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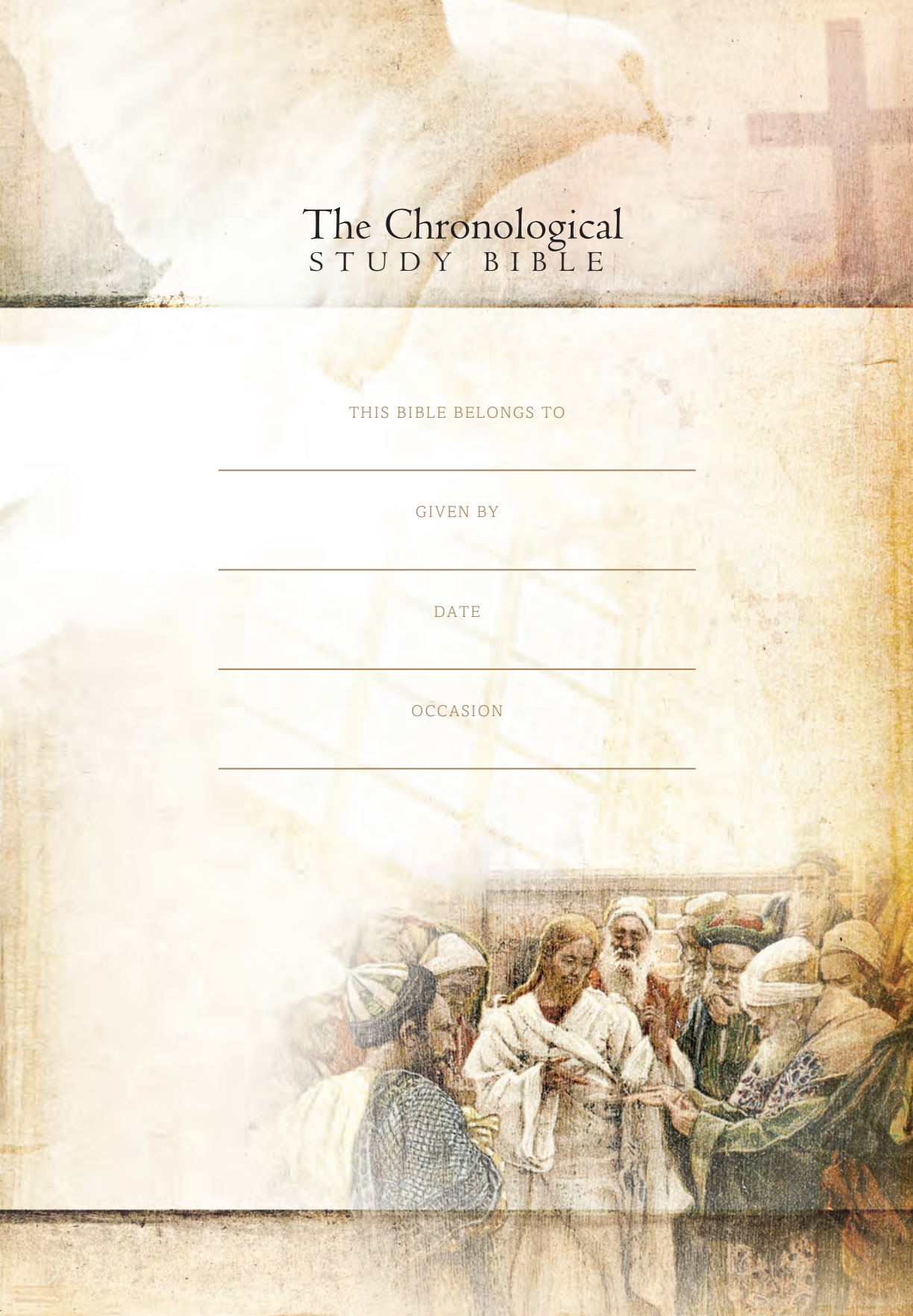

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REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM DIVIDE THE KINGDOM

The discontent and unrest that existed in Solomon's kingdom was like a powder keg awaiting a spark. When Solomon died, the occasion for the explosion came because of the foolish insensitivity of his son Rehoboam. The ten northern tribes revolted against Rehoboam and appointed Jeroboam as their king.

Israel (northern kingdom)

Jeroboam established his capital at Tirzah. He was succeeded by his son Nadab, but the dynasty was soon cut off by Nadab's assassination.

Nadab besieged the Philistine city of Gibbethon, but during the siege was assassinated by his successor Baasha (1Ki 15:27).

Judah (southern kingdom)

Rehoboam fought border wars against Jeroboam, probably over the territory of Benjamin which was a buffer zone between the two kingdoms (1Ki 14:30).

Abijah (or Abijam), son of Rehoboam, continued the border wars against Jeroboam (1Ki 15:7).

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Moses' Flight and Return to Egypt
Moses fled from Pharaoh through the Sinai desert and settled in the land of Midian. In the vicinity of Horeb, located by tradition in the Sinai Peninsula, God revealed himself in the burning bush and called Moses to go back to Egypt. Moses met Aaron at Horeb, and together they returned to Pharaoh's court in Rameses.

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Information current at time of writing

INTRODUCTION

The Bible was not written at one time nor by one author. The books of the Old and New Testaments were written over a period of more than 1,000 years, and their contents cover a variety of ancient peoples and cultures. If we are to understand and appropriate the Bible's message today, we need some sense of the historical and cultural context in which its diverse parts appeared. We read the words of the Bible today under entirely different circumstances than those under which they were written. To neglect the historical and cultural background of the biblical books is to risk misunderstanding them.

Unfortunately for modern readers, the individual books of the Bible do not always provide the information necessary to understand the Bible's historical and cultural background. At the time that these books were written, readers would have already been familiar with the world the writings describe. But thousands of years later, the events and customs that the original readers would have recognized immediately are often confusing and only dimly understood by modern readers.

The Chronological Study Bible will take you on a journey through the history and culture of the Bible. It will allow you to step back into biblical times and discover the world out of which the Bible grew. It will help you follow the flow of events in the Scriptures and see where sacred and secular history converge into one story of salvation. You will learn how sacred history fits into the context of secular history—why an event happened, how events relate to each other, as well as the cultural, religious, political, and geographical background that influenced the events.

Features for Historical and Cultural Learning

Several features of *The Chronological Study Bible* will help you understand the history and culture of the Bible.

Chronological Bible Text The entire New International Version text is rearranged according to the time of the events narrated in each book or passage. Every verse of the Bible is located in one of nine epochs of time.

Transition Commentary Transition Comments explain the placement and chronology of related passages of the Bible. You will learn how different Bible passages relate to each other and how they relate to the history of the ancient Near East and the Greco-Roman world. For instance, chapters 7 and 26 of the Book of Jeremiah preserve two versions of a single sermon. In *The Chronological Study Bible*, these chapters appear together under "Jeremiah's Temple Sermon" (p. 718), along with one of Jeremiah's confessions that responds to the persecution he experienced as a result of his preaching.

Epoch Introductions An "epoch" is a period of time that is characterized by peculiar features or events. *The Chronological Study Bible* will lead you through nine epochs, beginning with Epoch 1 (from creation up to Israel's patriarchs) and finishing with Epoch 9 (the church age and the visions of the end times). Introductions to each epoch discuss the peoples of that time and reveal what archaeology and the biblical literature tell us concerning the period.

Historical Overviews The Bible story unfolds over thousands of years. Historical Overviews provide descriptions of the changing times, helping you to form a mental view of the steps along the way. You will learn the importance of happenings from "The Beginnings of Human Civilization" (p. 2) to "Apocalyptic Writings and the End Times" (p. 1426).

Background Notes At many points, the world we read about in the Bible is related to the world outside the Bible. Background Notes provide information on the events, the customs, the religions, the literature, the politics, the places, and the persons with which the people of Bible times were familiar. For example, in "The Flood Through Other Eyes" (p. 10) you will learn of great flood stories that were told and retold throughout the ancient Near East.

Daily Life Have you ever wondered what life was really like for Bible peoples? Many of their customs differ greatly from ours today. Daily Life insights will acquaint you with topics such as "Cults and Supernatural" and "Politics and Government." In "Marriage and Family" (pp. 39, 61) you will see why being the firstborn son was a privileged position in the ancient family.

Time Panels It is easier to grasp the passage of time when events are plotted along a time line. Time Panels treat significant topics of the Bible, such as "Paul Becomes a Missionary" (p. 1287), which shows the important occurrences of Paul's life between his conversion and his earliest missionary journeys.

Time Capsules While the Bible offers some information for determining the dates of particular events, many more events of ancient history find no mention whatsoever in Scripture. Time Capsules provide dates for important episodes and occasions, grouping events inside and outside of the Bible within specific time periods. The list of happenings in "Time Capsule 522 to 520 B.C." (p. 951) and "Time Capsule 518 to 500 B.C." (p. 954) shows why the reign of Darius I in Persia was an opportune time for the Jews to rebuild and rededicate the Jerusalem temple. The Time Capsules appear in chronological order throughout *The Chronological Study Bible*, but no attempt has been made to locate them at the exact chro-

nological time of the Bible text. Because of uncertainties in establishing an exact date for the Bible narratives, the Time Capsules have been placed only within the approximate time period of a narrative.

Time Charts How can you organize for your study the years and years of time that relate to what you read in Scripture? Time Charts provide visual overviews of important chronological topics in the Bible. The final pages of the New Testament warn of Jerusalem's demise, and "The Fate of Jerusalem" (p. 1436) charts Jerusalem's rocky course of events from the temple's desecration by Antiochus IV to the city being renamed Aelia Capitolina as a Roman colony.

Maps Maps provide knowledge of the geography of biblical times. Dozens of in-text maps appear throughout *The Chronological Study Bible* showing the Bible lands as the ancient peoples knew them. In "The Hyksos Empire" (p. 59) you will see that during patriarchal times foreigners ruled a region encompassing Egypt as well as Palestine, which was then known as "Retenu."

Scripture References References at the top of each page help you locate the Bible passages appearing on a particular page. On each page with scripture, the first and last verse starting on that page are indicated.

Cultural and Historical Topics Are you interested in the lives of ancient peoples? Do you want to learn about their daily customs? The gods and goddesses they worshiped? The places where they lived and worked? The writings they read? The peoples, rulers, and nations that affected their lives? **Cultural and Historical Topics** (p. 1451) will help you locate such information in the Background Notes.

Glossary The Background Notes mention certain names, places, and things that are unfamiliar to us today. The brief descriptions and explanations of these subjects in the **Glossary** (p. 1469) provide clarification when you need it.

Concordance and Index of Scripture Passages A 119-page concordance (including people and places) allows you to look up passages by the words they contain (p. 1489). The **Index of Scripture Passages** (p. 1609) follows the concordance, and provides a guide to page numbers for all of the Bible passages in the chronological arrangement.

Reading a Chronological Text

This study Bible's attempt to rearrange the Bible text in the order of the events it narrates will probably highlight some difficulties that many Bible readers have never noticed. The Bible as it really is, not as we have imaginatively harmonized it in our minds, may be a bit unsettling at first. But to recognize such problems will only help readers better appreciate the efforts of serious biblical scholars to interpret the Bible. One goal of *The Chronological Study Bible* is to help Bible readers join the scholars' quest for historical truth.

Rearranging the Bible is, of course, a fallible human effort. Even those who have earned advanced degrees in the various fields of biblical studies would disagree on any particular rearrangement. The editors of *The Chronological Study Bible* have been forced at times to make hard decisions, to choose one location at the neglect of another that is equally plausible. In such instances, an honest effort has been made to acknowledge another possible arrangement and to present its case fairly. This allows readers to decide the issues for themselves.

In the case of debated issues, *The Chronological Study Bible* avoids presenting a single, biased perspective. Rather, it treats evenhandedly the entire spectrum of credible opinion on disputed matters. It takes with equal seriousness the views of traditional, conservative Bible students and those of modern, critical scholarship. No attempt is made to persuade readers that one particular view is correct; that determination is ultimately their prayerful and thoughtful responsibility.

Rearranging the order of the Bible's books may appear to some readers to be a violation of the integrity of the Bible. The goal of *The Chronological Study Bible* is not to replace the time-honored canonical arrangement, but instead to honor time as the setting in which the biblical record appeared. Readers who study this Bible will return to their traditional Bibles better equipped to read them. No longer will its words be disconnected holy pronouncements out of the blue. They will be seen for what they really are: words "rightly given . . . like apples of gold in settings of silver" (Pr 25:11). To acquire a sense of the flow of the Bible's story will put flesh and blood on its message.

Cyrus Cylinder. Terracotta, Babylonian, c. 539–530 B.C. From Babylon, southern Iraq photo by Marco Prins and Jona Lendering

READING THEOLOGICAL HISTORY

One goal of *The Chronological Study Bible* is to help readers acquire a greater appreciation for the historical dimensions of the biblical message. The Bible is not a theology book arranged according to topics: God, man, sin, salvation, etc. Nor is it simply a chronicle of events from creation to the final consummation. Historical events are often the Bible's subject matter, but these events are always reported from a particular perspective. That perspective is theological history. It is in the arena of history that God has chosen to make himself known.

History and the Old Testament

The Old Testament is centered in history. It describes historical events and is addressed, at one level at least, to a specific historical audience: the Hebrew people. This makes the faith taught in the Bible very different from the beliefs of other ancient Near Eastern peoples.

The peoples surrounding the Hebrews built their religious beliefs on the rhythms of nature. The world had visible patterns, but to its inhabitants these rhythms were unexplainable, uncontrollable, and therefore attributed to the gods. There were gods to represent all the phenomena of nature: gods of the sun, moon, rain, storms, rivers, seas, and the earth itself. The typical religious expression of such religion was the myth, a story that explained these unexplainable features of nature. For instance, almost every people had a myth of a deity who was dead for part of the year and alive for the rest of the year—a story that explained the recurring cycle of the seasons.

The God of the Old Testament is very different. Most importantly, He is one God. All the phenomena that other peoples regarded as gods are simply the creations of the one God. In the other religions of the ancient Near East, nature was divine; in the Bible, God both created nature and was more than nature. The God of the Bible deals with His creation not in recurring, regular patterns, but in onetime, extraordinary moments of self-revelation. Moreover, these moments when God acts on earth are not described in vague, mythic language ("long ago, in the land of the gods"), but occur in real time, in recognizable locations on earth.

For this reason, the Old Testament's primary mode of communication is not myth, but history. Israel was not interested in describing how God acts in continual repetition in nature; Israel wanted to tell how God had performed unique, onetime actions in human history. They wanted to tell how at specific moments in history, God chose Abraham, blessed Jacob, and saved Abraham's and Jacob's descendants from slavery in Egypt. They wanted to tell how God established his chosen king over Israel, how God allowed that kingdom to be destroyed, and how once again God rescued his people from captivity. To tell their very different sort of faith, the Israelites used the art of history writing, and the Old Testament itself contains some of the very earliest examples of this art.

Of course, not all of the Old Testament consists of history writing. But even the parts of the Old Testament that are not history writing themselves usually appear in some historical context. The oracles, speeches, and poetry of the prophets are not history, but they are addressed to real people in real historical situations. They recall God's mighty acts of the historical past; they promise that God can and will act in history again. Books of wisdom and philosophy that do not speak of history at all, like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, are nevertheless identified with the historical context of King Solomon's court. Even the psalms, intended for regular repetition in public worship, often provide a historical background, such as

Ps 3, superscribed as "A Psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom."

Israel understood God as a God who acts in history, and for this reason almost every religious utterance was read in light of the history of God's mighty acts. Therefore, to understand the Old Testament as it is meant to be understood, the reader must have some grasp of the historical events that lie behind each chapter and book. Unless the reader knows the history of Israel and the ancient Near East, the Bible will always be to some extent a closed book.

The New Testament and the Old

The Old Testament was the Bible of the New Testament writers. Old Testament images and concepts filled their minds. Allusions to the Old Testament appear on nearly every page of their writings. The teaching of the Old Testament was basic to their thought.

These New Testament writers also believed that Christ was God's final revelation, the One who brought the earlier revelation into proper focus (Heb 1:1, 2). Indeed, the risen Christ himself had explained to his disciples how he fulfilled the Scriptures (Lk 24:27). Thus New Testament writers understood him to be the One who brought to completion God's plan of salvation recorded in the early chapters of Genesis.

History writing in the New Testament is certainly a theological history. The authors believed that the purpose and meaning of history could be found in Christ. Therefore, the history of which they wrote was salvation history. God's earlier saving works looked forward to the cross. God's bringing his people out of Egypt became a pattern for Christ's atoning work. At the Passover meal commemorating this deliverance from bondage, Christ made the bread and wine symbols of his death and of the new covenant (Lk 22:19, 20). History had reached its highest point in him. So Paul, the most influential teacher of Christianity, wrote about the Jesus who appeared to him on the Damascus Road, describing the risen Christ as the one "from whom all things came and for whom we live" (1Co 8:6).

The Message and the Historical Setting

While both the Old and New Testaments present their message on a historical frame, the message takes precedence to the historical setting. The writers of biblical history did not write in the same manner as a modern historian. Ancient history writers were not as interested in "when something happened" as they were in the meaning of the events they were recounting. Therefore the reader of biblical history must be aware that many of the concerns that dominate modern history writing (specific dates, discussions of natural causes) simply were not very important to most of the biblical writers.

REARRANGING THE BIBLE'S CANONICAL ORDER

The individual books included in the Old and New Testaments as authoritative are called "the canon." For some readers, the placement of these books in our English Bibles (called "canonical order") is slightly confusing, since it does not always follow chronological order. Rather, it follows the order of the Latin Vulgate translated by Jerome in the 4th century A.D.

A reader can follow the Old Testament chronology easily for the first dozen books (Genesis through 2 Kings), but after that the chronological order often disappears. The books of Chronicles through Esther backtrack and retell many of the events already described. Portions of the books of Psalms and Proverbs refer to times that are centuries apart, and the prophetic writings, speaking of widely different times, are not presented in straight chronological order.

The New Testament reader also faces some chronological uncertainty. The life of Jesus appears in four Gospels, and while all four Gospels report information about Jesus in general chronological order, none do so strictly. Certain sayings or events appear in differing sequences in the various Gospels. Each of the authors had a slightly different purpose and audience in mind, and structured his materials in order to achieve the greatest effectiveness. Determining the events of Paul's life is not simple since the information from his letters does not always connect directly with the narrative of the Book of Acts.

Thus the canonical order presents a dilemma. To understand the Bible the reader must understand something of the history to which the Bible refers. At the same time, though, that historical background is not readily apparent from the order of the books in the Bible itself. *The Chronological Study Bible* makes the Bible's historical background more accessible by rearranging the Bible text according to nine epochs of time.

Moving Whole Books. To begin with, whole books of the Bible are relocated according to the historical time period narrated in the books. This reordering disrupts the canonical order of the books, and though this might seem irreverent to some people, it actually continues an ancient practice. The order of books in the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) differs from that of the older Hebrew Bible, and some of the Septuagint reordering is reflected in our English Old Testaments.

The early Greek translators, thinking a chronological order would make more sense, moved such books as Ruth, Ezra, and Nehemiah from their positions in the Hebrew manuscripts. The Book of Ruth does not appear after the Book of Judges in the Hebrew Bible, but near the end of the Bible. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah come

before the books of Chronicles, even though they narrate events occurring later in time than those narrated by Chronicles. When the Old Testament was translated into Greek during the Hellenistic era (336–37 B.C.), the confusing chronology of the Hebrew Bible was changed by relocating several of these books. The Book of Ruth, which tells of events during the final years of the judges, was inserted between the books of Judges and 1 Samuel, while Ezra and Nehemiah were placed after 2 Chronicles.

Moving Portions of Books. Chronological confusion is not restricted to the order of whole books, however. The contents of certain individual books are not in chronological order, making it difficult for a modern reader to comprehend the historical context. So in addition to reordering whole books, even the contents of individual books have been rearranged—quite extensively in books like Isaiah and Jeremiah—to follow a chronological outline.

Combining Portions of Books. Moreover, various books have been woven together. For instance, the historical books of Kings and Chronicles are often interrupted by prophetic books or passages that pertain to the time described in the history. The four Gospels are combined into one presentation following the sequence of the Gospel of Mark. Certain of Paul's letters are inserted into the Book of Acts.

Principles of Rearrangement

Rearranging the biblical books chronologically is by no means easily accomplished, since Bible scholars differ on almost every important point of chronology. The rearrangement in *The Chronological Study Bible* is based on two distinct chronological goals. First, it provides a *relative chronology*, placing related events together without fixed dates. For instance, the prophet Amos spoke in the northern kingdom of Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II, and so the history of Jeroboam II is read alongside the words of Amos that refer to Jeroboam's time. Second, *The Chronological Study Bible* provides an *absolute chronology* tied to historical information and fixed dates (or at least tentative dates). An absolute chronology enables readers to place the biblical history in the larger context of world history.

There are imposing difficulties with any attempt to construct either relative or absolute chronologies. Many biblical passages offer no chronological specificity. Even among books and passages that provide some indication of a specific historical context, the intended context is not always clear. For instance, the oracle of Jer 14 is dated to the time of "the droughts," and Jeremiah's original audience supposedly had no trouble identifying this time. Modern readers, however, are not so fortunate: Were these droughts during the reign of King Josiah or King Jehoiakim or King Zedekiah? Jeremiah's prophetic career spans the reigns of all three kings. In the Book of Joel another prophet responds to a locust plague that ravaged the land of Judah. But when was that plague? Different scholars place Joel in at least three different centuries. All one can do in selecting a time period for the Book of Joel is to look at clues within the prophecy itself and then, in all humility, guess.

Difficulties vary with the different books of the Bible because those books differ from each other in the type of chronological issues they raise. *The Chronological Study Bible* addresses the unique problems of each portion of the Bible.

Genesis Through Joshua

The books of the Bible that narrate the earliest events do not provide specific years or refer to specific events or names that can be dated by other means. Even such a central figure as the individual who was Egypt's pharaoh during the Exodus is never referred to by name. Moreover, the years that are given are often suspiciously round numbers—like 40 years, which may be simply a symbolic number representing one generation.

Due to this lack of specific chronological information, scholars disagree widely on exactly when to date many events of early Israelite history. The Hebrews' exodus from Egypt, for example, is dated by many scholars in the 15th century B.C., whereas other scholars place it 200 years later, during the 13th century. The choice of either of these dates does not affect the chronological sequence of the narrative: by either date the Exodus precedes the conquest. So in *The Chronological Study Bible* both dates are given without stating any preference. The dates of the exodus, wilderness wandering, and the conquest under Joshua are interrelated; consequently, the date a person favors for the exodus determines the dating of the other two events.

The Exodus and Wilderness Wandering

When presenting relative chronology, the passages of the Bible are ordered according to the history that is narrated in the passage, not according to the time of the book's writing. For instance, the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy narrate the events of Israel's departure from Egypt and the subsequent wilderness wanderings. In *The Chronological Study Bible*, these books appear in the historical context of the exodus, although many scholars argue that parts of these books were written much later. Regardless of when these books were written, their narrative can be appreciated as marvelous literature telling a story set in the time of the Hebrew exodus from Egypt.

Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles

The books of 1 and 2 Kings represent historical accounts that were evidently put together in their current form during the Babylonian exile (597–539 B.C.). Yet, because they narrate events as far back in time as the death of King David (about 970 B.C.), the books of Kings are not located in *The Chronological Study Bible* during their time of writing (the exile), but rather are divided up and associated with the various historical eras which they narrate.

The history of the Israelite kingdoms is recounted in two full-length histories. The first is recorded in the books of Samuel and Kings, and the second appears in the books of Chronicles. The two histories are very similar; indeed, 1 and 2 Chronicles often quote directly from the earlier history of Samuel/Kings. Yet there are some marked differences in perspective. Whereas Samuel and Kings emphasize the religious leadership of prophets, Chronicles emphasizes the role of the priests. In order to present both historical accounts in their entirety, while staying as close as possible to chronological order, the two histories alternate. The account of a particular historical time appears first as told in Samuel or Kings, being labeled "Prophetic Account." Then the same history as told in Chronicles follows, being labeled "Priestly Account." This dual history begins at the reign of King Saul and continues until the destruction of Jerusalem, at which time a single chronological account resumes.

The Kings of the Divided Monarchy

Israel and Judah kept careful records of the lengths of reign of their rulers. The Bible's dates for the kings are relative dates, cross-referencing them to each other: for instance, Ahab became king of Israel in the 38th year of Asa king of Judah (1Ki 16:29). Since no definite year is given for the beginning of Asa's reign, however, this information alone is not enough to establish Ahab's dates.

An additional problem occurs when the years of reign are totaled. When the years given for the kings of Israel and Judah are added up, Israel's totals do not always correspond to Judah's. These apparent inconsistencies may appear for various reasons. When one king dies and another is crowned, is that year counted twice—as the last year of the deceased king and also as the first year of the new king? When a crown prince rules as regent while his royal father is still alive, as happens more than once, are the years of the coregency counted in the reigns of both kings? These questions make it difficult to utilize the years of reign in calculating an overall chronology. To provide a consistent presentation, *The Chronological Study Bible* adapts the system of dates for the kings found in *The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings* by Edwin R. Thiele.

In the later history of Israel, the dates are much more certain, though a few chronological problems remain. Occasionally a biblical historian will recount some event out of chronological order, usually to make a theological point. For instance, the very last event described in the life of Hezekiah king of Judah is his entertaining of ambassadors from Babylon (2Ki 20:12–19; Isa 39:1–8). Evidence from both inside and outside of the Bible reveals that that event actually occurred earlier, certainly not just before Hezekiah's death (2Ki 20:21). The biblical historian evidently moved the account to the end because of the prophet Isaiah's warning about Babylon. During Hezekiah's reign, God had delivered Judah from Assyria, but the historian foreshadows a coming time when God would allow Judah to fall to Babylon. Emphasizing chronological order, *The Chronological Study Bible* restores such temporal displacements to their probable chronological contexts.

The Prophets

Other biblical books also concern the time covered by the Samuel/Kings and Chronicles double history. In *The Chronological Study Bible* most of the prophetic books are inserted at the appropriate historical points in the "Prophetic Account." Several groups of psalms as well as the words of the priestly prophet Ezekiel appear within the "Priestly Account." Books are inserted within the Prophetic and the Priestly accounts according to the events which are narrated or prophesied, not according to the times when the books were written. The Book of Jonah, for instance, is often thought to have been composed sometime in the Persian era (559–331 B.C.), but events in the book are set in the lifetime of the prophet Jonah, who lived centuries earlier, during the reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.). Thus, the Book of Jonah appears in the context of Jeroboam's reign.

Other prophetic passages speak of times later than the traditional date of composition for the passage itself. For example, parts of the Book of Isaiah refer to events that took place centuries after the prophet Isaiah lived. Though Isaiah prophesied in Jerusalem during the 8th century B.C., the passage of Isa 44:28; 45:1 refers by name to Cyrus, a Persian king who lived in the 6th century. For this reason, some chapters from the Book of Isaiah appear in the time of Cyrus (539–530 B.C.). While scholars disagree whether these chapters were written by Isaiah of Jerusalem or by a later prophet during the 6th century, they agree that the 6th century is the time to which these chapters refer.

The Book of Ezekiel provides many dates, most of which indicate when the prophet received a message from God. To calculate his dates Ezekiel began counting from the exile of Jehoiachin to Babylon in 597 B.C. Each date is expressed as a

"year of the exile of King Jehoiachin" (Eze 1:2) or a "year of our exile" (Eze 33:21). In providing modern equivalents for Ezekiel's dates, *The Chronological Study Bible* follows the system of dates compiled in *Babylonian Chronology 626 B.C.–A.D. 75* by R. A. Parker and W. H. Dubberstein.

The Book of Jeremiah

The Book of Jeremiah, perhaps the most radically rearranged book in *The Chronological Study Bible*, is a prime example of a book that lacks chronological order in its canonical form. As one of the most history-conscious of the prophetic books, Jeremiah refers specifically to individual kings and officials and even includes several historical narratives. At the same time, though, these history-minded oracles and historical narratives are not presented in anything resembling chronological order. Even the historical narratives of Jer 25–29; 32–40 skip back and forth in time (see Jer 25:1; 26:1; 32:1; 36:1). Thus although the Book of Jeremiah is only understandable in light of the historical events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., simply reading the book from start to finish does not give the reader that necessary understanding.

Messianic Prophecies

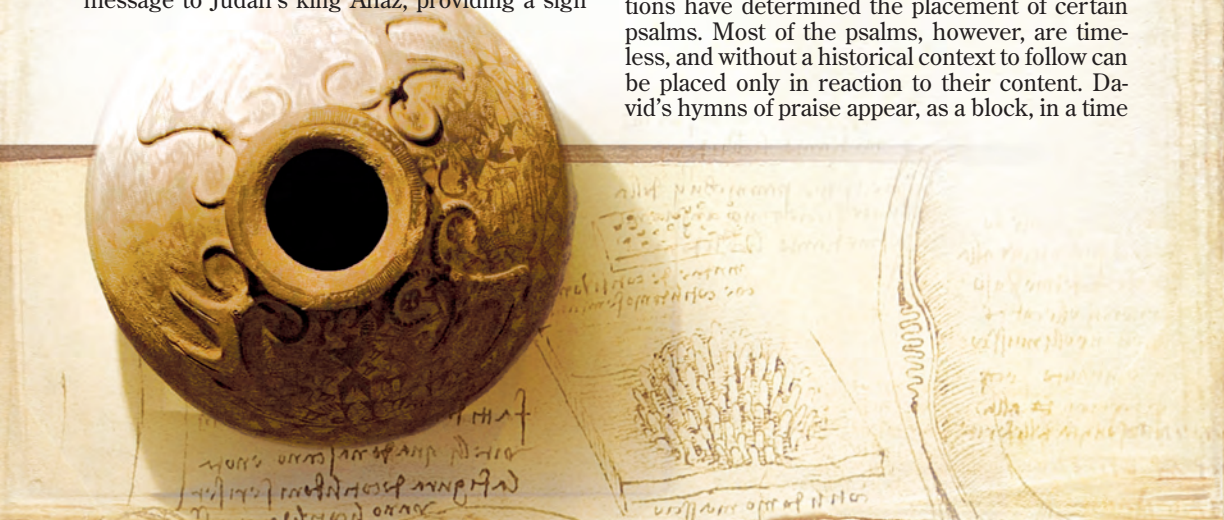
Messianic prophecies raise a question as to the time period to which a particular prophecy refers. The New Testament takes great care to demonstrate that many Old Testament passages ultimately refer to the person and work of Jesus Christ. It would make sense to locate such Old Testament passages at pertinent places in the life of Jesus. This has not been done, however. Without denying that messianic prophecies are ultimately fulfilled in Christ, most of them also have significance for their original Old Testament time period. For instance, the promise in Isa 7:14, "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son," is quoted in Mt 1:23 as a reference to Christ's virgin birth. In the context of Isa 7, though, the promise is a part of the prophet Isaiah's larger message to Judah's king Ahaz, providing a sign that he should not fear the nations of Syria and Israel, for they would soon be destroyed (Isa 7:16). This prophecy has significance for more than one time period, and in *The Chronological Study Bible* appears in its original context, during the reign of Ahaz, even though its prophetic significance extends to the later context at the birth of Christ.

Wisdom Literature and Psalms

Some of the most hotly contested debates among Old Testament scholars concern the date when this or that passage was composed. Fortunately, *The Chronological Study Bible* only seeks to place biblical passages according to the setting described, a question about which there is more agreement. Even so, complete scholarly consensus still is not possible, and sometimes it is not certain to which time period various passages refer.

The wisdom literature of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job is an example of such chronological uncertainty. While most of the Old Testament is centered in history, these writings are an exception. Wisdom speaks of universal, practical matters that apply to all people of all nations in all ages. A proverb like "Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over all wrongs" (Pr 10:12), for example, applies just as well to every age. Most of the Book of Proverbs and all of the Book of Ecclesiastes are associated with the court of King Solomon, the revered head of the wisdom movement in Israel. So in *The Chronological Study Bible* these passages appear in Solomon's time. Some sections of Proverbs and the whole Book of Job, however, defy chronological placement. For this reason, these writings are separated from the chronology and located, somewhat arbitrarily, in the Babylonian exile.

The psalms also intentionally resist chronological placement. For the most part, they do not refer to any one time, but rather speak in general language, providing words for worship in the temple. Some psalms do have superscriptions that associate them with particular events—usually from the life of David—and these superscriptions have determined the placement of certain psalms. Most of the psalms, however, are timeless, and without a historical context to follow can be placed only in reaction to their content. David's hymns of praise appear, as a block, in a time



when David praised God: when he brought the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem (1Ch 15:29). On the other hand, David's laments appear at a time when David lamented: during a plague (1Ch 21:30). Other psalms appear in other historical contexts, from the fall of Jerusalem (Ps 89) to the Babylonian captivity (Ps 137) to the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (Ps 120–134).

The Gospels

A challenging task faces us when we attempt to arrange the Gospels into a chronological presentation of Jesus' life. If early Christian tradition is correct, Mark's Gospel was not written to provide a sequential account of the events in Jesus' life. If the other Synoptic Gospels—Matthew and Luke—are related to Mark, as most scholars believe, they are not organized primarily along chronological lines either. What has long been recognized about John's Gospel is probably also true of the Synoptic Gospels: the Gospel writers' theological interests and their communities' practical needs were more decisive than historical concerns.

None of the Gospels satisfy our modern expectations of a biography of Jesus. This is not the fault of the Gospel writers; they had different purposes for writing, which will disappoint those whose only interest is history. But when we do ask historical questions, what, for example, should we conclude about the Gospel authors reporting events in the life of Jesus in different sequences?

The Synoptic Problem

The first three Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels. The word "Synoptic" comes from two Greek words meaning "seen together." Matthew, Mark, and Luke tell the story of Jesus in essentially the same sequence and in nearly identical terms. The similarities are especially obvious when these three Gospels are compared with John. But equally striking are their conspicuous differences when compared closely with each other. This creates what scholars call the "Synoptic Problem": How can both similarities and differences be satisfactorily explained?

Similarities might be explained by appeal to the Gospels' divine inspiration. But this fails to account for their differences. Virtually all scholars today agree that the similarities among the Synoptic Gospels are so close as to require a literary explanation. That is, either all three copied from a lost earlier gospel or two of the Gospels depended on the third.

Other gospels did exist, which are called "apocryphal" because the church never accepted them. The apocryphal gospels were never widely used. Some were rejected because they seemed to promote false doctrines. Others were dismissed as merely fanciful speculations designed to answer the curious questions of those familiar with the canonical Gospels. In any case, none of the apocryphal gospels that survive explain the similarities among the canonical Gospels.

Various theories have been proposed to explain how the Gospels might have depended on each other. St. Augustine proposed the theory that Matthew was the earliest Gospel and that Luke and Mark used it in writing theirs. Many modern scholars espouse a similar view. But since the 19th century most scholars have presumed that Mark was the earliest Gospel. Even assuming that Mark was written first still does not account for all the similarities among the Synoptic Gospels. To offer more explanation, most scholars assume that, in addition to Mark, Matthew and Luke depended on a now-lost source. This hypothetical source is generally called "Q," an abbreviation for the German word *Quelle*, meaning "source."

Both ancient tradition and scholarly opinion seem to agree that Mark was the earliest Gospel. Since we cannot be certain of the exact sequence of events, the life of Jesus in *The Chronological Study Bible* follows Mark's order. Additional information provided by the other Gospels is arranged in what seems to be the most plausible order around Mark's framework.

Acts of the Apostles

The second task in rearranging the New Testament books is to construct a chronology of important events that occurred during the lives of the apostles and during the early years of the Christian church. The Book of Acts and the New Testament letters serve as the basis for the chronology of the church age. References to the political leaders during this time help pinpoint certain dates.

The Book of Acts is the one book of the New Testament which traces the development of the early church after the ascension of Jesus. Standing between the Gospels and the New Testament letters, Acts is a bridge between the life of Jesus and the ministry of the apostle Paul. As such, the narrative of Acts is one source of historical information about the early church.

There is little doubt that the Book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke come from the same author. Since the author does not identify himself by name, scholars have ascribed the authorship of both books to Luke, the companion of Paul (2Ti 4:11). Luke was closely associated with many events of Paul's mission, and this results in greater vividness in the latter half of Acts. At places (see Ac 16:10–17), the narrative changes to the first person ("we"), indicating that Luke was personally present. Nevertheless, some scholars believe that the books of Luke and Acts were written by an anonymous writer who was later identified with Luke. Also questioned is whether Luke is a reliable historian, since his primary

motive for writing was not to record history, but to inform his audience of the triumphant course of the gospel, beginning in Jesus and continuing in the church (Ac 1:1). Thus, other scholars look to Paul's letters for a chronology of his ministry.

Paul's Letters

Paul the apostle was the earliest and most influential interpreter of Christ's message and teaching. As an early Christian missionary, Paul founded and corresponded with several early Christian churches. Using Paul's letters, however, to determine a chronology of events in his life is difficult. The letters do not provide any specific dates or a sequence of events, but only offer pieces of information which scholars try to relate to the narrative of Acts. To make the task more difficult, scholars cannot agree on the sequence in which Paul wrote his letters, nor on whether all of the letters accredited to Paul were actually written by him.

The New Testament letters follow the general custom and form of letters which became an important form of communication in the Greek-speaking world about 300 years before the birth of Jesus. The Roman government provided postal service only for official documents, so private letters were sent by special messengers or friendly travelers. Letters normally were sent to designated parties, although some were "open" or circular letters. Paul's letters, with the possible exception of Ephesians, were addressed to specific congregations.

Ancient letters normally followed a pattern which included: (1) an introduction, listing the names of sender and recipient, followed by a formal greeting inquiring about the recipient's health and a thanksgiving formula; (2) a body, or purpose for writing; and (3) a conclusion, consisting of appropriate remarks and a farewell. Paul's letters follow this pattern, with some exceptions. Paul replaced the bland greeting of inquiry about health with a salutation combining Christian grace and Hebrew peace. His thanksgiving was likewise more than a formality; it was a sincere expression of gratitude for the well-being of his congregations. He also omitted the farewell in favor of personal greetings or a benediction.

Since Paul's letters do not provide a sequence of events, *The Chronological Study Bible* follows the narrative sequence of Acts. In the Old Testament, books were rearranged based on the description of the narrative. Since the New Testament letters describe themselves as communication written from a particular sender to intended recipients, individual letters have been placed according to this description, if possible. In canonical Bibles, the Pauline letters are arranged in the New Testament according to length, from the longest (Romans) to the shortest (Philemon). In *The Chronological Study Bible* they have been arranged, as much as possible, according to information given in the salutations, greetings, and bodies of the letters.

The Prison Letters

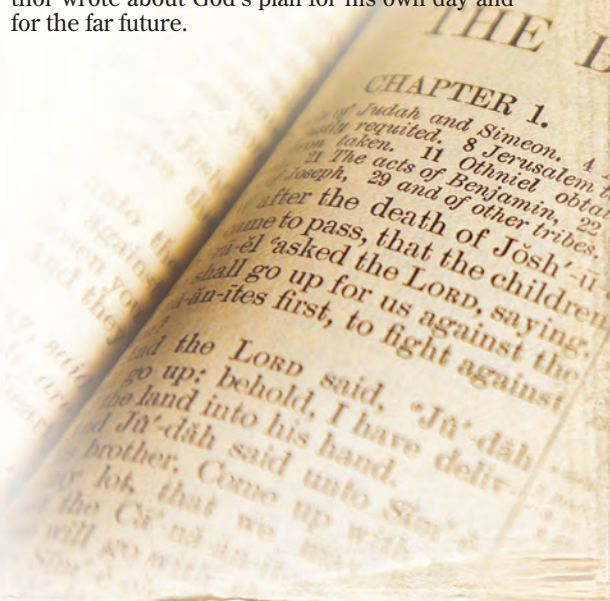
The Book of Acts ends with Paul in prison in Rome. Four letters—Philippians, Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians—are known as the Prison Letters, since all make reference to Paul being in prison. Paul, however, was imprisoned in Caesarea and possibly in Ephesus, besides Rome, so the placement of any one of the Prison Letters must be considered tentative.

The Pastoral Letters

The chronology from Paul's imprisonment on is drawn from inferences in the New Testament letters, which have been arranged in *The Chronological Study Bible* according to their salutations, where possible. The Pastoral Letters—1 and 2 Timothy and Titus—have been placed according to the belief of some that Paul was released from Roman imprisonment to continue missionary work in Macedonia. If Paul was martyred while in prison, however, possibly in A.D. 64, these letters would have been compiled much later, by an unknown editor.

The Last New Testament Writings

The final books of the New Testament offer little help in determining a chronology. According to tradition, Peter was martyred in A.D. 64, so the letters of 1 and 2 Peter have been placed in *The Chronological Study Bible* just before that time. Those who think one or both of the letters were written by an unknown author would place them later. Writings such as Hebrews and the letters of 1, 2, and 3 John indicate some time in the last half of the 1st century A.D., but a more precise dating is impossible. The Book of Revelation appears last in *The Chronological Study Bible*. Its contents are not limited to a specific time; the author wrote about God's plan for his own day and for the far future.



PREFACE TO THE NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION

The goal of the New International Version (NIV) is to enable English-speaking people from around the world to read and hear God's eternal Word in their own language. Our work as translators is motivated by our conviction that the Bible is God's Word in written form. We believe that the Bible contains the divine answer to the deepest needs of humanity, sheds unique light on our path in a dark world and sets forth the way to our eternal well-being. Out of these deep convictions, we have sought to recreate as far as possible the experience of the original audience—blending transparency to the original text with accessibility for the millions of English speakers around the world. We have prioritized accuracy, clarity and literary quality with the goal of creating a translation suitable for public and private reading, evangelism, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use. We have also sought to preserve a measure of continuity with the long tradition of translating the Scriptures into English.

The complete NIV Bible was first published in 1978. It was a completely new translation made by over a hundred scholars working directly from the best available Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek texts. The translators came from the United States, Great Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, giving the translation an international scope. They were from many denominations and churches—including Anglican, Assemblies of God, Baptist, Brethren, Christian Reformed, Church of Christ, Evangelical Covenant, Evangelical Free, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Nazarene, Presbyterian, Wesleyan and others. This breadth of denominational and theological perspective helped to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias. For these reasons, and by the grace of God, the NIV has gained a wide readership in all parts of the English-speaking world.

The work of translating the Bible is never finished. As good as they are, English translations must be regularly updated so that they will continue to communicate accurately the meaning of God's Word. Updates are needed in order to reflect the latest developments in our understanding of the biblical world and its languages and to keep pace with changes in English usage. Recognizing, then, that the NIV would retain its ability to communicate God's Word accurately only if it were regularly updated, the original translators established the Committee on Bible Translation (CBT). The committee is a self-perpetuating group of biblical scholars charged with keeping abreast of advances in biblical scholarship and changes in English and issuing periodic updates to the NIV. CBT is an independent, self-governing body and has sole responsibility for the NIV text. The committee mirrors the original group of translators in its diverse international and denominational makeup and in its unifying commitment to the Bible as God's inspired Word.

In obedience to its mandate, the committee has issued periodic updates to the NIV. An initial revision was released in 1984. A more thorough revision process was completed in 2005, resulting in the separately published Today's New International Version (TNIV). The updated NIV you now have in your hands builds on both the original NIV and the TNIV and represents the latest effort of the committee to articulate God's unchanging Word in the way the original authors might have said it had they been speaking in English to the global English-speaking audience today.

The first concern of the translators has continued to be the accuracy of the translation and its faithfulness to the intended meaning of the biblical writers. This has moved the translators to go beyond a formal word-for-word rendering of the original texts. Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, accurate communication of the meaning of the biblical authors demands constant regard for varied contextual uses of words and idioms and for frequent modifications in sentence structures.

As an aid to the reader, sectional headings have been inserted. They are not to be regarded as part of the biblical text and are not intended for oral reading. It is the committee's hope that these headings may prove more helpful to the reader than the traditional chapter divisions, which were introduced long after the Bible was written.

For the Old Testament the standard Hebrew text, the Masoretic Text as published in the latest edition of *Biblia Hebraica,* has been used throughout. The Masoretic Text tradition contains marginal notations that offer variant readings. These have sometimes been followed instead of the text itself. Because such instances involve variants within the Masoretic tradition, they have not been indicated in the textual notes. In a few cases, words in the basic consonantal text have been divided differently than in the Masoretic Text. Such cases are usually indicated in the textual footnotes. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain biblical texts that represent an earlier stage of the transmission of the Hebrew text. They have been consulted, as have been the Samaritan Pentateuch and the ancient scribal traditions concerning deliberate textual changes. The translators also consulted the more important early versions—the Greek Septuagint, Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion, the Latin Vulgate, the Syriac Peshitta, the Aramaic Targums and, for the Psalms, the *Juxta Hebraica* of Jerome. Readings from these versions, the Dead Sea Scrolls and the scribal traditions were occasionally followed where the Masoretic Text seemed doubtful and where accepted principles of textual criticism showed that one or more of these textual witnesses appeared to provide the correct reading. In rare cases, the committee has emended the Hebrew text where it appears to have become corrupted at an even earlier stage of its transmission. These departures from the Masoretic Text are also indicated in the textual footnotes. Sometimes the vowel indicators (which are later additions to the basic consonantal text) found in the Masoretic Text did not, in the judgment of the committee, represent the correct vowels for the original text. Accordingly, some words have been read with a different set of vowels. These instances are usually not indicated in the footnotes.

The Greek text used in translating the New Testament is an eclectic one, based on the latest editions of the Nestle-Aland/United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament. The committee has made its choices among the variant readings in accordance with widely accepted principles of New Testament textual criticism. Footnotes call attention to places where uncertainty remains.

The New Testament authors, writing in Greek, often quote the Old Testament from its ancient Greek version, the Septuagint. This is one reason why some of the Old Testament quotations in the NIV New Testament are not identical to the corresponding passages in the NIV Old Testament. Such quotations in the New Testament are indicated with the footnote "(see Septuagint)."

Other footnotes in this version are of several kinds, most of which need no explanation. Those giving alternative translations begin with "Or" and generally introduce the alternative with the last word preceding it in the text, except when it is a single-word alternative. When poetry is quoted in a footnote, a slash mark indicates a line division.

It should be noted that references to diseases, minerals, flora and fauna, architectural details, clothing, jewelry, musical instruments and other articles cannot always be identified with precision. Also, linear measurements and measures of capacity can only be approximated (see the Table of Weights and Measures). Although *Selah,* used mainly in the Psalms, is probably a musical term, its meaning is uncertain. Since it may interrupt reading and distract the reader, this word has not been kept in the English text, but every occurrence has been signaled by a footnote.

One of the main reasons the task of Bible translation is never finished is the change in our own language, English. Although a basic core of the language remains relatively stable, many diverse and complex linguistic factors continue to bring about subtle shifts in the meanings and/or connotations of even old, well-established words and phrases. One of the shifts that creates particular challenges to writers and translators alike is the manner in which gender is presented. The original NIV (1978) was published in a time when "a man" would naturally be understood, in many contexts, to be referring to a person, whether male or female. But most English speakers today tend to hear a distinctly male connotation in this word. In recognition of this change in English, this edition of the NIV, along with almost all other recent English translations, substitutes other expressions when the original text intends to refer generically to men and women equally. Thus, for instance, the NIV (1984) rendering of

1 Corinthians 8:3, "But the man who loves God is known by God" becomes in this edition "But whoever loves God is known by God." On the other hand, "man" and "mankind," as ways of denoting the human race, are still widely used. This edition of the NIV therefore continues to use these words, along with other expressions, in this way.

A related shift in English creates a greater challenge for modern translations: the move away from using the third-person masculine singular pronouns—"he/him/his"—to refer to men and women equally. This usage does persist at a low level in some forms of English, and this revision therefore occasionally uses these pronouns in a generic sense. But the tendency, recognized in day-to-day usage and confirmed by extensive research, is away from the generic use of "he," "him" and "his." In recognition of this shift in language and in an effort to translate into the "common" English that people are actually using, this revision of the NIV generally uses other constructions when the biblical text is plainly addressed to men and women equally. The reader will frequently encounter a "they," "them" or "their" to express a generic singular idea. Thus, for instance, Mark 8:36 reads: "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" This generic use of the "indefinite" or "singular" "they/them/their" has a venerable place in English idiom and has quickly become established as standard English, spoken and written, all over the world. Where an individual emphasis is deemed to be present, "anyone" or "everyone" or some other equivalent is generally used as the antecedent of such pronouns.

Sometimes the chapter and/or verse numbering in English translations of the Old Testament differs from that found in published Hebrew texts. This is particularly the case in the Psalms, where the traditional titles are often included in the Hebrew verse numbering. Such differences are indicated in the footnotes at the bottom of the page. In the New Testament, verse numbers that marked off portions of the traditional English text not supported by the best Greek manuscripts now appear in brackets, with a footnote indicating the text that has been omitted (see, for example, Matthew 17:[21]).

Mark 16:9–20 and John 7:53—8:11, although long accorded virtually equal status with the rest of the Gospels in which they stand, have a very questionable—and confused—standing in the textual history of the New Testament, as noted in the bracketed annotations with which they are set off. A different typeface has been chosen for these passages to indicate even more clearly their uncertain status.

Basic formatting of the text, such as lining the poetry, paragraphing (both prose and poetry), setting up of (administrative-like) lists, indenting letters and lengthy prayers within narratives and the insertion of sectional headings, has been the work of the committee. However, the choice between single-column and double-column formats has been left to the publishers. Also the issuing of "red-letter" editions is a publisher's choice—one the committee does not endorse.

The committee has again been reminded that every human effort is flawed—including this revision of the NIV. We trust, however, that many will find in it an improved representation of the Word of God, through which they hear his call to faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and to service in his kingdom. We offer this version of the Bible to him in whose name and for whose glory it has been made.

The Committee on Bible Translation
September 2010

BEFORE THE PATRIARCHS

Humankind's earliest ancestors appear in what is called "prehistory"—before events were recorded. Then humans pioneered writing, and "history" began.

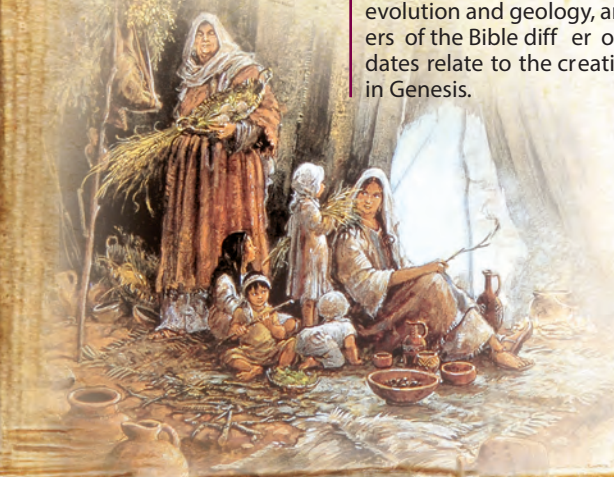
CREATION—2000 B.C.

The Bible begins its story with the accounts of creation and of humankind's early history. The epoch extending from undatable creation to about 2000 B.C. witnessed the beginning both of life itself and of humankind's first civilizations. This is the time before the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, long before Israel became a specific people. It is the time of humankind's earliest ancestors.

The very earliest part of this epoch is called "prehistory" because it covers the story of humans before there were recorded events. The advent of writing around 3000 B.C. eventually ended "prehistory," as humans began preserving information concerning their economies, laws, and religions. The various written documents of this period, including lists of kings, inscriptions from buildings, and historical epics, mark the start of the historical era.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

Archaeologists arrange historical and cultural evidence according to the most vital metal of each period, such as stone, copper, bronze, or iron. The earliest period, called the Stone Age, is divided into the Old Stone, Middle Stone, and New Stone ages. A later period, the Bronze Age, is also divided into the Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, and Late Bronze ages. The dates for these periods are approximate, of course, because cultural changes always come gradually. Very early dates are based on theories of evolution and geology, and interpreters of the Bible differ on how such dates relate to the creation accounts in Genesis.



Old Stone Age	before 10,000 B.C.
Middle Stone Age	10,000 to 8000 B.C.
New Stone Age	8000 to 4000 B.C.
Copper-Stone Age	4000 to 3000 B.C.
Early Bronze Age	3000 to 2000 B.C.

The Old Stone Age is designated by the name "Paleolithic." It was an age of hunting and food-gathering. People lived in caves or temporary shelters. They made implements of flint or chipped stone, and subsisted from what they could gather from nature itself.

The Middle Stone Age is called the Mesolithic period. It was a transitional stage to a food-producing economy. During this period real settlements first appeared, and there was an evolution in the arts of civilization.

The New Stone Age, or Neolithic period, is distinguished by several advances. One of the most notable, the invention of pottery, divides the New Stone Age into a preopottery period (c. 8000–5500 B.C.) and a pottery period (c. 5500–4000 B.C.). Other developments included agriculture, textiles, and the domestication of animals.

The Copper-Stone Age, or Chalcolithic period, saw a transition to a significant use of copper. At some sites from this period, dwellings were underground, entered by shafts from the surface and connected by tunnels. Copper working was found in the many pits, ovens, and fireplaces common in such sites.

The Early Bronze Age is the period in which we leave "prehistory" and enter the "historical" period. This is the period in which written records appear. The Mesopotamians pioneered writing, but Egypt was quick to recognize the benefits of it. At the site of Arad in Palestine, archaeologists have uncovered a potsherd bearing the signature of Narmer, who is often identified with Menes, the pharaoh of Egypt's first dynasty.

THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

The story of the Bible is linked with the histories of two great lands: Mesopotamia and Egypt. In Mesopotamia two different cultures developed, one in the south and the other in the north.

The earliest known inhabitants of Mesopotamia lived in the southern part, the land of Sumer or southern Babylonia. Known as Sumerians, this culture greatly influenced all of the ancient Near East, including the Israelites. The Sumerians developed a township system of government, consisting of city-states, in which the temple of the local deity was the center of economic, cultural, and religious life.

In northern Babylonia lived the Accadians. This culture took its name from the town of Agade, also known as Accad. The Accadian culture did not develop the independent city-state system of the south, but seems to have existed as a single territory. While there were temples, the palace and household played the more important role in the Accadian economy. Around 2300 B.C. a northerner named Sargon of Agade was able to unify north and south Babylonia.

Scholars have placed the first human settlements as early as 7,000 to 8,000 years before Christ.

Egypt was a land divided into two kingdoms: Lower Egypt around the Nile Delta and Upper Egypt of the Nile Valley. Egypt's prehistory or predynastic period witnessed the development of rulership by pharaohs. This period ended around 3000 B.C. with the unification of Lower and Upper Egypt by the ruler Menes, resulting in the First Dynasty. During the following Archaic period, the country came to accept a divine monarchy in which the pharaoh was considered the incarnation of the sky god Horus. Later pharaohs of the Old Kingdom, beginning about 2700 B.C., became famous for their pyramids.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The Book of Genesis is usually divided at Ge 12, where the story of the patriarch Abraham begins. The chapters of Ge 1–11, which concern the time before the patriarchs, are called "primeval history" because they relate the first ages of the world. Primeval history tells of a time much different from what the patriarchs would later experience, and from what humans experience now.

The major narratives of this primeval history give an account of creation, a great Flood, and the tower at Babel. The creation account (Ge 1–3) describes the creation of all things, including humankind. The newly created humans rebel against God, resulting in their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. The Flood account (Ge 6–9) tells of the continued evil in human hearts, the Flood, and God's judgment upon humanity. The redemption of Noah's family offers a new beginning. Following the Flood, Ge 11 narrates the spread of the human race and its arrogant attempt to build a tower to the heavens. God confuses their languages, forcing them to disperse.

THE BEGINNINGS OF HUMAN CIVILIZATION

Biblical and secular historians agree that human civilization began in the ancient Near East. The earliest large communities developed in Mesopotamia (modern Iraq and Iran) and in Egypt. Palestine, where biblical Israel is found, lies along the best road between Mesopotamia and Egypt, and so the Bible's own history appropriately begins with these two civilization centers.

The task of assigning specific dates to this ancient history is difficult and uncertain, but scholars have placed the first human settlements as early as 7,000 to 8,000 years before Christ. Although dating the early events of civilization is elusive, we can at least follow the general stages by which human communities developed.

Advances in technology made it possible for humans to live in large communities. First they developed stone tools, then discovered how to make clay vessels, how to extract and use copper ore, and, by about 3000 B.C., how to use bronze. In terms of food and support, humans moved from small family groups hunting and gathering their food to larger nomadic clans tending domesticated animals. Farming developed next, and by 3000 B.C. people in Mesopotamia and Egypt were using sophisticated irrigation techniques to harness the regular floods of the Tigris, Euphrates, and Nile rivers. Now for the first time, food could be produced in large supply, enough to support cities and even empires.

The period from 3000 to 2000 B.C. (called the Early Bronze Age) saw the development of several such empires: the civilizations of Sumer, Accad, and Ur in Mesopotamia and the Old Kingdom of Egypt. Towering monuments testify to the amazing technological sophistication of these cultures. This was the age of the great pyramids in Egypt and of similar structures in Mesopotamia, called ziggurats. These ancient peoples worshiped many gods: gods of light, darkness, skies, seas, the land, the sun, the moon and stars, plants, and animals. Ancient writings from this time describe not only these gods, but also the creation of the world and a great flood.

TRANSITION

The Book of Genesis

The Old Testament as a whole chronicles the history of the nation of Israel. This nation does not emerge as an entity, though, until the Book of Exodus, when God appears to the twelve tribes at Sinai. Genesis, then, is the prologue to the history of Israel. Chapters 1–11 tell about the creation and earliest history of all humankind, and chapters 12–50 describe God's working within the chosen family of Abraham, from whom Israel descended.

Within the theological narratives of Ge 1–11 are several brief comments that reflect the advancing civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. There are conflicts between hunters and shepherds and between shepherds and farmers. Humans develop technology and craftsmanship and establish the first cities. Chapter 11 describes humanity's technical skill (and vaulting ambition) in its account of a tower, or ziggurat, in the plains of Shinar (Mesopotamia). As in the Mesopotamian and Egyptian writings, there are stories of creation and of a worldwide flood.

Genesis, along with the books of Exodus through Deuteronomy, has traditionally been attributed to Moses. Many scholars retain this view today, but others, noting abrupt changes in vocabulary and style and certain perspectives that appear to come from a later time, argue that the book contains several sources and traditions, some much older than others. In either case, whether written entirely by Moses or composed from 900 to 400 B.C. of various ancient strands, the Book of Genesis is a recounting of Israel's origins by one who knew that all this was leading to God's choice of Israel as a "treasured possession . . . out of all nations" (Ex 19:5).

• Genesis 1:1—4:26

Genesis

The Beginning

1 **:1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. [2]Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

[3]And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. [4]God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. [5]God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.

[6]And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." [7]So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. [8]God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.

[9]And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. [10]God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

[11]Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds." And it was so. [12]The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. [13]And there was evening, and there was morning—the third day.

[14]And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, [15]and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. [16]God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. [17]God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, [18]to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. [19]And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

[20]And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of the sky." [21]So God created the great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. [22]God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." [23]And there was evening, and there was morning—the fifth day.

[24]And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so. [25]God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the

The Creator God Is Not Sun or Moon (Ge 1:16)

In Ge 1:16 the two great lights created by God are called the "greater light" and "lesser light." The words "sun" and "moon" were not omitted by accident from this verse. The writer of Genesis was aware that two prominent gods worshiped in the ancient Near East were the sun and the moon.

In Egypt the sun was associated with several important gods, including Amon-Re, Re, and Aton. Egyptians believed that the sun, as the god Re, created the world by his own personified power. One of Re's "eyes" was the moon god Tefnut. Another Egyptian god was Ptah, who was also considered the creator of all things. Ptah's two eyes were the sun and moon.

In Mesopotamia the sun god Shamash was worshiped as the benefactor of the oppressed. Night was seen as the passing of the sun to the netherworld or underworld. Ancient peoples prayed to the hidden sun for mediation between the dead and the living.

Canaanite worshipers knew the sun as Shemesh. The appearance of this god's name in place names, such as Beth Shemesh (1Sa 6:12), hints at the importance of Shemesh to the polytheistic Canaanites. While they also worshiped the moon, a moon god was only of secondary importance in their pantheon of deities.

The author of Ge 1:14–19 makes the case that the Creator of the world is on a different plane than the sun or the moon. They are only the "greater" and "lesser" lights. No one should acknowledge them as deities or confuse them with the true God. They are simply creations of the Creator God.

ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind
in our image, in our likeness, so that they
may rule over the fish in the sea and the
birds in the sky, over the livestock and all
the wild animals,[a] and over all the crea-
tures that move along the ground."

27 So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them,
"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the
earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in
the sea and the birds in the sky and over
every living creature that moves on the
ground."

29 Then God said, "I give you every seed-
bearing plant on the face of the whole
earth and every tree that has fruit with
seed in it. They will be yours for food.
30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all
the birds in the sky and all the creatures
that move along the ground—everything
that has the breath of life in it—I give ev-
ery green plant for food." And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it
was very good. And there was evening,
and there was morning—the sixth day.

Plants & Animals

In relatively dry climates a flourishing tree is a conspicuous sign of adequate water (Ge 2:9). Gardens have been cultivated in the Near East for thousands of years, and the success of the gardens of Babylon is proverbial. Egyptian rulers also gave attention to their gardens and to the fish and birds in them.

2 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were
completed in all their vast array.

2 By the seventh day God had finished the
work he had been doing; so on the seventh
day he rested from all his work. 3 Then God
blessed the seventh day and made it holy,
because on it he rested from all the work
of creating that he had done.

Adam and Eve

4 This is the account of the heavens and the
earth when they were created, when the LORD
God made the earth and the heavens.

5 Now no shrub had yet appeared on the
earth[b] and no plant had yet sprung up, for
the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth
and there was no one to work the ground,
6 but streams[c] came up from the earth and wa-
tered the whole surface of the ground. 7 Then
the LORD God formed a man[d] from the dust of
the ground and breathed into his nostrils the
breath of life, and the man became a living
being.

8 Now the LORD God had planted a garden in
the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he
had formed. 9 The LORD God made all kinds of
trees grow out of the ground—trees that were
pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the
middle of the garden were the tree of life and
the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10 A river watering the garden flowed from
Eden; from there it was separated into four
headwaters. 11 The name of the first is the

[a] *26* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Syriac); Masoretic Text *the earth* [b] *5* Or *land*; also in verse 6 [c] *6* Or *mist* [d] *7* The Hebrew for *man (adam)* sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for *ground (adamah)*; it is also the name *Adam* (see verse 20).

Creation by Conquest in Babylon (Ge 1:26–29)

In the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626–539 B.C.), the fourth day of the New Year's celebration was highlighted by reciting the Enuma Elish, a liturgical text relating the creation of the physical world. This Babylonian poem was originally composed sometime before or during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar I (1133–1116 B.C.) to glorify Marduk as the divine ruler and establisher of order in the universe.

According to the Babylonian epic, before the world existed there were only Apsu and Tiamat, the god and goddess of fresh and salt water. Apsu and Tiamat give birth to deities, and the noise of these younger gods upsets them so much that they plot to slay their children. However, Ea, god of wisdom, discovers the plan and kills Apsu before the slaughter of the gods can be carried out. From the corpse of the slain god, Ea creates a home for himself and his spouse, the goddess Damkina. Here Ea and Damkina bear a son—Marduk.

Meanwhile, Tiamat, finding her husband slain and her peace disturbed by the gods' continuing noise, creates for herself an army of venomous monsters. She musters this horrendous force, appointing Kingu as leader, to kill off the younger gods and wreak revenge for the death of Apsu. Overhearing this scheme, Ea is overwhelmed by the coming terror. All the younger deities assemble to discuss their fate; all appear hopeless. Then the youthful Marduk volunteers to defend the gods.

In the ensuing battle all the hordes of monsters are killed, ending with the deaths of Kingu and Tiamat herself. Marduk divides the corpse of Tiamat, providing for two heavens and the earth. From the blood of Kingu, Marduk creates humans.

Some aspects of creation in the Babylonian epic have counterparts in the Genesis creation story (Ge 1:1—2:4a). The sun and moon are treated as physical, created entities and not as deities. Light is created before other objects. The heavens are populated with the sun, moon, and stars in order to mark off the months, days, and festivals. Humans are created only at the end of creation. Yet also important are the theological differences. In the Babylonian story, humans were created as slaves for the gods, so that the deities would not have to work anymore. Genesis offers a much higher estimation of the worth of humanity in the eyes of God (Ge 1:26–29).

Pishon; it winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. 12 (The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin[a] and onyx are also there.) 13 The name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.[b] 14 The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. 20 So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam[c] no suitable helper was found. 21 So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs[d] and then closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib[e] he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

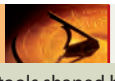
23 The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called 'woman,'
for she was taken out of man."

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

25 Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

[a] *12* Or *good; pearls* [b] *13* Possibly southeast Mesopotamia
[c] *20* Or *the man* [d] *21* Or *took part of the man's side*
[e] *22* Or *part*

TIME CAPSULE		26,000 to 10,000 B.C.
26,000		Stone tools shaped by grinding, from Japan
23,000		Stone tools shaped by grinding, from Australia
20,000		First known ovens, in the Ukraine
13,000		Flutes known in France
12,000		Boomerang known in Australia
11,000		Wolves or dogs tamed in Palestine
10,000		Prehistoric cave paintings, Lascaux, France
10,000–8000		Middle Stone Age

Where Was Eden? (Ge 2:10–14)

The Book of Genesis states that God planted a garden "in the east, in Eden" (Ge 2:8). The name "Eden" is used not only for the region where God placed the garden (2:10), but also for the garden itself (2:15). For centuries biblical commentators have speculated on the location of Eden, studying the description of the garden for possible hints.

The garden is associated with four rivers: Pishon, Gihon, Tigris, and Euphrates (2:10–14). The last two of these rivers are known. Thus the mention of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers would suggest a location for Eden somewhere in Mesopotamia.

Unfortunately, the other rivers, Pishon and Gihon, are obscure and defy absolute placement. Pishon was in the land of Havilah (2:11), which has been associated with Arabia (Ge 25:18), as well as with India. Gihon was in Cush (2:13), which was an ancient name for the area south of Egypt. Some scholars have argued that Pishon and Gihon represent the Indus and Nile rivers, but others contend that they may have been canals.

To the ancient writer of Genesis, Eden was a place blessed with an abundant supply of water. Unfortunately, this writer's description of Eden's rivers will not help us pinpoint a location for Eden itself.

The Fall

3 [1]Now the serpent was more crafty than any
of the wild animals the LORD God had made.
He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You
must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"

[2]The woman said to the serpent, "We may
eat fruit from the trees in the garden, [3]but God
did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree
that is in the middle of the garden, and you
must not touch it, or you will die.'"

[4]"You will not certainly die," the serpent said
to the woman. [5]"For God knows that when you
eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you
will be like God, knowing good and evil."

[6]When the woman saw that the fruit of the
tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye,
and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she
took some and ate it. She also gave some to
her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.
[7]Then the eyes of both of them were opened,
and they realized they were naked; so they
sewed fig leaves together and made coverings
for themselves.

[8]Then the man and his wife heard the sound
of the LORD God as he was walking in the gar-
den in the cool of the day, and they hid from
the LORD God among the trees of the garden.
[9]But the LORD God called to the man, "Where
are you?"

[10]He answered, "I heard you in the garden,
and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."

[11]And he said, "Who told you that you were
naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I
commanded you not to eat from?"

[12]The man said, "The woman you put here
with me — she gave me some fruit from the
tree, and I ate it."

[13]Then the LORD God said to the woman,
"What is this you have done?"

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me,
and I ate."

[14]So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Be-
cause you have done this,

"Cursed are you above all livestock
and all wild animals!
You will crawl on your belly
and you will eat dust
all the days of your life.
[15]And I will put enmity
between you and the woman,
and between your offspring[a] and hers;
he will crush[b] your head,
and you will strike his heel."

[16]To the woman he said,

"I will make your pains in childbearing very
severe;
with painful labor you will give birth to
children.
Your desire will be for your husband,
and he will rule over you."

[a] *15* Or *seed* [b] *15* Or *strike*

TIME CAPSULE	8000 to 7000 B.C.
8000	Archaeological evidence of settlement at Jericho
8000	Lentils and peas grown in the Middle East
8000–4000	New Stone Age
7500	Sheep domesticated in the Middle East
7500	Hatchet used in Europe to fell trees
7000	The oldest known fortifications, at Jericho

17To Adam he said, "Because you listened
to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about
which I commanded you, 'You must not eat
from it,'

"Cursed is the ground because of you;
through painful toil you will eat food
from it
all the days of your life.
18It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
and you will eat the plants of the field.
19By the sweat of your brow
you will eat your food
until you return to the ground,
since from it you were taken;
for dust you are
and to dust you will return."

20Adam[a] named his wife Eve,[b] because she would become the mother of all the living.
21The LORD God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them. 22And the LORD God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever." 23So the LORD God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. 24After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side[c] of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.

Cain and Abel

4 1Adam[a] made love to his wife Eve, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Cain.[d] She said, "With the help of the LORD I have brought forth[e] a man." 2Later she gave birth to his brother Abel.

Now Abel kept flocks, and Cain worked the soil. 3In the course of time Cain brought some of the fruits of the soil as an offering to the LORD. 4And Abel also brought an offering—fat portions from some of the firstborn of his flock. The LORD looked with favor on Abel and his offering, 5but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast.

6Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? 7If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."

8Now Cain said to his brother Abel, "Let's go out to the field."[f] While they were in the field, Cain attacked his brother Abel and killed him.

9Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?"

"I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"

10The LORD said, "What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground. 11Now you are under a curse and driven from the ground, which opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12When you work the ground, it will no longer yield its crops for you. You will be a restless wanderer on the earth."

13Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is more than I can bear. 14Today you are driving me from the land, and I will be hidden from your presence; I will be a restless wanderer on the earth, and whoever finds me will kill me."

15But the LORD said to him, "Not so[g]; anyone who kills Cain will suffer vengeance seven times over." Then the LORD put a mark on Cain so that no one who found him would kill him. 16So Cain went out from the LORD's presence and lived in the land of Nod,[h] east of Eden.

17Cain made love to his wife, and she became pregnant and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was then building a city, and he named it after his son Enoch. 18To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of Mehujael, and Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

19Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah. 20Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock. 21His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play stringed instruments and pipes. 22Zillah also had a son, Tubal-Cain, who forged all kinds of tools out of[i] bronze and iron. Tubal-Cain's sister was Naamah.

Science & Technology
True bronze (Ge 4:22) is an alloy of copper and tin. Iron is an element that in its pure state is soft. Its usefulness for making tools and weapons did not appear until it could be reliably combined with carbon to make steel. It was still rare in the time of Pharaoh Tutankhamun (1336–1327 B.C.). One dagger with an iron blade was discovered in his tomb.

[a] *20,1* Or *The man* [b] *20* *Eve* probably means *living.*
[c] *24* Or *placed in front* [d] *1* *Cain* sounds like the Hebrew for *brought forth* or *acquired.* [e] *1* Or *have acquired*
[f] *8* Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text does not have *"Let's go out to the field."*
[g] *15* Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *Very well*
[h] *16* *Nod* means *wandering* (see verses 12 and 14).
[i] *22* Or *who instructed all who work in*

23 Lamech said to his wives,

"Adah and Zillah, listen to me;
wives of Lamech, hear my words.
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man for injuring me.
24 If Cain is avenged seven times,
then Lamech seventy-seven times."

25 Adam made love to his wife again, and she gave birth to a son and named him Seth,[a] saying, "God has granted me another child in place of Abel, since Cain killed him." 26 Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh.

At that time people began to call on[b] the name of the LORD.

TRANSITION

Records of the Descendants

Genesis 1–11 tells much of its story by means of genealogies. At the end of the Cain and Abel account is a list of eight descendants of Cain (Ge 4:17–22), among whom are the ancestors of pastoral nomads (v. 20), musicians (v. 21), and metalworkers (v. 22). In Ge 5 the line of Adam's descendants through Seth is given, breaking off just before the Flood. Finally, in Ge 10 the peoples of the earth are listed under the three sons of Noah, categorized according to clans, languages, location, and nationality.

It is possible, using the numbers of these lists, to add up the years and thus date the creation of the world at about 4004 B.C. Such computations were published in A.D. 1650–1654 by the archbishop James Ussher. Many scholars, though, argue that modern historical dating and chronological specificity were foreign to the ancient mind and suggest that the exact numbers should not be read so mechanically. Furthermore, the numbers themselves vary in different text traditions, showing many disagreements between the Hebrew Bible, Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament).

Thus different interpreters treat the genealogies in different ways. Some add up the successive generations, as did Ussher, to arrive at a date for creation sometime around 4004 B.C. Others take the genealogies as the schemes of ancient mathematicians, with different purposes, and accept that a date for the creation of the world is impossible to determine.

• **Genesis 5:1—6:22**

Genesis

From Adam to Noah

5 :1 This is the written account of Adam's family line.

When God created mankind, he made them in the likeness of God. 2 He created them male and female and blessed them. And he named them "Mankind"[c] when they were created.

3 When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. 4 After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. 5 Altogether, Adam lived a total of 930 years, and then he died.

6 When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father[d] of Enosh. 7 After he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. 8 Altogether, Seth lived a total of 912 years, and then he died.

9 When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. 10 After he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. 11 Altogether, Enosh lived a total of 905 years, and then he died.

12 When Kenan had lived 70 years, he became the father of Mahalalel. 13 After he became the father of Mahalalel, Kenan lived 840 years and had other sons and daughters. 14 Altogether, Kenan lived a total of 910 years, and then he died.

15 When Mahalalel had lived 65 years, he became the father of Jared. 16 After he became the father of Jared, Mahalalel lived 830 years and had other sons and daughters. 17 Altogether, Mahalalel lived a total of 895 years, and then he died.

18 When Jared had lived 162 years, he became the father of Enoch. 19 After he became the father of Enoch, Jared lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. 20 Altogether, Jared lived a total of 962 years, and then he died.

21 When Enoch had lived 65 years, he became the father of Methuselah. 22 After he became the father of Methuselah, Enoch walked faithfully with God 300 years and had other sons and daughters. 23 Altogether, Enoch lived a total of 365 years. 24 Enoch walked faithfully with God; then he was no more, because God took him away.

25 When Methuselah had lived 187 years, he became the father of Lamech. 26 After he became the father of Lamech, Methuselah lived

[a] *25 Seth* probably means *granted.* [b] *26* Or *to proclaim*
[c] *2* Hebrew *adam* [d] *6 Father* may mean *ancestor*; also in verses 7-26.

The Sumerian King List (Ge 5:1–32)

The Sumerian King List is a text from southern Mesopotamia, written sometime very early in the 2nd millennium B.C. The list presumably follows a tradition going back to the early 3rd millennium B.C. It has interesting parallels with the genealogical list in Ge 5.

In its existing form, the Sumerian King List is a propaganda text designed by the kings of Isin to affirm their rule as legitimate. It delineates the history of Sumer (and Accad) by showing the succession of dynasties (or cities) from the beginning of time to the writer's present. Each monarch in the early period rules for a very lengthy period (thousands of years on the average). Similarly, six of Adam's descendants listed in Ge 5 lived in excess of 900 years (e.g., Ge 5:5, 8, 11).

The King List abruptly and tersely mentions the great flood, which cuts the dynastic lines in half. Interestingly, after the flood, the reigns of the monarchs begin to decrease from thousands to hundreds of years. Gilgamesh, the famous hero from Uruk, ruled a mere 126 years. The lengths of reigns finally fall within the normal span of a human lifetime. Likewise, the genealogy of Ge 11:10–26 shows a continual diminishing of the human life span after the Genesis Flood.

The Sumerian literary tradition, like the biblical record, contains the account that humankind lived to an advanced age in pre-Flood antiquity. Both also agree in general that ages began to decline immediately after the Flood until, finally, modern life spans were experienced. This shared characteristic of the Sumerian and biblical records lends credibility to the view that both cultures came from the same literary setting or environment.

782 years and had other sons and daughters. 27 Altogether, Methuselah lived a total of 969 years, and then he died.

28 When Lamech had lived 182 years, he had a son. 29 He named him Noah[a] and said, "He will comfort us in the labor and painful toil of our hands caused by the ground the LORD has cursed." 30 After Noah was born, Lamech lived 595 years and had other sons and daughters. 31 Altogether, Lamech lived a total of 777 years, and then he died.

32 After Noah was 500 years old, he became the father of Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Wickedness in the World

6 1 When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, 2 the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. 3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit will not contend with[b] humans forever, for they are mortal[c]; their days will be a hundred and twenty years."

4 The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

5 The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. 6 The LORD regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 7 So the LORD said, "I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them." 8 But Noah found favor in the eyes of the LORD.

Noah and the Flood

9 This is the account of Noah and his family.

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. 10 Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

11 Now the earth was corrupt in God's sight

[a] *29 Noah* sounds like the Hebrew for *comfort.* [b] *3* Or *My spirit will not remain in* [c] *3* Or *corrupt*

TIME CAPSULE	7000 to 5000 B.C.
7000	Stone tools shaped by grinding, from Europe
6770	Carbon-14 dating of ashes at Jericho
6500	Cattle domesticated in Turkey
6500	Settlement at Ras Shamra (Ugarit) in Syria
6500	Paintings from Spain show people gathering wild honey
6000	Domestic cat is known, in Cyprus
6000	Skull with evidence of surgery (trepanning), from Europe
5859	Carbon-14 dating of early fortification at Jericho
5500	Pottery is first known in Palestine
5000	Copper is melted (1083° C) and cast in the Near East
5000	Evidence of temple at Eridu, Iraq
5000	Grapes are cultivated in Europe
5000	Mirrors found in graves in central Turkey

The Flood Through Other Eyes (Ge 6:5–7)

Divine destruction of the world by means of a flood is a motif known in cultures from around the world. Most of these stories appear to have had their origin in the biblical account (Ge 6:5—9:29). However, the ancient Near East has numerous myths of the great flood which are separate retellings of the same event.

Mesopotamian stories of the flood are first found written in the Sumerian language, in the earliest known literature (3rd millennium B.C.). A variety of retellings produced a number of versions. The two most famous flood stories outside the Bible are the Gilgamesh Epic and the story of Atrahasis.

Numerous other references and renditions of the flood are found scattered throughout the classical literature and other texts of the ancient Near East. The flood itself divides the history of the world into the period before it occurred and the current age. Things now are not as they were then.

and was full of violence. 12God saw how corrupt
the earth had become, for all the people on
earth had corrupted their ways. 13So God said
to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all people,
for the earth is filled with violence because of
them. I am surely going to destroy both them
and the earth. 14So make yourself an ark of cy-
press[a] wood; make rooms in it and coat it with
pitch inside and out. 15This is how you are to
build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits
long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high.[b]
16Make a roof for it, leaving below the roof an
opening one cubit[c] high all around.[d] Put a door
in the side of the ark and make lower, middle
and upper decks. 17I am going to bring flood-
waters on the earth to destroy all life under the
heavens, every creature that has the breath of
life in it. Everything on earth will perish. 18But
I will establish my covenant with you, and you
will enter the ark—you and your sons and your
wife and your sons' wives with you. 19You are
to bring into the ark two of all living creatures,
male and female, to keep them alive with you.
20Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of an-
imal and of every kind of creature that moves
along the ground will come to you to be kept
alive. 21You are to take every kind of food that
is to be eaten and store it away as food for you
and for them."

22Noah did everything just as God command-
ed him.

TRANSITION

How Long Was Noah in the Ark?

The narrator of the Flood tradition offers several dates, indicating when certain events took place. The time frame of these dates, cited by year, month and day based on Noah's age, has Noah, his family and the animals confined in the ark for more than a year—371 days.

In Ge 7:11—8:19 are five dates. The first instance at 7:11 marks when the rain began. Five months later, the ark rested on Ararat (8:4). Two and a half months later the mountains were seen (8:5). After another three months Noah removed the covering of the ark (8:13). Finally, Noah, his family and the animals went out of the ark 57 days later (8:14–19). The days between each date, assuming 30-day months as the narrator appears to do, are 150 + 74 + 90 + 57, totaling 371 days.

• **Genesis 7:1—11:32**

Genesis

7 :1 The LORD then said to Noah, "Go into
the ark, you and your whole family, because
I have found you righteous in this generation.
2Take with you seven pairs of every kind of
clean animal, a male and its mate, and one pair
of every kind of unclean animal, a male and
its mate, 3and also seven pairs of every kind
of bird, male and female, to keep their various
kinds alive throughout the earth. 4Seven days
from now I will send rain on the earth for forty
days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the
face of the earth every living creature I have
made."

5And Noah did all that the LORD commanded
him.

6Noah was six hundred years old when the
floodwaters came on the earth. 7And Noah
and his sons and his wife and his sons' wives
entered the ark to escape the waters of the
flood. 8Pairs of clean and unclean animals,
of birds and of all creatures that move along
the ground, 9male and female, came to Noah
and entered the ark, as God had commanded

[a] *14* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] *15* That is, about 450 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high or about 135 meters long, 23 meters wide and 14 meters high
[c] *16* That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters
[d] *16* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

When the Gods Tire of Noisy Humans (Ge 7:1)

The story of Atrahasis, written during the reign of Ammisaduqa, king of Babylon (1646–1626 B.C.), is a variant of the Gilgamesh Epic. The title of the Atrahasis story means "When the gods like man." Yet the story, like that of the Genesis Flood story (Ge 7:4), tells of the gods destroying much of humankind.

The reason given in this story for the flood was that the humans on the earth had become too numerous and their noise was disturbing the gods. The deities planned several devices to reduce the population including drought, plague, and famine, but each time the people survived. Finally, a flood was devised from which the people could not escape. It was Ea who warned the hero, Atrahasis, to save the animals and craftsmen in a boat, which he then did.

The humans had previously fed the gods by their sacrifices. As the seven days and nights of the flood raged and humans died, the deities became hungry and thirsty. Thus they were happy to have some people survive the flood.

The Mesopotamian legend contrasts with the ethical emphasis in Genesis. The Mesopotamian gods destroyed humans because they were noisy, yet wanted some humans left for service. The God of Genesis destroyed humans because they were wicked and corrupt (Ge 6:5–7, 11–13). He allowed Noah and his family to live because they were righteous (Ge 7:1).

Noah. 10And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

11In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. 12And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

13On that very day Noah and his sons, Shem, Ham and Japheth, together with his wife and the wives of his three sons, entered the ark. 14They had with them every wild animal according to its kind, all livestock according to their kinds, every creature that moves along the ground according to its kind and every bird according to its kind, everything with wings. 15Pairs of all creatures that have the breath of life in them came to Noah and entered the ark. 16The animals going in were male and female of every living thing, as God had commanded Noah. Then the LORD shut him in.

17For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. 18The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. 19They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. 20The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits.[a,b] 21Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all mankind. 22Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. 23Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

[a] *20* That is, about 23 feet or about 6.8 meters [b] *20* Or *rose more than fifteen cubits, and the mountains were covered*

The Ancient Near East after 3000 B.C.
During the 3rd millennium Lower and Upper Egypt were united. Egypt's Old Kingdom (2700–2160 B.C.) produced the great pyramids, such as those at Giza. In Mesopotamia, the land of Sumer developed a system of independent city-states. Toward the end of the millennium this city-state rule was replaced by a more extensive territorial rule centered in Accad.

When the Bird Does Not Return (Ge 8:6–12)

Both similarities and differences exist between the biblical Flood story in Ge 6–9 and the Mesopotamian flood legend known as the Gilgamesh Epic. Among the similarities are the birds—doves, ravens, sparrows—that are sent out to determine if the floodwaters have receded (Ge 8:6–12).

Though the Gilgamesh flood story appears already in the mid-3rd millennium Sumerian stories, the epic account most widely known comes from the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.). The story is related by the flood survivor, Utnapishtim, at the edge of the world, where Gilgamesh (king of Uruk around 2600 B.C.) had sought him to discover how to become immortal.

There is no reason given in this account for the decision by the council of the gods to destroy the earth. However, Ea, the god of wisdom, realizing that destruction was a mistake, warns Utnapishtim that a flood is coming. Utnapishtim tears down his house and builds a boat, into which he gathers animals in pairs, seeds of all plants, his relatives, and skilled craftsmen. The deities unleash the flood as a weapon for seven days, destroying everything which is not in the boat and terrifying themselves as well.

After the divine flood ceased, the boat rested on a mountaintop in the Zagros Mountains. Utnapishtim releases first a dove, then a sparrow, both of whom return without finding a place to land, and lastly a raven, who does not return. The flood is finally over and everything is allowed to leave the boat and repopulate the earth.

24 The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

8 1 But God remembered Noah and all the
wild animals and the livestock that were
with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over
the earth, and the waters receded. 2 Now the
springs of the deep and the floodgates of the
heavens had been closed, and the rain had
stopped falling from the sky. 3 The water re-
ceded steadily from the earth. At the end of
the hundred and fifty days the water had gone
down, 4 and on the seventeenth day of the sev-
enth month the ark came to rest on the moun-
tains of Ararat. 5 The waters continued to re-
cede until the tenth month, and on the first day
of the tenth month the tops of the mountains
became visible.

6 After forty days Noah opened a window he
had made in the ark 7 and sent out a raven, and
it kept flying back and forth until the water had
dried up from the earth. 8 Then he sent out a
dove to see if the water had receded from the
surface of the ground. 9 But the dove could
find nowhere to perch because there was wa-
ter over all the surface of the earth; so it re-
turned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his
hand and took the dove and brought it back
to himself in the ark. 10 He waited seven more
days and again sent out the dove from the ark.
11 When the dove returned to him in the eve-
ning, there in its beak was a freshly plucked
olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had
receded from the earth. 12 He waited seven
more days and sent the dove out again, but this
time it did not return to him.

13 By the first day of the first month of Noah's
six hundred and first year, the water had dried
up from the earth. Noah then removed the cov-
ering from the ark and saw that the surface of
the ground was dry. 14 By the twenty-seventh
day of the second month the earth was com-
pletely dry.

15 Then God said to Noah, 16 "Come out of the
ark, you and your wife and your sons and their
wives. 17 Bring out every kind of living creature
that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all

TIME CAPSULE	5000 to 4000 B.C.
5000	Copper is melted (1083 B.C.) and cast in the Near East
4500	Copper is known in Egypt
4500	Bronze and brass are derived from copper
4500	Sockets for hinging doors used in Sumer
4300	Village culture in the Fayum (Egypt), west of the Nile
4004	Ussher's date for the creation
4000	Casting of molten silver and gold in the Near East
4000	Evidence of bits used for horses, from the Ukraine

EGYPT'S FIRST DYNASTIES

When the Egyptian priest Manetho (c. 305–285 B.C.) wrote a history of Egypt in Greek, he divided the history of the kings into 30 periods known as "dynasties." Manetho's dynasties are still used as an outline for Egypt's history, but have been divided into larger historical periods. The 1st and 2nd Dynasties are Egypt's formative age; the 3rd through 8th Dynasties are her pyramid age.

The Archaic Period	The Dynasties
3000–2700 B.C.	1st and 2nd Dynasties. Menes is the traditional founder of the 1st Dynasty. He unified the two predynastic kingdoms of Lower and Upper Egypt.
The Old Kingdom	**The Dynasties**
2700–2600 B.C.	3rd Dynasty. Pyramid age begins with the Step Pyramid of Pharaoh Djoser in 2650 B.C.
2600–2500 B.C.	4th Dynasty. The Great Pyramid becomes one of the seven wonders of the world.
2500–2350 B.C.	5th Dynasty. The sun god Re of Heliopolis is considered the father of the living ruler. The god Osiris is the god of the dead.
2350–2160 B.C.	6th–8th Dynasties. Weni, an Egyptian official, records 5 military expeditions against the "Sand-dwellers" of southern Palestine.

the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it."

18 So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. 19 All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on land—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

20 Then Noah built an altar to the LORD and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. 21 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though[a] every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

22 "As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease."

[a] 21 Or *humans, for*

Agriculture & Herding
To be fruitful, vineyards require considerable care. When the grapes are crushed for their juice, organisms found on the outside of the peel reach the juice. The organisms multiply and cause the juice to ferment and become wine (Ge 9:20, 21). If it ferments too long, it becomes vinegar. Ancient farmers had to balance these different factors.

God's Covenant With Noah

9 1 Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. 2 The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. 3 Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

4 "But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. 5 And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being.

6 "Whoever sheds human blood,
by humans shall their blood be shed;
for in the image of God
has God made mankind.

TIME CAPSULE	4000 to 3500 B.C.
4000–3000	Copper-Stone Age
3700	Two villages combine to create Uruk, the earliest urban site
3500	Bronze is known in Ur
3500	Egyptian art shows greyhounds
3500	Village culture around Beersheba
3500	The olive is cultivated in Palestine

God's Bow or a Goddess's Necklace (Ge 9:8–17)

The Genesis Flood narrative closes with a promise by God that the destruction of the the human race by a flood would not occur again. In Ge 9:8–17 the covenant between God and Noah represents a binding commitment between God and humans. God initiates a covenant never to destroy humanity with water again, and the sign of this covenant forever is God's rainbow placed in the sky.

At the end of the Mesopotamian flood narratives there are also speeches made by the deities that humans will not be destroyed again. There is also a sign established in the sky as a reminder. However, the purpose and context is quite different from that of the biblical Flood story. In both the Gilgamesh Epic and the story of Atrahasis, the flood ends with the majority of gods glad to have the terror over.

The reaction of the deities varied. Ellil, the warrior god, is furious over the survival of the few remaining humans. On the other hand, the goddess Ninhursag (Nintu or Ishtar in some renditions), the goddess of both human and divine children, is devastated that her children have been destroyed. In an appeal made in highest heaven, Ninhursag declares that this deed by the gods is an evil against her and that her grief must be appeased. She takes the "big flies," created by Anu, makes them into a necklace, and sets it up as a daily reminder to the gods never to destroy the people, on whom the gods depend, again.

In the Mesopotamian flood narrative the covenant was made solely on the divine level, and the sign was for the gods alone. In Genesis God's rainbow is a visible sign of his covenant promises to Noah, to Noah's descendants, and to all living creatures of the earth (Ge 9:12, 17).

7 As for you, be fruitful and increase in number;
multiply on the earth and increase upon it."

8 Then God said to Noah and to his sons with
him: 9 "I now establish my covenant with you
and with your descendants after you 10 and with
every living creature that was with you — the
birds, the livestock and all the wild animals,
all those that came out of the ark with you —
every living creature on earth. 11 I establish my
covenant with you: Never again will all life be
destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again
will there be a flood to destroy the earth."

12 And God said, "This is the sign of the cov-
enant I am making between me and you and
every living creature with you, a covenant for
all generations to come: 13 I have set my rain-
bow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the
covenant between me and the earth. 14 When-
ever I bring clouds over the earth and the
rainbow appears in the clouds, 15 I will remem-
ber my covenant between me and you and all
living creatures of every kind. Never again will
the waters become a flood to destroy all life.
16 Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds,
I will see it and remember the everlasting cov-
enant between God and all living creatures of
every kind on the earth."

17 So God said to Noah, "This is the sign of
the covenant I have established between me
and all life on the earth."

The Sons of Noah

18 The sons of Noah who came out of the ark
were Shem, Ham and Japheth. (Ham was the
father of Canaan.) 19 These were the three sons
of Noah, and from them came the people who
were scattered over the whole earth.

20 Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded[a] to plant
a vineyard. 21 When he drank some of its wine,
he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his
tent. 22 Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his fa-
ther naked and told his two brothers outside.
23 But Shem and Japheth took a garment and
laid it across their shoulders; then they walked
in backward and covered their father's naked
body. Their faces were turned the other way
so that they would not see their father naked.

24 When Noah awoke from his wine and
found out what his youngest son had done to
him, 25 he said,

[a] *20* Or *soil, was the first*

TIME CAPSULE		3500 to 3000 B.C.
3500		Sumerians develop advanced civilization in southern Mesopotamia
3300		Domestication of the horse
3250		Potter's wheel from Ur
3200		Earliest writing, from Uruk in the Sumerian language
3200		Earliest picture of a boat with a sail, from Egypt
3150		Pictographs from Uruk showing four-wheeled carts
3100		Earliest depiction of a chariot
3000		Egyptians write in hieroglyphic script

The First World Empire (Ge 10:8–10)

The city of Accad was one of the major urban centers in central Mesopotamia and, according to Ge 10:10, one of the first cities in the kingdom of the legendary Nimrod. Although the precise location has not been found, Accad was most likely near Babylon.

The Sumerian name of the city was Agade. A certain Sargon of Agade (c. 2350 B.C.) founded the city and made it the capital of an early Semitic dynasty. Sargon and his successors (notably his grandson Naram-Sin) were able to control all of the Tigris-Euphrates basin and claimed to have even reached the Mediterranean Sea. The dynasty of Agade lasted for about two centuries and was in fact the first world empire. Evidently the city was then destroyed and not subsequently reoccupied. A Sumerian text from the late 3rd millennium B.C., *The Curse of Agade*, commemorates the city's demise.

The term "Accad" survived after the city was gone. The title "Sumer and Accad" continued to be used for the region of southern Mesopotamia until the late Achaemenid period (4th century B.C.). The language of the Semitic-speaking peoples of Accad is now known as "Accadian." Later peoples of Mesopotamia, including the Assyrians and Babylonians, employed Accadian as the written language of the region. Accadian texts have been discovered dating as late as the 1st century A.D.

"Cursed be Canaan!
The lowest of slaves
will he be to his brothers."

[26]He also said,

"Praise be to the LORD, the God of Shem!
May Canaan be the slave of Shem.
[27]May God extend Japheth's[a] territory;
may Japheth live in the tents of Shem,
and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth."

[28]After the flood Noah lived 350 years. [29]Noah lived a total of 950 years, and then he died.

The Table of Nations

10 [1]This is the account of Shem, Ham and Japheth, Noah's sons, who themselves had sons after the flood.

The Japhethites

[2]The sons[b] of Japheth:
Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal, Meshek and Tiras.
[3]The sons of Gomer:
Ashkenaz, Riphath and Togarmah.
[4]The sons of Javan:
Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittites and the Rodanites.[c] [5](From these the maritime peoples spread out into their territories by their clans within their nations, each with its own language.)

The Hamites

[6]The sons of Ham:
Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.

[a] *27 Japheth* sounds like the Hebrew for *extend*. [b] *2 Sons* may mean *descendants* or *successors* or *nations*; also in verses 3, 4, 6, 7, 20-23, 29 and 31. [c] *4* Some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text and Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Septuagint and 1 Chron. 1:7); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *Dodanites*

TIME CAPSULE		3000 to 2500 B.C.
3000–2000		Early Bronze Age
3000		Menes unites Lower and Upper Egypt to found Egypt's First Dynasty
3000		Pottery is made on a wheel, Palestine
2900		Egyptians adopt a civil calendar of 365 days per year
2750		First stage of Stonehenge monument, Britain
2700–2160		The Old Kingdom in Egypt
2650		Step Pyramid of Djoser, the oldest building of cut stone
2600		Gilgamesh, a legendary king of Uruk
2550		The Great Pyramid at Giza, 481 feet high
2500		Alignments of huge stones (megaliths), Carnac, France

The First Major City (Ge 10:10)

Uruk was a Sumerian city on the Euphrates River in ancient Mesopotamia. Although the name "Uruk" is cited only in Ge 10:10 and Ezr 4:9, its historical importance far exceeds its scant mention in the Bible. Uruk played a role in the origin of urbanization, as well as being one of the great religious centers of Mesopotamia.

Archaeological investigations have confirmed that the Ubaidian people, early inhabitants of Sumer, founded two villages in this area before 4000 B.C. By 3700 B.C. the two centers fused together to create Uruk, the first urban site in world history.

The first evidence of public architecture, cylinder seals, and the origins of writing come from this city. Building projects at Uruk included the earliest known ziggurat, a holy mound at the top of which was the White Temple. Cylinder seals, which were used to mark ownership, spread from Uruk throughout the ancient world. Picture writing (dated to about 3200 B.C.) expressed ideas through a series of pictures. This writing would later evolve into the script known as cuneiform, used first by the Sumerians, early inhabitants of the Tigris-Euphrates valley.

Religion was prominent in Uruk. An, the chief deity, was the head of the Sumerian pantheon of gods. Inanna, the goddess of love, was believed to bring fertility and prosperity to Sumer through her marriage to the god Dumuzi. The exploits of Gilgamesh, a legendary king of Uruk (c. 2600 B.C.), in search of immortality, mention many of the Sumerian gods and goddesses.

Late in the 4th millennium the population of Uruk began to expand their culture, controlling major trade routes and the surrounding regions economically. It is not clear whether this also resulted in political domination. However, Uruk is the second city named in the Sumerian King List, a document that traces the succession of cities which ruled Sumer after the flood.

Uruk had a long history, existing until Hellenistic times (the end of the 1st millennium B.C.). Its longevity is apparent from the two occurrences of Uruk in the Bible. It is mentioned very early as part of Nimrod's post-Flood kingdom (Ge 10:8–10). Much later in time it is one of the cities and nations writing against Jerusalem during the reign of the Persian ruler Artaxerxes I (465–424 B.C.; Ezr 4:9).

7 The sons of Cush:
Seba, Havilah, Sabtah, Raamah and Sabteka.
The sons of Raamah:
Sheba and Dedan.

8 Cush was the father[a] of Nimrod, who became a mighty warrior on the earth. 9 He was a mighty hunter before the LORD; that is why it is said, "Like Nimrod, a mighty hunter before the LORD." 10 The first centers of his kingdom were Babylon, Uruk, Akkad and Kalneh, in[b] Shinar.[c] 11 From that land he went to Assyria, where he built Nineveh, Rehoboth Ir,[d] Calah 12 and Resen, which is between Nineveh and Calah—which is the great city.

TIME CAPSULE		2500 to 2400 B.C.
2500		Earliest surviving dam, in Egypt, 272 feet thick
2500		Stone temples built at Ggantija, Malta
2500		Egyptians use the sistrum, a metal percussion instrument
2500		Widespread use of axes with sockets for the handle
2450		Smelted iron from Mesopotamia
2450		Egyptians make copper pipes
2400		Egyptians use oars to propel large boats
2400–2250		Ebla, a Semitic city-state in northern Syria

13 Egypt was the father of
the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, 14 Pathrusites, Kasluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites.
15 Canaan was the father of
Sidon his firstborn,[e] and of the Hittites, 16 Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, 17 Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, 18 Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

Later the Canaanite clans scattered 19 and the borders of Canaan reached from Sidon toward Gerar as far as Gaza, and then toward Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboyim, as far as Lasha.
20 These are the sons of Ham by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

The Semites

21 Sons were also born to Shem, whose older brother was[f] Japheth; Shem was the ancestor of all the sons of Eber.

22 The sons of Shem:
Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.
23 The sons of Aram:
Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshek.[g]

[a] *8 Father* may mean *ancestor* or *predecessor* or *founder*; also in verses 13, 15, 24 and 26. [b] *10* Or *Uruk and Akkad—all of them in* [c] *10* That is, Babylonia [d] *11* Or *Nineveh with its city squares* [e] *15* Or *of the Sidonians, the foremost* [f] *21* Or *Shem, the older brother of* [g] *23* See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 1:17; Hebrew *Mash*.

24 Arphaxad was the father of[a] Shelah,
and Shelah the father of Eber.
25 Two sons were born to Eber:
One was named Peleg,[b] because in his
time the earth was divided; his brother
was named Joktan.
26 Joktan was the father of
Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,
27 Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 28 Obal, Abimael, Sheba, 29 Ophir, Havilah and Jobab.
All these were sons of Joktan.

30 The region where they lived stretched from Mesha toward Sephar, in the eastern hill country.
31 These are the sons of Shem by their clans and languages, in their territories and nations.

32 These are the clans of Noah's sons, according to their lines of descent, within their nations. From these the nations spread out over the earth after the flood.

[a] *24* Hebrew; Septuagint *father of Cainan, and Cainan was the father of* [b] *25* *Peleg* means *division.* [c] *2* Or *from the east*; or *in the east* [d] *2* That is, Babylonia [e] *9* That is, Babylon; *Babel* sounds like the Hebrew for *confused.*

The Tower of Babel

11 1 Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. 2 As people moved eastward,[c] they found a plain in Shinar[d] and settled there.
3 They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for mortar.
4 Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."
5 But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. 6 The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.
7 Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."
8 So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city.
9 That is why it was called Babel[e] — because there the LORD confused the language of the

Babel and Its Tower (Ge 11:1–9)

Babel was one of the chief cities in Nimrod's kingdom (Ge 10:8–10). The term "Babel" is the Hebrew form of the name "Babylon," the city on the Euphrates River in central Mesopotamia.

The city has a very ancient past. It is first mentioned by the Accadian king Sargon (c. 2350 B.C.), who, according to tradition, burned it. Shar-kali-sharri (c. 2200 B.C.) restored its temple tower. Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.), a king of the 1st Dynasty of Babylon, made it his capital city. Unfortunately, archaeologists have been able to find evidence only as far back as the period of the Neo-Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II (605 B.C. and later). The rising water table in the area has prevented much research into earlier periods.

Babel has received much attention over its tower (Ge 11:4, 5). It likely was a staged temple tower, the distinctive Mesopotamian structure known by the Sumerian term "ziggurat." Ziggurats were developed in the 3rd millennium B.C. at Uruk and Ur in Babylonia, as well as at Nineveh, and consisted of smaller and smaller stages or stories built on top of each other.

Those who believe the tower at Babel refers to temple ruins from Mesopotamia point especially to Etemenanki, the ziggurat of the Marduk temple in Babylon. A Babylonian text describes it as having a base of 295 feet square with seven platforms over 108 feet high. The top platform had a temple where the god met with humanity. Access was achieved by ramps or stairways.

In Genesis the tower was never completed (Ge 11:8). The Etemenanki did not fare much better. It was repaired by the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.), severely damaged in the Assyrian civil war (652–648 B.C.), restored again by Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 B.C.), but destroyed by the Persian king Xerxes I in 472 B.C. Alexander the Great (323 B.C.) cleared the area to rebuild it, but died prematurely.

THE MILLENNIUMS

A millennium is a period of 1,000 years. Scholars of ancient history often refer to millenniums (or millennia) when speaking of time before the Common Era or Christian Era (before the year A.D. 1). The setting of the Old Testament books from the patriarchs through the prophet Malachi extends from the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. through most of the 1st millennium.

Millennium Designation	Range of Dates
3rd millennium B.C.	3000 to 2000 B.C.
2nd millennium B.C.	2000 to 1000 B.C.
1st millennium B.C.	1000 to 1 B.C.

whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth.

From Shem to Abram

10 This is the account of Shem's family line.

Two years after the flood, when Shem was
100 years old, he became the father[a] of Arphaxad. 11 And after he became the father of Arphaxad, Shem lived 500 years and had other sons and daughters.

12 When Arphaxad had lived 35 years, he became the father of Shelah. 13 And after he became the father of Shelah, Arphaxad lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.[b]

14 When Shelah had lived 30 years, he became the father of Eber. 15 And after he became the father of Eber, Shelah lived 403 years and had other sons and daughters.

16 When Eber had lived 34 years, he became the father of Peleg. 17 And after he became the father of Peleg, Eber lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters.

18 When Peleg had lived 30 years, he became the father of Reu. 19 And after he became the father of Reu, Peleg lived 209 years and had other sons and daughters.

20 When Reu had lived 32 years, he became the father of Serug. 21 And after he became the father of Serug, Reu lived 207 years and had other sons and daughters.

22 When Serug had lived 30 years, he became the father of Nahor. 23 And after he became the father of Nahor, Serug lived 200 years and had other sons and daughters.

24 When Nahor had lived 29 years, he became the father of Terah. 25 And after he became the father of Terah, Nahor lived 119 years and had other sons and daughters.

26 After Terah had lived 70 years, he became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran.

Abram's Family

27 This is the account of Terah's family line.

Terah became the father of Abram, Nahor and Haran. And Haran became the father of Lot. 28 While his father Terah was still alive, Haran died in Ur of the Chaldeans, in the land of his birth. 29 Abram and Nahor both married. The name of Abram's wife was Sarai, and the name of Nahor's wife was Milkah; she was the daughter of Haran, the father of both Milkah and Iskah. 30 Now Sarai was childless because she was not able to conceive.

31 Terah took his son Abram, his grandson Lot son of Haran, and his daughter-in-law Sarai, the wife of his son Abram, and together they set out from Ur of the Chaldeans to go to Canaan. But when they came to Harran, they settled there.

32 Terah lived 205 years, and he died in Harran.

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[a] *10 Father* may mean *ancestor*; also in verses 11-25.
[b] *12,13* Hebrew; Septuagint (see also Luke 3:35, 36 and note at Gen. 10:24) *35 years, he became the father of Cainan.* 13 *And after he became the father of Cainan, Arphaxad lived 430 years and had other sons and daughters, and then he died. When Cainan had lived 130 years, he became the father of Shelah. And after he became the father of Shelah, Cainan lived 330 years and had other sons and daughters*

The Patriarchs, Israel's Ancestors

God chose from among the nations of the world a man, named Abraham, to whom he revealed himself. In response, Abraham chose to be God's servant.

2000–1500 B.C.

The term *patriarch* refers to the founder or ruler of a tribe, family, or clan. The Israelites traced their ancestry to one man—"the patriarch Abraham" (Isa 51:2; Heb 7:4). They laid claim to Canaan based on the covenant God made with their first three patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob—to "take possession of the land" (Dt 1:8). The phrase "the . . . patriarchs" eventually referred to Jacob's twelve sons as well (Ac 7:8, 9). Thus, among figures of the Bible, the patriarchs were the ancestors of the Israelites from Abraham to Jacob's son Joseph.

Exact dates for the period in which the patriarchs lived cannot be established. The events of the patriarchal narratives in Genesis cannot be synchronized with any events outside of the Bible. As a result, scholars have suggested dates for the patriarchs ranging from 2000 B.C. to as late as 1200 B.C. The biblical context places Abraham long before Moses. In the genealogy of Ex 6:16–20, Moses is the great-great-grandson of Jacob, who himself was the grandson of Abraham. The line of descent—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Levi, Kohath, Amram, Moses—would set Abraham somewhere around 2000 to 1900 B.C.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

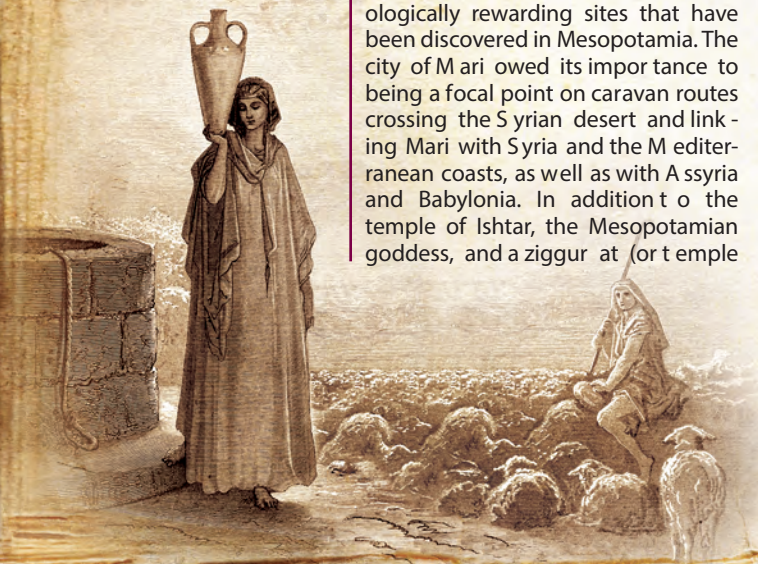
The Middle Bronze Age (2000–1500 B.C.) produced one of the more archaeologically rewarding sites that have been discovered in Mesopotamia. The city of Mari owed its importance to being a focal point on caravan routes crossing the Syrian desert and linking Mari with Syria and the Mediterranean coasts, as well as with Assyria and Babylonia. In addition to the temple of Ishtar, the Mesopotamian goddess, and a ziggurat (or temple tower), archaeologists found a royal palace containing almost 300 rooms.

Some 20,000 clay tablets, known as the Mari letters, were dug up, which shed much light on the ancient biblical world. These documents were written in Accadian and date from the time of Hammurabi (c. 1750 B.C.). Some of the documents are diplomatic correspondence between Mari's king Zimri-Lim and Babylon's Hammurabi, who eventually destroyed Mari.

The Mari tablets refer to terms often associated with the patriarchs. The term "Habiru," found both at Mari and in the Nuzi texts, has been compared to Abraham being named a "Hebrew" (Ge 14:13). The seminomadic group called "Bene-yamina" at Mari bears a similar name to the Israelite name "Benjamin." Mari also sheds light on the Amorites. Nahor, Harran, Mari, Qatna, and Ugarit all appear as Amorite cities with Amorite kings.

Another discovery related to the patriarchs dates from around the change from Middle Bronze (2000–1500 B.C.) to Late Bronze (1500–1200 B.C.). Numerous clay tablets from the city of Nuzi are thought to illuminate customs and local practices found in the patriarchal narratives. Nuzi was a Hurrian city, and it was sometime after 1550 B.C. that the Hurrians established themselves in upper Mesopotamia and northern Syria, rapidly expanding to form the powerful kingdom of Mitanni.

Exact dates for Nuzi are difficult to determine, although the Nuzi tablets are usually dated between 1400 and 1330 B.C. The similarities of social and legal customs between the Nuzi texts and the patriarchal stories have led some scholars to place the patriarchs themselves after 1550 B.C. The Nuzi customs, however, may reflect social conditions of centuries before Nuzi, as well as those of much later times in the 1st millennium. Rather than demonstrating a date for the patriarchs, the Nuzi texts provide insights into cultural customs that help us understand daily life in the 2nd millennium B.C.



THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

The dynasty of Sargon of Agade lasted for only about a century before it declined. Mesopotamia experienced a period of anarchy, partly caused by invasions of the Gutians, foreigners from the Zagros Mountains. The strongest dynasty to emerge during this unstable time was the 3rd Dynasty of Ur, founded by Ur-Nammu about 2112 B.C. The connections that existed between Ur and various Syrian cities form one possible setting for Abraham's journeys.

Eventually, Ur declined as well. The Ur empire collapsed with the invasion of the Elamites, bringing an end to Sumerian civilization. Tribes of Semitic peoples, called Amorites, migrated into Mesopotamia from the west in large numbers. Capturing major regions, they established Amorite dynasties in various city-states. Both Shamshi-Adad I (c. 1813–1781 B.C.), ruler of Asshur, and Hammurabi of Babylon (1792–1750 B.C.) were Amorite kings.

In Egypt, a period of decline and civil war ended gradually during the Middle Kingdom. King Amenemhet I of Thebes (1963–1934 B.C.) convinced the princes of the land to give their allegiance to him as the true heir to Egypt's throne. Another pharaoh, Sesostris III (1862–1843 B.C.) established a central government by restraining the powers of Egypt's provincial rulers and families.

Unity in Egypt continued for more than 200 years. Eventually, however, the country experienced a second period of weakness in which rival dynasties competed for control of limited areas. The most important of these dynasties was the Hyksos, who gained control of Lower Egypt, establishing a capital at Avaris. Toward the end of the Middle Bronze Age, King Kamose of Thebes broke the power of the Hyksos, and his younger brother Ahmose eventually drove them from Egypt.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The second part of the book of Genesis, chs. 12–50, tells the stories of Israel's patriarchs. The events from the lives of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (chs. 12–38) take place primarily in Canaan, although Abraham originated in Mesopotamia (Ur and Harran). The traditions concerning these ancestors are grouped into cycles of stories around Abraham (12:1—25:18) and around Jacob (25:19—36:43). Isaac appears in the Abraham and Jacob cycles, with much of his story in Ge 26.

Abraham enters into covenant with God and is given the promise that he and his descendants will become a blessing to all humanity. In the stories of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah and Rachel, and Joseph, the fulfillment of God's promises takes concrete form. The life of Joseph (chs. 37–50) is set primarily in Egypt, and in that foreign place we see God's unfailing providence and his determination to keep his promise to Abraham.

THE CHANGING OF THE EMPIRES

After about 2200 B.C. the great empires of the Early Bronze Age fell apart. Political instability and unrest spread throughout Egypt and Mesopotamia at the close of this age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1500 B.C.).

In Egypt, the Old Kingdom was followed by over a century of political and social disarray. During this time, known in Egyptian history as the First Intermediate Period (2160–2010 B.C.), bedouins from Asia infiltrated the Nile Delta. Civil strife between Egypt's city-states ended in 2040, when Mentuhotep II from Thebes reunified the land and began the prosperous and stable Middle Kingdom, which lasted until about 1786 B.C.

The instability of the time resulted partly from the appearance of the Amurru, or Amorites.

In Mesopotamia, no great empire arose to replace the 3rd Dynasty of Ur after that city-state fell in 2004. Smaller kingdoms, such as Isin, Larsa, Assyria, Mari, and Babylon, took turns dominating each other for brief periods. The greatest of these was the kingdom of Hammurabi I of Babylon (1792–1750 B.C.), whose famous law code parallels many of the Israelite laws. Hammurabi eventually brought all of Mesopotamia under Babylonian control. Even this kingdom was brief, though, declining during the rule of Hammurabi's son.

The instability of the time resulted partly from the appearance throughout the ancient Near East of a new ethnic group, the Amurru, or Amorites. This large group of Semitic people had personal names and customs that resemble those of the biblical Hebrews. Their influence was so pervasive that even some Mesopotamian kings had Amorite names.

After 2000, Amorites inhabited Palestine. Some settled in villages and established their own city-states, others lived as seminomadic shepherds, and still others lived on the fringes of society as warlike outcasts. Such outsiders, referred to as "Habiru," usually served as slaves or mercenaries to others, but on occasion fought their own battles.

Amorites worshiped many gods, but each city or clan identified its own particular deity. In Mesopotamia, in cities influenced by the Amorites, there even appeared prophets of these local gods, using language very similar to that of the much later Old Testament prophets. Away from the cities, among the seminomadic shepherds, great stress was given to the god of the clan's forefathers. Worship usually involved animal sacrifice, but child sacrifice was also common.

TRANSITION

Abram the Amorite

The accounts of the patriarchs in Ge 12–50 fit within the setting of Mesopotamia at this time. Abram was surely from an Amorite family, and that family's migration from Ur to Harran (in Syria) to southern Palestine follows the general pattern of the Amorite expansion. The patriarchs' way of life corresponds to that of the seminomadic shepherds, although occasionally they acted like the more warlike Habiru, as when Abram leads his men to battle in Ge 14. The God who speaks to Abram is seen at least partly as the God of the clan, referred to often as "the God of your fathers" (Ex 3:13).

Although Abram's relationship with his God follows many of the Amorite patterns, it also differs from Amorite religion in significant ways. For instance, Abram's God repudiates child sacrifice (Ge 22). Moreover, God is not just a local clan deity. Although he makes a covenant with a particular family, that covenant exists in order to bless "all peoples on earth" (Ge 12:3).

• **Genesis 12:1—15:21**

Genesis

The Call of Abram

12 :1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Go from
your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you.

2 "I will make you into a great nation,
and I will bless you;
I will make your name great,
and you will be a blessing.[a]
3 I will bless those who bless you,
and whoever curses you I will
curse;
and all peoples on earth
will be blessed through you."[b]

4 So Abram went, as the LORD had told him;
and Lot went with him. Abram was seventy-
five years old when he set out from Harran.
5 He took his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, all
the possessions they had accumulated and
the people they had acquired in Harran, and
they set out for the land of Canaan, and they
arrived there.
6 Abram traveled through the land as far as
the site of the great tree of Moreh at Shechem.
At that time the Canaanites were in the land.
7 The LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To
your offspring[c] I will give this land." So he built
an altar there to the LORD, who had appeared
to him.
8 From there he went on toward the hills east
of Bethel and pitched his tent, with Bethel on
the west and Ai on the east. There he built an
altar to the LORD and called on the name of the
LORD.
9 Then Abram set out and continued toward
the Negev.

Abram in Egypt

10 Now there was a famine in the land, and
Abram went down to Egypt to live there for a
while because the famine was severe. 11 As he
was about to enter Egypt, he said to his wife
Sarai, "I know what a beautiful woman you are.
12 When the Egyptians see you, they will say,
'This is his wife.' Then they will kill me but will
let you live. 13 Say you are my sister, so that I
will be treated well for your sake and my life
will be spared because of you."
14 When Abram came to Egypt, the Egyptians
saw that Sarai was a very beautiful woman.
15 And when Pharaoh's officials saw her, they
praised her to Pharaoh, and she was taken
into his palace. 16 He treated Abram well for
her sake, and Abram acquired sheep and cattle, male and female donkeys, male and female
servants, and camels.
17 But the LORD inflicted serious diseases on
Pharaoh and his household because of Abram's
wife Sarai. 18 So Pharaoh summoned Abram.
"What have you done to me?" he said. "Why
didn't you tell me she was your wife? 19 Why did
you say, 'She is my sister,' so that I took her to
be my wife? Now then, here is your wife. Take
her and go!" 20 Then Pharaoh gave orders about
Abram to his men, and they sent him on his
way, with his wife and everything he had.

[a] 2 Or *be seen as blessed in blessings* (see 48:20)
[b] 3 Or *earth / will use your name*
[c] 7 Or *seed*

TIME CAPSULE		2350 to 2160 B.C.
2350		Instruction of Ptahhotep, wisdom literature from Egypt
2350		Sargon of Agade unifies Babylonia
2348		Ussher's date for the Flood of Noah
2300		Empire of the Old Accadian monarchs
2300		Map on clay tablet, with cardinal points marked, Iraq
2250		Evidence of nomads in Palestine
2160		Bronze is in general use in Egypt
2160		Collapse of Old Kingdom in Egypt

The Great Pyramid at Giza (Ge 12:14)

The famous pyramids at Giza functioned as individual tombs for some of the monarchs of Egypt's Old Kingdom (2700–2160 B.C.). Earliest among the monumental pyramid tombs appears to have been the Step Pyramid of Pharaoh Djoser (c. 2650 B.C.). The monarchs of the 4th Dynasty (2600–2500 B.C.), Khufu and his successor Khafre, built huge pyramids in imitation of the Step Pyramid. The Great Pyramid is slightly over 480 feet high, and each of the four sides at the base is about 756 feet wide. Such massive monuments demonstrate the great architectural precision and excellence of the Egyptian Old Kingdom.

The patriarch Abram traveled to Egypt during a time of famine in Canaan (Ge 12:10). Exact dates for Abram's life are unknown, but scholars often place him around 2000 or 1900 B.C. Thus, the Great Pyramid at Giza was already centuries old when Abram and Sarai visited Egypt (Ge 12:10—13:1).

Abram and Lot Separate

13 [1]So Abram went up from Egypt to the Negev, with his wife and everything he had, and Lot went with him. [2]Abram had become very wealthy in livestock and in silver and gold.

[3]From the Negev he went from place to place until he came to Bethel, to the place between Bethel and Ai where his tent had been earlier [4]and where he had first built an altar. There Abram called on the name of the LORD.

[5]Now Lot, who was moving about with Abram, also had flocks and herds and tents. [6]But the land could not support them while they stayed together, for their possessions were so great that they were not able to stay together. [7]And quarreling arose between Abram's herders and Lot's. The Canaanites and Perizzites were also living in the land at that time.

[8]So Abram said to Lot, "Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. [9]Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to the right, I'll go to the left."

[10]Lot looked around and saw that the whole plain of the Jordan toward Zoar was well watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt. (This was before the LORD destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.) [11]So Lot chose for himself the whole plain of the Jordan and set out toward the east. The two men parted company: [12]Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. [13]Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.

[14]The LORD said to Abram after Lot had parted from him, "Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. [15]All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring[a] forever. [16]I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. [17]Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."

[18]So Abram went to live near the great trees of Mamre at Hebron, where he pitched his tents. There he built an altar to the LORD.

Abram Rescues Lot

14 [1]At the time when Amraphel was king of Shinar,[b] Arioch king of Ellasar, Kedorlaomer king of Elam and Tidal king of Goyim, [2]these kings went to war against Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboyim, and

[a] *15* Or *seed*; also in verse 16 [b] *1* That is, Babylonia; also in verse 9

TIME CAPSULE	2166 to 2000 B.C.
2166–1991	Abraham's life (based on early Exodus)
2112–2004	Ur-Nammu founds 3rd Dynasty of Ur
2095	Law code of Ur-Nammu
2040	Mentuhotep II from Thebes reunifies Egypt
2040–1786	The Middle Kingdom in Egypt
2017–1985	Ishbi-Erra founds Isin dynasty
2004	City-state of Ur falls to the Elamites
2000	Amorites inhabit Palestine

The Habiru—Refugees or Outlaws? (Ge 14:13)

The Habiru (also spelled Hapiru) were a class of fugitives found in the ancient Near East from about 2000 to 1000 B.C. Some of the Habiru were refugees who fled their homelands, while others included brigands, malcontents, and socially maladjusted individuals. Their geographic horizon extended from southern Mesopotamia, Anatolia, and Syro-Palestine to Egypt.

The obvious similarity between the words *Habiru* and *Hebrew* has led some to equate the Habiru with the early Israelites. Unfortunately, the original meaning of the Accadian term *Habiru* has never been satisfactorily determined. Most scholars, however, believe it concerns either refugees forced to leave their own land, or armed brigands who caused problems for local populations.

The Habiru are described at length in a great variety of texts, ranging from the Amarna letters in Egypt to the Hittite archives in central Anatolia. The Mari tablets describe the Habiru as brigands who were very mobile. The Nuzi documents identify them as foreigners who served the citizens of Nuzi. In all these texts, the Habiru are foreign to the Near Eastern society in which they are trying to survive. Some survived as servants or laborers; others as outlaws.

Abram was called "the Hebrew" (Ge 14:13). In this context, he could be acting as an armed brigand with his own army to help his nephew Lot (14:14–16). On the other hand, David and his men are also called "Hebrews" (1Sa 29:3) when, in flight from King Saul, they sought refuge among the Philistines (1Sa 27:1–4). Although "Hebrew" is clearly an ethnic term in the Bible, it may have been originally a term describing the social condition of persons in flight or of those in armed gangs. Abram could have been called "the Hebrew" simply because of his status as a foreigner in Canaan.

the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). 3All these latter kings joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Dead Sea Valley). 4For twelve years they had been subject to Kedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled.

5In the fourteenth year, Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him went out and defeated the Rephaites in Ashteroth Karnaim, the Zuzites in Ham, the Emites in Shaveh Kiriathaim 6and the Horites in the hill country of Seir, as far as El Paran near the desert. 7Then they turned back and went to En Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), and they conquered the whole territory of the Amalekites, as well as the Amorites who were living in Hazezon Tamar.

8Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboyim and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) marched out and drew up their battle lines in the Valley of Siddim 9against Kedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goyim, Amraphel king of Shinar and Arioch king of Ellasar—four kings against five. 10Now the Valley of Siddim was full of tar pits, and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some of the men fell into them and the rest fled to the hills. 11The four kings seized all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their food; then they went away. 12They also carried off Abram's nephew Lot and his possessions, since he was living in Sodom.

13A man who had escaped came and reported this to Abram the Hebrew. Now Abram was living near the great trees of Mamre the Amorite, a brother[a] of Eshkol and Aner, all of whom were allied with Abram. 14When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he called out the 318 trained men born in his household and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15During the night Abram divided his men to attack them and he routed them, pursuing them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. 16He recovered all the goods and brought back his relative Lot and his possessions, together with the women and the other people.

17After Abram returned from defeating Kedorlaomer and the kings allied with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley).

18Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, 19and he blessed Abram, saying,

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Creator of heaven and earth.
20And praise be to God Most High,
who delivered your enemies into your hand."

Then Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

21The king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give

[a] *13* Or *a relative*; or *an ally*

TIME CAPSULE		2000 B.C.
2000–1500		Middle Bronze Age
2000		Drains and sewers are used at Knossos, Crete
2000		Egyptian rulers develop royal postal system
2000		Ugarit and Levantine cities flourish
2000		Soap is known in Babylon
2000		Wheel-thrown pottery in Crete

Abram's Ceremony and a Hittite Ritual (Ge 15:9, 10)

In a covenant ceremony Abram was instructed to cut animals in halves and arrange the pieces opposite each other (Ge 15:9, 10). Abram's animal ritual has a literary parallel in a Hittite text from Anatolia, dated after the mid-2nd millennium B.C.

The Hittite text describes a ritual of purification to be used after a military defeat. The troops are required to perform the ritual "behind a river," where a man, a goat, a puppy, and a small pig are cut in half. The sections, thus divided, are arranged oppositely parallel on one side and on the other. In front of this array, a gate of an unknown type of wood is built. Fires are lit on both sides of the arranged pieces. Then the troops are obliged to pass between the fires and are sprinkled with water upon reaching the bank of the river.

The procedure is not mentioned in any official Hittite state cult, but is recorded in the royal archives. Its similarities with the ceremony in Genesis, although superficial, show a common ritual tradition.

me the people and keep the goods for yourself."
22But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "With raised hand I have sworn an oath to the LORD, God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth, 23that I will accept nothing belonging to you, not even a thread or the strap of a sandal, so that you will never be able to say, 'I made Abram rich.' 24I will accept nothing but what my men have eaten and the share that belongs to the men who went with me—to Aner, Eshkol and Mamre. Let them have their share."

The LORD's Covenant With Abram

15 1After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision:

"Do not be afraid, Abram.
I am your shield,[a]
your very great reward.[b]"

2But Abram said, "Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit[c] my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?" 3And Abram said, "You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir."
4Then the word of the LORD came to him: "This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir." 5He took him outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring[d] be."
6Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.
7He also said to him, "I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it."
8But Abram said, "Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?"
9So the LORD said to him, "Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon."
10Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. 11Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away.
12As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him. 13Then the LORD said to him, "Know for certain that for four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own and that they will be enslaved and mistreated there. 14But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves, and afterward they will come out with great possessions. 15You, however, will go to your ancestors in peace and be buried at a good old age. 16In the fourth generation your descendants will come back here, for the sin of the Amorites has not yet reached its full measure."
17When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. 18On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, "To your descendants I give this land, from the Wadi[e] of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates— 19the land of the Kenites, Kenizzites, Kadmonites, 20Hittites, Perizzites, Rephaites, 21Amorites, Canaanites, Girgashites and Jebusites."

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[a] *1* Or *sovereign* [b] *1* Or *shield; / your reward will be very great* [c] *2* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. [d] *5* Or *seed* [e] *18* Or *river*

TRANSITION

The Birth of Ishmael

None of the events of the patriarchs can be synchronized with any dates known from nonbiblical sources. Nevertheless, Genesis does provide a brief chronological outline of Abraham's life. Abram was 75 years old when he left Harran in Mesopotamia and journeyed to Canaan with his wife, Sarai (Ge 12:4, 5). After living 10 years in Canaan, Sarai made use of a typical ancient Near Eastern custom for a bar-

Passing Between the Halves (Ge 15:17–21)

There are no adequate modern parallels to the broad-ranging meanings of the term "covenant" as used in the Bible. The closest parallel probably resides in marriage, where a public gathering solemnizes an agreement between two people.

The type of covenant presented in the Bible is most often between two parties. The superior party was known as the *suzerain*; the inferior party as the *vassal*. Both the suzerain and vassal had specific responsibilities. Primarily, in ancient societies the suzerain provided protection for the vassal, while the vassal supported the suzerain with taxes and was loyal in time of war.

The Lord and Abram joined themselves in a suzerain and vassal covenant (Ge 15:18). As in similar ancient Near Eastern covenants, they held a public ceremony to ratify their relationship. The sacrifice of animals and a meal (15:9, 10) were typical components of covenant ceremonies, as were the promises of both parties. Abram's part of this agreement was to "believe" in the Lord (15:6), which meant to worship no other gods. The Lord promised Abram to make his descendants as numerous as the stars (15:5) and provide a homeland for them (15:18).

Two differences between ancient Near Eastern covenants and the Ge 15 covenant are striking. Usually the list of the vassal's duties and responsibilities was much larger than that of the suzerain's. In fact, a covenant, including the duties of the vassal, was imposed on the vassal by the suzerain. In the Ge 15 covenant almost nothing is said about Abram's responsibilities. The focus is on what the Lord promised to Abram, not what Abram promised the Lord.

In the second difference it was usually the vassal who cut the animals in two parts and walked between them (15:10, 17). The ritual symbolically demonstrated what would happen to the vassal if the covenant was broken. The "blazing torch" passing between the pieces of flesh in the Ge 15 covenant (15:17) was obviously a representation of the Lord. The symbolism of him passing between the cut sacrifices implies that he would die before he would allow his covenant with Abram to fail.

ren wife. In this custom, the wife authorized her husband to obtain children by her personal slave (Ge 16:3). Thus, Abram at age 86 fathered Ishmael through Sarai's maid, Hagar (16:16).

Sarai's barrenness continued for 13 more years, but God intervened before Abram, now 99 years old (Ge 17:1), could announce Ishmael as his legal heir. Changing Abram's name to Abraham, and Sarai's to Sarah, God promised a child by Sarah (17:5, 15, 16).

• Genesis 16:1—20:18

Genesis

Hagar and Ishmael

16 :1 Now Sarai, Abram's wife, had borne
him no children. But she had an Egyptian slave named Hagar; 2so she said to Abram,
"The LORD has kept me from having children.
Go, sleep with my slave; perhaps I can build a
family through her."

Abram agreed to what Sarai said. 3So after
Abram had been living in Canaan ten years,
Sarai his wife took her Egyptian slave Hagar
and gave her to her husband to be his wife. 4He
slept with Hagar, and she conceived.

When she knew she was pregnant, she began to despise her mistress. 5Then Sarai said
to Abram, "You are responsible for the wrong I
am suffering. I put my slave in your arms, and
now that she knows she is pregnant, she despises me. May the LORD judge between you
and me."

6"Your slave is in your hands," Abram said.
"Do with her whatever you think best." Then
Sarai mistreated Hagar; so she fled from her.

7The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a
spring in the desert; it was the spring that is
beside the road to Shur. 8And he said, "Hagar,
slave of Sarai, where have you come from, and
where are you going?"

"I'm running away from my mistress Sarai,"
she answered.

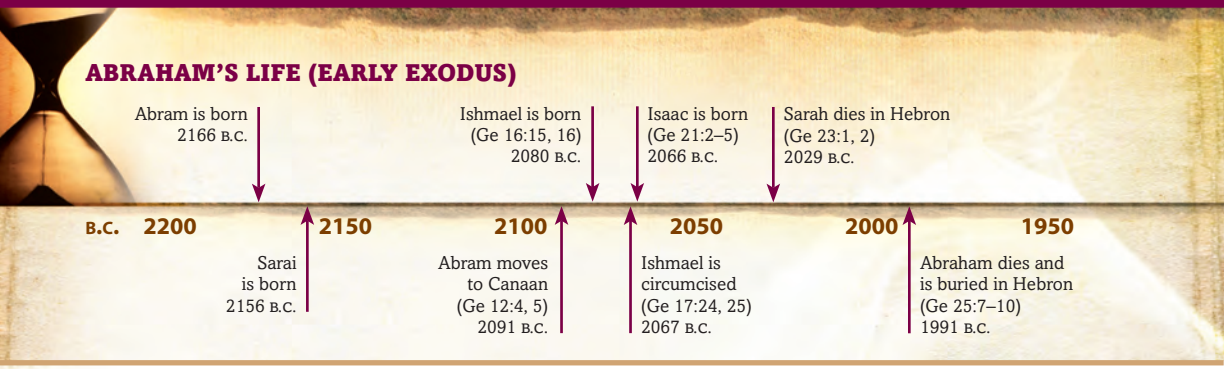
9Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go
back to your mistress and submit to her." 10The
angel added, "I will increase your descendants
so much that they will be too numerous to
count."

11The angel of the LORD also said to her:

"You are now pregnant
and you will give birth to a son.
You shall name him Ishmael,[a]
for the LORD has heard of your
misery.
12He will be a wild donkey of a man;
his hand will be against everyone
and everyone's hand against him,
and he will live in hostility
toward[b] all his brothers."

13She gave this name to the LORD who spoke
to her: "You are the God who sees me," for
she said, "I have now seen[c] the One who sees

[a] *11 Ishmael* means *God hears.* [b] *12* Or *live to the east / of*
[c] *13* Or *seen the back of*



me." 14That is why the well was called Beer Lahai Roi[a]; it is still there, between Kadesh and Bered.

15So Hagar bore Abram a son, and Abram gave the name Ishmael to the son she had borne. 16Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael.

The Covenant of Circumcision

17 1When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to him and said, "I am God Almighty[b]; walk before me faithfully and be blameless. 2Then I will make my covenant between me and you and will greatly increase your numbers."

3Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4"As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5No longer will you be called Abram[c]; your name will be Abraham,[d] for I have made you a father of many nations. 6I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God."

9Then God said to Abraham, "As for you, you must keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you for the generations to come. 10This is my covenant with you and your descendants after you, the covenant you are to keep: Every male among you shall be circumcised. 11You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. 12For the generations to come every male among you who is eight days old must be circumcised, including those born in your household or bought with money from a foreigner — those who are not your offspring. 13Whether born in your household or bought with your money, they must be circumcised. My covenant in your flesh is to be an everlasting covenant. 14Any uncircumcised male, who has not been circumcised in the flesh, will be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant."

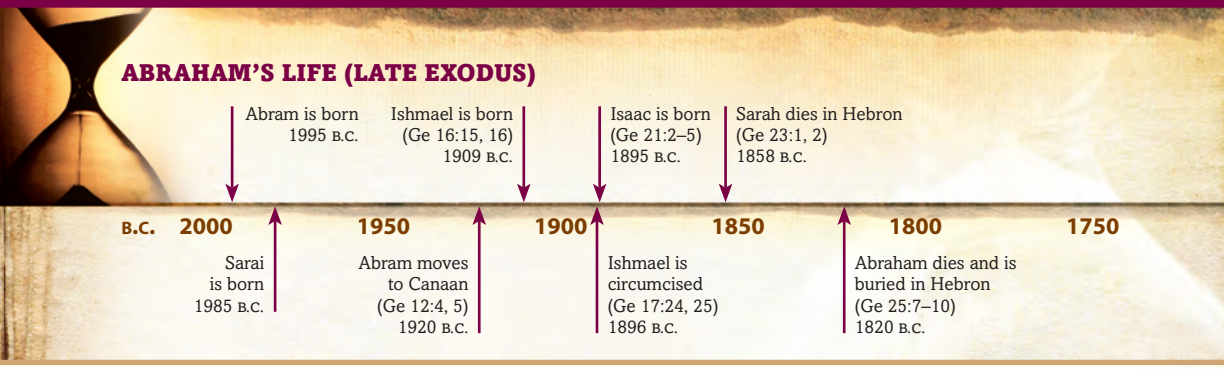
15God also said to Abraham, "As for Sarai your wife, you are no longer to call her Sarai; her name will be Sarah. 16I will bless her and will surely give you a son by her. I will bless her so that she will be the mother of nations; kings of peoples will come from her."

17Abraham fell facedown; he laughed and said to himself, "Will a son be born to a man a hundred years old? Will Sarah bear a child at the age of ninety?" 18And Abraham said to God, "If only Ishmael might live under your blessing!"

19Then God said, "Yes, but your wife Sarah will bear you a son, and you will call him Isaac.[e] I will establish my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his descendants after him. 20And as for Ishmael, I have heard you: I will surely bless him; I will make him fruitful and will greatly increase his numbers. He will be the father of twelve rulers, and I will make him into a great nation. 21But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom Sarah will bear to you by this time next year." 22When he had

Daily Life & Customs
Circumcision is a minor operation that removes a piece of skin from the male organ. It was practiced in several nations of the ancient Near East, including Egypt. But for Israel it was a sign of membership in the community and was required of every male (Ge 17:10, 11). Traditionally it was performed with a flint knife.

[a] *14 Beer Lahai Roi* means *well of the Living One who sees me.*
[b] *1* Hebrew *El-Shaddai* [c] *5 Abram* means *exalted father.*
[d] *5 Abraham* probably means *father of many.* [e] *19 Isaac* means *he laughs.*



finished speaking with Abraham, God went up from him.

23 On that very day Abraham took his son
Ishmael and all those born in his household
or bought with his money, every male in his
household, and circumcised them, as God
told him. 24 Abraham was ninety-nine years old
when he was circumcised, 25 and his son Ishma-
el was thirteen; 26 Abraham and his son Ishmael
were both circumcised on that very day. 27 And
every male in Abraham's household, including
those born in his household or bought from a
foreigner, was circumcised with him.

The Three Visitors

18 1 The LORD appeared to Abraham near
the great trees of Mamre while he was
sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat
of the day. 2 Abraham looked up and saw three
men standing nearby. When he saw them, he
hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet
them and bowed low to the ground.

3 He said, "If I have found favor in your eyes,
my lord,[a] do not pass your servant by. 4 Let a
little water be brought, and then you may all
wash your feet and rest under this tree. 5 Let
me get you something to eat, so you can be re-
freshed and then go on your way — now that
you have come to your servant."

"Very well," they answered, "do as you say."

6 So Abraham hurried into the tent to Sarah.
"Quick," he said, "get three seahs[b] of the finest
flour and knead it and bake some bread."

7 Then he ran to the herd and selected a
choice, tender calf and gave it to a servant, who
hurried to prepare it. 8 He then brought some
curds and milk and the calf that had been pre-
pared, and set these before them. While they
ate, he stood near them under a tree.

9 "Where is your wife Sarah?" they asked him.

"There, in the tent," he said.

10 Then one of them said, "I will surely return
to you about this time next year, and Sarah
your wife will have a son."

Now Sarah was listening at the entrance to
the tent, which was behind him. 11 Abraham
and Sarah were already very old, and Sarah
was past the age of childbearing. 12 So Sarah
laughed to herself as she thought, "After I am
worn out and my lord is old, will I now have
this pleasure?"

13 Then the LORD said to Abraham, "Why did
Sarah laugh and say, 'Will I really have a child,
now that I am old?' 14 Is anything too hard for
the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed
time next year, and Sarah will have a son."

15 Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I
did not laugh."

But he said, "Yes, you did laugh."

Abraham Pleads for Sodom

16 When the men got up to leave, they looked
down toward Sodom, and Abraham walked
along with them to see them on their way.
17 Then the LORD said, "Shall I hide from Abra-
ham what I am about to do? 18 Abraham will
surely become a great and powerful nation,
and all nations on earth will be blessed through
him.[c] 19 For I have chosen him, so that he will
direct his children and his household after him
to keep the way of the LORD by doing what is
right and just, so that the LORD will bring about
for Abraham what he has promised him."

20 Then the LORD said, "The outcry against
Sodom and Gomorrah is so great and their sin
so grievous 21 that I will go down and see if what
they have done is as bad as the outcry that has
reached me. If not, I will know."

22 The men turned away and went toward
Sodom, but Abraham remained standing be-
fore the LORD.[d] 23 Then Abraham approached
him and said: "Will you sweep away the right-
teous with the wicked? 24 What if there are fifty

[a] *3* Or *eyes, Lord* [b] *6* That is, probably about 36 pounds or about 16 kilograms [c] *18* Or *will use his name in blessings* (see 48:20) [d] *22* Masoretic Text; an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition *but the LORD remained standing before Abraham*

righteous people in the city? Will you really sweep it away and not spare[a] the place for the sake of the fifty righteous people in it? 25Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

26The LORD said, "If I find fifty righteous people in the city of Sodom, I will spare the whole place for their sake."

27Then Abraham spoke up again: "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, though I am nothing but dust and ashes, 28what if the number of the righteous is five less than fifty? Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five people?"

"If I find forty-five there," he said, "I will not destroy it."

29Once again he spoke to him, "What if only forty are found there?"

He said, "For the sake of forty, I will not do it."

30Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak. What if only thirty can be found there?"

He answered, "I will not do it if I find thirty there."

31Abraham said, "Now that I have been so bold as to speak to the Lord, what if only twenty can be found there?"

He said, "For the sake of twenty, I will not destroy it."

32Then he said, "May the Lord not be angry, but let me speak just once more. What if only ten can be found there?"

He answered, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy it."

33When the LORD had finished speaking with Abraham, he left, and Abraham returned home.

Sodom and Gomorrah Destroyed

19 1The two angels arrived at Sodom in the evening, and Lot was sitting in the gateway of the city. When he saw them, he got up to meet them and bowed down with his face to the ground. 2"My lords," he said, "please turn aside to your servant's house. You can wash your feet and spend the night and then go on your way early in the morning."

"No," they answered, "we will spend the night in the square."

3But he insisted so strongly that they did go with him and entered his house. He prepared a meal for them, baking bread without yeast, and they ate. 4Before they had gone to bed, all the men from every part of the city of Sodom—both young and old—surrounded the house. 5They called to Lot, "Where are the men who came to you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we can have sex with them."

6Lot went outside to meet them and shut the door behind him 7and said, "No, my friends. Don't do this wicked thing. 8Look, I have two daughters who have never slept with a man. Let me bring them out to you, and you can do what you like with them. But don't do anything to these men, for they have come under the protection of my roof."

9"Get out of our way," they replied. "This fellow came here as a foreigner, and now he wants to play the judge! We'll treat you worse than them." They kept bringing pressure on Lot and moved forward to break down the door.

10But the men inside reached out and pulled Lot back into the house and shut the door. 11Then they struck the men who were at the door of the house, young and old, with blindness so that they could not find the door.

12The two men said to Lot, "Do you have anyone else here—sons-in-law, sons or daughters, or anyone else in the city who belongs to you? Get them out of here, 13because we are going to destroy this place. The outcry to the LORD against its people is so great that he has sent us to destroy it."

14So Lot went out and spoke to his sons-in-law, who were pledged to marry[b] his daughters. He said, "Hurry and get out of this place, because the LORD is about to destroy the city!" But his sons-in-law thought he was joking.

15With the coming of dawn, the angels urged Lot, saying, "Hurry! Take your wife and your two daughters who are here, or you will be swept away when the city is punished."

16When he hesitated, the men grasped his hand and the hands of his wife and of his two daughters and led them safely out of the city, for the LORD was merciful to them. 17As soon as they had brought them out, one of them said, "Flee for your lives! Don't look back, and don't stop anywhere in the plain! Flee to the mountains or you will be swept away!"

18But Lot said to them, "No, my lords,[c] please! 19Your[d] servant has found favor in your[d] eyes, and you[d] have shown great kindness to me in sparing my life. But I can't flee to the mountains; this disaster will overtake me, and I'll die. 20Look, here is a town near enough to run to, and it is small. Let me flee to it—it is very small, isn't it? Then my life will be spared."

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[a] *24* Or *forgive*; also in verse 26
[b] *14* Or *were married to*
[c] *18* Or *No, Lord*; or *No, my lord*
[d] *19* The Hebrew is singular.

21 He said to him, "Very well, I will grant this
request too; I will not overthrow the town you
speak of. 22 But flee there quickly, because I
cannot do anything until you reach it." (That is
why the town was called Zoar.[a])
23 By the time Lot reached Zoar, the sun
had risen over the land. 24 Then the LORD
rained down burning sulfur on Sodom and
Gomorrah — from the LORD out of the heav-
ens. 25 Thus he overthrew those cities and the
entire plain, destroying all those living in the
cities — and also the vegetation in the land.
26 But Lot's wife looked back, and she became
a pillar of salt.
27 Early the next morning Abraham got up
and returned to the place where he had stood
before the LORD. 28 He looked down toward
Sodom and Gomorrah, toward all the land of
the plain, and he saw dense smoke rising from
the land, like smoke from a furnace.
29 So when God destroyed the cities of
the plain, he remembered Abraham, and he
brought Lot out of the catastrophe that over-
threw the cities where Lot had lived.

Lot and His Daughters

30 Lot and his two daughters left Zoar and
settled in the mountains, for he was afraid to
stay in Zoar. He and his two daughters lived
in a cave. 31 One day the older daughter said to
the younger, "Our father is old, and there is no
man around here to give us children — as is the
custom all over the earth. 32 Let's get our father
to drink wine and then sleep with him and pre-
serve our family line through our father."
33 That night they got their father to drink
wine, and the older daughter went in and slept
with him. He was not aware of it when she lay
down or when she got up.
34 The next day the older daughter said to
the younger, "Last night I slept with my father.
Let's get him to drink wine again tonight, and
you go in and sleep with him so we can pre-
serve our family line through our father." 35 So
they got their father to drink wine that night
also, and the younger daughter went in and
slept with him. Again he was not aware of it
when she lay down or when she got up.
36 So both of Lot's daughters became preg-
nant by their father. 37 The older daughter had
a son, and she named him Moab[b]; he is the fa-
ther of the Moabites of today. 38 The younger
daughter also had a son, and she named him
Ben-Ammi[c]; he is the father of the Ammonites[d]
of today.

Abraham and Abimelek

20 1 Now Abraham moved on from there
into the region of the Negev and lived
between Kadesh and Shur. For a while he
stayed in Gerar, 2 and there Abraham said of his
wife Sarah, "She is my sister." Then Abimelek
king of Gerar sent for Sarah and took her.
3 But God came to Abimelek in a dream one
night and said to him, "You are as good as dead
because of the woman you have taken; she is a
married woman."
4 Now Abimelek had not gone near her, so
he said, "Lord, will you destroy an innocent
nation? 5 Did he not say to me, 'She is my sis-
ter,' and didn't she also say, 'He is my brother'?
I have done this with a clear conscience and
clean hands."
6 Then God said to him in the dream, "Yes, I
know you did this with a clear conscience, and
so I have kept you from sinning against me.
That is why I did not let you touch her. 7 Now
return the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and
he will pray for you and you will live. But if you
do not return her, you may be sure that you
and all who belong to you will die."
8 Early the next morning Abimelek sum-
moned all his officials, and when he told them
all that had happened, they were very much
afraid. 9 Then Abimelek called Abraham in and
said, "What have you done to us? How have I
wronged you that you have brought such great
guilt upon me and my kingdom? You have done
things to me that should never be done." 10 And
Abimelek asked Abraham, "What was your rea-
son for doing this?"
11 Abraham replied, "I said to myself, 'There
is surely no fear of God in this place, and they
will kill me because of my wife.' 12 Besides, she
really is my sister, the daughter of my father
though not of my mother; and she became my
wife. 13 And when God had me wander from my
father's household, I said to her, 'This is how
you can show your love to me: Everywhere we
go, say of me, "He is my brother."'"
14 Then Abimelek brought sheep and cattle
and male and female slaves and gave them to
Abraham, and he returned Sarah his wife to
him. 15 And Abimelek said, "My land is before
you; live wherever you like."
16 To Sarah he said, "I am giving your brother
a thousand shekels[e] of silver. This is to cover
the offense against you before all who are with
you; you are completely vindicated."
17 Then Abraham prayed to God, and God

[a] *22 Zoar* means *small.* [b] *37 Moab* sounds like the Hebrew for *from father.* [c] *38 Ben-Ammi* means *son of my father's people.* [d] *38* Hebrew *Bene-Ammon* [e] *16* That is, about 25 pounds or about 12 kilograms

healed Abimelek, his wife and his female slaves so they could have children again, 18for the LORD had kept all the women in Abimelek's household from conceiving because of Abraham's wife Sarah.

TRANSITION

The Birth of Isaac

Both Abraham (Ge 17:17) and Sarah (18:11, 12) laughed in disbelief that a couple well past childbearing age should bear a son. Yet in fulfillment of God's promise, Abraham, age 100, fathered Isaac through his wife, Sarah, age 90 (Ge 17:17; 21:1–5). Sarah's first concern was for her new son's status as Abraham's heir, a status threatened by Hagar's son, Ishmael (21:9, 10). Ishmael was now about 14 years old, being 13 at his circumcision (17:24, 25).

An ancient Near Eastern law code describes the practice of giving one's maid as a second wife (see "The Birth of Ishmael" at Ge 16:1). The law provided protection for children born to the second wife. It prohibited the disinheriting of a firstborn son of a slave wife (Ishmael) in the event that the barren upper-class wife should later bear a son (Isaac). However, the upper-class wife's son would supersede the slave wife's son as the legal "firstborn." Furthermore, the slave wife and her children could be offered their freedom, in which case they forfeited their inheritance. Isaac did become Abraham's heir, representing one case in which a younger son received the inheritance and blessing.

• **Genesis 21:1—24:67**

Genesis

The Birth of Isaac

21 :1 Now the LORD was gracious to Sarah as he had said, and the LORD did for Sarah what he had promised. 2Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the very time God had promised him. 3Abraham gave the name Isaac[a] to the son Sarah bore him. 4When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him. 5Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him.

6Sarah said, "God has brought me laughter, and everyone who hears about this will laugh with me." 7And she added, "Who would have said to Abraham that Sarah would nurse children? Yet I have borne him a son in his old age."

Hagar and Ishmael Sent Away

8The child grew and was weaned, and on the day Isaac was weaned Abraham held a great feast. 9But Sarah saw that the son whom Hagar the Egyptian had borne to Abraham was mocking, 10and she said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac."

11The matter distressed Abraham greatly because it concerned his son. 12But God said to him, "Do not be so distressed about the boy and your slave woman. Listen to whatever Sarah tells you, because it is through Isaac that your offspring[b] will be reckoned. 13I will make the son of the slave into a nation also, because he is your offspring."

14Early the next morning Abraham took some food and a skin of water and gave them to Hagar. He set them on her shoulders and then sent her off with the boy. She went on her way and wandered in the Desert of Beersheba.

15When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. 16Then she went off and sat down about a bowshot away, for she thought, "I cannot watch the boy die." And as she sat there, she[c] began to sob.

17God heard the boy crying, and the angel of God called to Hagar from heaven and said to her, "What is the matter, Hagar? Do not be afraid; God has heard the boy crying as he lies there. 18Lift the boy up and take him by the hand, for I will make him into a great nation."

19Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water. So she went and filled the skin with water and gave the boy a drink.

20God was with the boy as he grew up. He lived in the desert and became an archer. 21While he was living in the Desert of Paran, his mother got a wife for him from Egypt.

The Treaty at Beersheba

22At that time Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his forces said to Abraham, "God is with you in everything you do. 23Now swear to me here before God that you will not deal falsely with me or my children or my descendants. Show to me and the country where you now reside as a foreigner the same kindness I have shown to you."

24Abraham said, "I swear it."

25Then Abraham complained to Abimelek about a well of water that Abimelek's servants had seized. 26But Abimelek said, "I don't know who has done this. You did not tell me, and I heard about it only today."

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[a] *3* *Isaac* means *he laughs.* [b] *12* Or *seed* [c] *16* Hebrew; Septuagint *the child*

A Slave of a Wife Becomes a Mother! (Ge 21:9–11)

Sarai's condition of childlessness caused her to give her female servant to Abram for procreation (Ge 16:1–3). It is obvious from Sarai's words, "perhaps I can build a family through her" (16:2), that she saw herself as the one who would be providing any eventual son from this union, even though the servant Hagar would be the mother of the child.

Ancient marriage contracts obligated wives to provide a son for the married couple. Contracts dating from the mid-2nd millennium have been discovered in the city of Nuzi which specify that if a wife bore no male child, she had the obligation to provide a child via a female servant. If a child was thus born to a servant, the child would be considered the child of the wife in regards to the contract. Thus, even a barren wife could fulfill her marital contract.

Abram's reluctance to send Hagar away when Sarai became jealous of her (Ge 21:9–11) reflects another aspect of the Nuzi tablets. Servants who provided such children were not supposed to be sent away, but rather treated favorably. So it was that it took the voice of God to convince Abram to listen to Sarai's desire (21:12).

27 So Abraham brought sheep and cattle and
gave them to Abimelek, and the two men made
a treaty. 28 Abraham set apart seven ewe lambs
from the flock, 29 and Abimelek asked Abra-
ham, "What is the meaning of these seven ewe
lambs you have set apart by themselves?"
30 He replied, "Accept these seven lambs
from my hand as a witness that I dug this well."
31 So that place was called Beersheba,[a] be-
cause the two men swore an oath there.
32 After the treaty had been made at Beershe-
ba, Abimelek and Phicol the commander of his
forces returned to the land of the Philistines.
33 Abraham planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-
sheba, and there he called on the name of the
Lord, the Eternal God. 34 And Abraham stayed
in the land of the Philistines for a long time.

[a] 31 *Beersheba* can mean *well of seven* and *well of the oath.*

Tamarisk tree in Revivim, Israel. Abraham planted a tamarisk and "called on the name of the Lord" (Ge 21:33).

Abraham Tested

22 1 Some time later God tested Abraham.
He said to him, "Abraham!"
"Here I am," he replied.
2 Then God said, "Take your son, your only
son, whom you love—Isaac—and go to the re-
gion of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt
offering on a mountain I will show you."
3 Early the next morning Abraham got up and
loaded his donkey. He took with him two of his
servants and his son Isaac. When he had cut
enough wood for the burnt offering, he set out
for the place God had told him about. 4 On the
third day Abraham looked up and saw the place
in the distance. 5 He said to his servants, "Stay
here with the donkey while I and the boy go
over there. We will worship and then we will
come back to you."
6 Abraham took the wood for the burnt offer-
ing and placed it on his son Isaac, and he him-
self carried the fire and the knife. As the two
of them went on together, 7 Isaac spoke up and
said to his father Abraham, "Father?"
"Yes, my son?" Abraham replied.
"The fire and wood are here," Isaac said, "but
where is the lamb for the burnt offering?"
8 Abraham answered, "God himself will pro-
vide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son."
And the two of them went on together.
9 When they reached the place God had told
him about, Abraham built an altar there and ar-
ranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac
and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.
10 Then he reached out his hand and took the
knife to slay his son. 11 But the angel of the
Lord called out to him from heaven, "Abraham!
Abraham!"
"Here I am," he replied.
12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do
not do anything to him. Now I know that you
fear God, because you have not withheld from
me your son, your only son."

Business Documents at Ebla (Ge 23:7–20)

The narrative in Ge 23:7–20 is a picture of business being transacted during the late 3rd or early 2nd millennium B.C. Abraham purchases a property, which is then deeded as his possession. Ancient texts dealing with business and commercial matters, as well as other types of texts, have been discovered at Ebla, a Semitic city-state in northern Syria that flourished from about 2400 to 2250 B.C.—prior to Abraham's time.

Although not mentioned in Scripture, Ebla casts its shadow over the history of northern Canaan. In the 3rd millennium B.C., Ebla controlled northern Canaan. By the time of Abraham (c. 2000 B.C.) this large urban center was long past its prime. Yet it was still an important center in the region.

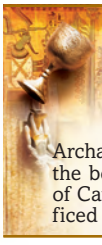
Discoveries at Ebla, though not directly related to Scripture, have been invaluable in providing a larger context for understanding the cultural environment of the narratives in Genesis. Many of the personal names found at Ebla reveal a linguistic type very similar to that of the Old Testament patriarchs. Personal names discovered at Ebla include Ab-ra-mu (Abram), E-sa-um (Esau), Sa-u-lum (Saul), and Da-'u-dum (David).

The recording of business transactions was part of life in the ancient Near East, just as it is today. This is evident at Ebla, where the largest portion of the texts found were administrative or business texts. More business recording is apparent in the narrative of Ge 23: the deeding of the field of Ephron to Abraham would refer to a written deed of purchase that was signed by the purchaser and witnesses (23:17–20).

13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket
he saw a ram[a] caught by its horns. He went
over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a
burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham
called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to
this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD
it will be provided."
15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham
from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear
by myself, declares the LORD, that because you
have done this and have not withheld your
son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you
and make your descendants as numerous as
the stars in the sky and as the sand on the sea-
shore. Your descendants will take possession of
the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your
offspring[b] all nations on earth will be blessed,[c]
because you have obeyed me."
19 Then Abraham returned to his servants,
and they set off together for Beersheba. And
Abraham stayed in Beersheba.

Nahor's Sons

20 Some time later Abraham was told, "Mil-
kah is also a mother; she has borne sons to
your brother Nahor: 21 Uz the firstborn, Buz his
brother, Kemuel (the father of Aram), 22 Kesed,
Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph and Bethuel." 23 Bethu-
el became the father of Rebekah. Milkah bore
these eight sons to Abraham's brother Nahor.
24 His concubine, whose name was Reumah,
also had sons: Tebah, Gaham, Tahash and Ma-
akah.



Religion & Worship

In the Bible, human sacrifice is regarded as one of the worst offenses against God and humankind (Ge 22:12). It was one of the reasons the Canaanites were condemned. Archaeologists have dug up urns with ashes and the bones of children from the sacred precincts of Carthage. Apparently, the Carthaginians sacrificed children as part of their religion.

The Death of Sarah

23 1 Sarah lived to be a hundred and twenty-
seven years old. 2 She died at Kiriath
Arba (that is, Hebron) in the land of Canaan,
and Abraham went to mourn for Sarah and to
weep over her.
3 Then Abraham rose from beside his dead
wife and spoke to the Hittites.[d] He said, 4 "I am
a foreigner and stranger among you. Sell me
some property for a burial site here so I can
bury my dead."
5 The Hittites replied to Abraham, 6 "Sir, listen
to us. You are a mighty prince among us. Bury
your dead in the choicest of our tombs. None
of us will refuse you his tomb for burying your
dead."
7 Then Abraham rose and bowed down be-
fore the people of the land, the Hittites. 8 He
said to them, "If you are willing to let me bury
my dead, then listen to me and intercede with
Ephron son of Zohar on my behalf 9 so he will
sell me the cave of Machpelah, which belongs
to him and is at the end of his field. Ask him
to sell it to me for the full price as a burial site
among you."
10 Ephron the Hittite was sitting among his
people and he replied to Abraham in the hear-
ing of all the Hittites who had come to the gate

[a] *13* Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint and Syriac; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *a ram behind him* [b] *18* Or *seed*
[c] *18* Or *and all nations on earth will use the name of your offspring in blessings* (see 48:20) [d] *3* Or *the descendants of Heth*; also in verses 5, 7, 10, 16, 18 and 20

My Servant Is My Heir! (Ge 24:2, 3)

When God promised Abram that his descendants were to grow into a great nation, he was addressing Abram's complaint in Ge 15:2, 3. Abram was childless, so his property would have to go to a stranger. Eliezer, a man from Damascus, was going to be his heir (15:2), and it only maximized Abram's dilemma that Eliezer was his servant.

Tablets discovered in the ancient city of Nuzi reveal that childless couples regularly selected a servant as a replacement son. It was the duty of this servant to care for his adopted parents when they grew old and to perform the burial rites when they died. For his service the servant became the heir to the parents' property.

Ancient contracts have been found that specify the duties of an adopted son and describe the relationship of the adoptee to any natural son born at a later time. Usually the natural son assumed the firstborn status. However, the adopted son was still treated well and not forsaken.

The relationship between Abram and Eliezer was a common relationship for that time. When Abram grew old, he made Eliezer his heir, probably with the usual stipulation that if a natural son was born, Eliezer would take second place. But even after the birth of Abram's sons, Ishmael and Isaac, Eliezer still maintained an important status in the household. He controlled all that Abram possessed (Ge 24:2) and, as the oldest and most trusted of Abram's servants, even had the important task of selecting Isaac's wife (24:3).

of his city. 11"No, my lord," he said. "Listen to me; I give[a] you the field, and I give[a] you the cave that is in it. I give[a] it to you in the presence of my people. Bury your dead."

12Again Abraham bowed down before the people of the land 13and he said to Ephron in their hearing, "Listen to me, if you will. I will pay the price of the field. Accept it from me so I can bury my dead there."

14Ephron answered Abraham, 15"Listen to me, my lord; the land is worth four hundred shekels[b] of silver, but what is that between you and me? Bury your dead."

16Abraham agreed to Ephron's terms and weighed out for him the price he had named in the hearing of the Hittites: four hundred shekels of silver, according to the weight current among the merchants.

17So Ephron's field in Machpelah near Mamre—both the field and the cave in it, and all the trees within the borders of the field—was deeded 18to Abraham as his property in the presence of all the Hittites who had come to the gate of the city. 19Afterward Abraham buried his wife Sarah in the cave in the field of Machpelah near Mamre (which is at Hebron) in the land of Canaan. 20So the field and the cave in it were deeded to Abraham by the Hittites as a burial site.

Isaac and Rebekah

24 1Abraham was now very old, and the LORD had blessed him in every way. 2He said to the senior servant in his household, the one in charge of all that he had, "Put your hand under my thigh. 3I want you to swear by the LORD, the God of heaven and the God of earth, that you will not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I am living, 4but will go to my country and my own relatives and get a wife for my son Isaac."

5The servant asked him, "What if the woman is unwilling to come back with me to this land? Shall I then take your son back to the country you came from?"

6"Make sure that you do not take my son back there," Abraham said. 7"The LORD, the God of heaven, who brought me out of my father's household and my native land and who spoke to me and promised me on oath, saying, 'To your offspring[c] I will give this land'—he will send his angel before you so that you can get a wife for my son from there. 8If the woman is unwilling to come back with you, then you will be released from this oath of mine. Only do not take my son back there." 9So the servant put his hand under the thigh of his master Abraham and swore an oath to him concerning this matter.

10Then the servant left, taking with him ten of his master's camels loaded with all kinds of good things from his master. He set out for Aram Naharaim[d] and made his way to the town of Nahor. 11He had the camels kneel down near the well outside the town; it was toward evening, the time the women go out to draw water.

12Then he prayed, "LORD, God of my master Abraham, make me successful today, and show kindness to my master Abraham. 13See, I am standing beside this spring, and the daughters of the townspeople are coming out to draw water. 14May it be that when I say to a young woman, 'Please let down your jar that I may have a

[a] *11* Or *sell* [b] *15* That is, about 10 pounds or about 4.6 kilograms [c] *7* Or *seed* [d] *10* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

drink,' and she says, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too'—let her be the one you have chosen for your servant Isaac. By this I will know that you have shown kindness to my master."

15 Before he had finished praying, Rebekah came out with her jar on her shoulder. She was the daughter of Bethuel son of Milkah, who was the wife of Abraham's brother Nahor. 16 The woman was very beautiful, a virgin; no man had ever slept with her. She went down to the spring, filled her jar and came up again.

17 The servant hurried to meet her and said, "Please give me a little water from your jar."

18 "Drink, my lord," she said, and quickly lowered the jar to her hands and gave him a drink. 19 After she had given him a drink, she said, "I'll draw water for your camels too, until they have had enough to drink." 20 So she quickly emptied her jar into the trough, ran back to the well to draw more water, and drew enough for all his camels. 21 Without saying a word, the man watched her closely to learn whether or not the LORD had made his journey successful.

22 When the camels had finished drinking, the man took out a gold nose ring weighing a beka[a] and two gold bracelets weighing ten shekels.[b] 23 Then he asked, "Whose daughter are you? Please tell me, is there room in your father's house for us to spend the night?"

24 She answered him, "I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son that Milkah bore to Nahor." 25 And she added, "We have plenty of straw and fodder, as well as room for you to spend the night."

26 Then the man bowed down and worshiped the LORD, 27 saying, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not abandoned his kindness and faithfulness to my master. As for me, the LORD has led me on the journey to the house of my master's relatives."

28 The young woman ran and told her mother's household about these things. 29 Now Rebekah had a brother named Laban, and he hurried out to the man at the spring. 30 As soon as he had seen the nose ring, and the bracelets on his sister's arms, and had heard Rebekah tell what the man said to her, he went out to the man and found him standing by the camels near the spring. 31 "Come, you who are blessed by the LORD," he said. "Why are you standing out here? I have prepared the house and a place for the camels."

32 So the man went to the house, and the camels were unloaded. Straw and fodder were brought for the camels, and water for him and his men to wash their feet. 33 Then food was set

[a] *22* That is, about 1/5 ounce or about 5.7 grams [b] *22* That is, about 4 ounces or about 115 grams

Journeys of Abraham
Abraham's birthplace has long been identified with Sumerian Ur in southern Mesopotamia. Ur may have sponsored colonies in northern Mesopotamia in the vicinity of Harran, from which Abraham's family possibly originated. At Shechem in central Canaan, Abraham received the promise of God concerning the new land (Ge 12:7). Famine, caused by unpredictable rains in Canaan, forced Abraham to Egypt, which was watered by the Nile River. Yet he would return to the land of promise.

DATING ABRAHAM FROM THE EXODUS

It is not known exactly when the patriarchs lived. The events narrated in Genesis cannot be synchronized with any events outside of the Bible. This has led scholars to propose dates for Abraham from about 2000 B.C. to as late as 1200 B.C. Others have used figures from the Bible to calculate Abraham's time backward from the Exodus.

Years	Chronological Information in Scripture
75	Abraham is 75 when leaving Harran (Ge 12:4).
25	Abraham is 100 when Isaac is born (Ge 21:5).
60	Isaac is 60 (and Abraham 160) when Jacob is born (Ge 25:26).
130	These figures represent a period of 290 years between Abraham's birth and Jacob's arrival in Egypt.
430	Israel's stay in Egypt is reported to be 430 years (Ex 12:40), a number that is rounded to 400 in Ge 15:13.

Following the early date for the Exodus in 1446 B.C., Abraham's birth is calculated at 2166 B.C. (1446 + 290 + 430 = 2166), and his death 175 years later at 1991 B.C.

Following the late date for the Exodus in 1275 B.C., Abraham's birth is calculated at 1995 B.C. (1275 + 290 + 430 + = 1995), and his death at 1820 B.C.

before him, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told you what I have to say."

"Then tell us," Laban said.

34So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. 35The LORD has blessed my master abundantly, and he has become wealthy. He has given him sheep and cattle, silver and gold, male and female servants, and camels and donkeys. 36My master's wife Sarah has borne him a son in her old age, and he has given him everything he owns. 37And my master made me swear an oath, and said, 'You must not get a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I live, 38but go to my father's family and to my own clan, and get a wife for my son.'

39"Then I asked my master, 'What if the woman will not come back with me?'

40"He replied, 'The LORD, before whom I have walked faithfully, will send his angel with you and make your journey a success, so that you can get a wife for my son from my own clan and from my father's family. 41You will be released from my oath if, when you go to my clan, they refuse to give her to you—then you will be released from my oath.'

42"When I came to the spring today, I said, 'LORD, God of my master Abraham, if you will, please grant success to the journey on which I have come. 43See, I am standing beside this spring. If a young woman comes out to draw water and I say to her, "Please let me drink a little water from your jar," 44and if she says to me, "Drink, and I'll draw water for your camels too," let her be the one the LORD has chosen for my master's son.'

45"Before I finished praying in my heart, Rebekah came out, with her jar on her shoulder. She went down to the spring and drew water, and I said to her, 'Please give me a drink.'

46"She quickly lowered her jar from her shoulder and said, 'Drink, and I'll water your camels too.' So I drank, and she watered the camels also.

47"I asked her, 'Whose daughter are you?'

"She said, 'The daughter of Bethuel son of Nahor, whom Milkah bore to him.'

"Then I put the ring in her nose and the bracelets on her arms, 48and I bowed down and worshiped the LORD. I praised the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who had led me on the right road to get the granddaughter of my master's brother for his son. 49Now if you will show kindness and faithfulness to my master, tell me; and if not, tell me, so I may know which way to turn."

50Laban and Bethuel answered, "This is from the LORD; we can say nothing to you one way or the other. 51Here is Rebekah; take her and go, and let her become the wife of your master's son, as the LORD has directed."

52When Abraham's servant heard what they

Science & Technology

Gold can be found in nature as a metal, either pure or mixed with silver and copper. It is easily worked and does not corrode. It has been used as a measure of value from early times, and is a perennial symbol of wealth and rank (Ge 24:22). Where there were no banks, gold could take the place of savings accounts.

said, he bowed down to the ground before the LORD. 53Then the servant brought out gold and silver jewelry and articles of clothing and gave them to Rebekah; he also gave costly gifts to her brother and to her mother. 54Then he and the men who were with him ate and drank and spent the night there.

When they got up the next morning, he said, "Send me on my way to my master."

55But her brother and her mother replied, "Let the young woman remain with us ten days or so; then you[a] may go."

56But he said to them, "Do not detain me, now that the LORD has granted success to my journey. Send me on my way so I may go to my master."

57Then they said, "Let's call the young woman and ask her about it." 58So they called Rebekah and asked her, "Will you go with this man?"

"I will go," she said.

59So they sent their sister Rebekah on her way, along with her nurse and Abraham's servant and his men. 60And they blessed Rebekah and said to her,

"Our sister, may you increase
to thousands upon thousands;
may your offspring possess
the cities of their enemies."

61Then Rebekah and her attendants got ready and mounted the camels and went back with the man. So the servant took Rebekah and left.

62Now Isaac had come from Beer Lahai Roi, for he was living in the Negev. 63He went out to the field one evening to meditate,[b] and as he looked up, he saw camels approaching. 64Rebekah also looked up and saw Isaac. She got down from her camel 65and asked the servant, "Who is that man in the field coming to meet us?"

"He is my master," the servant answered. So she took her veil and covered herself.

66Then the servant told Isaac all he had done. 67Isaac brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he married Rebekah. So she became his wife, and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death.

TIME CAPSULE	2000 to 1900 B.C.
2000–1000	Habiru appear in the ancient Near East as a class of fugitives
1995–1820	Abraham's life (based on late Exodus)
1963–1786	12th Dynasty of Egypt
1963–1934	Amenemhet I rules Egypt during time of prosperity
1950	Copper is mined by Egyptians in Nubia
1900	Mathematicians discover Pythagorean theorem

TRANSITION

The Close of Abraham's Life

Genesis presents a concluding summary of Abraham's story before beginning that of his son Isaac and grandson Jacob. Abraham, who was 100 years old when Isaac was born, was 140 when Isaac married (Ge 25:20) and 160 when Isaac fathered Jacob (25:26). Sometime during the 38 years between Sarah's death (Ge 23:1) and his own, Abraham married Keturah (25:1), one of his concubines.

Ancient Near Eastern custom was for a man to divide his property among his sons before death. The major portion went to Isaac, Abraham's second son, born to his full wife Sarah, with smaller gifts to the other sons (25:5, 6). The Hebrew patriarch died at age 175 (25:7).

• **Genesis 25:1—36:43**

Genesis

The Death of Abraham

25:1 Abraham had taken another wife, whose name was Keturah. 2She bore him Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah. 3Jokshan was the father of Sheba and Dedan; the descendants of Dedan were the Ashurites, the Letushites and the Leummites. 4The sons of Midian were Ephah, Epher, Hanok, Abida and Eldaah. All these were descendants of Keturah.

5Abraham left everything he owned to Isaac. 6But while he was still living, he gave gifts to the sons of his concubines and sent them away from his son Isaac to the land of the east.

7Abraham lived a hundred and seventy-five years. 8Then Abraham breathed his last and died at a good old age, an old man and full of years; and he was gathered to his people. 9His sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the cave of Machpelah near Mamre, in the field of Ephron son of Zohar the Hittite, 10the field Abraham had bought from the Hittites.[c] There Abraham was buried with his wife Sarah. 11After Abraham's death, God blessed his son Isaac, who then lived near Beer Lahai Roi.

[a] *55* Or *she* is uncertain. [b] *63* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word [c] *10* Or *the descendants of Heth*

Buried in the Cave of Machpelah (Ge 25:9, 10)

Abraham purchased a field from a Hittite man named Ephron to bury his wife Sarah (Ge 23:4). His interest in the field was due to the presence of a cave on that property (23:9), making this the only account in the Old Testament of using a cave as a burial site.

Abraham's purchase of the cave of Machpelah began a burial tradition continued by his descendants. Not only was Sarah buried in the cave, but Abraham himself was buried there when he died (Ge 25:9, 10). Abraham's son Isaac was living nearby in Hebron shortly before his death (Ge 35:27; see 23:19), and was buried in the cave along with Rebekah, his wife (Ge 49:31). Isaac's son Jacob buried his wife Leah there, and was himself interred in the cave of Machpelah by his sons, who returned his body from Egypt for that purpose (Ge 49:29–33; 50:13).

Caves were usually used not as burial sites but as places of refuge. When Lot and his daughters fled Sodom and had nowhere else to live, they inhabited a cave (Ge 19:30). Five Amorite kings who were fighting against the Israelites fled during the battle to hide in the cave at Makkedah (Jos 10:16). Because hiding from King Saul occupied much of David's early military life, he seems to have spent more time living in a cave than anywhere else (1Sa 22:1; 24:1–3). Even Elijah, when he ran from the angry queen Jezebel, found refuge in a desert cave (1Ki 19:13).

In ancient times caves were only infrequently used for burials. In some periods cadavers were buried in the floors of houses, but during most periods tombs were carved from the soft limestone rock in the Palestinian hills or dug into the dirt. Most often burials were grouped together, much like our modern tradition of cemeteries. Like the cave of Machpelah, burials were often family affairs, and burial sites were used for generations.

With little effort ancient peoples could utilize caves as ready-made houses or storage areas. It seems that only rarely would they give up this use of caves by making them burial sites. Perhaps, due to Abraham's landlessness as a foreigner (Ge 23:4), his only recourse was to purchase a plot of land for the burial of his family, and the cave was a ready-made tomb for that purpose.

Ishmael's Sons

12 This is the account of the family line of
Abraham's son Ishmael, whom Sarah's slave,
Hagar the Egyptian, bore to Abraham.

13 These are the names of the sons of Ish-
mael, listed in the order of their birth: Neba-
ioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar, Adbeel,
Mibsam, 14 Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 15 Hadad,
Tema, Jetur, Naphish and Kedemah. 16 These
were the sons of Ishmael, and these are the
names of the twelve tribal rulers according to
their settlements and camps. 17 Ishmael lived a
hundred and thirty-seven years. He breathed
his last and died, and he was gathered to his
people. 18 His descendants settled in the area
from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern border
of Egypt, as you go toward Ashur. And they
lived in hostility toward[a] all the tribes related
to them.

Jacob and Esau

19 This is the account of the family line of
Abraham's son Isaac.

Abraham became the father of Isaac, 20 and
Isaac was forty years old when he married Re-
bekah daughter of Bethuel the Aramean from
Paddan Aram[b] and sister of Laban the Aramean.

21 Isaac prayed to the LORD on behalf of his
wife, because she was childless. The LORD an-
swered his prayer, and his wife Rebekah be-
came pregnant. 22 The babies jostled each other
within her, and she said, "Why is this happen-
ing to me?" So she went to inquire of the LORD.
23 The LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples from within you will be
separated;
one people will be stronger than the
other,
and the older will serve the younger."

24 When the time came for her to give birth,
there were twin boys in her womb. 25 The first
to come out was red, and his whole body was
like a hairy garment; so they named him Esau.[c]
26 After this, his brother came out, with his hand
grasping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob.[d]
Isaac was sixty years old when Rebekah gave
birth to them.

27 The boys grew up, and Esau became a skill-
ful hunter, a man of the open country, while
Jacob was content to stay at home among the
tents. 28 Isaac, who had a taste for wild game,
loved Esau, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 Once when Jacob was cooking some stew,
Esau came in from the open country, famished.
30 He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of
that red stew! I'm famished!" (That is why he
was also called Edom.[e])

[a] *18* Or *lived to the east of* [b] *20* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia [c] *25* *Esau* may mean *hairy*. [d] *26* *Jacob* means *he grasps the heel*, a Hebrew idiom for *he deceives*. [e] *30* *Edom* means *red*.

31 Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright."
32 "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?"
33 But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob.
34 Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left.
So Esau despised his birthright.

Isaac and Abimelek

26 1 Now there was a famine in the land—besides the previous famine in Abraham's time—and Isaac went to Abimelek king of the Philistines in Gerar. 2 The LORD appeared to Isaac and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land where I tell you to live. 3 Stay in this land for a while, and I will be with you and will bless you. For to you and your descendants I will give all these lands and will confirm the oath I swore to your father Abraham. 4 I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and will give them all these lands, and through your offspring[a] all nations on earth will be blessed,[b] 5 because Abraham obeyed me and did everything I required of him, keeping my commands, my decrees and my instructions." 6 So Isaac stayed in Gerar.
7 When the men of that place asked him about his wife, he said, "She is my sister," because he was afraid to say, "She is my wife." He thought, "The men of this place might kill me on account of Rebekah, because she is beautiful."
8 When Isaac had been there a long time, Abimelek king of the Philistines looked down from a window and saw Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah. 9 So Abimelek summoned Isaac and said, "She is really your wife! Why did you say, 'She is my sister'?"
Isaac answered him, "Because I thought I might lose my life on account of her."
10 Then Abimelek said, "What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us."
11 So Abimelek gave orders to all the people: "Anyone who harms this man or his wife shall surely be put to death."
12 Isaac planted crops in that land and the same year reaped a hundredfold, because the LORD blessed him. 13 The man became rich, and his wealth continued to grow until he became very wealthy. 14 He had so many flocks and herds and servants that the Philistines envied him. 15 So all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the time of his father Abraham, the Philistines stopped up, filling them with earth.
16 Then Abimelek said to Isaac, "Move away from us; you have become too powerful for us."
17 So Isaac moved away from there and encamped in the Valley of Gerar, where he settled. 18 Isaac reopened the wells that had been dug in the time of his father Abraham, which the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham died, and he gave them the same names his father had given them.
19 Isaac's servants dug in the valley and discovered a well of fresh water there. 20 But the herders of Gerar quarreled with those of Isaac and said, "The water is ours!" So he named the well Esek,[c] because they disputed with him. 21 Then they dug another well, but they quar-

[a] 4 Or *seed* [b] 4 Or *and all nations on earth will use the name of your offspring in blessings* (see 48:20) [c] 20 *Esek* means *dispute.*

Changing Empires of the Near East
In Egypt the Old Kingdom was followed by civil strife between Herakleopolis and Thebes. Thebes eventually reunited Egypt in 2040 B.C. In Mesopotamia, Ur-Nammu founded the 3rd Dynasty of Ur (2112–2004 B.C.). As this great city-state declined, smaller kingdoms, such as Isin, Larsa, Asshur, Mari, and Babylon, asserted their independence from Ur's control.

reled over that one also; so he named it Sitnah.[a]
22 He moved on from there and dug another
well, and no one quarreled over it. He named it
Rehoboth,[b] saying, "Now the LORD has given us
room and we will flourish in the land."
23 From there he went up to Beersheba.
24 That night the LORD appeared to him and
said, "I am the God of your father Abraham. Do
not be afraid, for I am with you; I will bless you
and will increase the number of your descen-
dants for the sake of my servant Abraham."
25 Isaac built an altar there and called on the
name of the LORD. There he pitched his tent,
and there his servants dug a well.
26 Meanwhile, Abimelek had come to him
from Gerar, with Ahuzzath his personal ad-
viser and Phicol the commander of his forces.
27 Isaac asked them, "Why have you come to
me, since you were hostile to me and sent me
away?"
28 They answered, "We saw clearly that the
LORD was with you; so we said, 'There ought to
be a sworn agreement between us'—between
us and you. Let us make a treaty with you 29 that
you will do us no harm, just as we did not harm
you but always treated you well and sent you
away peacefully. And now you are blessed by
the LORD."
30 Isaac then made a feast for them, and they
ate and drank. 31 Early the next morning the
men swore an oath to each other. Then Isaac
sent them on their way, and they went away
peacefully.
32 That day Isaac's servants came and told
him about the well they had dug. They said,
"We've found water!" 33 He called it Shibah,[c]
and to this day the name of the town has been
Beersheba.[d]

Jacob Takes Esau's Blessing

34 When Esau was forty years old, he married
Judith daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and also
Basemath daughter of Elon the Hittite. 35 They
were a source of grief to Isaac and Rebekah.

27 1 When Isaac was old and his eyes were
so weak that he could no longer see, he
called for Esau his older son and said to him,
"My son."
"Here I am," he answered.
2 Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't
know the day of my death. 3 Now then, get
your equipment—your quiver and bow—and
go out to the open country to hunt some wild
game for me. 4 Prepare me the kind of tasty
food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I
may give you my blessing before I die."
5 Now Rebekah was listening as Isaac spoke
to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open
country to hunt game and bring it back, 6 Re-
bekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard
your father say to your brother Esau, 7 'Bring
me some game and prepare me some tasty
food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing
in the presence of the LORD before I die.' 8 Now,
my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you:
9 Go out to the flock and bring me two choice
young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food
for your father, just the way he likes it. 10 Then
take it to your father to eat, so that he may give
you his blessing before he dies."
11 Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "But my
brother Esau is a hairy man while I have smooth
skin. 12 What if my father touches me? I would
appear to be tricking him and would bring down
a curse on myself rather than a blessing."
13 His mother said to him, "My son, let the
curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get
them for me."
14 So he went and got them and brought them
to his mother, and she prepared some tasty
food, just the way his father liked it. 15 Then Re-
bekah took the best clothes of Esau her older
son, which she had in the house, and put them
on her younger son Jacob. 16 She also covered
his hands and the smooth part of his neck with
the goatskins. 17 Then she handed to her son Ja-
cob the tasty food and the bread she had made.
18 He went to his father and said, "My father."
"Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?"
19 Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your
firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit
up and eat some of my game, so that you may
give me your blessing."
20 Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so
quickly, my son?"
"The LORD your God gave me success," he
replied.
21 Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I
can touch you, my son, to know whether you
really are my son Esau or not."
22 Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who

Marriage & Family
Primogeniture is the social custom of giving the firstborn son the natural right to succeed his father as supreme head of the family (Ge 27:32). Like the right of a prince to become king, primogeniture is not based on merit or talent, but on the accident of birth. The Bible recounts several struggles between firstborn and younger sons.

[a] *21 Sitnah* means *opposition.* [b] *22 Rehoboth* means *room.*
[c] *33 Shibah* can mean *oath* or *seven.* [d] *33 Beersheba* can mean *well of the oath* and *well of seven.*

EGYPT AND THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

Egypt's Old Kingdom was followed by the First Intermediate Period. This time of social upheaval saw the collapse of the central government.

First Intermediate Period	The Dynasties
2160–2010 B.C.	9th–10th Dynasties. Local princes and barons vied for power. Territorial conflicts and disorder among the social classes replaced stability. Bedouins from Asia settled in the Delta region.
c. 2100 B.C.	Two city-states, Herakleopolis and Thebes, competed for power.
2040 B.C.	Thebes was victorious and brought an end to civil war in Egypt.
The Middle Kingdom	**The Dynasties**
2106–1786 B.C.	11th and 12th Dynasties. Thebes' victory in 2040 allowed Egypt to pursue peacetime activities. But not until Amenemhet I began the 12th Dynasty in 1963 B.C. could Egypt experience peace and prosperity.

touched him and said, "The voice is the voice
of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau."
23 He did not recognize him, for his hands were
hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he pro-
ceeded to bless him. 24 "Are you really my son
Esau?" he asked.

"I am," he replied.

25 Then he said, "My son, bring me some of
your game to eat, so that I may give you my
blessing."

Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he
brought some wine and he drank. 26 Then his
father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son,
and kiss me."

27 So he went to him and kissed him. When
Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he
blessed him and said,

"Ah, the smell of my son
is like the smell of a field
that the LORD has blessed.

28 May God give you heaven's dew
and earth's richness—
an abundance of grain and new wine.
29 May nations serve you
and peoples bow down to you.
Be lord over your brothers,
and may the sons of your mother bow
down to you.
May those who curse you be cursed
and those who bless you be blessed."

30 After Isaac finished blessing him, and Ja-
cob had scarcely left his father's presence, his
brother Esau came in from hunting. 31 He too
prepared some tasty food and brought it to his
father. Then he said to him, "My father, please
sit up and eat some of my game, so that you
may give me your blessing."

32 His father Isaac asked him, "Who are you?"

"I am your son," he answered, "your firstborn,
Esau."

33 Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who
was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to
me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed
him—and indeed he will be blessed!"

34 When Esau heard his father's words, he
burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said
to his father, "Bless me—me too, my father!"

35 But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully
and took your blessing."

36 Esau said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob[a]?
This is the second time he has taken advantage
of me: He took my birthright, and now he's tak-
en my blessing!" Then he asked, "Haven't you
reserved any blessing for me?"

[a] *36 Jacob* means *he grasps the heel*, a Hebrew idiom for *he takes advantage of* or *he deceives*.

TIME CAPSULE	1900 to 1860 B.C.
1900–1750	Asshur establishes a merchant colony at Kanesh in Anatolia
1900	Amorite dynasty rules the city of Ugarit
1900	Ionic-speaking people move into Greece
1876	Jacob enters Egypt (based on early Exodus; Ge 46:3)
1862–1843	Sesostris III restrains the powers of Egypt's provincial families
1860–1750	Execration Texts of Egypt

The Mari Tablet Towns (Ge 28:10)

It is not known exactly when the patriarchs lived. Estimates for dating Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob range from about 2100 to 1800 B.C. Such dates would locate the patriarchal period sometime before, or simultaneous with, the Mari tablets, which themselves have been placed between 1813 and 1760 B.C.

Mari was once a powerful city located about halfway between Babylon and the Mediterranean Sea. Situated on the banks of the Euphrates River, Mari became rich through trading. Although the city is not named in the Bible, it is well known today because a large archive of official documents, now called the Mari tablets, was discovered there.

More than 20,000 clay tablets written in the Accadian language were dug up at the excavation site. The royal palace of Zimri-Lim, the last king of Mari, had more than 300 rooms, and it was in these rooms that archaeologists found the tablets.

Mari was very powerful for several hundred years, up to 1760 B.C., when it was destroyed by Hammurabi of Babylon. Hammurabi took away many documents, especially treaties and works on religion, before he abandoned the library. What remains is an extensive record dealing with many aspects of government.

The royal palace kept all kinds of administrative records, including lists of supplies, purchases, and expenses. Supplies and accounts for the women of the palace and the harem were kept separately. There are many letters to and from other cities.

The Mari tablets frequently mention the cities of Nahor and Harran. Both Abraham (Ge 11:31) and Jacob (27:43; 28:10) lived in Harran at separate times during their lives. Abraham's servant is reported to have traveled to Nahor (24:10). Since cities mentioned in the Mari tablets are also named in the patriarchal stories, it is possible that the tablets reflect aspects of the culture known by the patriarchs.

37 Isaac answered Esau, "I have made him
lord over you and have made all his relatives
his servants, and I have sustained him with
grain and new wine. So what can I possibly do
for you, my son?"
38 Esau said to his father, "Do you have only
one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my fa-
ther!" Then Esau wept aloud.
39 His father Isaac answered him,

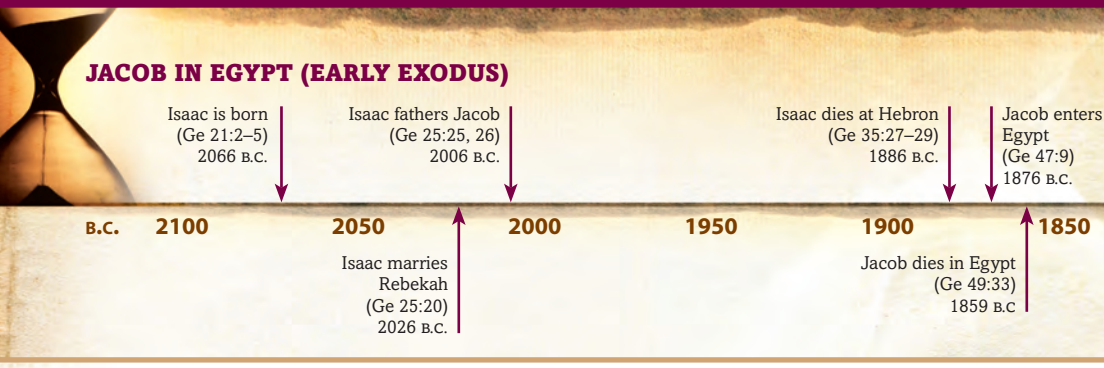
"Your dwelling will be
away from the earth's richness,
away from the dew of heaven above.
40 You will live by the sword
and you will serve your brother.
But when you grow restless,
you will throw his yoke
from off your neck."

41 Esau held a grudge against Jacob because
of the blessing his father had given him. He said
to himself, "The days of mourning for my father
are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."
42 When Rebekah was told what her older
son Esau had said, she sent for her younger
son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau
is planning to avenge himself by killing you.
43 Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once
to my brother Laban in Harran. 44 Stay with him
for a while until your brother's fury subsides.
45 When your brother is no longer angry with
you and forgets what you did to him, I'll send
word for you to come back from there. Why
should I lose both of you in one day?"

46 Then Rebekah said to Isaac, "I'm disgusted
with living because of these Hittite women. If
Jacob takes a wife from among the women of
this land, from Hittite women like these, my life
will not be worth living."

28 1 So Isaac called for Jacob and blessed
him. Then he commanded him: "Do
not marry a Canaanite woman. 2 Go at once
to Paddan Aram,[a] to the house of your moth-
er's father Bethuel. Take a wife for yourself
there, from among the daughters of Laban,
your mother's brother. 3 May God Almighty[b]
bless you and make you fruitful and increase
your numbers until you become a community
of peoples. 4 May he give you and your descen-
dants the blessing given to Abraham, so that
you may take possession of the land where
you now reside as a foreigner, the land God
gave to Abraham." 5 Then Isaac sent Jacob on
his way, and he went to Paddan Aram, to La-
ban son of Bethuel the Aramean, the brother
of Rebekah, who was the mother of Jacob and
Esau.
6 Now Esau learned that Isaac had blessed
Jacob and had sent him to Paddan Aram
to take a wife from there, and that when he
blessed him he commanded him, "Do not mar-
ry a Canaanite woman," 7 and that Jacob had
obeyed his father and mother and had gone
to Paddan Aram. 8 Esau then realized how dis-
pleasing the Canaanite women were to his fa-
ther Isaac; 9 so he went to Ishmael and married
Mahalath, the sister of Nebaioth and daughter
of Ishmael son of Abraham, in addition to the
wives he already had.

[a] 2 That is, Northwest Mesopotamia; also in verses 5, 6 and 7
[b] 3 Hebrew *El-Shaddai*



Jacob's Dream at Bethel

10 Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Harran.
11 When he reached a certain place, he stopped
for the night because the sun had set. Taking
one of the stones there, he put it under his
head and lay down to sleep. 12 He had a dream
in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth,
with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels
of God were ascending and descending on it.
13 There above it[a] stood the LORD, and he said:
"I am the LORD, the God of your father Abraham
and the God of Isaac. I will give you and your
descendants the land on which you are lying.
14 Your descendants will be like the dust of the
earth, and you will spread out to the west and to
the east, to the north and to the south. All peo-
ples on earth will be blessed through you and
your offspring.[b] 15 I am with you and will watch
over you wherever you go, and I will bring you
back to this land. I will not leave you until I have
done what I have promised you."
16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he
thought, "Surely the LORD is in this place, and
I was not aware of it." 17 He was afraid and said,
"How awesome is this place! This is none oth-
er than the house of God; this is the gate of
heaven."
18 Early the next morning Jacob took the
stone he had placed under his head and set it
up as a pillar and poured oil on top of it. 19 He
called that place Bethel,[c] though the city used
to be called Luz.
20 Then Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God
will be with me and will watch over me on this
journey I am taking and will give me food to eat
and clothes to wear 21 so that I return safely to
my father's household, then the LORD[d] will be
my God 22 and[e] this stone that I have set up as
a pillar will be God's house, and of all that you
give me I will give you a tenth."

Jacob Arrives in Paddan Aram

29 1 Then Jacob continued on his journey
and came to the land of the eastern peo-
ples. 2 There he saw a well in the open country,
with three flocks of sheep lying near it because
the flocks were watered from that well. The
stone over the mouth of the well was large.
3 When all the flocks were gathered there, the
shepherds would roll the stone away from the
well's mouth and water the sheep. Then they
would return the stone to its place over the
mouth of the well.
4 Jacob asked the shepherds, "My brothers,
where are you from?"
"We're from Harran," they replied.
5 He said to them, "Do you know Laban, Na-
hor's grandson?"
"Yes, we know him," they answered.
6 Then Jacob asked them, "Is he well?"
"Yes, he is," they said, "and here comes his
daughter Rachel with the sheep."
7 "Look," he said, "the sun is still high; it is
not time for the flocks to be gathered. Water
the sheep and take them back to pasture."
8 "We can't," they replied, "until all the flocks
are gathered and the stone has been rolled
away from the mouth of the well. Then we will
water the sheep."
9 While he was still talking with them, Rachel
came with her father's sheep, for she was a
shepherd. 10 When Jacob saw Rachel daughter
of his uncle Laban, and Laban's sheep, he went
over and rolled the stone away from the mouth
of the well and watered his uncle's sheep.
11 Then Jacob kissed Rachel and began to weep
aloud. 12 He had told Rachel that he was a rela-
tive of her father and a son of Rebekah. So she
ran and told her father.
13 As soon as Laban heard the news about Ja-
cob, his sister's son, he hurried to meet him.
He embraced him and kissed him and brought
him to his home, and there Jacob told him all

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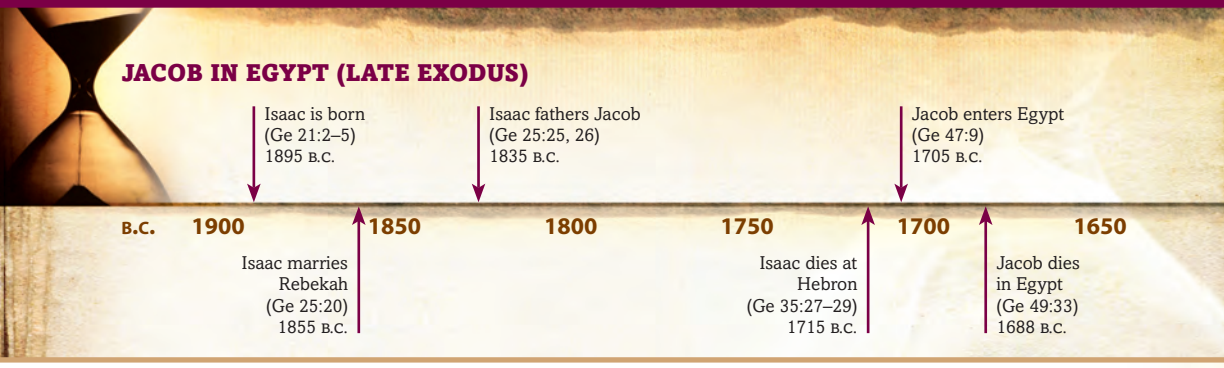
[a] *13* Or *There beside him* [b] *14* Or *will use your name and the name of your offspring in blessings* (see 48:20)
[c] *19* *Bethel* means *house of God.* [d] *20,21* Or *Since God . . . father's household, the* LORD [e] *21,22* Or *household, and the* LORD *will be my God,* 22 *then*



these things. 14Then Laban said to him, "You are my own flesh and blood."

Jacob Marries Leah and Rachel

After Jacob had stayed with him for a whole month, 15Laban said to him, "Just because you are a relative of mine, should you work for me for nothing? Tell me what your wages should be."

16Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17Leah had weak[a] eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful. 18Jacob was in love with Rachel and said, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter Rachel."

19Laban said, "It's better that I give her to you than to some other man. Stay here with me." 20So Jacob served seven years to get Rachel, but they seemed like only a few days to him because of his love for her.

21Then Jacob said to Laban, "Give me my wife. My time is completed, and I want to make love to her."

22So Laban brought together all the people of the place and gave a feast. 23But when evening came, he took his daughter Leah and brought her to Jacob, and Jacob made love to her. 24And Laban gave his servant Zilpah to his daughter as her attendant.

25When morning came, there was Leah! So Jacob said to Laban, "What is this you have done to me? I served you for Rachel, didn't I? Why have you deceived me?"

26Laban replied, "It is not our custom here to give the younger daughter in marriage before the older one. 27Finish this daughter's bridal week; then we will give you the younger one also, in return for another seven years of work."

28And Jacob did so. He finished the week with Leah, and then Laban gave him his daughter Rachel to be his wife. 29Laban gave his servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her attendant. 30Jacob made love to Rachel also, and his love for Rachel was greater than his love for Leah. And he worked for Laban another seven years.

Jacob's Children

31When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive, but Rachel remained childless. 32Leah became pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Reuben,[b] for she said, "It is because the LORD has seen my misery. Surely my husband will love me now."

33She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Because the LORD heard that I am not loved, he gave me this one too." So she named him Simeon.[c]

34Again she conceived, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "Now at last my husband will become attached to me, because I have borne him three sons." So he was named Levi.[d]

35She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named him Judah.[e] Then she stopped having children.

30 1When Rachel saw that she was not bearing Jacob any children, she became jealous of her sister. So she said to Jacob, "Give me children, or I'll die!"

2Jacob became angry with her and said, "Am I in the place of God, who has kept you from having children?"

3Then she said, "Here is Bilhah, my servant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and I too can build a family through her."

4So she gave him her servant Bilhah as a wife. Jacob slept with her, 5and she became pregnant and bore him a son. 6Then Rachel said, "God has vindicated me; he has listened

[a] *17* Or *delicate* [b] *32* *Reuben* sounds like the Hebrew for *he has seen my misery*; the name means *see, a son.* [c] *33* *Simeon* probably means *one who hears.* [d] *34* *Levi* sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for *attached.* [e] *35* *Judah* sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for *praise.*

to my plea and given me a son." Because of this she named him Dan.[a]

7Rachel's servant Bilhah conceived again and bore Jacob a second son. 8Then Rachel said, "I have had a great struggle with my sister, and I have won." So she named him Naphtali.[b]

9When Leah saw that she had stopped having children, she took her servant Zilpah and gave her to Jacob as a wife. 10Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a son. 11Then Leah said, "What good fortune!"[c] So she named him Gad.[d]

12Leah's servant Zilpah bore Jacob a second son. 13Then Leah said, "How happy I am! The women will call me happy." So she named him Asher.[e]

14During wheat harvest, Reuben went out into the fields and found some mandrake plants, which he brought to his mother Leah. Rachel said to Leah, "Please give me some of your son's mandrakes."

15But she said to her, "Wasn't it enough that you took away my husband? Will you take my son's mandrakes too?"

"Very well," Rachel said, "he can sleep with you tonight in return for your son's mandrakes."

16So when Jacob came in from the fields that evening, Leah went out to meet him. "You must sleep with me," she said. "I have hired you with my son's mandrakes." So he slept with her that night.

17God listened to Leah, and she became pregnant and bore Jacob a fifth son. 18Then Leah said, "God has rewarded me for giving my servant to my husband." So she named him Issachar.[f]

19Leah conceived again and bore Jacob a sixth son. 20Then Leah said, "God has presented me with a precious gift. This time my husband will treat me with honor, because I have borne him six sons." So she named him Zebulun.[g]

21Some time later she gave birth to a daughter and named her Dinah.

22Then God remembered Rachel; he listened to her and enabled her to conceive. 23She became pregnant and gave birth to a son and said, "God has taken away my disgrace." 24She named him Joseph,[h] and said, "May the LORD add to me another son."

Jacob's Flocks Increase

25After Rachel gave birth to Joseph, Jacob said to Laban, "Send me on my way so I can go back to my own homeland. 26Give me my wives and children, for whom I have served you, and I will be on my way. You know how much work I've done for you."

27But Laban said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, please stay. I have learned by divination that the LORD has blessed me because of you." 28He added, "Name your wages, and I will pay them."

29Jacob said to him, "You know how I have worked for you and how your livestock has fared under my care. 30The little you had before I came has increased greatly, and the LORD has blessed you wherever I have been. But now, when may I do something for my own household?"

31"What shall I give you?" he asked.

"Don't give me anything," Jacob replied. "But if you will do this one thing for me, I will go on tending your flocks and watching over them: 32Let me go through all your flocks today and remove from them every speckled or spotted sheep, every dark-colored lamb and every spotted or speckled goat. They will be my wages. 33And my honesty will testify for me in the future, whenever you check on the wages you have paid me. Any goat in my possession that is not speckled or spotted, or any lamb that is not dark-colored, will be considered stolen."

34"Agreed," said Laban. "Let it be as you have said." 35That same day he removed all the male goats that were streaked or spotted, and all the speckled or spotted female goats (all that had white on them) and all the dark-colored lambs, and he placed them in the care of his sons. 36Then he put a three-day journey between himself and Jacob, while Jacob continued to tend the rest of Laban's flocks.

37Jacob, however, took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches. 38Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering troughs, so that they would be di-

Health & Medicine
A mandrake (Ge 30:14) is a small plant that blooms in the spring and has roots resembling a person's legs. It was by reputation an aphrodisiac, or aid to physical passion. Plants get their reputations as medicines or potions sometimes from science and sometimes from tradition or superstition, or from a mixture of these.

[a] *6 Dan* here means *he has vindicated.* [b] *8 Naphtali* means *my struggle.* [c] *11* Or *"A troop is coming!"* [d] *11 Gad* can mean *good fortune* or *a troop.* [e] *13 Asher* means *happy.* [f] *18 Issachar* sounds like the Hebrew for *reward.* [g] *20 Zebulun* probably means *honor.* [h] *24 Joseph* means *may he add.*

rectly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink, 39they mated in front of the branches. And they bore young that were streaked or speckled or spotted. 40Jacob set apart the young of the flock by themselves, but made the rest face the streaked and dark-colored animals that belonged to Laban. Thus he made separate flocks for himself and did not put them with Laban's animals. 41Whenever the stronger females were in heat, Jacob would place the branches in the troughs in front of the animals so they would mate near the branches, 42but if the animals were weak, he would not place them there. So the weak animals went to Laban and the strong ones to Jacob. 43In this way the man grew exceedingly prosperous and came to own large flocks, and female and male servants, and camels and donkeys.

Jacob Flees From Laban

31 1Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, "Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father." 2And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been.

3Then the LORD said to Jacob, "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you."

4So Jacob sent word to Rachel and Leah to come out to the fields where his flocks were. 5He said to them, "I see that your father's attitude toward me is not what it was before, but the God of my father has been with me. 6You know that I've worked for your father with all my strength, 7yet your father has cheated me by changing my wages ten times. However, God has not allowed him to harm me. 8If he said, 'The speckled ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks gave birth to speckled young; and if he said, 'The streaked ones will be your wages,' then all the flocks bore streaked young. 9So God has taken away your father's livestock and has given them to me.

10"In breeding season I once had a dream in which I looked up and saw that the male goats mating with the flock were streaked, speckled or spotted. 11The angel of God said to me in the dream, 'Jacob.' I answered, 'Here I am.' 12And he said, 'Look up and see that all the male goats mating with the flock are streaked, speckled or spotted, for I have seen all that Laban has been doing to you. 13I am the God of Bethel, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to me. Now leave this land at once and go back to your native land.'"

14Then Rachel and Leah replied, "Do we still have any share in the inheritance of our father's estate? 15Does he not regard us as foreigners? Not only has he sold us, but he has used up what was paid for us. 16Surely all the wealth that God took away from our father belongs to us and our children. So do whatever God has told you."

17Then Jacob put his children and his wives on camels, 18and he drove all his livestock ahead of him, along with all the goods he had accumulated in Paddan Aram,[a] to go to his father Isaac in the land of Canaan.

19When Laban had gone to shear his sheep, Rachel stole her father's household gods. 20Moreover, Jacob deceived Laban the Aramean by not telling him he was running away. 21So he fled with all he had, crossed the Euphrates River, and headed for the hill country of Gilead.

Laban Pursues Jacob

22On the third day Laban was told that Jacob had fled. 23Taking his relatives with him, he pursued Jacob for seven days and caught up with him in the hill country of Gilead. 24Then God came to Laban the Aramean in a dream at night and said to him, "Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad."

25Jacob had pitched his tent in the hill country of Gilead when Laban overtook him, and Laban and his relatives camped there too. 26Then Laban said to Jacob, "What have you done? You've deceived me, and you've carried off my daughters like captives in war. 27Why did you run off secretly and deceive me? Why didn't you tell me, so I could send you away with joy and singing to the music of timbrels and harps? 28You didn't even let me kiss my grandchildren and my daughters goodbye. You have done a foolish thing. 29I have the power to harm you; but last night the God of your father said to me, 'Be careful not to say anything to Jacob, either good or bad.' 30Now you have gone off because you longed to return to your father's household. But why did you steal my gods?"

31Jacob answered Laban, "I was afraid, because I thought you would take your daughters away from me by force. 32But if you find anyone who has your gods, that person shall not live. In the presence of our relatives, see for yourself whether there is anything of yours here with me; and if so, take it." Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen the gods.

33So Laban went into Jacob's tent and into

[a] *18* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

Family Leadership and Household Gods (Ge 31:30–34)

One of the most curious stories of the patriarchal accounts is the theft of Laban's gods by his daughter Rachel (Ge 31:19). What makes this story seem so out of place is that these gods are never mentioned again after this episode, nor were they mentioned previously. Another oddity is Laban's insistence on finding the gods (31:33–35). After all, they were probably made of clay, like the hundreds of household gods that have been found in archaeological excavations, and had little intrinsic value.

Laban's accusation provoked reaction from Jacob centered on his mistreatment while with Laban (31:38–41). Jacob went so far as to claim that it was God alone who provided his wealth; he got nothing from Laban (31:42). Laban disputed that claim and suggested that all that Jacob possessed, including his wives, was actually Laban's (31:43). Certainly the two men could not agree on who owned what!

Conciliation was reached by making a covenant and establishing a boundary between Laban and Jacob (31:44–52). Since it was Laban who suggested the pillar of stones as a protective barrier, we can suppose that he had some fear of Jacob, even though it was Laban who had until this time been pursuing Jacob.

The story presents various puzzles: Laban's determination to recover the household gods; both men's claim of ownership of the wives, children and flocks; Laban's initiation of a boundary. Understanding these puzzles is helped by evidence that household gods served a purpose in addition to that of worship. Information gathered from one ancient tablet found at the 2nd millennium city of Nuzi suggests that, at times, household gods were used as evidence of family leadership.

The claim to leadership enlightens some aspects of this story. It explains why Rachel stole the gods: to give her husband the position of tribal leader. Why Laban was so insistent on getting them back: to make sure one of his own sons would become the family chief. Why Laban wanted to erect a boundary between Jacob and himself: to make sure that Jacob never returned with the household gods to claim the first rights to the family holdings.

Leah's tent and into the tent of the two female
servants, but he found nothing. After he came
out of Leah's tent, he entered Rachel's tent.
34 Now Rachel had taken the household gods
and put them inside her camel's saddle and
was sitting on them. Laban searched through
everything in the tent but found nothing.
35 Rachel said to her father, "Don't be angry,
my lord, that I cannot stand up in your pres-
ence; I'm having my period." So he searched
but could not find the household gods.
36 Jacob was angry and took Laban to task.
"What is my crime?" he asked Laban. "How
have I wronged you that you hunt me down?
37 Now that you have searched through all my
goods, what have you found that belongs to
your household? Put it here in front of your rel-
atives and mine, and let them judge between
the two of us.
38 "I have been with you for twenty years now.
Your sheep and goats have not miscarried, nor
have I eaten rams from your flocks. 39 I did not
bring you animals torn by wild beasts; I bore
the loss myself. And you demanded payment
from me for whatever was stolen by day or
night. 40 This was my situation: The heat con-
sumed me in the daytime and the cold at night,
and sleep fled from my eyes. 41 It was like this
for the twenty years I was in your household.
I worked for you fourteen years for your two
daughters and six years for your flocks, and
you changed my wages ten times. 42 If the God
of my father, the God of Abraham and the Fear
of Isaac, had not been with me, you would sure-
ly have sent me away empty-handed. But God
has seen my hardship and the toil of my hands,
and last night he rebuked you."
43 Laban answered Jacob, "The women are my
daughters, the children are my children, and
the flocks are my flocks. All you see is mine.
Yet what can I do today about these daughters
of mine, or about the children they have borne?
44 Come now, let's make a covenant, you and I,
and let it serve as a witness between us."
45 So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pil-
lar. 46 He said to his relatives, "Gather some
stones." So they took stones and piled them in
a heap, and they ate there by the heap. 47 Laban
called it Jegar Sahadutha, and Jacob called it
Galeed.[a]
48 Laban said, "This heap is a witness be-
tween you and me today." That is why it was
called Galeed. 49 It was also called Mizpah,[b]
because he said, "May the LORD keep watch
between you and me when we are away from
each other. 50 If you mistreat my daughters or if
you take any wives besides my daughters, even
though no one is with us, remember that God
is a witness between you and me."
51 Laban also said to Jacob, "Here is this heap,
and here is this pillar I have set up between you
and me. 52 This heap is a witness, and this pillar
is a witness, that I will not go past this heap to

[a] *47* The Aramaic *Jegar Sahadutha* and the Hebrew *Galeed* both mean *witness heap.* [b] *49* *Mizpah* means *watchtower.*

Laban of Aram-naharaim (Ge 31:47)

Paddan Aram, also known as Aram Naharaim (Dt 23:4), was the home of Laban, a descendant of Abraham's brother Nahor (Ge 28:2). Meaning literally "Aram between the Rivers," Aram Naharaim was the geographic name for upper Mesopotamia—the region between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Egyptian sources, including the Amarna archives from the 14th century, referred to the region as Naharina (without the "Aram" prefix). Some English Bible versions translate it as "Mesopotamia."

Laban is described as an "Aramean" (Ge 28:5). The ethnic group known as the Arameans are not mentioned as inhabitants of this area until the 12th century, but in the early 1st millennium, numerous Aramean states were found in eastern Syria, and many individual Aramean tribes were causing great difficulty for both the Assyrian and Babylonian kingdoms in Mesopotamia.

When Laban speaks the words "Jegar Sahadutha," he is saying "Heap of Witness" in the Aramaic language (Ge 31:47). Until the 1st millennium, Aramaic (a Semitic language closely related to biblical Hebrew) was spoken primarily by people from Aramean states. The Assyrians found Aramaic a convenient language for administering their conquered areas, thus it became an official language in portions of the Neo-Assyrian Empire from the 8th century on. The use of Aramaic spread until it later became the international language of commerce during the period of the Persian Empire's dominance (c. 559–331 B.C.).

The figure of Laban from Paddan Aram (upper Mesopotamia) represents a people that had great influence on their world. The Arameans did not establish major kingdoms, as did the Assyrians and Babylonians. Nevertheless, the adjective "Aramean" was used long after the Aramean political states no longer existed. They left their mark through their language. Although Aramaic was later replaced by Greek in the Mediterranean world, the language continued to be used in the Near East by the Parthians (after 200 B.C.) and could be found as far east as India. It was the primary language of Palestine during the time of Jesus.

your side to harm you and that you will not go
past this heap and pillar to my side to harm me.
53May the God of Abraham and the God of Na-
hor, the God of their father, judge between us."

So Jacob took an oath in the name of the
Fear of his father Isaac. 54He offered a sacrifice
there in the hill country and invited his rela-
tives to a meal. After they had eaten, they spent
the night there.

55Early the next morning Laban kissed his
grandchildren and his daughters and blessed
them. Then he left and returned home.[a]

Jacob Prepares to Meet Esau

32[b] 1Jacob also went on his way, and the an-
gels of God met him. 2When Jacob saw
them, he said, "This is the camp of God!" So he
named that place Mahanaim.[c]

3Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his
brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country
of Edom. 4He instructed them: "This is what
you are to say to my lord Esau: 'Your servant
Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and
have remained there till now. 5I have cattle and
donkeys, sheep and goats, male and female
servants. Now I am sending this message to
my lord, that I may find favor in your eyes.'"

6When the messengers returned to Jacob,
they said, "We went to your brother Esau, and
now he is coming to meet you, and four hun-
dred men are with him."

7In great fear and distress Jacob divided the
people who were with him into two groups,[d]
and the flocks and herds and camels as well.
8He thought, "If Esau comes and attacks one
group,[e] the group[e] that is left may escape."

9Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father
Abraham, God of my father Isaac, LORD, you
who said to me, 'Go back to your country and
your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' 10I
am unworthy of all the kindness and faithful-
ness you have shown your servant. I had only
my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now
I have become two camps. 11Save me, I pray,

[a] *55* In Hebrew texts this verse (31:55) is numbered 32:1.
[b] In Hebrew texts 32:1-32 is numbered 32:2-33.
[c] *2* *Mahanaim* means *two camps.*
[d] *7* Or *camps*
[e] *8* Or *camp*

TIME CAPSULE		1834 to 1800 B.C.
1834		Amorite tribe captures city-state of Larsa
1834–1823		Warad-Sin is appointed by his father to be ruler of Larsa
1822–1763		Rim-Sin, king of Larsa
1813–1781		Shamshi-Adad I of Assyria rules city-state of Asshur and most of northern Mesopotamia
1813–1760		The Mari tablets
1804		King Rim-Sin of Larsa captures Isin
1800		Seminomadic tribe called Bene-yamina makes raids on Mari
1800		Musical notation used in Babylonia

from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children. 12But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'"

13He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau: 14two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, 15thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. 16He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants, "Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds."

17He instructed the one in the lead: "When my brother Esau meets you and asks, 'Who do you belong to, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?' 18then you are to say, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us.'"

19He also instructed the second, the third and all the others who followed the herds: "You are to say the same thing to Esau when you meet him. 20And be sure to say, 'Your servant Jacob is coming behind us.'" For he thought, "I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me." 21So Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp.

Jacob Returns to Canaan

After 20 years in Paddan Aram (northern Mesopotamia), Jacob returned to Canaan. He encountered the angels of God at Mahanaim and wrestled with a messenger of God at Peniel.

Jacob Wrestles With God

22That night Jacob got up and took his two wives, his two female servants and his eleven sons and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. 23After he had sent them across the stream, he sent over all his possessions. 24So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. 25When the man saw that he could not overpower him, he touched the socket of Jacob's hip so that his hip was wrenched as he wrestled with the man. 26Then the man said, "Let me go, for it is daybreak."

But Jacob replied, "I will not let you go unless you bless me."

27The man asked him, "What is your name?"

"Jacob," he answered.

28Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel,[a] because you have struggled with God and with humans and have overcome."

29Jacob said, "Please tell me your name."

But he replied, "Why do you ask my name?" Then he blessed him there.

30So Jacob called the place Peniel,[b] saying, "It is because I saw God face to face, and yet my life was spared."

31The sun rose above him as he passed Peniel,[c] and he was limping because of his hip. 32Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip, because the socket of Jacob's hip was touched near the tendon.

Jacob Meets Esau

33 1Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. 2He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. 3He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother.

4But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept. 5Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. "Who are these with you?" he asked.

Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant."

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[a] *28 Israel* probably means *he struggles with God.*
[b] *30 Peniel* means *face of God.* [c] *31* Hebrew *Penuel*, a variant of *Peniel*

6Then the female servants and their children
approached and bowed down. 7Next, Leah and
her children came and bowed down. Last of all
came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed
down.
8Esau asked, "What's the meaning of all
these flocks and herds I met?"
"To find favor in your eyes, my lord," he said.
9But Esau said, "I already have plenty, my
brother. Keep what you have for yourself."
10"No, please!" said Jacob. "If I have found
favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me.
For to see your face is like seeing the face of
God, now that you have received me favorably.
11Please accept the present that was brought
to you, for God has been gracious to me and
I have all I need." And because Jacob insisted,
Esau accepted it.
12Then Esau said, "Let us be on our way; I'll
accompany you."
13But Jacob said to him, "My lord knows that
the children are tender and that I must care
for the ewes and cows that are nursing their
young. If they are driven hard just one day,
all the animals will die. 14So let my lord go on
ahead of his servant, while I move along slowly
at the pace of the flocks and herds before me
and the pace of the children, until I come to my
lord in Seir."
15Esau said, "Then let me leave some of my
men with you."
"But why do that?" Jacob asked. "Just let me
find favor in the eyes of my lord."
16So that day Esau started on his way back to
Seir. 17Jacob, however, went to Sukkoth, where
he built a place for himself and made shelters
for his livestock. That is why the place is called
Sukkoth.[a]
18After Jacob came from Paddan Aram,[b] he
arrived safely at the city of Shechem in Canaan
and camped within sight of the city. 19For a
hundred pieces of silver,[c] he bought from the
sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, the plot
of ground where he pitched his tent. 20There
he set up an altar and called it El Elohe Israel.[d]

Dinah and the Shechemites

34 1Now Dinah, the daughter Leah had
borne to Jacob, went out to visit the
women of the land. 2When Shechem son of
Hamor the Hivite, the ruler of that area, saw
her, he took her and raped her. 3His heart was
drawn to Dinah daughter of Jacob; he loved the
young woman and spoke tenderly to her. 4And
Shechem said to his father Hamor, "Get me
this girl as my wife."
5When Jacob heard that his daughter Dinah
had been defiled, his sons were in the fields
with his livestock; so he did nothing about it
until they came home.
6Then Shechem's father Hamor went out to
talk with Jacob. 7Meanwhile, Jacob's sons had
come in from the fields as soon as they heard
what had happened. They were shocked and
furious, because Shechem had done an outra-
geous thing in[e] Israel by sleeping with Jacob's
daughter—a thing that should not be done.
8But Hamor said to them, "My son Shechem
has his heart set on your daughter. Please give
her to him as his wife. 9Intermarry with us;
give us your daughters and take our daughters
for yourselves. 10You can settle among us; the
land is open to you. Live in it, trade[f] in it, and
acquire property in it."

[a] *17 Sukkoth* means *shelters.* [b] *18* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia [c] *19* Hebrew *hundred kesitahs*; a kesitah was a unit of money of unknown weight and value. [d] *20 El Elohe Israel* can mean *El is the God of Israel* or *mighty is the God of Israel.* [e] *7* Or *against* [f] *10* Or *move about freely*; also in verse 21

Jacob and Esau
by Francesco Hayez
c. 1844

11Then Shechem said to Dinah's father and
brothers, "Let me find favor in your eyes, and
I will give you whatever you ask. 12Make the
price for the bride and the gift I am to bring
as great as you like, and I'll pay whatever you
ask me. Only give me the young woman as my
wife."
13Because their sister Dinah had been de-
filed, Jacob's sons replied deceitfully as they
spoke to Shechem and his father Hamor.
14They said to them, "We can't do such a thing;
we can't give our sister to a man who is not cir-
cumcised. That would be a disgrace to us. 15We
will enter into an agreement with you on one
condition only: that you become like us by cir-
cumcising all your males. 16Then we will give
you our daughters and take your daughters for
ourselves. We'll settle among you and become
one people with you. 17But if you will not agree
to be circumcised, we'll take our sister and go."
18Their proposal seemed good to Hamor
and his son Shechem. 19The young man, who
was the most honored of all his father's family,
lost no time in doing what they said, because
he was delighted with Jacob's daughter. 20So
Hamor and his son Shechem went to the gate
of their city to speak to the men of their city.
21"These men are friendly toward us," they
said. "Let them live in our land and trade in it;
the land has plenty of room for them. We can
marry their daughters and they can marry
ours. 22But the men will agree to live with us as
one people only on the condition that our males
be circumcised, as they themselves are. 23Won't
their livestock, their property and all their oth-
er animals become ours? So let us agree to their
terms, and they will settle among us."
24All the men who went out of the city gate
agreed with Hamor and his son Shechem, and
every male in the city was circumcised.
25Three days later, while all of them were
still in pain, two of Jacob's sons, Simeon and
Levi, Dinah's brothers, took their swords and
attacked the unsuspecting city, killing every
male. 26They put Hamor and his son Shechem
to the sword and took Dinah from Shechem's
house and left. 27The sons of Jacob came upon
the dead bodies and looted the city where[a]
their sister had been defiled. 28They seized
their flocks and herds and donkeys and every-
thing else of theirs in the city and out in the
fields. 29They carried off all their wealth and all
their women and children, taking as plunder
everything in the houses.
30Then Jacob said to Simeon and Levi, "You
have brought trouble on me by making me ob-
noxious to the Canaanites and Perizzites, the
people living in this land. We are few in number,
and if they join forces against me and attack
me, I and my household will be destroyed."
31But they replied, "Should he have treated
our sister like a prostitute?"

Jacob Returns to Bethel

35 1Then God said to Jacob, "Go up to Beth-
el and settle there, and build an altar
there to God, who appeared to you when you
were fleeing from your brother Esau."
2So Jacob said to his household and to all
who were with him, "Get rid of the foreign
gods you have with you, and purify yourselves
and change your clothes. 3Then come, let us
go up to Bethel, where I will build an altar to
God, who answered me in the day of my dis-
tress and who has been with me wherever I
have gone." 4So they gave Jacob all the foreign
gods they had and the rings in their ears, and
Jacob buried them under the oak at Shechem.
5Then they set out, and the terror of God fell
on the towns all around them so that no one
pursued them.
6Jacob and all the people with him came to
Luz (that is, Bethel) in the land of Canaan.
7There he built an altar, and he called the place
El Bethel,[b] because it was there that God re-
vealed himself to him when he was fleeing
from his brother.
8Now Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, died and
was buried under the oak outside Bethel. So it
was named Allon Bakuth.[c]
9After Jacob returned from Paddan Aram,[d]
God appeared to him again and blessed him.
10God said to him, "Your name is Jacob,[e] but
you will no longer be called Jacob; your name
will be Israel.[f]" So he named him Israel.
11And God said to him, "I am God Almighty[g];
be fruitful and increase in number. A nation
and a community of nations will come from

Architecture & Building
Stone pillars are the oldest kind of monument (Ge 35:14). There are more than 3,000 stone pillars at Carnac, France, from before 2000 B.C. When no writing accompanies a pillar, its meaning usually cannot be recovered. The pyramids and obelisks of Egypt are in effect elaborations of the pillar. Not all carved obelisks have writing on them.

[a] *27* Or *because* [b] *7* *El Bethel* means *God of Bethel.*
[c] *8* *Allon Bakuth* means *oak of weeping.* [d] *9* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia; also in verse 26 [e] *10* *Jacob* means *he grasps the heel*, a Hebrew idiom for *he deceives.*
[f] *10* *Israel* probably means *he struggles with God.*
[g] *11* Hebrew *El-Shaddai*

Benjamin—Sons of the South (Ge 35:18)

Benjamin was the youngest son of the biblical patriarch Jacob. Among the twelve tribes of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin bears his name as its tribal ancestor. Members of this tribe are thus called "Benjaminites" or "Benjamites," among whom the most famous were Saul, the first king of Israel (1Sa 9:1, 2), and Paul the apostle (Php 3:4, 5).

In the biblical narrative of Benjamin's birth, the baby is named by the mother as she was dying in childbirth. The name Rachel gave her son, "Ben-Oni," means "son of my trouble." But the father, Jacob, named the baby "Benjamin" (Ge 35:18). The English syllables "jamin" translate a Hebrew word meaning "right hand" or "south." (In Israel, the south is on the right-hand side as a person faces the east.) Thus the name "Benjamin" meant "son of my right hand" or "son of the south."

Another tribe with a similar name is known from ancient times. Clay tablets from the Amorite site of Mari in Syria give evidence that a tribe called "Bene-yamina" existed around 1800 B.C. The Bene-yamina were an unruly seminomadic group that were causing concern for Mari's king, Zimri-Lim.

The original meaning of the names "Benjamin" and "Bene-yamina" is undeniably the same; both mean literally "sons of the south." Nevertheless, there is no connection between the Israelite tribe and the tribe mentioned in the Mari sources. However, the similar names do suggest that both groups had a Semitic heritage and that "Benjamin" may very well have been a popular name for tribes in the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1500 B.C.).

you, and kings will be among your descendants. 12The land I gave to Abraham and Isaac
I also give to you, and I will give this land to
your descendants after you." 13Then God went
up from him at the place where he had talked
with him.

14Jacob set up a stone pillar at the place where God had talked with him, and he poured out a drink offering on it; he also poured oil on it. 15Jacob called the place where God had talked with him Bethel.[a]

The Deaths of Rachel and Isaac

16Then they moved on from Bethel. While they were still some distance from Ephrath, Rachel began to give birth and had great difficulty. 17And as she was having great difficulty in childbirth, the midwife said to her, "Don't despair, for you have another son." 18As she breathed her last—for she was dying—she named her son Ben-Oni.[b] But his father named him Benjamin.[c]

19So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem). 20Over her tomb Jacob set up a pillar, and to this day that pillar marks Rachel's tomb.

21Israel moved on again and pitched his tent beyond Migdal Eder. 22While Israel was living in that region, Reuben went in and slept with his father's concubine Bilhah, and Israel heard of it.

Jacob had twelve sons:
23The sons of Leah:
Reuben the firstborn of Jacob,
Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun.
24The sons of Rachel:
Joseph and Benjamin.
25The sons of Rachel's servant Bilhah:
Dan and Naphtali.
26The sons of Leah's servant Zilpah:
Gad and Asher.
These were the sons of Jacob, who were born to him in Paddan Aram.

27Jacob came home to his father Isaac in Mamre, near Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), where Abraham and Isaac had stayed. 28Isaac lived a hundred and eighty years. 29Then he breathed his last and died and was gathered to his people, old and full of years. And his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Esau's Descendants

36 1This is the account of the family line of Esau (that is, Edom).

2Esau took his wives from the women of Canaan: Adah daughter of Elon the Hittite, and Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon the Hivite—
3also Basemath daughter of Ishmael and sister of Nebaioth.

4Adah bore Eliphaz to Esau, Basemath bore Reuel, 5and Oholibamah bore Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the sons of Esau, who were born to him in Canaan.

6Esau took his wives and sons and daughters and all the members of his household, as well as his livestock and all his other animals and all the goods he had acquired in Canaan, and moved to a land some distance from his brother Jacob. 7Their possessions were too great for them to remain together; the land where they

[a] *15 Bethel* means *house of God.* [b] *18 Ben-Oni* means *son of my trouble.* [c] *18 Benjamin* means *son of my right hand.*

The Horites of Mount Seir (Ge 36:21)

At one time, Seir and Edom were possibly two separate geographical regions. Seir was a mountainous region; Edom was part of the Transjordanian plateau. Eventually Seir became a part of the Edomite state, and the names "Seir" and "Edom" came to be used interchangeably.

Two different peoples—the Horites and the Edomites—lived in this area known as Seir and Edom. The Horite genealogy in Ge 36:20–30 is distinct from the Edomite genealogy in Ge 36:9–19. The Horites appear to have been a more pastoral people, different from the agricultural Edomites. In the Bible the Horites are described as a group of tribes who inhabited the mountains of Seir until they were displaced by the Edomites (Ge 14:6; Dt 2:12, 22).

When in the 19th century scholars discovered a people called the Hurrians, they assumed a connection between Hurrians and the biblical Horites. But Hurrians were a cultural and political force in north Syria and the Tigris area, and their whereabouts in the northern regions does not correspond with the Horite association with Mount Seir.

The Horites should not be confused with either the Edomites or the Hurrians. All that can be determined about them now is that they were very early inhabitants of Seir.

were staying could not support them both because of their livestock. 8So Esau (that is, Edom) settled in the hill country of Seir.

9This is the account of the family line of Esau the father of the Edomites in the hill country of Seir.

10These are the names of Esau's sons:
Eliphaz, the son of Esau's wife Adah, and Reuel, the son of Esau's wife Basemath.
11The sons of Eliphaz:
Teman, Omar, Zepho, Gatam and Kenaz.
12Esau's son Eliphaz also had a concubine named Timna, who bore him Amalek. These were grandsons of Esau's wife Adah.
13The sons of Reuel:
Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.
14The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah and granddaughter of Zibeon, whom she bore to Esau:
Jeush, Jalam and Korah.

15These were the chiefs among Esau's descendants:
The sons of Eliphaz the firstborn of Esau:
Chiefs Teman, Omar, Zepho, Kenaz, 16Korah,[a] Gatam and Amalek. These were the chiefs descended from Eliphaz in Edom; they were grandsons of Adah.
17The sons of Esau's son Reuel:
Chiefs Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah. These were the chiefs descended from Reuel in Edom; they were grandsons of Esau's wife Basemath.
18The sons of Esau's wife Oholibamah:
Chiefs Jeush, Jalam and Korah. These were the chiefs descended from Esau's wife Oholibamah daughter of Anah.

19These were the sons of Esau (that is, Edom), and these were their chiefs.

20These were the sons of Seir the Horite, who were living in the region:
Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, 21Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These sons of Seir in Edom were Horite chiefs.
22The sons of Lotan:
Hori and Homam.[b] Timna was Lotan's sister.
23The sons of Shobal:
Alvan, Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.
24The sons of Zibeon:
Aiah and Anah. This is the Anah who discovered the hot springs[c] in the desert while he was grazing the donkeys of his father Zibeon.
25The children of Anah:
Dishon and Oholibamah daughter of Anah.
26The sons of Dishon[d]:
Hemdan, Eshban, Ithran and Keran.
27The sons of Ezer:
Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.
28The sons of Dishan:
Uz and Aran.
29These were the Horite chiefs:
Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, 30Dishon, Ezer and Dishan. These were the Horite chiefs, according to their divisions, in the land of Seir.

The Rulers of Edom

31These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned:

[a] *16* Masoretic Text; Samaritan Pentateuch (also verse 11 and 1 Chron. 1:36) does not have *Korah*. [b] *22* Hebrew *Hemam*, a variant of *Homam* (see 1 Chron. 1:39) [c] *24* Vulgate; Syriac *discovered water;* the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [d] *26* Hebrew *Dishan*, a variant of *Dishon*

32 Bela son of Beor became king of Edom.
His city was named Dinhabah.
33 When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from
Bozrah succeeded him as king.
34 When Jobab died, Husham from the land
of the Temanites succeeded him as king.
35 When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad,
who defeated Midian in the country of
Moab, succeeded him as king. His city
was named Avith.
36 When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah
succeeded him as king.
37 When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth
on the river succeeded him as king.
38 When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan son of Ak-
bor succeeded him as king.
39 When Baal-Hanan son of Akbor died, Ha-
dad[a] succeeded him as king. His city
was named Pau, and his wife's name
was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, the
daughter of Me-Zahab.

40 These were the chiefs descended from Esau,
by name, according to their clans and regions:
Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, 41 Oholibamah,
Elah, Pinon, 42 Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar,
43 Magdiel and Iram. These were the
chiefs of Edom, according to their set-
tlements in the land they occupied.

This is the family line of Esau, the father of the Edomites.

TRANSITION

Joseph—a Hebrew in Egypt

The significance of the Hyksos dynasty for the Joseph narratives of Ge 37–50 is debated. Some claim that Joseph's rise to power and the Hebrews' entry into Egypt took place during this time, while others say that the patriarchs must have entered Egypt earlier. In either case, an Egyptian dynasty with Semitic roots would have been a less hostile environment for the Hebrews, and might have contributed to their growth upon arriving there (Ex 1:7).

• **Genesis 37:1—46:34**

Genesis

Joseph's Dreams

37 :1 Jacob lived in the land where his father had stayed, the land of Canaan.

2 This is the account of Jacob's family line.

Joseph, a young man of seventeen, was tending the flocks with his brothers, the sons of Bilhah and the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and he brought their father a bad report about them.

3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any of his other sons, because he had been born to him in his old age; and he made an ornate[b] robe for him. 4 When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" 11 His brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

Joseph Sold by His Brothers

12 Now his brothers had gone to graze their father's flocks near Shechem, 13 and Israel said to Joseph, "As you know, your brothers are grazing the flocks near Shechem. Come, I am going to send you to them."

"Very well," he replied.

14 So he said to him, "Go and see if all is well with your brothers and with the flocks, and bring word back to me." Then he sent him off from the Valley of Hebron.

When Joseph arrived at Shechem, 15 a man found him wandering around in the fields and asked him, "What are you looking for?"

16 He replied, "I'm looking for my brothers. Can you tell me where they are grazing their flocks?"

17 "They have moved on from here," the man answered. "I heard them say, 'Let's go to Dothan.'"

So Joseph went after his brothers and found them near Dothan. 18 But they saw him in the

[a] *39* Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 1:50); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *Hadar* [b] *3* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain; also in verses 23 and 32.

EGYPT IN THE MIDDLE BRONZE AGE

The spread of the Amorite peoples evidently reached even to Egypt. After several prosperous centuries, the Middle Kingdom of Egypt ended, and the land again began to break up politically. In the Second Intermediate Period (1786–1550 B.C.) of Egyptian history, as in the First Intermediate Period, foreigners entered Egypt from Asia and settled in the Nile Delta (see "The Changing of the Empires" at Ge 12:1). Eventually, Egypt fell under the control of these outsiders, a Semitic people, known as the Hyksos (meaning "foreign chiefs"). Although much despised by the native Egyptians, the Hyksos maintained their control from about 1648 to 1540 B.C., even expanding Egypt's control north into Palestine, which became an Egyptian province.

distance, and before he reached them, they plotted to kill him.

19 "Here comes that dreamer!" they said to each other. 20 "Come now, let's kill him and throw him into one of these cisterns and say that a ferocious animal devoured him. Then we'll see what comes of his dreams."

21 When Reuben heard this, he tried to rescue him from their hands. "Let's not take his life," he said. 22 "Don't shed any blood. Throw him into this cistern here in the wilderness, but don't lay a hand on him." Reuben said this to rescue him from them and take him back to his father.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing— 24 and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it.

25 As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt.

26 Judah said to his brothers, "What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? 27 Come, let's sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood." His brothers agreed.

28 So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels[a] of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the cistern and saw that Joseph was not there, he tore his clothes. 30 He went back to his brothers and said, "The boy isn't there! Where can I turn now?"

31 Then they got Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 They took the ornate robe back to their father and said, "We found this. Examine it to see whether it is your son's robe."

33 He recognized it and said, "It is my son's robe! Some ferocious animal has devoured him. Joseph has surely been torn to pieces."

34 Then Jacob tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and daughters came to comfort him, but he refused to be comforted. "No," he said, "I will continue to mourn until I join my son in the grave." So his father wept for him.

36 Meanwhile, the Midianites[b] sold Joseph in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

Joseph Goes to Egypt

Joseph searched for his brothers, eventually finding them at Dothan. His brothers sold him to a caravan of Midianites passing by en route from Gilead to Egypt.

Judah and Tamar

38 1 At that time, Judah left his brothers and went down to stay with a man of Adullam named Hirah. 2 There Judah met the daughter of a Canaanite man named Shua. He married her and made love to her; 3 she became pregnant and gave birth to a son, who was named

[a] *28* That is, about 8 ounces or about 230 grams
[b] *36* Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac (see also verse 28); Masoretic Text *Medanites*

THE OLD BABYLONIAN PERIOD

Mesopotamia during the Old Babylonian period was characterized by various warring dynasties, each struggling for power over one another. Before this time, the strongest empire of southern Babylonia had been the 3rd Dynasty of Ur. The Ur dynasty was succeeded by others—primarily Isin and Larsa. Yet even these two dynasties did not last, eventually falling to Hammurabi, the greatest ruler of the time.

Key Dates	Key Events
2112–2004 B.C.	Ur-Nammu, founder of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur, constructs a ziggurat of Ur in honor of the god Nanna
2017 B.C.	Isin dynasty founded by an Amorite named Ishbi-Erra
2004 B.C.	City of Ur falls to the Elamites
c. 1804 B.C.	King Rim-Sin of Larsa defeats Isin
1792–1750 B.C.	Hammurabi is sixth king of the 1st Dynasty of Babylon
c. 1781 B.C.	Hammurabi defeats Isin
c. 1763 B.C.	Hammurabi defeats King Rim-Sin of Larsa
1760 B.C.	Hammurabi defeats King Zimri-Lim of Mari

Er. 4She conceived again and gave birth to a
son and named him Onan. 5She gave birth to
still another son and named him Shelah. It was
at Kezib that she gave birth to him.

6Judah got a wife for Er, his firstborn, and
her name was Tamar. 7But Er, Judah's first-
born, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the
LORD put him to death.

8Then Judah said to Onan, "Sleep with your
brother's wife and fulfill your duty to her as
a brother-in-law to raise up offspring for your
brother." 9But Onan knew that the child would
not be his; so whenever he slept with his broth-
er's wife, he spilled his semen on the ground to
keep from providing offspring for his brother.
10What he did was wicked in the LORD's sight;
so the LORD put him to death also.

11Judah then said to his daughter-in-law Ta-
mar, "Live as a widow in your father's household
until my son Shelah grows up." For he thought,
"He may die too, just like his brothers." So Ta-
mar went to live in her father's household.

12After a long time Judah's wife, the daughter
of Shua, died. When Judah had recovered from
his grief, he went up to Timnah, to the men
who were shearing his sheep, and his friend
Hirah the Adullamite went with him.

13When Tamar was told, "Your father-in-law
is on his way to Timnah to shear his sheep,"
14she took off her widow's clothes, covered
herself with a veil to disguise herself, and then
sat down at the entrance to Enaim, which is on
the road to Timnah. For she saw that, though
Shelah had now grown up, she had not been
given to him as his wife.

15When Judah saw her, he thought she was a
prostitute, for she had covered her face. 16Not
realizing that she was his daughter-in-law, he
went over to her by the roadside and said,
"Come now, let me sleep with you."

"And what will you give me to sleep with
you?" she asked.

17"I'll send you a young goat from my flock,"
he said.

"Will you give me something as a pledge un-
til you send it?" she asked.

18He said, "What pledge should I give you?"

"Your seal and its cord, and the staff in your
hand," she answered. So he gave them to her
and slept with her, and she became pregnant
by him. 19After she left, she took off her veil
and put on her widow's clothes again.

20Meanwhile Judah sent the young goat by
his friend the Adullamite in order to get his
pledge back from the woman, but he did not
find her. 21He asked the men who lived there,
"Where is the shrine prostitute who was beside
the road at Enaim?"

"There hasn't been any shrine prostitute
here," they said.

22So he went back to Judah and said, "I didn't
find her. Besides, the men who lived there said,
'There hasn't been any shrine prostitute here.'"

23Then Judah said, "Let her keep what she
has, or we will become a laughingstock. Af-
ter all, I did send her this young goat, but you
didn't find her."

24About three months later Judah was told,
"Your daughter-in-law Tamar is guilty of pros-
titution, and as a result she is now pregnant."

Judah said, "Bring her out and have her
burned to death!"

Joseph Goes to Egypt (Ge 39:1, 2)

After arriving in Egypt, Joseph became a slave of the Egyptian officer Potiphar (Ge 39:1), but this slave's fortunes changed dramatically. Joseph's rise to power saw him become first the attendant of Potiphar, put "in charge of his household" (39:4), but eventually a ruler over all of Egypt, second in power to the Egyptian pharaoh himself (41:39–43). One possible setting for the Joseph story is the period when the Hyksos people ruled Egypt.

Before the Hyksos arrived, Egypt had been a united country. Under the 12th Dynasty (1963–1786 B.C.) Egypt enjoyed a flourishing mining industry and agricultural program, as well as a new capital established near Memphis by Pharaoh Amenemhet I. Another pharaoh, Sesostris III, was able to organize a strong central government for Egypt by controlling the families who ruled Egypt's territories.

Sometime after the 12th Dynasty, the country began to fragment. Various rulers set up their own dynasties over portions of Egypt and ruled at the same time. The 13th Dynasty (1786–1633 B.C.) established a new capital at Thebes, while the 14th Dynasty (1786–1602 B.C.) consisted of several rulers in the Delta who proclaimed themselves "kings."

The political upheaval made Egypt ripe for the invasion of the Hyksos people, who subjugated the country and placed their own capital at Avaris in the Delta region. The Hyksos dynasty lasted more than a century (1648–1540 B.C.).

The ethnic background of the Hyksos is one reason for setting the Joseph story during this period. These invaders were a mixture of Semitic and Asiatic peoples. In an Egypt ruled by such foreigners, it is possible that someone like Joseph, himself being Semitic and foreign, could rise from a servant to a position of high office.

25 As she was being brought out, she sent a
message to her father-in-law. "I am pregnant by
the man who owns these," she said. And she
added, "See if you recognize whose seal and
cord and staff these are."
26 Judah recognized them and said, "She is
more righteous than I, since I wouldn't give
her to my son Shelah." And he did not sleep
with her again.
27 When the time came for her to give birth,
there were twin boys in her womb. 28 As she was
giving birth, one of them put out his hand; so
the midwife took a scarlet thread and tied it on
his wrist and said, "This one came out first."
29 But when he drew back his hand, his brother
came out, and she said, "So this is how you have
broken out!" And he was named Perez.[a] 30 Then
his brother, who had the scarlet thread on his
wrist, came out. And he was named Zerah.[b]

Joseph and Potiphar's Wife

39 1 Now Joseph had been taken down to
Egypt. Potiphar, an Egyptian who was
one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the
guard, bought him from the Ishmaelites who
had taken him there.

Beliefs & Ideas

The name of Perez is explained by an incident at his birth (Ge 38:29). In the Bible, names are often connected with memorable facts about the person named. In this case, the Hebrew word for "breaking out" is related to the name Perez. Ancient people thought that a person's name gave access to, or power over, that person.

2 The Lord was with Joseph so that he pros-
pered, and he lived in the house of his Egyptian
master. 3 When his master saw that the Lord
was with him and that the Lord gave him suc-
cess in everything he did, 4 Joseph found favor
in his eyes and became his attendant. Potiphar
put him in charge of his household, and he
entrusted to his care everything he owned.
5 From the time he put him in charge of his
household and of all that he owned, the Lord
blessed the household of the Egyptian because
of Joseph. The blessing of the Lord was on ev-
erything Potiphar had, both in the house and
in the field. 6 So Potiphar left everything he had
in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge, he did
not concern himself with anything except the
food he ate.

Now Joseph was well-built and handsome,
7 and after a while his master's wife took notice
of Joseph and said, "Come to bed with me!"
8 But he refused. "With me in charge," he told
her, "my master does not concern himself with
anything in the house; everything he owns he
has entrusted to my care. 9 No one is greater in
this house than I am. My master has withheld
nothing from me except you, because you are
his wife. How then could I do such a wicked
thing and sin against God?" 10 And though she
spoke to Joseph day after day, he refused to go
to bed with her or even be with her.
11 One day he went into the house to attend to
his duties, and none of the household servants
was inside. 12 She caught him by his cloak and

[a] *29 Perez* means *breaking out.* [b] *30 Zerah* can mean *scarlet* or *brightness.*

The Tale of Two Brothers (Ge 39:7–18)

Joseph's troubles with Potiphar's wife (Ge 39:7–18) have a literary parallel in a folk tale from Egypt's New Kingdom (c. 1550–1069 B.C.). At best, the similarities between the *Tale of Two Brothers* and the Joseph story are superficial and confined to a few details. Nevertheless, both stories share a common plot.

The main characters in the *Tale of Two Brothers* are gods. Anubis asks his younger brother Bata to help him with the yearly sowing. While back home fetching grain, Bata is approached by Anubis's wife, who desires sexual relations with him. Like Joseph, Bata is appalled by the offer and leaves in haste. The wife makes it look as if she has been assaulted by Bata.

Readers of the 2nd millennium were familiar with this plot. An innocent servant or shepherd receives a sexual invitation from a seductive wife. His innocency triumphs by his refusal to participate, at which point he incurs the anger and false accusations of the wife. Though innocent, he must flee.

said, "Come to bed with me!" But he left his cloak in her hand and ran out of the house.
13When she saw that he had left his cloak in
her hand and had run out of the house, 14she
called her household servants. "Look," she said
to them, "this Hebrew has been brought to us
to make sport of us! He came in here to sleep
with me, but I screamed. 15When he heard me
scream for help, he left his cloak beside me and
ran out of the house."
16She kept his cloak beside her until his mas-
ter came home. 17Then she told him this sto-
ry: "That Hebrew slave you brought us came
to me to make sport of me. 18But as soon as I
screamed for help, he left his cloak beside me
and ran out of the house."
19When his master heard the story his wife
told him, saying, "This is how your slave treat-
ed me," he burned with anger. 20Joseph's mas-
ter took him and put him in prison, the place
where the king's prisoners were confined.
But while Joseph was there in the prison,
21the LORD was with him; he showed him kind-
ness and granted him favor in the eyes of the
prison warden. 22So the warden put Joseph in
charge of all those held in the prison, and he
was made responsible for all that was done
there. 23The warden paid no attention to any-
thing under Joseph's care, because the LORD
was with Joseph and gave him success in what-
ever he did.

The Cupbearer and the Baker

40 1Some time later, the cupbearer and the
baker of the king of Egypt offended their
master, the king of Egypt. 2Pharaoh was angry
with his two officials, the chief cupbearer and
the chief baker, 3and put them in custody in the
house of the captain of the guard, in the same
prison where Joseph was confined. 4The cap-
tain of the guard assigned them to Joseph, and
he attended them.
After they had been in custody for some time,
5each of the two men—the cupbearer and the
baker of the king of Egypt, who were being
held in prison—had a dream the same night,
and each dream had a meaning of its own.
6When Joseph came to them the next morn-
ing, he saw that they were dejected. 7So he
asked Pharaoh's officials who were in custody
with him in his master's house, "Why do you
look so sad today?"
8"We both had dreams," they answered, "but
there is no one to interpret them."
Then Joseph said to them, "Do not interpre-
tations belong to God? Tell me your dreams."
9So the chief cupbearer told Joseph his
dream. He said to him, "In my dream I saw
a vine in front of me, 10and on the vine were
three branches. As soon as it budded, it blos-
somed, and its clusters ripened into grapes.
11Pharaoh's cup was in my hand, and I took the
grapes, squeezed them into Pharaoh's cup and
put the cup in his hand."
12"This is what it means," Joseph said to him.
"The three branches are three days. 13Within
three days Pharaoh will lift up your head and
restore you to your position, and you will put
Pharaoh's cup in his hand, just as you used to
do when you were his cupbearer. 14But when

TIME CAPSULE		1800 to 1779 B.C.
1800		Wheel-thrown pottery in Greece
1792		Hammurabi ascends throne of Babylon
1790		First code of laws issued by Hammurabi
1790		Sumerian King List traces the history of Sumer and Accad from the Flood to Hammurabi
1786–1633		13th Dynasty of Egypt establishes capital at Thebes
1786–1602		14th Dynasty of Egypt consists of local kings in the west Delta
1781		Hammurabi defeats Isin
1779		Earliest evidence for a wheel with spokes, from Syria

Egypt's Seven Lean Years (Ge 41:25–32)

Pharaoh's dreams involved seven fat cows and seven plump heads of grain, which were devoured by seven ugly cows and seven thin heads, respectively (Ge 41:1–7). In Joseph's interpretation, the ugly cows and thin heads symbolized seven years of famine (41:25–32). The record of the seven lean years in Egypt appears to have an antecedent in Egyptian literature.

A text called *The Tradition of the Seven Lean Years in Egypt* is attributed to Djoser, a pharaoh of the 3rd Dynasty of Egypt's Old Kingdom (c. 2650 B.C.). The text of this Egyptian story as it now exists came from scribes during the reign of Ptolemy V (204–180 B.C.), a ruler of the Macedonian dynasty established by the successors of Alexander the Great. While this text is much later than the account in Genesis, it is possible that it had been copied from an earlier text.

The Egyptian text recounts a letter that Djoser wrote to his overseer in Elephantine in southern Egypt, lamenting the fact that the "Nile has not come in my time for a space of seven years." Consequently grain was scarce, fruits were dried up, and "every man robbed his companion."

Imhotep, the renowned vizier or chief minister to Djoser, proceeds to tell him about the god Khnum, who resides at the birthplace of the Nile, namely Elephantine. Pharaoh Djoser then has a dream in which the god tells him that the Nile would soon "pour forth for you." Thus, plants would again grow and starvation would cease. The pharaoh awoke refreshed and presumably then drafted the text for his official at Elephantine.

all goes well with you, remember me and show me kindness; mention me to Pharaoh and get me out of this prison. 15I was forcibly carried off from the land of the Hebrews, and even here I have done nothing to deserve being put in a dungeon."

16When the chief baker saw that Joseph had given a favorable interpretation, he said to Joseph, "I too had a dream: On my head were three baskets of bread.[a] 17In the top basket were all kinds of baked goods for Pharaoh, but the birds were eating them out of the basket on my head."

18"This is what it means," Joseph said. "The three baskets are three days. 19Within three days Pharaoh will lift off your head and impale your body on a pole. And the birds will eat away your flesh."

20Now the third day was Pharaoh's birthday, and he gave a feast for all his officials. He lifted up the heads of the chief cupbearer and the chief baker in the presence of his officials: 21He restored the chief cupbearer to his position, so that he once again put the cup into Pharaoh's hand— 22but he impaled the chief baker, just as Joseph had said to them in his interpretation.

23The chief cupbearer, however, did not remember Joseph; he forgot him.

Politics & Government

The Egyptians maintained large stone storehouses, primarily for grain (Ge 41:48). This protected them from famine and also helped stabilize prices. The granaries were often associated with temples. The ruler was regarded as divine, and the department devoted to grain was one of the most important in the fundamentally religious government of Egypt.

Pharaoh's Dreams

41 1When two full years had passed, Pharaoh had a dream: He was standing by the Nile, 2when out of the river there came up seven cows, sleek and fat, and they grazed among the reeds. 3After them, seven other cows, ugly and gaunt, came up out of the Nile and stood beside those on the riverbank. 4And the cows that were ugly and gaunt ate up the seven sleek, fat cows. Then Pharaoh woke up.

5He fell asleep again and had a second dream: Seven heads of grain, healthy and good, were growing on a single stalk. 6After them, seven other heads of grain sprouted— thin and scorched by the east wind. 7The thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven healthy, full heads. Then Pharaoh woke up; it had been a dream.

8In the morning his mind was troubled, so he sent for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt. Pharaoh told them his dreams, but no one could interpret them for him.

[a] *16* Or *three wicker baskets*

9Then the chief cupbearer said to Pharaoh,
"Today I am reminded of my shortcomings.
10Pharaoh was once angry with his servants,
and he imprisoned me and the chief baker in
the house of the captain of the guard. 11Each
of us had a dream the same night, and each
dream had a meaning of its own. 12Now a young
Hebrew was there with us, a servant of the cap-
tain of the guard. We told him our dreams, and
he interpreted them for us, giving each man
the interpretation of his dream. 13And things
turned out exactly as he interpreted them to
us: I was restored to my position, and the other
man was impaled."

14So Pharaoh sent for Joseph, and he was
quickly brought from the dungeon. When he
had shaved and changed his clothes, he came
before Pharaoh.

15Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I had a dream,
and no one can interpret it. But I have heard
it said of you that when you hear a dream you
can interpret it."

16"I cannot do it," Joseph replied to Pharaoh,
"but God will give Pharaoh the answer he de-
sires."

17Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "In my
dream I was standing on the bank of the Nile,
18when out of the river there came up seven
cows, fat and sleek, and they grazed among
the reeds. 19After them, seven other cows
came up — scrawny and very ugly and lean. I
had never seen such ugly cows in all the land
of Egypt. 20The lean, ugly cows ate up the sev-
en fat cows that came up first. 21But even after
they ate them, no one could tell that they had
done so; they looked just as ugly as before.
Then I woke up.

22"In my dream I saw seven heads of grain,
full and good, growing on a single stalk. 23After
them, seven other heads sprouted — withered
and thin and scorched by the east wind. 24The
thin heads of grain swallowed up the seven
good heads. I told this to the magicians, but
none of them could explain it to me."

25Then Joseph said to Pharaoh, "The dreams
of Pharaoh are one and the same. God has re-
vealed to Pharaoh what he is about to do. 26The
seven good cows are seven years, and the sev-
en good heads of grain are seven years; it is
one and the same dream. 27The seven lean,
ugly cows that came up afterward are seven
years, and so are the seven worthless heads
of grain scorched by the east wind: They are
seven years of famine.

28"It is just as I said to Pharaoh: God has
shown Pharaoh what he is about to do. 29Seven
years of great abundance are coming through-
out the land of Egypt, 30but seven years of fam-
ine will follow them. Then all the abundance
in Egypt will be forgotten, and the famine will
ravage the land. 31The abundance in the land
will not be remembered, because the famine
that follows it will be so severe. 32The reason
the dream was given to Pharaoh in two forms
is that the matter has been firmly decided by
God, and God will do it soon.

The Hyksos Empire
After taking control of Lower Egypt, the Hyksos established a capital at Avaris. King Kamose of Thebes eventually broke the power of the Hyksos, and his younger brother Ahmose I drove them from Egypt. In 1540 Ahmose began a three-year siege of Sharuhen, the Hyksos stronghold in south Palestine. At this time, Egyptian texts refer to the land of Palestine as "Retenu."

33 "And now let Pharaoh look for a discerning
and wise man and put him in charge of the land
of Egypt. 34 Let Pharaoh appoint commission-
ers over the land to take a fifth of the harvest
of Egypt during the seven years of abundance.
35 They should collect all the food of these good
years that are coming and store up the grain
under the authority of Pharaoh, to be kept in
the cities for food. 36 This food should be held
in reserve for the country, to be used during
the seven years of famine that will come upon
Egypt, so that the country may not be ruined
by the famine."
37 The plan seemed good to Pharaoh and to
all his officials. 38 So Pharaoh asked them, "Can
we find anyone like this man, one in whom is
the spirit of God[a]?"
39 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God
has made all this known to you, there is no one
so discerning and wise as you. 40 You shall be in
charge of my palace, and all my people are to
submit to your orders. Only with respect to the
throne will I be greater than you."

Joseph in Charge of Egypt

41 So Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I hereby put
you in charge of the whole land of Egypt."
42 Then Pharaoh took his signet ring from his
finger and put it on Joseph's finger. He dressed
him in robes of fine linen and put a gold chain
around his neck. 43 He had him ride in a chariot
as his second-in-command,[b] and people shout-
ed before him, "Make way[c]!" Thus he put him
in charge of the whole land of Egypt.
44 Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "I am Phar-
aoh, but without your word no one will lift hand
or foot in all Egypt." 45 Pharaoh gave Joseph
the name Zaphenath-Paneah and gave him As-
enath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On,[d] to
be his wife. And Joseph went throughout the
land of Egypt.
46 Joseph was thirty years old when he en-
tered the service of Pharaoh king of Egypt.
And Joseph went out from Pharaoh's presence
and traveled throughout Egypt. 47 During the
seven years of abundance the land produced
plentifully. 48 Joseph collected all the food pro-
duced in those seven years of abundance in
Egypt and stored it in the cities. In each city he
put the food grown in the fields surrounding
it. 49 Joseph stored up huge quantities of grain,
like the sand of the sea; it was so much that
he stopped keeping records because it was be-
yond measure.
50 Before the years of famine came, two sons
were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of
Potiphera, priest of On. 51 Joseph named his
firstborn Manasseh[e] and said, "It is because
God has made me forget all my trouble and all
my father's household." 52 The second son he
named Ephraim[f] and said, "It is because God
has made me fruitful in the land of my suffer-
ing."
53 The seven years of abundance in Egypt
came to an end, 54 and the seven years of fam-
ine began, just as Joseph had said. There was
famine in all the other lands, but in the whole

[a] *38* Or *of the gods* [b] *43* Or *in the chariot of his second-in-command*; or *in his second chariot* [c] *43* Or *Bow down*
[d] *45* That is, Heliopolis; also in verse 50 [e] *51* *Manasseh* sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for *forget.*
[f] *52* *Ephraim* sounds like the Hebrew for *twice fruitful.*

land of Egypt there was food. 55When all Egypt began to feel the famine, the people cried to Pharaoh for food. Then Pharaoh told all the Egyptians, "Go to Joseph and do what he tells you."

56When the famine had spread over the whole country, Joseph opened all the storehouses and sold grain to the Egyptians, for the famine was severe throughout Egypt. 57And all the world came to Egypt to buy grain from Joseph, because the famine was severe everywhere.

Joseph's Brothers Go to Egypt

42 1When Jacob learned that there was grain in Egypt, he said to his sons, "Why do you just keep looking at each other?" 2He continued, "I have heard that there is grain in Egypt. Go down there and buy some for us, so that we may live and not die."

3Then ten of Joseph's brothers went down to buy grain from Egypt. 4But Jacob did not send Benjamin, Joseph's brother, with the others, because he was afraid that harm might come to him. 5So Israel's sons were among those who went to buy grain, for there was famine in the land of Canaan also.

6Now Joseph was the governor of the land, the person who sold grain to all its people. So when Joseph's brothers arrived, they bowed down to him with their faces to the ground. 7As soon as Joseph saw his brothers, he recognized them, but he pretended to be a stranger and spoke harshly to them. "Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From the land of Canaan," they replied, "to buy food."

8Although Joseph recognized his brothers, they did not recognize him. 9Then he remembered his dreams about them and said to them, "You are spies! You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

10"No, my lord," they answered. "Your servants have come to buy food. 11We are all the sons of one man. Your servants are honest men, not spies."

12"No!" he said to them. "You have come to see where our land is unprotected."

13But they replied, "Your servants were twelve brothers, the sons of one man, who lives in the land of Canaan. The youngest is now with our father, and one is no more."

14Joseph said to them, "It is just as I told you: You are spies! 15And this is how you will be tested: As surely as Pharaoh lives, you will not leave this place unless your youngest brother comes here. 16Send one of your number to get your brother; the rest of you will be kept in prison, so that your words may be tested to see if you are telling the truth. If you are not, then as surely as Pharaoh lives, you are spies!" 17And he put them all in custody for three days.

18On the third day, Joseph said to them, "Do this and you will live, for I fear God: 19If you are honest men, let one of your brothers stay here in prison, while the rest of you go and take grain back for your starving households. 20But you must bring your youngest brother to me, so that your words may be verified and that you may not die." This they proceeded to do.

21They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come on us."

22Reuben replied, "Didn't I tell you not to sin against the boy? But you wouldn't listen! Now we must give an accounting for his blood." 23They did not realize that Joseph could understand them, since he was using an interpreter.

24He turned away from them and began to weep, but then came back and spoke to them again. He had Simeon taken from them and bound before their eyes.

25Joseph gave orders to fill their bags with grain, to put each man's silver back in his sack, and to give them provisions for their journey. After this was done for them, 26they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left.

27At the place where they stopped for the night one of them opened his sack to get feed for his donkey, and he saw his silver in the mouth of his sack. 28"My silver has been returned," he said to his brothers. "Here it is in my sack."

Their hearts sank and they turned to each other trembling and said, "What is this that God has done to us?"

29When they came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan, they told him all that had happened to them. They said, 30"The man who is lord over the land spoke harshly to us and treated us as though we were spying on the land. 31But we said to him, 'We are honest men; we are not spies. 32We were twelve brothers, sons of one father. One is no more, and the youngest is now with our father in Canaan.'

33"Then the man who is lord over the land said to us, 'This is how I will know whether you are honest men: Leave one of your brothers here with me, and take food for your starving households and go. 34But bring your youngest brother to me so I will know that you are not spies but honest men. Then I will give your

brother back to you, and you can trade[a] in the land.'"

35As they were emptying their sacks, there in each man's sack was his pouch of silver! When they and their father saw the money pouches, they were frightened. 36Their father Jacob said to them, "You have deprived me of my children. Joseph is no more and Simeon is no more, and now you want to take Benjamin. Everything is against me!"

37Then Reuben said to his father, "You may put both of my sons to death if I do not bring him back to you. Entrust him to my care, and I will bring him back."

38But Jacob said, "My son will not go down there with you; his brother is dead and he is the only one left. If harm comes to him on the journey you are taking, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in sorrow."

The Second Journey to Egypt

43 1Now the famine was still severe in the land. 2So when they had eaten all the grain they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, "Go back and buy us a little more food."

3But Judah said to him, "The man warned us solemnly, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.' 4If you will send our brother along with us, we will go down and buy food for you. 5But if you will not send him, we will not go down, because the man said to us, 'You will not see my face again unless your brother is with you.'"

6Israel asked, "Why did you bring this trouble on me by telling the man you had another brother?"

7They replied, "The man questioned us closely about ourselves and our family. 'Is your father still living?' he asked us. 'Do you have another brother?' We simply answered his questions. How were we to know he would say, 'Bring your brother down here'?"

8Then Judah said to Israel his father, "Send the boy along with me and we will go at once, so that we and you and our children may live and not die. 9I myself will guarantee his safety; you can hold me personally responsible for him. If I do not bring him back to you and set him here before you, I will bear the blame before you all my life. 10As it is, if we had not delayed, we could have gone and returned twice."

11Then their father Israel said to them, "If it must be, then do this: Put some of the best products of the land in your bags and take them down to the man as a gift—a little balm and a little honey, some spices and myrrh, some pistachio nuts and almonds. 12Take double the amount of silver with you, for you must return the silver that was put back into the mouths of your sacks. Perhaps it was a mistake. 13Take your brother also and go back to the man at once. 14And may God Almighty[b] grant you mercy before the man so that he will let your other brother and Benjamin come back with you. As for me, if I am bereaved, I am bereaved."

15So the men took the gifts and double the amount of silver, and Benjamin also. They hurried down to Egypt and presented themselves to Joseph. 16When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, "Take these men to my house, slaughter an animal and prepare a meal; they are to eat with me at noon."

17The man did as Joseph told him and took the men to Joseph's house. 18Now the men were frightened when they were taken to his house. They thought, "We were brought here because of the silver that was put back into our sacks the first time. He wants to attack us and overpower us and seize us as slaves and take our donkeys."

19So they went up to Joseph's steward and spoke to him at the entrance to the house. 20"We beg your pardon, our lord," they said, "we came down here the first time to buy food. 21But at the place where we stopped for the night we opened our sacks and each of us found his silver—the exact weight—in the mouth of his sack. So we have brought it back with us. 22We have also brought additional silver with us to buy food. We don't know who put our silver in our sacks."

23"It's all right," he said. "Don't be afraid. Your God, the God of your father, has given you treasure in your sacks; I received your silver." Then he brought Simeon out to them.

24The steward took the men into Joseph's house, gave them water to wash their feet and provided fodder for their donkeys. 25They prepared their gifts for Joseph's arrival at noon, because they had heard that they were to eat there.

26When Joseph came home, they presented to him the gifts they had brought into the

Marriage & Family

Joseph seated his brothers in order of their age (Ge 43:33). Rights of inheritance were almost inflexibly linked to the order of birth. In society as a whole, age was regarded as a title to respect. Contempt for one's parents or elders was a serious offense, in certain cases calling for extreme punishment (Ex 21:17; Lev 19:32).

[a] *34* Or *move about freely* [b] *14* Hebrew *El-Shaddai*

house, and they bowed down before him to the ground. 27He asked them how they were, and then he said, "How is your aged father you told me about? Is he still living?"

28They replied, "Your servant our father is still alive and well." And they bowed down, prostrating themselves before him.

29As he looked about and saw his brother Benjamin, his own mother's son, he asked, "Is this your youngest brother, the one you told me about?" And he said, "God be gracious to you, my son." 30Deeply moved at the sight of his brother, Joseph hurried out and looked for a place to weep. He went into his private room and wept there.

31After he had washed his face, he came out and, controlling himself, said, "Serve the food."

32They served him by himself, the brothers by themselves, and the Egyptians who ate with him by themselves, because Egyptians could not eat with Hebrews, for that is detestable to Egyptians. 33The men had been seated before him in the order of their ages, from the firstborn to the youngest; and they looked at each other in astonishment. 34When portions were served to them from Joseph's table, Benjamin's portion was five times as much as anyone else's. So they feasted and drank freely with him.

A Silver Cup in a Sack

44 1Now Joseph gave these instructions to the steward of his house: "Fill the men's sacks with as much food as they can carry, and put each man's silver in the mouth of his sack. 2Then put my cup, the silver one, in the mouth of the youngest one's sack, along with the silver for his grain." And he did as Joseph said.

3As morning dawned, the men were sent on their way with their donkeys. 4They had not gone far from the city when Joseph said to his steward, "Go after those men at once, and when you catch up with them, say to them, 'Why have you repaid good with evil? 5Isn't this the cup my master drinks from and also uses for divination? This is a wicked thing you have done.'"

6When he caught up with them, he repeated these words to them. 7But they said to him, "Why does my lord say such things? Far be it from your servants to do anything like that! 8We even brought back to you from the land of Canaan the silver we found inside the mouths of our sacks. So why would we steal silver or gold from your master's house? 9If any of your servants is found to have it, he will die; and the rest of us will become my lord's slaves."

10"Very well, then," he said, "let it be as you say. Whoever is found to have it will become my slave; the rest of you will be free from blame."

11Each of them quickly lowered his sack to the ground and opened it. 12Then the steward proceeded to search, beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest. And the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. 13At this, they tore their clothes. Then they all loaded their donkeys and returned to the city.

14Joseph was still in the house when Judah and his brothers came in, and they threw themselves to the ground before him. 15Joseph said to them, "What is this you have done? Don't you know that a man like me can find things out by divination?"

16"What can we say to my lord?" Judah replied. "What can we say? How can we prove our innocence? God has uncovered your servants' guilt. We are now my lord's slaves—we ourselves and the one who was found to have the cup."

17But Joseph said, "Far be it from me to do such a thing! Only the man who was found to have the cup will become my slave. The rest of you, go back to your father in peace."

18Then Judah went up to him and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, let me speak a word to my lord. Do not be angry with your servant, though you are equal to Pharaoh himself. 19My lord asked his servants, 'Do you have a father or a brother?' 20And we answered, 'We have an aged father, and there is a young son born to him in his old age. His brother is dead, and he is the only one of his mother's sons left, and his father loves him.'

21"Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me so I can see him for myself.' 22And we said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father; if he leaves him, his father will die.' 23But you told your servants, 'Unless your

TIME CAPSULE	1775 to 1700 B.C.
1775	Zimri-Lim regains control of Mari
1760	Hammurabi destroys palace at Mari
1741–1364	Disunited, independent city-states in the region later called Assyria
1728	Ussher's date for the descent of Joseph into Egypt
1705	Jacob enters Egypt (based on late Exodus; Ge 46:3)
1700	Phoenicians develop alphabet of consonants only

youngest brother comes down with you, you will not see my face again.' 24When we went back to your servant my father, we told him what my lord had said.

25"'Then our father said, 'Go back and buy a little more food.' 26But we said, 'We cannot go down. Only if our youngest brother is with us will we go. We cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.'

27"'Your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons. 28One of them went away from me, and I said, "He has surely been torn to pieces." And I have not seen him since. 29If you take this one from me too and harm comes to him, you will bring my gray head down to the grave in misery.'

30"So now, if the boy is not with us when I go back to your servant my father, and if my father, whose life is closely bound up with the boy's life, 31sees that the boy isn't there, he will die. Your servants will bring the gray head of our father down to the grave in sorrow. 32Your servant guaranteed the boy's safety to my father. I said, 'If I do not bring him back to you, I will bear the blame before you, my father, all my life!'

33"Now then, please let your servant remain here as my lord's slave in place of the boy, and let the boy return with his brothers. 34How can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? No! Do not let me see the misery that would come on my father."

Joseph Makes Himself Known

45 1Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, "Have everyone leave my presence!" So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. 2And he wept so loudly that the Egyptians heard him, and Pharaoh's household heard about it.

3Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence.

4Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! 5And now, do not be distressed and do not be angry with yourselves for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. 6For two years now there has been famine in the land, and for the next five years there will be no plowing and reaping. 7But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance.[a]

8"So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. 9Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. 10You shall live in the region of Goshen and be near me—you, your children and grandchildren, your flocks and herds, and all you have. 11I will provide for you there, because five years of famine are still to come. Otherwise you and your household and all who belong to you will become destitute.'

12"You can see for yourselves, and so can my brother Benjamin, that it is really I who am speaking to you. 13Tell my father about all the honor accorded me in Egypt and about everything you have seen. And bring my father down here quickly."

14Then he threw his arms around his brother Benjamin and wept, and Benjamin embraced him, weeping. 15And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him.

16When the news reached Pharaoh's palace that Joseph's brothers had come, Pharaoh and all his officials were pleased. 17Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Tell your brothers, 'Do this: Load your animals and return to the land of Canaan, 18and bring your father and your families back to me. I will give you the best of the land of Egypt and you can enjoy the fat of the land.'

19"You are also directed to tell them, 'Do this: Take some carts from Egypt for your children and your wives, and get your father and come. 20Never mind about your belongings, because the best of all Egypt will be yours.'"

21So the sons of Israel did this. Joseph gave them carts, as Pharaoh had commanded, and he also gave them provisions for their journey. 22To each of them he gave new clothing, but to Benjamin he gave three hundred shekels[b] of silver and five sets of clothes. 23And this is what he sent to his father: ten donkeys loaded with the best things of Egypt, and ten female donkeys loaded with grain and bread and other provisions for his journey. 24Then he sent his brothers away, and as they were leaving he said to them, "Don't quarrel on the way!"

25So they went up out of Egypt and came to their father Jacob in the land of Canaan. 26They told him, "Joseph is still alive! In fact, he is ruler of all Egypt." Jacob was stunned; he did not believe them. 27But when they told him every-

[a] *7* Or *save you as a great band of survivors*
[b] *22* That is, about 7 1/2 pounds or about 3.5 kilograms

thing Joseph had said to them, and when he saw the carts Joseph had sent to carry him back, the spirit of their father Jacob revived. 28And Israel said, "I'm convinced! My son Joseph is still alive. I will go and see him before I die."

Jacob Goes to Egypt

46 1So Israel set out with all that was his, and when he reached Beersheba, he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.

2And God spoke to Israel in a vision at night and said, "Jacob! Jacob!"

"Here I am," he replied.

3"I am God, the God of your father," he said. "Do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you into a great nation there. 4I will go down to Egypt with you, and I will surely bring you back again. And Joseph's own hand will close your eyes."

5Then Jacob left Beersheba, and Israel's sons took their father Jacob and their children and their wives in the carts that Pharaoh had sent to transport him. 6So Jacob and all his offspring went to Egypt, taking with them their livestock and the possessions they had acquired in Canaan. 7Jacob brought with him to Egypt his sons and grandsons and his daughters and granddaughters—all his offspring.

8These are the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob and his descendants) who went to Egypt:

Reuben the firstborn of Jacob.
9The sons of Reuben:
Hanok, Pallu, Hezron and Karmi.
10The sons of Simeon:
Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman.
11The sons of Levi:
Gershon, Kohath and Merari.
12The sons of Judah:
Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez and Zerah (but Er and Onan had died in the land of Canaan).
The sons of Perez:
Hezron and Hamul.
13The sons of Issachar:
Tola, Puah,[a] Jashub[b] and Shimron.
14The sons of Zebulun:
Sered, Elon and Jahleel.
15These were the sons Leah bore to Jacob in Paddan Aram,[c] besides his daughter Dinah. These sons and daughters of his were thirty-three in all.

16The sons of Gad:
Zephon,[d] Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli.
17The sons of Asher:
Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah.
Their sister was Serah.
The sons of Beriah:
Heber and Malkiel.
18These were the children born to Jacob by Zilpah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Leah—sixteen in all.

19The sons of Jacob's wife Rachel:
Joseph and Benjamin. 20In Egypt, Manasseh and Ephraim were born to Joseph by Asenath daughter of Potiphera, priest of On.[e]
21The sons of Benjamin:
Bela, Beker, Ashbel, Gera, Naaman, Ehi, Rosh, Muppim, Huppim and Ard.
22These were the sons of Rachel who were born to Jacob—fourteen in all.

23The son of Dan:
Hushim.
24The sons of Naphtali:
Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem.
25These were the sons born to Jacob by Bilhah, whom Laban had given to his daughter Rachel—seven in all.

26All those who went to Egypt with Jacob—those who were his direct descendants, not counting his sons' wives—numbered sixty-six persons. 27With the two sons[f] who had been born to Joseph in Egypt, the members of Jacob's family, which went to Egypt, were seventy[g] in all.

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[a] *13* Samaritan Pentateuch and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 7:1); Masoretic Text *Puvah* [b] *13* Samaritan Pentateuch and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Num. 26:24 and 1 Chron. 7:1); Masoretic Text *Iob* [c] *15* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia [d] *16* Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint (see also Num. 26:15); Masoretic Text *Ziphion* [e] *20* That is, Heliopolis [f] *27* Hebrew; Septuagint *the nine children* [g] *27* Hebrew (see also Exodus 1:5 and note); Septuagint (see also Acts 7:14) *seventy-five*

[28]Now Jacob sent Judah ahead of him to Joseph to get directions to Goshen. When they arrived in the region of Goshen, [29]Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father[a] and wept for a long time.

[30]Israel said to Joseph, "Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive."

[31]Then Joseph said to his brothers and to his father's household, "I will go up and speak to Pharaoh and will say to him, 'My brothers and my father's household, who were living in the land of Canaan, have come to me. [32]The men are shepherds; they tend livestock, and they have brought along their flocks and herds and everything they own.' [33]When Pharaoh calls you in and asks, 'What is your occupation?' [34]you should answer, 'Your servants have tended livestock from our boyhood on, just as our fathers did.' Then you will be allowed to settle in the region of Goshen, for all shepherds are detestable to the Egyptians."

TRANSITION

Jacob Enters Egypt

Jacob's journey from Canaan to Egypt is summarized in Ge 47:27: "Now the Israelites settled in Egypt . . . and increased greatly in number." This event marks the move of the Israelite people from Canaan, the promised land, to Egypt, the land of slavery. As such, it became part of Israel's basic statement of faith. Israel's faith started with the retelling of her historical origins, often beginning with Jacob's descent to Egypt. For instance, the ritual retelling of Dt 26:5–9 begins "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt . . ."

Jacob was 130 years old when he entered Egypt (Ge 47:9). This figure is sometimes used to relate Abraham to the Israelite sojourn in Egypt. Abraham fathered Isaac when he was 100 years old (Ge 21:5). Isaac fathered Jacob 60 years later (Ge 25:26). Adding the numbers makes a passing of 290 years between Abraham's birth and this entry into Egypt (100 + 60 + 130 = 290).

• Genesis 47:1—50:26

Genesis

47 :1 Joseph went and told Pharaoh, "My father and brothers, with their flocks and herds and everything they own, have come from the land of Canaan and are now in Goshen." [2]He chose five of his brothers and presented them before Pharaoh.

[3]Pharaoh asked the brothers, "What is your occupation?"

"Your servants are shepherds," they replied to Pharaoh, "just as our fathers were." [4]They also said to him, "We have come to live here for a while, because the famine is severe in Canaan and your servants' flocks have no pasture. So now, please let your servants settle in Goshen."

[5]Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Your father and your brothers have come to you, [6]and the land of Egypt is before you; settle your father and your brothers in the best part of the land. Let them live in Goshen. And if you know of any among them with special ability, put them in charge of my own livestock."

[7]Then Joseph brought his father Jacob in and presented him before Pharaoh. After Jacob blessed[b] Pharaoh, [8]Pharaoh asked him, "How old are you?"

[9]And Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my pilgrimage are a hundred and thirty. My years have been few and difficult, and they do not equal the years of the pilgrimage of my fathers." [10]Then Jacob blessed[c] Pharaoh and went out from his presence.

[11]So Joseph settled his father and his brothers in Egypt and gave them property in the best part of the land, the district of Rameses, as Pharaoh directed. [12]Joseph also provided his father and his brothers and all his father's household with food, according to the number of their children.

Joseph and the Famine

[13]There was no food, however, in the whole region because the famine was severe; both Egypt and Canaan wasted away because of the famine. [14]Joseph collected all the money that was to be found in Egypt and Canaan in payment for the grain they were buying, and he brought it to Pharaoh's palace. [15]When the money of the people of Egypt and Canaan was gone, all Egypt came to Joseph and said, "Give us food. Why should we die before your eyes? Our money is all gone."

[16]"Then bring your livestock," said Joseph. "I will sell you food in exchange for your livestock, since your money is gone." [17]So they brought their livestock to Joseph, and he gave them food in exchange for their horses, their sheep and goats, their cattle and donkeys. And he brought them through that year with food in exchange for all their livestock.

[18]When that year was over, they came to him

[a] *29* Hebrew *around him* [b] *7* Or *greeted* [c] *10* Or *said farewell to*

Blessed Are the Blessed (Ge 47:7, 10)

Bestowing a blessing on another was a common act in the ancient Near East. Inherent in the blessing process was the assumption, by both parties, that the one doing the blessing was superior to the one being blessed. Such superiority arose from a relationship to God, who was considered the source of the blessing. God occasionally gave a blessing directly (Ge 2:3; 32:26).

To pronounce a blessing was not thought of as merely a ceremonial event. Rather, the pronouncement was seen as actually conferring a specific change in status. Since the name and power of God was used, the blessing, once given, could not be retracted, even if bestowed by deceit. Once Isaac mistakenly pronounced the blessing for the firstborn son upon Jacob, his younger son (Ge 27:27–29), he could not reverse the action in order to bless Esau, his firstborn (27:33–37).

A subordinate could also bless. Years later, Jacob, a foreigner in Egypt, blessed the pharaoh of Egypt. Since many died at a young age, old age was a sign that God's power resided with the one having a long life. Thus, Jacob, an old man, was superior to the younger pharaoh, who could benefit from Jacob's blessing him (Ge 47:7, 10). Sometimes the Bible literally describes humans as "blessing" God (e.g., Ps 34:1; 115:17, 18 in some versions; the NIV uses other terms). In these cases "blessing God" likely conveys the idea of giving all that a human can rightfully give to God—praise.

the following year and said, "We cannot hide from our lord the fact that since our money is gone and our livestock belongs to you, there is nothing left for our lord except our bodies and our land. 19Why should we perish before your eyes—we and our land as well? Buy us and our land in exchange for food, and we with our land will be in bondage to Pharaoh. Give us seed so that we may live and not die, and that the land may not become desolate."

20So Joseph bought all the land in Egypt for Pharaoh. The Egyptians, one and all, sold their fields, because the famine was too severe for them. The land became Pharaoh's, 21and Joseph reduced the people to servitude,[a] from one end of Egypt to the other. 22However, he did not buy the land of the priests, because they received a regular allotment from Pharaoh and had food enough from the allotment Pharaoh gave them. That is why they did not sell their land.

23Joseph said to the people, "Now that I have bought you and your land today for Pharaoh, here is seed for you so you can plant the ground. 24But when the crop comes in, give a fifth of it to Pharaoh. The other four-fifths you may keep as seed for the fields and as food for yourselves and your households and your children."

25"You have saved our lives," they said. "May we find favor in the eyes of our lord; we will be in bondage to Pharaoh."

26So Joseph established it as a law concerning land in Egypt—still in force today—that a fifth of the produce belongs to Pharaoh. It was only the land of the priests that did not become Pharaoh's.

27Now the Israelites settled in Egypt in the region of Goshen. They acquired property there and were fruitful and increased greatly in number.

28Jacob lived in Egypt seventeen years, and the years of his life were a hundred and forty-seven. 29When the time drew near for Israel to die, he called for his son Joseph and said to him, "If I have found favor in your eyes, put your hand under my thigh and promise that you will show me kindness and faithfulness. Do not bury me in Egypt, 30but when I rest with my fathers, carry me out of Egypt and bury me where they are buried."

"I will do as you say," he said.

31"Swear to me," he said. Then Joseph swore to him, and Israel worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.[b]

Manasseh and Ephraim

48 1Some time later Joseph was told, "Your father is ill." So he took his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim along with him. 2When Jacob was told, "Your son Joseph has come to you," Israel rallied his strength and sat up on the bed.

3Jacob said to Joseph, "God Almighty[c] appeared to me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and there he blessed me 4and said to me, 'I am going to make you fruitful and increase your numbers. I will make you a community of peoples,

Politics & Government

The Egyptian state supervised a bureaucracy capable of building pyramids and temples that required thousands of workers and years of effort. They kept meticulous records of commodities and of disbursements of food and drink to workers (Ge 47:24). There were no coins, but they had standard-sized loaves of bread.

[a] *21* Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint (see also Vulgate); Masoretic Text *and he moved the people into the cities*
[b] *31* Or *Israel bowed down at the head of his bed* [c] *3* Hebrew *El-Shaddai*

and I will give this land as an everlasting possession to your descendants after you.'

5"Now then, your two sons born to you in Egypt before I came to you here will be reckoned as mine; Ephraim and Manasseh will be mine, just as Reuben and Simeon are mine. 6Any children born to you after them will be yours; in the territory they inherit they will be reckoned under the names of their brothers. 7As I was returning from Paddan,[a] to my sorrow Rachel died in the land of Canaan while we were still on the way, a little distance from Ephrath. So I buried her there beside the road to Ephrath" (that is, Bethlehem).

8When Israel saw the sons of Joseph, he asked, "Who are these?"

9"They are the sons God has given me here," Joseph said to his father.

Then Israel said, "Bring them to me so I may bless them."

10Now Israel's eyes were failing because of old age, and he could hardly see. So Joseph brought his sons close to him, and his father kissed them and embraced them.

11Israel said to Joseph, "I never expected to see your face again, and now God has allowed me to see your children too."

12Then Joseph removed them from Israel's knees and bowed down with his face to the ground. 13And Joseph took both of them, Ephraim on his right toward Israel's left hand and Manasseh on his left toward Israel's right hand, and brought them close to him. 14But Israel reached out his right hand and put it on Ephraim's head, though he was the younger, and crossing his arms, he put his left hand on Manasseh's head, even though Manasseh was the firstborn.

15Then he blessed Joseph and said,

"May the God before whom my fathers
Abraham and Isaac walked faithfully,
the God who has been my shepherd
all my life to this day,
16the Angel who has delivered me from all harm
—may he bless these boys.
May they be called by my name
and the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac,
and may they increase greatly
on the earth."

17When Joseph saw his father placing his right hand on Ephraim's head he was displeased; so he took hold of his father's hand to move it from Ephraim's head to Manasseh's head. 18Joseph said to him, "No, my father, this one is the firstborn; put your right hand on his head."

19But his father refused and said, "I know, my son, I know. He too will become a people, and he too will become great. Nevertheless, his younger brother will be greater than he, and his descendants will become a group of nations." 20He blessed them that day and said,

"In your[b] name will Israel pronounce this blessing:
'May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh.'"

So he put Ephraim ahead of Manasseh.

21Then Israel said to Joseph, "I am about to die, but God will be with you[c] and take you[c] back to the land of your[c] fathers. 22And to you I give one more ridge of land[d] than to your brothers, the ridge I took from the Amorites with my sword and my bow."

Jacob Blesses His Sons

49 1Then Jacob called for his sons and said: "Gather around so I can tell you what will happen to you in days to come.

2"Assemble and listen, sons of Jacob;
listen to your father Israel.

3"Reuben, you are my firstborn,
my might, the first sign of my strength,
excelling in honor, excelling in power.
4Turbulent as the waters, you will no longer excel,
for you went up onto your father's bed,
onto my couch and defiled it.

5"Simeon and Levi are brothers—
their swords[e] are weapons of violence.
6Let me not enter their council,
let me not join their assembly,
for they have killed men in their anger
and hamstrung oxen as they pleased.
7Cursed be their anger, so fierce,
and their fury, so cruel!
I will scatter them in Jacob
and disperse them in Israel.

8"Judah,[f] your brothers will praise you;
your hand will be on the neck of your enemies;
your father's sons will bow down to you.

[a] *7* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia [b] *20* The Hebrew is singular. [c] *21* The Hebrew is plural. [d] *22* The Hebrew for *ridge of land* is identical with the place name Shechem. [e] *5* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [f] *8* *Judah* sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for *praise*.

The Twelve Tribes of Israel (Ge 49:1–28)

Each tribe was a social group composed of many clans and families, together with their dependents, outside the ties of blood kinship, who had become associated with the group through covenant, marriage, adoption, or slavery. Israel was an association of twelve tribes, designated by the names of the ancestors from whom they were descended (Dt 27:12, 13; Eze 48:1–35). The historical origins of the tribal units may be traced to the Book of Genesis. Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel (Ge 32:28), was the father of 12 sons (Ge 29:31—30:24; 35:18, 22–26). The sons of Jacob, excluding Levi and Joseph but including Joseph's sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, were the ancestors of the later tribal units in the nation's history. The development of the tribes begins with the events described in the Book of Exodus.

The sons of Jacob, together with their father and families, migrated to Egypt to join their brother Joseph and to escape the famine in Canaan (Ge 46:1–27; Ex 1:16). They grew significantly in number for the next 400 years (Ge 15:13; Ex 12:40). Then the descendants of Jacob's sons left Egypt in the exodus under the leadership of Moses. They were joined by many who were not descendants of Jacob. These additional Exodus people are thus characterized as "many other people" or "the rabble" (Ex 12:38; Nu 11:4).

The number of dependents, those not of blood kinship, continued to increase as the tribal units developed. Moses' father-in-law, whose clan joined Israel in the wilderness, was a Midianite (Nu 10:29). Caleb, who figured prominently in the conquest of the land of Canaan, was called a Kenizzite (Jos 14:13, 14). Later the Calebites were given an inheritance among the tribe of Judah (Jos 15:13).

The tribal confederation with its institutions reached its highest form during the period recorded in the books of Joshua and Judges. The rigidity of Israel's tribal structure did weaken somewhat with the establishment of the United Kingdom under David and Solomon. But tribal organization and association was maintained throughout later biblical history (Lk 2:36; Ac 4:36; Ro 11:1; Heb 7:14).

9 You are a lion's cub, Judah;
you return from the prey, my son.
Like a lion he crouches and lies down,
like a lioness—who dares to rouse him?
10 The scepter will not depart from Judah,
nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,[a]
until he to whom it belongs[b] shall come
and the obedience of the nations shall be his.
11 He will tether his donkey to a vine,
his colt to the choicest branch;
he will wash his garments in wine,
his robes in the blood of grapes.
12 His eyes will be darker than wine,
his teeth whiter than milk.[c]

13 "Zebulun will live by the seashore
and become a haven for ships;
his border will extend toward Sidon.

14 "Issachar is a rawboned[d] donkey
lying down among the sheep pens.[e]
15 When he sees how good is his resting place
and how pleasant is his land,
he will bend his shoulder to the burden
and submit to forced labor.

16 "Dan[f] will provide justice for his people
as one of the tribes of Israel.
17 Dan will be a snake by the roadside,
a viper along the path,
that bites the horse's heels
so that its rider tumbles backward.

18 "I look for your deliverance, LORD.

19 "Gad[g] will be attacked by a band of raiders,
but he will attack them at their heels.

20 "Asher's food will be rich;
he will provide delicacies fit for a king.

21 "Naphtali is a doe set free
that bears beautiful fawns.[h]

22 "Joseph is a fruitful vine,
a fruitful vine near a spring,
whose branches climb over a wall.[i]
23 With bitterness archers attacked him;
they shot at him with hostility.
24 But his bow remained steady,
his strong arms stayed[j] limber,
because of the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob,
because of the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel,
25 because of your father's God, who helps you,
because of the Almighty,[k] who blesses you
with blessings of the skies above,
blessings of the deep springs below,
blessings of the breast and womb.

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[a] *10* Or *from his descendants* [b] *10* Or *to whom tribute belongs*; the meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. [c] *12* Or *will be dull from wine, / his teeth white from milk* [d] *14* Or *strong* [e] *14* Or *the campfires*; or *the saddlebags* [f] *16* *Dan* here means *he provides justice.* [g] *19* *Gad* sounds like the Hebrew for *attack* and also for *band of raiders.* [h] *21* Or *free; / he utters beautiful words* [i] *22* Or *Joseph is a wild colt, / a wild colt near a spring, / a wild donkey on a terraced hill* [j] *23,24* Or *archers will attack . . . will shoot . . . will remain . . . will stay* [k] *25* Hebrew *Shaddai*

26 Your father's blessings are greater
than the blessings of the ancient mountains,
than[a] the bounty of the age-old hills.
Let all these rest on the head of Joseph,
on the brow of the prince among[b] his brothers.

27 "Benjamin is a ravenous wolf;
in the morning he devours the prey,
in the evening he divides the plunder."

28 All these are the twelve tribes of Israel, and this is what their father said to them when he blessed them, giving each the blessing appropriate to him.

The Death of Jacob

29 Then he gave them these instructions: "I am about to be gathered to my people. Bury me with my fathers in the cave in the field of Ephron the Hittite, 30 the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre in Canaan, which Abraham bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. 31 There Abraham and his wife Sarah were buried, there Isaac and his wife Rebekah were buried, and there I buried Leah. 32 The field and the cave in it were bought from the Hittites.[c]"

33 When Jacob had finished giving instructions to his sons, he drew his feet up into the bed, breathed his last and was gathered to his people.

50 1 Joseph threw himself on his father and wept over him and kissed him. 2 Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, 3 taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

4 When the days of mourning had passed, Joseph said to Pharaoh's court, "If I have found favor in your eyes, speak to Pharaoh for me. Tell him, 5 'My father made me swear an oath and said, "I am about to die; bury me in the tomb I dug for myself in the land of Canaan." Now let me go up and bury my father; then I will return.'"

6 Pharaoh said, "Go up and bury your father, as he made you swear to do."

7 So Joseph went up to bury his father. All Pharaoh's officials accompanied him — the dignitaries of his court and all the dignitaries of Egypt — 8 besides all the members of Joseph's household and his brothers and those belonging to his father's household. Only their children and their flocks and herds were left in Goshen. 9 Chariots and horsemen[d] also went up with him. It was a very large company.

10 When they reached the threshing floor of Atad, near the Jordan, they lamented loudly and bitterly; and there Joseph observed a seven-day period of mourning for his father. 11 When the Canaanites who lived there saw the mourning at the threshing floor of Atad, they said, "The Egyptians are holding a solemn ceremony of mourning." That is why that place near the Jordan is called Abel Mizraim.[e]

12 So Jacob's sons did as he had commanded them: 13 They carried him to the land of Canaan and buried him in the cave in the field of Machpelah, near Mamre, which Abraham had bought along with the field as a burial place from Ephron the Hittite. 14 After burying his father, Joseph returned to Egypt, together with his brothers and all the others who had gone with him to bury his father.

Today the modern city of el-Khalil (Hebron) is built up around the site of Machpelah. The cave was once protected by a Christian church but is now marked by a Muslim mosque.

Joseph Reassures His Brothers

15 When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" 16 So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 17 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept.

18 His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said.

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[a] *26* Or *of my progenitors, / as great as* [b] *26* Or *of the one separated from* [c] *32* Or *the descendants of Heth*
[d] *9* Or *charioteers* [e] *11* *Abel Mizraim* means *mourning of the Egyptians.*

19But Joseph said to them, “Don’t be afraid.
Am I in the place of God? 20You intended to
harm me, but God intended it for good to ac-
complish what is now being done, the saving
of many lives. 21So then, don’t be afraid. I will
provide for you and your children.” And he re-
assured them and spoke kindly to them.

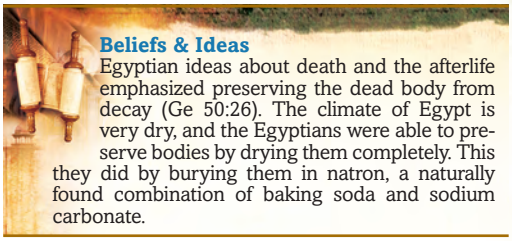
The Death of Joseph

22Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his
father’s family. He lived a hundred and ten
years 23and saw the third generation of Ephra-
im’s children. Also the children of Makir son
of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph’s
knees.[a]

24Then Joseph said to his brothers, “I am
about to die. But God will surely come to your
aid and take you up out of this land to the land
he promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Ja-
cob.” 25And Joseph made the Israelites swear
an oath and said, “God will surely come to your
aid, and then you must carry my bones up from
this place.”

26So Joseph died at the age of a hundred
and ten. And after they embalmed him, he was
placed in a coffin in Egypt.

[a] *23* That is, were counted as his



Beliefs & Ideas

Egyptian ideas about death and the afterlife emphasized preserving the dead body from decay (Ge 50:26). The climate of Egypt is very dry, and the Egyptians were able to preserve bodies by drying them completely. This they did by burying them in natron, a naturally found combination of baking soda and sodium carbonate.

The Rise of a Unified People

God miraculously delivered his people from the hands of the strongest nation of that day. These dramatic events would forever be proof that the Israelites were God's people.

1500–1200 B.C.

The Exodus marks the beginning of Israel as a people. The patriarchs were, at most, an extended family, rather than a people. More such families undoubtedly moved to Egypt either because of famine, or because of the migrations of peoples all over the Middle East. When a dynasty of strong pharaohs returned to power, these "foreigners" were oppressed and put to forced labor. The escape of a large band of these slaves under the leadership of Moses was a new beginning for the Israelites. Their experiences in the years of wandering in the wilderness along with the great covenant ceremony at Mount Sinai began to mold them into both a distinct religious entity and the nucleus of a nation. Their entry into Canaan and the struggle to maintain a separate identity in the face of cultural and religious temptations strengthened their sense of being a people.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

The oldest written records of significance for Palestine come from the Late Bronze Age (1500–1200 B.C.). The Amarna letters were part of the royal archive of Amenhotep IV, also known as Akhenaten (1352–1336 B.C.). Akhenaten was more interested in religious reform than in foreign policy. He abandoned Egyptian activity in Palestine to pursue the introduction of monotheism, based on the worship of the sun god, Aten.

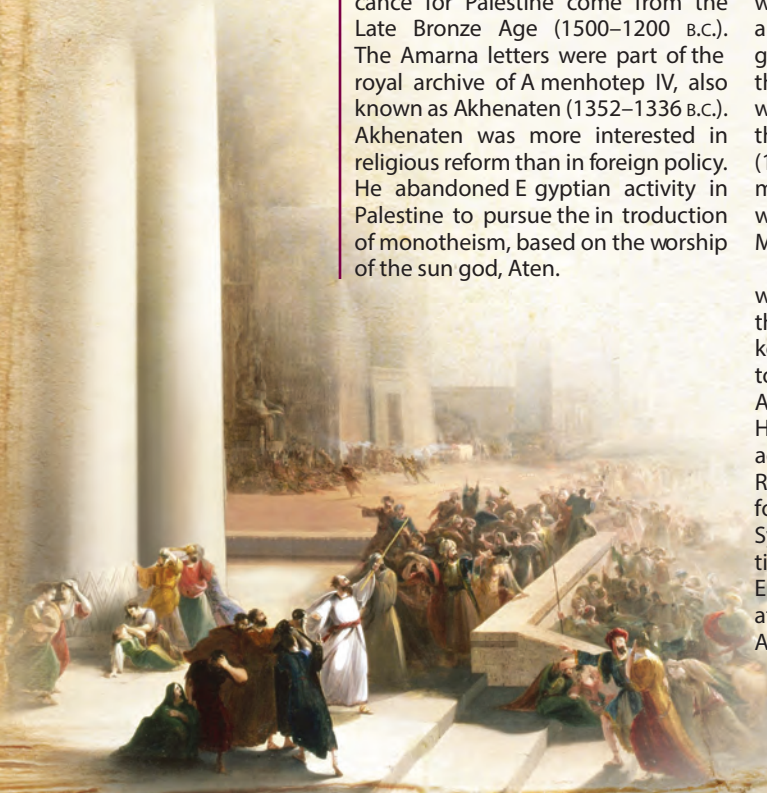
Akhenaten's disinterest in administering the Egyptian empire resulted in turmoil and civil war in Palestine, and the Amarna letters reflect this disorder. Without the stabilizing influence of the Egyptian military, the kings of the city-states were increasing their own power at the expense of their neighbors. There were also raids by a people called the Habiru. Many of the Amarna letters appeal to the pharaoh for aid against the incursions of these Habiru.

Other writings from the Late Bronze Age reflect a time of Egyptian power. An inscription of Merenptah, who ruled Egypt from 1213 to 1203 B.C., includes the first mention of Israel in Egyptian documents. Merenptah commemorates his victories over the Libyans and other foreigners, boasting that all the peoples of Asia had submitted. One line reads, "Israel is laid waste, his seed is not."

THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

Early in this period, Egyptian armies marched through Palestine into Syria, where they clashed with the Hurrians of Mitanni (in modern Iraq). The greatest political accomplishment of the Hurrians was the Mitanni Empire, which ruled Assyria and lasted until the reign of Shalmaneser I of Assyria (1273–1244 B.C.). They were even more important culturally, with their writings found from Assyria to Asia Minor to Egypt.

Later in the Late Bronze Age, there were wars between Egyptians and the Hittites of Anatolia (modern Turkey). The Hittite Empire captured towns and regions, such as Ugarit and Amurru, from under Egypt's control. Hostilities with the Egyptians erupted again during the reign of Pharaoh Ramesses II (1279–1213 B.C.), who fought the Hittites to a stalemate in Syria and kept Palestine under Egyptian rule. Around 1200 B.C. the Hittite Empire collapsed, partly because of attacks by the "Sea Peoples" from the Aegean, and the rise of Assyria.



Two ethnic or political groups played roles in Israel's history during the Late Bronze Age: the Midianites and Canaanites. The Midianites lived in northwest Arabia, along the Gulf of Aqaba. They were shepherds but also copper miners and traders. Moses fled to the land of Midian, where he married into the family of Jethro, a priest of Midian (Ex 18). Much later, a related tribe of Midianites were involved in the Israelite worship of Baal of Peor (Nu 25:16–18). The incident led to hostilities between Israel and Midian during the time of Moses (Nu 31:1–8).

The Canaanites were the inhabitants of Palestine west of the Jordan at the time of Joshua's invasion. They are first mentioned in an inscription of Amenhotep II (1427–1400 B.C.), and also in the Amarna letters. Originally, the term probably applied either to a Hurrian military aristocracy, or to a class of merchants. By the time of Joshua, the Canaanites were a mixed group of people. In the Old Testament the term "Canaanites" sometimes refers to all the people who lived west of Jordan. Other times the term is restricted to the Phoenicians who lived along the coast.

The kings of this time were more expansionist than were previous Egyptian dynasties.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The biblical books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua relate the rise of the Israelites from slaves in Egypt to a unified people. The theme of these books is God's mighty acts on behalf of his people in the historical and political events of the Late Bronze Age. Though the focus of the biblical books is on God's activity, and the response of Israel to that activity, we still catch glimpses of the larger world of the Late Bronze Age.

Several pivotal events shaped Israel as a people. The Book of Exodus focuses on their escape from Egypt under the leadership of Moses and the making of the great covenant at Mount Sinai. The books of Leviticus and Numbers continue with the covenant, relating more divine instructions from Mount Sinai. Numbers also narrates the experiences the Israelites faced before coming to the promised land, most significantly the wilderness wanderings. Finally they were at the doorstep of Canaan. The Book of Deuteronomy is written as Moses' farewell speeches to the people of Israel. They would enter the land under a new generation of leaders, which is the story of the Book of Joshua.

EGYPT AND THE EXODUS

At last an Egyptian dynasty arose to expel the hated Hyksos rulers and begin the last great period of prosperity for ancient Egypt, the New Kingdom (c. 1550–1069 B.C.). Perhaps from a desire to keep all foreigners at bay, the kings of this time were more expansionist than were previous Egyptian dynasties. King Thutmose III (1479–1425 B.C.), for instance, expanded Egypt's boundaries through Palestine as far as the Euphrates River. These gains in Syria were soon challenged by an enemy from the north, the empire of the Hittites in Asia Minor.

One of Thutmose's descendants, Amenhotep IV (1352–1336 B.C.), is an especially remarkable New Kingdom ruler. Rejecting the many gods of Egyptian religion, this king worshiped one god, the sun god named Aten. He changed his own name to Akhenaten and built a new capital at Amarna. Letters found in the ruins of Amarna show that the city-states of Palestine were in varying degrees of rebellion during Akhenaten's reign. His religious reforms died when he did.

Another New Kingdom ruler, Ramesses II (1279–1213 B.C.), was especially notable for his many building projects. Egyptian sources suggest that Ramesses expanded the old Hyksos capital Avaris and renamed it "Rameses" after himself. The city became the royal residence for the 19th and 20th Dynasties. Ramesses reigned for more than 60 years, but his successors inherited a weaker Egypt and never equaled his glory.

TRANSITION

The Book of Exodus

The Hebrews' exodus from bondage in Egypt is the defining event both in Israel's emergence as a nation and in the shape of that nation's faith. The Book of Exodus devotes about equal space to the events and to the ensuing covenant. The first half (chs. 1–19) tells the history, from Moses' birth through the Exodus itself up to Israel's climactic encounter with God on Mount Sinai. The second half of the book (chs. 20–40) consists mostly of God's instructions to his covenant people both general, like the Ten Commandments, and specific, like the instructions for building the tabernacle, Israel's tent shrine.

It is no denial of the divine origin of this covenant to note how it is couched in the language and customs of its day. For instance, it is interesting to note that the covenant's emphasis on one God was preceded by the failed reforms of Akhenaten. Or again, the pattern for the giving of the covenant in Ex 19–24 follows a very common Hittite treaty pattern, beginning with a prologue and continuing with a list of expectations (chs. 20–23), then concluding with a ratification ceremony (ch. 24).

• **Exodus 1:1—2:15**

Exodus

The Israelites Oppressed

1:1 These are the names of the sons of Israel who went to Egypt with Jacob, each with his family: [2]Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah; [3]Issachar, Zebulun and Benjamin; [4]Dan and Naphtali; Gad and Asher. [5]The descendants of Jacob numbered seventy[a] in all; Joseph was already in Egypt.

[6]Now Joseph and all his brothers and all that generation died, [7]but the Israelites were exceedingly fruitful; they multiplied greatly, increased in numbers and became so numerous that the land was filled with them.

[8]Then a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt. [9]"Look," he said to his people, "the Israelites have become far too numerous for us. [10]Come, we must deal shrewdly with them or they will become even more numerous and, if war breaks out, will join our enemies, fight against us and leave the country."

[11]So they put slave masters over them to oppress them with forced labor, and they built Pithom and Rameses as store cities for Pharaoh. [12]But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites [13]and worked them ruthlessly. [14]They made their lives bitter with harsh labor in brick and mortar and with all kinds of work in the fields; in all their harsh labor the Egyptians worked them ruthlessly.

[15]The king of Egypt said to the Hebrew midwives, whose names were Shiphrah and Puah, [16]"When you are helping the Hebrew women during childbirth on the delivery stool, if you see that the baby is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." [17]The midwives, however, feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys live. [18]Then the king of Egypt summoned the midwives and asked them, "Why have you done this? Why have you let the boys live?"

[19]The midwives answered Pharaoh, "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

Health & Medicine
In traditional cultures births are usually attended only by women. A midwife is a woman with experience and training who can assist at births, recognize complications, and so forth. The most widespread practice, ancient and modern, is for mothers to deliver in a sitting position with a support like a delivery stool (Ex 1:16).

[20]So God was kind to the midwives and the people increased and became even more numerous. [21]And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

[22]Then Pharaoh gave this order to all his people: "Every Hebrew boy that is born you must throw into the Nile, but let every girl live."

The Birth of Moses

2 [1]Now a man of the tribe of Levi married a Levite woman, [2]and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. When she saw that he was a fine child, she hid him for three months. [3]But when she could hide him no longer, she got a papyrus basket[b] for him and coated it with tar and pitch. Then she placed the child in it and put it among the reeds along the bank of the Nile. [4]His sister stood at a distance to see what would happen to him.

[5]Then Pharaoh's daughter went down to the Nile to bathe, and her attendants were walking along the riverbank. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her female slave to get it. [6]She opened it and saw the baby. He was crying, and she felt sorry for him. "This is one of the Hebrew babies," she said.

[7]Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, "Shall I go and get one of the Hebrew women to nurse the baby for you?"

[8]"Yes, go," she answered. So the girl went and got the baby's mother. [9]Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this baby and nurse him for me, and I will pay you." So the woman took the baby and nursed him. [10]When the child grew older, she took him to Pharaoh's daughter and he became her son. She named him Moses,[c] saying, "I drew him out of the water."

Moses Flees to Midian

[11]One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. [12]Looking this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. [13]The next day he went out and saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, "Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?"

[14]The man said, "Who made you ruler and judge over us? Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid and thought, "What I did must have become known."

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[a] *5* Masoretic Text (see also Gen. 46:27); Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint (see also Acts 7:14 and note at Gen. 46:27) *seventy-five* [b] *3* The Hebrew can also mean *ark*, as in Gen. 6:14. [c] *10* *Moses* sounds like the Hebrew for *draw out*.

The Birth of Sargon (Ex 2:1–10)

The birth story of Moses (Ex 2:1–10) resembles a familiar theme in the ancient Near Eastern folklore: the exposure and rescue of an infant son, and his subsequent ascent to a position of royalty. One of the most famous versions of this theme is the birth legend of Sargon of Accad, a ruler in central Mesopotamia around 2350 B.C.

Although many legends of Sargon abound, the earliest record of these is from the late 8th century B.C. Some scholars maintain that the text was composed to commemorate the feats of a namesake of the Accadian Sargon—Sargon II of Assyria (721–705 B.C.).

According to the story, Sargon was born to a high priestess and an unknown father. Sargon's birth was kept secret, and his mother set him in a basket among bulrushes, where he was found by a drawer of water. From these humble beginnings, Sargon is said to have been granted the love of Ishtar, the goddess of love and war. The goddess's love is regarded as a token of Sargon's title to the throne. The apparent similarities between the Sargon and Moses birth accounts, though fascinating, are nevertheless superficial.

15 When Pharaoh heard of this, he tried to kill
Moses, but Moses fled from Pharaoh and went
to live in Midian, where he sat down by a well.

TRANSITION

Moses in Midian

Within the official boundaries of the Egyptian empire, in Palestine and the arid Sinai Peninsula, lived a diverse group called the Midianites. These people appeared sometime around the 13th century B.C. and were known as traders (cf. Ge 37:36) and metalworkers. Less clearly known is their religion, but there is some evidence that they worshiped in tent shrines in the desert. The tabernacle that Moses was commanded to build (Ex 26) may be related to Midianite practices. Moses' father-in-law Reuel (Ex 2:18) was, after all, a priest of Midian. Elsewhere the names Jethro (Ex 3:1) and Hobab (Jdg 4:11 note) are also given for the father-in-law of Moses.

• **Exodus 2:16—6:30**

Exodus

2:16 Now a priest of Midian had seven
daughters, and they came to draw water
and fill the troughs to water their father's flock.
17 Some shepherds came along and drove them
away, but Moses got up and came to their rescue and watered their flock.
18 When the girls returned to Reuel their father, he asked them, "Why have you returned
so early today?"
19 They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us
from the shepherds. He even drew water for us
and watered the flock."
20 "And where is he?" Reuel asked his daughters. "Why did you leave him? Invite him to
have something to eat."
21 Moses agreed to stay with the man, who
gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage. 22 Zipporah gave birth to a son, and Moses named him Gershom,[a] saying, "I have become a foreigner in a foreign land."
23 During that long period, the king of Egypt
died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery
and cried out, and their cry for help because
of their slavery went up to God. 24 God heard
their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob.
25 So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

Moses and the Burning Bush

3 1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro
his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and
he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.
2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him
in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw
that though the bush was on fire it did not burn
up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see
this strange sight—why the bush does not
burn up."
4 When the LORD saw that he had gone over
to look, God called to him from within the
bush, "Moses! Moses!"
And Moses said, "Here I am."
5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take
off your sandals, for the place where you are
standing is holy ground." 6 Then he said, "I am
the God of your father,[b] the God of Abraham,

[a] *22 Gershom* sounds like the Hebrew for *a foreigner there.*
[b] *6* Masoretic Text; Samaritan Pentateuch (see Acts 7:32) *fathers*

the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.

7The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

11But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

12And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you[a] will worship God on this mountain."

13Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

14God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM.[b] This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

15God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD,[c] the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.'

"This is my name forever,
the name you shall call me
from generation to generation.

16"Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. 17And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey.'

18"The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.' 19But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. 20So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

21"And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. 22Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians."

[a] *12* The Hebrew is plural. [b] *14* Or *I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE*
[c] *15* The Hebrew for *LORD* sounds like and may be related to the Hebrew for *I AM* in verse 14.

Moses' Flight and Return to Egypt
Moses fled from Pharaoh through the Sinai desert and settled in the land of Midian. In the vicinity of Horeb, located by tradition in the Sinai Peninsula, God revealed himself in the burning bush and called Moses to go back to Egypt. Moses met Aaron at Horeb, and together they returned to Pharaoh's court in Rameses.

Enmerkar and the Heavy Mouth (Ex 4:10–16)

Among the objections Moses raised against his going to Pharaoh (Ex 3:11) was that he considered himself "slow of speech and tongue" (Ex 4:10). In the Hebrew language this condition is expressed literally as "heavy of mouth" and "heavy of tongue." Moses' difficulties in speech are not unprecedented in ancient Near Eastern literature.

Enmerkar, the Sumerian king of Uruk and third successor to the famous Gilgamesh, is the main character of *Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta,* an epic written in Sumerian near the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. In the brief passage, a messenger is unable to comprehend a message given to him by Enmerkar, and thus unable to verbally deliver it. Like Moses, Enmerkar was "slow in speech," expressed in the epic as "heavy of mouth." Therefore, the king of Uruk invented writing by putting the message on a piece of clay.

This epic seems to explain the origin of writing, implying that writing did not exist before Enmerkar (c. 2700–2500 B.C.). In actuality, writing preceded Enmerkar by at least 500 years.

Signs for Moses

4 [1]Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'?"

[2]Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

"A staff," he replied.

[3]The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground."

Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. [4]Then the LORD said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. [5]"This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has appeared to you."

[6]Then the LORD said, "Put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, the skin was leprous[a]—it had become as white as snow.

[7]"Now put it back into your cloak," he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

[8]Then the LORD said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first sign, they may believe the second. [9]But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground."

[10]Moses said to the LORD, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

[11]The LORD said to him, "Who gave human beings their mouths? Who makes them deaf or mute? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Is it not I, the LORD? [12]Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

[13]But Moses said, "Pardon your servant, Lord. Please send someone else."

[14]Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and he will be glad to see you. [15]You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. [16]He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. [17]But take this staff in your hand so you can perform the signs with it."

Moses Returns to Egypt

[18]Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me return to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive."

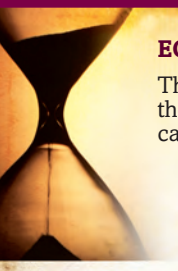
Jethro said, "Go, and I wish you well."

[19]Now the LORD had said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all those who wanted to kill you are dead." [20]So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand.

[21]The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to

[a] *6* The Hebrew word for *leprous* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

TIME CAPSULE	1660 to 1633 B.C.
1660	Horse in use in Nubia (southern Egypt)
1650	Hattusilis I makes Hattusa the Hittite capital
1648–1540	The Hyksos dynasty controls Lower Egypt
1646–1626	Ammisaduqa, king of Babylon
1634	Hittite king Hattusilis I destroys Alalakh
1633–1550	Egypt's 17th Dynasty rules at Thebes



EGYPT AND THE NEW KINGDOM

The Egyptian priest Manetho (c. 305–285 B.C.) describes the destructive invasion of Egypt by the Hyksos people, who seized control of Egypt and made Avaris, in the Delta region, their new capital.

Second Intermediate Period	The Dynasties
1786–1550 B.C.	13th–17th Dynasties. The weakening of the 13th Dynasty (1786–1633 B.C.) began a period in which rival dynasties vied for power.
1786–1602 B.C.	In the Delta several rulers proclaimed themselves "kings," representing the 14th Dynasty.
1648–1540 B.C.	The Hyksos dynasty controlled only Lower Egypt, while the kings of the Upper Nile Valley stood firm in their own local domains.
The New Kingdom	**The Dynasties**
1550–1069 B.C.	18th–20th Dynasties. The Egyptian kings Kamose and Ahmose I expelled the Hyksos from Egypt, beginning Egypt's "New Kingdom."
1550–1295 B.C.	18th Dynasty. Amenhotep I named himself after the god Amen or Amon. This universal god was linked with the sun god Re, and worshiped as Amon-Re.
1295–1186 B.C.	19th Dynasty. Seti I began new wars of conquest that pushed Egypt into Palestine, driving back the Hittites.
1186–1069 B.C.	20th Dynasty. Ramesses III fought off invasions by the Sea Peoples.

do. But I will harden his heart so that he will
not let the people go. 22Then say to Pharaoh,
'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my first-
born son, 23and I told you, "Let my son go, so
he may worship me." But you refused to let
him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'"
24At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met
Moses[a] and was about to kill him. 25But Zippo-
rah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin
and touched Moses' feet with it.[b] "Surely you
are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said.
26So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she
said "bridegroom of blood," referring to cir-
cumcision.)
27The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wil-
derness to meet Moses." So he met Moses at
the mountain of God and kissed him. 28Then
Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had
sent him to say, and also about all the signs he
had commanded him to perform.
29Moses and Aaron brought together all the
elders of the Israelites, 30and Aaron told them
everything the LORD had said to Moses. He
also performed the signs before the people,
31and they believed. And when they heard that
the LORD was concerned about them and had
seen their misery, they bowed down and wor-
shiped.

Bricks Without Straw

5 1Afterward Moses and Aaron went to Phar-
aoh and said, "This is what the LORD, the
God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that
they may hold a festival to me in the wilder-
ness.'"
2Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD, that I
should obey him and let Israel go? I do not
know the LORD and I will not let Israel go."
3Then they said, "The God of the Hebrews
has met with us. Now let us take a three-day
journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices
to the LORD our God, or he may strike us with
plagues or with the sword."
4But the king of Egypt said, "Moses and Aar-
on, why are you taking the people away from
their labor? Get back to your work!" 5Then
Pharaoh said, "Look, the people of the land
are now numerous, and you are stopping them
from working."
6That same day Pharaoh gave this order to
the slave drivers and overseers in charge of the
people: 7"You are no longer to supply the peo-
ple with straw for making bricks; let them go
and gather their own straw. 8But require them

[a] *24* Hebrew *him* [b] *25* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

to make the same number of bricks as before; don't reduce the quota. They are lazy; that is why they are crying out, 'Let us go and sacrifice to our God.' 9Make the work harder for the people so that they keep working and pay no attention to lies."

10Then the slave drivers and the overseers went out and said to the people, "This is what Pharaoh says: 'I will not give you any more straw. 11Go and get your own straw wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced at all.'" 12So the people scattered all over Egypt to gather stubble to use for straw. 13The slave drivers kept pressing them, saying, "Complete the work required of you for each day, just as when you had straw." 14And Pharaoh's slave drivers beat the Israelite overseers they had appointed, demanding, "Why haven't you met your quota of bricks yesterday or today, as before?"

15Then the Israelite overseers went and appealed to Pharaoh: "Why have you treated your servants this way? 16Your servants are given no straw, yet we are told, 'Make bricks!' Your servants are being beaten, but the fault is with your own people."

17Pharaoh said, "Lazy, that's what you are—lazy! That is why you keep saying, 'Let us go and sacrifice to the LORD.' 18Now get to work. You will not be given any straw, yet you must produce your full quota of bricks."

19The Israelite overseers realized they were in trouble when they were told, "You are not to reduce the number of bricks required of you for each day." 20When they left Pharaoh, they found Moses and Aaron waiting to meet them, 21and they said, "May the LORD look on you and judge you! You have made us obnoxious to Pharaoh and his officials and have put a sword in their hand to kill us."

God Promises Deliverance

22Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Why, Lord, why have you brought trouble on this people? Is this why you sent me? 23Ever since I went to Pharaoh to speak in your name, he has brought trouble on this people, and you have not rescued your people at all."

6 1Then the LORD said to Moses, "Now you will see what I will do to Pharaoh: Because of my mighty hand he will let them go; because of my mighty hand he will drive them out of his country."

2God also said to Moses, "I am the LORD. 3I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob as God Almighty,[a] but by my name the LORD[b] I did not make myself fully known to them. 4I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, where they resided as foreigners. 5Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the Israelites, whom the Egyptians are enslaving, and I have remembered my covenant.

6"Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. 7I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. 8And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD.'"

9Moses reported this to the Israelites, but they did not listen to him because of their discouragement and harsh labor.

10Then the LORD said to Moses, 11"Go, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the Israelites go out of his country."

12But Moses said to the LORD, "If the Israelites will not listen to me, why would Pharaoh listen to me, since I speak with faltering lips[c]?"

Family Record of Moses and Aaron

13Now the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron about the Israelites and Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he commanded them to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.

14These were the heads of their families[d]:

The sons of Reuben the firstborn son of Israel were Hanok and Pallu, Hezron and Karmi. These were the clans of Reuben.

15The sons of Simeon were Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jakin, Zohar and Shaul the son of a Canaanite woman. These were the clans of Simeon.

Religion & Worship

Animal sacrifice was practiced in all ancient cultures. It is a ritual killing of an animal as a part of religion (Ex 5:3). Apparently the animal's moment of death and shedding of blood impressed on human beings that they were responsible to forces outside themselves. The Egyptians did not question the need to perform sacrifices.

[a] *3* Hebrew *El-Shaddai* [b] *3* See note at 3:15.
[c] *12* Hebrew *I am uncircumcised of lips*; also in verse 30
[d] *14* The Hebrew for *families* here and in verse 25 refers to units larger than clans.

16These were the names of the sons of
Levi according to their records: Gershon,
Kohath and Merari. Levi lived 137 years.
17The sons of Gershon, by clans, were
Libni and Shimei.
18The sons of Kohath were Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel. Kohath lived 133
years.
19The sons of Merari were Mahli and
Mushi.
These were the clans of Levi according
to their records.
20Amram married his father's sister
Jochebed, who bore him Aaron and Moses. Amram lived 137 years.
21The sons of Izhar were Korah, Nepheg
and Zikri.
22The sons of Uzziel were Mishael, Elzaphan and Sithri.
23Aaron married Elisheba, daughter of
Amminadab and sister of Nahshon, and
she bore him Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar
and Ithamar.
24The sons of Korah were Assir, Elkanah and Abiasaph. These were the Korahite clans.
25Eleazar son of Aaron married one of
the daughters of Putiel, and she bore him
Phinehas.

These were the heads of the Levite families, clan by clan.

26It was this Aaron and Moses to whom the
LORD said, "Bring the Israelites out of Egypt
by their divisions." 27They were the ones who
spoke to Pharaoh king of Egypt about bringing
the Israelites out of Egypt—this same Moses
and Aaron.

Aaron to Speak for Moses

28Now when the LORD spoke to Moses in
Egypt, 29he said to him, "I am the LORD. Tell
Pharaoh king of Egypt everything I tell you."
30But Moses said to the LORD, "Since I speak
with faltering lips, why would Pharaoh listen
to me?"

TRANSITION

From Egypt to Midian to Egypt

The life of Moses is viewed by tradition in three periods: early life in Egypt; sojourn in Midian; appearance before Pharaoh in Egypt. The ages recorded for Moses in different biblical passages make each of the three periods to be 40 years long.

The first period, beginning with Moses' birth, ended abruptly when he was forced to flee Egypt. The Book of Exodus defines this time only as "after Moses had grown up" (Ex 2:11). However, Stephen's sermonic survey of Israel's history makes Moses "forty years old" at this time (Ac 7:23).

The second period, during which Moses found refuge in Midian, ended with Moses' return to Egypt, accompanied by Aaron. The Book of Exodus reports Moses to have been 80 years old when he and 83-year-old Aaron first approached Pharaoh (Ex 7:7). Stephen's sermon agrees, placing the burning bush experience 40 years after Moses fled to Midian.

The last period of Moses' life ends, of course, with his death. That Moses was 80 when he stood before Pharaoh is consistent both with his age of 120 when he died (Dt 34:7) and with the 40 years of wandering in the wilderness (Nu 14:33–35).

• **Exodus 7:1—12:36**

Exodus

7 **:1** Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I
have made you like God to Pharaoh, and
your brother Aaron will be your prophet. 2You
are to say everything I command you, and your
brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. 3But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my
signs and wonders in Egypt, 4he will not listen
to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and
with mighty acts of judgment I will bring out
my divisions, my people the Israelites. 5And the
Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when
I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring
the Israelites out of it."
6Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them. 7Moses was eighty years old
and Aaron eighty-three when they spoke to
Pharaoh.

Aaron's Staff Becomes a Snake

8The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 9"When
Pharaoh says to you, 'Perform a miracle,' then
say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw it down
before Pharaoh,' and it will become a snake."
10So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and
did just as the LORD commanded. Aaron threw
his staff down in front of Pharaoh and his officials, and it became a snake. 11Pharaoh then
summoned wise men and sorcerers, and the
Egyptian magicians also did the same things
by their secret arts: 12Each one threw down his
staff and it became a snake. But Aaron's staff
swallowed up their staffs. 13Yet Pharaoh's heart
became hard and he would not listen to them,
just as the LORD had said.

Dueling Deities: Magic and Magicians in Egypt (Ex 7:11)

Throughout the ancient Near East, magicians were important members of royal courts. Magic was a means by which power could be transferred from the gods to humans. Magicians were well-educated, literate persons, who had studied the incantations and actions that were needed to cause gods or demons to honor human requests. Their official services were needed for understanding the will of the gods, bringing down curses on treaty-breakers, or creating catastrophes for enemies.

Egypt's magical traditions are the best known to us of all the traditions of the ancient world. This is partly because other civilizations were impressed by the Egyptian traditions, but mostly because a wealth of their magical texts have survived in the desert. The Egyptian magical texts extend in time from the Pyramid Texts (3rd millennium B.C.) to the end of the Roman Empire, and include incantations, amulets, secret signs, certain geometric shapes, acrostic word patterns, and the names of famous persons.

In Exodus, Moses is presented as directing the plagues in the same manner as the Egyptians understood their magic to work. Through the miracles Moses conveyed the power of his God. The Egyptian magicians, however, were engaged in the same enterprise. When they turned rods into snakes, water into blood, or called frogs out of the Nile, they believed it was the power of their gods working through them (Ex 7:10, 11).

Pharaoh's magicians were unimpressed with Moses and his God as long as they were able to do the same tricks through their magical arts. But when they could not produce gnats, the Egyptians expressed their admiration for Moses with the words "This is the finger of God" (Ex 8:18, 19), which quotes an actual Egyptian magical phrase. In this way they acknowledged that Moses' God was greater than their gods.

The Plague of Blood

14 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's
heart is unyielding; he refuses to let the people
go. 15 Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he goes
out to the river. Confront him on the bank of
the Nile, and take in your hand the staff that
was changed into a snake. 16 Then say to him,
'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent
me to say to you: Let my people go, so that
they may worship me in the wilderness. But
until now you have not listened. 17 This is what
the LORD says: By this you will know that I am
the LORD: With the staff that is in my hand I
will strike the water of the Nile, and it will be
changed into blood. 18 The fish in the Nile will
die, and the river will stink; the Egyptians will
not be able to drink its water.'"

19 The LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Take
your staff and stretch out your hand over the
waters of Egypt — over the streams and canals,
over the ponds and all the reservoirs — and
they will turn to blood.' Blood will be every-
where in Egypt, even in vessels[a] of wood and
stone."

20 Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had
commanded. He raised his staff in the presence
of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the wa-
ter of the Nile, and all the water was changed
into blood. 21 The fish in the Nile died, and the
river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could
not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in
Egypt.

22 But the Egyptian magicians did the same
things by their secret arts, and Pharaoh's heart
became hard; he would not listen to Moses and
Aaron, just as the LORD had said. 23 Instead, he
turned and went into his palace, and did not
take even this to heart. 24 And all the Egyptians
dug along the Nile to get drinking water, be-
cause they could not drink the water of the
river.

The Plague of Frogs

25 Seven days passed after the LORD struck
8[b] the Nile. 1 Then the LORD said to Moses,
"Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This
is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so
that they may worship me. 2 If you refuse to let
them go, I will send a plague of frogs on your
whole country. 3 The Nile will teem with frogs.
They will come up into your palace and your
bedroom and onto your bed, into the houses
of your officials and on your people, and into
your ovens and kneading troughs. 4 The frogs
will come up on you and your people and all
your officials.'"

5 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron,
'Stretch out your hand with your staff over the
streams and canals and ponds, and make frogs
come up on the land of Egypt.'"

6 So Aaron stretched out his hand over the
waters of Egypt, and the frogs came up and
covered the land. 7 But the magicians did the
same things by their secret arts; they also
made frogs come up on the land of Egypt.

8 Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and
said, "Pray to the LORD to take the frogs away
from me and my people, and I will let your peo-
ple go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

9 Moses said to Pharaoh, "I leave to you the
honor of setting the time for me to pray for you

[a] *19* Or *even on their idols* [b] In Hebrew texts 8:1-4 is numbered 7:26-29, and 8:5-32 is numbered 8:1-28.

and your officials and your people that you and your houses may be rid of the frogs, except for those that remain in the Nile."

10"Tomorrow," Pharaoh said.

Moses replied, "It will be as you say, so that you may know there is no one like the LORD our God. 11The frogs will leave you and your houses, your officials and your people; they will remain only in the Nile."

12After Moses and Aaron left Pharaoh, Moses cried out to the LORD about the frogs he had brought on Pharaoh. 13And the LORD did what Moses asked. The frogs died in the houses, in the courtyards and in the fields. 14They were piled into heaps, and the land reeked of them. 15But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said.

The Plague of Gnats

16Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell Aaron, 'Stretch out your staff and strike the dust of the ground,' and throughout the land of Egypt the dust will become gnats." 17They did this, and when Aaron stretched out his hand with the staff and struck the dust of the ground, gnats came on people and animals. All the dust throughout the land of Egypt became gnats. 18But when the magicians tried to produce gnats by their secret arts, they could not.

Since the gnats were on people and animals everywhere, 19the magicians said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not listen, just as the LORD had said.

The Plague of Flies

20Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning and confront Pharaoh as he goes to the river and say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me. 21If you do not let my people go, I will send swarms of flies on you and your officials, on your people and into your houses. The houses of the Egyptians will be full of flies; even the ground will be covered with them.

22" 'But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the LORD, am in this land. 23I will make a distinction[a] between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow.' "

24And the LORD did this. Dense swarms of flies poured into Pharaoh's palace and into the houses of his officials; throughout Egypt the land was ruined by the flies.

25Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Go, sacrifice to your God here in the land."

26But Moses said, "That would not be right. The sacrifices we offer the LORD our God would be detestable to the Egyptians. And if we offer sacrifices that are detestable in their eyes, will they not stone us? 27We must take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God, as he commands us."

28Pharaoh said, "I will let you go to offer sacrifices to the LORD your God in the wilderness, but you must not go very far. Now pray for me."

29Moses answered, "As soon as I leave you, I will pray to the LORD, and tomorrow the flies will leave Pharaoh and his officials and his people. Only let Pharaoh be sure that he does not act deceitfully again by not letting the people go to offer sacrifices to the LORD."

30Then Moses left Pharaoh and prayed to the LORD, 31and the LORD did what Moses asked. The flies left Pharaoh and his officials and his people; not a fly remained. 32But this time also Pharaoh hardened his heart and would not let the people go.

The Plague on Livestock

9 1Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: "Let my people go, so that they may worship me." 2If you refuse to let them go and continue to hold them back, 3the hand of the LORD will bring a terrible plague on your livestock in the field—on your horses, donkeys and camels and on your cattle, sheep and goats. 4But the LORD will make a distinction between the livestock of Israel and that of Egypt, so that no animal belonging to the Israelites will die.' "

5The LORD set a time and said, "Tomorrow the LORD will do this in the land." 6And the

[a] 23 Septuagint and Vulgate; Hebrew *will put a deliverance*

next day the LORD did it: All the livestock of the Egyptians died, but not one animal belonging to the Israelites died. 7Pharaoh investigated and found that not even one of the animals of the Israelites had died. Yet his heart was unyielding and he would not let the people go.

The Plague of Boils

8Then the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Take handfuls of soot from a furnace and have Moses toss it into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. 9It will become fine dust over the whole land of Egypt, and festering boils will break out on people and animals throughout the land."

10So they took soot from a furnace and stood before Pharaoh. Moses tossed it into the air, and festering boils broke out on people and animals. 11The magicians could not stand before Moses because of the boils that were on them and on all the Egyptians. 12But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the LORD had said to Moses.

The Plague of Hail

13Then the LORD said to Moses, "Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, 'This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, 14or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. 15For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. 16But I have raised you up[a] for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. 17You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go. 18Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now. 19Give an order now to bring your livestock and everything you have in the field to a place of shelter, because the hail will fall on every person and animal that has not been brought in and is still out in the field, and they will die.'"

20Those officials of Pharaoh who feared the word of the LORD hurried to bring their slaves and their livestock inside. 21But those who ignored the word of the LORD left their slaves and livestock in the field.

22Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand toward the sky so that hail will fall all over Egypt—on people and animals and on everything growing in the fields of Egypt." 23When Moses stretched out his staff toward the sky, the LORD sent thunder and hail, and lightning flashed down to the ground. So the LORD rained hail on the land of Egypt; 24hail fell and lightning flashed back and forth. It was the worst storm in all the land of Egypt since it had become a nation. 25Throughout Egypt hail struck everything in the fields—both people and animals; it beat down everything growing in the fields and stripped every tree. 26The only place it did not hail was the land of Goshen, where the Israelites were.

27Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron. "This time I have sinned," he said to them. "The LORD is in the right, and I and my people are in the wrong. 28Pray to the LORD, for we have had enough thunder and hail. I will let you go; you don't have to stay any longer."

29Moses replied, "When I have gone out of the city, I will spread out my hands in prayer to the LORD. The thunder will stop and there will be no more hail, so you may know that the earth is the LORD's. 30But I know that you and your officials still do not fear the LORD God."

31(The flax and barley were destroyed, since the barley had headed and the flax was in bloom. 32The wheat and spelt, however, were not destroyed, because they ripen later.)

33Then Moses left Pharaoh and went out of the city. He spread out his hands toward the LORD; the thunder and hail stopped, and the rain no longer poured down on the land. 34When Pharaoh saw that the rain and hail and thunder had stopped, he sinned again: He and his officials hardened their hearts. 35So Pharaoh's heart was hard and he would not let the Israelites go, just as the LORD had said through Moses.

The Plague of Locusts

10 1Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the hearts of his officials so that I may perform these signs of mine among them 2that you

Agriculture & Herding

Flax was grown mainly for its fibers, from which linen is made (Ex 9:31). Spelt is a food grain similar to wheat, but it can grow in less fertile soil. Wheat and barley both have been grown in Egypt since 5000 B.C., and in Palestine since about 8000 B.C. All Egyptian agriculture depends on the Nile for water.

[a] 16 Or *have spared you*

Where Was the Red Sea? (Ex 10:19)

The Hebrew slaves escaped Egypt by way of the Red Sea. In antiquity this Red Sea also included the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, the two gulfs into which it splits. The precise location of the Exodus crossing has been debated by scholars since antiquity without any agreement on a possible site.

The Red Sea is called *Yam Suph* in Hebrew, which is often translated as "sea of reeds." The Sea of Reeds would refer to the marshes where bulrushes or reeds grow plentifully. In a number of Old Testament passages, *Yam Suph* is associated with the Gulf of Aqaba, which marked the southern tip of King Solomon's empire (1Ki 9:26; Ex 23:31). Yet in other passages *Yam Suph* probably refers to the Gulf of Suez, since the narrative indicates a body of water bordering on Egypt (Ex 10:19; 13:18).

Although traditionally translated as "Red Sea," the Hebrew term *Yam Suph* probably means "Sea of Reeds." In various passages, *Yam Suph* is identified as the sea of the Exodus (Ex 15:4, 22), where the Israelites crossed over on dry ground, escaping the Egyptians who were drowned. Nevertheless, the geographical location of this sea remains ambiguous, since descriptions of *Yam Suph* reflect the geography of Egypt as the biblical writer knew it. The majority of scholars favor a location somewhere in the eastern Delta region of Egypt, but the true location is still undetermined.

may tell your children and grandchildren how
I dealt harshly with the Egyptians and how I
performed my signs among them, and that you
may know that I am the LORD."

3So Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and
said to him, "This is what the LORD, the God of
the Hebrews, says: 'How long will you refuse
to humble yourself before me? Let my people
go, so that they may worship me. 4If you refuse
to let them go, I will bring locusts into your
country tomorrow. 5They will cover the face of
the ground so that it cannot be seen. They will
devour what little you have left after the hail,
including every tree that is growing in your
fields. 6They will fill your houses and those of
all your officials and all the Egyptians—some-
thing neither your parents nor your ancestors
have ever seen from the day they settled in
this land till now.'" Then Moses turned and left
Pharaoh.

7Pharaoh's officials said to him, "How long
will this man be a snare to us? Let the people
go, so that they may worship the LORD their
God. Do you not yet realize that Egypt is ru-
ined?"

8Then Moses and Aaron were brought back
to Pharaoh. "Go, worship the LORD your God,"
he said. "But tell me who will be going."

9Moses answered, "We will go with our young
and our old, with our sons and our daughters,
and with our flocks and herds, because we are
to celebrate a festival to the LORD."

10Pharaoh said, "The LORD be with you—if
I let you go, along with your women and chil-
dren! Clearly you are bent on evil.[a] 11No! Have
only the men go and worship the LORD, since
that's what you have been asking for." Then
Moses and Aaron were driven out of Pharaoh's
presence.

12And the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out
your hand over Egypt so that locusts swarm
over the land and devour everything growing
in the fields, everything left by the hail."

13So Moses stretched out his staff over
Egypt, and the LORD made an east wind blow
across the land all that day and all that night.
By morning the wind had brought the locusts;
14they invaded all Egypt and settled down in
every area of the country in great numbers.
Never before had there been such a plague of
locusts, nor will there ever be again. 15They
covered all the ground until it was black. They
devoured all that was left after the hail—every-
thing growing in the fields and the fruit on the
trees. Nothing green remained on tree or plant
in all the land of Egypt.

16Pharaoh quickly summoned Moses and
Aaron and said, "I have sinned against the LORD
your God and against you. 17Now forgive my
sin once more and pray to the LORD your God
to take this deadly plague away from me."

18Moses then left Pharaoh and prayed to the
LORD. 19And the LORD changed the wind to a
very strong west wind, which caught up the lo-
custs and carried them into the Red Sea.[b] Not
a locust was left anywhere in Egypt. 20But the
LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would
not let the Israelites go.

[a] *10* Or *Be careful, trouble is in store for you!* [b] *19* Or *the Sea of Reeds*

The Plague of Darkness

21 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out
your hand toward the sky so that darkness
spreads over Egypt—darkness that can be
felt." 22 So Moses stretched out his hand toward
the sky, and total darkness covered all Egypt
for three days. 23 No one could see anyone else
or move about for three days. Yet all the Isra-
elites had light in the places where they lived.
24 Then Pharaoh summoned Moses and said,
"Go, worship the LORD. Even your women and
children may go with you; only leave your
flocks and herds behind."
25 But Moses said, "You must allow us to have
sacrifices and burnt offerings to present to the
LORD our God. 26 Our livestock too must go with
us; not a hoof is to be left behind. We have to
use some of them in worshiping the LORD our
God, and until we get there we will not know
what we are to use to worship the LORD."
27 But the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart,
and he was not willing to let them go. 28 Phar-
aoh said to Moses, "Get out of my sight! Make
sure you do not appear before me again! The
day you see my face you will die."
29 "Just as you say," Moses replied. "I will nev-
er appear before you again."

The Plague on the Firstborn

11 1 Now the LORD had said to Moses, "I will
bring one more plague on Pharaoh and
on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from
here, and when he does, he will drive you out
completely. 2 Tell the people that men and wom-
en alike are to ask their neighbors for articles
of silver and gold." 3 (The LORD made the Egyp-
tians favorably disposed toward the people, and
Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt
by Pharaoh's officials and by the people.)
4 So Moses said, "This is what the LORD says:
'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt.
5 Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from
the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the
throne, to the firstborn son of the female slave,
who is at her hand mill, and all the firstborn of
the cattle as well. 6 There will be loud wailing
throughout Egypt—worse than there has ever
been or ever will be again. 7 But among the Is-
raelites not a dog will bark at any person or ani-
mal.' Then you will know that the LORD makes a
distinction between Egypt and Israel. 8 All these
officials of yours will come to me, bowing down
before me and saying, 'Go, you and all the peo-
ple who follow you!' After that I will leave."
Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.
9 The LORD had said to Moses, "Pharaoh will
refuse to listen to you—so that my wonders
may be multiplied in Egypt." 10 Moses and Aar-
on performed all these wonders before Phar-
aoh, but the LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart,
and he would not let the Israelites go out of his
country.

The Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread

12 1 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron in
Egypt, 2 "This month is to be for you the
first month, the first month of your year. 3 Tell
the whole community of Israel that on the tenth
day of this month each man is to take a lamb[a]
for his family, one for each household. 4 If any
household is too small for a whole lamb, they
must share one with their nearest neighbor,
having taken into account the number of peo-
ple there are. You are to determine the amount
of lamb needed in accordance with what each
person will eat. 5 The animals you choose must
be year-old males without defect, and you may
take them from the sheep or the goats. 6 Take
care of them until the fourteenth day of the
month, when all the members of the commu-
nity of Israel must slaughter them at twilight.
7 Then they are to take some of the blood and
put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes
of the houses where they eat the lambs. 8 That
same night they are to eat the meat roasted
over the fire, along with bitter herbs, and bread
made without yeast. 9 Do not eat the meat raw
or boiled in water, but roast it over a fire—with
the head, legs and internal organs. 10 Do not
leave any of it till morning; if some is left till
morning, you must burn it. 11 This is how you
are to eat it: with your cloak tucked into your
belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff
in your hand. Eat it in haste; it is the LORD's
Passover.
12 "On that same night I will pass through
Egypt and strike down every firstborn of both
people and animals, and I will bring judgment
on all the gods of Egypt. I am the LORD. 13 The
blood will be a sign for you on the houses
where you are, and when I see the blood, I will

[a] 3 The Hebrew word can mean *lamb* or *kid*; also in verse 4.

Trade & Economics
Both silver and gold (Ex 11:2) were used as a way of storing value long before coins were introduced in about 625 B.C. Ancient Egyptian bracelets and other items of gold jewelry were sometimes very thick and heavy. A necklace buried with Psusennes I in about 991 B.C. (and recovered in A.D. 1940) weighs more than 42 pounds.

Origins of the Passover Meal (Ex 12:8)

Certain elements of the Passover ritual can be traced to ceremonies that celebrated the new agricultural year in farming cultures. These elements include a sacrifice to be eaten by the community, the eating of the new crop, bitter herbs, unleavened bread, thanksgiving for not dying during the period between harvests, and, of course, a new start. The Israelites would have known about these celebrations from farming in the Nile Delta.

God revealed through Moses a new meaning for the Israelite meal. Now the feast would symbolize salvation from Egyptian slavery and from death. The angel of death "passed over" the houses of the Israelites when he killed the firstborn of the Egyptians (Ex 12:12, 13). The meal was to be prepared and eaten in haste, with the people ready to leave at a moment's notice. There was not time for bread to rise or for meat to be cooked slowly, so the lamb was to be roasted quickly over the fire (Ex 12:8–10).

To this day the Passover Seder is celebrated by all Jewish families throughout the world. It is prepared and eaten according to the rules of Ex 12. As the meal is eaten, the story of Passover is related not as something which happened long ago to ancestors, but always as happening now. It is now that God brings every person who partakes of the meal to freedom and to salvation. The feast establishes identity: we are the people of God, because God did these things for us. Anticipating the coming of God's Messiah, Jewish tradition added to the service a place at the table for Elijah should the prophet come "this year" to proclaim the advent of the Messiah.

pass over you. No destructive plague will touch you when I strike Egypt.

14"This is a day you are to commemorate; for the generations to come you shall celebrate it as a festival to the LORD—a lasting ordinance. 15For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day remove the yeast from your houses, for whoever eats anything with yeast in it from the first day through the seventh must be cut off from Israel. 16On the first day hold a sacred assembly, and another one on the seventh day. Do no work at all on these days, except to prepare food for everyone to eat; that is all you may do.

17"Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. 18In the first month you are to eat bread made without yeast, from the evening of the fourteenth day until the evening of the twenty-first day. 19For seven days no yeast is to be found in your houses. And anyone, whether foreigner or native-born, who eats anything with yeast in it must be cut off from the community of Israel. 20Eat nothing made with yeast. Wherever you live, you must eat unleavened bread."

21Then Moses summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go at once and select the animals for your families and slaughter the Passover lamb. 22Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it into the blood in the basin and put some of the blood on the top and on both sides of the doorframe. None of you shall go out of the door of your house until morning. 23When the LORD goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.

24"Obey these instructions as a lasting ordinance for you and your descendants. 25When you enter the land that the LORD will give you as he promised, observe this ceremony. 26And when your children ask you, 'What does this ceremony mean to you?' 27then tell them, 'It is the Passover sacrifice to the LORD, who passed over the houses of the Israelites in Egypt and spared our homes when he struck down the Egyptians.'" Then the people bowed down and worshiped. 28The Israelites did just what the LORD commanded Moses and Aaron.

29At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh, who sat on the throne, to the firstborn of the prisoner, who was in the dungeon, and the firstborn of all the livestock as well. 30Pharaoh and all his officials and all the Egyptians got up during the night, and there was loud wailing in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead.

The Exodus

31During the night Pharaoh summoned Moses and Aaron and said, "Up! Leave my people, you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD as you have requested. 32Take your flocks and herds, as you have said, and go. And also bless me."

33The Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave the country. "For otherwise," they said, "we will all die!" 34So the people took their dough before the yeast was added, and carried it on their shoulders in kneading troughs wrapped in clothing. 35The Israelites did as

Egypt and Its Gold (Ex 12:35, 36)

Gold and silver were considered precious metals from the beginning of history. In Egyptian society, the king or pharaoh (as he was called) had the power to concentrate wealth for himself. According to Egyptian custom, when kings or queens were buried their treasure went with them into the ground. This custom sometimes allows us to see from an Egyptian tomb what kind of wealth the deceased ruler possessed, of which gold was usually included.

Such was the case when archaeologists discovered the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun with its treasure intact. The tomb contained all kinds of furniture, clothing, and other articles. The coffin of the king himself was made of solid gold about 1/8 inch thick and was over 6 feet long, weighing 243 pounds (or about 4 talents).

The wealth of Tutankhamun's tomb is indicative of the wealth that the Hebrews must have observed while in Egypt. Tutankhamun became king in 1336 B.C., which places him about a 100 years before or after the Hebrew exodus from Egypt. The date of the Exodus is debated, but scholars locate it at either 1446 B.C. or later around 1275 B.C. When the Hebrews had an opportunity to take something of Egypt with them, Egyptian gold must have been hard to resist (Ex 12:35, 36).

Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians
for articles of silver and gold and for clothing.
36 The Lord had made the Egyptians favorably
disposed toward the people, and they gave
them what they asked for; so they plundered
the Egyptians.

[a] *40* Masoretic Text; Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint *Egypt and Canaan*

TRANSITION

The Exodus Begun

The actual date of the Exodus has been much debated. The two most frequently proposed possibilities are about 200 years apart: (1) in the 15th century B.C. during the reign of Thutmose III (1479–1425 B.C.) and (2) in the 13th century B.C. under Ramesses II (1279–1213 B.C.). The 15th-century date fits the numbers given in 1Ki 6:1, which places the Exodus 480 years before Solomon's temple, which would be about 1446 B.C. The 13th-century date, around 1275 B.C., seems to better fit other evidence (e.g., the building of the city of Rameses mentioned in Ex 1:11) but requires understanding the 480 years of 1 Kings as a symbolic number.

Both dates place the Exodus in times of clear Egyptian supremacy, however, and this may be the essential point. The fact that the Book of Exodus does not name the Egyptian king, the very fact that so frustrates historians, is peculiarly appropriate in a book that tells how the ruler of the world's greatest empire is humbled before the mighty arm of Israel's God.

• Exodus 12:37—18:27

Exodus

12 :37 The Israelites journeyed from Rameses to Sukkoth. There were about six
hundred thousand men on foot, besides women and children. 38 Many other people went up
with them, and also large droves of livestock,
both flocks and herds. 39 With the dough the
Israelites had brought from Egypt, they baked
loaves of unleavened bread. The dough was
without yeast because they had been driven
out of Egypt and did not have time to prepare
food for themselves.

40 Now the length of time the Israelite people
lived in Egypt[a] was 430 years. 41 At the end of
the 430 years, to the very day, all the Lord's
divisions left Egypt. 42 Because the Lord kept
vigil that night to bring them out of Egypt, on
this night all the Israelites are to keep vigil to
honor the Lord for the generations to come.

Passover Restrictions

43 The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, "These
are the regulations for the Passover meal:

"No foreigner may eat it. 44 Any slave you
have bought may eat it after you have circumcised him, 45 but a temporary resident or a
hired worker may not eat it.

46 "It must be eaten inside the house; take
none of the meat outside the house. Do not
break any of the bones. 47 The whole community of Israel must celebrate it.

48 "A foreigner residing among you who
wants to celebrate the Lord's Passover must
have all the males in his household circumcised; then he may take part like one born in
the land. No uncircumcised male may eat it.

49The same law applies both to the native-born
and to the foreigner residing among you."

50All the Israelites did just what the LORD had
commanded Moses and Aaron. 51And on that
very day the LORD brought the Israelites out of
Egypt by their divisions.

Consecration of the Firstborn

13 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Consecrate
to me every firstborn male. The first off-
spring of every womb among the Israelites be-
longs to me, whether human or animal."

3Then Moses said to the people, "Commemo-
rate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out
of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought
you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing
containing yeast. 4Today, in the month of Aviv,
you are leaving. 5When the LORD brings you into
the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites,
Hivites and Jebusites—the land he swore to
your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with
milk and honey—you are to observe this cere-
mony in this month: 6For seven days eat bread
made without yeast and on the seventh day hold
a festival to the LORD. 7Eat unleavened bread
during those seven days; nothing with yeast in
it is to be seen among you, nor shall any yeast
be seen anywhere within your borders. 8On
that day tell your son, 'I do this because of what
the LORD did for me when I came out of Egypt.'
9This observance will be for you like a sign on
your hand and a reminder on your forehead that
this law of the LORD is to be on your lips. For the
LORD brought you out of Egypt with his mighty
hand. 10You must keep this ordinance at the ap-
pointed time year after year.

11"After the LORD brings you into the land of
the Canaanites and gives it to you, as he prom-
ised on oath to you and your ancestors, 12you
are to give over to the LORD the first offspring
of every womb. All the firstborn males of your
livestock belong to the LORD. 13Redeem with a
lamb every firstborn donkey, but if you do not
redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every first-
born among your sons.

14"In days to come, when your son asks
you, 'What does this mean?' say to him, 'With
a mighty hand the LORD brought us out of
Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 15When Phar-
aoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the LORD
killed the firstborn of both people and animals
in Egypt. This is why I sacrifice to the LORD
the first male offspring of every womb and re-
deem each of my firstborn sons.' 16And it will
be like a sign on your hand and a symbol on
your forehead that the LORD brought us out of
Egypt with his mighty hand."

Crossing the Sea

17When Pharaoh let the people go, God did
not lead them on the road through the Philis-
tine country, though that was shorter. For God
said, "If they face war, they might change their
minds and return to Egypt." 18So God led the
people around by the desert road toward the
Red Sea.[a] The Israelites went up out of Egypt
ready for battle.

19Moses took the bones of Joseph with him
because Joseph had made the Israelites swear
an oath. He had said, "God will surely come to

[a] *18* Or *the Sea of Reeds*

The Route of the Exodus
Two routes have been proposed for the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. A northern route moves east from Rameses along the northern Sinai coast. The southern route passes Sukkoth, continuing to the lower region of the Sinai Peninsula.

The Road Through Philistia (Ex 13:17)

There were three ancient routes between Asia and Egypt. One route went from Elath near Ezion Geber (1Ki 9:26) across the Sinai Peninsula to the area of the Suez around the city of On (Heliopolis). Another route stretched from near Beersheba in the Negev to the area of the Suez. The route most commonly used, however, especially by Egyptian armies, was the "road through the Philistine country" (Ex 13:17).

In Egypt this roadway was called the "way of Horus," named for Egypt's earliest state god. The way of Horus was a coastal route that left Egypt from the northeast. It ran along the northern reaches of the Sinai Peninsula, and along the coast of Canaan. If a traveler was going toward Damascus, he would cut inland passing Megiddo and then down the Jezreel Valley to Hazor and from there cross into Transjordan. More northerly destinations would continue along the coast. The route did not actually lie within sight of the Mediterranean Sea, since the land closest to the water was marshy. Instead it lay inland a few miles where the soil was firmer.

The biblical name "road through the Philistine country" alludes to the coastal area where the Philistines lived and through which the way of Horus passed. From the point of view of the Israelites, the way of Horus came and went through Philistia and was, thus, the "road through the Philistine country." In later times, when the Philistines were not a distinguishable people, this route was known simply as the "Way of the Sea" (Isa 9:1).

your aid, and then you must carry my bones up with you from this place."[a]

20 After leaving Sukkoth they camped at
Etham on the edge of the desert. 21 By day the
LORD went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to
guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so that they could
travel by day or night. 22 Neither the pillar of
cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left
its place in front of the people.

14 1 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 "Tell the
Israelites to turn back and encamp near
Pi Hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea. They
are to encamp by the sea, directly opposite Baal
Zephon. 3 Pharaoh will think, 'The Israelites
are wandering around the land in confusion,
hemmed in by the desert.' 4 And I will harden
Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them. But I
will gain glory for myself through Pharaoh and
all his army, and the Egyptians will know that I
am the LORD." So the Israelites did this.

5 When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his officials changed
their minds about them and said, "What have
we done? We have let the Israelites go and have
lost their services!" 6 So he had his chariot made
ready and took his army with him. 7 He took six
hundred of the best chariots, along with all the
other chariots of Egypt, with officers over all of
them. 8 The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, so that he pursued the Israelites, who were marching out boldly. 9 The
Egyptians—all Pharaoh's horses and chariots,
horsemen[b] and troops—pursued the Israelites
and overtook them as they camped by the sea
near Pi Hahiroth, opposite Baal Zephon.

10 As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD. 11 They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

13 Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the LORD will bring you today. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. 14 The LORD will fight for you; you need only to be still."

15 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. 16 Raise your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea to divide the water so that the Israelites can go through the sea on dry ground. 17 I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them. And I will gain glory through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. 18 The Egyptians will know that I am the LORD when I gain glory through Pharaoh, his chariots and his horsemen."

TIME CAPSULE		1625 to 1600 B.C.
1625		Chariots used by the Hittites
1600		Chariot introduced to the Nile valley
1600		Labyrinthine palace of Knossos, Crete
1600		Minoan palace of Phaistos, Crete
1600–1400		The zenith of the Minoan civilization

[a] *19* See Gen. 50:25.
[b] *9* Or *charioteers*; also in verses 17, 18, 23, 26 and 28

TWO DATES FOR THE EXODUS

Two dating schemes have been proposed for the Exodus from Egypt, an "early" date and a "late" date. The early scheme considers the 480 years of 1Ki 6:1 to be a precise note of time; the late scheme considers it to be a symbolic figure, not an actual one.

A 15th-Century Exodus

When: Approximately 1446 B.C.
Ruling Pharaoh: Thutmose III (1479–1425 B.C.)
Reasons: 1Ki 6:1 states that the Exodus occurred 480 years before Solomon began building the temple.
Solomon, who reigned from 970 to 930 B.C., began the temple in the 4th year of his reign (about 966 B.C.).
The Exodus would then have occurred 480 years before 966 B.C., placing it in 1446 B.C.

A 13th-Century Exodus

When: Approximately 1275 B.C.
Ruling Pharaoh: Ramesses II (1279–1213 B.C.)
Reasons: Ex 1:11 states that the Hebrew slaves built the supply cities, Pithom and Rameses.
Egyptian sources suggest that Pharaoh Ramesses renamed the city of Rameses after himself.
The 480 years of 1Ki 6:1 is a symbolic number, representing 12 generations of 40 years each.

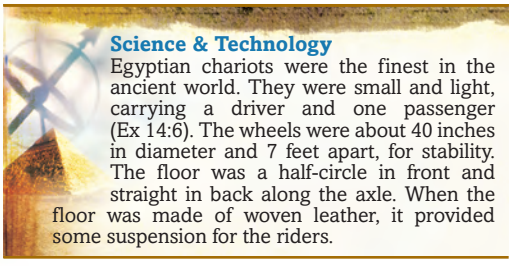
19 Then the angel of God, who had been traveling in front of Israel's army, withdrew and went behind them. The pillar of cloud also moved from in front and stood behind them, 20 coming between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long.

21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and all that night the LORD drove the sea back with a strong east wind and turned it into dry land. The waters were divided, 22 and the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left.

23 The Egyptians pursued them, and all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen followed them into the sea. 24 During the last watch of the night the LORD looked down from the pillar of fire and cloud at the Egyptian army and threw it into confusion. 25 He jammed[a] the wheels of their chariots so that they had difficulty driving. And the Egyptians said, "Let's get away from the Israelites! The LORD is fighting for them against Egypt."

26 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea so that the waters may flow back over the Egyptians and their chariots and horsemen." 27 Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea went back to its place. The Egyptians were fleeing toward[b] it, and the LORD swept them into the sea. 28 The water flowed back and covered the chariots and horsemen — the entire army of Pharaoh that had followed the Israelites into the sea. Not one of them survived.

29 But the Israelites went through the sea on dry ground, with a wall of water on their right and on their left. 30 That day the LORD saved Israel from the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians lying dead on the shore. 31 And when the Israelites saw the mighty hand of the LORD displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the LORD and put their trust in him and in Moses his servant.



Science & Technology

Egyptian chariots were the finest in the ancient world. They were small and light, carrying a driver and one passenger (Ex 14:6). The wheels were about 40 inches in diameter and 7 feet apart, for stability. The floor was a half-circle in front and straight in back along the axle. When the floor was made of woven leather, it provided some suspension for the riders.

The Song of Moses and Miriam

15 1 Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD:

"I will sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.
Both horse and driver
he has hurled into the sea.

[a] *25* See Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint and Syriac; Masoretic Text *removed* [b] *27* Or *from*

2 "The LORD is my strength and my
defense[a];
he has become my salvation.
He is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him.
3 The LORD is a warrior;
the LORD is his name.
4 Pharaoh's chariots and his army
he has hurled into the sea.
The best of Pharaoh's officers
are drowned in the Red Sea.[b]
5 The deep waters have covered them;
they sank to the depths like a stone.
6 Your right hand, LORD,
was majestic in power.
Your right hand, LORD,
shattered the enemy.

7 "In the greatness of your majesty
you threw down those who opposed
you.
You unleashed your burning anger;
it consumed them like stubble.
8 By the blast of your nostrils
the waters piled up.
The surging waters stood up like a wall;
the deep waters congealed in the heart of
the sea.
9 The enemy boasted,
'I will pursue, I will overtake them.
I will divide the spoils;
I will gorge myself on them.
I will draw my sword
and my hand will destroy them.'

10 But you blew with your breath,
and the sea covered them.
They sank like lead
in the mighty waters.
11 Who among the gods
is like you, LORD?
Who is like you—
majestic in holiness,
awesome in glory,
working wonders?

12 "You stretch out your right hand,
and the earth swallows your
enemies.
13 In your unfailing love you will lead
the people you have redeemed.
In your strength you will guide them
to your holy dwelling.
14 The nations will hear and tremble;
anguish will grip the people of
Philistia.
15 The chiefs of Edom will be terrified,
the leaders of Moab will be seized with
trembling,
the people[c] of Canaan will melt away;
16 terror and dread will fall on them.
By the power of your arm
they will be as still as a stone—
until your people pass by, LORD,
until the people you bought[d] pass by.
17 You will bring them in and plant them
on the mountain of your inheritance—
the place, LORD, you made for your
dwelling,
the sanctuary, Lord, your hands
established.

[a] 2 Or *song* [b] 4 Or *the Sea of Reeds*; also in verse 22
[c] 15 Or *rulers* [d] 16 Or *created*

God Among the Warrior Deities (Ex 15:1–21)

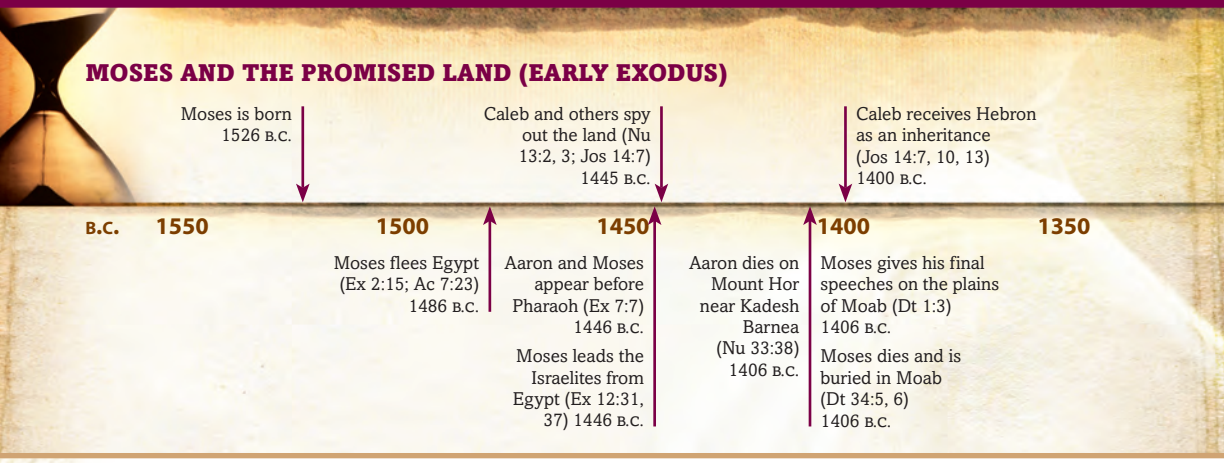
The Song of Moses and Miriam in Ex 15:1–21 is a victory song like those sung in many cultures in the ancient world. God is praised as a warrior going out to fight for Israel.

In the faith of the ancient world, armies did not go to battle alone. The deity or deities of the army fought in heaven and on earth against the opposing army and its gods. Nearly every culture had a deity of war. The Canaanite goddess Anath bedecked herself with parts of corpses from slain soldiers. The Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar led armies, along with the patron deities of the warring cities. All gods who were responsible for particular cities were expected to be able to defend their territory.

So Israel's God, bringing his people out of Egypt, is depicted in song as having defeated the army (and thus also the gods) of the Egyptians by himself. The use of water to destroy enemies is ancient. Songs about the defeat of the Sumerian city of Ur early in the 2nd millennium B.C. tell about floods and roaring rivers sent by the gods to destroy the city. In Israel's song God picks up chariots and riders and throws them into the water like so many toys (Ex 15:1, 4).

The language, symbols and imagery of Israel's song are those commonly used for war deities in the ancient Near East. Israel's enemies near and far are terrified (Ex 15:14–16). Terror, or fear, was assumed to be a separate substance which went before the deity, defeating enemies even before the god arrived. The people of the victorious deity are established in their proper place, and the winning god is enthroned as ruler over the vanquished deities (15:16–18).

The peoples around Israel would understand such phrases familiar to ancient civilization. Thus, they would recognize the victory song of Moses and Miriam as praise for the work of a warrior deity who was mightier than any other deity ("Who among the gods is like you, LORD?" Ex 15:11).



18 "The LORD reigns
for ever and ever."

19 When Pharaoh's horses, chariots and horsemen[a] went into the sea, the LORD brought the waters of the sea back over them, but the Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. 20 Then Miriam the prophet, Aaron's sister, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women followed her, with timbrels and dancing. 21 Miriam sang to them:

"Sing to the LORD,
for he is highly exalted.
Both horse and driver
he has hurled into the sea."

The Waters of Marah and Elim

22 Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea and they went into the Desert of Shur. For three days they traveled in the desert without finding water. 23 When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.[b]) 24 So the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?"

25 Then Moses cried out to the LORD, and the LORD showed him a piece of wood. He threw it into the water, and the water became fit to drink.

There the LORD issued a ruling and instruction for them and put them to the test. 26 He said, "If you listen carefully to the LORD your God and do what is right in his eyes, if you pay attention to his commands and keep all his decrees, I will not bring on you any of the diseases I brought on the Egyptians, for I am the LORD, who heals you."

27 Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water.

Manna and Quail

16 1 The whole Israelite community set out from Elim and came to the Desert of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after they had come out of Egypt. 2 In the desert the whole community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. 3 The Israelites said to them, "If only we had died by the LORD's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death."

4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "I will rain down bread from heaven for you. The people are to go out each day and gather enough for that day. In this way I will test them and see whether they will follow my instructions. 5 On the sixth day they are to prepare what they bring in, and that is to be twice as much as they gather on the other days."

6 So Moses and Aaron said to all the Israelites, "In the evening you will know that it was the LORD who brought you out of Egypt, 7 and in the morning you will see the glory of the LORD, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we, that you should grumble against us?" 8 Moses also said, "You will know that it was the LORD when he gives you meat to eat in the evening and all the bread you want in the morning, because he has heard your grumbling against him. Who are we? You are not grumbling against us, but against the LORD."

9 Then Moses told Aaron, "Say to the entire Israelite community, 'Come before the LORD, for he has heard your grumbling.'"

10 While Aaron was speaking to the whole Israelite community, they looked toward the desert, and there was the glory of the LORD appearing in the cloud.

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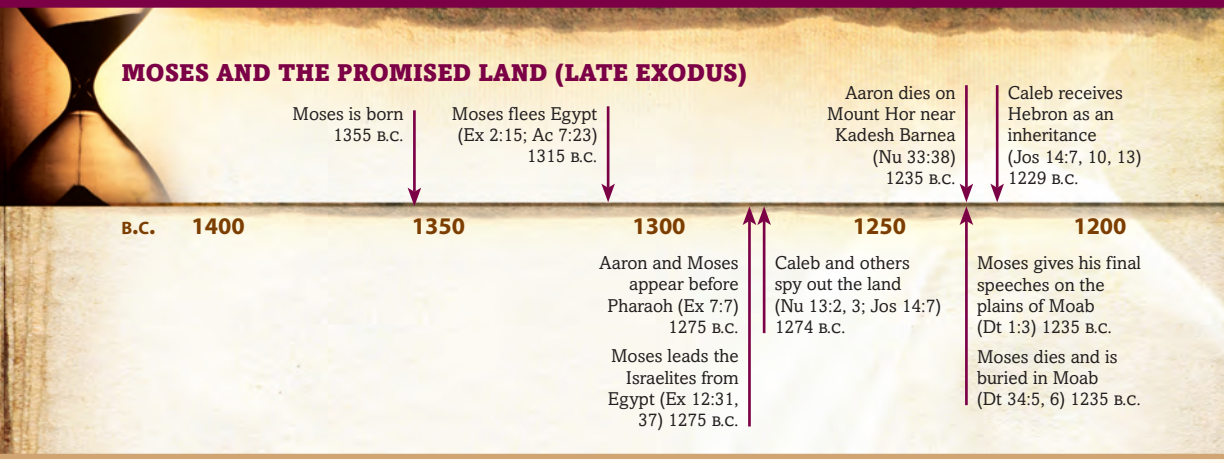
[a] *19* Or *charioteers* [b] *23* *Marah* means *bitter.*



11 The LORD said to Moses, 12 "I have heard
the grumbling of the Israelites. Tell them, 'At
twilight you will eat meat, and in the morning
you will be filled with bread. Then you will
know that I am the LORD your God.'"
13 That evening quail came and covered the
camp, and in the morning there was a layer of
dew around the camp. 14 When the dew was
gone, thin flakes like frost on the ground ap-
peared on the desert floor. 15 When the Israel-
ites saw it, they said to each other, "What is it?"
For they did not know what it was.

Moses said to them, "It is the bread the
LORD has given you to eat. 16 This is what the
LORD has commanded: 'Everyone is to gather
as much as they need. Take an omer[a] for each
person you have in your tent.'"
17 The Israelites did as they were told; some
gathered much, some little. 18 And when they
measured it by the omer, the one who gathered
much did not have too much, and the one who
gathered little did not have too little. Everyone
had gathered just as much as they needed.
19 Then Moses said to them, "No one is to
keep any of it until morning."
20 However, some of them paid no attention to
Moses; they kept part of it until morning, but
it was full of maggots and began to smell. So
Moses was angry with them.
21 Each morning everyone gathered as much
as they needed, and when the sun grew hot, it
melted away. 22 On the sixth day, they gathered
twice as much — two omers[b] for each person —
and the leaders of the community came and re-
ported this to Moses. 23 He said to them, "This
is what the LORD commanded: 'Tomorrow is to
be a day of sabbath rest, a holy sabbath to the
LORD. So bake what you want to bake and boil
what you want to boil. Save whatever is left and
keep it until morning.'"
24 So they saved it until morning, as Moses
commanded, and it did not stink or get mag-
gots in it. 25 "Eat it today," Moses said, "because
today is a sabbath to the LORD. You will not find
any of it on the ground today. 26 Six days you
are to gather it, but on the seventh day, the Sab-
bath, there will not be any."
27 Nevertheless, some of the people went out
on the seventh day to gather it, but they found
none. 28 Then the LORD said to Moses, "How
long will you[c] refuse to keep my commands
and my instructions? 29 Bear in mind that the
LORD has given you the Sabbath; that is why on
the sixth day he gives you bread for two days.
Everyone is to stay where they are on the sev-
enth day; no one is to go out." 30 So the people
rested on the seventh day.
31 The people of Israel called the bread

The quails that fell upon the Israelite camp were most likely a migrating flock. When the tired birds landed to rest, it was easy for the people to catch them.

[a] *16* That is, possibly about 3 pounds or about 1.4 kilograms; also in verses 18, 32, 33 and 36
[b] *22* That is, possibly about 6 pounds or about 2.8 kilograms
[c] *28* The Hebrew is plural.

manna.[a] It was white like coriander seed and tasted like wafers made with honey. [32]Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 'Take an omer of manna and keep it for the generations to come, so they can see the bread I gave you to eat in the wilderness when I brought you out of Egypt.'"

[33]So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a jar and put an omer of manna in it. Then place it before the LORD to be kept for the generations to come."

[34]As the LORD commanded Moses, Aaron put the manna with the tablets of the covenant law, so that it might be preserved. [35]The Israelites ate manna forty years, until they came to a land that was settled; they ate manna until they reached the border of Canaan.

[36](An omer is one-tenth of an ephah.)

Water From the Rock

17 [1]The whole Israelite community set out from the Desert of Sin, traveling from place to place as the LORD commanded. They camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. [2]So they quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink."

Moses replied, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you put the LORD to the test?"

[3]But the people were thirsty for water there, and they grumbled against Moses. They said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?"

[4]Then Moses cried out to the LORD, "What am I to do with these people? They are almost ready to stone me."

[5]The LORD answered Moses, "Go out in front of the people. Take with you some of the elders of Israel and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. [6]I will stand there before you by the rock at Horeb. Strike the rock, and water will come out of it for the people to drink." So Moses did this in the sight of the elders of Israel. [7]And he called the place Massah[b] and Meribah[c] because the Israelites quarreled and because they tested the LORD saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

The Amalekites Defeated

[8]The Amalekites came and attacked the Israelites at Rephidim. [9]Moses said to Joshua, "Choose some of our men and go out to fight the Amalekites. Tomorrow I will stand on top of the hill with the staff of God in my hands."

[10]So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. [11]As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. [12]When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. [13]So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword.

[14]Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write this on a scroll as something to be remembered and make sure that Joshua hears it, because I will completely blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven."

[15]Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. [16]He said, "Because hands were lifted up against[d] the throne of the LORD,[e] the LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."

Jethro Visits Moses

18 [1]Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.

[2]After Moses had sent away his wife Zipporah, his father-in-law Jethro received her [3]and her two sons. One son was named Gershom,[f] for Moses said, "I have become a foreigner in a foreign land"; [4]and the other was named Eliezer,[g] for he said, "My father's God was my helper; he saved me from the sword of Pharaoh."

[5]Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, together with Moses' sons and wife, came to him in the wilderness, where he was camped near the mountain of God. [6]Jethro had sent word to him, "I, your father-in-law Jethro, am coming to you with your wife and her two sons."

[7]So Moses went out to meet his father-in-law and bowed down and kissed him. They greeted each other and then went into the tent. [8]Moses told his father-in-law about everything the LORD had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians

Daily Life & Customs
The 7-day week, with its rhythm of 6 days of work and 1 day of rest (Ex 16:30), is revealed in Ge 1 and in Ex 20. The early Assyrians and the Egyptians divided time into periods of 10 days, while the Sumerians used 7. The recognized number of planets was 7, but this is not necessarily the reason for the length of the week.

[a] *31 Manna* sounds like the Hebrew for *What is it?* (see verse 15). [b] *7 Massah* means *testing.* [c] *7 Meribah* means *quarreling.* [d] *16* Or *to* [e] *16* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain. [f] *3 Gershom* sounds like the Hebrew for *a foreigner there.* [g] *4 Eliezer* means *my God is helper.*

for Israel's sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.

9Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. 10He said, "Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. 11Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly." 12Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law in the presence of God.

13The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. 14When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, "What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?"

15Moses answered him, "Because the people come to me to seek God's will. 16Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God's decrees and instructions."

17Moses' father-in-law replied, "What you are doing is not good. 18You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone. 19Listen now to me and I will give you some advice, and may God be with you. You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him. 20Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave. 21But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 22Have them serve as judges for the people at all times, but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves. That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you. 23If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied."

24Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. 25He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens. 26They served as judges for the people at all times. The difficult cases they brought to Moses, but the simple ones they decided themselves.

27Then Moses sent his father-in-law on his way, and Jethro returned to his own country.

TRANSITION

At Mount Sinai

The Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai in the 3rd month following their exodus from Egypt (Ex 19:1). Here they would remain for several months while God's glory rested on the mountain. They completed work on the tabernacle in the 1st month of the 2nd year of the Exodus (Ex 40:17), thus one year after leaving Egypt (Ex 12:2, 3).

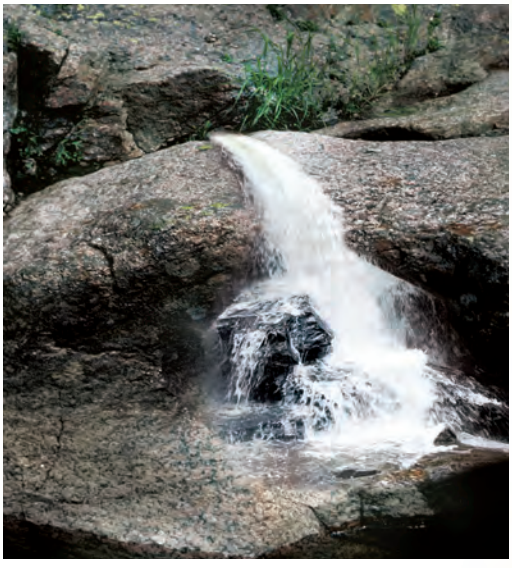
- **Exodus 19:1—40:38**

Exodus

At Mount Sinai

19:1 On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. 2After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

3Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 4'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5Now if you obey



Where the Gods Live: Sacred Mountains (Ex 19:2, 3)

Where heaven and earth met, humans and deities could come together. On the physical landscape of the ancient world, this meant mountains. Since ancient people thought deities actually lived on the peak of a sacred mountain, they built temples or altars on or near the mountain in honor of the gods.

So it was all over the Near East. The Canaanites and Phoenicians believed their gods lived on actual mountains near their cities. At Ugarit, El lived on Mount Zaphon. In Ex 19:20, Israel's God Yahweh lives on Mount Sinai. Later, the Judeans believed Yahweh took up his residence on Mount Zion in Jerusalem, while the Samaritans said he lived on Mount Gerizim near Samaria. In the flat river valleys of Mesopotamia, worshipers of various deities built their own mountains, called ziggurats. The most famous ziggurat was that of Babylon, Etemenanki.

The appearance of the deity (called "theophany") at the sacred mountain often was accompanied by thunder, lightning, earthquakes, clouds, loud noises, lesser deities, and terror. Many of these characteristics are present in the description of God coming down on Sinai (Ex 19:16–19).

Usually only priests were willing to risk experiencing such presence of the god. The actual appearance of the deity itself was thought to be dangerous to people who had not properly prepared themselves. The people of Israel were carefully prepared for the visit of God to the mountain (Ex 19:10–13). Despite preparations, they were too terrified to actually meet God, and so Moses served as intermediary between God and the people (Ex 19:23–25; 20:18–21).

me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, 6you[a] will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

7So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. 8The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said." So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.

9The LORD said to Moses, "I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you." Then Moses told the LORD what the people had said.

10And the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes 11and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. 12Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not approach the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain is to be put to death. 13They are to be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on them. No person or animal shall be permitted to live.' Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they approach the mountain."

14After Moses had gone down the mountain to the people, he consecrated them, and they washed their clothes. 15Then he said to the people, "Prepare yourselves for the third day. Abstain from sexual relations."

16On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. 17Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain[b] trembled violently. 19As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.[c]

20The LORD descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up 21and the LORD said to him, "Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the LORD and many of them perish. 22Even the priests, who approach the LORD, must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will break out against them."

23Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, 'Put limits around the mountain and set it apart as holy.'"

Geography & Environment

The Sinai Peninsula is a triangle of land between Egypt and Israel, about 125 miles east to west and 200 miles north to south. The traditional location of Mount Sinai (Ex 19:18) is toward the south at Jebel Musa, a mountain 7,500 feet in altitude. This tradition is not early. The peninsula as a whole is inhospitable, desert land.

[a] *5,6* Or *possession, for the whole earth is mine.* [6]*You*
[b] *18* Most Hebrew manuscripts; a few Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint *and all the people*
[c] *19* Or *and God answered him with thunder*

24 The LORD replied, "Go down and bring
Aaron up with you. But the priests and the
people must not force their way through to
come up to the LORD, or he will break out
against them."
25 So Moses went down to the people and told
them.

Religion & Worship
Almost all ancient worshipers had statues of one or more of their gods. The Israelites were the outstanding exception to this rule (Ex 20:4). When Pompey the Great entered the temple in Jerusalem in 63 B.C., he and his men were deeply impressed that they found no image of God in the sanctuary.

The Ten Commandments

20 1 And God spoke all these words:

2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought
you out of Egypt, out of the land of
slavery.
3 "You shall have no other gods before[a] me.
4 "You shall not make for yourself an im-
age in the form of anything in heaven
above or on the earth beneath or in
the waters below. 5 You shall not bow
down to them or worship them; for I,
the LORD your God, am a jealous God,
punishing the children for the sin of
the parents to the third and fourth
generation of those who hate me, 6 but
showing love to a thousand genera-
tions of those who love me and keep
my commandments.
7 "You shall not misuse the name of the
LORD your God, for the LORD will not
hold anyone guiltless who misuses his
name.
8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it
holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do
all your work, 10 but the seventh day is
a sabbath to the LORD your God. On
it you shall not do any work, neither
you, nor your son or daughter, nor
your male or female servant, nor your
animals, nor any foreigner residing in
your towns. 11 For in six days the LORD
made the heavens and the earth, the
sea, and all that is in them, but he rest-
ed on the seventh day. Therefore the
LORD blessed the Sabbath day and
made it holy.
12 "Honor your father and your mother, so
that you may live long in the land the
LORD your God is giving you.
13 "You shall not murder.
14 "You shall not commit adultery.
15 "You shall not steal.
16 "You shall not give false testimony against
your neighbor.
17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's
house. You shall not covet your neigh-
bor's wife, or his male or female ser-
vant, his ox or donkey, or anything
that belongs to your neighbor."

18 When the people saw the thunder and
lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the
mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear.
They stayed at a distance 19 and said to Moses,
"Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do
not have God speak to us or we will die."
20 Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid.
God has come to test you, so that the fear of
God will be with you to keep you from sinning."
21 The people remained at a distance, while
Moses approached the thick darkness where
God was.

Idols and Altars

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell the
Israelites this: 'You have seen for yourselves
that I have spoken to you from heaven: 23 Do
not make any gods to be alongside me; do not
make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of
gold.
24 "'Make an altar of earth for me and sacri-
fice on it your burnt offerings and fellowship
offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle.
Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I
will come to you and bless you. 25 If you make
an altar of stones for me, do not build it with
dressed stones, for you will defile it if you use
a tool on it. 26 And do not go up to my altar on
steps, or your private parts may be exposed.'

21 1 "These are the laws you are to set be-
fore them:

Hebrew Servants

2 "If you buy a Hebrew servant, he is to serve
you for six years. But in the seventh year, he
shall go free, without paying anything. 3 If
he comes alone, he is to go free alone; but if
he has a wife when he comes, she is to go with
him. 4 If his master gives him a wife and she
bears him sons or daughters, the woman and
her children shall belong to her master, and
only the man shall go free.
5 "But if the servant declares, 'I love my mas-
ter and my wife and children and do not want

[a] 3 Or *besides*

to go free,' [6]then his master must take him before the judges.[a] He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life.

[7]"If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is not to go free as male servants do. [8]If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself,[b] he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, because he has broken faith with her. [9]If he selects her for his son, he must grant her the rights of a daughter. [10]If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. [11]If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money.

Personal Injuries

[12]"Anyone who strikes a person with a fatal blow is to be put to death. [13]However, if it is not done intentionally, but God lets it happen, they are to flee to a place I will designate. [14]But if anyone schemes and kills someone deliberately, that person is to be taken from my altar and put to death.

TIME CAPSULE	1595 B.C.
1595	Hittite king Mursilis I sacks Aleppo in northern Syria
1595	Mursilis I ends Old Babylonian dynasty of Hammurabi
1595–1000	Middle Babylonian period
1595	Agum II rules Babylon as first king of Kassite dynasty

[15]"Anyone who attacks[c] their father or mother is to be put to death.

[16]"Anyone who kidnaps someone is to be put to death, whether the victim has been sold or is still in the kidnapper's possession.

[17]"Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.

[18]"If people quarrel and one person hits another with a stone or with their fist[d] and the victim does not die but is confined to bed, [19]the one who struck the blow will not be held liable if the other can get up and walk around outside with a staff; however, the guilty party must pay the injured person for any loss of time and see that the victim is completely healed.

[20]"Anyone who beats their male or female slave with a rod must be punished if the slave dies as a direct result, [21]but they are not to be punished if the slave recovers after a day or two, since the slave is their property.

[22]"If people are fighting and hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely[e] but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined whatever the woman's husband demands and the court allows. [23]But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life, [24]eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, [25]burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.

[26]"An owner who hits a male or female slave in the eye and destroys it must let the slave go free to compensate for the eye. [27]And an owner who knocks out the tooth of a male or female

[a] *6* Or *before God* [b] *8* Or *master so that he does not choose her* [c] *15* Or *kills* [d] *18* Or *with a tool* [e] *22* Or *she has a miscarriage*

The Bull That Gored (Ex 21:28–32)

Certain laws found in the Law of Moses concern subject matter that is treated quite similarly in the laws of other ancient Near Eastern cultures. One example is the law dealing with a bull that gores a human, causing personal injury or death (Ex 21:28–32). A "goring-bull" law was not unique to Israel; at least four other ancient Near Eastern traditions had legislation on this issue.

The earliest appearance of bull-goring laws comes from Eshnunna, an early Old Babylonian period site (c. 2017–1793 B.C.) on the Diyala River in Mesopotamia. Such laws are also found in the Code of Hammurabi, a set of legal promulgations from Babylon (c. 1792–1750 B.C.). In these laws, there is no stipulation to stone a bull that gored habitually. The owner, rather, was heavily fined, especially if the bull had not been previously dehorned. In Israel, owners were also fined (21:30–32), but the bull was stoned (21:28).

Other examples of bull-goring legislation show that such laws existed over a long period of time. One letter comes from the Old Babylonian city of Mari on the Syrian side of the Euphrates River. The Mari tablets date from around 1813 to 1760 B.C., and demonstrate that goring-bull laws were actually put into practice in Syro-Mesopotamia during the time of the biblical patriarchs. Another letter from Nuzi in northern Mesopotamia places similar laws a few centuries later (c. 1450–1330 B.C.).

Apparently, Israel shared in a tradition of laws that were common in the ancient Near East. In the case of the goring-bull laws, Israel and the Old Babylonian cultures shared the principle of negligence and liability. Owners who failed to safeguard against potentially dangerous situations were held responsible (21:29).

slave must let the slave go free to compensate for the tooth.

28"If a bull gores a man or woman to death, the bull is to be stoned to death, and its meat must not be eaten. But the owner of the bull will not be held responsible. 29If, however, the bull has had the habit of goring and the owner has been warned but has not kept it penned up and it kills a man or woman, the bull is to be stoned and its owner also is to be put to death. 30However, if payment is demanded, the owner may redeem his life by the payment of whatever is demanded. 31This law also applies if the bull gores a son or daughter. 32If the bull gores a male or female slave, the owner must pay thirty shekels[a] of silver to the master of the slave, and the bull is to be stoned to death.

33"If anyone uncovers a pit or digs one and fails to cover it and an ox or a donkey falls into it, 34the one who opened the pit must pay the owner for the loss and take the dead animal in exchange.

35"If anyone's bull injures someone else's bull and it dies, the two parties are to sell the live one and divide both the money and the dead animal equally. 36However, if it was known that the bull had the habit of goring, yet the owner did not keep it penned up, the owner must pay, animal for animal, and take the dead animal in exchange.

Protection of Property

22[b] 1"Whoever steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it must pay back five head of cattle for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.

2"If a thief is caught breaking in at night and is struck a fatal blow, the defender is not guilty of bloodshed; 3but if it happens after sunrise, the defender is guilty of bloodshed.

"Anyone who steals must certainly make restitution, but if they have nothing, they must be sold to pay for their theft. 4If the stolen animal is found alive in their possession—whether ox or donkey or sheep—they must pay back double.

5"If anyone grazes their livestock in a field or vineyard and lets them stray and they graze in someone else's field, the offender must make restitution from the best of their own field or vineyard.

6"If a fire breaks out and spreads into thornbushes so that it burns shocks of grain or standing grain or the whole field, the one who started the fire must make restitution.

7"If anyone gives a neighbor silver or goods for safekeeping and they are stolen from the neighbor's house, the thief, if caught, must pay back double. 8But if the thief is not found, the owner of the house must appear before the judges, and they must[c] determine whether the owner of the house has laid hands on the other person's property. 9In all cases of illegal possession of an ox, a donkey, a sheep, a garment, or any other lost property about which somebody says, 'This is mine,' both parties are to bring their cases before the judges.[d] The one whom the judges declare[e] guilty must pay back double to the other.

10"If anyone gives a donkey, an ox, a sheep or any other animal to their neighbor for safekeeping and it dies or is injured or is taken away while no one is looking, 11the issue between them will be settled by the taking of an oath before the LORD that the neighbor did not lay hands on the other person's property. The owner is to accept this, and no restitution is required. 12But if the animal was stolen from the neighbor, restitution must be made to the owner. 13If it was torn to pieces by a wild animal, the neighbor shall bring in the remains as evidence and shall not be required to pay for the torn animal.

14"If anyone borrows an animal from their neighbor and it is injured or dies while the owner is not present, they must make restitution. 15But if the owner is with the animal, the borrower will not have to pay. If the animal was hired, the money paid for the hire covers the loss.

Social Responsibility

16"If a man seduces a virgin who is not pledged to be married and sleeps with her, he must pay the bride-price, and she shall be his wife. 17If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, he must still pay the bride-price for virgins.

18"Do not allow a sorceress to live.

19"Anyone who has sexual relations with an animal is to be put to death.

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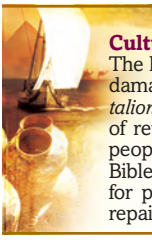
[a] *32* That is, about 12 ounces or about 345 grams
[b] In Hebrew texts 22:1 is numbered 21:37, and 22:2-31 is numbered 22:1-30.
[c] *8* Or *before God, and he will*
[d] *9* Or *before God*
[e] *9* Or *whom God declares*



Culture & Society

The law that requires a penalty equal to the damage caused by the crime is called *Lex talionis*. This is a Latin term that means "law of retaliation." The idea is familiar to most people through its expression in the Hebrew Bible (Ex 21:24). Some ancient codes called for penalties greater than the injury to be repaid.

The Code of Hammurabi (Ex 22:16, 17)

Babylon's king Hammurabi (1792–1750 B.C.) is best known for his law code. The Code of Hammurabi (as it is called) contains 282 laws and has numerous parallels with Scripture. Few of the laws, however, were ever cited in existing Old Babylonian court cases. At any rate, the collection of laws therein is incomplete and ignores many subjects. Hammurabi did not create these laws; rather, they appear to be a collection of diverse traditions.

The format of the Code of Hammurabi shows a similarity with laws in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy. Both the Code of Hammurabi and the Covenant Code, found in Ex 20:22—23:33, have a series of laws structured in an "if . . . then" format. These laws begin with the word "if," introducing a description of a potentially criminal situation. The format continues with the word "then," offering a description of the penalty. This format or style of law is often called case law since its format describes particular cases or situations.

The "if . . . then" format of the Code of Hammurabi appears frequently in the Covenant Code (with and without the word "then"; Ex 22:8, 16, 17). The similarities of these two codes (and others) show there was a widespread legal tradition in the 2nd millennium B.C. In fact a number of situations mentioned in the Hammurabi code are virtually duplicated in the Mosaic code, often with different penalties.

The Code of Hammurabi shares parallels with scriptural laws recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy.

20 "Whoever sacrifices to any god other than
the LORD must be destroyed.[a]
21 "Do not mistreat or oppress a foreigner, for
you were foreigners in Egypt.
22 "Do not take advantage of the widow or the
fatherless. 23 If you do and they cry out to me,
I will certainly hear their cry. 24 My anger will
be aroused, and I will kill you with the sword;
your wives will become widows and your chil-
dren fatherless.
25 "If you lend money to one of my people
among you who is needy, do not treat it like a
business deal; charge no interest. 26 If you take
your neighbor's cloak as a pledge, return it by
sunset, 27 because that cloak is the only cov-
ering your neighbor has. What else can they
sleep in? When they cry out to me, I will hear,
for I am compassionate.
28 "Do not blaspheme God[b] or curse the ruler
of your people.
29 "Do not hold back offerings from your gra-
naries or your vats.[c]
"You must give me the firstborn of your sons.
30 Do the same with your cattle and your sheep.
Let them stay with their mothers for seven
days, but give them to me on the eighth day.
31 "You are to be my holy people. So do not
eat the meat of an animal torn by wild beasts;
throw it to the dogs.

Laws of Justice and Mercy

23 1 "Do not spread false reports. Do not
help a guilty person by being a malicious
witness.
2 "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong.
When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not
pervert justice by siding with the crowd, 3 and
do not show favoritism to a poor person in a
lawsuit.
4 "If you come across your enemy's ox or don-
key wandering off, be sure to return it. 5 If you
see the donkey of someone who hates you fall-
en down under its load, do not leave it there; be
sure you help them with it.
6 "Do not deny justice to your poor people in
their lawsuits. 7 Have nothing to do with a false
charge and do not put an innocent or honest
person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty.
8 "Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds
those who see and twists the words of the in-
nocent.
9 "Do not oppress a foreigner; you yourselves
know how it feels to be foreigners, because you
were foreigners in Egypt.

Sabbath Laws

10 "For six years you are to sow your fields
and harvest the crops, 11 but during the sev-
enth year let the land lie unplowed and unused.
Then the poor among your people may get food
from it, and the wild animals may eat what is
left. Do the same with your vineyard and your
olive grove.
12 "Six days do your work, but on the seventh
day do not work, so that your ox and your don-
key may rest, and so that the slave born in your
household and the foreigner living among you
may be refreshed.

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[a] *20* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. [b] *28* Or *Do not revile the judges* [c] *29* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

13"Be careful to do everything I have said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods; do not let them be heard on your lips.

The Three Annual Festivals

14"Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me.

15"Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread; for seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

"No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

16"Celebrate the Festival of Harvest with the firstfruits of the crops you sow in your field.

"Celebrate the Festival of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you gather in your crops from the field.

17"Three times a year all the men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD.

18"Do not offer the blood of a sacrifice to me along with anything containing yeast.

"The fat of my festival offerings must not be kept until morning.

19"Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God.

"Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk.

God's Angel to Prepare the Way

20"See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. 21Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him. 22If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. 23My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hivites and Jebusites, and I will wipe them out. 24Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces. 25Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you, 26and none will miscarry or be barren in your land. I will give you a full life span.

27"I will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. 28I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way. 29But I will not drive them out in a single year, because the land would become desolate and the wild animals too numerous for you. 30Little by little I will drive them out before you, until you have increased enough to take possession of the land.

31"I will establish your borders from the Red Sea[a] to the Mediterranean Sea,[b] and from the desert to the Euphrates River. I will give into your hands the people who live in the land, and you will drive them out before you. 32Do not make a covenant with them or with their gods. 33Do not let them live in your land or they will cause you to sin against me, because the worship of their gods will certainly be a snare to you."

The Covenant Confirmed

24 1Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, 2but Moses alone is to approach the LORD; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him."

3When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do." 4Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.

He got up early the next morning and built

[a] *31* Or *the Sea of Reeds* [b] *31* Hebrew *to the Sea of the Philistines*

an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. 5Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. 6Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he splashed against the altar. 7Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."

8Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

9Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up 10and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky. 11But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

12The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction."

13Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. 14He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them."

15When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, 16and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. 17To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. 18Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Offerings for the Tabernacle

25 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from everyone whose heart prompts them to give. 3These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; 4blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; 5ram skins dyed red and another type of durable leather[a]; acacia wood; 6olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; 7and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.

8"Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. 9Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.

The Ark

10"Have them make an ark[b] of acacia wood—two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high.[c] 11Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it. 12Cast four gold rings for it and fasten them to its four feet, with two rings on one side and two rings on the other. 13Then make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. 14Insert the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry it. 15The poles are to remain in the rings of this ark; they are not to be removed. 16Then put in the ark the tablets of the covenant law, which I will give you.

17"Make an atonement cover of pure gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit and a half wide. 18And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. 19Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. 20The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them. The cherubim are to face each other, looking toward the cover. 21Place the cover on top of the ark and put in the ark the tablets of the covenant law that I will give you. 22There, above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the covenant law, I will meet with you and give you all my commands for the Israelites.

The Table

23"Make a table of acacia wood—two cubits long, a cubit wide and a cubit and a half high.[d] 24Overlay it with pure gold and make a gold molding around it. 25Also make around it a rim

Culture & Society
The ark was a portable chest made of wood and covered with gold (Ex 25:10). To this extent it resembles portable chests made by the Egyptians, displaying their skill in woodwork and decoration. The chests also provide examples of the way objects were carried with parallel bars arranged for the porters.

[a] *5* Possibly the hides of large aquatic mammals [b] *10* That is, a chest [c] *10* That is, about 3 3/4 feet long and 2 1/4 feet wide and high or about 1.1 meters long and 68 centimeters wide and high; similarly in verse 17 [d] *23* That is, about 3 feet long, 1 1/2 feet wide and 2 1/4 feet high or about 90 centimeters long, 45 centimeters wide and 68 centimeters high

a handbreadth[a] wide and put a gold molding on the rim. 26Make four gold rings for the table and fasten them to the four corners, where the four legs are. 27The rings are to be close to the rim to hold the poles used in carrying the table. 28Make the poles of acacia wood, overlay them with gold and carry the table with them. 29And make its plates and dishes of pure gold, as well as its pitchers and bowls for the pouring out of offerings. 30Put the bread of the Presence on this table to be before me at all times.

The Lampstand

31"Make a lampstand of pure gold. Hammer out its base and shaft, and make its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms of one piece with them. 32Six branches are to extend from the sides of the lampstand—three on one side and three on the other. 33Three cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms are to be on one branch, three on the next branch, and the same for all six branches extending from the lampstand. 34And on the lampstand there are to be four cups shaped like almond flowers with buds and blossoms. 35One bud shall be under the first pair of branches extending from the lampstand, a second bud under the second pair, and a third bud under the third pair—six branches in all. 36The buds and branches shall all be of one piece with the lampstand, hammered out of pure gold.

37"Then make its seven lamps and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it. 38Its wick trimmers and trays are to be of pure gold. 39A talent[b] of pure gold is to be used for the lampstand and all these accessories. 40See that you make them according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.

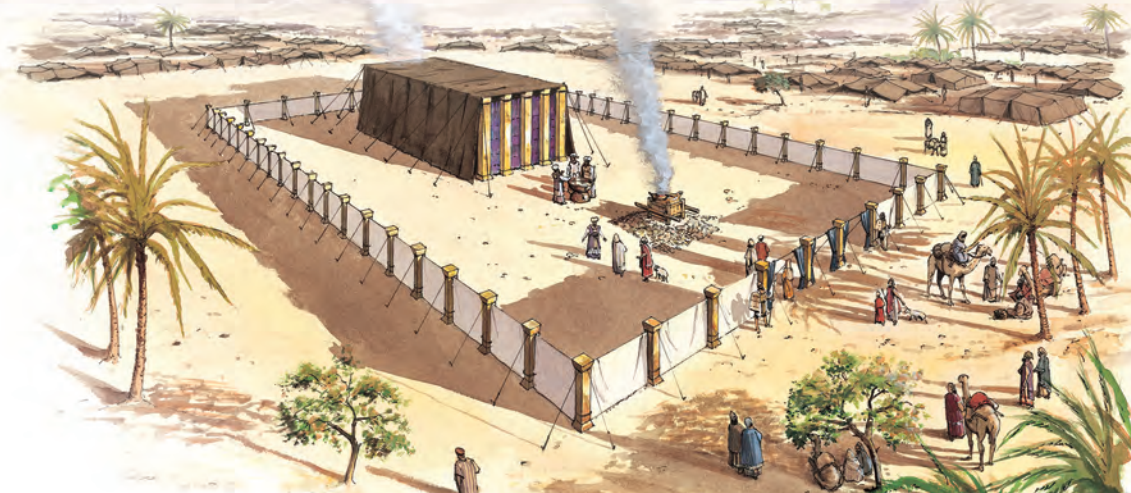
The Tabernacle

26 1"Make the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim woven into them by a skilled worker. 2All the curtains are to be the same size—twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide.[c] 3Join five of the curtains together, and do the same with the other five. 4Make loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and do the same with the end curtain in the other set. 5Make fifty loops on one curtain and fifty loops on the end curtain of the other set, with the loops opposite each other. 6Then make fifty gold clasps and use them to fasten the curtains together so that the tabernacle is a unit.

7"Make curtains of goat hair for the tent over the tabernacle—eleven altogether. 8All eleven curtains are to be the same size—thirty cubits long and four cubits wide.[d] 9Join five of the curtains together into one set and the other six into another set. Fold the sixth curtain double at the front of the tent. 10Make fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and also along the edge of the end curtain in the other set. 11Then make fifty bronze clasps and put them in the loops to fasten the tent together as a unit. 12As for the additional length of the tent curtains, the half curtain that is left over is to hang down at the rear of the tabernacle. 13The tent curtains will be a cubit[e] longer on both sides; what is left will hang over the sides of the tabernacle so as to cover it. 14Make for the tent a covering of ram skins dyed red, and over that a covering of the other durable leather.[f]

15"Make upright frames of acacia wood for

[a] *25* That is, about 3 inches or about 7.5 centimeters
[b] *39* That is, about 75 pounds or about 34 kilograms
[c] *2* That is, about 42 feet long and 6 feet wide or about 13 meters long and 1.8 meters wide
[d] *8* That is, about 45 feet long and 6 feet wide or about 13.5 meters long and 1.8 meters wide
[e] *13* That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters
[f] *14* Possibly the hides of large aquatic mammals (see 25:5)



the tabernacle. 16Each frame is to be ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide,[a] 17with two projections set parallel to each other. Make all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. 18Make twenty frames for the south side of the tabernacle 19and make forty silver bases to go under them—two bases for each frame, one under each projection. 20For the other side, the north side of the tabernacle, make twenty frames 21and forty silver bases—two under each frame. 22Make six frames for the far end, that is, the west end of the tabernacle, 23and make two frames for the corners at the far end. 24At these two corners they must be double from the bottom all the way to the top and fitted into a single ring; both shall be like that. 25So there will be eight frames and sixteen silver bases—two under each frame.

26"Also make crossbars of acacia wood: five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, 27five for those on the other side, and five for the frames on the west, at the far end of the tabernacle. 28The center crossbar is to extend from end to end at the middle of the frames. 29Overlay the frames with gold and make gold rings to hold the crossbars. Also overlay the crossbars with gold.

30"Set up the tabernacle according to the plan shown you on the mountain.

31"Make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim woven into it by a skilled worker. 32Hang it with gold hooks on four posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold and standing on four silver bases. 33Hang the curtain from the clasps and place the ark of the covenant law behind the curtain. The curtain will separate the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. 34Put the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant law in the Most Holy Place. 35Place the table outside the curtain on the north side of the tabernacle and put the lampstand opposite it on the south side.

36"For the entrance to the tent make a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer. 37Make gold hooks for this curtain and five posts of acacia wood overlaid with gold. And cast five bronze bases for them.

Religion & Worship
Ancient altars from the Middle East were often provided with projections on the four corners, called horns in the Bible (Ex 27:2). Possibly these horns were used to hold the animal on the altar, as Ps 118:27 would suggest. The bull was honored in different religions and the horn is a symbol of divine strength. But Exodus says nothing of this.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

27 1"Build an altar of acacia wood, three cubits[b] high; it is to be square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.[c] 2Make a horn at each of the four corners, so that the horns and the altar are of one piece, and overlay the altar with bronze. 3Make all its utensils of bronze—its pots to remove the ashes, and its shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and firepans. 4Make a grating for it, a bronze network, and make a bronze ring at each of the four corners of the network. 5Put it under the ledge of the altar so that it is halfway up the altar. 6Make poles of acacia wood for the altar and overlay them with bronze. 7The poles are to be inserted into the rings so they will be on two sides of the altar when it is carried. 8Make the altar hollow, out of boards. It is to be made just as you were shown on the mountain.

The Courtyard

9"Make a courtyard for the tabernacle. The south side shall be a hundred cubits[d] long and is to have curtains of finely twisted linen, 10with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts. 11The north side shall also be a hundred cubits long and is to have curtains, with twenty posts and twenty bronze bases and with silver hooks and bands on the posts.

12"The west end of the courtyard shall be fifty cubits[e] wide and have curtains, with ten posts and ten bases. 13On the east end, toward the sunrise, the courtyard shall also be fifty cubits wide. 14Curtains fifteen cubits[f] long are to be on one side of the entrance, with three posts and three bases, 15and curtains fifteen cubits long are to be on the other side, with three posts and three bases.

16"For the entrance to the courtyard, provide a curtain twenty cubits[g] long, of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer—with four posts and four bases. 17All the posts around the courtyard are to have silver bands and hooks, and bronze bases. 18The courtyard shall be a hundred cu-

[a] *16* That is, about 15 feet long and 2 1/4 feet wide or about 4.5 meters long and 68 centimeters wide [b] *1* That is, about 4 1/2 feet or about 1.4 meters [c] *1* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters long and wide [d] *9* That is, about 150 feet or about 45 meters; also in verse 11 [e] *12* That is, about 75 feet or about 23 meters; also in verse 13 [f] *14* That is, about 23 feet or about 6.8 meters; also in verse 15
[g] *16* That is, about 30 feet or about 9 meters

bits long and fifty cubits wide,[a] with curtains of finely twisted linen five cubits[b] high, and with bronze bases. 19All the other articles used in the service of the tabernacle, whatever their function, including all the tent pegs for it and those for the courtyard, are to be of bronze.

Oil for the Lampstand

20"Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning. 21In the tent of meeting, outside the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law, Aaron and his sons are to keep the lamps burning before the LORD from evening till morning. This is to be a lasting ordinance among the Israelites for the generations to come.

The Priestly Garments

28 1"Have Aaron your brother brought to you from among the Israelites, along with his sons Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, so they may serve me as priests. 2Make sacred garments for your brother Aaron to give him dignity and honor. 3Tell all the skilled workers to whom I have given wisdom in such matters that they are to make garments for Aaron, for his consecration, so he may serve me as priest. 4These are the garments they are to make: a breastpiece, an ephod, a robe, a woven tunic, a turban and a sash. They are to make these sacred garments for your brother Aaron and his sons, so they may serve me as priests. 5Have them use gold, and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and fine linen.

The Ephod

6"Make the ephod of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen—the work of skilled hands. 7It is to have two shoulder pieces attached to two of its corners, so it can be fastened. 8Its skillfully woven waistband is to be like it—of one piece with the ephod and made with gold, and with blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and with finely twisted linen.

9"Take two onyx stones and engrave on them the names of the sons of Israel 10in the order of their birth—six names on one stone and the remaining six on the other. 11Engrave the names of the sons of Israel on the two stones the way a gem cutter engraves a seal. Then mount the stones in gold filigree settings 12and fasten them on the shoulder pieces of the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of Israel. Aaron is to bear the names on his shoulders as a memorial before the LORD. 13Make gold filigree settings 14and two braided chains of pure gold, like a rope, and attach the chains to the settings.

The Breastpiece

15"Fashion a breastpiece for making decisions—the work of skilled hands. Make it like the ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted linen. 16It is to be square—a span[c] long and a span wide—and folded double. 17Then mount four rows of precious stones on it. The first row shall be carnelian, chrysolite and beryl; 18the second row shall be turquoise, lapis lazuli and emerald; 19the third row shall be jacinth, agate and amethyst; 20the fourth row shall be topaz, onyx and jasper.[d] Mount them in gold filigree settings. 21There are to be twelve stones, one for each of the names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.

22"For the breastpiece make braided chains of pure gold, like a rope. 23Make two gold rings for it and fasten them to two corners of the breastpiece. 24Fasten the two gold chains to the rings at the corners of the breastpiece, 25and the other ends of the chains to the two settings, attaching them to the shoulder pieces of the ephod at the front. 26Make two gold rings and attach them to the other two corners of the breastpiece on the inside edge next to the ephod. 27Make two more gold rings and attach them to the bottom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the ephod, close to the seam just above the waistband of the ephod. 28The rings of the breastpiece are to be tied to the rings of the ephod with blue cord, connecting it to the waistband, so that the breastpiece will not swing out from the ephod.

29"Whenever Aaron enters the Holy Place, he will bear the names of the sons of Israel over

Culture & Society
Precious and semiprecious stones (Ex 28:18) were valued for their transparency, color, and polish. Little was known about their hardness or chemical composition. The color may be apparent from the name or context, but it is usually impossible to know much more. Diamonds and rubies were probably not used because they were too hard to polish.

[a] *18* That is, about 150 feet long and 75 feet wide or about 45 meters long and 23 meters wide [b] *18* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters [c] *16* That is, about 9 inches or about 23 centimeters [d] *20* The precise identification of some of these precious stones is uncertain.

his heart on the breastpiece of decision as a continuing memorial before the LORD. 30Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the LORD. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the LORD.

Other Priestly Garments

31"Make the robe of the ephod entirely of blue cloth, 32with an opening for the head in its center. There shall be a woven edge like a collar[a] around this opening, so that it will not tear. 33Make pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn around the hem of the robe, with gold bells between them. 34The gold bells and the pomegranates are to alternate around the hem of the robe. 35Aaron must wear it when he ministers. The sound of the bells will be heard when he enters the Holy Place before the LORD and when he comes out, so that he will not die.

36"Make a plate of pure gold and engrave on it as on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. 37Fasten a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban; it is to be on the front of the turban. 38It will be on Aaron's forehead, and he will bear the guilt involved in the sacred gifts the Israelites consecrate, whatever their gifts may be. It will be on Aaron's forehead continually so that they will be acceptable to the LORD.

39"Weave the tunic of fine linen and make the turban of fine linen. The sash is to be the work of an embroiderer. 40Make tunics, sashes and caps for Aaron's sons to give them dignity and honor. 41After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests.

42"Make linen undergarments as a covering for the body, reaching from the waist to the thigh. 43Aaron and his sons must wear them whenever they enter the tent of meeting or approach the altar to minister in the Holy Place, so that they will not incur guilt and die.

"This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants.

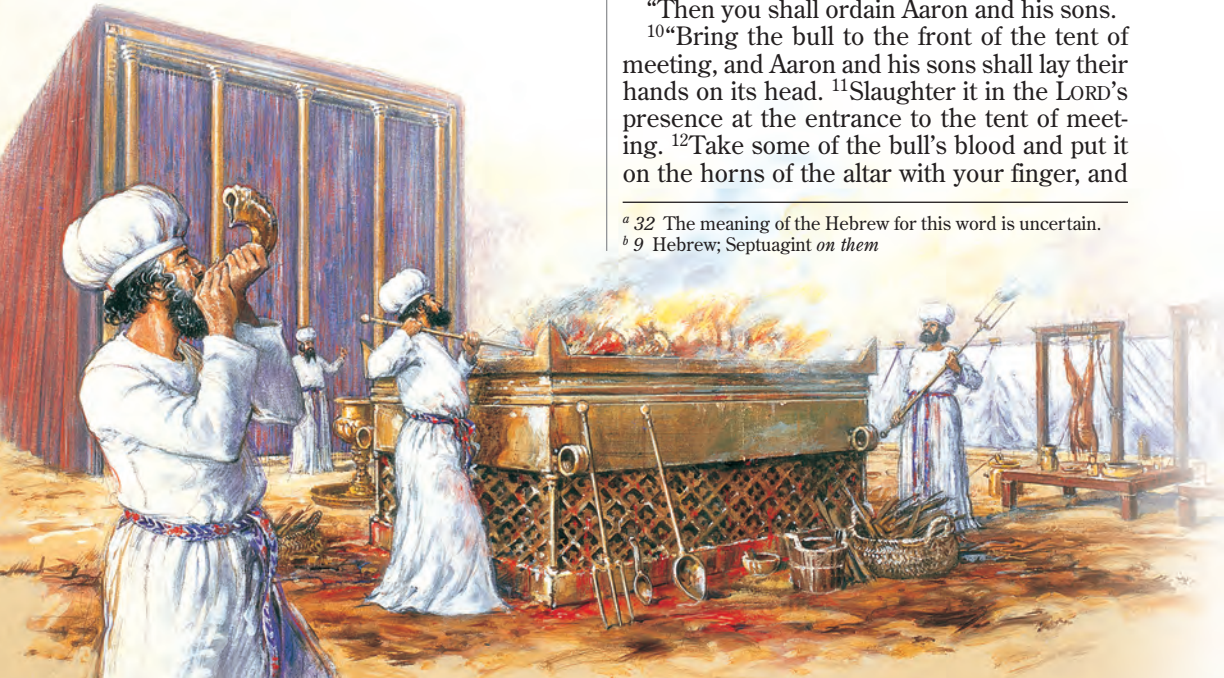
Consecration of the Priests

29 1"This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve me as priests: Take a young bull and two rams without defect. 2And from the finest wheat flour make round loaves without yeast, thick loaves without yeast and with olive oil mixed in, and thin loaves without yeast and brushed with olive oil. 3Put them in a basket and present them along with the bull and the two rams. 4Then bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water. 5Take the garments and dress Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod itself and the breastpiece. Fasten the ephod on him by its skillfully woven waistband. 6Put the turban on his head and attach the sacred emblem to the turban. 7Take the anointing oil and anoint him by pouring it on his head. 8Bring his sons and dress them in tunics 9and fasten caps on them. Then tie sashes on Aaron and his sons.[b] The priesthood is theirs by a lasting ordinance.

"Then you shall ordain Aaron and his sons.

10"Bring the bull to the front of the tent of meeting, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. 11Slaughter it in the LORD's presence at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 12Take some of the bull's blood and put it on the horns of the altar with your finger, and

[a] *32* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] *9* Hebrew; Septuagint *on them*



pour out the rest of it at the base of the altar.
13Then take all the fat on the internal organs,
the long lobe of the liver, and both kidneys with
the fat on them, and burn them on the altar.
14But burn the bull's flesh and its hide and its
intestines outside the camp. It is a sin offering.[a]
15"Take one of the rams, and Aaron and his
sons shall lay their hands on its head. 16Slaugh-
ter it and take the blood and splash it against
the sides of the altar. 17Cut the ram into pieces
and wash the internal organs and the legs, put-
ting them with the head and the other pieces.
18Then burn the entire ram on the altar. It is a
burnt offering to the LORD, a pleasing aroma, a
food offering presented to the LORD.
19"Take the other ram, and Aaron and his
sons shall lay their hands on its head. 20Slaugh-
ter it, take some of its blood and put it on the
lobes of the right ears of Aaron and his sons,
on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the
big toes of their right feet. Then splash blood
against the sides of the altar. 21And take some
blood from the altar and some of the anointing
oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments
and on his sons and their garments. Then he
and his sons and their garments will be con-
secrated.
22"Take from this ram the fat, the fat tail, the
fat on the internal organs, the long lobe of the
liver, both kidneys with the fat on them, and
the right thigh. (This is the ram for the ordina-
tion.) 23From the basket of bread made with-
out yeast, which is before the LORD, take one
round loaf, one thick loaf with olive oil mixed in,
and one thin loaf. 24Put all these in the hands of
Aaron and his sons and have them wave them
before the LORD as a wave offering. 25Then take
them from their hands and burn them on the al-
tar along with the burnt offering for a pleasing
aroma to the LORD, a food offering presented to
the LORD. 26After you take the breast of the ram
for Aaron's ordination, wave it before the LORD
as a wave offering, and it will be your share.
27"Consecrate those parts of the ordination
ram that belong to Aaron and his sons: the
breast that was waved and the thigh that was
presented. 28This is always to be the perpetu-
al share from the Israelites for Aaron and his
sons. It is the contribution the Israelites are to
make to the LORD from their fellowship offer-
ings.
29"Aaron's sacred garments will belong to
his descendants so that they can be anointed
and ordained in them. 30The son who succeeds
him as priest and comes to the tent of meeting
to minister in the Holy Place is to wear them
seven days.
31"Take the ram for the ordination and cook
the meat in a sacred place. 32At the entrance to
the tent of meeting, Aaron and his sons are to
eat the meat of the ram and the bread that is
in the basket. 33They are to eat these offerings
by which atonement was made for their ordina-
tion and consecration. But no one else may eat
them, because they are sacred. 34And if any of
the meat of the ordination ram or any bread is
left over till morning, burn it up. It must not be
eaten, because it is sacred.
35"Do for Aaron and his sons everything I
have commanded you, taking seven days to or-
dain them. 36Sacrifice a bull each day as a sin
offering to make atonement. Purify the altar by
making atonement for it, and anoint it to con-
secrate it. 37For seven days make atonement
for the altar and consecrate it. Then the altar
will be most holy, and whatever touches it will
be holy.
38"This is what you are to offer on the altar
regularly each day: two lambs a year old. 39Of-
fer one in the morning and the other at twilight.
40With the first lamb offer a tenth of an ephah[b]
of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin[c]
of oil from pressed olives, and a quarter of a hin
of wine as a drink offering. 41Sacrifice the other
lamb at twilight with the same grain offering
and its drink offering as in the morning—a
pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to
the LORD.
42"For the generations to come this burnt of-
fering is to be made regularly at the entrance
to the tent of meeting, before the LORD. There
I will meet you and speak to you; 43there also I
will meet with the Israelites, and the place will
be consecrated by my glory.
44"So I will consecrate the tent of meeting
and the altar and will consecrate Aaron and
his sons to serve me as priests. 45Then I will

[a] *14* Or *purification offering*; also in verse 36 [b] *40* That is, probably about 3 1/2 pounds or about 1.6 kilograms [c] *40* That is, probably about 1 quart or about 1 liter

TIME CAPSULE		1553 to 1540 B.C.
1553		Kamose wars with Hyksos and reaches Avaris
1550–1069		The New Kingdom in Egypt
1540		Ahmose I expels Hyksos from Egypt
1540		Ahmose I begins 3-year siege of Sharuhen in south Palestine
1540		Thebes becomes the family burying ground of the pharaohs

dwell among the Israelites and be their God. 46They will know that I am the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt so that I might dwell among them. I am the LORD their God.

The Altar of Incense

30 1"Make an altar of acacia wood for burning incense. 2It is to be square, a cubit long and a cubit wide, and two cubits high[a]—its horns of one piece with it. 3Overlay the top and all the sides and the horns with pure gold, and make a gold molding around it. 4Make two gold rings for the altar below the molding—two on each of the opposite sides—to hold the poles used to carry it. 5Make the poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. 6Put the altar in front of the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law—before the atonement cover that is over the tablets of the covenant law—where I will meet with you.

7"Aaron must burn fragrant incense on the altar every morning when he tends the lamps. 8He must burn incense again when he lights the lamps at twilight so incense will burn regularly before the LORD for the generations to come. 9Do not offer on this altar any other incense or any burnt offering or grain offering, and do not pour a drink offering on it. 10Once a year Aaron shall make atonement on its horns. This annual atonement must be made with the blood of the atoning sin offering[b] for the generations to come. It is most holy to the LORD."

Atonement Money

11Then the LORD said to Moses, 12"When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the LORD a ransom for his life at the time he is counted. Then no plague will come on them when you number them. 13Each one who crosses over to those already counted is to give a half shekel,[c] according to the sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs. This half shekel is an offering to the LORD. 14All who cross over, those twenty years old or more, are to give an offering to the LORD. 15The rich are not to give more than a half shekel and the poor are not to give less when you make the offering to the LORD to atone for your lives. 16Receive the atonement money from the Israelites and use it for the service of the tent of meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD, making atonement for your lives."

Trade & Economics

Spices (Ex 30:34) were an important part of trade and commerce. They were imported from Arabia and from as far away as India, which could be reached from Egypt by sea. Most were plant products, such as gums and resins. Onycha was taken from a mollusk that lives in the Red Sea. Its exotic origin adds to its perceived value.

Basin for Washing

17Then the LORD said to Moses, 18"Make a bronze basin, with its bronze stand, for washing. Place it between the tent of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. 19Aaron and his sons are to wash their hands and feet with water from it. 20Whenever they enter the tent of meeting, they shall wash with water so that they will not die. Also, when they approach the altar to minister by presenting a food offering to the LORD, 21they shall wash their hands and feet so that they will not die. This is to be a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his descendants for the generations to come."

Anointing Oil

22Then the LORD said to Moses, 23"Take the following fine spices: 500 shekels[d] of liquid myrrh, half as much (that is, 250 shekels) of fragrant cinnamon, 250 shekels[e] of fragrant calamus, 24500 shekels of cassia—all according to the sanctuary shekel—and a hin[f] of olive oil. 25Make these into a sacred anointing oil, a fragrant blend, the work of a perfumer. It will be the sacred anointing oil. 26Then use it to anoint the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law, 27the table and all its articles, the lampstand and its accessories, the altar of incense, 28the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, and the basin with its stand. 29You shall consecrate them so they will be most holy, and whatever touches them will be holy.

30"Anoint Aaron and his sons and consecrate them so they may serve me as priests. 31Say to the Israelites, 'This is to be my sacred anointing oil for the generations to come. 32Do not pour it on anyone else's body and do not make any other oil using the same formula. It is sacred, and you are to consider it sacred. 33Whoever makes perfume like it and puts it on anyone other than a priest must be cut off from their people.'"

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[a] *2* That is, about 1 1/2 feet long and wide and 3 feet high or about 45 centimeters long and wide and 90 centimeters high
[b] *10* Or *purification offering* [c] *13* That is, about 1/5 ounce or about 5.8 grams; also in verse 15 [d] *23* That is, about 12 1/2 pounds or about 5.8 kilograms; also in verse 24
[e] *23* That is, about 6 1/4 pounds or about 2.9 kilograms
[f] *24* That is, probably about 1 gallon or about 3.8 liters

Incense

34 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Take fragrant spices — gum resin, onycha and galbanum — and pure frankincense, all in equal amounts, 35 and make a fragrant blend of incense, the work of a perfumer. It is to be salted and pure and sacred. 36 Grind some of it to powder and place it in front of the ark of the covenant law in the tent of meeting, where I will meet with you. It shall be most holy to you. 37 Do not make any incense with this formula for yourselves; consider it holy to the LORD. 38 Whoever makes incense like it to enjoy its fragrance must be cut off from their people."

Bezalel and Oholiab

31 1 Then the LORD said to Moses, 2 "See, I have chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 3 and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills — 4 to make artistic designs for work in gold, silver and bronze, 5 to cut and set stones, to work in wood, and to engage in all kinds of crafts. 6 Moreover, I have appointed Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the tribe of Dan, to help him. Also I have given ability to all the skilled workers to make everything I have commanded you: 7 the tent of meeting, the ark of the covenant law with the atonement cover on it, and all the other furnishings of the tent — 8 the table and its articles, the pure gold lampstand and all its accessories, the altar of incense, 9 the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils, the basin with its stand — 10 and also the woven garments, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when they serve as priests, 11 and the anointing oil and fragrant incense for the Holy Place. They are to make them just as I commanded you."

The Sabbath

12 Then the LORD said to Moses, 13 "Say to the Israelites, 'You must observe my Sabbaths. This will be a sign between me and you for the generations to come, so you may know that I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

14 "'Observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you. Anyone who desecrates it is to be put to death; those who do any work on that day must be cut off from their people. 15 For six days work is to be done, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, holy to the LORD. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath day is to be put to death. 16 The Israelites are to observe the Sabbath, celebrating it for the generations to come as a lasting covenant. 17 It will be a sign between me and the Israelites forever, for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.'"

18 When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant law, the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.

The Golden Calf

32 1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods[a] who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

2 Aaron answered them, "Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me." 3 So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, "These are your gods,[b] Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

5 When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD." 6 So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offer-

[a] 1 Or *a god*; also in verses 23 and 31 [b] 4 Or *This is your god*; also in verse 8

Calves, Cows, and Bulls Representing the Divine (Ex 32:1–4)

The stories of Aaron molding the golden calf (Ex 32:1–4) and Jeroboam building the golden calves for his new temples at Bethel and Dan (1Ki 12:28–31) are similar. Aaron's action, at the insistence of the people, came only 40 days after they received the commandments not to worship other gods nor to make images for worship. In almost no time the Israelites broke the rules given them by God. Similarly, God gave Jeroboam the northern kingdom with the provision that he be faithful to God. Jeroboam immediately broke the same commandments as the Israelites did in the wilderness.

But why make a calf? Cattle were common images for deities in the ancient Near East. In Egypt, Hathor, a very popular goddess, was represented as a cow, as a woman with cow horns or ears or both, and as a human with a cow's head. The usual manner of depicting a male deity in Syria-Palestine was to represent him either as a bull or with some features of a bull, usually horns. In Babylon the bull images of Hadad lined the main processional street.

The golden calf was possibly the representation of a Canaanite deity. Both El and Baal are connected with bulls in the Ugaritic texts. No large images of cattle deities have been recovered from Syria-Palestine, but a number of small bull images from the time of the Israelite occupation of the land demonstrate that larger statues could likely have been realistically fashioned in standing positions. If the golden calf represents a Canaanite god, such worship was a blatant rejection of Israel's God.

There is another possibility. In the ancient Near East, bulls, as well as other animals, were sometimes intended not as an image of the deity itself, but as mounts for the god who was understood to be present. Jeroboam's golden calves could have served the same purpose as the cherubim in the temple at Jerusalem. But even this would have been a rejection of the proper worship of Israel's God.

ings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.

7 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. 8 They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'

9 "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people. 10 Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation."

11 But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? 12 Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people. 13 Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'" 14 Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

15 Moses turned and went down the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands. They were inscribed on both sides, front and back. 16 The tablets were the work of God; the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets.

17 When Joshua heard the noise of the people shouting, he said to Moses, "There is the sound of war in the camp."

18 Moses replied:

"It is not the sound of victory,
it is not the sound of defeat;
it is the sound of singing that I hear."

19 When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. 20 And he took the calf the people had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it.

21 He said to Aaron, "What did these people

do to you, that you led them into such great sin?"

22"Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil. 23They said to me, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' 24So I told them, 'Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.' Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!"

25Moses saw that the people were running wild and that Aaron had let them get out of control and so become a laughingstock to their enemies. 26So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And all the Levites rallied to him.

27Then he said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.'" 28The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. 29Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day."

30The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin."

31So Moses went back to the LORD and said, "Oh, what a great sin these people have committed! They have made themselves gods of gold. 32But now, please forgive their sin—but if not, then blot me out of the book you have written."

33The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book. 34Now go, lead the people to the place I spoke of, and my angel will go before you. However, when the time comes for me to punish, I will punish them for their sin."

35And the LORD struck the people with a plague because of what they did with the calf Aaron had made.

33 1Then the LORD said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' 2I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 3Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."

4When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments. 5For the LORD had said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites, 'You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.'" 6So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb.

The Tent of Meeting

7Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp. 8And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent. 9As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses. 10Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent. 11The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Moses and the Glory of the LORD

12Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.' 13If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

14The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

15Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 16How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

17And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do

Daily Life & Customs
Garments and ornaments for the body commonly signify a person's rank and status. It may be that the Israelites were removing such items, or it may be that they were removing whatever items were inappropriate for mourning, whether the items had special value or not (Ex 33:5).

Forbidden Religious Objects (Ex 34:13)

Altars, sacred stones, and Asherah poles appear in the Bible as a recurring group of banned religious objects (Ex 34:13). All three were common in the religious world of Syria-Palestine, including Canaan.

Altars were used for making sacrifices to the god of the area. They were constructed where the deity was felt to be present, sometimes along with a temple, a shrine, or an open sanctuary. Many of the numerous ancient altars discovered in Palestine are carefully carved with stone horns on the four top corners. A depression was often carved around the outer top area to catch blood so that it could be ritually sprinkled on the altar itself, a standard sacrificial ritual. Only when devoted to God and restricted to certain locations were altars acceptable for Israel.

Sacred stones were standing slabs of stone, sometimes carved, which stood in religious centers as representatives of deities. Such cultic items dating from the 3rd millennium B.C. have been recovered from Syria-Palestine. The tops often were shaped into a curve, and sometimes a divine symbol was carved into one of the flat surfaces. They functioned as divine images. Thus, to allow sacred stones to remain standing would have breached the commandment not to worship other gods (Ex 20:3).

The Hebrew *Asherim,* translated as "Asherah poles," were representations of the goddess Asherah. Because of the impermanence of wood and the lack of Old Testament descriptions, the form of the Asherim is uncertain. Some suggest these items were sacred trees or representations of sacred trees. Others suppose they were wooden objects made by humans, possibly poles or images. Since the Asherim stood for the goddess Asherah, it is understandable that the Judahites and Israelites were told to cut down, splinter, and burn them (Dt 7:5; 12:3).

The many warnings against these forbidden objects suggest the appeal that Canaanite culture had for Judah and Israel. Incorporating indigenous religion into their worship of God posed a constant danger.

the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. 23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

The New Stone Tablets

34 1 The LORD said to Moses, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. 2 Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. 3 No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain."

4 So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands. 5 Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. 6 And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, 7 maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

8 Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. 9 "Lord," he said, "if I have found favor in your eyes, then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance."

10 Then the LORD said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you. 11 Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 12 Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. 13 Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles.[a] 14 Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

15 "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute

[a] *13* That is, wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah

themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. 16And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

17"Do not make any idols.

18"Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt.

19"The first offspring of every womb belongs to me, including all the firstborn males of your livestock, whether from herd or flock. 20Redeem the firstborn donkey with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem all your firstborn sons.

"No one is to appear before me empty-handed.

21"Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest.

22"Celebrate the Festival of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Festival of Ingathering at the turn of the year.[a] 23Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD, the God of Israel. 24I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the LORD your God.

25"Do not offer the blood of a sacrifice to me along with anything containing yeast, and do not let any of the sacrifice from the Passover Festival remain until morning.

26"Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God.

"Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk."

27Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." 28Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.

The Radiant Face of Moses

29When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. 30When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. 31But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. 32Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai.

33When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. 34But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, 35they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

Sabbath Regulations

35 1Moses assembled the whole Israelite community and said to them, "These are the things the LORD has commanded you to do: 2For six days, work is to be done, but the seventh day shall be your holy day, a day of sabbath rest to the LORD. Whoever does any work on it is to be put to death. 3Do not light a fire in any of your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

Materials for the Tabernacle

4Moses said to the whole Israelite community, "This is what the LORD has commanded: 5From what you have, take an offering for the LORD. Everyone who is willing is to bring to the LORD an offering of gold, silver and bronze;

[a] *22* That is, in the autumn

6 blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen;
goat hair; 7 ram skins dyed red and another
type of durable leather[a]; acacia wood; 8 olive oil
for the light; spices for the anointing oil and
for the fragrant incense; 9 and onyx stones and
other gems to be mounted on the ephod and
breastpiece.

10 "All who are skilled among you are to
come and make everything the LORD has com-
manded: 11 the tabernacle with its tent and its
covering, clasps, frames, crossbars, posts and
bases; 12 the ark with its poles and the atone-
ment cover and the curtain that shields it; 13 the
table with its poles and all its articles and the
bread of the Presence; 14 the lampstand that is
for light with its accessories, lamps and oil for
the light; 15 the altar of incense with its poles,
the anointing oil and the fragrant incense; the
curtain for the doorway at the entrance to the
tabernacle; 16 the altar of burnt offering with its
bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils; the
bronze basin with its stand; 17 the curtains of
the courtyard with its posts and bases, and the
curtain for the entrance to the courtyard; 18 the
tent pegs for the tabernacle and for the court-
yard, and their ropes; 19 the woven garments
worn for ministering in the sanctuary—both
the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and
the garments for his sons when they serve as
priests."

20 Then the whole Israelite community with-
drew from Moses' presence, 21 and everyone
who was willing and whose heart moved them
came and brought an offering to the LORD for
the work on the tent of meeting, for all its ser-
vice, and for the sacred garments. 22 All who
were willing, men and women alike, came and
brought gold jewelry of all kinds: brooches,
earrings, rings and ornaments. They all pre-
sented their gold as a wave offering to the
LORD. 23 Everyone who had blue, purple or scar-
let yarn or fine linen, or goat hair, ram skins
dyed red or the other durable leather brought
them. 24 Those presenting an offering of sil-
ver or bronze brought it as an offering to the
LORD, and everyone who had acacia wood for
any part of the work brought it. 25 Every skilled
woman spun with her hands and brought what
she had spun—blue, purple or scarlet yarn or
fine linen. 26 And all the women who were will-
ing and had the skill spun the goat hair. 27 The
leaders brought onyx stones and other gems
to be mounted on the ephod and breastpiece.
28 They also brought spices and olive oil for the
light and for the anointing oil and for the fra-
grant incense. 29 All the Israelite men and wom-
en who were willing brought to the LORD free-
will offerings for all the work the LORD through
Moses had commanded them to do.

Bezalel and Oholiab

30 Then Moses said to the Israelites, "See, the
LORD has chosen Bezalel son of Uri, the son of
Hur, of the tribe of Judah, 31 and he has filled
him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with
understanding, with knowledge and with all
kinds of skills— 32 to make artistic designs for
work in gold, silver and bronze, 33 to cut and
set stones, to work in wood and to engage in
all kinds of artistic crafts. 34 And he has given
both him and Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the
tribe of Dan, the ability to teach others. 35 He
has filled them with skill to do all kinds of work
as engravers, designers, embroiderers in blue,
purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen, and weav-
ers—all of them skilled workers and designers.

36 1 So Bezalel, Oholiab and every skilled
person to whom the LORD has given skill
and ability to know how to carry out all the
work of constructing the sanctuary are to do
the work just as the LORD has commanded."

2 Then Moses summoned Bezalel and Oholi-
ab and every skilled person to whom the LORD
had given ability and who was willing to come
and do the work. 3 They received from Moses
all the offerings the Israelites had brought to
carry out the work of constructing the sanctu-
ary. And the people continued to bring freewill
offerings morning after morning. 4 So all the
skilled workers who were doing all the work on
the sanctuary left what they were doing 5 and
said to Moses, "The people are bringing more
than enough for doing the work the LORD com-
manded to be done."

6 Then Moses gave an order and they sent
this word throughout the camp: "No man or
woman is to make anything else as an offer-

[a] 7 Possibly the hides of large aquatic mammals; also in verse 23

TIME CAPSULE		1525 to 1511 B.C.
1525		Ilim-ilimma I establishes kingdom at Aleppo
1525		Ilim-ilimma's kingdom overthrown, and his son Idrimi flees to Phoenicia
1525–1504		Amenhotep I, pharaoh of Egypt
1518–1480		Idrimi returns victoriously and makes his capital at Alalakh
1511		Idrimi makes treaty with Mitanni in an alliance against the Hittites

ing for the sanctuary." And so the people were restrained from bringing more, 7because what they already had was more than enough to do all the work.

The Tabernacle

8All those who were skilled among the workers made the tabernacle with ten curtains of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn, with cherubim woven into them by expert hands. 9All the curtains were the same size—twenty-eight cubits long and four cubits wide.[a] 10They joined five of the curtains together and did the same with the other five. 11Then they made loops of blue material along the edge of the end curtain in one set, and the same was done with the end curtain in the other set. 12They also made fifty loops on one curtain and fifty loops on the end curtain of the other set, with the loops opposite each other. 13Then they made fifty gold clasps and used them to fasten the two sets of curtains together so that the tabernacle was a unit.

14They made curtains of goat hair for the tent over the tabernacle—eleven altogether. 15All eleven curtains were the same size—thirty cubits long and four cubits wide.[b] 16They joined five of the curtains into one set and the other six into another set. 17Then they made fifty loops along the edge of the end curtain in one set and also along the edge of the end curtain in the other set. 18They made fifty bronze clasps to fasten the tent together as a unit. 19Then they made for the tent a covering of ram skins dyed red, and over that a covering of the other durable leather.[c]

20They made upright frames of acacia wood for the tabernacle. 21Each frame was ten cubits long and a cubit and a half wide,[d] 22with two projections set parallel to each other. They made all the frames of the tabernacle in this way. 23They made twenty frames for the south side of the tabernacle 24and made forty silver bases to go under them—two bases for each frame, one under each projection. 25For the other side, the north side of the tabernacle, they made twenty frames 26and forty silver bases—two under each frame. 27They made six frames for the far end, that is, the west end of the tabernacle, 28and two frames were made for the corners of the tabernacle at the far end. 29At these two corners the frames were double from the bottom all the way to the top and fitted into a single ring; both were made alike. 30So there were eight frames and sixteen silver bases—two under each frame.

31They also made crossbars of acacia wood: five for the frames on one side of the tabernacle, 32five for those on the other side, and five for the frames on the west, at the far end of the tabernacle. 33They made the center crossbar so that it extended from end to end at the middle of the frames. 34They overlaid the frames with gold and made gold rings to hold the crossbars. They also overlaid the crossbars with gold.

35They made the curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen, with cherubim woven into it by a skilled worker. 36They made four posts of acacia wood for it and overlaid them with gold. They made gold hooks for them and cast their four silver bases. 37For the entrance to the tent they made a curtain of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen—the work of an embroiderer; 38and they made five posts with hooks for them. They overlaid the tops of the posts and their bands with gold and made their five bases of bronze.

[a] *9* That is, about 42 feet long and 6 feet wide or about 13 meters long and 1.8 meters wide [b] *15* That is, about 45 feet long and 6 feet wide or about 14 meters long and 1.8 meters wide [c] *19* Possibly the hides of large aquatic mammals (see 35:7) [d] *21* That is, about 15 feet long and 2 1/4 feet wide or about 4.5 meters long and 68 centimeters wide

Gifted craftsmen with wisdom and understanding were set apart for the construction of the temple

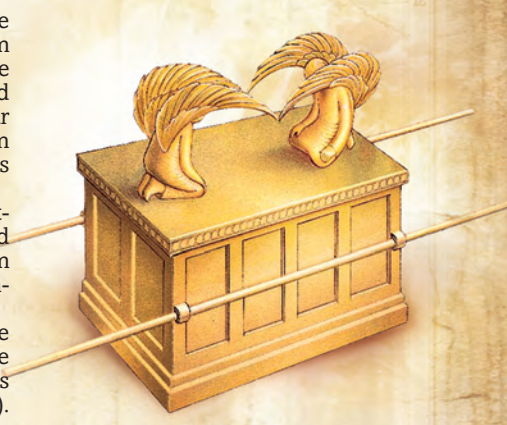
A Throne for God (Ex 37:1–9)

The ark of the covenant was an object that reminded the Israelites of the presence of God in their midst. Although some nomadic peoples used small traveling casks for worship, no ancient people had a sacred object that compares to Israel's large box with its heavy adornment and sculptured cherubim on the lid (Ex 37:1–9).

There are various ideas as to what the ark represents, often relating to each other in meaning. It has been described as a container or chest, as a portable throne for Israel's God, or as an extension of God's presence.

The construction of the ark is described in the shape of a chest, measuring 45 inches long by 27 inches wide by 27 inches tall (Ex 37:1). As such, it served as a container to hold items. Similar to the temple thrones of gods in Egypt and the foundation deposits of temples in Mesopotamia, the ark also bore the words of the deity: the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Other items contained within the ark were Aaron's staff and a jar of manna (Heb 9:4).

As a portable throne the ark provided the place where God would "sit" in the presence of the Israelites. The cherubim on the ark (Ex 37:7) were not images of God, but rather divine attendants. They represented the type of throne which seated rulers and deities along the eastern Mediterranean coast as far back as the 2nd millennium B.C. A king sitting upon a cherubim throne is pictured in the sarcophagus of Ahiram, king of Byblos in the 10th century B.C.



Some scholars think that the ark represented the "footstool" of God's throne, rather than the throne itself. King David referred to the ark as a "footstool" (1Ch 28:2). The cherubim throne of Ahiram had a box-shaped footstool, and the Canaanite god El also had a footstool.

The ark was a symbol of the invisible presence of God. The possession of the ark in battle represented both the presence and the favor of God (1Sa 4:3–7). Its capture by the Philistines meant that the favor of God had been lost as well (1Sa 4:19–22).

The Ark

37 [1]Bezalel made the ark of acacia wood—
two and a half cubits long, a cubit and
a half wide, and a cubit and a half high.[a] [2]He
overlaid it with pure gold, both inside and out,
and made a gold molding around it. [3]He cast
four gold rings for it and fastened them to its
four feet, with two rings on one side and two
rings on the other. [4]Then he made poles of aca-
cia wood and overlaid them with gold. [5]And he
inserted the poles into the rings on the sides of
the ark to carry it.

[6]He made the atonement cover of pure
gold—two and a half cubits long and a cubit
and a half wide. [7]Then he made two cherubim
out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover.
[8]He made one cherub on one end and the sec-
ond cherub on the other; at the two ends he
made them of one piece with the cover. [9]The
cherubim had their wings spread upward, over-
shadowing the cover with them. The cherubim
faced each other, looking toward the cover.

Religion & Worship
The lampstand (Ex 37:17) was removed from Jerusalem by the Roman army in A.D. 70. It is depicted on the arch of Titus in Rome as part of a parade of spoils taken by the victorious soldiers. This was probably not the original lamp, but in any case it too is now lost. The seven-branched lampstand continues as a symbol of Judaism.

The Table

[10]They[b] made the table of acacia wood—two
cubits long, a cubit wide and a cubit and a half
high.[c] [11]Then they overlaid it with pure gold
and made a gold molding around it. [12]They
also made around it a rim a handbreadth[d] wide
and put a gold molding on the rim. [13]They cast
four gold rings for the table and fastened them
to the four corners, where the four legs were.
[14]The rings were put close to the rim to hold
the poles used in carrying the table. [15]The
poles for carrying the table were made of aca-
cia wood and were overlaid with gold. [16]And
they made from pure gold the articles for the
table—its plates and dishes and bowls and its
pitchers for the pouring out of drink offerings.

[a] *1* That is, about 3 3/4 feet long and 2 1/4 feet wide and high or about 1.1 meters long and 68 centimeters wide and high; similarly in verse 6 [b] *10* Or *He*; also in verses 11-29 [c] *10* That is, about 3 feet long, 1 1/2 feet wide and 2 1/4 feet high or about 90 centimeters long, 45 centimeters wide and 68 centimeters high [d] *12* That is, about 3 inches or about 7.5 centimeters

The Lampstand

17 They made the lampstand of pure gold.
They hammered out its base and shaft, and
made its flowerlike cups, buds and blossoms
of one piece with them. 18 Six branches extend-
ed from the sides of the lampstand—three on
one side and three on the other. 19 Three cups
shaped like almond flowers with buds and
blossoms were on one branch, three on the
next branch and the same for all six branches
extending from the lampstand. 20 And on the
lampstand were four cups shaped like almond
flowers with buds and blossoms. 21 One bud
was under the first pair of branches extending
from the lampstand, a second bud under the
second pair, and a third bud under the third
pair—six branches in all. 22 The buds and the
branches were all of one piece with the lamp-
stand, hammered out of pure gold.

23 They made its seven lamps, as well as its
wick trimmers and trays, of pure gold. 24 They
made the lampstand and all its accessories
from one talent[a] of pure gold.

The Altar of Incense

25 They made the altar of incense out of aca-
cia wood. It was square, a cubit long and a cubit
wide and two cubits high[b]—its horns of one
piece with it. 26 They overlaid the top and all the
sides and the horns with pure gold, and made a
gold molding around it. 27 They made two gold
rings below the molding—two on each of the
opposite sides—to hold the poles used to car-
ry it. 28 They made the poles of acacia wood and
overlaid them with gold.

29 They also made the sacred anointing oil
and the pure, fragrant incense—the work of
a perfumer.

The Altar of Burnt Offering

38 1 They[c] built the altar of burnt offering of
acacia wood, three cubits[d] high; it was
square, five cubits long and five cubits wide.[e]
2 They made a horn at each of the four corners,
so that the horns and the altar were of one
piece, and they overlaid the altar with bronze.
3 They made all its utensils of bronze—its
pots, shovels, sprinkling bowls, meat forks and
firepans. 4 They made a grating for the altar, a
bronze network, to be under its ledge, halfway
up the altar. 5 They cast bronze rings to hold the
poles for the four corners of the bronze grat-
ing. 6 They made the poles of acacia wood and
overlaid them with bronze. 7 They inserted the
poles into the rings so they would be on the
sides of the altar for carrying it. They made it
hollow, out of boards.

The Basin for Washing

8 They made the bronze basin and its bronze
stand from the mirrors of the women who
served at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

The Courtyard

9 Next they made the courtyard. The south
side was a hundred cubits[f] long and had cur-
tains of finely twisted linen, 10 with twenty
posts and twenty bronze bases, and with silver
hooks and bands on the posts. 11 The north side
was also a hundred cubits long and had twen-
ty posts and twenty bronze bases, with silver
hooks and bands on the posts.

12 The west end was fifty cubits[g] wide and had
curtains, with ten posts and ten bases, with sil-
ver hooks and bands on the posts. 13 The east
end, toward the sunrise, was also fifty cubits
wide. 14 Curtains fifteen cubits[h] long were on
one side of the entrance, with three posts and
three bases, 15 and curtains fifteen cubits long
were on the other side of the entrance to the
courtyard, with three posts and three bases.
16 All the curtains around the courtyard were
of finely twisted linen. 17 The bases for the
posts were bronze. The hooks and bands on
the posts were silver, and their tops were over-
laid with silver; so all the posts of the courtyard
had silver bands.

18 The curtain for the entrance to the court-
yard was made of blue, purple and scarlet yarn
and finely twisted linen—the work of an em-
broiderer. It was twenty cubits[i] long and, like
the curtains of the courtyard, five cubits[j] high,
19 with four posts and four bronze bases. Their
hooks and bands were silver, and their tops
were overlaid with silver. 20 All the tent pegs of
the tabernacle and of the surrounding court-
yard were bronze.

The Materials Used

21 These are the amounts of the materials
used for the tabernacle, the tabernacle of the
covenant law, which were recorded at Moses'
command by the Levites under the direction
of Ithamar son of Aaron, the priest. 22 (Bezalel
son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah,

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[a] *24* That is, about 75 pounds or about 34 kilograms
[b] *25* That is, about 1 1/2 feet long and wide and 3 feet high or about 45 centimeters long and wide and 90 centimeters high
[c] *1* Or *He*; also in verses 2-9
[d] *1* That is, about 4 1/2 feet or about 1.4 meters
[e] *1* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters long and wide
[f] *9* That is, about 150 feet or about 45 meters
[g] *12* That is, about 75 feet or about 23 meters
[h] *14* That is, about 22 feet or about 6.8 meters
[i] *18* That is, about 30 feet or about 9 meters
[j] *18* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters

made everything the LORD commanded Moses;
23 with him was Oholiab son of Ahisamak, of the
tribe of Dan—an engraver and designer, and
an embroiderer in blue, purple and scarlet yarn
and fine linen.) 24 The total amount of the gold
from the wave offering used for all the work on
the sanctuary was 29 talents and 730 shekels,[a]
according to the sanctuary shekel.
25 The silver obtained from those of the com-
munity who were counted in the census was
100 talents[b] and 1,775 shekels,[c] according to
the sanctuary shekel— 26 one beka per person,
that is, half a shekel,[d] according to the sanc-
tuary shekel, from everyone who had crossed
over to those counted, twenty years old or
more, a total of 603,550 men. 27 The 100 talents
of silver were used to cast the bases for the
sanctuary and for the curtain—100 bases from
the 100 talents, one talent for each base. 28 They
used the 1,775 shekels to make the hooks for
the posts, to overlay the tops of the posts, and
to make their bands.
29 The bronze from the wave offering was 70
talents and 2,400 shekels.[e] 30 They used it to
make the bases for the entrance to the tent of
meeting, the bronze altar with its bronze grat-
ing and all its utensils, 31 the bases for the sur-
rounding courtyard and those for its entrance
and all the tent pegs for the tabernacle and
those for the surrounding courtyard.

The Priestly Garments

39 1 From the blue, purple and scarlet yarn
they made woven garments for minister-
ing in the sanctuary. They also made sacred
garments for Aaron, as the LORD commanded
Moses.

The Ephod

2 They[f] made the ephod of gold, and of blue,
purple and scarlet yarn, and of finely twisted
linen. 3 They hammered out thin sheets of gold
and cut strands to be worked into the blue, pur-
ple and scarlet yarn and fine linen—the work
of skilled hands. 4 They made shoulder pieces
for the ephod, which were attached to two of its
corners, so it could be fastened. 5 Its skillfully
woven waistband was like it—of one piece with
the ephod and made with gold, and with blue,
purple and scarlet yarn, and with finely twisted
linen, as the LORD commanded Moses.
6 They mounted the onyx stones in gold fil-
igree settings and engraved them like a seal
with the names of the sons of Israel. 7 Then
they fastened them on the shoulder pieces of
the ephod as memorial stones for the sons of
Israel, as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Breastpiece

8 They fashioned the breastpiece—the work
of a skilled craftsman. They made it like the
ephod: of gold, and of blue, purple and scar-
let yarn, and of finely twisted linen. 9 It was
square—a span[g] long and a span wide—and
folded double. 10 Then they mounted four rows
of precious stones on it. The first row was car-
nelian, chrysolite and beryl; 11 the second row
was turquoise, lapis lazuli and emerald; 12 the
third row was jacinth, agate and amethyst;
13 the fourth row was topaz, onyx and jasper.[h]
They were mounted in gold filigree settings.
14 There were twelve stones, one for each of the
names of the sons of Israel, each engraved like
a seal with the name of one of the twelve tribes.
15 For the breastpiece they made braided
chains of pure gold, like a rope. 16 They made
two gold filigree settings and two gold rings,
and fastened the rings to two of the corners of
the breastpiece. 17 They fastened the two gold
chains to the rings at the corners of the breast-
piece, 18 and the other ends of the chains to the
two settings, attaching them to the shoulder
pieces of the ephod at the front. 19 They made
two gold rings and attached them to the oth-
er two corners of the breastpiece on the inside
edge next to the ephod. 20 Then they made two
more gold rings and attached them to the bot-
tom of the shoulder pieces on the front of the
ephod, close to the seam just above the waist-
band of the ephod. 21 They tied the rings of the
breastpiece to the rings of the ephod with blue
cord, connecting it to the waistband so that
the breastpiece would not swing out from the
ephod—as the LORD commanded Moses.

Other Priestly Garments

22 They made the robe of the ephod entirely
of blue cloth—the work of a weaver— 23 with

Science & Technology
Gold is the most malleable and ductile of metals. This means that it can be hammered into very thin sheets (Ex 39:3), thinner than a piece of paper. Gold can be easily worked into different shapes and does not corrode. These characteristics help account for its value.

[a] *24* The weight of the gold was a little over a ton or about 1 metric ton. [b] *25* That is, about 3 3/4 tons or about 3.4 metric tons; also in verse 27 [c] *25* That is, about 44 pounds or about 20 kilograms; also in verse 28 [d] *26* That is, about 1/5 ounce or about 5.7 grams [e] *29* The weight of the bronze was about 2 1/2 tons or about 2.4 metric tons. [f] *2* Or *He*; also in verses 7, 8 and 22 [g] *9* That is, about 9 inches or about 23 centimeters [h] *13* The precise identification of some of these precious stones is uncertain.

an opening in the center of the robe like the opening of a collar,[a] and a band around this opening, so that it would not tear. 24They made pomegranates of blue, purple and scarlet yarn and finely twisted linen around the hem of the robe. 25And they made bells of pure gold and attached them around the hem between the pomegranates. 26The bells and pomegranates alternated around the hem of the robe to be worn for ministering, as the LORD commanded Moses.

27For Aaron and his sons, they made tunics of fine linen—the work of a weaver— 28and the turban of fine linen, the linen caps and the undergarments of finely twisted linen. 29The sash was made of finely twisted linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn—the work of an embroiderer—as the LORD commanded Moses.

30They made the plate, the sacred emblem, out of pure gold and engraved on it, like an inscription on a seal: HOLY TO THE LORD. 31Then they fastened a blue cord to it to attach it to the turban, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Moses Inspects the Tabernacle

32So all the work on the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, was completed. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD commanded Moses. 33Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses: the tent and all its furnishings, its clasps, frames, crossbars, posts and bases; 34the covering of ram skins dyed red and the covering of another durable leather[b] and the shielding curtain; 35the ark of the covenant law with its poles and the atonement cover; 36the table with all its articles and the bread of the Presence; 37the pure gold lampstand with its row of lamps and all its accessories, and the olive oil for the light; 38the gold altar, the anointing oil, the fragrant incense, and the curtain for the entrance to the tent; 39the bronze altar with its bronze grating, its poles and all its utensils; the basin with its stand; 40the curtains of the courtyard with its posts and bases, and the curtain for the entrance to the courtyard; the ropes and tent pegs for the courtyard; all the furnishings for the tabernacle, the tent of meeting; 41and the woven garments worn for ministering in the sanctuary, both the sacred garments for Aaron the priest and the garments for his sons when serving as priests.

42The Israelites had done all the work just as the LORD had commanded Moses. 43Moses inspected the work and saw that they had done it just as the LORD had commanded. So Moses blessed them.

Setting Up the Tabernacle

40 1Then the LORD said to Moses: 2"Set up the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, on the first day of the first month. 3Place the ark of the covenant law in it and shield the ark with the curtain. 4Bring in the table and set out what belongs on it. Then bring in the lampstand and set up its lamps. 5Place the gold altar of incense in front of the ark of the covenant law and put the curtain at the entrance to the tabernacle.

6"Place the altar of burnt offering in front of the entrance to the tabernacle, the tent of meeting; 7place the basin between the tent of meeting and the altar and put water in it. 8Set up the courtyard around it and put the curtain at the entrance to the courtyard.

9"Take the anointing oil and anoint the tabernacle and everything in it; consecrate it and all its furnishings, and it will be holy. 10Then anoint the altar of burnt offering and all its utensils; consecrate the altar, and it will be most holy. 11Anoint the basin and its stand and consecrate them.

12"Bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the tent of meeting and wash them with water. 13Then dress Aaron in the sacred garments, anoint him and consecrate him so he may serve me as priest. 14Bring his sons and dress them in tunics. 15Anoint them just as you anointed their father, so they may serve me as priests. Their anointing will be to a priesthood that will continue throughout their generations." 16Moses did everything just as the LORD commanded him.

17So the tabernacle was set up on the first day of the first month in the second year. 18When Moses set up the tabernacle, he put the bases in place, erected the frames, inserted the crossbars and set up the posts. 19Then he spread the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering over the tent, as the LORD commanded him.

20He took the tablets of the covenant law and placed them in the ark, attached the poles to

Culture & Society

Ancient treaties from the time of Moses have a recognizable form. Usually there is a provision for keeping the text of the treaty. In this case, the tablets of the law were deposited in the ark of the covenant law (Ex 40:20), putting them at the center of the priestly rituals. Possibly the two tablets were identical, each a complete text of the law.

[a] *23* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] *34* Possibly the hides of large aquatic mammals

the ark and put the atonement cover over it.
21Then he brought the ark into the tabernacle
and hung the shielding curtain and shielded
the ark of the covenant law, as the LORD com-
manded him.
22Moses placed the table in the tent of meet-
ing on the north side of the tabernacle outside
the curtain 23and set out the bread on it before
the LORD, as the LORD commanded him.
24He placed the lampstand in the tent of
meeting opposite the table on the south side
of the tabernacle 25and set up the lamps before
the LORD, as the LORD commanded him.
26Moses placed the gold altar in the tent of
meeting in front of the curtain 27and burned
fragrant incense on it, as the LORD command-
ed him.
28Then he put up the curtain at the entrance
to the tabernacle. 29He set the altar of burnt
offering near the entrance to the tabernacle,
the tent of meeting, and offered on it burnt of-
ferings and grain offerings, as the LORD com-
manded him.
30He placed the basin between the tent of
meeting and the altar and put water in it for
washing, 31and Moses and Aaron and his sons
used it to wash their hands and feet. 32They
washed whenever they entered the tent of
meeting or approached the altar, as the LORD
commanded Moses.
33Then Moses set up the courtyard around
the tabernacle and altar and put up the curtain
at the entrance to the courtyard. And so Moses
finished the work.

The Glory of the LORD

34Then the cloud covered the tent of meet-
ing, and the glory of the LORD filled the taber-
nacle. 35Moses could not enter the tent of meet-
ing because the cloud had settled on it, and the
glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
36In all the travels of the Israelites, whenever
the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle, they
would set out; 37but if the cloud did not lift, they
did not set out—until the day it lifted. 38So the
cloud of the LORD was over the tabernacle by
day, and fire was in the cloud by night, in the
sight of all the Israelites during all their travels.

TRANSITION

The Book of Leviticus

Leviticus continues God's covenant instruc-
tions on Mount Sinai, begun in Ex 20. The name
comes from the many laws and regulations of
the book that concern the righrts and duties of
priests (who were of the tribe of Levi).

Certain clearly defined bodies of laws
can be identified in the book. The first seven
chapters prescribe the laws of sacrifices; chs.
11–15 distinguish between what is clean and
unclean; ch. 16 describes the Day of Atone-
ment; and the various laws of chs. 17–26 are
unified by the distinct refrain "Be holy, because
I, the LORD your God, am holy" (Lev 19:2).

The entire book of Leviticus is set in a
relatively brief period of time. Only a month
and a half passes between the erection of the
tabernacle at Mount Sinai and the Hebrews'
departure from Sinai. The tabernacle was
finished on the first day of the first month in
the second year of the Exodus (Ex 40:17); the
departure was on the twentieth day of the
second month of the same year (Nu 10:11,
12). Depending on whether the Hebrews left
Egypt in the 15th or 13th century, the second
year of the Exodus would be about 1445 or
1274 B.C. (see "Egypt and the Exodus" at Ex 1:1).

The content of Leviticus, however, ex-
tends beyond this short month and a half in
the wilderness. Many of the laws clearly per-
tain to a time after the Israelites had entered
their land, for instance, the laws for planting
fields and cleansing houses. Partly for this
reason, some suggest that at least the current
form of the book was actually composed later
than its context would suggest, perhaps from
several different law codes. Of course, those
who accept the traditional attribution of the
first five books of the Bible to Moses disagree
and understand these passages simply as laws
given for a future time.

The animal sacrifices described so care-
fully in Leviticus fit properly in the historical
context of the book. Animal sacrifice was
universal in ancient Near Eastern religion, so
Israel's sacrifice of animals is hardly surprising.
More striking, though, is the absolute prohibi-
tion against the equally common practice of
child sacrifice (see Lev 18:21).

• Leviticus 1:1—15:33

Leviticus

The Burnt Offering

1:1 The LORD called to Moses and spoke
to him from the tent of meeting. He said,
2"Speak to the Israelites and say to them:
'When anyone among you brings an offering
to the LORD, bring as your offering an animal
from either the herd or the flock.
3"'If the offering is a burnt offering from the
herd, you are to offer a male without defect.
You must present it at the entrance to the tent
of meeting so that it will be acceptable to the
LORD. 4You are to lay your hand on the head
of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted
on your behalf to make atonement for you.

5You are to slaughter the young bull before the LORD, and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and splash it against the sides of the altar at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 6You are to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. 7The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. 8Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar. 9You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

10"'If the offering is a burnt offering from the flock, from either the sheep or the goats, you are to offer a male without defect. 11You are to slaughter it at the north side of the altar before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. 12You are to cut it into pieces, and the priest shall arrange them, including the head and the fat, on the wood that is burning on the altar. 13You are to wash the internal organs and the legs with water, and the priest is to bring all of them and burn them on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

14"'If the offering to the LORD is a burnt offering of birds, you are to offer a dove or a young pigeon. 15The priest shall bring it to the altar, wring off the head and burn it on the altar; its blood shall be drained out on the side of the altar. 16He is to remove the crop and the feathers[a] and throw them down east of the altar where the ashes are. 17He shall tear it open by the wings, not dividing it completely, and then the priest shall burn it on the wood that is burning on the altar. It is a burnt offering, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

The Grain Offering

2 1"'When anyone brings a grain offering to the LORD, their offering is to be of the finest flour. They are to pour olive oil on it, put incense on it 2and take it to Aaron's sons the priests. The priest shall take a handful of the flour and oil, together with all the incense, and burn this as a memorial[b] portion on the altar, a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 3The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the food offerings presented to the LORD.

4"'If you bring a grain offering baked in an oven, it is to consist of the finest flour: either thick loaves made without yeast and with olive oil mixed in or thin loaves made without yeast and brushed with olive oil. 5If your grain offering is prepared on a griddle, it is to be made of the finest flour mixed with oil, and without yeast. 6Crumble it and pour oil on it; it is a grain offering. 7If your grain offering is cooked in a pan, it is to be made of the finest flour and some olive oil. 8Bring the grain offering made of these things to the LORD; present it to the priest, who shall take it to the altar. 9He shall take out the memorial portion from the grain offering and burn it on the altar as a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 10The rest of the grain offering belongs to Aaron and his sons; it is a most holy part of the food offerings presented to the LORD.

11"'Every grain offering you bring to the LORD must be made without yeast, for you are not to burn any yeast or honey in a food offering presented to the LORD. 12You may bring them to the LORD as an offering of the firstfruits, but they are not to be offered on the altar as a pleasing aroma. 13Season all your grain offerings with salt. Do not leave the salt of the covenant of your God out of your grain offerings; add salt to all your offerings.

14"'If you bring a grain offering of firstfruits to the LORD, offer crushed heads of new grain roasted in the fire. 15Put oil and incense on it; it is a grain offering. 16The priest shall burn the memorial portion of the crushed grain and the oil, together with all the incense, as a food offering presented to the LORD.

The Fellowship Offering

3 1"'If your offering is a fellowship offering, and you offer an animal from the herd, whether male or female, you are to present before the LORD an animal without defect. 2You are to lay your hand on the head of your offering and slaughter it at the entrance to the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons the priests shall splash the blood against the sides of the altar. 3From the fellowship offering you are to bring

Religion & Worship
Salt has a symbolic meaning in the sacrificial system (Lev 2:13). It is a common substance and is an essential ingredient in bread. Leaven was not used in sacrifices but salt was required. The Bible does not explain the meaning of these symbols. Leaven is often said to be a symbol of decay, but its normal use is to improve bread, not destroy it.

[a] *16* Or *crop with its contents*; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [b] *2* Or *representative*; also in verses 9 and 16

a food offering to the LORD: the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, 4both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. 5Then Aaron's sons are to burn it on the altar on top of the burnt offering that is lying on the burning wood; it is a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

6"'If you offer an animal from the flock as a fellowship offering to the LORD, you are to offer a male or female without defect. 7If you offer a lamb, you are to present it before the LORD, 8lay your hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. 9From the fellowship offering you are to bring a food offering to the LORD: its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, 10both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. 11The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering presented to the LORD.

12"'If your offering is a goat, you are to present it before the LORD, 13lay your hand on its head and slaughter it in front of the tent of meeting. Then Aaron's sons shall splash its blood against the sides of the altar. 14From what you offer you are to present this food offering to the LORD: the internal organs and all the fat that is connected to them, 15both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which you will remove with the kidneys. 16The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering, a pleasing aroma. All the fat is the LORD's.

17"'This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live: You must not eat any fat or any blood.'"

Turtledoves were used as a trespass offering.

The Sin Offering

4 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Say to the Israelites: 'When anyone sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands—

3"'If the anointed priest sins, bringing guilt on the people, he must bring to the LORD a young bull without defect as a sin offering[a] for the sin he has committed. 4He is to present the bull at the entrance to the tent of meeting before the LORD. He is to lay his hand on its head and slaughter it there before the LORD. 5Then the anointed priest shall take some of the bull's blood and carry it into the tent of meeting. 6He is to dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle some of it seven times before the LORD, in front of the curtain of the sanctuary. 7The priest shall then put some of the blood on the horns of the altar of fragrant incense that is before the LORD in the tent of meeting. The rest of the bull's blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 8He shall remove all the fat from the bull of the sin offering—all the fat that is connected to the internal organs, 9both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys— 10just as the fat is removed from the ox[b] sacrificed as a fellowship offering. Then the priest shall burn them on the altar of burnt offering. 11But the hide of the bull and all its flesh, as well as the head and legs, the internal organs and the intestines— 12that is, all the rest of the bull—he must take outside the camp to a place ceremonially clean, where the ashes are thrown, and burn it there in a wood fire on the ash heap.

13"'If the whole Israelite community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, even though the community is unaware of the matter, when they realize their guilt 14and the sin they committed becomes known, the assembly must bring a young bull as a sin offering and present it before the tent of meeting. 15The elders of the community are to lay their hands on the bull's head before the LORD, and the bull shall be slaughtered before the LORD. 16Then the anointed priest is to take some of the bull's blood into the tent of meeting. 17He shall dip his finger into the blood and sprinkle it before the LORD seven times in front of the curtain. 18He is to put some of the blood on the horns of the altar that is before the LORD in the tent of meet-

[a] *3* Or *purification offering*; here and throughout this chapter
[b] *10* The Hebrew word can refer to either male or female.

ing. The rest of the blood he shall pour out at the base of the altar of burnt offering at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 19He shall remove all the fat from it and burn it on the altar, 20and do with this bull just as he did with the bull for the sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for the community, and they will be forgiven. 21Then he shall take the bull outside the camp and burn it as he burned the first bull. This is the sin offering for the community.

22"'When a leader sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the commands of the LORD his God, when he realizes his guilt 23and the sin he has committed becomes known, he must bring as his offering a male goat without defect. 24He is to lay his hand on the goat's head and slaughter it at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered before the LORD. It is a sin offering. 25Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 26He shall burn all the fat on the altar as he burned the fat of the fellowship offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for the leader's sin, and he will be forgiven.

27"'If any member of the community sins unintentionally and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD's commands, when they realize their guilt 28and the sin they have committed becomes known, they must bring as their offering for the sin they committed a female goat without defect. 29They are to lay their hand on the head of the sin offering and slaughter it at the place of the burnt offering. 30Then the priest is to take some of the blood with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 31They shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement for them, and they will be forgiven.

32"'If someone brings a lamb as their sin offering, they are to bring a female without defect. 33They are to lay their hand on its head and slaughter it for a sin offering at the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered. 34Then the priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger and put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and pour out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. 35They shall remove all the fat, just as the fat is removed from the lamb of the fellowship offering, and the priest shall burn it on the altar on top of the food offerings presented to the LORD. In this way the priest will make atonement for them for the sin they have committed, and they will be forgiven.

[a] 6 Or *purification offering*; here and throughout this chapter

Religion & Worship

The uncleanness treated in Leviticus is ritual uncleanness. Being unclean in this sense means to be excluded from normal participation in acts of religion. A person could become unclean by touching a corpse (Lev 5:2), although this is not an immoral or sinful act. The offerings provided the means for removing uncleanness in this and other cases.

5 1"'If anyone sins because they do not speak up when they hear a public charge to testify regarding something they have seen or learned about, they will be held responsible.

2"'If anyone becomes aware that they are guilty—if they unwittingly touch anything ceremonially unclean (whether the carcass of an unclean animal, wild or domestic, or of any unclean creature that moves along the ground) and they are unaware that they have become unclean, but then they come to realize their guilt; 3or if they touch human uncleanness (anything that would make them unclean) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt; 4or if anyone thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything, whether good or evil (in any matter one might carelessly swear about) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt— 5when anyone becomes aware that they are guilty in any of these matters, they must confess in what way they have sinned. 6As a penalty for the sin they have committed, they must bring to the LORD a female lamb or goat from the flock as a sin offering[a]; and the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin.

TIME CAPSULE		1504 to 1500 B.C.
1504–1492		Thutmose I, pharaoh of Egypt
1500–1200		Late Bronze Age
1500		Memphis again becomes the chosen royal residence for Egypt's pharaoh
1500		The priesthood of Thebes rises to power
1500		Map of Nippur, Iraq, on a clay tablet
1500		The best chariots are made in Egypt

7"'Anyone who cannot afford a lamb is to
bring two doves or two young pigeons to the
LORD as a penalty for their sin—one for a sin
offering and the other for a burnt offering.
8They are to bring them to the priest, who
shall first offer the one for the sin offering. He
is to wring its head from its neck, not dividing it
completely, 9and is to splash some of the blood
of the sin offering against the side of the altar;
the rest of the blood must be drained out at the
base of the altar. It is a sin offering. 10The priest
shall then offer the other as a burnt offering
in the prescribed way and make atonement for
them for the sin they have committed, and they
will be forgiven.

11"'If, however, they cannot afford two doves
or two young pigeons, they are to bring as an
offering for their sin a tenth of an ephah[a] of the
finest flour for a sin offering. They must not put
olive oil or incense on it, because it is a sin of-
fering. 12They are to bring it to the priest, who
shall take a handful of it as a memorial[b] portion
and burn it on the altar on top of the food offer-
ings presented to the LORD. It is a sin offering.
13In this way the priest will make atonement for
them for any of these sins they have commit-
ted, and they will be forgiven. The rest of the
offering will belong to the priest, as in the case
of the grain offering.'"

The Guilt Offering

14The LORD said to Moses: 15"When anyone is
unfaithful to the LORD by sinning unintentionally
in regard to any of the LORD's holy things, they
are to bring to the LORD as a penalty a ram from
the flock, one without defect and of the proper
value in silver, according to the sanctuary shek-
el.[c] It is a guilt offering. 16They must make res-
titution for what they have failed to do in regard
to the holy things, pay an additional penalty of a
fifth of its value and give it all to the priest. The
priest will make atonement for them with the
ram as a guilt offering, and they will be forgiven.

17"If anyone sins and does what is forbidden
in any of the LORD's commands, even though
they do not know it, they are guilty and will be
held responsible. 18They are to bring to the
priest as a guilt offering a ram from the flock,
one without defect and of the proper value. In
this way the priest will make atonement for
them for the wrong they have committed un-
intentionally, and they will be forgiven. 19It is a
guilt offering; they have been guilty of[d] wrong-
doing against the LORD."

6[e] 1The LORD said to Moses: 2"If anyone sins
and is unfaithful to the LORD by deceiving
a neighbor about something entrusted to them
or left in their care or about something stolen,
or if they cheat their neighbor, 3or if they find
lost property and lie about it, or if they swear
falsely about any such sin that people may com-
mit— 4when they sin in any of these ways and
realize their guilt, they must return what they
have stolen or taken by extortion, or what was
entrusted to them, or the lost property they
found, 5or whatever it was they swore falsely
about. They must make restitution in full, add
a fifth of the value to it and give it all to the own-
er on the day they present their guilt offering.
6And as a penalty they must bring to the priest,
that is, to the LORD, their guilt offering, a ram
from the flock, one without defect and of the
proper value. 7In this way the priest will make
atonement for them before the LORD, and they
will be forgiven for any of the things they did
that made them guilty."

The Burnt Offering

8The LORD said to Moses: 9"Give Aaron and
his sons this command: 'These are the regula-
tions for the burnt offering: The burnt offering
is to remain on the altar hearth throughout the
night, till morning, and the fire must be kept
burning on the altar. 10The priest shall then
put on his linen clothes, with linen undergar-
ments next to his body, and shall remove the
ashes of the burnt offering that the fire has
consumed on the altar and place them beside
the altar. 11Then he is to take off these clothes
and put on others, and carry the ashes outside
the camp to a place that is ceremonially clean.
12The fire on the altar must be kept burning; it
must not go out. Every morning the priest is to
add firewood and arrange the burnt offering
on the fire and burn the fat of the fellowship

[a] *11* That is, probably about 3 1/2 pounds or about 1.6 kilograms [b] *12* Or *representative* [c] *15* That is, about 2/5 ounce or about 12 grams [d] *19* Or *offering; atonement has been made for their* [e] In Hebrew texts 6:1-7 is numbered 5:20-26, and 6:8-30 is numbered 6:1-23.

offerings on it. 13The fire must be kept burning on the altar continuously; it must not go out.

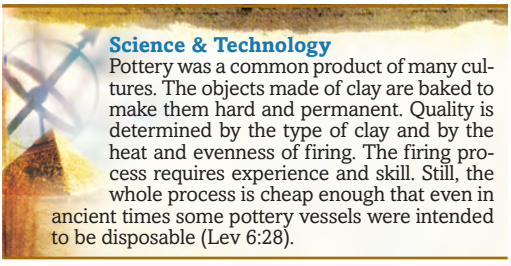
The Grain Offering

14"'These are the regulations for the grain offering: Aaron's sons are to bring it before the LORD, in front of the altar. 15The priest is to take a handful of the finest flour and some olive oil, together with all the incense on the grain offering, and burn the memorial[a] portion on the altar as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 16Aaron and his sons shall eat the rest of it, but it is to be eaten without yeast in the sanctuary area; they are to eat it in the courtyard of the tent of meeting. 17It must not be baked with yeast; I have given it as their share of the food offerings presented to me. Like the sin offering[b] and the guilt offering, it is most holy. 18Any male descendant of Aaron may eat it. For all generations to come it is his perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the LORD. Whatever touches them will become holy.[c]'"

19The LORD also said to Moses, 20"This is the offering Aaron and his sons are to bring to the LORD on the day he[d] is anointed: a tenth of an ephah[e] of the finest flour as a regular grain offering, half of it in the morning and half in the evening. 21It must be prepared with oil on a griddle; bring it well-mixed and present the grain offering broken[f] in pieces as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 22The son who is to succeed him as anointed priest shall prepare it. It is the LORD's perpetual share and is to be burned completely. 23Every grain offering of a priest shall be burned completely; it must not be eaten."

The Sin Offering

24The LORD said to Moses, 25"Say to Aaron and his sons: 'These are the regulations for the sin offering: The sin offering is to be slaughtered before the LORD in the place the burnt offering is slaughtered; it is most holy. 26The priest who offers it shall eat it; it is to be eaten in the sanctuary area, in the courtyard of the tent of meeting. 27Whatever touches any of the flesh will become holy, and if any of the blood is spattered on a garment, you must wash it in the sanctuary area. 28The clay pot the meat is cooked in must be broken; but if it is cooked in a bronze pot, the pot is to be scoured and rinsed with water. 29Any male in a priest's family may eat it; it is most holy. 30But any sin offering whose blood is brought into the tent of meeting to make atonement in the Holy Place must not be eaten; it must be burned up.



Science & Technology

Pottery was a common product of many cultures. The objects made of clay are baked to make them hard and permanent. Quality is determined by the type of clay and by the heat and evenness of firing. The firing process requires experience and skill. Still, the whole process is cheap enough that even in ancient times some pottery vessels were intended to be disposable (Lev 6:28).

The Guilt Offering

7 1"'These are the regulations for the guilt offering, which is most holy: 2The guilt offering is to be slaughtered in the place where the burnt offering is slaughtered, and its blood is to be splashed against the sides of the altar. 3All its fat shall be offered: the fat tail and the fat that covers the internal organs, 4both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the long lobe of the liver, which is to be removed with the kidneys. 5The priest shall burn them on the altar as a food offering presented to the LORD. It is a guilt offering. 6Any male in a priest's family may eat it, but it must be eaten in the sanctuary area; it is most holy.

7"'The same law applies to both the sin offering[g] and the guilt offering: They belong to the priest who makes atonement with them. 8The priest who offers a burnt offering for anyone may keep its hide for himself. 9Every grain offering baked in an oven or cooked in a pan or on a griddle belongs to the priest who offers it, 10and every grain offering, whether mixed with olive oil or dry, belongs equally to all the sons of Aaron.

The Fellowship Offering

11"'These are the regulations for the fellowship offering anyone may present to the LORD:

12"'If they offer it as an expression of thankfulness, then along with this thank offering they are to offer thick loaves made without yeast and with olive oil mixed in, thin loaves made without yeast and brushed with oil, and thick loaves of the finest flour well-kneaded and with oil mixed in. 13Along with their fellowship offering of thanksgiving they are to present an offering with thick loaves of bread made with yeast. 14They are to bring one of each kind as an offering, a contribution to the LORD; it be-

[a] *15* Or *representative* [b] *17* Or *purification offering*; also in verses 25 and 30 [c] *18* Or *Whoever touches them must be holy*; similarly in verse 27 [d] *20* Or *each* [e] *20* That is, probably about 3 1/2 pounds or about 1.6 kilograms [f] *21* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [g] *7* Or *purification offering*; also in verse 37

longs to the priest who splashes the blood of the fellowship offering against the altar. 15The meat of their fellowship offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the day it is offered; they must leave none of it till morning.

16"'If, however, their offering is the result of a vow or is a freewill offering, the sacrifice shall be eaten on the day they offer it, but anything left over may be eaten on the next day. 17Any meat of the sacrifice left over till the third day must be burned up. 18If any meat of the fellowship offering is eaten on the third day, the one who offered it will not be accepted. It will not be reckoned to their credit, for it has become impure; the person who eats any of it will be held responsible.

19"'Meat that touches anything ceremonially unclean must not be eaten; it must be burned up. As for other meat, anyone ceremonially clean may eat it. 20But if anyone who is unclean eats any meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the LORD, they must be cut off from their people. 21Anyone who touches something unclean—whether human uncleanness or an unclean animal or any unclean creature that moves along the ground[a]—and then eats any of the meat of the fellowship offering belonging to the LORD must be cut off from their people.'"

Eating Fat and Blood Forbidden

22The LORD said to Moses, 23"Say to the Israelites: 'Do not eat any of the fat of cattle, sheep or goats. 24The fat of an animal found dead or torn by wild animals may be used for any other purpose, but you must not eat it. 25Anyone who eats the fat of an animal from which a food offering may be[b] presented to the LORD must be cut off from their people. 26And wherever you live, you must not eat the blood of any bird or animal. 27Anyone who eats blood must be cut off from their people.'"

The Priests' Share

28The LORD said to Moses, 29"Say to the Israelites: 'Anyone who brings a fellowship offering to the LORD is to bring part of it as their sacrifice to the LORD. 30With their own hands they are to present the food offering to the LORD; they are to bring the fat, together with the breast, and wave the breast before the LORD as a wave offering. 31The priest shall burn the fat on the altar, but the breast belongs to Aaron and his sons. 32You are to give the right thigh of your fellowship offerings to the priest as a contribution. 33The son of Aaron who offers the blood and the fat of the fellowship offering shall have the right thigh as his share. 34From the fellowship offerings of the Israelites, I have taken the breast that is waved and the thigh that is presented and have given them to Aaron the priest and his sons as their perpetual share from the Israelites.'"

35This is the portion of the food offerings presented to the LORD that were allotted to Aaron and his sons on the day they were presented to serve the LORD as priests. 36On the day they were anointed, the LORD commanded that the Israelites give this to them as their perpetual share for the generations to come.

37These, then, are the regulations for the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the guilt offering, the ordination offering and the fellowship offering, 38which the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai in the Desert of Sinai on the day he commanded the Israelites to bring their offerings to the LORD.

The Ordination of Aaron and His Sons

8 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Bring Aaron and his sons, their garments, the anointing oil, the bull for the sin offering,[c] the two rams and the basket containing bread made without yeast, 3and gather the entire assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting." 4Moses did as the LORD commanded him, and the assembly gathered at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

5Moses said to the assembly, "This is what the LORD has commanded to be done." 6Then Moses brought Aaron and his sons forward and washed them with water. 7He put the tunic on Aaron, tied the sash around him, clothed him with the robe and put the ephod on him. He also fastened the ephod with a decorative waistband, which he tied around him. 8He placed the breastpiece on him and put the Urim and Thummim in the breastpiece. 9Then he placed the turban on Aaron's head and set the gold plate, the sacred emblem, on the front of it, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Cults & Supernatural
The Urim and Thummim (Lev 8:8) were apparently some kind of lot that could be used to obtain an answer from God about certain questions (Nu 27:21). In the surrounding cultures, a common method of looking for such answers was to try to read them from the inside parts of a sacrificed animal, especially the liver. The Romans observed the flights of birds.

[a] *21* A few Hebrew manuscripts, Samaritan Pentateuch, Syriac and Targum (see 5:2); most Hebrew manuscripts *any unclean, detestable thing* [b] *25* Or *offering is* [c] *2* Or *purification offering*; also in verse 14

10Then Moses took the anointing oil and
anointed the tabernacle and everything in it,
and so consecrated them. 11He sprinkled some
of the oil on the altar seven times, anointing the
altar and all its utensils and the basin with its
stand, to consecrate them. 12He poured some
of the anointing oil on Aaron's head and anoint-
ed him to consecrate him. 13Then he brought
Aaron's sons forward, put tunics on them,
tied sashes around them and fastened caps on
them, as the LORD commanded Moses.

14He then presented the bull for the sin offer-
ing, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands on
its head. 15Moses slaughtered the bull and took
some of the blood, and with his finger he put it
on all the horns of the altar to purify the altar.
He poured out the rest of the blood at the base
of the altar. So he consecrated it to make atone-
ment for it. 16Moses also took all the fat around
the internal organs, the long lobe of the liver,
and both kidneys and their fat, and burned it
on the altar. 17But the bull with its hide and its
flesh and its intestines he burned up outside
the camp, as the LORD commanded Moses.

18He then presented the ram for the burnt of-
fering, and Aaron and his sons laid their hands
on its head. 19Then Moses slaughtered the ram
and splashed the blood against the sides of the
altar. 20He cut the ram into pieces and burned
the head, the pieces and the fat. 21He washed
the internal organs and the legs with water
and burned the whole ram on the altar. It was
a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, a food of-
fering presented to the LORD, as the LORD com-
manded Moses.

22He then presented the other ram, the ram
for the ordination, and Aaron and his sons laid
their hands on its head. 23Moses slaughtered
the ram and took some of its blood and put it
on the lobe of Aaron's right ear, on the thumb
of his right hand and on the big toe of his right
foot. 24Moses also brought Aaron's sons for-
ward and put some of the blood on the lobes
of their right ears, on the thumbs of their right
hands and on the big toes of their right feet.
Then he splashed blood against the sides of
the altar. 25After that, he took the fat, the fat
tail, all the fat around the internal organs, the
long lobe of the liver, both kidneys and their
fat and the right thigh. 26And from the basket
of bread made without yeast, which was before
the LORD, he took one thick loaf, one thick loaf
with olive oil mixed in, and one thin loaf, and he
put these on the fat portions and on the right
thigh. 27He put all these in the hands of Aaron
and his sons, and they waved them before the
LORD as a wave offering. 28Then Moses took
them from their hands and burned them on the
altar on top of the burnt offering as an ordina-
tion offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering
presented to the LORD. 29Moses also took the
breast, which was his share of the ordination
ram, and waved it before the LORD as a wave
offering, as the LORD commanded Moses.

30Then Moses took some of the anointing oil
and some of the blood from the altar and sprin-
kled them on Aaron and his garments and on
his sons and their garments. So he consecrated
Aaron and his garments and his sons and their
garments.

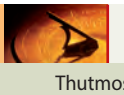
31Moses then said to Aaron and his sons,
"Cook the meat at the entrance to the tent of
meeting and eat it there with the bread from
the basket of ordination offerings, as I was
commanded: 'Aaron and his sons are to eat it.'
32Then burn up the rest of the meat and the
bread. 33Do not leave the entrance to the tent of
meeting for seven days, until the days of your
ordination are completed, for your ordination
will last seven days. 34What has been done
today was commanded by the LORD to make
atonement for you. 35You must stay at the en-
trance to the tent of meeting day and night for
seven days and do what the LORD requires, so
you will not die; for that is what I have been
commanded."

36So Aaron and his sons did everything the
LORD commanded through Moses.

The Priests Begin Their Ministry

9 1On the eighth day Moses summoned Aar-
on and his sons and the elders of Israel. 2He
said to Aaron, "Take a bull calf for your sin of-
fering[a] and a ram for your burnt offering, both
without defect, and present them before the
LORD. 3Then say to the Israelites: 'Take a male
goat for a sin offering, a calf and a lamb — both

[a] 2 Or *purification offering*; here and throughout this chapter

TIME CAPSULE		1492 to 1479 B.C.
1492–1479		Thutmose II, pharaoh of Egypt
1486		Moses flees Egypt (based on early Exodus; Ex 2:15; Ac 7:23)
1479–1425		Thutmose III, pharaoh of Egypt
1479		When Thutmose II dies, Queen Hatshepsut assumes a coregency with the very young Thutmose III
1479–1457		Queen Hatshepsut reigns jointly with Thutmose III

Right or Wrong Ritual: Life or Death (Lev 10:1–7)

In the modern western world we tend to think of religious rituals as the procedures by which a group of people worship God. It is not a crisis of faith if some part of a ritual is not done exactly right. But in the ancient world the ritual was considered something to be performed correctly. The ritual, properly performed, was proper religion. To make an error in the prescribed forms of the rite was not just a mistake, but an act of impiety.

The priests, who were anointed and set apart to perform the rituals, were expected to live by a more stringent set of rules than were ordinary people. They had to memorize all the liturgy, hymns, and words for every religious service. The ancient world held services for the deities every day of the year, and so specialists were needed among the priesthood who could handle any service. These priests, it was believed, were chosen by the deity being worshiped.

Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, were legitimate priests who chose on their own not to follow the ritual that was sanctioned by God (Lev 10:1). Their deviation appears minor in the eyes of the modern western world; they simply lit their incense censers with a fire from an unapproved source. But for this breach of worship they were both destroyed by divine fire (10:2).

Israelites and Judahites would have understood these deaths as the proper consequence. A priest was supposed to follow the proper ritual, since the ritual was the way deity was honored and respected (10:3). Nadab's and Abihu's evil was their decision to determine for themselves right and wrong ways to worship. Even mourning for these dead priests was denied, lest it be seen as condoning their sin (10:6, 7).

a year old and without defect—for a burnt offering, [4]and an ox[a] and a ram for a fellowship offering to sacrifice before the LORD, together with a grain offering mixed with olive oil. For today the LORD will appear to you.'"

[5]They took the things Moses commanded to the front of the tent of meeting, and the entire assembly came near and stood before the LORD. [6]Then Moses said, "This is what the LORD has commanded you to do, so that the glory of the LORD may appear to you."

[7]Moses said to Aaron, "Come to the altar and sacrifice your sin offering and your burnt offering and make atonement for yourself and the people; sacrifice the offering that is for the people and make atonement for them, as the LORD has commanded."

[8]So Aaron came to the altar and slaughtered the calf as a sin offering for himself. [9]His sons brought the blood to him, and he dipped his finger into the blood and put it on the horns of the altar; the rest of the blood he poured out at the base of the altar. [10]On the altar he burned the fat, the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver from the sin offering, as the LORD commanded Moses; [11]the flesh and the hide he burned up outside the camp.

[12]Then he slaughtered the burnt offering. His sons handed him the blood, and he splashed it against the sides of the altar. [13]They handed him the burnt offering piece by piece, including the head, and he burned them on the altar. [14]He washed the internal organs and the legs and burned them on top of the burnt offering on the altar.

[15]Aaron then brought the offering that was for the people. He took the goat for the people's sin offering and slaughtered it and offered it for a sin offering as he did with the first one.

[16]He brought the burnt offering and offered it in the prescribed way. [17]He also brought the grain offering, took a handful of it and burned it on the altar in addition to the morning's burnt offering.

[18]He slaughtered the ox and the ram as the fellowship offering for the people. His sons handed him the blood, and he splashed it against the sides of the altar. [19]But the fat portions of the ox and the ram—the fat tail, the layer of fat, the kidneys and the long lobe of the liver— [20]these they laid on the breasts, and then Aaron burned the fat on the altar. [21]Aaron waved the breasts and the right thigh before the LORD as a wave offering, as Moses commanded.

[22]Then Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them. And having sacrificed the sin offering, the burnt offering and the fellowship offering, he stepped down.

[23]Moses and Aaron then went into the tent of meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the glory of the LORD appeared to all the people. [24]Fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed the burnt offering and the fat portions on the altar. And when all the people saw it, they shouted for joy and fell facedown.

The Death of Nadab and Abihu

10 [1]Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu took their censers, put fire in them and added incense; and they offered unauthorized fire

[a] *4* The Hebrew word can refer to either male or female; also in verses 18 and 19.

before the LORD, contrary to his command. 2So fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. 3Moses then said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said:

"'Among those who approach me
I will be proved holy;
in the sight of all the people
I will be honored.'"

Aaron remained silent.

4Moses summoned Mishael and Elzaphan, sons of Aaron's uncle Uzziel, and said to them, "Come here; carry your cousins outside the camp, away from the front of the sanctuary." 5So they came and carried them, still in their tunics, outside the camp, as Moses ordered.

6Then Moses said to Aaron and his sons Eleazar and Ithamar, "Do not let your hair become unkempt[a] and do not tear your clothes, or you will die and the LORD will be angry with the whole community. But your relatives, all the Israelites, may mourn for those the LORD has destroyed by fire. 7Do not leave the entrance to the tent of meeting or you will die, because the LORD's anointing oil is on you." So they did as Moses said.

8Then the LORD said to Aaron, 9"You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the tent of meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, 10so that you can distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, 11and so you can teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses."

12Moses said to Aaron and his remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, "Take the grain offering left over from the food offerings prepared without yeast and presented to the LORD and eat it beside the altar, for it is most holy. 13Eat it in the sanctuary area, because it is your share and your sons' share of the food offerings presented to the LORD; for so I have been commanded. 14But you and your sons and your daughters may eat the breast that was waved and the thigh that was presented. Eat them in a ceremonially clean place; they have been given to you and your children as your share of the Israelites' fellowship offerings. 15The thigh that was presented and the breast that was waved must be brought with the fat portions of the food offerings, to be waved before the LORD as a wave offering. This will be the perpetual share for you and your children, as the LORD has commanded."

16When Moses inquired about the goat of the sin offering[b] and found that it had been burned up, he was angry with Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's remaining sons, and asked, 17"Why didn't you eat the sin offering in the sanctuary area? It is most holy; it was given to you to take away the guilt of the community by making atonement for them before the LORD. 18Since its blood was not taken into the Holy Place, you should have eaten the goat in the sanctuary area, as I commanded."

19Aaron replied to Moses, "Today they sacrificed their sin offering and their burnt offering before the LORD, but such things as this have happened to me. Would the LORD have been pleased if I had eaten the sin offering today?" 20When Moses heard this, he was satisfied.

Clean and Unclean Food

11 1The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 2"Say to the Israelites: 'Of all the animals that live on land, these are the ones you may eat: 3You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud.

4"'There are some that only chew the cud or only have a divided hoof, but you must not eat them. The camel, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is ceremonially unclean for you. 5The hyrax, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. 6The rabbit, though it chews the cud, does not have a divided hoof; it is unclean for you. 7And the pig, though it has a divided hoof, does not chew the cud; it is unclean for you. 8You must not eat their meat or touch their carcasses; they are unclean for you.

9"'Of all the creatures living in the water of the seas and the streams you may eat any that have fins and scales. 10But all creatures in the seas or streams that do not have fins and scales—whether among all the swarming things or among all the other living creatures in the water—you are to regard as unclean. 11And since you are to regard them as unclean, you must not eat their meat; you must regard

Plants & Animals
The rationale for the distinctions between clean and unclean animals has been the subject of speculation. One suggestion is that unclean animals include those whose locomotion is improper or irregular, like the bat, which is a mammal that flies. Fish without fins are unclean (Lev 11:10), as are animals that "move" (or creep) on the ground (11:41).

[a] 6 Or *Do not uncover your heads*
[b] 16 Or *purification offering*; also in verses 17 and 19

Rock hyrax

their carcasses as unclean. 12Anything living in the water that does not have fins and scales is to be regarded as unclean by you.

13"'These are the birds you are to regard as unclean and not eat because they are unclean: the eagle,[a] the vulture, the black vulture, 14the red kite, any kind of black kite, 15any kind of raven, 16the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, 17the little owl, the cormorant, the great owl, 18the white owl, the desert owl, the osprey, 19the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.

20"'All flying insects that walk on all fours are to be regarded as unclean by you. 21There are, however, some flying insects that walk on all fours that you may eat: those that have jointed legs for hopping on the ground. 22Of these you may eat any kind of locust, katydid, cricket or grasshopper. 23But all other flying insects that have four legs you are to regard as unclean.

24"'You will make yourselves unclean by these; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. 25Whoever picks up one of their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening.

26"'Every animal that does not have a divided hoof or that does not chew the cud is unclean for you; whoever touches the carcass of any of them will be unclean. 27Of all the animals that walk on all fours, those that walk on their paws are unclean for you; whoever touches their carcasses will be unclean till evening. 28Anyone who picks up their carcasses must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. These animals are unclean for you.

29"'Of the animals that move along the ground, these are unclean for you: the weasel, the rat, any kind of great lizard, 30the gecko, the monitor lizard, the wall lizard, the skink and the chameleon. 31Of all those that move along the ground, these are unclean for you. Whoever touches them when they are dead will be unclean till evening. 32When one of them dies and falls on something, that article, whatever its use, will be unclean, whether it is made of wood, cloth, hide or sackcloth. Put it in water; it will be unclean till evening, and then it will be clean. 33If one of them falls into a clay pot, everything in it will be unclean, and you must break the pot. 34Any food you are allowed to eat that has come into contact with water from any such pot is unclean, and any liquid that is drunk from such a pot is unclean. 35Anything that one of their carcasses falls on becomes unclean; an oven or cooking pot must be broken up. They are unclean, and you are to regard them as unclean. 36A spring, however, or a cistern for collecting water remains clean, but anyone who touches one of these carcasses is unclean. 37If a carcass falls on any seeds that are to be planted, they remain clean. 38But if water has been put on the seed and a carcass falls on it, it is unclean for you.

39"'If an animal that you are allowed to eat dies, anyone who touches its carcass will be unclean till evening. 40Anyone who eats some of its carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening. Anyone who picks up the carcass must wash their clothes, and they will be unclean till evening.

41"'Every creature that moves along the ground is to be regarded as unclean; it is not to be eaten. 42You are not to eat any creature that moves along the ground, whether it moves on its belly or walks on all fours or on many feet; it is unclean. 43Do not defile yourselves by any of these creatures. Do not make yourselves unclean by means of them or be made unclean by them. 44I am the LORD your God; consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am holy. Do not make yourselves unclean by any creature that moves along the ground. 45I am the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt to be your God; therefore be holy, because I am holy.

46"'These are the regulations concerning animals, birds, every living thing that moves about in the water and every creature that moves along the ground. 47You must distinguish between the unclean and the clean, between living creatures that may be eaten and those that may not be eaten.'"

Purification After Childbirth

12 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Say to the Israelites: 'A woman who becomes pregnant and gives birth to a son will be ceremo-

[a] *13* The precise identification of some of the birds, insects and animals in this chapter is uncertain.

nially unclean for seven days, just as she is unclean during her monthly period. 3On the eighth day the boy is to be circumcised. 4Then the woman must wait thirty-three days to be purified from her bleeding. She must not touch anything sacred or go to the sanctuary until the days of her purification are over. 5If she gives birth to a daughter, for two weeks the woman will be unclean, as during her period. Then she must wait sixty-six days to be purified from her bleeding.

6"'When the days of her purification for a son or daughter are over, she is to bring to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting a year-old lamb for a burnt offering and a young pigeon or a dove for a sin offering.[a] 7He shall offer them before the LORD to make atonement for her, and then she will be ceremonially clean from her flow of blood.

"'These are the regulations for the woman who gives birth to a boy or a girl. 8But if she cannot afford a lamb, she is to bring two doves or two young pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. In this way the priest will make atonement for her, and she will be clean.'"

Regulations About Defiling Skin Diseases

13 1The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 2"When anyone has a swelling or a rash or a shiny spot on their skin that may be a defiling skin disease,[b] they must be brought to Aaron the priest or to one of his sons[c] who is a priest. 3The priest is to examine the sore on the skin, and if the hair in the sore has turned white and the sore appears to be more than skin deep, it is a defiling skin disease. When the priest examines that person, he shall pronounce them ceremonially unclean. 4If the shiny spot on the skin is white but does not appear to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has not turned white, the priest is to isolate the affected person for seven days. 5On the seventh day the priest is to examine them, and if he sees that the sore is unchanged and has not spread in the skin, he is to isolate them for another seven days. 6On the seventh day the priest is to examine them again, and if the sore has faded and has not spread in the skin, the priest shall pronounce them clean; it is only a rash. They must wash their clothes, and they will be clean. 7But if the rash does spread in their skin after they have shown themselves to the priest to be pronounced clean, they must appear before the priest again. 8The priest is to examine that person, and if the rash has spread in the skin, he shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling skin disease.

9"When anyone has a defiling skin disease, they must be brought to the priest. 10The priest is to examine them, and if there is a white swelling in the skin that has turned the hair white and if there is raw flesh in the swelling, 11it is a chronic skin disease and the priest shall pronounce them unclean. He is not to isolate them, because they are already unclean.

12"If the disease breaks out all over their skin and, so far as the priest can see, it covers all the skin of the affected person from head to foot, 13the priest is to examine them, and if the disease has covered their whole body, he shall pronounce them clean. Since it has all turned white, they are clean. 14But whenever raw flesh appears on them, they will be unclean. 15When the priest sees the raw flesh, he shall pronounce them unclean. The raw flesh is unclean; they have a defiling disease. 16If the raw flesh changes and turns white, they must go to the priest. 17The priest is to examine them, and if the sores have turned white, the priest shall pronounce the affected person clean; then they will be clean.

18"When someone has a boil on their skin and it heals, 19and in the place where the boil was, a white swelling or reddish-white spot appears, they must present themselves to the priest. 20The priest is to examine it, and if it appears to be more than skin deep and the hair in it has turned white, the priest shall pronounce that person unclean. It is a defiling skin disease that has broken out where the boil was. 21But if, when the priest examines it, there is no white hair in it and it is not more than skin deep and has faded, then the priest is to isolate them for seven days. 22If it is spreading in the skin, the priest shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling disease. 23But if the spot is unchanged and has not spread, it is only a scar from the boil, and the priest shall pronounce them clean.

24"When someone has a burn on their skin and a reddish-white or white spot appears in the raw flesh of the burn, 25the priest is to examine the spot, and if the hair in it has turned white, and it appears to be more than skin deep, it is a defiling disease that has broken out in the burn. The priest shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling skin disease. 26But if the priest examines it and there is no white hair in the spot and if it is not more than skin deep and has faded, then the priest is to isolate them for

[a] *6* Or *purification offering*; also in verse 8 [b] *2* The Hebrew word for *defiling skin disease*, traditionally translated "leprosy," was used for various diseases affecting the skin; here and throughout verses 3-46. [c] *2* Or *descendants*

seven days. 27On the seventh day the priest is to examine that person, and if it is spreading in the skin, the priest shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling skin disease. 28If, however, the spot is unchanged and has not spread in the skin but has faded, it is a swelling from the burn, and the priest shall pronounce them clean; it is only a scar from the burn.

29"If a man or woman has a sore on their head or chin, 30the priest is to examine the sore, and if it appears to be more than skin deep and the hair in it is yellow and thin, the priest shall pronounce them unclean; it is a defiling skin disease on the head or chin. 31But if, when the priest examines the sore, it does not seem to be more than skin deep and there is no black hair in it, then the priest is to isolate the affected person for seven days. 32On the seventh day the priest is to examine the sore, and if it has not spread and there is no yellow hair in it and it does not appear to be more than skin deep, 33then the man or woman must shave themselves, except for the affected area, and the priest is to keep them isolated another seven days. 34On the seventh day the priest is to examine the sore, and if it has not spread in the skin and appears to be no more than skin deep, the priest shall pronounce them clean. They must wash their clothes, and they will be clean. 35But if the sore does spread in the skin after they are pronounced clean, 36the priest is to examine them, and if he finds that the sore has spread in the skin, he does not need to look for yellow hair; they are unclean. 37If, however, the sore is unchanged so far as the priest can see, and if black hair has grown in it, the affected person is healed. They are clean, and the priest shall pronounce them clean.

38"When a man or woman has white spots on the skin, 39the priest is to examine them, and if the spots are dull white, it is a harmless rash that has broken out on the skin; they are clean.

40"A man who has lost his hair and is bald is clean. 41If he has lost his hair from the front of his scalp and has a bald forehead, he is clean. 42But if he has a reddish-white sore on his bald head or forehead, it is a defiling disease breaking out on his head or forehead. 43The priest is to examine him, and if the swollen sore on his head or forehead is reddish-white like a defiling skin disease, 44the man is diseased and is unclean. The priest shall pronounce him unclean because of the sore on his head.

45"Anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt,[a] cover the lower part of their face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' 46As long as they have the disease they remain unclean. They must live alone; they must live outside the camp.

Regulations About Defiling Molds

47"As for any fabric that is spoiled with a defiling mold—any woolen or linen clothing, 48any woven or knitted material of linen or wool, any leather or anything made of leather— 49if the affected area in the fabric, the leather, the woven or knitted material, or any leather article, is greenish or reddish, it is a defiling mold and must be shown to the priest. 50The priest is to examine the affected area and isolate the article for seven days. 51On the seventh day he is to examine it, and if the mold has spread in the fabric, the woven or knitted material, or the leather, whatever its use, it is a persistent defiling mold; the article is unclean. 52He must burn the fabric, the woven or knitted material of wool or linen, or any leather article that has been spoiled; because the defiling mold is persistent, the article must be burned.

53"But if, when the priest examines it, the mold has not spread in the fabric, the woven or knitted material, or the leather article, 54he shall order that the spoiled article be washed. Then he is to isolate it for another seven days. 55After the article has been washed, the priest is to examine it again, and if the mold has not changed its appearance, even though it has not spread, it is unclean. Burn it, no matter which side of the fabric has been spoiled. 56If, when the priest examines it, the mold has faded after the article has been washed, he is to tear the spoiled part out of the fabric, the leather, or the woven or knitted material. 57But if it reappears in the fabric, in the woven or knitted material, or in the leather article, it is a spreading mold; whatever has the mold must be burned. 58Any fabric, woven or knitted material, or any leather article that has been washed and is rid of the mold, must be washed again. Then it will be clean."

59These are the regulations concerning defiling molds in woolen or linen clothing, woven or knitted material, or any leather article, for pronouncing them clean or unclean.

Health & Medicine
Although there was no theory of communicable diseases, the isolation of the leper looks very much like quarantine (Lev 13:45). The modern disease called leprosy is a particular infection called technically Hansen's disease. Its symptoms are different from the leprosy mentioned in the Bible.

[a] *45* Or *clothes, uncover their head*

Cleansing From Defiling Skin Diseases

14 [1]The LORD said to Moses, [2]"These are the regulations for any diseased person at the time of their ceremonial cleansing, when they are brought to the priest: [3]The priest is to go outside the camp and examine them. If they have been healed of their defiling skin disease,[a] [4]the priest shall order that two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the person to be cleansed. [5]Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over fresh water in a clay pot. [6]He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. [7]Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the defiling disease, and then pronounce them clean. After that, he is to release the live bird in the open fields.

[8]"The person to be cleansed must wash their clothes, shave off all their hair and bathe with water; then they will be ceremonially clean. After this they may come into the camp, but they must stay outside their tent for seven days. [9]On the seventh day they must shave off all their hair; they must shave their head, their beard, their eyebrows and the rest of their hair. They must wash their clothes and bathe themselves with water, and they will be clean.

[10]"On the eighth day they must bring two male lambs and one ewe lamb a year old, each without defect, along with three-tenths of an ephah[b] of the finest flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering, and one log[c] of oil. [11]The priest who pronounces them clean shall present both the one to be cleansed and their offerings before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting.

[12]"Then the priest is to take one of the male lambs and offer it as a guilt offering, along with the log of oil; he shall wave them before the LORD as a wave offering. [13]He is to slaughter the lamb in the sanctuary area where the sin offering[d] and the burnt offering are slaughtered. Like the sin offering, the guilt offering belongs to the priest; it is most holy. [14]The priest is to take some of the blood of the guilt offering and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. [15]The priest shall then take some of the log of oil, pour it in the palm of his own left hand, [16]dip his right forefinger into the oil in his palm, and with his finger sprinkle some of it before the LORD seven times. [17]The priest is to put some of the oil remaining in his palm on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot, on top of the blood of the guilt offering. [18]The rest of the oil in his palm the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed and make atonement for them before the LORD.

[19]"Then the priest is to sacrifice the sin offering and make atonement for the one to be cleansed from their uncleanness. After that, the priest shall slaughter the burnt offering [20]and offer it on the altar, together with the grain offering, and make atonement for them, and they will be clean.

[21]"If, however, they are poor and cannot afford these, they must take one male lamb as a guilt offering to be waved to make atonement for them, together with a tenth of an ephah[e] of the finest flour mixed with olive oil for a grain offering, a log of oil, [22]and two doves or two young pigeons, such as they can afford, one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering.

[23]"On the eighth day they must bring them for their cleansing to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting, before the LORD. [24]The priest is to take the lamb for the guilt offering, together with the log of oil, and wave them before the LORD as a wave offering. [25]He shall slaughter the lamb for the guilt offering and take some of its blood and put it on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. [26]The priest is to pour some of the oil into the palm of his own left hand, [27]and with his right forefinger sprinkle some of the oil from his palm seven times before the LORD. [28]Some of the oil in his palm he is to put on the same places he put the blood of the guilt offering—on the lobe of the right ear of the one to be cleansed, on the thumb of their right hand and on the big toe of their right foot. [29]The rest of the oil in his palm the priest shall put on the head of the one to be cleansed, to make atonement for them before the LORD. [30]Then he shall sacrifice the doves or the young pigeons, such as the person can afford, [31]one as a sin offering and the other as a burnt offering, together with the grain offering. In this way the priest will

[a] *3* The Hebrew word for *defiling skin disease*, traditionally translated "leprosy," was used for various diseases affecting the skin; also in verses 7, 32, 54 and 57. [b] *10* That is, probably about 11 pounds or about 5 kilograms [c] *10* That is, about 1/3 quart or about 0.3 liter; also in verses 12, 15, 21 and 24 [d] *13* Or *purification offering*; also in verses 19, 22 and 31 [e] *21* That is, probably about 3 1/2 pounds or about 1.6 kilograms

Rituals Against Fungus (Lev 14:33–53)

Israel's laws included regulations for dealing with a "spreading mold in a house" (Lev 14:33–53). The Hebrew word translated "spreading mold" (14:34) is generic, pertaining to various infestations. When used to describe the deterioration of garments (Lev 13:47) and houses, it probably refers to decay caused by fungus, mildew, mold, or dry rot.

In Israel, any house that was discolored with mildew caused by fungus-producing organisms was quarantined (14:36–38). The structure had to be cleansed both physically and ritually. Affected areas of stone were scraped, or replaced and remortared (14:40–42). If efforts were successful, the priest pronounced the house clean and performed a purification ritual (14:48–53).

This Mosaic dictum for quarantining and cleansing infected houses can be compared with two texts from Mesopotamia. One is a quotation from a Babylonian omen series, which prescribes a ritual to the Babylonian gods Ea and Ishum. Another ritual is mentioned in a letter to Esarhaddon, the king of Assyria from 680 to 669 B.C.

The omen reads, "If there is a fungus in a man's house, on the outer north wall, the owner of the house will die and his house will be scattered." In order to avert the evil, the individual is told to gather the fungus (in a particular manner) and burn it with a torch, placing mud and gypsum around it. The person then must recite an incantation to Ea (the god of wisdom) and slaughter a sheep to the god Ishum. Holy water is thrown on the person while another incantation is recited. Thus, the evil of the omen will be thwarted.

A letter to Esarhaddon confirms to the king the existence of a prayer and a ritual for two types of fungus that had appeared on the inner courtyard of the temple of Nabu. The author of the letter states that a technician, meaning a priest, will perform the appropriate ritual several times on the next morning.

make atonement before the LORD on behalf of the one to be cleansed."

32These are the regulations for anyone who has a defiling skin disease and who cannot afford the regular offerings for their cleansing.

Cleansing From Defiling Molds

33The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 34"When you enter the land of Canaan, which I am giving you as your possession, and I put a spreading mold in a house in that land, 35the owner of the house must go and tell the priest, 'I have seen something that looks like a defiling mold in my house.' 36The priest is to order the house to be emptied before he goes in to examine the mold, so that nothing in the house will be pronounced unclean. After this the priest is to go in and inspect the house. 37He is to examine the mold on the walls, and if it has greenish or reddish depressions that appear to be deeper than the surface of the wall, 38the priest shall go out the doorway of the house and close it up for seven days. 39On the seventh day the priest shall return to inspect the house. If the mold has spread on the walls, 40he is to order that the contaminated stones be torn out and thrown into an unclean place outside the town. 41He must have all the inside walls of the house scraped and the material that is scraped off dumped into an unclean place outside the town. 42Then they are to take other stones to replace these and take new clay and plaster the house.

43"If the defiling mold reappears in the house after the stones have been torn out and the house scraped and plastered, 44the priest is to go and examine it and, if the mold has spread in the house, it is a persistent defiling mold; the house is unclean. 45It must be torn down—its stones, timbers and all the plaster—and taken out of the town to an unclean place.

46"Anyone who goes into the house while it is closed up will be unclean till evening. 47Anyone who sleeps or eats in the house must wash their clothes.

48"But if the priest comes to examine it and the mold has not spread after the house has been plastered, he shall pronounce the house clean, because the defiling mold is gone. 49To purify the house he is to take two birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop. 50He shall kill one of the birds over fresh water in a clay pot. 51Then he is to take the cedar wood, the hyssop, the scarlet yarn and the live bird, dip them into the blood of the dead bird and the fresh water, and sprinkle the house seven times. 52He shall purify the house with the bird's blood, the fresh water, the live bird, the cedar wood, the hyssop and the scarlet yarn. 53Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields outside the town. In this way he will make atonement for the house, and it will be clean."

54These are the regulations for any defiling skin disease, for a sore, 55for defiling molds in fabric or in a house, 56and for a swelling, a rash or a shiny spot, 57to determine when something is clean or unclean.

These are the regulations for defiling skin diseases and defiling molds.

Discharges Causing Uncleanness

15 [1]The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, [2]"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When any man has an unusual bodily discharge, such a discharge is unclean. [3]Whether it continues flowing from his body or is blocked, it will make him unclean. This is how his discharge will bring about uncleanness:

[4]"'Any bed the man with a discharge lies on will be unclean, and anything he sits on will be unclean. [5]Anyone who touches his bed must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. [6]Whoever sits on anything that the man with a discharge sat on must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

[7]"'Whoever touches the man who has a discharge must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

[8]"'If the man with the discharge spits on anyone who is clean, they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

[9]"'Everything the man sits on when riding will be unclean, [10]and whoever touches any of the things that were under him will be unclean till evening; whoever picks up those things must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

[11]"'Anyone the man with a discharge touches without rinsing his hands with water must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

[12]"'A clay pot that the man touches must be broken, and any wooden article is to be rinsed with water.

[13]"'When a man is cleansed from his discharge, he is to count off seven days for his ceremonial cleansing; he must wash his clothes and bathe himself with fresh water, and he will be clean. [14]On the eighth day he must take two doves or two young pigeons and come before the Lord to the entrance to the tent of meeting and give them to the priest. [15]The priest is to sacrifice them, the one for a sin offering[a] and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement before the Lord for the man because of his discharge.

[16]"'When a man has an emission of semen, he must bathe his whole body with water, and he will be unclean till evening. [17]Any clothing or leather that has semen on it must be washed with water, and it will be unclean till evening. [18]When a man has sexual relations with a woman and there is an emission of semen, both of them must bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

[19]"'When a woman has her regular flow of blood, the impurity of her monthly period will last seven days, and anyone who touches her will be unclean till evening.

[20]"'Anything she lies on during her period will be unclean, and anything she sits on will be unclean. [21]Anyone who touches her bed will be unclean; they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. [22]Anyone who touches anything she sits on will be unclean; they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening. [23]Whether it is the bed or anything she was sitting on, when anyone touches it, they will be unclean till evening.

[24]"'If a man has sexual relations with her and her monthly flow touches him, he will be unclean for seven days; any bed he lies on will be unclean.

[25]"'When a woman has a discharge of blood for many days at a time other than her monthly period or has a discharge that continues beyond her period, she will be unclean as long as she has the discharge, just as in the days of her period. [26]Any bed she lies on while her discharge continues will be unclean, as is her bed during her monthly period, and anything she sits on will be unclean, as during her period. [27]Anyone who touches them will be unclean; they must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be unclean till evening.

[28]"'When she is cleansed from her discharge, she must count off seven days, and after that she will be ceremonially clean. [29]On the eighth day she must take two doves or two young pigeons and bring them to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. [30]The priest is to sacrifice one for a sin offering and the other for a burnt offering. In this way he will make atonement for her before the Lord for the uncleanness of her discharge.

[31]"'You must keep the Israelites separate from things that make them unclean, so they will not die in their uncleanness for defiling my dwelling place,[b] which is among them.'"

[32]These are the regulations for a man with a discharge, for anyone made unclean by an emission of semen, [33]for a woman in her monthly period, for a man or a woman with a discharge, and for a man who has sexual relations with a woman who is ceremonially unclean.

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[a] *15* Or *purification offering*; also in verse 30 [b] *31* Or *my tabernacle*

TRANSITION

The Day of Atonement

A description of the Da y of A tonement, the most sacred event in the year, appears in Lev 16 and also in L ev 23:26–32. Postbiblical Judaism referred to this annual obser vance as "the day" or "the great day." In the New Testament Paul literally calls it "the fast" (Ac 27:9). It was observed on the 10th day of the 7th month, Tishri, corresponding to October. See "Israel's Festivals" at Lev 23:1.

• **Leviticus 16:1—22:33**

Leviticus

The Day of Atonement

16 **:1** The LORD spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron who died when they approached the LORD. 2The LORD said to Moses: "Tell your brother Aaron that he is not to come whenever he chooses into the Most Holy Place behind the curtain in front of the atonement cover on the ark, or else he will die. For I will appear in the cloud over the atonement cover.

3"This is how Aaron is to enter the Most Holy Place: He must first bring a young bull for a sin offering[a] and a ram for a burnt offering. 4He is to put on the sacred linen tunic, with linen undergarments next to his body; he is to tie the linen sash around him and put on the linen turban. These are sacred garments; so he must bathe himself with water before he puts them on. 5From the Israelite community he is to take two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

6"Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household. 7Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 8He is to cast lots for the two goats—one lot for the LORD and the other for the scapegoat.[b] 9Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the LORD and sacrifice it for a sin offering. 10But the goat chosen by lot as the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the LORD to be used for making atonement by sending it into the wilderness as a scapegoat.

11"Aaron shall bring the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself and his household, and he is to slaughter the bull for his own sin offering. 12He is to take a censer full

[a] *3* Or *purification offering*; here and throughout this chapter
[b] *8* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain; also in verses 10 and 26.

Animals That Carry Away Sin (Lev 16:7–10)

The Day of Atonement, observed on the 10th day of the 7th month, was the most sacred event in the year (Lev 16:29, 34). One of the rituals for this annual day of fasting involved the cleansing of the sanctuary with blood. This was the only time in the year when the high priest entered the Most Holy Place to appear before the atonement cover (16:11–17). The other ritual involved the sending away of the scapegoat (16:7–10, 20–22).

In the scapegoat ritual, the scapegoat was sent into the wilderness. First, however, the priest placed his hands on the goat and confessed the sins of his people. The ritual symbolized the "removal" or "taking away" of the people's sin (16:21, 22).

The general form of the scapegoat ritual, as described in Leviticus, is not unique to Israel. Rituals from Anatolia and Mesopotamia attempt to appease an angry deity by using animals to carry away a plague or other evil suffering. A Hittite text from the mid-2nd millennium B.C. outlines what a monarch should do in case there is pestilence in his land caused by fighting in enemy territory.

In the Hittite ritual, the king is required to take an enemy bull (or ewe), "decorate the bull's ears with earrings and (fasten on it) red wool, green wool, black wool, and white wool." The bull is then driven into the enemy country, with the recitation, "Whatever god of the enemy country has caused this pestilence (if it be a male god), I have given thee a lusty, decorated bull with earrings. Be thou content with it. This bull shall take back the pestilence to the enemy country." An identical ceremony is performed with the ewe if the enemy's deity is a female.

In the Israelite ritual two goats were used. One was designated for the Lord and offered as a sin offering (16:9). The other goat, the scapegoat, bore the people's iniquities (16:22). In this ritual Israel released a live animal to carry away impurities, as other cultures did to eliminate sicknesses or sorceries.

of burning coals from the altar before the LORD and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. 13He is to put the incense on the fire before the LORD, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the tablets of the covenant law, so that he will not die. 14He is to take some of the bull's blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement cover.

15"He shall then slaughter the goat for the sin offering for the people and take its blood behind the curtain and do with it as he did with the bull's blood: He shall sprinkle it on the atonement cover and in front of it. 16In this way he will make atonement for the Most Holy Place because of the uncleanness and rebellion of the Israelites, whatever their sins have been. He is to do the same for the tent of meeting, which is among them in the midst of their uncleanness. 17No one is to be in the tent of meeting from the time Aaron goes in to make atonement in the Most Holy Place until he comes out, having made atonement for himself, his household and the whole community of Israel.

18"Then he shall come out to the altar that is before the LORD and make atonement for it. He shall take some of the bull's blood and some of the goat's blood and put it on all the horns of the altar. 19He shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times to cleanse it and to consecrate it from the uncleanness of the Israelites.

20"When Aaron has finished making atonement for the Most Holy Place, the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall bring forward the live goat. 21He is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites—all their sins—and put them on the goat's head. He shall send the goat away into the wilderness in the care of someone appointed for the task. 22The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a remote place; and the man shall release it in the wilderness.

23"Then Aaron is to go into the tent of meeting and take off the linen garments he put on before he entered the Most Holy Place, and he is to leave them there. 24He shall bathe himself with water in the sanctuary area and put on his regular garments. Then he shall come out and sacrifice the burnt offering for himself and the burnt offering for the people, to make atonement for himself and for the people. 25He shall also burn the fat of the sin offering on the altar.

26"The man who releases the goat as a scapegoat must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp. 27The bull and the goat for the sin offerings, whose blood was brought into the Most Holy Place to make atonement, must be taken outside the camp; their hides, flesh and intestines are to be burned up. 28The man who burns them must wash his clothes and bathe himself with water; afterward he may come into the camp.

29"This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: On the tenth day of the seventh month you must deny yourselves[a] and not do any work—whether native-born or a foreigner residing among you— 30because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the LORD, you will be clean from all your sins. 31It is a day of sabbath rest, and you must deny yourselves; it is a lasting ordinance. 32The priest who is anointed and ordained to succeed his father as high priest is to make atonement. He is to put on the sacred linen garments 33and make atonement for the Most Holy Place, for the tent of meeting and the altar, and for the priests and all the members of the community.

34"This is to be a lasting ordinance for you: Atonement is to be made once a year for all the sins of the Israelites."

And it was done, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Eating Blood Forbidden

17 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: 'This is what the LORD has commanded: 3Any Israelite who sacrifices an ox,[b] a lamb or a goat in the camp or outside of it 4instead of bringing it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to present it as an offering to the LORD in front of the tabernacle of the LORD—that person shall be considered guilty of bloodshed; they have shed blood and must be cut off from their people. 5This is so the Israelites will bring to the LORD the sacrifices they are now making in the open fields. They must

Beliefs & Ideas

The treatment of the scapegoat illustrates clearly how sins are transferred to the sacrificial animal by the laying on of hands by the priest (Lev 16:21). The ritual described here is the origin of our idea of a "scapegoat." Sending a live animal away instead of killing it is a unique feature of the Day of Atonement.

[a] *29* Or *must fast*; also in verse 31

[b] *3* The Hebrew word can refer to either male or female.

bring them to the priest, that is, to the LORD, at the entrance to the tent of meeting and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings. 6The priest is to splash the blood against the altar of the LORD at the entrance to the tent of meeting and burn the fat as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 7They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols[a] to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.'

8"'Say to them: 'Any Israelite or any foreigner residing among them who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice 9and does not bring it to the entrance to the tent of meeting to sacrifice it to the LORD must be cut off from the people of Israel.

10"'I will set my face against any Israelite or any foreigner residing among them who eats blood, and I will cut them off from the people. 11For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.[b] 12Therefore I say to the Israelites, "None of you may eat blood, nor may any foreigner residing among you eat blood."

13"'Any Israelite or any foreigner residing among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, 14because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the Israelites, "You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off."

15"'Anyone, whether native-born or foreigner, who eats anything found dead or torn by wild animals must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and they will be ceremonially unclean till evening; then they will be clean. 16But if they do not wash their clothes and bathe themselves, they will be held responsible.'"

TIME CAPSULE		1470 to 1448 B.C.
1470		Massive volcanic eruption on the Aegean island of Thera
1458		Thutmose III defeats coalition of Canaanite cities at Megiddo
1450		The city of Shechem is rebuilt after a century in ruins
1450		Earliest Egyptian shadow clock
1450		Thutmose III offers 27,000 pounds of gold to Amen, at Thebes
1448		Thutmose III campaigns on the Euphrates River against Mitanni

Unlawful Sexual Relations

18 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'I am the LORD your God. 3You must not do as they do in Egypt, where you used to live, and you must not do as they do in the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you. Do not follow their practices. 4You must obey my laws and be careful to follow my decrees. I am the LORD your God. 5Keep my decrees and laws, for the person who obeys them will live by them. I am the LORD.

6"'No one is to approach any close relative to have sexual relations. I am the LORD.

7"'Do not dishonor your father by having sexual relations with your mother. She is your mother; do not have relations with her.

8"'Do not have sexual relations with your father's wife; that would dishonor your father.

9"'Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.

10"'Do not have sexual relations with your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter; that would dishonor you.

11"'Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister.

12"'Do not have sexual relations with your father's sister; she is your father's close relative.

13"'Do not have sexual relations with your mother's sister, because she is your mother's close relative.

14"'Do not dishonor your father's brother by approaching his wife to have sexual relations; she is your aunt.

15"'Do not have sexual relations with your daughter-in-law. She is your son's wife; do not have relations with her.

16"'Do not have sexual relations with your brother's wife; that would dishonor your brother.

17"'Do not have sexual relations with both a woman and her daughter. Do not have sexual relations with either her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter; they are her close relatives. That is wickedness.

18"'Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

19"'Do not approach a woman to have sexual

[a] *7* Or *the demons* [b] *11* Or *atonement by the life in the blood*

Marriage & Family
The law provides a list of blood relatives with whom sexual intercourse is forbidden (Lev 18:6). In some ancient societies the ruling class asserted for itself the right to marry sisters or brothers and flaunted this as a mark of nobility. This was the custom in Egypt. Over a period of time the practice is genetically harmful.

relations during the uncleanness of her monthly period.

20"'Do not have sexual relations with your neighbor's wife and defile yourself with her.

21"'Do not give any of your children to be sacrificed to Molek, for you must not profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

22"'Do not have sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman; that is detestable.

23"'Do not have sexual relations with an animal and defile yourself with it. A woman must not present herself to an animal to have sexual relations with it; that is a perversion.

24"'Do not defile yourselves in any of these ways, because this is how the nations that I am going to drive out before you became defiled. 25Even the land was defiled; so I punished it for its sin, and the land vomited out its inhabitants. 26But you must keep my decrees and my laws. The native-born and the foreigners residing among you must not do any of these detestable things, 27for all these things were done by the people who lived in the land before you, and the land became defiled. 28And if you defile the land, it will vomit you out as it vomited out the nations that were before you.

29"'Everyone who does any of these detestable things—such persons must be cut off from their people. 30Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you came and do not defile yourselves with them. I am the LORD your God.'"

Various Laws

19 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

3"'Each of you must respect your mother and father, and you must observe my Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God.

4"'Do not turn to idols or make metal gods for yourselves. I am the LORD your God.

5"'When you sacrifice a fellowship offering to the LORD, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. 6It shall be eaten on the day you sacrifice it or on the next day; anything left over until the third day must be burned up. 7If any of it is eaten on the third day, it is impure and will not be accepted. 8Whoever eats it will be held responsible because they have desecrated what is holy to the LORD; they must be cut off from their people.

9"'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. 10Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and the foreigner. I am the LORD your God.

11"'Do not steal.

"'Do not lie.

"'Do not deceive one another.

12"'Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD.

13"'Do not defraud or rob your neighbor.

"'Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.

14"'Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block in front of the blind, but fear your God. I am the LORD.

15"'Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly.

16"'Do not go about spreading slander among your people.

"'Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD.

17"'Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.

18"'Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

19"'Keep my decrees.

"'Do not mate different kinds of animals.

"'Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed.

"'Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material.

20"'If a man sleeps with a female slave who is promised to another man but who has not been ransomed or given her freedom, there must be due punishment.[a] Yet they are not to be put to death, because she had not been freed. 21The man, however, must bring a ram to the entrance to the tent of meeting for a guilt offering to the LORD. 22With the ram of the guilt offering the priest is to make atonement for him before the LORD for the sin he has committed, and his sin will be forgiven.

[a] *20* Or *be an inquiry*

Technical Prophecy Seeks Divine Knowledge (Lev 19:26)

Ancient people considered it important to know the will of the gods—on demand, if necessary. So there were specialists in the art of determining a deity's will through rituals or through the specialists' deep knowledge of the secret meaning of natural phenomena. Such specialized practices, which included divination and soothsaying, were aimed at foretelling the future and thus can be called "technical prophecy."

Most of what we know about divination and soothsaying comes from Mesopotamia, Babylonia and Assyria. Mesopotamian technical prophecy was carried out by highly educated, trained priests. A number of tablets survive which tell how to read natural events to determine the will of the gods. Wind, water, the blowing of grain, the appearance of animals, the position of the stars and planets, and indeed almost any natural occurrence had its divine meaning.

In a different method, Mesopotamian priests could obtain particular information by performing sacrifices. Archaeologists have found large numbers of clay models of livers taken from sheep sacrificed for the purpose of divination. By reading the bumps on the liver the priests could determine the answers to questions. The answers were then recorded on these clay models.

The peoples around Israel also sought knowledge from the gods. Sacred oracles from Syria-Palestine are found in Greek records such as *De Dea Syria* from the 2nd century A.D. These records indicate that answers to the questions of worshipers came through sounds from the openings of caves or from the flying of gods' statues (which skeptics claimed were rigged with ropes).

The Israelites themselves were forbidden to divine the will of God through these technical methods. They were allowed the oracular items called Urim and Thummim (Dt 33:8; 1Sa 14:41), but Israel's law clearly instructed them not to "practice divination or seek omens" (Lev 19:26). For the Israelites the divine will would be disclosed by God through vision, dream, or prophet, and the Israelite worshiper was free to petition God for such revelation.

23 "'When you enter the land and plant any
kind of fruit tree, regard its fruit as forbidden.[a]
For three years you are to consider it forbid-
den[a]; it must not be eaten. 24 In the fourth year
all its fruit will be holy, an offering of praise to
the LORD. 25 But in the fifth year you may eat
its fruit. In this way your harvest will be in-
creased. I am the LORD your God.
26 "'Do not eat any meat with the blood still
in it.
"'Do not practice divination or seek omens.
27 "'Do not cut the hair at the sides of your
head or clip off the edges of your beard.
28 "'Do not cut your bodies for the dead or
put tattoo marks on yourselves. I am the LORD.
29 "'Do not degrade your daughter by making
her a prostitute, or the land will turn to prosti-
tution and be filled with wickedness.
30 "'Observe my Sabbaths and have rever-
ence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.
31 "'Do not turn to mediums or seek out spir-
itists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the
LORD your God.
32 "'Stand up in the presence of the aged,
show respect for the elderly and revere your
God. I am the LORD.
33 "'When a foreigner resides among you in
your land, do not mistreat them. 34 The foreign-
er residing among you must be treated as your
native-born. Love them as yourself, for you
were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your
God.
35 "'Do not use dishonest standards when
measuring length, weight or quantity. 36 Use
honest scales and honest weights, an honest
ephah[b] and an honest hin.[c] I am the LORD your
God, who brought you out of Egypt.
37 "'Keep all my decrees and all my laws and
follow them. I am the LORD.'"

Culture & Society

There is undeniable evidence from Carthage in North Africa that the sacrifice of children was carried on there regularly. Sacrifice of adult human beings was the state religion of the Aztecs. It is sometimes said that human sacrifice never really occurred. The Law of Moses shows that it was a temptation at least (Lev 20:2).

Punishments for Sin

20 1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Say to the
Israelites: 'Any Israelite or any foreign-
er residing in Israel who sacrifices any of his
children to Molek is to be put to death. The
members of the community are to stone him. 3 I
myself will set my face against him and will cut
him off from his people; for by sacrificing his
children to Molek, he has defiled my sanctuary
and profaned my holy name. 4 If the members
of the community close their eyes when that
man sacrifices one of his children to Molek and
if they fail to put him to death, 5 I myself will
set my face against him and his family and will

[a] *23* Hebrew *uncircumcised* [b] *36* An ephah was a dry measure having the capacity of about 3/5 of a bushel or about 22 liters. [c] *36* A hin was a liquid measure having the capacity of about 1 gallon or about 3.8 liters.

cut them off from their people together with all who follow him in prostituting themselves to Molek.

6"'I will set my face against anyone who turns to mediums and spiritists to prostitute themselves by following them, and I will cut them off from their people.

7"'Consecrate yourselves and be holy, because I am the LORD your God. 8Keep my decrees and follow them. I am the LORD, who makes you holy.

9"'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death. Because they have cursed their father or mother, their blood will be on their own head.

10"'If a man commits adultery with another man's wife—with the wife of his neighbor—both the adulterer and the adulteress are to be put to death.

11"'If a man has sexual relations with his father's wife, he has dishonored his father. Both the man and the woman are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

12"'If a man has sexual relations with his daughter-in-law, both of them are to be put to death. What they have done is a perversion; their blood will be on their own heads.

13"'If a man has sexual relations with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

14"'If a man marries both a woman and her mother, it is wicked. Both he and they must be burned in the fire, so that no wickedness will be among you.

15"'If a man has sexual relations with an animal, he is to be put to death, and you must kill the animal.

16"'If a woman approaches an animal to have sexual relations with it, kill both the woman and the animal. They are to be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads.

17"'If a man marries his sister, the daughter of either his father or his mother, and they have sexual relations, it is a disgrace. They are to be publicly removed from their people. He has dishonored his sister and will be held responsible.

18"'If a man has sexual relations with a woman during her monthly period, he has exposed the source of her flow, and she has also uncovered it. Both of them are to be cut off from their people.

19"'Do not have sexual relations with the sister of either your mother or your father, for that would dishonor a close relative; both of you would be held responsible.

20"'If a man has sexual relations with his aunt, he has dishonored his uncle. They will be held responsible; they will die childless.

21"'If a man marries his brother's wife, it is an act of impurity; he has dishonored his brother. They will be childless.

22"'Keep all my decrees and laws and follow them, so that the land where I am bringing you to live may not vomit you out. 23You must not live according to the customs of the nations I am going to drive out before you. Because they did all these things, I abhorred them. 24But I said to you, "You will possess their land; I will give it to you as an inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from the nations.

25"'You must therefore make a distinction between clean and unclean animals and between unclean and clean birds. Do not defile yourselves by any animal or bird or anything that moves along the ground—those that I have set apart as unclean for you. 26You are to be holy to me because I, the LORD, am holy, and I have set you apart from the nations to be my own.

27"'A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads.'"

Rules for Priests

21 1The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'A priest must not make himself ceremonially unclean for any of his people who die, 2except for a close relative, such as his mother or father, his son or daughter, his brother, 3or an unmarried sister who is dependent on him since she has no husband—for her he may make himself unclean. 4He must not make himself unclean for people related to him by marriage,[a] and so defile himself.

5"'Priests must not shave their heads or shave off the edges of their beards or cut their bodies. 6They must be holy to their God and

Cults & Supernatural
The medium or spiritist is someone who pretends to find out things, especially about the future, through contact with dead persons or other kinds of spirits from the realm of the dead (Lev 20:27). This is a common sort of magic that appears with many variations of method, in ancient and modern times. The Bible subjects it to ridicule and forbids it.

[a] 4 Or *unclean as a leader among his people*

must not profane the name of their God. Because they present the food offerings to the LORD, the food of their God, they are to be holy.

7"'They must not marry women defiled by prostitution or divorced from their husbands, because priests are holy to their God. 8Regard them as holy, because they offer up the food of your God. Consider them holy, because I the LORD am holy—I who make you holy.

9"'If a priest's daughter defiles herself by becoming a prostitute, she disgraces her father; she must be burned in the fire.

10"'The high priest, the one among his brothers who has had the anointing oil poured on his head and who has been ordained to wear the priestly garments, must not let his hair become unkempt[a] or tear his clothes. 11He must not enter a place where there is a dead body. He must not make himself unclean, even for his father or mother, 12nor leave the sanctuary of his God or desecrate it, because he has been dedicated by the anointing oil of his God. I am the LORD.

13"'The woman he marries must be a virgin. 14He must not marry a widow, a divorced woman, or a woman defiled by prostitution, but only a virgin from his own people, 15so that he will not defile his offspring among his people. I am the LORD, who makes him holy.'"

16The LORD said to Moses, 17"Say to Aaron: 'For the generations to come none of your descendants who has a defect may come near to offer the food of his God. 18No man who has any defect may come near: no man who is blind or lame, disfigured or deformed; 19no man with a crippled foot or hand, 20or who is a hunchback or a dwarf, or who has any eye defect, or who has festering or running sores or damaged testicles. 21No descendant of Aaron the priest who has any defect is to come near to present the food offerings to the LORD. He has a defect; he must not come near to offer the food of his God. 22He may eat the most holy food of his God, as well as the holy food; 23yet because of his defect, he must not go near the curtain or approach the altar, and so desecrate my sanctuary. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.'"

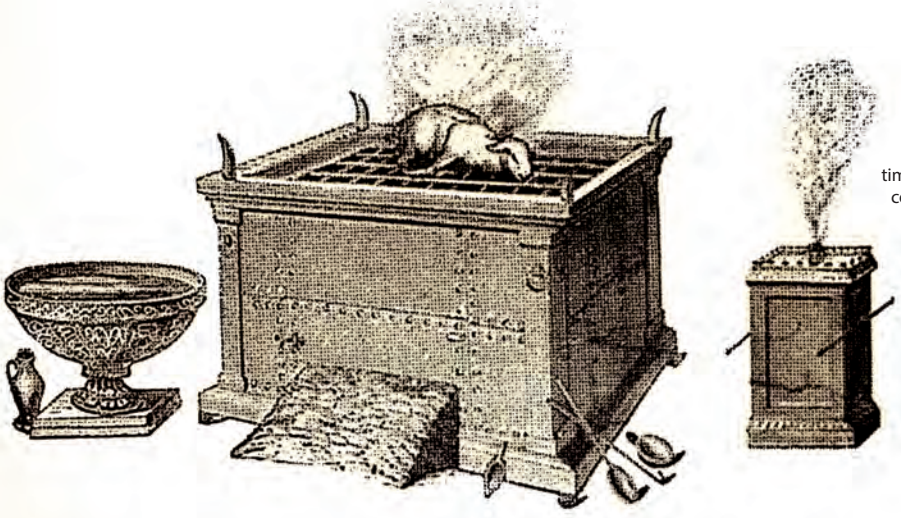
24So Moses told this to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites.

22 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Tell Aaron and his sons to treat with respect the sacred offerings the Israelites consecrate to me, so they will not profane my holy name. I am the LORD.

3"Say to them: 'For the generations to come, if any of your descendants is ceremonially unclean and yet comes near the sacred offerings that the Israelites consecrate to the LORD, that person must be cut off from my presence. I am the LORD.

4"'If a descendant of Aaron has a defiling skin disease[b] or a bodily discharge, he may not eat the sacred offerings until he is cleansed. He will also be unclean if he touches something defiled by a corpse or by anyone who has an emission of semen, 5or if he touches any crawling thing that makes him unclean, or any person who makes him unclean, whatever the uncleanness may be. 6The one who touches any such thing will be unclean till evening. He must not eat any of the sacred offerings unless he has bathed himself with water. 7When the sun goes down, he will be clean, and after that he may eat the sacred offerings, for they are his food. 8He must not eat anything found dead or

[a] *10* Or *not uncover his head* [b] *4* The Hebrew word for *defiling skin disease*, traditionally translated "leprosy," was used for various diseases affecting the skin.



Burnt offerings were brought periodically to God in Old Testament times so that the Israelites could atone for their sins and restore fellowship with God.

torn by wild animals, and so become unclean through it. I am the LORD.

9"'The priests are to perform my service in such a way that they do not become guilty and die for treating it with contempt. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.

10"'No one outside a priest's family may eat the sacred offering, nor may the guest of a priest or his hired worker eat it. 11But if a priest buys a slave with money, or if slaves are born in his household, they may eat his food. 12If a priest's daughter marries anyone other than a priest, she may not eat any of the sacred contributions. 13But if a priest's daughter becomes a widow or is divorced, yet has no children, and she returns to live in her father's household as in her youth, she may eat her father's food. No unauthorized person, however, may eat it.

14"'Anyone who eats a sacred offering by mistake must make restitution to the priest for the offering and add a fifth of the value to it. 15The priests must not desecrate the sacred offerings the Israelites present to the LORD 16by allowing them to eat the sacred offerings and so bring upon them guilt requiring payment. I am the LORD, who makes them holy.'"

Unacceptable Sacrifices

17The LORD said to Moses, 18"Speak to Aaron and his sons and to all the Israelites and say to them: 'If any of you—whether an Israelite or a foreigner residing in Israel—presents a gift for a burnt offering to the LORD, either to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering, 19you must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep or goats in order that it may be accepted on your behalf. 20Do not bring anything with a defect, because it will not be accepted on your behalf. 21When anyone brings from the herd or flock a fellowship offering to the LORD to fulfill a special vow or as a freewill offering, it must be without defect or blemish to be acceptable. 22Do not offer to the LORD the blind, the injured or the maimed, or anything with warts or festering or running sores. Do not place any of these on the altar as a food offering presented to the LORD. 23You may, however, present as a freewill offering an ox[a] or a sheep that is deformed or stunted, but it will not be accepted in fulfillment of a vow. 24You must not offer to the LORD an animal whose testicles are bruised, crushed, torn or cut. You must not do this in your own land, 25and you must not accept such animals from the hand of a foreigner and offer them as the food of your God. They will not be accepted on your behalf, because they are deformed and have defects.'"

26The LORD said to Moses, 27"When a calf, a lamb or a goat is born, it is to remain with its mother for seven days. From the eighth day on, it will be acceptable as a food offering presented to the LORD. 28Do not slaughter a cow or a sheep and its young on the same day.

29"When you sacrifice a thank offering to the LORD, sacrifice it in such a way that it will be accepted on your behalf. 30It must be eaten that same day; leave none of it till morning. I am the LORD.

31"Keep my commands and follow them. I am the LORD. 32Do not profane my holy name, for I must be acknowledged as holy by the Israelites. I am the LORD, who made you holy 33and who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD."

[a] *23* The Hebrew word can refer to either male or female.

TRANSITION

Israel's Festivals

In addition t o the S abbath (Lev 23:3), Lev 23 describes seven sacred festivals of the Hebrew calendar tha t were observed before the Babylonian exile. These festivals were occasions for nationwide gatherings which called the people to public worship.

Passover (23:5) and the F estival of Unlea vened Bread (23:6–8) occurred in A viv (also called Nisan), the 1st month (March-April) of the sacred year. Combined they w ere one of Israel's three annual pilg rimage festivals for which every adult male w as required to present himself a t the taber nacle, and la ter, the temple. Passover may have been c elebrated for one day at the beginning of the week-long Festival of Unlea vened Bread, as it is in mod - ern Judaism.

Firstfruits (23:9–21) was celebrated twice during the year as an e xpression of g ratitude to God for his provision in the harvest. The first celebration occurred on the day following the Sabbath at the time of the F estival of Unleavened Bread. This fell during the barley harvest, sometime between the 16th and 22nd days of the 1st mon th (Aviv). The second celebration occurred 50 days later during the Festival of Weeks.

The Festival of Weeks (23:15–22), also known as Harvest (Ex 23:16), oc curred 50 da ys after the offering of firstfruits a t the barley harvest. Held in c onnection with the whea t harvest, this one-day celebration during the 3rd month (Sivan) involved the firstfruits obser vation as well as other sacrifices. It was the second festival with required attendance at the temple.

The Festival of Trumpets (23:23–25) was the first of thr ee holy da ys of the 7th mon th

(Tishri). It was a sacred celebration of the new civil year, calling attention to judgment for sin, and the need for penitence and forgiveness.

The Day of Atonement (23:26–32) was the second holy day of the 7th month. On this day sacrifice was made for the sin of the whole nation; thus, it was a time of true repentance and faith preparing for the Festival of Tabernacles.

The Festival of Tabernacles (23:33–36; or Shelters, vv. 39–43), the third holy day of the 7th month, was celebrated at the end of the grape harvest in September-October. Also known as Ingathering (Ex 23:16), it was a time for great joy when all harvests were completed. It was also the third festival requiring a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

• Leviticus 23:1—24:23

Leviticus

The Appointed Festivals

23 :1 The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed festivals, the appointed festivals of the LORD, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies.

The Sabbath

3" 'There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a sabbath to the LORD.

The Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread

4" 'These are the LORD's appointed festivals, the sacred assemblies you are to proclaim at their appointed times: 5The LORD's Passover begins at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. 6On the fifteenth day of that month the LORD's Festival of Unleavened Bread begins; for seven days you must eat bread made without yeast. 7On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. 8For seven days present a food offering to the LORD. And on the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.' "

Offering the Firstfruits

9The LORD said to Moses, 10"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you and you reap its harvest, bring to the priest a sheaf of the first grain you harvest. 11He is to wave the sheaf before the LORD so it will be accepted on your behalf; the priest is to wave it on the day after the Sabbath. 12On the day you wave the sheaf, you must sacrifice as a burnt offering to the LORD a lamb a year old without defect, 13together with its grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah[a] of the finest flour mixed with olive oil—a food offering presented to the LORD, a pleasing aroma—and its drink offering of a quarter of a hin[b] of wine. 14You must not eat any bread, or roasted or new grain, until the very day you bring this offering to your God. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

The Festival of Weeks

15" 'From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks. 16Count off fifty days up to the day after the seventh Sabbath, and then present an offering of new grain to the LORD. 17From wherever you live, bring two loaves made of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour, baked with yeast, as a wave offering of firstfruits to the LORD. 18Present with this bread seven male lambs, each a year old and without defect, one young bull and two rams. They will be a burnt offering to the LORD, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings—a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 19Then sacrifice one male goat for a sin offering[c] and two lambs, each a year old, for a fellowship offering. 20The priest is to wave the two lambs before the LORD as a wave offering, together with the bread of the firstfruits. They are a sacred offering to the LORD for the priest. 21On that same day you are to proclaim a sacred assembly and do no regular work. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live.

22" 'When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the LORD your God.' "

The Festival of Trumpets

23The LORD said to Moses, 24"Say to the Israelites: 'On the first day of the seventh month you are to have a day of sabbath rest, a sacred assembly commemorated with trumpet blasts. 25Do no regular work, but present a food offering to the LORD.' "

The Day of Atonement

26The LORD said to Moses, 27"The tenth day

[a] *13* That is, probably about 7 pounds or about 3.2 kilograms; also in verse 17 [b] *13* That is, about 1 quart or about 1 liter
[c] *19* Or *purification offering*

ISRAEL'S ANNUAL FESTIVALS

Festival	Month of Sacred Year	Day	Corresponding Month
Passover	1 (Aviv)	14	Mar.-Apr.
Ex 12:1–14; Lev 23:5; Nu 9:1–14; 28:16; Dt 16:1–7			
*Unleavened Bread	1 (Aviv)	15–21	Mar.-Apr.
Ex 12:15–20; 13:3–10; Lev 23:6–8; Nu 28:17–25; Dt 16:3, 4, 8			
Firstfruits	1 (Aviv) and 3 (Sivan)	16 6	Mar.-Apr. May-June
Lev 23:9–14; Nu 28:26			
*Weeks (Harvest or Pentecost)	3 (Sivan)	6 (50 days after barley harvest)	May-June
Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:15–21; Nu 28:26–31; Dt 16:9–12			
Trumpets	7 (Tishri)	1	Sept.-Oct.
Lev 23:23–25; Nu 29:1–6			
Day of Atonement; Yom Kippur	7 (Tishri)	10	Sept.-Oct.
Lev 16; 23:26–32; Nu 29:7–11			
*Tabernacles (Shelters or Ingathering)	7 (Tishri)	15–22	Sept.-Oct.
Ex 23:16; 34:22; Lev 23:33–36, 39–43; Nu 29:12–38; Dt 16:13–15			

*The three major festivals for which all males of Israel were required to travel to the temple in Jerusalem (Ex. 23:14–19).

of this seventh month is the Day of Atonement. Hold a sacred assembly and deny yourselves,[a] and present a food offering to the LORD. 28Do not do any work on that day, because it is the Day of Atonement, when atonement is made for you before the LORD your God. 29Those who do not deny themselves on that day must be cut off from their people. 30I will destroy from among their people anyone who does any work on that day. 31You shall do no work at all. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come, wherever you live. 32It is a day of sabbath rest for you, and you must deny yourselves. From the evening of the ninth day of the month until the following evening you are to observe your sabbath."

The Festival of Tabernacles

33The LORD said to Moses, 34"Say to the Israelites: 'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month the LORD's Festival of Tabernacles begins, and it lasts for seven days. 35The first day is a sacred assembly; do no regular work. 36For seven days present food offerings to the LORD, and on the eighth day hold a sacred assembly and present a food offering to the LORD. It is the closing special assembly; do no regular work.

37("'These are the LORD's appointed festivals, which you are to proclaim as sacred assemblies for bringing food offerings to the LORD — the burnt offerings and grain offerings, sacrifices and drink offerings required for each day. 38These offerings are in addition to those for the LORD's Sabbaths and[b] in addition to your gifts and whatever you have vowed and all the freewill offerings you give to the LORD.)

39"'So beginning with the fifteenth day of the seventh month, after you have gathered the crops of the land, celebrate the festival to the LORD for seven days; the first day is a day of sabbath rest, and the eighth day also is a day of sabbath rest. 40On the first day you are to take branches from luxuriant trees — from palms, willows and other leafy trees — and rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days. 41Celebrate this as a festival to the LORD for seven days each year. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come; celebrate it in the seventh month. 42Live in temporary shelters for seven days: All native-born Israelites are to live in such shelters 43so your descendants will know that I had the Israelites live in temporary shelters when I brought them out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.'"

44So Moses announced to the Israelites the appointed festivals of the LORD.

[a] *27* Or *and fast*; similarly in verses 29 and 32
[b] *38* Or *These festivals are in addition to the LORD's Sabbaths, and these offerings are*

Olive Oil and Bread Set Before the LORD

24 [1]The LORD said to Moses, [2]"Command the Israelites to bring you clear oil of pressed olives for the light so that the lamps may be kept burning continually. [3]Outside the curtain that shields the ark of the covenant law in the tent of meeting, Aaron is to tend the lamps before the LORD from evening till morning, continually. This is to be a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. [4]The lamps on the pure gold lampstand before the LORD must be tended continually.

[5]"Take the finest flour and bake twelve loaves of bread, using two-tenths of an ephah[a] for each loaf. [6]Arrange them in two stacks, six in each stack, on the table of pure gold before the LORD. [7]By each stack put some pure incense as a memorial[b] portion to represent the bread and to be a food offering presented to the LORD. [8]This bread is to be set out before the LORD regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites, as a lasting covenant. [9]It belongs to Aaron and his sons, who are to eat it in the sanctuary area, because it is a most holy part of their perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the LORD."

A Blasphemer Put to Death

[10]Now the son of an Israelite mother and an Egyptian father went out among the Israelites, and a fight broke out in the camp between him and an Israelite. [11]The son of the Israelite woman blasphemed the Name with a curse; so they brought him to Moses. (His mother's name was Shelomith, the daughter of Dibri the Danite.) [12]They put him in custody until the will of the LORD should be made clear to them.

[13]Then the LORD said to Moses: [14]"Take the blasphemer outside the camp. All those who heard him are to lay their hands on his head, and the entire assembly is to stone him. [15]Say to the Israelites: 'Anyone who curses their God will be held responsible; [16]anyone who blasphemes the name of the LORD is to be put to death. The entire assembly must stone them. Whether foreigner or native-born, when they blaspheme the Name they are to be put to death.

[17]"'Anyone who takes the life of a human being is to be put to death. [18]Anyone who takes the life of someone's animal must make restitution—life for life. [19]Anyone who injures their neighbor is to be injured in the same manner: [20]fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. The one who has inflicted the injury must suffer the same injury. [21]Whoever kills an animal must make restitution, but whoever kills a human being is to be put to death. [22]You are to have the same law for the foreigner and the native-born. I am the LORD your God.'"

[23]Then Moses spoke to the Israelites, and they took the blasphemer outside the camp and stoned him. The Israelites did as the LORD commanded Moses.

Daily Life & Customs

Olives grow on small trees that live for many years. The oil is removed by crushing the fruit. Like honey, olive oil does not spoil in storage. It was commonly used as lamp oil (Lev 24:2). A wick partly submerged in a small pool of oil burns like the wick of a wax candle. More oil can be added easily without blowing out the flame.

[a] *5* That is, probably about 7 pounds or about 3.2 kilograms
[b] *7* Or *representative*

The Festival of Weeks occurs during the barley harvest.

HAMMURABI'S "EYE FOR AN EYE" (LEV 24:19, 20)

The punishments of Israel's legal system sometimes were based on a system of physical retaliation. The corporal punishments sentenced on the guilty offender were comparable to the injuries which the victim suffered. As the Law of Moses states, "Anyone who injures their neighbor is to be injured in the same manner" (Lev 24:19), whether "eye for eye" or "tooth for tooth" (24:20).

Sometimes this law of "eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Ex 21:23–25) is considered to be primitive retaliations. It was designed, however, to protect the helpless from unfair reprisal by the powerful. Once a person had been judged guilty, justice was performed with complete impartiality. The rich man did not receive a lesser sentence for the same crime as did the poor man. This principle of physical reprisal may have come to Israel through the Amorites, as is suggested by laws from a prominent Amorite king.

Hammurabi (or Hammurapi) was the sixth king (1792–1750 B.C.) of the 1st Dynasty of Babylon. During his long reign Babylon rose to prominence in southern Mesopotamia. He was part of a group of Amorite rulers, some of whom had taken Babylon before his time. By the end of his reign, Hammurabi was successful in uniting the entire Tigris-Euphrates valley, although much of his empire was lost within a generation after his death.

A collection of laws that were sponsored by this Amorite king, now known as the Code of Hammurabi, reflect the same principle of retaliation found in the Law of Moses. If a citizen injured another citizen's eye or tooth, Hammurabi's code states: "his eye shall be destroyed" or "his tooth shall be knocked out." Such retribution is not found in law codes of the Sumerians and Hittites, nor in the Laws of Eshnunna. Possibly it comes from a time when Amorite tribes populated both Babylonia and Palestine.

TRANSITION

The Sabbath Years and Year of Jubilee

Every 7th year was the Sabbath Year, in which the land was to lie fallow (Lev 25:4). Among other things this practice would prevent soil depletion and the subsequent impoverishment of the farmer. The Year of Jubilee came every 50th year (Lev 25:9, 11). Possibly no systematic harvesting of the produce of the fields was permitted during the 7th or Jubilee years. Although people might eat such produce in the fields (25:6, 7, 12), their regular meals were to come from the excess of the previous years (25:21).

• **Leviticus 25:1—27:34**

Leviticus

The Sabbath Year

25:1 The LORD said to Moses at Mount Sinai, 2"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a sabbath to the LORD. 3For six years sow your fields, and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. 4But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the LORD. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. 5Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. 6Whatever the land yields during the sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your male and female servants, and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, 7as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.

The Year of Jubilee

8"'Count off seven sabbath years—seven times seven years—so that the seven sabbath years amount to a period of forty-nine years. 9Then have the trumpet sounded everywhere on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement sound the trumpet throughout your land. 10Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each of you is to return to your family property and to your own clan. 11The fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you; do not sow and do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the untended vines. 12For it is a jubilee and is to be holy for you; eat only what is taken directly from the fields.

13"'In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property.

14"'If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. 15You are to buy from your own people on the basis of the number of years since the Jubilee. And they are to sell to you on the basis of the number of years left for harvesting crops. 16When the years are many, you are to increase the price, and when the years are few, you are to decrease the price, because what is really being sold to you is the number of crops. 17Do not take advantage of each other, but fear your God. I am the LORD your God.

18"'Follow my decrees and be careful to obey my laws, and you will live safely in the land.

Protecting the Weak in the Jubilee Year (Lev 25:8–17)

Every 50th year in Israel was the Year of Jubilee (Lev 25:11–13). The provisions of this sacred time were intended to maintain economic equality and prevent the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few. In the Jubilee year, if property were not already redeemed, it was to be restored to the original owner (25:25–28). This prevented the creation of great hereditary estates that would have reduced the families of small landholders to the status of serfs.

The concept of the Jubilee year in Lev 25 bears a general similarity to the suspension of debts, which was a widespread phenomenon in the Old Babylonian period (c. 2017–1595 B.C.). While the Old Babylonian peoples lived a few centuries before Israel inhabited Canaan, they too were concerned about the equitable distribution of land and the resultant wealth.

An Old Babylonian literary text (in the form of a letter) describes the conduct of judges during the suspension of debts on behalf of the sun god Shamash. The judges of two city-states, Babylon and nearby Sippar, met at Sippar to read the lawsuits of Sippar citizens. Also to be read were the sale documents for fields, houses, and orchards, which became invalid during the suspension of debts (the jubilee).

In both cultures there was an awareness that the accumulation of land could result in the oppression of those who were socially and economically weak. In the Old Babylonian letter, an individual who had been subsequently wronged wrote to the officials, asking that "the weak not be handed over to the strong in the presence of my lord, and for the strong not to oppress the weak." Israel's God Yahweh included a command amongst the stipulations of the Jubilee year: "do not take advantage of each other" (25:14, 17).

19 Then the land will yield its fruit, and you will
eat your fill and live there in safety. 20 You may
ask, "What will we eat in the seventh year if we
do not plant or harvest our crops?" 21 I will send
you such a blessing in the sixth year that the
land will yield enough for three years. 22 While
you plant during the eighth year, you will eat
from the old crop and will continue to eat from
it until the harvest of the ninth year comes in.

23 "'The land must not be sold permanently,
because the land is mine and you reside in my
land as foreigners and strangers. 24 Through-
out the land that you hold as a possession, you
must provide for the redemption of the land.

25 "'If one of your fellow Israelites becomes
poor and sells some of their property, their
nearest relative is to come and redeem what
they have sold. 26 If, however, there is no one
to redeem it for them but later on they pros-
per and acquire sufficient means to redeem it
themselves, 27 they are to determine the val-
ue for the years since they sold it and refund
the balance to the one to whom they sold it;
they can then go back to their own property.
28 But if they do not acquire the means to repay,
what was sold will remain in the possession of
the buyer until the Year of Jubilee. It will be
returned in the Jubilee, and they can then go
back to their property.

29 "'Anyone who sells a house in a walled
city retains the right of redemption a full year
after its sale. During that time the seller may
redeem it. 30 If it is not redeemed before a full
year has passed, the house in the walled city
shall belong permanently to the buyer and the
buyer's descendants. It is not to be returned
in the Jubilee. 31 But houses in villages with-
out walls around them are to be considered
as belonging to the open country. They can be
redeemed, and they are to be returned in the
Jubilee.

32 "'The Levites always have the right to re-
deem their houses in the Levitical towns, which
they possess. 33 So the property of the Levites is
redeemable — that is, a house sold in any town
they hold — and is to be returned in the Jubilee,
because the houses in the towns of the Levites
are their property among the Israelites. 34 But
the pastureland belonging to their towns must
not be sold; it is their permanent possession.

35 "'If any of your fellow Israelites become
poor and are unable to support themselves
among you, help them as you would a foreign-
er and stranger, so they can continue to live
among you. 36 Do not take interest or any prof-
it from them, but fear your God, so that they
may continue to live among you. 37 You must
not lend them money at interest or sell them
food at a profit. 38 I am the LORD your God, who
brought you out of Egypt to give you the land
of Canaan and to be your God.

39 "'If any of your fellow Israelites become
poor and sell themselves to you, do not make
them work as slaves. 40 They are to be treat-
ed as hired workers or temporary residents
among you; they are to work for you until the
Year of Jubilee. 41 Then they and their chil-
dren are to be released, and they will go back
to their own clans and to the property of their
ancestors. 42 Because the Israelites are my ser-
vants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must
not be sold as slaves. 43 Do not rule over them
ruthlessly, but fear your God.

44 "'Your male and female slaves are to come

from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. 45You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. 46You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.

47"'If a foreigner residing among you becomes rich and any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to the foreigner or to a member of the foreigner's clan, 48they retain the right of redemption after they have sold themselves. One of their relatives may redeem them: 49An uncle or a cousin or any blood relative in their clan may redeem them. Or if they prosper, they may redeem themselves. 50They and their buyer are to count the time from the year they sold themselves up to the Year of Jubilee. The price for their release is to be based on the rate paid to a hired worker for that number of years. 51If many years remain, they must pay for their redemption a larger share of the price paid for them. 52If only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, they are to compute that and pay for their redemption accordingly. 53They are to be treated as workers hired from year to year; you must see to it that those to whom they owe service do not rule over them ruthlessly.

54"'Even if someone is not redeemed in any of these ways, they and their children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee, 55for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Reward for Obedience

26 1"'Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God.

2"'Observe my Sabbaths and have reverence for my sanctuary. I am the LORD.

3"'If you follow my decrees and are careful to obey my commands, 4I will send you rain in its season, and the ground will yield its crops and the trees their fruit. 5Your threshing will continue until grape harvest and the grape harvest will continue until planting, and you will eat all the food you want and live in safety in your land.

6"'I will grant peace in the land, and you will lie down and no one will make you afraid. I will remove wild beasts from the land, and the sword will not pass through your country. 7You will pursue your enemies, and they will fall by the sword before you. 8Five of you will chase a hundred, and a hundred of you will chase ten thousand, and your enemies will fall by the sword before you.

9"'I will look on you with favor and make you fruitful and increase your numbers, and I will keep my covenant with you. 10You will still be eating last year's harvest when you will have to move it out to make room for the new. 11I will put my dwelling place[a] among you, and I will not abhor you. 12I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people. 13I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt so that you would no longer be slaves to the Egyptians; I broke the bars of your yoke and enabled you to walk with heads held high.

Punishment for Disobedience

14"'But if you will not listen to me and carry out all these commands, 15and if you reject my decrees and abhor my laws and fail to carry out all my commands and so violate my covenant, 16then I will do this to you: I will bring on you sudden terror, wasting diseases and fever that will destroy your sight and sap your strength. You will plant seed in vain, because your enemies will eat it. 17I will set my face against you so that you will be defeated by your enemies;

[a] 11 Or *my tabernacle*

Plants & Animals

The largest herds of domestic animals were sheep and goats. These could be attacked and killed by wolves and lions (Lev 26:6), and also by birds of prey. Like the lion, the Syrian bear was dangerous to human beings. It reaches over 500 pounds in weight and would inspire terror in anyone it threatened.

TIME CAPSULE		1446 to 1425 B.C.
1446		Moses leads exodus from Egypt (based on early Exodus)
1446–1406		The 40 years of wilderness wandering (based on early Exodus)
1445		Israelites depart from Mount Sinai (based on early Exodus)
1443		Thutmose III receives tribute from Alalakh
1439		Mitanni recovers all of northern Syria from Egypt
1425–1180		The New Kingdom of the Hittites

those who hate you will rule over you, and you will flee even when no one is pursuing you.

18"'If after all this you will not listen to me, I will punish you for your sins seven times over. 19I will break down your stubborn pride and make the sky above you like iron and the ground beneath you like bronze. 20Your strength will be spent in vain, because your soil will not yield its crops, nor will the trees of your land yield their fruit.

21"'If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. 22I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted.

23"'If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, 24I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. 25And I will bring the sword on you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands. 26When I cut off your supply of bread, ten women will be able to bake your bread in one oven, and they will dole out the bread by weight. You will eat, but you will not be satisfied.

27"'If in spite of this you still do not listen to me but continue to be hostile toward me, 28then in my anger I will be hostile toward you, and I myself will punish you for your sins seven times over. 29You will eat the flesh of your sons and the flesh of your daughters. 30I will destroy your high places, cut down your incense altars and pile your dead bodies[a] on the lifeless forms of your idols, and I will abhor you. 31I will turn your cities into ruins and lay waste your sanctuaries, and I will take no delight in the pleasing aroma of your offerings. 32I myself will lay waste the land, so that your enemies who live there will be appalled. 33I will scatter you among the nations and will draw out my sword and pursue you. Your land will be laid waste, and your cities will lie in ruins. 34Then the land will enjoy its sabbath years all the time that it lies desolate and you are in the country of your enemies; then the land will rest and enjoy its sabbaths. 35All the time that it lies desolate, the land will have the rest it did not have during the sabbaths you lived in it.

36"'As for those of you who are left, I will make their hearts so fearful in the lands of their enemies that the sound of a windblown leaf will put them to flight. They will run as though fleeing from the sword, and they will fall, even though no one is pursuing them. 37They will stumble over one another as though fleeing from the sword, even though no one is pursuing them. So you will not be able to stand before your enemies. 38You will perish among the nations; the land of your enemies will devour you. 39Those of you who are left will waste away in the lands of their enemies because of their sins; also because of their ancestors' sins they will waste away.

40"'But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their ancestors—their unfaithfulness and their hostility toward me, 41which made me hostile toward them so that I sent them into the land of their enemies—then when their uncircumcised hearts are humbled and they pay for their sin, 42I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. 43For the land will be deserted by them and will enjoy its sabbaths while it lies desolate without them. They will pay for their sins because they rejected my laws and abhorred my decrees. 44Yet in spite of this, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the LORD their God. 45But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the LORD.'"

46These are the decrees, the laws and the regulations that the LORD established at Mount Sinai between himself and the Israelites through Moses.

Redeeming What Is the LORD's

27 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If anyone makes a special vow to dedicate a person to the LORD by giving the equivalent value, 3set the value of a male between the ages of twenty and sixty at fifty shekels[b] of silver, according to the sanctuary shekel[c]; 4for a female, set her value at thirty shekels[d]; 5for a person between the ages of five and twenty, set the value of a male at twenty shekels[e] and of a female at ten shekels[f]; 6for a person between one month and five years, set the value of a male at five shekels[g]

[a] *30* Or *your funeral offerings* [b] *3* That is, about 1 1/4 pounds or about 575 grams; also in verse 16 [c] *3* That is, about 2/5 ounce or about 12 grams; also in verse 25 [d] *4* That is, about 12 ounces or about 345 grams [e] *5* That is, about 8 ounces or about 230 grams [f] *5* That is, about 4 ounces or about 115 grams; also in verse 7 [g] *6* That is, about 2 ounces or about 58 grams

of silver and that of a female at three shekels[a] of silver; [7]for a person sixty years old or more, set the value of a male at fifteen shekels[b] and of a female at ten shekels. [8]If anyone making the vow is too poor to pay the specified amount, the person being dedicated is to be presented to the priest, who will set the value according to what the one making the vow can afford.

[9]"'If what they vowed is an animal that is acceptable as an offering to the LORD, such an animal given to the LORD becomes holy. [10]They must not exchange it or substitute a good one for a bad one, or a bad one for a good one; if they should substitute one animal for another, both it and the substitute become holy. [11]If what they vowed is a ceremonially unclean animal—one that is not acceptable as an offering to the LORD—the animal must be presented to the priest, [12]who will judge its quality as good or bad. Whatever value the priest then sets, that is what it will be. [13]If the owner wishes to redeem the animal, a fifth must be added to its value.

[14]"'If anyone dedicates their house as something holy to the LORD, the priest will judge its quality as good or bad. Whatever value the priest then sets, so it will remain. [15]If the one who dedicates their house wishes to redeem it, they must add a fifth to its value, and the house will again become theirs.

[16]"'If anyone dedicates to the LORD part of their family land, its value is to be set according to the amount of seed required for it—fifty shekels of silver to a homer[c] of barley seed. [17]If they dedicate a field during the Year of Jubilee, the value that has been set remains. [18]But if they dedicate a field after the Jubilee, the priest will determine the value according to the number of years that remain until the next Year of Jubilee, and its set value will be reduced. [19]If the one who dedicates the field wishes to redeem it, they must add a fifth to its value, and the field will again become theirs. [20]If, however, they do not redeem the field, or if they have sold it to someone else, it can never be redeemed. [21]When the field is released in the Jubilee, it will become holy, like a field devoted to the LORD; it will become priestly property.

[22]"'If anyone dedicates to the LORD a field they have bought, which is not part of their family land, [23]the priest will determine its value up to the Year of Jubilee, and the owner must pay its value on that day as something holy to the LORD. [24]In the Year of Jubilee the field will revert to the person from whom it was bought, the one whose land it was. [25]Every value is to be set according to the sanctuary shekel, twenty gerahs to the shekel.

[26]"'No one, however, may dedicate the firstborn of an animal, since the firstborn already belongs to the LORD; whether an ox[d] or a sheep, it is the LORD's. [27]If it is one of the unclean animals, it may be bought back at its set value, adding a fifth of the value to it. If it is not redeemed, it is to be sold at its set value.

[28]"'But nothing that a person owns and devotes[e] to the LORD—whether a human being or an animal or family land—may be sold or redeemed; everything so devoted is most holy to the LORD.

[29]"'No person devoted to destruction[f] may be ransomed; they are to be put to death.

[30]"'A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD; it is holy to the LORD. [31]Whoever would redeem any of their tithe must add a fifth of the value to it. [32]Every tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the LORD. [33]No one may pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If anyone does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.'"

[34]These are the commands the LORD gave Moses at Mount Sinai for the Israelites.

[a] *6* That is, about 1 1/4 ounces or about 35 grams
[b] *7* That is, about 6 ounces or about 175 grams
[c] *16* That is, probably about 300 pounds or about 135 kilograms
[d] *26* The Hebrew word can refer to either male or female.
[e] *28* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD.
[f] *29* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

TRANSITION

The Book of Numbers

In the Hebrew Bible, this book is entitled "In the Wilderness." The name "Numbers" comes from the Greek translation of the Old Testament and refers specifically to the census figures given in two census reports: Nu 1:2–46 and 26:2–51.

The content of the Book of Numbers is diverse, moving back and forth between lists and laws and narratives, making it hard to identify any single outline or structure. The book begins in the same vein as Leviticus, with more divine instructions from Mount Sinai, still stressing priestly matters. These laws conclude in ch. 10, and the Israelites set out for the promised land.

Israel needed organization in order to reach that "land flowing with milk and honey," and

God instructed Moses to take a census (Nu 1:2) so that the people would be organized both for travel and for warfare. This first census took place in the 2nd month of the 2nd year of the Exodus, either 1445 or 1274 B.C. (see "Egypt and the Exodus" at Ex 1:1). In that same month and year, Moses and the people departed from Sinai (Nu 10:11–13).

The census numbers are surprisingly large, and interpreters have often been puzzled by them. For instance, how could 603,550 fighting men (Nu 1:45, 46) be intimidated by the tiny nation of Edom (Nu 20:14–21)? To answer such questions, many have noted that the Hebrew word for "thousand" is the same as the word for "clan." Understood that way, the numbers would be considerably lower.

The narratives of Nu 10–25 take up where those of Exodus leave off and in many ways parallel the accounts of Israel's grumbling against God in Ex 16; 17. Indeed, the people appear even more dissatisfied in Numbers. In the end, God decrees that this complaining generation, including Moses himself, would not enter the promised land.

• **Numbers 1:1—8:26**

Numbers

The Census

1 :1 The LORD spoke to Moses in the tent of meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said:
2 "Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. 3 You and Aaron are to count according to their divisions all the men in Israel who are twenty years old or more and able to serve in the army. 4 One man from each tribe, each of them the head of his family, is to help you. 5 These are the names of the men who are to assist you:

from Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur;
6 from Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;
7 from Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab;
8 from Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar;
9 from Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon;
10 from the sons of Joseph:
from Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud;
from Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur;
11 from Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni;
12 from Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;
13 from Asher, Pagiel son of Okran;
14 from Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel;
15 from Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan."

16 These were the men appointed from the community, the leaders of their ancestral tribes. They were the heads of the clans of Israel.
17 Moses and Aaron took these men whose names had been specified, 18 and they called the whole community together on the first day of the second month. The people registered their ancestry by their clans and families, and the men twenty years old or more were listed by name, one by one, 19 as the LORD commanded Moses. And so he counted them in the Desert of Sinai:

20 From the descendants of Reuben the firstborn son of Israel:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, one by one, according to the records of their clans and families.
21 The number from the tribe of Reuben was 46,500.

22 From the descendants of Simeon:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were counted and listed by name, one by one, according to the records of their clans and families. 23 The number from the tribe of Simeon was 59,300.

24 From the descendants of Gad:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 25 The number from the tribe of Gad was 45,650.

26 From the descendants of Judah:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 27 The number from the tribe of Judah was 74,600.

28 From the descendants of Issachar:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were

Politics & Government
A census is an official count of a population and is usually understood as an assertion of government power. Frequently its purpose is taxation. In Nu 1:2 it is a means of raising an army. By 1800 B.C. the city of Mari on the Euphrates River had a military census in its archives.

listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 29The number from the tribe of Issachar was 54,400.

30From the descendants of Zebulun:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 31The number from the tribe of Zebulun was 57,400.

32From the sons of Joseph:
From the descendants of Ephraim:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 33The number from the tribe of Ephraim was 40,500.
34From the descendants of Manasseh:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 35The number from the tribe of Manasseh was 32,200.

36From the descendants of Benjamin:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 37The number from the tribe of Benjamin was 35,400.

38From the descendants of Dan:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 39The number from the tribe of Dan was 62,700.

40From the descendants of Asher:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 41The number from the tribe of Asher was 41,500.

42From the descendants of Naphtali:
All the men twenty years old or more who were able to serve in the army were listed by name, according to the records of their clans and families. 43The number from the tribe of Naphtali was 53,400.

44These were the men counted by Moses and Aaron and the twelve leaders of Israel, each one representing his family. 45All the Israelites twenty years old or more who were able to serve in Israel's army were counted according to their families. 46The total number was 603,550.

47The ancestral tribe of the Levites, however, was not counted along with the others. 48The LORD had said to Moses: 49"You must not count the tribe of Levi or include them in the census of the other Israelites. 50Instead, appoint the Levites to be in charge of the tabernacle of the covenant law — over all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they are to take care of it and encamp around it. 51Whenever the tabernacle is to move, the Levites are to take it down, and whenever the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall do it. Anyone else who approaches it is to be put to death. 52The Israelites are to set up their tents by divisions, each of them in their own camp under their standard. 53The Levites, however, are to set up their tents around the tabernacle of the covenant law so that my wrath will not fall on the Israelite community. The Levites are to be responsible for the care of the tabernacle of the covenant law."
54The Israelites did all this just as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Arrangement of the Tribal Camps

2 1The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: 2"The Israelites are to camp around the tent of meeting some distance from it, each of them under their standard and holding the banners of their family."

3On the east, toward the sunrise, the divisions of the camp of Judah are to encamp under their standard. The leader of the people of Judah is Nahshon son of Amminadab. 4His division numbers 74,600.
5The tribe of Issachar will camp next to them. The leader of the people of Issachar

TIME CAPSULE	1406 to 1405 B.C.
1406	Israelites reach the plains of Moab (based on early Exodus; Nu 22:1)
1406	Aaron dies on Mount Hor (early Exodus; Nu 33:38)
1406	Moses is buried in Moab (early Exodus; Dt 34:5, 6)
1405	Joshua leads Israelite conquest of Canaan (based on early Exodus)
1405–1403	Pharaoh Amenhotep II leads two campaigns into Canaan, quelling revolts

is Nethanel son of Zuar. 6His division numbers 54,400.

7The tribe of Zebulun will be next. The leader of the people of Zebulun is Eliab son of Helon. 8His division numbers 57,400.

9All the men assigned to the camp of Judah, according to their divisions, number 186,400. They will set out first.

10On the south will be the divisions of the camp of Reuben under their standard. The leader of the people of Reuben is Elizur son of Shedeur. 11His division numbers 46,500.

12The tribe of Simeon will camp next to them. The leader of the people of Simeon is Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. 13His division numbers 59,300.

14The tribe of Gad will be next. The leader of the people of Gad is Eliasaph son of Deuel.[a] 15His division numbers 45,650.

16All the men assigned to the camp of Reuben, according to their divisions, number 151,450. They will set out second.

17Then the tent of meeting and the camp of the Levites will set out in the middle of the camps. They will set out in the same order as they encamp, each in their own place under their standard.

18On the west will be the divisions of the camp of Ephraim under their standard. The leader of the people of Ephraim is Elishama son of Ammihud. 19His division numbers 40,500.

20The tribe of Manasseh will be next to them. The leader of the people of Manasseh is Gamaliel son of Pedahzur. 21His division numbers 32,200.

22The tribe of Benjamin will be next. The leader of the people of Benjamin is Abidan son of Gideoni. 23His division numbers 35,400.

24All the men assigned to the camp of Ephraim, according to their divisions, number 108,100. They will set out third.

25On the north will be the divisions of the camp of Dan under their standard. The leader of the people of Dan is Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai. 26His division numbers 62,700.

27The tribe of Asher will camp next to them. The leader of the people of Asher is Pagiel son of Okran. 28His division numbers 41,500.

29The tribe of Naphtali will be next. The leader of the people of Naphtali is Ahira son of Enan. 30His division numbers 53,400.

31All the men assigned to the camp of Dan number 157,600. They will set out last, under their standards.

32These are the Israelites, counted according to their families. All the men in the camps, by their divisions, number 603,550. 33The Levites, however, were not counted along with the other Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses.

34So the Israelites did everything the LORD commanded Moses; that is the way they encamped under their standards, and that is the way they set out, each of them with their clan and family.

The Levites

3 1This is the account of the family of Aaron and Moses at the time the LORD spoke to Moses at Mount Sinai.

2The names of the sons of Aaron were Nadab the firstborn and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 3Those were the names of Aaron's sons, the anointed priests, who were ordained to serve as priests. 4Nadab and Abihu, however, died before the LORD when they made an offering with unauthorized fire before him in the Desert of Sinai. They had no sons, so Eleazar and Ithamar served as priests during the lifetime of their father Aaron.

5The LORD said to Moses, 6"Bring the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron the priest to assist him. 7They are to perform duties for him and for the whole community at the tent of meeting by doing the work of the tabernacle. 8They are to take care of all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, fulfilling the obligations of the Israelites by doing the work of the tabernacle. 9Give the Levites to Aaron and his sons; they are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to him.[b] 10Appoint Aaron and his sons to serve as priests; anyone else who approaches the sanctuary is to be put to death."

11The LORD also said to Moses, 12"I have taken the Levites from among the Israelites in place of the first male offspring of every Israelite woman. The Levites are mine, 13for all the firstborn are mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set apart for myself every firstborn in Israel, whether human or animal. They are to be mine. I am the LORD."

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[a] *14* Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch and Vulgate (see also 1:14); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *Reuel* [b] *9* Most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text; some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch and Septuagint (see also 8:16) *to me*

14The Lord said to Moses in the Desert of
Sinai, 15"Count the Levites by their families
and clans. Count every male a month old or
more." 16So Moses counted them, as he was
commanded by the word of the Lord.
17These were the names of the sons of Levi:
Gershon, Kohath and Merari.
18These were the names of the Gershonite
clans:
Libni and Shimei.
19The Kohathite clans:
Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.
20The Merarite clans:
Mahli and Mushi.
These were the Levite clans, according to
their families.

21To Gershon belonged the clans of the Lib-
nites and Shimeites; these were the Gershonite
clans. 22The number of all the males a month
old or more who were counted was 7,500. 23The
Gershonite clans were to camp on the west, be-
hind the tabernacle. 24The leader of the fam-
ilies of the Gershonites was Eliasaph son of
Lael. 25At the tent of meeting the Gershonites
were responsible for the care of the taberna-
cle and tent, its coverings, the curtain at the
entrance to the tent of meeting, 26the curtains
of the courtyard, the curtain at the entrance to
the courtyard surrounding the tabernacle and
altar, and the ropes—and everything related
to their use.

27To Kohath belonged the clans of the Am-
ramites, Izharites, Hebronites and Uzzielites;
these were the Kohathite clans. 28The number
of all the males a month old or more was 8,600.[a]
The Kohathites were responsible for the care
of the sanctuary. 29The Kohathite clans were
to camp on the south side of the tabernacle.
30The leader of the families of the Kohath-
ite clans was Elizaphan son of Uzziel. 31They
were responsible for the care of the ark, the
table, the lampstand, the altars, the articles of
the sanctuary used in ministering, the curtain,
and everything related to their use. 32The chief
leader of the Levites was Eleazar son of Aaron,
the priest. He was appointed over those who
were responsible for the care of the sanctuary.

33To Merari belonged the clans of the Mah-
lites and the Mushites; these were the Merarite
clans. 34The number of all the males a month
old or more who were counted was 6,200. 35The
leader of the families of the Merarite clans was
Zuriel son of Abihail; they were to camp on the
north side of the tabernacle. 36The Merarites
were appointed to take care of the frames of the
tabernacle, its crossbars, posts, bases, all its
equipment, and everything related to their use,
37as well as the posts of the surrounding court-
yard with their bases, tent pegs and ropes.

38Moses and Aaron and his sons were to
camp to the east of the tabernacle, toward the
sunrise, in front of the tent of meeting. They
were responsible for the care of the sanctuary
on behalf of the Israelites. Anyone else who ap-
proached the sanctuary was to be put to death.

39The total number of Levites counted at
the Lord's command by Moses and Aaron ac-
cording to their clans, including every male a
month old or more, was 22,000.

40The Lord said to Moses, "Count all the
firstborn Israelite males who are a month old
or more and make a list of their names. 41Take
the Levites for me in place of all the firstborn of
the Israelites, and the livestock of the Levites in
place of all the firstborn of the livestock of the
Israelites. I am the Lord."
42So Moses counted all the firstborn of the
Israelites, as the Lord commanded him. 43The
total number of firstborn males a month old or
more, listed by name, was 22,273.
44The Lord also said to Moses, 45"Take the
Levites in place of all the firstborn of Israel,
and the livestock of the Levites in place of their
livestock. The Levites are to be mine. I am the
Lord. 46To redeem the 273 firstborn Israelites
who exceed the number of the Levites, 47col-
lect five shekels[b] for each one, according to the
sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs.
48Give the money for the redemption of the ad-
ditional Israelites to Aaron and his sons."
49So Moses collected the redemption mon-
ey from those who exceeded the number re-
deemed by the Levites. 50From the firstborn of
the Israelites he collected silver weighing 1,365
shekels,[c] according to the sanctuary shekel.
51Moses gave the redemption money to Aar-
on and his sons, as he was commanded by the
word of the Lord.

The Kohathites

4 1The Lord said to Moses and Aaron: 2"Take
a census of the Kohathite branch of the Le-
vites by their clans and families. 3Count all the
men from thirty to fifty years of age who come
to serve in the work at the tent of meeting.

[a] *28* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts *8,300*
[b] *47* That is, about 2 ounces or about 58 grams
[c] *50* That is, about 35 pounds or about 16 kilograms

4 "This is the work of the Kohathites at the
tent of meeting: the care of the most holy
things. 5 When the camp is to move, Aaron and
his sons are to go in and take down the shield-
ing curtain and put it over the ark of the cov-
enant law. 6 Then they are to cover the curtain
with a durable leather,[a] spread a cloth of solid
blue over that and put the poles in place.
7 "Over the table of the Presence they are
to spread a blue cloth and put on it the plates,
dishes and bowls, and the jars for drink offer-
ings; the bread that is continually there is to
remain on it. 8 They are to spread a scarlet cloth
over them, cover that with the durable leather
and put the poles in place.
9 "They are to take a blue cloth and cover
the lampstand that is for light, together with
its lamps, its wick trimmers and trays, and all
its jars for the olive oil used to supply it. 10 Then
they are to wrap it and all its accessories in a
covering of the durable leather and put it on a
carrying frame.
11 "Over the gold altar they are to spread a
blue cloth and cover that with the durable
leather and put the poles in place.
12 "They are to take all the articles used for
ministering in the sanctuary, wrap them in a
blue cloth, cover that with the durable leather
and put them on a carrying frame.
13 "They are to remove the ashes from the
bronze altar and spread a purple cloth over it.
14 Then they are to place on it all the utensils
used for ministering at the altar, including the
firepans, meat forks, shovels and sprinkling
bowls. Over it they are to spread a covering of
the durable leather and put the poles in place.
15 "After Aaron and his sons have finished
covering the holy furnishings and all the holy
articles, and when the camp is ready to move,
only then are the Kohathites to come and do
the carrying. But they must not touch the holy
things or they will die. The Kohathites are to
carry those things that are in the tent of meet-
ing.
16 "Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, is to have
charge of the oil for the light, the fragrant
incense, the regular grain offering and the
anointing oil. He is to be in charge of the en-
tire tabernacle and everything in it, including
its holy furnishings and articles."
17 The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 18 "See
that the Kohathite tribal clans are not de-
stroyed from among the Levites. 19 So that they
may live and not die when they come near the
most holy things, do this for them: Aaron and
his sons are to go into the sanctuary and as-
sign to each man his work and what he is to
carry. 20 But the Kohathites must not go in to
look at the holy things, even for a moment, or
they will die."

The Gershonites

21 The LORD said to Moses, 22 "Take a census
also of the Gershonites by their families and
clans. 23 Count all the men from thirty to fifty
years of age who come to serve in the work at
the tent of meeting.
24 "This is the service of the Gershonite clans
in their carrying and their other work: 25 They
are to carry the curtains of the tabernacle, that
is, the tent of meeting, its covering and its out-
er covering of durable leather, the curtains for
the entrance to the tent of meeting, 26 the cur-
tains of the courtyard surrounding the taber-
nacle and altar, the curtain for the entrance to
the courtyard, the ropes and all the equipment
used in the service of the tent. The Gershonites
are to do all that needs to be done with these
things. 27 All their service, whether carrying or
doing other work, is to be done under the di-
rection of Aaron and his sons. You shall assign
to them as their responsibility all they are to
carry. 28 This is the service of the Gershonite
clans at the tent of meeting. Their duties are to
be under the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron,
the priest.

[a] *6* Possibly the hides of large aquatic mammals; also in verses 8, 10, 11, 12, 14 and 25

Mycenaean vase, 1400–1100 B.C.

The Merarites

29"Count the Merarites by their clans and
families. 30Count all the men from thirty to fifty
years of age who come to serve in the work at
the tent of meeting. 31As part of all their ser-
vice at the tent, they are to carry the frames of
the tabernacle, its crossbars, posts and bases,
32as well as the posts of the surrounding court-
yard with their bases, tent pegs, ropes, all their
equipment and everything related to their use.
Assign to each man the specific things he is
to carry. 33This is the service of the Merarite
clans as they work at the tent of meeting un-
der the direction of Ithamar son of Aaron, the
priest."

The Numbering of the Levite Clans

34Moses, Aaron and the leaders of the com-
munity counted the Kohathites by their clans
and families. 35All the men from thirty to fifty
years of age who came to serve in the work at
the tent of meeting, 36counted by clans, were
2,750. 37This was the total of all those in the Ko-
hathite clans who served at the tent of meeting.
Moses and Aaron counted them according to
the LORD's command through Moses.

38The Gershonites were counted by their
clans and families. 39All the men from thirty to
fifty years of age who came to serve in the work
at the tent of meeting, 40counted by their clans
and families, were 2,630. 41This was the total
of those in the Gershonite clans who served at
the tent of meeting. Moses and Aaron counted
them according to the LORD's command.

42The Merarites were counted by their clans
and families. 43All the men from thirty to fifty
years of age who came to serve in the work at
the tent of meeting, 44counted by their clans,
were 3,200. 45This was the total of those in
the Merarite clans. Moses and Aaron count-
ed them according to the LORD's command
through Moses.

46So Moses, Aaron and the leaders of Israel
counted all the Levites by their clans and fam-
ilies. 47All the men from thirty to fifty years
of age who came to do the work of serving
and carrying the tent of meeting 48numbered
8,580. 49At the LORD's command through Mo-
ses, each was assigned his work and told what
to carry.

Thus they were counted, as the LORD com-
manded Moses.

The Purity of the Camp

5 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Command the
Israelites to send away from the camp any-
one who has a defiling skin disease[a] or a dis-
charge of any kind, or who is ceremonially un-
clean because of a dead body. 3Send away male
and female alike; send them outside the camp
so they will not defile their camp, where I dwell
among them." 4The Israelites did so; they sent
them outside the camp. They did just as the
LORD had instructed Moses.

Restitution for Wrongs

5The LORD said to Moses, 6"Say to the Isra-
elites: 'Any man or woman who wrongs anoth-
er in any way[b] and so is unfaithful to the LORD
is guilty 7and must confess the sin they have
committed. They must make full restitution for
the wrong they have done, add a fifth of the val-
ue to it and give it all to the person they have
wronged. 8But if that person has no close rel-
ative to whom restitution can be made for the
wrong, the restitution belongs to the LORD and
must be given to the priest, along with the ram
with which atonement is made for the wrong-
doer. 9All the sacred contributions the Israelites
bring to a priest will belong to him. 10Sacred
things belong to their owners, but what they
give to the priest will belong to the priest.'"

The Test for an Unfaithful Wife

11Then the LORD said to Moses, 12"Speak to
the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man's wife
goes astray and is unfaithful to him 13so that
another man has sexual relations with her, and
this is hidden from her husband and her im-
purity is undetected (since there is no witness
against her and she has not been caught in the
act), 14and if feelings of jealousy come over her
husband and he suspects his wife and she is
impure—or if he is jealous and suspects her
even though she is not impure— 15then he is
to take his wife to the priest. He must also take
an offering of a tenth of an ephah[c] of barley
flour on her behalf. He must not pour olive oil
on it or put incense on it, because it is a grain
offering for jealousy, a reminder-offering to
draw attention to wrongdoing.

16"'The priest shall bring her and have her
stand before the LORD. 17Then he shall take
some holy water in a clay jar and put some dust
from the tabernacle floor into the water. 18After
the priest has had the woman stand before the
LORD, he shall loosen her hair and place in her
hands the reminder-offering, the grain offering
for jealousy, while he himself holds the bitter
water that brings a curse. 19Then the priest

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[a] *2* The Hebrew word for *defiling skin disease*, traditionally translated "leprosy," was used for various diseases affecting the skin. [b] *6* Or *woman who commits any wrong common to mankind* [c] *15* That is, probably about 3 1/2 pounds or about 1.6 kilograms

shall put the woman under oath and say to her, "If no other man has had sexual relations with you and you have not gone astray and become impure while married to your husband, may this bitter water that brings a curse not harm you. 20But if you have gone astray while married to your husband and you have made yourself impure by having sexual relations with a man other than your husband"— 21here the priest is to put the woman under this curse— "may the LORD cause you to become a curse[a] among your people when he makes your womb miscarry and your abdomen swell. 22May this water that brings a curse enter your body so that your abdomen swells or your womb miscarries."

"'Then the woman is to say, "Amen. So be it."

23"'The priest is to write these curses on a scroll and then wash them off into the bitter water. 24He shall make the woman drink the bitter water that brings a curse, and this water that brings a curse and causes bitter suffering will enter her. 25The priest is to take from her hands the grain offering for jealousy, wave it before the LORD and bring it to the altar. 26The priest is then to take a handful of the grain offering as a memorial[b] offering and burn it on the altar; after that, he is to have the woman drink the water. 27If she has made herself impure and been unfaithful to her husband, this will be the result: When she is made to drink the water that brings a curse and causes bitter suffering, it will enter her, her abdomen will swell and her womb will miscarry, and she will become a curse. 28If, however, the woman has not made herself impure, but is clean, she will be cleared of guilt and will be able to have children.

29"'This, then, is the law of jealousy when a woman goes astray and makes herself impure while married to her husband, 30or when feelings of jealousy come over a man because he suspects his wife. The priest is to have her stand before the LORD and is to apply this entire law to her. 31The husband will be innocent of any wrongdoing, but the woman will bear the consequences of her sin.'"

Culture & Society

An ordeal is a way of deciding whether a person is innocent or guilty. Whether the person is harmed or safe under a particular trial is supposed to reveal guilt or innocence. Ordeals were common in the ancient Middle East. The Bible describes only one ordeal (Nu 5:17–28). In it, the punishment as well as the determination of guilt is referred to God (5:21, 22, 27).

The Nazirite

6 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of dedication to the LORD as a Nazirite, 3they must abstain from wine and other fermented drink and must not drink vinegar made from wine or other fermented drink. They must not drink grape juice or eat grapes or raisins. 4As long as they remain under their Nazirite vow, they must not eat anything that comes from the grapevine, not even the seeds or skins.

5"'During the entire period of their Nazirite vow, no razor may be used on their head. They must be holy until the period of their dedication to the LORD is over; they must let their hair grow long.

6"'Throughout the period of their dedication to the LORD, the Nazirite must not go near a dead body. 7Even if their own father or mother or brother or sister dies, they must not make themselves ceremonially unclean on account of them, because the symbol of their dedication to God is on their head. 8Throughout the period of their dedication, they are consecrated to the LORD.

9"'If someone dies suddenly in the Nazirite's presence, thus defiling the hair that symbolizes their dedication, they must shave their head on the seventh day— the day of their cleansing. 10Then on the eighth day they must bring two doves or two young pigeons to the priest at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 11The priest is to offer one as a sin offering[c] and the other as a burnt offering to make atonement for the Nazirite because they sinned by being in the presence of the dead body. That same day they are to consecrate their head again. 12They must rededicate themselves to the LORD for the same period of dedication and must bring a year-old male lamb as a guilt offering. The previous days do not count, because they became defiled during their period of dedication.

13"'Now this is the law of the Nazirite when the period of their dedication is over. They are to be brought to the entrance to the tent of meeting. 14There they are to present their offerings to the LORD: a year-old male lamb without defect for a burnt offering, a year-old ewe lamb without defect for a sin offering, a ram without defect for a fellowship offering, 15together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and a basket of bread made with the

[a] *21* That is, may he cause your name to be used in cursing (see Jer. 29:22); or, may others see that you are cursed; similarly in verse 27. [b] *26* Or *representative*
[c] *11* Or *purification offering*; also in verses 14 and 16

finest flour and without yeast—thick loaves
with olive oil mixed in, and thin loaves brushed
with olive oil.
16"'The priest is to present all these before
the LORD and make the sin offering and the
burnt offering. 17He is to present the basket of
unleavened bread and is to sacrifice the ram as
a fellowship offering to the LORD, together with
its grain offering and drink offering.
18"'Then at the entrance to the tent of meet-
ing, the Nazirite must shave off the hair that
symbolizes their dedication. They are to take
the hair and put it in the fire that is under the
sacrifice of the fellowship offering.
19"'After the Nazirite has shaved off the hair
that symbolizes their dedication, the priest is
to place in their hands a boiled shoulder of the
ram, and one thick loaf and one thin loaf from
the basket, both made without yeast. 20The
priest shall then wave these before the LORD
as a wave offering; they are holy and belong
to the priest, together with the breast that was
waved and the thigh that was presented. After
that, the Nazirite may drink wine.
21"'This is the law of the Nazirite who vows
offerings to the LORD in accordance with their
dedication, in addition to whatever else they
can afford. They must fulfill the vows they have
made, according to the law of the Nazirite.'"

The Priestly Blessing

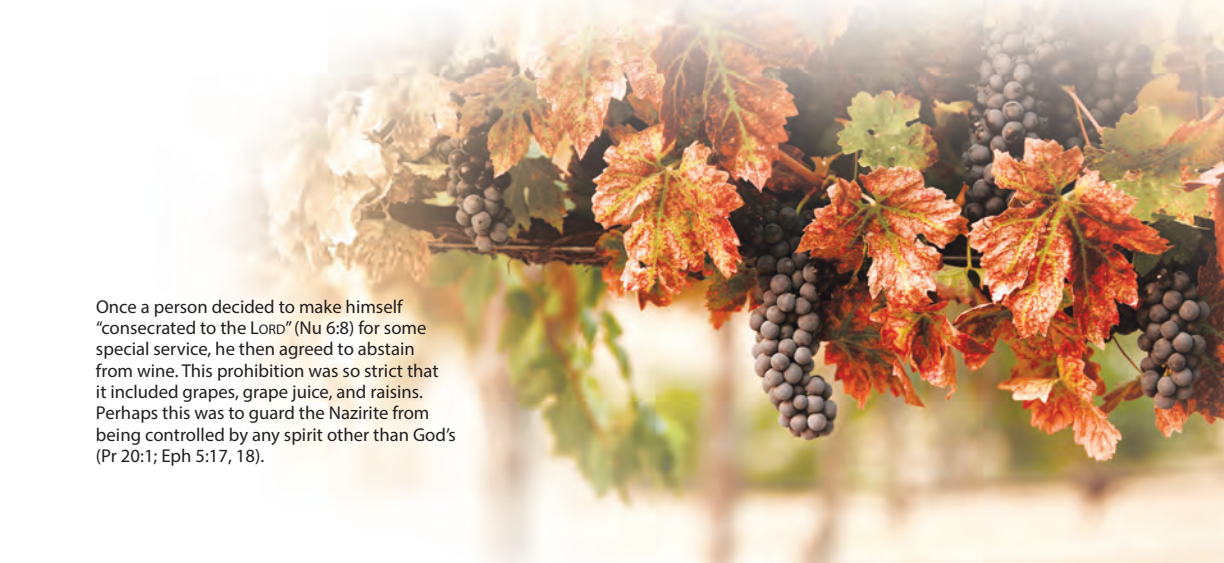
22The LORD said to Moses, 23"Tell Aaron and
his sons, 'This is how you are to bless the Isra-
elites. Say to them:

24"'"The LORD bless you
and keep you;
25the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
26the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace."'

27"So they will put my name on the Israelites,
and I will bless them."

Offerings at the Dedication of the Tabernacle

7 1When Moses finished setting up the taber-
nacle, he anointed and consecrated it and
all its furnishings. He also anointed and con-
secrated the altar and all its utensils. 2Then
the leaders of Israel, the heads of families who
were the tribal leaders in charge of those who
were counted, made offerings. 3They brought
as their gifts before the LORD six covered carts
and twelve oxen—an ox from each leader and
a cart from every two. These they presented
before the tabernacle.
4The LORD said to Moses, 5"Accept these
from them, that they may be used in the work
at the tent of meeting. Give them to the Levites
as each man's work requires."
6So Moses took the carts and oxen and gave
them to the Levites. 7He gave two carts and
four oxen to the Gershonites, as their work re-
quired, 8and he gave four carts and eight oxen
to the Merarites, as their work required. They
were all under the direction of Ithamar son of
Aaron, the priest. 9But Moses did not give any
to the Kohathites, because they were to carry
on their shoulders the holy things, for which
they were responsible.
10When the altar was anointed, the leaders
brought their offerings for its dedication and
presented them before the altar. 11For the
LORD had said to Moses, "Each day one leader
is to bring his offering for the dedication of the
altar."



Once a person decided to make himself "consecrated to the LORD" (Nu 6:8) for some special service, he then agreed to abstain from wine. This prohibition was so strict that it included grapes, grape juice, and raisins. Perhaps this was to guard the Nazirite from being controlled by any spirit other than God's (Pr 20:1; Eph 5:17, 18).

12 The one who brought his offering on the first
day was Nahshon son of Amminadab of the
tribe of Judah.
13 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels[a] and one
silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy
shekels,[b] both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour
mixed with olive oil as a grain offering;
14 one gold dish weighing ten shekels,[c]
filled with incense; 15 one young bull, one
ram and one male lamb a year old for a
burnt offering; 16 one male goat for a sin
offering[d]; 17 and two oxen, five rams, five
male goats and five male lambs a year old
to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering.
This was the offering of Nahshon son of
Amminadab.

18 On the second day Nethanel son of Zuar, the
leader of Issachar, brought his offering.
19 The offering he brought was one silver
plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the
sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 20 one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; 21 one young bull,
one ram and one male lamb a year old for a
burnt offering; 22 one male goat for a sin offering; 23 and two oxen, five rams, five male
goats and five male lambs a year old to be
sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This
was the offering of Nethanel son of Zuar.

24 On the third day, Eliab son of Helon, the
leader of the people of Zebulun, brought his
offering.
25 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one
silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy
shekels, both according to the sanctuary
shekel, each filled with the finest flour
mixed with olive oil as a grain offering;
26 one gold dish weighing ten shekels,
filled with incense; 27 one young bull, one
ram and one male lamb a year old for a
burnt offering; 28 one male goat for a sin offering; 29 and two oxen, five rams, five male
goats and five male lambs a year old to be
sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This
was the offering of Eliab son of Helon.

30 On the fourth day Elizur son of Shedeur, the
leader of the people of Reuben, brought his offering.
31 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one
silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy
shekels, both according to the sanctuary
shekel, each filled with the finest flour
mixed with olive oil as a grain offering;
32 one gold dish weighing ten shekels,
filled with incense; 33 one young bull, one
ram and one male lamb a year old for a
burnt offering; 34 one male goat for a sin offering; 35 and two oxen, five rams, five male
goats and five male lambs a year old to be
sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This
was the offering of Elizur son of Shedeur.

36 On the fifth day Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai, the leader of the people of Simeon, brought
his offering.
37 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one
silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy
shekels, both according to the sanctuary
shekel, each filled with the finest flour
mixed with olive oil as a grain offering;
38 one gold dish weighing ten shekels,
filled with incense; 39 one young bull, one
ram and one male lamb a year old for a
burnt offering; 40 one male goat for a sin
offering; 41 and two oxen, five rams, five
male goats and five male lambs a year old
to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering.
This was the offering of Shelumiel son of
Zurishaddai.

42 On the sixth day Eliasaph son of Deuel, the
leader of the people of Gad, brought his offering.
43 His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one
silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy
shekels, both according to the sanctuary
shekel, each filled with the finest flour
mixed with olive oil as a grain offering;
44 one gold dish weighing ten shekels,
filled with incense; 45 one young bull, one

Religion & Worship
This list of the gifts presented to the Lord is highly formal and ceremonial (Nu 7:12–83). It resembles Egyptian pictures dating from 2650 B.C. that show servant after servant presenting trays of offerings to the temple. The ceremonial repetition produces an effect of order and abundance.

[a] *13* That is, about 3 1/4 pounds or about 1.5 kilograms; also elsewhere in this chapter [b] *13* That is, about 1 3/4 pounds or about 800 grams; also elsewhere in this chapter
[c] *14* That is, about 4 ounces or about 115 grams; also elsewhere in this chapter [d] *16* Or *purification offering*; also elsewhere in this chapter

ram and one male lamb a year old for a burnt offering; [46]one male goat for a sin offering; [47]and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Eliasaph son of Deuel.

[48]On the seventh day Elishama son of Ammihud, the leader of the people of Ephraim, brought his offering.

[49]His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; [50]one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; [51]one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old for a burnt offering; [52]one male goat for a sin offering; [53]and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Elishama son of Ammihud.

[54]On the eighth day Gamaliel son of Pedahzur, the leader of the people of Manasseh, brought his offering.

[55]His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; [56]one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; [57]one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old for a burnt offering; [58]one male goat for a sin offering; [59]and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Gamaliel son of Pedahzur.

[60]On the ninth day Abidan son of Gideoni, the leader of the people of Benjamin, brought his offering.

[61]His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; [62]one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; [63]one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old for a burnt offering; [64]one male goat for a sin offering; [65]and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Abidan son of Gideoni.

[66]On the tenth day Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai, the leader of the people of Dan, brought his offering.

[67]His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; [68]one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; [69]one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old for a burnt offering; [70]one male goat for a sin offering; [71]and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai.

[72]On the eleventh day Pagiel son of Okran, the leader of the people of Asher, brought his offering.

[73]His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; [74]one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; [75]one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old for a burnt offering; [76]one male goat for a sin offering; [77]and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Pagiel son of Okran.

TIME CAPSULE 1400 B.C.	
1400–1330	Nuzi tablets illuminate patriarchal customs
1400	Population of Egypt is about 4 million
1400	Population of Palestine is about 200,000
1400	Egyptians begin to use chariot wheels with six spokes
1400	King Lab'ayu establishes small empire at Shechem
1400	Mycenaean Greeks invade Crete, destroying the palace at Knossos
1400–1200	Mythological texts from Ugarit

78On the twelfth day Ahira son of Enan, the
leader of the people of Naphtali, brought his
offering.
79His offering was one silver plate weighing a hundred and thirty shekels and one silver sprinkling bowl weighing seventy shekels, both according to the sanctuary shekel, each filled with the finest flour mixed with olive oil as a grain offering; 80one gold dish weighing ten shekels, filled with incense; 81one young bull, one ram and one male lamb a year old for a burnt offering; 82one male goat for a sin offering; 83and two oxen, five rams, five male goats and five male lambs a year old to be sacrificed as a fellowship offering. This was the offering of Ahira son of Enan.

84These were the offerings of the Israelite leaders for the dedication of the altar when it was anointed: twelve silver plates, twelve silver sprinkling bowls and twelve gold dishes. 85Each silver plate weighed a hundred and thirty shekels, and each sprinkling bowl seventy shekels. Altogether, the silver dishes weighed two thousand four hundred shekels,[a] according to the sanctuary shekel. 86The twelve gold dishes filled with incense weighed ten shekels each, according to the sanctuary shekel. Altogether, the gold dishes weighed a hundred and twenty shekels.[b] 87The total number of animals for the burnt offering came to twelve young bulls, twelve rams and twelve male lambs a year old, together with their grain offering. Twelve male goats were used for the sin offering. 88The total number of animals for the sacrifice of the fellowship offering came to twenty-four oxen, sixty rams, sixty male goats and sixty male lambs a year old. These were the offerings for the dedication of the altar after it was anointed.

89When Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from between the two cherubim above the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant law. In this way the LORD spoke to him.

Setting Up the Lamps

8 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you set up the lamps, see that all seven light up the area in front of the lampstand.'"

3Aaron did so; he set up the lamps so that they faced forward on the lampstand, just as the LORD commanded Moses. 4This is how the lampstand was made: It was made of hammered gold—from its base to its blossoms. The lampstand was made exactly like the pattern the LORD had shown Moses.

The Setting Apart of the Levites

5The LORD said to Moses: 6"Take the Levites from among all the Israelites and make them ceremonially clean. 7To purify them, do this: Sprinkle the water of cleansing on them; then have them shave their whole bodies and wash their clothes. And so they will purify themselves. 8Have them take a young bull with its grain offering of the finest flour mixed with olive oil; then you are to take a second young bull for a sin offering.[c] 9Bring the Levites to the front of the tent of meeting and assemble the whole Israelite community. 10You are to bring the Levites before the LORD, and the Israelites are to lay their hands on them. 11Aaron is to present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the Israelites, so that they may be ready to do the work of the LORD.

12"Then the Levites are to lay their hands on the heads of the bulls, using one for a sin offering to the LORD and the other for a burnt offering, to make atonement for the Levites. 13Have the Levites stand in front of Aaron and his sons and then present them as a wave offering to the LORD. 14In this way you are to set the Levites apart from the other Israelites, and the Levites will be mine.

15"After you have purified the Levites and presented them as a wave offering, they are to come to do their work at the tent of meeting. 16They are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to me. I have taken them as my own in place of the firstborn, the first male offspring from every Israelite woman. 17Every firstborn male in Israel, whether human or animal, is mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for myself. 18And I have taken the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons in Israel. 19From among all the Israelites, I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the tent of meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make atonement for them so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the sanctuary."

20Moses, Aaron and the whole Israelite community did with the Levites just as the LORD commanded Moses. 21The Levites purified themselves and washed their clothes. Then Aaron presented them as a wave offering be-

[a] *85* That is, about 60 pounds or about 28 kilograms
[b] *86* That is, about 3 pounds or about 1.4 kilograms
[c] *8* Or *purification offering*; also in verse 12

fore the LORD and made atonement for them to purify them. 22After that, the Levites came to do their work at the tent of meeting under the supervision of Aaron and his sons. They did with the Levites just as the LORD commanded Moses.

23The LORD said to Moses, 24"This applies to the Levites: Men twenty-five years old or more shall come to take part in the work at the tent of meeting, 25but at the age of fifty, they must retire from their regular service and work no longer. 26They may assist their brothers in performing their duties at the tent of meeting, but they themselves must not do the work. This, then, is how you are to assign the responsibilities of the Levites."

TRANSITION

Observing the Rite of the Passover

In the 2nd month of the 2nd year of the Exodus, Moses took the first of two census reports, determining how many men were available for war (Nu 1:1–4). Just one month prior to this census, in the 1st month, the Israelites observed their first Passover since departing Egypt (Nu 9:1–5). Because the Passover was so important to the Israelite community, those who were not able to observe it in the 1st month were permitted to do so in the 2nd month (9:6, 7, 9, 11). Only 6 days after this second observance, Israel departed from Mount Sinai (10:12).

• **Numbers 9:1—12:16**

Numbers

The Passover

9:1 The LORD spoke to Moses in the Desert of Sinai in the first month of the second year after they came out of Egypt. He said, 2"Have the Israelites celebrate the Passover at the appointed time. 3Celebrate it at the appointed time, at twilight on the fourteenth day of this month, in accordance with all its rules and regulations."

4So Moses told the Israelites to celebrate the Passover, 5and they did so in the Desert of Sinai at twilight on the fourteenth day of the first month. The Israelites did everything just as the LORD commanded Moses.

6But some of them could not celebrate the Passover on that day because they were ceremonially unclean on account of a dead body. So they came to Moses and Aaron that same day 7and said to Moses, "We have become unclean because of a dead body, but why should we be kept from presenting the LORD's offering with the other Israelites at the appointed time?"

8Moses answered them, "Wait until I find out what the LORD commands concerning you."

9Then the LORD said to Moses, 10"Tell the Israelites: 'When any of you or your descendants are unclean because of a dead body or are away on a journey, they are still to celebrate the LORD's Passover, 11but they are to do it on the fourteenth day of the second month at twilight. They are to eat the lamb, together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. 12They must not leave any of it till morning or break any of its bones. When they celebrate the Passover, they must follow all the regulations. 13But if anyone who is ceremonially clean and not on a journey fails to celebrate the Passover, they must be cut off from their people for not presenting the LORD's offering at the appointed time. They will bear the consequences of their sin.

14" 'A foreigner residing among you is also to celebrate the LORD's Passover in accordance with its rules and regulations. You must have the same regulations for both the foreigner and the native-born.' "

The Cloud Above the Tabernacle

15On the day the tabernacle, the tent of the covenant law, was set up, the cloud covered it. From evening till morning the cloud above the tabernacle looked like fire. 16That is how it continued to be; the cloud covered it, and at night it looked like fire. 17Whenever the cloud lifted from above the tent, the Israelites set out; wherever the cloud settled, the Israelites encamped. 18At the LORD's command the Israelites set out, and at his command they encamped. As long as the cloud stayed over the tabernacle, they remained in camp. 19When the cloud remained over the tabernacle a long time, the Israelites obeyed the LORD's order and did not set out. 20Sometimes the cloud was over the tabernacle only a few days; at the LORD's command they would encamp, and then at his command they would set out. 21Sometimes the cloud stayed only from evening till morning, and when it lifted in the morning, they set out. Whether by day or by night, whenever the cloud lifted, they set out. 22Whether the cloud stayed over the tabernacle for two days or a month or a year, the Israelites would remain in camp and not set out; but when it lifted, they would set out. 23At the LORD's command they encamped, and at the LORD's command they set out. They obeyed the LORD's order, in accordance with his command through Moses.

The Silver Trumpets

10 [1]The LORD said to Moses: [2]"Make two trumpets of hammered silver, and use them for calling the community together and for having the camps set out. [3]When both are sounded, the whole community is to assemble before you at the entrance to the tent of meeting. [4]If only one is sounded, the leaders—the heads of the clans of Israel—are to assemble before you. [5]When a trumpet blast is sounded, the tribes camping on the east are to set out. [6]At the sounding of a second blast, the camps on the south are to set out. The blast will be the signal for setting out. [7]To gather the assembly, blow the trumpets, but not with the signal for setting out.

[8]"The sons of Aaron, the priests, are to blow the trumpets. This is to be a lasting ordinance for you and the generations to come. [9]When you go into battle in your own land against an enemy who is oppressing you, sound a blast on the trumpets. Then you will be remembered by the LORD your God and rescued from your enemies. [10]Also at your times of rejoicing—your appointed festivals and New Moon feasts—you are to sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, and they will be a memorial for you before your God. I am the LORD your God."

The Israelites Leave Sinai

[11]On the twentieth day of the second month of the second year, the cloud lifted from above the tabernacle of the covenant law. [12]Then the Israelites set out from the Desert of Sinai and traveled from place to place until the cloud came to rest in the Desert of Paran. [13]They set out, this first time, at the LORD's command through Moses.

[14]The divisions of the camp of Judah went first, under their standard. Nahshon son of Amminadab was in command. [15]Nethanel son of Zuar was over the division of the tribe of Issachar, [16]and Eliab son of Helon was over the division of the tribe of Zebulun. [17]Then the tabernacle was taken down, and the Gershonites and Merarites, who carried it, set out.

[18]The divisions of the camp of Reuben went next, under their standard. Elizur son of Shedeur was in command. [19]Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai was over the division of the tribe of Simeon, [20]and Eliasaph son of Deuel was over the division of the tribe of Gad. [21]Then the Kohathites set out, carrying the holy things. The tabernacle was to be set up before they arrived.

[22]The divisions of the camp of Ephraim went next, under their standard. Elishama son of Ammihud was in command. [23]Gamaliel son of Pedahzur was over the division of the tribe of Manasseh, [24]and Abidan son of Gideoni was over the division of the tribe of Benjamin.

[25]Finally, as the rear guard for all the units, the divisions of the camp of Dan set out under their standard. Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai was in command. [26]Pagiel son of Okran was over the division of the tribe of Asher, [27]and Ahira son of Enan was over the division of the tribe of Naphtali. [28]This was the order of march for the Israelite divisions as they set out.

[29]Now Moses said to Hobab son of Reuel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, "We are setting out for the place about which the LORD said, 'I will give it to you.' Come with us and we will treat you well, for the LORD has promised good things to Israel."

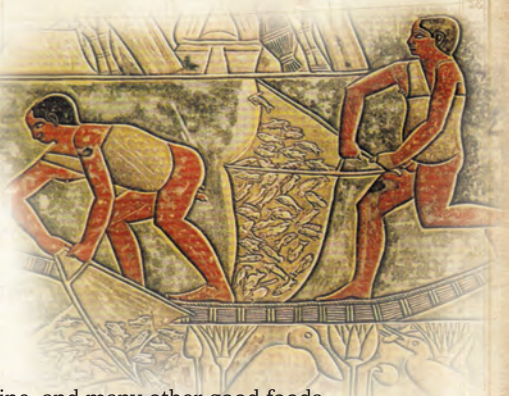
[30]He answered, "No, I will not go; I am going back to my own land and my own people."

[31]But Moses said, "Please do not leave us. You know where we should camp in the wilderness, and you can be our eyes. [32]If you come with us, we will share with you whatever good things the LORD gives us."

[33]So they set out from the mountain of the LORD and traveled for three days. The ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them

Arts & Literature
Trumpets are wind instruments that can be made from shells or animal horns (Nu 10:2). They are known from very early times. Two metal trumpets, one made of silver, were buried with the pharaoh Tutankhamun in 1327 B.C. The trumpet seems to be a favorite signaling device for soldiers.

Eating the Good Foods of Egypt (Nu 11:5)



The fresh fish eaten by the Israelites while in Egypt was a distant memory by the time they were wandering in the wilderness. They could recall other foods that Egypt had offered: "cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions, and garlic" (Nu 11:5). Now they were unhappy because they had no meat or the special foods they had enjoyed in Egypt. They complained about the lack of variety in their diet. The manna was rather bland, having the flowerlike odor of coriander seed (Nu 11:6–9).

The delightful foods of Egypt are also mentioned in writings of that country. An Egyptian letter from the end of the New Kingdom period (1550–1069 B.C.) voices a similar bent towards the fruitful bounty at the city of Rameses. The scribe Pai-Bes writes to his master Amen-em-Opet that, upon arriving in Rameses, he found it a beautiful and pleasant district, full of fish in its ponds, grassy meadows, abundant dates, melons, leeks, onions, olives, figs, sweet wine, and many other good foods.

The Israelites had known the city of Rameses. It was one of the store cities they had built while slaves (Ex 1:11). It was also the starting point of their exodus out of Egypt (Ex 12:37). The ancient Egyptians called the city Per-Rameses-meri-Amon, the name used by the scribe in his letter. The scribe's naming of "melons, leeks, onions," along with several other foods, appears, at the very least, to authenticate the veracity of the Israelites' complaint. Like the scribe, they too had witnessed the abundance of Rameses and Egypt.

during those three days to find them a place to rest. 34The cloud of the LORD was over them by day when they set out from the camp.

35Whenever the ark set out, Moses said,

"Rise up, LORD!
May your enemies be scattered;
may your foes flee before you."

36Whenever it came to rest, he said,

"Return, LORD,
to the countless thousands of Israel."

Fire From the LORD

11 1Now the people complained about their hardships in the hearing of the LORD, and when he heard them his anger was aroused. Then fire from the LORD burned among them and consumed some of the outskirts of the camp. 2When the people cried out to Moses, he prayed to the LORD and the fire died down. 3So that place was called Taberah,[a] because fire from the LORD had burned among them.

Quail From the LORD

4The rabble with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites started wailing and said, "If only we had meat to eat! 5We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost—also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic. 6But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!"

7The manna was like coriander seed and looked like resin. 8The people went around gathering it, and then ground it in a hand mill or crushed it in a mortar. They cooked it in a pot or made it into loaves. And it tasted like something made with olive oil. 9When the dew settled on the camp at night, the manna also came down.

10Moses heard the people of every family wailing at the entrance to their tents. The LORD became exceedingly angry, and Moses was troubled. 11He asked the LORD, "Why have you brought this trouble on your servant? What have I done to displease you that you put the burden of all these people on me? 12Did I conceive all these people? Did I give them birth? Why do you tell me to carry them in my arms, as a nurse carries an infant, to the land you promised on oath to their ancestors? 13Where can I get meat for all these people? They keep wailing to me, 'Give us meat to eat!' 14I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me. 15If this is how you are going to treat me, please go ahead and kill me—if I

Politics & Government
The Egyptians were proud of their ability to organize work. As is known from contemporary records, it was a point of pride with them that those who built monumental buildings like pyramids and tombs were well provided for (Nu 11:5). For one thing, it was proof of the general prosperity of the country.

[a] 3 *Taberah* means *burning*.

have found favor in your eyes—and do not let me face my own ruin."

16The LORD said to Moses: "Bring me seventy of Israel's elders who are known to you as leaders and officials among the people. Have them come to the tent of meeting, that they may stand there with you. 17I will come down and speak with you there, and I will take some of the power of the Spirit that is on you and put it on them. They will share the burden of the people with you so that you will not have to carry it alone.

18"'Tell the people: 'Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow, when you will eat meat. The LORD heard you when you wailed, "If only we had meat to eat! We were better off in Egypt!" Now the LORD will give you meat, and you will eat it. 19You will not eat it for just one day, or two days, or five, ten or twenty days, 20but for a whole month—until it comes out of your nostrils and you loathe it—because you have rejected the LORD, who is among you, and have wailed before him, saying, "Why did we ever leave Egypt?"'"

21But Moses said, "Here I am among six hundred thousand men on foot, and you say, 'I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!' 22Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?"

23The LORD answered Moses, "Is the LORD's arm too short? Now you will see whether or not what I say will come true for you."

24So Moses went out and told the people what the LORD had said. He brought together seventy of their elders and had them stand around the tent. 25Then the LORD came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied—but did not do so again.

26However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp. 27A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp."

28Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!"

29But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!" 30Then Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp.

31Now a wind went out from the LORD and drove quail in from the sea. It scattered them up to two cubits[a] deep all around the camp, as far as a day's walk in any direction. 32All that day and night and all the next day the people went out and gathered quail. No one gathered less than ten homers.[b] Then they spread them out all around the camp. 33But while the meat was still between their teeth and before it could be consumed, the anger of the LORD burned against the people, and he struck them with a severe plague. 34Therefore the place was named Kibroth Hattaavah,[c] because there they buried the people who had craved other food.

35From Kibroth Hattaavah the people traveled to Hazeroth and stayed there.

Miriam and Aaron Oppose Moses

12 1Miriam and Aaron began to talk against Moses because of his Cushite wife, for he had married a Cushite. 2"Has the LORD spoken only through Moses?" they asked. "Hasn't he also spoken through us?" And the LORD heard this.

3(Now Moses was a very humble man, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth.)

4At once the LORD said to Moses, Aaron and Miriam, "Come out to the tent of meeting, all three of you." So the three of them went out. 5Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud; he stood at the entrance to the tent and summoned Aaron and Miriam. When the two of them stepped forward, 6he said, "Listen to my words:

"When there is a prophet among you,
I, the LORD, reveal myself to them in visions,
I speak to them in dreams.
7But this is not true of my servant Moses;
he is faithful in all my house.
8With him I speak face to face,
clearly and not in riddles;
he sees the form of the LORD.
Why then were you not afraid
to speak against my servant Moses?"

9The anger of the LORD burned against them, and he left them.

10When the cloud lifted from above the tent, Miriam's skin was leprous[d]—it became as

[a] *31* That is, about 3 feet or about 90 centimeters
[b] *32* That is, possibly about 1 3/4 tons or about 1.6 metric tons
[c] *34* *Kibroth Hattaavah* means *graves of craving*.
[d] *10* The Hebrew for *leprous* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

white as snow. Aaron turned toward her and saw that she had a defiling skin disease, 11and he said to Moses, "Please, my lord, I ask you not to hold against us the sin we have so foolishly committed. 12Do not let her be like a stillborn infant coming from its mother's womb with its flesh half eaten away."

13So Moses cried out to the LORD, "Please, God, heal her!"

14The LORD replied to Moses, "If her father had spit in her face, would she not have been in disgrace for seven days? Confine her outside the camp for seven days; after that she can be brought back." 15So Miriam was confined outside the camp for seven days, and the people did not move on till she was brought back.

16After that, the people left Hazeroth and encamped in the Desert of Paran.

TRANSITION

Canaan Before the Conquest

From Kadesh Barnea the Israelites made their first attempt to penetrate the land of Canaan (Nu 13:17–20). Before the arrival of the Israelites, Canaan was divided between dozens of small, relatively independent city-states, each with its own king. After the conquests of the Egyptian Pharaoh Thutmose I (1504–1492 B.C.), these Canaanite city-states were officially provinces of Egypt, but as letters from Palestine to Pharaoh Akhenaten show, Egyptian control was not always very firm.

Many of the Canaanite peoples were of Amorite descent, like the Israelites themselves, but later migrations had brought other ethnic groups into the land. Thus the Bible's frequent lists of the peoples to be conquered (Hittites, Hivites, Horites, Jebusites, Girgashites, Perizzites, etc., Nu 13:29) reflect a genuine ethnic mix. Nevertheless, the Bible often uses the term "Amorite" (or sometimes "Canaanite") in a general way, to refer to all or any of the peoples, nations, or tribes living in Palestine.

The city-states within Canaan were established and comparatively strong, while those to the east of the Jordan River were newer and weaker. Thus it makes sense that Israel established its control first in the east.

• **Numbers 13:1–33**

Numbers

Exploring Canaan

13 :1 The LORD said to Moses, 2"Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders."

3So at the LORD's command Moses sent them out from the Desert of Paran. All of them were leaders of the Israelites. 4These are their names:

from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua son of Zakkur;
5from the tribe of Simeon, Shaphat son of Hori;
6from the tribe of Judah, Caleb son of Jephunneh;
7from the tribe of Issachar, Igal son of Joseph;
8from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea son of Nun;
9from the tribe of Benjamin, Palti son of Raphu;
10from the tribe of Zebulun, Gaddiel son of Sodi;
11from the tribe of Manasseh (a tribe of Joseph), Gaddi son of Susi;
12from the tribe of Dan, Ammiel son of Gemalli;
13from the tribe of Asher, Sethur son of Michael;
14from the tribe of Naphtali, Nahbi son of Vophsi;
15from the tribe of Gad, Geuel son of Maki.

16These are the names of the men Moses sent to explore the land. (Moses gave Hoshea son of Nun the name Joshua.)

17When Moses sent them to explore Canaan, he said, "Go up through the Negev and on into the hill country. 18See what the land is like and whether the people who live there are strong or weak, few or many. 19What kind of land do they live in? Is it good or bad? What kind of towns do they live in? Are they unwalled or fortified? 20How is the soil? Is it fertile or poor? Are there trees in it or not? Do your best to bring back some of the fruit of the land." (It was the season for the first ripe grapes.)

21So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath. 22They went up through the Negev and came to Hebron, where Ahiman, Sheshai and Talmai, the descendants of Anak, lived. (Hebron had been built seven years before Zoan in Egypt.) 23When they reached the Valley of Eshkol,[a] they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. 24That place was called the Valley of Eshkol because of the cluster of grapes the Israelites cut off there. 25At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land.

[a] *23 Eshkol* means *cluster*; also in verse 24.

Long Gone but Never Forgotten—The Nephilim (Nu 13:33)

When the Israelite scouts encountered the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, they reported that they had come across giants (Nu 13:32, 33). In their Hebrew language they referred to these giants as the Nephilim—the descendants of people who had lived before the flood of Noah (Ge 6:4). What frightened the spies was the immense size of their enemies: "Surely these people must descend from the intermarriage of the 'sons of God' and their human wives" (Ge 6:2). The Israelites had thought the Nephilim existed only during the time before the flood; they did not expect to find them in their own world.

The mythologies of the ancient Near East described a time, before the great flood, when things were different. In those days divinities and humans mated and produced semidivine, semihuman offspring who possessed superhuman qualities. They were the famous persons of ancient times, of which stories continued to be told (surviving in the mythologies of Egypt and Mesopotamia). These persons were considered to be stronger and larger than the current populace (see Nu 13:31).

Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, argued that the Nephilim were not too powerful to fight. Their size and lineage (even if they did come from the ancient deity-humans) were not matters to be taken into consideration since God had already promised the victory to the Israelites no matter what the odds (Nu 14:6–9). The people, unfortunately, voted with the other spies, being afraid to fight powerful and, perhaps, supernatural foes.

Report on the Exploration

26 They came back to Moses and Aaron and
the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the
Desert of Paran. There they reported to them
and to the whole assembly and showed them
the fruit of the land. 27 They gave Moses this
account: "We went into the land to which you
sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey!
Here is its fruit. 28 But the people who live there
are powerful, and the cities are fortified and
very large. We even saw descendants of Anak
there. 29 The Amalekites live in the Negev; the
Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill
country; and the Canaanites live near the sea
and along the Jordan."
30 Then Caleb silenced the people before
Moses and said, "We should go up and take
possession of the land, for we can certainly
do it."
31 But the men who had gone up with him
said, "We can't attack those people; they are
stronger than we are." 32 And they spread
among the Israelites a bad report about the
land they had explored. They said, "The land
we explored devours those living in it. All the
people we saw there are of great size. 33 We saw
the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak
come from the Nephilim). We seemed like
grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked
the same to them."

TRANSITION

Israel in the Wilderness

The story continues through the Israelites' tragic refusal at Kadesh Barnea to enter the promised land and through the consequent 40 years of wandering in the wilderness (Nu 14:33–35). While Numbers describes the Israelites' journey from Sinai to Kadesh Barnea, and then to the plains of Moab, it reports almost nothing about the 40 years of wandering which intervened between their first departure from Kadesh Barnea (Nu 14:25) and their second (Nu 20:22).

These gaps in the historical record arise because Numbers is not intended to be a history of the Hebrew people. It is a record of the faithfulness of God. Despite the failures of everyone, from the least of the people to Moses himself, God is faithful to his original promise to Abraham and his descendants. This does not mean that individuals escape the consequences of their sin, only that God's redemptive purposes in the world cannot be thwarted.

Thus the stagnant 40 years while the people were simply waiting are omitted as insignificant. Only the events occurring at the beginning and the end of the 40 years are mentioned: the Israelites' defeat when they tried to enter the land on their own strength (Nu 14:45), and their request for permission to pass through Edom (Nu 20:14). Between these events are only various laws and a few stories of the disobedience of key leaders.

• **Numbers 14:1—20:13**

Numbers

The People Rebel

14 :1 That night all the members of the
community raised their voices and wept
aloud. 2 All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said
to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in
this wilderness! 3 Why is the Lord bringing
us to this land only to let us fall by the sword?
Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back

to Egypt?" 4And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

5Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. 6Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes 7and said to the entire Israelite assembly, "The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. 8If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. 9Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will devour them. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them."

10But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. Then the glory of the LORD appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites. 11The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the signs I have performed among them? 12I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a nation greater and stronger than they."

13Moses said to the LORD, "Then the Egyptians will hear about it! By your power you brought these people up from among them. 14And they will tell the inhabitants of this land about it. They have already heard that you, LORD, are with these people and that you, LORD, have been seen face to face, that your cloud stays over them, and that you go before them in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. 15If you put all these people to death, leaving none alive, the nations who have heard this report about you will say, 16'The LORD was not able to bring these people into the land he promised them on oath, so he slaughtered them in the wilderness.'

17"Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: 18'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.' 19In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now."

20The LORD replied, "I have forgiven them, as you asked. 21Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, 22not one of those who saw my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times— 23not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their ancestors. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it. 24But because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land he went to, and his descendants will inherit it. 25Since the Amalekites and the Canaanites are living in the valleys, turn back tomorrow and set out toward the desert along the route to the Red Sea.[a]"

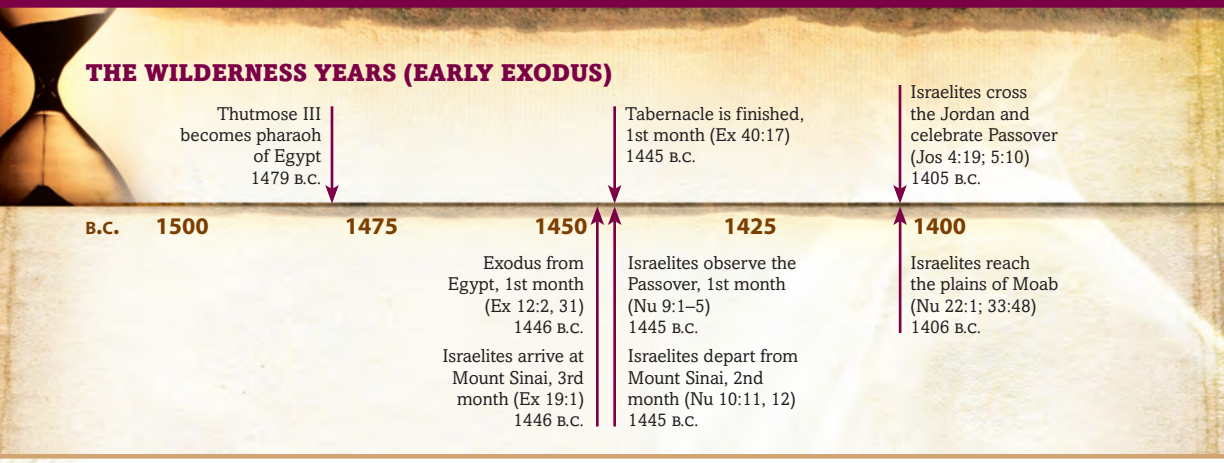
26The LORD said to Moses and Aaron: 27"How long will this wicked community grumble against me? I have heard the complaints of these grumbling Israelites. 28So tell them, 'As surely as I live, declares the LORD, I will do to you the very thing I heard you say: 29In this wilderness your bodies will fall—every one of you twenty years old or more who was counted in the census and who has grumbled against me. 30Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun. 31As for your children that you said would be taken as plunder, I will bring them in to enjoy the land you have rejected. 32But as for you, your bodies will fall in this wilderness. 33Your children will be shepherds here for forty years, suffering for your unfaithfulness, until the last of your bodies lies in the wilderness. 34For forty years—one year for each of the forty days you explored the land—you will suffer for your sins and know what it is like to have me against you.' 35I, the LORD, have spoken, and I will surely do these things to this whole wicked community, which has banded together against me. They will meet their end in this wilderness; here they will die."

36So the men Moses had sent to explore the land, who returned and made the whole community grumble against him by spreading a bad report about it— 37these men who were responsible for spreading the bad report about the land were struck down and died of a plague before the LORD. 38Of the men who went to explore the land, only Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh survived.

Politics & Government

The nation-state is an invention of modern times. By contrast, the peoples mentioned in the Bible are usually tribes or single cities, often of very small size. The Amalekites (Nu 14:25) were nomads or seminomads who lived south and west of Canaan. They were traditionally enemies of the Israelites.

[a] 25 Or *the Sea of Reeds*



39When Moses reported this to all the Israelites, they mourned bitterly. 40Early the next morning they set out for the highest point in the hill country, saying, "Now we are ready to go up to the land the LORD promised. Surely we have sinned!"

41But Moses said, "Why are you disobeying the LORD's command? This will not succeed! 42Do not go up, because the LORD is not with you. You will be defeated by your enemies, 43for the Amalekites and the Canaanites will face you there. Because you have turned away from the LORD, he will not be with you and you will fall by the sword."

44Nevertheless, in their presumption they went up toward the highest point in the hill country, though neither Moses nor the ark of the LORD's covenant moved from the camp. 45Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who lived in that hill country came down and attacked them and beat them down all the way to Hormah.

Supplementary Offerings

15 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'After you enter the land I am giving you as a home 3and you present to the LORD food offerings from the herd or the flock, as an aroma pleasing to the LORD—whether burnt offerings or sacrifices, for special vows or freewill offerings or festival offerings— 4then the person who brings an offering shall present to the LORD a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah[a] of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin[b] of olive oil. 5With each lamb for the burnt offering or the sacrifice, prepare a quarter of a hin of wine as a drink offering.

6"'With a ram prepare a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah[c] of the finest flour mixed with a third of a hin[d] of olive oil, 7and a third of a hin of wine as a drink offering. Offer it as an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

8"'When you prepare a young bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice, for a special vow or a fellowship offering to the LORD, 9bring with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah[e] of the finest flour mixed with half a hin[f] of olive oil, 10and also bring half a hin of wine as a drink offering. This will be a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 11Each bull or ram, each lamb or young goat, is to be prepared in this manner. 12Do this for each one, for as many as you prepare.

13"'Everyone who is native-born must do these things in this way when they present a food offering as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 14For the generations to come, whenever a foreigner or anyone else living among you presents a food offering as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, they must do exactly as you do. 15The community is to have the same rules for you and for the foreigner residing among you; this is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come. You and the foreigner shall be the same before the LORD: 16The same laws and regulations will apply both to you and to the foreigner residing among you.'"

17The LORD said to Moses, 18"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land to which I am taking you 19and you eat the food of the land, present a portion as an offering to the LORD. 20Present a loaf from the first of your ground meal and present it as an

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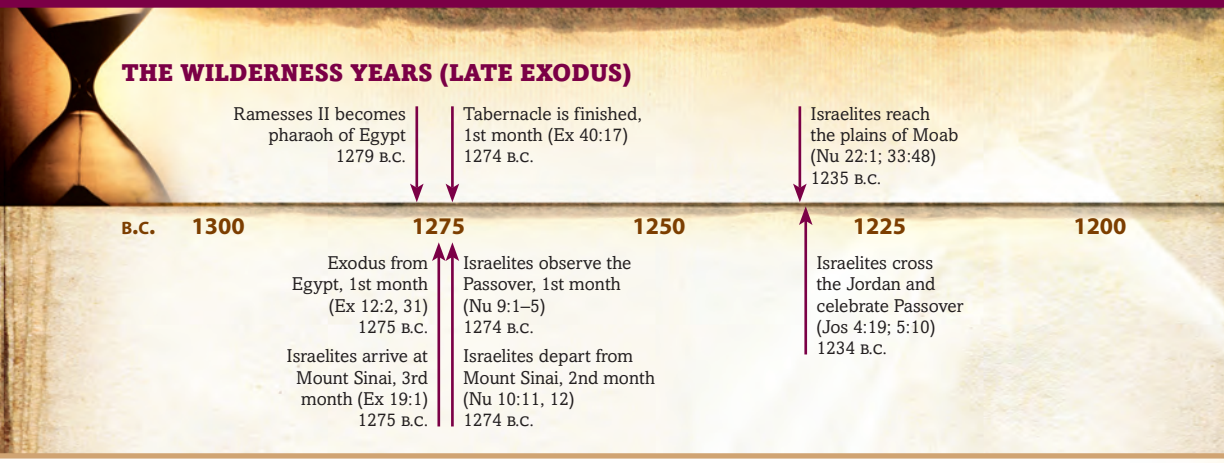
[a] *4* That is, probably about 3 1/2 pounds or about 1.6 kilograms [b] *4* That is, about 1 quart or about 1 liter; also in verse 5 [c] *6* That is, probably about 7 pounds or about 3.2 kilograms [d] *6* That is, about 1 1/3 quarts or about 1.3 liters; also in verse 7 [e] *9* That is, probably about 11 pounds or about 5 kilograms [f] *9* That is, about 2 quarts or about 1.9 liters; also in verse 10



offering from the threshing floor. 21Throughout the generations to come you are to give this offering to the LORD from the first of your ground meal.

Offerings for Unintentional Sins

22"'Now if you as a community unintentionally fail to keep any of these commands the LORD gave Moses— 23any of the LORD's commands to you through him, from the day the LORD gave them and continuing through the generations to come— 24and if this is done unintentionally without the community being aware of it, then the whole community is to offer a young bull for a burnt offering as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, along with its prescribed grain offering and drink offering, and a male goat for a sin offering.[a] 25The priest is to make atonement for the whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven, for it was not intentional and they have presented to the LORD for their wrong a food offering and a sin offering. 26The whole Israelite community and the foreigners residing among them will be forgiven, because all the people were involved in the unintentional wrong.

27"'But if just one person sins unintentionally, that person must bring a year-old female goat for a sin offering. 28The priest is to make atonement before the LORD for the one who erred by sinning unintentionally, and when atonement has been made, that person will be forgiven. 29One and the same law applies to everyone who sins unintentionally, whether a native-born Israelite or a foreigner residing among you.

30"'But anyone who sins defiantly, whether native-born or foreigner, blasphemes the LORD and must be cut off from the people of Israel. 31Because they have despised the LORD's word and broken his commands, they must surely be cut off; their guilt remains on them.'"

The Sabbath-Breaker Put to Death

32While the Israelites were in the wilderness, a man was found gathering wood on the Sabbath day. 33Those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and the whole assembly, 34and they kept him in custody, because it was not clear what should be done to him. 35Then the LORD said to Moses, "The man must die. The whole assembly must stone him outside the camp." 36So the assembly took him outside the camp and stoned him to death, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Tassels on Garments

37The LORD said to Moses, 38"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. 39You will have these tassels to look at and so you will remember all the commands of the LORD, that you may obey them and not prostitute yourselves by chasing after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. 40Then you will remember to obey all my commands and will be consecrated to your God. 41I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to be your God. I am the LORD your God.'"

Daily Life & Customs
The tassels were made by twisting and knotting the threads of the fabric in the outer garment. This element of the garment, still used today at prayer, was assigned a mnemonic (memory) function (Nu 15:39). The permanence of the Scripture text has assured the permanence of the mnemonic sign as well.

[a] *24* Or *purification offering*; also in verses 25 and 27

Sinuhe Visits a Fertile Palestine (Nu 16:12, 13)

The report of the spies to Moses was that the land Palestine "flows with milk and honey" (Nu 13:23, 27). Although the sons of Eliab questioned the truth of this report (Nu 16:12, 13), the fertility of Palestine was known long before the Israelites arrived. A similar description is found in an Egyptian text of the Middle Kingdom which covers events from the reigns of two pharaohs Amenemhet I (1963–1934 B.C.) and Sesostris I (1943–1898 B.C.). The *Tale of Sinuhe* describes the travels and ordeals in Palestine of an Egyptian official by the name Sinuhe.

Sinuhe, according to the text, was a high official in the court of Pharaoh Amenemhet I. During an unstable period of change in power in Egypt, Sinuhe fled to Palestine. The land of Palestine was then called "Retenu" in Egyptian texts, and was usually thought of as northern Canaan and southern and central Syria. Sinuhe records his many trials and tribulations in the region.

On one occasion, Sinuhe settles with a certain Ammienshi, called the ruler of Upper Retenu. The Egyptian official describes the area as having figs and grapes. "It had more wine than water. Plentiful was its honey, abundant its olives. Every kind of fruit was on its trees. Barley was there, and emmer." Milk was used in "every kind of cooking."

The Egyptian text is the earliest account of conditions in Palestine during the period of the biblical patriarchs. It appears to accord well with descriptions found in the five books of the Pentateuch. Both the *Tale of Sinuhe* and the Pentateuch describe Palestine during this time as fertile but politically unstable and sparsely populated.

Korah, Dathan and Abiram

16 [1]Korah son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, and certain Reubenites — Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab, and On son of Peleth — became insolent[a] [2]and rose up against Moses. With them were 250 Israelite men, well-known community leaders who had been appointed members of the council. [3]They came as a group to oppose Moses and Aaron and said to them, "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is with them. Why then do you set yourselves above the LORD's assembly?"

[4]When Moses heard this, he fell facedown. [5]Then he said to Korah and all his followers: "In the morning the LORD will show who belongs to him and who is holy, and he will have that person come near him. The man he chooses he will cause to come near him. [6]You, Korah, and all your followers are to do this: Take censers [7]and tomorrow put burning coals and incense in them before the LORD. The man the LORD chooses will be the one who is holy. You Levites have gone too far!"

[8]Moses also said to Korah, "Now listen, you Levites! [9]Isn't it enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the Israelite community and brought you near himself to do the work at the LORD's tabernacle and to stand before the community and minister to them? [10]He has brought you and all your fellow Levites near himself, but now you are trying to get the priesthood too. [11]It is against the LORD that you and all your followers have banded together. Who is Aaron that you should grumble against him?"

[12]Then Moses summoned Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab. But they said, "We will not come! [13]Isn't it enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to kill us in the wilderness? And now you also want to lord it over us! [14]Moreover, you haven't brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey or given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Do you want to treat these men like slaves[b]? No, we will not come!"

[15]Then Moses became very angry and said to the LORD, "Do not accept their offering. I have not taken so much as a donkey from them, nor have I wronged any of them."

[16]Moses said to Korah, "You and all your followers are to appear before the LORD tomorrow — you and they and Aaron. [17]Each man is to take his censer and put incense in it — 250 censers in all — and present it before the LORD. You and Aaron are to present your censers also." [18]So each of them took his censer, put burning coals and incense in it, and stood with Moses and Aaron at the entrance to the tent of meeting. [19]When Korah had gathered all his followers in opposition to them at the entrance to the tent of meeting, the glory of the LORD appeared to the entire assembly. [20]The LORD said to Moses and Aaron, [21]"Separate yourselves from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once."

[22]But Moses and Aaron fell facedown and cried out, "O God, the God who gives breath to all living things, will you be angry with the entire assembly when only one man sins?"

[23]Then the LORD said to Moses, [24]"Say to the

[a] *1* Or *Peleth — took men* [b] *14* Or *to deceive these men*; Hebrew *Will you gouge out the eyes of these men*

assembly, 'Move away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram.'"
25 Moses got up and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 He warned the assembly, "Move back from the tents of these wicked men! Do not touch anything belonging to them, or you will be swept away because of all their sins." 27 So they moved away from the tents of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Dathan and Abiram had come out and were standing with their wives, children and little ones at the entrances to their tents.
28 Then Moses said, "This is how you will know that the LORD has sent me to do all these things and that it was not my idea: 29 If these men die a natural death and suffer the fate of all mankind, then the LORD has not sent me. 30 But if the LORD brings about something totally new, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them, with everything that belongs to them, and they go down alive into the realm of the dead, then you will know that these men have treated the LORD with contempt."
31 As soon as he finished saying all this, the ground under them split apart 32 and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them and their households, and all those associated with Korah, together with their possessions. 33 They went down alive into the realm of the dead, with everything they owned; the earth closed over them, and they perished and were gone from the community. 34 At their cries, all the Israelites around them fled, shouting, "The earth is going to swallow us too!"
35 And fire came out from the LORD and consumed the 250 men who were offering the incense.
36 The LORD said to Moses, 37 "Tell Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, to remove the censers from the charred remains and scatter the coals some distance away, for the censers are holy— 38 the censers of the men who sinned at the cost of their lives. Hammer the censers into sheets to overlay the altar, for they were presented before the LORD and have become holy. Let them be a sign to the Israelites."
39 So Eleazar the priest collected the bronze censers brought by those who had been burned to death, and he had them hammered out to overlay the altar, 40 as the LORD directed him through Moses. This was to remind the Israelites that no one except a descendant of Aaron should come to burn incense before the LORD, or he would become like Korah and his followers.

41 The next day the whole Israelite community grumbled against Moses and Aaron. "You have killed the LORD's people," they said.
42 But when the assembly gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron and turned toward the tent of meeting, suddenly the cloud covered it and the glory of the LORD appeared. 43 Then Moses and Aaron went to the front of the tent of meeting, 44 and the LORD said to Moses, 45 "Get away from this assembly so I can put an end to them at once." And they fell facedown.
46 Then Moses said to Aaron, "Take your censer and put incense in it, along with burning coals from the altar, and hurry to the assembly to make atonement for them. Wrath has come out from the LORD; the plague has started." 47 So Aaron did as Moses said, and ran into the midst of the assembly. The plague had already started among the people, but Aaron offered the incense and made atonement for them. 48 He stood between the living and the dead, and the plague stopped. 49 But 14,700 people died from the plague, in addition to those who had died because of Korah. 50 Then Aaron returned to Moses at the entrance to the tent of meeting, for the plague had stopped.[a]

The Budding of Aaron's Staff

17[b] 1 The LORD said to Moses, 2 "Speak to the Israelites and get twelve staffs from them, one from the leader of each of their ancestral tribes. Write the name of each man on his staff. 3 On the staff of Levi write Aaron's name, for there must be one staff for the head of each ancestral tribe. 4 Place them in the tent of meeting in front of the ark of the covenant law, where I meet with you. 5 The staff belonging to the man I choose will sprout, and I will rid myself of this constant grumbling against you by the Israelites."
6 So Moses spoke to the Israelites, and their leaders gave him twelve staffs, one for the leader of each of their ancestral tribes, and Aaron's

TIME CAPSULE		1400 to 1366 B.C.
1400		Oldest discovered water clock, from Egypt
1400		Spectators on a grandstand shown in a mural, Crete
1400–1390		Thutmose IV, pharaoh of Egypt
1390–1352		Amenhotep III, pharaoh of Egypt, rules during period of peace
1366		Hittite king Suppiluliumas invades Syria and captures Alalakh

[a] *50* In Hebrew texts 16:36-50 is numbered 17:1-15.
[b] In Hebrew texts 17:1-13 is numbered 17:16-28.

staff was among them. 7Moses placed the staffs
before the LORD in the tent of the covenant law.
8The next day Moses entered the tent and
saw that Aaron's staff, which represented the
tribe of Levi, had not only sprouted but had
budded, blossomed and produced almonds.
9Then Moses brought out all the staffs from
the LORD's presence to all the Israelites. They
looked at them, and each of the leaders took
his own staff.
10The LORD said to Moses, "Put back Aaron's
staff in front of the ark of the covenant law, to
be kept as a sign to the rebellious. This will put
an end to their grumbling against me, so that
they will not die." 11Moses did just as the LORD
commanded him.
12The Israelites said to Moses, "We will die!
We are lost, we are all lost! 13Anyone who even
comes near the tabernacle of the LORD will die.
Are we all going to die?"

During the wilderness wandering, Aaron's staff was the only staff that produced buds, blossoms, and almonds, indicating God's choice of Aaron and his descendants as priests (Nu 17:1–10).

Duties of Priests and Levites

18 1The LORD said to Aaron, "You, your
sons and your family are to bear the re-
sponsibility for offenses connected with the
sanctuary, and you and your sons alone are to
bear the responsibility for offenses connected
with the priesthood. 2Bring your fellow Levites
from your ancestral tribe to join you and assist
you when you and your sons minister before
the tent of the covenant law. 3They are to be
responsible to you and are to perform all the
duties of the tent, but they must not go near the
furnishings of the sanctuary or the altar. Oth-
erwise both they and you will die. 4They are to
join you and be responsible for the care of the
tent of meeting—all the work at the tent—and
no one else may come near where you are.
5"You are to be responsible for the care of
the sanctuary and the altar, so that my wrath
will not fall on the Israelites again. 6I myself
have selected your fellow Levites from among
the Israelites as a gift to you, dedicated to the
LORD to do the work at the tent of meeting. 7But
only you and your sons may serve as priests
in connection with everything at the altar and
inside the curtain. I am giving you the service
of the priesthood as a gift. Anyone else who
comes near the sanctuary is to be put to death."

Offerings for Priests and Levites

8Then the LORD said to Aaron, "I myself have
put you in charge of the offerings presented
to me; all the holy offerings the Israelites give
me I give to you and your sons as your portion,
your perpetual share. 9You are to have the part
of the most holy offerings that is kept from the
fire. From all the gifts they bring me as most
holy offerings, whether grain or sin[a] or guilt
offerings, that part belongs to you and your
sons. 10Eat it as something most holy; every
male shall eat it. You must regard it as holy.
11"This also is yours: whatever is set aside
from the gifts of all the wave offerings of the
Israelites. I give this to you and your sons and
daughters as your perpetual share. Everyone
in your household who is ceremonially clean
may eat it.
12"I give you all the finest olive oil and all the
finest new wine and grain they give the LORD as
the firstfruits of their harvest. 13All the land's
firstfruits that they bring to the LORD will be
yours. Everyone in your household who is cer-
emonially clean may eat it.
14"Everything in Israel that is devoted[b] to

[a] *9* Or *purification* [b] *14* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD.

the LORD is yours. 15The first offspring of every
womb, both human and animal, that is offered
to the LORD is yours. But you must redeem ev-
ery firstborn son and every firstborn male of
unclean animals. 16When they are a month old,
you must redeem them at the redemption price
set at five shekels[a] of silver, according to the
sanctuary shekel, which weighs twenty gerahs.
17"But you must not redeem the firstborn of
a cow, a sheep or a goat; they are holy. Splash
their blood against the altar and burn their fat
as a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the
LORD. 18Their meat is to be yours, just as the
breast of the wave offering and the right thigh
are yours. 19Whatever is set aside from the holy
offerings the Israelites present to the LORD I
give to you and your sons and daughters as
your perpetual share. It is an everlasting cov-
enant of salt before the LORD for both you and
your offspring."
20The LORD said to Aaron, "You will have no
inheritance in their land, nor will you have any
share among them; I am your share and your
inheritance among the Israelites.
21"I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel
as their inheritance in return for the work they
do while serving at the tent of meeting. 22From
now on the Israelites must not go near the tent
of meeting, or they will bear the consequences
of their sin and will die. 23It is the Levites who
are to do the work at the tent of meeting and
bear the responsibility for any offenses they
commit against it. This is a lasting ordinance
for the generations to come. They will receive
no inheritance among the Israelites. 24Instead,
I give to the Levites as their inheritance the
tithes that the Israelites present as an offer-
ing to the LORD. That is why I said concerning
them: 'They will have no inheritance among
the Israelites.'"
25The LORD said to Moses, 26"Speak to the Le-
vites and say to them: 'When you receive from
the Israelites the tithe I give you as your inher-
itance, you must present a tenth of that tithe as
the LORD's offering. 27Your offering will be reck-
oned to you as grain from the threshing floor
or juice from the winepress. 28In this way you
also will present an offering to the LORD from all
the tithes you receive from the Israelites. From
these tithes you must give the LORD's portion
to Aaron the priest. 29You must present as the
LORD's portion the best and holiest part of ev-
erything given to you.'
30"Say to the Levites: 'When you present
the best part, it will be reckoned to you as the
product of the threshing floor or the winepress.
31You and your households may eat the rest of
it anywhere, for it is your wages for your work
at the tent of meeting. 32By presenting the best
part of it you will not be guilty in this matter;
then you will not defile the holy offerings of the
Israelites, and you will not die.'"

The Water of Cleansing

19 1The LORD said to Moses and Aaron:
2"This is a requirement of the law that
the LORD has commanded: Tell the Israelites to
bring you a red heifer without defect or blem-
ish and that has never been under a yoke. 3Give
it to Eleazar the priest; it is to be taken outside
the camp and slaughtered in his presence.
4Then Eleazar the priest is to take some of its
blood on his finger and sprinkle it seven times
toward the front of the tent of meeting. 5While
he watches, the heifer is to be burned—its
hide, flesh, blood and intestines. 6The priest is
to take some cedar wood, hyssop and scarlet
wool and throw them onto the burning heifer.
7After that, the priest must wash his clothes
and bathe himself with water. He may then
come into the camp, but he will be ceremoni-
ally unclean till evening. 8The man who burns
it must also wash his clothes and bathe with
water, and he too will be unclean till evening.
9"A man who is clean shall gather up the ash-
es of the heifer and put them in a ceremonially
clean place outside the camp. They are to be
kept by the Israelite community for use in the
water of cleansing; it is for purification from
sin. 10The man who gathers up the ashes of the
heifer must also wash his clothes, and he too
will be unclean till evening. This will be a last-
ing ordinance both for the Israelites and for the
foreigners residing among them.
11"Whoever touches a human corpse will
be unclean for seven days. 12They must purify
themselves with the water on the third day and
on the seventh day; then they will be clean. But
if they do not purify themselves on the third
and seventh days, they will not be clean. 13If
they fail to purify themselves after touching a
human corpse, they defile the LORD's taberna-
cle. They must be cut off from Israel. Because

Beliefs & Ideas

The animal to be sacrificed is reserved to God from its birth. The specification that it could never have been used by anyone else (Nu 19:2) is a way of emphasizing this consecration (Mk 11:2). Possibly the prohibition of using dressed stones for the Lord's altars has a similar meaning (Ex 20:25).

[a] *16* That is, about 2 ounces or about 58 grams

the water of cleansing has not been sprinkled on them, they are unclean; their uncleanness remains on them.

14"This is the law that applies when a person dies in a tent: Anyone who enters the tent and anyone who is in it will be unclean for seven days, 15and every open container without a lid fastened on it will be unclean.

16"Anyone out in the open who touches someone who has been killed with a sword or someone who has died a natural death, or anyone who touches a human bone or a grave, will be unclean for seven days.

17"For the unclean person, put some ashes from the burned purification offering into a jar and pour fresh water over them. 18Then a man who is ceremonially clean is to take some hyssop, dip it in the water and sprinkle the tent and all the furnishings and the people who were there. He must also sprinkle anyone who has touched a human bone or a grave or anyone who has been killed or anyone who has died a natural death. 19The man who is clean is to sprinkle those who are unclean on the third and seventh days, and on the seventh day he is to purify them. Those who are being cleansed must wash their clothes and bathe with water, and that evening they will be clean. 20But if those who are unclean do not purify themselves, they must be cut off from the community, because they have defiled the sanctuary of the LORD. The water of cleansing has not been sprinkled on them, and they are unclean. 21This is a lasting ordinance for them.

"The man who sprinkles the water of cleansing must also wash his clothes, and anyone who touches the water of cleansing will be unclean till evening. 22Anything that an unclean person touches becomes unclean, and anyone who touches it becomes unclean till evening."

Water From the Rock

20 1In the first month the whole Israelite community arrived at the Desert of Zin, and they stayed at Kadesh. There Miriam died and was buried.

2Now there was no water for the community, and the people gathered in opposition to Moses and Aaron. 3They quarreled with Moses and said, "If only we had died when our brothers fell dead before the LORD! 4Why did you bring the LORD's community into this wilderness, that we and our livestock should die here? 5Why did you bring us up out of Egypt to this terrible place? It has no grain or figs, grapevines or pomegranates. And there is no water to drink!"

6Moses and Aaron went from the assembly to the entrance to the tent of meeting and fell facedown, and the glory of the LORD appeared to them. 7The LORD said to Moses, 8"Take the staff, and you and your brother Aaron gather the assembly together. Speak to that rock before their eyes and it will pour out its water. You will bring water out of the rock for the community so they and their livestock can drink."

9So Moses took the staff from the LORD's presence, just as he commanded him. 10He and Aaron gathered the assembly together in front of the rock and Moses said to them, "Listen, you rebels, must we bring you water out of this rock?" 11Then Moses raised his arm and struck the rock twice with his staff. Water gushed out, and the community and their livestock drank.

12But the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "Because you did not trust in me enough to honor me as holy in the sight of the Israelites, you will not bring this community into the land I give them."

13These were the waters of Meribah,[a] where the Israelites quarreled with the LORD and where he was proved holy among them.

[a] *13 Meribah* means *quarreling.*

TRANSITION

Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan

The narrative of Numbers concludes with the Israelites once more at Kadesh Barnea (Nu 20:1, 14). The issue now is whether this new generation would believe after their fathers had not. As they prepare to journey from Kadesh toward the plains of Moab, they are ready to hear once more God's command to enter the land of Canaan.

The account of Aaron's death on Mount Hor (Nu 20:22–29) indicates the 40th year after the Exodus, and thus the last year of the wilderness wandering. In the list of Israel's wilderness journeys in ch. 33, Aaron's death is placed in the 5th month of the 40th year after the Israelites' departure from Egypt (Nu 33:3, 37, 38). Calculating by this tradition of Nu 33, Israel would have reached the plains of Moab either around 1406 B.C. (40 years = 1446–1406) or around 1235 B.C. (40 years = 1275–1235; see "Egypt and the Exodus" at Ex 1:1).

The plains of Moab are the setting for the Balaam traditions. An Aramaic inscription found in the area east of the Jordan mentions a seer named Balaam. If this is the same Balaam described in Nu 22–24, then he was quite famous, which would explain King Balak's obvious respect for his powers (Nu 22:4–6).

• **Numbers 20:14—36:13**

Numbers

Edom Denies Israel Passage

20:14 Moses sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom, saying:

"This is what your brother Israel says: You know about all the hardships that have come on us. 15Our ancestors went down into Egypt, and we lived there many years. The Egyptians mistreated us and our ancestors, 16but when we cried out to the LORD, he heard our cry and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt.

"Now we are here at Kadesh, a town on the edge of your territory. 17Please let us pass through your country. We will not go through any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the King's Highway and not turn to the right or to the left until we have passed through your territory."

18But Edom answered:

"You may not pass through here; if you try, we will march out and attack you with the sword."

19The Israelites replied:

"We will go along the main road, and if we or our livestock drink any of your water, we will pay for it. We only want to pass through on foot—nothing else."

20Again they answered:

"You may not pass through."

Then Edom came out against them with a large and powerful army. 21Since Edom refused to let them go through their territory, Israel turned away from them.

The Death of Aaron

22The whole Israelite community set out from Kadesh and came to Mount Hor. 23At Mount Hor, near the border of Edom, the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, 24"Aaron will be gathered to his people. He will not enter the land I give the Israelites, because both of you rebelled against my command at the waters of Meribah. 25Get Aaron and his son Eleazar and take them up Mount Hor. 26Remove Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar, for Aaron will be gathered to his people; he will die there."

27Moses did as the LORD commanded: They went up Mount Hor in the sight of the whole community. 28Moses removed Aaron's garments and put them on his son Eleazar. And Aaron died there on top of the mountain. Then Moses and Eleazar came down from the mountain, 29and when the whole community learned that Aaron had died, all the Israelites mourned for him thirty days.

Arad Destroyed

21 1When the Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev, heard that Israel was coming along the road to Atharim, he attacked the Israelites and captured some of them. 2Then Israel made this vow to the LORD: "If you will deliver these people into our hands, we will totally destroy[a] their cities." 3The LORD listened to Israel's plea and gave the Canaanites over to them. They completely destroyed them and their towns; so the place was named Hormah.[b]

The Bronze Snake

4They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea,[c] to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; 5they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

6Then the LORD sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. 7The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the LORD and against you. Pray that the LORD will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people.

8The LORD said to Moses, "Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." 9So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

The Journey to Moab

10The Israelites moved on and camped at Oboth. 11Then they set out from Oboth and camped in Iye Abarim, in the wilderness that faces Moab toward the sunrise. 12From there they moved on and camped in the Zered Valley. 13They set out from there and camped alongside the Arnon, which is in the wilderness extending into Amorite territory. The Arnon is the border of Moab, between Moab and the Amorites.14That is why the Book of the Wars of the LORD says:

[a] *2* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verse 3. [b] *3* *Hormah* means *destruction*.
[c] *4* Or *the Sea of Reeds*

A Quick Cure for Snakebite (Nu 21:4–9)

The bronze snake on a pole that Moses made in the wilderness functioned as a cure for venomous snakebites (Nu 21:4–9). Scholars have suggested three explanations for what appears to be a type of magical medicine. Each of the three may express something about what the people of Israel understand concerning this snake.

One suggestion is that the image of the snake was merely an object of sympathetic magic. The bronze snake, representing the actual snake that bit the victim, was presented as a way of removing the poison from the snakebite. Magic amulets or charms for warding off and then curing illnesses and poisons were used everywhere in the ancient Near East. A number of copper and bronze snake figures have been recovered, showing that the practice was widespread.

A second possibility is that the object symbolized God's power over the snakes. The bronze snake would have been a sort of specialized worship item for those with snakebites. The "glance" toward the object would have been a plea or prayer to God for help. The bronze snake was only an aid to the prayer, while the cure would have come from God.

Yet a third suggestion supposes the bronze snake to have been an intermediary between God and the people. In the ancient Near East, the highest god of a pantheon could create new deities for specific purposes. The Israelites would have understood the bronze snake as a lesser divine being created expressly to cure their particular kind of snakebites. Among the mythological texts of Ugarit (13th century B.C.) is the *Legend of Keret.* In this story the god El creates the goddess Shatiqatu solely to cure King Keret from an illness no other deity could handle.

This third understanding possibly explains what happened later as the bronze snake was incorporated into the Israelite worship of God. It had been created by Moses and had been part of the religious world of Israel and Judah since before the settlement in Canaan. But by the time of Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.) Judahites worshiped it as Nehushtan (2Ki 18:4), possibly considering it a minor deity. The people's devotion to the bronze snake was condemned by Hezekiah, who had it destroyed.

". . . Zahab[a] in Suphah and the ravines,
the Arnon [15]and[b] the slopes of the ravines
that lead to the settlement of Ar
and lie along the border of Moab."

[16]From there they continued on to Beer, the well where the LORD said to Moses, "Gather the people together and I will give them water."

[17]Then Israel sang this song:

"Spring up, O well!
Sing about it,
[18]about the well that the princes dug,
that the nobles of the people sank—
the nobles with scepters and staffs."

Arts & Literature
The Book of the Wars of the Lord (Nu 21:14) has not been preserved, but part of its contents were evidently songs composed in the wilderness. Folk songs and even nursery rhymes can preserve names of places and historical events. Frequently the reference is brief or like a riddle, and the underlying history is then hard to discover.

Then they went from the wilderness to Mattanah, [19]from Mattanah to Nahaliel, from Nahaliel to Bamoth, [20]and from Bamoth to the valley in Moab where the top of Pisgah overlooks the wasteland.

Defeat of Sihon and Og

[21]Israel sent messengers to say to Sihon king of the Amorites:

[22]"Let us pass through your country. We will not turn aside into any field or vineyard, or drink water from any well. We will travel along the King's Highway until we have passed through your territory."

[23]But Sihon would not let Israel pass through his territory. He mustered his entire army and marched out into the wilderness against Israel. When he reached Jahaz, he fought with Israel. [24]Israel, however, put him to the sword and took over his land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, but only as far as the Ammonites, because their border was fortified. [25]Israel captured all

[a] *14* Septuagint; Hebrew *Waheb* [b] *14,15* Or *"I have been given from Suphah and the ravines / of the Arnon [15]to*

Balaam: Prophet for Hire (Nu 22:5, 6)

Balaam son of Beor is the famous prophet of Nu 22–24 whose services were requested by Balak, king of Moab. The Israelites were crossing through Moab at the time, and Balak was uncomfortable with such a large group of people in his land. So he called on the prophet to curse the Israelites in the name of God.

Normally a ruler would call on his own professional court prophets for such an undertaking. The blessing or cursing of neighboring kingdoms was standard duty for a court prophet. In contrast, prophets-for-hire were generally viewed unfavorably as unscrupulous persons who would say whatever their employer wished to hear. Nevertheless, Balak believed himself to be in sufficient danger to send for a famous and powerful prophet, whose work was known for its potency.

In the biblical traditions of Nu 22–24 Balaam is presented both favorably and unfavorably. Balaam, intending to keep his contract with Balak, attempted to curse the Israelites, but God kept him from doing so, insisting that Balaam bless them instead. In this way Balaam was a true prophet even in spite of himself and so, perhaps, was worthy of his fame. In a separate tradition (Nu 31:8, 16) Balaam is held responsible for the Israelite apostasy at Peor, and reported to have been killed by Israel.

An 8th-century B.C. inscription from Jordan confirms that Balaam was a renowned prophet at the time of Judah's and Israel's monarchies. The text, found at Tell Deir 'Alla, displays a heavenly pantheon, and tells how the prophet Balaam was called by the gods in the night through a vision or dream to witness to the divine will (see Nu 22:20). Thus Balaam's reliability as a prophet was remembered and recorded not only in the Bible, but also by the devotees who inscribed the Tell Deir 'Alla walls.

the cities of the Amorites and occupied them, including Heshbon and all its surrounding settlements. 26Heshbon was the city of Sihon king of the Amorites, who had fought against the former king of Moab and had taken from him all his land as far as the Arnon.

27That is why the poets say:

"Come to Heshbon and let it be rebuilt;
let Sihon's city be restored.

28"Fire went out from Heshbon,
a blaze from the city of Sihon.
It consumed Ar of Moab,
the citizens of Arnon's heights.
29Woe to you, Moab!
You are destroyed, people of Chemosh!
He has given up his sons as fugitives
and his daughters as captives
to Sihon king of the Amorites.

30"But we have overthrown them;
Heshbon's dominion has been destroyed
all the way to Dibon.
We have demolished them as far as
Nophah,
which extends to Medeba."

31So Israel settled in the land of the Amorites.

32After Moses had sent spies to Jazer, the Israelites captured its surrounding settlements and drove out the Amorites who were there. 33Then they turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, and Og king of Bashan and his whole army marched out to meet them in battle at Edrei.

34The LORD said to Moses, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him into your hands, along with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon."

35So they struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army, leaving them no survivors. And they took possession of his land.

Balak Summons Balaam

22 1Then the Israelites traveled to the plains of Moab and camped along the Jordan across from Jericho.

2Now Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites, 3and Moab was terrified because there were so many people. Indeed, Moab was filled with dread because of the Israelites.

4The Moabites said to the elders of Midian, "This horde is going to lick up everything around us, as an ox licks up the grass of the field."

So Balak son of Zippor, who was king of Moab at that time, 5sent messengers to summon Balaam son of Beor, who was at Pethor, near the Euphrates River, in his native land. Balak said:

> "A people has come out of Egypt; they cover the face of the land and have settled next to me. 6Now come and put a curse on these people, because they are too powerful for me. Perhaps then I will be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that whoever you bless is blessed, and whoever you curse is cursed."

7The elders of Moab and Midian left, taking with them the fee for divination. When they came to Balaam, they told him what Balak had said.

8 "Spend the night here," Balaam said to
them, "and I will report back to you with the
answer the LORD gives me." So the Moabite of-
ficials stayed with him.
9 God came to Balaam and asked, "Who are
these men with you?"
10 Balaam said to God, "Balak son of Zippor,
king of Moab, sent me this message: 11 'A peo-
ple that has come out of Egypt covers the face
of the land. Now come and put a curse on them
for me. Perhaps then I will be able to fight them
and drive them away.'"
12 But God said to Balaam, "Do not go with
them. You must not put a curse on those peo-
ple, because they are blessed."
13 The next morning Balaam got up and said to
Balak's officials, "Go back to your own country,
for the LORD has refused to let me go with you."
14 So the Moabite officials returned to Balak
and said, "Balaam refused to come with us."
15 Then Balak sent other officials, more nu-
merous and more distinguished than the first.
16 They came to Balaam and said:

> "This is what Balak son of Zippor says:
> Do not let anything keep you from coming
> to me, 17 because I will reward you hand-
> somely and do whatever you say. Come
> and put a curse on these people for me."

18 But Balaam answered them, "Even if Balak
gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I
could not do anything great or small to go be-
yond the command of the LORD my God. 19 Now
spend the night here so that I can find out what
else the LORD will tell me."
20 That night God came to Balaam and said,
"Since these men have come to summon you,
go with them, but do only what I tell you."

Balaam's Donkey

21 Balaam got up in the morning, saddled his
donkey and went with the Moabite officials.
22 But God was very angry when he went, and
the angel of the LORD stood in the road to op-
pose him. Balaam was riding on his donkey,
and his two servants were with him. 23 When
the donkey saw the angel of the LORD standing
in the road with a drawn sword in his hand, it
turned off the road into a field. Balaam beat it
to get it back on the road.
24 Then the angel of the LORD stood in a nar-
row path through the vineyards, with walls on
both sides. 25 When the donkey saw the angel of
the LORD, it pressed close to the wall, crushing
Balaam's foot against it. So he beat the donkey
again.
26 Then the angel of the LORD moved on
ahead and stood in a narrow place where there
was no room to turn, either to the right or to
the left. 27 When the donkey saw the angel of
the LORD, it lay down under Balaam, and he
was angry and beat it with his staff. 28 Then the
LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and it said to
Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you
beat me these three times?"
29 Balaam answered the donkey, "You have
made a fool of me! If only I had a sword in my
hand, I would kill you right now."
30 The donkey said to Balaam, "Am I not your
own donkey, which you have always ridden, to
this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this
to you?"
"No," he said.
31 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and
he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the
road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low
and fell facedown.
32 The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why
have you beaten your donkey these three
times? I have come here to oppose you be-
cause your path is a reckless one before me.[a]
33 The donkey saw me and turned away from
me these three times. If it had not turned away,
I would certainly have killed you by now, but I
would have spared it."
34 Balaam said to the angel of the LORD, "I
have sinned. I did not realize you were stand-
ing in the road to oppose me. Now if you are
displeased, I will go back."
35 The angel of the LORD said to Balaam, "Go
with the men, but speak only what I tell you."
So Balaam went with Balak's officials.
36 When Balak heard that Balaam was coming,
he went out to meet him at the Moabite town on
the Arnon border, at the edge of his territory.
37 Balak said to Balaam, "Did I not send you an
urgent summons? Why didn't you come to me?
Am I really not able to reward you?"
38 "Well, I have come to you now," Balaam re-
plied. "But I can't say whatever I please. I must
speak only what God puts in my mouth."
39 Then Balaam went with Balak to Kiriath
Huzoth. 40 Balak sacrificed cattle and sheep,
and gave some to Balaam and the officials who
were with him. 41 The next morning Balak took
Balaam up to Bamoth Baal, and from there he
could see the outskirts of the Israelite camp.

Balaam's First Message

23 1 Balaam said, "Build me seven altars
here, and prepare seven bulls and seven
rams for me." 2 Balak did as Balaam said, and

[a] *32* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

the two of them offered a bull and a ram on each altar.
3 Then Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offering while I go aside. Perhaps the LORD will come to meet with me. Whatever he reveals to me I will tell you." Then he went off to a barren height.
4 God met with him, and Balaam said, "I have prepared seven altars, and on each altar I have offered a bull and a ram."
5 The LORD put a word in Balaam's mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and give him this word."
6 So he went back to him and found him standing beside his offering, with all the Moabite officials. 7 Then Balaam spoke his message:

"Balak brought me from Aram,
the king of Moab from the eastern mountains.
'Come,' he said, 'curse Jacob for me;
come, denounce Israel.'
8 How can I curse
those whom God has not cursed?
How can I denounce
those whom the LORD has not denounced?
9 From the rocky peaks I see them,
from the heights I view them.
I see a people who live apart
and do not consider themselves one of the nations.
10 Who can count the dust of Jacob
or number even a fourth of Israel?
Let me die the death of the righteous,
and may my final end be like theirs!"

11 Balak said to Balaam, "What have you done to me? I brought you to curse my enemies, but you have done nothing but bless them!"
12 He answered, "Must I not speak what the LORD puts in my mouth?"

Balaam's Second Message

13 Then Balak said to him, "Come with me to another place where you can see them; you will not see them all but only the outskirts of their camp. And from there, curse them for me." 14 So he took him to the field of Zophim on the top of Pisgah, and there he built seven altars and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.
15 Balaam said to Balak, "Stay here beside your offering while I meet with him over there."
16 The LORD met with Balaam and put a word in his mouth and said, "Go back to Balak and give him this word."
17 So he went to him and found him standing beside his offering, with the Moabite officials. Balak asked him, "What did the LORD say?"
18 Then he spoke his message:

"Arise, Balak, and listen;
hear me, son of Zippor.
19 God is not human, that he should lie,
not a human being, that he should change his mind.
Does he speak and then not act?
Does he promise and not fulfill?
20 I have received a command to bless;
he has blessed, and I cannot change it.

21 "No misfortune is seen in Jacob,
no misery observed[a] in Israel.
The LORD their God is with them;
the shout of the King is among them.
22 God brought them out of Egypt;
they have the strength of a wild ox.
23 There is no divination against[b] Jacob,
no evil omens against[b] Israel.
It will now be said of Jacob
and of Israel, 'See what God has done!'
24 The people rise like a lioness;
they rouse themselves like a lion
that does not rest till it devours its prey
and drinks the blood of its victims."

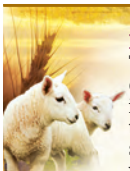
25 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Neither curse them at all nor bless them at all!"
26 Balaam answered, "Did I not tell you I must do whatever the LORD says?"

Balaam's Third Message

27 Then Balak said to Balaam, "Come, let me take you to another place. Perhaps it will please God to let you curse them for me from there." 28 And Balak took Balaam to the top of Peor, overlooking the wasteland.
29 Balaam said, "Build me seven altars here, and prepare seven bulls and seven rams for me." 30 Balak did as Balaam had said, and offered a bull and a ram on each altar.

24 1 Now when Balaam saw that it pleased the LORD to bless Israel, he did not resort to divination as at other times, but turned his face toward the wilderness. 2 When Balaam

[a] *21* Or *He has not looked on Jacob's offenses / or on the wrongs found* [b] *23* Or *in*



Plants & Animals
The conventional assignment of different characteristics to different animals is partly dictated by nature, and partly traditional. For the ancient Near East the strength of the ox was a matter of observation (Nu 23:22). More important, the ox or bull was prominent in religion, as it was in Egypt and in Mycenae.

looked out and saw Israel encamped tribe by tribe, the Spirit of God came on him 3and he spoke his message:

"The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor,
the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly,
4the prophecy of one who hears the words of God,
who sees a vision from the Almighty,[a]
who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:

5"How beautiful are your tents, Jacob,
your dwelling places, Israel!

6"Like valleys they spread out,
like gardens beside a river,
like aloes planted by the LORD,
like cedars beside the waters.
7Water will flow from their buckets;
their seed will have abundant water.

"Their king will be greater than Agag;
their kingdom will be exalted.

8"God brought them out of Egypt;
they have the strength of a wild ox.
They devour hostile nations
and break their bones in pieces;
with their arrows they pierce them.
9Like a lion they crouch and lie down,
like a lioness—who dares to rouse them?

"May those who bless you be blessed
and those who curse you be cursed!"

10Then Balak's anger burned against Balaam. He struck his hands together and said to him, "I summoned you to curse my enemies, but you have blessed them these three times. 11Now leave at once and go home! I said I would reward you handsomely, but the LORD has kept you from being rewarded."

12Balaam answered Balak, "Did I not tell the messengers you sent me, 13'Even if Balak gave me all the silver and gold in his palace, I could not do anything of my own accord, good or bad, to go beyond the command of the LORD—and I must say only what the LORD says'?14Now I am going back to my people, but come, let me warn you of what this people will do to your people in days to come."

Balaam's Fourth Message

15Then he spoke his message:

"The prophecy of Balaam son of Beor,
the prophecy of one whose eye sees clearly,
16the prophecy of one who hears the words of God,
who has knowledge from the Most High,
who sees a vision from the Almighty,
who falls prostrate, and whose eyes are opened:

17"I see him, but not now;
I behold him, but not near.
A star will come out of Jacob;
a scepter will rise out of Israel.
He will crush the foreheads of Moab,
the skulls[b] of[c] all the people of Sheth.[d]
18Edom will be conquered;
Seir, his enemy, will be conquered,
but Israel will grow strong.
19A ruler will come out of Jacob
and destroy the survivors of the city."

Balaam's Fifth Message

20Then Balaam saw Amalek and spoke his message:

"Amalek was first among the nations,
but their end will be utter destruction."

Balaam's Sixth Message

21Then he saw the Kenites and spoke his message:

"Your dwelling place is secure,
your nest is set in a rock;
22yet you Kenites will be destroyed
when Ashur takes you captive."

Balaam's Seventh Message

23Then he spoke his message:

"Alas! Who can live when God does this?[e]
24 Ships will come from the shores of Cyprus;
they will subdue Ashur and Eber,
but they too will come to ruin."

25Then Balaam got up and returned home, and Balak went his own way.

Moab Seduces Israel

25 1While Israel was staying in Shittim, the men began to indulge in sexual immorality with Moabite women, 2who invited them to the sacrifices to their gods. The people ate the sacrificial meal and bowed down before these gods. 3So Israel yoked themselves to the Baal

[a] *4* Hebrew *Shaddai*; also in verse 16 [b] *17* Samaritan Pentateuch (see also Jer. 48:45); the meaning of the word in the Masoretic Text is uncertain. [c] *17* Or possibly *Moab, / batter* [d] *17* Or *all the noisy boasters* [e] *23* Masoretic Text; with a different word division of the Hebrew *The people from the islands will gather from the north.*

Chasing the Gods of Moab (Nu 25:1–9)

The Israelites had no sooner been blessed by the prophet Balaam than they turned to the worship of the god Baal of Peor (Nu 25:1–9). Balaam had attempted to curse them, but God intervened. This was another in a series of events, beginning with the Exodus itself, in which God's salvation was repaid with complaints and apostasy.

What happened at the mountain called Peor in Moab? The Israelite men, being attracted to the Moabite women, accepted an invitation to their religious festivals where Baal of Peor, the god of the mountain, was worshiped. Baal of Peor was a prominent god of the Moabites, as well as of the Midianites and Ammonites.

The Israelites "ate" at the sacrifices (Nu 25:2). Whenever people in the ancient world killed animals for food, the slaughter was done in a ritual of sacrifice. The sacrifice gave honor to the deity to whom the meal was dedicated. Eating the meat served from the sacrifice was considered an act of worship of that deity, even if there were no other rituals or religious actions involved.

The Israelites who joined in the feast not only ate the sacrifice, but also "bowed down" to the Moabite gods (25:2). The men had not just gone along with the women for sexual favors and a free meal; rather they had joined the local cult devoted to the local god. For worshiping gods other than Israel's God, the punishment was death (25:4). Leaving the corpses of the offenders exposed was a practice used also by the Assyrian armies. It both disgraced the dead and served as a warning to others.

of Peor. And the LORD's anger burned against them.

4The LORD said to Moses, "Take all the leaders of these people, kill them and expose them in broad daylight before the LORD, so that the LORD's fierce anger may turn away from Israel."

5So Moses said to Israel's judges, "Each of you must put to death those of your people who have yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor."

6Then an Israelite man brought into the camp a Midianite woman right before the eyes of Moses and the whole assembly of Israel while they were weeping at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 7When Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, saw this, he left the assembly, took a spear in his hand 8and followed the Israelite into the tent. He drove the spear into both of them, right through the Israelite man and into the woman's stomach. Then the plague against the Israelites was stopped; 9but those who died in the plague numbered 24,000.

10The LORD said to Moses, 11"Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, the priest, has turned my anger away from the Israelites. Since he was as zealous for my honor among them as I am, I did not put an end to them in my zeal. 12Therefore tell him I am making my covenant of peace with him. 13He and his descendants will have a covenant of a lasting priesthood, because he was zealous for the honor of his God and made atonement for the Israelites."

14The name of the Israelite who was killed with the Midianite woman was Zimri son of Salu, the leader of a Simeonite family. 15And the name of the Midianite woman who was put to death was Kozbi daughter of Zur, a tribal chief of a Midianite family.

16The LORD said to Moses, 17"Treat the Midianites as enemies and kill them. 18They treated you as enemies when they deceived you in the Peor incident involving their sister Kozbi, the daughter of a Midianite leader, the woman who was killed when the plague came as a result of that incident."

The Second Census

26 1After the plague the LORD said to Moses and Eleazar son of Aaron, the priest, 2"Take a census of the whole Israelite community by families—all those twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army of Israel." 3So on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, Moses and Eleazar the priest spoke with them and said, 4"Take a census of the men twenty years old or more, as the LORD commanded Moses."

These were the Israelites who came out of Egypt:

5The descendants of Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, were:
through Hanok, the Hanokite clan;
through Pallu, the Palluite clan;
6through Hezron, the Hezronite clan;
through Karmi, the Karmite clan.
7These were the clans of Reuben; those numbered were 43,730.

8The son of Pallu was Eliab, 9and the sons of Eliab were Nemuel, Dathan and Abiram. The same Dathan and Abiram were the community officials who rebelled against Moses and Aaron and were among Korah's followers when they rebelled against the LORD. 10The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them along with Korah, whose followers died when the fire devoured the 250 men. And they served as a warning sign. 11The line of Korah, however, did not die out.

12 The descendants of Simeon by their clans were:
through Nemuel, the Nemuelite clan;
through Jamin, the Jaminite clan;
through Jakin, the Jakinite clan;
13 through Zerah, the Zerahite clan;
through Shaul, the Shaulite clan.
14 These were the clans of Simeon; those numbered were 22,200.

15 The descendants of Gad by their clans were:
through Zephon, the Zephonite clan;
through Haggi, the Haggite clan;
through Shuni, the Shunite clan;
16 through Ozni, the Oznite clan;
through Eri, the Erite clan;
17 through Arodi,[a] the Arodite clan;
through Areli, the Arelite clan.
18 These were the clans of Gad; those numbered were 40,500.

19 Er and Onan were sons of Judah, but they died in Canaan.
20 The descendants of Judah by their clans were:
through Shelah, the Shelanite clan;
through Perez, the Perezite clan;
through Zerah, the Zerahite clan.
21 The descendants of Perez were:
through Hezron, the Hezronite clan;
through Hamul, the Hamulite clan.
22 These were the clans of Judah; those numbered were 76,500.

23 The descendants of Issachar by their clans were:
through Tola, the Tolaite clan;
through Puah, the Puite[b] clan;
24 through Jashub, the Jashubite clan;
through Shimron, the Shimronite clan.
25 These were the clans of Issachar; those numbered were 64,300.

26 The descendants of Zebulun by their clans were:
through Sered, the Seredite clan;
through Elon, the Elonite clan;
through Jahleel, the Jahleelite clan.
27 These were the clans of Zebulun; those numbered were 60,500.

28 The descendants of Joseph by their clans through Manasseh and Ephraim were:

29 The descendants of Manasseh:
through Makir, the Makirite clan (Makir was the father of Gilead);
through Gilead, the Gileadite clan.
30 These were the descendants of Gilead:
through Iezer, the Iezerite clan;
through Helek, the Helekite clan;
31 through Asriel, the Asrielite clan;
through Shechem, the Shechemite clan;
32 through Shemida, the Shemidaite clan;
through Hepher, the Hepherite clan.
33 (Zelophehad son of Hepher had no sons; he had only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah.)
34 These were the clans of Manasseh; those numbered were 52,700.

35 These were the descendants of Ephraim by their clans:
through Shuthelah, the Shuthelahite clan;
through Beker, the Bekerite clan;
through Tahan, the Tahanite clan.
36 These were the descendants of Shuthelah:
through Eran, the Eranite clan.
37 These were the clans of Ephraim; those numbered were 32,500.

These were the descendants of Joseph by their clans.

38 The descendants of Benjamin by their clans were:
through Bela, the Belaite clan;
through Ashbel, the Ashbelite clan;
through Ahiram, the Ahiramite clan;
39 through Shupham,[c] the Shuphamite clan;
through Hupham, the Huphamite clan.
40 The descendants of Bela through Ard and Naaman were:
through Ard,[d] the Ardite clan;
through Naaman, the Naamite clan.
41 These were the clans of Benjamin; those numbered were 45,600.

TIME CAPSULE		1363 to 1360 B.C.
1363–1328		Ashur-uballit I is first ruler called "king of Assyria"
1360		Fire in the palace at Ugarit destroys the royal archives
1360		Ashur-uballit I writes two letters to Egyptian capital at Amarna
1360–1333		Amarna letters exchanged between Egypt and Canaanite vassal rulers

[a] *17* Samaritan Pentateuch and Syriac (see also Gen. 46:16); Masoretic Text *Arod* [b] *23* Samaritan Pentateuch, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 7:1); Masoretic Text *through Puvah, the Punite* [c] *39* A few manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *Shephupham* [d] *40* Samaritan Pentateuch and Vulgate (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text does not have *through Ard*.

42These were the descendants of Dan by their clans:
through Shuham, the Shuhamite clan.
These were the clans of Dan: 43All of them were Shuhamite clans; and those numbered were 64,400.

44The descendants of Asher by their clans were:
through Imnah, the Imnite clan;
through Ishvi, the Ishvite clan;
through Beriah, the Beriite clan;
45and through the descendants of Beriah:
through Heber, the Heberite clan;
through Malkiel, the Malkielite clan.
46(Asher had a daughter named Serah.)
47These were the clans of Asher; those numbered were 53,400.

48The descendants of Naphtali by their clans were:
through Jahzeel, the Jahzeelite clan;
through Guni, the Gunite clan;
49through Jezer, the Jezerite clan;
through Shillem, the Shillemite clan.
50These were the clans of Naphtali; those numbered were 45,400.

51The total number of the men of Israel was 601,730.

52The LORD said to Moses, 53"The land is to be allotted to them as an inheritance based on the number of names. 54To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one; each is to receive its inheritance according to the number of those listed. 55Be sure that the land is distributed by lot. What each group inherits will be according to the names for its ancestral tribe. 56Each inheritance is to be distributed by lot among the larger and smaller groups."

57These were the Levites who were counted by their clans:
through Gershon, the Gershonite clan;
through Kohath, the Kohathite clan;
through Merari, the Merarite clan.
58These also were Levite clans:
the Libnite clan,
the Hebronite clan,
the Mahlite clan,
the Mushite clan,
the Korahite clan.
(Kohath was the forefather of Amram;
59the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed,
a descendant of Levi, who was born to the Levites[a] in Egypt. To Amram she bore Aaron, Moses and their sister Miriam. 60Aaron was the father of Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 61But Nadab and Abihu died when they made an offering before the LORD with unauthorized fire.)

62All the male Levites a month old or more numbered 23,000. They were not counted along with the other Israelites because they received no inheritance among them.

63These are the ones counted by Moses and Eleazar the priest when they counted the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. 64Not one of them was among those counted by Moses and Aaron the priest when they counted the Israelites in the Desert of Sinai. 65For the LORD had told those Israelites they would surely die in the wilderness, and not one of them was left except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Zelophehad's Daughters

27 1The daughters of Zelophehad son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, belonged to the clans of Manasseh son of Joseph. The names of the daughters were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah. They came forward 2and stood before Moses, Eleazar the priest, the leaders and the whole assembly at the entrance to the tent of meeting and said, 3"Our father died in the wilderness. He was not among Korah's followers, who banded together against the LORD, but he died for his own sin and left no sons. 4Why should our father's name disappear from his clan because he had no son? Give us property among our father's relatives."

5So Moses brought their case before the LORD, 6and the LORD said to him, 7"What Zelophehad's daughters are saying is right. You must certainly give them property as an inheritance among their father's relatives and give their father's inheritance to them.

8"Say to the Israelites, 'If a man dies and leaves no son, give his inheritance to his daughter. 9If he has no daughter, give his inheritance

Culture & Society
The people of Israel are listed tribe by tribe, with the sons and families carefully named (Nu 26:51). In the tribal community, the facts of descent and physical relation have a much greater or a more obvious importance than in industrial societies. The Bible figures lines of descent over hundreds of years.

[a] 59 Or *Jochebed, a daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi*

to his brothers. 10If he has no brothers, give his inheritance to his father's brothers. 11If his father had no brothers, give his inheritance to the nearest relative in his clan, that he may possess it. This is to have the force of law for the Israelites, as the LORD commanded Moses.'"

Joshua to Succeed Moses

12Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go up this mountain in the Abarim Range and see the land I have given the Israelites. 13After you have seen it, you too will be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was,14for when the community rebelled at the waters in the Desert of Zin, both of you disobeyed my command to honor me as holy before their eyes." (These were the waters of Meribah Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.)

15Moses said to the LORD, 16"May the LORD, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community 17to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

18So the LORD said to Moses, "Take Joshua son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit of leadership,[a] and lay your hand on him. 19Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and the entire assembly and commission him in their presence. 20Give him some of your authority so the whole Israelite community will obey him. 21He is to stand before Eleazar the priest, who will obtain decisions for him by inquiring of the Urim before the LORD. At his command he and the entire community of the Israelites will go out, and at his command they will come in."

22Moses did as the LORD commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Eleazar the priest and the whole assembly. 23Then he laid his hands on him and commissioned him, as the LORD instructed through Moses.

Daily Offerings

28 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Give this command to the Israelites and say to them: 'Make sure that you present to me at the appointed time my food offerings, as an aroma pleasing to me.' 3Say to them: 'This is the food offering you are to present to the LORD: two lambs a year old without defect, as a regular burnt offering each day. 4Offer one lamb in the morning and the other at twilight, 5together with a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah[b] of the finest flour mixed with a quarter of a hin[c] of oil from pressed olives. 6This is the regular burnt offering instituted at Mount Sinai as a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD. 7The accompanying drink offering is to be a quarter of a hin of fermented drink with each lamb. Pour out the drink offering to the LORD at the sanctuary. 8Offer the second lamb at twilight, along with the same kind of grain offering and drink offering that you offer in the morning. This is a food offering, an aroma pleasing to the LORD.

Sabbath Offerings

9"'On the Sabbath day, make an offering of two lambs a year old without defect, together with its drink offering and a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah[d] of the finest flour mixed with olive oil. 10This is the burnt offering for every Sabbath, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering.

Monthly Offerings

11"'On the first of every month, present to the LORD a burnt offering of two young bulls,

[a] *18* Or *the Spirit* [b] *5* That is, probably about 3 1/2 pounds or about 1.6 kilograms; also in verses 13, 21 and 29 [c] *5* That is, about 1 quart or about 1 liter; also in verses 7 and 14 [d] *9* That is, probably about 7 pounds or about 3.2 kilograms; also in verses 12, 20 and 28

Two unblemished male lambs were offered daily—one in the morning, one in the evening—as part of the regular burnt offering to the Lord.

ISRAEL'S SACRED TIMES

Sabbath	Every 7th day was a solemn rest from all work. *Ex 20:8–11; 31:12–17; Lev 23:3; Dt 5:12–15*
Sabbath Year	Every 7th year was designated a "year of release" to allow the land to lie fallow. *Ex 23:10, 11; Lev 25:1–7*
Year of Jubilee	The 50th year, which followed seven Sabbath years, was to proclaim liberty to those who were servants because of debt, and to return lands to their former owners. *Lev 25:8–55; 27:17–24; Eze 46:17*
The New Moon	The 1st day of the Hebrew 29 or 30-day month was a day of rest, special sacrifices, and the blowing of trumpets *Nu 28:11–15; Ps 81:3*
Dedication (Lights or *Hanukkah*)	An 8-day festival in the 9th month (Kislev) commemorating the cleansing of the temple from defilement by Syria, and its rededication. *Jn 10:22*
Purim (Lots)	A festival on the 14th and 15th of the 12th month (Adar). The name comes from Babylonian *Pur*, meaning "lot." *Est 9:18–32*

one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. 12With each bull there is to be a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah[a] of the finest flour mixed with oil; with the ram, a grain offering of two-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with oil; 13and with each lamb, a grain offering of a tenth of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with oil. This is for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma, a food offering presented to the LORD. 14With each bull there is to be a drink offering of half a hin[b] of wine; with the ram, a third of a hin[c]; and with each lamb, a quarter of a hin. This is the monthly burnt offering to be made at each new moon during the year. 15Besides the regular burnt offering with its drink offering, one male goat is to be presented to the LORD as a sin offering.[d]

The Passover

16"'On the fourteenth day of the first month the LORD's Passover is to be held. 17On the fifteenth day of this month there is to be a festival; for seven days eat bread made without yeast. 18On the first day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. 19Present to the LORD a food offering consisting of a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. 20With each bull offer a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths; 21and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth. 22Include one male goat as a sin offering to make atonement for you. 23Offer these in addition to the regular morning burnt offering. 24In this way present the food offering every day for seven days as an aroma pleasing to the LORD; it is to be offered in addition to the regular burnt offering and its drink offering. 25On the seventh day hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work.

The Festival of Weeks

26"'On the day of firstfruits, when you present to the LORD an offering of new grain during the Festival of Weeks, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. 27Present a burnt offering of two young bulls, one ram and seven male lambs a year old as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. 28With each bull there is to be a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths; 29and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth. 30Include one male goat to make atonement for you. 31Offer these together with their drink offerings, in addition to the regular burnt offering and its grain offering. Be sure the animals are without defect.

The Festival of Trumpets

29 1"'On the first day of the seventh month hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. It is a day for you to sound the trumpets. 2As an aroma pleasing to the LORD, offer a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. 3With the bull offer a grain offering of

[a] *12* That is, probably about 11 pounds or about 5 kilograms; also in verses 20 and 28 [b] *14* That is, about 2 quarts or about 1.9 liters [c] *14* That is, about 1 1/3 quarts or about 1.3 liters [d] *15* Or *purification offering*; also in verse 22

three-tenths of an ephah[a] of the finest flour mixed with olive oil; with the ram, two-tenths[b]; 4and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth.[c] 5Include one male goat as a sin offering[d] to make atonement for you. 6These are in addition to the monthly and daily burnt offerings with their grain offerings and drink offerings as specified. They are food offerings presented to the LORD, a pleasing aroma.

The Day of Atonement

7"'On the tenth day of this seventh month hold a sacred assembly. You must deny yourselves[e] and do no work. 8Present as an aroma pleasing to the LORD a burnt offering of one young bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. 9With the bull offer a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with oil; with the ram, two-tenths; 10and with each of the seven lambs, one-tenth. 11Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the sin offering for atonement and the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

The Festival of Tabernacles

12"'On the fifteenth day of the seventh month, hold a sacred assembly and do no regular work. Celebrate a festival to the LORD for seven days. 13Present as an aroma pleasing to the LORD a food offering consisting of a burnt offering of thirteen young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect.14With each of the thirteen bulls offer a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of the finest flour mixed with oil; with each of the two rams, two-tenths; 15and with each of the fourteen lambs, one-tenth. 16Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

17"'On the second day offer twelve young bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. 18With the bulls, rams and lambs, offer their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. 19Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering, and their drink offerings.

20"'On the third day offer eleven bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. 21With the bulls, rams and lambs, offer their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. 22Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

23"'On the fourth day offer ten bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. 24With the bulls, rams and lambs, offer their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. 25Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

26"'On the fifth day offer nine bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. 27With the bulls, rams and lambs, offer their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. 28Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

29"'On the sixth day offer eight bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. 30With the bulls, rams and lambs, offer their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. 31Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

32"'On the seventh day offer seven bulls, two rams and fourteen male lambs a year old, all without defect. 33With the bulls, rams and lambs, offer their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. 34Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

35"'On the eighth day hold a closing special assembly and do no regular work. 36Present as an aroma pleasing to the LORD a food offering consisting of a burnt offering of one bull, one ram and seven male lambs a year old, all without defect. 37With the bull, the ram and the lambs, offer their grain offerings and drink offerings according to the number specified. 38Include one male goat as a sin offering, in addition to the regular burnt offering with its grain offering and drink offering.

39"'In addition to what you vow and your freewill offerings, offer these to the LORD at your appointed festivals: your burnt offerings, grain offerings, drink offerings and fellowship offerings.'"

40Moses told the Israelites all that the LORD commanded him.[f]

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[a] *3* That is, probably about 11 pounds or about 5 kilograms; also in verses 9 and 14 [b] *3* That is, probably about 7 pounds or about 3.2 kilograms; also in verses 9 and 14 [c] *4* That is, probably about 3 1/2 pounds or about 1.6 kilograms; also in verses 10 and 15 [d] *5* Or *purification offering*; also elsewhere in this chapter [e] *7* Or *must fast* [f] *40* In Hebrew texts this verse (29:40) is numbered 30:1.

Swearing to the Gods (Nu 30:2)

Emar has recently become a source for the understanding of Middle-Euphrates Syria in the Late Bronze Age (c. 1500–1200 B.C.). The city of Emar (or Imar, as it was apparently known) is indirectly referred to in texts from Ebla in the 3rd millennium B.C. and from Mari in the 18th century B.C. In later centuries (from about 1350 to 1187 B.C.) Emar was a Hittite protectorate, or dependent state.

Over 2,000 cuneiform texts, mostly written in Accadian, have been found at Emar. Many of these texts share distinct literary parallels with the Old Testament, and a number of features in the Emar textual collection appear to have a direct bearing on the understanding of the biblical text. These include the Emar installation festivals, calendar, rites for the dead, and rituals for the prophetic and priestly offices.

One such parallel between Emar and the Bible concerns vows made to the deity. According to Israel's law concerning vows to God, any Israelite who "takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge" (Nu 30:2) must carry out the oath and honor the agreement. At Emar, it seems that people swore by their ancestor's gods in order to protect their property rights. The inheritance clauses of certain texts from Emar show that heirs would swear by the gods of their deceased relative. Both cultures settled legal affairs by swearing to their deities.

Vows

30[a] [1]Moses said to the heads of the tribes of Israel: "This is what the LORD commands: [2]When a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath to obligate himself by a pledge, he must not break his word but must do everything he said.

[3]"When a young woman still living in her father's household makes a vow to the LORD or obligates herself by a pledge [4]and her father hears about her vow or pledge but says nothing to her, then all her vows and every pledge by which she obligated herself will stand. [5]But if her father forbids her when he hears about it, none of her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand; the LORD will release her because her father has forbidden her.

[6]"If she marries after she makes a vow or after her lips utter a rash promise by which she obligates herself [7]and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her, then her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. [8]But if her husband forbids her when he hears about it, he nullifies the vow that obligates her or the rash promise by which she obligates herself, and the LORD will release her.

[9]"Any vow or obligation taken by a widow or divorced woman will be binding on her.

[10]"If a woman living with her husband makes a vow or obligates herself by a pledge under oath [11]and her husband hears about it but says nothing to her and does not forbid her, then all her vows or the pledges by which she obligated herself will stand. [12]But if her husband nullifies them when he hears about them, then none of the vows or pledges that came from her lips will stand. Her husband has nullified them, and the LORD will release her. [13]Her husband may confirm or nullify any vow she makes or any sworn pledge to deny herself.[b] [14]But if her husband says nothing to her about it from day to day, then he confirms all her vows or the pledges binding on her. He confirms them by saying nothing to her when he hears about them. [15]If, however, he nullifies them some time after he hears about them, then he must bear the consequences of her wrongdoing."

[16]These are the regulations the LORD gave Moses concerning relationships between a man and his wife, and between a father and his young daughter still living at home.

Vengeance on the Midianites

31 [1]The LORD said to Moses, [2]"Take vengeance on the Midianites for the Israelites. After that, you will be gathered to your people."

[3]So Moses said to the people, "Arm some of your men to go to war against the Midianites so that they may carry out the LORD's vengeance on them. [4]Send into battle a thousand men from each of the tribes of Israel." [5]So twelve thousand men armed for battle, a thousand from each tribe, were supplied from the clans of Israel. [6]Moses sent them into battle, a thousand from each tribe, along with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, who took with him articles from the sanctuary and the trumpets for signaling.

Marriage & Family

In making and paying vows, the father or husband had a kind of veto power over what a wife or daughter could do (Nu 30:16). But when the veto power was not exercised within the time limit, or if it did not apply, a woman could make and pay vows that had the same absolute solemnity as vows made by a male.

[a] In Hebrew texts 30:1-16 is numbered 30:2-17.
[b] *13* Or *to fast*

7They fought against Midian, as the LORD commanded Moses, and killed every man. 8Among their victims were Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—the five kings of Midian. They also killed Balaam son of Beor with the sword. 9The Israelites captured the Midianite women and children and took all the Midianite herds, flocks and goods as plunder. 10They burned all the towns where the Midianites had settled, as well as all their camps. 11They took all the plunder and spoils, including the people and animals, 12and brought the captives, spoils and plunder to Moses and Eleazar the priest and the Israelite assembly at their camp on the plains of Moab, by the Jordan across from Jericho.

13Moses, Eleazar the priest and all the leaders of the community went to meet them outside the camp.14Moses was angry with the officers of the army—the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds—who returned from the battle.

15"Have you allowed all the women to live?" he asked them. 16"They were the ones who followed Balaam's advice and enticed the Israelites to be unfaithful to the LORD in the Peor incident, so that a plague struck the LORD's people. 17Now kill all the boys. And kill every woman who has slept with a man, 18but save for yourselves every girl who has never slept with a man.

19"Anyone who has killed someone or touched someone who was killed must stay outside the camp seven days. On the third and seventh days you must purify yourselves and your captives. 20Purify every garment as well as everything made of leather, goat hair or wood."

21Then Eleazar the priest said to the soldiers who had gone into battle, "This is what is required by the law that the LORD gave Moses: 22Gold, silver, bronze, iron, tin, lead 23and anything else that can withstand fire must be put through the fire, and then it will be clean. But it must also be purified with the water of cleansing. And whatever cannot withstand fire must be put through that water. 24On the seventh day wash your clothes and you will be clean. Then you may come into the camp."

Dividing the Spoils

25The LORD said to Moses, 26"You and Eleazar the priest and the family heads of the community are to count all the people and animals that were captured. 27Divide the spoils equally between the soldiers who took part in the battle and the rest of the community. 28From the soldiers who fought in the battle, set apart as tribute for the LORD one out of every five hundred, whether people, cattle, donkeys or sheep. 29Take this tribute from their half share and give it to Eleazar the priest as the LORD's part. 30From the Israelites' half, select one out of every fifty, whether people, cattle, donkeys, sheep or other animals. Give them to the Levites, who are responsible for the care of the LORD's tabernacle." 31So Moses and Eleazar the priest did as the LORD commanded Moses.

32The plunder remaining from the spoils that the soldiers took was 675,000 sheep, 3372,000 cattle, 3461,000 donkeys 35and 32,000 women who had never slept with a man.

36The half share of those who fought in the battle was:

337,500 sheep, 37of which the tribute for the LORD was 675;
3836,000 cattle, of which the tribute for the LORD was 72;
3930,500 donkeys, of which the tribute for the LORD was 61;
4016,000 people, of whom the tribute for the LORD was 32.

41Moses gave the tribute to Eleazar the priest as the LORD's part, as the LORD commanded Moses.

42The half belonging to the Israelites, which Moses set apart from that of the fighting men— 43the community's half—was 337,500 sheep, 4436,000 cattle, 4530,500 donkeys 46and 16,000 people. 47From the Israelites' half, Moses selected one out of every fifty people and animals, as the LORD commanded him, and gave them to the Levites, who were responsible for the care of the LORD's tabernacle.

48Then the officers who were over the units of the army—the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds—went to Mo-

TIME CAPSULE		1352 to 1350 B.C.
1352–1336		Amenhotep IV, pharaoh of Egypt
1352		Amenhotep IV introduces monotheism to Egypt
1350		A "Lion Gate" at Hattusa, the Hittite capital
1350		A hymn composed to the Egyptian Aten (sun disk)
1350		The story of Adapa known from a tablet found at Asshur and Tell el-Amarna, Egypt
1350		Abdi-Hepa, king of Jerusalem, writes to Pharaoh Amenhotep IV in Egypt

ses [49]and said to him, "Your servants have counted the soldiers under our command, and not one is missing. [50]So we have brought as an offering to the LORD the gold articles each of us acquired—armlets, bracelets, signet rings, earrings and necklaces—to make atonement for ourselves before the LORD."

[51]Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted from them the gold—all the crafted articles. [52]All the gold from the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds that Moses and Eleazar presented as a gift to the LORD weighed 16,750 shekels.[a] [53]Each soldier had taken plunder for himself. [54]Moses and Eleazar the priest accepted the gold from the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds and brought it into the tent of meeting as a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD.

The Transjordan Tribes

32 [1]The Reubenites and Gadites, who had very large herds and flocks, saw that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for livestock. [2]So they came to Moses and Eleazar the priest and to the leaders of the community, and said, [3]"Ataroth, Dibon, Jazer, Nimrah, Heshbon, Elealeh, Sebam, Nebo and Beon— [4]the land the LORD subdued before the people of Israel—are suitable for livestock, and your servants have livestock. [5]If we have found favor in your eyes," they said, "let this land be given to your servants as our possession. Do not make us cross the Jordan."

[6]Moses said to the Gadites and Reubenites, "Should your fellow Israelites go to war while you sit here? [7]Why do you discourage the Israelites from crossing over into the land the LORD has given them? [8]This is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh Barnea to look over the land. [9]After they went up to the Valley of Eshkol and viewed the land, they discouraged the Israelites from entering the land the LORD had given them. [10]The LORD's anger was aroused that day and he swore this oath: [11]'Because they have not followed me wholeheartedly, not one of those who were twenty years old or more when they came up out of Egypt will see the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob— [12]not one except Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite and Joshua son of Nun, for they followed the LORD wholeheartedly.' [13]The LORD's anger burned against Israel and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until the whole generation of those who had done evil in his sight was gone.

[14]"And here you are, a brood of sinners, standing in the place of your fathers and making the LORD even more angry with Israel. [15]If you turn away from following him, he will again leave all this people in the wilderness, and you will be the cause of their destruction."

[16]Then they came up to him and said, "We would like to build pens here for our livestock and cities for our women and children. [17]But we will arm ourselves for battle[b] and go ahead of the Israelites until we have brought them to their place. Meanwhile our women and children will live in fortified cities, for protection from the inhabitants of the land. [18]We will not return to our homes until each of the Israelites has received their inheritance. [19]We will not receive any inheritance with them on the other side of the Jordan, because our inheritance has come to us on the east side of the Jordan."

[20]Then Moses said to them, "If you will do this—if you will arm yourselves before the LORD for battle [21]and if all of you who are armed cross over the Jordan before the LORD until he has driven his enemies out before him— [22]then when the land is subdued before the LORD, you may return and be free from your

[a] *52* That is, about 420 pounds or about 190 kilograms
[b] *17* Septuagint; Hebrew *will be quick to arm ourselves*

obligation to the LORD and to Israel. And this land will be your possession before the LORD.
23"But if you fail to do this, you will be sinning against the LORD; and you may be sure that your sin will find you out. 24Build cities for your women and children, and pens for your flocks, but do what you have promised."
25The Gadites and Reubenites said to Moses, "We your servants will do as our lord commands. 26Our children and wives, our flocks and herds will remain here in the cities of Gilead. 27But your servants, every man who is armed for battle, will cross over to fight before the LORD, just as our lord says."
28Then Moses gave orders about them to Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun and to the family heads of the Israelite tribes. 29He said to them, "If the Gadites and Reubenites, every man armed for battle, cross over the Jordan with you before the LORD, then when the land is subdued before you, you must give them the land of Gilead as their possession. 30But if they do not cross over with you armed, they must accept their possession with you in Canaan."
31The Gadites and Reubenites answered, "Your servants will do what the LORD has said. 32We will cross over before the LORD into Canaan armed, but the property we inherit will be on this side of the Jordan."
33Then Moses gave to the Gadites, the Reubenites and the half-tribe of Manasseh son of Joseph the kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan—the whole land with its cities and the territory around them.
34The Gadites built up Dibon, Ataroth, Aroer, 35Atroth Shophan, Jazer, Jogbehah, 36Beth Nimrah and Beth Haran as fortified cities, and built pens for their flocks. 37And the Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh and Kiriathaim, 38as well as Nebo and Baal Meon (these names were changed) and Sibmah. They gave names to the cities they rebuilt.
39The descendants of Makir son of Manasseh went to Gilead, captured it and drove out the Amorites who were there. 40So Moses gave Gilead to the Makirites, the descendants of Manasseh, and they settled there. 41Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, captured their settlements and called them Havvoth Jair.[a] 42And Nobah captured Kenath and its surrounding settlements and called it Nobah after himself.

Stages in Israel's Journey

33 1Here are the stages in the journey of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt by divisions under the leadership of Moses and Aaron. 2At the LORD's command Moses recorded the stages in their journey. This is their journey by stages:

3The Israelites set out from Rameses on the fifteenth day of the first month, the day after the Passover. They marched out defiantly in full view of all the Egyptians, 4who were burying all their firstborn, whom the LORD had struck down among them; for the LORD had brought judgment on their gods.
5The Israelites left Rameses and camped at Sukkoth.
6They left Sukkoth and camped at Etham, on the edge of the desert.
7They left Etham, turned back to Pi Ha-

[a] *41* Or *them the settlements of Jair*

The Approach to Transjordan
From Kadesh Barnea Moses wanted to go east through Edom and north through Moab toward Canaan. Being refused passage through both territories, he instead went south to Elath, then north and east, bypassing Edom and Moab.

hiroth, to the east of Baal Zephon, and camped near Migdol.
8They left Pi Hahiroth[a] and passed through the sea into the desert, and when they had traveled for three days in the Desert of Etham, they camped at Marah.
9They left Marah and went to Elim, where there were twelve springs and seventy palm trees, and they camped there.
10They left Elim and camped by the Red Sea.[b]
11They left the Red Sea and camped in the Desert of Sin.
12They left the Desert of Sin and camped at Dophkah.
13They left Dophkah and camped at Alush.
14They left Alush and camped at Rephidim, where there was no water for the people to drink.
15They left Rephidim and camped in the Desert of Sinai.
16They left the Desert of Sinai and camped at Kibroth Hattaavah.
17They left Kibroth Hattaavah and camped at Hazeroth.
18They left Hazeroth and camped at Rithmah.
19They left Rithmah and camped at Rimmon Perez.
20They left Rimmon Perez and camped at Libnah.
21They left Libnah and camped at Rissah.
22They left Rissah and camped at Kehelathah.
23They left Kehelathah and camped at Mount Shepher.
24They left Mount Shepher and camped at Haradah.
25They left Haradah and camped at Makheloth.
26They left Makheloth and camped at Tahath.
27They left Tahath and camped at Terah.
28They left Terah and camped at Mithkah.
29They left Mithkah and camped at Hashmonah.
30They left Hashmonah and camped at Moseroth.
31They left Moseroth and camped at Bene Jaakan.
32They left Bene Jaakan and camped at Hor Haggidgad.
33They left Hor Haggidgad and camped at Jotbathah.
34They left Jotbathah and camped at Abronah.
35They left Abronah and camped at Ezion Geber.
36They left Ezion Geber and camped at Kadesh, in the Desert of Zin.
37They left Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, on the border of Edom. 38At the LORD's command Aaron the priest went up Mount Hor, where he died on the first day of the fifth month of the fortieth year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. 39Aaron was a hundred and twenty-three years old when he died on Mount Hor.
40The Canaanite king of Arad, who lived in the Negev of Canaan, heard that the Israelites were coming.
41They left Mount Hor and camped at Zalmonah.
42They left Zalmonah and camped at Punon.
43They left Punon and camped at Oboth.
44They left Oboth and camped at Iye Abarim, on the border of Moab.
45They left Iye Abarim and camped at Dibon Gad.
46They left Dibon Gad and camped at Almon Diblathaim.
47They left Almon Diblathaim and camped in the mountains of Abarim, near Nebo.
48They left the mountains of Abarim and camped on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho. 49There on the plains of Moab they camped along the Jordan from Beth Jeshimoth to Abel Shittim.

50On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho the LORD said to Moses, 51"Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, 52drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. 53Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess. 54Distribute the land by lot, according to your clans. To a larger group give a larger inheritance, and to a smaller group a smaller one. Whatever falls to them by lot will be theirs. Distribute it according to your ancestral tribes.
55"'But if you do not drive out the inhabi-

[a] *8* Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Samaritan Pentateuch and Vulgate; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *left from before Hahiroth* [b] *10* Or *the Sea of Reeds*; also in verse 11

The Wadi of Egypt (Nu 34:1–5)

Numbers 34 describes the boundaries of the promised land—Canaan—which the Israelites would inherit. The southern border extended to the "Wadi of Egypt" (Nu 34:3, 5; cf. Ge 15:18). Some translations call it "the River of Egypt." Without thought, one could confuse this with the Nile River, since the Nile is, and always has been, the life of Egyptian history and people.

The Nile River is at times intended by the biblical writer, but is in the Hebrew called simply "the river" (Isa 19:7; Na 3:8). The name "Nile" comes from the Greco-Roman period (after 332 B.C.) and was unknown in earlier times. The Egyptians referred to the Nile by a word equivalent to "river," and a Hebrew modification of this Egyptian word appears most often in the Old Testament when the Nile is intended (Ge 41:1; Ex 1:22). In such cases the NIV goes ahead and translates it "Nile" or "Nile River."

The "Wadi of Egypt" refers to the Wadi el-'Arish, a river that flows from the Sinai Peninsula's central high plateau to the low lying Mediterranean coast. Most people in ancient times came and left Egypt by traveling along the northern edge of the Sinai Peninsula. The Wadi el-'Arish intersects the peninsula on its eastern edge and, thus, marked for ancient people the easternmost boundary of Egypt.

tants of the land, those you allow to remain will become barbs in your eyes and thorns in your sides. They will give you trouble in the land where you will live. 56And then I will do to you what I plan to do to them.'"

Boundaries of Canaan

34 1The LORD said to Moses, 2"Command the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter Canaan, the land that will be allotted to you as an inheritance is to have these boundaries:

3"'Your southern side will include some of the Desert of Zin along the border of Edom. Your southern boundary will start in the east from the southern end of the Dead Sea, 4cross south of Scorpion Pass, continue on to Zin and go south of Kadesh Barnea. Then it will go to Hazar Addar and over to Azmon, 5where it will turn, join the Wadi of Egypt and end at the Mediterranean Sea.

6"'Your western boundary will be the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. This will be your boundary on the west.

7"'For your northern boundary, run a line from the Mediterranean Sea to Mount Hor 8and from Mount Hor to Lebo Hamath. Then the boundary will go to Zedad, 9continue to Ziphron and end at Hazar Enan. This will be your boundary on the north.

10"'For your eastern boundary, run a line from Hazar Enan to Shepham. 11The boundary will go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain and continue along the slopes east of the Sea of Galilee.[a] 12Then the boundary will go down along the Jordan and end at the Dead Sea.

"'This will be your land, with its boundaries on every side.'"

13Moses commanded the Israelites: "Assign this land by lot as an inheritance. The LORD has ordered that it be given to the nine and a half tribes,14because the families of the tribe of Reuben, the tribe of Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh have received their inheritance. 15These two and a half tribes have received their inheritance east of the Jordan across from Jericho, toward the sunrise."

16The LORD said to Moses, 17"These are the names of the men who are to assign the land for you as an inheritance: Eleazar the priest and Joshua son of Nun. 18And appoint one leader from each tribe to help assign the land. 19These are their names:

Caleb son of Jephunneh,
from the tribe of Judah;
20Shemuel son of Ammihud,
from the tribe of Simeon;
21Elidad son of Kislon,
from the tribe of Benjamin;
22Bukki son of Jogli,
the leader from the tribe of Dan;
23Hanniel son of Ephod,
the leader from the tribe of Manasseh
son of Joseph;
24Kemuel son of Shiphtan,
the leader from the tribe of Ephraim son
of Joseph;
25Elizaphan son of Parnak,
the leader from the tribe of Zebulun;
26Paltiel son of Azzan,
the leader from the tribe of Issachar;

[a] *11* Hebrew *Kinnereth*

27 Ahihud son of Shelomi,
the leader from the tribe of Asher;
28 Pedahel son of Ammihud,
the leader from the tribe of Naphtali."
29 These are the men the LORD commanded to assign the inheritance to the Israelites in the land of Canaan.

Towns for the Levites

35 1 On the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho, the LORD said to Moses, 2 "Command the Israelites to give the Levites towns to live in from the inheritance the Israelites will possess. And give them pasturelands around the towns. 3 Then they will have towns to live in and pasturelands for the cattle they own and all their other animals.

4 "The pasturelands around the towns that you give the Levites will extend a thousand cubits[a] from the town wall. 5 Outside the town, measure two thousand cubits[b] on the east side, two thousand on the south side, two thousand on the west and two thousand on the north, with the town in the center. They will have this area as pastureland for the towns.

Cities of Refuge

6 "Six of the towns you give the Levites will be cities of refuge, to which a person who has killed someone may flee. In addition, give them forty-two other towns. 7 In all you must give the Levites forty-eight towns, together with their pasturelands. 8 The towns you give the Levites from the land the Israelites possess are to be given in proportion to the inheritance of each tribe: Take many towns from a tribe that has many, but few from one that has few."

9 Then the LORD said to Moses: 10 "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, 11 select some towns to be your cities of refuge, to which a person who has killed someone accidentally may flee. 12 They will be places of refuge from the avenger, so that anyone accused of murder may not die before they stand trial before the assembly. 13 These six towns you give will be your cities of refuge. 14 Give three on this side of the Jordan and three in Canaan as cities of refuge. 15 These six towns will be a place of refuge for Israelites and for foreigners residing among them, so that anyone who has killed another accidentally can flee there.

16 "'If anyone strikes someone a fatal blow with an iron object, that person is a murderer; the murderer is to be put to death. 17 Or if anyone is holding a stone and strikes someone a fatal blow with it, that person is a murderer; the murderer is to be put to death. 18 Or if anyone is holding a wooden object and strikes someone a fatal blow with it, that person is a murderer; the murderer is to be put to death. 19 The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death; when the avenger comes upon the murderer, the avenger shall put the murderer to death. 20 If anyone with malice aforethought shoves another or throws something at them intentionally so that they die 21 or if out of enmity one person hits another with their fist so that the other dies, that person is to be put to death; that person is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when they meet.

22 "'But if without enmity someone suddenly pushes another or throws something at them unintentionally 23 or, without seeing them, drops on them a stone heavy enough to kill them, and they die, then since that other person was not an enemy and no harm was intended, 24 the assembly must judge between the accused and the avenger of blood according to these regulations. 25 The assembly must protect the one accused of murder from the avenger of blood and send the accused back to the city of refuge to which they fled. The accused must stay there until the death of the high priest, who was anointed with the holy oil.

26 "'But if the accused ever goes outside the limits of the city of refuge to which they fled 27 and the avenger of blood finds them outside the city, the avenger of blood may kill the accused without being guilty of murder. 28 The accused must stay in the city of refuge until the death of the high priest; only after the death of the high priest may they return to their own property.

29 "'This is to have the force of law for you throughout the generations to come, wherever you live.

30 "'Anyone who kills a person is to be put to death as a murderer only on the testimony of witnesses. But no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness.

Politics & Government
The places of refuge had the basic purpose of preventing private revenge, or vendetta (Nu 35:12). Criminal justice was the prerogative of the state, under the ultimate authority of God, who reserved vengeance for himself (Dt 32:35). The places of refuge show how God delegated the right to punish to the state, and not to private parties.

[a] *4* That is, about 1,500 feet or about 450 meters [b] *5* That is, about 3,000 feet or about 900 meters

31"'Do not accept a ransom for the life of a murderer, who deserves to die. They are to be put to death.

32"'Do not accept a ransom for anyone who has fled to a city of refuge and so allow them to go back and live on their own land before the death of the high priest.

33"'Do not pollute the land where you are. Bloodshed pollutes the land, and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it. 34Do not defile the land where you live and where I dwell, for I, the LORD, dwell among the Israelites.'"

Inheritance of Zelophehad's Daughters

36 1The family heads of the clan of Gilead son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, who were from the clans of the descendants of Joseph, came and spoke before Moses and the leaders, the heads of the Israelite families. 2They said, "When the LORD commanded my lord to give the land as an inheritance to the Israelites by lot, he ordered you to give the inheritance of our brother Zelophehad to his daughters. 3Now suppose they marry men from other Israelite tribes; then their inheritance will be taken from our ancestral inheritance and added to that of the tribe they marry into. And so part of the inheritance allotted to us will be taken away. 4When the Year of Jubilee for the Israelites comes, their inheritance will be added to that of the tribe into which they marry, and their property will be taken from the tribal inheritance of our ancestors."

5Then at the LORD's command Moses gave this order to the Israelites: "What the tribe of the descendants of Joseph is saying is right. 6This is what the LORD commands for Zelophehad's daughters: They may marry anyone they please as long as they marry within their father's tribal clan. 7No inheritance in Israel is to pass from one tribe to another, for every Israelite shall keep the tribal inheritance of their ancestors. 8Every daughter who inherits land in any Israelite tribe must marry someone in her father's tribal clan, so that every Israelite will possess the inheritance of their ancestors. 9No inheritance may pass from one tribe to another, for each Israelite tribe is to keep the land it inherits."

10So Zelophehad's daughters did as the LORD commanded Moses. 11Zelophehad's daughters—Mahlah, Tirzah, Hoglah, Milkah and Noah—married their cousins on their father's side. 12They married within the clans of the descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph, and their inheritance remained in their father's tribe and clan.

13These are the commands and regulations the LORD gave through Moses to the Israelites on the plains of Moab by the Jordan across from Jericho.

TRANSITION

The Book of Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy opens where the Book of Numbers closes: the Hebrew people are on the plains of Moab across the Jordan from Jericho (Nu 36:13; Dt 1:1). The journey from Kadesh Barnea, which is reported to take 11 days (Dt 1:2), was now over—after 40 years in the wilderness (1:3). Of the whole generation that refused to accept God's promise of the land of Canaan (Nu 14:26–32), only three persons were left: Joshua, Caleb and Moses.

Except for a few introductory and concluding statements referring to Moses in the third person, the Book of Deuteronomy consists of Moses' speeches to the people of Israel on the eve of their crossing the Jordan River to capture the promised land. In his first speech (chs. 1–4) he reviews the history of the people's travels from Egypt to their current place on the eastern banks of the Jordan. His second speech (chs. 5–28) summarizes the commandments that God had given on Mount Sinai, including a second presentation of the Ten Commandments in ch. 5. The name "Deuteronomy," which is derived from Latin and means "second law," refers to this speech. The third speech (chs. 29–33) is Moses' farewell and includes exhortations, songs, and blessings.

The structure of the book can be compared to a common ancient Near Eastern treaty format, found especially among the Hittites (see "The Book of Exodus" at Ex 1:1). Such treaties began with a preamble and historical prologue (in Deuteronomy, the first speech), proceeded to the conditions and stipulations of the agreement (as in Moses' second speech), declared the blessings and curses that would result from obedience or disobedience (Dt 27; 28), called on heavenly witnesses (31:28), and provided for the care of the treaty document (31:24–29). Again we see God and his representative speaking in language and forms that would have been familiar to the original ancient Israelite audience.

The huge influence of Deuteronomy on the rest of the Old Testament is indisputable. Its highly distinct style appears throughout the historical books and in several of the Prophets, and it was very probably the book discovered in the temple that prompted the reforms of

King Josiah (2Ki 22). Some scholars accept Moses as the author while others do not (particularly the account of Moses' death in ch. 34). Nevertheless, even those who c onsider the earlier books of G enesis through Numbers to be carefully edited composites from different sources agree on the fundamen tal unity of Deuteronomy.

• Deuteronomy 1:1–4

Deuteronomy

The Command to Leave Horeb

1:1 These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel in the wilderness east of the Jordan—that is, in the Arabah—opposite Suph, between Paran and Tophel, Laban, Hazeroth and Dizahab. [2] (It takes eleven days to go from Horeb to Kadesh Barnea by the Mount Seir road.)

[3] In the fortieth year, on the first day of the eleventh month, Moses proclaimed to the Israelites all that the LORD had commanded him concerning them. [4] This was after he had defeated Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon, and at Edrei had defeated Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth.

TRANSITION

God's Mighty Acts

In his first speech (D t 1:6—4:43) Moses very carefully prepared his people t o obey God and en ter the land. He did so b y showing what had br ought them t o this poin t—both disobedienc e (1:19–46) and obedienc e (2:1—3:22). Then he reminded them of the significance of those star tling events at Sinai and of God's election of them to be his special people (4:1–43). This historical recital serves as the pr ologue to God's covenant with his chosen people (see "Covenantal Obedience" at Dt 4:44).

• Deuteronomy 1:5—4:43

Deuteronomy

1:5 East of the Jordan in the territory of Moab, Moses began to expound this law, saying:

[6] The LORD our God said to us at Horeb, "You have stayed long enough at this mountain. [7] Break camp and advance into the hill country of the Amorites; go to all the neighboring peoples in the Arabah, in the mountains, in the western foothills, in the Negev and along the coast, to the land of the Canaanites and to Lebanon, as far as the great river, the Euphrates. [8] See, I have given you this land. Go in and take possession of the land the LORD swore he would give to your fathers—to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and to their descendants after them."

The Appointment of Leaders

[9] At that time I said to you, "You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone. [10] The LORD your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as numerous as the stars in the sky. [11] May the LORD, the God of your ancestors, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! [12] But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? [13] Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you."

[14] You answered me, "What you propose to do is good."

[15] So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. [16] And I charged your judges at that time, "Hear the disputes between your people and judge fairly, whether the case is between two Israelites or between an Israelite and a foreigner residing among you. [17] Do not show partiality in judging; hear both small and great alike. Do not be afraid of anyone, for judgment belongs to God. Bring me any case too hard for you, and I will hear it." [18] And at that time I told you everything you were to do.

Spies Sent Out

[19] Then, as the LORD our God commanded us, we set out from Horeb and went toward the hill country of the Amorites through all that vast and dreadful wilderness that you have seen, and so we reached Kadesh Barnea. [20] Then I said to you, "You have reached the hill country of the Amorites, which the LORD our God is giving us. [21] See, the LORD your God has given you the land. Go up and take possession of it as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, told you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

[22] Then all of you came to me and said, "Let us send men ahead to spy out the land for us and bring back a report about the route we are to take and the towns we will come to."

[23] The idea seemed good to me; so I selected twelve of you, one man from each tribe. [24] They left and went up into the hill country, and came to the Valley of Eshkol and explored it. [25] Taking with them some of the fruit of the land, they brought it down to us and reported, "It is a good land that the LORD our God is giving us."

Rebellion Against the Lord

26But you were unwilling to go up; you rebelled against the command of the Lord your
God. 27You grumbled in your tents and said,
"The Lord hates us; so he brought us out
of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the
Amorites to destroy us. 28Where can we go?
Our brothers have made our hearts melt in
fear. They say, 'The people are stronger and
taller than we are; the cities are large, with
walls up to the sky. We even saw the Anakites
there.'"
29Then I said to you, "Do not be terrified; do
not be afraid of them. 30The Lord your God,
who is going before you, will fight for you, as
he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes,
31and in the wilderness. There you saw how the
Lord your God carried you, as a father carries
his son, all the way you went until you reached
this place."
32In spite of this, you did not trust in the
Lord your God, 33who went ahead of you on
your journey, in fire by night and in a cloud by
day, to search out places for you to camp and to
show you the way you should go.
34When the Lord heard what you said, he
was angry and solemnly swore: 35"No one from
this evil generation shall see the good land I
swore to give your ancestors, 36except Caleb
son of Jephunneh. He will see it, and I will give
him and his descendants the land he set his
feet on, because he followed the Lord whole-
heartedly."
37Because of you the Lord became angry
with me also and said, "You shall not enter it,
either. 38But your assistant, Joshua son of Nun,
will enter it. Encourage him, because he will
lead Israel to inherit it. 39And the little ones that
you said would be taken captive, your children
who do not yet know good from bad—they will
enter the land. I will give it to them and they
will take possession of it. 40But as for you, turn
around and set out toward the desert along the
route to the Red Sea.[a]"
41Then you replied, "We have sinned against
the Lord. We will go up and fight, as the Lord
our God commanded us." So every one of you
put on his weapons, thinking it easy to go up
into the hill country.
42But the Lord said to me, "Tell them, 'Do
not go up and fight, because I will not be with
you. You will be defeated by your enemies.'"
43So I told you, but you would not listen. You
rebelled against the Lord's command and in
your arrogance you marched up into the hill
country. 44The Amorites who lived in those
hills came out against you; they chased you like
a swarm of bees and beat you down from Seir
all the way to Hormah. 45You came back and
wept before the Lord, but he paid no attention
to your weeping and turned a deaf ear to you.
46And so you stayed in Kadesh many days—all
the time you spent there.

Wanderings in the Wilderness

2 1Then we turned back and set out toward
the wilderness along the route to the Red
Sea,[a] as the Lord had directed me. For a long
time we made our way around the hill country
of Seir.
2Then the Lord said to me, 3"You have made
your way around this hill country long enough;
now turn north. 4Give the people these orders:
'You are about to pass through the territory of
your relatives the descendants of Esau, who
live in Seir. They will be afraid of you, but be
very careful.5Do not provoke them to war, for
I will not give you any of their land, not even
enough to put your foot on. I have given Esau
the hill country of Seir as his own. 6You are to
pay them in silver for the food you eat and the
water you drink.'"
7The Lord your God has blessed you in all
the work of your hands. He has watched over
your journey through this vast wilderness.
These forty years the Lord your God has been
with you, and you have not lacked anything.
8So we went on past our relatives the descen-
dants of Esau, who live in Seir. We turned from
the Arabah road, which comes up from Elath
and Ezion Geber, and traveled along the desert
road of Moab.
9Then the Lord said to me, "Do not harass
the Moabites or provoke them to war, for I will
not give you any part of their land. I have given
Ar to the descendants of Lot as a possession."
10(The Emites used to live there—a people
strong and numerous, and as tall as the Ana-
kites. 11Like the Anakites, they too were con-
sidered Rephaites, but the Moabites called
them Emites. 12Horites used to live in Seir, but
the descendants of Esau drove them out. They

Trade & Economics
Coins were not struck until late in the 7th century B.C. However, it had long been possible to use pieces of gold, silver, or bronze in bartering and exchange (Dt 2:6). Like the earliest coins, such pieces of metal were not tokens, but were used in consideration of their intrinsic value and exchanged by actual weight.

[a] *40,1* Or *the Sea of Reeds*

destroyed the Horites from before them and settled in their place, just as Israel did in the land the LORD gave them as their possession.)

13And the LORD said, "Now get up and cross the Zered Valley." So we crossed the valley.

14Thirty-eight years passed from the time we left Kadesh Barnea until we crossed the Zered Valley. By then, that entire generation of fighting men had perished from the camp, as the LORD had sworn to them. 15The LORD's hand was against them until he had completely eliminated them from the camp.

16Now when the last of these fighting men among the people had died, 17the LORD said to me, 18"Today you are to pass by the region of Moab at Ar. 19When you come to the Ammonites, do not harass them or provoke them to war, for I will not give you possession of any land belonging to the Ammonites. I have given it as a possession to the descendants of Lot."

20(That too was considered a land of the Rephaites, who used to live there; but the Ammonites called them Zamzummites. 21They were a people strong and numerous, and as tall as the Anakites. The LORD destroyed them from before the Ammonites, who drove them out and settled in their place. 22The LORD had done the same for the descendants of Esau, who lived in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites from before them. They drove them out and have lived in their place to this day. 23And as for the Avvites who lived in villages as far as Gaza, the Caphtorites coming out from Caphtor[a] destroyed them and settled in their place.)

Defeat of Sihon King of Heshbon

24"Set out now and cross the Arnon Gorge. See, I have given into your hand Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his country. Begin to take possession of it and engage him in battle. 25This very day I will begin to put the terror and fear of you on all the nations under heaven. They will hear reports of you and will tremble and be in anguish because of you."

26From the Desert of Kedemoth I sent messengers to Sihon king of Heshbon offering peace and saying, 27"Let us pass through your country. We will stay on the main road; we will not turn aside to the right or to the left. 28Sell us food to eat and water to drink for their price in silver. Only let us pass through on foot— 29as the descendants of Esau, who live in Seir, and the Moabites, who live in Ar, did for us—until we cross the Jordan into the land the LORD our God is giving us." 30But Sihon king of Heshbon refused to let us pass through. For the LORD your God had made his spirit stubborn and his heart obstinate in order to give him into your hands, as he has now done.

31The LORD said to me, "See, I have begun to deliver Sihon and his country over to you. Now begin to conquer and possess his land."

32When Sihon and all his army came out to meet us in battle at Jahaz, 33the LORD our God delivered him over to us and we struck him down, together with his sons and his whole army. 34At that time we took all his towns and completely destroyed[b] them—men, women and children. We left no survivors. 35But the livestock and the plunder from the towns we had captured we carried off for ourselves. 36From Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the gorge, even as far as Gilead, not one town was too strong for us. The LORD our God gave us all of them. 37But in accordance with the command of the LORD our God, you did not encroach on any of the land of the Ammonites, neither the land along the course of the Jabbok nor that around the towns in the hills.

Defeat of Og King of Bashan

3 1Next we turned and went up along the road toward Bashan, and Og king of Bashan with his whole army marched out to meet us in battle at Edrei. 2The LORD said to me, "Do not be afraid of him, for I have delivered him into your hands, along with his whole army and his land. Do to him what you did to Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon."

3So the LORD our God also gave into our hands Og king of Bashan and all his army. We struck them down, leaving no survivors. 4At that time we took all his cities. There was not one of the sixty cities that we did not take from them—the whole region of Argob, Og's kingdom in Bashan.5All these cities were fortified with high walls and with gates and bars, and there were also a great many unwalled villages. 6We completely destroyed[b] them, as we had done with Sihon king of Heshbon, destroying[b] every city—men, women and children. 7But all the livestock and the plunder from their cities we carried off for ourselves.

8So at that time we took from these two kings of the Amorites the territory east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Gorge as far as Mount Hermon. 9(Hermon is called Sirion by the Sidonians; the Amorites call it Senir.) 10We took all the towns on the plateau, and all Gilead, and all Bashan as far as Salekah and Edrei, towns of

[a] *23* That is, Crete [b] *34,6* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

Og's kingdom in Bashan. [11] (Og king of Bashan was the last of the Rephaites. His bed was decorated with iron and was more than nine cubits long and four cubits wide.[a] It is still in Rabbah of the Ammonites.)

Division of the Land

[12]Of the land that we took over at that time, I gave the Reubenites and the Gadites the territory north of Aroer by the Arnon Gorge, including half the hill country of Gilead, together with its towns. [13]The rest of Gilead and also all of Bashan, the kingdom of Og, I gave to the half-tribe of Manasseh. (The whole region of Argob in Bashan used to be known as a land of the Rephaites. [14]Jair, a descendant of Manasseh, took the whole region of Argob as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Maakathites; it was named after him, so that to this day Bashan is called Havvoth Jair.[b]) [15]And I gave Gilead to Makir. [16]But to the Reubenites and the Gadites I gave the territory extending from Gilead down to the Arnon Gorge (the middle of the gorge being the border) and out to the Jabbok River, which is the border of the Ammonites. [17]Its western border was the Jordan in the Arabah, from Kinnereth to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea), below the slopes of Pisgah.

[18]I commanded you at that time: "The LORD your God has given you this land to take possession of it. But all your able-bodied men, armed for battle, must cross over ahead of the other Israelites. [19]However, your wives, your children and your livestock (I know you have much livestock) may stay in the towns I have given you, [20]until the LORD gives rest to your fellow Israelites as he has to you, and they too have taken over the land that the LORD your God is giving them across the Jordan. After that, each of you may go back to the possession I have given you."

Moses Forbidden to Cross the Jordan

[21]At that time I commanded Joshua: "You have seen with your own eyes all that the LORD your God has done to these two kings. The LORD will do the same to all the kingdoms over there where you are going. [22]Do not be afraid of them; the LORD your God himself will fight for you."

[23]At that time I pleaded with the LORD: [24]"Sovereign LORD, you have begun to show to your servant your greatness and your strong hand. For what god is there in heaven or on earth who can do the deeds and mighty works you do? [25]Let me go over and see the good land beyond the Jordan—that fine hill country and Lebanon."

[26]But because of you the LORD was angry with me and would not listen to me. "That is enough," the LORD said. "Do not speak to me anymore about this matter. [27]Go up to the top of Pisgah and look west and north and south and east. Look at the land with your own eyes, since you are not going to cross this Jordan. [28]But commission Joshua, and encourage and strengthen him, for he will lead this people across and will cause them to inherit the land that you will see." [29]So we stayed in the valley near Beth Peor.

Obedience Commanded

4 [1]Now, Israel, hear the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and may go in and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. [2]Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the LORD your God that I give you.

[3]You saw with your own eyes what the LORD did at Baal Peor. The LORD your God destroyed from among you everyone who followed the Baal of Peor, [4]but all of you who held fast to the LORD your God are still alive today.

[5]See, I have taught you decrees and laws as the LORD my God commanded me, so that you may follow them in the land you are entering to take possession of it. [6]Observe them carefully, for this will show your wisdom and understanding to the nations, who will hear about all these decrees and say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people." [7]What other nation is so great as to have their gods near them the way the LORD our God is near us whenever we pray to him? [8]And what other nation is so great as to have such righteous decrees and laws as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

[9]Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them fade from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. [10]Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when he said to me, "Assemble the people before me to hear my words so that they may learn to revere me as long as they live in the land and may teach them to their children."

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[a] *11* That is, about 14 feet long and 6 feet wide or about 4 meters long and 1.8 meters wide [b] *14* Or *called the settlements of Jair*

11 You came near and stood at the foot of the
mountain while it blazed with fire to the very
heavens, with black clouds and deep darkness.
12 Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire.
You heard the sound of words but saw no form;
there was only a voice. 13 He declared to you his
covenant, the Ten Commandments, which he
commanded you to follow and then wrote them
on two stone tablets. 14 And the LORD directed
me at that time to teach you the decrees and
laws you are to follow in the land that you are
crossing the Jordan to possess.

Idolatry Forbidden

15 You saw no form of any kind the day the
LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire.
Therefore watch yourselves very carefully,
16 so that you do not become corrupt and make
for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape,
whether formed like a man or a woman, 17 or
like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in
the air, 18 or like any creature that moves along
the ground or any fish in the waters below.
19 And when you look up to the sky and see the
sun, the moon and the stars—all the heaven-
ly array—do not be enticed into bowing down
to them and worshiping things the LORD your
God has apportioned to all the nations under
heaven. 20 But as for you, the LORD took you and
brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace,
out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheri-
tance, as you now are.

21 The LORD was angry with me because of
you, and he solemnly swore that I would not
cross the Jordan and enter the good land the
LORD your God is giving you as your inheri-
tance. 22 I will die in this land; I will not cross
the Jordan; but you are about to cross over and
take possession of that good land. 23 Be careful
not to forget the covenant of the LORD your God
that he made with you; do not make for your-
selves an idol in the form of anything the LORD
your God has forbidden. 24 For the LORD your
God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

25 After you have had children and grandchil-
dren and have lived in the land a long time—if
you then become corrupt and make any kind
of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your
God and arousing his anger, 26 I call the heav-
ens and the earth as witnesses against you this
day that you will quickly perish from the land
that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.
You will not live there long but will certainly be
destroyed. 27 The LORD will scatter you among
the peoples, and only a few of you will survive
among the nations to which the LORD will drive
you. 28 There you will worship man-made gods
of wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or
eat or smell. 29 But if from there you seek the
LORD your God, you will find him if you seek
him with all your heart and with all your soul.
30 When you are in distress and all these things
have happened to you, then in later days you
will return to the LORD your God and obey him.
31 For the LORD your God is a merciful God; he
will not abandon or destroy you or forget the
covenant with your ancestors, which he con-
firmed to them by oath.

The LORD Is God

32 Ask now about the former days, long be-
fore your time, from the day God created hu-
man beings on the earth; ask from one end of
the heavens to the other. Has anything so great
as this ever happened, or has anything like it
ever been heard of? 33 Has any other people
heard the voice of God[a] speaking out of fire, as
you have, and lived? 34 Has any god ever tried
to take for himself one nation out of another na-
tion, by testings, by signs and wonders, by war,
by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or
by great and awesome deeds, like all the things
the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before
your very eyes?

35 You were shown these things so that you
might know that the LORD is God; besides him
there is no other. 36 From heaven he made you
hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he
showed you his great fire, and you heard his
words from out of the fire. 37 Because he loved
your ancestors and chose their descendants af-
ter them, he brought you out of Egypt by his
Presence and his great strength, 38 to drive out
before you nations greater and stronger than
you and to bring you into their land to give it to
you for your inheritance, as it is today.

39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day
that the LORD is God in heaven above and on
the earth below. There is no other. 40 Keep his
decrees and commands, which I am giving you
today, so that it may go well with you and your

Arts & Literature
The art of the ancient Near East was fundamentally at the service of the nobility, who held the powers of religion and of government. For this reason most of the persons depicted are kings or gods (Dt 4:16). In Egypt, the statues of kings were much bigger than the statues of the gods. The Jews did not make any statues of God.

[a] 33 Or *of a god*

children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.

Cities of Refuge

41Then Moses set aside three cities east of the Jordan, 42to which anyone who had killed a person could flee if they had unintentionally killed a neighbor without malice aforethought. They could flee into one of these cities and save their life. 43The cities were these: Bezer in the wilderness plateau, for the Reubenites; Ramoth in Gilead, for the Gadites; and Golan in Bashan, for the Manassites.

TRANSITION

Covenantal Obedience

A brief introduction (Dt 4:44–49) describes the setting for Moses' second speech, explaining how Israel arrived on the east side of the Jordan. The first section of the speech (chs. 5–11) summarizes the covenant obligations, and explains what the "decrees and laws" are about and why obedience to them would be crucial for Israel to enjoy the covenant blessings. The second section (12:1—26:19) lists specific requirements, intermingling civil, ceremonial, and moral laws.

In this speech Moses reminds the people of their covenant obligations to be kept when they enter the land. It is plain, especially in chs. 6–11, that his purpose was not primarily informational, but motivational. His concern was to ensure that they would obey what they knew.

• Deuteronomy 4:44—28:68

Deuteronomy

Introduction to the Law

4 :44 This is the law Moses set before the Israelites. 45These are the stipulations, decrees and laws Moses gave them when they came out of Egypt 46and were in the valley near Beth Peor east of the Jordan, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon and was defeated by Moses and the Israelites as they came out of Egypt. 47They took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two Amorite kings east of the Jordan. 48This land extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge to Mount Sirion[a] (that is, Hermon), 49and included all the Arabah east of the Jordan, as far as the Dead Sea,[b] below the slopes of Pisgah.

The Ten Commandments

5 1Moses summoned all Israel and said:
Hear, Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them. 2The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. 3It was not with our ancestors[c] that the LORD made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today. 4The LORD spoke to you face to face out of the fire on the mountain. 5(At that time I stood between the LORD and you to declare to you the word of the LORD, because you were afraid of the fire and did not go up the mountain.) And he said:

6"I am the LORD your God, who brought
you out of Egypt, out of the land of
slavery.
7"You shall have no other gods before[d] me.
8"You shall not make for yourself an im-
age in the form of anything in heav-
en above or on the earth beneath or
in the waters below. 9You shall not
bow down to them or worship them;
for I, the LORD your God, am a jeal-
ous God, punishing the children for
the sin of the parents to the third and
fourth generation of those who hate
me, 10but showing love to a thousand
generations of those who love me and
keep my commandments.
11"You shall not misuse the name of the
LORD your God, for the LORD will not
hold anyone guiltless who misuses his
name.
12"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it
holy, as the LORD your God has com-
manded you. 13Six days you shall la-
bor and do all your work, 14but the
seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD
your God. On it you shall not do any
work, neither you, nor your son or
daughter, nor your male or female
servant, nor your ox, your donkey or
any of your animals, nor any foreign-
er residing in your towns, so that your
male and female servants may rest,
as you do. 15Remember that you were
slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your
God brought you out of there with a
mighty hand and an outstretched arm.
Therefore the LORD your God has
commanded you to observe the Sab-
bath day.
16"Honor your father and your mother, as
the LORD your God has commanded
you, so that you may live long and that

[a] *48* Syriac (see also 3:9); Hebrew *Siyon* [b] *49* Hebrew *the Sea of the Arabah* [c] *3* Or *not only with our parents* [d] *7* Or *besides*

How Is an Idol a God? (Dt 5:8, 9)

The prohibition of Dt 5:8, 9 reflects a world where bowing down to idols meant worshiping not just images, but deities. Representations of gods in human, animal, or abstract forms were everywhere in the ancient Near East. Scattered from Egypt through Syria-Palestine and throughout Mesopotamia were local temples housing these images.

Beliefs differed as to whether or not gods were really there in the statues. In Egypt the gods were understood to be always in heaven above the human world, yet always in the images as well. The statues were considered to be the body of the god into which the presence of the deity entered. For this reason the body was clothed, bathed, and fed as one would care for a ruler. Since heavenly deities were invisible, the statues were normally kept in the dark, inner room of the temples away from the eyes of the people. Except for festival days when the image was brought out on procession, only the attending priests were allowed into the image's presence.

In Mesopotamia the understanding of images was slightly different. The image was considered only wood, stone, or metal as long as it was being fashioned. However, once it was set up in the temple, a lengthy ritual called "opening the mouth" changed the nature of the image. Through this religious ritual the deity supposedly entered the statue so that the idol became the god and, at that point, could receive praise, bestow blessings, and grant favors. The image was understood to be a gift of the god who dwelt within it. Therefore, any image that was looted in warfare was taken as absolute proof that the favor of the deity had passed to the victors.

In contrast to the Egyptians and Mesopotamians, Israel's worship was to be imageless. The commandment in Dt 5:8, 9 condemns the fashioning of any image: "in the form of anything." Moreover, the commandment even forbids making an image of the God of Israel.

it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.
17 "You shall not murder.
18 "You shall not commit adultery.
19 "You shall not steal.
20 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
21 "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

22 These are the commandments the LORD proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

23 When you heard the voice out of the darkness, while the mountain was ablaze with fire, all the leaders of your tribes and your elders came to me. 24 And you said, "The LORD our God has shown us his glory and his majesty, and we have heard his voice from the fire. Today we have seen that a person can live even if God speaks with them. 25 But now, why should we die? This great fire will consume us, and we will die if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. 26 For what mortal has ever heard the voice of the living God speaking out of fire, as we have, and survived? 27 Go near and listen to all that the LORD our God says. Then tell us whatever the LORD our God tells you. We will listen and obey."

28 The LORD heard you when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, "I have heard what this people said to you. Everything they said was good. 29 Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

30 "Go, tell them to return to their tents. 31 But you stay here with me so that I may give you all the commands, decrees and laws you are to teach them to follow in the land I am giving them to possess."

32 So be careful to do what the LORD your God has commanded you; do not turn aside to the right or to the left. 33 Walk in obedience to all that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

Love the LORD Your God

6 1 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2 so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3 Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

Beliefs & Ideas
The words beginning "Hear, O Israel" are the basic confession of Jewish faith (Dt 6:4). They are called the Shema (the Hebrew word meaning "hear"). They have been repeated privately and in public liturgy continuously, from the time that they were first revealed until today. Written on parchment scrolls, they are attached to doorposts in a special container.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD
is one.[a] 5 Love the LORD your God with all your
heart and with all your soul and with all your
strength. 6 These commandments that I give
you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress
them on your children. Talk about them when
you sit at home and when you walk along the
road, when you lie down and when you get up.
8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind
them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the
doorframes of your houses and on your gates.
10 When the LORD your God brings you into
the land he swore to your fathers, to Abraham,
Isaac and Jacob, to give you — a land with large,
flourishing cities you did not build, 11 houses
filled with all kinds of good things you did not
provide, wells you did not dig, and vineyards
and olive groves you did not plant — then when
you eat and are satisfied, 12 be careful that you
do not forget the LORD, who brought you out of
Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
13 Fear the LORD your God, serve him only
and take your oaths in his name. 14 Do not fol-
low other gods, the gods of the peoples around
you; 15 for the LORD your God, who is among
you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn
against you, and he will destroy you from the
face of the land. 16 Do not put the LORD your
God to the test as you did at Massah. 17 Be sure
to keep the commands of the LORD your God
and the stipulations and decrees he has given
you. 18 Do what is right and good in the LORD's
sight, so that it may go well with you and you
may go in and take over the good land the LORD
promised on oath to your ancestors, 19 thrust-
ing out all your enemies before you, as the
LORD said.
20 In the future, when your son asks you,

Geography & Environment
The list of seven nations (Dt 7:1) is a traditional list of the enemies that Israel encountered in Palestine (Jos 3:10). The Hittites were from what is today Turkey. The Jebusites dwelt in Jerusalem and were conquered by David. "Canaanite" and "Amorite" are often used loosely to include all or most of the seven peoples.

"What is the meaning of the stipulations, de-
crees and laws the LORD our God has com-
manded you?" 21 tell him: "We were slaves of
Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out
of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22 Before our eyes
the LORD sent signs and wonders — great and
terrible — on Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole
household. 23 But he brought us out from there
to bring us in and give us the land he prom-
ised on oath to our ancestors. 24 The LORD com-
manded us to obey all these decrees and to
fear the LORD our God, so that we might always
prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today.
25 And if we are careful to obey all this law be-
fore the LORD our God, as he has commanded
us, that will be our righteousness."

Driving Out the Nations

7 1 When the LORD your God brings you into
the land you are entering to possess and
drives out before you many nations — the Hit-
tites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Per-
izzites, Hivites and Jebusites, seven nations
larger and stronger than you — 2 and when
the LORD your God has delivered them over
to you and you have defeated them, then you
must destroy them totally.[b] Make no treaty with
them, and show them no mercy. 3 Do not inter-
marry with them. Do not give your daughters
to their sons or take their daughters for your
sons, 4 for they will turn your children away
from following me to serve other gods, and
the LORD's anger will burn against you and will
quickly destroy you. 5 This is what you are to do
to them: Break down their altars, smash their
sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles[c]
and burn their idols in the fire. 6 For you are a
people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD
your God has chosen you out of all the peoples
on the face of the earth to be his people, his
treasured possession.
7 The LORD did not set his affection on you
and choose you because you were more nu-
merous than other peoples, for you were the
fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the
LORD loved you and kept the oath he swore to
your ancestors that he brought you out with a
mighty hand and redeemed you from the land
of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of
Egypt. 9 Know therefore that the LORD your
God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his

[a] *4* Or *The LORD our God is one LORD*; or *The LORD is our God, the LORD is one*; or *The LORD is our God, the LORD alone*
[b] *2* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verse 26.
[c] *5* That is, wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah; here and elsewhere in Deuteronomy

Pharaoh, King of Egypt (Dt 7:8)

Although the term "Pharaoh" is well known from Scripture, it was not the most common designation used by Egyptians for their monarch before the New Kingdom period (c. 1550 B.C.). In fact, it was not even used to refer to the Egyptian king until later in Egypt's history.

The Egyptian term for "Pharaoh" means literally the "Great House." Originally, it designated part of the large palatial complex at Memphis, one of the early capitals of Egypt in the 3rd millennium B.C. Soon thereafter, it denoted the Egyptian government itself the king and his administration not just the buildings from which they governed.

The process by which the king of Egypt became known as "Pharaoh" was gradual, involving various stages. In the first stage, sometime before Thutmose III became king (1479 B.C.), the title was occasionally applied to Egypt's monarch. A more advanced stage occurred before the end of the New Kingdom period (c. 1069 B.C.) when the use of "Pharaoh" referring to the king moved from everyday speech into the official language of the country. From the time of King Shoshenq I (or Sheshonk, 945–924 B.C.), "Pharaoh" was added to the king's official title.

The biblical writer uses the term as a common way of referring to the Egyptian king. God had delivered His people from bondage under "Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Dt 7:8). This use reveals a knowledge of Egypt in the late 2nd and early 1st millenniums B.C.

The title "Pharaoh" highlights Israel's climactic experience with Egypt's king. The monarch of Egypt was considered the divine incarnation of Horus (the falcon god), as well as the son of Re (the sun god). Since Pharaoh was considered a god, the contest was between gods: the incarnate god of Egypt against the God of Israel, who spoke through his prophet Moses.

covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments. [10]But

those who hate him he will repay to their face by destruction;
he will not be slow to repay to their face those who hate him.

[11]Therefore, take care to follow the commands, decrees and laws I give you today.

[12]If you pay attention to these laws and are careful to follow them, then the LORD your God will keep his covenant of love with you, as he swore to your ancestors. [13]He will love you and bless you and increase your numbers. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the crops of your land—your grain, new wine and olive oil—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you. [14]You will be blessed more than any other people; none of your men or women will be childless, nor will any of your livestock be without young. [15]The LORD will keep you free from every disease. He will not inflict on you the horrible diseases you knew in Egypt, but he will inflict them on all who hate you. [16]You must destroy all the peoples the LORD your God gives over to you. Do not look on them with pity and do not serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you.

[17]You may say to yourselves, "These nations are stronger than we are. How can we drive them out?" [18]But do not be afraid of them; remember well what the LORD your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt. [19]You saw with your own eyes the great trials, the signs and wonders, the mighty hand and outstretched arm, with which the LORD your God brought you out. The LORD your God will do the same to all the peoples you now fear. [20]Moreover, the LORD your God will send the hornet among them until even the survivors who hide from you have perished. [21]Do not be terrified by them, for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a great and awesome God. [22]The LORD your God will drive out those nations before you, little by little. You will not be allowed to eliminate them all at once, or the wild animals will multiply around you. [23]But the LORD your God will deliver them over to you, throwing them into great confusion until they are destroyed. [24]He will give their kings into your hand, and you will wipe out their names from under heaven. No one will be able to stand up against you; you will destroy them. [25]The images of their gods you are to burn in the fire. Do not covet the silver and gold on them, and do not take it for yourselves, or you will be ensnared by it, for it is detestable to the LORD your God. [26]Do not

bring a detestable thing into your house or you, like it, will be set apart for destruction. Regard it as vile and utterly detest it, for it is set apart for destruction.

Do Not Forget the Lord

8 [1]Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors. [2]Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. [3]He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord. [4]Your clothes did not wear out and your feet did not swell during these forty years. [5]Know then in your heart that as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord your God disciplines you.

[6]Observe the commands of the Lord your God, walking in obedience to him and revering him. [7]For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land—a land with brooks, streams, and deep springs gushing out into the valleys and hills; [8]a land with wheat and barley, vines and fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil and honey; [9]a land where bread will not be scarce and you will lack nothing; a land where the rocks are iron and you can dig copper out of the hills.

[10]When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. [11]Be careful that you do not forget the Lord your God, failing to observe his commands, his laws and his decrees that I am giving you this day. [12]Otherwise, when you eat and are satisfied, when you build fine houses and settle down, [13]and when your herds and flocks grow large and your silver and gold increase and all you have is multiplied, [14]then your heart will become proud and you will forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. [15]He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock. [16]He gave you manna to eat in the wilderness, something your ancestors had never known, to humble and test you so that in the end it might go well with you. [17]You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." [18]But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.

[19]If you ever forget the Lord your God and follow other gods and worship and bow down to them, I testify against you today that you will surely be destroyed. [20]Like the nations the Lord destroyed before you, so you will be destroyed for not obeying the Lord your God.

Not Because of Israel's Righteousness

9 [1]Hear, Israel: You are now about to cross the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and stronger than you, with large cities that have walls up to the sky. [2]The people are strong and tall—Anakites! You know about them and have heard it said: "Who can stand up against the Anakites?" [3]But be assured today that the Lord your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the Lord has promised you.

[4]After the Lord your God has driven them out before you, do not say to yourself, "The Lord has brought me here to take possession of this land because of my righteousness." No, it is on account of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is going to drive them out before you. [5]It is not because of your righteousness or your integrity that you are going in to take possession of their land; but on account of the wickedness of these nations, the Lord your God will drive them out before you, to accomplish what he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. [6]Understand, then, that it is not because of your righteousness that the Lord your God is giving you this good land to possess, for you are a stiff-necked people.

The Golden Calf

[7]Remember this and never forget how you aroused the anger of the Lord your God in the wilderness. From the day you left Egypt until you arrived here, you have been rebellious against the Lord. [8]At Horeb you aroused the Lord's wrath so that he was angry enough to destroy you. [9]When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the Lord had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water. [10]The Lord gave me two stone tablets inscribed by the finger of God. On them were all the commandments the Lord proclaimed to you on the mountain out of the fire, on the day of the assembly.

Annihilation of the Golden Calf (Dt 9:21)

Moses did not want the people to forget their failure to remain devoted to Yahweh. He recalled for them the calf idol they had made, and that he had destroyed. Moses' actions in the matter possibly seem extreme: "I . . . burned it in the fire. Then I crushed it and ground it to powder as fine as dust" (Dt 9:21). Such actions, however, appear to have a parallel within Canaanite ritual.

Ritual annihilation of an enemy god was evidently common, at least in Canaan. A text from Ugarit (c. 1400–1200 B.C.), belonging to the Baal-Anath cycle of myths, describes a very similar destruction. The goddess Anath burns, grinds, and scatters the god Mot.

The Ugaritic ritual may not be the same ritual that is being described in Dt 9:21. Nevertheless, the similarities suggest that Moses' annihilation of the idol calf was possibly a symbolic or ritualistic destruction known in Canaanite culture. It was not uncommon for Israelites and others to destroy enemy gods by breaking, burning, crushing, grinding, and scattering them, actions that possibly symbolized the utter defeat of the gods. In addition to Moses, two Judahite kings—Josiah (2Ki 23:4, 6, 15) and Asa—(2Ch 15:16)—performed similar actions.

11 At the end of the forty days and forty
nights, the LORD gave me the two stone tablets,
the tablets of the covenant. 12 Then the LORD
told me, "Go down from here at once, because
your people whom you brought out of Egypt
have become corrupt. They have turned away
quickly from what I commanded them and
have made an idol for themselves."
13 And the LORD said to me, "I have seen this
people, and they are a stiff-necked people in-
deed! 14 Let me alone, so that I may destroy
them and blot out their name from under heav-
en. And I will make you into a nation stronger
and more numerous than they."
15 So I turned and went down from the moun-
tain while it was ablaze with fire. And the two
tablets of the covenant were in my hands.
16 When I looked, I saw that you had sinned
against the LORD your God; you had made for
yourselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf.
You had turned aside quickly from the way
that the LORD had commanded you. 17 So I
took the two tablets and threw them out of my
hands, breaking them to pieces before your
eyes.
18 Then once again I fell prostrate before the
LORD for forty days and forty nights; I ate no
bread and drank no water, because of all the
sin you had committed, doing what was evil in
the LORD's sight and so arousing his anger. 19 I
feared the anger and wrath of the LORD, for he
was angry enough with you to destroy you. But
again the LORD listened to me. 20 And the LORD
was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him,
but at that time I prayed for Aaron too. 21 Also I
took that sinful thing of yours, the calf you had
made, and burned it in the fire. Then I crushed
it and ground it to powder as fine as dust and
threw the dust into a stream that flowed down
the mountain.

22 You also made the LORD angry at Taberah,
at Massah and at Kibroth Hattaavah.
23 And when the LORD sent you out from Ka-
desh Barnea, he said, "Go up and take pos-
session of the land I have given you." But you
rebelled against the command of the LORD your
God. You did not trust him or obey him. 24 You
have been rebellious against the LORD ever
since I have known you.
25 I lay prostrate before the LORD those for-
ty days and forty nights because the LORD had
said he would destroy you. 26 I prayed to the
LORD and said, "Sovereign LORD, do not destroy
your people, your own inheritance that you re-
deemed by your great power and brought out
of Egypt with a mighty hand. 27 Remember your
servants Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Overlook
the stubbornness of this people, their wicked-
ness and their sin. 28 Otherwise, the country
from which you brought us will say, 'Because
the LORD was not able to take them into the
land he had promised them, and because he
hated them, he brought them out to put them
to death in the wilderness.' 29 But they are your
people, your inheritance that you brought out
by your great power and your outstretched
arm."

Tablets Like the First Ones

10 1 At that time the LORD said to me, "Chisel
out two stone tablets like the first ones
and come up to me on the mountain. Also make
a wooden ark.[a] 2 I will write on the tablets the

Daily Life & Customs

Fasting appears in the Bible as a natural expression of feelings of distress, sorrow, and guilt (Dt 9:18). It does not play a large part in the Law of Moses, where only one mandatory fast is found—on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29–31). The apostle Paul literally called this day "the Fast" (Ac 27:9, Greek).

[a] *1* That is, a chest

words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. Then you are to put them in the ark."

3So I made the ark out of acacia wood and chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I went up on the mountain with the two tablets in my hands. 4The LORD wrote on these tablets what he had written before, the Ten Commandments he had proclaimed to you on the mountain, out of the fire, on the day of the assembly. And the LORD gave them to me. 5Then I came back down the mountain and put the tablets in the ark I had made, as the LORD commanded me, and they are there now.

6(The Israelites traveled from the wells of Bene Jaakan to Moserah. There Aaron died and was buried, and Eleazar his son succeeded him as priest. 7From there they traveled to Gudgodah and on to Jotbathah, a land with streams of water. 8At that time the LORD set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the LORD, to stand before the LORD to minister and to pronounce blessings in his name, as they still do today. 9That is why the Levites have no share or inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the LORD is their inheritance, as the LORD your God told them.)

10Now I had stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights, as I did the first time, and the LORD listened to me at this time also. It was not his will to destroy you. 11"Go," the LORD said to me, "and lead the people on their way, so that they may enter and possess the land I swore to their ancestors to give them."

Fear the LORD

12And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13and to observe the LORD's commands and decrees that I am giving you today for your own good?

TIME CAPSULE		1350 to 1345 B.C.
1350		The Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni falls, and is ruled by Assyrians and Hittites
1350		King Niqmaddu II of Ugarit makes treaty with the king of Amurru
1348		Amenhotep IV changes his name to Akhenaten
1348		Pharaoh Akhenaten founds the city of Akhetaten (el-Amarna) in Egypt
1345		Pharaoh Akhenaten makes his residence in Akhetaten

14To the LORD your God belong the heavens, even the highest heavens, the earth and everything in it. 15Yet the LORD set his affection on your ancestors and loved them, and he chose you, their descendants, above all the nations—as it is today. 16Circumcise your hearts, therefore, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. 17For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes. 18He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. 19And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt. 20Fear the LORD your God and serve him. Hold fast to him and take your oaths in his name. 21He is the one you praise; he is your God, who performed for you those great and awesome wonders you saw with your own eyes. 22Your ancestors who went down into Egypt were seventy in all, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars in the sky.

Love and Obey the LORD

11 1Love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always. 2Remember today that your children were not the ones who saw and experienced the discipline of the LORD your God: his majesty, his mighty hand, his outstretched arm; 3the signs he performed and the things he did in the heart of Egypt, both to Pharaoh king of Egypt and to his whole country; 4what he did to the Egyptian army, to its horses and chariots, how he overwhelmed them with the waters of the Red Sea[a] as they were pursuing you, and how the LORD brought lasting ruin on them. 5It was not your children who saw what he did for you in the wilderness until you arrived at this place, 6and what he did to Dathan and Abiram, sons of Eliab the Reubenite, when the earth opened its mouth right in the middle of all Israel and swallowed them up with their households, their tents and every living thing that belonged to them. 7But it was your own eyes that saw all these great things the LORD has done.

8Observe therefore all the commands I am giving you today, so that you may have the strength to go in and take over the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 9and so that you may live long in the land the LORD swore to your ancestors to give to them and

[a] 4 Or *the Sea of Reeds*

LAW CODES OF ANCIENT MESOPOTAMIA

The Hebrew laws of the Bible can be compared with several collections of laws (called "law codes") from other peoples of the ancient Near East. Many of the legal stipulations in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy also appear in these other legal traditions.

Legal Collections in the Bible	Reference
The Ten Commandments	Ex 20:2–17; Dt 5:6–21
The Covenant Code	Ex 20:22—23:33
The Book of the Law	Dt 12–26
The Holiness Code	Lev 17–26

Law Codes of Ancient Cultures	Date	Language
Code of Ur-Nammu	c. 2112–2095 B.C.	Sumerian
Code of Lipit-Ishtar	c. 1934–1924 B.C.	Sumerian
Laws of Eshnunna	c. 1900 B.C.	Accadian
Code of Hammurabi	c. 1792–1750 B.C.	Accadian
Hittite laws	c. 1750–1200 B.C.	Hittite
Middle Assyrian laws	c. 1132–1076 B.C.	Accadian

their descendants, a land flowing with milk and
honey. 10The land you are entering to take over
is not like the land of Egypt, from which you
have come, where you planted your seed and
irrigated it by foot as in a vegetable garden.
11But the land you are crossing the Jordan to
take possession of is a land of mountains and
valleys that drinks rain from heaven. 12It is a
land the LORD your God cares for; the eyes of
the LORD your God are continually on it from
the beginning of the year to its end.

13So if you faithfully obey the commands I
am giving you today—to love the LORD your
God and to serve him with all your heart and
with all your soul— 14then I will send rain on
your land in its season, both autumn and spring
rains, so that you may gather in your grain,
new wine and olive oil. 15I will provide grass in
the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and
be satisfied.

16Be careful, or you will be enticed to turn
away and worship other gods and bow down
to them. 17Then the LORD's anger will burn
against you, and he will shut up the heavens
so that it will not rain and the ground will yield
no produce, and you will soon perish from the
good land the LORD is giving you. 18Fix these
words of mine in your hearts and minds; tie
them as symbols on your hands and bind them
on your foreheads. 19Teach them to your chil-
dren, talking about them when you sit at home
and when you walk along the road, when you
lie down and when you get up. 20Write them
on the doorframes of your houses and on your
gates, 21so that your days and the days of your
children may be many in the land the LORD
swore to give your ancestors, as many as the
days that the heavens are above the earth.

22If you carefully observe all these com-
mands I am giving you to follow—to love the
LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him
and to hold fast to him— 23then the LORD will
drive out all these nations before you, and you
will dispossess nations larger and stronger than
you. 24Every place where you set your foot will
be yours: Your territory will extend from the
desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates Riv-
er to the Mediterranean Sea. 25No one will be
able to stand against you. The LORD your God,
as he promised you, will put the terror and fear
of you on the whole land, wherever you go.

26See, I am setting before you today a bless-
ing and a curse— 27the blessing if you obey
the commands of the LORD your God that I am
giving you today; 28the curse if you disobey
the commands of the LORD your God and turn
from the way that I command you today by fol-
lowing other gods, which you have not known.
29When the LORD your God has brought you
into the land you are entering to possess, you
are to proclaim on Mount Gerizim the bless-
ings, and on Mount Ebal the curses. 30As you
know, these mountains are across the Jordan,
westward, toward the setting sun, near the
great trees of Moreh, in the territory of those
Canaanites living in the Arabah in the vicinity
of Gilgal. 31You are about to cross the Jordan to
enter and take possession of the land the LORD
your God is giving you. When you have taken
it over and are living there, 32be sure that you
obey all the decrees and laws I am setting be-
fore you today.

The One Place of Worship

12 [1]These are the decrees and laws you must be careful to follow in the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you to possess—as long as you live in the land. [2]Destroy completely all the places on the high mountains, on the hills and under every spreading tree, where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods. [3]Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and burn their Asherah poles in the fire; cut down the idols of their gods and wipe out their names from those places.

[4]You must not worship the LORD your God in their way. [5]But you are to seek the place the LORD your God will choose from among all your tribes to put his Name there for his dwelling. To that place you must go; [6]there bring your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, what you have vowed to give and your freewill offerings, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. [7]There, in the presence of the LORD your God, you and your families shall eat and shall rejoice in everything you have put your hand to, because the LORD your God has blessed you.

[8]You are not to do as we do here today, everyone doing as they see fit, [9]since you have not yet reached the resting place and the inheritance the LORD your God is giving you. [10]But you will cross the Jordan and settle in the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, and he will give you rest from all your enemies around you so that you will live in safety. [11]Then to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name—there you are to bring everything I command you: your burnt offerings and sacrifices, your tithes and special gifts, and all the choice possessions you have vowed to the LORD. [12]And there rejoice before the LORD your God—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites from your towns who have no allotment or inheritance of their own. [13]Be careful not to sacrifice your burnt offerings anywhere you please. [14]Offer them only at the place the LORD will choose in one of your tribes, and there observe everything I command you.

[15]Nevertheless, you may slaughter your animals in any of your towns and eat as much of the meat as you want, as if it were gazelle or deer, according to the blessing the LORD your God gives you. Both the ceremonially unclean and the clean may eat it. [16]But you must not eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water. [17]You must not eat in your own towns the tithe of your grain and new wine and olive oil, or the firstborn of your herds and flocks, or whatever you have vowed to give, or your freewill offerings or special gifts. [18]Instead, you are to eat them in the presence of the LORD your God at the place the LORD your God will choose—you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, and the Levites from your towns—and you are to rejoice before the LORD your God in everything you put your hand to. [19]Be careful not to neglect the Levites as long as you live in your land.

[20]When the LORD your God has enlarged your territory as he promised you, and you crave meat and say, "I would like some meat," then you may eat as much of it as you want. [21]If the place where the LORD your God chooses to put his Name is too far away from you, you may slaughter animals from the herds and flocks the LORD has given you, as I have commanded you, and in your own towns you may eat as much of them as you want. [22]Eat them as you would gazelle or deer. Both the ceremonially unclean and the clean may eat. [23]But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat. [24]You must not eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water. [25]Do not eat it, so that it may go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is right in the eyes of the LORD.

[26]But take your consecrated things and whatever you have vowed to give, and go to the place the LORD will choose. [27]Present your burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD your God, both the meat and the blood. The blood of your sacrifices must be poured beside the altar of the LORD your God, but you may eat the meat. [28]Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

[29]The LORD your God will cut off before you the nations you are about to invade and dispossess. But when you have driven them out and settled in their land, [30]and after they have been

Religion & Worship

The religion of the Canaanites was centered on shrines located on hilltops scattered throughout the country (Dt 12:3). The stones were poles of some sort, wood or stone, sometimes decorated with carving, sometimes not (Dt 16:21). They were not necessarily complete images like the statues of the Greeks and Romans.

destroyed before you, be careful not to be ensnared by inquiring about their gods, saying, "How do these nations serve their gods? We will do the same." 31You must not worship the LORD your God in their way, because in worshiping their gods, they do all kinds of detestable things the LORD hates. They even burn their sons and daughters in the fire as sacrifices to their gods.

32See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.[a]

Worshiping Other Gods

13[b] 1If a prophet, or one who foretells by dreams, appears among you and announces to you a sign or wonder, 2and if the sign or wonder spoken of takes place, and the prophet says, "Let us follow other gods" (gods you have not known) "and let us worship them," 3you must not listen to the words of that prophet or dreamer. The LORD your God is testing you to find out whether you love him with all your heart and with all your soul. 4It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him and hold fast to him. 5That prophet or dreamer must be put to death for inciting rebellion against the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt and redeemed you from the land of slavery. That prophet or dreamer tried to turn you from the way the LORD your God commanded you to follow. You must purge the evil from among you.

6If your very own brother, or your son or daughter, or the wife you love, or your closest friend secretly entices you, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods that neither you nor your ancestors have known, 7gods of the peoples around you, whether near or far, from one end of the land to the other), 8do not yield to them or listen to them. Show them no pity. Do not spare them or shield them. 9You must certainly put them to death. Your hand must be the first in putting them to death, and then the hands of all the people. 10Stone them to death, because they tried to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 11Then all Israel will hear and be afraid, and no one among you will do such an evil thing again.

12If you hear it said about one of the towns the LORD your God is giving you to live in 13that troublemakers have arisen among you and have led the people of their town astray, saying, "Let us go and worship other gods" (gods you have not known), 14then you must inquire, probe and investigate it thoroughly. And if it is true and it has been proved that this detestable thing has been done among you, 15you must certainly put to the sword all who live in that town. You must destroy it completely,[c] both its people and its livestock. 16You are to gather all the plunder of the town into the middle of the public square and completely burn the town and all its plunder as a whole burnt offering to the LORD your God. That town is to remain a ruin forever, never to be rebuilt, 17and none of the condemned things[c] are to be found in your hands. Then the LORD will turn from his fierce anger, will show you mercy, and will have compassion on you. He will increase your numbers, as he promised on oath to your ancestors— 18because you obey the LORD your God by keeping all his commands that I am giving you today and doing what is right in his eyes.

Clean and Unclean Food

14 1You are the children of the LORD your God. Do not cut yourselves or shave the front of your heads for the dead, 2for you are a people holy to the LORD your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the LORD has chosen you to be his treasured possession.

3Do not eat any detestable thing. 4These are the animals you may eat: the ox, the sheep, the goat, 5the deer, the gazelle, the roe deer, the wild goat, the ibex, the antelope and the mountain sheep.[d] 6You may eat any animal that has a divided hoof and that chews the cud. 7However, of those that chew the cud or that have

[a] *32* In Hebrew texts this verse (12:32) is numbered 13:1.
[b] In Hebrew texts 13:1-18 is numbered 13:2-19.
[c] *15,17* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.
[d] *5* The precise identification of some of the birds and animals in this chapter is uncertain.

TIME CAPSULE		1336 to 1300 B.C.
1336–1327		Tutankhamun becomes pharaoh and reverses Akhenaten's reforms
1323–1295		Horemhab, pharaoh of Egypt
1315		Moses flees Egypt (based on late Exodus; Ex 2:15; Ac 7:23)
1321–1298		Reign of Hittite king Mursilis II described in the "Text of Anittas"
1308–1274		Adad-nirari I of Assyria conducts campaigns against Mitanni
1300		Assyria loses control of Babylonia to the Kassites

Taxes in Ugarit (Dt 14:22–29)

At the site of Tell Ras Shamra, along the Syrian coast, archaeologists discovered the northern Canaanite city of Ugarit. This city was the capital of a 2nd millennium kingdom by the same name. A fertile agricultural countryside and a flourishing port used by seagoing trade ships helped the kingdom of Ugarit become a prosperous commercial center. But the sea was also the city's downfall; Ugarit was destroyed around 1180 B.C. by the raids of the Sea Peoples. The inhabitants abandoned their homes; no village or city ever occupied the area again.

Excavations at the site of Ugarit have uncovered over 1,000 texts in an alphabetic cuneiform script, all of which come from the 14th to 12th centuries B.C. Most of the documents were written in Ugaritic, a language until recently unknown. Like biblical Hebrew, it is a Northwest Semitic language, and thus shares many linguistic characteristics with the written language of the Old Testament.

The Ugaritic texts illuminate many mythical, religious, social, and cultural elements in the Old Testament. In Dt 14:22–29 the Israelites are required to pay a tithe of their grain produce. Similarly, some Ugaritic texts mention a tax, or tithe, in the form of royal decrees imposed on royal dependents in outlying towns subject to Ugarit. Evidently, these royal dependents were required to perform various duties as well as pay certain taxes to royal authorities. Whether there was a religious significance to this tithe, as there was with the Israelite tithe (Dt 14:23), is not known with certainty.

a divided hoof you may not eat the camel, the rabbit or the hyrax. Although they chew the cud, they do not have a divided hoof; they are ceremonially unclean for you. 8The pig is also unclean; although it has a divided hoof, it does not chew the cud. You are not to eat their meat or touch their carcasses.

9Of all the creatures living in the water, you may eat any that has fins and scales. 10But anything that does not have fins and scales you may not eat; for you it is unclean.

11You may eat any clean bird. 12But these you may not eat: the eagle, the vulture, the black vulture, 13the red kite, the black kite, any kind of falcon, 14any kind of raven, 15the horned owl, the screech owl, the gull, any kind of hawk, 16the little owl, the great owl, the white owl, 17the desert owl, the osprey, the cormorant, 18the stork, any kind of heron, the hoopoe and the bat.

19All flying insects are unclean to you; do not eat them. 20But any winged creature that is clean you may eat.

21Do not eat anything you find already dead. You may give it to the foreigner residing in any of your towns, and they may eat it, or you may sell it to any other foreigner. But you are a people holy to the LORD your God.

Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk.

Plants & Animals

It is difficult to find a single principle that explains the rationale behind the specific assignment of animals to the clean and the unclean groups. The forbidden birds include all the birds of prey (Dt 14:12). These birds eat food that they find already dead. This was considered objectionable for religion, though not necessarily unhealthy (Dt 14:21).

Tithes

22Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year. 23Eat the tithe of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name, so that you may learn to revere the LORD your God always. 24But if that place is too distant and you have been blessed by the LORD your God and cannot carry your tithe (because the place where the LORD will choose to put his Name is so far away), 25then exchange your tithe for silver, and take the silver with you and go to the place the LORD your God will choose. 26Use the silver to buy whatever you like: cattle, sheep, wine or other fermented drink, or anything you wish. Then you and your household shall eat there in the presence of the LORD your God and rejoice. 27And do not neglect the Levites living in your towns, for they have no allotment or inheritance of their own.

28At the end of every three years, bring all the tithes of that year's produce and store it in your towns, 29so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.

The Year for Canceling Debts

15 1At the end of every seven years you must cancel debts. 2This is how it is to be done: Every creditor shall cancel any loan they have made to a fellow Israelite. They shall not require payment from anyone among their own people, because the LORD's time for canceling debts has been proclaimed. 3You may require

payment from a foreigner, but you must cancel any debt your fellow Israelite owes you. 4However, there need be no poor people among you, for in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess as your inheritance, he will richly bless you, 5if only you fully obey the LORD your God and are careful to follow all these commands I am giving you today. 6For the LORD your God will bless you as he has promised, and you will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. You will rule over many nations but none will rule over you.

7If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them. 8Rather, be openhanded and freely lend them whatever they need. 9Be careful not to harbor this wicked thought: "The seventh year, the year for canceling debts, is near," so that you do not show ill will toward the needy among your fellow Israelites and give them nothing. They may then appeal to the LORD against you, and you will be found guilty of sin. 10Give generously to them and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to. 11There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.

Freeing Servants

12If any of your people — Hebrew men or women — sell themselves to you and serve you six years, in the seventh year you must let them go free. 13And when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. 14Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the LORD your God has blessed you. 15Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today.

16But if your servant says to you, "I do not want to leave you," because he loves you and your family and is well off with you, 17then take an awl and push it through his earlobe into the door, and he will become your servant for life. Do the same for your female servant.

18Do not consider it a hardship to set your servant free, because their service to you these six years has been worth twice as much as that of a hired hand. And the LORD your God will bless you in everything you do.

The Firstborn Animals

19Set apart for the LORD your God every firstborn male of your herds and flocks. Do not put the firstborn of your cows to work, and do not shear the firstborn of your sheep. 20Each year you and your family are to eat them in the presence of the LORD your God at the place he will choose. 21If an animal has a defect, is lame or blind, or has any serious flaw, you must not sacrifice it to the LORD your God. 22You are to eat it in your own towns. Both the ceremonially unclean and the clean may eat it, as if it were gazelle or deer. 23But you must not eat the blood; pour it out on the ground like water.

The Passover

16 1Observe the month of Aviv and celebrate the Passover of the LORD your God, because in the month of Aviv he brought you out of Egypt by night. 2Sacrifice as the Passover to the LORD your God an animal from your flock or herd at the place the LORD will choose as a dwelling for his Name. 3Do not eat it with bread made with yeast, but for seven days eat unleavened bread, the bread of affliction, because you left Egypt in haste — so that all the days of your life you may remember the time of your departure from Egypt. 4Let no yeast be found in your possession in all your land for seven days. Do not let any of the meat you sacrifice on the evening of the first day remain until morning.

5You must not sacrifice the Passover in any town the LORD your God gives you 6except in the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name. There you must sacrifice the Passover in the evening, when the sun goes down, on the anniversary[a] of your departure from Egypt. 7Roast it and eat it at the place the LORD your God will choose. Then in the morning return to your tents. 8For six days eat unleavened bread and on the seventh day hold an assembly to the LORD your God and do no work.

The Festival of Weeks

9Count off seven weeks from the time you begin to put the sickle to the standing grain. 10Then celebrate the Festival of Weeks to the LORD your God by giving a freewill offering in proportion to the blessings the LORD your God has given you. 11And rejoice before the LORD your God at the place he will choose as a dwelling for his Name — you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, the Levites in your towns, and the foreigners, the fatherless and the widows living among you. 12Remember that you were slaves in Egypt, and follow carefully these decrees.

[a] 6 Or *down, at the time of day*

Appointing Just Judges (Dt 16:18–20)

The qualifications for choosing judges and officials were considered a serious matter in ancient cultures. Both Israel and Egypt had stipulations regarding the conduct of judges, emphasizing that a system of justice is only as good as the people who administer it.

Israel's law called for the selection of judges who would judge "the people fairly" (Dt 16:18). The ideal of a just legal system was supported by prohibitions requiring that Israel's judges not "show partiality" or "accept a bribe" (16:19).

The same ideal is evident in Egypt according to the Edict of Horemhab. Pharaoh Horemhab ruled for about 30 years (1323–1295 B.C.) in Egypt's 18th Dynasty, late in the 14th century B.C. For the administration of justice, the monarch looked for "people discreet and of good character, knowing how to judge the inmost thoughts, obedient to the instructions of the palace, and to the laws of the throne hall."

Horemhab claims to have taught these judges "the right course of life by guiding them to the truth." His advice to them was: "Do not associate with other people. Do not take bribes from others, for that will not turn out well." As the pharaoh advised his judges, he was clear in his warning concerning showing partiality: "Behold, (anyone) of you who makes common cause with another shall be for you as one who offends against truth."

These examples from Israel and Egypt demonstrate a common tradition in the ancient Near East about the appropriate administration of justice by legal officials. Bribes and partiality were not to be part of the system.

The Festival of Tabernacles

13 Celebrate the Festival of Tabernacles for
seven days after you have gathered the pro-
duce of your threshing floor and your wine-
press. 14 Be joyful at your festival—you, your
sons and daughters, your male and female
servants, and the Levites, the foreigners, the
fatherless and the widows who live in your
towns. 15 For seven days celebrate the festival
to the Lord your God at the place the Lord will
choose. For the Lord your God will bless you
in all your harvest and in all the work of your
hands, and your joy will be complete.

16 Three times a year all your men must ap-
pear before the Lord your God at the place
he will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened
Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of
Tabernacles. No one should appear before the
Lord empty-handed: 17 Each of you must bring
a gift in proportion to the way the Lord your
God has blessed you.

Judges

18 Appoint judges and officials for each of
your tribes in every town the Lord your God
is giving you, and they shall judge the people
fairly. 19 Do not pervert justice or show partiali-
ty. Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds the
eyes of the wise and twists the words of the
innocent. 20 Follow justice and justice alone,
so that you may live and possess the land the
Lord your God is giving you.

Worshiping Other Gods

21 Do not set up any wooden Asherah pole be-
side the altar you build to the Lord your God,
22 and do not erect a sacred stone, for these the
Lord your God hates.

17 1 Do not sacrifice to the Lord your God an
ox or a sheep that has any defect or flaw
in it, for that would be detestable to him.

2 If a man or woman living among you in one
of the towns the Lord gives you is found do-
ing evil in the eyes of the Lord your God in
violation of his covenant, 3 and contrary to my
command has worshiped other gods, bowing
down to them or to the sun or the moon or the
stars in the sky, 4 and this has been brought
to your attention, then you must investigate it
thoroughly. If it is true and it has been proved
that this detestable thing has been done in Isra-
el, 5 take the man or woman who has done this
evil deed to your city gate and stone that per-
son to death. 6 On the testimony of two or three
witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no
one is to be put to death on the testimony of
only one witness. 7 The hands of the witness-
es must be the first in putting that person to
death, and then the hands of all the people. You
must purge the evil from among you.

Law Courts

8 If cases come before your courts that are
too difficult for you to judge—whether blood-
shed, lawsuits or assaults—take them to the
place the Lord your God will choose. 9 Go to
the Levitical priests and to the judge who is in
office at that time. Inquire of them and they will
give you the verdict. 10 You must act according
to the decisions they give you at the place the
Lord will choose. Be careful to do everything
they instruct you to do. 11 Act according to
whatever they teach you and the decisions they
give you. Do not turn aside from what they tell
you, to the right or to the left. 12 Anyone who
shows contempt for the judge or for the priest

who stands ministering there to the LORD your God is to be put to death. You must purge the evil from Israel. 13All the people will hear and be afraid, and will not be contemptuous again.

The King

14When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," 15be sure to appoint over you a king the LORD your God chooses. He must be from among your fellow Israelites. Do not place a foreigner over you, one who is not an Israelite. 16The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again." 17He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

18When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. 19It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees 20and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel.

Offerings for Priests and Levites

18 1The Levitical priests — indeed, the whole tribe of Levi — are to have no allotment or inheritance with Israel. They shall live on the food offerings presented to the LORD, for that is their inheritance. 2They shall have no inheritance among their fellow Israelites; the LORD is their inheritance, as he promised them.

3This is the share due the priests from the people who sacrifice a bull or a sheep: the shoulder, the internal organs and the meat from the head. 4You are to give them the firstfruits of your grain, new wine and olive oil, and the first wool from the shearing of your sheep, 5for the LORD your God has chosen them and their descendants out of all your tribes to stand and minister in the LORD's name always.

6If a Levite moves from one of your towns anywhere in Israel where he is living, and comes in all earnestness to the place the LORD will choose, 7he may minister in the name of the LORD his God like all his fellow Levites who serve there in the presence of the LORD. 8He is to share equally in their benefits, even though he has received money from the sale of family possessions.

Occult Practices

9When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. 10Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, 11or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead. 12Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD; because of these same detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. 13You must be blameless before the LORD your God.

The Prophet

14The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination. But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so. 15The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. 16For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, "Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die."

17The LORD said to me: "What they say is good. 18I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. 19I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. 20But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death."

21You may say to yourselves, "How can we know when a message has not been spoken by the LORD?" 22If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not

Cults & Supernatural
Ancient society was permeated with different kinds of magic (Dt 18:10). It was practiced to foretell the future, to influence events, and to counter evil, including the magic of an enemy. The one God cannot be controlled or manipulated, and consequently his law forbids any magic, whatever its intent.

Omens, Spells, and Other Abominations (Dt 18:10, 11)

The Law of Moses banned all forms of foreign practices of divination. The various practices listed in Dt 18:10, 11 were viewed as a subsidiary of magic. Often employed for divinatory oracles, these methods attempted to learn the will of the gods or to obtain knowledge of the future by other supernatural means. Sometimes the intent was to influence supernatural powers. All such practices were considered abominations of the Canaanite peoples (18:9, 13) and, as such, were forbidden in Israel.

All forms of divination were distinguished from inquiries of Israel's God. The use of the Urim and Thummim, the ephod, lots, and dreams were all legitimate methods of seeking Yahweh's will (1Sa 14:41; 23:9–12; 28:6). Divination practices, such as consulting a medium (1Sa 28:7–20), however, were illegitimate, even though some were believed to have power. They were not considered to be connected with the gods, but instead were seen as magic or wisdom arts, revealing secrets of God in a perverted way. Thus, the divinator trusted in signs and omens and in human wisdom rather than in God.

An example of pagan divination was teratoscopy, the omen interpretation of birth anomalies. One omen portends: "If an anomalous birth has eight feet and two tails, a prince will seize universal kingship." Moreover, the recorder of this omen mentions a hunter who claimed that when his sow gave birth, the offspring did in fact have eight feet and two tails. Thus, this omen was preserved for posterity. In Israel, the law was clear: "Let no one be found among you who . . . interprets omens" (Dt 18:10).

spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously, so do not be alarmed.

Cities of Refuge

19 [1]When the LORD your God has destroyed
the nations whose land he is giving you,
and when you have driven them out and settled in their towns and houses, [2]then set aside
for yourselves three cities in the land the LORD
your God is giving you to possess. [3]Determine
the distances involved and divide into three
parts the land the LORD your God is giving you
as an inheritance, so that a person who kills
someone may flee for refuge to one of these
cities.

[4]This is the rule concerning anyone who kills a person and flees there for safety—anyone who kills a neighbor unintentionally, without malice aforethought. [5]For instance, a man may go into the forest with his neighbor to cut wood, and as he swings his ax to fell a tree, the head may fly off and hit his neighbor and kill him. That man may flee to one of these cities and save his life. [6]Otherwise, the avenger of blood might pursue him in a rage, overtake him if the distance is too great, and kill him even though he is not deserving of death, since he did it to his neighbor without malice aforethought. [7]This is why I command you to set aside for yourselves three cities.

[8]If the LORD your God enlarges your territory, as he promised on oath to your ancestors, and gives you the whole land he promised them, [9]because you carefully follow all these laws I command you today—to love the LORD your God and to walk always in obedience to him—then you are to set aside three more cities. [10]Do this so that innocent blood will not be shed in your land, which the LORD your God is giving you as your inheritance, and so that you will not be guilty of bloodshed.

[11]But if out of hate someone lies in wait, assaults and kills a neighbor, and then flees to one of these cities, [12]the killer shall be sent for by the town elders, be brought back from the city, and be handed over to the avenger of blood to die. [13]Show no pity. You must purge from Israel the guilt of shedding innocent blood, so that it may go well with you.

[14]Do not move your neighbor's boundary stone set up by your predecessors in the inheritance you receive in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess.

Witnesses

[15]One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

[16]If a malicious witness takes the stand to accuse someone of a crime, [17]the two people involved in the dispute must stand in the presence of the LORD before the priests and the judges who are in office at the time. [18]The judges must make a thorough investigation, and if the witness proves to be a liar, giving false testimony against a fellow Israelite, [19]then do to the false witness as that witness intended to do to the other party. You must purge the evil from among you. [20]The rest of the people will hear of this and be afraid, and never again will such an evil thing be done among you. [21]Show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot.

Going to War

20 [1]When you go to war against your enemies and see horses and chariots and
an army greater than yours, do not be afraid

of them, because the LORD your God, who brought you up out of Egypt, will be with you. 2When you are about to go into battle, the priest shall come forward and address the army. 3He shall say: "Hear, Israel: Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. 4For the LORD your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory."

5The officers shall say to the army: "Has anyone built a new house and not yet begun to live in it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else may begin to live in it. 6Has anyone planted a vineyard and not begun to enjoy it? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else enjoy it. 7Has anyone become pledged to a woman and not married her? Let him go home, or he may die in battle and someone else marry her." 8Then the officers shall add, "Is anyone afraid or fainthearted? Let him go home so that his fellow soldiers will not become disheartened too." 9When the officers have finished speaking to the army, they shall appoint commanders over it.

10When you march up to attack a city, make its people an offer of peace. 11If they accept and open their gates, all the people in it shall be subject to forced labor and shall work for you. 12If they refuse to make peace and they engage you in battle, lay siege to that city. 13When the LORD your God delivers it into your hand, put to the sword all the men in it. 14As for the women, the children, the livestock and everything else in the city, you may take these as plunder for yourselves. And you may use the plunder the LORD your God gives you from your enemies. 15This is how you are to treat all the cities that are at a distance from you and do not belong to the nations nearby.

16However, in the cities of the nations the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes. 17Completely destroy[a] them—the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—as the LORD your God has commanded you. 18Otherwise, they will teach you to follow all the detestable things they do in worshiping their gods, and you will sin against the LORD your God.

19When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can eat their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees people, that you should besiege them?[b] 20However, you may cut down trees that you know are not fruit trees and use them to build siege works until the city at war with you falls.

Atonement for an Unsolved Murder

21 1If someone is found slain, lying in a field in the land the LORD your God is giving you to possess, and it is not known who the killer was, 2your elders and judges shall go out and measure the distance from the body to the neighboring towns. 3Then the elders of the town nearest the body shall take a heifer that has never been worked and has never worn a yoke 4and lead it down to a valley that has not been plowed or planted and where there is a flowing stream. There in the valley they

[a] *17* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. [b] *19* Or *down to use in the siege, for the fruit trees are for the benefit of people.*

Bows were the most characteristic weapons of warfare in the Old Testament period, serving often as the decisive element in a battle.

Chariots served as mobile firing platforms and could bring great firepower quickly to the key point of the battle.

Finding a Dead Body (Dt 21:1–9)

If a dead person was found in an open field, the Israelite people performed a very specific ritual (Dt 21:1–9). In the event that an innocent person was murdered and no one was apprehended, the whole nation was held responsible. Therefore a sacrifice had to be made for all the people.

Finding a slain stranger in the open country was not a phenomenon unique to Israel. Hittite laws, compiled in the mid-2nd millennium B.C. in central Anatolia, also dealt with this issue, but with a different response than that of Dt 21.

One Hittite law reads: "If a man is killed on the field (or) fallow of another man, in case he is a free man, he shall give field (and) fallow, house (and) 1½ pounds of silver. In case it is a woman, he shall give 3 pounds of silver." Thus, according to Hittite law, the family of a murder victim would be compensated by the property owner of the land where the murder occurred.

Both the Israelites and Hittites had provisions regarding the community nearest to where the body of a slain person was found. In Israel, the leaders were instructed to "measure the distance from the body to the neighboring towns" (Dt 21:2), and the elders of the nearest city were required to perform a ritual, killing a heifer to remove guilt from the community. The Hittites also measured: "a distance of three leagues in one direction and a distance of three leagues in the other direction." The village that fell within the measured area was required to pay compensation.

The Israelite and Hittite laws differ in some aspects. The Hittite text is devoid of the ritual significance found in Dt 21, and therefore no provisions were made to pacify a deity that may have been offended by the death (presumably a homicide). For her part, Israel made no attempt to compensate the victim's family. Both cultures, however, had a sense of corporate responsibility, requiring certain actions of the nearest community.

are to break the heifer's neck. [5]The Levitical priests shall step forward, for the LORD your God has chosen them to minister and to pronounce blessings in the name of the LORD and to decide all cases of dispute and assault. [6]Then all the elders of the town nearest the body shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley, [7]and they shall declare: "Our hands did not shed this blood, nor did our eyes see it done. [8]Accept this atonement for your people Israel, whom you have redeemed, LORD, and do not hold your people guilty of the blood of an innocent person." Then the bloodshed will be atoned for, [9]and you will have purged from yourselves the guilt of shedding innocent blood, since you have done what is right in the eyes of the LORD.

Marrying a Captive Woman

[10]When you go to war against your enemies and the LORD your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, [11]if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. [12]Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails [13]and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife. [14]If you are not pleased with her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

The Right of the Firstborn

[15]If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, [16]when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. [17]He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

A Rebellious Son

[18]If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, [19]his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. [20]They shall say to the elders, "This

TIME CAPSULE		1295 to 1275 B.C.
1295–1294		Ramesses I founds Egypt's 19th Dynasty
1294–1279		Seti I, pharaoh of Egypt
1294		Seti I drives Hittites from southern Syria
1279–1213		Ramesses II, pharaoh of Egypt
1279		Ramesses II oversees a great building program in Egypt
1275		Moses leads exodus from Egypt (based on late Exodus)

The Slandered Bride from Nippur (Dt 22:13–19)

Israelite society had laws governing how a husband could treat a new wife. The law of Dt 22:13–19 prohibits a man from obtaining a divorce merely by questioning her virginity and slandering her name (22:14). A woman so accused was permitted to produce evidence of her fidelity. Should she be vindicated, the husband was fined 100 shekels of silver and forbidden to divorce her for the rest of his life (22:19).

Rejecting a new wife was not unique to Israel. A Sumerian marriage contract from Nippur describes a certain Enlil-issu, a priest of Enlil (the chief deity of the Sumerian pantheon). Enlil-issu took the woman Ama-sukkal as his wife, and the new wife brought 19 shekels of silver to her spouse. The contract stipulates that if Enlil-issu rejects his bride, the 19 shekels must be returned, as well as a half mina of silver (approximately 30 shekels). If the wife rejects her husband, the payment is exactly the same. No reasons are given for the potential separation.

All did not go well. Later on, the couple had their day in court, apparently before the consummation of the marriage. Ama-sukkal was not convicted of speaking against her husband, but Enlil-issu was convicted of slandering and abusing his wife, to which he responded, "You may convict me (even) more than now; (still) I will not marry her. Let them imprison me and (then) I will pay the money (instead)."

There are differences between the Israelite and Sumerian laws. The virginity of the Sumerian bride is not an issue in the Nippur contract, while virginity was the primary issue in the Israelite law. Nevertheless, we see that in both cultures a new bride was protected to some degree from being rejected unjustly, slandered, and consequently divorced.

son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard." 21Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.

Various Laws

22If someone guilty of a capital offense is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, 23you must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

22 1If you see your fellow Israelite's ox or sheep straying, do not ignore it but be sure to take it back to its owner. 2If they do not live near you or if you do not know who owns it, take it home with you and keep it until they come looking for it. Then give it back. 3Do the same if you find their donkey or cloak or anything else they have lost. Do not ignore it.

4If you see your fellow Israelite's donkey or ox fallen on the road, do not ignore it. Help the owner get it to its feet.

5A woman must not wear men's clothing, nor a man wear women's clothing, for the LORD your God detests anyone who does this.

6If you come across a bird's nest beside the road, either in a tree or on the ground, and the mother is sitting on the young or on the eggs, do not take the mother with the young. 7You may take the young, but be sure to let the mother go, so that it may go well with you and you may have a long life.

8When you build a new house, make a parapet around your roof so that you may not bring the guilt of bloodshed on your house if someone falls from the roof.

9Do not plant two kinds of seed in your vineyard; if you do, not only the crops you plant but also the fruit of the vineyard will be defiled.[a]

10Do not plow with an ox and a donkey yoked together.

11Do not wear clothes of wool and linen woven together.

12Make tassels on the four corners of the cloak you wear.

Marriage Violations

13If a man takes a wife and, after sleeping with her, dislikes her 14and slanders her and gives her a bad name, saying, "I married this woman, but when I approached her, I did not find proof of her virginity," 15then the young woman's father and mother shall bring to the town elders at the gate proof that she was a virgin. 16Her father will say to the elders, "I gave my daughter in marriage to this man, but he dislikes her. 17Now he has slandered her and said, 'I did not find your daughter to be a virgin.' But here is the proof of my daughter's virginity." Then her parents shall display the cloth before the elders of the town, 18and the elders shall take the man and punish him. 19They shall fine him a hundred shekels[b] of silver and give them to the young woman's father, because this man has given an Israelite virgin a bad name. She shall continue to be his wife; he must not divorce her as long as he lives.

20If, however, the charge is true and no proof of the young woman's virginity can be

[a] *9* Or *be forfeited to the sanctuary* [b] *19* That is, about 2 1/2 pounds or about 1.2 kilograms

found, [21]she shall be brought to the door of her father's house and there the men of her town shall stone her to death. She has done an outrageous thing in Israel by being promiscuous while still in her father's house. You must purge the evil from among you.

[22]If a man is found sleeping with another man's wife, both the man who slept with her and the woman must die. You must purge the evil from Israel.

[23]If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, [24]you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death—the young woman because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you.

[25]But if out in the country a man happens to meet a young woman pledged to be married and rapes her, only the man who has done this shall die. [26]Do nothing to the woman; she has committed no sin deserving death. This case is like that of someone who attacks and murders a neighbor, [27]for the man found the young woman out in the country, and though the betrothed woman screamed, there was no one to rescue her.

[28]If a man happens to meet a virgin who is not pledged to be married and rapes her and they are discovered, [29]he shall pay her father fifty shekels[a] of silver. He must marry the young woman, for he has violated her. He can never divorce her as long as he lives.

[30]A man is not to marry his father's wife; he must not dishonor his father's bed.[b]

Exclusion From the Assembly

23[c] [1]No one who has been emasculated by crushing or cutting may enter the assembly of the LORD.

[2]No one born of a forbidden marriage[d] nor any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, not even in the tenth generation.

[3]No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, not even in the tenth generation. [4]For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim[e] to pronounce a curse on you. [5]However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. [6]Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them as long as you live.

[7]Do not despise an Edomite, for the Edomites are related to you. Do not despise an Egyptian, because you resided as foreigners in their country. [8]The third generation of children born to them may enter the assembly of the LORD.

Uncleanness in the Camp

[9]When you are encamped against your enemies, keep away from everything impure. [10]If one of your men is unclean because of a nocturnal emission, he is to go outside the camp and stay there. [11]But as evening approaches he is to wash himself, and at sunset he may return to the camp.

[12]Designate a place outside the camp where you can go to relieve yourself. [13]As part of your equipment have something to dig with, and when you relieve yourself, dig a hole and cover up your excrement. [14]For the LORD your God moves about in your camp to protect you and to deliver your enemies to you. Your camp must be holy, so that he will not see among you anything indecent and turn away from you.

Miscellaneous Laws

[15]If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master. [16]Let them live among you wherever they like and in whatever town they choose. Do not oppress them.

[17]No Israelite man or woman is to become a shrine prostitute. [18]You must not bring the earnings of a female prostitute or of a male prostitute[f] into the house of the LORD your God to pay any vow, because the LORD your God detests them both.

[19]Do not charge a fellow Israelite interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest. [20]You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a fellow Israelite, so that the LORD your God may bless you in everything you put your hand to in the land you are entering to possess.

Cults & Supernatural

Shrine prostitutes were forbidden in Israel (Dt 23:17). Sacred prostitution and sexual rituals, practiced in shrines by the Phoenicians, and probably also by the Canaanites, were thought to bring fertility to the land. The connection of prostitutes with religion and ritual is hinted at in the Bible, but no details are explained, and little is really known about it.

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[a] *29* That is, about 1 1/4 pounds or about 575 grams
[b] *30* In Hebrew texts this verse (22:30) is numbered 23:1.
[c] In Hebrew texts 23:1-25 is numbered 23:2-26. [d] *2* Or *one of illegitimate birth* [e] *4* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia
[f] *18* Hebrew *of a dog*

21If you make a vow to the LORD your God,
do not be slow to pay it, for the LORD your God
will certainly demand it of you and you will be
guilty of sin. 22But if you refrain from making
a vow, you will not be guilty. 23Whatever your
lips utter you must be sure to do, because you
made your vow freely to the LORD your God
with your own mouth.

24If you enter your neighbor's vineyard, you
may eat all the grapes you want, but do not put
any in your basket. 25If you enter your neigh-
bor's grainfield, you may pick kernels with
your hands, but you must not put a sickle to
their standing grain.

24 1If a man marries a woman who becomes
displeasing to him because he finds
something indecent about her, and he writes
her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and
sends her from his house, 2and if after she
leaves his house she becomes the wife of an-
other man, 3and her second husband dislikes
her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives
it to her and sends her from his house, or if
he dies, 4then her first husband, who divorced
her, is not allowed to marry her again after she
has been defiled. That would be detestable in
the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon
the land the LORD your God is giving you as an
inheritance.

5If a man has recently married, he must not
be sent to war or have any other duty laid on
him. For one year he is to be free to stay at
home and bring happiness to the wife he has
married.

6Do not take a pair of millstones—not even
the upper one—as security for a debt, because
that would be taking a person's livelihood as
security.

7If someone is caught kidnapping a fellow Is-
raelite and treating or selling them as a slave,
the kidnapper must die. You must purge the
evil from among you.

8In cases of defiling skin diseases,[a] be very
careful to do exactly as the Levitical priests in-
struct you. You must follow carefully what I
have commanded them. 9Remember what the
LORD your God did to Miriam along the way
after you came out of Egypt.

10When you make a loan of any kind to your
neighbor, do not go into their house to get what
is offered to you as a pledge. 11Stay outside and
let the neighbor to whom you are making the
loan bring the pledge out to you. 12If the neigh-
bor is poor, do not go to sleep with their pledge
in your possession. 13Return their cloak by sun-
set so that your neighbor may sleep in it. Then
they will thank you, and it will be regarded as a
righteous act in the sight of the LORD your God.

14Do not take advantage of a hired worker
who is poor and needy, whether that worker is
a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one
of your towns. 15Pay them their wages each day
before sunset, because they are poor and are
counting on it. Otherwise they may cry to the
LORD against you, and you will be guilty of sin.

16Parents are not to be put to death for their
children, nor children put to death for their par-
ents; each will die for their own sin.

17Do not deprive the foreigner or the father-
less of justice, or take the cloak of the widow
as a pledge. 18Remember that you were slaves
in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you
from there. That is why I command you to do
this.

19When you are harvesting in your field
and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to
get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless
and the widow, so that the LORD your God may
bless you in all the work of your hands. 20When
you beat the olives from your trees, do not go
over the branches a second time. Leave what
remains for the foreigner, the fatherless and
the widow. 21When you harvest the grapes in
your vineyard, do not go over the vines again.
Leave what remains for the foreigner, the fa-
therless and the widow. 22Remember that you
were slaves in Egypt. That is why I command
you to do this.

25 1When people have a dispute, they are to
take it to court and the judges will decide
the case, acquitting the innocent and condemn-
ing the guilty. 2If the guilty person deserves to
be beaten, the judge shall make them lie down
and have them flogged in his presence with the

[a] 8 The Hebrew word for *defiling skin diseases*, traditionally translated "leprosy," was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

TIME CAPSULE		1275 to 1273 B.C.
1275–1235		The 40 years of wilderness wandering (based on late Exodus)
1274		Israelites depart from Mount Sinai (based on late Exodus)
1274		Ramesses II fights the Hittites at Kadesh, both sides using chariots
1274		Ramesses II suffers defeat against the Hittites
1273–1076		Middle Assyrian Empire
1273–1244		Shalmaneser I of Assyria boasts of conquering the Hittites, the Arameans, and Mitanni

Taking Off the Sandals (Dt 25:5–10)

The countries of the Bible are warm and dry much of the year. Although shoes, covering the entire foot, are sometimes depicted in ancient pictures, sandals were the natural and more common foot covering for that climate. The simple act of removing a sandal carried symbolic meaning for ancient people.

Sandals were such personal items that they symbolically represented their owner in some legal transactions. In one type of business transaction, removal of the sandal confirmed an exchange of buying and selling. Such an exchange could even include the acquisition of a wife (Ru 4:7–10). Yet a different legal transaction involved the breakdown of family and social obligations. A woman had a right to bear children to her deceased husband. If her brother-in-law refused her that right, she could publicly humiliate him, indicating such by removing his sandal (Dt 25:7–10).

Sandals were also removed to symbolize the presence of holy ground. Because shoes tread through dust and dirt, they are symbolically dirty to Muslims; thus, they are taken off before entering holy places like mosques. This Muslim custom reflects the attitude that shoes, dirty as they are, should not desecrate holy places. This same attitude appears in the Old Testament. Both Moses before the burning bush (Ex 3:5) and Joshua before the "commander of the Lord's army" (Jos 5:15) were instructed to remove their sandals, for they stood on "holy ground."

number of lashes the crime deserves, [3]but the judge must not impose more than forty lashes. If the guilty party is flogged more than that, your fellow Israelite will be degraded in your eyes.

[4]Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain.

[5]If brothers are living together and one of them dies without a son, his widow must not marry outside the family. Her husband's brother shall take her and marry her and fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to her. [6]The first son she bears shall carry on the name of the dead brother so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

[7]However, if a man does not want to marry his brother's wife, she shall go to the elders at the town gate and say, "My husband's brother refuses to carry on his brother's name in Israel. He will not fulfill the duty of a brother-in-law to me." [8]Then the elders of his town shall summon him and talk to him. If he persists in saying, "I do not want to marry her," [9]his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, "This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother's family line." [10]That man's line shall be known in Israel as The Family of the Unsandaled.

[11]If two men are fighting and the wife of one of them comes to rescue her husband from his assailant, and she reaches out and seizes him by his private parts, [12]you shall cut off her hand. Show her no pity.

[13]Do not have two differing weights in your bag—one heavy, one light. [14]Do not have two differing measures in your house—one large, one small. [15]You must have accurate and honest weights and measures, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. [16]For the Lord your God detests anyone who does these things, anyone who deals dishonestly.

[17]Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. [18]When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and attacked all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. [19]When the Lord your God gives you rest from all the enemies around you in the land he is giving you to possess as an inheritance, you shall blot out the name of Amalek from under heaven. Do not forget!

Trade & Economics

Without a bureau of standards, uniformity in weights and measures was difficult to achieve (Dt 25:13). On the local level it was not impossible. Hellenistic cities put up standard measuring tables in public places. One from Thasos is made of stone with two basins cut into it, providing standards of about 8 and 16 quarts.

Firstfruits and Tithes

26 [1]When you have entered the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, [2]take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the Lord your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name [3]and say to the priest in office at the time, "I declare today to the Lord your God that I have come to the land the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us." [4]The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God. [5]Then you shall declare before the Lord your God: "My father was a

Middle Assyrian Laws (Dt 25:11, 12)

A number of the laws in the Pentateuch have literary parallels in the law codes of Mesopotamia. These codes include the Laws of Eshnunna and the Code of Hammurabi. The Middle Assyrian laws, however, are closer in time and subject matter to the biblical laws than are the compilations of Eshnunna and Hammurabi.

The law of Dt 25:11, 12 addresses the case of a woman who intervenes in a fight between her husband and another man. The punishment cutting off her hand seems by modern standards to be both harsh and crude. This biblical law, however, was not out of place in the culture of that ancient time.

One Middle Assyrian law offers a fairly close parallel to the Deuteronomy law: "If a woman injures the testicles of a man in a fight, one of her fingers shall be cut off." The law establishes a more severe penalty if the man's "second testicle becomes affected from the first" or if the woman "injures the second testicle (too)." The Assyrian document is partly broken and unreadable, but possibly indicates that the woman who damages both of a man's testicles would have her eyes put out.

Such punishments are inappropriate in our legal systems today. Nevertheless, we can observe similarities between Israel's laws recorded in the Bible and the laws of other ancient cultures, such as the Sumerians, Babylonians, Assyrians, and Hittites. These parallels illustrate a shared legal tradition that existed throughout the ancient Near East. Apparently, certain social norms were accepted by both Israel and the neighboring peoples.

wandering Aramean, and he went down into
Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous.
6But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us
suffer, subjecting us to harsh labor. 7Then we
cried out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors,
and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. 8So the LORD brought
us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs
and wonders. 9He brought us to this place and
gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and
honey; 10and now I bring the firstfruits of the
soil that you, LORD, have given me." Place the
basket before the LORD your God and bow
down before him. 11Then you and the Levites
and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God
has given to you and your household.

12When you have finished setting aside a
tenth of all your produce in the third year, the
year of the tithe, you shall give it to the Levite,
the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so
that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. 13Then say to the LORD your God: "I have
removed from my house the sacred portion
and have given it to the Levite, the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, according to
all you commanded. I have not turned aside
from your commands nor have I forgotten any
of them. 14I have not eaten any of the sacred
portion while I was in mourning, nor have I removed any of it while I was unclean, nor have
I offered any of it to the dead. I have obeyed
the LORD my God; I have done everything you
commanded me. 15Look down from heaven,
your holy dwelling place, and bless your people Israel and the land you have given us as
you promised on oath to our ancestors, a land
flowing with milk and honey."

Follow the LORD's Commands

16The LORD your God commands you this
day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully
observe them with all your heart and with all
your soul. 17You have declared this day that the
LORD is your God and that you will walk in obedience to him, that you will keep his decrees,
commands and laws—that you will listen to
him. 18And the LORD has declared this day that
you are his people, his treasured possession
as he promised, and that you are to keep all
his commands. 19He has declared that he will
set you in praise, fame and honor high above
all the nations he has made and that you will
be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he
promised.

The Altar on Mount Ebal

27 1Moses and the elders of Israel commanded the people: "Keep all these commands that I give you today. 2When you have
crossed the Jordan into the land the LORD your
God is giving you, set up some large stones and
coat them with plaster. 3Write on them all the
words of this law when you have crossed over
to enter the land the LORD your God is giving
you, a land flowing with milk and honey, just
as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you. 4And when you have crossed the Jordan, set up these stones on Mount Ebal, as I
command you today, and coat them with plaster. 5Build there an altar to the LORD your God,
an altar of stones. Do not use any iron tool on
them. 6Build the altar of the LORD your God
with fieldstones and offer burnt offerings on it

to the LORD your God. 7Sacrifice fellowship offerings there, eating them and rejoicing in the presence of the LORD your God. 8And you shall write very clearly all the words of this law on these stones you have set up."

Curses From Mount Ebal

9Then Moses and the Levitical priests said to all Israel, "Be silent, Israel, and listen! You have now become the people of the LORD your God. 10Obey the LORD your God and follow his commands and decrees that I give you today."

11On the same day Moses commanded the people:

12When you have crossed the Jordan, these tribes shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph and Benjamin. 13And these tribes shall stand on Mount Ebal to pronounce curses: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan and Naphtali.

14The Levites shall recite to all the people of Israel in a loud voice:

15"Cursed is anyone who makes an idol—a thing detestable to the LORD, the work of skilled hands—and sets it up in secret."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

16"Cursed is anyone who dishonors their father or mother."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

17"Cursed is anyone who moves their neighbor's boundary stone."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

18"Cursed is anyone who leads the blind astray on the road."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

19"Cursed is anyone who withholds justice from the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

20"Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

21"Cursed is anyone who has sexual relations with any animal."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

22"Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

23"Cursed is anyone who sleeps with his mother-in-law."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

24"Cursed is anyone who kills their neighbor secretly."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

25"Cursed is anyone who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

26"Cursed is anyone who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out."

Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

Blessings for Obedience

28 1If you fully obey the LORD your God and carefully follow all his commands I give you today, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. 2All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the LORD your God:

3You will be blessed in the city and blessed in the country.

4The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land and the young of your livestock—the calves of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.

5Your basket and your kneading trough will be blessed.

6You will be blessed when you come in and blessed when you go out.

7The LORD will grant that the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you. They will come at you from one direction but flee from you in seven.

8The LORD will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The LORD your God will bless you in the land he is giving you.

9The LORD will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the LORD your God and walk in obedience to him. 10Then all the peoples on

earth will see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they will fear you. 11The LORD will grant you abundant prosperity—in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your ground—in the land he swore to your ancestors to give you.

12The LORD will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none. 13The LORD will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the LORD your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom. 14Do not turn aside from any of the commands I give you today, to the right or to the left, following other gods and serving them.

Curses for Disobedience

15However, if you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come on you and overtake you:

16You will be cursed in the city and
cursed in the country.
17Your basket and your kneading trough
will be cursed.
18The fruit of your womb will be cursed,
and the crops of your land, and the calves
of your herds and the lambs of your flocks.
19You will be cursed when you come in
and cursed when you go out.

20The LORD will send on you curses, confusion and rebuke in everything you put your hand to, until you are destroyed and come to sudden ruin because of the evil you have done in forsaking him.[a] 21The LORD will plague you with diseases until he has destroyed you from the land you are entering to possess. 22The LORD will strike you with wasting disease, with fever and inflammation, with scorching heat and drought, with blight and mildew, which will plague you until you perish. 23The sky over your head will be bronze, the ground beneath you iron. 24The LORD will turn the rain of your country into dust and powder; it will come down from the skies until you are destroyed.

25The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You will come at them from one direction but flee from them in seven, and you will become a thing of horror to all the kingdoms on earth. 26Your carcasses will be food for all the birds and the wild animals, and there will be no one to frighten them away. 27The LORD will afflict you with the boils of Egypt and with tumors, festering sores and the itch, from which you cannot be cured. 28The LORD will afflict you with madness, blindness and confusion of mind. 29At midday you will grope about like a blind person in the dark. You will be unsuccessful in everything you do; day after day you will be oppressed and robbed, with no one to rescue you.

30You will be pledged to be married to a woman, but another will take her and rape her. You will build a house, but you will not live in it. You will plant a vineyard, but you will not even begin to enjoy its fruit. 31Your ox will be slaughtered before your eyes, but you will eat none of it. Your donkey will be forcibly taken from you and will not be returned. Your sheep will be given to your enemies, and no one will rescue them. 32Your sons and daughters will be given to another nation, and you will wear out your eyes watching for them day after day, powerless to lift a hand. 33A people that you do not know will eat what your land and labor produce, and you will have nothing but cruel oppression all your days. 34The sights you see will drive you mad. 35The LORD will afflict your knees and legs with painful boils that cannot be cured, spreading from the soles of your feet to the top of your head.

36The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your ancestors. There you will worship other gods, gods of wood and stone. 37You will become a thing of horror, a byword and an object of ridicule among all the peoples where the LORD will drive you.

38You will sow much seed in the field but you will harvest little, because locusts will devour it. 39You will plant vineyards and cultivate them but you will not drink the wine or gather the grapes, because worms will eat them. 40You will have olive trees throughout your country but you will not use the oil, because the olives will drop off. 41You will have sons and daughters but you will not keep them, because they will go into captivity. 42Swarms of locusts will

Health & Medicine
In modern times the human reaction to trauma and distress has been made the object of scientific study. It is not a topic for every time or every situation. In Dt 28:34 the Bible shows a seemingly modern awareness of how the mind is assaulted and damaged by cruelty, thus "driven mad."

[a] *20* Hebrew *me*

The Curses of Disobedience (Dt 28:30–34)

The various commandments and statutes established in the Law of Moses were to be obeyed. The solemn message of Dt 28:15–68 is that disobedience would not be tolerated in Israel. They could enjoy blessings from God, or they could experience curses: their carcasses eaten by birds (28:26); their bodies plagued by incurable diseases (28:27); their wives raped (28:30). The list of miseries goes on throughout Dt 28.

Curses were a part of covenants in the ancient world, and were intended to enforce the stipulations of the covenant. What jars our modern concepts of God is Israel's belief that it was their deity who would cause these curses if they violated the covenant. Several times in Deuteronomy are the words, "The LORD will . . ." (28:20–22, 24, 25, etc.). Israel was not unique in these beliefs concerning covenant curses. The grave consequences for disobedience are formally similar to the consequences other peoples faced for breaking treaties with their monarchs.

Esarhaddon, king of Assyria (680–669 B.C.), required subject states to accept a treaty of fidelity to both Esarhaddon and his successor(s). *The Vassal Treaties of Esarhaddon* contain in explicit detail the consequences for breaking the oaths, and reflect traditional curses found in Mesopotamian texts for at least 1,000 years before Esarhaddon.

A selection of gods in the Assyrian pantheon were called upon to enact various curses (very similar to Dt 28) upon a disobedient vassal and his heirs. For example: Nergal would extinguish the life of the vassal, along with bringing carnage and pestilence; Ishtar would break the bow of the vassal in battle; Ninurta would kill the vassal with his bow and feed his carcass to the birds; the god Sin would clothe the vassal with leprosy; and Shamash would cause the individual to walk about in darkness. Last, all of the gods listed on the tablet would work to turn the vassal's soil into iron, and turn the rain in the sky over his land into copper.

take over all your trees and the crops of your land.
43 The foreigners who reside among you will
rise above you higher and higher, but you will
sink lower and lower. 44 They will lend to you,
but you will not lend to them. They will be the
head, but you will be the tail.
45 All these curses will come on you. They
will pursue you and overtake you until you are
destroyed, because you did not obey the LORD
your God and observe the commands and de-
crees he gave you. 46 They will be a sign and a
wonder to you and your descendants forever.
47 Because you did not serve the LORD your God
joyfully and gladly in the time of prosperity,
48 therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness
and dire poverty, you will serve the enemies
the LORD sends against you. He will put an iron
yoke on your neck until he has destroyed you.
49 The LORD will bring a nation against you
from far away, from the ends of the earth, like an
eagle swooping down, a nation whose language
you will not understand, 50 a fierce-looking na-
tion without respect for the old or pity for the
young. 51 They will devour the young of your
livestock and the crops of your land until you
are destroyed. They will leave you no grain,
new wine or olive oil, nor any calves of your
herds or lambs of your flocks until you are
ruined. 52 They will lay siege to all the cities
throughout your land until the high fortified
walls in which you trust fall down. They will
besiege all the cities throughout the land the
LORD your God is giving you.
53 Because of the suffering your enemy will
inflict on you during the siege, you will eat
the fruit of the womb, the flesh of the sons
and daughters the LORD your God has given
you. 54 Even the most gentle and sensitive man
among you will have no compassion on his own
brother or the wife he loves or his surviving
children, 55 and he will not give to one of them
any of the flesh of his children that he is eating.
It will be all he has left because of the suffer-
ing your enemy will inflict on you during the
siege of all your cities. 56 The most gentle and
sensitive woman among you — so sensitive
and gentle that she would not venture to touch
the ground with the sole of her foot — will be-
grudge the husband she loves and her own son
or daughter 57 the afterbirth from her womb
and the children she bears. For in her dire need
she intends to eat them secretly because of the
suffering your enemy will inflict on you during
the siege of your cities.
58 If you do not carefully follow all the words
of this law, which are written in this book,
and do not revere this glorious and awesome
name — the LORD your God — 59 the LORD will
send fearful plagues on you and your descen-
dants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and se-
vere and lingering illnesses. 60 He will bring on
you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded,
and they will cling to you. 61 The LORD will also
bring on you every kind of sickness and disas-
ter not recorded in this Book of the Law, until
you are destroyed. 62 You who were as numer-
ous as the stars in the sky will be left but few
in number, because you did not obey the LORD
your God. 63 Just as it pleased the LORD to make

you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess.

64Then the LORD will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods—gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known. 65Among those nations you will find no repose, no resting place for the sole of your foot. There the LORD will give you an anxious mind, eyes weary with longing, and a despairing heart. 66You will live in constant suspense, filled with dread both night and day, never sure of your life. 67In the morning you will say, "If only it were evening!" and in the evening, "If only it were morning!"—because of the terror that will fill your hearts and the sights that your eyes will see. 68The LORD will send you back in ships to Egypt on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves, but no one will buy you.

TRANSITION

Moses' Final Words

Moses' final speech (29:1—33:29) contains various materials. In a final change Moses reviews Israel's recent God-given victories over idolatrous nations (29:1–19) and predicts their future apostasy (29:20–29), but also God's restoration and cleansing (30:1–10). In light of all of this, Moses calls on them to choose life (30:11—31:6). The Song of Moses (ch. 32) and the blessing of Moses (ch. 33) complete this leader's words to his people.

• **Deuteronomy 29:1—33:29**

Deuteronomy

Renewal of the Covenant

29[a] **:1** These are the terms of the covenant the LORD commanded Moses to make with the Israelites in Moab, in addition to the covenant he had made with them at Horeb.

2Moses summoned all the Israelites and said to them:

Your eyes have seen all that the LORD did in Egypt to Pharaoh, to all his officials and to all his land. 3With your own eyes you saw those great trials, those signs and great wonders. 4But to this day the LORD has not given you a mind that understands or eyes that see or ears that hear. 5Yet the LORD says, "During the forty years that I led you through the wilderness, your clothes did not wear out, nor did the sandals on your feet. 6You ate no bread and drank no wine or other fermented drink. I did this so that you might know that I am the LORD your God."

7When you reached this place, Sihon king of Heshbon and Og king of Bashan came out to fight against us, but we defeated them. 8We took their land and gave it as an inheritance to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

9Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do. 10All of you are standing today in the presence of the LORD your God—your leaders and chief men, your elders and officials, and all the other men of Israel, 11together with your children and your wives, and the foreigners living in your camps who chop your wood and carry your water. 12You are standing here in order to enter into a covenant with the LORD your God, a covenant the LORD is making with you this day and sealing with an oath, 13to confirm you this day as his people, that he may be your God as he promised you and as he swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. 14I am making this covenant, with its oath, not only with you 15who are standing here with us today in the presence of the LORD our God but also with those who are not here today.

16You yourselves know how we lived in Egypt and how we passed through the countries on the way here. 17You saw among them their detestable images and idols of wood and stone, of silver and gold. 18Make sure there is no man or woman, clan or tribe among you today whose heart turns away from the LORD our God to go and worship the gods of those nations; make sure there is no root among you that produces such bitter poison.

19When such a person hears the words of this oath and they invoke a blessing on themselves, thinking, "I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way," they will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry. 20The LORD will never be willing to forgive them; his wrath and zeal will burn against them. All the curses written in this book will fall on them, and the LORD will blot out their names from under heaven. 21The LORD will single them out from all the tribes of Israel for disaster, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law.

22Your children who follow you in later generations and foreigners who come from distant

[a] In Hebrew texts 29:1 is numbered 28:69, and 29:2-29 is numbered 29:1-28.

lands will see the calamities that have fallen on the land and the diseases with which the LORD has afflicted it. [23]The whole land will be a burning waste of salt and sulfur—nothing planted, nothing sprouting, no vegetation growing on it. It will be like the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboyim, which the LORD overthrew in fierce anger. [24]All the nations will ask: "Why has the LORD done this to this land? Why this fierce, burning anger?"

[25]And the answer will be: "It is because this people abandoned the covenant of the LORD, the God of their ancestors, the covenant he made with them when he brought them out of Egypt. [26]They went off and worshiped other gods and bowed down to them, gods they did not know, gods he had not given them. [27]Therefore the LORD's anger burned against this land, so that he brought on it all the curses written in this book. [28]In furious anger and in great wrath the LORD uprooted them from their land and thrust them into another land, as it is now."

[29]The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.

Prosperity After Turning to the LORD

30 [1]When all these blessings and curses I have set before you come on you and you take them to heart wherever the LORD your God disperses you among the nations, [2]and when you and your children return to the LORD your God and obey him with all your heart and with all your soul according to everything I command you today, [3]then the LORD your God will restore your fortunes[a] and have compassion on you and gather you again from all the nations where he scattered you. [4]Even if you have been banished to the most distant land under the heavens, from there the LORD your God will gather you and bring you back. [5]He will bring you to the land that belonged to your ancestors, and you will take possession of it. He will make you more prosperous and numerous than your ancestors. [6]The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live. [7]The LORD your God will put all these curses on your enemies who hate and persecute you. [8]You will again obey the LORD and follow all his commands I am giving you today. [9]Then the LORD your God will make you most prosperous in all the work of your hands and in the fruit of your womb, the young of your livestock and the crops of your land. The LORD will again delight in you and make you prosperous, just as he delighted in your ancestors, [10]if you obey the LORD your God and keep his commands and decrees that are written in this Book of the Law and turn to the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

Small cosmetics case with two ointment vessels, wood and fayence, New Kingdom of Egypt, 18th dynasty, c. 1400 B.C.

The Offer of Life or Death

[11]Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. [12]It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" [13]Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" [14]No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

[15]See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. [16]For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

[17]But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, [18]I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

[19]This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live [20]and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the

[a] *3* Or *will bring you back from captivity*

Adapa Misses Out on Immortality (Dt 30:11, 12)

The Accadian myth of Adapa was found on a cuneiform text in the library at Tell el-Amarna, the Egyptian capital during the time of Pharaoh Akhenaten (1352–1336 B.C.). The story was uncovered also in various sites of Mesopotamia, including Asshur and Nineveh. The text relates the various adventures of the hero, Adapa, a priest of Ea at Eridu, a city in southern Mesopotamia.

According to the incomplete account, Adapa's boat sinks because of the divine South Wind as he is procuring food for the shrine at Eridu. He subsequently breaks the wings of the South Wind, causing a dramatic change in the climate, and resulting in a mandatory visit by Adapa to the divine high council, headed by Anu, the king of the gods.

Adapa's god, Ea, counsels him to refuse food or drink from the gods, as mortals often would be given food causing death. He is asked to try to win the favor of Tammuz and Gizzida, the divine gatekeepers. During his audience with Anu, Adapa is unexpectedly offered the bread and water of life. Heeding Ea's counsel, Adapa rejects the food, which amuses Anu. Adapa is then returned to his home. Whether Anu and Ea had conspired to trick Adapa, or whether Ea was ignorant of what Anu would offer the priest is not known, as the text is not complete.

The myth has the purpose of showing why humans had not achieved immortality. In ancient thought there was a distinction between the divine realm and the human realm. In general, humans did not belong in heaven. This belief is reflected in Dt 30:11, 12 where Moses assures the Israelites that God's commands are not in heaven, lest they need someone to "ascend into heaven" for them to retrieve the commands.

LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Joshua to Succeed Moses

31 [1]Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: [2]"I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.' [3]The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the LORD said. [4]And the LORD will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land. [5]The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. [6]Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

[7]Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. [8]The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Public Reading of the Law

[9]So Moses wrote down this law and gave it to the Levitical priests, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel. [10]Then Moses commanded them: "At the end of every seven years, in the year for canceling debts, during the Festival of Tabernacles, [11]when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place he will choose, you shall read this law before them in their hearing. [12]Assemble the people—men, women and children, and the foreigners residing in your towns—so they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. [13]Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God as long as you live in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Israel's Rebellion Predicted

[14]The LORD said to Moses, "Now the day of your death is near. Call Joshua and present yourselves at the tent of meeting, where I will commission him." So Moses and Joshua came and presented themselves at the tent of meeting.

[15]Then the LORD appeared at the tent in a pillar of cloud, and the cloud stood over the entrance to the tent. [16]And the LORD said to Moses: "You are going to rest with your ancestors, and these people will soon prostitute themselves to the foreign gods of the land they are entering. They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. [17]And in that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and calamities will come on them, and in that day they will ask, 'Have not these disasters come on us because our God is not with us?' [18]And I will

certainly hide my face in that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods.

19"Now write down this song and teach it to the Israelites and have them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them. 20When I have brought them into the land flowing with milk and honey, the land I promised on oath to their ancestors, and when they eat their fill and thrive, they will turn to other gods and worship them, rejecting me and breaking my covenant. 21And when many disasters and calamities come on them, this song will testify against them, because it will not be forgotten by their descendants. I know what they are disposed to do, even before I bring them into the land I promised them on oath." 22So Moses wrote down this song that day and taught it to the Israelites.

23The LORD gave this command to Joshua son of Nun: "Be strong and courageous, for you will bring the Israelites into the land I promised them on oath, and I myself will be with you."

24After Moses finished writing in a book the words of this law from beginning to end, 25he gave this command to the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD: 26"Take this Book of the Law and place it beside the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God. There it will remain as a witness against you. 27For I know how rebellious and stiff-necked you are. If you have been rebellious against the LORD while I am still alive and with you, how much more will you rebel after I die! 28Assemble before me all the elders of your tribes and all your officials, so that I can speak these words in their hearing and call the heavens and the earth to testify against them. 29For I know that after my death you are sure to become utterly corrupt and to turn from the way I have commanded you. In days to come, disaster will fall on you because you will do evil in the sight of the LORD and arouse his anger by what your hands have made."

The Song of Moses

30And Moses recited the words of this song from beginning to end in the hearing of the whole assembly of Israel:

32 1Listen, you heavens, and I will speak;
hear, you earth, the words of my mouth.
2Let my teaching fall like rain
and my words descend like dew,
like showers on new grass,
like abundant rain on tender plants.

3I will proclaim the name of the LORD.
Oh, praise the greatness of our God!
4He is the Rock, his works are perfect,
and all his ways are just.
A faithful God who does no wrong,
upright and just is he.

5They are corrupt and not his children;
to their shame they are a warped and crooked generation.
6Is this the way you repay the LORD,
you foolish and unwise people?
Is he not your Father, your Creator,[a]
who made you and formed you?

7Remember the days of old;
consider the generations long past.
Ask your father and he will tell you,
your elders, and they will explain to you.
8When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance,
when he divided all mankind,
he set up boundaries for the peoples
according to the number of the sons of Israel.[b]
9For the LORD's portion is his people,
Jacob his allotted inheritance.

10In a desert land he found him,
in a barren and howling waste.
He shielded him and cared for him;
he guarded him as the apple of his eye,
11like an eagle that stirs up its nest
and hovers over its young,
that spreads its wings to catch them
and carries them aloft.
12The LORD alone led him;
no foreign god was with him.

13He made him ride on the heights of the land
and fed him with the fruit of the fields.
He nourished him with honey from the rock,
and with oil from the flinty crag,

Arts & Literature
In general, poetry is easier than prose to memorize and to transmit orally to "have them sing it" (Dt 31:19). This is so because a poem focuses on its own words as well as on what it talks about. Furthermore, the typical formal features of poetry, such as rhyming and balanced lines, make it easier to recite complete sections of a composition.

[a] *6* Or *Father, who bought you* [b] *8* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Septuagint) *sons of God*

14 with curds and milk from herd and flock
and with fattened lambs and goats,
with choice rams of Bashan
and the finest kernels of wheat.
You drank the foaming blood of the grape.

15 Jeshurun[a] grew fat and kicked;
filled with food, they became heavy and sleek.
They abandoned the God who made them
and rejected the Rock their Savior.
16 They made him jealous with their foreign gods
and angered him with their detestable idols.
17 They sacrificed to false gods, which are not God—
gods they had not known,
gods that recently appeared,
gods your ancestors did not fear.
18 You deserted the Rock, who fathered you;
you forgot the God who gave you birth.

19 The LORD saw this and rejected them
because he was angered by his sons and daughters.
20 "I will hide my face from them," he said,
"and see what their end will be;
for they are a perverse generation,
children who are unfaithful.
21 They made me jealous by what is no god
and angered me with their worthless idols.
I will make them envious by those who are not a people;
I will make them angry by a nation that has no understanding.
22 For a fire will be kindled by my wrath,
one that burns down to the realm of the dead below.
It will devour the earth and its harvests
and set afire the foundations of the mountains.

23 "I will heap calamities on them
and spend my arrows against them.
24 I will send wasting famine against them,
consuming pestilence and deadly plague;
I will send against them the fangs of wild beasts,
the venom of vipers that glide in the dust.
25 In the street the sword will make them childless;
in their homes terror will reign.
The young men and young women will perish,
the infants and those with gray hair.

26 I said I would scatter them
and erase their name from human memory,
27 but I dreaded the taunt of the enemy,
lest the adversary misunderstand
and say, 'Our hand has triumphed;
the LORD has not done all this.'"

28 They are a nation without sense,
there is no discernment in them.
29 If only they were wise and would understand this
and discern what their end will be!
30 How could one man chase a thousand,
or two put ten thousand to flight,
unless their Rock had sold them,
unless the LORD had given them up?
31 For their rock is not like our Rock,
as even our enemies concede.
32 Their vine comes from the vine of Sodom
and from the fields of Gomorrah.
Their grapes are filled with poison,
and their clusters with bitterness.
33 Their wine is the venom of serpents,
the deadly poison of cobras.

34 "Have I not kept this in reserve
and sealed it in my vaults?
35 It is mine to avenge; I will repay.
In due time their foot will slip;
their day of disaster is near
and their doom rushes upon them."

36 The LORD will vindicate his people
and relent concerning his servants
when he sees their strength is gone
and no one is left, slave or free.[b]
37 He will say: "Now where are their gods,
the rock they took refuge in,
38 the gods who ate the fat of their sacrifices
and drank the wine of their drink offerings?
Let them rise up to help you!
Let them give you shelter!

39 "See now that I myself am he!
There is no god besides me.

Plants & Animals

The ideas of strength and protection, both inherent in the image of an eagle's wings, are combined in Dt 32:11. The eagle displays strength and subtlety in the way it stays aloft in the wind. Secondly, wings were a traditional symbol of protection and refuge. Ancient Egyptian sculptures often have the wings of a falcon protecting a ruler or prince.

[a] *15 Jeshurun* means *the upright one*, that is, Israel.
[b] *36* Or *and they are without a ruler or leader*

I put to death and I bring to life,
I have wounded and I will heal,
and no one can deliver out of my hand.
40 I lift my hand to heaven and solemnly swear:
As surely as I live forever,
41 when I sharpen my flashing sword
and my hand grasps it in judgment,
I will take vengeance on my adversaries
and repay those who hate me.
42 I will make my arrows drunk with blood,
while my sword devours flesh:
the blood of the slain and the captives,
the heads of the enemy leaders."

43 Rejoice, you nations, with his people,[a,b]
for he will avenge the blood of his servants;
he will take vengeance on his enemies
and make atonement for his land and people.

44 Moses came with Joshua[c] son of Nun and spoke all the words of this song in the hearing of the people. 45 When Moses finished reciting all these words to all Israel, 46 he said to them, "Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. 47 They are not just idle words for you—they are your life. By them you will live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to possess."

Moses to Die on Mount Nebo

48 On that same day the LORD told Moses, 49 "Go up into the Abarim Range to Mount Nebo in Moab, across from Jericho, and view Canaan, the land I am giving the Israelites as their own possession. 50 There on the mountain that you have climbed you will die and be gathered to your people, just as your brother Aaron died on Mount Hor and was gathered to his people. 51 This is because both of you broke faith with me in the presence of the Israelites at the waters of Meribah Kadesh in the Desert of Zin and because you did not uphold my holiness among the Israelites. 52 Therefore, you will see the land only from a distance; you will not enter the land I am giving to the people of Israel."

Moses Blesses the Tribes

33 1 This is the blessing that Moses the man of God pronounced on the Israelites before his death. 2 He said:

"The LORD came from Sinai
and dawned over them from Seir;
he shone forth from Mount Paran.
He came with[d] myriads of holy ones
from the south, from his mountain slopes.[e]
3 Surely it is you who love the people;
all the holy ones are in your hand.
At your feet they all bow down,
and from you receive instruction,
4 the law that Moses gave us,
the possession of the assembly of Jacob.
5 He was king over Jeshurun[f]
when the leaders of the people assembled,
along with the tribes of Israel.

6 "Let Reuben live and not die,
nor[g] his people be few."

7 And this he said about Judah:

"Hear, LORD, the cry of Judah;
bring him to his people.
With his own hands he defends his cause.
Oh, be his help against his foes!"

8 About Levi he said:

"Your Thummim and Urim belong
to your faithful servant.
You tested him at Massah;
you contended with him at the waters of Meribah.
9 He said of his father and mother,
'I have no regard for them.'
He did not recognize his brothers
or acknowledge his own children,
but he watched over your word
and guarded your covenant.
10 He teaches your precepts to Jacob
and your law to Israel.

TIME CAPSULE		1259 to 1250 B.C.
1259	Egyptians and Hittites conclude a peace treaty	
1250	Hittite letter mentions the iron blade of a dagger	
1250	"Lion Gate" of Mycenae	
1250	Sea battle between Cyprus and the Hittites	
1250	Letter from King Hattusilis III shows Hittite skills in producing smelted iron	

[a] *43* Or *Make his people rejoice, you nations* [b] *43* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Septuagint) *people, / and let all the angels worship him, /* [c] *44* Hebrew *Hoshea*, a variant of *Joshua* [d] *2* Or *from* [e] *2* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. [f] *5* *Jeshurun* means *the upright one*, that is, Israel; also in verse 26. [g] *6* Or *but let*

He offers incense before you
and whole burnt offerings on your altar.
11 Bless all his skills, LORD,
and be pleased with the work of his hands.
Strike down those who rise against him,
his foes till they rise no more."

12 About Benjamin he said:

"Let the beloved of the LORD rest secure in him,
for he shields him all day long,
and the one the LORD loves rests between his shoulders."

13 About Joseph he said:

"May the LORD bless his land
with the precious dew from heaven above
and with the deep waters that lie below;
14 with the best the sun brings forth
and the finest the moon can yield;
15 with the choicest gifts of the ancient mountains
and the fruitfulness of the everlasting hills;
16 with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness
and the favor of him who dwelt in the burning bush.
Let all these rest on the head of Joseph,
on the brow of the prince among[a] his brothers.
17 In majesty he is like a firstborn bull;
his horns are the horns of a wild ox.
With them he will gore the nations,
even those at the ends of the earth.
Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim;
such are the thousands of Manasseh."

18 About Zebulun he said:

"Rejoice, Zebulun, in your going out,
and you, Issachar, in your tents.
19 They will summon peoples to the mountain
and there offer the sacrifices of the righteous;
they will feast on the abundance of the seas,
on the treasures hidden in the sand."

20 About Gad he said:

"Blessed is he who enlarges Gad's domain!
Gad lives there like a lion,
tearing at arm or head.
21 He chose the best land for himself;
the leader's portion was kept for him.
When the heads of the people assembled,
he carried out the LORD's righteous will,
and his judgments concerning Israel."

22 About Dan he said:

"Dan is a lion's cub,
springing out of Bashan."

23 About Naphtali he said:

"Naphtali is abounding with the favor of the LORD
and is full of his blessing;
he will inherit southward to the lake."

24 About Asher he said:

"Most blessed of sons is Asher;
let him be favored by his brothers,
and let him bathe his feet in oil.
25 The bolts of your gates will be iron and bronze,
and your strength will equal your days.

26 "There is no one like the God of Jeshurun,
who rides across the heavens to help you
and on the clouds in his majesty.
27 The eternal God is your refuge,
and underneath are the everlasting arms.
He will drive out your enemies before you,
saying, 'Destroy them!'
28 So Israel will live in safety;
Jacob will dwell[b] secure

[a] 16 Or *of the one separated from Jacob's spring is*
[b] 28 Septuagint; Hebrew

Canaan as seen from Mount Nebo

Beliefs & Ideas

The gods of Canaan and Mesopotamia, unlike the gods of Egypt, were in constant struggle and change. Over against them the Bible maintains the theme of the incomparability of the Lord (Dt 33:26), even when the Lord's power is expressed in a conventional symbol, such as riding on the clouds.

in a land of grain and new wine,
where the heavens drop dew.
29 Blessed are you, Israel!
Who is like you,
a people saved by the LORD?
He is your shield and helper
and your glorious sword.
Your enemies will cower before you,
and you will tread on their heights."

TRANSITION

The Death of Moses

Though he could not enter, Moses was allowed to see the new land. He had been the great spokesman for God. There would be other prophets in Israel, but no one would ever hold the place of the man who led them out of Egypt to the promised land. As a crowning honor, he is called for the first time the name by which he is perhaps best remembered: "Moses the servant of the LORD" (Dt 34:5).

Israel had reached the plains of Moab around either 1406 B.C. or 1235 B.C. (see "Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan" at Nu 20:14). Moses began his speeches in the 11th month of this 40th year after the Israelites' departure from Egypt (Dt 1:3; see Nu 33:38). According to the chronological scheme of the Book of Joshua, the Israelites crossed the Jordan and celebrated Passover in the 1st month of the next year (Jos 4:19; 5:10). Sometime during the intervening two months, Moses died at the age of 120 years (Dt 34:7).

• Deuteronomy 34:1–12

Deuteronomy

The Death of Moses

34 **:1** Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the LORD showed him the whole land—from Gilead to Dan, 2 all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Manasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the Mediterranean Sea, 3 the Negev and the whole region from the Valley of Jericho, the City of Palms, as far as Zoar. 4 Then the LORD said to him, "This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, 'I will give it to your descendants.' I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it."

5 And Moses the servant of the LORD died there in Moab, as the LORD had said. 6 He buried him[a] in Moab, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, but to this day no one knows where his grave is. 7 Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength gone. 8 The Israelites grieved for Moses in the plains of Moab thirty days, until the time of weeping and mourning was over.

9 Now Joshua son of Nun was filled with the spirit[b] of wisdom because Moses had laid his hands on him. So the Israelites listened to him and did what the LORD had commanded Moses.

10 Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face, 11 who did all those signs and wonders the LORD sent him to do in Egypt—to Pharaoh and to all his officials and to his whole land. 12 For no one has ever shown the mighty power or performed the awesome deeds that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

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[a] 6 Or *He was buried* [b] 9 Or *Spirit*

TRANSITION

Teach Us to Number Our Days

Many of the psalms begin with a superscription associating that particular psalm with a specific historical person, usually David. Unfortunately the superscriptions do not settle questions of authorship because the terminology used in them is ambiguous. The Hebrew phrase of the superscriptions can be translated in various ways, possibly meaning "of David," "to David," "belonging to David," or "by David." Thus the Hebrew superscriptions do not necessarily refer to authorship, and scholars often differ on the precise dating of certain psalms.

The superscription of Ps 90 describes this psalm as "A prayer of Moses the man of God." Many scholars consider Ps 90 to be a late composition that was associated with Moses long after his death. The psalm is placed here after Deuteronomy not to decide the questions of authorship, but rather to allow it to be read in the context of Moses, as intended by the superscription. By reading Ps 90 shortly after other poetic speeches accredited to Moses (Dt 32; 33; see 31:30; 32:44; 33:1), we can understand it as a final comment on Moses' life and a prayer for God's help in the coming struggles. See "The Book of Psalms" at Ps 8.

• Psalm 90

PSALM 90

A prayer of Moses the man of God.

Lord, you have been our dwelling place
throughout all generations.
[2]Before the mountains were born
or you brought forth the whole world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are
God.

[3]You turn people back to dust,
saying, "Return to dust, you mortals."
[4]A thousand years in your sight
are like a day that has just gone by,
or like a watch in the night.
[5]Yet you sweep people away in the sleep of
death—
they are like the new grass of the
morning:
[6]In the morning it springs up new,
but by evening it is dry and
withered.

[7]We are consumed by your anger
and terrified by your indignation.
[8]You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your
presence.
[9]All our days pass away under your
wrath;
we finish our years with a moan.

[10]Our days may come to seventy years,
or eighty, if our strength endures;
yet the best of them are but trouble and
sorrow,
for they quickly pass, and we fly
away.
[11]If only we knew the power of your
anger!
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is
your due.
[12]Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

[13]Relent, LORD! How long will it be?
Have compassion on your
servants.
[14]Satisfy us in the morning with your
unfailing love,
that we may sing for joy and be glad all
our days.
[15]Make us glad for as many days as you have
afflicted us,
for as many years as we have seen
trouble.
[16]May your deeds be shown to your
servants,
your splendor to their children.

[17]May the favor[a] of the Lord our God rest
on us;
establish the work of our hands
for us—
yes, establish the work of our hands.

[a] *17* Or *beauty*

THE CONQUEST OF CANAAN

Historians disagree as to when the Israelites left Egypt (see "The Exodus Begun" at Ex 12:37). The same historians disagree as to when Israel arrived in Canaan. Some place the invasion at the end of the 15th century; others at the end of the 13th. Archaeological support has been claimed for both dates, such as evidence that Jericho was destroyed at this or that era. But assigning specific dates to physical remains is difficult, and, ultimately, archaeology has not solved the question.

What can be agreed on, from evidence both within and outside of the Bible, is that the conquest of Palestine was not the unstoppable, crushing tide of invaders that is sometimes pictured. Despite sweeping statements that Joshua conquered "the entire land" (e.g., Jos 11:16, 23), there are also descriptions of the land that "are still . . . to be taken over" (e.g., Jos 13:1–6). Some of the Israelite conquests appear to have been by peaceful assimilation of the native peoples into the Israelites' own group, such as happened with the Gibeonites (Jos 9).

The conquest of Palestine was not the untoppable, crushing tide of invaders that is sometimes pictured.

The danger of such assimilation is that the Israelites' faith would be mixed with the religious beliefs and practices of Canaan. The Canaanites recognized many deities, two of the more prominent ones being El, the great sky god, and his female consort Asherah. By the time of the conquest, the worship of El had been overshadowed by worship of a warrior storm god, Baal.

Canaanite worship practices included child sacrifice and fertility rites, often involving relations with cult prostitutes. Images of the gods were common in worship, as were the wooden poles or objects called "Asherim" after the goddess Asherah. Much of Israel's religious history dealt with the conflict between worshipers of the one God of the Exodus and worshipers of these Canaanite deities.

TRANSITION

The Book of Joshua

Although the Book of Joshua tells of Israel's conquest of Canaan, it is not a typical war story: little space is given to accounts of actual fighting. Indeed, almost half of the book (chs. 13–21) details how the land would be divided between Israel's twelve tribes. Clearly the focus is God's fulfillment of his promise of land instead of on feats of arms.

God's command that Israel destroy every creature living in the land (Jos 6:17, 21) poses a difficult ethical issue. This command is moderated somewhat in Jos 8:2 but is still understandably troubling to many readers. We should not minimize the ethical question, but should understand that the reason given for the command involves the abominable and idolatrous Canaanite lifestyle. God ordains this total destruction so that Israel would not adopt the religious practices of the Canaanites (see Dt 20:16–18).

The book concludes on the same theme. In a covenant renewal ceremony (chs. 23; 24), Joshua demands that Israel choose whether they will follow God or the gods of Canaan.

• **Joshua 1:1—5:15**

Joshua

Joshua Installed as Leader

1:1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: 2"Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them—to the Israelites. 3I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. 4Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates—all the Hittite country—to the Mediterranean Sea in the west. 5No one will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you. 6Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them.

7"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. 8Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. 9Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."

10So Joshua ordered the officers of the people: 11"Go through the camp and tell the people, 'Get your provisions ready. Three days from now you will cross the Jordan here to go in and take possession of the land the LORD your God is giving you for your own.'"

12But to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, Joshua said, 13"Remember the command that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you after he said, 'The LORD your God will give you rest by giving you this land.' 14Your wives, your children and your livestock may stay in the land that Moses gave you east of the Jordan, but all your fighting men, ready for battle, must cross over ahead of your fellow Israelites. You are to help them 15until the LORD gives them rest, as he has done for you, and until they too have taken possession of the land the LORD your God is giving them. After that, you may go back and occupy your own land, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you east of the Jordan toward the sunrise."

16Then they answered Joshua, "Whatever you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go. 17Just as we fully obeyed Moses, so we will obey you. Only may the LORD your God be with you as he was with Moses. 18Whoever rebels against your word and does not obey it, whatever you may command them, will be put to death. Only be strong and courageous!"

Rahab and the Spies

2 1Then Joshua son of Nun secretly sent two spies from Shittim. "Go, look over the land," he said, "especially Jericho." So they went and entered the house of a prostitute named Rahab and stayed there.

2The king of Jericho was told, "Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land." 3So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: "Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land."

4But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. 5At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." 6(But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) 7So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

8Before the spies lay down for the night, she

Architecture & Building
Like medieval castles, some cities of Palestine were surrounded with high, elaborate walls. Rahab's house was part of the wall of Jericho and she had a window facing out (Jos 2:15). It would have been high enough above ground level to keep anyone from climbing in.

went up on the roof [9]and said to them, "I know that the LORD has given you this land and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. [10]We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea[a] for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.[b] [11]When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

[12]"Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign [13]that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them—and that you will save us from death."

[14]"Our lives for your lives!" the men assured her. "If you don't tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land."

[15]So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. [16]She said to them, "Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way."

[17]Now the men had said to her, "This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us [18]unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. [19]If any of them go outside your house into the street, their blood will be on their own heads; we will not be responsible. As for those who are in the house with you, their blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on them. [20]But if you tell what we are doing, we will be released from the oath you made us swear."

[21]"Agreed," she replied. "Let it be as you say."

So she sent them away, and they departed. And she tied the scarlet cord in the window.

[22]When they left, they went into the hills and stayed there three days, until the pursuers had searched all along the road and returned without finding them. [23]Then the two men started back. They went down out of the hills, forded the river and came to Joshua son of Nun and told him everything that had happened to them. [24]They said to Joshua, "The LORD has surely given the whole land into our hands; all the people are melting in fear because of us."

Crossing the Jordan

3 [1]Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. [2]After three days the officers went throughout the camp, [3]giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. [4]Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits[c] between you and the ark; do not go near it."

[5]Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you."

[6]Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them.

[7]And the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. [8]Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'"

[9]Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the LORD your God. [10]This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebu-

Beliefs & Ideas
The ark of the covenant resembles in some ways furniture found in both ancient Egypt and Palestine. Probably the ark represented the footstool of God's throne. Although by design it was portable (Jos 3:6), it was not a charm or talisman that could guarantee the favor of God for those who possessed it or took it into battle.

[a] *10* Or *the Sea of Reeds* [b] *10* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. [c] *4* That is, about 3,000 feet or about 900 meters

Circumcised with Flint Knives (Jos 5:3)

Long before humans learned how to write or even make cooking vessels from clay, they discovered that flint, a kind of stone, could be split into smaller sharp and, thus, more useable pieces. Often large stones, called cores, were struck with other stones, or sometimes short sticks were placed on the worker's chest and pressed onto the core. Eventually, small pieces were split off of the larger cores.

A variety of tools were created with this method. The most common creation was a long narrow blade used for a knife. Other tools created were scrapers used to remove the flesh from hides, drills for poking holes, and knives. One of the most unusual designs was a special crafted blade that was fitted on a curved wooden base, used as a sickle.

After the smaller pieces were forced from the core, they were sharpened by striking the edges with other flints. Flints can be sharper than scalpels. Modern surgeons have been known to use them in surgery.

In Gilgal, the Israelites' first camp after crossing the Jordan, this ageold tool, the flint knife, was used to perform the sacred ceremony of circumcision (Jos 4:19; 5:2, 3). Such a tool was commonly available and would have been sharper than any other cutting tool.

sites. 11See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord
of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of
you. 12Now then, choose twelve men from the
tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. 13And as
soon as the priests who carry the ark of the
LORD—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in
the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will
be cut off and stand up in a heap."
14So when the people broke camp to cross
the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the
covenant went ahead of them. 15Now the Jor-
dan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as
soon as the priests who carried the ark reached
the Jordan and their feet touched the water's
edge, 16the water from upstream stopped flow-
ing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away,
at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zare-
than, while the water flowing down to the Sea
of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was com-
pletely cut off. So the people crossed over op-
posite Jericho. 17The priests who carried the
ark of the covenant of the LORD stopped in the
middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground,
while all Israel passed by until the whole nation
had completed the crossing on dry ground.

4 1When the whole nation had finished cross-
ing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua,
2"Choose twelve men from among the people,
one from each tribe, 3and tell them to take up
twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan,
from right where the priests are standing, and
carry them over with you and put them down
at the place where you stay tonight."
4So Joshua called together the twelve men
he had appointed from the Israelites, one from
each tribe, 5and said to them, "Go over before
the ark of the LORD your God into the middle
of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone
on his shoulder, according to the number of
the tribes of the Israelites, 6to serve as a sign
among you. In the future, when your children
ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' 7tell
them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off be-
fore the ark of the covenant of the LORD. When
it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan
were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial
to the people of Israel forever."
8So the Israelites did as Joshua commanded
them. They took twelve stones from the mid-
dle of the Jordan, according to the number of
the tribes of the Israelites, as the LORD had
told Joshua; and they carried them over with
them to their camp, where they put them down.
9Joshua set up the twelve stones that had been[a]
in the middle of the Jordan at the spot where
the priests who carried the ark of the covenant
had stood. And they are there to this day.
10Now the priests who carried the ark re-
mained standing in the middle of the Jordan
until everything the LORD had commanded
Joshua was done by the people, just as Moses
had directed Joshua. The people hurried over,
11and as soon as all of them had crossed, the
ark of the LORD and the priests came to the oth-
er side while the people watched. 12The men
of Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh
crossed over, ready for battle, in front of the Is-
raelites, as Moses had directed them. 13About
forty thousand armed for battle crossed over
before the LORD to the plains of Jericho for war.
14That day the LORD exalted Joshua in the
sight of all Israel; and they stood in awe of him
all the days of his life, just as they had stood in
awe of Moses.
15Then the LORD said to Joshua, 16"Command

[a] 9 Or *Joshua also set up twelve stones*

the priests carrying the ark of the covenant law to come up out of the Jordan."

17So Joshua commanded the priests, "Come up out of the Jordan."

18And the priests came up out of the river carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD. No sooner had they set their feet on the dry ground than the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and ran at flood stage as before.

19On the tenth day of the first month the people went up from the Jordan and camped at Gilgal on the eastern border of Jericho. 20And Joshua set up at Gilgal the twelve stones they had taken out of the Jordan. 21He said to the Israelites, "In the future when your descendants ask their parents, 'What do these stones mean?' 22tell them, 'Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground.' 23For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan what he had done to the Red Sea[a] when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. 24He did this so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God."

5 1Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until they[b] had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.

Circumcision and Passover at Gilgal

2At that time the LORD said to Joshua, "Make flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again." 3So Joshua made flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Gibeath Haaraloth.[c]

4Now this is why he did so: All those who came out of Egypt — all the men of military age — died in the wilderness on the way after leaving Egypt. 5All the people that came out had been circumcised, but all the people born in the wilderness during the journey from Egypt had not. 6The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years until all the men who were of military age when they left Egypt had died, since they had not obeyed the LORD. For the LORD had sworn to them that they would not see the land he had solemnly promised their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and honey. 7So he raised up their sons in their place, and these were the ones Joshua circumcised. They were still uncircumcised because they had not been circumcised on the way. 8And after the whole nation had been circumcised, they remained where they were in camp until they were healed.

9Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." So the place has been called Gilgal[d] to this day.

10On the evening of the fourteenth day of the month, while camped at Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, the Israelites celebrated the Passover. 11The day after the Passover, that very day, they ate some of the produce of the land: unleavened bread and roasted grain. 12The manna stopped the day after[e] they ate this food from the land; there was no longer any manna for the Israelites, but that year they ate the produce of Canaan.

[a] *23* Or *the Sea of Reeds* [b] *1* Another textual tradition *we* [c] *3* *Gibeath Haaraloth* means *the hill of foreskins.* [d] *9* *Gilgal* sounds like the Hebrew for *roll.* [e] *12* Or *the day*

When the Heavens Go to War (Jos 5:13–15)

Joshua met the commander of God's army, who spoke for God whom he served (Jos 5:13–15). Being aware that he had, in effect, met God in this divine servant, Joshua's reaction was to bow down and worship the heavenly being. The commander's instructions for Joshua to remove his sandals reminds us of the same command to Moses at the burning bush (Ex 3:5).

That heaven should have its own army would not have seemed strange in the ancient world. While there were specific gods and goddesses of warfare, entire armies of gods could be found in the mythology of the ancient Near East, serving the desires of their superior gods. Mesopotamian myths of the 2nd and 1st millenniums B.C. describe heavenly armies waging war against both divine and human enemies. In the Babylonian epic, Enuma Elish, the god Marduk conquers the army of the goddess Tiamat.

Human wars were fought under the direction of the deities of the land over which a king reigned. The ancients believed that wars were not just between human armies, but also between heavenly armies. The patron deities of the rival states had their own armies to back their people.

Joshua believed that he would not be fighting alone. Egyptian letters from the Amarna period (c. 1360–1333 B.C.) reflect the belief that the king of Egypt went to war as part of a divine army. In a similar fashion, Joshua, having been asked by God to take the promised land, met his heavenly counterpart. The notification "I have now come" (Jos 5:14) informed Joshua that the human conquest of the land was only a part of the real action. Crucial events of the battle would take place in heaven.

Beliefs & Ideas

The symbolism of removing the shoes in a holy place (Jos 5:15) is followed today in Islamic mosques, where shoes may not be worn. In the 19th century A.D. it was required to be barefoot before the Emperor of Ethiopia. Perhaps shoes seem to represent the uncleanness of the workaday world.

The Fall of Jericho

13 Now when Joshua was near Jericho, he
looked up and saw a man standing in front of
him with a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua
went up to him and asked, "Are you for us or
for our enemies?"
14 "Neither," he replied, "but as command-
er of the army of the LORD I have now come."
Then Joshua fell facedown to the ground in rev-
erence, and asked him, "What message does
my Lord[a] have for his servant?"
15 The commander of the LORD's army re-
plied, "Take off your sandals, for the place
where you are standing is holy." And Joshua
did so.

TRANSITION

Conquering the Canaanite Cities

The detailed accounts in chs. 1–5 of the preparation, the Jordan crossing, and the camp at Gilgal show Israel mobilized to enter the land. The crossing of the Jordan and the Passover celebration are dated in the 1st month (Jos 4:19; 5:10), suggesting that Joshua readied the people in less than two months after Moses' death. The conquest would have begun, then, around either 1405 B.C. or 1234 B.C. (see "The Death of Moses" at Dt 34:1).

The conquest itself is described in three campaigns or stages: the thrust into central Canaan (Jos 6:1—8:35), the southern campaign (9:1—10:43), and the northern campaign (11:1–15). The first stage relates the destruction of Jericho and Ai. Stages two and three present the long and complex military campaigns against coalitions of Canaanite cities.

The reader could easily assume that the whole operation took only a short time, whereas the process actually lasted several years. And even then the conquest was not complete (13:1). The campaigns are reported briefly in order to emphasize God's giving, rather than Israel's taking, the land. See "The Early Years of Conquest" at Jos 14:6.

• **Joshua 6:1—14:5**

Joshua

6 :1 Now the gates of Jericho were securely
barred because of the Israelites. No one went
out and no one came in.
2 Then the LORD said to Joshua, "See, I have
delivered Jericho into your hands, along with
its king and its fighting men. 3 March around
the city once with all the armed men. Do this
for six days. 4 Have seven priests carry trum-
pets of rams' horns in front of the ark. On
the seventh day, march around the city seven
times, with the priests blowing the trumpets.
5 When you hear them sound a long blast on
the trumpets, have the whole army give a loud
shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and
the army will go up, everyone straight in."
6 So Joshua son of Nun called the priests
and said to them, "Take up the ark of the cov-
enant of the LORD and have seven priests carry
trumpets in front of it." 7 And he ordered the
army, "Advance! March around the city, with
an armed guard going ahead of the ark of the
LORD."
8 When Joshua had spoken to the people,
the seven priests carrying the seven trumpets
before the LORD went forward, blowing their
trumpets, and the ark of the LORD's covenant
followed them. 9 The armed guard marched
ahead of the priests who blew the trumpets,
and the rear guard followed the ark. All this
time the trumpets were sounding. 10 But Josh-
ua had commanded the army, "Do not give a
war cry, do not raise your voices, do not say
a word until the day I tell you to shout. Then
shout!" 11 So he had the ark of the LORD car-
ried around the city, circling it once. Then the
army returned to camp and spent the night
there.
12 Joshua got up early the next morning and
the priests took up the ark of the LORD. 13 The
seven priests carrying the seven trumpets
went forward, marching before the ark of the
LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed
men went ahead of them and the rear guard fol-
lowed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets
kept sounding. 14 So on the second day they
marched around the city once and returned to
the camp. They did this for six days.
15 On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak
and marched around the city seven times in the
same manner, except that on that day they cir-
cled the city seven times. 16 The seventh time
around, when the priests sounded the trumpet
blast, Joshua commanded the army, "Shout!
For the LORD has given you the city! 17 The city

[a] *14* Or *lord*

Devoted to Destruction (Jos 7:1)

All of the inhabitants of Jericho, humans and animals, were killed as a sacrifice to God. They were "devoted to the LORD" (Jos 6:17). In addition, all of Jericho's property was placed off limits to the Israelites and destroyed, except for items of iron, bronze, silver and gold, which went into the sacred treasury (6:18, 19). All of these things—people, property, valuables—were considered "devoted." The Hebrew word translated "devoted" referred to things that were completely destroyed or set apart for sacred use.

Devoted things were given to God. Of course, the items were not given to God physically, but rather by being totally destroyed or dedicated to sacred use. They were kept from the Israelites. They were for them "devoted" items. By not taking these items for themselves, the Israelites were acknowledging that such things belonged to God. God was the real conqueror of the city. Jericho was a kind of "tithe," the first city conquered in the promised land. Its possessions, therefore, belonged to God.

Achan's sin (Jos 7:1) was that he took a garment from Jericho, even though he knew that everything in Jericho had been dedicated to God. He thus stole from God. By taking a "devoted" item, he himself became cursed.

This same Hebrew word for "devoted" is translated "destruction" in Is 43:28. Israel (Jacob) would be given "to destruction." The Israelites had sinned against God, and would now themselves be dedicated to Him through their coming destruction.

and all that is in it are to be devoted[a] to the LORD. Only Rahab the prostitute and all who are with her in her house shall be spared, because she hid the spies we sent. 18But keep away from the devoted things, so that you will not bring about your own destruction by taking any of them. Otherwise you will make the camp of Israel liable to destruction and bring trouble on it. 19All the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron are sacred to the LORD and must go into his treasury."

20When the trumpets sounded, the army shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the men gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so everyone charged straight in, and they took the city. 21They devoted the city to the LORD and destroyed with the sword every living thing in it—men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

22Joshua said to the two men who had spied out the land, "Go into the prostitute's house and bring her out and all who belong to her, in accordance with your oath to her." 23So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother, her brothers and sisters and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

24Then they burned the whole city and everything in it, but they put the silver and gold and the articles of bronze and iron into the treasury of the LORD's house. 25But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

26At that time Joshua pronounced this solemn oath: "Cursed before the LORD is the one who undertakes to rebuild this city, Jericho:

"At the cost of his firstborn son
he will lay its foundations;
at the cost of his youngest
he will set up its gates."

27So the LORD was with Joshua, and his fame spread throughout the land.

[a] *17* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verses 18 and 21. [b] *1* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verses 11, 12, 13 and 15. [c] *1* See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 2:6; Hebrew *Zabdi*; also in verses 17 and 18.

Beliefs & Ideas

Lev 27:28, 29 explains that what is "devoted" (Jos 6:18) has passed out of human hands and into the jurisdiction of God. This "cursing" or "devotion" to God, expressed by the Hebrew word *herem*, is not a practice that can be applied outside the specific references of the Old Testament. It is little known outside these biblical passages.

Achan's Sin

7 1But the Israelites were unfaithful in regard to the devoted things[b]; Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri,[c] the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took some of them. So the LORD's anger burned against Israel.

2Now Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai, which is near Beth Aven to the east of Bethel, and told them, "Go up and spy out the region." So the men went up and spied out Ai.

3When they returned to Joshua, they said, "Not all the army will have to go up against Ai. Send two or three thousand men to take it and do not weary the whole army, for only a

few people live there." 4So about three thousand went up; but they were routed by the men of Ai, 5who killed about thirty-six of them. They chased the Israelites from the city gate as far as the stone quarries and struck them down on the slopes. At this the hearts of the people melted in fear and became like water.

6Then Joshua tore his clothes and fell face-down to the ground before the ark of the LORD, remaining there till evening. The elders of Israel did the same, and sprinkled dust on their heads. 7And Joshua said, "Alas, Sovereign LORD, why did you ever bring this people across the Jordan to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us? If only we had been content to stay on the other side of the Jordan! 8Pardon your servant, Lord. What can I say, now that Israel has been routed by its enemies? 9The Canaanites and the other people of the country will hear about this and they will surround us and wipe out our name from the earth. What then will you do for your own great name?"

10The LORD said to Joshua, "Stand up! What are you doing down on your face? 11Israel has sinned; they have violated my covenant, which I commanded them to keep. They have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen, they have lied, they have put them with their own possessions. 12That is why the Israelites cannot stand against their enemies; they turn their backs and run because they have been made liable to destruction. I will not be with you anymore unless you destroy whatever among you is devoted to destruction.

13"Go, consecrate the people. Tell them, 'Consecrate yourselves in preparation for tomorrow; for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: There are devoted things among you, Israel. You cannot stand against your enemies until you remove them.

14"'In the morning, present yourselves tribe by tribe. The tribe the LORD chooses shall come forward clan by clan; the clan the LORD chooses shall come forward family by family; and the family the LORD chooses shall come forward man by man. 15Whoever is caught with the devoted things shall be destroyed by fire, along with all that belongs to him. He has violated the covenant of the LORD and has done an outrageous thing in Israel!'"

16Early the next morning Joshua had Israel come forward by tribes, and Judah was chosen. 17The clans of Judah came forward, and the Zerahites were chosen. He had the clan of the Zerahites come forward by families, and Zimri was chosen. 18Joshua had his family come forward man by man, and Achan son of Karmi, the son of Zimri, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was chosen.

19Then Joshua said to Achan, "My son, give glory to the LORD, the God of Israel, and honor him. Tell me what you have done; do not hide it from me."

20Achan replied, "It is true! I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel. This is what I have done: 21When I saw in the plunder a beautiful robe from Babylonia,[a] two hundred shekels[b] of silver and a bar of gold weighing fifty shekels,[c] I coveted them and took them. They are hidden in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

22So Joshua sent messengers, and they ran to the tent, and there it was, hidden in his tent, with the silver underneath. 23They took the things from the tent, brought them to Joshua and all the Israelites and spread them out before the LORD.

24Then Joshua, together with all Israel, took Achan son of Zerah, the silver, the robe, the gold bar, his sons and daughters, his cattle, donkeys and sheep, his tent and all that he had, to the Valley of Achor. 25Joshua said, "Why have you brought this trouble on us? The LORD will bring trouble on you today."

Then all Israel stoned him, and after they had stoned the rest, they burned them. 26Over Achan they heaped up a large pile of rocks, which remains to this day. Then the LORD turned from his fierce anger. Therefore that place has been called the Valley of Achor[d] ever since.

[a] *21* Hebrew *Shinar* [b] *21* That is, about 5 pounds or about 2.3 kilograms [c] *21* That is, about 1 1/4 pounds or about 575 grams [d] *26* *Achor* means *trouble.*

TIME CAPSULE		1243 to 1234 B.C.
1243–1207		Tukulti-Ninurta I, king of Assyria
1240		Hittite Empire declines and vanishes by 1180 B.C.
1235		Israelites reach the plains of Moab (based on late Exodus; Nu 22:1)
1235		Aaron dies on Mount Hor (late Exodus; Nu 33:38)
1235		Moses is buried in Moab (late Exodus; Dt 34:5, 6)
1234		Joshua leads Israelite conquest of Canaan (based on late Exodus)

Ai Destroyed

8 [1]Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Do not
be afraid; do not be discouraged. Take the
whole army with you, and go up and attack Ai.
For I have delivered into your hands the king of
Ai, his people, his city and his land. [2]You shall
do to Ai and its king as you did to Jericho and
its king, except that you may carry off their
plunder and livestock for yourselves. Set an
ambush behind the city."

[3]So Joshua and the whole army moved out to
attack Ai. He chose thirty thousand of his best
fighting men and sent them out at night [4]with
these orders: "Listen carefully. You are to set an
ambush behind the city. Don't go very far from
it. All of you be on the alert. [5]I and all those
with me will advance on the city, and when the
men come out against us, as they did before,
we will flee from them. [6]They will pursue us
until we have lured them away from the city, for
they will say, 'They are running away from us
as they did before.' So when we flee from them,
[7]you are to rise up from ambush and take the
city. The LORD your God will give it into your
hand. [8]When you have taken the city, set it on
fire. Do what the LORD has commanded. See to
it; you have my orders."

[9]Then Joshua sent them off, and they went
to the place of ambush and lay in wait between
Bethel and Ai, to the west of Ai—but Joshua
spent that night with the people.

[10]Early the next morning Joshua mustered
his army, and he and the leaders of Israel
marched before them to Ai. [11]The entire force
that was with him marched up and approached
the city and arrived in front of it. They set
up camp north of Ai, with the valley between
them and the city. [12]Joshua had taken about
five thousand men and set them in ambush be-
tween Bethel and Ai, to the west of the city. [13]So
the soldiers took up their positions—with the
main camp to the north of the city and the am-
bush to the west of it. That night Joshua went
into the valley.

[14]When the king of Ai saw this, he and all the
men of the city hurried out early in the morn-
ing to meet Israel in battle at a certain place
overlooking the Arabah. But he did not know
that an ambush had been set against him be-
hind the city. [15]Joshua and all Israel let them-
selves be driven back before them, and they
fled toward the wilderness. [16]All the men of
Ai were called to pursue them, and they pur-
sued Joshua and were lured away from the city.
[17]Not a man remained in Ai or Bethel who did
not go after Israel. They left the city open and
went in pursuit of Israel.

[18]Then the LORD said to Joshua, "Hold out
toward Ai the javelin that is in your hand, for
into your hand I will deliver the city." So Josh-
ua held out toward the city the javelin that was
in his hand. [19]As soon as he did this, the men
in the ambush rose quickly from their position
and rushed forward. They entered the city and
captured it and quickly set it on fire.

[20]The men of Ai looked back and saw the
smoke of the city rising up into the sky, but
they had no chance to escape in any direction;
the Israelites who had been fleeing toward the
wilderness had turned back against their pur-
suers. [21]For when Joshua and all Israel saw that
the ambush had taken the city and that smoke
was going up from it, they turned around and
attacked the men of Ai. [22]Those in the ambush
also came out of the city against them, so that
they were caught in the middle, with Israelites
on both sides. Israel cut them down, leaving
them neither survivors nor fugitives. [23]But
they took the king of Ai alive and brought him
to Joshua.

[24]When Israel had finished killing all the
men of Ai in the fields and in the wilderness
where they had chased them, and when every
one of them had been put to the sword, all the
Israelites returned to Ai and killed those who
were in it. [25]Twelve thousand men and women
fell that day—all the people of Ai. [26]For Joshua
did not draw back the hand that held out his
javelin until he had destroyed[a] all who lived in

[a] *26* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

Ai. 27But Israel did carry off for themselves the livestock and plunder of this city, as the LORD had instructed Joshua.

28So Joshua burned Ai[a] and made it a permanent heap of ruins, a desolate place to this day. 29He impaled the body of the king of Ai on a pole and left it there until evening. At sunset, Joshua ordered them to take the body from the pole and throw it down at the entrance of the city gate. And they raised a large pile of rocks over it, which remains to this day.

The Covenant Renewed at Mount Ebal

30Then Joshua built on Mount Ebal an altar to the LORD, the God of Israel, 31as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded the Israelites. He built it according to what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses—an altar of uncut stones, on which no iron tool had been used. On it they offered to the LORD burnt offerings and sacrificed fellowship offerings. 32There, in the presence of the Israelites, Joshua wrote on stones a copy of the law of Moses. 33All the Israelites, with their elders, officials and judges, were standing on both sides of the ark of the covenant of the LORD, facing the Levitical priests who carried it. Both the foreigners living among them and the native-born were there. Half of the people stood in front of Mount Gerizim and half of them in front of Mount Ebal, as Moses the servant of the LORD had formerly commanded when he gave instructions to bless the people of Israel.

34Afterward, Joshua read all the words of the law—the blessings and the curses—just as it is written in the Book of the Law. 35There was not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read to the whole assembly of Israel, including the women and children, and the foreigners who lived among them.

The Conquest of Canaan (Central and Southern Campaigns)
From the camp at Gilgal, Joshua launched two campaigns. Jericho fell in the central campaign, which continued with an ambush of Bethel and Ai. Joshua launched the southern campaign against the Amorites assembled near Gibeon, and continued the assault all the way to Debir.

The Gibeonite Deception

9 1Now when all the kings west of the Jordan heard about these things—the kings in the hill country, in the western foothills, and along the entire coast of the Mediterranean Sea as far as Lebanon (the kings of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites)— 2they came together to wage war against Joshua and Israel.

3However, when the people of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, 4they resorted to a ruse: They went as a delegation whose donkeys were loaded[b] with worn-out sacks and old wineskins, cracked and mended. 5They put worn and patched sandals on their feet and wore old clothes. All the bread of their food supply was dry and moldy. 6Then they went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and the Israelites, "We have come from a distant country; make a treaty with us."

7The Israelites said to the Hivites, "But perhaps you live near us, so how can we make a treaty with you?"

8"We are your servants," they said to Joshua.

But Joshua asked, "Who are you and where do you come from?"

9They answered: "Your servants have come from a very distant country because of the fame of the LORD your God. For we have heard reports of him: all that he did in Egypt, 10and all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan—Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth. 11And our elders and all those living in our country said to us, 'Take provisions for your journey; go and meet them and say to them, "We are your servants; make a treaty with us."' 12This bread of ours was warm when we packed it at home on the day we left to come to you. But now see how dry and moldy it is.

[a] *28* *Ai* means *the ruin*. [b] *4* Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint) *They prepared provisions and loaded their donkeys*

Gilgal, Place of Covenant (Jos 9:6)

Gilgal is a special holy place in the biblical stories. It was there that the newly arrived Israelites were circumcised. This act reestablished them as God's chosen people (Jos 4:19; 5:7) and was supposed to prepare them spiritually for their conquest of Canaan. Gilgal was also where they celebrated their first Passover in the promised land (5:10). The "camp at Gilgal" (9:6) served as the Israelites' base of operations during their early military activities (Jos 10:6, 7, 15, 43).

It is not surprising that Gilgal became a cultic center. At a later time both Samuel and Saul name Gilgal as a place where one went to offer sacrifices (1Sa 10:8; 15:21). Understandably, Saul used Gilgal as a place to intensify nationalistic feelings and loyalty (1Sa 11:14, 15). It was there that Saul was made king of Israel.

13 And these wineskins that we filled were new,
but see how cracked they are. And our clothes
and sandals are worn out by the very long jour-
ney."
14 The Israelites sampled their provisions
but did not inquire of the LORD. 15 Then Joshua
made a treaty of peace with them to let them
live, and the leaders of the assembly ratified it
by oath.
16 Three days after they made the treaty with
the Gibeonites, the Israelites heard that they
were neighbors, living near them. 17 So the Isra-
elites set out and on the third day came to their
cities: Gibeon, Kephirah, Beeroth and Kiriath
Jearim. 18 But the Israelites did not attack them,
because the leaders of the assembly had sworn
an oath to them by the LORD, the God of Israel.
The whole assembly grumbled against the
leaders, 19 but all the leaders answered, "We
have given them our oath by the LORD, the
God of Israel, and we cannot touch them now.
20 This is what we will do to them: We will let
them live, so that God's wrath will not fall on
us for breaking the oath we swore to them."
21 They continued, "Let them live, but let them
be woodcutters and water carriers in the ser-
vice of the whole assembly." So the leaders'
promise to them was kept.
22 Then Joshua summoned the Gibeonites
and said, "Why did you deceive us by saying,
'We live a long way from you,' while actually
you live near us? 23 You are now under a curse:
You will never be released from service as
woodcutters and water carriers for the house
of my God."
24 They answered Joshua, "Your servants
were clearly told how the LORD your God had
commanded his servant Moses to give you the
whole land and to wipe out all its inhabitants
from before you. So we feared for our lives
because of you, and that is why we did this.
25 We are now in your hands. Do to us whatever
seems good and right to you."
26 So Joshua saved them from the Israelites,
and they did not kill them. 27 That day he made
the Gibeonites woodcutters and water carriers
for the assembly, to provide for the needs of the
altar of the LORD at the place the LORD would
choose. And that is what they are to this day.

The Sun Stands Still

10 1 Now Adoni-Zedek king of Jerusalem
heard that Joshua had taken Ai and total-
ly destroyed[a] it, doing to Ai and its king as he
had done to Jericho and its king, and that the
people of Gibeon had made a treaty of peace
with Israel and had become their allies. 2 He
and his people were very much alarmed at this,
because Gibeon was an important city, like one
of the royal cities; it was larger than Ai, and all
its men were good fighters. 3 So Adoni-Zedek
king of Jerusalem appealed to Hoham king of
Hebron, Piram king of Jarmuth, Japhia king of
Lachish and Debir king of Eglon. 4 "Come up
and help me attack Gibeon," he said, "because
it has made peace with Joshua and the Israel-
ites."
5 Then the five kings of the Amorites—the
kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, La-
chish and Eglon—joined forces. They moved
up with all their troops and took up positions
against Gibeon and attacked it.
6 The Gibeonites then sent word to Joshua in
the camp at Gilgal: "Do not abandon your ser-
vants. Come up to us quickly and save us! Help
us, because all the Amorite kings from the hill
country have joined forces against us."
7 So Joshua marched up from Gilgal with his
entire army, including all the best fighting men.
8 The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of
them; I have given them into your hand. Not
one of them will be able to withstand you."
9 After an all-night march from Gilgal, Joshua
took them by surprise. 10 The LORD threw them
into confusion before Israel, so Joshua and the
Israelites defeated them completely at Gibeon.

[a] *1* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verses 28, 35, 37, 39 and 40.

When God Listened to a Man (Jos 10:12, 13)

Joshua's prayer, "Sun, stand still over Gibeon, and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon" (Jos 10:12), seems to request that somehow God stop the sun or perform some other miraculous heavenly event to lengthen the day. Joshua did not pray late in the evening: the sun "over Gibeon" would be in the east, while the moon "over the Valley of Aijalon" would be in the west. This positioning of the sun and moon indicates early morning, and for Joshua to utter a request for a longer day at that time of day seems unusual.

Joshua's asking the sun and moon to "stand still" (10:12) is a request typical of celestial omen texts from Mesopotamia. These texts are concerned with the 1st day of the full moon which came at the middle of the month and was observable by the location of the sun and moon in the early morning on opposite horizons. In Mesopotamian omen texts the sun and moon are asked to "wait" on each other, so that they would be on their respective horizons on the 14th day of the month.

When this positioning occurred, it was seen by the Mesopotamians as a sign of good fortune. For them it indicated that their calculations were accurate, that there would be exactly 30 days in the month, and that the days themselves would be full-length. On the other hand, when the sun and moon were on their respective horizons on any other day, it was considered a bad omen.

The position of the sun in the east (Gibeon) and moon in the west (Valley of Aijalon) suggests that this event occurred near the middle of the month. Joshua may be asking God to allow the sun and moon to "stand still" (10:12) or wait for each other so that they would be on their horizons on a day other than the 14th day of the month. That would cause the Canaanites to believe that that day was an evil day for fighting and give the Israelites the upper hand before the battle began. What made this occasion memorable is that "the LORD listened to a human being" (10:14). God listened to Joshua, and the sun and moon were positioned for Israel's advantage "the LORD was fighting for Israel."

Israel pursued them along the road going up to Beth Horon and cut them down all the way to Azekah and Makkedah. 11As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on them, and more of them died from the hail than were killed by the swords of the Israelites.

12On the day the LORD gave the Amorites over to Israel, Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel:

"Sun, stand still over Gibeon,
and you, moon, over the Valley of Aijalon."
13So the sun stood still,
and the moon stopped,
till the nation avenged itself on[a] its enemies,

as it is written in the Book of Jashar.

The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day. 14There has never been a day like it before or since, a day when the LORD listened to a human being. Surely the LORD was fighting for Israel!

15Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

Five Amorite Kings Killed

16Now the five kings had fled and hidden in the cave at Makkedah. 17When Joshua was told that the five kings had been found hiding in the cave at Makkedah, 18he said, "Roll large rocks up to the mouth of the cave, and post some men there to guard it. 19But don't stop; pursue your enemies! Attack them from the rear and don't let them reach their cities, for the LORD your God has given them into your hand."

20So Joshua and the Israelites defeated them completely, but a few survivors managed to reach their fortified cities. 21The whole army then returned safely to Joshua in the camp at Makkedah, and no one uttered a word against the Israelites.

22Joshua said, "Open the mouth of the cave and bring those five kings out to me." 23So they brought the five kings out of the cave—the kings of Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon. 24When they had brought these kings to Joshua, he summoned all the men of Israel and said to the army commanders who had come with him, "Come here and put your feet on the necks of these kings." So they came forward and placed their feet on their necks.

25Joshua said to them, "Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged. Be strong and courageous. This is what the LORD will do to all the enemies you are going to fight." 26Then Joshua put the kings to death and exposed their bodies on five poles, and they were left hanging on the poles until evening.

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[a] *13* Or *nation triumphed over*

Culture & Society
Hanging was not a way of putting someone to death, but a way of exposing the bodies of those executed (Jos 10:26). The Law of Moses did not permit exposure past nightfall, but in many societies up to medieval times corpses were left exposed for days or weeks. The Romans exposed thousands of crucified Jews outside the walls of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

27 At sunset Joshua gave the order and they took them down from the poles and threw them into the cave where they had been hiding. At the mouth of the cave they placed large rocks, which are there to this day.

Southern Cities Conquered

28 That day Joshua took Makkedah. He put the city and its king to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it. He left no survivors. And he did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.

29 Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Makkedah to Libnah and attacked it. 30 The LORD also gave that city and its king into Israel's hand. The city and everyone in it Joshua put to the sword. He left no survivors there. And he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

31 Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Libnah to Lachish; he took up positions against it and attacked it. 32 The LORD gave Lachish into Israel's hands, and Joshua took it on the second day. The city and everyone in it he put to the sword, just as he had done to Libnah. 33 Meanwhile, Horam king of Gezer had come up to help Lachish, but Joshua defeated him and his army—until no survivors were left.

34 Then Joshua and all Israel with him moved on from Lachish to Eglon; they took up positions against it and attacked it. 35 They captured it that same day and put it to the sword and totally destroyed everyone in it, just as they had done to Lachish.

36 Then Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron and attacked it. 37 They took the city and put it to the sword, together with its king, its villages and everyone in it. They left no survivors. Just as at Eglon, they totally destroyed it and everyone in it.

38 Then Joshua and all Israel with him turned around and attacked Debir. 39 They took the city, its king and its villages, and put them to the sword. Everyone in it they totally destroyed. They left no survivors. They did to Debir and its king as they had done to Libnah and its king and to Hebron.

40 So Joshua subdued the whole region, including the hill country, the Negev, the western foothills and the mountain slopes, together with all their kings. He left no survivors. He totally destroyed all who breathed, just as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded. 41 Joshua subdued them from Kadesh Barnea to Gaza and from the whole region of Goshen to Gibeon. 42 All these kings and their lands Joshua conquered in one campaign, because the LORD, the God of Israel, fought for Israel.

43 Then Joshua returned with all Israel to the camp at Gilgal.

Northern Kings Defeated

11 1 When Jabin king of Hazor heard of this, he sent word to Jobab king of Madon, to the kings of Shimron and Akshaph, 2 and to the northern kings who were in the mountains, in the Arabah south of Kinnereth, in the western foothills and in Naphoth Dor on the west; 3 to the Canaanites in the east and west; to the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites and Jebusites in the hill country; and to the Hivites below Hermon in the region of Mizpah. 4 They came out with all their troops and a large number of horses and chariots—a huge army, as numerous as the sand on the seashore. 5 All these kings joined forces and made camp together at the Waters of Merom to fight against Israel.

6 The LORD said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, because by this time tomorrow I will hand all of them, slain, over to Israel. You are to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots."

7 So Joshua and his whole army came against them suddenly at the Waters of Merom and attacked them, 8 and the LORD gave them into the hand of Israel. They defeated them and pursued them all the way to Greater Sidon, to Misrephoth Maim, and to the Valley of Mizpah on the east, until no survivors were left. 9 Joshua did to them as the LORD had directed: He hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots.

10 At that time Joshua turned back and captured

Plants & Animals
Before about 950 B.C. horses were not used for cavalry in battle, but for pulling chariots. To hamstring a horse is to cripple it by cutting the large tendon in the back of its leg (Jos 11:6). The destroyed equipment of an enemy is an eloquent sign of their defeat, since they no longer control their means of fighting.

Hazor and put its king to the sword. (Hazor had been the head of all these kingdoms.) 11Everyone in it they put to the sword. They totally destroyed[a] them, not sparing anyone that breathed, and he burned Hazor itself.

12Joshua took all these royal cities and their kings and put them to the sword. He totally destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded. 13Yet Israel did not burn any of the cities built on their mounds—except Hazor, which Joshua burned. 14The Israelites carried off for themselves all the plunder and livestock of these cities, but all the people they put to the sword until they completely destroyed them, not sparing anyone that breathed. 15As the LORD commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua, and Joshua did it; he left nothing undone of all that the LORD commanded Moses.

16So Joshua took this entire land: the hill country, all the Negev, the whole region of Goshen, the western foothills, the Arabah and the mountains of Israel with their foothills, 17from Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir, to Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon below Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings and put them to death. 18Joshua waged war against all these kings for a long time. 19Except for the Hivites living in Gibeon, not one city made a treaty of peace with the Israelites, who took them all in battle. 20For it was the LORD himself who hardened their hearts to wage war against Israel, so that he might destroy them totally, exterminating them without mercy, as the LORD had commanded Moses.

21At that time Joshua went and destroyed the Anakites from the hill country: from Hebron, Debir and Anab, from all the hill country of Judah, and from all the hill country of Israel. Joshua totally destroyed them and their towns. 22No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.

23So Joshua took the entire land, just as the LORD had directed Moses, and he gave it as an inheritance to Israel according to their tribal divisions. Then the land had rest from war.

List of Defeated Kings

12 1These are the kings of the land whom the Israelites had defeated and whose territory they took over east of the Jordan, from the Arnon Gorge to Mount Hermon, including all the eastern side of the Arabah:

2Sihon king of the Amorites, who reigned in Heshbon.
He ruled from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge—from the middle of the gorge—to the Jabbok River, which is the border of the Ammonites. This included half of Gilead. 3He also ruled over the eastern Arabah from the Sea of Galilee[b] to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea), to Beth Jeshimoth, and then southward below the slopes of Pisgah.

4And the territory of Og king of Bashan, one of the last of the Rephaites, who reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei.
5He ruled over Mount Hermon, Salekah, all of Bashan to the border of the people of Geshur and Maakah, and half of Gilead to the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

6Moses, the servant of the LORD, and the Israelites conquered them. And Moses the servant of the LORD gave their land to the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh to be their possession.

7Here is a list of the kings of the land that Joshua and the Israelites conquered on the west side of the Jordan, from Baal Gad in the Valley of Lebanon to Mount Halak, which rises toward Seir. Joshua gave their lands as an inheritance to the tribes of Israel according to

The Conquest of Canaan (Northern Campaign)
A large coalition of kings gathered at the Waters of Merom to fight against Joshua. In a surprise attack, Joshua's armies drove the forces back, some toward Tyre and Sidon, others toward Kedesh. Joshua divided his forces, destroying Hazor along the way.

[a] *11* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verses 12, 20 and 21. [b] *3* Hebrew *Kinnereth*

The Sea Peoples Settle in Philistia (Jos 13:2, 3)

The Philistines were a people group whose origins are not clearly known. New Kingdom Egyptian sources from the 13th and 12th centuries B.C. mention them as one of the Sea Peoples who unsuccessfully invaded Egypt. The inscriptions of Pharaoh Merenptah (1213–1203 B.C.) report that when the Libyans attacked Egypt, there were "foreigners from the sea" fighting within the ranks of the Libyan armies. Egyptian descriptions of Pharaoh Ramesses' battles against the Sea Peoples list the Philistines among the opponents.

Some scholars believe that the Sea People groups came from the western regions of the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas from Greece and Crete. Cities, regions and empires fell to these seaborne raiders: Cyprus, north Syria, the Hittite Empire, Ugarit. The Sea Peoples continued down the eastern Mediterranean coastal areas toward Canaan until Egypt's Ramesses III (1184–1153 B.C.) stopped their advance in 1175 B.C.

Ramesses did not win decisively. Later Egyptian sources record the settlement of some of the Sea Peoples in southern Palestine, which was in the Egyptian sphere of influence. The group called "Philistines" organized a confederation of five major cities: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron. The Sea Peoples' invasion spawned a new culture in Palestine, one that the Israelites would experience as "Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron" (Jos 13:3).

Pharaoh Merenptah

their tribal divisions. [8]The lands included the hill country, the western foothills, the Arabah, the mountain slopes, the wilderness and the Negev. These were the lands of the Hittites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. These were the kings:

[9]the king of Jericho	one
the king of Ai (near Bethel)	one
[10]the king of Jerusalem	one
the king of Hebron	one
[11]the king of Jarmuth	one
the king of Lachish	one
[12]the king of Eglon	one
the king of Gezer	one
[13]the king of Debir	one
the king of Geder	one
[14]the king of Hormah	one
the king of Arad	one
[15]the king of Libnah	one
the king of Adullam	one
[16]the king of Makkedah	one
the king of Bethel	one
[17]the king of Tappuah	one
the king of Hepher	one
[18]the king of Aphek	one
the king of Lasharon	one
[19]the king of Madon	one
the king of Hazor	one
[20]the king of Shimron Meron	one
the king of Akshaph	one
[21]the king of Taanach	one
the king of Megiddo	one
[22]the king of Kedesh	one
the king of Jokneam in Carmel	one
[23]the king of Dor (in Naphoth Dor)	one
the king of Goyim in Gilgal	one
[24]the king of Tirzah	one
thirty-one kings in all.	

Land Still to Be Taken

13 [1]When Joshua had grown old, the LORD said to him, "You are now very old, and there are still very large areas of land to be taken over.

[2]"This is the land that remains: all the regions of the Philistines and Geshurites, [3]from the Shihor River on the east of Egypt to the territory of Ekron on the north, all of it counted as Canaanite though held by the five Philistine rulers in Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron; the territory of the Avvites [4]on the south; all the land of the Canaanites, from Arah of the Sidonians as far as Aphek and the border of the Amorites; [5]the area of Byblos; and all Lebanon to the east, from Baal Gad below Mount Hermon to Lebo Hamath.

[6]"As for all the inhabitants of the mountain regions from Lebanon to Misrephoth Maim, that is, all the Sidonians, I myself will drive them out before the Israelites. Be sure to allocate this land to Israel for an inheritance, as I have instructed you, [7]and divide it as an inheritance among the nine tribes and half of the tribe of Manasseh."

Division of the Land East of the Jordan

[8]The other half of Manasseh,[a] the Reubenites and the Gadites had received the inheritance that Moses had given them east of the Jordan,

[a] 8 Hebrew *With it* (that is, with the other half of Manasseh)

as he, the servant of the LORD, had assigned it to them.

9It extended from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and included the whole plateau of Medeba as far as Dibon, 10and all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, out to the border of the Ammonites. 11It also included Gilead, the territory of the people of Geshur and Maakah, all of Mount Hermon and all Bashan as far as Salekah— 12that is, the whole kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtaroth and Edrei. (He was the last of the Rephaites.) Moses had defeated them and taken over their land. 13But the Israelites did not drive out the people of Geshur and Maakah, so they continue to live among the Israelites to this day.

14But to the tribe of Levi he gave no inheritance, since the food offerings presented to the LORD, the God of Israel, are their inheritance, as he promised them.

15This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Reuben, according to its clans:

16The territory from Aroer on the rim of the Arnon Gorge, and from the town in the middle of the gorge, and the whole plateau past Medeba 17to Heshbon and all its towns on the plateau, including Dibon, Bamoth Baal, Beth Baal Meon, 18Jahaz, Kedemoth, Mephaath, 19Kiriathaim, Sibmah, Zereth Shahar on the hill in the valley, 20Beth Peor, the slopes of Pisgah, and Beth Jeshimoth— 21all the towns on the plateau and the entire realm of Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled at Heshbon. Moses had defeated him and the Midianite chiefs, Evi, Rekem, Zur, Hur and Reba—princes allied with Sihon—who lived in that country. 22In addition to those slain in battle, the Israelites had put to the sword Balaam son of Beor, who practiced divination. 23The boundary of the Reubenites was the bank of the Jordan. These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Reubenites, according to their clans.

24This is what Moses had given to the tribe of Gad, according to its clans:

25The territory of Jazer, all the towns of Gilead and half the Ammonite country as far as Aroer, near Rabbah; 26and from Heshbon to Ramath Mizpah and Betonim, and from Mahanaim to the territory of Debir; 27and in the valley, Beth Haram, Beth Nimrah, Sukkoth and Zaphon with the rest of the realm of Sihon king of Heshbon (the east side of the Jordan, the territory up to the end of the Sea of Galilee[a]). 28These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the Gadites, according to their clans.

29This is what Moses had given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, that is, to half the family of the descendants of Manasseh, according to its clans:

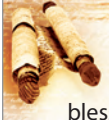
30The territory extending from Mahanaim and including all of Bashan, the entire realm of Og king of Bashan—all the settlements of Jair in Bashan, sixty towns, 31half of Gilead, and Ashtaroth and Edrei (the royal cities of Og in Bashan). This was for the descendants of Makir son of Manasseh—for half of the sons of Makir, according to their clans.

32This is the inheritance Moses had given when he was in the plains of Moab across the Jordan east of Jericho. 33But to the tribe of Levi, Moses had given no inheritance; the LORD, the God of Israel, is their inheritance, as he promised them.

Division of the Land West of the Jordan

14 1Now these are the areas the Israelites received as an inheritance in the land of Canaan, which Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the tribal clans of Israel allotted to them. 2Their inheritances were assigned by lot to the nine and a half tribes, as the LORD had commanded through Moses. 3Moses had granted the two and a half tribes their inheritance east of the Jordan but had not granted the Levites an inheritance among the rest, 4for Joseph's descendants had become two tribes—Manasseh and Ephraim. The Levites received no share of the land but only towns to live in, with pasturelands for their flocks and herds. 5So the Israelites divided the land, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

[a] *27* Hebrew *Kinnereth*



TRANSITION

The Early Years of Conquest

The tradition in Jos 14 emphasizes God's blessings to faithful Caleb. He was 40 years old when Moses sent him, along with the others, to spy out the land (Jos 14:7). That event,

recorded in Nu 13:1– 6, is loca ted in the 2nd year of the Ex odus, either 1445 or 1274 B.C. (see "The Book of Numbers" at Nu 1:1).

Now Caleb had reached the age of 85 (Jos 14:10). The passing time of 45 y ears suggests a date of around 1400 or 1229 B.C. This point in the conquest of Canaan was possibly 6 y ears after Israel's arrival on the plains of Moab in 1406 or 1235 B.C. (see "Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan" at Nu 20:14).

The listing of C aleb's age is not meant to pinpoint calendar y ears. Rather, the e xample of Caleb is important for chs. 13 and 24 which narrate the distribution of the tribal territories and Joshua's final char ge to the tr ibes. With Caleb we see both faithfulness t o God and fulfillment of God's promises. The first inheritance of land would go to one who had been faithful. Furthermore, the granting of that inheritance would fulfill the pr omise made long before at the beg inning of the Ex odus (Nu 14:24).

• **Joshua 14:6—24:33**

Joshua

Allotment for Caleb

14 :6 Now the people of Judah approached
Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said to him, "You know
what the LORD said to Moses the man of God
at Kadesh Barnea about you and me. 7I was
forty years old when Moses the servant of the
LORD sent me from Kadesh Barnea to explore
the land. And I brought him back a report according to my convictions, 8but my fellow Israelites who went up with me made the hearts of
the people melt in fear. I, however, followed the
LORD my God wholeheartedly. 9So on that day
Moses swore to me, 'The land on which your
feet have walked will be your inheritance and
that of your children forever, because you have
followed the LORD my God wholeheartedly.'[a]

[a] *9* Deut. 1:36 [b] *4* Septuagint; Hebrew *your*

10"Now then, just as the LORD promised, he
has kept me alive for forty-five years since the
time he said this to Moses, while Israel moved
about in the wilderness. So here I am today,
eighty-five years old! 11I am still as strong today
as the day Moses sent me out; I'm just as vigorous to go out to battle now as I was then. 12Now
give me this hill country that the LORD promised me that day. You yourself heard then that
the Anakites were there and their cities were
large and fortified, but, the LORD helping me, I
will drive them out just as he said."

13Then Joshua blessed Caleb son of Jephunneh and gave him Hebron as his inheritance.
14So Hebron has belonged to Caleb son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite ever since, because he
followed the LORD, the God of Israel, wholeheartedly. 15(Hebron used to be called Kiriath
Arba after Arba, who was the greatest man
among the Anakites.)

Then the land had rest from war.

Allotment for Judah

15 1The allotment for the tribe of Judah, according to its clans, extended down to
the territory of Edom, to the Desert of Zin in
the extreme south.

2Their southern boundary started from
the bay at the southern end of the Dead
Sea, 3crossed south of Scorpion Pass, continued on to Zin and went over to the south
of Kadesh Barnea. Then it ran past Hezron
up to Addar and curved around to Karka.
4It then passed along to Azmon and joined
the Wadi of Egypt, ending at the Mediterranean Sea. This is their[b] southern boundary.

5The eastern boundary is the Dead Sea
as far as the mouth of the Jordan.

The northern boundary started from
the bay of the sea at the mouth of the Jordan, 6went up to Beth Hoglah and continued north of Beth Arabah to the Stone of

The Desert of Zin

Bohan son of Reuben. 7The boundary then
went up to Debir from the Valley of Achor
and turned north to Gilgal, which faces the
Pass of Adummim south of the gorge. It
continued along to the waters of En She-
mesh and came out at En Rogel. 8Then it
ran up the Valley of Ben Hinnom along the
southern slope of the Jebusite city (that is,
Jerusalem). From there it climbed to the
top of the hill west of the Hinnom Valley at
the northern end of the Valley of Rephaim.
9From the hilltop the boundary headed to-
ward the spring of the waters of Nephtoah,
came out at the towns of Mount Ephron
and went down toward Baalah (that is, Kir-
iath Jearim). 10Then it curved westward
from Baalah to Mount Seir, ran along the
northern slope of Mount Jearim (that is,
Kesalon), continued down to Beth She-
mesh and crossed to Timnah. 11It went
to the northern slope of Ekron, turned
toward Shikkeron, passed along to Mount
Baalah and reached Jabneel. The bound-
ary ended at the sea.
12The western boundary is the coastline
of the Mediterranean Sea.

These are the boundaries around the people of Judah by their clans.

13In accordance with the LORD's command to him, Joshua gave to Caleb son of Jephunneh a portion in Judah—Kiriath Arba, that is, Hebron. (Arba was the forefather of Anak.) 14From Hebron Caleb drove out the three Anakites—Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai, the sons of Anak. 15From there he marched against the people living in Debir (formerly called Kiriath Sepher). 16And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Aksah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher." 17Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's brother, took it; so Caleb gave his daughter Aksah to him in marriage.
18One day when she came to Othniel, she urged him[a] to ask her father for a field. When she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What can I do for you?"

Culture & Society
Arba is reported to be the ancestor of the people, or tribe, of the Anakites (Jos 14:15; 15:13). Similarly the nomadic Arabs, or Bedouin, are known by the name of a distant ancestor. For example, the name "Beni Amir" means the "sons of Amir." These names do not mean that a genealogy can be traced back to a certain person, but that a tribe associates itself with a certain famous name.

19She replied, "Do me a special favor. Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water." So Caleb gave her the upper and lower springs.

20This is the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, according to its clans:

21The southernmost towns of the tribe of Judah in the Negev toward the boundary of Edom were:

Kabzeel, Eder, Jagur, 22Kinah, Dimonah, Adadah, 23Kedesh, Hazor, Ithnan, 24Ziph, Telem, Bealoth, 25Hazor Hadattah, Kerioth Hezron (that is, Hazor), 26Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27Hazar Gaddah, Heshmon, Beth Pelet, 28Hazar Shual, Beersheba, Biziothiah, 29Baalah, Iyim, Ezem, 30Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, 31Ziklag, Madmannah, Sansannah, 32Lebaoth, Shilhim, Ain and Rimmon—a total of twenty-nine towns and their villages.

33In the western foothills:

Eshtaol, Zorah, Ashnah, 34Zanoah, En Gannim, Tappuah, Enam, 35Jarmuth, Adullam, Sokoh, Azekah, 36Shaaraim, Adithaim and Gederah (or Gederothaim)[b]—fourteen towns and their villages.

37Zenan, Hadashah, Migdal Gad, 38Dilean, Mizpah, Joktheel, 39Lachish, Bozkath, Eglon, 40Kabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish, 41Gederoth, Beth Dagon, Naamah and Makkedah—sixteen towns and their villages.

42Libnah, Ether, Ashan, 43Iphtah, Ashnah, Nezib, 44Keilah, Akzib and Mareshah—nine towns and their villages.

45Ekron, with its surrounding settlements and villages; 46west of Ekron, all that were in the vicinity of Ashdod, together with their villages; 47Ashdod, its surrounding settlements and villages; and Gaza, its settlements and villages, as far as the Wadi of Egypt and the coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.

48In the hill country:

Shamir, Jattir, Sokoh, 49Dannah, Kiriath Sannah (that is, Debir), 50Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, 51Goshen, Holon and Giloh—eleven towns and their villages.

52Arab, Dumah, Eshan, 53Janim, Beth Tappuah, Aphekah, 54Humtah, Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron) and Zior—nine towns and their villages.

55Maon, Carmel, Ziph, Juttah, 56Jezreel,

[a] *18* Hebrew and some Septuagint manuscripts; other Septuagint manuscripts (see also note at Judges 1:14) *Othniel, he urged her* [b] *36* Or *Gederah and Gederothaim*

Merenptah, the Subduer of Gezer (Jos 16:10)

Gezer was a major city in central Palestine, strategically located in the hills between the mountains and the coast. As the Israelites made incursions into Canaan, they were unable to occupy Gezer, and it remained a Canaanite-controlled city (Jos 16:10; Jdg 1:29). The Canaanites of Gezer were not so fortunate in facing the pharaohs of Egypt, though.

In the days before Israel's monarchy, two different pharaohs waged victorious campaigns against Gezer. Thutmose III claims to have captured the city in his first campaign around 1458 B.C. Gezer is one of over 100 city names on Thutmoses' victory list inscribed on the walls of the temple of Amon at Karnak. Yet it was another pharaoh Merenptah who became known for his victory over Gezer.

Merenptah (also spelled Merneptah) succeeded the great builder Ramesses II to become the fourth king of Egypt's 19th Dynasty (c. 1213–1203 B.C.). This monarch appears to have kept the borders of the Egyptian empire intact. Early in his reign (1210 B.C.) he subdued the city of Gezer, and obtained the title, "Subduer of Gezer." Merenptah claims credit for Gezer's destruction in the Israel Stele, a victory inscription that also mentions the vanquishing of "Israel."

If there is any connection between the Gezer campaign and the boast against Israel in the stele, it is not known. "Israel" may simply have been loosely included in a list of Palestinian names. There is no evidence that Merenptah actually campaigned against Israel itself.

Although Israel could not conquer Gezer in Joshua's time, the city would later come to the Israelites through yet another Egyptian pharaoh. Some think that Siamun (978–959 B.C.) is the unnamed pharaoh of 1Ki 9:16 who captured Gezer and gave it to Israel's king Solomon as a wedding present.

Jokdeam, Zanoah, 57Kain, Gibeah and Timnah — ten towns and their villages.

58Halhul, Beth Zur, Gedor, 59Maarath, Beth Anoth and Eltekon — six towns and their villages.[a]

60Kiriath Baal (that is, Kiriath Jearim) and Rabbah — two towns and their villages.

61In the wilderness:

Beth Arabah, Middin, Sekakah, 62Nibshan, the City of Salt and En Gedi — six towns and their villages.

63Judah could not dislodge the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to this day the Jebusites live there with the people of Judah.

Allotment for Ephraim and Manasseh

16 1The allotment for Joseph began at the Jordan, east of the springs of Jericho, and went up from there through the desert into the hill country of Bethel. 2It went on from Bethel (that is, Luz),[b] crossed over to the territory of the Arkites in Ataroth, 3descended westward to the territory of the Japhletites as far as the region of Lower Beth Horon and on to Gezer, ending at the Mediterranean Sea.

4So Manasseh and Ephraim, the descendants of Joseph, received their inheritance.

5This was the territory of Ephraim, according to its clans:

The boundary of their inheritance went from Ataroth Addar in the east to Upper Beth Horon 6and continued to the Mediterranean Sea. From Mikmethath on the north it curved eastward to Taanath Shiloh, passing by it to Janoah on the east. 7Then it went down from Janoah to Ataroth and Naarah, touched Jericho and came out at the Jordan. 8From Tappuah the border went west to the Kanah Ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Ephraimites, according to its clans. 9It also included all the towns and their villages that were set aside for the Ephraimites within the inheritance of the Manassites.

10They did not dislodge the Canaanites living in Gezer; to this day the Canaanites live among the people of Ephraim but are required to do forced labor.

17 1This was the allotment for the tribe of Manasseh as Joseph's firstborn, that is, for Makir, Manasseh's firstborn. Makir was the ancestor of the Gileadites, who had received Gilead and Bashan because the Makirites were great soldiers. 2So this allotment was for the rest of the people of Manasseh — the clans of Abiezer, Helek, Asriel, Shechem, Hepher and Shemida. These are the other male descendants of Manasseh son of Joseph by their clans.

3Now Zelophehad son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Makir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons but only daughters, whose names were Mahlah, Noah, Hoglah, Milkah and Tirzah. 4They went to Eleazar the priest, Joshua son of Nun, and the leaders and said, "The LORD commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our relatives." So Joshua gave

[a] *59* The Septuagint adds another district of eleven towns, including Tekoa and Ephrathah (Bethlehem).
[b] *2* Septuagint; Hebrew *Bethel to Luz*

them an inheritance along with the brothers of their father, according to the LORD's command. 5Manasseh's share consisted of ten tracts of land besides Gilead and Bashan east of the Jordan,6because the daughters of the tribe of Manasseh received an inheritance among the sons. The land of Gilead belonged to the rest of the descendants of Manasseh.

7The territory of Manasseh extended from Asher to Mikmethath east of Shechem. The boundary ran southward from there to include the people living at En Tappuah. 8(Manasseh had the land of Tappuah, but Tappuah itself, on the boundary of Manasseh, belonged to the Ephraimites.) 9Then the boundary continued south to the Kanah Ravine. There were towns belonging to Ephraim lying among the towns of Manasseh, but the boundary of Manasseh was the northern side of the ravine and ended at the Mediterranean Sea. 10On the south the land belonged to Ephraim, on the north to Manasseh. The territory of Manasseh reached the Mediterranean Sea and bordered Asher on the north and Issachar on the east.

11Within Issachar and Asher, Manasseh also had Beth Shan, Ibleam and the people of Dor, Endor, Taanach and Megiddo, together with their surrounding settlements (the third in the list is Naphoth[a]).

12Yet the Manassites were not able to occupy these towns, for the Canaanites were determined to live in that region. 13However, when the Israelites grew stronger, they subjected the Canaanites to forced labor but did not drive them out completely.

14The people of Joseph said to Joshua, "Why have you given us only one allotment and one portion for an inheritance? We are a numerous people, and the LORD has blessed us abundantly."

15"If you are so numerous," Joshua answered, "and if the hill country of Ephraim is too small for you, go up into the forest and clear land for yourselves there in the land of the Perizzites and Rephaites."

Science & Technology

The "chariots fitted with iron" of Jos 17:18 is possibly a way of saying "cruel" or "invincible" chariots. A chariot during Joshua's time would not have had much iron in it. Perhaps the word refers to some kind of armor protecting the horse or chariot, or to armor or weapons brandished by the charioteer.

16The people of Joseph replied, "The hill country is not enough for us, and all the Canaanites who live in the plain have chariots fitted with iron, both those in Beth Shan and its settlements and those in the Valley of Jezreel."

17But Joshua said to the tribes of Joseph—to Ephraim and Manasseh—"You are numerous and very powerful. You will have not only one allotment 18but the forested hill country as well. Clear it, and its farthest limits will be yours; though the Canaanites have chariots fitted with iron and though they are strong, you can drive them out."

Division of the Rest of the Land

18 1The whole assembly of the Israelites gathered at Shiloh and set up the tent of meeting there. The country was brought under their control, 2but there were still seven Israelite tribes who had not yet received their inheritance.

3So Joshua said to the Israelites: "How long will you wait before you begin to take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has given you? 4Appoint three men from each tribe. I will send them out to make a survey of the land and to write a description of it, according to the inheritance of each. Then they will return to me. 5You are to divide the land into seven parts. Judah is to remain in its territory on the south and the tribes of Joseph in their territory on the north.6After you have written descriptions of the seven parts of the land, bring them here to me and I will cast lots for you in the presence of the LORD our God. 7The Levites, however, do not get a portion among you, because the priestly service of the LORD is their inheritance. And Gad, Reuben and the half-tribe of Manasseh have already received their inheritance on the east side of the Jordan. Moses the servant of the LORD gave it to them."

8As the men started on their way to map out the land, Joshua instructed them, "Go and make a survey of the land and write a description of it. Then return to me, and I will cast lots for you here at Shiloh in the presence of the LORD." 9So the men left and went through the land. They wrote its description on a scroll, town by town, in seven parts, and returned to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh. 10Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the LORD, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions.

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[a] *11* That is, Naphoth Dor

Jebus, City of the Jebusites (Jos 18:28)

In Jos 18:21–28 the biblical writer lists the cities that made up the inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin. For one of those cities he adds an identification in parentheses: the Jebusite city (that is, Jerusalem). Jebus was the pre-Israelite name for Jerusalem, capital city of Israel. The inhabitants of Jebus, the Jebusites, are listed as one of the Canaanite tribes who dwelt in the region of central Palestine (Ex 33:2). Some scholars believe that they were a non-Semitic people, possibly related to the Hurrians.

The name "Jebus" is not mentioned in any source outside of the Bible. The city's Hebrew name, Jerusalem, is found in the Egyptian Execration Texts (19th to 18th centuries B.C.) and in the documents from Tell el-Amarna in Egypt (14th to 13th centuries B.C.). Such evidence suggests that the city's name had been Jerusalem for several centuries.

Much remains unknown about Jebus. We do not know whether the Jebusites received their name from the city Jebus, or whether Jebus was named after the Jebusites who dwelt there. When the name was changed to Jebus is not known, nor whether, at some point, the city could have been called by both names. It is possible that David restored the earlier name, Jerusalem, when he became king of Israel and captured the city from the Jebusites (c. 1003 B.C.; 2Sa 5:6, 7).

Allotment for Benjamin

11 The first lot came up for the tribe of Benjamin according to its clans. Their allotted territory
lay between the tribes of Judah and Joseph:
12 On the north side their boundary began at the Jordan, passed the northern
slope of Jericho and headed west into the
hill country, coming out at the wilderness
of Beth Aven. 13 From there it crossed to
the south slope of Luz (that is, Bethel) and
went down to Ataroth Addar on the hill
south of Lower Beth Horon.
14 From the hill facing Beth Horon on the
south the boundary turned south along
the western side and came out at Kiriath
Baal (that is, Kiriath Jearim), a town of
the people of Judah. This was the western
side.
15 The southern side began at the outskirts of Kiriath Jearim on the west, and
the boundary came out at the spring of
the waters of Nephtoah. 16 The boundary
went down to the foot of the hill facing the
Valley of Ben Hinnom, north of the Valley
of Rephaim. It continued down the Hinnom Valley along the southern slope of
the Jebusite city and so to En Rogel. 17 It
then curved north, went to En Shemesh,
continued to Geliloth, which faces the Pass
of Adummim, and ran down to the Stone
of Bohan son of Reuben. 18 It continued to
the northern slope of Beth Arabah[a] and on
down into the Arabah. 19 It then went to the
northern slope of Beth Hoglah and came
out at the northern bay of the Dead Sea, at
the mouth of the Jordan in the south. This
was the southern boundary.
20 The Jordan formed the boundary on
the eastern side.
These were the boundaries that marked out
the inheritance of the clans of Benjamin on all
sides.
21 The tribe of Benjamin, according to its clans,
had the following towns:
Jericho, Beth Hoglah, Emek Keziz,
22 Beth Arabah, Zemaraim, Bethel, 23 Avvim,
Parah, Ophrah, 24 Kephar Ammoni, Ophni
and Geba—twelve towns and their villages.
25 Gibeon, Ramah, Beeroth, 26 Mizpah,
Kephirah, Mozah, 27 Rekem, Irpeel, Taralah, 28 Zelah, Haeleph, the Jebusite city
(that is, Jerusalem), Gibeah and Kiriath—
fourteen towns and their villages.
This was the inheritance of Benjamin for its
clans.

Allotment for Simeon

19 1 The second lot came out for the tribe of
Simeon according to its clans. Their inheritance lay within the territory of Judah. 2 It
included:
Beersheba (or Sheba),[b] Moladah, 3 Hazar Shual, Balah, Ezem, 4 Eltolad, Bethul,
Hormah, 5 Ziklag, Beth Markaboth, Hazar
Susah, 6 Beth Lebaoth and Sharuhen—
thirteen towns and their villages;
7 Ain, Rimmon, Ether and Ashan—four
towns and their villages— 8 and all the villages around these towns as far as Baalath
Beer (Ramah in the Negev).
This was the inheritance of the tribe of the Simeonites, according to its clans. 9 The inheritance
of the Simeonites was taken from the share of
Judah, because Judah's portion was more than
they needed. So the Simeonites received their
inheritance within the territory of Judah.

Allotment for Zebulun

10 The third lot came up for Zebulun according
to its clans:

[a] *18* Septuagint; Hebrew *slope facing the Arabah*
[b] *2* Or *Beersheba, Sheba*; 1 Chron. 4:28 does not have *Sheba.*

The boundary of their inheritance went as far as Sarid. 11Going west it ran to Maralah, touched Dabbesheth, and extended to the ravine near Jokneam. 12It turned east from Sarid toward the sunrise to the territory of Kisloth Tabor and went on to Daberath and up to Japhia. 13Then it continued eastward to Gath Hepher and Eth Kazin; it came out at Rimmon and turned toward Neah. 14There the boundary went around on the north to Hannathon and ended at the Valley of Iphtah El. 15Included were Kattath, Nahalal, Shimron, Idalah and Bethlehem. There were twelve towns and their villages.
16These towns and their villages were the inheritance of Zebulun, according to its clans.

Allotment for Issachar

17The fourth lot came out for Issachar according to its clans. 18Their territory included:
Jezreel, Kesulloth, Shunem, 19Hapharaim, Shion, Anaharath, 20Rabbith, Kishion, Ebez, 21Remeth, En Gannim, En Haddah and Beth Pazzez. 22The boundary touched Tabor, Shahazumah and Beth Shemesh, and ended at the Jordan. There were sixteen towns and their villages.
23These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Issachar, according to its clans.

The Cities of Refuge
The cities of refuge were established at strategic locations to provide a place of sanctuary for those who had k illed someone unintentionally. There they remained until either being judged innoc ent by the c ongregation or until the death of the current high priest. Only then could they return to their original home without fear of reprisal.

Allotment for Asher

24The fifth lot came out for the tribe of Asher according to its clans. 25Their territory included:
Helkath, Hali, Beten, Akshaph, 26Allammelek, Amad and Mishal. On the west the boundary touched Carmel and Shihor Libnath. 27It then turned east toward Beth Dagon, touched Zebulun and the Valley of Iphtah El, and went north to Beth Emek and Neiel, passing Kabul on the left. 28It went to Abdon,[a] Rehob, Hammon and Kanah, as far as Greater Sidon. 29The boundary then turned back toward Ramah and went to the fortified city of Tyre, turned toward Hosah and came out at the Mediterranean Sea in the region of Akzib, 30Ummah, Aphek and Rehob. There were twenty-two towns and their villages.
31These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Asher, according to its clans.

Allotment for Naphtali

32The sixth lot came out for Naphtali according to its clans:
33Their boundary went from Heleph and the large tree in Zaanannim, passing Adami Nekeb and Jabneel to Lakkum and ending at the Jordan. 34The boundary ran west through Aznoth Tabor and came out at Hukkok. It touched Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west and the Jordan[b] on the east. 35The fortified towns were Ziddim, Zer, Hammath, Rakkath, Kinnereth, 36Adamah, Ramah, Hazor, 37Kedesh, Edrei, En Hazor, 38Iron, Migdal El, Horem, Beth Anath and Beth Shemesh. There were nineteen towns and their villages.
39These towns and their villages were the inheritance of the tribe of Naphtali, according to its clans.

Allotment for Dan

40The seventh lot came out for the tribe of Dan according to its clans. 41The territory of their inheritance included:
Zorah, Eshtaol, Ir Shemesh, 42Shaalabbin, Aijalon, Ithlah, 43Elon, Timnah, Ekron,

[a] *28* Some Hebrew manuscripts (see also 21:30); most Hebrew manuscripts *Ebron* [b] *34* Septuagint; Hebrew *west, and Judah, the Jordan,*

Sumerian Cities of Refuge (Jos 20:1–9)

When Israel entered Canaan, they appointed six locations to be "cities of refuge" (Jos 20:2; Nu 35:13, 14). These cities were intended to stop the emergence of blood feuds, since the custom of blood revenge was long-standing (see Ge 9:6). They were places where someone who had killed another by accident (Jos 20:3) could go in order to escape the quick revenge of the dead person's family. These cities were not places where justice could be avoided, but places where further bloodshed could be prevented while an investigation took place (20:6).

Other Near Eastern peoples besides Israel provided places of refuge for its fugitives. A Sumerian incantation hymn dedicates a temple to the god Ninurta "on the battlefield by the cities of all the countries." The temple is described as the "house of refuge, wide house of the protective deity." As described in the Sumerian hymn, this house of refuge functioned as a "far-off ship moored in a foreign land" for the person who was confined to it. It was designated for "that person who in his own village, any man could cut him down."

The Sumerian text does not explicitly describe the reasons why the individual would need refuge in the temple of Ninurta. In contrast, the Israelite laws do specify what constituted an unintentional or accidental homicide (Nu 35:22, 23; Dt 19:4, 5). Both the Sumerians and Israelites believed that their gods offered protection to certain persons. Ninurta is called "the protective deity," and Moses establishes the cities of refuge at the command of Yahweh (Nu 35:9–11). Both cultures knew that a place of refuge was needed to curb uncontrollable blood feuds.

44 Eltekeh, Gibbethon, Baalath, 45 Jehud,
Bene Berak, Gath Rimmon, 46 Me Jarkon
and Rakkon, with the area facing Joppa.
47 (When the territory of the Danites was lost
to them, they went up and attacked Leshem,
took it, put it to the sword and occupied it. They
settled in Leshem and named it Dan after their
ancestor.)
48 These towns and their villages were the in-
heritance of the tribe of Dan, according to its
clans.

Allotment for Joshua

49 When they had finished dividing the land
into its allotted portions, the Israelites gave
Joshua son of Nun an inheritance among them,
50 as the LORD had commanded. They gave him
the town he asked for—Timnath Serah[a] in the
hill country of Ephraim. And he built up the
town and settled there.
51 These are the territories that Eleazar the
priest, Joshua son of Nun and the heads of the
tribal clans of Israel assigned by lot at Shiloh in
the presence of the LORD at the entrance to the
tent of meeting. And so they finished dividing
the land.

Cities of Refuge

20 1 Then the LORD said to Joshua: 2 "Tell the
Israelites to designate the cities of refuge,
as I instructed you through Moses, 3 so that any-
one who kills a person accidentally and unin-
tentionally may flee there and find protection from
the avenger of blood. 4 When they flee to one of
these cities, they are to stand in the entrance
of the city gate and state their case before the
elders of that city. Then the elders are to admit
the fugitive into their city and provide a place
to live among them. 5 If the avenger of blood
comes in pursuit, the elders must not surren-
der the fugitive, because the fugitive killed their
neighbor unintentionally and without malice
aforethought. 6 They are to stay in that city until
they have stood trial before the assembly and
until the death of the high priest who is serv-
ing at that time. Then they may go back to their
own home in the town from which they fled."
7 So they set apart Kedesh in Galilee in the
hill country of Naphtali, Shechem in the hill
country of Ephraim, and Kiriath Arba (that is,
Hebron) in the hill country of Judah. 8 East of
the Jordan (on the other side from Jericho)
they designated Bezer in the wilderness on the
plateau in the tribe of Reuben, Ramoth in Gile-
ad in the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan in
the tribe of Manasseh. 9 Any of the Israelites or
any foreigner residing among them who killed
someone accidentally could flee to these des-
ignated cities and not be killed by the avenger
of blood prior to standing trial before the as-
sembly.

Towns for the Levites

21 1 Now the family heads of the Levites ap-
proached Eleazar the priest, Joshua son
of Nun, and the heads of the other tribal fam-
ilies of Israel 2 at Shiloh in Canaan and said to
them, "The LORD commanded through Moses
that you give us towns to live in, with pasture-
lands for our livestock." 3 So, as the LORD had
commanded, the Israelites gave the Levites the
following towns and pasturelands out of their
own inheritance:

[a] *50* Also known as *Timnath Heres* (see Judges 2:9)

4The first lot came out for the Kohathites, according to their clans. The Levites who were descendants of Aaron the priest were allotted thirteen towns from the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin. 5The rest of Kohath's descendants were allotted ten towns from the clans of the tribes of Ephraim, Dan and half of Manasseh.

6The descendants of Gershon were allotted thirteen towns from the clans of the tribes of Issachar, Asher, Naphtali and the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan.

7The descendants of Merari, according to their clans, received twelve towns from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun.

8So the Israelites allotted to the Levites these towns and their pasturelands, as the LORD had commanded through Moses.

9From the tribes of Judah and Simeon they allotted the following towns by name 10(these towns were assigned to the descendants of Aaron who were from the Kohathite clans of the Levites, because the first lot fell to them):

11They gave them Kiriath Arba (that is, Hebron), with its surrounding pastureland, in the hill country of Judah. (Arba was the forefather of Anak.) 12But the fields and villages around the city they had given to Caleb son of Jephunneh as his possession.

13So to the descendants of Aaron the priest they gave Hebron (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Libnah, 14Jattir, Eshtemoa, 15Holon, Debir, 16Ain, Juttah and Beth Shemesh, together with their pasturelands—nine towns from these two tribes.

17And from the tribe of Benjamin they gave them Gibeon, Geba, 18Anathoth and Almon, together with their pasturelands—four towns.

19The total number of towns for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, came to thirteen, together with their pasturelands.

20The rest of the Kohathite clans of the Levites were allotted towns from the tribe of Ephraim:

21In the hill country of Ephraim they were given Shechem (a city of refuge for one accused of murder) and Gezer, 22Kibzaim and Beth Horon, together with their pasturelands—four towns.

23Also from the tribe of Dan they received Eltekeh, Gibbethon, 24Aijalon and Gath Rimmon, together with their pasturelands—four towns.

25From half the tribe of Manasseh they received Taanach and Gath Rimmon, together with their pasturelands—two towns.

26All these ten towns and their pasturelands were given to the rest of the Kohathite clans.

27The Levite clans of the Gershonites were given:

from the half-tribe of Manasseh,
Golan in Bashan (a city of refuge for one accused of murder) and Be Eshterah, together with their pasturelands—two towns;

28from the tribe of Issachar,
Kishion, Daberath, 29Jarmuth and En Gannim, together with their pasturelands—four towns;

30from the tribe of Asher,
Mishal, Abdon, 31Helkath and Rehob, together with their pasturelands—four towns;

32from the tribe of Naphtali,
Kedesh in Galilee (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Hammoth Dor and Kartan, together with their pasturelands—three towns.

33The total number of towns of the Gershonite clans came to thirteen, together with their pasturelands.

34The Merarite clans (the rest of the Levites) were given:

from the tribe of Zebulun,
Jokneam, Kartah, 35Dimnah and Nahalal, together with their pasturelands—four towns;

36from the tribe of Reuben,
Bezer, Jahaz, 37Kedemoth and Mephaath, together with their pasturelands—four towns;

38from the tribe of Gad,
Ramoth in Gilead (a city of refuge for one accused of murder), Mahanaim, 39Heshbon and Jazer, together with their pasturelands—four towns in all.

40The total number of towns allotted to the Merarite clans, who were the rest of the Levites, came to twelve.

41The towns of the Levites in the territory held by the Israelites were forty-eight in all, together with their pasturelands. 42Each of these towns had pasturelands surrounding it; this was true for all these towns.

43So the LORD gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their ancestors, and they took possession of it and settled there. 44The LORD gave them rest on every side, just as he had

THE LITERATURE OF UGARIT

Writings of "Canaanites" (Jos 24:11) were discovered in Syria at Ras Shamra, known by its ancient name Ugarit. The Canaanite texts include myths, epics, and legends written in a unique alphabetic script, now called Ugaritic.

Ugaritic Legends and Myths

Legend of Keret	Named for its major character, Keret, king of Hubur. Much of this story contains advice from El, the head of the gods, to Keret on where to find a new wife.
Legend of Aqhat	The story of King Aqhat, who is the son of Daniel. The goddess Anath has Aqhat killed in order to obtain his beautiful bow for her arsenal. The father Daniel buries his son and mourns for a 7-year period.
Baal-Anath Cycle	Various episodes describe cosmic battles between the divine forces of barrenness and productivity, sterility and fertility. The victor in these wars is sometimes Baal, sometimes Yam. Baal's consort, the goddess Anath, fights against Yam and Mot.

sworn to their ancestors. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the LORD gave all their enemies into their hands. 45Not one of all the LORD's good promises to Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

Eastern Tribes Return Home

22 1Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh 2and said to them, "You have done all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and you have obeyed me in everything I commanded. 3For a long time now—to this very day—you have not deserted your fellow Israelites but have carried out the mission the LORD your God gave you. 4Now that the LORD your God has given them rest as he promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you on the other side of the Jordan. 5But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD gave you: to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to keep his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul."

6Then Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their homes. 7(To the half-tribe of Manasseh Moses had given land in Bashan, and to the other half of the tribe Joshua gave land on the west side of the Jordan along with their fellow Israelites.) When Joshua sent them home, he blessed them, 8saying, "Return to your homes with your great wealth—with large herds of livestock, with silver, gold, bronze and iron, and a great quantity of clothing—and divide the plunder from your enemies with your fellow Israelites."

9So the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh left the Israelites at Shiloh in Canaan to return to Gilead, their own land, which they had acquired in accordance with the command of the LORD through Moses.

10When they came to Geliloth near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. 11And when the Israelites heard that they had built the altar on the border of Canaan at Geliloth near the Jordan on the Israelite side, 12the whole assembly of Israel gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them.

13So the Israelites sent Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, to the land of Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh. 14With him they sent ten of the chief men, one from each of the tribes of Israel, each the head of a family division among the Israelite clans.

15When they went to Gilead—to Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh—they said to them: 16"The whole assembly of the LORD says: 'How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the LORD and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? 17Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin, even though a plague fell on the community of the

Geography & Environment

It is notoriously difficult to estimate the size of ancient populations for the cities inhabited by the Israelites (Jos 21:43). Archaeological evidence suggests that the population of Palestine in the 14th century B.C. was not greater than 250,000 in all. The site of ancient Jericho is only eight and one-half acres in size, and most cities had fewer than 1,000 inhabitants.

LORD! 18And are you now turning away from the LORD?

"'If you rebel against the LORD today, tomorrow he will be angry with the whole community of Israel. 19If the land you possess is defiled, come over to the LORD's land, where the LORD's tabernacle stands, and share the land with us. But do not rebel against the LORD or against us by building an altar for yourselves, other than the altar of the LORD our God. 20When Achan son of Zerah was unfaithful in regard to the devoted things,[a] did not wrath come on the whole community of Israel? He was not the only one who died for his sin.'"

21Then Reuben, Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh replied to the heads of the clans of Israel: 22"The Mighty One, God, the LORD! The Mighty One, God, the LORD! He knows! And let Israel know! If this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the LORD, do not spare us this day. 23If we have built our own altar to turn away from the LORD and to offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, or to sacrifice fellowship offerings on it, may the LORD himself call us to account.

24"No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, 'What do you have to do with the LORD, the God of Israel? 25The LORD has made the Jordan a boundary between us and you—you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the LORD.' So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the LORD.

26"That is why we said, 'Let us get ready and build an altar—but not for burnt offerings or sacrifices.' 27On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the LORD at his sanctuary with our burnt offerings, sacrifices and fellowship offerings. Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, 'You have no share in the LORD.'

TIME CAPSULE		1213 to 1208 B.C.
1213–1203		Merenptah, pharaoh of Egypt
1211		Merenptah takes inventory of the wealth in Egypt's temples
1210		Merenptah captures the city of Gezer
1208		Libyan tribes and seaborne pirates attack Egypt
1208		Merenptah defeats the Libyans and Sea Peoples
1208		In the Israel Stele, Merenptah mentions Israel as one of his conquests

28"And we said, 'If they ever say this to us, or to our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the LORD's altar, which our ancestors built, not for burnt offerings and sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.'

29"Far be it from us to rebel against the LORD and turn away from him today by building an altar for burnt offerings, grain offerings and sacrifices, other than the altar of the LORD our God that stands before his tabernacle."

30When Phinehas the priest and the leaders of the community—the heads of the clans of the Israelites—heard what Reuben, Gad and Manasseh had to say, they were pleased. 31And Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, said to Reuben, Gad and Manasseh, "Today we know that the LORD is with us, because you have not been unfaithful to the LORD in this matter. Now you have rescued the Israelites from the LORD's hand."

32Then Phinehas son of Eleazar, the priest, and the leaders returned to Canaan from their meeting with the Reubenites and Gadites in Gilead and reported to the Israelites. 33They were glad to hear the report and praised God. And they talked no more about going to war against them to devastate the country where the Reubenites and the Gadites lived.

34And the Reubenites and the Gadites gave the altar this name: A Witness Between Us—that the LORD is God.

Joshua's Farewell to the Leaders

23 1After a long time had passed and the LORD had given Israel rest from all their enemies around them, Joshua, by then a very old man, 2summoned all Israel—their elders, leaders, judges and officials—and said to them: "I am very old. 3You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the LORD your God who fought for you. 4Remember how I have allotted as an inheritance for your tribes all the land of the nations that remain—the nations I conquered—between the Jordan and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. 5The LORD your God himself will push them out for your sake. He will drive them out before you, and you will take possession of their land, as the LORD your God promised you.

6"Be very strong; be careful to obey all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, without turning aside to the right or to the left. 7Do not associate with these nations that

[a] *20* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

The Brothers and the Moon God (Jos 24:2)

Joshua reminded the people that their ancestors once lived in the region of the Euphrates River, where they "worshiped other gods" (Jos 24:2). The specific ancestors named are Terah and his two sons, Abraham and Nahor. In this ancestral family we witness a split, with one son continuing in his father's faith, while the other son pursued a new faith.

Terah lived at Ur in southern Mesopotamia. He moved about 600 miles north to Harran in northern Mesopotamia (Ge 11:31), taking with him his son Abraham, Sarai (Abraham's wife), and Lot (Terah's grandson). Terah's other son, Nahor, is not reported to have made the journey to Harran at this time. Neither did Nahor take his brother Abraham's journey of faith to believe in the God Yahweh.

Who were the "other gods" (Jos 24:2) that Terah and Nahor worshiped? Since these individuals were associated with the cities of Ur and Harran, it is likely that one of the "other gods" was Sin, the Mesopotamian moon god. Both Ur and Harran were centers for the worship of this lunar deity. The main temples at Harran and at Ur were dedicated to Sin. Living in the religious culture of these cities, Terah's family, being polytheists, were probably moon worshipers.

The brothers Abraham and Nahor took different directions of faith, and their respective decisions influenced their offspring. The participants in property agreements of ancient times often sealed their agreements by invoking the gods of their ancestors. In such an agreement, Laban, the descendant of Nahor, swore by his ancestor's gods, while Jacob swore by Yahweh, the God of his father Isaac and grandfather Abraham (Ge 31:53).

remain among you; do not invoke the names
of their gods or swear by them. You must not
serve them or bow down to them. 8But you are
to hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have
until now.
9"The LORD has driven out before you great
and powerful nations; to this day no one has
been able to withstand you. 10One of you routs
a thousand, because the LORD your God fights
for you, just as he promised. 11So be very care-
ful to love the LORD your God.
12"But if you turn away and ally yourselves
with the survivors of these nations that remain
among you and if you intermarry with them
and associate with them, 13then you may be
sure that the LORD your God will no longer
drive out these nations before you. Instead,
they will become snares and traps for you,
whips on your backs and thorns in your eyes,
until you perish from this good land, which the
LORD your God has given you.
14"Now I am about to go the way of all the
earth. You know with all your heart and soul
that not one of all the good promises the LORD
your God gave you has failed. Every promise
has been fulfilled; not one has failed. 15But just
as all the good things the LORD your God has
promised you have come to you, so he will
bring on you all the evil things he has threat-
ened, until the LORD your God has destroyed
you from this good land he has given you. 16If
you violate the covenant of the LORD your God,
which he commanded you, and go and serve
other gods and bow down to them, the LORD's
anger will burn against you, and you will quick-
ly perish from the good land he has given you."

The Covenant Renewed at Shechem (Jos 24:15)

The ancient fortified city of Shechem was the first capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. Its name means "shoulder," probably because the city was built mainly on the slope, or shoulder, of Mount Ebal. Shechem was an important city long before the Israelites occupied Canaan. The city has been destroyed and rebuilt several times through the centuries.

Shechem is first mentioned in connection with Abraham's journey into the land of Canaan. When Abraham eventually came to Shechem, the Lord appeared to him and announced that this was the land he would give to Abraham's descendants. Because of this incident, Shechem is an important place in the religious history of the Hebrew people.

After the Israelites conquered Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, an altar was built at Shechem. Its building was accompanied by a covenant ceremony in obedience to the command of Moses, given earlier in Deuteronomy 27:12, 13. Because Shechem was situated between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, this covenant ceremony took on a symbolic meaning. To this day Mount Gerizim is forested, while Mount Ebal is barren. Thus the blessings of faithfully keeping the covenant were proclaimed from Mount Gerizim, while the curses of breaking the covenant were proclaimed from Mount Ebal.

At the close of his life, Joshua gathered the tribes of Israel at Shechem (Jos 24:1). Here he reviewed God's gracious dealings with Israel and performed a covenant-renewing ceremony on behalf of the nation. He closed his speech with his famous statement, "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve . . . but as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD" (Jos 24:15).

The Covenant Renewed at Shechem

24 [1]Then Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned the elders, leaders, judges and officials of Israel, and they presented themselves before God.

[2]Joshua said to all the people, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Long ago your ancestors, including Terah the father of Abraham and Nahor, lived beyond the Euphrates River and worshiped other gods. [3]But I took your father Abraham from the land beyond the Euphrates and led him throughout Canaan and gave him many descendants. I gave him Isaac, [4]and to Isaac I gave Jacob and Esau. I assigned the hill country of Seir to Esau, but Jacob and his family went down to Egypt.

[5]"'Then I sent Moses and Aaron, and I afflicted the Egyptians by what I did there, and I brought you out.[6]When I brought your people out of Egypt, you came to the sea, and the Egyptians pursued them with chariots and horsemen[a] as far as the Red Sea.[b] [7]But they cried to the LORD for help, and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians; he brought the sea over them and covered them. You saw with your own eyes what I did to the Egyptians. Then you lived in the wilderness for a long time.

Politics & Government
Ancient armies were compared to bees, wasps, and hornets (Jos 24:12) because they traveled on foot and were dangerous when they were in great numbers, like a swarm of insects. The Greeks often decorated their shields with pictures of animals, and the hornet was used this way.

[8]"'I brought you to the land of the Amorites who lived east of the Jordan. They fought against you, but I gave them into your hands. I destroyed them from before you, and you took possession of their land. [9]When Balak son of Zippor, the king of Moab, prepared to fight against Israel, he sent for Balaam son of Beor to put a curse on you. [10]But I would not listen to Balaam, so he blessed you again and again, and I delivered you out of his hand.

[11]"'Then you crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The citizens of Jericho fought against you, as did also the Amorites, Perizzites, Canaanites, Hittites, Girgashites, Hivites and Jebusites, but I gave them into your hands. [12]I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. [13]So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.'

[14]"Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. [15]But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

[16]Then the people answered, "Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! [17]It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our parents up out of Egypt, from that land

[a] 6 Or *charioteers* [b] 6 Or *the Sea of Reeds*

of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. 18And the LORD drove out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God."

19Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD. He is a holy God; he is a jealous God. He will not forgive your rebellion and your sins. 20If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, he will turn and bring disaster on you and make an end of you, after he has been good to you."

21But the people said to Joshua, "No! We will serve the LORD."

22Then Joshua said, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen to serve the LORD."

"Yes, we are witnesses," they replied.

23"Now then," said Joshua, "throw away the foreign gods that are among you and yield your hearts to the LORD, the God of Israel."

24And the people said to Joshua, "We will serve the LORD our God and obey him."

25On that day Joshua made a covenant for the people, and there at Shechem he reaffirmed for them decrees and laws. 26And Joshua recorded these things in the Book of the Law of God. Then he took a large stone and set it up there under the oak near the holy place of the LORD.

27"See!" he said to all the people. "This stone will be a witness against us. It has heard all the words the LORD has said to us. It will be a witness against you if you are untrue to your God."

28Then Joshua dismissed the people, each to their own inheritance.

Buried in the Promised Land

29After these things, Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. 30And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Serah[a] in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

31Israel served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had experienced everything the LORD had done for Israel.

32And Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, were buried at Shechem in the tract of land that Jacob bought for a hundred pieces of silver[b] from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. This became the inheritance of Joseph's descendants.

33And Eleazar son of Aaron died and was buried at Gibeah, which had been allotted to his son Phinehas in the hill country of Ephraim.

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[a] *30* Also known as *Timnath Heres* (see Judges 2:9)
[b] *32* Hebrew *hundred kesitahs*; a kesitah was a unit of money of unknown weight and value.

From Tribes to a Nation

A sweep of events marks Israel's rise from a loose confederation of tribes to a great kingdom. The fragmented tribes became the glory of Solomon.

(1200–930 B.C.)

The conquest of Canaan under Joshua is pictured as a united effort by the Israelite people. Yet because of natural boundaries and local concerns, Israel became an increasingly fragmented people. This was a time when international power in the ancient world was at a low ebb. Still Israel was barely surviving against such relatively insignificant peoples as the Moabites, Midianites, and Amalekites. The Israelite tribes were struggling to find a foothold in the new land. Israel's story makes a transition, however, from the loose-knit group of tribes to a highly organized monarchy. The tribes that were governed by divinely selected judges eventually became a kingdom ruled by a dynasty also chosen under divine guidance. This story is told through a dramatic sweep of events that produced the most powerful empire in the ancient Middle East, in the golden age under the leadership of David and Solomon.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

Archaeological excavations reveal that such Canaanite cities as Bethel or Beth Shemesh were flourishing urban cultures. Houses were well built, with paved floors, and cities had public drainage systems and fortified walls. Sophisticated pottery, art, jewelry, and statues of gods are found in large numbers. The pottery and other goods discovered suggest that trade with Syria, Egypt, and the Aegean flourished. Stone bowls from ancient Egypt were found in the ruins, attesting to a trade in "antiques."

Archaeology offers a different picture of Israelite settlements during this period. Towns appeared in the hill country for the first time, including such places as Shiloh, Mizpah, and Gibeah, among others. The houses were built of stones stacked together, with no attempt to shape the stones to fit, and with no mortar to hold them together. Art and pottery were crude, and there are almost no signs of trade. This picture fits with that in the Book of Judges: the Israelites were poor, oppressed, and threatened by the superior cultures of their new neighbors; they were barely clinging to existence.

The transition from judges to kings can be seen in archaeology. Gibeah, Saul's fortress, has been excavated, revealing a two-story building, well built, with at least one watchtower. A higher quality pottery was found there, and—most important—an iron plowpoint. Israel was beginning to use iron. Yet it was David who "provided a large amount of iron" (1Ch 22:3) for the construction of a temple. All the iron fastenings that David stored up made the building of Solomon's temple possible. Iron nails held longer and tighter than those of bronze.

While David began various building projects in Jerusalem (2Sa 5:9, 11), very little has been uncovered by archaeologists. Excavations at Jerusalem do show an ingenious water system through which David's soldiers may have climbed to capture the city, when it was known as Jebus (2Sa 5:8). The situation changes, however, with David's son Solomon. Several archaeological finds lend support to the biblical picture of Solomon as Israel's first great builder.

Solomon was a trader in chariots and horses, buying chariots in Egypt and selling them farther north and east. Chariot cities built by Solomon include Megiddo, Hazor, and Gezer. All of these cities show evidence of fortifications dating to Solomon's time,

particularly the six-chambered gates that were common in Solomon's building enterprises.

Excavations at Ezion Geber, on the Gulf of Aqaba, have uncovered the remains of a metal industry, apparently worked by slaves. Solomon controlled the mines of the Sinai and had a monopoly on the metal industry of his day. It was from these mines, most likely, that the great bronze doors and other metal trappings of the temple came. Ezion Geber was also a seaport, from which Solomon's ships went on trading expeditions to Africa every third year (1Ki 10:22). Some archaeological evidence of the spice trade with Arabia suggests that the famous queen of Sheba visited Solomon as much for economic reasons as to hear his wisdom.

Israel now organized itself into a loose confederation of independent tribes.

Solomon's most significant building project was the temple and royal palace. The plan of Solomon's temple, as described in the Bible, is similar to plans of other temples in Canaan and Phoenicia. In fact, a temple dedicated to Yahweh has been excavated near the city of Arad in the Negev. It was part of a royal fortress from the time of Solomon, and differs from the Jerusalem temple mainly in having a broad room, rather than the long holy place. The 20-year temple-palace enterprise (2Ch 8:1) was impressive testimony that Israel had made the transition from tribes to a great nation.

THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

Much of Israel's history reflects the relative strength and weakness of Egypt and the empires of Mesopotamia. These major empires were weak during the reigns of David and Solomon, allowing both kings to expand their Israelite kingdoms. Yet other peoples interacted with Israel during the settlement and kingdom period.

The Sea Peoples were a great migration of seaborne groups coming out of Greece and the regions around the Aegean Sea. They overran ancient civilizations in Troy, Cyprus, and Asia Minor. They attacked Egypt by both land and sea, and Pharaoh Ramesses III (1184–1153 B.C.), while preventing their advance into Egypt, did allow them to settle in Egyptian strongholds on the Palestine coast. One of the Sea Peoples, the Philistines, controlled much of Palestine, and only under King David were the Israelites able to compete with and ultimately defeat the Philistines.

The Canaanites were a highly cultured people in the land when Israel arrived, with superiority in areas of building, art, trade, and economics. But their most important threat to Israel was in the area of religion. A nomadic people trying to settle in the land must have found it almost impossible not to think the gods of the Canaanites were powerful indeed, giving the Canaanite people such wealth and power. The documents found at Ugarit (Ras Shamra) include many of the myths, rituals, hymns, and prayers of the Canaanites.

The Arameans were the various tribes and kingdoms located in southern Syria, just northeast of Canaan. Cushan-Rishathaim, an unknown king from the early days of the judges (Jdg 3:8, 10), is sometimes identified as an Aramean. More definite references to Arameans (or Syrians), though, come from the time of David. Aram often refers to Aram-Damascus, the state whose capital was Damascus. David eventually conquered an alliance of Arameans from Damascus and from Zobah, an Aramean kingdom north of Damascus ruled by King Hadadezer (2Sa 8:3–8). Damascus regained its independence from Israel during Solomon's reign (1Ki 11:23–25).

Several nomadic or seminomadic groups raided the settled lands from time to time. The Amalekites are mentioned only in the Bible. The Midianites threatened Israel during the era of the judges and were opposed by Israel's judge Gideon (Jdg 6–8). What made such raids successful was the domestication of the camel, which freed travelers (and raiders) to range farther afield into the deserts. By David's reign these raiding groups were no longer serious threats.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Biblical books which relate Israel's transition to a kingdom include Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Chronicles, and parts of 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles. These books are a special kind of history: they not only give data about the past, but they try to explain what the data mean and how God was active in the history of the people. Judges is a collection of narratives about tribal heroes and heroines in the period between the death of Joshua and the time of Samuel. Ruth is about a foreign woman through whom God works to bring forth King David. 1 and 2 Samuel report the end of the judges and the rise of the monarchy in Israel. They include the lives of Samuel, Saul, and David.

The histories of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles report the golden age of monarchy under David and Solomon. Many of Israel's writings were associated with these great kings. Traditionally, more of the Psalms were ascribed to David than to any other person. The glory years of Solomon are reflected in the love songs of the Song of Solomon, in the collections of sayings on the good life in Proverbs, and in the ultimate questions of life and death covered in Ecclesiastes.

A TRIBAL CONFEDERATION IN ISRAEL

Having established at least a foothold in the land of Canaan, Israel now organized itself into a loose confederation of independent tribes. The link connecting these clans was their God. The tribes celebrated common religious festivals at the shrine where the ark of the covenant was kept. The shrine was movable, but it was most often located at Gilgal and Shiloh.

The tribal confederation had military purposes as well. When an outside people invaded, the clans were to join in a holy war. Some leader would take the initiative and summon the tribes to battle. These leaders, for the most part, we call the judges.

The judges led makeshift armies, but they did not have to face the forces of the major empires. Through most of the period of the judges, Egypt and the countries of Mesopotamia were weak and preoccupied with internal problems. The wars of the Book of Judges are waged against unconquered Canaanites and such small neighboring nations as Edom, Midian, and Ammon.

Toward the end of the Late Bronze Age (1500–1200 B.C.), though, a new group began to arrive in the land of Canaan, evidently from across the Mediterranean. They had war chariots and knew how to use iron, giving them a military advantage over the Israelites, who only had bronze. These seaborne bands, called the Sea Peoples, settled the fertile land along the southern coast. Among these peoples was the group called by the name "Philistines."

The presence of the Philistines helps to explain why the tribe of Dan, to whom Joshua allotted the Philistine coastland, never conquered any of its portion. Despite the uneven efforts of the Danite judge Samson, the tribe of Dan ultimately left the coast and found itself a new homeland far to the north (Jdg 18:1).

TRANSITION

The Book of Judges

The brief introduction of the Book of Judges (Jdg 1:1—2:6) again makes clear that the Israelite invasion of Canaan was incomplete. The major portion of the book (3:7—16:31) focuses on the judges, the men and women by whom God delivered his people from oppressors. Though the judges were usually military leaders, they also exercised administrative duties, and some of them are not reported to have led armies at all (such as the "minor judges"; cf. Jdg 10:1–5; 12:8–15).

By the end of the book, the confederacy appears ready to collapse. The tribes had never been entirely unified either in worship or war. Four of them, Reuben, Gad (Gilead), Dan, and Asher, seem not to have responded to Deborah's summons to assist the other tribes in battle (Jdg 5:16, 17). By the latter stages of the judges' period, the tribes had fallen into idolatry and civil war. The refrain of the final chapters—"In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit" (17:6; 21:25)—points ahead to 1 Samuel and the beginning of the monarchy.

• **Judges 1:1—3:6**

Judges

Israel Fights the Remaining Canaanites

1:1 After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, "Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Canaanites?"

2 The LORD answered, "Judah shall go up; I have given the land into their hands."

3 The men of Judah then said to the Simeonites their fellow Israelites, "Come up with us into the territory allotted to us, to fight against the Canaanites. We in turn will go with you into yours." So the Simeonites went with them.

4 When Judah attacked, the LORD gave the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands, and they struck down ten thousand men at Bezek. 5 It was there that they found Adoni-Bezek and fought against him, putting to rout the Canaanites and Perizzites. 6 Adoni-Bezek fled, but they chased him and caught him, and cut off his thumbs and big toes.

7 Then Adoni-Bezek said, "Seventy kings with their thumbs and big toes cut off have picked up scraps under my table. Now God has paid me back for what I did to them." They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

8 The men of Judah attacked Jerusalem also and took it. They put the city to the sword and set it on fire.

9 After that, Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites living in the hill country, the Negev and the western foothills. 10 They advanced against the Canaanites living in Hebron (formerly called Kiriath Arba) and defeated Sheshai, Ahiman and Talmai. 11 From there they advanced against the people living in Debir (formerly called Kiriath Sepher).

12 And Caleb said, "I will give my daughter Aksah in marriage to the man who attacks and captures Kiriath Sepher." 13 Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, took it; so Caleb gave his daughter Aksah to him in marriage.

Arad in the Inscriptions (Jdg 1:16)

The southern region of Judah, a dry wilderness area, was known as "the Negev" (Jdg 1:16). Arad was a Canaanite town in the Negev, thus the writer of Judges employs the description "in the Negev near Arad." The site of Arad was a large fortified town during the Early Bronze Age (c. 3000 B.C.) and showed extensive trade connections with Old Kingdom Egypt. This Arad was destroyed about 2700 B.C.

Another Arad emerged later during the Iron Age (c. 1200–600 B.C.), as is known from various inscriptions. Pieces of broken pottery (called by the Greek name *ostraca*) were used as inexpensive writing material, being inscribed with pen and ink. The name "Arad" appears on these pottery fragments or potsherds, as well as being mentioned in the records of Shishak, the Egyptian pharaoh (945–924 B.C.).

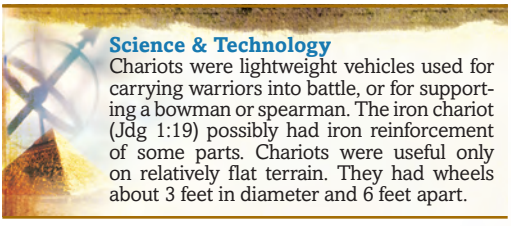
Over 200 ostraca have been found at the site of Arad. One inscription mentions a "House of Yahweh," using the personal name of Israel's God. This shrine or temple has in fact been found, containing a number of stone altars.

The inscriptions also list a number of Hebrew names of priestly families. The most prominent name is that of a particular "Eliashib," who held a leadership position. The common name "Eliashib" appears often in the Old Testament (1Ch 3:24; 24:12; Ezr 10:6, 24, 27; Ne 3:1), although none are the same person as the Arad Eliashib.

Pharaoh Shishak claims to have captured Arad during a raid of Palestine in 925 B.C. An inscription on the walls of the temple of Karnak, listing over 150 towns which Shishak captured, includes the citadel of Arad. Archaeological excavations show that Arad was destroyed by fire during Shishak's time.

14 One day when she came to Othniel, she urged him[a] to ask her father for a field. When
she got off her donkey, Caleb asked her, "What
can I do for you?"
15 She replied, "Do me a special favor. Since
you have given me land in the Negev, give me
also springs of water." So Caleb gave her the
upper and lower springs.
16 The descendants of Moses' father-in-law,
the Kenite, went up from the City of Palms[b]
with the people of Judah to live among the in-
habitants of the Desert of Judah in the Negev
near Arad.
17 Then the men of Judah went with the Sim-
eonites their fellow Israelites and attacked the
Canaanites living in Zephath, and they total-
ly destroyed[c] the city. Therefore it was called
Hormah.[d] 18 Judah also took[e] Gaza, Ashkelon
and Ekron—each city with its territory.
19 The LORD was with the men of Judah. They
took possession of the hill country, but they
were unable to drive the people from the plains,
because they had chariots fitted with iron. 20 As
Moses had promised, Hebron was given to Ca-
leb, who drove from it the three sons of Anak.
21 The Benjamites, however, did not drive out
the Jebusites, who were living in Jerusalem; to
this day the Jebusites live there with the Ben-
jamites.
22 Now the tribes of Joseph attacked Bethel,
and the LORD was with them. 23 When they sent
men to spy out Bethel (formerly called Luz),
24 the spies saw a man coming out of the city
and they said to him, "Show us how to get into
the city and we will see that you are treated
well." 25 So he showed them, and they put the
city to the sword but spared the man and his
whole family. 26 He then went to the land of the
Hittites, where he built a city and called it Luz,
which is its name to this day.
27 But Manasseh did not drive out the people
of Beth Shan or Taanach or Dor or Ibleam or
Megiddo and their surrounding settlements,
for the Canaanites were determined to live
in that land. 28 When Israel became strong,
they pressed the Canaanites into forced la-
bor but never drove them out completely.
29 Nor did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites
living in Gezer, but the Canaanites continued

[a] *14* Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate *Othniel, he urged her*
[b] *16* That is, Jericho [c] *17* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. [d] *17* *Hormah* means *destruction.* [e] *18* Hebrew; Septuagint *Judah did not take*



Science & Technology

Chariots were lightweight vehicles used for carrying warriors into battle, or for supporting a bowman or spearman. The iron chariot (Jdg 1:19) possibly had iron reinforcement of some parts. Chariots were useful only on relatively flat terrain. They had wheels about 3 feet in diameter and 6 feet apart.

to live there among them. 30Neither did Zebulun drive out the Canaanites living in Kitron or Nahalol, so these Canaanites lived among them, but Zebulun did subject them to forced labor. 31Nor did Asher drive out those living in Akko or Sidon or Ahlab or Akzib or Helbah or Aphek or Rehob. 32The Asherites lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land because they did not drive them out. 33Neither did Naphtali drive out those living in Beth Shemesh or Beth Anath; but the Naphtalites too lived among the Canaanite inhabitants of the land, and those living in Beth Shemesh and Beth Anath became forced laborers for them. 34The Amorites confined the Danites to the hill country, not allowing them to come down into the plain. 35And the Amorites were determined also to hold out in Mount Heres, Aijalon and Shaalbim, but when the power of the tribes of Joseph increased, they too were pressed into forced labor. 36The boundary of the Amorites was from Scorpion Pass to Sela and beyond.

The Angel of the LORD at Bokim

2 1The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land I swore to give to your ancestors. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, 2and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? 3And I have also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; they will become traps for you, and their gods will become snares to you.'"

4When the angel of the LORD had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud, 5and they called that place Bokim.[a] There they offered sacrifices to the LORD.

Disobedience and Defeat

6After Joshua had dismissed the Israelites, they went to take possession of the land, each to their own inheritance. 7The people served the LORD throughout the lifetime of Joshua and of the elders who outlived him and who had seen all the great things the LORD had done for Israel.

8Joshua son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of a hundred and ten. 9And they buried him in the land of his inheritance, at Timnath Heres[b] in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash.

10After that whole generation had been gathered to their ancestors, another generation grew up who knew neither the LORD nor what he had done for Israel. 11Then the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD and served the Baals. 12They forsook the LORD, the God of their ancestors, who had brought them out of Egypt. They followed and worshiped various gods of the peoples around them. They aroused the LORD's anger 13because they forsook him and served Baal and the Ashtoreths. 14In his anger against Israel the LORD gave them into the hands of raiders who plundered them. He sold them into the hands of their enemies all around, whom they were no longer able to resist. 15Whenever Israel went out to fight, the hand of the LORD was against them to defeat them, just as he had sworn to them. They were in great distress.

16Then the LORD raised up judges,[c] who saved them out of the hands of these raiders. 17Yet they would not listen to their judges but prostituted themselves to other gods and worshiped them. They quickly turned from the ways of their ancestors, who had been obedi-

[a] *5 Bokim* means *weepers.* [b] *9* Also known as *Timnath Serah* (see Joshua 19:50 and 24:30) [c] *16* Or *leaders*; similarly in verses 17-19

Ruins of the fortress at Arad

Organizing a Pantheon of Many Gods (Jdg 2:11–13)

When the Israelites "served the Baals" (Jdg 2:11), they were buying into the mythological structure of the universe understood by the local culture. The gods of the religious world of Syria-Palestine were formed into a four-level hierarchy not unlike a small, localized bureaucracy.

The highest authorities of the Canaanite universe were the deities El and Asherah, the parents of all the other gods. They were the actual rulers of the cosmos and the final court of appeal for both gods and humans. As highest rulers, they assigned each of their offspring responsibility for specific tasks in governing the world.

The second level of deities was an especially rowdy group, as the myths recovered from Ugarit demonstrate. These gods were the powers behind the forces of nature, the political fates of cities and empires, and even behind abstractions, such as justice. Very powerful, they ordered the universe, promoted the welfare of their worshipers, and advanced themselves against other deities. Conflicting interests of their divine wills explained for devotees why the world did not always operate as it ought.

A third level of gods served as craftsmen and artisans for the higher deities. As specialists in the professions, their expertise was unsurpassed. They might contradict and even argue with higher-level gods when ordered to do things they themselves knew to be folly. While they obeyed orders, they were not averse to mocking their superiors for the inferior knowledge those gods had of the work at hand.

At the bottom level of the divine hierarchy were the messenger deities—the angels. They were the slave labor of the Canaanite heaven. The position of any of the higher deities in the four-level bureaucracy was determined by El and Asherah and could be changed at any time, particularly for misuse of authority.

Israel's temptation to "try out" some of these deities sometimes was too great (Jdg 2:12). Besides Asherah (3:7), they knew of second-level gods and goddesses, such as Baal (3:7) and Anath (3:31). The idol that Hezekiah called Nehushtan (2Ki 18:4) represents a healing deity of the third level.

ent to the LORD's commands. 18Whenever the LORD raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived; for the LORD relented because of their groaning under those who oppressed and afflicted them. 19But when the judge died, the people returned to ways even more corrupt than those of their ancestors, following other gods and serving and worshiping them. They refused to give up their evil practices and stubborn ways.

20Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel and said, "Because this nation has violated the covenant I ordained for their ancestors and has not listened to me, 21I will no longer drive out before them any of the nations Joshua left when he died. 22I will use them to test Israel and see whether they will keep the way of the LORD and walk in it as their ancestors did." 23The LORD had allowed those nations to remain; he did not drive them out at once by giving them into the hands of Joshua.

3 1These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan 2(he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): 3the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. 4They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD's commands, which he had given their ancestors through Moses.

5The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 6They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.

TRANSITION

How Long Was the Era of the Judges?

After Joshua's death conditions changed quickly for the Israelite tribes. Their experiences are described in Jdg 2:11—3:6 as a recurring cycle of apostasy, oppression, supplication, and deliverance. The collection of stories in 3:7—16:31 reports the exploits of Israel's judges during 7 cycles of oppression and deliverance. Despite many attempts, scholars have not been able to determine the length of time represented in these stories.

The book provides various numbers for the years of the judges' period. Three types of chronological information indicate the number of years (1) that Israel was oppressed (e.g., Jdg 3:8), (2) that Israel had peace following a deliverance (e.g., Jdg 3:11), and (3) that particular individuals served as judge (e.g., Jdg 10:2). When tabulated, the total of these years is 410, but this figure does not necessarily represent the length of this period. Interpreting the numbers is complicated by the possibility of overlapping time periods and of symbolic numbers.

It was common to list periods chronologically which were either contemporaneous

or overlapping. Since most of the judges were confined to particular tribes or regions, it is reasonable to assume considerable overlapping of the periods and events. The report that in one period Israel was oppressed by both Philistia and Ammon (Jdg 10:7) could suggest that Jephthah and Samson may have been living and working at the same time.

Many of the numbers in the Book of Judges may be symbolic, rather than chronological. Twelve judges are mentioned, although a detailed account is given for only six. While there were possibly many more judges than these, the number 12 speaks in symbolic fashion of the whole of an era. The same is true for the 7 cycles of oppression and deliverance, with 7 also depicting a sense of completeness. Also the duration of leadership ascribed to many of the judges is in units or multiples of 40, a number frequently denoting a generation of unspecified length.

An exact, precise dating of the judges' period will remain unknown. No references to contemporary events of this period are available. The figure of 300 years in Jdg 11:26 represents a period from Israel's victory over King Sihon of Heshbon (Nu 21:25, 26) to Jephthah's speech, but is difficult to coordinate with other evidence. All that can be said with certainty is that the period of Israel's judges stretches from the entry into Canaan (around 1406 or 1235 B.C.) until the establishment of the monarchy with Saul (around 1050 or 1020 B.C.).

• **Judges 3:7—21:25**

Judges

Othniel

3 :7 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs. [8]The anger of the LORD burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim,[a] to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years. [9]But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. [10]The Spirit of the LORD came on him, so that he became Israel's judge[b] and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him. [11]So the land had peace for forty years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.

Ehud

[12]Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and because they did this evil the LORD gave Eglon king of Moab power over Israel. [13]Getting the Ammonites and Amalekites to join him, Eglon came and attacked Israel, and they took possession of the City of Palms.[c] [14]The Israelites were subject to Eglon king of Moab for eighteen years.

[15]Again the Israelites cried out to the LORD, and he gave them a deliverer—Ehud, a left-handed man, the son of Gera the Benjamite. The Israelites sent him with tribute to Eglon king of Moab. [16]Now Ehud had made a double-edged sword about a cubit[d] long, which he strapped to his right thigh under his clothing. [17]He presented the tribute to Eglon king of Moab, who was a very fat man. [18]After Ehud had presented the tribute, he sent on their way those who had carried it. [19]But on reaching the stone images near Gilgal he himself went back to Eglon and said, "Your Majesty, I have a secret message for you."

The king said to his attendants, "Leave us!" And they all left.

[20]Ehud then approached him while he was sitting alone in the upper room of his palace[e] and said, "I have a message from God for you." As the king rose from his seat, [21]Ehud reached with his left hand, drew the sword from his right thigh and plunged it into the king's belly. [22]Even the handle sank in after the blade, and his bowels discharged. Ehud did not pull the sword out, and the fat closed in over it. [23]Then Ehud went out to the porch[f]; he shut the doors of the upper room behind him and locked them.

[24]After he had gone, the servants came and found the doors of the upper room locked. They said, "He must be relieving himself in the inner room of the palace." [25]They waited to the point of embarrassment, but when he did not

[a] *8* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia [b] *10* Or *leader* [c] *13* That is, Jericho [d] *16* That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters [e] *20* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain; also in verse 24. [f] *23* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

TIME CAPSULE		1207 to 1200 B.C.
1207		Assyrian king Tukulti-Ninurta I assassinated in his own palace
1203		After Merenptah's death, Egypt declines into civil wars
1200		Mycenaean civilization of Greece is destroyed, possibly by invading Dorians
1200–800		The Dark Age of Greece
1200–600		Iron Age
1200		Rise of iron technology (carburization)

Anath, Goddess of War (Jdg 3:31)

The judge Shamgar was known as "son of Anath" (Jdg 3:31). Anath was the name of the Syro-Palestinian goddess of war, and it is not certain whether "Anath" in the judge's name refers to a location, a traditional family name, or the goddess herself. Regardless, it is noteworthy that the Bible, in recording the judge's military victory, has kept the goddess's name unchanged.

Anath is well known from the documents discovered at Ugarit. Daughter of the supreme god El, she was indulged by her father to the point of being spoiled. As a goddess Anath was greedy, self-consumed, ruthless, and violent. In a vivid symbol of the mayhem of war, she is described as crushing soldiers like grapes and draping herself with pieces of their corpses while she is in her own home. When she wanted something, she used violent brute force to attain it, without regard for the morality of the action.

Because of the close relationship of Anath with the storm god Baal, she is referred to either as Baal's sister or spouse. As his partner, Anath rescues him from the predicaments into which he rather stupidly entangled himself. In one case the goddess even killed Mot, the god of death, to reclaim Baal from the netherworld. Clearly dangerous to humans and deities, Anath's loyalty to Baal appears to remain constant.

The ruler of any city or nation considered it of great importance to have Anath's protection as the goddess of war. She is described in the Ugaritic texts as nursing the future king of the city in his youth. This was a way of saying that the heir to the throne was brought up properly to defend the area; that is, to be a warrior. The association of her name with Shamgar's may, in fact, have something to do with his status as such a leader and warrior.

open the doors of the room, they took a key and unlocked them. There they saw their lord fallen to the floor, dead.

26While they waited, Ehud got away. He passed by the stone images and escaped to Seirah. 27When he arrived there, he blew a trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went down with him from the hills, with him leading them.

28"Follow me," he ordered, "for the LORD has given Moab, your enemy, into your hands." So they followed him down and took possession of the fords of the Jordan that led to Moab; they allowed no one to cross over. 29At that time they struck down about ten thousand Moabites, all vigorous and strong; not one escaped. 30That day Moab was made subject to Israel, and the land had peace for eighty years.

Shamgar

31After Ehud came Shamgar son of Anath, who struck down six hundred Philistines with an oxgoad. He too saved Israel.

Deborah

4 1Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, now that Ehud was dead. 2So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. 3Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help.

4Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading[a] Israel at that time. 5She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided. 6She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. 7I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'"

8Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go."

9"Certainly I will go with you," said Deborah. "But because of the course you are taking, the honor will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." So Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh. 10There Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali, and ten thousand men went up under his command. Deborah also went up with him.

11Now Heber the Kenite had left the other Kenites, the descendants of Hobab, Moses' brother-in-law,[b] and pitched his tent by the great tree in Zaanannim near Kedesh.

Science & Technology

The chariot was the main offensive weapon of the armies of that time (Jdg 4:3). It carried a soldier with a bow. As the famous paintings of Tutankhamun illustrate, archers could shoot from a chariot while it was moving at full speed. If they had compound bows, they could shoot beyond the range of ordinary bows.

[a] *4* Traditionally *judging* [b] *11* Or *father-in-law*

12When they told Sisera that Barak son of
Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, 13Sisera
summoned from Harosheth Haggoyim to the
Kishon River all his men and his nine hundred
chariots fitted with iron.
14Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! This is
the day the LORD has given Sisera into your
hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?"
So Barak went down Mount Tabor, with ten
thousand men following him. 15At Barak's ad-
vance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his char-
iots and army by the sword, and Sisera got
down from his chariot and fled on foot.
16Barak pursued the chariots and army as far
as Harosheth Haggoyim, and all Sisera's troops
fell by the sword; not a man was left. 17Sisera,
meanwhile, fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the
wife of Heber the Kenite, because there was an
alliance between Jabin king of Hazor and the
family of Heber the Kenite.
18Jael went out to meet Sisera and said to
him, "Come, my lord, come right in. Don't be
afraid." So he entered her tent, and she cov-
ered him with a blanket.
19"I'm thirsty," he said. "Please give me some
water." She opened a skin of milk, gave him a
drink, and covered him up.
20"Stand in the doorway of the tent," he told
her. "If someone comes by and asks you, 'Is
anyone in there?' say 'No.'"
21But Jael, Heber's wife, picked up a tent peg
and a hammer and went quietly to him while
he lay fast asleep, exhausted. She drove the
peg through his temple into the ground, and
he died.
22Just then Barak came by in pursuit of Sis-
era, and Jael went out to meet him. "Come,"
she said, "I will show you the man you're look-
ing for." So he went in with her, and there lay
Sisera with the tent peg through his temple—
dead.
23On that day God subdued Jabin king of
Canaan before the Israelites. 24And the hand
of the Israelites pressed harder and harder
against Jabin king of Canaan until they de-
stroyed him.

Daily Life & Customs

Jael treated Sisera like a guest (Jdg 4:18). Her tent and her blanket were symbols of the protection he would enjoy through the laws of hospitality. The Kenites, to whom Jael's husband belonged, however, were a seminomadic tribe which was generally favorable to the Israelites (4:17). In a choice between conflicting loyalties, Jael rejected the relations established with Hazor by her husband, and killed Hazor's general Sisera.

The Song of Deborah

5 1On that day Deborah and Barak son of
Abinoam sang this song:

2"When the princes in Israel take the lead,
when the people willingly offer
themselves—
praise the LORD!

3"Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers!
I, even I, will sing to[a] the LORD;
I will praise the LORD, the God of Israel, in
song.

4"When you, LORD, went out from Seir,
when you marched from the land of
Edom,
the earth shook, the heavens poured,
the clouds poured down water.
5The mountains quaked before the LORD, the
One of Sinai,
before the LORD, the God of Israel.

6"In the days of Shamgar son of Anath,
in the days of Jael, the highways were
abandoned;
travelers took to winding paths.
7Villagers in Israel would not fight;
they held back until I, Deborah,
arose,
until I arose, a mother in Israel.
8God chose new leaders
when war came to the city gates,
but not a shield or spear was seen
among forty thousand in Israel.
9My heart is with Israel's princes,
with the willing volunteers among the
people.
Praise the LORD!

10"You who ride on white donkeys,
sitting on your saddle blankets,
and you who walk along the road,
consider 11the voice of the singers[b] at the
watering places.
They recite the victories of the
LORD,
the victories of his villagers in
Israel.

"Then the people of the LORD
went down to the city gates.
12'Wake up, wake up, Deborah!
Wake up, wake up, break out in song!
Arise, Barak!
Take captive your captives, son of
Abinoam.'

[a] *3* Or *of* [b] *11* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Beliefs & Ideas
Many people considered the stars to rule human affairs, either directly or as signs of divine powers. When the stars had turned against Sisera (Jdg 5:20), it meant that God ruled over all other powers, however they may be conceived. It seems also that God stirred up the Kishon River against Sisera's chariots.

13 "The remnant of the nobles came down;
the people of the LORD came down to me
against the mighty.
14 Some came from Ephraim, whose roots
were in Amalek;
Benjamin was with the people who
followed you.
From Makir captains came down,
from Zebulun those who bear a
commander's[a] staff.
15 The princes of Issachar were with
Deborah;
yes, Issachar was with Barak,
sent under his command into the valley.
In the districts of Reuben
there was much searching of heart.
16 Why did you stay among the sheep pens[b]
to hear the whistling for the flocks?
In the districts of Reuben
there was much searching of heart.
17 Gilead stayed beyond the Jordan.
And Dan, why did he linger by the
ships?
Asher remained on the coast
and stayed in his coves.
18 The people of Zebulun risked their very
lives;
so did Naphtali on the terraced fields.

19 "Kings came, they fought,
the kings of Canaan fought.
At Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo,
they took no plunder of silver.
20 From the heavens the stars fought,
from their courses they fought against
Sisera.
21 The river Kishon swept them away,
the age-old river, the river Kishon.
March on, my soul; be strong!
22 Then thundered the horses' hooves—
galloping, galloping go his mighty steeds.
23 'Curse Meroz,' said the angel of the LORD.
'Curse its people bitterly,
because they did not come to help the
LORD,
to help the LORD against the mighty.'

24 "Most blessed of women be Jael,
the wife of Heber the Kenite,
most blessed of tent-dwelling women.
25 He asked for water, and she gave him milk;
in a bowl fit for nobles she brought him
curdled milk.
26 Her hand reached for the tent peg,
her right hand for the workman's
hammer.
She struck Sisera, she crushed his head,
she shattered and pierced his temple.
27 At her feet he sank,
he fell; there he lay.
At her feet he sank, he fell;
where he sank, there he fell—dead.

28 "Through the window peered Sisera's
mother;
behind the lattice she cried out,
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?
Why is the clatter of his chariots
delayed?'
29 The wisest of her ladies answer her;
indeed, she keeps saying to herself,
30 'Are they not finding and dividing the spoils:
a woman or two for each man,
colorful garments as plunder for Sisera,
colorful garments embroidered,
highly embroidered garments for my
neck—
all this as plunder?'

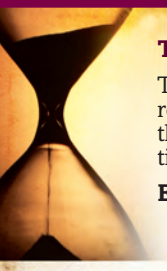
31 "So may all your enemies perish, LORD!
But may all who love you be like the sun
when it rises in its strength."

Then the land had peace forty years.

Gideon

6 1 The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, and for seven years he gave them into the hands of the Midianites. 2 Because the power of Midian was so oppressive, the Israelites prepared shelters for themselves in mountain

[a] *14* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] *16* Or *the campfires*; or *the saddlebags*



THE CYCLES OF THE JUDGES (PART 1)

The history of Israel's judges is told in two parts. An introduction (Jdg 2:11—3:6) describes a recurring cycle of apostasy, oppression, supplication, and deliverance. The numbers given for the years of oppression and deliverance may be symbolic or, if actual, may represent overlapping time periods. Part 1 (Jdg 3:7—10:5) covers seven judges and the king of Shechem.

Events and Judges	Years
Israel serves Cushan-Rishathaim (3:7, 8)	8
Peace follows Othniel's deliverance (3:9–11)	40
Israel serves Eglon (3:12–14)	18
Peace follows Ehud's deliverance (3:15–30)	80
Shamgar delivers Israel from Philistines (3:31)	?
Israel serves Jabin (4:1–3)	20
Peace follows deliverance by Deborah and Barak (4:4—5:31)	40
Israel serves Midian (6:1–6)	7
Peace follows Gideon's deliverance (6:7—8:35)	40
Abimelek, king of Shechem (9:1–57)	3
Tola's career (10:1, 2)	23
Jair's career (10:3–5)	22

clefts, caves and strongholds. 3Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. 4They camped on the land and ruined the crops all the way to Gaza and did not spare a living thing for Israel, neither sheep nor cattle nor donkeys. 5They came up with their livestock and their tents like swarms of locusts. It was impossible to count them or their camels; they invaded the land to ravage it. 6Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they cried out to the LORD for help.

7When the Israelites cried out to the LORD because of Midian, 8he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 9I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. 10I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me."

11The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

13"Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our ancestors told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and given us into the hand of Midian."

14The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?"

15"Pardon me, my lord," Gideon replied, "but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family."

16The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites, leaving none alive."

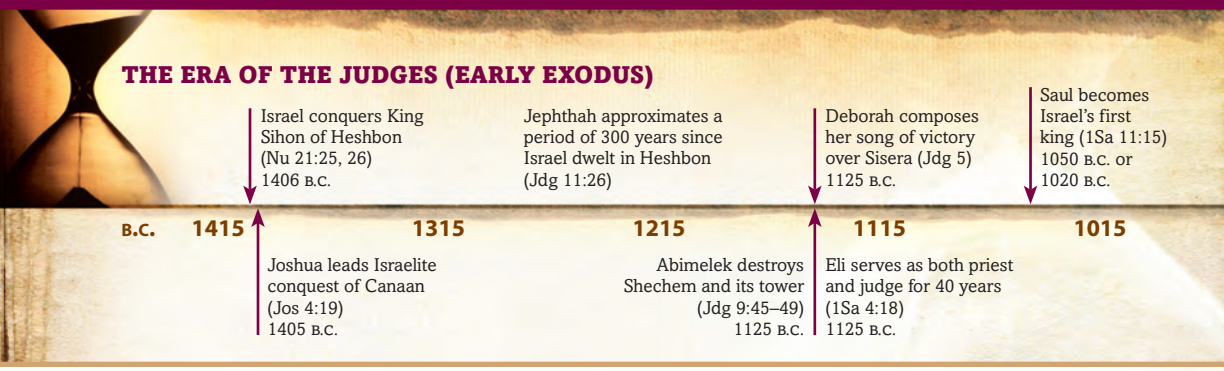
17Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. 18Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you."

And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return."

19Gideon went inside, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah[a] of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak.

20The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. 21Then the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread with the

[a] *19* That is, probably about 36 pounds or about 16 kilograms



tip of the staff that was in his hand. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. 22When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!"

23But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die."

24So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

25That same night the LORD said to him, "Take the second bull from your father's herd, the one seven years old.[a] Tear down your father's altar to Baal and cut down the Asherah pole[b] beside it. 26Then build a proper kind of[c] altar to the LORD your God on the top of this height. Using the wood of the Asherah pole that you cut down, offer the second[d] bull as a burnt offering."

27So Gideon took ten of his servants and did as the LORD told him. But because he was afraid of his family and the townspeople, he did it at night rather than in the daytime.

28In the morning when the people of the town got up, there was Baal's altar, demolished, with the Asherah pole beside it cut down and the second bull sacrificed on the newly built altar!

29They asked each other, "Who did this?"

When they carefully investigated, they were told, "Gideon son of Joash did it."

30The people of the town demanded of Joash, "Bring out your son. He must die, because he has broken down Baal's altar and cut down the Asherah pole beside it."

31But Joash replied to the hostile crowd around him, "Are you going to plead Baal's cause? Are you trying to save him? Whoever fights for him shall be put to death by morning! If Baal really is a god, he can defend himself when someone breaks down his altar." 32So because Gideon broke down Baal's altar, they gave him the name Jerub-Baal[e] that day, saying, "Let Baal contend with him."

33Now all the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples joined forces and crossed over the Jordan and camped in the Valley of Jezreel. 34Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning the Abiezrites to follow him. 35He sent messengers throughout Manasseh, calling them to arms, and also into Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, so that they too went up to meet them.

36Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised— 37look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." 38And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water.

39Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew." 40That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

Gideon Defeats the Midianites

7 1Early in the morning, Jerub-Baal (that is, Gideon) and all his men camped at the spring of Harod. The camp of Midian was north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. 2The LORD said to Gideon, "You have too many men. I cannot deliver Midian into their hands, or Israel would boast against me, 'My own strength has saved me.' 3Now announce to the army, 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.'" So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

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[a] *25* Or *Take a full-grown, mature bull from your father's herd*
[b] *25* That is, a wooden symbol of the goddess Asherah; also in verses 26, 28 and 30
[c] *26* Or *build with layers of stone an*
[d] *26* Or *full-grown*; also in verse 28
[e] *32* *Jerub-Baal* probably means *let Baal contend.*

Baal, God of Storms (Jdg 6:25–32)

Of all the deities of Canaan, the Israelites were most drawn to Baal. Gideon's family had been devotees of the god (Jdg 6:25). So, when Gideon turned to worship God as the only God, he broke with the family tradition.

In Hebrew, "Baal" is the title "lord." This title was given to the storm god Hadad, who is widely known from Syria, Mesopotamia, and Egypt through inscriptions dating from the mid-3rd millennium to the last century B.C. Usually Hadad was simply called "Baal" and was understood to be the god of storms.

Since Baal brought rain, he was also credited with bringing the annual crops which were dependent on the rain. The gifts of rain and crops were so important that there were many sites devoted to the worship of Baal, each using the local version of the god's name.

In the Ugaritic myths Baal is portrayed as a mighty, lustful, and ambitious deity, but also as a god with decidedly more muscles than brains. His worshipers clearly enjoyed a good story about Baal charging into a situation through sheer bravado only to discover too late that it was a really dumb thing to do. Baal relied primarily on his sister Anath to rescue him from these difficulties of his own making, though others, such as Kothar-and-Hasis (a skilled artisan deity), Shapshu (the sun goddess), Asherah and El (rulers of the pantheon), helped him as well.

The seriousness with which some Israelites took their devotion to Baal is seen in their desire to kill Gideon for tearing down Baal's altar (Jdg 6:28–30). Joash, however, defends his son Gideon by making the deciding point: However entertaining the stories about Baal may be, if he is a god, he should be able to plead for himself. Thus Gideon is given the nickname "Jerub-Baal," meaning "let Baal contend" (6:31, 32).

4But the LORD said to Gideon, "There are still
too many men. Take them down to the water,
and I will thin them out for you there. If I say,
'This one shall go with you,' he shall go; but if
I say, 'This one shall not go with you,' he shall
not go."

Gideon's Campaign

The Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon in Ophrah, instructing him to rally the Israelites against the Midianites. With only 300 men Gideon left Harod and descended upon the sleeping armies just north of Mount Moreh. He pursued the Midianites through Sukkoth and Peniel, finally capturing the Midianite kings in Karkor.

5So Gideon took the men down to the water.
There the LORD told him, "Separate those who
lap the water with their tongues as a dog laps
from those who kneel down to drink." 6Three
hundred of them drank from cupped hands,
lapping like dogs. All the rest got down on their
knees to drink.

7The LORD said to Gideon, "With the three
hundred men that lapped I will save you and
give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the
others go home." 8So Gideon sent the rest of
the Israelites home but kept the three hundred, who took over the provisions and trumpets of the others.

Now the camp of Midian lay below him in
the valley. 9During that night the LORD said to
Gideon, "Get up, go down against the camp, because I am going to give it into your hands. 10If
you are afraid to attack, go down to the camp
with your servant Purah 11and listen to what
they are saying. Afterward, you will be encouraged to attack the camp." So he and Purah his
servant went down to the outposts of the camp.
12The Midianites, the Amalekites and all the
other eastern peoples had settled in the valley,
thick as locusts. Their camels could no more
be counted than the sand on the seashore.

13Gideon arrived just as a man was telling a
friend his dream. "I had a dream," he was saying. "A round loaf of barley bread came tumbling into the Midianite camp. It struck the tent
with such force that the tent overturned and
collapsed."

14His friend responded, "This can be nothing
other than the sword of Gideon son of Joash,
the Israelite. God has given the Midianites and
the whole camp into his hands."

15When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed down and worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel and called out, "Get up! The LORD has given the Midianite camp into your hands." 16Dividing the three hundred men into three companies, he placed trumpets and empty jars in the hands of all of them, with torches inside.

17"Watch me," he told them. "Follow my lead. When I get to the edge of the camp, do exactly as I do. 18When I and all who are with me blow our trumpets, then from all around the camp blow yours and shout, 'For the LORD and for Gideon.'"

19Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. 20The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" 21While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled.

22When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords. The army fled to Beth Shittah toward Zererah as far as the border of Abel Meholah near Tabbath. 23Israelites from Naphtali, Asher and all Manasseh were called out, and they pursued the Midianites. 24Gideon sent messengers throughout the hill country of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites and seize the waters of the Jordan ahead of them as far as Beth Barah."

So all the men of Ephraim were called out and they seized the waters of the Jordan as far as Beth Barah. 25They also captured two of the Midianite leaders, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued the Midianites and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, who was by the Jordan.

Zebah and Zalmunna

8 1Now the Ephraimites asked Gideon, "Why have you treated us like this? Why didn't you call us when you went to fight Midian?" And they challenged him vigorously.

2But he answered them, "What have I accomplished compared to you? Aren't the gleanings of Ephraim's grapes better than the full grape harvest of Abiezer? 3God gave Oreb and Zeeb, the Midianite leaders, into your hands. What was I able to do compared to you?" At this, their resentment against him subsided.

4Gideon and his three hundred men, exhausted yet keeping up the pursuit, came to the Jordan and crossed it. 5He said to the men of Sukkoth, "Give my troops some bread; they are worn out, and I am still pursuing Zebah and Zalmunna, the kings of Midian."

6But the officials of Sukkoth said, "Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your troops?"

7Then Gideon replied, "Just for that, when the LORD has given Zebah and Zalmunna into my hand, I will tear your flesh with desert thorns and briers."

8From there he went up to Peniel[a] and made the same request of them, but they answered as the men of Sukkoth had. 9So he said to the men of Peniel, "When I return in triumph, I will tear down this tower."

10Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor with a force of about fifteen thousand men, all that were left of the armies of the eastern peoples; a hundred and twenty thousand swordsmen had fallen. 11Gideon went up by the route of the nomads east of Nobah and Jogbehah and attacked the unsuspecting army. 12Zebah and Zalmunna, the two kings of Midian, fled, but he pursued them and captured them, routing their entire army.

13Gideon son of Joash then returned from the battle by the Pass of Heres. 14He caught a young man of Sukkoth and questioned him, and the young man wrote down for him the names of the seventy-seven officials of Sukkoth, the elders of the town. 15Then Gideon came and said to the men of Sukkoth, "Here are Zebah and Zalmunna, about whom you taunted me by saying, 'Do you already have the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna in your possession? Why should we give bread to your exhausted men?'" 16He took the elders of the town and taught the men of Sukkoth a lesson by punishing them with desert thorns and briers. 17He also pulled down the tower of Peniel and killed the men of the town.

Culture & Society
Fighting was largely hand-to-hand in ancient warfare, and a conventional part of battle was the warrior's boast (Jdg 8:9). Boasts and taunts of heroes are common in the *Iliad,* from about 850 B.C. In his *Commentaries,* Julius Caesar recorded several heroic sayings that affected the course of battle.

[a] *8* Hebrew *Penuel,* a variant of *Peniel*; also in verses 9 and 17

Towers of Safety (Jdg 8:9, 17)

Towers were a standard feature of ancient cities. Often a city wall would be punctuated with regularly placed towers. Such towers were widened spaces in the wall where a larger number of defenders could withstand attackers attempting to gain entry. Towers allowed city residents to watch the other parts of the walls from a slightly forward position. They also provided a somewhat flanking position against attackers trying to scale or undermine the walls.

Towers were also built on hilltops. These served as watchtowers to detect approaching enemies or as signaling places for communication between larger communities.

Families also constructed towers for personal safety and storage of farming implements. Such towers have been found with the full range of household artifacts, symbolizing their domestic usefulness.

Citizens of smaller communities could not afford to build strong walls to protect their villages. They sometimes built one strong, tall building, a tower, to which they could flee in times of distress. Especially for smaller communities, the time investment for building towers was great, which made a tower a valuable prize of the citizenry.

Gideon was so distressed at the lack of support his effort received from the people of Peniel that he punished them by tearing down their tower (Jdg 8:8, 9, 17). They were left vulnerable and stripped of what must have been an object of community pride. Such a punishment would have been long remembered.

18 Then he asked Zebah and Zalmunna,
"What kind of men did you kill at Tabor?"
"Men like you," they answered, "each one
with the bearing of a prince."
19 Gideon replied, "Those were my broth-
ers, the sons of my own mother. As surely as
the LORD lives, if you had spared their lives, I
would not kill you." 20 Turning to Jether, his old-
est son, he said, "Kill them!" But Jether did not
draw his sword, because he was only a boy and
was afraid.
21 Zebah and Zalmunna said, "Come, do it
yourself. 'As is the man, so is his strength.'" So
Gideon stepped forward and killed them, and
took the ornaments off their camels' necks.

Gideon's Ephod

22 The Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over
us—you, your son and your grandson—be-
cause you have saved us from the hand of Mid-
ian."
23 But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over
you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD
will rule over you." 24 And he said, "I do have
one request, that each of you give me an ear-
ring from your share of the plunder." (It was
the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold ear-
rings.)
25 They answered, "We'll be glad to give
them." So they spread out a garment, and each
of them threw a ring from his plunder onto
it. 26 The weight of the gold rings he asked
for came to seventeen hundred shekels,[a] not
counting the ornaments, the pendants and the
purple garments worn by the kings of Midian
or the chains that were on their camels' necks.
27 Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which
he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel prosti-
tuted themselves by worshiping it there, and it
became a snare to Gideon and his family.

Gideon's Death

28 Thus Midian was subdued before the Is-
raelites and did not raise its head again. Dur-
ing Gideon's lifetime, the land had peace forty
years.
29 Jerub-Baal son of Joash went back home
to live. 30 He had seventy sons of his own, for
he had many wives. 31 His concubine, who lived
in Shechem, also bore him a son, whom he
named Abimelek. 32 Gideon son of Joash died
at a good old age and was buried in the tomb
of his father Joash in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.
33 No sooner had Gideon died than the Israel-
ites again prostituted themselves to the Baals.
They set up Baal-Berith as their god 34 and did
not remember the LORD their God, who had
rescued them from the hands of all their ene-
mies on every side. 35 They also failed to show
any loyalty to the family of Jerub-Baal (that is,
Gideon) in spite of all the good things he had
done for them.

Abimelek

9 1 Abimelek son of Jerub-Baal went to his
mother's brothers in Shechem and said to
them and to all his mother's clan, 2 "Ask all the
citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you:
to have all seventy of Jerub-Baal's sons rule
over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am
your flesh and blood."
3 When the brothers repeated all this to the
citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to fol-
low Abimelek, for they said, "He is related to
us." 4 They gave him seventy shekels[b] of silver
from the temple of Baal-Berith, and Abimelek
used it to hire reckless scoundrels, who be-
came his followers. 5 He went to his father's

[a] *26* That is, about 43 pounds or about 20 kilograms
[b] *4* That is, about 1 3/4 pounds or about 800 grams

Shechem in the Amarna Letters (Jdg 9:6–31)

Nearly 400 cuneiform tablets (mostly letters) were found in Egypt at Tell el-Amarna (ancient Akhetaten) in the "office-house of the Pharaoh." These texts, called the Amarna letters, cover about a 30-year period (c. 1360–1333 B.C.) during the reigns of pharaohs Amen-hotep III and Akhenaten. Most of the letters are written in Accadian, an East Semitic tongue that was the international language during this period.

Descriptions of Canaan in the Amarna letters fit well with the biblical portrayal. The land was politically decentralized, divided into separate, politically organized communities settled around larger cities and surrounding villages. The most prominent of these city-states were Gezer, Shechem, and Hazor. Some sites named in the Bible for this period, such as Hebron, Jericho, and Ai, are not mentioned in the Amarna letters. Jerusalem, however, is depicted as a modest city, and relatively unimportant.

The city of Shechem which is described for Abimelek's time (Jdg 9) bears similarity to the Canaanite town described in the Amarna letters. The Shechem of the Amarna letters has city lords and a mayor. Similarly, the city lords of Jdg 9, called the "citizens of Shechem," exercise the power to make Abimelek king (9:6), then later challenge his rule (9:23). The mayor who administered Shechem's affairs on behalf of King Abimelek was the city magistrate Zebul (9:30, 31).

The Amarna letters provide important information about the social and political world of Palestine during the era of Israel's judges. Often mentioned are the Habiru, roving bands of mercenaries, who are named in the Amarna letters as employed by Shechem. Similarly, a band of Habiru hired by the "citizens of Shechem" in Jdg 9 are represented as "Gaal and his clan" (9:26, 41).

home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers, the sons of Jerub-Baal. But Jotham, the youngest son of Jerub-Baal, escaped by hiding. 6Then all the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo gathered beside the great tree at the pillar in Shechem to crown Abimelek king.

7When Jotham was told about this, he climbed up on the top of Mount Gerizim and shouted to them, "Listen to me, citizens of Shechem, so that God may listen to you. 8One day the trees went out to anoint a king for themselves. They said to the olive tree, 'Be our king.'

9"But the olive tree answered, 'Should I give up my oil, by which both gods and humans are honored, to hold sway over the trees?'

10"Next, the trees said to the fig tree, 'Come and be our king.'

11"But the fig tree replied, 'Should I give up my fruit, so good and sweet, to hold sway over the trees?'

12"Then the trees said to the vine, 'Come and be our king.'

13"But the vine answered, 'Should I give up my wine, which cheers both gods and humans, to hold sway over the trees?'

14"Finally all the trees said to the thornbush, 'Come and be our king.'

15"The thornbush said to the trees, 'If you really want to anoint me king over you, come and take refuge in my shade; but if not, then let fire come out of the thornbush and consume the cedars of Lebanon!'

16"Have you acted honorably and in good faith by making Abimelek king? Have you been fair to Jerub-Baal and his family? Have you treated him as he deserves? 17Remember that my father fought for you and risked his life to rescue you from the hand of Midian. 18But today you have revolted against my father's family. You have murdered his seventy sons on a single stone and have made Abimelek, the son of his female slave, king over the citizens of Shechem because he is related to you. 19So have you acted honorably and in good faith toward Jerub-Baal and his family today? If you have, may Abimelek be your joy, and may you be his, too! 20But if you have not, let fire come out from Abimelek and consume you, the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and let fire come out from you, the citizens of Shechem and Beth Millo, and consume Abimelek!"

21Then Jotham fled, escaping to Beer, and he lived there because he was afraid of his brother Abimelek.

22After Abimelek had governed Israel three years, 23God stirred up animosity between Abimelek and the citizens of Shechem so that they acted treacherously against Abimelek. 24God did this in order that the crime against Jerub-Baal's seventy sons, the shedding of their blood, might be avenged on their brother Abimelek and on the citizens of Shechem, who had helped him murder his brothers. 25In opposition to him these citizens of Shechem set men on the hilltops to ambush and rob everyone who passed by, and this was reported to Abimelek.

26Now Gaal son of Ebed moved with his clan into Shechem, and its citizens put their confidence in him. 27After they had gone out into the fields and gathered the grapes and trodden them, they held a festival in the temple of their god. While they were eating and

The Old-Time Bread Machine (Jdg 9:53)

Before flour was available in stores, individuals produced their own flour. After harvest, the grain was gathered in specially prepared areas for threshing. In this process the seed heads were broken from the stocks. Then the seeds were thrown into the air to allow the remaining bits of stock, which were lighter, to blow away.

The milling process, the final step, was accomplished by grinding the grain between two basalt stones. The bottom millstone most often had an outside edge to keep the flour from falling to the ground. The most common shapes for the "upper millstone" (Jdg 9:53) were either round or loaf-shaped.

Pairs of round millstones were custom fitted to each other. Both stones had a center hole and a protruding "collar" around the hole to keep the millstones aligned. The upper millstone also had one hole drilled on its outer edge. After the grain was placed between the two millstones, a small stick was inserted in the hole of the upper millstone and was used to slowly turn the upper millstone on the lower millstone, crushing the grain in the process.

Loaf-shaped upper millstones, with rounded tops and flat bottoms, were less complex in design but more effective in use. The grain was placed on the flat lower millstone; then, using two hands, the upper millstone was pushed back and forth, crushing the grain.

Small basalt bowls and pestles, not unlike those used by pharmacists, were also used for grinding small amounts of grain. Though producing less flour than millstones, they were also less tiring to use, when only small amounts of flour were needed.

Millstones were part of everyday life for people of Old Testament times. Archaeologists find many samples of millstones wherever they dig. Judging from the many broken pieces found, millstones were easily broken and frequently discarded.

Any upper millstone weighed enough to produce a serious injury, if not death, when dropped from a high place. In the case of Abimelek (Jdg 9:53, 54) that is exactly what happened. He died because a household appliance was dropped on his head.

drinking, they cursed Abimelek. 28Then Gaal son of Ebed said, "Who is Abimelek, and why should we Shechemites be subject to him? Isn't he Jerub-Baal's son, and isn't Zebul his deputy? Serve the family of Hamor, Shechem's father! Why should we serve Abimelek? 29If only this people were under my command! Then I would get rid of him. I would say to Abimelek, 'Call out your whole army!'"[a]

30When Zebul the governor of the city heard what Gaal son of Ebed said, he was very angry. 31Under cover he sent messengers to Abimelek, saying, "Gaal son of Ebed and his clan have come to Shechem and are stirring up the city against you. 32Now then, during the night you and your men should come and lie in wait in the fields. 33In the morning at sunrise, advance against the city. When Gaal and his men come out against you, seize the opportunity to attack them."

34So Abimelek and all his troops set out by night and took up concealed positions near Shechem in four companies. 35Now Gaal son of Ebed had gone out and was standing at the entrance of the city gate just as Abimelek and his troops came out from their hiding place.

36When Gaal saw them, he said to Zebul, "Look, people are coming down from the tops of the mountains!"

Zebul replied, "You mistake the shadows of the mountains for men."

37But Gaal spoke up again: "Look, people are coming down from the central hill,[b] and a company is coming from the direction of the diviners' tree."

38Then Zebul said to him, "Where is your big talk now, you who said, 'Who is Abimelek that we should be subject to him?' Aren't these the men you ridiculed? Go out and fight them!"

39So Gaal led out[c] the citizens of Shechem and fought Abimelek. 40Abimelek chased him all the way to the entrance of the gate, and many were killed as they fled. 41Then Abimelek stayed in Arumah, and Zebul drove Gaal and his clan out of Shechem.

42The next day the people of Shechem went out to the fields, and this was reported to Abimelek. 43So he took his men, divided them into three companies and set an ambush in the fields. When he saw the people coming out of

[a] *29* Septuagint; Hebrew *him." Then he said to Abimelek, "Call out your whole army!"* [b] *37* The Hebrew for this phrase means *the navel of the earth.* [c] *39* Or *Gaal went out in the sight of*

the city, he rose to attack them. 44Abimelek and the companies with him rushed forward to a position at the entrance of the city gate. Then two companies attacked those in the fields and struck them down. 45All that day Abimelek pressed his attack against the city until he had captured it and killed its people. Then he destroyed the city and scattered salt over it.

46On hearing this, the citizens in the tower of Shechem went into the stronghold of the temple of El-Berith. 47When Abimelek heard that they had assembled there, 48he and all his men went up Mount Zalmon. He took an ax and cut off some branches, which he lifted to his shoulders. He ordered the men with him, "Quick! Do what you have seen me do!" 49So all the men cut branches and followed Abimelek. They piled them against the stronghold and set it on fire with the people still inside. So all the people in the tower of Shechem, about a thousand men and women, also died.

50Next Abimelek went to Thebez and besieged it and captured it. 51Inside the city, however, was a strong tower, to which all the men and women—all the people of the city—had fled. They had locked themselves in and climbed up on the tower roof. 52Abimelek went to the tower and attacked it. But as he approached the entrance to the tower to set it on fire, 53a woman dropped an upper millstone on his head and cracked his skull.

54Hurriedly he called to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and kill me, so that they can't say, 'A woman killed him.'" So his servant ran him through, and he died. 55When the Israelites saw that Abimelek was dead, they went home.

56Thus God repaid the wickedness that Abimelek had done to his father by murdering his seventy brothers. 57God also made the people of Shechem pay for all their wickedness. The curse of Jotham son of Jerub-Baal came on them.

Tola

10 1After the time of Abimelek, a man of Issachar named Tola son of Puah, the son of Dodo, rose to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim. 2He led[a] Israel twenty-three years; then he died, and was buried in Shamir.

Jair

3He was followed by Jair of Gilead, who led Israel twenty-two years. 4He had thirty sons, who rode thirty donkeys. They controlled thirty towns in Gilead, which to this day are called Havvoth Jair.[b] 5When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

Jephthah

6Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines. And because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served him, 7he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, 8who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites. 9The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim;

[a] *2* Traditionally *judged*; also in verse 3 [b] *4* Or *called the settlements of Jair*

Worshiping Your Neighbors' Gods (Jdg 10:6–16)

In the laws of Deuteronomy the Israelites were forbidden to worship the gods of the neighboring peoples (Dt 6:14, 15). Yet as they settled in the new land, they took up the worship of the local deities, such as "the Baals and the Ashtoreths" (Jdg 10:6). The singular names "Baal" and "Ashtoreth" referred to widely revered deities. However, the plural "Baals" would seem to point generally to many various local male deities. Similarly, the plural "Ashtoreths" would signify all the local goddesses.

The popular belief of the ancient Near East was that particular deities owned particular sections of land. When people moved from one area to another, they were expected to worship the gods of their new area. They had to respect the local deity in order to be blessed by that deity.

By worshiping the Baals and Ashtoreths of Canaan, the Israelites were following the normal religious traditions of their day. They would have learned from the indigenous population that these gods were the owners of this land, and needed to be worshiped in order to prosper there. Thus the culture of the time made it difficult for many Israelites to ignore the gods of their new locality.

The Baals and Ashtoreths are only two examples of Israel turning away from God to the local deities. They are reported to have followed after gods from many areas, including Aram (Syria), Sidon, Moab, Ammon, and Philistia (Jdg 10:6). When eventually they cried, "We have sinned . . . forsaking our God" (10:10), possibly they realized that they were his people no matter where they existed, and their obedience was to be toward him alone. They must "[get] rid of the foreign gods" (10:16).

THE CYCLES OF THE JUDGES (PART 2)

Part 2 of the history of Israel's judges (Jdg 10:17—15:20) covers five more judges. The introduction (Jdg 10:6–16) depicts the Israelites as more and more undiscriminating in their worship of pagan gods.

Events and Judges	Years
Israel serves Ammon and Philistia (10:6–16)	18
Jephthah's career (10:17—12:7)	6
Ibzan's career (12:8–10)	7
Elon's career (12:11, 12)	10
Abdon's career (12:13–15)	8
Israel serves Philistia (13:1)	40
Samson's career (13:2—15:20)	20

Israel was in great distress. [10]Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals."

[11]The LORD replied, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, [12]the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites[a] oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands? [13]But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you. [14]Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!"

[15]But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now." [16]Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And he could bear Israel's misery no longer.

[17]When the Ammonites were called to arms and camped in Gilead, the Israelites assembled and camped at Mizpah. [18]The leaders of the people of Gilead said to each other, "Whoever will take the lead in attacking the Ammonites will be head over all who live in Gilead."

11 [1]Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. [2]Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family," they said, "because you are the son of another woman." [3]So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob, where a gang of scoundrels gathered around him and followed him.

[4]Some time later, when the Ammonites were fighting against Israel, [5]the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob. [6]"Come," they said, "be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites."

[7]Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?"

[8]The elders of Gilead said to him, "Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be head over all of us who live in Gilead."

[9]Jephthah answered, "Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me—will I really be your head?"

[10]The elders of Gilead replied, "The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say."

[11]So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and commander over them. And he repeated all his words before the LORD in Mizpah.

[12]Then Jephthah sent messengers to the Ammonite king with the question: "What do you have against me that you have attacked my country?"

[13]The king of the Ammonites answered Jephthah's messengers, "When Israel came up out of Egypt, they took away my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok, all the way to the Jordan. Now give it back peaceably."

[a] *12* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts *Midianites*

TIME CAPSULE 1200 to 1186 B.C.	
1200	Copper mining and smelting in Austria
1200	Fall of Troy to the Greeks
1200	Civil struggles in Egypt end with accession of Seti II
1188–1186	Queen Tewosret rules Egypt
1186	A court official, Chancellor Baye, struggles for power in Egypt

Gods' Lands, Gods' Peoples (Jdg 11:24)

People of ancient cultures believed that the gods owned territory and could give it to whomever they wished. The gods also took care of particular peoples. When any ruler went out to battle, he proclaimed that he was fighting alongside his god or gods. The outcome of the battle was in the hands of the gods who were leading the kings. These two notions—gods giving lands and gods protecting their people—collide when two deities, Chemosh and Yahweh, are thought to possess the same land (Jdg 11:24).

Jephthah explained to the king of Ammon how Israel came to control the land which it was then inhabiting. The long explanation (Jdg 11:14–28) describes the entrance of Israel into the promised land. Jephthah's theological language was familiar throughout the ancient Near East. The God of Israel actually took the land from other gods and gave it to Israel.

Chemosh was the national god of Moab (Nu 21:22), but apparently was worshiped also by the Ammonites. The disagreement between Jephthah and the Ammonite king centered on what territory Chemosh had given the Ammonites (Jdg 11:24). The Ammonites claimed that they should have the land held by Israel, but Jephthah argues that both nations had received their lands from their gods and should accept what the gods had given them. The land really belonged to the gods, and not to the people who lived there.

The issue of land ownership, according to Jephthah, was already decided and the outcome of any battle was already decided. Israel had not broken faith with either Yahweh or the Ammonites. The land that Israel possessed was given to them by Yahweh, not to the Ammonites by Chemosh.

14 Jephthah sent back messengers to the Ammonite king, 15 saying:

"This is what Jephthah says: Israel did not take the land of Moab or the land of the Ammonites. 16 But when they came up out of Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness to the Red Sea[a] and on to Kadesh. 17 Then Israel sent messengers to the king of Edom, saying, 'Give us permission to go through your country,' but the king of Edom would not listen. They sent also to the king of Moab, and he refused. So Israel stayed at Kadesh.

18 "Next they traveled through the wilderness, skirted the lands of Edom and Moab, passed along the eastern side of the country of Moab, and camped on the other side of the Arnon. They did not enter the territory of Moab, for the Arnon was its border.

19 "Then Israel sent messengers to Sihon king of the Amorites, who ruled in Heshbon, and said to him, 'Let us pass through your country to our own place.' 20 Sihon, however, did not trust Israel[b] to pass through his territory. He mustered all his troops and encamped at Jahaz and fought with Israel.

21 "Then the LORD, the God of Israel, gave Sihon and his whole army into Israel's hands, and they defeated them. Israel took over all the land of the Amorites who lived in that country, 22 capturing all of it from the Arnon to the Jabbok and from the desert to the Jordan.

23 "Now since the LORD, the God of Israel, has driven the Amorites out before his people Israel, what right have you to take it over? 24 Will you not take what your god Chemosh gives you? Likewise, whatever the LORD our God has given us, we will possess. 25 Are you any better than Balak son of Zippor, king of Moab? Did he ever quarrel with Israel or fight with them? 26 For three hundred years Israel occupied Heshbon, Aroer, the surrounding settlements and all the towns along the Arnon. Why didn't you retake them during that time? 27 I have not wronged you, but you are doing me wrong by waging war against me. Let the LORD, the Judge, decide the dispute this day between the Israelites and the Ammonites."

28 The king of Ammon, however, paid no attention to the message Jephthah sent him.

29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites. 30 And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, 31 whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when

[a] *16* Or *the Sea of Reeds*
[b] *20* Or *however, would not make an agreement for Israel*

Religion & Worship

Human sacrifice is associated with the outcome of war in Greek literature, as it was with Jephthah (Jdg 11:30, 31). Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter in order to raise the wind for his ships. Greek literature also associates wandering in the mountains (Jdg 11:37) with the religious cult of the Bacchae, in the play of that name.

I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

32Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into his hands. 33He devastated twenty towns from Aroer to the vicinity of Minnith, as far as Abel Keramim. Thus Israel subdued Ammon.

34When Jephthah returned to his home in Mizpah, who should come out to meet him but his daughter, dancing to the sound of timbrels! She was an only child. Except for her he had neither son nor daughter. 35When he saw her, he tore his clothes and cried, "Oh no, my daughter! You have brought me down and I am devastated. I have made a vow to the LORD that I cannot break."

36"My father," she replied, "you have given your word to the LORD. Do to me just as you promised, now that the LORD has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites. 37But grant me this one request," she said. "Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry."

38"You may go," he said. And he let her go for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never marry. 39After the two months, she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin.

From this comes the Israelite tradition 40that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

Jephthah and Ephraim

12 1The Ephraimite forces were called out, and they crossed over to Zaphon. They said to Jephthah, "Why did you go to fight the Ammonites without calling us to go with you? We're going to burn down your house over your head."

2Jephthah answered, "I and my people were engaged in a great struggle with the Ammonites, and although I called, you didn't save me out of their hands. 3When I saw that you wouldn't help, I took my life in my hands and crossed over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave me the victory over them. Now why have you come up today to fight me?"

4Jephthah then called together the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. The Gileadites struck them down because the Ephraimites had said, "You Gileadites are renegades from Ephraim and Manasseh." 5The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he replied, "No," 6they said, "All right, say 'Shibboleth.'" If he said, "Sibboleth," because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time.

7Jephthah led[a] Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in a town in Gilead.

Ibzan, Elon and Abdon

8After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem led Israel. 9He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He gave his daughters away in marriage to those outside his clan, and for his sons he brought in thirty young women as wives from outside his clan. Ibzan led Israel seven years. 10Then Ibzan died and was buried in Bethlehem.

11After him, Elon the Zebulunite led Israel

[a] *7* Traditionally *judged*; also in verses 8-14

Israel's Southern Drawl (Jdg 12:6)

Jephthah the Gileadite was the successful leader who enabled the Israelites east of the Jordan to defeat the antagonistic Ammonites (Jdg 11:4–33). As a result of Jephthah's activities, however, the tribe of Ephraim, which occupied the west side of the Jordan rift, and the Gileadites, who lived on the other side, came to war (12:1–4). In this war the pronunciation of one word could keep a man alive.

The word "Shibboleth" offers a rare opportunity to witness the sectional tensions that existed among the Israelites. The Old Testament accounts about a lineage that descended from one father can give the impression that the Israelites were afterwards a uniform nation. Jephthah, however, knew that there were distinct differences among the Israelite tribes. The most important, for this battle account, is that they were often so isolated from each other that at least one of the tribes developed its own Hebrew dialect.

It seems that the members of the central hill country tribe of Ephraim could not make a "sh" sound and, instead, pronounced an "s." Their attempts to say "Shibboleth" inevitably sounded as "Sibboleth" (12:6). Their effort, as they approached Jephthah's men, to hide themselves by claiming to be part of his troops failed. The impostors were exposed by their language.

This small glimpse into the everyday life of the Israelites shows us that some of them "talked funny." We can only wonder what other geographical differences may have existed among them.

ten years. 12Then Elon died and was buried in
Aijalon in the land of Zebulun.
13After him, Abdon son of Hillel, from Pira-
thon, led Israel. 14He had forty sons and thirty
grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. He
led Israel eight years. 15Then Abdon son of Hil-
lel died and was buried at Pirathon in Ephraim,
in the hill country of the Amalekites.

The Birth of Samson

13 1Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes
of the LORD, so the LORD delivered them
into the hands of the Philistines for forty years.
2A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah,
from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who
was childless, unable to give birth. 3The angel
of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are
barren and childless, but you are going to be-
come pregnant and give birth to a son. 4Now
see to it that you drink no wine or other fer-
mented drink and that you do not eat anything
unclean. 5You will become pregnant and have
a son whose head is never to be touched by a
razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, ded-
icated to God from the womb. He will take the
lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the
Philistines."
6Then the woman went to her husband and
told him, "A man of God came to me. He looked
like an angel of God, very awesome. I didn't
ask him where he came from, and he didn't
tell me his name. 7But he said to me, 'You will
become pregnant and have a son. Now then,
drink no wine or other fermented drink and do
not eat anything unclean, because the boy will
be a Nazirite of God from the womb until the
day of his death.'"
8Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "Pardon
your servant, Lord. I beg you to let the man of
God you sent to us come again to teach us how
to bring up the boy who is to be born."
9God heard Manoah, and the angel of God
came again to the woman while she was out
in the field; but her husband Manoah was not
with her. 10The woman hurried to tell her hus-
band, "He's here! The man who appeared to me
the other day!"
11Manoah got up and followed his wife.
When he came to the man, he said, "Are you
the man who talked to my wife?"
"I am," he said.
12So Manoah asked him, "When your words
are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs
the boy's life and work?"
13The angel of the LORD answered, "Your wife
must do all that I have told her. 14She must not
eat anything that comes from the grapevine,
nor drink any wine or other fermented drink
nor eat anything unclean. She must do every-
thing I have commanded her."
15Manoah said to the angel of the LORD, "We
would like you to stay until we prepare a young
goat for you."
16The angel of the LORD replied, "Even
though you detain me, I will not eat any of your
food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer
it to the LORD." (Manoah did not realize that it
was the angel of the LORD.)
17Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the
LORD, "What is your name, so that we may hon-
or you when your word comes true?"
18He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is
beyond understanding.[a]" 19Then Manoah took
a young goat, together with the grain offering,
and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the
LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and
his wife watched: 20As the flame blazed up from
the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD
ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah
and his wife fell with their faces to the ground.
21When the angel of the LORD did not show him-
self again to Manoah and his wife, Manoah re-
alized that it was the angel of the LORD.
22"We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife.
"We have seen God!"
23But his wife answered, "If the LORD had
meant to kill us, he would not have accepted
a burnt offering and grain offering from our
hands, nor shown us all these things or now
told us this."
24The woman gave birth to a boy and named
him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed
him, 25and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir
him while he was in Mahaneh Dan, between
Zorah and Eshtaol.

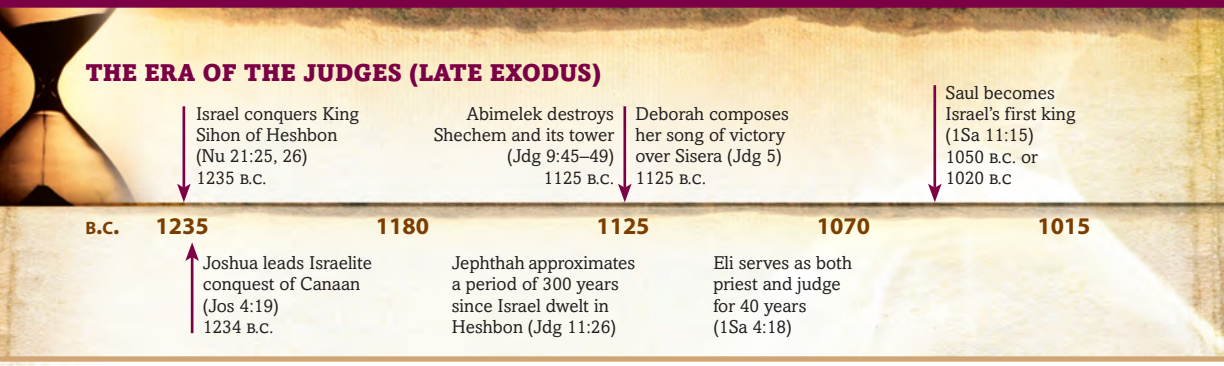
Samson's Marriage

14 1Samson went down to Timnah and saw
there a young Philistine woman. 2When
he returned, he said to his father and mother,
"I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah;
now get her for me as my wife."
3His father and mother replied, "Isn't there

Beliefs & Ideas

The name of a person was considered a key to their favor or influence. Often its meaning or possible associations expressed an essential truth about the person. Revealing a name meant offering a degree of intimacy. The name of a divine power gives a human being a way of calling on that power (Jdg 13:18).

[a] 18 Or *is wonderful*



an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the uncircumcised Philistines to get a wife?"

But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." 4 (His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, who was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines; for at that time they were ruling over Israel.)

5 Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. 6 The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. 7 Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her.

8 Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass, and in it he saw a swarm of bees and some honey. 9 He scooped out the honey with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it. But he did not tell them that he had taken the honey from the lion's carcass.

10 Now his father went down to see the woman. And there Samson held a feast, as was customary for young men. 11 When the people saw him, they chose thirty men to be his companions.

Arts & Literature
Traditionally riddles were important tests of someone's wisdom, insight, and skill. In some cases a riddle was offered as a test whose outcome was of far-reaching importance, if not life and death. Though Samson was marrying a Philistine woman, relations between Israelites and Philistines were strained. The Philistines were serious about finding the answer to Samson's riddle (Jdg 14:14).

12 "Let me tell you a riddle," Samson said to them. "If you can give me the answer within the seven days of the feast, I will give you thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes. 13 If you can't tell me the answer, you must give me thirty linen garments and thirty sets of clothes."

"Tell us your riddle," they said. "Let's hear it."

14 He replied,

"Out of the eater, something to eat;
out of the strong, something sweet."

For three days they could not give the answer.

15 On the fourth[a] day, they said to Samson's wife, "Coax your husband into explaining the riddle for us, or we will burn you and your father's household to death. Did you invite us here to steal our property?"

16 Then Samson's wife threw herself on him, sobbing, "You hate me! You don't really love me. You've given my people a riddle, but you haven't told me the answer."

"I haven't even explained it to my father or mother," he replied, "so why should I explain it to you?" 17 She cried the whole seven days of the feast. So on the seventh day he finally told her, because she continued to press him. She in turn explained the riddle to her people.

18 Before sunset on the seventh day the men of the town said to him,

"What is sweeter than honey?
What is stronger than a lion?"

Samson said to them,

"If you had not plowed with my heifer,
you would not have solved my riddle."

19 Then the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. He went down to Ashkelon, struck down thirty of their men, stripped them of everything and gave their clothes to those who had explained the riddle. Burning with anger, he returned to his father's home. 20 And

[a] *15* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac; Hebrew *seventh*

Samson's wife was given to one of his companions who had attended him at the feast.

Samson's Vengeance on the Philistines

15 [1]Later on, at the time of wheat harvest, Samson took a young goat and went to visit his wife. He said, "I'm going to my wife's room." But her father would not let him go in.

[2]"I was so sure you hated her," he said, "that I gave her to your companion. Isn't her younger sister more attractive? Take her instead."

[3]Samson said to them, "This time I have a right to get even with the Philistines; I will really harm them." [4]So he went out and caught three hundred foxes and tied them tail to tail in pairs. He then fastened a torch to every pair of tails, [5]lit the torches and let the foxes loose in the standing grain of the Philistines. He burned up the shocks and standing grain, together with the vineyards and olive groves.

[6]When the Philistines asked, "Who did this?" they were told, "Samson, the Timnite's son-in-law, because his wife was given to his companion."

So the Philistines went up and burned her and her father to death. [7]Samson said to them, "Since you've acted like this, I swear that I won't stop until I get my revenge on you." [8]He attacked them viciously and slaughtered many of them. Then he went down and stayed in a cave in the rock of Etam.

[9]The Philistines went up and camped in Judah, spreading out near Lehi. [10]The people of Judah asked, "Why have you come to fight us?"

"We have come to take Samson prisoner," they answered, "to do to him as he did to us."

[11]Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?"

He answered, "I merely did to them what they did to me."

[12]They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines."

Samson said, "Swear to me that you won't kill me yourselves."

[13]"Agreed," they answered. "We will only tie you up and hand you over to them. We will not kill you." So they bound him with two new ropes and led him up from the rock. [14]As he approached Lehi, the Philistines came toward him shouting. The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. The ropes on his arms became like charred flax, and the bindings dropped from his hands. [15]Finding a fresh jawbone of a donkey, he grabbed it and struck down a thousand men.

[16]Then Samson said,

"With a donkey's jawbone
I have made donkeys of them.[a]
With a donkey's jawbone
I have killed a thousand men."

[17]When he finished speaking, he threw away the jawbone; and the place was called Ramath Lehi.[b]

[18]Because he was very thirsty, he cried out to the LORD, "You have given your servant this great victory. Must I now die of thirst and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?" [19]Then God opened up the hollow place in Lehi, and water came out of it. When Samson drank, his strength returned and he revived. So the spring was called En Hakkore,[c] and it is still there in Lehi.

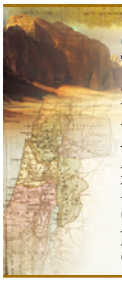
[20]Samson led[d] Israel for twenty years in the days of the Philistines.

Samson and Delilah

16 [1]One day Samson went to Gaza, where he saw a prostitute. He went in to spend the night with her. [2]The people of Gaza were told, "Samson is here!" So they surrounded the place and lay in wait for him all night at the city gate. They made no move during the night, saying, "At dawn we'll kill him."

[3]But Samson lay there only until the middle of the night. Then he got up and took hold of the doors of the city gate, together with the two posts, and tore them loose, bar and all. He lifted them to his shoulders and carried them to the top of the hill that faces Hebron.

[4]Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. [5]The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up



Geography & Environment
The names of places are interpreted so as to call to mind a significant incident that happened at that place. Sometimes the name is linked in a straightforward way to the event, as Samson chose the name "Ramath Lehi," meaning "jawbone height," to mark his victory with a jawbone (Jdg 15:17). Other times, the link is like a pun, making use of a fortuitous similarity of sound.

[a] *16* Or *made a heap or two*; the Hebrew for *donkey* sounds like the Hebrew for *heap*. [b] *17* *Ramath Lehi* means *jawbone hill*. [c] *19* *En Hakkore* means *caller's spring*. [d] *20* Traditionally *judged*

Samson the Nazirite (Jdg 16:17)

Besides his extraordinary physical strength and his spectacular wildness of character, Samson had one other unique distinction: he was a Nazirite (Jdg 16:17). The word "Nazirite" means one who is consecrated (or separated or devoted) to something. More specifically, a Nazirite was one who had taken a vow "to the Lord" (Nu 6:2).

The peculiarities of the Nazirite vow were defined by very clear parameters. Nazirites were to avoid any produce from grapevines: juice, fresh grapes and raisins (Nu 6:3, 4). In addition, they were not to cut their hair (Nu 6:5) or come in contact with a dead body, even if it was a close relative (Nu 6:6, 7).

The Nazirite vow was considered very solemn, not something to be taken lightly. Indeed the Samson stories open with an angel telling Samson's mother that her child would be a Nazirite from his birth and instructing her on the details of the Nazirite lifestyle (Jdg 13:3–5). Even Samson's mother was to keep herself from grapevine produce and food considered unclean (13:13, 14).

While Samson is the only Old Testament person specifically identified as a Nazirite, it is likely that many prophets were also Nazirites. The prophet Amos mentions prophets and Nazirites together (Am 2:11, 12), and Samuel is an example of someone who was both. His mother, Hannah, made a vow that Samuel's hair would never be cut (1Sa 1:11). The Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) adds to 1Sa 1:11 that Samuel would also abstain from grape juice. While not specifically said to be a Nazirite, it seems likely that, since Samuel followed the Nazirite rules, he was a Nazirite.

and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels[a] of silver."

6So Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued."

7Samson answered her, "If anyone ties me with seven fresh bowstrings that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man."

8Then the rulers of the Philistines brought her seven fresh bowstrings that had not been dried, and she tied him with them. 9With men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the bowstrings as easily as a piece of string snaps when it comes close to a flame. So the secret of his strength was not discovered.

10Then Delilah said to Samson, "You have made a fool of me; you lied to me. Come now, tell me how you can be tied."

11He said, "If anyone ties me securely with new ropes that have never been used, I'll become as weak as any other man."

12So Delilah took new ropes and tied him with them. Then, with men hidden in the room, she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" But he snapped the ropes off his arms as if they were threads.

13Delilah then said to Samson, "All this time you have been making a fool of me and lying to me. Tell me how you can be tied."

He replied, "If you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom and tighten it with the pin, I'll become as weak as any other man." So while he was sleeping, Delilah took the seven braids of his head, wove them into the fabric 14and[b] tightened it with the pin.

Again she called to him, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!" He awoke from his sleep and pulled up the pin and the loom, with the fabric.

15Then she said to him, "How can you say, 'I love you,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." 16With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to death of it.

17So he told her everything. "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."

18When Delilah saw that he had told her everything, she sent word to the rulers of the Philistines, "Come back once more; he has told me everything." So the rulers of the Philistines returned with the silver in their hands. 19After putting him to sleep on her lap, she called for someone to shave off the seven braids of his hair, and so began to subdue him.[c] And his strength left him.

20Then she called, "Samson, the Philistines are upon you!"

He awoke from his sleep and thought, "I'll go out as before and shake myself free." But he did not know that the Lord had left him.

21Then the Philistines seized him, gouged

[a] *5* That is, about 28 pounds or about 13 kilograms
[b] *13,14* Some Septuagint manuscripts; Hebrew *replied, "I can if you weave the seven braids of my head into the fabric on the loom." 14So she*
[c] *19* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts *and he began to weaken*

out his eyes and took him down to Gaza. Binding him with bronze shackles, they set him to grinding grain in the prison. 22But the hair on his head began to grow again after it had been shaved.

The Death of Samson

23Now the rulers of the Philistines assembled to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god and to celebrate, saying, "Our god has delivered Samson, our enemy, into our hands."

24When the people saw him, they praised their god, saying,

"Our god has delivered our enemy
into our hands,
the one who laid waste our land
and multiplied our slain."

25While they were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them.

When they stood him among the pillars, 26Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them." 27Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. 28Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." 29Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, 30Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

31Then his brothers and his father's whole family went down to get him. They brought him back and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol in the tomb of Manoah his father. He had led[a] Israel twenty years.

Micah's Idols

17 1Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim 2said to his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels[b] of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse—I have that silver with me; I took it."

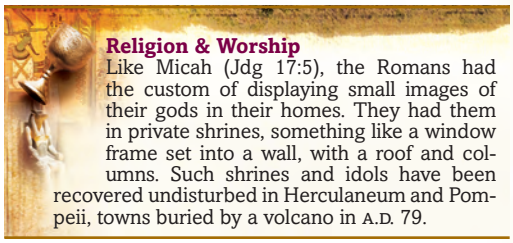
Then his mother said, "The LORD bless you, my son!"

3When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, "I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make an image overlaid with silver. I will give it back to you."

4So after he returned the silver to his mother, she took two hundred shekels[c] of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who used them to make the idol. And it was put in Micah's house.

5Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some household gods and installed one of his sons as his priest. 6In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

7A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, 8left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way[d] he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim.



Religion & Worship

Like Micah (Jdg 17:5), the Romans had the custom of displaying small images of their gods in their homes. They had them in private shrines, something like a window frame set into a wall, with a roof and columns. Such shrines and idols have been recovered undisturbed in Herculaneum and Pompeii, towns buried by a volcano in A.D. 79.

[a] *31* Traditionally *judged* [b] *2* That is, about 28 pounds or about 13 kilograms [c] *4* That is, about 5 pounds or about 2.3 kilograms [d] *8* Or *To carry on his profession*

The Household Gods of Nuzi (Jdg 17:5; 18:14, 20)

Nuzi was an administrative center in the ancient land of Arraphe. It became prominent in the latter half of the 2nd millennium B.C. as part of the Hurrian kingdom of Mitanni. Over 3,500 cuneiform texts have been discovered at the site. These texts, written in a Hurrian style of Accadian, illuminate many social, legal, and religious customs of northern Mesopotamia around the 15th century B.C.

Many of these customs find parallels in the Old Testament. Servants were adopted by childless couples at Nuzi. As in the case of Abram's adopted servant, Eliezer (Ge 15:2, 3), the adopted servant at Nuzi became an heir to the foster parents' estate. Another Nuzi custom allows for a childless wife to furnish her husband with a handmaid as a concubine. As with Sarai and Hagar (Ge 16:1, 2), the wife was entitled to treat the concubine's offspring as her own. A natural son born after a child by a handmaiden nevertheless became the primary heir, as it was with Ishmael and Isaac (Ge 21:9–14).

The Nuzi texts reveal that household gods, called teraphim, were a significant part of family life. Possession of these small household deities implied headship of the family. In the traditional line of inheritance, the eldest son normally received the family gods, as well as the largest share of the family property. Property inheritance possibly explains Rachel's stealing of her father, Laban's, household gods (Ge 31:19).

The household gods of the Ephramite Micah also resemble those of Nuzi. Archaeological evidence from Nuzi suggests that houses had their own shrines, as did Micah (Jdg 17:5). A Nuzi court case concerns the loss of the family gods to someone outside of the family. Micah experienced the same misfortune (Jdg 18:14–17).

9 Micah asked him, "Where are you from?"

"I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah," he said, "and I'm looking for a place to stay."

10 Then Micah said to him, "Live with me and be my father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels[a] of silver a year, your clothes and your food." 11 So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man became like one of his sons to him. 12 Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house. 13 And Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest."

The Danites Settle in Laish

18 1 In those days Israel had no king. And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking a place of their own where they might settle, because they had not yet come into an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. 2 So the Danites sent five of their leading men from Zorah and Eshtaol to spy out the land and explore it. These men represented all the Danites. They told them, "Go, explore the land."

So they entered the hill country of Ephraim and came to the house of Micah, where they spent the night. 3 When they were near Micah's house, they recognized the voice of the young Levite; so they turned in there and asked him, "Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? Why are you here?"

4 He told them what Micah had done for him, and said, "He has hired me and I am his priest."

5 Then they said to him, "Please inquire of God to learn whether our journey will be successful."

6 The priest answered them, "Go in peace. Your journey has the LORD's approval."

7 So the five men left and came to Laish, where they saw that the people were living in safety, like the Sidonians, at peace and secure. And since their land lacked nothing, they were prosperous.[b] Also, they lived a long way from the Sidonians and had no relationship with anyone else.[c]

8 When they returned to Zorah and Eshtaol, their fellow Danites asked them, "How did you find things?"

9 They answered, "Come on, let's attack them! We have seen the land, and it is very good. Aren't you going to do something? Don't hesitate to go there and take it over. 10 When you get there, you will find an unsuspecting people and a spacious land that God has put into your hands, a land that lacks nothing whatever."

11 Then six hundred men of the Danites, armed for battle, set out from Zorah and Eshtaol. 12 On their way they set up camp near Kiriath Jearim in Judah. This is why the place west of Kiriath Jearim is called Mahaneh Dan[d] to this day. 13 From there they went on to the hill country of Ephraim and came to Micah's house.

14 Then the five men who had spied out the land of Laish said to their fellow Danites, "Do you know that one of these houses has an ephod, some household gods and an image overlaid with silver? Now you know what

[a] *10* That is, about 4 ounces or about 115 grams
[b] *7* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.
[c] *7* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts *with the Arameans*
[d] *12* *Mahaneh Dan* means *Dan's camp.*

to do." [15]So they turned in there and went to the house of the young Levite at Micah's place and greeted him. [16]The six hundred Danites, armed for battle, stood at the entrance of the gate. [17]The five men who had spied out the land went inside and took the idol, the ephod and the household gods while the priest and the six hundred armed men stood at the entrance of the gate.

[18]When the five men went into Micah's house and took the idol, the ephod and the household gods, the priest said to them, "What are you doing?"

[19]They answered him, "Be quiet! Don't say a word. Come with us, and be our father and priest. Isn't it better that you serve a tribe and clan in Israel as priest rather than just one man's household?" [20]The priest was very pleased. He took the ephod, the household gods and the idol and went along with the people. [21]Putting their little children, their livestock and their possessions in front of them, they turned away and left.

[22]When they had gone some distance from Micah's house, the men who lived near Micah were called together and overtook the Danites. [23]As they shouted after them, the Danites turned and said to Micah, "What's the matter with you that you called out your men to fight?"

[24]He replied, "You took the gods I made, and my priest, and went away. What else do I have? How can you ask, 'What's the matter with you?'"

[25]The Danites answered, "Don't argue with us, or some of the men may get angry and attack you, and you and your family will lose your lives." [26]So the Danites went their way, and Micah, seeing that they were too strong for him, turned around and went back home.

[27]Then they took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a people at peace and secure. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city. [28]There was no one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob.

The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there. [29]They named it Dan after their ancestor Dan, who was born to Israel—though the city used to be called Laish. [30]There the Danites set up for themselves the idol, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses,[a] and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. [31]They continued to use the idol Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.

A Levite and His Concubine

19 [1]In those days Israel had no king.
Now a Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah. [2]But she was unfaithful to him. She left him and went back to her parents' home in Bethlehem, Judah. After she had been there four months, [3]her husband went to her to persuade her to return. He had with him his servant and two donkeys. She took him into her parents' home, and when her father saw him, he gladly welcomed him. [4]His father-in-law, the woman's father, prevailed on him to stay; so he remained with him three days, eating and drinking, and sleeping there.

[5]On the fourth day they got up early and he prepared to leave, but the woman's father said to his son-in-law, "Refresh yourself with something to eat; then you can go." [6]So the two of them sat down to eat and drink together. Afterward the woman's father said, "Please stay tonight and enjoy yourself." [7]And when the man got up to go, his father-in-law persuaded him, so he stayed there that night. [8]On the morning of the fifth day, when he rose to go, the woman's father said, "Refresh yourself. Wait till afternoon!" So the two of them ate together.

[9]Then when the man, with his concubine and his servant, got up to leave, his father-in-law, the woman's father, said, "Now look, it's almost evening. Spend the night here; the day is nearly over. Stay and enjoy yourself. Early tomorrow morning you can get up and be on your way home." [10]But, unwilling to stay another night, the man left and went toward Jebus (that is, Jerusalem), with his two saddled donkeys and his concubine.

[11]When they were near Jebus and the day was almost gone, the servant said to his master,

[a] *30* Many Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate; many other Hebrew manuscripts and some other Septuagint manuscripts *Manasseh*

They Washed Their Feet (Jdg 19:21)

Footwashing was an expression of hospitality extended to guests of ancient Near Eastern homes. People traveling dusty roads needed to wash their feet for comfort and cleanliness. Guests were often offered water and vessels for washing their own feet. Such hospitality is described in Jdg 19:17–21 when a traveler and his two servants lodge with an old man in Gibeah. Footwashing could also be performed by a servant (Lk 7:44).

Customs varied. The earliest practice was to pour water over the guest's feet, while later practice used a basin. A portable footbath found at Samaria had a raised area in the middle to support the foot. In the town of Tell Beit Mirsim, identified with Debir (Jos 10:38), archaeologists discovered built-in washing basins in rooms surrounding the court by one gate. The basins suggested that these rooms were part of the city's guesthouse.

"Come, let's stop at this city of the Jebusites and spend the night."

12 His master replied, "No. We won't go into any city whose people are not Israelites. We will go on to Gibeah." 13 He added, "Come, let's try to reach Gibeah or Ramah and spend the night in one of those places." 14 So they went on, and the sun set as they neared Gibeah in Benjamin. 15 There they stopped to spend the night. They went and sat in the city square, but no one took them in for the night.

16 That evening an old man from the hill country of Ephraim, who was living in Gibeah (the inhabitants of the place were Benjamites), came in from his work in the fields. 17 When he looked and saw the traveler in the city square, the old man asked, "Where are you going? Where did you come from?"

18 He answered, "We are on our way from Bethlehem in Judah to a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim where I live. I have been to Bethlehem in Judah and now I am going to the house of the LORD.[a] No one has taken me in for the night. 19 We have both straw and fodder for our donkeys and bread and wine for ourselves your servants—me, the woman and the young man with us. We don't need anything."

20 "You are welcome at my house," the old man said. "Let me supply whatever you need. Only don't spend the night in the square." 21 So he took him into his house and fed his donkeys. After they had washed their feet, they had something to eat and drink.

22 While they were enjoying themselves, some of the wicked men of the city surrounded the house. Pounding on the door, they shouted to the old man who owned the house, "Bring out the man who came to your house so we can have sex with him."

23 The owner of the house went outside and said to them, "No, my friends, don't be so vile. Since this man is my guest, don't do this outrageous thing. 24 Look, here is my virgin daughter, and his concubine. I will bring them out to you now, and you can use them and do to them whatever you wish. But as for this man, don't do such an outrageous thing."

25 But the men would not listen to him. So the man took his concubine and sent her outside to them, and they raped her and abused her throughout the night, and at dawn they let her go. 26 At daybreak the woman went back to the house where her master was staying, fell down at the door and lay there until daylight.

27 When her master got up in the morning and opened the door of the house and stepped out to continue on his way, there lay his concubine, fallen in the doorway of the house, with her hands on the threshold. 28 He said to her, "Get up; let's go." But there was no answer. Then the man put her on his donkey and set out for home.

29 When he reached home, he took a knife and cut up his concubine, limb by limb, into twelve parts and sent them into all the areas of Israel. 30 Everyone who saw it was saying to one another, "Such a thing has never been seen or done, not since the day the Israelites came up out of Egypt. Just imagine! We must do something! So speak up!"

Culture & Society

In the traditional culture of the bedouin, or the nomadic Arabs, the "Law of the Tent" occupies a special place. Anyone who physically enters the tent of another person enjoys sanctuary there, and the owner will suffer extreme shame if any harm comes to his guest. The threatened sexual abuse of a guest by the citizens of Gibeah would have been an "outrageous thing" (Jdg 19:22, 23).

The Israelites Punish the Benjamites

20 1 Then all Israel from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came together as one and assembled before the LORD in Mizpah. 2 The leaders of all the people of the

[a] *18* Hebrew, Vulgate, Syriac and Targum; Septuagint *going home*

tribes of Israel took their places in the assembly of God's people, four hundred thousand men armed with swords. 3 (The Benjamites heard that the Israelites had gone up to Mizpah.) Then the Israelites said, "Tell us how this awful thing happened."

4 So the Levite, the husband of the murdered woman, said, "I and my concubine came to Gibeah in Benjamin to spend the night. 5 During the night the men of Gibeah came after me and surrounded the house, intending to kill me. They raped my concubine, and she died. 6 I took my concubine, cut her into pieces and sent one piece to each region of Israel's inheritance, because they committed this lewd and outrageous act in Israel. 7 Now, all you Israelites, speak up and tell me what you have decided to do."

8 All the men rose up together as one, saying, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will return to his house. 9 But now this is what we'll do to Gibeah: We'll go up against it in the order decided by casting lots. 10 We'll take ten men out of every hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from a thousand, and a thousand from ten thousand, to get provisions for the army. Then, when the army arrives at Gibeah[a] in Benjamin, it can give them what they deserve for this outrageous act done in Israel." 11 So all the Israelites got together and united as one against the city.

12 The tribes of Israel sent messengers throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What about this awful crime that was committed among you? 13 Now turn those wicked men of Gibeah over to us so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel."

But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. 14 From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight against the Israelites. 15 At once the Benjamites mobilized twenty-six thousand swordsmen from their towns, in addition to seven hundred able young men from those living in Gibeah. 16 Among all these soldiers there were seven hundred select troops who were left-handed, each of whom could sling a stone at a hair and not miss.

17 Israel, apart from Benjamin, mustered four hundred thousand swordsmen, all of them fit for battle.

18 The Israelites went up to Bethel[b] and inquired of God. They said, "Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Benjamites?"

The LORD replied, "Judah shall go first."

19 The next morning the Israelites got up and pitched camp near Gibeah. 20 The Israelites went out to fight the Benjamites and took up battle positions against them at Gibeah. 21 The Benjamites came out of Gibeah and cut down twenty-two thousand Israelites on the battlefield that day. 22 But the Israelites encouraged one another and again took up their positions where they had stationed themselves the first day. 23 The Israelites went up and wept before the LORD until evening, and they inquired of the LORD. They said, "Shall we go up again to fight against the Benjamites, our fellow Israelites?"

The LORD answered, "Go up against them."

24 Then the Israelites drew near to Benjamin the second day. 25 This time, when the Benjamites came out from Gibeah to oppose them, they cut down another eighteen thousand Israelites, all of them armed with swords.

26 Then all the Israelites, the whole army, went up to Bethel, and there they sat weeping before the LORD. They fasted that day until evening and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD. 27 And the Israelites inquired of the LORD. (In those days the ark of the covenant of God was there, 28 with Phinehas son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ministering before it.) They asked, "Shall we go up again to fight against the Benjamites, our fellow Israelites, or not?"

The LORD responded, "Go, for tomorrow I will give them into your hands."

29 Then Israel set an ambush around Gibeah. 30 They went up against the Benjamites on the third day and took up positions against Gibeah as they had done before. 31 The Benjamites came out to meet them and were drawn away from the city. They began to inflict casualties on the Israelites as before, so that about thirty men fell in the open field and on the roads—the one leading to Bethel and the other to Gibeah. 32 While the Benjamites were saying, "We are defeating them as before," the Israelites

[a] *10* One Hebrew manuscript; most Hebrew manuscripts *Geba,* a variant of *Gibeah* [b] *18* Or *to the house of God*; also in verse 26

TIME CAPSULE	1185 to 1180 B.C.
1185	Setnakht ends another civil war in Egypt and founds 20th Dynasty
1184–1153	Ramesses III, pharaoh of Egypt
1180	Hattusa, the Hittite capital, is destroyed
1180	End of the New Kingdom of the Hittites
1180	Ugarit is destroyed

were saying, "Let's retreat and draw them away from the city to the roads."

33All the men of Israel moved from their places and took up positions at Baal Tamar, and the Israelite ambush charged out of its place on the west[a] of Gibeah.[b] 34Then ten thousand of Israel's able young men made a frontal attack on Gibeah. The fighting was so heavy that the Benjamites did not realize how near disaster was. 35The LORD defeated Benjamin before Israel, and on that day the Israelites struck down 25,100 Benjamites, all armed with swords. 36Then the Benjamites saw that they were beaten.

Now the men of Israel had given way before Benjamin, because they relied on the ambush they had set near Gibeah. 37Those who had been in ambush made a sudden dash into Gibeah, spread out and put the whole city to the sword. 38The Israelites had arranged with the ambush that they should send up a great cloud of smoke from the city, 39and then the Israelites would counterattack.

The Benjamites had begun to inflict casualties on the Israelites (about thirty), and they said, "We are defeating them as in the first battle." 40But when the column of smoke began to rise from the city, the Benjamites turned and saw the whole city going up in smoke. 41Then the Israelites counterattacked, and the Benjamites were terrified, because they realized that disaster had come on them. 42So they fled before the Israelites in the direction of the wilderness, but they could not escape the battle. And the Israelites who came out of the towns cut them down there. 43They surrounded the Benjamites, chased them and easily[c] overran them in the vicinity of Gibeah on the east. 44Eighteen thousand Benjamites fell, all of them valiant fighters. 45As they turned and fled toward the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, the Israelites cut down five thousand men along the roads. They kept pressing after the Benjamites as far as Gidom and struck down two thousand more.

46On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters. 47But six hundred of them turned and fled into the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months. 48The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire.

Wives for the Benjamites

21 1The men of Israel had taken an oath at Mizpah: "Not one of us will give his daughter in marriage to a Benjamite."

2The people went to Bethel,[d] where they sat before God until evening, raising their voices and weeping bitterly. 3"LORD, God of Israel," they cried, "why has this happened to Israel? Why should one tribe be missing from Israel today?"

4Early the next day the people built an altar and presented burnt offerings and fellowship offerings.

5Then the Israelites asked, "Who from all the tribes of Israel has failed to assemble before the LORD?" For they had taken a solemn oath that anyone who failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah was to be put to death.

6Now the Israelites grieved for the tribe of Benjamin, their fellow Israelites. "Today one tribe is cut off from Israel," they said. 7"How can we provide wives for those who are left, since we have taken an oath by the LORD not to give them any of our daughters in marriage?" 8Then they asked, "Which one of the tribes of Israel failed to assemble before the LORD at Mizpah?" They discovered that no one from Jabesh Gilead had come to the camp for the assembly. 9For when they counted the people, they found that none of the people of Jabesh Gilead were there.

10So the assembly sent twelve thousand fighting men with instructions to go to Jabesh Gilead and put to the sword those living there, including the women and children. 11"This is what you are to do," they said. "Kill every male and every woman who is not a virgin." 12They found among the people living in Jabesh Gilead four hundred young women who had never slept with a man, and they took them to the camp at Shiloh in Canaan.

13Then the whole assembly sent an offer of peace to the Benjamites at the rock of Rimmon. 14So the Benjamites returned at that time and were given the women of Jabesh Gilead who had been spared. But there were not enough for all of them.

15The people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a gap in the tribes of Israel. 16And the elders of the assembly said, "With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left? 17The Benjamite survivors must have heirs," they said, "so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out. 18We can't give them our daughters as wives, since we Israelites have taken this oath: 'Cursed be anyone who gives a wife to a Benjamite.' 19But look, there is the annual fes-

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[a] *33* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [b] *33* Hebrew *Geba,* a variant of *Gibeah* [c] *43* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [d] *2* Or *to the house of God*

The Israel Stele of Merenptah (Jdg 21:25)

The Israel Stele was a monument set up by Pharaoh Merenptah of Egypt in the 5th year of his reign (c. 1208 B.C.), commemorating his victories in Palestine. The monument describes a clash between Egyptians and some Israelites, which is the first known mention of Israel from a source outside of the Bible.

Israel is depicted on the monument as "laid waste, his seed is not." The entirety of Palestine is described as conquered and controlled by the Egyptian monarch. Some scholars think that the name "Israel," as it appears in the stele, constitutes a people group, not a land. They suggest that Israel was not yet settled in Palestine, but rather, would have just left Egypt.

The text of the stele is not easily understood, so it is impossible to determine how long Israel had been in the land at the time Merenptah campaigned in Palestine. The Israel Stele does offer evidence that Israel was recognized as a people in Palestine around 1208 B.C. That the Egyptians did not know Israel as a nation or land fits with the description found in the Book of Judges: "In those days Israel had no king" (Jdg 21:25).

tival of the LORD in Shiloh, which lies north of Bethel, east of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah."

20 So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, "Go and hide in the vineyards 21 and watch. When the young women of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, rush from the vineyards and each of you seize one of them to be your wife. Then return to the land of Benjamin. 22 When their fathers or brothers complain to us, we will say to them, 'Do us the favor of helping them, because we did not get wives for them during the war. You will not be guilty of breaking your oath because you did not give your daughters to them.'"

23 So that is what the Benjamites did. While the young women were dancing, each man caught one and carried her off to be his wife. Then they returned to their inheritance and rebuilt the towns and settled in them.

24 At that time the Israelites left that place and went home to their tribes and clans, each to his own inheritance.

25 In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

[a] *1* Traditionally *judged*

TRANSITION

The Book of Ruth

The Book of Judges, like many histories, presents only the wars and battles of its time. The Book of Ruth deals with what average people were doing between those wars. It describes a stable society, governed by wise elders, in which the laws of the covenant are respected and kept. For instance, the law demanded that if a man died before his wife had borne him children, his nearest male relative should marry the widow and raise up an heir to the one who had died (Dt 25:5–10). Under this law Ruth eventually marries Boaz.

The book also pictures more peaceful relations with Israel's neighbors than does Judges. Naomi moves back and forth between Israel and Moab, and her sons take Moabite wives. This intermarriage alone is surprising, but even more startling is that the mixed marriage of Ruth and Boaz is blessed by God and produces Israel's greatest king, King David (Ru 4:18–22).

- **Ruth 1:1—4:12**

Ruth

Naomi Loses Her Husband and Sons

1:1 In the days when the judges ruled,[a] there was a famine in the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. 2 The man's name was Elimelek, his wife's name was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to Moab and lived there.

3 Now Elimelek, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. 4 They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, 5 both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

Naomi and Ruth Return to Bethlehem

6 When Naomi heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing

food for them, she and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. 7With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.

8Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go back, each of you, to your mother's home. May the LORD show you kindness, as you have shown kindness to your dead husbands and to me. 9May the LORD grant that each of you will find rest in the home of another husband."

Then she kissed them goodbye and they wept aloud 10and said to her, "We will go back with you to your people."

11But Naomi said, "Return home, my daughters. Why would you come with me? Am I going to have any more sons, who could become your husbands? 12Return home, my daughters; I am too old to have another husband. Even if I thought there was still hope for me—even if I had a husband tonight and then gave birth to sons— 13would you wait until they grew up? Would you remain unmarried for them? No, my daughters. It is more bitter for me than for you, because the LORD's hand has turned against me!"

14At this they wept aloud again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her.

15"Look," said Naomi, "your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her."

16But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. 17Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me." 18When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

19So the two women went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they arrived in Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women exclaimed, "Can this be Naomi?"

20"Don't call me Naomi,[a]" she told them. "Call me Mara,[b] because the Almighty[c] has made my life very bitter. 21I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The LORD has afflicted[d] me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me."

22So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, arriving in Bethlehem as the barley harvest was beginning.

Ruth Meets Boaz in the Grain Field

2 1Now Naomi had a relative on her husband's side, a man of standing from the clan of Elimelek, whose name was Boaz.

2And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the fields and pick up the leftover grain behind anyone in whose eyes I find favor."

Naomi said to her, "Go ahead, my daughter." 3So she went out, entered a field and began to glean behind the harvesters. As it turned out, she was working in a field belonging to Boaz, who was from the clan of Elimelek.

4Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, "The LORD be with you!"

"The LORD bless you!" they answered.

5Boaz asked the overseer of his harvesters, "Who does that young woman belong to?"

6The overseer replied, "She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi. 7She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves behind the harvesters.' She came into the field and has remained here from morning till now, except for a short rest in the shelter."

8So Boaz said to Ruth, "My daughter, listen to me. Don't go and glean in another field and don't go away from here. Stay here with the women who work for me. 9Watch the field where the men are harvesting, and follow along after the women. I have told the men not to lay a hand on you. And whenever you are thirsty, go and get a drink from the water jars the men have filled."

10At this, she bowed down with her face to the ground. She asked him, "Why have I found

[a] *20 Naomi* means *pleasant.* [b] *20 Mara* means *bitter.*
[c] *20* Hebrew *Shaddai*; also in verse 21 [d] *21* Or *has testified against*

Naomi's Guardian-Redeemer (Ru 2:20)

Naomi recognizes God's kindness in the person of Boaz, who is one of her "guardian-redeemers" (Ru 2:20). The Hebrew word *goel,* translated "close relative" in some translations, means "to redeem." Such relatives were redeemers because they had a legal obligation under the Law of Moses to redeem, or buy back from foreclosure, the property of destitute relatives (Lev 25:25).

The close relative could redeem various types of obligations through a monetary payment. Individuals could reclaim their land or house. An indentured servant could be redeemed from servitude. A religious offering could be reclaimed. Yet some redemptions were not made with a sum of money. The closest male relative of a murdered Israelite was a "blood redeemer." This "avenger of blood" (2Sa 14:11) was required to avenge the blood of the dead kinsman with the life of the murderer.

The closest adult male relative of a deceased person was required to assure the economic welfare of the deceased's kin. In this case, the legal custom of the close relative was very similar to another legal custom—the levirate marriage. The close relative was to continue the name of his deceased male relative by legally acquiring the dead man's wife (Dt 25:5, 6). The children of the new union then inherited the property of the deceased—the former husband.

Naomi hoped that Boaz would accept his dual responsibility as her close relative. One responsibility was to redeem Naomi's land, which she had sold in her destitute condition (Ruth 4:3, 4). Yet a second responsibility was to marry Naomi's daughter-in-law Ruth, continuing the name of Ruth's dead husband (4:5).

such favor in your eyes that you notice me—a foreigner?"

11 Boaz replied, "I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband—how you left your father and mother and your homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before. 12 May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge."

13 "May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord," she said. "You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants."

14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar."

When she sat down with the harvesters, he offered her some roasted grain. She ate all she wanted and had some left over. 15 As she got up to glean, Boaz gave orders to his men, "Let her gather among the sheaves and don't reprimand her. 16 Even pull out some stalks for her from the bundles and leave them for her to pick up, and don't rebuke her."

17 So Ruth gleaned in the field until evening. Then she threshed the barley she had gathered, and it amounted to about an ephah.[a] 18 She carried it back to town, and her mother-in-law saw how much she had gathered. Ruth also brought out and gave her what she had left over after she had eaten enough.

19 Her mother-in-law asked her, "Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who took notice of you!"

Then Ruth told her mother-in-law about the one at whose place she had been working. "The name of the man I worked with today is Boaz," she said.

20 "The LORD bless him!" Naomi said to her daughter-in-law. "He has not stopped showing his kindness to the living and the dead." She added, "That man is our close relative; he is one of our guardian-redeemers.[b]"

21 Then Ruth the Moabite said, "He even said to me, 'Stay with my workers until they finish harvesting all my grain.'"

22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It will be good for you, my daughter, to go with the women who work for him, because in someone else's field you might be harmed."

23 So Ruth stayed close to the women of Boaz to glean until the barley and wheat harvests were finished. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor

3 1 One day Ruth's mother-in-law Naomi said to her, "My daughter, I must find a home[c] for you, where you will be well provided for. 2 Now Boaz, with whose women you have worked, is a relative of ours. Tonight he will be winnowing barley on the threshing floor. 3 Wash, put on perfume, and get dressed in your best clothes. Then go down to the threshing floor, but don't let him know you are there until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 When he lies down, note the place where he is lying. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down. He will tell you what to do."

[a] *17* That is, probably about 30 pounds or about 13 kilograms
[b] *20* The Hebrew word for *guardian-redeemer* is a legal term for one who has the obligation to redeem a relative in serious difficulty (see Lev. 25:25-55).
[c] *1* Hebrew *find rest* (see 1:9)

Marriage & Family
The "duty as your guardian-redeemer" (Ru 3:13) was a legal provision aimed at preserving the name and family line of the deceased relative. If a husband died without children, his brother had the duty of marrying the widow and raising a family for him. The custom illustrates how central genealogy was in that culture.

5"I will do whatever you say," Ruth answered.
6So she went down to the threshing floor and did everything her mother-in-law told her to do.
7When Boaz had finished eating and drinking and was in good spirits, he went over to lie down at the far end of the grain pile. Ruth approached quietly, uncovered his feet and lay down. 8In the middle of the night something startled the man; he turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet!
9"Who are you?" he asked.
"I am your servant Ruth," she said. "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a guardian-redeemer[a] of our family."
10"The LORD bless you, my daughter," he replied. "This kindness is greater than that which you showed earlier: You have not run after the younger men, whether rich or poor. 11And now, my daughter, don't be afraid. I will do for you all you ask. All the people of my town know that you are a woman of noble character. 12Although it is true that I am a guardian-redeemer of our family, there is another who is more closely related than I. 13Stay here for the night, and in the morning if he wants to do his duty as your guardian-redeemer, good; let him redeem you. But if he is not willing, as surely as the LORD lives I will do it. Lie here until morning."

14So she lay at his feet until morning, but got up before anyone could be recognized; and he said, "No one must know that a woman came to the threshing floor."
15He also said, "Bring me the shawl you are wearing and hold it out." When she did so, he poured into it six measures of barley and placed the bundle on her. Then he[b] went back to town.
16When Ruth came to her mother-in-law, Naomi asked, "How did it go, my daughter?"
Then she told her everything Boaz had done for her 17and added, "He gave me these six measures of barley, saying, 'Don't go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"
18Then Naomi said, "Wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. For the man will not rest until the matter is settled today."

Boaz Marries Ruth

4 1Meanwhile Boaz went up to the town gate and sat down there just as the guardian-redeemer[c] he had mentioned came along. Boaz said, "Come over here, my friend, and sit down." So he went over and sat down.
2Boaz took ten of the elders of the town and said, "Sit here," and they did so. 3Then he said to the guardian-redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from Moab, is selling the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelek. 4I thought I should bring the matter to your attention and suggest that you buy it in the presence of these seated here and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, do so. But if you[d] will not, tell me, so I will know. For no one has the right to do it except you, and I am next in line."
"I will redeem it," he said.
5Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the land from Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the[e] dead man's widow, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property."
6At this, the guardian-redeemer said, "Then I cannot redeem it because I might endanger my own estate. You redeem it yourself. I cannot do it."

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[a] *9* The Hebrew word for *guardian-redeemer* is a legal term for one who has the obligation to redeem a relative in serious difficulty (see Lev. 25:25-55); also in verses 12 and 13.
[b] *15* Most Hebrew manuscripts; many Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac *she*
[c] *1* The Hebrew word for *guardian-redeemer* is a legal term for one who has the obligation to redeem a relative in serious difficulty (see Lev. 25:25-55); also in verses 3, 6, 8 and 14.
[d] *4* Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *he*
[e] *5* Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew (see also Septuagint) *Naomi and from Ruth the Moabite, you acquire the*

Levirate Marriage and Sandal Ceremony (Ru 4:1–10)

Levir is the Latin word for "brother-in-law." The levirate marriage is described in the legal text of Dt 25:5–10. If a man died without leaving a male heir, his widow was to marry within the husband's family. Moreover, the husband's brother (i.e., the widow's brother-in-law) was required to perform the duty of the levir, that is, marry the woman and produce a son.

Preserving the family line was important in Israel. The levirate marriage was linked to laws of inheritance, so any offspring from the husband's brother were considered children of the deceased. The firstborn son would take the name of the dead former husband.

If the brother-in-law refused to perform the levir's duty, the woman was to perform the ceremony of the removal of his sandal (Dt 25:8–10). A woman had a right to bear children to her deceased husband. If her brother-in-law refused her that right, she could publicly humiliate him. She was then allowed to marry outside of the family.

The primary purpose of the levirate marriage law was to protect the widow and help compensate the deceased husband's family for their personal loss. In Naomi's case, since she was beyond childbearing age, the levirate marriage would be to her widowed daughter-in-law Ruth. Naomi's closest relative was not willing to assume this obligation (Ruth 4:6). Perhaps he considered that if he had a son by Ruth who became his only surviving heir, all of his property would belong to the family of Elimelek, Naomi's deceased husband.

In the sandal ceremony of Ruth 4:6–8 there seems to be no disdain for the relative who declined to perform the duty of the levir. The significance of taking off the sandal seems to imply the passing of one's legal rights to another. Boaz thus gained the right to clear the property against any future claims, and to marry Ruth (4:9, 10).

7 (Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)
8 So the guardian-redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it yourself." And he removed his sandal.
9 Then Boaz announced to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelek, Kilion and Mahlon. 10 I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, Mahlon's widow, as my wife, in order to maintain the name of the dead with his property, so that his name will not disappear from among his family or from his hometown. Today you are witnesses!"
11 Then the elders and all the people at the gate said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the family of Israel. May you have standing in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12 Through the offspring the LORD gives you by this young woman, may your family be like that of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah."

TRANSITION

From Turbulence to Rest

The story of Ruth takes place in the latter part of the judges' period ("in the days when the judges ruled," Ru 1:1). Its rural setting and wholesome yet believable characters provide stark contrast to the violence and chaos of those days when "Israel had no king" (Jdg 21:25).

The genealogy at the end of the book (Ru 4:18–22) reveals that the characters of this story are none other than the great-grandparents of King David. This story of faithfulness and family solidarity not only contrasts to the turbulence of the judges' period, but points forward to the reign of David (1010–970 B.C.)—to a time when Israel would have "rest on every side" (1Ki 5:4).

• **Ruth 4:13–22**

Ruth

Naomi Gains a Son

4 :13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When he made love to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son. 14 The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a guardian-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! 15 He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth."
16 Then Naomi took the child in her arms and cared for him. 17 The women living there said, "Naomi has a son!" And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The Genealogy of David

18 This, then, is the family line of Perez:

Perez was the father of Hezron,
19 Hezron the father of Ram,
Ram the father of Amminadab,

20 Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,[a]
21 Salmon the father of Boaz,
Boaz the father of Obed,
22 Obed the father of Jesse,
and Jesse the father of David.

TRANSITION

The Books of 1 and 2 Samuel

The books of Judges and Ruth point toward the beginning of an Israelite monarchy; in the books of Samuel the monarchy takes shape. In general terms, 1 Samuel tells of the beginning of the kingdom to the end of the reign of the first king, Saul. Then 2 Samuel is devoted to the career of David, Israel's second, and greatest, king.

But 1 Samuel begins not with a king, but with the imposing figure of Samuel. Samuel is priest and prophet and judge, indeed everything except king. It is from Samuel that the people seek a king. It is Samuel whom God sends to anoint first Saul, then David. It is Samuel who announces God's rejection of Saul (ch. 15), and when Saul's kingdom totters, it is from Samuel's ghost that Saul seeks advice (ch. 28).

The books of Samuel never identify an author, and may have been constructed from several different sources. For instance, the history from 2Sa 9 to 1Ki 2 gives such intimate detail of the inner workings of David's court that many have called it an independent eyewitness account. If so, it has been connected with other, more general, historical sources to form the present books.

• **1 Samuel 1:1—6:21**

1 Samuel

The Birth of Samuel

1:1 There was a certain man from Ramathaim, a Zuphite[b] from the hill country of Ephraim, whose name was Elkanah son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph, an Ephraimite. 2 He had two wives; one was called Hannah and the other Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had none.

Marriage & Family

Polygamy has flourished where women have occupied a low station in society. Israelites, such as Elkanah (1Sa 1:2), who had several wives were following the culture of that time. The rivalry of the wives was related to their desire for children, and was marked by jealousy, struggle, taunts, and scheming (1:6). Historically, the church has consistently opposed polygamy and seldom made even temporary concessions to it.

3 Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the LORD Almighty at Shiloh, where Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, were priests of the LORD. 4 Whenever the day came for Elkanah to sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and daughters. 5 But to Hannah he gave a double portion because he loved her, and the LORD had closed her womb. 6 Because the LORD had closed Hannah's womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her. 7 This went on year after year. Whenever Hannah went up to the house of the LORD, her rival provoked her till she wept and would not eat. 8 Her husband Elkanah would say to her, "Hannah, why are you weeping? Why don't you eat? Why are you downhearted? Don't I mean more to you than ten sons?"

9 Once when they had finished eating and drinking in Shiloh, Hannah stood up. Now Eli the priest was sitting on his chair by the doorpost of the LORD's house. 10 In her deep anguish Hannah prayed to the LORD, weeping bitterly. 11 And she made a vow, saying, "LORD Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head."

12 As she kept on praying to the LORD, Eli observed her mouth. 13 Hannah was praying in her heart, and her lips were moving but her voice was not heard. Eli thought she was drunk 14 and said to her, "How long are you going to stay drunk? Put away your wine."

15 "Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. 16 Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief."

17 Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him."

18 She said, "May your servant find favor in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.

19 Early the next morning they arose and worshiped before the LORD and then went back to their home at Ramah. Elkanah made love to his wife Hannah, and the LORD remembered her. 20 So in the course of time Hannah became

[a] *20* A few Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate (see also verse 21 and Septuagint of 1 Chron. 2:11); most Hebrew manuscripts *Salma* [b] *1* See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 6:26-27,33-35; or *from Ramathaim Zuphim*.

Ritual for an Audience with God (1Sa 1:8–18)

In the ancient Near East people believed that the gods would appear to you if you went to a sacred site. Worshipers followed a ritual that included a sacrifice, a meal dedicated to the god, and a prayer of petition, then spent the night in the holy place. Often the deity appeared to the worshiper in a dream (see 1Ki 3:5), but sometimes through the priests or a direct vision.

According to a text from about 2150 B.C., Gudea, king of Lagash, slept at the site of a proposed shrine. Gudea asked permission of the god Ningirsu to build a temple for the deity at that site. Ningirsu appeared to Gudea in a dream, giving him not only permission to build, but also the plans for the building itself. Other examples of this kind of prayer are found in Mesopotamia, Asia Minor, Egypt, Phoenicia, and the Greco-Roman world (including the epics of Homer).

Each year Elkanah and his wife Hannah visited the holy place at Shiloh (1Sa 1:3, 7). Hannah came to the sanctuary of Yahweh at Shiloh, where her husband, Elkanah, made a sacrifice for her (1:4, 5). After eating what was possibly a meal dedicated to Yahweh, Hannah made her prayer of petition (1:9–11). She was answered by Eli, God's priest, in God's name, and her request was granted in the birth of Samuel (1:20).

pregnant and gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel,[a] saying, "Because I asked the LORD for him."

Hannah Dedicates Samuel

21When her husband Elkanah went up with all his family to offer the annual sacrifice to the LORD and to fulfill his vow, 22Hannah did not go. She said to her husband, "After the boy is weaned, I will take him and present him before the LORD, and he will live there always."[b]

23"Do what seems best to you," her husband Elkanah told her. "Stay here until you have weaned him; only may the LORD make good his[c] word." So the woman stayed at home and nursed her son until she had weaned him.

24After he was weaned, she took the boy with her, young as he was, along with a three-year-old bull,[d] an ephah[e] of flour and a skin of wine, and brought him to the house of the LORD at Shiloh. 25When the bull had been sacrificed, they brought the boy to Eli, 26and she said to him, "Pardon me, my lord. As surely as you live, I am the woman who stood here beside you praying to the LORD. 27I prayed for this child, and the LORD has granted me what I asked of him. 28So now I give him to the LORD. For his whole life he will be given over to the LORD." And he worshiped the LORD there.

Hannah's Prayer

2 1Then Hannah prayed and said:

"My heart rejoices in the LORD;
in the LORD my horn[f] is lifted high.
My mouth boasts over my enemies,
for I delight in your deliverance.

2"There is no one holy like the LORD;
there is no one besides you;
there is no Rock like our God.

3"Do not keep talking so proudly
or let your mouth speak such arrogance,
for the LORD is a God who knows,
and by him deeds are weighed.

4"The bows of the warriors are broken,
but those who stumbled are armed with strength.
5Those who were full hire themselves out for food,
but those who were hungry are hungry no more.
She who was barren has borne seven children,
but she who has had many sons pines away.

6"The LORD brings death and makes alive;
he brings down to the grave and raises up.
7The LORD sends poverty and wealth;
he humbles and he exalts.
8He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
he seats them with princes
and has them inherit a throne of honor.

"For the foundations of the earth are the LORD's;
on them he has set the world.
9He will guard the feet of his faithful servants,
but the wicked will be silenced in the place of darkness.

10"It is not by strength that one prevails;
those who oppose the LORD will be broken.

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[a] *20* *Samuel* sounds like the Hebrew for *heard by God.*
[b] *22* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls *always. I have dedicated him as a Nazirite—all the days of his life."* [c] *23* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint and Syriac *your*
[d] *24* Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint and Syriac; Masoretic Text *with three bulls* [e] *24* That is, probably about 36 pounds or about 16 kilograms [f] *1* *Horn* here symbolizes strength; also in verse 10.

The Most High will thunder from heaven;
the LORD will judge the ends of the earth.

"He will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed."

11Then Elkanah went home to Ramah, but the boy ministered before the LORD under Eli the priest.

Eli's Wicked Sons

12Eli's sons were scoundrels; they had no regard for the LORD. 13Now it was the practice of the priests that, whenever any of the people offered a sacrifice, the priest's servant would come with a three-pronged fork in his hand while the meat was being boiled 14and would plunge the fork into the pan or kettle or caldron or pot. Whatever the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is how they treated all the Israelites who came to Shiloh. 15But even before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the person who was sacrificing, "Give the priest some meat to roast; he won't accept boiled meat from you, but only raw."

16If the person said to him, "Let the fat be burned first, and then take whatever you want," the servant would answer, "No, hand it over now; if you don't, I'll take it by force."

17This sin of the young men was very great in the LORD's sight, for they[a] were treating the LORD's offering with contempt.

18But Samuel was ministering before the LORD—a boy wearing a linen ephod. 19Each year his mother made him a little robe and took it to him when she went up with her husband to offer the annual sacrifice. 20Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife, saying, "May the LORD give you children by this woman to take the place of the one she prayed for and gave to[b] the LORD." Then they would go home. 21And the LORD was gracious to Hannah; she gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, the boy Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.

22Now Eli, who was very old, heard about everything his sons were doing to all Israel and how they slept with the women who served at the entrance to the tent of meeting. 23So he said to them, "Why do you do such things? I hear from all the people about these wicked deeds of yours. 24No, my sons; the report I hear spreading among the LORD's people is not good. 25If one person sins against another, God[c] may mediate for the offender; but if anyone sins against the LORD, who will intercede for them?" His sons, however, did not listen to their father's rebuke, for it was the LORD's will to put them to death.

26And the boy Samuel continued to grow in stature and in favor with the LORD and with people.

Prophecy Against the House of Eli

27Now a man of God came to Eli and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Did I not clearly reveal myself to your ancestor's family when they were in Egypt under Pharaoh? 28I chose your ancestor out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, to go up to my altar, to burn incense, and to wear an ephod in my presence. I also gave your ancestor's family all the food offerings presented by the Israelites. 29Why do you[d] scorn my sacrifice and offering that I prescribed for my dwelling? Why do you honor your sons more than me by fattening yourselves on the choice parts of every offering made by my people Israel?'

30"'Therefore the LORD, the God of Israel, declares: 'I promised that members of your family would minister before me forever.' But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. 31The time is coming when I will cut short your strength and the strength of your priestly house, so that no one in it will reach old age, 32and you will see distress in my dwelling. Although good will be done to Israel, no one in your family line will ever reach old age. 33Every one of you that I do not cut off from serving at my altar I will spare only to destroy your sight and sap your strength, and all your descendants will die in the prime of life.

34"'And what happens to your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, will be a sign to you—they will both die on the same day. 35I will raise

TIME CAPSULE		1178 to 1169 B.C.
1178		Ramesses III defends Egypt against Libyan invasion
1175		Sea battle between Ramesses III and the Sea Peoples
1175		The Philistines settle on southern coast of Palestine
1172		Ramesses III repels another Libyan invasion of Egypt
1169		Wall carving from funerary temple near Thebes shows sea battle of Ramesses III

[a] *17* Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint; Masoretic Text *people*
[b] *20* Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text *and asked from*
[c] *25* Or *the judges* [d] *29* The Hebrew is plural.

up for myself a faithful priest, who will do according to what is in my heart and mind. I will firmly establish his priestly house, and they will minister before my anointed one always. 36Then everyone left in your family line will come and bow down before him for a piece of silver and a loaf of bread and plead, "Appoint me to some priestly office so I can have food to eat."'"

The Lord Calls Samuel

3 1The boy Samuel ministered before the Lord under Eli. In those days the word of the Lord was rare; there were not many visions.

2One night Eli, whose eyes were becoming so weak that he could barely see, was lying down in his usual place. 3The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the house of the Lord, where the ark of God was. 4Then the Lord called Samuel.

Samuel answered, "Here I am." 5And he ran to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

But Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down." So he went and lay down.

6Again the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

"My son," Eli said, "I did not call; go back and lie down."

7Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord: The word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him.

8A third time the Lord called, "Samuel!" And Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, "Here I am; you called me."

Then Eli realized that the Lord was calling the boy. 9So Eli told Samuel, "Go and lie down, and if he calls you, say, 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10The Lord came and stood there, calling as at the other times, "Samuel! Samuel!"

Then Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening."

11And the Lord said to Samuel: "See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make the ears of everyone who hears about it tingle. 12At that time I will carry out against Eli everything I spoke against his family—from beginning to end. 13For I told him that I would judge his family forever because of the sin he knew about; his sons blasphemed God,[a] and he failed to restrain them. 14Therefore I swore to the house of Eli, 'The guilt of Eli's house will never be atoned for by sacrifice or offering.'"

15Samuel lay down until morning and then opened the doors of the house of the Lord. He was afraid to tell Eli the vision, 16but Eli called him and said, "Samuel, my son."

Samuel answered, "Here I am."

17"What was it he said to you?" Eli asked. "Do not hide it from me. May God deal with you, be it ever so severely, if you hide from me anything he told you." 18So Samuel told him everything, hiding nothing from him. Then Eli said, "He is the Lord; let him do what is good in his eyes."

19The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground. 20And all Israel from Dan to Beersheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord. 21The Lord continued to appear at Shiloh, and there he revealed himself to Samuel through his word.

4 1And Samuel's word came to all Israel.

The Philistines Capture the Ark

Now the Israelites went out to fight against the Philistines. The Israelites camped at Ebenezer, and the Philistines at Aphek. 2The Philistines deployed their forces to meet Israel, and as the battle spread, Israel was defeated by the Philistines, who killed about four thousand of them on the battlefield. 3When the soldiers returned to camp, the elders of Israel asked, "Why did the Lord bring defeat on us today before the Philistines? Let us bring the ark of the Lord's covenant from Shiloh, so that he may go with us and save us from the hand of our enemies."

4So the people sent men to Shiloh, and they brought back the ark of the covenant of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim. And Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

5When the ark of the Lord's covenant came into the camp, all Israel raised such a great shout that the ground shook. 6Hearing the uproar, the Philistines asked, "What's all this shouting in the Hebrew camp?"

When they learned that the ark of the Lord

Culture & Society
The reply "Here I am" (1Sa 3:4) is the reply a servant would give to an employer, like a soldier coming to attention and returning a salute. Samuel's attitude and immediate response to the voice of God is first his response to Eli. Moments later the young Samuel responded to God with the same willingness to serve (3:10).

[a] *13* An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text *sons made themselves contemptible*

Beliefs & Ideas

In Hebrew the name "Ichabod" means "no glory," reflecting the departure of God's glory from Israel (1Sa 4:21). In the Old Testament, the glory of God is the radiance perceived when he is present, and is often associated with the ark of the covenant. In general, the glory of God is the appearance of what makes him unique and admirable, especially his power and mercy.

had come into the camp, [7]the Philistines were afraid. "A god has[a] come into the camp," they said. "Oh no! Nothing like this has happened before. [8]We're doomed! Who will deliver us from the hand of these mighty gods? They are the gods who struck the Egyptians with all kinds of plagues in the wilderness. [9]Be strong, Philistines! Be men, or you will be subject to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Be men, and fight!"

[10]So the Philistines fought, and the Israelites were defeated and every man fled to his tent. The slaughter was very great; Israel lost thirty thousand foot soldiers. [11]The ark of God was captured, and Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, died.

The Ministry of Samuel

At Shiloh God called Samuel to be his servant and prophet. Samuel called on Isr ael to put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and to face judgment at Mizpah. Following Saul's defeat of the Ammonites, the people gathered at Gilgal, where Samuel renewed the kingdom covenant with Israel and established Saul as king.

Death of Eli

[12]That same day a Benjamite ran from the battle line and went to Shiloh with his clothes torn and dust on his head. [13]When he arrived, there was Eli sitting on his chair by the side of the road, watching, because his heart feared for the ark of God. When the man entered the town and told what had happened, the whole town sent up a cry.

[14]Eli heard the outcry and asked, "What is the meaning of this uproar?"

The man hurried over to Eli, [15]who was ninety-eight years old and whose eyes had failed so that he could not see. [16]He told Eli, "I have just come from the battle line; I fled from it this very day."

Eli asked, "What happened, my son?"

[17]The man who brought the news replied, "Israel fled before the Philistines, and the army has suffered heavy losses. Also your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God has been captured."

[18]When he mentioned the ark of God, Eli fell backward off his chair by the side of the gate. His neck was broken and he died, for he was an old man, and he was heavy. He had led[b] Israel forty years.

[19]His daughter-in-law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant and near the time of delivery. When she heard the news that the ark of God had been captured and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead, she went into labor and gave birth, but was overcome by her labor pains. [20]As she was dying, the women attending her said, "Don't despair; you have given birth to a son." But she did not respond or pay any attention.

[21]She named the boy Ichabod,[c] saying, "The Glory has departed from Israel"—because of the capture of the ark of God and the deaths of her father-in-law and her husband. [22]She said, "The Glory has departed from Israel, for the ark of God has been captured."

The Ark in Ashdod and Ekron

5 [1]After the Philistines had captured the ark of God, they took it from Ebenezer to Ashdod. [2]Then they carried the ark into Dagon's temple and set it beside Dagon. [3]When the people of Ashdod rose early the next day, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! They took Dagon and put him back in his place. [4]But the following morning when they rose, there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before the ark of the LORD! His head and hands had been broken off

[a] *7* Or *"Gods have* (see Septuagint) [b] *18* Traditionally *judged* [c] *21* *Ichabod* means *no glory.*

Dagon Breaks Before God (1Sa 5:1–5)

The Philistine community at Ashdod adopted one of the most widely worshiped gods arising from the middle Euphrates region. Dagon was known as a deity at two of the Philistine's five principal cities: Gaza (Jdg 16:21, 23) and Ashdod (1Sa 5:1–5). Dagon's temple at Ashdod still existed as late as the Hellenistic period (2nd century B.C.), when the city was known as Azotus (1Mc 10:83, 84).

The worship of Dagon is first recorded in the records of Sargon of Accad (c. 2350 B.C.), long before the time of the Philistines. The central temple of the cult was situated at Terqa, located just below the junction of the Habor and Euphrates rivers. Dagon was the patron deity of the territory governed from this city.

A lack of narrative materials makes it difficult to describe Dagon. The most reasonable theory—that he is the deity of grain—was suggested by Philo of Byblos, a 2nd-century A.D. Greek historian. The Hebrew noun *dagan* simply means "grain," and the central place of grain in the diet of all the cultures of the area might explain the popularity of the deity. A less likely, yet popular, theory connects Dagon to fish (Hebrew *dag* means "fish").

The Mari tablets (c. 1813–1760 B.C.) describe the activities of Dagon. As a ruling god, he led his people in warfare, provided for the fertility of the land and populace, protected the territory from human and divine encroachment, and took special care of the royal family. More interestingly, Dagon kept contact with his people by means of prophetic communication. Professional and nonprofessional prophets would report the will of the deity through those whom the god seized for such communication.

By Samuel's time the cult of Dagon had spread throughout Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine. Following ancient practice, a victorious Philistine city would bring booty taken from Israel's deity and place it before the image of their own deity. The breaking of Dagon's image in the presence of the ark of God (1Sa 5:3, 4) demonstrated the power Israel's God had over the Philistines' Dagon.

and were lying on the threshold; only his body remained. 5That is why to this day neither the priests of Dagon nor any others who enter Dagon's temple at Ashdod step on the threshold.

6The LORD's hand was heavy on the people of Ashdod and its vicinity; he brought devastation on them and afflicted them with tumors.[a] 7When the people of Ashdod saw what was happening, they said, "The ark of the god of Israel must not stay here with us, because his hand is heavy on us and on Dagon our god." 8So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and asked them, "What shall we do with the ark of the god of Israel?"

They answered, "Have the ark of the god of Israel moved to Gath." So they moved the ark of the God of Israel.

9But after they had moved it, the LORD's hand was against that city, throwing it into a great panic. He afflicted the people of the city, both young and old, with an outbreak of tumors.[b] 10So they sent the ark of God to Ekron.

As the ark of God was entering Ekron, the people of Ekron cried out, "They have brought the ark of the god of Israel around to us to kill us and our people." 11So they called together all the rulers of the Philistines and said, "Send the ark of the god of Israel away; let it go back to its own place, or it[c] will kill us and our people." For death had filled the city with panic; God's hand was very heavy on it. 12Those who did not die were afflicted with tumors, and the outcry of the city went up to heaven.

The Ark Returned to Israel

6 1When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months, 2the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, "What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it back to its place."

3They answered, "If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it back to him without a gift; by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted from you."

4The Philistines asked, "What guilt offering should we send to him?"

They replied, "Five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers. 5Make models of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and give glory to Israel's god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land. 6Why do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh did? When Israel's god dealt harshly with them, did they not send the Israelites out so they could go on their way?

7"Now then, get a new cart ready, with two cows that have calved and have never been yoked. Hitch the cows to the cart, but take their calves away and pen them up. 8Take the ark of the LORD and put it on the cart, and in

[a] *6* Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate *tumors. And rats appeared in their land, and there was death and destruction throughout the city* [b] *9* Or *with tumors in the groin* (see Septuagint) [c] *11* Or *he*

Testing the Presence of God (1Sa 6:1–9)

The Philistine reaction to the capture of the ark of God shows much about the theology of that ancient time. People believed that the deities behind the armies were the real military forces in a battle; the defeat of an enemy's army was also the defeat of the enemy's god. Because the Philistines had defeated the Israelite armies, they believed that their god Dagon was stronger than Yahweh, God of Israel. So they placed Yahweh's ark in Dagon's temple (1Sa 5:2).

The result was a plague (5:6) and a big embarrassment (5:4). The Philistines in Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron were defeated by Israel's God without the aid of human armies (5:6–10). Another ancient thought was that good or bad fortune could result from a sacred object. At first the Philistines believed that the plague was caused by the ark itself (5:10, 11). Though not certain that Israel's God was really behind these events, they decided to return the ark to the Israelites.

Before sending the ark out, the Philistines checked with their priests and diviners (6:2), a standard practice in the ancient Near East. Before any activity, official or mundane, worshipers inquired of the gods whether the action would be a good thing. The unexpected answer: send back the ark, along with gold images of tumors and rats, all in honor of Yahweh, God of Israel. Seeking cures, petitioners used models of disease as offerings to deities of healing. The objects served as a form of imitative magic, while the gold was a gift to the god.

Still not certain that Israel's God was really behind their problems, the Philistines set up a test. They yoked cows having calves (and untrained as draft animals) to the ark. If the cows turned back to their calves, as would be natural, so that the ark went nowhere, the Philistines would know the ark was no god, but just a gold-plated wooden box (6:9). The cows, of course, went where God directed them, and the Philistines witnessed a God who was more powerful than they (6:16).

a chest beside it put the gold objects you are sending back to him as a guilt offering. Send it on its way, 9but keep watching it. If it goes up to its own territory, toward Beth Shemesh, then the LORD has brought this great disaster on us. But if it does not, then we will know that it was not his hand that struck us but that it happened to us by chance."

10So they did this. They took two such cows and hitched them to the cart and penned up their calves. 11They placed the ark of the LORD on the cart and along with it the chest containing the gold rats and the models of the tumors. 12Then the cows went straight up toward Beth Shemesh, keeping on the road and lowing all the way; they did not turn to the right or to the left. The rulers of the Philistines followed them as far as the border of Beth Shemesh.

13Now the people of Beth Shemesh were harvesting their wheat in the valley, and when they looked up and saw the ark, they rejoiced at the sight. 14The cart came to the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh, and there it stopped beside a large rock. The people chopped up the wood of the cart and sacrificed the cows as a burnt offering to the LORD. 15The Levites took down the ark of the LORD, together with the chest containing the gold objects, and placed them on the large rock. On that day the people of Beth Shemesh offered burnt offerings and made sacrifices to the LORD. 16The five rulers of the Philistines saw all this and then returned that same day to Ekron.

17These are the gold tumors the Philistines sent as a guilt offering to the LORD—one each for Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. 18And the number of the gold rats was according to the number of Philistine towns belonging to the five rulers—the fortified towns with their country villages. The large rock on which the Levites set the ark of the LORD is a witness to this day in the field of Joshua of Beth Shemesh.

19But God struck down some of the inhabitants of Beth Shemesh, putting seventy[a] of them to death because they looked into the ark of the LORD. The people mourned because of the heavy blow the LORD had dealt them. 20And the people of Beth Shemesh asked, "Who can stand in the presence of the LORD, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?"

21Then they sent messengers to the people of Kiriath Jearim, saying, "The Philistines have returned the ark of the LORD. Come down and take it up to your town."

[a] *19* A few Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint *50,070*

TRANSITION

Samuel's Public Ministry

After the ark was returned from Philistine territory, it was taken to Kiriath Jearim (1Sa 7:1, 2). There it would remain for 20 years while Israel lamented under Philistine control (7:2). After these years, Samuel would begin what is recorded in 7:3–17 as his first public ministry.

The chronological comment of 7:2 is one of a few such statements in 1 and 2 Samuel (see 1Sa 6:1; 2Sa 2:10, 11; 5:4, 5). Unfortunately,

none of them allows us to establish dates for any of the primary events of this period. We do know that Samuel was an old man at the time he presented Saul as king in 1050 or 1020 B.C. (1Sa 8:1, 5; 10:24; see "When Did Saul Become King?" at 1Sa 13:1).

• **1 Samuel 7:1–17**

1 Samuel

7:1 So the men of Kiriath Jearim came and took up the ark of the LORD. They brought it to Abinadab's house on the hill and consecrated Eleazar his son to guard the ark of the LORD. 2The ark remained at Kiriath Jearim a long time—twenty years in all.

Samuel Subdues the Philistines at Mizpah

Then all the people of Israel turned back to the LORD. 3So Samuel said to all the Israelites, "If you are returning to the LORD with all your hearts, then rid yourselves of the foreign gods and the Ashtoreths and commit yourselves to the LORD and serve him only, and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines." 4So the Israelites put away their Baals and Ashtoreths, and served the LORD only.

5Then Samuel said, "Assemble all Israel at Mizpah, and I will intercede with the LORD for you." 6When they had assembled at Mizpah, they drew water and poured it out before the LORD. On that day they fasted and there they confessed, "We have sinned against the LORD." Now Samuel was serving as leader[a] of Israel at Mizpah.

7When the Philistines heard that Israel had assembled at Mizpah, the rulers of the Philistines came up to attack them. When the Israelites heard of it, they were afraid because of the Philistines. 8They said to Samuel, "Do not stop crying out to the LORD our God for us, that he may rescue us from the hand of the Philistines." 9Then Samuel took a suckling lamb and sacrificed it as a whole burnt offering to the LORD. He cried out to the LORD on Israel's behalf, and the LORD answered him.

10While Samuel was sacrificing the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to engage Israel in battle. But that day the LORD thundered with loud thunder against the Philistines and threw them into such a panic that they were routed before the Israelites. 11The men of Israel rushed out of Mizpah and pursued the Philistines, slaughtering them along the way to a point below Beth Kar.

12Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer,[b] saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us."

13So the Philistines were subdued and they stopped invading Israel's territory. Throughout Samuel's lifetime, the hand of the LORD was against the Philistines. 14The towns from

[a] *6* Traditionally *judge*; also in verse 15 [b] *12* *Ebenezer* means *stone of help*.

THE UNITED MONARCHY IN ISRAEL

In the larger scope of ancient Near Eastern history, no time was more propitious for Israel to establish a monarchy. No great empire existed that might challenge a new kingdom. Assyria, the dominant power in Mesopotamia, was going through a temporary, but lengthy, period of weakness. Egypt's powerful New Kingdom (1550–1069 B.C.) was ending, and Egypt would never again be as strong.

Israel's major rivals during the united monarchy were the smaller kingdoms around Palestine. Of these, the Philistines on the coastal plain remained the greatest threat. Indeed, it was the Philistine threat that led the people to call for a king, and their first king, Saul, died fighting the Philistines. Not until Saul's successor, David, was this enemy finally subdued (2Sa 5:25).

Israel received what they had asked for: a king like all the nations.

David's rise to power as king attained high points in two events. First was his capture of the Jebusite city, Jerusalem (2Sa 5:6, 7). The city was well suited to be the capital of David's united nation. Second was his defeat of the Philistines, which enabled him to extend his rule across the Jordan River into Edom, Moab, and Ammon, and north into Syria (2Sa 8).

By the reign of Solomon, David's son and successor, Israel's borders had expanded to their greatest extent ever. Solomon consolidated his father's modest empire. By means of diplomatic ties, especially with the merchant city of Tyre to the north, Solomon became very successful in international trade. Within Israel, he constructed a new kind of state. The loose confederacy of independent tribes was replaced by a highly organized central bureaucracy, including military conscription and forced labor. Even Israel's worship center changed, from a movable tent shrine to a permanent temple, with the king himself performing some sacred functions. Israel received what they had asked for in 1Sa 8:5: a king "such as all the other nations have."

Is Beauty Judged by the Nose? (1Sa 8:13)

Samuel warned the people that a future king would take their daughters "to be perfumers and cooks and bakers" (1Sa 8:13). Actually, perfumers were highly prized professionals, including priests among their ranks (1Ch 9:30). They are mentioned in the literatures of Ebla, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and Ugarit.

Due to the dry dusty atmosphere of the Near East, it is not surprising that a regular coating of moisturizing perfumed oils was applied to the body, including the hair. In such treatments, not only was the body covered with a fragrant potion, but more often the oily perfume served as a cosmetic. It was probably in this sphere that Esther received a six-month treatment of myrrh (perhaps, as a sunblock or skin softener) and "perfumes" (Est 2:12).

Among the perfumes available in Bible times were calamus, cassia, cinnamon, bdellium, frankincense, galbanum, myrrh, nard, and saffron. Many of these items were imported from distant lands, like Arabia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, and Somaliland. They were transported by caravans on overland routes, like the traders who bought Joseph while traveling from Gilead on their way to Egypt (Ge 37:25). Perfumes probably also were transported by ship.

Among the specific uses of perfumes were preparations for the dead. When King Asa died (869 B.C.), he was laid in a bed in his tomb that was "covered with spices and various blended perfumes" (2Ch 16:14).

The medicinal use of perfumes and oils required specialists who knew not only how and when to apply these remedies, but also what to apply. This made professional perfumers an important part of ancient societies. Feeling good certainly does "bring joy to" one's heart (Pr 27:9).

Ekron to Gath that the Philistines had captured from Israel were restored to Israel, and Israel delivered the neighboring territory from the hands of the Philistines. And there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

15 Samuel continued as Israel's leader all the days of his life. 16 From year to year he went on a circuit from Bethel to Gilgal to Mizpah, judging Israel in all those places. 17 But he always went back to Ramah, where his home was, and there he also held court for Israel. And he built an altar there to the LORD.

TRANSITION

Israel Asks for a King

Samuel's sons, as Eli's before him (1Sa 2:12–17), were not worthy of their father. In his old age Samuel had appointed his sons as judges, but nothing about their judging could be characterized as just (1Sa 8:1–3). The combination of Samuel's advancing age and his sons' corruption caused the people to seek a new type of leadership.

The people did not blame Samuel for his sons' ways. Nevertheless, they were ready to replace their corrupt judges with a king, following the pattern of other nations (8:4, 5). Samuel cautioned them about seeking a king. The picture he gave them was typical of Near Eastern kings: oppressive, greedy and self-serving (8:10–18).

• 1 Samuel 8:1–22

1 Samuel

Israel Asks for a King

8 :1 When Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons as Israel's leaders.[a] 2 The name of his firstborn was Joel and the name of his second was Abijah, and they served at Beersheba. 3 But his sons did not follow his ways. They turned aside after dishonest gain and accepted bribes and perverted justice.

4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. 5 They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not follow your ways; now appoint a king to lead[b] us, such as all the other nations have."

6 But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. 7 And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. 8 As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you. 9 Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will claim as his rights."

10 Samuel told all the words of the LORD to the people who were asking him for a king. 11 He said, "This is what the king who will reign over you will claim as his rights: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. 12 Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. 13 He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. 14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give

[a] *1* Traditionally *judges* [b] *5* Traditionally *judge*; also in verses 6 and 20

them to his attendants. 15He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. 16Your male and female servants and the best of your cattle[a] and donkeys he will take for his own use. 17He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. 18When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, but the LORD will not answer you in that day."

19But the people refused to listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want a king over us. 20Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles."

21When Samuel heard all that the people said, he repeated it before the LORD. 22The LORD answered, "Listen to them and give them a king."

Then Samuel said to the Israelites, "Everyone go back to your own town."

[a] *16* Septuagint; Hebrew *young men* [b] *8* That is, about 1/10 ounce or about 3 grams

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Saul and David

The Bible contains two separate histories of the Israelite monarchy. The first is found in the books of Samuel and Kings, and the second in the books of Chronicles. Although the account in Chronicles is based on the earlier history of Samuel and Kings, and often quotes directly from it, the two accounts tell the history from very different perspectives.

These two differing views of Israel's history could be described as the "prophetic view" in Samuel/Kings and the "priestly view" in Chronicles. Whereas Samuel and Kings are especially interested in prophets and prophecy, Chronicles is much more concerned with the temple and its priests. Because of such clear differences, the two accounts will be presented separately in alternating presentations, labeled "Prophetic" (Samuel/Kings) and "Priestly" (Chronicles).

The prophetic account begins with the prophet Samuel's meeting with Saul, the man from the tribe of Benjamin who would become the first king. At that time, the Philistines along the Mediterranean seacoast dominated the scene, but Saul was well suited to command Israel. He proved this by leading a military campaign against Ammon (1Sa 11). In this battle, Saul behaves like one of the judges of earlier years and is consequently accepted by both northern and southern Israel.

The account of Saul's career is woven together with the rise to power of Israel's next king, David. Saul's last years were clouded by periods of depression and gloom. By the time the young David entered Saul's court with his soothing music (1Sa 16:19–23), he had already been anointed Saul's successor (16:1, 13).

• 1 Samuel 9:1—12:25

1 Samuel

Samuel Anoints Saul

9:1 There was a Benjamite, a man of standing, whose name was Kish son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Bekorath, the son of Aphiah of Benjamin. 2Kish had a son named Saul, as handsome a young man as could be found anywhere in Israel, and he was a head taller than anyone else.

3Now the donkeys belonging to Saul's father Kish were lost, and Kish said to his son Saul, "Take one of the servants with you and go and look for the donkeys." 4So he passed through the hill country of Ephraim and through the area around Shalisha, but they did not find them. They went on into the district of Shaalim, but the donkeys were not there. Then he passed through the territory of Benjamin, but they did not find them.

5When they reached the district of Zuph, Saul said to the servant who was with him, "Come, let's go back, or my father will stop thinking about the donkeys and start worrying about us."

6But the servant replied, "Look, in this town there is a man of God; he is highly respected, and everything he says comes true. Let's go there now. Perhaps he will tell us what way to take."

7Saul said to his servant, "If we go, what can we give the man? The food in our sacks is gone. We have no gift to take to the man of God. What do we have?"

8The servant answered him again. "Look," he said, "I have a quarter of a shekel[b] of silver. I will give it to the man of God so that he will tell us what way to take." 9(Formerly in Israel, if someone went to inquire of God, they would say, "Come, let us go to the seer," because the prophet of today used to be called a seer.)

10"Good," Saul said to his servant. "Come, let's go." So they set out for the town where the man of God was.

11As they were going up the hill to the town, they met some young women coming out to draw water, and they asked them, "Is the seer here?"

12"He is," they answered. "He's ahead of you. Hurry now; he has just come to our town today, for the people have a sacrifice at the

The Evil High Places (1Sa 9:12)

High places were a regular part of religious life in Canaanite society. The Israelites were also attracted to these facilities, making them a common feature in their cities, both in Israel (2Ki 17:9) and in Judah (2Ki 23:5, 8).

The fullest description of a high place is of one near a city in the region of Zuph (1Sa 9:5). At this high place there was a hall large enough to hold at least 30 people (9:22), which was used, at least sometimes, as a place for eating (9:13). A cook was stationed there, which means the high place probably also had some type of kitchen and, presumably, storage rooms (9:23, 24). An altar was also present, allowing Samuel to attend a sacrifice at this high place (9:12).

Because of the word "high," many have assumed that high places were necessarily built on isolated hills or mountaintops. Such is suggested by comments that worshipers "go up" to or "[come] down from" the high place (1Sa 9:13, 25). Nevertheless, high places were probably just as often built within the walls of cities. The location of high places is said to be in "the towns" (2Ki 23:5) or at the "gateway" of a city (2Ki 23:8). That cities most often were built on hilltops could mean that the highest point of a city may have been reserved for a high place.

On the other hand, archaeologists have discovered figurines and other cult objects in and around raised platforms, not so prominently located within cities. Small rooms and cooking areas have been found associated with these raised platforms, which possibly were the "high places" of Old Testament cities, even though not located on hilltops.

Worship in high places was later condemned. Hezekiah is reported to have been a good king partly because, among other things, he "removed the high places" (2Ki 18:4). The details of what transpired at these sites is now lost. What is clear is that high places became centers for the worship of foreign gods, where the Israelites engaged in evil practices (Jer 19:4, 5).

high place. 13As soon as you enter the town,
you will find him before he goes up to the
high place to eat. The people will not begin
eating until he comes, because he must bless
the sacrifice; afterward, those who are invited
will eat. Go up now; you should find him about
this time."
14They went up to the town, and as they were
entering it, there was Samuel, coming toward
them on his way up to the high place.
15Now the day before Saul came, the LORD
had revealed this to Samuel: 16"About this time
tomorrow I will send you a man from the land
of Benjamin. Anoint him ruler over my people
Israel; he will deliver them from the hand of
the Philistines. I have looked on my people, for
their cry has reached me."
17When Samuel caught sight of Saul, the
LORD said to him, "This is the man I spoke to
you about; he will govern my people."
18Saul approached Samuel in the gateway
and asked, "Would you please tell me where
the seer's house is?"
19"I am the seer," Samuel replied. "Go up
ahead of me to the high place, for today you
are to eat with me, and in the morning I will
send you on your way and will tell you all that
is in your heart. 20As for the donkeys you lost
three days ago, do not worry about them; they
have been found. And to whom is all the desire
of Israel turned, if not to you and your whole
family line?"
21Saul answered, "But am I not a Benjamite,
from the smallest tribe of Israel, and is not my
clan the least of all the clans of the tribe of Ben-
jamin? Why do you say such a thing to me?"
22Then Samuel brought Saul and his servant
into the hall and seated them at the head of
those who were invited—about thirty in num-
ber. 23Samuel said to the cook, "Bring the piece
of meat I gave you, the one I told you to lay
aside."
24So the cook took up the thigh with what
was on it and set it in front of Saul. Samuel said,
"Here is what has been kept for you. Eat, be-
cause it was set aside for you for this occasion
from the time I said, 'I have invited guests.'"
And Saul dined with Samuel that day.
25After they came down from the high place
to the town, Samuel talked with Saul on the
roof of his house. 26They rose about daybreak,
and Samuel called to Saul on the roof, "Get
ready, and I will send you on your way." When
Saul got ready, he and Samuel went outside to-
gether. 27As they were going down to the edge
of the town, Samuel said to Saul, "Tell the ser-
vant to go on ahead of us"—and the servant
did so—"but you stay here for a while, so that
I may give you a message from God."
10 1Then Samuel took a flask of olive oil and
poured it on Saul's head and kissed him,
saying, "Has not the LORD anointed you ruler
over his inheritance?[a] 2When you leave me to-
day, you will meet two men near Rachel's tomb,

[a] *1* Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate *over his people Israel? You will reign over the LORD's people and save them from the power of their enemies round about. And this will be a sign to you that the LORD has anointed you ruler over his inheritance:*

at Zelzah on the border of Benjamin. They will say to you, 'The donkeys you set out to look for have been found. And now your father has stopped thinking about them and is worried about you. He is asking, "What shall I do about my son?"'

3"Then you will go on from there until you reach the great tree of Tabor. Three men going up to worship God at Bethel will meet you there. One will be carrying three young goats, another three loaves of bread, and another a skin of wine. 4They will greet you and offer you two loaves of bread, which you will accept from them.

5"After that you will go to Gibeah of God, where there is a Philistine outpost. As you approach the town, you will meet a procession of prophets coming down from the high place with lyres, timbrels, pipes and harps being played before them, and they will be prophesying. 6The Spirit of the LORD will come powerfully upon you, and you will prophesy with them; and you will be changed into a different person. 7Once these signs are fulfilled, do whatever your hand finds to do, for God is with you.

8"Go down ahead of me to Gilgal. I will surely come down to you to sacrifice burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, but you must wait seven days until I come to you and tell you what you are to do."

Saul Made King

9As Saul turned to leave Samuel, God changed Saul's heart, and all these signs were fulfilled that day. 10When he and his servant arrived at Gibeah, a procession of prophets met him; the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he joined in their prophesying. 11When all those who had formerly known him saw him prophesying with the prophets, they asked each other, "What is this that has happened to the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?"

12A man who lived there answered, "And who is their father?" So it became a saying: "Is Saul also among the prophets?" 13After Saul stopped prophesying, he went to the high place.

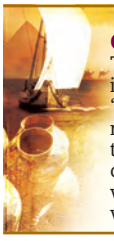
14Now Saul's uncle asked him and his servant, "Where have you been?"

"Looking for the donkeys," he said. "But when we saw they were not to be found, we went to Samuel."

15Saul's uncle said, "Tell me what Samuel said to you."

16Saul replied, "He assured us that the donkeys had been found." But he did not tell his uncle what Samuel had said about the kingship.

17Samuel summoned the people of Israel to the LORD at Mizpah 18and said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I brought Israel up out of Egypt, and I delivered you from the power of Egypt and all the kingdoms that oppressed you.' 19But you have now rejected your God, who saves you out of all your disasters and calamities. And you have



Culture & Society

The prophets appear as religious ecstatics, living in groups or bands (1Sa 10:5). "Prophesying" in this context was a recognizable kind of abnormal behavior, like a trance. In Greek tradition also, the oracles of the gods were not delivered in a normal way. According to Heraclitus, the oracles were ambiguous, like riddles.

Where Was Rachel's Tomb? (1Sa 10:2)

Where was Rachel buried—near Bethlehem or farther north near Ramah? The answer to that question is not easily answered, but the confusion is easy to explain.

Jacob's wife Rachel was the mother of four sons, Joseph and Benjamin, her own children, and Dan and Naphtali, born to Rachel through her servant Bilhah (Ge 35:24, 25). In giving birth to Benjamin she died.

According to Genesis, her death and burial occurred just north of Bethlehem, which is identified with the older settlement of Ephrath (Ge 35:19, 20; 48:7). Yet in 1 Samuel the tomb of Rachel is located north of Jerusalem on the "border of Benjamin" (1Sa 10:2), probably somewhere between Gibeah and Ramah. The confusion about where Rachel was buried very likely has something to do with intertribal rivalry.

In the days of the Israelite monarchy, the main rivals for the throne pitted the tribes of Judah and Benjamin against each other. David was from the tribe of Judah, which is the primary reason that his first capital was in Hebron, a Judahite city (2Sa 2:1, 11). Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, so his headquarters were located in Benjamite territory, in the city known as "Gibeah in Benjamin" (1Sa 13:2) and as "Gibeah of Saul" (1Sa 15:34).

The anomaly concerning Rachel's tomb was that the mother of the Benjamites was buried in the heart of Judahite territory, Benjamin's major rival. Of course, Rachel's burial occurred long before the land was divided among the tribes. It seems logical that after the Benjamites possessed their own territory, they either reinterred their mother (if her burial site was still known), or created a new memorial place, on the border of Benjamin. They were certainly not likely to admit that their mother was buried in Judah near Bethlehem. Whether physically or not, her burial spot was moved to Benjamin.

said, 'No, appoint a king over us.' So now present yourselves before the LORD by your tribes and clans."

20When Samuel had all Israel come forward by tribes, the tribe of Benjamin was taken by lot. 21Then he brought forward the tribe of Benjamin, clan by clan, and Matri's clan was taken. Finally Saul son of Kish was taken. But when they looked for him, he was not to be found. 22So they inquired further of the LORD, "Has the man come here yet?"

And the LORD said, "Yes, he has hidden himself among the supplies."

23They ran and brought him out, and as he stood among the people he was a head taller than any of the others. 24Samuel said to all the people, "Do you see the man the LORD has chosen? There is no one like him among all the people."

Then the people shouted, "Long live the king!"

25Samuel explained to the people the rights and duties of kingship. He wrote them down on a scroll and deposited it before the LORD. Then Samuel dismissed the people to go to their own homes.

26Saul also went to his home in Gibeah, accompanied by valiant men whose hearts God had touched. 27But some scoundrels said, "How can this fellow save us?" They despised him and brought him no gifts. But Saul kept silent.

Saul Rescues the City of Jabesh

11 1Nahash[a] the Ammonite went up and besieged Jabesh Gilead. And all the men of Jabesh said to him, "Make a treaty with us, and we will be subject to you."

2But Nahash the Ammonite replied, "I will make a treaty with you only on the condition that I gouge out the right eye of every one of you and so bring disgrace on all Israel."

3The elders of Jabesh said to him, "Give us seven days so we can send messengers throughout Israel; if no one comes to rescue us, we will surrender to you."

4When the messengers came to Gibeah of Saul and reported these terms to the people, they all wept aloud. 5Just then Saul was returning from the fields, behind his oxen, and he asked, "What is wrong with everyone? Why are they weeping?" Then they repeated to him what the men of Jabesh had said.

6When Saul heard their words, the Spirit of God came powerfully upon him, and he burned with anger. 7He took a pair of oxen, cut them into pieces, and sent the pieces by messengers throughout Israel, proclaiming, "This is what will be done to the oxen of anyone who does not follow Saul and Samuel." Then the terror of the LORD fell on the people, and they came out together as one. 8When Saul mustered them at Bezek, the men of Israel numbered three hundred thousand and those of Judah thirty thousand.

9They told the messengers who had come, "Say to the men of Jabesh Gilead, 'By the time the sun is hot tomorrow, you will be rescued.'"

[a] *1* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls *gifts. Now Nahash king of the Ammonites oppressed the Gadites and Reubenites severely. He gouged out all their right eyes and struck terror and dread in Israel. Not a man remained among the Israelites beyond the Jordan whose right eye was not gouged out by Nahash king of the Ammonites, except that seven thousand men fled from the Ammonites and entered Jabesh Gilead. About a month later,* [1]*Nahash*

Saul the King? (1Sa 11:14, 15)

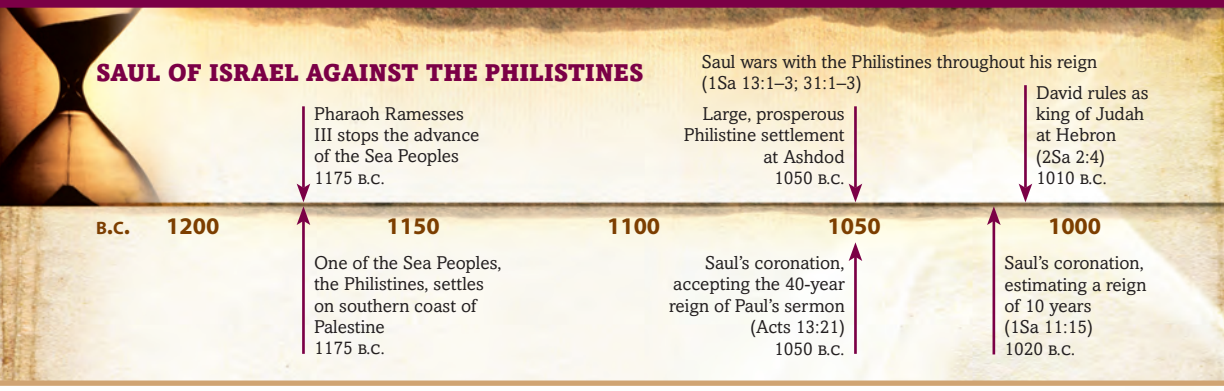
Gilgal held special significance for the relationship between Israel and her God, Yahweh. It was there that the Israelites renewed their covenant with Yahweh before entering the promised land (Jos 5:10). It was also at Gilgal that Saul was made king (1Sa 11:15). Yet despite the coronation ritual and celebration, a question hung over the new king: What kind of kingdom did he really have?

His standing army was relatively small and divided into two units, both of which were stationed within Benjamin, Saul's own tribal territory (1Sa 13:2). Even though Saul's soldiers are described as "men from Israel" (13:2), one wonders if most of them were not from his own tribe of Benjamin.

Before his coronation, Saul acted like a judge, calling together troops for a specific need (1Sa 11:7). Even though Samuel had already proclaimed Saul's kingship, the king-to-be met with opposition and rejection (10:24–27).

It appears that Saul's kingdom was an act of desperation on the part of the Israelites. The Ammonites were moving in on the tribes of Reuben and Gad (11:1–3), while the Philistines were controlling the heartland of Israel (13:3). The Israelites were ill prepared for war, lacking swords and spears, as well as a way to sharpen them, if they had them (13:19–22).

Saul's reign was one of defense and struggle. He is pictured as spending much of his time chasing David. The Bible says nothing about any building activities. Saul spent all of his time building a kingdom, with no time to build a palace. While there was great rejoicing in Gilgal at Saul's coronation (11:15), such things as palaces and royal cities would have to wait until the reign of his successor David.



When the messengers went and reported this to the men of Jabesh, they were elated. 10They said to the Ammonites, "Tomorrow we will surrender to you, and you can do to us whatever you like."

11The next day Saul separated his men into three divisions; during the last watch of the night they broke into the camp of the Ammonites and slaughtered them until the heat of the day. Those who survived were scattered, so that no two of them were left together.

Saul Confirmed as King

12The people then said to Samuel, "Who was it that asked, 'Shall Saul reign over us?' Turn these men over to us so that we may put them to death."

13But Saul said, "No one will be put to death today, for this day the LORD has rescued Israel."

14Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingship." 15So all the people went to Gilgal and made Saul king in the presence of the LORD. There they sacrificed fellowship offerings before the LORD, and Saul and all the Israelites held a great celebration.

Samuel's Farewell Speech

12 1Samuel said to all Israel, "I have listened to everything you said to me and have set a king over you. 2Now you have a king as your leader. As for me, I am old and gray, and my sons are here with you. I have been your leader from my youth until this day. 3Here I stand. Testify against me in the presence of the LORD and his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I cheated? Whom have I oppressed? From whose hand have I accepted a bribe to make me shut my eyes? If I have done any of these things, I will make it right."

4"You have not cheated or oppressed us," they replied. "You have not taken anything from anyone's hand."

5Samuel said to them, "The LORD is witness against you, and also his anointed is witness this day, that you have not found anything in my hand."

"He is witness," they said.

6Then Samuel said to the people, "It is the LORD who appointed Moses and Aaron and brought your ancestors up out of Egypt. 7Now then, stand here, because I am going to confront you with evidence before the LORD as to all the righteous acts performed by the LORD for you and your ancestors.

8"After Jacob entered Egypt, they cried to the LORD for help, and the LORD sent Moses and Aaron, who brought your ancestors out of Egypt and settled them in this place.

9"But they forgot the LORD their God; so he sold them into the hand of Sisera, the commander of the army of Hazor, and into the hands of the Philistines and the king of Moab, who fought against them. 10They cried out to the LORD and said, 'We have sinned; we have forsaken the LORD and served the Baals and the Ashtoreths. But now deliver us from the hands of our enemies, and we will serve you.' 11Then the LORD sent Jerub-Baal,[a] Barak,[b] Jephthah and Samuel,[c] and he delivered you from the hands of your enemies all around you, so that you lived in safety.

12"But when you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was moving against you, you said to me, 'No, we want a king to rule over us'—even though the LORD your God was your king. 13Now here is the king you have chosen, the one you asked for; see, the LORD has set a king over you. 14If you fear the LORD and serve and obey him and do not rebel against his commands, and if both you and the king who reigns

[a] *11* Also called *Gideon* [b] *11* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac; Hebrew *Bedan* [c] *11* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac *Samson*

over you follow the LORD your God—good!
15But if you do not obey the LORD, and if you
rebel against his commands, his hand will be
against you, as it was against your ancestors.
16"Now then, stand still and see this great
thing the LORD is about to do before your eyes!
17Is it not wheat harvest now? I will call on the
LORD to send thunder and rain. And you will
realize what an evil thing you did in the eyes of
the LORD when you asked for a king."
18Then Samuel called on the LORD, and that
same day the LORD sent thunder and rain. So
all the people stood in awe of the LORD and of
Samuel.
19The people all said to Samuel, "Pray to the
LORD your God for your servants so that we will
not die, for we have added to all our other sins
the evil of asking for a king."
20"Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "You
have done all this evil; yet do not turn away
from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your
heart. 21Do not turn away after useless idols.
They can do you no good, nor can they rescue
you, because they are useless. 22For the sake
of his great name the LORD will not reject his
people, because the LORD was pleased to make
you his own. 23As for me, far be it from me that
I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray
for you. And I will teach you the way that is
good and right. 24But be sure to fear the LORD
and serve him faithfully with all your heart;
consider what great things he has done for you.
25Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and
your king will perish."

TRANSITION

When Did Saul Become King?

The Hebrew text of 1Sa 13:1 is in disar ray. It says that Saul was a year old when he began to reign and reigned for two years. Unfortunately, we do not know how old Saul was when he began to reign, nor in what year he became king. The NIV rendering is based on a few late Greek manuscripts and a passage in Acts.

In Antioch Paul preached a sermon in which he appealed to Israel's history. He comments that Saul was king for "forty years" (Ac 13:21), a number mentioned also by the Jewish historian Josephus. Some accept this number as the length of Saul's reign and, counting backward 40 years from the supposed date when David became king (1010 B.C.), place Saul's coronation in 1050 B.C.

Other scholars understand the 40 years of Acts 13:21 to be a symbolic round number representing one generation. Rather than 40 years, they suggest a much shorter reign. To allow time for the several military campaigns waged by Saul, a reign of at least 10 years is supposed, and Saul's coronation is arbitrarily placed at about 1020 B.C.

The incompleteness of the Hebrew text in 1Sa 13:1 leaves us without exact information. What we can say is that Saul possibly became king sometime between 1050 and 1020 B.C.

• 1 Samuel 13:1—16:23

1 Samuel

Samuel Rebukes Saul

13 :1 Saul was thirty[a] years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-[b] two years.

2Saul chose three thousand men from Israel; two thousand were with him at Mikmash and in the hill country of Bethel, and a thousand were with Jonathan at Gibeah in Benjamin. The rest of the men he sent back to their homes.

3Jonathan attacked the Philistine outpost at Geba, and the Philistines heard about it. Then Saul had the trumpet blown throughout the land and said, "Let the Hebrews hear!" 4So all Israel heard the news: "Saul has attacked the Philistine outpost, and now Israel has become obnoxious to the Philistines." And the people were summoned to join Saul at Gilgal.

5The Philistines assembled to fight Israel, with three thousand[c] chariots, six thousand charioteers, and soldiers as numerous as the sand on the seashore. They went up and camped at Mikmash, east of Beth Aven. 6When the Israelites saw that their situation was critical and that their army was hard pressed, they hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in pits and cisterns. 7Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead.

Saul remained at Gilgal, and all the troops with him were quaking with fear. 8He waited seven days, the time set by Samuel; but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and Saul's men began to scatter. 9So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the fellowship offerings." And Saul offered up the burnt offering. 10Just as he finished making the offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him.

11"What have you done?" asked Samuel.

Saul replied, "When I saw that the men were scattering, and that you did not come at the set time, and that the Philistines were assembling at Mikmash, 12I thought, 'Now the Philistines will come down against me at Gilgal, and I have

[a] *1* A few late manuscripts of the Septuagint; Hebrew does not have *thirty.* [b] *1* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Acts 13:21); Masoretic Text does not have *forty-.* [c] *5* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac; Hebrew *thirty thousand*

From Copper to Bronze to Iron (1Sa 13:19–22)

The first metals used by humans were gold, silver, and copper. Gold and silver were too soft to be used for tools or weapons. Copper in its native form is also soft, although it was hammered into a harder form. However, sometime around 3500 B.C. ancient metalworkers discovered that copper hardened when alloyed with tin to produce bronze, or with zinc to produce brass.

The harder bronze was not only a better metal for producing tools, but also resulted in more effective weapons. During the Early Bronze Age, from about 2300 B.C., bronze swords and ax heads were produced by bronzeworkers with increasing skill. Bronze instruments of warfare, such as the spear (2Sa 21:16), the bow (2Sa 22:35), and the shield (2Ch 12:10), were still in use at the time of Israel's monarchy.

The next advance in metal technology came with the discovery of smelting to separate iron from its oxides. The ironworking process, which required fuel and heat, was slow to develop. Before 1200 B.C. iron was used mostly for jewelry and ceremonial weapons; however, there are a few examples of military use. An Accadian text from Nuzi in northern Mesopotamia, dating from about the 15th century B.C., gives evidence of a coat of scale armor, using iron scales, made for a horse. When the Israelites first arrived in Canaan, they were faced with the superiority of their opponents' iron-reinforced chariots (Jdg 1:19; 4:3).

Ironworking demanded the skill of a blacksmith. A letter of the Hittite king Hattusilis III, dating around 1250 B.C., shows that the Hittites had developed skills in the production of smelted iron. When Saul became Israel's king (1050 or 1020 B.C.), Philistine ironsmiths were able to control the actual working of iron in Canaan. They would sharpen the Hebrews' iron tools, but would not teach them to "make swords or spears" of iron (1Sa 13:19, 22).

not sought the LORD's favor.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering."

13"You have done a foolish thing," Samuel said. "You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. 14But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command."

15Then Samuel left Gilgal[a] and went up to Gibeah in Benjamin, and Saul counted the men who were with him. They numbered about six hundred.

Israel Without Weapons

16Saul and his son Jonathan and the men with them were staying in Gibeah[b] in Benjamin, while the Philistines camped at Mikmash. 17Raiding parties went out from the Philistine camp in three detachments. One turned toward Ophrah in the vicinity of Shual, 18another toward Beth Horon, and the third toward the borderland overlooking the Valley of Zeboyim facing the wilderness.

19Not a blacksmith could be found in the whole land of Israel, because the Philistines had said, "Otherwise the Hebrews will make swords or spears!" 20So all Israel went down to the Philistines to have their plow points, mattocks, axes and sickles[c] sharpened. 21The price was two-thirds of a shekel[d] for sharpening plow points and mattocks, and a third of a shekel[e] for sharpening forks and axes and for repointing goads.

22So on the day of the battle not a soldier with Saul and Jonathan had a sword or spear in his hand; only Saul and his son Jonathan had them.

Jonathan Attacks the Philistines

23Now a detachment of Philistines had gone
14 out to the pass at Mikmash. 1One day Jonathan son of Saul said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the

Science & Technology

Although the word "iron" does not occur in 1Sa 13:19–22, the Philistines are represented as having a certain skill that the Hebrews lacked. The technology of bronze was by this time centuries old. Approximately 50 percent of weapons recovered by archaeologists from the era of David and Solomon are iron and 50 percent bronze. A hundred years earlier, 80 percent were bronze.

[a] *15* Hebrew; Septuagint *Gilgal and went his way; the rest of the people went after Saul to meet the army, and they went out of Gilgal* [b] *16* Two Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts *Geba,* a variant of *Gibeah* [c] *20* Septuagint; Hebrew *plow points* [d] *21* That is, about 1/4 ounce or about 8 grams [e] *21* That is, about 1/8 ounce or about 4 grams

Philistine outpost on the other side." But he did not tell his father.

2 Saul was staying on the outskirts of Gibeah under a pomegranate tree in Migron. With him were about six hundred men, 3 among whom was Ahijah, who was wearing an ephod. He was a son of Ichabod's brother Ahitub son of Phinehas, the son of Eli, the LORD's priest in Shiloh. No one was aware that Jonathan had left.

4 On each side of the pass that Jonathan intended to cross to reach the Philistine outpost was a cliff; one was called Bozez and the other Seneh. 5 One cliff stood to the north toward Mikmash, the other to the south toward Geba.

6 Jonathan said to his young armor-bearer, "Come, let's go over to the outpost of those uncircumcised men. Perhaps the LORD will act in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by many or by few."

7 "Do all that you have in mind," his armor-bearer said. "Go ahead; I am with you heart and soul."

8 Jonathan said, "Come on, then; we will cross over toward them and let them see us. 9 If they say to us, 'Wait there until we come to you,' we will stay where we are and not go up to them. 10 But if they say, 'Come up to us,' we will climb up, because that will be our sign that the LORD has given them into our hands."

11 So both of them showed themselves to the Philistine outpost. "Look!" said the Philistines. "The Hebrews are crawling out of the holes they were hiding in." 12 The men of the outpost shouted to Jonathan and his armor-bearer, "Come up to us and we'll teach you a lesson."

So Jonathan said to his armor-bearer, "Climb up after me; the LORD has given them into the hand of Israel."

13 Jonathan climbed up, using his hands and feet, with his armor-bearer right behind him. The Philistines fell before Jonathan, and his armor-bearer followed and killed behind him. 14 In that first attack Jonathan and his armor-bearer killed some twenty men in an area of about half an acre.

Israel Routs the Philistines

15 Then panic struck the whole army—those in the camp and field, and those in the outposts and raiding parties—and the ground shook. It was a panic sent by God.[a]

16 Saul's lookouts at Gibeah in Benjamin saw the army melting away in all directions. 17 Then Saul said to the men who were with him, "Muster the forces and see who has left us." When they did, it was Jonathan and his armor-bearer who were not there.

18 Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God." (At that time it was with the Israelites.)[b] 19 While Saul was talking to the priest, the tumult in the Philistine camp increased more and more. So Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

20 Then Saul and all his men assembled and went to the battle. They found the Philistines in total confusion, striking each other with their swords. 21 Those Hebrews who had previously been with the Philistines and had gone up with them to their camp went over to the Israelites who were with Saul and Jonathan. 22 When all the Israelites who had hidden in the hill country of Ephraim heard that the Philistines were on the run, they joined the battle in hot pursuit. 23 So on that day the LORD saved Israel, and the battle moved on beyond Beth Aven.

Jonathan Eats Honey

24 Now the Israelites were in distress that day, because Saul had bound the people under an oath, saying, "Cursed be anyone who eats food before evening comes, before I have avenged myself on my enemies!" So none of the troops tasted food.

25 The entire army entered the woods, and there was honey on the ground. 26 When they went into the woods, they saw the honey oozing out; yet no one put his hand to his mouth, because they feared the oath. 27 But Jonathan had not heard that his father had bound the people with the oath, so he reached out the end of the staff that was in his hand and dipped it into the honeycomb. He raised his hand to his mouth, and his eyes brightened.[c] 28 Then one of the soldiers told him, "Your father bound the army under a strict oath, saying, 'Cursed be anyone who eats food today!' That is why the men are faint."

29 Jonathan said, "My father has made trouble for the country. See how my eyes brightened when I tasted a little of this honey. 30 How much better it would have been if the men had eaten today some of the plunder they took from their enemies. Would not the slaughter of the Philistines have been even greater?"

31 That day, after the Israelites had struck down the Philistines from Mikmash to Aijalon, they were exhausted. 32 They pounced on the plunder and, taking sheep, cattle and calves, they butchered them on the ground and ate them, together with the blood. 33 Then someone said to Saul, "Look, the men are sinning against the LORD by eating meat that has blood in it."

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[a] *15* Or *a terrible panic* [b] *18* Hebrew; Septuagint *"Bring the ephod." (At that time he wore the ephod before the Israelites.)*
[c] *27* Or *his strength was renewed*; similarly in verse 29

"You have broken faith," he said. "Roll a large stone over here at once." 34Then he said, "Go out among the men and tell them, 'Each of you bring me your cattle and sheep, and slaughter them here and eat them. Do not sin against the LORD by eating meat with blood still in it.'"

So everyone brought his ox that night and slaughtered it there. 35Then Saul built an altar to the LORD; it was the first time he had done this.

36Saul said, "Let us go down and pursue the Philistines by night and plunder them till dawn, and let us not leave one of them alive."

"Do whatever seems best to you," they replied.

But the priest said, "Let us inquire of God here."

37So Saul asked God, "Shall I go down and pursue the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel's hand?" But God did not answer him that day.

38Saul therefore said, "Come here, all you who are leaders of the army, and let us find out what sin has been committed today. 39As surely as the LORD who rescues Israel lives, even if the guilt lies with my son Jonathan, he must die." But not one of them said a word.

40Saul then said to all the Israelites, "You stand over there; I and Jonathan my son will stand over here."

"Do what seems best to you," they replied.

41Then Saul prayed to the LORD, the God of Israel, "Why have you not answered your servant today? If the fault is in me or my son Jonathan, respond with Urim, but if the men of Israel are at fault,[a] respond with Thummim." Jonathan and Saul were taken by lot, and the men were cleared. 42Saul said, "Cast the lot between me and Jonathan my son." And Jonathan was taken.

43Then Saul said to Jonathan, "Tell me what you have done."

So Jonathan told him, "I tasted a little honey with the end of my staff. And now I must die!"

44Saul said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you do not die, Jonathan."

45But the men said to Saul, "Should Jonathan die—he who has brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Never! As surely as the LORD lives, not a hair of his head will fall to the ground, for he did this today with God's help." So the men rescued Jonathan, and he was not put to death.

46Then Saul stopped pursuing the Philistines, and they withdrew to their own land.

47After Saul had assumed rule over Israel, he fought against their enemies on every side: Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings[b] of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment on them.[c] 48He fought valiantly and defeated the Amalekites, delivering Israel from the hands of those who had plundered them.

Saul's Family

49Saul's sons were Jonathan, Ishvi and Malki-Shua. The name of his older daughter was Merab, and that of the younger was Michal. 50His wife's name was Ahinoam daughter of Ahimaaz. The name of the commander of Saul's army was Abner son of Ner, and Ner was Saul's uncle. 51Saul's father Kish and Abner's father Ner were sons of Abiel.

52All the days of Saul there was bitter war with the Philistines, and whenever Saul saw a mighty or brave man, he took him into his service.

The LORD Rejects Saul as King

15 1Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. 2This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. 3Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy[d] all that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.'"

4So Saul summoned the men and mustered them at Telaim—two hundred thousand foot soldiers and ten thousand from Judah. 5Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. 6Then he said to the Kenites, "Go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt." So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites.

Religion & Worship

Samuel repeats God's demand that Amalek be destroyed (1Sa 15:3). The term for this decree in Hebrew is *herem,* meaning "devoted" or "banned." As a religious demand, it is absolute, although in fact the inhabitants of Canaan were not at any time entirely exterminated (Dt 7:22; Jdg 1:27–36). Throughout history, many wars have had an obvious religious component.

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[a] *41* Septuagint; Hebrew does not have *"Why . . . at fault.*
[b] *47* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint *king*
[c] *47* Hebrew; Septuagint *he was victorious*
[d] *3* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verses 8, 9, 15, 18, 20 and 21.

7 Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the
way from Havilah to Shur, near the eastern
border of Egypt. 8 He took Agag king of the
Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally
destroyed with the sword. 9 But Saul and the
army spared Agag and the best of the sheep
and cattle, the fat calves[a] and lambs — every-
thing that was good. These they were unwilling
to destroy completely, but everything that was
despised and weak they totally destroyed.
10 Then the word of the LORD came to Sam-
uel: 11 "I regret that I have made Saul king, be-
cause he has turned away from me and has
not carried out my instructions." Samuel was
angry, and he cried out to the LORD all that
night.
12 Early in the morning Samuel got up and
went to meet Saul, but he was told, "Saul has
gone to Carmel. There he has set up a mon-
ument in his own honor and has turned and
gone on down to Gilgal."
13 When Samuel reached him, Saul said, "The
LORD bless you! I have carried out the LORD's
instructions."
14 But Samuel said, "What then is this bleat-
ing of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of
cattle that I hear?"
15 Saul answered, "The soldiers brought them
from the Amalekites; they spared the best of
the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD
your God, but we totally destroyed the rest."
16 "Enough!" Samuel said to Saul. "Let me tell
you what the LORD said to me last night."
"Tell me," Saul replied.
17 Samuel said, "Although you were once
small in your own eyes, did you not become the
head of the tribes of Israel? The LORD anoint-
ed you king over Israel. 18 And he sent you on
a mission, saying, 'Go and completely destroy
those wicked people, the Amalekites; wage war
against them until you have wiped them out.'
19 Why did you not obey the LORD? Why did you
pounce on the plunder and do evil in the eyes
of the LORD?"

TIME CAPSULE		1169 to 1130 B.C.
1169		Sea Peoples depicted in horse-drawn carts
1157		Elamites capture Babylonia and destroy the Kassite dynasty
1133–1116		Nebuchadnezzar I rules 2nd Isin dynasty of Babylon
1130		Egyptians lose control of southern Canaan
1130		Final destruction of Mycenae

20 "But I did obey the LORD," Saul said. "I
went on the mission the LORD assigned me.
I completely destroyed the Amalekites and
brought back Agag their king. 21 The soldiers
took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the
best of what was devoted to God, in order to
sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal."
22 But Samuel replied:

"Does the LORD delight in burnt offerings
and sacrifices
as much as in obeying the LORD?
To obey is better than sacrifice,
and to heed is better than the fat of rams.
23 For rebellion is like the sin of divination,
and arrogance like the evil of idolatry.
Because you have rejected the word of the
LORD,
he has rejected you as king."

24 Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned. I
violated the LORD's command and your instruc-
tions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in
to them. 25 Now I beg you, forgive my sin and
come back with me, so that I may worship the
LORD."
26 But Samuel said to him, "I will not go back
with you. You have rejected the word of the
LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king
over Israel!"
27 As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught
hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore. 28 Sam-
uel said to him, "The LORD has torn the king-
dom of Israel from you today and has given it
to one of your neighbors — to one better than
you. 29 He who is the Glory of Israel does not
lie or change his mind; for he is not a human
being, that he should change his mind."
30 Saul replied, "I have sinned. But please
honor me before the elders of my people and
before Israel; come back with me, so that I
may worship the LORD your God." 31 So Sam-
uel went back with Saul, and Saul worshiped
the LORD.
32 Then Samuel said, "Bring me Agag king of
the Amalekites."
Agag came to him in chains.[b] And he thought,
"Surely the bitterness of death is past."
33 But Samuel said,

"As your sword has made women childless,
so will your mother be childless among
women."

And Samuel put Agag to death before the LORD
at Gilgal.

[a] *9* Or *the grown bulls*; the meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. [b] *32* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

34Then Samuel left for Ramah, but Saul went
up to his home in Gibeah of Saul. 35Until the
day Samuel died, he did not go to see Saul
again, though Samuel mourned for him. And
the LORD regretted that he had made Saul king
over Israel.

Samuel Anoints David

16 1The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will
you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected
him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil
and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse
of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to
be king."

2But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul
hears about it, he will kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and
say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' 3In-
vite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you
what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I
indicate."

4Samuel did what the LORD said. When he
arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town
trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do
you come in peace?"

5Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come
to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves
and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he
consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited
them to the sacrifice.

6When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and
thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands
here before the LORD."

7But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not con-
sider his appearance or his height, for I have
rejected him. The LORD does not look at the
things people look at. People look at the out-
ward appearance, but the LORD looks at the
heart."

8Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him
pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The
LORD has not chosen this one either." 9Jesse
then had Shammah pass by, but Samuel said,
"Nor has the LORD chosen this one." 10Jesse
had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but
Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen
these." 11So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the
sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered.
"He is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit
down until he arrives."

12So he sent for him and had him brought
in. He was glowing with health and had a fine
appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him;
this is the one."

13So Samuel took the horn of oil and anoint-
ed him in the presence of his brothers, and
from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came
powerfully upon David. Samuel then went to
Ramah.

David in Saul's Service

14Now the Spirit of the LORD had departed
from Saul, and an evil[a] spirit from the LORD tor-
mented him.

15Saul's attendants said to him, "See, an evil
spirit from God is tormenting you. 16Let our
lord command his servants here to search for
someone who can play the lyre. He will play
when the evil spirit from God comes on you,
and you will feel better."

17So Saul said to his attendants, "Find some-
one who plays well and bring him to me."

18One of the servants answered, "I have seen
a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to
play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior.
He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And
the LORD is with him."

19Then Saul sent messengers to Jesse and
said, "Send me your son David, who is with the
sheep." 20So Jesse took a donkey loaded with
bread, a skin of wine and a young goat and sent
them with his son David to Saul.

21David came to Saul and entered his ser-
vice. Saul liked him very much, and David be-
came one of his armor-bearers. 22Then Saul
sent word to Jesse, saying, "Allow David to re-
main in my service, for I am pleased with him."

23Whenever the spirit from God came on
Saul, David would take up his lyre and play.
Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel
better, and the evil spirit would leave him.

[a] *14* Or *and a harmful*; similarly in verses 15, 16 and 23

TRANSITION

The Shepherd's Psalm

Few of the psalms give any information about their historical context. Indeed, this is intentional: the psalms were designed for worship and were written to reflect the many different needs of many worshipers who would use them. The origination of the psalms in worship makes it difficult to place them in chronological order.

Although we cannot know exactly when Ps 23 was composed, it is particularly appropriate to be read after 1Sa 16:14–23. With such a psalm the shepherd David might sing to his troubled, unstable king.

• **Psalm 23**

PSALM 23

A psalm of David.

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
2 He makes me lie down in green
pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,
3 he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.
4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,[a]
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.
6 Surely your goodness and love will
follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the LORD
forever.

TRANSITION

David in Saul's Court

David's arrival in Saul's court as musician and armor-bearer (1Sa 16:14–23) is followed immediately by a second arrival, this time as the boy slayer of the Philistine giant (1Sa 17). Though some details of these two accounts are puzzling, such as why Saul does not seem to recognize his own armor-bearer (1Sa 17:55), the "two arrivals" are appropriate to David's character. He will always be remembered as both a great warrior, the lion of Judah, and as the sweet singer of Israel, the man after God's own heart.

Saul's and David's victories over the Philistines gave heart to Israel, but the Philistines continued pressing inland. Saul would spend the rest of his life at war with them. That strain, along with his jealousy of David's popularity, helped to overset an already troubled mind.

• **1 Samuel 17:1—19:17**

1 Samuel

David and Goliath

17 :1 Now the Philistines gathered their forces for war and assembled at Sokoh in Judah. They pitched camp at Ephes Dammim, between Sokoh and Azekah. 2 Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines. 3 The Philistines occupied one hill and the Israelites another, with the valley between them.

4 A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. His height was six cubits and a span.[b] 5 He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing five thousand shekels[c]; 6 on his legs he wore bronze greaves, and a bronze javelin was slung on his back. 7 His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed six hundred shekels.[d] His shield bearer went ahead of him.

8 Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. 9 If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us." 10 Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." 11 On hearing the Philistine's words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified.

12 Now David was the son of an Ephrathite named Jesse, who was from Bethlehem in Judah. Jesse had eight sons, and in Saul's time he was very old. 13 Jesse's three oldest sons had followed Saul to the war: The firstborn was Eliab; the second, Abinadab; and the third, Shammah. 14 David was the youngest. The three oldest followed Saul, 15 but David went back and forth from Saul to tend his father's sheep at Bethlehem.

16 For forty days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand.

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[a] *4* Or *the valley of the shadow of death* [b] *4* That is, about 9 feet 9 inches or about 3 meters [c] *5* That is, about 125 pounds or about 58 kilograms [d] *7* That is, about 15 pounds or about 6.9 kilograms

Science & Technology
The description of Goliath's spear emphasizes his skill as a warrior (1Sa 17:7). In Homer, the "huge and heavy" spear of the heroic warrior is the proverbial indicator of strength on the battlefield. Hector's spear was 17 feet long. Soldiers of the Roman Empire used a throwing spear that came in light and heavy versions. The heavy version reportedly had a diameter of 3 inches.

17 Now Jesse said to his son David, "Take this
ephah[a] of roasted grain and these ten loaves
of bread for your brothers and hurry to their
camp. 18 Take along these ten cheeses to the
commander of their unit. See how your broth-
ers are and bring back some assurance[b] from
them. 19 They are with Saul and all the men of
Israel in the Valley of Elah, fighting against the
Philistines."
20 Early in the morning David left the flock in
the care of a shepherd, loaded up and set out,
as Jesse had directed. He reached the camp as
the army was going out to its battle positions,
shouting the war cry. 21 Israel and the Philis-
tines were drawing up their lines facing each
other. 22 David left his things with the keeper
of supplies, ran to the battle lines and asked
his brothers how they were. 23 As he was talk-
ing with them, Goliath, the Philistine champi-
on from Gath, stepped out from his lines and
shouted his usual defiance, and David heard it.
24 Whenever the Israelites saw the man, they all
fled from him in great fear.
25 Now the Israelites had been saying, "Do
you see how this man keeps coming out? He
comes out to defy Israel. The king will give
great wealth to the man who kills him. He will
also give him his daughter in marriage and will
exempt his family from taxes in Israel."
26 David asked the men standing near him,
"What will be done for the man who kills this
Philistine and removes this disgrace from Isra-
el? Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that
he should defy the armies of the living God?"
27 They repeated to him what they had been
saying and told him, "This is what will be done
for the man who kills him."
28 When Eliab, David's oldest brother, heard
him speaking with the men, he burned with
anger at him and asked, "Why have you come
down here? And with whom did you leave
those few sheep in the wilderness? I know how
conceited you are and how wicked your heart
is; you came down only to watch the battle."
29 "Now what have I done?" said David. "Can't
I even speak?" 30 He then turned away to some-
one else and brought up the same matter, and
the men answered him as before. 31 What David
said was overheard and reported to Saul, and
Saul sent for him.
32 David said to Saul, "Let no one lose heart
on account of this Philistine; your servant will
go and fight him."
33 Saul replied, "You are not able to go out
against this Philistine and fight him; you are
only a young man, and he has been a warrior
from his youth."
34 But David said to Saul, "Your servant has
been keeping his father's sheep. When a lion
or a bear came and carried off a sheep from
the flock, 35 I went after it, struck it and rescued
the sheep from its mouth. When it turned on
me, I seized it by its hair, struck it and killed it.

[a] *17* That is, probably about 36 pounds or about 16 kilograms
[b] *18* Or *some token*; or *some pledge of spoils*

How Big Is a Giant? (1Sa 17:4)

The height reported for the Philistine Goliath, "six cubits and a span" (1Sa 17:4), indicates a very big man: approximately 9 feet, 9 inches tall. If such a height seems tall now, it was much taller in ancient times. Biblical people averaged about 5 feet in height, judging from skeletons uncovered by archaeologists.

Other Old Testament sources offer a different measurement for Goliath's height. Some manuscripts of the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) and one of the Samuel manuscripts from the Dead Sea Scrolls read "*four* cubits and a span" in 1Sa 17:4. This height—about 6 feet, 9 inches—would still make Goliath a giant for David's time. It is difficult to know what caused the differing numbers of six cubits (9 feet) and four cubits (6 feet).

Some scholars have noticed a possible explanation in the Hebrew text. The Hebrew words for "six hundred" (17:7), a few lines below the "six cubits" line, look very similar to the Hebrew words for "six cubits." They suppose that the eye of an early copyist accidentally caught sight of "six hundred," and the similarity of those words in Hebrew caused him to write "six" instead of "four" with "cubits." In this way, "six cubits" may have replaced "four cubits," making Goliath appear to be 9 feet, 9 inches tall, when he was still a giant at 6 feet, 9 inches.

It cannot be known which of these manuscripts preserves the original number. Nevertheless, the youth David (1Sa 17:33) faced an opponent who, at either height, was truly a giant among warriors of his day.

Is the Armor Too Big, or the Crown? (1Sa 17:38–40)

There was more to Saul's offer of the royal armor and sword to David than meets the eye (1Sa 17:38, 39). Positions of authority in the ancient world were marked by formal insignia, or by special clothing. Even more important, the ruler's weapon, usually a sword, was seen as a gift of the deities and a mark of their favor toward the bearer as the legitimate ruler.

So when Saul offered David his armor, he would have been understood by Israelite culture as offering David his own position as king of Israel. The transfer of clothing signified a transfer of status. Elsewhere in the Bible, Elijah called Elisha to replace him as God's primary prophet simply by throwing his mantle upon his successor (1Ki 19:19).

Saul's sword was the mark of his position as defender of Israel; when the sword was given to David, Saul's kingship went with it. But David could not wear the armor or the sword; he was not ready to rule, even though he already had the favor of God and the courage to defend Israel. By returning the military gear, David showed that he did not intend to replace Saul as king. He held to this position firmly, even later avoiding confrontation with Saul (1Sa 24:6, 7).

Eventually, however, David would be king. When Saul's son Jonathan covenanted with David, the transfer of clothing and armor was repeated, but with a different result (1Sa 18:1–4).

36 Your servant has killed both the lion and the
bear; this uncircumcised Philistine will be like
one of them, because he has defied the armies
of the living God. 37 The LORD who rescued me
from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear
will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine."
Saul said to David, "Go, and the LORD be with
you."
38 Then Saul dressed David in his own tunic.
He put a coat of armor on him and a bronze
helmet on his head. 39 David fastened on his
sword over the tunic and tried walking around,
because he was not used to them.
"I cannot go in these," he said to Saul, "be-
cause I am not used to them." So he took them
off. 40 Then he took his staff in his hand, chose
five smooth stones from the stream, put them
in the pouch of his shepherd's bag and, with
his sling in his hand, approached the Philistine.
41 Meanwhile, the Philistine, with his shield
bearer in front of him, kept coming closer to
David. 42 He looked David over and saw that he
was little more than a boy, glowing with health
and handsome, and he despised him. 43 He said
to David, "Am I a dog, that you come at me with
sticks?" And the Philistine cursed David by his
gods. 44 "Come here," he said, "and I'll give
your flesh to the birds and the wild animals!"
45 David said to the Philistine, "You come
against me with sword and spear and jave-
lin, but I come against you in the name of the
LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel,
whom you have defied. 46 This day the LORD will
deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you
down and cut off your head. This very day I
will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to
the birds and the wild animals, and the whole
world will know that there is a God in Israel.
47 All those gathered here will know that it is
not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for
the battle is the LORD's, and he will give all of
you into our hands."
48 As the Philistine moved closer to attack
him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to
meet him. 49 Reaching into his bag and taking
out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philis-
tine on the forehead. The stone sank into his
forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground.
50 So David triumphed over the Philistine
with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his
hand he struck down the Philistine and killed
him.
51 David ran and stood over him. He took
hold of the Philistine's sword and drew it from
the sheath. After he killed him, he cut off his
head with the sword.
When the Philistines saw that their hero was
dead, they turned and ran. 52 Then the men of
Israel and Judah surged forward with a shout
and pursued the Philistines to the entrance of
Gath[a] and to the gates of Ekron. Their dead
were strewn along the Shaaraim road to Gath
and Ekron. 53 When the Israelites returned
from chasing the Philistines, they plundered
their camp.
54 David took the Philistine's head and
brought it to Jerusalem; he put the Philistine's
weapons in his own tent.
55 As Saul watched David going out to meet
the Philistine, he said to Abner, commander
of the army, "Abner, whose son is that young
man?"
Abner replied, "As surely as you live, Your
Majesty, I don't know."
56 The king said, "Find out whose son this
young man is."
57 As soon as David returned from killing the
Philistine, Abner took him and brought him

[a] *52* Some Septuagint manuscripts; Hebrew *of a valley*

Jonathan Transfers Claim to the Throne (1Sa 18:1–4)

After he killed Goliath, David became a member of Saul's court. Jonathan, Saul's son and heir, took an immediate liking to David and saw this new friend as an equal. This, as it turns out, was central to the rise of David to the throne.

When Saul had offered David his armor and sword (1Sa 17:38, 39), David returned them. Now Jonathan handed over to David his robe and his military gear, including his sword and bow (1Sa 18:4). As with Saul's offer, Jonathan's offer entailed more than the clothes.

With David's acceptance of the sword of Jonathan, David became who Jonathan was. David was now the heir apparent to the throne of Israel. Jonathan was already an acknowledged military leader by this time; David is described as still a young man (17:58). But in this action the already established heir, Jonathan, acknowledged that God's decision had been made: David was to rule rather than himself, and he was willing to step aside.

Both Saul and Jonathan knew what had happened with this transfer of royal insignia (1Sa 20:30, 31). Saul began sending out David to battles he had previously fought himself or had sent Jonathan to fight (18:5). After this time, in another indication of David's new status, Saul began to refer to David as "my son" (1Sa 24:16; 26:21).

before Saul, with David still holding the Philistine's head.

58 "Whose son are you, young man?" Saul asked him.

David said, "I am the son of your servant Jesse of Bethlehem."

Saul's Growing Fear of David

18 1 After David had finished talking with Saul, Jonathan became one in spirit with David, and he loved him as himself. 2 From that day Saul kept David with him and did not let him return home to his family. 3 And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself. 4 Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.

5 Whatever mission Saul sent him on, David was so successful that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the troops, and Saul's officers as well.

6 When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. 7 As they danced, they sang:

"Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands."

8 Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" 9 And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David.

10 The next day an evil[a] spirit from God came forcefully on Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand 11 and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.

[a] *10* Or *a harmful*

12Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had departed from Saul. 13So he sent David away from him and gave him command over a thousand men, and David led the troops in their campaigns. 14In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him. 15When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him. 16But all Israel and Judah loved David, because he led them in their campaigns.

17Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD." For Saul said to himself, "I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!"

18But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?" 19So[a] when the time came for Merab, Saul's daughter, to be given to David, she was given in marriage to Adriel of Meholah.

20Now Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. 21"I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law."

22Then Saul ordered his attendants: "Speak to David privately and say, 'Look, the king likes you, and his attendants all love you; now become his son-in-law.'"

23They repeated these words to David. But David said, "Do you think it is a small matter to become the king's son-in-law? I'm only a poor man and little known."

24When Saul's servants told him what David had said, 25Saul replied, "Say to David, 'The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.'" Saul's plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines.

26When the attendants told David these things, he was pleased to become the king's son-in-law. So before the allotted time elapsed, 27David took his men with him and went out and killed two hundred Philistines and brought back their foreskins. They counted out the full number to the king so that David might become the king's son-in-law. Then Saul gave him his daughter Michal in marriage.

28When Saul realized that the LORD was with David and that his daughter Michal loved David, 29Saul became still more afraid of him, and he remained his enemy the rest of his days.

30The Philistine commanders continued to go out to battle, and as often as they did, David met with more success than the rest of Saul's officers, and his name became well known.

Marriage & Family
The dowry or bride-price is a feature of traditional cultures. Sometimes the bride is accompanied by a gift from her father, and other times the prospective husband must give a gift to the father. Instead of a dowry, Saul requests that David present to him the tokens of a victory against their national enemy, the Philistines (1Sa 18:25).

Saul Tries to Kill David

19 1Saul told his son Jonathan and all the attendants to kill David. But Jonathan had taken a great liking to David 2and warned him, "My father Saul is looking for a chance to kill you. Be on your guard tomorrow morning; go into hiding and stay there. 3I will go out and stand with my father in the field where you are. I'll speak to him about you and will tell you what I find out."

4Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, "Let not the king do wrong to his servant David; he has not wronged you, and what he has done has benefited you greatly. 5He took his life in his hands when he killed the Philistine. The LORD won a great victory for all Israel, and you saw it and were glad. Why then would you do wrong to an innocent man like David by killing him for no reason?"

6Saul listened to Jonathan and took this oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, David will not be put to death."

7So Jonathan called David and told him the whole conversation. He brought him to Saul, and David was with Saul as before.

8Once more war broke out, and David went out and fought the Philistines. He struck them with such force that they fled before him.

9But an evil[b] spirit from the LORD came on Saul as he was sitting in his house with his spear in his hand. While David was playing the lyre, 10Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear, but David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall. That night David made good his escape.

11Saul sent men to David's house to watch it and to kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, warned him, "If you don't run for your life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed." 12So Michal let David down through a window,

[a] *19* Or *However,* [b] *9* Or *But a harmful*

and he fled and escaped. 13Then Michal took an idol and laid it on the bed, covering it with a garment and putting some goats' hair at the head.

14When Saul sent the men to capture David, Michal said, "He is ill."

15Then Saul sent the men back to see David and told them, "Bring him up to me in his bed so that I may kill him." 16But when the men entered, there was the idol in the bed, and at the head was some goats' hair.

17Saul said to Michal, "Why did you deceive me like this and send my enemy away so that he escaped?"

Michal told him, "He said to me, 'Let me get away. Why should I kill you?'"

TRANSITION

Protection in the Night

While the language of the psalms themselves does not describe specific historical events, a few psalms have superscriptions that assign them to a particular historical context. These superscriptions are clearly separate from the actual psalm, and many scholars believe that they were added long after the original compositions.

Whether they were original to the psalms or were added later, the superscriptions do associate some psalms with specific events. They may indicate how certain psalms were understood or used by Israelites in worship and devotion. For that reason, psalms have been placed so as to preserve the associations of the superscriptions. Thus Ps 59 was associated with Saul's attempt to capture David at his own house (1Sa 19:15).

• Psalm 59

PSALM 59[a]

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A miktam.[b] *When Saul had sent men to watch David's house in order to kill him.*

Deliver me from my enemies, O God;
be my fortress against those who are attacking me.
2Deliver me from evildoers
and save me from those who are after my blood.

3See how they lie in wait for me!
Fierce men conspire against me
for no offense or sin of mine, LORD.
4I have done no wrong, yet they are ready to attack me.
Arise to help me; look on my plight!
5You, LORD God Almighty,
you who are the God of Israel,
rouse yourself to punish all the nations;
show no mercy to wicked traitors.[c]

6They return at evening,
snarling like dogs,
and prowl about the city.
7See what they spew from their mouths—
the words from their lips are sharp as swords,
and they think, "Who can hear us?"
8But you laugh at them, LORD;
you scoff at all those nations.

9You are my strength, I watch for you;
you, God, are my fortress,
10 my God on whom I can rely.

God will go before me
and will let me gloat over those who slander me.
11But do not kill them, Lord our shield,[d]
or my people will forget.
In your might uproot them
and bring them down.
12For the sins of their mouths,
for the words of their lips,
let them be caught in their pride.
For the curses and lies they utter,
13 consume them in your wrath,
consume them till they are no more.
Then it will be known to the ends of the earth
that God rules over Jacob.

14They return at evening,
snarling like dogs,
and prowl about the city.
15They wander about for food
and howl if not satisfied.

Plants & Animals

In the ancient Near East most dogs were not pets but wild dogs. They made their presence known at night, when there was no traffic or crowds to keep them away (Ps 59:14). Since they ate whatever they could find, their diet was unclean and could even include dead bodies or blood. Having paws, they were considered unclean for food or sacrifice (Lev 11:27).

[a] In Hebrew texts 59:1-17 is numbered 59:2-18. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] *5* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 13. [d] *11* Or *sovereign*

16 But I will sing of your strength,
in the morning I will sing of your love;
for you are my fortress,
my refuge in times of trouble.

17 You are my strength, I sing praise to you;
you, God, are my fortress,
my God on whom I can rely.

TRANSITION

David Flees from Saul

As David's popularity grows, even within Saul's inner circle, so does Saul's jealousy. The break is inevitable; David flees. Although he is a fugitive, he somehow keeps his influential supporters, among whom are Samuel (1Sa 19:18), Jonathan (Saul's son and heir, 20:1–42), and the priest Ahimelek (21:1–9).

Ahimelek's son, Abiathar, became one of David's primary supporters. Many years later the Gospel of Mark would refer to the event described in 1Sa 21, but instead of mentioning Ahimelek, it would use the better known name of the son, Abiathar (Mk 2:23–28).

• 1 Samuel 19:18—21:15

1 Samuel

19:18 When David had fled and made his escape, he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. Then he and Samuel went to Naioth and stayed there. 19 Word came to Saul: "David is in Naioth at Ramah"; 20 so he sent men to capture him. But when they saw a group of prophets prophesying, with Samuel standing there as their leader, the Spirit of God came on Saul's men, and they also prophesied. 21 Saul was told about it, and he sent more men, and they prophesied too. Saul sent men a third time, and they also prophesied. 22 Finally, he himself left for Ramah and went to the great cistern at Seku. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?"

"Over in Naioth at Ramah," they said.

23 So Saul went to Naioth at Ramah. But the Spirit of God came even on him, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth. 24 He stripped off his garments, and he too prophesied in Samuel's presence. He lay naked all that day and all that night. This is why people say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"

David and Jonathan

20 1 Then David fled from Naioth at Ramah and went to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to kill me?"

2 "Never!" Jonathan replied. "You are not going to die! Look, my father doesn't do anything, great or small, without letting me know. Why would he hide this from me? It isn't so!"

3 But David took an oath and said, "Your father knows very well that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said to himself, 'Jonathan must not know this or he will be grieved.' Yet as surely as the LORD lives and as you live, there is only a step between me and death."

4 Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do for you."

5 So David said, "Look, tomorrow is the New Moon feast, and I am supposed to dine with the king; but let me go and hide in the field until the evening of the day after tomorrow. 6 If your father misses me at all, tell him, 'David earnestly asked my permission to hurry to Bethlehem, his hometown, because an annual sacrifice is being made there for his whole clan.' 7 If he says, 'Very well,' then your servant is safe. But if he loses his temper, you can be sure that he is determined to harm me. 8 As for you, show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the LORD. If I am guilty, then kill me yourself! Why hand me over to your father?"

9 "Never!" Jonathan said. "If I had the least inkling that my father was determined to harm you, wouldn't I tell you?"

10 David asked, "Who will tell me if your father answers you harshly?"

11 "Come," Jonathan said, "let's go out into the field." So they went there together.

12 Then Jonathan said to David, "I swear by the LORD, the God of Israel, that I will surely sound out my father by this time the day after tomorrow! If he is favorably disposed toward you, will I not send you word and let you know? 13 But if my father intends to harm you, may the LORD deal with Jonathan, be it ever so severely, if I do not let you know and send you away in peace. May the LORD be with you as he has been with my father. 14 But show me unfailing kindness like the LORD's kindness as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, 15 and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the LORD has cut off every one of David's enemies from the face of the earth."

16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "May the LORD call David's enemies to account." 17 And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow is the New Moon feast. You will be missed, because your seat will be empty. 19 The day af-

Months of the Yearly Calendar (1Sa 20:5–24)

In Israel, the New Moon was an important festival. So important that Israelites expected this festival to continue in the new earth, where all people will enjoy companionship with Yahweh (Isa 66:22, 23).

The "New Moon" festival resulted from the practice of beginning a new month based on a new moon, the sighting of the first visible crescent of the moon. Virtually every society in the Near East marked their months by the new moon, Egypt being an exception. Since the actual amount of time occurring between new moons is more than 29 days, but less than 30 days, some months contained 29 days, and others 30. The time was determined by visual observation.

Most nations kept track of their years following an agricultural agenda with spring serving as the beginning of the year. The problem was that one year (12 months) of 29- or 30-day months quickly leads to a New Year's day out of sync with spring (12 months x 29 and 1/2 days = 354 days in a year). Thus, in Babylon, on an irregular basis a king would add a 13th month to the year to adjust the New Year's day to the beginning of the spring season. By about 500 B.C. the Babylonians had worked out a regular 19-year cycle to regulate this correspondence.

How the problem was handled in Israel is not known. What is known is that very early in Israel's history, the New Moon day had become a monthly religious festival (1Sa 20:5, 18, 24). The importance of this day is suggested by its description as "our festival" (Ps 81:3), and the claim that the New Moon festival was a "decree for Israel" (81:4). No wonder the prophet Amos complained about those who waited anxiously for the New Moon day to pass, so they could return to their regular business (Am 8:5).

ter tomorrow, toward evening, go to the place where you hid when this trouble began, and wait by the stone Ezel. 20I will shoot three arrows to the side of it, as though I were shooting at a target. 21Then I will send a boy and say, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I say to him, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you; bring them here,' then come, because, as surely as the LORD lives, you are safe; there is no danger. 22But if I say to the boy, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you,' then you must go, because the LORD has sent you away. 23And about the matter you and I discussed—remember, the LORD is witness between you and me forever."

24So David hid in the field, and when the New Moon feast came, the king sat down to eat. 25He sat in his customary place by the wall, opposite Jonathan,[a] and Abner sat next to Saul, but David's place was empty. 26Saul said nothing that day, for he thought, "Something must have happened to David to make him ceremonially unclean—surely he is unclean." 27But the next day, the second day of the month, David's place was empty again. Then Saul said to his son Jonathan, "Why hasn't the son of Jesse come to the meal, either yesterday or today?"

28Jonathan answered, "David earnestly asked me for permission to go to Bethlehem. 29He said, 'Let me go, because our family is observing a sacrifice in the town and my brother has ordered me to be there. If I have found favor in your eyes, let me get away to see my brothers.' That is why he has not come to the king's table."

30Saul's anger flared up at Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse and rebellious woman! Don't I know that you have sided with the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of the mother who bore you? 31As long as the son of Jesse lives on this earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now send someone to bring him to me, for he must die!"

32"Why should he be put to death? What has he done?" Jonathan asked his father. 33But Saul hurled his spear at him to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David.

34Jonathan got up from the table in fierce anger; on that second day of the feast he did not eat, because he was grieved at his father's shameful treatment of David.

35In the morning Jonathan went out to the field for his meeting with David. He had a small boy with him, 36and he said to the boy, "Run and find the arrows I shoot." As the boy ran, he shot an arrow beyond him. 37When the boy came to the place where Jonathan's arrow had fallen, Jonathan called out after him, "Isn't the arrow beyond you?" 38Then he

[a] *25* Septuagint; Hebrew *wall. Jonathan arose*

TIME CAPSULE	1125 to 1120 B.C.
1125	Deborah composes her song of victory over Sisera (Jdg 5)
1125	Archaeological remains at Shechem show Abimelek's destruction of the city and its tower (Jdg 9:45–49)
1120	Nebuchadnezzar I conquers Elam and returns statue of Marduk
1120	Babylonian temple of Esagil renovated and Marduk proclaimed king of the gods

shouted, "Hurry! Go quickly! Don't stop!" The boy picked up the arrow and returned to his master. 39 (The boy knew nothing about all this; only Jonathan and David knew.) 40Then Jonathan gave his weapons to the boy and said, "Go, carry them back to town."

41After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together—but David wept the most.

42Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, for we have sworn friendship with each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'The LORD is witness between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.'" Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.[a]

David at Nob

21[b] 1David went to Nob, to Ahimelek the priest. Ahimelek trembled when he met him, and asked, "Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?"

2David answered Ahimelek the priest, "The king sent me on a mission and said to me, 'No one is to know anything about the mission I am sending you on.' As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place. 3Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find."

4But the priest answered David, "I don't have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here—provided the men have kept themselves from women."

5David replied, "Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever[c] I set out. The men's bodies are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!" 6So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the LORD and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.

7Now one of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the LORD; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul's chief shepherd.

8David asked Ahimelek, "Don't you have a spear or a sword here? I haven't brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king's mission was urgent."

9The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one."

David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

David at Gath

10That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. 11But the servants of Achish said to him, "Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances:

"'Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands'?"

12David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. 13So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.

14Achish said to his servants, "Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me? 15Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?"

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[a] *42* In Hebrew texts this sentence (20:42b) is numbered 21:1.
[b] In Hebrew texts 21:1-15 is numbered 21:2-16. [c] *5* Or *from us in the past few days since*

The Valley of Elah

TRANSITION

Among the Philistines at Gath

Two psalms have superscriptions that associate them with David's sojourn at Gath. The superscription to Ps 56 remembers the time when the Philistines captured David. The superscription to Ps 34 even mentions David's pretended insanity before the Philistine king.

The name of the Philistine king in Ps 34 is Abimelek. In 1Sa 21:10–15 where this incident is reported, the king's name is given as Achish. Possibly "Abimelek" was a title or throne name used for all kings of the Philistine regions. The city of Gerar, which was a Philistine city after about 1200 B.C., shows a King Abimelek in the patriarchal stories of Abraham (Ge 20:2) and of his son Isaac (Ge 26:1, where Abimelek is even called "king of the Philistines"). The name "Abimelek" is translated "my father, the king" or "father of the king," an appropriate meaning for a throne name.

• **Psalms 56; 34**

PSALM 56[a]

For the director of music. To the tune of "A Dove on Distant Oaks." Of David. A miktam.[b] *When the Philistines had seized him in Gath.*

Be merciful to me, my God,
for my enemies are in hot pursuit;
all day long they press their attack.
2 My adversaries pursue me all day long;
in their pride many are attacking me.

3 When I am afraid, I put my trust in
you.
4 In God, whose word I praise—
in God I trust and am not afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?

5 All day long they twist my words;
all their schemes are for my ruin.
6 They conspire, they lurk,
they watch my steps,
hoping to take my life.
7 Because of their wickedness do not[c] let
them escape;
in your anger, God, bring the nations
down.

8 Record my misery;
list my tears on your scroll[d]—
are they not in your record?

9 Then my enemies will turn back
when I call for help.
By this I will know that God is for me.

10 In God, whose word I praise,
in the LORD, whose word I praise—
11 in God I trust and am not afraid.
What can man do to me?

12 I am under vows to you, my God;
I will present my thank offerings to you.
13 For you have delivered me from death
and my feet from stumbling,
that I may walk before God
in the light of life.

PSALM 34[e,f]

Of David. When he pretended to be insane before Abimelek, who drove him away, and he left.

I will extol the LORD at all times;
his praise will always be on my lips.
2 I will glory in the LORD;
let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
3 Glorify the LORD with me;
let us exalt his name together.

4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.
5 Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with
shame.
6 This poor man called, and the LORD heard
him;
he saved him out of all his troubles.
7 The angel of the LORD encamps around
those who fear him,
and he delivers them.

8 Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in
him.
9 Fear the LORD, you his holy people,
for those who fear him lack nothing.
10 The lions may grow weak and hungry,
but those who seek the LORD lack no
good thing.
11 Come, my children, listen to me;
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
12 Whoever of you loves life
and desires to see many good days,
13 keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from telling lies.
14 Turn from evil and do good;
seek peace and pursue it.

15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,
and his ears are attentive to their cry;

[a] In Hebrew texts 56:1-13 is numbered 56:2-14. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] 7 Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text does not have *do not*. [d] 8 Or *misery; / put my tears in your wineskin* [e] This psalm is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. [f] In Hebrew texts 34:1-22 is numbered 34:2-23.

Angel: Messenger and Presence of God (Ps 34:7)

Angels do the will of God. Both the Hebrew and Greek words for "angel" mean "messenger." In the ancient Near East the divine realm was viewed in terms of the structure of human society, and angels were the lowest level of society—the slave messengers. These lowest denizens of heaven did only what they were commanded to do by their superiors.

While other ancient Near Eastern cultures believed in pantheons of gods, the official religion of Israel accepted no other divine beings than God, save the angels. The gods of the pantheons could disagree with and disobey the authoritative deities of their own divine hierarchy. The psalmists, though, knew of no disagreement in heaven, since God is in control of all divine beings (Ps 89:6, 7). The angels do the work of heaven in harmony with the will of God.

In narratives of the Bible and of the texts from Ugarit (1400–1200 B.C.), divine messengers carry messages in the form of living letters. The messengers repeat word for word what they are told to report to other gods or to humans. In this way the message given by an angel in the name of another deity was indeed the very words of the deity who sent the messenger.

An angel of any given deity was so closely associated with the god as to represent the actual presence of the god. Thus, as Moses experienced at the burning bush (Ex 3:2–4), to speak with an angel was actually to speak with the deity. The Bible presents a similar situation with the activity of angels. Since the messenger could do only as ordered by God, whatever an angel did in the name of God was done by God. So in Israel's psalms, it is God who protects the faithful, even though the actual divine being standing guard is God's angel (Ps 34:7).

16 but the face of the LORD is against those
who do evil,
to blot out their name from the earth.
17 The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears
them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.
18 The LORD is close to the brokenhearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
19 The righteous person may have many
troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;
20 he protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.
21 Evil will slay the wicked;
the foes of the righteous will be
condemned.
22 The LORD will rescue his servants;
no one who takes refuge in him will be
condemned.

TRANSITION

Murder in the Holy Place

Saul's pursuit of David intensified, now involving actual murder. The time of Israel's tribal confederation, just before Saul was crowned king, was not very unified, but what unity there was came from Israel's common worship at the shrine where the ark of the covenant was kept. Reverence for the shrine continued, even after the confederation ended, and no sane Israelite would have dreamed of attacking that holy place or its priests. But Saul by this time could hardly be called sane.

• 1 Samuel 22:1–23

1 Samuel

David at Adullam and Mizpah

22:1 David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. 2 All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.

3 From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, "Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?" 4 So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.

5 But the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah." So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

Saul Kills the Priests of Nob

6 Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul was seated, spear in hand, under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing at his side. 7 He said to them, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? 8 Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today."

9But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing
with Saul's officials, said, "I saw the son of Jes-
se come to Ahimelek son of Ahitub at Nob.
10Ahimelek inquired of the LORD for him; he
also gave him provisions and the sword of Go-
liath the Philistine."
11Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelek
son of Ahitub and all the men of his family, who
were the priests at Nob, and they all came to
the king. 12Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahi-
tub."
"Yes, my lord," he answered.
13Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired
against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving
him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for
him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies
in wait for me, as he does today?"
14Ahimelek answered the king, "Who of all
your servants is as loyal as David, the king's
son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and high-
ly respected in your household? 15Was that
day the first time I inquired of God for him?
Of course not! Let not the king accuse your
servant or any of his father's family, for your
servant knows nothing at all about this whole
affair."
16But the king said, "You will surely die,
Ahimelek, you and your whole family."
17Then the king ordered the guards at his
side: "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD,
because they too have sided with David. They
knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me."
But the king's officials were unwilling to
raise a hand to strike the priests of the LORD.
18The king then ordered Doeg, "You turn
and strike down the priests." So Doeg the
Edomite turned and struck them down. That
day he killed eighty-five men who wore the lin-
en ephod. 19He also put to the sword Nob, the
town of the priests, with its men and women,
its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys
and sheep.
20But one son of Ahimelek son of Ahitub,
named Abiathar, escaped and fled to join Da-
vid. 21He told David that Saul had killed the
priests of the LORD. 22Then David said to Abi-
athar, "That day, when Doeg the Edomite was
there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am
responsible for the death of your whole family.
23Stay with me; don't be afraid. The man who
wants to kill you is trying to kill me too. You
will be safe with me."

[a] In Hebrew texts 52:1-9 is numbered 52:3-11. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 5.

Politics & Government
The administrative center was not a physical location, like a building, but the physical presence of the ruler, in this case, Saul (1Sa 22:6). With a spear as the symbol of his authority and his retainers surrounding him, Saul could establish a ruling center under a tamarisk tree. Deborah held court under a palm tree (Jdg 4:5).

TRANSITION

Doeg, the Evildoer

An important player in the massacre of the priests was Saul's servant Doeg. He was the one who informed Saul about the priest Ahimelek's dealings with David (1Sa 22:9, 10). When Saul's own guards refused to strike the Lord's priests, the Edomite Doeg did not hesitate to carry out the evil deed, killing 85 priests, as well as people in the city of Nob (22:18, 19).

It is not surprising that Israel would reflect upon this tragedy in a psalm. The superscription of Ps 52 associates this psalm's thoughts on evil and wickedness with the evildoer Doeg.

• Psalm 52

PSALM 52[a]

For the director of music. A maskil[b] *of David. When Doeg the Edomite had gone to Saul and told him: "David has gone to the house of Ahimelek."*

Why do you boast of evil, you mighty
hero?
Why do you boast all day long,
you who are a disgrace in the eyes of
God?
2You who practice deceit,
your tongue plots destruction;
it is like a sharpened razor.
3You love evil rather than good,
falsehood rather than speaking the
truth.[c]
4You love every harmful word,
you deceitful tongue!

5Surely God will bring you down to
everlasting ruin:
He will snatch you up and pluck you from
your tent;
he will uproot you from the land of the
living.
6The righteous will see and fear;
they will laugh at you, saying,

7 "Here now is the man
who did not make God his stronghold
but trusted in his great wealth
and grew strong by destroying others!"

8 But I am like an olive tree
flourishing in the house of God;
I trust in God's unfailing love
for ever and ever.
9 For what you have done I will always praise you
in the presence of your faithful people.
And I will hope in your name,
for your name is good.

TRANSITION

Seeking God's Guidance

In the ancient Near East, there were many ways of asking advice from the gods. Before battles, kings would consult with soothsayers and diviners to ensure divine favor. Mosaic law prohibited such divination (see Lev 19:26), but even in Israel there were means of seeking a word from God. One of these evidently was the ephod that Abiathar the priest had brought to David's camp (1Sa 23:9–12).

In Exodus, the ephod refers to the linen apron worn by the high priest (Ex 39:2–7). With Abiathar's ephod David would ask a yes-no question, and by some means that is not clear the ephod would reveal God's answer. The means is not important, in the end. The essential point is that David inquired of God, and God answered. Saul, by contrast, sought information from spies. When Saul did at last inquire of God, God would no longer answer (1Sa 28:6).

• 1 Samuel 23:1–29

1 Samuel

David Saves Keilah

23 :1 When David was told, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors," 2 he inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"

The LORD answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah."

3 But David's men said to him, "Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!"

4 Once again David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him, "Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand." 5 So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah. 6 (Now Abiathar son of Ahimelek had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.)

Saul Pursues David

7 Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "God has delivered him into my hands, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars." 8 And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

9 When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod." 10 David said, "LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. 11 Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will."

12 Again David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?"

And the LORD said, "They will."

13 So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.

14 David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands.

15 While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that[a] Saul had come out to take his life. 16 And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. 17 "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." 18 The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.

19 The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon? 20 Now, Your Majesty, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for giving him into your hands."

21 Saul replied, "The LORD bless you for your concern for me. 22 Go and get more information. Find out where David usually goes and who has seen him there. They tell me he is very crafty. 23 Find out about all the hiding

[a] *15* Or *he was afraid because*

places he uses and come back to me with definite information. Then I will go with you; if he is in the area, I will track him down among all the clans of Judah."

24 So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon. 25 Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David.

26 Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, 27 a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land." 28 Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth.[a] 29 And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.[b]

TRANSITION

David in the Desert

The "Desert of Judah," mentioned in the superscription of Ps 63, is the arid, rocky region along the western shore of the Dead Sea, southeast of Jerusalem. On the western edge of this desert area are the towns Ziph, Maon, and Carmel (not to be confused with Mount Carmel on the Mediterranean Sea). The town of En Gedi, sitting on the shore of the Dead Sea, is an oasis of the area.

Most of these places are mentioned in the account of David's flight from Saul (1Sa 23:13–29). The rugged terrain of the desert made it difficult for Saul to track David. Such terrain is reflected in the language of the psalmist who seeks God "in a dry and parched land" (Ps 63:1).

• **Psalm 63**

PSALM 63[c]

A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.

You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.

2 I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
3 Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
4 I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
5 I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

6 On my bed I remember you;
I think of you through the watches of the night.
7 Because you are my help,
I sing in the shadow of your wings.
8 I cling to you;
your right hand upholds me.

9 Those who want to kill me will be destroyed;
they will go down to the depths of the earth.
10 They will be given over to the sword
and become food for jackals.

11 But the king will rejoice in God;
all who swear by God will glory in him,
while the mouths of liars will be silenced.

TRANSITION

Hiding in the Caves

David is not the only illustrious refugee who has found haven among the crags and caves of the Judean wilderness. In later years such people as Herod the Great and the Jewish zealots who rebelled against the Roman Empire would hide there also. The many caves were particularly useful hiding places—the Dead Sea Scrolls lay undiscovered in some of these caves for hundreds of years.

David clearly made the most of the cave environment while avoiding Saul's pursuit. The superscriptions of two psalms—Ps 57 and Ps 142—associate these psalms' laments with the stressful circumstances surrounding David's days of hiding.

• **1 Samuel 24:1–22**
• **Psalms 57; 142**

1 Samuel 24:1–22

David Spares Saul's Life

24[d] **:1** After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." 2 So Saul took three

[a] *28 Sela Hammahlekoth* means *rock of parting.*
[b] *29* In Hebrew texts this verse (23:29) is numbered 24:1.
[c] In Hebrew texts 63:1-11 is numbered 63:2-12. [d] In Hebrew texts 24:1-22 is numbered 24:2-23.

thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

3He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. 4The men said, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said[a] to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

5Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. 6He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the LORD." 7With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

8Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground. 9He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'? 10This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the LORD's anointed.' 11See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. 12May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. 13As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you.

14"Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Who are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? 15May the LORD be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand."

16When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud. 17"You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. 18You have just now told me about the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. 19When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today. 20I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. 21Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family."

22So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

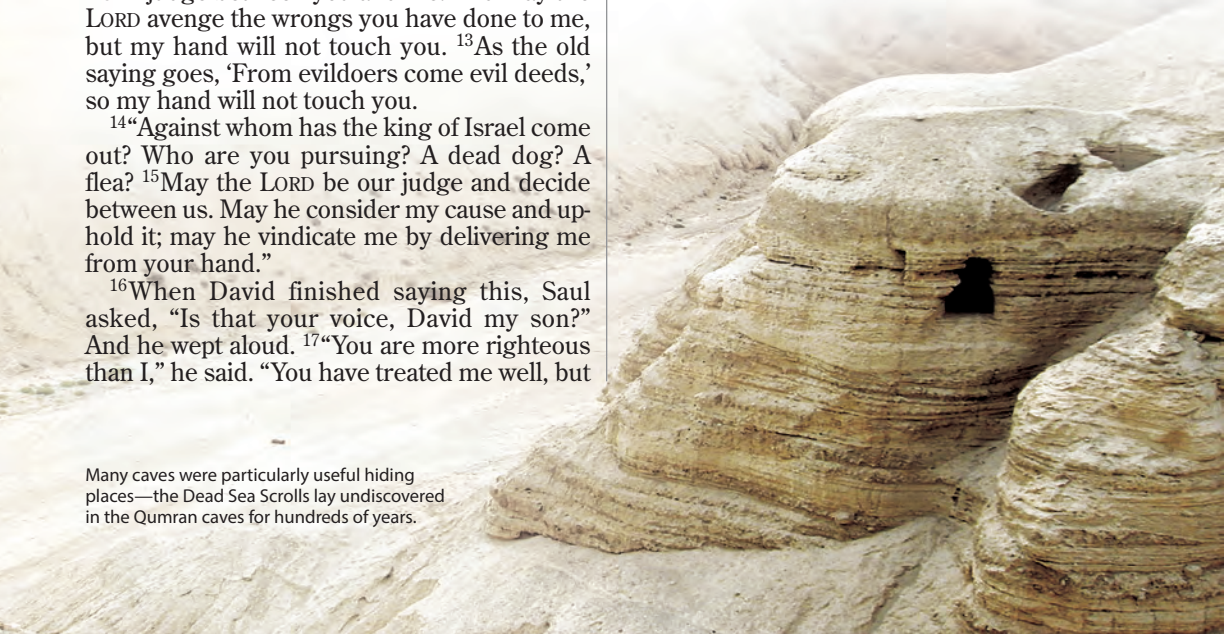
PSALM 57[b]

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A miktam.[c] *When he had fled from Saul into the cave.*

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me,
for in you I take refuge.
I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings
until the disaster has passed.

2I cry out to God Most High,
to God, who vindicates me.
3He sends from heaven and saves me,
rebuking those who hotly pursue me—[d]
God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.

[a] *4* Or *"Today the LORD is saying* [b] In Hebrew texts 57:1-11 is numbered 57:2-12. [c] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [d] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 6.



Many caves were particularly useful hiding places—the Dead Sea Scrolls lay undiscovered in the Qumran caves for hundreds of years.

4 I am in the midst of lions;
I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts—
men whose teeth are spears and arrows,
whose tongues are sharp swords.

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.

6 They spread a net for my feet—
I was bowed down in distress.
They dug a pit in my path—
but they have fallen into it themselves.

7 My heart, O God, is steadfast,
my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and make music.
8 Awake, my soul!
Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.

9 I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
10 For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.

PSALM 142[a]

A maskil[b] *of David. When he was in the cave. A prayer.*

I cry aloud to the LORD;
I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy.
2 I pour out before him my complaint;
before him I tell my trouble.

3 When my spirit grows faint within me,
it is you who watch over my way.
In the path where I walk
people have hidden a snare for me.
4 Look and see, there is no one at my right hand;
no one is concerned for me.
I have no refuge;
no one cares for my life.

5 I cry to you, LORD;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."

6 Listen to my cry,
for I am in desperate need;
rescue me from those who pursue me,
for they are too strong for me.

7 Set me free from my prison,
that I may praise your name.
Then the righteous will gather about me
because of your goodness to me.

[a] In Hebrew texts 142:1-7 is numbered 142:2-8. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] *1* Hebrew and some Septuagint manuscripts; other Septuagint manuscripts *Maon*

TRANSITION

What's in a Name?

Names in the Old Testament are often significant clues to interpretation. Hebrew names had meaning. For instance, according to a popular interpretation given in 1Sa 1:20, the name "Samuel" came from the Hebrew word meaning "to ask." Hannah named her son Samuel because she had "asked the LORD for him."

In 1Sa 25 the wordplay is more obvious. The name "Nabal," in popular interpretation, meant literally "Fool" or "folly" (1Sa 25:25). Nabal lives up to his name. Having refused to give David's men provisions, he ends up providing David with his own wife.

• 1 Samuel 25:1–44

1 Samuel

David, Nabal and Abigail

25 :1 Now Samuel died, and all Israel assembled and mourned for him; and they buried him at his home in Ramah. Then David moved down into the Desert of Paran.[c]

2 A certain man in Maon, who had property there at Carmel, was very wealthy. He had a thousand goats and three thousand sheep, which he was shearing in Carmel. 3 His name was Nabal and his wife's name was Abigail. She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband was surly and mean in his dealings—he was a Calebite.

4 While David was in the wilderness, he heard that Nabal was shearing sheep. 5 So he sent ten young men and said to them, "Go up to Nabal at Carmel and greet him in my name. 6 Say to him: 'Long life to you! Good health to you and your household! And good health to all that is yours!

7 "'Now I hear that it is sheep-shearing time. When your shepherds were with us, we did not mistreat them, and the whole time they were at Carmel nothing of theirs was missing. 8 Ask your own servants and they will tell you. Therefore be favorable toward my men, since we come at a festive time. Please give your servants and your son David whatever you can find for them.'"

9 When David's men arrived, they gave Nabal this message in David's name. Then they waited.

10 Nabal answered David's servants, "Who
is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many
servants are breaking away from their masters
these days. 11 Why should I take my bread and
water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my
shearers, and give it to men coming from who
knows where?"
12 David's men turned around and went back.
When they arrived, they reported every word.
13 David said to his men, "Each of you strap on
your sword!" So they did, and David strapped
his on as well. About four hundred men went
up with David, while two hundred stayed with
the supplies.
14 One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's
wife, "David sent messengers from the wilder-
ness to give our master his greetings, but he
hurled insults at them. 15 Yet these men were
very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and
the whole time we were out in the fields near
them nothing was missing. 16 Night and day
they were a wall around us the whole time
we were herding our sheep near them. 17 Now
think it over and see what you can do, because
disaster is hanging over our master and his
whole household. He is such a wicked man that
no one can talk to him."
18 Abigail acted quickly. She took two hun-
dred loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five
dressed sheep, five seahs[a] of roasted grain,
a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred
cakes of pressed figs, and loaded them on don-
keys. 19 Then she told her servants, "Go on
ahead; I'll follow you." But she did not tell her
husband Nabal.
20 As she came riding her donkey into a moun-
tain ravine, there were David and his men de-
scending toward her, and she met them. 21 David

Food & Drink

Raisins and fig cakes are made by drying fruit, with the result being a concentration of sugar. This is naturally attractive to the taste, and it acts as a preservative. The absence of processed sugars made dried fruits more desirable (1Sa 25:18). Honey is another source of sugar and it too is prominent in the Bible as a symbol of prosperity.

had just said, "It's been useless—all my watch-
ing over this fellow's property in the wilderness
so that nothing of his was missing. He has paid
me back evil for good. 22 May God deal with Da-
vid,[b] be it ever so severely, if by morning I leave
alive one male of all who belong to him!"
23 When Abigail saw David, she quickly got
off her donkey and bowed down before David
with her face to the ground. 24 She fell at his feet
and said: "Pardon your servant, my lord, and
let me speak to you; hear what your servant
has to say. 25 Please pay no attention, my lord,
to that wicked man Nabal. He is just like his
name—his name means Fool, and folly goes
with him. And as for me, your servant, I did not
see the men my lord sent. 26 And now, my lord,
as surely as the LORD your God lives and as you
live, since the LORD has kept you from blood-
shed and from avenging yourself with your
own hands, may your enemies and all who are
intent on harming my lord be like Nabal. 27 And
let this gift, which your servant has brought to
my lord, be given to the men who follow you.
28 "Please forgive your servant's presump-
tion. The LORD your God will certainly make a
lasting dynasty for my lord, because you fight
the LORD's battles, and no wrongdoing will be
found in you as long as you live. 29 Even though
someone is pursuing you to take your life, the
life of my lord will be bound securely in the
bundle of the living by the LORD your God, but
the lives of your enemies he will hurl away as
from the pocket of a sling. 30 When the LORD
has fulfilled for my lord every good thing he
promised concerning him and has appointed

[a] *18* That is, probably about 60 pounds or about 27 kilograms
[b] *22* Some Septuagint manuscripts; Hebrew *with David's enemies*

Figs were eaten fresh (2Ki 18:31), pressed into cakes (1Sa 25:18), and used as a poultice (Isa 38:21).

From the Pocket of a Sling (1Sa 25:29)

The most common image of a sling is that of the slingshot, a weapon built from a Y-shaped piece of wood. That is not what David used in his confrontation with Goliath (1Sa 17:40), nor what Abigail means by "the pocket of a sling" (1Sa 25:29).

The type of sling that David used was made from either leather or goat's hair. This sling had two long, thin straps with a pouch or pocket in the middle. The stone would be placed in the pocket after which the two straps were held in the same hand and swung around in the air to gain velocity while the slinger took aim.

At the ready, the slinger released one strap from his hand, sending the stone flying with great speed toward the target. Some slings had a small loop on one of the straps that could be placed around a finger to reduce the chance of accidental release of the entire sling. Abigail's well-chosen words, declaring that God would "hurl away" David's enemies as from a sling's pocket (25:29), would communicate clearly to a king who had been a slinger himself.

him ruler over Israel, 31my lord will not have on his conscience the staggering burden of needless bloodshed or of having avenged himself. And when the LORD your God has brought my lord success, remember your servant."

32David said to Abigail, "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has sent you today to meet me. 33May you be blessed for your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands. 34Otherwise, as surely as the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, who has kept me from harming you, if you had not come quickly to meet me, not one male belonging to Nabal would have been left alive by daybreak."

35Then David accepted from her hand what she had brought him and said, "Go home in peace. I have heard your words and granted your request."

36When Abigail went to Nabal, he was in the house holding a banquet like that of a king. He was in high spirits and very drunk. So she told him nothing at all until daybreak. 37Then in the morning, when Nabal was sober, his wife told him all these things, and his heart failed him and he became like a stone. 38About ten days later, the LORD struck Nabal and he died.

39When David heard that Nabal was dead, he said, "Praise be to the LORD, who has upheld my cause against Nabal for treating me with contempt. He has kept his servant from doing wrong and has brought Nabal's wrongdoing down on his own head."

Then David sent word to Abigail, asking her to become his wife. 40His servants went to Carmel and said to Abigail, "David has sent us to you to take you to become his wife."

41She bowed down with her face to the ground and said, "I am your servant and am ready to serve you and wash the feet of my lord's servants." 42Abigail quickly got on a donkey and, attended by her five female servants, went with David's messengers and became his wife. 43David had also married Ahinoam of Jezreel, and they both were his wives. 44But Saul had given his daughter Michal, David's wife, to Paltiel[a] son of Laish, who was from Gallim.

[a] *44* Hebrew *Palti*, a variant of *Paltiel*

TRANSITION

Saul's Last Days

Saul was clearly aware that David would succeed him as king. This fear he had revealed early on to his son Jonathan (1Sa 20:30, 31). Later, in a unique encounter with the man who would become his successor, Saul extracted a promise that his family be spared the usual fate of the families of displaced dynasties (24:20, 21). David's inevitable kingship did mean that no reconciliation would be possible between Saul and David.

The last chapters of 1 Samuel (26:1—30:31) record David's activities during Saul's last years. When it became clear that Saul's hatred would not allow David to participate in the life of his people, David contemplated going over to the Philistines, a step he finally accepted (27:1–4). David would spend much of his exile among the Philistines at the town of Ziklag.

Saul received information on David's movements from informers, more than once from the residents of Ziph in the Judean wilderness (1Sa 23:19; 26:1). Saul did not receive any message from God, however. Faced with this silence, he resorted to necromancy, the summoning of the spirits of the dead (28:7–20). Though common in the ancient Near East, the practice was prohibited in Israel (see Lev 19:31; 20:27).

In his efforts to escape Saul's grasp, David often hid in the deserted region east of Ziph, known as the Desert of Ziph (1Sa 23:14; 26:2). The people of Ziph remained loyal to Saul, and their messages to Gibeah telling him of David's whereabouts are remembered in the superscription of Ps 54.

- **Psalm 54**
- **1 Samuel 26:1—30:31**

PSALM 54[a]

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil[b] *of David. When the Ziphites had gone to Saul and said, "Is not David hiding among us?"*

Save me, O God, by your name;
vindicate me by your might.
2 Hear my prayer, O God;
listen to the words of my mouth.

3 Arrogant foes are attacking me;
ruthless people are trying to kill me—
people without regard for God.[c]

4 Surely God is my help;
the Lord is the one who sustains me.

5 Let evil recoil on those who slander me;
in your faithfulness destroy them.

6 I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you;
I will praise your name, LORD, for it is good.
7 You have delivered me from all my troubles,
and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes.

1 Samuel 26:1—30:31

David Again Spares Saul's Life

26 :1 The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?"

2 So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand select Israelite troops, to search there for David. 3 Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul had followed him there, 4 he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had definitely arrived.

5 Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him.

6 David then asked Ahimelek the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, "Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?"

"I'll go with you," said Abishai.

7 So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.

8 Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won't strike him twice."

9 But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless? 10 As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. 11 But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."

12 So David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

13 Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away; there was a wide space between them. 14 He called out to the army and to Abner son of Ner, "Aren't you going to answer me, Abner?"

Abner replied, "Who are you who calls to the king?"

15 David said, "You're a man, aren't you? And who is like you in Israel? Why didn't you guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy your lord the king. 16 What you have done is not good. As surely as the LORD lives, you and your men must die, because you did not guard your master, the LORD's anointed. Look around you. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were near his head?"

17 Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is that your voice, David my son?"

David replied, "Yes it is, my lord the king." 18 And he added, "Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of? 19 Now let my lord the king listen to his servant's words. If the LORD has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, people have done it, may they be cursed before the LORD! They have driven me today from my share in the LORD's inheritance and have said, 'Go, serve other gods.' 20 Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the LORD. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea—as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

21 Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have been terribly wrong."

22 "Here is the king's spear," David answered.

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[a] In Hebrew texts 54:1-7 is numbered 54:3-9. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here.

Royal Cities of the Philistine Lords (1Sa 27:5)

The activities of the Philistines, as they settled in Canaan by the middle of the 12th century B.C., were centered on five cities: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gath, and Gaza (Jos 13:3; 1Sa 6:17). These cities are all located in the southern coastal plain. It is natural that this region was selected by the Philistines, since they were part of a larger group of peoples called the Sea Peoples, all of whom came from coastal areas.

The fighting between the Philistines and the Israelites was in many ways a geographical struggle. The Philistines resided in the coastal plain, while the Israelites were the people of the central hill country. The Philistine encroachment into the hill country was so forceful that Israel was provoked into a change of leadership from the religious leader Samuel to the political and military leader Saul (1Sa 9:16).

While only five cities are specifically designated as Philistine, each of these royal cities oversaw the activities of nearby smaller towns or villages. Ziklag, which was given to David by the Philistine king Achish, was probably a vassal town to the Philistine royal city of Gath (1Sa 27:5, 6). In this way the sphere of the Philistine cities was much wider than might be supposed. Five Philistine lords ruled over the many country villages affiliated with the five royal cities (1Sa 8:18).

Philistine pottery appears in Canaan about the middle of the 12th century B.C. While centered in the coastal area, some pottery has also been found in the Shephelah (the foothills of the hill country) and even in the hill country. This should not be surprising, since Philistine military outposts spread to the very hometowns of both Saul and David (1Sa 14:1; 2Sa 23:14). The five Philistine cities sought to add subservient cities to their realm, but Saul, David, and their kinsmen, ardent opponents, stood in the way.

"Let one of your young men come over and get it. 23The LORD rewards everyone for their righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. 24As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all trouble."

25Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, David my son; you will do great things and surely triumph."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.

David Among the Philistines

27 1But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand."

2So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maok king of Gath. 3David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal. 4When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.

5Then David said to Achish, "If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?"

6So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. 7David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.

8Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt.) 9Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes. Then he returned to Achish.

10When Achish asked, "Where did you go raiding today?" David would say, "Against the Negev of Judah" or "Against the Negev of Jerahmeel" or "Against the Negev of the Kenites." 11He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, "They might inform on us and say, 'This is what David did.'" And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory. 12Achish trusted David and said to himself, "He has become so obnoxious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant for life."

28 1In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army."

2David said, "Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do."

Achish replied, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."

Saul and the Medium at Endor

3Now Samuel was dead, and all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in his own town of Ramah. Saul had expelled the mediums and spiritists from the land.

4The Philistines assembled and came and set up camp at Shunem, while Saul gathered

A Guide for Divine Wisdom (1Sa 28:6)

In a revelation to Moses at Mount Sinai, God not only established Israel's priesthood, but also provided a means for direct communication between the priesthood and himself. The vehicle for this communication was located on the "breastplate of decision" (Ex 28:29, 30), a decorative, square, linen piece that hung across the high priest's chest. It was attached to the priest's gown by two gold chains that were connected at the shoulders. On this breastplate were twelve stones inscribed with the names of the twelve Israelite tribes (Ex 28:17–21). The most remarkable feature of the breastplate, however, was the two additional stones called the Urim and Thummim.

The Urim and Thummim were used to ask God specific questions. A leader with a question would go to the high priest, who would "obtain decisions . . . by inquiring . . . before the LORD" (Nu 27:21) for the questioner. Questions were formed so that a yes or no answer could be given (1Sa 23:9–12). Presumably, the appropriate stone glowed. In the stories of David, the Urim and Thummim stones are often indicated by the calling for "the ephod," the high priest's garment to which they were attached (1Sa 30:7, 8).

Saul's diminished relationship with his God is starkly underlined by his failure to receive a divine answer "by dreams or Urim or prophets" (1Sa 28:6, 15). The picture is of a desperate Saul being ignored by his deity. Eventually, Saul turned to witchcraft for guidance (1Sa 28:7).

Obtaining answers from God via the Urim and Thummim seems to have ceased or at least become out of vogue after the time of David. From Solomon's reign until the Jews' return from Babylon, the Urim and Thummim are mentioned only by the governor of Judah (Ezr 2:63; Ne 7:65). Whether they actually were used even at that time is questionable. The governor may have referred to the Urim and Thummim as a way of stalling would-be priests who lacked evidence of the proper priestly genealogy (Ezr 2:62).

all Israel and set up camp at Gilboa. 5When Saul saw the Philistine army, he was afraid; terror filled his heart. 6He inquired of the LORD, but the LORD did not answer him by dreams or Urim or prophets. 7Saul then said to his attendants, "Find me a woman who is a medium, so I may go and inquire of her."

"There is one in Endor," they said.

8So Saul disguised himself, putting on other clothes, and at night he and two men went to the woman. "Consult a spirit for me," he said, "and bring up for me the one I name."

9But the woman said to him, "Surely you know what Saul has done. He has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why have you set a trap for my life to bring about my death?"

10Saul swore to her by the LORD, "As surely as the LORD lives, you will not be punished for this."

11Then the woman asked, "Whom shall I bring up for you?"

"Bring up Samuel," he said.

12When the woman saw Samuel, she cried out at the top of her voice and said to Saul, "Why have you deceived me? You are Saul!"

Cults & Supernatural

The popular view was that the dead went to Sheol or the underworld, a dark place from which one could not return. It was not considered impossible to have contact with the dead, but it was forbidden in the Law of Moses. When Saul attempted to make contact with the dead Samuel, he violated the order of nature as God has planned it (1Sa 28:8–14).

13The king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?"

The woman said, "I see a ghostly figure[a] coming up out of the earth."

14"What does he look like?" he asked.

"An old man wearing a robe is coming up," she said.

Then Saul knew it was Samuel, and he bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.

15Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?"

"I am in great distress," Saul said. "The Philistines are fighting against me, and God has departed from me. He no longer answers me, either by prophets or by dreams. So I have called on you to tell me what to do."

16Samuel said, "Why do you consult me, now that the LORD has departed from you and become your enemy? 17The LORD has done what he predicted through me. The LORD has torn the kingdom out of your hands and given it to one of your neighbors—to David. 18Because you did not obey the LORD or carry out his fierce wrath against the Amalekites, the LORD has done this to you today. 19The LORD will deliver both Israel and you into the hands of the Philistines, and tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. The LORD will also give the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines."

20Immediately Saul fell full length on the ground, filled with fear because of Samuel's words. His strength was gone, for he had eaten nothing all that day and all that night.

[a] *13* Or *see spirits*; or *see gods*

21When the woman came to Saul and saw
that he was greatly shaken, she said, "Look,
your servant has obeyed you. I took my life
in my hands and did what you told me to do.
22Now please listen to your servant and let me
give you some food so you may eat and have
the strength to go on your way."
23He refused and said, "I will not eat."
But his men joined the woman in urging him,
and he listened to them. He got up from the
ground and sat on the couch.
24The woman had a fattened calf at the
house, which she butchered at once. She took
some flour, kneaded it and baked bread with-
out yeast. 25Then she set it before Saul and his
men, and they ate. That same night they got
up and left.

Achish Sends David Back to Ziklag

29 1The Philistines gathered all their
forces at Aphek, and Israel camped by
the spring in Jezreel. 2As the Philistine rul-
ers marched with their units of hundreds and
thousands, David and his men were marching
at the rear with Achish. 3The commanders of
the Philistines asked, "What about these He-
brews?"
Achish replied, "Is this not David, who was
an officer of Saul king of Israel? He has already
been with me for over a year, and from the day
he left Saul until now, I have found no fault in
him."
4But the Philistine commanders were angry
with Achish and said, "Send the man back,
that he may return to the place you assigned
him. He must not go with us into battle, or
he will turn against us during the fighting.
How better could he regain his master's fa-
vor than by taking the heads of our own men?
5Isn't this the David they sang about in their
dances:

"'Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands'?"

6So Achish called David and said to him, "As
surely as the LORD lives, you have been reli-
able, and I would be pleased to have you serve
with me in the army. From the day you came
to me until today, I have found no fault in you,
but the rulers don't approve of you. 7Now turn
back and go in peace; do nothing to displease
the Philistine rulers."
8"But what have I done?" asked David. "What
have you found against your servant from the
day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and
fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"
9Achish answered, "I know that you have
been as pleasing in my eyes as an angel of God;
nevertheless, the Philistine commanders have
said, 'He must not go up with us into battle.'
10Now get up early, along with your master's
servants who have come with you, and leave in
the morning as soon as it is light."
11So David and his men got up early in the
morning to go back to the land of the Philis-
tines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

David Destroys the Amalekites

30 1David and his men reached Ziklag on
the third day. Now the Amalekites had
raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had at-
tacked Ziklag and burned it, 2and had taken
captive the women and everyone else in it, both
young and old. They killed none of them, but
carried them off as they went on their way.
3When David and his men reached Ziklag,
they found it destroyed by fire and their wives
and sons and daughters taken captive. 4So Da-
vid and his men wept aloud until they had no
strength left to weep. 5David's two wives had
been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abi-
gail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 6David was
greatly distressed because the men were talk-
ing of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit
because of his sons and daughters. But David
found strength in the LORD his God.
7Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the
son of Ahimelek, "Bring me the ephod." Abi-
athar brought it to him, 8and David inquired
of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party?
Will I overtake them?"
"Pursue them," he answered. "You will
certainly overtake them and succeed in the
rescue."
9David and the six hundred men with him
came to the Besor Valley, where some stayed
behind. 10Two hundred of them were too ex-
hausted to cross the valley, but David and the
other four hundred continued the pursuit.
11They found an Egyptian in a field and
brought him to David. They gave him water
to drink and food to eat— 12part of a cake of
pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate
and was revived, for he had not eaten any food

Religion & Worship
The ephod was a kind of garment worn by the high priest (1Sa 30:7). Its function was to permit a questioner to inquire of God concerning what actions to take in particular situations. Attached to the ephod was a breastplate containing the Urim and Thummim. These were special objects, accessible to the high priest and the king, used to convey God's answer.

Bedouins and Their Camels (1Sa 30:1–18)

The bedouins were pastoral nomads in western Asia in the 1st millennium B.C., who specialized in camel breeding. The camel was first domesticated in east and south Arabia in the 3rd millennium B.C. By the end of the Late Bronze Age (c. 1200 B.C.), the animal was used for transport and food in Syro-Palestine.

The first literary evidence of bedouin tribes comes from Assyrian royal inscriptions and reliefs (9th to 7th centuries B.C.). These tribes are described as large and combative, but subject to the Assyrian state. A thousand Arab bedouins were conscripted to fight along with Assyria at the battle of Qarqar against the Syro-Palestinian coalition (853 B.C.). The Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) was given 10,000 camels as tribute from the bedouins.

The first bedouin political state emerged in the 7th century B.C. According to Assyrian annals, it was a tribal confederacy centered in northern Arabia, led by the tribe of Qedar. These camel-breeding tribes are associated with the Ishmaelites, who were descended from Ishmael, the first son of Abraham (Ge 16:15).

The camel allowed the pastoral nomads to travel greater distances, giving them the ability to penetrate the desert, away from politically organized communities. The Amalekites, whose attributes are similar in nature to the bedouin, seem to have traversed a large geographical region from the western Sinai to Arabia (1Sa 15:7). Their seasonal migrations as camel herders brought them into contact with other peoples, contact that sometimes became raiding opportunities. Some of the Amalekites who raided David's Ziklag were able to escape by fleeing on their camels (1Sa 30:1, 16, 17).

or drunk any water for three days and three nights.

13 David asked him, "Who do you belong to? Where do you come from?"

He said, "I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago. 14 We raided the Negev of the Kerethites, some territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag."

15 David asked him, "Can you lead me down to this raiding party?"

He answered, "Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them."

16 He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah. 17 David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. 18 David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. 19 Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back. 20 He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, "This is David's plunder."

21 Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Valley. They came out to meet David and the men with him. As David and his men approached, he asked them how they were. 22 But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, "Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go."

23 David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiding party that came against us. 24 Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike." 25 David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.

26 When David reached Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, "Here is a gift for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies."

27 David sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and Jattir; 28 to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa 29 and Rakal; to those in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites; 30 to those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athak 31 and Hebron; and to those in all the other places where he and his men had roamed.

TRANSITION

Israel's First King Is Dead

The final chapter of 1 Samuel depicts the sad end to a life of progressive alienation from God. Saul's rebellion was his own, but his defeat included other people as well. A last grim service (31:11–13) for the fallen king and his sons was performed in memory of Saul's deliverance of Jabesh Gilead many years before (see 1Sa 11). Israel's first king was dead, clearing the way for David's accession in about 1010 B.C.

The story of Saul's death continues from 1 Samuel to 2 Samuel without interruption. Modern sensitivities are repulsed at David's actions in 2Sa 1:1–16. Nonetheless, there is every reason to believe he was acting in integrity. Believing the Amalekite's report that he had killed Saul, David, far from rewarding the man, executed him for his wanton act (1:14–16). David himself had twice refused to kill Saul. He refused to allow his men to kill the king. Even if it would give him the throne, David would not approve the murder of his predecessor.

- **1 Samuel 31:1–13**
- **2 Samuel 1:1–27**

1 Samuel 31:1–13

Saul Takes His Life

31:1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell dead on Mount Gilboa. 2The Philistines were in hot pursuit of Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. 3The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically.

4Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me."

But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. 5When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died with him. 6So Saul and his three sons and his armor-bearer and all his men died together that same day.

7When the Israelites along the valley and those across the Jordan saw that the Israelite army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them.

8The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9They cut off his head and stripped off his armor, and they sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news in the temple of their idols and among their people. 10They put his armor in the temple of the Ashtoreths and fastened his body to the wall of Beth Shan.

11When the people of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12all their valiant men marched through the night to Beth Shan. They took down the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall of Beth Shan and went to Jabesh, where they burned them. 13Then they took their bones and buried them under a tamarisk tree at Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.

2 Samuel 1:1–27

David Hears of Saul's Death

1:1 After the death of Saul, David returned from striking down the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days. 2On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor.

3"Where have you come from?" David asked him.

He answered, "I have escaped from the Israelite camp."

4"What happened?" David asked. "Tell me."

"The men fled from the battle," he replied. "Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

5Then David said to the young man who brought him the report, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

6"I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," the young man said, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and their drivers in hot pursuit. 7When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, 'What can I do?'

8"He asked me, 'Who are you?'

"'An Amalekite,' I answered.

9"Then he said to me, 'Stand here by me and kill me! I'm in the throes of death, but I'm still alive.'

Culture & Society

A standard feature of ancient warfare was to make a display of the fallen enemy. A suit of armor taken on the field of battle would be set up as a kind of sculptural monument. Still more terrible was to leave the enemy unburied. The people of Jabesh Gilead were brave because they performed a sacred duty in the face of great danger (1Sa 31:8–13).

10 "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord."

11 Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. 12 They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and for the nation of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

13 David said to the young man who brought him the report, "Where are you from?"

"I am the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite," he answered.

14 David asked him, "Why weren't you afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?"

15 Then David called one of his men and said, "Go, strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died. 16 For David had said to him, "Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the LORD's anointed.'"

David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan

17 David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, 18 and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

19 "A gazelle[a] lies slain on your heights, Israel.
How the mighty have fallen!

20 "Tell it not in Gath,
proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,
lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad,
lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.

21 "Mountains of Gilboa,
may you have neither dew nor rain,
may no showers fall on your terraced fields.[b]
For there the shield of the mighty was despised,
the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.

22 "From the blood of the slain,
from the flesh of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.

23 Saul and Jonathan—
in life they were loved and admired,
and in death they were not parted.
They were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.

24 "Daughters of Israel,
weep for Saul,
who clothed you in scarlet and finery,
who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.

25 "How the mighty have fallen in battle!
Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

26 I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;
you were very dear to me.
Your love for me was wonderful,
more wonderful than that of women.

27 "How the mighty have fallen!
The weapons of war have perished!"

TRANSITION

Deliverance from Saul

The superscription to Ps 18 is not very specific. It associates the psalm with a time when David celebrated deliverance, especially deliverance from Saul. Since no reconciliation with Saul took place before he died, it makes some sense to read this psalm in the context of Saul's death.

This psalm also appears , with only minor changes, in 2Sa 22. There, although 2Sa 22:1 still notes David's deliverance from Saul, the song refers to a wider range of enemies.

• **Psalm 18**

PSALM 18[c]

For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD. He sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said:

I love you, LORD, my strength.

2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield[d] and the horn[e] of my salvation, my stronghold.

3 I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and I have been saved from my enemies.

4 The cords of death entangled me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.

[a] *19 Gazelle* here symbolizes a human dignitary. [b] *21* Or / *nor fields that yield grain for offerings* [c] In Hebrew texts 18:1-50 is numbered 18:2-51. [d] *2* Or *sovereign* [e] *2 Horn* here symbolizes strength.

5 The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.
6 In my distress I called to the LORD;
I cried to my God for help.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came before him, into his ears.
7 The earth trembled and quaked,
and the foundations of the mountains
shook;
they trembled because he was angry.
8 Smoke rose from his nostrils;
consuming fire came from his mouth,
burning coals blazed out of it.
9 He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.
10 He mounted the cherubim and flew;
he soared on the wings of the wind.
11 He made darkness his covering, his canopy
around him—
the dark rain clouds of the sky.
12 Out of the brightness of his presence clouds
advanced,
with hailstones and bolts of lightning.
13 The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.[a]
14 He shot his arrows and scattered the
enemy,
with great bolts of lightning he routed
them.
15 The valleys of the sea were exposed
and the foundations of the earth laid bare
at your rebuke, LORD,
at the blast of breath from your nostrils.
16 He reached down from on high and took
hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
17 He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong
for me.
18 They confronted me in the day of my
disaster,
but the LORD was my support.
19 He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted
in me.
20 The LORD has dealt with me according to
my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands
he has rewarded me.
21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I am not guilty of turning from my God.
22 All his laws are before me;
I have not turned away from his decrees.
23 I have been blameless before him
and have kept myself from sin.
24 The LORD has rewarded me according to
my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands in
his sight.
25 To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself
blameless,
26 to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the devious you show yourself
shrewd.
27 You save the humble
but bring low those whose eyes are
haughty.
28 You, LORD, keep my lamp burning;
my God turns my darkness into
light.
29 With your help I can advance against a
troop[b];
with my God I can scale a wall.
30 As for God, his way is perfect:
The LORD's word is flawless;
he shields all who take refuge in him.
31 For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is the Rock except our God?
32 It is God who arms me with strength
and keeps my way secure.
33 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;
he causes me to stand on the heights.
34 He trains my hands for battle;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
35 You make your saving help my shield,
and your right hand sustains me;
your help has made me great.
36 You provide a broad path for my feet,
so that my ankles do not give way.
37 I pursued my enemies and overtook
them;
I did not turn back till they were
destroyed.
38 I crushed them so that they could not rise;
they fell beneath my feet.

[a] *13* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Samuel 22:14); most Hebrew manuscripts *resounded, / amid hailstones and bolts of lightning* [b] *29* Or *can run through a barricade*

Beliefs & Ideas

God's appearance at Mount Sinai when Moses received the law was marked by thunder, lightning, earthquake, and smoke. The phenomena of earthquake, volcano, and thunderstorm came together (Ex 19:16–19). The Canaanites regarded their god Baal as the ruler of storms, and in Greek literature Zeus is called the "cloud gatherer." The display of natural power was considered a sign of divine power (Ps 18:7).

39 You armed me with strength for battle;
you humbled my adversaries before me.
40 You made my enemies turn their backs in flight,
and I destroyed my foes.
41 They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—
to the LORD, but he did not answer.
42 I beat them as fine as windblown dust;
I trampled them[a] like mud in the streets.
43 You have delivered me from the attacks of the people;
you have made me the head of nations.
People I did not know now serve me,
44 foreigners cower before me;
as soon as they hear of me, they obey me.
45 They all lose heart;
they come trembling from their strongholds.

46 The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be God my Savior!
47 He is the God who avenges me,
who subdues nations under me,
48 who saves me from my enemies.
You exalted me above my foes;
from a violent man you rescued me.

49 Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among the nations;
I will sing the praises of your name.

50 He gives his king great victories;
he shows unfailing love to his anointed,
to David and to his descendants forever.

[a] *42* Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac and Targum (see also 2 Samuel 22:43); Masoretic Text *I poured them out*

TRANSITION

Who Will Succeed Saul as King?

Most ancient Near Eastern kingdoms had established dynasties in which successive rulers came from the same family. The practice of dynastic succession meant that when a king died, his eldest son normally reigned in his place. The exceptions were those rather frequent cases when a powerful general seized control for himself.

But dynastic succession was foreign to Israel. During the earlier tribal confederacy, the judges had been inspired specifically for times of crisis, and their inspiration was not transferred to their sons. When Gideon was asked to reign, he refused, saying, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son rule over you. The LORD will rule over you" (Jdg 8:23).

When Israel's first king died, the question of succession became crucial. Some favored a dynastic succession, placing Saul's son Ish-Bosheth on the throne (2Sa 2:8–10). Others, perhaps remembering the pattern of the judges, preferred to crown the man who had shown himself most able, David (2Sa 2:10, 11).

In addition, both Ish-Bosheth and David had ambitious generals. Abner, who was commander of Saul's army, as well as a cousin of Saul, naturally supported Ish-Bosheth to succeed his father as king. In the same way, Joab, commander of David's army and the son of David's sister Zeruiah, was a powerful element in David's campaign for the throne. In the ensuing years of civil war, the plots and maneuverings of these generals became extremely significant.

Equally significant are the brief lists in 2Sa 3:2–5 and 5:13–16 of the sons born to David. The question of royal succession would apply to the next generation as well. David's first and third sons, Amnon and Absalom (3:2, 3), would prove themselves unworthy of the throne and be eliminated (2Sa 13–18). Two other sons, Adonijah (3:4) and Solomon (5:14), would later challenge each other for their father's throne (1Ki 1; 2).

• **2 Samuel 2:1—4:12**

2 Samuel

David Anointed King Over Judah

2 :1 In the course of time, David inquired of the LORD. "Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?" he asked.

The LORD said, "Go up."

David asked, "Where shall I go?"

"To Hebron," the LORD answered.

[2]So David went up there with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. [3]David also took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns. [4]Then the men of Judah came to Hebron, and there they anointed David king over the tribe of Judah.

When David was told that it was the men from Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul, [5]he sent messengers to them to say to them, "The LORD bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him. [6]May the LORD now show you kindness and faithfulness, and I too will show you the same favor because you have done this. [7]Now then, be strong and brave, for Saul your master is dead, and the people of Judah have anointed me king over them."

War Between the Houses of David and Saul

[8]Meanwhile, Abner son of Ner, the commander of Saul's army, had taken Ish-Bosheth son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. [9]He made him king over Gilead, Ashuri and Jezreel, and also over Ephraim, Benjamin and all Israel.

[10]Ish-Bosheth son of Saul was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he reigned two years. The tribe of Judah, however, remained loyal to David. [11]The length of time David was king in Hebron over Judah was seven years and six months.

[12]Abner son of Ner, together with the men of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, left Mahanaim and went to Gibeon. [13]Joab son of Zeruiah and David's men went out and met them at the pool of Gibeon. One group sat down on one side of the pool and one group on the other side.

[14]Then Abner said to Joab, "Let's have some of the young men get up and fight hand to hand in front of us."

"All right, let them do it," Joab said.

[15]So they stood up and were counted off—twelve men for Benjamin and Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, and twelve for David. [16]Then each man grabbed his opponent by the head and thrust his dagger into his opponent's side, and they fell down together. So that place in Gibeon was called Helkath Hazzurim.[a]

[17]The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner and the Israelites were defeated by David's men.

[18]The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Now Asahel was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle. [19]He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him. [20]Abner looked behind him and asked, "Is that you, Asahel?"

"It is," he answered.

[21]Then Abner said to him, "Turn aside to the right or to the left; take on one of the young men and strip him of his weapons." But Asahel would not stop chasing him.

[22]Again Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me! Why should I strike you down? How could I look your brother Joab in the face?"

[23]But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He fell there and died on the spot. And every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died.

[24]But Joab and Abishai pursued Abner, and as the sun was setting, they came to the hill of Ammah, near Giah on the way to the wasteland of Gibeon. [25]Then the men of Benjamin rallied behind Abner. They formed themselves into a group and took their stand on top of a hill.

[26]Abner called out to Joab, "Must the sword devour forever? Don't you realize that this will end in bitterness? How long before you order your men to stop pursuing their fellow Israelites?"

[27]Joab answered, "As surely as God lives, if you had not spoken, the men would have continued pursuing them until morning."

[28]So Joab blew the trumpet, and all the troops came to a halt; they no longer pursued Israel, nor did they fight anymore.

[29]All that night Abner and his men marched through the Arabah. They crossed the Jordan, continued through the morning hours[b] and came to Mahanaim.

Culture & Society

In the hand-to-hand combat of the nomad, the final stage was to seize the opponent and deliver the fatal blow (2Sa 2:16). The fighting match between Saul's and David's warriors illustrates a particular technique of fighting. The contest displays a social idea of combat in which the number of contestants is fixed and the fighting is by arrangement (2:14, 15).

[a] *16 Helkath Hazzurim* means *field of daggers* or *field of hostilities.* [b] *29* See Septuagint; the meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

The Sort-of Wife (2Sa 3:7)

The word "concubine" is difficult to define for people of Western culture since there is no analogous relationship in Western European society. In the ancient Near East a concubine was a woman who had legal status within a family and who shared the sexual attentions of the husband, while having somewhat lesser authority than a wife. The presence of concubines in a household was openly acknowledged without any pejorative implication (2Sa 19:5). In other words, they were accepted like other family members. The sons of a concubine were treated as heirs, though with, perhaps, somewhat lesser status (Ge 25:6).

For one to take another man's concubine was seen as usurping the husband's authority. This was especially true of a king's concubines. To gain possession of a king's harem was to gain title to the king's throne. After David became king, he took possession of Saul's concubines (2Sa 12:8). When Absalom usurped his father David's rule of Jerusalem, one of his first acts to publicly claim royal authority was to establish sexual relations with David's concubines (2Sa 16:21, 22).

After Saul died, his son Ish-Bosheth struggled to secure his position as Saul's successor. There were battles between Ish-Bosheth's Israel and David's Judah (2Sa 3:6). In light of Ish-Bosheth's shaky kingship, it is quite natural that he would be alarmed at the possibility of anyone, especially the army commander Abner, having relations with Saul's concubine, Rizpah (3:7).

30 Then Joab stopped pursuing Abner and assembled the whole army. Besides Asahel, nineteen of David's men were found missing. 31 But David's men had killed three hundred and sixty Benjamites who were with Abner. 32 They took Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb at Bethlehem. Then Joab and his men marched all night and arrived at Hebron by daybreak.

3 1 The war between the house of Saul and the house of David lasted a long time. David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker.

2 Sons were born to David in Hebron:
His firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel;
3 his second, Kileab the son of Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel;
the third, Absalom the son of Maakah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;
4 the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith;
the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;
5 and the sixth, Ithream the son of David's wife Eglah.
These were born to David in Hebron.

Abner Goes Over to David

6 During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner had been strengthening his own position in the house of Saul. 7 Now Saul had had a concubine named Rizpah daughter of Aiah. And Ish-Bosheth said to Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?"

8 Abner was very angry because of what Ish-Bosheth said. So he answered, "Am I a dog's head — on Judah's side? This very day I am loyal to the house of your father Saul and to his family and friends. I haven't handed you over to David. Yet now you accuse me of an offense involving this woman! 9 May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the LORD promised him on oath 10 and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba." 11 Ish-Bosheth did not dare to say another word to Abner, because he was afraid of him.

12 Then Abner sent messengers on his behalf to say to David, "Whose land is it? Make an agreement with me, and I will help you bring all Israel over to you."

13 "Good," said David. "I will make an agreement with you. But I demand one thing of you: Do not come into my presence unless you bring Michal daughter of Saul when you come to see me." 14 Then David sent messengers to Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, demanding, "Give me my wife Michal, whom I betrothed to myself for the price of a hundred Philistine foreskins."

15 So Ish-Bosheth gave orders and had her taken away from her husband Paltiel son of Laish. 16 Her husband, however, went with her, weeping behind her all the way to Bahurim. Then Abner said to him, "Go back home!" So he went back.

17 Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, "For some time you have wanted to make David your king. 18 Now do it! For the LORD promised David, 'By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies.'"

19 Abner also spoke to the Benjamites in person. Then he went to Hebron to tell David everything that Israel and the whole tribe of Benjamin wanted to do. 20 When Abner, who had twenty men with him, came to David at Hebron, David prepared a feast for him and his

men. 21Then Abner said to David, "Let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king, so that they may make a covenant with you, and that you may rule over all that your heart desires." So David sent Abner away, and he went in peace.

Joab Murders Abner

22Just then David's men and Joab returned from a raid and brought with them a great deal of plunder. But Abner was no longer with David in Hebron, because David had sent him away, and he had gone in peace. 23When Joab and all the soldiers with him arrived, he was told that Abner son of Ner had come to the king and that the king had sent him away and that he had gone in peace.

24So Joab went to the king and said, "What have you done? Look, Abner came to you. Why did you let him go? Now he is gone! 25You know Abner son of Ner; he came to deceive you and observe your movements and find out everything you are doing."

26Joab then left David and sent messengers after Abner, and they brought him back from the cistern at Sirah. But David did not know it. 27Now when Abner returned to Hebron, Joab took him aside into an inner chamber, as if to speak with him privately. And there, to avenge the blood of his brother Asahel, Joab stabbed him in the stomach, and he died.

28Later, when David heard about this, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the LORD concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. 29May his blood fall on the head of Joab and on his whole family! May Joab's family never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy[a] or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food."

30(Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)

31Then David said to Joab and all the people with him, "Tear your clothes and put on sackcloth and walk in mourning in front of Abner." King David himself walked behind the bier. 32They buried Abner in Hebron, and the king wept aloud at Abner's tomb. All the people wept also.

33The king sang this lament for Abner:

"Should Abner have died as the lawless die?
34 Your hands were not bound,
your feet were not fettered.
You fell as one falls before the wicked."

And all the people wept over him again.

35Then they all came and urged David to eat something while it was still day; but David took an oath, saying, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if I taste bread or anything else before the sun sets!"

36All the people took note and were pleased; indeed, everything the king did pleased them. 37So on that day all the people there and all Israel knew that the king had no part in the murder of Abner son of Ner.

38Then the king said to his men, "Do you not realize that a commander and a great man has fallen in Israel this day? 39And today, though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me. May the LORD repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!"

Ish-Bosheth Murdered

4 1When Ish-Bosheth son of Saul heard that Abner had died in Hebron, he lost courage, and all Israel became alarmed. 2Now Saul's son had two men who were leaders of raiding bands. One was named Baanah and the other Rekab; they were sons of Rimmon the Beerothite from the tribe of Benjamin—Beeroth is considered part of Benjamin, 3because the people of Beeroth fled to Gittaim and have resided there as foreigners to this day.

4(Jonathan son of Saul had a son who was lame in both feet. He was five years old when the news about Saul and Jonathan came from Jezreel. His nurse picked him up and fled, but as she hurried to leave, he fell and became disabled. His name was Mephibosheth.)

5Now Rekab and Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, set out for the house of Ish-Bosheth, and they arrived there in the heat of the day while he was taking his noonday rest. 6They went into the inner part of the house as if to get some wheat, and they stabbed him in the stomach. Then Rekab and his brother Baanah slipped away.

7They had gone into the house while he was lying on the bed in his bedroom. After they

Culture & Society
Before the monarchy there was a long-standing custom of blood revenge. The "avenger of blood" would avenge the death of a relative by killing the relative's slayer (Jos 20:3). Blood vengeance was not allowed, however, for persons killed in battle (2Sa 2:21–23). Joab ignores this exception and avenges his younger brother Asahel's death by killing Abner (2Sa 3:27).

[a] *29* The Hebrew for *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

stabbed and killed him, they cut off his head. Taking it with them, they traveled all night by way of the Arabah. 8They brought the head of Ish-Bosheth to David at Hebron and said to the king, "Here is the head of Ish-Bosheth son of Saul, your enemy, who tried to kill you. This day the LORD has avenged my lord the king against Saul and his offspring."

9David answered Rekab and his brother Baanah, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, "As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, 10when someone told me, 'Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and put him to death in Ziklag. That was the reward I gave him for his news! 11How much more—when wicked men have killed an innocent man in his own house and on his own bed—should I not now demand his blood from your hand and rid the earth of you!"

12So David gave an order to his men, and they killed them. They cut off their hands and feet and hung the bodies by the pool in Hebron. But they took the head of Ish-Bosheth and buried it in Abner's tomb at Hebron.

TRANSITION

When Did David Become King?

The exact dates of David's kingship are unknown. In fact, exact dates for Israel's first three kings—Saul, David, Solomon—are not known (see "When Did Saul Become King?" at 1Sa 13:1). The text of 2 Samuel records that David reigned first over Judah for 7 and 1/2 years at Hebron, then over Israel and Judah for 33 years at Jerusalem. These figures are rounded to a total reign of 40 years (2Sa 5:4, 5). However, an absolute date for when David began to rule is lacking.

David's reign could be estimated backward from his son Solomon, but Solomon's dates, too, are uncertain. Like Saul and David, Solomon also is reported to have reigned 40 years (1Ki 11:42). However, the 40-year figure given for Saul, David, and Solomon could be a symbolic round number representing the length of a generation. In addition, we are not sure how long Solomon ruled as a coregent with his father (1Ki 1:32–35; 2:1, 10).

If we accept that any dates for David are only approximate, his reign can be figured by starting from Solomon's son Rehoboam. The beginning of Rehoboam's rule over Judah can be placed at 930 B.C. Counting backward 40 years would date Solomon's reign from 970 to 930 B.C. Backing up another 40 years would place the beginning of David's rule in Judah at about 1010 B.C. and in Jerusalem at about 1003 B.C.

• 2 Samuel 5:1—7:29

2 Samuel

David Becomes King Over Israel

5 :1 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. 2In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"

3When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

4David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. 5In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

David Conquers Jerusalem

6The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." 7Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.

8On that day David had said, "Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those 'lame and blind' who are David's enemies.[a]" That is why they say, "The 'blind and lame' will not enter the palace."

9David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the terraces[b] inward. 10And he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

11Now Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David. 12Then David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

13After he left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him. 14These are the names of the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

17When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard

[a] 8 Or *are hated by David* [b] 9 Or *the Millo*

Up the Jebusite Water Shaft (2Sa 5:8)

The City of David was built on a hill over the Gihon spring, the main water source for the Jerusalem area (2Ch 32:30). Before David conquered the city, a people called the Jebusites lived there and dug a shaft down to the spring, which flowed from the mountain's base.

This water shaft was the key to the long-lived freedom of the Jebusites (Jos 15:63). It gave the city's inhabitants access to water, even when enemies surrounded them. That plus the steep mountain on which the city was built made the city nearly impossible to conquer.

The digging of the Jebusite shaft was no easy task. In fact, the Jebusites actually first dug a tunnel that after some time had to be abandoned. Their second attempt produced two descending steps and one horizontal step before finally reaching water level. Once there, the Jebusites tunneled an additional 65 feet to the mouth of the spring.

David discovered the Jebusite shaft and realized that it was the easiest and least-expected way for his soldiers to enter Jerusalem. By climbing up the shaft (the same shaft still visible to visitors today), David and his men conquered the Jebusites and gained a new capital city (2Sa 5:8, 9).

about it and went down to the stronghold. 18Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; 19so David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?"

The LORD answered him, "Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands."

20So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, "As waters break out, the LORD has broken out against my enemies before me." So that place was called Baal Perazim.[a] 21The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off.

22Once more the Philistines came up and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim; 23so David inquired of the LORD, and he answered, "Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the poplar trees. 24As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the poplar trees, move quickly, because that will mean the LORD has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army." 25So David did as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon[b] to Gezer.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

6 1David again brought together all the able young men of Israel—thirty thousand. 2He and all his men went to Baalah[c] in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name,[d] the name of the LORD Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark. 3They set the ark of God on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart 4with the ark of God on it,[e] and Ahio was walking in front of it. 5David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets,[f] harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals.

6When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. 7The LORD's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God.

8Then David was angry because the LORD's wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah.[g]

9David was afraid of the LORD that day and said, "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" 10He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 11The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite for three months, and the LORD blessed him and his entire household.

12Now King David was told, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God." So David went to bring up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing. 13When those who were carrying the ark of the LORD had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. 14Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, 15while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

16As the ark of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David

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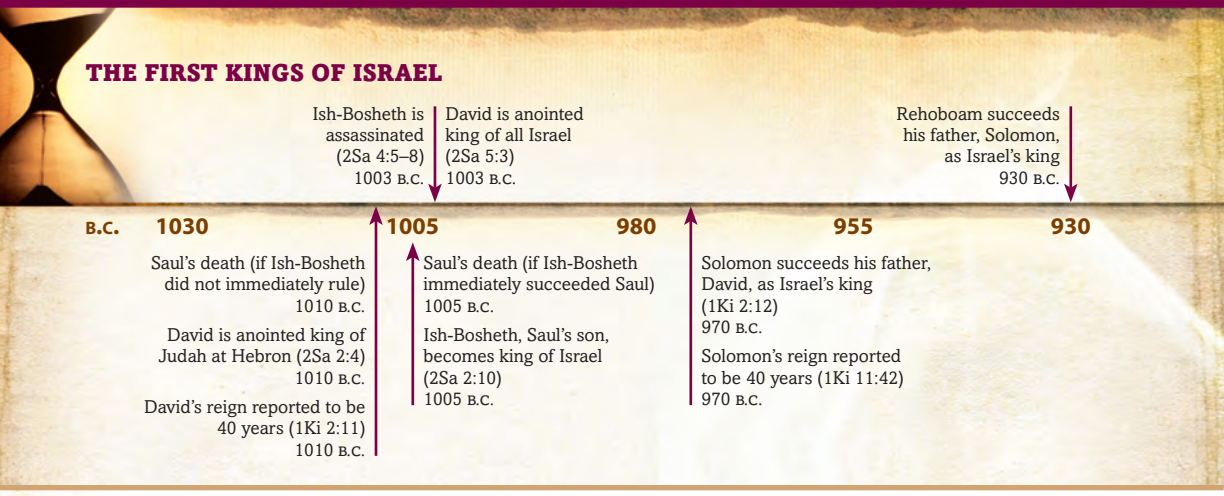
[a] *20 Baal Perazim* means *the lord who breaks out.*
[b] *25* Septuagint (see also 1 Chron. 14:16); Hebrew *Geba*
[c] *2* That is, Kiriath Jearim (see 1 Chron. 13:6) [d] *2* Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate do not have *the Name.* [e] *3,4* Dead Sea Scrolls and some Septuagint manuscripts; Masoretic Text *cart* 4*and they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill* [f] *5* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint (see also 1 Chron. 13:8) *songs*
[g] *8 Perez Uzzah* means *outbreak against Uzzah.*



leaping and dancing before the LORD, she despised him in her heart.

17They brought the ark of the LORD and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the LORD. 18After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD Almighty. 19Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.

20When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!"

21David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD. 22I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."

23And Michal daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

Agriculture & Herding
David is one of several shepherds who eventually became great leaders (2Sa 7:8). Amos was called to be a prophet while he was tending sheep (Am 7:14). Moses noticed the burning bush when he was "tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law" (Ex 3:1). One of Greece's earliest poets, Hesiod (c. 700 B.C.) received his call to write poetry while he was a shepherd on Mount Helicon.

God's Promise to David

7 1After the king was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, 2he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent."

3Nathan replied to the king, "Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the LORD is with you."

4But that night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying:

5"Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in? 6I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. 7Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"'

8"Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. 9I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth. 10And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 11and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders[a]

[a] *11* Traditionally *judges*

over my people Israel. I will also give you rest from all your enemies.

"'The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: 12When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. 13He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. 14I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. 15But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me[a]; your throne will be established forever.'"

17Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

David's Prayer

18Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said:

"Who am I, Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 19And as if this were not enough in your sight, Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant—and this decree, Sovereign LORD, is for a mere human![b]

20"What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Sovereign LORD. 21For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.

22"How great you are, Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. 23And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt?[c] 24You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, LORD, have become their God.

25"And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, 26so that your name will be great forever. Then people will say, 'The LORD Almighty is God over Israel!' And the house of your servant David will be established in your sight.

27"LORD Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you.' So your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you. 28Sovereign LORD, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant. 29Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, Sovereign LORD, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever."

[a] *16* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *you* [b] *19* Or *for the human race*
[c] *23* See Septuagint and 1 Chron. 17:21; Hebrew *wonders for your land and before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt, from the nations and their gods.*

TRANSITION

The Books of Chronicles

While Chronicles has a different emphasis than Samuel and Kings, the Chronicler is able to use a good deal of those earlier books. In fact, Chronicles often quotes the other histories, especially Kings. But Chronicles also extends further in time. Whereas Kings ends during the Babylonian exile, Chronicles concludes with the Persian king Cyrus's proclamation that allowed the exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem. See "Prophetic Account: Saul and David" at 1Sa 9:1.

Although the books of Chronicles are especially concerned with the monarchy, they begin much earlier, with Adam. In the historical shorthand of genealogies of 1Ch 1–9, the Chronicler covers the time span between Adam and King Saul (and a good deal beyond Saul). These genealogical lists actually go as far as the postexilic period and provide an important backdrop for that era (see "Priestly Genealogies" at 1Ch 1:1).

The final genealogy (1Ch 9:35–44), however, covers Saul's family and introduces the narrative of his tragic death in 1Ch 10. Within the listare what was probably the original names of Saul's son (Esh-Baal, 9:39) and grandson (Merib-Baal, 9:40). The prophetic story of Saul's family in 2 Samuel consistently spells these names as Ish-Bosheth (2Sa 2:8) and Mephibosheth (2Sa 4:4). The author of Samuel replaced the name of the Canaanite god Baal with *Bosheth,* the Hebrew word for "shame."

• **1 Chronicles 9:35–44**

1 Chronicles

The Genealogy of Saul

9:35 Jeiel the father[a] of Gibeon lived in Gibeon.
His wife's name was Maakah, 36and his firstborn son was Abdon, followed by Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner, Nadab, 37Gedor, Ahio, Zechariah and Mikloth. 38Mikloth was the father of Shimeam. They too lived near their relatives in Jerusalem.
39Ner was the father of Kish, Kish the father of Saul, and Saul the father of Jonathan, Malki-Shua, Abinadab and Esh-Baal.[b]
40The son of Jonathan:
Merib-Baal,[c] who was the father of Micah.
41The sons of Micah:
Pithon, Melek, Tahrea and Ahaz.[d]
42Ahaz was the father of Jadah, Jadah[e] was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri, and Zimri was the father of Moza. 43Moza was the father of Binea; Rephaiah was his son, Eleasah his son and Azel his son.
44Azel had six sons, and these were their names:
Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah, Obadiah and Hanan. These were the sons of Azel.

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Saul and David

The books of Chronicles cover the same historical time period as the books of Samuel and Kings, but they do so very differently. The author of Chronicles, often called "the Chronicler," wrote at a later time and with a different purpose, and thus omitted episodes that would detract from that purpose. Saul is allotted very little space, and the Chronicler consistently ignores the civil war between the houses of Saul and David. Only Saul's ignominious end is recorded (1Ch 10) as background to David's rise to the throne.

The Chronicler is mainly interested in Davidic kingship, Jerusalem, and the temple. In Chronicles, David is above all the devout founder of the Jerusalem temple. Perhaps for this reason, he is consistently presented in a positive light. In telling David's story, the Chronicler emphasizes the king's concern for the ark of the covenant and for his capital at Jerusalem (1Ch 13; 15). Both the ark and the capital are prerequisites for the temple.

• 1 Chronicles 10:1—11:47

1 Chronicles

Saul Takes His Life

10:1 Now the Philistines fought against Israel; the Israelites fled before them, and many fell dead on Mount Gilboa. 2The Philistines were in hot pursuit of Saul and his sons, and they killed his sons Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-Shua. 3The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him.

4Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and abuse me."

But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it. 5When the armor-bearer saw that Saul was dead, he too fell on his sword and died. 6So Saul and his three sons died, and all his house died together.

7When all the Israelites in the valley saw that the army had fled and that Saul and his sons had died, they abandoned their towns and fled. And the Philistines came and occupied them.

8The next day, when the Philistines came to strip the dead, they found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa. 9They stripped him and took his head and his armor, and sent messengers throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim the news among their idols and their people. 10They put his armor in the temple of their gods and hung up his head in the temple of Dagon.

11When all the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12all their valiant men went and took the bodies of Saul and his sons and brought them to Jabesh. Then they buried their bones under the great tree in Jabesh, and they fasted seven days.

13Saul died because he was unfaithful to the LORD; he did not keep the word of the LORD and even consulted a medium for guidance, 14and did not inquire of the LORD. So the LORD put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.

David Becomes King Over Israel

11 1All Israel came together to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. 2In the past, even while Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel on their

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[a] *35* *Father* may mean *civic leader* or *military leader.*
[b] *39* Also known as *Ish-Bosheth* [c] *40* Also known as *Mephibosheth* [d] *41* Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint and 8:35); Hebrew does not have *and Ahaz.* [e] *42* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 8:36); most Hebrew manuscripts *Jarah, Jarah*

What Were the Terraces? (1Ch 11:8)

David's building of the terraces, sometimes called the Millo, was considered by the biblical writers to be one of this king's major accomplishments. Likewise his son Solomon was known for significant building activities, including the temple, Solomon's palace, the wall of Jerusalem, the rebuilding of the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer, as well as the terraces (1Ki 9:15). The building of the terraces was certainly seen as a major building feat. Unfortunately, the biblical writers never describe what the terraces were.

The terraces are first associated with David; therefore, we can assume that the terraces were located in the City of David (1Ch 11:8). The later account of the terraces' rebuilding by King Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.) specifies this location (2Ch 32:5). Whatever the terraces were, they appear to have been a major construction project.

Archaeological excavations in the City of David discovered terraces built on its steep eastern slope. These terraces served as retaining walls for the buildings constructed above. This innovative support structure was probably what Jerusalemites knew as "the terraces."

A fortification or citadel near Jerusalem, the Millo may have been a solid tower full of earth or a bastion strenghtening a weak point in the wall.

military campaigns. And the LORD your God said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"

3When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, he made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel, as the LORD had promised through Samuel.

David Conquers Jerusalem

4David and all the Israelites marched to Jerusalem (that is, Jebus). The Jebusites who lived there 5said to David, "You will not get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.

6David had said, "Whoever leads the attack on the Jebusites will become commander-in-chief." Joab son of Zeruiah went up first, and so he received the command.

7David then took up residence in the fortress, and so it was called the City of David. 8He built up the city around it, from the terraces[a] to the surrounding wall, while Joab restored the rest of the city. 9And David became more and more powerful, because the LORD Almighty was with him.

David's Mighty Warriors

10These were the chiefs of David's mighty warriors—they, together with all Israel, gave his kingship strong support to extend it over the whole land, as the LORD had promised—11this is the list of David's mighty warriors:

Jashobeam,[b] a Hakmonite, was chief of the officers[c]; he raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed in one encounter.

12Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite, one of the three mighty warriors. 13He was with David at Pas Dammim when the Philistines gathered there for battle. At a place where there was a field full of barley, the troops fled from the Philistines. 14But they took their stand in the middle of the field. They defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the LORD brought about a great victory.

15Three of the thirty chiefs came down to David to the rock at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 16At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. 17David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!"

Arts & Literature

In the ancient world, the proper disposition of the bodies of the dead was of extreme importance (1Ch 10:11, 12). In the Greek tragedy *Antigone,* the lead character, Antigone, decides against the law of the state that she must provide a decent burial for her brother. She makes this choice of divine law over human law, even though she knows that the penalty for doing what is right is death.

[a] *8* Or *the Millo* [b] *11* Possibly a variant of *Jashob-Baal*
[c] *11* Or *Thirty*; some Septuagint manuscripts *Three* (see also 2 Samuel 23:8)

18 So the Three broke through the Philistine
lines, drew water from the well near the gate of
Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he
refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out to
the LORD. 19 "God forbid that I should do this!"
he said. "Should I drink the blood of these men
who went at the risk of their lives?" Because
they risked their lives to bring it back, David
would not drink it.

Such were the exploits of the three mighty
warriors.

20 Abishai the brother of Joab was chief of
the Three. He raised his spear against three
hundred men, whom he killed, and so he be-
came as famous as the Three. 21 He was dou-
bly honored above the Three and became their
commander, even though he was not included
among them.

22 Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant fighter
from Kabzeel, performed great exploits. He
struck down Moab's two mightiest warriors.
He also went down into a pit on a snowy day
and killed a lion. 23 And he struck down an
Egyptian who was five cubits[a] tall. Although
the Egyptian had a spear like a weaver's rod in
his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club.
He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's
hand and killed him with his own spear. 24 Such
were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada;
he too was as famous as the three mighty war-
riors. 25 He was held in greater honor than any
of the Thirty, but he was not included among
the Three. And David put him in charge of his
bodyguard.

26 The mighty warriors were:
Asahel the brother of Joab,
Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem,
27 Shammoth the Harorite,
Helez the Pelonite,
28 Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa,
Abiezer from Anathoth,
29 Sibbekai the Hushathite,
Ilai the Ahohite,
30 Maharai the Netophathite,
Heled son of Baanah the Netophathite,
31 Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah in Benja-
min,
Benaiah the Pirathonite,
32 Hurai from the ravines of Gaash,
Abiel the Arbathite,
33 Azmaveth the Baharumite,
Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
34 the sons of Hashem the Gizonite,
Jonathan son of Shagee the Hararite,
35 Ahiam son of Sakar the Hararite,
Eliphal son of Ur,
36 Hepher the Mekerathite,
Ahijah the Pelonite,
37 Hezro the Carmelite,
Naarai son of Ezbai,
38 Joel the brother of Nathan,
Mibhar son of Hagri,
39 Zelek the Ammonite,
Naharai the Berothite, the armor-bearer
of Joab son of Zeruiah,
40 Ira the Ithrite,
Gareb the Ithrite,
41 Uriah the Hittite,
Zabad son of Ahlai,
42 Adina son of Shiza the Reubenite, who
was chief of the Reubenites, and the thir-
ty with him,
43 Hanan son of Maakah,
Joshaphat the Mithnite,
44 Uzzia the Ashterathite,
Shama and Jeiel the sons of Hotham the
Aroerite,
45 Jediael son of Shimri,
his brother Joha the Tizite,
46 Eliel the Mahavite,
Jeribai and Joshaviah the sons of Elna-
am,
Ithmah the Moabite,
47 Eliel, Obed and Jaasiel the Mezobaite.

[a] *23* That is, about 7 feet 6 inches or about 2.3 meters

TRANSITION

David the Fugitive

Chronicles makes no mention of Saul's opposition to David's rise to kingship (see "Priestly Account: Saul and David" at 1Ch 10:1). But in 1Ch 12, in material not found in the prophetic account, the Chronicler does describe the days before David was king when he was pursued by Saul in the wilderness. During this time David had established his stronghold and military headquarters at Ziklag in the extreme south of Judah (12:1, 8, 16).

The Chronicler's account emphasizes the support that gathered around David. Even some of Saul's own kinsmen from the tribe of Benjamin came to David's aid (12:2). Even men from two of the northern tribes, Gad (12:8–15) and Manasseh (12:19–22), came. This description of David's fugitive days shows that the support he had then had culminated in the joy and celebration now surrounding his coronation as king of all Israel. All the mighty warriors and all Israelites now came to Hebron "to turn Saul's kingdom over" to David (12:23–40).

• 1 Chronicles 12:1—15:29

1 Chronicles

Warriors Join David

12 :1 These were the men who came to David at Ziklag, while he was banished from the presence of Saul son of Kish (they were among the warriors who helped him in battle; [2]they were armed with bows and were able to shoot arrows or to sling stones right-handed or left-handed; they were relatives of Saul from the tribe of Benjamin):

[3]Ahiezer their chief and Joash the sons of Shemaah the Gibeathite; Jeziel and Pelet the sons of Azmaveth; Berakah, Jehu the Anathothite, [4]and Ishmaiah the Gibeonite, a mighty warrior among the Thirty, who was a leader of the Thirty; Jeremiah, Jahaziel, Johanan, Jozabad the Gederathite,[a] [5]Eluzai, Jerimoth, Bealiah, Shemariah and Shephatiah the Haruphite; [6]Elkanah, Ishiah, Azarel, Joezer and Jashobeam the Korahites; [7]and Joelah and Zebadiah the sons of Jeroham from Gedor.

[8]Some Gadites defected to David at his stronghold in the wilderness. They were brave warriors, ready for battle and able to handle the shield and spear. Their faces were the faces of lions, and they were as swift as gazelles in the mountains.

[9]Ezer was the chief,
Obadiah the second in command, Eliab the third,
[10]Mishmannah the fourth, Jeremiah the fifth,
[11]Attai the sixth, Eliel the seventh,
[12]Johanan the eighth, Elzabad the ninth,
[13]Jeremiah the tenth and Makbannai the eleventh.

[14]These Gadites were army commanders; the least was a match for a hundred, and the greatest for a thousand. [15]It was they who crossed the Jordan in the first month when it was overflowing all its banks, and they put to flight everyone living in the valleys, to the east and to the west.

[16]Other Benjamites and some men from Judah also came to David in his stronghold. [17]David went out to meet them and said to them, "If you have come to me in peace to help me, I am ready for you to join me. But if you have come to betray me to my enemies when my hands are free from violence, may the God of our ancestors see it and judge you."

[18]Then the Spirit came on Amasai, chief of the Thirty, and he said:

"We are yours, David!
We are with you, son of Jesse!
Success, success to you,
and success to those who help you,
for your God will help you."

So David received them and made them leaders of his raiding bands.

[19]Some of the tribe of Manasseh defected to David when he went with the Philistines to fight against Saul. (He and his men did not help the Philistines because, after consultation, their rulers sent him away. They said, "It will cost us our heads if he deserts to his master Saul.") [20]When David went to Ziklag, these were the men of Manasseh who defected to him: Adnah, Jozabad, Jediael, Michael, Jozabad, Elihu and Zillethai, leaders of units of a thousand in Manasseh. [21]They helped David against raiding bands, for all of them were brave warriors, and they were commanders in his army. [22]Day after day men came to help David, until he had a great army, like the army of God.[b]

Others Join David at Hebron

[23]These are the numbers of the men armed for battle who came to David at Hebron to turn Saul's kingdom over to him, as the LORD had said:

[24]from Judah, carrying shield and spear—6,800 armed for battle;
[25]from Simeon, warriors ready for battle—7,100;
[26]from Levi—4,600, [27]including Jehoiada, leader of the family of Aaron, with 3,700 men, [28]and Zadok, a brave young warrior, with 22 officers from his family;
[29]from Benjamin, Saul's tribe—3,000, most of whom had remained loyal to Saul's house until then;

TIME CAPSULE		1100 to 1076 B.C.
1100		Wen-amon sails on official mission to Byblos to purchase lumber
1098		Rebellion in Upper Egypt against the high priest of Amon
1086		Ussher's date for the birth of David
1076		Assyria's power declines after death of Tiglath-Pileser I
1076		Wen-amon reports that high priest of Amon controls southern Egypt

[a] *4* In Hebrew texts the second half of this verse (*Jeremiah . . . Gederathite*) is numbered 12:5, and 12:5-40 is numbered 12:6-41. [b] *22* Or *a great and mighty army*

30 from Ephraim, brave warriors, famous in
their own clans—20,800;
31 from half the tribe of Manasseh, designat-
ed by name to come and make David
king—18,000;
32 from Issachar, men who understood the
times and knew what Israel should do—
200 chiefs, with all their relatives under
their command;
33 from Zebulun, experienced soldiers pre-
pared for battle with every type of
weapon, to help David with undivided
loyalty—50,000;
34 from Naphtali—1,000 officers, together
with 37,000 men carrying shields and
spears;
35 from Dan, ready for battle—28,600;
36 from Asher, experienced soldiers prepared
for battle—40,000;
37 and from east of the Jordan, from Reuben,
Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh,
armed with every type of weapon—
120,000.

38 All these were fighting men who volun-
teered to serve in the ranks. They came to He-
bron fully determined to make David king over
all Israel. All the rest of the Israelites were also
of one mind to make David king. 39 The men
spent three days there with David, eating and
drinking, for their families had supplied pro-
visions for them. 40 Also, their neighbors from
as far away as Issachar, Zebulun and Naphtali
came bringing food on donkeys, camels, mules
and oxen. There were plentiful supplies of flour,
fig cakes, raisin cakes, wine, olive oil, cattle and
sheep, for there was joy in Israel.

Bringing Back the Ark

13 1 David conferred with each of his offi-
cers, the commanders of thousands and
commanders of hundreds. 2 He then said to the
whole assembly of Israel, "If it seems good to
you and if it is the will of the LORD our God, let
us send word far and wide to the rest of our peo-
ple throughout the territories of Israel, and also
to the priests and Levites who are with them in
their towns and pasturelands, to come and join
us. 3 Let us bring the ark of our God back to us,
for we did not inquire of[a] it[b] during the reign of
Saul." 4 The whole assembly agreed to do this,
because it seemed right to all the people.

5 So David assembled all Israel, from the Shi-
hor River in Egypt to Lebo Hamath, to bring
the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim. 6 David and
all Israel went to Baalah of Judah (Kiriath Je-
arim) to bring up from there the ark of God
the LORD, who is enthroned between the cher-
ubim—the ark that is called by the Name.

7 They moved the ark of God from Abinadab's
house on a new cart, with Uzzah and Ahio guid-
ing it. 8 David and all the Israelites were cele-
brating with all their might before God, with
songs and with harps, lyres, timbrels, cymbals
and trumpets.

9 When they came to the threshing floor of
Kidon, Uzzah reached out his hand to steady
the ark, because the oxen stumbled. 10 The
LORD's anger burned against Uzzah, and he
struck him down because he had put his hand
on the ark. So he died there before God.

11 Then David was angry because the LORD's
wrath had broken out against Uzzah, and to
this day that place is called Perez Uzzah.[c]

12 David was afraid of God that day and asked,
"How can I ever bring the ark of God to me?"
13 He did not take the ark to be with him in the
City of David. Instead, he took it to the house
of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 14 The ark of God re-
mained with the family of Obed-Edom in his
house for three months, and the LORD blessed
his household and everything he had.

David's House and Family

14 1 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messen-
gers to David, along with cedar logs,
stonemasons and carpenters to build a palace
for him. 2 And David knew that the LORD had
established him as king over Israel and that his
kingdom had been highly exalted for the sake
of his people Israel.

3 In Jerusalem David took more wives and be-
came the father of more sons and daughters.
4 These are the names of the children born to
him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solo-
mon, 5 Ibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, 6 Nogah, Nepheg,
Japhia, 7 Elishama, Beeliada[d] and Eliphelet.

David Defeats the Philistines

8 When the Philistines heard that David had
been anointed king over all Israel, they went up
in full force to search for him, but David heard

Arts & Literature
The ancient world had wind, percussion, and stringed instruments. The main instruments of the Israelites seem to have been small harps and percussion instruments, not including drums (1Ch 13:8). The percussion instruments include the metal rattle called a sistrum that was a favorite in Egypt. The titles of the psalms probably include some names of musical tunes.

[a] *3* Or *we neglected* [b] *3* Or *him* [c] *11* *Perez Uzzah* means *outbreak against Uzzah.* [d] *7* A variant of *Eliada*

Pelesets, Philistines, and Palestine (1Ch 14:8)

The name "Sea Peoples" was coined by the Egyptians to denote groups of people that migrated to Canaan beginning at the end of the 13th century B.C. They came to the Near East in two major waves, traveling along the coast via Asia Minor and Canaan before reaching Egypt.

At the mortuary temple of Ramesses III, Medinet Habu, graphic pictures of the Sea Peoples were incised in the temple walls. These pictures provide an Egyptian view of what the Sea Peoples looked like, the kind of ships they used, their weapons, and how they dressed. The text that goes with the pictures even records the names of the individual subgroups. Although most of the names are unfamiliar, like the Denyen, Thekel, Shekelesh, Sherden, and Weshesh, one group—the Pelesets—are known in the Bible as "the Philistines" (1Ch 14:8).

Ramesses III also described how the Sea Peoples devastated the nations that were in their path. Nations like the Hittites and major cities like Ugarit collapsed after the Sea Peoples passed their way. The Sea Peoples' manner of travel was by ship and on foot. Those who sailed along the coast were supported by those who followed along coastal roads. Some of the Sea Peoples seem to have settled newly conquered territory as others pressed on toward Egypt.

According to Ramesses III, in Egypt they met their match. He stopped their advance, then settled them on the coast of Canaan. Why the Sea Peoples began their epic migration is not known. It has been suggested that famine in their homelands or the force of other peoples made them begin their trek. Whatever the cause, one of their groups, the Pelesets (Philistines), so dominated the history of the coastal regions of Canaan that their name became the name of the region—Palestine.

about it and went out to meet them. 9Now the Philistines had come and raided the Valley of Rephaim; 10so David inquired of God: "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?"

The LORD answered him, "Go, I will deliver them into your hands."

11So David and his men went up to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, "As waters break out, God has broken out against my enemies by my hand." So that place was called Baal Perazim.[a] 12The Philistines had abandoned their gods there, and David gave orders to burn them in the fire.

13Once more the Philistines raided the valley; 14so David inquired of God again, and God answered him, "Do not go directly after them, but circle around them and attack them in front of the poplar trees. 15As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the poplar trees, move out to battle, because that will mean God has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army." 16So David did as God commanded him, and they struck down the Philistine army, all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.

17So David's fame spread throughout every land, and the LORD made all the nations fear him.

The Ark Brought to Jerusalem

15 1After David had constructed buildings for himself in the City of David, he prepared a place for the ark of God and pitched a tent for it. 2Then David said, "No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the LORD chose them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister before him forever."

3David assembled all Israel in Jerusalem to bring up the ark of the LORD to the place he had prepared for it. 4He called together the descendants of Aaron and the Levites:

5From the descendants of Kohath,
Uriel the leader and 120 relatives;
6from the descendants of Merari,
Asaiah the leader and 220 relatives;
7from the descendants of Gershon,[b]
Joel the leader and 130 relatives;
8from the descendants of Elizaphan,
Shemaiah the leader and 200 relatives;
9from the descendants of Hebron,
Eliel the leader and 80 relatives;
10from the descendants of Uzziel,
Amminadab the leader and 112 relatives.

11Then David summoned Zadok and Abiathar the priests, and Uriel, Asaiah, Joel, Shemaiah, Eliel and Amminadab the Levites. 12He said to them, "You are the heads of the Levitical families; you and your fellow Levites are to consecrate yourselves and bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel, to the place I have prepared for it. 13It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the LORD our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way." 14So the priests and Levites consecrated themselves in order to bring up the ark of the LORD, the God of Israel. 15And the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the LORD.

16David told the leaders of the Levites to

[a] *11 Baal Perazim* means *the lord who breaks out.*
[b] *7* Hebrew *Gershom,* a variant of *Gershon*

appoint their fellow Levites as musicians to make a joyful sound with musical instruments: lyres, harps and cymbals.

17So the Levites appointed Heman son of Joel; from his relatives, Asaph son of Berekiah; and from their relatives the Merarites, Ethan son of Kushaiah; 18and with them their relatives next in rank: Zechariah,[a] Jaaziel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel,[b] the gatekeepers.

19The musicians Heman, Asaph and Ethan were to sound the bronze cymbals; 20Zechariah, Jaaziel,[c] Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Unni, Eliab, Maaseiah and Benaiah were to play the lyres according to *alamoth,*[d] 21and Mattithiah, Eliphelehu, Mikneiah, Obed-Edom, Jeiel and Azaziah were to play the harps, directing according to *sheminith.*[d] 22Kenaniah the head Levite was in charge of the singing; that was his responsibility because he was skillful at it.

23Berekiah and Elkanah were to be doorkeepers for the ark. 24Shebaniah, Joshaphat, Nethanel, Amasai, Zechariah, Benaiah and Eliezer the priests were to blow trumpets before the ark of God. Obed-Edom and Jehiah were also to be doorkeepers for the ark.

25So David and the elders of Israel and the commanders of units of a thousand went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from the house of Obed-Edom, with rejoicing. 26Because God had helped the Levites who were carrying the ark of the covenant of the LORD, seven bulls and seven rams were sacrificed. 27Now David was clothed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and as were the musicians, and Kenaniah, who was in charge of the singing of the choirs. David also wore a linen ephod. 28So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouts, with the sounding of rams' horns and trumpets, and of cymbals, and the playing of lyres and harps.

29As the ark of the covenant of the LORD was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David dancing and celebrating, she despised him in her heart.

Politics & Government

David was clothed in a robe of fine linen as he danced to music during the procession of the ark into Jerusalem (1Ch 15:27–29). The reaction of Michal (2Sa 6:20) may suggest that he discarded the robe during the dancing. By participating in the dance and procession, David possibly demonstrated to the people his authority to rule before Yahweh his God.

TRANSITION

The Book of Psalms

The psalms, almost without exception, are difficult to tie to a specific historical context. They are the worship songs of Israel and are intended to apply to the needs of all worshipers across time. Some psalms do have historical superscriptions that make it possible to associate them with specific events, but these make up only about 10 percent of all the psalms.

The rest of the psalms must follow some other criteria by which to read them within the history of Israel. One criterion is to place the psalms ascribed to David (or Solomon or Moses) during the life of that person (see "Teach Us to Number Our Days" at Ps. 90). A second criterion is to place psalms according to their type.

While there are various classifications of psalm types, two prominent types are hymns and laments. Hymns are songs of praise to God, and laments are appeals for God's help in times of trouble. In the Bible, the psalms are arranged in five distinct books (perhaps to parallel the five books of the Pentateuch). In general, the movement through the five books progresses from lament (in the early books) to praise (in the fifth book).

There was joy and shouting and music as David and Israel moved the ark to Jerusalem (1Ch 15:25–28). Such a setting favors the reading of psalms that are hymns of praise, and which are ascribed to David. Several psalms (Ps 8; 19; 29; 32; 65; 68; 103; 108; 138) are appropriate for the context of David's joyous entry into Jerusalem before the ark. A psalm of thanksgiving, such as Ps 32, expresses gratitude to God for deliverance. The joy that accompanies God's deliverance could also reflect the joy of the ark event.

- **Psalms 8; 19; 29; 32; 65; 68; 103; 108; 138**

PSALM 8[e]

For the director of music. According to gittith.[f] *A psalm of David.*

LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

You have set your glory
in the heavens.

[a] *18* Three Hebrew manuscripts and most Septuagint manuscripts (see also verse 20 and 16:5); most Hebrew manuscripts *Zechariah son and* or *Zechariah, Ben and*
[b] *18* Hebrew; Septuagint (see also verse 21) *Jeiel and Azaziah*
[c] *20* See verse 18; Hebrew *Aziel*, a variant of *Jaaziel.*
[d] *20,21* Probably a musical term
[e] In Hebrew texts 8:1-9 is numbered 8:2-10.
[f] Title: Probably a musical term

2 Through the praise of children and infants
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,
to silence the foe and the avenger.
3 When I consider your heavens,
the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars,
which you have set in place,
4 what is mankind that you are mindful of them,
human beings that you care for them?[a]

5 You have made them[b] a little lower than the angels[c]
and crowned them[b] with glory and honor.
6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands;
you put everything under their[d] feet:
7 all flocks and herds,
and the animals of the wild,
8 the birds in the sky,
and the fish in the sea,
all that swim the paths of the seas.

9 LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

PSALM 19[e]

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

The heavens declare the glory of God;
the skies proclaim the work of his hands.
2 Day after day they pour forth speech;
night after night they reveal knowledge.
3 They have no speech, they use no words;
no sound is heard from them.
4 Yet their voice[f] goes out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world.
In the heavens God has pitched a tent for the sun.
5 It is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
like a champion rejoicing to run his course.
6 It rises at one end of the heavens
and makes its circuit to the other;
nothing is deprived of its warmth.

7 The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.
The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.
8 The precepts of the LORD are right,
giving joy to the heart.
The commands of the LORD are radiant,
giving light to the eyes.
9 The fear of the LORD is pure,
enduring forever.
The decrees of the LORD are firm,
and all of them are righteous.

10 They are more precious than gold,
than much pure gold;
they are sweeter than honey,
than honey from the honeycomb.
11 By them your servant is warned;
in keeping them there is great reward.
12 But who can discern their own errors?
Forgive my hidden faults.
13 Keep your servant also from willful sins;
may they not rule over me.
Then I will be blameless,
innocent of great transgression.

14 May these words of my mouth and this meditation of my heart
be pleasing in your sight,
LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

PSALM 29

A psalm of David.

Ascribe to the LORD, you heavenly beings,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
2 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his[g] holiness.

3 The voice of the LORD is over the waters;
the God of glory thunders,
the LORD thunders over the mighty waters.
4 The voice of the LORD is powerful;
the voice of the LORD is majestic.
5 The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars;
the LORD breaks in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
6 He makes Lebanon leap like a calf,
Sirion[h] like a young wild ox.

Religion & Worship
The sun illustrates God's energy and power, and it is linked with a bridegroom as representing natural life in its bloom (Ps 19:4, 5). Some ancient peoples worshiped the sun. The Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaten (1352–1336 B.C.) tried to make the sun god the only deity in Egypt's state religion, but his successors reversed his innovation as soon as he died.

[a] *4* Or *what is a human being that you are mindful of him, / a son of man that you care for him?* [b] *5* Or *him* [c] *5* Or *than God* [d] *6* Or *made him ruler . . . ; / . . . his* [e] In Hebrew texts 19:1-14 is numbered 19:2-15. [f] *4* Septuagint, Jerome and Syriac; Hebrew *measuring line* [g] *2* Or *LORD with the splendor of* [h] *6* That is, Mount Hermon

Storm God Imagery (Ps 29:3–9)

Hymns offering praise for deities in the ancient Near East often used common language, even though the hymns praised different gods. For example, Ps 29 glorifies Yahweh as a storm god, using language very similar to the descriptions in the Ugaritic texts of the Canaanite and Phoenician god Baal.

Phrases like "voice of the LORD" (29:5) and "voice of Baal" are common Semitic language. They refer to thunder as the sound of a god's speech, whether that deity was a storm god or not. The thunder or voice announced both the power and the presence of the deity. All of nature and of humanity was affected by the sound and reverberation of the approaching god.

Place names in Ps 29 describe a geography north of Israel. "Lebanon" and "Sirion" (29:6) are mountain ranges of Phoenicia. The "mighty waters" (29:3) appear to picture the Mediterranean Sea. The "Desert of Kadesh" (29:8) possibly refers to the Kadesh on the Orontes River in Syria. A hymn composed for a Phoenician deity, such as Baal, would most likely refer to these same places. Possibly Ps 29 adapts Phoenician language, describing a storm passing eastward from the waters of the Mediterranean, across Lebanon, and over the land through the wilderness.

7 The voice of the LORD strikes
with flashes of lightning.
8 The voice of the LORD shakes the desert;
the LORD shakes the Desert of Kadesh.
9 The voice of the LORD twists the oaks[a]
and strips the forests bare.
And in his temple all cry, "Glory!"

10 The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;
the LORD is enthroned as King forever.
11 The LORD gives strength to his people;
the LORD blesses his people with peace.

PSALM 32

Of David. A maskil.[b]

Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
2 Blessed is the one
whose sin the LORD does not count
against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit.

3 When I kept silent,
my bones wasted away
through my groaning all day long.
4 For day and night
your hand was heavy on me;
my strength was sapped
as in the heat of summer.[c]

5 Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the LORD."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

6 Therefore let all the faithful pray to you
while you may be found;
surely the rising of the mighty waters
will not reach them.
7 You are my hiding place;
you will protect me from trouble
and surround me with songs of deliverance.

8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way
you should go;
I will counsel you with my loving eye on
you.
9 Do not be like the horse or the mule,
which have no understanding
but must be controlled by bit and bridle
or they will not come to you.
10 Many are the woes of the wicked,
but the LORD's unfailing love
surrounds the one who trusts in him.

11 Rejoice in the LORD and be glad, you
righteous;
sing, all you who are upright in heart!

PSALM 65[d]

For the director of music. A psalm of David. A song.

Praise awaits[e] you, our God, in Zion;
to you our vows will be fulfilled.
2 You who answer prayer,
to you all people will come.

[a] 9 Or *LORD makes the deer give birth* [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] 4 The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 5 and 7. [d] In Hebrew texts 65:1-13 is numbered 65:2-14. [e] 1 Or *befits*; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

King of the Universe (Ps 29:10, 11)

The last two verses of Ps 29 are a classic ending for hymns in the ancient world. They define Yahweh as the God who rules above all other gods. Cultures that believed in pantheons of many gods commonly honored one deity as the ruler of all the others. While the official religion of Israel considered Yahweh to be the only God, hymns could reflect Yahweh's power over the gods of popular religion.

The heavenly throne room is pictured much like the throne room of a human ruler. The king sat upon a throne raised above all others in the reception hall. Similarly, the psalmist describes Yahweh as King, sitting above "the flood" forever (29:10). For ancient people the Flood meant the waters of chaos which still surround the created order. The waters of chaos were terrifying; they were the waters unleashed in the Flood. But as long as God reigns, he keeps them in check.

The power which is described in Ps 29 as belonging to Yahweh is also given to God's people (29:11). Just as rulers empower people who live under their rule, so the Israelites, God's chosen people, are promised the strength of Yahweh. The psalm ends with a sense of order, kept for the benefit of Israel.

3 When we were overwhelmed by sins,
you forgave[a] our transgressions.
4 Blessed are those you choose
and bring near to live in your courts!
We are filled with the good things of your house,
of your holy temple.

5 You answer us with awesome and righteous deeds,
God our Savior,
the hope of all the ends of the earth
and of the farthest seas,
6 who formed the mountains by your power,
having armed yourself with strength,
7 who stilled the roaring of the seas,
the roaring of their waves,
and the turmoil of the nations.
8 The whole earth is filled with awe at your wonders;
where morning dawns, where evening fades,
you call forth songs of joy.

9 You care for the land and water it;
you enrich it abundantly.
The streams of God are filled with water
to provide the people with grain,
for so you have ordained it.[b]
10 You drench its furrows and level its ridges;
you soften it with showers and bless its crops.
11 You crown the year with your bounty,
and your carts overflow with abundance.
12 The grasslands of the wilderness overflow;
the hills are clothed with gladness.
13 The meadows are covered with flocks
and the valleys are mantled with grain;
they shout for joy and sing.

[a] 3 Or *made atonement for* [b] 9 Or *for that is how you prepare the land* [c] In Hebrew texts 68:1-35 is numbered 68:2-36. [d] 4 Or *name, / prepare the way for him who rides through the deserts* [e] 6 Or *the desolate in a homeland* [f] 7 The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 19 and 32.

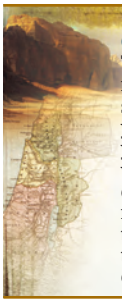
PSALM 68[c]

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm. A song.

May God arise, may his enemies be scattered;
may his foes flee before him.
2 May you blow them away like smoke—
as wax melts before the fire,
may the wicked perish before God.
3 But may the righteous be glad
and rejoice before God;
may they be happy and joyful.

4 Sing to God, sing in praise of his name,
extol him who rides on the clouds[d];
rejoice before him—his name is the LORD.
5 A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows,
is God in his holy dwelling.
6 God sets the lonely in families,[e]
he leads out the prisoners with singing;
but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.

7 When you, God, went out before your people,
when you marched through the wilderness,[f]



Geography & Environment

The seasons of Palestine are more accurately called wet and dry than winter and summer. There are two rainy seasons each year. However, the variation of rain from year to year is great, and the population was continually reminded of their dependence on the heavens (Ps 65:9). With no refrigeration and little distant transportation of food, the products of the earth and the cycles of gardening were known to everyone.

KINGDOMS OF SYRIA AND PALESTINE

Syria refers to the region north of Palestine, which was associated with the city-state of Damascus. In ancient times Syria was known as Aram. Since Syria and Palestine rarely knew political unity, various kingdoms inhabited these regions.

Kingdom	Approximate Period	Important Rulers
Ebla	2400–2250 B.C.	Igris-Halam, Irkab-Damu
Alalakh	1800–1400 B.C.	Yamhad, Yarim-Lim, Idrimi
Ugarit	1400–1180 B.C.	Niqmaddu II
Sea Peoples	1200–1050 B.C.	Seafaring peoples including the Philistines
Aram-Damascus	1050–732 B.C.	Rezon, Hadadezer (Ben-Hadad), Hazael
Phoenicia	1050–340 B.C.	Hiram I, Ethbaal I
United Israel	1050 (or 1020)–930 B.C.	Saul, David, Solomon
Israel	930–722 B.C.	Jeroboam I, Ahab, Jehu
Judah	930–586 B.C.	Rehoboam, Hezekiah, Josiah

8 the earth shook, the heavens poured down
rain,
before God, the One of Sinai,
before God, the God of Israel.
9 You gave abundant showers, O God;
you refreshed your weary inheritance.
10 Your people settled in it,
and from your bounty, God, you provided
for the poor.

11 The Lord announces the word,
and the women who proclaim it are a
mighty throng:
12 "Kings and armies flee in haste;
the women at home divide the
plunder.
13 Even while you sleep among the sheep
pens,[a]
the wings of my dove are sheathed with
silver,
its feathers with shining gold."
14 When the Almighty[b] scattered the kings in
the land,
it was like snow fallen on Mount
Zalmon.

15 Mount Bashan, majestic mountain,
Mount Bashan, rugged mountain,

Geography & Environment
Zalmon is evidently a mountain in Bashan, but is not positively identified (Ps 68:14). Bashan was east of the Sea of Galilee and reached as far as Mount Hermon, the highest mountain in Palestine. Usually there is snow on Mount Hermon, and its beauty is proverbial. The very striking poetic imagery of Ps. 68 sometimes presents difficulties for interpretation.

16 why gaze in envy, you rugged mountain,
at the mountain where God chooses to
reign,
where the LORD himself will dwell
forever?
17 The chariots of God are tens of
thousands
and thousands of thousands;
the Lord has come from Sinai into his
sanctuary.[c]
18 When you ascended on high,
you took many captives;
you received gifts from people,
even from[d] the rebellious—
that you,[e] LORD God, might dwell
there.

19 Praise be to the Lord, to God our Savior,
who daily bears our burdens.
20 Our God is a God who saves;
from the Sovereign LORD comes escape
from death.
21 Surely God will crush the heads of his
enemies,
the hairy crowns of those who go on in
their sins.
22 The Lord says, "I will bring them from
Bashan;
I will bring them from the depths of the
sea,
23 that your feet may wade in the blood of your
foes,
while the tongues of your dogs have their
share."

[a] *13* Or *the campfires;* or *the saddlebags* [b] *14* Hebrew *Shaddai* [c] *17* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text *Lord is among them at Sinai in holiness* [d] *18* Or *gifts for people, / even* [e] *18* Or *they*

24 Your procession, God, has come into view,
the procession of my God and King into the sanctuary.
25 In front are the singers, after them the musicians;
with them are the young women playing the timbrels.
26 Praise God in the great congregation;
praise the LORD in the assembly of Israel.
27 There is the little tribe of Benjamin, leading them,
there the great throng of Judah's princes,
and there the princes of Zebulun and of Naphtali.

28 Summon your power, God[a];
show us your strength, our God, as you have done before.
29 Because of your temple at Jerusalem
kings will bring you gifts.
30 Rebuke the beast among the reeds,
the herd of bulls among the calves of the nations.
Humbled, may the beast bring bars of silver.
Scatter the nations who delight in war.
31 Envoys will come from Egypt;
Cush[b] will submit herself to God.

32 Sing to God, you kingdoms of the earth,
sing praise to the Lord,
33 to him who rides across the highest heavens, the ancient heavens,
who thunders with mighty voice.
34 Proclaim the power of God,
whose majesty is over Israel,
whose power is in the heavens.
35 You, God, are awesome in your sanctuary;
the God of Israel gives power and strength to his people.

Praise be to God!

[a] *28* Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *Your God has summoned power for you*
[b] *31* That is, the upper Nile region

PSALM 103

Of David.

Praise the LORD, my soul;
all my inmost being, praise his holy name.
2 Praise the LORD, my soul,
and forget not all his benefits—
3 who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases,
4 who redeems your life from the pit
and crowns you with love and compassion,
5 who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The LORD works righteousness
and justice for all the oppressed.

7 He made known his ways to Moses,
his deeds to the people of Israel:
8 The LORD is compassionate and gracious,
slow to anger, abounding in love.
9 He will not always accuse,
nor will he harbor his anger forever;
10 he does not treat us as our sins deserve
or repay us according to our iniquities.

When God Is Angry (Ps 103:8, 9)

Stilling the gods' anger is a common theme in ancient Near Eastern literature. An Accadian epic text from at least the 8th century B.C. in Mesopotamia is *The Epic of Erra,* a narrative poem about the chief deity Marduk; his protagonist, the god Erra; and Erra's advisor, the god Ishum. The anger displayed by Erra can be contrasted with the anger that characterizes Yahweh in the Old Testament.

At one point in the Accadian poem, Erra becomes enraged and decides to ravage countries and their populations. Ishum pacifies him and a remnant escapes. Erra recognizes his blunder in attacking the divine leadership of Marduk and his subjects—humankind. Thus, Erra praises Ishum for his rational calm in the face of Erra's great rage.

Although this text shares a common literary theme with the Bible, the incipient polytheism of the text betrays a marked difference from the monotheism of Israel. The anger of various ancient Near Eastern deities had to be restrained, usually by other deities who intervened on behalf of humans. In contrast, Israel understood that there were no other gods who could intervene when Yahweh was angry. Yet Yahweh restrains his own anger. The psalmist declares that Yahweh is "slow to anger" and will not "harbor his anger forever" (Ps 103:8, 9).

Ancient Near Eastern gods often became angry for petty reasons. The god Erra makes mistakes and allows his anger to get the best of him. The God of Israel neither makes a mistake nor becomes so infuriated that he loses control. Anger is not a basic part of Yahweh's personality; rather, He is "compassionate and gracious" (Ps 103:8).

11 For as high as the heavens are above the
earth,
so great is his love for those who fear him;
12 as far as the east is from the west,
so far has he removed our transgressions
from us.

13 As a father has compassion on his children,
so the LORD has compassion on those
who fear him;
14 for he knows how we are formed,
he remembers that we are dust.
15 The life of mortals is like grass,
they flourish like a flower of the field;
16 the wind blows over it and it is gone,
and its place remembers it no more.
17 But from everlasting to everlasting
the LORD's love is with those who fear
him,
and his righteousness with their
children's children—
18 with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.

19 The LORD has established his throne in
heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.

20 Praise the LORD, you his angels,
you mighty ones who do his bidding,
who obey his word.
21 Praise the LORD, all his heavenly hosts,
you his servants who do his will.
22 Praise the LORD, all his works
everywhere in his dominion.

Praise the LORD, my soul.

PSALM 108[a]

A song. A psalm of David.

My heart, O God, is steadfast;
I will sing and make music with all my
soul.
2 Awake, harp and lyre!
I will awaken the dawn.
3 I will praise you, LORD, among the nations;
I will sing of you among the peoples.
4 For great is your love, higher than the
heavens;
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.
5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;
let your glory be over all the earth.

6 Save us and help us with your right hand,
that those you love may be delivered.
7 God has spoken from his sanctuary:
"In triumph I will parcel out Shechem
and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth.
8 Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim is my helmet,
Judah is my scepter.
9 Moab is my washbasin,
on Edom I toss my sandal;
over Philistia I shout in triumph."

10 Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
11 Is it not you, God, you who have rejected us
and no longer go out with our armies?
12 Give us aid against the enemy,
for human help is worthless.
13 With God we will gain the victory,
and he will trample down our enemies.

PSALM 138

Of David.

I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart;
before the "gods" I will sing your praise.
2 I will bow down toward your holy temple
and will praise your name
for your unfailing love and your
faithfulness,
for you have so exalted your solemn decree
that it surpasses your fame.
3 When I called, you answered me;
you greatly emboldened me.

4 May all the kings of the earth praise you,
LORD,
when they hear what you have decreed.
5 May they sing of the ways of the LORD,
for the glory of the LORD is great.

6 Though the LORD is exalted, he looks kindly
on the lowly;
though lofty, he sees them from afar.
7 Though I walk in the midst of trouble,
you preserve my life.
You stretch out your hand against the anger
of my foes;
with your right hand you save me.
8 The LORD will vindicate me;
your love, LORD, endures forever—
do not abandon the works of your hands.

[a] In Hebrew texts 108:1-13 is numbered 108:2-14.

TRANSITION

Music in the Temple

One aspect of the Chronicler's emphasis on the temple is his interest in the different priestly duties, particularly in the musical service. In the genealogical introduction to 1 Chronicles (1Ch 1:1—9:34), more space is given to the Levitical musicians than to some

entire tribes (see 6:31–48 and "Priestly Genealogies" at 1Ch 1:1).

The prophetic account in 2Sa 6:12–19 mentions the sound of music when the ark was brought to Jerusalem. The Chronicler, however, provides much more detail about that music and stresses the role of the Levites in this event. There were Levites carrying the ark, as well as singing and playing instruments (1Ch 15:2, 15, 16, 28). Once the ark was in Jerusalem, David began to organize the service of the Jerusalem sanctuary. One of his first actions was to appoint the Levitical musicians and their three leaders: Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (1Ch 16:37, 41, 42; see 2Ch 5:12).

1 Chronicles

Ministering Before the Ark

16 :1 They brought the ark of God and set
it inside the tent that David had pitched
for it, and they presented burnt offerings and
fellowship offerings before God. 2After David
had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and
fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in
the name of the LORD. 3Then he gave a loaf of
bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to
each Israelite man and woman.

4He appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to extol,[a] thank,
and praise the LORD, the God of Israel: 5Asaph
was the chief, and next to him in rank were
Zechariah, then Jaaziel,[b] Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and
Jeiel. They were to play the lyres and harps,
Asaph was to sound the cymbals, 6and Benaiah
and Jahaziel the priests were to blow the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant
of God.

7That day David first appointed Asaph and
his associates to give praise to the LORD in this
manner:

8Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he
has done.
9Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.
10Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD
rejoice.
11Look to the LORD and his strength;
seek his face always.
12Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he
pronounced,
13you his servants, the descendants of Israel,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.
14He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.
15He remembers[c] his covenant forever,
the promise he made, for a thousand
generations,
16the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac.
17He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant:
18"To you I will give the land of Canaan
as the portion you will inherit."
19When they were but few in number,
few indeed, and strangers in it,
20they[d] wandered from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another.
21He allowed no one to oppress them;
for their sake he rebuked kings:
22"Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm."
23Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
24Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.
25For great is the LORD and most worthy of
praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
26For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
27Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and joy are in his dwelling place.

[a] *4* Or *petition*; or *invoke* [b] *5* See 15:18,20; Hebrew *Jeiel*, possibly another name for *Jaaziel*. [c] *15* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Psalm 105:8); Hebrew *Remember* [d] *18-20* One Hebrew manuscript, Septuagint and Vulgate (see also Psalm 105:12); most Hebrew manuscripts *inherit, / 19though you are but few in number, / few indeed, and strangers in it." / 20They*

There Are Gods and Then There Is God (Ps 96:5)

Hymns of praise in the ancient Near East often declared the god being praised to be superior to all other gods. The Bible occasionally uses that kind of language, but more often goes beyond it and says that Yahweh is the only God.

One way of dismissing other gods was to say they were only statues. The supposed "gods of the nations" are nothing more than the inanimate idols themselves (Ps 96:5). Yahweh is declared the true deity because only he created the world—"the LORD made the heavens" (96:5). All other gods are impotent and unworthy of adoration; they should be ignored. People who could mistake stone, metal, or wood for a real god are foolish.

A second way of dismissing other gods was to leave open the possibility they existed, yet maintain that they had no serious power and therefore were not to be taken seriously. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, says that other gods did not create the world and will therefore cease to exist (Jer 10:11). Their insignificance is stressed by their being placed lower than Yahweh in divine authority.

In this way, the Hebrew poets were able to adapt the usual language of Near Eastern hymns into the worship of Yahweh. To Israel and Judah only Yahweh mattered. The other deities either did not exist or were so meaningless that whether they existed was irrelevant. Yahweh was "to be feared above all gods" (Ps 96:4).

28 Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of
nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
29 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come before him.
Worship the LORD in the splendor of his[a]
holiness.
30 Tremble before him, all the earth!
The world is firmly established; it cannot
be moved.

31 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be
glad;
let them say among the nations, "The
LORD reigns!"
32 Let the sea resound, and all that is in it;
let the fields be jubilant, and everything
in them!
33 Let the trees of the forest sing,
let them sing for joy before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.

34 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.
35 Cry out, "Save us, God our Savior;
gather us and deliver us from the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name,
and glory in your praise."
36 Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.

Then all the people said "Amen" and "Praise the LORD."

37 David left Asaph and his associates before the ark of the covenant of the LORD to minister there regularly, according to each day's requirements. 38 He also left Obed-Edom and his sixty-eight associates to minister with them. Obed-Edom son of Jeduthun, and also Hosah, were gatekeepers.

39 David left Zadok the priest and his fellow priests before the tabernacle of the LORD at the high place in Gibeon 40 to present burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of burnt offering regularly, morning and evening, in accordance with everything written in the Law of the LORD, which he had given Israel. 41 With them were Heman and Jeduthun and the rest of those chosen and designated by name to give thanks to the LORD, "for his love endures forever." 42 Heman and Jeduthun were responsible for the sounding of the trumpets and cymbals and for the playing of the other instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were stationed at the gate.

43 Then all the people left, each for their own home, and David returned home to bless his family.

[a] *29* Or *LORD with the splendor of*

TRANSITION

Psalms of the Musicians

When the ark was placed in the tabernacle, David gave a psalm to the Levitical singers under Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun to perform (1Ch 16:1, 7–36). The various sections of this psalm also appear in three independent psalms: Ps 96; 105; 106. (1Ch 16:8–22 = Ps 105:1–15; 1Ch 16:22–23 = Ps 96:1–13; 1Ch 16:34–36 = Ps 106:1, 47, 48).

The names of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun appear in the superscriptions of several psalms. Two psalms (Ps 39; 62) are identified as being by David and given by name to Jeduthun. Another psalm (Ps 77) is ascribed to Asaph, but given to Jeduthun. Many other psalms are ascribed to Asaph (Ps 50; 73–83) and one (Ps 88) to Heman.

- **Psalms 96; 105; 106; 39; 62; 50; 73–83; 88**

PSALM 96

Sing to the LORD a new song;
sing to the LORD, all the earth.
2 Sing to the LORD, praise his name;
proclaim his salvation day after day.
3 Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

4 For great is the LORD and most worthy of
praise;
he is to be feared above all gods.
5 For all the gods of the nations are idols,
but the LORD made the heavens.
6 Splendor and majesty are before him;
strength and glory are in his sanctuary.

7 Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of
nations,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
8 Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name;
bring an offering and come into his
courts.
9 Worship the LORD in the splendor of his[a]
holiness;
tremble before him, all the earth.
10 Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns."
The world is firmly established, it cannot
be moved;
he will judge the peoples with equity.

11 Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be
glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.
12 Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in
them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.
13 Let all creation rejoice before the LORD, for
he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

PSALM 105

Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he
has done.
2 Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.
3 Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the LORD
rejoice.
4 Look to the LORD and his strength;
seek his face always.

5 Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he
pronounced,
6 you his servants, the descendants of
Abraham,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.
7 He is the LORD our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.

8 He remembers his covenant forever,
the promise he made, for a thousand
generations,
9 the covenant he made with Abraham,
the oath he swore to Isaac.
10 He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant:
11 "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as the portion you will inherit."

12 When they were but few in number,
few indeed, and strangers in it,
13 they wandered from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another.
14 He allowed no one to oppress them;
for their sake he rebuked kings:
15 "Do not touch my anointed ones;
do my prophets no harm."

16 He called down famine on the land
and destroyed all their supplies of food;
17 and he sent a man before them—
Joseph, sold as a slave.
18 They bruised his feet with shackles,
his neck was put in irons,
19 till what he foretold came to pass,
till the word of the LORD proved him
true.
20 The king sent and released him,
the ruler of peoples set him free.
21 He made him master of his household,
ruler over all he possessed,
22 to instruct his princes as he pleased
and teach his elders wisdom.

23 Then Israel entered Egypt;
Jacob resided as a foreigner in the land of
Ham.
24 The LORD made his people very fruitful;
he made them too numerous for their
foes,
25 whose hearts he turned to hate his people,
to conspire against his servants.
26 He sent Moses his servant,
and Aaron, whom he had chosen.
27 They performed his signs among them,
his wonders in the land of Ham.
28 He sent darkness and made the land
dark—
for had they not rebelled against his
words?
29 He turned their waters into blood,
causing their fish to die.

[a] 9 Or *LORD with the splendor of*

30 Their land teemed with frogs,
which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers.
31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
and gnats throughout their country.
32 He turned their rain into hail,
with lightning throughout their land;
33 he struck down their vines and fig trees
and shattered the trees of their country.
34 He spoke, and the locusts came,
grasshoppers without number;
35 they ate up every green thing in their land,
ate up the produce of their soil.
36 Then he struck down all the firstborn in their land,
the firstfruits of all their manhood.
37 He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold,
and from among their tribes no one faltered.
38 Egypt was glad when they left,
because dread of Israel had fallen on them.

39 He spread out a cloud as a covering,
and a fire to give light at night.
40 They asked, and he brought them quail;
he fed them well with the bread of heaven.
41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed like a river in the desert.

42 For he remembered his holy promise
given to his servant Abraham.
43 He brought out his people with rejoicing,
his chosen ones with shouts of joy;
44 he gave them the lands of the nations,
and they fell heir to what others had toiled for—
45 that they might keep his precepts
and observe his laws.

Praise the LORD.[a]

Arts & Literature
The Hebrew Bible contains several references to Israel's past, especially to God's past works on the people's behalf. Certain psalms rehearse in some detail the history that is related to the Exodus from Egypt, asserting its relevance to the succeeding generations. In Ps 106, not only the Exodus, but also the rebellion in the wilderness is recounted (106:7–33).

PSALM 106

Praise the LORD.[b]

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

2 Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD
or fully declare his praise?
3 Blessed are those who act justly,
who always do what is right.

4 Remember me, LORD, when you show favor to your people,
come to my aid when you save them,
5 that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones,
that I may share in the joy of your nation
and join your inheritance in giving praise.

6 We have sinned, even as our ancestors did;
we have done wrong and acted wickedly.
7 When our ancestors were in Egypt,
they gave no thought to your miracles;
they did not remember your many kindnesses,
and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea.[c]
8 Yet he saved them for his name's sake,
to make his mighty power known.
9 He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up;
he led them through the depths as through a desert.
10 He saved them from the hand of the foe;
from the hand of the enemy he redeemed them.
11 The waters covered their adversaries;
not one of them survived.
12 Then they believed his promises
and sang his praise.

13 But they soon forgot what he had done
and did not wait for his plan to unfold.
14 In the desert they gave in to their craving;
in the wilderness they put God to the test.
15 So he gave them what they asked for,
but sent a wasting disease among them.

16 In the camp they grew envious of Moses
and of Aaron, who was consecrated to the LORD.
17 The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan;
it buried the company of Abiram.
18 Fire blazed among their followers;
a flame consumed the wicked.

[a] *45* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah* [b] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; also in verse 48 [c] *7* Or *the Sea of Reeds*; also in verses 9 and 22

Worshiping Ancestors as Gods (Ps 106:28)

The deification of ancestors was common throughout the ancient world. The mythological texts from Ugarit (1400–1200 B.C.) make reference to "rulers" in the netherworld who formerly had been monarchs in the human realm. These deceased humans were treated as minor deities, having religious feasts held in their honor. Even in ancient Palestine, the excavations of graves have sometimes uncovered tubes built into the ground so that communication and food could be delivered to the deceased.

Ancestor worship is not common in the Bible. There is one Canaanite practice mentioned, however, by which famous or important dead persons had become deities of the underworld. The psalmist reports that the Israelites "ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods" (Ps 106:28). The practice is associated with the "Baal of Peor" incident, indicating that the Israelites encountered the custom as they moved toward the promised land.

The Law of Moses made it unacceptable to treat any human as a god, whether living or dead (Ex 20:2; Dt 26:14). The Israelites who engaged in the regional religious belief of eating sacrifices for the dead were considered to have turned away from the one true God and "aroused the LORD's anger" (Ps 106:29). To honor the memory of one's ancestors was desirable, but such honor must not pass over into worship.

19 At Horeb they made a calf
and worshiped an idol cast from metal.
20 They exchanged their glorious God
for an image of a bull, which eats grass.
21 They forgot the God who saved them,
who had done great things in Egypt,
22 miracles in the land of Ham
and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.
23 So he said he would destroy them—
had not Moses, his chosen one,
stood in the breach before him
to keep his wrath from destroying them.

24 Then they despised the pleasant land;
they did not believe his promise.
25 They grumbled in their tents
and did not obey the LORD.
26 So he swore to them with uplifted hand
that he would make them fall in the wilderness,
27 make their descendants fall among the nations
and scatter them throughout the lands.

28 They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor
and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods;
29 they aroused the LORD's anger by their wicked deeds,
and a plague broke out among them.
30 But Phinehas stood up and intervened,
and the plague was checked.
31 This was credited to him as righteousness
for endless generations to come.
32 By the waters of Meribah they angered the LORD,
and trouble came to Moses because of them;
33 for they rebelled against the Spirit of God,
and rash words came from Moses' lips.[a]

34 They did not destroy the peoples
as the LORD had commanded them,
35 but they mingled with the nations
and adopted their customs.
36 They worshiped their idols,
which became a snare to them.
37 They sacrificed their sons
and their daughters to false gods.
38 They shed innocent blood,
the blood of their sons and daughters,
whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan,
and the land was desecrated by their blood.
39 They defiled themselves by what they did;
by their deeds they prostituted themselves.

40 Therefore the LORD was angry with his people
and abhorred his inheritance.
41 He gave them into the hands of the nations,
and their foes ruled over them.
42 Their enemies oppressed them
and subjected them to their power.
43 Many times he delivered them,
but they were bent on rebellion
and they wasted away in their sin.
44 Yet he took note of their distress
when he heard their cry;
45 for their sake he remembered his covenant
and out of his great love he relented.
46 He caused all who held them captive
to show them mercy.

47 Save us, LORD our God,
and gather us from the nations,
that we may give thanks to your holy name
and glory in your praise.

48 Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.

Let all the people say, "Amen!"

Praise the LORD.

[a] 33 Or *against his spirit, / and rash words came from his lips*

PSALM 39[a]

For the director of music. For Jeduthun.
A psalm of David.

I said, "I will watch my ways
and keep my tongue from sin;
I will put a muzzle on my mouth
while in the presence of the wicked."
2 So I remained utterly silent,
not even saying anything good.
But my anguish increased;
3 my heart grew hot within me.
While I meditated, the fire burned;
then I spoke with my tongue:

4 "Show me, LORD, my life's end
and the number of my days;
let me know how fleeting my life is.
5 You have made my days a mere handbreadth;
the span of my years is as nothing before you.
Everyone is but a breath,
even those who seem secure.[b]

6 "Surely everyone goes around like a mere phantom;
in vain they rush about, heaping up wealth
without knowing whose it will finally be.

7 "But now, Lord, what do I look for?
My hope is in you.
8 Save me from all my transgressions;
do not make me the scorn of fools.
9 I was silent; I would not open my mouth,
for you are the one who has done this.
10 Remove your scourge from me;
I am overcome by the blow of your hand.
11 When you rebuke and discipline anyone for their sin,
you consume their wealth like a moth—
surely everyone is but a breath.

12 "Hear my prayer, LORD,
listen to my cry for help;
do not be deaf to my weeping.
I dwell with you as a foreigner,
a stranger, as all my ancestors were.
13 Look away from me, that I may enjoy life again
before I depart and am no more."

Religion & Worship
When food, whether meat or vegetable, was offered in sacrifice, there was a natural suggestion that the worshiper was providing sustenance for the god or gods being worshiped. In the Old Testament sacrifices were required by Israel's God. Yet the Psalms reveal a sharp polemic against any such misinterpretation of the sacrifices. Yahweh declares, "If I were hungry I would not tell you" (Ps 50:12).

PSALM 62[c]

For the director of music. For Jeduthun.
A psalm of David.

Truly my soul finds rest in God;
my salvation comes from him.
2 Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.

3 How long will you assault me?
Would all of you throw me down—
this leaning wall, this tottering fence?
4 Surely they intend to topple me
from my lofty place;
they take delight in lies.
With their mouths they bless,
but in their hearts they curse.[d]

5 Yes, my soul, find rest in God;
my hope comes from him.
6 Truly he is my rock and my salvation;
he is my fortress, I will not be shaken.
7 My salvation and my honor depend on God[e];
he is my mighty rock, my refuge.
8 Trust in him at all times, you people;
pour out your hearts to him,
for God is our refuge.

9 Surely the lowborn are but a breath,
the highborn are but a lie.
If weighed on a balance, they are nothing;
together they are only a breath.
10 Do not trust in extortion
or put vain hope in stolen goods;
though your riches increase,
do not set your heart on them.

11 One thing God has spoken,
two things I have heard:
"Power belongs to you, God,
12 and with you, Lord, is unfailing love";
and, "You reward everyone
according to what they have done."

PSALM 50

A psalm of Asaph.

The Mighty One, God, the LORD,
speaks and summons the earth
from the rising of the sun to where it sets.

[a] In Hebrew texts 39:1-13 is numbered 39:2-14. [b] *5* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 11. [c] In Hebrew texts 62:1-12 is numbered 62:2-13. [d] *4* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 8. [e] *7* Or */ God Most High is my salvation and my honor*

2 From Zion, perfect in beauty,
God shines forth.
3 Our God comes
and will not be silent;
a fire devours before him,
and around him a tempest rages.
4 He summons the heavens above,
and the earth, that he may judge his people:
5 "Gather to me this consecrated people,
who made a covenant with me by sacrifice."
6 And the heavens proclaim his righteousness,
for he is a God of justice.[a,b]

7 "Listen, my people, and I will speak;
I will testify against you, Israel:
I am God, your God.
8 I bring no charges against you concerning your sacrifices
or concerning your burnt offerings, which are ever before me.
9 I have no need of a bull from your stall
or of goats from your pens,
10 for every animal of the forest is mine,
and the cattle on a thousand hills.
11 I know every bird in the mountains,
and the insects in the fields are mine.
12 If I were hungry I would not tell you,
for the world is mine, and all that is in it.
13 Do I eat the flesh of bulls
or drink the blood of goats?

14 "Sacrifice thank offerings to God,
fulfill your vows to the Most High,
15 and call on me in the day of trouble;
I will deliver you, and you will honor me."

16 But to the wicked person, God says:

"What right have you to recite my laws
or take my covenant on your lips?
17 You hate my instruction
and cast my words behind you.
18 When you see a thief, you join with him;
you throw in your lot with adulterers.
19 You use your mouth for evil
and harness your tongue to deceit.
20 You sit and testify against your brother
and slander your own mother's son.
21 When you did these things and I kept silent,
you thought I was exactly[c] like you.
But I now arraign you
and set my accusations before you.

22 "Consider this, you who forget God,
or I will tear you to pieces, with no one to rescue you:
23 Those who sacrifice thank offerings honor me,
and to the blameless[d] I will show my salvation."

PSALM 73

A psalm of Asaph.

Surely God is good to Israel,
to those who are pure in heart.
2 But as for me, my feet had almost slipped;
I had nearly lost my foothold.
3 For I envied the arrogant
when I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

4 They have no struggles;
their bodies are healthy and strong.[e]
5 They are free from common human burdens;
they are not plagued by human ills.
6 Therefore pride is their necklace;
they clothe themselves with violence.
7 From their callous hearts comes iniquity[f];
their evil imaginations have no limits.
8 They scoff, and speak with malice;
with arrogance they threaten oppression.
9 Their mouths lay claim to heaven,
and their tongues take possession of the earth.
10 Therefore their people turn to them
and drink up waters in abundance.[g]
11 They say, "How would God know?
Does the Most High know anything?"

Culture & Society
Standards of physical beauty have a natural and a social component. In many cultures fat is praised, presumably because it is a sign of wealth to have enough to eat. The psalm writer's judgment concerning prosperity is influenced by moral considerations of the pride, arrogance, and cruelty that wealth seems to encourage. The prosperity of wicked persons is transitory, no more permanent than a dream (Ps 73:3, 19, 20).

[a] *6* With a different word division of the Hebrew; Masoretic Text *for God himself is judge* [b] *6* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [c] *21* Or *thought the 'I AM' was* [d] *23* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; the meaning of the Masoretic Text for this phrase is uncertain. [e] *4* With a different word division of the Hebrew; Masoretic Text *struggles at their death; / their bodies are healthy* [f] *7* Syriac (see also Septuagint); Hebrew *Their eyes bulge with fat* [g] *10* The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.

12 This is what the wicked are like—
always free of care, they go on amassing wealth.

13 Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure
and have washed my hands in innocence.
14 All day long I have been afflicted,
and every morning brings new punishments.

15 If I had spoken out like that,
I would have betrayed your children.
16 When I tried to understand all this,
it troubled me deeply
17 till I entered the sanctuary of God;
then I understood their final destiny.

18 Surely you place them on slippery ground;
you cast them down to ruin.
19 How suddenly are they destroyed,
completely swept away by terrors!
20 They are like a dream when one awakes;
when you arise, Lord,
you will despise them as fantasies.

21 When my heart was grieved
and my spirit embittered,
22 I was senseless and ignorant;
I was a brute beast before you.

23 Yet I am always with you;
you hold me by my right hand.
24 You guide me with your counsel,
and afterward you will take me into glory.
25 Whom have I in heaven but you?
And earth has nothing I desire besides you.
26 My flesh and my heart may fail,
but God is the strength of my heart
and my portion forever.

27 Those who are far from you will perish;
you destroy all who are unfaithful to you.
28 But as for me, it is good to be near God.
I have made the Sovereign LORD my refuge;
I will tell of all your deeds.

PSALM 74

A maskil[a] *of Asaph.*

O God, why have you rejected us forever?
Why does your anger smolder against
the sheep of your pasture?

2 Remember the nation you purchased long ago,
the people of your inheritance, whom you redeemed—
Mount Zion, where you dwelt.
3 Turn your steps toward these everlasting ruins,
all this destruction the enemy has brought on the sanctuary.

4 Your foes roared in the place where you met with us;
they set up their standards as signs.
5 They behaved like men wielding axes
to cut through a thicket of trees.
6 They smashed all the carved paneling
with their axes and hatchets.
7 They burned your sanctuary to the ground;
they defiled the dwelling place of your Name.
8 They said in their hearts, "We will crush them completely!"
They burned every place where God was worshiped in the land.

9 We are given no signs from God;
no prophets are left,
and none of us knows how long this will be.
10 How long will the enemy mock you, God?
Will the foe revile your name forever?
11 Why do you hold back your hand, your right hand?
Take it from the folds of your garment and destroy them!

12 But God is my King from long ago;
he brings salvation on the earth.

13 It was you who split open the sea by your power;
you broke the heads of the monster in the waters.
14 It was you who crushed the heads of Leviathan
and gave it as food to the creatures of the desert.
15 It was you who opened up springs and streams;
you dried up the ever-flowing rivers.

[a] Title: Probably a literary or musical term

16 The day is yours, and yours also the night;
you established the sun and moon.
17 It was you who set all the boundaries of the earth;
you made both summer and winter.

18 Remember how the enemy has mocked you, LORD,
how foolish people have reviled your name.
19 Do not hand over the life of your dove to wild beasts;
do not forget the lives of your afflicted people forever.
20 Have regard for your covenant,
because haunts of violence fill the dark places of the land.
21 Do not let the oppressed retreat in disgrace;
may the poor and needy praise your name.
22 Rise up, O God, and defend your cause;
remember how fools mock you all day long.
23 Do not ignore the clamor of your adversaries,
the uproar of your enemies, which rises continually.

PSALM 75[a]

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." A psalm of Asaph. A song.

We praise you, God,
we praise you, for your Name is near;
people tell of your wonderful deeds.

2 You say, "I choose the appointed time;
it is I who judge with equity.
3 When the earth and all its people quake,
it is I who hold its pillars firm.[b]
4 To the arrogant I say, 'Boast no more,'
and to the wicked, 'Do not lift up your horns.[c]
5 Do not lift your horns against heaven;
do not speak so defiantly.'"

6 No one from the east or the west
or from the desert can exalt themselves.
7 It is God who judges:
He brings one down, he exalts another.
8 In the hand of the LORD is a cup
full of foaming wine mixed with spices;
he pours it out, and all the wicked of the earth
drink it down to its very dregs.

9 As for me, I will declare this forever;
I will sing praise to the God of Jacob,
10 who says, "I will cut off the horns of all the wicked,
but the horns of the righteous will be lifted up."

PSALM 76[d]

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of Asaph. A song.

God is renowned in Judah;
in Israel his name is great.
2 His tent is in Salem,
his dwelling place in Zion.
3 There he broke the flashing arrows,
the shields and the swords, the weapons of war.[e]

4 You are radiant with light,
more majestic than mountains rich with game.
5 The valiant lie plundered,
they sleep their last sleep;
not one of the warriors
can lift his hands.
6 At your rebuke, God of Jacob,
both horse and chariot lie still.

7 It is you alone who are to be feared.
Who can stand before you when you are angry?
8 From heaven you pronounced judgment,
and the land feared and was quiet—
9 when you, God, rose up to judge,
to save all the afflicted of the land.
10 Surely your wrath against mankind brings you praise,
and the survivors of your wrath are restrained.[f]

11 Make vows to the LORD your God and fulfill them;
let all the neighboring lands
bring gifts to the One to be feared.
12 He breaks the spirit of rulers;
he is feared by the kings of the earth.

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[a] In Hebrew texts 75:1-10 is numbered 75:2-11. [b] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [c] *4* *Horns* here symbolize strength; also in verses 5 and 10. [d] In Hebrew texts 76:1-12 is numbered 76:2-13. [e] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 9. [f] *10* Or *Surely the wrath of mankind brings you praise, / and the remainder of wrath you arm yourself*

PSALM 77[a]

For the director of music. For Jeduthun. Of Asaph. A psalm.

I cried out to God for help;
I cried out to God to hear me.
2 When I was in distress, I sought the Lord;
at night I stretched out untiring hands,
and I would not be comforted.

3 I remembered you, God, and I groaned;
I meditated, and my spirit grew faint.[b]
4 You kept my eyes from closing;
I was too troubled to speak.
5 I thought about the former days,
the years of long ago;
6 I remembered my songs in the night.
My heart meditated and my spirit asked:

7 "Will the Lord reject forever?
Will he never show his favor again?
8 Has his unfailing love vanished forever?
Has his promise failed for all time?
9 Has God forgotten to be merciful?
Has he in anger withheld his
compassion?"

10 Then I thought, "To this I will appeal:
the years when the Most High stretched
out his right hand.
11 I will remember the deeds of the LORD;
yes, I will remember your miracles of
long ago.
12 I will consider all your works
and meditate on all your mighty deeds."

13 Your ways, God, are holy.
What god is as great as our God?
14 You are the God who performs miracles;
you display your power among the
peoples.
15 With your mighty arm you redeemed your
people,
the descendants of Jacob and Joseph.

16 The waters saw you, God,
the waters saw you and writhed;
the very depths were convulsed.
17 The clouds poured down water,
the heavens resounded with thunder;
your arrows flashed back and forth.
18 Your thunder was heard in the whirlwind,
your lightning lit up the world;
the earth trembled and quaked.
19 Your path led through the sea,
your way through the mighty waters,
though your footprints were not seen.

20 You led your people like a flock
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

PSALM 78

A maskil[c] *of Asaph.*

My people, hear my teaching;
listen to the words of my mouth.
2 I will open my mouth with a parable;
I will utter hidden things, things from of
old—
3 things we have heard and known,
things our ancestors have told us.
4 We will not hide them from their
descendants;
we will tell the next generation
the praiseworthy deeds of the LORD,
his power, and the wonders he has done.
5 He decreed statutes for Jacob
and established the law in Israel,
which he commanded our ancestors
to teach their children,
6 so the next generation would know them,
even the children yet to be born,
and they in turn would tell their children.
7 Then they would put their trust in God
and would not forget his deeds
but would keep his commands.

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[a] In Hebrew texts 77:1-20 is numbered 77:2-21. [b] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 9 and 15. [c] Title: Probably a literary or musical term

8 They would not be like their ancestors—
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
whose hearts were not loyal to God,
whose spirits were not faithful to him.

9 The men of Ephraim, though armed with bows,
turned back on the day of battle;
10 they did not keep God's covenant
and refused to live by his law.
11 They forgot what he had done,
the wonders he had shown them.
12 He did miracles in the sight of their ancestors
in the land of Egypt, in the region of Zoan.
13 He divided the sea and led them through;
he made the water stand up like a wall.
14 He guided them with the cloud by day
and with light from the fire all night.
15 He split the rocks in the wilderness
and gave them water as abundant as the seas;
16 he brought streams out of a rocky crag
and made water flow down like rivers.

17 But they continued to sin against him,
rebelling in the wilderness against the Most High.
18 They willfully put God to the test
by demanding the food they craved.
19 They spoke against God;
they said, "Can God really
spread a table in the wilderness?
20 True, he struck the rock,
and water gushed out,
streams flowed abundantly,
but can he also give us bread?
Can he supply meat for his people?"
21 When the LORD heard them, he was furious;
his fire broke out against Jacob,
and his wrath rose against Israel,
22 for they did not believe in God
or trust in his deliverance.
23 Yet he gave a command to the skies above
and opened the doors of the heavens;
24 he rained down manna for the people to eat,
he gave them the grain of heaven.
25 Human beings ate the bread of angels;
he sent them all the food they could eat.
26 He let loose the east wind from the heavens
and by his power made the south wind blow.
27 He rained meat down on them like dust,
birds like sand on the seashore.
28 He made them come down inside their camp,
all around their tents.
29 They ate till they were gorged—
he had given them what they craved.
30 But before they turned from what they craved,
even while the food was still in their mouths,
31 God's anger rose against them;
he put to death the sturdiest among them,
cutting down the young men of Israel.

32 In spite of all this, they kept on sinning;
in spite of his wonders, they did not believe.
33 So he ended their days in futility
and their years in terror.
34 Whenever God slew them, they would seek him;
they eagerly turned to him again.
35 They remembered that God was their Rock,
that God Most High was their Redeemer.
36 But then they would flatter him with their mouths,
lying to him with their tongues;
37 their hearts were not loyal to him,
they were not faithful to his covenant.
38 Yet he was merciful;
he forgave their iniquities
and did not destroy them.
Time after time he restrained his anger
and did not stir up his full wrath.
39 He remembered that they were but flesh,
a passing breeze that does not return.

40 How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness
and grieved him in the wasteland!
41 Again and again they put God to the test;
they vexed the Holy One of Israel.
42 They did not remember his power—
the day he redeemed them from the oppressor,
43 the day he displayed his signs in Egypt,
his wonders in the region of Zoan.
44 He turned their river into blood;
they could not drink from their streams.
45 He sent swarms of flies that devoured them,
and frogs that devastated them.
46 He gave their crops to the grasshopper,
their produce to the locust.
47 He destroyed their vines with hail
and their sycamore-figs with sleet.
48 He gave over their cattle to the hail,
their livestock to bolts of lightning.
49 He unleashed against them his hot anger,
his wrath, indignation and hostility—
a band of destroying angels.

50 He prepared a path for his anger;
he did not spare them from death
but gave them over to the plague.
51 He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt,
the firstfruits of manhood in the tents of Ham.
52 But he brought his people out like a flock;
he led them like sheep through the wilderness.
53 He guided them safely, so they were unafraid;
but the sea engulfed their enemies.
54 And so he brought them to the border of his holy land,
to the hill country his right hand had taken.
55 He drove out nations before them
and allotted their lands to them as an inheritance;
he settled the tribes of Israel in their homes.

56 But they put God to the test
and rebelled against the Most High;
they did not keep his statutes.
57 Like their ancestors they were disloyal and faithless,
as unreliable as a faulty bow.
58 They angered him with their high places;
they aroused his jealousy with their idols.
59 When God heard them, he was furious;
he rejected Israel completely.
60 He abandoned the tabernacle of Shiloh,
the tent he had set up among humans.
61 He sent the ark of his might into captivity,
his splendor into the hands of the enemy.
62 He gave his people over to the sword;
he was furious with his inheritance.
63 Fire consumed their young men,
and their young women had no wedding songs;
64 their priests were put to the sword,
and their widows could not weep.

65 Then the Lord awoke as from sleep,
as a warrior wakes from the stupor of wine.

Beliefs & Ideas

Like David (Ps 78:70), the prophet Amos received the call of God while he was tending sheep (Am 7:14, 15). The Greek poet Hesiod, a contemporary of Homer, relates how he heard the divine call to be a poet while he was shepherding. The gift of writing poetry was not given to all and was not to be refused when offered.

66 He beat back his enemies;
he put them to everlasting shame.
67 Then he rejected the tents of Joseph,
he did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;
68 but he chose the tribe of Judah,
Mount Zion, which he loved.
69 He built his sanctuary like the heights,
like the earth that he established forever.
70 He chose David his servant
and took him from the sheep pens;
71 from tending the sheep he brought him
to be the shepherd of his people Jacob,
of Israel his inheritance.
72 And David shepherded them with integrity of heart;
with skillful hands he led them.

PSALM 79

A psalm of Asaph.

O God, the nations have invaded your inheritance;
they have defiled your holy temple,
they have reduced Jerusalem to rubble.
2 They have left the dead bodies of your servants
as food for the birds of the sky,
the flesh of your own people for the animals of the wild.
3 They have poured out blood like water
all around Jerusalem,
and there is no one to bury the dead.
4 We are objects of contempt to our neighbors,
of scorn and derision to those around us.

5 How long, LORD? Will you be angry forever?
How long will your jealousy burn like fire?
6 Pour out your wrath on the nations
that do not acknowledge you,
on the kingdoms
that do not call on your name;
7 for they have devoured Jacob
and devastated his homeland.

8 Do not hold against us the sins of past generations;
may your mercy come quickly to meet us,
for we are in desperate need.
9 Help us, God our Savior,
for the glory of your name;
deliver us and forgive our sins
for your name's sake.
10 Why should the nations say,
"Where is their God?"

Before our eyes, make known among the nations
that you avenge the outpoured blood of your servants.

Cherubim, the Divine Guardians (Ps 80:1)

The religious and royal art of ancient Near Eastern civilizations shows a number of winged, mythological creatures being depicted as composites of several different animals. These supernatural beings appear as guardians for thrones, gateways, palaces, and temples, as well as serving as stands for the images of deities.

The cherubim of the Bible are representatives of these creatures. They acted as guardians of the garden of Eden (Ge 3:24); they formed the moving throne of God (Eze 1–3); their likenesses were molded at the top of the ark of the covenant (Ex 25:18). In the Most Holy Place of Solomon's temple were two large cherubim, and images of cherubim were carved into the temple walls by order of Solomon (1Ki 6:23–29). Clearly, the artistic representation of the cherubim was associated with the worship of God in Jerusalem.

Cherubim are always described in the Bible as having wings, but we lack a full description of their appearance. From similar creatures found in the art of Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, and even in the Samaritan ivory fragments (not to mention Egyptian sphinxes), cherubim appear to have animal bodies with human heads and a pair of wings extending from the shoulders. While human heads appear on all examples, as well as wings, the bodies may be those of lions or bulls or a combination of both. Phoenician artistic examples exist from the 2nd millennium B.C. through the biblical period, so it is possible that the figures carved in the Jerusalem temple were designed by Phoenician craftsmen based on their understanding of such figures.

In religious art cherubim formed mounts, guardians, or companions of the deities, but did not represent the gods themselves. Likewise, the cherubim in Solomon's temple were not intended to be images of God, but were displayed to demonstrate the holiness of the sanctuary and the majesty of the deity worshiped there. Ps 80:1 reflects the place where God's presence was most revered: in the temple, dwelling between the cherubim of the atonement cover (see Nu 7:89).

11 May the groans of the prisoners come
before you;
with your strong arm preserve those
condemned to die.
12 Pay back into the laps of our neighbors
seven times
the contempt they have hurled at you,
Lord.
13 Then we your people, the sheep of your
pasture,
will praise you forever;
from generation to generation
we will proclaim your praise.

PSALM 80[a]

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lilies of the Covenant." Of Asaph. A psalm.

Hear us, Shepherd of Israel,
you who lead Joseph like a flock.
You who sit enthroned between the
cherubim,
shine forth 2 before Ephraim, Benjamin
and Manasseh.
Awaken your might;
come and save us.

3 Restore us, O God;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

4 How long, LORD God Almighty,
will your anger smolder
against the prayers of your people?
5 You have fed them with the bread of
tears;
you have made them drink tears by the
bowlful.
6 You have made us an object of derision[b] to
our neighbors,
and our enemies mock us.

7 Restore us, God Almighty;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

8 You transplanted a vine from Egypt;
you drove out the nations and planted it.
9 You cleared the ground for it,
and it took root and filled the land.
10 The mountains were covered with its shade,
the mighty cedars with its branches.
11 Its branches reached as far as the Sea,[c]
its shoots as far as the River.[d]

[a] In Hebrew texts 80:1-19 is numbered 80:2-20.
[b] *6* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text *contention* [c] *11* Probably the Mediterranean
[d] *11* That is, the Euphrates

When Gods Go Bad (Ps 82:1)

Among the psalms, Ps 82 uniquely offers the only reference to Yahweh taking direct control of the world from the heavenly beings. These "gods," who previously controlled the world under Yahweh's authority, had perpetuated injustice to the poor (82:2–4).

The scene of Yahweh among the gods resembles the assembly of Canaanite gods in the Ugaritic myths (c. 1400–1200 B.C.). At Ugarit the gods were answerable to El, head of the pantheon, for their behavior. The lesser gods were responsible for keeping order in the universe, supposedly working together to run the cosmos according to El's plan. If they did not, El could remove them from power or even condemn them to death.

The psalmist's "great assembly" (82:1) appears to have originally referred to the heavenly council. The "great" were "'gods,' . . . sons of the Most High" (82:6). They have been interpreted to be either angels or judges.

In this psalm Yahweh condemns the "great" gods or judges. They were supposed to defend the powerless, but instead condoned the wicked behavior of the powerful. Because the heavenly powers have acted improperly, knowledge and order have collapsed, and the cosmos hovers on the edge of a return to chaos (82:5).

Instead of justice and order, the gods or judges have created injustice and chaos. Yahweh, who gave them their power in the beginning, now condemns them to death (82:6, 7). The assembly sings praises to God for taking over sole rule of the universe (82:8). Like the god El of the Ugaritic texts, Yahweh is the principal figure, whose justice and order can no longer be thwarted by lesser gods.

12 Why have you broken down its walls
so that all who pass by pick its grapes?
13 Boars from the forest ravage it,
and insects from the fields feed on it.
14 Return to us, God Almighty!
Look down from heaven and see!
Watch over this vine,
15 the root your right hand has planted,
the son[a] you have raised up for yourself.

16 Your vine is cut down, it is burned with fire;
at your rebuke your people perish.
17 Let your hand rest on the man at your right hand,
the son of man you have raised up for yourself.
18 Then we will not turn away from you;
revive us, and we will call on your name.

19 Restore us, LORD God Almighty;
make your face shine on us,
that we may be saved.

PSALM 81[b]

For the director of music. According to gittith.[c] *Of Asaph.*

Sing for joy to God our strength;
shout aloud to the God of Jacob!
2 Begin the music, strike the timbrel,
play the melodious harp and lyre.

3 Sound the ram's horn at the New Moon,
and when the moon is full, on the day of our festival;
4 this is a decree for Israel,
an ordinance of the God of Jacob.

5 When God went out against Egypt,
he established it as a statute for Joseph.

I heard an unknown voice say:

6 "I removed the burden from their shoulders;
their hands were set free from the basket.
7 In your distress you called and I rescued you,
I answered you out of a thundercloud;
I tested you at the waters of Meribah.[d]
8 Hear me, my people, and I will warn you—
if you would only listen to me, Israel!
9 You shall have no foreign god among you;
you shall not worship any god other than me.
10 I am the LORD your God,
who brought you up out of Egypt.
Open wide your mouth and I will fill it.

11 "But my people would not listen to me;
Israel would not submit to me.
12 So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts
to follow their own devices.

13 "If my people would only listen to me,
if Israel would only follow my ways,
14 how quickly I would subdue their enemies
and turn my hand against their foes!
15 Those who hate the LORD would cringe before him,
and their punishment would last forever.

[a] *15* Or *branch* [b] In Hebrew texts 81:1-16 is numbered 81:2-17. [c] Title: Probably a musical term [d] *7* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here.

An Arabian Tribal Confederacy (Ps 83:6)

The name "Ishmael" became the representative name for the entire tribe of Ishmaelites. Ishmael was the son of Abraham by Sarah's maid, Hagar (Ge 16:15). The twelve sons of Ishmael are well-known, both in the Bible (Ge 25:12–16) and in sources outside of the Bible. It is not certain whether these sources are speaking about the same group or groups, or if the sources refer to different groups. The psalmist was aware of one group of "Ishmaelites" (Ps 83:6) that were enemies of Israel.

The Ishmaelites were the first known power from the central Arabian desert. An Ishmaelite tribal confederacy reached its greatest power during the Late Assyrian period. The first reference to them comes from the 8th-century B.C. records of Tiglath-Pileser III, describing his campaigns in Syria. The Ishmaelites sent tribute of camels to this Assyrian king after his campaign against them in 738 B.C. again in 733 B.C. They paid tribute of camels, incense, and spices to Tiglath-Pileser. Another Assyrian king, Sargon II received tribute from a variety of Ishmaelite tribes in 716 B.C.

The Ishmaelite tribes evidently lived along the trade routes used to transport incense and controlled the trade of incense and aromatic goods. Assyrian attempts to create vassal states in northern Arabia were unsuccessful. The annals of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) offer much description of Ishmaelite tribes that were encroaching upon Assyrian territory.

The term "Ishmaelite" disappeared at the end of the 7th century B.C. Many of the splinter tribes, however, continued to exist, including the Arab tribes in central Arabia.

16 But you would be fed with the finest of wheat;
with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

PSALM 82

A psalm of Asaph.

God presides in the great assembly;
he renders judgment among the "gods":

2 "How long will you[a] defend the unjust
and show partiality to the wicked?[b]
3 Defend the weak and the fatherless;
uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.
4 Rescue the weak and the needy;
deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

5 "The 'gods' know nothing, they understand nothing.
They walk about in darkness;
all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

6 "I said, 'You are "gods";
you are all sons of the Most High.'
7 But you will die like mere mortals;
you will fall like every other ruler."

8 Rise up, O God, judge the earth,
for all the nations are your inheritance.

PSALM 83[c]

A song. A psalm of Asaph.

O God, do not remain silent;
do not turn a deaf ear,
do not stand aloof, O God.

2 See how your enemies growl,
how your foes rear their heads.
3 With cunning they conspire against your people;
they plot against those you cherish.
4 "Come," they say, "let us destroy them as a nation,
so that Israel's name is remembered no more."

5 With one mind they plot together;
they form an alliance against you—
6 the tents of Edom and the Ishmaelites,
of Moab and the Hagrites,
7 Byblos, Ammon and Amalek,
Philistia, with the people of Tyre.
8 Even Assyria has joined them
to reinforce Lot's descendants.[b]

9 Do to them as you did to Midian,
as you did to Sisera and Jabin at the river Kishon,
10 who perished at Endor
and became like dung on the ground.
11 Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,
all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna,
12 who said, "Let us take possession
of the pasturelands of God."

13 Make them like tumbleweed, my God,
like chaff before the wind.
14 As fire consumes the forest
or a flame sets the mountains ablaze,
15 so pursue them with your tempest
and terrify them with your storm.
16 Cover their faces with shame, LORD,
so that they will seek your name.

17 May they ever be ashamed and dismayed;
may they perish in disgrace.

[a] *2* The Hebrew is plural. [b] *2,8* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [c] In Hebrew texts 83:1-18 is numbered 83:2-19.

18 Let them know that you, whose name is the
LORD—
that you alone are the Most High over all
the earth.

PSALM 88[a]

A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah. For the director of music. According to mahalath leannoth.[b] *A* maskil[c] *of Heman the Ezrahite.*

LORD, you are the God who saves me;
day and night I cry out to you.
2 May my prayer come before you;
turn your ear to my cry.

3 I am overwhelmed with troubles
and my life draws near to death.
4 I am counted among those who go down to
the pit;
I am like one without strength.
5 I am set apart with the dead,
like the slain who lie in the grave,
whom you remember no more,
who are cut off from your care.

6 You have put me in the lowest pit,
in the darkest depths.
7 Your wrath lies heavily on me;
you have overwhelmed me with all your
waves.[d]
8 You have taken from me my closest
friends
and have made me repulsive to them.
I am confined and cannot escape;
9 my eyes are dim with grief.

I call to you, LORD, every day;
I spread out my hands to you.
10 Do you show your wonders to the
dead?
Do their spirits rise up and praise
you?
11 Is your love declared in the grave,
your faithfulness in Destruction[e]?
12 Are your wonders known in the place of
darkness,
or your righteous deeds in the land of
oblivion?

13 But I cry to you for help, LORD;
in the morning my prayer comes before
you.
14 Why, LORD, do you reject me
and hide your face from me?

15 From my youth I have suffered and been
close to death;
I have borne your terrors and am in
despair.
16 Your wrath has swept over me;
your terrors have destroyed me.
17 All day long they surround me like a
flood;
they have completely engulfed me.
18 You have taken from me friend and
neighbor—
darkness is my closest friend.

TRANSITION

A Desire to Build the Temple

The Chronicler shows David establishing everything about the temple except the temple itself. One reason David could not build the temple was because he was a warrior, who had shed blood (1Ch 22:8; 28:1–3). However, in 2Sa 7 and 1Ch 17 a more basic reason is given: during all the years of the tribal confederation, God's ark had been in a movable shrine. He had never been restricted to a single site. David, while establishing the new patterns of kingship, would nevertheless respect the old covenant traditions, one of which was the tabernacle.

• **1 Chronicles 17:1–27**

1 Chronicles

God's Promise to David

17:1 After David was settled in his palace, he said to Nathan the prophet, "Here I am, living in a house of cedar, while the ark of the covenant of the LORD is under a tent."

2 Nathan replied to David, "Whatever you have in mind, do it, for God is with you."

3 But that night the word of God came to Nathan, saying:

4 "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD says: You are not the one to build me a house to dwell in. 5 I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought Israel up out of Egypt to this day. I have moved from one tent site to another, from one dwelling place to another. 6 Wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their leaders[f] whom I commanded to shepherd my people, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?"'

7 "Now then, tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I took you

[a] In Hebrew texts 88:1-18 is numbered 88:2-19. [b] Title: Possibly a tune, "The Suffering of Affliction" [c] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [d] *7* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 10. [e] *11* Hebrew *Abaddon* [f] *6* Traditionally *judges*; also in verse 10

from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. 8I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name like the names of the greatest men on earth. 9And I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore, as they did at the beginning 10and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel. I will also subdue all your enemies.

"'I declare to you that the LORD will build a house for you: 11When your days are over and you go to be with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, one of your own sons, and I will establish his kingdom. 12He is the one who will build a house for me, and I will establish his throne forever. 13I will be his father, and he will be my son. I will never take my love away from him, as I took it away from your predecessor. 14I will set him over my house and my kingdom forever; his throne will be established forever.'"

15Nathan reported to David all the words of this entire revelation.

David's Prayer

16Then King David went in and sat before the LORD, and he said:

"Who am I, LORD God, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? 17And as if this were not enough in your sight, my God, you have spoken about the future of the house of your servant. You, LORD God, have looked on me as though I were the most exalted of men.

18"What more can David say to you for honoring your servant? For you know your servant, 19LORD. For the sake of your servant and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made known all these great promises.

20"There is no one like you, LORD, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears. 21And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth whose God went out to redeem a people for himself, and to make a name for yourself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? 22You made your people Israel your very own forever, and you, LORD, have become their God.

23"And now, LORD, let the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house be established forever. Do as you promised, 24so that it will be established and that your name will be great forever. Then people will say, 'The LORD Almighty, the God over Israel, is Israel's God!' And the house of your servant David will be established before you.

25"You, my God, have revealed to your servant that you will build a house for him. So your servant has found courage to pray to you. 26You, LORD, are God! You have promised these good things to your servant. 27Now you have been pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, LORD, have blessed it, and it will be blessed forever."

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: David's Reign

When Saul died, the Philistines must have assumed that their victory over Israel was complete. The government of Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, had virtually no power, and David's rule over Judah was probably condoned by the Philistines. After all, David had been living in their land, and they considered him their man.

If those were the Philistines' assumptions, they were wrong. Within an astonishingly brief time, David had constructed an impressive empire. First, he drove the Philistines from Israelite territory (2Sa 5). Then, responding to an insult from Ammon, he sent his armies across the Jordan. By the time he was done, he had defeated the Ammonites, several Aramean (Syrian) kingdoms, Moab, and Edom (2Sa 8; 10). He was aided, no doubt, by the decline of the empires of Egypt and Mesopotamia, but his achievements are still impressive, by any standards.

In typical fashion, though, the biblical history pays scant attention to such feats of arms. Instead, the text focuses on David's behavior while his armies were off at war—especially on his affair with Bathsheba. This incident and its aftermath form the heart of what is often called the "Succession Document" (2Sa 9—1Ki 2). The history of the "Succession Document" gives a unified and very detailed record of events in David's court up until Solomon, the son of Bathsheba, was crowned David's successor.

• **2 Samuel 8:1—12:14**

Hadadezer Falls to King David (2Sa 8:3)

Hadadezer was the Aramean king defeated by David. As the "king of Zobah" (2Sa 8:3, 5), Hadadezer ruled a territory assumed to be north of Damascus in Syria. It is possible, however, that Hadadezer also controlled territory "beyond the Euphrates River" (2Sa 10:16). Aramean tribes were being used as mercenaries by the Ammonites against Israel, and Hadadezer appears to have commanded several mercenary troops.

Scholars are not certain whether David fought against Hadadezer one, two, or even three times. The various battle reports in Scripture could refer to different battles or to the same battle. At some point, the Arameans became subject to David (10:19).

Hadadezer has not been identified in presently known sources outside of the Bible. He should not be confused with his namesake Hadadezer, the later king of Damascus who was part of the coalition opposing Shalmaneser III at the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C.

2 Samuel

David's Victories

8 :1 In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Metheg Ammah from the control of the Philistines.

2 David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought him tribute.

3 Moreover, David defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his monument at[a] the Euphrates River. 4 David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers[b] and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstrung all but a hundred of the chariot horses.

5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them. 6 He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought tribute. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

7 David took the gold shields that belonged to the officers of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 From Tebah[c] and Berothai, towns that belonged to Hadadezer, King David took a great quantity of bronze.

9 When Tou[d] king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer, 10 he sent his son Joram[e] to King David to greet him and congratulate him on his victory in battle over Hadadezer, who had been at war with Tou. Joram brought with him articles of silver, of gold and of bronze.

11 King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued: 12 Edom[f] and Moab, the Ammonites and the Philistines, and Amalek. He also dedicated the plunder taken from Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah.

13 And David became famous after he returned from striking down eighteen thousand Edomites[g] in the Valley of Salt.

14 He put garrisons throughout Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

David's Officials

15 David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people. 16 Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; 17 Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelek son of Abiathar were priests; Seraiah was secretary; 18 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites; and David's sons were priests.[h]

David and Mephibosheth

9 1 David asked, "Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

2 Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They summoned him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?"

"At your service," he replied.

3 The king asked, "Is there no one still alive from the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?"

Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is lame in both feet."

4 "Where is he?" the king asked.

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[a] *3* Or *his control along* [b] *4* Septuagint (see also Dead Sea Scrolls and 1 Chron. 18:4); Masoretic Text *captured seventeen hundred of his charioteers* [c] *8* See some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 18:8); Hebrew *Betah*. [d] *9* Hebrew *Toi*, a variant of *Tou*; also in verse 10 [e] *10* A variant of *Hadoram* [f] *12* Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 18:11); most Hebrew manuscripts *Aram* [g] *13* A few Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 18:12); most Hebrew manuscripts *Aram* (that is, Arameans) [h] *18* Or *were chief officials* (see Septuagint and Targum; see also 1 Chron. 18:17)

You Dirty Dead Dog! (2Sa 9:8)

The dog was the earliest domesticated animal, providing companionship for humans. Yet, in the Bible, the term "dog" is often applied figuratively to worthless or wicked persons. The profit from the sale of a dog was compared to the price of a prostitute and neither was supposed to be donated to the sanctuary because Israel's God "detests them both" (Dt 23:18).

In important ways, dogs and pigs were thought by ancient people to be alike. Both were scavengers and both ran wild, if not controlled. In some ancient Near Eastern societies dogs and pigs were associated with or substituted for each other in religious rituals. Interestingly enough, the part dogs or pigs played in these rituals was as agents for cleansing, with impurities and disease being transferred from the human to the animal.

The Law of Moses contained various dietary laws. Food restrictions permitted the eating of "clean" animals, while forbidding the eating of "unclean" animals. The distinction of which animals were clean and which were not clean is detailed in Lev 11. Both the pig and the dog, by the criteria of Leviticus (11:7, 27), would be unclean.

When Mephibosheth called himself a "dead dog" (2Sa 9:8), he was lowering himself to the lowest possible realm. Not only did he liken himself to an unclean scavenger (Ex 22:31; 1Ki 14:11), but he portrayed himself as a dog in its worse possible state—death. The Levitical rule was that a dead dog (or any dead unclean animal) should not be touched. If it was touched, even accidentally, it made the one who touched it "unclean till evening" (Lev 11:24, 25).

As a verbal sign of humility, Mephibosheth could have said nothing more to King David to show the differences in their positions. David was the king, while Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, was a dead dog.

Ziba answered, "He is at the house of Makir
son of Ammiel in Lo Debar."
5So King David had him brought from Lo De-
bar, from the house of Makir son of Ammiel.
6When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the
son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to
pay him honor.
David said, "Mephibosheth!"
"At your service," he replied.
7"Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for
I will surely show you kindness for the sake
of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you
all the land that belonged to your grandfather
Saul, and you will always eat at my table."
8Mephibosheth bowed down and said, "What
is your servant, that you should notice a dead
dog like me?"
9Then the king summoned Ziba, Saul's stew-
ard, and said to him, "I have given your mas-
ter's grandson everything that belonged to
Saul and his family. 10You and your sons and
your servants are to farm the land for him and
bring in the crops, so that your master's grand-
son may be provided for. And Mephibosheth,
grandson of your master, will always eat at my
table." (Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty
servants.)
11Then Ziba said to the king, "Your servant
will do whatever my lord the king commands
his servant to do." So Mephibosheth ate at Da-
vid's[a] table like one of the king's sons.
12Mephibosheth had a young son named
Mika, and all the members of Ziba's house-
hold were servants of Mephibosheth. 13And
Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, because he
always ate at the king's table; he was lame in
both feet.

David Defeats the Ammonites

10 1In the course of time, the king of the
Ammonites died, and his son Hanun
succeeded him as king. 2David thought, "I will
show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, just as
his father showed kindness to me." So David
sent a delegation to express his sympathy to
Hanun concerning his father.

When David's men came to the land of the
Ammonites, 3the Ammonite commanders said
to Hanun their lord, "Do you think David is
honoring your father by sending envoys to you
to express sympathy? Hasn't David sent them
to you only to explore the city and spy it out
and overthrow it?" 4So Hanun seized David's
envoys, shaved off half of each man's beard,

Culture & Society
Israelites regarded a man's beard as a mark of his worth and status. To have it forcibly removed or disfigured was not just a question of appearances, but a mark of defeat. Since a leader was personally responsible for his followers, the humiliation of David's servants was a humiliation for him as well (2Sa 10:4–6).

[a] *11* Septuagint; Hebrew *my*

cut off their garments at the buttocks, and sent them away.

5When David was told about this, he sent messengers to meet the men, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, "Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back."

6When the Ammonites realized that they had become obnoxious to David, they hired twenty thousand Aramean foot soldiers from Beth Rehob and Zobah, as well as the king of Maakah with a thousand men, and also twelve thousand men from Tob.

7On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the entire army of fighting men. 8The Ammonites came out and drew up in battle formation at the entrance of their city gate, while the Arameans of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maakah were by themselves in the open country.

9Joab saw that there were battle lines in front of him and behind him; so he selected some of the best troops in Israel and deployed them against the Arameans. 10He put the rest of the men under the command of Abishai his brother and deployed them against the Ammonites. 11Joab said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you are to come to my rescue; but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come to rescue you. 12Be strong, and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The LORD will do what is good in his sight."

13Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him. 14When the Ammonites realized that the Arameans were fleeing, they fled before Abishai and went inside the city. So Joab returned from fighting the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem.

TIME CAPSULE		1073 to 1050 B.C.
1073–1056		Assyrian king Assur-bel-kala encounters Arameans at the River Habur
1069		End of New Kingdom in Egypt
1069		Smendes I becomes pharaoh and makes Zoan (Tanis) Egypt's new capital
1054		Pinudjem I becomes first pharaoh of southern Egypt
1050–930		Arameans bring "Dark Age" to Assyrian royal reports
1050		Philistines have prosperous settlement at Ashdod

15After the Arameans saw that they had been routed by Israel, they regrouped. 16Hadadezer had Arameans brought from beyond the Euphrates River; they went to Helam, with Shobak the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.

17When David was told of this, he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan and went to Helam. The Arameans formed their battle lines to meet David and fought against him. 18But they fled before Israel, and David killed seven hundred of their charioteers and forty thousand of their foot soldiers.[a] He also struck down Shobak the commander of their army, and he died there. 19When all the kings who were vassals of Hadadezer saw that they had been routed by Israel, they made peace with the Israelites and became subject to them.

So the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

David and Bathsheba

11 1In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.

2One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, 3and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." 4Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home. 5The woman conceived and sent word to David, saying, "I am pregnant."

6So David sent this word to Joab: "Send me Uriah the Hittite." And Joab sent him to David. 7When Uriah came to him, David asked him how Joab was, how the soldiers were and how the war was going. 8Then David said to Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." So Uriah left the palace, and a gift from the king was sent after him. 9But Uriah slept at the entrance to the palace with all his master's servants and did not go down to his house.

10David was told, "Uriah did not go home." So he asked Uriah, "Haven't you just come from a military campaign? Why didn't you go home?"

11Uriah said to David, "The ark and Israel

[a] *18* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 19:18); Hebrew *horsemen*

and Judah are staying in tents,[a] and my commander Joab and my lord's men are camped in the open country. How could I go to my house to eat and drink and make love to my wife? As surely as you live, I will not do such a thing!"

12Then David said to him, "Stay here one more day, and tomorrow I will send you back." So Uriah remained in Jerusalem that day and the next. 13At David's invitation, he ate and drank with him, and David made him drunk. But in the evening Uriah went out to sleep on his mat among his master's servants; he did not go home.

14In the morning David wrote a letter to Joab and sent it with Uriah. 15In it he wrote, "Put Uriah out in front where the fighting is fiercest. Then withdraw from him so he will be struck down and die."

16So while Joab had the city under siege, he put Uriah at a place where he knew the strongest defenders were. 17When the men of the city came out and fought against Joab, some of the men in David's army fell; moreover, Uriah the Hittite died.

18Joab sent David a full account of the battle. 19He instructed the messenger: "When you have finished giving the king this account of the battle, 20the king's anger may flare up, and he may ask you, 'Why did you get so close to the city to fight? Didn't you know they would shoot arrows from the wall? 21Who killed Abimelek son of Jerub-Besheth[b]? Didn't a woman drop an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died in Thebez? Why did you get so close to the wall?' If he asks you this, then say to him, 'Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead.'"

22The messenger set out, and when he arrived he told David everything Joab had sent him to say. 23The messenger said to David, "The men overpowered us and came out against us in the open, but we drove them back to the entrance of the city gate. 24Then the archers shot arrows at your servants from the wall, and some of the king's men died. Moreover, your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

25David told the messenger, "Say this to Joab: 'Don't let this upset you; the sword devours one as well as another. Press the attack against the city and destroy it.' Say this to encourage Joab."

26When Uriah's wife heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. 27After the time of mourning was over, David had her brought to his house, and she became his wife and bore him a son. But the thing David had done displeased the LORD.

Nathan Rebukes David

12 1The LORD sent Nathan to David. When he came to him, he said, "There were two men in a certain town, one rich and the other poor. 2The rich man had a very large number of sheep and cattle, 3but the poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb he had bought. He raised it, and it grew up with him and his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him.

4"Now a traveler came to the rich man, but the rich man refrained from taking one of his own sheep or cattle to prepare a meal for the traveler who had come to him. Instead, he took the ewe lamb that belonged to the poor man and prepared it for the one who had come to him."

5David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this must die! 6He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

7Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. 8I gave your

[a] *11* Or *staying at Sukkoth* [b] *21* Also known as *Jerub-Baal* (that is, Gideon)

Nathan confronted David with his double sin by likening David to the rich man with "a very large number of sheep and cattle" in the parable of the one little ewe lamb.

master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you all Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. 9Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites. 10Now, therefore, the sword will never depart from your house, because you despised me and took the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your own.'

11"'This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. 12You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel.'"

13Then David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Nathan replied, "The LORD has taken away your sin. You are not going to die. 14But because by doing this you have shown utter contempt for[a] the LORD, the son born to you will die."

TRANSITION

Create in Me a Clean Heart

No psalm is more clearly tied to a historical context than Ps 51. Not only is its superscription unusually explicit, but there are even internal echoes within the psalm (cf. Ps 51:4 and 2S a 12:13). Many scholars argue that this psalm was actually composed long after David. Regardless of the question of authorship, however, there can be little doubt that Ps 51 is meant to be read in light of David's adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband (2Sa 11; 12).

• **Psalm 51**

PSALM 51[b]

For the director of music. A psalm of David. When the prophet Nathan came to him after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba.

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
2Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

3For I know my transgressions,
and my sin is always before me.
4Against you, you only, have I sinned
and done what is evil in your sight;
so you are right in your verdict
and justified when you judge.
5Surely I was sinful at birth,
sinful from the time my mother
conceived me.
6Yet you desired faithfulness even in the
womb;
you taught me wisdom in that secret
place.

7Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.
8Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.
9Hide your face from my sins
and blot out all my iniquity.

10Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
11Do not cast me from your presence
or take your Holy Spirit from me.
12Restore to me the joy of your salvation
and grant me a willing spirit, to
sustain me.

13Then I will teach transgressors your ways,
so that sinners will turn back to you.
14Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed,
O God,
you who are God my Savior,
and my tongue will sing of your
righteousness.
15Open my lips, Lord,
and my mouth will declare your praise.
16You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would
bring it;
you do not take pleasure in burnt
offerings.
17My sacrifice, O God, is[c] a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart
you, God, will not despise.

18May it please you to prosper Zion,
to build up the walls of Jerusalem.
19Then you will delight in the sacrifices of the
righteous,
in burnt offerings offered whole;
then bulls will be offered on your altar.

[a] *14* An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition; Masoretic Text *for the enemies of* [b] In Hebrew texts 51:1-19 is numbered 51:3-21. [c] *17* Or *The sacrifices of God are*

TRANSITION

The Sons of David

Counting the children named in Scripture, David fathered 19 sons and 1 daughter. His six oldest sons (listed in 2Sa 3:2–5) were all born in Hebron, all with different mothers.

The eldest, and therefore the logical choice to reign after David, was Amnon. The second, Chileab, is never mentioned again and may have died young. Third was Absalom, and fourth was Adonijah.

None of the four eldest sons would succeed David on Israel's throne. That honor would fall to a much younger son, just born and by that token the least likely to reign: Solomon, the son of Bathsheba. When reading of the complicated interactions between these sons, we should always remember where they stood in line to the throne. It is certain that the sons themselves never forgot.

• 2 Samuel 12:15—14:33

2 Samuel

12:15 After Nathan had gone home, the LORD struck the child that Uriah's wife had borne to David, and he became ill. 16David pleaded with God for the child. He fasted and spent the nights lying in sackcloth[a] on the ground. 17The elders of his household stood beside him to get him up from the ground, but he refused, and he would not eat any food with them.

18On the seventh day the child died. David's attendants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead, for they thought, "While the child was still living, he wouldn't listen to us when we spoke to him. How can we now tell him the child is dead? He may do something desperate."

19David noticed that his attendants were whispering among themselves, and he realized the child was dead. "Is the child dead?" he asked.

"Yes," they replied, "he is dead."

20Then David got up from the ground. After he had washed, put on lotions and changed his clothes, he went into the house of the LORD and worshiped. Then he went to his own house, and at his request they served him food, and he ate.

21His attendants asked him, "Why are you acting this way? While the child was alive, you fasted and wept, but now that the child is dead, you get up and eat!"

22He answered, "While the child was still alive, I fasted and wept. I thought, 'Who knows? The LORD may be gracious to me and let the child live.' 23But now that he is dead, why should I go on fasting? Can I bring him back again? I will go to him, but he will not return to me."

24Then David comforted his wife Bathsheba, and he went to her and made love to her. She gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon. The LORD loved him; 25and because the LORD loved him, he sent word through Nathan the prophet to name him Jedidiah.[b]

26Meanwhile Joab fought against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal citadel. 27Joab then sent messengers to David, saying, "I have fought against Rabbah and taken its water supply. 28Now muster the rest of the troops and besiege the city and capture it. Otherwise I will take the city, and it will be named after me."

29So David mustered the entire army and went to Rabbah, and attacked and captured it. 30David took the crown from their king's[c] head, and it was placed on his own head. It weighed a talent[d] of gold, and it was set with precious stones. David took a great quantity of plunder from the city 31and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes, and he made

[a] *16* Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint; Masoretic Text does not have *in sackcloth*. [b] *25* *Jedidiah* means *loved by the* LORD. [c] *30* Or *from Milkom's* (that is, Molek's) [d] *30* That is, about 75 pounds or about 34 kilograms

Rabbah, Capital of the Ammonites (2Sa 12:26)

The Ammonites inhabited the mountainous area in Transjordan directly east of Jerusalem. Their capital was at Rabbah, which was also known as "Rabbah of the Ammonites" (Dt 3:11). The city is designated a "royal citadel," meaning that a king resided there (2Sa 12:26). Since this Ammonite royal city was only about 40 miles from Jerusalem, Israel's capital city, King David had to capture Rabbah in order to control the region for Israel. This he eventually did, assuming the Ammonite king's crown for himself (12:29, 30).

Rabbah has one of the most impressive natural settings. Its L-shaped citadel sits high above the center of modern Amman, Jordan. Because of extensive building in later times, principally in Roman and Byzantine periods, much of the city from David's time has not been uncovered. Nevertheless, Rabbah's natural defensive position is obvious.

When Joab, David's general, captured the city, he was careful to send word to David that he had not only captured the city but also its water source (12:27). In the area of the citadel, archaeologists have discovered a large underground cistern. Dated by nearby structures, it appears to be the main water source from the time when Joab besieged the city. Some think that a fortified citadel protected the Ammonite king's royal residence as well as the water supply. If so, then Joab was indicating to David that Israel's army had broken down Ammon's strongest defenses.

Ashes of Sorrow (2Sa 13:19)

People of biblical times often figuratively expressed their feelings. One way this was done was by joining their feelings to an unusual striking act. For example, accidentally tearing a favorite article of clothing would make some people angry, sad, or frustrated. But in Bible times distraught people sometimes tore their clothes in a dramatic expression of their feelings. We should remember that long before the industrial revolution every piece of clothing was handmade. This only reinforces how much sorrow a person must have felt to tear a garment, especially if it was a precious one.

Tamar's tragic story is one of a sister being sexually violated by her brother Amnon, even though she pled with him that "such a thing should not be done in Israel" (2Sa 13:12). In disgrace she tore her robe, a special possession as indicated by its description as "ornate." In addition, she put "ashes on her head" (2Sa 13:19).

In the cooking process the usual endeavor was to remain clean, meaning to keep the ashes in the firepit and not on one's person. Ashes were refuse and dirty. Tamar, like other ancient persons (Est 4:1; Job 2:8; Da 9:3), covered herself with ashes by putting them on her head. By tearing her beautiful robe and covering her head in ashes, Tamar expressed, even better than with words, how distraught she was.

them work at brickmaking.[a] David did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then he and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.

Amnon and Tamar

13 [1]In the course of time, Amnon son of David fell in love with Tamar, the beautiful sister of Absalom son of David.

[2]Amnon became so obsessed with his sister Tamar that he made himself ill. She was a virgin, and it seemed impossible for him to do anything to her.

[3]Now Amnon had an adviser named Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother. Jonadab was a very shrewd man. [4]He asked Amnon, "Why do you, the king's son, look so haggard morning after morning? Won't you tell me?"

Amnon said to him, "I'm in love with Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."

[5]"Go to bed and pretend to be ill," Jonadab said. "When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand.'"

[6]So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. When the king came to see him, Amnon said to him, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and make some special bread in my sight, so I may eat from her hand."

[7]David sent word to Tamar at the palace: "Go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him." [8]So Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was lying down. She took some dough, kneaded it, made the bread in his sight and baked it. [9]Then she took the pan and served him the bread, but he refused to eat.

"Send everyone out of here," Amnon said. So everyone left him. [10]Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food here into my bedroom so I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the bread she had prepared and brought it to her brother Amnon in his bedroom. [11]But when she took it to him to eat, he grabbed her and said, "Come to bed with me, my sister."

[12]"No, my brother!" she said to him. "Don't force me! Such a thing should not be done in Israel! Don't do this wicked thing. [13]What about me? Where could I get rid of my disgrace? And what about you? You would be like one of the wicked fools in Israel. Please speak to the king; he will not keep me from being married to you." [14]But he refused to listen to her, and since he was stronger than she, he raped her.

[15]Then Amnon hated her with intense hatred. In fact, he hated her more than he had loved her. Amnon said to her, "Get up and get out!"

[16]"No!" she said to him. "Sending me away would be a greater wrong than what you have already done to me."

But he refused to listen to her. [17]He called his personal servant and said, "Get this woman out of my sight and bolt the door after her." [18]So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. She was wearing an ornate[b] robe, for this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore. [19]Tamar put ashes on her

Daily Life & Customs

Concerning Tamar's "ornate robe" is the comment that "this was the kind of garment the virgin daughters of the king wore" (2Sa 13:18). Clothing has always been used as a means of distinguishing royalty and the nobility from the population at large. Frequently societies have passed laws, called sumptuary laws, that enforce such distinctions.

[a] *31* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.
[b] *18* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain; also in verse 19.

ABSALOM'S CRIME AND RISE TO POWER

Chronological notes in the Book of 2 Samuel trace the quick rise of Absalom as he attempts to take the kingship from his father by force.

Passing Years	Event
	Amnon defiles his half sister Tamar (2Sa 13:1–22)
2 years later	Absalom has his brother Amnon killed (2Sa 13:23–29)
	Absalom banished to Geshur for 3 years (2Sa 13:37–39)
3 years later	Absalom returns to Jerusalem (2Sa 14:21–24)
	Absalom dwells in Jerusalem for 2 years (2Sa 14:28)
2 years later	Absalom burns Joab's field (2Sa 14:29–32)
	Absalom courts the men of Israel for 4 years (2Sa 15:1–6)
4 years later	Absalom goes to Hebron to declare himself king (2Sa 15:7–12)

The Hebrew Old Testament reads "40 years" in 2Sa 15:7. Yet David's entire reign was only 40 years long (1Ki 2:11). The chronological difficulty is solved if we read "4 years" in 2Sa 15:7, as do the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament), Syriac manuscripts, and the historian Josephus.

head and tore the ornate robe she was wearing. She put her hands on her head and went away, weeping aloud as she went.

[20]Her brother Absalom said to her, "Has that Amnon, your brother, been with you? Be quiet for now, my sister; he is your brother. Don't take this thing to heart." And Tamar lived in her brother Absalom's house, a desolate woman.

[21]When King David heard all this, he was furious. [22]And Absalom never said a word to Amnon, either good or bad; he hated Amnon because he had disgraced his sister Tamar.

Absalom Kills Amnon

[23]Two years later, when Absalom's sheepshearers were at Baal Hazor near the border of Ephraim, he invited all the king's sons to come there. [24]Absalom went to the king and said, "Your servant has had shearers come. Will the king and his attendants please join me?"

[25]"No, my son," the king replied. "All of us should not go; we would only be a burden to you." Although Absalom urged him, he still refused to go but gave him his blessing.

[26]Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon come with us."

The king asked him, "Why should he go with you?" [27]But Absalom urged him, so he sent with him Amnon and the rest of the king's sons.

[28]Absalom ordered his men, "Listen! When Amnon is in high spirits from drinking wine and I say to you, 'Strike Amnon down,' then kill him. Don't be afraid. Haven't I given you this order? Be strong and brave." [29]So Absalom's men did to Amnon what Absalom had ordered. Then all the king's sons got up, mounted their mules and fled.

[30]While they were on their way, the report came to David: "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons; not one of them is left." [31]The king stood up, tore his clothes and lay down on the ground; and all his attendants stood by with their clothes torn.

[32]But Jonadab son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "My lord should not think that they killed all the princes; only Amnon is dead. This has been Absalom's express intention ever since the day Amnon raped his sister Tamar. [33]My lord the king should not be concerned about the report that all the king's sons are dead. Only Amnon is dead."

[34]Meanwhile, Absalom had fled.

Now the man standing watch looked up and saw many people on the road west of him, coming down the side of the hill. The watchman went and told the king, "I see men in the direction of Horonaim, on the side of the hill."[a]

[35]Jonadab said to the king, "See, the king's sons have come; it has happened just as your servant said."

[36]As he finished speaking, the king's sons came in, wailing loudly. The king, too, and all his attendants wept very bitterly.

[37]Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, the king of Geshur. But King David mourned many days for his son.

[38]After Absalom fled and went to Geshur, he stayed there three years. [39]And King David longed to go to Absalom, for he was consoled concerning Amnon's death.

[a] *34* Septuagint; Hebrew does not have this sentence.

Absalom Returns to Jerusalem

14 1Joab son of Zeruiah knew that the king's
heart longed for Absalom. 2So Joab
sent someone to Tekoa and had a wise woman brought from there. He said to her, "Pretend you are in mourning. Dress in mourning clothes, and don't use any cosmetic lotions. Act like a woman who has spent many days grieving for the dead. 3Then go to the king and speak these words to him." And Joab put the words in her mouth.

4When the woman from Tekoa went[a] to the king, she fell with her face to the ground to pay him honor, and she said, "Help me, Your Majesty!"

5The king asked her, "What is troubling you?"

She said, "I am a widow; my husband is dead. 6I your servant had two sons. They got into a fight with each other in the field, and no one was there to separate them. One struck the other and killed him. 7Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant; they say, 'Hand over the one who struck his brother down, so that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed; then we will get rid of the heir as well.' They would put out the only burning coal I have left, leaving my husband neither name nor descendant on the face of the earth."

8The king said to the woman, "Go home, and I will issue an order in your behalf."

9But the woman from Tekoa said to him, "Let my lord the king pardon me and my family, and let the king and his throne be without guilt."

10The king replied, "If anyone says anything to you, bring them to me, and they will not bother you again."

11She said, "Then let the king invoke the LORD his God to prevent the avenger of blood from adding to the destruction, so that my son will not be destroyed."

"As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "not one hair of your son's head will fall to the ground."

12Then the woman said, "Let your servant speak a word to my lord the king."

"Speak," he replied.

13The woman said, "Why then have you devised a thing like this against the people of God? When the king says this, does he not convict himself, for the king has not brought back his banished son? 14Like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be recovered, so we must die. But that is not what God desires; rather, he devises ways so that a banished person does not remain banished from him.

15"And now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; perhaps he will grant his servant's request. 16Perhaps the king will agree to deliver his servant from the hand of the man who is trying to cut off both me and my son from God's inheritance.'

17"And now your servant says, 'May the word of my lord the king secure my inheritance, for my lord the king is like an angel of God in discerning good and evil. May the LORD your God be with you.'"

18Then the king said to the woman, "Don't keep from me the answer to what I am going to ask you."

"Let my lord the king speak," the woman said.

19The king asked, "Isn't the hand of Joab with you in all this?"

The woman answered, "As surely as you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or to the left from anything my lord the king says. Yes, it was your servant Joab who instructed me to do this and who put all these words into the mouth of your servant. 20Your servant Joab did this to change the present situation. My lord has wisdom like that of an angel of God—he knows everything that happens in the land."

21The king said to Joab, "Very well, I will do it. Go, bring back the young man Absalom."

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[a] *4* Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *spoke*

22 Joab fell with his face to the ground to pay
him honor, and he blessed the king. Joab said,
"Today your servant knows that he has found
favor in your eyes, my lord the king, because
the king has granted his servant's request."
23 Then Joab went to Geshur and brought Ab-
salom back to Jerusalem. 24 But the king said,
"He must go to his own house; he must not see
my face." So Absalom went to his own house
and did not see the face of the king.
25 In all Israel there was not a man so highly
praised for his handsome appearance as Absa-
lom. From the top of his head to the sole of his
foot there was no blemish in him. 26 Whenever
he cut the hair of his head—he used to cut his
hair once a year because it became too heavy
for him—he would weigh it, and its weight was
two hundred shekels[a] by the royal standard.
27 Three sons and a daughter were born to
Absalom. His daughter's name was Tamar, and
she became a beautiful woman.
28 Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem with-
out seeing the king's face. 29 Then Absalom
sent for Joab in order to send him to the king,
but Joab refused to come to him. So he sent a
second time, but he refused to come. 30 Then
he said to his servants, "Look, Joab's field is
next to mine, and he has barley there. Go and
set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the
field on fire.
31 Then Joab did go to Absalom's house, and
he said to him, "Why have your servants set
my field on fire?"
32 Absalom said to Joab, "Look, I sent word
to you and said, 'Come here so I can send you
to the king to ask, "Why have I come from Ge-
shur? It would be better for me if I were still
there!"' Now then, I want to see the king's face,
and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me
to death."
33 So Joab went to the king and told him this.
Then the king summoned Absalom, and he
came in and bowed down with his face to the
ground before the king. And the king kissed
Absalom.

[a] *26* That is, about 5 pounds or about 2.3 kilograms
[b] *7* Some Septuagint manuscripts, Syriac and Josephus; Hebrew *forty* [c] *8* Some Septuagint manuscripts; Hebrew does not have *in Hebron.*

TRANSITION

Absalom Subverts the Nation

David's advancing years and his preoccupation with war and his family problems may have delayed the administration of justice. In this Absalom saw the opportunity to work his way into the good graces of the people of Israel, eventually building a conspiracy to become king himself (2Sa 15:1–6, 10–12). When David received word of this conspiracy, however, he did not delay. His hasty departure from the city to escape Absalom may have been in part to save Jerusalem from siege and possible damage.

A chronological note in 2Sa 15:7 suggests that 40 years passed before Absalom made his move in Hebron. However, since David's entire reign is reported to have been 40 years (1Ki 2:11), the NIV translates the passage of time in 2Sa 15:7 as "four years," as does the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament), Syriac manuscripts, and the Jewish historian Josephus (see footnote at 2Sa 15:7).

• 2 Samuel 15:1–37

2 Samuel

Absalom's Conspiracy

15:1 In the course of time, Absalom provided himself with a chariot and horses and with fifty men to run ahead of him. 2 He would get up early and stand by the side of the road leading to the city gate. Whenever anyone came with a complaint to be placed before the king for a decision, Absalom would call out to him, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel." 3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you." 4 And Absalom would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice."
5 Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him.
6 Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the people of Israel.
7 At the end of four[b] years, Absalom said to the king, "Let me go to Hebron and fulfill a vow I made to the LORD. 8 While your servant was living at Geshur in Aram, I made this vow: 'If the LORD takes me back to Jerusalem, I will worship the LORD in Hebron.[c]'"
9 The king said to him, "Go in peace." So he went to Hebron.
10 Then Absalom sent secret messengers throughout the tribes of Israel to say, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron.'" 11 Two hundred men from Jerusalem had accompanied

Gittites Fight with David (2Sa 15:18)

Gath was one of the five principal Philistine cities and was the closest to Judahite territory (1Sa 17:52). According to the report of the Book of Joshua, Gath was formerly inhabited by a race of giants called the Anakites (Jos 11:22), and it was the home of the giant Goliath, whom David killed (1Sa 17:4).

David of Israel had personal connections with Gath. While Saul was king of Israel, David had sought asylum by fleeing to Gath, where he was received by the city's king, Achish (1Sa 27:2). Later, when David became king of Israel himself, he regularly employed soldiers from Gath (known as "the Gittites") in his army (2Sa 15:18). In addition to 600 Gittite mercenaries under the command of Ittai the Gittite (2Sa 18:2), David also employed Obed-Edom the Gittite (2Sa 6:10).

Employing foreign mercenaries, or whole contingents of foreign troops, in one's army was fairly common in the ancient Near East. The Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) used archers and shield-bearing troops from both Syria and Elam. Thus it is not surprising that David would use foreign auxiliaries, such as the Gittites, in his own armies.

Absalom. They had been invited as guests and went quite innocently, knowing nothing about the matter. 12While Absalom was offering sacrifices, he also sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, to come from Giloh, his hometown. And so the conspiracy gained strength, and Absalom's following kept on increasing.

David Flees

13A messenger came and told David, "The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom."

14Then David said to all his officials who were with him in Jerusalem, "Come! We must flee, or none of us will escape from Absalom. We must leave immediately, or he will move quickly to overtake us and bring ruin on us and put the city to the sword."

15The king's officials answered him, "Your servants are ready to do whatever our lord the king chooses."

16The king set out, with his entire household following him; but he left ten concubines to take care of the palace. 17So the king set out, with all the people following him, and they halted at the edge of the city. 18All his men marched past him, along with all the Kerethites and Pelethites; and all the six hundred Gittites who had accompanied him from Gath marched before the king.

19The king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why should you come along with us? Go back and stay with King Absalom. You are a foreigner, an exile from your homeland. 20You came only yesterday. And today shall I make you wander about with us, when I do not know where I am going? Go back, and take your people with you. May the LORD show you kindness and faithfulness."[a]

21But Ittai replied to the king, "As surely as the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be."

22David said to Ittai, "Go ahead, march on." So Ittai the Gittite marched on with all his men and the families that were with him.

23The whole countryside wept aloud as all the people passed by. The king also crossed the Kidron Valley, and all the people moved on toward the wilderness.

24Zadok was there, too, and all the Levites who were with him were carrying the ark of the covenant of God. They set down the ark of God, and Abiathar offered sacrifices until all the people had finished leaving the city.

25Then the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the LORD's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. 26But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him."

27The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Do you understand? Go back to the city with my blessing. Take your son Ahimaaz with you, and also Abiathar's son Jonathan. You and Abiathar return with your two sons. 28I will wait at the fords in the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." 29So Zadok and Abiathar took the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stayed there.

30But David continued up the Mount of Olives,

Politics & Government

The Kerethites and Pelethites were professional soldiers working for King David (2Sa 15:18). Their names are often taken to mean that they came from Crete and from Palestine. The advantage of mercenary soldiers is that they are not torn by local loyalties, but the related disadvantage is that their loyalty may become nothing more than money.

[a] *20* Septuagint; Hebrew *May kindness and faithfulness be with you*

weeping as he went; his head was covered and he was barefoot. All the people with him covered their heads too and were weeping as they went up. 31Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness."

32When David arrived at the summit, where people used to worship God, Hushai the Arkite was there to meet him, his robe torn and dust on his head. 33David said to him, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me. 34But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, 'Your Majesty, I will be your servant; I was your father's servant in the past, but now I will be your servant,' then you can help me by frustrating Ahithophel's advice. 35Won't the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you? Tell them anything you hear in the king's palace. 36Their two sons, Ahimaaz son of Zadok and Jonathan son of Abiathar, are there with them. Send them to me with anything you hear."

37So Hushai, David's confidant, arrived at Jerusalem as Absalom was entering the city.

TRANSITION

A Prayer in Time of Darkness

As he fled Jerusalem, David sent the ark of the covenant back into the city. He was convinced that if God favored his cause, he would return and see it again (2Sa 15:24–26). Such trust in God's care is a proper setting in which to read Ps 3. The superscription of the psalm associates this lament with David's flight from his own son.

• Psalm 3

PSALM 3[a]

A psalm of David. When he fled from his son Absalom.

LORD, how many are my foes!
How many rise up against me!
2Many are saying of me,
"God will not deliver him."[b]

3But you, LORD, are a shield around me,
my glory, the One who lifts my head high.
4I call out to the LORD,
and he answers me from his holy mountain.
5I lie down and sleep;
I wake again, because the LORD sustains me.
6I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side.

7Arise, LORD!
Deliver me, my God!
Strike all my enemies on the jaw;
break the teeth of the wicked.

8From the LORD comes deliverance.
May your blessing be on your people.

[a] In Hebrew texts 3:1-8 is numbered 3:2-9. [b] *2* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 4 and 8.

TRANSITION

David Flees Jerusalem

Although David had gone to considerable trouble to unite the land of Israel, the tribal distinctions remained. Of all the tribes, the one that resented David most was the tribe of Benjamin, Saul's tribe. As David fled his stronghold in Jerusalem, seemingly deposed, he personally encountered Benjamite hostility. Shimei, a kinsman of Saul, wrongly blamed David for the misfortunes of Saul's last days (2Sa 16:5–8).

• 2 Samuel 16:1–14

2 Samuel

David and Ziba

16:1 When David had gone a short distance beyond the summit, there was Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, waiting to meet him. He had a string of donkeys saddled and loaded with two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred cakes of raisins, a hundred cakes of figs and a skin of wine.

2The king asked Ziba, "Why have you brought these?"

Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and fruit are for the men to eat, and the wine is to refresh those who become exhausted in the wilderness."

3The king then asked, "Where is your master's grandson?"

Ziba said to him, "He is staying in Jerusalem, because he thinks, 'Today the Israelites will restore to me my grandfather's kingdom.'"

4Then the king said to Ziba, "All that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours."

"I humbly bow," Ziba said. "May I find favor in your eyes, my lord the king."

Shimei Curses David

5As King David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul's family came out

from there. His name was Shimei son of Gera, and he cursed as he came out. 6He pelted David and all the king's officials with stones, though all the troops and the special guard were on David's right and left. 7As he cursed, Shimei said, "Get out, get out, you murderer, you scoundrel! 8The LORD has repaid you for all the blood you shed in the household of Saul, in whose place you have reigned. The LORD has given the kingdom into the hands of your son Absalom. You have come to ruin because you are a murderer!"

9Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and cut off his head."

10But the king said, "What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'"

11David then said to Abishai and all his officials, "My son, my own flesh and blood, is trying to kill me. How much more, then, this Benjamite! Leave him alone; let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. 12It may be that the LORD will look upon my misery and restore to me his covenant blessing instead of his curse today."

13So David and his men continued along the road while Shimei was going along the hillside opposite him, cursing as he went and throwing stones at him and showering him with dirt. 14The king and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted. And there he refreshed himself.

TRANSITION

Persecution from a Benjamite

The superscription to Ps 7 does not identify a specific time. Nor does it identify "Cush, a Benjamite," who is mentioned only here in the Bible. Nevertheless, the reference to the insults of this Benjamite Cush corresponds rather neatly with the insults of the Benjamite Shimei in 2Sa 16. The content of Ps 7 suggests that Cush was an enemy of David; his affiliation with the tribe of Benjamin makes it likely he followed Saul. Whenever and whatever this unknown Cush spoke, the lament of Ps 7 makes increasingly clear the rivalry between Saul's tribe and David's tribe of Judah.

• Psalm 7

PSALM 7[a]

A shiggaion[b] *of David, which he sang to the* LORD *concerning Cush, a Benjamite.*

LORD my God, I take refuge in you;
save and deliver me from all who pursue me,

Beliefs & Ideas

The bow and arrow was the most effective long-range weapon until the introduction of firearms. In Homer's *Iliad*, divine arrows fall on the Greeks when Apollo wishes to punish them for disrespect. The arrows bring sickness and death. Similarly, arrows also appear in the Bible as appropriate symbols of wounding, suffering, and death. If they come from God, they are his judgment (Ps 7:13).

2or they will tear me apart like a lion
and rip me to pieces with no one to rescue me.

3LORD my God, if I have done this
and there is guilt on my hands—
4if I have repaid my ally with evil
or without cause have robbed my foe—
5then let my enemy pursue and overtake me;
let him trample my life to the ground
and make me sleep in the dust.[c]

6Arise, LORD, in your anger;
rise up against the rage of my enemies.
Awake, my God; decree justice.
7Let the assembled peoples gather around you,
while you sit enthroned over them on high.
8 Let the LORD judge the peoples.
Vindicate me, LORD, according to my righteousness,
according to my integrity, O Most High.
9Bring to an end the violence of the wicked
and make the righteous secure—
you, the righteous God
who probes minds and hearts.

10My shield[d] is God Most High,
who saves the upright in heart.
11God is a righteous judge,
a God who displays his wrath every day.
12If he does not relent,
he[e] will sharpen his sword;
he will bend and string his bow.
13He has prepared his deadly weapons;
he makes ready his flaming arrows.

14Whoever is pregnant with evil
conceives trouble and gives birth to disillusionment.
15Whoever digs a hole and scoops it out
falls into the pit they have made.

[a] In Hebrew texts 7:1-17 is numbered 7:2-18. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] *5* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here.
[d] *10* Or *sovereign* [e] *12* Or *If anyone does not repent, / God*

16 The trouble they cause recoils on them;
their violence comes down on their own heads.

17 I will give thanks to the LORD because of his righteousness;
I will sing the praises of the name of the LORD Most High.

TRANSITION

Who Will Be Commander?

In the ancient Near East, the commander of the army was extremely powerful, almost on a level with the king himself. Indeed, when a king was overthrown, the commander of the army was generally involved. In this period when first Absalom took over Jerusalem as king (2Sa 16:15, 16), and then David returned to the city as king (2Sa 19:15), two commanders—Joab and Amasa—vied for control of the army.

Amasa was a cousin of Joab, and both men were nephews of David (1Ch 2:13–17). Although earlier defending Absalom (2Sa 14:1–24), Joab went into exile with the king, to whom was his first loyalty. When Absalom entered Jerusalem, he installed Amasa over the army in place of Joab (2Sa 17:25; 18:1, 2).

David's commander, Joab, is one of the most complex figures in the Bible. On the one hand he seems to be fiercely loyal to David, but on the other hand he repeatedly acts on his own initiative, even against David's express wishes. His conduct in the battle against Absalom is the best example of Joab's independent nature (2Sa 18:5, 14).

Returning to the throne, David sought to heal the wounds of war. He forgave Absalom's commander, Amasa, and appointed him in place of Joab (2Sa 19:11–13). David may have blamed Joab for the death of Absalom as well as for the earlier murder of Abner (2Sa 3:27). But Joab, though loyal to David, was also brutally single-minded in his determination to lead David's armies, and he destroyed yet another rival (2Sa 20:8–10).

• 2 Samuel 16:15—20:26

2 Samuel

The Advice of Ahithophel and Hushai

16 :15 Meanwhile, Absalom and all the men of Israel came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel was with him. 16 Then Hushai the Arkite, David's confidant, went to Absalom and said to him, "Long live the king! Long live the king!"

17 Absalom said to Hushai, "So this is the love you show your friend? If he's your friend, why didn't you go with him?"

18 Hushai said to Absalom, "No, the one chosen by the LORD, by these people, and by all the men of Israel—his I will be, and I will remain with him. 19 Furthermore, whom should I serve? Should I not serve the son? Just as I served your father, so I will serve you."

20 Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give us your advice. What should we do?"

21 Ahithophel answered, "Sleep with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself obnoxious to your father, and the hands of everyone with you will be more resolute." 22 So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he slept with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

23 Now in those days the advice Ahithophel gave was like that of one who inquires of God. That was how both David and Absalom regarded all of Ahithophel's advice.

17 1 Ahithophel said to Absalom, "I would[a] choose twelve thousand men and set out tonight in pursuit of David. 2 I would attack him while he is weary and weak. I would strike him with terror, and then all the people with him will flee. I would strike down only the king 3 and bring all the people back to you. The death of the man you seek will mean the return of all; all the people will be unharmed." 4 This plan seemed good to Absalom and to all the elders of Israel.

5 But Absalom said, "Summon also Hushai the Arkite, so we can hear what he has to say as well." 6 When Hushai came to him, Absalom said, "Ahithophel has given this advice. Should we do what he says? If not, give us your opinion."

7 Hushai replied to Absalom, "The advice Ahithophel has given is not good this time. 8 You know your father and his men; they are fighters, and as fierce as a wild bear robbed of her cubs. Besides, your father is an experienced fighter; he will not spend the night with the troops. 9 Even now, he is hidden in a cave or some other place. If he should attack your troops first,[b] whoever hears about it will say, 'There has been a slaughter among the troops who follow Absalom.' 10 Then even the bravest soldier, whose heart is like the heart of a lion, will melt with fear, for all Israel knows that your father is a fighter and that those with him are brave.

11 "So I advise you: Let all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba—as numerous as the sand on

[a] 1 Or *Let me attack* [b] 9 Or *When some of the men fall at the first*

the seashore—be gathered to you, with you yourself leading them into battle. 12Then we will attack him wherever he may be found, and we will fall on him as dew settles on the ground. Neither he nor any of his men will be left alive. 13If he withdraws into a city, then all Israel will bring ropes to that city, and we will drag it down to the valley until not so much as a pebble is left."

14Absalom and all the men of Israel said, "The advice of Hushai the Arkite is better than that of Ahithophel." For the LORD had determined to frustrate the good advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster on Absalom.

15Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, "Ahithophel has advised Absalom and the elders of Israel to do such and such, but I have advised them to do so and so. 16Now send a message at once and tell David, 'Do not spend the night at the fords in the wilderness; cross over without fail, or the king and all the people with him will be swallowed up.'"

17Jonathan and Ahimaaz were staying at En Rogel. A female servant was to go and inform them, and they were to go and tell King David, for they could not risk being seen entering the city. 18But a young man saw them and told Absalom. So the two of them left at once and went to the house of a man in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard, and they climbed down into it. 19His wife took a covering and spread it out over the opening of the well and scattered grain over it. No one knew anything about it.

20When Absalom's men came to the woman at the house, they asked, "Where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?"

The woman answered them, "They crossed over the brook."[a] The men searched but found no one, so they returned to Jerusalem.

21After they had gone, the two climbed out of the well and went to inform King David. They said to him, "Set out and cross the river at once; Ahithophel has advised such and such against you." 22So David and all the people with him set out and crossed the Jordan. By daybreak, no one was left who had not crossed the Jordan.

Plants & Animals

Animals are normally ranked in order of prestige. In the Bible the mule appears next to the horse as a favored mount of kings (1Ki 1:33; 2Sa 18:9). Mules are the offspring of a female horse and a donkey; they resemble horses, but are hardier. The Law of Moses forbade breeding one species with another (Lev 19:19). To obey this law mules had to be brought into Israel from the outside.

23When Ahithophel saw that his advice had not been followed, he saddled his donkey and set out for his house in his hometown. He put his house in order and then hanged himself. So he died and was buried in his father's tomb.

Absalom's Death

24David went to Mahanaim, and Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. 25Absalom had appointed Amasa over the army in place of Joab. Amasa was the son of Jether,[b] an Ishmaelite[c] who had married Abigail,[d] the daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruiah the mother of Joab. 26The Israelites and Absalom camped in the land of Gilead.

27When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Makir son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim 28brought bedding and bowls and articles of pottery. They also brought wheat and barley, flour and roasted grain, beans and lentils,[e] 29honey and curds, sheep, and cheese from cows' milk for David and his people to eat. For they said, "The people have become exhausted and hungry and thirsty in the wilderness."

18 1David mustered the men who were with him and appointed over them commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds. 2David sent out his troops, a third under the command of Joab, a third under Joab's brother Abishai son of Zeruiah, and a third under Ittai the Gittite. The king told the troops, "I myself will surely march out with you."

3But the men said, "You must not go out; if we are forced to flee, they won't care about us. Even if half of us die, they won't care; but you are worth ten thousand of us.[f] It would be better now for you to give us support from the city."

4The king answered, "I will do whatever seems best to you."

So the king stood beside the gate while all his men marched out in units of hundreds and of thousands. 5The king commanded Joab, Abishai and Ittai, "Be gentle with the young man Absalom for my sake." And all the troops heard the king giving orders concerning Absalom to each of the commanders.

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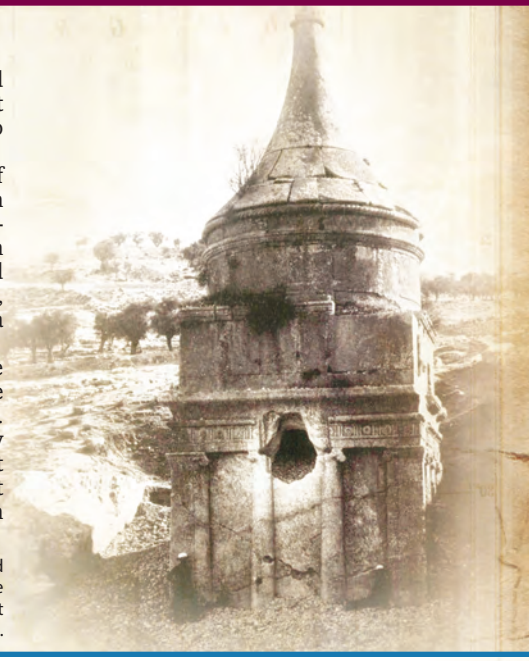
[a] *20* Or *"They passed by the sheep pen toward the water."*
[b] *25* Hebrew *Ithra*, a variant of *Jether* [c] *25* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 2:17); Hebrew and other Septuagint manuscripts *Israelite* [d] *25* Hebrew *Abigal*, a variant of *Abigail* [e] *28* Most Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac; Hebrew *lentils, and roasted grain* [f] *3* Two Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate; most Hebrew manuscripts *care; for now there are ten thousand like us*

Absalom's Monument (2Sa 18:18)

Absalom wanted to be king in his father's place but ended his life under an obscure oak tree (2Sa 18:14, 15). He did not even have a son to carry on his name. In the end, he had no kingdom and no heir.

During his lifetime Absalom reflected on his lack of a son to remember him. Apparently, all three sons born to Absalom must have died early in life (2Sa 14:27). Without a male heir, Absalom decided to erect a monument in one of the most traveled valleys. Thus, as people walked through the "King's Valley" (also called the Kidron Valley), they would see his monument and remember Absalom (2Sa 18:18).

Today, visitors to modern Jerusalem can see "the Tomb of Absalom" in the Kidron Valley. While that is the tomb's popular name, it has no real connection to Absalom. The monument called the Tomb of Absalom was actually built during the Roman period (37 B.C.–A.D. 325), almost 1,000 years after the time of Absalom. Even the monument that Absalom himself built as a memorial to his life has been forgotten.



The mausoleum erroneously called Absalom's Monument, located in the Kidron Valley east of Jerusalem, was built centuries after Absalom's death.

6 David's army marched out of the city to
fight Israel, and the battle took place in the
forest of Ephraim. 7 There Israel's troops were
routed by David's men, and the casualties that
day were great — twenty thousand men. 8 The
battle spread out over the whole countryside,
and the forest swallowed up more men that day
than the sword.

9 Now Absalom happened to meet David's
men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule
went under the thick branches of a large oak,
Absalom's hair got caught in the tree. He was
left hanging in midair, while the mule he was
riding kept on going.

10 When one of the men saw what had hap-
pened, he told Joab, "I just saw Absalom hang-
ing in an oak tree."

11 Joab said to the man who had told him this,
"What! You saw him? Why didn't you strike
him to the ground right there? Then I would
have had to give you ten shekels[a] of silver and
a warrior's belt."

12 But the man replied, "Even if a thousand
shekels[b] were weighed out into my hands, I
would not lay a hand on the king's son. In our
hearing the king commanded you and Abish-
ai and Ittai, 'Protect the young man Absalom
for my sake.[c]' 13 And if I had put my life in
jeopardy[d] — and nothing is hidden from the
king — you would have kept your distance
from me."

14 Joab said, "I'm not going to wait like this for
you." So he took three javelins in his hand and
plunged them into Absalom's heart while Ab-
salom was still alive in the oak tree. 15 And ten
of Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom,
struck him and killed him.

16 Then Joab sounded the trumpet, and the
troops stopped pursuing Israel, for Joab halted
them. 17 They took Absalom, threw him into a
big pit in the forest and piled up a large heap
of rocks over him. Meanwhile, all the Israelites
fled to their homes.

18 During his lifetime Absalom had taken a
pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a
monument to himself, for he thought, "I have
no son to carry on the memory of my name."
He named the pillar after himself, and it is
called Absalom's Monument to this day.

David Mourns

19 Now Ahimaaz son of Zadok said, "Let me
run and take the news to the king that the LORD
has vindicated him by delivering him from the
hand of his enemies."

20 "You are not the one to take the news to-
day," Joab told him. "You may take the news
another time, but you must not do so today, be-
cause the king's son is dead."

21 Then Joab said to a Cushite, "Go, tell the

[a] *11* That is, about 4 ounces or about 115 grams [b] *12* That is, about 25 pounds or about 12 kilograms [c] *12* A few Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts may be translated *Absalom, whoever you may be.* [d] *13* Or *Otherwise, if I had acted treacherously toward him*

king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed down before Joab and ran off.

22 Ahimaaz son of Zadok again said to Joab, "Come what may, please let me run behind the Cushite."

But Joab replied, "My son, why do you want to go? You don't have any news that will bring you a reward."

23 He said, "Come what may, I want to run."

So Joab said, "Run!" Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain[a] and outran the Cushite.

24 While David was sitting between the inner and outer gates, the watchman went up to the roof of the gateway by the wall. As he looked out, he saw a man running alone. 25 The watchman called out to the king and reported it.

The king said, "If he is alone, he must have good news." And the runner came closer and closer.

26 Then the watchman saw another runner, and he called down to the gatekeeper, "Look, another man running alone!"

The king said, "He must be bringing good news, too."

27 The watchman said, "It seems to me that the first one runs like Ahimaaz son of Zadok."

"He's a good man," the king said. "He comes with good news."

28 Then Ahimaaz called out to the king, "All is well!" He bowed down before the king with his face to the ground and said, "Praise be to the LORD your God! He has delivered up those who lifted their hands against my lord the king."

29 The king asked, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

Ahimaaz answered, "I saw great confusion just as Joab was about to send the king's servant and me, your servant, but I don't know what it was."

30 The king said, "Stand aside and wait here." So he stepped aside and stood there.

31 Then the Cushite arrived and said, "My lord the king, hear the good news! The LORD has vindicated you today by delivering you from the hand of all who rose up against you."

32 The king asked the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?"

The Cushite replied, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up to harm you be like that young man."

33 The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!"[b]

19[c] 1 Joab was told, "The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." 2 And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, "The king is grieving for his son." 3 The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. 4 The king covered his face and cried aloud, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

5 Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, "Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. 6 You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. 7 Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the LORD that if you don't go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come on you from your youth till now."

8 So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway," they all came before him.

Meanwhile, the Israelites had fled to their homes.

David Returns to Jerusalem

9 Throughout the tribes of Israel, all the people were arguing among themselves, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies; he is the one who rescued us from the hand of the Philistines. But now he has fled the country to escape from Absalom; 10 and Absalom, whom we anointed to rule over us, has died in battle. So why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?"

11 King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests: "Ask the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his palace, since what is being said throughout Israel has reached the king at his quarters? 12 You are my relatives, my own flesh and blood. So why should you be the last to bring back the king?' 13 And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my own flesh and blood? May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if you are not the commander of my army for life in place of Joab.'"

14 He won over the hearts of the men of Judah so that they were all of one mind. They sent word to the king, "Return, you and all your

[a] *23* That is, the plain of the Jordan
[b] *33* In Hebrew texts this verse (18:33) is numbered 19:1.
[c] In Hebrew texts 19:1-43 is numbered 19:2-44.

Idrimi Returns to His Kingdom (2Sa 19:30)

Alalakh was a city that carried on commercial relations with various cities of Mesopotamia and Syria during the 17th and 16th centuries B.C. Cities on the Euphrates River, such as Emar and Carchemish, as well as Ebla and Ugarit to the west, were trading partners of Alalakh. Various cuneiform texts and an autobiographical inscription found at Alalakh relate the story of Idrimi, king of Alalakh from about 1518 to 1480 B.C.

Idrimi's father established a kingdom at the city of Aleppo. The "autobiography," dated two centuries after Idrimi's death, recounts how he fled with his family from Aleppo when his father was overthrown around 1525 B.C. For seven years he lived among the Habiru, who helped him eventually regain the throne. He located the capital of his kingdom at Alalakh.

There are elements of folklore in the story of Idrimi's rise to power and the justification of his reign that are similar to the story of King David. Both Idrimi and David were forced to flee their homes. Both lived among foreigners: Idrimi with the Habiru; David as a "Hebrew" among the Philistines (1Sa 29:2, 3). Both spent time in exile, but both were able to regain their thrones: Idrimi at Alalakh; David at Jerusalem (2Sa 19:30; 20:22).

men."[15]Then the king returned and went as far as the Jordan.

Now the men of Judah had come to Gilgal to go out and meet the king and bring him across the Jordan. [16]Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, hurried down with the men of Judah to meet King David. [17]With him were a thousand Benjamites, along with Ziba, the steward of Saul's household, and his fifteen sons and twenty servants. They rushed to the Jordan, where the king was. [18]They crossed at the ford to take the king's household over and to do whatever he wished.

When Shimei son of Gera crossed the Jordan, he fell prostrate before the king [19]and said to him, "May my lord not hold me guilty. Do not remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. May the king put it out of his mind. [20]For I your servant know that I have sinned, but today I have come here as the first from the tribes of Joseph to come down and meet my lord the king."

[21]Then Abishai son of Zeruiah said, "Shouldn't Shimei be put to death for this? He cursed the LORD's anointed."

[22]David replied, "What does this have to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? What right do you have to interfere? Should anyone be put to death in Israel today? Don't I know that today I am king over Israel?" [23]So the king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king promised him on oath.

[24]Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, also went down to meet the king. He had not taken care of his feet or trimmed his mustache or washed his clothes from the day the king left until the day he returned safely. [25]When he came from Jerusalem to meet the king, the king asked him, "Why didn't you go with me, Mephibosheth?"

[26]He said, "My lord the king, since I your servant am lame, I said, 'I will have my donkey saddled and will ride on it, so I can go with the king.' But Ziba my servant betrayed me. [27]And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king. My lord the king is like an angel of God; so do whatever you wish. [28]All my grandfather's descendants deserved nothing but death from my lord the king, but you gave your servant a place among those who eat at your table. So what right do I have to make any more appeals to the king?"

[29]The king said to him, "Why say more? I order you and Ziba to divide the land."

[30]Mephibosheth said to the king, "Let him take everything, now that my lord the king has returned home safely."

[31]Barzillai the Gileadite also came down from Rogelim to cross the Jordan with the king and to send him on his way from there. [32]Now Barzillai was very old, eighty years of age. He had provided for the king during his stay in Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. [33]The king said to Barzillai, "Cross over with me and stay with me in Jerusalem, and I will provide for you."

[34]But Barzillai answered the king, "How many more years will I live, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? [35]I am now eighty years old. Can I tell the difference between what is enjoyable and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats and drinks? Can I still hear the voices of male and female singers? Why should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? [36]Your servant will cross over the Jordan with the king for a short distance, but why should the king reward me in this way? [37]Let your servant return, that I may die in my own town near the tomb of my father and mother. But here is your servant Kimham. Let him cross over with my lord the king. Do for him whatever you wish."

38The king said, "Kimham shall cross over
with me, and I will do for him whatever you
wish. And anything you desire from me I will
do for you."
39So all the people crossed the Jordan, and
then the king crossed over. The king kissed
Barzillai and bid him farewell, and Barzillai re-
turned to his home.
40When the king crossed over to Gilgal, Kim-
ham crossed with him. All the troops of Judah
and half the troops of Israel had taken the king
over.
41Soon all the men of Israel were coming
to the king and saying to him, "Why did our
brothers, the men of Judah, steal the king away
and bring him and his household across the
Jordan, together with all his men?"
42All the men of Judah answered the men of
Israel, "We did this because the king is closely
related to us. Why are you angry about it? Have
we eaten any of the king's provisions? Have we
taken anything for ourselves?"
43Then the men of Israel answered the men
of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king; so
we have a greater claim on David than you
have. Why then do you treat us with contempt?
Weren't we the first to speak of bringing back
our king?"
But the men of Judah pressed their claims
even more forcefully than the men of Israel.

Sheba Rebels Against David

20 1Now a troublemaker named Sheba son
of Bikri, a Benjamite, happened to be
there. He sounded the trumpet and shouted,

"We have no share in David,
no part in Jesse's son!
Every man to his tent, Israel!"

2So all the men of Israel deserted David to
follow Sheba son of Bikri. But the men of Judah
stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan
to Jerusalem.
3When David returned to his palace in Jeru-
salem, he took the ten concubines he had left
to take care of the palace and put them in a
house under guard. He provided for them but
had no sexual relations with them. They were
kept in confinement till the day of their death,
living as widows.
4Then the king said to Amasa, "Summon the
men of Judah to come to me within three days,
and be here yourself." 5But when Amasa went
to summon Judah, he took longer than the time
the king had set for him.
6David said to Abishai, "Now Sheba son of
Bikri will do us more harm than Absalom did.
Take your master's men and pursue him, or he
will find fortified cities and escape from us."[a]
7So Joab's men and the Kerethites and Pel-
ethites and all the mighty warriors went out
under the command of Abishai. They marched
out from Jerusalem to pursue Sheba son of
Bikri.
8While they were at the great rock in Gibe-
on, Amasa came to meet them. Joab was wear-
ing his military tunic, and strapped over it at
his waist was a belt with a dagger in its sheath.
As he stepped forward, it dropped out of its
sheath.
9Joab said to Amasa, "How are you, my
brother?" Then Joab took Amasa by the beard
with his right hand to kiss him. 10Amasa was
not on his guard against the dagger in Joab's
hand, and Joab plunged it into his belly, and his
intestines spilled out on the ground. Without
being stabbed again, Amasa died. Then Joab
and his brother Abishai pursued Sheba son of
Bikri.
11One of Joab's men stood beside Amasa and
said, "Whoever favors Joab, and whoever is for
David, let him follow Joab!" 12Amasa lay wal-
lowing in his blood in the middle of the road,
and the man saw that all the troops came to
a halt there. When he realized that everyone
who came up to Amasa stopped, he dragged
him from the road into a field and threw a gar-
ment over him. 13After Amasa had been re-
moved from the road, everyone went on with
Joab to pursue Sheba son of Bikri.
14Sheba passed through all the tribes of Isra-
el to Abel Beth Maakah and through the entire
region of the Bikrites,[b] who gathered togeth-
er and followed him.15All the troops with Joab
came and besieged Sheba in Abel Beth Maa-
kah. They built a siege ramp up to the city, and
it stood against the outer fortifications. While
they were battering the wall to bring it down,
16a wise woman called from the city, "Listen!
Listen! Tell Joab to come here so I can speak
to him." 17He went toward her, and she asked,
"Are you Joab?"
"I am," he answered.
She said, "Listen to what your servant has
to say."
"I'm listening," he said.
18She continued, "Long ago they used to
say, 'Get your answer at Abel,' and that settled
it. 19We are the peaceful and faithful in Israel.
You are trying to destroy a city that is a mother
in Israel. Why do you want to swallow up the
LORD's inheritance?"

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[a] *6* Or *and do us serious injury* [b] *14* See Septuagint and Vulgate; Hebrew *Berites.*

Kerethites and Pelethites (2Sa 20:23)

The Kerethites and the Pelethites were core troops of David's personal guard. Their Canaanite home territory in southern Judah was close to the Philistines near the Mediterranean coast (1Sa 30:14).

The Kerethites and the Pelethites had become attached to David while he lived in Gath (2Sa 15:18). Somehow they felt closer to David than to the Philistines. Their origin near Gath suggests that their ancestors may have been part of the Sea Peoples and, thus, had migrated from the Aegean area. On the other hand, they may have been the remnant of peoples that were replaced by the Philistines who moved into the coastal area. We have no documented evidence to settle this question.

The Kerethites and the Pelethites were extremely loyal to David, accompanying him when he fled from Absalom (2Sa 15:18) and pursuing the rebel Sheba who threatened David's kingdom (2Sa 20:7). They were also instrumental in the events that established Solomon as king (1Ki 1:38, 44).

The Kerethites, Pelethites, and David were in a near-perfect relationship. The protection and loyalty which the Kerethites and Pelethites offered David assured them of his goodwill. Yet because they were foreigners, there was no possibility of this personal guard—those closest to David—replacing him as king with one of their own.

20 "Far be it from me!" Joab replied, "Far be
it from me to swallow up or destroy! 21 That is
not the case. A man named Sheba son of Bikri,
from the hill country of Ephraim, has lifted up
his hand against the king, against David. Hand
over this one man, and I'll withdraw from the
city."

The woman said to Joab, "His head will be
thrown to you from the wall."

22 Then the woman went to all the people with
her wise advice, and they cut off the head of
Sheba son of Bikri and threw it to Joab. So he
sounded the trumpet, and his men dispersed
from the city, each returning to his home. And
Joab went back to the king in Jerusalem.

David's Officials

23 Joab was over Israel's entire army; Bena-
iah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites
and Pelethites; 24 Adoniram[a] was in charge of
forced labor; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was
recorder; 25 Sheva was secretary; Zadok and
Abiathar were priests; 26 and Ira the Jairite[b] was
David's priest.

[a] *24* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Kings 4:6 and 5:14); Hebrew *Adoram* [b] *26* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 23:38) *Ithrite*

TRANSITION

The Gibeonites Are Avenged

The precise time when this three-year famine occurred is unknown, but it must have been sometime after David brought Mephibosheth to Jerusalem (2Sa 21:7; 9:13). Some scholars suggest that the Gibeonite incident answers the charge of Shimei against David as a murderous man (2Sa 16:7, 8). The famine is interpreted to David as caused by an otherwise unreported slaughter of the Gibeonites by Saul. Such a slaughter would have been a breach of a divinely sanctioned covenant (21:2). Shimei's kinsman Saul was more murderous than David.

At a loss to find a way to cleanse the land of its bloodguilt, David accepted the vengeful demand of the remaining Gibeonites and ordered the execution of seven of Saul's descendants. Shimei had assumed that God was punishing David (16:8), but after the Gibeonites' anger had been assuaged, God did not punish David but rather heard his prayer (21:14).

• 2 Samuel 21:1–22

2 Samuel

The Gibeonites Avenged

21 :1 During the reign of David, there was a
famine for three successive years; so Da-
vid sought the face of the Lord. The Lord said,
"It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained
house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to
death."

2 The king summoned the Gibeonites and
spoke to them. (Now the Gibeonites were not
a part of Israel but were survivors of the Am-
orites; the Israelites had sworn to spare them,
but Saul in his zeal for Israel and Judah had
tried to annihilate them.) 3 David asked the Gib-
eonites, "What shall I do for you? How shall
I make atonement so that you will bless the
Lord's inheritance?"

4 The Gibeonites answered him, "We have no
right to demand silver or gold from Saul or his
family, nor do we have the right to put anyone
in Israel to death."

"What do you want me to do for you?" David
asked.

5 They answered the king, "As for the man
who destroyed us and plotted against us so
that we have been decimated and have no place
anywhere in Israel, 6 let seven of his male de-
scendants be given to us to be killed and their

bodies exposed before the LORD at Gibeah of Saul—the LORD's chosen one."

So the king said, "I will give them to you."

7The king spared Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the oath before the LORD between David and Jonathan son of Saul. 8But the king took Armoni and Mephibosheth, the two sons of Aiah's daughter Rizpah, whom she had borne to Saul, together with the five sons of Saul's daughter Merab,[a] whom she had borne to Adriel son of Barzillai the Meholathite. 9He handed them over to the Gibeonites, who killed them and exposed their bodies on a hill before the LORD. All seven of them fell together; they were put to death during the first days of the harvest, just as the barley harvest was beginning.

10Rizpah daughter of Aiah took sackcloth and spread it out for herself on a rock. From the beginning of the harvest till the rain poured down from the heavens on the bodies, she did not let the birds touch them by day or the wild animals by night. 11When David was told what Aiah's daughter Rizpah, Saul's concubine, had done, 12he went and took the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from the citizens of Jabesh Gilead. (They had stolen their bodies from the public square at Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung them after they struck Saul down on Gilboa.) 13David brought the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan from there, and the bones of those who had been killed and exposed were gathered up.

14They buried the bones of Saul and his son Jonathan in the tomb of Saul's father Kish, at Zela in Benjamin, and did everything the king commanded. After that, God answered prayer in behalf of the land.

Wars Against the Philistines

15Once again there was a battle between the Philistines and Israel. David went down with his men to fight against the Philistines, and he became exhausted. 16And Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of Rapha, whose bronze spearhead weighed three hundred shekels[b] and who was armed with a new sword, said he would kill David. 17But Abishai son of Zeruiah came to David's rescue; he struck the Philistine down and killed him. Then David's men swore to him, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished."

18In the course of time, there was another battle with the Philistines, at Gob. At that time Sibbekai the Hushathite killed Saph, one of the descendants of Rapha.

19In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jair[c] the Bethlehemite killed the brother of[d] Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

20In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot—twenty-four in all. He also was descended from Rapha. 21When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimeah, David's brother, killed him.

22These four were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.

Culture & Society

The Gibeonites requested seven sons to be given to them to be killed and hanged up "before the LORD" (2Sa 21:6). The offering of these sons as some sort of sacrifice by the Gibeonites shows how complex the issues of guilt and justice were in ancient cultures. In the *Iliad*, Achilles is said to offer twelve sons of the enemy on the funeral pyre of his friend Patroclus.

TRANSITION

David's Song of Praise

Because the superscription of Ps 18 refers to David's deliverance "from the hand of Saul," that psalm appears with the narrative of Saul's death, to be read in that context. Nevertheless, an almost exact duplicate of Ps 18 occurs here in 2Sa 22, reflecting the end of Da vid's life. In this context, the psalm must be read as David's thanks for a lifetime of deliverance, from many more enemies than just Saul.

David's song of praise is followed by his "last words" (2Sa 23:1–7). The Hebrew term translated "inspired utterance" in 23:1 is used in the Old Testament to describe divinely inspired prophetic speeches. These "last words" have some of the tone and authority of a divine oracle.

•2 Samuel 22:1—23:39

2 Samuel

David's Song of Praise

22:1 David sang to the LORD the words of this song when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. 2He said:

[a] *8* Two Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 1 Samuel 18:19); most Hebrew and Septuagint manuscripts *Michal* [b] *16* That is, about 7 1/2 pounds or about 3.5 kilograms [c] *19* See 1 Chron. 20:5; Hebrew *Jaare-Oregim*. [d] *19* See 1 Chron. 20:5; Hebrew does not have *the brother of*.

"The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer;
3 my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield[a] and the horn[b] of my salvation.
He is my stronghold, my refuge and my savior—
from violent people you save me.
4 "I called to the LORD, who is worthy of praise,
and have been saved from my enemies.
5 The waves of death swirled about me;
the torrents of destruction overwhelmed me.
6 The cords of the grave coiled around me;
the snares of death confronted me.
7 "In my distress I called to the LORD;
I called out to my God.
From his temple he heard my voice;
my cry came to his ears.
8 The earth trembled and quaked,
the foundations of the heavens[c] shook;
they trembled because he was angry.
9 Smoke rose from his nostrils;
consuming fire came from his mouth,
burning coals blazed out of it.
10 He parted the heavens and came down;
dark clouds were under his feet.
11 He mounted the cherubim and flew;
he soared[d] on the wings of the wind.
12 He made darkness his canopy around him—
the dark[e] rain clouds of the sky.
13 Out of the brightness of his presence
bolts of lightning blazed forth.
14 The LORD thundered from heaven;
the voice of the Most High resounded.
15 He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy,
with great bolts of lightning he routed them.
16 The valleys of the sea were exposed
and the foundations of the earth laid bare
at the rebuke of the LORD,
at the blast of breath from his nostrils.
17 "He reached down from on high and took hold of me;
he drew me out of deep waters.
18 He rescued me from my powerful enemy,
from my foes, who were too strong for me.
19 They confronted me in the day of my disaster,
but the LORD was my support.
20 He brought me out into a spacious place;
he rescued me because he delighted in me.
21 "The LORD has dealt with me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.
22 For I have kept the ways of the LORD;
I am not guilty of turning from my God.
23 All his laws are before me;
I have not turned away from his decrees.
24 I have been blameless before him
and have kept myself from sin.
25 The LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,
according to my cleanness[f] in his sight.
26 "To the faithful you show yourself faithful,
to the blameless you show yourself blameless,
27 to the pure you show yourself pure,
but to the devious you show yourself shrewd.
28 You save the humble,
but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.
29 You, LORD, are my lamp;
the LORD turns my darkness into light.
30 With your help I can advance against a troop[g];
with my God I can scale a wall.
31 "As for God, his way is perfect:
The LORD's word is flawless;
he shields all who take refuge in him.

[a] *3* Or *sovereign* [b] *3* *Horn* here symbolizes strength. [c] *8* Hebrew; Vulgate and Syriac (see also Psalm 18:7) *mountains* [d] *11* Many Hebrew manuscripts (see also Psalm 18:10); most Hebrew manuscripts *appeared* [e] *12* Septuagint (see also Psalm 18:11); Hebrew *massed* [f] *25* Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate (see also Psalm 18:24) *to the cleanness of my hands* [g] *30* Or *can run through a barricade*

David the Hero of Israel's Songs (2Sa 23:1)

The last words of David are introduced by the epitaph, "son of Jesse . . . the man exalted by the Most High, the man anointed by the God of Jacob, the hero of Israel's songs" (2Sa 23:1). David and psalms are ever considered together in the tradition of Israel.

Psalms are often thought of as poems or songs. In the Hebrew tradition the psalms are known as "songs of praise." While other themes are exhibited in the psalms, praise is the most pronounced feature. Music was a regular part of ancient life, accompanying mourners at funerals, priests at temples, brides at weddings, and the solitary individual in contemplation. Within this musical culture, the psalms were Israel's worship songs, offering reflection on the experiences of life.

In the stories that surround David, psalms are shown to be an integral part of his life (2Sa 1:17). His skill at playing the lyre was widely known and highly appreciated (1Sa 16:16–23). When David became king, he appointed professional singers to perform religious duties (1Ch 6:31, 32; 15:16–24). David himself rendered "songs of praise" at special religious occasions (1Ch 16:7–36). In these services, music was used as a vehicle for prophesying (1Ch 25:1).

The Book of Psalms is often associated with David because the superscriptions (or psalm titles) ascribe a large number of the psalms to David or to an event in his life. After his death, David's fame as a psalmist grew ever larger. While the Hebrew Bible associates David with 73 psalms, later translations increase the number of psalms ascribed to him. The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll claims that David wrote 4,050 psalms and songs, all given him by divine inspiration from the Lord.

32 For who is God besides the LORD?
And who is the Rock except our God?
33 It is God who arms me with strength[a]
and keeps my way secure.
34 He makes my feet like the feet of a deer;
he causes me to stand on the heights.
35 He trains my hands for battle;
my arms can bend a bow of bronze.
36 You make your saving help my shield;
your help has made[b] me great.
37 You provide a broad path for my feet,
so that my ankles do not give way.

38 "I pursued my enemies and crushed them;
I did not turn back till they were
destroyed.
39 I crushed them completely, and they could
not rise;
they fell beneath my feet.
40 You armed me with strength for battle;
you humbled my adversaries before me.
41 You made my enemies turn their backs in
flight,
and I destroyed my foes.
42 They cried for help, but there was no one to
save them—
to the LORD, but he did not answer.
43 I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth;
I pounded and trampled them like mud in
the streets.

44 "You have delivered me from the attacks of
the peoples;
you have preserved me as the head of
nations.
People I did not know now serve me,
45 foreigners cower before me;
as soon as they hear of me, they
obey me.
46 They all lose heart;
they come trembling[c] from their
strongholds.

47 "The LORD lives! Praise be to my Rock!
Exalted be my God, the Rock, my Savior!
48 He is the God who avenges me,
who puts the nations under me,
49 who sets me free from my enemies.
You exalted me above my foes;
from a violent man you rescued me.
50 Therefore I will praise you, LORD, among
the nations;
I will sing the praises of your name.

51 "He gives his king great victories;
he shows unfailing kindness to his
anointed,
to David and his descendants forever."

David's Last Words

23 1 These are the last words of David:
"The inspired utterance of David son of
Jesse,
the utterance of the man exalted by the
Most High,
the man anointed by the God of Jacob,
the hero of Israel's songs:

2 "The Spirit of the LORD spoke through me;
his word was on my tongue.
3 The God of Israel spoke,
the Rock of Israel said to me:

[a] *33* Dead Sea Scrolls, some Septuagint manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Psalm 18:32); Masoretic Text *who is my strong refuge* [b] *36* Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text *shield; / you stoop down to make* [c] *46* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate (see also Psalm 18:45); Masoretic Text *they arm themselves*

'When one rules over people in
righteousness,
when he rules in the fear of God,
4 he is like the light of morning at sunrise
on a cloudless morning,
like the brightness after rain
that brings grass from the earth.'

5 "If my house were not right with God,
surely he would not have made with me
an everlasting covenant,
arranged and secured in every part;
surely he would not bring to fruition my
salvation
and grant me my every desire.
6 But evil men are all to be cast aside like
thorns,
which are not gathered with the hand.
7 Whoever touches thorns
uses a tool of iron or the shaft of a spear;
they are burned up where they lie."

David's Mighty Warriors

8 These are the names of David's mighty warriors:

Josheb-Basshebeth,[a] a Tahkemonite,[b] was chief of the Three; he raised his spear against eight hundred men, whom he killed[c] in one encounter.

9 Next to him was Eleazar son of Dodai the Ahohite. As one of the three mighty warriors, he was with David when they taunted the Philistines gathered at Pas Dammim[d] for battle. Then the Israelites retreated, 10 but Eleazar stood his ground and struck down the Philistines till his hand grew tired and froze to the sword. The LORD brought about a great victory that day. The troops returned to Eleazar, but only to strip the dead.

11 Next to him was Shammah son of Agee the Hararite. When the Philistines banded together at a place where there was a field full of lentils, Israel's troops fled from them. 12 But Shammah took his stand in the middle of the field. He defended it and struck the Philistines down, and the LORD brought about a great victory.

13 During harvest time, three of the thirty chief warriors came down to David at the cave of Adullam, while a band of Philistines was encamped in the Valley of Rephaim. 14 At that time David was in the stronghold, and the Philistine garrison was at Bethlehem. 15 David longed for water and said, "Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!" 16 So the three mighty warriors broke through the Philistine lines, drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David. But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the LORD. 17 "Far be it from me, LORD, to do this!" he said. "Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?" And David would not drink it.

Such were the exploits of the three mighty warriors.

18 Abishai the brother of Joab son of Zeruiah was chief of the Three.[e] He raised his spear against three hundred men, whom he killed, and so he became as famous as the Three. 19 Was he not held in greater honor than the Three? He became their commander, even though he was not included among them.

20 Benaiah son of Jehoiada, a valiant fighter from Kabzeel, performed great exploits. He struck down Moab's two mightiest warriors. He also went down into a pit on a snowy day and killed a lion. 21 And he struck down a huge Egyptian. Although the Egyptian had a spear in his hand, Benaiah went against him with a club. He snatched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with his own spear. 22 Such were the exploits of Benaiah son of Jehoiada; he too was as famous as the three mighty warriors. 23 He was held in greater honor than any of the Thirty, but he was not included among the Three. And David put him in charge of his bodyguard.

24 Among the Thirty were:
Asahel the brother of Joab,
Elhanan son of Dodo from Bethlehem,
25 Shammah the Harodite,
Elika the Harodite,
26 Helez the Paltite,
Ira son of Ikkesh from Tekoa,

[a] *8* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts suggest *Ish-Bosheth,* that is, *Esh-Baal* (see also 1 Chron. 11:11 *Jashobeam*).
[b] *8* Probably a variant of *Hakmonite* (see 1 Chron. 11:11)
[c] *8* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 11:11); Hebrew and other Septuagint manuscripts *Three; it was Adino the Eznite who killed eight hundred men*
[d] *9* See 1 Chron. 11:13; Hebrew *gathered there.*
[e] *18* Most Hebrew manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 11:20); two Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac *Thirty*

TIME CAPSULE **1050 to 1003 B.C.**

1050	Saul becomes first king of Israel (or 1020)
1020	Saul becomes first king of Israel (or 1050)
1010–1003	David rules as king of Judah at Hebron (2Sa 2:4)
1005	Ish-Bosheth succeeds Saul as king of Israel (2Sa 2:10)
1003	Ish-Bosheth is assassinated (2Sa 4:5–8)
1003–970	David rules as king of Israel at Jerusalem

27 Abiezer from Anathoth,
Sibbekai[a] the Hushathite,
28 Zalmon the Ahohite,
Maharai the Netophathite,
29 Heled[b] son of Baanah the Netophathite,
Ithai son of Ribai from Gibeah in Benjamin,
30 Benaiah the Pirathonite,
Hiddai[c] from the ravines of Gaash,
31 Abi-Albon the Arbathite,
Azmaveth the Barhumite,
32 Eliahba the Shaalbonite,
the sons of Jashen,
Jonathan 33 son of[d] Shammah the Hararite,
Ahiam son of Sharar[e] the Hararite,
34 Eliphelet son of Ahasbai the Maakathite,
Eliam son of Ahithophel the Gilonite,
35 Hezro the Carmelite,
Paarai the Arbite,
36 Igal son of Nathan from Zobah,
the son of Hagri,[f]
37 Zelek the Ammonite,
Naharai the Beerothite, the armor-bearer of Joab son of Zeruiah,
38 Ira the Ithrite,
Gareb the Ithrite
39 and Uriah the Hittite.
There were thirty-seven in all.

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: David's Reign

The historian of Chronicles presents a very different picture of David than does the historian of Samuel. A small example of the Chronicler's work is David's victory over Moab. In 1Sa 8:2, David summarily executes two-thirds of his Moabite prisoners of war. The Chronicler, however, concerned to show David in his very best light, tells of the victory while omitting these brutal executions (1Ch 18:2).

The Chronicler goes to greater lengths to avoid David's failures. For instance, Chronicles completely omits any reference either to David's sin with Bathsheba or to the civil war with Absalom. Avoiding all unpleasantness in this way, the Chronicler is able to tell of David's reign rather quickly.

• **1 Chronicles 18:1–13**

1 Chronicles

David's Victories

18 :1 In the course of time, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and he took Gath and its surrounding villages from the control of the Philistines.

2 David also defeated the Moabites, and they became subject to him and brought him tribute.

3 Moreover, David defeated Hadadezer king of Zobah, in the vicinity of Hamath, when he went to set up his monument at[g] the Euphrates River. 4 David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstrung all but a hundred of the chariot horses.

5 When the Arameans of Damascus came to help Hadadezer king of Zobah, David struck down twenty-two thousand of them. 6 He put garrisons in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus, and the Arameans became subject to him and brought him tribute. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

7 David took the gold shields carried by the officers of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem. 8 From Tebah[h] and Kun, towns that belonged to Hadadezer, David took a great quantity of bronze, which Solomon used to make the bronze Sea, the pillars and various bronze articles.

9 When Tou king of Hamath heard that David had defeated the entire army of Hadadezer king of Zobah, 10 he sent his son Hadoram to King David to greet him and congratulate him on his victory in battle over Hadadezer, who had been at war with Tou. Hadoram brought all kinds of articles of gold, of silver and of bronze.

11 King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold he had taken from all these nations: Edom and Moab, the Ammonites and the Philistines, and Amalek.

12 Abishai son of Zeruiah struck down eighteen thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt. 13 He put garrisons in Edom, and all the Edomites became subject to David. The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

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[a] *27* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 21:18; 1 Chron. 11:29); Hebrew *Mebunnai* [b] *29* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate (see also 1 Chron. 11:30); most Hebrew manuscripts *Heleb* [c] *30* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 11:32) *Hurai* [d] *33* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 11:34); Hebrew does not have *son of.* [e] *33* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 11:35) *Sakar* [f] *36* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Chron. 11:38); Hebrew *Haggadi* [g] *3* Or *to restore his control over* [h] *8* Hebrew *Tibhath,* a variant of *Tebah*

TRANSITION

The Promise of Military Victory

Not only does the superscription of Ps 60 place this psalm precisely, but so also does the text of the psalm itself. Most psalms inten-

tionally use very general language, referring to unspecified "enemies." In contrast, Ps 60 names particular surrounding kingdoms, the nations that David conquered, in its superscription and text.

The psalm expresses the hope that God will bring future victory over enemies (Ps 60:12). In ch. 18 the Chronicler summarized David's victories over Philistia, Moab, Aram (Syria), and Edom with the report that "the LORD gave David victory wherever he went" (1Ch 18:13). In the final account of David's wars with the Ammonites, Philistines, and descendants of the giant (1Ch 19; 20), Chronicles continues to show that God's blessing was upon David (1Ch 19:13).

- **Psalm 60**
- **1 Chronicles 18:14—20:8**

PSALM 60[a]

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Lily of the Covenant." A miktam[b] *of David. For teaching. When he fought Aram Naharaim[c] and Aram Zobah,[d] and when Joab returned and struck down twelve thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt.*

You have rejected us, God, and burst upon us;
you have been angry—now restore us!
2 You have shaken the land and torn it open;
mend its fractures, for it is quaking.
3 You have shown your people desperate times;
you have given us wine that makes us stagger.
4 But for those who fear you, you have raised a banner
to be unfurled against the bow.[e]

5 Save us and help us with your right hand,
that those you love may be delivered.
6 God has spoken from his sanctuary:
"In triumph I will parcel out Shechem
and measure off the Valley of Sukkoth.
7 Gilead is mine, and Manasseh is mine;
Ephraim is my helmet,
Judah is my scepter.
8 Moab is my washbasin,
on Edom I toss my sandal;
over Philistia I shout in triumph."
9 Who will bring me to the fortified city?
Who will lead me to Edom?
10 Is it not you, God, you who have now rejected us
and no longer go out with our armies?
11 Give us aid against the enemy,
for human help is worthless.
12 With God we will gain the victory,
and he will trample down our enemies.

[a] In Hebrew texts 60:1-12 is numbered 60:3-14. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] Title: That is, Arameans of Northwest Mesopotamia [d] Title: That is, Arameans of central Syria [e] *4* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [f] *16* Some Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 2 Samuel 8:17); most Hebrew manuscripts *Abimelek* [g] *6* That is, about 38 tons or about 34 metric tons [h] *6* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia

1 Chronicles 18:14—20:8

David's Officials

18:14 David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people. 15 Joab son of Zeruiah was over the army; Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was recorder; 16 Zadok son of Ahitub and Ahimelek[f] son of Abiathar were priests; Shavsha was secretary; 17 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethites and Pelethites; and David's sons were chief officials at the king's side.

David Defeats the Ammonites

19 1 In the course of time, Nahash king of the Ammonites died, and his son succeeded him as king. 2 David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father.

When David's envoys came to Hanun in the land of the Ammonites to express sympathy to him, 3 the Ammonite commanders said to Hanun, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending envoys to you to express sympathy? Haven't his envoys come to you only to explore and spy out the country and overthrow it?" 4 So Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved them, cut off their garments at the buttocks, and sent them away.

5 When someone came and told David about the men, he sent messengers to meet them, for they were greatly humiliated. The king said, "Stay at Jericho till your beards have grown, and then come back."

6 When the Ammonites realized that they had become obnoxious to David, Hanun and the Ammonites sent a thousand talents[g] of silver to hire chariots and charioteers from Aram Naharaim,[h] Aram Maakah and Zobah. 7 They hired thirty-two thousand chariots and charioteers, as well as the king of Maakah with his troops, who came and camped near Medeba, while the Ammonites were mustered from their towns and moved out for battle.

8 On hearing this, David sent Joab out with the

Gates and Fortified Cities (1Ch 19:9)

Battles were often fought near the entrance, or gate, of a city (1Ch 19:9), which was its most vulnerable defensive feature. City gates were made of wood, so it was easier for enemies to gain access to the city by beating them down or setting them on fire, than by storming or undermining the stone walls. For this reason a number of developments were added to city gates to make them a stronger part of a fortified city's overall defense (2Ch 8:5).

One building strategy was to make the approach to the city a long narrow ramp. Such ramps ran parallel to one of the city's walls, and were often built along the wall from right to left. Enemy soldiers carrying shields were forced to turn nearly backwards to defend themselves (even in ancient times people were mostly right-handed). Furthermore, enemies had to run the length of the wall before they came to the first gate. This process exposed them to observation and attack from the city's defenders.

Cities also had more than one gate in the gatehouse or main-gate complex. The outer gate was built well outside the city and at a right angle to the city. It was placed directly in front of the approach ramp and was the first major obstacle for attackers.

These gatehouses were part of a castlelike building similar to towers. Defenders were stationed on the roofs of these complexes and behind the doors. If enemy soldiers succeeded in gaining entrance, they found themselves confined to a narrow passage that made a sharp right turn toward the main gate. Of course, defenders were not only blocking the passage but were also stationed above on the walls of the passage. If enemies survived this gauntlet, they still faced the city's primary gate.

The main gate was a multichambered structure resembling an extra-large tower. It consisted of up to four separate sets of gates, behind which were chambers for defending soldiers. The roofs of these gate structures were designed so that the defenders had clear aim at the attackers.

entire army of fighting men. 9The Ammonites
came out and drew up in battle formation at the
entrance to their city, while the kings who had
come were by themselves in the open country.
10Joab saw that there were battle lines in front
of him and behind him; so he selected some
of the best troops in Israel and deployed them
against the Arameans. 11He put the rest of the
men under the command of Abishai his brother, and they were deployed against the Ammonites. 12Joab said, "If the Arameans are too
strong for me, then you are to rescue me; but
if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then
I will rescue you. 13Be strong, and let us fight
bravely for our people and the cities of our God.
The LORD will do what is good in his sight."
14Then Joab and the troops with him advanced to fight the Arameans, and they fled before him. 15When the Ammonites realized that
the Arameans were fleeing, they too fled before
his brother Abishai and went inside the city. So
Joab went back to Jerusalem.
16After the Arameans saw that they had been
routed by Israel, they sent messengers and had
Arameans brought from beyond the Euphrates
River, with Shophak the commander of Hadadezer's army leading them.
17When David was told of this, he gathered
all Israel and crossed the Jordan; he advanced
against them and formed his battle lines opposite them. David formed his lines to meet the
Arameans in battle, and they fought against
him. 18But they fled before Israel, and David
killed seven thousand of their charioteers and
forty thousand of their foot soldiers. He also
killed Shophak the commander of their army.
19When the vassals of Hadadezer saw that
they had been routed by Israel, they made
peace with David and became subject to him.
So the Arameans were not willing to help the
Ammonites anymore.

The Capture of Rabbah

20 1In the spring, at the time when kings go
off to war, Joab led out the armed forces.
He laid waste the land of the Ammonites and
went to Rabbah and besieged it, but David remained in Jerusalem. Joab attacked Rabbah
and left it in ruins. 2David took the crown from
the head of their king[a]—its weight was found
to be a talent[b] of gold, and it was set with pre-

[a] *2* Or *of Milkom,* that is, Molek
[b] *2* That is, about 75 pounds or about 34 kilograms

Health & Medicine
The presence of an extra toe or finger is a common birth defect, in itself harmless, but often accompanying more serious deformities (1Ch 20:6). One such abnormality produces giants. The Old Testament mentions giants several times, including the famous Og (Dt 3:11), whose bed was about 14 feet long. Og is described as unusual, "the last of the Rephaites."

cious stones—and it was placed on David's head. He took a great quantity of plunder from the city [3]and brought out the people who were there, consigning them to labor with saws and with iron picks and axes. David did this to all the Ammonite towns. Then David and his entire army returned to Jerusalem.

War With the Philistines

[4]In the course of time, war broke out with the Philistines, at Gezer. At that time Sibbekai the Hushathite killed Sippai, one of the descendants of the Rephaites, and the Philistines were subjugated.

[5]In another battle with the Philistines, Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi the brother of Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.

[6]In still another battle, which took place at Gath, there was a huge man with six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot—twenty-four in all. He also was descended from Rapha. [7]When he taunted Israel, Jonathan son of Shimea, David's brother, killed him.

[8]These were descendants of Rapha in Gath, and they fell at the hands of David and his men.

[a] *2* Septuagint (see also verse 4 and 1 Chron. 21:2); Hebrew *Joab the army commander*

TRANSITION
Prophetic Account: David's Final Years

The ancient world knew of only two reasons for taking a census: to draft citizens into the military or to draft them into forced labor. Both types of conscription were common among Near Eastern kingdoms, but neither had ever been a part of Israel's life. During the tribal confederation, war had been a voluntary action and only foreigners had been enslaved. When David took a census, it was a clear step away from those covenant traditions and a clear step toward the usual patterns of kingship. Even Joab, David's pragmatic commander in chief, was surprised at David's decision (2Sa 24:3).

The census takers followed a route from Jerusalem to Aroer (east of the Dead Sea), north to Dan, west to Tyre, south to Beersheba, then back to Jerusalem. While it took nearly 10 months to complete this circuit (24:8), it is not certain when the census occurred.

• 2 Samuel 24:1–25

2 Samuel

David Enrolls the Fighting Men

24 :1 Again the anger of the LORD burned against Israel, and he incited David against them, saying, "Go and take a census of Israel and Judah."

[2]So the king said to Joab and the army commanders[a] with him, "Go throughout the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beersheba and enroll the fighting men, so that I may know how many there are."

[3]But Joab replied to the king, "May the LORD your God multiply the troops a hundred times over, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king want to do such a thing?"

[4]The king's word, however, overruled Joab and the army commanders; so they left the presence of the king to enroll the fighting men of Israel.

[5]After crossing the Jordan, they camped near Aroer, south of the town in the gorge, and then went through Gad and on to Jazer. [6]They went to Gilead and the region of Tahtim Hodshi, and on to Dan Jaan and around toward Sidon. [7]Then they went toward the fortress of Tyre and all the towns of the Hivites and Canaanites. Finally, they went on to Beersheba in the Negev of Judah.

[8]After they had gone through the entire land, they came back to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

[9]Joab reported the number of the fighting men to the king: In Israel there were eight hundred thousand able-bodied men who could handle a sword, and in Judah five hundred thousand.

[10]David was conscience-stricken after he

Politics & Government
The Bible contains numerous lists of persons and tribes, as well as censuses of fighting men. In many cases the purpose of a census was taxation or a military draft. For this and other reasons censuses were often offensive to the population being counted (2Sa 24:2). A census taken by the Romans caused riots in Palestine around A.D. 6 or 7.

Counting Heads (2Sa 24:10–14)

One case of census taking is presented in the Old Testament as at best a mistake and at worst a sin. King David wanted to count his population, but his census is presented as an evil act that would bring punishment on the Israelites (2Sa 24:10–13). The Chronicler even suggests that the idea for David's census came from Satan himself (1Ch 21:1).

A number of census records have been found among ancient Near Eastern tablets. Empires, stretching over large areas, needed to be able to calculate taxes and assign supplies for their soldiers. They met these obligations by counting and recording the numbers of their people. For propaganda purposes, the Assyrians calculated that they had resettled in different parts of their kingdom 4.5 million conquered people.

An interesting example of an ancient census is the Assyrian Doomsday Book. In these 21 tablets families are registered by the father's name. After the families are listed, the children's height is provided as a means of calculating relative age. A separate section provided a description of land that belonged to each family and how the land was used. Not all families were included in this register, since the Assyrian Doomsday Book was used as a regional guide to noble families who were exempt from Assyrian taxes. From these records it has become clear that early censuses were not used for long-range planning but had specific, immediate purposes.

The Bible nowhere specifies why census taking was considered evil. Nevertheless, David felt guilty over the census he ordered, confessing that he had "sinned greatly" (2Sa 24:10). Since it seems obvious that the counting in itself was not bad, the sin had to do with the motivation for counting the people. We can only guess that if David knew the size of his population he might either trust in the size of his army or fear the size of his enemy's army. The census would thus interfere with dependence on God to give victory over Israel's enemies.

had counted the fighting men, and he said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, LORD, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

11 Before David got up the next morning, the word of the LORD had come to Gad the prophet, David's seer: 12 "Go and tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.'"

13 So Gad went to David and said to him, "Shall there come on you three[a] years of famine in your land? Or three months of fleeing from your enemies while they pursue you? Or three days of plague in your land? Now then, think it over and decide how I should answer the one who sent me."

14 David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let us fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is great; but do not let me fall into human hands."

15 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the end of the time designated, and seventy thousand of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. 16 When the angel stretched out his hand to destroy Jerusalem, the LORD relented concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was afflicting the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 When David saw the angel who was striking down the people, he said to the LORD, "I have sinned; I, the shepherd,[b] have done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall on me and my family."

David Builds an Altar

18 On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." 19 So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. 20 When Araunah looked and saw the king and his officials coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

21 Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

"To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

22 Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever he wishes and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. 23 Your Majesty, Araunah[c] gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you."

24 But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor and the

[a] *13* Septuagint (see also 1 Chron. 21:12); Hebrew *seven*
[b] *17* Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint; Masoretic Text does not have *the shepherd*. [c] *23* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *King Araunah*

oxen and paid fifty shekels[a] of silver for them. 25David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.

TRANSITION

The Books of Kings

Although the books of Kings present a unified history, they clearly consist of many smaller strands, woven together by an editor. These strands include a detailed account of Solomon's court, a history of the kings of the northern kingdom, a history of the kings of the southern kingdom, and narratives about the prophets Elijah and Elisha.

All these strands are woven together and unified by theological comments that interpret the history. The interpretations evaluate the different kings and kingdoms in terms of the requirements found in the Book of Deuteronomy. For instance, 2Ki 17, which explains in some detail why God allowed the northern kingdom to be destroyed, uses thoughts and even specific expressions from Deuteronomy. For this reason, Kings is often described as part of a "Deuteronomistic History."

The history concludes during the Babylonian exile, with the last recorded event occurring in 561 B.C. (2Ki 25:27–30). However, there is no mention of the Persian king Cyrus and his edict of 539 B.C. that freed the exiled Jews (see 2Ch 36:22, 23). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the editing process was done sometime between 561 and 539 B.C.

The Book of 1 Kings begins with the story of how Solomon became David's successor instead of Adonijah, the crown prince. An exact date for when Solomon began his reign is impossible to determine. The 40 years given as the length of his reign (1Ki 11:42) could be a symbolic number, and, furthermore, it is not known how long Solomon ruled as a coregent while his father, David, was still alive (1Ki 1:32–35; 2:10). Accepting these uncertainties, we can set the date for Solomon's enthronement at approximately 970 B.C. See "When Did David Become King?" at 2Sa 5:1.

• **1 Kings 1:1—2:35**

1 Kings

Adonijah Sets Himself Up as King

1 :1 When King David was very old, he could not keep warm even when they put covers over him. 2So his attendants said to him, "Let us look for a young virgin to serve the king and take care of him. She can lie beside him so that our lord the king may keep warm."

3Then they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful young woman and found Abishag, a Shunammite, and brought her to the king. 4The woman was very beautiful; she took care of the king and waited on him, but the king had no sexual relations with her.

5Now Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith, put himself forward and said, "I will be king." So he got chariots and horses[b] ready, with fifty men to run ahead of him. 6(His father had never rebuked him by asking, "Why do you behave as you do?" He was also very handsome and was born next after Absalom.)

7Adonijah conferred with Joab son of Zeruiah and with Abiathar the priest, and they gave him their support. 8But Zadok the priest, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei and David's special guard did not join Adonijah.

9Adonijah then sacrificed sheep, cattle and fattened calves at the Stone of Zoheleth near En Rogel. He invited all his brothers, the king's sons, and all the royal officials of Judah, 10but he did not invite Nathan the prophet or Benaiah or the special guard or his brother Solomon.

11Then Nathan asked Bathsheba, Solomon's mother, "Have you not heard that Adonijah, the son of Haggith, has become king, and our lord David knows nothing about it? 12Now then, let me advise you how you can save your own life and the life of your son Solomon. 13Go in to King David and say to him, 'My lord the king, did you not swear to me your servant: "Surely Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne"? Why then has Adonijah become king?' 14While you are still there talking to the king, I will come in and add my word to what you have said."

15So Bathsheba went to see the aged king in his room, where Abishag the Shunammite was attending him. 16Bathsheba bowed down, prostrating herself before the king.

"What is it you want?" the king asked.

17She said to him, "My lord, you yourself swore to me your servant by the LORD your God: 'Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne.' 18But now Adonijah has become king, and you, my lord the king, do not know about it. 19He has sacrificed great numbers of cattle, fattened calves, and sheep, and has invited all the king's sons, Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of the army, but he has not invited Solomon your servant. 20My lord the king, the eyes of all Israel

[a] *24* That is, about 1 1/4 pounds or about 575 grams
[b] *5* Or *charioteers*

are on you, to learn from you who will sit on the throne of my lord the king after him. [21]Otherwise, as soon as my lord the king is laid to rest with his ancestors, I and my son Solomon will be treated as criminals."

[22]While she was still speaking with the king, Nathan the prophet arrived. [23]And the king was told, "Nathan the prophet is here." So he went before the king and bowed with his face to the ground.

[24]Nathan said, "Have you, my lord the king, declared that Adonijah shall be king after you, and that he will sit on your throne? [25]Today he has gone down and sacrificed great numbers of cattle, fattened calves, and sheep. He has invited all the king's sons, the commanders of the army and Abiathar the priest. Right now they are eating and drinking with him and saying, 'Long live King Adonijah!' [26]But me your servant, and Zadok the priest, and Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and your servant Solomon he did not invite. [27]Is this something my lord the king has done without letting his servants know who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?"

David Makes Solomon King

[28]Then King David said, "Call in Bathsheba." So she came into the king's presence and stood before him.

[29]The king then took an oath: "As surely as the LORD lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble, [30]I will surely carry out this very day what I swore to you by the LORD, the God of Israel: Solomon your son shall be king after me, and he will sit on my throne in my place."

[31]Then Bathsheba bowed down with her face to the ground, prostrating herself before the king, and said, "May my lord King David live forever!"

[32]King David said, "Call in Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet and Benaiah son of Jehoiada." When they came before the king, [33]he said to them: "Take your lord's servants with you and have Solomon my son mount my own mule and take him down to Gihon. [34]There have Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet anoint him king over Israel. Blow the trumpet and shout, 'Long live King Solomon!' [35]Then you are to go up with him, and he is to come and sit on my throne and reign in my place. I have appointed him ruler over Israel and Judah."

[36]Benaiah son of Jehoiada answered the king, "Amen! May the LORD, the God of my lord the king, so declare it. [37]As the LORD was with my lord the king, so may he be with Solomon to make his throne even greater than the throne of my lord King David!"

[38]So Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites went down and had Solomon mount King David's mule, and they escorted him to Gihon. [39]Zadok the priest took the horn of oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then they sounded the trumpet and all the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" [40]And all the people went up after him, playing pipes and rejoicing greatly, so that the ground shook with the sound.

[41]Adonijah and all the guests who were with him heard it as they were finishing their feast. On hearing the sound of the trumpet, Joab asked, "What's the meaning of all the noise in the city?"

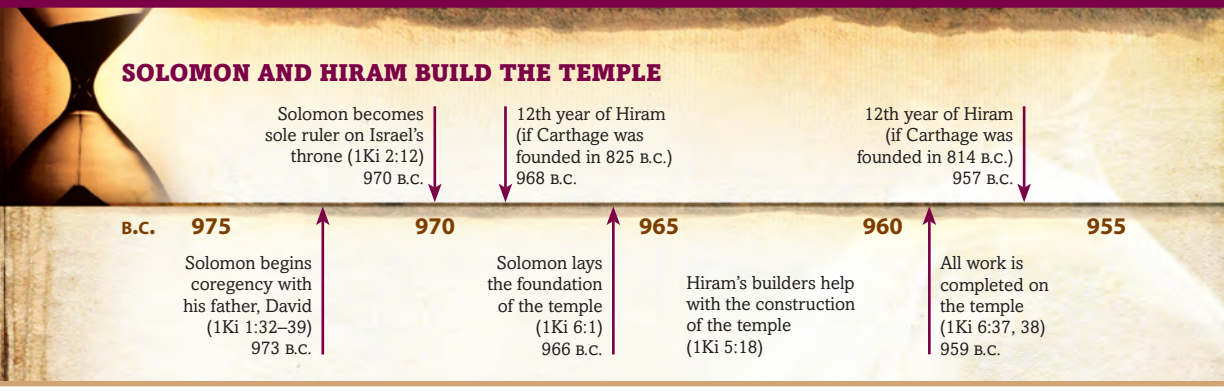
[42]Even as he was speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest arrived. Adonijah said, "Come in. A worthy man like you must be bringing good news."

[43]"Not at all!" Jonathan answered. "Our lord King David has made Solomon king. [44]The king has sent with him Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, Benaiah son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and they have put him on the king's mule, [45]and Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet have anointed him king at Gihon. From there they have gone up cheering, and the city resounds with it. That's the noise you hear. [46]Moreover, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. [47]Also, the royal officials have come to congratulate our lord King David, saying, 'May your God make Solomon's name more famous than yours and his throne greater than yours!' And the king bowed in worship on his bed [48]and said, 'Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who has allowed my eyes to see a successor on my throne today.'"

[49]At this, all Adonijah's guests rose in alarm and dispersed. [50]But Adonijah, in fear of Solomon, went and took hold of the horns of the altar. [51]Then Solomon was told, "Adonijah is afraid of King Solomon and is clinging to the horns of the altar. He says, 'Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not put his servant to death with the sword.'"

Politics & Government

The ritual act of anointing was accompanied with shouts of praise, called acclamation. Like anointing, acclamation was a particular symbolic action. It was an essential part of raising a person to the throne to become king. When the priest Zadok and prophet Nathan anointed Solomon, they shouted "Long live King Solomon!" to which the people answered the same (1Ki 1:34, 39).



52 Solomon replied, "If he shows himself to
be worthy, not a hair of his head will fall to
the ground; but if evil is found in him, he will
die." 53 Then King Solomon sent men, and they
brought him down from the altar. And Adonijah
came and bowed down to King Solomon, and
Solomon said, "Go to your home."

David's Charge to Solomon

2 1 When the time drew near for David to die,
he gave a charge to Solomon his son.
2 "I am about to go the way of all the earth,"
he said. "So be strong, act like a man, 3 and ob-
serve what the LORD your God requires: Walk
in obedience to him, and keep his decrees and
commands, his laws and regulations, as writ-
ten in the Law of Moses. Do this so that you
may prosper in all you do and wherever you
go 4 and that the LORD may keep his promise to
me: 'If your descendants watch how they live,
and if they walk faithfully before me with all
their heart and soul, you will never fail to have
a successor on the throne of Israel.'
5 "Now you yourself know what Joab son of
Zeruiah did to me — what he did to the two
commanders of Israel's armies, Abner son of
Ner and Amasa son of Jether. He killed them,
shedding their blood in peacetime as if in bat-
tle, and with that blood he stained the belt
around his waist and the sandals on his feet.
6 Deal with him according to your wisdom, but
do not let his gray head go down to the grave
in peace.
7 "But show kindness to the sons of Barzillai
of Gilead and let them be among those who eat
at your table. They stood by me when I fled
from your brother Absalom.
8 "And remember, you have with you Shimei
son of Gera, the Benjamite from Bahurim, who
called down bitter curses on me the day I went
to Mahanaim. When he came down to meet me
at the Jordan, I swore to him by the LORD: 'I will
not put you to death by the sword.' 9 But now,
do not consider him innocent. You are a man of
wisdom; you will know what to do to him. Bring
his gray head down to the grave in blood."
10 Then David rested with his ancestors
and was buried in the City of David. 11 He had
reigned forty years over Israel — seven years
in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 12 So
Solomon sat on the throne of his father David,
and his rule was firmly established.

Solomon's Throne Established

13 Now Adonijah, the son of Haggith, went
to Bathsheba, Solomon's mother. Bathsheba
asked him, "Do you come peacefully?"
He answered, "Yes, peacefully." 14 Then he
added, "I have something to say to you."
"You may say it," she replied.
15 "As you know," he said, "the kingdom was
mine. All Israel looked to me as their king. But
things changed, and the kingdom has gone to
my brother; for it has come to him from the
LORD. 16 Now I have one request to make of you.
Do not refuse me."
"You may make it," she said.
17 So he continued, "Please ask King Solo-
mon — he will not refuse you — to give me Ab-
ishag the Shunammite as my wife."
18 "Very well," Bathsheba replied, "I will
speak to the king for you."
19 When Bathsheba went to King Solomon to
speak to him for Adonijah, the king stood up
to meet her, bowed down to her and sat down
on his throne. He had a throne brought for the
king's mother, and she sat down at his right
hand.
20 "I have one small request to make of you,"
she said. "Do not refuse me."
The king replied, "Make it, my mother; I will
not refuse you."
21 So she said, "Let Abishag the Shunammite
be given in marriage to your brother Adonijah."
22 King Solomon answered his mother, "Why
do you request Abishag the Shunammite for

Adonijah? You might as well request the kingdom for him—after all, he is my older brother—yes, for him and for Abiathar the priest and Joab son of Zeruiah!"

23Then King Solomon swore by the LORD: "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if Adonijah does not pay with his life for this request! 24And now, as surely as the LORD lives—he who has established me securely on the throne of my father David and has founded a dynasty for me as he promised—Adonijah shall be put to death today!" 25So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he struck down Adonijah and he died.

26To Abiathar the priest the king said, "Go back to your fields in Anathoth. You deserve to die, but I will not put you to death now, because you carried the ark of the Sovereign LORD before my father David and shared all my father's hardships." 27So Solomon removed Abiathar from the priesthood of the LORD, fulfilling the word the LORD had spoken at Shiloh about the house of Eli.

28When the news reached Joab, who had conspired with Adonijah though not with Absalom, he fled to the tent of the LORD and took hold of the horns of the altar. 29King Solomon was told that Joab had fled to the tent of the LORD and was beside the altar. Then Solomon ordered Benaiah son of Jehoiada, "Go, strike him down!"

30So Benaiah entered the tent of the LORD and said to Joab, "The king says, 'Come out!'"

But he answered, "No, I will die here."

Benaiah reported to the king, "This is how Joab answered me."

31Then the king commanded Benaiah, "Do as he says. Strike him down and bury him, and so clear me and my whole family of the guilt of the innocent blood that Joab shed. 32The LORD will repay him for the blood he shed, because without my father David knowing it he attacked two men and killed them with the sword. Both of them—Abner son of Ner, commander of Israel's army, and Amasa son of Jether, commander of Judah's army—were better men and more upright than he. 33May the guilt of their blood rest on the head of Joab and his descendants forever. But on David and his descendants, his house and his throne, may there be the LORD's peace forever."

34So Benaiah son of Jehoiada went up and struck down Joab and killed him, and he was buried at his home out in the country. 35The king put Benaiah son of Jehoiada over the army in Joab's position and replaced Abiathar with Zadok the priest.

TRANSITION

Shimei Before King Solomon

Twice David prevented Shimei from being killed (2Sa 16:9–12; 19:21–23). On his deathbed, however, David asked Solomon to see to it that Shimei did not remain unpunished (1Ki 2:8, 9). Now, at least three years after David's death, Solomon executed Shimei the Benjamite for violating the oath he took before the new king (1Ki 2:36–46).

• **1 Kings 2:36–46**

1 Kings

2 :36 Then the king sent for Shimei and said to him, "Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and live there, but do not go anywhere else. 37The day you leave and cross the Kidron Valley, you can be sure you will die; your blood will be on your own head."

38Shimei answered the king, "What you say is good. Your servant will do as my lord the king has said." And Shimei stayed in Jerusalem for a long time.

39But three years later, two of Shimei's slaves ran off to Achish son of Maakah, king of Gath, and Shimei was told, "Your slaves are in Gath." 40At this, he saddled his donkey and went to Achish at Gath in search of his slaves. So Shimei went away and brought the slaves back from Gath.

41When Solomon was told that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had returned, 42the king summoned Shimei and said to him, "Did I not make you swear by the LORD and warn you, 'On the day you leave to go anywhere else, you can be sure you will die'? At that time you said to me, 'What you say is good. I will obey.' 43Why then did you not keep your oath to the LORD and obey the command I gave you?"

44The king also said to Shimei, "You know in your heart all the wrong you did to my father David. Now the LORD will repay you for your wrongdoing. 45But King Solomon will be blessed, and David's throne will remain secure before the LORD forever."

46Then the king gave the order to Benaiah son of Jehoiada, and he went out and struck Shimei down and he died.

The kingdom was now established in Solomon's hands.

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: David's Final Years

One place where Chronicles is sharply distinct from Samuel is in the account of David's census. In 2Sa 24, God was angry and stirred

David to this sin. In 1Ch 21, Satan prompts the census. Whatever theological reason there may be for this change, it is consistent with Chronicles's concern for David's good reputation. Satan, not an angry God, incited David to sin.

• 1 Chronicles 21:1–30

1 Chronicles

David Counts the Fighting Men

21 **:1** Satan rose up against Israel and incited David to take a census of Israel. 2So David said to Joab and the commanders of the troops, "Go and count the Israelites from Beersheba to Dan. Then report back to me so that I may know how many there are."

3But Joab replied, "May the LORD multiply his troops a hundred times over. My lord the king, are they not all my lord's subjects? Why does my lord want to do this? Why should he bring guilt on Israel?"

4The king's word, however, overruled Joab; so Joab left and went throughout Israel and then came back to Jerusalem. 5Joab reported the number of the fighting men to David: In all Israel there were one million one hundred thousand men who could handle a sword, including four hundred and seventy thousand in Judah.

6But Joab did not include Levi and Benjamin in the numbering, because the king's command was repulsive to him. 7This command was also evil in the sight of God; so he punished Israel.

8Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing."

9The LORD said to Gad, David's seer, 10"Go and tell David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am giving you three options. Choose one of them for me to carry out against you.'"

11So Gad went to David and said to him, "This is what the LORD says: 'Take your choice: 12three years of famine, three months of being swept away[a] before your enemies, with their swords overtaking you, or three days of the sword of the LORD — days of plague in the land, with the angel of the LORD ravaging every part of Israel.' Now then, decide how I should answer the one who sent me."

13David said to Gad, "I am in deep distress. Let me fall into the hands of the LORD, for his mercy is very great; but do not let me fall into human hands."

14So the LORD sent a plague on Israel, and seventy thousand men of Israel fell dead. 15And God sent an angel to destroy Jerusalem. But as the angel was doing so, the LORD saw it and relented concerning the disaster and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "Enough! Withdraw your hand." The angel of the LORD was then standing at the threshing floor of Araunah[b] the Jebusite.

16David looked up and saw the angel of the LORD standing between heaven and earth, with a drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. Then David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell facedown.

[a] *12* Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate (see also 2 Samuel 24:13) *of fleeing* [b] *15* Hebrew *Ornan*, a variant of *Araunah*; also in verses 18-28

Satan, Initiating Evil for Israel (1Ch 21:1)

The Chronicler uses "Satan" as the proper name of a celestial being, who is operating independently of Yahweh. This Satan who "rose up against Israel" (1Ch 21:1) is related to the divine functionary who appears as an adversary or accuser of humans (Job 1:6; 2:1; Zec 3:1). The Chronicler's Satan, however, differs by being a divine being in opposition to the will of God.

Ancient Near Eastern civilizations had many demons, as well as deities who often did horrendous things to humans. The only deity, though, who can reasonably be compared to the figure of Satan (as Satan developed in early Judaism and appears in Christianity) is found in Persia's dualistic religion, Zoroastrianism.

The Iranian prophet Zoroaster lived possibly between the 10th and 6th centuries B.C., although exact dates are unknown. He taught that the cosmos was divided into two warring factions, one good and one evil. Those who struggle on behalf of good worship Ahura Mazda, the god of light; those seeking evil worship Angra Mainyu (also called Ahriman). These two deities, with their followers, were destined to vie for control of the universe until a final cosmic battle in which good will triumph over evil. Those humans who served Ahura Mazda would find rewards in heaven; those who served Angra Mainyu would be cast into a burning hell.

Zoroastrianism became the official religion of the Persian Empire during the Achaemenid dynasty (c. 559–331 B.C.). It was publicly declared the royal faith in a huge inscription by Darius I (522–486 B.C.). The Chronicler wrote during the approximately 200 years that Judah was a territory within the Persian province called "beyond the Euphrates River" (1Ch 19:16), and his notion of Satan as the evil counterpart of God compares to the evil Angra Mainyu of Zoroastrianism.

17 David said to God, "Was it not I who ordered the fighting men to be counted? I, the shepherd,[a] have sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? LORD my God, let your hand fall on me and my family, but do not let this plague remain on your people."

David Builds an Altar

18 Then the angel of the LORD ordered Gad to tell David to go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. 19 So David went up in obedience to the word that Gad had spoken in the name of the LORD.

20 While Araunah was threshing wheat, he turned and saw the angel; his four sons who were with him hid themselves. 21 Then David approached, and when Araunah looked and saw him, he left the threshing floor and bowed down before David with his face to the ground.

22 David said to him, "Let me have the site of your threshing floor so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped. Sell it to me at the full price."

23 Araunah said to David, "Take it! Let my lord the king do whatever pleases him. Look, I will give the oxen for the burnt offerings, the threshing sledges for the wood, and the wheat for the grain offering. I will give all this."

24 But King David replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, or sacrifice a burnt offering that costs me nothing."

25 So David paid Araunah six hundred shekels[b] of gold for the site. 26 David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. He called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven on the altar of burnt offering.

27 Then the LORD spoke to the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. 28 At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he offered sacrifices there. 29 The tabernacle of the LORD, which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time on the high place at Gibeon. 30 But David could not go before it to inquire of God, because he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the LORD.

TRANSITION

David's Laments

David's hymns of praise were associated with the time when David rejoiced before the ark of the covenant (see "The Book of Psalms" at Ps 8). The other major category of psalms is laments, in which the singer complains to God and asks for help. Related to the lament is the song of trust, in which the singer expresses faith in God's ability to deliver.

Several of the psalms associated with specific points in David's life are laments or songs of trust. For example, Ps 57 and 142 reflect David's days of hiding in caves from Saul, while Ps 3 and 7 reflect his flight from Jerusalem. All of these psalms are laments. Many other laments and songs of trust, however, are attributed to David, but provide no historical context. Nevertheless, these psalms can be read in light of this time in David's life.

The arrangement of psalms in the Bible shows a movement from lament to praise (see "The Book of Psalms" at Ps 8). If we read David's laments according to the five "Books" of the psalms, we see the concentration of laments in Books I and II. In Book I (Ps 1–41) itself are 22 more laments associated with David.

• Psalms 4–6; 9–14; 16; 17; 22; 25–28; 31; 35; 36; 38; 40; 41

PSALM 4[c]

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm of David.

Answer me when I call to you,
my righteous God.
Give me relief from my distress;
have mercy on me and hear my prayer.

2 How long will you people turn my glory into shame?
How long will you love delusions and seek false gods[d]?[e]
3 Know that the LORD has set apart his faithful servant for himself;
the LORD hears when I call to him.

4 Tremble and[f] do not sin;
when you are on your beds,
search your hearts and be silent.
5 Offer the sacrifices of the righteous
and trust in the LORD.

6 Many, LORD, are asking, "Who will bring us prosperity?"
Let the light of your face shine on us.

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[a] *17* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see 2 Samuel 24:17 and note); Masoretic Text does not have *the shepherd*. [b] *25* That is, about 15 pounds or about 6.9 kilograms [c] In Hebrew texts 4:1-8 is numbered 4:2-9. [d] *2* Or *seek lies* [e] *2* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 4. [f] *4* Or *In your anger* (see Septuagint)

7 Fill my heart with joy
when their grain and new wine abound.

8 In peace I will lie down and sleep,
for you alone, LORD,
make me dwell in safety.

PSALM 5[a]

For the director of music. For pipes. A psalm of David.

Listen to my words, LORD,
consider my lament.
2 Hear my cry for help,
my King and my God,
for to you I pray.

3 In the morning, LORD, you hear my voice;
in the morning I lay my requests before you
and wait expectantly.
4 For you are not a God who is pleased with wickedness;
with you, evil people are not welcome.
5 The arrogant cannot stand
in your presence.
You hate all who do wrong;
6 you destroy those who tell lies.
The bloodthirsty and deceitful
you, LORD, detest.
7 But I, by your great love,
can come into your house;
in reverence I bow down
toward your holy temple.

8 Lead me, LORD, in your righteousness
because of my enemies—
make your way straight before me.
9 Not a word from their mouth can be trusted;
their heart is filled with malice.
Their throat is an open grave;
with their tongues they tell lies.
10 Declare them guilty, O God!
Let their intrigues be their downfall.
Banish them for their many sins,
for they have rebelled against you.
11 But let all who take refuge in you be glad;
let them ever sing for joy.
Spread your protection over them,
that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

12 Surely, LORD, you bless the righteous;
you surround them with your favor as with a shield.

PSALM 6[b]

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. According to sheminith.[c] *A psalm of David.*

LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath.
2 Have mercy on me, LORD, for I am faint;
heal me, LORD, for my bones are in agony.
3 My soul is in deep anguish.
How long, LORD, how long?

4 Turn, LORD, and deliver me;
save me because of your unfailing love.
5 Among the dead no one proclaims your name.
Who praises you from the grave?

6 I am worn out from my groaning.

All night long I flood my bed with weeping
and drench my couch with tears.
7 My eyes grow weak with sorrow;
they fail because of all my foes.

8 Away from me, all you who do evil,
for the LORD has heard my weeping.
9 The LORD has heard my cry for mercy;
the LORD accepts my prayer.
10 All my enemies will be overwhelmed with shame and anguish;
they will turn back and suddenly be put to shame.

PSALM 9[d,e]

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Death of the Son." A psalm of David.

I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart;
I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.
2 I will be glad and rejoice in you;
I will sing the praises of your name,
O Most High.

3 My enemies turn back;
they stumble and perish before you.
4 For you have upheld my right and my cause,
sitting enthroned as the righteous judge.
5 You have rebuked the nations and destroyed the wicked;
you have blotted out their name for ever and ever.

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[a] In Hebrew texts 5:1-12 is numbered 5:2-13. [b] In Hebrew texts 6:1-10 is numbered 6:2-11. [c] Title: Probably a musical term [d] Psalms 9 and 10 may originally have been a single acrostic poem in which alternating lines began with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Septuagint they constitute one psalm. [e] In Hebrew texts 9:1-20 is numbered 9:2-21.

6 Endless ruin has overtaken my enemies,
you have uprooted their cities;
even the memory of them has perished.

7 The LORD reigns forever;
he has established his throne for judgment.
8 He rules the world in righteousness
and judges the peoples with equity.
9 The LORD is a refuge for the oppressed,
a stronghold in times of trouble.
10 Those who know your name trust in you,
for you, LORD, have never forsaken those who seek you.

11 Sing the praises of the LORD, enthroned in Zion;
proclaim among the nations what he has done.
12 For he who avenges blood remembers;
he does not ignore the cries of the afflicted.

13 LORD, see how my enemies persecute me!
Have mercy and lift me up from the gates of death,
14 that I may declare your praises
in the gates of Daughter Zion,
and there rejoice in your salvation.

15 The nations have fallen into the pit they have dug;
their feet are caught in the net they have hidden.
16 The LORD is known by his acts of justice;
the wicked are ensnared by the work of their hands.[a]
17 The wicked go down to the realm of the dead,
all the nations that forget God.
18 But God will never forget the needy;
the hope of the afflicted will never perish.

19 Arise, LORD, do not let mortals triumph;
let the nations be judged in your presence.
20 Strike them with terror, LORD;
let the nations know they are only mortal.

Marriage & Family
The basic economic unit of ancient society was the family, with the father at its head. Under him were his immediate relatives as well as more distant relatives, servants, and still others, depending on the family's wealth. A fatherless person was someone who fell outside this circle of defense and provision (Ps 10:14).

PSALM 10[b]

Why, LORD, do you stand far off?
Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?

2 In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,
who are caught in the schemes he devises.
3 He boasts about the cravings of his heart;
he blesses the greedy and reviles the LORD.
4 In his pride the wicked man does not seek him;
in all his thoughts there is no room for God.
5 His ways are always prosperous;
your laws are rejected by[c] him;
he sneers at all his enemies.
6 He says to himself, "Nothing will ever shake me."
He swears, "No one will ever do me harm."

7 His mouth is full of lies and threats;
trouble and evil are under his tongue.
8 He lies in wait near the villages;
from ambush he murders the innocent.
His eyes watch in secret for his victims;
9 like a lion in cover he lies in wait.
He lies in wait to catch the helpless;
he catches the helpless and drags them off in his net.
10 His victims are crushed, they collapse;
they fall under his strength.
11 He says to himself, "God will never notice;
he covers his face and never sees."

12 Arise, LORD! Lift up your hand, O God.
Do not forget the helpless.
13 Why does the wicked man revile God?
Why does he say to himself,
"He won't call me to account"?
14 But you, God, see the trouble of the afflicted;
you consider their grief and take it in hand.
The victims commit themselves to you;
you are the helper of the fatherless.

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[a] *16* The Hebrew has *Higgaion* and *Selah* (words of uncertain meaning) here; *Selah* occurs also at the end of verse 20.
[b] Psalms 9 and 10 may originally have been a single acrostic poem in which alternating lines began with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the Septuagint they constitute one psalm. [c] *5* See Septuagint; Hebrew */ they are haughty, and your laws are far from*

15 Break the arm of the wicked man;
call the evildoer to account for his wickedness
that would not otherwise be found out.

16 The LORD is King for ever and ever;
the nations will perish from his land.
17 You, LORD, hear the desire of the afflicted;
you encourage them, and you listen to their cry,
18 defending the fatherless and the oppressed,
so that mere earthly mortals
will never again strike terror.

PSALM 11

For the director of music. Of David.

In the LORD I take refuge.
How then can you say to me:
"Flee like a bird to your mountain.
2 For look, the wicked bend their bows;
they set their arrows against the strings
to shoot from the shadows
at the upright in heart.
3 When the foundations are being destroyed,
what can the righteous do?"

4 The LORD is in his holy temple;
the LORD is on his heavenly throne.
He observes everyone on earth;
his eyes examine them.
5 The LORD examines the righteous,
but the wicked, those who love violence,
he hates with a passion.
6 On the wicked he will rain
fiery coals and burning sulfur;
a scorching wind will be their lot.

7 For the LORD is righteous,
he loves justice;
the upright will see his face.

PSALM 12[a]

For the director of music. According to sheminith.[b] *A psalm of David.*

Help, LORD, for no one is faithful anymore;
those who are loyal have vanished from the human race.
2 Everyone lies to their neighbor;
they flatter with their lips
but harbor deception in their hearts.

3 May the LORD silence all flattering lips
and every boastful tongue—
4 those who say,
"By our tongues we will prevail;
our own lips will defend us—who is lord over us?"

5 "Because the poor are plundered and the needy groan,
I will now arise," says the LORD.
"I will protect them from those who malign them."
6 And the words of the LORD are flawless,
like silver purified in a crucible,
like gold[c] refined seven times.

7 You, LORD, will keep the needy safe
and will protect us forever from the wicked,
8 who freely strut about
when what is vile is honored by the human race.

PSALM 13[d]

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

How long, LORD? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
2 How long must I wrestle with my thoughts
and day after day have sorrow in my heart?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?

3 Look on me and answer, LORD my God.
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,
4 and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him,"
and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

5 But I trust in your unfailing love;
my heart rejoices in your salvation.
6 I will sing the LORD's praise,
for he has been good to me.

PSALM 14

For the director of music. Of David.

The fool[e] says in his heart,
"There is no God."
They are corrupt, their deeds are vile;
there is no one who does good.

2 The LORD looks down from heaven
on all mankind
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.

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[a] In Hebrew texts 12:1-8 is numbered 12:2-9. [b] Title: Probably a musical term [c] *6* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text *earth* [d] In Hebrew texts 13:1-6 is numbered 13:2-6. [e] *1* The Hebrew words rendered *fool* in Psalms denote one who is morally deficient.

The Sleep of Death (Ps 13:3)

Death is a universal dilemma. In one ancient Near Eastern story, the Gilgamesh Epic, the hero Gilgamesh is suddenly struck by the pain of death, when his friend Enkidu dies. Gilgamesh then begins a long journey in search of the secret of eternal life. Even when he finds it in a thorny plant, it is stolen from him, and Gilgamesh concludes that seeking immortality is useless because all must die.

The Israelites had a unique focus on the here and now. While the Egyptians prepared elaborate tombs, including paintings and figures that would supposedly benefit the dead one, the Hebrew scriptures stressed the importance of living life to its fullness because death was the end of human activity. Hebrew wisdom offered this advice: Find joy in the daily rounds of life, "for in the realm of the dead, where you are going, there is neither working nor planning nor knowledge nor wisdom" (Ecc 9:10).

Death was often equated with a kind of sleep, thus the psalmist uses the image of "sleep in death" (Ps 13:3). When the kings of Israel died, we are told they went to sleep or "rested" with their ancestors (1Ki 2:10; 11:43; 14:31).

The Hebrews described death with visual imagery as the abode of the dead. A person who dies goes to Sheol, or "the grave" (Job 21:13; Pr 7:27). In Sheol there is no human activity, not even the praising of the Lord (Ps 146:3, 4; 115:17). Or as the author of Ecclesiastes wrote, "For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing" (Ecc 9:5).

Death was not to be dreaded; it was the expected, normal end of life. Indeed, death was considered good for the person who was "full of years" and had reached "a good old age" (Ge 25:8; Job 42:17).

3 All have turned away, all have become
corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

4 Do all these evildoers know nothing?
They devour my people as though eating
bread;
they never call on the LORD.
5 But there they are, overwhelmed with
dread,
for God is present in the company of the
righteous.
6 You evildoers frustrate the plans of the
poor,
but the LORD is their refuge.

7 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out
of Zion!
When the LORD restores his people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

PSALM 16

A miktam[a] *of David.*

Keep me safe, my God,
for in you I take refuge.

2 I say to the LORD, "You are my Lord;
apart from you I have no good thing."
3 I say of the holy people who are in the land,
"They are the noble ones in whom is all
my delight."
4 Those who run after other gods will suffer
more and more.
I will not pour out libations of blood to
such gods
or take up their names on my lips.

5 LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup;
you make my lot secure.
6 The boundary lines have fallen for me in
pleasant places;
surely I have a delightful inheritance.
7 I will praise the LORD, who counsels me;
even at night my heart instructs me.
8 I keep my eyes always on the LORD.
With him at my right hand, I will not be
shaken.

9 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue
rejoices;
my body also will rest secure,
10 because you will not abandon me to the
realm of the dead,
nor will you let your faithful[b] one see
decay.
11 You make known to me the path of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence,
with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

PSALM 17

A prayer of David.

Hear me, LORD, my plea is just;
listen to my cry.
Hear my prayer—
it does not rise from deceitful lips.
2 Let my vindication come from you;
may your eyes see what is right.

3 Though you probe my heart,
though you examine me at night and
test me,
you will find that I have planned no evil;
my mouth has not transgressed.

[a] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [b] *10* Or *holy*

4 Though people tried to bribe me,
I have kept myself from the ways of the violent
through what your lips have commanded.
5 My steps have held to your paths;
my feet have not stumbled.

6 I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;
turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.
7 Show me the wonders of your great love,
you who save by your right hand
those who take refuge in you from their foes.
8 Keep me as the apple of your eye;
hide me in the shadow of your wings
9 from the wicked who are out to destroy me,
from my mortal enemies who surround me.

10 They close up their callous hearts,
and their mouths speak with arrogance.
11 They have tracked me down, they now surround me,
with eyes alert, to throw me to the ground.
12 They are like a lion hungry for prey,
like a fierce lion crouching in cover.

13 Rise up, LORD, confront them, bring them down;
with your sword rescue me from the wicked.
14 By your hand save me from such people, LORD,
from those of this world whose reward is in this life.
May what you have stored up for the wicked fill their bellies;
may their children gorge themselves on it,
and may there be leftovers for their little ones.

15 As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face;
when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.

PSALM 22[a]

For the director of music. To the tune of "The Doe of the Morning." A psalm of David.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?
2 My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest.[b]

3 Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;
you are the one Israel praises.[c]
4 In you our ancestors put their trust;
they trusted and you delivered them.
5 To you they cried out and were saved;
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

6 But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.
7 All who see me mock me;
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
8 "He trusts in the LORD," they say,
"let the LORD rescue him.
Let him deliver him,
since he delights in him."

9 Yet you brought me out of the womb;
you made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast.
10 From birth I was cast on you;
from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Do not be far from me,
for trouble is near
and there is no one to help.

12 Many bulls surround me;
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.
13 Roaring lions that tear their prey
open their mouths wide against me.
14 I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are out of joint.
My heart has turned to wax;
it has melted within me.
15 My mouth[d] is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;
you lay me in the dust of death.

16 Dogs surround me,
a pack of villains encircles me;
they pierce[e] my hands and my feet.

Beliefs & Ideas
The "apple" of the eye is the pupil, the dark opening through which light enters the eye. Its beauty, its function, and its delicacy make the eye the object of protection, and a source of anxiety if threatened. The use of this metaphor in the Bible expresses faith that God treats his own as especially precious (Ps 17:8; Dt 32:10).

[a] In Hebrew texts 22:1-31 is numbered 22:2-32. [b] *2* Or *night, and am not silent* [c] *3* Or *Yet you are holy, / enthroned on the praises of Israel* [d] *15* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text *strength* [e] *16* Dead Sea Scrolls and some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Septuagint and Syriac; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *me, / like a lion*

17 All my bones are on display;
people stare and gloat over me.
18 They divide my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment.

19 But you, LORD, do not be far from me.
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.
20 Deliver me from the sword,
my precious life from the power of the dogs.
21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

22 I will declare your name to my people;
in the assembly I will praise you.
23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
24 For he has not despised or scorned
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.

25 From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly;
before those who fear you[a] I will fulfill my vows.
26 The poor will eat and be satisfied;
those who seek the LORD will praise him—
may your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth
will remember and turn to the LORD,
and all the families of the nations
will bow down before him,
28 for dominion belongs to the LORD
and he rules over the nations.

29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—
those who cannot keep themselves alive.
30 Posterity will serve him;
future generations will be told about the Lord.
31 They will proclaim his righteousness,
declaring to a people yet unborn:
He has done it!

PSALM 25[b]

Of David.

In you, LORD my God,
I put my trust.

2 I trust in you;
do not let me be put to shame,
nor let my enemies triumph over me.
3 No one who hopes in you
will ever be put to shame,
but shame will come on those
who are treacherous without cause.

4 Show me your ways, LORD,
teach me your paths.
5 Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.
6 Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love,
for they are from of old.
7 Do not remember the sins of my youth
and my rebellious ways;
according to your love remember me,
for you, LORD, are good.

8 Good and upright is the LORD;
therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.
9 He guides the humble in what is right
and teaches them his way.
10 All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful
toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.
11 For the sake of your name, LORD,
forgive my iniquity, though it is great.

12 Who, then, are those who fear the LORD?
He will instruct them in the ways they should choose.[c]
13 They will spend their days in prosperity,
and their descendants will inherit the land.
14 The LORD confides in those who fear him;
he makes his covenant known to them.
15 My eyes are ever on the LORD,
for only he will release my feet from the snare.

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,
for I am lonely and afflicted.
17 Relieve the troubles of my heart
and free me from my anguish.
18 Look on my affliction and my distress
and take away all my sins.
19 See how numerous are my enemies
and how fiercely they hate me!

20 Guard my life and rescue me;
do not let me be put to shame,
for I take refuge in you.
21 May integrity and uprightness protect me,
because my hope, LORD,[d] is in you.

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[a] *25* Hebrew *him* [b] This psalm is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. [c] *12* Or *ways he chooses*
[d] *21* Septuagint; Hebrew does not have *LORD*.

22 Deliver Israel, O God,
from all their troubles!

PSALM 26

Of David.

Vindicate me, LORD,
for I have led a blameless life;
I have trusted in the LORD
and have not faltered.
2 Test me, LORD, and try me,
examine my heart and my mind;
3 for I have always been mindful of your
unfailing love
and have lived in reliance on your
faithfulness.

4 I do not sit with the deceitful,
nor do I associate with hypocrites.
5 I abhor the assembly of evildoers
and refuse to sit with the wicked.
6 I wash my hands in innocence,
and go about your altar, LORD,
7 proclaiming aloud your praise
and telling of all your wonderful deeds.

8 LORD, I love the house where you live,
the place where your glory dwells.
9 Do not take away my soul along with
sinners,
my life with those who are
bloodthirsty,
10 in whose hands are wicked schemes,
whose right hands are full of bribes.
11 I lead a blameless life;
deliver me and be merciful to me.

12 My feet stand on level ground;
in the great congregation I will praise the
LORD.

PSALM 27

Of David.

The LORD is my light and my salvation—
whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life—
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When the wicked advance against me
to devour[a] me,
it is my enemies and my foes
who will stumble and fall.
3 Though an army besiege me,
my heart will not fear;
though war break out against me,
even then I will be confident.

4 One thing I ask from the LORD,
this only do I seek:
that I may dwell in the house of the LORD
all the days of my life,
to gaze on the beauty of the LORD
and to seek him in his temple.
5 For in the day of trouble
he will keep me safe in his dwelling;
he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred
tent
and set me high upon a rock.

6 Then my head will be exalted
above the enemies who surround me;
at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts
of joy;
I will sing and make music to the LORD.

7 Hear my voice when I call, LORD;
be merciful to me and answer me.
8 My heart says of you, "Seek his face!"
Your face, LORD, I will seek.
9 Do not hide your face from me,
do not turn your servant away in anger;
you have been my helper.
Do not reject me or forsake me,
God my Savior.
10 Though my father and mother forsake me,
the LORD will receive me.
11 Teach me your way, LORD;
lead me in a straight path
because of my oppressors.
12 Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes,
for false witnesses rise up against me,
spouting malicious accusations.

13 I remain confident of this:
I will see the goodness of the LORD
in the land of the living.
14 Wait for the LORD;
be strong and take heart
and wait for the LORD.

PSALM 28

Of David.

To you, LORD, I call;
you are my Rock,
do not turn a deaf ear to me.

Culture & Society
In the nomadic culture of the bedouin, one of the most sacred laws, related to the laws of hospitality, is the "law of the tent." According to this custom, a host is bound to protect any guest who enters his dwelling. The host's personal honor is turned to shame if he is unable to secure his guests from harm, even under extreme circumstances. The psalmist finds similar protection in God's "dwelling" (Ps 27:5).

[a] 2 Or *slander*

For if you remain silent,
I will be like those who go down to the pit.
2 Hear my cry for mercy
as I call to you for help,
as I lift up my hands
toward your Most Holy Place.

3 Do not drag me away with the wicked,
with those who do evil,
who speak cordially with their neighbors
but harbor malice in their hearts.
4 Repay them for their deeds
and for their evil work;
repay them for what their hands have done
and bring back on them what they deserve.

5 Because they have no regard for the deeds of the LORD
and what his hands have done,
he will tear them down
and never build them up again.

6 Praise be to the LORD,
for he has heard my cry for mercy.
7 The LORD is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and he helps me.
My heart leaps for joy,
and with my song I praise him.

8 The LORD is the strength of his people,
a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.
9 Save your people and bless your inheritance;
be their shepherd and carry them forever.

PSALM 31[a]

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame;
deliver me in your righteousness.
2 Turn your ear to me,
come quickly to my rescue;
be my rock of refuge,
a strong fortress to save me.
3 Since you are my rock and my fortress,
for the sake of your name lead and guide me.
4 Keep me free from the trap that is set for me,
for you are my refuge.
5 Into your hands I commit my spirit;
deliver me, LORD, my faithful God.
6 I hate those who cling to worthless idols;
as for me, I trust in the LORD.
7 I will be glad and rejoice in your love,
for you saw my affliction
and knew the anguish of my soul.
8 You have not given me into the hands of the enemy
but have set my feet in a spacious place.

9 Be merciful to me, LORD, for I am in distress;
my eyes grow weak with sorrow,
my soul and body with grief.
10 My life is consumed by anguish
and my years by groaning;
my strength fails because of my affliction,[b]
and my bones grow weak.
11 Because of all my enemies,
I am the utter contempt of my neighbors
and an object of dread to my closest friends—
those who see me on the street flee from me.
12 I am forgotten as though I were dead;
I have become like broken pottery.
13 For I hear many whispering,
"Terror on every side!"
They conspire against me
and plot to take my life.

14 But I trust in you, LORD;
I say, "You are my God."
15 My times are in your hands;
deliver me from the hands of my enemies,
from those who pursue me.
16 Let your face shine on your servant;
save me in your unfailing love.
17 Let me not be put to shame, LORD,
for I have cried out to you;
but let the wicked be put to shame
and be silent in the realm of the dead.
18 Let their lying lips be silenced,
for with pride and contempt
they speak arrogantly against the righteous.

19 How abundant are the good things
that you have stored up for those who fear you,
that you bestow in the sight of all,
on those who take refuge in you.
20 In the shelter of your presence you hide them
from all human intrigues;
you keep them safe in your dwelling
from accusing tongues.

[a] In Hebrew texts 31:1-24 is numbered 31:2-25. [b] *10* Or *guilt*

21 Praise be to the LORD,
for he showed me the wonders of his love
when I was in a city under siege.
22 In my alarm I said,
"I am cut off from your sight!"
Yet you heard my cry for mercy
when I called to you for help.

23 Love the LORD, all his faithful people!
The LORD preserves those who are true
to him,
but the proud he pays back in full.
24 Be strong and take heart,
all you who hope in the LORD.

PSALM 35

Of David.

Contend, LORD, with those who contend
with me;
fight against those who fight
against me.
2 Take up shield and armor;
arise and come to my aid.
3 Brandish spear and javelin[a]
against those who pursue me.
Say to me,
"I am your salvation."

4 May those who seek my life
be disgraced and put to shame;
may those who plot my ruin
be turned back in dismay.
5 May they be like chaff before the wind,
with the angel of the LORD driving them
away;
6 may their path be dark and slippery,
with the angel of the LORD pursuing them.

7 Since they hid their net for me without
cause
and without cause dug a pit for me,
8 may ruin overtake them by surprise—
may the net they hid entangle them,
may they fall into the pit, to their ruin.
9 Then my soul will rejoice in the LORD
and delight in his salvation.
10 My whole being will exclaim,
"Who is like you, LORD?
You rescue the poor from those too strong
for them,
the poor and needy from those who rob
them."

11 Ruthless witnesses come forward;
they question me on things I know
nothing about.
12 They repay me evil for good
and leave me like one bereaved.
13 Yet when they were ill, I put on sackcloth
and humbled myself with fasting.
When my prayers returned to me
unanswered,
14 I went about mourning
as though for my friend or brother.
I bowed my head in grief
as though weeping for my mother.
15 But when I stumbled, they gathered in glee;
assailants gathered against me without
my knowledge.
They slandered me without ceasing.
16 Like the ungodly they maliciously mocked;[b]
they gnashed their teeth at me.

17 How long, Lord, will you look on?
Rescue me from their ravages,
my precious life from these lions.
18 I will give you thanks in the great assembly;
among the throngs I will praise you.
19 Do not let those gloat over me
who are my enemies without cause;
do not let those who hate me without reason
maliciously wink the eye.
20 They do not speak peaceably,
but devise false accusations
against those who live quietly in the land.
21 They sneer at me and say, "Aha! Aha!
With our own eyes we have seen it."

22 LORD, you have seen this; do not be silent.
Do not be far from me, Lord.
23 Awake, and rise to my defense!
Contend for me, my God and Lord.
24 Vindicate me in your righteousness, LORD
my God;
do not let them gloat over me.
25 Do not let them think, "Aha, just what we
wanted!"
or say, "We have swallowed him up."

26 May all who gloat over my distress
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who exalt themselves over me
be clothed with shame and disgrace.

[a] 3 Or *and block the way* [b] 16 Septuagint; Hebrew may mean *Like an ungodly circle of mockers,*

Politics & Government
Lying "witnesses" (Ps 35:11) appeared in the law courts to destroy private enemies. Jezebel hired false witnesses to testify against one of her enemies in order to put him to death (1Ki 21:13). In the New Testament, Jesus' enemies found witnesses to testify against him (Mt 26:60). The Ten Commandments refer directly to the courts when they say, "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor" (Ex 20:16).

27 May those who delight in my vindication
shout for joy and gladness;
may they always say, "The LORD be exalted,
who delights in the well-being of his
servant."

28 My tongue will proclaim your
righteousness,
your praises all day long.

PSALM 36[a]

For the director of music. Of David the servant of the LORD.

I have a message from God in my heart
concerning the sinfulness of the wicked:[b]
There is no fear of God
before their eyes.

2 In their own eyes they flatter themselves
too much to detect or hate their sin.
3 The words of their mouths are wicked and
deceitful;
they fail to act wisely or do good.
4 Even on their beds they plot evil;
they commit themselves to a sinful
course
and do not reject what is wrong.

5 Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies.
6 Your righteousness is like the highest
mountains,
your justice like the great deep.
You, LORD, preserve both people and
animals.
7 How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your
wings.
8 They feast on the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of
delights.
9 For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.

10 Continue your love to those who know you,
your righteousness to the upright in
heart.
11 May the foot of the proud not come
against me,
nor the hand of the wicked drive me
away.
12 See how the evildoers lie fallen—
thrown down, not able to rise!

PSALM 38[c]

A psalm of David. A petition.

LORD, do not rebuke me in your anger
or discipline me in your wrath.
2 Your arrows have pierced me,
and your hand has come down on me.
3 Because of your wrath there is no health in
my body;
there is no soundness in my bones
because of my sin.
4 My guilt has overwhelmed me
like a burden too heavy to bear.

5 My wounds fester and are loathsome
because of my sinful folly.
6 I am bowed down and brought very low;
all day long I go about mourning.
7 My back is filled with searing pain;
there is no health in my body.
8 I am feeble and utterly crushed;
I groan in anguish of heart.

9 All my longings lie open before you, Lord;
my sighing is not hidden from you.
10 My heart pounds, my strength fails me;
even the light has gone from my eyes.
11 My friends and companions avoid me
because of my wounds;
my neighbors stay far away.
12 Those who want to kill me set their traps,
those who would harm me talk of my
ruin;
all day long they scheme and lie.

13 I am like the deaf, who cannot hear,
like the mute, who cannot speak;
14 I have become like one who does not
hear,
whose mouth can offer no reply.
15 LORD, I wait for you;
you will answer, Lord my God.
16 For I said, "Do not let them gloat
or exalt themselves over me when my
feet slip."

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[a] In Hebrew texts 36:1-12 is numbered 36:2-13. [b] *1* Or *A message from God: The transgression of the wicked / resides in their hearts.* [c] In Hebrew texts 38:1-22 is numbered 38:2-23.

17 For I am about to fall,
and my pain is ever with me.
18 I confess my iniquity;
I am troubled by my sin.
19 Many have become my enemies without cause[a];
those who hate me without reason are numerous.
20 Those who repay my good with evil
lodge accusations against me,
though I seek only to do what is good.

21 LORD, do not forsake me;
do not be far from me, my God.
22 Come quickly to help me,
my Lord and my Savior.

PSALM 40[b]

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

I waited patiently for the LORD;
he turned to me and heard my cry.
2 He lifted me out of the slimy pit,
out of the mud and mire;
he set my feet on a rock
and gave me a firm place to stand.
3 He put a new song in my mouth,
a hymn of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear the LORD
and put their trust in him.

4 Blessed is the one
who trusts in the LORD,
who does not look to the proud,
to those who turn aside to false gods.[c]
5 Many, LORD my God,
are the wonders you have done,
the things you planned for us.
None can compare with you;
were I to speak and tell of your deeds,
they would be too many to declare.

6 Sacrifice and offering you did not desire—
but my ears you have opened[d]—
burnt offerings and sin offerings[e] you did not require.
7 Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—
it is written about me in the scroll.[f]
8 I desire to do your will, my God;
your law is within my heart."

9 I proclaim your saving acts in the great assembly;
I do not seal my lips, LORD,
as you know.
10 I do not hide your righteousness in my heart;
I speak of your faithfulness and your saving help.
I do not conceal your love and your faithfulness
from the great assembly.

11 Do not withhold your mercy from me, LORD;
may your love and faithfulness always protect me.
12 For troubles without number surround me;
my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.
They are more than the hairs of my head,
and my heart fails within me.
13 Be pleased to save me, LORD;
come quickly, LORD, to help me.

14 May all who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.
15 May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"
be appalled at their own shame.
16 But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help always say,
"The LORD is great!"

17 But as for me, I am poor and needy;
may the Lord think of me.
You are my help and my deliverer;
you are my God, do not delay.

PSALM 41[g]

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

Blessed are those who have regard for the weak;
the LORD delivers them in times of trouble.
2 The LORD protects and preserves them—
they are counted among the blessed in the land—
he does not give them over to the desire of their foes.
3 The LORD sustains them on their sickbed
and restores them from their bed of illness.

4 I said, "Have mercy on me, LORD;
heal me, for I have sinned against you."

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[a] *19* One Dead Sea Scrolls manuscript; Masoretic Text *my vigorous enemies* [b] In Hebrew texts 40:1-17 is numbered 40:2-18. [c] *4* Or *to lies* [d] *6* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts *but a body you have prepared for me* [e] *6* Or *purification offerings* [f] *7* Or *come / with the scroll written for me* [g] In Hebrew texts 41:1-13 is numbered 41:2-14.

5 My enemies say of me in malice,
"When will he die and his name perish?"
6 When one of them comes to see me,
he speaks falsely, while his heart gathers slander;
then he goes out and spreads it around.

7 All my enemies whisper together against me;
they imagine the worst for me, saying,
8 "A vile disease has afflicted him;
he will never get up from the place where he lies."
9 Even my close friend,
someone I trusted,
one who shared my bread,
has turned[a] against me.

10 But may you have mercy on me, LORD;
raise me up, that I may repay them.
11 I know that you are pleased with me,
for my enemy does not triumph over me.
12 Because of my integrity you uphold me
and set me in your presence forever.

13 Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.
Amen and Amen.

TRANSITION

David's Laments (Book II)

Psalm 41 ends Book I (Ps 1–41) of the psalms, with Ps 41:13 offering a doxology to this first segment of the Psalter. Again in Book II (Ps 42–72) we see the emphasis on lament in the early part of the Psalter, with seven additional laments associated with David and one unidentified lament (Ps 71).

- **Psalms 53; 55; 58; 61; 64; 69; 70; 71**

PSALM 53[b]

For the director of music. According to mahalath.[c] *A* maskil[d] *of David.*

The fool says in his heart,
"There is no God."
They are corrupt, and their ways are vile;
there is no one who does good.

2 God looks down from heaven
on all mankind
to see if there are any who understand,
any who seek God.
3 Everyone has turned away, all have become corrupt;
there is no one who does good,
not even one.

4 Do all these evildoers know nothing?
They devour my people as though eating bread;
they never call on God.
5 But there they are, overwhelmed with dread,
where there was nothing to dread.
God scattered the bones of those who attacked you;
you put them to shame, for God despised them.

6 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When God restores his people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

PSALM 55[e]

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil[d] *of David.*

Listen to my prayer, O God,
do not ignore my plea;
2 hear me and answer me.
My thoughts trouble me and I am distraught
3 because of what my enemy is saying,
because of the threats of the wicked;
for they bring down suffering on me
and assail me in their anger.

4 My heart is in anguish within me;
the terrors of death have fallen on me.
5 Fear and trembling have beset me;
horror has overwhelmed me.
6 I said, "Oh, that I had the wings of a dove!
I would fly away and be at rest.
7 I would flee far away
and stay in the desert;[f]
8 I would hurry to my place of shelter,
far from the tempest and storm."

9 Lord, confuse the wicked, confound their words,
for I see violence and strife in the city.
10 Day and night they prowl about on its walls;
malice and abuse are within it.
11 Destructive forces are at work in the city;
threats and lies never leave its streets.

12 If an enemy were insulting me,
I could endure it;

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[a] *9* Hebrew *has lifted up his heel* [b] In Hebrew texts 53:1-6 is numbered 53:2-7. [c] Title: Probably a musical term [d] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [e] In Hebrew texts 55:1-23 is numbered 55:2-24. [f] *7* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and in the middle of verse 19.

if a foe were rising against me,
I could hide.
13 But it is you, a man like myself,
my companion, my close friend,
14 with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship
at the house of God,
as we walked about
among the worshipers.

15 Let death take my enemies by surprise;
let them go down alive to the realm of the dead,
for evil finds lodging among them.

16 As for me, I call to God,
and the LORD saves me.
17 Evening, morning and noon
I cry out in distress,
and he hears my voice.
18 He rescues me unharmed
from the battle waged against me,
even though many oppose me.
19 God, who is enthroned from of old,
who does not change—
he will hear them and humble them,
because they have no fear of God.

20 My companion attacks his friends;
he violates his covenant.
21 His talk is smooth as butter,
yet war is in his heart;
his words are more soothing than oil,
yet they are drawn swords.

22 Cast your cares on the LORD
and he will sustain you;
he will never let
the righteous be shaken.
23 But you, God, will bring down the wicked
into the pit of decay;
the bloodthirsty and deceitful
will not live out half their days.

But as for me, I trust in you.

PSALM 58[a]

For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy." Of David. A miktam.[b]

Do you rulers indeed speak justly?
Do you judge people with equity?
2 No, in your heart you devise injustice,
and your hands mete out violence on the earth.
3 Even from birth the wicked go astray;
from the womb they are wayward,
spreading lies.
4 Their venom is like the venom of a snake,
like that of a cobra that has stopped its ears,
5 that will not heed the tune of the charmer,
however skillful the enchanter may be.

6 Break the teeth in their mouths, O God;
LORD, tear out the fangs of those lions!
7 Let them vanish like water that flows away;
when they draw the bow, let their arrows fall short.
8 May they be like a slug that melts away as it moves along,
like a stillborn child that never sees the sun.

9 Before your pots can feel the heat of the thorns—
whether they be green or dry—the wicked will be swept away.[c]
10 The righteous will be glad when they are avenged,
when they dip their feet in the blood of the wicked.
11 Then people will say,
"Surely the righteous still are rewarded;
surely there is a God who judges the earth."

PSALM 61[d]

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. Of David.

Hear my cry, O God;
listen to my prayer.
2 From the ends of the earth I call to you,
I call as my heart grows faint;
lead me to the rock that is higher than I.
3 For you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the foe.

4 I long to dwell in your tent forever
and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.[e]
5 For you, God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.

6 Increase the days of the king's life,
his years for many generations.
7 May he be enthroned in God's presence forever;
appoint your love and faithfulness to protect him.

[a] In Hebrew texts 58:1-11 is numbered 58:2-12. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [c] 9 The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain. [d] In Hebrew texts 61:1-8 is numbered 61:2-9. [e] 4 The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here.

8 Then I will ever sing in praise of your name
and fulfill my vows day after day.

PSALM 64[a]

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

Hear me, my God, as I voice my complaint;
protect my life from the threat of the enemy.
2 Hide me from the conspiracy of the wicked,
from the plots of evildoers.
3 They sharpen their tongues like swords
and aim cruel words like deadly arrows.
4 They shoot from ambush at the innocent;
they shoot suddenly, without fear.
5 They encourage each other in evil plans,
they talk about hiding their snares;
they say, "Who will see it[b]?"
6 They plot injustice and say,
"We have devised a perfect plan!"
Surely the human mind and heart are cunning.
7 But God will shoot them with his arrows;
they will suddenly be struck down.
8 He will turn their own tongues against them
and bring them to ruin;
all who see them will shake their heads in scorn.
9 All people will fear;
they will proclaim the works of God
and ponder what he has done.
10 The righteous will rejoice in the LORD
and take refuge in him;
all the upright in heart will glory in him!

PSALM 69[c]

For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of David.

Save me, O God,
for the waters have come up to my neck.
2 I sink in the miry depths,
where there is no foothold.
I have come into the deep waters;
the floods engulf me.
3 I am worn out calling for help;
my throat is parched.
My eyes fail,
looking for my God.
4 Those who hate me without reason
outnumber the hairs of my head;
many are my enemies without cause,
those who seek to destroy me.
I am forced to restore
what I did not steal.
5 You, God, know my folly;
my guilt is not hidden from you.
6 Lord, the LORD Almighty,
may those who hope in you
not be disgraced because of me;
God of Israel,
may those who seek you
not be put to shame because of me.
7 For I endure scorn for your sake,
and shame covers my face.
8 I am a foreigner to my own family,
a stranger to my own mother's children;
9 for zeal for your house consumes me,
and the insults of those who insult you fall on me.
10 When I weep and fast,
I must endure scorn;
11 when I put on sackcloth,
people make sport of me.
12 Those who sit at the gate mock me,
and I am the song of the drunkards.
13 But I pray to you, LORD,
in the time of your favor;
in your great love, O God,
answer me with your sure salvation.
14 Rescue me from the mire,
do not let me sink;
deliver me from those who hate me,
from the deep waters.
15 Do not let the floodwaters engulf me
or the depths swallow me up
or the pit close its mouth over me.
16 Answer me, LORD, out of the goodness of your love;
in your great mercy turn to me.
17 Do not hide your face from your servant;
answer me quickly, for I am in trouble.
18 Come near and rescue me;
deliver me because of my foes.
19 You know how I am scorned, disgraced and shamed;
all my enemies are before you.
20 Scorn has broken my heart
and has left me helpless;
I looked for sympathy, but there was none,
for comforters, but I found none.
21 They put gall in my food
and gave me vinegar for my thirst.
22 May the table set before them become a snare;
may it become retribution and[d] a trap.

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[a] In Hebrew texts 64:1-10 is numbered 64:2-11.
[b] *5* Or *us*
[c] In Hebrew texts 69:1-36 is numbered 69:2-37.
[d] *22* Or *snare / and their fellowship become*

23 May their eyes be darkened so they cannot
see,
and their backs be bent forever.
24 Pour out your wrath on them;
let your fierce anger overtake them.
25 May their place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in their tents.
26 For they persecute those you wound
and talk about the pain of those you hurt.
27 Charge them with crime upon crime;
do not let them share in your salvation.
28 May they be blotted out of the book of life
and not be listed with the righteous.

29 But as for me, afflicted and in pain—
may your salvation, God, protect me.

30 I will praise God's name in song
and glorify him with thanksgiving.
31 This will please the LORD more than an ox,
more than a bull with its horns and
hooves.
32 The poor will see and be glad—
you who seek God, may your hearts live!
33 The LORD hears the needy
and does not despise his captive people.

34 Let heaven and earth praise him,
the seas and all that move in them,
35 for God will save Zion
and rebuild the cities of Judah.
Then people will settle there and possess it;
36 the children of his servants will inherit it,
and those who love his name will dwell
there.

PSALM 70[a]

For the director of music. Of David. A petition.

Hasten, O God, to save me;
come quickly, LORD, to help me.

2 May those who want to take my life
be put to shame and confusion;
may all who desire my ruin
be turned back in disgrace.
3 May those who say to me, "Aha! Aha!"
turn back because of their shame.
4 But may all who seek you
rejoice and be glad in you;
may those who long for your saving help
always say,
"The LORD is great!"

5 But as for me, I am poor and needy;
come quickly to me, O God.
You are my help and my deliverer;
LORD, do not delay.

[a] In Hebrew texts 70:1-5 is numbered 70:2-6.

PSALM 71

In you, LORD, I have taken refuge;
let me never be put to shame.
2 In your righteousness, rescue me and
deliver me;
turn your ear to me and save me.
3 Be my rock of refuge,
to which I can always go;
give the command to save me,
for you are my rock and my fortress.
4 Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the
wicked,
from the grasp of those who are evil and
cruel.

5 For you have been my hope, Sovereign
LORD,
my confidence since my youth.
6 From birth I have relied on you;
you brought me forth from my mother's
womb.
I will ever praise you.
7 I have become a sign to many;
you are my strong refuge.
8 My mouth is filled with your praise,
declaring your splendor all day long.

9 Do not cast me away when I am old;
do not forsake me when my strength is
gone.
10 For my enemies speak against me;
those who wait to kill me conspire
together.
11 They say, "God has forsaken him;
pursue him and seize him,
for no one will rescue him."
12 Do not be far from me, my God;
come quickly, God, to help me.
13 May my accusers perish in shame;
may those who want to harm me
be covered with scorn and disgrace.

14 As for me, I will always have hope;
I will praise you more and more.

15 My mouth will tell of your righteous
deeds,
of your saving acts all day long—
though I know not how to relate them
all.
16 I will come and proclaim your mighty acts,
Sovereign LORD;
I will proclaim your righteous deeds,
yours alone.
17 Since my youth, God, you have
taught me,
and to this day I declare your marvelous
deeds.

18 Even when I am old and gray,
do not forsake me, my God,
till I declare your power to the next generation,
your mighty acts to all who are to come.

19 Your righteousness, God, reaches to the heavens,
you who have done great things.
Who is like you, God?
20 Though you have made me see troubles,
many and bitter,
you will restore my life again;
from the depths of the earth
you will again bring me up.
21 You will increase my honor
and comfort me once more.

22 I will praise you with the harp
for your faithfulness, my God;
I will sing praise to you with the lyre,
Holy One of Israel.
23 My lips will shout for joy
when I sing praise to you—
I whom you have delivered.
24 My tongue will tell of your righteous acts
all day long,
for those who wanted to harm me
have been put to shame and confusion.

TRANSITION

David's Laments (Books III-V)

The end of Book II (Pss 42–72) of the psalms is clearly indicated by Ps 72:20, "This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse." At one time this verse possibly marked the end of a collection of David's psalms, and most psalms associated with David do appear in Books I and II. In the last three books of the psalms (Books III-V), only a few Davidic laments are found. One additional lament, Ps 102, presents the prayer of an unknown suffering saint.

- **Psalms 86; 102; 109; 139–141; 143**

PSALM 86

A prayer of David.

Hear me, LORD, and answer me,
for I am poor and needy.
2 Guard my life, for I am faithful to you;
save your servant who trusts in you.
You are my God; 3 have mercy on me, Lord,
for I call to you all day long.
4 Bring joy to your servant, Lord,
for I put my trust in you.
5 You, Lord, are forgiving and good,
abounding in love to all who call to you.
6 Hear my prayer, LORD;
listen to my cry for mercy.
7 When I am in distress, I call to you,
because you answer me.

8 Among the gods there is none like you, Lord;
no deeds can compare with yours.
9 All the nations you have made
will come and worship before you, Lord;
they will bring glory to your name.
10 For you are great and do marvelous deeds;
you alone are God.

11 Teach me your way, LORD,
that I may rely on your faithfulness;
give me an undivided heart,
that I may fear your name.
12 I will praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart;
I will glorify your name forever.
13 For great is your love toward me;
you have delivered me from the depths,
from the realm of the dead.

14 Arrogant foes are attacking me, O God;
ruthless people are trying to kill me—
they have no regard for you.
15 But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God,
slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.
16 Turn to me and have mercy on me;
show your strength in behalf of your servant;
save me, because I serve you
just as my mother did.
17 Give me a sign of your goodness,
that my enemies may see it and be put to shame,
for you, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

PSALM 102[a]

A prayer of an afflicted person who has grown weak and pours out a lament before the LORD.

Hear my prayer, LORD;
let my cry for help come to you.
2 Do not hide your face from me
when I am in distress.
Turn your ear to me;
when I call, answer me quickly.

3 For my days vanish like smoke;
my bones burn like glowing embers.

[a] In Hebrew texts 102:1-28 is numbered 102:2-29.

4 My heart is blighted and withered like
grass;
I forget to eat my food.
5 In my distress I groan aloud
and am reduced to skin and bones.
6 I am like a desert owl,
like an owl among the ruins.
7 I lie awake; I have become
like a bird alone on a roof.
8 All day long my enemies taunt me;
those who rail against me use my name
as a curse.
9 For I eat ashes as my food
and mingle my drink with tears
10 because of your great wrath,
for you have taken me up and thrown me
aside.
11 My days are like the evening shadow;
I wither away like grass.

12 But you, LORD, sit enthroned forever;
your renown endures through all
generations.
13 You will arise and have compassion on
Zion,
for it is time to show favor to her;
the appointed time has come.
14 For her stones are dear to your servants;
her very dust moves them to pity.
15 The nations will fear the name of the
LORD,
all the kings of the earth will revere your
glory.
16 For the LORD will rebuild Zion
and appear in his glory.
17 He will respond to the prayer of the
destitute;
he will not despise their plea.

18 Let this be written for a future generation,
that a people not yet created may praise
the LORD:
19 "The LORD looked down from his sanctuary
on high,
from heaven he viewed the earth,
20 to hear the groans of the prisoners
and release those condemned to death."
21 So the name of the LORD will be declared in
Zion
and his praise in Jerusalem
22 when the peoples and the kingdoms
assemble to worship the LORD.

23 In the course of my life[a] he broke my
strength;
he cut short my days.

24 So I said:
"Do not take me away, my God, in the midst
of my days;
your years go on through all generations.
25 In the beginning you laid the foundations of
the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your
hands.
26 They will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.
Like clothing you will change them
and they will be discarded.
27 But you remain the same,
and your years will never end.
28 The children of your servants will live in
your presence;
their descendants will be established
before you."

PSALM 109

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

My God, whom I praise,
do not remain silent,
2 for people who are wicked and deceitful
have opened their mouths against me;
they have spoken against me with lying
tongues.
3 With words of hatred they surround me;
they attack me without cause.
4 In return for my friendship they accuse me,
but I am a man of prayer.
5 They repay me evil for good,
and hatred for my friendship.

6 Appoint someone evil to oppose my
enemy;
let an accuser stand at his right hand.
7 When he is tried, let him be found guilty,
and may his prayers condemn him.
8 May his days be few;
may another take his place of leadership.
9 May his children be fatherless
and his wife a widow.
10 May his children be wandering beggars;
may they be driven[b] from their ruined
homes.

Plants & Animals
In the ancient Near East solitude was considered dangerous and unpleasant, not as a welcome retreat from a busy life. The desert was a place of hunger (Ps 107:4, 5), and the cries of the birds there (Ps 102:6) made the atmosphere eerie. Security was found in being surrounded with the life of the town and city.

[a] *23* Or *By his power* [b] *10* Septuagint; Hebrew *sought*

11 May a creditor seize all he has;
may strangers plunder the fruits of his labor.
12 May no one extend kindness to him
or take pity on his fatherless children.
13 May his descendants be cut off,
their names blotted out from the next generation.
14 May the iniquity of his fathers be remembered before the LORD;
may the sin of his mother never be blotted out.
15 May their sins always remain before the LORD,
that he may blot out their name from the earth.

16 For he never thought of doing a kindness,
but hounded to death the poor
and the needy and the brokenhearted.
17 He loved to pronounce a curse—
may it come back on him.
He found no pleasure in blessing—
may it be far from him.
18 He wore cursing as his garment;
it entered into his body like water,
into his bones like oil.
19 May it be like a cloak wrapped about him,
like a belt tied forever around him.
20 May this be the LORD's payment to my accusers,
to those who speak evil of me.

21 But you, Sovereign LORD,
help me for your name's sake;
out of the goodness of your love,
deliver me.
22 For I am poor and needy,
and my heart is wounded within me.
23 I fade away like an evening shadow;
I am shaken off like a locust.
24 My knees give way from fasting;
my body is thin and gaunt.
25 I am an object of scorn to my accusers;
when they see me, they shake their heads.

26 Help me, LORD my God;
save me according to your unfailing love.
27 Let them know that it is your hand,
that you, LORD, have done it.
28 While they curse, may you bless;
may those who attack me be put to shame,
but may your servant rejoice.
29 May my accusers be clothed with disgrace
and wrapped in shame as in a cloak.

30 With my mouth I will greatly extol the LORD;
in the great throng of worshipers I will praise him.
31 For he stands at the right hand of the needy,
to save their lives from those who would condemn them.

Beliefs & Ideas

Curses were common in the ancient world. A curse is a formula of words that when recited or written is supposed to influence the course of another person's life. A person who suspected that an enemy was using curses could reply with countercurses designed to resist the influence of the curse (Ps 109:17).

PSALM 139

For the director of music. Of David. A psalm.

You have searched me, LORD,
and you know me.
2 You know when I sit and when I rise;
you perceive my thoughts from afar.
3 You discern my going out and my lying down;
you are familiar with all my ways.
4 Before a word is on my tongue
you, LORD, know it completely.
5 You hem me in behind and before,
and you lay your hand upon me.
6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me,
too lofty for me to attain.

7 Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
10 even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.
11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"
12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.

13 For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
14 I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.

15 My frame was not hidden from you
when I was made in the secret place,
when I was woven together in the depths
of the earth.
16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written
in your book
before one of them came to be.
17 How precious to me are your thoughts,[a]
God!
How vast is the sum of them!
18 Were I to count them,
they would outnumber the grains of
sand—
when I awake, I am still with you.

19 If only you, God, would slay the wicked!
Away from me, you who are bloodthirsty!
20 They speak of you with evil intent;
your adversaries misuse your name.
21 Do I not hate those who hate you, LORD,
and abhor those who are in rebellion
against you?
22 I have nothing but hatred for them;
I count them my enemies.
23 Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.
24 See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.

PSALM 140[b]

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

Rescue me, LORD, from evildoers;
protect me from the violent,
2 who devise evil plans in their hearts
and stir up war every day.
3 They make their tongues as sharp as a
serpent's;
the poison of vipers is on their lips.[c]

4 Keep me safe, LORD, from the hands of the
wicked;
protect me from the violent,
who devise ways to trip my feet.
5 The arrogant have hidden a snare for me;
they have spread out the cords of their
net
and have set traps for me along my path.

6 I say to the LORD, "You are my God."
Hear, LORD, my cry for mercy.
7 Sovereign LORD, my strong deliverer,
you shield my head in the day of battle.

8 Do not grant the wicked their desires, LORD;
do not let their plans succeed.

9 Those who surround me proudly rear their
heads;
may the mischief of their lips engulf
them.
10 May burning coals fall on them;
may they be thrown into the fire,
into miry pits, never to rise.
11 May slanderers not be established in the
land;
may disaster hunt down the violent.

12 I know that the LORD secures justice for the
poor
and upholds the cause of the needy.
13 Surely the righteous will praise your
name,
and the upright will live in your presence.

PSALM 141

A psalm of David.

I call to you, LORD, come quickly to me;
hear me when I call to you.
2 May my prayer be set before you like
incense;
may the lifting up of my hands be like the
evening sacrifice.

3 Set a guard over my mouth, LORD;
keep watch over the door of my lips.
4 Do not let my heart be drawn to what is evil
so that I take part in wicked deeds
along with those who are evildoers;
do not let me eat their delicacies.

5 Let a righteous man strike me—that is a
kindness;
let him rebuke me—that is oil on my
head.
My head will not refuse it,
for my prayer will still be against the
deeds of evildoers.

6 Their rulers will be thrown down from the
cliffs,
and the wicked will learn that my words
were well spoken.

Religion & Worship
The Bible describes more than one posture suitable for praying. The most basic is to fall down or bow before the Creator. The hands reach out to God when begging, in giving praise, and possibly in greeting (Ps 141:2). The raised hands may also be a sign of amazement and reverence for the awesomeness of God.

[a] *17* Or *How amazing are your thoughts concerning me*
[b] In Hebrew texts 140:1-13 is numbered 140:2-14.
[c] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 5 and 8.

7 They will say, "As one plows and breaks up
the earth,
so our bones have been scattered at the
mouth of the grave."

8 But my eyes are fixed on you, Sovereign
LORD;
in you I take refuge—do not give me
over to death.
9 Keep me safe from the traps set by
evildoers,
from the snares they have laid for me.
10 Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
while I pass by in safety.

PSALM 143

A psalm of David.

LORD, hear my prayer,
listen to my cry for mercy;
in your faithfulness and righteousness
come to my relief.
2 Do not bring your servant into judgment,
for no one living is righteous before you.
3 The enemy pursues me,
he crushes me to the ground;
he makes me dwell in the darkness
like those long dead.
4 So my spirit grows faint within me;
my heart within me is dismayed.
5 I remember the days of long ago;
I meditate on all your works
and consider what your hands have done.
6 I spread out my hands to you;
I thirst for you like a parched land.[a]

7 Answer me quickly, LORD;
my spirit fails.
Do not hide your face from me
or I will be like those who go down to the
pit.
8 Let the morning bring me word of your
unfailing love,
for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go,
for to you I entrust my life.

Daily Life & Customs
In village life a person's affairs are more visible than in modern cities. In the Bible, righteous persons are considered responsible to support their society according to their means. Their acts of generosity are not occasional, special displays, but part of the household budget. Although outsiders might not see it, the reputation of a generous person would be common knowledge, as visible as the light of day at noon (Ps 37:6).

9 Rescue me from my enemies, LORD,
for I hide myself in you.
10 Teach me to do your will,
for you are my God;
may your good Spirit
lead me on level ground.

11 For your name's sake, LORD, preserve my
life;
in your righteousness, bring me out of
trouble.
12 In your unfailing love, silence my enemies;
destroy all my foes,
for I am your servant.

TRANSITION
The Prosperity of the Wicked
One psalm associated with David is neither a hymn nor a lament, but rather a wisdom psalm (see "Wisdom Psalms" at Ps 1). The collection of wise sayings in Ps 37 is often compared to the Book of Proverbs. Its basic theme is to commend trust in God for everyday living in the face of wickedness and temptation. Despite temporary prosperity, the wicked must ultimately fail.

• **Psalm 37**

PSALM 37[b]

Of David.

Do not fret because of those who are evil
or be envious of those who do wrong;
2 for like the grass they will soon wither,
like green plants they will soon die away.

3 Trust in the LORD and do good;
dwell in the land and enjoy safe pasture.
4 Take delight in the LORD,
and he will give you the desires of your
heart.

5 Commit your way to the LORD;
trust in him and he will do this:
6 He will make your righteous reward shine
like the dawn,
your vindication like the noonday sun.

7 Be still before the LORD
and wait patiently for him;
do not fret when people succeed in their
ways,
when they carry out their wicked
schemes.

[a] 6 The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [b] This psalm is an acrostic poem, the stanzas of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

8 Refrain from anger and turn from wrath;
do not fret—it leads only to evil.
9 For those who are evil will be destroyed,
but those who hope in the LORD will
inherit the land.

10 A little while, and the wicked will be no
more;
though you look for them, they will not
be found.
11 But the meek will inherit the land
and enjoy peace and prosperity.

12 The wicked plot against the righteous
and gnash their teeth at them;
13 but the Lord laughs at the wicked,
for he knows their day is coming.

14 The wicked draw the sword
and bend the bow
to bring down the poor and needy,
to slay those whose ways are upright.
15 But their swords will pierce their own
hearts,
and their bows will be broken.

16 Better the little that the righteous have
than the wealth of many wicked;
17 for the power of the wicked will be broken,
but the LORD upholds the righteous.

18 The blameless spend their days under the
LORD's care,
and their inheritance will endure forever.
19 In times of disaster they will not wither;
in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.

20 But the wicked will perish:
Though the LORD's enemies are like the
flowers of the field,
they will be consumed, they will go up in
smoke.

21 The wicked borrow and do not repay,
but the righteous give generously;
22 those the LORD blesses will inherit the land,
but those he curses will be destroyed.

23 The LORD makes firm the steps
of the one who delights in him;
24 though he may stumble, he will not fall,
for the LORD upholds him with his hand.

25 I was young and now I am old,
yet I have never seen the righteous
forsaken
or their children begging bread.

26 They are always generous and lend freely;
their children will be a blessing.[a]

27 Turn from evil and do good;
then you will dwell in the land forever.
28 For the LORD loves the just
and will not forsake his faithful ones.

Wrongdoers will be completely destroyed[b];
the offspring of the wicked will perish.
29 The righteous will inherit the land
and dwell in it forever.

30 The mouths of the righteous utter wisdom,
and their tongues speak what is just.
31 The law of their God is in their hearts;
their feet do not slip.

32 The wicked lie in wait for the righteous,
intent on putting them to death;
33 but the LORD will not leave them in the
power of the wicked
or let them be condemned when brought
to trial.

34 Hope in the LORD
and keep his way.
He will exalt you to inherit the land;
when the wicked are destroyed, you will
see it.

35 I have seen a wicked and ruthless man
flourishing like a luxuriant native tree,
36 but he soon passed away and was no more;
though I looked for him, he could not be
found.

37 Consider the blameless, observe the
upright;
a future awaits those who seek peace.[c]
38 But all sinners will be destroyed;
there will be no future[d] for the wicked.

39 The salvation of the righteous comes from
the LORD;
he is their stronghold in time of trouble.
40 The LORD helps them and delivers them;
he delivers them from the wicked and
saves them,
because they take refuge in him.

[a] *26* Or *freely; / the names of their children will be used in blessings* (see Gen. 48:20); or *freely; / others will see that their children are blessed*
[b] *28* See Septuagint; Hebrew *They will be protected forever*
[c] *37* Or *upright; / those who seek peace will have posterity*
[d] *38* Or *posterity*

TRANSITION

Preparations for the Temple

In both 2Sa 24 and 1Ch 21, David took the census and was punished. The two accounts differ after that point, though. The Samuel account is immediately followed by the description of David's feeble last years (1Ki 1; 2), a pathetic end to a great life. The Chronicles account focuses on David's victories, and to the Chronicler, none of David's achievements

is as great as his founding of the temple and his appointment of the priests who would serve there.

The superscription of Ps 30 associates the psalm with "the dedication of the temple. Of David." The Hebrew could also be translated literally as "the dedication of the house of David." Although it is not certain that the word "house" refers to the temple, the superscription may suggest that at some point Ps 30 was associated with the temple. The NIV clarifies accordingly.

- **1 Chronicles 22:1–19**
- **Psalm 30**

1 Chronicles 22:1–19

22 :1 Then David said, "The house of the LORD God is to be here, and also the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

Preparations for the Temple

2So David gave orders to assemble the foreigners residing in Israel, and from among them he appointed stonecutters to prepare dressed stone for building the house of God. 3He provided a large amount of iron to make nails for the doors of the gateways and for the fittings, and more bronze than could be weighed. 4He also provided more cedar logs than could be counted, for the Sidonians and Tyrians had brought large numbers of them to David.

5David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house to be built for the LORD should be of great magnificence and fame and splendor in the sight of all the nations. Therefore I will make preparations for it." So David made extensive preparations before his death.

6Then he called for his son Solomon and charged him to build a house for the LORD, the God of Israel. 7David said to Solomon: "My son, I had it in my heart to build a house for the Name of the LORD my God. 8But this word of the LORD came to me: 'You have shed much blood and have fought many wars. You are not to build a house for my Name, because you have shed much blood on the earth in my sight. 9But you will have a son who will be a man of peace and rest, and I will give him rest from all his enemies on every side. His name will be Solomon,[a] and I will grant Israel peace and quiet during his reign. 10He is the one who will build a house for my Name. He will be my son, and I will be his father. And I will establish the throne of his kingdom over Israel forever.'

11"Now, my son, the LORD be with you, and may you have success and build the house of the LORD your God, as he said you would. 12May the LORD give you discretion and understanding when he puts you in command over Israel, so that you may keep the law of the LORD your God. 13Then you will have success if you are careful to observe the decrees and laws that the LORD gave Moses for Israel. Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged.

14"I have taken great pains to provide for the temple of the LORD a hundred thousand talents[b] of gold, a million talents[c] of silver, quantities of bronze and iron too great to be weighed, and wood and stone. And you may add to them. 15You have many workers: stonecutters, masons and carpenters, as well as those skilled in every kind of work 16in gold and silver, bronze and iron—craftsmen beyond number. Now begin the work, and the LORD be with you."

17Then David ordered all the leaders of Israel to help his son Solomon. 18He said to them, "Is not the LORD your God with you? And has he not granted you rest on every side? For he has given the inhabitants of the land into my hands, and the land is subject to the LORD and to his people. 19Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the LORD your God. Begin to build the sanctuary of the LORD God, so that you may bring the ark of the covenant of the LORD and the sacred articles belonging to God into the temple that will be built for the Name of the LORD."

Architecture & Building
Gates were often made of wood fortified with many nails (1Ch 22:3). The doorway of the Parthenon in Athens was nearly 14 feet wide and 32 feet high, and the doors were made of wood plated with bronze. The doorway of Solomon's temple was somewhat smaller. Architects used bronze and iron for structural reinforcement as well as for ornamentation in building.

PSALM 30[d]

A psalm. A song. For the dedication of the temple.[e] Of David.

I will exalt you, LORD,
for you lifted me out of the depths
and did not let my enemies gloat
over me.

[a] *9 Solomon* sounds like and may be derived from the Hebrew for *peace.* [b] *14* That is, about 3,750 tons or about 3,400 metric tons [c] *14* That is, about 37,500 tons or about 34,000 metric tons [d] In Hebrew texts 30:1-12 is numbered 30:2-13. [e] Title: Or *palace*

2 LORD my God, I called to you for help,
and you healed me.
3 You, LORD, brought me up from the realm
of the dead;
you spared me from going down to the
pit.

4 Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful
people;
praise his holy name.
5 For his anger lasts only a moment,
but his favor lasts a lifetime;
weeping may stay for the night,
but rejoicing comes in the morning.

6 When I felt secure, I said,
"I will never be shaken."
7 LORD, when you favored me,
you made my royal mountain[a] stand
firm;
but when you hid your face,
I was dismayed.

8 To you, LORD, I called;
to the Lord I cried for mercy:
9 "What is gained if I am silenced,
if I go down to the pit?
Will the dust praise you?
Will it proclaim your faithfulness?
10 Hear, LORD, and be merciful to me;
LORD, be my help."

11 You turned my wailing into dancing;
you removed my sackcloth and clothed
me with joy,
12 that my heart may sing your praises and not
be silent.
LORD my God, I will praise you forever.

[a] *7* That is, Mount Zion [b] *10* One Hebrew manuscript, Septuagint and Vulgate (see also verse 11); most Hebrew manuscripts *Zina*

TRANSITION

Divisions of the Temple Personnel

In the Chronicler's emphasis upon temple affairs, other matters get pushed aside. For instance, all the complicated court intrigues that led up to Solomon's coronation in 1 Kings are replaced in the priestly account with a single sentence (1Ch 23:1). Then the Chronicler returns to his temple theme.

The organization of the temple arranged the personnel into family groups. The Levites (ch. 23), priests (ch. 24), musicians (ch. 25), and gatekeepers (ch. 26) are listed by divisions. Although these lists are frustrating to modern readers, such details of organization were not trivial to the Chronicler.

• 1 Chronicles 23:1—26:19

1 Chronicles

The Levites

23 **:1** When David was old and full of years, he made his son Solomon king over Israel.

2 He also gathered together all the leaders of Israel, as well as the priests and Levites. 3 The Levites thirty years old or more were counted, and the total number of men was thirty-eight thousand. 4 David said, "Of these, twenty-four thousand are to be in charge of the work of the temple of the LORD and six thousand are to be officials and judges. 5 Four thousand are to be gatekeepers and four thousand are to praise the LORD with the musical instruments I have provided for that purpose."

6 David separated the Levites into divisions corresponding to the sons of Levi: Gershon, Kohath and Merari.

Gershonites

7 Belonging to the Gershonites:
Ladan and Shimei.
8 The sons of Ladan:
Jehiel the first, Zetham and Joel—three in all.
9 The sons of Shimei:
Shelomoth, Haziel and Haran—three in all.
These were the heads of the families of Ladan.
10 And the sons of Shimei:
Jahath, Ziza,[b] Jeush and Beriah.
These were the sons of Shimei—four in all.
11 Jahath was the first and Ziza the second, but Jeush and Beriah did not have many sons; so they were counted as one family with one assignment.

Kohathites

12 The sons of Kohath:
Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel—four in all.
13 The sons of Amram:
Aaron and Moses.
Aaron was set apart, he and his descendants forever, to consecrate the most holy things, to offer sacrifices before the LORD, to minister before him and to pronounce blessings in his name forever.
14 The sons of Moses the man of God were counted as part of the tribe of Levi.
15 The sons of Moses:
Gershom and Eliezer.
16 The descendants of Gershom:
Shubael was the first.

17 The descendants of Eliezer:
Rehabiah was the first.
Eliezer had no other sons, but the sons
of Rehabiah were very numerous.
18 The sons of Izhar:
Shelomith was the first.
19 The sons of Hebron:
Jeriah the first, Amariah the second,
Jahaziel the third and Jekameam the
fourth.
20 The sons of Uzziel:
Micah the first and Ishiah the second.

Merarites

21 The sons of Merari:
Mahli and Mushi.
The sons of Mahli:
Eleazar and Kish.
22 Eleazar died without having sons: he
had only daughters. Their cousins, the
sons of Kish, married them.
23 The sons of Mushi:
Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth—three in all.

24 These were the descendants of Levi by their families—the heads of families as they were registered under their names and counted individually, that is, the workers twenty years old or more who served in the temple of the LORD. 25 For David had said, "Since the LORD, the God of Israel, has granted rest to his people and has come to dwell in Jerusalem forever, 26 the Levites no longer need to carry the tabernacle or any of the articles used in its service." 27 According to the last instructions of David, the Levites were counted from those twenty years old or more.

28 The duty of the Levites was to help Aaron's descendants in the service of the temple of the LORD: to be in charge of the courtyards, the side rooms, the purification of all sacred things and the performance of other duties at the house of God. 29 They were in charge of the bread set out on the table, the special flour for the grain offerings, the thin loaves made without yeast, the baking and the mixing, and all measurements of quantity and size. 30 They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD. They were to do the same in the evening 31 and whenever burnt offerings were presented to the LORD on the Sabbaths, at the New Moon feasts and at the appointed festivals. They were to serve before the LORD regularly in the proper number and in the way prescribed for them.

32 And so the Levites carried out their responsibilities for the tent of meeting, for the Holy Place and, under their relatives the descendants of Aaron, for the service of the temple of the LORD.

The Divisions of Priests

24 1 These were the divisions of the descendants of Aaron:

The sons of Aaron were Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. 2 But Nadab and Abihu died before their father did, and they had no sons; so Eleazar and Ithamar served as the priests. 3 With the help of Zadok a descendant of Eleazar and Ahimelek a descendant of Ithamar, David separated them into divisions for their appointed order of ministering. 4 A larger number of leaders were found among Eleazar's descendants than among Ithamar's, and they were divided accordingly: sixteen heads of families from Eleazar's descendants and eight heads of families from Ithamar's descendants. 5 They divided them impartially by casting lots, for there were officials of the sanctuary and officials of God among the descendants of both Eleazar and Ithamar.

6 The scribe Shemaiah son of Nethanel, a Levite, recorded their names in the presence of the king and of the officials: Zadok the priest, Ahimelek son of Abiathar and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites—one family being taken from Eleazar and then one from Ithamar.

7 The first lot fell to Jehoiarib,
the second to Jedaiah,
8 the third to Harim,
the fourth to Seorim,
9 the fifth to Malkijah,
the sixth to Mijamin,
10 the seventh to Hakkoz,
the eighth to Abijah,
11 the ninth to Jeshua,
the tenth to Shekaniah,
12 the eleventh to Eliashib,
the twelfth to Jakim,
13 the thirteenth to Huppah,
the fourteenth to Jeshebeab,

TIME CAPSULE		1000 B.C.
1000	Example of steel hardened by quenching, from Cyprus	
1000	Growth of coastal trade under Phoenicians	
1000	Hebrew and Greek alphabets develop from Phoenician	
1000	Nubia becomes an independent state	
1000	Semitic peoples migrate from Arabia to Ethiopia	

14 the fifteenth to Bilgah,
the sixteenth to Immer,
15 the seventeenth to Hezir,
the eighteenth to Happizzez,
16 the nineteenth to Pethahiah,
the twentieth to Jehezkel,
17 the twenty-first to Jakin,
the twenty-second to Gamul,
18 the twenty-third to Delaiah
and the twenty-fourth to Maaziah.

19 This was their appointed order of ministering when they entered the temple of the LORD, according to the regulations prescribed for them by their ancestor Aaron, as the LORD, the God of Israel, had commanded him.

The Rest of the Levites

20 As for the rest of the descendants of Levi:
from the sons of Amram: Shubael;
from the sons of Shubael: Jehdeiah.
21 As for Rehabiah, from his sons:
Ishiah was the first.
22 From the Izharites: Shelomoth;
from the sons of Shelomoth: Jahath.
23 The sons of Hebron: Jeriah the first,[a] Amariah the second, Jahaziel the third and Jekameam the fourth.
24 The son of Uzziel: Micah;
from the sons of Micah: Shamir.
25 The brother of Micah: Ishiah;
from the sons of Ishiah: Zechariah.
26 The sons of Merari: Mahli and Mushi.
The son of Jaaziah: Beno.
27 The sons of Merari:
from Jaaziah: Beno, Shoham, Zakkur and Ibri.
28 From Mahli: Eleazar, who had no sons.
29 From Kish: the son of Kish:
Jerahmeel.
30 And the sons of Mushi: Mahli, Eder and Jerimoth.

These were the Levites, according to their families. 31 They also cast lots, just as their relatives the descendants of Aaron did, in the presence of King David and of Zadok, Ahimelek, and the heads of families of the priests and of the Levites. The families of the oldest brother were treated the same as those of the youngest.

The Musicians

25 1 David, together with the commanders of the army, set apart some of the sons of Asaph, Heman and Jeduthun for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals. Here is the list of the men who performed this service:

2 From the sons of Asaph:
Zakkur, Joseph, Nethaniah and Asarelah. The sons of Asaph were under the supervision of Asaph, who prophesied under the king's supervision.
3 As for Jeduthun, from his sons:
Gedaliah, Zeri, Jeshaiah, Shimei,[b] Hashabiah and Mattithiah, six in all, under the supervision of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied, using the harp in thanking and praising the LORD.
4 As for Heman, from his sons:
Bukkiah, Mattaniah, Uzziel, Shubael and Jerimoth; Hananiah, Hanani, Eliathah, Giddalti and Romamti-Ezer; Joshbekashah, Mallothi, Hothir and Mahazioth.
5 (All these were sons of Heman the king's seer. They were given him through the promises of God to exalt him. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters.)

6 All these men were under the supervision of their father for the music of the temple of the LORD, with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry at the house of God.

Asaph, Jeduthun and Heman were under the supervision of the king. 7 Along with their relatives—all of them trained and skilled in music for the LORD—they numbered 288. 8 Young and old alike, teacher as well as student, cast lots for their duties.

9 The first lot, which was for Asaph, fell to Joseph, his sons and relatives[c]	12[d]
the second to Gedaliah, him and his relatives and sons	12
10 the third to Zakkur, his sons and relatives	12
11 the fourth to Izri,[e] his sons and relatives	12
12 the fifth to Nethaniah, his sons and relatives	12
13 the sixth to Bukkiah, his sons and relatives	12
14 the seventh to Jesarelah,[f] his sons and relatives	12
15 the eighth to Jeshaiah, his sons and relatives	12

[a] *23* Two Hebrew manuscripts and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 23:19); most Hebrew manuscripts *The sons of Jeriah:* [b] *3* One Hebrew manuscript and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also verse 17); most Hebrew manuscripts do not have *Shimei.* [c] *9* See Septuagint; Hebrew does not have *his sons and relatives.* [d] *9* See the total in verse 7; Hebrew does not have *twelve.*
[e] *11* A variant of *Zeri* [f] *14* A variant of *Asarelah*

Prophets Between God and Humanity (1Ch 25:5)

Prophets were common in the ancient Near East. In most royal courts, they were specialists whose occupation was to act as a mediator between God (or the gods) and the human world. These prophets were understood to have been seized by the divinities who used them to convey their very words to the human listeners. Kings employed court prophets in order to be informed of the divine will any time it was deemed necessary. Some of these professional prophets were not trustworthy, since they might claim as divine word whatever would advance their own positions in court.

A historical note in the Book of 1 Samuel indicates that the prophet had earlier been known as a "seer" (1Sa 9:9). The term "seer" refers to the experience of the prophet being allowed to see the deliberations of the divine council and to relate the decisions made there in accurate detail. Thus one who was called a "seer," a term related to the prophet's vision, came to be called a prophet, a term related to the public proclamation of the message.

In David's court Heman is described as "the king's seer" (1Ch 25:5). This Heman was also one of David's temple musicians (1Ch 16:42). Possibly a group of cultic prophets became part of the temple musical guild, and so David appointed this group "for the ministry of prophesying, accompanied by harps, lyres and cymbals" (25:1).

16 the ninth to Mattaniah,
his sons and relatives 12
17 the tenth to Shimei,
his sons and relatives 12
18 the eleventh to Azarel,[a]
his sons and relatives 12
19 the twelfth to Hashabiah,
his sons and relatives 12
20 the thirteenth to Shubael,
his sons and relatives 12
21 the fourteenth to Mattithiah,
his sons and relatives 12
22 the fifteenth to Jerimoth,
his sons and relatives 12
23 the sixteenth to Hananiah,
his sons and relatives 12
24 the seventeenth to Joshbekashah,
his sons and relatives 12
25 the eighteenth to Hanani,
his sons and relatives 12
26 the nineteenth to Mallothi,
his sons and relatives 12
27 the twentieth to Eliathah,
his sons and relatives 12
28 the twenty-first to Hothir,
his sons and relatives 12
29 the twenty-second to Giddalti,
his sons and relatives 12
30 the twenty-third to Mahazioth,
his sons and relatives 12
31 the twenty-fourth to Romamti-Ezer,
his sons and relatives 12.

The Gatekeepers

26 1 The divisions of the gatekeepers:

From the Korahites: Meshelemiah son of Kore, one of the sons of Asaph.
2 Meshelemiah had sons:
Zechariah the firstborn,
Jediael the second,
Zebadiah the third,
Jathniel the fourth,
3 Elam the fifth,
Jehohanan the sixth
and Eliehoenai the seventh.
4 Obed-Edom also had sons:
Shemaiah the firstborn,
Jehozabad the second,
Joah the third,
Sakar the fourth,
Nethanel the fifth,
5 Ammiel the sixth,
Issachar the seventh
and Peullethai the eighth.
(For God had blessed Obed-Edom.)

6 Obed-Edom's son Shemaiah also had sons, who were leaders in their father's family because they were very capable men. 7 The sons of Shemaiah: Othni, Rephael, Obed and Elzabad; his relatives Elihu and Semakiah were also able men. 8 All these were descendants of Obed-Edom; they and their sons and their relatives were capable men with the strength to do the work — descendants of Obed-Edom, 62 in all.
9 Meshelemiah had sons and relatives, who were able men — 18 in all.

10 Hosah the Merarite had sons: Shimri the first (although he was not the firstborn, his father had appointed him the first), 11 Hilkiah the second, Tabaliah the third and Zechariah the fourth. The sons and relatives of Hosah were 13 in all.
12 These divisions of the gatekeepers, through their leaders, had duties for minis-

[a] *18* A variant of *Uzziel*

tering in the temple of the LORD, just as their relatives had. 13Lots were cast for each gate, according to their families, young and old alike.

14The lot for the East Gate fell to Shelemiah.[a] Then lots were cast for his son Zechariah, a wise counselor, and the lot for the North Gate fell to him. 15The lot for the South Gate fell to Obed-Edom, and the lot for the storehouse fell to his sons. 16The lots for the West Gate and the Shalleketh Gate on the upper road fell to Shuppim and Hosah.

Guard was alongside of guard: 17There were six Levites a day on the east, four a day on the north, four a day on the south and two at a time at the storehouse. 18As for the court[b] to the west, there were four at the road and two at the court[b] itself.

19These were the divisions of the gatekeepers who were descendants of Korah and Merari.

TRANSITION

The Sons of Korah

Among the lists of Levites in Chronicles, two groups receive particular attention. The first is the Levitical singers, led by Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun (1Ch 25:1). The second is the gatekeepers. It is hard to be sure what duties were assigned these gatekeepers, but 1Ch 26:1 identifies them with the group called the "Korahites." The superscriptions of many psalms refer to this group, associating those psalms with "the Sons of Korah."

The psalms "of the Sons of Korah" (Ps 42–49; 84; 85; 87), as well as two others (Ps 15; 24), speak of the requirements for entry into the temple and thus seem appropriate for gatekeepers. Psalm 43, while it does not have a superscription, is clearly a continuation of Ps 42, which is ascribed to the Sons of Korah. Psalm 88 is associated with Heman the Ezrahite, as well as the Sons of Korah (see "Psalms of the Musicians" at Ps 96).

• **Psalms 15; 24; 42–49; 84; 85; 87**

PSALM 15

A psalm of David.

LORD, who may dwell in your sacred tent?
Who may live on your holy mountain?

[a] *14* A variant of *Meshelemiah* [b] *18* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [c] *4* Or *swear falsely* [d] *6* Two Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac (see also Septuagint); most Hebrew manuscripts *face, Jacob* [e] *6* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 10.

2The one whose walk is blameless,
who does what is righteous,
who speaks the truth from their heart;
3whose tongue utters no slander,
who does no wrong to a neighbor,
and casts no slur on others;
4who despises a vile person
but honors those who fear the LORD;
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,
and does not change their mind;
5who lends money to the poor without interest;
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.

Whoever does these things
will never be shaken.

PSALM 24

Of David. A psalm.

The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it;
2for he founded it on the seas
and established it on the waters.

3Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD?
Who may stand in his holy place?
4The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not trust in an idol
or swear by a false god.[c]

5They will receive blessing from the LORD
and vindication from God their Savior.
6Such is the generation of those who seek him,
who seek your face, God of Jacob.[d,e]

7Lift up your heads, you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
8Who is this King of glory?
The LORD strong and mighty,
the LORD mighty in battle.

Architecture & Building

To the psalmist, the "ancient doors" (Ps 24:7) were the gates of heaven. On earth they were represented by the gates of the temple. God enters the temple in order to take up his residence there in the inmost sanctuary. The moment of passage through a door was an occasion for ceremonies or rituals at every level, from the doorway of a cottage to the cordon of guards that protected access to a king.

9 Lift up your heads, you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
10 Who is he, this King of glory?
The LORD Almighty—
he is the King of glory.

PSALM 42[a,b]

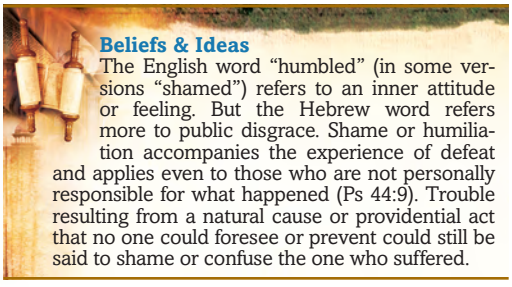
For the director of music. A maskil[c] *of the Sons of Korah.*

As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?
3 My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me all day long,
"Where is your God?"
4 These things I remember
as I pour out my soul:
how I used to go to the house of God
under the protection of the Mighty One[d]
with shouts of joy and praise
among the festive throng.

5 Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

6 My soul is downcast within me;
therefore I will remember you
from the land of the Jordan,
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.
7 Deep calls to deep
in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers
have swept over me.

8 By day the LORD directs his love,
at night his song is with me—
a prayer to the God of my life.



Beliefs & Ideas

The English word "humbled" (in some versions "shamed") refers to an inner attitude or feeling. But the Hebrew word refers more to public disgrace. Shame or humiliation accompanies the experience of defeat and applies even to those who are not personally responsible for what happened (Ps 44:9). Trouble resulting from a natural cause or providential act that no one could foresee or prevent could still be said to shame or confuse the one who suffered.

9 I say to God my Rock,
"Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I go about mourning,
oppressed by the enemy?"
10 My bones suffer mortal agony
as my foes taunt me,
saying to me all day long,
"Where is your God?"

11 Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

PSALM 43[a]

Vindicate me, my God,
and plead my cause
against an unfaithful nation.
Rescue me from those who are
deceitful and wicked.
2 You are God my stronghold.
Why have you rejected me?
Why must I go about mourning,
oppressed by the enemy?
3 Send me your light and your faithful care,
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy mountain,
to the place where you dwell.
4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God, my joy and my delight.
I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.

5 Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?
Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

PSALM 44[e]

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil.[f]

We have heard it with our ears, O God;
our ancestors have told us
what you did in their days,
in days long ago.
2 With your hand you drove out the nations
and planted our ancestors;
you crushed the peoples
and made our ancestors flourish.

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[a] In many Hebrew manuscripts Psalms 42 and 43 constitute one psalm. [b] In Hebrew texts 42:1-11 is numbered 42:2-12. [c] Title: Probably a literary or musical term [d] 4 See Septuagint and Syriac; the meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain. [e] In Hebrew texts 44:1-26 is numbered 44:2-27. [f] Title: Probably a literary or musical term

3 It was not by their sword that they won the land,
nor did their arm bring them victory;
it was your right hand, your arm,
and the light of your face, for you loved them.

4 You are my King and my God,
who decrees[a] victories for Jacob.
5 Through you we push back our enemies;
through your name we trample our foes.
6 I put no trust in my bow,
my sword does not bring me victory;
7 but you give us victory over our enemies,
you put our adversaries to shame.
8 In God we make our boast all day long,
and we will praise your name forever.[b]

9 But now you have rejected and humbled us;
you no longer go out with our armies.
10 You made us retreat before the enemy,
and our adversaries have plundered us.
11 You gave us up to be devoured like sheep
and have scattered us among the nations.
12 You sold your people for a pittance,
gaining nothing from their sale.

13 You have made us a reproach to our neighbors,
the scorn and derision of those around us.
14 You have made us a byword among the nations;
the peoples shake their heads at us.
15 I live in disgrace all day long,
and my face is covered with shame
16 at the taunts of those who reproach and revile me,
because of the enemy, who is bent on revenge.

17 All this came upon us,
though we had not forgotten you;
we had not been false to your covenant.
18 Our hearts had not turned back;
our feet had not strayed from your path.
19 But you crushed us and made us a haunt for jackals;
you covered us over with deep darkness.

20 If we had forgotten the name of our God
or spread out our hands to a foreign god,
21 would not God have discovered it,
since he knows the secrets of the heart?

22 Yet for your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.

23 Awake, Lord! Why do you sleep?
Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever.
24 Why do you hide your face
and forget our misery and oppression?

25 We are brought down to the dust;
our bodies cling to the ground.
26 Rise up and help us;
rescue us because of your unfailing love.

PSALM 45[c]

For the director of music. To the tune of "Lilies." Of the Sons of Korah. A maskil.[d] *A wedding song.*

My heart is stirred by a noble theme
as I recite my verses for the king;
my tongue is the pen of a skillful writer.

2 You are the most excellent of men
and your lips have been anointed with grace,
since God has blessed you forever.

3 Gird your sword on your side, you mighty one;
clothe yourself with splendor and majesty.
4 In your majesty ride forth victoriously
in the cause of truth, humility and justice;
let your right hand achieve awesome deeds.
5 Let your sharp arrows pierce the hearts of the king's enemies;
let the nations fall beneath your feet.
6 Your throne, O God,[e] will last for ever and ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of your kingdom.
7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy.

Trade & Economics
Wealth and luxury are expressed in the Bible by means of the products available to the rich and powerful in ancient times. Such products included perfumes and ivory (Ps 45:8). Ivory was difficult to obtain, usually being imported from foreign places. Perfumes were compounded using substances that came from as far away as the Himalaya mountains in India.

[a] *4* Septuagint, Aquila and Syriac; Hebrew *King, O God; / command* [b] *8* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [c] In Hebrew texts 45:1-17 is numbered 45:2-18. [d] Title: Probably a literary or musical term
[e] *6* Here the king is addressed as God's representative.

God Is in the Midst of His City (Ps 46:4, 5)

Ancient people understood a relationship between their land and their deities. Gods owned territory and allotted it to human rulers. The residence of the god was the main temple in the capital of the land under the deity's control. This city of the god could only be transferred from one human ruler to another with the blessing of the god, or if the deity was defeated in heaven by another deity.

The people of Mesopotamia never doubted that their god Marduk controlled Babylon. Even when the city was overrun by the Elamites (c. 1157 B.C.) and later destroyed by the Assyrians (689 B.C.), the people believed that Marduk had declared this fate for his city because the population had breached its loyalty to its patron deity.

Just so, Jerusalem was God's capital in Judah. The people of Jerusalem commonly believed that as long as they obeyed God, God would save their city from any human invasion. This is what Isaiah proclaimed to the Assyrians (Isa 37:33–35) and what certain false prophets twisted into a belief that Jerusalem could not be conquered at all (Jer 23:16, 17). The theology of the psalmist, however, is clear: if the people were righteous, God would not allow the city to be taken from them, no matter the size or power of the enemy attacking. The "city of God . . . will not fall" (Ps 46:4, 5).

God was understood to dwell in a special way in the temple at Jerusalem. Since God is the only deity, there would never be a way to defeat Jerusalem unless God abandoned the temple and city. This central article of Judean theology was modified by a vision of the prophet Ezekiel: when God could no longer tolerate the evil of Jerusalem's population, He moved out of the city. It ceased to be God's city and was destroyed by mere humans with ease (Eze 10).

8 All your robes are fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia;
from palaces adorned with ivory
the music of the strings makes you glad.
9 Daughters of kings are among your honored women;
at your right hand is the royal bride in gold of Ophir.

10 Listen, daughter, and pay careful attention:
Forget your people and your father's house.
11 Let the king be enthralled by your beauty;
honor him, for he is your lord.
12 The city of Tyre will come with a gift,[a]
people of wealth will seek your favor.
13 All glorious is the princess within her chamber;
her gown is interwoven with gold.
14 In embroidered garments she is led to the king;
her virgin companions follow her—
those brought to be with her.
15 Led in with joy and gladness,
they enter the palace of the king.

16 Your sons will take the place of your fathers;
you will make them princes throughout the land.

17 I will perpetuate your memory through all generations;
therefore the nations will praise you for ever and ever.

PSALM 46[b]

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. According to alamoth.[c] *A song.*

God is our refuge and strength,
an ever-present help in trouble.
2 Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way
and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea,
3 though its waters roar and foam
and the mountains quake with their surging.[d]

4 There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.
5 God is within her, she will not fall;
God will help her at break of day.
6 Nations are in uproar, kingdoms fall;
he lifts his voice, the earth melts.

7 The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

8 Come and see what the LORD has done,
the desolations he has brought on the earth.
9 He makes wars cease
to the ends of the earth.
He breaks the bow and shatters the spear;
he burns the shields[e] with fire.

[a] *12* Or *A Tyrian robe is among the gifts* [b] In Hebrew texts 46:1-11 is numbered 46:2-12. [c] Title: Probably a musical term [d] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 7 and 11. [e] *9* Or *chariots*

10 He says, "Be still, and know that I am God;
I will be exalted among the nations,
I will be exalted in the earth."

11 The LORD Almighty is with us;
the God of Jacob is our fortress.

PSALM 47[a]

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

Clap your hands, all you nations;
shout to God with cries of joy.
2 For the LORD Most High is awesome,
the great King over all the earth.
3 He subdued nations under us,
peoples under our feet.
4 He chose our inheritance for us,
the pride of Jacob, whom he loved.[b]

5 God has ascended amid shouts of joy,
the LORD amid the sounding of trumpets.
6 Sing praises to God, sing praises;
sing praises to our King, sing praises.
7 For God is the King of all the earth;
sing to him a psalm of praise.

8 God reigns over the nations;
God is seated on his holy throne.
9 The nobles of the nations assemble
as the people of the God of Abraham,
for the kings[c] of the earth belong to God;
he is greatly exalted.

PSALM 48[d]

A song. A psalm of the Sons of Korah.

Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise,
in the city of our God, his holy mountain.

2 Beautiful in its loftiness,
the joy of the whole earth,
like the heights of Zaphon[e] is Mount Zion,
the city of the Great King.
3 God is in her citadels;
he has shown himself to be her fortress.

4 When the kings joined forces,
when they advanced together,
5 they saw her and were astounded;
they fled in terror.
6 Trembling seized them there,
pain like that of a woman in labor.

7 You destroyed them like ships of Tarshish
shattered by an east wind.

8 As we have heard,
so we have seen
in the city of the LORD Almighty,
in the city of our God:
God makes her secure
forever.[b]

9 Within your temple, O God,
we meditate on your unfailing love.
10 Like your name, O God,
your praise reaches to the ends of the earth;
your right hand is filled with righteousness.
11 Mount Zion rejoices,
the villages of Judah are glad
because of your judgments.

12 Walk about Zion, go around her,
count her towers,
13 consider well her ramparts,
view her citadels,
that you may tell of them
to the next generation.

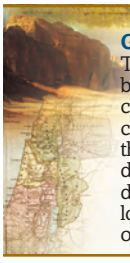
14 For this God is our God for ever and ever;
he will be our guide even to the end.

PSALM 49[f]

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

Hear this, all you peoples;
listen, all who live in this world,
2 both low and high,
rich and poor alike:
3 My mouth will speak words of wisdom;
the meditation of my heart will give you understanding.
4 I will turn my ear to a proverb;
with the harp I will expound my riddle:

5 Why should I fear when evil days come,
when wicked deceivers surround me—
6 those who trust in their wealth
and boast of their great riches?



Geography & Environment
The "east wind" is a hot, dry wind that blows across Palestine from the east. It can continue for days or weeks, and therefore can become very unpleasant. In the Bible the east wind symbolizes an exercise of divine judgment. It withers crops (Ge 41:27), destroys gardens (Eze 17:10) and brings locusts (Ex 10:13). It is said to shatter ships on the sea (Ps 48:7; Eze 27:26).

[a] In Hebrew texts 47:1-9 is numbered 47:2-10. [b] *4,8* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [c] *9* Or *shields* [d] In Hebrew texts 48:1-14 is numbered 48:2-15. [e] *2 Zaphon* was the most sacred mountain of the Canaanites. [f] In Hebrew texts 49:1-20 is numbered 49:2-21.

7 No one can redeem the life of another
or give to God a ransom for them—
8 the ransom for a life is costly,
no payment is ever enough—
9 so that they should live on forever
and not see decay.
10 For all can see that the wise die,
that the foolish and the senseless also perish,
leaving their wealth to others.
11 Their tombs will remain their houses[a] forever,
their dwellings for endless generations,
though they had[b] named lands after themselves.

12 People, despite their wealth, do not endure;
they are like the beasts that perish.

13 This is the fate of those who trust in themselves,
and of their followers, who approve their sayings.[c]
14 They are like sheep and are destined to die;
death will be their shepherd
(but the upright will prevail over them in the morning).
Their forms will decay in the grave,
far from their princely mansions.
15 But God will redeem me from the realm of the dead;
he will surely take me to himself.
16 Do not be overawed when others grow rich,
when the splendor of their houses increases;
17 for they will take nothing with them when they die,
their splendor will not descend with them.
18 Though while they live they count themselves blessed—
and people praise you when you prosper—
19 they will join those who have gone before them,
who will never again see the light of life.

Plants & Animals
In the Bible, "sparrow" (Ps 84:3) is not the name of a single species of bird, but refers to several kinds of small birds that frequent human habitations. These birds, like the English sparrow found everywhere in the United States, are able to adapt to changing conditions and the presence of human beings.

20 People who have wealth but lack understanding
are like the beasts that perish.

PSALM 84[d]

For the director of music. According to gittith.[e]
Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

How lovely is your dwelling place,
LORD Almighty!
2 My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the LORD;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God.
3 Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young—
a place near your altar,
LORD Almighty, my King and my God.
4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you.[f]

5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.
6 As they pass through the Valley of Baka,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.[g]
7 They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.

8 Hear my prayer, LORD God Almighty;
listen to me, God of Jacob.
9 Look on our shield,[h] O God;
look with favor on your anointed one.

10 Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
the LORD bestows favor and honor;
no good thing does he withhold
from those whose walk is blameless.

12 LORD Almighty,
blessed is the one who trusts in you.

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[a] *11* Septuagint and Syriac; Hebrew *In their thoughts their houses will remain* [b] *11* Or *generations, / for they have*
[c] *13* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 15. [d] In Hebrew texts 84:1-12 is numbered 84:2-13. [e] Title: Probably a musical term
[f] *4* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 8. [g] *6* Or *blessings*
[h] *9* Or *sovereign*

PSALM 85[a]

For the director of music. Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm.

You, LORD, showed favor to your land;
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.
2 You forgave the iniquity of your people
and covered all their sins.[b]
3 You set aside all your wrath
and turned from your fierce anger.

4 Restore us again, God our Savior,
and put away your displeasure
toward us.
5 Will you be angry with us forever?
Will you prolong your anger through all
generations?
6 Will you not revive us again,
that your people may rejoice in you?
7 Show us your unfailing love, LORD,
and grant us your salvation.

8 I will listen to what God the LORD says;
he promises peace to his people, his
faithful servants—
but let them not turn to folly.
9 Surely his salvation is near those who fear
him,
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Love and faithfulness meet together;
righteousness and peace kiss each other.
11 Faithfulness springs forth from the earth,
and righteousness looks down from
heaven.
12 The LORD will indeed give what is good,
and our land will yield its harvest.
13 Righteousness goes before him
and prepares the way for his steps.

PSALM 87

Of the Sons of Korah. A psalm. A song.

He has founded his city on the holy
mountain.
2 The LORD loves the gates of Zion
more than all the other dwellings of
Jacob.

3 Glorious things are said of you,
city of God:[c]

[a] In Hebrew texts 85:1-13 is numbered 85:2-14.
[b] *2* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [c] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 6. [d] *4* A poetic name for Egypt [e] *4* That is, the upper Nile region [f] *4* Or *"I will record concerning those who acknowledge me: / 'This one was born in Zion.' / Hear this, Rahab and Babylon, / and you too, Philistia, Tyre and Cush."* [g] *20* Septuagint; Hebrew *As for the Levites, Ahijah was*

Religion & Worship
Rahab (Ps 87:4) appears to be the name of the chaos monster of Canaanite mythology. The creation of the world was explained as a triumph of order over chaos, or as a battle between God and the monster. The Bible compares Egypt with Rahab when Egypt appears as the enemy of God's purposes (Isa 30:7). No mention has been found of Rahab outside the Bible.

4 "I will record Rahab[d] and Babylon
among those who acknowledge me—
Philistia too, and Tyre, along with Cush[e]—
and will say, 'This one was born in Zion.'"[f]
5 Indeed, of Zion it will be said,
"This one and that one were born in her,
and the Most High himself will establish
her."
6 The LORD will write in the register of the
peoples:
"This one was born in Zion."

7 As they make music they will sing,
"All my fountains are in you."

TRANSITION

David's Counsel to Solomon

The organization of David's kingdom concludes in 1Ch 26:20—27:34 with lists of the temple treasurers, judicial officers, military commanders and officers, tribal officers, overseers, and counselors. David is credited with organizing Israel's religious life, military power, and civil government. One thing remained—building the temple.

Both Samuel/Kings and Chronicles agree that David did not build the temple. Solomon, his son and successor, did that. The two accounts differ, however, in the extent to which David is involved. The Chronicler spares no effort to show that David did everything except build the temple. When David hands over the building plans to Solomon (1Ch 28:11), it is clear that the Chronicler sees David, not his son, as the true founder of the temple.

• 1 Chronicles 26:20—29:30

1 Chronicles

The Treasurers and Other Officials

26:20 Their fellow Levites were[g] in charge of the treasuries of the house of God and the treasuries for the dedicated things.
21 The descendants of Ladan, who were Gershonites through Ladan and who were heads of families belonging to Ladan the Gershonite,

were Jehieli, [22]the sons of Jehieli, Zetham and his brother Joel. They were in charge of the treasuries of the temple of the LORD.

[23]From the Amramites, the Izharites, the Hebronites and the Uzzielites:

[24]Shubael, a descendant of Gershom son of Moses, was the official in charge of the treasuries. [25]His relatives through Eliezer: Rehabiah his son, Jeshaiah his son, Joram his son, Zikri his son and Shelomith his son. [26]Shelomith and his relatives were in charge of all the treasuries for the things dedicated by King David, by the heads of families who were the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and by the other army commanders. [27]Some of the plunder taken in battle they dedicated for the repair of the temple of the LORD. [28]And everything dedicated by Samuel the seer and by Saul son of Kish, Abner son of Ner and Joab son of Zeruiah, and all the other dedicated things were in the care of Shelomith and his relatives.

[29]From the Izharites: Kenaniah and his sons were assigned duties away from the temple, as officials and judges over Israel.

[30]From the Hebronites: Hashabiah and his relatives — seventeen hundred able men — were responsible in Israel west of the Jordan for all the work of the LORD and for the king's service. [31]As for the Hebronites, Jeriah was their chief according to the genealogical records of their families. In the fortieth year of David's reign a search was made in the records, and capable men among the Hebronites were found at Jazer in Gilead. [32]Jeriah had twenty-seven hundred relatives, who were able men and heads of families, and King David put them in charge of the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh for every matter pertaining to God and for the affairs of the king.

Architecture & Building

It was customary for part of the spoils won in wars to be dedicated to the temples, whether in Israel (1Ch 26:27) or in Greece and Rome. The accumulated wealth in the temple would form a strategic reserve for the city, making the temple a public treasury. As a result, temples became attractive targets in wartime, being raided by friends or plundered by enemies.

Army Divisions

27 [1]This is the list of the Israelites — heads of families, commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and their officers, who served the king in all that concerned the army divisions that were on duty month by month throughout the year. Each division consisted of 24,000 men.

[2]In charge of the first division, for the first month, was Jashobeam son of Zabdiel. There were 24,000 men in his division. [3]He was a descendant of Perez and chief of all the army officers for the first month.

[4]In charge of the division for the second month was Dodai the Ahohite; Mikloth was the leader of his division. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[5]The third army commander, for the third month, was Benaiah son of Jehoiada the priest. He was chief and there were 24,000 men in his division. [6]This was the Benaiah who was a mighty warrior among the Thirty and was over the Thirty. His son Ammizabad was in charge of his division.

[7]The fourth, for the fourth month, was Asahel the brother of Joab; his son Zebadiah was his successor. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[8]The fifth, for the fifth month, was the commander Shamhuth the Izrahite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[9]The sixth, for the sixth month, was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[10]The seventh, for the seventh month, was Helez the Pelonite, an Ephraimite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[11]The eighth, for the eighth month, was Sibbekai the Hushathite, a Zerahite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[12]The ninth, for the ninth month, was Abiezer the Anathothite, a Benjamite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[13]The tenth, for the tenth month, was Maharai the Netophathite, a Zerahite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[14]The eleventh, for the eleventh month, was Benaiah the Pirathonite, an Ephraimite. There were 24,000 men in his division.

[15]The twelfth, for the twelfth month, was Heldai the Netophathite, from the family of Othniel. There were 24,000 men in his division.

Leaders of the Tribes

[16]The leaders of the tribes of Israel:

over the Reubenites: Eliezer son of Zikri;

over the Simeonites: Shephatiah son of Maakah;
17 over Levi: Hashabiah son of Kemuel;
over Aaron: Zadok;
18 over Judah: Elihu, a brother of David;
over Issachar: Omri son of Michael;
19 over Zebulun: Ishmaiah son of Obadiah;
over Naphtali: Jerimoth son of Azriel;
20 over the Ephraimites: Hoshea son of Azaziah;
over half the tribe of Manasseh: Joel son of Pedaiah;

[a] *24* Septuagint; Hebrew *number*

The Davidic Kingdom

The military successes of David against the Moabites and Edomites expanded and solidified his control to the east and south of Jerusalem. He also succeeded in isolating the Philistines to a few coastal cities. Victories against Zobah and the Arameans in the northeast and against the Ammonites in the central region greatly extended his borders.

21 over the half-tribe of Manasseh in Gilead:
Iddo son of Zechariah;
over Benjamin: Jaasiel son of Abner;
22 over Dan: Azarel son of Jeroham.
These were the leaders of the tribes of Israel.

23 David did not take the number of the men twenty years old or less, because the LORD had promised to make Israel as numerous as the stars in the sky. 24 Joab son of Zeruiah began to count the men but did not finish. God's wrath came on Israel on account of this numbering, and the number was not entered in the book[a] of the annals of King David.

The King's Overseers

25 Azmaveth son of Adiel was in charge of the royal storehouses.
Jonathan son of Uzziah was in charge of the storehouses in the outlying districts, in the towns, the villages and the watchtowers.
26 Ezri son of Kelub was in charge of the workers who farmed the land.
27 Shimei the Ramathite was in charge of the vineyards.
Zabdi the Shiphmite was in charge of the produce of the vineyards for the wine vats.
28 Baal-Hanan the Gederite was in charge of the olive and sycamore-fig trees in the western foothills.
Joash was in charge of the supplies of olive oil.
29 Shitrai the Sharonite was in charge of the herds grazing in Sharon.
Shaphat son of Adlai was in charge of the herds in the valleys.
30 Obil the Ishmaelite was in charge of the camels.
Jehdeiah the Meronothite was in charge of the donkeys.
31 Jaziz the Hagrite was in charge of the flocks.
All these were the officials in charge of King David's property.

32 Jonathan, David's uncle, was a counselor, a man of insight and a scribe. Jehiel son of Hakmoni took care of the king's sons.
33 Ahithophel was the king's counselor.
Hushai the Arkite was the king's confidant.
34 Ahithophel was succeeded by Jehoiada son of Benaiah and by Abiathar.
Joab was the commander of the royal army.

David's Plans for the Temple

28 1 David summoned all the officials of Israel to assemble at Jerusalem: the officers over the tribes, the commanders of the

divisions in the service of the king, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the warriors and all the brave fighting men.

2King David rose to his feet and said: "Listen to me, my fellow Israelites, my people. I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. 3But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.'

4"Yet the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me from my whole family to be king over Israel forever. He chose Judah as leader, and from the tribe of Judah he chose my family, and from my father's sons he was pleased to make me king over all Israel. 5Of all my sons—and the LORD has given me many—he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. 6He said to me: 'Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. 7I will establish his kingdom forever if he is unswerving in carrying out my commands and laws, as is being done at this time.'

8"So now I charge you in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God: Be careful to follow all the commands of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever.

9"And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. 10Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house as the sanctuary. Be strong and do the work."

11Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the portico of the temple, its buildings, its storerooms, its upper parts, its inner rooms and the place of atonement. 12He gave him the plans of all that the Spirit had put in his mind for the courts of the temple of the LORD and all the surrounding rooms, for the treasuries of the temple of God and for the treasuries for the dedicated things. 13He gave him instructions for the divisions of the priests and Levites, and for all the work of serving in the temple of the LORD, as well as for all the articles to be used in its service. 14He designated the weight of gold for all the gold articles to be used in various kinds of service, and the weight of silver for all the silver articles to be used in various kinds of service: 15the weight of gold for the gold lampstands and their lamps, with the weight for each lampstand and its lamps; and the weight of silver for each silver lampstand and its lamps, according to the use of each lampstand; 16the weight of gold for each table for consecrated bread; the weight of silver for the silver tables; 17the weight of pure gold for the forks, sprinkling bowls and pitchers; the weight of gold for each gold dish; the weight of silver for each silver dish; 18and the weight of the refined gold for the altar of incense. He also gave him the plan for the chariot, that is, the cherubim of gold that spread their wings and overshadow the ark of the covenant of the LORD.

19"All this," David said, "I have in writing as a result of the LORD's hand on me, and he enabled me to understand all the details of the plan."

20David also said to Solomon his son, "Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the LORD is finished. 21The divisions of the priests and Levites are ready for all the work on the temple of God, and every willing person skilled in any craft will help you in all the work. The officials and all the people will obey your every command."

Gifts for Building the Temple

29 1Then King David said to the whole assembly: "My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. 2With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise,[a] stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities. 3Besides, in my devotion to the temple of my God I now give my personal treasures of gold and silver for the temple of my God, over and above everything I have provided for this holy temple: 4three thousand talents[b] of gold (gold of Ophir)

[a] *2* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] *4* That is, about 110 tons or about 100 metric tons

and seven thousand talents[a] of refined silver,
for the overlaying of the walls of the buildings,
5 for the gold work and the silver work, and for
all the work to be done by the craftsmen. Now,
who is willing to consecrate themselves to the
LORD today?"

6 Then the leaders of families, the officers of
the tribes of Israel, the commanders of thou-
sands and commanders of hundreds, and the
officials in charge of the king's work gave
willingly. 7 They gave toward the work on the
temple of God five thousand talents[b] and ten
thousand darics[c] of gold, ten thousand talents[d]
of silver, eighteen thousand talents[e] of bronze
and a hundred thousand talents[f] of iron. 8 Any-
one who had precious stones gave them to
the treasury of the temple of the LORD in the
custody of Jehiel the Gershonite. 9 The people
rejoiced at the willing response of their lead-
ers, for they had given freely and wholehear-
tedly to the LORD. David the king also rejoiced
greatly.

David's Prayer

10 David praised the LORD in the presence of
the whole assembly, saying,

"Praise be to you, LORD,
the God of our father Israel,
from everlasting to everlasting.
11 Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power
and the glory and the majesty and the
splendor,
for everything in heaven and earth is
yours.
Yours, LORD, is the kingdom;
you are exalted as head over all.
12 Wealth and honor come from you;
you are the ruler of all things.
In your hands are strength and power
to exalt and give strength to all.
13 Now, our God, we give you thanks,
and praise your glorious name.

14 "But who am I, and who are my people, that
we should be able to give as generously as this?
Everything comes from you, and we have giv-
en you only what comes from your hand. 15 We
are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as
were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are
like a shadow, without hope. 16 LORD our God,
all this abundance that we have provided for
building you a temple for your Holy Name
comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to
you. 17 I know, my God, that you test the heart
and are pleased with integrity. All these things
I have given willingly and with honest intent.
And now I have seen with joy how willingly
your people who are here have given to you.
18 LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac
and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts
in the hearts of your people forever, and keep
their hearts loyal to you. 19 And give my son
Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep
your commands, statutes and decrees and to
do everything to build the palatial structure for
which I have provided."

20 Then David said to the whole assembly,
"Praise the LORD your God." So they all praised
the LORD, the God of their fathers; they bowed
down, prostrating themselves before the LORD
and the king.

Solomon Acknowledged as King

21 The next day they made sacrifices to the
LORD and presented burnt offerings to him: a
thousand bulls, a thousand rams and a thou-
sand male lambs, together with their drink of-
ferings, and other sacrifices in abundance for
all Israel. 22 They ate and drank with great joy
in the presence of the LORD that day.

Then they acknowledged Solomon son of Da-
vid as king a second time, anointing him before
the LORD to be ruler and Zadok to be priest.
23 So Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as
king in place of his father David. He prospered
and all Israel obeyed him. 24 All the officers and
warriors, as well as all of King David's sons,
pledged their submission to King Solomon.

25 The LORD highly exalted Solomon in the
sight of all Israel and bestowed on him royal
splendor such as no king over Israel ever had
before.

The Death of David

26 David son of Jesse was king over all Isra-
el. 27 He ruled over Israel forty years—seven
in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. 28 He
died at a good old age, having enjoyed long life,
wealth and honor. His son Solomon succeeded
him as king.

29 As for the events of King David's reign,
from beginning to end, they are written in the
records of Samuel the seer, the records of Na-
than the prophet and the records of Gad the
seer, 30 together with the details of his reign and
power, and the circumstances that surround-
ed him and Israel and the kingdoms of all the
other lands.

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[a] *4* That is, about 260 tons or about 235 metric tons
[b] *7* That is, about 190 tons or about 170 metric tons
[c] *7* That is, about 185 pounds or about 84 kilograms
[d] *7* That is, about 380 tons or about 340 metric tons
[e] *7* That is, about 675 tons or about 610 metric tons
[f] *7* That is, about 3,800 tons or about 3,400 metric tons

Kings as Vice-Regents (Ps 2:7)

The position of king in the ancient Near East was the point at which heaven and earth came together. The Egyptians believed their pharaoh was divine and returned to the gods when he died. From about 1500 B.C. the pharaoh was thought to be the son of the god Amon-Re, as well as the "image of god," both physically and in his actions. Egyptian kings had their own priests, and their palace was treated as a temple. The pharaoh counted on the help of the other gods in ruling his kingdom. As long as he did not alienate the other deities, they would fight with him to protect or expand the kingdom of Egypt.

In Mesopotamia, rulers were not considered divine, but they were understood to have been appointed king by the patron deity of their city or empire. Since the god had chosen him, the king ruled as vice-regent of the god and was accountable to the god for all his actions. As long as the king did what was expected of a good ruler, the gods would protect him and guarantee victory over his enemies.

Such ancient Near Eastern theology was used by Judah to celebrate the crowning of Davidic kings in Jerusalem. The psalmist describes Yahweh speaking to Judah's new king in words parallel to the Mesopotamian royal texts: "You are my son; today I have become your father" (Ps 2:7). The early Christians understood Ps 2 to refer to Jesus as the Messiah (Ac 4:25, 26; 13:33). But originally Ps 2:7 meant that Judah's king was the legitimate heir to the throne (other rulers were "adopted"). The king was the vice-regent of Yahweh, seated at his right hand, and Yahweh would guarantee victories for the king over Judah's enemies.

TRANSITION

Royal and Enthronement Psalms

In addition to the two general types of psalms, the hymns and laments, there are several smaller categories or subtypes. One category consists of those psalms which focus particularly on the position of the king, and thus are known as "royal" or "enthronement" psalms. A few of these (Ps 2; 20) speak of the earthly king as God's chosen son, his anointed one. Others (Ps 93–99) describe God himself as King. Yet others are fitting either for the king's coronation (Ps 110), as prayers for him (Ps 21; 72), or as promises or prayers by him (Ps 101; 144). The theme of these psalms is best expressed in the recurring declaration, "The LORD reigns" (Ps 93:1; 97:1).

The royal or enthronement psalms may have been used in royal festivals in the temple, or during coronations. It is impossible to be sure of this, but it nevertheless seems appropriate to read these psalms in light of Solomon's coronation. The Chronicler relates Solomon's assumption of the throne above all in the context of the temple. One royal psalm, Ps 96, appears with some differences as part of the psalm David presented to the Levitical musicians (see "Psalms of the Musicians" at Ps 96).

• Psalms 2; 20; 21; 72; 93–95; 97–99; 101; 110; 144

PSALM 2

Why do the nations conspire[a]
and the peoples plot in vain?
2 The kings of the earth rise up
and the rulers band together
against the LORD and against his anointed,
saying,
3 "Let us break their chains
and throw off their shackles."

4 The One enthroned in heaven laughs;
the Lord scoffs at them.
5 He rebukes them in his anger
and terrifies them in his wrath, saying,
6 "I have installed my king
on Zion, my holy mountain."

7 I will proclaim the LORD's decree:

He said to me, "You are my son;
today I have become your father.
8 Ask me,
and I will make the nations your
inheritance,
the ends of the earth your possession.
9 You will break them with a rod of iron[b];
you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

10 Therefore, you kings, be wise;
be warned, you rulers of the earth.
11 Serve the LORD with fear
and celebrate his rule with trembling.
12 Kiss his son, or he will be angry
and your way will lead to your
destruction,
for his wrath can flare up in a moment.
Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

PSALM 20[c]

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

May the LORD answer you when you are in
distress;
may the name of the God of Jacob protect
you.
2 May he send you help from the sanctuary
and grant you support from Zion.

[a] *1* Hebrew; Septuagint *rage* [b] *9* Or *will rule them with an iron scepter* (see Septuagint and Syriac) [c] In Hebrew texts 20:1-9 is numbered 20:2-10.

3 May he remember all your sacrifices
and accept your burnt offerings.[a]
4 May he give you the desire of your heart
and make all your plans succeed.
5 May we shout for joy over your victory
and lift up our banners in the name of our God.

May the LORD grant all your requests.

6 Now this I know:
The LORD gives victory to his anointed.
He answers him from his heavenly sanctuary
with the victorious power of his right hand.
7 Some trust in chariots and some in horses,
but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.
8 They are brought to their knees and fall,
but we rise up and stand firm.
9 LORD, give victory to the king!
Answer us when we call!

PSALM 21[b]

For the director of music. A psalm of David.

The king rejoices in your strength, LORD.
How great is his joy in the victories you give!

2 You have granted him his heart's desire
and have not withheld the request of his lips.[a]
3 You came to greet him with rich blessings
and placed a crown of pure gold on his head.
4 He asked you for life, and you gave it to him—
length of days, for ever and ever.
5 Through the victories you gave, his glory is great;
you have bestowed on him splendor and majesty.
6 Surely you have granted him unending blessings
and made him glad with the joy of your presence.
7 For the king trusts in the LORD;
through the unfailing love of the Most High
he will not be shaken.

8 Your hand will lay hold on all your enemies;
your right hand will seize your foes.
9 When you appear for battle,
you will burn them up as in a blazing furnace.
The LORD will swallow them up in his wrath,
and his fire will consume them.
10 You will destroy their descendants from the earth,
their posterity from mankind.
11 Though they plot evil against you
and devise wicked schemes, they cannot succeed.
12 You will make them turn their backs
when you aim at them with drawn bow.

13 Be exalted in your strength, LORD;
we will sing and praise your might.

PSALM 72

Of Solomon.

Endow the king with your justice, O God,
the royal son with your righteousness.
2 May he judge your people in righteousness,
your afflicted ones with justice.

3 May the mountains bring prosperity to the people,
the hills the fruit of righteousness.
4 May he defend the afflicted among the people
and save the children of the needy;
may he crush the oppressor.
5 May he endure[c] as long as the sun,
as long as the moon, through all generations.
6 May he be like rain falling on a mown field,
like showers watering the earth.
7 In his days may the righteous flourish
and prosperity abound till the moon is no more.

8 May he rule from sea to sea
and from the River[d] to the ends of the earth.
9 May the desert tribes bow before him
and his enemies lick the dust.
10 May the kings of Tarshish and of distant shores
bring tribute to him.

Geography & Environment
The psalmist uses geographical names as conventional references to the most distant corners of the earth (Ps 72:10). Tarshish and the "distant shores" are probably Spain and islands in the Mediterranean, west of Israel. Sheba and Seba were in south Arabia and possibly east Africa. These places could be reached by sea. The Jews were not sailors, but their neighbors the Phoenicians were.

[a] *3,2* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here. [b] In Hebrew texts 21:1-13 is numbered 21:2-14. [c] *5* Septuagint; Hebrew *You will be feared* [d] *8* That is, the Euphrates

May the kings of Sheba and Seba
present him gifts.
11 May all kings bow down to him
and all nations serve him.

12 For he will deliver the needy who cry out,
the afflicted who have no one to help.
13 He will take pity on the weak and the needy
and save the needy from death.
14 He will rescue them from oppression and violence,
for precious is their blood in his sight.

15 Long may he live!
May gold from Sheba be given him.
May people ever pray for him
and bless him all day long.
16 May grain abound throughout the land;
on the tops of the hills may it sway.
May the crops flourish like Lebanon
and thrive[a] like the grass of the field.
17 May his name endure forever;
may it continue as long as the sun.

Then all nations will be blessed through him,[b]
and they will call him blessed.

18 Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel,
who alone does marvelous deeds.
19 Praise be to his glorious name forever;
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.
Amen and Amen.

20 This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.

PSALM 93

The LORD reigns, he is robed in majesty;
the LORD is robed in majesty and armed with strength;
indeed, the world is established, firm and secure.
2 Your throne was established long ago;
you are from all eternity.

3 The seas have lifted up, LORD,
the seas have lifted up their voice;
the seas have lifted up their pounding waves.
4 Mightier than the thunder of the great waters,
mightier than the breakers of the sea—
the LORD on high is mighty.

5 Your statutes, LORD, stand firm;
holiness adorns your house
for endless days.

PSALM 94

The LORD is a God who avenges.
O God who avenges, shine forth.
2 Rise up, Judge of the earth;
pay back to the proud what they deserve.
3 How long, LORD, will the wicked,
how long will the wicked be jubilant?

4 They pour out arrogant words;
all the evildoers are full of boasting.
5 They crush your people, LORD;
they oppress your inheritance.
6 They slay the widow and the foreigner;
they murder the fatherless.
7 They say, "The LORD does not see;
the God of Jacob takes no notice."

8 Take notice, you senseless ones among the people;
you fools, when will you become wise?
9 Does he who fashioned the ear not hear?
Does he who formed the eye not see?
10 Does he who disciplines nations not punish?
Does he who teaches mankind lack knowledge?
11 The LORD knows all human plans;
he knows that they are futile.

12 Blessed is the one you discipline, LORD,
the one you teach from your law;
13 you grant them relief from days of trouble,
till a pit is dug for the wicked.
14 For the LORD will not reject his people;
he will never forsake his inheritance.
15 Judgment will again be founded on righteousness,
and all the upright in heart will follow it.

16 Who will rise up for me against the wicked?
Who will take a stand for me against evildoers?
17 Unless the LORD had given me help,
I would soon have dwelt in the silence of death.
18 When I said, "My foot is slipping,"
your unfailing love, LORD,
supported me.
19 When anxiety was great within me,
your consolation brought me joy.

20 Can a corrupt throne be allied with you—
a throne that brings on misery by its decrees?

[a] *16* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text *Lebanon, / from the city*
[b] *17* Or *will use his name in blessings* (see Gen. 48:20)

21 The wicked band together against the
righteous
and condemn the innocent to death.
22 But the LORD has become my fortress,
and my God the rock in whom I take
refuge.
23 He will repay them for their sins
and destroy them for their wickedness;
the LORD our God will destroy them.

PSALM 95

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD;
let us shout aloud to the Rock of our
salvation.
2 Let us come before him with thanksgiving
and extol him with music and song.

3 For the LORD is the great God,
the great King above all gods.
4 In his hand are the depths of the earth,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
5 The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.

6 Come, let us bow down in worship,
let us kneel before the LORD our Maker;
7 for he is our God
and we are the people of his pasture,
the flock under his care.

Today, if only you would hear his voice,
8 "Do not harden your hearts as you did at
Meribah,[a]
as you did that day at Massah[b] in the
wilderness,
9 where your ancestors tested me;
they tried me, though they had seen what
I did.
10 For forty years I was angry with that
generation;
I said, 'They are a people whose hearts
go astray,
and they have not known my ways.'
11 So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.'"

PSALM 97

The LORD reigns, let the earth be glad;
let the distant shores rejoice.
2 Clouds and thick darkness surround him;
righteousness and justice are the
foundation of his throne.
3 Fire goes before him
and consumes his foes on every side.
4 His lightning lights up the world;
the earth sees and trembles.
5 The mountains melt like wax before the
LORD,
before the Lord of all the earth.
6 The heavens proclaim his righteousness,
and all peoples see his glory.

7 All who worship images are put to shame,
those who boast in idols—
worship him, all you gods!

8 Zion hears and rejoices
and the villages of Judah are glad
because of your judgments, LORD.
9 For you, LORD, are the Most High over all
the earth;
you are exalted far above all gods.
10 Let those who love the LORD hate evil,
for he guards the lives of his faithful
ones
and delivers them from the hand of the
wicked.
11 Light shines[c] on the righteous
and joy on the upright in heart.
12 Rejoice in the LORD, you who are righteous,
and praise his holy name.

PSALM 98

A psalm.

Sing to the LORD a new song,
for he has done marvelous things;
his right hand and his holy arm
have worked salvation for him.
2 The LORD has made his salvation known
and revealed his righteousness to the
nations.
3 He has remembered his love
and his faithfulness to Israel;
all the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.

4 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth,
burst into jubilant song with music;
5 make music to the LORD with the harp,
with the harp and the sound of singing,
6 with trumpets and the blast of the ram's
horn—
shout for joy before the LORD, the King.

7 Let the sea resound, and everything in it,
the world, and all who live in it.
8 Let the rivers clap their hands,
let the mountains sing together for joy;
9 let them sing before the LORD,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples with equity.

[a] *8 Meribah* means *quarreling.* [b] *8 Massah* means *testing.*
[c] *11* One Hebrew manuscript and ancient versions (see also 112:4); most Hebrew manuscripts *Light is sown*

Davidic Kings in the Cosmic Order (Ps 110:1–4)

In the pantheons of the ancient Near East, superior gods appointed lesser gods to their positions in the cosmic hierarchy. Similarly, human rulers were given their thrones by the patron gods of their lands. In Syria-Palestine and Mesopotamia, kings were understood to be ruling on behalf of the gods. Kings were not divine, but they held a special position of power and trust in relationship to their god.

The psalmist of Ps 110 expresses such a relationship between Yahweh and a Davidic king: "The Lord says to my lord" (Yahweh says to my king; 110:1). The king is placed in the honored position at the right hand of Yahweh.

Ancient people believed that the god of the land chose the human ruler, and also defended that ruler and land against other kings and their gods. Wars fought on earth by kings and their armies were actually fought in heaven by the gods. Any ruler who obeyed his patron deity would never go out to battle alone, but would always have the aid of his god.

Yahweh's words to the king, "You are a priest forever" (110:4), reflects an ancient Near Eastern concept of kingship not found in the rest of the Bible. Kings in Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine were also considered the official high priest of their patron deities, even though kings did not perform routine priestly functions. Yet in Judah, kings were not priests and were not allowed to function as priests (2Ch 26:18).

In contrast, however, the psalmist announces that the Davidic king is a priest "in the order of Melchizedek" (110:4). Melchizedek was a Canaanite priest-king, the king of Salem, but also a "priest of God Most High" (Ge 14:18). Perhaps at some point in history Israel's king did serve as honorary priest of Yahweh.

PSALM 99

The Lord reigns,
let the nations tremble;
he sits enthroned between the cherubim,
let the earth shake.
2 Great is the Lord in Zion;
he is exalted over all the nations.
3 Let them praise your great and awesome
name—
he is holy.

4 The King is mighty, he loves justice—
you have established equity;
in Jacob you have done
what is just and right.
5 Exalt the Lord our God
and worship at his footstool;
he is holy.

6 Moses and Aaron were among his
priests,
Samuel was among those who called on
his name;
they called on the Lord
and he answered them.
7 He spoke to them from the pillar of cloud;
they kept his statutes and the decrees he
gave them.

8 Lord our God,
you answered them;
you were to Israel a forgiving God,
though you punished their misdeeds.[a]
9 Exalt the Lord our God
and worship at his holy mountain,
for the Lord our God is holy.

PSALM 101

Of David. A psalm.

I will sing of your love and justice;
to you, Lord, I will sing praise.
2 I will be careful to lead a blameless life—
when will you come to me?

I will conduct the affairs of my house
with a blameless heart.
3 I will not look with approval
on anything that is vile.

I hate what faithless people do;
I will have no part in it.
4 The perverse of heart shall be far from me;
I will have nothing to do with what is evil.

5 Whoever slanders their neighbor in secret,
I will put to silence;
whoever has haughty eyes and a proud
heart,
I will not tolerate.

6 My eyes will be on the faithful in the land,
that they may dwell with me;
the one whose walk is blameless
will minister to me.

7 No one who practices deceit
will dwell in my house;
no one who speaks falsely
will stand in my presence.

8 Every morning I will put to silence
all the wicked in the land;
I will cut off every evildoer
from the city of the Lord.

[a] 8 Or *God, / an avenger of the wrongs done to them*

PSALM 110

Of David. A psalm.

The LORD says to my lord:[a]
"Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet."

2 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter
from Zion, saying,
"Rule in the midst of your enemies!"
3 Your troops will be willing
on your day of battle.
Arrayed in holy splendor,
your young men will come to you
like dew from the morning's womb.[b]

4 The LORD has sworn
and will not change his mind:
"You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek."

5 The Lord is at your right hand[c];
he will crush kings on the day of his
wrath.
6 He will judge the nations, heaping up the
dead
and crushing the rulers of the whole
earth.
7 He will drink from a brook along the way,[d]
and so he will lift his head high.

PSALM 144

Of David.

Praise be to the LORD my Rock,
who trains my hands for war,
my fingers for battle.
2 He is my loving God and my fortress,
my stronghold and my deliverer,
my shield, in whom I take refuge,
who subdues peoples[e] under me.

3 LORD, what are human beings that you care
for them,
mere mortals that you think of them?
4 They are like a breath;
their days are like a fleeting shadow.

5 Part your heavens, LORD, and come down;
touch the mountains, so that they smoke.
6 Send forth lightning and scatter the enemy;
shoot your arrows and rout them.
7 Reach down your hand from on high;
deliver me and rescue me
from the mighty waters,
from the hands of foreigners
8 whose mouths are full of lies,
whose right hands are deceitful.

9 I will sing a new song to you, my God;
on the ten-stringed lyre I will make music
to you,
10 to the One who gives victory to kings,
who delivers his servant David.

From the deadly sword 11 deliver me;
rescue me from the hands of foreigners
whose mouths are full of lies,
whose right hands are deceitful.

12 Then our sons in their youth
will be like well-nurtured plants,
and our daughters will be like pillars
carved to adorn a palace.
13 Our barns will be filled
with every kind of provision.
Our sheep will increase by thousands,
by tens of thousands in our fields;
14 our oxen will draw heavy loads.[f]
There will be no breaching of walls,
no going into captivity,
no cry of distress in our streets.
15 Blessed is the people of whom this is true;
blessed is the people whose God is the LORD.

[a] *1* Or *Lord* [b] *3* The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain. [c] *5* Or *My lord is at your right hand, LORD* [d] *7* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain. [e] *2* Many manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls, Aquila, Jerome and Syriac; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *subdues my people* [f] *14* Or *our chieftains will be firmly established*

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Solomon's Reign

David will always be remembered in two contexts. On the one hand he is the psalmist of Israel, but on the other hand he is the man of war who defeated Israel's enemies. His son Solomon also has a dual claim to fame in the Bible. First, he is the one who constructed the temple. Second, Solomon is particularly tied to the wisdom tradition of Israel.

The term "wisdom tradition" refers to a phenomenon that was widespread in the ancient Near East, especially in royal courts. This kind of "wisdom" stressed observation of the world and the search for the underlying principles of reality. Wisdom, in this restricted definition, is not very concerned with eternity; its focus is always on this world and on human relationships. In both the narratives of Solomon's judgment (1Ki 3:16–28) and the literature attributed to him (1Ki 4:29–34), Solomon is Israel's original model for the wise man.

• **1 Kings 3:1—4:34**

Solomon Marries Pharaoh's Daughter (1Ki 3:1)

Marriage was an effective means for creating alliances among ancient nations. The idea behind such marriages was that two nations, by marriage, became one larger extended family. The hope was that one would deal more kindly with kin than with strangers.

No greater evidence of Solomon's importance among the nearby countries could be given than to record his marriage to an Egyptian pharaoh's daughter. As policy, Egypt's pharaohs did not give their daughters in marriage to foreign kings. In one tablet from Tell el-Amarna, Egypt (1360–1333 B.C.), the Egyptians respond to a request by a Babylonian king for one of pharaoh's daughters, "From of old a daughter of the king of Egypt has not been given to anyone." At the same time, the pharaohs themselves did marry royal, foreign wives. Solomon's marriage to one of pharaoh's daughters (1Ki 3:1; 9:16) is a major testimony to Solomon's unusual esteem.

On the other hand, in the time of Solomon Egypt had seen its better days. Solomon's Egyptian father-in-law is not named, but Siamun (978–959 B.C.), who reigned during Egypt's Third Intermediate Period, is the likely pharaoh. This period was characterized by weakness and instability. The pharaohs were so politically weak that they did all they could to assure support from important Egyptians, including allowing the marriage of their daughters to Egyptian commoners. In the case of Solomon, Siamun sought the support of Israel by doing the extraordinary—marrying one of his daughters to a foreign king.

1 Kings

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

3 :1 Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh
king of Egypt and married his daughter. He
brought her to the City of David until he finished building his palace and the temple of the
LORD, and the wall around Jerusalem. [2]The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the LORD. [3]Solomon showed his love for the LORD by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David, except that he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places.

[4]The king went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices, for that was the most important high place, and Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. [5]At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

[6]Solomon answered, "You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day.

[7]"Now, LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. [8]Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. [9]So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

[10]The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. [11]So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, [12]I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. [13]Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both wealth and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. [14]And if you walk in obedience to me and keep my decrees and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life." [15]Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream.

He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord's covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

A Wise Ruling

[16]Now two prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. [17]One of them said, "Pardon me, my lord. This woman and I live in the same house, and I had a baby while she was there with me. [18]The third day after my child was born, this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there was no one in the house but the two of us.

[19]"During the night this woman's son died because she lay on him. [20]So she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from my side while I your servant was asleep. She put him by her breast and put her dead son by my breast. [21]The next morning, I got up to nurse my son—and he was dead! But when I looked at him closely in the morning light, I saw that it wasn't the son I had borne."

22 The other woman said, "No! The living one
is my son; the dead one is yours."
But the first one insisted, "No! The dead one
is yours; the living one is mine." And so they
argued before the king.
23 The king said, "This one says, 'My son is
alive and your son is dead,' while that one says,
'No! Your son is dead and mine is alive.'"
24 Then the king said, "Bring me a sword." So
they brought a sword for the king. 25 He then
gave an order: "Cut the living child in two and
give half to one and half to the other."
26 The woman whose son was alive was deep-
ly moved out of love for her son and said to the
king, "Please, my lord, give her the living baby!
Don't kill him!"
But the other said, "Neither I nor you shall
have him. Cut him in two!"
27 Then the king gave his ruling: "Give the
living baby to the first woman. Do not kill him;
she is his mother."
28 When all Israel heard the verdict the king
had given, they held the king in awe, because
they saw that he had wisdom from God to ad-
minister justice.

Solomon's Officials and Governors

4 1 So King Solomon ruled over all Israel.
2 And these were his chief officials:

Azariah son of Zadok — the priest;
3 Elihoreph and Ahijah, sons of Shisha —
secretaries;
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud — recorder;
4 Benaiah son of Jehoiada — commander in
chief;
Zadok and Abiathar — priests;
5 Azariah son of Nathan — in charge of the
district governors;
Zabud son of Nathan — a priest and advis-
er to the king;
6 Ahishar — palace administrator;
Adoniram son of Abda — in charge of
forced labor.

7 Solomon had twelve district governors over
all Israel, who supplied provisions for the king
and the royal household. Each one had to pro-
vide supplies for one month in the year. 8 These
are their names:

Ben-Hur — in the hill country of Ephraim;
9 Ben-Deker — in Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth
Shemesh and Elon Bethhanan;
10 Ben-Hesed — in Arubboth (Sokoh and all
the land of Hepher were his);
11 Ben-Abinadab — in Naphoth Dor (he was
married to Taphath daughter of Solo-
mon);
12 Baana son of Ahilud — in Taanach and
Megiddo, and in all of Beth Shan next to
Zarethan below Jezreel, from Beth Shan
to Abel Meholah across to Jokmeam;
13 Ben-Geber — in Ramoth Gilead (the settle-
ments of Jair son of Manasseh in Gilead
were his, as well as the region of Argob
in Bashan and its sixty large walled cit-
ies with bronze gate bars);
14 Ahinadab son of Iddo — in Mahanaim;
15 Ahimaaz — in Naphtali (he had married
Basemath daughter of Solomon);
16 Baana son of Hushai — in Asher and in
Aloth;
17 Jehoshaphat son of Paruah — in Issachar;
18 Shimei son of Ela — in Benjamin;
19 Geber son of Uri — in Gilead (the country
of Sihon king of the Amorites and the
country of Og king of Bashan). He was
the only governor over the district.

Solomon's Daily Provisions

20 The people of Judah and Israel were as
numerous as the sand on the seashore; they
ate, they drank and they were happy. 21 And
Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the
Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines,
as far as the border of Egypt. These countries

Megiddo in Solomon's Districts (1Ki 4:7, 12)

Outside of Judah, Solomon's kingdom was divided into 12 administrative districts, each ruled by a governor (1Ki 4:7–19). Many districts were primarily geographic and not tribal entities, thus breaking with Israel's earlier tradition. The districts were set up to provide administrative tax collections for the crown, and the appointed governor was in charge of raising revenue to support Solomon's administration in Jerusalem (1Ki 4:20, 21). The district of Judah appears to have been exempt from this taxation, a situation which did not create good feeling for Judah among the other tribes.

Megiddo was a Canaanite town in the valley of Jezreel in northern Palestine. It apparently came under Israel's control by Solomon's time and was likely the seat of his 5th administrative district (1Ki 4:12). It was also one of the major cities rebuilt by Solomon, along with Jerusalem, Hazor, and Gezer.

Megiddo is listed among the cities which Pharaoh Shishak (945–924 B.C.) claims to have conquered in his Palestinian campaign of 925 B.C. A number of buildings at Megiddo, including a palace, appear to have been destroyed by fire during this invasion. A portion of a stele (standing stone slab or pillar) recording Shishak's invasion was found at the site. That Shishak (also spelled Sheshonk or Shoshenq) set up a triumphal stele possibly indicates that he desired to reassert Egyptian control in Canaan.

brought tribute and were Solomon's subjects all his life.

22 Solomon's daily provisions were thirty cors[a] of the finest flour and sixty cors[b] of meal,
23 ten head of stall-fed cattle, twenty of pasture-fed cattle and a hundred sheep and goats, as well as deer, gazelles, roebucks and choice fowl. 24 For he ruled over all the kingdoms west of the Euphrates River, from Tiphsah to Gaza, and had peace on all sides. 25 During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, everyone under their own vine and under their own fig tree.

26 Solomon had four[c] thousand stalls for chariot horses, and twelve thousand horses.[d]

27 The district governors, each in his month, supplied provisions for King Solomon and all who came to the king's table. They saw to it that nothing was lacking. 28 They also brought to the proper place their quotas of barley and straw for the chariot horses and the other horses.

Solomon's Wisdom

29 God gave Solomon wisdom and very great insight, and a breadth of understanding as measureless as the sand on the seashore. 30 Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the people of the East, and greater than all the wisdom of Egypt. 31 He was wiser than anyone else, including Ethan the Ezrahite — wiser than Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. And his fame spread to all the surrounding nations. 32 He spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs numbered a thousand and five. 33 He spoke about plant life, from the cedar of Lebanon to the hyssop that grows out of walls. He also spoke about animals and birds, reptiles and fish. 34 From all nations people came to listen to Solomon's wisdom, sent by all the kings of the world, who had heard of his wisdom.[e]

[a] *22* That is, probably about 5 1/2 tons or about 5 metric tons
[b] *22* That is, probably about 11 tons or about 10 metric tons
[c] *26* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 2 Chron. 9:25); Hebrew *forty* [d] *26* Or *charioteers* [e] *34* In Hebrew texts 4:21-34 is numbered 5:1-14.

Food & Drink
Grapevines and fig trees yielded the more pleasant, if less essential, parts of the diet. The peaceful cultivation of these plants by individual householders is a miniature but vigorous sketch of the life of peace (1Ki 4:25). The multitude of animals provided for the king's table (1Ki 4:23) expresses the higher level of life in the royal court.

TRANSITION

The Book of Proverbs

The wisdom tradition of Israel influences several different biblical books, but its heart is in the Book of Proverbs. The proverbs are short, poetically matched comments on the world. They do not claim to be universal truth, but rather situational advice to be applied to different contexts. (For instance, two adjacent proverbs in Pr 26:4, 5 give directly contradictory advice.)

The Book of Proverbs is actually several different collections of proverbs. Chapters 1–9 contain relatively long strings of interconnected proverbs and a few extended "wisdom

poems." The sayings of Pr 10:1—22:16 are a less unified collection of individual proverbs, though there is some organization around themes, such as human behavior and the inner person. Other collections in the Book of Proverbs are to be dated later than Solomon's reign (see "Wisdom in the Ancient Near East" at Pr 22:17).

Both of the first two collections (1:1—9:18 and 10:1—22:16) are ascribed to Solomon. Many interpreters suggest that the attributions in Pr 1:1 and 10:1 do not necessarily refer to authorship but are rather tributes to Solomon, the greatest of all the wise. Especially the longer poems of chs. 1–9 have been considered to be later than Solomon's time. Other interpreters, though, accept the attributions of 1:1 and 10:1 as simple statements of fact. In either case, it is appropriate to read these wise sayings following the comment of 1 Kings that Solomon was "wiser than anyone else" (1Ki 4:31).

The collection of chs. 1–9 is a picture of the value of wisdom. Wisdom is personified as a woman pleading with men and women to pursue her. A strong contrast is developed between the fruits of pursuing wisdom and the corruption of following folly.

• **Proverbs 1:1—9:18**

Proverbs

Purpose and Theme

1:1 The proverbs of Solomon son of David,
king of Israel:

2 for gaining wisdom and instruction;
for understanding words of insight;
3 for receiving instruction in prudent
behavior,
doing what is right and just and fair;
4 for giving prudence to those who are
simple,[a]
knowledge and discretion to the young—
5 let the wise listen and add to their learning,
and let the discerning get guidance—
6 for understanding proverbs and parables,
the sayings and riddles of the wise.[b]

7 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of
knowledge,
but fools[c] despise wisdom and
instruction.

[a] *4* The Hebrew word rendered *simple* in Proverbs denotes a person who is gullible, without moral direction and inclined to evil. [b] *6* Or *understanding a proverb, namely, a parable, / and the sayings of the wise, their riddles* [c] *7* The Hebrew words rendered *fool* in Proverbs, and often elsewhere in the Old Testament, denote a person who is morally deficient.
[d] *21* Septuagint; Hebrew */ at noisy street corners*

Prologue: Exhortations to Embrace Wisdom

Warning Against the Invitation of Sinful Men

8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction
and do not forsake your mother's
teaching.
9 They are a garland to grace your head
and a chain to adorn your neck.

10 My son, if sinful men entice you,
do not give in to them.
11 If they say, "Come along with us;
let's lie in wait for innocent blood,
let's ambush some harmless soul;
12 let's swallow them alive, like the grave,
and whole, like those who go down to the
pit;
13 we will get all sorts of valuable things
and fill our houses with plunder;
14 cast lots with us;
we will all share the loot"—
15 my son, do not go along with them,
do not set foot on their paths;
16 for their feet rush into evil,
they are swift to shed blood.
17 How useless to spread a net
where every bird can see it!
18 These men lie in wait for their own blood;
they ambush only themselves!
19 Such are the paths of all who go after ill-
gotten gain;
it takes away the life of those who
get it.

Wisdom's Rebuke

20 Out in the open wisdom calls aloud,
she raises her voice in the public square;
21 on top of the wall[d] she cries out,
at the city gate she makes her speech:

22 "How long will you who are simple love
your simple ways?
How long will mockers delight in
mockery
and fools hate knowledge?
23 Repent at my rebuke!
Then I will pour out my thoughts to you,
I will make known to you my teachings.
24 But since you refuse to listen when I call
and no one pays attention when I stretch
out my hand,
25 since you disregard all my advice
and do not accept my rebuke,
26 I in turn will laugh when disaster strikes
you;
I will mock when calamity overtakes
you—

27 when calamity overtakes you like a storm,
when disaster sweeps over you like a whirlwind,
when distress and trouble overwhelm you.

28 "Then they will call to me but I will not answer;
they will look for me but will not find me,
29 since they hated knowledge
and did not choose to fear the LORD.
30 Since they would not accept my advice
and spurned my rebuke,
31 they will eat the fruit of their ways
and be filled with the fruit of their schemes.
32 For the waywardness of the simple will kill them,
and the complacency of fools will destroy them;
33 but whoever listens to me will live in safety
and be at ease, without fear of harm."

Moral Benefits of Wisdom

2 1 My son, if you accept my words
and store up my commands within you,
2 turning your ear to wisdom
and applying your heart to understanding—
3 indeed, if you call out for insight
and cry aloud for understanding,
4 and if you look for it as for silver
and search for it as for hidden treasure,
5 then you will understand the fear of the LORD
and find the knowledge of God.
6 For the LORD gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.
7 He holds success in store for the upright,
he is a shield to those whose walk is blameless,
8 for he guards the course of the just
and protects the way of his faithful ones.
9 Then you will understand what is right and just
and fair—every good path.
10 For wisdom will enter your heart,
and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul.
11 Discretion will protect you,
and understanding will guard you.

12 Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men,
from men whose words are perverse,
13 who have left the straight paths
to walk in dark ways,
14 who delight in doing wrong
and rejoice in the perverseness of evil,
15 whose paths are crooked
and who are devious in their ways.

16 Wisdom will save you also from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words,
17 who has left the partner of her youth
and ignored the covenant she made before God.[a]
18 Surely her house leads down to death
and her paths to the spirits of the dead.
19 None who go to her return
or attain the paths of life.

20 Thus you will walk in the ways of the good
and keep to the paths of the righteous.
21 For the upright will live in the land,
and the blameless will remain in it;
22 but the wicked will be cut off from the land,
and the unfaithful will be torn from it.

Wisdom Bestows Well-Being

3 1 My son, do not forget my teaching,
but keep my commands in your heart,
2 for they will prolong your life many years
and bring you peace and prosperity.

3 Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Then you will win favor and a good name
in the sight of God and man.

5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.[b]

7 Do not be wise in your own eyes;
fear the LORD and shun evil.

[a] 17 Or *covenant of her God* [b] 6 Or *will direct your paths*

TIME CAPSULE		980 to 970 B.C.
980		Hiram becomes king of Tyre (or 969)
978–959		Siamun, pharaoh of Egypt
975		The temple of Hera is constructed at Olympia in Greece
973		Solomon is coregent with David (1Ki 1:32–39)
970–930		Solomon, king of Israel (1Ki 1:39)

8 This will bring health to your body
and nourishment to your bones.

9 Honor the LORD with your wealth,
with the firstfruits of all your crops;
10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing,
and your vats will brim over with new wine.

11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline,
and do not resent his rebuke,
12 because the LORD disciplines those he loves,
as a father the son he delights in.[a]

13 Blessed are those who find wisdom,
those who gain understanding,
14 for she is more profitable than silver
and yields better returns than gold.
15 She is more precious than rubies;
nothing you desire can compare with her.
16 Long life is in her right hand;
in her left hand are riches and honor.
17 Her ways are pleasant ways,
and all her paths are peace.
18 She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her;
those who hold her fast will be blessed.

19 By wisdom the LORD laid the earth's foundations,
by understanding he set the heavens in place;
20 by his knowledge the watery depths were divided,
and the clouds let drop the dew.

21 My son, do not let wisdom and understanding out of your sight,
preserve sound judgment and discretion;
22 they will be life for you,
an ornament to grace your neck.
23 Then you will go on your way in safety,
and your foot will not stumble.
24 When you lie down, you will not be afraid;
when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.
25 Have no fear of sudden disaster
or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked,
26 for the LORD will be at your side
and will keep your foot from being snared.

27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due,
when it is in your power to act.
28 Do not say to your neighbor,
"Come back tomorrow and I'll give it to you"—
when you already have it with you.
29 Do not plot harm against your neighbor,
who lives trustfully near you.
30 Do not accuse anyone for no reason—
when they have done you no harm.

31 Do not envy the violent
or choose any of their ways.

32 For the LORD detests the perverse
but takes the upright into his confidence.
33 The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked,
but he blesses the home of the righteous.
34 He mocks proud mockers
but shows favor to the humble and oppressed.
35 The wise inherit honor,
but fools get only shame.

Get Wisdom at Any Cost

4 1 Listen, my sons, to a father's instruction;
pay attention and gain understanding.
2 I give you sound learning,
so do not forsake my teaching.
3 For I too was a son to my father,
still tender, and cherished by my mother.
4 Then he taught me, and he said to me,
"Take hold of my words with all your heart;
keep my commands, and you will live.
5 Get wisdom, get understanding;
do not forget my words or turn away from them.

[a] *12* Hebrew; Septuagint *loves, / and he chastens everyone he accepts as his child*

Marriage & Family
In the instruction of the wisdom literature is the traditional advice from father to son (Pr 4:3, 4). A predominant purpose is to advise young men on how to follow a career in business or the court, as opposed for example to agriculture or the army. Several proverbs tell explicitly how to deal with kings (Pr 24:21).

6 Do not forsake wisdom, and she will protect
you;
love her, and she will watch over you.
7 The beginning of wisdom is this: Get[a]
wisdom.
Though it cost all you have,[b] get
understanding.
8 Cherish her, and she will exalt you;
embrace her, and she will honor you.
9 She will give you a garland to grace your
head
and present you with a glorious crown."

10 Listen, my son, accept what I say,
and the years of your life will be many.
11 I instruct you in the way of wisdom
and lead you along straight paths.
12 When you walk, your steps will not be
hampered;
when you run, you will not stumble.
13 Hold on to instruction, do not let it go;
guard it well, for it is your life.
14 Do not set foot on the path of the wicked
or walk in the way of evildoers.
15 Avoid it, do not travel on it;
turn from it and go on your way.
16 For they cannot rest until they do evil;
they are robbed of sleep till they make
someone stumble.
17 They eat the bread of wickedness
and drink the wine of violence.

18 The path of the righteous is like the
morning sun,
shining ever brighter till the full light of
day.
19 But the way of the wicked is like deep
darkness;
they do not know what makes them
stumble.

20 My son, pay attention to what I say;
turn your ear to my words.
21 Do not let them out of your sight,
keep them within your heart;
22 for they are life to those who find them
and health to one's whole body.
23 Above all else, guard your heart,
for everything you do flows from it.
24 Keep your mouth free of perversity;
keep corrupt talk far from your lips.
25 Let your eyes look straight ahead;
fix your gaze directly before you.
26 Give careful thought to the[c] paths for your
feet
and be steadfast in all your ways.
27 Do not turn to the right or the left;
keep your foot from evil.

Warning Against Adultery

5 1 My son, pay attention to my wisdom,
turn your ear to my words of insight,
2 that you may maintain discretion
and your lips may preserve knowledge.
3 For the lips of the adulterous woman drip
honey,
and her speech is smoother than oil;
4 but in the end she is bitter as gall,
sharp as a double-edged sword.
5 Her feet go down to death;
her steps lead straight to the grave.
6 She gives no thought to the way of life;
her paths wander aimlessly, but she does
not know it.

7 Now then, my sons, listen to me;
do not turn aside from what I say.
8 Keep to a path far from her,
do not go near the door of her house,
9 lest you lose your honor to others
and your dignity[d] to one who is cruel,
10 lest strangers feast on your wealth
and your toil enrich the house of
another.
11 At the end of your life you will groan,
when your flesh and body are spent.
12 You will say, "How I hated discipline!
How my heart spurned correction!
13 I would not obey my teachers
or turn my ear to my instructors.
14 And I was soon in serious trouble
in the assembly of God's people."

15 Drink water from your own cistern,
running water from your own well.
16 Should your springs overflow in the
streets,
your streams of water in the public
squares?
17 Let them be yours alone,
never to be shared with strangers.
18 May your fountain be blessed,
and may you rejoice in the wife of your
youth.

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[a] *7* Or *Wisdom is supreme; therefore get* [b] *7* Or *wisdom. / Whatever else you get* [c] *26* Or *Make level* [d] *9* Or *years*

19 A loving doe, a graceful deer—
may her breasts satisfy you always,
may you ever be intoxicated with her love.
20 Why, my son, be intoxicated with another man's wife?
Why embrace the bosom of a wayward woman?

21 For your ways are in full view of the LORD,
and he examines all your paths.
22 The evil deeds of the wicked ensnare them;
the cords of their sins hold them fast.
23 For lack of discipline they will die,
led astray by their own great folly.

Warnings Against Folly

6 1 My son, if you have put up security for your neighbor,
if you have shaken hands in pledge for a stranger,
2 you have been trapped by what you said,
ensnared by the words of your mouth.
3 So do this, my son, to free yourself,
since you have fallen into your neighbor's hands:
Go—to the point of exhaustion—[a]
and give your neighbor no rest!
4 Allow no sleep to your eyes,
no slumber to your eyelids.
5 Free yourself, like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter,
like a bird from the snare of the fowler.

6 Go to the ant, you sluggard;
consider its ways and be wise!
7 It has no commander,
no overseer or ruler,
8 yet it stores its provisions in summer
and gathers its food at harvest.

9 How long will you lie there, you sluggard?
When will you get up from your sleep?
10 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
11 and poverty will come on you like a thief
and scarcity like an armed man.

12 A troublemaker and a villain,
who goes about with a corrupt mouth,
13 who winks maliciously with his eye,
signals with his feet
and motions with his fingers,
14 who plots evil with deceit in his heart—
he always stirs up conflict.

15 Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant;
he will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.

16 There are six things the LORD hates,
seven that are detestable to him:
17 haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
hands that shed innocent blood,
18 a heart that devises wicked schemes,
feet that are quick to rush into evil,
19 a false witness who pours out lies
and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.

Warning Against Adultery

20 My son, keep your father's command
and do not forsake your mother's teaching.
21 Bind them always on your heart;
fasten them around your neck.
22 When you walk, they will guide you;
when you sleep, they will watch over you;
when you awake, they will speak to you.
23 For this command is a lamp,
this teaching is a light,
and correction and instruction
are the way to life,
24 keeping you from your neighbor's wife,
from the smooth talk of a wayward woman.

25 Do not lust in your heart after her beauty
or let her captivate you with her eyes.

26 For a prostitute can be had for a loaf of bread,
but another man's wife preys on your very life.
27 Can a man scoop fire into his lap
without his clothes being burned?
28 Can a man walk on hot coals
without his feet being scorched?
29 So is he who sleeps with another man's wife;
no one who touches her will go unpunished.

30 People do not despise a thief if he steals
to satisfy his hunger when he is starving.
31 Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold,
though it costs him all the wealth of his house.
32 But a man who commits adultery has no sense;
whoever does so destroys himself.
33 Blows and disgrace are his lot,
and his shame will never be wiped away.

[a] 3 Or *Go and humble yourself,*

34 For jealousy arouses a husband's fury,
and he will show no mercy when he takes revenge.
35 He will not accept any compensation;
he will refuse a bribe, however great it is.

Warning Against the Adulterous Woman

7 1 My son, keep my words
and store up my commands within you.
2 Keep my commands and you will live;
guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.
3 Bind them on your fingers;
write them on the tablet of your heart.
4 Say to wisdom, "You are my sister,"
and to insight, "You are my relative."
5 They will keep you from the adulterous woman,
from the wayward woman with her seductive words.

6 At the window of my house
I looked down through the lattice.
7 I saw among the simple,
I noticed among the young men,
a youth who had no sense.
8 He was going down the street near her corner,
walking along in the direction of her house
9 at twilight, as the day was fading,
as the dark of night set in.

10 Then out came a woman to meet him,
dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent.
11 (She is unruly and defiant,
her feet never stay at home;
12 now in the street, now in the squares,
at every corner she lurks.)
13 She took hold of him and kissed him
and with a brazen face she said:

14 "Today I fulfilled my vows,
and I have food from my fellowship offering at home.
15 So I came out to meet you;
I looked for you and have found you!
16 I have covered my bed
with colored linens from Egypt.
17 I have perfumed my bed
with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon.
18 Come, let's drink deeply of love till morning;
let's enjoy ourselves with love!
19 My husband is not at home;
he has gone on a long journey.
20 He took his purse filled with money
and will not be home till full moon."

21 With persuasive words she led him astray;
she seduced him with her smooth talk.
22 All at once he followed her
like an ox going to the slaughter,
like a deer[a] stepping into a noose[b]
23 till an arrow pierces his liver,
like a bird darting into a snare,
little knowing it will cost him his life.

24 Now then, my sons, listen to me;
pay attention to what I say.
25 Do not let your heart turn to her ways
or stray into her paths.
26 Many are the victims she has brought down;
her slain are a mighty throng.
27 Her house is a highway to the grave,
leading down to the chambers of death.

Wisdom's Call

8 1 Does not wisdom call out?
Does not understanding raise her voice?
2 At the highest point along the way,
where the paths meet, she takes her stand;
3 beside the gate leading into the city,
at the entrance, she cries aloud:
4 "To you, O people, I call out;
I raise my voice to all mankind.
5 You who are simple, gain prudence;
you who are foolish, set your hearts on it.[c]
6 Listen, for I have trustworthy things to say;
I open my lips to speak what is right.
7 My mouth speaks what is true,
for my lips detest wickedness.
8 All the words of my mouth are just;
none of them is crooked or perverse.
9 To the discerning all of them are right;
they are upright to those who have found knowledge.
10 Choose my instruction instead of silver,
knowledge rather than choice gold,

Politics & Government
The gates of ancient cities were large structures that often included several rooms where business could be conducted. It is appropriate to find the figure of Wisdom calling for her students in this location (Pr 8:3), since the city gate was a place where legal as well as commercial transactions took place (Ru 4:1, 11; Am 5:12, 15).

[a] *22* Syriac (see also Septuagint); Hebrew *fool*
[b] *22* The meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain.
[c] *5* Septuagint; Hebrew *foolish, instruct your minds*

The Person of Lady Wisdom (Pr 8:22–31)

God's first possession, which he possessed before the universe was created, is the figure of Wisdom (Pr 8:22). In Pr 8:1—9:12 Wisdom is portrayed as a woman who seeks to teach all humans how to live properly in this world in accordance with the will of God and in harmony with the design of creation. She knows from direct involvement both God's will and creation's design, for it was by Wisdom that God created the world (8:27–31) so that humans can understand it and live well in it.

The poem in Proverbs insists that acquiring wisdom is easy, since Wisdom herself seeks out persons, both wise and foolish, to teach them (8:1–4). The ways of God are not hidden; neither are the ways which lead to a good human life. Anyone who wishes to succeed is welcomed to learn this way of life. For wisdom, it is asserted, leads to a good life, while foolishness leads to death.

The Hebrew Bible represents God's wisdom as a person, the feminine figure of Wisdom, but not as a separate deity. It remains unknown whether some Israelites and Judeans may have related her to the goddess Asherah. The Ugaritic myths (1400–1200 B.C.) present Asherah as the spouse of El, the head of the pantheon, and as having great wisdom of her own.

Wisdom became increasingly identified with God and with the Torah, the first five books of Israel's Scripture. Her traits accumulated through a tradition of poems written later than Proverbs, such as Ecclesiasticus (Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach), Baruch, and the Wisdom of Solomon. By the time the Wisdom of Solomon was written, Wisdom could be portrayed as creator of the world, the giver of life, and even the source of eternal life. Later, these same notions appear in the prologue of the Gospel of John (John 1:1–18), describing the preexistence of Christ, the divine Word.

11 for wisdom is more precious than rubies,
and nothing you desire can compare with her.

12 "I, wisdom, dwell together with prudence;
I possess knowledge and discretion.
13 To fear the LORD is to hate evil;
I hate pride and arrogance,
evil behavior and perverse speech.
14 Counsel and sound judgment are mine;
I have insight, I have power.
15 By me kings reign
and rulers issue decrees that are just;
16 by me princes govern,
and nobles—all who rule on earth.[a]
17 I love those who love me,
and those who seek me find me.
18 With me are riches and honor,
enduring wealth and prosperity.
19 My fruit is better than fine gold;
what I yield surpasses choice silver.
20 I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,
21 bestowing a rich inheritance on those who love me
and making their treasuries full.

22 "The LORD brought me forth as the first of his works,[b,c]
before his deeds of old;
23 I was formed long ages ago,
at the very beginning, when the world came to be.
24 When there were no watery depths, I was given birth,
when there were no springs overflowing with water;
25 before the mountains were settled in place,
before the hills, I was given birth,
26 before he made the world or its fields
or any of the dust of the earth.
27 I was there when he set the heavens in place,
when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,
28 when he established the clouds above
and fixed securely the fountains of the deep,
29 when he gave the sea its boundary
so the waters would not overstep his command,
and when he marked out the foundations of the earth.
30 Then I was constantly[d] at his side.
I was filled with delight day after day,
rejoicing always in his presence,
31 rejoicing in his whole world
and delighting in mankind.

32 "Now then, my children, listen to me;
blessed are those who keep my ways.
33 Listen to my instruction and be wise;
do not disregard it.
34 Blessed are those who listen to me,
watching daily at my doors,
waiting at my doorway.
35 For those who find me find life
and receive favor from the LORD.
36 But those who fail to find me harm themselves;
all who hate me love death."

[a] *16* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint; other Hebrew manuscripts *all righteous rulers* [b] *22* Or *way*; or *dominion*
[c] *22* Or *The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work*; or *The LORD brought me forth at the beginning of his work*
[d] *30* Or *was the artisan*; or *was a little child*

Invitations of Wisdom and Folly

9 [1]Wisdom has built her house;
she has set up[a] its seven pillars.
[2]She has prepared her meat and mixed her wine;
she has also set her table.
[3]She has sent out her servants, and she calls
from the highest point of the city,
[4] "Let all who are simple come to my house!"
To those who have no sense she says,
[5] "Come, eat my food
and drink the wine I have mixed.
[6]Leave your simple ways and you will live;
walk in the way of insight."

[7]Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults;
whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse.
[8]Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you;
rebuke the wise and they will love you.
[9]Instruct the wise and they will be wiser still;
teach the righteous and they will add to their learning.

[10]The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.
[11]For through wisdom[b] your days will be many,
and years will be added to your life.
[12]If you are wise, your wisdom will reward you;
if you are a mocker, you alone will suffer.

[13]Folly is an unruly woman;
she is simple and knows nothing.
[14]She sits at the door of her house,
on a seat at the highest point of the city,
[15]calling out to those who pass by,
who go straight on their way,
[16] "Let all who are simple come to my house!"
To those who have no sense she says,
[17] "Stolen water is sweet;
food eaten in secret is delicious!"
[18]But little do they know that the dead are there,
that her guests are deep in the realm of the dead.

TRANSITION

More Proverbs Ascribed to Solomon

The value and the practice of wisdom are encouraged throughout Pr 10:1—22:16, the second collection of proverbs ascribed to Solomon. Chapters 10–15 are characterized by proverbs which contrast wise and foolish behavior. In Proverbs this contrast is more than just a comment on intelligence. Wisdom meant living in harmony with the good and orderly creation of God. Thus for the wisdom teachers, wisdom was almost a synonym for virtue, and folly and wickedness were interchangeable.

• **Proverbs 10:1—15:33**

Proverbs

Proverbs of Solomon

10 **:1** The proverbs of Solomon:

A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish son brings grief to his mother.

[2]Ill-gotten treasures have no lasting value,
but righteousness delivers from death.

[3]The LORD does not let the righteous go hungry,
but he thwarts the craving of the wicked.

[4]Lazy hands make for poverty,
but diligent hands bring wealth.

[5]He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son,
but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

[6]Blessings crown the head of the righteous,
but violence overwhelms the mouth of the wicked.[c]

[7]The name of the righteous is used in blessings,[d]
but the name of the wicked will rot.

[8]The wise in heart accept commands,
but a chattering fool comes to ruin.

[9]Whoever walks in integrity walks securely,
but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.

[10]Whoever winks maliciously causes grief,
and a chattering fool comes to ruin.

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[a] *1* Septuagint, Syriac and Targum; Hebrew *has hewn out*
[b] *11* Septuagint, Syriac and Targum; Hebrew *me*
[c] *6* Or *righteous, / but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence*
[d] *7* See Gen. 48:20.

11 The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life,
but the mouth of the wicked conceals violence.

12 Hatred stirs up conflict,
but love covers over all wrongs.

13 Wisdom is found on the lips of the discerning,
but a rod is for the back of one who has no sense.

14 The wise store up knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool invites ruin.

15 The wealth of the rich is their fortified city,
but poverty is the ruin of the poor.

16 The wages of the righteous is life,
but the earnings of the wicked are sin and death.

17 Whoever heeds discipline shows the way to life,
but whoever ignores correction leads others astray.

18 Whoever conceals hatred with lying lips
and spreads slander is a fool.

19 Sin is not ended by multiplying words,
but the prudent hold their tongues.

20 The tongue of the righteous is choice silver,
but the heart of the wicked is of little value.

21 The lips of the righteous nourish many,
but fools die for lack of sense.

22 The blessing of the LORD brings wealth,
without painful toil for it.

23 A fool finds pleasure in wicked schemes,
but a person of understanding delights in wisdom.

24 What the wicked dread will overtake them;
what the righteous desire will be granted.

25 When the storm has swept by, the wicked are gone,
but the righteous stand firm forever.

26 As vinegar to the teeth and smoke to the eyes,
so are sluggards to those who send them.

27 The fear of the LORD adds length to life,
but the years of the wicked are cut short.

28 The prospect of the righteous is joy,
but the hopes of the wicked come to nothing.

29 The way of the LORD is a refuge for the blameless,
but it is the ruin of the those who do evil.

30 The righteous will never be uprooted,
but the wicked will not remain in the land.

31 From the mouth of the righteous comes the fruit of wisdom,
but a perverse tongue will be silenced.

32 The lips of the righteous know what finds favor,
but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse.

11 1 The LORD detests dishonest scales,
but accurate weights find favor with him.

2 When pride comes, then comes disgrace,
but with humility comes wisdom.

3 The integrity of the upright guides them,
but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

4 Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath,
but righteousness delivers from death.

5 The righteousness of the blameless makes their paths straight,
but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness.

6 The righteousness of the upright delivers them,
but the unfaithful are trapped by evil desires.

7 Hopes placed in mortals die with them;
all the promise of[a] their power comes to nothing.

8 The righteous person is rescued from trouble,
and it falls on the wicked instead.

9 With their mouths the godless destroy their neighbors,
but through knowledge the righteous escape.

10 When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices;
when the wicked perish, there are shouts of joy.

11 Through the blessing of the upright a city is exalted,
but by the mouth of the wicked it is destroyed.

12 Whoever derides their neighbor has no sense,
but the one who has understanding holds their tongue.

13 A gossip betrays a confidence,
but a trustworthy person keeps a secret.

14 For lack of guidance a nation falls,
but victory is won through many advisers.

15 Whoever puts up security for a stranger will surely suffer,
but whoever refuses to shake hands in pledge is safe.

16 A kindhearted woman gains honor,
but ruthless men gain only wealth.

17 Those who are kind benefit themselves,
but the cruel bring ruin on themselves.

18 A wicked person earns deceptive wages,
but the one who sows righteousness reaps a sure reward.

19 Truly the righteous attain life,
but whoever pursues evil finds death.

20 The LORD detests those whose hearts are perverse,
but he delights in those whose ways are blameless.

21 Be sure of this: The wicked will not go unpunished,
but those who are righteous will go free.

22 Like a gold ring in a pig's snout
is a beautiful woman who shows no discretion.

23 The desire of the righteous ends only in good,
but the hope of the wicked only in wrath.

24 One person gives freely, yet gains even more;
another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty.

25 A generous person will prosper;
whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

26 People curse the one who hoards grain,
but they pray God's blessing on the one who is willing to sell.

27 Whoever seeks good finds favor,
but evil comes to one who searches for it.

28 Those who trust in their riches will fall,
but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.

29 Whoever brings ruin on their family will inherit only wind,
and the fool will be servant to the wise.

30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life,
and the one who is wise saves lives.

31 If the righteous receive their due on earth,
how much more the ungodly and the sinner!

12 1 Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but whoever hates correction is stupid.

2 Good people obtain favor from the LORD,
but he condemns those who devise wicked schemes.

3 No one can be established through wickedness,
but the righteous cannot be uprooted.

4 A wife of noble character is her husband's crown,
but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.

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[a] *7* Two Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate, Syriac and Targum *When the wicked die, their hope perishes; / all they expected from*

5 The plans of the righteous are just,
but the advice of the wicked is deceitful.

6 The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood,
but the speech of the upright rescues them.

7 The wicked are overthrown and are no more,
but the house of the righteous stands firm.

8 A person is praised according to their prudence,
and one with a warped mind is despised.

9 Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant
than pretend to be somebody and have no food.

10 The righteous care for the needs of their animals,
but the kindest acts of the wicked are cruel.

11 Those who work their land will have abundant food,
but those who chase fantasies have no sense.

12 The wicked desire the stronghold of evildoers,
but the root of the righteous endures.

13 Evildoers are trapped by their sinful talk,
and so the innocent escape trouble.

14 From the fruit of their lips people are filled with good things,
and the work of their hands brings them reward.

15 The way of fools seems right to them,
but the wise listen to advice.

16 Fools show their annoyance at once,
but the prudent overlook an insult.

17 An honest witness tells the truth,
but a false witness tells lies.

18 The words of the reckless pierce like swords,
but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

19 Truthful lips endure forever,
but a lying tongue lasts only a moment.

20 Deceit is in the hearts of those who plot evil,
but those who promote peace have joy.

21 No harm overtakes the righteous,
but the wicked have their fill of trouble.

22 The LORD detests lying lips,
but he delights in people who are trustworthy.

23 The prudent keep their knowledge to themselves,
but a fool's heart blurts out folly.

24 Diligent hands will rule,
but laziness ends in forced labor.

25 Anxiety weighs down the heart,
but a kind word cheers it up.

26 The righteous choose their friends carefully,
but the way of the wicked leads them astray.

27 The lazy do not roast[a] any game,
but the diligent feed on the riches of the hunt.

28 In the way of righteousness there is life;
along that path is immortality.

13 1 A wise son heeds his father's instruction,
but a mocker does not respond to rebukes.

2 From the fruit of their lips people enjoy good things,
but the unfaithful have an appetite for violence.

3 Those who guard their lips preserve their lives,
but those who speak rashly will come to ruin.

4 A sluggard's appetite is never filled,
but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.

5 The righteous hate what is false,
but the wicked make themselves a stench
and bring shame on themselves.

[a] *27* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Politics & Government

The emphasis of the wisdom literature on the power of speech and the need to watch carefully what one says suggests that the instruction originated in court circles (Pr 12:17). In the royal court, policy would be discussed and decided. Also in the court, spies would be a danger, as the warning about "a bird in the sky" and "a bird on the wing" indicates (Ecc 10:20).

6 Righteousness guards the person of
integrity,
but wickedness overthrows the sinner.

7 One person pretends to be rich, yet has
nothing;
another pretends to be poor, yet has great
wealth.

8 A person's riches may ransom their life,
but the poor cannot respond to
threatening rebukes.

9 The light of the righteous shines brightly,
but the lamp of the wicked is snuffed
out.

10 Where there is strife, there is pride,
but wisdom is found in those who take
advice.

11 Dishonest money dwindles away,
but whoever gathers money little by little
makes it grow.

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

13 Whoever scorns instruction will pay for it,
but whoever respects a command is
rewarded.

14 The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life,
turning a person from the snares of
death.

15 Good judgment wins favor,
but the way of the unfaithful leads to their
destruction.[a]

16 All who are prudent act with[b] knowledge,
but fools expose their folly.

17 A wicked messenger falls into trouble,
but a trustworthy envoy brings healing.

18 Whoever disregards discipline comes to
poverty and shame,
but whoever heeds correction is
honored.

19 A longing fulfilled is sweet to the soul,
but fools detest turning from evil.

20 Walk with the wise and become wise,
for a companion of fools suffers harm.

21 Trouble pursues the sinner,
but the righteous are rewarded with good
things.

22 A good person leaves an inheritance for
their children's children,
but a sinner's wealth is stored up for the
righteous.

23 An unplowed field produces food for the
poor,
but injustice sweeps it away.

24 Whoever spares the rod hates their
children,
but the one who loves their children is
careful to discipline them.

25 The righteous eat to their hearts' content,
but the stomach of the wicked goes
hungry.

14 1 The wise woman builds her house,
but with her own hands the foolish one
tears hers down.

2 Whoever fears the LORD walks uprightly,
but those who despise him are devious in
their ways.

3 A fool's mouth lashes out with pride,
but the lips of the wise protect them.

4 Where there are no oxen, the manger is
empty,
but from the strength of an ox come
abundant harvests.

5 An honest witness does not deceive,
but a false witness pours out lies.

6 The mocker seeks wisdom and finds none,
but knowledge comes easily to the
discerning.

7 Stay away from a fool,
for you will not find knowledge on their
lips.

8 The wisdom of the prudent is to give
thought to their ways,
but the folly of fools is deception.

9 Fools mock at making amends for sin,
but goodwill is found among the upright.

10 Each heart knows its own bitterness,
and no one else can share its joy.

11 The house of the wicked will be destroyed,
but the tent of the upright will flourish.

12 There is a way that appears to be right,
but in the end it leads to death.

13 Even in laughter the heart may ache,
and rejoicing may end in grief.

14 The faithless will be fully repaid for their
ways,
and the good rewarded for theirs.

[a] *15* Septuagint and Syriac; the meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. [b] *16* Or *prudent protect themselves through*

15 The simple believe anything,
but the prudent give thought to their steps.

16 The wise fear the LORD and shun evil,
but a fool is hotheaded and yet feels
secure.

17 A quick-tempered person does foolish
things,
and the one who devises evil schemes is
hated.

18 The simple inherit folly,
but the prudent are crowned with
knowledge.

19 Evildoers will bow down in the presence of
the good,
and the wicked at the gates of the
righteous.

20 The poor are shunned even by their
neighbors,
but the rich have many friends.

21 It is a sin to despise one's neighbor,
but blessed is the one who is kind to the
needy.

22 Do not those who plot evil go astray?
But those who plan what is good find[a]
love and faithfulness.

23 All hard work brings a profit,
but mere talk leads only to poverty.

24 The wealth of the wise is their crown,
but the folly of fools yields folly.

25 A truthful witness saves lives,
but a false witness is deceitful.

26 Whoever fears the LORD has a secure
fortress,
and for their children it will be a refuge.

27 The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life,
turning a person from the snares of
death.

28 A large population is a king's glory,
but without subjects a prince is ruined.

29 Whoever is patient has great understanding,
but one who is quick-tempered displays
folly.

30 A heart at peace gives life to the body,
but envy rots the bones.

31 Whoever oppresses the poor shows
contempt for their Maker,
but whoever is kind to the needy honors
God.

32 When calamity comes, the wicked are
brought down,
but even in death the righteous seek
refuge in God.

33 Wisdom reposes in the heart of the
discerning
and even among fools she lets herself be
known.[b]

34 Righteousness exalts a nation,
but sin condemns any people.

35 A king delights in a wise servant,
but a shameful servant arouses his fury.

15 1 A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

2 The tongue of the wise adorns knowledge,
but the mouth of the fool gushes folly.

3 The eyes of the LORD are everywhere,
keeping watch on the wicked and the
good.

[a] *22* Or *show* [b] *33* Hebrew; Septuagint and Syriac *discerning / but in the heart of fools she is not known*

Solomon's Administrative Districts

"A large population is a king's glory" (Pr 14:28). The growth and extension of Israel's borders under Solomon's leadership resulted in a very large kingdom (1Ki 4:20, 21). Solomon faced an urgent need for ever-increasing revenues to meet expenditures on building and commercial projects throughout his expanding kingdom. To address this need, the king divided Israel into 12 districts and appointed over each district a governor responsible for levying and collecting taxes.

4 The soothing tongue is a tree of life,
but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.

5 A fool spurns a parent's discipline,
but whoever heeds correction shows prudence.

6 The house of the righteous contains great treasure,
but the income of the wicked brings ruin.

7 The lips of the wise spread knowledge,
but the hearts of fools are not upright.

8 The LORD detests the sacrifice of the wicked,
but the prayer of the upright pleases him.

9 The LORD detests the way of the wicked,
but he loves those who pursue righteousness.

10 Stern discipline awaits anyone who leaves the path;
the one who hates correction will die.

11 Death and Destruction[a] lie open before the LORD—
how much more do human hearts!

12 Mockers resent correction,
so they avoid the wise.

13 A happy heart makes the face cheerful,
but heartache crushes the spirit.

14 The discerning heart seeks knowledge,
but the mouth of a fool feeds on folly.

15 All the days of the oppressed are wretched,
but the cheerful heart has a continual feast.

16 Better a little with the fear of the LORD
than great wealth with turmoil.

17 Better a small serving of vegetables with love
than a fattened calf with hatred.

Beliefs & Ideas

The Old Testament commonly refers to the dead as inhabitants of Sheol, sometimes translated as "Death" (Pr 15:11). As a place, Sheol is a shadowy region where the dead, although not unconscious, are unable to participate in the affairs of the living. Ancient people thought of Sheol or Death as a person, as well as a place. The personified Death was never satisfied (Pr 27:20).

18 A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict,
but the one who is patient calms a quarrel.

19 The way of the sluggard is blocked with thorns,
but the path of the upright is a highway.

20 A wise son brings joy to his father,
but a foolish man despises his mother.

21 Folly brings joy to one who has no sense,
but whoever has understanding keeps a straight course.

22 Plans fail for lack of counsel,
but with many advisers they succeed.

23 A person finds joy in giving an apt reply—
and how good is a timely word!

24 The path of life leads upward for the prudent
to keep them from going down to the realm of the dead.

25 The LORD tears down the house of the proud,
but he sets the widow's boundary stones in place.

26 The LORD detests the thoughts of the wicked,
but gracious words are pure in his sight.

27 The greedy bring ruin to their households,
but the one who hates bribes will live.

28 The heart of the righteous weighs its answers,
but the mouth of the wicked gushes evil.

29 The LORD is far from the wicked,
but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

30 Light in a messenger's eyes brings joy to the heart,
and good news gives health to the bones.

31 Whoever heeds life-giving correction
will be at home among the wise.

32 Those who disregard discipline despise themselves,
but the one who heeds correction gains understanding.

33 Wisdom's instruction is to fear the LORD,
and humility comes before honor.

[a] *11* Hebrew *Abaddon*

TRANSITION

Miscellaneous Proverbs

A cluster of sayings (Pr 16:10–15) deals with the responsibilities and desired characteristics of the king and his reign. For the most part, however, Pr 16:1—22:16 are a collection of miscellaneous, self-contained proverbs.

• **Proverbs 16:1—22:16**

Proverbs

16 **:1** To humans belong the plans of the heart,
but from the LORD comes the proper answer of the tongue.

2 All a person's ways seem pure to them,
but motives are weighed by the LORD.

3 Commit to the LORD whatever you do,
and he will establish your plans.

4 The LORD works out everything to its proper end—
even the wicked for a day of disaster.

5 The LORD detests all the proud of heart.
Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished.

6 Through love and faithfulness sin is atoned for;
through the fear of the LORD evil is avoided.

7 When the LORD takes pleasure in anyone's way,
he causes their enemies to make peace with them.

8 Better a little with righteousness
than much gain with injustice.

9 In their hearts humans plan their course,
but the LORD establishes their steps.

10 The lips of a king speak as an oracle,
and his mouth does not betray justice.

11 Honest scales and balances belong to the LORD;
all the weights in the bag are of his making.

12 Kings detest wrongdoing,
for a throne is established through righteousness.

13 Kings take pleasure in honest lips;
they value the one who speaks what is right.

14 A king's wrath is a messenger of death,
but the wise will appease it.

15 When a king's face brightens, it means life;
his favor is like a rain cloud in spring.

16 How much better to get wisdom than gold,
to get insight rather than silver!

17 The highway of the upright avoids evil;
those who guard their ways preserve their lives.

18 Pride goes before destruction,
a haughty spirit before a fall.

19 Better to be lowly in spirit along with the oppressed
than to share plunder with the proud.

20 Whoever gives heed to instruction prospers,[a]
and blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD.

21 The wise in heart are called discerning,
and gracious words promote instruction.[b]

22 Prudence is a fountain of life to the prudent,
but folly brings punishment to fools.

23 The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent,
and their lips promote instruction.[c]

24 Gracious words are a honeycomb,
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

25 There is a way that appears to be right,
but in the end it leads to death.

26 The appetite of laborers works for them;
their hunger drives them on.

27 A scoundrel plots evil,
and on their lips it is like a scorching fire.

28 A perverse person stirs up conflict,
and a gossip separates close friends.

29 A violent person entices their neighbor
and leads them down a path that is not good.

30 Whoever winks with their eye is plotting perversity;
whoever purses their lips is bent on evil.

31 Gray hair is a crown of splendor;
it is attained in the way of righteousness.

32 Better a patient person than a warrior,
one with self-control than one who takes a city.

[a] *20* Or *whoever speaks prudently finds what is good*
[b] *21* Or *words make a person persuasive*
[c] *23* Or *prudent / and make their lips persuasive*

33 The lot is cast into the lap,
but its every decision is from the LORD.

17 1 Better a dry crust with peace and quiet
than a house full of feasting, with strife.

2 A prudent servant will rule over a
disgraceful son
and will share the inheritance as one of
the family.

3 The crucible for silver and the furnace for
gold,
but the LORD tests the heart.

4 A wicked person listens to deceitful lips;
a liar pays attention to a destructive
tongue.

5 Whoever mocks the poor shows contempt
for their Maker;
whoever gloats over disaster will not go
unpunished.

6 Children's children are a crown to the aged,
and parents are the pride of their
children.

7 Eloquent lips are unsuited to a godless
fool—
how much worse lying lips to a ruler!

8 A bribe is seen as a charm by the one who
gives it;
they think success will come at every
turn.

9 Whoever would foster love covers over an
offense,
but whoever repeats the matter separates
close friends.

10 A rebuke impresses a discerning person
more than a hundred lashes a fool.

11 Evildoers foster rebellion against God;
the messenger of death will be sent
against them.

12 Better to meet a bear robbed of her cubs
than a fool bent on folly.

13 Evil will never leave the house
of one who pays back evil for good.

14 Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam;
so drop the matter before a dispute
breaks out.

15 Acquitting the guilty and condemning the
innocent—
the LORD detests them both.

16 Why should fools have money in hand to
buy wisdom,
when they are not able to
understand it?

17 A friend loves at all times,
and a brother is born for a time of
adversity.

18 One who has no sense shakes hands in
pledge
and puts up security for a neighbor.

19 Whoever loves a quarrel loves sin;
whoever builds a high gate invites
destruction.

20 One whose heart is corrupt does not
prosper;
one whose tongue is perverse falls into
trouble.

21 To have a fool for a child brings grief;
there is no joy for the parent of a godless
fool.

22 A cheerful heart is good medicine,
but a crushed spirit dries up the
bones.

23 The wicked accept bribes in secret
to pervert the course of justice.

24 A discerning person keeps wisdom in
view,
but a fool's eyes wander to the ends of the
earth.

25 A foolish son brings grief to his father
and bitterness to the mother who bore
him.

26 If imposing a fine on the innocent is not
good,
surely to flog honest officials is not right.

27 The one who has knowledge uses words
with restraint,
and whoever has understanding is even-
tempered.

28 Even fools are thought wise if they keep
silent,
and discerning if they hold their tongues.

18 1 An unfriendly person pursues selfish
ends
and against all sound judgment starts
quarrels.

2 Fools find no pleasure in understanding
but delight in airing their own opinions.

3 When wickedness comes, so does
contempt,
and with shame comes reproach.

4 The words of the mouth are deep waters,
but the fountain of wisdom is a rushing
stream.

5 It is not good to be partial to the wicked
and so deprive the innocent of justice.

6 The lips of fools bring them strife,
and their mouths invite a beating.

7 The mouths of fools are their undoing,
and their lips are a snare to their very
lives.

8 The words of a gossip are like choice
morsels;
they go down to the inmost parts.

9 One who is slack in his work
is brother to one who destroys.

10 The name of the LORD is a fortified tower;
the righteous run to it and are safe.

11 The wealth of the rich is their fortified
city;
they imagine it a wall too high to scale.

12 Before a downfall the heart is haughty,
but humility comes before honor.

13 To answer before listening—
that is folly and shame.

14 The human spirit can endure in sickness,
but a crushed spirit who can bear?

15 The heart of the discerning acquires
knowledge,
for the ears of the wise seek it out.

16 A gift opens the way
and ushers the giver into the presence of
the great.

17 In a lawsuit the first to speak seems right,
until someone comes forward and cross-
examines.

18 Casting the lot settles disputes
and keeps strong opponents apart.

19 A brother wronged is more unyielding than
a fortified city;
disputes are like the barred gates of a
citadel.

20 From the fruit of their mouth a person's
stomach is filled;
with the harvest of their lips they are
satisfied.

21 The tongue has the power of life and
death,
and those who love it will eat its fruit.

22 He who finds a wife finds what is good
and receives favor from the LORD.

23 The poor plead for mercy,
but the rich answer harshly.

24 One who has unreliable friends soon comes
to ruin,
but there is a friend who sticks closer
than a brother.

19 1 Better the poor whose walk is
blameless
than a fool whose lips are perverse.

2 Desire without knowledge is not good—
how much more will hasty feet miss the
way!

3 A person's own folly leads to their ruin,
yet their heart rages against the LORD.

4 Wealth attracts many friends,
but even the closest friend of the poor
person deserts them.

5 A false witness will not go unpunished,
and whoever pours out lies will not go
free.

6 Many curry favor with a ruler,
and everyone is the friend of one who
gives gifts.

Architecture & Building
The main defense of cities was a high, thick wall (Pr 18:11). At the time of Solomon these walls were built thick enough to be in effect a double wall with internal walls making rooms inside. Dirt or rubble was used to make the surrounding ground slope so enemies had to attack uphill.

7 The poor are shunned by all their
relatives—
how much more do their friends avoid
them!
Though the poor pursue them with
pleading,
they are nowhere to be found.[a]

8 The one who gets wisdom loves life;
the one who cherishes understanding will
soon prosper.

9 A false witness will not go unpunished,
and whoever pours out lies will perish.

10 It is not fitting for a fool to live in luxury—
how much worse for a slave to rule over
princes!

11 A person's wisdom yields patience;
it is to one's glory to overlook an offense.

12 A king's rage is like the roar of a lion,
but his favor is like dew on the grass.

13 A foolish child is a father's ruin,
and a quarrelsome wife is like
the constant dripping of a leaky roof.

14 Houses and wealth are inherited from
parents,
but a prudent wife is from the LORD.

15 Laziness brings on deep sleep,
and the shiftless go hungry.

16 Whoever keeps commandments keeps their
life,
but whoever shows contempt for their
ways will die.

17 Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the
LORD,
and he will reward them for what they
have done.

18 Discipline your children, for in that there is
hope;
do not be a willing party to their death.

19 A hot-tempered person must pay the
penalty;
rescue them, and you will have to do it
again.

20 Listen to advice and accept discipline,
and at the end you will be counted among
the wise.

21 Many are the plans in a person's heart,
but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails.

22 What a person desires is unfailing love[b];
better to be poor than a liar.

23 The fear of the LORD leads to life;
then one rests content, untouched by
trouble.

24 A sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
he will not even bring it back to his
mouth!

25 Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn
prudence;
rebuke the discerning, and they will gain
knowledge.

26 Whoever robs their father and drives out
their mother
is a child who brings shame and
disgrace.

27 Stop listening to instruction, my son,
and you will stray from the words of
knowledge.

28 A corrupt witness mocks at justice,
and the mouth of the wicked gulps down
evil.

29 Penalties are prepared for mockers,
and beatings for the backs of fools.

20 1 Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler;
whoever is led astray by them is not
wise.

2 A king's wrath strikes terror like the roar of
a lion;
those who anger him forfeit their lives.

3 It is to one's honor to avoid strife,
but every fool is quick to quarrel.

4 Sluggards do not plow in season;
so at harvest time they look but find
nothing.

5 The purposes of a person's heart are deep
waters,
but one who has insight draws them out.

6 Many claim to have unfailing love,
but a faithful person who can find?

7 The righteous lead blameless lives;
blessed are their children after them.

8 When a king sits on his throne to judge,
he winnows out all evil with his eyes.

9 Who can say, "I have kept my heart pure;
I am clean and without sin"?

10 Differing weights and differing measures—
the LORD detests them both.

[a] *7* The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain.
[b] *22* Or *Greed is a person's shame*

11 Even small children are known by their
actions,
so is their conduct really pure and
upright?

12 Ears that hear and eyes that see—
the LORD has made them both.

13 Do not love sleep or you will grow poor;
stay awake and you will have food to
spare.

14 "It's no good, it's no good!" says the
buyer—
then goes off and boasts about the
purchase.

15 Gold there is, and rubies in abundance,
but lips that speak knowledge are a rare
jewel.

16 Take the garment of one who puts up
security for a stranger;
hold it in pledge if it is done for an
outsider.

17 Food gained by fraud tastes sweet,
but one ends up with a mouth full of
gravel.

18 Plans are established by seeking advice;
so if you wage war, obtain guidance.

19 A gossip betrays a confidence;
so avoid anyone who talks too much.

20 If someone curses their father or mother,
their lamp will be snuffed out in pitch
darkness.

21 An inheritance claimed too soon
will not be blessed at the end.

22 Do not say, "I'll pay you back for this
wrong!"
Wait for the LORD, and he will avenge
you.

23 The LORD detests differing weights,
and dishonest scales do not please him.

24 A person's steps are directed by the LORD.
How then can anyone understand their
own way?

25 It is a trap to dedicate something rashly
and only later to consider one's vows.

26 A wise king winnows out the wicked;
he drives the threshing wheel over them.

27 The human spirit is[a] the lamp of the LORD
that sheds light on one's inmost being.

28 Love and faithfulness keep a king safe;
through love his throne is made secure.

29 The glory of young men is their strength,
gray hair the splendor of the old.

30 Blows and wounds scrub away evil,
and beatings purge the inmost being.

21 1 In the LORD's hand the king's heart is a
stream of water
that he channels toward all who please
him.

2 A person may think their own ways are
right,
but the LORD weighs the heart.

3 To do what is right and just
is more acceptable to the LORD than
sacrifice.

4 Haughty eyes and a proud heart—
the unplowed field of the wicked—
produce sin.

5 The plans of the diligent lead to profit
as surely as haste leads to poverty.

6 A fortune made by a lying tongue
is a fleeting vapor and a deadly snare.[b]

7 The violence of the wicked will drag them
away,
for they refuse to do what is right.

8 The way of the guilty is devious,
but the conduct of the innocent is upright.

9 Better to live on a corner of the roof
than share a house with a quarrelsome
wife.

10 The wicked crave evil;
their neighbors get no mercy from them.

11 When a mocker is punished, the simple
gain wisdom;
by paying attention to the wise they get
knowledge.

12 The Righteous One[c] takes note of the house
of the wicked
and brings the wicked to ruin.

13 Whoever shuts their ears to the cry of the
poor
will also cry out and not be answered.

14 A gift given in secret soothes anger,
and a bribe concealed in the cloak
pacifies great wrath.

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[a] *27* Or *A person's words are* [b] *6* Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Vulgate; most Hebrew manuscripts *vapor for those who seek death* [c] *12* Or *The righteous person*

15 When justice is done, it brings joy to the
righteous
but terror to evildoers.

16 Whoever strays from the path of prudence
comes to rest in the company of the
dead.

17 Whoever loves pleasure will become poor;
whoever loves wine and olive oil will
never be rich.

18 The wicked become a ransom for the
righteous,
and the unfaithful for the upright.

19 Better to live in a desert
than with a quarrelsome and nagging
wife.

20 The wise store up choice food and olive
oil,
but fools gulp theirs down.

21 Whoever pursues righteousness and love
finds life, prosperity[a] and honor.

22 One who is wise can go up against the city
of the mighty
and pull down the stronghold in which
they trust.

23 Those who guard their mouths and their
tongues
keep themselves from calamity.

24 The proud and arrogant person—"Mocker"
is his name—
behaves with insolent fury.

25 The craving of a sluggard will be the death
of him,
because his hands refuse to work.
26 All day long he craves for more,
but the righteous give without sparing.

27 The sacrifice of the wicked is detestable—
how much more so when brought with
evil intent!

28 A false witness will perish,
but a careful listener will testify
successfully.

29 The wicked put up a bold front,
but the upright give thought to their
ways.

30 There is no wisdom, no insight, no plan
that can succeed against the LORD.

31 The horse is made ready for the day of
battle,
but victory rests with the LORD.

22 1 A good name is more desirable than
great riches;
to be esteemed is better than silver or
gold.

2 Rich and poor have this in common:
The LORD is the Maker of them all.

3 The prudent see danger and take refuge,
but the simple keep going and pay the
penalty.

4 Humility is the fear of the LORD;
its wages are riches and honor and life.

5 In the paths of the wicked are snares and
pitfalls,
but those who would preserve their life
stay far from them.

6 Start children off on the way they should go,
and even when they are old they will not
turn from it.

7 The rich rule over the poor,
and the borrower is slave to the lender.

8 Whoever sows injustice reaps calamity,
and the rod they wield in fury will be
broken.

9 The generous will themselves be blessed,
for they share their food with the poor.

10 Drive out the mocker, and out goes strife;
quarrels and insults are ended.

11 One who loves a pure heart and who speaks
with grace
will have the king for a friend.

12 The eyes of the LORD keep watch over
knowledge,
but he frustrates the words of the
unfaithful.

13 The sluggard says, "There's a lion outside!
I'll be killed in the public square!"

14 The mouth of an adulterous woman is a
deep pit;
a man who is under the LORD's wrath falls
into it.

15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a child,
but the rod of discipline will drive it far
away.

16 One who oppresses the poor to increase his
wealth
and one who gives gifts to the rich—both
come to poverty.

[a] *21* Or *righteousness*

TRANSITION

Solomon the Builder

In addition to being the quintessential wise man, Solomon is famed for his building projects. He made the most of his father David's alliance with the merchant city of Tyre (2Sa 5:11; 1Ki 5:1) and also used Israel's strategic position on several trade routes to his advantage. Solomon quickly became wealthier than any Israelite king before or since, and much of this wealth he poured into construction.

• 1 Kings 5:1–18

1 Kings

Preparations for Building the Temple

5[a] **:1** When Hiram king of Tyre heard that
Solomon had been anointed king to succeed his father David, he sent his envoys to Solomon, because he had always been on friendly terms with David. [2]Solomon sent back this message to Hiram:

[3]"You know that because of the wars waged against my father David from all sides, he could not build a temple for the Name of the LORD his God until the LORD put his enemies under his feet. [4]But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side, and there is no adversary or disaster. [5]I intend, therefore, to build a temple for the Name of the LORD my God, as the LORD told my father David, when he said, 'Your son whom I will put on the throne in your place will build the temple for my Name.'

[6]"So give orders that cedars of Lebanon be cut for me. My men will work with yours, and I will pay you for your men whatever wages you set. You know that we have no one so skilled in felling timber as the Sidonians."

[7]When Hiram heard Solomon's message, he was greatly pleased and said, "Praise be to the LORD today, for he has given David a wise son to rule over this great nation."

[8]So Hiram sent word to Solomon:

"I have received the message you sent me and will do all you want in providing the cedar and juniper logs. [9]My men will haul them down from Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea, and I will float them as rafts by sea to the place you specify. There I will separate them and you can take them away. And you are to grant my wish by providing food for my royal household."

[10]In this way Hiram kept Solomon supplied with all the cedar and juniper logs he wanted, [11]and Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand cors[b] of wheat as food for his household, in addition to twenty thousand baths[c,d] of pressed olive oil. Solomon continued to do this for Hiram year after year. [12]The LORD gave Solomon wisdom, just as he had promised him. There were peaceful relations between Hiram and Solomon, and the two of them made a treaty.

[13]King Solomon conscripted laborers from all Israel—thirty thousand men. [14]He sent them off to Lebanon in shifts of ten thousand a month, so that they spent one month in Lebanon and two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor. [15]Solomon had seventy thousand carriers and eighty thousand stonecutters in the hills, [16]as well as three hundred[e] thirty foremen who supervised the project and directed the workers. [17]At the king's command they removed from the quarry large blocks of high-grade stone to provide a foundation of dressed stone for the temple. [18]The craftsmen of Solomon and Hiram and workers from Byblos cut and prepared the timber and stone for the building of the temple.

[a] In Hebrew texts 5:1-18 is numbered 5:15-32.
[b] *11* That is, probably about 3,600 tons or about 3,250 metric tons
[c] *11* Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 2:10); Hebrew *twenty cors*
[d] *11* That is, about 120,000 gallons or about 440,000 liters
[e] *16* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 2 Chron. 2:2,18) *thirty-six hundred*

TRANSITION

Laying the Temple's Foundation

Solomon laid the foundation of the temple in the 4th year of his reign, which was about 966 B.C. (see "The Books of Kings" at 1Ki 1:1). This 4th year is said to have been 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt (1Ki 6:1).

Scholars approach this chronological information in different ways. Some interpret the 480 years as figurative—perhaps the result of multiplying the 12 tribes by the standard length of a generation, which was 40 years (12 x 40 = 480). These interpreters then do not use the figure of 1Ki 6:1 to calculate the time of the Exodus. Others take the 480 years literally, and a simple calculation from the 4th year of Solomon (966 B.C.) would then date the Israelite exodus from Egypt at 1446 B.C. (966 + 480 = 1446). On the different dates proposed for the Exodus, see "The Exodus Begun" at Ex 12:37.

The temple was built according to David's plans. The description in 1Ki 6 of the actual construction includes many details which are now known to have been common in temple designs of that time.

• 1 Kings 6:1–38

Founding Solomon's Temple (1Ki 6:1)

According to 1 Kings, the construction of the Jerusalem temple began in the 4th year of Solomon's reign. The Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 37–100) lived long after Solomon, but wrote in his work titled *Against Apion* concerning the date of the temple's foundation.

Josephus's accounts of Hiram, king of Tyre, provide information that could be instrumental in approximating a date for the building of the temple, as well as for Solomon's own rule. Josephus quotes from a lost work of the historian Menander of Ephesus, who provided a list of Tyrian kings.

Scholars do debate whether Josephus's chronological information is reliable. In addition to the list of kings, Menander wrote that the time from Hiram's coronation as king to the founding of the north African city of Carthage was 155 years and 8 months. Josephus also tells us, via Menander, that the temple of Jerusalem was built in Hiram's 12th year. Unfortunately, Josephus's own calculations do not add to his totals.

We cannot obtain a precise date for Solomon's 4th year from Josephus's information. Scholars do not agree on when Carthage was founded: some say 825 B.C.; others say 814 B.C. combining Josephus's calculations would date Solomon's temple building in either 968 or 957 B.C. In the absence of absolute chronological data, Solomon's 4th year is usually estimated to have been about 966 B.C.

1 Kings

Solomon Builds the Temple

6:1 In the four hundred and eightieth[a] year after the Israelites came out of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv, the second month, he began to build the temple of the LORD.

2 The temple that King Solomon built for the LORD was sixty cubits long, twenty wide and thirty high.[b] 3 The portico at the front of the main hall of the temple extended the width of the temple, that is twenty cubits,[c] and projected ten cubits[d] from the front of the temple. 4 He made narrow windows high up in the temple walls. 5 Against the walls of the main hall and inner sanctuary he built a structure around the building, in which there were side rooms. 6 The lowest floor was five cubits[e] wide, the middle floor six cubits[f] and the third floor seven.[g] He made offset ledges around the outside of the temple so that nothing would be inserted into the temple walls.

7 In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.

8 The entrance to the lowest[h] floor was on the south side of the temple; a stairway led up to the middle level and from there to the third. 9 So he built the temple and completed it, roofing it with beams and cedar planks. 10 And he built the side rooms all along the temple. The height of each was five cubits, and they were attached to the temple by beams of cedar.

11 The word of the LORD came to Solomon: 12 "As for this temple you are building, if you follow my decrees, observe my laws and keep all my commands and obey them, I will fulfill through you the promise I gave to David your father. 13 And I will live among the Israelites and will not abandon my people Israel."

14 So Solomon built the temple and completed it. 15 He lined its interior walls with cedar boards, paneling them from the floor of the temple to the ceiling, and covered the floor of the temple with planks of juniper. 16 He partitioned off twenty cubits at the rear of the temple with cedar boards from floor to ceiling to form within the temple an inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. 17 The main hall in front of this room was forty cubits[i] long. 18 The inside of the temple was cedar, carved with gourds and open flowers. Everything was cedar; no stone was to be seen.

19 He prepared the inner sanctuary within the temple to set the ark of the covenant of the LORD there. 20 The inner sanctuary was twenty cubits long, twenty wide and twenty high. He overlaid the inside with pure gold, and he also overlaid the altar of cedar. 21 Solomon covered the inside of the temple with pure gold, and he extended gold chains across the front of the inner sanctuary, which was overlaid with gold. 22 So he overlaid the whole interior with gold. He also overlaid with gold the altar that belonged to the inner sanctuary.

23 For the inner sanctuary he made a pair of cherubim out of olive wood, each ten cubits high. 24 One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long, and the other wing five cubits—

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[a] *1* Hebrew; Septuagint *four hundred and fortieth* [b] *2* That is, about 90 feet long, 30 feet wide and 45 feet high or about 27 meters long, 9 meters wide and 14 meters high [c] *3* That is, about 30 feet or about 9 meters; also in verses 16 and 20 [d] *3* That is, about 15 feet or about 4.5 meters; also in verses 23-26 [e] *6* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters; also in verses 10 and 24 [f] *6* That is, about 9 feet or about 2.7 meters [g] *6* That is, about 11 feet or about 3.2 meters [h] *8* Septuagint; Hebrew *middle* [i] *17* That is, about 60 feet or about 18 meters

Architecture & Building

A cherub is a supernatural creature that was represented in the decor of Solomon's temple (1Ki 6:23). Its wings are mentioned often. The visions of Ezekiel (Eze 1:5–14; 10:20) suggest that the cherub was part human, part animal, with prominent wings. Figures of this description are familiar from the art of the ancient Middle East.

ten cubits from wing tip to wing tip. [25]The second cherub also measured ten cubits, for the two cherubim were identical in size and shape. [26]The height of each cherub was ten cubits. [27]He placed the cherubim inside the innermost room of the temple, with their wings spread out. The wing of one cherub touched one wall, while the wing of the other touched the other wall, and their wings touched each other in the middle of the room. [28]He overlaid the cherubim with gold.

[29]On the walls all around the temple, in both the inner and outer rooms, he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers. [30]He also covered the floors of both the inner and outer rooms of the temple with gold.

[31]For the entrance to the inner sanctuary he made doors out of olive wood that were one fifth of the width of the sanctuary. [32]And on the two olive-wood doors he carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers, and overlaid the cherubim and palm trees with hammered gold. [33]In the same way, for the entrance to the main hall he made doorframes out of olive wood that were one fourth of the width of the hall. [34]He also made two doors out of juniper wood, each having two leaves that turned in sockets. [35]He carved cherubim, palm trees and open flowers on them and overlaid them with gold hammered evenly over the carvings.

[36]And he built the inner courtyard of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams.

[37]The foundation of the temple of the LORD was laid in the fourth year, in the month of Ziv. [38]In the eleventh year in the month of Bul, the eighth month, the temple was finished in all its details according to its specifications. He had spent seven years building it.

[a] *2* That is, about 150 feet long, 75 feet wide and 45 feet high or about 45 meters long, 23 meters wide and 14 meters high
[b] *5* The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.
[c] *6* That is, about 75 feet long and 45 feet wide or about 23 meters long and 14 meters wide
[d] *7* Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *floor*
[e] *10* That is, about 15 feet or about 4.5 meters; also in verse 23
[f] *10* That is, about 12 feet or about 3.6 meters

TRANSITION

Building the King's Palace

The construction of the temple was a 7-year process, lasting from 966 to 959 B.C. (1Ki 6:37, 38). The palace complex, however, took longer to complete because it included several buildings south of the temple. The Palace of the Forest of Lebanon (1Ki 7:2–5) served as a treasury and armory (1Ki 10:17, 21; Isa 22:8). Other buildings were a colonnade (7:6), the Hall of Justice (7:7), and residences for Solomon and Pharaoh's daughter (7:8).

The account in 1 Kings records the length of time it took Solomon to complete the temple and palace. In addition to the 7 years of temple construction were another 13 years for the palace (1Ki 7:1). Thus, these two major projects covered a period of 20 years (966–946 B.C.; see 1Ki 9:10).

• **1 Kings 7:1—9:14**

1 Kings

Solomon Builds His Palace

7 :1 It took Solomon thirteen years, however, to complete the construction of his palace.
[2]He built the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon a hundred cubits long, fifty wide and thirty high,[a] with four rows of cedar columns supporting trimmed cedar beams. [3]It was roofed with cedar above the beams that rested on the columns—forty-five beams, fifteen to a row. [4]Its windows were placed high in sets of three, facing each other. [5]All the doorways had rectangular frames; they were in the front part in sets of three, facing each other.[b]

[6]He made a colonnade fifty cubits long and thirty wide.[c] In front of it was a portico, and in front of that were pillars and an overhanging roof.

[7]He built the throne hall, the Hall of Justice, where he was to judge, and he covered it with cedar from floor to ceiling.[d] [8]And the palace in which he was to live, set farther back, was similar in design. Solomon also made a palace like this hall for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had married.

[9]All these structures, from the outside to the great courtyard and from foundation to eaves, were made of blocks of high-grade stone cut to size and smoothed on their inner and outer faces. [10]The foundations were laid with large stones of good quality, some measuring ten cubits[e] and some eight.[f] [11]Above were high-grade stones, cut to size, and cedar beams. [12]The great courtyard was surrounded by a wall of three courses of dressed stone and one course of trimmed cedar beams, as was the

Theology of Palace and Temple Districts (1Ki 7:1–12)

The extensive details about the construction of Solomon's royal residence are similar to the royal districts of capital cities in Syria-Palestine during the first half of the 1st millennium B.C. The site required an impressive palace for the king's family, a reception hall for greeting foreign dignitaries, and a private royal temple (which served also as the central temple of the kingdom).

The capital cities of ancient empires were built both for protection and to impress those who approached them. To this end there were walls around the city and walls around the royal complex within the city itself. Ancient people understood that the deity who had created the kingdom dwelt within the town along with the ruler, who was chosen by the deity. Within the inner wall would be the dual dwellings of the king and the god.

In the theology behind the town structure, the deity and king ruled together and so dwelt together. Should the kingdom be invaded, the nation was not yet defeated as long as the royal complex could be defended. Should the temple be overrun, however, the people understood that the patron deity had turned the land over to the invading peoples and their invading deity.

Since the temple was part of the palace complex, the king could consult the patron deity at any time. The temple itself was usually restricted to the use of the royal family and the royal priesthood, except for holy days when the courts would be opened for public worship. Even then the inner sanctuary of the temple was usually restricted to the higher levels of priests.

A palace complex similar to that which Solomon built in Jerusalem was uncovered intact at Tell Ta'yinat in northern Syria. A large palace building with a reception throne room stood beside a smaller temple with an entryway, a main room, and a most holy place, just like the ground plan of Solomon's temple.

inner courtyard of the temple of the LORD with its portico.

The Temple's Furnishings

13 King Solomon sent to Tyre and brought
Huram,[a] 14 whose mother was a widow from
the tribe of Naphtali and whose father was from
Tyre and a skilled craftsman in bronze. Huram
was filled with wisdom, with understanding
and with knowledge to do all kinds of bronze
work. He came to King Solomon and did all the
work assigned to him.

15 He cast two bronze pillars, each eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits in circumference.[b] 16 He also made two capitals of cast
bronze to set on the tops of the pillars; each
capital was five cubits[c] high. 17 A network of interwoven chains adorned the capitals on top of
the pillars, seven for each capital. 18 He made
pomegranates in two rows[d] encircling each
network to decorate the capitals on top of the
pillars.[e] He did the same for each capital. 19 The
capitals on top of the pillars in the portico were
in the shape of lilies, four cubits[f] high. 20 On the
capitals of both pillars, above the bowl-shaped
part next to the network, were the two hundred
pomegranates in rows all around. 21 He erected
the pillars at the portico of the temple. The pillar to the south he named Jakin[g] and the one to
the north Boaz.[h] 22 The capitals on top were in
the shape of lilies. And so the work on the pillars was completed.

23 He made the Sea of cast metal, circular in
shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim
and five cubits high. It took a line of thirty cubits[i] to measure around it. 24 Below the rim,
gourds encircled it—ten to a cubit. The gourds
were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea.

25 The Sea stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south
and three facing east. The Sea rested on top of
them, and their hindquarters were toward the
center. 26 It was a handbreadth[j] in thickness,
and its rim was like the rim of a cup, like a lily
blossom. It held two thousand baths.[k]

27 He also made ten movable stands of
bronze; each was four cubits long, four wide
and three high.[l] 28 This is how the stands were
made: They had side panels attached to uprights. 29 On the panels between the uprights
were lions, bulls and cherubim—and on the
uprights as well. Above and below the lions
and bulls were wreaths of hammered work.
30 Each stand had four bronze wheels with
bronze axles, and each had a basin resting on
four supports, cast with wreaths on each side.

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[a] *13* Hebrew *Hiram,* a variant of *Huram*; also in verses 40 and 45 [b] *15* That is, about 27 feet high and 18 feet in circumference or about 8.1 meters high and 5.4 meters in circumference [c] *16* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters; also in verse 23 [d] *18* Two Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *made the pillars, and there were two rows* [e] *18* Many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *pomegranates* [f] *19* That is, about 6 feet or about 1.8 meters; also in verse 38 [g] *21* *Jakin* probably means *he establishes.* [h] *21* *Boaz* probably means *in him is strength.* [i] *23* That is, about 45 feet or about 14 meters [j] *26* That is, about 3 inches or about 7.5 centimeters [k] *26* That is, about 12,000 gallons or about 44,000 liters; the Septuagint does not have this sentence. [l] *27* That is, about 6 feet long and wide and about 4 1/2 feet high or about 1.8 meters long and wide and 1.4 meters high

31 On the inside of the stand there was an opening that had a circular frame one cubit[a] deep. This opening was round, and with its basework it measured a cubit and a half.[b] Around its opening there was engraving. The panels of the stands were square, not round. 32 The four wheels were under the panels, and the axles of the wheels were attached to the stand. The diameter of each wheel was a cubit and a half. 33 The wheels were made like chariot wheels; the axles, rims, spokes and hubs were all of cast metal.

34 Each stand had four handles, one on each corner, projecting from the stand. 35 At the top of the stand there was a circular band half a cubit[c] deep. The supports and panels were attached to the top of the stand. 36 He engraved cherubim, lions and palm trees on the surfaces of the supports and on the panels, in every available space, with wreaths all around. 37 This is the way he made the ten stands. They were all cast in the same molds and were identical in size and shape.

38 He then made ten bronze basins, each holding forty baths[d] and measuring four cubits across, one basin to go on each of the ten stands. 39 He placed five of the stands on the south side of the temple and five on the north. He placed the Sea on the south side, at the southeast corner of the temple. 40 He also made the pots[e] and shovels and sprinkling bowls.

So Huram finished all the work he had undertaken for King Solomon in the temple of the LORD:

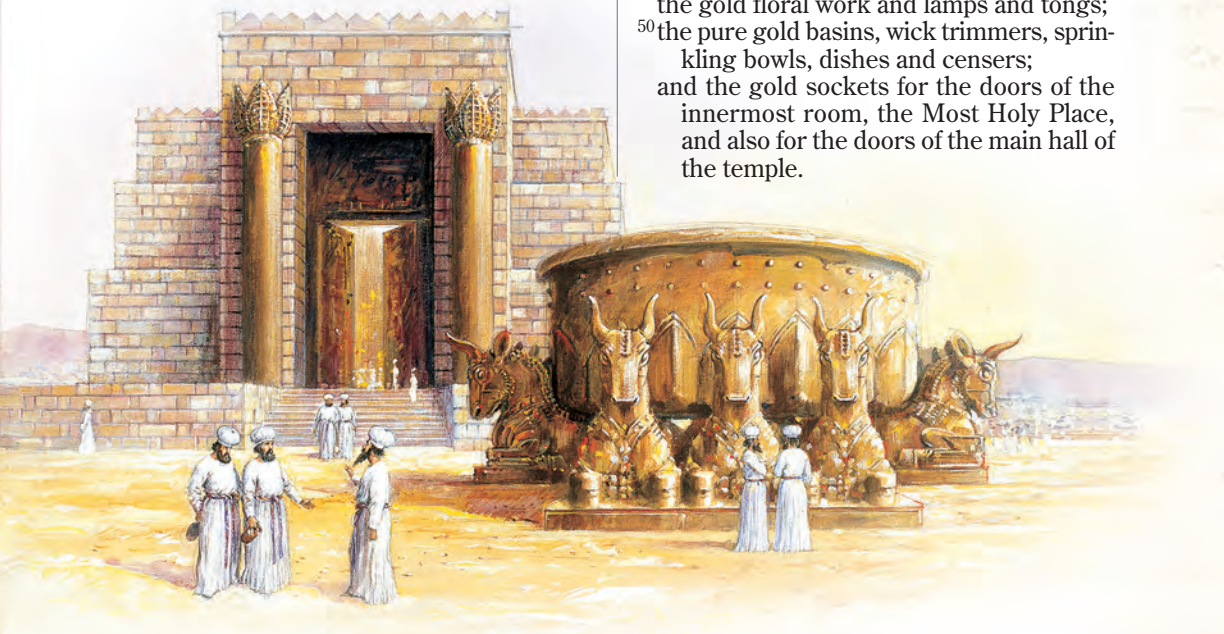
41 the two pillars;
the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;
the two sets of network decorating the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;
42 the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of network (two rows of pomegranates for each network decorating the bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars);
43 the ten stands with their ten basins;
44 the Sea and the twelve bulls under it;
45 the pots, shovels and sprinkling bowls.

All these objects that Huram made for King Solomon for the temple of the LORD were of burnished bronze. 46 The king had them cast in clay molds in the plain of the Jordan between Sukkoth and Zarethan. 47 Solomon left all these things unweighed, because there were so many; the weight of the bronze was not determined.

48 Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in the LORD's temple:

the golden altar;
the golden table on which was the bread of the Presence;
49 the lampstands of pure gold (five on the right and five on the left, in front of the inner sanctuary);
the gold floral work and lamps and tongs;
50 the pure gold basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and censers;
and the gold sockets for the doors of the innermost room, the Most Holy Place, and also for the doors of the main hall of the temple.

[a] *31* That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters
[b] *31* That is, about 2 1/4 feet or about 68 centimeters; also in verse 32
[c] *35* That is, about 9 inches or about 23 centimeters
[d] *38* That is, about 240 gallons or about 880 liters
[e] *40* Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Syriac and Vulgate (see also verse 45 and 2 Chron. 4:11); many other Hebrew manuscripts *basins*



51When all the work King Solomon had done
for the temple of the LORD was finished, he
brought in the things his father David had dedicated—the silver and gold and the furnishings—and he placed them in the treasuries of the LORD's temple.

The Ark Brought to the Temple

8 1Then King Solomon summoned into his
presence at Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion, the City of David. 2All the Israelites came together to King Solomon at the time of the festival in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month.

3When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the priests took up the ark, 4and they brought up the ark of the LORD and the tent of meeting and all the sacred furnishings in it. The priests and Levites carried them up, 5and King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel that had gathered about him were before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and cattle that they could not be recorded or counted.

6The priests then brought the ark of the LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. 7The cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its carrying poles. 8These poles were so long that their ends could be seen from the Holy Place in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are still there today. 9There was nothing in the ark except the two stone tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

10When the priests withdrew from the Holy Place, the cloud filled the temple of the LORD. 11And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple.

12Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that he would dwell in a dark cloud; 13I have indeed built a magnificent temple for you, a place for you to dwell forever."

14While the whole assembly of Israel was standing there, the king turned around and blessed them. 15Then he said:

> "Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, who with his own hand has fulfilled what he promised with his own mouth to my father David. For he said, 16'Since the day I brought my people Israel out of Egypt, I have not chosen a city in any tribe of Israel to have a temple built so that my Name might be there, but I have chosen David to rule my people Israel.'
>
> 17"My father David had it in his heart to build a temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 18But the LORD said to my father David, 'You did well to have it in your heart to build a temple for my Name. 19Nevertheless, you are not the one to build the temple, but your son, your own flesh and blood—he is the one who will build the temple for my Name.'
>
> 20"The LORD has kept the promise he made: I have succeeded David my father and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just as the LORD promised, and I have built the temple for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. 21I have provided a place there for the ark, in which is the covenant of the LORD that he made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt."

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

22Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven 23and said:

> "LORD, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven above or on earth below—you who keep your covenant of love with your servants who continue wholeheartedly in your way. 24You have kept your promise to your servant David my father; with your mouth you have promised and with your hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.
>
> 25"Now LORD, the God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father the promises you made to him when you said, 'You shall never fail to have a successor to sit before me on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants are careful in all they do to walk before me faithfully as you have done.' 26And now, God of Israel, let your word that you promised your servant David my father come true.
>
> 27"But will God really dwell on earth?

Religion & Worship
The normal position for public prayer was to stand and to stretch out the hands (Ps 134:2; 1Ti 2:8). In this position Solomon prayed (1Ki 8:22), though he also kneeled facing the altar before standing to bless the people (1Ki 8:54, 55). The position taken for prayer at home or in private could well have been different.

The heavens, even the highest heaven,
cannot contain you. How much less this
temple I have built! 28Yet give attention
to your servant's prayer and his plea for
mercy, LORD my God. Hear the cry and
the prayer that your servant is praying in
your presence this day. 29May your eyes be
open toward this temple night and day, this
place of which you said, 'My Name shall be
there,' so that you will hear the prayer your
servant prays toward this place. 30Hear the
supplication of your servant and of your
people Israel when they pray toward this
place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling
place, and when you hear, forgive.

31"When anyone wrongs their neighbor
and is required to take an oath and they
come and swear the oath before your al-
tar in this temple, 32then hear from heav-
en and act. Judge between your servants,
condemning the guilty by bringing down
on their heads what they have done, and
vindicating the innocent by treating them
in accordance with their innocence.

33"When your people Israel have been
defeated by an enemy because they have
sinned against you, and when they turn
back to you and give praise to your name,
praying and making supplication to you in
this temple, 34then hear from heaven and
forgive the sin of your people Israel and
bring them back to the land you gave to
their ancestors.

35"When the heavens are shut up and
there is no rain because your people have
sinned against you, and when they pray
toward this place and give praise to your
name and turn from their sin because you
have afflicted them, 36then hear from heav-
en and forgive the sin of your servants,
your people Israel. Teach them the right
way to live, and send rain on the land you
gave your people for an inheritance.

37"When famine or plague comes to the
land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grass-
hoppers, or when an enemy besieges them
in any of their cities, whatever disaster or
disease may come, 38and when a prayer or
plea is made by anyone among your people
Israel—being aware of the afflictions of
their own hearts, and spreading out their
hands toward this temple— 39then hear
from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive
and act; deal with everyone according to
all they do, since you know their hearts
(for you alone know every human heart),
40so that they will fear you all the time they
live in the land you gave our ancestors.

41"As for the foreigner who does not
belong to your people Israel but has
come from a distant land because of your
name— 42for they will hear of your great
name and your mighty hand and your
outstretched arm—when they come and
pray toward this temple, 43then hear from
heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever
the foreigner asks of you, so that all the
peoples of the earth may know your name
and fear you, as do your own people Israel,
and may know that this house I have built
bears your Name.

44"When your people go to war against
their enemies, wherever you send them,
and when they pray to the LORD toward
the city you have chosen and the temple I
have built for your Name, 45then hear from
heaven their prayer and their plea, and up-
hold their cause.

46"When they sin against you—for there
is no one who does not sin—and you be-
come angry with them and give them over
to their enemies, who take them captive
to their own lands, far away or near; 47and
if they have a change of heart in the land
where they are held captive, and repent
and plead with you in the land of their cap-
tors and say, 'We have sinned, we have
done wrong, we have acted wickedly';
48and if they turn back to you with all their
heart and soul in the land of their enemies
who took them captive, and pray to you
toward the land you gave their ancestors,
toward the city you have chosen and the
temple I have built for your Name; 49then
from heaven, your dwelling place, hear
their prayer and their plea, and uphold
their cause. 50And forgive your people,
who have sinned against you; forgive all
the offenses they have committed against
you, and cause their captors to show them
mercy; 51for they are your people and your
inheritance, whom you brought out of
Egypt, out of that iron-smelting furnace.

52"May your eyes be open to your ser-
vant's plea and to the plea of your people
Israel, and may you listen to them when-
ever they cry out to you. 53For you singled
them out from all the nations of the world
to be your own inheritance, just as you de-
clared through your servant Moses when
you, Sovereign LORD, brought our ances-
tors out of Egypt."

54When Solomon had finished all these
prayers and supplications to the LORD, he rose
from before the altar of the LORD, where he had

been kneeling with his hands spread out toward heaven. 55He stood and blessed the whole assembly of Israel in a loud voice, saying:

56"Praise be to the LORD, who has given
rest to his people Israel just as he promised. Not one word has failed of all the
good promises he gave through his servant Moses. 57May the LORD our God be
with us as he was with our ancestors; may
he never leave us nor forsake us. 58May
he turn our hearts to him, to walk in obedience to him and keep the commands,
decrees and laws he gave our ancestors.
59And may these words of mine, which I
have prayed before the LORD, be near to
the LORD our God day and night, that he
may uphold the cause of his servant and
the cause of his people Israel according to
each day's need, 60so that all the peoples of
the earth may know that the LORD is God
and that there is no other. 61And may your
hearts be fully committed to the LORD our
God, to live by his decrees and obey his
commands, as at this time."

The Dedication of the Temple

62Then the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifices before the LORD. 63Solomon offered a sacrifice of fellowship offerings to the LORD: twenty-two thousand cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand sheep and goats. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated the temple of the LORD.

64On that same day the king consecrated the middle part of the courtyard in front of the temple of the LORD, and there he offered burnt offerings, grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings, because the bronze altar that stood before the LORD was too small to hold the burnt offerings, the grain offerings and the fat of the fellowship offerings.

65So Solomon observed the festival at that time, and all Israel with him—a vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the Wadi of Egypt. They celebrated it before the LORD our God for seven days and seven days more, fourteen days in all. 66On the following day he sent the people away. They blessed the king and then went home, joyful and glad in heart for all the good things the LORD had done for his servant David and his people Israel.

The LORD Appears to Solomon

9 1When Solomon had finished building the temple of the LORD and the royal palace, and had achieved all he had desired to do, 2the LORD appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gibeon. 3The LORD said to him:

"I have heard the prayer and plea you
have made before me; I have consecrated
this temple, which you have built, by putting my Name there forever. My eyes and
my heart will always be there.
4"As for you, if you walk before me faithfully with integrity of heart and uprightness, as David your father did, and do all
I command and observe my decrees and
laws, 5I will establish your royal throne
over Israel forever, as I promised David
your father when I said, 'You shall never
fail to have a successor on the throne of
Israel.'
6"But if you[a] or your descendants turn
away from me and do not observe the commands and decrees I have given you[a] and
go off to serve other gods and worship
them, 7then I will cut off Israel from the
land I have given them and will reject this
temple I have consecrated for my Name.
Israel will then become a byword and an
object of ridicule among all peoples. 8This
temple will become a heap of rubble. All[b]
who pass by will be appalled and will scoff
and say, 'Why has the LORD done such a
thing to this land and to this temple?' 9People will answer, 'Because they have forsaken the LORD their God, who brought
their ancestors out of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshiping and serving them—that is why the LORD brought
all this disaster on them.'"

Solomon's Other Activities

10At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built these two buildings—the temple of the LORD and the royal palace— 11King Solomon gave twenty towns in Galilee to Hiram king of Tyre, because Hiram had supplied him with all the cedar and juniper and gold he wanted. 12But when Hiram went from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon had given him, he was not pleased with them. 13"What kind of towns are these you have given me, my brother?" he asked. And he called them the Land of Kabul,[c] a name they have to this day. 14Now Hiram had sent to the king 120 talents[d] of gold.

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[a] *6* The Hebrew is plural. [b] *8* See some Septuagint manuscripts, Old Latin, Syriac, Arabic and Targum; Hebrew *And though this temple is now imposing, all* [c] *13* *Kabul* sounds like the Hebrew for *good-for-nothing.* [d] *14* That is, about 4 1/2 tons or about 4 metric tons

Solomon and His Architecture (1Ki 9:15)

Three cities that were rebuilt by Solomon—Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer—provide one of the most striking correlations between archaeology and the Bible (1Ki 9:15). At each of these cities, archaeologists have dug down to layers that are assigned to Solomon's time period. They have uncovered a striking similarity in the fortifications that these cities had at that time.

Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer all had nearly identical six-chambered gates. The chambers were part of a gate complex and part of a larger tower structure. They were constructed by building four parallel piers on each side of the entranceway. These piers were connected and made into rooms by an outside wall on each set of piers. There were, then, three rooms on each side, with an aisle down the middle.

Wooden gates were placed between the piers, which meant that the entire gate complex had four separate gates. The multiple gates, and chambers behind each gate, assured a difficult access for those trying to take the city by force.

At both Hazor and Gezer, a casemate wall was connected to the unique gateways. Casemate walls were two closely parallel walls which were subdivided into rooms. While these walls were rather narrow and not very thick, dirt from within the city could be quickly placed between the walls, transforming the two walls into one thick, strong wall. The architectural similarities found at Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer suggest that six-chambered gates and casemate walls were characteristic of Solomon's building strategy.

Ruins of the six-chambered gate at Megiddo.

TRANSITION

Solomon's Other Accomplishments

Solomon's most important building project was the Jerusalem t emple, but he had other projects that were similarly impressive. Excavations in P alestine have uncovered several fortified cities that Solomon built along Israel's borders.

• 1 Kings 9:15—10:29

1 Kings

9 :15 Here is the account of the forced labor King Solomon conscripted to build the LORD's temple, his own palace, the terraces,[a] the wall of Jerusalem, and Hazor, Megiddo and Gezer. 16 (Pharaoh king of Egypt had attacked and captured Gezer. He had set it on fire. He killed its Canaanite inhabitants and then gave it as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. 17 And Solomon rebuilt Gezer.) He built up Lower Beth Horon, 18 Baalath, and Tadmor[b] in the desert, within his land, 19 as well as all his store cities and the towns for his chariots and for his horses[c]—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

20 There were still people left from the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites (these peoples were not Israelites). 21 Solomon conscripted the descendants of all these peoples remaining in the land—whom the Israelites could not exterminate[d]—to serve as slave labor, as it is to this day. 22 But Solomon did not make slaves of any of the Israelites; they were his fighting men, his government officials, his officers, his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and charioteers. 23 They were also the chief officials in charge of Solomon's projects—550 officials supervising those who did the work.

24 After Pharaoh's daughter had come up from the City of David to the palace Solomon had built for her, he constructed the terraces.

25 Three times a year Solomon sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings on the altar he had built for the LORD, burning incense before the LORD along with them, and so fulfilled the temple obligations.

[a] *15* Or *the Millo*; also in verse 24 [b] *18* The Hebrew may also be read *Tamar.* [c] *19* Or *charioteers*
[d] *21* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

26 King Solomon also built ships at Ezion Geber, which is near Elath in Edom, on the shore of the Red Sea.[a] 27 And Hiram sent his men—sailors who knew the sea—to serve in the fleet with Solomon's men. 28 They sailed to Ophir and brought back 420 talents[b] of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

10 1 When the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon and his relationship to the LORD, she came to test Solomon with hard questions. 2 Arriving at Jerusalem with a very great caravan—with camels carrying spices, large quantities of gold, and precious stones—she came to Solomon and talked with him about all that she had on her mind. 3 Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too hard for the king to explain to her. 4 When the queen of Sheba saw all the wisdom of Solomon and the palace he had built, 5 the food on his table, the seating of his officials, the attending servants in their robes, his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he made at[c] the temple of the LORD, she was overwhelmed.

6 She said to the king, "The report I heard in my own country about your achievements and your wisdom is true. 7 But I did not believe these things until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not even half was told me; in wisdom and wealth you have far exceeded the report I heard. 8 How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! 9 Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on the throne of Israel. Because of the LORD's eternal love for Israel, he has made you king to maintain justice and righteousness."

10 And she gave the king 120 talents[d] of gold, large quantities of spices, and precious stones. Never again were so many spices brought in as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

11 (Hiram's ships brought gold from Ophir; and from there they brought great cargoes of almugwood[e] and precious stones. 12 The king used the almugwood to make supports[f] for the temple of the LORD and for the royal palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. So much almugwood has never been imported or seen since that day.)

13 King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for, besides what he had given her out of his royal bounty. Then she left and returned with her retinue to her own country.

Solomon's Splendor

14 The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents,[g] 15 not including the revenues from merchants and traders and from all the Arabian kings and the governors of the territories.

16 King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels[h] of gold went into each shield. 17 He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three minas[i] of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

18 Then the king made a great throne covered with ivory and overlaid with fine gold. 19 The throne had six steps, and its back had a rounded top. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. 20 Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom. 21 All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's days. 22 The king had a fleet of trading ships[j] at sea along with the ships of Hiram. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

23 King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. 24 The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. 25 Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold,

Trade & Economics
A throne is the symbolic point from which a kingdom is ruled, and its magnificent construction indicates the greatness of that kingdom. Ivory was imported, and Solomon's use of it shows his power to buy material from distant places (see 1Ki 10:22; Pr 31:14). The lion figures around the throne also demonstrate the wealth of Solomon's kingdom (1Ki 10:19, 20).

[a] *26* Or *the Sea of Reeds* [b] *28* That is, about 16 tons or about 14 metric tons [c] *5* Or *the ascent by which he went up to* [d] *10* That is, about 4 1/2 tons or about 4 metric tons [e] *11* Probably a variant of *algumwood*; also in verse 12 [f] *12* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [g] *14* That is, about 25 tons or about 23 metric tons [h] *16* That is, about 15 pounds or about 6.9 kilograms; also in verse 29 [i] *17* That is, about 3 3/4 pounds or about 1.7 kilograms; or perhaps reference is to double minas, that is, about 7 1/2 pounds or about 3.5 kilograms. [j] *22* Hebrew *of ships of Tarshish*

robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

26 Solomon accumulated chariots and horses;
he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve
thousand horses,[a] which he kept in the chari-
ot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. 27 The
king made silver as common in Jerusalem as
stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig
trees in the foothills. 28 Solomon's horses were
imported from Egypt and from Kue[b]—the roy-
al merchants purchased them from Kue at the
current price. 29 They imported a chariot from
Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a
horse for a hundred and fifty.[c] They also ex-
ported them to all the kings of the Hittites and
of the Arameans.

[a] 26 Or *charioteers* [b] 28 Probably *Cilicia* [c] 29 That is, about 3 3/4 pounds or about 1.7 kilograms [d] 1 Or *the leader of the assembly*; also in verses 2 and 12

TRANSITION

The Book of Ecclesiastes

No book in the Bible is more surprising than this one. In its secular worldview, its purely philosophical approach to reality, and especially its thoroughgoing pessimism, it is unlike any other biblical text. To be sure, it concludes with an orthodox statement of faith (Ecc 12:13, 14), but this glimmer of faith follows chapter upon chapter of anguished doubt.

Perhaps equally surprising is the book's attribution to Solomon. Though Solomon's name is not mentioned, the author calls himself "the Teacher, son of David, king in Jerusalem" (1:1; see 1:12). Because of this identification, and even more because of Solomon's traditional position as the master sage and model wise man, some scholars suggest that the Teacher's words are indeed Solomon's. Other scholars, however, note that except for the references to the Teacher's wisdom and wealth (2:4–9), the book hardly fits the Bible's portrait of Solomon. This fact, along with the late style and grammar used in the book, suggests to them that someone else wrote the book, assuming the role of Solomon.

Whether Solomon or another writer, the author who appears in the pages of the book itself is above all a teacher. The Hebrew word for "Teacher," *Qoheleth,* means "the leader of the assembly." The Book of Ecclesiastes consists of the words of this teacher (12:9, 10). He diligently produced many proverbs (12:9) and other words of truth (12:10), so that the people might be admonished. He was a wise man, a teacher, a skilled writer, a seeker of truth, and an exhorter of his flock (12:11, 12).

Regardless of whether Solomon wrote the original, the book can be read in light of Solomon's greatness. Read in this way, Ecclesiastes offers a striking contrast between Solomon at the peak of his power and worldly success and this bleak and weary book. The writer's thesis is "Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless" (1:2). There are inexplicable mysteries about life which defy easy solutions. Human wisdom is only partial; it cannot fathom the mysteries of God's creation. Only at the end, almost as an afterthought, does the Teacher appear to make his peace with his world and his God (12:13).

• **Ecclesiastes 1:1—12:14**

Ecclesiastes

Everything Is Meaningless

1:1 The words of the Teacher,[d] son of David,
king in Jerusalem:

2 "Meaningless! Meaningless!"
says the Teacher.
"Utterly meaningless!
Everything is meaningless."

3 What do people gain from all their labors
at which they toil under the sun?
4 Generations come and generations go,
but the earth remains forever.
5 The sun rises and the sun sets,
and hurries back to where it rises.
6 The wind blows to the south
and turns to the north;
round and round it goes,
ever returning on its course.
7 All streams flow into the sea,
yet the sea is never full.
To the place the streams come from,
there they return again.
8 All things are wearisome,
more than one can say.
The eye never has enough of seeing,
nor the ear its fill of hearing.
9 What has been will be again,
what has been done will be done again;
there is nothing new under the sun.
10 Is there anything of which one can say,
"Look! This is something new"?
It was here already, long ago;
it was here before our time.
11 No one remembers the former generations,
and even those yet to come
will not be remembered
by those who follow them.

Wisdom Is Meaningless

12 I, the Teacher, was king over Israel in Je-
rusalem. 13 I applied my mind to study and to

explore by wisdom all that is done under the heavens. What a heavy burden God has laid on mankind! 14I have seen all the things that are done under the sun; all of them are meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

15What is crooked cannot be straightened;
what is lacking cannot be counted.

16I said to myself, "Look, I have increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge." 17Then I applied myself to the understanding of wisdom, and also of madness and folly, but I learned that this, too, is a chasing after the wind.

18For with much wisdom comes much sorrow;
the more knowledge, the more grief.

Pleasures Are Meaningless

2 1I said to myself, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure to find out what is good." But that also proved to be meaningless. 2"Laughter," I said, "is madness. And what does pleasure accomplish?" 3I tried cheering myself with wine, and embracing folly—my mind still guiding me with wisdom. I wanted to see what was good for people to do under the heavens during the few days of their lives.

4I undertook great projects: I built houses for myself and planted vineyards. 5I made gardens and parks and planted all kinds of fruit trees in them. 6I made reservoirs to water groves of flourishing trees. 7I bought male and female slaves and had other slaves who were born in my house. I also owned more herds and flocks than anyone in Jerusalem before me. 8I amassed silver and gold for myself, and the treasure of kings and provinces. I acquired male and female singers, and a harem[a] as well—the delights of a man's heart. 9I became greater by far than anyone in Jerusalem before me. In all this my wisdom stayed with me.

10I denied myself nothing my eyes desired;
I refused my heart no pleasure.

Plants & Animals
The kings of the ancient Near East, like the pharaohs of Egypt, placed great importance on their gardens (Ecc 2:5). The "king's garden" (2Ki 25:4) was probably part of the royal residence. The tradition of royal gardens has been continued especially by the Arabs. A famous example is the Alhambra in Spain, with its courtyards and fountains, built in the 13th century A.D.

My heart took delight in all my labor,
and this was the reward for all my toil.
11Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done
and what I had toiled to achieve,
everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind;
nothing was gained under the sun.

Wisdom and Folly Are Meaningless

12Then I turned my thoughts to consider wisdom,
and also madness and folly.
What more can the king's successor do
than what has already been done?
13I saw that wisdom is better than folly,
just as light is better than darkness.
14The wise have eyes in their heads,
while the fool walks in the darkness;
but I came to realize
that the same fate overtakes them both.

15Then I said to myself,

"The fate of the fool will overtake me also.
What then do I gain by being wise?"
I said to myself,
"This too is meaningless."
16For the wise, like the fool, will not be long remembered;
the days have already come when both have been forgotten.
Like the fool, the wise too must die!

Toil Is Meaningless

17So I hated life, because the work that is done under the sun was grievous to me. All of it is meaningless, a chasing after the wind. 18I hated all the things I had toiled for under the sun, because I must leave them to the one who comes after me. 19And who knows whether that person will be wise or foolish? Yet they will have control over all the fruit of my toil into which I have poured my effort and skill under the sun. This too is meaningless. 20So my heart began to despair over all my toilsome labor under the sun. 21For a person may labor with wisdom, knowledge and skill, and then they must leave all they own to another who has not toiled for it. This too is meaningless and a great misfortune. 22What do people get for all the toil and anxious striving with which they labor under the sun? 23All their days their work is grief and pain; even at night their minds do not rest. This too is meaningless.

24A person can do nothing better than to eat

[a] *8* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, [25]for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? [26]To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

A Time for Everything

3 [1]There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

[2] a time to be born and a time to die,
a time to plant and a time to uproot,
[3] a time to kill and a time to heal,
a time to tear down and a time to build,
[4] a time to weep and a time to laugh,
a time to mourn and a time to dance,
[5] a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,
[6] a time to search and a time to give up,
a time to keep and a time to throw away,
[7] a time to tear and a time to mend,
a time to be silent and a time to speak,
[8] a time to love and a time to hate,
a time for war and a time for peace.

[9]What do workers gain from their toil? [10]I have seen the burden God has laid on the human race. [11]He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet[a] no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end. [12]I know that there is nothing better for people than to be happy and to do good while they live. [13]That each of them may eat and drink, and find satisfaction in all their toil—this is the gift of God. [14]I know that everything God does will endure forever; nothing can be added to it and nothing taken from it. God does it so that people will fear him.

[15]Whatever is has already been,
and what will be has been before;
and God will call the past to account.[b]

[16]And I saw something else under the sun:

In the place of judgment—wickedness was there,
in the place of justice—wickedness was there.

[17]I said to myself,

"God will bring into judgment
both the righteous and the wicked,
for there will be a time for every activity,
a time to judge every deed."

[18]I also said to myself, "As for humans, God tests them so that they may see that they are like the animals. [19]Surely the fate of human beings is like that of the animals; the same fate awaits them both: As one dies, so dies the other. All have the same breath[c]; humans have no advantage over animals. Everything is meaningless. [20]All go to the same place; all come from dust, and to dust all return. [21]Who knows if the human spirit rises upward and if the spirit of the animal goes down into the earth?"

[22]So I saw that there is nothing better for a person than to enjoy their work, because that is their lot. For who can bring them to see what will happen after them?

Oppression, Toil, Friendlessness

4 [1]Again I looked and saw all the oppression that was taking place under the sun:

I saw the tears of the oppressed—
and they have no comforter;
power was on the side of their oppressors—
and they have no comforter.

[a] *11* Or *also placed ignorance in the human heart, so that*
[b] *15* Or *God calls back the past* [c] *19* Or *spirit*

2 And I declared that the dead,
who had already died,
are happier than the living,
who are still alive.
3 But better than both
is the one who has never been born,
who has not seen the evil
that is done under the sun.

4 And I saw that all toil and all achievement spring from one person's envy of another. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

5 Fools fold their hands
and ruin themselves.
6 Better one handful with tranquillity
than two handfuls with toil
and chasing after the wind.

7 Again I saw something meaningless under the sun:

8 There was a man all alone;
he had neither son nor brother.
There was no end to his toil,
yet his eyes were not content with his wealth.
"For whom am I toiling," he asked,
"and why am I depriving myself of enjoyment?"
This too is meaningless—
a miserable business!

9 Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:
10 If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.
But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.
11 Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?
12 Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.
A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Advancement Is Meaningless

13 Better a poor but wise youth than an old but foolish king who no longer knows how to heed a warning. 14 The youth may have come from prison to the kingship, or he may have been born in poverty within his kingdom. 15 I saw that all who lived and walked under the sun followed the youth, the king's successor. 16 There was no end to all the people who were before them. But those who came later were not pleased with the successor. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Fulfill Your Vow to God

5[a] 1 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

2 Do not be quick with your mouth,
do not be hasty in your heart
to utter anything before God.
God is in heaven
and you are on earth,
so let your words be few.
3 A dream comes when there are many cares,
and many words mark the speech of a fool.

4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. 5 It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it. 6 Do not let your mouth lead you into sin. And do not protest to the temple messenger, "My vow was a mistake." Why should God be angry at what you say and destroy the work of your hands? 7 Much dreaming and many words are meaningless. Therefore fear God.

Riches Are Meaningless

8 If you see the poor oppressed in a district, and justice and rights denied, do not be surprised at such things; for one official is eyed by a higher one, and over them both are others higher still. 9 The increase from the land is taken by all; the king himself profits from the fields.

10 Whoever loves money never has enough;
whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income.
This too is meaningless.

11 As goods increase,
so do those who consume them.
And what benefit are they to the owners
except to feast their eyes on them?

12 The sleep of a laborer is sweet,
whether they eat little or much,
but as for the rich, their abundance
permits them no sleep.

13 I have seen a grievous evil under the sun:

wealth hoarded to the harm of its owners,
14 or wealth lost through some misfortune,
so that when they have children
there is nothing left for them to inherit.

[a] In Hebrew texts 5:1 is numbered 4:17, and 5:2-20 is numbered 5:1-19.

15 Everyone comes naked from their mother's
womb,
and as everyone comes, so they depart.
They take nothing from their toil
that they can carry in their hands.

16 This too is a grievous evil:

As everyone comes, so they depart,
and what do they gain,
since they toil for the wind?
17 All their days they eat in darkness,
with great frustration, affliction and anger.

18 This is what I have observed to be good: that it is appropriate for a person to eat, to drink and to find satisfaction in their toilsome labor under the sun during the few days of life God has given them—for this is their lot. 19 Moreover, when God gives someone wealth and possessions, and the ability to enjoy them, to accept their lot and be happy in their toil—this is a gift of God. 20 They seldom reflect on the days of their life, because God keeps them occupied with gladness of heart.

6 1 I have seen another evil under the sun, and it weighs heavily on mankind: 2 God gives some people wealth, possessions and honor, so that they lack nothing their hearts desire, but God does not grant them the ability to enjoy them, and strangers enjoy them instead. This is meaningless, a grievous evil.

3 A man may have a hundred children and live many years; yet no matter how long he lives, if he cannot enjoy his prosperity and does not receive proper burial, I say that a stillborn child is better off than he. 4 It comes without meaning, it departs in darkness, and in darkness its name is shrouded. 5 Though it never saw the sun or knew anything, it has more rest than does that man— 6 even if he lives a thousand years twice over but fails to enjoy his prosperity. Do not all go to the same place?

7 Everyone's toil is for their mouth,
yet their appetite is never satisfied.
8 What advantage have the wise over fools?
What do the poor gain
by knowing how to conduct themselves
before others?
9 Better what the eye sees
than the roving of the appetite.
This too is meaningless,
a chasing after the wind.

10 Whatever exists has already been named,
and what humanity is has been known;
no one can contend
with someone who is stronger.

11 The more the words,
the less the meaning,
and how does that profit anyone?

12 For who knows what is good for a person in life, during the few and meaningless days they pass through like a shadow? Who can tell them what will happen under the sun after they are gone?

Wisdom

7 1 A good name is better than fine perfume,
and the day of death better than the day
of birth.
2 It is better to go to a house of mourning
than to go to a house of feasting,
for death is the destiny of everyone;
the living should take this to heart.
3 Frustration is better than laughter,
because a sad face is good for the heart.
4 The heart of the wise is in the house of
mourning,
but the heart of fools is in the house of
pleasure.
5 It is better to heed the rebuke of a wise
person
than to listen to the song of fools.
6 Like the crackling of thorns under the pot,
so is the laughter of fools.
This too is meaningless.

7 Extortion turns a wise person into a fool,
and a bribe corrupts the heart.

8 The end of a matter is better than its
beginning,
and patience is better than pride.
9 Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit,
for anger resides in the lap of fools.

10 Do not say, "Why were the old days better
than these?"
For it is not wise to ask such questions.

11 Wisdom, like an inheritance, is a good thing
and benefits those who see the sun.
12 Wisdom is a shelter
as money is a shelter,
but the advantage of knowledge is this:
Wisdom preserves those who have it.

Culture & Society
In several cultures typical of the Mediterranean area, a person's chief goal is to maintain personal honor, his perceived reputation as a person of substance and consequence (Ecc 7:1). This is achieved mainly through family and social relations and interactions, rather than through learning skills or accumulating wealth.

13 Consider what God has done:

Who can straighten
what he has made crooked?
14 When times are good, be happy;
but when times are bad, consider this:
God has made the one
as well as the other.
Therefore, no one can discover
anything about their future.

15 In this meaningless life of mine I have seen both of these:

the righteous perishing in their righteousness,
and the wicked living long in their wickedness.
16 Do not be overrighteous,
neither be overwise—
why destroy yourself?
17 Do not be overwicked,
and do not be a fool—
why die before your time?
18 It is good to grasp the one
and not let go of the other.
Whoever fears God will avoid all extremes.[a]

19 Wisdom makes one wise person more powerful
than ten rulers in a city.

20 Indeed, there is no one on earth who is righteous,
no one who does what is right and never sins.

21 Do not pay attention to every word people say,
or you may hear your servant cursing you—
22 for you know in your heart
that many times you yourself have cursed others.

23 All this I tested by wisdom and I said,

"I am determined to be wise"—
but this was beyond me.
24 Whatever exists is far off and most profound—
who can discover it?
25 So I turned my mind to understand,
to investigate and to search out wisdom and the scheme of things
and to understand the stupidity of wickedness
and the madness of folly.
26 I find more bitter than death
the woman who is a snare,
whose heart is a trap
and whose hands are chains.
The man who pleases God will escape her,
but the sinner she will ensnare.

27 "Look," says the Teacher,[b] "this is what I have discovered:

"Adding one thing to another to discover the scheme of things—
28 while I was still searching
but not finding—
I found one upright man among a thousand,
but not one upright woman among them all.
29 This only have I found:
God created mankind upright,
but they have gone in search of many schemes."

8 1 Who is like the wise?
Who knows the explanation of things?
A person's wisdom brightens their face
and changes its hard appearance.

Obey the King

2 Obey the king's command, I say, because you took an oath before God. 3 Do not be in a hurry to leave the king's presence. Do not stand up for a bad cause, for he will do whatever he pleases. 4 Since a king's word is supreme, who can say to him, "What are you doing?"

5 Whoever obeys his command will come to no harm,
and the wise heart will know the proper time and procedure.
6 For there is a proper time and procedure for every matter,
though a person may be weighed down by misery.

7 Since no one knows the future,
who can tell someone else what is to come?
8 As no one has power over the wind to contain it,
so[c] no one has power over the time of their death.
As no one is discharged in time of war,
so wickedness will not release those who practice it.

9 All this I saw, as I applied my mind to everything done under the sun. There is a time

[a] 18 Or *will follow them both* [b] 27 Or *the leader of the assembly* [c] 8 Or *over the human spirit to retain it, / and so*

Death Is Our Lot; Enjoy Life (Ecc 8:8)

Ancient people reflected on the inevitability of death. As the Book of Ecclesiastes expresses: "no one has power over the time of their death" (Ecc 8:8). Similar reflections are found in the Gilgamesh Epic, the adventures of Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, around 2600 B.C.

The Gilgamesh Epic, composed in Accadian, has been preserved in two major versions, one from late in the Old Babylonian period (1750–1600 B.C.) and a second by Neo-Assyrian scribes (750–612 B.C.). The Neo-Assyrian version contains a scene in which Gilgamesh, in his search for immortality, passes by Siduri, the divine alewife (who is tending her beer stand on the seacoast). Her advice (in the Old Babylonian version) on the futility of his quest is quite similar to the advice of Ecclesiastes: "Enjoy life" (Ecc 9:9).

Siduri begins by reminding Gilgamesh that it is impossible for humans to find eternal life, which the gods have reserved for themselves. Her advice to Gilgamesh is to eat, make merry, and rejoice in the feasting while he can. She tells him to enjoy the daily rounds of life: wear fresh, clean clothing, bathe himself, play with his children, and enjoy his wife. That is all, she tells him, that is allowed by the gods. Old age and death will overtake everyone. Gilgamesh continued on his search, but found that Siduri's words reflected reality.

The writer of Ecclesiastes offers readers much the same advice: eat and drink with joy, wear clean ("white") garments, attend to your body ("anoint your head with oil"), and enjoy your wife (Ecc 9:7–9). The passage in the Gilgamesh Epic shows that these ideas of Ecclesiastes were known in the ancient Near East as early as the Israelite and Judean kingdoms. Siduri's speech proves that the idea of resignation to mortality was pondered in the ancient Near East in almost the same terms as it was by the teacher of Ecclesiastes.

when a man lords it over others to his own[a] hurt. 10Then too, I saw the wicked buried—those who used to come and go from the holy place and receive praise[b] in the city where they did this. This too is meaningless.

11When the sentence for a crime is not quickly carried out, people's hearts are filled with schemes to do wrong. 12Although a wicked person who commits a hundred crimes may live a long time, I know that it will go better with those who fear God, who are reverent before him. 13Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.

14There is something else meaningless that occurs on earth: the righteous who get what the wicked deserve, and the wicked who get what the righteous deserve. This too, I say, is meaningless. 15So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun.

16When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe the labor that is done on earth—people getting no sleep day or night—17then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all their efforts to search it out, no one can discover its meaning. Even if the wise claim they know, they cannot really comprehend it.

[a] *9* Or *to their* [b] *10* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (Aquila); most Hebrew manuscripts *and are forgotten* [c] *2* Septuagint (Aquila), Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew does not have *and the bad.* [d] *4* Or *What then is to be chosen? With all who live, there is hope*

A Common Destiny for All

9 1So I reflected on all this and concluded that the righteous and the wise and what they do are in God's hands, but no one knows whether love or hate awaits them. 2All share a common destiny—the righteous and the wicked, the good and the bad,[c] the clean and the unclean, those who offer sacrifices and those who do not.

As it is with the good,
so with the sinful;
as it is with those who take oaths,
so with those who are afraid to take them.

3This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of people, moreover, are full of evil and there is madness in their hearts while they live, and afterward they join the dead. 4Anyone who is among the living has hope[d]—even a live dog is better off than a dead lion!

5For the living know that they will die,
but the dead know nothing;
they have no further reward,
and even their name is forgotten.
6Their love, their hate
and their jealousy have long since vanished;
never again will they have a part
in anything that happens under the sun.

What the Dead Know (Ecc 9:5, 10)

Necromancy was the contacting of the dead on behalf of the living. It is found in ancient literature from the Sumerian period (late 3rd millennium B.C.), such as the Mesopotamian story of Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the netherworld. Heroes would make their way to the edge of the land of the dead to speak with those who had passed into the land of Death. Or they consulted a medium who connected them to the spirit to whom they wished to speak. Hebrew wisdom literature, however, presented a different view: "the dead know nothing" (Ecc 9:5).

The Law of Moses forbade such practices (Dt 18:11). Nevertheless, a famous case of an Israelite seeking information from the spirits of the dead is that of Saul asking the medium of Endor to call up the ghost of Samuel. Saul, desperate for information from God, thought he could learn the will of God from the dead Samuel (1Sa 28:8–19). Not only did this act violate God's law, but also Saul's own proclamation against necromancy (28:3, 9).

What did the dead know? Sometimes it appears from ancient literature that the dead were expected to know the future or events which were happening at a great distance. Gilgamesh asked Enkidu about the meaning of life and the possibility of avoiding death, but the query was of no avail, only confirming Gilgamesh's mortality. The usual conversation between the living and the dead seems to involve the desire of a living person to learn the fates that relatives and loved ones faced in the afterworld.

The Hebrew scriptures not only prohibited consulting the dead, but said it was futile. The dead have neither "knowledge nor wisdom" (Ecc 9:10). Samuel's response to Saul revealed both God's will and the future of Saul's family (1Sa 28:16–19), but this is unusual. God had departed from Saul (28:15), and whatever the king's experience with necromancy involved was a violation of Israel's religious traditions.

7 Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink
your wine with a joyful heart, for God has al-
ready approved what you do. 8 Always be
clothed in white, and always anoint your head
with oil. 9 Enjoy life with your wife, whom you
love, all the days of this meaningless life that
God has given you under the sun — all your
meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and
in your toilsome labor under the sun. 10 What-
ever your hand finds to do, do it with all your
might, for in the realm of the dead, where you
are going, there is neither working nor plan-
ning nor knowledge nor wisdom.

11 I have seen something else under the sun:

The race is not to the swift
or the battle to the strong,
nor does food come to the wise
or wealth to the brilliant
or favor to the learned;
but time and chance happen to them all.

12 Moreover, no one knows when their hour
will come:

As fish are caught in a cruel net,
or birds are taken in a snare,
so people are trapped by evil times
that fall unexpectedly upon them.

Wisdom Better Than Folly

13 I also saw under the sun this example of
wisdom that greatly impressed me: 14 There
was once a small city with only a few people
in it. And a powerful king came against it, sur-
rounded it and built huge siege works against
it. 15 Now there lived in that city a man poor
but wise, and he saved the city by his wisdom.
But nobody remembered that poor man. 16 So I
said, "Wisdom is better than strength." But the
poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words
are no longer heeded.

17 The quiet words of the wise are more to be
heeded
than the shouts of a ruler of fools.
18 Wisdom is better than weapons of war,
but one sinner destroys much good.

10 1 As dead flies give perfume a bad smell,
so a little folly outweighs wisdom and
honor.
2 The heart of the wise inclines to the right,
but the heart of the fool to the left.
3 Even as fools walk along the road,
they lack sense
and show everyone how stupid they are.
4 If a ruler's anger rises against you,
do not leave your post;
calmness can lay great offenses to rest.

5 There is an evil I have seen under the
sun,
the sort of error that arises from a
ruler:
6 Fools are put in many high positions,
while the rich occupy the low ones.
7 I have seen slaves on horseback,
while princes go on foot like slaves.

8 Whoever digs a pit may fall into it;
whoever breaks through a wall may be
bitten by a snake.

9 Whoever quarries stones may be injured by them;
whoever splits logs may be endangered by them.

10 If the ax is dull
and its edge unsharpened,
more strength is needed,
but skill will bring success.

11 If a snake bites before it is charmed,
the charmer receives no fee.

12 Words from the mouth of the wise are gracious,
but fools are consumed by their own lips.
13 At the beginning their words are folly;
at the end they are wicked madness—
14 and fools multiply words.

No one knows what is coming—
who can tell someone else what will happen after them?

15 The toil of fools wearies them;
they do not know the way to town.

16 Woe to the land whose king was a servant[a]
and whose princes feast in the morning.
17 Blessed is the land whose king is of noble birth
and whose princes eat at a proper time—
for strength and not for drunkenness.

18 Through laziness, the rafters sag;
because of idle hands, the house leaks.

19 A feast is made for laughter,
wine makes life merry,
and money is the answer for everything.

20 Do not revile the king even in your thoughts,
or curse the rich in your bedroom,
because a bird in the sky may carry your words,
and a bird on the wing may report what you say.

Invest in Many Ventures

11 1 Ship your grain across the sea;
after many days you may receive a return.
2 Invest in seven ventures, yes, in eight;
you do not know what disaster may come upon the land.

3 If clouds are full of water,
they pour rain on the earth.
Whether a tree falls to the south or to the north,
in the place where it falls, there it will lie.
4 Whoever watches the wind will not plant;
whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.

5 As you do not know the path of the wind,
or how the body is formed[b] in a mother's womb,
so you cannot understand the work of God,
the Maker of all things.

6 Sow your seed in the morning,
and at evening let your hands not be idle,
for you do not know which will succeed,
whether this or that,
or whether both will do equally well.

Remember Your Creator While Young

7 Light is sweet,
and it pleases the eyes to see the sun.
8 However many years anyone may live,
let them enjoy them all.
But let them remember the days of darkness,
for there will be many.
Everything to come is meaningless.

9 You who are young, be happy while you are young,
and let your heart give you joy in the days of your youth.
Follow the ways of your heart
and whatever your eyes see,
but know that for all these things
God will bring you into judgment.
10 So then, banish anxiety from your heart
and cast off the troubles of your body,
for youth and vigor are meaningless.

12 1 Remember your Creator
in the days of your youth,
before the days of trouble come
and the years approach when you will say,
"I find no pleasure in them"—
2 before the sun and the light
and the moon and the stars grow dark,
and the clouds return after the rain;

[a] 16 Or *king is a child* [b] 5 Or *know how life* (or *the spirit*) / *enters the body being formed*

Politics & Government
Ecclesiastes stresses the wisdom of not talking against the government or the powerful (Ecc 10:20). In the ancient Near East the king's privilege and power were often without theoretical limit. In Israel the word of Yahweh was supreme, but the prophets sometimes had to risk their lives to proclaim this liberating truth.

3 when the keepers of the house
tremble,
and the strong men stoop,
when the grinders cease because they are
few,
and those looking through the windows
grow dim;
4 when the doors to the street are closed
and the sound of grinding fades;
when people rise up at the sound of
birds,
but all their songs grow faint;
5 when people are afraid of heights
and of dangers in the streets;
when the almond tree blossoms
and the grasshopper drags itself
along
and desire no longer is stirred.
Then people go to their eternal home
and mourners go about the streets.

6 Remember him — before the silver cord is
severed,
and the golden bowl is broken;
before the pitcher is shattered at the
spring,
and the wheel broken at the well,
7 and the dust returns to the ground it came
from,
and the spirit returns to God who
gave it.

8 "Meaningless! Meaningless!" says the
Teacher.[a]
"Everything is meaningless!"

The Conclusion of the Matter

9 Not only was the Teacher wise, but he also imparted knowledge to the people. He pondered and searched out and set in order many proverbs. 10 The Teacher searched to find just the right words, and what he wrote was upright and true.

11 The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails — given by one shepherd.[b] 12 Be warned, my son, of anything in addition to them.

Of making many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body.

13 Now all has been heard;
here is the conclusion of the matter:
Fear God and keep his commandments,
for this is the duty of all mankind.
14 For God will bring every deed into
judgment,
including every hidden thing,
whether it is good or evil.

TRANSITION

Solomon's Political Wives

Much of S olomon's economic success was built on diplomatic alliances. In the ancient world, such allianc es were generally sealed with marriage relations, and Solomon's thousand wives and c oncubines included many women from foreign courts. One of the most impor tant of S olomon's diplomatic wives was an E gyptian princess (1Ki 3:1; 7:8; 9:16). She is thought to have been the daughter of Pharaoh Siamun (978–959 B.C.), a ruler of the Egyptian 21st Dynasty.

• **1 Kings 11:1–8**

1 Kings

Solomon's Wives

11:1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter — Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. 2 They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. 3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. 4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. 5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the Ammonites. 8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

[a] *8* Or *the leader of the assembly*; also in verses 9 and 10
[b] *11* Or *Shepherd*

TRANSITION

The Song of Solomon

This book is an extended dialogue between two lovers (the Shulammite and her beloved), written in sumptuous and of ten erotic poetry. The speakers are not identified by name in the t ext, but in the Hebr ew it is clear when a speech is addressed to a man and when to a woman. A few other voices chime in: the daugh ters of Jerusalem (SS 1:5), the beloved's friends (6:13), and the Shulammite's

Solomon Worships the Gods of His Wives (1Ki 11:1–8)

Most royal marriages in the ancient world were political. A treaty would be finalized with a wedding, one ruler's child marrying a child of the other ruler. Family ties between kingdoms meant that warfare between them would be a family matter, and thus less likely to happen. Solomon's wives (who numbered 700 according to 1Ki 11:3) were all princesses. Apparently Solomon was considered an important international partner by numerous kingdoms within and around his empire.

Each of these women had come from a country that worshiped gods different from the national God of Israel. Each woman would wish to remain true to her own heritage and her own protective deity. They would have worshiped the God of Israel as the ruling god of the land in which they now lived, yet they remained devoted to the gods of their homelands.

Solomon allowed his wives to worship their own deities, but it is not for this that the author of Kings condemns him. Rather, Solomon's desire for his wives was strong, and he himself eventually began to worship the deities his wives worshiped. Even in the theology of the time this would have been unnecessary; Solomon had no tradition or relationship with these foreign gods, as did his wives. Yet, in his old age he shifted from an exclusive monotheism to the worship of many gods. For this he is condemned; it was apostasy from Yahweh, his own God (1Ki 11:4).

brothers (8:8, 9). Still, most of the speeches come from the two lovers.

Solomon is mentioned by name, not only in the superscription (1:1) but also in the speeches (3:7–11; 8:11, 12). Some suggest that the book is actually a three-person conversation, with Solomon being one of the speakers. This is uncertain, as indeed are most things about this book, where luxurious description overpowers plot and logic. Jews and Christians alike have often interpreted the poem as an allegory of God's love affair with his people. Many, though, read it literally and accept it as the Bible's blessing on the delights of human love.

The superscription does not necessarily mean that Solomon wrote the book. The Hebrew construction of Song 1:1 is ambiguous and could mean "to Solomon," "for Solomon," or simply "in the manner of Solomon." The other references to Solomon are in the third person, which make it possible that the book is in honor of an "ideal Solomon," and refers to the style in which Solomon may have composed love songs (1Ki 4:32).

Regardless of whether the book was authored by Solomon or compiled late, it nevertheless reflects the setting of Solomon's era. The pomp and circumstance described in the book calls to mind Solomon's royal court. His association with the song warrants reading it in light of his relations with women described in 1Ki 11:1–8.

• Song of Solomon 1:1—8:14

Song of Songs

1:1 Solomon's Song of Songs.

She[a]

2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth—
for your love is more delightful than wine.
3 Pleasing is the fragrance of your perfumes;
your name is like perfume poured out.
No wonder the young women love you!
4 Take me away with you—let us hurry!
Let the king bring me into his chambers.

Friends

We rejoice and delight in you[b];
we will praise your love more than wine.

She

How right they are to adore you!

5 Dark am I, yet lovely,
daughters of Jerusalem,
dark like the tents of Kedar,
like the tent curtains of Solomon.[c]
6 Do not stare at me because I am dark,
because I am darkened by the sun.
My mother's sons were angry with me
and made me take care of the vineyards;
my own vineyard I had to neglect.
7 Tell me, you whom I love,
where you graze your flock
and where you rest your sheep at midday.
Why should I be like a veiled woman
beside the flocks of your friends?

Friends

8 If you do not know, most beautiful of women,
follow the tracks of the sheep
and graze your young goats
by the tents of the shepherds.

[a] The main male and female speakers (identified primarily on the basis of the gender of the relevant Hebrew forms) are indicated by the captions *He* and *She* respectively. The words of others are marked *Friends*. In some instances the divisions and their captions are debatable. [b] *4* The Hebrew is masculine singular. [c] *5* Or *Salma*

En Gedi, an Oasis in a Mountain (SS 1:14)

En Gedi is the strongest of the perennial springs that flow from the Judean wilderness down to the Dead Sea. This spring cascades down the face of the mountain in stages with small pools between falls. Its path down the mountain is surrounded by lush vegetation, which has a uniquely compelling beauty well known to the writer of the Song of Solomon (SS 1:14).

The rough terrain from which the spring comes is extremely rugged, making it an ideal hideout for David when he was running from King Saul (1Sa 23:29; 24:1). In the mountains surrounding the spring are many caves and hiding places.

The site of En Gedi was enjoyed as an oasis on the shore of the Dead Sea long before David's time. On the top of one of the nearby hills lie the ruins of an ancient temple which dates back to the 4th millennium B.C. Cultic copper implements from the temple were found buried just a few miles south, hidden in a cave.

He

9 I liken you, my darling, to a mare
among Pharaoh's chariot horses.
10 Your cheeks are beautiful with earrings,
your neck with strings of jewels.
11 We will make you earrings of gold,
studded with silver.

She

12 While the king was at his table,
my perfume spread its fragrance.
13 My beloved is to me a sachet of myrrh
resting between my breasts.
14 My beloved is to me a cluster of henna
blossoms
from the vineyards of En Gedi.

He

15 How beautiful you are, my darling!
Oh, how beautiful!
Your eyes are doves.

She

16 How handsome you are, my beloved!
Oh, how charming!
And our bed is verdant.

He

17 The beams of our house are cedars;
our rafters are firs.

She[a]

2 1 I am a rose[b] of Sharon,
a lily of the valleys.

He

2 Like a lily among thorns
is my darling among the young women.

She

3 Like an apple[c] tree among the trees of the
forest
is my beloved among the young men.
I delight to sit in his shade,
and his fruit is sweet to my taste.
4 Let him lead me to the banquet hall,
and let his banner over me be love.
5 Strengthen me with raisins,
refresh me with apples,
for I am faint with love.
6 His left arm is under my head,
and his right arm embraces me.
7 Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and by the does of the
field:
Do not arouse or awaken love
until it so desires.

8 Listen! My beloved!
Look! Here he comes,
leaping across the mountains,
bounding over the hills.
9 My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.
Look! There he stands behind our wall,
gazing through the windows,
peering through the lattice.
10 My beloved spoke and said to me,
"Arise, my darling,
my beautiful one, come with me.
11 See! The winter is past;
the rains are over and gone.
12 Flowers appear on the earth;
the season of singing has come,
the cooing of doves
is heard in our land.
13 The fig tree forms its early fruit;
the blossoming vines spread their
fragrance.
Arise, come, my darling;
my beautiful one, come with me."

He

14 My dove in the clefts of the rock,
in the hiding places on the mountainside,

[a] Or *He* [b] *1* Probably a member of the crocus family
[c] *3* Or possibly *apricot*; here and elsewhere in Song of Songs

show me your face,
let me hear your voice;
for your voice is sweet,
and your face is lovely.
15 Catch for us the foxes,
the little foxes
that ruin the vineyards,
our vineyards that are in bloom.

She

16 My beloved is mine and I am his;
he browses among the lilies.
17 Until the day breaks
and the shadows flee,
turn, my beloved,
and be like a gazelle
or like a young stag
on the rugged hills.[a]

3 1 All night long on my bed
I looked for the one my heart loves;
I looked for him but did not find him.
2 I will get up now and go about the city,
through its streets and squares;
I will search for the one my heart loves.
So I looked for him but did not find him.
3 The watchmen found me
as they made their rounds in the city.
"Have you seen the one my heart loves?"
4 Scarcely had I passed them
when I found the one my heart loves.
I held him and would not let him go
till I had brought him to my mother's
house,
to the room of the one who conceived me.
5 Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you
by the gazelles and by the does of the
field:
Do not arouse or awaken love
until it so desires.

6 Who is this coming up from the wilderness
like a column of smoke,
perfumed with myrrh and incense
made from all the spices of the merchant?
7 Look! It is Solomon's carriage,
escorted by sixty warriors,
the noblest of Israel,
8 all of them wearing the sword,
all experienced in battle,
each with his sword at his side,
prepared for the terrors of the night.
9 King Solomon made for himself the
carriage;
he made it of wood from Lebanon.
10 Its posts he made of silver,
its base of gold.
Its seat was upholstered with purple,
its interior inlaid with love.
Daughters of Jerusalem, 11 come out,
and look, you daughters of Zion.
Look[b] on King Solomon wearing a crown,
the crown with which his mother
crowned him
on the day of his wedding,
the day his heart rejoiced.

He

4 1 How beautiful you are, my darling!
Oh, how beautiful!
Your eyes behind your veil are doves.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
descending from the hills of Gilead.

[a] *17* Or *the hills of Bether*
[b] *10,11* Or *interior lovingly inlaid / by the daughters of Jerusalem. / 11 Come out, you daughters of Zion, / and look*

2 Your teeth are like a flock of sheep just
shorn,
coming up from the washing.
Each has its twin;
not one of them is alone.
3 Your lips are like a scarlet ribbon;
your mouth is lovely.
Your temples behind your veil
are like the halves of a pomegranate.
4 Your neck is like the tower of David,
built with courses of stone[a];
on it hang a thousand shields,
all of them shields of warriors.
5 Your breasts are like two fawns,
like twin fawns of a gazelle
that browse among the lilies.
6 Until the day breaks
and the shadows flee,
I will go to the mountain of myrrh
and to the hill of incense.
7 You are altogether beautiful, my
darling;
there is no flaw in you.

8 Come with me from Lebanon, my bride,
come with me from Lebanon.
Descend from the crest of Amana,
from the top of Senir, the summit of
Hermon,
from the lions' dens
and the mountain haunts of leopards.
9 You have stolen my heart, my sister, my
bride;
you have stolen my heart
with one glance of your eyes,
with one jewel of your necklace.
10 How delightful is your love, my sister, my
bride!
How much more pleasing is your love
than wine,
and the fragrance of your perfume
more than any spice!
11 Your lips drop sweetness as the
honeycomb, my bride;
milk and honey are under your
tongue.
The fragrance of your garments
is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

Arts & Literature
In Near Eastern poetry, the appeal of a metaphor or simile is often intellectual, offering a puzzle rather than a picture. The teeth are like sheep because none are missing (SS 4:2), not because there is much visual similarity. Such images can become conventional clichés, and difficult to interpret.

12 You are a garden locked up, my sister, my
bride;
you are a spring enclosed, a sealed
fountain.
13 Your plants are an orchard of pomegranates
with choice fruits,
with henna and nard,
14 nard and saffron,
calamus and cinnamon,
with every kind of incense tree,
with myrrh and aloes
and all the finest spices.
15 You are[b] a garden fountain,
a well of flowing water
streaming down from Lebanon.

She

16 Awake, north wind,
and come, south wind!
Blow on my garden,
that its fragrance may spread
everywhere.
Let my beloved come into his garden
and taste its choice fruits.

He

5 1 I have come into my garden, my sister,
my bride;
I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.
I have eaten my honeycomb and my honey;
I have drunk my wine and my milk.

Friends

Eat, friends, and drink;
drink your fill of love.

She

2 I slept but my heart was awake.
Listen! My beloved is knocking:
"Open to me, my sister, my darling,
my dove, my flawless one.
My head is drenched with dew,
my hair with the dampness of the night."
3 I have taken off my robe—
must I put it on again?
I have washed my feet—
must I soil them again?
4 My beloved thrust his hand through the
latch-opening;
my heart began to pound for him.
5 I arose to open for my beloved,
and my hands dripped with myrrh,
my fingers with flowing myrrh,
on the handles of the bolt.

[a] *4* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.
[b] *15* Or *I am* (spoken by *She*)

6 I opened for my beloved,
but my beloved had left; he was gone.
My heart sank at his departure.[a]
I looked for him but did not find him.
I called him but he did not answer.
7 The watchmen found me
as they made their rounds in the city.
They beat me, they bruised me;
they took away my cloak,
those watchmen of the walls!
8 Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you—
if you find my beloved,
what will you tell him?
Tell him I am faint with love.

Friends

9 How is your beloved better than others,
most beautiful of women?
How is your beloved better than others,
that you so charge us?

She

10 My beloved is radiant and ruddy,
outstanding among ten thousand.
11 His head is purest gold;
his hair is wavy
and black as a raven.
12 His eyes are like doves
by the water streams,
washed in milk,
mounted like jewels.
13 His cheeks are like beds of spice
yielding perfume.
His lips are like lilies
dripping with myrrh.
14 His arms are rods of gold
set with topaz.
His body is like polished ivory
decorated with lapis lazuli.
15 His legs are pillars of marble
set on bases of pure gold.
His appearance is like Lebanon,
choice as its cedars.
16 His mouth is sweetness itself;
he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, this is my friend,
daughters of Jerusalem.

Friends

6 1 Where has your beloved gone,
most beautiful of women?
Which way did your beloved turn,
that we may look for him with you?

She

2 My beloved has gone down to his garden,
to the beds of spices,
to browse in the gardens
and to gather lilies.
3 I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine;
he browses among the lilies.

He

4 You are as beautiful as Tirzah, my darling,
as lovely as Jerusalem,
as majestic as troops with banners.

[a] 6 Or *heart had gone out to him when he spoke*

Geography in the Song of Solomon
The beautiful love story that unfolds in the Song of Solomon takes place in a variety of settings. With several word pictures the lovers speak of, and to, each other: "rose of Sharon"; "lily of the valleys"; "vineyards of En Gedi." Love grows and flourishes in the pastoral setting of the pastures and valleys, on the mountains and hillsides.

Arts & Literature
The comparisons of SS 6:4 are good illustrations of the puzzling imagery of Israelite poetry. The woman's beauty is compared to cities, and to the flags of a marching army. The point of comparison is not explained, but perhaps it reflects the woman's importance to the writer and her power over his emotions.

5 Turn your eyes from me;
they overwhelm me.
Your hair is like a flock of goats
descending from Gilead.
6 Your teeth are like a flock of sheep
coming up from the washing.
Each has its twin,
not one of them is missing.
7 Your temples behind your veil
are like the halves of a pomegranate.
8 Sixty queens there may be,
and eighty concubines,
and virgins beyond number;
9 but my dove, my perfect one, is unique,
the only daughter of her mother,
the favorite of the one who bore her.
The young women saw her and called her
blessed;
the queens and concubines praised her.

Friends

10 Who is this that appears like the dawn,
fair as the moon, bright as the sun,
majestic as the stars in procession?

He

11 I went down to the grove of nut trees
to look at the new growth in the valley,
to see if the vines had budded
or the pomegranates were in bloom.
12 Before I realized it,
my desire set me among the royal
chariots of my people.[a]

Friends

13 Come back, come back, O Shulammite;
come back, come back, that we may gaze
on you!

He

Why would you gaze on the Shulammite
as on the dance of Mahanaim?[b]

TIME CAPSULE		969 to 950 B.C.
969		Hiram becomes king of Tyre (or 980)
966		Solomon begins to build the temple (1Ki 6:1)
966–959		Solomon completes the temple in 7 years (1Ki 6:38)
959–946		Solomon completes the palace in 13 years (1Ki 7:1)
954		Shishak serves as commander in chief of Egypt's army
950		Assyrians make armor with iron scales

7[c] 1 How beautiful your sandaled feet,
O prince's daughter!
Your graceful legs are like jewels,
the work of an artist's hands.
2 Your navel is a rounded goblet
that never lacks blended wine.
Your waist is a mound of wheat
encircled by lilies.
3 Your breasts are like two fawns,
like twin fawns of a gazelle.
4 Your neck is like an ivory tower.
Your eyes are the pools of Heshbon
by the gate of Bath Rabbim.
Your nose is like the tower of Lebanon
looking toward Damascus.
5 Your head crowns you like Mount Carmel.
Your hair is like royal tapestry;
the king is held captive by its tresses.
6 How beautiful you are and how pleasing,
my love, with your delights!
7 Your stature is like that of the palm,
and your breasts like clusters of fruit.
8 I said, "I will climb the palm tree;
I will take hold of its fruit."
May your breasts be like clusters of grapes
on the vine,
the fragrance of your breath like apples,
9 and your mouth like the best wine.

She

May the wine go straight to my beloved,
flowing gently over lips and teeth.[d]
10 I belong to my beloved,
and his desire is for me.
11 Come, my beloved, let us go to the
countryside,
let us spend the night in the villages.[e]
12 Let us go early to the vineyards
to see if the vines have budded,
if their blossoms have opened,
and if the pomegranates are in bloom—
there I will give you my love.
13 The mandrakes send out their fragrance,
and at our door is every delicacy,
both new and old,
that I have stored up for you, my beloved.

8 1 If only you were to me like a brother,
who was nursed at my mother's breasts!
Then, if I found you outside,
I would kiss you,
and no one would despise me.

[a] *12* Or *among the chariots of Amminadab*; or *among the chariots of the people of the prince* [b] *13* In Hebrew texts this verse (6:13) is numbered 7:1. [c] In Hebrew texts 7:1-13 is numbered 7:2-14. [d] *9* Septuagint, Aquila, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *lips of sleepers* [e] *11* Or *the henna bushes*

The Pools of Heshbon (Song 7:4)

The biblical city of Heshbon was situated at a major north-south, east-west crossroad on the King's Highway (Nu 20:17) in Transjordan. It was there that a battle was fought between the Israelites, led by Moses, and the Amorites, led by Sihon (Nu 21:21–31). The Israelites successfully defeated the Amorites, after which Israel's tribes of Reuben and Gad settled in Transjordan (Nu 32).

The Iron Age (1200–600 B.C.) location of Heshbon was established in an area that had no perennial spring. Those who built the city had to construct water cisterns beneath the houses and public buildings. By this means the inhabitants were able to collect the water from the roofs and streets during the winter rainy season.

Archaeologists have found many cisterns at Tell Hesban, the modern name of Heshbon. The largest water facility from the time of the Song of Solomon was a reservoir that would hold about 600,000 gallons of water, if filled. Certainly the pools of Heshbon were a good choice for the biblical writer when he sought figurative language to describe a Shulammite girl's beauty. Possibly he had in mind deep and dark eyes in referring to the Shulammite's eyes as "the pools of Heshbon" (SS 7:4).

[2] I would lead you
and bring you to my mother's house—
she who has taught me.
I would give you spiced wine to drink,
the nectar of my pomegranates.
[3] His left arm is under my head
and his right arm embraces me.
[4] Daughters of Jerusalem, I charge you:
Do not arouse or awaken love
until it so desires.

Friends

[5] Who is this coming up from the wilderness
leaning on her beloved?

She

Under the apple tree I roused you;
there your mother conceived you,
there she who was in labor gave you birth.
[6] Place me like a seal over your heart,
like a seal on your arm;
for love is as strong as death,
its jealousy[a] unyielding as the grave.
It burns like blazing fire,
like a mighty flame.[b]

[7] Many waters cannot quench love;
rivers cannot sweep it away.
If one were to give
all the wealth of one's house for love,
it[c] would be utterly scorned.

Friends

[8] We have a little sister,
and her breasts are not yet grown.
What shall we do for our sister
on the day she is spoken for?
[9] If she is a wall,
we will build towers of silver on her.
If she is a door,
we will enclose her with panels of cedar.

She

[10] I am a wall,
and my breasts are like towers.
Thus I have become in his eyes
like one bringing contentment.

[a] 6 Or *ardor* [b] 6 Or *fire, / like the very flame of the* LORD
[c] 7 Or *he*

11 Solomon had a vineyard in Baal Hamon;
he let out his vineyard to tenants.
Each was to bring for its fruit
a thousand shekels[a] of silver.
12 But my own vineyard is mine to give;
the thousand shekels are for you,
Solomon,
and two hundred[b] are for those who tend
its fruit.

He

13 You who dwell in the gardens
with friends in attendance,
let me hear your voice!

She

14 Come away, my beloved,
and be like a gazelle
or like a young stag
on the spice-laden mountains.

TRANSITION

Solomon's Decline

Solomon's many foreign wives led to his downfall. The more he resembled the other kings of the ancient world, the further he got from Israel's covenant relationship with God. Besides worshiping his wives' foreign gods, Solomon also established forced labor for his citizens. This was unheard-of among free Israelites, and Israel would not bear it long. As Pharaoh Shishak (known as Sheshonk I), who ruled from 945 to 924 B.C., led a new dynasty in Egypt, King Solomon of Israel was in the declining years of his reign (1Ki 11:40).

• **1 Kings 11:9–43**

1 Kings

11 :9 The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. 10 Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command. 11 So the LORD said to Solomon, "Since this is your attitude and you have not kept my covenant and my decrees, which I commanded you, I will most certainly tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your subordinates. 12 Nevertheless, for the sake of David your father, I will not do it during your lifetime. I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 Yet I will not tear the whole kingdom from him, but will give him one tribe for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I have chosen."

Solomon's Adversaries

14 Then the LORD raised up against Solomon an adversary, Hadad the Edomite, from the royal line of Edom. 15 Earlier when David was fighting with Edom, Joab the commander of the army, who had gone up to bury the dead, had struck down all the men in Edom. 16 Joab and all the Israelites stayed there for six months, until they had destroyed all the men in Edom. 17 But Hadad, still only a boy, fled to Egypt with some Edomite officials who had served his father. 18 They set out from Midian and went to Paran. Then taking people from Paran with them, they went to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt, who gave Hadad a house and land and provided him with food.

19 Pharaoh was so pleased with Hadad that he gave him a sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes, in marriage. 20 The sister of Tahpenes bore him a son named Genubath, whom Tahpenes brought up in the royal palace. There Genubath lived with Pharaoh's own children.

21 While he was in Egypt, Hadad heard that David rested with his ancestors and that Joab the commander of the army was also dead. Then Hadad said to Pharaoh, "Let me go, that I may return to my own country."

22 "What have you lacked here that you want to go back to your own country?" Pharaoh asked.

"Nothing," Hadad replied, "but do let me go!"

23 And God raised up against Solomon another adversary, Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, Hadadezer king of Zobah. 24 When David destroyed Zobah's army, Rezon gathered a band of men around him and became their leader; they went to Damascus, where they settled and took control. 25 Rezon was Israel's adversary as long as Solomon lived, adding to the trouble caused by Hadad. So Rezon ruled in Aram and was hostile toward Israel.

Jeroboam Rebels Against Solomon

26 Also, Jeroboam son of Nebat rebelled against the king. He was one of Solomon's officials, an Ephraimite from Zeredah, and his mother was a widow named Zeruah.

27 Here is the account of how he rebelled against the king: Solomon had built the terraces[c] and had filled in the gap in the wall of the city of David his father. 28 Now Jeroboam was a man of standing, and when Solomon saw

[a] *11* That is, about 25 pounds or about 12 kilograms; also in verse 12 [b] *12* That is, about 5 pounds or about 2.3 kilograms [c] *27* Or *the Millo*

how well the young man did his work, he put him in charge of the whole labor force of the tribes of Joseph.

29About that time Jeroboam was going out of Jerusalem, and Ahijah the prophet of Shiloh met him on the way, wearing a new cloak. The two of them were alone out in the country, 30and Ahijah took hold of the new cloak he was wearing and tore it into twelve pieces. 31Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten pieces for yourself, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'See, I am going to tear the kingdom out of Solomon's hand and give you ten tribes. 32But for the sake of my servant David and the city of Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, he will have one tribe. 33I will do this because they have[a] forsaken me and worshiped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Molek the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in obedience to me, nor done what is right in my eyes, nor kept my decrees and laws as David, Solomon's father, did.

34" 'But I will not take the whole kingdom out of Solomon's hand; I have made him ruler all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose and who obeyed my commands and decrees. 35I will take the kingdom from his son's hands and give you ten tribes. 36I will give one tribe to his son so that David my servant may always have a lamp before me in Jerusalem, the city where I chose to put my Name. 37However, as for you, I will take you, and you will rule over all that your heart desires; you will be king over Israel. 38If you do whatever I command you and walk in obedience to me and do what is right in my eyes by obeying my decrees and commands, as David my servant did, I will be with you. I will build you a dynasty as enduring as the one I built for David and will give Israel to you. 39I will humble David's descendants because of this, but not forever.' "

40Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but Jeroboam fled to Egypt, to Shishak the king, and stayed there until Solomon's death.

Solomon's Death

41As for the other events of Solomon's reign—all he did and the wisdom he displayed—are they not written in the book of the annals of Solomon? 42Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 43Then he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

[a] *33* Hebrew; Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac *because he has*

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Solomon's Reign

The second book of Chronicles continues the story of the monarchy from the beginning of Solomon's reign (c. 970 B.C.). The Chronicler takes a much more positive view of Solomon than does the historian of Kings. In the priestly history, Solomon is above all the builder of the temple. Anything that might distract from that central role (such as Solomon's wisdom) is downplayed, and anything that might tarnish it (such as Solomon's worship of foreign gods) is simply omitted.

• 2 Chronicles 1:1—2:18

2 Chronicles

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

1:1 Solomon son of David established himself firmly over his kingdom, for the LORD his God was with him and made him exceedingly great.

2Then Solomon spoke to all Israel—to the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, to the judges and to all the leaders in Israel, the heads of families— 3and Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon, for God's tent of meeting was there, which Moses the LORD's servant had made in the wilderness. 4Now David had brought up the ark of God from Kiriath Jearim to the place he had prepared for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. 5But the bronze altar that Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, had made was in Gibeon in front of the tabernacle of the LORD; so Solomon and the assembly inquired of him there. 6Solomon went up to the bronze altar before the LORD in the tent of meeting and offered a thousand burnt offerings on it.

7That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

8Solomon answered God, "You have shown great kindness to David my father and have made me king in his place. 9Now, LORD God, let your promise to my father David be confirmed, for you have made me king over a people who are as numerous as the dust of the earth. 10Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of yours?"

11God said to Solomon, "Since this is your heart's desire and you have not asked for wealth, possessions or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to

Kings of the Neo-Hittites (2Ch 1:17)

The Hittites were a major Indo-European people centered in Anatolia. Their political power extended from about 1700 to 1180 B.C., and the Hittite Empire at its height comprised most of present-day Turkey, Armenia, Syria, and northern Palestine. They fought numerous battles with Egypt for supremacy in Palestine. The Hittites adopted the cuneiform writing system from Mesopotamia to write their own language, also known as Hittite.

References to Hittites in the Bible do not refer to the great Hittite Empire of the Late Bronze Age (1500–1200 B.C.), but to the political successors of the Hittites in north Syria. These so-called Neo-Hittite kingdoms, which were centered at Carchemish, Malatya, and other cities, survived in north Syria until the Assyrian conquest in the 8th century B.C. The Neo-Hittite states were a mixture of a variety of ethnic components, including Hittite, Luwian (native Anatolian), Hurrian, and Northwest Semitic elements.

The "kings of the Hittites" with whom Solomon conducted business (2Ch 1:17) apparently refers to these petty Neo-Hittite states in north Syria. Since they were composed of small kingdoms lacking a united political structure, it would be appropriate to speak of several Hittite "kings." By the time of Solomon (970–930 B.C.), the Neo-Hittite kingdoms had been substantially weakened, but were still able to import horses and chariots from Israel's wealthy king.

govern my people over whom I have made you king, 12therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, possessions and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."

13Then Solomon went to Jerusalem from the high place at Gibeon, from before the tent of meeting. And he reigned over Israel.

14Solomon accumulated chariots and horses; he had fourteen hundred chariots and twelve thousand horses,[a] which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. 15The king made silver and gold as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills. 16Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from Kue[b]—the royal merchants purchased them from Kue at the current price. 17They imported a chariot from Egypt for six hundred shekels[c] of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty.[d] They also exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and of the Arameans.

Preparations for Building the Temple

2[e] 1Solomon gave orders to build a temple for the Name of the LORD and a royal palace for himself. 2He conscripted 70,000 men as carriers and 80,000 as stonecutters in the hills and 3,600 as foremen over them.

Science & Technology

The Egyptians met the horse and chariot when fighting against the Hyksos in around 1648 B.C., and within a hundred years were using the same weapon themselves. They became masters in using it, and distinguished themselves as chariot makers (2Ch 1:17). In a land where wood was scarce, they became expert in joinery, and their chariots were light, flexible, and strong.

3Solomon sent this message to Hiram[f] king of Tyre:

"Send me cedar logs as you did for my father David when you sent him cedar to build a palace to live in. 4Now I am about to build a temple for the Name of the LORD my God and to dedicate it to him for burning fragrant incense before him, for setting out the consecrated bread regularly, and for making burnt offerings every morning and evening and on the Sabbaths, at the New Moons and at the appointed festivals of the LORD our God. This is a lasting ordinance for Israel.

5"The temple I am going to build will be great, because our God is greater than all other gods. 6But who is able to build a temple for him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him? Who then am I to build a temple for him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before him?

7"Send me, therefore, a man skilled to work in gold and silver, bronze and iron, and in purple, crimson and blue yarn, and experienced in the art of engraving, to work in Judah and Jerusalem with my skilled workers, whom my father David provided.

8"Send me also cedar, juniper and algum[g] logs from Lebanon, for I know that your servants are skilled in cutting timber there. My servants will work with yours 9to provide me with plenty of lumber, because the temple I build must be large and

[a] *14* Or *charioteers* [b] *16* Probably Cilicia [c] *17* That is, about 15 pounds or about 6.9 kilograms [d] *17* That is, about 3 3/4 pounds or about 1.7 kilograms [e] In Hebrew texts 2:1 is numbered 1:18, and 2:2-18 is numbered 2:1-17.
[f] *3* Hebrew *Huram,* a variant of *Hiram*; also in verses 11 and 12
[g] *8* Probably a variant of *almug*

Hiram, King of Tyre (2Ch 2:11)

Hiram, who became king of Tyre in either 980 or 969 B.C., had a special relationship with Solomon, king of Israel (2Ch 2:11). They were business partners in several efforts. This association continued a friendship that had existed previously between Solomon's father and Hiram (2Sa 5:11).

A treaty between Hiram and Solomon involved several acts of cooperation (1Ki 5:12). One was the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. Craftsmen of Israel and Tyre worked together in building the temple, Solomon's palace, as well as other projects (1Ki 5:18; 2Ch 2:12–14). The two kings were also joint participants in a commercial shipping business (1Ki 10:11, 22).

Additional information about Hiram comes from Josephus, the Jewish historian of the 1st century A.D. Josephus in turn draws information from a historian named Dius, whose work has not survived to modern times. Supposedly, Hiram and Solomon competed with each other in solving riddles. Wagers were made between them as to who could solve whose riddles. At first Solomon won large sums of money from Hiram. As time went on, however, Hiram gained the help of a certain Abdemon, who not only won for Hiram his losses but also an additional great amount from Solomon.

One might suppose that Hiram was helping Solomon only because of his friendship with David (1Ki 5:1). In fact, Hiram was helping, at least in part, because of the wealth it brought him. Not only did he receive a yearly payment in kind (1Ki 5:11), but, at the end of the major building projects, Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities, which were probably located on the Mediterranean coast (1Ki 9:11). Indeed, the Phoenicians became one of the most wealthy people in the 1st millennium B.C.

magnificent. 10I will give your servants,
the woodsmen who cut the timber, twenty thousand cors[a] of ground wheat, twenty
thousand cors[b] of barley, twenty thousand
baths[c] of wine and twenty thousand baths
of olive oil."

11Hiram king of Tyre replied by letter to Solomon:

"Because the LORD loves his people, he
has made you their king."

12And Hiram added:

"Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
who made heaven and earth! He has given King David a wise son, endowed with
intelligence and discernment, who will
build a temple for the LORD and a palace
for himself.
13"I am sending you Huram-Abi, a man
of great skill, 14whose mother was from
Dan and whose father was from Tyre. He
is trained to work in gold and silver, bronze
and iron, stone and wood, and with purple
and blue and crimson yarn and fine linen.
He is experienced in all kinds of engraving
and can execute any design given to him.
He will work with your skilled workers and
with those of my lord, David your father.
15"Now let my lord send his servants the
wheat and barley and the olive oil and wine
he promised, 16and we will cut all the logs
from Lebanon that you need and will float
them as rafts by sea down to Joppa. You
can then take them up to Jerusalem."

17Solomon took a census of all the foreigners residing in Israel, after the census his father David had taken; and they were found to be 153,600. 18He assigned 70,000 of them to be carriers and 80,000 to be stonecutters in the hills, with 3,600 foremen over them to keep the people working.

[a] *10* That is, probably about 3,600 tons or about 3,200 metric tons of wheat [b] *10* That is, probably about 3,000 tons or about 2,700 metric tons of barley [c] *10* That is, about 120,000 gallons or about 440,000 liters [d] *1* Hebrew *Ornan*, a variant of *Araunah* [e] *3* That is, about 90 feet long and 30 feet wide or about 27 meters long and 9 meters wide

TRANSITION

Solomon Begins Building the Temple

Work on the foundation of the temple began in the 4th year of Solomon's reign, which was about 966 B.C. (2Ch 3:2). The Chronicler shortens the Kings account of the construction of the temple. His main interest is in the institutions and worship connected with the building.

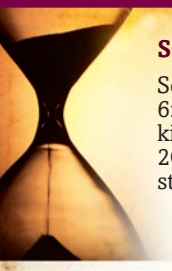
- **2 Chronicles 3:1—4:22**

2 Chronicles

Solomon Builds the Temple

3:1 Then Solomon began to build the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. It was on the threshing floor of Araunah[d] the Jebusite, the place provided by David. 2He began building on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign.

3The foundation Solomon laid for building the temple of God was sixty cubits long and twenty cubits wide[e] (using the cubit of the old



SOLOMON THE BUILDER

Solomon is reported to have laid the foundation of the temple in the 4th year of his reign (1Ki 6:1). It took 7 years to build the temple (1Ki 6:37, 38) and an additional 13 years to build the king's palace (1Ki 7:1). In all, Solomon spent 20 years in two great building projects (1Ki 9:10; 2Ch 8:1). These chronological figures are possibly symbolic, rather than actual, but they do stress the architectural accomplishments of one of Israel's great leaders.

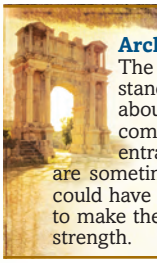
Year	Event
970	Solomon becomes king (1Ki 1:32–40; 1Ch 29:22)
966	Solomon begins to build the temple (1Ki 6:1; 2Ch 3:1)
959	Solomon completes construction of the temple (1Ki 6:37, 38; 2Ch 5:1)
946	Solomon completes construction of the royal palace (1Ki 7:1; 2Ch 8:1)
930	Solomon dies and is succeeded by his son Rehoboam (1Ki 11:43; 2Ch 9:31)

standard). 4The portico at the front of the temple was twenty cubits[a] long across the width of the building and twenty[b] cubits high.

He overlaid the inside with pure gold. 5He paneled the main hall with juniper and covered it with fine gold and decorated it with palm tree and chain designs. 6He adorned the temple with precious stones. And the gold he used was gold of Parvaim. 7He overlaid the ceiling beams, doorframes, walls and doors of the temple with gold, and he carved cherubim on the walls.

8He built the Most Holy Place, its length corresponding to the width of the temple—twenty cubits long and twenty cubits wide. He overlaid the inside with six hundred talents[c] of fine gold. 9The gold nails weighed fifty shekels.[d] He also overlaid the upper parts with gold.

10For the Most Holy Place he made a pair of sculptured cherubim and overlaid them with gold. 11The total wingspan of the cherubim was twenty cubits. One wing of the first cherub was five cubits[e] long and touched the temple wall, while its other wing, also five cubits long, touched the wing of the other cherub. 12Similarly one wing of the second cherub was five cubits long and touched the other temple wall, and its other wing, also five cubits long, touched the wing of the first cherub. 13The wings of these cherubim extended twenty cubits. They stood on their feet, facing the main hall.[f]



Architecture & Building

The pillars erected by Solomon were free-standing and made of bronze, probably about 27 feet high (2Ch 3:17). Pillars were commonly used in this way to mark the entrance to ancient temples. Since pillars are sometimes decorated like plants, the pillars could have represented trees. Their names seem to make them symbolic of God's presence in his strength.

14He made the curtain of blue, purple and crimson yarn and fine linen, with cherubim worked into it.

15For the front of the temple he made two pillars, which together were thirty-five cubits[g] long, each with a capital five cubits high. 16He made interwoven chains[h] and put them on top of the pillars. He also made a hundred pomegranates and attached them to the chains. 17He erected the pillars in the front of the temple, one to the south and one to the north. The one to the south he named Jakin[i] and the one to the north Boaz.[j]

The Temple's Furnishings

4 1He made a bronze altar twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide and ten cubits high.[k] 2He made the Sea of cast metal, circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim and five cubits[l] high. It took a line of thirty cubits[m] to measure around it. 3Below the rim, figures of bulls encircled it—ten to a cubit.[n] The bulls were cast in two rows in one piece with the Sea.

4The Sea stood on twelve bulls, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east. The Sea rested on top

[a] *4* That is, about 30 feet or about 9 meters; also in verses 8, 11 and 13 [b] *4* Some Septuagint and Syriac manuscripts; Hebrew *and a hundred and twenty* [c] *8* That is, about 23 tons or about 21 metric tons [d] *9* That is, about 1 1/4 pounds or about 575 grams [e] *11* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters; also in verse 15 [f] *13* Or *facing inward* [g] *15* That is, about 53 feet or about 16 meters [h] *16* Or possibly *made chains in the inner sanctuary*; the meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. [i] *17* *Jakin* probably means *he establishes.* [j] *17* *Boaz* probably means *in him is strength.* [k] *1* That is, about 30 feet long and wide and 15 feet high or about 9 meters long and wide and 4.5 meters high [l] *2* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters [m] *2* That is, about 45 feet or about 14 meters [n] *3* That is, about 18 inches or about 45 centimeters

of them, and their hindquarters were toward the center. 5It was a handbreadth[a] in thickness, and its rim was like the rim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It held three thousand baths.[b]

6He then made ten basins for washing and placed five on the south side and five on the north. In them the things to be used for the burnt offerings were rinsed, but the Sea was to be used by the priests for washing.

7He made ten gold lampstands according to the specifications for them and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north.

8He made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north. He also made a hundred gold sprinkling bowls.

9He made the courtyard of the priests, and the large court and the doors for the court, and overlaid the doors with bronze. 10He placed the Sea on the south side, at the southeast corner.

11And Huram also made the pots and shovels and sprinkling bowls.

So Huram finished the work he had undertaken for King Solomon in the temple of God:

12the two pillars;
the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;
the two sets of network decorating the two bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars;
13the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of network (two rows of pomegranates for each network, decorating the bowl-shaped capitals on top of the pillars);
14the stands with their basins;
15the Sea and the twelve bulls under it;
16the pots, shovels, meat forks and all related articles.

All the objects that Huram-Abi made for King Solomon for the temple of the LORD were of polished bronze. 17The king had them cast in clay molds in the plain of the Jordan between Sukkoth and Zarethan.[c] 18All these things that Solomon made amounted to so much that the weight of the bronze could not be calculated.

19Solomon also made all the furnishings that were in God's temple:

the golden altar;
the tables on which was the bread of the Presence;
20the lampstands of pure gold with their lamps, to burn in front of the inner sanctuary as prescribed;
21the gold floral work and lamps and tongs (they were solid gold);
22the pure gold wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and censers; and the gold doors of the temple: the inner doors to the Most Holy Place and the doors of the main hall.

[a] *5* That is, about 3 inches or about 7.5 centimeters
[b] *5* That is, about 18,000 gallons or about 66,000 liters
[c] *17* Hebrew *Zeredatha*, a variant of *Zarethan*

TIME CAPSULE	945 to 930 B.C.
945–924	Shishak, pharaoh of Egypt (Shoshenq I or Sheshonk)
945	The term "Pharaoh" is added to the Egyptian king's official title
934–612	Neo-Assyrian period
934	Ashur-dan, king of Assyria, fortifies city of Asshur
930	Solomon dies and is succeeded by his son Rehoboam (1Ki 11:43)

TRANSITION

The Ceremony of the Ark

Construction of the temple took 7 years to complete, lasting from 966 to 959 B.C. (1Ki 6:37, 38). The Chronicler associates the temple site with Mount Moriah on which Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac (2Ch 3:1; Ge 22:2). Since this mound was north of the ancient City of David, upon completion of the temple the city limits were extended to include the temple area. It was then necessary to bring the ark up from its former resting place (2Ch 1:4; 5:2).

• **2 Chronicles 5:1—7:22**

2 Chronicles

5:1 When all the work Solomon had done for the temple of the LORD was finished, he brought in the things his father David had dedicated—the silver and gold and all the furnishings—and he placed them in the treasuries of God's temple.

The Ark Brought to the Temple

2Then Solomon summoned to Jerusalem the elders of Israel, all the heads of the tribes and the chiefs of the Israelite families, to bring up the ark of the LORD's covenant from Zion, the City of David. 3And all the Israelites came together to the king at the time of the festival in the seventh month.

4When all the elders of Israel had arrived,
the Levites took up the ark, 5and they brought
up the ark and the tent of meeting and all the
sacred furnishings in it. The Levitical priests
carried them up; 6and King Solomon and the
entire assembly of Israel that had gathered
about him were before the ark, sacrificing so
many sheep and cattle that they could not be
recorded or counted.

7The priests then brought the ark of the
LORD's covenant to its place in the inner sanc-
tuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, and
put it beneath the wings of the cherubim. 8The
cherubim spread their wings over the place
of the ark and covered the ark and its carry-
ing poles. 9These poles were so long that their
ends, extending from the ark, could be seen
from in front of the inner sanctuary, but not
from outside the Holy Place; and they are still
there today. 10There was nothing in the ark ex-
cept the two tablets that Moses had placed in
it at Horeb, where the LORD made a covenant
with the Israelites after they came out of Egypt.

11The priests then withdrew from the Holy
Place. All the priests who were there had con-
secrated themselves, regardless of their divi-
sions. 12All the Levites who were musicians—
Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun and their sons and
relatives—stood on the east side of the altar,
dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals,
harps and lyres. They were accompanied by
120 priests sounding trumpets. 13The trum-
peters and musicians joined in unison to give
praise and thanks to the LORD. Accompanied
by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments,
the singers raised their voices in praise to the
LORD and sang:

"He is good;
his love endures forever."

Then the temple of the LORD was filled with
the cloud, 14and the priests could not perform
their service because of the cloud, for the glory
of the LORD filled the temple of God.

6 1Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said
that he would dwell in a dark cloud; 2I have
built a magnificent temple for you, a place for
you to dwell forever."

3While the whole assembly of Israel was
standing there, the king turned around and
blessed them. 4Then he said:

"Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel,
who with his hands has fulfilled what he
promised with his mouth to my father Da-
vid. For he said, 5'Since the day I brought
my people out of Egypt, I have not chosen
a city in any tribe of Israel to have a tem-
ple built so that my Name might be there,
nor have I chosen anyone to be ruler over
my people Israel. 6But now I have chosen
Jerusalem for my Name to be there, and I
have chosen David to rule my people Is-
rael.'

7"My father David had it in his heart to
build a temple for the Name of the LORD,
the God of Israel. 8But the LORD said to
my father David, 'You did well to have it in
your heart to build a temple for my Name.
9Nevertheless, you are not the one to build
the temple, but your son, your own flesh
and blood—he is the one who will build
the temple for my Name.'

10"The LORD has kept the promise he
made. I have succeeded David my father
and now I sit on the throne of Israel, just
as the LORD promised, and I have built the
temple for the Name of the LORD, the God
of Israel. 11There I have placed the ark, in
which is the covenant of the LORD that he
made with the people of Israel."

Solomon's Prayer of Dedication

12Then Solomon stood before the altar of the
LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel
and spread out his hands. 13Now he had made
a bronze platform, five cubits long, five cubits
wide and three cubits high,[a] and had placed it
in the center of the outer court. He stood on
the platform and then knelt down before the
whole assembly of Israel and spread out his
hands toward heaven. 14He said:

"LORD, the God of Israel, there is no
God like you in heaven or on earth—you
who keep your covenant of love with your
servants who continue wholeheartedly in
your way. 15You have kept your promise to
your servant David my father; with your
mouth you have promised and with your
hand you have fulfilled it—as it is today.

16"Now, LORD, the God of Israel, keep for
your servant David my father the prom-
ises you made to him when you said, 'You
shall never fail to have a successor to sit
before me on the throne of Israel, if only
your descendants are careful in all they do
to walk before me according to my law, as
you have done.' 17And now, LORD, the God
of Israel, let your word that you promised
your servant David come true.

18"But will God really dwell on earth

[a] *13* That is, about 7 1/2 feet long and wide and 4 1/2 feet high or about 2.3 meters long and wide and 1.4 meters high

with humans? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain you. How much less this temple I have built! 19Yet, LORD my God, give attention to your servant's prayer and his plea for mercy. Hear the cry and the prayer that your servant is praying in your presence. 20May your eyes be open toward this temple day and night, this place of which you said you would put your Name there. May you hear the prayer your servant prays toward this place. 21Hear the supplications of your servant and of your people Israel when they pray toward this place. Hear from heaven, your dwelling place; and when you hear, forgive.

22"When anyone wrongs their neighbor and is required to take an oath and they come and swear the oath before your altar in this temple, 23then hear from heaven and act. Judge between your servants, condemning the guilty and bringing down on their heads what they have done, and vindicating the innocent by treating them in accordance with their innocence.

24"When your people Israel have been defeated by an enemy because they have sinned against you and when they turn back and give praise to your name, praying and making supplication before you in this temple, 25then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your people Israel and bring them back to the land you gave to them and their ancestors.

26"When the heavens are shut up and there is no rain because your people have sinned against you, and when they pray toward this place and give praise to your name and turn from their sin because you have afflicted them, 27then hear from heaven and forgive the sin of your servants, your people Israel. Teach them the right way to live, and send rain on the land you gave your people for an inheritance.

28"When famine or plague comes to the land, or blight or mildew, locusts or grasshoppers, or when enemies besiege them in any of their cities, whatever disaster or disease may come, 29and when a prayer or plea is made by anyone among your people Israel—being aware of their afflictions and pains, and spreading out their hands toward this temple— 30then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Forgive, and deal with everyone according to all they do, since you know their hearts (for you alone know the human heart), 31so that they will fear you and walk in obedience to you all the time they live in the land you gave our ancestors.

32"As for the foreigner who does not belong to your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of your great name and your mighty hand and your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple, 33then hear from heaven, your dwelling place. Do whatever the foreigner asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you, as do your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears your Name.

The Spread of Solomon's Fame
Solomon's influence in economic and political affairs was enhanced by the transportation and trade routes that intersected his kingdom. That Solomon acquired much through trade is suggested by the response of the queen of Sheba on her visit to Solomon, and by the mention of traders and merchants (2Ch 9:14) in the account of his wealth.

34 "When your people go to war against
their enemies, wherever you send them,
and when they pray to you toward this city
you have chosen and the temple I have
built for your Name, 35 then hear from
heaven their prayer and their plea, and up-
hold their cause.
36 "When they sin against you — for there
is no one who does not sin — and you be-
come angry with them and give them over
to the enemy, who takes them captive to
a land far away or near; 37 and if they have
a change of heart in the land where they
are held captive, and repent and plead with
you in the land of their captivity and say,
'We have sinned, we have done wrong and
acted wickedly'; 38 and if they turn back to
you with all their heart and soul in the land
of their captivity where they were taken,
and pray toward the land you gave their
ancestors, toward the city you have chosen
and toward the temple I have built for your
Name; 39 then from heaven, your dwelling
place, hear their prayer and their pleas,
and uphold their cause. And forgive your
people, who have sinned against you.
40 "Now, my God, may your eyes be open
and your ears attentive to the prayers of-
fered in this place.

41 "Now arise, LORD God, and come to
your resting place,
you and the ark of your might.
May your priests, LORD God, be
clothed with salvation,
may your faithful people rejoice in
your goodness.
42 LORD God, do not reject your
anointed one.
Remember the great love promised
to David your servant."

The Dedication of the Temple

7 1 When Solomon finished praying, fire came
down from heaven and consumed the burnt
offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the
LORD filled the temple. 2 The priests could not
enter the temple of the LORD because the glo-
ry of the LORD filled it. 3 When all the Israelites
saw the fire coming down and the glory of the
LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pave-
ment with their faces to the ground, and they
worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying,

"He is good;
his love endures forever."

4 Then the king and all the people offered sac-
rifices before the LORD. 5 And King Solomon of-
fered a sacrifice of twenty-two thousand head
of cattle and a hundred and twenty thousand
sheep and goats. So the king and all the peo-
ple dedicated the temple of God. 6 The priests
took their positions, as did the Levites with the
LORD's musical instruments, which King Da-
vid had made for praising the LORD and which
were used when he gave thanks, saying, "His
love endures forever." Opposite the Levites, the
priests blew their trumpets, and all the Israel-
ites were standing.
7 Solomon consecrated the middle part of the
courtyard in front of the temple of the LORD,
and there he offered burnt offerings and the fat
of the fellowship offerings, because the bronze
altar he had made could not hold the burnt of-
ferings, the grain offerings and the fat portions.
8 So Solomon observed the festival at that
time for seven days, and all Israel with him — a
vast assembly, people from Lebo Hamath to the
Wadi of Egypt. 9 On the eighth day they held
an assembly, for they had celebrated the dedi-
cation of the altar for seven days and the festi-
val for seven days more. 10 On the twenty-third
day of the seventh month he sent the people
to their homes, joyful and glad in heart for the
good things the LORD had done for David and
Solomon and for his people Israel.

The LORD Appears to Solomon

11 When Solomon had finished the temple
of the LORD and the royal palace, and had suc-
ceeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do
in the temple of the LORD and in his own palace,
12 the LORD appeared to him at night and said:

"I have heard your prayer and have cho-
sen this place for myself as a temple for
sacrifices.
13 "When I shut up the heavens so that
there is no rain, or command locusts to
devour the land or send a plague among
my people, 14 if my people, who are called
by my name, will humble themselves and
pray and seek my face and turn from their
wicked ways, then I will hear from heav-
en, and I will forgive their sin and will heal
their land. 15 Now my eyes will be open and
my ears attentive to the prayers offered in
this place. 16 I have chosen and consecrat-
ed this temple so that my Name may be
there forever. My eyes and my heart will
always be there.
17 "As for you, if you walk before me faith-
fully as David your father did, and do all I
command, and observe my decrees and
laws, 18 I will establish your royal throne, as

Chariots and Chariot Cities (2Ch 8:5, 6)

The first chariots were apparently four-wheeled wagons or carts used to transport soldiers into battle. Pictures of such vehicles have been found from as early as 3100 B.C. The Egyptians, the Assyrians, and the Romans all used chariots in war. They were symbols of mobility and power.

In its classic form, the chariot is a two-wheeled, horse-drawn vehicle from which a soldier rides and fights. Through the centuries, most chariots carried two passengers, a driver and a fighter, and were drawn by two horses. The best chariots were made in Egypt starting about 1500 B.C., before the Hebrews' Egyptian service. Several complete Egyptian chariots from this time were recovered in A.D. 1922 from the tomb of Tutankhamun, one of the pharaohs whose goods were buried with him.

Tutankhamun's chariots are made of carefully shaped wood, glued and tied together with rawhide. The platform carried two riders side by side; it was a wooden frame with woven straps of leather for the floor. All this made the chariot light in weight, very strong, and as springy as engineering would allow. The "chariots fitted with iron" driven by Israel's enemies (Jos 17:16, 18; Jdg 1:19; 4:3, 13) were probably wood with iron tires or metal reinforcement at certain points.

Chariot forces became a crucial part of an adequate defense in the ancient Near East. King David confiscated chariots from his conquered enemies (2Sa 8:3, 4). But it was his son Solomon who realized the military potential of the chariot. He not only imported Egyptian chariots, but also established "cities for his chariots" (2Ch 8:6). Archaeological excavations at Hazor, one of the cities fortified by Solomon (1Ki 9:15, 17–19), shows the remains of chariot enclosures dating to Solomon's time.

I covenanted with David your father when
I said, 'You shall never fail to have a successor to rule over Israel.'
19"But if you[a] turn away and forsake the
decrees and commands I have given you[a]
and go off to serve other gods and worship
them, 20then I will uproot Israel from my
land, which I have given them, and will reject this temple I have consecrated for my
Name. I will make it a byword and an object
of ridicule among all peoples. 21This temple
will become a heap of rubble. All[b] who pass
by will be appalled and say, 'Why has the
LORD done such a thing to this land and to
this temple?' 22People will answer, 'Because
they have forsaken the LORD, the God of
their ancestors, who brought them out of
Egypt, and have embraced other gods,
worshiping and serving them—that is why
he brought all this disaster on them.'"

[a] *19* The Hebrew is plural. [b] *21* See some Septuagint manuscripts, Old Latin, Syriac, Arabic and Targum; Hebrew *And though this temple is now so imposing, all* [c] *2* Hebrew *Huram*, a variant of *Hiram*; also in verse 18 [d] *6* Or *charioteers*

TRANSITION

Building the Royal Palaces

The period of 20 years from 966 to 946 B.C. included 7 years of temple construction and an additional 13 years for the king's palace (1Ki 6:37–7:1). Besides these two major projects, other buildings were erected (see "Building the King's Palace" at 1Ki 7:1).

One particular house was built for Solomon's wife from Egypt, the daughter of Pharaoh. While both the historians of Kings (1Ki 9:24) and the Chronicler (2Ch 8:11) record this event, Chronicles emphasizes that the pagan princess must not dwell in the sacred places near the ark. As usual, the priestly history shows great concern for the ritual holiness of the temple of Israel's God.

• 2 Chronicles 8:1—9:31

2 Chronicles

Solomon's Other Activities

8:1 At the end of twenty years, during which Solomon built the temple of the LORD and his own palace, 2Solomon rebuilt the villages that Hiram[c] had given him, and settled Israelites in them. 3Solomon then went to Hamath Zobah and captured it. 4He also built up Tadmor in the desert and all the store cities he had built in Hamath. 5He rebuilt Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon as fortified cities, with walls and with gates and bars, 6as well as Baalath and all his store cities, and all the cities for his chariots and for his horses[d]—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, in Lebanon and throughout all the territory he ruled.

Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (2Ch 9:1–9)

The queen of Sheba who visited Solomon at Jerusalem (2Ch 9:1) is otherwise unnamed in Scripture. Presumably, Sheba was a land in the southwestern Arabian peninsula, and was known in native sources as Saba. The kingdom of Saba was a complex society by the end of the 1st millennium B.C.

The term "Saba," referring to the people called Sabeans, is mentioned in the inscriptions of two Assyrian kings: Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) and Sargon II (721–705 B.C.). Although these Sabeans were in northern Arabia, it is possible that they had originated in south Arabia (in Sheba) and later expanded along important northern trade routes.

Sabean civilization appears to have been sophisticated, having large urban centers, irrigation systems, and a myriad of trade connections throughout the Near East and southern Asia. Sabean merchants (or "merchants of Sheba") were well known for their trade items (Isa 60:6; Eze 27:22, 23).

It is possible that the queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem, not only to visit socially with Solomon, but also to strengthen trade relations with him. Solomon had just built a cargo fleet that traversed the Gulf of Aqaba (1Ki 9:26–28), and the queen's abundant gifts to him (1Ch 9:9) may have been in exchange for trade concessions.

7 There were still people left from the Hittites,
Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites
(these people were not Israelites). 8 Solomon
conscripted the descendants of all these peo-
ple remaining in the land—whom the Israel-
ites had not destroyed—to serve as slave la-
bor, as it is to this day. 9 But Solomon did not
make slaves of the Israelites for his work; they
were his fighting men, commanders of his
captains, and commanders of his chariots and
charioteers. 10 They were also King Solomon's
chief officials—two hundred and fifty officials
supervising the men.

11 Solomon brought Pharaoh's daughter up
from the City of David to the palace he had built
for her, for he said, "My wife must not live in the
palace of David king of Israel, because the plac-
es the ark of the LORD has entered are holy."

12 On the altar of the LORD that he had built in
front of the portico, Solomon sacrificed burnt
offerings to the LORD, 13 according to the dai-
ly requirement for offerings commanded by
Moses for the Sabbaths, the New Moons and
the three annual festivals—the Festival of Un-
leavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the
Festival of Tabernacles. 14 In keeping with the
ordinance of his father David, he appointed
the divisions of the priests for their duties, and
the Levites to lead the praise and to assist the
priests according to each day's requirement.
He also appointed the gatekeepers by divisions
for the various gates, because this was what
David the man of God had ordered. 15 They did
not deviate from the king's commands to the
priests or to the Levites in any matter, includ-
ing that of the treasuries.

16 All Solomon's work was carried out, from
the day the foundation of the temple of the
LORD was laid until its completion. So the tem-
ple of the LORD was finished.

17 Then Solomon went to Ezion Geber and
Elath on the coast of Edom. 18 And Hiram sent
him ships commanded by his own men, sailors
who knew the sea. These, with Solomon's men,
sailed to Ophir and brought back four hundred
and fifty talents[a] of gold, which they delivered
to King Solomon.

Geography & Environment
Ophir is the name of a remote source of gold (2Ch 8:18), probably in the direction of Yemen and across the Indian Ocean to the east. Apart from this, it is not possible to identify its location. There was some ancient gold production in the biblical Cush, roughly corresponding to Upper Egypt and the Sudan. As is still true, remoteness of origin adds glamor to luxury products.

The Queen of Sheba Visits Solomon

9 1 When the queen of Sheba heard of Solo-
mon's fame, she came to Jerusalem to test
him with hard questions. Arriving with a very
great caravan—with camels carrying spices,
large quantities of gold, and precious stones—
she came to Solomon and talked with him about
all she had on her mind. 2 Solomon answered all
her questions; nothing was too hard for him to
explain to her. 3 When the queen of Sheba saw
the wisdom of Solomon, as well as the palace
he had built, 4 the food on his table, the seating
of his officials, the attending servants in their
robes, the cupbearers in their robes and the
burnt offerings he made at[b] the temple of the
LORD, she was overwhelmed.

5 She said to the king, "The report I heard in
my own country about your achievements and
your wisdom is true. 6 But I did not believe what
they said until I came and saw with my own
eyes. Indeed, not even half the greatness of your

[a] *18* That is, about 17 tons or about 15 metric tons
[b] *4* Or *and the ascent by which he went up to*

wisdom was told me; you have far exceeded the report I heard. 7How happy your people must be! How happy your officials, who continually stand before you and hear your wisdom! 8Praise be to the LORD your God, who has delighted in you and placed you on his throne as king to rule for the LORD your God. Because of the love of your God for Israel and his desire to uphold them forever, he has made you king over them, to maintain justice and righteousness."

9Then she gave the king 120 talents[a] of gold, large quantities of spices, and precious stones. There had never been such spices as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon.

10 (The servants of Hiram and the servants of Solomon brought gold from Ophir; they also brought algumwood[b] and precious stones. 11The king used the algumwood to make steps for the temple of the LORD and for the royal palace, and to make harps and lyres for the musicians. Nothing like them had ever been seen in Judah.)

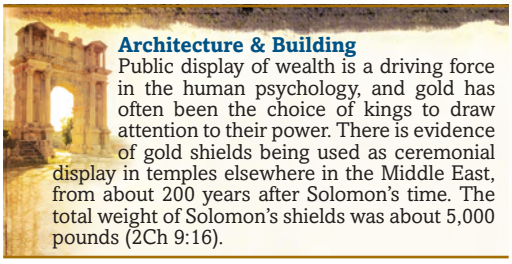
12King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired and asked for; he gave her more than she had brought to him. Then she left and returned with her retinue to her own country.

Solomon's Splendor

13The weight of the gold that Solomon received yearly was 666 talents,[c] 14not including the revenues brought in by merchants and traders. Also all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the territories brought gold and silver to Solomon.

15King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels[d] of hammered gold went into each shield. 16He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold, with three hundred shekels[e] of gold in each shield. The king put them in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

17Then the king made a great throne covered with ivory and overlaid with pure gold. 18The throne had six steps, and a footstool of gold was attached to it. On both sides of the seat were armrests, with a lion standing beside each of them. 19Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like it had ever been made for any other kingdom. 20All King Solomon's goblets were gold, and all the household articles in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. Nothing was made of silver, because silver was considered of little value in Solomon's day. 21The king had a fleet of trading ships[f] manned by Hiram's[g] servants. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.



Architecture & Building
Public display of wealth is a driving force in the human psychology, and gold has often been the choice of kings to draw attention to their power. There is evidence of gold shields being used as ceremonial display in temples elsewhere in the Middle East, from about 200 years after Solomon's time. The total weight of Solomon's shields was about 5,000 pounds (2Ch 9:16).

22King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. 23All the kings of the earth sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart. 24Year after year, everyone who came brought a gift—articles of silver and gold, and robes, weapons and spices, and horses and mules.

25Solomon had four thousand stalls for horses and chariots, and twelve thousand horses,[h] which he kept in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. 26He ruled over all the kings from the Euphrates River to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. 27The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as plentiful as sycamore-fig trees in the foothills. 28Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from all other countries.

Solomon's Death

29As for the other events of Solomon's reign, from beginning to end, are they not written in the records of Nathan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite and in the visions of Iddo the seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat? 30Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 31Then he rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of David his father. And Rehoboam his son succeeded him as king.

[a] *9* That is, about 4 1/2 tons or about 4 metric tons
[b] *10* Probably a variant of *almugwood*
[c] *13* That is, about 25 tons or about 23 metric tons
[d] *15* That is, about 15 pounds or about 6.9 kilograms
[e] *16* That is, about 7 1/2 pounds or about 3.5 kilograms
[f] *21* Hebrew *of ships that could go to Tarshish*
[g] *21* Hebrew *Huram*, a variant of *Hiram*
[h] *25* Or *charioteers*

The Fall of Two Nations

The positive accomplishments of the united monarchy slowly began to unravel, and Solomon's kingdom eventually divided into Israel and Judah.

(930–586 B.C.)

The brokenness of God's people led to brokenness in the world. Solomon's empire broke apart partly because Solomon and Rehoboam failed to be instruments of justice for their people. The many positive accomplishments of the united monarchy now slowly began to unravel, eventually resulting in the division of Solomon's kingdom into Israel (north) and Judah (south).

The story of the divided monarchy is one of gradual decay, with only brief interludes of hope. The two little nations of Israel and Judah spent most of their existence as vassal states, serving first the Neo-Assyrian Empire (934–612 B.C.) and then the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626–539 B.C.). Israel was destroyed by the Neo-Assyrians; Judah by the Neo-Babylonians.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

The Iron Age (1200–600 B.C.) spans the united and divided monarchies, and remains and records of this age often relate to the Bible. For example, Pharaoh Shishak I left inscriptions listing the cities and towns that he conquered in Palestine after the division of the kingdoms. While Egypt was not a strong force in the region, the records of other empires, especially those of Assyria, provide more details to supplement the biblical accounts.

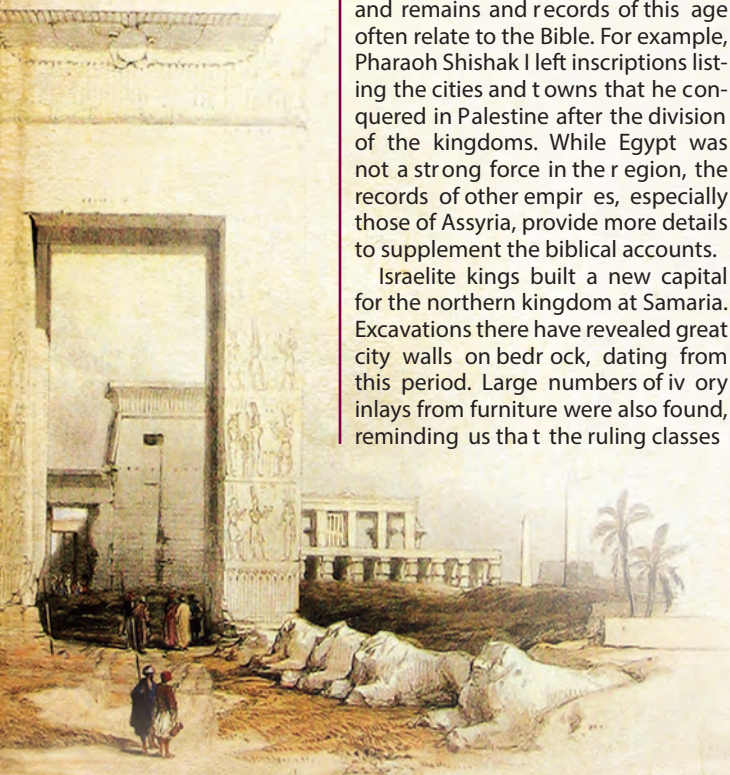
Israelite kings built a new capital for the northern kingdom at Samaria. Excavations there have revealed great city walls on bedrock, dating from this period. Large numbers of ivory inlays from furniture were also found, reminding us that the ruling classes in Israel were incredibly wealthy. The prophets criticized the upper classes because their "houses adorned with ivory" (Am 3:15) were built by exploiting the poor.

King Ahab rebuilt the stables at Megiddo, and made it once again a great city. He also built a palace at Hazor as part of their renovation of that city. His economic power made him an international force. According to an inscription of Shalmaneser III of Assyria, "Ahab the Israelite" brought 2,000 chariots and 10,000 infantry to the battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.). Ahab apparently had picked up on Solomon's trade in horses and chariots. Certainly he was a force in halting Assyria's advance toward Palestine.

Israel appears in other important inscriptions of the period. The famous Moabite Stone tells how King Mesha of Moab rebelled successfully against Israel in the 9th century B.C. The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III (841 B.C.) shows, in a series of carvings, conquered kings paying tribute to the Neo-Assyrian emperor. In the first "picture" of an Israelite king, Jehu of Israel is shown kissing the feet of Shalmaneser.

Records and annals of Assyrian kings reveal contact between the Neo-Assyrian Empire and the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. King Azariah (Uzziah) of Judah is listed in the records of Tiglath-Pileser III as leading a revolt against Assyria. Both Assyrian inscriptions and excavated cities in Israel record that Tiglath-Pileser overran Israel (about 732 B.C.), laying waste cities, making Galilee an Assyrian province, and deporting the population to other parts of his empire.

Ironically, one of the more important archaeological finds related to the fall of Israel is found to the south, in Jerusalem. The "Broad Wall" of Judah's king Hezekiah was a city wall built on the western hills of Jerusalem. It tells us that, at this time, Jerusalem was greatly enlarged, partly to handle the flood of refugees from Israel.



Judah herself experienced Assyrian power through Assyria's king Sennacherib. Hezekiah undertook a massive water project to carry water from the Gihon spring, outside the city walls, through a tunnel into the city. The tunnel was dug to ensure the water supply at the time of Sennacherib's invasion in 701 B.C. Sennacherib also left a long document describing his siege of Jerusalem. The carvings on Sennacherib's palace walls included large pictures of the siege and destruction of Lachish, an important Judahite fortress. The carvings show the siege process, the storming of the city, and the surrender of the citizens.

The Neo-Assyrian Empire fell around 612 B.C., but in its place arose the Neo-Babylonian Empire, which would ultimately destroy Jerusalem and carry the kings of Judah into exile. From the period of the Babylonian invasions are the Lachish Letters. These messages are written on pieces of broken pottery to the military commander at Lachish (which had been rebuilt). In them, an officer describes how he can no longer see the signals from other outposts, a sign of the advance of the Babylonian army.

The glory years of Solomon were ended, replaced by a monarchy divided into North and South.

In Jerusalem itself, recent excavations in the City of David have uncovered what is called the House of Ahiel, a 6th-century house that was destroyed by the Babylonians in their attacks on the city. The house had been burned, and there were Babylonian arrowheads in the ruins.

On a more peaceful note are the many seals and seal impressions from this period found in Jerusalem. One seal belongs to Gedaliah, the governor, who may have been the governor put in place by the Babylonians after they destroyed Jerusalem. Another fascinating seal impression bears the name of Baruch, son of Neriah, the name of the prophet Jeremiah's friend and scribe.

THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

The Assyrians were one of the great superpowers of the ancient world, with an empire centered on the Tigris River. One of the keys to Assyrian power was a large, permanent army, with soldiers trained in every specialty needed for war. Artists were important in Assyria, and literature and architecture flourished. The most spectacular work was stone carving, and Assyrian palaces and monuments are filled with carvings, showing the nation at war, at work, and in the daily round of life. On the other side of their character, the Assyrians were unspeakably cruel and tortured prisoners as a regular practice. The Assyrian Empire was overthrown by the Medes and Babylonians in the years between 612 and 609 B.C.

The other superpower in the East was Babylon. One of their greatest kings was Nebuchadnezzar, whose armies destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. In addition to his military and political ambitions, Nebuchadnezzar rebuilt Babylon to make it one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The Ishtar Gate was a double gate, faced with enameled bricks, in patterns of flowers, animals, and dragons. The palace was also built of enameled bricks, and contained one room decorated with bricks of gold and blue. The "hanging gardens," a set of gardens built on terraces that thrust up into the air, is one of the wonders of the ancient world. Babylon was taken by the Persians in 539 B.C.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Biblical books that relate this period come from three groups, the first consisting of portions from Kings and Chronicles. The history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel shows their alternation between faithfulness and faithlessness in their relationships with Yahweh.

A second group relates to the Neo-Assyrian period and includes the prophetic writings of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah, Jonah, and Zephaniah. Amos and Hosea preached in Israel, with an emphasis on social and economic justice. They warned of the coming punishment of Yahweh because of Israel's failure to keep the covenant. Isaiah was a counselor to the kings of Judah. He worked through two major international crises, which he saw as signs of God's rule over the nations, and of God's displeasure over Judah's failure to bring about social justice. Micah was a rural contemporary of Isaiah who also preached against injustice, but lifted up a vision of a day of peace and salvation. Zephaniah began preaching sometime after 640 B.C., condemning idolatry and injustice. All these prophets were conscious of God's concern for justice and the failure of their nation to bring justice to the people.

The third group relates to the Neo-Babylonian period. Parts of the Book of Daniel tell the story of a Jewish youth exiled to Babylon, while the Book of Lamentations mourns the destruction of Jerusalem. Also included are prophecies from Jeremiah, Habakkuk, Nahum, Ezekiel, and Obadiah. Jeremiah lived through the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. He continued to call for social justice and loyalty to Yahweh, but also introduced the vision of a new covenant and of hope. Habakkuk records the pain of seeing the Babylonians on the march and wonders where God is in these events. Nahum rejoices over the defeat of Assyria. Ezekiel was the first prophet to write from exile in Babylon. He first preached a message of doom and judgment but, after the

destruction of Jerusalem, began to preach hope. Obadiah is a song of anger against the people of Edom for their part in the destruction of Jerusalem.

THE DIVIDED MONARCHY IN ISRAEL

Israel was more united under the monarchy than ever before, but the old tribal loyalties remained, at least under the surface. Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, had surrounded himself with other Benjamites (1Sa 22:7), as had David with members of his own tribe of Judah. These two tribes remained rivals throughout the united monarchy. While resentment over the forced labor imposed by Solomon precipitated the division of Israel into different parts (1Ki 12:1–17), the divisions were there already.

The division of Israel into two kingdoms led to some resentment and even the threat of war, but war was averted and before long the two new nations were diplomatic allies. However, the glory years of Solomon's united monarchy were ended, replaced by a divided monarchy—a northern kingdom, which from this time on assumed the old name "Israel," and a southern kingdom of Judah.

The division of the kingdom left David's empire in shambles. Not only was Israel split, but the other nations that David had conquered soon achieved independence. The continuing weakness of the Egyptian and Assyrian empires allowed the weakened land of Israel to survive, but Aram-Damascus (Syria), just to the northeast, was a growing threat.

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: The Kingdom Divides

The books of Kings are an anonymous writer's reflections on the history of the Israelite monarchy from the accession of Solomon to the end. The story of the uneasy coexistence of Israel and Judah continues from 1Ki 12:1 until the fall of the northern kingdom (2Ki 17:41). The unity between North (Israel) and South (Judah) under Saul, David, and Solomon had been held together by the charisma and strength of its leaders. Now the tribes went separate ways, following separate leaders: Jeroboam I for the northern tribes and Rehoboam, Solomon's son, for the southern tribes of Judah and Simeon.

• **1 Kings 12:1–24**

1 Kings

Israel Rebels Against Rehoboam

12 **:1** Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all
Israel had gone there to make him king.
2 When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he
was still in Egypt, where he had fled from King
Solomon), he returned from[a] Egypt. 3 So they
sent for Jeroboam, and he and the whole as-
sembly of Israel went to Rehoboam and said to
him: 4 "Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but
now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke
he put on us, and we will serve you."

5 Rehoboam answered, "Go away for three
days and then come back to me." So the people
went away.

6 Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders
who had served his father Solomon during his
lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer
these people?" he asked.

7 They replied, "If today you will be a servant
to these people and serve them and give them
a favorable answer, they will always be your
servants."

8 But Rehoboam rejected the advice the el-
ders gave him and consulted the young men
who had grown up with him and were serv-
ing him. 9 He asked them, "What is your ad-
vice? How should we answer these people who
say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put
on us'?"

10 The young men who had grown up with
him replied, "These people have said to you,
'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make
our yoke lighter.' Now tell them, 'My little fin-
ger is thicker than my father's waist. 11 My fa-
ther laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it
even heavier. My father scourged you with
whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"

12 Three days later Jeroboam and all the peo-
ple returned to Rehoboam, as the king had
said, "Come back to me in three days." 13 The
king answered the people harshly. Rejecting
the advice given him by the elders, 14 he fol-
lowed the advice of the young men and said,
"My father made your yoke heavy; I will make
it even heavier. My father scourged you with
whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." 15 So
the king did not listen to the people, for this
turn of events was from the LORD, to fulfill the
word the LORD had spoken to Jeroboam son of
Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

16 When all Israel saw that the king refused to
listen to them, they answered the king:

"What share do we have in David,
what part in Jesse's son?
To your tents, Israel!
Look after your own house, David!"

So the Israelites went home. 17 But as for the Is-
raelites who were living in the towns of Judah,
Rehoboam still ruled over them.

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[a] 2 Or *he remained in*

18 King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram,[a] who
was in charge of forced labor, but all Israel
stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however,
managed to get into his chariot and escape to
Jerusalem. 19 So Israel has been in rebellion
against the house of David to this day.
20 When all the Israelites heard that Jeroboam had returned, they sent and called him to
the assembly and made him king over all Israel. Only the tribe of Judah remained loyal to the
house of David.
21 When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem,
he mustered all Judah and the tribe of Benjamin — a hundred and eighty thousand able
young men — to go to war against Israel and to
regain the kingdom for Rehoboam son of Solomon.
22 But this word of God came to Shemaiah the
man of God: 23 "Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah, to all Judah and Benjamin,
and to the rest of the people, 24 'This is what the
LORD says: Do not go up to fight against your
brothers, the Israelites. Go home, every one of
you, for this is my doing.'" So they obeyed the
word of the LORD and went home again, as the
LORD had ordered.

[a] *18* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 4:6 and 5:14); Hebrew *Adoram* [b] *25* Hebrew *Penuel,* a variant of *Peniel* [c] *30* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text *people went to the one as far as Dan*

TRANSITION

First Dynasty of the Northern Kingdom

Israel in the north was much larger and stronger than the southern Judah. But Israel was also less unified than Judah. Not only did it include more tribes, but it had neither a central shrine, like the temple in Jerusalem, nor the ark of the covenant. To remedy this lack, Israel's first king, Jeroboam I, built replacement shrines at Dan and Bethel. These were probably dedicated to Israel's one God, but the golden calves Jeroboam set there were soon regarded as idols (1Ki 12:25–33).

The visit of the "man of God" to Bethel reflects the interest in prophecy by the historian of Kings. This man of God is presented as a true prophet who makes a distant prophecy (1Ki 13:1, 2). He prophesies events to occur during the reign of Josiah (640–609 B.C.), 300 years after the time of Jeroboam (930–909 B.C.). But Jeroboam rejected the warnings from this prophet, and became the stereotype of the sinful king (13:33, 34).

• 1 Kings 12:25—14:20

1 Kings

Golden Calves at Bethel and Dan

12 :25 Then Jeroboam fortified Shechem
in the hill country of Ephraim and lived
there. From there he went out and built up Peniel.[b]
26 Jeroboam thought to himself, "The kingdom will now likely revert to the house of David. 27 If these people go up to offer sacrifices
at the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem, they
will again give their allegiance to their lord, Rehoboam king of Judah. They will kill me and
return to King Rehoboam."
28 After seeking advice, the king made two
golden calves. He said to the people, "It is too
much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Here are
your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of
Egypt." 29 One he set up in Bethel, and the other in Dan. 30 And this thing became a sin; the
people came to worship the one at Bethel and
went as far as Dan to worship the other.[c]
31 Jeroboam built shrines on high places and
appointed priests from all sorts of people, even
though they were not Levites. 32 He instituted a festival on the fifteenth day of the eighth
month, like the festival held in Judah, and
offered sacrifices on the altar. This he did in
Bethel, sacrificing to the calves he had made.
And at Bethel he also installed priests at the
high places he had made. 33 On the fifteenth
day of the eighth month, a month of his own
choosing, he offered sacrifices on the altar he
had built at Bethel. So he instituted the festival for the Israelites and went up to the altar to
make offerings.

The Man of God From Judah

13 1 By the word of the LORD a man of God
came from Judah to Bethel, as Jeroboam was standing by the altar to make an offering. 2 By the word of the LORD he cried out
against the altar: "Altar, altar! This is what the
LORD says: 'A son named Josiah will be born
to the house of David. On you he will sacrifice
the priests of the high places who make offerings here, and human bones will be burned on
you.'" 3 That same day the man of God gave a
sign: "This is the sign the LORD has declared:
The altar will be split apart and the ashes on it
will be poured out."
4 When King Jeroboam heard what the man
of God cried out against the altar at Bethel, he
stretched out his hand from the altar and said,
"Seize him!" But the hand he stretched out toward the man shriveled up, so that he could not
pull it back. 5 Also, the altar was split apart and

Holy Cows (1Ki 12:28)

The act of Jeroboam in crafting images of cows for worship was not unique. Not only did he repeat the actions of Aaron by creating a golden calf, but he quoted the words of Aaron, "These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt" (Ex 32:4; 1Ki 12:28).

Exactly which god was represented by the calves is not known. The Hebrew word for "calves" in 1Ki 12:28 suggests that the animal was a young bull, as was used for sacrifices (Mic 6:6). A number of small bull images have been found by archaeologists, testifying to the common worship of such images. Calf worship was still prominent among the Israelites of the northern kingdom when Hosea prophesied (Hos 8:5; 10:5, 6), during the reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.).

Jeroboam I placed his two idol calves in the two geographical extremes of his empire (1Ki 12:29). Bethel, just a few miles north of Jerusalem, means "house of god" and had been a traditional place of worship since the days of the patriarchs (Ge 31:13). Dan lies in the most northerly extreme of Israel. In so doing Jeroboam made sure that one of his worship centers was closer to the Israelites than was Jerusalem.

To completely separate the Israelites from the worship of God in Jerusalem, Jeroboam even began a new priesthood. In Israel's covenant the Levites were assigned as priests for the nation's worship (Nu 3:5–10), but Jeroboam appointed non-Levitical priests, causing the Levites to flee to Judah (1Ki 12:31; 2Ch 11:14, 15). He even inaugurated separate festivals (1Ki 12:32). By encouraging the worship of the golden bull, Jeroboam hoped to keep the hearts of his people from returning to King Rehoboam, the grandson of David (12:26, 27).

its ashes poured out according to the sign given by the man of God by the word of the LORD.

6Then the king said to the man of God, "Intercede with the LORD your God and pray for me that my hand may be restored." So the man of God interceded with the LORD, and the king's hand was restored and became as it was before.

7The king said to the man of God, "Come home with me for a meal, and I will give you a gift."

8But the man of God answered the king, "Even if you were to give me half your possessions, I would not go with you, nor would I eat bread or drink water here. 9For I was commanded by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat bread or drink water or return by the way you came.'" 10So he took another road and did not return by the way he had come to Bethel.

11Now there was a certain old prophet living in Bethel, whose sons came and told him all that the man of God had done there that day. They also told their father what he had said to the king. 12Their father asked them, "Which way did he go?" And his sons showed him which road the man of God from Judah had taken. 13So he said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me." And when they had saddled the donkey for him, he mounted it 14and rode after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, "Are you the man of God who came from Judah?"

"I am," he replied.

15So the prophet said to him, "Come home with me and eat."

16The man of God said, "I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. 17I have been told by the word of the LORD: 'You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.'"

18The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.'" (But he was lying to him.) 19So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

20While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. 21He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the LORD says: 'You have defied the word of the LORD and have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. 22You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your ancestors.'"

23When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. 24As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and

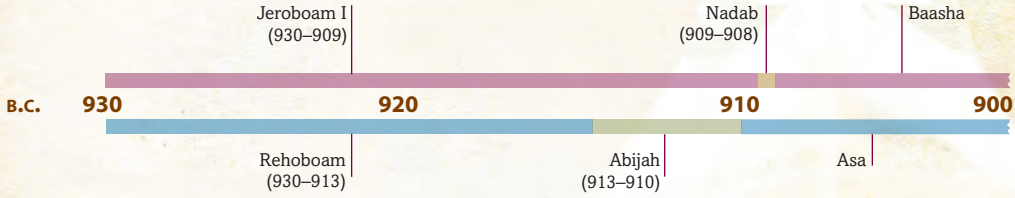
REHOBOAM AND JEROBOAM DIVIDE THE KINGDOM

The discontent and unrest that existed in Solomon's kingdom was like a powder keg awaiting a spark. When Solomon died, the occasion for the explosion came because of the foolish insensitivity of his son Rehoboam. The ten northern tribes revolted against Rehoboam and appointed Jeroboam as their king.

Israel (northern kingdom)

Jeroboam established his capital at Tirzah. He was succeeded by his son Nadab, but the dynasty was soon cut off by Nadab's assassination.

Nadab besieged the Philistine city of Gibbethon, but during the siege was assassinated by his successor Baasha (1Ki 15:27).



Judah (southern kingdom)

Rehoboam fought border wars against Jeroboam, probably over the territory of Benjamin which was a buffer zone between the two kingdoms (1Ki 14:30).

Abijah (or Abijam), son of Rehoboam, continued the border wars against Jeroboam (1Ki 15:7).

killed him, and his body was left lying on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it.[25]Some people who passed by saw the body lying there, with the lion standing beside the body, and they went and reported it in the city where the old prophet lived.

[26]When the prophet who had brought him back from his journey heard of it, he said, "It is the man of God who defied the word of the LORD. The LORD has given him over to the lion, which has mauled him and killed him, as the word of the LORD had warned him."

[27]The prophet said to his sons, "Saddle the donkey for me," and they did so. [28]Then he went out and found the body lying on the road, with the donkey and the lion standing beside it. The lion had neither eaten the body nor mauled the donkey. [29]So the prophet picked up the body of the man of God, laid it on the donkey, and brought it back to his own city to mourn for him and bury him. [30]Then he laid the body in his own tomb, and they mourned over him and said, "Alas, my brother!"

[31]After burying him, he said to his sons, "When I die, bury me in the grave where the man of God is buried; lay my bones beside his bones. [32]For the message he declared by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel and against all the shrines on the high places in the towns of Samaria will certainly come true."

[33]Even after this, Jeroboam did not change his evil ways, but once more appointed priests for the high places from all sorts of people. Anyone who wanted to become a priest he consecrated for the high places. [34]This was the sin of the house of Jeroboam that led to its downfall and to its destruction from the face of the earth.

Ahijah's Prophecy Against Jeroboam

14 [1]At that time Abijah son of Jeroboam became ill, [2]and Jeroboam said to his wife, "Go, disguise yourself, so you won't be recognized as the wife of Jeroboam. Then go to

TIME CAPSULE		930 to 925 B.C.
930	Rehoboam succeeds Solomon as king of Israel	
930	The kingdom of Israel splits into northern Israel and southern Judah	
930	Jeroboam I becomes king in northern Israel	
930–722	The northern kingdom of Israel	
930–586	The southern kingdom of Judah	
925	Pharaoh Shishak captures Arad during a raid of Palestine	
925	Shishak sacks the temple in Jerusalem	

Shiloh. Ahijah the prophet is there—the one
who told me I would be king over this people.
3Take ten loaves of bread with you, some cakes
and a jar of honey, and go to him. He will tell
you what will happen to the boy." 4So Jeroboam's wife did what he said and went to Ahijah's
house in Shiloh.

Now Ahijah could not see; his sight was
gone because of his age. 5But the LORD had
told Ahijah, "Jeroboam's wife is coming to ask
you about her son, for he is ill, and you are to
give her such and such an answer. When she
arrives, she will pretend to be someone else."

6So when Ahijah heard the sound of her footsteps at the door, he said, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam. Why this pretense? I have been sent
to you with bad news. 7Go, tell Jeroboam that
this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I
raised you up from among the people and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. 8I tore
the kingdom away from the house of David and
gave it to you, but you have not been like my
servant David, who kept my commands and followed me with all his heart, doing only what
was right in my eyes. 9You have done more evil
than all who lived before you. You have made
for yourself other gods, idols made of metal;
you have aroused my anger and turned your
back on me.

10"'Because of this, I am going to bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam. I will cut off from
Jeroboam every last male in Israel—slave or
free.[a] I will burn up the house of Jeroboam as
one burns dung, until it is all gone. 11Dogs will
eat those belonging to Jeroboam who die in the
city, and the birds will feed on those who die in
the country. The LORD has spoken!'

12"As for you, go back home. When you set
foot in your city, the boy will die. 13All Israel will
mourn for him and bury him. He is the only
one belonging to Jeroboam who will be buried,
because he is the only one in the house of Jeroboam in whom the LORD, the God of Israel, has
found anything good.

14"The LORD will raise up for himself a king
over Israel who will cut off the family of Jeroboam. Even now this is beginning to happen.
15And the LORD will strike Israel, so that it will
be like a reed swaying in the water. He will uproot Israel from this good land that he gave to
their ancestors and scatter them beyond the
Euphrates River, because they aroused the
LORD's anger by making Asherah poles.[c] 16And
he will give Israel up because of the sins Jeroboam has committed and has caused Israel to
commit."

17Then Jeroboam's wife got up and left and
went to Tirzah. As soon as she stepped over the
threshold of the house, the boy died. 18They
buried him, and all Israel mourned for him,
as the LORD had said through his servant the
prophet Ahijah.

19The other events of Jeroboam's reign,
his wars and how he ruled, are written in the
book of the annals of the kings of Israel. 20He
reigned for twenty-two years and then rested
with his ancestors. And Nadab his son succeeded him as king.

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[a] *10* Or *Israel—every ruler or leader* [b] *14* The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain. [c] *15* That is, wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah; here and elsewhere in 1 Kings

TRANSITION

The Davidic Dynasty in Judah

The descendants of David continued to rule in Judah during the divided monarchy, represented first by Solomon's son Rehoboam. During Rehoboam's reign (930–913 B.C.), the Egyptian pharaoh Shishak (or Sheshonk) marched against Judah and Jerusalem, taking tribute from the temple and palace (1Ki 14:25, 26). Shishak's own records report a devastating attack on Israel as well. Ruling Egypt's 22nd Dynasty from 945 to 924 B.C., Shishak led his campaign into Palestine during Rehoboam's 5th year (c. 925 B.C.).

In the first account of Judah during the divided kingdom, the historian of Kings presents three kings: Rehoboam, Abijah (or Abijam, 913–910 B.C.), and Asa (910–869 B.C.). He dates each king by synchronizing his accession year with the reign of the monarch in the other kingdom (see 1Ki 15:1, 9).

Because Kings alternates between accounts of Israel and Judah, some unusual historical sequences result. For example, the border wars between Asa and Israel's Baasha (15:16–21) are discussed before Baasha is formally introduced (15:27–30). During the 9th century B.C. Damascus (Syria) allied itself with various Aramean kingdoms and became a serious threat to Israel's northeast. Asa enticed Ben-Hadad I of Aram-Damascus to invade Israel, hoping to relieve Israel's military pressure on Jerusalem.

• **1 Kings 14:21—15:24**

1 Kings

Rehoboam King of Judah

14 :21 Rehoboam son of Solomon was king
in Judah. He was forty-one years old
when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes of Israel in which to put his Name. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite.

22 Judah did evil in the eyes of the LORD. By
the sins they committed they stirred up his jealous anger more than those who were before them had done. 23 They also set up for themselves high places, sacred stones and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. 24 There were even male shrine prostitutes in the land; the people engaged in all the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.

25 In the fifth year of King Rehoboam, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem. 26 He carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal palace. He took everything, including all the gold shields Solomon had made. 27 So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them and assigned these to the commanders of the guard on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. 28 Whenever the king went to the LORD's temple, the guards bore the shields, and afterward they returned them to the guardroom.

29 As for the other events of Rehoboam's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? 30 There was continual warfare between Rehoboam and Jeroboam. 31 And Rehoboam rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite. And Abijah[a] his son succeeded him as king.

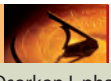
Abijah King of Judah

15 1 In the eighteenth year of the reign of
Jeroboam son of Nebat, Abijah[b] became king of Judah, 2 and he reigned in Jerusalem three years. His mother's name was Maakah daughter of Abishalom.[c]

3 He committed all the sins his father had
done before him; his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his forefather had been. 4 Nevertheless, for David's sake the LORD his God gave him a lamp in Jerusalem by raising up a son to succeed him and by making Jerusalem strong. 5 For David had done what was right in the eyes of the LORD and had not failed to keep any of the LORD's commands all the days of his life—except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.

6 There was war between Abijah[d] and

[a] *31* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 12:16); most Hebrew manuscripts *Abijam*
[b] *1* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 2 Chron. 12:16); most Hebrew manuscripts *Abijam*; also in verses 7 and 8
[c] *2* A variant of *Absalom*; also in verse 10
[d] *6* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac *Abijam* (that is, Abijah); most Hebrew manuscripts *Rehoboam*

TIME CAPSULE	 924 to 900 B.C.
924–889	Osorkon I, pharaoh of Egypt, provides wealth for the temple of Thebes
913	Abijah becomes king in Judah
910	Asa becomes king in Judah
909	Nadab becomes king in Israel
908	Baasha assassinates Nadab and becomes king in Israel
900	Phoenicians establish trading colonies as far away as Spain

Jeroboam throughout Abijah's lifetime. [7]As for the other events of Abijah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. [8]And Abijah rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. And Asa his son succeeded him as king.

Asa King of Judah

[9]In the twentieth year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Asa became king of Judah, [10]and he reigned in Jerusalem forty-one years. His grandmother's name was Maakah daughter of Abishalom.

[11]Asa did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, as his father David had done. [12]He expelled the male shrine prostitutes from the land and got rid of all the idols his ancestors had made. [13]He even deposed his grandmother Maakah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive image for the worship of Asherah. Asa cut it down and burned it in the Kidron Valley. [14]Although he did not remove the high places, Asa's heart was fully committed to the LORD all his life. [15]He brought into the temple of the LORD the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.

[16]There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns. [17]Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah.

[18]Asa then took all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of the LORD's temple and of his own palace. He entrusted it to his officials and sent them to Ben-Hadad son of Tabrimmon, the son of Hezion, the king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus. [19]"Let there be a treaty between me and you," he said, "as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you a gift of silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me."

[20]Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel. He conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Beth Maakah and all Kinnereth in addition to Naphtali. [21]When Baasha heard this, he stopped building Ramah and withdrew to Tirzah. [22]Then King Asa issued an order to all Judah — no one was exempt — and they carried away from Ramah the stones and timber Baasha had been using there. With them King Asa built up Geba in Benjamin, and also Mizpah.

[23]As for all the other events of Asa's reign, all his achievements, all he did and the cities he built, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? In his old age, however, his feet became diseased. [24]Then Asa rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the city of his father David. And Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him as king.

TRANSITION

Unrest in Israel

Instability characterized the northern kingdom. Despite Jeroboam's long reign (930–909 B.C.), his dynasty would continue to rule Israel for only two more years under his son Nadab (909–908 B.C.) before being cut off by Baasha. The new dynasty would also last for only two rulers: Baasha himself (908–886 B.C.) and his son Elah (886–885 B.C.). One of Elah's military commanders, Zimri, assassinated the king and assumed the throne himself. But Zimri's conspiracy lasted only 7 days (1Ki 16:15–30), and Israel sank into civil war.

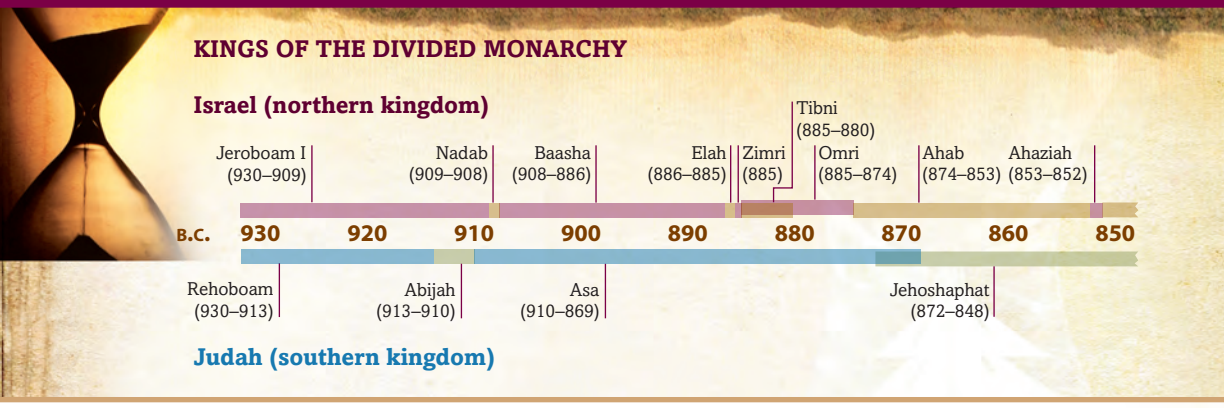
• **1 Kings 15:25—16:20**

1 Kings

Nadab King of Israel

15:25 Nadab son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. [26]He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the ways of his father and committing the same sin his father had caused Israel to commit.

[27]Baasha son of Ahijah from the tribe of Issachar plotted against him, and he struck him down at Gibbethon, a Philistine town, while Nadab and all Israel were besieging it. [28]Baasha



killed Nadab in the third year of Asa king of Judah and succeeded him as king.

29 As soon as he began to reign, he killed Jeroboam's whole family. He did not leave Jeroboam anyone that breathed, but destroyed them all, according to the word of the LORD given through his servant Ahijah the Shilonite. 30 This happened because of the sins Jeroboam had committed and had caused Israel to commit, and because he aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel.

31 As for the other events of Nadab's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? 32 There was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel throughout their reigns.

Baasha King of Israel

33 In the third year of Asa king of Judah, Baasha son of Ahijah became king of all Israel in Tirzah, and he reigned twenty-four years. 34 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, following the ways of Jeroboam and committing the same sin Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit.

16 1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jehu son of Hanani concerning Baasha: 2 "I lifted you up from the dust and appointed you ruler over my people Israel, but you followed the ways of Jeroboam and caused my people Israel to sin and to arouse my anger by their sins. 3 So I am about to wipe out Baasha and his house, and I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat. 4 Dogs will eat those belonging to Baasha who die in the city, and birds will feed on those who die in the country."

5 As for the other events of Baasha's reign, what he did and his achievements, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? 6 Baasha rested with his ancestors and was buried in Tirzah. And Elah his son succeeded him as king.

7 Moreover, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Jehu son of Hanani to Baasha and his house, because of all the evil he had done in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger by the things he did, becoming like the house of Jeroboam—and also because he destroyed it.

Elah King of Israel

8 In the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah, Elah son of Baasha became king of Israel, and he reigned in Tirzah two years.

9 Zimri, one of his officials, who had command of half his chariots, plotted against him. Elah was in Tirzah at the time, getting drunk in the home of Arza, the palace administrator at Tirzah. 10 Zimri came in, struck him down and killed him in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah. Then he succeeded him as king.

11 As soon as he began to reign and was seated on the throne, he killed off Baasha's whole family. He did not spare a single male, whether relative or friend. 12 So Zimri destroyed the whole family of Baasha, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken against Baasha through the prophet Jehu— 13 because of all the sins Baasha and his son Elah had committed and had caused Israel to commit, so that they aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, by their worthless idols.

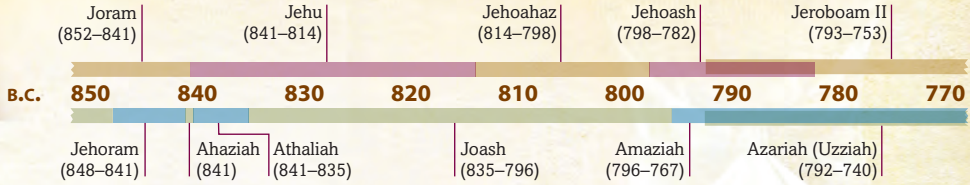
14 As for the other events of Elah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

Zimri King of Israel

15 In the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah, Zimri reigned in Tirzah seven days. The army was encamped near Gibbethon, a Philistine town. 16 When the Israelites in the camp heard that Zimri had plotted against the king and murdered him, they proclaimed Omri, the commander of the army, king over Israel that very day there in the camp. 17 Then Omri and

KINGS OF THE DIVIDED MONARCHY (CONTINUED)

Israel (northern kingdom)



Judah (southern kingdom)

all the Israelites with him withdrew from Gibbethon and laid siege to Tirzah. 18When Zimri saw that the city was taken, he went into the citadel of the royal palace and set the palace on fire around him. So he died, 19because of the sins he had committed, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD and following the ways of Jeroboam and committing the same sin Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit.

20As for the other events of Zimri's reign, and the rebellion he carried out, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: The Kingdom Divides

Whereas the prophetic history in the books of Kings deals with both Israel and Judah, at least until Israel's destruction, the priestly history is interested primarily in Judah. Only the barest outline of the northern kingdom's history can be gleaned from Chronicles, while much more detail is given about Judah's kings. This is especially true when this detail concerns the temple. The books of Kings, for instance, say nothing about Asa's temple reforms, which are so prominent in the Chronicler's account (2Ch 15).

• 2 Chronicles 10:1—11:23

2 Chronicles

Israel Rebels Against Rehoboam

10:1 Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. 2When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard this (he was in Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon), he returned from Egypt. 3So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and all Israel went to Rehoboam and said to him: 4"Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but now lighten the harsh labor and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you."

5Rehoboam answered, "Come back to me in three days." So the people went away.

6Then King Rehoboam consulted the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How would you advise me to answer these people?" he asked.

7They replied, "If you will be kind to these people and please them and give them a favorable answer, they will always be your servants."

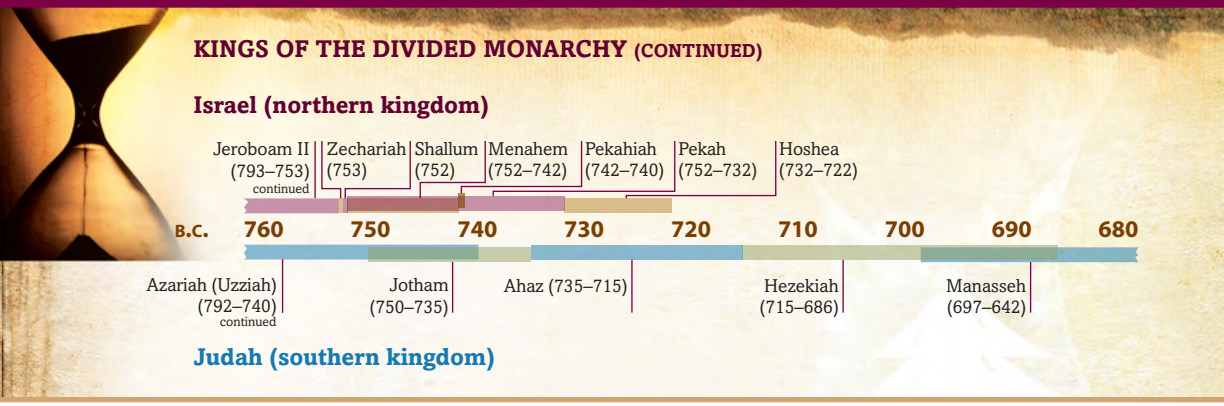
8But Rehoboam rejected the advice the elders gave him and consulted the young men who had grown up with him and were serving him. 9He asked them, "What is your advice? How should we answer these people who say to me, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?"

10The young men who had grown up with him replied, "The people have said to you, 'Your father put a heavy yoke on us, but make our yoke lighter.' Now tell them, 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. 11My father laid on you a heavy yoke; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions.'"

12Three days later Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, as the king had said, "Come back to me in three days." 13The king answered them harshly. Rejecting the advice of the elders, 14he followed the advice of the young men and said, "My father made your yoke heavy; I will make it even heavier. My father scourged you with whips; I will scourge you with scorpions." 15So the king did not listen to the people, for this turn of events was from God, to fulfill the word the LORD had spoken to Jeroboam son of Nebat through Ahijah the Shilonite.

16When all Israel saw that the king refused to listen to them, they answered the king:

"What share do we have in David,
what part in Jesse's son?



To your tents, Israel!
Look after your own house, David!"

So all the Israelites went home. 17But as for the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah, Rehoboam still ruled over them.

18King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram,[a] who was in charge of forced labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death. King Rehoboam, however, managed to get into his chariot and escape to Jerusalem. 19So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.

11 1When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mustered Judah and Benjamin — a hundred and eighty thousand able young men — to go to war against Israel and to regain the kingdom for Rehoboam.

2But this word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God: 3"Say to Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah and to all Israel in Judah and Benjamin, 4'This is what the LORD says: Do not go up to fight against your fellow Israelites. Go home, every one of you, for this is my doing.'" So they obeyed the words of the LORD and turned back from marching against Jeroboam.

Rehoboam Fortifies Judah

5Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem and built up towns for defense in Judah: 6Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, 7Beth Zur, Soko, Adullam, 8Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, 9Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, 10Zorah, Aijalon and Hebron. These were fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin. 11He strengthened their defenses and put commanders in them, with supplies of food, olive oil and wine. 12He put shields and spears in all the cities, and made them very strong. So Judah and Benjamin were his.

13The priests and Levites from all their districts throughout Israel sided with him. 14The Levites even abandoned their pasturelands and property and came to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of the LORD 15when he appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat and calf idols he had made. 16Those from every tribe of Israel who set their hearts on seeking the LORD, the God of Israel, followed the Levites to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices to the LORD, the God of their ancestors. 17They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon three years, following the ways of David and Solomon during this time.

Rehoboam's Family

18Rehoboam married Mahalath, who was the daughter of David's son Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Jesse's son Eliab. 19She bore him sons: Jeush, Shemariah and Zaham. 20Then he married Maakah daughter of Absalom, who bore him Abijah, Attai, Ziza and Shelomith. 21Rehoboam loved Maakah daughter of Absalom more than any of his other wives and concubines. In all, he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters.

22Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maakah as crown prince among his brothers, in order to make him king. 23He acted wisely, dispersing some of his sons throughout the districts of Judah and Benjamin, and to all the fortified cities. He gave them abundant provisions and took many wives for them.

[a] *18* Hebrew *Hadoram*, a variant of *Adoniram*

TRANSITION

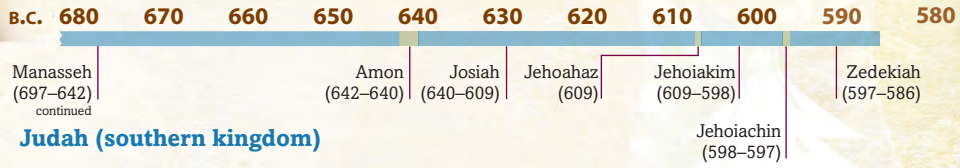
Rehoboam's Apostasy

As the Chronicler traces the kings of Judah starting with Rehoboam (930–913 B.C.) and Abijah (913–910 B.C.), he emphasizes the consequences of disobedience. While both Kings and Chronicles mention Shishak's

KINGS OF THE DIVIDED MONARCHY (CONTINUED)

Israel (northern kingdom)

Fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 B.C.



invasion of Judah in 925 B.C., the Chronicler offers an explanation for the attack that is not found in the parallel account of 1Ki 14:25, 26. In Chronicles the underlying cause of this invasion was Rehoboam's and Judah's sin (12:5–8).

Chronicles also notes Jeroboam's disobedience. In a sermon, Judah's king Abijah challenged the legitimacy of Jeroboam's reign (2Ch 13:5, 6) and the validity of his religious innovations (13:8, 9). Jeroboam had led Israel to abandon Yahweh, the God of their fathers (13:12).

• 2 Chronicles 12:1—13:22

2 Chronicles

Shishak Attacks Jerusalem

12 :1 After Rehoboam's position as king was established and he had become strong, he and all Israel[a] with him abandoned the law of the LORD. [2]Because they had been unfaithful to the LORD, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem in the fifth year of King Rehoboam. [3]With twelve hundred chariots and sixty thousand horsemen and the innumerable troops of Libyans, Sukkites and Cushites[b] that came with him from Egypt, [4]he captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.

[5]Then the prophet Shemaiah came to Rehoboam and to the leaders of Judah who had assembled in Jerusalem for fear of Shishak, and he said to them, "This is what the LORD says, 'You have abandoned me; therefore, I now abandon you to Shishak.'"

[a] *1* That is, Judah, as frequently in 2 Chronicles [b] *3* That is, people from the upper Nile region

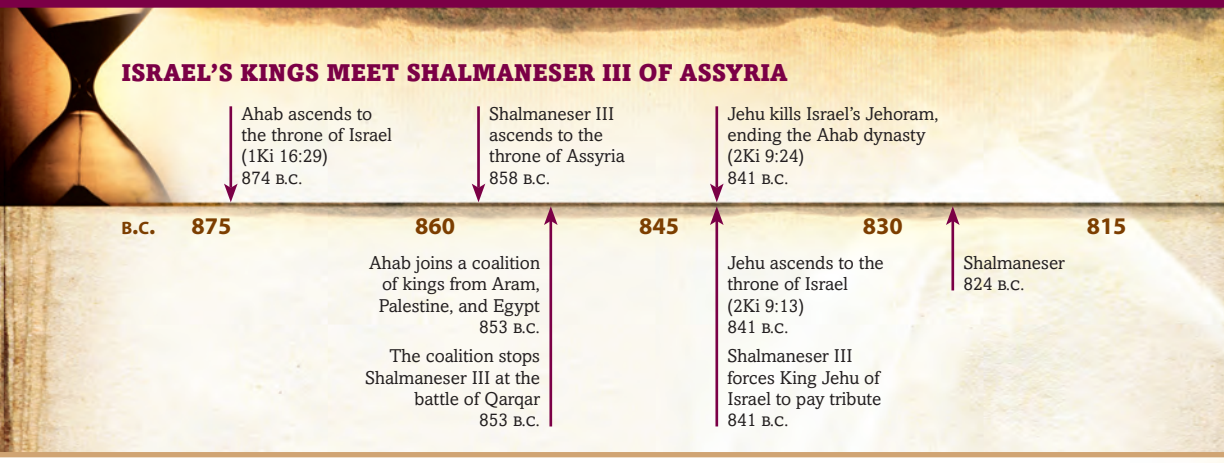
SHISHAK CAMPAIGNS AGAINST SOLOMON'S SON (2CH 12:2, 9)

Shishak (also spelled Sheshonk or Shoshenq) was the founder of the 22nd Dynasty of Egypt. He claimed descent from a series of Libyan chiefs who had migrated generations earlier to the Delta region of Egypt. From Egyptian sources, Shishak is first known as the commander in chief of the Egyptian army under Psusennes II (959–945 B.C.), the last pharaoh of the 21st Dynasty. One of Shishak's sons had married a daughter of the pharaoh, which possibly allowed Shishak to claim Egypt's throne when Pharaoh Psusennes died.

A statue of Shishak has been found at Byblos, a Phoenician city on the Mediterranean Sea. The statue indicates possible Egyptian dominance on the Phoenician coast, and Shishak's activity so close to Israel may explain why political dissidents under Solomon's rule, such as Jeroboam, fled to Egypt (1Ki 11:40). Egypt's acceptance of these dissidents may imply an antagonistic relationship between Egypt and Israel late in Solomon's reign.

After Solomon's death, in the 5th year of his son Rehoboam's reign (925 B.C.), Shishak invaded Palestine (2Ch 12:2, 9). Archaeologists have uncovered evidence of that invasion at settlements in both Israel and Judah, which show signs of tremendous destruction. An inscription in the temple of Amon at Karnak tersely describes the campaign, listing over 150 towns which are said to have been destroyed. Not on the list is Jerusalem, having been spared because Rehoboam apparently paid Shishak with treasures from the temple and palace (1Ki 14:26; 2Ch 12:7–9).

Shishak's reign (945–924 B.C.) was the beginning of over two centuries of Libyan rule in Egypt. He erected a victory stele at Megiddo, thus reasserting Egyptian domination in Palestine.



6 The leaders of Israel and the king humbled
themselves and said, "The LORD is just."
7 When the LORD saw that they humbled
themselves, this word of the LORD came to Shemaiah: "Since they have humbled themselves,
I will not destroy them but will soon give them
deliverance. My wrath will not be poured out
on Jerusalem through Shishak. 8 They will,
however, become subject to him, so that they
may learn the difference between serving me
and serving the kings of other lands."
9 When Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem, he carried off the treasures of the temple of the LORD and the treasures of the royal
palace. He took everything, including the gold
shields Solomon had made. 10 So King Rehoboam made bronze shields to replace them
and assigned these to the commanders of the
guard on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. 11 Whenever the king went to the LORD's
temple, the guards went with him, bearing the
shields, and afterward they returned them to
the guardroom.
12 Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the
LORD's anger turned from him, and he was not
totally destroyed. Indeed, there was some good
in Judah.
13 King Rehoboam established himself firmly in Jerusalem and continued as king. He was
forty-one years old when he became king, and
he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the
city the LORD had chosen out of all the tribes
of Israel in which to put his Name. His mother's name was Naamah; she was an Ammonite.
14 He did evil because he had not set his heart
on seeking the LORD.
15 As for the events of Rehoboam's reign,
from beginning to end, are they not written in
the records of Shemaiah the prophet and of
Iddo the seer that deal with genealogies? There
was continual warfare between Rehoboam and
Jeroboam. 16 Rehoboam rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. And
Abijah his son succeeded him as king.

Abijah King of Judah

13 1 In the eighteenth year of the reign of
Jeroboam, Abijah became king of Judah,
2 and he reigned in Jerusalem three years. His
mother's name was Maakah,[a] a daughter[b] of
Uriel of Gibeah.
There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. 3 Abijah went into battle with an army of
four hundred thousand able fighting men, and
Jeroboam drew up a battle line against him
with eight hundred thousand able troops.
4 Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim, in the hill
country of Ephraim, and said, "Jeroboam and
all Israel, listen to me! 5 Don't you know that
the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants forever by a covenant of salt? 6 Yet Jeroboam son
of Nebat, an official of Solomon son of David,
rebelled against his master. 7 Some worthless

[a] 2 Most Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 11:20 and 1 Kings 15:2); Hebrew *Micaiah* [b] 2 Or *granddaughter*

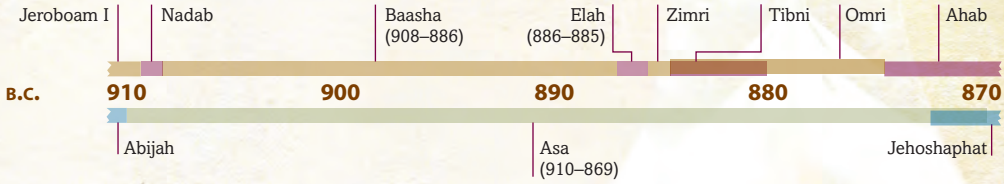
TIME CAPSULE	900 to 885 B.C.
900	Earliest example of laminated steel
895	Asa leads covenant renewal celebration in Judah (2Ch 15:10–15)
895	Osorkon I of Egypt invades Palestine
887	Ethbaal I, priest of Astarte, seizes throne of Tyre
886	Elah becomes king in Israel
885	Zimri murders Elah and becomes king in Israel
885	Zimri commits suicide after 7 days as king

ASA AND BAASHA FIGHT OVER RAMAH

Israel (northern kingdom)

Baasha secured himself on Israel's throne by assassinating Nadab and then murdering every member of Jeroboam's and Nadab's royal house (1Ki 15:27–29). In order to defend his kingdom against Ben-Hadad of Aram (Syria), Baasha was forced to withdraw from Ramah.

Elah succeeded his father, Baasha, but a brief 2-year reign was ended when Zimri, one of his captains, murdered him while Elah was in a drunken stupor (1Ki 16:8–10).



Judah (southern kingdom)

Asa, the son of Abijah, had two encounters with foreign nations. First, he stopped an invasion by the Ethiopian king Zerah (2Ch 14:12, 13). Later, when Baasha tried to blockade Asa by fortifying the city of Ramah, Asa hired Ben-Hadad, king of Aram (Syria), to thwart Baasha's plans (2Ch 16:1–6).

scoundrels gathered around him and opposed Rehoboam son of Solomon when he was young and indecisive and not strong enough to resist them.

8"And now you plan to resist the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hands of David's descendants. You are indeed a vast army and have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made to be your gods. 9But didn't you drive out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites, and make priests of your own as the peoples of other lands do? Whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams may become a priest of what are not gods.

10"As for us, the LORD is our God, and we have not forsaken him. The priests who serve the LORD are sons of Aaron, and the Levites assist them. 11Every morning and evening they present burnt offerings and fragrant incense to the LORD. They set out the bread on the ceremonially clean table and light the lamps on the gold lampstand every evening. We are observing the requirements of the LORD our God. But you have forsaken him. 12God is with us; he is our leader. His priests with their trumpets will sound the battle cry against you. People of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your ancestors, for you will not succeed."

13Now Jeroboam had sent troops around to the rear, so that while he was in front of Judah the ambush was behind them. 14Judah turned and saw that they were being attacked at both front and rear. Then they cried out to the LORD. The priests blew their trumpets 15and the men of Judah raised the battle cry. At the sound of their battle cry, God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. 16The Israelites fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hands. 17Abijah and his troops inflicted heavy losses on them, so that there were five hundred thousand casualties among Israel's able men. 18The Israelites were subdued on that occasion, and the people of Judah were victorious because they relied on the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

19Abijah pursued Jeroboam and took from him the towns of Bethel, Jeshanah and Ephron, with their surrounding villages. 20Jeroboam did not regain power during the time of Abijah. And the LORD struck him down and he died.

21But Abijah grew in strength. He married fourteen wives and had twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters.

22The other events of Abijah's reign, what he did and what he said, are written in the annotations of the prophet Iddo.

Marriage & Family
Cases of polygamy, a man having more than one wife, were usually a sign that a person was rich and powerful, such as King Abijah (2Ch 13:21). Polygamy may have been practiced only by the upper class. The Greeks were monogamous, and the Romans regarded polygamy as degenerate or barbarian. The Jews by the New Testament period were generally monogamous.

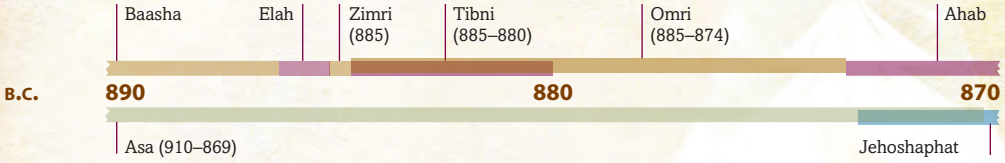
OMRI BEGINS A NEW DYNASTY

Israel (northern kingdom)

Zimri, the king's chariot commander, ended the Baasha-Elah dynasty without support of the army. Immediately Omri, the army commander, besieged the capital Tirzah. After only 7 days as king, Zimri was forced to commit suicide (1Ki 16:15).

Tibni challenged Omri for the throne for at least 4 or 5 years, but Omri emerged victorious.

Omri reigned for 6 years in Tirzah, but built a new city, Samaria, and made it Israel's new capital.



Judah (southern kingdom)

Asa contracted a disease in his feet in the 39th year of his reign (871 B.C.). He would live about 2 years longer (2Ch 16:12, 13). During his last years, Asa's son Jehoshaphat ruled with his father as a coregent.

TRANSITION

Asa's Revival

According to the Chronicler, the beginning of Asa's reign (910–869 B.C.) was peaceful (2Ch 14:1). It was a time of religious reform in which Asa removed the shrines of the Canaanite nature religions (2Ch 14:3, 5). The Chronicler provides a more detailed account of the reform in 2Ch 15. The covenant renewal celebration (15:10–15) was held in Asa's 15th year (895 B.C.). Despite these successful reforms, Asa was unable to rid the land completely of the pagan high places (15:17).

• 2 Chronicles 14:1—16:14

2 Chronicles

14 [a] **:1** And Abijah rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. Asa his son succeeded him as king, and in his days the country was at peace for ten years.

Asa King of Judah

[2]Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. [3]He removed the foreign altars and the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles.[b] [4]He commanded Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, and to obey his laws and commands. [5]He removed the high places and incense altars in every town in Judah, and the kingdom was at peace under him. [6]He built up the fortified cities of Judah, since the land was at peace. No one was at war with him during those years, for the LORD gave him rest.

[7]"Let us build up these towns," he said to Judah, "and put walls around them, with towers, gates and bars. The land is still ours, because we have sought the LORD our God; we sought him and he has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered.

[8]Asa had an army of three hundred thousand men from Judah, equipped with large shields and with spears, and two hundred and eighty thousand from Benjamin, armed with small shields and with bows. All these were brave fighting men.

[9]Zerah the Cushite marched out against them with an army of thousands upon thousands and three hundred chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. [10]Asa went out to meet him, and they took up battle positions in the Valley of Zephathah near Mareshah.

[11]Then Asa called to the LORD his God and said, "LORD, there is no one like you to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, LORD our God, for we rely on you, and in your name we have come against this vast army. LORD, you are our God; do not let mere mortals prevail against you."

[12]The LORD struck down the Cushites before Asa and Judah. The Cushites fled, [13]and Asa and his army pursued them as far as Gerar. Such a great number of Cushites fell that they could not recover; they were crushed before the LORD and his forces. The men of Judah carried off a large amount of plunder. [14]They

[a] In Hebrew texts 14:1 is numbered 13:23, and 14:2-15 is numbered 14:1-14. [b] *3* That is, wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah; here and elsewhere in 2 Chronicles

Asherah, Queen Mother of the Gods (2Ch 15:16)

King Asa of Judah removed his mother, Maakah, from her position as queen mother of Judah because she made sacred objects for the goddess Asherah (2Ch 15:16). The worship of any deity beside Yahweh was forbidden, so Asa was fulfilling the cultic laws by removing even the work of his mother from the royal precinct. It was urgent then to replace Maakah as queen mother since any such high position should be held by one true to Yahweh.

Asherah was a widely worshiped goddess throughout Syria-Palestine and even into Egypt. In the myths recovered from Ugarit, she is the spouse of El, head of the pantheon, and thus the queen mother of the gods. She chose which deities were to be established in what positions of authority in the cosmos. In the chain of authority she was the final resort for petitions to El. She is portrayed as fairly well in control of herself and the world which she owns with her spouse. Unquestionably, Asherah was the most politically powerful goddess in the Canaanite pantheon.

It appears that at times Judahites worshiped Asherah as the spouse of Yahweh, who was also called El (Ge 33:20; 35:7). Inscriptions dating from the time of the divided monarchy (after 930 B.C.) name Yahweh and refer to "His Asherah." These inscriptions were found in northeast Sinai at Kuntillet 'Ajrud and within Judah's borders at Khirbet el-Qom. The goddess clearly was popular in the land among populace and royalty alike, who continued worshiping her even down to the reign of Josiah (640–609 B.C.; 2Ki 23:4).

A human queen mother was the queen who, among other duties, advised the king, helped appoint princes and princesses to official positions, and helped choose the heir apparent to the throne. It was a position of considerable power and prestige. That King Asa's mother, Maakah, worshiped Asherah, and dedicated some cultic object to her, possibly shows that this queen mother of Judah acknowledged her role as a representative of the goddess, the queen mother of heaven.

destroyed all the villages around Gerar, for the terror of the LORD had fallen on them. They looted all these villages, since there was much plunder there. 15They also attacked the camps of the herders and carried off droves of sheep and goats and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

Asa's Reform

15 1The Spirit of God came on Azariah son of Oded. 2He went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with him. If you seek him, he will be found by you, but if you forsake him, he will forsake you. 3For a long time Israel was without the true God, without a priest to teach and without the law. 4But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought him, and he was found by them. 5In those days it was not safe to travel about, for all the inhabitants of the lands were in great turmoil. 6One nation was being crushed by another and one city by another, because God was troubling them with every kind of distress. 7But as for you, be strong and do not give up, for your work will be rewarded."

8When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah son of[a] Oded the prophet, he took courage. He removed the detestable idols from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns he had captured in the hills of Ephraim. He repaired the altar of the LORD that was in front of the portico of the LORD's temple.

9Then he assembled all Judah and Benjamin and the people from Ephraim, Manasseh and Simeon who had settled among them, for large numbers had come over to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him.

10They assembled at Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign. 11At that time they sacrificed to the LORD seven hundred head of cattle and seven thousand sheep and goats from the plunder they had brought back. 12They entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their ancestors, with all their heart and soul. 13All who would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, were to be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman. 14They took an oath to the LORD with loud acclamation, with shouting and with trumpets and horns. 15All Judah rejoiced about the oath because they had sworn it wholeheartedly. They sought God eagerly, and he was found by them. So the LORD gave them rest on every side.

16King Asa also deposed his grandmother Maakah from her position as queen mother, because she had made a repulsive image for the worship of Asherah. Asa cut it down, broke it up and burned it in the Kidron Valley. 17Although he did not remove the high places from Israel, Asa's heart was fully committed to the LORD all his life. 18He brought into the temple

[a] *8* Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint and verse 1); Hebrew does not have *Azariah son of.*

of God the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated.

19 There was no more war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa's reign.

Asa's Last Years

16 1 In the thirty-sixth year of Asa's reign Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah.

2 Asa then took the silver and gold out of the treasuries of the LORD's temple and of his own palace and sent it to Ben-Hadad king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus. 3 "Let there be a treaty between me and you," he said, "as there was between my father and your father. See, I am sending you silver and gold. Now break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel so he will withdraw from me."

4 Ben-Hadad agreed with King Asa and sent the commanders of his forces against the towns of Israel. They conquered Ijon, Dan, Abel Maim[a] and all the store cities of Naphtali. 5 When Baasha heard this, he stopped building Ramah and abandoned his work. 6 Then King Asa brought all the men of Judah, and they carried away from Ramah the stones and timber Baasha had been using. With them he built up Geba and Mizpah.

7 At that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him: "Because you relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. 8 Were not the Cushites[b] and Libyans a mighty army with great numbers of chariots and horsemen[c]? Yet when you relied on the LORD, he delivered them into your hand. 9 For the eyes of the LORD range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him. You have done a foolish thing, and from now on you will be at war."

10 Asa was angry with the seer because of this; he was so enraged that he put him in prison. At the same time Asa brutally oppressed some of the people.

11 The events of Asa's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 12 In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa was afflicted with a disease in his feet. Though his disease was severe, even in his illness he did not seek help from the LORD, but only from the physicians. 13 Then in the forty-first year of his reign Asa died and rested with his ancestors. 14 They buried him in the tomb that he had cut out for himself in the City of David. They laid him on a bier covered with spices and various blended perfumes, and they made a huge fire in his honor.

[a] *4* Also known as *Abel Beth Maakah* [b] *8* That is, people from the upper Nile region [c] *8* Or *charioteers*

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Ahab and Jehoshaphat

Zimri's assassination of King Elah (see "Unrest in Israel" at 1Ki 15:25) resulted in a few chaotic years for Israel. The chariot commander Zimri had little support, but merely took advantage of the king's drunken stupor (1Ki 16:9). Another military commander, Omri, assuming kingship himself, ended Zimri's conspiracy after only 7 days (16:15, 16). However, civil war broke out for about five years (885–880 B.C.), with Omri and a rival named Tibni competing for the throne (16:21). Omri eventually won.

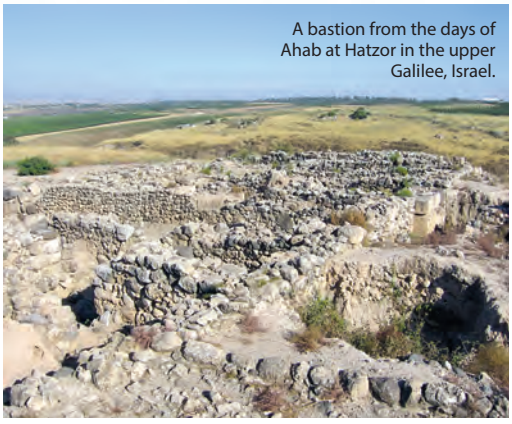
The turbulent history of the northern kingdom stabilized somewhat under the rule of Omri (885–874 B.C.). Although the Bible says little about his king beyond his founding of the capital city of Samaria, he was very successful in material terms. He expanded Israel's borders and established a reputation for himself. Even after Omri's dynasty had disappeared, Assyria would refer to the nation of Israel as "the house of Omri." Certainly, he was successful enough to establish a dynasty: his son Ahab reigned in his place.

The historian of Kings is much more concerned with Ahab, primarily because of his wife, Jezebel. Jezebel was from the merchant

city of Tyre and brought with her an evangelistic zeal for her god, Baal (1Ki 16:31). She established her own shrines, priests, and prophets, and ruthlessly persecuted those who remained faithful to Yahweh, the God of Israel. Foremost among these faithful was a rough and austere prophet named Elijah.

Israel and Judah had often warred against each other during the first years following the monarchy's division in 930 B.C. Their political relations calmed somewhat when Ahab of Israel and Jehoshaphat of Judah formed an alliance. Eventually, the two kingdoms even joined themselves militarily in battle against Aram (Syria; 1Ki 22).

• 1 Kings 16:21–34



A bastion from the days of Ahab at Hatzor in the upper Galilee, Israel.

1 Kings

Omri King of Israel

16 :21 Then the people of Israel were split
into two factions; half supported Tibni
son of Ginath for king, and the other half supported Omri. 22But Omri's followers proved
stronger than those of Tibni son of Ginath. So
Tibni died and Omri became king.

23In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah,
Omri became king of Israel, and he reigned
twelve years, six of them in Tirzah. 24He
bought the hill of Samaria from Shemer for two
talents[a] of silver and built a city on the hill, calling it Samaria, after Shemer, the name of the
former owner of the hill.

25But Omri did evil in the eyes of the LORD
and sinned more than all those before him.
26He followed completely the ways of Jeroboam
son of Nebat, committing the same sin Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit, so that they
aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, by their worthless idols.

27As for the other events of Omri's reign,
what he did and the things he achieved, are
they not written in the book of the annals of
the kings of Israel? 28Omri rested with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria. And Ahab
his son succeeded him as king.

Ahab Becomes King of Israel

29In the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel,
and he reigned in Samaria over Israel twenty-two years. 30Ahab son of Omri did more evil in
the eyes of the LORD than any of those before

[a] *24* That is, about 150 pounds or about 68 kilograms

Ahab the Religious Compromiser (1Ki 16:28–33)

Ahab was the second king of a dynasty founded by his father Omri in the northern kingdom of Israel. He ruled from 874 to 853 B.C. and is possibly alluded to in an inscription from c. 850 B.C. The royal inscription, called the Moabite Stone, does not mention Ahab by name. However, the Moabite king Mesha does claim to have freed the Moabites from Israelite domination during the reign of the "son of Omri."

The writer of the books of Kings gives a very negative evaluation of Ahab. His sin was that of religious compromise: he allowed Baal worship to continue in Israel.

Religious compromise was the consequence of a political move. Much of Ahab's reign saw tension between Israel and the Aramean kingdom of Damascus to the northeast. Continuing his father's policies of thwarting the Aramean presence in Israel, Ahab sought a series of alliances with neighboring Judah to the south and with Phoenicia on the coast.

Ahab's alliances were strengthened by political marriages. His daughter Athaliah was married in 867 B.C. to Jehoram, the son of Judah's King Jehoshaphat (2Ki 8:16–18; 2Ch 21:5, 6). The marriage helped to end hostile relations between Israel and Judah. The historian Josephus records that Ahab himself married Jezebel, whose father Ethbaal ruled the Phoenician kingdom including Tyre and Sidon (1Ki 16:31, 32).

Ahab thus solidified peace with Phoenicia through his marriage to the infamous Phoenician princess Jezebel. This foreign queen remained true to her foreign background: Josephus reports that her father was a priest in the Phoenician cult of Baal; his name "Ethbaal" means "with Baal." The writer of Israel's history strongly condemned Ahab for supporting Jezebel's worship of the Phoenician and Canaanite god and compromising the Israelite worship of Yahweh (1Ki 16:30–33).

JEHOSHAPHAT AND AHAB FORM AN ALLIANCE

Israel (northern kingdom)

Ahab, son of Omri, was the first king of Israel to establish peaceful relations with Judah. He had frequent conflicts with Ben-Hadad, king of Aram (Syria). Jehoshaphat and Ahab joined forces against the Arameans in a battle at Ramoth Gilead, where Ahab lost his life (1Ki 22).

Judah (southern kingdom)

Jehoshaphat, son of Asa, allied himself with Israel's king Ahab. The alliance was sealed with the marriage of Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram and Ahab's daughter Athaliah (2Ki 8:18).

him. [31]He not only considered it trivial to commit the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, but he also married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal king of the Sidonians, and began to serve Baal and worship him. [32]He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he built in Samaria. [33]Ahab also made an Asherah pole and did more to arouse the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, than did all the kings of Israel before him.

[34]In Ahab's time, Hiel of Bethel rebuilt Jericho. He laid its foundations at the cost of his firstborn son Abiram, and he set up its gates at the cost of his youngest son Segub, in accordance with the word of the LORD spoken by Joshua son of Nun.

TRANSITION

Elijah in Israel

Kings expands the brief summary of Ahab's reign (1Ki 16:29–34) with stories about the prophet Elijah. During Ahab's rule (874–853 B.C.), the struggle of Hebrew faith with Baalism inaugurates a new era of prophetic revelation. Elijah's struggle against, and eventual victory over, Baalism (1Ki 17; 18) leads to Jezebel's threat on Elijah's life and his depressive reaction (1Ki 19).

- **1 Kings 17:1—19:21**

1 Kings

Elijah Announces a Great Drought

17:1 Now Elijah the Tishbite, from Tishbe[a] in Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word."

[a] *1* Or *Tishbite, of the settlers*

Elijah Fed by Ravens

[2]Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah: [3]"Leave here, turn eastward and hide in the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan. [4]You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there."

[5]So he did what the LORD had told him. He went to the Kerith Ravine, east of the Jordan, and stayed there. [6]The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook.

Elijah and the Widow at Zarephath

[7]Some time later the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. [8]Then the word of the LORD came to him: [9]"Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food." [10]So he went to Zarephath. When he came to the town gate, a widow was there gathering sticks. He called to her and asked, "Would you bring me a little water in a

Geography & Environment

Gathering sticks for a fire was common when the only fuel available for heating was wood (1Ki 17:10). The climate of Palestine is mild enough that heating is not absolutely necessary in winter. However, fuel is required year-round for cooking. In modern times there is often danger of deforestation, but when the population was smaller, wood was a renewable supply.

jar so I may have a drink?" [11]As she was going to get it, he called, "And bring me, please, a piece of bread."

[12]"As surely as the LORD your God lives," she replied, "I don't have any bread—only a handful of flour in a jar and a little olive oil in a jug. I am gathering a few sticks to take home and make a meal for myself and my son, that we may eat it—and die."

[13]Elijah said to her, "Don't be afraid. Go home and do as you have said. But first make a small loaf of bread for me from what you have and bring it to me, and then make something for yourself and your son. [14]For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the LORD sends rain on the land.'"

[15]She went away and did as Elijah had told her. So there was food every day for Elijah and for the woman and her family. [16]For the jar of flour was not used up and the jug of oil did not run dry, in keeping with the word of the LORD spoken by Elijah.

[17]Some time later the son of the woman who owned the house became ill. He grew worse and worse, and finally stopped breathing. [18]She said to Elijah, "What do you have against me, man of God? Did you come to remind me of my sin and kill my son?"

[19]"Give me your son," Elijah replied. He took him from her arms, carried him to the upper room where he was staying, and laid him on his bed. [20]Then he cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, have you brought tragedy even on this widow I am staying with, by causing her son to die?" [21]Then he stretched himself out on the boy three times and cried out to the LORD, "LORD my God, let this boy's life return to him!"

[22]The LORD heard Elijah's cry, and the boy's life returned to him, and he lived. [23]Elijah picked up the child and carried him down from the room into the house. He gave him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!"

[24]Then the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God and that the word of the LORD from your mouth is the truth."

Elijah and Obadiah

18 [1]After a long time, in the third year, the word of the LORD came to Elijah: "Go and present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the land." [2]So Elijah went to present himself to Ahab.

Now the famine was severe in Samaria, [3]and Ahab had summoned Obadiah, his palace administrator. (Obadiah was a devout believer in the LORD. [4]While Jezebel was killing off the LORD's prophets, Obadiah had taken a hundred prophets and hidden them in two caves, fifty in each, and had supplied them with food and water.) [5]Ahab had said to Obadiah, "Go through the land to all the springs and valleys. Maybe we can find some grass to keep the horses and mules alive so we will not have to kill any of our animals." [6]So they divided the land they were to cover, Ahab going in one direction and Obadiah in another.

[7]As Obadiah was walking along, Elijah met him. Obadiah recognized him, bowed down to the ground, and said, "Is it really you, my lord Elijah?"

[8]"Yes," he replied. "Go tell your master, 'Elijah is here.'"

[9]"What have I done wrong," asked Obadiah, "that you are handing your servant over to Ahab to be put to death? [10]As surely as the LORD your God lives, there is not a nation or kingdom where my master has not sent someone to look for you. And whenever a nation or kingdom claimed you were not there, he made them swear they could not find you. [11]But now you tell me to go to my master and say, 'Elijah is here.' [12]I don't know where the Spirit of the LORD may carry you when I leave you. If I go and tell Ahab and he doesn't find you, he will kill me. Yet I your servant have worshiped the LORD since my youth. [13]Haven't you heard, my lord, what I did while Jezebel was killing the prophets of the LORD? I hid a hundred of the LORD's prophets in two caves, fifty in each, and supplied them with food and water. [14]And now you tell me to go to my master and say, 'Elijah is here.' He will kill me!"

[15]Elijah said, "As the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today."

TIME CAPSULE	885 to 879 B.C.
885–880	Civil war between Omri and Tibni, competing for Israel's throne
883–859	Ashurnasirpal II of Assyria campaigns every year of his reign
883	Ashurnasirpal rebuilds Calah as his capital in Assyria
880	Omri becomes sole king in Israel
880	Assyrian troops fight on horseback in pairs
879	Omri builds city of Samaria and makes it Israel's new capital city

Mocking Canaanite Religious Ritual (1Ki 18:17–29)

The confrontation between Elijah and the 450 prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel (1Ki 18) demonstrates the power of Israel's God, Yahweh, over against the weakness, even unreality, of the god Baal. After King Ahab of Israel married Jezebel, the princess of Sidon, the foreign queen promoted the worship of her Sidonian god, Baal (1Ki 16:31, 32). The goddess Asherah, symbolized by trees or wooden images (16:33), was also part of this cult, being represented by 400 prophets of her own (18:19).

The prophets of Baal and Asherah are said to "eat at Jezebel's table" (18:19), meaning they were on the government payroll. Professional prophets were standard personnel in many courts, though the number, 850, in Jezebel's court suggests either a rich kingdom or extravagance on her part.

Elijah chose a ritual for the contest that was common to the opposing prophets. An animal sacrifice (18:23) was a central cultic ritual used to honor deities, and bull sacrifices are well known from the clay tablets found at Ugarit. Both Yahweh and Baal were worshiped by the proper sacrifice of bulls.

Elijah's request that each deity light the fire for its own sacrifice (18:24) may reflect the staging of "miracles" in Phoenician temples. The 2nd-century A.D. writer Lucian from Samosata records in *De Dea Syria* how Phoenician priests would rig idols with hidden ropes. Pulling on the ropes would make the idols appear to move and thus amaze worshipers. On the mountain, at a new altar, there would be no chance to fool people with a staged "miraculous" divine intervention.

The prophets of Baal cried aloud and cut themselves in a frenzy (18:28). Self-laceration and mutilation, considered a sign of submission to the deity, appears in a number of religious cult activities. Lucian of Samosata reports worshipers of the goddess at Hierapolis falling into a frenzy and cutting off parts of their own flesh in honor of the deity. On Mount Carmel such actions failed to elicit any divine response (18:29).

Elijah on Mount Carmel

16 So Obadiah went to meet Ahab and told
him, and Ahab went to meet Elijah. 17 When
he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, you
troubler of Israel?"
18 "I have not made trouble for Israel," Elijah
replied. "But you and your father's family have.
You have abandoned the LORD's commands
and have followed the Baals. 19 Now summon
the people from all over Israel to meet me on
Mount Carmel. And bring the four hundred
and fifty prophets of Baal and the four hun-
dred prophets of Asherah, who eat at Jezebel's
table."
20 So Ahab sent word throughout all Israel
and assembled the prophets on Mount Carmel.
21 Elijah went before the people and said, "How
long will you waver between two opinions? If
the LORD is God, follow him; but if Baal is God,
follow him."
But the people said nothing.
22 Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only one
of the LORD's prophets left, but Baal has four
hundred and fifty prophets. 23 Get two bulls for
us. Let Baal's prophets choose one for them-
selves, and let them cut it into pieces and put it
on the wood but not set fire to it. I will prepare
the other bull and put it on the wood but not set
fire to it. 24 Then you call on the name of your
god, and I will call on the name of the LORD.
The god who answers by fire—he is God."
Then all the people said, "What you say is
good."
25 Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "Choose
one of the bulls and prepare it first, since there
are so many of you. Call on the name of your
god, but do not light the fire." 26 So they took
the bull given them and prepared it.
Then they called on the name of Baal from
morning till noon. "Baal, answer us!" they
shouted. But there was no response; no one
answered. And they danced around the altar
they had made.
27 At noon Elijah began to taunt them. "Shout
louder!" he said. "Surely he is a god! Perhaps
he is deep in thought, or busy, or traveling.
Maybe he is sleeping and must be awakened."
28 So they shouted louder and slashed them-
selves with swords and spears, as was their
custom, until their blood flowed. 29 Midday
passed, and they continued their frantic proph-
esying until the time for the evening sacrifice.
But there was no response, no one answered,
no one paid attention.
30 Then Elijah said to all the people, "Come
here to me." They came to him, and he re-
paired the altar of the LORD, which had been
torn down. 31 Elijah took twelve stones, one for
each of the tribes descended from Jacob, to
whom the word of the LORD had come, saying,
"Your name shall be Israel." 32 With the stones
he built an altar in the name of the LORD, and
he dug a trench around it large enough to hold
two seahs[a] of seed. 33 He arranged the wood,
cut the bull into pieces and laid it on the wood.
Then he said to them, "Fill four large jars with
water and pour it on the offering and on the
wood."

[a] *32* That is, probably about 24 pounds or about 11 kilograms

34 "Do it again," he said, and they did it again.
"Do it a third time," he ordered, and they did it the third time. 35 The water ran down around the altar and even filled the trench.

36 At the time of sacrifice, the prophet Elijah stepped forward and prayed: "LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, let it be known today that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. 37 Answer me, LORD, answer me, so these people will know that you, LORD, are God, and that you are turning their hearts back again."

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell and burned up the sacrifice, the wood, the stones and the soil, and also licked up the water in the trench.

39 When all the people saw this, they fell prostrate and cried, "The LORD — he is God! The LORD — he is God!"

40 Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize the prophets of Baal. Don't let anyone get away!" They seized them, and Elijah had them brought down to the Kishon Valley and slaughtered there.

41 And Elijah said to Ahab, "Go, eat and drink, for there is the sound of a heavy rain." 42 So Ahab went off to eat and drink, but Elijah climbed to the top of Carmel, bent down to the ground and put his face between his knees.

43 "Go and look toward the sea," he told his servant. And he went up and looked.
"There is nothing there," he said.
Seven times Elijah said, "Go back."

44 The seventh time the servant reported, "A cloud as small as a man's hand is rising from the sea."
So Elijah said, "Go and tell Ahab, 'Hitch up your chariot and go down before the rain stops you.'"

45 Meanwhile, the sky grew black with clouds, the wind rose, a heavy rain started falling and Ahab rode off to Jezreel. 46 The power of the LORD came on Elijah and, tucking his cloak into his belt, he ran ahead of Ahab all the way to Jezreel.

Elijah Flees to Horeb

19 1 Now Ahab told Jezebel everything Elijah had done and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. 2 So Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah to say, "May the gods deal

The Uptown Girl (1Ki 19:2, 3)

The marriage between Israel's king Ahab and Sidon's princess Jezebel was politically motivated. Unfortunately, the union had an ill effect on Israel's worship of Yahweh. Even today, the name "Jezebel" is associated with all that is evil.

Jezebel, it should be remembered, killed the prophets of Yahweh (1Ki 18:13). She was also the one who frightened Yahweh's prophet Elijah so much that he fled for safety (1Ki 19:2, 3). She also caused the man Naboth to be killed so her husband could possess Naboth's field (1Ki 21:8–13). Her evil deeds led Elijah to predict that Jezebel would be eaten by dogs after her death (1Ki 21:23; 2Ki 9:35–37). Since Jezebel was so evil, how could she have had so much power?

That her influence came from being the wife of Ahab, making her the queen, is true but not the whole story. She was also the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of Sidon (1Ki 16:31). During Ahab's time Sidon was one of the most powerful and certainly richest areas in and around Israel. The material culture of the Sidonians is one of the highest of those found in ancient Canaan. Their ceramic dishes are artistically beautiful, making the typical pots of the Israelites look clumsy and backwoodish.

As a princess from Sidon, Jezebel might have been the original "uptown" girl. She came from the richest and most advanced culture, as the daughter of a king, to Israel, a simple hill-country kingdom. Her aristocratic presence overwhelmed those around her; all eyes and hearts turned in her direction. They swooned in following her god Baal and deserted Yahweh, God of Israel. Not surprisingly, this original "uptown" girl also influenced her husband Ahab's worship of Baal (1Ki 16:31).

with me, be it ever so severely, if by this time tomorrow I do not make your life like that of one of them."

3 Elijah was afraid[a] and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, 4 while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." 5 Then he lay down under the bush and fell asleep.

All at once an angel touched him and said, "Get up and eat." 6 He looked around, and there by his head was some bread baked over hot coals, and a jar of water. He ate and drank and then lay down again.

7 The angel of the LORD came back a second time and touched him and said, "Get up and eat, for the journey is too much for you." 8 So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. 9 There he went into a cave and spent the night.

The LORD Appears to Elijah

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

11 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. 12 After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. 13 When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

14 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

15 The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. 16 Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. 17 Jehu will put to death any who escape the sword of Hazael, and Elisha will put to death any who escape the sword of Jehu. 18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel — all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and whose mouths have not kissed him."

The Call of Elisha

19 So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. 20 Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye," he said, "and then I will come with you."

"Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?"

21 So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

[a] 3 Or *Elijah saw*

TRANSITION

Ahab Wars with Damascus

Towards the end of Ahab's reign, one of Israel's primary threats was the state of Aram (or Syria), with its center in Damascus. In 853 B.C. Damascus led a coalition of Syro-Palestinian states (including Ahab and Israel) which was able to resist an advancing Assyrian army at the town of Qarqar. Ahab and Damascus were allies in that encounter with Assyria, but they became enemies soon afterward. The wars that Ahab fought against Aram-Damascus are recounted in 1Ki 20; 22.

The identity of King Ben-Hadad who led the Aramean (Syrian) forces against Israel (1Ki 20:1) is uncertain. Since the Arameans' main deity was Hadad, god of rain, several of Aram's kings were named "Ben-Hadad," meaning "son of Hadad." Some think that Ahab's opponent was the same Ben-Hadad who aided Judah's King Asa (1Ki 15:18), or possibly the King Hadadezer of Damascus who led the coalition at Qarqar. Others even suggest that the name "Ben-Hadad" reflects the Aramean king of 2Ki 13:24, 25. Thus the actual events surrounding Ahab's death in 853 B.C. remain unidentified.

• **1 Kings 20:1—22:40**

1 Kings

Ben-Hadad Attacks Samaria

20 :1 Now Ben-Hadad king of Aram mustered his entire army. Accompanied by thirty-two kings with their horses and chariots, he went up and besieged Samaria and attacked it. [2]He sent messengers into the city to Ahab king of Israel, saying, "This is what Ben-Hadad says: [3]'Your silver and gold are mine, and the best of your wives and children are mine.'"

[4]The king of Israel answered, "Just as you say, my lord the king. I and all I have are yours."

[5]The messengers came again and said, "This is what Ben-Hadad says: 'I sent to demand your silver and gold, your wives and your children. [6]But about this time tomorrow I am going to send my officials to search your palace and the houses of your officials. They will seize everything you value and carry it away.'"

[7]The king of Israel summoned all the elders of the land and said to them, "See how this man is looking for trouble! When he sent for my wives and my children, my silver and my gold, I did not refuse him."

[8]The elders and the people all answered, "Don't listen to him or agree to his demands."

[9]So he replied to Ben-Hadad's messengers, "Tell my lord the king, 'Your servant will do all you demanded the first time, but this demand I cannot meet.'" They left and took the answer back to Ben-Hadad.

[10]Then Ben-Hadad sent another message to Ahab: "May the gods deal with me, be it ever so severely, if enough dust remains in Samaria to give each of my men a handful."

[11]The king of Israel answered, "Tell him: 'One who puts on his armor should not boast like one who takes it off.'"

[12]Ben-Hadad heard this message while he and the kings were drinking in their tents,[a] and he ordered his men: "Prepare to attack." So they prepared to attack the city.

Ahab Defeats Ben-Hadad

[13]Meanwhile a prophet came to Ahab king of Israel and announced, "This is what the LORD says: 'Do you see this vast army? I will give it into your hand today, and then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

[14]"But who will do this?" asked Ahab.

The prophet replied, "This is what the LORD says: 'The junior officers under the provincial commanders will do it.'"

"And who will start the battle?" he asked.

The prophet answered, "You will."

[15]So Ahab summoned the 232 junior officers under the provincial commanders. Then he assembled the rest of the Israelites, 7,000 in all. [16]They set out at noon while Ben-Hadad and the 32 kings allied with him were in their tents getting drunk. [17]The junior officers under the provincial commanders went out first.

Now Ben-Hadad had dispatched scouts, who reported, "Men are advancing from Samaria."

[18]He said, "If they have come out for peace, take them alive; if they have come out for war, take them alive."

[19]The junior officers under the provincial commanders marched out of the city with the army behind them [20]and each one struck down his opponent. At that, the Arameans fled, with the Israelites in pursuit. But Ben-Hadad king of Aram escaped on horseback with some of his horsemen. [21]The king of Israel advanced and overpowered the horses and chariots and inflicted heavy losses on the Arameans.

[22]Afterward, the prophet came to the king of Israel and said, "Strengthen your position and see what must be done, because next spring the king of Aram will attack you again."

[23]Meanwhile, the officials of the king of Aram advised him, "Their gods are gods of the hills. That is why they were too strong for us. But if we fight them on the plains, surely we will be stronger than they. [24]Do this: Remove all the kings from their commands and replace them with other officers. [25]You must also raise an army like the one you lost—horse for horse and chariot for chariot—so we can fight Israel on the plains. Then surely we will be stronger than they." He agreed with them and acted accordingly.

[26]The next spring Ben-Hadad mustered the Arameans and went up to Aphek to fight against Israel. [27]When the Israelites were also mustered and given provisions, they marched out to meet them. The Israelites camped opposite them like two small flocks of goats, while the Arameans covered the countryside.

[28]The man of God came up and told the king of Israel, "This is what the LORD says: 'Because the Arameans think the LORD is a god of the hills and not a god of the valleys, I will deliver this vast army into your hands, and you will know that I am the LORD.'"

[29]For seven days they camped opposite each other, and on the seventh day the battle was joined. The Israelites inflicted a hundred thousand casualties on the Aramean foot soldiers in one day. [30]The rest of them escaped to the city of Aphek, where the wall collapsed on twenty-

[a] *12* Or *in Sukkoth*; also in verse 16

seven thousand of them. And Ben-Hadad fled to the city and hid in an inner room.

31 His officials said to him, "Look, we have heard that the kings of Israel are merciful. Let us go to the king of Israel with sackcloth around our waists and ropes around our heads. Perhaps he will spare your life."

32 Wearing sackcloth around their waists and ropes around their heads, they went to the king of Israel and said, "Your servant Ben-Hadad says: 'Please let me live.'"

The king answered, "Is he still alive? He is my brother."

33 The men took this as a good sign and were quick to pick up his word. "Yes, your brother Ben-Hadad!" they said.

"Go and get him," the king said. When Ben-Hadad came out, Ahab had him come up into his chariot.

34 "I will return the cities my father took from your father," Ben-Hadad offered. "You may set up your own market areas in Damascus, as my father did in Samaria."

Ahab said, "On the basis of a treaty I will set you free." So he made a treaty with him, and let him go.

A Prophet Condemns Ahab

35 By the word of the LORD one of the company of the prophets said to his companion, "Strike me with your weapon," but he refused.

36 So the prophet said, "Because you have not obeyed the LORD, as soon as you leave me a lion will kill you." And after the man went away, a lion found him and killed him.

37 The prophet found another man and said, "Strike me, please." So the man struck him and wounded him. 38 Then the prophet went and stood by the road waiting for the king. He disguised himself with his headband down over his eyes. 39 As the king passed by, the prophet called out to him, "Your servant went into the thick of the battle, and someone came to me with a captive and said, 'Guard this man. If he is missing, it will be your life for his life, or you must pay a talent[a] of silver.' 40 While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared."

"That is your sentence," the king of Israel said. "You have pronounced it yourself."

41 Then the prophet quickly removed the headband from his eyes, and the king of Israel recognized him as one of the prophets. 42 He said to the king, "This is what the LORD says: 'You have set free a man I had determined should die.[b] Therefore it is your life for his life, your people for his people.'" 43 Sullen and angry, the king of Israel went to his palace in Samaria.

Naboth's Vineyard

21 1 Some time later there was an incident involving a vineyard belonging to Naboth the Jezreelite. The vineyard was in Jezreel, close to the palace of Ahab king of Samaria. 2 Ahab said to Naboth, "Let me have your vineyard to use for a vegetable garden, since it is close to my palace. In exchange I will give you a better vineyard or, if you prefer, I will pay you whatever it is worth."

3 But Naboth replied, "The LORD forbid that I should give you the inheritance of my ancestors."

4 So Ahab went home, sullen and angry because Naboth the Jezreelite had said, "I will not give you the inheritance of my ancestors." He lay on his bed sulking and refused to eat.

5 His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, "Why are you so sullen? Why won't you eat?"

6 He answered her, "Because I said to Naboth the Jezreelite, 'Sell me your vineyard; or if you prefer, I will give you another vineyard in its place.' But he said, 'I will not give you my vineyard.'"

7 Jezebel his wife said, "Is this how you act as king over Israel? Get up and eat! Cheer up. I'll get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite."

8 So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, placed his seal on them, and sent them to the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city with him. 9 In those letters she wrote:

> "Proclaim a day of fasting and seat Naboth in a prominent place among the people. 10 But seat two scoundrels opposite him and have them bring charges that he has cursed both God and the king. Then take him out and stone him to death."

11 So the elders and nobles who lived in Naboth's city did as Jezebel directed in the letters she had written to them. 12 They proclaimed a

Religion & Worship

The prophets occasionally performed "prophetic actions" of some sort, dramatizing an aspect of their message. Such actions might include "striking" (1Ki 20:35), symbolic items, such as Zedekiah's "iron horns" (1Ki 22:11), as well as more elaborate activity like Ezekiel's actions (Eze 4; 5). There is at least one example of prophetic action in the New Testament (Ac 21:11).

[a] *39* That is, about 75 pounds or about 34 kilograms

[b] *42* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

fast and seated Naboth in a prominent place among the people. 13Then two scoundrels came and sat opposite him and brought charges against Naboth before the people, saying, "Naboth has cursed both God and the king." So they took him outside the city and stoned him to death. 14Then they sent word to Jezebel: "Naboth has been stoned to death."

15As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth had been stoned to death, she said to Ahab, "Get up and take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite that he refused to sell you. He is no longer alive, but dead." 16When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went down to take possession of Naboth's vineyard.

17Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 18"Go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who rules in Samaria. He is now in Naboth's vineyard, where he has gone to take possession of it. 19Say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: Have you not murdered a man and seized his property?' Then say to him, 'This is what the LORD says: In the place where dogs licked up Naboth's blood, dogs will lick up your blood—yes, yours!'"

20Ahab said to Elijah, "So you have found me, my enemy!"

"I have found you," he answered, "because you have sold yourself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD. 21He says, 'I am going to bring disaster on you. I will wipe out your descendants and cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free.[a] 22I will make your house like that of Jeroboam son of Nebat and that of Baasha son of Ahijah, because you have aroused my anger and have caused Israel to sin.'

23"And also concerning Jezebel the LORD says: 'Dogs will devour Jezebel by the wall of[b] Jezreel.'

24"Dogs will eat those belonging to Ahab who die in the city, and the birds will feed on those who die in the country."

25(There was never anyone like Ahab, who sold himself to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, urged on by Jezebel his wife. 26He behaved in the vilest manner by going after idols, like the Amorites the LORD drove out before Israel.)

27When Ahab heard these words, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and fasted. He lay in sackcloth and went around meekly.

28Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite: 29"Have you noticed how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself, I will not bring this disaster in his day, but I will bring it on his house in the days of his son."

Micaiah Prophesies Against Ahab

22 1For three years there was no war between Aram and Israel. 2But in the third year Jehoshaphat king of Judah went down to see the king of Israel. 3The king of Israel had said to his officials, "Don't you know that Ramoth Gilead belongs to us and yet we are doing nothing to retake it from the king of Aram?"

4So he asked Jehoshaphat, "Will you go with me to fight against Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied to the king of Israel, "I am as you are, my people as your people, my horses as your horses." 5But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "First seek the counsel of the LORD."

6So the king of Israel brought together the prophets—about four hundred men—and asked them, "Shall I go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I refrain?"

"Go," they answered, "for the Lord will give it into the king's hand."

7But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no longer a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?"

8The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one prophet through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king should not say such a thing," Jehoshaphat replied.

9So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once."

10Dressed in their royal robes, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them. 11Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns

TIME CAPSULE		874 to 867 B.C.
874–850		Osorkon II of Egypt completes extensive temple construction at Tanis
874		Ahab becomes king in Israel
872		Jehoshaphat serves as coregent with Asa in Judah
869		Jehoshaphat becomes sole king in Judah
867		Israel's King Ahab marries daughter Athaliah to Jehoram, the son of Judah's King Jehoshaphat

[a] *21* Or *Israel—every ruler or leader* [b] *23* Most Hebrew manuscripts; a few Hebrew manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 2 Kings 9:26) *the plot of ground at*

and he declared, "This is what the LORD says: 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.'"

12All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. "Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious," they said, "for the LORD will give it into the king's hand."

13The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, the other prophets without exception are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably."

14But Micaiah said, "As surely as the LORD lives, I can tell him only what the LORD tells me."

15When he arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or not?"

"Attack and be victorious," he answered, "for the LORD will give it into the king's hand."

16The king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

17Then Micaiah answered, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the LORD said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'"

18The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?"

19Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the multitudes of heaven standing around him on his right and on his left. 20And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?'

"One suggested this, and another that. 21Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.'

22"'By what means?' the LORD asked.

"'I will go out and be a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said.

"'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.'

23"So now the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you."

24Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. "Which way did the spirit from[a] the LORD go when he went from me to speak to you?" he asked.

25Micaiah replied, "You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room."

26The king of Israel then ordered, "Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king's son 27and say, 'This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.'"

28Micaiah declared, "If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me." Then he added, "Mark my words, all you people!"

Ahab Killed at Ramoth Gilead

29So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 30The king

[a] *24* Or *Spirit of*

Beliefs & Ideas

In several visions of God described by the prophets, God is enthroned and surrounded by a court consisting of his servants. Among those attending the court are spirits prepared to perform works, such as deceiving King Ahab (1Ki 22:19–23). In one case, even Satan, the Adversary, attends God's court, obtaining permission to afflict Job with misfortune and sickness (Job 1:6–12).

The Ivory House (1Ki 22:39)

The city of Samaria holds two distinctions. First, it was the only city that the Israelites are specifically credited with building from the ground up (1Ki 16:24); all others they took from some other people. Samaria's second claim to fame is the amazingly large number of ivories that were found in the rubble of King Ahab's palace (1Ki 22:39).

The ivories have been found in destruction layers that had been Ahab's house, but exactly how they were used is not certain. Among the pieces found were a large number of plaques, suggesting that they were hung on walls. Some of these plaques were themselves decorated with gold, colored glass, and jewels. Other pieces of ivory were used as inlays for furniture, which recalls the "beds adorned with ivory" mentioned by the prophet Amos (Am 6:4).

The motifs of these ivory pieces included animals like lions and goats; foreign gods like the Egyptian gods Horus and Re; Hebrew letters; and winged creatures. No doubt such unusual and expensive decoration spread the fame of Ahab, who ruled from 874 to 853 B.C. Ivory houses also characterized the prosperity that the prophet Amos decried during the later reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.). The kings of Israel had a summer palace in Jezreel and a winter palace at Samaria, both being examples of luxury and extravagance (Am 3:15).

of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

31 Now the king of Aram had ordered his thirty-two chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel." 32 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, "Surely this is the king of Israel." So they turned to attack him, but when Jehoshaphat cried out, 33 the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel and stopped pursuing him.

34 But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the sections of his armor. The king told his chariot driver, "Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded." 35 All day long the battle raged, and the king was propped up in his chariot facing the Arameans. The blood from his wound ran onto the floor of the chariot, and that evening he died. 36 As the sun was setting, a cry spread through the army: "Every man to his town. Every man to his land!"

37 So the king died and was brought to Samaria, and they buried him there. 38 They washed the chariot at a pool in Samaria (where the prostitutes bathed),[a] and the dogs licked up his blood, as the word of the LORD had declared.

39 As for the other events of Ahab's reign, including all he did, the palace he built and adorned with ivory, and the cities he fortified, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? 40 Ahab rested with his ancestors. And Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king.

TRANSITION

The Alliance of Judah and Israel

In a summary of Jehoshaphat's reign (872–848 B.C.), the author of Kings comments that Jehoshaphat was "at peace with the king of Israel" (1Ki 22:44). This alliance resulted in both a joint military campaign with Israel's Ahab and later a commercial enterprise with Ahab's son Ahaziah—neither of which was successful. The campaign against the Arameans at Ramoth Gilead was aborted after Ahab was killed (1Ki 22:35, 36), and the trading venture with Ahaziah ended in shipwreck (1Ki 22:48; 2Ch 20:35–37). After two such failures, Jehoshaphat was understandably reluctant to continue working with Israel (1Ki 22:49).

• **1 Kings 22:41–50**

1 Kings

Jehoshaphat King of Judah

22 :41 Jehoshaphat son of Asa became king of Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel. 42 Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. 43 In everything he followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. The high places, however, were not removed, and the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.[b] 44 Jehoshaphat was also at peace with the king of Israel.

[a] *38* Or *Samaria and cleaned the weapons* [b] *43* In Hebrew texts this sentence (22:43b) is numbered 22:44, and 22:44-53 is numbered 22:45-54.

45 As for the other events of Jehoshaphat's
reign, the things he achieved and his military
exploits, are they not written in the book of the
annals of the kings of Judah? 46 He rid the land
of the rest of the male shrine prostitutes who
remained there even after the reign of his fa-
ther Asa. 47 There was then no king in Edom; a
provincial governor ruled.
48 Now Jehoshaphat built a fleet of trading
ships[a] to go to Ophir for gold, but they never
set sail—they were wrecked at Ezion Geber.
49 At that time Ahaziah son of Ahab said to Je-
hoshaphat, "Let my men sail with yours," but
Jehoshaphat refused.
50 Then Jehoshaphat rested with his ances-
tors and was buried with them in the city of
David his father. And Jehoram his son succeed-
ed him as king.

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Ahab and Jehoshaphat

The historian of Kings offered a short summary of Jehoshapha t's reign (1Ki 22:41–50), while covering Ahab's reign in the nor thern kingdom much more thoroughly. The Chronicler reverses that emphasis, concentrating on Judah's king Jehoshaphat (872–848 B.C.), and mentioning Ahab only a t the campaig n against Ramoth Gilead (2Ch 18).

Chronicles relates the ba ttle of R amoth Gilead almost w ord for word from Kings, but adds comments that present Jehoshaphat in a good ligh t. The feast hosted by Ahab (2Ch 18:2) is not men tioned in 1K i 22:2; per haps the Chronicler wanted to show that Ahab was primarily responsible for the militar y defeat. While Jehoshaphat is rebuked for his alliance with "the wicked," meaning Ahab, he is praised for his religious reforms (2Ch 19:1–3).

• 2 Chronicles 17:1—19:11

2 Chronicles

Jehoshaphat King of Judah

17 **:1** Jehoshaphat his son succeeded him
as king and strengthened himself against
Israel. 2 He stationed troops in all the fortified
cities of Judah and put garrisons in Judah and
in the towns of Ephraim that his father Asa had
captured.
3 The LORD was with Jehoshaphat because
he followed the ways of his father David be-
fore him. He did not consult the Baals 4 but
sought the God of his father and followed his
commands rather than the practices of Israel.
5 The LORD established the kingdom under his
control; and all Judah brought gifts to Jehosh-
aphat, so that he had great wealth and honor.
6 His heart was devoted to the ways of the LORD;
furthermore, he removed the high places and
the Asherah poles from Judah.
7 In the third year of his reign he sent his of-
ficials Ben-Hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethan-
el and Micaiah to teach in the towns of Judah.
8 With them were certain Levites—Shemaiah,
Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth,
Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah and Tob-Ad-
onijah—and the priests Elishama and Jeho-
ram. 9 They taught throughout Judah, taking
with them the Book of the Law of the LORD;
they went around to all the towns of Judah and
taught the people.
10 The fear of the LORD fell on all the king-
doms of the lands surrounding Judah, so that
they did not go to war against Jehoshaphat.
11 Some Philistines brought Jehoshaphat gifts
and silver as tribute, and the Arabs brought
him flocks: seven thousand seven hundred
rams and seven thousand seven hundred goats.
12 Jehoshaphat became more and more pow-
erful; he built forts and store cities in Judah
13 and had large supplies in the towns of Judah.
He also kept experienced fighting men in Je-
rusalem. 14 Their enrollment by families was as
follows:

From Judah, commanders of units of 1,000:
Adnah the commander, with 300,000
fighting men;
15 next, Jehohanan the commander, with
280,000;
16 next, Amasiah son of Zikri, who volun-
teered himself for the service of the
LORD, with 200,000.
17 From Benjamin:
Eliada, a valiant soldier, with 200,000
men armed with bows and shields;
18 next, Jehozabad, with 180,000 men
armed for battle.

19 These were the men who served the king, be-
sides those he stationed in the fortified cities
throughout Judah.

Micaiah Prophesies Against Ahab

18 1 Now Jehoshaphat had great wealth and
honor, and he allied himself with Ahab
by marriage. 2 Some years later he went down
to see Ahab in Samaria. Ahab slaughtered
many sheep and cattle for him and the people
with him and urged him to attack Ramoth Gil-
ead. 3 Ahab king of Israel asked Jehoshaphat

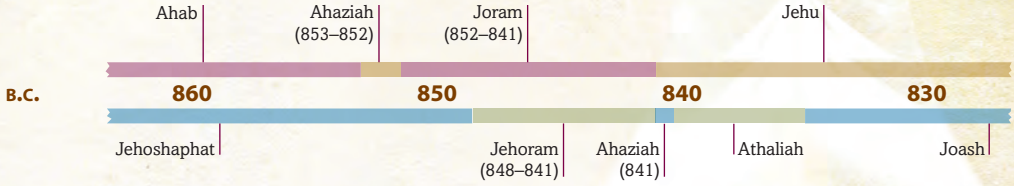
[a] 48 Hebrew *of ships of Tarshish*

BROTHERS, IN-LAWS, UNCLES, AND NEPHEWS

Israel (northern kingdom)

Ahaziah was the son of Ahab, brother of Israel's Joram (or Jehoram), and uncle to Judah's Ahaziah. He continued the alliance with Jehoshaphat, building ships and conducting an unsuccessful joint trading venture (2Ch 20:35–37).

Joram (or Jehoram) was the son of Ahab, brother of Israel's Ahaziah, and uncle to Judah's Ahaziah. He allied himself with Jehoshaphat to fight Moab (2Ki 3:6). Later he allied with Judah's Ahaziah, his nephew, to fight Aram (2Ki 8:28, 29).



Judah (southern kingdom)

Jehoram (or Joram) was the son of Jehoshaphat and brother-in-law to Israel's Ahaziah and Joram. He married their sister Athaliah (2Ch 21:6).

Ahaziah was the son of Jehoram and the nephew of Israel's Ahaziah and Jehoram. He joined his uncle, Israel's Joram, in a campaign against Aram (2Ki 8:28).

king of Judah, "Will you go with me against Ramoth Gilead?"

Jehoshaphat replied, "I am as you are, and my people as your people; we will join you in the war." [4]But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "First seek the counsel of the LORD."

[5]So the king of Israel brought together the prophets — four hundred men — and asked them, "Shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I not?"

"Go," they answered, "for God will give it into the king's hand."

[6]But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no longer a prophet of the LORD here whom we can inquire of?"

[7]The king of Israel answered Jehoshaphat, "There is still one prophet through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good about me, but always bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah."

"The king should not say such a thing," Jehoshaphat replied.

[8]So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once."

[9]Dressed in their royal robes, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them. [10]Now Zedekiah son of Kenaanah had made iron horns, and he declared, "This is what the LORD says: 'With these you will gore the Arameans until they are destroyed.'"

[11]All the other prophets were prophesying the same thing. "Attack Ramoth Gilead and be victorious," they said, "for the LORD will give it into the king's hand."

[12]The messenger who had gone to summon Micaiah said to him, "Look, the other prophets without exception are predicting success for the king. Let your word agree with theirs, and speak favorably."

[13]But Micaiah said, "As surely as the LORD lives, I can tell him only what my God says."

[14]When he arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall I not?"

"Attack and be victorious," he answered, "for they will be given into your hand."

[15]The king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear to tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

[16]Then Micaiah answered, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shep-

Beliefs & Ideas

Zedekiah's iron horns (2Ch 18:10) were part of a public display of prophets before the royal court of Israel. The symbolic action makes the prophetic word visible and unforgettable. The royal court itself resembles the heavenly court described by Micaiah (2Ch 18:18) in one respect: the agents before the throne are not unanimous, but include differing opinions.

Heaven Plans an Assassination (2Ch 18:18–22)

Ahab, king of Israel (874–853 B.C.), asked Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in an attack on Aram (2Ch 18:3). The two kings then consulted the professional court prophets, inquiring about the will of the deity in the matter. This was normal practice throughout the ancient Near East, especially during military campaigns, and kings kept staffs of professional prophets in their courts just for this purpose.

The 400 professional prophets who answered Ahab spoke with one voice (18:5). Prophets usually determined the will of the deity by means of set observations which were written down in manuals. This kept individual interpretation to a minimum. However, one prophet, Micaiah, spoke independently for Yahweh, claiming to have seen and heard the heavenly court procedure.

Usually the divine council was made up of gods. In Canaanite religion, El, the head of the pantheon, would be in charge of such a council, but the deities in attendance were the ones who debated the course of action. Once a plan was determined, these lesser deities were also the ones to carry out the action in the world. In Micaiah's vision Yahweh is the head of the council (18:18), and the members are called spirits. The spirit who devised the plan to lead the king of Israel into a battle where he would die was also the one assigned to carry out the plan (18:21).

Neo-Assyrian texts show that court prophets continued to be consulted by the Assyrian kings Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.) and Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.). The prophets, who are called "proclaimers," reported oracles to the king from such Assyrian deities as Ashur, Ishtar, and Ninlil. The oracles themselves were preserved in the official royal annals.

herd, and the LORD said, 'These people have no master. Let each one go home in peace.'"

17 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Didn't I tell you that he never prophesies anything good about me, but only bad?"

18 Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on his throne with all the multitudes of heaven standing on his right and on his left. 19 And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab king of Israel into attacking Ramoth Gilead and going to his death there?'

"One suggested this, and another that. 20 Finally, a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD and said, 'I will entice him.'

"'By what means?' the LORD asked.

21 "'I will go and be a deceiving spirit in the mouths of all his prophets,' he said.

"'You will succeed in enticing him,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.'

22 "So now the LORD has put a deceiving spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours. The LORD has decreed disaster for you."

23 Then Zedekiah son of Kenaanah went up and slapped Micaiah in the face. "Which way did the spirit from[a] the LORD go when he went from me to speak to you?" he asked.

24 Micaiah replied, "You will find out on the day you go to hide in an inner room."

25 The king of Israel then ordered, "Take Micaiah and send him back to Amon the ruler of the city and to Joash the king's son, 26 and say, 'This is what the king says: Put this fellow in prison and give him nothing but bread and water until I return safely.'"

27 Micaiah declared, "If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me." Then he added, "Mark my words, all you people!"

Ahab Killed at Ramoth Gilead

28 So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth Gilead. 29 The king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will enter the battle in disguise, but you wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle.

30 Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel." 31 When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they thought, "This is the king of Israel." So they turned to attack him, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him, 32 for when the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they stopped pursuing him.

33 But someone drew his bow at random and hit the king of Israel between the breastplate and the scale armor. The king told the chariot driver, "Wheel around and get me out of the fighting. I've been wounded." 34 All day long the battle raged, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. Then at sunset he died.

19 1 When Jehoshaphat king of Judah returned safely to his palace in Jerusalem, 2 Jehu the seer, the son of Hanani, went out to meet him and said to the king, "Should you help the wicked and love[b] those who hate the LORD? Because of this, the wrath of the LORD is on you. 3 There is, however, some good in

[a] 23 Or *Spirit of* [b] 2 Or *and make alliances with*

you, for you have rid the land of the Asherah poles and have set your heart on seeking God."

Jehoshaphat Appoints Judges

4 Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and he went
out again among the people from Beersheba to
the hill country of Ephraim and turned them
back to the LORD, the God of their ancestors.
5 He appointed judges in the land, in each of the
fortified cities of Judah. 6 He told them, "Con-
sider carefully what you do, because you are
not judging for mere mortals but for the LORD,
who is with you whenever you give a verdict.
7 Now let the fear of the LORD be on you. Judge
carefully, for with the LORD our God there is no
injustice or partiality or bribery."

8 In Jerusalem also, Jehoshaphat appointed
some of the Levites, priests and heads of Isra-
elite families to administer the law of the LORD
and to settle disputes. And they lived in Jeru-
salem. 9 He gave them these orders: "You must
serve faithfully and wholeheartedly in the fear
of the LORD. 10 In every case that comes before
you from your people who live in the cities—
whether bloodshed or other concerns of the
law, commands, decrees or regulations—you
are to warn them not to sin against the LORD;
otherwise his wrath will come on you and your
people. Do this, and you will not sin.

11 "Amariah the chief priest will be over you
in any matter concerning the LORD, and Zeba-
diah son of Ishmael, the leader of the tribe of
Judah, will be over you in any matter concern-
ing the king, and the Levites will serve as offi-
cials before you. Act with courage, and may the
LORD be with those who do well."

TRANSITION

Holy War Against the Transjordan Coalition

Elijah, in many ways the hero of the Book of 1 Kings, appears only once in Chronicles (2Ch 21:12). This is partly because Elijah prophesied in the northern kingdom, whereas the Chronicler writes mostly about Judah. Another reason, though, is that the Chronicler simply is not as interested in prophets—even Elijah—as he is in priests and the temple. For instance, Jehoshaphat's battle against a coalition of Transjordanian forces, including Moab, Ammon, and Edom, is not recorded in Kings. The account in Chronicles relates a royal speech in the temple court (2Ch 20:5, 14–17), and describes the battle as fought not by warriors but by, of all people, the temple musicians (20:21–23, 27–29).

• 2 Chronicles 20:1–37

2 Chronicles

Jehoshaphat Defeats Moab and Ammon

20 :1 After this, the Moabites and Ammon-
ites with some of the Meunites[a] came to
wage war against Jehoshaphat.

2 Some people came and told Jehoshaphat, "A
vast army is coming against you from Edom,[b]
from the other side of the Dead Sea. It is al-
ready in Hazezon Tamar" (that is, En Gedi).
3 Alarmed, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of
the LORD, and he proclaimed a fast for all Ju-
dah. 4 The people of Judah came together to
seek help from the LORD; indeed, they came
from every town in Judah to seek him.

5 Then Jehoshaphat stood up in the assem-
bly of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple of the
LORD in the front of the new courtyard 6 and
said:

> "LORD, the God of our ancestors, are you
> not the God who is in heaven? You rule
> over all the kingdoms of the nations. Pow-
> er and might are in your hand, and no one
> can withstand you. 7 Our God, did you not
> drive out the inhabitants of this land before
> your people Israel and give it forever to
> the descendants of Abraham your friend?
> 8 They have lived in it and have built in it a
> sanctuary for your Name, saying, 9 'If ca-
> lamity comes upon us, whether the sword
> of judgment, or plague or famine, we will
> stand in your presence before this temple
> that bears your Name and will cry out to
> you in our distress, and you will hear us
> and save us.'
>
> 10 "But now here are men from Ammon,
> Moab and Mount Seir, whose territory
> you would not allow Israel to invade when
> they came from Egypt; so they turned
> away from them and did not destroy them.
> 11 See how they are repaying us by coming
> to drive us out of the possession you gave
> us as an inheritance. 12 Our God, will you
> not judge them? For we have no power to
> face this vast army that is attacking us. We
> do not know what to do, but our eyes are
> on you."

13 All the men of Judah, with their wives and
children and little ones, stood there before the
LORD.

14 Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jahazi-
el son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son
of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite and de-
scendant of Asaph, as he stood in the assembly.

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[a] *1* Some Septuagint manuscripts; Hebrew *Ammonites*
[b] *2* One Hebrew manuscript; most Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Vulgate *Aram*

Seir Is Edom (2Ch 20:23)

Seir was a geographic region within the territory of the Edomites (Ge 36:21). The central and southern highlands of Transjordan were, in biblical times, divided among three peoples, the Ammonites, Moabites, and Edomites, with the Edomites living in the southern-most region.

The association between Edom and Seir was so close that, at times, the name of Seir was used as an alternative name for Edom (Nu 24:18). Sometimes Seir is referred to as Mount Seir, suggesting that its territory was mountainous.

Exactly where this region is located is unknown. The name "Seir" means "hairy," which provides no geographical clues. On the other hand, "Edom" means "red," which has caused some scholars to speculate that Edom itself was in the area of the reddish sandstone mountains around Petra, with Seir being one of those mountains. This location is unlikely, however, since Seir seems to be connected with a major passageway up to the Transjordanian plateau (Jos 12:7).

The Chronicler apparently uses "Mount Seir" to represent Edom (2Ch 20:23). The Ammonites and Moabites joined forces to destroy the Edomites, before turning on each other.

15 He said: "Listen, King Jehoshaphat and
all who live in Judah and Jerusalem! This is
what the LORD says to you: 'Do not be afraid
or discouraged because of this vast army. For
the battle is not yours, but God's. 16 Tomorrow
march down against them. They will be climb-
ing up by the Pass of Ziz, and you will find them
at the end of the gorge in the Desert of Jeruel.
17 You will not have to fight this battle. Take up
your positions; stand firm and see the deliver-
ance the LORD will give you, Judah and Jerusa-
lem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.
Go out to face them tomorrow, and the LORD
will be with you.'"

18 Jehoshaphat bowed down with his face to
the ground, and all the people of Judah and Je-
rusalem fell down in worship before the LORD.
19 Then some Levites from the Kohathites and
Korahites stood up and praised the LORD, the
God of Israel, with a very loud voice.

20 Early in the morning they left for the Des-
ert of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat
stood and said, "Listen to me, Judah and peo-
ple of Jerusalem! Have faith in the LORD your
God and you will be upheld; have faith in his
prophets and you will be successful." 21 After
consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed
men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for
the splendor of his[a] holiness as they went out
at the head of the army, saying:

"Give thanks to the LORD,
for his love endures forever."

22 As they began to sing and praise, the LORD
set ambushes against the men of Ammon and
Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Ju-
dah, and they were defeated. 23 The Ammonites
and Moabites rose up against the men from
Mount Seir to destroy and annihilate them.
After they finished slaughtering the men from
Seir, they helped to destroy one another.

24 When the men of Judah came to the place
that overlooks the desert and looked toward
the vast army, they saw only dead bodies ly-
ing on the ground; no one had escaped. 25 So
Jehoshaphat and his men went to carry off
their plunder, and they found among them a
great amount of equipment and clothing[b] and
also articles of value—more than they could
take away. There was so much plunder that it
took three days to collect it. 26 On the fourth
day they assembled in the Valley of Berakah,
where they praised the LORD. This is why it is
called the Valley of Berakah[c] to this day.

27 Then, led by Jehoshaphat, all the men of
Judah and Jerusalem returned joyfully to Je-
rusalem, for the LORD had given them cause
to rejoice over their enemies. 28 They entered
Jerusalem and went to the temple of the LORD
with harps and lyres and trumpets.

29 The fear of God came on all the surround-
ing kingdoms when they heard how the LORD
had fought against the enemies of Israel.
30 And the kingdom of Jehoshaphat was at
peace, for his God had given him rest on ev-
ery side.

[a] *21* Or *him with the splendor of* [b] *25* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate; most Hebrew manuscripts *corpses*
[c] *26* *Berakah* means *praise.*

TIME CAPSULE		858 to 853 B.C.
858–824		Shalmaneser III of Assyria campaigns against Urartu and Damascus
858		Assyrian Empire reaches to the Mediterranean
856		Shalmaneser captures many cities of Urartu
853–845		Urhilina, king of Hamath, is part of coalition that stops Assyrian advances to the west
853		Anti-Assyrian coalition fights against Assyria's Shalmaneser at the battle of Qarqar

The End of Jehoshaphat's Reign

31So Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king of Judah, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. 32He followed the ways of his father Asa and did not stray from them; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. 33The high places, however, were not removed, and the people still had not set their hearts on the God of their ancestors.

34The other events of Jehoshaphat's reign, from beginning to end, are written in the annals of Jehu son of Hanani, which are recorded in the book of the kings of Israel.

35Later, Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an alliance with Ahaziah king of Israel, whose ways were wicked. 36He agreed with him to construct a fleet of trading ships.[a] After these were built at Ezion Geber, 37Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have made an alliance with Ahaziah, the LORD will destroy what you have made." The ships were wrecked and were not able to set sail to trade.[b]

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Fall of Omri's Dynasty

The Omride dynasty lasted almost 50 years through the reigns of four Israelite kings. Omri and his son Ahab were followed on the throne by Ahaziah (853–852 B.C.) and Joram (or Jehoram; 852–841 B.C.). Both Ahaziah and Joram were sons of Ahab; since Ahaziah was childless, he was succeeded as king by his brother (2Ki 1:17).

The historian of Kings introduces Ahaziah's reign in 1Ki 22:51–53 with criticism of the king's religious policies. Ahaziah was guilty of perpetuating both the Canaanite fertility religion of his parents, Ahab and Jezebel, and the idolatrous calf worship of Jeroboam. The story of Ahaziah's involvement with Canaanite religion continues in the Book of 2 Kings, recounting the king's encounter with the prophet Elijah (2Ki 1).

- **1 Kings 22:51–53**
- **2 Kings 1:1–18**

1 Kings 22:51–53

Ahaziah King of Israel

22:51 Ahaziah son of Ahab became king of Israel in Samaria in the seventeenth year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, and he reigned over Israel two years. 52He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, because he followed the ways of his father and mother and of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who caused Israel to sin. 53He served and worshiped Baal and aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of Israel, just as his father had done.

2 Kings 1:1–18

The LORD's Judgment on Ahaziah

1:1 After Ahab's death, Moab rebelled against Israel. 2Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers, saying to them, "Go and consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron, to see if I will recover from this injury."

3But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, "Go up and meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going off to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron?' 4Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'You will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!'" So Elijah went.

5When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, "Why have you come back?"

6"A man came to meet us," they replied. "And he said to us, 'Go back to the king who sent you and tell him, "This is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!"'"

7The king asked them, "What kind of man was it who came to meet you and told you this?"

8They replied, "He had a garment of hair[c] and had a leather belt around his waist."

The king said, "That was Elijah the Tishbite."

9Then he sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. The captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on the top of a hill, and said to him, "Man of God, the king says, 'Come down!'"

10Elijah answered the captain, "If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and

[a] *36* Hebrew *of ships that could go to Tarshish* [b] *37* Hebrew *sail for Tarshish* [c] *8* Or *He was a hairy man*

Culture & Society

Clothing is used universally to indicate the status and function of persons in society. The prophet's calling is shown by unsophisticated garments, including a leather belt (2Ki 1:8; Mk 1:6). Among other things, this clothing proves that the prophet is not on the king's payroll, but owes allegiance only to God (Lk 7:25).

The Lord of the Flies (2Ki 1:2–16)

Baal-Zebub, a Philistine deity at Ekron, is unknown outside of 2Ki 1:2–16. The deity is often confused with Beelzebul (or Beelzebub) mentioned in the New Testament (Mt 12:24). The name "Baal-Zebub" means "lord of the flies," and a deity by this name likely was worshiped in the Philistine city of Ekron.

Ahaziah, due to an accidental injury (2Ki 1:2), did not rule long as king of Israel (853–852 B.C.). Having been wounded, he sent messengers to the deity Baal-Zebub, seeking information about his chances of recovery. One method by which professional prophets determined the will of the gods was to watch the ways in which flies swarmed. So probably Baal-Zebub was a god from whom knowledge of future events was sought by means of the flight of insects. Ahaziah sought divine knowledge from Ekron, just as people from all over the ancient world visited the Greek shrine at Delphi to inquire of the oracle there.

Elijah, the prophet of Yahweh, stopped the messengers (and a few armies) from consulting Baal-Zebub and then confronted Ahaziah with his lack of faithfulness. This was a demonstration that Yahweh is all Israel needs; there is no need for foreign gods (1:6). That the king did not trust the God of Israel enough to inquire of him was enough to cause the king to die. The ancients believed that rulers were given their kingdoms by their patron gods. When a king abandoned his patron god, he risked being abandoned by the god.

consume you and your fifty men!" Then fire fell from heaven and consumed the captain and his men.

11 At this the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. The captain said to him, "Man of God, this is what the king says, 'Come down at once!'"

12 "If I am a man of God," Elijah replied, "may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men!" Then the fire of God fell from heaven and consumed him and his fifty men.

13 So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. This third captain went up and fell on his knees before Elijah. "Man of God," he begged, "please have respect for my life and the lives of these fifty men, your servants! 14 See, fire has fallen from heaven and consumed the first two captains and all their men. But now have respect for my life!"

15 The angel of the Lord said to Elijah, "Go down with him; do not be afraid of him." So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king.

16 He told the king, "This is what the Lord says: Is it because there is no God in Israel for you to consult that you have sent messengers to consult Baal-Zebub, the god of Ekron? Because you have done this, you will never leave the bed you are lying on. You will certainly die!" 17 So he died, according to the word of the Lord that Elijah had spoken.

Because Ahaziah had no son, Joram[a] succeeded him as king in the second year of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah. 18 As for all the other events of Ahaziah's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?

[a] *17* Hebrew *Jehoram*, a variant of *Joram*

TRANSITION

Elisha in Israel

Elijah's role in 1 Kings is assumed in 2 Kings by his disciple and successor Elisha. The two prophets are presented quite differently, however. Elijah is always a messenger, pronouncing God's words, whereas Elisha speaks briefly or not at all. Instead, Elisha performs miracles, and his ministry is marked more with actions than words.

The Elisha narratives are often indifferent to political powers. For instance, the story in 2Ki 6:8–23 speaks of the kings of Israel and Aram but never bothers to identify which ones. Elisha himself was very involved in politics, however. Indeed, he personally inaugurated two new royal dynasties: that of Hazael, king of Aram (2Ki 8:7–15), and that of Jehu, king of Israel (2Ki 9:1–13).

The last king of the Omride dynasty, Joram, also called Jehoram (852–841 B.C.), came to the throne during the period of Elisha's ministry (2Ki 1:17; 3:1). Joram removed a cultic pillar of Baal that was set up by his father, Ahab (3:2). However, he did not rid Israel of Baal worship; the temple of Baal continued to stand through Joram's reign until destroyed by Jehu (2Ki 10:25–28).

• **2 Kings 2:1—8:15**

2 Kings

Elijah Taken Up to Heaven

2 **:1** When the Lord was about to take Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal. 2 Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here; the Lord has sent me to Bethel."

But Elisha said, "As surely as the Lord lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went down to Bethel.

3 The company of the prophets at Bethel

Life from a Spring (2Ki 2:19–22)

The men of Jericho approached the prophet Elisha concerning their city's spring, remarking, "The water is bad" (2Ki 2:19). The spring referred to in this story is today commonly known as "Elisha's spring." It lies across the modern road from the ancient ruin of Jericho, called by archaeologists Tell es-Sultan. The more formal name of the spring is thus En es-Sultan (*En* being the Arabic word for spring).

This spring is vitally important to the region, partly because Jericho has the lowest elevation of any city on earth (about 840 feet below sea level). Such a low elevation, combined with the naturally arid climate of Israel, makes the area very hot in summer and pleasantly warm in winter. Its geographical location on the east side of the Judean hills and wilderness means that what moisture is blown in from the Mediterranean Sea is emptied well before it reaches the Jordan valley.

Settlers in the Jericho area were attracted by this spring, which still gushes forth at about 1,000 gallons of water per minute. It waters the Jericho region by an ingenious and complex system of gravity-flow irrigation channels. En es-Sultan thus provides a year-round source of water that has been used for agriculture for thousands of years. Archaeological evidence suggests that Jericho is the oldest city in the world, thanks to En es-Sultan.

If the waters of En es-Sultan were to go bad or stop, all ancient settlement in this area would have ceased, since the spring was the major source of water. One can then understand the desperation of the city elders who pled with Elisha for help. With the waters of En es-Sultan turning bad, the very existence of Jericho was at stake. Elisha "healed" the waters (2Ki 2:21), and the city was saved.

came out to Elisha and asked, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?"

"Yes, I know," Elisha replied, "so be quiet."

4Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here, Elisha; the LORD has sent me to Jericho."

And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So they went to Jericho.

5The company of the prophets at Jericho went up to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that the LORD is going to take your master from you today?"

"Yes, I know," he replied, "so be quiet."

6Then Elijah said to him, "Stay here; the LORD has sent me to the Jordan."

And he replied, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So the two of them walked on.

7Fifty men from the company of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing the place where Elijah and Elisha had stopped at the Jordan. 8Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up and struck the water with it. The water divided to the right and to the left, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground.

9When they had crossed, Elijah said to Elisha, "Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken from you?"

"Let me inherit a double portion of your spirit," Elisha replied.

10"You have asked a difficult thing," Elijah said, "yet if you see me when I am taken from you, it will be yours—otherwise, it will not."

11As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire and horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind. 12Elisha saw this and cried out, "My father! My father! The chariots and horsemen of Israel!" And Elisha saw him no more. Then he took hold of his garment and tore it in two.

13Elisha then picked up Elijah's cloak that had fallen from him and went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. 14He took the cloak that had fallen from Elijah and struck the water with it. "Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?" he asked. When he struck the water, it divided to the right and to the left, and he crossed over.

15The company of the prophets from Jericho, who were watching, said, "The spirit of Elijah is resting on Elisha." And they went to meet him and bowed to the ground before him. 16"Look," they said, "we your servants have fifty able men. Let them go and look for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has picked him up and set him down on some mountain or in some valley."

"No," Elisha replied, "do not send them."

17But they persisted until he was too embarrassed to refuse. So he said, "Send them." And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find him. 18When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, "Didn't I tell you not to go?"

Healing of the Water

19The people of the city said to Elisha, "Look, our lord, this town is well situated, as you can see, but the water is bad and the land is unproductive."

20"Bring me a new bowl," he said, "and put salt in it." So they brought it to him.

21 Then he went out to the spring and threw
the salt into it, saying, "This is what the LORD
says: 'I have healed this water. Never again will
it cause death or make the land unproductive.'"
22 And the water has remained pure to this day,
according to the word Elisha had spoken.

Elisha Is Jeered

23 From there Elisha went up to Bethel. As
he was walking along the road, some boys
came out of the town and jeered at him. "Get
out of here, baldy!" they said. "Get out of here,
baldy!" 24 He turned around, looked at them
and called down a curse on them in the name
of the LORD. Then two bears came out of the
woods and mauled forty-two of the boys. 25 And
he went on to Mount Carmel and from there
returned to Samaria.

Moab Revolts

3 1 Joram[a] son of Ahab became king of Israel
in Samaria in the eighteenth year of Jehosh-
aphat king of Judah, and he reigned twelve
years. 2 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD,
but not as his father and mother had done. He
got rid of the sacred stone of Baal that his fa-
ther had made. 3 Nevertheless he clung to the
sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had
caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away
from them.

4 Now Mesha king of Moab raised sheep,
and he had to pay the king of Israel a tribute
of a hundred thousand lambs and the wool of a
hundred thousand rams. 5 But after Ahab died,
the king of Moab rebelled against the king of
Israel. 6 So at that time King Joram set out from
Samaria and mobilized all Israel. 7 He also sent
this message to Jehoshaphat king of Judah:
"The king of Moab has rebelled against me.
Will you go with me to fight against Moab?"

"I will go with you," he replied. "I am as you
are, my people as your people, my horses as
your horses."

8 "By what route shall we attack?" he asked.

"Through the Desert of Edom," he an-
swered.

9 So the king of Israel set out with the king
of Judah and the king of Edom. After a round-
about march of seven days, the army had no
more water for themselves or for the animals
with them.

10 "What!" exclaimed the king of Israel. "Has
the LORD called us three kings together only to
deliver us into the hands of Moab?"

11 But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no proph-
et of the LORD here, through whom we may in-
quire of the LORD?"

An officer of the king of Israel answered,
"Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour
water on the hands of Elijah.[b]"

12 Jehoshaphat said, "The word of the LORD
is with him." So the king of Israel and Jehosh-
aphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

13 Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Why do
you want to involve me? Go to the prophets of
your father and the prophets of your mother."

"No," the king of Israel answered, "because
it was the LORD who called us three kings to-
gether to deliver us into the hands of Moab."

14 Elisha said, "As surely as the LORD Al-
mighty lives, whom I serve, if I did not have
respect for the presence of Jehoshaphat king
of Judah, I would not pay any attention to you.
15 But now bring me a harpist."

While the harpist was playing, the hand of
the LORD came on Elisha 16 and he said, "This
is what the LORD says: I will fill this valley with
pools of water. 17 For this is what the LORD says:
You will see neither wind nor rain, yet this valley
will be filled with water, and you, your cattle and
your other animals will drink. 18 This is an easy
thing in the eyes of the LORD; he will also deliv-
er Moab into your hands. 19 You will overthrow
every fortified city and every major town. You
will cut down every good tree, stop up all the
springs, and ruin every good field with stones."

20 The next morning, about the time for offer-
ing the sacrifice, there it was — water flowing
from the direction of Edom! And the land was
filled with water.

21 Now all the Moabites had heard that the
kings had come to fight against them; so every
man, young and old, who could bear arms was
called up and stationed on the border. 22 When
they got up early in the morning, the sun was
shining on the water. To the Moabites across
the way, the water looked red — like blood.
23 "That's blood!" they said. "Those kings must
have fought and slaughtered each other. Now
to the plunder, Moab!"

24 But when the Moabites came to the camp

Culture & Society

Society's convictions about what sort of behavior is appropriate for persons of different ages varies for good and bad reasons. Frequently, the age at which young men became warriors in ancient societies was younger than in modern Western armies. The "boys" of 2Ki 2:23, like the "young man" of Ge 4:23, could have been armed and dangerous.

[a] *1* Hebrew *Jehoram,* a variant of *Joram*; also in verse 6
[b] *11* That is, he was Elijah's personal servant.

A Human Sacrifice for a Hopeless War (2Ki 3:21–27)

When Mesha, king of Moab, waged a war of liberation against Israelite overlordship, he found himself fighting three armies: the Israelites and their allies Judah and Edom. The author of Kings uses a series of statements in 2Ki 3:21–27 to convey the increasingly hopeless situation of the Moabite forces.

The military undertaking was over before it began. The Moabites mistook the red reflection of the sunrise in the river to be blood from the three armies. Moab moved upon the Israelite encampment as scavengers rather than as military personnel and were themselves taken by surprise and routed (vv. 21–24).

Israel's army devastated the entire land of Moab, forcing the Moabite survivors to retreat into Kir Hareseth, their only city left standing. In a last military tactic, a Moabite force of 700 hand-to-hand combat soldiers were led out of the walled city to confront the Edomite army. It was a futile effort (vv. 25, 26).

All military strategy having failed, the King of Moab sacrificed his heir-apparent on the city wall in view of the attacking coalition (v. 27). The amazing result of this maneuver was that the "fury against Israel was great," and the attacking armies departed to their homes, leaving the Moabite army victorious on the field of battle. In the face of overwhelming odds, the King of Moab had won the war.

This passage may not seem so weird when compared to an incantation text from Ugarit, a Mediterranean Sea coastal city destroyed in the 12th century B.C. The text explains what needed to be done if the city was besieged and the battle was hopeless. Baal, the patron deity of Ugarit, is addressed, and a horse and a human son are sacrificed to the deity along with a libation poured out in the deity's honor. Upon hearing the shout of the city's people, Baal would respond by "throwing" the besiegers away from the city gates and saving the day.

Certainly this was a ritual to be used only when it was clear to the defenders that the war was lost. It effectively removed Moab's next generation of political rule, the king's firstborn son. Sacrificing the child to Chemosh, Moab's deity, demonstrated how serious the sacrificers were.

The result was exactly what Mesha's religious tradition told him would happen: the supposedly victorious armies fled. Their flight may have been influenced by the absolute condemnation of human sacrifice in the divine law of Judah and Israel (Ex 34:20; Dt 18:10). Child sacrifice was so appalling and detestable that they fled what was to them a place of absolute apostasy.

of Israel, the Israelites rose up and fought them
until they fled. And the Israelites invaded the
land and slaughtered the Moabites. 25They de-
stroyed the towns, and each man threw a stone
on every good field until it was covered. They
stopped up all the springs and cut down every
good tree. Only Kir Hareseth was left with its
stones in place, but men armed with slings sur-
rounded it and attacked it.

26When the king of Moab saw that the battle
had gone against him, he took with him seven
hundred swordsmen to break through to the
king of Edom, but they failed. 27Then he took
his firstborn son, who was to succeed him as
king, and offered him as a sacrifice on the city
wall. The fury against Israel was great; they
withdrew and returned to their own land.

The Widow's Olive Oil

4 1The wife of a man from the company of the
prophets cried out to Elisha, "Your servant
my husband is dead, and you know that he re-
vered the LORD. But now his creditor is coming
to take my two boys as his slaves."

2Elisha replied to her, "How can I help you?
Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

"Your servant has nothing there at all," she
said, "except a small jar of olive oil."

3Elisha said, "Go around and ask all your
neighbors for empty jars. Don't ask for just a
few. 4Then go inside and shut the door behind
you and your sons. Pour oil into all the jars, and
as each is filled, put it to one side."

5She left him and shut the door behind her
and her sons. They brought the jars to her and
she kept pouring. 6When all the jars were full,
she said to her son, "Bring me another one."

But he replied, "There is not a jar left." Then
the oil stopped flowing.

7She went and told the man of God, and he
said, "Go, sell the oil and pay your debts. You
and your sons can live on what is left."

The Shunammite's Son Restored to Life

8One day Elisha went to Shunem. And a
well-to-do woman was there, who urged him
to stay for a meal. So whenever he came by,
he stopped there to eat. 9She said to her hus-

band, "I know that this man who often comes our way is a holy man of God. 10Let's make a small room on the roof and put in it a bed and a table, a chair and a lamp for him. Then he can stay there whenever he comes to us."

11One day when Elisha came, he went up to his room and lay down there. 12He said to his servant Gehazi, "Call the Shunammite." So he called her, and she stood before him. 13Elisha said to him, "Tell her, 'You have gone to all this trouble for us. Now what can be done for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?'"

She replied, "I have a home among my own people."

14"What can be done for her?" Elisha asked.

Gehazi said, "She has no son, and her husband is old."

15Then Elisha said, "Call her." So he called her, and she stood in the doorway. 16"About this time next year," Elisha said, "you will hold a son in your arms."

"No, my lord!" she objected. "Please, man of God, don't mislead your servant!"

17But the woman became pregnant, and the next year about that same time she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.

18The child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the reapers. 19He said to his father, "My head! My head!"

His father told a servant, "Carry him to his mother." 20After the servant had lifted him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. 21She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, then shut the door and went out.

22She called her husband and said, "Please send me one of the servants and a donkey so I can go to the man of God quickly and return."

23"Why go to him today?" he asked. "It's not the New Moon or the Sabbath."

"That's all right," she said.

24She saddled the donkey and said to her servant, "Lead on; don't slow down for me unless I tell you." 25So she set out and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When he saw her in the distance, the man of God said to his servant Gehazi, "Look! There's the Shunammite! 26Run to meet her and ask her, 'Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?'"

"Everything is all right," she said.

27When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she took hold of his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, "Leave her alone! She is in bitter distress, but the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me why."

28"Did I ask you for a son, my lord?" she said. "Didn't I tell you, 'Don't raise my hopes'?"

29Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tuck your cloak into your belt, take my staff in your hand and run. Don't greet anyone you meet, and if anyone greets you, do not answer. Lay my staff on the boy's face."

30But the child's mother said, "As surely as the LORD lives and as you live, I will not leave you." So he got up and followed her.

31Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the boy's face, but there was no sound or response. So Gehazi went back to meet Elisha and told him, "The boy has not awakened."

32When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his couch. 33He went in, shut the door on the two of them and prayed to the LORD. 34Then he got on the bed and lay on the boy, mouth to mouth, eyes to eyes, hands to hands. As he stretched himself out on him, the boy's body grew warm. 35Elisha turned away and walked back and forth in the room and then got on the bed and stretched out on him once more. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes.

36Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, "Call

the Shunammite." And he did. When she came, he said, "Take your son." 37She came in, fell at his feet and bowed to the ground. Then she took her son and went out.

Death in the Pot

38Elisha returned to Gilgal and there was a famine in that region. While the company of the prophets was meeting with him, he said to his servant, "Put on the large pot and cook some stew for these prophets."

39One of them went out into the fields to gather herbs and found a wild vine and picked as many of its gourds as his garment could hold. When he returned, he cut them up into the pot of stew, though no one knew what they were. 40The stew was poured out for the men, but as they began to eat it, they cried out, "Man of God, there is death in the pot!" And they could not eat it.

41Elisha said, "Get some flour." He put it into the pot and said, "Serve it to the people to eat." And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

Feeding of a Hundred

42A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. "Give it to the people to eat," Elisha said.

43"How can I set this before a hundred men?" his servant asked.

But Elisha answered, "Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: 'They will eat and have some left over.'" 44Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.

Naaman Healed of Leprosy

5 1Now Naaman was commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded, because through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. He was a valiant soldier, but he had leprosy.[a]

2Now bands of raiders from Aram had gone out and had taken captive a young girl from Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. 3She said to her mistress, "If only my master would see the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy."

4Naaman went to his master and told him what the girl from Israel had said. 5"By all means, go," the king of Aram replied. "I will send a letter to the king of Israel." So Naaman left, taking with him ten talents[b] of silver, six thousand shekels[c] of gold and ten sets of clothing. 6The letter that he took to the king of Israel read: "With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman to you so that you may cure him of his leprosy."

7As soon as the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his robes and said, "Am I God? Can I kill and bring back to life? Why does this fellow send someone to me to be cured of his leprosy? See how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me!"

8When Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his robes, he sent him this message: "Why have you torn your robes? Have the man come to me and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel." 9So Naaman went with his horses and chariots and stopped at the door of Elisha's house. 10Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

11But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. 12Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So he turned and went off in a rage.

13Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'!" 14So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy.

15Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God. He stood before him and said, "Now I know that there is no God in all the world except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant."

16The prophet answered, "As surely as the LORD lives, whom I serve, I will not accept a thing." And even though Naaman urged him, he refused.

17"If you will not," said Naaman, "please let me, your servant, be given as much earth as a pair of mules can carry, for your servant will never again make burnt offerings and sacrifices to any other god but the LORD. 18But may the LORD forgive your servant for this one thing: When my master enters the temple of Rimmon to bow down and he is leaning on my arm and

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[a] *1* The Hebrew for *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin; also in verses 3, 6, 7, 11 and 27. [b] *5* That is, about 750 pounds or about 340 kilograms [c] *5* That is, about 150 pounds or about 69 kilograms

I have to bow there also—when I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD forgive your servant for this."

19"Go in peace," Elisha said.

After Naaman had traveled some distance, 20Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said to himself, "My master was too easy on Naaman, this Aramean, by not accepting from him what he brought. As surely as the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him."

21So Gehazi hurried after Naaman. When Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him. "Is everything all right?" he asked.

22"Everything is all right," Gehazi answered. "My master sent me to say, 'Two young men from the company of the prophets have just come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent[a] of silver and two sets of clothing.'"

23"By all means, take two talents," said Naaman. He urged Gehazi to accept them, and then tied up the two talents of silver in two bags, with two sets of clothing. He gave them to two of his servants, and they carried them ahead of Gehazi. 24When Gehazi came to the hill, he took the things from the servants and put them away in the house. He sent the men away and they left.

25When he went in and stood before his master, Elisha asked him, "Where have you been, Gehazi?"

"Your servant didn't go anywhere," Gehazi answered.

26But Elisha said to him, "Was not my spirit with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to take money or to accept clothes—or olive groves and vineyards, or flocks and herds, or male and female slaves? 27Naaman's leprosy will cling to you and to your descendants forever." Then Gehazi went from Elisha's presence and his skin was leprous—it had become as white as snow.

An Axhead Floats

6 1The company of the prophets said to Elisha, "Look, the place where we meet with you is too small for us. 2Let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a pole; and let us build a place there for us to meet."

And he said, "Go."

3Then one of them said, "Won't you please come with your servants?"

"I will," Elisha replied. 4And he went with them.

They went to the Jordan and began to cut down trees. 5As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axhead fell into the water. "Oh no, my lord!" he cried out. "It was borrowed!"

6The man of God asked, "Where did it fall?" When he showed him the place, Elisha cut a stick and threw it there, and made the iron float. 7"Lift it out," he said. Then the man reached out his hand and took it.

Elisha Traps Blinded Arameans

8Now the king of Aram was at war with Israel. After conferring with his officers, he said, "I will set up my camp in such and such a place."

9The man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Beware of passing that place, because the Arameans are going down there." 10So the king of Israel checked on the place indicated by the man of God. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places.

11This enraged the king of Aram. He summoned his officers and demanded of them, "Tell me! Which of us is on the side of the king of Israel?"

12"None of us, my lord the king," said one of his officers, "but Elisha, the prophet who is in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom."

13"Go, find out where he is," the king ordered, "so I can send men and capture him." The report came back: "He is in Dothan." 14Then he sent horses and chariots and a strong force there. They went by night and surrounded the city.

15When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early the next morning, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. "Oh no, my lord! What shall we do?" the servant asked.

16"Don't be afraid," the prophet answered. "Those who are with us are more than those who are with them."

17And Elisha prayed, "Open his eyes, LORD, so that he may see." Then the LORD opened the

Beliefs & Ideas

Taking money in exchange for religious services, as did Gehazi (2Ki 5:20–27), is not forbidden in the Bible, but is regarded as dangerous. The basic principle that money and possessions are potentially corrupting is already expressed in Ge 14:23 and reaches a climax in the cleansing of the temple (Mk 11:15–17) and the death of Ananias and Sapphira (Ac 5:1–11).

[a] *22* That is, about 75 pounds or about 34 kilograms

servant's eyes, and he looked and saw the hills full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

18 As the enemy came down toward him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Strike this army with blindness." So he struck them with blindness, as Elisha had asked.

19 Elisha told them, "This is not the road and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will lead you to the man you are looking for." And he led them to Samaria.

20 After they entered the city, Elisha said, "LORD, open the eyes of these men so they can see." Then the LORD opened their eyes and they looked, and there they were, inside Samaria.

21 When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, "Shall I kill them, my father? Shall I kill them?"

22 "Do not kill them," he answered. "Would you kill those you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them so that they may eat and drink and then go back to their master." 23 So he prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. So the bands from Aram stopped raiding Israel's territory.

Famine in Besieged Samaria

24 Some time later, Ben-Hadad king of Aram mobilized his entire army and marched up and laid siege to Samaria. 25 There was a great famine in the city; the siege lasted so long that a donkey's head sold for eighty shekels[a] of silver, and a quarter of a cab[b] of seed pods[c] for five shekels.[d]

26 As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried to him, "Help me, my lord the king!"

27 The king replied, "If the LORD does not help you, where can I get help for you? From the threshing floor? From the winepress?" 28 Then he asked her, "What's the matter?"

She answered, "This woman said to me, 'Give up your son so we may eat him today, and tomorrow we'll eat my son.' 29 So we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, 'Give up your son so we may eat him,' but she had hidden him."

30 When the king heard the woman's words, he tore his robes. As he went along the wall, the people looked, and they saw that, under his robes, he had sackcloth on his body. 31 He said, "May God deal with me, be it ever so severely, if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders today!"

32 Now Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. The king sent a messenger ahead, but before he arrived, Elisha said to the elders, "Don't you see how this murderer is sending someone to cut off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door and hold it shut against him. Is not the sound of his master's footsteps behind him?" 33 While he was still talking to them, the messenger came down to him.

The king said, "This disaster is from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?"

7 1 Elisha replied, "Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the LORD says: About this time tomorrow, a seah[e] of the finest flour will sell for a shekel[f] and two seahs[g] of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria."

2 The officer on whose arm the king was leaning said to the man of God, "Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?"

"You will see it with your own eyes," answered Elisha, "but you will not eat any of it!"

The Siege Lifted

3 Now there were four men with leprosy[h] at the entrance of the city gate. They said to each

[a] *25* That is, about 2 pounds or about 920 grams [b] *25* That is, probably about 1/4 pound or about 100 grams [c] *25* Or *of doves' dung* [d] *25* That is, about 2 ounces or about 58 grams [e] *1* That is, probably about 12 pounds or about 5.5 kilograms of flour; also in verses 16 and 18 [f] *1* That is, about 2/5 ounce or about 12 grams; also in verses 16 and 18 [g] *1* That is, probably about 20 pounds or about 9 kilograms of barley; also in verses 16 and 18 [h] *3* The Hebrew for *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin; also in verse 8.

Elisha refuses Naaman's gift
Pieter Fransz de Grebber
c. 1600

other, "Why stay here until we die? 4If we say, 'We'll go into the city'—the famine is there, and we will die. And if we stay here, we will die. So let's go over to the camp of the Arameans and surrender. If they spare us, we live; if they kill us, then we die."

5At dusk they got up and went to the camp of the Arameans. When they reached the edge of the camp, no one was there, 6for the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots and horses and a great army, so that they said to one another, "Look, the king of Israel has hired the Hittite and Egyptian kings to attack us!" 7So they got up and fled in the dusk and abandoned their tents and their horses and donkeys. They left the camp as it was and ran for their lives.

8The men who had leprosy reached the edge of the camp, entered one of the tents and ate and drank. Then they took silver, gold and clothes, and went off and hid them. They returned and entered another tent and took some things from it and hid them also.

9Then they said to each other, "What we're doing is not right. This is a day of good news and we are keeping it to ourselves. If we wait until daylight, punishment will overtake us. Let's go at once and report this to the royal palace."

10So they went and called out to the city gatekeepers and told them, "We went into the Aramean camp and no one was there—not a sound of anyone—only tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents left just as they were." 11The gatekeepers shouted the news, and it was reported within the palace.

12The king got up in the night and said to his officers, "I will tell you what the Arameans have done to us. They know we are starving; so they have left the camp to hide in the countryside, thinking, 'They will surely come out, and then we will take them alive and get into the city.'"

13One of his officers answered, "Have some men take five of the horses that are left in the city. Their plight will be like that of all the Israelites left here—yes, they will only be like all these Israelites who are doomed. So let us send them to find out what happened."

14So they selected two chariots with their horses, and the king sent them after the Aramean army. He commanded the drivers, "Go and find out what has happened." 15They followed them as far as the Jordan, and they found the whole road strewn with the clothing and equipment the Arameans had thrown away in their headlong flight. So the messengers returned and reported to the king. 16Then the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans. So a seah of the finest flour sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley sold for a shekel, as the LORD had said.

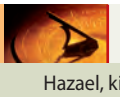
17Now the king had put the officer on whose arm he leaned in charge of the gate, and the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died, just as the man of God had foretold when the king came down to his house. 18It happened as the man of God had said to the king: "About this time tomorrow, a seah of the finest flour will sell for a shekel and two seahs of barley for a shekel at the gate of Samaria."

19The officer had said to the man of God, "Look, even if the LORD should open the floodgates of the heavens, could this happen?" The man of God had replied, "You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of it!" 20And that is exactly what happened to him, for the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died.

The Shunammite's Land Restored

8 1Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, "Go away with your family and stay for a while wherever you can, because the LORD has decreed a famine in the land that will last seven years." 2The woman proceeded to do as the man of God said. She and her family went away and stayed in the land of the Philistines seven years.

3At the end of the seven years she came back from the land of the Philistines and went to appeal to the king for her house and land. 4The king was talking to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, and had said, "Tell me about all the great things Elisha has done." 5Just as Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had restored the dead to life, the woman whose son Elisha had brought back to life came to appeal to the king for her house and land.

TIME CAPSULE 	842 to 841 B.C.
842–800	Hazael, king of Aram-Damascus
841	Ahaziah becomes king in Judah
841	Jehu exterminates the Ahab dynasty and becomes king in Israel
841	Athaliah murders her grandsons and gains Judah's throne
841	The Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III
841	Shalmaneser forces King Jehu of Israel to pay tribute

King, Dog, and Son of a Nobody (2Ki 8:7–15)

Hazael was a king of Aram-Damascus (Syria) and an archenemy of Israel. The devastation that he would inflict upon Israel and Judah was graphically depicted by the prophet Elisha even before Hazael became Aram's king (2Ki 8:11–13). Though a king, Hazael really was a "dog" who would commit such a horrible feat (8:13).

Events of Hazael's reign (c. 842–800 B.C.) are known from biblical and Assyrian sources. The Bible records that he usurped the throne of Damascus, killing Ben-Hadad, the previous king (2Ki 8:7–15). The annals of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III support this picture by describing Hazael as "the son of a nobody," an expression referring to a usurper.

The Syro-Palestinian coalition of Hamath, Aram-Damascus, Israel, and others had earlier blocked the advances of Shalmaneser III of Assyria in 853 B.C. This coalition evidently broke down during the reign of Hazael. He alone met an invading Assyrian army in 841 B.C. and was defeated. Damascus was besieged but not taken, although the countryside surrounding it was devastated. The Assyrians returned twice again in 837 and 836 B.C., but Hazael survived these attacks also.

Sometime after 836 B.C. Hazael became free of Assyrian advances, and was able to concentrate his efforts on the south, terrorizing both Israel and Judah. He took the Transjordan—the territory east of the Jordan River—from Israel (2Ki 10:32, 33). Apparently Israel under King Jehoahaz (814–798 B.C.) became a vassal of Aram after Hazael had reduced the Israelite army (2Ki 13:7). Likewise, Judah under King Joash (835–796 B.C.) also paid tribute to Hazael (2Ki 12:17, 18). Both Jehoahaz and Joash were probably relieved when Hazael died near the ends of their reigns (2Ki 13:24).

Gehazi said, "This is the woman, my lord the king, and this is her son whom Elisha restored to life." 6The king asked the woman about it, and she told him.

Then he assigned an official to her case and said to him, "Give back everything that belonged to her, including all the income from her land from the day she left the country until now."

Hazael Murders Ben-Hadad

7Elisha went to Damascus, and Ben-Hadad king of Aram was ill. When the king was told, "The man of God has come all the way up here," 8he said to Hazael, "Take a gift with you and go to meet the man of God. Consult the LORD through him; ask him, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"

9Hazael went to meet Elisha, taking with him as a gift forty camel-loads of all the finest wares of Damascus. He went in and stood before him, and said, "Your son Ben-Hadad king of Aram has sent me to ask, 'Will I recover from this illness?'"

10Elisha answered, "Go and say to him, 'You will certainly recover.' Nevertheless,[a] the LORD has revealed to me that he will in fact die." 11He stared at him with a fixed gaze until Hazael was embarrassed. Then the man of God began to weep.

12"Why is my lord weeping?" asked Hazael.

"Because I know the harm you will do to the Israelites," he answered. "You will set fire to their fortified places, kill their young men with the sword, dash their little children to the ground, and rip open their pregnant women."

13Hazael said, "How could your servant, a mere dog, accomplish such a feat?"

"The LORD has shown me that you will become king of Aram," answered Elisha.

14Then Hazael left Elisha and returned to his master. When Ben-Hadad asked, "What did Elisha say to you?" Hazael replied, "He told me that you would certainly recover." 15But the next day he took a thick cloth, soaked it in water and spread it over the king's face, so that he died. Then Hazael succeeded him as king.

TRANSITION

The Royal Marriage

The alliance between King Jehoshaphat of Judah and King Ahab of Israel was secured by a diplomatic marriage: Jehoshaphat's son, Prince Jehoram, married Ahab's daughter, Princess Athaliah (2Ki 8:18). The marriage was a seal of the political allianc e between their families that fostered peace and cooperation between the nations Judah and Israel.

The two families even gave their sons some of the same names. While Ahab's sons Ahaziah and Joram (or Jehoram) were ruling in Isr ael (853–841 B.C.), Jehoshaphat's son Jehor am (848–841 B.C.) and grandson Ahaziah (841 B.C.) were ruling in Judah.

• **2 Kings 8:16–29**

2 Kings

Jehoram King of Judah

8:16 In the fifth year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, when Jehoshaphat was king of Judah, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat began

[a] *10* The Hebrew may also be read *Go and say, 'You will certainly not recover,' for.*

his reign as king of Judah. 17He was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. 18He followed the ways of the kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done, for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. 19Nevertheless, for the sake of his servant David, the LORD was not willing to destroy Judah. He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever.

20In the time of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against Judah and set up its own king. 21So Jehoram[a] went to Zair with all his chariots. The Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, but he rose up and broke through by night; his army, however, fled back home. 22To this day Edom has been in rebellion against Judah. Libnah revolted at the same time.

23As for the other events of Jehoram's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? 24Jehoram rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. And Ahaziah his son succeeded him as king.

Ahaziah King of Judah

25In the twelfth year of Joram son of Ahab king of Israel, Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign. 26Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother's name was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri king of Israel. 27He followed the ways of the house of Ahab and did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for he was related by marriage to Ahab's family.

28Ahaziah went with Joram son of Ahab to war against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram; 29so King Joram returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Arameans had inflicted on him at Ramoth[b] in his battle with Hazael king of Aram.

Then Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to Jezreel to see Joram son of Ahab, because he had been wounded.

[a] *21* Hebrew *Joram*, a variant of *Jehoram*; also in verses 23 and 24 [b] *29* Hebrew *Ramah*, a variant of *Ramoth*
[c] *8* Or *Israel—every ruler or leader*

TRANSITION

Jehu Destroys Ahab's Family

Jehu (841–814 B.C.) came to power with Elisha's charge to end the dynasty of Omri and its Baal worship (2Ki 9:1–10). He completed the destruction of official Baalism (10:28), but his methods were so bloody that a century later the prophet Hosea would still be denouncing them (Hos 1:4).

Jehu's persecution of Ahab's family broke up Israel's military alliances. Phoenicia to the north was the homeland of Ahab's wife, Jezebel. Judah to the south was greatly influenced by Ahab's daughter Athaliah, who was queen mother in Jerusalem. Jehu 's Israel was now estranged from both Phoenicia and Judah.

Without these alliances, Israel was vulnerable to more powerful nations, such as Aram-Damascus (Syria) and Assyria. Aram under King Hazael succeeded in capturing much Israelite territory (10:32, 33). Farther to the north, the long dormant Assyrian Empire was beginning to awake. The resurgent Assyria compelled Jehu to pay tribute, an event recorded on the Black Obelisk of the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III.

• 2 Kings 9:1—10:36

2 Kings

Jehu Anointed King of Israel

9:1 The prophet Elisha summoned a man from the company of the prophets and said to him, "Tuck your cloak into your belt, take this flask of olive oil with you and go to Ramoth Gilead. 2When you get there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Go to him, get him away from his companions and take him into an inner room. 3Then take the flask and pour the oil on his head and declare, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and run; don't delay!"

4So the young prophet went to Ramoth Gilead. 5When he arrived, he found the army officers sitting together. "I have a message for you, commander," he said.

"For which of us?" asked Jehu.

"For you, commander," he replied.

6Jehu got up and went into the house. Then the prophet poured the oil on Jehu's head and declared, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anoint you king over the LORD's people Israel. 7You are to destroy the house of Ahab your master, and I will avenge the blood of my servants the prophets and the blood of all the LORD's servants shed by Jezebel. 8The whole house of Ahab will perish. I will cut off from Ahab every last male in Israel—slave or free.[c] 9I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha son of Ahijah. 10As for Jezebel, dogs will devour her on the plot of ground at Jezreel, and no one will bury her.'" Then he opened the door and ran.

11When Jehu went out to his fellow officers,

Jehu Encounters Shalmaneser and Hazael (2Ki 9:13)

Jehu was the individual who became king after overthrowing the dynasty of Omri in Israel. To complete his bloody revolution he attempted to eradicate the Baal cult from Samaria. Followers of Baal would have naturally supported the Omri-Ahab family, and thus would have been a constant threat to Jehu (2Ki 10:18–27).

The Assyrian king Shalmaneser III conducted his fourth campaign against Syro-Palestine in 841 B.C., the first year of Jehu's reign (841–814 B.C.). Jehu was apparently part of a coalition of kings that included King Hazael of Aram-Damascus. The Assyrians wreaked great havoc in the area, but did not take either Damascus or Samaria.

Details of Shalmaneser's campaign are found in Assyrian inscriptions. Among the annals and on the Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser are records that Jehu was reduced to vassaldom and was required to pay a heavy tribute to the Assyrian monarch. The Assyrian writings describe Jehu as the "son of Omri." Either the Omri dynasty enjoyed an international reputation or the Assyrians were ignorant of the hostile relationship between Jehu and the Omri royal family.

The encounter between Shalmaneser and Jehu must have been significant for both kings. Shalmaneser carved a scene on his Black Obelisk depicting Jehu bowing in submission to the Assyrian ruler, bringing with him many articles of tribute. Jehu, by submitting to the Assyrians, gained protection against Aram-Damascus. In fact, Shalmaneser invaded Damascus again in 838 B.C. but failed to overthrow Hazael.

No Assyrian sources mention Jehu again, implying that he had been successfully subjugated, requiring no further Assyrian incursions. Years later, however, as the Assyrian Empire declined, Hazael of Aram-Damascus attacked Israel, conquering parts of Jehu's kingdom (2Ki 10:32, 33).

Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III

one of them asked him, "Is everything all right? Why did this maniac come to you?"

"You know the man and the sort of things he says," Jehu replied.

12"That's not true!" they said. "Tell us."

Jehu said, "Here is what he told me: 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.'"

13They quickly took their cloaks and spread them under him on the bare steps. Then they blew the trumpet and shouted, "Jehu is king!"

Jehu Kills Joram and Ahaziah

14So Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram and all Israel had been defending Ramoth Gilead against Hazael king of Aram, 15but King Joram[a] had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds the Arameans had inflicted on him in the battle with Hazael king of Aram.) Jehu said, "If you desire to make me king, don't let anyone slip out of the city to go and tell the news in Jezreel." 16Then he got into his chariot and rode to Jezreel, because Joram was resting there and Ahaziah king of Judah had gone down to see him.

17When the lookout standing on the tower in Jezreel saw Jehu's troops approaching, he called out, "I see some troops coming."

"Get a horseman," Joram ordered. "Send him to meet them and ask, 'Do you come in peace?'"

18The horseman rode off to meet Jehu and said, "This is what the king says: 'Do you come in peace?'"

"What do you have to do with peace?" Jehu replied. "Fall in behind me."

The lookout reported, "The messenger has reached them, but he isn't coming back."

19So the king sent out a second horseman. When he came to them he said, "This is what the king says: 'Do you come in peace?'"

Jehu replied, "What do you have to do with peace? Fall in behind me."

20The lookout reported, "He has reached them, but he isn't coming back either. The driving is like that of Jehu son of Nimshi—he drives like a maniac."

21"Hitch up my chariot," Joram ordered. And when it was hitched up, Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah rode out, each in his

Politics & Government

Becoming a king in Israel required formal public acknowledgment and proclamation. This was done by anointing and public acclamation. In the anointing of Jehu (2Ki 9:12, 13), a trumpet was used in a typical way to emphasize a pronouncement that was new, important, and authoritative. In effect, the trumpet magnified the human voice.

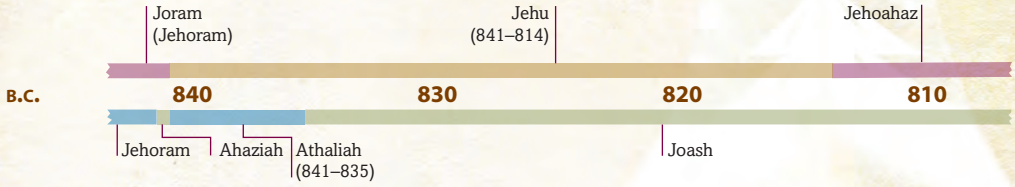
[a] *15* Hebrew *Jehoram,* a variant of *Joram*; also in verses 17 and 21-24

ATTACKS ON JUDAH'S ROYAL FAMILY

Israel (northern kingdom)

Jehu led a violent extermination of the Ahab dynasty. After killing Israel's king Joram (Jehoram) (2Ki 9:24), the son of Ahab, Jehu also influenced the deaths of Ahab's wife Jezebel (9:33) and 70 sons (2Ki 10:1, 7).

The slaughter of Ahab's family continued with the killing of Judah's king Ahaziah (9:27), who was Ahab's grandson. Jehu continued an attack against Judah's royal family by executing Ahaziah's brothers (10:12–14). These attacks on Judah's royalty allowed Athaliah to seize Judah's throne.



Judah (southern kingdom)

Athaliah was the daughter of Israel's king Ahab and sister of Israel's king Joram (Jehoram). She was married to Judah's king Jehoram. When her husband died, Athaliah's son Ahaziah became king, but was killed after one year.

Desiring Judah's throne for herself, Athaliah ruthlessly tried to kill all her grandsons (2Ki 11:1). Had she succeeded, there would not have been a descendant of David to sit on Judah's throne. One grandson survived, the infant Joash (2Ki 11:2).

own chariot, to meet Jehu. They met him at the plot of ground that had belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. 22When Joram saw Jehu he asked, "Have you come in peace, Jehu?"

"How can there be peace," Jehu replied, "as long as all the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel abound?"

23Joram turned about and fled, calling out to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!"

24Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart and he slumped down in his chariot. 25Jehu said to Bidkar, his chariot officer, "Pick him up and throw him on the field that belonged to Naboth the Jezreelite. Remember how you and I were riding together in chariots behind Ahab his father when the LORD spoke this prophecy against him: 26'Yesterday I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons, declares the LORD, and I will surely make you pay for it on this plot of ground, declares the LORD.'[a] Now then, pick him up and throw him on that plot, in accordance with the word of the LORD."

27When Ahaziah king of Judah saw what had happened, he fled up the road to Beth Haggan.[b] Jehu chased him, shouting, "Kill him too!" They wounded him in his chariot on the way up to Gur near Ibleam, but he escaped to Megiddo and died there. 28His servants took him by chariot to Jerusalem and buried him with his ancestors in his tomb in the City of David. 29(In the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king of Judah.)

Jezebel Killed

30Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel heard about it, she put on eye makeup, arranged her hair and looked out of a window. 31As Jehu entered the gate, she asked, "Have you come in peace, you Zimri, you murderer of your master?"[c]

32He looked up at the window and called out, "Who is on my side? Who?" Two or three eunuchs looked down at him. 33"Throw her down!" Jehu said. So they threw her down, and some of her blood spattered the wall and the horses as they trampled her underfoot.

34Jehu went in and ate and drank. "Take care of that cursed woman," he said, "and bury her, for she was a king's daughter." 35But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing except her skull, her feet and her hands. 36They went back and told Jehu, who said, "This is the word of the LORD that he spoke through his servant Elijah the Tishbite: On the plot of ground at Jezreel dogs will devour Jezebel's

[a] *26* See 1 Kings 21:19. [b] *27* Or *fled by way of the garden house* [c] *31* Or *"Was there peace for Zimri, who murdered his master?"*

flesh.[a] 37Jezebel's body will be like dung on the ground in the plot at Jezreel, so that no one will be able to say, 'This is Jezebel.'"

Ahab's Family Killed

10 1Now there were in Samaria seventy sons of the house of Ahab. So Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria: to the officials of Jezreel,[b] to the elders and to the guardians of Ahab's children. He said, 2"You have your master's sons with you and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city and weapons. Now as soon as this letter reaches you, 3choose the best and most worthy of your master's sons and set him on his father's throne. Then fight for your master's house."

4But they were terrified and said, "If two kings could not resist him, how can we?"

5So the palace administrator, the city governor, the elders and the guardians sent this message to Jehu: "We are your servants and we will do anything you say. We will not appoint anyone as king; you do whatever you think best."

6Then Jehu wrote them a second letter, saying, "If you are on my side and will obey me, take the heads of your master's sons and come to me in Jezreel by this time tomorrow."

Now the royal princes, seventy of them, were with the leading men of the city, who were rearing them. 7When the letter arrived, these men took the princes and slaughtered all seventy of them. They put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu in Jezreel. 8When the messenger arrived, he told Jehu, "They have brought the heads of the princes."

Then Jehu ordered, "Put them in two piles at the entrance of the city gate until morning."

9The next morning Jehu went out. He stood before all the people and said, "You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master and killed him, but who killed all these? 10Know, then, that not a word the LORD has spoken against the house of Ahab will fail. The LORD has done what he announced through his servant Elijah." 11So Jehu killed everyone in Jezreel who remained of the house of Ahab, as well as all his chief men, his close friends and his priests, leaving him no survivor.

12Jehu then set out and went toward Samaria. At Beth Eked of the Shepherds, 13he met some relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah and asked, "Who are you?"

They said, "We are relatives of Ahaziah, and we have come down to greet the families of the king and of the queen mother."

14"Take them alive!" he ordered. So they took them alive and slaughtered them by the well of Beth Eked—forty-two of them. He left no survivor.

15After he left there, he came upon Jehonadab son of Rekab, who was on his way to meet him. Jehu greeted him and said, "Are you in accord with me, as I am with you?"

"I am," Jehonadab answered.

"If so," said Jehu, "give me your hand." So he did, and Jehu helped him up into the chariot. 16Jehu said, "Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD." Then he had him ride along in his chariot.

17When Jehu came to Samaria, he killed all who were left there of Ahab's family; he destroyed them, according to the word of the LORD spoken to Elijah.

Servants of Baal Killed

18Then Jehu brought all the people together and said to them, "Ahab served Baal a little; Jehu will serve him much. 19Now summon all the prophets of Baal, all his servants and all his priests. See that no one is missing, because I am going to hold a great sacrifice for Baal. Anyone who fails to come will no longer live." But Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the servants of Baal.

20Jehu said, "Call an assembly in honor of Baal." So they proclaimed it. 21Then he sent word throughout Israel, and all the servants of Baal came; not one stayed away. They crowded into the temple of Baal until it was full from one end to the other. 22And Jehu said to the keeper of the wardrobe, "Bring robes for all the servants of Baal." So he brought out robes for them.

23Then Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rekab went into the temple of Baal. Jehu said to the servants of Baal, "Look around and see that no one who serves the LORD is here with you—only servants of Baal." 24So they went in to make sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had posted eighty men outside with this warning: "If one of you lets any of the men I am placing in your hands escape, it will be your life for his life."

25As soon as Jehu had finished making the burnt offering, he ordered the guards and officers: "Go in and kill them; let no one escape." So they cut them down with the sword. The guards and officers threw the bodies out and then entered the inner shrine of the temple of Baal. 26They brought the sacred stone out of the temple of Baal and burned it. 27They demolished the sacred stone of Baal and tore down the temple of Baal, and people have used it for a latrine to this day.

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[a] *36* See 1 Kings 21:23. [b] *1* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate *of the city*

Baal Worship in Samaria (2Ki 10:18–28)

During Ahab's reign (874–853 B.C.), Yahweh continued to be the official God of Israel, but Baal was clearly the main deity worshiped by the royal family. The temple of Baal was located in Samaria, the capital city (2Ki 10:21), while the national temples of Yahweh were in Bethel and Dan, away from the center of the kingdom.

The god Baal that was worshiped in Samaria had been introduced from Sidon by Ahab's queen Jezebel (1Ki 16:31, 32). Since the worship of Yahweh continued in the country, the two deities—Baal and Yahweh—were seen as part of a pantheon of gods for the northern kingdom. But the god whom the royal court consulted regularly was Baal; it was Baal's temple that was part of the palace complex in Samaria. The authority given to Baal in Ahab's northern kingdom is evident by the large number of prophets and priests of Baal, and by the throngs of worshipers.

The worshipers would not have considered worshiping both Baal and Yahweh to be a problem. They would have seen Baal as Yahweh's representative in charge of ruling their kingdom. The Law of Moses, however, forbade the worship of other gods even if one believed these gods existed. Israelites were not to bow down to anything in heaven or on earth (Ex 20:4, 5).

The worship of Baal was a problem. Baal had become the heart of the national religion. This was an apostasy that called for the overthrow of the rulers and even the kingdom itself. In a very real sense, Sidon had conquered Israel religiously. The apostasy was ended by Jehu, whose bloody purge of Baalism destroyed the royal family of Ahab, as well as massacring the worshipers of Baal (2Ki 10:18–28).

28 So Jehu destroyed Baal worship in Israel. 29 However, he did not turn away from the
sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had
caused Israel to commit—the worship of the
golden calves at Bethel and Dan.
30 The Lord said to Jehu, "Because you have
done well in accomplishing what is right in my
eyes and have done to the house of Ahab all I
had in mind to do, your descendants will sit on
the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."
31 Yet Jehu was not careful to keep the law of the
Lord, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He
did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam,
which he had caused Israel to commit.
32 In those days the Lord began to reduce
the size of Israel. Hazael overpowered the Is-
raelites throughout their territory 33 east of the
Jordan in all the land of Gilead (the region of
Gad, Reuben and Manasseh), from Aroer by
the Arnon Gorge through Gilead to Bashan.
34 As for the other events of Jehu's reign, all
he did, and all his achievements, are they not
written in the book of the annals of the kings
of Israel?
35 Jehu rested with his ancestors and was bur-
ied in Samaria. And Jehoahaz his son succeed-
ed him as king. 36 The time that Jehu reigned
over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

[a] 2 That is, Judah, as frequently in 2 Chronicles

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Fall of Omri's Dynasty

Because the northern kingdom lay outside the purview of the Chronicler, he only briefly mentions that Jehu destroyed the dynasty of Omri and Ahab (2Ch 22:7, 8). He is much more concerned about the impact that Ahab's family had on two of Judah's kings: Jehoram (848–841 B.C.) and Ahaziah (841 B.C.). Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, apparently had much influence on her husband, Jehoram (2Ch 21:6), and then seized power after his death. In her role as queen mother, Athaliah could exert power in the government of her son, Ahaziah (2Ch 22:2, 3).

• 2 Chronicles 21:1—22:9

2 Chronicles

21 :1 Then Jehoshaphat rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the
City of David. And Jehoram his son succeed-
ed him as king. 2 Jehoram's brothers, the sons
of Jehoshaphat, were Azariah, Jehiel, Zecha-
riah, Azariahu, Michael and Shephatiah. All
these were sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel.[a]
3 Their father had given them many gifts of sil-
ver and gold and articles of value, as well as
fortified cities in Judah, but he had given the
kingdom to Jehoram because he was his first-
born son.

Jehoram King of Judah

4 When Jehoram established himself firmly
over his father's kingdom, he put all his broth-
ers to the sword along with some of the officials
of Israel. 5 Jehoram was thirty-two years old
when he became king, and he reigned in Jeru-
salem eight years. 6 He followed the ways of the
kings of Israel, as the house of Ahab had done,
for he married a daughter of Ahab. He did evil
in the eyes of the Lord. 7 Nevertheless, because
of the covenant the Lord had made with David,

the LORD was not willing to destroy the house of David. He had promised to maintain a lamp for him and his descendants forever.

8In the time of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against Judah and set up its own king. 9So Jehoram went there with his officers and all his chariots. The Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, but he rose up and broke through by night. 10To this day Edom has been in rebellion against Judah.

Libnah revolted at the same time, because Jehoram had forsaken the LORD, the God of his ancestors. 11He had also built high places on the hills of Judah and had caused the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves and had led Judah astray.

12Jehoram received a letter from Elijah the prophet, which said:

> "This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: 'You have not followed the ways of your father Jehoshaphat or of Asa king of Judah. 13But you have followed the ways of the kings of Israel, and you have led Judah and the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves, just as the house of Ahab did. You have also murdered your own brothers, members of your own family, men who were better than you. 14So now the LORD is about to strike your people, your sons, your wives and everything that is yours, with a heavy blow. 15You yourself will be very ill with a lingering disease of the bowels, until the disease causes your bowels to come out.'"

16The LORD aroused against Jehoram the hostility of the Philistines and of the Arabs who lived near the Cushites. 17They attacked Judah, invaded it and carried off all the goods found in the king's palace, together with his sons and wives. Not a son was left to him except Ahaziah,[a] the youngest.

TIME CAPSULE		841 to 814 B.C.
841		Shalmaneser III besieges Damascus and destroys the surrounding countryside
838		Shalmaneser invades Damascus but fails to overthrow Hazael
835		Athaliah is killed, and Joash becomes king in Judah
825		Founding of city of Carthage (or 814)
814		Founding of city of Carthage (or 825)
814		Jehoahaz becomes king in Israel

18After all this, the LORD afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease of the bowels. 19In the course of time, at the end of the second year, his bowels came out because of the disease, and he died in great pain. His people made no funeral fire in his honor, as they had for his predecessors.

20Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. He passed away, to no one's regret, and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Ahaziah King of Judah

22 1The people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, Jehoram's youngest son, king in his place, since the raiders, who came with the Arabs into the camp, had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah began to reign.

2Ahaziah was twenty-two[b] years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother's name was Athaliah, a granddaughter of Omri.

3He too followed the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother encouraged him to act wickedly. 4He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for after his father's death they became his advisers, to his undoing. 5He also followed their counsel when he went with Joram[c] son of Ahab king of Israel to wage war against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth Gilead. The Arameans wounded Joram; 6so he returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds they had inflicted on him at Ramoth[d] in his battle with Hazael king of Aram.

Then Ahaziah[e] son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to Jezreel to see Joram son of Ahab because he had been wounded.

7Through Ahaziah's visit to Joram, God brought about Ahaziah's downfall. When Ahaziah arrived, he went out with Joram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab. 8While Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, he found the officials of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's relatives, who had been attending Ahaziah, and he killed them. 9He then went in search of Ahaziah, and his men captured him while he was hiding in Samaria. He was

[a] *17* Hebrew *Jehoahaz,* a variant of *Ahaziah* [b] *2* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 2 Kings 8:26); Hebrew *forty-two* [c] *5* Hebrew *Jehoram,* a variant of *Joram*; also in verses 6 and 7 [d] *6* Hebrew *Ramah,* a variant of *Ramoth* [e] *6* Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 2 Kings 8:29); most Hebrew manuscripts *Azariah*

brought to Jehu and put to death. They buried him, for they said, "He was a son of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." So there was no one in the house of Ahaziah powerful enough to retain the kingdom.

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Athaliah Seizes Judah's Throne

Jehu exceeded his role of destroying the Israelite house of Ahab and killed even Judah's king, Ahaziah (2Ki 9:27, 28). It is not hard to explain Jehu's actions. Ahaziah was related to Ahab's family through his mother, Athaliah. Israel's king Joram was the uncle of Judah's king Ahaziah, so Jehu killed them both.

With her son dead, Athaliah seized the throne of Judah herself and nearly exterminated the Davidic line. She wanted to make sure that no surviving male of David's royal family could challenge her rule. For the first and only time, a queen ruled Judah on her own.

Athaliah's reign (841–835 B.C.) would be brief, for one young prince, Joash, was saved from the massacre (2Ki 11:2, 3). Jehoiada, the chief priest for many years in Jerusalem, organized the conspiracy that brought the young Joash (or Jehoash) to the throne. The accession of Joash (835–796 B.C.) restored the Davidic monarchy to the southern kingdom.

• **2 Kings 11:1—12:21**

2 Kings

Athaliah and Joash

11 **:1** When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family. [2]But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Jehoram[a] and sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes, who were about to be murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah; so he was not killed. [3]He remained hidden with his nurse at the temple of the LORD for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

[4]In the seventh year Jehoiada sent for the commanders of units of a hundred, the Carites and the guards and had them brought to him at the temple of the LORD. He made a covenant with them and put them under oath at the temple of the LORD. Then he showed them the king's son. [5]He commanded them, saying, "This is what you are to do: You who are in the three companies that are going on duty on the Sabbath—a third of you guarding the royal palace, [6]a third at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gate behind the guard, who take turns guarding the temple— [7]and you who are in the other two companies that normally go off Sabbath duty are all to guard the temple for the king. [8]Station yourselves around the king, each of you with weapon in hand. Anyone who approaches your ranks[b] is to be put to death. Stay close to the king wherever he goes."

[9]The commanders of units of a hundred did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. Each one took his men—those who were going on duty on the Sabbath and those who were going off duty—and came to Jehoiada the priest. [10]Then he gave the commanders the spears and shields that had belonged to King David and that were in the temple of the LORD. [11]The guards, each with weapon in hand, stationed themselves around the king—near the altar and the temple, from the south side to the north side of the temple.

[12]Jehoiada brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; he presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and shouted, "Long live the king!"

[13]When Athaliah heard the noise made by the guards and the people, she went to the people at the temple of the LORD. [14]She looked and there was the king, standing by the pillar, as the custom was. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her robes and called out, "Treason! Treason!"

[15]Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders of units of a hundred, who were in charge of the troops: "Bring her out between the ranks[c] and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "She must not be put to death in the temple of the LORD." [16]So they seized her as she reached the place where the horses enter the palace grounds, and there she was put to death.

[17]Jehoiada then made a covenant between the LORD and the king and people that they would be the LORD's people. He also made a covenant between the king and the people. [18]All the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols to pieces and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

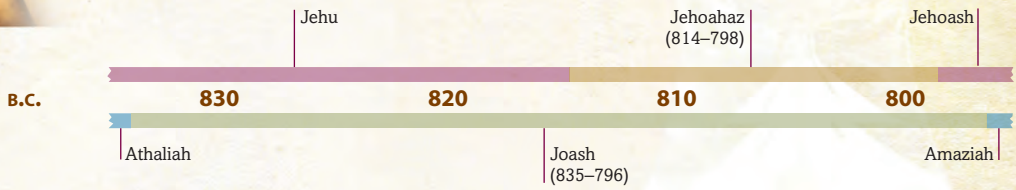
Then Jehoiada the priest posted guards at the temple of the LORD. [19]He took with him

[a] *2* Hebrew *Joram*, a variant of *Jehoram* [b] *8* Or *approaches the precincts* [c] *15* Or *out from the precincts*

HAZAEL ATTACKS JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Israel (northern kingdom)

Jehoahaz, son of Jehu, continued the dynasty begun by his father. The kingdom that Jehoahaz inherited from Jehu was beset by wars against Aram-Damascus (2Ki 10:32, 33). King Hazael of Aram (Syria) and his son Ben-Hadad severely punished Israel during Jehoahaz's reign (2Ki 13:3, 25).



Judah (southern kingdom)

Joash was the son of Ahaziah and grandson of Judah's royal couple, Jehoram and Athaliah. When King Ahaziah died, Athaliah killed all the royal heirs to the throne except for one. Hidden by his aunt Jehosheba, Joash (or Jehoash) survived to become king at 7 years old (2Ch 22:12; 24:1).

About 812 B.C. Joash made repairs to the temple (2Ki 12:6–16). Unfortunately, he was forced to pay tribute to Hazael of Aram (Syria), which included sacred items and wealth from the temple treasuries (12:17, 18).

the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards and all the people of the land, and together they brought the king down from the temple of the LORD and went into the palace, entering by way of the gate of the guards. The king then took his place on the royal throne. 20All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was calm, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword at the palace.

21Joash[a] was seven years old when he began to reign.[b]

Joash Repairs the Temple

12[c] 1In the seventh year of Jehu, Joash[d] became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty years. His mother's name was Zibiah; she was from Beersheba. 2Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the years Jehoiada the priest instructed him. 3The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

4Joash said to the priests, "Collect all the money that is brought as sacred offerings to the temple of the LORD—the money collected in the census, the money received from personal vows and the money brought voluntarily to the temple. 5Let every priest receive the money from one of the treasurers, then use it to repair whatever damage is found in the temple."

6But by the twenty-third year of King Joash the priests still had not repaired the temple. 7Therefore King Joash summoned Jehoiada the priest and the other priests and asked them, "Why aren't you repairing the damage done to the temple? Take no more money from your treasurers, but hand it over for repairing the temple." 8The priests agreed that they would not collect any more money from the people and that they would not repair the temple themselves.

9Jehoiada the priest took a chest and bored a hole in its lid. He placed it beside the altar, on the right side as one enters the temple of the LORD. The priests who guarded the entrance put into the chest all the money that was brought to the temple of the LORD. 10Whenever they saw that there was a large amount of money in the chest, the royal secretary and the high priest came, counted the money that had been brought into the temple of the LORD and put it into bags. 11When the amount had been

Trade & Economics
In the absence of banks, religious temples were used as treasuries or storehouses (2Ki 12:9). This was true in Egypt and Greece as well as in Israel, resulting in a close association of civil and religious government. The practice of keeping written records of the ownership of goods goes back as far as the history of writing itself.

[a] *21* Hebrew *Jehoash,* a variant of *Joash* [b] *21* In Hebrew texts this verse (11:21) is numbered 12:1. [c] In Hebrew texts 12:1-21 is numbered 12:2-22. [d] *1* Hebrew *Jehoash,* a variant of *Joash*; also in verses 2, 4, 6, 7 and 18

determined, they gave the money to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple. With it they paid those who worked on the temple of the LORD—the carpenters and builders, 12the masons and stonecutters. They purchased timber and blocks of dressed stone for the repair of the temple of the LORD, and met all the other expenses of restoring the temple.

13The money brought into the temple was not spent for making silver basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, trumpets or any other articles of gold or silver for the temple of the LORD; 14it was paid to the workers, who used it to repair the temple. 15They did not require an accounting from those to whom they gave the money to pay the workers, because they acted with complete honesty. 16The money from the guilt offerings and sin offerings[a] was not brought into the temple of the LORD; it belonged to the priests.

17About this time Hazael king of Aram went up and attacked Gath and captured it. Then he turned to attack Jerusalem. 18But Joash king of Judah took all the sacred objects dedicated by his predecessors—Jehoshaphat, Jehoram and Ahaziah, the kings of Judah—and the gifts he himself had dedicated and all the gold found in the treasuries of the temple of the LORD and of the royal palace, and he sent them to Hazael king of Aram, who then withdrew from Jerusalem.

19As for the other events of the reign of Joash, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? 20His officials conspired against him and assassinated him at Beth Millo, on the road down to Silla. 21The officials who murdered him were Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer. He died and was buried with his ancestors in the City of David. And Amaziah his son succeeded him as king.

[a] *16* Or *purification offerings* [b] *6* That is, a wooden symbol of the goddess Asherah; here and elsewhere in 2 Kings
[c] *9* Hebrew *Joash*, a variant of *Jehoash*; also in verses 12-14 and 25

TRANSITION

The Dynasty of Jehu in Israel

Jehu overthrew the Omride dynasty and established a new dynasty that would last for almost a century (841–753 B.C.). Four successors followed Jehu on Israel's throne: Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, and Zechariah. The reigns of Jehoahaz (814–798 B.C.) and Jehoash (798–782 B.C.) were marked by constant wars with Aram-Damascus (Syria; 2Ki 13:3).

While Jehu was king, Aram's King Hazael had been able to take from Israel territories on the east side of the Jordan (2Ki 10:31–33). Apparently, Hazael continued to reduce Israel's territory during Jehoahaz's rule. However, the situation changed by the time Jehoash became king. Aram's powerful king Hazael (c. 842–800 B.C.) had died, and about 796 B.C. Aram was besieged by the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III. These events allowed Jehoash to find some success against a weaker Aram (2Ki 13:24, 25).

• **2 Kings 13:1–25**

2 Kings

Jehoahaz King of Israel

13 :1 In the twenty-third year of Joash son of Ahaziah king of Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned seventeen years. 2He did evil in the eyes of the LORD by following the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit, and he did not turn away from them. 3So the LORD's anger burned against Israel, and for a long time he kept them under the power of Hazael king of Aram and Ben-Hadad his son.

4Then Jehoahaz sought the LORD's favor, and the LORD listened to him, for he saw how severely the king of Aram was oppressing Israel. 5The LORD provided a deliverer for Israel, and they escaped from the power of Aram. So the Israelites lived in their own homes as they had before. 6But they did not turn away from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, which he had caused Israel to commit; they continued in them. Also, the Asherah pole[b] remained standing in Samaria.

7Nothing had been left of the army of Jehoahaz except fifty horsemen, ten chariots and ten thousand foot soldiers, for the king of Aram had destroyed the rest and made them like the dust at threshing time.

8As for the other events of the reign of Jehoahaz, all he did and his achievements, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? 9Jehoahaz rested with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria. And Jehoash[c] his son succeeded him as king.

Jehoash King of Israel

10In the thirty-seventh year of Joash king of Judah, Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years. 11He did evil in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit; he continued in them.

The Declining Kingdom of Ben-Hadad (2Ki 13:3)

Zakkur Stele

The name "Ben-Hadad" was used for at least two kings of Aram-Damascus, and possibly three. The Ben-Hadad named in 2Ki 13:3 as the son of Hazael should not be confused with the Ben-Hadad mentioned in 1Ki 15:18–20. Ben-Hadad, son of Hazael, ruled Aram-Damascus in the late 9th or early 8th century B.C. While his father had been probably the most powerful monarch of the Aram-Damascus kingdom, sources outside of the Bible describe the decline of the kingdom under Ben-Hadad's own reign.

In the early 8th century B.C. Ben-Hadad led an assault against Zakkur, the king of the lands of Hamath and Luash. According to Zakkur's own inscription, he was saved from Ben-Hadad's siege by divine intervention. Although Ben-Hadad led a coalition of ten allies, he was in fact unable to defeat Zakkur.

The Neo-Assyrian annals describe another failure of Ben-Hadad. These texts tell how the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III (810–783 B.C.) waged a successful assault upon the Aramean capital, Damascus, in 796 B.C. The Assyrians entered the city and forced the king to pay tribute. While the Aramean king mentioned in the texts is called Mar'i, some scholars now identify him with Ben-Hadad, who ruled Damascus at that time.

While Ben-Hadad's Aramean state was suffering these defeats against Hamath and Assyria, it was also losing territory on its southern border to Israel. Israel had been a vassal state of Aram-Damascus under Ben-Hadad's father, Hazael (see 2Ki 10:32, 33; 13:3–7). However, during Ben-Hadad's reign this Aramean domination was overthrown by King Jehoash (or Joash) of Israel. In three campaigns during his reign (798–782 B.C.), Jehoash was successful in recapturing cities from Ben-Hadad that Israel had lost previously (2Ki 13:24, 25).

12 As for the other events of the reign of Jehoash, all he did and his achievements, including his war against Amaziah king of Judah, are
they not written in the book of the annals of
the kings of Israel? 13 Jehoash rested with his
ancestors, and Jeroboam succeeded him on the
throne. Jehoash was buried in Samaria with the
kings of Israel.

14 Now Elisha had been suffering from the ill-
ness from which he died. Jehoash king of Israel
went down to see him and wept over him. "My
father! My father!" he cried. "The chariots and
horsemen of Israel!"

15 Elisha said, "Get a bow and some arrows,"
and he did so. 16 "Take the bow in your hands,"
he said to the king of Israel. When he had tak-
en it, Elisha put his hands on the king's hands.

17 "Open the east window," he said, and he
opened it. "Shoot!" Elisha said, and he shot.
"The LORD's arrow of victory, the arrow of vic-
tory over Aram!" Elisha declared. "You will
completely destroy the Arameans at Aphek."

18 Then he said, "Take the arrows," and the
king took them. Elisha told him, "Strike the
ground." He struck it three times and stopped.
19 The man of God was angry with him and said,
"You should have struck the ground five or six
times; then you would have defeated Aram and
completely destroyed it. But now you will de-
feat it only three times."

20 Elisha died and was buried.

Now Moabite raiders used to enter the country every spring. 21 Once while some Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders; so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. When the body touched Elisha's bones, the man came to life and stood up on his feet.

22 Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. 23 But the LORD was gracious to them and had compassion and showed concern for them because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. To this day he has been unwilling to destroy them or banish them from his presence.

24 Hazael king of Aram died, and Ben-Hadad his son succeeded him as king. 25 Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz recaptured from Ben-Hadad son of Hazael the towns he had taken in battle from his father Jehoahaz. Three times Jehoash defeated him, and so he recovered the Israelite towns.

TRANSITION

Conspiracy Continues in Judah

Joash became king through a conspiracy led by the chief pr iest Jehoiada, who sw ore the temple guards to loyalty in the name of the child king. His reign also ended in conspiracy with Joash being assassinated by his own servants (2Ki 12:20, 21). Joash's son Amaziah (796–767 B.C.) became king in place of his

The Moabite Stone and King Mesha (2Ki 13:20)

Moab was a nation located in the area southeast of the Dead Sea. Its inhabitants were descended from one of the daughters of Lot, a nephew of Abraham (Ge 11:27; 19:36, 37), and thus were related to the Israelites. Relations, however, did not produce peace between the two peoples.

It is understandable that there were "Moabite raiders" (2Ki 13:20) in Israel sometime after Elisha died in the early 8th century B.C. The Moabite Stone, a royal inscription on a basalt slab dating from about 850 B.C., tells of the Moabite king Mesha, who ruled Moab while Ahab was king in Israel. After Ahab died in 853 B.C. (2Ki 3:4, 5), Mesha was able to recover Moabite territory in Medeba from the control of Israel. In fact, Mesha claims that three of Israel's cities were taken: Ataroth, Nebo, and Jahaz. He likely resettled the three cities with Moabites.

The Moabite Stone is the only known memorial stele or stone slab written in Moabite. Similar to other ancient Near Eastern royal inscriptions, this text describes the king, his paternal ancestry, and the major successes of his tenure as king, including military and building exploits.

assassinated father. But like his father, Amaziah's reign and life also would be ended by conspiracy and assassination (2Ki 14:17–20). The Davidic dynasty was still on shaky ground.

When Jehu became Israel's king, the alliance between Israel and Judah ended immediately. Under Judah's king Amaziah, war broke out once again between the two nations. The outcome for Judah was disastrous: Amaziah was captured, and Israel's army invaded Jerusalem, looting treasures from the temple and palace (2Ki 14:12–14). A people's conspiracy against Amaziah is understandable since his war against Israel and the loss of temple treasures would have made him an unpopular king.

• 2 Kings 14:1–22

2 Kings

Amaziah King of Judah

14:1 In the second year of Jehoash[a] son of Jehoahaz king of Israel, Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah began to reign. [2]He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Jehoaddan; she was from Jerusalem. [3]He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not as his father David had done. In everything he followed the example of his father Joash. [4]The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

[5]After the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, he executed the officials who had murdered his father the king. [6]Yet he did not put the children of the assassins to death, in accordance with what is written in the Book of the Law of Moses where the LORD commanded: "Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin."[b]

[7]He was the one who defeated ten thousand Edomites in the Valley of Salt and captured Sela in battle, calling it Joktheel, the name it has to this day.

[8]Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel, with the challenge: "Come, let us face each other in battle."

[9]But Jehoash king of Israel replied to Amaziah king of Judah: "A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' Then a wild beast in Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle underfoot. [10]You have indeed defeated Edom and now you are arrogant. Glory in your victory, but stay at home! Why ask for trouble and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also?"

[11]Amaziah, however, would not listen, so Jehoash king of Israel attacked. He and Amaziah king of Judah faced each other at Beth Shemesh in Judah. [12]Judah was routed by Israel, and every man fled to his home. [13]Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah, at Beth Shemesh. Then Jehoash went to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate—a section about four hundred cubits long.[c] [14]He took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace. He also took hostages and returned to Samaria.

[15]As for the other events of the reign of Jehoash, what he did and his achievements,

[a] *1* Hebrew *Joash*, a variant of *Jehoash*; also in verses 13, 23 and 27 [b] *6* Deut. 24:16 [c] *13* That is, about 600 feet or about 180 meters

including his war against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? [16]Jehoash rested with his ancestors and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. And Jeroboam his son succeeded him as king.

[17]Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. [18]As for the other events of Amaziah's reign, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?

[19]They conspired against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish, but they sent men after him to Lachish and killed him there. [20]He was brought back by horse and was buried in Jerusalem with his ancestors, in the City of David.

[21]Then all the people of Judah took Azariah,[a] who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. [22]He was the one who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after Amaziah rested with his ancestors.

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Athaliah Seizes Judah's Throne

In Kings, the account of the northern kingdom's rulers from Joram through Jehoash is expanded with stories about the prophet Elisha (2Ki 2–13). In fact, Elisha's final prophecy occurs in a meeting with King Jehoash (Joash) of Israel (2Ki 13:14–21). In Chronicles, however, the focus is on priests rather than prophets, and on Judah rather than Israel. The prophet Elisha does not appear in Chronicles, and the prophetic struggle with the northern kingdom's Baal worship appears only insofar as that struggle touched Judah.

Israel's Baal worship did arrive in Judah in the person of Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab. She no doubt promoted Baalism while married to Judah's King Jehoram, as well as during her own reign (841–835 B.C.). In Chronicles, however, Baalism is defeated not by prophets but by priests. The Chronicler highlights the part played by the religious personnel in making Joash king (2Ch 23:4–7) and in leading a purge of Baal worship (23:16–19).

• **2 Chronicles 22:10—23:21**

2 Chronicles

Athaliah and Joash

22:10 When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to destroy the whole royal family of the house of Judah. [11]But Jehosheba,[b] the daughter of King Jehoram, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the royal princes who were about to be murdered and put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Because Jehosheba,[b] the daughter of King Jehoram and wife of the priest Jehoiada, was Ahaziah's sister, she hid the child from Athaliah so she could not kill him. [12]He remained hidden with them at the temple of God for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

23 [1]In the seventh year Jehoiada showed his strength. He made a covenant with the commanders of units of a hundred: Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zikri. [2]They went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites and the heads of Israelite families from all the towns. When they came to Jerusalem, [3]the whole assembly made a covenant with the king at the temple of God.

Jehoiada said to them, "The king's son shall reign, as the LORD promised concerning the descendants of David. [4]Now this is what you are to do: A third of you priests and Levites who are going on duty on the Sabbath are to keep watch at the doors, [5]a third of you at the royal palace and a third at the Foundation Gate, and all the others are to be in the courtyards of the temple of the LORD. [6]No one is to enter the temple of the LORD except the priests and Levites on duty; they may enter because they are consecrated, but all the others are to observe the LORD's command not to enter.[c] [7]The Levites are to station themselves around the king, each with weapon in hand. Anyone who enters the temple is to be put to death. Stay close to the king wherever he goes."

[8]The Levites and all the men of Judah did just as Jehoiada the priest ordered. Each one took his men—those who were going on duty on the Sabbath and those who were going off duty—for Jehoiada the priest had not released any of the divisions. [9]Then he gave the commanders of units of a hundred the spears and the large and small shields that had belonged to King David and that were in the temple of God. [10]He stationed all the men, each with his weapon in hand, around the king—near the altar and the temple, from the south side to the north side of the temple.

[11]Jehoiada and his sons brought out the king's son and put the crown on him; they presented him with a copy of the covenant and proclaimed him king. They anointed him and shouted, "Long live the king!"

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[a] *21* Also called *Uzziah* [b] *11* Hebrew *Jehoshabeath,* a variant of *Jehosheba* [c] *6* Or *are to stand guard where the LORD has assigned them*

Religion & Worship

In the Bible, any area belonging to God is marked by his purity and righteousness. God does not permit wrongdoing in his presence, and the earthly king who reigns in his name must also exclude wrongdoing. The priest in 2Ch 23:14 considers it obvious that killing is not permitted in the temple, even though in some circumstances killing is permitted before God (1Sa 15:33).

12 When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and cheering the king, she went to them at the temple of the LORD. 13 She looked, and there was the king, standing by his pillar at the entrance. The officers and the trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, and musicians with their instruments were leading the praises. Then Athaliah tore her robes and shouted, "Treason! Treason!"

14 Jehoiada the priest sent out the commanders of units of a hundred, who were in charge of the troops, and said to them: "Bring her out between the ranks[a] and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "Do not put her to death at the temple of the LORD." 15 So they seized her as she reached the entrance of the Horse Gate on the palace grounds, and there they put her to death.

16 Jehoiada then made a covenant that he, the people and the king[b] would be the LORD's people. 17 All the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars.

18 Then Jehoiada placed the oversight of the temple of the LORD in the hands of the Levitical priests, to whom David had made assignments in the temple, to present the burnt offerings of the LORD as written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and singing, as David had ordered. 19 He also stationed gatekeepers at the gates of the LORD's temple so that no one who was in any way unclean might enter.

20 He took with him the commanders of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people and all the people of the land and brought the king down from the temple of the LORD. They went into the palace through the Upper Gate and seated the king on the royal throne. 21 All the people of the land rejoiced, and the city was calm, because Athaliah had been slain with the sword.

[a] *14* Or *out from the precincts* [b] *16* Or *covenant between the* LORD *and the people and the king that they* (see 2 Kings 11:17)

TRANSITION

The Apostasy of Joash and Amaziah

The Chronicler's emphasis on priests and the temple is reflected in the details that he alone presents. His account of Joash's reign (835–796 B.C.), for instance, stresses the role of the king's different advisors. Joash did right while following the lead of the priest Jehoiada, but when the priest was gone, he fell under the wrongful influence of Judah's leaders (2Ch 24:15–18). Worse, the king murdered Jehoiada's son Zechariah (24:20–22), a murder still remembered in Jesus' time (Mt 23:35).

Similarly, only the Chronicler tells us about idolatry during the reign of Amaziah (796–767 B.C.). While both Kings and Chronicles report Judah's victory over Edom (2Ki 14:7; 2Ch 25:11, 12), the Chronicler notes Amaziah's

Baal Worship in Jerusalem (2Ch 23:17)

Just as Israel's capital, Samaria, featured a temple of Baal, so also was there a temple built for Baal in Jerusalem, the capital of Judah (2Ch 23:17). It is possible that this building was built by Judah's king Jehoram for his bride Athaliah, the daughter of Jezebel. The new queen brought to Judah the Baal religion of Sidon, her mother's home city, and influenced her husband Jehoram toward the religious behaviors of her father Ahab's kingdom (2Ch 21:5, 6).

Unlike in Samaria, however, Yahweh remained the major deity in the capital Jerusalem. The Baal temple was built for a foreign deity worshiped by the royal family, like the temples built by Solomon for his foreign wives (1Ki 11:7, 8). Most likely, those who worshiped Baal understood him to be under the control of Yahweh, whose temple remained the central shrine of the kingdom and who would still have been considered the direct ruler of Judah.

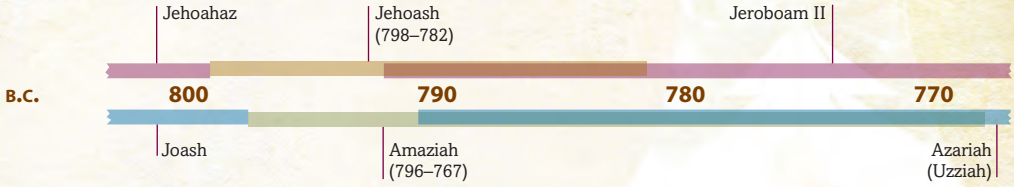
When Athaliah seized the throne, however, the god she worshiped became the major deity of the country. Her murder of the descendants of David (2Ch 22:10) shows that she exercised her power primarily for her own protection. She did not rule as a regent for Yahweh, and was perhaps responsible for the deterioration of Yahweh's temple, mentioned by the Chronicler (2Ch 24:7).

Opposition to Athaliah's rule was instigated by the priests of Yahweh's temple. The "people of the land," who were probably the landowning countrymen (2Ch 23:13), remained loyal to Yahweh and joined the revolt to overthrow the queen. Returning to the worship of Yahweh was vital so that Yahweh would continue to protect the land, and not allow it to be devastated as the northern kingdom was.

ISRAEL IS VICTORIOUS OVER JUDAH

Israel (northern kingdom)

Jehoash (or Joash), son of Jehoahaz, continued the Jehu dynasty. Israel was revived during his reign, following a long period of suffering at the hands of the Arameans (Syrians). The Assyrian king Adad-nirari III captured the Aramean capital, Damascus, in 796 B.C., and that event possibly enabled Jehoash to recover cities from Aram that Israel had lost while Jehoash's father ruled (2Ki 13:24, 25). Jehoash also defeated King Amaziah of Judah.



Judah (southern kingdom)

Amaziah, son of Joash, became king when his father was assassinated (2Ch 24:25). He built up the army of Judah, enabling him to gain a stunning victory over the Edomites (24:5, 11). Possibly this success led Amaziah to challenge Jehoash (or Joash) of Israel to war, an effort with disastrous results. Israel defeated Judah at Beth Shemesh; destroyed part of Jerusalem's wall; and looted both Jerusalem's temple and royal treasury (2Ch 25:22–24). Like his father, Amaziah was assassinated (25:27).

involvement with Edomite gods (25:14, 15, 20). Amaziah's actions were typical of kings of the ancient world in that he sought to incorporate the captured gods in to his own religion. But such behavior was neither normal nor acceptable for a Judahite king.

• **2 Chronicles 24:1—25:28**

2 Chronicles

Joash Repairs the Temple

24:1 Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty years. His mother's name was Zibiah; she was from Beersheba. [2]Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the years of Jehoiada the priest. [3]Jehoiada chose two wives for him, and he had sons and daughters.

[4]Some time later Joash decided to restore the temple of the LORD. [5]He called together the priests and Levites and said to them, "Go to the towns of Judah and collect the money due annually from all Israel, to repair the temple of your God. Do it now." But the Levites did not act at once.

[6]Therefore the king summoned Jehoiada the chief priest and said to him, "Why haven't you required the Levites to bring in from Judah and Jerusalem the tax imposed by Moses the servant of the LORD and by the assembly of Israel for the tent of the covenant law?"

[7]Now the sons of that wicked woman Athaliah had broken into the temple of God and had used even its sacred objects for the Baals.

[8]At the king's command, a chest was made and placed outside, at the gate of the temple of the LORD. [9]A proclamation was then issued in Judah and Jerusalem that they should bring to the LORD the tax that Moses the servant of God had required of Israel in the wilderness. [10]All the officials and all the people brought their contributions gladly, dropping them into the chest until it was full. [11]Whenever the chest was brought in by the Levites to the king's officials and they saw that there was a large amount of money, the royal secretary and the officer of the chief priest would come and empty the chest and carry it back to its place. They did this regularly and collected a great amount of money. [12]The king and Jehoiada gave it to those who carried out the work required for the temple of the LORD. They hired masons and carpenters to restore the LORD's temple, and also workers in iron and bronze to repair the temple.

[13]The men in charge of the work were diligent, and the repairs progressed under them. They rebuilt the temple of God according to its original design and reinforced it. [14]When they had finished, they brought the rest of the money to the king and Jehoiada, and with it were made articles for the LORD's temple: articles for the service and for the burnt offerings, and also dishes and other objects of gold and silver. As long as Jehoiada lived, burnt offerings

Priests Wielding Political Power (2Ch 24:1–3)

In the power structures of the ancient Near East, priests carried both political and religious authority. They were consulted by rulers and free citizens to determine the will of the gods. They were responsible for teaching the moral rules decreed by the gods. In both Mesopotamia and Egypt priests controlled large tracts of land and their temples played the role of modern banks for storing money and making loans. At times in Egypt the priests were said to wield more power than the pharaoh. So priesthoods were able to bring both political and sacred authority to bear on the rulers of their societies.

In Israel and Judah priests also exercised power in relation to kings and rulers. The most important office of the priest was as the intermediary between God and the people; this meant also between God and the king. Priests were expected to bring up future rulers in the proper service and worship of God.

The potential political power of the priesthood is witnessed in the Jerusalem priest Jehoiada. He organized the palace guard to bring about the downfall and execution of Queen Athaliah, resulting in the enthronement of Joash (Jehoash) as king (2Ki 11:4–21). Since the new king was so young, the priest Jehoiada served in the influential position of regent and advisor to the king, even securing wives for him (2Ch 24:1–3).

were presented continually in the temple of the LORD.

15 Now Jehoiada was old and full of years, and
he died at the age of a hundred and thirty. 16 He
was buried with the kings in the City of David,
because of the good he had done in Israel for
God and his temple.

The Wickedness of Joash

17 After the death of Jehoiada, the officials
of Judah came and paid homage to the king,
and he listened to them. 18 They abandoned the
temple of the LORD, the God of their ancestors,
and worshiped Asherah poles and idols. Be-
cause of their guilt, God's anger came on Ju-
dah and Jerusalem. 19 Although the LORD sent
prophets to the people to bring them back to
him, and though they testified against them,
they would not listen.

20 Then the Spirit of God came on Zechariah
son of Jehoiada the priest. He stood before the
people and said, "This is what God says: 'Why
do you disobey the LORD's commands? You will
not prosper. Because you have forsaken the
LORD, he has forsaken you.'"

21 But they plotted against him, and by or-
der of the king they stoned him to death in the
courtyard of the LORD's temple. 22 King Joash
did not remember the kindness Zechariah's
father Jehoiada had shown him but killed his
son, who said as he lay dying, "May the LORD
see this and call you to account."

23 At the turn of the year,[a] the army of Aram
marched against Joash; it invaded Judah and
Jerusalem and killed all the leaders of the peo-
ple. They sent all the plunder to their king in
Damascus. 24 Although the Aramean army had
come with only a few men, the LORD delivered
into their hands a much larger army. Because
Judah had forsaken the LORD, the God of their
ancestors, judgment was executed on Joash.
25 When the Arameans withdrew, they left Jo-
ash severely wounded. His officials conspired
against him for murdering the son of Jehoiada
the priest, and they killed him in his bed. So he
died and was buried in the City of David, but
not in the tombs of the kings.

26 Those who conspired against him were
Zabad,[b] son of Shimeath an Ammonite wom-
an, and Jehozabad, son of Shimrith[c] a Moabite
woman. 27 The account of his sons, the many
prophecies about him, and the record of the
restoration of the temple of God are written in
the annotations on the book of the kings. And
Amaziah his son succeeded him as king.

Amaziah King of Judah

25 1 Amaziah was twenty-five years old when
he became king, and he reigned in Jeru-
salem twenty-nine years. His mother's name
was Jehoaddan; she was from Jerusalem. 2 He
did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but
not wholeheartedly. 3 After the kingdom was
firmly in his control, he executed the officials

[a] *23* Probably in the spring [b] *26* A variant of *Jozabad*
[c] *26* A variant of *Shomer*

TIME CAPSULE		810 to 796 B.C.
810–783		Adad-nirari III of Assyria influenced by his mother, Semiramis
800		Earliest reference to hardening steel by quenching, Odyssey Book 9
798		Jehoash (or Joash) becomes king in Israel
796		Adad-nirari III of Assyria successfully assaults the Aramean capital, Damascus
796		Ben-Hadad (called Mar'i) of Damascus pays tribute to Adad-nirari
796		King Jehoash of Israel pays tribute to Adad-nirari

Adopting Their Idols (2Ch 25:14)

The booty taken in war from defeated peoples often included the statues and images of their gods. Two kings of Judah took idols as booty, David from the Philistines (2Sa 5:19–21) and Amaziah from the Edomites (2Ch 25:14–16).

Captured idols often were treated as symbols of the gods themselves, as they had been by their own peoples. Such idols were taken to the temples of the victors and placed in positions of honor. It was believed that these gods had chosen the conquerors to rule the invaded territories for the gods. In such cases the gods became a part of the divine bureaucracy of the empire.

Theologically, taking these objects could be good propaganda. When Nebuchadnezzar I (1133–1116 B.C.) returned the image of Marduk to Babylon from Elam, where it had been taken previously as booty, the event was treated as the glorious return of the god and as showing the greatness of Babylon. This return sparked an explosion of theological writing of hymns and poems.

Cyrus II, king of Persia (559–530 B.C.), also realized political advantage by respecting the local gods of conquered peoples. At the beginning of his reign over Babylon he declared that all the images of the peoples conquered by the Neo-Babylonian kings would be returned to their respective lands and their respective peoples. Cyrus believed that all the gods had accepted him as the true ruler for their lands.

When Amaziah adopted the Edomite gods (2Ch 25:14), he was following the common practice of victorious kings. But the resulting wrath of Yahweh would show that Amaziah had made the wrong choice (25:16).

who had murdered his father the king. 4Yet he did not put their children to death, but acted in accordance with what is written in the Law, in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded: "Parents shall not be put to death for their children, nor children be put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin."[a]

5Amaziah called the people of Judah together and assigned them according to their families to commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds for all Judah and Benjamin. He then mustered those twenty years old or more and found that there were three hundred thousand men fit for military service, able to handle the spear and shield. 6He also hired a hundred thousand fighting men from Israel for a hundred talents[b] of silver.

7But a man of God came to him and said, "Your Majesty, these troops from Israel must not march with you, for the LORD is not with Israel—not with any of the people of Ephraim. 8Even if you go and fight courageously in battle, God will overthrow you before the enemy, for God has the power to help or to overthrow."

TIME CAPSULE		763 to 752 B.C.
763		City of Harran rebels against Assyrians and is destroyed by Ashur-dan III
753		Zechariah becomes king in Israel
752		Shallum assassinates Zechariah and becomes king in Israel
752		Menahem assassinates Shallum and becomes king in Israel
752		Pekah is an officer in Israel's royal court

9Amaziah asked the man of God, "But what about the hundred talents I paid for these Israelite troops?"

The man of God replied, "The LORD can give you much more than that."

10So Amaziah dismissed the troops who had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home. They were furious with Judah and left for home in a great rage.

11Amaziah then marshaled his strength and led his army to the Valley of Salt, where he killed ten thousand men of Seir. 12The army of Judah also captured ten thousand men alive, took them to the top of a cliff and threw them down so that all were dashed to pieces.

13Meanwhile the troops that Amaziah had sent back and had not allowed to take part in the war raided towns belonging to Judah from Samaria to Beth Horon. They killed three thousand people and carried off great quantities of plunder.

14When Amaziah returned from slaughtering the Edomites, he brought back the gods of the people of Seir. He set them up as his own gods, bowed down to them and burned sacrifices to them. 15The anger of the LORD burned against Amaziah, and he sent a prophet to him, who said, "Why do you consult this people's gods, which could not save their own people from your hand?"

16While he was still speaking, the king said to him, "Have we appointed you an adviser to the king? Stop! Why be struck down?"

So the prophet stopped but said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because

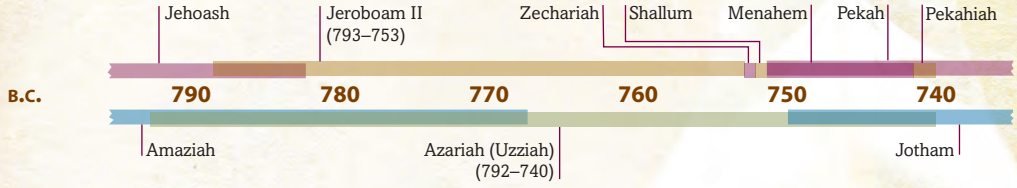
[a] *4* Deut. 24:16 [b] *6* That is, about 3 3/4 tons or about 3.4 metric tons; also in verse 9

COREGENCIES, LONG REIGNS, AND PROSPERITY

Israel (northern kingdom)

Jeroboam II, son of Jehoash, was the 4th king of the Jehu dynasty. His long reign of 41 years began as a coregent with his father. Possibly Jehoash placed Jeroboam on the throne when war broke out against King Amaziah of Judah (2Ki 13:12).

Successful military adventures helped Jeroboam expand the boundaries of Israel to their greatest extent since the days of David and Solomon (2Ki 14:25, 28). The prophet Amos prophesied against social abuses in Jeroboam's Israel (Am 7:9–11).



Judah (southern kingdom)

Azariah (or Uzziah) became king at 16 years old, and his long reign of 52 years suggests that he served as a coregent with his father Amaziah. Possibly the people placed the young Azariah on the throne when his father was taken prisoner by Israel (2Ki 14:13, 21).

Ruling a prosperous Judah, Azariah secured the defenses of both his capital and country. About 750 B.C. the disease of leprosy forced him to live the rest of his life in a separate place, while his son Jotham ruled as coregent (2Ch 26:21).

you have done this and have not listened to my counsel."

17 After Amaziah king of Judah consulted his advisers, he sent this challenge to Jehoash[a] son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu, king of Israel: "Come, let us face each other in battle."

18 But Jehoash king of Israel replied to Amaziah king of Judah: "A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' Then a wild beast in Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle underfoot. 19 You say to yourself that you have defeated Edom, and now you are arrogant and proud. But stay at home! Why ask for trouble and cause your own downfall and that of Judah also?"

20 Amaziah, however, would not listen, for God so worked that he might deliver them into the hands of Jehoash, because they sought the gods of Edom. 21 So Jehoash king of Israel attacked. He and Amaziah king of Judah faced each other at Beth Shemesh in Judah. 22 Judah was routed by Israel, and every man fled to his home. 23 Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah,[b] at Beth Shemesh. Then Jehoash brought him to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate—a section about four hundred cubits[c] long. 24 He took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the temple of God that had been in the care of Obed-Edom, together with the palace treasures and the hostages, and returned to Samaria.

25 Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. 26 As for the other events of Amaziah's reign, from beginning to end, are they not written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel? 27 From the time that Amaziah turned away from following the LORD, they conspired against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lachish, but they sent men after him to Lachish and killed him there. 28 He was brought back by horse and was buried with his ancestors in the City of Judah.[d]

[a] *17* Hebrew *Joash,* a variant of *Jehoash*; also in verses 18, 21, 23 and 25 [b] *23* Hebrew *Jehoahaz,* a variant of *Ahaziah*
[c] *23* That is, about 600 feet or about 180 meters [d] *28* Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac (see also 2 Kings 14:20) *David*

Politics & Government

Lachish was the second largest city in Palestine during the 9th and 8th centuries B.C. Solomon's son Rehoboam made it one of his fortified cities (2Ch 11:5–10). Two other Judahite kings probably strengthened Lachish's fortifications: Asa (2Ch 14:6) and Jehoshaphat (17:2). This fortified city was thus a logical place for Amaziah to seek protection (2Ch 25:27).

THE NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE

Most of Israel's national history took place in a power vacuum. The great New Kingdom of Egypt, from which the Israelites had escaped in the Exodus, faded away shortly after Ramesses II (1279–1213 B.C.). The Egyptian dynasties that followed were much weaker. In Mesopotamia, the major power was Assyria, but Assyria remained too busy with internal problems to worry about outlying nations like Israel.

A few times Assyria seemed to revive and look beyond its borders. A monument to the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) describes how he swept through Israel and forced the Israelite king Jehu to pay tribute to Assyria. Such triumphs were rare, though, until the Assyrian Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) came to power during the reigns of Azariah (Uzziah) in Judah and Jeroboam II in Israel. Tiglath-Pileser quickly established his supremacy over Mesopotamia, even over Assyria's old rival Babylon, and began to expand Assyria's borders.

Few armies were as hated as the Assyrian army. Even in a time and culture that was not known for respecting human life, Assyrian tactics and policies toward their enemies were notoriously brutal. The surrounding nations began to watch Tiglath-Pileser nervously.

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Jeroboam and Azariah (Uzziah)

The prophetic history, found in 2 Kings, places particular emphasis on the history of the northern kingdom and kings, such as Jeroboam II. Jeroboam was the fourth generation of the Jehu dynasty in Israel, following his grandfather Jehoahaz and father Jehoash to the throne. His long reign of about 41 years (793–753 B.C.) began with an 11-year coregency, during which time Jeroboam ruled together with his father. Upon the death of Jehoash (Joash) in 782 B.C., Jeroboam succeeded to his father's throne (2Ki 13:13), now a king in his own right.

It was a good time to take leadership in Israel. The Assyrian Empire led by Shalmaneser III had forced Jeroboam's great-grandfather Jehu to pay tribute in 841 B.C. But that empire was now greatly weakened. During the years from 782 to 745 B.C., Assyria was fragmented into various governor-ruled states, and threatened by an expanding kingdom of Urartu to its north. Assyria's weakness allowed Jeroboam to pursue an expansionist policy himself, restoring territory on Israel's northern border (2Ki 14:25).

• 2 Kings 14:23–29

2 Kings

Jeroboam II King of Israel

14:23 In the fifteenth year of Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash king of Israel became king in Samaria, and he reigned forty-one years. 24He did evil in the eyes of the LORD and did not turn away from any of the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit. 25He was the one who restored the boundaries of Israel from Lebo Hamath to the Dead Sea,[a] in accordance with the word of the LORD, the God of Israel, spoken through his servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath Hepher.

26The LORD had seen how bitterly everyone in Israel, whether slave or free, was suffering;[b] there was no one to help them. 27And since the LORD had not said he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Jehoash.

28As for the other events of Jeroboam's reign, all he did, and his military achievements, including how he recovered for Israel both Damascus and Hamath, which had belonged to Judah, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel? 29Jeroboam rested with his ancestors, the kings of Israel. And Zechariah his son succeeded him as king.

[a] *25* Hebrew *the Sea of the Arabah* [b] *26* Or *Israel was suffering. They were without a ruler or leader, and*

TRANSITION

The Book of Jonah

Jonah the son of Amittai is mentioned in 2Ki 14:25, prophesying a victory for the Israelite king Jeroboam II. The book devoted to this prophet does not mention Jonah's activities in Israel. Instead, it tells of a message God gives Jonah to deliver to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria.

Certain details of the Book of Jonah have troubled historians. Leaving aside Jonah's extraordinary encounter with the great fish, scholars have noted that Assyrian records do not mention a mass repentance in Nineveh at this time. Also the title "king of Nineveh" (Jnh 3:6) seems rather small for the ruler of an empire. For these reasons, many have treated the book as an extended parable, not intended to be read as history. Others though, not troubled by accounts of God doing miracles, find no reason to doubt the book's facticity.

Jonah is distinct among prophetic books in that it is a narrative, not a collection of poetic oracles. The message of the book, that God is

concerned with all his cr eation, not just with Israel, is not unique , though. I t also appears with other pr ophets, including Jonah 's contemporary Amos.

Two features stand out in the book 's theology. One is the universal love and compassion of God for all na tions. Another is the so vereignty of God. The relatively unimpressive title "king of N ineveh" serves above all to humble Nineveh's great monarch before the power of Israel's God.

• **Jonah 1:1—4:11**

Jonah

Jonah Flees From the LORD

1:1 The word of the LORD came to Jonah son
of Amittai: 2"Go to the great city of Nineveh
and preach against it, because its wickedness
has come up before me."

3But Jonah ran away from the LORD and
headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa,
where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed
for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

4Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea,
and such a violent storm arose that the ship
threatened to break up. 5All the sailors were
afraid and each cried out to his own god. And
they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the
ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where
he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6The
captain went to him and said, "How can you
sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe
he will take notice of us so that we will not
perish."

7Then the sailors said to each other, "Come,
let us cast lots to find out who is responsible
for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell
on Jonah. 8So they asked him, "Tell us, who is
responsible for making all this trouble for us?
What kind of work do you do? Where do you
come from? What is your country? From what
people are you?"

9He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship
the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea
and the dry land."

10This terrified them and they asked, "What
have you done?" (They knew he was running
away from the LORD, because he had already
told them so.)

11The sea was getting rougher and rougher.
So they asked him, "What should we do to you
to make the sea calm down for us?"

12"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he
replied, "and it will become calm. I know that
it is my fault that this great storm has come
upon you."

13Instead, the men did their best to row back
to land. But they could not, for the sea grew
even wilder than before. 14Then they cried out
to the LORD, "Please, LORD, do not let us die
for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you,
LORD, have done as you pleased." 15Then they
took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the
raging sea grew calm. 16At this the men greatly
feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to
the LORD and made vows to him.

JONAH SAILS FOR TARSHISH (JNH 1:3)

When Jonah decided to flee from God, he "headed for Tarshish" and "found a ship bound for that port" (Jnh 1:3). The narrative about Jonah indicates that Tarshish was in an opposite direction from Nineveh, but the specific direction is not given.

Tarshish is mentioned over thirty times in Scripture, yet its exact location is uncertain. The kings Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah built ships at Ezion Geber, near the Red Sea, which, according to the original Hebrew, were intended to "go to Tarshish" (2Ch 20:36, 37). Nevertheless, the location of Tarshish was not necessarily in the vicinity of the Red Sea.

The most likely candidate for a location is the Phoenician colony Tartessus in southwestern Spain. This colony was known to the Greek historian Herodotus and the Latin writers Strabo and Pliny. Their writings refer to its rich metal resources. Assyrian records from the 7th century B.C. also mention a place called Tarsisi, but its location is unknown.

Some scholars suppose that the term "Tarshish" may well describe an activity associated with a place rather than a specific geographic location. Besides Strabo and Pliny, the prophets Jeremiah (Jer 10:9) and Ezekiel (Eze 27:12) also knew that Tarshish was a source for metals. In the Hebrew language the word "Tarshish" often refers to a precious stone, usually translated as "beryl" (Ex 28:20; Eze 28:13). Possibly then, "Tarshish" did not identify one specific location, but rather several places where the activity of metalworking took place.

In the Bible, ships are frequently called "ships of Tarshish" (Isa 23:1, 14; 60:9). Tarshish ships were often found in the Mediterranean area, carrying goods from Tyre (Eze 27:25). We may never know whether the destination of the Tarshish ship in the Jonah story was one site known as "Tarshish" or one of several sites referred to by that name.

Jonah's Prayer

17 Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish
2 [a] three days and three nights. 1 From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God.
2 He said:

"In my distress I called to the LORD,
and he answered me.
From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help,
and you listened to my cry.
3 You hurled me into the depths,
into the very heart of the seas,
and the currents swirled about me;
all your waves and breakers
swept over me.
4 I said, 'I have been banished
from your sight;
yet I will look again
toward your holy temple.'

5 The engulfing waters threatened me, [b]
the deep surrounded me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.
6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever.
But you, LORD my God,
brought my life up from the pit.

7 "When my life was ebbing away,
I remembered you, LORD,
and my prayer rose to you,
to your holy temple.

8 "Those who cling to worthless idols
turn away from God's love for them.
9 But I, with shouts of grateful praise,
will sacrifice to you.
What I have vowed I will make good.
I will say, 'Salvation comes from the LORD.'"

10 And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Geography & Environment
Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire and certainly a "large city" by ancient standards (Jnh 3:3). Archaeologists have uncovered a very large temple of Ishtar as well as other public buildings in Nineveh. More than 25,000 tablets were discovered in the palace of Ashurbanipal. Among these tablets were several that related the Mesopotamian flood legend.

Jonah Goes to Nineveh

3 1 Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."
3 Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. 4 Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." 5 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.
6 When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. 7 This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

[a] In Hebrew texts 2:1 is numbered 1:17, and 2:1-10 is numbered 2:2-11. [b] 5 Or *waters were at my throat*

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. 8But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. 9Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

10When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Jonah's Anger at the LORD's Compassion

4 1But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. 2He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

4But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

5Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant[a] and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. 7But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. 8When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

9But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

10But the LORD said, "You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?"

[a] *6* The precise identification of this plant is uncertain; also in verses 7, 9 and 10. [b] *1* Hebrew *Joash,* a variant of *Jehoash* [c] *5* Or *the inhabitants of* [d] *5* *Aven* means *wickedness.*

TRANSITION

The Book of Amos

Two of the minor prophets, Amos and Hosea, spoke to the northern kingdom of Israel during the rise of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Both took the Assyrian threat very seriously, but their messages were unheard. Comparative prosperity in Israel during the reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.) had fed complacency.

Amos spoke harshly about this complacency. Although he himself was from Tekoa in the land of Judah (Am 1:1), Amos was sent by God to prophesy to Israel (see 7:10–17), and he brought with him a deep intolerance for oppression. He raged against the lavish lives of the rich (4:1–3), the oppression of the poor (5:11–15), and the ostentatious religious ceremony of the oppressors (5:21–24).

Even more startling, Amos belittles Israel's precious Exodus heritage. Yes, Israel was chosen from among all the nations, he says, but that just means God will judge Israel more harshly (3:1, 2). Besides, Amos adds, God works among other nations, too, such as Cush (Ethiopia), Philistia, and Aram (9:7). Given Amos's message, it is not surprising that he was eventually sent home to Judah (7:12, 13).

• **Amos 1:1—6:7**

Amos

1 **:1** The words of Amos, one of the shepherds of Tekoa—the vision he saw concerning Israel two years before the earthquake, when Uzziah was king of Judah and Jeroboam son of Jehoash[b] was king of Israel.

2He said:

"The LORD roars from Zion
and thunders from Jerusalem;
the pastures of the shepherds dry up,
and the top of Carmel withers."

Judgment on Israel's Neighbors

3This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Damascus,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because she threshed Gilead
with sledges having iron teeth,
4I will send fire on the house of
Hazael
that will consume the fortresses of
Ben-Hadad.
5I will break down the gate of Damascus;
I will destroy the king who is in[c] the
Valley of Aven[d]
and the one who holds the scepter in Beth
Eden.

The people of Aram will go into exile to
Kir,"
says the LORD.

6 This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Gaza,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because she took captive whole
communities
and sold them to Edom,
7 I will send fire on the walls of Gaza
that will consume her fortresses.
8 I will destroy the king[a] of Ashdod
and the one who holds the scepter in
Ashkelon.
I will turn my hand against Ekron,
till the last of the Philistines are dead,"
says the Sovereign LORD.

9 This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Tyre,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because she sold whole communities of
captives to Edom,
disregarding a treaty of brotherhood,
10 I will send fire on the walls of Tyre
that will consume her fortresses."

11 This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Edom,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because he pursued his brother with a
sword
and slaughtered the women of the land,
because his anger raged continually
and his fury flamed unchecked,
12 I will send fire on Teman
that will consume the fortresses of
Bozrah."

13 This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Ammon,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because he ripped open the pregnant
women of Gilead
in order to extend his borders,
14 I will set fire to the walls of Rabbah
that will consume her fortresses
amid war cries on the day of battle,
amid violent winds on a stormy day.
15 Her king[b] will go into exile,
he and his officials together,"
says the LORD.

TIME CAPSULE **750 B.C.**

750	Jotham serves as coregent with Uzziah (Azariah) in Judah
750	Archaeological work at the city of Hazor shows occurrence of earthquake
750	Clay tablet presents Gilgamesh story as a drama
750	Earliest description of a chariot race, in the *Iliad*
750	Greek city-state culture in Aegean
750	*Iliad* and *Odyssey* come from oral tradition

2 1 This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Moab,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because he burned to ashes
the bones of Edom's king,
2 I will send fire on Moab
that will consume the fortresses of
Kerioth.[c]
Moab will go down in great tumult
amid war cries and the blast of the
trumpet.
3 I will destroy her ruler
and kill all her officials with him,"
says the LORD.

4 This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Judah,
even for four, I will not relent.
Because they have rejected the law of the
LORD
and have not kept his decrees,
because they have been led astray by false
gods,[d]
the gods[e] their ancestors followed,
5 I will send fire on Judah
that will consume the fortresses of
Jerusalem."

Judgment on Israel

6 This is what the LORD says:

"For three sins of Israel,
even for four, I will not relent.
They sell the innocent for silver,
and the needy for a pair of sandals.
7 They trample on the heads of the poor
as on the dust of the ground
and deny justice to the oppressed.
Father and son use the same girl
and so profane my holy name.
8 They lie down beside every altar
on garments taken in pledge.
In the house of their god
they drink wine taken as fines.

[a] *8* Or *inhabitants* [b] *15* Or */ Molek* [c] *2* Or *of her cities*
[d] *4* Or *by lies* [e] *4* Or *lies*

From a Capital to a Vassal City (Am 1:6–8)

During a period from about 1550 to 1150 B.C., Egypt ruled over Canaan, with Gaza serving as the capital city of the Egyptian province. The earliest inscriptional evidence of Gaza shows that it was a well-fortified town as far back as the reign of Seti I of Egypt (1294–1279 B.C.).

During the time of Pharaoh Ramesses III (1184–1153 B.C.), the Sea Peoples invaded Canaan. Although Ramesses stopped their further advance in 1175 B.C., he allowed them to settle in southern Palestine. One group of the Sea Peoples, the Philistines, formed a confederation of five city-states, and Gaza, which had been Canaan's capital under Egypt, continued as the foremost Philistine city.

During the 8th century B.C., when the Neo-Assyrian Empire was threatening nations to the west, the prophet Amos pronounced various judgments on Gaza and on other Philistine cities (Am 1:6–8). Amos had foreboding news for Gaza: both its walls and palaces would be destroyed by fire (1:7).

The troubles started for Gaza when Tiglath-Pileser was king of Assyria (744–727 B.C.) and a certain Hanno was king of Gaza. Hanno is mentioned in an Assyrian tribute list from 738 B.C. as one king who paid tribute to Assyria. The Assyrian annals note Tiglath-Pileser's campaign in 734 B.C. in which he marched through Aram and Palestine, conquering the city of Gaza. Gaza's royal family was captured and a large tribute imposed. Hanno apparently fled at this time, although he was reinstated later during Tiglath-Pileser's reign.

During the reign of Sargon II of Assyria (721–705 B.C.), Hanno again rebelled and was subsequently led in chains to Assyria. Amos's prophecy (1:7) probably points toward either Gaza's fall in 734 B.C. or to the later campaign by Sargon II. The city that had been a capital of Canaan and a leading Philistine city was now merely a vassal of Assyria.

9 "Yet I destroyed the Amorites before them,
though they were tall as the cedars
and strong as the oaks.
I destroyed their fruit above
and their roots below.
10 I brought you up out of Egypt
and led you forty years in the wilderness
to give you the land of the Amorites.

11 "I also raised up prophets from among your children
and Nazirites from among your youths.
Is this not true, people of Israel?"
declares the LORD.
12 "But you made the Nazirites drink wine
and commanded the prophets not to prophesy.

13 "Now then, I will crush you
as a cart crushes when loaded with grain.
14 The swift will not escape,
the strong will not muster their strength,
and the warrior will not save his life.
15 The archer will not stand his ground,
the fleet-footed soldier will not get away,
and the horseman will not save his life.
16 Even the bravest warriors
will flee naked on that day,"
declares the LORD.

Witnesses Summoned Against Israel

3 1 Hear this word, people of Israel, the word
the LORD has spoken against you—against
the whole family I brought up out of Egypt:

2 "You only have I chosen
of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you
for all your sins."

3 Do two walk together
unless they have agreed to do so?
4 Does a lion roar in the thicket
when it has no prey?
Does it growl in its den
when it has caught nothing?
5 Does a bird swoop down to a trap on the ground
when no bait is there?
Does a trap spring up from the ground
if it has not caught anything?
6 When a trumpet sounds in a city,
do not the people tremble?
When disaster comes to a city,
has not the LORD caused it?

7 Surely the Sovereign LORD does nothing
without revealing his plan
to his servants the prophets.

8 The lion has roared—
who will not fear?
The Sovereign LORD has spoken—
who can but prophesy?

Trade & Economics

In the ancient world, fibers were prepared and woven into fabrics by hand. The complexities of keeping sheep for wool or growing flax for linen only added to the value of cloth. For the poor, the outer garment doubled as a blanket. It could be offered as security for a loan (Am 2:8), but the law required lenders not to keep this essential item overnight (Ex 22:26, 27).

9 Proclaim to the fortresses of Ashdod
and to the fortresses of Egypt:
"Assemble yourselves on the mountains of
Samaria;
see the great unrest within her
and the oppression among her people."

10 "They do not know how to do right,"
declares the LORD,
"who store up in their fortresses
what they have plundered and looted."

11 Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"An enemy will overrun your land,
pull down your strongholds
and plunder your fortresses."

12 This is what the LORD says:

"As a shepherd rescues from the lion's
mouth
only two leg bones or a piece of an ear,
so will the Israelites living in Samaria be
rescued,
with only the head of a bed
and a piece of fabric[a] from a couch.[b]"

13 "Hear this and testify against the descendants of Jacob," declares the Lord, the LORD God Almighty.

14 "On the day I punish Israel for her sins,
I will destroy the altars of Bethel;
the horns of the altar will be cut off
and fall to the ground.
15 I will tear down the winter house
along with the summer house;
the houses adorned with ivory will be
destroyed
and the mansions will be demolished,"
declares the LORD.

Israel Has Not Returned to God

4 1 Hear this word, you cows of Bashan on
Mount Samaria,
you women who oppress the poor and
crush the needy
and say to your husbands, "Bring us
some drinks!"
2 The Sovereign LORD has sworn by his
holiness:
"The time will surely come
when you will be taken away with hooks,
the last of you with fishhooks.[c]
3 You will each go straight out
through breaches in the wall,
and you will be cast out toward
Harmon,[d]"
declares the LORD.

4 "Go to Bethel and sin;
go to Gilgal and sin yet more.
Bring your sacrifices every morning,
your tithes every three years.[e]
5 Burn leavened bread as a thank offering
and brag about your freewill offerings—
boast about them, you Israelites,
for this is what you love to do,"
declares the Sovereign LORD.

6 "I gave you empty stomachs in every city
and lack of bread in every town,
yet you have not returned to me,"
declares the LORD.

7 "I also withheld rain from you
when the harvest was still three months
away.
I sent rain on one town,
but withheld it from another.
One field had rain;
another had none and dried up.
8 People staggered from town to town for
water
but did not get enough to drink,
yet you have not returned to me,"
declares the LORD.

9 "Many times I struck your gardens and
vineyards,
destroying them with blight and mildew.
Locusts devoured your fig and olive trees,
yet you have not returned to me,"
declares the LORD.

10 "I sent plagues among you
as I did to Egypt.
I killed your young men with the sword,
along with your captured horses.
I filled your nostrils with the stench of your
camps,
yet you have not returned to me,"
declares the LORD.

11 "I overthrew some of you
as I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah.
You were like a burning stick snatched
from the fire,
yet you have not returned to me,"
declares the LORD.

12 "Therefore this is what I will do to you, Israel,
and because I will do this to you, Israel,
prepare to meet your God."

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[a] *12* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.
[b] *12* Or *Israelites be rescued, / those who sit in Samaria / on the edge of their beds / and in Damascus on their couches.*
[c] *2* Or *away in baskets, / the last of you in fish baskets*
[d] *3* Masoretic Text; with a different word division of the Hebrew (see Septuagint) *out, you mountain of oppression*
[e] *4* Or *days*

13 He who forms the mountains,
who creates the wind,
and who reveals his thoughts to mankind,
who turns dawn to darkness,
and treads on the heights of the earth—
the LORD God Almighty is his name.

A Lament and Call to Repentance

5 1 Hear this word, Israel, this lament I take up
concerning you:

2 "Fallen is Virgin Israel,
never to rise again,
deserted in her own land,
with no one to lift her up."

3 This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Israel:

"Your city that marches out a thousand
strong
will have only a hundred left;
your town that marches out a hundred
strong
will have only ten left."

4 This is what the LORD says to Israel:

"Seek me and live;
5 do not seek Bethel,
do not go to Gilgal,
do not journey to Beersheba.
For Gilgal will surely go into exile,
and Bethel will be reduced to nothing.[a]"
6 Seek the LORD and live,
or he will sweep through the tribes of
Joseph like a fire;
it will devour them,
and Bethel will have no one to
quench it.

7 There are those who turn justice into
bitterness
and cast righteousness to the ground.

8 He who made the Pleiades and Orion,
who turns midnight into dawn
and darkens day into night,
who calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them out over the face of the
land—
the LORD is his name.
9 With a blinding flash he destroys the
stronghold
and brings the fortified city to ruin.

10 There are those who hate the one who
upholds justice in court
and detest the one who tells the truth.

11 You levy a straw tax on the poor
and impose a tax on their grain.
Therefore, though you have built stone
mansions,
you will not live in them;
though you have planted lush vineyards,
you will not drink their wine.
12 For I know how many are your offenses
and how great your sins.

There are those who oppress the innocent
and take bribes
and deprive the poor of justice in the
courts.
13 Therefore the prudent keep quiet in such
times,
for the times are evil.

14 Seek good, not evil,
that you may live.
Then the LORD God Almighty will be with
you,
just as you say he is.
15 Hate evil, love good;
maintain justice in the courts.
Perhaps the LORD God Almighty will have
mercy
on the remnant of Joseph.

16 Therefore this is what the Lord, the LORD
God Almighty, says:

"There will be wailing in all the streets
and cries of anguish in every public
square.
The farmers will be summoned to weep
and the mourners to wail.
17 There will be wailing in all the vineyards,
for I will pass through your midst,"
says the LORD.

The Day of the LORD

18 Woe to you who long
for the day of the LORD!
Why do you long for the day of the
LORD?
That day will be darkness, not light.
19 It will be as though a man fled from a lion
only to meet a bear,
as though he entered his house
and rested his hand on the wall
only to have a snake bite him.
20 Will not the day of the LORD be darkness,
not light—
pitch-dark, without a ray of brightness?

21 "I hate, I despise your religious
festivals;
your assemblies are a stench to me.

[a] 5 Hebrew *aven*, a reference to Beth Aven (a derogatory name for Bethel); see Hosea 4:15.

The Decline of Hamath the Great (Am 6:2, 14)

Hamath was a Syro-Hittite city in central Aram, which had a past going back as far as the 6th millennium B.C. The city is mentioned in the Aramean Ebla texts from the 3rd millennium B.C. and in Hittite texts of the 2nd millennium B.C. The prophet Amos warned that the Assyrians would attack Israel "from Lebo Hamath" (Am 6:14), which represented Israel's northern border during the reign of King Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.).

The city of Hamath had numerous dealings with Israel to its south. During the period of David and Solomon (after 1000 B.C.), Hamath was apparently subordinate to Israel. Later, however, Hamath became independent. The Assyrian sources of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) say that King Urhilina of Hamath was a ringleader in the coalition against Assyria at the battle of Qarqar in 853 B.C. Under King Zakkur, Hamath enjoyed a period of strength during the early 8th century B.C.

Yet the Bible indicates weakness for Hamath sometime later in the same century. Amos, who prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II, points out that since "great Hamath" had fallen, Israel should not think that she herself would survive (Am 6:2). Furthermore, the writer of Kings records a victory by Jeroboam II over Hamath (2Ki 14:28).

If Jeroboam II did in fact defeat Hamath, it is possible that this Syro-Hittite kingdom began to decline during the 8th century B.C. According to Assyrian annals, Hamath was forced to surrender 19 provinces to Assyria in 738 B.C., 15 years after the death of Jeroboam II. By 720 B.C. Hamath had lost its independence and had become a province of Assyria.

22 Even though you bring me burnt offerings
and grain offerings,
I will not accept them.
Though you bring choice fellowship
offerings,
I will have no regard for them.
23 Away with the noise of your
songs!
I will not listen to the music of your
harps.
24 But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing
stream!

25 "Did you bring me sacrifices and
offerings
forty years in the wilderness, people of
Israel?
26 You have lifted up the shrine of your
king,
the pedestal of your idols,
the star of your god[a]—
which you made for yourselves.
27 Therefore I will send you into exile beyond
Damascus,"
says the LORD, whose name is God
Almighty.

Food & Drink

The custom of eating while reclining seems to have come to Palestine from the East. People ate from common dishes on a low table as they reclined on large couches. The banquets of the rich included musicians, fine foods, and perfumes for the guests. Ivory inlays decorated the wooden parts of luxurious furniture (Am 6:4). Examples of such inlay survive, showing how it was carved by artisans.

Woe to the Complacent

6 1 Woe to you who are complacent in Zion,
and to you who feel secure on Mount
Samaria,
you notable men of the foremost nation,
to whom the people of Israel come!
2 Go to Kalneh and look at it;
go from there to great Hamath,
and then go down to Gath in Philistia.
Are they better off than your two
kingdoms?
Is their land larger than yours?
3 You put off the day of disaster
and bring near a reign of terror.
4 You lie on beds adorned with ivory
and lounge on your couches.
You dine on choice lambs
and fattened calves.
5 You strum away on your harps like David
and improvise on musical instruments.
6 You drink wine by the bowlful
and use the finest lotions,
but you do not grieve over the ruin of
Joseph.
7 Therefore you will be among the first to go
into exile;
your feasting and lounging will end.

[a] *26* Or *lifted up Sakkuth your king / and Kaiwan your idols, / your star-gods*; Septuagint *lifted up the shrine of Molek / and the star of your god Rephan, / their idols*

TRANSITION

The Book of Amos: Destruction to Come

Part of Israel's pride during Amos's time came from the military victories of Jeroboam II

(2Ki 14:25). Lo Debar and Karnaim, mentioned in Amos 6:13, may have been cities of the Transjordan captured in these campaigns. Amos is scornful of such petty boasting. Victory over these insignificant cities pales before the destruction and slaughter that approaches Israel (Am 6:8–11).

• **Amos 6:8—7:9**

Amos

The LORD Abhors the Pride of Israel

6 :8 The Sovereign LORD has sworn by himself—the LORD God Almighty declares:

"I abhor the pride of Jacob
and detest his fortresses;
I will deliver up the city
and everything in it."

9 If ten people are left in one house, they too will die. 10 And if the relative who comes to carry the bodies out of the house to burn them[a] asks anyone who might be hiding there, "Is anyone else with you?" and he says, "No," then he will go on to say, "Hush! We must not mention the name of the LORD."

11 For the LORD has given the command,
and he will smash the great house into pieces
and the small house into bits.

12 Do horses run on the rocky crags?
Does one plow the sea[b] with oxen?
But you have turned justice into poison
and the fruit of righteousness into bitterness—

13 you who rejoice in the conquest of Lo Debar[c]
and say, "Did we not take Karnaim[d] by our own strength?"

14 For the LORD God Almighty declares,
"I will stir up a nation against you, Israel,
that will oppress you all the way
from Lebo Hamath to the valley of the Arabah."

Locusts, Fire and a Plumb Line

7 1 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: He was preparing swarms of locusts after the king's share had been harvested and just as the late crops were coming up. 2 When they had stripped the land clean, I cried out, "Sovereign LORD, forgive! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!"

3 So the LORD relented.

"This will not happen," the LORD said.

4 This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: The Sovereign LORD was calling for judgment by fire; it dried up the great deep and devoured the land. 5 Then I cried out, "Sovereign LORD, I beg you, stop! How can Jacob survive? He is so small!"

6 So the LORD relented.

"This will not happen either," the Sovereign LORD said.

7 This is what he showed me: The Lord was standing by a wall that had been built true to plumb,[e] with a plumb line[f] in his hand. 8 And the LORD asked me, "What do you see, Amos?"

"A plumb line," I replied.

Then the Lord said, "Look, I am setting a plumb line among my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

9 "The high places of Isaac will be destroyed
and the sanctuaries of Israel will be ruined;
with my sword I will rise against the house of Jeroboam."

[a] *10* Or *to make a funeral fire in honor of the dead*
[b] *12* With a different word division of the Hebrew; Masoretic Text *plow there*
[c] *13* *Lo Debar* means *nothing.*
[d] *13* *Karnaim* means *horns*; *horn* here symbolizes strength.
[e] *7* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.
[f] *7* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain; also in verse 8.

TIME CAPSULE		750 to 744 B.C.
750		Picture of a pulley, from Assyria
747–664		The Cushite Era in Egypt
747–716		Cushite ruler named Piankhy is pharaoh in Egypt
747–539		The Babylonian Chronicle
745		Political structure of the Neo-Assyrian Empire is fragmented
744–727		Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria, also called "Pul" (2Ki 15:19)

TRANSITION

Confrontation with Amaziah

The account in Amos 7:10–17 of Amos's encounter with Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, includes the message that Amaziah sent to Jeroboam II (7:10, 11). The message reports a prophecy in which Amos predicts that Jeroboam will die violently and that Israel will go into exile. This prophecy thus dates Amos's ministry sometime before the end of Jeroboam's reign in 753 B.C.

Attempts have been made to date Amos's

ministry by an earthquake which occurred during the reign of Judah's King Uzziah (or Azariah), but which was still remembered hundreds of years later (see Zec 14:5). Amos received his vision "two years before the earthquake" (Am 1:1).

Unfortunately, an exact date for this earthquake is uncertain. Archaeological work at the city of Hazor shows evidence that it happened sometime in the mid-8th century B.C. The Jewish historian Josephus connects the earthquake with the violation of the priest's office by Azariah (2Ch 26:16–20). When Azariah's violation resulted in leprosy, his son Jotham governed with him as coregent (2Ki 15:5). Jotham's 10-year coregency with Azariah began in 750 B.C., so following Josephus would place Amos's ministry a few years before 750.

• **Amos 7:10—9:15**

Amos

Amos and Amaziah

7:10 Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel
sent a message to Jeroboam king of Israel: "Amos is raising a conspiracy against you in
the very heart of Israel. The land cannot bear
all his words. 11For this is what Amos is saying:

"'Jeroboam will die by the sword,
and Israel will surely go into exile,
away from their native land.'"

12Then Amaziah said to Amos, "Get out, you seer! Go back to the land of Judah. Earn your bread there and do your prophesying there. 13Don't prophesy anymore at Bethel, because this is the king's sanctuary and the temple of the kingdom."

14Amos answered Amaziah, "I was neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I was a shepherd, and I also took care of sycamore-fig trees. 15But the LORD took me from tending the flock and said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel.' 16Now then, hear the word of the LORD. You say,

"'Do not prophesy against Israel,
and stop preaching against the
descendants of Isaac.'

Agriculture & Herding

The sycamore fruit of Amos was a kind of fig (*ficus sycomorus*). When the fruit is young, small cuts are made in it. Experience has shown that doing this improves the quality of the mature fruit. It is a tedious process, and one who "took care of sycamore-fig trees" (Am 7:14) was not considered to be employed in a high status job.

17"Therefore this is what the LORD says:

"'Your wife will become a prostitute in the
city,
and your sons and daughters will fall by
the sword.
Your land will be measured and divided up,
and you yourself will die in a pagan[a]
country.
And Israel will surely go into exile,
away from their native land.'"

A Basket of Ripe Fruit

8 1This is what the Sovereign LORD showed me: a basket of ripe fruit. 2"What do you see, Amos?" he asked.

"A basket of ripe fruit," I answered.

Then the LORD said to me, "The time is ripe for my people Israel; I will spare them no longer.

3"In that day," declares the Sovereign LORD, "the songs in the temple will turn to wailing.[b] Many, many bodies—flung everywhere! Silence!"

4Hear this, you who trample the needy
and do away with the poor of the land,

5saying,

"When will the New Moon be over
that we may sell grain,
and the Sabbath be ended
that we may market wheat?"—
skimping on the measure,
boosting the price
and cheating with dishonest scales,
6buying the poor with silver
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
selling even the sweepings with the
wheat.

7The LORD has sworn by himself, the Pride of Jacob: "I will never forget anything they have done.

8"Will not the land tremble for this,
and all who live in it mourn?
The whole land will rise like the Nile;
it will be stirred up and then sink
like the river of Egypt.

9"In that day," declares the Sovereign LORD,

"I will make the sun go down at noon
and darken the earth in broad daylight.
10I will turn your religious festivals into
mourning
and all your singing into weeping.

[a] *17* Hebrew *an unclean* [b] *3* Or *"the temple singers will wail*

I will make all of you wear sackcloth
and shave your heads.
I will make that time like mourning for an only son
and the end of it like a bitter day.

11 "The days are coming," declares the Sovereign LORD,
"when I will send a famine through the land—
not a famine of food or a thirst for water,
but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD.
12 People will stagger from sea to sea
and wander from north to east,
searching for the word of the LORD,
but they will not find it.

13 "In that day

"the lovely young women and strong young men
will faint because of thirst.
14 Those who swear by the sin of Samaria—
who say, 'As surely as your god lives, Dan,'
or, 'As surely as the god[a] of Beersheba lives'—
they will fall, never to rise again."

Israel to Be Destroyed

9 1 I saw the Lord standing by the altar, and he said:

"Strike the tops of the pillars
so that the thresholds shake.
Bring them down on the heads of all the people;
those who are left I will kill with the sword.
Not one will get away,
none will escape.
2 Though they dig down to the depths below,
from there my hand will take them.
Though they climb up to the heavens above,
from there I will bring them down.
3 Though they hide themselves on the top of Carmel,
there I will hunt them down and seize them.
Though they hide from my eyes at the bottom of the sea,
there I will command the serpent to bite them.
4 Though they are driven into exile by their enemies,
there I will command the sword to slay them.

"I will keep my eye on them
for harm and not for good."

5 The Lord, the LORD Almighty—
he touches the earth and it melts,
and all who live in it mourn;
the whole land rises like the Nile,
then sinks like the river of Egypt;
6 he builds his lofty palace[b] in the heavens
and sets its foundation[c] on the earth;
he calls for the waters of the sea
and pours them out over the face of the land—
the LORD is his name.

7 "Are not you Israelites
the same to me as the Cushites[d]?"
declares the LORD.
"Did I not bring Israel up from Egypt,
the Philistines from Caphtor[e]
and the Arameans from Kir?

8 "Surely the eyes of the Sovereign LORD
are on the sinful kingdom.
I will destroy it
from the face of the earth.
Yet I will not totally destroy
the descendants of Jacob,"
declares the LORD.
9 "For I will give the command,
and I will shake the people of Israel
among all the nations

[a] *14* Hebrew *the way* [b] *6* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain. [c] *6* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [d] *7* That is, people from the upper Nile region [e] *7* That is, Crete

God Is the God of All Peoples (Am 9:7)

The prophet Amos recognized that Israel was not the only people who had received Yahweh's mercy. In a series of short poetic statements, Amos describes the universal power of Yahweh and reminds the Israelites that God is not concerned with them alone (Am 9:7).

The prophet cites examples of three other peoples for whom Yahweh cares and for whom he has acted in the past. This places the sin of Israel in a much broader context. There are others for whom God needs to work, and Israel must not put herself above the other nations or assume that she will be treated differently from the other nations.

The three peoples named by Amos are the Cushites, Philistines, and Arameans. Yahweh's mercy thus reaches to a distant people (the Cushites), as well as to Israel's neighboring enemies (the Philistines and Arameans). He has brought to Canaan people from the centers of differing cultures: from Egypt (Egyptian cultural sphere), from Caphtor (East Mediterranean cultural sphere), and from Kir (Mesopotamian cultural sphere). Yahweh's concern is for all people.

It is not important to Amos that none of the other three peoples worshiped Yahweh. Israel had been called to be God's special people and to worship Yahweh alone, but had not done so. Now, as easily as God had brought these peoples into the land, he would scatter the Israelites from out of the land and into the world.

as grain is shaken in a sieve,
and not a pebble will reach the ground.
10 All the sinners among my people
will die by the sword,
all those who say,
'Disaster will not overtake or meet us.'

Israel's Restoration

11 "In that day

"I will restore David's fallen shelter—
I will repair its broken walls
and restore its ruins—
and will rebuild it as it used to be,
12 so that they may possess the remnant of
Edom
and all the nations that bear my name,[a]"
declares the LORD,
who will do these things.

13 "The days are coming," declares the LORD,

"when the reaper will be overtaken by the
plowman
and the planter by the one treading
grapes.
New wine will drip from the mountains
and flow from all the hills,
14 and I will bring my people Israel back
from exile.[b]

"They will rebuild the ruined cities and live
in them.
They will plant vineyards and drink their
wine;
they will make gardens and eat their fruit.
15 I will plant Israel in their own land,
never again to be uprooted
from the land I have given them,"

says the LORD your God.

[a] *12* Hebrew; Septuagint *so that the remnant of people / and all the nations that bear my name may seek me* [b] *14* Or *will restore the fortunes of my people Israel*

Arts & Literature

The prophet revealed what God had said through the names given to the children (Hos 1:4–7). By themselves, these names convey little, but when their meaning was known, the children became a perpetual reminder of what God was saying to the people. The prophets used actions with particular symbolic meanings, making their words public, memorable, and definite.

TRANSITION

The Book of Hosea

Hosea is the only native northern Israelite among the writing prophets. Although active at the same time as Amos, Hosea's message is quite different in its focus. Where Amos spoke about oppression, poverty, and injustice, Hosea speaks against the worship of the Canaanite deities, such as Baal and Asherah. These religions stressed rituals that were designed to promote the fertility of the land; among these rituals was sexual intercourse with official cult prostitutes.

Prostitution, or harlotry, becomes a major theme in Hosea, partly through the prophet's own family experience (Hos 1–3). Israel is the bride of God, and once the marriage was happy (Hos 2:14, 15; 11:1). By worshiping other gods, though, Israel has become a harlot. God alternately rages against his unfaithful wife and tenderly longs for reconciliation (6:4; 11:8, 9). The book ends with an impassioned appeal for Israel to "return" and a promise that, if she will, then God will become the true fertility God to his wayward people.

• **Hosea 1:1—3:5**

Hosea

1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Hosea
son of Beeri during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and during the reign of Jeroboam son of Jehoash[a] king of Israel:

Hosea's Wife and Children

2When the LORD began to speak through Hosea, the LORD said to him, "Go, marry a promiscuous woman and have children with her, for like an adulterous wife this land is guilty of unfaithfulness to the LORD." 3So he married Gomer daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

4Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call him Jezreel, because I will soon punish the house of Jehu for the massacre at Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of Israel. 5In that day I will break Israel's bow in the Valley of Jezreel."

6Gomer conceived again and gave birth to a daughter. Then the LORD said to Hosea, "Call her Lo-Ruhamah (which means "not loved"), for I will no longer show love to Israel, that I should at all forgive them. 7Yet I will show love to Judah; and I will save them—not by bow, sword or battle, or by horses and horsemen, but I, the LORD their God, will save them."

8After she had weaned Lo-Ruhamah, Gomer had another son. 9Then the LORD said, "Call him Lo-Ammi (which means "not my people"), for you are not my people, and I am not your God.[b]

10"Yet the Israelites will be like the sand on the seashore, which cannot be measured or counted. In the place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' they will be called 'children of the living God.' 11The people of Judah and the people of Israel will come together; they will appoint one leader and will come up out of the land, for great will be the day of Jezreel.[c]

2[d] 1"Say of your brothers, 'My people,' and of your sisters, 'My loved one.'

Israel Punished and Restored

2"Rebuke your mother, rebuke her,
for she is not my wife,
and I am not her husband.
Let her remove the adulterous look from her face
and the unfaithfulness from between her breasts.
3Otherwise I will strip her naked
and make her as bare as on the day she was born;
I will make her like a desert,
turn her into a parched land,
and slay her with thirst.
4I will not show my love to her children,
because they are the children of adultery.
5Their mother has been unfaithful
and has conceived them in disgrace.
She said, 'I will go after my lovers,
who give me my food and my water,
my wool and my linen, my olive oil and my drink.'
6Therefore I will block her path with thornbushes;
I will wall her in so that she cannot find her way.
7She will chase after her lovers but not catch them;
she will look for them but not find them.
Then she will say,
'I will go back to my husband as at first,
for then I was better off than now.'
8She has not acknowledged that I was the one
who gave her the grain, the new wine and oil,
who lavished on her the silver and gold—
which they used for Baal.
9"Therefore I will take away my grain when it ripens,
and my new wine when it is ready.
I will take back my wool and my linen,
intended to cover her naked body.
10So now I will expose her lewdness
before the eyes of her lovers;
no one will take her out of my hands.
11I will stop all her celebrations:
her yearly festivals, her New Moons,
her Sabbath days—all her appointed festivals.

TIME CAPSULE	743 to 740 B.C.
743	Tiglath-Pileser III wins battle against Ararat's Sarduri II
742–630	Period of Assyria's greatest imperial power
742	Pekahiah becomes king in Israel
740	Jotham becomes sole king in Judah
740	Pekah assassinates Pekahiah and becomes sole king in Israel
740	Isaiah's call consists of a vision of God

[a] *1* Hebrew *Joash,* a variant of *Jehoash* [b] *9* Or *your I AM*
[c] *11* In Hebrew texts 1:10,11 is numbered 2:1,2.
[d] In Hebrew texts 2:1-23 is numbered 2:3-25.

12 I will ruin her vines and her fig trees,
which she said were her pay from her lovers;
I will make them a thicket,
and wild animals will devour them.
13 I will punish her for the days
she burned incense to the Baals;
she decked herself with rings and jewelry,
and went after her lovers,
but me she forgot,"
declares the LORD.

14 "Therefore I am now going to allure her;
I will lead her into the wilderness
and speak tenderly to her.
15 There I will give her back her vineyards,
and will make the Valley of Achor[a] a door of hope.
There she will respond[b] as in the days of her youth,
as in the day she came up out of Egypt.

16 "In that day," declares the LORD,
"you will call me 'my husband';
you will no longer call me 'my master.[c]'
17 I will remove the names of the Baals from her lips;
no longer will their names be invoked.
18 In that day I will make a covenant for them
with the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky
and the creatures that move along the ground.
Bow and sword and battle
I will abolish from the land,
so that all may lie down in safety.
19 I will betroth you to me forever;
I will betroth you in[d] righteousness and justice,
in[d] love and compassion.
20 I will betroth you in[d] faithfulness,
and you will acknowledge the LORD.

21 "In that day I will respond,"
declares the LORD —
"I will respond to the skies,
and they will respond to the earth;
22 and the earth will respond to the grain,
the new wine and the olive oil,
and they will respond to Jezreel.[e]
23 I will plant her for myself in the land;
I will show my love to the one I called 'Not my loved one.[f]'
I will say to those called 'Not my people,[g]' 'You are my people';
and they will say, 'You are my God.'"

Hosea's Reconciliation With His Wife

3 1 The LORD said to me, "Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another man and is an adulteress. Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes."

2 So I bought her for fifteen shekels[h] of silver and about a homer and a lethek[i] of barley. 3 Then I told her, "You are to live with me many days; you must not be a prostitute or be intimate with any man, and I will behave the same way toward you."

4 For the Israelites will live many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stones, without ephod or household gods. 5 Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days.

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[a] *15* *Achor* means *trouble.* [b] *15* Or *sing* [c] *16* Hebrew *baal* [d] *19,20* Or *with* [e] *22* *Jezreel* means *God plants.* [f] *23* Hebrew *Lo-Ruhamah* (see 1:6) [g] *23* Hebrew *Lo-Ammi* (see 1:9) [h] *2* That is, about 6 ounces or about 170 grams [i] *2* A homer and a lethek possibly weighed about 430 pounds or about 195 kilograms.

TRANSITION

The Dates of Hosea's Ministry

The names of five kings indicate the historical period during which Hosea prophesied. According to Hos 1:1, his ministry is dated by the reign of Israel's Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.), and by Judah's kings Uzziah (Azariah), Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. The total period of the Judahite kings was from about 792 to 686 B.C., although there is no reason to believe Hosea's ministry extended past the fall of Israel in 722 B.C.

The words of Hosea are not arranged in the book chronologically, but rather by thematic and poetic connections. Moreover, it is almost impossible to suggest a chronology for Hosea's oracles, since they are vague concerning their historical context. Most could apply to any of a number of historical situations. Knowing some details about the last years of the northern kingdom, however, does help to illuminate a few of Hosea's many obscure passages.

The account of Hosea's unhappy marriage (Hos 1–3) traces Israel's apostasy from Yahweh, and serves as an introduction to the themes and language of the book. This section is followed by a statement of God's charges against Israel (4:1—5:7), which possibly reflects the political stability and prosperity of the last years of Jeroboam's rule up to 753 B.C. As already indicated by Hosea's contemporary Amos (see "The Book of Amos" at Am 1:1), the

people had become complacent and comfortable with the social inequality and religious apostasy of their time (Hos 2:8; 4:11–13).
• **Hosea 4:1—5:7**

Hosea

The Charge Against Israel

4 **:1** Hear the word of the LORD, you Israelites,
because the LORD has a charge to bring against you who live in the land:
"There is no faithfulness, no love,
no acknowledgment of God in the land.
2 There is only cursing,[a] lying and murder,
stealing and adultery;
they break all bounds,
and bloodshed follows bloodshed.
3 Because of this the land dries up,
and all who live in it waste away;
the beasts of the field, the birds in the sky
and the fish in the sea are swept away.

4 "But let no one bring a charge,
let no one accuse another,
for your people are like those
who bring charges against a priest.
5 You stumble day and night,
and the prophets stumble with you.
So I will destroy your mother—
6 my people are destroyed from lack of knowledge.

"Because you have rejected knowledge,
I also reject you as my priests;
because you have ignored the law of your God,
I also will ignore your children.
7 The more priests there were,
the more they sinned against me;
they exchanged their glorious God[b] for something disgraceful.
8 They feed on the sins of my people
and relish their wickedness.
9 And it will be: Like people, like priests.
I will punish both of them for their ways
and repay them for their deeds.

10 "They will eat but not have enough;
they will engage in prostitution but not flourish,
because they have deserted the LORD
to give themselves 11 to prostitution;
old wine and new wine
take away their understanding.
12 My people consult a wooden idol,
and a diviner's rod speaks to them.
A spirit of prostitution leads them astray;
they are unfaithful to their God.
13 They sacrifice on the mountaintops
and burn offerings on the hills,
under oak, poplar and terebinth,
where the shade is pleasant.
Therefore your daughters turn to prostitution
and your daughters-in-law to adultery.

14 "I will not punish your daughters
when they turn to prostitution,
nor your daughters-in-law
when they commit adultery,
because the men themselves consort with harlots
and sacrifice with shrine prostitutes—
a people without understanding will come to ruin!

15 "Though you, Israel, commit adultery,
do not let Judah become guilty.

"Do not go to Gilgal;
do not go up to Beth Aven.[c]
And do not swear, 'As surely as the LORD lives!'
16 The Israelites are stubborn,
like a stubborn heifer.
How then can the LORD pasture them
like lambs in a meadow?
17 Ephraim is joined to idols;
leave him alone!
18 Even when their drinks are gone,
they continue their prostitution;
their rulers dearly love shameful ways.
19 A whirlwind will sweep them away,
and their sacrifices will bring them shame.

Judgment Against Israel

5 1 "Hear this, you priests!
Pay attention, you Israelites!
Listen, royal house!
This judgment is against you:

Cults & Supernatural
The religion of Canaan was practiced in innumerable small shrines located on hilltops and in groves of trees. The idols consisted of stone pillars and wooden poles. There were prostitutes of both sexes present at the shrines, and their activities were encouraged and protected, if not required, by the local gods (Hos 4:14).

[a] *2* That is, to pronounce a curse on [b] *7* Syriac (see also an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition); Masoretic Text *me; / I will exchange their glory* [c] *15* *Beth Aven* means *house of wickedness* (a derogatory name for Bethel, which means *house of God*).

You have been a snare at Mizpah,
a net spread out on Tabor.
2 The rebels are knee-deep in slaughter.
I will discipline all of them.
3 I know all about Ephraim;
Israel is not hidden from me.
Ephraim, you have now turned to prostitution;
Israel is corrupt.

4 "Their deeds do not permit them
to return to their God.
A spirit of prostitution is in their heart;
they do not acknowledge the LORD.
5 Israel's arrogance testifies against them;
the Israelites, even Ephraim, stumble in their sin;
Judah also stumbles with them.
6 When they go with their flocks and herds
to seek the LORD,
they will not find him;
he has withdrawn himself from them.
7 They are unfaithful to the LORD;
they give birth to illegitimate children.
When they celebrate their New Moon feasts,
he will devour[a] their fields.

TRANSITION

Hosea and Assyria

During the 30 years from the end of Jeroboam's reign in 753 B.C. to Samaria's fall in 722, the situation in northern Israel changed drastically. Political life suffered a rapid change of rulers occasioned by intrigue and assassinations. A resurgent Assyria, in successive attacks, succeeded in stripping away more and more of Israel's territory.

Some of Hosea's oracles may reflect the confusion of this time. In 743 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III of Assyria campaigned against the Syro-Palestinian states. Israel under King Pekah (752–732 B.C.) joined Aram (Syria), hoping to stop the Assyrian advance. Pekah and Aram also pressured Judah to join them, prompting the Syro-Ephraimite War from 735 to 732 B.C. (see "Israel and Aram Besiege Judah" at Isa 7:1). Both Judah and Israel (called "Ephraim") suffer, fighting each other (Hos 5:10–14).

• **Hosea 5:8—6:11**

Hosea

5 **:8** "Sound the trumpet in Gibeah,
the horn in Ramah.
Raise the battle cry in Beth Aven[b];
lead on, Benjamin.
9 Ephraim will be laid waste
on the day of reckoning.
Among the tribes of Israel
I proclaim what is certain.
10 Judah's leaders are like those
who move boundary stones.
I will pour out my wrath on them
like a flood of water.
11 Ephraim is oppressed,
trampled in judgment,
intent on pursuing idols.[c]
12 I am like a moth to Ephraim,
like rot to the people of Judah.

13 "When Ephraim saw his sickness,
and Judah his sores,
then Ephraim turned to Assyria,
and sent to the great king for help.
But he is not able to cure you,
not able to heal your sores.
14 For I will be like a lion to Ephraim,
like a great lion to Judah.
I will tear them to pieces and go away;
I will carry them off, with no one to rescue them.
15 Then I will return to my lair
until they have borne their guilt
and seek my face—
in their misery
they will earnestly seek me."

Israel Unrepentant

6 1 "Come, let us return to the LORD.
He has torn us to pieces
but he will heal us;
he has injured us
but he will bind up our wounds.
2 After two days he will revive us;
on the third day he will restore us,
that we may live in his presence.
3 Let us acknowledge the LORD;
let us press on to acknowledge him.
As surely as the sun rises,
he will appear;
he will come to us like the winter rains,
like the spring rains that water the earth."

4 "What can I do with you, Ephraim?
What can I do with you, Judah?
Your love is like the morning mist,
like the early dew that disappears.

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[a] *7* Or *Now their New Moon feasts / will devour them and*
[b] *8* *Beth Aven* means *house of wickedness* (a derogatory name for Bethel, which means *house of God*).
[c] *11* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

5 Therefore I cut you in pieces with my prophets,
I killed you with the words of my mouth—
then my judgments go forth like the sun.[a]
6 For I desire mercy, not sacrifice,
and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.
7 As at Adam,[b] they have broken the covenant;
they were unfaithful to me there.
8 Gilead is a city of evildoers,
stained with footprints of blood.
9 As marauders lie in ambush for a victim,
so do bands of priests;
they murder on the road to Shechem,
carrying out their wicked schemes.
10 I have seen a horrible thing in Israel:
There Ephraim is given to prostitution,
Israel is defiled.

11 "Also for you, Judah,
a harvest is appointed.

"Whenever I would restore the fortunes of my people,

[a] 5 The meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain.
[b] 7 Or *Like Adam*; or *Like human beings*

TRANSITION

Hosea and Israel's Kings

"All their kings fall" (Hos 7:7). This was an appropriate description of instability in the declining northern kingdom. Within 20 years, four of Israel's kings had been assassinated: Zechariah in 753 B.C., Shallum in 752 (within 7 months of Zechariah), Pekahiah in 740, and Pekah in 732. After the Syro-Ephraimite War ended in 732, Israel was in its final years as a kingdom.

Hoshea (732–722 B.C.) was the last king of northern Israel. He led a pro-Assyrian conspiracy against Israel's king Pekah, assassinating him and seizing the throne himself (2Ki 15:30). At first Israel, under Hoshea, became a vassal of Assyria (Hos 5:13; 14:3). Sometime after the death of the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III in 727 B.C., Hoshea stopped paying tribute and turned to Egypt for help (2Ki 17:4). The prophet Hosea warns that an alliance with Egypt will be of no avail (Hos 7:11, 16).

Hoshea's refusal to pay tribute to Assyria had dire consequences. The Assyrian king Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.) laid siege to Samaria from 725 to 722 B.C. and, at some point, imprisoned Hoshea. Samaria lost her king (Hos 10:3, 7; 13:10, 11). The policy pursued by King Hoshea to lean upon Egypt for help against Assyria would not succeed in preserving the nation from destruction (11:5, 6; 13:16).

• Hosea 7:1—14:9

Hosea

7 :1 whenever I would heal Israel,
the sins of Ephraim are exposed
and the crimes of Samaria revealed.
They practice deceit,
thieves break into houses,
bandits rob in the streets;
2 but they do not realize
that I remember all their evil deeds.
Their sins engulf them;
they are always before me.

3 "They delight the king with their wickedness,
the princes with their lies.
4 They are all adulterers,
burning like an oven
whose fire the baker need not stir
from the kneading of the dough till it rises.
5 On the day of the festival of our king
the princes become inflamed with wine,
and he joins hands with the mockers.
6 Their hearts are like an oven;
they approach him with intrigue.
Their passion smolders all night;
in the morning it blazes like a flaming fire.
7 All of them are hot as an oven;
they devour their rulers.
All their kings fall,
and none of them calls on me.

8 "Ephraim mixes with the nations;
Ephraim is a flat loaf not turned over.
9 Foreigners sap his strength,
but he does not realize it.
His hair is sprinkled with gray,
but he does not notice.
10 Israel's arrogance testifies against him,
but despite all this
he does not return to the LORD his God
or search for him.

11 "Ephraim is like a dove,
easily deceived and senseless—
now calling to Egypt,
now turning to Assyria.
12 When they go, I will throw my net over them;
I will pull them down like the birds in the sky.

Destroying Their Idols (Hos 8:5, 6)

The spoils of war in the ancient world often included statues and images of the gods of defeated peoples. The prophet Hosea dismisses the golden calves of Samaria (Israel) by prophesying that they are worthless and fated to become Assyrian spoils of war (Hos 10:5, 6).

The Neo-Assyrian kings regularly listed the images of gods, as well as gold and silver, as part of the spoils of war taken from conquered temples. In an inscription, Sargon II includes the images of Samaria's gods among the tally of spoils taken from Samaria in 721 B.C. These were not the golden calves referred to by Hosea, but other idols used by the royal house of Israel.

Captured idols were most valuable as sources of precious metal and gems. If the conquerors wished to show disdain for the conquered people, they would dismantle the idols and use the gold, silver, and gems as raw material for other projects. The wooden or stone parts of the idol would be burned or broken. Extreme contempt for the images meant that the entire object was totally destroyed. No wonder there would be mourning (Hos 10:5) when the once-worshiped idol was "broken in pieces" (Hos 8:6).

When I hear them flocking together,
I will catch them.
13 Woe to them,
because they have strayed from me!
Destruction to them,
because they have rebelled against me!
I long to redeem them
but they speak about me falsely.
14 They do not cry out to me from their hearts
but wail on their beds.
They slash themselves,[a] appealing to their gods
for grain and new wine,
but they turn away from me.
15 I trained them and strengthened their arms,
but they plot evil against me.
16 They do not turn to the Most High;
they are like a faulty bow.
Their leaders will fall by the sword
because of their insolent words.
For this they will be ridiculed
in the land of Egypt.

Israel to Reap the Whirlwind

8 1 "Put the trumpet to your lips!
An eagle is over the house of the LORD
because the people have broken my covenant
and rebelled against my law.
2 Israel cries out to me,
'Our God, we acknowledge you!'
3 But Israel has rejected what is good;
an enemy will pursue him.
4 They set up kings without my consent;
they choose princes without my approval.
With their silver and gold
they make idols for themselves
to their own destruction.
5 Samaria, throw out your calf-idol!
My anger burns against them.
How long will they be incapable of purity?
6 They are from Israel!
This calf—a metalworker has made it;
it is not God.
It will be broken in pieces,
that calf of Samaria.

7 "They sow the wind
and reap the whirlwind.
The stalk has no head;
it will produce no flour.
Were it to yield grain,
foreigners would swallow it up.
8 Israel is swallowed up;
now she is among the nations
like something no one wants.
9 For they have gone up to Assyria
like a wild donkey wandering alone.
Ephraim has sold herself to lovers.
10 Although they have sold themselves among the nations,
I will now gather them together.
They will begin to waste away
under the oppression of the mighty king.

11 "Though Ephraim built many altars for sin offerings,
these have become altars for sinning.

[a] *14* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *They gather together*

12 I wrote for them the many things of my law,
but they regarded them as something
foreign.
13 Though they offer sacrifices as gifts to me,
and though they eat the meat,
the LORD is not pleased with them.
Now he will remember their wickedness
and punish their sins:
They will return to Egypt.
14 Israel has forgotten their Maker
and built palaces;
Judah has fortified many towns.
But I will send fire on their cities
that will consume their fortresses."

Punishment for Israel

9 1 Do not rejoice, Israel;
do not be jubilant like the other nations.
For you have been unfaithful to your God;
you love the wages of a prostitute
at every threshing floor.
2 Threshing floors and winepresses will not
feed the people;
the new wine will fail them.
3 They will not remain in the LORD's land;
Ephraim will return to Egypt
and eat unclean food in Assyria.
4 They will not pour out wine offerings to the
LORD,
nor will their sacrifices please him.
Such sacrifices will be to them like the
bread of mourners;
all who eat them will be unclean.
This food will be for themselves;
it will not come into the temple of the
LORD.

5 What will you do on the day of your
appointed festivals,
on the feast days of the LORD?
6 Even if they escape from destruction,
Egypt will gather them,
and Memphis will bury them.
Their treasures of silver will be taken over
by briers,
and thorns will overrun their tents.
7 The days of punishment are coming,
the days of reckoning are at hand.
Let Israel know this.
Because your sins are so many
and your hostility so great,
the prophet is considered a fool,
the inspired person a maniac.
8 The prophet, along with my God,
is the watchman over Ephraim,[a]
yet snares await him on all his paths,
and hostility in the house of his God.
9 They have sunk deep into corruption,
as in the days of Gibeah.
God will remember their wickedness
and punish them for their sins.

10 "When I found Israel,
it was like finding grapes in the desert;
when I saw your ancestors,
it was like seeing the early fruit on the fig
tree.
But when they came to Baal Peor,
they consecrated themselves to that
shameful idol
and became as vile as the thing they
loved.
11 Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird—
no birth, no pregnancy, no conception.
12 Even if they rear children,
I will bereave them of every one.
Woe to them
when I turn away from them!
13 I have seen Ephraim, like Tyre,
planted in a pleasant place.
But Ephraim will bring out
their children to the slayer."

14 Give them, LORD—
what will you give them?
Give them wombs that miscarry
and breasts that are dry.

15 "Because of all their wickedness in Gilgal,
I hated them there.
Because of their sinful deeds,
I will drive them out of my house.
I will no longer love them;
all their leaders are rebellious.
16 Ephraim is blighted,
their root is withered,
they yield no fruit.
Even if they bear children,
I will slay their cherished offspring."

17 My God will reject them
because they have not obeyed him;
they will be wanderers among the nations.

[a] 8 Or *The prophet is the watchman over Ephraim, / the people of my God*

Marriage & Family
Societies in ancient Israel considered it extremely important for people to have families. Barrenness was a universally understood cause of personal misery. When Hosea invoked an evil fate on Ephraim, he chose "wombs that miscarry" (Hos 9:14) and the death of any newborn that escaped miscarriage. The last of the plagues on Egypt involved the death of the firstborn (Ex 4:23).

Remember the Brutal Shalman (Hos 10:14)

The person whom the prophet Hosea identifies as "Shalman" (Hos 10:14) must have been well known to Hosea and his contemporaries. Evidently Shalman's army destroyed a fortress named Beth Arbel, treating the victims mercilessly. The dark memories which Hosea recalls include mothers being "dashed to the ground" with their children (10:14).

Unfortunately, both Shalman and Beth Arbel are mentioned in the Bible only by Hosea, and defy absolute identification. Beth Arbel has been identified with Arbela, a town in the Transjordan, near Pella. The site is mentioned by the early Christian historian Eusebius, who locates the town on a very strategic trade route. Josephus, the 1st-century A.D. Jewish historian, also lists an Arbela west of the Sea of Galilee, but this site is not considered important enough to be remembered for such massive destruction as described by Hosea. There is no literary evidence that either of these sites was destroyed during Hosea's time.

"Shalman" has most often been interpreted as a short form of the name "Shalmaneser." Five kings of Assyria were known as Shalmaneser, two of whom could have been the king mentioned by Hosea. Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) fought at the battle of Qarqar (853 B.C.), and in fact may have invaded Israel in 841 B.C. Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.) laid siege to Samaria and was the primary force that brought down the northern kingdom of Israel. Neither of these Shalmanesers, however, lists a Beth Arbel in his records.

Another possibility is a certain Moabite king, Salmanu, a contemporary of Hosea. Salmanu is listed as a tribute bearer in the annals of Assyria's King Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.). Whether the prophet speaks of Shalmaneser or Salmanu, he warns Israel that she will face the same brutality that Beth Arbel once suffered from the now unidentified Shalman (Hos 10:15).

10 [1]Israel was a spreading vine;
he brought forth fruit for himself.
As his fruit increased,
he built more altars;
as his land prospered,
he adorned his sacred stones.
[2]Their heart is deceitful,
and now they must bear their guilt.
The LORD will demolish their altars
and destroy their sacred stones.

[3]Then they will say, "We have no king
because we did not revere the LORD.
But even if we had a king,
what could he do for us?"
[4]They make many promises,
take false oaths
and make agreements;
therefore lawsuits spring up
like poisonous weeds in a plowed field.
[5]The people who live in Samaria fear
for the calf-idol of Beth Aven.[a]
Its people will mourn over it,
and so will its idolatrous priests,
those who had rejoiced over its splendor,
because it is taken from them into exile.
[6]It will be carried to Assyria
as tribute for the great king.
Ephraim will be disgraced;
Israel will be ashamed of its foreign alliances.
[7]Samaria's king will be destroyed,
swept away like a twig on the surface of the waters.
[8]The high places of wickedness[b] will be destroyed—
it is the sin of Israel.
Thorns and thistles will grow up
and cover their altars.
Then they will say to the mountains,
"Cover us!"
and to the hills, "Fall on us!"

[9]"Since the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, Israel,
and there you have remained.[c]
Will not war again overtake
the evildoers in Gibeah?
[10]When I please, I will punish them;
nations will be gathered against them
to put them in bonds for their double sin.
[11]Ephraim is a trained heifer
that loves to thresh;
so I will put a yoke
on her fair neck.
I will drive Ephraim,
Judah must plow,
and Jacob must break up the ground.
[12]Sow righteousness for yourselves,
reap the fruit of unfailing love,
and break up your unplowed ground;
for it is time to seek the LORD,
until he comes
and showers his righteousness on you.

[a] *5* *Beth Aven* means *house of wickedness* (a derogatory name for Bethel, which means *house of God*). [b] *8* Hebrew *aven,* a reference to Beth Aven (a derogatory name for Bethel); see verse 5. [c] *9* Or *there a stand was taken*

The Assyrians Make a Comeback (Hos 11:5)

Assyria was not always a political state. It originated around the city of Ashur along the Tigris River and is first mentioned in Accadian sources in the late 3rd millennium B.C. The Assyrians evidently forged an independent state in the early 2nd millennium B.C. (c. 1800 B.C.), but did not become a lasting political force until the 14th century B.C. The reign of Ashuruballit I (c. 1363–1328 B.C.) marked the beginning of a stable empire.

Even though Assyria was now an influential kingdom, it was not yet a major power. Assyrian expansionist tendencies did not begin until the late 13th century B.C. under Tukulti-Ninurta I (c. 1243–1207 B.C.). It was not until the 9th century B.C. that Assyria threatened Syria-Palestine, primarily under Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) and his successors.

After Shalmaneser, the Neo-Assyrian Empire declined to a low point. By 745 B.C. its political structure was fragmented, and the kingdom of Urartu threatened its northern territory. At this crucial time for the empire a new king took power, beginning a revival of Assyrian strength. From 744 to 681 B.C., four Assyrian kings, all of whom appear in the Bible, led Assyria to its greatest period of imperial power: Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, Sennacherib.

The revived Assyria threatened the very existence of the small states to the west. In 734 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III mounted a ferocious offensive against the western states. This campaign culminated in the conquest of Damascus in 732 B.C. and forced most other states to pay tribute to Assyria.

A decade later the Assyrians laid siege to Samaria, the capital of Israel, and ended its existence. Shalmaneser V conducted a 3-year siege, climaxing in Samaria's fall in 722 B.C. Sargon II succeeded Shalmaneser in that same year and probably was the king who carried the Israelite people into exile. Israel experienced the reality of Hosea's prophecy: "Will not Assyria rule over them?" (Hos 11:5).

Assyria had come back as a major power, and she would flex her new strength quickly. Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.) seized most of the major towns in Judah in his campaign of 701 B.C., then destroyed Babylon in 689 B.C.

13 But you have planted wickedness,
you have reaped evil,
you have eaten the fruit of deception.
Because you have depended on your own strength
and on your many warriors,
14 the roar of battle will rise against your people,
so that all your fortresses will be devastated—
as Shalman devastated Beth Arbel on the day of battle,
when mothers were dashed to the ground with their children.
15 So will it happen to you, Bethel,
because your wickedness is great.
When that day dawns,
the king of Israel will be completely destroyed.

God's Love for Israel

11 1 "When Israel was a child, I loved him,
and out of Egypt I called my son.
2 But the more they were called,
the more they went away from me.[a]
They sacrificed to the Baals
and they burned incense to images.
3 It was I who taught Ephraim to walk,
taking them by the arms;
but they did not realize
it was I who healed them.
4 I led them with cords of human kindness,
with ties of love.
To them I was like one who lifts
a little child to the cheek,
and I bent down to feed them.
5 "Will they not return to Egypt
and will not Assyria rule over them
because they refuse to repent?
6 A sword will flash in their cities;
it will devour their false prophets
and put an end to their plans.
7 My people are determined to turn from me.
Even though they call me God Most High,
I will by no means exalt them.

[a] *2* Septuagint; Hebrew *them*

TIME CAPSULE		738 to 735 B.C.
738		King Enel of Hamath loses 19 provinces to the Assyrians
738		Samaria, Damascus, and Tyre pay tribute to Assyria
737–735		Rezin of Damascus leads coalition against Assyria
735–732		The Syro-Ephraimite War
735		Ahaz serves as coregent with Jotham in Judah

8 "How can I give you up, Ephraim?
How can I hand you over, Israel?
How can I treat you like Admah?
How can I make you like Zeboyim?
My heart is changed within me;
all my compassion is aroused.
9 I will not carry out my fierce anger,
nor will I devastate Ephraim again.
For I am God, and not a man—
the Holy One among you.
I will not come against their cities.
10 They will follow the LORD;
he will roar like a lion.
When he roars,
his children will come trembling from the west.
11 They will come from Egypt,
trembling like sparrows,
from Assyria, fluttering like doves.
I will settle them in their homes,"
declares the LORD.

Israel's Sin

12 Ephraim has surrounded me with lies,
Israel with deceit.
And Judah is unruly against God,
even against the faithful Holy One.[a]
12[b] 1 Ephraim feeds on the wind;
he pursues the east wind all day
and multiplies lies and violence.
He makes a treaty with Assyria
and sends olive oil to Egypt.
2 The LORD has a charge to bring against Judah;
he will punish Jacob[c] according to his ways
and repay him according to his deeds.
3 In the womb he grasped his brother's heel;
as a man he struggled with God.
4 He struggled with the angel and overcame him;
he wept and begged for his favor.

TIME CAPSULE		735 to 733 B.C.
735	Tiglath-Pileser III lays siege to capital of Ararat	
734	Tiglath-Pileser mounts offensive campaign against western states	
734	Tiglath-Pileser marches through Palestine and conquers city of Gaza	
733	Shanip of Bit-Ammon pays tribute to the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser	
733	Ishmaelites pay tribute to Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria	

He found him at Bethel
and talked with him there—
5 the LORD God Almighty,
the LORD is his name!
6 But you must return to your God;
maintain love and justice,
and wait for your God always.

7 The merchant uses dishonest scales
and loves to defraud.
8 Ephraim boasts,
"I am very rich; I have become wealthy.
With all my wealth they will not find in me
any iniquity or sin."

9 "I have been the LORD your God
ever since you came out of Egypt;
I will make you live in tents again,
as in the days of your appointed festivals.
10 I spoke to the prophets,
gave them many visions
and told parables through them."

11 Is Gilead wicked?
Its people are worthless!
Do they sacrifice bulls in Gilgal?
Their altars will be like piles of stones
on a plowed field.
12 Jacob fled to the country of Aram[d];
Israel served to get a wife,
and to pay for her he tended sheep.
13 The LORD used a prophet to bring Israel up from Egypt,
by a prophet he cared for him.
14 But Ephraim has aroused his bitter anger;
his Lord will leave on him the guilt of his bloodshed
and will repay him for his contempt.

The LORD's Anger Against Israel

13 1 When Ephraim spoke, people trembled;
he was exalted in Israel.
But he became guilty of Baal worship and died.
2 Now they sin more and more;
they make idols for themselves from their silver,
cleverly fashioned images,
all of them the work of craftsmen.
It is said of these people,
"They offer human sacrifices!
They kiss[e] calf-idols!"

[a] *12* In Hebrew texts this verse (11:12) is numbered 12:1.
[b] In Hebrew texts 12:1-14 is numbered 12:2-15. [c] *2 Jacob* means *he grasps the heel*, a Hebrew idiom for *he takes advantage of* or *he deceives*. [d] *12* That is, Northwest Mesopotamia [e] *2* Or *"Men who sacrifice / kiss*

3 Therefore they will be like the morning mist,
like the early dew that disappears,
like chaff swirling from a threshing floor,
like smoke escaping through a window.

4 "But I have been the LORD your God
ever since you came out of Egypt.
You shall acknowledge no God but me,
no Savior except me.
5 I cared for you in the wilderness,
in the land of burning heat.
6 When I fed them, they were satisfied;
when they were satisfied, they became proud;
then they forgot me.
7 So I will be like a lion to them,
like a leopard I will lurk by the path.
8 Like a bear robbed of her cubs,
I will attack them and rip them open;
like a lion I will devour them—
a wild animal will tear them apart.

9 "You are destroyed, Israel,
because you are against me, against your helper.
10 Where is your king, that he may save you?
Where are your rulers in all your towns,
of whom you said,
'Give me a king and princes'?
11 So in my anger I gave you a king,
and in my wrath I took him away.
12 The guilt of Ephraim is stored up,
his sins are kept on record.
13 Pains as of a woman in childbirth come to him,
but he is a child without wisdom;
when the time arrives,
he doesn't have the sense to come out of the womb.

14 "I will deliver this people from the power of the grave;
I will redeem them from death.
Where, O death, are your plagues?
Where, O grave, is your destruction?

"I will have no compassion,
15 even though he thrives among his brothers.
An east wind from the LORD will come,
blowing in from the desert;
his spring will fail
and his well dry up.
His storehouse will be plundered
of all its treasures.

16 The people of Samaria must bear their guilt,
because they have rebelled against their God.
They will fall by the sword;
their little ones will be dashed to the ground,
their pregnant women ripped open."[a]

Repentance to Bring Blessing

14[b] 1 Return, Israel, to the LORD your God.
Your sins have been your downfall!
2 Take words with you
and return to the LORD.
Say to him:
"Forgive all our sins
and receive us graciously,
that we may offer the fruit of our lips.[c]
3 Assyria cannot save us;
we will not mount warhorses.
We will never again say 'Our gods'
to what our own hands have made,
for in you the fatherless find compassion."

4 "I will heal their waywardness
and love them freely,
for my anger has turned away from them.
5 I will be like the dew to Israel;
he will blossom like a lily.
Like a cedar of Lebanon
6 he will send down his roots;
his young shoots will grow.
His splendor will be like an olive tree,
his fragrance like a cedar of Lebanon.
7 People will dwell again in his shade;
they will flourish like the grain,
they will blossom like the vine—
Israel's fame will be like the wine of Lebanon.
8 Ephraim, what more have I[d] to do with idols?
I will answer him and care for him.
I am like a flourishing juniper;
your fruitfulness comes from me."

9 Who is wise? Let them realize these things.
Who is discerning? Let them understand.
The ways of the LORD are right;
the righteous walk in them,
but the rebellious stumble in them.

[a] *16* In Hebrew texts this verse (13:16) is numbered 14:1.
[b] In Hebrew texts 14:1-9 is numbered 14:2-10. [c] *2* Or *offer our lips as sacrifices of bulls* [d] *8* Or Hebrew; Septuagint *What more has Ephraim*

TRANSITION

Azariah (Uzziah) King of Judah

The long reign of Jeroboam II in the northern kingdom coincided with the even longer reign of Azariah in Judah (792–740 B.C.). Indeed, Azariah (called Uzziah in Chronicles

and Isaiah) almost outlived Judah's time of peace. The skin disease of leprosy forced him to relinquish administration of his kingdom to his son Jotham around 750 B.C. The disruptions associated with the resurgent Assyrian Empire began in earnest sometime during the 10-year coregency (750–740 B.C.) while Jotham ruled with his father.

• **2 Kings 15:1–7**

2 Kings

Azariah King of Judah

15 :1 In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam king of Israel, Azariah[a] son of Amaziah king of Judah began to reign. [2]He was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jekoliah; she was from Jerusalem. [3]He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. [4]The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there.

[5]The LORD afflicted the king with leprosy[b] until the day he died, and he lived in a separate house.[c] Jotham the king's son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

[6]As for the other events of Azariah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? [7]Azariah rested with his ancestors and was buried near them in the City of David. And Jotham his son succeeded him as king.

[a] *1* Also called *Uzziah*; also in verses 6, 7, 8, 17, 23 and 27
[b] *5* The Hebrew for *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin. [c] *5* Or *in a house where he was relieved of responsibilities*

TRANSITION

The Book of Isaiah

Few books have inspired more debate in terms of their historical context. Isaiah the prophet lived in Judah in the 8th century B.C., the time of Assyria's resurgence. He prophesied in Jerusalem, especially to kings Ahaz (735–715 B.C.) and Hezekiah (715–686 B.C.), and many of his prophecies speak clearly of the political situation of their time. His message to both kings, in brief, was that no human power could stand in the way of Assyria. Thus Judah was not to rely on alliances with Egypt or any other nation. Judah's only hope was faith in God's power to protect Zion, his chosen city.

The judgments recorded in Isa 1– 35 can almost all be placed in this 8th-century Assyrian context. Chapters 36–39 are a historical narrative about that time period, almost identical to 2Ki 18:13—20:19. The setting changes, however, in Isa 40–55. These chapters are oracles of salvation that specifically speak of Cyrus the Persian and the restoration of Jerusalem in 538 B.C., some 200 years after Isaiah's time. Another change of setting occurs in Isa 56–66, chapters that appear to speak of the restored temple during Persian rule (c. 538–515 B.C.).

For almost a thousand years, some scholars have noted these shifts and suggested that the Book of Isaiah is the work of at least two different prophets. One would have been the prophet Isaiah himself, but the other an anonymous prophet of the late Babylonian exile (Cyrus's time) who consciously traced his spiritual roots to the original Isaiah. Other scholars, while acknowledging that chs. 40–66 speak of a later time, maintain that they are still the work of the prophet Isaiah, a divine vision of the salvation to come in the distant future.

But historical context concerns more than just the question of authorship. The sense of the various chapters of Isaiah should be considered in the context of which they speak. During Isaiah's own lifetime the threat was Assyria, and the prophet had to speak forcefully to his people and their kings, because they tended to trust in their own political and military maneuverings rather than in the power of God. This is the setting for most of Isa 1–39.

The prophecies of Isa 40– 66 demonstrate that Judah's God is superior to other nations that would come. God promises to deliver his people, his chosen servants, from their captivity in Babylon. He will do something unheard of: through the mighty Persian emperor Cyrus, God will set an exiled people free to go home. Beyond all this, God will prepare his people to make his glory known to the Gentiles, who will come to the Lord's house to learn his ways (49:6; 56:3–8). These later chapters of Isaiah should be read in this context.

The first five chapters of Isaiah contain

many representative oracles and may be intended as a thematic introduction to the book. Chronologically, though, Isaiah's ministry begins with his call, recounted in Isa 6. The prophet's call consists of a vision of God which he received "in the year that King Uzziah died" (6:1), about 740 B.C.

Chapters 1–5 present God's case against Judah. She has been seduced by the folly of human independence. Because Judah placed her faith in human leadership instead of in God, she was doomed to experience weaker and weaker leadership. This was exactly what happened in Judah's final years.

- **Isaiah 6:1–13**
- **Isaiah 1:1—5:30**

Isaiah 6:1–13

Isaiah's Commission

6 :1 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw
the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a
throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. [2]Above him were seraphim, each with six
wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with
two they were flying. [3]And they were calling to
one another:

"Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory."

[4]At the sound of their voices the doorposts and
thresholds shook and the temple was filled
with smoke.

[5]"Woe to me!" I cried. "I am ruined! For I am
a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the
King, the LORD Almighty."

[6]Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a
live coal in his hand, which he had taken with
tongs from the altar. [7]With it he touched my
mouth and said, "See, this has touched your
lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin
atoned for."

[8]Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying,
"Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

[9]He said, "Go and tell this people:

"'Be ever hearing, but never understanding;
be ever seeing, but never perceiving.'

[10]Make the heart of this people calloused;
make their ears dull
and close their eyes.[a]
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed."

[11]Then I said, "For how long, Lord?"
And he answered:

[a] *9,10* Hebrew; Septuagint *'You will be ever hearing, but never understanding; / you will be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' / [10]This people's heart has become calloused; / they hardly hear with their ears, / and they have closed their eyes*

Arts & Literature
A stone relief made between 894 and 808 B.C. shows a figure with six wings, something like the seraphim seen by Isaiah (Isa 6:2). The relief was found at Tell Halaf, about halfway between Nineveh and Carchemish in northern Mesopotamia. Unfortunately, there is no writing on the relief to say what it represents.

Isaiah Encounters the Seraphim (Isa 6:2–7)

In Judaism and Christianity the seraphim have been considered to be angels high in the heavenly court. The only account in the Bible where seraphim appear (Isa 6:2–7) suggests they were guardians of the throne room of Yahweh.

The translation "seraphim" comes from the Hebrew word *saraph,* which often refers to a "darting, venomous serpent" (Isa 14:29; 30:6). Therefore some scholars assume that the beings which Isaiah saw guarding the throne of Yahweh had some type of serpents' bodies.

Ancient Near Eastern mythologies commonly present snakelike creatures guarding deities and their possessions. In Egypt the uraeus ("fiery snake") was not only a guardian of the god-king, but also a symbol of divine-kingship itself. The artifacts of Elam are rich in cobra symbolism. Mesopotamian artists used a serpent with legs liberally in public artwork. Further to the east, Indian mythology had nagas guarding the food and treasures of the gods. These cobra people could appear either as snakes or humans, or even with aspects of both. They also shot fire from their eyes and mouths.

The six wings of the seraphim (Isa 6:2) correspond to the six wings of the god El. The Greek writer Philo of Byblos (A.D. 64–141) explains in his *History of Phoenicia* that these wings represent eternal vigilance, mind, and understanding—all appropriate attributes for those closest to Yahweh.

The seraphim in Isaiah act for God and stand in God's presence, giving God glory and praise. They also act for God in relationship to the prophet. Inspiring both reverence and awe, the seraphim were able to make Isaiah acceptable in the presence of Yahweh (2:7), an activity which reflects their position as throne room guards.

"Until the cities lie ruined
and without inhabitant,
until the houses are left deserted
and the fields ruined and ravaged,
12 until the LORD has sent everyone far away
and the land is utterly forsaken.
13 And though a tenth remains in the land,
it will again be laid waste.
But as the terebinth and oak
leave stumps when they are cut down,
so the holy seed will be the stump in the land."

Isaiah 1:1—5:30

1:1 The vision concerning Judah and Jerusalem that Isaiah son of Amoz saw during the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

A Rebellious Nation

2 Hear me, you heavens! Listen, earth!
For the LORD has spoken:
"I reared children and brought them up,
but they have rebelled against me.
3 The ox knows its master,
the donkey its owner's manger,
but Israel does not know,
my people do not understand."

4 Woe to the sinful nation,
a people whose guilt is great,
a brood of evildoers,
children given to corruption!
They have forsaken the LORD;
they have spurned the Holy One of Israel
and turned their backs on him.

5 Why should you be beaten anymore?
Why do you persist in rebellion?
Your whole head is injured,
your whole heart afflicted.
6 From the sole of your foot to the top of your head
there is no soundness—
only wounds and welts
and open sores,
not cleansed or bandaged
or soothed with olive oil.

7 Your country is desolate,
your cities burned with fire;
your fields are being stripped by foreigners
right before you,
laid waste as when overthrown by strangers.
8 Daughter Zion is left
like a shelter in a vineyard,
like a hut in a cucumber field,
like a city under siege.
9 Unless the LORD Almighty
had left us some survivors,
we would have become like Sodom,
we would have been like Gomorrah.

10 Hear the word of the LORD,
you rulers of Sodom;
listen to the instruction of our God,
you people of Gomorrah!
11 "The multitude of your sacrifices—
what are they to me?" says the LORD.
"I have more than enough of burnt offerings,
of rams and the fat of fattened animals;
I have no pleasure
in the blood of bulls and lambs and goats.
12 When you come to appear before me,
who has asked this of you,
this trampling of my courts?
13 Stop bringing meaningless offerings!
Your incense is detestable to me.
New Moons, Sabbaths and convocations—
I cannot bear your worthless assemblies.
14 Your New Moon feasts and your appointed festivals
I hate with all my being.
They have become a burden to me;
I am weary of bearing them.
15 When you spread out your hands in prayer,
I hide my eyes from you;
even when you offer many prayers,
I am not listening.

Your hands are full of blood!

16 Wash and make yourselves clean.
Take your evil deeds out of my sight;
stop doing wrong.
17 Learn to do right; seek justice.
Defend the oppressed.[a]
Take up the cause of the fatherless;
plead the case of the widow.

Religion & Worship
Worship in Old Testament times involved daily sacrifices of animals, as well as various feasts and assemblies held during the year (Isa 1:13). In many cultures today, as also in ancient Rome, the number of religious holidays accounts for practically half of the days in a year. Although God had instituted Israel's religious meetings, he took no delight in them unless they represented genuine worship.

[a] *17* Or *justice. / Correct the oppressor*

18 "Come now, let us settle the matter,"
says the LORD.
"Though your sins are like scarlet,
they shall be as white as snow;
though they are red as crimson,
they shall be like wool.
19 If you are willing and obedient,
you will eat the good things of the land;
20 but if you resist and rebel,
you will be devoured by the sword."
For the mouth of the LORD
has spoken.

21 See how the faithful city
has become a prostitute!
She once was full of justice;
righteousness used to dwell in her—
but now murderers!
22 Your silver has become dross,
your choice wine is diluted with water.
23 Your rulers are rebels,
partners with thieves;
they all love bribes
and chase after gifts.
They do not defend the cause of the
fatherless;
the widow's case does not come before
them.

24 Therefore the Lord, the LORD Almighty,
the Mighty One of Israel, declares:
"Ah! I will vent my wrath on my foes
and avenge myself on my enemies.
25 I will turn my hand against you;[a]
I will thoroughly purge away your dross
and remove all your impurities.
26 I will restore your leaders as in days of
old,
your rulers as at the beginning.
Afterward you will be called
the City of Righteousness,
the Faithful City."

27 Zion will be delivered with justice,
her penitent ones with righteousness.
28 But rebels and sinners will both be broken,
and those who forsake the LORD will
perish.

29 "You will be ashamed because of the sacred
oaks
in which you have delighted;
you will be disgraced because of the
gardens
that you have chosen.
30 You will be like an oak with fading leaves,
like a garden without water.

31 The mighty man will become tinder
and his work a spark;
both will burn together,
with no one to quench the fire."

The Mountain of the LORD

2 1 This is what Isaiah son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem:

2 In the last days

the mountain of the LORD's temple will be
established
as the highest of the mountains;
it will be exalted above the hills,
and all nations will stream to it.

3 Many peoples will come and say,

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the
LORD,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths."
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
4 He will judge between the nations
and will settle disputes for many
peoples.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against
nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.

5 Come, descendants of Jacob,
let us walk in the light of the LORD.

The Day of the LORD

6 You, LORD, have abandoned your people,
the descendants of Jacob.
They are full of superstitions from the East;
they practice divination like the
Philistines
and embrace pagan customs.
7 Their land is full of silver and gold;
there is no end to their treasures.
Their land is full of horses;
there is no end to their chariots.
8 Their land is full of idols;
they bow down to the work of their
hands,
to what their fingers have made.
9 So people will be brought low
and everyone humbled—
do not forgive them.[b]

10 Go into the rocks, hide in the ground
from the fearful presence of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty!

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[a] *25* That is, against Jerusalem [b] *9* Or *not raise them up*

Worshiping Moles and Bats (Isa 2:20)

Isaiah focuses on two extremely repugnant examples of idol worship. Moles and bats were not usually the animals used as images to represent deities. In order to show how ridiculous Judah's apostasy was, Isaiah contrasted the precious metals, gold and silver, with the images of "moles and bats" made from them (Isa 2:20).

The Hebrew word translated "moles" (2:20) refers to a digging animal and is sometimes translated as "mice." Rodents, particularly mice, were mummified in Egypt as a part of the worship of various deities, but mice themselves were not worshiped there.

Bats, on the other hand, were regularly worshiped in Egypt as a part of the cult of the dead. The peak of devotion to bats came in the late Egyptian period (1069–525 B.C.), which was contemporary with the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Egyptian statues of bats for use in the religious cult are very lifelike, displaying much attention to the detail of the natural animal.

Some deity statues in Egypt were part animal and part human, but the idols which Isaiah mentions were simply molded in the shape of rodents and bats. Isaiah reminds his hearers, with these particularly repugnant examples, that they had broken the Law of Moses, which prohibited the making of an image in the likeness of anything on the earth (Ex 20:4).

11 The eyes of the arrogant will be humbled
and human pride brought low;
the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.

12 The LORD Almighty has a day in store
for all the proud and lofty,
for all that is exalted
(and they will be humbled),
13 for all the cedars of Lebanon, tall and lofty,
and all the oaks of Bashan,
14 for all the towering mountains
and all the high hills,
15 for every lofty tower
and every fortified wall,
16 for every trading ship[a]
and every stately vessel.
17 The arrogance of man will be brought low
and human pride humbled;
the LORD alone will be exalted in that day,
18 and the idols will totally disappear.

19 People will flee to caves in the rocks
and to holes in the ground
from the fearful presence of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to shake the earth.
20 In that day people will throw away
to the moles and bats
their idols of silver and idols of gold,
which they made to worship.
21 They will flee to caverns in the rocks
and to the overhanging crags
from the fearful presence of the LORD
and the splendor of his majesty,
when he rises to shake the earth.

22 Stop trusting in mere humans,
who have but a breath in their nostrils.
Why hold them in esteem?

Judgment on Jerusalem and Judah

3 1 See now, the Lord,
the LORD Almighty,
is about to take from Jerusalem and Judah
both supply and support:
all supplies of food and all supplies of water,
2 the hero and the warrior,
the judge and the prophet,
the diviner and the elder,
3 the captain of fifty and the man of rank,
the counselor, skilled craftsman and clever enchanter.

4 "I will make mere youths their officials;
children will rule over them."

5 People will oppress each other—
man against man, neighbor against neighbor.
The young will rise up against the old,
the nobody against the honored.

6 A man will seize one of his brothers
in his father's house, and say,
"You have a cloak, you be our leader;
take charge of this heap of ruins!"
7 But in that day he will cry out,
"I have no remedy.
I have no food or clothing in my house;
do not make me the leader of the people."

8 Jerusalem staggers,
Judah is falling;
their words and deeds are against the LORD,
defying his glorious presence.
9 The look on their faces testifies against them;
they parade their sin like Sodom;
they do not hide it.

[a] *16* Hebrew *every ship of Tarshish*

Woe to them!
They have brought disaster upon themselves.

10 Tell the righteous it will be well with them,
for they will enjoy the fruit of their deeds.
11 Woe to the wicked!
Disaster is upon them!
They will be paid back
for what their hands have done.

12 Youths oppress my people,
women rule over them.
My people, your guides lead you astray;
they turn you from the path.

13 The LORD takes his place in court;
he rises to judge the people.
14 The LORD enters into judgment
against the elders and leaders of his people:
"It is you who have ruined my vineyard;
the plunder from the poor is in your houses.
15 What do you mean by crushing my people
and grinding the faces of the poor?"
declares the Lord,
the LORD Almighty.

16 The LORD says,
"The women of Zion are haughty,
walking along with outstretched necks,
flirting with their eyes,
strutting along with swaying hips,
with ornaments jingling on their ankles.
17 Therefore the Lord will bring sores on the heads of the women of Zion;
the LORD will make their scalps bald."

18 In that day the Lord will snatch away their finery: the bangles and headbands and crescent necklaces, 19 the earrings and bracelets and veils, 20 the headdresses and anklets and sashes, the perfume bottles and charms, 21 the signet rings and nose rings, 22 the fine robes and the capes and cloaks, the purses 23 and mirrors, and the linen garments and tiaras and shawls.

24 Instead of fragrance there will be a stench;
instead of a sash, a rope;
instead of well-dressed hair, baldness;
instead of fine clothing, sackcloth;
instead of beauty, branding.
25 Your men will fall by the sword,
your warriors in battle.
26 The gates of Zion will lament and mourn;
destitute, she will sit on the ground.

4 1 In that day seven women
will take hold of one man
and say, "We will eat our own food
and provide our own clothes;
only let us be called by your name.
Take away our disgrace!"

The Branch of the LORD

2 In that day the Branch of the LORD will be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land will be the pride and glory of the survivors in Israel. 3 Those who are left in Zion, who remain in Jerusalem, will be called holy, all who are recorded among the living in Jerusalem. 4 The Lord will wash away the filth of the women of Zion; he will cleanse the bloodstains from Jerusalem by a spirit[a] of judgment and a spirit[a] of fire. 5 Then the LORD will create over all of Mount Zion and over those who assemble there a cloud of smoke by day and a glow of flaming fire by night; over everything the glory[b] will be a canopy. 6 It will be a shelter and shade from the heat of the day, and a refuge and hiding place from the storm and rain.

The Song of the Vineyard

5 1 I will sing for the one I love
a song about his vineyard:
My loved one had a vineyard
on a fertile hillside.
2 He dug it up and cleared it of stones
and planted it with the choicest vines.
He built a watchtower in it
and cut out a winepress as well.
Then he looked for a crop of good grapes,
but it yielded only bad fruit.

3 "Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah,
judge between me and my vineyard.
4 What more could have been done for my vineyard
than I have done for it?
When I looked for good grapes,
why did it yield only bad?
5 Now I will tell you
what I am going to do to my vineyard:

Daily Life & Customs
Since there is no description of most of the items in Isaiah's list of finery (Isa 3:18), it is often impossible to tell exactly what these items were. Despite the difficulty faced by modern scholars to learn the precise meaning of the Hebrew words, those words were not rare or difficult when written. To the Hebrew writer, they were too familiar to think of anyone not knowing them.

[a] 4 Or *the Spirit* [b] 5 Or *over all the glory there*

I will take away its hedge,
and it will be destroyed;
I will break down its wall,
and it will be trampled.
6 I will make it a wasteland,
neither pruned nor cultivated,
and briers and thorns will grow there.
I will command the clouds
not to rain on it."

7 The vineyard of the LORD Almighty
is the nation of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are the vines he delighted in.
And he looked for justice, but saw
bloodshed;
for righteousness, but heard cries of
distress.

Woes and Judgments

8 Woe to you who add house to house
and join field to field
till no space is left
and you live alone in the land.

9 The LORD Almighty has declared in my hearing:

"Surely the great houses will become
desolate,
the fine mansions left without occupants.
10 A ten-acre vineyard will produce only a
bath[a] of wine;
a homer[b] of seed will yield only an ephah[c]
of grain."

11 Woe to those who rise early in the morning
to run after their drinks,
who stay up late at night
till they are inflamed with wine.
12 They have harps and lyres at their
banquets,
pipes and timbrels and wine,
but they have no regard for the deeds of the
LORD,
no respect for the work of his hands.
13 Therefore my people will go into exile
for lack of understanding;
those of high rank will die of hunger
and the common people will be parched
with thirst.
14 Therefore Death expands its jaws,
opening wide its mouth;
into it will descend their nobles and masses
with all their brawlers and revelers.
15 So people will be brought low
and everyone humbled,
the eyes of the arrogant humbled.
16 But the LORD Almighty will be exalted by
his justice,
and the holy God will be proved holy by
his righteous acts.
17 Then sheep will graze as in their own
pasture;
lambs will feed[d] among the ruins of the
rich.

18 Woe to those who draw sin along with cords
of deceit,
and wickedness as with cart ropes,
19 to those who say, "Let God hurry;
let him hasten his work
so we may see it.
The plan of the Holy One of Israel—
let it approach, let it come into view,
so we may know it."

20 Woe to those who call evil good
and good evil,
who put darkness for light
and light for darkness,
who put bitter for sweet
and sweet for bitter.

21 Woe to those who are wise in their own
eyes
and clever in their own sight.

22 Woe to those who are heroes at drinking
wine
and champions at mixing drinks,
23 who acquit the guilty for a bribe,
but deny justice to the innocent.
24 Therefore, as tongues of fire lick up straw
and as dry grass sinks down in the
flames,
so their roots will decay
and their flowers blow away like dust;

TIME CAPSULE		733 to 732 B.C.
733–732		Rezin of Damascus leads rebellion against Assyria
733		Tiglath-Pileser III is victorious against Rezin's army and lays siege to Damascus
732		Tiglath-Pileser conquers the Aramean state of Damascus
732		The Syro-Ephraimite War
732		Hoshea assassinates Pekah and becomes king in Israel
732		Ahaz becomes sole king in Judah

[a] *10* That is, about 6 gallons or about 22 liters [b] *10* That is, probably about 360 pounds or about 160 kilograms
[c] *10* That is, probably about 36 pounds or about 16 kilograms
[d] *17* Septuagint; Hebrew */ strangers will eat*

for they have rejected the law of the LORD
Almighty
and spurned the word of the Holy One of
Israel.
25 Therefore the LORD's anger burns against
his people;
his hand is raised and he strikes them
down.
The mountains shake,
and the dead bodies are like refuse in the
streets.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

26 He lifts up a banner for the distant nations,
he whistles for those at the ends of the
earth.
Here they come,
swiftly and speedily!
27 Not one of them grows tired or stumbles,
not one slumbers or sleeps;
not a belt is loosened at the waist,
not a sandal strap is broken.
28 Their arrows are sharp,
all their bows are strung;
their horses' hooves seem like flint,
their chariot wheels like a whirlwind.
29 Their roar is like that of the lion,
they roar like young lions;
they growl as they seize their prey
and carry it off with no one to rescue.
30 In that day they will roar over it
like the roaring of the sea.
And if one looks at the land,
there is only darkness and distress;
even the sun will be darkened by clouds.

[a] *1* Also called *Azariah* [b] *5* Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac; other Hebrew manuscripts *vision*

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Jeroboam and Uzziah (Azariah)

Under the long reign of Jeroboam II (793–753 B.C.), Israel experienced prosperity and political success to a degree it had not known since the monarchy divided. Yet the Chronicler, who never shows much interest in the northern kingdom, does not mention this king. Jeroboam's contemporary—King Uzziah of Judah (792–740 B.C.)—was also a great ruler. Like Jeroboam, Uzziah led his southern kingdom to a time of prosperity and expansion.

Chronicles, telling the story from a priestly perspective, devotes much more space to Judah's Uzziah (Azariah in Kings) than does the prophetic account. The most significant difference between the two histories concerns Uzziah's leprosy. The Book of 2 Kings does not explicitly say why Uzziah contracted the disease, but it does say that Uzziah's sin was that of allowing the "high places" to remain. The Chronicler, by contrast, focuses on Uzziah's sin against the temple and against the prerogatives of the priests.

• 2 Chronicles 26:1–23

2 Chronicles

Uzziah King of Judah

26 **:1** Then all the people of Judah took Uzziah,[a] who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. 2 He was the one who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after Amaziah rested with his ancestors.

3 Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jekoliah; she was from Jerusalem. 4 He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. 5 He sought God during the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear[b] of God. As long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success.

6 He went to war against the Philistines and broke down the walls of Gath, Jabneh and Ashdod. He then rebuilt towns near Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines. 7 God helped him against the Philistines and against the Arabs who lived in Gur Baal and against the Meunites. 8 The Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, because he had become very powerful.

9 Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, at the Valley Gate and at the angle of the wall, and he fortified them. 10 He also built towers in the wilderness and dug many cisterns, because he had much livestock in the foothills and in the plain. He had people working his fields and vineyards in the hills and in the fertile lands, for he loved the soil.

11 Uzziah had a well-trained army, ready to go out by divisions according to their numbers as mustered by Jeiel the secretary and Maaseiah the officer under the direction of Hananiah, one of the royal officials. 12 The total number of family leaders over the fighting men was 2,600. 13 Under their command was an army of 307,500 men trained for war, a powerful force to support the king against his enemies. 14 Uzziah provided shields, spears, helmets, coats of armor, bows and slingstones for the entire army. 15 In Jerusalem he made devices invented for

No King-Priests in Judah (2Ch 26:16–21)

The Law of Moses stipulated that only the priests could perform the ritual sacrifices (Nu 3:5–10). The interior of the temple in Jerusalem was forbidden to all except for certain orders of Levitical priests. Unlike the kings of neighboring nations, the king of Judah was not allowed into his own private temple, for he was not a priest as were most kings in the ancient Near East.

The common Near Eastern belief was that the most significant person in the community should also be the one to represent the people before the god. Egyptian kings were considered embodied gods, and had responsibilities for religious rituals within the cult. Mesopotamian and Syro-Palestinian rulers were seen as both vice-regents of their patron deities as well as high priests of the deities' cults. Certain public holy days could be carried out only by the king, serving as high priest. One of the reasons Nabonidus, king of Babylonia (556–539 B.C.), was so unpopular was that he did not perform the New Year's rituals for several years, but left them to his son. This made the ritual improper and without value.

During Abraham's time, the person of Melchizedek is described as both "*king* of Salem" and "*priest* of God Most High" (Ge 14:18). Possibly the earlier rulers of Jerusalem (identified with Salem) had been king-priests, but this was a practice not allowed in Yahweh's Jerusalem cult. There, political rule and religious practice were strictly separate.

Judah's king Uzziah (Azariah) was trying to act like the other kings of the ancient world by burning incense on the altar of the temple (2Ch 26:16–20). His actions, however, were usurping the role of the priest. The antagonistic encounter between Uzziah and 81 priests of Yahweh (26:17, 18) reveals the power struggles between king and priests that probably occurred often in Judah's politics.

use on the towers and on the corner defenses so that soldiers could shoot arrows and hurl large stones from the walls. His fame spread far and wide, for he was greatly helped until he became powerful.

16 But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. 18 They confronted King Uzziah and said, "It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God."

19 Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the LORD's temple, leprosy[a] broke out on his forehead. 20 When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the LORD had afflicted him.

21 King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house[b]—leprous, and banned from the temple of the LORD. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.

22 The other events of Uzziah's reign, from beginning to end, are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. 23 Uzziah rested with his ancestors and was buried near them in a cemetery that belonged to the kings, for people said, "He had leprosy." And Jotham his son succeeded him as king.

[a] *19* The Hebrew for *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin; also in verses 20, 21 and 23. [b] *21* Or *in a house where he was relieved of responsibilities*

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Pekah Attacks Ahaz

After Jeroboam II, the northern kingdom that had been so prosperous and comfortable fell apart. Four different kings ruled in r apid succession; only two were related, and only one was able t o hold the thr one for longer than a couple of years.

Assassination was commonplace in Isr ael for 20 y ears. Zechariah (753 B.C.) ruled only 6 months before his assassination ended the dynasty of Jehu. Shallum (752 B.C.), the assassin, ruled only 1 month before he himself was assassinated by the next king, Menahem. After a 10-year rule (752–742 B.C.), Menahem was succeeded by his son Pekahiah (742–740 B.C.). A military officer, Pekah, assassinated Pekahiah, only to be assassinated himself in 732 B.C. by Israel's last king, Hoshea.

The fifth king, Pekah, evidently came to power with the support of those who wanted to resist the g rowing power of A ssyria. The previous two kings, Menahem and his son Pekahiah, had been sympa thetic to Assyria, at least t o the e xtent of pa ying tribute (2Ki 15:19, 20). P ekah's anti-Assyrian party probably resented Menahem's and Pekahiah's conciliatory attitude toward Assyria. Pekah would

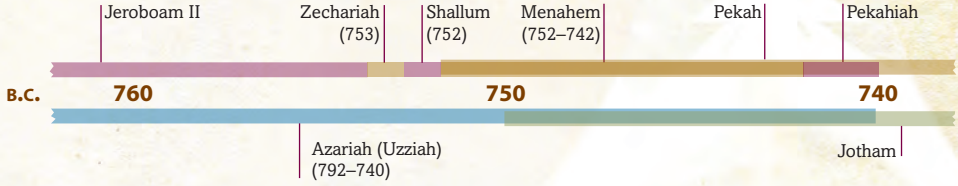
ASSASSINATIONS IN ISRAEL

Israel (northern kingdom)

Zechariah, son of Jeroboam II, was the last king of the Jehu dynasty. He reigned only 6 months before being assassinated by Shallum (2Ki 15:8, 10).

Shallum claimed the throne by assassinating Zechariah, but after only 1 month as king was himself assassinated by Menahem.

Menahem quickly killed the assassin Shallum and assumed the throne himself. But his kingship was probably challenged by a rival named Pekah. Another threat was the advancing Assyrian army of Tiglath-Pileser III which forced Menahem to pay tribute to the Assyrian king (2Ki 15:19).



Judah (southern kingdom)

Azariah (or Uzziah) extended Judah's territory and brought the nation to a time of great prosperity. In the south he maintained control over Edom; to the west he warred against the Philistines, seizing several cities (2Ch 26:2, 6). While Judah enjoyed a stable period under Azariah's leadership, the northern kingdom, Israel, faced much instability as one king after another was assassinated.

later form an alliance with Rezin, king of Aram, which pitted Israel and Aram against Judah and Assyria (see 2Ki 15:37; 16:5, 7–9).

• **2 Kings 15:8–31**

2 Kings

Zechariah King of Israel

15:8 In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah king of Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned six months. [9]He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his predecessors had done. He did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

[10]Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against Zechariah. He attacked him in front of the people,[a] assassinated him and succeeded him as king. [11]The other events of Zechariah's reign are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel. [12]So the word of the LORD spoken to Jehu was fulfilled: "Your descendants will sit on the throne of Israel to the fourth generation."[b]

Shallum King of Israel

[13]Shallum son of Jabesh became king in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah king of Judah, and he reigned in Samaria one month. [14]Then Menahem son of Gadi went from Tirzah up to Samaria. He attacked Shallum son of Jabesh in Samaria, assassinated him and succeeded him as king.

[15]The other events of Shallum's reign, and the conspiracy he led, are written in the book of the annals of the kings of Israel.

[16]At that time Menahem, starting out from Tirzah, attacked Tiphsah and everyone in the city and its vicinity, because they refused to open their gates. He sacked Tiphsah and ripped open all the pregnant women.

Menahem King of Israel

[17]In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah king of Judah, Menahem son of Gadi became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria ten years. [18]He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. During his entire reign he did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

[19]Then Pul[c] king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave him a thousand talents[d] of silver to gain his support and strengthen his own hold on the kingdom. [20]Menahem exacted this money from Israel. Every wealthy person had to contribute fifty shekels[e] of silver to be given to the king of Assyria. So the king

[a] *10* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts *in Ibleam*
[b] *12* 2 Kings 10:30
[c] *19* Also called *Tiglath-Pileser*
[d] *19* That is, about 38 tons or about 34 metric tons
[e] *20* That is, about 1 1/4 pounds or about 575 grams

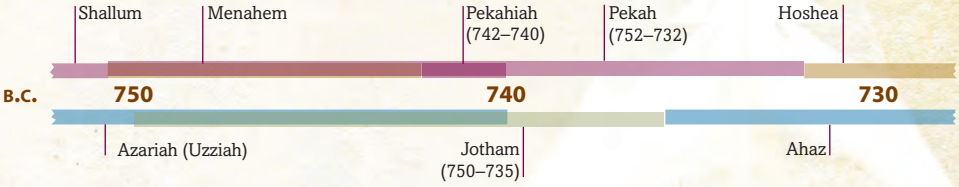
AN OFFICER ASSASSINATES THE KING

Israel (northern kingdom)

Pekah is reported to have ruled 20 years (2Ki 15:27). If so, his reign began at the same time Menahem took the throne. Possibly Pekah was an officer of the royal court while Menahem and Pekahiah were kings.

Pekahiah, son of Menahem, reigned only 2 years before being assassinated by Pekah (2Ki 15:25).

Pekah became sole king by assassinating Pekahiah. His reign ended when he himself was assassinated by Hoshea (2Ki 15:30).



Judah (southern kingdom)

Jotham began ruling as a coregent when it was discovered that his father, Azariah, had leprosy (2Ch 26:21). He inherited a prosperous kingdom from his father and continued to strengthen Judah, building cities and fortifications throughout the countryside. A threat to Judah began to develop during Jotham's reign when Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Aram (Syria) formed a coalition (2Ki 15:37).

of Assyria withdrew and stayed in the land no longer.

21 As for the other events of Menahem's
reign, and all he did, are they not written in
the book of the annals of the kings of Israel?
22 Menahem rested with his ancestors. And
Pekahiah his son succeeded him as king.

Pekahiah King of Israel

23 In the fiftieth year of Azariah king of Ju-
dah, Pekahiah son of Menahem became king
of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned two years.
24 Pekahiah did evil in the eyes of the LORD.
He did not turn away from the sins of Jerobo-
am son of Nebat, which he had caused Israel
to commit. 25 One of his chief officers, Pekah
son of Remaliah, conspired against him. Tak-
ing fifty men of Gilead with him, he assassi-
nated Pekahiah, along with Argob and Arieh,
in the citadel of the royal palace at Samaria.
So Pekah killed Pekahiah and succeeded him
as king.

26 The other events of Pekahiah's reign, and
all he did, are written in the book of the annals
of the kings of Israel.

Pekah King of Israel

27 In the fifty-second year of Azariah king of
Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king of
Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twenty years.
28 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. He did
not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam son of
Nebat, which he had caused Israel to commit.

29 In the time of Pekah king of Israel, Tig-
lath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took Ijon,
Abel Beth Maakah, Janoah, Kedesh and Hazor.
He took Gilead and Galilee, including all the
land of Naphtali, and deported the people to
Assyria. 30 Then Hoshea son of Elah conspired
against Pekah son of Remaliah. He attacked
and assassinated him, and then succeeded him
as king in the twentieth year of Jotham son of
Uzziah.

31 As for the other events of Pekah's reign,
and all he did, are they not written in the book
of the annals of the kings of Israel?

TRANSITION

Jotham and Ahaz in Judah

While political instabilit y plagued Isr ael, the calm succession of David's descendants on the throne of Judah continued. After a coregency with his fa ther, Uzziah (Azariah) (750–740 B.C.), Jotham ruled Judah alone un til being succeeded by his own son Ahaz (735–715 B.C.). A coalition between Israel's king Pekah and Aram's king Rezin had some impact upon Jotham's kingdom, but would present a serious crisis for Ahaz's kingdom (2Ki 15:37; 16:5).

• 2 Kings 15:32—16:4

2 Kings

Jotham King of Judah

15 :32 In the second year of Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, Jotham son of Uzziah king of Judah began to reign. [33]He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His mother's name was Jerusha daughter of Zadok. [34]He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done. [35]The high places, however, were not removed; the people continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense there. Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple of the LORD.

[36]As for the other events of Jotham's reign, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? [37](In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah.) [38]Jotham rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David, the city of his father. And Ahaz his son succeeded him as king.

Ahaz King of Judah

16 [1]In the seventeenth year of Pekah son of Remaliah, Ahaz son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign. [2]Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD his God. [3]He followed the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son in the fire, engaging in the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. [4]He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.

[a] *2* Or *has set up camp in* [b] *3* *Shear-Jashub* means *a remnant will return.*

TRANSITION

Israel and Aram Besiege Judah

Assyria's growing power under Tiglath-Pileser III could no longer be ignored. Israel and Aram formed a defensive alliance, and their kings, Pekah and Rezin, demanded that Judah join the alliance as well. Ahaz declined, perhaps influenced by the prophet Isaiah's assurances that the Syro-Israelite coalition was doomed (Isa 7:3–9; 8:5–8).

Aram and Israel, then, decided to secure their flank by attacking Judah. Thus Ahaz, trying to avoid war with Assyria, had incited Israel and Aram to besiege his land. Isaiah told him to depend on God (Isa 7:4), but Ahaz preferred more pragmatic steps. He made a treaty with the only power strong enough to protect him: Assyria. Ahaz invited (and paid) Tiglath-Pileser to attack Aram and Israel, and Tiglath-Pileser was happy to oblige.

In the prophecies of Isa 7:1—10:4, Isaiah rebukes King Ahaz, addressing him as "house of David" (Isa 7:13). Ahaz trusts in Assyria instead of in God. The prophet also prophesies against Damascus (Syria) and Ephraim (Israel), the two allies (Isa 17:1–14). In the midst of this rebuke and judgment, Isaiah offers Judah its ultimate hope: the personal presence of God (Hebrew *Immanuel,* "God with us," 7:14; 8:8, 10). This promise of God's personal presence forms the core of the New Testament's understanding of Christ (see Mt 1:23, quoting Isa 7:14).

- **2 Kings 16:5–9**
- **Isaiah 7:1—10:4**
- **Isaiah 17:1–14**

2 Kings 16:5–9

16 :5 Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem and besieged Ahaz, but they could not overpower him. [6]At that time, Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram by driving out the people of Judah. Edomites then moved into Elath and have lived there to this day.

[7]Ahaz sent messengers to say to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, "I am your servant and vassal. Come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Aram and of the king of Israel, who are attacking me." [8]And Ahaz took the silver and gold found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace and sent it as a gift to the king of Assyria. [9]The king of Assyria complied by attacking Damascus and capturing it. He deported its inhabitants to Kir and put Rezin to death.

Isaiah 7:1—10:4

The Sign of Immanuel

7 :1 When Ahaz son of Jotham, the son of Uzziah, was king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel marched up to fight against Jerusalem, but they could not overpower it.

[2]Now the house of David was told, "Aram has allied itself with[a] Ephraim"; so the hearts of Ahaz and his people were shaken, as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind.

[3]Then the LORD said to Isaiah, "Go out, you and your son Shear-Jashub,[b] to meet Ahaz at

Vassal to Sovereign to Vassal (2Ki 16:9)

Aram was an important state in southern Syria from the 11th to 8th centuries B.C. The state was connected with the larger ethnic group of Arameans, who inhabited this area in the late 2nd and 1st millenniums B.C. Reflecting this region, the NKJV and some other translations render the Hebrew name *Aram* as "Syria" or "Syrians."

Many Aramean tribal states attached the designation "Aram" to their names, as in the compound name "Paddan Aram" (Ge 25:20). Biblical writers usually used the Hebrew word *Aram* to refer specifically to Aram-Damascus, the Aramean state whose capital was Damascus. But occasionally *Aram* refers to the Aramean states in general (Jdg 10:6; 1Ki 10:29; Am 9:7).

Early in the 10th century B.C., the Aram-Damascus kingdom was incorporated as a vassal into King David's state (2Sa 8:5, 6). During the reign of Solomon (970–930 B.C.), Rezon usurped the throne of Damascus and was able to free himself of Israelite control (1Ki 11:23–25).

Aram-Damascus took advantage of the split of the Israelite kingdom in 930 B.C. and became the most powerful state in the region. Soon thereafter, Ahab of Israel became vassal to Ben-Hadad of Aram (1Ki 20:1–9), who ruled a kingdom that controlled much of southern Syria and Palestine.

Aram-Damascus was instrumental in originating the anti-Assyrian coalition against Assyria's Shalmaneser III in 853 B.C., culminating in the battle of Qarqar. Assyrian annals tell us that Ahab of Israel furnished 2,000 chariots and 10,000 infantry, while King Hadadezer of Aram-Damascus contributed 1,200 chariots and 20,000 infantry. The coalition lasted about a decade. For the next century, intermittent war was fought between Aram-Damascus and Israel, with Aram usually the dominant power in this struggle.

Aram-Damascus continued to be a threat to the existence of both Israel and Judah until the mid-8th century B.C. During the state's last years of independence, Rezin, the last Aramean king, formed a second anti-Assyrian coalition. In what is known as the Syro-Ephraimite War, Rezin, in alliance with Israel, attacked Judah with the apparent goal of coercing Judah into the coalition.

The result was not as Rezin hoped. Assyrian annals tell of Aram falling to Assyria in 732 B.C. and becoming a vassal to the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser III. Aram-Damascus was annexed to Assyria, ending the former state's sovereignty (2Ki 16:9).

the end of the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer's Field. 4Say to him, 'Be careful, keep calm and don't be afraid. Do not lose heart because of these two smoldering stubs of firewood—because of the fierce anger of Rezin and Aram and of the son of Remaliah. 5Aram, Ephraim and Remaliah's son have plotted your ruin, saying, 6"Let us invade Judah; let us tear it apart and divide it among ourselves, and make the son of Tabeel king over it." 7Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'It will not take place,
it will not happen,
8for the head of Aram is Damascus,
and the head of Damascus is only Rezin.
Within sixty-five years
Ephraim will be too shattered to be a people.
9The head of Ephraim is Samaria,
and the head of Samaria is only Remaliah's son.
If you do not stand firm in your faith,
you will not stand at all.'"

10Again the LORD spoke to Ahaz, 11"Ask the LORD your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights."

12But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the LORD to the test."

13Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? 14Therefore the Lord himself will give you[a] a sign: The virgin[b] will conceive and give birth to a son, and[c] will call him Immanuel.[d] 15He will be eating curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, 16for before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. 17The LORD will bring on you and on your people and on the house of your father a time unlike any since Ephraim broke away from Judah—he will bring the king of Assyria."

Assyria, the LORD's Instrument

18In that day the LORD will whistle for flies from the Nile delta in Egypt and for bees from the land of Assyria. 19They will all come and settle in the steep ravines and in the crevices in the rocks, on all the thornbushes and at all the water holes. 20In that day the Lord will use a razor hired from beyond the Euphrates River—the king of Assyria—to shave your head and private parts, and to cut off your beard also. 21In that day, a person will keep alive a young cow and two goats. 22And because of the abundance of the milk they give, there will be curds to eat.

[a] *14* The Hebrew is plural. [b] *14* Or *young woman* [c] *14* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls *son, and he* or *son, and they* [d] *14* *Immanuel* means *God with us.*

Smoldering Ends of Burnt-Out Logs (Isa 7:1–9)

The term "Syro-Ephraimite War" is a modern expression referring to the major conflict in which the kingdom of Judah was opposed by the Syro-Ephraimite coalition of Aram (Syria) and Israel. King Rezin of Aram (centered in Damascus) and King Pekah of northern Israel (known as Ephraim) tried to force Judah to join them in an alliance against Assyria. The resulting war is reported in the biblical historical narratives (2Ki 16:5–9; 2Ch 28:5–21).

The importance of this struggle in Israel's history is evident from numerous references to the conflict in the prophets. Some of Hosea's prophecies probably picture the period during the war, reflecting military engagements between Israel and Judah (Hos 5:8–15). The prophet Isaiah told Judah's king Ahaz not to fear the kings of Aram and Israel, calling them "two smoldering stubs of firewood" (Isa 7:1–9); they were burnt-out logs.

Before the war, a coalition of Syro-Palestinian states, including Aram, Tyre, Ashkelon, and Israel, had formed to defend against the rising power of Assyria. When Ahaz of Judah refused to enter the group, they plotted to replace this Davidic king with a puppet ruler, who was the son of a certain Tabeel (Isa 7:5, 6). Scholars suppose Tabeel refers to Tubail, who later himself became king of Tyre.

As the prophet Isaiah had announced (Isa 7:1–9), the Syro-Ephraimite coalition failed. Judah and Jerusalem were attacked; however, the Assyrians under Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.), responding to Ahaz's call for help, invaded Aram, destroying Damascus in 732 B.C. Tyre lost significant territory, and the rulers of the Philistine states Ashkelon and Gaza were replaced. Pekah of Israel was subsequently assassinated, and Israel was required to continue paying tribute to Assyria.

All who remain in the land will eat curds and
honey. 23In that day, in every place where there
were a thousand vines worth a thousand silver
shekels,[a] there will be only briers and thorns.
24Hunters will go there with bow and arrow, for
the land will be covered with briers and thorns.
25As for all the hills once cultivated by the hoe,
you will no longer go there for fear of the briers and thorns; they will become places where
cattle are turned loose and where sheep run.

Isaiah and His Children as Signs

8 1The LORD said to me, "Take a large scroll
and write on it with an ordinary pen: Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz."[b] 2So I called in Uriah the
priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah as reliable witnesses for me. 3Then I made love to the
prophetess, and she conceived and gave birth
to a son. And the LORD said to me, "Name him
Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz. 4For before the boy
knows how to say 'My father' or 'My mother,'
the wealth of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria will be carried off by the king of Assyria."
5The LORD spoke to me again:

6"Because this people has rejected
the gently flowing waters of Shiloah
and rejoices over Rezin
and the son of Remaliah,
7therefore the Lord is about to bring against
them
the mighty floodwaters of the Euphrates—
the king of Assyria with all his pomp.
It will overflow all its channels,
run over all its banks
8and sweep on into Judah, swirling over it,
passing through it and reaching up to the
neck.
Its outspread wings will cover the breadth
of your land,
Immanuel[c]!"

9Raise the war cry,[d] you nations, and be
shattered!
Listen, all you distant lands.
Prepare for battle, and be shattered!
Prepare for battle, and be shattered!
10Devise your strategy, but it will be thwarted;
propose your plan, but it will not stand,
for God is with us.[e]

11This is what the LORD says to me with his strong hand upon me, warning me not to follow the way of this people:

12"Do not call conspiracy
everything this people calls a
conspiracy;
do not fear what they fear,
and do not dread it.
13The LORD Almighty is the one you are to
regard as holy,
he is the one you are to fear,
he is the one you are to dread.
14He will be a holy place;
for both Israel and Judah he will be
a stone that causes people to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.
And for the people of Jerusalem he
will be
a trap and a snare.

[a] *23* That is, about 25 pounds or about 12 kilograms
[b] *1* *Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz* means *quick to the plunder, swift to the spoil*; also in verse 3.
[c] *8* *Immanuel* means *God with us.*
[d] *9* Or *Do your worst*
[e] *10* Hebrew *Immanuel*

Cults & Supernatural

The spirits of the dead, and the mediums who pretend to speak for them, can only talk in whispers and squeaks (Isa 8:19). This is appropriate for those who have left their body behind. When Odysseus visited Hades, the spirits there lamented their increasing separation from the life of physical vitality. The prophets struggled to keep the people from resorting to spiritism.

15 Many of them will stumble;
they will fall and be broken,
they will be snared and captured."

16 Bind up this testimony of warning
and seal up God's instruction among my disciples.
17 I will wait for the LORD,
who is hiding his face from the descendants of Jacob.
I will put my trust in him.

Assyrian Campaigns in Palestine

In 734 B.C. Tiglath-Pileser III of A ssyria moved along the coast through Philistia, conquering Gaza, and placing his forces on the Egyptian border. In 733 B.C. much of Galilee was conquered, deporting many Israelites in the process. The Aramean capital of Damascus fell to Assyria in 732 B.C.

18 Here am I, and the children the LORD has given me. We are signs and symbols in Israel from the LORD Almighty, who dwells on Mount Zion.

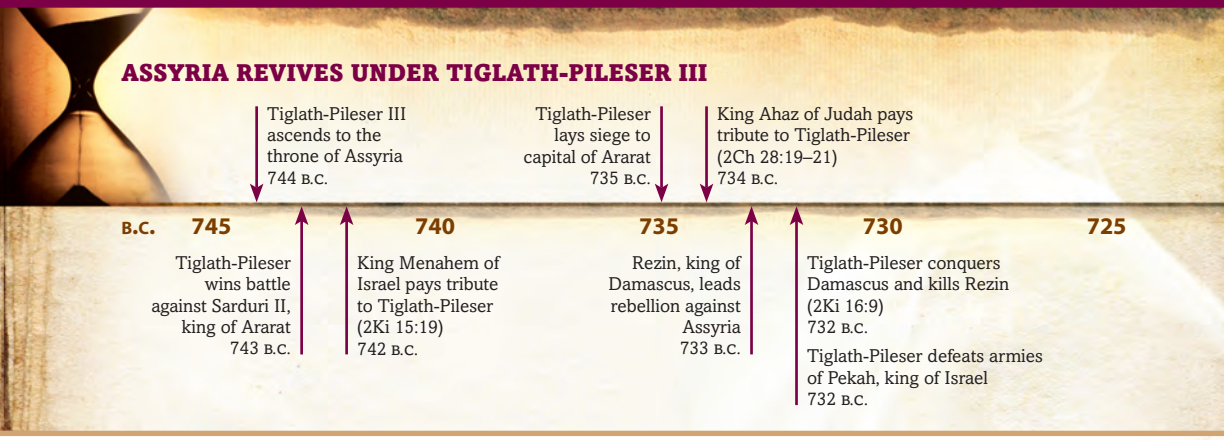
The Darkness Turns to Light

19 When someone tells you to consult mediums and spiritists, who whisper and mutter, should not a people inquire of their God? Why consult the dead on behalf of the living? 20 Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. 21 Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. 22 Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.

9[a] 1 Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan—

2 The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.
3 You have enlarged the nation
and increased their joy;
they rejoice before you
as people rejoice at the harvest,
as warriors rejoice
when dividing the plunder.
4 For as in the day of Midian's defeat,
you have shattered
the yoke that burdens them,
the bar across their shoulders,
the rod of their oppressor.
5 Every warrior's boot used in battle
and every garment rolled in blood
will be destined for burning,
will be fuel for the fire.
6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

[a] In Hebrew texts 9:1 is numbered 8:23, and 9:2-21 is numbered 9:1-20.



7 Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness
from that time on and forever.
The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

The LORD's Anger Against Israel

8 The Lord has sent a message against Jacob;
it will fall on Israel.
9 All the people will know it—
Ephraim and the inhabitants of Samaria—
who say with pride
and arrogance of heart,
10 "The bricks have fallen down,
but we will rebuild with dressed stone;
the fig trees have been felled,
but we will replace them with cedars."
11 But the LORD has strengthened Rezin's foes against them
and has spurred their enemies on.
12 Arameans from the east and Philistines from the west
have devoured Israel with open mouth.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

13 But the people have not returned to him who struck them,
nor have they sought the LORD Almighty.
14 So the LORD will cut off from Israel both head and tail,
both palm branch and reed in a single day;
15 the elders and dignitaries are the head,
the prophets who teach lies are the tail.
16 Those who guide this people mislead them,
and those who are guided are led astray.
17 Therefore the Lord will take no pleasure in the young men,
nor will he pity the fatherless and widows,
for everyone is ungodly and wicked,
every mouth speaks folly.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

18 Surely wickedness burns like a fire;
it consumes briers and thorns,
it sets the forest thickets ablaze,
so that it rolls upward in a column of smoke.
19 By the wrath of the LORD Almighty
the land will be scorched
and the people will be fuel for the fire;
they will not spare one another.
20 On the right they will devour,
but still be hungry;
on the left they will eat,
but not be satisfied.
Each will feed on the flesh of their own offspring[a]:

[a] 20 Or *arm*

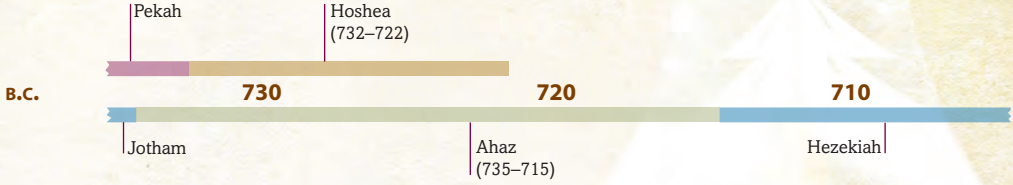
TIME CAPSULE		727 to 722 B.C.
727	Tiglath-Pileser III dies, and Hoshea withholds tribute from Assyria	
726–722	The reign of Shalmaneser V of Assyria ends during a revolution	
725–722	Shalmaneser lays siege to Samaria	
724	Hoshea of Israel shifts his loyalty from Assyria to Egypt	
722	Fall of Samaria to the Assyrians	

ASSYRIA COMES TO JUDAH AND ISRAEL

Israel (northern kingdom)

Hoshea became king after assassinating the former king, Pekah. At first Hoshea served as a puppet king under Assyria. But eventually he rebelled against Assyria, negotiating an alliance with Egypt (2Ki 17:4).

The Assyrian king, Shalmaneser V, besieged the capital, Samaria, and Hoshea was captured and imprisoned. After 3 years of siege, Assyria finally captured Samaria, and its inhabitants were exiled to locations in the Assyrian Empire.



Judah (southern kingdom)

Ahaz, son of Jotham, adopted policies as king that favored Assyria. He refused to join the anti-Assyrian alliance that kings Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Aram (Syria) were supporting. Pekah and Rezin besieged Jerusalem, threatening to dethrone Ahaz.

In defense, Ahaz requested help from the king of Assyria. The plan worked when Assyria invaded Israel and Aram, but Ahaz had to pay tribute to Assyria's king (2Ki 16:9, 10; 2Ch 28:21).

21 Manasseh will feed on Ephraim, and
Ephraim on Manasseh;
together they will turn against Judah.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

10 1 Woe to those who make unjust laws,
to those who issue oppressive decrees,
2 to deprive the poor of their rights
and withhold justice from the oppressed
of my people,
making widows their prey
and robbing the fatherless.
3 What will you do on the day of reckoning,
when disaster comes from afar?
To whom will you run for help?
Where will you leave your riches?
4 Nothing will remain but to cringe among
the captives
or fall among the slain.

Yet for all this, his anger is not turned away,
his hand is still upraised.

Isaiah 17:1–14

A Prophecy Against Damascus

17 :1 A prophecy against Damascus:

"See, Damascus will no longer be a city
but will become a heap of ruins.
2 The cities of Aroer will be deserted
and left to flocks, which will lie down,
with no one to make them afraid.
3 The fortified city will disappear from Ephraim,
and royal power from Damascus;
the remnant of Aram will be
like the glory of the Israelites,"
declares the LORD Almighty.

4 "In that day the glory of Jacob will fade;
the fat of his body will waste away.
5 It will be as when reapers harvest the
standing grain,
gathering the grain in their arms—
as when someone gleans heads of grain
in the Valley of Rephaim.
6 Yet some gleanings will remain,
as when an olive tree is beaten,
leaving two or three olives on the topmost
branches,
four or five on the fruitful boughs,"
declares the LORD, the God of Israel.

7 In that day people will look to their Maker
and turn their eyes to the Holy One of
Israel.
8 They will not look to the altars,
the work of their hands,
and they will have no regard for the
Asherah poles[a]

[a] 8 That is, wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah

Is This a Ritual for a Dying God? (Isa 17:10, 11)

Isaiah prophesied that a harvest of the "finest plants" would "be as nothing" (Isa 17:10, 11). Scholars have often suggested that the prophet refers to a ritual for the worship of the god Adonis. All we know about the worship of Adonis comes from Greek sources, but it is claimed that the Greek cult of Adonis was based on a Phoenician cult practiced primarily by women in Phoenicia.

As a part of the ritual in honor of Adonis, seedlings were planted on potsherds (broken pieces of pottery). The plants would sprout, but because they had no soil, would grow only for a day or two and then die. The short life of the plant symbolized the short and tragic life of the god Adonis, who is said to have died young in a hunting accident. The women then mourned for the dead god with public wailing.

Isaiah intensifies the meaning of the ritual. The worshipers think they are mourning for the god, but Isaiah asserts that they are really mourning their own demise. They will surely die because they have abandoned Yahweh (17:10).

and the incense altars their fingers have made.

9 In that day their strong cities, which they left because of the Israelites, will be like places abandoned to thickets and undergrowth. And all will be desolation.

10 You have forgotten God your Savior;
you have not remembered the Rock, your fortress.
Therefore, though you set out the finest plants
and plant imported vines,
11 though on the day you set them out, you make them grow,
and on the morning when you plant them, you bring them to bud,
yet the harvest will be as nothing
in the day of disease and incurable pain.

12 Woe to the many nations that rage—
they rage like the raging sea!
Woe to the peoples who roar—
they roar like the roaring of great waters!
13 Although the peoples roar like the roar of surging waters,
when he rebukes them they flee far away,
driven before the wind like chaff on the hills,
like tumbleweed before a gale.
14 In the evening, sudden terror!
Before the morning, they are gone!
This is the portion of those who loot us,
the lot of those who plunder us.

TIME CAPSULE	722 to 720 B.C.
722	Sargon II usurps the throne of Assyria
721	First official year of Sargon's reign
721–705	Israelites transported to Assyria during early years of Sargon's reign
721–710	Marduk-Baladan's first reign in Babylon
720	Elamites assist Marduk-Baladan against Assyria

TRANSITION

After the Syro-Ephraimite War

The Syro-Ephraimite War ended in 732 B.C. when Tiglath-Pileser and Assyria destroyed Damascus, the capital of Aram (Syria). The Assyrian armies made their presence felt throughout Palestine, from Aram in the northeast to the Philistine coastlands in the southwest. Isaiah warns Assyria that her hold on Palestine will not last forever (Isa 14:24–27), but before Assyria's power would be broken, that power would stretch even to the land of the Philistines (14:28–32).

Judah too, which had avoided war by making diplomatic concessions, was under Assyrian sovereignty. Ahaz's Assyrian-inspired temple modifications (2Ki 16:10–18) should perhaps be seen as a sign of the Judean king's loyalty to his Assyrian overlords (16:18).

- **Isaiah 14:24–32**
- **2 Kings 16:10–20**

Isaiah 14:24–32

14 **:24** The LORD Almighty has sworn,
"Surely, as I have planned, so it will be,
and as I have purposed, so it will happen.

25 I will crush the Assyrian in my land;
on my mountains I will trample him down.
His yoke will be taken from my people,
and his burden removed from their shoulders."

26 This is the plan determined for the whole world;
this is the hand stretched out over all nations.
27 For the LORD Almighty has purposed, and who can thwart him?
His hand is stretched out, and who can turn it back?

A Prophecy Against the Philistines

28 This prophecy came in the year King Ahaz died:

29 Do not rejoice, all you Philistines,
that the rod that struck you is broken;
from the root of that snake will spring up a viper,
its fruit will be a darting, venomous serpent.
30 The poorest of the poor will find pasture,
and the needy will lie down in safety.
But your root I will destroy by famine;
it will slay your survivors.

31 Wail, you gate! Howl, you city!
Melt away, all you Philistines!
A cloud of smoke comes from the north,
and there is not a straggler in its ranks.
32 What answer shall be given
to the envoys of that nation?
"The LORD has established Zion,
and in her his afflicted people will find refuge."

2 Kings 16:10–20

16:10 Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria. He saw an altar in Damascus and sent to Uriah the priest a sketch of the altar, with detailed plans for its construction. 11 So Uriah the priest built an altar in accordance with all the plans that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus and finished it before King Ahaz returned. 12 When the king came back from Damascus and saw the altar, he approached it and presented offerings[a] on it. 13 He offered up his burnt offering and grain offering, poured out his drink offering, and splashed the blood of his fellowship offerings against the altar. 14 As for the bronze altar that stood before the LORD, he brought it from the front of the temple—from between the new altar and the temple of the LORD—and put it on the north side of the new altar.

15 King Ahaz then gave these orders to Uriah the priest: "On the large new altar, offer the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering, the king's burnt offering and his grain offering, and the burnt offering of all the people of the land, and their grain offering and their drink offering. Splash against this altar the blood of all the burnt offerings and sacrifices. But I will use the bronze altar for seeking guidance." 16 And Uriah the priest did just as King Ahaz had ordered.

17 King Ahaz cut off the side panels and removed the basins from the movable stands. He removed the Sea from the bronze bulls that supported it and set it on a stone base. 18 He took away the Sabbath canopy[b] that had been built at the temple and removed the royal entryway outside the temple of the LORD, in deference to the king of Assyria.

19 As for the other events of the reign of Ahaz, and what he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? 20 Ahaz rested with his ancestors and was buried with them in the City of David. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

TRANSITION

The Book of Micah

Micah, like Isaiah, prophesied in Judah during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah (Mic 1:1). Indeed, there are even some parallels between the two prophets. Both spoke of God's plan for Zion (Jerusalem) and said that salvation would come through the line of David (cf. Isa 11:1–5; Mic 5:2–5). There is even one shared prophecy: Isa 2:2–4 is almost identical to Mic 4:1–3.

Micah has a few distinctives, however. Perhaps because he is not from Jerusalem itself, he is less convinced of Jerusalem's invulnerability than Isaiah seems. Micah prophesies Jerusalem's destruction (Mic 3:12; see Jer 26:17–19 for the results of this prophecy). In addition, Micah rejects religious hypocrisy and calls for the protection of the helpless in language that is more like that of Amos than that of Isaiah (Mic 6:1–8).

• **Micah 1:1—2:13**

Micah

1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Micah of Moresheth during the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—

[a] *12* Or *and went up* [b] *18* Or *the dais of his throne* (see Septuagint)

the vision he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

2 Hear, you peoples, all of you,
listen, earth and all who live in it,
that the Sovereign LORD may bear witness
against you,
the Lord from his holy temple.

Judgment Against Samaria and Jerusalem

3 Look! The LORD is coming from his
dwelling place;
he comes down and treads on the heights
of the earth.
4 The mountains melt beneath him
and the valleys split apart,
like wax before the fire,
like water rushing down a slope.
5 All this is because of Jacob's transgression,
because of the sins of the people of Israel.
What is Jacob's transgression?
Is it not Samaria?
What is Judah's high place?
Is it not Jerusalem?

6 "Therefore I will make Samaria a heap of
rubble,
a place for planting vineyards.
I will pour her stones into the valley
and lay bare her foundations.
7 All her idols will be broken to pieces;
all her temple gifts will be burned with
fire;
I will destroy all her images.
Since she gathered her gifts from the wages
of prostitutes,
as the wages of prostitutes they will again
be used."

Weeping and Mourning

8 Because of this I will weep and wail;
I will go about barefoot and naked.
I will howl like a jackal
and moan like an owl.
9 For Samaria's plague is incurable;
it has spread to Judah.
It has reached the very gate of my people,
even to Jerusalem itself.
10 Tell it not in Gath[a];
weep not at all.
In Beth Ophrah[b]
roll in the dust.
11 Pass by naked and in shame,
you who live in Shaphir.[c]
Those who live in Zaanan[d]
will not come out.
Beth Ezel is in mourning;
it no longer protects you.
12 Those who live in Maroth[e] writhe in pain,
waiting for relief,
because disaster has come from the LORD,
even to the gate of Jerusalem.
13 You who live in Lachish,
harness fast horses to the chariot.
You are where the sin of Daughter Zion
began,
for the transgressions of Israel were
found in you.
14 Therefore you will give parting gifts
to Moresheth Gath.
The town of Akzib[f] will prove deceptive
to the kings of Israel.
15 I will bring a conqueror against you
who live in Mareshah.[g]
The nobles of Israel
will flee to Adullam.
16 Shave your head in mourning
for the children in whom you delight;
make yourself as bald as the vulture,
for they will go from you into exile.

Human Plans and God's Plans

2 1 Woe to those who plan iniquity,
to those who plot evil on their beds!
At morning's light they carry it out
because it is in their power to do it.
2 They covet fields and seize them,
and houses, and take them.
They defraud people of their homes,
they rob them of their inheritance.

3 Therefore, the LORD says:

"I am planning disaster against this people,
from which you cannot save yourselves.
You will no longer walk proudly,
for it will be a time of calamity.

[a] *10 Gath* sounds like the Hebrew for *tell.* [b] *10 Beth Ophrah* means *house of dust.* [c] *11 Shaphir* means *pleasant.* [d] *11 Zaanan* sounds like the Hebrew for *come out.* [e] *12 Maroth* sounds like the Hebrew for *bitter.* [f] *14 Akzib* means *deception.* [g] *15 Mareshah* sounds like the Hebrew for *conqueror.*

TIME CAPSULE		720 to 716 B.C.
720	After a victory at Qarqar Sargon II marches through Gaza and Israel to Egypt's border	
720	Hamath is incorporated into the Assyrian Empire	
717	Assyrians conquer and destroy Carchemish	
717	Memphis is besieged by the Nubian ruler Piankhy	
716	Ishmaelite tribes pay tribute to Sargon II of Assyria	

4 In that day people will ridicule you;
they will taunt you with this mournful song:
'We are utterly ruined;
my people's possession is divided up.
He takes it from me!
He assigns our fields to traitors.'"

5 Therefore you will have no one in the assembly of the LORD
to divide the land by lot.

False Prophets

6 "Do not prophesy," their prophets say.
"Do not prophesy about these things;
disgrace will not overtake us."
7 You descendants of Jacob, should it be said,
"Does the LORD become[a] impatient?
Does he do such things?"

"Do not my words do good
to the one whose ways are upright?
8 Lately my people have risen up
like an enemy.
You strip off the rich robe
from those who pass by without a care,
like men returning from battle.
9 You drive the women of my people
from their pleasant homes.
You take away my blessing
from their children forever.
10 Get up, go away!
For this is not your resting place,
because it is defiled,
it is ruined, beyond all remedy.
11 If a liar and deceiver comes and says,
'I will prophesy for you plenty of wine and beer,'
that would be just the prophet for this people!

Deliverance Promised

12 "I will surely gather all of you, Jacob;
I will surely bring together the remnant of Israel.
I will bring them together like sheep in a pen,
like a flock in its pasture;
the place will throng with people.
13 The One who breaks open the way will go up before them;
they will break through the gate and go out.
Their King will pass through before them,
the LORD at their head."

TRANSITION

Micah's Ministry

Like Hosea's oracles, Micah's words provide only vague references to the historical events which may form their background. The kings mentioned in Mic 1:1 (Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah) place Micah's ministry in the second half of the 8th century B.C. (750–686 B.C.). Specific dates within that period are not possible to determine.

A few passages in the book suggest approximate times. References to Samaria (Mic 1:1, 6) imply that at least part of Micah's preaching occurred before the fall of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C. Two other passages point to a later time during Hezekiah's reign (715–686 B.C.). The cities named in Mic 1:10–16 seem to picture a military invasion from the south such as that conducted by the Assyrian king Sennacherib in 701 B.C. (see "Sennacherib's Invasion" at Isa 36:1). Quoting the words of Mic 3:12, Jeremiah places Micah in "the days of Hezekiah" (Jer 26:18), prophesying the fall of Jerusalem.

• **Micah 3:1—7:20**

Micah

Leaders and Prophets Rebuked

3 :1 Then I said,

"Listen, you leaders of Jacob,
you rulers of Israel.
Should you not embrace justice,
2 you who hate good and love evil;
who tear the skin from my people
and the flesh from their bones;
3 who eat my people's flesh,
strip off their skin
and break their bones in pieces;
who chop them up like meat for the pan,
like flesh for the pot?"

4 Then they will cry out to the LORD,
but he will not answer them.
At that time he will hide his face from them
because of the evil they have done.

5 This is what the LORD says:

"As for the prophets
who lead my people astray,
they proclaim 'peace'
if they have something to eat,
but prepare to wage war against anyone
who refuses to feed them.
6 Therefore night will come over you, without visions,
and darkness, without divination.

[a] 7 Or *Is the Spirit of the LORD*

A Prophet Prophesies Against the Prophets (Mic 3:5–8)

Kings usually employed the services of professional prophets, who kept the king informed of the will of the gods. Yet despite the prevalence of such court prophets, it was widely believed that gods could use any human, from slave to ruler, as a prophet. The Mari tablets (c. 1813–1760 B.C.) record a prophecy from the deity Dagon as it was spoken by a slave woman who served one of the princesses. The prophetic frenzy of King Saul is an example of prophetic actions on the part of royalty (1Sa 19:23, 24).

Those persons who were seized by God and forced to speak the divine word are known as ecstatic prophets. For example, Amos insists that God had made him speak, though he was definitely not a prophet, only a sheepbreeder (Am 7:14, 15). Similarly, Micah received power to prophesy "with the Spirit of the LORD" (Mic 3:8). Yet Micah's prophecies denounced the professional prophets and seers who themselves could obtain "no answer from God" (Mic 3:5–7).

Generally, the ecstatic prophets were different individuals from the professional court prophets, and the Bible distinguishes between true and false prophets. The true prophet was forced to speak the very word supplied by God whether or not the human wished to do so, as was Jeremiah's prophetic experience (Jer 20:7–9). To hear the words of a true prophet was to hear the very word of God. False prophets, however, made up their own prophecies and then spoke them as if they were from the divine world. One seldom actually encountered a court prophet who was also ecstatic, though such was the prophet Micaiah in King Ahab's court (1Ki 22:8, 14).

The sun will set for the prophets,
and the day will go dark for them.
7 The seers will be ashamed
and the diviners disgraced.
They will all cover their faces
because there is no answer from God."
8 But as for me, I am filled with power,
with the Spirit of the LORD,
and with justice and might,
to declare to Jacob his transgression,
to Israel his sin.

9 Hear this, you leaders of Jacob,
you rulers of Israel,
who despise justice
and distort all that is right;
10 who build Zion with bloodshed,
and Jerusalem with wickedness.
11 Her leaders judge for a bribe,
her priests teach for a price,
and her prophets tell fortunes for money.
Yet they look for the LORD's support and say,
"Is not the LORD among us?
No disaster will come upon us."
12 Therefore because of you,
Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
the temple hill a mound overgrown with thickets.

The Mountain of the LORD

4 1 In the last days
the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established
as the highest of the mountains;
it will be exalted above the hills,
and peoples will stream to it.
2 Many nations will come and say,

"Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD,
to the temple of the God of Jacob.
He will teach us his ways,
so that we may walk in his paths."
The law will go out from Zion,
the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.
3 He will judge between many peoples
and will settle disputes for strong nations far and wide.
They will beat their swords into plowshares
and their spears into pruning hooks.
Nation will not take up sword against nation,
nor will they train for war anymore.
4 Everyone will sit under their own vine
and under their own fig tree,
and no one will make them afraid,
for the LORD Almighty has spoken.
5 All the nations may walk
in the name of their gods,
but we will walk in the name of the LORD our God for ever and ever.

The LORD's Plan

6 "In that day," declares the LORD,

"I will gather the lame;
I will assemble the exiles
and those I have brought to grief.
7 I will make the lame my remnant,
those driven away a strong nation.
The LORD will rule over them in Mount Zion
from that day and forever.

Each with Their Own God (Mic 4:5)

Micah recognized that each people had its own gods. Each state or group had its own patron deity or deities to whom it was devoted, and whom the civil authorities honored in public ritual. The theology of the ancient Near East held that patron deities provided for their people protection, abundance, and guidance for moral and ritual conduct.

Around Judah were cities with patron deities, like Tyre and her god Baal-Melqart. There were also states, such as Moab with her ethnic deity Chemosh, and empires, which, though they had vast pantheons, still had a national deity, such as Re in Egypt, Ashur in Assyria, and Marduk in Babylonia.

Micah says that Judah will "walk" in Yahweh's name forever, though other nations walk in the name of their own gods (Mic 4:5). The import of his statement is that Yahweh was one God among many deities. That there were other gods for other peoples, however, does not alter Judah's situation: Yahweh was to be their only God, and it was by the laws of Yahweh that Judah must live.

8 As for you, watchtower of the flock,
stronghold[a] of Daughter Zion,
the former dominion will be restored to you;
kingship will come to Daughter Jerusalem."

9 Why do you now cry aloud—
have you no king[b]?
Has your ruler[c] perished,
that pain seizes you like that of a woman in labor?
10 Writhe in agony, Daughter Zion,
like a woman in labor,
for now you must leave the city
to camp in the open field.
You will go to Babylon;
there you will be rescued.
There the LORD will redeem you
out of the hand of your enemies.

11 But now many nations
are gathered against you.
They say, "Let her be defiled,
let our eyes gloat over Zion!"
12 But they do not know
the thoughts of the LORD;
they do not understand his plan,
that he has gathered them like sheaves to the threshing floor.
13 "Rise and thresh, Daughter Zion,
for I will give you horns of iron;
I will give you hooves of bronze,
and you will break to pieces many nations."
You will devote their ill-gotten gains to the LORD,
their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

Health & Medicine

In the ancient world, children were born at home, not in a hospital. The pains of labor and delivery, extreme as they are, were familiar to many people. The writers of the Bible use birth pains to suggest the sufferings that must take place before the salvation of God appears (Mic 4:10). The distress that accompanies the unfolding of the divine plan has been called "the birth pangs of the Messiah" (compare Jn 16:21, 22).

A Promised Ruler From Bethlehem

5[d] 1 Marshal your troops now, city of troops,
for a siege is laid against us.
They will strike Israel's ruler
on the cheek with a rod.

2 "But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah,
though you are small among the clans[e] of Judah,
out of you will come for me
one who will be ruler over Israel,
whose origins are from of old,
from ancient times."

3 Therefore Israel will be abandoned
until the time when she who is in labor bears a son,
and the rest of his brothers return
to join the Israelites.

4 He will stand and shepherd his flock
in the strength of the LORD,
in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God.
And they will live securely, for then his greatness
will reach to the ends of the earth.

5 And he will be our peace
when the Assyrians invade our land
and march through our fortresses.
We will raise against them seven shepherds,
even eight commanders,
6 who will rule[f] the land of Assyria with the sword,
the land of Nimrod with drawn sword.[g]

[a] 8 Or *hill* [b] 9 Or *King* [c] 9 Or *Ruler* [d] In Hebrew texts 5:1 is numbered 4:14, and 5:2-15 is numbered 5:1-14.
[e] 2 Or *rulers* [f] 6 Or *crush* [g] 6 Or *Nimrod in its gates*

He will deliver us from the Assyrians
when they invade our land
and march across our borders.

7 The remnant of Jacob will be
in the midst of many peoples
like dew from the LORD,
like showers on the grass,
which do not wait for anyone
or depend on man.
8 The remnant of Jacob will be among the nations,
in the midst of many peoples,
like a lion among the beasts of the forest,
like a young lion among flocks of sheep,
which mauls and mangles as it goes,
and no one can rescue.
9 Your hand will be lifted up in triumph over your enemies,
and all your foes will be destroyed.

10 "In that day," declares the LORD,

"I will destroy your horses from among you
and demolish your chariots.
11 I will destroy the cities of your land
and tear down all your strongholds.
12 I will destroy your witchcraft
and you will no longer cast spells.
13 I will destroy your idols
and your sacred stones from among you;
you will no longer bow down
to the work of your hands.
14 I will uproot from among you your Asherah poles[a]
when I demolish your cities.
15 I will take vengeance in anger and wrath
on the nations that have not obeyed me."

[a] *14* That is, wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah
[b] *8* Or *prudently*

The LORD's Case Against Israel

6 1 Listen to what the LORD says:

"Stand up, plead my case before the mountains;
let the hills hear what you have to say.

2 "Hear, you mountains, the LORD's accusation;
listen, you everlasting foundations of the earth.
For the LORD has a case against his people;
he is lodging a charge against Israel.

3 "My people, what have I done to you?
How have I burdened you? Answer me.
4 I brought you up out of Egypt
and redeemed you from the land of slavery.
I sent Moses to lead you,
also Aaron and Miriam.
5 My people, remember
what Balak king of Moab plotted
and what Balaam son of Beor answered.
Remember your journey from Shittim to Gilgal,
that you may know the righteous acts of the LORD."

6 With what shall I come before the LORD
and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
7 Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of olive oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
8 He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.
And what does the LORD require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly[b] with your God.

Omri's Name Lives On (Mic 6:16)

Omri was the king of Israel (885–874 B.C.) who established Samaria as the capital of the Israelite kingdom. He also founded a dynasty in Israel that lasted four generations, with Omri being followed on Israel's throne by his son Ahab, and Ahab's sons Ahaziah and Joram.

Omri and his dynasty achieved international importance. Illustrating Omri's influence are references to him in two sources outside of the Bible. The Moabite Stone is a basalt slab dating from about 850 B.C. which records some of Omri's military accomplishments. In the inscription on the stone, King Mesha of Moab mentions Omri as occupying parts of the land of Moab. Moreover, Omri is indirectly mentioned in the Assyrian annals of Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.). Although Jehu was not of Omri's family and had even overthrown the Omri dynasty, he is described in the annals as a "son of Omri," and the land of Israel is called the "house of Omri."

This Israelite king also impacted neighboring Judah, and his name was known to Micah, who prophesied more than 125 years after Omri's death. Micah's mention of "the statutes of Omri" (Mic 6:16) possibly alludes to Omri's importance in at least legal declarations, although there is no other reference to Omri's legal code, even in sources outside of the Bible. Despite impressive political accomplishments, Omri is condemned for his religious policies (1Ki 16:25, 26), and Micah announces judgment on the people because they have kept Omri's statutes.

Israel's Guilt and Punishment

9 Listen! The LORD is calling to the city—
and to fear your name is wisdom—
"Heed the rod and the One who
appointed it.[a]
10 Am I still to forget your ill-gotten treasures,
you wicked house,
and the short ephah,[b] which is accursed?
11 Shall I acquit someone with dishonest
scales,
with a bag of false weights?
12 Your rich people are violent;
your inhabitants are liars
and their tongues speak deceitfully.
13 Therefore, I have begun to destroy you,
to ruin[c] you because of your sins.
14 You will eat but not be satisfied;
your stomach will still be empty.[d]
You will store up but save nothing,
because what you save[e] I will give to the
sword.
15 You will plant but not harvest;
you will press olives but not use the
oil,
you will crush grapes but not drink the
wine.
16 You have observed the statutes of Omri
and all the practices of Ahab's house;
you have followed their traditions.
Therefore I will give you over to ruin
and your people to derision;
you will bear the scorn of the nations.[f]"

Israel's Misery

7 1 What misery is mine!
I am like one who gathers summer fruit
at the gleaning of the vineyard;
there is no cluster of grapes to eat,
none of the early figs that I crave.
2 The faithful have been swept from the land;
not one upright person remains.
Everyone lies in wait to shed blood;
they hunt each other with nets.
3 Both hands are skilled in doing evil;
the ruler demands gifts,
the judge accepts bribes,
the powerful dictate what they desire—
they all conspire together.
4 The best of them is like a brier,
the most upright worse than a thorn
hedge.
The day God visits you has come,
the day your watchmen sound the alarm.
Now is the time of your confusion.
5 Do not trust a neighbor;
put no confidence in a friend.
Even with the woman who lies in your
embrace
guard the words of your lips.
6 For a son dishonors his father,
a daughter rises up against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-
law—
a man's enemies are the members of his
own household.

7 But as for me, I watch in hope for the LORD,
I wait for God my Savior;
my God will hear me.

Israel Will Rise

8 Do not gloat over me, my enemy!
Though I have fallen, I will rise.

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[a] *9* The meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain. [b] *10* An ephah was a dry measure. [c] *13* Or *Therefore, I will make you ill and destroy you; / I will ruin* [d] *14* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [e] *14* Or *You will press toward birth but not give birth, / and what you bring to birth* [f] *16* Septuagint; Hebrew *scorn due my people*

Though I sit in darkness,
the LORD will be my light.
9 Because I have sinned against him,
I will bear the LORD's wrath,
until he pleads my case
and upholds my cause.
He will bring me out into the light;
I will see his righteousness.
10 Then my enemy will see it
and will be covered with shame,
she who said to me,
"Where is the LORD your God?"
My eyes will see her downfall;
even now she will be trampled underfoot
like mire in the streets.

11 The day for building your walls will come,
the day for extending your boundaries.
12 In that day people will come to you
from Assyria and the cities of Egypt,
even from Egypt to the Euphrates
and from sea to sea
and from mountain to mountain.
13 The earth will become desolate because of
its inhabitants,
as the result of their deeds.

Prayer and Praise

14 Shepherd your people with your staff,
the flock of your inheritance,
which lives by itself in a forest,
in fertile pasturelands.[a]
Let them feed in Bashan and Gilead
as in days long ago.

15 "As in the days when you came out of Egypt,
I will show them my wonders."

16 Nations will see and be ashamed,
deprived of all their power.
They will put their hands over their mouths
and their ears will become deaf.
17 They will lick dust like a snake,
like creatures that crawl on the ground.
They will come trembling out of their dens;
they will turn in fear to the LORD our God
and will be afraid of you.
18 Who is a God like you,
who pardons sin and forgives the
transgression
of the remnant of his inheritance?
You do not stay angry forever
but delight to show mercy.
19 You will again have compassion on us;
you will tread our sins underfoot
and hurl all our iniquities into the depths
of the sea.
20 You will be faithful to Jacob,
and show love to Abraham,
as you pledged on oath to our ancestors
in days long ago.

[a] 14 Or *in the middle of Carmel*

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Pekah Attacks Ahaz

As usual, the Chronicler gives more detail about the kings of Judah and much less detail about the kings of Israel, than does the Book of Kings. The succession of kings in Israel is not mentioned; only Pekah appears in relation to the attack on Judah (2Ch 28:5, 6). On the other hand, Chronicles expands the account of King Jotham in Judah, relating more of his building activities (27:3, 4) and his victory over Ammon (27:5).

The differences between Kings and Chronicles, though, are more than just detail. In 2 Kings, Aram and Israel could not overcome Ahaz (2Ki 16:5), but 2 Chronicles describes their victory over Judah, emphasizing Judah's losses (2Ch 28:5–15). Perhaps 2Ki 16:5 only means that the Syro-Israelite coalition could not take Jerusalem itself.

In Chronicles the two kingdoms, Israel and Judah, are still "fellow Israelites," even though they are at war (28:11). For Israel to have enslaved their brethren from Judah would have been in violation of the Mosaic law (see Lev 25:39–43). The Israelites of Ephraim were sensitive to the guilt involved (2Ch 28:13), which influenced the kind treatment of the Judahite captives (28:15).

The two histories agree, however, in their condemnation of Ahaz and his worship of foreign deities. King Ahaz did not turn to God, but in fact turned farther from him (2Ch 28:22–25).

• 2 Chronicles 27:1—28:27

2 Chronicles

Jotham King of Judah

27:1 Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His mother's name was Jerusha daughter of Zadok. 2 He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him he did not enter the temple of the LORD. The people, however, continued their corrupt practices. 3 Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the temple of the LORD and did extensive work on the wall at the hill of Ophel. 4 He built towns in the hill country of Judah and forts and towers in the wooded areas.

5 Jotham waged war against the king of the

Ammonites and conquered them. That year the Ammonites paid him a hundred talents[a] of silver, ten thousand cors[b] of wheat and ten thousand cors[c] of barley. The Ammonites brought him the same amount also in the second and third years.

6 Jotham grew powerful because he walked steadfastly before the LORD his God.

7 The other events in Jotham's reign, including all his wars and the other things he did, are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. 8 He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. 9 Jotham rested with his ancestors and was buried in the City of David. And Ahaz his son succeeded him as king.

Ahaz King of Judah

28 1 Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. Unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD. 2 He followed the ways of the kings of Israel and also made idols for worshiping the Baals. 3 He burned sacrifices in the Valley of Ben Hinnom and sacrificed his children in the fire, engaging in the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. 4 He offered sacrifices and burned incense at the high places, on the hilltops and under every spreading tree.

5 Therefore the LORD his God delivered him into the hands of the king of Aram. The Arameans defeated him and took many of his people as prisoners and brought them to Damascus.

He was also given into the hands of the king of Israel, who inflicted heavy casualties on him. 6 In one day Pekah son of Remaliah killed a hundred and twenty thousand soldiers in Judah — because Judah had forsaken the LORD, the God of their ancestors. 7 Zikri, an Ephraimite warrior, killed Maaseiah the king's son, Azrikam the officer in charge of the palace, and Elkanah, second to the king. 8 The men of Israel took captive from their fellow Israelites who were from Judah two hundred thousand wives, sons and daughters. They also took a great deal of plunder, which they carried back to Samaria.

9 But a prophet of the LORD named Oded was there, and he went out to meet the army when it returned to Samaria. He said to them, "Because the LORD, the God of your ancestors, was angry with Judah, he gave them into your hand. But you have slaughtered them in a rage that reaches to heaven. 10 And now you intend to make the men and women of Judah and Jerusalem your slaves. But aren't you also guilty of sins against the LORD your God? 11 Now listen to me! Send back your fellow Israelites you have taken as prisoners, for the LORD's fierce anger rests on you."

12 Then some of the leaders in Ephraim — Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berekiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai — confronted those who were arriving from the war. 13 "You must not bring those prisoners here," they said, "or we will be guilty before the LORD. Do you intend to add to our sin and guilt? For our guilt is already great, and his fierce anger rests on Israel."

14 So the soldiers gave up the prisoners and plunder in the presence of the officials and all the assembly. 15 The men designated by name took the prisoners, and from the plunder they clothed all who were naked. They provided them with clothes and sandals, food and drink, and healing balm. All those who were weak they put on donkeys. So they took them back to their fellow Israelites at Jericho, the City of Palms, and returned to Samaria.

16 At that time King Ahaz sent to the kings[d] of Assyria for help. 17 The Edomites had again come and attacked Judah and carried away prisoners, 18 while the Philistines had raided towns in the foothills and in the Negev of Judah. They captured and occupied Beth Shemesh, Aijalon and Gederoth, as well as Soko, Timnah and Gimzo, with their surrounding villages. 19 The LORD had humbled Judah because of Ahaz king of Israel,[e] for he had promoted wickedness in Judah and had been most unfaithful to the LORD. 20 Tiglath-Pileser[f] king of Assyria came to him, but he gave him trouble instead of help. 21 Ahaz took some of the things from the temple

TIME CAPSULE		715 to 710 B.C.
715		Hezekiah becomes king in Judah
714–712		Ashkelon joins with other Philistine cities in coalition against Assyria
713		Sargon II places his brother on throne in Ashdod
712		Sargon forces Yamani of Ashdod to flee to Egypt
710		Marduk-Baladan driven from Babylon by Sargon

[a] *5* That is, about 3 3/4 tons or about 3.4 metric tons [b] *5* That is, probably about 1,800 tons or about 1,600 metric tons of wheat [c] *5* That is, probably about 1,500 tons or about 1,350 metric tons of barley [d] *16* Most Hebrew manuscripts; one Hebrew manuscript, Septuagint and Vulgate (see also 2 Kings 16:7) *king* [e] *19* That is, Judah, as frequently in 2 Chronicles [f] *20* Hebrew *Tilgath-Pilneser,* a variant of *Tiglath-Pileser*

King So or Dynasty So (2Ki 17:4)

King Hoshea of Israel attempted to procure military aid from "So king of Egypt" (2Ki 17:4) for a rebellion against Assyria, but was unsuccessful. The positive identification of this king with monarchs listed in Egyptian records also has been unsuccessful.

Though no Egyptian king is known by the name "So," two kings are possible candidates. Both ruled in Egypt during Hoshea's reign in Israel (732–722 B.C.), and both ruled at a time when Egypt was politically divided. In fact, they were contemporaries: Osorkon IV (730–715 B.C.) and Tefnakht I (727–720 B.C.).

Osorkon IV was the last ruler of the 22nd Dynasty (c. 945–715 B.C.). The Egypt of his time was no longer a united kingdom, but rather consisted of small, rival Libyan dynasties. Some scholars suggest that "So" was a short form of the name "Osorkon."

Tefnakht I was able to consolidate a kingdom in Egypt's West Delta, establishing a capital at Sais. Scholars have supposed that "So" could be a place name corresponding to Sais, or to "the Saite," a name referring to the dynasty of pharaohs who ruled from the city of Sais. If this were the case, then the writer of 2 Kings possibly meant that Hoshea sent "to Sais (So), to the king of Egypt," emphasizing the Egyptian monarch's dynasty rather than his personal name.

These two contemporary monarchs are the most likely candidates to be King So of Egypt. Although Osorkon IV would have been physically closer to Palestine, Tefnakht campaigned in Arabia, according to tradition.

of the LORD and from the royal palace and from the officials and presented them to the king of Assyria, but that did not help him.

22 In his time of trouble King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the LORD. 23 He offered sacrifices to the gods of Damascus, who had defeated him; for he thought, "Since the gods of the kings of Aram have helped them, I will sacrifice to them so they will help me." But they were his downfall and the downfall of all Israel.

24 Ahaz gathered together the furnishings from the temple of God and cut them in pieces. He shut the doors of the LORD's temple and set up altars at every street corner in Jerusalem. 25 In every town in Judah he built high places to burn sacrifices to other gods and aroused the anger of the LORD, the God of his ancestors.

26 The other events of his reign and all his ways, from beginning to end, are written in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 27 Ahaz rested with his ancestors and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but he was not placed in the tombs of the kings of Israel. And Hezekiah his son succeeded him as king.

[a] *4 So* is probably an abbreviation for *Osorkon*.

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Assyria's Invasions

The alliance made by Pekah of Israel and Rezin of Aram (Syria) failed. As Isaiah had foretold (Isa 17:1– 11), Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria overcame Aram and crushed it, destroying 591 towns in the campaign that ended in 732 B.C. Israel, however, survived briefly after the Syro-Ephraimite War, now under King Hoshea (732–722 B.C.). When Tiglath-Pileser died, Hoshea rebelled against Assyria, depending on help from Egypt. Tiglath-Pileser's successor, Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.), moved quickly.

• **2 Kings 17:1–4**

2 Kings

Hoshea Last King of Israel

17:1 In the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years. 2 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him.

3 Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up to attack Hoshea, who had been Shalmaneser's vassal and had paid him tribute. 4 But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea was a traitor, for he had sent envoys to So[a] king of Egypt, and he no longer paid tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done year by year. Therefore Shalmaneser seized him and put him in prison.

TRANSITION

A Warning to Jerusalem's Leaders

To Isaiah, in southern Judah, northern Israel's approaching end was the result of the people's refusal to listen to the word of the Lord. There was no reason for Judah to rejoice. Instead, Isaiah used the "fading flower" of Ephraim (another name for Israel) as an object lesson for the rulers in Jerusalem (Isa 28:1–29). Jerusalem too can be punished, he declares, though it will not be destroyed (29:6–9). And someday, perhaps, those who had refused to hear will hear; even Israel, the house of Jacob, might be restored (29:17–24).

• **Isaiah 28:1—29:24**

Isaiah

Woe to the Leaders of Ephraim and Judah

28 **:1** Woe to that wreath, the pride of
Ephraim's drunkards,
to the fading flower, his glorious beauty,
set on the head of a fertile valley—
to that city, the pride of those laid low by
wine!
2 See, the Lord has one who is powerful and
strong.
Like a hailstorm and a destructive
wind,
like a driving rain and a flooding downpour,
he will throw it forcefully to the ground.
3 That wreath, the pride of Ephraim's
drunkards,
will be trampled underfoot.
4 That fading flower, his glorious beauty,
set on the head of a fertile valley,
will be like figs ripe before harvest—
as soon as people see them and take them
in hand,
they swallow them.

Assyrian Campaigns Against Israel and Judah

In 725 B.C. Shalmaneser V of Assyria invaded Israel and besieged the capital city of Samaria for 3 years. Shalmaneser died shortly before Samaria fell in 722 B.C. Sargon II, his successor, claimed the credit for the Assyrian victory. In 701 B.C. Sennacherib of Assyria moved southward along the coastal plains, defeated an Egyptian army, and then turned his attention toward Judah. From his camp at Lachish he moved against Jerusalem, but did not capture the city.

Food & Drink

There is a natural limit to the strength of alcohol that can be obtained without distilling, a process unknown in biblical times. Great quantities of grain were used to make beer, which was more of a food or thin gruel than today's beer. Numerous warnings in Scripture show that drunkenness was a problem (Isa 28:7).

5 In that day the LORD Almighty
will be a glorious crown,
a beautiful wreath
for the remnant of his people.
6 He will be a spirit of justice
to the one who sits in judgment,
a source of strength
to those who turn back the battle at the
gate.

7 And these also stagger from wine
and reel from beer:
Priests and prophets stagger from beer
and are befuddled with wine;
they reel from beer,
they stagger when seeing visions,
they stumble when rendering decisions.
8 All the tables are covered with vomit
and there is not a spot without filth.

9 "Who is it he is trying to teach?
To whom is he explaining his message?
To children weaned from their milk,
to those just taken from the breast?
10 For it is:
Do this, do that,
a rule for this, a rule for that[a];
a little here, a little there."

11 Very well then, with foreign lips and strange
tongues
God will speak to this people,
12 to whom he said,
"This is the resting place, let the weary
rest";
and, "This is the place of repose"—
but they would not listen.
13 So then, the word of the LORD to them will
become:
Do this, do that,
a rule for this, a rule for that;
a little here, a little there—
so that as they go they will fall backward;
they will be injured and snared and
captured.

[a] *10* Hebrew / *sav lasav sav lasav / kav lakav kav lakav* (probably meaningless sounds mimicking the prophet's words); also in verse 13

A Covenant with Death (Isa 28:15, 18)

In the ancient world worshipers prayed to both demons and deities of death to spare them, or they wore amulets to protect them from death by warding off the divine beings. Such amulets are commonly found in Middle Eastern archaeological digs, including Judah and Israel.

The god of death in Syria-Palestine was Mot. The Ugaritic myths from Ras Shamra, Aram (Syria), depict Mot as having an insatiable appetite for living beings and, in the end, devouring all life. In Canaanite thought, Mot, the bringer of death, struggles with Baal, the bringer of life. Mot's victories result in death and destruction on earth, while Baal's victories bring life-giving rains and good crops.

Isaiah confronted some leaders of Jerusalem who anticipated a coming destruction (Isa 28:14–22). The "overwhelming scourge" (28:15) pictures a "flood," a metaphor used throughout the ancient Near East for military destruction. These leaders believed that by making a covenant with Mot they would be safe. Mot, they supposed, would protect them when the devastation passed through.

Isaiah answers that their "covenant with death," their bargain with Mot, offers no real security (28:18, 19). All Mot can deliver is death itself.

14 Therefore hear the word of the LORD, you scoffers
who rule this people in Jerusalem.
15 You boast, "We have entered into a covenant with death,
with the realm of the dead we have made an agreement.
When an overwhelming scourge sweeps by, it cannot touch us,
for we have made a lie our refuge and falsehood[a] our hiding place."

16 So this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone,
a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;
the one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic.
17 I will make justice the measuring line and righteousness the plumb line;
hail will sweep away your refuge, the lie,
and water will overflow your hiding place.
18 Your covenant with death will be annulled;
your agreement with the realm of the dead will not stand.
When the overwhelming scourge sweeps by,
you will be beaten down by it.
19 As often as it comes it will carry you away;
morning after morning, by day and by night,
it will sweep through."

The understanding of this message will bring sheer terror.
20 The bed is too short to stretch out on,
the blanket too narrow to wrap around you.

21 The LORD will rise up as he did at Mount Perazim,
he will rouse himself as in the Valley of Gibeon—
to do his work, his strange work,
and perform his task, his alien task.
22 Now stop your mocking,
or your chains will become heavier;
the Lord, the LORD Almighty, has told me
of the destruction decreed against the whole land.

23 Listen and hear my voice;
pay attention and hear what I say.
24 When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually?
Does he keep on breaking up and working the soil?
25 When he has leveled the surface,
does he not sow caraway and scatter cumin?
Does he not plant wheat in its place,[b]
barley in its plot,[b]
and spelt in its field?
26 His God instructs him
and teaches him the right way.

27 Caraway is not threshed with a sledge,
nor is the wheel of a cart rolled over cumin;
caraway is beaten out with a rod,
and cumin with a stick.
28 Grain must be ground to make bread;
so one does not go on threshing it forever.
The wheels of a threshing cart may be rolled over it,
but one does not use horses to grind grain.
29 All this also comes from the LORD Almighty,
whose plan is wonderful,
whose wisdom is magnificent.

[a] *15* Or *false gods*
[b] *25* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

THE FALL OF SAMARIA

Woe to David's City

29 [1]Woe to you, Ariel, Ariel,
the city where David settled!
Add year to year
and let your cycle of festivals go on.
[2]Yet I will besiege Ariel;
she will mourn and lament,
she will be to me like an altar hearth.[a]
[3]I will encamp against you on all sides;
I will encircle you with towers
and set up my siege works against you.
[4]Brought low, you will speak from the ground;
your speech will mumble out of the dust.
Your voice will come ghostlike from the earth;
out of the dust your speech will whisper.

[5]But your many enemies will become like fine dust,
the ruthless hordes like blown chaff.
Suddenly, in an instant,
[6] the LORD Almighty will come
with thunder and earthquake and great noise,
with windstorm and tempest and flames of a devouring fire.

TIME CAPSULE		710 to 703 B.C.
710	Assyrian troops fight on horseback individually	
705	Hezekiah revolts against Assyria	
705	Earliest pin-tumbler lock mechanism, Assyria	
704–681	Sennacherib of Assyria faces alliance of Chaldeans, Arameans, and Elamites early in his reign	
703–702?	Marduk-Baladan's second reign in Babylon	

[7]Then the hordes of all the nations that fight against Ariel,
that attack her and her fortress and besiege her,
will be as it is with a dream,
with a vision in the night—
[8]as when a hungry person dreams of eating,
but awakens hungry still;
as when a thirsty person dreams of drinking,
but awakens faint and thirsty still.
So will it be with the hordes of all the nations
that fight against Mount Zion.

[9]Be stunned and amazed,
blind yourselves and be sightless;
be drunk, but not from wine,
stagger, but not from beer.
[10]The LORD has brought over you a deep sleep:
He has sealed your eyes (the prophets);
he has covered your heads (the seers).

[11]For you this whole vision is nothing but words sealed in a scroll. And if you give the scroll to someone who can read, and say, "Read this, please," they will answer, "I can't; it is sealed." [12]Or if you give the scroll to someone who cannot read, and say, "Read this, please," they will answer, "I don't know how to read."

[13]The Lord says:

"These people come near to me with their mouth
and honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
Their worship of me
is based on merely human rules they have been taught.[b]

[a] *2* The Hebrew for *altar hearth* sounds like the Hebrew for *Ariel*. [b] *13* Hebrew; Septuagint *They worship me in vain; / their teachings are merely human rules*

14 Therefore once more I will astound these people
with wonder upon wonder;
the wisdom of the wise will perish,
the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish."
15 Woe to those who go to great depths
to hide their plans from the LORD,
who do their work in darkness and think,
"Who sees us? Who will know?"
16 You turn things upside down,
as if the potter were thought to be like the clay!
Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it,
"You did not make me"?
Can the pot say to the potter,
"You know nothing"?

17 In a very short time, will not Lebanon be turned into a fertile field
and the fertile field seem like a forest?
18 In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll,
and out of gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind will see.
19 Once more the humble will rejoice in the LORD;
the needy will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.
20 The ruthless will vanish,
the mockers will disappear,
and all who have an eye for evil will be cut down—
21 those who with a word make someone out to be guilty,
who ensnare the defender in court
and with false testimony deprive the innocent of justice.

22 Therefore this is what the LORD, who redeemed Abraham, says to the descendants of Jacob:

"No longer will Jacob be ashamed;
no longer will their faces grow pale.
23 When they see among them their children,
the work of my hands,
they will keep my name holy;
they will acknowledge the holiness of the Holy One of Jacob,
and will stand in awe of the God of Israel.
24 Those who are wayward in spirit will gain understanding;
those who complain will accept instruction."

TRANSITION

The Fall of Samaria

Modern history-writing aims at objectivity and tries to present only what can be independently verified. This is a new notion. Ancient historians invariably had their own polemic purposes and—more to the point—were quite open about it. The historian of the Book of Kings cannot tell of such an event as the fall of the northern kingdom without giving the theological reason that such a thing could have happened.

Practical reasons for the fall, such as Assyria's superior armies, are unimportant to the biblical historian. Israel had broken the statutes and commandments of the Lord (2Ki 17:15, 16). Ultimately it was Israel's rejection by her God that brought about her fall (17:18, 20, 23).

The identity of the Assyrian king who captured Samaria in 722 B.C. is not clear. Shalmaneser V died sometime during or after the 3-year siege. His brother and successor, Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), was probably the king who actually entered the city and led the conquered Israelites into exile.

In an inscription Sargon claims credit for deporting 27,290 captives. The custom of many Assyrian kings was to replace the deported captives with inhabitants from other conquered areas. The mixture of races broke rebellious tendencies and blended religious practices (17:24–41). This ethnic and religious blending in Samaria is the reason for the Jewish prejudice against Samaritans that is so evident in the New Testament.

• **2 Kings 17:5–41**

2 Kings

17 :5 The king of Assyria invaded the entire land, marched against Samaria and laid siege to it for three years. 6 In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and deported the Israelites to Assyria. He settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in the towns of the Medes.

Israel Exiled Because of Sin

7 All this took place because the Israelites had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them up out of Egypt from under the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They worshiped other gods 8 and followed the practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before them, as well as the practices that the kings of Israel had introduced. 9 The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city they built themselves high places in all their towns. 10 They set up sacred stones and

Assyrians Worship Yahweh (2Ki 17:25, 28)

In the theology of the ancient world, gods owned territory. When Assyria overran Samaria, it was understood that Ashur, god of Assyria, was then in control of an empire which included Israel. Since the land of Israel still technically belonged to Yahweh, in the eyes of the Assyrians Yahweh was now a lesser deity in their pantheon, who would serve their god Ashur.

The Assyrians desired to be on good terms with the deities who owned the territories which Ashur and the Assyrian armies had conquered. It was important, therefore, to acknowledge Yahweh as God of Israel. Immediately after the conquest, however, busy with the resettling of peoples from other parts of their empire into Israel, the Assyrian army failed to retain the official rites in honor of Yahweh. As would any slighted god in the ancient world, Yahweh responded with a "gentle" reminder not to ignore the real power of the land; lions were sent which attacked people (2Ki 17:25).

Assyria attempted to correct this slight by finding among the exiled Israelites an official priest of Yahweh and returning him to Samaria. The king of Assyria hoped that the people who had been resettled in Israel would learn the proper religion for the territory they now inhabited. This would ensure that the local God, Yahweh, would remain happy with Assyria.

The people whom the Assyrians had forcibly relocated to Israel did what the Judeans would do approximately 136 years later when they were exiled to Babylonia. The new transplanted inhabitants brought their own gods with them to Israel and continued the worship they had practiced in their previous home territories (2Ki 17:29–33).

Asherah poles on every high hill and under every spreading tree. 11At every high place they burned incense, as the nations whom the LORD had driven out before them had done. They did wicked things that aroused the LORD's anger. 12They worshiped idols, though the LORD had said, "You shall not do this."[a] 13The LORD warned Israel and Judah through all his prophets and seers: "Turn from your evil ways. Observe my commands and decrees, in accordance with the entire Law that I commanded your ancestors to obey and that I delivered to you through my servants the prophets."

14But they would not listen and were as stiff-necked as their ancestors, who did not trust in the LORD their God. 15They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their ancestors and the statutes he had warned them to keep. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the LORD had ordered them, "Do not do as they do."

16They forsook all the commands of the LORD their God and made for themselves two idols cast in the shape of calves, and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the starry hosts, and they worshiped Baal. 17They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire. They practiced divination and sought omens and sold themselves to do evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger.

18So the LORD was very angry with Israel and removed them from his presence. Only the tribe of Judah was left, 19and even Judah did not keep the commands of the LORD their God. They followed the practices Israel had introduced. 20Therefore the LORD rejected all the people of Israel; he afflicted them and gave them into the hands of plunderers, until he thrust them from his presence.

21When he tore Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat their king. Jeroboam enticed Israel away from following the LORD and caused them to commit a great sin. 22The Israelites persisted in all the sins of Jeroboam and did not turn away from them 23until the LORD removed them from his presence, as he had warned through all his servants the prophets. So the people of Israel were taken from their homeland into exile in Assyria, and they are still there.

Cults & Supernatural

The native religion of Canaan had an obvious focus on trees, whether living trees or the wooden poles made from them (2Ki 17:10). These poles were carved in some way, probably not as freestanding statues like those of classical Greece and Rome. The Israelites were familiar with trees being a popular and widespread symbol of divinity, but were not to represent their God by any image.

Samaria Resettled

24The king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Kuthah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took over Samaria and lived in its towns. 25When they first lived there, they did not worship the LORD; so he sent lions among them and they killed some

[a] *12* Exodus 20:4,5

Gods of the Assyrian Exiles in Israel (2Ki 17:29–33)

The people whom Assyria forcibly resettled in Israel did not worship Yahweh exclusively when they arrived. Nor did they accept the gods of Canaan. Instead the immigrants took over the sacred places of the Israelites and established the cults of their own gods where the Israelites had worshiped Canaanite gods (2Ki 17:29).

Most of the deities listed in 2Ki 17:30, 31 (Ashima, Nibhaz, Tartak, Adrammelek, Anammelek) cannot be clearly identified with any known gods of the ancient Near East. Only Nergal (and perhaps Sukkoth Benoth) can be associated with Babylonian or Assyrian religion.

The new immigrants to Samaria were not impressed with the local rural deities. While they did begin to worship Yahweh (17:33), they also kept the worship of other gods from cultured areas of Mesopotamia and Elam. Because they made statues of their deities, their first religious actions were forbidden by the local patron deity of the land, Yahweh.

of the people. [26]It was reported to the king of Assyria: "The people you deported and resettled in the towns of Samaria do not know what the god of that country requires. He has sent lions among them, which are killing them off, because the people do not know what he requires."

[27]Then the king of Assyria gave this order: "Have one of the priests you took captive from Samaria go back to live there and teach the people what the god of the land requires." [28]So one of the priests who had been exiled from Samaria came to live in Bethel and taught them how to worship the LORD.

[29]Nevertheless, each national group made its own gods in the several towns where they settled, and set them up in the shrines the people of Samaria had made at the high places. [30]The people from Babylon made Sukkoth Benoth, those from Kuthah made Nergal, and those from Hamath made Ashima; [31]the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire as sacrifices to Adrammelek and Anammelek, the gods of Sepharvaim. [32]They worshiped the LORD, but they also appointed all sorts of their own people to officiate for them as priests in the shrines at the high places. [33]They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods in accordance with the customs of the nations from which they had been brought.

[34]To this day they persist in their former practices. They neither worship the LORD nor adhere to the decrees and regulations, the laws and commands that the LORD gave the descendants of Jacob, whom he named Israel. [35]When the LORD made a covenant with the Israelites, he commanded them: "Do not worship any other gods or bow down to them, serve them or sacrifice to them. [36]But the LORD, who brought you up out of Egypt with mighty power and outstretched arm, is the one you must worship. To him you shall bow down and to him offer sacrifices. [37]You must always be careful to keep the decrees and regulations, the laws and commands he wrote for you. Do not worship other gods. [38]Do not forget the covenant I have made with you, and do not worship other gods. [39]Rather, worship the LORD your God; it is he who will deliver you from the hand of all your enemies."

[40]They would not listen, however, but persisted in their former practices. [41]Even while these people were worshiping the LORD, they were serving their idols. To this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their ancestors did.

TRANSITION

A New King in Judah

The reign of Ahaz had not been good for Judah. His pro-Assyrian policy resulted in Judah becoming a vassal to Assyria. He compromised Judah's worship of Yahweh through his worship of foreign deities. During Ahaz's rule, Judah lost the port of Elath to Aram, and it became inhabited by Edomites. Furthermore, Chronicles records invasions by the Philistines into southern Judah at this time (2Ch 28:18).

Judah needed a change of direction, and it came in Hezekiah, the son and successor of Ahaz. During his reign (715–686 B.C.), Hezekiah led an unparalleled reformation of worship (2Ki 18:4–6); revolted against Assyria, reversing the policy of Ahaz (18:7); and reconquered Philistia (18:8). This first rebellion against Assyria may have occurred in 705 B.C. when the Assyrian king Sargon died.

• **2 Kings 18:1–12**

2 Kings

Hezekiah King of Judah

18 :1 In the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. [2]He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His

mother's name was Abijah[a] daughter of Zechariah. 3He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. 4He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.[b])

5Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. 6He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses. 7And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. 8From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory.

9In King Hezekiah's fourth year, which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and laid siege to it. 10At the end of three years the Assyrians took it. So Samaria was captured in Hezekiah's sixth year, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel. 11The king of Assyria deported Israel to Assyria and settled them in Halah, in Gozan on the Habor River and in towns of the Medes. 12This happened because they had not obeyed the LORD their God, but had violated his covenant — all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded. They neither listened to the commands nor carried them out.

TRANSITION

Assyria, Tool in God's Hand

The prophet Isaiah had declared that Assyria was (unwittingly) serving God's purposes in punishing Israel. When that punishment was complete, however, Isaiah had a new message: a message of judgment for Assyria and of possible hope for the remnant of Israel and to Judah.

The Assyrians had made people submit to their yoke (Isa 10:27) and boasted of their strength (10:13, 14). God would now punish his arrogant tool, Assyria (10:5–34). He would reveal a ruler "from the stump of Jesse," that is, from the line of David, to rule in peace (11:1–9), and would gather his people from every place to which they may have been scattered by his judgment (11:10–16). Such deliverance prompts a hymn of praise to God (12:1–6).

• Isaiah 10:5—12:6

Isaiah

God's Judgment on Assyria

10 :5 "Woe to the Assyrian, the rod of my anger,
in whose hand is the club of my wrath!
6I send him against a godless nation,
I dispatch him against a people who anger me,
to seize loot and snatch plunder,
and to trample them down like mud in the streets.
7But this is not what he intends,
this is not what he has in mind;
his purpose is to destroy,
to put an end to many nations.
8'Are not my commanders all kings?' he says.
9 'Has not Kalno fared like Carchemish?
Is not Hamath like Arpad,
and Samaria like Damascus?
10As my hand seized the kingdoms of the idols,
kingdoms whose images excelled those of Jerusalem and Samaria —
11shall I not deal with Jerusalem and her images
as I dealt with Samaria and her idols?'"

12When the Lord has finished all his work against Mount Zion and Jerusalem, he will say, "I will punish the king of Assyria for the willful pride of his heart and the haughty look in his eyes. 13For he says:

"'By the strength of my hand I have done this,
and by my wisdom, because I have understanding.
I removed the boundaries of nations,
I plundered their treasures;
like a mighty one I subdued[c] their kings.
14As one reaches into a nest,
so my hand reached for the wealth of the nations;
as people gather abandoned eggs,
so I gathered all the countries;
not one flapped a wing,
or opened its mouth to chirp.'"

15Does the ax raise itself above the person who swings it,
or the saw boast against the one who uses it?

[a] *2* Hebrew *Abi*, a variant of *Abijah* [b] *4* *Nehushtan* sounds like the Hebrew for both *bronze* and *snake*.
[c] *13* Or *treasures; / I subdued the mighty,*

Omri Builds a Capital at Samaria (Isa 10:10, 11)

The name "Samaria" originally referred to the city chosen by King Omri to be the capital city of Israel in the early 9th century B.C. The site was excellent for establishing a capital because it was militarily defensible and close to a major international highway. Later in time, the name "Samaria" was associated with the region otherwise known as the northern kingdom of Israel.

It has been presumed that Omri built the city Samaria to create an atmosphere of stability and security during a period when it was uncertain who had rights to the throne. Several of the previous kings—Nadab, Elah, Zimri, and Tibni—ruled for very short periods before being overthrown by the succeeding monarch. Omri, a military commander who in fact himself usurped the throne, survived a civil war lasting about 5 years (885–880 B.C.), during which Tibni also claimed to be king (1Ki 16:21). Following Tibni's death, Omri moved Israel's capital from Tirzah, where the earlier kings Baasha, Elah, and Zimri had ruled (1Ki 16:22–24).

Samaria became a center for worship of the Phoenician god Baal. The cult of Baal was officially established in Samaria by Omri's son Ahab, who built a temple of Baal in the city.

The capital of the northern kingdom remained in Samaria until the nation fell in 722 B.C. More than a century after Omri had founded Samaria, the prophet Isaiah recalled the city in his message to Jerusalem. The idols and images of Jerusalem, the capital of Judah, Isaiah warned, would meet the same fate as had the idols and images of Samaria, the capital of Israel (Isa 10:10, 11).

As if a rod were to wield the person who lifts it up,
or a club brandish the one who is not wood!
16 Therefore, the Lord, the LORD Almighty,
will send a wasting disease upon his sturdy warriors;
under his pomp a fire will be kindled like a blazing flame.
17 The Light of Israel will become a fire,
their Holy One a flame;
in a single day it will burn and consume his thorns and his briers.
18 The splendor of his forests and fertile fields
it will completely destroy,
as when a sick person wastes away.
19 And the remaining trees of his forests will be so few
that a child could write them down.

The Remnant of Israel

20 In that day the remnant of Israel,
the survivors of Jacob,
will no longer rely on him who struck them down
but will truly rely on the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel.
21 A remnant will return,[a] a remnant of Jacob
will return to the Mighty God.
22 Though your people be like the sand by the sea, Israel,
only a remnant will return.
Destruction has been decreed,
overwhelming and righteous.
23 The Lord, the LORD Almighty, will carry out
the destruction decreed upon the whole land.

24 Therefore this is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says:

"My people who live in Zion,
do not be afraid of the Assyrians,
who beat you with a rod
and lift up a club against you, as Egypt did.
25 Very soon my anger against you will end
and my wrath will be directed to their destruction."

26 The LORD Almighty will lash them with a whip,
as when he struck down Midian at the rock of Oreb;
and he will raise his staff over the waters,
as he did in Egypt.
27 In that day their burden will be lifted from your shoulders,
their yoke from your neck;
the yoke will be broken
because you have grown so fat.[b]

28 They enter Aiath;
they pass through Migron;
they store supplies at Mikmash.
29 They go over the pass, and say,
"We will camp overnight at Geba."
Ramah trembles;
Gibeah of Saul flees.
30 Cry out, Daughter Gallim!
Listen, Laishah!
Poor Anathoth!
31 Madmenah is in flight;
the people of Gebim take cover.

[a] *21* Hebrew *shear-jashub* (see 7:3 and note); also in verse 22
[b] *27* Hebrew; Septuagint *broken / from your shoulders*

32 This day they will halt at Nob;
they will shake their fist
at the mount of Daughter Zion,
at the hill of Jerusalem.

33 See, the Lord, the LORD Almighty,
will lop off the boughs with great power.
The lofty trees will be felled,
the tall ones will be brought low.
34 He will cut down the forest thickets with an ax;
Lebanon will fall before the Mighty One.

The Branch From Jesse

11 1 A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse;
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit.
2 The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—
3 and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears;
4 but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
5 Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

6 The wolf will live with the lamb,
the leopard will lie down with the goat,
the calf and the lion and the yearling[a] together;
and a little child will lead them.
7 The cow will feed with the bear,
their young will lie down together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox.
8 The infant will play near the cobra's den,
and the young child will put its hand into the viper's nest.
9 They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,
for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

10 In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his resting place will be glorious.
11 In that day the Lord will reach out his hand a second time to reclaim the surviving remnant of his people from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Cush,[b] from Elam, from Babylonia,[c] from Hamath and from the islands of the Mediterranean.

12 He will raise a banner for the nations
and gather the exiles of Israel;
he will assemble the scattered people of Judah
from the four quarters of the earth.
13 Ephraim's jealousy will vanish,
and Judah's enemies[d] will be destroyed;
Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah,
nor Judah hostile toward Ephraim.
14 They will swoop down on the slopes of Philistia to the west;
together they will plunder the people to the east.
They will subdue Edom and Moab,
and the Ammonites will be subject to them.
15 The LORD will dry up
the gulf of the Egyptian sea;
with a scorching wind he will sweep his hand
over the Euphrates River.
He will break it up into seven streams
so that anyone can cross over in sandals.
16 There will be a highway for the remnant of his people
that is left from Assyria,
as there was for Israel
when they came up from Egypt.

Songs of Praise

12 1 In that day you will say:
"I will praise you, LORD.
Although you were angry with me,
your anger has turned away
and you have comforted me.
2 Surely God is my salvation;
I will trust and not be afraid.
The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defense[e];
he has become my salvation."
3 With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation.

4 In that day you will say:

[a] 6 Hebrew; Septuagint *lion will feed* [b] 11 That is, the upper Nile region [c] 11 Hebrew *Shinar* [d] 13 Or *hostility* [e] 2 Or *song*

Edom—Judah's Unwanted Neighbor (Isa 11:14)

"They will subdue Edom" (Isa 11:14). The prophet describes a time when Judah and Israel (Ephraim), once again united, would conquer the Edomites. In the last years of the 8th century B.C., this message would have been welcomed by Judahites. Their sister nation Israel had fallen in 722 B.C., and Edom offered Judah no cooperation in confronting the Assyrians in 713 and 701 B.C.

Edom was south and east of the Dead Sea. According to Israelite tradition, the Edomites were descended from Jacob's brother Esau, and a list of early Edomite monarchs appears in Ge 36:31–39. Judah's relationship to their Edomite neighbors, however, was normally hostile.

King Ahaz took the throne of Judah in 735 B.C., and the first few years of his reign were marked by war. To his north he had to withstand a coalition of two nations—Aram and Israel. To his south he faced a smaller yet real threat from Edom. In fact, the nation of Edom played a role in the events following the invasion of Judah by Aram and northern Israel.

In what is called the Syro-Ephraimite War, Aram (Syria) and Israel (Ephraim) attempted to depose King Ahaz of Judah (2Ki 16:5). Ahaz subsequently asked Assyria for help, and evidently entered into a treaty which reduced Judah to the status of an Assyrian vassal (16:7, 8). Edom was able to take advantage of this unstable international situation to invade southern Judah and occupy Elath, formerly an Edomite possession (2Ch 28:16, 17; 2Ki 16:6).

Edom is listed in Assyrian annals as among the nations who sent tribute to Assyria after the Syro-Ephraimite War of 732 B.C. Having become a vassal of Assyria, Edom was occasionally required to commit troops and unpaid labor for the Assyrians. No wonder she refused to ally with Judah against mighty Assyria.

"Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done,
and proclaim that his name is exalted.
5 Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things;
let this be known to all the world.
6 Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,
for great is the Holy One of Israel among you."

[a] 7,8 Or *nobles / on whom you had set your eyes.* / 8 *Do not go*

TRANSITION

Hezekiah's Proverbs

Shalmaneser V of Assyria conquered Israel, but died himself about the same time. He was replaced by Sargon II (721–705 B.C.). Shortly after Sargon took the throne, a certain Marduk-Baladan led a successful rebellion in the city of Babylon. The first several years of Sargon's rule would pass (721–710 B.C.) before he was able to drive Marduk-Baladan into hiding.

Sargon was involved in various campaigns. In 720 a victory at Qarqar was followed by a march through Gaza and Israel to Egypt's border. In 713 and 712 he defeated separate rebellions in Ashdod. During Sargon's military activities, Judah somehow escaped his attention. This allowed King Hezekiah to establish a fairly prosperous court and apparently to sponsor some literary work, the collections of wisdom traditions.

The attribution of Pr 25:1 identifies a collection of proverbs (Pr 25–29) which was copied by "the men of Hezekiah king of Judah." Perhaps some of the sayings connected with Solomon's name were copied and preserved for future generations. The reference to the "men of Hezekiah" may reflect Hezekiah's support of the sages who collected and copied the earlier proverbs.

• **Proverbs 25:1—29:27**

Proverbs

More Proverbs of Solomon

25:1 These are more proverbs of Solomon, compiled by the men of Hezekiah king of Judah:

2 It is the glory of God to conceal a matter;
to search out a matter is the glory of kings.
3 As the heavens are high and the earth is deep,
so the hearts of kings are unsearchable.

4 Remove the dross from the silver,
and a silversmith can produce a vessel;
5 remove wicked officials from the king's presence,
and his throne will be established through righteousness.

6 Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence,
and do not claim a place among his great men;
7 it is better for him to say to you, "Come up here,"
than for him to humiliate you before his nobles.

What you have seen with your eyes
8 do not bring[a] hastily to court,
for what will you do in the end
if your neighbor puts you to shame?

JUDAH AFTER ISRAEL'S FALL

Israel (northern kingdom)

Fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 B.C.

Judah (southern kingdom)

Hezekiah, son of Ahaz, faced a golden opportunity to bring some unity between Judah and Israel. In the north, Israel had fallen to Assyria, so Hezekiah invited the northern tribes to a Passover celebration in Jerusalem.

There is no indication that Hezekiah joined the rebellion against Assyria that Ashdod led in 712 B.C. Eventually he did rebel, and the Assyrian king Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem in 701 B.C.

Hezekiah suffered a serious illness 15 years before he died. It is possible that his son Manasseh served as a coregent with him during the last 11 or 12 years of Hezekiah's life.

9 If you take your neighbor to court,
do not betray another's confidence,
10 or the one who hears it may shame you
and the charge against you will stand.

11 Like apples[a] of gold in settings of silver
is a ruling rightly given.
12 Like an earring of gold or an ornament of fine gold
is the rebuke of a wise judge to a listening ear.

13 Like a snow-cooled drink at harvest time
is a trustworthy messenger to the one who sends him;
he refreshes the spirit of his master.
14 Like clouds and wind without rain
is one who boasts of gifts never given.

15 Through patience a ruler can be persuaded,
and a gentle tongue can break a bone.

16 If you find honey, eat just enough—
too much of it, and you will vomit.
17 Seldom set foot in your neighbor's house—
too much of you, and they will hate you.

18 Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow
is one who gives false testimony against a neighbor.
19 Like a broken tooth or a lame foot
is reliance on the unfaithful in a time of trouble.
20 Like one who takes away a garment on a cold day,
or like vinegar poured on a wound,
is one who sings songs to a heavy heart.

21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat;
if he is thirsty, give him water to drink.
22 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head,
and the LORD will reward you.

23 Like a north wind that brings unexpected rain
is a sly tongue—which provokes a horrified look.

24 Better to live on a corner of the roof
than share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

25 Like cold water to a weary soul
is good news from a distant land.
26 Like a muddied spring or a polluted well
are the righteous who give way to the wicked.

27 It is not good to eat too much honey,
nor is it honorable to search out matters that are too deep.

28 Like a city whose walls are broken through
is a person who lacks self-control.

26 1 Like snow in summer or rain in harvest,
honor is not fitting for a fool.
2 Like a fluttering sparrow or a darting swallow,
an undeserved curse does not come to rest.
3 A whip for the horse, a bridle for the donkey,
and a rod for the backs of fools!

[a] *11* Or possibly *apricots*

Sumerian Abominations (Pr 26:25)

The Book of Proverbs describes people who pretend kindness but are motivated by hatred and deceit: "seven abominations fill their hearts" (Pr 26:25). Other proverbs list murder (Pr 6:16, 17), dishonest scales (11:1), and pride (16:5) as abominations. The Lord is said to detest "lying lips" (12:22). Whatever offended the moral sense of a person was considered an abomination, not only by Israel's God, but also by the gods of Sumer, located in the southern Tigris-Euphrates valley.

A Sumerian text lists a series of abominations to the gods. A judge who perverts justice, or a first-born son who drives a younger son out of his rightful inheritance, are abominations to the god Utu. Also offensive to Utu are eating at a banquet without washing the hands, spitting without stamping on the spittle, and blowing the nose without returning the mucus to dust. Reaching for alms was an abomination to the god Ninurta. Bringing unwashed hands to the mouth was offensive presumably to any god.

The abominations in the Sumerian list are cultic and ethical in nature, but do not address idolatry as an abomination. The Law of Moses, however, was forthright: the toleration or bringing of carved images into one's house was an abomination to the God of Israel (Dt 7:25, 26).

4 Do not answer a fool according to his folly,
or you yourself will be just like him.
5 Answer a fool according to his folly,
or he will be wise in his own eyes.
6 Sending a message by the hands of a fool
is like cutting off one's feet or drinking
poison.
7 Like the useless legs of one who is lame
is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
8 Like tying a stone in a sling
is the giving of honor to a fool.
9 Like a thornbush in a drunkard's hand
is a proverb in the mouth of a fool.
10 Like an archer who wounds at random
is one who hires a fool or any passer-by.
11 As a dog returns to its vomit,
so fools repeat their folly.
12 Do you see a person wise in their own eyes?
There is more hope for a fool than for
them.

13 A sluggard says, "There's a lion in the road,
a fierce lion roaming the streets!"
14 As a door turns on its hinges,
so a sluggard turns on his bed.
15 A sluggard buries his hand in the dish;
he is too lazy to bring it back to his
mouth.
16 A sluggard is wiser in his own eyes
than seven people who answer discreetly.

17 Like one who grabs a stray dog by the ears
is someone who rushes into a quarrel not
their own.

18 Like a maniac shooting
flaming arrows of death
19 is one who deceives their neighbor
and says, "I was only joking!"

20 Without wood a fire goes out;
without a gossip a quarrel dies down.

21 As charcoal to embers and as wood to fire,
so is a quarrelsome person for kindling
strife.
22 The words of a gossip are like choice
morsels;
they go down to the inmost parts.

23 Like a coating of silver dross on
earthenware
are fervent[a] lips with an evil heart.
24 Enemies disguise themselves with their
lips,
but in their hearts they harbor deceit.
25 Though their speech is charming, do not
believe them,
for seven abominations fill their hearts.
26 Their malice may be concealed by
deception,
but their wickedness will be exposed in
the assembly.

[a] *23* Hebrew; Septuagint *smooth*

27 Whoever digs a pit will fall into it;
if someone rolls a stone, it will roll back on them.
28 A lying tongue hates those it hurts,
and a flattering mouth works ruin.

27 1 Do not boast about tomorrow,
for you do not know what a day may bring.
2 Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth;
an outsider, and not your own lips.
3 Stone is heavy and sand a burden,
but a fool's provocation is heavier than both.
4 Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming,
but who can stand before jealousy?
5 Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.
6 Wounds from a friend can be trusted,
but an enemy multiplies kisses.
7 One who is full loathes honey from the comb,
but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.
8 Like a bird that flees its nest
is anyone who flees from home.
9 Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart,
and the pleasantness of a friend
springs from their heartfelt advice.
10 Do not forsake your friend or a friend of your family,
and do not go to your relative's house when disaster strikes you—
better a neighbor nearby than a relative far away.
11 Be wise, my son, and bring joy to my heart;
then I can answer anyone who treats me with contempt.
12 The prudent see danger and take refuge,
but the simple keep going and pay the penalty.
13 Take the garment of one who puts up security for a stranger;
hold it in pledge if it is done for an outsider.
14 If anyone loudly blesses their neighbor early in the morning,
it will be taken as a curse.
15 A quarrelsome wife is like the dripping of a leaky roof in a rainstorm;
16 restraining her is like restraining the wind or grasping oil with the hand.
17 As iron sharpens iron,
so one person sharpens another.
18 The one who guards a fig tree will eat its fruit,
and whoever protects their master will be honored.
19 As water reflects the face,
so one's life reflects the heart.[a]
20 Death and Destruction[b] are never satisfied,
and neither are human eyes.
21 The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold,
but people are tested by their praise.
22 Though you grind a fool in a mortar,
grinding them like grain with a pestle,
you will not remove their folly from them.
23 Be sure you know the condition of your flocks,
give careful attention to your herds;
24 for riches do not endure forever,
and a crown is not secure for all generations.
25 When the hay is removed and new growth appears
and the grass from the hills is gathered in,

Agriculture & Herding
In addition to careers in court or business, Proverbs also presents the farmer (Pr 27:18) and the shepherd (Pr 27:23) as typical or acceptable ways of life. Those employed in these occupations are exhorted to pay attention to the day-to-day affairs of their labor. For such diligence they would enjoy the fruits of their work.

TIME CAPSULE **701 to 700 B.C.**

701	Assyrian king Sennacherib stops rebellion in Ashkelon
701	Sennacherib seizes major towns in Judah and besieges Jerusalem
700	Malta is a Phoenician trading colony
700–200	Rituals of sacrifice of children at the Phoenician colony of Carthage

[a] *19* Or *so others reflect your heart back to you*
[b] *20* Hebrew *Abaddon*

26 the lambs will provide you with clothing,
and the goats with the price of a field.
27 You will have plenty of goats' milk to feed your family
and to nourish your female servants.

28 1 The wicked flee though no one pursues,
but the righteous are as bold as a lion.

2 When a country is rebellious, it has many rulers,
but a ruler with discernment and knowledge maintains order.

3 A ruler[a] who oppresses the poor
is like a driving rain that leaves no crops.

4 Those who forsake instruction praise the wicked,
but those who heed it resist them.

5 Evildoers do not understand what is right,
but those who seek the LORD understand it fully.

6 Better the poor whose walk is blameless
than the rich whose ways are perverse.

7 A discerning son heeds instruction,
but a companion of gluttons disgraces his father.

8 Whoever increases wealth by taking interest or profit from the poor
amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.

9 If anyone turns a deaf ear to my instruction,
even their prayers are detestable.

10 Whoever leads the upright along an evil path
will fall into their own trap,
but the blameless will receive a good inheritance.

11 The rich are wise in their own eyes;
one who is poor and discerning sees how deluded they are.

12 When the righteous triumph, there is great elation;
but when the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding.

13 Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy.

14 Blessed is the one who always trembles before God,
but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble.

15 Like a roaring lion or a charging bear
is a wicked ruler over a helpless people.

16 A tyrannical ruler practices extortion,
but one who hates ill-gotten gain will enjoy a long reign.

17 Anyone tormented by the guilt of murder will seek refuge in the grave;
let no one hold them back.

18 The one whose walk is blameless is kept safe,
but the one whose ways are perverse will fall into the pit.[b]

19 Those who work their land will have abundant food,
but those who chase fantasies will have their fill of poverty.

20 A faithful person will be richly blessed,
but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.

21 To show partiality is not good—
yet a person will do wrong for a piece of bread.

22 The stingy are eager to get rich
and are unaware that poverty awaits them.

23 Whoever rebukes a person will in the end gain favor
rather than one who has a flattering tongue.

24 Whoever robs their father or mother
and says, "It's not wrong,"
is partner to one who destroys.

25 The greedy stir up conflict,
but those who trust in the LORD will prosper.

26 Those who trust in themselves are fools,
but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe.

27 Those who give to the poor will lack nothing,
but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses.

28 When the wicked rise to power, people go into hiding;
but when the wicked perish, the righteous thrive.

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[a] *3* Or *A poor person into one*
[b] *18* Syriac (see Septuagint); Hebrew *into one*

29 [1]Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes
will suddenly be destroyed—without remedy.

[2]When the righteous thrive, the people rejoice;
when the wicked rule, the people groan.

[3]A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,
but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.

[4]By justice a king gives a country stability,
but those who are greedy for[a] bribes tear it down.

[5]Those who flatter their neighbors
are spreading nets for their feet.

[6]Evildoers are snared by their own sin,
but the righteous shout for joy and are glad.

[7]The righteous care about justice for the poor,
but the wicked have no such concern.

[8]Mockers stir up a city,
but the wise turn away anger.

[9]If a wise person goes to court with a fool,
the fool rages and scoffs, and there is no peace.

[10]The bloodthirsty hate a person of integrity
and seek to kill the upright.

[11]Fools give full vent to their rage,
but the wise bring calm in the end.

[12]If a ruler listens to lies,
all his officials become wicked.

[13]The poor and the oppressor have this in common:
The LORD gives sight to the eyes of both.

[14]If a king judges the poor with fairness,
his throne will be established forever.

[15]A rod and a reprimand impart wisdom,
but a child left undisciplined disgraces its mother.

[16]When the wicked thrive, so does sin,
but the righteous will see their downfall.

[17]Discipline your children, and they will give you peace;
they will bring you the delights you desire.

[18]Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint;
but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom's instruction.

[19]Servants cannot be corrected by mere words;
though they understand, they will not respond.

[20]Do you see someone who speaks in haste?
There is more hope for a fool than for them.

[21]A servant pampered from youth
will turn out to be insolent.

[22]An angry person stirs up conflict,
and a hot-tempered person commits many sins.

[23]Pride brings a person low,
but the lowly in spirit gain honor.

[24]The accomplices of thieves are their own enemies;
they are put under oath and dare not testify.

[25]Fear of man will prove to be a snare,
but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe.

[26]Many seek an audience with a ruler,
but it is from the LORD that one gets justice.

[27]The righteous detest the dishonest;
the wicked detest the upright.

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[a] *4* Or *who give*

TRANSITION

The Ashdod Rebellion

While Sargon, king of Assyria, was occupied with Babylon, a new dynasty came to power in Egypt. An Ethiopian ruler named Piankhy (747–716 B.C.) swept through the land, uniting Egypt under one ruler for the first time in generations. The new power in Egypt gave hope to the nations of Palestine, who formed a coalition to rebel against Sargon. From 714 to 712 B.C. this rebellion was centered in Ashdod, on the Philistine coast, but it involved Moab, Edom, and certain promises from Egypt.

Judah was invited to join the anti-Assyrian coalition, but opinion on the matter was divided. Many thought this was Judah's chance, but Isaiah disagreed. Perhaps one of Isaiah's opponents was Shebna the scribe, mentioned in Isa 22:15–25. The exact nature of Shebna's conduct which caused him to be

demoted from his office (22:19) is unknown. He represents the blindness of Judah's leaders.

Some of Isaiah's harshest messages were directed against Egypt (18:1—20:6) and against all those who trusted in Egypt's help (30:1—32:20). Neither would a relationship with Moab help Judah (15:1—16:14). God would save Zion, he agreed, but the way to salvation was through faith in God, not through alliances.

- **Isaiah 18:1—20:6**
- **Isaiah 15:1—16:14**
- **Isaiah 22:15–25**
- **Isaiah 30:1—32:20**

Isaiah 18:1—20:6

A Prophecy Against Cush

18 **:1** Woe to the land of whirring wings[a]
along the rivers of Cush,[b]
2 which sends envoys by sea
in papyrus boats over the water.

Go, swift messengers,
to a people tall and smooth-skinned,
to a people feared far and wide,
an aggressive nation of strange speech,
whose land is divided by rivers.

3 All you people of the world,
you who live on the earth,
when a banner is raised on the mountains,
you will see it,
and when a trumpet sounds,
you will hear it.
4 This is what the LORD says to me:
"I will remain quiet and will look on from
my dwelling place,
like shimmering heat in the sunshine,
like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest."
5 For, before the harvest, when the blossom
is gone
and the flower becomes a ripening grape,
he will cut off the shoots with pruning knives,
and cut down and take away the
spreading branches.
6 They will all be left to the mountain birds of
prey
and to the wild animals;
the birds will feed on them all summer,
the wild animals all winter.

7 At that time gifts will be brought to the LORD Almighty

from a people tall and smooth-skinned,
from a people feared far and wide,
an aggressive nation of strange speech,
whose land is divided by rivers—

the gifts will be brought to Mount Zion, the place of the Name of the LORD Almighty.

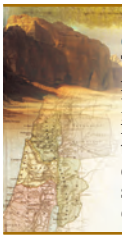
A Prophecy Against Egypt

19 1 A prophecy against Egypt:

See, the LORD rides on a swift cloud
and is coming to Egypt.
The idols of Egypt tremble before him,
and the hearts of the Egyptians melt with
fear.

2 "I will stir up Egyptian against Egyptian—
brother will fight against brother,
neighbor against neighbor,
city against city,
kingdom against kingdom.
3 The Egyptians will lose heart,
and I will bring their plans to nothing;
they will consult the idols and the spirits of
the dead,
the mediums and the spiritists.
4 I will hand the Egyptians over
to the power of a cruel master,
and a fierce king will rule over them,"
declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

5 The waters of the river will dry up,
and the riverbed will be parched and
dry.
6 The canals will stink;
the streams of Egypt will dwindle and
dry up.
The reeds and rushes will wither,
7 also the plants along the Nile,
at the mouth of the river.
Every sown field along the Nile
will become parched, will blow away and
be no more.
8 The fishermen will groan and lament,
all who cast hooks into the Nile;
those who throw nets on the water
will pine away.
9 Those who work with combed flax will
despair,
the weavers of fine linen will lose hope.



Geography & Environment
The White Nile flows from Lake Tanzania, and near Khartoum it joins the Blue Nile that originates in Ethiopia. The Nile is 4,132 miles long, the longest river in the world. All the inhabited land of Egypt depends directly on the Nile (Isa 19:7), since there is practically no rainfall in that country.

[a] *1* Or *of locusts* [b] *1* That is, the upper Nile region

The Supreme Commander Comes to Ashdod (Isa 20:1)

Back in the period of Israel's judges, Ashdod had been a major Philistine city. Ashdod was prominent in the Philistine capture of the ark of the covenant (1Sa 5:1–7), and it is also mentioned in Ugaritic sources of that time (15th to 13th centuries B.C.).

In the 8th century B.C. the threat of Assyria loomed large on the Palestinian horizon. The Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III had conquered the Aramean state of Damascus in 732 B.C., and there is evidence that the Assyrians also campaigned against the Philistines at that time. Ashdod and other cities in Palestine certainly felt the presence of Assyrian imperial power.

The Assyrian annals of Sargon II report how Ashdod revolted against Assyria a generation later. Ashdod's king Aziru formed an alliance with Egypt, Gaza, Ekron, Judah (under Hezekiah), Moab, Ammon, and Edom. But the alliance failed, and Sargon came to Palestine in 713 B.C., placing his own brother on Ashdod's throne in place of Aziru.

The people of Ashdod did not give up. Overthrowing Sargon's brother, they appointed a certain commoner, named Yamani. Yamani was successful in organizing another coalition against Assyria, this time consisting of the Philistine city-states Judah, Moab, Edom, Ammon, and possibly Cyprus. But Sargon returned again in 712 B.C., and Yamani was forced to flee to Egypt.

Ashdod did not recover this time. Sargon's annals mention an unnamed king of Egypt who sent Yamani in chains back to Assyria. The Assyrians returned, this time under the leadership of the supreme commander, or Tartan, called *turtanu* in the Assyrian language. The Tartan seized the city of Ashdod and deported the royal family, the gods of Ashdod, and its people, gold, and silver to Assyria (Isa 20:1). Ashdod was made into an Assyrian province. Fragments of a victory stele of Sargon have been found at the site of ancient Ashdod.

10 The workers in cloth will be dejected,
and all the wage earners will be sick at heart.

11 The officials of Zoan are nothing but fools;
the wise counselors of Pharaoh give senseless advice.
How can you say to Pharaoh,
"I am one of the wise men,
a disciple of the ancient kings"?

12 Where are your wise men now?
Let them show you and make known
what the LORD Almighty has planned against Egypt.
13 The officials of Zoan have become fools,
the leaders of Memphis are deceived;
the cornerstones of her peoples have led Egypt astray.
14 The LORD has poured into them a spirit of dizziness;
they make Egypt stagger in all that she does,
as a drunkard staggers around in his vomit.
15 There is nothing Egypt can do—
head or tail, palm branch or reed.

16 In that day the Egyptians will become weaklings. They will shudder with fear at the uplifted hand that the LORD Almighty raises against them. 17 And the land of Judah will bring terror to the Egyptians; everyone to whom Judah is mentioned will be terrified, because of what the LORD Almighty is planning against them.

18 In that day five cities in Egypt will speak the language of Canaan and swear allegiance to the LORD Almighty. One of them will be called the City of the Sun.[a]

19 In that day there will be an altar to the LORD in the heart of Egypt, and a monument to the LORD at its border. 20 It will be a sign and witness to the LORD Almighty in the land of Egypt. When they cry out to the LORD because of their oppressors, he will send them a savior and defender, and he will rescue them. 21 So the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and in that day they will acknowledge the LORD. They will worship with sacrifices and grain offerings; they will make vows to the LORD and keep them. 22 The LORD will strike Egypt with a plague; he will strike them and heal them. They will turn to the LORD, and he will respond to their pleas and heal them.

23 In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. The Assyrians will go to Egypt and the Egyptians to Assyria. The Egyptians and Assyrians will worship together. 24 In that day Israel will be the third, along with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing[b] on the earth. 25 The LORD Almighty will bless them, saying, "Blessed be Egypt my people, Assyria my handiwork, and Israel my inheritance."

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[a] *18* Some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls, Symmachus and Vulgate; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *City of Destruction* [b] *24* Or *Assyria, whose names will be used in blessings* (see Gen. 48:20); or *Assyria, who will be seen by others as blessed*

A Prophecy Against Egypt and Cush

20 [1]In the year that the supreme commander, sent by Sargon king of Assyria, came to Ashdod and attacked and captured it— [2]at that time the LORD spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. He said to him, "Take off the sackcloth from your body and the sandals from your feet." And he did so, going around stripped and barefoot.

[3]Then the LORD said, "Just as my servant Isaiah has gone stripped and barefoot for three years, as a sign and portent against Egypt and Cush,[a] [4]so the king of Assyria will lead away stripped and barefoot the Egyptian captives and Cushite exiles, young and old, with buttocks bared—to Egypt's shame. [5]Those who trusted in Cush and boasted in Egypt will be dismayed and put to shame. [6]In that day the people who live on this coast will say, 'See what has happened to those we relied on, those we fled to for help and deliverance from the king of Assyria! How then can we escape?'"

Isaiah 15:1—16:14

A Prophecy Against Moab

15 **:1** A prophecy against Moab:

Ar in Moab is ruined,
destroyed in a night!
Kir in Moab is ruined,
destroyed in a night!

[2]Dibon goes up to its temple,
to its high places to weep;
Moab wails over Nebo and Medeba.
Every head is shaved
and every beard cut off.
[3]In the streets they wear sackcloth;
on the roofs and in the public squares
they all wail,
prostrate with weeping.
[4]Heshbon and Elealeh cry out,
their voices are heard all the way to Jahaz.
Therefore the armed men of Moab cry out,
and their hearts are faint.

[5]My heart cries out over Moab;
her fugitives flee as far as Zoar,
as far as Eglath Shelishiyah.
They go up the hill to Luhith,
weeping as they go;
on the road to Horonaim
they lament their destruction.
[6]The waters of Nimrim are dried up
and the grass is withered;
the vegetation is gone
and nothing green is left.
[7]So the wealth they have acquired and stored up
they carry away over the Ravine of the Poplars.
[8]Their outcry echoes along the border of Moab;
their wailing reaches as far as Eglaim,
their lamentation as far as Beer Elim.
[9]The waters of Dimon[b] are full of blood,
but I will bring still more upon Dimon[b]—
a lion upon the fugitives of Moab
and upon those who remain in the land.

[a] *3* That is, the upper Nile region; also in verse 5
[b] *9* *Dimon*, a wordplay on *Dibon* (see verse 2), sounds like the Hebrew for *blood*.

Ethiopians Ruling in Egypt (Isa 20:2–6)

The prophet Isaiah acted out Egypt's and Cush's (Ethiopia's) fate of being taken naked into Assyrian captivity (Isa 20:2–6). The Assyrian invasion, which Isaiah describes as an attack on both Cushites and Egyptians, would result in "Egypt's shame" (20:4). The attack is against one "coast" whose inhabitants "trusted in Cush and boasted in Egypt" (20:5, 6).

The name "Ethiopia" is a translation of the Hebrew *Cush,* a land south of Egypt and east of the Nile. Later the Romans knew the land as Nubia. The Egyptians had extensive trading relations with the Cushites, and often dominated them politically. The Bible also mentions important trading connections with this area (Job 28:19). A close blood tie is observed in the Bible, as Cush was a brother of Mizraim, the ancestor of Egypt (cf. Ge 10:6).

By the 8th century B.C. the Cushites were successful in conquering Egypt and creating the Egyptian 25th Dynasty (c. 780–656 B.C.). They brought a certain degree of unity to Egypt, but faced a threat from the expanding Assyrian Empire. When Sennacherib and the Assyrians sought to conquer Judah, the Cushites, under Tirhakah, attempted to halt the advance of the Assyrian army (Isa 37:9). This event occurred either in 701 B.C., when Tirhakah was the Cushite crown prince, or a decade later in 688 B.C., when Tirhakah was himself king of Cushite Egypt.

Clashes between Egypt and two Assyrian kings continued during Tirhakah's reign (690–664 B.C.). Esarhaddon drove Tirhakah from Memphis in 671 B.C., and Ashurbanipal recaptured Memphis in 667 B.C. While the Cushites (Ethiopians) ruled Egypt, they surely wondered how they might gain "deliverance from the king of Assyria" (Isa 20:6).

16 [1]Send lambs as tribute
to the ruler of the land,
from Sela, across the desert,
to the mount of Daughter Zion.
[2]Like fluttering birds
pushed from the nest,
so are the women of Moab
at the fords of the Arnon.

[3]"Make up your mind," Moab says.
"Render a decision.
Make your shadow like night—
at high noon.
Hide the fugitives,
do not betray the refugees.
[4]Let the Moabite fugitives stay with you;
be their shelter from the destroyer."

The oppressor will come to an end,
and destruction will cease;
the aggressor will vanish from the land.
[5]In love a throne will be established;
in faithfulness a man will sit on it—
one from the house[a] of David—
one who in judging seeks justice
and speeds the cause of righteousness.

[6]We have heard of Moab's pride—
how great is her arrogance!—
of her conceit, her pride and her insolence;
but her boasts are empty.
[7]Therefore the Moabites wail,
they wail together for Moab.
Lament and grieve
for the raisin cakes of Kir Hareseth.
[8]The fields of Heshbon wither,
the vines of Sibmah also.
The rulers of the nations
have trampled down the choicest vines,
which once reached Jazer
and spread toward the desert.
Their shoots spread out
and went as far as the sea.[b]
[9]So I weep, as Jazer weeps,
for the vines of Sibmah.
Heshbon and Elealeh,
I drench you with tears!

Architecture & Building
Many of the tombs dating from the time of Isaiah are cut into the rocks in the hills surrounding Jerusalem. Some tombs were made with an entrance area leading to the rooms where family members could be buried. Only a rich person could afford to prepare such an impressive tomb. Shebna built a memorial to himself instead of paying attention to the desperate condition of his nation (Isa 22:15, 16).

The shouts of joy over your ripened fruit
and over your harvests have been stilled.
[10]Joy and gladness are taken away from the orchards;
no one sings or shouts in the vineyards;
no one treads out wine at the presses,
for I have put an end to the shouting.
[11]My heart laments for Moab like a harp,
my inmost being for Kir Hareseth.
[12]When Moab appears at her high place,
she only wears herself out;
when she goes to her shrine to pray,
it is to no avail.

[13]This is the word the LORD has already spoken concerning Moab. [14]But now the LORD says: "Within three years, as a servant bound by contract would count them, Moab's splendor and all her many people will be despised, and her survivors will be very few and feeble."

Isaiah 22:15–25

22 **:15** This is what the Lord, the LORD Almighty, says:

"Go, say to this steward,
to Shebna the palace administrator:
[16]What are you doing here and who gave you permission
to cut out a grave for yourself here,
hewing your grave on the height
and chiseling your resting place in the rock?

[17]"Beware, the LORD is about to take firm hold of you
and hurl you away, you mighty man.
[18]He will roll you up tightly like a ball
and throw you into a large country.
There you will die
and there the chariots you were so proud of
will become a disgrace to your master's house.
[19]I will depose you from your office,
and you will be ousted from your position.

[20]"In that day I will summon my servant, Eliakim son of Hilkiah. [21]I will clothe him with your robe and fasten your sash around him and hand your authority over to him. He will be a father to those who live in Jerusalem and to the people of Judah. [22]I will place on his shoulder the key to the house of David; what he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. [23]I will drive him like a peg into a firm

[a] *5* Hebrew *tent* [b] *8* Probably the Dead Sea

place; he will become a seat[a] of honor for the house of his father. 24All the glory of his family will hang on him: its offspring and offshoots—all its lesser vessels, from the bowls to all the jars.

25"In that day," declares the LORD Almighty, "the peg driven into the firm place will give way; it will be sheared off and will fall, and the load hanging on it will be cut down." The LORD has spoken.

Isaiah 30:1—32:20

Woe to the Obstinate Nation

30:1 "Woe to the obstinate children,"
declares the LORD,
"to those who carry out plans that are not mine,
forming an alliance, but not by my Spirit,
heaping sin upon sin;
2who go down to Egypt
without consulting me;
who look for help to Pharaoh's protection,
to Egypt's shade for refuge.
3But Pharaoh's protection will be to your shame,
Egypt's shade will bring you disgrace.
4Though they have officials in Zoan
and their envoys have arrived in Hanes,
5everyone will be put to shame
because of a people useless to them,
who bring neither help nor advantage,
but only shame and disgrace."

6A prophecy concerning the animals of the Negev:

Through a land of hardship and distress,
of lions and lionesses,
of adders and darting snakes,
the envoys carry their riches on donkeys' backs,
their treasures on the humps of camels,
to that unprofitable nation,
7 to Egypt, whose help is utterly useless.
Therefore I call her
Rahab the Do-Nothing.

8Go now, write it on a tablet for them,
inscribe it on a scroll,
that for the days to come
it may be an everlasting witness.
9For these are rebellious people, deceitful children,
children unwilling to listen to the LORD's instruction.

[a] 23 Or *throne*

Arts & Literature
The oldest writing tablets (Isa 30:8) discovered so far can be dated to about 1350 B.C. They were found in A.D. 1986 in a shipwreck off the coast of southern Turkey. Until this discovery, the oldest tablets were those found in a well at Nimrud, near Nineveh, dating from about 700 B.C. The original writing surface was a coating of wax.

10They say to the seers,
"See no more visions!"
and to the prophets,
"Give us no more visions of what is right!
Tell us pleasant things,
prophesy illusions.
11Leave this way,
get off this path,
and stop confronting us
with the Holy One of Israel!"

12Therefore this is what the Holy One of Israel says:

"Because you have rejected this message,
relied on oppression
and depended on deceit,
13this sin will become for you
like a high wall, cracked and bulging,
that collapses suddenly, in an instant.
14It will break in pieces like pottery,
shattered so mercilessly
that among its pieces not a fragment will be found
for taking coals from a hearth
or scooping water out of a cistern."

15This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says:

"In repentance and rest is your salvation,
in quietness and trust is your strength,
but you would have none of it.
16You said, 'No, we will flee on horses.'
Therefore you will flee!

TIME CAPSULE	697 to 686 B.C.
697	Manasseh serves as coregent with Hezekiah in Judah
690–664	Tirhakah leads rebuilding program in Egypt
689	Assyrian king Sennacherib demolishes Babylon
689	Statue of Marduk disturbed at Babylon
686	Manasseh becomes sole king in Judah

Topheth Burns with an Abundance of Wood (Isa 30:33)

Topheth (or Tophet) was a cultic site installed in the Valley of Ben Hinnom (2Ki 23:10). It was connected to the worship of the god Molek and involved rituals that allowed children to be burned with fire (Jer 7:31). The Hinnom Valley runs roughly in a curving form, east-west, on the south side of the city of Jerusalem. To this day, no archaeological evidence of Topheth has been found.

The prophets often mentioned the fire of Topheth that was used to destroy children, but for the prophets Topheth was symbolical of the judgment God would bring on those not faithful to him. Jeremiah proclaims that God would make Jerusalem and the towns around it like Topheth—like a place of burning—because their inhabitants were "stiff-necked" against God's will (Jer 19:12–15).

Another prophet, Isaiah, announces that a similar punishment would befall Assyria (Isa 30:31–33). Topheth is pictured by Isaiah as a funeral pyre that God had "long prepared," ages before Assyria existed. It was "deep and wide," a place of burning "with an abundance of fire and wood," certainly adequate to punish Assyria (30:31) and its king (30:33).

The rites of child sacrifice at Topheth left their mark long after worship at that spot had been forgotten. By New Testament times, the Aramaic term *gehinnam,* meaning "Hinnom Valley," was known in Greek as Gehenna, the "fire of hell" (Mt 5:22). In Jesus' warnings about fire of hell (Mt 18:9), Gehenna would be a fiery judgment, recalling the judgment and burning at Topheth proclaimed by Isaiah.

You said, 'We will ride off on swift horses.'
Therefore your pursuers will be swift!
17 A thousand will flee
at the threat of one;
at the threat of five
you will all flee away,
till you are left
like a flagstaff on a mountaintop,
like a banner on a hill."

18 Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you;
therefore he will rise up to show you compassion.
For the LORD is a God of justice.
Blessed are all who wait for him!

19 People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. 20 Although the Lord gives you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, your teachers will be hidden no more; with your own eyes you will see them. 21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it." 22 Then you will desecrate your idols overlaid with silver and your images covered with gold; you will throw them away like a menstrual cloth and say to them, "Away with you!"

23 He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful. In that day your cattle will graze in broad meadows. 24 The oxen and donkeys that work the soil will eat fodder and mash, spread out with fork and shovel. 25 In the day of great slaughter, when the towers fall, streams of water will flow on every high mountain and every lofty hill. 26 The moon will shine like the sun, and the sunlight will be seven times brighter, like the light of seven full days, when the LORD binds up the bruises of his people and heals the wounds he inflicted.

27 See, the Name of the LORD comes from afar,
with burning anger and dense clouds of smoke;
his lips are full of wrath,
and his tongue is a consuming fire.
28 His breath is like a rushing torrent,
rising up to the neck.
He shakes the nations in the sieve of destruction;
he places in the jaws of the peoples
a bit that leads them astray.
29 And you will sing
as on the night you celebrate a holy festival;
your hearts will rejoice
as when people playing pipes go up
to the mountain of the LORD,
to the Rock of Israel.
30 The LORD will cause people to hear his majestic voice
and will make them see his arm coming down

TIME CAPSULE		684 to 677 B.C.
684		Inundation of the Nile results in bumper crop in Egypt
683–680		Tirhakah of Egypt conducts military campaigns in Libya and Palestine
681		Sennacherib's death
680–669		Esarhaddon's mother Naqi'a exercises authority during her son's reign
677		Esarhaddon marches against Sidon

with raging anger and consuming fire,
with cloudburst, thunderstorm and hail.
31 The voice of the LORD will shatter Assyria;
with his rod he will strike them down.
32 Every stroke the LORD lays on them
with his punishing club
will be to the music of timbrels and harps,
as he fights them in battle with the blows
of his arm.
33 Topheth has long been prepared;
it has been made ready for the king.
Its fire pit has been made deep and wide,
with an abundance of fire and wood;
the breath of the LORD,
like a stream of burning sulfur,
sets it ablaze.

Woe to Those Who Rely on Egypt

31 1 Woe to those who go down to Egypt
for help,
who rely on horses,
who trust in the multitude of their chariots
and in the great strength of their
horsemen,
but do not look to the Holy One of Israel,
or seek help from the LORD.
2 Yet he too is wise and can bring disaster;
he does not take back his words.
He will rise up against that wicked nation,
against those who help evildoers.
3 But the Egyptians are mere mortals and not
God;
their horses are flesh and not spirit.
When the LORD stretches out his hand,
those who help will stumble,
those who are helped will fall;
all will perish together.

4 This is what the LORD says to me:

"As a lion growls,
a great lion over its prey—
and though a whole band of shepherds
is called together against it,
it is not frightened by their shouts
or disturbed by their clamor—
so the LORD Almighty will come down
to do battle on Mount Zion and on its
heights.
5 Like birds hovering overhead,
the LORD Almighty will shield Jerusalem;
he will shield it and deliver it,
he will 'pass over' it and will rescue it."

6 Return, you Israelites, to the One you have so greatly revolted against. 7 For in that day every one of you will reject the idols of silver and gold your sinful hands have made.

8 "Assyria will fall by no human sword;
a sword, not of mortals, will devour them.
They will flee before the sword
and their young men will be put to forced
labor.
9 Their stronghold will fall because of terror;
at the sight of the battle standard their
commanders will panic,"
declares the LORD,
whose fire is in Zion,
whose furnace is in Jerusalem.

The Kingdom of Righteousness

32 1 See, a king will reign in righteousness
and rulers will rule with justice.
2 Each one will be like a shelter from the
wind
and a refuge from the storm,
like streams of water in the desert
and the shadow of a great rock in a
thirsty land.

3 Then the eyes of those who see will no
longer be closed,
and the ears of those who hear will listen.
4 The fearful heart will know and
understand,
and the stammering tongue will be fluent
and clear.
5 No longer will the fool be called noble
nor the scoundrel be highly respected.
6 For fools speak folly,
their hearts are bent on evil:
They practice ungodliness
and spread error concerning the LORD;
the hungry they leave empty
and from the thirsty they withhold water.
7 Scoundrels use wicked methods,
they make up evil schemes

to destroy the poor with lies,
even when the plea of the needy is just.
8 But the noble make noble plans,
and by noble deeds they stand.

The Women of Jerusalem

9 You women who are so complacent,
rise up and listen to me;
you daughters who feel secure,
hear what I have to say!
10 In little more than a year
you who feel secure will tremble;
the grape harvest will fail,
and the harvest of fruit will not come.
11 Tremble, you complacent women;
shudder, you daughters who feel secure!
Strip off your fine clothes
and wrap yourselves in rags.
12 Beat your breasts for the pleasant fields,
for the fruitful vines
13 and for the land of my people,
a land overgrown with thorns and
briers—
yes, mourn for all houses of merriment
and for this city of revelry.
14 The fortress will be abandoned,
the noisy city deserted;
citadel and watchtower will become a
wasteland forever,
the delight of donkeys, a pasture for
flocks,
15 till the Spirit is poured on us from on high,
and the desert becomes a fertile field,
and the fertile field seems like a forest.
16 The LORD's justice will dwell in the desert,
his righteousness live in the fertile field.
17 The fruit of that righteousness will be
peace;
its effect will be quietness and confidence
forever.
18 My people will live in peaceful dwelling
places,
in secure homes,
in undisturbed places of rest.
19 Though hail flattens the forest
and the city is leveled completely,
20 how blessed you will be,
sowing your seed by every stream,
and letting your cattle and donkeys range
free.

TRANSITION

Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery

Sargon of Assyria decisively put down the Ashdod rebellion in 712 B.C., and as Isaiah had expected, Egypt did not keep its promises of aid. King Hezekiah must not have been too involved in the rebellion, however, because Judah was not punished as Ashdod was. Nevertheless, a few years later he began to consider rebellion again. He even received overtures of friendship from Marduk-Baladan, who had been driven from Babylon by Sargon around 710 B.C. but had managed to regain control and was planning another rebellion against Assyria.

The biblical history of the next few years appears not only in 2Ki 18:13—20:21 but also in Isa 36–39. The order of events in the biblical text is not strictly chronological. Hezekiah's illness (Isa 38) and the visit by ambassadors from the Babylonian ruler Marduk-Baladan (Isa 39) are described at the end of this section but must have come before Sennacherib withdrew from Jerusalem (Isa 37:37; see 2Ki 20:6).

The name "Berodach-Baladan" in some translations of 2Ki 20:12 appears to be a corrupted spelling of Merodach-Baladan (or Marduk-Baladan). He was the Babylonian ruler at two separate times (721–710 and 703–702 B.C.), and specialized in forming alliances to support his fight against Assyrian control. He may still have been known by the title "king of Babylon" at the time of Hezekiah's sickness, although he might then have been in exile. Hezekiah died in 686 B.C.; his illness 15 years earlier would have been approximately 701 B.C. (2Ki 20:6).

- **2 Kings 20:1–11**
- **Isaiah 38:1–22**
- **2 Kings 20:12–19**
- **Isaiah 39:1–8**

2 Kings 20:1–11

Hezekiah's Illness

20:1 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

2 Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, 3 "Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 Before Isaiah had left the middle court, the word of the LORD came to him: 5 "Go back and tell Hezekiah, the ruler of my people, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the temple of the LORD. 6 I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will

Sennacherib Fails to Open the Cage (Isa 38:6)

Sennacherib was the king of Assyria who mounted a ferocious military campaign against Syro-Palestine at the end of the 8th century B.C. The invasion is described in Sennacherib's annals as his third military campaign. There are a number of copies referring to this attack, as well as carved stone reliefs at Nineveh which relate the Assyrian siege of Lachish (an important fortified town in Judah).

The annals describe the destruction of a wide area of Judah, but do not mention the taking of Jerusalem. Military operations against the capital of Judah were never completed, although Sennacherib claims to have encircled Jerusalem with watchtowers. Outside of Jerusalem, the land of Judah was plundered: 46 cities were conquered, many of which were given over to Philistia, a rival of Judah. The annals claim that over 200,000 captives were taken from Judah (though not necessarily into permanent or extended captivity).

Sennacherib placed responsibility for Judah's fate in the hands of Hezekiah (the Assyrians typically blamed the enemy monarch for the invasion). We are told that the Assyrians demanded from Hezekiah his daughters, weapons, women, gold, and numerous other artifacts. The lists of tribute are the longest and most detailed of any of Sennacherib's inscriptions, possibly to downplay the failure to take Jerusalem.

The reassuring message to Hezekiah from the prophet Isaiah was that God would deliver his "city from the hand of the king of Assyria" (Isa 38:6). The Assyrian annals boast of victories but make no mention of defeats. Thus Sennacherib boasts of imprisoning Hezekiah like a "bird in a cage," but fails to say that the Assyrians had to withdraw from the cage without capturing the bird.

deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for my sake and for the sake of my servant David.'"

7 Then Isaiah said, "Prepare a poultice of figs." They did so and applied it to the boil, and he recovered.

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

9 Isaiah answered, "This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: Shall the shadow go forward ten steps, or shall it go back ten steps?"

10 "It is a simple matter for the shadow to go forward ten steps," said Hezekiah. "Rather, have it go back ten steps."

11 Then the prophet Isaiah called on the LORD, and the LORD made the shadow go back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.

Isaiah 38:1–22

Hezekiah's Illness

38 :1 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to him and said, "This is what the LORD says: Put your house in order, because you are going to die; you will not recover."

2 Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, 3 "Remember, LORD, how I have walked before you faithfully and with wholehearted devotion and have done what is good in your eyes." And Hezekiah wept bitterly.

4 Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah: 5 "Go and tell Hezekiah, 'This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life. 6 And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city.

7 "'This is the LORD's sign to you that the LORD will do what he has promised: 8 I will make the shadow cast by the sun go back the ten steps it has gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.'" So the sunlight went back the ten steps it had gone down.

9 A writing of Hezekiah king of Judah after his illness and recovery:

10 I said, "In the prime of my life
must I go through the gates of death
and be robbed of the rest of my years?"
11 I said, "I will not again see the LORD himself
in the land of the living;
no longer will I look on my fellow man,
or be with those who now dwell in this world.
12 Like a shepherd's tent my house
has been pulled down and taken from me.
Like a weaver I have rolled up my life,
and he has cut me off from the loom;
day and night you made an end of me.

Science & Technology

Sundials were in use in Egypt from at least 1300 B.C. The scale on which the shadow traveled was straight, like a ruler. There are also sundials made in which the shadow travels up or down a series of steps, like a flight of stairs. Ahaz's sundial may have been of this type (Isa 38:8), with a pillar on the top.

13 I waited patiently till dawn,
but like a lion he broke all my
bones;
day and night you made an end of me.
14 I cried like a swift or thrush,
I moaned like a mourning dove.
My eyes grew weak as I looked to the
heavens.
I am being threatened; Lord, come to my
aid!"

15 But what can I say?
He has spoken to me, and he himself has
done this.
I will walk humbly all my years
because of this anguish of my soul.
16 Lord, by such things people live;
and my spirit finds life in them too.
You restored me to health
and let me live.
17 Surely it was for my benefit
that I suffered such anguish.
In your love you kept me
from the pit of destruction;
you have put all my sins
behind your back.
18 For the grave cannot praise you,
death cannot sing your praise;
those who go down to the pit
cannot hope for your faithfulness.
19 The living, the living—they praise you,
as I am doing today;
parents tell their children
about your faithfulness.

20 The LORD will save me,
and we will sing with stringed
instruments
all the days of our lives
in the temple of the LORD.

21 Isaiah had said, "Prepare a poultice of figs and apply it to the boil, and he will recover."

22 Hezekiah had asked, "What will be the sign that I will go up to the temple of the LORD?"

2 Kings 20:12–19

Envoys From Babylon

20:12 At that time Marduk-Baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of Hezekiah's illness. 13 Hezekiah received the envoys and showed them all that was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices and the fine olive oil—his armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

14 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did those men say, and where did they come from?"

"From a distant land," Hezekiah replied. "They came from Babylon."

15 The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?"

"They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them."

16 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD: 17 The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. 18 And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away, and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

19 "The word of the LORD you have spoken is good," Hezekiah replied. For he thought, "Will there not be peace and security in my lifetime?"

Isaiah 39:1–8

Envoys From Babylon

39:1 At that time Marduk-Baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent Hezekiah letters and a gift, because he had heard of his illness and recovery. 2 Hezekiah received the envoys gladly and showed them what was in his storehouses—the silver, the gold, the spices, the fine olive oil—his entire armory and everything found among his treasures. There was nothing in his palace or in all his kingdom that Hezekiah did not show them.

3 Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked, "What did those men say, and where did they come from?"

"From a distant land," Hezekiah replied. "They came to me from Babylon."

4 The prophet asked, "What did they see in your palace?"

"They saw everything in my palace," Hezekiah said. "There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them."

5 Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Hear the word of the LORD Almighty: 6 The time will surely come when everything in your palace, and all that your predecessors have stored up until this day, will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. 7 And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood who will be born to you, will be taken away,

A Babylonian Thorn Pricks Mighty Assyria (Isa 39:1)

Marduk-Baladan (also known by his Accadian name, Mardukapal-iddina) was a Chaldean (alternate term, Babylonian) tribal leader from southern Babylonia during the late 8th century B.C. Except for the biblical references (2Ki 20:12; Isa 39:1), this ruler is mentioned primarily in hostile Assyrian sources, although a few Babylonian sources do exist.

While Assyria was expanding its control of southern Babylonia, Marduk-Baladan sent tribute to the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.). Later, during the confusing period in which the Assyrian throne was usurped by Sargon II (722–721 B.C.), the Chaldean leader formed a coalition of Chaldean and Aramean tribes and claimed independence from Assyria. He was evidently appreciated by the local inhabitants of Babylonia, who flourished under his kingship for the next 10 years until 710 B.C.

After 710 B.C. Marduk-Baladan was forced to engage in an ancient equivalent of guerrilla warfare against Assyrian advances. Although he was deposed from the throne of Babylon in this period, the Chaldean chieftain was never captured by the Assyrians. He, along with Hezekiah of Judah and others, was instrumental in leading a rebellion against Assyria during the early reign of Sennacherib (704–701 B.C.).

The alliance against Assyria was eventually defeated. Sennacherib drove Marduk-Baladan out of Babylon, and the Chaldean is last mentioned as fleeing east to Elam about 700 B.C. For a half-century, this ruler had been a constant thorn in the side of the Assyrian Empire.

Sennacherib during his Babylonian war, relief from his palace in Nineveh

and they will become eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon."

8"The word of the LORD you have spoken is good," Hezekiah replied. For he thought, "There will be peace and security in my lifetime."

TRANSITION

Sennacherib's Invasion

After flirting with the idea for years, Hezekiah finally rebelled against Assyria. The Assyrian king, Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.), promptly attacked Judah.

The chronology of Sennacherib's invasion is difficult. The 14th year of Hezekiah (2Ki 18:13; Isa 36:1) would be 701 B.C., but the siege was interrupted by an attack from Tirhakah of Egypt (2Ki 19:9; Isa 37:9), whose reign (690–664 B.C.) did not begin until about 10 years after this date. Some suggest that the Bible uses the name "Tirhakah," the most famous of the Ethiopian pharaohs, for a different and less well known king. Others argue that Hezekiah actually rebelled against Sennacherib twice, and the two accounts have been compressed into one narrative.

The suggestion that there were two invasions would also explain why there are two different reasons given for Jerusalem's deliverance. Hezekiah rebelled and was invaded in 701 B.C. He survived this first invasion only by paying exorbitant tribute to Sennacherib (2Ki 18:14–16). This payment is corroborated by Assyrian records, but interestingly enough, the parallel passage in Isaiah (Isa 36:1, 2) does not mention Hezekiah's tribute.

- **Isaiah 36:1**
- **2 Kings 18:13–16**

Isaiah 36:1

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

36:1 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them.

2 Kings 18:13–16

18:13 In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah and captured them. 14So Hezekiah king of Judah sent this message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: "I have done wrong. Withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand of me." The king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah

The Assyrians Serve God, So They Say (2Ki 18:25; Isa 36:10)

One of the high-ranking officers in the Assyrian army was titled the supreme commander (or Rabshakeh) (2Ki 18:17; Isa 36:2), a position possibly similar to a Chief of Staff. As the Assyrian army laid siege to Jerusalem, the supreme commander urged King Hezekiah and his people to surrender. He further intimidated the Jerusalemites by claiming that Jerusalem's own God, Yahweh, had given him authority to take the city (2Ki 18:25; Isa 36:10).

The supreme commander supported his claim by asserting that Yahweh was displeased with Hezekiah as king of Judah. The altars and high places that had been purged in Hezekiah's earlier reform (2Ki 18:4) belonged to Yahweh, so the supreme commander thought (2Ki 18:22; Isa 36:7). Therefore, Yahweh had given Judah to Sennacherib, king of Assyria (704–681 B.C.), who would become Yahweh's new vice-regent for the land. According to the supreme commander's logic, the Judahites should recognize their own God's right to transfer the land from Hezekiah's control to Sennacherib's, as well as understand that Yahweh had brought the Assyrian army to take possession.

The supreme commander's speech plays on the common Near Eastern belief that gods owned the land and could give it to whomever they chose. A frequently used propaganda device in the Neo-Assyrian period was to claim that a god had chosen to destroy his own nation or turn it over to another people. Sennacherib himself used this argument when he destroyed Babylon in 689 B.C., claiming that Marduk (Babylon's god) had ordered the destruction of his own city.

king of Judah three hundred talents[a] of silver and thirty talents[b] of gold. 15So Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the temple of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace.

16At this time Hezekiah king of Judah stripped off the gold with which he had covered the doors and doorposts of the temple of the LORD, and gave it to the king of Assyria.

TRANSITION

A Second Invasion

Hezekiah survived his rebellion of 701 B.C., but some 12 or 13 years later he tried again. Maybe around 688 B.C. Sennacherib again invaded and laid siege to Jerusalem (Isa 36:2—37:7). This time Tirhakah, the Cushite king of Egypt, interrupted the siege briefly but was driven back. This time there was no tribute paid; Jerusalem was spared by a miraculous plague that swept the Assyrian camp (Isa 37:8–38). A second invasion by Sennacherib is not recorded in Assyrian annals, but it has been suggested by scholars to account for the appearance of Pharaoh Tirhakah, who was not yet in power when Sennacherib invaded Judah in 701 B.C.

- **2 Kings 18:17—19:7**
- **Isaiah 36:2—37:7**
- **2 Kings 19:8–37**
- **Isaiah 37:8–38**
- **2 Kings 20:20, 21**

2 Kings 18:17—19:7

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

18 **:17** The king of Assyria sent his supreme commander, his chief officer and his field commander with a large army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. They came up to Jerusalem and stopped at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Washerman's Field. 18They called for the king; and Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to them.

19The field commander said to them, "Tell Hezekiah:

"'This is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: On what are you basing this confidence of yours? 20You say you have the counsel and the might for war—but you speak only empty words. On whom are you depending, that you rebel against me? 21Look, I know you are depending on Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff, which pierces the hand of anyone who leans on it! Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who depend on him. 22But if you say to me, "We are depending on the LORD our God"—isn't he the one whose high places and altars Hezekiah removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, "You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem"?

23"'Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses—if you can put riders on them! 24How can you repulse one officer of the least of my master's officials, even though you are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen[c]? 25Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this place without word from the LORD?

[a] *14* That is, about 11 tons or about 10 metric tons
[b] *14* That is, about 1 ton or about 1 metric ton
[c] *24* Or *charioteers*

Okay, the Assyrians Really Serve Ashur (2Ki 18:35; Isa 36:20)

The supreme commander continued his propaganda speech with a shift in emphasis. The king of Assyria, Sennacherib, was considered the vice-regent of the god Ashur, patron deity of Assyria. The common belief was that conquering armies were preceded by their gods, who defeated the local gods of the lands being invaded. The divine presence (of Ashur, in this case) went before the king, defeating his enemies.

Clearly, the supreme commander argues, none of the gods of other lands had been able to help their people against the Assyrian army (2Ki 18:33–35; Isa 36:18–20). Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah had all fallen to Assyria's power. So Ashur must be the highest ruling deity of all gods; otherwise why would Sennacherib's armies be so successful?

The unbroken list of conquests (2Ki 18:34; Isa 36:19) was given to Jerusalem as proof that Ashur and his Assyrians controlled the world. If all other gods had given up their land and handed their territories over to Ashur, it would follow logically that Yahweh should do the same. The Judahites were defying both Ashur and Yahweh by their refusal to surrender.

The prophet Isaiah, however, assured Hezekiah that the supreme commander had "blasphemed" Yahweh both by misunderstanding the order of the universe and by misrepresenting the current situation. Whether Assyria knew it or not, she existed only at the command of the sovereign God Yahweh (Isa 37:26, 27).

The LORD himself told me to march against this country and destroy it.'"

[26]Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, and Shebna and Joah said to the field commander, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Don't speak to us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall."

[27]But the commander replied, "Was it only to your master and you that my master sent me to say these things, and not to the people sitting on the wall—who, like you, will have to eat their own excrement and drink their own urine?"

[28]Then the commander stood and called out in Hebrew, "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! [29]This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you. He cannot deliver you from my hand. [30]Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD when he says, 'The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.'

[31]"Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, [32]until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey. Choose life and not death!

"Do not listen to Hezekiah, for he is misleading you when he says, 'The LORD will deliver us.' [33]Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? [34]Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? [35]Who of all the gods of these countries has been able to save his land from me? How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

[36]But the people remained silent and said nothing in reply, because the king had commanded, "Do not answer him."

[37]Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went to Hezekiah, with their clothes torn, and told him what the field commander had said.

Jerusalem's Deliverance Foretold

19 [1]When King Hezekiah heard this, he tore his clothes and put on sackcloth and went into the temple of the LORD. [2]He sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. [3]They told him, "This is what Hezekiah says: This day is a day of distress and rebuke and disgrace, as when children come to the moment of birth and there is no strength to deliver them. [4]It may be that the LORD your God will hear all the words of the field commander,

TIME CAPSULE	676 to 672 B.C.
676	Edom, Moab, and Ammon become vassals of Assyria
675	Temple of the moon god at Harran is repaired by Assyrian king Esarhaddon
674	Esarhaddon makes his first attack on Egypt
672	Esarhaddon appoints one son as heir to Assyria's throne and another son to Babylonia's throne

whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the LORD your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives."

5When King Hezekiah's officials came to Isaiah, 6Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master, 'This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid of what you have heard—those words with which the underlings of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. 7Listen! When he hears a certain report, I will make him want to return to his own country, and there I will have him cut down with the sword.'"

Isaiah 36:2—37:7

36:2 Then the king of Assyria sent his field commander with a large army from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. When the commander stopped at the aqueduct of the Upper Pool, on the road to the Launderer's Field, 3Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the secretary, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder went out to him.

4The field commander said to them, "Tell Hezekiah:

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8"'Come now, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria: I will give you two thousand horses—if you can put riders on them! 9How then can you repulse one officer of the least of my master's officials, even though you are depending on Egypt for chariots and horsemen[a]? 10Furthermore, have I come to attack and destroy this land without the LORD? The LORD himself told me to march against this country and destroy it.'"

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16"Do not listen to Hezekiah. This is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then each of you will eat fruit from your own vine and fig tree and drink water from your own cistern, 17until I come and take you to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards.

18"Do not let Hezekiah mislead you when he says, 'The LORD will deliver us.' Have the gods of any nations ever delivered their lands from the hand of the king of Assyria? 19Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? Have they rescued Samaria from my hand? 20Who of all the gods of these countries have been able to save their lands from me? How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?"

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[a] 9 Or *charioteers*

Tirhakah, King of Ethiopia and Egypt (2Ki 19:9; Isa 37:9)

Tirhakah was from a Nubian line of kings of Egypt in the 25th Dynasty. Isaiah calls him the "king of Cush" (or Ethiopia; Isa 37:9), a correct title since Tirhakah originated in Nubia, a region of northeast Africa along the Nile.

Upon attaining the Egyptian throne, Tirhakah began numerous building projects, especially at the Egyptian city of Thebes. Egyptian inscriptions provide evidence of his military campaigns both in Libya and in Palestine early in his reign (c. 683–680 B.C.). He allied with Tyre and Sidon against the continued advance of Assyria.

After 680 B.C. Tirhakah finally faced attacks from Assyria. Assyrian sources describe the invasion and conquest of the Phoenician city-states by Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.), who then invaded the Delta region of Egypt. Though Esarhaddon's forces were repulsed in 674 B.C., his army succeeded 3 years later (671 B.C.) in taking Memphis, Tirhakah's capital city.

Tirhakah was able to regain control of Memphis. However, another Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.), also sent armies to Egypt early in his reign in 667 and 664 B.C. The Assyrians forced Tirhakah to flee southward to Nubia, where he died in 664 B.C. Nevertheless, he continued to be considered the king of Egypt even while in his southern exile.

Tirhakah's role in the Assyrian invasion of Judah is unknown in sources outside of the Bible. Assyria's king Sennacherib first invaded Judah in 701 B.C. (Isa 36:2), and Tirhakah was not officially king of Egypt for another decade (690–664 B.C.). Some scholars suppose that Sennacherib besieged Jerusalem during a second invasion around 688 B.C. During that year Tirhakah was ruling Egypt and could have interrupted the siege (Isa 37:9), though Assyrian sources do not report a campaign in 688.

words of the field commander, whom his master, the king of Assyria, has sent to ridicule the living God, and that he will rebuke him for the words the LORD your God has heard. Therefore pray for the remnant that still survives."

5When King Hezekiah's officials came to
Isaiah, 6Isaiah said to them, "Tell your master,
'This is what the LORD says: Do not be afraid
of what you have heard—those words with
which the underlings of the king of Assyria
have blasphemed me. 7Listen! When he hears
a certain report, I will make him want to return
to his own country, and there I will have him
cut down with the sword.'"

2 Kings 19:8–37

19:8 When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah.

9Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the king of Cush,[a] was marching out to fight against him. So he again sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: 10"Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.' 11Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? 12Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them—the gods of Gozan, Harran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? 13Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? Where are the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?"

Hezekiah's Prayer

14Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers and read it. Then he went up to the temple of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. 15And Hezekiah prayed to the LORD: "LORD, the God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, you alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You have made heaven and earth. 16Give ear, LORD, and hear; open your eyes, LORD, and see; listen to the words Sennacherib has sent to ridicule the living God.

17"It is true, LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste these nations and their lands. 18They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. 19Now, LORD our God, deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you alone, LORD, are God."

Isaiah Prophesies Sennacherib's Fall

20Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria. 21This is the word that the LORD has spoken against him:

"'Virgin Daughter Zion
despises you and mocks you.
Daughter Jerusalem
tosses her head as you flee.

[a] *9* That is, the upper Nile region

Science & Technology
An army attacking a city would typically lay siege to it, or surround it and try to starve it into submission. Within its walls a city had to have food and water to resist a siege. The attacking army could try to build a "siege ramp" (2Ki 19:32), a ramp of dirt leading up to the top of the city walls. Using such a ramp, the soldiers could march over the fortifications.

22 Who is it you have ridiculed and
blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised your voice
and lifted your eyes in pride?
Against the Holy One of Israel!
23 By your messengers
you have ridiculed the Lord.
And you have said,
"With my many chariots
I have ascended the heights of the
mountains,
the utmost heights of Lebanon.
I have cut down its tallest cedars,
the choicest of its junipers.
I have reached its remotest parts,
the finest of its forests.
24 I have dug wells in foreign lands
and drunk the water there.
With the soles of my feet
I have dried up all the streams of Egypt."

25 "'Have you not heard?
Long ago I ordained it.
In days of old I planned it;
now I have brought it to pass,
that you have turned fortified cities
into piles of stone.
26 Their people, drained of power,
are dismayed and put to shame.
They are like plants in the field,
like tender green shoots,
like grass sprouting on the roof,
scorched before it grows up.

27 "'But I know where you are
and when you come and go
and how you rage against me.
28 Because you rage against me
and because your insolence has reached
my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose
and my bit in your mouth,
and I will make you return
by the way you came.'

29 "This will be the sign for you, Hezekiah:

"This year you will eat what grows by itself,
and the second year what springs from
that.
But in the third year sow and reap,
plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
30 Once more a remnant of the kingdom of
Judah
will take root below and bear fruit above.
31 For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant,
and out of Mount Zion a band of
survivors.

"The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

32 "Therefore this is what the LORD says concerning the king of Assyria:

"'He will not enter this city
or shoot an arrow here.

Ararat—Assyria's Enemy to the North (2Ki 19:37; Isa 37:38)

Ararat is best known as the region where Noah's ark landed, described by Ge 8:4 as "on the mountains of Ararat." The country of Ararat was located in eastern Anatolia, and, at its greatest extent, included parts of what today is Iran, Iraq, and southern Russia. Assyrian records called this country Urartu. During the 9th to 6th centuries B.C. the kingdom of Urartu or Ararat flourished as an independent political entity, posing a constant threat to the Assyrian Empire.

The Assyrian annals first mention Ararat as a geographic region during the reign of Shalmaneser I (13th century B.C.). By the 9th century B.C. Ararat was ruled as a unified state by a certain Sarduri I. The expansion of the kingdom to the south posed a direct threat to Assyrian economic security, resulting in two centuries of conflict between the two powers. The Assyrian king Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) conducted several campaigns against Ararat, commemorating his victories on the large bronze gates of the Assyrian city Imgur-Enlil, southeast of Nineveh.

The 8th century witnessed more Assyrian victories. Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.) won a primary battle against Ararat's Sarduri II in 743. His Assyrian army destroyed the Ararat countryside while laying siege to Sarduri's capital in 735 B.C. Another Assyrian king, Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), claims to have invaded Ararat, raided its sacred city, Musasir, and carried off the national god of Ararat.

Relations between Ararat and Assyria were no better during the reign of Assyria's Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.). It makes sense that those who murdered Sennacherib in 681 would flee to Ararat, the political enemies of Assyria, in order to find refuge. Both Assyrian and later Babylonian sources appear to confirm the biblical account of Sennacherib's death in 2Ki 19:37; Isa 37:38. The Babylonian Chronicle reports Sennacherib's death by his son.

The Assyrians never completely conquered Ararat. However, the Medes, who with the Babylonians ended the Assyrian Empire in 612 B.C., also brought an end to Ararat. With the help of the Scythians, the Medes incorporated the kingdom of Ararat into the Median Empire in 585 B.C.

He will not come before it with shield
or build a siege ramp against it.
33 By the way that he came he will
return;
he will not enter this city,
declares the LORD.
34 I will defend this city and save it,
for my sake and for the sake of David my
servant.'"

35 That night the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! 36 So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.

37 One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword, and they escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.

Isaiah 37:8–38

37:8 When the field commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah.

9 Now Sennacherib received a report that Tirhakah, the king of Cush,[a] was marching out to fight against him. When he heard it, he sent messengers to Hezekiah with this word: 10 "Say to Hezekiah king of Judah: Do not let the god you depend on deceive you when he says, 'Jerusalem will not be given into the hands of the king of Assyria.' 11 Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the countries, destroying them completely. And will you be delivered? 12 Did the gods of the nations that were destroyed by my predecessors deliver them—the gods of Gozan, Harran, Rezeph and the people of Eden who were in Tel Assar? 13 Where is the king of Hamath or the king of Arpad? Where are the kings of Lair, Sepharvaim, Hena and Ivvah?"

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18 "It is true, LORD, that the Assyrian kings have laid waste all these peoples and their lands. 19 They have thrown their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods but only wood and stone, fashioned by human hands. 20 Now, LORD our God, deliver us from

his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, LORD, are the only God.[a]"

Sennacherib's Fall

[21]Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Because you have prayed to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria, [22]this is the word the LORD has spoken against him:

"Virgin Daughter Zion
despises and mocks you.
Daughter Jerusalem
tosses her head as you flee.
[23]Who is it you have ridiculed and
blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised your voice
and lifted your eyes in pride?
Against the Holy One of Israel!
[24]By your messengers
you have ridiculed the Lord.
And you have said,
'With my many chariots
I have ascended the heights of the
mountains,
the utmost heights of Lebanon.
I have cut down its tallest cedars,
the choicest of its junipers.
I have reached its remotest heights,
the finest of its forests.
[25]I have dug wells in foreign lands[b]
and drunk the water there.
With the soles of my feet
I have dried up all the streams of Egypt.'

[26]"Have you not heard?
Long ago I ordained it.
In days of old I planned it;
now I have brought it to pass,
that you have turned fortified cities
into piles of stone.
[27]Their people, drained of power,
are dismayed and put to shame.
They are like plants in the field,
like tender green shoots,
like grass sprouting on the roof,
scorched[c] before it grows up.

[28]"But I know where you are
and when you come and go
and how you rage against me.
[29]Because you rage against me
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my ears,
I will put my hook in your nose
and my bit in your mouth,
and I will make you return
by the way you came.

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will take root below and bear fruit
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[32]For out of Jerusalem will come a remnant,
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The zeal of the LORD Almighty
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"He will not enter this city
or shoot an arrow here.
He will not come before it with shield
or build a siege ramp against it.
[34]By the way that he came he will return;
he will not enter this city,"
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[35]"I will defend this city and save it,
for my sake and for the sake of David my
servant!"

[36]Then the angel of the LORD went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up the next morning—there were all the dead bodies! [37]So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there.

[38]One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his sons Adrammelek and Sharezer killed him with the sword, and they escaped to the land of Ararat. And Esarhaddon his son succeeded him as king.

2 Kings 20:20, 21

20:20 As for the other events of Hezekiah's reign, all his achievements and how he made the pool and the tunnel by which he brought water into the city, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? [21]Hezekiah rested with his ancestors. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.

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[a] *20* Dead Sea Scrolls (see also 2 Kings 19:19); Masoretic Text *you alone are the LORD* [b] *25* Dead Sea Scrolls (see also 2 Kings 19:24); Masoretic Text does not have *in foreign lands.* [c] *27* Some manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 2 Kings 19:26); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *roof / and terraced fields*

TRANSITION

After Sennacherib's Campaign

Jerusalem had been spared, just as Isaiah had repeatedly promised (see Isa 31:4, 5), but the land had not escaped unscathed by Sennacherib's invasion (Isa 22:1–14). The prophet condemns Judah's leadership, perhaps even including Hezekiah, for paying more attention to the defenses of the city than to seeking "the One" who made them (22:8–11). The lands around Jerusalem had been desolated, as had the northern lands of Phoenicia, particularly the city of Sidon (23:1–18).

The historical setting of Isa 24–27 is difficult to determine. The judgments and salvations described in these chapters are not specifically tied to the political events of the 8th century. For this reason, many suggest that chs. 24–27 actually refer to a much later time, perhaps to the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. It is true that the style of these chapters is more like the apocalyptic prophecies in Ezekiel and Daniel than like the other prophecies of Isaiah. Nevertheless, the woe described here well suits the time after Assyria's armies had destroyed Israel and ravaged Judah, as does the reference in Isa 27:13 to the ones "who were perishing in Assyria."

- **Isaiah 22:1–14**
- **Isaiah 23:1–18**
- **Isaiah 24:1—27:13**

Isaiah 22:1–14

A Prophecy About Jerusalem

22 :1 A prophecy against the Valley of Vision:

What troubles you now,
that you have all gone up on the roofs,
2 you town so full of commotion,
you city of tumult and revelry?
Your slain were not killed by the sword,
nor did they die in battle.
3 All your leaders have fled together;
they have been captured without using the bow.
All you who were caught were taken prisoner together,
having fled while the enemy was still far away.
4 Therefore I said, "Turn away from me;
let me weep bitterly.
Do not try to console me
over the destruction of my people."

5 The Lord, the LORD Almighty, has a day
of tumult and trampling and terror
in the Valley of Vision,
a day of battering down walls
and of crying out to the mountains.
6 Elam takes up the quiver,
with her charioteers and horses;
Kir uncovers the shield.
7 Your choicest valleys are full of chariots,
and horsemen are posted at the city gates.

8 The Lord stripped away the defenses of Judah,
and you looked in that day
to the weapons in the Palace of the Forest.
9 You saw that the walls of the City of David
were broken through in many places;
you stored up water
in the Lower Pool.
10 You counted the buildings in Jerusalem
and tore down houses to strengthen the wall.
11 You built a reservoir between the two walls
for the water of the Old Pool,
but you did not look to the One who made it,
or have regard for the One who planned it long ago.

12 The Lord, the LORD Almighty,
called you on that day
to weep and to wail,
to tear out your hair and put on sackcloth.
13 But see, there is joy and revelry,
slaughtering of cattle and killing of sheep,
eating of meat and drinking of wine!
"Let us eat and drink," you say,
"for tomorrow we die!"

14 The LORD Almighty has revealed this in my hearing: "Till your dying day this sin will not be atoned for," says the Lord, the LORD Almighty.

Isaiah 23:1–18

A Prophecy Against Tyre

23 :1 A prophecy against Tyre:

Wail, you ships of Tarshish!
For Tyre is destroyed
and left without house or harbor.

TIME CAPSULE	671 to 667 B.C.
671	Esarhaddon invades Egypt and captures Memphis
671	Esarhaddon drives the Egyptian ruler Tirhakah from Memphis
669	Esarhaddon dies en route to Egypt
668–627	Ashurbanipal rules in Assyria
667–648	Shamash-shuma-ukin rules Babylonia

Hezekiah's Tunnel (Isa 22:11)

Beginning in the 8th century B.C. the kingdoms of Judah and Israel were continuously threatened by the Neo-Assyrian Empire. Assyrian kings came to Canaan to collect taxes and to intimidate the local rulers. In 722 B.C. Samaria, the capital of Israel, was destroyed (2Ki 17:6), and those Israelites that could, fled toward Jerusalem. Upon becoming king of Judah in 715 B.C., Hezekiah did his best to prepare Jerusalem for the eventual attack by the Assyrians. His most lasting project involved water.

Rain in Judah usually comes only in the winter. Thus, Judahites built their cities near perennial springs, and in Jerusalem the main water source was the Gihon spring (1Ki 1:33, 38). Like most springs, the Gihon flowed in the valley, while the city sat on the hill above. Thus the spring that served Jerusalem water was, then, at the foot of the hill, outside the walls of the city. That location would be a problem if an enemy army surrounded the city.

Hezekiah camouflaged the spring and ordered that a tunnel be carved into the hillside to bring the water under the city. Shafts were then dug down to the flowing water in the tunnel, which when finished was 1,750 feet long and emptied into the Pool of Siloam (2Ch 32:2–4, 30).

A dedication inscription was discovered in A.D. 1880 near the southern exit of the tunnel. Called the Siloam inscription, it describes the 8-month effort of two teams of diggers working toward each other from opposite ends of the tunnel. As the workmen came close together they could hear the other team, and they dug, according to the inscription, "pickaxe against pickaxe" until the water flowed from the spring to the reservoir.

Hezekiah's tunnel was a remarkable building project. The height of the tunnel varies greatly but averages 6 feet, and the water is most often less than knee-deep. Even today, visitors to Jerusalem can wade through the s-shaped tunnel in the cool waters of the Gihon spring. Hezekiah was successful in securing the city's water supply. But the prophet (Isa 22:9–11) warns Judah's leaders that dependence on defense projects would not be sufficient to secure the city itself.

From the land of Cyprus
word has come to them.

2 Be silent, you people of the island
and you merchants of Sidon,
whom the seafarers have enriched.
3 On the great waters
came the grain of the Shihor;
the harvest of the Nile[a] was the revenue of Tyre,
and she became the marketplace of the nations.

4 Be ashamed, Sidon, and you fortress of the sea,
for the sea has spoken:
"I have neither been in labor nor given birth;
I have neither reared sons nor brought up daughters."
5 When word comes to Egypt,
they will be in anguish at the report from Tyre.

6 Cross over to Tarshish;
wail, you people of the island.
7 Is this your city of revelry,
the old, old city,
whose feet have taken her
to settle in far-off lands?
8 Who planned this against Tyre,
the bestower of crowns,
whose merchants are princes,
whose traders are renowned in the earth?
9 The LORD Almighty planned it,
to bring down her pride in all her splendor
and to humble all who are renowned on the earth.

10 Till[b] your land as they do along the Nile,
Daughter Tarshish,
for you no longer have a harbor.
11 The LORD has stretched out his hand over the sea
and made its kingdoms tremble.
He has given an order concerning Phoenicia
that her fortresses be destroyed.
12 He said, "No more of your reveling,
Virgin Daughter Sidon, now crushed!

[a] *2,3* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls *Sidon, / who cross over the sea; / your envoys 3are on the great waters. / The grain of the Shihor, / the harvest of the Nile,* [b] *10* Dead Sea Scrolls and some Septuagint manuscripts; Masoretic Text *Go through*

"Up, cross over to Cyprus;
even there you will find no rest."
13 Look at the land of the Babylonians,[a]
this people that is now of no account!
The Assyrians have made it
a place for desert creatures;
they raised up their siege towers,
they stripped its fortresses bare
and turned it into a ruin.

14 Wail, you ships of Tarshish;
your fortress is destroyed!

15 At that time Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, the span of a king's life. But at the end of these seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the prostitute:

16 "Take up a harp, walk through the city,
you forgotten prostitute;
play the harp well, sing many a song,
so that you will be remembered."

17 At the end of seventy years, the LORD will deal with Tyre. She will return to her lucrative prostitution and will ply her trade with all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. 18 Yet her profit and her earnings will be set apart for the LORD; they will not be stored up or hoarded. Her profits will go to those who live before the LORD, for abundant food and fine clothes.

Isaiah 24:1—27:13

The LORD's Devastation of the Earth

24 :1 See, the LORD is going to lay waste
the earth
and devastate it;
he will ruin its face
and scatter its inhabitants—
2 it will be the same
for priest as for people,
for the master as for his servant,
for the mistress as for her servant,
for seller as for buyer,
for borrower as for lender,
for debtor as for creditor.
3 The earth will be completely laid waste
and totally plundered.
The LORD has spoken this word.

4 The earth dries up and withers,
the world languishes and withers,
the heavens languish with the earth.
5 The earth is defiled by its people;
they have disobeyed the laws,
violated the statutes
and broken the everlasting covenant.
6 Therefore a curse consumes the earth;
its people must bear their guilt.
Therefore earth's inhabitants are
burned up,
and very few are left.
7 The new wine dries up and the vine withers;
all the merrymakers groan.
8 The joyful timbrels are stilled,
the noise of the revelers has stopped,
the joyful harp is silent.
9 No longer do they drink wine with a song;
the beer is bitter to its drinkers.
10 The ruined city lies desolate;
the entrance to every house is barred.
11 In the streets they cry out for wine;
all joy turns to gloom,
all joyful sounds are banished from the
earth.
12 The city is left in ruins,
its gate is battered to pieces.
13 So will it be on the earth
and among the nations,
as when an olive tree is beaten,
or as when gleanings are left after the
grape harvest.

14 They raise their voices, they shout for joy;
from the west they acclaim the LORD's
majesty.
15 Therefore in the east give glory to the
LORD;
exalt the name of the LORD, the God of
Israel,
in the islands of the sea.
16 From the ends of the earth we hear
singing:
"Glory to the Righteous One."

But I said, "I waste away, I waste away!
Woe to me!
The treacherous betray!
With treachery the treacherous betray!"
17 Terror and pit and snare await you,
people of the earth.
18 Whoever flees at the sound of terror
will fall into a pit;
whoever climbs out of the pit
will be caught in a snare.

The floodgates of the heavens are opened,
the foundations of the earth shake.
19 The earth is broken up,
the earth is split asunder,
the earth is violently shaken.
20 The earth reels like a drunkard,
it sways like a hut in the wind;
so heavy upon it is the guilt of its rebellion
that it falls—never to rise again.

[a] 13 Or *Chaldeans*

God Punishes Gods and Kings (Isa 24:21–23)

Worshipers held special feast days dedicated to their gods, at which time the duty of the gods was to bring justice to all. Such justice included punishing evildoers. Patron deities of cities and empires, as well as the sun gods and goddesses, were expected to punish the wicked at any time. Nevertheless, humans would also pray to gods of all kinds and at all levels of the divine hierarchy, requesting that justice be done.

Isaiah expects that Yahweh will sweep the wicked completely from ruling over his righteous worshipers (Isa 24:21–23). All who have misbehaved will be punished. Divine rulers "in the heavens above" as well as human rulers ("the kings on the earth below") will lose the offices they have abused. They will be placed in the Pit, usually meaning the land of the dead (Sheol), a place where they will be physically restrained from ever gaining power again.

The myths of Ugarit contain similar threats against the gods by El, the chief god of the pantheon. El reminds the other gods that he can and will remove them from their positions for improper behavior. Such behavior occurs in the Ugaritic *Legend of Aqhat* when the goddess Anath kills Aqhat. Aqhat's father, Daniel, requests the god Baal to intercede with El so that Anath might be punished.

Similarly, Isaiah expects Yahweh to punish the idols. The moon god Yareah and the sun god Shemesh were widely worshiped deities throughout Syria-Palestine, and Isaiah prophesies that they will be debased (24:23). Instead, God alone will reign in Jerusalem (the holy city) on Mount Zion (the holy mountain; see Ps 82).

21 In that day the LORD will punish
the powers in the heavens above
and the kings on the earth below.
22 They will be herded together
like prisoners bound in a dungeon;
they will be shut up in prison
and be punished[a] after many days.
23 The moon will be dismayed,
the sun ashamed;
for the LORD Almighty will reign
on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem,
and before its elders—with great glory.

Praise to the LORD

25 1 LORD, you are my God;
I will exalt you and praise your name,
for in perfect faithfulness
you have done wonderful things,
things planned long ago.
2 You have made the city a heap of rubble,
the fortified town a ruin,
the foreigners' stronghold a city no more;
it will never be rebuilt.
3 Therefore strong peoples will honor you;
cities of ruthless nations will revere
you.
4 You have been a refuge for the poor,
a refuge for the needy in their distress,
a shelter from the storm
and a shade from the heat.
For the breath of the ruthless
is like a storm driving against a wall
5 and like the heat of the desert.
You silence the uproar of foreigners;
as heat is reduced by the shadow of a
cloud,
so the song of the ruthless is stilled.

6 On this mountain the LORD Almighty will
prepare
a feast of rich food for all peoples,
a banquet of aged wine—
the best of meats and the finest of wines.
7 On this mountain he will destroy
the shroud that enfolds all peoples,
the sheet that covers all nations;
8 he will swallow up death forever.
The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the
tears
from all faces;
he will remove his people's disgrace
from all the earth.
The LORD has spoken.

9 In that day they will say,

"Surely this is our God;
we trusted in him, and he saved us.
This is the LORD, we trusted in him;
let us rejoice and be glad in his
salvation."

10 The hand of the LORD will rest on this
mountain;
but Moab will be trampled in their land
as straw is trampled down in the manure.

Politics & Government
Pits have often been used for punishment (Isa 24:22). In 413 B.C. Athens suffered a terrible defeat at Syracuse, and 7,000 prisoners were held in the quarries at Syracuse before being sold into slavery. The Romans executed prisoners condemned to death in an underground cell called the Tullianum.

[a] 22 Or *released*

11 They will stretch out their hands in it,
as swimmers stretch out their hands to swim.
God will bring down their pride
despite the cleverness[a] of their hands.
12 He will bring down your high fortified walls
and lay them low;
he will bring them down to the ground,
to the very dust.

A Song of Praise

26 1 In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah:

We have a strong city;
God makes salvation
its walls and ramparts.
2 Open the gates
that the righteous nation may enter,
the nation that keeps faith.
3 You will keep in perfect peace
those whose minds are steadfast,
because they trust in you.
4 Trust in the LORD forever,
for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal.
5 He humbles those who dwell on high,
he lays the lofty city low;
he levels it to the ground
and casts it down to the dust.
6 Feet trample it down—
the feet of the oppressed,
the footsteps of the poor.

7 The path of the righteous is level;
you, the Upright One, make the way of the righteous smooth.
8 Yes, LORD, walking in the way of your laws,[b]
we wait for you;
your name and renown
are the desire of our hearts.
9 My soul yearns for you in the night;
in the morning my spirit longs for you.
When your judgments come upon the earth,
the people of the world learn righteousness.
10 But when grace is shown to the wicked,
they do not learn righteousness;
even in a land of uprightness they go on doing evil
and do not regard the majesty of the LORD.
11 LORD, your hand is lifted high,
but they do not see it.
Let them see your zeal for your people and be put to shame;
let the fire reserved for your enemies consume them.

12 LORD, you establish peace for us;
all that we have accomplished you have done for us.
13 LORD our God, other lords besides you have ruled over us,
but your name alone do we honor.
14 They are now dead, they live no more;
their spirits do not rise.
You punished them and brought them to ruin;
you wiped out all memory of them.
15 You have enlarged the nation, LORD;
you have enlarged the nation.
You have gained glory for yourself;
you have extended all the borders of the land.

16 LORD, they came to you in their distress;
when you disciplined them,
they could barely whisper a prayer.[a]
17 As a pregnant woman about to give birth
writhes and cries out in her pain,
so were we in your presence, LORD.
18 We were with child, we writhed in labor,
but we gave birth to wind.
We have not brought salvation to the earth,
and the people of the world have not come to life.

19 But your dead will live, LORD;
their bodies will rise—
let those who dwell in the dust
wake up and shout for joy—
your dew is like the dew of the morning;
the earth will give birth to her dead.

20 Go, my people, enter your rooms
and shut the doors behind you;

[a] *11,16* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] *8* Or *judgments*

TIME CAPSULE	667 to 656 B.C.
667	Ashurbanipal captures Memphis
665	Elamite ruler Urtak attacks Babylonia and is pushed back
664	Ethiopia controls Egypt until 664
664	Ashurbanipal drives Cushites from Thebes and Memphis
664–525	Egypt is united under pharaohs from Sais
656	Psammetichus I begins united dynasty in Egypt by annexing Upper Egypt

hide yourselves for a little while
until his wrath has passed by.
21 See, the LORD is coming out of his dwelling
to punish the people of the earth for their sins.
The earth will disclose the blood shed on it;
the earth will conceal its slain no longer.

Deliverance of Israel

27 1 In that day,
the LORD will punish with his sword—
his fierce, great and powerful sword—
Leviathan the gliding serpent,
Leviathan the coiling serpent;
he will slay the monster of the sea.

2 In that day—

"Sing about a fruitful vineyard:
3 I, the LORD, watch over it;
I water it continually.
I guard it day and night
so that no one may harm it.
4 I am not angry.
If only there were briers and thorns confronting me!
I would march against them in battle;
I would set them all on fire.
5 Or else let them come to me for refuge;
let them make peace with me,
yes, let them make peace with me."

6 In days to come Jacob will take root,
Israel will bud and blossom
and fill all the world with fruit.

7 Has the LORD struck her
as he struck down those who struck her?
Has she been killed
as those were killed who killed her?
8 By warfare[a] and exile you contend with her—
with his fierce blast he drives her out,
as on a day the east wind blows.
9 By this, then, will Jacob's guilt be atoned for,
and this will be the full fruit of the removal of his sin:
When he makes all the altar stones
to be like limestone crushed to pieces,
no Asherah poles[b] or incense altars
will be left standing.
10 The fortified city stands desolate,
an abandoned settlement, forsaken like the wilderness;
there the calves graze,
there they lie down;
they strip its branches bare.
11 When its twigs are dry, they are broken off
and women come and make fires with them.
For this is a people without understanding;
so their Maker has no compassion on them,
and their Creator shows them no favor.

12 In that day the LORD will thresh from the flowing Euphrates to the Wadi of Egypt, and you, Israel, will be gathered up one by one.
13 And in that day a great trumpet will sound. Those who were perishing in Assyria and those who were exiled in Egypt will come and worship the LORD on the holy mountain in Jerusalem.

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Assyria's Invasions

The Chronicler has comparatively little interest in Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria. Political matters are never as important in Chronicles as are temple concerns. The historian of Kings only briefly covered Hezekiah's reform before devoting most of his account to the king's illness and the Assyrian invasions. The Chronicler reverses the emphasis, expanding the account of the reforms (2Ch 29–31), then offering a shortened version of the illness and invasions (2Ch 32).

Indeed, the Chronicler describes Hezekiah's greatness entirely in terms of his temple reforms. Hezekiah's reforms are even more highly praised than the more famous reforms of his great-grandson Josiah (2Ki 22; 23; 2Ch 34; 35). Hezekiah is even given credit for resuming the Passover celebration (2Ch 30:26), something that 2Ki 23:22 attributes to Josiah. As usual, Chronicles shows a keen interest in the priests and Levites and in their duties (2Ch 31).

• 2 Chronicles 29:1—31:21

2 Chronicles

Hezekiah Purifies the Temple

29 :1 Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. 2 He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done.

[a] 8 See Septuagint; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [b] 9 That is, wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah

3 In the first month of the first year of his
reign, he opened the doors of the temple of
the LORD and repaired them. 4 He brought in
the priests and the Levites, assembled them
in the square on the east side 5 and said: "Lis-
ten to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now
and consecrate the temple of the LORD, the God
of your ancestors. Remove all defilement from
the sanctuary. 6 Our parents were unfaithful;
they did evil in the eyes of the LORD our God
and forsook him. They turned their faces away
from the LORD's dwelling place and turned their
backs on him. 7 They also shut the doors of the
portico and put out the lamps. They did not
burn incense or present any burnt offerings
at the sanctuary to the God of Israel. 8 There-
fore, the anger of the LORD has fallen on Judah
and Jerusalem; he has made them an object
of dread and horror and scorn, as you can see
with your own eyes. 9 This is why our fathers
have fallen by the sword and why our sons and
daughters and our wives are in captivity. 10 Now
I intend to make a covenant with the LORD, the
God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn
away from us. 11 My sons, do not be negligent
now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand be-
fore him and serve him, to minister before him
and to burn incense."

12 Then these Levites set to work:
from the Kohathites,
Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of
Azariah;
from the Merarites,
Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Je-
hallelel;
from the Gershonites,
Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of
Joah;
13 from the descendants of Elizaphan,
Shimri and Jeiel;
from the descendants of Asaph,
Zechariah and Mattaniah;
14 from the descendants of Heman,
Jehiel and Shimei;
from the descendants of Jeduthun,
Shemaiah and Uzziel.

15 When they had assembled their fellow Le-
vites and consecrated themselves, they went in
to purify the temple of the LORD, as the king
had ordered, following the word of the LORD.
16 The priests went into the sanctuary of the
LORD to purify it. They brought out to the court-
yard of the LORD's temple everything unclean
that they found in the temple of the LORD. The
Levites took it and carried it out to the Kidron
Valley. 17 They began the consecration on the
first day of the first month, and by the eighth
day of the month they reached the portico of
the LORD. For eight more days they consecrat-
ed the temple of the LORD itself, finishing on
the sixteenth day of the first month.

18 Then they went in to King Hezekiah and
reported: "We have purified the entire temple
of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering with all
its utensils, and the table for setting out the
consecrated bread, with all its articles. 19 We
have prepared and consecrated all the articles
that King Ahaz removed in his unfaithfulness
while he was king. They are now in front of the
LORD's altar."

20 Early the next morning King Hezekiah
gathered the city officials together and went
up to the temple of the LORD. 21 They brought
seven bulls, seven rams, seven male lambs
and seven male goats as a sin offering[a] for
the kingdom, for the sanctuary and for Judah.
The king commanded the priests, the descen-
dants of Aaron, to offer these on the altar of the
LORD. 22 So they slaughtered the bulls, and the
priests took the blood and splashed it against
the altar; next they slaughtered the rams and
splashed their blood against the altar; then
they slaughtered the lambs and splashed their
blood against the altar. 23 The goats for the sin
offering were brought before the king and the
assembly, and they laid their hands on them.
24 The priests then slaughtered the goats and
presented their blood on the altar for a sin of-
fering to atone for all Israel, because the king
had ordered the burnt offering and the sin of-
fering for all Israel.

25 He stationed the Levites in the temple of
the LORD with cymbals, harps and lyres in the
way prescribed by David and Gad the king's
seer and Nathan the prophet; this was com-
manded by the LORD through his prophets.
26 So the Levites stood ready with David's
instruments, and the priests with their trum-
pets.

27 Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the
burnt offering on the altar. As the offering be-
gan, singing to the LORD began also, accom-
panied by trumpets and the instruments of
David king of Israel. 28 The whole assembly
bowed in worship, while the musicians played
and the trumpets sounded. All this continued
until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was
completed.

29 When the offerings were finished, the king
and everyone present with him knelt down and
worshiped. 30 King Hezekiah and his officials
ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the

[a] *21* Or *purification offering*; also in verses 23 and 24

words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness and bowed down and worshiped.

31Then Hezekiah said, "You have now dedicated yourselves to the LORD. Come and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the temple of the LORD." So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all whose hearts were willing brought burnt offerings.

32The number of burnt offerings the assembly brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams and two hundred male lambs—all of them for burnt offerings to the LORD. 33The animals consecrated as sacrifices amounted to six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep and goats. 34The priests, however, were too few to skin all the burnt offerings; so their relatives the Levites helped them until the task was finished and until other priests had been consecrated, for the Levites had been more conscientious in consecrating themselves than the priests had been. 35There were burnt offerings in abundance, together with the fat of the fellowship offerings and the drink offerings that accompanied the burnt offerings.

So the service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished. 36Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly.

Hezekiah Celebrates the Passover

30 1Hezekiah sent word to all Israel and Judah and also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh, inviting them to come to the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. 2The king and his officials and the whole assembly in Jerusalem decided to celebrate the Passover in the second month. 3They had not been able to celebrate it at the regular time because not enough priests had consecrated themselves and the people had not assembled in Jerusalem. 4The plan seemed right both to the king and to the whole assembly. 5They decided to send a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, calling the people to come to Jerusalem and celebrate the Passover to the LORD, the God of Israel. It had not been celebrated in large numbers according to what was written.

6At the king's command, couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and from his officials, which read:

> "People of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, that he may return to you who are left, who have escaped from the hand of the kings of Assyria. 7Do not be like your parents and your fellow Israelites, who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their ancestors, so that he made them an object of horror, as you see. 8Do not be stiff-necked, as your ancestors were; submit to the LORD. Come to his sanctuary, which he has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that his fierce anger will turn away from you. 9If you return to the LORD, then your fellow Israelites and your children will be shown compassion by their captors and will return to this land, for the LORD your God is gracious and compassionate. He will not turn his face from you if you return to him."

10The couriers went from town to town in Ephraim and Manasseh, as far as Zebulun, but people scorned and ridiculed them. 11Nevertheless, some from Asher, Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and went to Jerusalem. 12Also in Judah the hand of God was on the people to give them unity of mind to carry out what the king and his officials had ordered, following the word of the LORD.

13A very large crowd of people assembled in Jerusalem to celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread in the second month. 14They removed the altars in Jerusalem and cleared away the incense altars and threw them into the Kidron Valley.

15They slaughtered the Passover lamb on the fourteenth day of the second month. The priests and the Levites were ashamed and consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the temple of the LORD. 16Then they took up their regular positions as prescribed in the Law of Moses the man of God. The priests splashed against the altar the blood handed to them by the Levites. 17Since many in the crowd had not consecrated themselves, the Levites had to kill the Passover lambs for all those who were not ceremonially clean and could not consecrate their lambs[a] to the LORD. 18Although most of the many people who came from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar and Zebulun had not purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover, contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "May the LORD, who is good, pardon everyone 19who sets their heart on seeking God—the LORD, the God of their ancestors—even if they are not clean according to the rules of the sanc-

[a] *17* Or *consecrate themselves*

Hezekiah Brings Revival to Judah (2Ch 30:26)

King Hezekiah of Judah (715–686 B.C.) is given very high marks as a monarch by the writer of 2 Kings. The works of this king (2Ki 18:3) and those of Josiah (2Ki 22:1, 2) are favorably compared with those of their ancestor King David. Hezekiah is credited with sweeping reforms of Judah's temple worship (2Ch 29–31). The Passover observance which he restored was such a time of joy that the Chronicler reports, "Since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem" (2Ch 30:26).

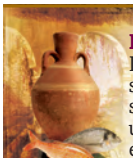
Hezekiah is a focus of attention in the Assyrian annals. It is probable that he joined the alliance of Chaldeans, Arameans, and Elamites that rebelled against Assyrian rule after the death of Sargon II in 705 B.C. Sargon's successor, Sennacherib, invaded Palestine in 701 B.C., ravaging Judah and taking all of its fortified towns except Jerusalem. The Assyrian records claim that over 200,000 Judahites were deported, and that Hezekiah was "like a caged bird" in his capital city. Though Jerusalem had to pay large amounts of tribute, the city was not captured (2Ki 18:13–16).

tuary." 20And the LORD heard Hezekiah and
healed the people.
21The Israelites who were present in Jerusalem celebrated the Festival of Unleavened
Bread for seven days with great rejoicing,
while the Levites and priests praised the LORD
every day with resounding instruments dedicated to the LORD.[a]
22Hezekiah spoke encouragingly to all the
Levites, who showed good understanding of
the service of the LORD. For the seven days
they ate their assigned portion and offered fellowship offerings and praised[b] the LORD, the
God of their ancestors.
23The whole assembly then agreed to celebrate the festival seven more days; so for
another seven days they celebrated joyfully.
24Hezekiah king of Judah provided a thousand
bulls and seven thousand sheep and goats for
the assembly, and the officials provided them
with a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep
and goats. A great number of priests consecrated themselves. 25The entire assembly of
Judah rejoiced, along with the priests and Levites and all who had assembled from Israel,
including the foreigners who had come from
Israel and also those who resided in Judah.
26There was great joy in Jerusalem, for since
the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel
there had been nothing like this in Jerusalem.
27The priests and the Levites stood to bless the
people, and God heard them, for their prayer
reached heaven, his holy dwelling place.

31 1When all this had ended, the Israelites
who were there went out to the towns
of Judah, smashed the sacred stones and cut
down the Asherah poles. They destroyed the
high places and the altars throughout Judah
and Benjamin and in Ephraim and Manasseh.
After they had destroyed all of them, the Israelites returned to their own towns and to their
own property.

Contributions for Worship

2Hezekiah assigned the priests and Levites
to divisions—each of them according to their
duties as priests or Levites—to offer burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, to minister,
to give thanks and to sing praises at the gates
of the LORD's dwelling. 3The king contributed
from his own possessions for the morning and
evening burnt offerings and for the burnt offerings on the Sabbaths, at the New Moons and
at the appointed festivals as written in the Law
of the LORD. 4He ordered the people living in
Jerusalem to give the portion due the priests
and Levites so they could devote themselves
to the Law of the LORD. 5As soon as the order
went out, the Israelites generously gave the
firstfruits of their grain, new wine, olive oil and
honey and all that the fields produced. They
brought a great amount, a tithe of everything.
6The people of Israel and Judah who lived in
the towns of Judah also brought a tithe of their
herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things
dedicated to the LORD their God, and they
piled them in heaps. 7They began doing this
in the third month and finished in the seventh
month. 8When Hezekiah and his officials came
and saw the heaps, they praised the LORD and
blessed his people Israel.
9Hezekiah asked the priests and Levites



Food & Drink

In biblical times practically all meat was slaughtered in a religious ritual, if not as a special sacrifice (2Ch 30:24). A large feast using such meat was part of the religious event. Among the nomadic Arabs (the bedouin) of modern times, meat was seldom eaten except for a festival or to welcome a guest. As nomads they kept large herds of sheep and goats, while hunting and eating gazelle.

[a] *21* Or *priests sang to the LORD every day, accompanied by the LORD's instruments of praise* [b] *22* Or *and confessed their sins to*

about the heaps; [10]and Azariah the chief priest, from the family of Zadok, answered, "Since the people began to bring their contributions to the temple of the LORD, we have had enough to eat and plenty to spare, because the LORD has blessed his people, and this great amount is left over."

[11]Hezekiah gave orders to prepare storerooms in the temple of the LORD, and this was done. [12]Then they faithfully brought in the contributions, tithes and dedicated gifts. Konaniah, a Levite, was the overseer in charge of these things, and his brother Shimei was next in rank. [13]Jehiel, Azaziah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismakiah, Mahath and Benaiah were assistants of Konaniah and Shimei his brother. All these served by appointment of King Hezekiah and Azariah the official in charge of the temple of God.

[14]Kore son of Imnah the Levite, keeper of the East Gate, was in charge of the freewill offerings given to God, distributing the contributions made to the LORD and also the consecrated gifts. [15]Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah and Shekaniah assisted him faithfully in the towns of the priests, distributing to their fellow priests according to their divisions, old and young alike.

[16]In addition, they distributed to the males three years old or more whose names were in the genealogical records—all who would enter the temple of the LORD to perform the daily duties of their various tasks, according to their responsibilities and their divisions. [17]And they distributed to the priests enrolled by their families in the genealogical records and likewise to the Levites twenty years old or more, according to their responsibilities and their divisions. [18]They included all the little ones, the wives, and the sons and daughters of the whole community listed in these genealogical records. For they were faithful in consecrating themselves.

[19]As for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who lived on the farmlands around their towns or in any other towns, men were designated by name to distribute portions to every male among them and to all who were recorded in the genealogies of the Levites.

[20]This is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah, doing what was good and right and faithful before the LORD his God. [21]In everything that he undertook in the service of God's temple and in obedience to the law and the commands, he sought his God and worked wholeheartedly. And so he prospered.

TRANSITION

Hezekiah's Sickness and Rebellion

When the Chronicler finally deals with Hezekiah's rebellion against Assyria, it is a much condensed account. Among other omissions, Chronicles does not mention that Hezekiah paid tribute to Sennacherib (2Ki 18:13, 16). As in Kings and Isaiah, the accounts of Hezekiah's illness and of the ambassadors from Babylon appear to be out of chronological order. Given the known dates for the Babylonian ruler Merodach-Baladan (721–710 and 703–702 B.C.), the "rulers of Babylon" (2Ch 32:31) probably visited before Sennacherib's withdrawal from Jerusalem in 701 B.C., and certainly before his death in 681 B.C.

- **2 Chronicles 32:24–31**
- **2 Chronicles 32:1–23**
- **2 Chronicles 32:32, 33**

2 Chronicles 32:24–31

Hezekiah's Pride, Success and Death

32:24 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. [25]But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the LORD's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. [26]Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore the LORD's wrath did not come on them during the days of Hezekiah.

[27]Hezekiah had very great wealth and honor, and he made treasuries for his silver and gold and for his precious stones, spices, shields and all kinds of valuables. [28]He also made buildings to store the harvest of grain, new wine and olive oil; and he made stalls for various kinds of cattle, and pens for the flocks. [29]He built villages and acquired great numbers of flocks and herds, for God had given him very great riches.

[30]It was Hezekiah who blocked the upper outlet of the Gihon spring and channeled the water down to the west side of the City of David. He succeeded in everything he undertook. [31]But

Architecture & Building

Hezekiah's tunnel (2Ch 32:30) still exists and is a tourist attraction today. It is 1,750 feet long. Workmen dug simultaneously from the two ends, and a surviving inscription tells how they met in the middle. They could hear shouts from the other team, enabling them to find each other. The tunnel was dug sometime between 715 and 701 B.C.

The Siege of Lachish (2Ch 32:9)

One of the more dramatic military efforts in Assyrian history is only barely mentioned in the Bible. This event was the conquest of Lachish by the Assyrian king Sennacherib. Some scholars think Sennacherib may have invaded Palestine twice: an invasion in 701 B.C. that is reported in Assyrian annals, and a supposed second invasion in 688 B.C. After attacking and defeating Lachish, the Assyrian king set up his headquarters there, from which he sent Assyrian forces to Jerusalem (2Ki 18:17).

The Bible only reports the destruction of Lachish in small details. It tells us that Sennacherib was "at Lachish" (2Ki 18:14), that he was "laying siege to Lachish" (2Ch 32:9), and implies that he eventually captured that city (Isa 37:8). Fortunately, the Assyrian record of that conquest is much more detailed.

On the walls of his Nineveh palace Sennacherib had carved stone reliefs of the siege of Lachish. In these artistic works one can see how the Assyrians built a siege mound for their use in breaching the walls. The captive Judahites are also shown being led into captivity, giving us the earliest pictures of the common dress of the day. We also gain an interesting insight into the military efforts of the time, including the defensive features of Lachish, the Assyrian siege engines equipped with battering rams, contingents of archers, and soldiers using slings in combat.

when envoys were sent by the rulers of Babylon to ask him about the miraculous sign that had occurred in the land, God left him to test him and to know everything that was in his heart.

2 Chronicles 32:1–23

Sennacherib Threatens Jerusalem

32:1 After all that Hezekiah had so faithfully done, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities, thinking to conquer them for himself. 2When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come and that he intended to wage war against Jerusalem, 3he consulted with his officials and military staff about blocking off the water from the springs outside the city, and they helped him. 4They gathered a large group of people who blocked all the springs and the stream that flowed through the land. "Why should the kings[a] of Assyria come and find plenty of water?" they said. 5Then he worked hard repairing all the broken sections of the wall and building towers on it. He built another wall outside that one and reinforced the terraces[b] of the City of David. He also made large numbers of weapons and shields.

6He appointed military officers over the people and assembled them before him in the square at the city gate and encouraged them with these words: 7"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or discouraged because of the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater power with us than with him. 8With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people gained confidence from what Hezekiah the king of Judah said.

9Later, when Sennacherib king of Assyria and all his forces were laying siege to Lachish, he sent his officers to Jerusalem with this message for Hezekiah king of Judah and for all the people of Judah who were there:

10"This is what Sennacherib king of Assyria says: On what are you basing your confidence, that you remain in Jerusalem under siege? 11When Hezekiah says, 'The LORD our God will save us from the hand of the king of Assyria,' he is misleading you, to let you die of hunger and thirst. 12Did not Hezekiah himself remove this god's high places and altars, saying to Judah and Jerusalem, 'You must worship before one altar and burn sacrifices on it'?

13"Do you not know what I and my predecessors have done to all the peoples of the other lands? Were the gods of those nations ever able to deliver their land from my hand? 14Who of all the gods of these nations that my predecessors destroyed has been able to save his people from me? How then can your god deliver you from my hand? 15Now do not let Hezekiah deceive you and mislead you like this. Do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or the hand of my predecessors. How much less will your god deliver you from my hand!"

16Sennacherib's officers spoke further against the LORD God and against his servant Hezekiah. 17The king also wrote letters ridiculing the LORD, the God of Israel, and saying this against him: "Just as the gods of the peoples of the other lands did not rescue their people from my hand, so the god of Hezekiah will not rescue his people from my hand." 18Then they called out in Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to terrify them and make them afraid in order to capture the city.

[a] *4* Hebrew; Septuagint and Syriac *king* [b] *5* Or *the Millo*

A Bird in a Cage (2Ch 32:9, 21, 22)

In the 8th century B.C. the Assyrians were the dominant power in the Near East, so it is no wonder that several books report about the Assyrian period (Isaiah, Jonah, Nahum, 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles). One of the most amazing accounts is that of the confrontation between Hezekiah and Sennacherib. What makes this incident so unusual is that it is mentioned not only in the Bible but also by the Assyrians in the annals of Sennacherib.

Sennacherib, the Assyrian king, invaded Judah in 701 B.C. He conquered Lachish, one of Judah's strongest cities, and was plaguing the entire area (2Ki 18:13, 14). The seriousness of this threat to Judah can be seen from Sennacherib's records where he claims to have destroyed 46 walled cities and to have conquered smaller towns "without number." In addition, Sennacherib boasted of taking 200,150 people captive. Undoubtedly, the Assyrian conquest was a catastrophic blow to Judah.

Whether in 701 B.C. or later, as some scholars suppose, in 688 B.C., Sennacherib finally focused his attention on Jerusalem. After surrounding the city, the Assyrian chief of staff tried to convince the city's leaders to petition King Hezekiah for peace (2Ki 18:17–19). Sennacherib's records report about Hezekiah, "Himself, like a caged bird, I shut up in Jerusalem, his royal city."

Though the city was terrified, Isaiah prophesied the ultimate demise of Sennacherib and retreat of his army (2Ki 19:6, 7). The Chronicler records the destruction of Sennacherib's army as the work of the angel of the Lord (2Ch 32:21). Sennacherib himself, in his own records, does not say why he did not complete his conquest of Jerusalem. He only states that he had made preparation to do so, but then went away.

19 They spoke about the God of Jerusalem as
they did about the gods of the other peoples of
the world—the work of human hands.
20 King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son
of Amoz cried out in prayer to heaven about
this. 21 And the LORD sent an angel, who annihi-
lated all the fighting men and the commanders
and officers in the camp of the Assyrian king.
So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace.
And when he went into the temple of his god,
some of his sons, his own flesh and blood, cut
him down with the sword.
22 So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the peo-
ple of Jerusalem from the hand of Sennacherib
king of Assyria and from the hand of all others.
He took care of them[a] on every side. 23 Many
brought offerings to Jerusalem for the LORD
and valuable gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah.
From then on he was highly regarded by all
the nations.

2 Chronicles 32:32, 33

32:32 The other events of Hezekiah's reign and his acts of devotion are written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the book of the kings of Judah and Israel. 33 Hezekiah rested with his ancestors and was buried on the hill where the tombs of David's descendants are. All Judah and the people of Jerusalem honored him when he died. And Manasseh his son succeeded him as king.

[a] *22* Hebrew; Septuagint and Vulgate *He gave them rest*

TIME CAPSULE		653 to 648 B.C.
653		Ashurbanipal campaigns against Elam at the Ulai Canal
652–648		The Assyrian civil war between Ashurbanipal and his brother Shamash-shuma-ukin
650		Greeks use molds for making things out of clay
648		Ashurbanipal captures Babylon, and his brother Shamash-shuma-ukin dies in the palace fire

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Bad and Good Kings

After his illness, Hezekiah probably began preparing his son Manasseh to succeed him as king. It is likely that Manasseh ruled as a co-regent during the last 11 or 12 years of Hezekiah's life (697–686 B.C.). After Hezekiah died, Manasseh quickly surrendered to Assyria. His long reign (697–642 B.C.) is presented as the blackest period in Judah's history. Hezekiah received praise as a king (2Ki 18:5); his son did not (21:11).

Manasseh seems to have set about dismantling the faith of the Judahites. No king of Judah would ever embrace the Canaanite (and probably Assyrian) deities as completely as Manasseh. According to tradition, Manasseh had the prophet Isaiah executed by placing him in a log and sawing it in half. The legend is uncertain, but it may be referred to in Heb 11:37. The historian of Kings is very clear concerning this ruler's influence: Judah's eventual destruction can be attributed to the sins of Manasseh (2Ki 21:10–15; 23:26, 27).

• **2 Kings 21:1–18**

The Long, Dark Years of Manasseh (2Ki 21:16)

Manasseh's reign (697–642 B.C.) was the longest in the history of the Judean kingdom. In his first 11 or 12 years he ruled as a minor, serving as a coregent with his father Hezekiah. His 55-year rule must have seemed even longer to some. The writer of Kings gives Manasseh very low marks as a monarch, cataloging the king's many sins (2Ki 21:1–18).

Assyrian sources from the 7th century B.C. mention Manasseh. Judah had become a vassal state of Assyria after Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 B.C. The annals of Sennacherib's son, Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.) name Manasseh among 22 vassal kings who were obligated to transport materials to Nineveh. The records of Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) also list Manasseh in an account of vassal kings who presented gifts to Assyria and helped to defeat Egypt.

Among the criticisms leveled at Manasseh was that he worshiped the stars—the "starry hosts" (2Ki 21:3). Some scholars assume that Manasseh's religious practices were due to the direction of Assyria. Vassal states were obligated to pay tribute and take loyalty oaths, demonstrating Assyrian rulership. But there is no evidence that the Assyrians imposed their religion upon these states. Possibly Manasseh willingly incorporated Assyrian cultic practices in the temple to show his loyalty to Assyria.

The writer of Chronicles reports that Manasseh was taken prisoner by the Assyrians to Babylon (2Ch 33:11). The city of Babylon did not gain power until after about 625 B.C., several years after Manasseh's reign. After the death of Esarhaddon, however, the Assyrians had corulers at Nineveh and Babylon for 16 years (668–652 B.C.), so it is plausible that Manasseh could have been sent to Babylon.

2 Kings

Manasseh King of Judah

21 :1 Manasseh was twelve years old when
he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother's name was
Hephzibah. [2]He did evil in the eyes of the LORD,
following the detestable practices of the nations
the LORD had driven out before the Israelites.
[3]He rebuilt the high places his father Hezekiah
had destroyed; he also erected altars to Baal
and made an Asherah pole, as Ahab king of Israel had done. He bowed down to all the starry
hosts and worshiped them. [4]He built altars in
the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD had
said, "In Jerusalem I will put my Name." [5]In the
two courts of the temple of the LORD, he built
altars to all the starry hosts. [6]He sacrificed his
own son in the fire, practiced divination, sought
omens, and consulted mediums and spiritists.
He did much evil in the eyes of the LORD, arousing his anger.

[7]He took the carved Asherah pole he had
made and put it in the temple, of which the
LORD had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I
have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will
put my Name forever. [8]I will not again make
the feet of the Israelites wander from the land
I gave their ancestors, if only they will be careful to do everything I commanded them and
will keep the whole Law that my servant Moses
gave them." [9]But the people did not listen. Manasseh led them astray, so that they did more
evil than the nations the LORD had destroyed
before the Israelites.

[10]The LORD said through his servants the
prophets: [11]"Manasseh king of Judah has committed these detestable sins. He has done more
evil than the Amorites who preceded him and
has led Judah into sin with his idols. [12]Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel,
says: I am going to bring such disaster on Jerusalem and Judah that the ears of everyone who
hears of it will tingle. [13]I will stretch out over
Jerusalem the measuring line used against
Samaria and the plumb line used against the
house of Ahab. I will wipe out Jerusalem as
one wipes a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. [14]I will forsake the remnant of my
inheritance and give them into the hands of enemies. They will be looted and plundered by all
their enemies; [15]they have done evil in my eyes
and have aroused my anger from the day their
ancestors came out of Egypt until this day."

[16]Moreover, Manasseh also shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end
to end—besides the sin that he had caused Judah to commit, so that they did evil in the eyes
of the LORD.

[17]As for the other events of Manasseh's
reign, and all he did, including the sin he committed, are they not written in the book of the
annals of the kings of Judah? [18]Manasseh rested with his ancestors and was buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzza. And Amon his
son succeeded him as king.

TRANSITION

Assassination in the Palace

Manasseh was followed to the throne by his son Amon, who was assassinated after only 2 years as king (642–640 B.C.). The conspiracy against Amon was probably a palace intrigue rather than a popular revolt (2Ki 21:23, 24). He

AN IDOLATROUS KING IN JUDAH

Israel (northern kingdom)

Fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 B.C.

Judah (southern kingdom)

Manasseh probably served as coregent with his father Hezekiah for about 11 or 12 years. During his own reign, Manasseh restored the idolatry that Hezekiah had abolished.

Those who protested Manasseh's actions were killed (2Ki 21:16). It is possible that he executed the prophet Isaiah. Rabbinical tradition states that Manasseh gave the command that Isaiah be sawn in two.

Amon, son of Manasseh, reigned for only 2 years. His own servants conspired to kill him; however, after Amon's assassination the people of Judah executed the conspirators and placed Amon's son Josiah on the throne (2Ch 33:25).

was assassinated in the royal palace, and "the people of the land" quickly enacted vengeance upon the conspirators.

• 2 Kings 21:19–26

2 Kings

Amon King of Judah

21:19 Amon was twenty-two years old
when he became king, and he reigned
in Jerusalem two years. His mother's name
was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz; she was
from Jotbah. 20He did evil in the eyes of the
LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. 21He
followed completely the ways of his father, wor-
shiping the idols his father had worshiped, and
bowing down to them. 22He forsook the LORD,
the God of his ancestors, and did not walk in
obedience to him.

23Amon's officials conspired against him and
assassinated the king in his palace. 24Then the
people of the land killed all who had plotted
against King Amon, and they made Josiah his
son king in his place.

25As for the other events of Amon's reign,
and what he did, are they not written in the
book of the annals of the kings of Judah? 26He
was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza.
And Josiah his son succeeded him as king.

TRANSITION

Josiah, the Religious Reformer

Sennacherib, king of Assyria, died in 681 B.C., a few years after Hezekiah. His reign ended violently when some of his own sons assassinated him, and he was replaced by another son, Esarhaddon (680–669 B.C.). Under Esarhaddon and his successor, Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.), Assyria was at its peak of power. These kings even conquered Egypt, something that no Mesopotamian power had ever done before. Esarhaddon captured Memphis in 671 B.C., and Ashurbanipal captured Memphis again in 667 B.C. and Thebes in 664 B.C.

By the end of Ashurbanipal's long reign (627 B.C.), however, the great Neo-Assyrian Empire was near collapse. Many factors explain this rapid decline, but ultimately one may say that the Assyrians were better at building an empire than at maintaining it. In particular, the nation of Babylon, which had never completely accepted Assyrian supremacy, began to assert itself.

Assyria's preoccupation with internal matters allowed the new king of Judah, Josiah (640–609 B.C.), to assert his independence. In 628 B.C. (his 12th year, 2Ch 34:3), he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of the pagan high places. While this was surely a religious action, it would also have made a political statement. Manasseh had shown his allegiance to Assyria by worshiping Assyrian gods; Josiah's return to the worship of Israel's God was a declaration of independence.

A discovery in 622 B.C., Josiah's 18th year (2Ki 22:3), as the young king began to repair and renovate the temple, greatly affected him. His reforms gained their greatest impetus from the Book of the Law that Hilkiah the priest found in the temple. From the kinds of reforms that Josiah put into effect, it seems likely that this book was part or all of the Book of Deuteronomy. No religious reforms in Israel's history were so comprehensive.

• 2 Kings 22:1–20

Should We Correct a Cult Gone Astray? (2Ki 22:8–20)

Josiah was confronted with the "Book of the Law," revealing that the temple cult in Jerusalem had been corrupted (2Ki 22:8). His response was to check with the prophetess Huldah to find out if this was truly the word of God (22:13). The caution of the king appears to be part of standard cult reform procedure in the ancient Near East.

The Assyrian king Sennacherib demolished the city of Babylon in 689 B.C. Later, his son Esarhaddon ruled Assyria and undertook the rebuilding of Babylon and the temple cult of the god Marduk. According to inscriptions relating the events of Esarhaddon's reign (680–669 B.C.), Marduk caused omens to appear to the king, revealing that the cult should be reinstated. The king, however, worried about such an undertaking since it was Marduk himself who had ordered his own city destroyed. Following Mesopotamian customs, the king went to the temples of the deities in charge of omens, Shamash and Adad, as well as to Marduk, and kneeled before them. Each deity supplied yet more omens to confirm that the temple reform should be instigated.

In the same way, the Babylonian king Nabonidus (556–539 B.C.) observed an eclipse of the moon, which was interpreted (by means of an omen book) to mean that the moon god, Sin, wished a new high priestess and a refurbished cult. As with Esarhaddon and Josiah, Nabonidus wanted to confirm the message. The king checked three times with the gods Shamash and Adad, the omen deities, to confirm the need for a new high priestess, the restoration of the Sin temples throughout Babylonia, and the choice of his daughter for priestess of Sin.

2 Kings

The Book of the Law Found

22 :1 Josiah was eight years old when he
became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother's name was
Jedidah daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. [2]He did what was right in the eyes of the
LORD and followed completely the ways of his
father David, not turning aside to the right or
to the left.

[3]In the eighteenth year of his reign, King
Josiah sent the secretary, Shaphan son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the temple of
the LORD. He said: [4]"Go up to Hilkiah the high
priest and have him get ready the money that
has been brought into the temple of the LORD,
which the doorkeepers have collected from the
people. [5]Have them entrust it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the temple.
And have these men pay the workers who repair the temple of the LORD— [6]the carpenters,
the builders and the masons. Also have them
purchase timber and dressed stone to repair
the temple. [7]But they need not account for the
money entrusted to them, because they are
honest in their dealings."

[8]Hilkiah the high priest said to Shaphan the
secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in
the temple of the LORD." He gave it to Shaphan,
who read it. [9]Then Shaphan the secretary went
to the king and reported to him: "Your officials
have paid out the money that was in the temple
of the LORD and have entrusted it to the workers and supervisors at the temple." [10]Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiah
the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan
read from it in the presence of the king.

[11]When the king heard the words of the
Book of the Law, he tore his robes. [12]He gave
these orders to Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son
of Shaphan, Akbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan
the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant:
[13]"Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for
the people and for all Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great
is the LORD's anger that burns against us because those who have gone before us have
not obeyed the words of this book; they have
not acted in accordance with all that is written
there concerning us."

[14]Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Akbor, Shaphan
and Asaiah went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe.
She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.

[15]She said to them, "This is what the LORD,
the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent
you to me, [16]'This is what the LORD says: I
am going to bring disaster on this place and
its people, according to everything written
in the book the king of Judah has read. [17]Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by
all the idols their hands have made,[a] my anger will burn against this place and will not be
quenched.' [18]Tell the king of Judah, who sent

[a] *17* Or *by everything they have done*

you to inquire of the LORD, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: 19Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I have spoken against this place and its people—that they would become a curse[a] and be laid waste—and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I also have heard you, declares the LORD. 20Therefore I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place.'"

So they took her answer back to the king.

TRANSITION

The Book of Zephaniah

The superscription to the Book of Zephaniah (Zep 1:1) places this prophet during the reign of Josiah (640–609 B.C.). Although Josiah's reforms are not mentioned specifically within the book, Zephaniah clearly sympathizes with Josiah's aims. In one oracle, the prophet pronounces doom on the idolatrous priests and pagan worshipers that Josiah sought to destroy (Zep 1:4–6). Zephaniah may have been one of the prophetic voices that encouraged the reform efforts (2Ki 23:2, 3), and his prophecies were probably delivered before the reforms of 622 B.C.

Zephaniah's message extended beyond Judah, however. He also pronounces judgment on foreign nations, most significantly on Cush (Ethiopia; which had controlled Egypt until about 664 B.C.) and on Assyria itself. The "day of the LORD," Zephaniah declares, will come to all the nations. Jerusalem itself is not exempt (Zep 3:6, 7), but in the end God will establish justice and comfort for his city.

• **Zephaniah 1:1—3:20**

Zephaniah

1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Zephaniah son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah, during the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah:

Judgment on the Whole Earth in the Day of the LORD

2"I will sweep away everything
from the face of the earth,"
declares the LORD.
3"I will sweep away both man and beast;
I will sweep away the birds in the sky
and the fish in the sea—
and the idols that cause the wicked to
stumble."[b]
"When I destroy all mankind
on the face of the earth,"
declares the LORD,
4"I will stretch out my hand against Judah
and against all who live in Jerusalem.
I will destroy every remnant of Baal
worship in this place,
the very names of the idolatrous
priests—
5those who bow down on the roofs
to worship the starry host,
those who bow down and swear by the
LORD
and who also swear by Molek,[c]
6those who turn back from following the
LORD
and neither seek the LORD nor inquire of
him."

7Be silent before the Sovereign LORD,
for the day of the LORD is near.
The LORD has prepared a sacrifice;
he has consecrated those he has invited.

8"On the day of the LORD's sacrifice
I will punish the officials
and the king's sons
and all those clad
in foreign clothes.
9On that day I will punish
all who avoid stepping on the threshold,[d]
who fill the temple of their gods
with violence and deceit.

10"On that day,"
declares the LORD,
"a cry will go up from the Fish Gate,
wailing from the New Quarter,
and a loud crash from the hills.
11Wail, you who live in the market district[e];
all your merchants will be wiped out,
all who trade with[f] silver will be
destroyed.
12At that time I will search Jerusalem with
lamps
and punish those who are complacent,
who are like wine left on its dregs,
who think, 'The LORD will do nothing,
either good or bad.'
13Their wealth will be plundered,
their houses demolished.
Though they build houses,
they will not live in them;

[a] *19* That is, their names would be used in cursing (see Jer. 29:22); or, others would see that they are cursed.
[b] *3* The meaning of the Hebrew for this line is uncertain.
[c] *5* Hebrew *Malkam* [d] *9* See 1 Samuel 5:5. [e] *11* Or *the Mortar* [f] *11* Or *in*

Jerusalem's Apostasies and Other Gods (Zep 1:4–6)

The prophet Zephaniah announces judgment upon the people of Judah. Apostasies are the cause for Yahweh's wrath; the people had been in pursuit of other deities.

The deity Baal, also known as the storm god Hadad, had long been a part of Jerusalem worship. This popular Canaanite deity was reintroduced during the reign of Manasseh (2Ki 21:3). The threat to "destroy every remnant of Baal" (Zep 1:4) parallels actions in Egypt after the Amarna period (c. 1336 B.C.). The name of the god Aten was removed from Egyptian monuments, manuscripts, and even from hieroglyphics where "Aten" formed part of someone's name. Workmen took chisels and actually chipped the divine name out of the stone. Zephaniah threatens even more drastic measures—not just the name, but the worshipers of Baal will be destroyed.

Besides Baal worshipers, there were those who worshiped the host of heaven in their homes. This means they accepted a pantheon of gods, while worshiping "on the roofs" (Zep 1:5), perhaps as they watched the stars. Since these people used their personal homes instead of cultic centers, they were possibly holding family worship services for various deities.

Many in Judah attempted to worship other gods in addition to Yahweh. Zephaniah particulary raises the example of Molek (or Milcom), no doubt chosen because he was understood by most Judahites to be unsavory (1:5). For Judah, Yahweh was to have been the only God and thus the only deity one could swear by. In most other nations, though, oaths were taken more seriously when the swearer swore by more and more deities. For Zephaniah, however, any oath that appealed beyond Yahweh to another god was already false.

though they plant vineyards,
they will not drink the wine."

14 The great day of the LORD is near—
near and coming quickly.
The cry on the day of the LORD is bitter;
the Mighty Warrior shouts his battle cry.
15 That day will be a day of wrath—
a day of distress and anguish,
a day of trouble and ruin,
a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness—
16 a day of trumpet and battle cry
against the fortified cities
and against the corner towers.

17 "I will bring such distress on all people
that they will grope about like those who are blind,
because they have sinned against the LORD.
Their blood will be poured out like dust
and their entrails like dung.
18 Neither their silver nor their gold
will be able to save them
on the day of the LORD's wrath."

In the fire of his jealousy
the whole earth will be consumed,
for he will make a sudden end
of all who live on the earth.

TIME CAPSULE **647 to 630 B.C.**

647	Ashurbanipal invades Elam
642	Amon becomes king in Judah
640	Josiah becomes king in Judah
640	Assyrians under Ashurbanipal conquer Elamites
630	All of Philistia comes under Egyptian control

Judah and Jerusalem Judged Along With the Nations

Judah Summoned to Repent

2 1 Gather together, gather yourselves together,
you shameful nation,
2 before the decree takes effect
and that day passes like windblown chaff,
before the LORD's fierce anger
comes upon you,
before the day of the LORD's wrath
comes upon you.
3 Seek the LORD, all you humble of the land,
you who do what he commands.
Seek righteousness, seek humility;
perhaps you will be sheltered
on the day of the LORD's anger.

Philistia

4 Gaza will be abandoned
and Ashkelon left in ruins.
At midday Ashdod will be emptied
and Ekron uprooted.
5 Woe to you who live by the sea,
you Kerethite people;
the word of the LORD is against you,
Canaan, land of the Philistines.
He says, "I will destroy you,
and none will be left."

6 The land by the sea will become pastures
having wells for shepherds
and pens for flocks.
7 That land will belong
to the remnant of the people of Judah;
there they will find pasture.
In the evening they will lie down
in the houses of Ashkelon.
The LORD their God will care for them;
he will restore their fortunes.[a]

Moab and Ammon

8 "I have heard the insults of Moab
and the taunts of the Ammonites,
who insulted my people
and made threats against their land.
9 Therefore, as surely as I live,"
declares the LORD Almighty,
the God of Israel,
"surely Moab will become like Sodom,
the Ammonites like Gomorrah—
a place of weeds and salt pits,
a wasteland forever.
The remnant of my people will plunder them;
the survivors of my nation will inherit their land."

10 This is what they will get in return for their pride,
for insulting and mocking
the people of the LORD Almighty.
11 The LORD will be awesome to them
when he destroys all the gods of the earth.

Beliefs & Ideas

In Old Testament times the goal of human civilization was typically the city. The uninhabited desert or wilderness was considered to be undesirable and hostile, a suitable picture of God's curse (Zep 2:13). Ruined buildings did not seem romantic or full of interesting memories. They were evidence that something had gone wrong and that God had rejected the people that once lived in them.

Distant nations will bow down to him,
all of them in their own lands.

Cush

12 "You Cushites,[b] too,
will be slain by my sword."

Assyria

13 He will stretch out his hand against the north
and destroy Assyria,
leaving Nineveh utterly desolate
and dry as the desert.
14 Flocks and herds will lie down there,
creatures of every kind.
The desert owl and the screech owl
will roost on her columns.
Their hooting will echo through the windows,
rubble will fill the doorways,
the beams of cedar will be exposed.

[a] 7 Or *will bring back their captives* [b] 12 That is, people from the upper Nile region

A New King Rises and a Capital Dies (Zep 2:13)

At the time the Assyrians destroyed Israel (722 B.C.) and then plagued Judah (701 B.C.), Nineveh was the proud capital of the Assyrian Empire (2Ki 18:9–13; 19:36). The Assyrian kingdom eventually spread from Egypt to the Persian Gulf. The size of Nineveh itself can be imagined from the description of the city in the Book of Jonah: "a very large city; it took three days to go through it" (Jnh 3:3). A city with a population of 120,000 inhabitants (Jnh 4:11) would certainly have been one of the largest cities of ancient times.

As far as the prophet Nahum was concerned, Nineveh, the great city, had one chief characteristic—sinfulness. The Assyrians, with Nineveh as their capital, had waged terrible military campaigns against Israel and Judah. Nahum prophesies the invasion, siege, and sack of this "city of blood" that had looted so many others (Na 1–3).

Nineveh was most influential at the time when her last major king, Ashurbanipal, took the throne. During Ashurbanipal's reign (668–627 B.C.), Assyria continued to control Babylonia, as she had since the Assyrian king Sennacherib captured the city of Babylon in 689 B.C. The death of a ruler, however, is a common time for revolt, and after Ashurbanipal's death a Babylonian named Nabopolassar seized the throne of Babylon. Nabopolassar was not from the Babylonian royal family but did receive the support of the populace.

Nabopolassar's kingdom grew quickly. He claimed Uruk in 623 B.C. and Nippur in 622 B.C., but failed to conquer Nineveh and Ashur in 615 B.C. Yet the prophet Zephaniah announced that Assyria and Nineveh would be destroyed (Zep 2:13). In 612 B.C. Nabopolassar's son Nebuchadnezzar led the armies of Babylon, in alliance with the Medes, and destroyed Nineveh. The destruction was so complete that the once-great capital never rose from the ashes.

15 This is the city of revelry
that lived in safety.
She said to herself,
"I am the one! And there is none
besides me."
What a ruin she has become,
a lair for wild beasts!
All who pass by her scoff
and shake their fists.

Jerusalem

3 1 Woe to the city of oppressors,
rebellious and defiled!
2 She obeys no one,
she accepts no correction.
She does not trust in the LORD,
she does not draw near to her God.
3 Her officials within her
are roaring lions;
her rulers are evening wolves,
who leave nothing for the morning.
4 Her prophets are unprincipled;
they are treacherous people.
Her priests profane the sanctuary
and do violence to the law.
5 The LORD within her is righteous;
he does no wrong.
Morning by morning he dispenses his
justice,
and every new day he does not fail,
yet the unrighteous know no shame.

Jerusalem Remains Unrepentant

6 "I have destroyed nations;
their strongholds are demolished.
I have left their streets deserted,
with no one passing through.
Their cities are laid waste;
they are deserted and empty.
7 Of Jerusalem I thought,
'Surely you will fear me
and accept correction!'
Then her place of refuge[a] would not be
destroyed,
nor all my punishments come upon[b]
her.
But they were still eager
to act corruptly in all they did.
8 Therefore wait for me,"
declares the LORD,
"for the day I will stand up to testify.[c]
I have decided to assemble the nations,
to gather the kingdoms
and to pour out my wrath on them—
all my fierce anger.
The whole world will be consumed
by the fire of my jealous anger.

Restoration of Israel's Remnant

9 "Then I will purify the lips of the peoples,
that all of them may call on the name of
the LORD
and serve him shoulder to shoulder.
10 From beyond the rivers of Cush[d]
my worshipers, my scattered people,
will bring me offerings.
11 On that day you, Jerusalem, will not be put
to shame
for all the wrongs you have done to me,
because I will remove from you
your arrogant boasters.
Never again will you be haughty
on my holy hill.
12 But I will leave within you
the meek and humble.
The remnant of Israel
will trust in the name of the LORD.
13 They will do no wrong;
they will tell no lies.
A deceitful tongue
will not be found in their mouths.
They will eat and lie down
and no one will make them afraid."

14 Sing, Daughter Zion;
shout aloud, Israel!
Be glad and rejoice with all your heart,
Daughter Jerusalem!
15 The LORD has taken away your
punishment,
he has turned back your enemy.
The LORD, the King of Israel, is with you;
never again will you fear any harm.
16 On that day
they will say to Jerusalem,
"Do not fear, Zion;
do not let your hands hang limp.
17 The LORD your God is with you,
the Mighty Warrior who saves.
He will take great delight in you;
in his love he will no longer rebuke you,
but will rejoice over you with singing."

18 "I will remove from you
all who mourn over the loss of your
appointed festivals,
which is a burden and reproach for you.
19 At that time I will deal
with all who oppressed you.
I will rescue the lame;
I will gather the exiles.

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[a] *7* Or *her sanctuary* [b] *7* Or *all those I appointed over*
[c] *8* Septuagint and Syriac; Hebrew *will rise up to plunder*
[d] *10* That is, the upper Nile region

I will give them praise and honor
in every land where they have suffered shame.
20 At that time I will gather you;
at that time I will bring you home.
I will give you honor and praise
among all the peoples of the earth
when I restore your fortunes[a]
before your very eyes,"
says the LORD.

TRANSITION

Josiah Keeps the Passover

The historian of Kings describes Josiah's religious reforms in some detail, and in 2Ki 23:25 gives Josiah by far the most complimentary evaluation of any of Judah's kings. Josiah's reign brought great hope to Judah, first to the priests and prophets who hoped to see a genuine renewal of worship. The celebration of the Passover in 622 B.C. formed a climax to Josiah's religious reforms (2Ki 23:21–23).

Josiah's reign also gave hope to Judahites with more secular goals. There were evidently many who dreamed of reunifying Israel. Josiah began to expand Judah's borders into what had been the northern kingdom of Israel before Assyria captured it. In these efforts, Josiah was helped by the sharp decline of the Assyrian Empire, which created a power vacuum in the area of the former northern kingdom. Among other actions, Josiah destroyed the idolatrous Israelite shrine of Bethel from which the prophet Amos had been expelled over a century before (Am 7:10–17).

• **2 Kings 23:1–25**

2 Kings

Josiah Renews the Covenant

23 :1 Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 2 He went up to the temple of the LORD with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the prophets—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the LORD. 3 The king stood by the pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—to follow the LORD and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, thus confirming the words of the covenant written in this book. Then all the people pledged themselves to the covenant.

4 The king ordered Hilkiah the high priest, the priests next in rank and the doorkeepers to remove from the temple of the LORD all the articles made for Baal and Asherah and all the starry hosts. He burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron Valley and took the ashes to Bethel. 5 He did away with the idolatrous priests appointed by the kings of Judah to burn incense on the high places of the towns of Judah and on those around Jerusalem—those who burned incense to Baal, to the sun and moon, to the constellations and to all the starry hosts. 6 He took the Asherah pole from the temple of the LORD to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem and burned it there. He ground it to powder and scattered the dust over the graves of the common people. 7 He also tore down the quarters of the male shrine prostitutes that were in the temple of the LORD, the quarters where women did weaving for Asherah.

8 Josiah brought all the priests from the towns of Judah and desecrated the high places, from Geba to Beersheba, where the priests had burned incense. He broke down the gateway at the entrance of the Gate of Joshua, the city governor, which was on the left of the city gate. 9 Although the priests of the high places did not serve at the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, they ate unleavened bread with their fellow priests.

10 He desecrated Topheth, which was in the Valley of Ben Hinnom, so no one could use it to sacrifice their son or daughter in the fire to Molek. 11 He removed from the entrance to the temple of the LORD the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They were in the court[b] near the room of an official named Nathan-Melek. Josiah then burned the chariots dedicated to the sun.

12 He pulled down the altars the kings of Judah had erected on the roof near the upper room of Ahaz, and the altars Manasseh had built in the two courts of the temple of the LORD. He removed them from there, smashed them to pieces and threw the rubble into the Kidron Valley. 13 The king also desecrated

Arts & Literature

The sun can be compared to a flaming chariot traveling across the sky, and the horses of this chariot are convenient symbols of its daily journey. Small statues of horses decorated with solar disks have been excavated near Jerusalem. Live horses pulling chariots in processions honoring the sun may have been thought to be "dedicated to the sun" (2Ki 23:11).

[a] *20* Or *I bring back your captives* [b] *11* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Cleaning Out Solomon's High Places (2Ki 23:13)

Josiah achieved fame as the king responsible for reforming Judah's cultic worship (2Ki 23:25). Part of his reform involved purging the temple and temple precincts of pagan images (see "The Temple Pantheon of Jerusalem" at 2Ch 34:33). Yet another part of the reform linked the famous Josiah with another king who, more than 300 years earlier, had also attained great fame—Solomon. Josiah destroyed the high places east of Jerusalem that Solomon himself had built (2Ki 23:13).

The Hebrew word translated "high place" refers to a sanctuary; what Solomon did was to build temples to foreign gods in the vicinity of Jerusalem. In the ancient Near East any temple, sanctuary, or shrine constructed by the rightful ruler was a state religious site. So Solomon had officially included foreign gods in the religion of Israel. Furthermore, his sanctuary construction was extensive; he actually built such shrines for "all his foreign wives" (1Ki 11:5–8).

Three gods—Ashtoreth, Chemosh, Molek (or Milcom)—are recorded by name as having a high place constructed for them by Solomon (2Ki 23:13). Ashtoreth (or Astarte) was the patron goddess in Sidon, a very powerful Phoenician city-state. Chemosh was the patron deity of Moab. An inscription set up by the Moabites around 850 B.C. tells about the defeat of Israel by Chemosh and his chosen Moabite king, Mesha. Molek, the god of Ammon, required human sacrifice. The famous Solomon allowed these deities into Israel; now the famous Josiah cleaned them out.

the high places that were east of Jerusalem on the south of the Hill of Corruption—the ones Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the vile goddess of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the vile god of Moab, and for Molek the detestable god of the people of Ammon. 14Josiah smashed the sacred stones and cut down the Asherah poles and covered the sites with human bones.

15Even the altar at Bethel, the high place made by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin—even that altar and high place he demolished. He burned the high place and ground it to powder, and burned the Asherah pole also. 16Then Josiah looked around, and when he saw the tombs that were there on the hillside, he had the bones removed from them and burned on the altar to defile it, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by the man of God who foretold these things.

17The king asked, "What is that tombstone I see?"

The people of the city said, "It marks the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and pronounced against the altar of Bethel the very things you have done to it."

18"Leave it alone," he said. "Don't let anyone disturb his bones." So they spared his bones and those of the prophet who had come from Samaria.

19Just as he had done at Bethel, Josiah removed all the shrines at the high places that the kings of Israel had built in the towns of Samaria and that had aroused the LORD's anger. 20Josiah slaughtered all the priests of those high places on the altars and burned human bones on them. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

21The king gave this order to all the people: "Celebrate the Passover to the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant." 22Neither in the days of the judges who led Israel nor in the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah had any such Passover been observed. 23But in the eighteenth year of King Josiah, this Passover was celebrated to the LORD in Jerusalem.

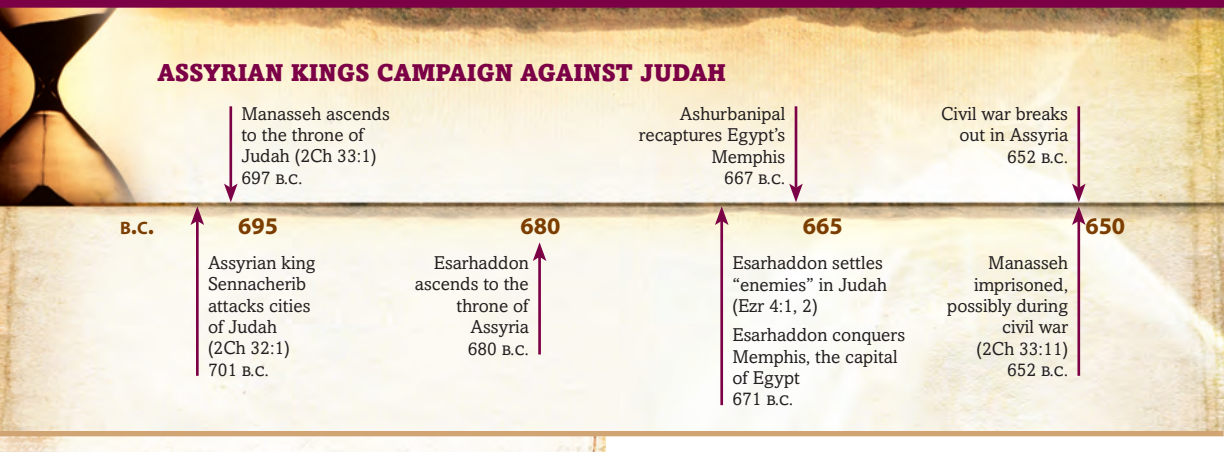
24Furthermore, Josiah got rid of the mediums and spiritists, the household gods, the idols and all the other detestable things seen in Judah and Jerusalem. This he did to fulfill the requirements of the law written in the book that Hilkiah the priest had discovered in the temple of the LORD. 25Neither before nor after Josiah was there a king like him who turned to the LORD as he did—with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength, in accordance with all the Law of Moses.

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Bad and Good Kings

Both Kings and Chronicles evaluate the kings of Israel and Judah in simple terms: the kings either do evil or do right. There is little or no middle ground. The kings of Judah during the Neo-Assyrian Empire were, in order, Ahaz (bad, 2Ch 28:1); Hezekiah (good, 2Ch 29:2); Manasseh, Amon (bad, 2Ch 33:2, 22); Josiah (good, 2Ch 34:2).

One of the most fascinating differences between the histories of Kings and Chronicles concerns King Manasseh (697–642 B.C.). In Kings his sinfulness is cited as the ultimate reason that God would allow Jerusalem to be destroyed (2Ki 21:11–13; 23:26, 27). No redeeming quality is allowed to disturb this black portrait. In Chronicles, however,



Manasseh is captured by Assyria and eventually humbles himself before God and is forgiven (2Ch 33:11–13). Such repentance is, to say the least, striking.

The Chronicler carries the theme of Manasseh's repentance into the account of Amon (642–640 B.C.). Kings criticized Amon for doing evil "as his father Manasseh had done" (2Ki 21:20). Chronicles changes this report to say that, "unlike his father Manasseh," Amon did not humble himself (2Ch 33:23). The "Prayer of Manasseh" of the Apocrypha is based on the Chronicler's repentance account, though it was almost certainly written centuries later.

The Chronicler's account of Josiah (640–609 B.C.) follows the Kings account very closely, except that it lays more stress on the Passover celebration. Since the Passover is a temple festival, this is completely consistent with Chronicles's priestly focus. Much more information is provided concerning the duties of the Levites and the details of the Passover ritual itself (2Ch 35:1–19).

• 2 Chronicles 33:1—35:19

2 Chronicles

Manasseh King of Judah

33 :1 Manasseh was twelve years old when
he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. 2He did evil in the eyes
of the LORD, following the detestable practices of the nations the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. 3He rebuilt the high places
his father Hezekiah had demolished; he also
erected altars to the Baals and made Asherah poles. He bowed down to all the starry
hosts and worshiped them. 4He built altars
in the temple of the LORD, of which the LORD
had said, "My Name will remain in Jerusalem
forever." 5In both courts of the temple of the
LORD, he built altars to all the starry hosts. 6He
sacrificed his children in the fire in the Valley
of Ben Hinnom, practiced divination and witchcraft, sought omens, and consulted mediums
and spiritists. He did much evil in the eyes of
the LORD, arousing his anger.

7He took the image he had made and put it
in God's temple, of which God had said to David and to his son Solomon, "In this temple and
in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all
the tribes of Israel, I will put my Name forever.
8I will not again make the feet of the Israelites
leave the land I assigned to your ancestors,
if only they will be careful to do everything I
commanded them concerning all the laws, decrees and regulations given through Moses."
9But Manasseh led Judah and the people of Jerusalem astray, so that they did more evil than
the nations the LORD had destroyed before the
Israelites.

10The LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they paid no attention. 11So the LORD
brought against them the army commanders
of the king of Assyria, who took Manasseh prisoner, put a hook in his nose, bound him with
bronze shackles and took him to Babylon. 12In
his distress he sought the favor of the LORD his
God and humbled himself greatly before the
God of his ancestors. 13And when he prayed to
him, the LORD was moved by his entreaty and
listened to his plea; so he brought him back to
Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God.

14Afterward he rebuilt the outer wall of the
City of David, west of the Gihon spring in the
valley, as far as the entrance of the Fish Gate
and encircling the hill of Ophel; he also made it
much higher. He stationed military commanders in all the fortified cities in Judah.

15He got rid of the foreign gods and removed
the image from the temple of the LORD, as well
as all the altars he had built on the temple hill
and in Jerusalem; and he threw them out of the

The King of Assyria Deports Manasseh (2Ch 33:11)

Esarhaddon ascended the throne of Assyria after his father Sennacherib was assassinated by some of his own sons (2Ki 19:37; Isa 37:38). Younger than his brothers, Esarhaddon pursued his father's murderers and avenged the death. Though this king's reign was short (680–669 B.C.), it was very active militarily, especially in the invasion of Egypt.

Esarhaddon's vassal treaties were discovered at the ancient Assyrian city of Nimrud. These documents are oaths of allegiance sworn by Assyrian vassals to uphold the appointment of the king's sons as monarchs in Babylonia and Assyria. The treaties are similar in structure to the oaths between God and Israel in Dt 27:11–26.

The Prism of Esarhaddon describes King Manasseh of Judah as a vassal of the Assyrian monarch. Thus some scholars think that Esarhaddon was the "king of Assyria" who deported Manasseh to Babylon (2Ch 33:11). Manasseh is also listed as a vassal, however, on the Prism of Ashurbanipal. So the deportation could have occurred during the reign of Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.), Esarhaddon's successor to the Assyrian throne.

city. 16Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed fellowship offerings and thank offerings on it, and told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel. 17The people, however, continued to sacrifice at the high places, but only to the LORD their God.

18The other events of Manasseh's reign, including his prayer to his God and the words the seers spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, are written in the annals of the kings of Israel.[a] 19His prayer and how God was moved by his entreaty, as well as all his sins and unfaithfulness, and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself—all these are written in the records of the seers.[b] 20Manasseh rested with his ancestors and was buried in his palace. And Amon his son succeeded him as king.

Amon King of Judah

21Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. 22He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. Amon worshiped and offered sacrifices to all the idols Manasseh had made. 23But unlike his father Manasseh, he did not humble himself before the LORD; Amon increased his guilt.

24Amon's officials conspired against him and assassinated him in his palace. 25Then the people of the land killed all who had plotted against King Amon, and they made Josiah his son king in his place.

Josiah's Reforms

34 1Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. 2He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and followed the ways of his father David, not turning aside to the right or to the left.

3In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, he began to seek the God of his father David. In his twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem of high places, Asherah poles and idols. 4Under his direction the altars of the Baals were torn down; he cut to pieces the incense altars that were above them, and smashed the Asherah poles and the idols. These he broke to pieces and scattered over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. 5He burned the bones of the priests on their altars, and so he purged Judah and Jerusalem. 6In the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around them, 7he tore down the altars and the Asherah poles and crushed the idols to powder and cut to pieces all the incense altars throughout Israel. Then he went back to Jerusalem.

8In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, to purify the land and the temple, he sent Shaphan son of Azaliah and Maaseiah the ruler of the city, with Joah son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the temple of the LORD his God.

9They went to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money that had been brought into the temple of God, which the Levites who were the gatekeepers had collected from the people of Manasseh, Ephraim and the entire remnant of Israel and from all the people of Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10Then they entrusted it to the men appointed to supervise the work on the LORD's temple. These men paid the workers who repaired and restored the temple. 11They also gave money to the carpenters and builders to purchase dressed stone, and timber for joists and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to fall into ruin.

12The workers labored faithfully. Over them

[a] *18* That is, Judah, as frequently in 2 Chronicles
[b] *19* One Hebrew manuscript and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *of Hozai*

to direct them were Jahath and Obadiah, Levites descended from Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, descended from Kohath. The Levites—all who were skilled in playing musical instruments— 13had charge of the laborers and supervised all the workers from job to job. Some of the Levites were secretaries, scribes and gatekeepers.

The Book of the Law Found

14While they were bringing out the money that had been taken into the temple of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD that had been given through Moses. 15Hilkiah said to Shaphan the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the temple of the LORD." He gave it to Shaphan.

16Then Shaphan took the book to the king and reported to him: "Your officials are doing everything that has been committed to them. 17They have paid out the money that was in the temple of the LORD and have entrusted it to the supervisors and workers." 18Then Shaphan the secretary informed the king, "Hilkiah the priest has given me a book." And Shaphan read from it in the presence of the king.

19When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his robes. 20He gave these orders to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah,[a] Shaphan the secretary and Asaiah the king's attendant: 21"Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for the remnant in Israel and Judah about what is written in this book that has been found. Great is the LORD's anger that is poured out on us because those who have gone before us have not kept the word of the LORD; they have not acted in accordance with all that is written in this book."

22Hilkiah and those the king had sent with him[b] went to speak to the prophet Huldah, who was the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath,[c] the son of Hasrah,[d] keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the New Quarter.

TIME CAPSULE		628 to 626 B.C.
628		Josiah begins to repair and renovate the temple
627		Jeremiah is born; or becomes aware of his divine calling; or begins to prophesy
626–539		The Neo-Babylonian Empire
626–605		Nabopolassar is founder of the Neo-Babylonian Dynasty
626		Nabopolassar lays siege to Assyrian garrison at Nippur

23She said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell the man who sent you to me, 24'This is what the LORD says: I am going to bring disaster on this place and its people—all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence of the king of Judah. 25Because they have forsaken me and burned incense to other gods and aroused my anger by all that their hands have made,[e] my anger will be poured out on this place and will not be quenched.' 26Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says concerning the words you heard: 27Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before God when you heard what he spoke against this place and its people, and because you humbled yourself before me and tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you, declares the LORD. 28Now I will gather you to your ancestors, and you will be buried in peace. Your eyes will not see all the disaster I am going to bring on this place and on those who live here.'"

So they took her answer back to the king.

29Then the king called together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30He went up to the temple of the LORD with the people of Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests and the Levites—all the people from the least to the greatest. He read in their hearing all the words of the Book of the Covenant, which had been found in the temple of the LORD. 31The king stood by his pillar and renewed the covenant in the presence of the LORD—to follow the LORD and keep his commands, statutes and decrees with all his heart and all his soul, and to obey the words of the covenant written in this book.

32Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin pledge themselves to it; the people of Jerusalem did this in accordance with the covenant of God, the God of their ancestors.

33Josiah removed all the detestable idols from all the territory belonging to the Israelites, and he had all who were present in Israel serve the LORD their God. As long as he lived, they did not fail to follow the LORD, the God of their ancestors.

Josiah Celebrates the Passover

35 1Josiah celebrated the Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and the Passover lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth day

[a] *20* Also called *Akbor son of Micaiah* [b] *22* One Hebrew manuscript, Vulgate and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts do not have *had sent with him.* [c] *22* Also called *Tikvah*
[d] *22* Also called *Harhas* [e] *25* Or *by everything they have done*

The Temple Pantheon of Jerusalem (2Ch 34:31, 33)

Josiah's covenant with Yahweh meant that there would be only one deity worshiped in Judah, for Josiah "removed all the detestable idols" from the country (2Ch 34:31, 33). The reform began in 622 B.C. by removing the idols that had been placed in the Jerusalem temple. These images, representing gods such as Baal and Asherah (2Ki 23:4), were of Syro-Palestinian (Canaanite) origin. The expression "all the starry hosts" (2Ki 23:4) referred to an entire pantheon of gods; Josiah's reform was thorough.

It is significant that there were images of these various deities in the royal temple. Through the reigns of Manasseh and Amon, Josiah's predecessors, the local gods had been incorporated into Judah's royal cult. Probably both Canaanite and Assyrian deities were worshiped, for Assyria was then the ruling power over the vassal state of Judah. Many of the traditional Canaanite gods had been worshiped in the northern kingdom, and an association of these gods with Israel may explain why Josiah took the cult images to Bethel for disposal (23:4). Bethel had been a national temple of Israel.

The sanctity of the temple space was retained during the reform efforts. Only priests were allowed to clean out the images. Hilkiah had been the high priest of the cult involving all these deities, but, under orders from the king (23:4), he removed the gods that he had served.

of the first month. 2He appointed the priests
to their duties and encouraged them in the
service of the LORD's temple. 3He said to the
Levites, who instructed all Israel and who had
been consecrated to the LORD: "Put the sacred
ark in the temple that Solomon son of David
king of Israel built. It is not to be carried about
on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your
God and his people Israel. 4Prepare yourselves
by families in your divisions, according to the
instructions written by David king of Israel and
by his son Solomon.
5"Stand in the holy place with a group of
Levites for each subdivision of the families of
your fellow Israelites, the lay people. 6Slaugh-
ter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves
and prepare the lambs for your fellow Israel-
ites, doing what the LORD commanded through
Moses."
7Josiah provided for all the lay people who
were there a total of thirty thousand lambs and
goats for the Passover offerings, and also three
thousand cattle—all from the king's own pos-
sessions.
8His officials also contributed voluntarily to
the people and the priests and Levites. Hilkiah,
Zechariah and Jehiel, the officials in charge of
God's temple, gave the priests twenty-six hun-
dred Passover offerings and three hundred cat-
tle. 9Also Konaniah along with Shemaiah and
Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, Jeiel
and Jozabad, the leaders of the Levites, provid-
ed five thousand Passover offerings and five
hundred head of cattle for the Levites.
10The service was arranged and the priests
stood in their places with the Levites in their
divisions as the king had ordered. 11The Pass-
over lambs were slaughtered, and the priests
splashed against the altar the blood handed to
them, while the Levites skinned the animals.
12They set aside the burnt offerings to give
them to the subdivisions of the families of the
people to offer to the LORD, as it is written in
the Book of Moses. They did the same with
the cattle. 13They roasted the Passover animals
over the fire as prescribed, and boiled the holy
offerings in pots, caldrons and pans and served
them quickly to all the people. 14After this, they
made preparations for themselves and for the
priests, because the priests, the descendants of
Aaron, were sacrificing the burnt offerings and
the fat portions until nightfall. So the Levites
made preparations for themselves and for the
Aaronic priests.
15The musicians, the descendants of Asaph,
were in the places prescribed by David, Asaph,
Heman and Jeduthun the king's seer. The gate-
keepers at each gate did not need to leave their
posts, because their fellow Levites made the
preparations for them.
16So at that time the entire service of the
LORD was carried out for the celebration of the
Passover and the offering of burnt offerings on
the altar of the LORD, as King Josiah had or-
dered. 17The Israelites who were present cele-
brated the Passover at that time and observed
the Festival of Unleavened Bread for seven
days. 18The Passover had not been observed
like this in Israel since the days of the proph-
et Samuel; and none of the kings of Israel had
ever celebrated such a Passover as did Josiah,
with the priests, the Levites and all Judah and
Israel who were there with the people of Jeru-
salem. 19This Passover was celebrated in the
eighteenth year of Josiah's reign.

TRANSITION

Psalms of Joy and Praise

Josiah reinstated the celebration of Pass-
over in Jerusalem, which had been neglected
for years. The Chronicler emphasizes the role

of the priests and Levites in Josiah's observance (2Ch 35:10), and also comments that the singers were "in the places prescribed by David" at the celebration (2Ch 35:15). Passover became a time of joy and feasting as God's people remembered his deliverance from Egypt. It was a time of singing and of giving praise to God. In such a context it is appropriate to recall some of the psalms that reflect joy and praise. The beautiful hymn of Ps 33 begins with a call to praise. Two psalms of thanksgiving (Ps 66; 67) celebrate the greatness of God in exuberant tones. The hymn of procession in Ps 100 was probably sung by pilgrims coming to worship in the temple.

• **Psalms 33; 66; 67; 100**

PSALM 33

Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous;
it is fitting for the upright to praise him.
2 Praise the LORD with the harp;
make music to him on the ten-stringed lyre.
3 Sing to him a new song;
play skillfully, and shout for joy.

4 For the word of the LORD is right and true;
he is faithful in all he does.
5 The LORD loves righteousness and justice;
the earth is full of his unfailing love.

6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
their starry host by the breath of his mouth.
7 He gathers the waters of the sea into jars[a];
he puts the deep into storehouses.
8 Let all the earth fear the LORD;
let all the people of the world revere him.
9 For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.

10 The LORD foils the plans of the nations;
he thwarts the purposes of the peoples.
11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever,
the purposes of his heart through all generations.

12 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,
the people he chose for his inheritance.
13 From heaven the LORD looks down
and sees all mankind;
14 from his dwelling place he watches
all who live on earth—
15 he who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.

16 No king is saved by the size of his army;
no warrior escapes by his great strength.
17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance;
despite all its great strength it cannot save.
18 But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him,
on those whose hope is in his unfailing love,
19 to deliver them from death
and keep them alive in famine.

20 We wait in hope for the LORD;
he is our help and our shield.
21 In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.
22 May your unfailing love be with us, LORD,
even as we put our hope in you.

PSALM 66

For the director of music. A song. A psalm.

Shout for joy to God, all the earth!
2 Sing the glory of his name;
make his praise glorious.
3 Say to God, "How awesome are your deeds!
So great is your power
that your enemies cringe before you.
4 All the earth bows down to you;
they sing praise to you,
they sing the praises of your name."[b]

5 Come and see what God has done,
his awesome deeds for mankind!
6 He turned the sea into dry land,
they passed through the waters on foot—
come, let us rejoice in him.
7 He rules forever by his power,
his eyes watch the nations—
let not the rebellious rise up against him.

8 Praise our God, all peoples,
let the sound of his praise be heard;
9 he has preserved our lives
and kept our feet from slipping.
10 For you, God, tested us;
you refined us like silver.
11 You brought us into prison
and laid burdens on our backs.
12 You let people ride over our heads;
we went through fire and water,
but you brought us to a place of abundance.

[a] 7 Or *sea as into a heap* [b] 4 The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 7 and 15.

13 I will come to your temple with burnt
offerings
and fulfill my vows to you—
14 vows my lips promised and my mouth
spoke
when I was in trouble.
15 I will sacrifice fat animals to you
and an offering of rams;
I will offer bulls and goats.

16 Come and hear, all you who fear God;
let me tell you what he has done
for me.
17 I cried out to him with my mouth;
his praise was on my tongue.
18 If I had cherished sin in my heart,
the Lord would not have listened;
19 but God has surely listened
and has heard my prayer.
20 Praise be to God,
who has not rejected my prayer
or withheld his love from me!

PSALM 67[a]

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A psalm. A song.

May God be gracious to us and bless us
and make his face shine on us—[b]
2 so that your ways may be known on
earth,
your salvation among all nations.

3 May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.
4 May the nations be glad and sing for
joy,
for you rule the peoples with equity
and guide the nations of the earth.
5 May the peoples praise you, God;
may all the peoples praise you.

6 The land yields its harvest;
God, our God, blesses us.
7 May God bless us still,
so that all the ends of the earth will fear
him.

PSALM 100

A psalm. For giving grateful praise.

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.
2 Worship the LORD with gladness;
come before him with joyful songs.
3 Know that the LORD is God.
It is he who made us, and we are
his[c];
we are his people, the sheep of his
pasture.

4 Enter his gates with thanksgiving
and his courts with praise;
give thanks to him and praise his
name.
5 For the LORD is good and his love endures
forever;
his faithfulness continues through all
generations.

[a] In Hebrew texts 67:1-7 is numbered 67:2-8. [b] *1* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verse 4. [c] *3* Or *and not we ourselves*

THE NEO-BABYLONIAN EMPIRE

The events of the approximately 30 years following Josiah's reform of 622 B.C. lie behind a wider range of biblical books. The most important are probably the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, but other prophetic books, historical accounts, psalms, and poems also refer to this critical era. The catastrophes of this time would completely reshape both the faith of the Judeans and the Bible itself. These disasters were even more staggering in that they came so suddenly after the optimistic years of Josiah's reign in Judah (640–609 B.C.).

The catastrophes of this time completely reshaped both the faith of the Judeans and the Bible itself.

Under Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) the Assyrian Empire that had once made the world its own had grown old and surprisingly weak. Constant rebellions from outlying provinces had sapped its resources. Egypt, for instance, had effectively declared its independence and appeared to be regaining some of its former strength. Even more disturbing for Assyria, though, were rebellions closer to home. After Ashurbanipal died, Babylon rebelled once more, joined by the northeastern nation of Media. This time Assyria would not be able to quell the revolt.

The effect of these stirring events on Judah was virtually to give King Josiah complete independence from his official overlords in Assyria. He could pursue his religious reforms and expand his political boundaries at will.

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Josiah's Last Years

Josiah's reforms would not allow Judah to avoid the consequences of Manasseh's sins. Judgment upon Judah was inevitable, though for a brief time delayed. Israel, the northern kingdom, had fallen in 722 B.C.; Judah's fall would come.

The word of Yahweh announcing the approaching judgment (2Ki 23:27) was likely preached by one of the prophets. While the identity of that prophet (or prophets) is not given, the theme of Yahweh rejecting his chosen people appears again in the prophecies of Jeremiah (Jer 6:27–30).

• **2 Kings 23:26, 27**

2 Kings

23 :26 Nevertheless, the LORD did not turn
away from the heat of his fierce anger,
which burned against Judah because of all
that Manasseh had done to arouse his anger.
27 So the LORD said, "I will remove Judah also
from my presence as I removed Israel, and I
will reject Jerusalem, the city I chose, and this
temple, about which I said, 'My Name shall be
there.'[a]"

[a] *27* 1 Kings 8:29

TRANSITION

The Book of Jeremiah

No prophet is more important in this crucial time period than Jeremiah. He was from a priestly family, from the small town of Anathoth near Jerusalem. He may have been a descendant of David's priest Abiathar, who had been banished to Anathoth by King Solomon (1Ki 2:26). In any case, Jeremiah's relationship with the Jerusalem establishment—temple, priests, prophets, and kings—was strained, to say the least. Unlike Isaiah, who was evidently acknowledged and respected throughout Jerusalem in his day, Jeremiah's long ministry was marked by persecution, banishment from the temple, and threats of death.

Jeremiah's very unpopular message was that Jerusalem had sinned so long and so grievously that God was about to destroy the temple, the city, and the land. In language very close to that of the northern prophet Hosea, Jeremiah called for the people to turn from their wickedness. Even after almost all of Jeremiah's prophecies had been fulfilled, though, few listened.

No book in the Old Testament presents more difficulties to chronological arrangement. In its usual order, the book is divided into three general sections: oracles against Judah and Jerusalem (chs. 1–25), narratives about Jeremiah (chs. 26–45), and oracles against other nations (chs. 46–51). The final chapter (ch. 52) is an almost exact reproduction of 2Ki 25. Not one of these three general sections follows a chronological arrangement, however. Even the historical narratives of the central portion skip back and forth in time. As for the oracles of the first section, it is almost impossible to decide the time period to which some of these refer.

Any attempt to arrange chronologically the various portions of Jeremiah must be both very different from the usual order and very tentative. On the other hand, no other Old Testament book benefits more from such a rearrangement. To read Jeremiah's words in light of his life and the history of his land is a completely new experience.

The first chronological difficulty concerns the beginning of Jeremiah's ministry. In Jer 1:2

the prophet is reported to have received the word of the Lord in the 13th year of Josiah's reign (627 B.C.). If this is when he began his prophetic task, then the time of his ministry spans all of Josiah's reforms. It is odd then that Jeremiah never mentions these reforms or any other sign of religious faithfulness in Jerusalem.

The year 627 B.C. marks a beginning for this prophet, but was it the beginning of his ministry? Some think this is when Jeremiah became aware of his divine calling, and not necessarily when he began to prophesy. Others suggest that Jer 1:2 actually refers to the date of Jeremiah's birth, noting that Jeremiah was called as a prophet even before he was born (Jer 1:5). If he was born in 627, Jeremiah could have begun his prophetic ministry near the end of Josiah's reforms, when he was between the ages of 12 and 18. Many of the oracles found in chs. 1–6 rebuke the people and the priests for backsliding, perhaps indicating that Josiah's reforms were falling apart even during Josiah's reign.

The end of Jeremiah's ministry is dated by Jer 1:3 in King Zedekiah's 11th year (586 B.C.). This prophet continued his work until Jerusalem fell and the city's people were exiled.

• Jeremiah 1:1—6:30

Jeremiah

1:1 The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. 2The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, 3and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

The Call of Jeremiah

4The word of the LORD came to me, saying,

5"Before I formed you in the womb I knew[a] you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

6"Alas, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

7But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

9Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth. 10See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

11The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"I see the branch of an almond tree," I replied.

12The LORD said to me, "You have seen correctly, for I am watching[b] to see that my word is fulfilled."

13The word of the LORD came to me again: "What do you see?"

"I see a pot that is boiling," I answered. "It is tilting toward us from the north."

14The LORD said to me, "From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. 15I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms," declares the LORD.

"Their kings will come and set up their thrones
in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem;
they will come against all her surrounding walls
and against all the towns of Judah.
16I will pronounce my judgments on my people
because of their wickedness in forsaking me,
in burning incense to other gods
and in worshiping what their hands have made.

17"Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. 18Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests and the people of the land. 19They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD.

Culture & Society

Like Moses (Ex 3:11), Jeremiah protested that he was unable to perform the task that God was asking him to do (Jer 1:6), that he was "too young," or in some translations a "youth." A "youth" was not someone underage, but someone without experience, an apprentice. The time of childhood ended sooner than in some Western societies, and males could become fighters while still considered "boys" (see 2Ki 2:23).

[a] *5* Or *chose* [b] *12* The Hebrew for *watching* sounds like the Hebrew for *almond tree.*

Broken Cisterns (Jer 2:13)

In Old Testament times cisterns were an everyday part of life. The seasonal rainfall of the Bible lands necessitated extraordinary strategies for securing water. In some cities virtually every household had its own cistern, arranged so as to collect runoff water from the streets as well as from the roofs of the houses.

Cisterns were dug into the bedrock foundation of the houses, and could be plastered or unplastered depending on the type of rock into which they had been dug. Sometimes two or more cisterns were connected by water channels. In the middle of many of these cisterns were stone-carved sumps where the larger impurities could be collected and periodically removed. Even in the best of times, however, the stored waters, while usable, were not very pleasant.

In Jer 2:13 the prophet makes a contrast between the true God and the false gods of Canaan. He describes Israel's God as fresh, sweet water from a living or moving spring that could give life to all. The Israelites are charged with ignoring this refreshing source and turning instead to water from a cistern.

The irony of Jeremiah's prophecy is even greater. The cisterns from which the Israelites were seeking satisfaction were broken cisterns that really could not collect water. Jeremiah's contrast would be understood by those who daily sought drinking water from cisterns. God is a living sustaining water source that satisfies, while the false gods of Canaan are like broken, unusable cisterns that promise refreshment but leave those who try to drink there thirsty and without hope.

Israel Forsakes God

2 [1]The word of the LORD came to me: [2]"Go
and proclaim in the hearing of Jerusalem:

"This is what the LORD says:

"'I remember the devotion of your youth,
how as a bride you loved me
and followed me through the wilderness,
through a land not sown.
[3]Israel was holy to the LORD,
the firstfruits of his harvest;
all who devoured her were held guilty,
and disaster overtook them,'"
declares the LORD.

[4]Hear the word of the LORD, you
descendants of Jacob,
all you clans of Israel.

[5]This is what the LORD says:

"What fault did your ancestors find
in me,
that they strayed so far from me?
They followed worthless idols
and became worthless themselves.

TIME CAPSULE		625 to 622 B.C.
625		Earliest coinage, found in Ephesus
623		Nabopolassar claims Uruk for the Babylonians
622		Nabopolassar claims Nippur for the Babylonians
622		Hilkiah the priest finds Book of the Law in the temple
622		The reforms of Josiah
622		Celebration of the Passover as a climax to Josiah's reform effort

[6]They did not ask, 'Where is the LORD,
who brought us up out of Egypt
and led us through the barren wilderness,
through a land of deserts and ravines,
a land of drought and utter darkness,
a land where no one travels and no one
lives?'
[7]I brought you into a fertile land
to eat its fruit and rich produce.
But you came and defiled my land
and made my inheritance detestable.
[8]The priests did not ask,
'Where is the LORD?'
Those who deal with the law did not
know me;
the leaders rebelled against me.
The prophets prophesied by Baal,
following worthless idols.

[9]"Therefore I bring charges against you
again,"
declares the LORD.
"And I will bring charges against your
children's children.
[10]Cross over to the coasts of Cyprus and
look,
send to Kedar[a] and observe closely;
see if there has ever been anything like
this:
[11]Has a nation ever changed its gods?
(Yet they are not gods at all.)
But my people have exchanged their
glorious God
for worthless idols.
[12]Be appalled at this, you heavens,
and shudder with great horror,"
declares the LORD.

[a] *10* In the Syro-Arabian desert

13 "My people have committed two sins:
They have forsaken me,
the spring of living water,
and have dug their own cisterns,
broken cisterns that cannot hold water.
14 Is Israel a servant, a slave by birth?
Why then has he become plunder?
15 Lions have roared;
they have growled at him.
They have laid waste his land;
his towns are burned and deserted.
16 Also, the men of Memphis and Tahpanhes
have cracked your skull.
17 Have you not brought this on yourselves
by forsaking the LORD your God
when he led you in the way?
18 Now why go to Egypt
to drink water from the Nile[a]?
And why go to Assyria
to drink water from the Euphrates?
19 Your wickedness will punish you;
your backsliding will rebuke you.
Consider then and realize
how evil and bitter it is for you
when you forsake the LORD your God
and have no awe of me,"
declares the Lord,
the LORD Almighty.

20 "Long ago you broke off your yoke
and tore off your bonds;
you said, 'I will not serve you!'

[a] *18* Hebrew *Shihor*; that is, a branch of the Nile

Science & Technology
"Cleansing powder" (probably lye or a naturally occurring soda) and soap are both alkaline. In practice this means that they can remove grease and oil from clothing, something that water alone will not do (Jer 2:22). The difficulty of washing clothes in ancient times is apparent from the way the whiteness of clean clothes is used as a metaphor in the Bible.

Indeed, on every high hill
and under every spreading tree
you lay down as a prostitute.
21 I had planted you like a choice vine
of sound and reliable stock.
How then did you turn against me
into a corrupt, wild vine?
22 Although you wash yourself with soap
and use an abundance of cleansing
powder,
the stain of your guilt is still
before me,"
declares the Sovereign LORD.
23 "How can you say, 'I am not defiled;
I have not run after the Baals'?
See how you behaved in the valley;
consider what you have done.
You are a swift she-camel
running here and there,
24 a wild donkey accustomed to the
desert,
sniffing the wind in her craving—
in her heat who can restrain her?

Avoiding Ungodly Alliances (Jer 2:18)

In the years between 627 and 605 B.C. many important events occurred in Judah. For instance, King Josiah undertook his reforms to centralize all worship of Yahweh at the Jerusalem temple and outlawed all idolatrous worship (2Ki 23:1–25). On the international scene, major changes were under way as well.

For over a century, the great Assyrian Empire had reigned supreme throughout the ancient Near East. At the beginning of the 7th century B.C., the Assyrian king Sennacherib had conquered all of Judah, except for Jerusalem, which miraculously withstood his siege (2Ki 18:13—19:37). By the late 7th century, however, Assyria's influence had begun to wane. King Josiah took advantage of Assyria's loss of power to exert Judah's independence.

The Babylonians quickly arose to contest the Assyrians for control of Mesopotamia. In an attempt to hold on to power and stop the Babylonians, Assyria entered an alliance with a more distant power—Egypt. They hoped this alliance with the pharaohs of the 26th Dynasty (664–525 B.C.) would change the balance of power back into their favor.

While all these events happened far from Judah, no doubt Assyrian, and possibly also Egyptian, diplomats lobbied in Jerusalem for the Judahites to join with them. The Egyptian pharaoh Psammetichus II even visited Judah in 591 B.C. The offer to join forces with the two oldest and most powerful, prestigious states in that century would have looked very tempting. Surely this was the path to security and prosperity for the kingdom of Judah!

Jeremiah did not think so. The "road to Egypt" and the "road to Assyria" were dead ends. Help would not come from the part of the Nile River known as Sihor (or Shihor, Isa 23:3), nor from Assyria's Euphrates River (Jer 2:18). Political alliances were not the way to security, but rather faithfulness to Yahweh and Yahweh alone. Rather than entering an alliance with the Assyrians and the Egyptians, Jeremiah counseled Judah to maintain the independence achieved during the reign of King Josiah (640–609 B.C.).

Any males that pursue her need not tire
themselves;
at mating time they will find her.
25 Do not run until your feet are bare
and your throat is dry.
But you said, 'It's no use!
I love foreign gods,
and I must go after them.'

26 "As a thief is disgraced when he is
caught,
so the people of Israel are disgraced—
they, their kings and their officials,
their priests and their prophets.
27 They say to wood, 'You are my father,'
and to stone, 'You gave me birth.'
They have turned their backs to me
and not their faces;
yet when they are in trouble, they say,
'Come and save us!'
28 Where then are the gods you made for
yourselves?
Let them come if they can save you
when you are in trouble!
For you, Judah, have as many gods
as you have towns.

29 "Why do you bring charges against me?
You have all rebelled against me,"
declares the LORD.
30 "In vain I punished your people;
they did not respond to correction.
Your sword has devoured your prophets
like a ravenous lion.

31 "You of this generation, consider the word
of the LORD:

"Have I been a desert to Israel
or a land of great darkness?
Why do my people say, 'We are free to
roam;
we will come to you no more'?
32 Does a young woman forget her jewelry,
a bride her wedding ornaments?
Yet my people have forgotten me,
days without number.
33 How skilled you are at pursuing love!
Even the worst of women can learn from
your ways.
34 On your clothes is found
the lifeblood of the innocent poor,
though you did not catch them breaking
in.
Yet in spite of all this
35 you say, 'I am innocent;
he is not angry with me.'
But I will pass judgment on you
because you say, 'I have not sinned.'
36 Why do you go about so much,
changing your ways?
You will be disappointed by Egypt
as you were by Assyria.
37 You will also leave that place
with your hands on your head,
for the LORD has rejected those you trust;
you will not be helped by them.

3 1 "If a man divorces his wife
and she leaves him and marries another
man,
should he return to her again?
Would not the land be completely defiled?
But you have lived as a prostitute with many
lovers—
would you now return to me?"
declares the LORD.
2 "Look up to the barren heights and see.
Is there any place where you have not
been ravished?
By the roadside you sat waiting for lovers,
sat like a nomad in the desert.
You have defiled the land
with your prostitution and wickedness.
3 Therefore the showers have been withheld,
and no spring rains have fallen.
Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute;
you refuse to blush with shame.
4 Have you not just called to me:
'My Father, my friend from my youth,
5 will you always be angry?
Will your wrath continue forever?'
This is how you talk,
but you do all the evil you can."

Unfaithful Israel

6 During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, "Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. 7 I thought that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. 8 I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. 9 Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. 10 In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense," declares the LORD.

11 The LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah. 12 Go, proclaim this message toward the north:

Jeremiah in the Days of King Josiah (Jer 3:6)

Jeremiah received messages from Yahweh "during the reign of King Josiah" (Jer 3:6). His prophetic call is dated specifically in Josiah's 13th year, which was 627 B.C. (Jer 1:1, 2). The peace and prosperity of Josiah's kingship is thus the setting for the early years of Jeremiah's ministry.

Josiah, who reigned from 640 to 609 B.C., was the last major king of the Davidic dynasty in Judah. He is given high marks by the historian of Kings (2Ki 23:25), equaled only by Josiah's great-grandfather Hezekiah (2Ki 18:5) and by David himself. It was in 622 B.C., Josiah's 18th year, that the Book of the Law, apparently including at least a portion of the Book of Deuteronomy, was discovered.

Some of the most significant achievements of King Josiah were in the area of religious reform. In 632 B.C. he began to seek the God of his ancestors, and in 628 B.C. he initiated his earliest reforms (2Ch 34:3). The crucial year, however, was 622. A project to repair the temple resulted in the discovery of the law book, which in turn provided a new momentum for the reformation already in progress.

These reform efforts seem to have coincided with a civil war in Assyria. The Neo-Assyrian Empire was in decline, and the reforms may have been an expression of Judah's independence from Assyrian rule. Josiah removed all pagan elements from the temple, again an act that could have been interpreted as a claim of autonomy from Assyria. Though the king may have had some political motives, the main impetus for reform was religious—a desire to seek Yahweh and adhere to his law (2Ki 23:3). In the days of such a king, Yahweh called and spoke to Jeremiah.

"'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD,
'I will frown on you no longer,
for I am faithful,' declares the LORD,
'I will not be angry forever.
13 Only acknowledge your guilt—
you have rebelled against the LORD your God,
you have scattered your favors to foreign gods
under every spreading tree,
and have not obeyed me,'"
declares the LORD.

14 "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband. I will choose you—one from a town and two from a clan—and bring you to Zion. 15 Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding. 16 In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land," declares the LORD, "people will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made. 17 At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts. 18 In those days the people of Judah will join the people of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your ancestors as an inheritance.

19 "I myself said,

"'How gladly would I treat you like my children
and give you a pleasant land,
the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.'
I thought you would call me 'Father'
and not turn away from following me.
20 But like a woman unfaithful to her husband,
so you, Israel, have been unfaithful to me,"
declares the LORD.

21 A cry is heard on the barren heights,
the weeping and pleading of the people of Israel,
because they have perverted their ways
and have forgotten the LORD their God.

22 "Return, faithless people;
I will cure you of backsliding."

"Yes, we will come to you,
for you are the LORD our God.
23 Surely the idolatrous commotion on the hills
and mountains is a deception;
surely in the LORD our God
is the salvation of Israel.
24 From our youth shameful gods have consumed
the fruits of our ancestors' labor—
their flocks and herds,
their sons and daughters.
25 Let us lie down in our shame,
and let our disgrace cover us.
We have sinned against the LORD our God,
both we and our ancestors;
from our youth till this day
we have not obeyed the LORD our God."

4 1 "If you, Israel, will return,
then return to me,"
declares the LORD.
"If you put your detestable idols out of my sight
and no longer go astray,

2 and if in a truthful, just and righteous way
you swear, 'As surely as the LORD lives,'
then the nations will invoke blessings by
him
and in him they will boast."

3 This is what the LORD says to the people of
Judah and to Jerusalem:

"Break up your unplowed ground
and do not sow among thorns.
4 Circumcise yourselves to the LORD,
circumcise your hearts,
you people of Judah and inhabitants of
Jerusalem,
or my wrath will flare up and burn like fire
because of the evil you have done—
burn with no one to quench it.

Disaster From the North

5 "Announce in Judah and proclaim in
Jerusalem and say:
'Sound the trumpet throughout the land!'
Cry aloud and say:
'Gather together!
Let us flee to the fortified cities!'
6 Raise the signal to go to Zion!
Flee for safety without delay!
For I am bringing disaster from the north,
even terrible destruction."

7 A lion has come out of his lair;
a destroyer of nations has set out.
He has left his place
to lay waste your land.
Your towns will lie in ruins
without inhabitant.
8 So put on sackcloth,
lament and wail,
for the fierce anger of the LORD
has not turned away from us.

9 "In that day," declares the LORD,
"the king and the officials will lose heart,
the priests will be horrified,
and the prophets will be appalled."

10 Then I said, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! How completely you have deceived this people and Jerusalem by saying, 'You will have peace,' when the sword is at our throats!"

11 At that time this people and Jerusalem will be told, "A scorching wind from the barren heights in the desert blows toward my people, but not to winnow or cleanse; 12 a wind too strong for that comes from me. Now I pronounce my judgments against them."

13 Look! He advances like the clouds,
his chariots come like a whirlwind,
his horses are swifter than eagles.
Woe to us! We are ruined!
14 Jerusalem, wash the evil from your heart
and be saved.
How long will you harbor wicked
thoughts?
15 A voice is announcing from Dan,
proclaiming disaster from the hills of
Ephraim.
16 "Tell this to the nations,
proclaim concerning Jerusalem:
'A besieging army is coming from a distant
land,
raising a war cry against the cities of
Judah.
17 They surround her like men guarding a
field,
because she has rebelled against me,'"
declares the LORD.
18 "Your own conduct and actions
have brought this on you.
This is your punishment.
How bitter it is!
How it pierces to the heart!"

19 Oh, my anguish, my anguish!
I writhe in pain.
Oh, the agony of my heart!
My heart pounds within me,
I cannot keep silent.
For I have heard the sound of the trumpet;
I have heard the battle cry.
20 Disaster follows disaster;
the whole land lies in ruins.
In an instant my tents are destroyed,
my shelter in a moment.
21 How long must I see the battle standard
and hear the sound of the trumpet?

22 "My people are fools;
they do not know me.
They are senseless children;
they have no understanding.
They are skilled in doing evil;
they know not how to do good."

23 I looked at the earth,
and it was formless and empty;
and at the heavens,
and their light was gone.
24 I looked at the mountains,
and they were quaking;
all the hills were swaying.
25 I looked, and there were no people;
every bird in the sky had flown away.
26 I looked, and the fruitful land was a desert;
all its towns lay in ruins
before the LORD, before his fierce anger.

27 This is what the LORD says:

"The whole land will be ruined,
though I will not destroy it completely.
28 Therefore the earth will mourn
and the heavens above grow dark,
because I have spoken and will not relent,
I have decided and will not turn back."

29 At the sound of horsemen and archers
every town takes to flight.
Some go into the thickets;
some climb up among the rocks.
All the towns are deserted;
no one lives in them.

30 What are you doing, you devastated one?
Why dress yourself in scarlet
and put on jewels of gold?
Why highlight your eyes with makeup?
You adorn yourself in vain.
Your lovers despise you;
they want to kill you.

31 I hear a cry as of a woman in labor,
a groan as of one bearing her first child—
the cry of Daughter Zion gasping for breath,
stretching out her hands and saying,
"Alas! I am fainting;
my life is given over to murderers."

Not One Is Upright

5 1 "Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem,
look around and consider,
search through her squares.
If you can find but one person
who deals honestly and seeks the truth,
I will forgive this city.
2 Although they say, 'As surely as the LORD lives,'
still they are swearing falsely."

3 LORD, do not your eyes look for truth?
You struck them, but they felt no pain;
you crushed them, but they refused correction.
They made their faces harder than stone
and refused to repent.
4 I thought, "These are only the poor;
they are foolish,
for they do not know the way of the LORD,
the requirements of their God.
5 So I will go to the leaders
and speak to them;
surely they know the way of the LORD,
the requirements of their God."
But with one accord they too had broken off the yoke
and torn off the bonds.
6 Therefore a lion from the forest will attack them,
a wolf from the desert will ravage them,
a leopard will lie in wait near their towns
to tear to pieces any who venture out,
for their rebellion is great
and their backslidings many.

7 "Why should I forgive you?
Your children have forsaken me
and sworn by gods that are not gods.
I supplied all their needs,
yet they committed adultery
and thronged to the houses of prostitutes.
8 They are well-fed, lusty stallions,
each neighing for another man's wife.
9 Should I not punish them for this?"
declares the LORD.
"Should I not avenge myself
on such a nation as this?

10 "Go through her vineyards and ravage them,
but do not destroy them completely.

Strip off her branches,
for these people do not belong to the LORD.
11 The people of Israel and the people of Judah
have been utterly unfaithful to me,"
declares the LORD.

12 They have lied about the LORD;
they said, "He will do nothing!
No harm will come to us;
we will never see sword or famine.
13 The prophets are but wind
and the word is not in them;
so let what they say be done to them."

14 Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty says:

"Because the people have spoken these words,
I will make my words in your mouth a fire
and these people the wood it consumes.
15 People of Israel," declares the LORD,
"I am bringing a distant nation against you—
an ancient and enduring nation,
a people whose language you do not know,
whose speech you do not understand.
16 Their quivers are like an open grave;
all of them are mighty warriors.
17 They will devour your harvests and food,
devour your sons and daughters;
they will devour your flocks and herds,
devour your vines and fig trees.
With the sword they will destroy
the fortified cities in which you trust.

18 "Yet even in those days," declares the LORD, "I will not destroy you completely. 19 And when the people ask, 'Why has the LORD our God done all this to us?' you will tell them, 'As you have forsaken me and served foreign gods in your own land, so now you will serve foreigners in a land not your own.'

20 "Announce this to the descendants of Jacob
and proclaim it in Judah:
21 Hear this, you foolish and senseless people,
who have eyes but do not see,
who have ears but do not hear:

Beliefs & Ideas

One of the notable themes of the Bible is the doctrine of the "remnant," the part of the people that God reserves (Jer 5:18). Only what remained of the people after the devastation of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. was able to return 70 years later. But it was foretold that there would be a remnant to return (Jer 46:28).

22 Should you not fear me?" declares the LORD.
"Should you not tremble in my presence?
I made the sand a boundary for the sea,
an everlasting barrier it cannot cross.
The waves may roll, but they cannot prevail;
they may roar, but they cannot cross it.
23 But these people have stubborn and rebellious hearts;
they have turned aside and gone away.
24 They do not say to themselves,
'Let us fear the LORD our God,
who gives autumn and spring rains in season,
who assures us of the regular weeks of harvest.'
25 Your wrongdoings have kept these away;
your sins have deprived you of good.

26 "Among my people are the wicked
who lie in wait like men who snare birds
and like those who set traps to catch people.
27 Like cages full of birds,
their houses are full of deceit;
they have become rich and powerful
28 and have grown fat and sleek.
Their evil deeds have no limit;
they do not seek justice.
They do not promote the case of the fatherless;
they do not defend the just cause of the poor.
29 Should I not punish them for this?"
declares the LORD.
"Should I not avenge myself
on such a nation as this?

30 "A horrible and shocking thing
has happened in the land:
31 The prophets prophesy lies,
the priests rule by their own authority,
and my people love it this way.
But what will you do in the end?

Jerusalem Under Siege

6 1 "Flee for safety, people of Benjamin!
Flee from Jerusalem!
Sound the trumpet in Tekoa!
Raise the signal over Beth Hakkerem!
For disaster looms out of the north,
even terrible destruction.
2 I will destroy Daughter Zion,
so beautiful and delicate.
3 Shepherds with their flocks will come against her;
they will pitch their tents around her,
each tending his own portion."

Signal-Fires in Beth Hakkerem (Jer 6:1)

In the 1930s archaeologists discovered a group of ostraca in the ruins of the outer gate at the site of Lachish, the ancient Judahite city. All the evidence suggests that these ostraca (broken pieces of pottery used to write on) were written in the last days of the kingdom of Judah before the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar utterly destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The ostraca are now known as the Lachish Letters.

The letters address a man named "Yaosh." Yaosh, always called "my lord" in the letters, probably commanded Lachish's defenses and participated in the frantic diplomatic and military attempts to stave off the Babylonian invasion. Letter IV has a particularly harrowing tone as it ends: "and let (my lord) know that we are watching for the signals of Lachish, according to all the indications which my lord has given, for we cannot see Azekah." The "signals of Lachish" were a fire lit on top of a high point or tower, as part of the national defense system—early technology to warn of an impending attack.

The only thing worse than the lighting of a signal was seeing it no more. That could mean only one thing: the enemy was approaching. Having lost sight of the signal-fire in Azekah, those in Jerusalem strained in hope to see the signal-fire of Lachish. Maybe the Babylonians would be stopped there! Judging by the destruction at Lachish, however, such a hope was in vain.

The Lachish Letters therefore provide a chilling background for Jeremiah's warning: "Raise the signal over Beth Hakkerem!" (Jer 6:1). Scholars have recently suggested that Beth Hakkerem was a site about 3 miles southwest of Jerusalem, almost exactly halfway between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. It thus represented the last stop before the invading Babylonian army reached Jerusalem. Jeremiah's point is clear: destruction of Jerusalem had drawn very near. God's judgment was about to ring forth.

4 "Prepare for battle against her!
Arise, let us attack at noon!
But, alas, the daylight is fading,
and the shadows of evening grow long.
5 So arise, let us attack at night
and destroy her fortresses!"

6 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Cut down the trees
and build siege ramps against Jerusalem.
This city must be punished;
it is filled with oppression.
7 As a well pours out its water,
so she pours out her wickedness.
Violence and destruction resound in her;
her sickness and wounds are ever before me.
8 Take warning, Jerusalem,
or I will turn away from you
and make your land desolate
so no one can live in it."

9 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Let them glean the remnant of Israel
as thoroughly as a vine;
pass your hand over the branches again,
like one gathering grapes."

10 To whom can I speak and give warning?
Who will listen to me?
Their ears are closed[a]
so they cannot hear.
The word of the LORD is offensive to them;
they find no pleasure in it.
11 But I am full of the wrath of the LORD,
and I cannot hold it in.

"Pour it out on the children in the street
and on the young men gathered together;
both husband and wife will be caught in it,
and the old, those weighed down with years.
12 Their houses will be turned over to others,
together with their fields and their wives,
when I stretch out my hand
against those who live in the land,"
declares the LORD.
13 "From the least to the greatest,
all are greedy for gain;
prophets and priests alike,
all practice deceit.
14 They dress the wound of my people
as though it were not serious.
'Peace, peace,' they say,
when there is no peace.
15 Are they ashamed of their detestable conduct?
No, they have no shame at all;
they do not even know how to blush.
So they will fall among the fallen;
they will be brought down when I punish them,"
says the LORD.

16 This is what the LORD says:

"Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths,

[a] *10* Hebrew *uncircumcised*

ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls.
But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'
17 I appointed watchmen over you and said,
'Listen to the sound of the trumpet!'
But you said, 'We will not listen.'
18 Therefore hear, you nations;
you who are witnesses,
observe what will happen to them.
19 Hear, you earth:
I am bringing disaster on this people,
the fruit of their schemes,
because they have not listened to my words
and have rejected my law.
20 What do I care about incense from Sheba
or sweet calamus from a distant land?
Your burnt offerings are not acceptable;
your sacrifices do not please me."

21 Therefore this is what the LORD says:

"I will put obstacles before this people.
Parents and children alike will stumble over them;
neighbors and friends will perish."

22 This is what the LORD says:

"Look, an army is coming
from the land of the north;
a great nation is being stirred up
from the ends of the earth.
23 They are armed with bow and spear;
they are cruel and show no mercy.
They sound like the roaring sea
as they ride on their horses;
they come like men in battle formation
to attack you, Daughter Zion."

24 We have heard reports about them,
and our hands hang limp.
Anguish has gripped us,
pain like that of a woman in labor.
25 Do not go out to the fields
or walk on the roads,
for the enemy has a sword,
and there is terror on every side.
26 Put on sackcloth, my people,
and roll in ashes;
mourn with bitter wailing
as for an only son,
for suddenly the destroyer
will come upon us.

27 "I have made you a tester of metals
and my people the ore,
that you may observe
and test their ways.
28 They are all hardened rebels,
going about to slander.
They are bronze and iron;
they all act corruptly.
29 The bellows blow fiercely
to burn away the lead with fire,
but the refining goes on in vain;
the wicked are not purged out.
30 They are called rejected silver,
because the LORD has rejected them."

Science & Technology

Silver commonly occurs in nature mixed with lead (Jer 6:29). The two metals are separated by a process called cupellation, in which the ore is heated in a ceramic vessel over a flame blown by a bellows. The process is repeated to increase the purity of the silver. With practice the technique can achieve a high degree of purity with silver, as well as recover the lead for its uses.

TRANSITION

The Book of Nahum

In 612 B.C. the rebel alliance of the Babylonians and the Medes, under the leadership of the Babylonian king Nabopolassar (626–605 B.C.), drove the Assyrians out of their own capital, Nineveh. The Assyrians were not entirely defeated, and they were able to regroup in the northwest, at the ancient city of Harran. Nevertheless, Nineveh, once a symbol of Assyrian splendor, was gone. The nations that had once been so terrorized by Assyria could only be delighted.

Nothing is known of the prophet named Nahum, nor of the exact time of his prophecy. It is clear, however, that the book speaks of the events of 612 B.C., when the Medes and Babylonians drove the Assyrians out of Nineveh. Nahum's glee at Nineveh's downfall can sound vindictive to modern ears, but it is understandable. Assyria's reputation for brutality and torture was well established; Nineveh was referred to as "the city of blood" (Na 3:1). More than one person had wondered how such cruelty could go unpunished, including the prophet Habakkuk (see "The Book of Habakkuk" at Hab 1:1). Nahum's delight comes primarily from seeing that the Lord does punish the wicked after all (see Na 1:2, 3).

Nahum's mention of Thebes (3:8) refers to the Egyptian capital which Assyria herself had sacked in 664 B.C. Nahum recalls that Assyrian victory as a warning that Assyria also must face judgment, and would fall as had her victims.

• **Nahum 1:1—3:19**

Assyria's Capital Is Destroyed (Na 1:1)

Nineveh was the chief city of the Assyrian Empire in the last century of the empire's power (c. 705–612 B.C.). It is this 7th-century Nineveh that is known from accounts in the books of Nahum and Jonah. Yet the city had a very long history, and there are substantial archaeological material remains of Nineveh from the New Stone Age (c. 5000–4000 B.C.).

The city is not mentioned in written records until the mid-3rd millennium B.C. when it was under control of the Accadian kings. It is named again briefly during the reign of Shamshi-Adad I (1813–1781 B.C.), who ruled the city-state of Ashur and most of northern Mesopotamia. Though it is listed in Ge 10:11 along with Calah, there is no evidence of Nineveh being politically linked with other Assyrian cities until later in time.

Nineveh was incorporated into Assyria during the reign of Ashur-uballit I (1363–1328 B.C.). The city thus played a prominent role in the Middle Assyrian Empire after 1273 B.C., and Assyrian kings spent much time in building activity there.

The Nineveh against which Nahum prophesies was more than just a major city. The Assyrian king Sennacherib (705–681 B.C.) decided to make Nineveh the capital of Assyria, and it was then transformed into the capital of a world state. Like the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II a century later, Sennacherib spent a great deal of time in monumental building projects at the site.

Despite being protected by an enormous city wall, Nineveh was captured and destroyed by an alliance of Medes and Chaldeans in 612 B.C. The fall of this great city, which is recorded in the Babylonian Chronicle and described in Nahum's prophecy (Na 2:3–13), effectively ended the Assyrian Empire.

Nahum

1:1 A prophecy concerning Nineveh. The
book of the vision of Nahum the Elkoshite.

The Lord's Anger Against Nineveh

2 The Lord is a jealous and avenging God;
the Lord takes vengeance and is filled
with wrath.
The Lord takes vengeance on his foes
and vents his wrath against his enemies.
3 The Lord is slow to anger but great in
power;
the Lord will not leave the guilty
unpunished.
His way is in the whirlwind and the storm,
and clouds are the dust of his feet.
4 He rebukes the sea and dries it up;
he makes all the rivers run dry.
Bashan and Carmel wither
and the blossoms of Lebanon fade.
5 The mountains quake before him
and the hills melt away.
The earth trembles at his presence,
the world and all who live in it.
6 Who can withstand his indignation?
Who can endure his fierce anger?
His wrath is poured out like fire;
the rocks are shattered before him.

7 The Lord is good,
a refuge in times of trouble.
He cares for those who trust in him,
8 but with an overwhelming flood
he will make an end of Nineveh;
he will pursue his foes into the realm of
darkness.

9 Whatever they plot against the Lord
he will bring[a] to an end;
trouble will not come a second time.
10 They will be entangled among thorns
and drunk from their wine;
they will be consumed like dry stubble.[b]
11 From you, Nineveh, has one come forth
who plots evil against the Lord
and devises wicked plans.

12 This is what the Lord says:

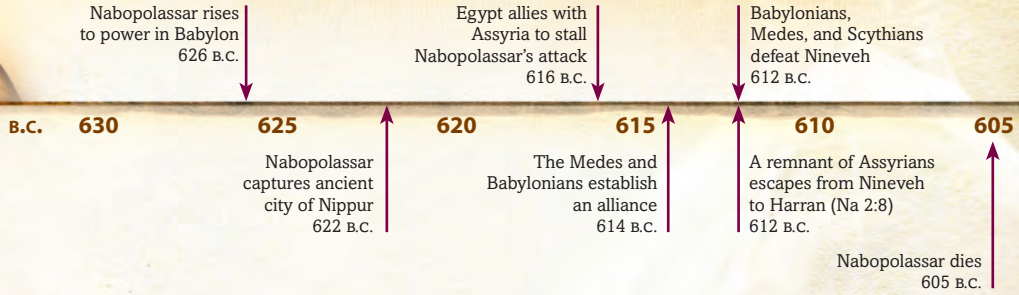
"Although they have allies and are numerous,
they will be destroyed and pass away.
Although I have afflicted you, Judah,
I will afflict you no more.
13 Now I will break their yoke from your neck
and tear your shackles away."

14 The Lord has given a command concerning
you, Nineveh:
"You will have no descendants to bear
your name.
I will destroy the images and idols
that are in the temple of your gods.
I will prepare your grave,
for you are vile."

15 Look, there on the mountains,
the feet of one who brings good news,
who proclaims peace!
Celebrate your festivals, Judah,
and fulfill your vows.
No more will the wicked invade you;
they will be completely destroyed.[c]

[a] *9* Or *What do you foes plot against the Lord? / He will bring it*
[b] *10* The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.
[c] *15* In Hebrew texts this verse (1:15) is numbered 2:1.

NAHUM PROPHESIES OF NINEVEH AND NABOPOLASSAR



Nineveh to Fall

2[a] [1]An attacker advances against you,
Nineveh.
Guard the fortress,
watch the road,
brace yourselves,
marshal all your strength!

[2]The LORD will restore the splendor of
Jacob
like the splendor of Israel,
though destroyers have laid them waste
and have ruined their vines.

[3]The shields of the soldiers are red;
the warriors are clad in scarlet.
The metal on the chariots flashes
on the day they are made ready;
the spears of juniper are brandished.[b]
[4]The chariots storm through the
streets,
rushing back and forth through the
squares.
They look like flaming torches;
they dart about like lightning.

[5]Nineveh summons her picked troops,
yet they stumble on their way.
They dash to the city wall;
the protective shield is put in place.
[6]The river gates are thrown open
and the palace collapses.
[7]It is decreed[c] that Nineveh
be exiled and carried away.
Her female slaves moan like doves
and beat on their breasts.
[8]Nineveh is like a pool
whose water is draining away.
"Stop! Stop!" they cry,
but no one turns back.
[9]Plunder the silver!
Plunder the gold!
The supply is endless,
the wealth from all its treasures!
[10]She is pillaged, plundered, stripped!
Hearts melt, knees give way,
bodies tremble, every face grows
pale.

[11]Where now is the lions' den,
the place where they fed their young,
where the lion and lioness went,
and the cubs, with nothing to fear?
[12]The lion killed enough for his cubs
and strangled the prey for his
mate,
filling his lairs with the kill
and his dens with the prey.

[13]"I am against you,"
declares the LORD Almighty.
"I will burn up your chariots in smoke,
and the sword will devour your young
lions.
I will leave you no prey on the earth.
The voices of your messengers
will no longer be heard."

TIME CAPSULE	616 to 614 B.C.
616–594	Babylonian Chronicle records campaigns of Nebuchadnezzar
616	Egypt sends help to Assyria to stop the Babylonian attack
615	Nabopolassar fails to conquer Nineveh and Ashur
614	Nabopolassar establishes peace treaty with Cyaxeres, king of the Medes
614	The Medes and Scythians capture city of Ashur

[a] In Hebrew texts 2:1-13 is numbered 2:2-14. [b] *3* Hebrew; Septuagint and Syriac *ready; / the horsemen rush to and fro.* [c] *7* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Woe to Nineveh

3 [1]Woe to the city of blood,
full of lies,
full of plunder,
never without victims!
[2]The crack of whips,
the clatter of wheels,
galloping horses
and jolting chariots!
[3]Charging cavalry,
flashing swords
and glittering spears!
Many casualties,
piles of dead,
bodies without number,
people stumbling over the corpses—
[4]all because of the wanton lust of a prostitute,
alluring, the mistress of sorceries,
who enslaved nations by her prostitution
and peoples by her witchcraft.

[5]"I am against you," declares the LORD Almighty.
"I will lift your skirts over your face.
I will show the nations your nakedness
and the kingdoms your shame.
[6]I will pelt you with filth,
I will treat you with contempt
and make you a spectacle.
[7]All who see you will flee from you and say,
'Nineveh is in ruins—who will mourn for her?'
Where can I find anyone to comfort you?"

[8]Are you better than Thebes,
situated on the Nile,
with water around her?
The river was her defense,
the waters her wall.
[9]Cush[a] and Egypt were her boundless strength;
Put and Libya were among her allies.
[10]Yet she was taken captive
and went into exile.
Her infants were dashed to pieces
at every street corner.
Lots were cast for her nobles,
and all her great men were put in chains.
[11]You too will become drunk;
you will go into hiding
and seek refuge from the enemy.

[12]All your fortresses are like fig trees
with their first ripe fruit;
when they are shaken,
the figs fall into the mouth of the eater.
[13]Look at your troops—
they are all weaklings.

[a] *9* That is, the upper Nile region

Arts & Literature
The public art of the Assyrians depicted the humiliation, mutilation, and death of prisoners of war. In the 9th century B.C. an Assyrian king boasted of his unrestrained cruelty to his enemies, recording his exploits by writing them in stone at the door of a temple. Ironically, Nahum's prophecy describes the fall of Assyria's capital, Nineveh (Na 3:3). It was conquered in 612 B.C. by the Babylonians and the Medes.

The Neo-Assyrian Empire
By 650 B.C. the Assyrian Empire, with its capital in Nineveh, stretched from the Persian Gulf in the east throughout the fertile crescent into Palestine and beyond, embracing for a short time all of Egypt in the southwest. Judah, while a free zone, still paid tribute to Assyria. The prophet Nahum mentions Assyria's victory over Thebes (or No Amon, Na 3:8). But Nahum also prophesies the destruction of Nineveh, Assyria's great capital (Na 3:18).

The gates of your land
are wide open to your enemies;
fire has consumed the bars of your gates.
14 Draw water for the siege,
strengthen your defenses!
Work the clay,
tread the mortar,
repair the brickwork!
15 There the fire will consume you;
the sword will cut you down—
they will devour you like a swarm of locusts.
Multiply like grasshoppers,
multiply like locusts!
16 You have increased the number of your merchants
till they are more numerous than the stars in the sky,
but like locusts they strip the land
and then fly away.
17 Your guards are like locusts,
your officials like swarms of locusts
that settle in the walls on a cold day—
but when the sun appears they fly away,
and no one knows where.
18 King of Assyria, your shepherds[a] slumber;
your nobles lie down to rest.
Your people are scattered on the mountains
with no one to gather them.
19 Nothing can heal you;
your wound is fatal.
All who hear the news about you
clap their hands at your fall,
for who has not felt
your endless cruelty?

"Your people are scattered on the mountains with no one to gather them." Nahum 3:18

TRANSITION

The Death of Josiah

Assyria, driven out of its capital, Nineveh, in 612 B.C., had established a capital-in-exile at Harran. In 610, the Assyrians were expelled even from there. In an attempt to recapture Harran, Assyria made an alliance with its former enemy Egypt. The Egyptian king, Necho II (610–595 B.C.) evidently feared the new strength of Babylon more than the aging power of Assyria, and he marched north through the land of Judah to join forces with Assyria in the assault of Harran.

On the way to Harran, Pharaoh Necho was met by Judah's King Josiah, who attacked the Egyptian army at Megiddo in 609 B.C. Exactly why Josiah did so is unclear. Perhaps he feared a resurgence of Egyptian power. Whatever the reason, Josiah and Judah paid for his attack. Josiah himself was killed, and Judah became an Egyptian vassal. Josiah's son Jehoahaz became the new king of Judah, but ruled only 3 months.

• **2 Kings 23:28–34**

2 Kings

23 :28 As for the other events of Josiah's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah?
29 While Josiah was king, Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt went up to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah marched out to meet him in battle, but Necho faced him and killed him at Megiddo. 30 Josiah's servants brought his body in a chariot from Megiddo to Jerusalem and buried him in his own tomb. And the people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and anointed him and made him king in place of his father.

Jehoahaz King of Judah

31 Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. 32 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his predecessors had done. 33 Pharaoh Necho put him in chains at Riblah in the land of Hamath so that he might not reign in Jerusalem, and he imposed on Judah a levy of a hundred talents[b] of silver and a talent[c] of gold. 34 Pharaoh Necho

[a] *18* That is, rulers [b] *33* That is, about 3 3/4 tons or about 3.4 metric tons [c] *33* That is, about 75 pounds or about 34 kilograms

made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt, and there he died.

TRANSITION

A Dirge for an Exiled King

Josiah's attack may have at least slowed the Egyptian armies under Necho. At any rate, the Assyrian-Egyptian alliance failed to recapture Harran. Assyria was driven further north, and Necho returned south. It was on this return trip that Necho asserted his new authority over Judah by removing the new king, Jehoahaz, from the throne and replacing him with his brother Eliakim.

In another demonstration of power, Necho changed Eliakim's name to the throne name "Jehoiakim." Similarly, Jehoahaz was an official throne name; Jehoahaz's personal name was Shallum (Jer 22:11). The prophet's dirge (Jer 22:10–12) instructs Judah not to continue weeping for the dead King Josiah, but rather to weep for Jehoahaz who was exiled to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho and would not return. Another reason to weep for Jehoahaz was the greed and rapacity of Jehoiakim who took his place (22:13–17).

• Jeremiah 22:10–17

Jeremiah

22 **:10** Do not weep for the dead king or
mourn his loss;
rather, weep bitterly for him who is
exiled,
because he will never return
nor see his native land again.

11 For this is what the LORD says about Shallum[a]
son of Josiah, who succeeded his father as king
of Judah but has gone from this place: "He will
never return. 12 He will die in the place where
they have led him captive; he will not see this
land again."

13 "Woe to him who builds his palace by
unrighteousness,
his upper rooms by injustice,
making his own people work for nothing,
not paying them for their labor.
14 He says, 'I will build myself a great palace
with spacious upper rooms.'
So he makes large windows in it,
panels it with cedar
and decorates it in red.

15 "Does it make you a king
to have more and more cedar?
Did not your father have food and
drink?
He did what was right and just,
so all went well with him.
16 He defended the cause of the poor and
needy,
and so all went well.
Is that not what it means to know me?"
declares the LORD.
17 "But your eyes and your heart
are set only on dishonest gain,
on shedding innocent blood
and on oppression and extortion."

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Josiah's Last Years

The Chronicler's account of Josiah's death in 609 B.C. is very close to the account in Kings. One difference is the curious note that Necho fought "at Carchemish" (2Ch 35:20). An important battle was fought by Assyria and Babylon at Carchemish in 605 B.C., 4 years after Josiah's death, but in 609 B.C. Necho was advancing to fight at Harran. The Chronicler may be referring to Necho's plans in 609 to join the Assyrian army near Carchemish on the Euphrates River, and use that city as a base of operations for the siege of Harran.

Chronicles also provides more detail about Josiah's death. The Chronicler reports that God accomplishes his purposes even through a foreigner, the Egyptian pharaoh Necho (35:21). The tragedy of Josiah's death is accentuated by the lamentations of Judah and of the prophet Jeremiah, mourning for the king whose reign would be remembered forever as the kingdom's last moment of glory.

• 2 Chronicles 35:20—36:4

2 Chronicles

The Death of Josiah

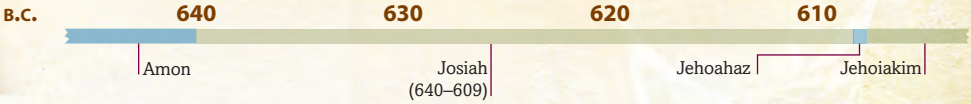
35 **:20** After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, Necho king of Egypt went up to fight at Carchemish on the Euphrates, and Josiah marched out to meet him in battle. 21 But Necho sent messengers to him, saying, "What quarrel is there, king of Judah, between you and me? It is not you I am attacking at this time, but the house with which I am at war. God has told me to hurry; so stop opposing God, who is with me, or he will destroy you."

[a] *11* Also called *Jehoahaz*

JOSIAH PURSUES REFORM IN JUDAH

Israel (northern kingdom)

Fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 B.C.



Judah (southern kingdom)

Josiah, son of Amon, ruled during 3 decades of peace and prosperity for Judah. The death of the great Assyrian king, Ashurbanipal, brought about a serious decline in Assyria's power and allowed Josiah freedom to pursue various reforms.

In 609 B.C. Josiah attempted to block Pharaoh Necho II of Egypt as he marched north to assist Assyria in a fight against Babylon. Possibly Necho's northern campaign appeared a threat to Judah. Nevertheless, in a battle against Necho at Megiddo, Josiah suffered serious injuries and eventually died.

22 Josiah, however, would not turn away from
him, but disguised himself to engage him in
battle. He would not listen to what Necho had
said at God's command but went to fight him
on the plain of Megiddo.
23 Archers shot King Josiah, and he told his
officers, "Take me away; I am badly wounded."
24 So they took him out of his chariot, put him
in his other chariot and brought him to Jeru-
salem, where he died. He was buried in the
tombs of his ancestors, and all Judah and Jeru-
salem mourned for him.
25 Jeremiah composed laments for Josiah,
and to this day all the male and female singers
commemorate Josiah in the laments. These be-
came a tradition in Israel and are written in the
Laments.
26 The other events of Josiah's reign and his
acts of devotion in accordance with what is writ-
ten in the Law of the LORD— 27 all the events,
from beginning to end, are written in the book
of the kings of Israel and Judah. 1 And
36 the people of the land took Jehoahaz son
of Josiah and made him king in Jerusalem in
place of his father.

Jehoahaz King of Judah

2 Jehoahaz[a] was twenty-three years old when
he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem
three months. 3 The king of Egypt dethroned
him in Jerusalem and imposed on Judah a levy
of a hundred talents[b] of silver and a talent[c] of
gold. 4 The king of Egypt made Eliakim, a broth-
er of Jehoahaz, king over Judah and Jerusalem
and changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But
Necho took Eliakim's brother Jehoahaz and
carried him off to Egypt.

TRANSITION

The Book of Habakkuk

In the final y ears of Josiah's reign, while Assyria fought the Babylonian alliance in Mesopotamia, the pr ophet Habakkuk pondered the forces behind these events. Like Nahum, Habakkuk felt the injustice of Assyria's power. In a dialogue with God, he asks how such violence could go unpunished . Unlike Nahum, though, Habakkuk is not sa tisfied with A ssyria's punishment at the hands of Babylon. Is Babylon any better than A ssyria, after all? How can a pure God use such impure tools? In reply, God tells Habakkuk to wait, for in such faithful waiting is true righteousness (Hab 2:4).

Habakkuk's forthright questioning has earned him the title "the philosopher prophet." He might just as well be described as a priestly prophet. He uses pr iestly language (ch. 3 is a psalm, complete with musical directions). Even the questions he asks of G od sound priestly, very similar in t one and c ontent to the questions asked b y the psalmist of P s 73, a psalm associa ted with the pr iestly singer Asaph.

• **Habakkuk 1:1—3:19**

Habakkuk

1:1 The prophecy that Habakkuk the prophet received.

Habakkuk's Complaint

2 How long, LORD, must I call for help,
but you do not listen?
Or cry out to you, "Violence!"
but you do not save?

[a] *2* Hebrew *Joahaz*, a variant of *Jehoahaz*; also in verse 4
[b] *3* That is, about 3 3/4 tons or about 3.4 metric tons
[c] *3* That is, about 75 pounds or about 34 kilograms

Chaldeans Become Babylonians (Hab 1:6)

As early as the 9th century B.C. the Chaldeans as a people are known from cuneiform records, the wedge-shaped characters etched in blocks of clay with styluses. The Chaldeans originally inhabited the southern portion of Babylonia on the west border of Elam. There was possibly a relationship between them and the Arameans, but that relationship is not clear. Both were tribal groups in southern Babylonia, and there is no difference between Aramean and Chaldean personal names. Yet the Arameans and Chaldeans were often described as distinct peoples.

For over 2 centuries of the Neo-Assyrian period (934–612 B.C.) the Chaldeans were at odds with the powerful Assyrians in the north. They often successfully waged guerrilla warfare against this foe. Marduk-Baladan II was a Chaldean king who twice occupied the throne of Babylon (721–710 and 703–702 B.C.). Evidently he also enlisted the support of Hezekiah, king of Judah, during a revolt against the Assyrians (Isa 39:1, 2).

By the 7th century B.C., the Chaldean tribes were able to control Babylonia and its capital city, Babylon. At that point, the terms "Babylonian" and "Chaldean" appear to be synonymous. Thus, Scripture uses these terms interchangeably: Nebuchadnezzar II, king of Babylon (c. 605–562 B.C.) and the destroyer of Jerusalem, was himself a Chaldean (see Ezr 5:12).

3 Why do you make me look at injustice?
Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?
Destruction and violence are before me;
there is strife, and conflict abounds.
4 Therefore the law is paralyzed,
and justice never prevails.
The wicked hem in the righteous,
so that justice is perverted.

The Lord's Answer

5 "Look at the nations and watch—
and be utterly amazed.
For I am going to do something in your days
that you would not believe,
even if you were told.
6 I am raising up the Babylonians,[a]
that ruthless and impetuous people,
who sweep across the whole earth
to seize dwellings not their own.
7 They are a feared and dreaded people;
they are a law to themselves
and promote their own honor.
8 Their horses are swifter than leopards,
fiercer than wolves at dusk.
Their cavalry gallops headlong;
their horsemen come from afar.
They fly like an eagle swooping to devour;
9 they all come intent on violence.
Their hordes[b] advance like a desert wind
and gather prisoners like sand.
10 They mock kings
and scoff at rulers.
They laugh at all fortified cities;
by building earthen ramps they capture them.
11 Then they sweep past like the wind and go on—
guilty people, whose own strength is their god."

Habakkuk's Second Complaint

12 Lord, are you not from everlasting?
My God, my Holy One, you[c] will never die.
You, Lord, have appointed them to execute judgment;
you, my Rock, have ordained them to punish.
13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil;
you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.
Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?
Why are you silent while the wicked
swallow up those more righteous than themselves?
14 You have made people like the fish in the sea,
like the sea creatures that have no ruler.
15 The wicked foe pulls all of them up with hooks,
he catches them in his net,

[a] *6* Or *Chaldeans* [b] *9* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [c] *12* An ancient Hebrew scribal tradition; Masoretic Text *we*

TIME CAPSULE		612 to 609 B.C.
612		The Medes and Babylonians drive the Assyrians out of Nineveh
612		Fall of Assyria to the Medes and Babylonians
610		Nabopolassar of Babylon attacks Harran and scatters the Assyrian and Egyptian armies
610–595		Pharaoh Necho II of Egypt is foe of Babylon
609		The last Assyrian king, Ashuruballit II, fails to recover the city of Harran from the Babylonians

he gathers them up in his dragnet;
and so he rejoices and is glad.
16 Therefore he sacrifices to his net
and burns incense to his dragnet,
for by his net he lives in luxury
and enjoys the choicest food.
17 Is he to keep on emptying his net,
destroying nations without mercy?

2 1 I will stand at my watch
and station myself on the ramparts;
I will look to see what he will say to me,
and what answer I am to give to this complaint.[a]

The LORD's Answer

2 Then the LORD replied:

"Write down the revelation
and make it plain on tablets
so that a herald[b] may run with it.
3 For the revelation awaits an appointed time;
it speaks of the end
and will not prove false.
Though it linger, wait for it;
it[c] will certainly come
and will not delay.

4 "See, the enemy is puffed up;
his desires are not upright—
but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness[d]—
5 indeed, wine betrays him;
he is arrogant and never at rest.
Because he is as greedy as the grave
and like death is never satisfied,
he gathers to himself all the nations
and takes captive all the peoples.

6 "Will not all of them taunt him with ridicule and scorn, saying,

"'Woe to him who piles up stolen goods
and makes himself wealthy by extortion!
How long must this go on?'
7 Will not your creditors suddenly arise?
Will they not wake up and make you tremble?
Then you will become their prey.

Beliefs & Ideas

The land of the dead in general is presented in the Old Testament as it seemed from the point of view of the living. The dead were excluded from the energy of life and were reduced to weak, unhappy shadows. In its terrible aspect death was compared to the mouth of a gigantic monster. The appetite of death could never be satisfied (Hab 2:5), requiring that all must die.

8 Because you have plundered many nations,
the peoples who are left will plunder you.
For you have shed human blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

9 "Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain,
setting his nest on high
to escape the clutches of ruin!
10 You have plotted the ruin of many peoples,
shaming your own house and forfeiting your life.
11 The stones of the wall will cry out,
and the beams of the woodwork will echo it.

12 "Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed
and establishes a town by injustice!
13 Has not the LORD Almighty determined
that the people's labor is only fuel for the fire,
that the nations exhaust themselves for nothing?
14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD
as the waters cover the sea.

15 "Woe to him who gives drink to his neighbors,
pouring it from the wineskin till they are drunk,
so that he can gaze on their naked bodies!
16 You will be filled with shame instead of glory.
Now it is your turn! Drink and let your nakedness be exposed[e]!
The cup from the LORD's right hand is coming around to you,
and disgrace will cover your glory.
17 The violence you have done to Lebanon will overwhelm you,
and your destruction of animals will terrify you.
For you have shed human blood;
you have destroyed lands and cities and everyone in them.

18 "Of what value is an idol carved by a craftsman?
Or an image that teaches lies?
For the one who makes it trusts in his own creation;
he makes idols that cannot speak.

[a] 1 Or *and what to answer when I am rebuked* [b] 2 Or *so that whoever reads it* [c] 3 Or *Though he linger, wait for him; / he* [d] 4 Or *faith* [e] 16 Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls, Aquila, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint) *and stagger*

19 Woe to him who says to wood, 'Come to
life!'
Or to lifeless stone, 'Wake up!'
Can it give guidance?
It is covered with gold and silver;
there is no breath in it."

20 The LORD is in his holy temple;
let all the earth be silent before him.

Habakkuk's Prayer

3 1 A prayer of Habakkuk the prophet. On *shigionoth*.[a]

2 LORD, I have heard of your fame;
I stand in awe of your deeds, LORD.
Repeat them in our day,
in our time make them known;
in wrath remember mercy.

3 God came from Teman,
the Holy One from Mount Paran.[b]
His glory covered the heavens
and his praise filled the earth.
4 His splendor was like the sunrise;
rays flashed from his hand,
where his power was hidden.
5 Plague went before him;
pestilence followed his steps.
6 He stood, and shook the earth;
he looked, and made the nations
tremble.
The ancient mountains crumbled
and the age-old hills collapsed—
but he marches on forever.
7 I saw the tents of Cushan in distress,
the dwellings of Midian in anguish.

8 Were you angry with the rivers, LORD?
Was your wrath against the streams?
Did you rage against the sea
when you rode your horses
and your chariots to victory?
9 You uncovered your bow,
you called for many arrows.
You split the earth with rivers;
10 the mountains saw you and writhed.
Torrents of water swept by;
the deep roared
and lifted its waves on high.

11 Sun and moon stood still in the heavens
at the glint of your flying arrows,
at the lightning of your flashing spear.
12 In wrath you strode through the earth
and in anger you threshed the nations.

13 You came out to deliver your people,
to save your anointed one.
You crushed the leader of the land of
wickedness,
you stripped him from head to foot.
14 With his own spear you pierced his
head
when his warriors stormed out to
scatter us,
gloating as though about to devour
the wretched who were in hiding.
15 You trampled the sea with your horses,
churning the great waters.

16 I heard and my heart pounded,
my lips quivered at the sound;
decay crept into my bones,
and my legs trembled.
Yet I will wait patiently for the day of
calamity
to come on the nation invading us.
17 Though the fig tree does not bud
and there are no grapes on the vines,
though the olive crop fails
and the fields produce no food,
though there are no sheep in the pen
and no cattle in the stalls,
18 yet I will rejoice in the LORD,
I will be joyful in God my Savior.

19 The Sovereign LORD is my strength;
he makes my feet like the feet of a
deer,
he enables me to tread on the heights.

For the director of music. On my stringed
instruments.

[a] *1* Probably a literary or musical term [b] *3* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the middle of verse 9 and at the end of verse 13.

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin

The exile of King Jehoahaz to Egypt by Pharaoh Necho (2Ki 23:34) was the end for Judah as an independent nation. Her next king, Jehoiakim, would rule as a vassal first to Egypt and then to Babylon. His son, Jehoiachin, would rule only long enough to surrender to Babylon.

When Pharaoh Necho of Egypt placed Jehoiakim on Judah's throne in 609 B.C., it was with the understanding that he would be loyal to Egypt. This gave Egypt a buffer between its own land and the armies of Babylon, but it placed Judah in a precarious position, caught between two warring empires. Of these, Babylon was the strongest, but Egypt was the nearest. Jehoiakim wavered between alliances, but generally remained loyal to Egypt.

• 2 Kings 23:35–37

2 Kings

23:35 Jehoiakim paid Pharaoh Necho the silver and gold he demanded. In order to do so, he taxed the land and exacted the silver and gold from the people of the land according to their assessments.

Jehoiakim King of Judah

[36]Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah; she was from Rumah. [37]And he did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his predecessors had done.

TRANSITION

Jeremiah's Temple Sermon

Jeremiah's ministry entered its most active stage when Jehoiakim became king in 609 B.C., when Jeremiah was (by one proposed chronology) about 18 years old. In Jehoiakim's first year, Jeremiah preached what is known as his Temple Sermon. The events surrounding this sermon and a short version of the sermon itself are recounted in Jer 26. A much longer version of the sermon appears in Jer 7:1—8:3. That Jeremiah was from Anathoth, not from Jerusalem, may explain why he was so scornful of those who put their trust in "the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD" (7:4). It may also explain why the Jerusalem hierarchy reacted so strongly to his condemnations.

At various points in the first half of the Book of Jeremiah appear the prophet's complaints to God concerning the difficulty of his calling. These are usually called Jeremiah's Confessions. They are couched in the language of the psalms and like the psalms give few clues as to their precise historical context. These laments can be read where complaints would be appropriate. The first of these, Jer 12:1–17, is appropriate in the context of Jeremiah's near execution after preaching his Temple Sermon (Jer 26:8–19).

- **Jeremiah 26:1–6**
- **Jeremiah 7:1—8:3**
- **Jeremiah 26:7–24**
- **Jeremiah 11:1—12:17**

Jeremiah 26:1–6

Jeremiah Threatened With Death

26:1 Early in the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came from the LORD: [2]"This is what the LORD says: Stand in the courtyard of the LORD's house and speak to all the people of the towns of Judah who come to worship in the house of the LORD. Tell them everything I command you; do not omit a word. [3]Perhaps they will listen and each will turn from their evil ways. Then I will relent and not inflict on them the disaster I was planning because of the evil they have done. [4]Say to them, 'This is what the LORD says: If you do not listen to me and follow my law, which I have set before you, [5]and if you do not listen to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I have sent to you again and again (though you have not listened), [6]then I will make this house like Shiloh and this city a curse[a] among all the nations of the earth.'"

Jeremiah 7:1—8:3

False Religion Worthless

7:1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: [2]"Stand at the gate of the LORD's house and there proclaim this message:

"'Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the LORD. [3]This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. [4]Do not trust in deceptive words and say, "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD!" [5]If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, [6]if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, [7]then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever. [8]But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.

[9]"'Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury,[b] burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known, [10]and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, "We are safe"—safe to do all these detestable things? [11]Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the LORD.

[12]"'Go now to the place in Shiloh where I first made a dwelling for my Name, and see what I did to it because of the wickedness of my people Israel. [13]While you were doing all these things, declares the LORD, I spoke to you again and again, but you did not listen; I called you, but you did not answer. [14]Therefore, what I did to Shiloh I will now do to the house that bears

[a] *6* That is, its name will be used in cursing (see 29:22); or, others will see that it is cursed. [b] *9* Or *and swear by false gods*

Family Worship of the Queen of Heaven (Jer 7:17–20)

Still unknown is the identity of the "Queen of Heaven" who was worshiped in Judah (Jer 7:18; 44:18). She could have been Asherah, Anath, or Astarte, all popular Canaanite goddesses. The only reference to "Queen of Heaven" outside the Bible is in a 6th-century B.C. letter found at Hermopolis in Egypt; there Anath is given the title. Since Anath was a popular deity in Hermopolis, it is possible she acquired the title "Queen of Heaven" there.

Whichever goddess was the queen of heaven, she seems to have been worshiped in homes, rather than in a temple. The activities of her worshipers mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah picture a family cultic meal and not a congregational service. The entire family was involved: women, men, and children all took part in the worship, though each had specific roles related to age and gender (Jer 7:18). The women were particularly associated with, and possibly blamed for, such worship, but they defended themselves to Jeremiah by reminding him that wives did nothing without their husbands' permission (Jer 44:19).

The worship ritual does not identify the goddess. The Hebrew word for the cakes that the women made (Jer 7:18) seems to come from an Accadian word referring to a sweet pastry which was offered to the Mesopotamian goddess Ishtar. Yet this would not necessarily connect the queen of heaven cult to Mesopotamia. It simply shows that important goddesses were honored with festival bakery goods.

The other ritual activities also fail to identify the queen of heaven. Both burning incense and pouring out drink offerings (Jer 44:18) were standard parts of religious rituals in Syria-Palestine. Judah's own God Yahweh was honored with incense and drink offerings.

Worship of the queen of heaven was carried to Egypt by refugees fleeing from Jerusalem's destruction. They apparently credited her with bringing the peace and well-being they enjoyed when Judah was independent under King Josiah (44:17). For Jeremiah, however, her worship was part of the cause of the past disaster, as well as that to come (44:20–27).

my Name, the temple you trust in, the place I gave to you and your ancestors. 15I will thrust you from my presence, just as I did all your fellow Israelites, the people of Ephraim.'

16"So do not pray for this people nor offer any plea or petition for them; do not plead with me, for I will not listen to you. 17Do you not see what they are doing in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 18The children gather wood, the fathers light the fire, and the women knead the dough and make cakes to offer to the Queen of Heaven. They pour out drink offerings to other gods to arouse my anger. 19But am I the one they are provoking? declares the LORD. Are they not rather harming themselves, to their own shame?

20"'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: My anger and my wrath will be poured out on this place—on man and beast, on the trees of the field and on the crops of your land—and it will burn and not be quenched.

21"'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go ahead, add your burnt offerings to your other sacrifices and eat the meat yourselves! 22For when I brought your ancestors out of Egypt and spoke to them, I did not just give them commands about burnt offerings and sacrifices, 23but I gave them this command: Obey me, and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in obedience to all I command you, that it may go well with you. 24But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts. They went backward and not forward. 25From the time your ancestors left Egypt until now, day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. 26But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff-necked and did more evil than their ancestors.'

27"When you tell them all this, they will not listen to you; when you call to them, they will not answer. 28Therefore say to them, 'This is the nation that has not obeyed the LORD its God or responded to correction. Truth has perished; it has vanished from their lips.

29"'Cut off your hair and throw it away; take up a lament on the barren heights, for the LORD has rejected and abandoned this generation that is under his wrath.

TIME CAPSULE	609 B.C.
609	Pharaoh Necho of Egypt moves army northward to help the Assyrians against Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon
609	Pharaoh Necho kills King Josiah of Judah at Megiddo
609	Jehoahaz becomes king in Judah
609	Necho replaces Jehoahaz with his half brother Eliakim
609	Necho gives Eliakim the throne name "Jehoiakim" (2Ch 36:4)

A Place for Burning Babies to the Gods (Jer 7:31)

A firepit in the Valley of Ben Hinnom called Topheth was built for the sole purpose of sacrificing young children to one or more deities. Probably the god worshiped there was Molek, but his cult may have been adapted to the worship of Yahweh. Jeremiah's prophecy of judgment (Jer 7:31) condemns the practice, but also reveals that the sacrifice of children was popular in Jerusalem.

The worship complex for these rituals must have been large. Jeremiah's reference to the "high places of Topheth" (7:31) describes dedicated sanctuaries serving as cultic centers. There would have been an altar, a place for cremating the sacrificial victims, and probably a burial area for the bones and ashes. Such a center has been excavated at the Phoenician colony of Carthage, where the bones of children and animals have been found in urns.

The Valley of Slaughter

30 "'The people of Judah have done evil in
my eyes, declares the LORD. They have set up
their detestable idols in the house that bears
my Name and have defiled it. 31 They have built
the high places of Topheth in the Valley of Ben
Hinnom to burn their sons and daughters in
the fire — something I did not command, nor
did it enter my mind. 32 So beware, the days are
coming, declares the LORD, when people will
no longer call it Topheth or the Valley of Ben
Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter, for they
will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no
more room. 33 Then the carcasses of this peo-
ple will become food for the birds and the wild
animals, and there will be no one to frighten
them away. 34 I will bring an end to the sounds
of joy and gladness and to the voices of bride
and bridegroom in the towns of Judah and the
streets of Jerusalem, for the land will become
desolate.

8 1 "'At that time, declares the LORD, the
bones of the kings and officials of Judah,
the bones of the priests and prophets, and
the bones of the people of Jerusalem will be
removed from their graves. 2 They will be ex-
posed to the sun and the moon and all the stars
of the heavens, which they have loved and
served and which they have followed and con-
sulted and worshiped. They will not be gath-
ered up or buried, but will be like dung lying on
the ground. 3 Wherever I banish them, all the
survivors of this evil nation will prefer death to
life, declares the LORD Almighty.'

Jeremiah 26:7–24

26 :7 The priests, the prophets and all
the people heard Jeremiah speak these
words in the house of the LORD. 8 But as soon as
Jeremiah finished telling all the people every-
thing the LORD had commanded him to say, the
priests, the prophets and all the people seized
him and said, "You must die! 9 Why do you
prophesy in the LORD's name that this house
will be like Shiloh and this city will be deso-
late and deserted?" And all the people crowded
around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

10 When the officials of Judah heard about
these things, they went up from the royal palace
to the house of the LORD and took their places
at the entrance of the New Gate of the LORD's
house. 11 Then the priests and the prophets said
to the officials and all the people, "This man
should be sentenced to death because he has
prophesied against this city. You have heard it
with your own ears!"

12 Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and
all the people: "The LORD sent me to prophesy
against this house and this city all the things
you have heard. 13 Now reform your ways and
your actions and obey the LORD your God.
Then the LORD will relent and not bring the di-
saster he has pronounced against you. 14 As for
me, I am in your hands; do with me whatever
you think is good and right. 15 Be assured, how-
ever, that if you put me to death, you will bring
the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves and
on this city and on those who live in it, for in
truth the LORD has sent me to you to speak all
these words in your hearing."

16 Then the officials and all the people said to
the priests and the prophets, "This man should
not be sentenced to death! He has spoken to us
in the name of the LORD our God."

17 Some of the elders of the land stepped for-
ward and said to the entire assembly of people,
18 "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days
of Hezekiah king of Judah. He told all the peo-
ple of Judah, 'This is what the LORD Almighty
says:

"'Zion will be plowed like a field,
Jerusalem will become a heap of rubble,
the temple hill a mound overgrown with
thickets.'[a]

19 "Did Hezekiah king of Judah or anyone else
in Judah put him to death? Did not Hezekiah
fear the LORD and seek his favor? And did not

[a] *18* Micah 3:12

the LORD relent, so that he did not bring the disaster he pronounced against them? We are about to bring a terrible disaster on ourselves!"

20 (Now Uriah son of Shemaiah from Kiriath Jearim was another man who prophesied in the name of the LORD; he prophesied the same things against this city and this land as Jeremiah did. 21When King Jehoiakim and all his officers and officials heard his words, the king was determined to put him to death. But Uriah heard of it and fled in fear to Egypt. 22King Jehoiakim, however, sent Elnathan son of Akbor to Egypt, along with some other men. 23They brought Uriah out of Egypt and took him to King Jehoiakim, who had him struck down with a sword and his body thrown into the burial place of the common people.)

24Furthermore, Ahikam son of Shaphan supported Jeremiah, and so he was not handed over to the people to be put to death.

Jeremiah 11:1—12:17

The Covenant Is Broken

11:1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2"Listen to the terms of this covenant and tell them to the people of Judah and to those who live in Jerusalem. 3Tell them that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Cursed is the one who does not obey the terms of this covenant— 4the terms I commanded your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the iron-smelting furnace.' I said, 'Obey me and do everything I command you, and you will be my people, and I will be your God. 5Then I will fulfill the oath I swore to your ancestors, to give them a land flowing with milk and honey'—the land you possess today."

I answered, "Amen, LORD."

6The LORD said to me, "Proclaim all these words in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem: 'Listen to the terms of this covenant and follow them. 7From the time I brought your ancestors up from Egypt until today, I warned them again and again, saying, "Obey me." 8But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubbornness of their evil hearts. So I brought on them all the curses of the covenant I had commanded them to follow but that they did not keep.'"

9Then the LORD said to me, "There is a conspiracy among the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem. 10They have returned to the sins of their ancestors, who refused to listen to my words. They have followed other gods to serve them. Both Israel and Judah have broken the covenant I made with their ancestors. 11Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'I will bring on them a disaster they cannot escape. Although they cry out to me, I will not listen to them. 12The towns of Judah and the people of Jerusalem will go and cry out to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they will not help them at all when disaster strikes. 13You, Judah, have as many gods as you have towns; and the altars you have set up to burn incense to that shameful god Baal are as many as the streets of Jerusalem.'

14"Do not pray for this people or offer any plea or petition for them, because I will not listen when they call to me in the time of their distress.

15"What is my beloved doing in my temple
as she, with many others, works out her evil schemes?
Can consecrated meat avert your punishment?
When you engage in your wickedness,
then you rejoice.[a]"

16The LORD called you a thriving olive tree
with fruit beautiful in form.
But with the roar of a mighty storm
he will set it on fire,
and its branches will be broken.

17The LORD Almighty, who planted you, has decreed disaster for you, because the people of both Israel and Judah have done evil and aroused my anger by burning incense to Baal.

Plot Against Jeremiah

18Because the LORD revealed their plot to me, I knew it, for at that time he showed me what they were doing. 19I had been like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; I did not realize that they had plotted against me, saying,

[a] 15 Or *Could consecrated meat avert your punishment? / Then you would rejoice*

TIME CAPSULE		609 to 605 B.C.
609		Jehoiakim becomes king in Judah
605		Jehoiakim's 3rd year according to the Babylonian method of counting in Book of Daniel
605		Jehoiakim's 4th year according to the Judean method of counting in Book of Jeremiah
605–562		Nebuchadnezzar II is 2nd king of Chaldean dynasty in Babylon

"Let us destroy the tree and its fruit;
let us cut him off from the land of the living,
that his name be remembered no more."
20 But you, LORD Almighty, who judge righteously
and test the heart and mind,
let me see your vengeance on them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

21 Therefore this is what the LORD says about the people of Anathoth who are threatening to kill you, saying, "Do not prophesy in the name of the LORD or you will die by our hands"—
22 therefore this is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will punish them. Their young men will die by the sword, their sons and daughters by famine. 23 Not even a remnant will be left to them, because I will bring disaster on the people of Anathoth in the year of their punishment."

Jeremiah's Complaint

12 1 You are always righteous, LORD,
when I bring a case before you.
Yet I would speak with you about your justice:
Why does the way of the wicked prosper?
Why do all the faithless live at ease?
2 You have planted them, and they have taken root;
they grow and bear fruit.
You are always on their lips
but far from their hearts.
3 Yet you know me, LORD;
you see me and test my thoughts about you.
Drag them off like sheep to be butchered!
Set them apart for the day of slaughter!
4 How long will the land lie parched
and the grass in every field be withered?
Because those who live in it are wicked,
the animals and birds have perished.
Moreover, the people are saying,
"He will not see what happens to us."

God's Answer

5 "If you have raced with men on foot
and they have worn you out,
how can you compete with horses?
If you stumble[a] in safe country,
how will you manage in the thickets by[b] the Jordan?
6 Your relatives, members of your own family—
even they have betrayed you;
they have raised a loud cry against you.
Do not trust them,
though they speak well of you.
7 "I will forsake my house,
abandon my inheritance;
I will give the one I love
into the hands of her enemies.
8 My inheritance has become to me
like a lion in the forest.
She roars at me;
therefore I hate her.
9 Has not my inheritance become to me
like a speckled bird of prey
that other birds of prey surround and attack?
Go and gather all the wild beasts;
bring them to devour.
10 Many shepherds will ruin my vineyard
and trample down my field;
they will turn my pleasant field
into a desolate wasteland.
11 It will be made a wasteland,
parched and desolate before me;
the whole land will be laid waste
because there is no one who cares.
12 Over all the barren heights in the desert
destroyers will swarm,
for the sword of the LORD will devour
from one end of the land to the other;
no one will be safe.
13 They will sow wheat but reap thorns;
they will wear themselves out but gain nothing.
They will bear the shame of their harvest
because of the LORD's fierce anger."

14 This is what the LORD says: "As for all my wicked neighbors who seize the inheritance I gave my people Israel, I will uproot them from their lands and I will uproot the people of Judah from among them. 15 But after I uproot them, I will again have compassion and will bring each of them back to their own inheritance and their own country. 16 And if they learn well the ways of my people and swear by my name, saying, 'As surely as the LORD lives'—even as they once taught my people to swear by Baal—then they will be established among my people. 17 But if any nation does not listen, I will completely uproot and destroy it," declares the LORD.

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[a] 5 Or *you feel secure only* [b] 5 Or *the flooding of*

TRANSITION

The Battle of Carchemish

In Jehoiakim's 4th y ear (605 B.C.), the exiled nation of Assyria again made an alliance with Egypt and attacked the Babylonian army, which was led by the crown prince of Babylon,

The City of Failed Revolts (Jer 47:5–7)

The large seaport town of Ashkelon, 13 miles north of Gaza along the coast of Philistia, was often controlled by other powers: Egypt, Assyria, Babylon. The history of this Philistine city is one of numerous rebellions against stronger forces, but also of numerous failures.

The name of the city appears in the Egyptian Execration Texts (19th to 18th centuries B.C.), as well as in the Amarna letters and various royal inscriptions from Egypt (14th to 13th centuries B.C.). A rebellion against Egyptian control was not successful, and a picture of Ashkelon's fall to Egyptian troops is inscribed in the wall of the temple of Karnak at Thebes. The inscription was once credited to the pharaoh Ramesses II (1279–1213 B.C.), but now is thought to be that of his son Merenptah (1213–1203 B.C.).

According to the Assyrian annals of Sargon II (721–705 B.C.), Ashkelon played a role (along with other Philistine cities) in a coalition against Assyria from 714 to 712 B.C. The rebellion did not work. Another overthrow of Assyrian control was attempted in 701 B.C. against the Assyrian ruler Sennacherib, but was stopped in the same year. The Philistine city would continue to pay tribute to Assyria until the collapse of the reign of the last great Assyrian monarch, Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.).

After the Assyrian Empire declined, other powers became interested in Ashkelon. All of Philistia, including this city, briefly came under Egyptian control about 630 B.C. However, in 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon celebrated a decisive victory over Egypt at the battle of Carchemish. When Nebuchadnezzar claimed Egyptian-held territory in the region of Ashkelon, the city resisted.

Jeremiah correctly prophesied that Ashkelon would be taken by Babylon (Jer 47:5–7). In 604 B.C. Ashkelon's king, Aga, was killed and many prisoners were captured and deported to Babylon. The Babylonian Chronicle describes these prisoners as receiving rations at the Babylonian court. Jeremiah's call, "Ashkelon will be silenced" (47:5), marked one more fall for a city that had fallen several times before.

Nebuchadnezzar (also spelled Nebuchadrezzar). On the way through Canaan, Pharaoh Necho evidently attacked Gaza and Ashkelon in the Philistine coastlands.

The battle, fought at Carchemish on the northern Euphrates River, was a rout. Nebuchadnezzar's armies destroyed the Assyrians once and for all and sent Necho fleeing back through Palestine toward Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar was unable to follow up his advantage, however. Receiving word that his father Nabopolassar had died, Nebuchadnezzar returned to Babylon to assume the throne, now the undisputed ruler over all Mesopotamia.

Jeremiah was a keen observer of world events and frequently spoke to and about the nations around Judah. His announcements of judgment against Philistia (Jer 47:1–7) and Egypt (46:1–12) may have referred to the events surrounding the battle at Carchemish. His political advice to Jehoiakim, which the king invariably ignored, was to accept Babylonian supremacy and reject alliances with Egypt.

Jeremiah's essential theme, though, was that all these events were part of God's plan, and that God was working through all the nations to perform his will. The object lessons of the ruined linen belt (13:1–11), the wineskin filled with wine (13:12–14), and the potter's clay (18:1–17) illustrated clearly that no nation, not even Judah, could escape his judgment.

- **Jeremiah 47:1–7**
- **Jeremiah 46:1–12**
- **Jeremiah 13:1–14**
- **Jeremiah 18:1–17**

Jeremiah 47:1–7

A Message About the Philistines

47 :1 This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the Philistines before Pharaoh attacked Gaza:

2 This is what the LORD says:

"See how the waters are rising in the north;
they will become an overflowing torrent.
They will overflow the land and everything in it,
the towns and those who live in them.
The people will cry out;
all who dwell in the land will wail
3 at the sound of the hooves of galloping steeds,
at the noise of enemy chariots
and the rumble of their wheels.
Parents will not turn to help their children;
their hands will hang limp.
4 For the day has come
to destroy all the Philistines
and to remove all survivors
who could help Tyre and Sidon.
The LORD is about to destroy the Philistines,
the remnant from the coasts of Caphtor.[a]
5 Gaza will shave her head in mourning;
Ashkelon will be silenced.
You remnant on the plain,
how long will you cut yourselves?

6 "'Alas, sword of the LORD,
how long till you rest?

[a] *4* That is, Crete

Return to your sheath;
cease and be still.'
7 But how can it rest
when the LORD has commanded it,
when he has ordered it
to attack Ashkelon and the coast?"

Jeremiah 46:1–12

A Message About Egypt

46:1 This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning the nations:

2 Concerning Egypt:

This is the message against the army of Pharaoh Necho king of Egypt, which was defeated at Carchemish on the Euphrates River by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah:

3 "Prepare your shields, both large and small,
and march out for battle!
4 Harness the horses,
mount the steeds!
Take your positions
with helmets on!
Polish your spears,
put on your armor!
5 What do I see?
They are terrified,
they are retreating,
their warriors are defeated.
They flee in haste
without looking back,
and there is terror on every side,"
declares the LORD.
6 "The swift cannot flee
nor the strong escape.
In the north by the River Euphrates
they stumble and fall.
7 "Who is this that rises like the Nile,
like rivers of surging waters?
8 Egypt rises like the Nile,
like rivers of surging waters.
She says, 'I will rise and cover the earth;
I will destroy cities and their people.'
9 Charge, you horses!
Drive furiously, you charioteers!
March on, you warriors—men of Cush[a]
and Put who carry shields,
men of Lydia who draw the bow.
10 But that day belongs to the Lord, the LORD Almighty—
a day of vengeance, for vengeance on his foes.
The sword will devour till it is satisfied,
till it has quenched its thirst with blood.
For the Lord, the LORD Almighty, will offer sacrifice
in the land of the north by the River Euphrates.
11 "Go up to Gilead and get balm,
Virgin Daughter Egypt.
But you try many medicines in vain;
there is no healing for you.
12 The nations will hear of your shame;
your cries will fill the earth.
One warrior will stumble over another;
both will fall down together."

[a] *9* That is, the upper Nile region

Who's Controlling Carchemish? (Jer 46:2)

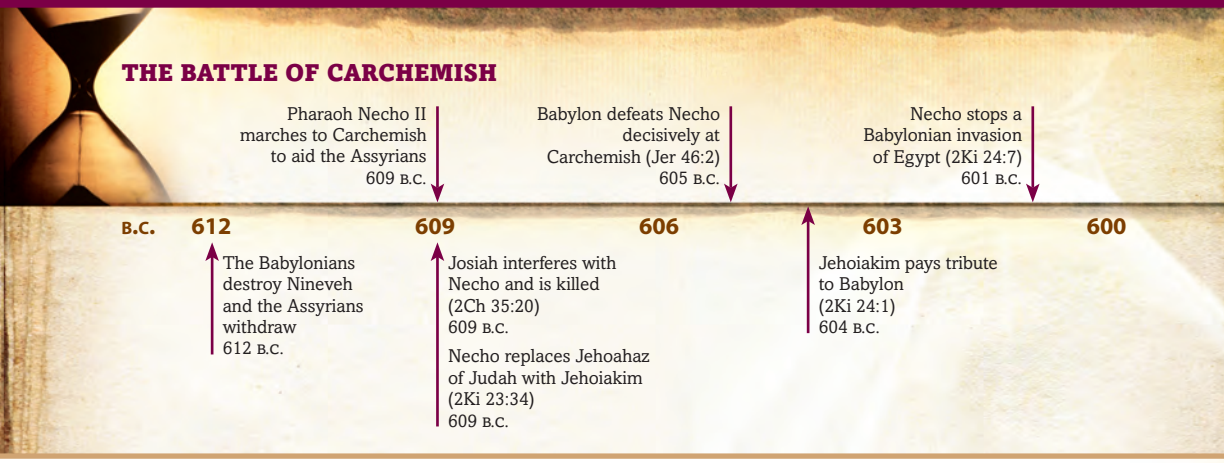
Carchemish was a major city with a strategic location on the Upper Euphrates River. Its position 120 miles inland from the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean put it near the main route from Egypt through Palestine to Assyria and Babylonia.

The city was sometimes independent and sometimes under foreign control. The Egyptians controlled it in the 15th century B.C., and the Hittites in the 13th century. Later on the Assyrians forced Carchemish to pay them taxes, and in 717 B.C. they conquered and destroyed the city (see Isa 10:9).

Carchemish was a key site in the struggle of Assyria and Egypt against Babylon. In 609 B.C. Pharaoh Necho of Egypt moved his army northward to help the Assyrians against Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. King Josiah of Judah for some reason tried to stop Necho, engaging the Egyptians at Megiddo, but was killed in the attempt (2Ki 23:29, 30; 2Ch 35:20–25).

Eventually, Necho was able to occupy and fortify Carchemish for Egypt. But in 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians defeated Necho at the battle of Carchemish. This defeat, which Jeremiah mentions (Jer 46:2), put the Egyptians out of the way and allowed the Babylonians to bring their forces down to Judah.

Judah was a small nation pressed between the Egyptians to the south and the Assyrians and Babylonians to the north. Josiah's Judean army was no match for the more powerful Egyptians in 609. However, Jeremiah prophesies that Judah's God, who is sovereign over political powers, would end Egypt's control of Carchemish in 605. God had planned a sacrifice "in the land of the north by the River Euphrates" (Jer 46:10).



Jeremiah 13:1–14

A Linen Belt

13 **:1** This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and buy a linen belt and put it around your waist, but do not let it touch water." [2]So I bought a belt, as the LORD directed, and put it around my waist.

[3]Then the word of the LORD came to me a second time: [4]"Take the belt you bought and are wearing around your waist, and go now to Perath[a] and hide it there in a crevice in the rocks." [5]So I went and hid it at Perath, as the LORD told me.

[6]Many days later the LORD said to me, "Go now to Perath and get the belt I told you to hide there." [7]So I went to Perath and dug up the belt and took it from the place where I had hidden it, but now it was ruined and completely useless.

[8]Then the word of the LORD came to me: [9]"This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way I will ruin the pride of Judah and the great pride of Jerusalem. [10]These wicked people, who refuse to listen to my words, who follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them, will be like this belt—completely useless! [11]For as a belt is bound around the waist, so I bound all the people of Israel and all the people of Judah to me,' declares the LORD, 'to be my people for my renown and praise and honor. But they have not listened.'

Wineskins

[12]"Say to them: 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Every wineskin should be filled with wine.' And if they say to you, 'Don't we know that every wineskin should be filled with wine?' [13]then tell them, 'This is what the LORD says: I am going to fill with drunkenness all who live in this land, including the kings who sit on David's throne, the priests, the prophets and all those living in Jerusalem. [14]I will smash them one against the other, parents and children alike, declares the LORD. I will allow no pity or mercy or compassion to keep me from destroying them.'"

Jeremiah 18:1–17

At the Potter's House

18 **:1** This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: [2]"Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." [3]So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. [4]But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him.

[5]Then the word of the LORD came to me. [6]He said, "Can I not do with you, Israel, as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, Israel. [7]If at any time I announce that a nation or kingdom is to be uprooted, torn down and destroyed, [8]and if that nation I warned repents of its evil, then I will relent and not inflict on it the disaster I had planned. [9]And

Science & Technology
A potter's wheel (Jer 18:3) is a horizontal platform that rotates and allows the workman to form circular vessels accurately. If the rotation is fast enough and has adequate momentum, the potter makes the vessel by pressing and pulling the clay as it turns. A half-shaped vessel can be folded down and remolded into a new one with no particular effort (18:4).

[a] *4* Or possibly *to the Euphrates*; similarly in verses 5-7

if at another time I announce that a nation or
kingdom is to be built up and planted, [10]and if
it does evil in my sight and does not obey me,
then I will reconsider the good I had intended
to do for it.
[11]"Now therefore say to the people of Judah
and those living in Jerusalem, 'This is what the
LORD says: Look! I am preparing a disaster for
you and devising a plan against you. So turn
from your evil ways, each one of you, and re-
form your ways and your actions.' [12]But they
will reply, 'It's no use. We will continue with our
own plans; we will all follow the stubbornness
of our evil hearts.'"

[13]Therefore this is what the LORD says:

"Inquire among the nations:
Who has ever heard anything like this?
A most horrible thing has been done
by Virgin Israel.
[14]Does the snow of Lebanon
ever vanish from its rocky slopes?
Do its cool waters from distant sources
ever stop flowing?[a]
[15]Yet my people have forgotten me;
they burn incense to worthless idols,
which made them stumble in their ways,
in the ancient paths.
They made them walk in byways,
on roads not built up.

The younger brothers of Kamanas,
king of Carchemish, playing games

[16]Their land will be an object of horror
and of lasting scorn;
all who pass by will be appalled
and will shake their heads.
[17]Like a wind from the east,
I will scatter them before their enemies;
I will show them my back and not my face
in the day of their disaster."

[a] *14* The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain.

TRANSITION

Jeremiah's Scroll

By the 4th year of Jehoiakim's reign (605 B.C.), when Babylon affirmed its supremacy at the battle of Carchemish, Jeremiah was well known to the Jerusalem leadership. Indeed, his constant condemnations of Judah's leaders had led them to banish him from the temple. There would be no more sermons at the temple gates (see "Jeremiah's Temple Sermon" at Jer 26:1). Jeremiah was not so easily silenced, though. The prophet dictated a message to his friend and scribe, Baruch, and sent him to read the scroll on the day of fasting (Jer 36:1–10). Baruch had to wait over a year before a day of fasting was proclaimed. The 9th month of Jehoiakim's 5th year (36:9, 22), following the Babylonian calendar, would place the fast in December, 604 B.C.

The exact contents of this scroll are uncertain, although it may have contained large portions of what is now Jer 1–25. The message of Jer 25:1–14 must have been a part of the scroll, since the superscription (25:1) dates these verses in Jehoiakim's 4th year, and the phrase "this book" (25:13) may refer to the scroll. Jeremiah reminds the people (25:3) that 23 years have passed since his calling in the 13th year of Josiah's reign (627 B.C.), and he has spoken to them repeatedly.

The second of Jeremiah's Confessions (15:10–21) can be read as an appropriate response to the king's rejection and burning of Jeremiah's written oracle (36:11–32). Jeremiah's friend Baruch also suffered and made his complaint, to which Jeremiah responds strongly (45:1–5). Baruch's brother, Seraiah, served as a high official under King Zedekiah. Baruch had good reason to believe that he, too, could have gained a responsible position in Judah's court (both were sons of Neriah, 32:12; 51:59). He forfeited that dream by siding with Jeremiah and alienating Judah's rulers.

- **Jeremiah 36:1–10**
- **Jeremiah 25:1–14**
- **Jeremiah 36:11–32**
- **Jeremiah 45:1–5**
- **Jeremiah 15:10–21**

Jehoiakim Resists Babylon's Control (Jer 36:1)

Jehoiakim, whose personal name was Eliakim, was one of the last three kings of the Judean monarchy (609–598 B.C.). He began his reign as a vassal to Egypt. After the death of his father Josiah at the battle of Megiddo (609 B.C.), Jehoiakim's brother Jehoahaz became Judah's new king. The Egyptian pharaoh Necho II removed Jehoahaz from the throne, deporting him to Egypt and replacing him with his brother Jehoiakim. Paying tribute to Egypt was Jehoiakim's task as a puppet ruler under Egypt's control.

After the battle of Carchemish, which took place in Jehoiakim's 4th year (605 B.C.; Jer 25:1; 36:1), the Judean king was obliged to shift allegiance to the new power in the area, Chaldean Babylon. The Babylonian Chronicle records that Nebuchadnezzar II marched to the west in 605 B.C. and conducted campaigns in Syria-Palestine from 605 to 601 B.C. It was probably the campaign of 604–603 B.C. for which the Babylonian Chronicle notes that Nebuchadnezzar exacted tribute from many of the Palestinian rulers, which would have included Jehoiakim.

The Judean monarch subsequently continued to pay tribute for the next 3 or 4 years, until the Babylonians suffered setbacks from Egypt. Jehoiakim then rebelled. Nebuchadnezzar did not immediately move against Jerusalem, possibly because, according to the Babylonian Chronicle, he remained in Babylon resupplying his army during his 5th year (599 B.C.).

Jehoiakim's luck would not last forever. The Babylonian Chronicle relates the capture of Jerusalem 2 years later (597 B.C.) by the Babylonian forces. Jehoiakim died either during or as a result of the siege. His son Jehoiachin was deposed, and enormous amounts of tribute were sent to Babylon.

Jeremiah 36:1–10

Jehoiakim Burns Jeremiah's Scroll

36:1 In the fourth year of Jehoiakim son
of Josiah king of Judah, this word came
to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2"Take a scroll and
write on it all the words I have spoken to you
concerning Israel, Judah and all the other na-
tions from the time I began speaking to you
in the reign of Josiah till now. 3Perhaps when
the people of Judah hear about every disaster I
plan to inflict on them, they will each turn from
their wicked ways; then I will forgive their
wickedness and their sin."

4So Jeremiah called Baruch son of Neriah,
and while Jeremiah dictated all the words the
LORD had spoken to him, Baruch wrote them
on the scroll. 5Then Jeremiah told Baruch, "I
am restricted; I am not allowed to go to the
LORD's temple. 6So you go to the house of the
LORD on a day of fasting and read to the peo-
ple from the scroll the words of the LORD that
you wrote as I dictated. Read them to all the
people of Judah who come in from their towns.
7Perhaps they will bring their petition before
the LORD and will each turn from their wick-
ed ways, for the anger and wrath pronounced
against this people by the LORD are great."

8Baruch son of Neriah did everything Jere-
miah the prophet told him to do; at the LORD's
temple he read the words of the LORD from the
scroll. 9In the ninth month of the fifth year of
Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, a time
of fasting before the LORD was proclaimed for
all the people in Jerusalem and those who had
come from the towns of Judah. 10From the
room of Gemariah son of Shaphan the secre-
tary, which was in the upper courtyard at the
entrance of the New Gate of the temple, Ba-
ruch read to all the people at the LORD's temple
the words of Jeremiah from the scroll.

Jeremiah 25:1–14

Seventy Years of Captivity

25:1 The word came to Jeremiah concern-
ing all the people of Judah in the fourth
year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah,
which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar
king of Babylon. 2So Jeremiah the prophet said
to all the people of Judah and to all those living
in Jerusalem: 3For twenty-three years—from
the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon king
of Judah until this very day—the word of the
LORD has come to me and I have spoken to you
again and again, but you have not listened.

4And though the LORD has sent all his ser-
vants the prophets to you again and again, you
have not listened or paid any attention. 5They
said, "Turn now, each of you, from your evil
ways and your evil practices, and you can stay
in the land the LORD gave to you and your an-
cestors for ever and ever. 6Do not follow other
gods to serve and worship them; do not arouse
my anger with what your hands have made.
Then I will not harm you."

7"But you did not listen to me," declares the
LORD, "and you have aroused my anger with
what your hands have made, and you have
brought harm to yourselves."

8Therefore the LORD Almighty says this: "Be-
cause you have not listened to my words, 9I will
summon all the peoples of the north and my
servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," de-
clares the LORD, "and I will bring them against

A Faithful Friend and Scribe (Jer 36:4, 32)

Jeremiah dictated his prophetic message to a certain Baruch, the son of Neriah (Jer 36:4). When temple officials forbade Jeremiah to enter the temple with his message of judgment, Baruch took the scroll into the temple courtyard and faithfully read it there (36:9, 10). Ultimately, the king destroyed the scroll, only to have Jeremiah dictate another to Baruch (36:20–24, 32). For his efforts, Baruch received a warrant for his arrest, and had to go into hiding (36:26).

Throughout the Book of Jeremiah, Baruch is pictured as Jeremiah's loyal friend, scribe, and lawyer. Baruch witnessed and sealed the legal transaction for Jeremiah's purchase of land and personally held the deed for Jeremiah (36:12–16). When the military forced Jeremiah to move to Egypt as a refugee following the destruction of Jerusalem, Baruch went with him (43:5, 6). Baruch was evidently Jeremiah's "right-hand man."

Yet Baruch was also a very important person in Jerusalem's society. A seal impression reading "Belonging to Berechiah, son of Neriah, the scribe" has been found in a royal archive. This seal of "Berechiah" (the long form of the name "Baruch") identifies Baruch's profession as a scribe, yet also suggests that he was probably a royal scribe from a prominent scribal family.

Not just anyone had a seal, only those with wealth and influence. Such a seal was a ring used to grant legal status to documents and transactions. Pressed into soft clay, it made the document legally binding based upon the status and character of the person. Baruch's seal impression matches two imprints, or bullae, which were made by the seal. Apparently, Jeremiah's friend and scribe had important connections within Jerusalem's society.

this land and its inhabitants and against all the surrounding nations. I will completely destroy[a] them and make them an object of horror and scorn, and an everlasting ruin. 10I will banish from them the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, the sound of millstones and the light of the lamp. 11This whole country will become a desolate wasteland, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon seventy years.

12"But when the seventy years are fulfilled, I will punish the king of Babylon and his nation, the land of the Babylonians,[b] for their guilt," declares the LORD, "and will make it desolate forever. 13I will bring on that land all the things I have spoken against it, all that are written in this book and prophesied by Jeremiah against all the nations. 14They themselves will be enslaved by many nations and great kings; I will repay them according to their deeds and the work of their hands."

Jeremiah 36:11–32

36:11 When Micaiah son of Gemariah, the son of Shaphan, heard all the words of the LORD from the scroll, 12he went down to the secretary's room in the royal palace, where all the officials were sitting: Elishama the secretary, Delaiah son of Shemaiah, Elnathan son of Akbor, Gemariah son of Shaphan, Zedekiah son of Hananiah, and all the other officials. 13After Micaiah told them everything he had heard Baruch read to the people from the scroll, 14all the officials sent Jehudi son of Nethaniah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Cushi, to say to Baruch, "Bring the scroll from which you have read to the people and come." So Baruch son of Neriah went to them with the scroll in his hand. 15They said to him, "Sit down, please, and read it to us."

So Baruch read it to them. 16When they heard all these words, they looked at each other in fear and said to Baruch, "We must report all these words to the king." 17Then they asked Baruch, "Tell us, how did you come to write all this? Did Jeremiah dictate it?"

18"Yes," Baruch replied, "he dictated all these words to me, and I wrote them in ink on the scroll."

19Then the officials said to Baruch, "You and Jeremiah, go and hide. Don't let anyone know where you are."

20After they put the scroll in the room of Elishama the secretary, they went to the king in the courtyard and reported everything to him. 21The king sent Jehudi to get the scroll, and Jehudi brought it from the room of Elishama the secretary and read it to the king and all the officials standing beside him. 22It was the ninth month and the king was sitting in the winter apartment, with a fire burning in the firepot in front of him. 23Whenever Jehudi had read three or four columns of the scroll, the king cut them off with a scribe's knife and threw them into the firepot, until the entire scroll was burned in the fire. 24The king and all his attendants who heard all these words showed no fear, nor did they tear their clothes. 25Even though Elnathan, Delaiah and Gemariah urged

[a] *9* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. [b] *12* Or *Chaldeans*

the king not to burn the scroll, he would not listen to them. 26Instead, the king commanded Jerahmeel, a son of the king, Seraiah son of Azriel and Shelemiah son of Abdeel to arrest Baruch the scribe and Jeremiah the prophet. But the LORD had hidden them.

27After the king burned the scroll containing the words that Baruch had written at Jeremiah's dictation, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 28"Take another scroll and write on it all the words that were on the first scroll, which Jehoiakim king of Judah burned up. 29Also tell Jehoiakim king of Judah, 'This is what the LORD says: You burned that scroll and said, "Why did you write on it that the king of Babylon would certainly come and destroy this land and wipe from it both man and beast?" 30Therefore this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim king of Judah: He will have no one to sit on the throne of David; his body will be thrown out and exposed to the heat by day and the frost by night. 31I will punish him and his children and his attendants for their wickedness; I will bring on them and those living in Jerusalem and the people of Judah every disaster I pronounced against them, because they have not listened.'"

32So Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to the scribe Baruch son of Neriah, and as Jeremiah dictated, Baruch wrote on it all the words of the scroll that Jehoiakim king of Judah had burned in the fire. And many similar words were added to them.

Jeremiah 45:1–5

A Message to Baruch

45:1 When Baruch son of Neriah wrote on a scroll the words Jeremiah the prophet dictated in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, Jeremiah said this to Baruch: 2"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to you, Baruch: 3You said, 'Woe to me! The LORD has added sorrow to my pain; I am worn out with groaning and find no rest.' 4But the LORD has told me to say to you, 'This is what the LORD says: I will overthrow what I have built and uproot what I have planted, throughout the earth. 5Should you then seek great things for yourself? Do not seek them. For I will bring disaster on all people, declares the LORD, but wherever you go I will let you escape with your life.'"

[a] *14* Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac (see also 17:4); most Hebrew manuscripts *I will cause your enemies to bring you / into*

Jeremiah 15:10–21

15:10 Alas, my mother, that you gave me birth,
a man with whom the whole land strives and contends!
I have neither lent nor borrowed,
yet everyone curses me.

11The LORD said,

"Surely I will deliver you for a good purpose;
surely I will make your enemies plead with you
in times of disaster and times of distress.

12"Can a man break iron—
iron from the north—or bronze?

13"Your wealth and your treasures
I will give as plunder, without charge,
because of all your sins
throughout your country.
14I will enslave you to your enemies
in[a] a land you do not know,
for my anger will kindle a fire
that will burn against you."

15LORD, you understand;
remember me and care for me.
Avenge me on my persecutors.
You are long-suffering—do not take me away;
think of how I suffer reproach for your sake.
16When your words came, I ate them;
they were my joy and my heart's delight,
for I bear your name,
LORD God Almighty.
17I never sat in the company of revelers,
never made merry with them;
I sat alone because your hand was on me
and you had filled me with indignation.
18Why is my pain unending
and my wound grievous and incurable?

Arts & Literature
Before the time of Christ, books were written on scrolls made of leather or papyrus, a kind of paper. A typical papyrus scroll was 10 inches high and 15 feet long, with the text written in columns. The scroll that Baruch wrote and then rewrote probably included a significant part of the present Book of Jeremiah, though it is impossible to know which sections exactly (Jer 36:27).

You are to me like a deceptive brook,
like a spring that fails.

19 Therefore this is what the LORD says:

"If you repent, I will restore you
that you may serve me;
if you utter worthy, not worthless,
words,
you will be my spokesman.
Let this people turn to you,
but you must not turn to them.
20 I will make you a wall to this people,
a fortified wall of bronze;
they will fight against you
but will not overcome you,
for I am with you
to rescue and save you,"
declares the LORD.
21 "I will save you from the hands of the
wicked
and deliver you from the grasp of the
cruel."

TRANSITION

The Drought

In his early prophecies, Jeremiah calls repeatedly for the people to return to the Lord (e.g., 4:1–4), but in his later oracles he seems less hopeful that the people can repent. Perhaps the continual rejection of his message by the people and the king led to this bleak new perspective.

The mention of "the drought" (Jer 14:1) does not specify when the drought occurred; however, the oracles that follow fit the later years of Jehoiakim's reign. These passages are difficult to place historically, but because of their similarity in theme and their recurring images of deserts and desolation, they can be read in the context of this drought.

This was a time for weeping, not just by the doomed nation but by the prophet who proclaimed that doom. Jeremiah's laments in Jer 14:1—15:9 emphasize that Judah's reality would be drought, war, and famine. The prophet's lifestyle—forbidding marriage, childbearing, attendance at funerals and weddings—was to be a constant reminder of Judah's imminent tragedy (16:1—17:27). Themes of Judah's evil and the consequences of judgment continue in Jer 8:4—10:16. At times Jeremiah could weep without ceasing (9:1); at other times he wanted to flee from his people (9:2). His discouragement is especially evident in 17:14–18, the third of his "Confessions."

- **Jeremiah 14:1—15:9**
- **Jeremiah 16:1—17:27**
- **Jeremiah 8:4—10:16**

Jeremiah 14:1—15:9

Drought, Famine, Sword

14 :1 This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah concerning the drought:

2 "Judah mourns,
her cities languish;
they wail for the land,
and a cry goes up from Jerusalem.
3 The nobles send their servants for water;
they go to the cisterns
but find no water.
They return with their jars unfilled;
dismayed and despairing,
they cover their heads.
4 The ground is cracked
because there is no rain in the land;
the farmers are dismayed
and cover their heads.
5 Even the doe in the field
deserts her newborn fawn
because there is no grass.
6 Wild donkeys stand on the barren heights
and pant like jackals;
their eyes fail
for lack of food."

7 Although our sins testify against us,
do something, LORD, for the sake of your
name.
For we have often rebelled;
we have sinned against you.
8 You who are the hope of Israel,
its Savior in times of distress,
why are you like a stranger in the land,
like a traveler who stays only a night?
9 Why are you like a man taken by surprise,
like a warrior powerless to save?
You are among us, LORD,
and we bear your name;
do not forsake us!

10 This is what the LORD says about this people:

"They greatly love to wander;
they do not restrain their feet.
So the LORD does not accept them;
he will now remember their wickedness
and punish them for their sins."

11 Then the LORD said to me, "Do not pray for the well-being of this people. 12 Although they fast, I will not listen to their cry; though they offer burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them. Instead, I will destroy them with the sword, famine and plague."

13 But I said, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! The prophets keep telling them, 'You will not see

Manasseh's Repentance and Forgiveness (Jer 15:4)

Many of the prayers and hymns of the ancient Near East concern forgiveness for sins committed against a certain deity. The gods could be petitioned for forgiveness because they were viewed as merciful to those who freely confessed their sins. Restoration of health, property, or position were considered signs that forgiveness had been granted. Proper devotion to the god seems to have been enough in ancient times to cancel almost any kind of sin, whether committed with or without knowledge.

One example of a forgiveness prayer is *Ludlul bel Nemeqi,* a Mesopotamian text from the Kassite period (c. 1595–1157 B.C.). The text describes the sufferings of the author and his prayer to the Babylonian god Marduk for relief. The writer admits that he has sinned against the god, even though he is not exactly certain what the transgression was, and asks for mercy. Marduk accepts the petitioner's prayer, forgives his sin, and restores him to health and fortune.

During a long reign (697–642 B.C.) King Manasseh had infuriated Yahweh with his heretical cult innovations. The devastating influence of this king's actions on Judah's national course was still remembered a half-century later by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer 15:4). The Chronicler records Manasseh's punishment by exile, his prayer of repentance, and acceptance by Yahweh (2Ch 33:11–13). As with other Near Eastern forgiveness prayers, Manasseh is restored to his kingdom (33:13).

the sword or suffer famine. Indeed, I will give you lasting peace in this place.'"

14 Then the LORD said to me, "The prophets are prophesying lies in my name. I have not sent them or appointed them or spoken to them. They are prophesying to you false visions, divinations, idolatries[a] and the delusions of their own minds. 15 Therefore this is what the LORD says about the prophets who are prophesying in my name: I did not send them, yet they are saying, 'No sword or famine will touch this land.' Those same prophets will perish by sword and famine. 16 And the people they are prophesying to will be thrown out into the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and sword. There will be no one to bury them, their wives, their sons and their daughters. I will pour out on them the calamity they deserve.

17 "Speak this word to them:

"'Let my eyes overflow with tears
night and day without ceasing;
for the Virgin Daughter, my people,
has suffered a grievous wound,
a crushing blow.
18 If I go into the country,
I see those slain by the sword;
if I go into the city,
I see the ravages of famine.
Both prophet and priest
have gone to a land they know not.'"

19 Have you rejected Judah completely?
Do you despise Zion?
Why have you afflicted us
so that we cannot be healed?
We hoped for peace
but no good has come,
for a time of healing
but there is only terror.
20 We acknowledge our wickedness, LORD,
and the guilt of our ancestors;
we have indeed sinned against you.
21 For the sake of your name do not despise us;
do not dishonor your glorious throne.
Remember your covenant with us
and do not break it.
22 Do any of the worthless idols of the nations
bring rain?
Do the skies themselves send down
showers?
No, it is you, LORD our God.
Therefore our hope is in you,
for you are the one who does all this.

15 1 Then the LORD said to me: "Even if Moses and Samuel were to stand before me, my heart would not go out to this people. Send them away from my presence! Let them go! 2 And if they ask you, 'Where shall we go?' tell them, 'This is what the LORD says:

"'Those destined for death, to death;
those for the sword, to the sword;
those for starvation, to starvation;
those for captivity, to captivity.'

3 "I will send four kinds of destroyers against them," declares the LORD, "the sword to kill and the dogs to drag away and the birds and the wild animals to devour and destroy. 4 I will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of

[a] *14* Or *visions, worthless divinations*

Beliefs & Ideas

The famine resulting from lack of water was a natural calamity, yet the people responded with shame (Jer 14:4). They felt responsibility for the famine because they considered it to be a punishment for their sins (14:7, 10). The control of the weather and especially rain was exclusively reserved to Judah's God Yahweh (14:22), while surrounding religions attributed this power to Baal.

A Prophet Without a Family (Jer 16:2)

A prophet's life often characterized the message that God had given that prophet to proclaim. The symbolism of the single life takes on dark overtones for Jeremiah (Jer 16:2–13).

God prohibited Jeremiah from marrying, and thus from having children: "You must not marry and have sons or daughters in this place" (Jer 16:2). By prohibiting marriage, God emptied the prophet's life of any future significance from the perspective of his society.

Israelite society was grounded upon the social institution of the family. Not only did the family provide stability for the present, it also carried the status of the family into the future. The man governed the family, and heirs provided the means for his "name," his status and honor, to continue into new generations.

Marriage, then, represented the first step toward achieving an honorable future. Marriage was not so much about "falling in love" as it was a social compact between two families in the hope of gaining more status (honor) for both. Children were the expected fruit of a marriage, cementing the relationship between the families and providing an inheritor to carry on the family's name into the future. With no children, one's household had no future; without a wife, a man had no legitimate children.

By depriving Jeremiah of a family, God symbolically pronounced the depth and extent of his judgment upon Israel. Even without a family, Jeremiah would be better off than his peers. The children of his peers would die "of deadly diseases" (16:3, 4) so frequently that even the parents would not observe the proper mourning rituals (16:5–7). Given the depth of destruction, even celebrations, such as those at weddings, would not occur (16:9). Such would be the price for Judah forsaking Yahweh and walking after other gods (16:10, 11).

the earth because of what Manasseh son of
Hezekiah king of Judah did in Jerusalem.

5 "Who will have pity on you, Jerusalem?
Who will mourn for you?
Who will stop to ask how you are?
6 You have rejected me," declares the LORD.
"You keep on backsliding.
So I will reach out and destroy you;
I am tired of holding back.
7 I will winnow them with a winnowing fork
at the city gates of the land.
I will bring bereavement and destruction on
my people,
for they have not changed their ways.
8 I will make their widows more numerous
than the sand of the sea.
At midday I will bring a destroyer
against the mothers of their young men;
suddenly I will bring down on them
anguish and terror.
9 The mother of seven will grow faint
and breathe her last.
Her sun will set while it is still day;
she will be disgraced and humiliated.
I will put the survivors to the sword
before their enemies,"
declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 16:1 — 17:27

Day of Disaster

16:1 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "You must not marry and have sons or daughters in this place." 3 For this is what the LORD says about the sons and daughters born in this land and about the women who are

their mothers and the men who are their fathers: 4"They will die of deadly diseases. They will not be mourned or buried but will be like dung lying on the ground. They will perish by sword and famine, and their dead bodies will become food for the birds and the wild animals."

5For this is what the LORD says: "Do not enter a house where there is a funeral meal; do not go to mourn or show sympathy, because I have withdrawn my blessing, my love and my pity from this people," declares the LORD. 6"Both high and low will die in this land. They will not be buried or mourned, and no one will cut themselves or shave their head for the dead. 7No one will offer food to comfort those who mourn for the dead—not even for a father or a mother—nor will anyone give them a drink to console them.

8"And do not enter a house where there is feasting and sit down to eat and drink. 9For this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Before your eyes and in your days I will bring an end to the sounds of joy and gladness and to the voices of bride and bridegroom in this place.

10"When you tell these people all this and they ask you, 'Why has the LORD decreed such a great disaster against us? What wrong have we done? What sin have we committed against the LORD our God?' 11then say to them, 'It is because your ancestors forsook me,' declares the LORD, 'and followed other gods and served and worshiped them. They forsook me and did not keep my law. 12But you have behaved more wickedly than your ancestors. See how all of you are following the stubbornness of your evil hearts instead of obeying me. 13So I will throw you out of this land into a land neither you nor your ancestors have known, and there you will serve other gods day and night, for I will show you no favor.'

14"However, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when it will no longer be said, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' 15but it will be said, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' For I will restore them to the land I gave their ancestors.

16"But now I will send for many fishermen," declares the LORD, "and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks. 17My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes. 18I will repay them double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land with the lifeless forms of their vile images and have filled my inheritance with their detestable idols."

19LORD, my strength and my fortress,
my refuge in time of distress,

Mourning at the Banquet Hall (Jer 16:5, 8)

Banqueting houses were common in ancient times, as evidenced by the texts and material remains of the ancient Near East. They were places where individuals (as well as "gods") came for the express purpose of drinking. The writer of Ecclesiastes planted "vineyards" and built "houses" (Ecc 2:4), by which he could be referring to wine cellars, places where wine was drunk, ritual banquet houses, or even taverns. The prophet Jeremiah was commanded by God not to enter a "house where there is feasting . . . to eat and drink" (Jer 16:8) because of the impending doom upon the nation.

The Hebrew term *marzeah* refers to some type of "house," but is ambiguous in meaning. It is translated in some translations both as "banquets" (Am 6:7) and as a "house where there is a funeral meal" (or "house of mourning") (Jer 16:5). Whatever its meaning, it is apparently synonymous with the "house where there is feasting" in Jer 16:8. The common denominator between the "house of mourning" in Jeremiah and the "banquets" in Amos may be drinking, and not mourning, as scholars have traditionally understood *marzeah*.

The house represented by *marzeah* is found in many written records outside of the Bible. At Ugarit, a Canaanite town with writings dating from 1400 to 1200 B.C., the *marzeah* appears to have been a meeting place for some kind of organization. The primary activity there was drinking. The *marzeah* organization owned much property, including vineyards, and often made large real estate transactions, as recorded in the Ugaritic texts.

The *marzeah* is also found in Phoenician writings from Carthage, as well as in Aramaic texts from Elephantine in Egypt, Palmyra, and Nabatea. It is also mentioned in a text from the Transjordan and in later Hebrew rabbinic writings. From this information, it appears that the *marzeah* was an organization known for its drinking festivals. Sometimes it was associated with funeral feasts, as many there would drink in order to console themselves. Jeremiah's "house where there is a funeral meal" (Jer 16:5) and "house where there is feasting" (16:8) were possibly the same house.

to you the nations will come
from the ends of the earth and say,
"Our ancestors possessed nothing but false gods,
worthless idols that did them no good.
20 Do people make their own gods?
Yes, but they are not gods!"

21 "Therefore I will teach them—
this time I will teach them
my power and might.
Then they will know
that my name is the LORD.

17 1 "Judah's sin is engraved with an iron tool,
inscribed with a flint point,
on the tablets of their hearts
and on the horns of their altars.
2 Even their children remember
their altars and Asherah poles[a]
beside the spreading trees
and on the high hills.
3 My mountain in the land
and your[b] wealth and all your treasures
I will give away as plunder,
together with your high places,
because of sin throughout your country.
4 Through your own fault you will lose
the inheritance I gave you.
I will enslave you to your enemies
in a land you do not know,
for you have kindled my anger,
and it will burn forever."

5 This is what the LORD says:

"Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who draws strength from mere flesh
and whose heart turns away from the LORD.
6 That person will be like a bush in the wastelands;
they will not see prosperity when it comes.
They will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.

7 "But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD,
whose confidence is in him.
8 They will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit."

9 The heart is deceitful above all things
and beyond cure.
Who can understand it?

10 "I the LORD search the heart
and examine the mind,
to reward each person according to their conduct,
according to what their deeds deserve."

11 Like a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay
are those who gain riches by unjust means.
When their lives are half gone, their riches will desert them,
and in the end they will prove to be fools.

12 A glorious throne, exalted from the beginning,
is the place of our sanctuary.
13 LORD, you are the hope of Israel;
all who forsake you will be put to shame.
Those who turn away from you will be written in the dust
because they have forsaken the LORD,
the spring of living water.

14 Heal me, LORD, and I will be healed;
save me and I will be saved,
for you are the one I praise.
15 They keep saying to me,
"Where is the word of the LORD?
Let it now be fulfilled!"
16 I have not run away from being your shepherd;
you know I have not desired the day of despair.
What passes my lips is open before you.
17 Do not be a terror to me;
you are my refuge in the day of disaster.
18 Let my persecutors be put to shame,
but keep me from shame;
let them be terrified,
but keep me from terror.
Bring on them the day of disaster;
destroy them with double destruction.

Keeping the Sabbath Day Holy

19 This is what the LORD said to me: "Go and stand at the Gate of the People,[c] through which the kings of Judah go in and out; stand also at all the other gates of Jerusalem. 20 Say to them, 'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Judah and all people of Judah and everyone

[a] *2* That is, wooden symbols of the goddess Asherah
[b] *2,3* Or *hills / 3 and the mountains of the land. / Your*
[c] *19* Or *Army*

living in Jerusalem who come through these
gates. 21This is what the LORD says: Be care-
ful not to carry a load on the Sabbath day or
bring it through the gates of Jerusalem. 22Do
not bring a load out of your houses or do any
work on the Sabbath, but keep the Sabbath day
holy, as I commanded your ancestors. 23Yet
they did not listen or pay attention; they were
stiff-necked and would not listen or respond to
discipline. 24But if you are careful to obey me,
declares the LORD, and bring no load through
the gates of this city on the Sabbath, but keep
the Sabbath day holy by not doing any work
on it, 25then kings who sit on David's throne
will come through the gates of this city with
their officials. They and their officials will come
riding in chariots and on horses, accompanied
by the men of Judah and those living in Jeru-
salem, and this city will be inhabited forever.
26People will come from the towns of Judah and
the villages around Jerusalem, from the territo-
ry of Benjamin and the western foothills, from
the hill country and the Negev, bringing burnt
offerings and sacrifices, grain offerings and
incense, and bringing thank offerings to the
house of the LORD. 27But if you do not obey me
to keep the Sabbath day holy by not carrying
any load as you come through the gates of Je-
rusalem on the Sabbath day, then I will kindle
an unquenchable fire in the gates of Jerusalem
that will consume her fortresses.'"

Jeremiah 8:4 — 10:16

Sin and Punishment

8:4 "Say to them, 'This is what the LORD
says:

"'When people fall down, do they not get up?
When someone turns away, do they not
return?
5Why then have these people turned away?
Why does Jerusalem always turn away?
They cling to deceit;
they refuse to return.
6I have listened attentively,
but they do not say what is right.
None of them repent of their wickedness,
saying, "What have I done?"
Each pursues their own course
like a horse charging into battle.
7Even the stork in the sky
knows her appointed seasons,
and the dove, the swift and the thrush
observe the time of their migration.
But my people do not know
the requirements of the LORD.

8"'How can you say, "We are wise,
for we have the law of the LORD,"
when actually the lying pen of the scribes
has handled it falsely?
9The wise will be put to shame;
they will be dismayed and trapped.
Since they have rejected the word of the
LORD,
what kind of wisdom do they have?
10Therefore I will give their wives to other men
and their fields to new owners.
From the least to the greatest,
all are greedy for gain;
prophets and priests alike,
all practice deceit.
11They dress the wound of my people
as though it were not serious.
"Peace, peace," they say,
when there is no peace.
12Are they ashamed of their detestable
conduct?
No, they have no shame at all;
they do not even know how to blush.
So they will fall among the fallen;
they will be brought down when they are
punished,
says the LORD.

13"'I will take away their harvest,
declares the LORD.
There will be no grapes on the vine.
There will be no figs on the tree,
and their leaves will wither.
What I have given them
will be taken from them.[a]'"

14Why are we sitting here?
Gather together!
Let us flee to the fortified cities
and perish there!
For the LORD our God has doomed us to
perish
and given us poisoned water to drink,
because we have sinned against him.
15We hoped for peace
but no good has come,
for a time of healing
but there is only terror.
16The snorting of the enemy's horses
is heard from Dan;
at the neighing of their stallions
the whole land trembles.
They have come to devour
the land and everything in it,
the city and all who live there.

[a] *13* The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain.

17 "See, I will send venomous snakes among you,
vipers that cannot be charmed,
and they will bite you,"
declares the LORD.

18 You who are my Comforter[a] in sorrow,
my heart is faint within me.
19 Listen to the cry of my people
from a land far away:
"Is the LORD not in Zion?
Is her King no longer there?"

"Why have they aroused my anger with their images,
with their worthless foreign idols?"

20 "The harvest is past,
the summer has ended,
and we are not saved."

21 Since my people are crushed, I am crushed;
I mourn, and horror grips me.
22 Is there no balm in Gilead?
Is there no physician there?
Why then is there no healing
for the wound of my people?

9[b] 1 Oh, that my head were a spring of water
and my eyes a fountain of tears!
I would weep day and night
for the slain of my people.
2 Oh, that I had in the desert
a lodging place for travelers,
so that I might leave my people
and go away from them;
for they are all adulterers,
a crowd of unfaithful people.

3 "They make ready their tongue
like a bow, to shoot lies;
it is not by truth
that they triumph[c] in the land.
They go from one sin to another;
they do not acknowledge me,"
declares the LORD.
4 "Beware of your friends;
do not trust anyone in your clan.
For every one of them is a deceiver,[d]
and every friend a slanderer.
5 Friend deceives friend,
and no one speaks the truth.
They have taught their tongues to lie;
they weary themselves with sinning.
6 You[e] live in the midst of deception;
in their deceit they refuse to acknowledge me,"
declares the LORD.

7 Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty says:

"See, I will refine and test them,
for what else can I do
because of the sin of my people?
8 Their tongue is a deadly arrow;
it speaks deceitfully.
With their mouths they all speak cordially to their neighbors,
but in their hearts they set traps for them.
9 Should I not punish them for this?"
declares the LORD.
"Should I not avenge myself
on such a nation as this?"

10 I will weep and wail for the mountains
and take up a lament concerning the wilderness grasslands.
They are desolate and untraveled,
and the lowing of cattle is not heard.
The birds have all fled
and the animals are gone.

11 "I will make Jerusalem a heap of ruins,
a haunt of jackals;
and I will lay waste the towns of Judah
so no one can live there."

12 Who is wise enough to understand this?
Who has been instructed by the LORD and can explain it? Why has the land been ruined and laid waste like a desert that no one can cross?
13 The LORD said, "It is because they have forsaken my law, which I set before them; they have not obeyed me or followed my law. 14 Instead, they have followed the stubbornness of their hearts; they have followed the Baals, as their ancestors taught them." 15 Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "See, I will make this people eat bitter food and drink poisoned water. 16 I will scatter them among nations that neither they nor their ancestors have known, and I will pursue them with the sword until I have made an end of them."

17 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Consider now! Call for the wailing women to come;
send for the most skillful of them.
18 Let them come quickly
and wail over us
till our eyes overflow with tears
and water streams from our eyelids.

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[a] *18* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] In Hebrew texts 9:1 is numbered 8:23, and 9:2-26 is numbered 9:1-25.
[c] *3* Or *lies; / they are not valiant for truth*
[d] *4* Or *a deceiving Jacob*
[e] *6* That is, Jeremiah (the Hebrew is singular)

Death Comes Through Your Windows (Jer 9:21)

The prophet warns Jerusalem to prepare for deep mourning. The city will be so shattered by the death toll of war that its women will wail with grief. As Jeremiah explains, death will no longer be outside, but rather inside the city. Indeed, death will come through the "windows" into the very homes of the people (Jer 9:20, 21).

The Hebrew word for "death" is *mot*. In the Hebrew Bible, *mot* not only refers to the place of death, but is also personified, referring to the person "Death." The prophets knew that Yahweh could redeem his people from the plagues of Death (Hos 13:14). In Ugaritic mythology, Mot was the god of death, who was understood to have final power over all humans, since all people die.

Throughout the ancient Near East there were numerous deities of death. The notion that Death creeps into personal dwellings to steal away the living can be found expressed in almost the same terms in an elegy from Assyria. Written as if by a woman who has died, the poem describes how Death crept into her bedroom and drove her away from her husband.

In both the Bible and the Assyrian text, Death is unwelcome and, like a thief, breaks into one's seemingly safe home to kill without mercy or warning. Jerusalem's women would certainly mourn, "Death has climbed in through our windows" (Jer 9:21).

19 The sound of wailing is heard from Zion:
'How ruined we are!
How great is our shame!
We must leave our land
because our houses are in ruins.'"

20 Now, you women, hear the word of the
LORD;
open your ears to the words of his mouth.
Teach your daughters how to wail;
teach one another a lament.
21 Death has climbed in through our windows
and has entered our fortresses;
it has removed the children from the streets
and the young men from the public
squares.

22 Say, "This is what the LORD declares:

"'Dead bodies will lie
like dung on the open field,
like cut grain behind the reaper,
with no one to gather them.'"

23 This is what the LORD says:

"Let not the wise boast of their wisdom
or the strong boast of their strength
or the rich boast of their riches,
24 but let the one who boasts boast about this:
that they have the understanding to
know me,
that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness,
justice and righteousness on earth,
for in these I delight,"
declares the LORD.

25 "The days are coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will punish all who are circumcised
only in the flesh— 26 Egypt, Judah, Edom, Ammon, Moab and all who live in the wilderness in
distant places.[a] For all these nations are really uncircumcised, and even the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart."

God and Idols

10 1 Hear what the LORD says to you, people
of Israel. 2 This is what the LORD says:

"Do not learn the ways of the nations
or be terrified by signs in the heavens,
though the nations are terrified by them.
3 For the practices of the peoples are
worthless;
they cut a tree out of the forest,
and a craftsman shapes it with his
chisel.
4 They adorn it with silver and gold;
they fasten it with hammer and nails
so it will not totter.
5 Like a scarecrow in a cucumber field,
their idols cannot speak;
they must be carried
because they cannot walk.
Do not fear them;
they can do no harm
nor can they do any good."

6 No one is like you, LORD;
you are great,
and your name is mighty in power.

Architecture & Building
The people of Canaan worshiped in many centers. The most prominent element in their worship was the wooden poles set up in honor of their female goddess (Jer 10:3–5). It is doubtful that these poles were free-standing sculpture, but they could have been carved in low relief. Except under unusual circumstances, such as the dry climate of Egypt, wood does not survive for archaeologists to discover.

[a] 26 Or *wilderness and who clip the hair by their foreheads*

Oracles in Heaven (Jer 10:2)

Jeremiah dismisses the idea of reading the future by looking at the skies. Even though Gentile nations studied the "signs in the heavens" and were "terrified by them" (Jer 10:2), Judah was not to follow their example. Ancient people had two ways of trying to read the future in the skies: one way studied atmospheric conditions; the other, the movement of planets and stars.

The atmospheric method looked to various weather-related conditions as indicators of what events would occur on earth. The way the wind blew, how the rain fell, the formation of clouds, or the color of the morning or evening sky were recorded and checked against the omen books to see what they meant. People did not think that these weather conditions caused the earthly events. Rather, the event was simply associated with a particular weather condition.

More famous, because it has been retained to the present age, is the reading of the stars and planets. Early forms of astronomy and astrology merged to tell both time and the future. By the 1st Dynasty in Egypt (c. 3000 B.C.) scribes associated the flooding of the Nile with the rising of the star Sirius. From the 9th Dynasty (c. 2160 B.C.) onward a series of stars (known as "rams" in Egypt) were thought to control individual destinies.

The zodiac and other familiar forms of astrology were developed in Mesopotamia. The earliest Mesopotamian astrological references date from the Dynasty of Akkad (c. 2300 B.C.). The Old Babylonian period (c. 2017–1595 B.C.) provides the first extensive series of celestial "charts," collected in a work entitled *Enuma Anu Enlil*.

At first the system was used to predict events for the nation itself and for the royal family. By the Neo-Assyrian period (934–612 B.C.) all the elements which now make up the zodiac appeared in an Assyrian text. The formal 12-sign, 4-season structure appeared later in the Neo-Babylonian (626–539 B.C.) or early Persian (539–530 B.C.) periods. The prophets dismissed the endeavors of astrologers and stargazers as meaningless (Jer 10:2; Isa 47:13).

7 Who should not fear you,
King of the nations?
This is your due.
Among all the wise leaders of the nations
and in all their kingdoms,
there is no one like you.

8 They are all senseless and foolish;
they are taught by worthless wooden idols.
9 Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish
and gold from Uphaz.
What the craftsman and goldsmith have made
is then dressed in blue and purple—
all made by skilled workers.
10 But the LORD is the true God;
he is the living God, the eternal King.
When he is angry, the earth trembles;
the nations cannot endure his wrath.

11 "Tell them this: 'These gods, who did not make the heavens and the earth, will perish from the earth and from under the heavens.'"[a]

12 But God made the earth by his power;
he founded the world by his wisdom
and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.
13 When he thunders, the waters in the heavens roar;
he makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth.
He sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

14 Everyone is senseless and without knowledge;
every goldsmith is shamed by his idols.
The images he makes are a fraud;
they have no breath in them.
15 They are worthless, the objects of mockery;
when their judgment comes, they will perish.
16 He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like these,
for he is the Maker of all things,
including Israel, the people of his inheritance—
the LORD Almighty is his name.

[a] *11* The text of this verse is in Aramaic.

TRANSITION

Jehoiakim's Rebellion Against Babylon

Despite his promises to remain faithful to Egypt, Jehoiakim had to bow to Babylonian authority. The Babylonian Chronicle reports

that Babylon's King Nebuchadnezzar campaigned in Syria-Palestine each year from 605 to 601 B.C. It was probably during the long campaign of 604–603 that Nebuchadnezzar showed his power in Jerusalem, and Jehoiakim became his subject. Jehoiakim always preferred alliances with Egypt though, and he rebelled against Babylon as soon as he thought he could get away with it. Sometime around 601 B.C. the Babylonian army suffered a military setback while fighting Pharaoh Necho in Egypt. Jehoiakim thought that this was his opportunity. He was mistaken.

• 2 Kings 24:1–4

2 Kings

24:1 During Jehoiakim's reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded the land, and Jehoiakim became his vassal for three years. But then he turned against Nebuchadnezzar and rebelled. 2The LORD sent Babylonian,[a] Aramean, Moabite and Ammonite raiders against him to destroy Judah, in accordance with the word of the LORD proclaimed by his servants the prophets. 3Surely these things happened to Judah according to the LORD's command, in order to remove them from his presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all he had done, 4including the shedding of innocent blood. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was not willing to forgive.

[a] 2 Or *Chaldean*

TRANSITION

The Rekabites

When Nebuchadnezzar swept through the land of Judah on the way to Jerusalem, he drove all the inhabitants before him. One family that was driven to take refuge in Jerusalem was the family of Rekab (Jer 35:11). This family, the Rekabites, had rigorously obeyed the arbitrary injunctions of their ancestor Jehonadab, and Jer 35 highlights their obedience as an example of loyalty not found in Judah in its last days.

The notable member of this family, who appears to be the founder, was Jehonadab (Jer 35:6; also spelled Jonadab). He is mentioned in 2Ki 10:15, 16 as one who opposed the worship of Baal in Israel, joining Jehu in his "zeal for the LORD." Jehonadab and his Rekabite descendants displayed a faithfulness and devotion towards Yahweh that was lacking in disobedient Judah.

• Jeremiah 35:1–19

Jeremiah

The Rekabites

35:1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD during the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah: 2"Go to the Rekabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the house of the LORD and give them wine to drink."

3So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his sons—the whole family of the Rekabites. 4I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials, which was over that of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. 5Then I set bowls full of wine and some cups before the Rekabites and said to them, "Drink some wine."

6But they replied, "We do not drink wine,

The Obedient Rekabites (Jer 35:2)

The Rekabites are an enigmatic people mentioned by name in Jeremiah 35. We can assume that the Rekabite family members encountered by Jeremiah were quite few in number, since all of them were able to fit in just one area of the temple (Jer 35:2).

The Rekabites were not usually city dwellers, since they did not build, or live, in houses, nor plant gardens or vineyards (Jer 35:7). They lived in tents as seasonal nomads, following the available water sources for their animals. In addition to the usual nomadic lifestyle, the Rekabites did not drink wine because Rekab (the ancestor from whom they derived their name) had commanded them saying "Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine" (Jer 35:6). It is possible that, in some way, the Rekabites were related to the Kenites (1Ch 2:55). This link with the Kenites would make the Rekabites distant relatives of Moses (Jdg 1:16).

Jeremiah pays special attention to the Rekabites partly because of their loyalty to their father. The prophet cites the example of the Rekabites as the basis for an earnest plea to a disobedient Judah (Jer 35:12–16). This family had rigorously obeyed the arbitrary injunctions of an earthly father. Why could not Judah obey the injunctions of their God Yahweh?

The reward for the Rekabites was the promise that their family would always continue (Jer 35:19; Ne 3:14). Implicit in this promise was hope that, if the Judahites would return to Yahweh, they too would continue to exist.

because our forefather Jehonadab[a] son of Rekab gave us this command: 'Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine. 7Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads.' 8We have obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab son of Rekab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine 9or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops. 10We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jehonadab commanded us. 11But when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded this land, we said, 'Come, we must go to Jerusalem to escape the Babylonian[b] and Aramean armies.' So we have remained in Jerusalem."

12Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: 13"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go and tell the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem, 'Will you not learn a lesson and obey my words?' declares the LORD. 14'Jehonadab son of Rekab ordered his descendants not to drink wine and this command has been kept. To this day they do not drink wine, because they obey their forefather's command. But I have spoken to you again and again, yet you have not obeyed me. 15Again and again I sent all my servants the prophets to you. They said, "Each of you must turn from your wicked ways and reform your actions; do not follow other gods to serve them. Then you will live in the land I have given to you and your ancestors." But you have not paid attention or listened to me. 16The descendants of Jehonadab son of Rekab have carried out the command their forefather gave them, but these people have not obeyed me.'

17"'Therefore this is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on Judah and on everyone living in Jerusalem every disaster I pronounced against them. I spoke to them, but they did not listen; I called to them, but they did not answer.'"

18Then Jeremiah said to the family of the Rekabites, "This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'You have obeyed the command of your forefather Jehonadab and have followed all his instructions and have done everything he ordered.' 19Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Jehonadab son of Rekab will never fail to have a descendant to serve me.'"

TRANSITION

False Prophets

No prophet since Elijah had more trouble with false prophets than Jeremiah. As Nebuchadnezzar approached Jerusalem, Jeremiah declared that God would give the city to the armies of Babylon, but other prophets proclaimed that Jerusalem could never be captured, never be destroyed. These false prophets of Judah would bear responsibility for Jerusalem's coming fall, for they had confirmed the people in their sinful ways (Jer 23:9–40).

Jeremiah's message of imminent doom led inevitably to more persecution. The narratives of chs. 18–20 show both the message and the response it was given. The last two of Jeremiah's Confessions also appear here (18:19–23 and 20:7–18). The final Confession, especially, is a wrenching cry from a man who never wanted to be a prophet but who could not stop, from a messenger whose greatness as a prophet is only magnified by his human frailty.

- **Jeremiah 23:9–40**
- **Jeremiah 18:18—20:18**

Jeremiah 23:9–40

Lying Prophets

23 :9 Concerning the prophets:

My heart is broken within me;
all my bones tremble.
I am like a drunken man,
like a strong man overcome by wine,
because of the LORD
and his holy words.
10The land is full of adulterers;
because of the curse[c] the land lies
parched
and the pastures in the wilderness are
withered.
The prophets follow an evil course
and use their power unjustly.

11"Both prophet and priest are godless;
even in my temple I find their
wickedness,"
declares the LORD.
12"Therefore their path will become slippery;
they will be banished to darkness
and there they will fall.
I will bring disaster on them
in the year they are punished,"
declares the LORD.

[a] *6* Hebrew *Jonadab*, a variant of *Jehonadab*; here and often in this chapter [b] *11* Or *Chaldean* [c] *10* Or *because of these things*

True or False Prophet? (Jer 23:16–27)

Jeremiah relentlessly proclaimed a message of God's judgment, warning that the Babylonians would come and completely devastate Judah and Jerusalem. The sufferings he described of the Babylonian siege and subsequent victory were terrifying (Jer 18:21).

To say the least, this did not exactly make him a popular speaker in Jerusalem. People then, as now, wanted an optimistic, upbeat message. Jeremiah, therefore, often had conflict with others, especially the aristocracy of Jerusalem, over the content of his prophecy. Among other things, Jeremiah once ended up in stocks outside the temple as the leaders of Jerusalem tried to get him to change his vision of the future (Jer 20:1–6).

Jeremiah, however, was not the only prophet at work in Jerusalem at that time. Other prophets worked the streets as well, and they were a little more sensitive to public sentiments than Jeremiah. As one might expect, these prophets were much more popular.

These other prophets recalled that the prophet Isaiah had correctly prophesied that God would save Jerusalem from the Assyrians merely a century earlier (Isa 37:21–35). From this they concluded, and publicly prophesied, that God again would save Jerusalem, and his temple, from defeat. Even though the Babylonians pressed near, there would be "peace" (Jer 23:17).

In Jeremiah's time it was not easy to distinguish between a false prophet and a true prophet: Which prophet had really received counsel from God? The key difference, claimed Jeremiah, was moral: the false prophets' oracles had brought about no change in the Judahites' evil lifestyle (23:22). This indicated that these prophets spoke "visions from their own minds, not from the mouth of the LORD" (23:16).

13 "Among the prophets of Samaria
I saw this repulsive thing:
They prophesied by Baal
and led my people Israel astray.
14 And among the prophets of Jerusalem
I have seen something horrible:
They commit adultery and live a lie.
They strengthen the hands of evildoers,
so that not one of them turns from their wickedness.
They are all like Sodom to me;
the people of Jerusalem are like Gomorrah."

15 Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty says concerning the prophets:

"I will make them eat bitter food
and drink poisoned water,
because from the prophets of Jerusalem
ungodliness has spread throughout the land."

16 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Do not listen to what the prophets are prophesying to you;
they fill you with false hopes.
They speak visions from their own minds,
not from the mouth of the LORD.
17 They keep saying to those who despise me,
'The LORD says: You will have peace.'
And to all who follow the stubbornness of their hearts
they say, 'No harm will come to you.'

18 But which of them has stood in the council of the LORD
to see or to hear his word?
Who has listened and heard his word?
19 See, the storm of the LORD
will burst out in wrath,
a whirlwind swirling down
on the heads of the wicked.
20 The anger of the LORD will not turn back
until he fully accomplishes
the purposes of his heart.
In days to come
you will understand it clearly.
21 I did not send these prophets,
yet they have run with their message;
I did not speak to them,
yet they have prophesied.
22 But if they had stood in my council,
they would have proclaimed my words to my people
and would have turned them from their evil ways
and from their evil deeds.

23 "Am I only a God nearby,"
declares the LORD,
"and not a God far away?
24 Who can hide in secret places
so that I cannot see them?"
declares the LORD.
"Do not I fill heaven and earth?"
declares the LORD.

25 "I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!' 26 How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who

prophesy the delusions of their own minds?
27 They think the dreams they tell one another
will make my people forget my name, just as
their ancestors forgot my name through Baal
worship. 28 Let the prophet who has a dream
recount the dream, but let the one who has my
word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to
do with grain?" declares the LORD. 29 "Is not my
word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a
hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?
30 "Therefore," declares the LORD, "I am
against the prophets who steal from one anoth-
er words supposedly from me. 31 Yes," declares
the LORD, "I am against the prophets who wag
their own tongues and yet declare, 'The LORD
declares.' 32 Indeed, I am against those who
prophesy false dreams," declares the LORD.
"They tell them and lead my people astray with
their reckless lies, yet I did not send or appoint
them. They do not benefit these people in the
least," declares the LORD.

False Prophecy

33 "When these people, or a prophet or a
priest, ask you, 'What is the message from the
LORD?' say to them, 'What message? I will for-
sake you, declares the LORD.' 34 If a prophet or
a priest or anyone else claims, 'This is a mes-
sage from the LORD,' I will punish them and
their household. 35 This is what each of you
keeps saying to your friends and other Isra-
elites: 'What is the LORD's answer?' or 'What
has the LORD spoken?' 36 But you must not men-
tion 'a message from the LORD' again, because
each one's word becomes their own message.
So you distort the words of the living God, the
LORD Almighty, our God. 37 This is what you
keep saying to a prophet: 'What is the LORD's
answer to you?' or 'What has the LORD spoken?'
38 Although you claim, 'This is a message from
the LORD,' this is what the LORD says: You used
the words, 'This is a message from the LORD,'
even though I told you that you must not claim,
'This is a message from the LORD.' 39 Therefore,
I will surely forget you and cast you out of my
presence along with the city I gave to you and
your ancestors. 40 I will bring on you everlasting
disgrace — everlasting shame that will not be
forgotten."

Religion & Worship
People knew the prophets by their appearance and way of life (2Ki 1:8), their visible experiences (1Sa 19:24), and their prophetic word (2Ch 18:7). Evidently some or most of these signs could be counterfeited by false prophets, claiming to speak for Yahweh (Jer 23:25). Priests and diviners who publicly claimed to represent other gods were more easily identified and excluded (Dt 13:2).

Jeremiah 18:18 — 20:18

18:18 They said, "Come, let's make plans
against Jeremiah; for the teaching of the
law by the priest will not cease, nor will counsel
from the wise, nor the word from the prophets.
So come, let's attack him with our tongues and
pay no attention to anything he says."

19 Listen to me, LORD;
hear what my accusers are saying!
20 Should good be repaid with evil?
Yet they have dug a pit for me.
Remember that I stood before you
and spoke in their behalf
to turn your wrath away from them.
21 So give their children over to famine;
hand them over to the power of the
sword.
Let their wives be made childless and
widows;
let their men be put to death,
their young men slain by the sword in
battle.
22 Let a cry be heard from their houses
when you suddenly bring invaders
against them,
for they have dug a pit to capture me
and have hidden snares for my feet.
23 But you, LORD, know
all their plots to kill me.
Do not forgive their crimes
or blot out their sins from your sight.
Let them be overthrown before you;
deal with them in the time of your anger.

19 1 This is what the LORD says: "Go and
buy a clay jar from a potter. Take along
some of the elders of the people and of the
priests 2 and go out to the Valley of Ben Hin-
nom, near the entrance of the Potsherd Gate.
There proclaim the words I tell you, 3 and say,
'Hear the word of the LORD, you kings of Ju-
dah and people of Jerusalem. This is what the
LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Listen!
I am going to bring a disaster on this place that
will make the ears of everyone who hears of it
tingle. 4 For they have forsaken me and made
this a place of foreign gods; they have burned
incense in it to gods that neither they nor their
ancestors nor the kings of Judah ever knew,
and they have filled this place with the blood of
the innocent. 5 They have built the high places
of Baal to burn their children in the fire as

Broken Pieces in the Garbage Dump (Jer 19:1–13)

Refuse disposal is a necessity not only for contemporary society, but was also for urban life in ancient Israel. Much like pioneer America where the refuse pile was just off the back step of the house, Jerusalemite society used a valley just outside its walls, the Valley of Hinnom, to dispose of its garbage.

Large pots served as the "garbage cans" to deliver the refuse to its proper place. Therefore, the gate that provided access to this valley was called the Potsherd Gate. In postexilic Judah, in the time of Nehemiah, the same gate was called the Dung Gate (Ne 2:13; 3:14; or Refuse Gate). It probably was not a pleasant place to spend an afternoon!

The Valley of Hinnom was also not a place that the "elders of the people and of the priests" (Jer 19:1), the leaders of Jerusalemite society, frequented very often. They, no doubt, had others to carry out their garbage. Yet it was in the midst of the city dump that Jeremiah called these important leaders of Jerusalem and Judah (19:2).

If the elders were not pleased at the location, they probably were not pleased with Jeremiah's message, either. Jeremiah used the setting to proclaim the tragedy that would soon befall Jerusalem, a tragedy so great as to make the ears "tingle" (19:3). The gist of Jeremiah's oracle is that all Judah and Jerusalem will become like broken pots in the garbage dump (19:6–9, 11–13). Jeremiah punctuated this oracle of judgment by shattering a pot in front of the elders (19:10, 11).

Through the combination of location and action, therefore, Jeremiah made God's coming judgment of Judah clear. Destruction awaited.

offerings to Baal—something I did not command or mention, nor did it enter my mind. 6So beware, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when people will no longer call this place Topheth or the Valley of Ben Hinnom, but the Valley of Slaughter.

7"'In this place I will ruin[a] the plans of Judah and Jerusalem. I will make them fall by the sword before their enemies, at the hands of those who want to kill them, and I will give their carcasses as food to the birds and the wild animals. 8I will devastate this city and make it an object of horror and scorn; all who pass by will be appalled and will scoff because of all its wounds. 9I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and daughters, and they will eat one another's flesh because their enemies will press the siege so hard against them to destroy them.'

10"Then break the jar while those who go with you are watching, 11and say to them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: I will smash this nation and this city just as this potter's jar is smashed and cannot be repaired. They will bury the dead in Topheth until there is no more room. 12This is what I will do to this place and to those who live here, declares the LORD. I will make this city like Topheth. 13The houses in Jerusalem and those of the kings of Judah will be defiled like this place, Topheth—all the houses where they burned incense on the roofs to all the starry hosts and poured out drink offerings to other gods.'"

14Jeremiah then returned from Topheth, where the LORD had sent him to prophesy, and stood in the court of the LORD's temple and said to all the people, 15"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'Listen! I am going to bring on this city and all the villages around it every disaster I pronounced against them, because they were stiff-necked and would not listen to my words.'"

[a] 7 The Hebrew for *ruin* sounds like the Hebrew for *jar* (see verses 1 and 10).

TIME CAPSULE	605 to 604 B.C.
605	Nebuchadnezzar defeats Necho at the battle of Carchemish
605–601	Nebuchadnezzar campaigns in Syria-Palestine each year
605	Possible deportation of Judeans, including Daniel, from Jerusalem
604–603	Nebuchadnezzar exacts tribute from many Palestinian rulers
604	Ashkelon's king Aga killed and prisoners deported to Babylon

Jeremiah and Pashhur

20 1When the priest Pashhur son of Immer, the official in charge of the temple of the LORD, heard Jeremiah prophesying these

Architecture & Building

In the Middle East the roofs of houses can be used like the deck or porch of a North American house. Archaeologists have discovered evidence that the people of Ashkelon, a Philistine town, burned incense on the roofs of their houses (Jer 19:13). In ancient societies, religious rituals were carried out not just by the state, but also by individuals and households.

things, [2]he had Jeremiah the prophet beaten and put in the stocks at the Upper Gate of Benjamin at the LORD's temple. [3]The next day, when Pashhur released him from the stocks, Jeremiah said to him, "The LORD's name for you is not Pashhur, but Terror on Every Side. [4]For this is what the LORD says: 'I will make you a terror to yourself and to all your friends; with your own eyes you will see them fall by the sword of their enemies. I will give all Judah into the hands of the king of Babylon, who will carry them away to Babylon or put them to the sword. [5]I will deliver all the wealth of this city into the hands of their enemies—all its products, all its valuables and all the treasures of the kings of Judah. They will take it away as plunder and carry it off to Babylon. [6]And you, Pashhur, and all who live in your house will go into exile to Babylon. There you will die and be buried, you and all your friends to whom you have prophesied lies.'"

Jeremiah's Complaint

[7]You deceived[a] me, LORD, and I was
deceived[a];
you overpowered me and prevailed.
I am ridiculed all day long;
everyone mocks me.
[8]Whenever I speak, I cry out
proclaiming violence and destruction.
So the word of the LORD has brought me
insult and reproach all day long.
[9]But if I say, "I will not mention his word
or speak anymore in his name,"
his word is in my heart like a fire,
a fire shut up in my bones.
I am weary of holding it in;
indeed, I cannot.
[10]I hear many whispering,
"Terror on every side!
Denounce him! Let's denounce him!"
All my friends
are waiting for me to slip, saying,
"Perhaps he will be deceived;
then we will prevail over him
and take our revenge on him."

Beliefs & Ideas

Although the Romans dignified suicide, regarding it as an acceptable way of leaving this world, the Judeans were much less approving of it. They did not criticize Saul for taking his own life in the wake of defeat in war, thus escaping abuse from his enemies (1Sa 31:4). Yet to curse the gift of life was understood to be an extreme act, practically an insult to God (Jer 20:14; Job 2:9, 10).

[11]But the LORD is with me like a mighty
warrior;
so my persecutors will stumble and not
prevail.
They will fail and be thoroughly disgraced;
their dishonor will never be forgotten.
[12]LORD Almighty, you who examine the
righteous
and probe the heart and mind,
let me see your vengeance on them,
for to you I have committed my cause.

[13]Sing to the LORD!
Give praise to the LORD!
He rescues the life of the needy
from the hands of the wicked.

[14]Cursed be the day I was born!
May the day my mother bore me not be
blessed!
[15]Cursed be the man who brought my father
the news,
who made him very glad, saying,
"A child is born to you—a son!"
[16]May that man be like the towns
the LORD overthrew without pity.
May he hear wailing in the morning,
a battle cry at noon.
[17]For he did not kill me in the womb,
with my mother as my grave,
her womb enlarged forever.
[18]Why did I ever come out of the womb
to see trouble and sorrow
and to end my days in shame?

[a] *7* Or *persuaded*

TRANSITION

Do Not Hope in King Jehoiachin

The attack on Egypt's border in 601 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian army was repelled by Pharaoh Necho. Babylon recovered from this battle, but Egypt did not. In the last few years before his death in 595 B.C., Pharaoh Necho could do no more than keep Babylon from invading Egypt (2Ki 24:7).

Before Nebuchadnezzar could capture Jerusalem, Jehoiakim died. Given the situation, one could speculate that he was assassinated, but such an event is unknown. In any case, he does not appear to have been much missed, if Jeremiah's comments on his death are representative (Jer 22:18–23).

Jehoiakim was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin (or Koniah, or Jeconiah), who is very often mentioned alongside his mother Nehushta. When Koniah became king, he assumed the throne name Jehoiachin. Though pleased to be rid of Jehoiakim, Jeremiah did

not greet the new king with optimism. His warnings now carried with them the conviction that it was too late (Jer 13:15–27). The king and his mother would be taken into exile (Jer 22:24–30; 13:18, 19). Jehoiachin ruled for only 3 months in 598–597 B.C. before surrendering to Nebuchadnezzar.

- **2 Kings 24:5–9**
- **Jeremiah 22:18–30**
- **Jeremiah 13:15–27**

2 Kings 24:5–9

24:5 As for the other events of Jehoiakim's reign, and all he did, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Judah? 6 Jehoiakim rested with his ancestors. And Jehoiachin his son succeeded him as king.

7 The king of Egypt did not march out from his own country again, because the king of Babylon had taken all his territory, from the Wadi of Egypt to the Euphrates River.

Jehoiachin King of Judah

8 Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother's name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan; she was from Jerusalem. 9 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father had done.

Jeremiah 22:18–30

22:18 Therefore this is what the LORD says about Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah:

"They will not mourn for him:
'Alas, my brother! Alas, my sister!'
They will not mourn for him:
'Alas, my master! Alas, his splendor!'

19 He will have the burial of a donkey—
dragged away and thrown
outside the gates of Jerusalem."

20 "Go up to Lebanon and cry out,
let your voice be heard in Bashan,
cry out from Abarim,
for all your allies are crushed.
21 I warned you when you felt secure,
but you said, 'I will not listen!'
This has been your way from your youth;
you have not obeyed me.
22 The wind will drive all your shepherds away,
and your allies will go into exile.
Then you will be ashamed and disgraced
because of all your wickedness.
23 You who live in 'Lebanon,[a]'
who are nestled in cedar buildings,
how you will groan when pangs come upon you,
pain like that of a woman in labor!

24 "As surely as I live," declares the LORD, "even if you, Jehoiachin[b] son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, were a signet ring on my right hand, I would still pull you off. 25 I will deliver you into the hands of those who want to kill you, those you fear—Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and the Babylonians.[c] 26 I will hurl you and the mother who gave you birth into another country, where neither of you was born, and there you both will die. 27 You will never come back to the land you long to return to."

28 Is this man Jehoiachin a despised, broken pot,
an object no one wants?
Why will he and his children be hurled out,
cast into a land they do not know?
29 O land, land, land,
hear the word of the LORD!
30 This is what the LORD says:
"Record this man as if childless,
a man who will not prosper in his lifetime,

[a] *23* That is, the palace in Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 7:2)
[b] *24* Hebrew *Koniah*, a variant of *Jehoiachin*; also in verse 28
[c] *25* Or *Chaldeans*

Pharaoh Necho Battles the Babylonians (2Ki 24:7)

Pharaoh Necho II, who reigned from 610 to 595 B.C., was the second king of the 26th Dynasty of Egypt. He is known for his defeat of Judah and killing of King Josiah at Megiddo in 609 B.C., and for his own defeat at the hands of Babylon at Carchemish in 605 B.C.

During the last years of the Assyrian Empire, Necho assisted the weakened Assyrians in their struggles against the rising power of the Babylonians. Accadian sources relate that in 609 Necho was moving his army north to help the Assyrians recapture Harran from the Babylonians. On the way, he encountered Josiah. In 605, Babylon completely annihilated Necho's Egyptian army at Carchemish.

The pharaoh was successful in repelling a Babylonian invasion deep into Palestine in 601 B.C. This evidently caused Judah's king Jehoiakim to rebel against Babylonian control (2Ki 24:1). Apparently Necho's forces could not recover from the 601 battle in order to conduct future campaigns: Necho "did not march out from his own country again" (2Ki 24:7). After 601, it appears that Egypt and Babylon were not hostile, but nothing more is mentioned about Necho, who died in 595 B.C.

for none of his offspring will prosper,
none will sit on the throne of David
or rule anymore in Judah."

Jeremiah 13:15–27

Threat of Captivity

13 :15 Hear and pay attention,
do not be arrogant,
for the LORD has spoken.
16 Give glory to the LORD your God
before he brings the darkness,
before your feet stumble
on the darkening hills.
You hope for light,
but he will turn it to utter darkness
and change it to deep gloom.
17 If you do not listen,
I will weep in secret
because of your pride;
my eyes will weep bitterly,
overflowing with tears,
because the LORD's flock will be taken
captive.

18 Say to the king and to the queen mother,
"Come down from your thrones,
for your glorious crowns
will fall from your heads."
19 The cities in the Negev will be shut up,
and there will be no one to open them.
All Judah will be carried into exile,
carried completely away.

20 Look up and see
those who are coming from the north.
Where is the flock that was entrusted to you,
the sheep of which you boasted?
21 What will you say when the LORD sets over
you
those you cultivated as your special allies?
Will not pain grip you
like that of a woman in labor?
22 And if you ask yourself,
"Why has this happened to me?"—
it is because of your many sins
that your skirts have been torn off
and your body mistreated.

23 Can an Ethiopian[a] change his skin
or a leopard its spots?
Neither can you do good
who are accustomed to doing evil.

24 "I will scatter you like chaff
driven by the desert wind.
25 This is your lot,
the portion I have decreed for you,"
declares the LORD,
"because you have forgotten me
and trusted in false gods.
26 I will pull up your skirts over your face
that your shame may be seen—
27 your adulteries and lustful neighings,
your shameless prostitution!
I have seen your detestable acts
on the hills and in the fields.
Woe to you, Jerusalem!
How long will you be unclean?"

[a] *23* Hebrew *Cushite* (probably a person from the upper Nile region)

TRANSITION

Jehoiachin Is Taken Captive

The new king Jehoiachin had little time to enjoy his throne. The Babylonian Chronicle reports that Nebuchadnezzar left Babylon in December, 598 B.C. in a campaign against Judah and besieged the city. Jeremiah's call to submit to Babylon was finally obeyed, though unwillingly, when it was clear that defeat was inevitable. In March, 597 B.C., Jehoiachin and his mother went into exile, and Mattaniah, another son of Josiah's and therefore uncle to Jehoiachin, was placed on the throne, changing his name to Zedekiah.

▪ **2 Kings 24:10–17**

2 Kings

24 :10 At that time the officers of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon advanced on Jerusalem and laid siege to it, 11 and Nebuchadnezzar himself came up to the city while his officers were besieging it. 12 Jehoiachin

Jehoiachin's Exile in Babylon (2Ki 24:10–17)

Jehoiachin ruled briefly as king of Judah for 3 months, from about December, 598 to March, 597 B.C. He was the son of Jehoiakim, the previous king who had rebelled against Babylonian rule around 601 B.C. Jehoiachin was the unfortunate successor who was but 18 years old when the Babylonians returned to take the city of Jerusalem and dethrone Judah's monarch.

The Babylonian Chronicle records that the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar left Babylon in the month of Kislev in his 7th year (December, 598 B.C.) on a campaign against Judah, and ultimately captured Jerusalem and its king. The text states that the king was deported, although his name is not explicitly mentioned, and that another king was appointed in his place. Obviously, the Babylonian Chronicle refers to Jehoiachin being deposed and deported to Babylon, while Mattaniah was put on the throne and given the throne name "Zedekiah" (2Ki 24:10–17).

Babylonian cuneiform texts, which date between 595 and 570 B.C., thus contemporary with the reign of Nebuchadnezzar II (605–562 B.C.), list rations distributed to several captives and skilled workers. Named among them is Jehoiachin. It is probable that the Judean king and his family were under house arrest, but enjoyed relative freedom.

Jehoiachin continued to be imprisoned until the reign of Awel-Marduk, successor to Nebuchadnezzar. This release from prison is dated in the 37th year of Jehoiachin's captivity (2Ki 25:27; Jer 52:31), which corresponds to about 561 B.C., at the beginning of Awel-Marduk's reign. Neither the Babylonian nor biblical sources describe Jehoiachin's fate, though he apparently dined in Babylon with other exiled kings until he died (Jer 52:34).

king of Judah, his mother, his attendants, his nobles and his officials all surrendered to him.

In the eighth year of the reign of the king of Babylon, he took Jehoiachin prisoner. 13As the LORD had declared, Nebuchadnezzar removed the treasures from the temple of the LORD and from the royal palace, and cut up the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made for the temple of the LORD. 14He carried all Jerusalem into exile: all the officers and fighting men, and all the skilled workers and artisans—a total of ten thousand. Only the poorest people of the land were left.

15Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiachin captive to Babylon. He also took from Jerusalem to Babylon the king's mother, his wives, his officials and the prominent people of the land. 16The king of Babylon also deported to Babylon the entire force of seven thousand fighting men, strong and fit for war, and a thousand skilled workers and artisans. 17He made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin's uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

[a] 7 Or *palace* [b] 9 One Hebrew manuscript, some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 2 Kings 24:8); most Hebrew manuscripts *eight* [c] 10 Hebrew *brother,* that is, relative (see 2 Kings 24:17)

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin

Chronicles, which normally gives more detail about the kings of Judah, is surprisingly brief in its account of Jehoiakim. The Chronicler adds one detail, that Jehoiakim was bound in chains to be taken to Babylon. It is not clear whether the king died before the Babylonians could carry him into captivity.

Chronicles also omits many details of Jehoiachin's reign, providing no reference to Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem. True to his priestly focus, the Chronicler does include comment about the treasures which were taken from the temple for tribute (2Ch 36:10).

• 2 Chronicles 36:5–10

2 Chronicles

Jehoiakim King of Judah

36 :5 Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD his God. 6Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked him and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. 7Nebuchadnezzar also took to Babylon articles from the temple of the LORD and put them in his temple[a] there.

8The other events of Jehoiakim's reign, the detestable things he did and all that was found against him, are written in the book of the kings of Israel and Judah. And Jehoiachin his son succeeded him as king.

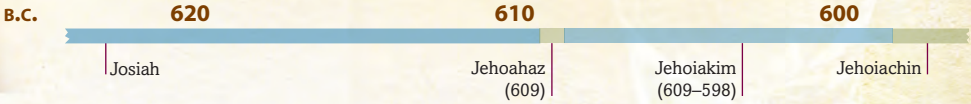
Jehoiachin King of Judah

9Jehoiachin was eighteen[b] years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. He did evil in the eyes of the LORD. 10In the spring, King Nebuchadnezzar sent for him and brought him to Babylon, together with articles of value from the temple of the LORD, and he made Jehoiachin's uncle,[c] Zedekiah, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

THE SONS OF JOSIAH RULE IN JUDAH

Israel (northern kingdom)

Fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 B.C.



Judah (southern kingdom)

Jehoahaz, son of Josiah, ruled for only 3 months (2Ch 36:2). Pharaoh Necho of Egypt, who defeated and killed Josiah, also deposed Jehoahaz from Judah's throne. Jehoahaz is also known as Shallum (1Ch 3:15).

Jehoiakim, also a son of Josiah, was a half brother to Jehoahaz. When Pharaoh Necho deported Jehoahaz to Egypt, he placed Eliakim on the throne, giving him the throne name "Jehoiakim" (2Ch 36:4). Jehoiakim was forced to pay tribute to Necho. Later in his reign, Jehoiakim became a vassal of Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (2Ki 24:1).

Politics & Government

The Babylonian Chronicle is an official writing covering events of southern Mesopotamia, dating from Sargon of Akkad (c. 2350 B.C.) to the Persian period (c. 539 B.C.). The entries include a selection of events and are brief. Only parts of the Chronicle survive. The date that Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar (2Ch 36:10) is given as 2 Adar, or March 16, 597 B.C.

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Zedekiah and Jeremiah

Judah was divided. Its leadership had been removed from the land with Jehoiachin in 597 B.C., leaving in Jerusalem those of lesser importance. One who stayed was Jeremiah. Although the prophet had had only str ained relations with the leaders of Judah, now that they were gone, Jeremiah considered them Jerusalem 's best hope. It was the exiles, not the people remaining in Judah, whom God would use to redeem his land and his people. In a vision (Jer 24:1–10) Jeremiah sees that the exiled people are actually "good figs." It is the sur vivors in Jerusalem, the "bad figs," who will face a terrible fate.

• **Jeremiah 24:1–10**

Jeremiah

Two Baskets of Figs

24 :1 After Jehoiachin[a] son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and the officials, the skilled workers and the artisans of Judah were carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the LORD showed me two baskets of figs placed in front of the temple of the LORD. [2]One basket had very good figs, like those that ripen early; the other basket had very bad figs, so bad they could not be eaten.

[3]Then the LORD asked me, "What do you see, Jeremiah?"

"Figs," I answered. "The good ones are very good, but the bad ones are so bad they cannot be eaten."

[4]Then the word of the LORD came to me: [5]"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians.[b] [6]My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them. [7]I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

[8]"'But like the bad figs, which are so bad they cannot be eaten,' says the LORD, 'so will I deal with Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the survivors from Jerusalem, whether they remain in this land or live in Egypt. [9]I will make them abhorrent and an offense to all the kingdoms of the earth, a reproach and a byword, a curse[c] and an object of ridicule, wherever I banish them. [10]I will send the sword, famine and plague against them until they are destroyed from the land I gave to them and their ancestors.'"

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[a] *1* Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant of *Jehoiachin*
[b] *5* Or *Chaldeans* [c] *9* That is, their names will be used in cursing (see 29:22); or, others will see that they are cursed.

TRANSITION

The Book of Daniel

Among the exiles taken to Babylon was the young man Daniel, who began immediately his training to become a courtier in Nebuchadnezzar's court (Da 1). His long life as a faithful Jew in a pagan land is told in chs. 1–6 of the Book of Daniel, while chs. 7–12 consist of Daniel's symbolic visions of the future.

The Book of Daniel presents many difficulties to chronological arrangement. To begin with, Da 1:1 places Nebuchadnezzar's siege and the beginning of Daniel's exile in the "third year of the reign of Jehoiakim" (605 B.C.). No other text describes a siege and captivity in that year, which was Nebuchadnezzar's 1st year. To resolve the difficulty, some scholars favor an otherwise unknown siege in 605 B.C. Then, it is suggested, Nebuchadnezzar sent Chaldean (Babylonian) armies against Judah (2Ki 24:2), bound Jehoiakim in chains, and carried off vessels from the Jerusalem temple (2Ch 36:6, 7), along with Daniel and other exiles. Then another, final, siege in 597 B.C. led to the much larger deportation described in other biblical accounts.

Other interpreters are more skeptical about an unknown event in 605 B.C. The historian of Kings recounts only the sieges of 597 B.C. (2Ki 24:10, 11) and of 588 B.C. (2Ki 25:1, 2). The prophet Jeremiah summarized the deportations of Judeans from Jerusalem (Jer 52:28–30), recording three deportations that possibly correspond to 597, 586, and 581 B.C. (see "Various Deportations to Babylon" at Jer 52:28). Jeremiah does not list a deportation for 605 B.C.

It is difficult to imagine why both Kings and Jeremiah neglect to mention such an important event as an invasion and deportation. Perhaps the dates given in Da 1:1; 2:1, locating these narratives at the beginning of King Nebuchadnezzar's reign, serve a thematic purpose—to shift the focus away from Judah's history to Babylon's. Indeed, in many ways, the main character in Da 1–4 is not Daniel but Nebuchadnezzar.

The first large deportation, and thus the beginning of the Babylonian exile, occurred in Nebuchadnezzar's 8th year (597 B.C.; 2Ki 24:12), when Jehoiachin was taken captive to Babylon. Regardless of when Daniel was deported, the experiences of this most famous Judean exile can be read in that context.

A second chronological difficulty has to do with identifying the times referred to in the visions of Daniel (chs. 7–12). On the one hand, the visions themselves say that they refer to a "later" time (8:19), and they are even today very often interpreted as referring to events that have not yet occurred. On the other hand, the more explicit visions (chs. 10–12) quite clearly refer to the end of the Persian Empire and the rise of the Greek Empire of the 4th through 2nd centuries B.C. (e.g., 11:2, 3; see "Daniel and the Greeks" at Da 10:1).

To say that Daniel's visions speak specifically of events in the Persian-Greek period does not, however, mean that they cannot also refer to the "later" time. Daniel's visions are densely packed with obscure and surprising images; they resist being restricted to any single meaning. For this reason, many scholars understand them to have multiple fulfillments. Thus, Da 7–12 can be read in light of historical events at the end of the 1st millennium B.C., while keeping in mind the possible references to an ultimate fulfillment. See "The Apocalyptic Visions of Daniel" at Da 7:1.

Because the visions describe the events of the Greek era so clearly and in such detail, scholars often suggest that they were actually written during Greek times and attributed to the historical figure of Daniel. Other scholars, though, less puzzled by such explicit foretelling of future events among the prophets, accept the traditional attribution of the book to Daniel himself.

• **Daniel 1:1–21**

Daniel

Daniel's Training in Babylon

1 **:1** In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar king
of Babylon came to Jerusalem and besieged it.
2 And the Lord delivered Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, along with some of the articles from the temple of God. These he carried
off to the temple of his god in Babylonia[a] and put in the treasure house of his god.

3 Then the king ordered Ashpenaz, chief
of his court officials, to bring into the king's service some of the Israelites from the royal family and the nobility— 4 young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, well informed, quick to understand, and qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and literature of the Babylonians.[b] 5 The

[a] 2 Hebrew *Shinar* [b] 4 Or *Chaldeans*

Culture & Society

Some people were born into slavery, but many others lost their freedom as a result of war. In this way the rich and the nobility could be enslaved as well as the poor. Nebuchadnezzar chose slaves for his palace from the defeated Judeans, requiring them to be physically healthy, wellborn, and well-educated (Da 1:3, 4). They received new names as a token of his authority over them.

DEPORTATIONS FROM JERUSALEM TO BABYLON

The armies of Babylon under King Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem on different occasions, taking parts of the population away into exile. The Babylonian Chronicle records the campaigns of Nebuchadnezzar between the years 616 and 594 B.C., including the siege of Jerusalem in 597 B.C.

A Proposed Early Deportation

605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem, captures King Jehoiakim, and deports captives, including Daniel, into exile.

Source: The Book of Daniel is the only record of a deportation in this year. Da 1:1, 2 dates the siege in Jehoiakim's 3rd year, which according to the Babylonian method of counting would be 605 B.C. Some think that 2Ch 36:6, 7 refers to this event. (Jeremiah, writing in Judah and using the Judean method of counting, reckons 605 B.C. as Jehoiakim's 4th year, Jer 46:2.)

The Deportation of Jehoiachin

597 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar captures King Jehoiachin, loots the temple treasures, and deports captives, including Ezekiel, into exile.

Source: The Babylonian Chronicle, as well as 2Ki 24:10–16; 2Ch 36:10; and probably Jer 52:28. The reason for the large difference in the numbers of deported captives is not known.

The Fall of Jerusalem

588 to 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar besieges Judah's cities, including Jerusalem, during these years. In 586, his army captures King Zedekiah, burns down the temple, and deports Jerusalem's people into exile.

Source: The Lachish Letters, as well as 2Ki 25:1–21; 2Ch 36:17–20; and probably Jer 52:29.

A Final Deportation

581 B.C. Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard for the Babylonians, deports 745 persons from Jerusalem.

Source: The Book of Jeremiah (Jer 50:30) is the only record of a deportation in this year. It could have been a reprisal for the murder of the governor Gedaliah, who was appointed by the Babylonians.

king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from the king's table. They were to be trained for three years, and after that they were to enter the king's service.

6 Among those who were chosen were some from Judah: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 7 The chief official gave them new names: to Daniel, the name Belteshazzar; to Hananiah, Shadrach; to Mishael, Meshach; and to Azariah, Abednego.

8 But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way. 9 Now God had caused the official to show favor and compassion to Daniel, 10 but the official told Daniel, "I am afraid of my lord the king, who has assigned your[a] food and drink. Why should he see you looking worse than the other young men your age? The king would then have my head because of you."

11 Daniel then said to the guard whom the chief official had appointed over Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, 12 "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. 13 Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." 14 So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days.

15 At the end of the ten days they looked

[a] *10* The Hebrew for *your* and *you* in this verse is plural.

healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. 16So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead.

17To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.

18At the end of the time set by the king to bring them into his service, the chief official presented them to Nebuchadnezzar. 19The king talked with them, and he found none equal to Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; so they entered the king's service. 20In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom.

21And Daniel remained there until the first year of King Cyrus.

[a] 2 Or *Chaldeans*; also in verses 4, 5 and 10 [b] 3 Or *was*
[c] 4 At this point the Hebrew text has *in Aramaic*, indicating that the text from here through the end of chapter 7 is in Aramaic.

TRANSITION

Daniel's Time in Babylon

Two different contexts appear in Da 2. The narrative of ch. 2 includes a symbolic dream that is, in many ways, parallel to Daniel's visions of the future in chs. 7 and 8. Thus the dream could be read alongside those two visions, in light of their future reference (see "The Apocalyptic Visions of Daniel" at Da 7:1). Because Nebuchadnezzar's dream is essential to the story set in his time, though, it should be read with chs. 1–6, rather than in the Greek period with the visions of chs. 7; 8.

The chronological note in Da 2:1 places the narrative in Nebuchadnezzar's 2nd year (604 B.C.) and assumes that Daniel and his three friends were taken captive a year earlier in 605 B.C. Besides the historical questions that surround these dates and make them puzzling to many scholars (see "The Book of Daniel" at Da 1:1), there are a few other chronological features of Daniel's career evident in Da 1; 2.

The Book of Daniel provides information that pictures a long life for the Judean Daniel in Babylon. Whether one begins with Nebuchadnezzar's 1st year (605 B.C.; Da 1:1) or with the first year of the exile as reported in Kings and Jeremiah (597 B.C.; Jer 28:1–4), Daniel's longevity in the court was remarkable. He is reported to have continued his public ministry in the royal court until the "first year of King Cyrus" (Da 1:21). Cyrus took the throne of Persia in 559 B.C.; however, this 1st year very likely refers to 539 B.C. when Cyrus defeated Babylon and became its ruler. The Book of Daniel thus describes an impressive record of from 60 to 70 years for Daniel in Babylon.

The story of Da 1 places the Hebrew exiles in training for 3 years after coming to Babylon (Da 1:5). Thus, Daniel's interpretation of the king's dream in 604 (his 2nd year; Da 2:1) is set before the end of the 3 years of training, and one must picture a very youthful Daniel in the king's court.

• **Daniel 2:1—4:37**

Daniel

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

2:1 In the second year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar had dreams; his mind was troubled and he could not sleep. 2So the king summoned the magicians, enchanters, sorcerers and astrologers[a] to tell him what he had dreamed. When they came in and stood before the king, 3he said to them, "I have had a dream that troubles me and I want to know what it means.[b]"

4Then the astrologers answered the king,[c] "May the king live forever! Tell your servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

5The king replied to the astrologers, "This is what I have firmly decided: If you do not tell me what my dream was and interpret it, I will have you cut into pieces and your houses turned into piles of rubble. 6But if you tell me the dream and explain it, you will receive from me gifts and rewards and great honor. So tell me the dream and interpret it for me."

7Once more they replied, "Let the king tell his servants the dream, and we will interpret it."

8Then the king answered, "I am certain that you are trying to gain time, because you realize that this is what I have firmly decided: 9If you do not tell me the dream, there is only one penalty for you. You have conspired to tell me misleading and wicked things, hoping the situation will change. So then, tell me the dream, and I will know that you can interpret it for me."

10The astrologers answered the king, "There is no one on earth who can do what the king asks! No king, however great and mighty, has ever asked such a thing of any magician or enchanter or astrologer. 11What the king asks is too difficult. No one can reveal it to the king except the gods, and they do not live among humans."

12This made the king so angry and furious that he ordered the execution of all the wise men of Babylon. 13So the decree was issued to

put the wise men to death, and men were sent to look for Daniel and his friends to put them to death.

14When Arioch, the commander of the king's guard, had gone out to put to death the wise men of Babylon, Daniel spoke to him with wisdom and tact. 15He asked the king's officer, "Why did the king issue such a harsh decree?" Arioch then explained the matter to Daniel. 16At this, Daniel went in to the king and asked for time, so that he might interpret the dream for him.

17Then Daniel returned to his house and explained the matter to his friends Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. 18He urged them to plead for mercy from the God of heaven concerning this mystery, so that he and his friends might not be executed with the rest of the wise men of Babylon. 19During the night the mystery was revealed to Daniel in a vision. Then Daniel praised the God of heaven 20and said:

"Praise be to the name of God for ever and ever;
wisdom and power are his.
21He changes times and seasons;
he deposes kings and raises up others.
He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning.
22He reveals deep and hidden things;
he knows what lies in darkness,
and light dwells with him.
23I thank and praise you, God of my ancestors:
You have given me wisdom and power,
you have made known to me what we asked of you,
you have made known to us the dream of the king."

Daniel Interprets the Dream

24Then Daniel went to Arioch, whom the king had appointed to execute the wise men of Babylon, and said to him, "Do not execute the wise men of Babylon. Take me to the king, and I will interpret his dream for him."

Science & Technology
Iron replaced bronze as the most common metal for tools and weapons, starting about 1200 B.C. The process of replacement lasted some time. For one thing, iron has to have some carbon in it, then it can be hardened by heating and quenching. Weapons were known to bend during use and the soldiers had to straighten them in the midst of battle. Yet in the end iron was recognized as the common symbol of war (Da 2:40).

25Arioch took Daniel to the king at once and said, "I have found a man among the exiles from Judah who can tell the king what his dream means."

26The king asked Daniel (also called Belteshazzar), "Are you able to tell me what I saw in my dream and interpret it?"

27Daniel replied, "No wise man, enchanter, magician or diviner can explain to the king the mystery he has asked about, 28but there is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries. He has shown King Nebuchadnezzar what will happen in days to come. Your dream and the visions that passed through your mind as you were lying in bed are these:

29"As Your Majesty was lying there, your mind turned to things to come, and the revealer of mysteries showed you what is going to happen. 30As for me, this mystery has been revealed to me, not because I have greater wisdom than anyone else alive, but so that Your Majesty may know the interpretation and that you may understand what went through your mind.

31"Your Majesty looked, and there before you stood a large statue—an enormous, dazzling statue, awesome in appearance. 32The head of the statue was made of pure gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, 33its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of baked clay. 34While you were watching, a rock was cut out, but not by human hands. It struck the statue on its feet of iron and clay and smashed them. 35Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver and the gold were all broken to pieces and became like chaff on a threshing floor in the summer. The wind swept them away without leaving a trace. But the rock that struck the statue became a huge mountain and filled the whole earth.

36"This was the dream, and now we will interpret it to the king. 37Your Majesty, you are the king of kings. The God of heaven has given you dominion and power and might and glory; 38in your hands he has placed all mankind and the beasts of the field and the birds in the sky. Wherever they live, he has made you ruler over them all. You are that head of gold.

39"After you, another kingdom will arise, inferior to yours. Next, a third kingdom, one of bronze, will rule over the whole earth. 40Finally, there will be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron—for iron breaks and smashes everything—and as iron breaks things to pieces, so it will crush and break all the others. 41Just as you saw that the feet and toes were partly of baked clay and partly of iron, so this will be

Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon (Da 3:1)

Nebuchadnezzar II reigned from 605 to 562 B.C., becoming the second and most famous king of the Neo-Babylonian or Chaldean dynasty (Da 3:1). As crown prince, he orchestrated the victory over the Egyptians at the crucial battle of Carchemish in 605 B.C.

The Chaldean king spent a great deal of effort in campaigning to the west—in Aram and Palestine—primarily to check Egyptian influence in the region. The Babylonian Chronicle, the primary historical source for the early periods of the Chaldean kingdom, records how Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 597 B.C. and deposed King Jehoiachin of Judah.

The destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., related by the historian of Kings (2Ki 25:1–21), is not mentioned in cuneiform records, since the Babylonian Chronicle breaks off after 594 B.C. The Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 37–100) does record Jerusalem's end in an account that apparently depends upon the Book of 2 Kings as a source.

Nebuchadnezzar was also known for his great building projects, especially in Babylon. These included a summer palace, a fortification of the city, the ziggurat (sometimes associated with the tower of Babel described in Ge 11), and the famous royal hanging gardens.

This Chaldean king is also well known from later Greek, Latin, and Jewish sources. The classical writers were impressed with his monumental building activity, while the Jewish writers, understandably, condemned him for his destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

a divided kingdom; yet it will have some of
the strength of iron in it, even as you saw iron
mixed with clay. 42As the toes were partly iron
and partly clay, so this kingdom will be partly
strong and partly brittle. 43And just as you saw
the iron mixed with baked clay, so the people
will be a mixture and will not remain united,
any more than iron mixes with clay.

44"In the time of those kings, the God of
heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be
destroyed, nor will it be left to another people.
It will crush all those kingdoms and bring them
to an end, but it will itself endure forever. 45This
is the meaning of the vision of the rock cut out
of a mountain, but not by human hands—a
rock that broke the iron, the bronze, the clay,
the silver and the gold to pieces.

"The great God has shown the king what will
take place in the future. The dream is true and
its interpretation is trustworthy."

46Then King Nebuchadnezzar fell prostrate
before Daniel and paid him honor and ordered
that an offering and incense be presented to
him. 47The king said to Daniel, "Surely your
God is the God of gods and the Lord of kings
and a revealer of mysteries, for you were able
to reveal this mystery."

48Then the king placed Daniel in a high posi-
tion and lavished many gifts on him. He made
him ruler over the entire province of Babylon
and placed him in charge of all its wise men.
49Moreover, at Daniel's request the king ap-
pointed Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego
administrators over the province of Babylon,
while Daniel himself remained at the royal
court.

The Image of Gold and the Blazing Furnace

3 1King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of
gold, sixty cubits high and six cubits wide,[a]
and set it up on the plain of Dura in the prov-
ince of Babylon. 2He then summoned the sa-
traps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers,
judges, magistrates and all the other provincial
officials to come to the dedication of the image
he had set up. 3So the satraps, prefects, gover-
nors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates
and all the other provincial officials assembled
for the dedication of the image that King Neb-
uchadnezzar had set up, and they stood be-
fore it.

4Then the herald loudly proclaimed, "Nations
and peoples of every language, this is what you
are commanded to do: 5As soon as you hear the
sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe
and all kinds of music, you must fall down and
worship the image of gold that King Nebuchad-
nezzar has set up. 6Whoever does not fall down
and worship will immediately be thrown into a
blazing furnace."

7Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound
of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds
of music, all the nations and peoples of every
language fell down and worshiped the image
of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.

8At this time some astrologers[b] came for-
ward and denounced the Jews. 9They said to
King Nebuchadnezzar, "May the king live for-
ever! 10Your Majesty has issued a decree that
everyone who hears the sound of the horn,
flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of
music must fall down and worship the image of
gold, 11and that whoever does not fall down and
worship will be thrown into a blazing furnace.
12But there are some Jews whom you have set

[a] *1* That is, about 90 feet high and 9 feet wide or about 27 meters high and 2.7 meters wide [b] *8* Or *Chaldeans*

over the affairs of the province of Babylon—Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego—who pay no attention to you, Your Majesty. They neither serve your gods nor worship the image of gold you have set up."

13Furious with rage, Nebuchadnezzar summoned Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. So these men were brought before the king, 14and Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods or worship the image of gold I have set up? 15Now when you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipe and all kinds of music, if you are ready to fall down and worship the image I made, very good. But if you do not worship it, you will be thrown immediately into a blazing furnace. Then what god will be able to rescue you from my hand?"

16Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us[a] from Your Majesty's hand. 18But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."

19Then Nebuchadnezzar was furious with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, and his attitude toward them changed. He ordered the furnace heated seven times hotter than usual 20and commanded some of the strongest soldiers in his army to tie up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego and throw them into the blazing furnace. 21So these men, wearing their robes, trousers, turbans and other clothes, were bound and thrown into the blazing furnace. 22The king's command was so urgent and the furnace so hot that the flames of the fire killed the soldiers who took up Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, 23and these three men, firmly tied, fell into the blazing furnace.

24Then King Nebuchadnezzar leaped to his feet in amazement and asked his advisers, "Weren't there three men that we tied up and threw into the fire?"

They replied, "Certainly, Your Majesty."

25He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."

26Nebuchadnezzar then approached the opening of the blazing furnace and shouted, "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, servants of the Most High God, come out! Come here!"

So Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego came out of the fire, 27and the satraps, prefects, governors and royal advisers crowded around them. They saw that the fire had not harmed their bodies, nor was a hair of their heads singed; their robes were not scorched, and there was no smell of fire on them.

28Then Nebuchadnezzar said, "Praise be to the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who has sent his angel and rescued his servants! They trusted in him and defied the king's command and were willing to give up their lives rather than serve or worship any god except their own God. 29Therefore I decree that the people of any nation or language who say anything against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego be cut into pieces and their houses be turned into piles of rubble, for no other god can save in this way."

30Then the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the province of Babylon.

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[a] *17* Or *If the God we serve is able to deliver us, then he will deliver us from the blazing furnace and*

Nebuchadenezzar's "body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird."

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream of a Tree

4[a] [1]King Nebuchadnezzar,

To the nations and peoples of every language, who live in all the earth:

May you prosper greatly!

[2]It is my pleasure to tell you about the miraculous signs and wonders that the Most High God has performed for me.

[3]How great are his signs,
how mighty his wonders!
His kingdom is an eternal kingdom;
his dominion endures from
generation to generation.

[4]I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. [5]I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. [6]So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. [7]When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers[b] and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. [8]Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream. (He is called Belteshazzar, after the name of my god, and the spirit of the holy gods is in him.)

[9]I said, "Belteshazzar, chief of the magicians, I know that the spirit of the holy gods is in you, and no mystery is too difficult for you. Here is my dream; interpret it for me. [10]These are the visions I saw while lying in bed: I looked, and there before me stood a tree in the middle of the land. Its height was enormous. [11]The tree grew large and strong and its top touched the sky; it was visible to the ends of the earth. [12]Its leaves were beautiful, its fruit abundant, and on it was food for all. Under it the wild animals found shelter, and the birds lived in its branches; from it every creature was fed.

[13]"In the visions I saw while lying in bed, I looked, and there before me was a holy one, a messenger,[c] coming down from heaven. [14]He called in a loud voice: 'Cut down the tree and trim off its branches; strip off its leaves and scatter its fruit. Let the animals flee from under it and the birds from its branches. [15]But let the stump and its roots, bound with iron and bronze, remain in the ground, in the grass of the field.

"'Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven, and let him live with the animals among the plants of the earth. [16]Let his mind be changed from that of a man and let him be given the mind of an animal, till seven times[d] pass by for him.

[17]"'The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of people.'

[18]"This is the dream that I, King Nebuchadnezzar, had. Now, Belteshazzar, tell me what it means, for none of the wise men in my kingdom can interpret it for me. But you can, because the spirit of the holy gods is in you."

Daniel Interprets the Dream

[19]Then Daniel (also called Belteshazzar) was greatly perplexed for a time, and his thoughts terrified him. So the king said, "Belteshazzar, do not let the dream or its meaning alarm you."

Belteshazzar answered, "My lord, if only the dream applied to your enemies and its meaning to your adversaries! [20]The tree you saw, which grew large and strong, with its top touching the sky, visible to the whole earth, [21]with beautiful leaves and abundant fruit, providing food for all, giving shelter to the wild animals, and having nesting places in its branches for the birds— [22]Your Majesty, you are that tree! You have become great and strong; your greatness has grown until it reaches the sky, and your dominion extends to distant parts of the earth.

[23]"Your Majesty saw a holy one, a messenger, coming down from heaven and

Beliefs & Ideas

The NIV "messenger" here is often translated "watcher," and is a kind of angel not mentioned anywhere in the Bible except Da 4:13, 23. Nevertheless, watchers are a prominent part of Jewish speculation of the last few centuries B.C. The medieval Jewish scholar Rashi explained the name by its similarity to the Hebrew word for "awake." Like God, the angels do not sleep (Ps 121:3, 4).

[a] In Aramaic texts 4:1-3 is numbered 3:31-33, and 4:4-37 is numbered 4:1-34. [b] *7* Or *Chaldeans* [c] *13* Or *watchman*; also in verses 17 and 23 [d] *16* Or *years*; also in verses 23, 25 and 32

saying, 'Cut down the tree and destroy it, but leave the stump, bound with iron and bronze, in the grass of the field, while its roots remain in the ground. Let him be drenched with the dew of heaven; let him live with the wild animals, until seven times pass by for him.'

24 "This is the interpretation, Your Majesty, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: 25 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes. 26 The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. 27 Therefore, Your Majesty, be pleased to accept my advice: Renounce your sins by doing what is right, and your wickedness by being kind to the oppressed. It may be that then your prosperity will continue."

The Dream Is Fulfilled

28 All this happened to King Nebuchadnezzar. 29 Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon, 30 he said, "Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?"

31 Even as the words were on his lips, a voice came from heaven, "This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. 32 You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like the ox. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and gives them to anyone he wishes."

33 Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like the ox. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like the feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird.

34 At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.

His dominion is an eternal dominion;
his kingdom endures from generation to generation.
35 All the peoples of the earth
are regarded as nothing.
He does as he pleases
with the powers of heaven
and the peoples of the earth.
No one can hold back his hand
or say to him: "What have you done?"

36 At the same time that my sanity was restored, my honor and splendor were returned to me for the glory of my kingdom. My advisers and nobles sought me out, and I was restored to my throne and became even greater than before. 37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

TRANSITION

Zedekiah's Alliances

While the exiles, including King Jehoiachin, were taken to Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar placed Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah on the throne, no doubt with clear instructions to remain faithful to Babylon. Mattaniah was given the throne name "Zedekiah."

Although Zedekiah was placed on the throne in Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and certainly swore fidelity to Babylon, his was a weak allegiance. Like his brother Jehoiakim before him, Zedekiah was often tempted by promises from Egypt. As far as Israel's political alliances were concerned, Zedekiah could just as well have been Jehoiakim again.

The final chapter of the Book of Jeremiah (ch. 52) appears to have been taken almost word for word from 2Ki 24:18—25:30. Some scholars suggest that a later editor, noting how the Book of Jeremiah jumps back and forth in time, felt the need to provide a chronological overview of Jeremiah's times.

- **2 Kings 24:18, 19**
- **Jeremiah 52:1, 2**

2 Kings 24:18, 19

Zedekiah King of Judah

24:18 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name

was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. 19He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done.

Jeremiah 52:1, 2

The Fall of Jerusalem

52 :1 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. 2He did evil in the eyes of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done.

[a] *1* A few Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac (see also 27:3,12 and 28:1); most Hebrew manuscripts *Jehoiakim* (Most Septuagint manuscripts do not have this verse.)

TRANSITION

Zedekiah's Jerusalem Conference

Almost immediately after becoming king, Zedekiah sponsored a conference of local nations. At this conference in Jerusalem, messengers from these neighboring lands discussed the possibility of a united rebellion against their Babylonian master. Excited by the possibilities, many prophets in Jerusalem began to foretell a great victory and the restoration of all that Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the city. As usual, Jeremiah was the lone dissenting voice. He declared that Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon was only doing God's will (Jer 27:6), and prophesied disaster on all who opposed Babylon.

Many of the oracles against the foreign nations (chs. 46–51) fit in this context. Jeremiah's message to Judah's neighbors was that the Lord would allow them to survive if they surrendered to the control of Babylon (Jer 27:1–11). Those who did not would fall to the invading Babylonian armies (48:1—49:39; 25:15–38). He had the same message for Zedekiah and Judah, despite the predictions of peace by such false prophets as Hananiah (27:12—28:17).

This conference is placed by Jer 27:1 "early" in Zedekiah's reign. Some Hebrew manuscripts and some major versions read "Jehoiakim" in place of "Zedekiah," and Jer 27:3 refers to King Zedekiah. Since the oracle takes place after Nebuchadnezzar had plundered the temple in 597 B.C. (27:20), it should be dated with Jer 28:1 in Zedekiah's 4th year (593 B.C.).

- **Jeremiah 27:1–11**
- **Jeremiah 48:1—49:39**
- **Jeremiah 25:15–38**
- **Jeremiah 27:12—28:17**

Jeremiah 27:1–11

Judah to Serve Nebuchadnezzar

27 :1 Early in the reign of Zedekiah[a] son of Josiah king of Judah, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2This is what the LORD said to me: "Make a yoke out of straps and crossbars and put it on your neck. 3Then send word to the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre and Sidon through the envoys who have come to Jerusalem to Zedekiah king of Judah. 4Give them a message for their masters and say, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Tell this to your masters: 5With my great power and outstretched arm I made the earth and its people and the animals that are on it, and I give it to anyone I please. 6Now I will give all your countries into the hands of my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; I will make even the wild animals subject to him. 7All nations will serve him and his son and his grandson until the time for his land comes; then many nations and great kings will subjugate him.

8" 'If, however, any nation or kingdom will not serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon or bow its neck under his yoke, I will punish that nation with the sword, famine and plague, declares the LORD, until I destroy it by his hand. 9So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your interpreters of dreams, your mediums or your sorcerers who tell you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon.' 10They prophesy lies to you that will only serve to remove you far from your lands; I will banish you and you will perish. 11But if any nation will bow its neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon and serve him, I will let that nation remain in its own land to till it and to live there, declares the LORD." '"

Jeremiah 48:1—49:39

A Message About Moab

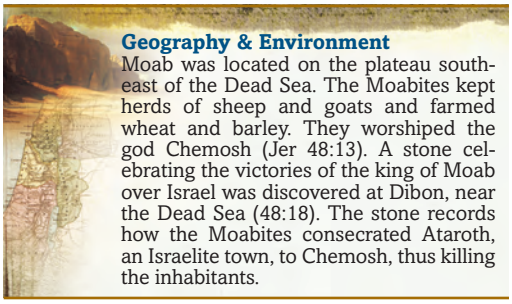
48 :1 Concerning Moab:

This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says:

Science & Technology

The basic motor power available for agriculture was the muscles of humans and animals. Animals pulled loads by means of a wooden yoke, a basic item known to everyone (Jer 27:2). The yoke was thus a symbol for doing work at the command of another. At its worst this was slavery or humiliation in war (Lev 26:13). At the other extreme it was a symbol for following the commandments of God (La 3:27; Mt 11:29).

"Woe to Nebo, for it will be ruined.
Kiriathaim will be disgraced and
captured;
the stronghold[a] will be disgraced and
shattered.
2 Moab will be praised no more;
in Heshbon[b] people will plot her downfall:
'Come, let us put an end to that nation.'
You, the people of Madmen,[c] will also be
silenced;
the sword will pursue you.
3 Cries of anguish arise from Horonaim,
cries of great havoc and destruction.
4 Moab will be broken;
her little ones will cry out.[d]
5 They go up the hill to Luhith,
weeping bitterly as they go;
on the road down to Horonaim
anguished cries over the destruction are
heard.
6 Flee! Run for your lives;
become like a bush[e] in the desert.
7 Since you trust in your deeds and riches,
you too will be taken captive,
and Chemosh will go into exile,
together with his priests and officials.
8 The destroyer will come against every
town,
and not a town will escape.
The valley will be ruined
and the plateau destroyed,
because the LORD has spoken.
9 Put salt on Moab,
for she will be laid waste[f];
her towns will become desolate,
with no one to live in them.



Geography & Environment
Moab was located on the plateau southeast of the Dead Sea. The Moabites kept herds of sheep and goats and farmed wheat and barley. They worshiped the god Chemosh (Jer 48:13). A stone celebrating the victories of the king of Moab over Israel was discovered at Dibon, near the Dead Sea (48:18). The stone records how the Moabites consecrated Ataroth, an Israelite town, to Chemosh, thus killing the inhabitants.

10 "A curse on anyone who is lax in doing the
LORD's work!
A curse on anyone who keeps their sword
from bloodshed!

11 "Moab has been at rest from youth,
like wine left on its dregs,
not poured from one jar to another—
she has not gone into exile.
So she tastes as she did,
and her aroma is unchanged.
12 But days are coming,"
declares the LORD,
"when I will send men who pour from
pitchers,
and they will pour her out;
they will empty her pitchers
and smash her jars.
13 Then Moab will be ashamed of Chemosh,
as Israel was ashamed
when they trusted in Bethel.

[a] *1* Or *captured; / Misgab* [b] *2* The Hebrew for *Heshbon* sounds like the Hebrew for *plot*. [c] *2* The name of the Moabite town Madmen sounds like the Hebrew for *be silenced*. [d] *4* Hebrew; Septuagint */ proclaim it to Zoar* [e] *6* Or *like Aroer* [f] *9* Or *Give wings to Moab, / for she will fly away*

The Neo-Babylonian Empire
In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar's 2-year siege of Carchemish proved successful, and most of the Assyrian Empire rapidly became the Babylonian Empire. In 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar conquered all of Judah, besieging and destroying Jerusalem and the Jewish temple in the process. At its zenith in 560 B.C. Babylon ruled the entire fertile crescent and Arabia, although Egypt regained autonomy.

14 "How can you say, 'We are warriors,
men valiant in battle'?
15 Moab will be destroyed and her towns
invaded;
her finest young men will go down in the
slaughter,"
declares the King, whose name is the
LORD Almighty.
16 "The fall of Moab is at hand;
her calamity will come quickly.
17 Mourn for her, all who live around her,
all who know her fame;
say, 'How broken is the mighty scepter,
how broken the glorious staff!'

18 "Come down from your glory
and sit on the parched ground,
you inhabitants of Daughter Dibon,
for the one who destroys Moab
will come up against you
and ruin your fortified cities.
19 Stand by the road and watch,
you who live in Aroer.
Ask the man fleeing and the woman
escaping,
ask them, 'What has happened?'
20 Moab is disgraced, for she is shattered.
Wail and cry out!
Announce by the Arnon
that Moab is destroyed.
21 Judgment has come to the plateau—
to Holon, Jahzah and Mephaath,
22 to Dibon, Nebo and Beth Diblathaim,
23 to Kiriathaim, Beth Gamul and Beth
Meon,
24 to Kerioth and Bozrah—
to all the towns of Moab, far and near.
25 Moab's horn[a] is cut off;
her arm is broken,"
declares the LORD.

26 "Make her drunk,
for she has defied the LORD.
Let Moab wallow in her vomit;
let her be an object of ridicule.
27 Was not Israel the object of your ridicule?
Was she caught among thieves,
that you shake your head in scorn
whenever you speak of her?
28 Abandon your towns and dwell among the
rocks,
you who live in Moab.
Be like a dove that makes its nest
at the mouth of a cave.

29 "We have heard of Moab's pride—
how great is her arrogance!—
of her insolence, her pride, her conceit
and the haughtiness of her heart.
30 I know her insolence but it is futile,"
declares the LORD,
"and her boasts accomplish nothing.
31 Therefore I wail over Moab,
for all Moab I cry out,
I moan for the people of Kir Hareseth.
32 I weep for you, as Jazer weeps,
you vines of Sibmah.
Your branches spread as far as the sea[b];
they reached as far as[c] Jazer.
The destroyer has fallen
on your ripened fruit and grapes.
33 Joy and gladness are gone
from the orchards and fields of Moab.
I have stopped the flow of wine from the
presses;
no one treads them with shouts of joy.
Although there are shouts,
they are not shouts of joy.

34 "The sound of their cry rises
from Heshbon to Elealeh and Jahaz,
from Zoar as far as Horonaim and Eglath
Shelishiyah,
for even the waters of Nimrim are
dried up.
35 In Moab I will put an end
to those who make offerings on the high
places
and burn incense to their gods,"
declares the LORD.
36 "So my heart laments for Moab like the
music of a pipe;
it laments like a pipe for the people of Kir
Hareseth.
The wealth they acquired is gone.
37 Every head is shaved
and every beard cut off;
every hand is slashed
and every waist is covered with sackcloth.

[a] *25* *Horn* here symbolizes strength. [b] *32* Probably the Dead Sea [c] *32* Two Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *as far as the Sea of*

TIME CAPSULE		604 to 601 B.C.
604		Baruch reads Jeremiah's scroll at the temple (Jer 36:10)
604		Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah's scroll (Jer 36:22, 23)
603		Nebuchadnezzar destroys Philistine city during campaign in Palestine
601		Necho repels a Babylonian invasion of Egypt's border
601		King Jehoiakim rebels against Babylonian rule

38 On all the roofs in Moab
and in the public squares
there is nothing but mourning,
for I have broken Moab
like a jar that no one wants,"
declares the LORD.
39 "How shattered she is! How they wail!
How Moab turns her back in shame!
Moab has become an object of ridicule,
an object of horror to all those around
her."

40 This is what the LORD says:

"Look! An eagle is swooping down,
spreading its wings over Moab.
41 Kerioth[a] will be captured
and the strongholds taken.
In that day the hearts of Moab's warriors
will be like the heart of a woman in labor.
42 Moab will be destroyed as a nation
because she defied the LORD.
43 Terror and pit and snare await you,
you people of Moab,"
declares the LORD.
44 "Whoever flees from the terror
will fall into a pit,
whoever climbs out of the pit
will be caught in a snare;
for I will bring on Moab
the year of her punishment,"
declares the LORD.

45 "In the shadow of Heshbon
the fugitives stand helpless,
for a fire has gone out from Heshbon,
a blaze from the midst of Sihon;
it burns the foreheads of Moab,
the skulls of the noisy boasters.
46 Woe to you, Moab!
The people of Chemosh are destroyed;
your sons are taken into exile
and your daughters into captivity.
47 "Yet I will restore the fortunes of Moab
in days to come,"
declares the LORD.

Here ends the judgment on Moab.

A Message About Ammon

49 1 Concerning the Ammonites:

This is what the LORD says:

"Has Israel no sons?
Has Israel no heir?
Why then has Molek[b] taken possession of
Gad?
Why do his people live in its
towns?
2 But the days are coming,"
declares the LORD,
"when I will sound the battle cry
against Rabbah of the Ammonites;
it will become a mound of ruins,
and its surrounding villages will be set on
fire.
Then Israel will drive out
those who drove her out,"
says the LORD.
3 "Wail, Heshbon, for Ai is destroyed!
Cry out, you inhabitants of Rabbah!
Put on sackcloth and mourn;
rush here and there inside the
walls,
for Molek will go into exile,
together with his priests and officials.
4 Why do you boast of your valleys,
boast of your valleys so fruitful?

[a] *41* Or *The cities* [b] *1* Or *their king*; also in verse 3

Unfaithful Daughter Ammon,
you trust in your riches and say,
'Who will attack me?'
5 I will bring terror on you
from all those around you,"
declares the Lord,
the Lord Almighty.
"Every one of you will be driven
away,
and no one will gather the fugitives.

6 "Yet afterward, I will restore the fortunes of
the Ammonites,"
declares the Lord.

A Message About Edom

7 Concerning Edom:

This is what the Lord Almighty says:

"Is there no longer wisdom in Teman?
Has counsel perished from the
prudent?
Has their wisdom decayed?
8 Turn and flee, hide in deep caves,
you who live in Dedan,
for I will bring disaster on Esau
at the time when I punish him.
9 If grape pickers came to you,
would they not leave a few grapes?
If thieves came during the night,
would they not steal only as much as they
wanted?
10 But I will strip Esau bare;
I will uncover his hiding places,
so that he cannot conceal himself.
His armed men are destroyed,
also his allies and neighbors,
so there is no one to say,
11 'Leave your fatherless children; I will keep
them alive.
Your widows too can depend on me.'"

12 This is what the Lord says: "If those who do not deserve to drink the cup must drink it, why should you go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, but must drink it. 13 I swear by myself," declares the Lord, "that Bozrah will become a ruin and a curse,[a] an object of horror and reproach; and all its towns will be in ruins forever."

14 I have heard a message from the Lord;
an envoy was sent to the nations to say,
"Assemble yourselves to attack it!
Rise up for battle!"

15 "Now I will make you small among the
nations,
despised by mankind.
16 The terror you inspire
and the pride of your heart have deceived
you,
you who live in the clefts of the rocks,
who occupy the heights of the hill.
Though you build your nest as high as the
eagle's,
from there I will bring you down,"
declares the Lord.
17 "Edom will become an object of horror;
all who pass by will be appalled and will
scoff
because of all its wounds.
18 As Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown,
along with their neighboring towns,"
says the Lord,
"so no one will live there;
no people will dwell in it.

19 "Like a lion coming up from Jordan's
thickets
to a rich pastureland,
I will chase Edom from its land in an
instant.
Who is the chosen one I will appoint for
this?
Who is like me and who can challenge me?
And what shepherd can stand
against me?"

20 Therefore, hear what the Lord has planned
against Edom,
what he has purposed against those who
live in Teman:
The young of the flock will be dragged
away;
their pasture will be appalled at their fate.
21 At the sound of their fall the earth will
tremble;
their cry will resound to the Red Sea.[b]
22 Look! An eagle will soar and swoop down,
spreading its wings over Bozrah.
In that day the hearts of Edom's warriors
will be like the heart of a woman in labor.

A Message About Damascus

23 Concerning Damascus:

"Hamath and Arpad are dismayed,
for they have heard bad news.
They are disheartened,
troubled like[c] the restless sea.
24 Damascus has become feeble,
she has turned to flee
and panic has gripped her;

[a] *13* That is, its name will be used in cursing (see 29:22); or, others will see that it is cursed. [b] *21* Or *the Sea of Reeds* [c] *23* Hebrew *on* or *by*

anguish and pain have seized her,
pain like that of a woman in labor.
25 Why has the city of renown not been abandoned,
the town in which I delight?
26 Surely, her young men will fall in the streets;
all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,"
declares the LORD Almighty.
27 "I will set fire to the walls of Damascus;
it will consume the fortresses of Ben-Hadad."

A Message About Kedar and Hazor

28 Concerning Kedar and the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon attacked:

This is what the LORD says:

"Arise, and attack Kedar
and destroy the people of the East.
29 Their tents and their flocks will be taken;
their shelters will be carried off
with all their goods and camels.
People will shout to them,
'Terror on every side!'

30 "Flee quickly away!
Stay in deep caves, you who live in Hazor,"
declares the LORD.
"Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has plotted against you;
he has devised a plan against you.

31 "Arise and attack a nation at ease,
which lives in confidence,"
declares the LORD,
"a nation that has neither gates nor bars;
its people live far from danger.
32 Their camels will become plunder,
and their large herds will be spoils of war.
I will scatter to the winds those who are in distant places[a]
and will bring disaster on them from every side,"
declares the LORD.

Geography & Environment
The people of Kedar were basically the same people later called Arabs (Jer 49:28). They were nomads, living in tents made of black goat hair (Ps 120:5; SS 1:5). They kept sheep and goats (Eze 27:21), but lived in the wilderness rather than in towns or pasturelands. Isaiah recalls their archers (Isa 21:17). Their traditional ancestor was one of the sons of Ishmael (Ge 25:13).

33 "Hazor will become a haunt of jackals,
a desolate place forever.
No one will live there;
no people will dwell in it."

A Message About Elam

34 This is the word of the LORD that came to Jeremiah the prophet concerning Elam, early in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah:

35 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"See, I will break the bow of Elam,
the mainstay of their might.
36 I will bring against Elam the four winds
from the four quarters of heaven;
I will scatter them to the four winds,
and there will not be a nation
where Elam's exiles do not go.
37 I will shatter Elam before their foes,
before those who want to kill them;
I will bring disaster on them,
even my fierce anger,"
declares the LORD.
"I will pursue them with the sword
until I have made an end of them.
38 I will set my throne in Elam
and destroy her king and officials,"
declares the LORD.

39 "Yet I will restore the fortunes of Elam
in days to come,"
declares the LORD.

Jeremiah 25:15–38

The Cup of God's Wrath

25 :15 This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, said to me: "Take from my hand this cup filled with the wine of my wrath and make all the nations to whom I send you drink it. 16 When they drink it, they will stagger and go mad because of the sword I will send among them."

17 So I took the cup from the LORD's hand and made all the nations to whom he sent me drink it: 18 Jerusalem and the towns of Judah, its kings and officials, to make them a ruin and an object of horror and scorn, a curse[b]—as they are today; 19 Pharaoh king of Egypt, his attendants, his officials and all his people, 20 and all the foreign people there; all the kings of Uz; all the kings of the Philistines (those of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and the people left at Ashdod); 21 Edom, Moab and Ammon; 22 all the kings of

[a] *32* Or *who clip the hair by their foreheads* [b] *18* That is, their names to be used in cursing (see 29:22); or, to be seen by others as cursed

Tyre and Sidon; the kings of the coastlands across the sea; 23Dedan, Tema, Buz and all who are in distant places[a]; 24all the kings of Arabia and all the kings of the foreign people who live in the wilderness; 25all the kings of Zimri, Elam and Media; 26and all the kings of the north, near and far, one after the other—all the kingdoms on the face of the earth. And after all of them, the king of Sheshak[b] will drink it too.

27"Then tell them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Drink, get drunk and vomit, and fall to rise no more because of the sword I will send among you.' 28But if they refuse to take the cup from your hand and drink, tell them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty says: You must drink it! 29See, I am beginning to bring disaster on the city that bears my Name, and will you indeed go unpunished? You will not go unpunished, for I am calling down a sword on all who live on the earth, declares the LORD Almighty.'

30"Now prophesy all these words against them and say to them:

"'The LORD will roar from on high;
he will thunder from his holy dwelling
and roar mightily against his land.
He will shout like those who tread the grapes,
shout against all who live on the earth.
31The tumult will resound to the ends of the earth,
for the LORD will bring charges against the nations;
he will bring judgment on all mankind
and put the wicked to the sword,'"
declares the LORD.

32This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Look! Disaster is spreading
from nation to nation;
a mighty storm is rising
from the ends of the earth."

33At that time those slain by the LORD will be everywhere—from one end of the earth to the other. They will not be mourned or gathered up or buried, but will be like dung lying on the ground.

34Weep and wail, you shepherds;
roll in the dust, you leaders of the flock.
For your time to be slaughtered has come;
you will fall like the best of the rams.[c]
35The shepherds will have nowhere to flee,
the leaders of the flock no place to escape.
36Hear the cry of the shepherds,
the wailing of the leaders of the flock,
for the LORD is destroying their pasture.
37The peaceful meadows will be laid waste
because of the fierce anger of the LORD.
38Like a lion he will leave his lair,
and their land will become desolate
because of the sword[d] of the oppressor
and because of the LORD's fierce anger.

[a] *23* Or *who clip the hair by their foreheads* [b] *26* *Sheshak* is a cryptogram for Babylon. [c] *34* Septuagint; Hebrew *fall and be shattered like fine pottery* [d] *38* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint (see also 46:16 and 50:16); most Hebrew manuscripts *anger*

Jeremiah 27:12—28:17

27:12 I gave the same message to Zedekiah king of Judah. I said, "Bow your neck under the yoke of the king of Babylon; serve him and his people, and you will live. 13Why

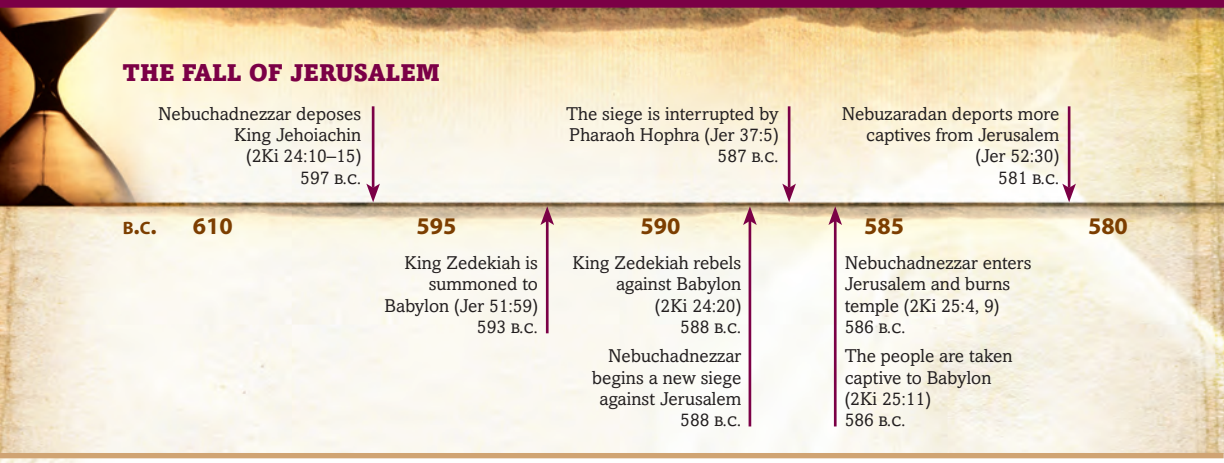
Ekron Drinks God's Wine Cup of Fury (Jer 25:20)

Ekron was one of the cities of the Philistine Pentapolis—an alliance of five cities which also included Ashkelon, Gath, Ashdod, and Gaza. It was located in the Shephelah, bordering on Judah's territory.

By the time of Jeremiah the Pentapolis was reduced by one, as Gath is no longer mentioned by the prophets Jeremiah (Jer 25:20), Zephaniah (Zep 2:4), or Zechariah (Zec 9:5). The remainder of the Philistine cities were also in danger of being destroyed, as Jeremiah's prophecy suggests. The kings of Ashkelon, Gaza, Ekron, and Ashdod are included among those Jeremiah made to drink God's "cup filled with the wine of [his] wrath" (Jer 25:15–17, 20).

Moreover, an Aramaic letter, known as the Saqqara Papyrus in Egypt, supports Jeremiah's warnings of coming destruction. The letter, written by a certain King Adon of one of the Philistine city-states, urgently requests aid from Egypt because of an approaching Babylonian invasion of Palestine. Such a letter could have been sent during or shortly after the time of Egypt's King Psammetichus I (664–610 B.C.), who had reunited Egypt and then aided Assyria against the rising power of Babylon. Some scholars suppose that Adon may indeed have been the king at Ekron.

The Babylonian Chronicle describes the destruction of a Philistine city during the campaign in 603 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar II. The name of the Philistine city, however, is not mentioned, and so possibly could have been Ekron. That Ekron did drink the wine cup of fury is possible, since the city is not named in any records again until the late Hellenistic period (after 150 B.C.).



will you and your people die by the sword, famine and plague with which the LORD has threatened any nation that will not serve the king of Babylon? 14Do not listen to the words of the prophets who say to you, 'You will not serve the king of Babylon,' for they are prophesying lies to you. 15'I have not sent them,' declares the LORD. 'They are prophesying lies in my name. Therefore, I will banish you and you will perish, both you and the prophets who prophesy to you.'"

16Then I said to the priests and all these people, "This is what the LORD says: Do not listen to the prophets who say, 'Very soon now the articles from the LORD's house will be brought back from Babylon.' They are prophesying lies to you. 17Do not listen to them. Serve the king of Babylon, and you will live. Why should this city become a ruin? 18If they are prophets and have the word of the LORD, let them plead with the LORD Almighty that the articles remaining in the house of the LORD and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem not be taken to Babylon. 19For this is what the LORD Almighty says about the pillars, the bronze Sea, the movable stands and the other articles that are left in this city, 20which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon did not take away when he carried Jehoiachin[a] son of Jehoiakim king of Judah into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon, along with all the nobles of Judah and Jerusalem— 21yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says about the things that are left in the house of the LORD and in the palace of the king of Judah and in Jerusalem: 22'They will be taken to Babylon and there they will remain until the day I come for them,' declares the LORD. 'Then I will bring them back and restore them to this place.'"

TIME CAPSULE		600 to 598 B.C.
600		Epimenides, poet from Crete
600		Greeks adopt from the East the custom of reclining at feasts
599		Nebuchadnezzar remains in Babylon to resupply his army
598		Nebuchadnezzar leaves Babylon in December to campaign against Judah
598–597		Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem
598		King Jehoiakim dies, possibly during siege of Jerusalem

The False Prophet Hananiah

28 1In the fifth month of that same year, the fourth year, early in the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, the prophet Hananiah son of Azzur, who was from Gibeon, said to me in the house of the LORD in the presence of the priests and all the people: 2"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. 3Within two years I will bring back to this place all the articles of the LORD's house that Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon removed from here and took to Babylon. 4I will also bring back to this place Jehoiachin[a] son of Jehoiakim king of Judah and all the other exiles from Judah who went to Babylon,' declares the LORD, 'for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon.'"

5Then the prophet Jeremiah replied to the prophet Hananiah before the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the LORD. 6He said, "Amen! May the LORD do so! May the LORD fulfill the words you have prophesied by bringing the articles of the

[a] *20,4* Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant of *Jehoiachin*

LORD's house and all the exiles back to this place from Babylon. 7Nevertheless, listen to what I have to say in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people: 8From early times the prophets who preceded you and me have prophesied war, disaster and plague against many countries and great kingdoms. 9But the prophet who prophesies peace will be recognized as one truly sent by the LORD only if his prediction comes true."

10Then the prophet Hananiah took the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah and broke it, 11and he said before all the people, "This is what the LORD says: 'In the same way I will break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon off the neck of all the nations within two years.'" At this, the prophet Jeremiah went on his way.

12After the prophet Hananiah had broken the yoke off the neck of the prophet Jeremiah, the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13"Go and tell Hananiah, 'This is what the LORD says: You have broken a wooden yoke, but in its place you will get a yoke of iron. 14This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will put an iron yoke on the necks of all these nations to make them serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and they will serve him. I will even give him control over the wild animals.'"

15Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah the prophet, "Listen, Hananiah! The LORD has not sent you, yet you have persuaded this nation to trust in lies. 16Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'I am about to remove you from the face of the earth. This very year you are going to die, because you have preached rebellion against the LORD.'"

17In the seventh month of that same year, Hananiah the prophet died.

[a] *2* Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant of *Jehoiachin* [b] *14* Or *will restore your fortunes*

TRANSITION

Letter to the Exiles

Jeremiah never lost his c onviction that Israel's hope la y in the e xiles in Bab ylon (see "Prophetic Account: Zedekiah and Jer emiah" at Jer 24:1). This hope, however, was not t o be fulfilled immediately. The exiles would not return to Israel for years yet, and Jer emiah wrote to tell them so (Jer 29:1–32). This was hardly the message that they wanted to hear. Indeed, one of the e xiles, a certain Shemaiah, wrote back to Jerusalem demanding that Jeremiah be impr isoned (29:24–28). As always, Jeremiah's message was rejected.

• **Jeremiah 29:1–32**

Jeremiah

A Letter to the Exiles

29 :1 This is the text of the letter that the prophet Jeremiah sent from Jerusalem to the surviving elders among the exiles and to the priests, the prophets and all the other people Nebuchadnezzar had carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. 2(This was after King Jehoiachin[a] and the queen mother, the court officials and the leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the skilled workers and the artisans had gone into exile from Jerusalem.) 3He entrusted the letter to Elasah son of Shaphan and to Gemariah son of Hilkiah, whom Zedekiah king of Judah sent to King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. It said:

4This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: 5"Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. 6Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. 7Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." 8Yes, this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let the prophets and diviners among you deceive you. Do not listen to the dreams you encourage them to have. 9They are prophesying lies to you in my name. I have not sent them," declares the LORD.

10This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. 11For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. 14I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity.[b] I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

15You may say, "The LORD has raised up prophets for us in Babylon," 16but this is what the LORD says about the king who sits

on David's throne and all the people who remain in this city, your fellow citizens who did not go with you into exile— 17yes, this is what the LORD Almighty says: "I will send the sword, famine and plague against them and I will make them like figs that are so bad they cannot be eaten. 18I will pursue them with the sword, famine and plague and will make them abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth, a curse[a] and an object of horror, of scorn and reproach, among all the nations where I drive them. 19For they have not listened to my words," declares the LORD, "words that I sent to them again and again by my servants the prophets. And you exiles have not listened either," declares the LORD.

20Therefore, hear the word of the LORD, all you exiles whom I have sent away from Jerusalem to Babylon. 21This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says about Ahab son of Kolaiah and Zedekiah son of Maaseiah, who are prophesying lies to you in my name: "I will deliver them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will put them to death before your very eyes. 22Because of them, all the exiles from Judah who are in Babylon will use this curse: 'May the LORD treat you like Zedekiah and Ahab, whom the king of Babylon burned in the fire.' 23For they have done outrageous things in Israel; they have committed adultery with their neighbors' wives, and in my name they have uttered lies—which I did not authorize. I know it and am a witness to it," declares the LORD.

Message to Shemaiah

24Tell Shemaiah the Nehelamite, 25"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You sent letters in your own name to all the people in Jerusalem, to the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah, and to all the other priests. You said to Zephaniah, 26'The LORD has appointed you priest in place of Jehoiada to be in charge of the house of the LORD; you should put any maniac who acts like a prophet into the stocks and neck-irons. 27So why have you not reprimanded Jeremiah from Anathoth, who poses as a prophet among you? 28He has sent this message to us in Babylon: It will be a long time. Therefore build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.'"

29Zephaniah the priest, however, read the letter to Jeremiah the prophet. 30Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 31"Send this message to all the exiles: 'This is what the LORD says about Shemaiah the Nehelamite: Because Shemaiah has prophesied to you, even though I did not send him, and has persuaded you to trust in lies, 32this is what the LORD says: I will surely punish Shemaiah the Nehelamite and his descendants. He will have no one left among this people, nor will he see the good things I will do for my people, declares the LORD, because he has preached rebellion against me.'"

TRANSITION

Oracles Against Babylon

Jeremiah had declared that Babylon was only doing what God wanted, but this did not mean that Babylon would never be punished for its own sins. In Zedekiah's 4th year (593 B.C.), the king was summoned to Babylon (Jer 51:59–64). Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar had heard about Zedekiah's Jerusalem conference (Jer 27) and wanted an explanation. In any case, Jeremiah used the king's journey to send another letter, this one filled with his oracles about Babylon's coming judgment (50:1—51:58).

- **Jeremiah 50:1—51:64**

Jeremiah

A Message About Babylon

50:1 This is the word the LORD spoke through Jeremiah the prophet concerning Babylon and the land of the Babylonians[b]:

2"Announce and proclaim among the nations,
lift up a banner and proclaim it;
keep nothing back, but say,
'Babylon will be captured;
Bel will be put to shame,
Marduk filled with terror.
Her images will be put to shame
and her idols filled with terror.'
3A nation from the north will attack her
and lay waste her land.
No one will live in it;
both people and animals will flee away.

4"In those days, at that time,"
declares the LORD,
"the people of Israel and the people of Judah together
will go in tears to seek the LORD their God.

[a] *18* That is, their names will be used in cursing (see verse 22); or, others will see that they are cursed.
[b] *1* Or *Chaldeans*; also in verses 8, 25, 35 and 45

Marduk Ascends the Divine Ranks (Jer 50:2)

Jeremiah announced the utter defeat of Babylon in the theological language of the people he had spent so much of his prophetic career confronting. The patron deity they believed in would prove to be the nothing Jeremiah had always proclaimed him to be: "Bel will be put to shame, Marduk filled with terror" (Jer 50:2). The downfall of Babylon, the city whose armies destroyed Judah and Jerusalem, would mean also the downfall of her deities and their images.

Before 2000 B.C. Marduk (or Merodach), one of the sons of the god Enki, was a minor deity in the pantheon of the Sumerians. He became the patron deity of Babylon, and then rose in status during the reign of Hammurabi, sixth king of the 1st Dynasty of Babylon (1792–1750 B.C.). When Hammurabi gained control over all of Mesopotamia, Marduk, the god of the ruling city, became the ruling god of the conquered territory as well. The 1st Dynasty built the temple area called Esagila to honor Marduk for the victorious expansion of power.

Marduk's prestige waned after the 1st Dynasty. The victory of Nebuchadnezzar I over Elam (c. 1120 B.C.), however, brought new theological activity in Babylon, producing a cult with Marduk worshiped as the great cosmic ruler. The Babylonian creation epic, the Enuma Elish, relates Marduk's creation of the universe and celebrates the order which the god maintained. The title "Bel" (meaning "lord") became synonymous with Marduk, and from this period Bel Marduk was considered the divine lord of the universe.

In the early 1st millennium B.C. Assyria became the prominent power in Mesopotamia. Marduk was incorporated into the Assyrian pantheon, and, when the Assyrian king Sennacherib demolished Babylon in 689 B.C., the image of Marduk was reverently taken to the Assyrian capital. In accordance with ancient theology, Marduk was made subordinate to the victorious Ashur, patron deity of Assyria.

By Jeremiah's time the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626–539 B.C.) had reestablished Babylon's supremacy in Mesopotamia and beyond. Marduk was again seen by all the conquered people as the supreme deity whose city was victorious because of his might. Jeremiah used this theology, believed even by his contemporaries in Judah, to declare the coming end of Babylon and its god. For Jeremiah there was no doubt that Marduk was nothing; he was "filled with terror" (Jer 50:2). Furthermore, Israel's God was in charge, declaring, "I will punish Bel in Babylon" (Jer 51:44).

5 They will ask the way to Zion
and turn their faces toward it.
They will come and bind themselves to the LORD
in an everlasting covenant
that will not be forgotten.

6 "My people have been lost sheep;
their shepherds have led them astray
and caused them to roam on the mountains.
They wandered over mountain and hill
and forgot their own resting place.
7 Whoever found them devoured them;
their enemies said, 'We are not guilty,
for they sinned against the LORD, their verdant pasture,
the LORD, the hope of their ancestors.'

8 "Flee out of Babylon;
leave the land of the Babylonians,
and be like the goats that lead the flock.
9 For I will stir up and bring against Babylon
an alliance of great nations from the land of the north.
They will take up their positions against her,
and from the north she will be captured.
Their arrows will be like skilled warriors
who do not return empty-handed.
10 So Babylonia[a] will be plundered;
all who plunder her will have their fill,"
declares the LORD.

11 "Because you rejoice and are glad,
you who pillage my inheritance,
because you frolic like a heifer threshing grain
and neigh like stallions,
12 your mother will be greatly ashamed;
she who gave you birth will be disgraced.
She will be the least of the nations—
a wilderness, a dry land, a desert.
13 Because of the LORD's anger she will not be inhabited
but will be completely desolate.
All who pass Babylon will be appalled;
they will scoff because of all her wounds.

14 "Take up your positions around Babylon,
all you who draw the bow.
Shoot at her! Spare no arrows,
for she has sinned against the LORD.
15 Shout against her on every side!
She surrenders, her towers fall,
her walls are torn down.
Since this is the vengeance of the LORD,
take vengeance on her;
do to her as she has done to others.

[a] *10* Or *Chaldea*

Sargon II Devours Israel (Jer 50:17)

Sargon was the throne name of an Assyrian king who probably usurped the throne in the late 8th century (c. 722 B.C.). His name is mentioned only once in the Bible: the prophet Isaiah records that he received an oracle in about 712 B.C., the year that "Sargon king of Assyria" campaigned against Ashdod (Isa 20:1).

Like his two immediate predecessors, Tiglath-Pileser III and Shalmaneser V, Sargon II mounted extensive military campaigns in Syro-Palestine. Though the Bible appears to give credit to Shalmaneser for besieging and taking Samaria (2Ki 17:3–6; 18:9, 10), Sargon in his annals claims to have conquered the city in 722 B.C. It is likely that both kings played a role in the conquest, with Shalmaneser conducting the siege and Sargon actually leading the Israelites into exile.

In his annals and inscriptions Sargon boasts about Samaria's fall. One claim tallies over 27,000 inhabitants of Samaria who were deported. Another claim states that Sargon subsequently rebuilt the city "better than it was before," and placed an Assyrian official there, as well as inhabitants brought from other lands. Archaeological excavations at Samaria from this period have revealed a fragment of a stele (stone slab) dedicated to Sargon, and a cuneiform text that mentions a local Assyrian governor.

As the prophet Jeremiah pictures Israel as a "scattered flock" of sheep, he reflects on Sargon's capture of the northern kingdom's capital at Samaria. Just as lions attack sheep, so did Sargon the king of Assyria "devour" Israel (Jer 50:17).

16 Cut off from Babylon the sower,
and the reaper with his sickle at harvest.
Because of the sword of the oppressor
let everyone return to their own people,
let everyone flee to their own land.

17 "Israel is a scattered flock
that lions have chased away.
The first to devour them
was the king of Assyria;
the last to crush their bones
was Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon."

18 Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty,
the God of Israel, says:

"I will punish the king of Babylon and his land
as I punished the king of Assyria.
19 But I will bring Israel back to their own pasture,
and they will graze on Carmel and Bashan;
their appetite will be satisfied
on the hills of Ephraim and Gilead.
20 In those days, at that time,"
declares the LORD,
"search will be made for Israel's guilt,
but there will be none,
and for the sins of Judah,
but none will be found,
for I will forgive the remnant I spare.

21 "Attack the land of Merathaim
and those who live in Pekod.
Pursue, kill and completely destroy[a] them,"
declares the LORD.
"Do everything I have commanded you.
22 The noise of battle is in the land,
the noise of great destruction!
23 How broken and shattered
is the hammer of the whole earth!
How desolate is Babylon
among the nations!
24 I set a trap for you, Babylon,
and you were caught before you knew it;
you were found and captured
because you opposed the LORD.
25 The LORD has opened his arsenal
and brought out the weapons of his wrath,
for the Sovereign LORD Almighty has work to do
in the land of the Babylonians.
26 Come against her from afar.
Break open her granaries;
pile her up like heaps of grain.
Completely destroy her
and leave her no remnant.
27 Kill all her young bulls;
let them go down to the slaughter!
Woe to them! For their day has come,
the time for them to be punished.
28 Listen to the fugitives and refugees from Babylon
declaring in Zion
how the LORD our God has taken vengeance,
vengeance for his temple.

29 "Summon archers against Babylon,
all those who draw the bow.
Encamp all around her;
let no one escape.

[a] *21* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verse 26.

Repay her for her deeds;
do to her as she has done.
For she has defied the LORD,
the Holy One of Israel.
30 Therefore, her young men will fall in the streets;
all her soldiers will be silenced in that day,"
declares the LORD.
31 "See, I am against you, you arrogant one,"
declares the Lord, the LORD Almighty,
"for your day has come,
the time for you to be punished.
32 The arrogant one will stumble and fall
and no one will help her up;
I will kindle a fire in her towns
that will consume all who are around her."

33 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"The people of Israel are oppressed,
and the people of Judah as well.
All their captors hold them fast,
refusing to let them go.
34 Yet their Redeemer is strong;
the LORD Almighty is his name.
He will vigorously defend their cause
so that he may bring rest to their land,
but unrest to those who live in Babylon.

35 "A sword against the Babylonians!"
declares the LORD—
"against those who live in Babylon
and against her officials and wise men!
36 A sword against her false prophets!
They will become fools.
A sword against her warriors!
They will be filled with terror.
37 A sword against her horses and chariots
and all the foreigners in her ranks!
They will become weaklings.
A sword against her treasures!
They will be plundered.
38 A drought on[a] her waters!
They will dry up.
For it is a land of idols,
idols that will go mad with terror.

39 "So desert creatures and hyenas will live there,
and there the owl will dwell.
It will never again be inhabited
or lived in from generation to generation.
40 As I overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah
along with their neighboring towns,"
declares the LORD,
"so no one will live there;
no people will dwell in it.

41 "Look! An army is coming from the north;
a great nation and many kings
are being stirred up from the ends of the earth.
42 They are armed with bows and spears;
they are cruel and without mercy.
They sound like the roaring sea
as they ride on their horses;
they come like men in battle formation
to attack you, Daughter Babylon.
43 The king of Babylon has heard reports about them,
and his hands hang limp.
Anguish has gripped him,
pain like that of a woman in labor.
44 Like a lion coming up from Jordan's thickets
to a rich pastureland,
I will chase Babylon from its land in an instant.
Who is the chosen one I will appoint for this?
Who is like me and who can challenge me?
And what shepherd can stand against me?"

45 Therefore, hear what the LORD has planned against Babylon,
what he has purposed against the land of the Babylonians:
The young of the flock will be dragged away;
their pasture will be appalled at their fate.
46 At the sound of Babylon's capture the earth will tremble;
its cry will resound among the nations.

[a] 38 Or *A sword against*

TIME CAPSULE		598 to 597 B.C.
598		Jehoiachin becomes king in Judah
597		Nebuchadnezzar captures Jerusalem and deposes King Jehoiachin
597		The prophet Ezekiel is among Judeans deported to Babylon
597		Nebuchadnezzar replaces Jehoiachin with his uncle Mattaniah
597		Nebuchadnezzar gives Mattaniah the throne name "Zedekiah" (2Ki 24:17)
597		Zedekiah becomes king in Judah

51 [1]This is what the LORD says:
"See, I will stir up the spirit of a destroyer
against Babylon and the people of Leb
Kamai.[a]
[2]I will send foreigners to Babylon
to winnow her and to devastate her land;
they will oppose her on every side
in the day of her disaster.
[3]Let not the archer string his bow,
nor let him put on his armor.
Do not spare her young men;
completely destroy[b] her army.
[4]They will fall down slain in Babylon,[c]
fatally wounded in her streets.
[5]For Israel and Judah have not been
forsaken
by their God, the LORD Almighty,
though their land[d] is full of guilt
before the Holy One of Israel.

[6]"Flee from Babylon!
Run for your lives!
Do not be destroyed because of her
sins.
It is time for the LORD's vengeance;
he will repay her what she deserves.
[7]Babylon was a gold cup in the LORD's
hand;
she made the whole earth drunk.
The nations drank her wine;
therefore they have now gone mad.
[8]Babylon will suddenly fall and be broken.
Wail over her!
Get balm for her pain;
perhaps she can be healed.

[9]"'We would have healed Babylon,
but she cannot be healed;
let us leave her and each go to our own
land,
for her judgment reaches to the skies,
it rises as high as the heavens.'

[10]"'The LORD has vindicated us;
come, let us tell in Zion
what the LORD our God has done.'

Science & Technology
Archers riding in chariots could shoot their arrows without stopping (Jer 51:3). One kind of armor for chariot archers was a long-sleeved leather shirt coming to the knees. Scales were sewn to the shirt, like fish scales, and a suit of armor might contain 500 to 1,000 scales and weigh about 50 pounds. This kind of armor appears in ancient Assyrian art, and many copper scales have also been discovered.

[11]"Sharpen the arrows,
take up the shields!
The LORD has stirred up the kings of the
Medes,
because his purpose is to destroy
Babylon.
The LORD will take vengeance,
vengeance for his temple.
[12]Lift up a banner against the walls of
Babylon!
Reinforce the guard,
station the watchmen,
prepare an ambush!
The LORD will carry out his purpose,
his decree against the people of Babylon.
[13]You who live by many waters
and are rich in treasures,
your end has come,
the time for you to be destroyed.
[14]The LORD Almighty has sworn by himself:
I will surely fill you with troops, as with a
swarm of locusts,
and they will shout in triumph over you.

[15]"He made the earth by his power;
he founded the world by his wisdom
and stretched out the heavens by his
understanding.
[16]When he thunders, the waters in the
heavens roar;
he makes clouds rise from the ends of the
earth.
He sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his
storehouses.

[17]"Everyone is senseless and without
knowledge;
every goldsmith is shamed by his idols.
The images he makes are a fraud;
they have no breath in them.
[18]They are worthless, the objects of mockery;
when their judgment comes, they will
perish.
[19]He who is the Portion of Jacob is not like
these,
for he is the Maker of all things,
including the people of his inheritance—
the LORD Almighty is his name.

[20]"You are my war club,
my weapon for battle—
with you I shatter nations,
with you I destroy kingdoms,

[a] *1 Leb Kamai* is a cryptogram for Chaldea, that is, Babylonia.
[b] *3* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. [c] *4* Or *Chaldea* [d] *5* Or *Almighty, / and the land of the Babylonians*

Health & Medicine
Balm is a kind of resin taken from trees by cutting the bark. It was used as a perfume and was considered effective as a medicine (Jer 51:8). Although Gilead is mentioned together with balm (Jer 8:22; 46:11), the substance was not produced in Gilead. It may have been transported through Gilead or sold there. Ancient pharmaceuticals consisted mainly of plant products recommended by tradition.

21 with you I shatter horse and rider,
with you I shatter chariot and driver,
22 with you I shatter man and woman,
with you I shatter old man and youth,
with you I shatter young man and young woman,
23 with you I shatter shepherd and flock,
with you I shatter farmer and oxen,
with you I shatter governors and officials.

24 "Before your eyes I will repay Babylon and all who live in Babylonia[a] for all the wrong they have done in Zion," declares the LORD.

25 "I am against you, you destroying mountain,
you who destroy the whole earth,"
declares the LORD.
"I will stretch out my hand against you,
roll you off the cliffs,
and make you a burned-out mountain.
26 No rock will be taken from you for a cornerstone,
nor any stone for a foundation,
for you will be desolate forever,"
declares the LORD.

27 "Lift up a banner in the land!
Blow the trumpet among the nations!
Prepare the nations for battle against her;
summon against her these kingdoms:
Ararat, Minni and Ashkenaz.
Appoint a commander against her;
send up horses like a swarm of locusts.
28 Prepare the nations for battle against her—
the kings of the Medes,
their governors and all their officials,
and all the countries they rule.
29 The land trembles and writhes,
for the LORD's purposes against Babylon stand—
to lay waste the land of Babylon
so that no one will live there.
30 Babylon's warriors have stopped fighting;
they remain in their strongholds.
Their strength is exhausted;
they have become weaklings.
Her dwellings are set on fire;
the bars of her gates are broken.
31 One courier follows another
and messenger follows messenger
to announce to the king of Babylon
that his entire city is captured,
32 the river crossings seized,
the marshes set on fire,
and the soldiers terrified."

33 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says:

"Daughter Babylon is like a threshing floor
at the time it is trampled;
the time to harvest her will soon come."

34 "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon has devoured us,
he has thrown us into confusion,
he has made us an empty jar.

[a] *24* Or *Chaldea*; also in verse 35

A Festival for Bel Marduk (Jer 51:44)

Bel Marduk was seen by the Babylonians as the creator god and the head of the pantheon of gods. Not only was the earth created long ago, but to the Babylonians that creation was temporary, needing to be reconfirmed each year lest the cosmos return to chaos.

The New Year's Festival was an 11- to 12-day process of securing a continued creation. It is not known what happened on each day of the festival, but we do know that Marduk's temple was prepared on the 1st day, with the incantation priest washing himself with water from the Euphrates River, praying, and singing on the 2nd day. On the 3rd day, three craftsmen were given materials to make two images of wood, which represented evil, and adorn them with precious stones and red garments. On the 4th day, in the late afternoon, the story of creation (called the *Enuma Elish*) was recited.

On the 5th day, Marduk's temple was purified by sprinkling its walls with water from the Tigris River and smearing them with a tree sap. After the temple was cleansed, a sheep was slaughtered and, after taking the body into the temple, both head and body were thrown into the Euphrates River, supposedly taking away the sins of the previous year. That evening the king presented himself before Marduk and surrendered his kingship. The officiating priest struck the face of the king, pulled his ears, and forced him to bow before Marduk's image. The king confessed his innocence from evil and recognized the supremacy of Marduk.

On the 6th day, the two wooden images made by the craftsmen were decapitated and burned. On following days, gods from surrounding areas were brought to Marduk's temple with more songs and prayers. A grand banquet finished the New Year celebration, and the gods were returned to their own temples. This entire festival revolved around the idea that Marduk controlled the world.

The prophet Jeremiah proclaimed, however, that one day, as retribution for what Babylon did to Jerusalem, Yahweh would punish Marduk and Babylon (Jer 51:44). When that happened, the world would know which god was really in control.

Like a serpent he has swallowed us
and filled his stomach with our delicacies,
and then has spewed us out.
35 May the violence done to our flesh[a] be on Babylon,"
say the inhabitants of Zion.
"May our blood be on those who live in Babylonia,"
says Jerusalem.

36 Therefore this is what the LORD says:

"See, I will defend your cause
and avenge you;
I will dry up her sea
and make her springs dry.
37 Babylon will be a heap of ruins,
a haunt of jackals,
an object of horror and scorn,
a place where no one lives.
38 Her people all roar like young lions,
they growl like lion cubs.
39 But while they are aroused,
I will set out a feast for them
and make them drunk,
so that they shout with laughter—
then sleep forever and not awake,"
declares the LORD.
40 "I will bring them down
like lambs to the slaughter,
like rams and goats.

41 "How Sheshak[b] will be captured,
the boast of the whole earth seized!
How desolate Babylon will be
among the nations!
42 The sea will rise over Babylon;
its roaring waves will cover her.
43 Her towns will be desolate,
a dry and desert land,
a land where no one lives,
through which no one travels.
44 I will punish Bel in Babylon
and make him spew out what he has swallowed.
The nations will no longer stream to him.
And the wall of Babylon will fall.

45 "Come out of her, my people!
Run for your lives!
Run from the fierce anger of the LORD.
46 Do not lose heart or be afraid
when rumors are heard in the land;
one rumor comes this year, another the next,
rumors of violence in the land
and of ruler against ruler.
47 For the time will surely come
when I will punish the idols of Babylon;
her whole land will be disgraced
and her slain will all lie fallen within her.
48 Then heaven and earth and all that is in them
will shout for joy over Babylon,

[a] *35* Or *done to us and to our children* [b] *41* *Sheshak* is a cryptogram for Babylon.

for out of the north
destroyers will attack her,"
declares the LORD.

49 "Babylon must fall because of Israel's slain,
just as the slain in all the earth
have fallen because of Babylon.
50 You who have escaped the sword,
leave and do not linger!
Remember the LORD in a distant land,
and call to mind Jerusalem."

51 "We are disgraced,
for we have been insulted
and shame covers our faces,
because foreigners have entered
the holy places of the LORD's house."

52 "But days are coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will punish her idols,
and throughout her land
the wounded will groan.
53 Even if Babylon ascends to the heavens
and fortifies her lofty stronghold,
I will send destroyers against her,"
declares the LORD.

54 "The sound of a cry comes from Babylon,
the sound of great destruction
from the land of the Babylonians.[a]
55 The LORD will destroy Babylon;
he will silence her noisy din.
Waves of enemies will rage like great waters;
the roar of their voices will resound.
56 A destroyer will come against Babylon;
her warriors will be captured,
and their bows will be broken.
For the LORD is a God of retribution;
he will repay in full.
57 I will make her officials and wise men drunk,
her governors, officers and warriors as well;
they will sleep forever and not awake,"
declares the King, whose name is the LORD Almighty.

58 This is what the LORD Almighty says:

"Babylon's thick wall will be leveled
and her high gates set on fire;
the peoples exhaust themselves for nothing,
the nations' labor is only fuel for the flames."

59 This is the message Jeremiah the prophet gave to the staff officer Seraiah son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, when he went to Babylon with Zedekiah king of Judah in the fourth year of his reign. 60 Jeremiah had written on a scroll about all the disasters that would come upon Babylon—all that had been recorded concerning Babylon. 61 He said to Seraiah, "When you get to Babylon, see that you read all these words aloud. 62 Then say, 'LORD, you have said you will destroy this place, so that neither people nor animals will live in it; it will be desolate forever.' 63 When you finish reading this scroll, tie a stone to it and throw it into the Euphrates. 64 Then say, 'So will Babylon sink to rise no more because of the disaster I will bring on her. And her people will fall.'"

The words of Jeremiah end here.

[a] 54 Or *Chaldeans*

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Zedekiah and Jeremiah

As with King Jehoiakim, Chronicles gives very little space to King Zedekiah. One detail is added, however. The Chronicler specifies that King Zedekiah did not listen to the prophet Jeremiah (who is never mentioned in the account in Kings). This indicates that by the time Chronicles was written—at least 50 years after Kings, and probably much more—Jeremiah's status was well established. Rejected throughout his life, Jeremiah would at last be recognized as a true prophet of God.

• **2 Chronicles 36:11, 12**

2 Chronicles

Zedekiah King of Judah

36:11 Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. 12 He did evil in the eyes of the LORD his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the LORD.

TRANSITION

The Book of Ezekiel

The second great prophet of Jerusalem's last days, along with Jeremiah, was Ezekiel. When Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem in 597 B.C., the young priest Ezekiel was one of the Judeans taken in exile to Babylon. Though he would visit Jerusalem in visions (Eze 8:3), he appears to have spent the rest of his life and ministry in Babylon.

Being a part of the Jerusalem priestly establishment, Ezekiel must have known of Jeremiah's preaching, and may even have joined the other priests in opposing it. If so, he changed

his mind in Babylon. Ezekiel's message to the exiles was much the same as Jeremiah's to those who remained in Jerusalem. To those who felt that this exile would be brief and that soon all would be restored in Jerusalem, Ezekiel prophesied that Jerusalem and even the temple itself would be destroyed. Not until that destruction had taken place (in 586 B.C.) would Ezekiel speak of a future restoration. His oracles of judgment appear in chs. 1–24, followed by his oracles concerning other nations (chs. 25–32). The book concludes with Ezekiel's words of salvation (chs. 33–48).

Ezekiel's priestly heritage shines through his prophecies, especially in his focus on the temple. Judah's sins are sins against true worship and ritual purity, particularly in the temple (see chs. 8–11). Judah's greatest punishment comes when the glory of God leaves the temple (11:23). After that, the temple's destruction is inevitable. Judah's true salvation appears in the form of a new, heavenly temple, to which God's glory would return (chs. 40–48, especially 43:1–5). The priestly focus of Ezekiel's prophecies makes it appropriate to read this prophet in the "Priestly Account" of Israel's history.

Unlike the Book of Jeremiah, Ezekiel's prophecies appear almost entirely in a clearly marked chronological order. Ezekiel received his prophetic call in the 5th year of Jehoiachin's exile (593 B.C.; Eze 1:2). The reference in Eze 1:1 to the "thirtieth year" may refer to the prophet's age at the time of his call. The account of Ezekiel's first vision of God (1:1—3:21) spans a period of 7 days during the year 593 (3:15, 16).

• **Ezekiel 1:1—3:21**

Ezekiel

Ezekiel's Inaugural Vision

1 **:1** In my thirtieth year, in the fourth month on the fifth day, while I was among the exiles by the Kebar River, the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.

[2]On the fifth of the month—it was the fifth year of the exile of King Jehoiachin— [3]the word of the LORD came to Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, by the Kebar River in the land of the Babylonians.[a] There the hand of the LORD was on him.

Religion & Worship
Ezekiel's vision of God is in effect his call to be a prophet. It seems to have been customary for Judeans in exile to gather for worship near running water, perhaps because ritual washings were involved. The Kebar River (Eze 1:1) was probably a canal connected with the Euphrates River in Babylon. Ezekiel's vision caused him to fall down (Eze 1:28), much as Isaiah was stunned by the glory of God (Isa 6:5).

[4]I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north—an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, [5]and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures. In appearance their form was human, [6]but each of them had four faces and four wings. [7]Their legs were straight; their feet were like those of a calf and gleamed like burnished bronze. [8]Under their wings on their four sides they had human hands. All four of them had faces and wings, [9]and the wings of one touched the wings of another. Each one went straight ahead; they did not turn as they moved.

[10]Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a human being, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. [11]Such were their faces. They each had two wings spreading out upward, each wing touching that of the creature on either side; and each had two other wings covering its body. [12]Each one went straight ahead. Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, without turning as they went. [13]The appearance of the living creatures was like burning coals of fire or like torches. Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. [14]The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.

[15]As I looked at the living creatures, I saw a wheel on the ground beside each creature with its four faces. [16]This was the appearance and structure of the wheels: They sparkled like topaz, and all four looked alike. Each appeared to be made like a wheel intersecting a wheel. [17]As they moved, they would go in any one of the four directions the creatures faced; the wheels did not change direction as the creatures went. [18]Their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around.

[19]When the living creatures moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the living creatures rose from the ground, the wheels also rose. [20]Wherever the spirit would go, they would go, and the wheels would rise along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels. [21]When the creatures moved, they also moved; when the creatures stood still, they also stood still; and when the creatures rose from the ground, the wheels rose along with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in the wheels.

[22]Spread out above the heads of the living

[a] *3* Or *Chaldeans*

A Prophet in Exile (Eze 1:1–3)

The Kebar River was located in Babylon, probably a few miles from the city of Nippur. It was there that Ezekiel began his prophetic work as a prophet "among the exiles" (Eze 1:1)—the Judeans whom the Babylonians had exiled from Judah.

Ezekiel was among a group of Judeans deported by the Babylonians in 597 B.C. (2Ki 24:14–16). Upon taking the throne in Judah, King Jehoiachin faced an immediate crisis. His father Jehoiakim had rebelled against the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, but it was Jehoiachin who experienced the consequences of that rebellion. Within 3 months of Jehoiachin's coronation, Nebuchadnezzar had besieged Jerusalem, deposed the new king, and taken him as a prisoner to Babylon (2Ki 24:12), along with others, including Ezekiel.

This exile should not be confused with the Babylonian exile of 586 B.C. In 588 B.C., Judah's king Zedekiah revolted against the Babylonians. In response, Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, taking a large portion of the surviving population into exile to Babylon (2Ki 25:1–21).

In 597 B.C., however, Nebuchadnezzar did not destroy Jerusalem. Instead, he "merely" replaced the Judahite king with another king who he thought would not rebel. For good measure, he took the old king, Jehoiachin, and many of Judah's skilled citizens in order to discourage their relatives back home in Judah from further rebellion. By taking this group into exile, Nebuchadnezzar essentially held them hostage.

Ezekiel, therefore, prophesied to a group away from home who most likely had hopes of returning to Jerusalem. If they looked to Ezekiel to fuel this hope, they were disappointed. Rather than hope, Ezekiel saw nothing but God's judgment upon Jerusalem as long as the city stood (Eze 15; 16).

creatures was what looked something like a vault, sparkling like crystal, and awesome. 23Under the vault their wings were stretched out one toward the other, and each had two wings covering its body. 24When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty,[a] like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.

25Then there came a voice from above the vault over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. 26Above the vault over their heads was what looked like a throne of lapis lazuli, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. 27I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. 28Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him.

This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking.

Ezekiel's Call to Be a Prophet

2 1He said to me, "Son of man,[b] stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." 2As he spoke, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet, and I heard him speaking to me.

3He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have been in revolt against me to this very day. 4The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' 5And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them. 6And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briers and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or be terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people. 7You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. 8But you, son of man, listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious people; open your mouth and eat what I give you."

9Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, 10which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.

3 1And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the people of Israel." 2So I opened my mouth, and he gave me the scroll to eat.

3Then he said to me, "Son of man, eat this scroll I am giving you and fill your stomach with it." So I ate it, and it tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth.

4He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them. 5You are not being sent to a people of obscure speech and strange language, but to the people of Israel— 6not to many peoples of

[a] *24* Hebrew *Shaddai* [b] *1* The Hebrew phrase *ben adam* means *human being*. The phrase *son of man* is retained as a form of address here and throughout Ezekiel because of its possible association with "Son of Man" in the New Testament.

obscure speech and strange language, whose words you cannot understand. Surely if I had sent you to them, they would have listened to you. 7But the people of Israel are not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for all the Israelites are hardened and obstinate. 8But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. 9I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint. Do not be afraid of them or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious people."

10And he said to me, "Son of man, listen carefully and take to heart all the words I speak to you. 11Go now to your people in exile and speak to them. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says,' whether they listen or fail to listen."

12Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a loud rumbling sound as the glory of the LORD rose from the place where it was standing.[a] 13It was the sound of the wings of the living creatures brushing against each other and the sound of the wheels beside them, a loud rumbling sound. 14The Spirit then lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness and in the anger of my spirit, with the strong hand of the LORD on me. 15I came to the exiles who lived at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River. And there, where they were living, I sat among them for seven days—deeply distressed.

Ezekiel's Task as Watchman

16At the end of seven days the word of the LORD came to me: 17"Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. 18When I say to a wicked person, 'You will surely die,' and you do not warn them or speak out to dissuade them from their evil ways in order to save their life, that wicked person will die for[b] their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 19But if you do warn the wicked person and they do not turn from their wickedness or from their evil ways, they will die for their sin; but you will have saved yourself.

20"Again, when a righteous person turns from their righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before them, they will die. Since you did not warn them, they will die for their sin. The righteous things that person did will not be remembered, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. 21But if you do warn the righteous person not to sin and they do not sin, they will surely live because they took warning, and you will have saved yourself."

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Rebellion Against Babylon

In about 589 B.C. a new king came to power in Egypt, Pharaoh Hophra (or Apries). Hophra appears to have promised his help and convinced Zedekiah to rebel against Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah declared independence from Babylon in his 9th year (588 B.C.). Nebuchadnezzar's armies moved swiftly. The siege lasted from the 10th month (perhaps January) of 588 until the summer of 586 B.C. (Zedekiah's 11th year; 2Ki 25:2).

- **2 Kings 24:20—25:3**
- **Jeremiah 52:3–6**

2 Kings 24:20—25:3

24 **:20** It was because of the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.

The Fall of Jerusalem

Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

25 1So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. He encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. 2The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

3By the ninth day of the fourth[c] month the famine in the city had become so severe that there was no food for the people to eat.

Jeremiah 52:3–6

52 **:3** It was because of the LORD's anger that all this happened to Jerusalem and Judah, and in the end he thrust them from his presence.

Now Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

4So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army. They encamped outside the city and built siege works all around it. 5The city was kept under siege until the eleventh year of King Zedekiah.

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[a] *12* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text *sound—may the glory of the LORD be praised from his place*
[b] *18* Or *in*; also in verses 19 and 20
[c] *3* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text (see Jer. 52:6); Masoretic Text does not have *fourth*.

6By the ninth day of the fourth month the
famine in the city had become so severe that
there was no food for the people to eat.

TRANSITION

The Siege of Jerusalem

It was surely no comfort to Jeremiah to see all his prophecies coming true. He mourned the coming destruction and the ravages of the siege. His prophecies now were addressed to those who "live under siege" (Jer 10:17). They reflect the horror felt by a person trying to cope with disaster (10:17–25).

Zedekiah may also have seen that Jeremiah had spoken the truth. Though it was far too late, he began to ask Jeremiah's advice and intercession. Jeremiah could give him no comforting answer, though (21:1—22:9). The well-meaning Zedekiah sought to encourage some sort of revival by promoting a return to such covenant obedience as the release of slaves (34:1–22). The Law of Moses called for the release of a Hebrew servant in the 7th year (Ex 21:2–4; Dt 15:12–15). Jeremiah approved of this measure, but the reform effort was halfhearted and quickly forgotten (Jer 34:16), and finally would make no difference in Jerusalem's fate.

- **Jeremiah 10:17–25**
- **Jeremiah 21:1—22:9**
- **Jeremiah 34:1–22**

Jeremiah 10:17–25

Coming Destruction

10 **:17** Gather up your belongings to leave
the land,
you who live under siege.
18For this is what the LORD says:
"At this time I will hurl out
those who live in this land;
I will bring distress on them
so that they may be captured."

19Woe to me because of my injury!
My wound is incurable!
Yet I said to myself,
"This is my sickness, and I must endure it."
20My tent is destroyed;
all its ropes are snapped.
My children are gone from me and are no
more;
no one is left now to pitch my tent
or to set up my shelter.

21The shepherds are senseless
and do not inquire of the LORD;
so they do not prosper
and all their flock is scattered.
22Listen! The report is coming—
a great commotion from the land of the
north!
It will make the towns of Judah desolate,
a haunt of jackals.

Jeremiah's Prayer

23LORD, I know that people's lives are not
their own;
it is not for them to direct their steps.
24Discipline me, LORD, but only in due
measure—
not in your anger,
or you will reduce me to nothing.
25Pour out your wrath on the nations
that do not acknowledge you,
on the peoples who do not call on your
name.
For they have devoured Jacob;
they have devoured him completely
and destroyed his homeland.

Jeremiah 21:1—22:9

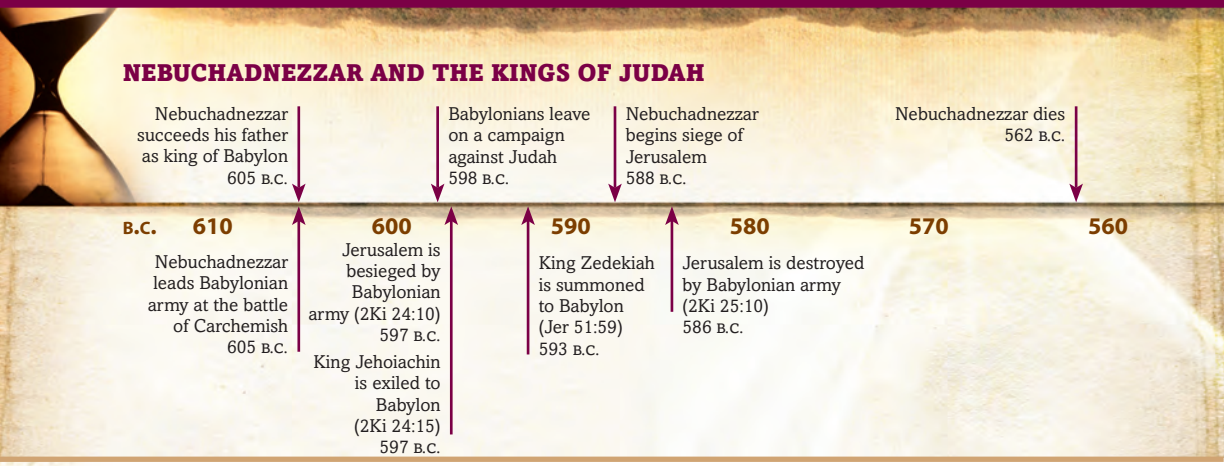
God Rejects Zedekiah's Request

21 **:1** The word came to Jeremiah from the
LORD when King Zedekiah sent to him
Pashhur son of Malkijah and the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah. They said: 2"Inquire now
of the LORD for us because Nebuchadnezzar[a]
king of Babylon is attacking us. Perhaps the
LORD will perform wonders for us as in times
past so that he will withdraw from us."

3But Jeremiah answered them, "Tell Zedekiah, 4'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I am about to turn against you the weapons of war that are in your hands, which you are using to fight the king of Babylon and the Babylonians[b] who are outside the wall besieging you. And I will gather them inside this city. 5I myself will fight against you with an outstretched hand and a mighty arm in furious anger and in great wrath. 6I will strike down those who live in this city—both man and beast—and they will die of a terrible plague. 7After that, declares the LORD, I will give Zedekiah king of Judah, his officials and the people in this city who survive the plague, sword and famine, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and to their enemies who want to kill them. He will put them to the sword; he will show them no mercy or pity or compassion.'

8"Furthermore, tell the people, 'This is what

[a] *2* Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* of which *Nebuchadnezzar* is a variant; here and often in Jeremiah and Ezekiel
[b] *4* Or *Chaldeans*; also in verse 9



the LORD says: See, I am setting before you
the way of life and the way of death. 9Whoever
stays in this city will die by the sword, famine
or plague. But whoever goes out and surren-
ders to the Babylonians who are besieging you
will live; they will escape with their lives. 10I
have determined to do this city harm and not
good, declares the LORD. It will be given into
the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will
destroy it with fire.'

11"Moreover, say to the royal house of Judah,
'Hear the word of the LORD. 12This is what the
LORD says to you, house of David:

"'Administer justice every morning;
rescue from the hand of the
oppressor
the one who has been robbed,
or my wrath will break out and burn like
fire
because of the evil you have done—
burn with no one to quench it.
13I am against you, Jerusalem,
you who live above this valley
on the rocky plateau, declares the
LORD—
you who say, "Who can come against us?
Who can enter our refuge?"
14I will punish you as your deeds deserve,
declares the LORD.
I will kindle a fire in your forests
that will consume everything around
you.'"

Judgment Against Wicked Kings

22 1This is what the LORD says: "Go down to
the palace of the king of Judah and pro-
claim this message there: 2'Hear the word of
the LORD to you, king of Judah, you who sit on
David's throne—you, your officials and your
people who come through these gates. 3This is
what the LORD says: Do what is just and right.
Rescue from the hand of the oppressor the one
who has been robbed. Do no wrong or violence
to the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow,
and do not shed innocent blood in this place.
4For if you are careful to carry out these com-
mands, then kings who sit on David's throne
will come through the gates of this palace, rid-
ing in chariots and on horses, accompanied by
their officials and their people. 5But if you do
not obey these commands, declares the LORD,

NEBUCHADREZZAR OR NEBUCHADNEZZAR? (JER 21:2)

Nebuchadnezzar's name is spelled slightly differently in Hebrew in many references of the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel. The difference is the subtle change from "r" (Nebuchad*r*ezzar) to "n" (Nebuchad*n*ezzar). See the footnote on Jer 21:2.

The spelling "Nebuchadrezzar," found in Jeremiah and Ezekiel in the Hebrew Old Testament and in some English translations, is actually closer to the Babylonian spelling, as is proven by Babylonian cuneiform texts. On the other hand, a few verses in Jeremiah also provide the alternate spelling "Nebuchadnezzar" (Jer 27:6; 28:3; etc.).

The two spellings of Nebuchadnezzar's name may demonstrate a shift in language that was taking place at that time. For hundreds of years the official diplomatic language had been Akkadian, a Semitic language centered in Babylon. In the 1st millennium Aramaic, another Semitic language, began to gain in influence. The shift from "r" to "n" in Nebuchadnezzar's name may be evidence of the influence of the Aramaic language. By New Testament times Aramaic was the common spoken language of the region.

Lachish Letters of Distress (Jer 34:7)

During Nebuchadnezzar's campaigns against Judah between 598 and 586 B.C., Lachish held a central place in Judahite resistance. Letters, written on broken pieces of pottery, have been found addressed to a military commander of Lachish named "Yaosh." The letters were sent by a strategically placed subordinate serving as a lookout. The lookout's task was to watch for signals from Azekah and Lachish and probably report information to and from Jerusalem.

From the lookout's vantage point, Azekah was probably the halfway point from Lachish. In one letter (Letter IV), he reports that because signals are no longer being received from Azekah he is watching and needing communication from Lachish. Since Azekah was no longer sending out messages, one can only guess that the Babylonians had already conquered that city and that the destruction of Lachish was imminent. The Lachish Letters probably were written shortly before Jerusalem's capture in 586 B.C.

I swear by myself that this palace will become a ruin.'"

6For this is what the LORD says about the palace of the king of Judah:

"Though you are like Gilead to me,
like the summit of Lebanon,
I will surely make you like a wasteland,
like towns not inhabited.
7I will send destroyers against you,
each man with his weapons,
and they will cut up your fine cedar beams
and throw them into the fire.

8"People from many nations will pass by this city and will ask one another, 'Why has the LORD done such a thing to this great city?' 9And the answer will be: 'Because they have forsaken the covenant of the LORD their God and have worshiped and served other gods.'"

Jeremiah 34:1–22

Warning to Zedekiah

34:1 While Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms and peoples in the empire he ruled were fighting against Jerusalem and all its surrounding towns, this word came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Go to Zedekiah king of Judah and tell him, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it down. 3You will not escape from his grasp but will surely be captured and given into his hands. You will see the king of Babylon with your own eyes, and he will speak with you face to face. And you will go to Babylon.

4"'Yet hear the LORD's promise to you, Zedekiah king of Judah. This is what the LORD says concerning you: You will not die by the sword; 5you will die peacefully. As people made a funeral fire in honor of your predecessors, the kings who ruled before you, so they will make a fire in your honor and lament, "Alas, master!" I myself make this promise, declares the LORD.'"

6Then Jeremiah the prophet told all this to Zedekiah king of Judah, in Jerusalem, 7while the army of the king of Babylon was fighting against Jerusalem and the other cities of Judah that were still holding out—Lachish and Azekah. These were the only fortified cities left in Judah.

Freedom for Slaves

8The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD after King Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people in Jerusalem to proclaim freedom for the slaves. 9Everyone was to free their Hebrew slaves, both male and female; no one was to hold a fellow Hebrew in bondage. 10So all the officials and people who entered into this covenant agreed that they would free their male and female slaves and no longer hold them in bondage. They agreed, and set them free. 11But afterward they changed their minds and took back the slaves they had freed and enslaved them again.

12Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 13"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I made a covenant with your ancestors when I brought them out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. I said, 14'Every seventh year each of you must free any fellow Hebrews who have sold themselves to you. After they have

TIME CAPSULE		594 to 593 B.C.
594		Hanging Gardens of Babylon built
594		Aristocrat Solon is appointed archon in Athens
594		Solon begins democratic reforms in Greece
593		King Zedekiah is summoned to Babylon (Jer 51:59–64)
593		Ezekiel receives his prophetic call

served you six years, you must let them go free.'[a] Your ancestors, however, did not listen to me or pay attention to me. 15Recently you repented and did what is right in my sight: Each of you proclaimed freedom to your own people. You even made a covenant before me in the house that bears my Name. 16But now you have turned around and profaned my name; each of you has taken back the male and female slaves you had set free to go where they wished. You have forced them to become your slaves again.

17"Therefore this is what the LORD says: You have not obeyed me; you have not proclaimed freedom to your own people. So I now proclaim 'freedom' for you, declares the LORD—'freedom' to fall by the sword, plague and famine. I will make you abhorrent to all the kingdoms of the earth. 18Those who have violated my covenant and have not fulfilled the terms of the covenant they made before me, I will treat like the calf they cut in two and then walked between its pieces. 19The leaders of Judah and Jerusalem, the court officials, the priests and all the people of the land who walked between the pieces of the calf, 20I will deliver into the hands of their enemies who want to kill them. Their dead bodies will become food for the birds and the wild animals.

21"I will deliver Zedekiah king of Judah and his officials into the hands of their enemies who want to kill them, to the army of the king of Babylon, which has withdrawn from you. 22I am going to give the order, declares the LORD, and I will bring them back to this city. They will fight against it, take it and burn it down. And I will lay waste the towns of Judah so no one can live there."

TRANSITION

Hophra's Assault

For once, an Egyptian pharaoh kept his promise of aid. While Jerusalem was under siege, Pharaoh Hophra moved north against the Babylonian armies. Hope was reborn in Jerusalem, but Jeremiah declared it to be futile. Egypt could not stand against Babylon (Jer 46:13–28). Indeed, Jeremiah derisively describes this pharaoh as "only a loud noise," who "missed his opportunity" (46:17). Hophra was an indecisive military leader who did not have good relations with his troops.

The Egyptian relief army did force the Babylonians to lift the siege from Jerusalem, but relief lasted only briefly. The Egyptians had to withdraw before the stronger Babylonian armies.

• **Jeremiah 46:13–28**

Jeremiah

46 :13 This is the message the LORD spoke to Jeremiah the prophet about the coming of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon to attack Egypt:

14"Announce this in Egypt, and proclaim it in Migdol;
proclaim it also in Memphis and Tahpanhes:
'Take your positions and get ready,
for the sword devours those around you.'
15Why will your warriors be laid low?
They cannot stand, for the LORD will push them down.
16They will stumble repeatedly;
they will fall over each other.
They will say, 'Get up, let us go back
to our own people and our native lands,
away from the sword of the oppressor.'
17There they will exclaim,
'Pharaoh king of Egypt is only a loud noise;
he has missed his opportunity.'

18"As surely as I live," declares the King,
whose name is the LORD Almighty,
"one will come who is like Tabor among the mountains,
like Carmel by the sea.
19Pack your belongings for exile,
you who live in Egypt,
for Memphis will be laid waste
and lie in ruins without inhabitant.

20"Egypt is a beautiful heifer,
but a gadfly is coming
against her from the north.
21The mercenaries in her ranks
are like fattened calves.
They too will turn and flee together,
they will not stand their ground,
for the day of disaster is coming upon them,
the time for them to be punished.
22Egypt will hiss like a fleeing serpent
as the enemy advances in force;
they will come against her with axes,
like men who cut down trees.
23They will chop down her forest,"
declares the LORD,
"dense though it be.
They are more numerous than locusts,
they cannot be counted.
24Daughter Egypt will be put to shame,
given into the hands of the people of the north."

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[a] *14* Deut. 15:12

Amon God of Thebes (Jer 46:25)

The prophet Jeremiah warns that Yahweh will use King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon and his armies to punish "Amon god of Thebes," or, in Hebrew, "Amon of No" (Jer 46:25, 26). Thebes (or "No") was the main city of Upper Egypt, a favorite city of the kings of Egypt's 25th Dynasty (780–656 B.C.), who worshiped the god Amon. In the following 26th Dynasty, Pharaoh Psammetichus I (664–610 B.C.) appointed his daughter as the "God's Wife of Amon" in Thebes. In Jeremiah's day, Thebes and Amon represented the power of Egypt, such as it was then.

Amon was the Egyptian god of air, wind, and spirit. The origins of the worship of Amon date back beyond written records. Amon was already among the major deities when his name first appeared in the Pyramid Texts of about 2300 B.C. In the 2nd millennium B.C. Amon was promoted as the central god of Thebes. When the priesthood of Thebes rose to power during Egypt's New Kingdom (after 1550 B.C.), Amon became known as the "king of the gods" and became attached to the god Re in the dual god name "Amon-Re."

Amon was worshiped throughout Egypt as the creator of the world and ruler of Egypt. He kept order not only in Egypt but in all the physical universe. Yet Jeremiah proclaims Yahweh's superiority over Amon of Thebes, the "king of the gods," just as the prophet proclaimed concerning Babylon's god Bel-Marduk (Jer 50:2; 51:44). This prophecy of Yahweh's justice against Egypt possibly looks toward the confrontation in 587 B.C. between Hophra, also a pharaoh of the 26th Dynasty, and Nebuchadnezzar.

25 The Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says:
"I am about to bring punishment on Amon god
of Thebes, on Pharaoh, on Egypt and her gods
and her kings, and on those who rely on Pharaoh. 26 I will give them into the hands of those
who want to kill them—Nebuchadnezzar king
of Babylon and his officers. Later, however,
Egypt will be inhabited as in times past," declares the Lord.

27 "Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant;
do not be dismayed, Israel.
I will surely save you out of a distant
place,
your descendants from the land of their
exile.
Jacob will again have peace and security,
and no one will make him afraid.
28 Do not be afraid, Jacob my servant,
for I am with you," declares the Lord.

The temple at Thebes (No)

"Though I completely destroy all the
nations
among which I scatter you,
I will not completely destroy you.
I will discipline you but only in due
measure;
I will not let you go entirely
unpunished."

TRANSITION

A Lull in the Siege

Hophra's attack succeeded at least temporarily (Jer 37:1–21). The Babylonians had to pull away from Jerusalem to counter the threat from the south (37:5). Jeremiah warned that the siege would be renewed (37:8), but even he took advantage of the temporary lifting of travel restrictions.

It seems that at this unlikely moment Jeremiah's message changed. On the eve of the greatest calamity in all the history of the kingdom, the prophet began to proclaim salvation. Traveling to his hometown of Anathoth in Zedekiah's 10th year (587 B.C.), Jeremiah officially signed the deed to a plot of land he had inherited (Jer 32). This he did as a sign that once again the inhabitants of the land would be free landowners (32:13–15). God would keep his covenant promises to his people (ch. 33), and his covenant with King David (33:17–22; 23:1–8).

It is possible that all of Jeremiah's messages of hope were delivered at this time, most notably the so-called "Book of Consolation" in Jer 30; 31. If so, the new message did Jeremiah little good. Upon his return to Jerusalem, he was arrested as a Babylonian sympathizer. Zedekiah continued to consult the imprisoned Jeremiah, but the king feared the leaders in the city, as well as those who had already

defected to the Babylonians (Jer 38). He did not have the courage to make the right choices.

- **Jeremiah 37:1–21**
- **Jeremiah 30:1—33:26**
- **Jeremiah 23:1–8**
- **Jeremiah 38:1–28**

Jeremiah 37:1–21

Jeremiah in Prison

37:1 Zedekiah son of Josiah was made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; he reigned in place of Jehoiachin[a] son of Jehoiakim. 2Neither he nor his attendants nor the people of the land paid any attention to the words the LORD had spoken through Jeremiah the prophet.

3King Zedekiah, however, sent Jehukal son of Shelemiah with the priest Zephaniah son of Maaseiah to Jeremiah the prophet with this message: "Please pray to the LORD our God for us."

4Now Jeremiah was free to come and go among the people, for he had not yet been put in prison. 5Pharaoh's army had marched out of Egypt, and when the Babylonians[b] who were besieging Jerusalem heard the report about them, they withdrew from Jerusalem.

6Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet: 7"This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: Tell the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of me, 'Pharaoh's army, which has marched out to support you, will go back to its own land, to Egypt. 8Then the Babylonians will return and attack this city; they will capture it and burn it down.'

9"This is what the LORD says: Do not deceive yourselves, thinking, 'The Babylonians will surely leave us.' They will not! 10Even if you were to defeat the entire Babylonian[c] army that is attacking you and only wounded men were left in their tents, they would come out and burn this city down."

11After the Babylonian army had withdrawn from Jerusalem because of Pharaoh's army, 12Jeremiah started to leave the city to go to the territory of Benjamin to get his share of the property among the people there. 13But when he reached the Benjamin Gate, the captain of the guard, whose name was Irijah son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah, arrested him and said, "You are deserting to the Babylonians!"

14"That's not true!" Jeremiah said. "I am not deserting to the Babylonians." But Irijah would not listen to him; instead, he arrested Jeremiah and brought him to the officials. 15They were angry with Jeremiah and had him beaten and imprisoned in the house of Jonathan the secretary, which they had made into a prison.

16Jeremiah was put into a vaulted cell in a dungeon, where he remained a long time. 17Then King Zedekiah sent for him and had him brought to the palace, where he asked him privately, "Is there any word from the LORD?"

"Yes," Jeremiah replied, "you will be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon."

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[a] *1* Hebrew *Koniah,* a variant of *Jehoiachin*
[b] *5* Or *Chaldeans*; also in verses 8, 9, 13 and 14
[c] *10* Or *Chaldean*; also in verse 11

The Politics of the Siege (Jer 37:1–16)

Siege warfare was—and is—a horrible thing. Israelite cities had little open space within them for food production. Inner city water supplies would often be limited. People from the surrounding countryside would crowd into the city for protection, stretching already thin food, water, and living space to the breaking point.

A city's main defense against a siege, its walls, was also its greatest liability. The enemy could concentrate its forces outside the city's single main gate. While an occasional messenger might escape over the wall, the possibility of goods or people entering or exiting the city was severely limited.

In such a situation, a city could only hope that help would arrive from outside, or that the army outside the city would give up before the people inside starved. The key to survival was not to give up. If morale within the city could be upheld to handle the harsh conditions, the people just might outlast the invading army.

During the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonian army in 587 B.C., the city leaders asked Jeremiah to support the war effort by praying for the city (Jer 37:3). Meanwhile, an Egyptian army disrupted the siege, forcing the Babylonian army to withdraw for a time (37:5). Morale among the Jerusalemites doubtlessly soared. Maybe their God would save Jerusalem!

Jeremiah, however, failed to be moved, and responded with more words of judgment: the Babylonians would be back (37:6–10). While the siege was lifted, the prophet attempted to leave the city to take care of personal business outside. Accused of deserting to the enemy, he was imprisoned so as not to adversely affect the effort to win the war (37:11–16). In prison Jeremiah could not disrupt public morale by either desertion or more statements of doom.

18 Then Jeremiah said to King Zedekiah,
"What crime have I committed against you or
your attendants or this people, that you have
put me in prison? 19 Where are your prophets
who prophesied to you, 'The king of Babylon
will not attack you or this land'? 20 But now, my
lord the king, please listen. Let me bring my
petition before you: Do not send me back to
the house of Jonathan the secretary, or I will
die there."
21 King Zedekiah then gave orders for Jere-
miah to be placed in the courtyard of the guard
and given a loaf of bread from the street of the
bakers each day until all the bread in the city
was gone. So Jeremiah remained in the court-
yard of the guard.

Jeremiah 30:1—33:26

Restoration of Israel

30:1 This is the word that came to Jere-
miah from the LORD: 2 "This is what the
LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Write in a book
all the words I have spoken to you. 3 The days
are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will
bring my people Israel and Judah back from
captivity[a] and restore them to the land I gave
their ancestors to possess,' says the LORD."
4 These are the words the LORD spoke con-
cerning Israel and Judah: 5 "This is what the
LORD says:

"'Cries of fear are heard—
terror, not peace.
6 Ask and see:
Can a man bear children?
Then why do I see every strong man
with his hands on his stomach like a
woman in labor,
every face turned deathly pale?
7 How awful that day will be!
No other will be like it.
It will be a time of trouble for Jacob,
but he will be saved out of it.

8 "'In that day,' declares the LORD Almighty,
'I will break the yoke off their necks
and will tear off their bonds;
no longer will foreigners enslave them.
9 Instead, they will serve the LORD their
God
and David their king,
whom I will raise up for them.

10 "'So do not be afraid, Jacob my servant;
do not be dismayed, Israel,'
declares the LORD.
'I will surely save you out of a distant place,
your descendants from the land of their
exile.
Jacob will again have peace and security,
and no one will make him afraid.
11 I am with you and will save you,'
declares the LORD.
'Though I completely destroy all the nations
among which I scatter you,
I will not completely destroy you.
I will discipline you but only in due
measure;
I will not let you go entirely unpunished.'

12 "This is what the LORD says:

"'Your wound is incurable,
your injury beyond healing.
13 There is no one to plead your cause,
no remedy for your sore,
no healing for you.
14 All your allies have forgotten you;
they care nothing for you.
I have struck you as an enemy would
and punished you as would the cruel,
because your guilt is so great
and your sins so many.
15 Why do you cry out over your wound,
your pain that has no cure?
Because of your great guilt and many sins
I have done these things to you.

16 "'But all who devour you will be devoured;
all your enemies will go into exile.
Those who plunder you will be plundered;
all who make spoil of you I will despoil.
17 But I will restore you to health
and heal your wounds,'
declares the LORD,
'because you are called an outcast,
Zion for whom no one cares.'

18 "This is what the LORD says:

"'I will restore the fortunes of Jacob's tents
and have compassion on his dwellings;
the city will be rebuilt on her ruins,
and the palace will stand in its proper
place.
19 From them will come songs of thanksgiving
and the sound of rejoicing.
I will add to their numbers,
and they will not be decreased;
I will bring them honor,
and they will not be disdained.
20 Their children will be as in days of old,
and their community will be established
before me;
I will punish all who oppress them.

[a] 3 Or *will restore the fortunes of my people Israel and Judah*

The Exiles Return to Samaria (Jer 31:5, 6)

Originally "Samaria" was the name for the capital of the northern kingdom of Israel. The city had been built by King Omri in the early 9th century B.C., presumably to establish his kingship after a period of civil war and unrest in Israel. Previous Israelite kings had ruled from Tirzah. Later the name "Samaria" would also be associated with the northern kingdom itself.

An earlier name for the region of Israel had been "Ephraim." After the Syro-Ephraimite War (735–732 B.C.), Israel lost some of its outlying territories to Assyria. Under the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III, these areas became Assyrian provinces known as Dor, Megiddo, and Gilead, each being named after the city from which the Assyrian-appointed governor ruled. Israel's borders were reduced to a territory that had belonged to the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim during the era of the judges. So now what was left of the region of Israel was often called "Ephraim."

After the Assyrian conquest of the city of Samaria in 722 B.C., the Assyrian king Sargon II established another Assyrian province. Following the Assyrian practice of naming a province after its chief city, the name "Samaria" was now used for the region where the city had been.

The prophet Jeremiah mentions "the hills of Samaria," as well as "the hills of Ephraim" (Jer 31:5, 6). The hill country of Samaria is a harsh, mountainous land full of fissures and valleys. Mountain passes make Samaria's hills accessible. In a message of hope, Jeremiah prophesies that God will return the exiles to the hill country known as Ephraim and Samaria. There they will settle, plant, and travel to Jerusalem (Zion) for worship.

21 Their leader will be one of their own;
their ruler will arise from among them.
I will bring him near and he will come close to me—
for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?'
declares the LORD.
22 "'So you will be my people,
and I will be your God.'"

23 See, the storm of the LORD
will burst out in wrath,
a driving wind swirling down
on the heads of the wicked.
24 The fierce anger of the LORD will not turn back
until he fully accomplishes
the purposes of his heart.
In days to come
you will understand this.

31 1 "At that time," declares the LORD, "I will be the God of all the families of Israel, and they will be my people."
2 This is what the LORD says:

"The people who survive the sword
will find favor in the wilderness;
I will come to give rest to Israel."

Marriage & Family
Ramah was about 5 miles north of Jerusalem, and Rachel's tomb was said to be near there. As the favorite wife of Jacob and the mother of Benjamin and Joseph, Rachel represents all of Israel. As their ancestor she is pictured mourning for the generation that was taken into exile by the Babylonians (Jer 31:15). The verse is quoted in Mt 2:18 about the suffering of the infants killed in Bethlehem by Herod.

3 The LORD appeared to us in the past,[a] saying:

"I have loved you with an everlasting love;
I have drawn you with unfailing kindness.
4 I will build you up again,
and you, Virgin Israel, will be rebuilt.
Again you will take up your timbrels
and go out to dance with the joyful.
5 Again you will plant vineyards
on the hills of Samaria;
the farmers will plant them
and enjoy their fruit.
6 There will be a day when watchmen cry out
on the hills of Ephraim,
'Come, let us go up to Zion,
to the LORD our God.'"

7 This is what the LORD says:

"Sing with joy for Jacob;
shout for the foremost of the nations.
Make your praises heard, and say,
'LORD, save your people,
the remnant of Israel.'
8 See, I will bring them from the land of the north
and gather them from the ends of the earth.
Among them will be the blind and the lame,
expectant mothers and women in labor;
a great throng will return.
9 They will come with weeping;
they will pray as I bring them back.
I will lead them beside streams of water
on a level path where they will not stumble,

[a] 3 Or *LORD has appeared to us from afar*

because I am Israel's father,
and Ephraim is my firstborn son.

10 "Hear the word of the LORD, you nations;
proclaim it in distant coastlands:
'He who scattered Israel will gather them
and will watch over his flock like a
shepherd.'
11 For the LORD will deliver Jacob
and redeem them from the hand of those
stronger than they.
12 They will come and shout for joy on the
heights of Zion;
they will rejoice in the bounty of the LORD—
the grain, the new wine and the olive oil,
the young of the flocks and herds.
They will be like a well-watered garden,
and they will sorrow no more.
13 Then young women will dance and be glad,
young men and old as well.
I will turn their mourning into gladness;
I will give them comfort and joy instead of
sorrow.
14 I will satisfy the priests with abundance,
and my people will be filled with my
bounty,"
declares the LORD.

15 This is what the LORD says:

"A voice is heard in Ramah,
mourning and great weeping,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."

16 This is what the LORD says:

"Restrain your voice from weeping
and your eyes from tears,
for your work will be rewarded,"
declares the LORD.
"They will return from the land of the
enemy.
17 So there is hope for your descendants,"
declares the LORD.
"Your children will return to their own
land.

18 "I have surely heard Ephraim's moaning:
'You disciplined me like an unruly calf,
and I have been disciplined.
Restore me, and I will return,
because you are the LORD my God.
19 After I strayed,
I repented;
after I came to understand,
I beat my breast.
I was ashamed and humiliated
because I bore the disgrace of my
youth.'
20 Is not Ephraim my dear son,
the child in whom I delight?
Though I often speak against him,
I still remember him.
Therefore my heart yearns for him;
I have great compassion for him,"
declares the LORD.

21 "Set up road signs;
put up guideposts.
Take note of the highway,
the road that you take.
Return, Virgin Israel,
return to your towns.
22 How long will you wander,
unfaithful Daughter Israel?
The LORD will create a new thing on
earth—
the woman will return to[a] the man."

23 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity,[b] the people in the land of Judah and in its towns will once again use these words: 'The LORD bless you, you prosperous city, you sacred mountain.' 24 People will live together in Judah and all its towns—farmers and those who move about with their flocks. 25 I will refresh the weary and satisfy the faint."

26 At this I awoke and looked around. My sleep had been pleasant to me.

27 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will plant the kingdoms of Israel and Judah with the offspring of people and of animals. 28 Just as I watched over them to uproot and tear down, and to overthrow, destroy and bring disaster, so I will watch over them to build and to plant," declares the LORD. 29 "In those days people will no longer say,

'The parents have eaten sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on
edge.'

30 Instead, everyone will die for their own sin; whoever eats sour grapes—their own teeth will be set on edge.

31 "The days are coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah.
32 It will not be like the covenant
I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,

[a] 22 Or *will protect* [b] 23 Or *I restore their fortunes*

Property Rights Under Siege (Jer 32:1–15)

In 587 B.C. Jerusalem's fall seemed—and was—at hand. The Babylonian siege against Jerusalem was under way. In response the Judahite king, Zedekiah, had imprisoned Jeremiah (Jer 32:2). The prophet's portrayal of the siege as God's judgment on Judah's idolatry seriously hindered the people's morale and thus Jerusalem's chances of withstanding the siege (32:3–5).

Prisons were not large bureaucratic institutions with barred cells in ancient Israel. Jeremiah's "crime" was against the king; therefore, his "prison" was a room under guard in the king's palace (32:2). King Zedekiah imprisoned Jeremiah to keep him from speaking in public.

The situation must have seemed quite hopeless to Jeremiah, who was under siege not merely once but twice. While the army of the mightiest empire in the Near East camped outside the city walls, Zedekiah's guard stood outside the prison room. Jeremiah's prophecy of judgment on Judah was playing itself out before everyone's eyes.

Surprisingly, under these circumstances God had Jeremiah purchase property (32:6–8). Free market conditions for the exchange of real estate did not exist in ancient Israel. Land belonged to families. Legal custom insured, as much as possible, that land would stay within family units, rather than fall into the hands of a few. As a nephew of Shallum and cousin of Hanamel (32:7), Jeremiah had the rights of first refusal to land in his hometown of Anathoth. Despite his imprisonment, despite the Babylonian siege, and despite his previous prophecy of annihilation for Jerusalem and Judah, Jeremiah purchased the property.

These actions again were symbolic of Jeremiah's prophetic message. Now that God's judgment was upon Judah, the message shifted to one of hope: judgment would come; yet God still had a future for his people (32:15).

because they broke my covenant,
though I was a husband to[a] them,[b]"
declares the LORD.
33 "This is the covenant I will make with the people of Israel
after that time," declares the LORD.
"I will put my law in their minds
and write it on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
34 No longer will they teach their neighbor,
or say to one another, 'Know the LORD,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest,"
declares the LORD.
"For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."

35 This is what the LORD says,

he who appoints the sun
to shine by day,
who decrees the moon and stars
to shine by night,
who stirs up the sea
so that its waves roar—
the LORD Almighty is his name:
36 "Only if these decrees vanish from my sight,"
declares the LORD,
"will Israel ever cease
being a nation before me."

37 This is what the LORD says:

"Only if the heavens above can be measured
and the foundations of the earth below be searched out
will I reject all the descendants of Israel
because of all they have done,"
declares the LORD.

38 "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when this city will be rebuilt for me from the Tower of Hananel to the Corner Gate. 39 The measuring line will stretch from there straight to the hill of Gareb and then turn to Goah. 40 The whole valley where dead bodies and ashes are thrown, and all the terraces out to the Kidron Valley on the east as far as the corner of the Horse Gate, will be holy to the LORD. The city will never again be uprooted or demolished."

Jeremiah Buys a Field

32 1 This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar. 2 The army of the king of Babylon was then besieging Jerusalem, and Jeremiah the prophet was confined in the courtyard of the guard in the royal palace of Judah.

3 Now Zedekiah king of Judah had imprisoned him there, saying, "Why do you prophesy as you do? You say, 'This is what the LORD says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will capture it. 4 Zedeki-

[a] *32* Hebrew; Septuagint and Syriac */ and I turned away from*
[b] *32* Or *was their master*

ah king of Judah will not escape the Babylonians[a] but will certainly be given into the hands of the king of Babylon, and will speak with him face to face and see him with his own eyes. 5He will take Zedekiah to Babylon, where he will remain until I deal with him, declares the LORD. If you fight against the Babylonians, you will not succeed.'"

6Jeremiah said, "The word of the LORD came to me: 7Hanamel son of Shallum your uncle is going to come to you and say, 'Buy my field at Anathoth, because as nearest relative it is your right and duty to buy it.'

8"Then, just as the LORD had said, my cousin Hanamel came to me in the courtyard of the guard and said, 'Buy my field at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Since it is your right to redeem it and possess it, buy it for yourself.'

"I knew that this was the word of the LORD; 9so I bought the field at Anathoth from my cousin Hanamel and weighed out for him seventeen shekels[b] of silver. 10I signed and sealed the deed, had it witnessed, and weighed out the silver on the scales. 11I took the deed of purchase—the sealed copy containing the terms and conditions, as well as the unsealed copy— 12and I gave this deed to Baruch son of Neriah, the son of Mahseiah, in the presence of my cousin Hanamel and of the witnesses who had signed the deed and of all the Jews sitting in the courtyard of the guard.

13"In their presence I gave Baruch these instructions: 14'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Take these documents, both the sealed and unsealed copies of the deed of purchase, and put them in a clay jar so they will last a long time. 15For this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land.'

16"After I had given the deed of purchase to Baruch son of Neriah, I prayed to the LORD:

17"Ah, Sovereign LORD, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you. 18You show love to thousands but bring the punishment for the parents' sins into the laps of their children after them. Great and mighty God, whose name is the LORD Almighty, 19great are your purposes and mighty are your deeds. Your eyes are open to the ways of all mankind; you reward each person according to their conduct and as their deeds deserve. 20You performed signs and wonders in Egypt and have continued them to this day, in Israel and among all mankind, and have gained the renown that is still yours. 21You brought your people Israel out of Egypt with signs and wonders, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with great terror. 22You gave them this land you had sworn to give their ancestors, a land flowing with milk and honey. 23They came in and took possession of it, but they did not obey you or follow your law; they did not do what you commanded them to do. So you brought all this disaster on them.

24"See how the siege ramps are built up to take the city. Because of the sword, famine and plague, the city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians who are attacking it. What you said has happened, as you now see. 25And though the city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians, you, Sovereign LORD, say to me, 'Buy the field with silver and have the transaction witnessed.'"

26Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 27"I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me? 28Therefore this is what the LORD says: I am about to give this city into the hands of the Babylonians and to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, who will capture it. 29The Babylonians who are attacking this city will come in and set it on fire; they will burn it down, along with the houses where the people aroused my anger by burning incense on the roofs to Baal and by pouring out drink offerings to other gods.

30"The people of Israel and Judah have done nothing but evil in my sight from their youth; indeed, the people of Israel have done nothing but arouse my anger with what their hands have made, declares the LORD. 31From the day it was built until now, this city has so aroused my anger and wrath that I must remove it from my sight. 32The people of Israel and Judah have provoked me by all the evil they have done—they, their kings and officials, their priests and

[a] *4* Or *Chaldeans*; also in verses 5, 24, 25, 28, 29 and 43
[b] *9* That is, about 7 ounces or about 200 grams

Trade & Economics
Ancient deeds were prepared in duplicate. One copy was folded or enclosed in the duplicate and then sealed (Jer 32:10). If a question arose about the deed, the inside copy would show whether someone had tampered with the outside. Seals were applied by pressing a carved stamp into a lump of wet clay. The design of many seals consisted only of a person's name and title.

A God Consuming Human Flesh (Jer 32:35)

The god Molek was worshiped by sacrificing human children. The ancient world in general was horrified by this practice, and the sacrifice of children to a deity became widely known as a "Molek sacrifice."

Whether the name of this deity was actually "Molek" remains uncertain. The scribes of the Hebrew Bible were so appalled with the worship of Molek that they used the vowels of the Hebrew word *bosheth* (meaning "shame") with this deity's name. The original name apparently meant "king" and could have been understood as a divine title. But it could also have been the actual name of the deity. The prophet Jeremiah mentions Molek together with the god Baal, whose name means "lord" (Jer 32:35).

While 1Ki 11:7 associates the worship of Molek with the Ammonites, it is the Phoenicians and the Judahites who show evidence of practicing child sacrifice. Literary and archaeological sources point to rituals involving the sacrifice of children at the Phoenician colony of Carthage from around 700 to 200 B.C. The central ritual of worship appears to have included the sacrifice of infants and small children, the burning of their bodies, and the burial of the cremated remains.

Jeremiah condemned both the practice of child sacrifice and the city of Jerusalem for allowing it (Jer 7:30–32; 19:13). The Topheth was a cult site set up in the Valley of Hinnom, near Jerusalem, for human sacrifice. Two Judahite kings, Ahaz (2Ch 28:1–3) and Manasseh (2Ch 33:1, 6), are reported to have sacrificed children there. We do not know whether what Jeremiah witnessed was the worship of Molek or the incorporation of Molek child sacrifice into the worship of Judah's God Yahweh. But for certain the prophet considered it an abomination (Jer 32:35).

prophets, the people of Judah and those living in Jerusalem. 33They turned their backs to me and not their faces; though I taught them again and again, they would not listen or respond to discipline. 34They set up their vile images in the house that bears my Name and defiled it. 35They built high places for Baal in the Valley of Ben Hinnom to sacrifice their sons and daughters to Molek, though I never commanded—nor did it enter my mind—that they should do such a detestable thing and so make Judah sin.

36"You are saying about this city, 'By the sword, famine and plague it will be given into the hands of the king of Babylon'; but this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 37I will surely gather them from all the lands where I banish them in my furious anger and great wrath; I will bring them back to this place and let them live in safety. 38They will be my people, and I will be their God. 39I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me and that all will then go well for them and for their children after them. 40I will make an everlasting covenant with them: I will never stop doing good to them, and I will inspire them to fear me, so that they will never turn away from me. 41I will rejoice in doing them good and will assuredly plant them in this land with all my heart and soul.

42"This is what the LORD says: As I have brought all this great calamity on this people, so I will give them all the prosperity I have promised them. 43Once more fields will be bought in this land of which you say, 'It is a desolate waste, without people or animals, for it has been given into the hands of the Babylonians.' 44Fields will be bought for silver, and deeds will be signed, sealed and witnessed in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem, in the towns of Judah and in the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, because I will restore their fortunes,[a] declares the LORD."

Promise of Restoration

33 1While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him a second time: 2"This is what the LORD says, he who made the earth, the LORD who formed it and established it—the LORD is his name: 3'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' 4For this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says about the houses in this city and the royal palaces of Judah that have been torn down to be used against the siege ramps and the sword 5in the fight with the Babylonians[b]: 'They will be filled with the dead bodies of the people I will slay in my anger and wrath. I will hide my face from this city because of all its wickedness.

6"'Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security. 7I will bring Judah and Israel back from captivity[c] and will rebuild them as they were before. 8I will cleanse them from all the sin they have committed against me and will forgive all their sins of rebellion against me. 9Then this city will bring me renown, joy, praise and honor before all nations on earth that hear of all the good

[a] *44* Or *will bring them back from captivity*
[b] *5* Or *Chaldeans* [c] *7* Or *will restore the fortunes of Judah and Israel*

things I do for it; and they will be in awe and will tremble at the abundant prosperity and peace I provide for it.'

10"This is what the LORD says: 'You say about this place, "It is a desolate waste, without people or animals." Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither people nor animals, there will be heard once more 11the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD, saying,

"Give thanks to the LORD Almighty,
for the LORD is good;
his love endures forever."

For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,' says the LORD.

12"This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In this place, desolate and without people or animals—in all its towns there will again be pastures for shepherds to rest their flocks. 13In the towns of the hill country, of the western foothills and of the Negev, in the territory of Benjamin, in the villages around Jerusalem and in the towns of Judah, flocks will again pass under the hand of the one who counts them,' says the LORD.

14"'The days are coming,' declares the LORD, 'when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

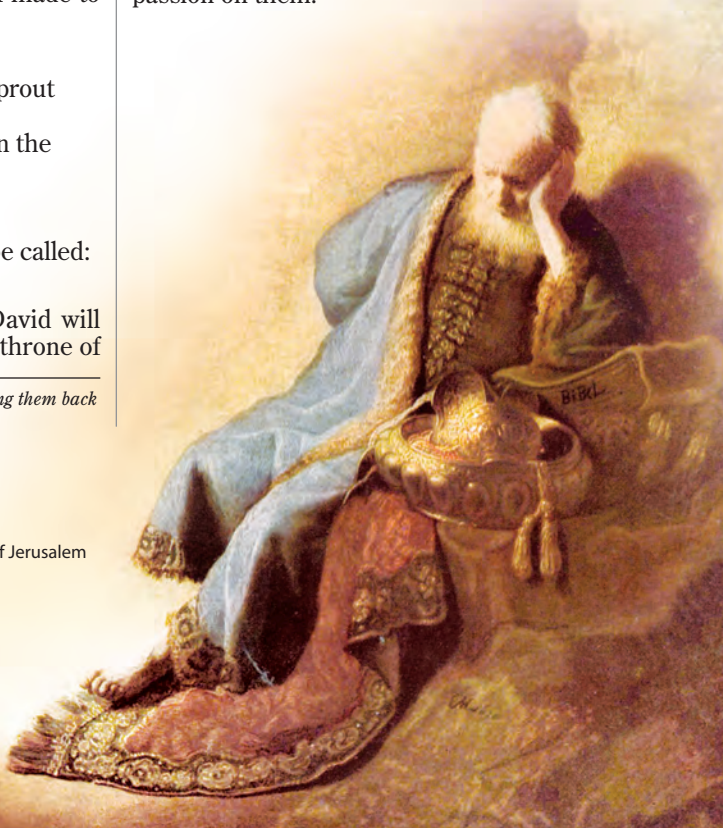
15"'In those days and at that time
I will make a righteous Branch sprout
from David's line;
he will do what is just and right in the
land.
16In those days Judah will be saved
and Jerusalem will live in safety.
This is the name by which it[a] will be called:
The LORD Our Righteous Savior.'

17For this is what the LORD says: 'David will never fail to have a man to sit on the throne of Israel, 18nor will the Levitical priests ever fail to have a man to stand before me continually to offer burnt offerings, to burn grain offerings and to present sacrifices.'"

19The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 20"This is what the LORD says: 'If you can break my covenant with the day and my covenant with the night, so that day and night no longer come at their appointed time, 21then my covenant with David my servant—and my covenant with the Levites who are priests ministering before me—can be broken and David will no longer have a descendant to reign on his throne. 22I will make the descendants of David my servant and the Levites who minister before me as countless as the stars in the sky and as measureless as the sand on the seashore.'"

23The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 24"Have you not noticed that these people are saying, 'The LORD has rejected the two kingdoms[b] he chose'? So they despise my people and no longer regard them as a nation. 25This is what the LORD says: 'If I have not made my covenant with day and night and established the laws of heaven and earth, 26then I will reject the descendants of Jacob and David my servant and will not choose one of his sons to rule over the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes[c] and have compassion on them.'"

[a] *16* Or *he* [b] *24* Or *families* [c] *26* Or *will bring them back from captivity*



Jeremiah mourns over the destruction of Jerusalem
Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn
c. 1630

JEREMIAH'S CALL AND MINISTRY

The prophet Jeremiah is reported to have received the "word of the LORD" in the 13th year of King Josiah, or 627 B.C. (Jer 1:2). Some think that Jeremiah was "young" (Jer 1:6) at this time. Others suppose that he was "in the womb" (Jer 1:5) and thus born in 627.

	Life of Jeremiah	Kings of Judah
645 B.C.	Approximate date of Jeremiah's birth if he was "young" (Jer 1:6) in 627 B.C.	
640 B.C.		Josiah becomes king in Judah
628 B.C.		Josiah begins early reforms of Judah's pagan religions (2Ch 34:3)
627 B.C.	Jeremiah receives the "word of the LORD" (Jer 1:2)	
627 B.C.	Date of Jeremiah's birth if he was called "in the womb" (Jer 1:5)	
622 B.C.		Josiah repairs the temple (2Ch 34:8)
622 B.C.		Josiah celebrates the Passover in a climax to his religious reforms (2Ki 23:21–23)
612 B.C.	Jeremiah possibly begins his prophetic ministry (if he was born in 627 B.C.)	
609 B.C.		Jehoiakim becomes king in Judah
604 B.C.		Jehoiakim burns Jeremiah's scroll (Jer 36:9, 22, 23)
597 B.C.		Zedekiah becomes king in Judah
587 B.C.		Zedekiah keeps Jeremiah imprisoned (Jer 37:21)
586 B.C.	Jeremiah is released by the captain of the Babylonian guard	

Jeremiah 23:1–8

The Righteous Branch

23 :1 "Woe to the shepherds who are destroying and scattering the sheep of my pasture!" declares the LORD. 2Therefore this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says to the shepherds who tend my people: "Because you have scattered my flock and driven them away and have not bestowed care on them, I will bestow punishment on you for the evil you have done," declares the LORD. 3"I myself will gather the remnant of my flock out of all the countries where I have driven them and will bring them back to their pasture, where they will be fruitful and increase in number. 4I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing," declares the LORD.

5"The days are coming," declares the LORD,
"when I will raise up for David[a] a
righteous Branch,
a King who will reign wisely
and do what is just and right in the land.
6In his days Judah will be saved
and Israel will live in safety.
This is the name by which he will be called:
The LORD Our Righteous Savior.

7"So then, the days are coming," declares the LORD, "when people will no longer say, 'As sure-

[a] 5 Or *up from David's line*

ly as the LORD lives, who brought the Israelites up out of Egypt,' 8but they will say, 'As surely as the LORD lives, who brought the descendants of Israel up out of the land of the north and out of all the countries where he had banished them.' Then they will live in their own land."

Jeremiah 38:1–28

Jeremiah Thrown Into a Cistern

38:1 Shephatiah son of Mattan, Gedaliah son of Pashhur, Jehukal[a] son of Shelemiah, and Pashhur son of Malkijah heard what Jeremiah was telling all the people when he said, 2"This is what the LORD says: 'Whoever stays in this city will die by the sword, famine or plague, but whoever goes over to the Babylonians[b] will live. They will escape with their lives; they will live.' 3And this is what the LORD says: 'This city will certainly be given into the hands of the army of the king of Babylon, who will capture it.'"

4Then the officials said to the king, "This man should be put to death. He is discouraging the soldiers who are left in this city, as well as all the people, by the things he is saying to them. This man is not seeking the good of these people but their ruin."

5"He is in your hands," King Zedekiah answered. "The king can do nothing to oppose you."

6So they took Jeremiah and put him into the cistern of Malkijah, the king's son, which was in the courtyard of the guard. They lowered Jeremiah by ropes into the cistern; it had no water in it, only mud, and Jeremiah sank down into the mud.

7But Ebed-Melek, a Cushite,[c] an official[d] in the royal palace, heard that they had put Jeremiah into the cistern. While the king was sitting in the Benjamin Gate, 8Ebed-Melek went out of the palace and said to him, 9"My lord the king, these men have acted wickedly in all they have done to Jeremiah the prophet. They have thrown him into a cistern, where he will starve to death when there is no longer any bread in the city."

10Then the king commanded Ebed-Melek the Cushite, "Take thirty men from here with you and lift Jeremiah the prophet out of the cistern before he dies."

11So Ebed-Melek took the men with him and went to a room under the treasury in the palace. He took some old rags and worn-out clothes from there and let them down with ropes to Jeremiah in the cistern. 12Ebed-Melek the Cushite said to Jeremiah, "Put these old rags and worn-out clothes under your arms to pad the ropes." Jeremiah did so, 13and they pulled him up with the ropes and lifted him out of the cistern. And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard.

Zedekiah Questions Jeremiah Again

14Then King Zedekiah sent for Jeremiah the prophet and had him brought to the third entrance to the temple of the LORD. "I am going to ask you something," the king said to Jeremiah. "Do not hide anything from me."

15Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "If I give you an answer, will you not kill me? Even if I did give you counsel, you would not listen to me."

16But King Zedekiah swore this oath secretly to Jeremiah: "As surely as the LORD lives, who has given us breath, I will neither kill you nor hand you over to those who want to kill you."

17Then Jeremiah said to Zedekiah, "This is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'If you surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, your life will be spared and this city will not be burned down; you and your family will live. 18But if you will not surrender to the officers of the king of Babylon, this city will be given into the hands of the Babylonians and they will burn it down; you yourself will not escape from them.'"

19King Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "I am afraid of the Jews who have gone over to the Babylonians, for the Babylonians may hand me over to them and they will mistreat me."

20"They will not hand you over," Jeremiah replied. "Obey the LORD by doing what I tell you. Then it will go well with you, and your life will be spared. 21But if you refuse to surrender, this is what the LORD has revealed to me: 22All the women left in the palace of the king of Judah will be brought out to the officials of the king of Babylon. Those women will say to you:

"'They misled you and overcame you—
those trusted friends of yours.

Agriculture & Herding

In the dry regions of Israel, cisterns for water storage were dug in the ground to a depth of about 15 feet (Jer 38:6). The opening at the surface was typically small enough to be covered, but below the surface the diameter of the pit increased to 8 or 10 feet. Such a cistern would hold 30 cubic yards or about 6,000 gallons. Rainwater filled the cisterns in the wet season.

[a] *1* Hebrew *Jukal*, a variant of *Jehukal* [b] *2* Or *Chaldeans*; also in verses 18, 19 and 23 [c] *7* Probably from the upper Nile region [d] *7* Or *a eunuch*

Your feet are sunk in the mud;
your friends have deserted you.'

23"All your wives and children will be brought out to the Babylonians. You yourself will not escape from their hands but will be captured by the king of Babylon; and this city will[a] be burned down."

24Then Zedekiah said to Jeremiah, "Do not let anyone know about this conversation, or you may die. 25If the officials hear that I talked with you, and they come to you and say, 'Tell us what you said to the king and what the king said to you; do not hide it from us or we will kill you,' 26then tell them, 'I was pleading with the king not to send me back to Jonathan's house to die there.'"

27All the officials did come to Jeremiah and question him, and he told them everything the king had ordered him to say. So they said no more to him, for no one had heard his conversation with the king.

28And Jeremiah remained in the courtyard of the guard until the day Jerusalem was captured.

The Fall of Jerusalem

This is how Jerusalem was taken:

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Rebellion Against Babylon

King Zedekiah appears in the Book of Kings as merely a repeat of his brother Jehoiakim and in the Book of Jeremiah as a weak, fearful ruler. The Chronicler has even less patience with this last king of Judah, describing him as one who "became stiff-necked and hardened his heart" (2Ch 36:13), words reminiscent of the hated pharaoh of the Exodus (Ex 8:15). Zedekiah's reign is roundly condemned, especially for the defilement of the house of the Lord (described in Eze 8–11), which is the crowning sin to the priestly writer of Chronicles (2Ch 36:14).

• **2 Chronicles 36:13–16**

2 Chronicles

36:13 He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the LORD, the God of Israel. 14Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the LORD, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

The Fall of Jerusalem

15The LORD, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the LORD was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.

TRANSITION

Ezekiel's Temple Vision

Ezekiel's visions were very often concerned with the temple (see "The Book of Ezekiel" at Eze 1:1). In the 6th year of Jehoiachin's exile (592 B.C.), a year after Ezekiel's prophetic call, the prophet had a vision (Eze 8–11). In this vision, he is led through the temple to observe how extensively it had been defiled during Zedekiah's reign. Pagan gods of all kinds were worshiped within the temple precincts. It was more than God would tolerate, and the vision ends with the glory of God departing from the temple (11:22, 23).

• **Ezekiel 8:1—11:25**

Ezekiel

Idolatry in the Temple

8:1 In the sixth year, in the sixth month on the fifth day, while I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, the hand of the Sovereign LORD came on me there. 2I looked, and I saw a figure like that of a man.[b] From what appeared to be his waist down he was like fire, and from there up his appearance was as bright as glowing metal. 3He stretched out what looked like a hand and took me by the hair of my head. The Spirit lifted me up between earth and heaven and in visions of God he took me to Jerusalem, to the entrance of the north gate of the inner court, where the idol that provokes to jealousy stood. 4And there before me was the glory of the God of Israel, as in the vision I had seen in the plain.

5Then he said to me, "Son of man, look toward the north." So I looked, and in the entrance north of the gate of the altar I saw this idol of jealousy.

6And he said to me, "Son of man, do you see what they are doing—the utterly detestable things the Israelites are doing here, things that will drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see things that are even more detestable."

[a] *23* Or *and you will cause this city to* [b] *2* Or *saw a fiery figure*

Weeping for Tammuz (Eze 8:14)

Who was Tammuz that Judean women would weep for him (Eze 8:14)? Why was this activity at the temple "detestable" (Eze 8:6, 13–15)?

Tammuz was an imported deity to Judah. The origins of the worship of the god are lost, though the name "Dumuzi" is assumed to have been a ruler of one of the Sumerian city-states before the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. By the Neo-Sumerian period (c. 2200–1900 B.C.) the Sumerians recognized Dumuzi as a god and usually associated him with the goddess Inanna. In the Akkadian cult the god Dumuzi was called Tammuz, and Inanna was identified with Ishtar. This god and goddess are known by both names as Dumuzi/Tammuz and Inanna/Ishtar.

Stories about the goddess Inanna/Ishtar tell of her visit to the underworld to visit a sister, queen of the netherworld. Tricked by her sister into becoming a corpse in the land of the dead, Inanna/Ishtar must find a substitute to take her place or remain among the dead forever. Returning to earth she finds only sympathetic divinities, none of whom she can bring herself to send to her sister. However, when she returns to her own temple, she is greeted by an unconcerned husband, Dumuzi/Tammuz. She has him dragged to the underworld by demons to take her place among the dead.

The poem called the Gilgamesh Epic makes reference to this myth and to an annual weeping that Ishtar establishes to commemorate Tammuz's death. It is this annual weeping for Tammuz which had caught the eye of Ezekiel at the temple in Jerusalem. Women in Judah had taken up the worship of Tammuz and possibly the rituals of Ishtar and Tammuz that involved fertility rites. This would also have been an abomination to God, who through Jeremiah had declared that fertility came only from God (Jer 5:24). Women weeping in ritual for another deity at the temple dedicated to God clearly was a great abomination.

7 Then he brought me to the entrance to the
court. I looked, and I saw a hole in the wall. 8 He
said to me, "Son of man, now dig into the wall."
So I dug into the wall and saw a doorway there.
9 And he said to me, "Go in and see the wick-
ed and detestable things they are doing here."
10 So I went in and looked, and I saw portrayed
all over the walls all kinds of crawling things
and unclean animals and all the idols of Israel.
11 In front of them stood seventy elders of Isra-
el, and Jaazaniah son of Shaphan was standing
among them. Each had a censer in his hand,
and a fragrant cloud of incense was rising.
12 He said to me, "Son of man, have you seen
what the elders of Israel are doing in the dark-
ness, each at the shrine of his own idol? They
say, 'The LORD does not see us; the LORD has
forsaken the land.'" 13 Again, he said, "You will
see them doing things that are even more de-
testable."
14 Then he brought me to the entrance of the
north gate of the house of the LORD, and I saw
women sitting there, mourning the god Tam-
muz. 15 He said to me, "Do you see this, son of
man? You will see things that are even more
detestable than this."
16 He then brought me into the inner court
of the house of the LORD, and there at the en-
trance to the temple, between the portico and
the altar, were about twenty-five men. With
their backs toward the temple of the LORD and
their faces toward the east, they were bowing
down to the sun in the east.
17 He said to me, "Have you seen this, son of
man? Is it a trivial matter for the people of Ju-
dah to do the detestable things they are doing
here? Must they also fill the land with violence
and continually arouse my anger? Look at them
putting the branch to their nose! 18 Therefore I
will deal with them in anger; I will not look on
them with pity or spare them. Although they
shout in my ears, I will not listen to them."

Judgment on the Idolaters

9 1 Then I heard him call out in a loud voice,
"Bring near those who are appointed to ex-
ecute judgment on the city, each with a weapon
in his hand." 2 And I saw six men coming from
the direction of the upper gate, which faces
north, each with a deadly weapon in his hand.
With them was a man clothed in linen who had
a writing kit at his side. They came in and stood
beside the bronze altar.
3 Now the glory of the God of Israel went up
from above the cherubim, where it had been,
and moved to the threshold of the temple.
Then the LORD called to the man clothed in lin-
en who had the writing kit at his side 4 and said
to him, "Go throughout the city of Jerusalem
and put a mark on the foreheads of those who
grieve and lament over all the detestable things
that are done in it."
5 As I listened, he said to the others, "Follow
him through the city and kill, without showing
pity or compassion. 6 Slaughter the old men,
the young men and women, the mothers and
children, but do not touch anyone who has
the mark. Begin at my sanctuary." So they be-
gan with the old men who were in front of the
temple.

Gods Abandon People Who Abandon Their Gods (Eze 10:18)

Ezekiel's vision of the chariot throne carrying Yahweh away from the temple, leaving the city to its destruction (Eze 10), fits the theologies of the ancient Near East. Common belief held that when people ignored the laws and rites of their patron gods, the gods abandoned them.

In Sumerian literature are poems (including a long lament over Ur) about the destruction of cities which were given up by their gods. A lament from the period of Sargon of Agade (Akkad, c. 2350 B.C.) was written as if from the mouth of a goddess who describes the destruction of her own city and her inability to even find where her temple had been. She regrets that she had fled with the other gods, for she could have stayed and saved her city, but it was now too late.

The god or gods of a city would only put up with a certain amount of disrespect from their people. Marduk, for example, is said to have abandoned Babylon when the people focused on accruing wealth, engaging in immoral behavior, and taking up with the cult of Elam. All the other deities who had lived in Babylon also left the temples for their places in heaven. That left the city open to destruction, as the Assyrians argued to justify their destruction of Babylon in 689 B.C. by their king Sennacherib.

In Ezekiel's vision, the glory of God departs from the threshold of Jerusalem's temple (Eze 10:4, 18). His holiness had been rejected so that he would not stay.

7 Then he said to them, "Defile the temple
and fill the courts with the slain. Go!" So they
went out and began killing throughout the city.
8 While they were killing and I was left alone,
I fell facedown, crying out, "Alas, Sovereign
LORD! Are you going to destroy the entire rem-
nant of Israel in this outpouring of your wrath
on Jerusalem?"

9 He answered me, "The sin of the people
of Israel and Judah is exceedingly great; the
land is full of bloodshed and the city is full of
injustice. They say, 'The LORD has forsaken
the land; the LORD does not see.' 10 So I will not
look on them with pity or spare them, but I will
bring down on their own heads what they have
done."

11 Then the man in linen with the writing kit
at his side brought back word, saying, "I have
done as you commanded."

God's Glory Departs From the Temple

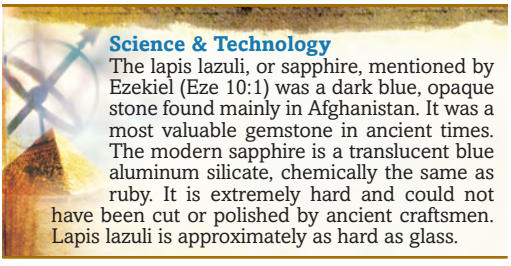
10 1 I looked, and I saw the likeness of a
throne of lapis lazuli above the vault
that was over the heads of the cherubim. 2 The
LORD said to the man clothed in linen, "Go in
among the wheels beneath the cherubim. Fill
your hands with burning coals from among the
cherubim and scatter them over the city." And
as I watched, he went in.

3 Now the cherubim were standing on the
south side of the temple when the man went
in, and a cloud filled the inner court. 4 Then the
glory of the LORD rose from above the cheru-
bim and moved to the threshold of the temple.
The cloud filled the temple, and the court was
full of the radiance of the glory of the LORD.
5 The sound of the wings of the cherubim could
be heard as far away as the outer court, like the
voice of God Almighty[a] when he speaks.

6 When the LORD commanded the man in lin-
en, "Take fire from among the wheels, from
among the cherubim," the man went in and
stood beside a wheel. 7 Then one of the cherubim
reached out his hand to the fire that was among
them. He took up some of it and put it into the
hands of the man in linen, who took it and went
out. 8 (Under the wings of the cherubim could be
seen what looked like human hands.)

9 I looked, and I saw beside the cherubim
four wheels, one beside each of the cherubim;
the wheels sparkled like topaz. 10 As for their
appearance, the four of them looked alike; each
was like a wheel intersecting a wheel. 11 As they
moved, they would go in any one of the four
directions the cherubim faced; the wheels did
not turn about[b] as the cherubim went. The
cherubim went in whatever direction the head
faced, without turning as they went. 12 Their en-
tire bodies, including their backs, their hands
and their wings, were completely full of eyes,
as were their four wheels. 13 I heard the wheels
being called "the whirling wheels." 14 Each of
the cherubim had four faces: One face was that
of a cherub, the second the face of a human be-
ing, the third the face of a lion, and the fourth
the face of an eagle.

15 Then the cherubim rose upward. These
were the living creatures I had seen by the



Science & Technology

The lapis lazuli, or sapphire, mentioned by Ezekiel (Eze 10:1) was a dark blue, opaque stone found mainly in Afghanistan. It was a most valuable gemstone in ancient times. The modern sapphire is a translucent blue aluminum silicate, chemically the same as ruby. It is extremely hard and could not have been cut or polished by ancient craftsmen. Lapis lazuli is approximately as hard as glass.

[a] 5 Hebrew *El-Shaddai* [b] 11 Or *aside*

Kebar River. 16When the cherubim moved, the wheels beside them moved; and when the cherubim spread their wings to rise from the ground, the wheels did not leave their side. 17When the cherubim stood still, they also stood still; and when the cherubim rose, they rose with them, because the spirit of the living creatures was in them.

18Then the glory of the LORD departed from over the threshold of the temple and stopped above the cherubim. 19While I watched, the cherubim spread their wings and rose from the ground, and as they went, the wheels went with them. They stopped at the entrance of the east gate of the LORD's house, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them.

20These were the living creatures I had seen beneath the God of Israel by the Kebar River, and I realized that they were cherubim. 21Each had four faces and four wings, and under their wings was what looked like human hands. 22Their faces had the same appearance as those I had seen by the Kebar River. Each one went straight ahead.

God's Sure Judgment on Jerusalem

11 1Then the Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the gate of the house of the LORD that faces east. There at the entrance of the gate were twenty-five men, and I saw among them Jaazaniah son of Azzur and Pelatiah son of Benaiah, leaders of the people. 2The LORD said to me, "Son of man, these are the men who are plotting evil and giving wicked advice in this city. 3They say, 'Haven't our houses been recently rebuilt? This city is a pot, and we are the meat in it.' 4Therefore prophesy against them; prophesy, son of man."

5Then the Spirit of the LORD came on me, and he told me to say: "This is what the LORD says: That is what you are saying, you leaders in Israel, but I know what is going through your mind. 6You have killed many people in this city and filled its streets with the dead.

7"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: The bodies you have thrown there are the meat and this city is the pot, but I will drive you out of it. 8You fear the sword, and the sword is what I will bring against you, declares the Sovereign LORD. 9I will drive you out of the city and deliver you into the hands of foreigners and inflict punishment on you. 10You will fall by the sword, and I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 11This city will not be a pot for you, nor will you be the meat in it; I will execute judgment on you at the borders of Israel. 12And you will know that I am the LORD, for you have not followed my decrees or kept my laws but have conformed to the standards of the nations around you."

13Now as I was prophesying, Pelatiah son of Benaiah died. Then I fell facedown and cried out in a loud voice, "Alas, Sovereign LORD! Will you completely destroy the remnant of Israel?"

The Promise of Israel's Return

14The word of the LORD came to me: 15"Son of man, the people of Jerusalem have said of your fellow exiles and all the other Israelites, 'They are far away from the LORD; this land was given to us as our possession.'

The East Gate of the Temple (Eze 11:1)

The East Gate of Jerusalem's temple was an important social institution. The 25 men, including two "leaders" (or "princes"), that Ezekiel envisioned there most likely represented the gathering of an official "city council" (Eze 11:1).

Right before the exile of 586 B.C., the temple became an important political institution. Entry into the temple's outer courtyard signified full membership in the society. To regulate entry, therefore, the temple had outer gates to keep the impure and the unqualified out. Only the priestly aristocracy were allowed into the inner courtyards. A set of inner gates prohibited nonpriests from violating the temple's sacred space.

The temple gates were not simple doors set on a hinge. Gates were large rooms in which people could gather. It is in one of these rooms that Ezekiel saw the 25 Judeans gather.

The East Gate of the temple, however, bore special significance. It defined a royal and governmental sphere. In Ezekiel's vision of the new temple, the gate is shut except for the Sabbath sacrifices. Then only the prince is allowed into the gate (Eze 46:1, 2). The common citizenry, the "people of the land," must worship outside the gate, at—not within—its entrance (46:3). Only the civic leader is allowed into the gate.

It is thus natural that Ezekiel saw two princes, Jaazaniah and Pelatiah, in the East Gate (11:1). The meeting was an important one. The leaders of the city gathered to determine the fate of Jerusalem. The death of Pelatiah at this meeting (11:13), then, signified the depth of divine judgment against these leaders. They had guided Jerusalem on a path that would end in destruction.

16"'Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.'

17"'Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.'

18"'They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols. 19I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh. 20Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God. 21But as for those whose hearts are devoted to their vile images and detestable idols, I will bring down on their own heads what they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD."

22Then the cherubim, with the wheels beside them, spread their wings, and the glory of the God of Israel was above them. 23The glory of the LORD went up from within the city and stopped above the mountain east of it. 24The Spirit lifted me up and brought me to the exiles in Babylonia[a] in the vision given by the Spirit of God.

Then the vision I had seen went up from me, 25and I told the exiles everything the LORD had shown me.

TRANSITION

Ezekiel's Oracles Before the Fall of Jerusalem

In the 7th year of Jehoiachin's exile (591 B.C.; Eze 20:1), the elders of Isr ael sat before Ezekiel. The prophet had less than f our years of pr ophetic ministry before Nebuchadnezzar would move against Jerusalem one more time. Ezekiel's message thr oughout this time w as one of judgment, of Jerusalem 's certain destruction (20:45—21:17).

The oracles, visions, parables, and allegor ies given during these years almost all speak of the coming punishment of Jerusalem. The allegory of Eze 17, f or instance, explicitly condemns Zedekiah's alliance with E gypt that led t o Babylon's final assault (17:15–17). Ezekiel condemns the false pr ophets (ch. 13), the elders of Isr ael (ch. 14), and the inhabitan ts of Jerusalem (chs . 15; 16). They all would suffer, not for their ancestors' sins, but f or their o wn (ch. 18; 22:1– 22). Judah and Jerusalem had not lear ned a lesson either from their r ebellious past (20:1– 44) or from their sister nation Samaria (ch. 23).

- **Ezekiel 13:1—18:32**
- **Ezekiel 20:1—21:17**
- **Ezekiel 22:1–22**
- **Ezekiel 23:1–49**

Ezekiel 13:1 — 18:32

False Prophets Condemned

13:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2"Son of man, prophesy against the prophets of Israel who are now prophesying. Say to those who prophesy out of their own imagination: 'Hear the word of the LORD! 3This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the foolish[b] prophets who follow their own spirit and have seen nothing! 4Your prophets, Israel, are like jackals among ruins. 5You have not gone up to the breaches in the wall to repair it for the people of Israel so that it will stand firm in the battle on the day of the LORD. 6Their visions are false and their divinations a lie. Even though the LORD has not sent them, they say, "The LORD declares," and expect him to fulfill their words. 7Have you not seen false visions and uttered lying divinations when you say, "The LORD declares," though I have not spoken?

8"'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because of your false words and lying visions, I am against you, declares the Sovereign LORD. 9My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will not belong to the council of my people or be listed in the records of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

10"'Because they lead my people astray, saying, "Peace," when there is no peace, and because, when a flimsy wall is built, they cover it with whitewash, 11therefore tell those who cover it with whitewash that it is going to fall. Rain will come in torrents, and I will send hailstones hurtling down, and violent winds will burst forth. 12When the wall collapses, will people not ask you, "Where is the whitewash you covered it with?"

13"'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: In my wrath I will unleash a violent wind, and in my anger hailstones and torrents of rain will fall with destructive fury. 14I will tear down the wall you have covered with whitewash and will level it to the ground so that its foundation will be laid bare. When it[c] falls, you

[a] *24* Or *Chaldea* [b] *3* Or *wicked* [c] *14* Or *the city*

will be destroyed in it; and you will know that I am the LORD. 15So I will pour out my wrath against the wall and against those who covered it with whitewash. I will say to you, "The wall is gone and so are those who whitewashed it, 16those prophets of Israel who prophesied to Jerusalem and saw visions of peace for her when there was no peace, declares the Sovereign LORD."'

17"Now, son of man, set your face against the daughters of your people who prophesy out of their own imagination. Prophesy against them 18and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to the women who sew magic charms on all their wrists and make veils of various lengths for their heads in order to ensnare people. Will you ensnare the lives of my people but preserve your own? 19You have profaned me among my people for a few handfuls of barley and scraps of bread. By lying to my people, who listen to lies, you have killed those who should not have died and have spared those who should not live.

20"'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against your magic charms with which you ensnare people like birds and I will tear them from your arms; I will set free the people that you ensnare like birds. 21I will tear off your veils and save my people from your hands, and they will no longer fall prey to your power. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 22Because you disheartened the righteous with your lies, when I had brought them no grief, and because you encouraged the wicked not to turn from their evil ways and so save their lives, 23therefore you will no longer see false visions or practice divination. I will save my people from your hands. And then you will know that I am the LORD.'"

Idolaters Condemned

14 1Some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat down in front of me. 2Then the word of the LORD came to me: 3"Son of man, these men have set up idols in their hearts and put wicked stumbling blocks before their faces. Should I let them inquire of me at all? 4Therefore speak to them and tell them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When any of the Israelites set up idols in their hearts and put a wicked stumbling block before their faces and then go to a prophet, I the LORD will answer them myself in keeping with their great idolatry. 5I will do this to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols.'

6"Therefore say to the people of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Repent! Turn from your idols and renounce all your detestable practices!

7"'When any of the Israelites or any foreigner residing in Israel separate themselves from me and set up idols in their hearts and put a wicked stumbling block before their faces and then go to a prophet to inquire of me, I the LORD will answer them myself. 8I will set my face against them and make them an example and a byword. I will remove them from my people. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

9"'And if the prophet is enticed to utter a prophecy, I the LORD have enticed that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and destroy him from among my people Israel. 10They will bear their guilt—the prophet will be as guilty as the one who consults him. 11Then the people of Israel will no longer stray from me, nor will they defile themselves anymore with all their sins. They will be my people, and I will be their God, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

Jerusalem's Judgment Inescapable

12The word of the LORD came to me: 13"Son of man, if a country sins against me by being unfaithful and I stretch out my hand against it to cut off its food supply and send famine upon it and kill its people and their animals, 14even if these three men—Noah, Daniel[a] and Job—were in it, they could save only themselves by their righteousness, declares the Sovereign LORD.

15"Or if I send wild beasts through that country and they leave it childless and it becomes desolate so that no one can pass through it because of the beasts, 16as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even if these three men were in it, they could not save their own sons or daughters. They alone would be saved, but the land would be desolate.

Cults & Supernatural
A very common form of magic is the "binding spell," whose purpose is to bind or compel the powers to control a person's destiny in a certain way (Eze 13:18). Such spells could be cast to fight an enemy, to attract a husband or wife, or to influence the outcome of a race. Items such as amulets, tokens, and figurines were prepared by magicians for their rituals and were given to customers paying for the spell.

[a] *14* Or *Danel*, a man of renown in ancient literature; also in verse 20

Even If Daniel Were Here! (Eze 14:14)

Ezekiel issues a dire warning that even if the great saints—Noah, Daniel, Job—were present, judgment would still come (Eze 14:14). Noah was the hero of the Flood (Ge 6–8); Job, the suffering hero of the Book of Job. Daniel, according to many scholars, is not the Daniel of biblical renown, but another Daniel from the Ugaritic *Legend of Aqhat*. The Hebrew name for "Daniel" is spelled differently in the Hebrew text of Eze 14:14 and 28:3 than it is in the Hebrew Book of Daniel.

The *Legend of Aqhat* is a long epic narrative written late in the 2nd millennium B.C. It is one of the texts found at Ugarit, a major Canaanite port city on the Aramean coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The legend is written in the Ugaritic language, which is closely related to the Hebrew language of the Bible.

In the epic, Daniel, the main character, requests an heir from El, the head of the Canaanite pantheon. The request is granted, and Daniel's new son, Aqhat, becomes a great hunter. The goddess Anath desires Aqhat's bow, which had been crafted by the god Kutharu, and when Aqhat refuses to relinquish it, Anath kills him. Aqhat's sister prepares to avenge his death, but the text of the legend is broken at this point, and the story is incomplete.

Whether the Daniel of the *Legend of Aqhat* is the same Daniel named by Ezekiel is not certain. Ezekiel recalls a Daniel who was wise (Eze 28:3). There is little evidence that the Ugaritic Daniel is recognized for his great wisdom, although the legend does contain a few wisdom sayings in a list named "Duties of a Son." Since the biblical Daniel was regarded as an expert interpreter of dreams and was renowned for his wisdom (Da 5:11, 12), it remains a possibility that Ezekiel had him in mind.

17 "Or if I bring a sword against that country
and say, 'Let the sword pass throughout the
land,' and I kill its people and their animals, 18 as
surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD,
even if these three men were in it, they could
not save their own sons or daughters. They
alone would be saved.
19 "Or if I send a plague into that land and
pour out my wrath on it through bloodshed,
killing its people and their animals, 20 as sure-
ly as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, even
if Noah, Daniel and Job were in it, they could
save neither son nor daughter. They would
save only themselves by their righteousness.
21 "For this is what the Sovereign LORD says:
How much worse will it be when I send against
Jerusalem my four dreadful judgments—
sword and famine and wild beasts and plague—
to kill its men and their animals! 22 Yet there will
be some survivors—sons and daughters who
will be brought out of it. They will come to you,
and when you see their conduct and their ac-
tions, you will be consoled regarding the disas-
ter I have brought on Jerusalem—every disas-
ter I have brought on it. 23 You will be consoled
when you see their conduct and their actions,
for you will know that I have done nothing in it
without cause, declares the Sovereign LORD."

TIME CAPSULE		592 to 589 B.C.
592		Ezekiel has vision of the Jerusalem temple
592		Elders of Judah sit before Ezekiel (Eze 8:1)
591		Certain elders inquire of the Lord from Ezekiel (Eze 20:1)
591		Pharaoh Psammetichus II of Egypt visits Palestine
591		Psammetichus marches to Asia
589		Ussher's date for the destruction of the temple

Jerusalem as a Useless Vine

15 1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son
of man, how is the wood of a vine differ-
ent from that of a branch from any of the trees
in the forest? 3 Is wood ever taken from it to
make anything useful? Do they make pegs from
it to hang things on? 4 And after it is thrown on
the fire as fuel and the fire burns both ends
and chars the middle, is it then useful for any-
thing? 5 If it was not useful for anything when it
was whole, how much less can it be made into
something useful when the fire has burned it
and it is charred?
6 "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD
says: As I have given the wood of the vine
among the trees of the forest as fuel for the
fire, so will I treat the people living in Jerusa-
lem. 7 I will set my face against them. Although
they have come out of the fire, the fire will yet
consume them. And when I set my face against
them, you will know that I am the LORD. 8 I will
make the land desolate because they have been
unfaithful, declares the Sovereign LORD."

Jerusalem as an Adulterous Wife

16 1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son
of man, confront Jerusalem with her de-
testable practices 3 and say, 'This is what the
Sovereign LORD says to Jerusalem: Your ances-
try and birth were in the land of the Canaanites;
your father was an Amorite and your mother a

Prostitution After Other Gods (Eze 16:15–30)

The prophet Ezekiel referred to a particular form of religious observance to announce judgment on the Judeans. In many ancient Near Eastern cults of Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine priestesses engaged in ritual prostitution as an act of religious devotion. Exactly how and why these acts were performed is not clear. Ezekiel accused the Judeans of a form of prostitution in their devotion to gods other than Yahweh. They had "engaged in prostitution" with the representatives of these other gods (Eze 16:15–17).

Ezekiel confronted the Judeans about seeking after deities from Canaan, Egypt, and Assyria, while abandoning Yahweh, who had given them all they had. The Canaanite gods, particularly Asherah and Baal, had been worshiped throughout the monarchies of Israel and Judah. Food provided by Yahweh was used in the worship of Baal, the god of storms, who was thought to bring fertility and provide grain in the field (16:19).

Egyptian deities had also been worshiped in Palestine since at least the time of Egyptian hegemony in the 2nd millennium B.C. Images of the divinities Hathor and Bes appeared in the area through the time of the monarchy of Judah. Some Judeans may have worshiped Egyptian deities in Judah's last days, hoping that the gods of their political ally would help them stand against Nebuchadnezzar II (16:26).

At various times in her history, Judah had courted the stronger nations—Assyria (16:28) and Babylonia (Chaldea, 16:29)—both politically and militarily because of a lack of faith in Yahweh as her protector. Such alliances involved acknowledgment of these nations' gods. Some Judeans worshiped the deities of these nations who had conquered them. They believed that the foreign gods had overcome Yahweh and were the current rulers of the universe. Judah indeed had become "a brazen prostitute" (16:30).

Hittite. 4On the day you were born your cord
was not cut, nor were you washed with water
to make you clean, nor were you rubbed with
salt or wrapped in cloths. 5No one looked on
you with pity or had compassion enough to do
any of these things for you. Rather, you were
thrown out into the open field, for on the day
you were born you were despised.

6"'Then I passed by and saw you kicking
about in your blood, and as you lay there in
your blood I said to you, "Live!"[a] 7I made you
grow like a plant of the field. You grew and de-
veloped and entered puberty. Your breasts had
formed and your hair had grown, yet you were
stark naked.

8"'Later I passed by, and when I looked at
you and saw that you were old enough for love,
I spread the corner of my garment over you
and covered your naked body. I gave you my
solemn oath and entered into a covenant with
you, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you be-
came mine.

9"'I bathed you with water and washed the
blood from you and put ointments on you. 10I
clothed you with an embroidered dress and
put sandals of fine leather on you. I dressed
you in fine linen and covered you with costly
garments. 11I adorned you with jewelry: I put
bracelets on your arms and a necklace around
your neck, 12and I put a ring on your nose, ear-
rings on your ears and a beautiful crown on
your head. 13So you were adorned with gold
and silver; your clothes were of fine linen and
costly fabric and embroidered cloth. Your food
was honey, olive oil and the finest flour. You
became very beautiful and rose to be a queen.
14And your fame spread among the nations on
account of your beauty, because the splendor
I had given you made your beauty perfect, de-
clares the Sovereign LORD.

15"'But you trusted in your beauty and used
your fame to become a prostitute. You lavished
your favors on anyone who passed by and your
beauty became his. 16You took some of your
garments to make gaudy high places, where
you carried on your prostitution. You went to
him, and he possessed your beauty.[b] 17You also
took the fine jewelry I gave you, the jewelry
made of my gold and silver, and you made for
yourself male idols and engaged in prostitution
with them. 18And you took your embroidered
clothes to put on them, and you offered my
oil and incense before them. 19Also the food I
provided for you—the flour, olive oil and hon-
ey I gave you to eat—you offered as fragrant
incense before them. That is what happened,
declares the Sovereign LORD.

[a] *6* A few Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts repeat *and as you lay there in your blood I said to you, "Live!"* [b] *16* The meaning of the Hebrew for this sentence is uncertain.

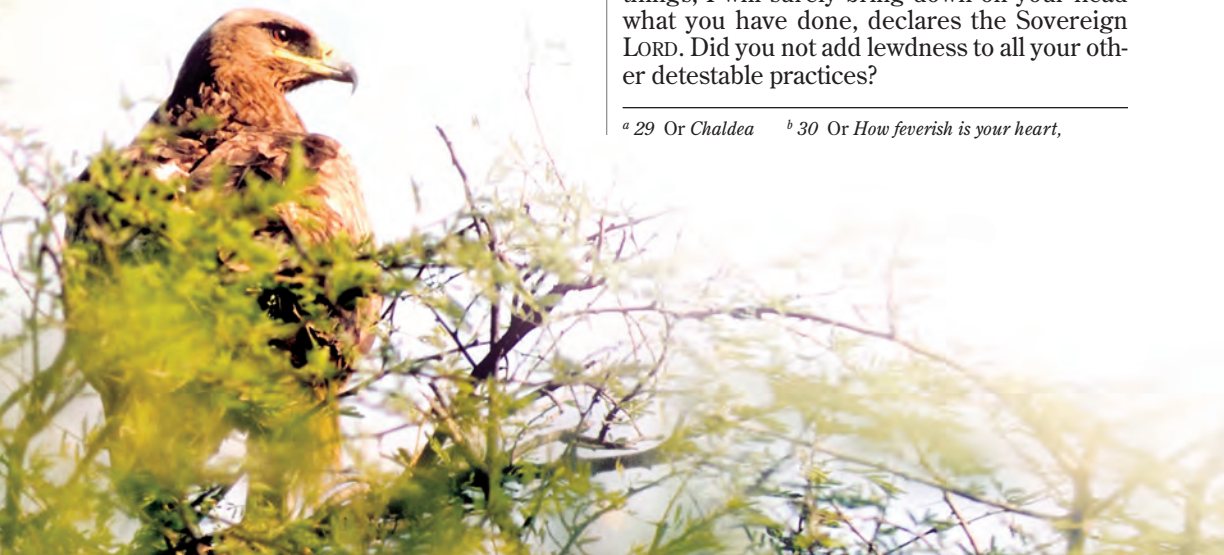
Marriage & Family

Rubbing a newborn baby with salt was a Palestinian custom (Eze 16:4). In caring for a baby during the first days of life, the parents and their society take possession of the child through traditional procedures, such as rubbing. In particular giving the child a name is highly important. In Israel, God took possession of firstborn male children on their 8th day of life, through circumcision (Lk 1:59).

20 "'And you took your sons and daughters
whom you bore to me and sacrificed them as
food to the idols. Was your prostitution not
enough? 21 You slaughtered my children and
sacrificed them to the idols. 22 In all your detest-
able practices and your prostitution you did not
remember the days of your youth, when you
were naked and bare, kicking about in your
blood.
23 "'Woe! Woe to you, declares the Sovereign
LORD. In addition to all your other wickedness,
24 you built a mound for yourself and made a
lofty shrine in every public square. 25 At ev-
ery street corner you built your lofty shrines
and degraded your beauty, spreading your
legs with increasing promiscuity to anyone
who passed by. 26 You engaged in prostitution
with the Egyptians, your neighbors with large
genitals, and aroused my anger with your in-
creasing promiscuity. 27 So I stretched out my
hand against you and reduced your territory;
I gave you over to the greed of your enemies,
the daughters of the Philistines, who were
shocked by your lewd conduct. 28 You engaged
in prostitution with the Assyrians too, because
you were insatiable; and even after that, you
still were not satisfied. 29 Then you increased
your promiscuity to include Babylonia,[a] a land
of merchants, but even with this you were not
satisfied.
30 "'I am filled with fury against you,[b] de-
clares the Sovereign LORD, when you do all
these things, acting like a brazen prostitute!
31 When you built your mounds at every street
corner and made your lofty shrines in every
public square, you were unlike a prostitute, be-
cause you scorned payment.

32 "'You adulterous wife! You prefer strangers
to your own husband! 33 All prostitutes receive
gifts, but you give gifts to all your lovers, brib-
ing them to come to you from everywhere for
your illicit favors. 34 So in your prostitution you
are the opposite of others; no one runs after
you for your favors. You are the very opposite,
for you give payment and none is given to you.
35 "'Therefore, you prostitute, hear the word
of the LORD! 36 This is what the Sovereign LORD
says: Because you poured out your lust and
exposed your naked body in your promiscu-
ity with your lovers, and because of all your
detestable idols, and because you gave them
your children's blood, 37 therefore I am going
to gather all your lovers, with whom you found
pleasure, those you loved as well as those you
hated. I will gather them against you from all
around and will strip you in front of them, and
they will see you stark naked. 38 I will sentence
you to the punishment of women who commit
adultery and who shed blood; I will bring on
you the blood vengeance of my wrath and jeal-
ous anger. 39 Then I will deliver you into the
hands of your lovers, and they will tear down
your mounds and destroy your lofty shrines.
They will strip you of your clothes and take
your fine jewelry and leave you stark naked.
40 They will bring a mob against you, who will
stone you and hack you to pieces with their
swords. 41 They will burn down your houses
and inflict punishment on you in the sight of
many women. I will put a stop to your prosti-
tution, and you will no longer pay your lovers.
42 Then my wrath against you will subside and
my jealous anger will turn away from you; I will
be calm and no longer angry.
43 "'Because you did not remember the days
of your youth but enraged me with all these
things, I will surely bring down on your head
what you have done, declares the Sovereign
LORD. Did you not add lewdness to all your oth-
er detestable practices?

[a] *29* Or *Chaldea* [b] *30* Or *How feverish is your heart,*



44 "'Everyone who quotes proverbs will
quote this proverb about you: "Like mother,
like daughter." 45 You are a true daughter of
your mother, who despised her husband and
her children; and you are a true sister of your
sisters, who despised their husbands and their
children. Your mother was a Hittite and your
father an Amorite. 46 Your older sister was Sa-
maria, who lived to the north of you with her
daughters; and your younger sister, who lived
to the south of you with her daughters, was
Sodom. 47 You not only followed their ways and
copied their detestable practices, but in all your
ways you soon became more depraved than
they. 48 As surely as I live, declares the Sover-
eign LORD, your sister Sodom and her daugh-
ters never did what you and your daughters
have done.
49 "'Now this was the sin of your sister Sod-
om: She and her daughters were arrogant,
overfed and unconcerned; they did not help
the poor and needy. 50 They were haughty and
did detestable things before me. Therefore
I did away with them as you have seen. 51 Sa-
maria did not commit half the sins you did. You
have done more detestable things than they,
and have made your sisters seem righteous
by all these things you have done. 52 Bear your
disgrace, for you have furnished some justifi-
cation for your sisters. Because your sins were
more vile than theirs, they appear more right-
eous than you. So then, be ashamed and bear
your disgrace, for you have made your sisters
appear righteous.
53 "'However, I will restore the fortunes of
Sodom and her daughters and of Samaria and
her daughters, and your fortunes along with
them, 54 so that you may bear your disgrace and
be ashamed of all you have done in giving them
comfort. 55 And your sisters, Sodom with her
daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will
return to what they were before; and you and
your daughters will return to what you were
before. 56 You would not even mention your sis-
ter Sodom in the day of your pride, 57 before
your wickedness was uncovered. Even so, you
are now scorned by the daughters of Edom[a]
and all her neighbors and the daughters of the
Philistines—all those around you who despise
you. 58 You will bear the consequences of your
lewdness and your detestable practices, de-
clares the LORD.
59 "'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
I will deal with you as you deserve, because
you have despised my oath by breaking the
covenant. 60 Yet I will remember the covenant I
made with you in the days of your youth, and I
will establish an everlasting covenant with you.
61 Then you will remember your ways and be
ashamed when you receive your sisters, both
those who are older than you and those who
are younger. I will give them to you as daugh-
ters, but not on the basis of my covenant with
you. 62 So I will establish my covenant with you,
and you will know that I am the LORD. 63 Then,
when I make atonement for you for all you have
done, you will remember and be ashamed and
never again open your mouth because of your
humiliation, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

Two Eagles and a Vine

17 1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son
of man, set forth an allegory and tell it to
the Israelites as a parable. 3 Say to them, 'This
is what the Sovereign LORD says: A great ea-
gle with powerful wings, long feathers and full
plumage of varied colors came to Lebanon.
Taking hold of the top of a cedar, 4 he broke off
its topmost shoot and carried it away to a land
of merchants, where he planted it in a city of
traders.
5 "'He took one of the seedlings of the land
and put it in fertile soil. He planted it like a wil-
low by abundant water, 6 and it sprouted and be-
came a low, spreading vine. Its branches turned
toward him, but its roots remained under it. So
it became a vine and produced branches and
put out leafy boughs.
7 "'But there was another great eagle with
powerful wings and full plumage. The vine
now sent out its roots toward him from the
plot where it was planted and stretched out its
branches to him for water. 8 It had been planted
in good soil by abundant water so that it would
produce branches, bear fruit and become a
splendid vine.'
9 "Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign
LORD says: Will it thrive? Will it not be uproot-
ed and stripped of its fruit so that it withers?
All its new growth will wither. It will not take a
strong arm or many people to pull it up by the
roots. 10 It has been planted, but will it thrive?
Will it not wither completely when the east
wind strikes it—wither away in the plot where
it grew?'"
11 Then the word of the LORD came to me:
12 "Say to this rebellious people, 'Do you not
know what these things mean?' Say to them:
'The king of Babylon went to Jerusalem and
carried off her king and her nobles, bringing
them back with him to Babylon. 13 Then he took

[a] 57 Many Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Vulgate *Aram*

a member of the royal family and made a treaty with him, putting him under oath. He also carried away the leading men of the land, 14so that the kingdom would be brought low, unable to rise again, surviving only by keeping his treaty. 15But the king rebelled against him by sending his envoys to Egypt to get horses and a large army. Will he succeed? Will he who does such things escape? Will he break the treaty and yet escape?

16"'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, he shall die in Babylon, in the land of the king who put him on the throne, whose oath he despised and whose treaty he broke. 17Pharaoh with his mighty army and great horde will be of no help to him in war, when ramps are built and siege works erected to destroy many lives. 18He despised the oath by breaking the covenant. Because he had given his hand in pledge and yet did all these things, he shall not escape.

19"'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: As surely as I live, I will repay him for despising my oath and breaking my covenant. 20I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon and execute judgment on him there because he was unfaithful to me. 21All his choice troops will fall by the sword, and the survivors will be scattered to the winds. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken.

22"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will take a shoot from the very top of a cedar and plant it; I will break off a tender sprig from its topmost shoots and plant it on a high and lofty mountain. 23On the mountain heights of Israel I will plant it; it will produce branches and bear fruit and become a splendid cedar. Birds of every kind will nest in it; they will find shelter in the shade of its branches. 24All the trees of the forest will know that I the LORD bring down the tall tree and make the low tree grow tall. I dry up the green tree and make the dry tree flourish.

"'I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.'"

The One Who Sins Will Die

18 1The word of the LORD came to me: 2"What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel:

"'The parents eat sour grapes,
and the children's teeth are set on edge'?

3"As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. 4For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.

5"Suppose there is a righteous man
who does what is just and right.
6He does not eat at the mountain shrines
or look to the idols of Israel.
He does not defile his neighbor's wife
or have sexual relations with a woman
during her period.
7He does not oppress anyone,
but returns what he took in pledge for a loan.
He does not commit robbery
but gives his food to the hungry
and provides clothing for the naked.
8He does not lend to them at interest
or take a profit from them.
He withholds his hand from doing wrong
and judges fairly between two parties.
9He follows my decrees
and faithfully keeps my laws.
That man is righteous;
he will surely live,
declares the Sovereign LORD.

10"Suppose he has a violent son, who sheds blood or does any of these other things[a] 11(though the father has done none of them):

"He eats at the mountain shrines.
He defiles his neighbor's wife.
12He oppresses the poor and needy.
He commits robbery.
He does not return what he took in pledge.
He looks to the idols.
He does detestable things.
13He lends at interest and takes a profit.

Will such a man live? He will not! Because he has done all these detestable things, he is to be put to death; his blood will be on his own head.

14"But suppose this son has a son who sees all the sins his father commits, and though he sees them, he does not do such things:

15"He does not eat at the mountain shrines
or look to the idols of Israel.
He does not defile his neighbor's wife.

[a] *10* Or *things to a brother*

Trade & Economics
In the ancient world, interest on loans was considered an improper way of making money. The Law of Moses allowed interest to be taken from strangers, but loans to and from Israelites were not permitted to accumulate interest (Ex 22:25; Lev 25:35, 36; Dt 23:20). As Ezekiel summarizes God's law of individual responsibility, he forbids one to lend "at interest" or "take a profit" (Eze 18:8).

A Consultation with a Prophet (Eze 20:1–3)

Ezekiel pursued his prophetic ministry in public. He continuously went out into the public realm to proclaim a message from God or to engage in symbolic actions that communicated the divine message to the exilic community.

A different situation occurs when the "elders of Israel" approach Ezekiel. These elders, who were the leaders of Ezekiel's exilic community in Babylon, came to the prophet in order to "inquire of the Lord" (Eze 20:1).

"Inquiring of a god" recalls the professional prophets that existed throughout the ancient Near East, including Babylon. For a fee individuals or groups could approach a prophet to receive oracular advice in the form of an omen from their deity. Often the prophet, "possessed by the spirit of the god," would enter a trance before presenting the message of the god by offering the appropriate response.

Interestingly, the leaders of Ezekiel's exilic community perceived him this way. Indeed, they "sat down" in front of Ezekiel, as if waiting for a "spirit" to take possession of the prophet (20:1). God, however, rejected this model for Ezekiel. In keeping with God's prohibition (Eze 14:1–3), Ezekiel refused to prophesy in answer to the elders' questions. He was not a prophet-for-hire. Rather, the elders received a stinging indictment from God for their behavior (20:4–32), along with God's refusal: "I will not let you inquire of me" (20:3, 31).

16 He does not oppress anyone
or require a pledge for a loan.
He does not commit robbery
but gives his food to the hungry
and provides clothing for the naked.
17 He withholds his hand from mistreating the poor
and takes no interest or profit from them.
He keeps my laws and follows my decrees.

He will not die for his father's sin; he will surely live. 18 But his father will die for his own sin, because he practiced extortion, robbed his brother and did what was wrong among his people.

19 "Yet you ask, 'Why does the son not share the guilt of his father?' Since the son has done what is just and right and has been careful to keep all my decrees, he will surely live. 20 The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.

21 "But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die. 22 None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live. 23 Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked? declares the Sovereign Lord. Rather, am I not pleased when they turn from their ways and live?

24 "But if a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin and does the same detestable things the wicked person does, will they live? None of the righteous things that person has done will be remembered. Because of the unfaithfulness they are guilty of and because of the sins they have committed, they will die.

25 "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Hear, you Israelites: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? 26 If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin, they will die for it; because of the sin they have committed they will die. 27 But if a wicked person turns away from the wickedness they have committed and does what is just and right, they will save their life. 28 Because they consider all the offenses they have committed and turn away from them, that person will surely live; they will not die. 29 Yet the Israelites say, 'The way of the Lord is not just.' Are my ways unjust, people of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust?

30 "Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. 31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!

Ezekiel 20:1—21:17

Rebellious Israel Purged

20:1 In the seventh year, in the fifth month on the tenth day, some of the elders of Israel came to inquire of the Lord, and they sat down in front of me.

2 Then the word of the Lord came to me: 3 "Son of man, speak to the elders of Israel and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Have you come to inquire of me? As

surely as I live, I will not let you inquire of me, declares the Sovereign LORD.'

4"'Will you judge them? Will you judge them, son of man? Then confront them with the detestable practices of their ancestors 5and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On the day I chose Israel, I swore with uplifted hand to the descendants of Jacob and revealed myself to them in Egypt. With uplifted hand I said to them, "I am the LORD your God." 6On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of Egypt into a land I had searched out for them, a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands. 7And I said to them, "Each of you, get rid of the vile images you have set your eyes on, and do not defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God."

8"'But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in Egypt. 9But for the sake of my name, I brought them out of Egypt. I did it to keep my name from being profaned in the eyes of the nations among whom they lived and in whose sight I had revealed myself to the Israelites. 10Therefore I led them out of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. 11I gave them my decrees and made known to them my laws, by which the person who obeys them will live. 12Also I gave them my Sabbaths as a sign between us, so they would know that I the LORD made them holy.

13"'Yet the people of Israel rebelled against me in the wilderness. They did not follow my decrees but rejected my laws—by which the person who obeys them will live—and they utterly desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and destroy them in the wilderness. 14But for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. 15Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the wilderness that I would not bring them into the land I had given them—a land flowing with milk and honey, the most beautiful of all lands— 16because they rejected my laws and did not follow my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths. For their hearts were devoted to their idols. 17Yet I looked on them with pity and did not destroy them or put an end to them in the wilderness. 18I said to their children in the wilderness, "Do not follow the statutes of your parents or keep their laws or defile yourselves with their idols. 19I am the LORD your God; follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 20Keep my Sabbaths holy, that they may be a sign between us. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God."

21"'But the children rebelled against me: They did not follow my decrees, they were not careful to keep my laws, of which I said, "The person who obeys them will live by them," and they desecrated my Sabbaths. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in the wilderness. 22But I withheld my hand, and for the sake of my name I did what would keep it from being profaned in the eyes of the nations in whose sight I had brought them out. 23Also with uplifted hand I swore to them in the wilderness that I would disperse them among the nations and scatter them through the countries, 24because they had not obeyed my laws but had rejected my decrees and desecrated my Sabbaths, and their eyes lusted after their parents' idols. 25So I gave them other statutes that were not good and laws through which they could not live; 26I defiled them through their gifts—the sacrifice of every firstborn—that I might fill them with horror so they would know that I am the LORD.'

27"Therefore, son of man, speak to the people of Israel and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In this also your ancestors blasphemed me by being unfaithful to me: 28When I brought them into the land I had sworn to give them and they saw any high hill or any leafy tree, there they offered their sacrifices, made offerings that aroused my anger, presented their fragrant incense and poured out their drink offerings. 29Then I said to them: What is this high place you go to?'" (It is called Bamah[a] to this day.)

Rebellious Israel Renewed

30"Therefore say to the Israelites: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Will you defile yourselves the way your ancestors did and lust after their vile images? 31When you offer your gifts—the sacrifice of your children in the fire—you continue to defile yourselves with all your idols to this day. Am I to let you inquire of me, you Israelites? As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will not let you inquire of me.

32"'You say, "We want to be like the nations, like the peoples of the world, who serve wood and stone." But what you have in mind will never happen. 33As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will reign over you with a

[a] *29 Bamah* means *high place.*

mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. 34I will bring you from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered—with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath. 35I will bring you into the wilderness of the nations and there, face to face, I will execute judgment upon you. 36As I judged your ancestors in the wilderness of the land of Egypt, so I will judge you, declares the Sovereign LORD. 37I will take note of you as you pass under my rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant. 38I will purge you of those who revolt and rebel against me. Although I will bring them out of the land where they are living, yet they will not enter the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

39"'As for you, people of Israel, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Go and serve your idols, every one of you! But afterward you will surely listen to me and no longer profane my holy name with your gifts and idols. 40For on my holy mountain, the high mountain of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD, there in the land all the people of Israel will serve me, and there I will accept them. There I will require your offerings and your choice gifts,[a] along with all your holy sacrifices. 41I will accept you as fragrant incense when I bring you out from the nations and gather you from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will be proved holy through you in the sight of the nations. 42Then you will know that I am the LORD, when I bring you into the land of Israel, the land I had sworn with uplifted hand to give to your ancestors. 43There you will remember your conduct and all the actions by which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves for all the evil you have done. 44You will know that I am the LORD, when I deal with you for my name's sake and not according to your evil ways and your corrupt practices, you people of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

Prophecy Against the South

45The word of the LORD came to me: 46"Son of man, set your face toward the south; preach against the south and prophesy against the forest of the southland. 47Say to the southern forest: 'Hear the word of the LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to set fire to you, and it will consume all your trees, both green and dry. The blazing flame will not be quenched, and every face from south to north will be scorched by it. 48Everyone will see that I the LORD have kindled it; it will not be quenched.'"

49Then I said, "Sovereign LORD, they are saying of me, 'Isn't he just telling parables?'"[b]

Babylon as God's Sword of Judgment

21[c] 1The word of the LORD came to me: 2"Son of man, set your face against Jerusalem and preach against the sanctuary. Prophesy against the land of Israel 3and say to her: 'This is what the LORD says: I am against you. I will draw my sword from its sheath and cut off from you both the righteous and the wicked. 4Because I am going to cut off the righteous and the wicked, my sword will be unsheathed against everyone from south to north. 5Then all people will know that I the LORD have drawn my sword from its sheath; it will not return again.'

6"Therefore groan, son of man! Groan before them with broken heart and bitter grief. 7And when they ask you, 'Why are you groaning?' you shall say, 'Because of the news that is coming. Every heart will melt with fear and every hand go limp; every spirit will become faint and every leg will be wet with urine.' It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD."

8The word of the LORD came to me: 9"Son of man, prophesy and say, 'This is what the Lord says:

"'A sword, a sword,
sharpened and polished—
10sharpened for the slaughter,
polished to flash like lightning!

"'Shall we rejoice in the scepter of my royal son? The sword despises every such stick.

11"'The sword is appointed to be polished,
to be grasped with the hand;
it is sharpened and polished,
made ready for the hand of the slayer.

TIME CAPSULE		589 to 587 B.C.
589–570	Hophra, pharaoh of Egypt, resides at Memphis	
588	King Zedekiah revolts against the Babylonians	
588–586	Nebuchadnezzar besieges Jerusalem	
587	Pharaoh Hophra forces the Babylonian armies to lift the siege from Jerusalem (Jer 37:5)	
587	Jeremiah attempts to visit Anathoth but is arrested	

[a] *40* Or *and the gifts of your firstfruits* [b] *49* In Hebrew texts 20:45-49 is numbered 21:1-5. [c] In Hebrew texts 21:1-32 is numbered 21:6-37.

12 Cry out and wail, son of man,
for it is against my people;
it is against all the princes of Israel.
They are thrown to the sword
along with my people.
Therefore beat your breast.

13 "'Testing will surely come. And what if even the scepter, which the sword despises, does not continue? declares the Sovereign LORD.'

14 "So then, son of man, prophesy
and strike your hands together.
Let the sword strike twice,
even three times.
It is a sword for slaughter—
a sword for great slaughter,
closing in on them from every side.
15 So that hearts may melt with fear
and the fallen be many,
I have stationed the sword for slaughter[a]
at all their gates.
Look! It is forged to strike like lightning,
it is grasped for slaughter.
16 Slash to the right, you sword,
then to the left,
wherever your blade is turned.
17 I too will strike my hands together,
and my wrath will subside.
I the LORD have spoken."

Ezekiel 22:1–22

Judgment on Jerusalem's Sins

22 :1 The word of the LORD came to me:

2 "Son of man, will you judge her? Will you judge this city of bloodshed? Then confront her with all her detestable practices 3 and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You city that brings on herself doom by shedding blood in her midst and defiles herself by making idols, 4 you have become guilty because of the blood you have shed and have become defiled by the idols you have made. You have brought your days to a close, and the end of your years has come. Therefore I will make you an object of scorn to the nations and a laughingstock to all the countries. 5 Those who are near and those who are far away will mock you, you infamous city, full of turmoil.

6 "'See how each of the princes of Israel who are in you uses his power to shed blood. 7 In you they have treated father and mother with contempt; in you they have oppressed the foreigner and mistreated the fatherless and the widow. 8 You have despised my holy things and desecrated my Sabbaths. 9 In you are slanderers who are bent on shedding blood; in you are those who eat at the mountain shrines and commit lewd acts. 10 In you are those who dishonor their father's bed; in you are those who violate women during their period, when they are ceremonially unclean. 11 In you one man commits a detestable offense with his neighbor's wife, another shamefully defiles his daughter-in-law, and another violates his sister, his own father's daughter. 12 In you are people who accept bribes to shed blood; you take interest and make a profit from the poor. You extort unjust gain from your neighbors. And you have forgotten me, declares the Sovereign LORD.

13 "'I will surely strike my hands together at the unjust gain you have made and at the blood you have shed in your midst. 14 Will your courage endure or your hands be strong in the day I deal with you? I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it. 15 I will disperse you among the nations and scatter you through the countries; and I will put an end to your uncleanness. 16 When you have been defiled[b] in the eyes of the nations, you will know that I am the LORD.'"

17 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 18 "Son of man, the people of Israel have become dross to me; all of them are the copper, tin, iron and lead left inside a furnace. They are but the dross of silver. 19 Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because you have all become dross, I will gather you into Jerusalem. 20 As silver, copper, iron, lead and tin are gathered into a furnace to be melted with a fiery blast, so will I gather you in my anger and my wrath and put you inside the city and melt you. 21 I will gather you and I will blow on you with my fiery wrath, and you will be melted inside her. 22 As silver is melted in a furnace, so you will be melted inside her, and you will know that I the LORD have poured out my wrath on you.'"

Ezekiel 23:1–49

Two Adulterous Sisters

23 :1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, there were two women, daughters of the same mother. 3 They became prostitutes in Egypt, engaging in prostitution from their youth. In that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed. 4 The older was named Oholah, and her sister

[a] *15* Septuagint; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [b] *16* Or *When I have allotted you your inheritance*

was Oholibah. They were mine and gave birth to sons and daughters. Oholah is Samaria, and Oholibah is Jerusalem.

5"Oholah engaged in prostitution while she was still mine; and she lusted after her lovers, the Assyrians—warriors 6clothed in blue, governors and commanders, all of them handsome young men, and mounted horsemen. 7She gave herself as a prostitute to all the elite of the Assyrians and defiled herself with all the idols of everyone she lusted after. 8She did not give up the prostitution she began in Egypt, when during her youth men slept with her, caressed her virgin bosom and poured out their lust on her.

9"Therefore I delivered her into the hands of her lovers, the Assyrians, for whom she lusted. 10They stripped her naked, took away her sons and daughters and killed her with the sword. She became a byword among women, and punishment was inflicted on her.

11"Her sister Oholibah saw this, yet in her lust and prostitution she was more depraved than her sister. 12She too lusted after the Assyrians—governors and commanders, warriors in full dress, mounted horsemen, all handsome young men. 13I saw that she too defiled herself; both of them went the same way.

14"But she carried her prostitution still further. She saw men portrayed on a wall, figures of Chaldeans[a] portrayed in red, 15with belts around their waists and flowing turbans on their heads; all of them looked like Babylonian chariot officers, natives of Chaldea.[b] 16As soon as she saw them, she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea. 17Then the Babylonians came to her, to the bed of love, and in their lust they defiled her. After she had been defiled by them, she turned away from them in disgust. 18When she carried on her prostitution openly and exposed her naked body, I turned away from her in disgust, just as I had turned away from her sister. 19Yet she became more and more promiscuous as she recalled the days of her youth, when she was a prostitute in Egypt. 20There she lusted after her lovers, whose genitals were like those of donkeys and whose emission was like that of horses. 21So you longed for the lewdness of your youth, when in Egypt your bosom was caressed and your young breasts fondled.[c]

22"Therefore, Oholibah, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will stir up your lovers against you, those you turned away from in disgust, and I will bring them against you from every side— 23the Babylonians and all the Chaldeans, the men of Pekod and Shoa and Koa, and all the Assyrians with them, handsome young men, all of them governors and commanders, chariot officers and men of high rank, all mounted on horses. 24They will come against you with weapons,[d] chariots and wagons and with a throng of people; they will take up positions against you on every side with large and small shields and with helmets. I will turn you over to them for punishment, and they will punish you according to their standards. 25I will direct my jealous anger against you, and they will deal with you in fury. They will cut off your noses and your ears, and those of you who are left will fall by the sword. They will take away your sons and daughters, and those of you who are left will be consumed by fire. 26They will also strip you of your clothes and take your fine jewelry. 27So I will put a stop to the lewdness and prostitution you began in Egypt. You will not look on these things with longing or remember Egypt anymore.

28"For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to deliver you into the hands of those you hate, to those you turned away from in disgust. 29They will deal with you in hatred and take away everything you have worked for. They will leave you stark naked, and the shame of your prostitution will be exposed. Your lewdness and promiscuity 30have brought this on you, because you lusted after the nations and defiled yourself with their idols. 31You have gone the way of your sister; so I will put her cup into your hand.

32"This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"You will drink your sister's cup,
a cup large and deep;
it will bring scorn and derision,
for it holds so much.
33You will be filled with drunkenness and
sorrow,
the cup of ruin and desolation,
the cup of your sister Samaria.

Politics & Government
The cruelty of the Assyrians is proverbial. Their inscriptions boast of how they abused, mutilated, and killed their prisoners taken in war, whether soldiers or civilians. Their sculptural reliefs depict scribes taking notes while the condemned hang exposed on stakes near the city walls. The Babylonians, while not the military nation that Assyria was, could still be cruel in war (Eze 23:25; 2Ki 25:6, 7).

[a] *14* Or *Babylonians* [b] *15* Or *Babylonia*; also in verse 16
[c] *21* Syriac (see also verse 3); Hebrew *caressed because of your young breasts* [d] *24* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

34 You will drink it and drain it dry
and chew on its pieces—
and you will tear your breasts.

I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.

35 "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since you have forgotten me and turned your back on me, you must bear the consequences of your lewdness and prostitution."

36 The LORD said to me: "Son of man, will you judge Oholah and Oholibah? Then confront them with their detestable practices, 37 for they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They committed adultery with their idols; they even sacrificed their children, whom they bore to me, as food for them. 38 They have also done this to me: At that same time they defiled my sanctuary and desecrated my Sabbaths. 39 On the very day they sacrificed their children to their idols, they entered my sanctuary and desecrated it. That is what they did in my house.

40 "They even sent messengers for men who came from far away, and when they arrived you bathed yourself for them, applied eye makeup and put on your jewelry. 41 You sat on an elegant couch, with a table spread before it on which you had placed the incense and olive oil that belonged to me.

42 "The noise of a carefree crowd was around her; drunkards were brought from the desert along with men from the rabble, and they put bracelets on the wrists of the woman and her sister and beautiful crowns on their heads. 43 Then I said about the one worn out by adultery, 'Now let them use her as a prostitute, for that is all she is.' 44 And they slept with her. As men sleep with a prostitute, so they slept with those lewd women, Oholah and Oholibah. 45 But righteous judges will sentence them to the punishment of women who commit adultery and shed blood, because they are adulterous and blood is on their hands.

46 "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Bring a mob against them and give them over to terror and plunder. 47 The mob will stone them and cut them down with their swords; they will kill their sons and daughters and burn down their houses.

48 "So I will put an end to lewdness in the land, that all women may take warning and not imitate you. 49 You will suffer the penalty for your lewdness and bear the consequences of your sins of idolatry. Then you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD."

Nebuchadnezzar's Campaigns Against Judah

From 605 to 586 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar conducted several campaigns in Judah. King Jehoiachin was forced to surrender to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C. Jerusalem's destruction came in 586 B.C. as the Babylonians approached from the south.

TRANSITION

Israel and Ammon Rebel

When Zedekiah made his alliance with Pharaoh Hophra of Egypt and rebelled against Babylon, he was evidently joined by the land of Ammon, on the eastern side of the Jordan (Jer 27:3). In Eze 21:18–23, Ezekiel pictures Nebuchadnezzar, on his way south, stopping to decide which nation to punish first. It would make little difference: neither would escape punishment, and Israel's King Zedekiah, the "profane and wicked prince" (21:25), would be overthrown (21:24–32).

In the 9th year of Jehoiachin's exile (Eze 24:1), the siege of Jerusalem began, perhaps in January of 588 B.C. Ezekiel's message—both by word and by deed—was for the exiles to prepare to lose their beloved city and temple (ch. 24).

- **Ezekiel 21:18–32**
- **Ezekiel 24:1–27**

Ezekiel 21:18–32

21:18 The word of the LORD came to me: 19 "Son of man, mark out two roads for the sword of the king of Babylon to take, both

starting from the same country. Make a signpost where the road branches off to the city.
20 Mark out one road for the sword to come
against Rabbah of the Ammonites and another against Judah and fortified Jerusalem. 21 For
the king of Babylon will stop at the fork in the
road, at the junction of the two roads, to seek an
omen: He will cast lots with arrows, he will consult his idols, he will examine the liver. 22 Into
his right hand will come the lot for Jerusalem,
where he is to set up battering rams, to give the
command to slaughter, to sound the battle cry,
to set battering rams against the gates, to build
a ramp and to erect siege works. 23 It will seem
like a false omen to those who have sworn allegiance to him, but he will remind them of their
guilt and take them captive.

24 "Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD
says: 'Because you people have brought to
mind your guilt by your open rebellion, revealing your sins in all that you do — because you
have done this, you will be taken captive.

25 "'You profane and wicked prince of Israel, whose day has come, whose time of punishment has reached its climax, 26 this is what
the Sovereign LORD says: Take off the turban,
remove the crown. It will not be as it was: The
lowly will be exalted and the exalted will be
brought low. 27 A ruin! A ruin! I will make it a
ruin! The crown will not be restored until he to
whom it rightfully belongs shall come; to him
I will give it.'

28 "And you, son of man, prophesy and say,
'This is what the Sovereign LORD says about
the Ammonites and their insults:

"'A sword, a sword,
drawn for the slaughter,
polished to consume
and to flash like lightning!
29 Despite false visions concerning you
and lying divinations about you,
it will be laid on the necks
of the wicked who are to be slain,
whose day has come,
whose time of punishment has reached
its climax.

30 "'Let the sword return to its sheath.
In the place where you were created,
in the land of your ancestry,
I will judge you.
31 I will pour out my wrath on you
and breathe out my fiery anger against
you;
I will deliver you into the hands of brutal
men,
men skilled in destruction.
32 You will be fuel for the fire,
your blood will be shed in your land,
you will be remembered no more;
for I the LORD have spoken.'"

Ezekiel 24:1–27

Jerusalem as a Cooking Pot

24 :1 In the ninth year, in the tenth month
on the tenth day, the word of the LORD
came to me: 2 "Son of man, record this date, this
very date, because the king of Babylon has laid
siege to Jerusalem this very day. 3 Tell this rebellious people a parable and say to them: 'This
is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'Put on the cooking pot; put it on
and pour water into it.
4 Put into it the pieces of meat,
all the choice pieces — the leg and the
shoulder.
Fill it with the best of these bones;
5 take the pick of the flock.
Pile wood beneath it for the bones;
bring it to a boil
and cook the bones in it.

6 "'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'Woe to the city of bloodshed,
to the pot now encrusted,
whose deposit will not go away!
Take the meat out piece by piece
in whatever order it comes.

7 "'For the blood she shed is in her
midst:
She poured it on the bare rock;
she did not pour it on the ground,
where the dust would cover it.
8 To stir up wrath and take revenge
I put her blood on the bare rock,
so that it would not be covered.

9 "'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD
says:

"'Woe to the city of bloodshed!
I, too, will pile the wood high.

Cults & Supernatural
Before going into battle, kings first consulted the gods (Eze 21:21). Divination was used to determine the divine will in a certain situation. Arrows were used something like dice, by throwing them and noting how they fell. Priests in Babylon inspected carefully and interpreted the livers of sacrificed animals. The shape and coloring of the liver was interpreted as if it were writing or an enigmatic sign from heaven.

10 So heap on the wood
and kindle the fire.
Cook the meat well,
mixing in the spices;
and let the bones be charred.
11 Then set the empty pot on the coals
till it becomes hot and its copper glows,
so that its impurities may be melted
and its deposit burned away.
12 It has frustrated all efforts;
its heavy deposit has not been removed,
not even by fire.

13 "'Now your impurity is lewdness. Because I tried to cleanse you but you would not be cleansed from your impurity, you will not be clean again until my wrath against you has subsided.

14 "'I the LORD have spoken. The time has come for me to act. I will not hold back; I will not have pity, nor will I relent. You will be judged according to your conduct and your actions, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

Ezekiel's Wife Dies

15 The word of the LORD came to me: 16 "Son of man, with one blow I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes. Yet do not lament or weep or shed any tears. 17 Groan quietly; do not mourn for the dead. Keep your turban fastened and your sandals on your feet; do not cover your mustache and beard or eat the customary food of mourners."

18 So I spoke to the people in the morning, and in the evening my wife died. The next morning I did as I had been commanded.

19 Then the people asked me, "Won't you tell us what these things have to do with us? Why are you acting like this?"

20 So I said to them, "The word of the LORD came to me: 21 Say to the people of Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to desecrate my sanctuary—the stronghold in which you take pride, the delight of your eyes, the object of your affection. The sons and daughters you left behind will fall by the sword. 22 And you will do as I have done. You will not cover your mustache and beard or eat the customary food of mourners. 23 You will keep your turbans on your heads and your sandals on your feet. You will not mourn or weep but will waste away because of[a] your sins and groan among yourselves. 24 Ezekiel will be a sign to you; you will do just as he has done. When this happens, you will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.'

25 "And you, son of man, on the day I take away their stronghold, their joy and glory, the delight of their eyes, their heart's desire, and their sons and daughters as well— 26 on that day a fugitive will come to tell you the news. 27 At that time your mouth will be opened; you will speak with him and will no longer be silent. So you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD."

TRANSITION

Ezekiel's Sign Acts

Despite Ezekiel's warnings, news of Zedekiah's rebellion surely sparked hope among the exiles in Babylon that perhaps Jerusalem could indeed gain her independenc e. Ezekiel vehemently opposed these false hopes . His message to the exiles was the same as Jeremiah's message to those in Jerusalem, but E zekiel's methods were quite distinct. Where Jeremiah would write soaring, impassioned poetr y, Ezekiel communicated in blunt prose or—more distinctively—in pantomime.

In the divine visions E zekiel received in 593 B.C. (Eze 1:1–3; 3:16, 22), he w as commanded to enact before the exiles certain sign acts. These symbolic actions (3:22—7:27) dramatically portrayed the hor rors of the siege that Jerusalem w ould undergo from 588 t o 586 B.C.

- **Ezekiel 3:22—7:27**

Ezekiel

3 **:22** The hand of the LORD was on me there, and he said to me, "Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you." 23 So I got up and went out to the plain. And the glory of the LORD was standing there, like the glory I had seen by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown.

24 Then the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet. He spoke to me and said: "Go, shut yourself inside your house. 25 And you, son of man, they will tie with ropes; you will be bound so that you cannot go out among the people. 26 I will make your tongue stick to the roof of your mouth so that you will be silent and unable to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious people. 27 But when I speak to you, I will open your mouth and you shall say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.' Whoever will listen let them listen, and whoever will refuse let them refuse; for they are a rebellious people.

Siege of Jerusalem Symbolized

4 1 "Now, son of man, take a block of clay, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. 2 Then lay siege to it: Erect siege

[a] *23* Or *away in*

How to Conduct a Siege (Eze 4:2, 3)

More than any other prophet, Ezekiel used "street theater" to convey his prophetic message. This prophet graphically portrayed a siege of Jerusalem to indicate God's judgment against the people (Eze 4).

The chief defense system of an Israelite city like Jerusalem was its walls. These were huge, thick, massive structures that completely surrounded the city. Already built on elevated land, the city walls made the city like a castle. Usually only one entryway into the city existed—the city gate. Gates, too, were large, complex structures, designed to inhibit a frontal attack on a city.

To counter this, an enemy would build a massive wall and ramp—what Ezekiel calls "siege works" (Eze 4:2)—at the most vulnerable (that is, the lowest) point of the city wall. Using siege works, the enemy could gain access to the city through a gradual incline to the height of the wall, rather than attempting to scale the walls like a cliff.

The siege "ramp" was a platform of earth, built to put some of the attackers level with the defenders on the wall. Defenders likewise built ramps on the inside of the walls. "Battering rams" were used to break down the fortifications.

The Judean exiles had just experienced these military techniques when Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem in 597 B.C. They no doubt heard quite well Ezekiel's message, as he used a scale model or drawings in the dirt to depict the siege machinery that would be brought against the city from 588 to 586 B.C. Ezekiel's street theater was a sign that the captives did not want to see.

works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. 3Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the people of Israel.

4"Then lie on your left side and put the sin of the people of Israel upon yourself.[a] You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. 5I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So for 390 days you will bear the sin of the people of Israel.

6"After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. 7Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her. 8I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege.

9"Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. 10Weigh out twenty shekels[b] of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. 11Also measure out a sixth of a hin[c] of water and drink it at set times. 12Eat the food as you would a loaf of barley bread; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel." 13The LORD said, "In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them."

14Then I said, "Not so, Sovereign LORD! I have never defiled myself. From my youth until now I have never eaten anything found dead or torn by wild animals. No impure meat has ever entered my mouth."

15"Very well," he said, "I will let you bake your bread over cow dung instead of human excrement."

16He then said to me: "Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, 17for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of[d] their sin.

God's Razor of Judgment

5 1"Now, son of man, take a sharp sword and use it as a barber's razor to shave your head and your beard. Then take a set of scales and divide up the hair. 2When the days of your siege come to an end, burn a third of the hair inside the city. Take a third and strike it with the sword all around the city. And scatter a third to the wind. For I will pursue them with drawn sword. 3But take a few hairs and tuck them away in the folds of your garment. 4Again, take a few of these and throw them into the fire and burn them up. A fire will spread from there to all Israel.

5"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her. 6Yet in her wickedness she has rebelled against my laws and decrees more than the nations and countries around her. She has rejected my laws and has not followed my decrees.

7"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD

[a] *4* Or *upon your side* [b] *10* That is, about 8 ounces or about 230 grams [c] *11* That is, about 2/3 quart or about 0.6 liter
[d] *17* Or *away in*

Ezekiel's Prophetic Theater (Eze 5:1–4)

As ancient Near Eastern prophets proclaimed a message from the gods, they often used more than words to get their message across. Often their very actions and lives illustrated the prophetic oracle. For no prophet was this more true than the prophet Ezekiel.

In one of his acted-out prophecies or sign acts, Ezekiel undergoes a haircut and a shave. The razor in this case, however, was to be a sword (Eze 5:1). Ezekiel then was to divide the hair into three parts: one-third to be burned in the midst of the city; a second third to be hit by a sword; another third to be scattered into the wind (5:2). Finally, from the last third, a small amount of hair was to be wrapped in Ezekiel's clothing, and later some of this would be thrown into a fire (5:3, 4).

Such symbolic actions seem bizarre, yet are significant for the prophet's message. First, the cutting of an adult male's hair and beard was a sign of humiliation. Using a sword as the razor, Ezekiel symbolically lived out with his own body the military humiliation that the Jerusalemites would face when the Babylonians conquered their city.

Yet the symbolism was even more precise. The burning of hair in the midst of the city and striking of hair with a sword signified the destruction of people when the Babylonians actually attacked Jerusalem. The scattered hair dramatically portrayed the fleeing of people into the countryside following the attack. The final third showed the destruction of the people after the attack. Only a few hairs, or people, wrapped into Ezekiel's clothing, would survive. Ezekiel's "haircut," thus portrayed an entire drama of death and destruction brought on by the Babylonian attack upon the city.

It is not known where Ezekiel undertook these activities. From his other prophetic behavior, however, we can assume that he performed these actions very much in the public eye, proclaiming Yahweh's message through the most effective media.

says: You have been more unruly than the nations around you and have not followed my decrees or kept my laws. You have not even[a] conformed to the standards of the nations around you.

8"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself am against you, Jerusalem, and I will inflict punishment on you in the sight of the nations. 9Because of all your detestable idols, I will do to you what I have never done before and will never do again. 10Therefore in your midst parents will eat their children, and children will eat their parents. I will inflict punishment on you and will scatter all your survivors to the winds. 11Therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because you have defiled my sanctuary with all your vile images and detestable practices, I myself will shave you; I will not look on you with pity or spare you. 12A third of your people will die of the plague or perish by famine inside you; a third will fall by the sword outside your walls; and a third I will scatter to the winds and pursue with drawn sword.

Arts & Literature

An arrow is a natural symbol for famine and disease, because it comes from afar and does not announce its coming (Eze 5:16). In Homer's *Iliad*, Apollo rains down arrows on the Greek soldiers in order to punish them for insulting a priest. The arrows kill animals and men by means of a plague. Similarly, the Psalms compare disease brought on by God's judgment with arrow wounds (Ps 38:2).

13"Then my anger will cease and my wrath against them will subside, and I will be avenged. And when I have spent my wrath on them, they will know that I the LORD have spoken in my zeal.

14"I will make you a ruin and a reproach among the nations around you, in the sight of all who pass by. 15You will be a reproach and a taunt, a warning and an object of horror to the nations around you when I inflict punishment on you in anger and in wrath and with stinging rebuke. I the LORD have spoken. 16When I shoot at you with my deadly and destructive arrows of famine, I will shoot to destroy you. I will bring more and more famine upon you and cut off your supply of food. 17I will send famine and wild beasts against you, and they will leave you childless. Plague and bloodshed will sweep through you, and I will bring the sword against you. I the LORD have spoken."

Doom for the Mountains of Israel

6 1The word of the LORD came to me: 2"Son of man, set your face against the mountains of Israel; prophesy against them 3and say: 'You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: I am about to bring a sword against you, and I will destroy your high places. 4Your altars will be demolished and your incense altars will be smashed; and I will slay your people

[a] *7* Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac *You have*

in front of your idols. 5I will lay the dead bodies
of the Israelites in front of their idols, and I will
scatter your bones around your altars. 6Wher-
ever you live, the towns will be laid waste and
the high places demolished, so that your altars
will be laid waste and devastated, your idols
smashed and ruined, your incense altars bro-
ken down, and what you have made wiped out.
7Your people will fall slain among you, and you
will know that I am the LORD.

8"'But I will spare some, for some of you
will escape the sword when you are scattered
among the lands and nations. 9Then in the na-
tions where they have been carried captive,
those who escape will remember me—how I
have been grieved by their adulterous hearts,
which have turned away from me, and by their
eyes, which have lusted after their idols. They
will loathe themselves for the evil they have
done and for all their detestable practices. 10And
they will know that I am the LORD; I did not
threaten in vain to bring this calamity on them.

11"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
Strike your hands together and stamp your
feet and cry out "Alas!" because of all the wick-
ed and detestable practices of the people of
Israel, for they will fall by the sword, famine
and plague. 12One who is far away will die of
the plague, and one who is near will fall by the
sword, and anyone who survives and is spared
will die of famine. So will I pour out my wrath
on them. 13And they will know that I am the
LORD, when their people lie slain among their
idols around their altars, on every high hill and
on all the mountaintops, under every spread-
ing tree and every leafy oak—places where
they offered fragrant incense to all their idols.
14And I will stretch out my hand against them
and make the land a desolate waste from the
desert to Diblah[a]—wherever they live. Then
they will know that I am the LORD.'"

The End Has Come

7 1The word of the LORD came to me: 2"Son of
man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says
to the land of Israel:

"'The end! The end has come
upon the four corners of the land!
3The end is now upon you,
and I will unleash my anger against you.
I will judge you according to your conduct
and repay you for all your detestable
practices.
4I will not look on you with pity;
I will not spare you.
I will surely repay you for your conduct
and for the detestable practices among
you.

"'Then you will know that I am the LORD.'

5"This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'Disaster! Unheard-of[b] disaster!
See, it comes!
6The end has come!
The end has come!
It has roused itself against you.
See, it comes!
7Doom has come upon you,
upon you who dwell in the land.
The time has come! The day is near!
There is panic, not joy, on the mountains.
8I am about to pour out my wrath on you
and spend my anger against you.
I will judge you according to your conduct
and repay you for all your detestable
practices.
9I will not look on you with pity;
I will not spare you.
I will repay you for your conduct
and for the detestable practices among
you.

"'Then you will know that it is I the LORD who
strikes you.

10"'See, the day!
See, it comes!
Doom has burst forth,
the rod has budded,
arrogance has blossomed!

[a] *14* Most Hebrew manuscripts; a few Hebrew manuscripts *Riblah* [b] *5* Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac *Disaster after*

11 Violence has arisen,[a]
a rod to punish the wicked.
None of the people will be left,
none of that crowd—
none of their wealth,
nothing of value.
12 The time has come!
The day has arrived!
Let not the buyer rejoice
nor the seller grieve,
for my wrath is on the whole crowd.
13 The seller will not recover
the property that was sold—
as long as both buyer and seller live.
For the vision concerning the whole crowd
will not be reversed.
Because of their sins, not one of them
will preserve their life.

14 "'They have blown the trumpet,
they have made all things ready,
but no one will go into battle,
for my wrath is on the whole crowd.
15 Outside is the sword;
inside are plague and famine.
Those in the country
will die by the sword;
those in the city
will be devoured by famine and plague.
16 The fugitives who escape
will flee to the mountains.
Like doves of the valleys,
they will all moan,
each for their own sins.
17 Every hand will go limp;
every leg will be wet with urine.
18 They will put on sackcloth
and be clothed with terror.
Every face will be covered with shame,
and every head will be shaved.

19 "'They will throw their silver into the streets,
and their gold will be treated as a thing unclean.
Their silver and gold
will not be able to deliver them
in the day of the LORD's wrath.
It will not satisfy their hunger
or fill their stomachs,
for it has caused them to stumble into sin.
20 They took pride in their beautiful jewelry
and used it to make their detestable idols.
They made it into vile images;
therefore I will make it a thing unclean for them.
21 I will give their wealth as plunder to foreigners
and as loot to the wicked of the earth,
who will defile it.
22 I will turn my face away from the people,
and robbers will desecrate the place I treasure.
They will enter it
and will defile it.

23 "'Prepare chains!
For the land is full of bloodshed,
and the city is full of violence.
24 I will bring the most wicked of nations
to take possession of their houses.
I will put an end to the pride of the mighty,
and their sanctuaries will be desecrated.
25 When terror comes,
they will seek peace in vain.
26 Calamity upon calamity will come,
and rumor upon rumor.
They will go searching for a vision from the prophet,
priestly instruction in the law will cease,
the counsel of the elders will come to an end.
27 The king will mourn,
the prince will be clothed with despair,
and the hands of the people of the land will tremble.
I will deal with them according to their conduct,
and by their own standards I will judge them.

"'Then they will know that I am the LORD.'"

[a] *11* Or *The violent one has become*

TRANSITION

Pharaoh Hophra's Assault

During a period from the 10th year (11th month) to the 11th year (3rd month) of Jehoiachin's exile, Ezekiel received prophetic messages concerning Egypt (Eze 29:1; 30:20; 31:1). This period corresponds to perhaps January through June of 587 B.C. The siege of Jerusalem had been underway nearly a year.

The occasion for these prophecies was an interruption in Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem. Hophra, king of Egypt, came to Zedekiah's aid, and even temporarily drew the Babylonian armies away from Jerusalem. In the city, Jeremiah warned that this lull would be temporary (Jer 37:7) and that Egypt would retreat. In Babylon, Ezekiel had the same message.

In the 6th century B.C. the Egyptians had already existed beside the Nile for over 3,500

years, and for much of that history had been the supreme ancient Near Eastern power. But by Ezekiel's time Egypt had not held that position for centuries. Now awakening Egypt had to face Babylon's increasing strength (Eze 30:20–26). The prophet recalls the fate of the Assyrian Empire (ch. 31): Egypt could never match Assyria's greatness, and that nation had fallen. Like powerful Assyria, Egypt also would be brought down. After her humiliation by Nebuchadnezzar, the country would no longer be among the first rank of world powers (29:1–16).

- **Ezekiel 29:1–16**
- **Ezekiel 30:20—31:18**

Ezekiel 29:1–16

A Prophecy Against Egypt

Judgment on Pharaoh

29:1 In the tenth year, in the tenth month on the twelfth day, the word of the LORD came to me: 2"Son of man, set your face against Pharaoh king of Egypt and prophesy against him and against all Egypt. 3Speak to him and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'I am against you, Pharaoh king of Egypt,
you great monster lying among your streams.
You say, "The Nile belongs to me;
I made it for myself."
4But I will put hooks in your jaws
and make the fish of your streams stick to your scales.
I will pull you out from among your streams,
with all the fish sticking to your scales.
5I will leave you in the desert,
you and all the fish of your streams.
You will fall on the open field
and not be gathered or picked up.
I will give you as food
to the beasts of the earth and the birds of the sky.

6Then all who live in Egypt will know that I am the LORD.

"'You have been a staff of reed for the people of Israel. 7When they grasped you with their hands, you splintered and you tore open their shoulders; when they leaned on you, you broke and their backs were wrenched.[a]

8"'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will bring a sword against you and kill both man and beast. 9Egypt will become a desolate wasteland. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

"'Because you said, "The Nile is mine; I made it," 10therefore I am against you and against your streams, and I will make the land of Egypt a ruin and a desolate waste from Migdol to Aswan, as far as the border of Cush.[b] 11The foot of neither man nor beast will pass through it; no one will live there for forty years. 12I will make the land of Egypt desolate among devastated lands, and her cities will lie desolate forty years among ruined cities. And I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries.

13"'Yet this is what the Sovereign LORD says: At the end of forty years I will gather the Egyptians from the nations where they were scattered. 14I will bring them back from captivity and return them to Upper Egypt, the land of their ancestry. There they will be a lowly kingdom. 15It will be the lowliest of kingdoms and will never again exalt itself above the other nations. I will make it so weak that it will never again rule over the nations. 16Egypt will no longer be a source of confidence for the people of Israel but will be a reminder of their sin in turning to her for help. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.'"

Ezekiel 30:20—31:18

Pharaoh's Arms Are Broken

30:20 In the eleventh year, in the first month on the seventh day, the word of the LORD came to me: 21"Son of man, I have broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt. It has not been bound up to be healed or put in a splint so that it may become strong enough to hold a sword. 22Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against Pharaoh king of Egypt. I will break both his arms, the good arm as well as the broken one, and make the sword fall from his hand. 23I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries. 24I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon and put my sword in his hand, but I will break the arms of Pharaoh, and he will groan before him like a mortally wounded man. 25I will strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon, but the arms of Pharaoh will fall limp. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I put my sword into the hand of the king of Babylon and he brandishes it against Egypt. 26I will disperse the Egyptians among the nations and scatter them through the countries. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

[a] *7* Syriac (see also Septuagint and Vulgate); Hebrew *and you caused their backs to stand* [b] *10* That is, the upper Nile region

Nebuchadnezzar Campaigns Against Egypt (Eze 30:21–26)

Egypt and Babylon were adversaries throughout the long reign of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon (605–562 B.C.). The spheres of influence for both nations extended to Palestine, and so the tiny kingdom of Judah became a pawn in the rivalry between these two superpowers.

In 605 B.C., while Nebuchadnezzar was yet a crown prince, he defeated Egypt at the great battle of Carchemish in Aram. He thus laid claim to Palestine, and apparently invaded Egypt 4 years later, but was repelled by Egypt's king Necho II (610–595 B.C.).

For practical purposes, Egypt made efforts to defend Judah against the advances of Babylon. The Egyptian king Hophra (589–570 B.C.) attempted to interrupt the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., but was forced to withdraw before the stronger army of Nebuchadnezzar. This is probably the situation that the prophet Ezekiel describes: God had "broken the arm of Pharaoh king of Egypt" (Eze 30:21). The flexed arm was a common symbol of Egyptian strength; yet God would "strengthen the arms of the king of Babylon" (30:24, 25).

Ezekiel delivered another prophetic message (Eze 29:17—30:19) in 571 B.C., just 4 years before another Babylonian invasion to the west. Unfortunately, the Babylonian Chronicle does not discuss this period, and so Nebuchadnezzar's account of this invasion is not known. Apparently Pharaoh Hophra lost control of Egypt in 570 B.C. in a revolt led by the Egyptian general Amasis. In 567 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar attempted to take advantage of Egypt's unstable situation, and Hophra joined with the Babylonians.

Nebuchadnezzar may well have devastated parts of Egypt, and Ezekiel prophesies of Egypt's destruction (30:10–12). However, the Babylonian invasion was repulsed by Amasis, and Pharaoh Hophra died during the battle.

Pharaoh as a Felled Cedar of Lebanon

31 [1]In the eleventh year, in the third month
on the first day, the word of the LORD
came to me: [2]"Son of man, say to Pharaoh king
of Egypt and to his hordes:

"'Who can be compared with you in
majesty?
[3]Consider Assyria, once a cedar in
Lebanon,
with beautiful branches overshadowing
the forest;
it towered on high,
its top above the thick foliage.
[4]The waters nourished it,
deep springs made it grow tall;
their streams flowed
all around its base
and sent their channels
to all the trees of the field.
[5]So it towered higher
than all the trees of the field;
its boughs increased
and its branches grew long,
spreading because of abundant
waters.
[6]All the birds of the sky
nested in its boughs,
all the animals of the wild
gave birth under its branches;
all the great nations
lived in its shade.
[7]It was majestic in beauty,
with its spreading boughs,
for its roots went down
to abundant waters.
[8]The cedars in the garden of God
could not rival it,
nor could the junipers
equal its boughs,
nor could the plane trees
compare with its branches—
no tree in the garden of God
could match its beauty.
[9]I made it beautiful
with abundant branches,
the envy of all the trees of Eden
in the garden of God.

[10]"'Therefore this is what the Sovereign
LORD says: Because the great cedar towered
over the thick foliage, and because it was proud
of its height, [11]I gave it into the hands of the
ruler of the nations, for him to deal with ac-
cording to its wickedness. I cast it aside, [12]and
the most ruthless of foreign nations cut it down
and left it. Its boughs fell on the mountains and
in all the valleys; its branches lay broken in all
the ravines of the land. All the nations of the
earth came out from under its shade and left
it. [13]All the birds settled on the fallen tree, and
all the wild animals lived among its branches.
[14]Therefore no other trees by the waters are
ever to tower proudly on high, lifting their tops
above the thick foliage. No other trees so well-
watered are ever to reach such a height; they
are all destined for death, for the earth below,
among mortals who go down to the realm of
the dead.

[15]"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
On the day it was brought down to the realm
of the dead I covered the deep springs with

mourning for it; I held back its streams, and its abundant waters were restrained. Because of it I clothed Lebanon with gloom, and all the trees of the field withered away. 16I made the nations tremble at the sound of its fall when I brought it down to the realm of the dead to be with those who go down to the pit. Then all the trees of Eden, the choicest and best of Lebanon, the well-watered trees, were consoled in the earth below. 17They too, like the great cedar, had gone down to the realm of the dead, to those killed by the sword, along with the armed men who lived in its shade among the nations.

18"'Which of the trees of Eden can be compared with you in splendor and majesty? Yet you, too, will be brought down with the trees of Eden to the earth below; you will lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.

"'This is Pharaoh and all his hordes, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

[a] 4 Or *Chaldeans*; also in verses 13, 25 and 26 [b] 4 Or *the Jordan Valley* [c] 5 Or *Chaldean*; also in verses 10 and 24 [d] 7 Or *Chaldeans*; also in verse 17 [e] 7 Or *the Jordan Valley* [f] 8 Or *Chaldean*; also in verse 14

TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: The Fall of Jerusalem

As both Jeremiah and Ezekiel predicted, Babylon defeated the Egyptian armies under Pharaoh Hophra and returned to finish off Jerusalem. In Zedekiah's 11th year (586 B.C.), the city fell. The significance of the fall of Jerusalem cannot be overstated. Israel's identity and the current form of her faith were obliterated at once. For this reason, many Old Testament passages describe the events around that fall. No fewer than four separate narrative accounts (including Chronicles) of the event appear in Scripture. The parallel accounts of 2Ki 25:4–26 and Jer 52:7–30 are supplemented with the longer account found in Jer 39–44, which may have been written by Jeremiah's scribe Baruch.

Jeremiah's prophecies were fulfilled in these horrible days. By the 4th month (perhaps July) of 586 B.C. the Babylonian army penetrated Jerusalem's walls (Jer 39:2). When Zedekiah knew that defense was hopeless, he and his army tried to desert the city. The effort was futile; Zedekiah was captured and taken to the Babylonian headquarters at Hamath (Jer 52:7–11; 39:1–7). One month later (Jer 52:12), the Babylonian army led by the commander Nebuzaradan trampled the city. The last vestiges of King Solomon's splendor were taken as spoils of war (Jer 52:12–27; 39:8–10).

- **2 Kings 25:4–7**
- **Jeremiah 52:7–11**
- **Jeremiah 39:1–7**
- **2 Kings 25:8–21**
- **Jeremiah 52:12–27**
- **Jeremiah 39:8–10**

2 Kings 25:4–7

25:4 Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Babylonians[a] were surrounding the city. They fled toward the Arabah,[b] 5but the Babylonian[c] army pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, 6and he was captured.

He was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where sentence was pronounced on him. 7They killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. Then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon.

Jeremiah 52:7–11

52:7 Then the city wall was broken through, and the whole army fled. They left the city at night through the gate between the two walls near the king's garden, though the Babylonians[d] were surrounding the city. They fled toward the Arabah,[e] 8but the Babylonian[f] army pursued King Zedekiah and overtook him in the plains of Jericho. All his soldiers were separated from him and scattered, 9and he was captured.

He was taken to the king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. 10There at Riblah the king of Babylon killed the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes; he also killed all the officials of Judah. 11Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes, bound him with bronze shackles and took him to Babylon, where he put him in prison till the day of his death.

Jeremiah 39:1–7

39:1 In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his whole army and laid siege to it. 2And on the ninth day of the fourth month of Zedekiah's eleventh year, the city wall was broken through. 3Then all the officials of the king of Babylon came and took seats in the Middle Gate: Nergal-Sharezer of Samgar, Nebo-Sarsekim a chief

Nergal and Nergal-Sharezer (Jer 39:3, 13)

Among the officials representing Babylon at the siege of Jerusalem was a certain Nergal-Sharezer (Jer 39:3). His name includes the name of the god Nergal, and means "Nergal, protect the king."

Nergal was the god of the netherworld in 3rd-millennium B.C. Sumer. His official cult center was the city of Kuthah. In the 2nd millennium B.C. his worship was incorporated into both Babylonian and Assyrian religions. As each of these states built their empires, they carried the worship of Nergal with them.

The *Myth of Nergal and Ereshkigal* exists in two distinct versions: one from Tell el-Amarna, Egypt, from about 1350 B.C., and another from 7th-century Babylonia. This narrative poem describes how Nergal came to the realm of the dead.

In the myth, Ereshkigal, queen of the dead, is slighted by the gods in heaven and demands that a deity be sent to her realm to assuage her anger. Nergal is the god who comes, prepared either to rule the netherworld or to deal violently with the goddess. But the god and goddess discover that they actually like each other, and Nergal remains as Ereshkigal's husband and as king of the dead.

Unlike other deities who entered the land of the dead and could not leave, Nergal was able to move among heaven, earth, and the underworld at will. This made him a natural deity for any business which required coordination among the various levels of the universe. Especially important were his duties as a patron deity. As the god of those fallen in warfare, Nergal hauled the slain from earth to the realm of the dead. As the god of mining and metalsmiths, he hauled precious metals from the netherworld to the earth.

officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officials of the king of Babylon. 4When Zedekiah king of Judah and all the soldiers saw them, they fled; they left the city at night by way of the king's garden, through the gate between the two walls, and headed toward the Arabah.[a]

5But the Babylonian[b] army pursued them and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho. They captured him and took him to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon at Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he pronounced sentence on him. 6There at Riblah the king of Babylon slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and also killed all the nobles of Judah. 7Then he put out Zedekiah's eyes and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon.

2 Kings 25:8–21

25:8 On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, an official of the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 9He set fire to the temple of the LORD, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. 10The whole Babylonian army under the commander of the imperial guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem. 11Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the rest of the populace and those who had deserted to the king of Babylon. 12But the commander left behind some of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

13The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea that were at the temple of the LORD and they carried the bronze to Babylon. 14They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, dishes and all the bronze articles used in the temple service. 15The commander of the imperial guard took away the censers and sprinkling bowls—all that were made of pure gold or silver.

16The bronze from the two pillars, the Sea and the movable stands, which Solomon had made for the temple of the LORD, was more than could be weighed. 17Each pillar was eighteen cubits[c] high. The bronze capital on top of one pillar was three cubits[d] high and was decorated with a network and pomegranates of bronze all around. The other pillar, with its network, was similar.

18The commander of the guard took as prisoners Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank and the three doorkeepers. 19Of those still in the city, he took the officer in charge of the fighting men, and five royal advis-

Politics & Government

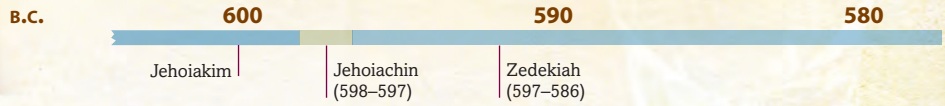
The defeat and destruction of a city is a terrible fate. Not only is human life itself destroyed, but with it the visible fruit of human labor and energy. The purpose of salvation is symbolized by a heavenly city, the new Jerusalem (Rev 21:2), showing how important is the idea of a city. Like the fall of Troy, the destruction of Jerusalem cannot fade from human consciousness (2Ki 25:9).

[a] *4* Or *the Jordan Valley* [b] *5* Or *Chaldean* [c] *17* That is, about 27 feet or about 8.1 meters [d] *17* That is, about 4 1/2 feet or about 1.4 meters

THE LAST KINGS OF JUDAH

Israel (northern kingdom)

Fell to the Assyrian Empire in 722 B.C.



Judah (southern kingdom)

Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, reigned only 3 months. Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon besieged Jerusalem and carried Jehoiachin into captivity in Babylon (2Ki 24:10, 12). Also called Jeconiah and Koniah, Jehoiachin was finally released by the new Babylonian king Awel-Marduk (2Ki 25:27).

Zedekiah, son of Josiah, was an uncle to Jehoiachin. When Nebuchadnezzar exiled Jehoiachin to Babylon, he placed Mattaniah on the throne, giving him the throne name "Zedekiah" (2Ki 24:17). Zedekiah was a puppet king ruling over a powerless land of poor farmers and laborers. He was under constant pressure from his advisors to revolt against Babylon. When Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C., Zedekiah was exiled (2Ki 25:7).

ers. He also took the secretary who was chief officer in charge of conscripting the people of the land and sixty of the conscripts who were found in the city. 20Nebuzaradan the commander took them all and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 21There at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king had them executed.

So Judah went into captivity, away from her land.

Jeremiah 52:12–27

52:12 On the tenth day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard, who served the king of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. 13He set fire to the temple of the LORD, the royal palace and all the houses of Jerusalem. Every important building he burned down. 14The whole Babylonian army, under the commander of the imperial guard, broke down all the walls around Jerusalem. 15Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard carried into exile some of the poorest people and those who remained in the city, along with the rest of the craftsmen[a] and those who had deserted to the king of Babylon. 16But Nebuzaradan left behind the rest of the poorest people of the land to work the vineyards and fields.

17The Babylonians broke up the bronze pillars, the movable stands and the bronze Sea that were at the temple of the LORD and they carried all the bronze to Babylon. 18They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, dishes and all the bronze articles used in the temple service. 19The commander of the imperial guard took away the basins, censers, sprinkling bowls, pots, lampstands, dishes and bowls used for drink offerings—all that were made of pure gold or silver.

20The bronze from the two pillars, the Sea and the twelve bronze bulls under it, and the movable stands, which King Solomon had made for the temple of the LORD, was more than could be weighed. 21Each pillar was eighteen cubits high and twelve cubits in circumference[b]; each was four fingers thick, and hollow. 22The bronze capital on top of one pillar was five cubits[c] high and was decorated with a network and pomegranates of bronze all around. The other pillar, with its pomegranates, was similar. 23There were ninety-six pomegranates on the sides; the total number of pomegranates above the surrounding network was a hundred.

24The commander of the guard took as prisoners Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest next in rank and the three doorkeepers. 25Of those still in the city, he took the officer in charge of the fighting men, and seven royal advisers. He also took the secretary who was chief officer in charge of conscripting the people of the land, sixty of whom were found in the city. 26Nebuzaradan the commander took them all and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. 27There at Riblah, in the land of Hamath, the king had them executed.

So Judah went into captivity, away from her land.

[a] *15* Or *the populace* [b] *21* That is, about 27 feet high and 18 feet in circumference or about 8.1 meters high and 5.4 meters in circumference [c] *22* That is, about 7 1/2 feet or about 2.3 meters

Jeremiah 39:8–10

39 :8 The Babylonians[a] set fire to the royal
palace and the houses of the people and
broke down the walls of Jerusalem. 9Nebuzar-
adan commander of the imperial guard carried
into exile to Babylon the people who remained
in the city, along with those who had gone
over to him, and the rest of the people. 10But
Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard left
behind in the land of Judah some of the poor
people, who owned nothing; and at that time he
gave them vineyards and fields.

TRANSITION

The Book of Lamentations

The Book of Lamentations consists of five separate poems on the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. These funeral songs and prayers describe both the horrors of the extended siege (e.g., La 4:4, 5) and the destruction itself. No other book captures so vividly the despair of seeing Zion destroyed, of seeing the holy city and its temple become a mockery to the nations.

Lamentations is traditionally attributed to Jeremiah, which explains its usual placement after the Book of Jeremiah, but the book itself does not name an author. Whether by Jeremiah or an unknown poet, the book is surely an eyewitness account of those wretched days. The five poems were penned, probably not long after Jerusalem's fall in 586, by someone who had seen the slaughter of many of his people, the enslavement of others, and the abject despair of the few survivors.

• Lamentations 1:1—5:22

Lamentations

1[b] **:1** How deserted lies the city,
once so full of people!
How like a widow is she,
who once was great among the
nations!
She who was queen among the provinces
has now become a slave.

2Bitterly she weeps at night,
tears are on her cheeks.
Among all her lovers
there is no one to comfort her.
All her friends have betrayed her;
they have become her enemies.

3After affliction and harsh labor,
Judah has gone into exile.
She dwells among the nations;
she finds no resting place.
All who pursue her have overtaken her
in the midst of her distress.

4The roads to Zion mourn,
for no one comes to her appointed
festivals.
All her gateways are desolate,
her priests groan,
her young women grieve,
and she is in bitter anguish.

5Her foes have become her masters;
her enemies are at ease.
The LORD has brought her grief
because of her many sins.
Her children have gone into exile,
captive before the foe.

6All the splendor has departed
from Daughter Zion.
Her princes are like deer
that find no pasture;
in weakness they have fled
before the pursuer.

7In the days of her affliction and wandering
Jerusalem remembers all the treasures
that were hers in days of old.
When her people fell into enemy hands,
there was no one to help her.
Her enemies looked at her
and laughed at her destruction.

8Jerusalem has sinned greatly
and so has become unclean.
All who honored her despise her,
for they have all seen her naked;
she herself groans
and turns away.

9Her filthiness clung to her skirts;
she did not consider her future.
Her fall was astounding;
there was none to comfort her.
"Look, LORD, on my affliction,
for the enemy has triumphed."

10The enemy laid hands
on all her treasures;
she saw pagan nations
enter her sanctuary—
those you had forbidden
to enter your assembly.

11All her people groan
as they search for bread;
they barter their treasures for food
to keep themselves alive.

[a] 8 Or *Chaldeans* [b] This chapter is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

Lamenting for the Defeated City (La 1:1)

The Book of Lamentations begins with an expression of deep hurt: "How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!" (La 1:1). Such laments for defeated cities and destroyed temples were commonplace in the ancient Near East. One of the best known is the *Lament for Ur,* composed sometime after the fall of the 3rd Dynasty of Ur in 2004 B.C.

Ur was a Sumerian kingdom in southern Mesopotamia. The lament was apparently written by the kings of Isin, a nearby city, who attempted to rebuild the city of Ur, and associated themselves with the Ur dynasty. The purpose of the lament was to calm the disquieted spirit of Nanna, the moon god of Ur. It was thus hoped that the moon god would once again rebuild his devastated residence.

The form of the *Lament for Ur* has two parts: the body of the text is a "harp lament," and the ending consists of a "tambourine lament." The first part is sung by Nanna's wife, Ningal, while the second is sung by a singer (or singers) who express the survivors' hope that the city gods will restore the city to greatness.

Scholars believe that the *Lament for Ur* may actually have been performed in the moonlight at the place of the ruined temple of Nanna at Ur. This lament claims that all of the Sumerian gods have abandoned their cities. Later, the lament describes the divine assembly and their fateful decision to evacuate the land. Finally, the tambourine lament makes a plea for Ningal to return to her city. She then makes the same appeal to her husband, Nanna.

There are superficial similarities between the *Lament for Ur* and the Book of Lamentations. Both writings concern a defeated city that has been forsaken by its deity (La 1:15). Both cities have fallen to the enemy (La 2:7). Yet both laments express hope that the deity will restore the city (La 3:22–33).

"Look, LORD, and consider,
for I am despised."

12 "Is it nothing to you, all you who pass by?
Look around and see.
Is any suffering like my suffering
that was inflicted on me,
that the LORD brought on me
in the day of his fierce anger?

13 "From on high he sent fire,
sent it down into my bones.
He spread a net for my feet
and turned me back.
He made me desolate,
faint all the day long.

14 "My sins have been bound into a yoke[a];
by his hands they were woven together.
They have been hung on my neck,
and the Lord has sapped my strength.
He has given me into the hands
of those I cannot withstand.

15 "The Lord has rejected
all the warriors in my midst;
he has summoned an army against me
to[b] crush my young men.
In his winepress the Lord has trampled
Virgin Daughter Judah.

16 "This is why I weep
and my eyes overflow with tears.
No one is near to comfort me,
no one to restore my spirit.
My children are destitute
because the enemy has prevailed."

17 Zion stretches out her hands,
but there is no one to comfort her.
The LORD has decreed for Jacob
that his neighbors become his foes;
Jerusalem has become
an unclean thing among them.

18 "The LORD is righteous,
yet I rebelled against his command.
Listen, all you peoples;
look on my suffering.
My young men and young women
have gone into exile.

19 "I called to my allies
but they betrayed me.
My priests and my elders
perished in the city
while they searched for food
to keep themselves alive.

20 "See, LORD, how distressed I am!
I am in torment within,
and in my heart I am disturbed,
for I have been most rebellious.
Outside, the sword bereaves;
inside, there is only death.

21 "People have heard my groaning,
but there is no one to comfort me.
All my enemies have heard of my
distress;
they rejoice at what you have done.
May you bring the day you have announced
so they may become like me.

[a] *14* Most Hebrew manuscripts; many Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint *He kept watch over my sins* [b] *15* Or *has set a time for me / when he will*

Temple Afire (La 2:5–7)

Temples were the focal point of civic life and the target for invaders. The patron deities of the city were believed to dwell in the temples. Festivals were held around temples, and valuables were deposited in them (they were the earliest banks).

For invaders, the capture of the central temple served several purposes, not the least of which was obtaining the wealth stored there. To take the temple was also to show that the gods of the city had chosen the conquerors over the local inhabitants. This meant that the conquerors were now the legitimate rulers of the people, land, and any possessions.

The burning of the central temple was a declaration of unconditional victory. Only if the gods of the city had abandoned that city to its fate would they allow their own home to be destroyed. When Sennacherib destroyed Babylon and the temple of Marduk in 689 B.C., he claimed to have done so on behalf of Marduk, who wished to punish his people for their evil behavior.

The captors were understood to have free rein with the city and its populace. The defeated city had no gods to whom they might appeal for mercy and no hope for a change in their fate. Their gods were believed to have moved to the capital of the victors, where they became patrons of the kings of that city.

The Book of Lamentations says the same thing about Nebuchadnezzar II burning Jerusalem and its temple in 586 B.C. (2Ki 25:9). Yahweh himself had become Judah's enemy (La 2:5) and destroyed his own temple—his "dwelling" and "place of meeting" (2:6). With Yahweh's permission, Judah's enemy now "raised a shout in the house of the LORD" (2:7).

22 "Let all their wickedness come before you;
deal with them
as you have dealt with me
because of all my sins.
My groans are many
and my heart is faint."

2[a] 1 How the Lord has covered Daughter Zion
with the cloud of his anger[b]!
He has hurled down the splendor of Israel
from heaven to earth;
he has not remembered his footstool
in the day of his anger.

2 Without pity the Lord has swallowed up
all the dwellings of Jacob;
in his wrath he has torn down
the strongholds of Daughter Judah.
He has brought her kingdom and its princes
down to the ground in dishonor.

3 In fierce anger he has cut off
every horn[c,d] of Israel.
He has withdrawn his right hand
at the approach of the enemy.
He has burned in Jacob like a flaming fire
that consumes everything around it.

4 Like an enemy he has strung his bow;
his right hand is ready.
Like a foe he has slain
all who were pleasing to the eye;
he has poured out his wrath like fire
on the tent of Daughter Zion.

5 The Lord is like an enemy;
he has swallowed up Israel.
He has swallowed up all her palaces
and destroyed her strongholds.
He has multiplied mourning and lamentation
for Daughter Judah.

6 He has laid waste his dwelling like a garden;
he has destroyed his place of meeting.
The LORD has made Zion forget
her appointed festivals and her Sabbaths;
in his fierce anger he has spurned
both king and priest.

7 The Lord has rejected his altar
and abandoned his sanctuary.
He has given the walls of her palaces
into the hands of the enemy;
they have raised a shout in the house of the LORD
as on the day of an appointed festival.

TIME CAPSULE		586 B.C.
586		Lachish Letters probably written shortly before Jerusalem's capture
586		Jerusalem falls to the Babylonians
586–538		The exile of Judah to Babylon
586		Hophra accepts Judean refugees in Egypt
586		Gedaliah is appointed governor of Judah

[a] This chapter is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.
[b] 1 Or *How the Lord in his anger / has treated Daughter Zion with contempt* [c] 3 Or *off / all the strength*; or *every king*
[d] 3 *Horn* here symbolizes strength.

8 The LORD determined to tear down
the wall around Daughter Zion.
He stretched out a measuring line
and did not withhold his hand from
destroying.
He made ramparts and walls lament;
together they wasted away.

9 Her gates have sunk into the ground;
their bars he has broken and destroyed.
Her king and her princes are exiled among
the nations,
the law is no more,
and her prophets no longer find
visions from the LORD.

10 The elders of Daughter Zion
sit on the ground in silence;
they have sprinkled dust on their heads
and put on sackcloth.
The young women of Jerusalem
have bowed their heads to the ground.

11 My eyes fail from weeping,
I am in torment within;
my heart is poured out on the ground
because my people are destroyed,
because children and infants faint
in the streets of the city.

12 They say to their mothers,
"Where is bread and wine?"
as they faint like the wounded
in the streets of the city,
as their lives ebb away
in their mothers' arms.

13 What can I say for you?
With what can I compare you,
Daughter Jerusalem?
To what can I liken you,
that I may comfort you,
Virgin Daughter Zion?
Your wound is as deep as the sea.
Who can heal you?

14 The visions of your prophets
were false and worthless;
they did not expose your sin
to ward off your captivity.
The prophecies they gave you
were false and misleading.

15 All who pass your way
clap their hands at you;
they scoff and shake their heads
at Daughter Jerusalem:
"Is this the city that was called
the perfection of beauty,
the joy of the whole earth?"

16 All your enemies open their mouths
wide against you;
they scoff and gnash their teeth
and say, "We have swallowed her up.
This is the day we have waited for;
we have lived to see it."

17 The LORD has done what he planned;
he has fulfilled his word,
which he decreed long ago.
He has overthrown you without pity,
he has let the enemy gloat over you,
he has exalted the horn[a] of your foes.

18 The hearts of the people
cry out to the Lord.
You walls of Daughter Zion,
let your tears flow like a river
day and night;
give yourself no relief,
your eyes no rest.

19 Arise, cry out in the night,
as the watches of the night begin;
pour out your heart like water
in the presence of the Lord.
Lift up your hands to him
for the lives of your children,
who faint from hunger
at every street corner.

20 "Look, LORD, and consider:
Whom have you ever treated like this?
Should women eat their offspring,
the children they have cared for?
Should priest and prophet be killed
in the sanctuary of the Lord?

21 "Young and old lie together
in the dust of the streets;
my young men and young women
have fallen by the sword.
You have slain them in the day of your anger;
you have slaughtered them without pity.

22 "As you summon to a feast day,
so you summoned against me terrors on
every side.
In the day of the LORD's anger
no one escaped or survived;
those I cared for and reared
my enemy has destroyed."

3[b] 1 I am the man who has seen affliction
by the rod of the LORD's wrath.
2 He has driven me away and made me walk
in darkness rather than light;

[a] *17 Horn* here symbolizes strength. [b] This chapter is an acrostic poem; the verses of each stanza begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and the verses within each stanza begin with the same letter.

3 indeed, he has turned his hand against me
again and again, all day long.

4 He has made my skin and my flesh grow old
and has broken my bones.
5 He has besieged me and surrounded me
with bitterness and hardship.
6 He has made me dwell in darkness
like those long dead.

7 He has walled me in so I cannot escape;
he has weighed me down with chains.
8 Even when I call out or cry for help,
he shuts out my prayer.
9 He has barred my way with blocks of stone;
he has made my paths crooked.

10 Like a bear lying in wait,
like a lion in hiding,
11 he dragged me from the path and mangled me
and left me without help.
12 He drew his bow
and made me the target for his arrows.

13 He pierced my heart
with arrows from his quiver.
14 I became the laughingstock of all my people;
they mock me in song all day long.
15 He has filled me with bitter herbs
and given me gall to drink.

16 He has broken my teeth with gravel;
he has trampled me in the dust.
17 I have been deprived of peace;
I have forgotten what prosperity is.
18 So I say, "My splendor is gone
and all that I had hoped from the LORD."

19 I remember my affliction and my wandering,
the bitterness and the gall.
20 I well remember them,
and my soul is downcast within me.
21 Yet this I call to mind
and therefore I have hope:

Arts & Literature
Lamentations displays a common technique of Hebrew poetry called acrostic. In an acrostic poem, each line or group of lines begins with the next letter of the alphabet. La 3:1–66 has 3 verses for each of the 22 Hebrew letters; the other chapters of Lamentations have one verse for each letter. The acrostic technique is common in Arabic and Persian verse, although not in English, which has its own poetic resources.

22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed,
for his compassions never fail.
23 They are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.
24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion;
therefore I will wait for him."

25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him,
to the one who seeks him;
26 it is good to wait quietly
for the salvation of the LORD.
27 It is good for a man to bear the yoke
while he is young.

28 Let him sit alone in silence,
for the LORD has laid it on him.
29 Let him bury his face in the dust—
there may yet be hope.
30 Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him,
and let him be filled with disgrace.

31 For no one is cast off
by the Lord forever.
32 Though he brings grief, he will show compassion,
so great is his unfailing love.
33 For he does not willingly bring affliction
or grief to anyone.

34 To crush underfoot
all prisoners in the land,
35 to deny people their rights
before the Most High,
36 to deprive them of justice—
would not the Lord see such things?

37 Who can speak and have it happen
if the Lord has not decreed it?
38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High
that both calamities and good things come?
39 Why should the living complain
when punished for their sins?

40 Let us examine our ways and test them,
and let us return to the LORD.
41 Let us lift up our hearts and our hands
to God in heaven, and say:
42 "We have sinned and rebelled
and you have not forgiven.

43 "You have covered yourself with anger and pursued us;
you have slain without pity.
44 You have covered yourself with a cloud
so that no prayer can get through.

45 You have made us scum and refuse
among the nations.

46 "All our enemies have opened their mouths
wide against us.
47 We have suffered terror and pitfalls,
ruin and destruction."
48 Streams of tears flow from my eyes
because my people are destroyed.

49 My eyes will flow unceasingly,
without relief,
50 until the LORD looks down
from heaven and sees.
51 What I see brings grief to my soul
because of all the women of my city.

52 Those who were my enemies without cause
hunted me like a bird.
53 They tried to end my life in a pit
and threw stones at me;
54 the waters closed over my head,
and I thought I was about to perish.

55 I called on your name, LORD,
from the depths of the pit.
56 You heard my plea: "Do not close your ears
to my cry for relief."
57 You came near when I called you,
and you said, "Do not fear."

58 You, Lord, took up my case;
you redeemed my life.
59 LORD, you have seen the wrong done
to me.
Uphold my cause!
60 You have seen the depth of their vengeance,
all their plots against me.

61 LORD, you have heard their insults,
all their plots against me—
62 what my enemies whisper and mutter
against me all day long.
63 Look at them! Sitting or standing,
they mock me in their songs.

64 Pay them back what they deserve, LORD,
for what their hands have done.
65 Put a veil over their hearts,
and may your curse be on them!
66 Pursue them in anger and destroy them
from under the heavens of the LORD.

4 [a] 1 How the gold has lost its luster,
the fine gold become dull!
The sacred gems are scattered
at every street corner.

2 How the precious children of Zion,
once worth their weight in gold,
are now considered as pots of clay,
the work of a potter's hands!

3 Even jackals offer their breasts
to nurse their young,
but my people have become heartless
like ostriches in the desert.

4 Because of thirst the infant's tongue
sticks to the roof of its mouth;
the children beg for bread,
but no one gives it to them.

5 Those who once ate delicacies
are destitute in the streets.
Those brought up in royal purple
now lie on ash heaps.

6 The punishment of my people
is greater than that of Sodom,
which was overthrown in a moment
without a hand turned to help her.

7 Their princes were brighter than snow
and whiter than milk,
their bodies more ruddy than rubies,
their appearance like lapis lazuli.

8 But now they are blacker than soot;
they are not recognized in the streets.
Their skin has shriveled on their bones;
it has become as dry as a stick.

9 Those killed by the sword are better off
than those who die of famine;
racked with hunger, they waste away
for lack of food from the field.

[a] This chapter is an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

10 With their own hands compassionate women
have cooked their own children,
who became their food
when my people were destroyed.

11 The LORD has given full vent to his wrath;
he has poured out his fierce anger.
He kindled a fire in Zion
that consumed her foundations.

12 The kings of the earth did not believe,
nor did any of the peoples of the world,
that enemies and foes could enter
the gates of Jerusalem.

13 But it happened because of the sins of her prophets
and the iniquities of her priests,
who shed within her
the blood of the righteous.

14 Now they grope through the streets
as if they were blind.
They are so defiled with blood
that no one dares to touch their garments.

15 "Go away! You are unclean!" people cry to them.
"Away! Away! Don't touch us!"
When they flee and wander about,
people among the nations say,
"They can stay here no longer."

16 The LORD himself has scattered them;
he no longer watches over them.
The priests are shown no honor,
the elders no favor.

17 Moreover, our eyes failed,
looking in vain for help;
from our towers we watched
for a nation that could not save us.

18 People stalked us at every step,
so we could not walk in our streets.
Our end was near, our days were numbered,
for our end had come.

Arts & Literature

The most prominent feature of Hebrew poetry is repeated thoughts and phrases. There is little or no rhyme. But there is at least one recognizable meter (or rhythm), usually used for poems of lament, like the Book of Lamentations. This rhythm is called *Qinah* and has five beats divided 3 + 2. The last chapter of Lamentations (5:1–22) follows a 3 + 3 rhythm instead of the *Qinah* rhythm.

19 Our pursuers were swifter
than eagles in the sky;
they chased us over the mountains
and lay in wait for us in the desert.

20 The LORD's anointed, our very life breath,
was caught in their traps.
We thought that under his shadow
we would live among the nations.

21 Rejoice and be glad, Daughter Edom,
you who live in the land of Uz.
But to you also the cup will be passed;
you will be drunk and stripped naked.

22 Your punishment will end, Daughter Zion;
he will not prolong your exile.
But he will punish your sin, Daughter Edom,
and expose your wickedness.

5 1 Remember, LORD, what has happened to us;
look, and see our disgrace.
2 Our inheritance has been turned over to strangers,
our homes to foreigners.
3 We have become fatherless,
our mothers are widows.
4 We must buy the water we drink;
our wood can be had only at a price.
5 Those who pursue us are at our heels;
we are weary and find no rest.
6 We submitted to Egypt and Assyria
to get enough bread.
7 Our ancestors sinned and are no more,
and we bear their punishment.
8 Slaves rule over us,
and there is no one to free us from their hands.
9 We get our bread at the risk of our lives
because of the sword in the desert.
10 Our skin is hot as an oven,
feverish from hunger.
11 Women have been violated in Zion,
and virgins in the towns of Judah.
12 Princes have been hung up by their hands;
elders are shown no respect.
13 Young men toil at the millstones;
boys stagger under loads of wood.
14 The elders are gone from the city gate;
the young men have stopped their music.
15 Joy is gone from our hearts;
our dancing has turned to mourning.
16 The crown has fallen from our head.
Woe to us, for we have sinned!
17 Because of this our hearts are faint,
because of these things our eyes grow dim

18 for Mount Zion, which lies desolate,
with jackals prowling over it.

19 You, LORD, reign forever;
your throne endures from generation to generation.
20 Why do you always forget us?
Why do you forsake us so long?
21 Restore us to yourself, LORD, that we may return;
renew our days as of old
22 unless you have utterly rejected us
and are angry with us beyond measure.

TRANSITION

Gedaliah the Governor

Nebuchadnezzar had had enough of kings in Jerusalem. Even his chosen servant Zedekiah had rebelled. Now there would be no more royalty. Instead, Nebuchadnezzar appointed a governor, named Gedaliah (2Ki 25:22). Archaeological finds indicate that this Gedaliah had been Zedekiah's chief minister, but he was not from the line of David. With Jerusalem a heap of rubble, Gedaliah set up his seat of government at Mizpah, while Nebuchadnezzar took still more of the people of Judah into exile to Babylon.

In the confusion of rounding up captives, it seems Jeremiah was arrested by mistake. He was taken to Ramah, a small town a few miles north of Jerusalem, where he was identified and released (Jer 39:11—40:6). The prophet was offered the chance to leave his land and his people and have full provisions. He chose rather to stay with Gedaliah and the poor survivors.

Gedaliah's father, Ahikam, had once saved Jeremiah's life (Jer 26:24), and Gedaliah was clearly disposed to follow Jeremiah's advice: he would humbly serve the king of Babylon (Jer 40:9). Even after all Jeremiah's prophecies had been proven true, though, this advice remained unpopular. Only about 2 months passed (2Ki 25:8, 25) between Gedaliah's appointment as governor and his assassination by a certain Ishmael (Jer 40:7—41:15).

The people, led now by a Judean army commander named Johanan, feared a reprisal by the Babylonians. Despite Jeremiah's prophetic word that they should stay in Judah, they fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah and Baruch with them (Jer 41:16—44:30). The last recorded messages of Jeremiah come from Tahpanhes in Egypt. His prophecies concern Pharaoh Hophra's loss of his throne in 570 B.C. to the Egyptian general Amasis (44:30) and Nebuchadnezzar's campaign against Egypt in 567 B.C., during which Hophra was killed (43:8–13).

- **2 Kings 25:22–26**
- **Jeremiah 39:11—44:30**

2 Kings 25:22–26

25:22 Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to be over the people he had left behind in Judah. 23 When all the army officers and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, Jaazaniah the son of the Maakathite, and their men. 24 Gedaliah took an oath to reassure them and their men. "Do not be afraid of the Babylonian officials," he said. "Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you."

25 In the seventh month, however, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was of royal blood, came with ten men and assassinated Gedaliah and also the men of Judah and the Babylonians who were with him at Mizpah. 26 At this, all the people from the least to the greatest, together with the army officers, fled to Egypt for fear of the Babylonians.

Jeremiah 39:11—44:30

39:11 Now Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had given these orders about Jeremiah through Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard: 12 "Take him and look after him; don't harm him but do for him whatever he asks." 13 So Nebuzaradan the commander of the guard, Nebushazban a chief officer, Nergal-Sharezer a high official and all the other officers of the king of Babylon 14 sent and had Jeremiah taken out of the courtyard of the guard. They turned him over to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, to take him back to his home. So he remained among his own people.

15 While Jeremiah had been confined in the courtyard of the guard, the word of the LORD came to him: 16 "Go and tell Ebed-Melek the Cushite, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I am about to fulfill my words against this city—words concerning disaster, not prosperity. At that time they will be fulfilled before your eyes. 17 But I will rescue you on that day, declares the LORD; you will not be given into the hands of those you fear. 18 I will save you; you will not fall by the sword but will escape with your life, because you trust in me, declares the LORD.'"

Jeremiah Freed

40 1 The word came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had released him at Ramah.

Political Turmoil After Jerusalem's Fall (Jer 40:5)

As Jeremiah had warned, in 586 B.C. the Babylonians utterly destroyed Jerusalem and the temple (2Ki 25:8–10). The Judahite leaders who had led the resistance against the Babylonians either died in battle or were exiled. Nevertheless, the Babylonians left some people in the land to produce crops, if for no other reason, to pay tribute to Babylon (2Ki 25:12).

The Babylonian king appointed Gedaliah as governor of Judah to oversee the people who remained (Jer 40:5). He held office only as a representative of the victorious Babylonians; nevertheless, Gedaliah's credentials were impressive. His grandfather was Shaphan, a scribe and high-ranking official during King Josiah's reign (640–609 B.C.) His father Ahikam was also an official of Josiah's court (2Ki 22:12), and was instrumental in saving Jeremiah from death (Jer 26:24). Gedaliah, therefore, came from a family with long ties in the public administration of Judah.

Yet after the conquest, Judah was a tough place to administrate. Jerusalem had been destroyed, so Gedaliah governed from Mizpah (Jer 40:8), a town north of Jerusalem in the land of the tribe of Benjamin. As might be expected, many of those left in the land resented the havoc and loss caused by the Babylonians. Judah's old society had been destroyed; what remained threatened to fall apart through various factions. It was Gedaliah's job to hold these factions together.

Though initially successful (Jer 40:12), Gedaliah eventually failed. A member of the royal family named Ishmael assassinated Gedaliah and purged the governor's supporters in an effort to gain the throne of Judah for himself (41:1–3). Yet such was not to be, and Ishmael fled to Ammon as a refugee (41:15). The remaining Judeans, fearing reprisal from the Babylonians, fled to Egypt (41:17). The land, which the Babylonians had left at least marginally inhabited, now was empty.

He had found Jeremiah bound in chains among all the captives from Jerusalem and Judah who were being carried into exile to Babylon. 2When the commander of the guard found Jeremiah, he said to him, "The LORD your God decreed this disaster for this place. 3And now the LORD has brought it about; he has done just as he said he would. All this happened because you people sinned against the LORD and did not obey him. 4But today I am freeing you from the chains on your wrists. Come with me to Babylon, if you like, and I will look after you; but if you do not want to, then don't come. Look, the whole country lies before you; go wherever you please." 5However, before Jeremiah turned to go,[a] Nebuzaradan added, "Go back to Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon has appointed over the towns of Judah, and live with him among the people, or go anywhere else you please."

Then the commander gave him provisions and a present and let him go. 6So Jeremiah went to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah and stayed with him among the people who were left behind in the land.

Gedaliah Assassinated

7When all the army officers and their men who were still in the open country heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam as governor over the land and had put him in charge of the men, women and children who were the poorest in the land and who had not been carried into exile to Babylon, 8they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan and Jonathan the sons of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth, the sons of Ephai the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah[b] the son of the Maakathite, and their men. 9Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, took an oath to reassure them and their men. "Do not be afraid to serve the Babylonians,[c]" he said. "Settle down in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will go well with you. 10I myself will stay at Mizpah to represent you before the Babylonians who come to us, but you are to harvest the wine, summer fruit and olive oil, and put them in your storage jars, and live in the towns you have taken over."

11When all the Jews in Moab, Ammon, Edom and all the other countries heard that the king of Babylon had left a remnant in Judah and had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, as governor over them, 12they all came back to the land of Judah, to Gedaliah at Mizpah, from all the countries where they had been scattered. And they harvested an abundance of wine and summer fruit.

13Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers still in the open country came to Gedaliah at Mizpah 14and said to him, "Don't you know that Baalis king of the Ammonites has sent Ishmael son of Nethaniah to take your life?" But Gedaliah son of Ahikam did not believe them.

15Then Johanan son of Kareah said privately to Gedaliah in Mizpah, "Let me go and kill Ishmael son of Nethaniah, and no one will know it. Why should he take your life and cause all

[a] 5 Or *Jeremiah answered* [b] 8 Hebrew *Jezaniah,* a variant of *Jaazaniah* [c] 9 Or *Chaldeans*; also in verse 10

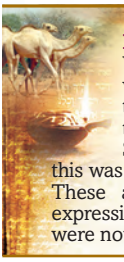
the Jews who are gathered around you to be scattered and the remnant of Judah to perish?"

16But Gedaliah son of Ahikam said to Johanan son of Kareah, "Don't do such a thing! What you are saying about Ishmael is not true."

41 1In the seventh month Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was of royal blood and had been one of the king's officers, came with ten men to Gedaliah son of Ahikam at Mizpah. While they were eating together there, 2Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him got up and struck down Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword, killing the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land. 3Ishmael also killed all the men of Judah who were with Gedaliah at Mizpah, as well as the Babylonian[a] soldiers who were there.

4The day after Gedaliah's assassination, before anyone knew about it, 5eighty men who had shaved off their beards, torn their clothes and cut themselves came from Shechem, Shiloh and Samaria, bringing grain offerings and incense with them to the house of the LORD. 6Ishmael son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went. When he met them, he said, "Come to Gedaliah son of Ahikam." 7When they went into the city, Ishmael son of Nethaniah and the men who were with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern. 8But ten of them said to Ishmael, "Don't kill us! We have wheat and barley, olive oil and honey, hidden in a field." So he let them alone and did not kill them with the others.

[a] 3 Or *Chaldean*



Daily Life & Customs

When in mourning, people displayed conventional signs of distress, such as tearing their clothes, wearing sackcloth, and putting dust or dirt on themselves (Jer 41:5). Some mourners cut themselves, although this was forbidden by the Law of Moses (Dt 14:1). These acts of self-humiliation were powerful expressions of inner turmoil and sorrow. They were not in themselves religious acts (Isa 58:5, 6).

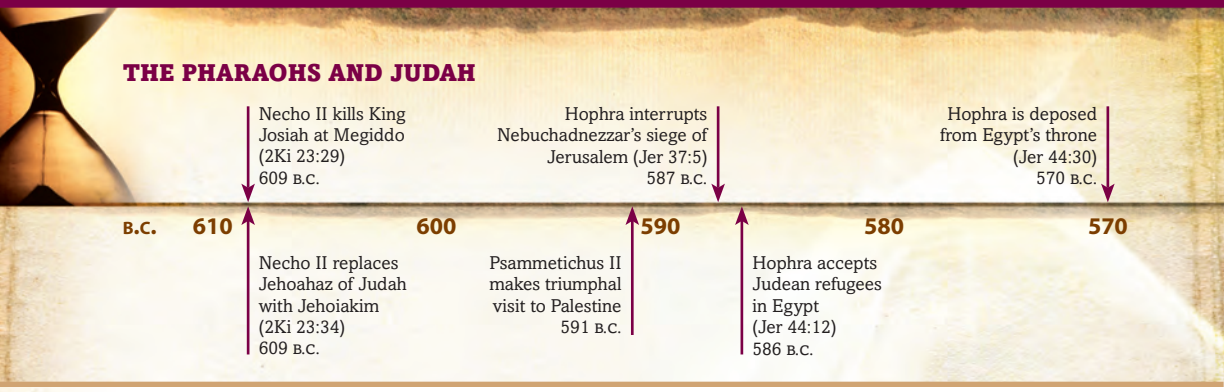
9Now the cistern where he threw all the bodies of the men he had killed along with Gedaliah was the one King Asa had made as part of his defense against Baasha king of Israel. Ishmael son of Nethaniah filled it with the dead.

10Ishmael made captives of all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah — the king's daughters along with all the others who were left there, over whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam. Ishmael son of Nethaniah took them captive and set out to cross over to the Ammonites.

11When Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him heard about all the crimes Ishmael son of Nethaniah had committed, 12they took all their men and went to fight Ishmael son of Nethaniah. They caught up with him near the great pool in Gibeon. 13When all the people Ishmael had with him saw Johanan son of Kareah and the army officers who were with him, they were glad. 14All the people Ishmael had taken captive at Mizpah turned and went over to Johanan son of Kareah. 15But Ishmael son of Nethaniah and eight of his men escaped from Johanan and fled to the Ammonites.

Jeremiah's Journey to Egypt

With the fall of Jerusalem, Jeremiah was taken in chains to Ramah and released. He went on to Mizpah to support the people left in the land. When the governor was killed, Jeremiah prophesied against leaving the land but was taken with the remnant to Tahpanhes in Egypt. His further prophecies to Jews living in Migdol, Memphis, and Tahpanhes may have contributed to Jewish settlements being established deeper in Egypt, as far as Yeb (Elephantine).



Flight to Egypt

16 Then Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him led away all the people of Mizpah who had survived, whom Johanan had recovered from Ishmael son of Nethaniah after Ishmael had assassinated Gedaliah son of Ahikam—the soldiers, women, children and court officials he had recovered from Gibeon. 17 And they went on, stopping at Geruth Kimham near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt 18 to escape the Babylonians.[a] They were afraid of them because Ishmael son of Nethaniah had killed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor over the land.

42 1 Then all the army officers, including Johanan son of Kareah and Jezaniah[b] son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least to the greatest approached 2 Jeremiah the prophet and said to him, "Please hear our petition and pray to the LORD your God for this entire remnant. For as you now see, though we were once many, now only a few are left. 3 Pray that the LORD your God will tell us where we should go and what we should do."

4 "I have heard you," replied Jeremiah the prophet. "I will certainly pray to the LORD your God as you have requested; I will tell you everything the LORD says and will keep nothing back from you."

5 Then they said to Jeremiah, "May the LORD be a true and faithful witness against us if we do not act in accordance with everything the LORD your God sends you to tell us. 6 Whether it is favorable or unfavorable, we will obey the LORD our God, to whom we are sending you, so that it will go well with us, for we will obey the LORD our God."

7 Ten days later the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah. 8 So he called together Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers who were with him and all the people from the least to the greatest. 9 He said to them, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, to whom you sent me to present your petition, says: 10 'If you stay in this land, I will build you up and not tear you down; I will plant you and not uproot you, for I have relented concerning the disaster I have inflicted on you. 11 Do not be afraid of the king of Babylon, whom you now fear. Do not be afraid of him, declares the LORD, for I am with you and will save you and deliver you from his hands. 12 I will show you compassion so that he will have compassion on you and restore you to your land.'

13 "However, if you say, 'We will not stay in this land,' and so disobey the LORD your God, 14 and if you say, 'No, we will go and live in Egypt, where we will not see war or hear the trumpet or be hungry for bread,' 15 then hear the word of the LORD, you remnant of Judah. This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'If you are determined to go to Egypt and you do go to settle there, 16 then the sword you fear will overtake you there, and the famine you dread will follow you into Egypt, and there you will die. 17 Indeed, all who are determined to go to Egypt to settle there will die by the sword, famine and plague; not one of them will survive or escape the disaster I will bring on them.' 18 This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: 'As my anger and wrath have been poured out on those who lived in Jerusalem, so will my wrath be poured out on you when you go to Egypt. You will be a curse[c] and an object of horror, a curse[c] and an object of reproach; you will never see this place again.'

19 "Remnant of Judah, the LORD has told you, 'Do not go to Egypt.' Be sure of this: I warn you today 20 that you made a fatal mistake when you sent me to the LORD your God and said, 'Pray to the LORD our God for us; tell us everything he says and we will do it.' 21 I have told you today,

[a] *18* Or *Chaldeans* [b] *1* Hebrew; Septuagint (see also 43:2) *Azariah* [c] *18* That is, your name will be used in cursing (see 29:22); or, others will see that you are cursed.

but you still have not obeyed the LORD your God in all he sent me to tell you. 22So now, be sure of this: You will die by the sword, famine and plague in the place where you want to go to settle."

43 1When Jeremiah had finished telling the people all the words of the LORD their God—everything the LORD had sent him to tell them— 2Azariah son of Hoshaiah and Johanan son of Kareah and all the arrogant men said to Jeremiah, "You are lying! The LORD our God has not sent you to say, 'You must not go to Egypt to settle there.' 3But Baruch son of Neriah is inciting you against us to hand us over to the Babylonians,[a] so they may kill us or carry us into exile to Babylon."

4So Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers and all the people disobeyed the LORD's command to stay in the land of Judah. 5Instead, Johanan son of Kareah and all the army officers led away all the remnant of Judah who had come back to live in the land of Judah from all the nations where they had been scattered. 6They also led away all those whom Nebuzaradan commander of the imperial guard had left with Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan—the men, the women, the children and the king's daughters. And they took Jeremiah the prophet and Baruch son of Neriah along with them. 7So they entered Egypt in disobedience to the LORD and went as far as Tahpanhes.

8In Tahpanhes the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah: 9"While the Jews are watching, take some large stones with you and bury them in clay in the brick pavement at the entrance to Pharaoh's palace in Tahpanhes. 10Then say to them, 'This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I will send for my servant Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and I will set his throne over these stones I have buried here; he will spread his royal canopy above them.11He will come and attack Egypt, bringing death to those destined for death, captivity to those destined for captivity, and the sword to those destined for the sword. 12He will set fire to the temples of the gods of Egypt; he will burn their temples and take their gods captive. As a shepherd picks his garment clean of lice, so he will pick Egypt clean and depart. 13There in the temple of the sun[b] in Egypt he will demolish the sacred pillars and will burn down the temples of the gods of Egypt.'"

[a] 3 Or *Chaldeans* [b] 13 Or *in Heliopolis* [c] 8 That is, your name will be used in cursing (see 29:22); or, others will see that you are cursed; also in verse 12; similarly in verse 22.

Disaster Because of Idolatry

44 1This word came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews living in Lower Egypt—in Migdol, Tahpanhes and Memphis—and in Upper Egypt: 2"This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You saw the great disaster I brought on Jerusalem and on all the towns of Judah. Today they lie deserted and in ruins 3because of the evil they have done. They aroused my anger by burning incense to and worshiping other gods that neither they nor you nor your ancestors ever knew. 4Again and again I sent my servants the prophets, who said, 'Do not do this detestable thing that I hate!' 5But they did not listen or pay attention; they did not turn from their wickedness or stop burning incense to other gods. 6Therefore, my fierce anger was poured out; it raged against the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem and made them the desolate ruins they are today.

7"Now this is what the LORD God Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Why bring such great disaster on yourselves by cutting off from Judah the men and women, the children and infants, and so leave yourselves without a remnant? 8Why arouse my anger with what your hands have made, burning incense to other gods in Egypt, where you have come to live? You will destroy yourselves and make yourselves a curse[c] and an object of reproach among all the nations on earth. 9Have you forgotten the wickedness committed by your ancestors and by the kings and queens of Judah and the wickedness committed by you and your wives in the land of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem? 10To this day they have not humbled themselves or shown reverence, nor have they followed my law and the decrees I set before you and your ancestors.

11"Therefore this is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: I am determined to bring disaster on you and to destroy all Judah. 12I will take away the remnant of Judah who were determined to go to Egypt to settle there. They will all perish in Egypt; they will fall by the sword or die from famine. From the least to the greatest, they will die by sword or famine. They will become a curse and an object of horror, a curse and an object of reproach. 13I will punish those who live in Egypt with the sword, famine and plague, as I punished Jerusalem. 14None of the remnant of Judah who have gone to live in Egypt will escape or survive to return to the land of Judah, to which they long to return and live; none will return except a few fugitives."

15Then all the men who knew that their wives

The Pharaoh Who Was But a Noise (Jer 44:30)

Hophra, who reigned from 589 to 570 B.C., was the fourth king of the 26th Dynasty of Egypt. Like previous rulers from the capital at Sais, known as the Saite dynasty, he intervened in Palestinian affairs in order to block the advances of Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon. His attempt to break up Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. failed, and the city eventually was destroyed (Jer 37:5–11). Many of Judah's refugees from the Babylonian siege did flee to Egypt, where they were accepted by Hophra and settled.

The Greek historian Diodorus, who from about 60 to 30 B.C. wrote a world history, claims that Hophra was successful in weakening Babylonian rule in Phoenicia and Cyprus at this time. The pharaoh employed Greek mercenaries (Jer 46:21) from Ionia and Caria (west coast of Turkey) to strengthen his military forces.

The prophet Jeremiah criticizes Hophra as "only a loud noise," who "missed his opportunity" (Jer 46:17). This may describe Hophra's ineffectiveness and indecisiveness as a leader. His attempt to quell a revolt in Cyrene late in his reign was decisively defeated, causing a rebellion in Egypt. In 570 B.C. the Egyptian general Amasis forced Hophra to flee east from Egypt.

In 567 B.C. Hophra returned to side with Nebuchadnezzar in an invasion of Egypt. The effort failed, and Hophra was captured and put to death approximately 20 years after a prophetic statement by Jeremiah (Jer 44:30). The Greek historian Herodotus claims that Hophra's tomb was still accessible over a century later, during that historian's time (c. 484–425 B.C.).

were burning incense to other gods, along with all the women who were present—a large assembly—and all the people living in Lower and Upper Egypt, said to Jeremiah, 16"We will not listen to the message you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD! 17We will certainly do everything we said we would: We will burn incense to the Queen of Heaven and will pour out drink offerings to her just as we and our ancestors, our kings and our officials did in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. At that time we had plenty of food and were well off and suffered no harm. 18But ever since we stopped burning incense to the Queen of Heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have had nothing and have been perishing by sword and famine."

19The women added, "When we burned incense to the Queen of Heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, did not our husbands know that we were making cakes impressed with her image and pouring out drink offerings to her?"

20Then Jeremiah said to all the people, both men and women, who were answering him, 21"Did not the LORD remember and call to mind the incense burned in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem by you and your ancestors, your kings and your officials and the people of the land? 22When the LORD could no longer endure your wicked actions and the detestable things you did, your land became a curse and a desolate waste without inhabitants, as it is today. 23Because you have burned incense and have sinned against the LORD and have not obeyed him or followed his law or his decrees or his stipulations, this disaster has come upon you, as you now see."

24Then Jeremiah said to all the people, including the women, "Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah in Egypt. 25This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: You and your wives have done what you said you would do when you promised, 'We will certainly carry out the vows we made to burn incense and pour out drink offerings to the Queen of Heaven.'

"Go ahead then, do what you promised! Keep your vows! 26But hear the word of the LORD, all you Jews living in Egypt: 'I swear by my great name,' says the LORD, 'that no one from Judah living anywhere in Egypt will ever again invoke my name or swear, "As surely as the Sovereign LORD lives." 27For I am watching over them for harm, not for good; the Jews in Egypt will perish by sword and famine until they are all destroyed. 28Those who escape the sword and return to the land of Judah from Egypt will be very few. Then the whole remnant of Judah who came to live in Egypt will know whose word will stand—mine or theirs.

29" 'This will be the sign to you that I will punish you in this place,' declares the LORD, 'so that you will know that my threats of harm against you will surely stand.' 30This is what the LORD

Cults & Supernatural

The "Queen of Heaven" referred to by Jeremiah was a Near Eastern goddess similar to Aphrodite or Venus. Offering cakes to the gods was a common practice, as was pouring out libations (Jer 44:19). A libation is an offering made by pouring drink onto the ground. Thus, the people offered to a pagan goddess their daily food.

says: 'I am going to deliver Pharaoh Hophra king of Egypt into the hands of his enemies who want to kill him, just as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, the enemy who wanted to kill him.'"

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: The Fall of Jerusalem

The Chronicler's account of Jerusalem's destruction is brief and, as usual, focuses on the temple. Much is omitted, such as Zedekiah's desperate flight from the doomed city. Chronicles—written long after Kings—adds a reference to the now vindicated prophet Jeremiah (2Ch 36:12; see also "Priestly Account: Zedekiah and Jeremiah" at 2Ch 36:11). Indeed, the Chronicler was aware not only of the prophet but of some of his specific prophecies: 2Ch 36:21 makes a direct reference to the 70 years of captivity that Jeremiah foretold in his letter to the exiles (Jer 29:10).

• 2 Chronicles 36:17–21

2 Chronicles

36:17 He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians,[a] who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. 18He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. 19They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there.

20He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power. 21The land enjoyed its sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah.

[a] *17* Or *Chaldeans*

TRANSITION

The End of the Siege

When it was clear to all in Jerusalem that there would be no escape from Nebuchadnezzar's siege, King Zedekiah tried to escape. He was captured and brutally blinded (Jer 39:4–7). Away in Babylon, Ezekiel described the event with uncanny accuracy (Eze 12). The end had come for Jerusalem. As Zedekiah's vision was destroyed, Ezekiel's vision was coming true (12:22–28).

• Ezekiel 12:1–28

Ezekiel

The Exile Symbolized

12:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2"Son of man, you are living among a rebellious people. They have eyes to see but do not see and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious people.

3"Therefore, son of man, pack your belongings for exile and in the daytime, as they watch, set out and go from where you are to another place. Perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious people. 4During the daytime, while they watch, bring out your belongings packed for exile. Then in the evening, while they are watching, go out like those who go into exile. 5While they watch, dig through the wall and take your belongings out through it. 6Put them on your shoulder as they are watching and carry them out at dusk. Cover your face so that you cannot see the land, for I have made you a sign to the Israelites."

7So I did as I was commanded. During the day I brought out my things packed for exile. Then in the evening I dug through the wall with my hands. I took my belongings out at dusk, carrying them on my shoulders while they watched.

8In the morning the word of the LORD came to me: 9"Son of man, did not the Israelites, that rebellious people, ask you, 'What are you doing?'

10"Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: This prophecy concerns the prince in Jerusalem and all the Israelites who are there.' 11Say to them, 'I am a sign to you.'

"As I have done, so it will be done to them. They will go into exile as captives.

12"The prince among them will put his things on his shoulder at dusk and leave, and a hole will be dug in the wall for him to go through. He will cover his face so that he cannot see the land. 13I will spread my net for him, and he will be caught in my snare; I will bring him to Babylonia, the land of the Chaldeans, but he will not see it, and there he will die. 14I will scatter to the winds all those around him—his staff and all his troops—and I will pursue them with drawn sword.

Digging Through a Wall (Eze 12:5–7)

God gave Ezekiel a curious command to carry out before his Judean peers. The prophet was to "dig through the wall" while they watched, and carry his belongings out through the opening (Eze 12:5). Furthermore, he was to undertake this act "at dusk," with his face covered so that he could not see the ground (12:6). This behavior was to be "a sign to the Israelites."

Ezekiel thus theatrically imitated a clandestine escape from a city under siege. City walls were thick structures, frequently serving as the back wall of private homes. Often the walls were casemate walls: two parallel walls built with 5 to 6 feet of open space between them. Cross walls would regularly link the two. The resulting rooms would be filled with earth or rubble.

City walls protected the inhabitants from enemy attacks, but they also made it difficult to escape the city once a siege was under way. The city gate could be easily guarded, but it provided the only direct access out of the city.

Only two options remained to escape from a city under siege. One could go *over* the wall—though, like a spider on a white wall, the enemy could easily detect you from afar. The other option would be to escape *through* the wall—literally to "dig" your way through it from the back room of your dwelling. Under the cover of darkness—when one could not see the ground—was the best time for such an escape, carrying only one's most valuable personal items.

In this way Ezekiel prophetically acted out someone attempting to escape the siege of Jerusalem before the city fell. He thus was a "sign" of God's judgment to the Judean community in exile.

15 "They will know that I am the LORD, when
I disperse them among the nations and scatter
them through the countries. 16 But I will spare a
few of them from the sword, famine and plague,
so that in the nations where they go they may
acknowledge all their detestable practices.
Then they will know that I am the LORD."

17 The word of the LORD came to me: 18 "Son
of man, tremble as you eat your food, and shud-
der in fear as you drink your water. 19 Say to the
people of the land: 'This is what the Sovereign
LORD says about those living in Jerusalem and
in the land of Israel: They will eat their food
in anxiety and drink their water in despair, for
their land will be stripped of everything in it
because of the violence of all who live there.
20 The inhabited towns will be laid waste and
the land will be desolate. Then you will know
that I am the LORD.'"

There Will Be No Delay

21 The word of the LORD came to me: 22 "Son
of man, what is this proverb you have in the
land of Israel: 'The days go by and every vision
comes to nothing'? 23 Say to them, 'This is what
the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to put an
end to this proverb, and they will no longer
quote it in Israel.' Say to them, 'The days are
near when every vision will be fulfilled. 24 For
there will be no more false visions or flattering
divinations among the people of Israel. 25 But
I the LORD will speak what I will, and it shall
be fulfilled without delay. For in your days, you
rebellious people, I will fulfill whatever I say,
declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

26 The word of the LORD came to me: 27 "Son
of man, the Israelites are saying, 'The vision he
sees is for many years from now, and he proph-
esies about the distant future.'

28 "Therefore say to them, 'This is what the
Sovereign LORD says: None of my words will
be delayed any longer; whatever I say will be
fulfilled, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

TRANSITION

Has God Renounced the Covenant with David?

The superscription to Ps 89 associates this psalm with Ethan the Ezrahite, an ancient wise man. Ethan is named along with three sons of Mahol as being surpassed in wisdom by Solomon (1Ki 4:31). Nevertheless, the content of this psalm almost certainly speaks of the fall of Jerusalem. One passage (89:38–45) describes a successor to King David who was defeated and deposed—possibly Jehoiachin, probably Zedekiah. Perhaps an older psalm was revised sometime after the destruction of 586 B.C. In any case, the question asked by the psalm was surely asked in that crisis: with Jerusalem in ruins and the unbroken line of David apparently ended, where was God's covenant now? The psalm concludes with its question unanswered.

• Psalm 89

PSALM 89[a]

A maskil[b] *of Ethan the Ezrahite.*

I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your
faithfulness known
through all generations.

[a] In Hebrew texts 89:1-52 is numbered 89:2-53. [b] Title: Probably a literary or musical term

2 I will declare that your love stands firm
forever,
that you have established your
faithfulness in heaven itself.
3 You said, "I have made a covenant with my
chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,
4 'I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all
generations.'"[a]

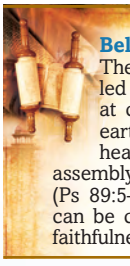
5 The heavens praise your wonders, LORD,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of
the holy ones.
6 For who in the skies above can compare
with the LORD?
Who is like the LORD among the heavenly
beings?
7 In the council of the holy ones God is
greatly feared;
he is more awesome than all who
surround him.
8 Who is like you, LORD God Almighty?
You, LORD, are mighty, and your
faithfulness surrounds you.

9 You rule over the surging sea;
when its waves mount up, you still them.
10 You crushed Rahab like one of the slain;
with your strong arm you scattered your
enemies.
11 The heavens are yours, and yours also the
earth;
you founded the world and all that is in it.
12 You created the north and the south;
Tabor and Hermon sing for joy at your
name.
13 Your arm is endowed with power;
your hand is strong, your right hand
exalted.

14 Righteousness and justice are the
foundation of your throne;
love and faithfulness go before you.
15 Blessed are those who have learned to
acclaim you,
who walk in the light of your presence,
LORD.
16 They rejoice in your name all day long;
they celebrate your righteousness.
17 For you are their glory and strength,
and by your favor you exalt our horn.[b]
18 Indeed, our shield[c] belongs to the LORD,
our king to the Holy One of Israel.

19 Once you spoke in a vision,
to your faithful people you said:
"I have bestowed strength on a warrior;
I have raised up a young man from
among the people.
20 I have found David my servant;
with my sacred oil I have anointed him.
21 My hand will sustain him;
surely my arm will strengthen him.
22 The enemy will not get the better of
him;
the wicked will not oppress him.
23 I will crush his foes before him
and strike down his adversaries.
24 My faithful love will be with him,
and through my name his horn[d] will be
exalted.
25 I will set his hand over the sea,
his right hand over the rivers.

[a] *4* The Hebrew has *Selah* (a word of uncertain meaning) here and at the end of verses 37, 45 and 48. [b] *17* *Horn* here symbolizes strong one. [c] *18* Or *sovereign* [d] *24* *Horn* here symbolizes strength.



Beliefs & Ideas

The power of kings was visible when they led an army, or when they were surrounded at court by their nobles and subjects. The earthly court is paralleled in the Bible by the heavenly court, where God is attended by an assembly of angels, saints, and "heavenly beings" (Ps 89:5–8). None of these lesser divine beings can be compared to God either in greatness or faithfulness (89:6).

26 He will call out to me, 'You are my Father,
my God, the Rock my Savior.'
27 And I will appoint him to be my firstborn,
the most exalted of the kings of the earth.
28 I will maintain my love to him forever,
and my covenant with him will never fail.
29 I will establish his line forever,
his throne as long as the heavens endure.

30 "If his sons forsake my law
and do not follow my statutes,
31 if they violate my decrees
and fail to keep my commands,
32 I will punish their sin with the rod,
their iniquity with flogging;
33 but I will not take my love from him,
nor will I ever betray my faithfulness.
34 I will not violate my covenant
or alter what my lips have uttered.
35 Once for all, I have sworn by my holiness—
and I will not lie to David—
36 that his line will continue forever
and his throne endure before me like the
sun;
37 it will be established forever like the moon,
the faithful witness in the sky."

38 But you have rejected, you have spurned,
you have been very angry with your
anointed one.
39 You have renounced the covenant with your
servant
and have defiled his crown in the dust.
40 You have broken through all his walls
and reduced his strongholds to ruins.
41 All who pass by have plundered him;
he has become the scorn of his
neighbors.
42 You have exalted the right hand of his foes;
you have made all his enemies rejoice.
43 Indeed, you have turned back the edge of
his sword
and have not supported him in battle.
44 You have put an end to his splendor
and cast his throne to the ground.
45 You have cut short the days of his youth;
you have covered him with a mantle of
shame.

46 How long, LORD? Will you hide yourself
forever?
How long will your wrath burn like fire?
47 Remember how fleeting is my life.
For what futility you have created all
humanity!
48 Who can live and not see death,
or who can escape the power of the
grave?

49 Lord, where is your former great love,
which in your faithfulness you swore to
David?
50 Remember, Lord, how your servant has[a]
been mocked,
how I bear in my heart the taunts of all
the nations,
51 the taunts with which your enemies, LORD,
have mocked,
with which they have mocked every step
of your anointed one.

52 Praise be to the LORD forever!
Amen and Amen.

TRANSITION

The News Arrives in Babylon

In the 12th year and 10th month of Jehoiachin's exile (perhaps January, 585 B.C.), news of Jerusalem's end reached the exiles (Eze 33:21). Ezekiel (who had evidently been mute for some time) could speak again, and he spoke volumes. The blame for the tragedy should be assigned in general to Judah's abominations (33:25–33). More specifically, blame was due to Judah's faithless rulers. In a lament (ch. 19) over the kings, the "princes of Israel" (19:1), Ezekiel recognized that fire had "spread from one of its main branches" and "consumed its fruit" (19:14). Zedekiah's own unfaithfulness had brought down the whole nation. Furthermore, Judah's prophets, priests, and princes had abused their power for personal gain (ch. 22).

These lamentations and oracles on Jerusalem's fall appear to be reflections on past events rather than predictions of events yet to come. For this reason, their words are appropriate for the days following the tragic events of 586 B.C.

- **Ezekiel 33:21–33**
- **Ezekiel 19:1–14**
- **Ezekiel 22:23–31**

Ezekiel 33:21–33

Jerusalem's Fall Explained

33:21 In the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month on the fifth day, a man who had escaped from Jerusalem came to me and said, "The city has fallen!" 22 Now the evening before the man arrived, the hand of the LORD was on me, and he opened my mouth before the man came to me in the morning. So my mouth was opened and I was no longer silent.

23 Then the word of the LORD came to me:

[a] 50 Or *your servants have*

24"Son of man, the people living in those ruins
in the land of Israel are saying, 'Abraham was
only one man, yet he possessed the land. But
we are many; surely the land has been given to
us as our possession.' 25Therefore say to them,
'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Since
you eat meat with the blood still in it and look
to your idols and shed blood, should you then
possess the land? 26You rely on your sword,
you do detestable things, and each of you de-
files his neighbor's wife. Should you then pos-
sess the land?'
27"Say this to them: 'This is what the Sover-
eign LORD says: As surely as I live, those who
are left in the ruins will fall by the sword, those
out in the country I will give to the wild ani-
mals to be devoured, and those in strongholds
and caves will die of a plague. 28I will make the
land a desolate waste, and her proud strength
will come to an end, and the mountains of Is-
rael will become desolate so that no one will
cross them. 29Then they will know that I am
the LORD, when I have made the land a desolate
waste because of all the detestable things they
have done.'
30"As for you, son of man, your people are
talking together about you by the walls and at
the doors of the houses, saying to each other,
'Come and hear the message that has come
from the LORD.' 31My people come to you, as
they usually do, and sit before you to hear your
words, but they do not put them into practice.
Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts
are greedy for unjust gain. 32Indeed, to them
you are nothing more than one who sings love
songs with a beautiful voice and plays an in-
strument well, for they hear your words but do
not put them into practice.
33"When all this comes true—and it surely
will—then they will know that a prophet has
been among them."

Ezekiel 19:1–14

A Lament Over Israel's Princes

19:1 "Take up a lament concerning the
princes of Israel 2and say:

"'What a lioness was your mother
among the lions!
She lay down among them
and reared her cubs.
3She brought up one of her cubs,
and he became a strong lion.
He learned to tear the prey
and he became a man-eater.
4The nations heard about him,
and he was trapped in their pit.
They led him with hooks
to the land of Egypt.

5"'When she saw her hope unfulfilled,
her expectation gone,
she took another of her cubs
and made him a strong lion.
6He prowled among the lions,
for he was now a strong lion.
He learned to tear the prey
and he became a man-eater.
7He broke down[a] their strongholds
and devastated their towns.
The land and all who were in it
were terrified by his roaring.
8Then the nations came against him,
those from regions round about.
They spread their net for him,
and he was trapped in their pit.
9With hooks they pulled him into a cage
and brought him to the king of Babylon.
They put him in prison,
so his roar was heard no longer
on the mountains of Israel.

10"'Your mother was like a vine in your
vineyard[b]
planted by the water;
it was fruitful and full of branches
because of abundant water.
11Its branches were strong,
fit for a ruler's scepter.
It towered high
above the thick foliage,
conspicuous for its height
and for its many branches.
12But it was uprooted in fury
and thrown to the ground.
The east wind made it shrivel,
it was stripped of its fruit;

[a] *7* Targum (see Septuagint); Hebrew *He knew*
[b] *10* Two Hebrew manuscripts; most Hebrew manuscripts *your blood*

TIME CAPSULE		585 to 581 B.C.
585–572		Nebuchadnezzar's 13-year siege of Tyre
585		News of Jerusalem's fall reaches the exiles (Eze 33:21)
585		The Medes incorporate the kingdom of Ararat into the Median Empire
582–581		Nebuchadnezzar defeats Ammon
581		Babylonian official Nebuzaradan deports captives from Jerusalem (Jer 52:30)

Priests Upholding Ritual Purity (Eze 22:26)

In ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia it was common for the priests to shave their heads and live in the large temple precincts. As the personal servants or slaves of the god, they were expected to follow regulations for purity which would allow them to enter the presence of the deity and fulfill their roles involving upkeep of the temple, religious sacrifices, and festival planning. If a priest became ritually unclean, he would have to leave the divine area until ritually cleansed.

The Jerusalem priests were not required to shave their heads, but were expected to follow similar rules of ritual. Since the priests were the only people who could make the necessary sacrifices before God, they had to be very careful about keeping the ritual correctly and maintaining themselves in the proper stance before God. When the prophet Ezekiel fumed against the Jerusalem priests, it was because they had not kept the precepts which were spelled out in the Levitical laws (Eze 22:26).

its strong branches withered
and fire consumed them.
13 Now it is planted in the desert,
in a dry and thirsty land.
14 Fire spread from one of its main[a] branches
and consumed its fruit.
No strong branch is left on it
fit for a ruler's scepter.'

"This is a lament and is to be used as a lament."

Ezekiel 22:23–31

22:23 Again the word of the LORD came to me: 24 "Son of man, say to the land, 'You are a land that has not been cleansed or rained on in the day of wrath.' 25 There is a conspiracy of her princes[b] within her like a roaring lion tearing its prey; they devour people, take treasures and precious things and make many widows within her. 26 Her priests do violence to my law and profane my holy things; they do not distinguish between the holy and the common; they teach that there is no difference between the unclean and the clean; and they shut their eyes to the keeping of my Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them. 27 Her officials within her are like wolves tearing their prey; they shed blood and kill people to make unjust gain. 28 Her prophets whitewash these deeds for them by false visions and lying divinations. They say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says'—when the LORD has not spoken. 29 The people of the land practice extortion and commit robbery; they oppress the poor and needy and mistreat the foreigner, denying them justice.

30 "I looked for someone among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found no one. 31 So I will pour out my wrath on them and consume them with my fiery anger, bringing down on their own heads all they have done, declares the Sovereign LORD."

TRANSITION

Oracles Against Judah's Neighbors

When Jerusalem fell, the nations around it rejoiced and joined in the plunder. Edom, in particular, appears to have aided Babylon against Judah. Ezekiel pronounced God's judgment on all of these peoples, including Ammon, Moab, and Philistia (Eze 25).

The most explicit judgments were reserved for the city of Tyre, on the Phoenician coast, and for Egypt, which had incited Jerusalem's rebellion. The oracles against Tyre (Eze 26–28) are actually dated in the 11th year (586 B.C.; 26:1). Nevertheless, Tyre's selfish reaction (26:2) implies that Jerusalem had been destroyed, so these oracles can be read in the context of 585 B.C. when the news of Jerusalem's fall arrived in Babylon (33:21). The oracle includes a description (26:7–14) of Nebuchadnezzar's 13-year siege of Tyre from 585 to 572 B.C.

Ezekiel received the oracle against Egypt (Eze 32) in the 12th year and 12th month (perhaps March, 585 B.C.; 32:1). The lament for Pharaoh anticipates the invasion by Nebuchadnezzar's Babylonian army in 567 B.C. (32:11).

- **Ezekiel 25:1—28:26**
- **Ezekiel 32:1–32**

Ezekiel 25:1—28:26

A Prophecy Against Ammon

25:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, set your face against the Ammonites and prophesy against them. 3 Say to them, 'Hear the word of the Sovereign LORD. This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you said "Aha!" over my sanctuary when it was desecrated and over the land of Israel when it was laid waste and over the people of Judah when they went into exile, 4 therefore I am going to give you to the people of the East as a possession. They will set up their camps and pitch their tents among you; they will eat your fruit and drink your milk. 5 I will turn Rabbah into a

[a] 14 Or *from under its* [b] 25 Septuagint; Hebrew *prophets*

pasture for camels and Ammon into a resting place for sheep. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 6For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because you have clapped your hands and stamped your feet, rejoicing with all the malice of your heart against the land of Israel, 7therefore I will stretch out my hand against you and give you as plunder to the nations. I will wipe you out from among the nations and exterminate you from the countries. I will destroy you, and you will know that I am the LORD.'"

A Prophecy Against Moab

8"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because Moab and Seir said, "Look, Judah has become like all the other nations," 9therefore I will expose the flank of Moab, beginning at its frontier towns—Beth Jeshimoth, Baal Meon and Kiriathaim—the glory of that land. 10I will give Moab along with the Ammonites to the people of the East as a possession, so that the Ammonites will not be remembered among the nations; 11and I will inflict punishment on Moab. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'"

A Prophecy Against Edom

12"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because Edom took revenge on Judah and became very guilty by doing so, 13therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will stretch out my hand against Edom and kill both man and beast. I will lay it waste, and from Teman to Dedan they will fall by the sword. 14I will take vengeance on Edom by the hand of my people Israel, and they will deal with Edom in accordance with my anger and my wrath; they will know my vengeance, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

A Prophecy Against Philistia

15"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: 'Because the Philistines acted in vengeance and took revenge with malice in their hearts, and with ancient hostility sought to destroy Judah, 16therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am about to stretch out my hand against the Philistines, and I will wipe out the Kerethites and destroy those remaining along the coast. 17I will carry out great vengeance on them and punish them in my wrath. Then they will know that I am the LORD, when I take vengeance on them.'"

A Prophecy Against Tyre

26 1In the eleventh month of the twelfth[a] year, on the first day of the month, the word of the LORD came to me: 2"'Son of man, because Tyre has said of Jerusalem, 'Aha! The gate to the nations is broken, and its doors have swung open to me; now that she lies in ruins I will prosper,' 3therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, Tyre, and I will bring many nations against you, like the sea casting up its waves. 4They will destroy the walls of Tyre and pull down her towers; I will scrape away her rubble and make her a bare rock. 5Out in the sea she will become a place to spread fishnets, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. She will become plunder for the nations, 6and her settlements on the mainland will be ravaged by the sword. Then they will know that I am the LORD.

7"'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: From the north I am going to bring against

[a] *1* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text does not have *month of the twelfth*.

The 13-Year Siege of Tyre (Eze 26:1–8)

According to Ezekiel's prophecy (Eze 26:1, 2), the city-state of Tyre was jubilant upon hearing of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylon in 586 B.C. Tyre was the great Phoenician seaport and commercial center to the north of Samaria and Judah. In her prime, Judah was a commercial link, thus a "gate" (26:2), between Tyre and Arabia. With Judah out of the way, possibly Tyre imagined even greater opportunities for herself.

Such jubilation, however, would be short lived, as the Babylonian monarch also moved against the Mediterranean coast, including Tyre, soon thereafter. Tyre, along with Sidon, was one of the more prominent Phoenician city-states on the Mediterranean coast. It was actually on an island about 765 yards from land. After Nebuchadnezzar defeated Egypt at the battle of Carchemish (605 B.C.), Tyre became Babylon's chief antagonist in Western Asia.

Josephus, the Jewish historian (A.D. 37–100), quotes presently undiscovered Phoenician sources that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Tyre for 13 years (585–572 B.C.). This conflict is mentioned by Ezekiel (Eze 29:17, 18), although he makes no reference to the length of the siege. The Babylonian king was unable to capture the city, but he was able to enforce a treaty that Tyre's royal family would now reside in Babylon. Someone from Tyre's royalty was allowed to continue to rule, but only alongside an appointed Babylonian governor. Because of this, Tyre's power was severely weakened, and many of the city's elite classes fled to Carthage.

Tyre Nebuchadnezzar[a] king of Babylon, king of kings, with horses and chariots, with horsemen and a great army. 8He will ravage your settlements on the mainland with the sword; he will set up siege works against you, build a ramp up to your walls and raise his shields against you. 9He will direct the blows of his battering rams against your walls and demolish your towers with his weapons. 10His horses will be so many that they will cover you with dust. Your walls will tremble at the noise of the warhorses, wagons and chariots when he enters your gates as men enter a city whose walls have been broken through. 11The hooves of his horses will trample all your streets; he will kill your people with the sword, and your strong pillars will fall to the ground. 12They will plunder your wealth and loot your merchandise; they will break down your walls and demolish your fine houses and throw your stones, timber and rubble into the sea. 13I will put an end to your noisy songs, and the music of your harps will be heard no more. 14I will make you a bare rock, and you will become a place to spread fishnets. You will never be rebuilt, for I the LORD have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.

15"This is what the Sovereign LORD says to Tyre: Will not the coastlands tremble at the sound of your fall, when the wounded groan and the slaughter takes place in you? 16Then all the princes of the coast will step down from their thrones and lay aside their robes and take off their embroidered garments. Clothed with terror, they will sit on the ground, trembling every moment, appalled at you. 17Then they will take up a lament concerning you and say to you:

"'How you are destroyed, city of renown,
peopled by men of the sea!
You were a power on the seas,
you and your citizens;
you put your terror
on all who lived there.
18Now the coastlands tremble
on the day of your fall;
the islands in the sea
are terrified at your collapse.'

Geography & Environment
Tyre was a Phoenician port about 50 miles south of Berytus (modern Beirut). It had a strong defense because it was built on an offshore island, as is noted by ancient and modern writers. The people of Tyre were expert seafarers, trading and founding colonies around the Mediterranean, including Carthage in North Africa. Tyre (Eze 27:2) is mentioned as early as 1800 B.C. in Egyptian texts.

19"This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I make you a desolate city, like cities no longer inhabited, and when I bring the ocean depths over you and its vast waters cover you, 20then I will bring you down with those who go down to the pit, to the people of long ago. I will make you dwell in the earth below, as in ancient ruins, with those who go down to the pit, and you will not return or take your place[b] in the land of the living. 21I will bring you to a horrible end and you will be no more. You will be sought, but you will never again be found, declares the Sovereign LORD."

A Lament Over Tyre

27 1The word of the LORD came to me: 2"Son of man, take up a lament concerning Tyre. 3Say to Tyre, situated at the gateway to the sea, merchant of peoples on many coasts, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'You say, Tyre,
"I am perfect in beauty."
4Your domain was on the high seas;
your builders brought your beauty to perfection.
5They made all your timbers
of juniper from Senir[c];
they took a cedar from Lebanon
to make a mast for you.
6Of oaks from Bashan
they made your oars;
of cypress wood[d] from the coasts of Cyprus
they made your deck, adorned with ivory.
7Fine embroidered linen from Egypt was your sail
and served as your banner;
your awnings were of blue and purple
from the coasts of Elishah.
8Men of Sidon and Arvad were your oarsmen;
your skilled men, Tyre, were aboard as your sailors.
9Veteran craftsmen of Byblos were on board
as shipwrights to caulk your seams.
All the ships of the sea and their sailors
came alongside to trade for your wares.

10"'Men of Persia, Lydia and Put
served as soldiers in your army.
They hung their shields and helmets on your walls,
bringing you splendor.

[a] *7* Hebrew *Nebuchadrezzar,* of which *Nebuchadnezzar* is a variant; here and often in Ezekiel and Jeremiah
[b] *20* Septuagint; Hebrew *return, and I will give glory*
[c] *5* That is, Mount Hermon [d] *6* Targum; the Masoretic Text has a different division of the consonants.

Harran, a City with a Long Life (Eze 27:23)

Harran was a city in North Aram about 60 miles north of the meeting of the Euphrates and Balikh rivers. The city has a long history, including the report that the patriarch Abraham's family came to this area from Ur of the Chaldeans (Ge 11:31).

In the late 2nd millennium B.C. Harran became an Assyrian stronghold, having relations with various Assyrian rulers. Adad-nirari I (1307–1274 B.C.) fortified its citadel, while Tiglath-Pileser I (1114–1076 B.C.) restored some of its religious edifices. In 763 B.C., however, the city rebelled against the rule of Ashur-dan III, who then destroyed Harran. The Assyrian king Sennacherib wrote to Judah's king Hezekiah around 701 or 688 B.C., and alluded to the event, boasting that his Assyrian "predecessors" had destroyed Harran, among other cities (2Ki 19:12).

After the fall of the Neo-Assyrian capital at Nineveh in 612 B.C., Harran became the last center of Assyrian rule until it too fell to the Babylonians in 610 B.C. The city continued to exist, and about 585 B.C. the prophet Ezekiel names Harran as a successful commercial center that traded with Tyre (Eze 27:23).

11 Men of Arvad and Helek
guarded your walls on every side;
men of Gammad
were in your towers.
They hung their shields around your walls;
they brought your beauty to perfection.

12 "'Tarshish did business with you because of your great wealth of goods; they exchanged silver, iron, tin and lead for your merchandise.
13 "'Greece, Tubal and Meshek did business with you; they traded human beings and articles of bronze for your wares.
14 "'Men of Beth Togarmah exchanged chariot horses, cavalry horses and mules for your merchandise.
15 "'The men of Rhodes[a] traded with you, and many coastlands were your customers; they paid you with ivory tusks and ebony.
16 "'Aram[b] did business with you because of your many products; they exchanged turquoise, purple fabric, embroidered work, fine linen, coral and rubies for your merchandise.
17 "'Judah and Israel traded with you; they exchanged wheat from Minnith and confections,[c] honey, olive oil and balm for your wares.
18 "'Damascus did business with you because of your many products and great wealth of goods. They offered wine from Helbon, wool from Zahar 19 and casks of wine from Izal in exchange for your wares: wrought iron, cassia and calamus.
20 "'Dedan traded in saddle blankets with you.
21 "'Arabia and all the princes of Kedar were your customers; they did business with you in lambs, rams and goats.
22 "'The merchants of Sheba and Raamah traded with you; for your merchandise they exchanged the finest of all kinds of spices and precious stones, and gold.
23 "'Harran, Kanneh and Eden and merchants of Sheba, Ashur and Kilmad traded with you.
24 In your marketplace they traded with you beautiful garments, blue fabric, embroidered work and multicolored rugs with cords twisted and tightly knotted.
25 "'The ships of Tarshish serve
as carriers for your wares.
You are filled with heavy cargo
as you sail the sea.
26 Your oarsmen take you
out to the high seas.
But the east wind will break you to pieces
far out at sea.
27 Your wealth, merchandise and wares,
your mariners, sailors and shipwrights,
your merchants and all your soldiers,
and everyone else on board
will sink into the heart of the sea
on the day of your shipwreck.
28 The shorelands will quake
when your sailors cry out.
29 All who handle the oars
will abandon their ships;
the mariners and all the sailors
will stand on the shore.
30 They will raise their voice
and cry bitterly over you;
they will sprinkle dust on their heads
and roll in ashes.
31 They will shave their heads because of you
and will put on sackcloth.
They will weep over you with anguish of soul
and with bitter mourning.
32 As they wail and mourn over you,
they will take up a lament concerning you:
"Who was ever silenced like Tyre,
surrounded by the sea?"
33 When your merchandise went out on the seas,
you satisfied many nations;
with your great wealth and your wares
you enriched the kings of the earth.

[a] *15* Septuagint; Hebrew *Dedan* [b] *16* Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac *Edom*
[c] *17* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Myth and the Prince of Tyre (Eze 28:2–10)

Ezekiel's prophecy against the prince of Tyre (Eze 28:2–10) brings together elements from the religious and mythological writings of the eastern Mediterranean. The sarcastic description Ezekiel offers of the prince's attitude reflects the cosmopolitan character of the Phoenicians.

Phoenician rulers were seen as subordinate partners with the patron deity of the city. The idea of the ruler himself being a god found some place in Phoenician royal ideology, having been incorporated from Egyptian culture. Thus, the prince of Tyre could boast, "I am a god" (Eze 28:2). Ezekiel, however, considered such pretentions to divine status to be merely self-delusion.

A Ugaritic myth presents another example of someone trying to move up the divine hierarchy, though not worthy. The god Athtar attempts to sit on Baal's throne, but Athtar is not equal to the throne, as Baal was, and has to step down. Ezekiel suggests that such is the case with the prince of Tyre: he is not even capable of retaining his royal position, let alone being a god. He is "a mere mortal and not a god" (28:2).

Ezekiel sarcastically mocks the prince about being "wiser than Daniel" (28:3). The Daniel that Ezekiel has in mind is probably the human character in the *Legend of Aqhat,* a narrative from Ugarit. In the legend, Daniel is pious, royal, and wise, but for him life also held bitterness. The Judeans who read Ezekiel's words also may have been reminded of the life of Daniel in exile (Da 5:11, 12). Regardless of which Daniel is intended, Tyre's prince was not really wise.

The prince thought much of himself, his heart had grown proud (28:5). In Greek mythology, such exaggerated pride or self-confidence is known as hubris, and angers the gods. The myth of Arachne demonstrates the dangers of hubris. Arachne was so good at weaving that she threatened the self-esteem of the goddess Athena. Athena turned her into a spider as punishment. Similarly, Ezekiel warns the prince that God will require his life in payment for his conceit (28:9, 10).

34 Now you are shattered by the sea
in the depths of the waters;
your wares and all your company
have gone down with you.
35 All who live in the coastlands
are appalled at you;
their kings shudder with horror
and their faces are distorted with fear.
36 The merchants among the nations scoff at you;
you have come to a horrible end
and will be no more.'"

A Prophecy Against the King of Tyre

28 1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, say to the ruler of Tyre, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'In the pride of your heart
you say, "I am a god;
I sit on the throne of a god
in the heart of the seas."
But you are a mere mortal and not a god,
though you think you are as wise as a god.
3 Are you wiser than Daniel[a]?
Is no secret hidden from you?
4 By your wisdom and understanding
you have gained wealth for yourself
and amassed gold and silver
in your treasuries.
5 By your great skill in trading
you have increased your wealth,
and because of your wealth
your heart has grown proud.

6 "'Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'Because you think you are wise,
as wise as a god,
7 I am going to bring foreigners against you,
the most ruthless of nations;
they will draw their swords against your beauty and wisdom
and pierce your shining splendor.
8 They will bring you down to the pit,
and you will die a violent death
in the heart of the seas.
9 Will you then say, "I am a god,"
in the presence of those who kill you?
You will be but a mortal, not a god,
in the hands of those who slay you.
10 You will die the death of the uncircumcised
at the hands of foreigners.

I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

11 The word of the LORD came to me: 12 "Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'You were the seal of perfection,
full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.
13 You were in Eden,
the garden of God;
every precious stone adorned you:
carnelian, chrysolite and emerald,
topaz, onyx and jasper,
lapis lazuli, turquoise and beryl.[b]

[a] *3* Or *Danel*, a man of renown in ancient literature
[b] *13* The precise identification of some of these precious stones is uncertain.

Your settings and mountings[a] were made of
gold;
on the day you were created they were
prepared.
14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub,
for so I ordained you.
You were on the holy mount of God;
you walked among the fiery stones.
15 You were blameless in your ways
from the day you were created
till wickedness was found in you.
16 Through your widespread trade
you were filled with violence,
and you sinned.
So I drove you in disgrace from the mount
of God,
and I expelled you, guardian cherub,
from among the fiery stones.
17 Your heart became proud
on account of your beauty,
and you corrupted your wisdom
because of your splendor.
So I threw you to the earth;
I made a spectacle of you before kings.
18 By your many sins and dishonest trade
you have desecrated your sanctuaries.
So I made a fire come out from you,
and it consumed you,
and I reduced you to ashes on the ground
in the sight of all who were watching.
19 All the nations who knew you
are appalled at you;
you have come to a horrible end
and will be no more.'"

A Prophecy Against Sidon

20 The word of the LORD came to me: 21 "Son of man, set your face against Sidon; prophesy against her 22 and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'I am against you, Sidon,
and among you I will display my glory.
You will know that I am the LORD,
when I inflict punishment on you
and within you am proved to be holy.
23 I will send a plague upon you
and make blood flow in your streets.
The slain will fall within you,
with the sword against you on every side.
Then you will know that I am the LORD.

24 "'No longer will the people of Israel have malicious neighbors who are painful briers and sharp thorns. Then they will know that I am the Sovereign LORD.

25 "'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: When I gather the people of Israel from the nations where they have been scattered, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of the nations. Then they will live in their own land, which I gave to my servant Jacob. 26 They will live there in safety and will build houses and plant vineyards; they will live in safety when I inflict punishment on all their neighbors who maligned them. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God.'"

Ezekiel 32:1–32

A Lament Over Pharaoh

32:1 In the twelfth year, in the twelfth month on the first day, the word of the LORD came to me: 2 "Son of man, take up a lament concerning Pharaoh king of Egypt and say to him:

"'You are like a lion among the nations;
you are like a monster in the seas
thrashing about in your streams,
churning the water with your feet
and muddying the streams.

3 "'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'With a great throng of people
I will cast my net over you,
and they will haul you up in my net.
4 I will throw you on the land
and hurl you on the open field.
I will let all the birds of the sky settle on you
and all the animals of the wild gorge
themselves on you.
5 I will spread your flesh on the mountains
and fill the valleys with your remains.
6 I will drench the land with your flowing
blood
all the way to the mountains,
and the ravines will be filled with your
flesh.
7 When I snuff you out, I will cover the heavens
and darken their stars;

Arts & Literature
The crocodile lived in the Nile in Egypt, and was a symbol of the forces of chaos and turmoil. For Ezekiel, this "monster in the seas" represented Egypt's power (Eze 32:2). Other symbols of superhuman power were the sun, moon, and stars (32:7). The sun was a principal god in Egypt. Ezekiel's lament over Egypt (32:2–8) shows that God is clearly sovereign over these symbols of the power of Egypt and its pharaoh.

[a] *13* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

I will cover the sun with a cloud,
and the moon will not give its light.
8 All the shining lights in the heavens
I will darken over you;
I will bring darkness over your land,
declares the Sovereign LORD.
9 I will trouble the hearts of many
peoples
when I bring about your destruction
among the nations,
among[a] lands you have not known.
10 I will cause many peoples to be appalled at
you,
and their kings will shudder with horror
because of you
when I brandish my sword before
them.
On the day of your downfall
each of them will tremble
every moment for his life.

11 "'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'The sword of the king of Babylon
will come against you.
12 I will cause your hordes to fall
by the swords of mighty men—
the most ruthless of all nations.
They will shatter the pride of Egypt,
and all her hordes will be overthrown.
13 I will destroy all her cattle
from beside abundant waters
no longer to be stirred by the foot of man
or muddied by the hooves of cattle.
14 Then I will let her waters settle
and make her streams flow like oil,
declares the Sovereign LORD.
15 When I make Egypt desolate
and strip the land of everything in it,
when I strike down all who live there,
then they will know that I am the LORD.'

16 "'This is the lament they will chant for her.
The daughters of the nations will chant it; for
Egypt and all her hordes they will chant it, de-
clares the Sovereign LORD."

Egypt's Descent Into the Realm of the Dead

17 In the twelfth year, on the fifteenth day of
the month, the word of the LORD came to me:
18 "Son of man, wail for the hordes of Egypt and
consign to the earth below both her and the
daughters of mighty nations, along with those
who go down to the pit. 19 Say to them, 'Are you
more favored than others? Go down and be
laid among the uncircumcised.' 20 They will fall
among those killed by the sword. The sword
is drawn; let her be dragged off with all her
hordes. 21 From within the realm of the dead the
mighty leaders will say of Egypt and her allies,
'They have come down and they lie with the
uncircumcised, with those killed by the sword.'
22 "Assyria is there with her whole army; she
is surrounded by the graves of all her slain, all
who have fallen by the sword. 23 Their graves are
in the depths of the pit and her army lies around
her grave. All who had spread terror in the land
of the living are slain, fallen by the sword.
24 "Elam is there, with all her hordes around
her grave. All of them are slain, fallen by the
sword. All who had spread terror in the land
of the living went down uncircumcised to the
earth below. They bear their shame with those
who go down to the pit. 25 A bed is made for her
among the slain, with all her hordes around her
grave. All of them are uncircumcised, killed by
the sword. Because their terror had spread in
the land of the living, they bear their shame
with those who go down to the pit; they are laid
among the slain.
26 "Meshek and Tubal are there, with all their
hordes around their graves. All of them are un-
circumcised, killed by the sword because they
spread their terror in the land of the living.
27 But they do not lie with the fallen warriors
of old,[b] who went down to the realm of the
dead with their weapons of war—their swords
placed under their heads and their shields[c]
resting on their bones—though these warriors
also had terrorized the land of the living.
28 "You too, Pharaoh, will be broken and will
lie among the uncircumcised, with those killed
by the sword.
29 "Edom is there, her kings and all her
princes; despite their power, they are laid with
those killed by the sword. They lie with the un-
circumcised, with those who go down to the pit.
30 "All the princes of the north and all the
Sidonians are there; they went down with the
slain in disgrace despite the terror caused by
their power. They lie uncircumcised with those
killed by the sword and bear their shame with
those who go down to the pit.
31 "Pharaoh—he and all his army—will see
them and he will be consoled for all his hordes
that were killed by the sword, declares the Sov-
ereign LORD. 32 Although I had him spread ter-
ror in the land of the living, Pharaoh and all his
hordes will be laid among the uncircumcised,
with those killed by the sword, declares the
Sovereign LORD."

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[a] *9* Hebrew; Septuagint *bring you into captivity among the nations, / to* [b] *27* Septuagint; Hebrew *warriors who were uncircumcised* [c] *27* Probable reading of the original Hebrew text; Masoretic Text *punishment*

TRANSITION

Despair and Anger

No text more clearly shows how the exiles felt upon hearing of Jerusalem's fall than does Ps 137, which is intur n achingly beautiful and savagely vindictive. The psalm alternates between love for Jerusalem and hatred for her enemies. The nation of Edom (137:7) was particularly hated for its aid to Babylon.

• **Psalm 137**

PSALM 137

By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept
when we remembered Zion.
2 There on the poplars
we hung our harps,
3 for there our captors asked us for songs,
our tormentors demanded songs of joy;
they said, "Sing us one of the songs of
Zion!"

4 How can we sing the songs of the LORD
while in a foreign land?
5 If I forget you, Jerusalem,
may my right hand forget its skill.
6 May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you,
if I do not consider Jerusalem
my highest joy.

7 Remember, LORD, what the Edomites did
on the day Jerusalem fell.
"Tear it down," they cried,
"tear it down to its foundations!"
8 Daughter Babylon, doomed to destruction,
happy is the one who repays you
according to what you have done to us.
9 Happy is the one who seizes your infants
and dashes them against the rocks.

[a] 3 Or *of Sela* [b] 7 The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

TRANSITION

The Book of Obadiah

Obadiah's name means "servant of the Lord," but beyond that, nothing certain is known about this prophet. The book's message, though, is clear: judgment upon Edom. The Edomites had acted treacherously against the inhabitants of Jerusalem during their darkest hour. They had laughed at Judah's sorrow, probably looted the hapless people, and helped the Babylonian soldiers find fleeing refugees. Edom, descended from Israel's brother Esau, had betrayed that brotherhood. Now Edom would be punished.

The date of the book is not completely certain; it could be referring to any number of times that Edom opposed Judah. Various verses, however, fit particularly well with the time after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Not only does Obadiah refer to the destruction of Jerusalem and a captivity (Ob 1:11, 12), but he also appears to quote from a prophecy of Jeremiah's (Ob 1:5; Jer 49:7–9).

• **Obadiah 1:1–21**

Obadiah

Obadiah's Vision

1:1 The vision of Obadiah.

This is what the Sovereign LORD says about Edom—

We have heard a message from the LORD:
An envoy was sent to the nations to say,
"Rise, let us go against her for battle"—

2 "See, I will make you small among the
nations;
you will be utterly despised.
3 The pride of your heart has deceived you,
you who live in the clefts of the rocks[a]
and make your home on the heights,
you who say to yourself,
'Who can bring me down to the ground?'
4 Though you soar like the eagle
and make your nest among the stars,
from there I will bring you down,"
declares the LORD.
5 "If thieves came to you,
if robbers in the night—
oh, what a disaster awaits you!—
would they not steal only as much as they
wanted?
If grape pickers came to you,
would they not leave a few grapes?
6 But how Esau will be ransacked,
his hidden treasures pillaged!
7 All your allies will force you to the border;
your friends will deceive and overpower
you;
those who eat your bread will set a trap for
you,[b]
but you will not detect it.

8 "In that day," declares the LORD,
"will I not destroy the wise men of Edom,
those of understanding in the mountains
of Esau?
9 Your warriors, Teman, will be terrified,
and everyone in Esau's mountains
will be cut down in the slaughter.
10 Because of the violence against your
brother Jacob,

you will be covered with shame;
you will be destroyed forever.
11 On the day you stood aloof
while strangers carried off his wealth
and foreigners entered his gates
and cast lots for Jerusalem,
you were like one of them.
12 You should not gloat over your brother
in the day of his misfortune,
nor rejoice over the people of Judah
in the day of their destruction,
nor boast so much
in the day of their trouble.
13 You should not march through the gates of my people
in the day of their disaster,
nor gloat over them in their calamity
in the day of their disaster,
nor seize their wealth
in the day of their disaster.
14 You should not wait at the crossroads
to cut down their fugitives,
nor hand over their survivors
in the day of their trouble.

15 "The day of the LORD is near
for all nations.
As you have done, it will be done to you;
your deeds will return upon your own head.
16 Just as you drank on my holy hill,
so all the nations will drink continually;
they will drink and drink
and be as if they had never been.
17 But on Mount Zion will be deliverance;
it will be holy,
and Jacob will possess his inheritance.
18 Jacob will be a fire
and Joseph a flame;
Esau will be stubble,
and they will set him on fire and destroy him.
There will be no survivors
from Esau."
The LORD has spoken.

19 People from the Negev will occupy
the mountains of Esau,
and people from the foothills will possess
the land of the Philistines.
They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria,
and Benjamin will possess Gilead.
20 This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan
will possess the land as far as Zarephath;
the exiles from Jerusalem who are in Sepharad
will possess the towns of the Negev.
21 Deliverers will go up on[a] Mount Zion
to govern the mountains of Esau.
And the kingdom will be the LORD's.

TRANSITION

Various Deportations to Babylon

In Jer 52:28–30 is a historical summary of the various deportations of Judeans from Jerusalem to Babylon. This summary does not occur anywhere else in the Bible. It differs both in dates and numbers of deportees from accounts given by the historian of Kings.

The summary lists three deportations, occurring in the 7th, 18th, and 23rd years of Nebuchadnezzar. The 7th year could refer to the exile of Jehoiachin in 597 B.C., while the 18th year could refer to the exiles deported at Jerusalem's fall in 586. The difference in dates from those reported in 2Ki 24:12 and 25:8 could result from different methods of reckoning the 1st year of a king.

The third deportation (52:30) is reported as carried out by Nebuzaradan in 581 B.C. (Nebuchadnezzar's 23rd year). There is no evidence beyond Jeremiah for a deportation in that year. Some scholars suggest that this may have been Babylon's response to the assassination of Gedaliah, the governor appointed by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer 41:16–18). The amount of time that passed between Jerusalem's fall in 586 and Gedaliah's murder—2 months or 5 years—is not known.

Little is certain about Jeremiah's summary. The vastly greater numbers of deported Judeans given in 2Ki 24:14, 16 may be round numbers including women and children. On the other hand, Jer 52 may refer to smaller deportations that were separate from those of 597 and 586. What the summary does offer is one more reminder of how greatly the inhabitants of Judah suffered in the fall of their nation.

• **Jeremiah 52:28–30**

Jeremiah

52:28 This is the number of the people Nebuchadnezzar carried into exile:

in the seventh year, 3,023 Jews;
29 in Nebuchadnezzar's eighteenth year,
832 people from Jerusalem;
30 in his twenty-third year,
745 Jews taken into exile by Nebuzaradan the commander of the imperial guard.
There were 4,600 people in all.

[a] *21* Or *from*

Exile and Return

This was a time in which the faith of Israel would become a universal faith, one in which Yahweh would be seen as the saving God of all peoples.

(586–332 B.C.)

Judah experienced a time of great tragedy when Jerusalem was destroyed and nearly all of Judah's leaders were taken into exile in Babylon. It was a time of despair in Judah's relationship with Yahweh, as well. "How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a foreign land?" (Ps 137:4) was a cry from the heart. What had happened between the exiled people and their God Yahweh?

Chief among the problems facing the Judeans was the question of identity. Prior to the Babylonian exile, they had been an independent, political state, to some extent secured by military power, and with a God-ordained Davidic king on the throne. All this was taken as proof that their God was the true God, the King of the universe. Now, none of these conditions existed. They were a powerless, subject people in a great empire whose rulers thought Yahweh was only one petty god among many.

With their lives now controlled by the Babylonians, the Judeans experienced tremendous temptation to surrender all their previous claims to having an exclusive revelation from God. In addition, they were tempted to surrender those behaviors which had been designed to separate them from the surrounding pagan cultures. Thus, there was a real danger that they would become assimilated into those cultures, preserving some Judean customs, but surrendering the covenants God had made with them.

That this did not happen was largely due to the labors of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; the priest Ezra; and the governor Nehemiah. Each of these individuals filled a distinctive role, and together they made it possible for the Jews to come to a new understanding of themselves. These five men showed them that their identity was to be a nation of priests, serving God and declaring him before the world. Their constitution was not to be some political arrangement, but the Law of God. Their covenant with him was what made them a people. This would be a time in which the faith of Israel would become a universal faith, one in which Yahweh would be seen as the saving God of all peoples.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

Various Babylonian remains elaborate on this period. The Babylonian Chronicle, a collection of documents written on baked clay tablets, describes events leading up to Judah's tragedy. This historical source of the Chaldean kingdom records how Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem in 597 b.c., deposed Jehoiachin of Judah, and appointed a new king in his place. The Babylonian Chronicle pictures Babylon as the new superpower in the Middle East; Judah lived only on sufferance from Babylon. But that relationship did not last, and archaeological surveys reveal that many cities and villages in Judah were destroyed in 586 b.c.

The Babylonian Chronicle recounts nothing after 594 b.c. Another Babylonian record, however, includes receipts for oil and other goods issued to Jehoiachin and his family. These Babylonian cuneiform texts, dating between 595 and 570 b.c., suggest that Judah's royal family, though in exile, lived in relative comfort and freedom at Babylonian expense.

Archaeology also witnesses the Judean return from the exile. The Cyrus Cylinder, a baked clay document, states that Cyrus was chosen by Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, to be ruler over Babylon and to restore the true worship of the gods. The cylinder clarifies that the return of exiles

and freedom of worship were key parts of Cyrus's policy. The language and content of the Cyrus Cylinder is very close to the decree in Ezra 1:2–4.

A document found in Egypt tells of a Persian inquiry into the religious practices of the Jews in Egypt near the end of the 5th century b.c. The letter, known as the Passover Papyrus, is one of the writings sent to the Jewish colony at Elephantine, and is dated in the 5th year of Darius II (419 b.c.), bearing his royal authority. It reminds us that the Persian rulers took an interest in the religious practices of subject peoples and were not above sending commissioners to assure that those practices were observed properly. Such a mission was given to the priest Ezra concerning religious practice in Jerusalem.

Coins and seals further testify to the restoration of Jerusalem. A number of jar handles show seal impressions reading "Judah," "Jerusalem," and "belonging to the king." The language reveals that Hebrew was giving way to Aramaic, which became the common language of the Persian Empire. Before the Persian period, gold and silver were weighed out on scales. Coins, however, made trade and business much simpler. During the second half of the 5th century, coins with Hebrew letters, bearing the name "Judah," appear. The Persian policy of allowing considerable local autonomy to Persian provinces included the right of provinces to strike their own coins.

The Persian Empire founded by Cyrus, became the great superpower of its day.

THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

During the reign of Babylon's last king, Nabonidus (556–539 b.c.), forces were building that spelled the end of the Babylonian Empire. Cyrus the Great ascended the throne of Persia in 559 b.c. The Persian Empire, founded by Cyrus, became the great superpower of its day. Between 539 b.c., when Cyrus entered Babylon, and 525 b.c., when Cyrus's son Cambyses conquered Egypt, all the Middle East became Persian. At least two Persian emperors tried to capture Greece. Darius I was defeated at Marathon in 490 b.c.; Xerxes I at Salamis in 480.

The Persian emperors were great builders as well as imperialists. Excavations at Susa have uncovered the palace begun by Darius and finished by Xerxes. The rock carvings on Persian palaces, tombs, and triumphal monuments show us the power and splendor of the Persian kings. Their empire lasted until 331 b.c., finally being defeated by the Macedonian armies of Alexander the Great.

When the exiles returned to Judah, they encountered other peoples already there. Sanballat (Ne 2:19) is identified as the governor of Samaria in documents from Elephantine. Samaritans were descendants of the mixed marriages between Israelites and peoples whom the Assyrians had imported. When the Jews enjoyed prosperity, the Samaritans were quick to acknowledge their blood relationship. But when the Jews suffered hard times, the Samaritans disowned such kinship, claiming to be descendants of Assyrian immigrants.

Samaritan hostility was coupled with that of the Ammonites in the east and the Arabians in the southeast. Tobiah the Ammonite (Ne 2:19) may have been the Persian governor of Ammon, just as Nehemiah was governor of Judah. His family was powerful in the Transjordan from the 5th century to at least the 2nd century. Geshem the Arab (Ne 2:19) was also a governor under Persian rule. The name "Geshem," appearing in inscriptions from Arabia and from a site near the border of Egypt, is associated with peoples of the northwest Arabian peninsula.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

Much of this period is related in the Bible by various prophets, as well as by some of the historical books. The prophetical books include Ezekiel, parts of Isaiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, and Joel. Ezekiel was taken to Babylon in 597 b.c., where he prophesied. He preached hope to the exiles, based on God's own nature and purpose. His book ends with a great vision of a future restoration of the temple. Isaiah's oracles of salvation in Isa 40–55 promise a return from exile and a rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple. The final chapters (Isa 56–66) presumably speak of the second temple, built during the Persian era.

The second temple is the concern of Haggai and Zechariah, preaching in Jerusalem about 520 b.c. They insisted that the temple had to be rebuilt at all costs. Once done, God would restore the power of the house of David in the person of Zerubbabel, the last known prince of David's line.

Little is known of Joel and Malachi, but it seems they prophesied when a temple was standing, possibly the second temple. Malachi accused the people and priests of indifference, doubt, and immorality. Joel saw a great locust plague as the beginning of the judgment of God, and thus called for national repentance.

Events of the period are narrated in the historical books of Ezra and Nehemiah. The Book of Ezra records the mission of Ezra the priest to inspect religious life in Judah, insisting on ritual purity. The Book of Nehemiah tells of the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls under the leadership of this Judean governor appointed by the Persians.

The picture of this time is colored by other books. The Book of Esther relates the story of a Jewish heroine who becomes queen of Persia and saves

her people at the risk of her own life. Two chapters of the Book of Daniel are set in the reigns of kings of this period: Babylon's Belshazzar, a coregent of Nabonidus (Da 5), and Persia's Darius (Da 6). Along with these books, we can read various psalms, the wisdom literature of Job and some proverbs, and the genealogical lists of 1 Chronicles.

EXILE IN BABYLON

Soon after Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, destroyed Jerusalem, all the ancient Near East fell under the control of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. In the early years of the conquest, the Babylonians were aided by Media, a nation located in the mountainous regions northeast of Babylon. Indeed, Cyaxares, king of the Medes, had been a part of Babylon's overthrow of Nineveh in 612 b.c. (see "The Book of Nahum" at Na 1:1). Later on, in 550 b.c., the Medes themselves were conquered by Cyrus the Great and absorbed into Cyrus's Persian Empire. Median troops reinforced the Persian forces that brought about Babylon's downfall. That event of 539 b.c. was still years away.

Nebuchadnezzar became king in 605 b.c., shortly after defeating an Assyrian-Egyptian coalition at Carchemish in Syria. He reigned until 562 b.c., being succeeded by his son Amel-Marduk (the Bible's Awel-Marduk, 2Ki 25:27). In 560 b.c., Amel-Marduk was displaced by his brother-in-law Neriglissar (perhaps the Nergal-Sharezer who had been present at the fall of Jerusalem, Jer 39:3, 13). Neriglissar also reigned only briefly, and his son and successor was deposed by the powerful Babylonian official Nabonidus (556–539 b.c.).

By the end of Nabonidus's reign, the empire was ready to fall apart. Nabonidus was not himself from the city of Babylon, and he did not worship that city's god, Marduk. Instead, he promoted the worship of the moon god Sin, thus angering the official priests of Babylon. Nabonidus moved his capital to an oasis in the Arabian desert and left his son Belshar-usur (the Belshazzar of Da 5) as his regent in Babylon itself. Seeing Babylon's internal problems, nations on the edges of the empire began to assert their independence from Babylonian influence. The most significant of these was Babylon's former ally, Media.

Under the Medes' last king, Astyages (585–550 b.c.), Media became large enough to be called an empire in its own right. Internal problems developed, however, and in 550 b.c. Astyages was overthrown by a young general named Cyrus, from the Median province of Persia. In 539 b.c., 11 years later, Cyrus the Persian marched almost unopposed into the city of Babylon, thus ending the reign of Nabonidus and conquering the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

The accession of Cyrus also marked the end of the Judean exile in Babylon. That exile had lasted only about 70 years, but those years witnessed important changes in the faith of the Judeans. No longer able to identify the center of their faith in the temple, the exiles focused on Scripture—specifically the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament. Their worship, meeting in the small gatherings that would later be called synagogues, stressed the reading of the Torah. A new class of religious leader arose, the scribe, whose function was to learn and interpret the Torah. The exiled Judeans became the people of the Book.

Moreover, the exiles had to adapt to their new position as a minority faith. In Babylon, they could not expect the king or the official priesthood to preserve correct worship. They had to define their faith themselves. This they did by emphasizing those laws that distinguished Judeans from other peoples, laws like Sabbath observance, dietary laws, and above all the command: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 20:3).

TRANSITION

Ezekiel's Message of Hope

Because of the Judeans' new emphasis on the Scriptures, Judah's faith in God survived its shattering grief over the destruction of the temple (see Ps 137). Indeed Judah's faith did not just survive; it was reborn, in a different form but stronger than ever. That rebirth is already evident in the work of Ezekiel, whose ministry took a new shape after Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed.

Ezekiel begins, in effect, a second ministry, inaugurated by a second vision of the watchman (Eze 33:1–20), a vision that had been a part of his original call experience (Eze 3:16–21). This second ministry still includes oracles of judgment—against the shepherds of Israel, against Mount Seir (Edom)—but these judgments are followed now by oracles of hope.

Judah was victimized by those closest to her. Kings are often portrayed as shepherds of the people, but many of Judah's kings had enriched themselves at the people's expense (ch. 34). Hope now presented itself in the promise of a true shepherd (34:23, 24). The Edomites were descended from Esau, yet Judah was treacherously attacked by this nation with close kinship ties (ch. 35; see "The Book of Obadiah" at Ob 1:1). Hope now came through the prophecy of restoration—both physical (36:1–15) and spiritual (36:16–38). Judah's restoration is illustrated by the vision of the valley of dry bones (37:1–14) and by the parable of the two sticks (37:15–28).

- **Ezekiel 33:1–20**
- **Ezekiel 34:1—37:28**

Ezekiel 33:1–20

Renewal of Ezekiel's Call as Watchman

33 :1 The word of the LORD came to me:
2"Son of man, speak to your people and
say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a
land, and the people of the land choose one of
their men and make him their watchman, 3and
he sees the sword coming against the land and
blows the trumpet to warn the people, 4then if
anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed
the warning and the sword comes and takes
their life, their blood will be on their own head.
5Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but
did not heed the warning, their blood will be on
their own head. If they had heeded the warn-
ing, they would have saved themselves. 6But if
the watchman sees the sword coming and does
not blow the trumpet to warn the people and
the sword comes and takes someone's life, that
person's life will be taken because of their sin,
but I will hold the watchman accountable for
their blood.'
7"Son of man, I have made you a watchman
for the people of Israel; so hear the word I
speak and give them warning from me. 8When
I say to the wicked, 'You wicked person, you
will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dis-
suade them from their ways, that wicked per-
son will die for[a] their sin, and I will hold you
accountable for their blood. 9But if you do warn
the wicked person to turn from their ways and
they do not do so, they will die for their sin,
though you yourself will be saved.
10"Son of man, say to the Israelites, 'This is
what you are saying: "Our offenses and sins
weigh us down, and we are wasting away be-
cause of[b] them. How then can we live?"' 11Say
to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sov-
ereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of
the wicked, but rather that they turn from their
ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways!
Why will you die, people of Israel?'
12"Therefore, son of man, say to your people,
'If someone who is righteous disobeys, that per-
son's former righteousness will count for noth-
ing. And if someone who is wicked repents,
that person's former wickedness will not bring
condemnation. The righteous person who sins
will not be allowed to live even though they
were formerly righteous.' 13If I tell a righteous
person that they will surely live, but then they
trust in their righteousness and do evil, none of
the righteous things that person has done will
be remembered; they will die for the evil they
have done. 14And if I say to a wicked person,
'You will surely die,' but they then turn away
from their sin and do what is just and right—
15if they give back what they took in pledge for
a loan, return what they have stolen, follow the
decrees that give life, and do no evil—that per-
son will surely live; they will not die. 16None of
the sins that person has committed will be re-
membered against them. They have done what
is just and right; they will surely live.
17"Yet your people say, 'The way of the Lord
is not just.' But it is their way that is not just. 18If
a righteous person turns from their righteous-
ness and does evil, they will die for it. 19And if
a wicked person turns away from their wicked-
ness and does what is just and right, they will
live by doing so. 20Yet you Israelites say, 'The
way of the Lord is not just.' But I will judge
each of you according to your own ways."

Ezekiel 34:1—37:28

The LORD Will Be Israel's Shepherd

34 :1 The word of the LORD came to me:
2"Son of man, prophesy against the
shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them:
'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to
you shepherds of Israel who only take care of
yourselves! Should not shepherds take care
of the flock? 3You eat the curds, clothe your-
selves with the wool and slaughter the choice
animals, but you do not take care of the flock.
4You have not strengthened the weak or healed
the sick or bound up the injured. You have not
brought back the strays or searched for the
lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutal-
ly. 5So they were scattered because there was
no shepherd, and when they were scattered
they became food for all the wild animals. 6My
sheep wandered over all the mountains and on
every high hill. They were scattered over the
whole earth, and no one searched or looked
for them.

[a] *8* Or *in*; also in verse 9 [b] *10* Or *away in*

TIME CAPSULE		575 to 570 B.C.
575		Greeks use saws for cutting
573		The prophet Ezekiel receives visions of the new temple
571		Ezekiel prophesies 4 years before Babylonian invasion of the west
570		Pharaoh Hophra flees Egypt in a revolt led by Egyptian general Amasis
570–526		Pharaoh Amasis allows Greeks to settle in Egypt's Delta

7 "'Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word
of the LORD: 8 As surely as I live, declares the
Sovereign LORD, because my flock lacks a shep-
herd and so has been plundered and has be-
come food for all the wild animals, and because
my shepherds did not search for my flock but
cared for themselves rather than for my flock,
9 therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of
the LORD: 10 This is what the Sovereign LORD
says: I am against the shepherds and will hold
them accountable for my flock. I will remove
them from tending the flock so that the shep-
herds can no longer feed themselves. I will res-
cue my flock from their mouths, and it will no
longer be food for them.

11 "'For this is what the Sovereign LORD says:
I myself will search for my sheep and look after
them. 12 As a shepherd looks after his scattered
flock when he is with them, so will I look after
my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places
where they were scattered on a day of clouds
and darkness. 13 I will bring them out from the
nations and gather them from the countries,
and I will bring them into their own land. I will
pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the
ravines and in all the settlements in the land.
14 I will tend them in a good pasture, and the
mountain heights of Israel will be their grazing
land. There they will lie down in good grazing
land, and there they will feed in a rich pasture
on the mountains of Israel. 15 I myself will tend
my sheep and have them lie down, declares the
Sovereign LORD. 16 I will search for the lost and
bring back the strays. I will bind up the injured
and strengthen the weak, but the sleek and the
strong I will destroy. I will shepherd the flock
with justice.

17 "'As for you, my flock, this is what the
Sovereign LORD says: I will judge between one
sheep and another, and between rams and
goats. 18 Is it not enough for you to feed on the
good pasture? Must you also trample the rest
of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough
for you to drink clear water? Must you also
muddy the rest with your feet? 19 Must my flock
feed on what you have trampled and drink what
you have muddied with your feet?

20 "'Therefore this is what the Sovereign
LORD says to them: See, I myself will judge
between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.
21 Because you shove with flank and shoulder,
butting all the weak sheep with your horns un-
til you have driven them away, 22 I will save my
flock, and they will no longer be plundered. I
will judge between one sheep and another. 23 I
will place over them one shepherd, my servant
David, and he will tend them; he will tend them
and be their shepherd. 24 I the LORD will be
their God, and my servant David will be prince
among them. I the LORD have spoken.

25 "'I will make a covenant of peace with them
and rid the land of savage beasts so that they
may live in the wilderness and sleep in the for-
ests in safety. 26 I will make them and the places
surrounding my hill a blessing.[a] I will send
down showers in season; there will be showers
of blessing. 27 The trees will yield their fruit and
the ground will yield its crops; the people will
be secure in their land. They will know that I
am the LORD, when I break the bars of their
yoke and rescue them from the hands of those
who enslaved them. 28 They will no longer be
plundered by the nations, nor will wild animals
devour them. They will live in safety, and no
one will make them afraid. 29 I will provide for
them a land renowned for its crops, and they
will no longer be victims of famine in the land
or bear the scorn of the nations. 30 Then they
will know that I, the LORD their God, am with
them and that they, the Israelites, are my peo-
ple, declares the Sovereign LORD. 31 You are my
sheep, the sheep of my pasture, and I am your
God, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

[a] *26* Or *I will cause them and the places surrounding my hill to be named in blessings* (see Gen. 48:20); or *I will cause them and the places surrounding my hill to be seen as blessed*

Edom Carries On Esau's Hostility (Eze 35:2)

Around January of 585 B.C. the prophet Ezekiel received news of Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians, which had occurred in 586 B.C. following a long siege (Eze 33:21; see 2Ki 25:1–10). The Babylonians, however, were not without allies in their attack on Jerusalem.

The Edomites, a people who dwelt in the desert country southeast of the land of Canaan, seemingly supported the Babylonians in their conquest. The traditions of Judah remember the people of Edom gloating over Jerusalem's destruction (Ps 137:7; Ob 1:10–12), as well as acquiring portions of what had once been Judah. Judah's neighbors did not act very "neighborly" in the moment of Judah's distress!

The Edomites are identified with Seir, a geographical name for the mountainous region in which they lived. Seir-Edom was more than Judah's geographical neighbor. The Edomites are also known as descendants of Esau, the older brother of Jacob, the forefather of the Israelites. The Law of Moses warns, "Do not despise an Edomite, for the Edomites are related to you" (Dt 23:7). A special kinship link tied Seir to Judah.

It is this tie that the Edomites violated. In response to the hostility of Edom during the Babylonian conquest of Judah and afterwards, God instructed Ezekiel to prophesy against Mount Seir (Eze 35:2, 15). Edom had reawakened the "ancient hostility" (Eze 35:5) of Esau's grievance against his brother Jacob (Ge 27:41).

A Prophecy Against Edom

35 [1]The word of the LORD came to me: [2]"Son of man, set your face against Mount Seir; prophesy against it [3]and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, Mount Seir, and I will stretch out my hand against you and make you a desolate waste. [4]I will turn your towns into ruins and you will be desolate. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

[5]"'Because you harbored an ancient hostility and delivered the Israelites over to the sword at the time of their calamity, the time their punishment reached its climax, [6]therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will give you over to bloodshed and it will pursue you. Since you did not hate bloodshed, bloodshed will pursue you. [7]I will make Mount Seir a desolate waste and cut off from it all who come and go. [8]I will fill your mountains with the slain; those killed by the sword will fall on your hills and in your valleys and in all your ravines. [9]I will make you desolate forever; your towns will not be inhabited. Then you will know that I am the LORD.

[10]"'Because you have said, "These two nations and countries will be ours and we will take possession of them," even though I the LORD was there, [11]therefore as surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I will treat you in accordance with the anger and jealousy you showed in your hatred of them and I will make myself known among them when I judge you. [12]Then you will know that I the LORD have heard all the contemptible things you have said against the mountains of Israel. You said, "They have been laid waste and have been given over to us to devour." [13]You boasted against me and spoke against me without restraint, and I heard it. [14]This is what the Sovereign LORD says: While the whole earth rejoices, I will make you desolate. [15]Because you rejoiced when the inheritance of Israel became desolate, that is how I will treat you. You will be desolate, Mount Seir, you and all of Edom. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'"

Geography & Environment
Mount Seir is another name for Edom (Eze 35:2). The Edomites lived in the mountainous territory south and east of the Dead Sea. Through their country ran the King's Highway, the main road from Egypt to Syria and points north and east. Relations between Edom and Judah were usually hostile. Apparently Edom offered no assistance to Judah during the invasions of the Assyrians in 713 and 701 B.C.

Hope for the Mountains of Israel

36 [1]"Son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel and say, 'Mountains of Israel, hear the word of the LORD. [2]This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The enemy said of you, "Aha! The ancient heights have become our possession."' [3]Therefore prophesy and say, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because they ravaged and crushed you from every side so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations and the object of people's malicious talk and slander, [4]therefore, mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Sovereign LORD: This is what the Sovereign LORD says to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, to the desolate ruins and the deserted towns that have been plundered and ridiculed by the rest of the nations around you— [5]this is what the Sovereign LORD says: In my burning zeal I have spoken against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, for with glee and with malice in their hearts they made my land their

The Sacred and Profane (Eze 36:22–26)

While Ezekiel is known chiefly as a prophet, he was also a priest. In fact, priestly concerns, concepts, and terminology fill the Book of Ezekiel. The prophet-priest Ezekiel used terminology related to the temple and its rituals to describe the present situation and future salvation of Israel.

The Jerusalem temple was considered the point where the divine intersected with the earth. As such, the temple, together with its space, utensils, and personnel, was characterized by purity and holiness. To be sanctified or holy was to be set apart from everyday use, devoted solely to the service of God. To use a sanctified object for other reasons or outside the temple was to profane it, thus rendering it impure for use in the temple.

This priestly language makes up the imagery used by Ezekiel (Eze 36:22–26). Through the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., Israel had come into contact with the nations. Yahweh's name, his status and honor, had been "profaned among the nations" (36:23). Israel's service was no longer confined to Yahweh and Yahweh alone. Contaminated by the nations, Israel had become impure, no longer qualified to enter into the temple area.

Yet Ezekiel saw a different day coming. First, God would again separate Israel from among the nations, returning her to her own land (36:24). Yet Israel's profanity, her impurity, had to be removed. In accordance with legislation in the Book of Leviticus, Ezekiel proclaimed that God would cleanse Israel through sprinkling with clean water (36:25). Purified by the ritual cleansing, Israel was sanctified, holy, again set apart for the service of God within the Jerusalem temple.

own possession so that they might plunder its pastureland.' 6Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I speak in my jealous wrath because you have suffered the scorn of the nations. 7Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I swear with uplifted hand that the nations around you will also suffer scorn.

8"'But you, mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home. 9I am concerned for you and will look on you with favor; you will be plowed and sown, 10and I will cause many people to live on you—yes, all of Israel. The towns will be inhabited and the ruins rebuilt. 11I will increase the number of people and animals living on you, and they will be fruitful and become numerous. I will settle people on you as in the past and will make you prosper more than before. Then you will know that I am the LORD. 12I will cause people, my people Israel, to live on you. They will possess you, and you will be their inheritance; you will never again deprive them of their children.

13"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Because some say to you, "You devour people and deprive your nation of its children," 14therefore you will no longer devour people or make your nation childless, declares the Sovereign LORD. 15No longer will I make you hear the taunts of the nations, and no longer will you suffer the scorn of the peoples or cause your nation to fall, declares the Sovereign LORD.'"

Israel's Restoration Assured

16Again the word of the LORD came to me: 17"Son of man, when the people of Israel were living in their own land, they defiled it by their conduct and their actions. Their conduct was like a woman's monthly uncleanness in my sight. 18So I poured out my wrath on them because they had shed blood in the land and because they had defiled it with their idols. 19I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries; I judged them according to their conduct and their actions. 20And wherever they went among the nations they profaned my holy name, for it was said of them, 'These are the LORD's people, and yet they had to leave his land.' 21I had concern for my holy name, which the people of Israel profaned among the nations where they had gone.

22"Therefore say to the Israelites, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: It is not for your sake, people of Israel, that I am going to do these things, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone. 23I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

24"'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 25I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. 28Then you will live in the land

An Old Battlefield (Eze 37:1)

One of the most familiar visions received by the prophet Ezekiel took place in a valley "full of bones" (Eze 37:1). The vision of the valley of dry bones concerns people who had been dead a long time—the bones were "very dry" (37:2). Yet these dry bones coming to life, animated by the Spirit, provide a powerful image of hope that lies beyond death and destruction.

But why were dry bones in the valley in the first place? Possibly with this imagery Ezekiel envisioned an old battlefield. In the ancient Near East, battles between armies often took place in valleys. The defending army would attempt to set up its line of defense at a pass into a valley. Terrain could restrict the mobility of the attacking army, allowing the defending army to concentrate its forces in a smaller area. If, however, the attacking army broke through the front line, the battle would ensue in the valley, usually with the defending forces retreating.

The valley of dry bones, therefore, symbolized a site of an ancient battle. The enemy force had overwhelmed the defending forces, leaving only bleached bones in their wake. It provided a powerful image of Judah following Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians. The reanimation of the bones (37:7–10), therefore, represented the rebirth of Judah and Jerusalem by the Spirit of God. The nation would be restored, given a new body.

I gave your ancestors; you will be my people,
and I will be your God. 29I will save you from
all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain
and make it plentiful and will not bring famine
upon you. 30I will increase the fruit of the trees
and the crops of the field, so that you will no
longer suffer disgrace among the nations be-
cause of famine. 31Then you will remember
your evil ways and wicked deeds, and you will
loathe yourselves for your sins and detestable
practices. 32I want you to know that I am not
doing this for your sake, declares the Sover-
eign LORD. Be ashamed and disgraced for your
conduct, people of Israel!

33"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: On
the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will re-
settle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt.
34The desolate land will be cultivated instead
of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass
through it. 35They will say, "This land that was
laid waste has become like the garden of Eden;
the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and
destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited."
36Then the nations around you that remain will
know that I the LORD have rebuilt what was de-
stroyed and have replanted what was desolate.
I the LORD have spoken, and I will do it.'

37"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
Once again I will yield to Israel's plea and do
this for them: I will make their people as nu-
merous as sheep, 38as numerous as the flocks
for offerings at Jerusalem during her appointed
festivals. So will the ruined cities be filled with
flocks of people. Then they will know that I am
the LORD."

The Valley of Dry Bones

37 1The hand of the LORD was on me, and
he brought me out by the Spirit of the
LORD and set me in the middle of a valley; it
was full of bones. 2He led me back and forth
among them, and I saw a great many bones on
the floor of the valley, bones that were very dry.
3He asked me, "Son of man, can these bones
live?"

I said, "Sovereign LORD, you alone know."

4Then he said to me, "Prophesy to these
bones and say to them, 'Dry bones, hear the
word of the LORD! 5This is what the Sovereign
LORD says to these bones: I will make breath[a]
enter you, and you will come to life. 6I will at-
tach tendons to you and make flesh come upon
you and cover you with skin; I will put breath
in you, and you will come to life. Then you will
know that I am the LORD.'"

7So I prophesied as I was commanded. And
as I was prophesying, there was a noise, a rat-
tling sound, and the bones came together, bone
to bone. 8I looked, and tendons and flesh ap-
peared on them and skin covered them, but
there was no breath in them.

9Then he said to me, "Prophesy to the
breath; prophesy, son of man, and say to it,
'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Come,
breath, from the four winds and breathe into
these slain, that they may live.'" 10So I prophe-
sied as he commanded me, and breath entered
them; they came to life and stood up on their
feet—a vast army.

11Then he said to me: "Son of man, these
bones are the people of Israel. They say, 'Our
bones are dried up and our hope is gone; we
are cut off.' 12Therefore prophesy and say to
them: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:
My people, I am going to open your graves and
bring you up from them; I will bring you back
to the land of Israel. 13Then you, my people,

[a] 5 The Hebrew for this word can also mean *wind* or *spirit* (see verses 6-14).

will know that I am the LORD, when I open your graves and bring you up from them. 14I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I the LORD have spoken, and I have done it, declares the LORD.'"

One Nation Under One King

15The word of the LORD came to me: 16"Son of man, take a stick of wood and write on it, 'Belonging to Judah and the Israelites associated with him.' Then take another stick of wood, and write on it, 'Belonging to Joseph (that is, to Ephraim) and all the Israelites associated with him.' 17Join them together into one stick so that they will become one in your hand.

18"When your people ask you, 'Won't you tell us what you mean by this?' 19say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to take the stick of Joseph—which is in Ephraim's hand—and of the Israelite tribes associated with him, and join it to Judah's stick. I will make them into a single stick of wood, and they will become one in my hand.' 20Hold before their eyes the sticks you have written on 21and say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will take the Israelites out of the nations where they have gone. I will gather them from all around and bring them back into their own land. 22I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. There will be one king over all of them and they will never again be two nations or be divided into two kingdoms. 23They will no longer defile themselves with their idols and vile images or with any of their offenses, for I will save them from all their sinful backsliding,[a] and I will cleanse them. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

24" 'My servant David will be king over them, and they will all have one shepherd. They will follow my laws and be careful to keep my decrees. 25They will live in the land I gave to my servant Jacob, the land where your ancestors lived. They and their children and their children's children will live there forever, and David my servant will be their prince forever. 26I will make a covenant of peace with them; it will be an everlasting covenant. I will establish them and increase their numbers, and I will put my sanctuary among them forever. 27My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people. 28Then the nations will know that I the LORD make Israel holy, when my sanctuary is among them forever.'"

[a] *23* Many Hebrew manuscripts (see also Septuagint); most Hebrew manuscripts *all their dwelling places where they sinned*

TRANSITION

Ezekiel's Apocalyptic Prophecies

Chapters 38 and 39 of Ezekiel are in many ways different from the rest of the book. Their message, the ultimate victory of God over the nations, is perfectly consistent with the preceding chapters, but the manner of describing that victory is distinct. Indeed these chapters are often noted as an early example of what would later be called "apocalyptic" writing, which is best represented in the Bible by Da 7–12 and the Book of Revelation.

Apocalyptic literature generally consists of vision reports (the word "apocalypse" comes from a Greek word meaning "revelation"). These visions usually involve a great many symbols, often quite obscure. While the original audience may have had the key to the symbols, such a key is usually left unstated (e.g., who is meant by "another horn, which started small" in Da 8:9). The primary purpose of apocalyptic writing appears to be to comfort the persecuted. The message is that while things may be bad now, and indeed may get much worse, in the end God will establish his eternal kingdom and will right all wrongs.

Fitting within this pattern of hidden symbolism is Eze 38; 39, which describes the attack and ultimate defeat of the mysterious Gog from the land of Magog. Who is meant by "Gog"? No nation by that name is known. Some have suggested that Ezekiel might have been referring to King Gyges (685–652 b.c.) of Lydia in Asia Minor. Others suggest it is the name of an otherwise unknown city in Media. Still others, noting that Gog comes from the north (Eze 38:6), think the name might refer to the Scythians, a band of barbarous raiders from the area around the Black Sea, north of Babylon.

These very different suggestions refer to groups that Ezekiel himself might have known in his own time. Because nothing in the Bible text itself favors one solution more than any other, though, the question remains open to further interpretation. Every generation since Ezekiel himself has had its own understanding of this passage, seeing the victory over Gog as a prophecy of victory over that generation's own enemies. While this makes the certain identification of Gog still more puzzling, perhaps it is what the prophecy calls for. God's victory over an unidentifiable enemy implies God's victory over any and every enemy.

Not knowing exactly to what the prophecy refers makes it difficult to place the oracle chronologically. It is possible simply to read these chapters in their biblical context, as a part of Ezekiel's second, hopeful ministry. God will no longer use the Gentile nations to punish Israel. Instead, in a future battle God will personally fight for his people and utterly destroy Israel's enemies (38:22). No

An Empire Forms in Persia (Eze 38:5)

The land of Persia played a major role in later Old Testament history, especially during the time of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. Like the Medes, the Persians were an Iranian tribal group that entered the region of modern Iran sometime after 1000 B.C. Little is known about the Persians before 559 B.C., when Cyrus the Great ascended the throne of Persia. Nevertheless, the prophet Ezekiel could have known of "Persia" (Eze 38:5) some 20 or 30 years before Cyrus. The Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (668–627 B.C.) records in an inscription that a "king of Parsumash" paid him homage around 640 B.C.

The Achaemenid empire of Cyrus (named after one of his supposed ancestors) ruled virtually the entire Near East, Egypt, and the eastern Mediterranean for about two centuries (559–331 B.C.). The organization of the Persian administration and its system of royal roads consolidated the state. One could argue that it was the most successful world political power until the advent of Rome.

Ashurbanipal's guards preceding the wheeled throne bearers.

aggressor can stand against God. Ezekiel's hope includes reunification: God will bring together the once-divided northern and southern kingdoms (39:25).

• **Ezekiel 38:1—39:29**

Ezekiel

The Lord's Great Victory Over the Nations

38 :1 The word of the Lord came to me:
2 "Son of man, set your face against Gog,
of the land of Magog, the chief prince of[a] Meshek and Tubal; prophesy against him
3 and say: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says:
I am against you, Gog, chief prince of[b] Meshek and Tubal.
4 I will turn you around, put hooks in your jaws and bring you out with your whole army—your horses, your horsemen fully armed, and a great horde with large and small shields, all of them brandishing their swords.
5 Persia, Cush[c] and Put will be with them, all with shields and helmets,
6 also Gomer with all its troops, and Beth Togarmah from the far north with all its troops—the many nations with you.

7 "'Get ready; be prepared, you and all the hordes gathered about you, and take command of them.
8 After many days you will be called to arms. In future years you will invade a land that has recovered from war, whose people were gathered from many nations to the mountains of Israel, which had long been desolate. They had been brought out from the nations, and now all of them live in safety.
9 You and all your troops and the many nations with you will go up, advancing like a storm; you will be like a cloud covering the land.

10 "'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: On that day thoughts will come into your mind and you will devise an evil scheme.
11 You will say, "I will invade a land of unwalled villages; I will attack a peaceful and unsuspecting people—all of them living without walls and without gates and bars.
12 I will plunder and loot and turn my hand against the resettled ruins and the people gathered from the nations, rich in livestock and goods, living at the center of the land.[d]"
13 Sheba and Dedan and the merchants of Tarshish and all her villages[e] will say to you, "Have you come to plunder? Have you gathered your hordes to loot, to carry off silver and gold, to take away livestock and goods and to seize much plunder?"'

14 "Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say to Gog: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: In that day, when my people Israel are living in safety, will you not take notice of it?
15 You will come from your place in the far north, you and many nations with you, all of them riding on horses, a great horde, a mighty army.
16 You will advance against my people Israel like a cloud that covers the land. In days to come, Gog, I will bring you against my land, so that the nations may know me when I am proved holy through you before their eyes.

17 "'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: You are the one I spoke of in former days by my servants the prophets of Israel. At that time they prophesied for years that I would bring you against them.
18 This is what will happen in that day: When Gog attacks the land of Israel, my hot anger will be aroused, declares the Sovereign Lord.
19 In my zeal and fiery wrath I

[a] *2* Or *the prince of Rosh,* [b] *3* Or *Gog, prince of Rosh,* [c] *5* That is, the upper Nile region [d] *12* The Hebrew for this phrase means *the navel of the earth.* [e] *13* Or *her strong lions*

declare that at that time there shall be a great earthquake in the land of Israel. 20The fish in the sea, the birds in the sky, the beasts of the field, every creature that moves along the ground, and all the people on the face of the earth will tremble at my presence. The mountains will be overturned, the cliffs will crumble and every wall will fall to the ground. 21I will summon a sword against Gog on all my mountains, declares the Sovereign LORD. Every man's sword will be against his brother. 22I will execute judgment on him with plague and bloodshed; I will pour down torrents of rain, hailstones and burning sulfur on him and on his troops and on the many nations with him. 23And so I will show my greatness and my holiness, and I will make myself known in the sight of many nations. Then they will know that I am the LORD.'

39 1"Son of man, prophesy against Gog and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against you, Gog, chief prince of[a] Meshek and Tubal. 2I will turn you around and drag you along. I will bring you from the far north and send you against the mountains of Israel. 3Then I will strike your bow from your left hand and make your arrows drop from your right hand. 4On the mountains of Israel you will fall, you and all your troops and the nations with you. I will give you as food to all kinds of carrion birds and to the wild animals. 5You will fall in the open field, for I have spoken, declares the Sovereign LORD. 6I will send fire on Magog and on those who live in safety in the coastlands, and they will know that I am the LORD.

7"'I will make known my holy name among my people Israel. I will no longer let my holy name be profaned, and the nations will know that I the LORD am the Holy One in Israel. 8It is coming! It will surely take place, declares the Sovereign LORD. This is the day I have spoken of.

9"'Then those who live in the towns of Israel will go out and use the weapons for fuel and burn them up—the small and large shields, the bows and arrows, the war clubs and spears. For seven years they will use them for fuel. 10They will not need to gather wood from the fields or cut it from the forests, because they will use the weapons for fuel. And they will plunder those who plundered them and loot those who looted them, declares the Sovereign LORD.

11"'On that day I will give Gog a burial place in Israel, in the valley of those who travel east of the Sea. It will block the way of travelers, because Gog and all his hordes will be buried there. So it will be called the Valley of Hamon Gog.[b]

12"'For seven months the Israelites will be burying them in order to cleanse the land. 13All the people of the land will bury them, and the day I display my glory will be a memorable day for them, declares the Sovereign LORD. 14People will be continually employed in cleansing the land. They will spread out across the land and, along with others, they will bury any bodies that are lying on the ground.

"'After the seven months they will carry out a more detailed search. 15As they go through the land, anyone who sees a human bone will leave a marker beside it until the gravediggers bury it in the Valley of Hamon Gog, 16near a town called Hamonah.[c] And so they will cleanse the land.'

17"Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: Call out to every kind of bird and all the wild animals: 'Assemble and come together from all around to the sacrifice I am preparing for you, the great sacrifice on the mountains of Israel. There you will eat flesh and drink blood. 18You will eat the flesh of mighty men and drink the blood of the princes of the earth as if they were rams and lambs, goats and bulls—all of them fattened animals from Bashan. 19At the sacrifice I am preparing for you, you will eat fat till you are glutted and drink blood till you are drunk. 20At my table you will eat your fill of horses and riders, mighty men and soldiers of every kind,' declares the Sovereign LORD.

21"I will display my glory among the nations, and all the nations will see the punishment I inflict and the hand I lay on them. 22From that day forward the people of Israel will know that I am the LORD their God. 23And the nations will know that the people of Israel went into exile for their sin, because they were unfaithful to me. So I hid my face from them and handed them over to their enemies, and they all fell by the sword. 24I dealt with them according to their uncleanness and their offenses, and I hid my face from them.

[a] *1* Or *Gog, prince of Rosh,* [b] *11* *Hamon Gog* means *hordes of Gog.* [c] *16* *Hamonah* means *horde.*

Geography & Environment

The places and peoples named in the Old Testament are sometimes difficult or impossible to identify today. Gog and Magog are mentioned only in Eze 38; 39 and Rev 20:8. Since Meshek and Tubal (Eze 38:2) were tribes living in what is today Turkey, it is possible that Gog and Magog were peoples in that area. They are reported to come from the north and to be fighters with bow and arrow (Eze 39:2, 3).

25"Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will now restore the fortunes of Jacob[a] and will have compassion on all the people of Israel, and I will be zealous for my holy name. 26They will forget their shame and all the unfaithfulness they showed toward me when they lived in safety in their land with no one to make them afraid. 27When I have brought them back from the nations and have gathered them from the countries of their enemies, I will be proved holy through them in the sight of many nations. 28Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind. 29I will no longer hide my face from them, for I will pour out my Spirit on the people of Israel, declares the Sovereign LORD."

TRANSITION

Ezekiel's Second Temple Vision

The 25th year of the Babylonian captivity (Eze 40:1) was perhaps April, 573 b.c. Nebuchadnezzar was still king, and the power of Babylon was growing greater each year. But to Ezekiel the turning point had already come, and he saw salvation arriving to replace Israel's shame and punishment. It is appropriate that Ezekiel, who would never forsake his priestly roots, should describe the ultimate salvation with a vision of a new, and better, temple.

Ezekiel's vision of the perfect temple is a companion piece to his earlier temple vision of chs. 8–11 (see "Ezekiel's Temple Vision" at Eze 8:1). In that vision, Ezekiel saw abominations and idolatry, and the vision concluded with the glory of God departing from the temple (Eze 11:22, 23). This time, Ezekiel sees only perfection. The crowning moment is when "the glory of the Lord entered the temple through the gate facing east . . . and the glory of the Lord filled the temple" (Eze 43:4, 5).

Chapters 40–48, like chs. 38; 39, contain a great deal of symbolism. Most of the symbols seem to indicate the absolute perfection of the future temple, but more specific meanings are certainly possible. These chapters too, then, can be described as early "apocalyptic" writing (see "Ezekiel's Apocalyptic Prophecies" at Eze 38:1). In fact, the most extensive apocalyptic book in the Bible, the Book of Revelation, also contains an extended vision of a perfect temple in the future, phrased in language very similar to that of Ezekiel (Rev 21).

These chapters, like chs. 38; 39 before them, are difficult to place chronologically. What temple is referred to here? If it is the actual rebuilt temple mentioned in Ezra 6:14–16, then the prophecy could be associated with that event. But the stunning, perfect temple described in this vision bears little resemblance to the disappointing structure mentioned at that time (see Ezra 3:12).

Perhaps, as is the case with the temple vision of Rev 21, Eze 40–48 is a vision of a future perfection, to come at an unspecified end. Thus it is not intended as a blueprint for an earthly, physical fulfillment. Rather it pictures the purity and spiritual vitality of the ideal place of worship and those who will worship there. In this sense, Ezekiel's vision of the restored temple complements the message of his second, hopeful ministry.

• Ezekiel 40:1—42:20

Ezekiel

The Temple Area Restored

40:1 In the twenty-fifth year of our exile, at the beginning of the year, on the tenth of the month, in the fourteenth year after the fall of the city—on that very day the hand of the LORD was on me and he took me there. 2In visions of God he took me to the land of Israel and set me on a very high mountain, on whose south side were some buildings that looked like a city. 3He took me there, and I saw a man whose appearance was like bronze; he was standing in the gateway with a linen cord and a measuring rod in his hand. 4The man said to me, "Son of man, look carefully and listen closely and pay attention to everything I am going to show you, for that is why you have been brought here. Tell the people of Israel everything you see."

The East Gate to the Outer Court

5I saw a wall completely surrounding the temple area. The length of the measuring rod in the man's hand was six long cubits,[b] each of which was a cubit and a handbreadth. He measured the wall; it was one measuring rod thick and one rod high.

6Then he went to the east gate. He climbed its steps and measured the threshold of the gate; it was one rod deep. 7The alcoves for the guards were one rod long and one rod wide, and the projecting walls between the alcoves were five cubits[c] thick. And the threshold of the gate next to the portico facing the temple was one rod deep.

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[a] *25* Or *now bring Jacob back from captivity* [b] *5* That is, about 11 feet or about 3.2 meters; also in verse 12. The long cubit of about 21 inches or about 53 centimeters is the basic unit of measurement of length throughout chapters 40–48. [c] *7* That is, about 8 3/4 feet or about 2.7 meters; also in verse 48

8Then he measured the portico of the gate-
way; 9it[a] was eight cubits[b] deep and its jambs
were two cubits[c] thick. The portico of the gate-
way faced the temple.
10Inside the east gate were three alcoves on
each side; the three had the same measure-
ments, and the faces of the projecting walls on
each side had the same measurements. 11Then
he measured the width of the entrance of the
gateway; it was ten cubits and its length was
thirteen cubits.[d] 12In front of each alcove was
a wall one cubit high, and the alcoves were six
cubits square. 13Then he measured the gate-
way from the top of the rear wall of one alcove
to the top of the opposite one; the distance was
twenty-five cubits[e] from one parapet opening
to the opposite one. 14He measured along the
faces of the projecting walls all around the in-
side of the gateway—sixty cubits.[f] The mea-
surement was up to the portico[g] facing the
courtyard.[h] 15The distance from the entrance
of the gateway to the far end of its portico was
fifty cubits.[i] 16The alcoves and the projecting
walls inside the gateway were surmounted by
narrow parapet openings all around, as was the
portico; the openings all around faced inward.
The faces of the projecting walls were decorat-
ed with palm trees.

The Outer Court

17Then he brought me into the outer court.
There I saw some rooms and a pavement that
had been constructed all around the court;
there were thirty rooms along the pavement.
18It abutted the sides of the gateways and was
as wide as they were long; this was the lower
pavement. 19Then he measured the distance
from the inside of the lower gateway to the out-
side of the inner court; it was a hundred cubits[j]
on the east side as well as on the north.

The North Gate

20Then he measured the length and width
of the north gate, leading into the outer court.
21Its alcoves—three on each side—its project-
ing walls and its portico had the same measure-
ments as those of the first gateway. It was fifty
cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 22Its
openings, its portico and its palm tree decora-
tions had the same measurements as those of
the gate facing east. Seven steps led up to it,
with its portico opposite them. 23There was a
gate to the inner court facing the north gate,
just as there was on the east. He measured
from one gate to the opposite one; it was a hun-
dred cubits.

The South Gate

24Then he led me to the south side and I saw
the south gate. He measured its jambs and its
portico, and they had the same measurements
as the others. 25The gateway and its portico
had narrow openings all around, like the open-
ings of the others. It was fifty cubits long and
twenty-five cubits wide. 26Seven steps led up to
it, with its portico opposite them; it had palm
tree decorations on the faces of the projecting
walls on each side. 27The inner court also had
a gate facing south, and he measured from this
gate to the outer gate on the south side; it was
a hundred cubits.

The Gates to the Inner Court

28Then he brought me into the inner court
through the south gate, and he measured the
south gate; it had the same measurements as
the others. 29Its alcoves, its projecting walls
and its portico had the same measurements
as the others. The gateway and its portico had
openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and
twenty-five cubits wide. 30(The porticoes of the
gateways around the inner court were twenty-
five cubits wide and five cubits deep.) 31Its por-
tico faced the outer court; palm trees decorated
its jambs, and eight steps led up to it.
32Then he brought me to the inner court on
the east side, and he measured the gateway;
it had the same measurements as the others.

[a] *8,9* Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *gateway facing the temple; it was one rod deep. 9Then he measured the portico of the gateway; it*
[b] *9* That is, about 14 feet or about 4.2 meters [c] *9* That is, about 3 1/2 feet or about 1 meter [d] *11* That is, about 18 feet wide and 23 feet long or about 5.3 meters wide and 6.9 meters long [e] *13* That is, about 44 feet or about 13 meters; also in verses 21, 25, 29, 30, 33 and 36 [f] *14* That is, about 105 feet or about 32 meters [g] *14* Septuagint; Hebrew *projecting wall*
[h] *14* The meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.
[i] *15* That is, about 88 feet or about 27 meters; also in verses 21, 25, 29, 33 and 36 [j] *19* That is, about 175 feet or about 53 meters; also in verses 23, 27 and 47

TIME CAPSULE 567 to 560 B.C.	
567	Hophra joins with Nebuchadnezzar to invade Egypt
567	Amasis repels the Babylonians, and Hophra is killed
562–560	Awel-Marduk succeeds Nebuchadnezzar as king of Babylon
561	Awel-Marduk releases Jehoiachin from prison (2Ki 25:27)
560–556	Neriglissar, king of Babylon, was possibly known earlier as Nergal-Sharezer (Jer 39:3)

33 Its alcoves, its projecting walls and its portico had the same measurements as the others. The gateway and its portico had openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 34 Its portico faced the outer court; palm trees decorated the jambs on either side, and eight steps led up to it.

35 Then he brought me to the north gate and measured it. It had the same measurements as the others, 36 as did its alcoves, its projecting walls and its portico, and it had openings all around. It was fifty cubits long and twenty-five cubits wide. 37 Its portico[a] faced the outer court; palm trees decorated the jambs on either side, and eight steps led up to it.

The Rooms for Preparing Sacrifices

38 A room with a doorway was by the portico in each of the inner gateways, where the burnt offerings were washed. 39 In the portico of the gateway were two tables on each side, on which the burnt offerings, sin offerings[b] and guilt offerings were slaughtered. 40 By the outside wall of the portico of the gateway, near the steps at the entrance of the north gateway were two tables, and on the other side of the steps were two tables. 41 So there were four tables on one side of the gateway and four on the other — eight tables in all — on which the sacrifices were slaughtered. 42 There were also four tables of dressed stone for the burnt offerings, each a cubit and a half long, a cubit and a half wide and a cubit high.[c] On them were placed the utensils for slaughtering the burnt offerings and the other sacrifices. 43 And double-pronged hooks, each a handbreadth[d] long, were attached to the wall all around. The tables were for the flesh of the offerings.

The Rooms for the Priests

44 Outside the inner gate, within the inner court, were two rooms, one[e] at the side of the north gate and facing south, and another at the side of the south[f] gate and facing north. 45 He said to me, "The room facing south is for the priests who guard the temple, 46 and the room facing north is for the priests who guard the altar. These are the sons of Zadok, who are the only Levites who may draw near to the LORD to minister before him."

47 Then he measured the court: It was square — a hundred cubits long and a hundred cubits wide. And the altar was in front of the temple.

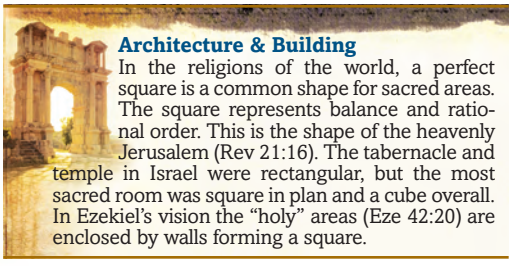
The New Temple

48 He brought me to the portico of the temple and measured the jambs of the portico; they were five cubits wide on either side. The width of the entrance was fourteen cubits[g] and its projecting walls were[h] three cubits[i] wide on either side. 49 The portico was twenty cubits[j] wide, and twelve[k] cubits[l] from front to back. It was reached by a flight of stairs,[m] and there were pillars on each side of the jambs.

41 1 Then the man brought me to the main hall and measured the jambs; the width of the jambs was six cubits[n] on each side.[o] 2 The entrance was ten cubits[p] wide, and the projecting walls on each side of it were five cubits[q] wide. He also measured the main hall; it was forty cubits long and twenty cubits wide.[r]

3 Then he went into the inner sanctuary and measured the jambs of the entrance; each was two cubits[s] wide. The entrance was six cubits wide, and the projecting walls on each side of it were seven cubits[t] wide. 4 And he measured the length of the inner sanctuary; it was twenty cubits, and its width was twenty cubits across the end of the main hall. He said to me, "This is the Most Holy Place."

5 Then he measured the wall of the temple; it was six cubits thick, and each side room around the temple was four cubits[u] wide. 6 The side rooms were on three levels, one above another, thirty on each level. There were ledges all



Architecture & Building

In the religions of the world, a perfect square is a common shape for sacred areas. The square represents balance and rational order. This is the shape of the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev 21:16). The tabernacle and temple in Israel were rectangular, but the most sacred room was square in plan and a cube overall. In Ezekiel's vision the "holy" areas (Eze 42:20) are enclosed by walls forming a square.

[a] *37* Septuagint (see also verses 31 and 34); Hebrew *jambs*
[b] *39* Or *purification offerings*
[c] *42* That is, about 2 2/3 feet long and wide and 21 inches high or about 80 centimeters long and wide and 53 centimeters high
[d] *43* That is, about 3 1/2 inches or about 9 centimeters
[e] *44* Septuagint; Hebrew *were rooms for singers, which were*
[f] *44* Septuagint; Hebrew *east*
[g] *48* That is, about 25 feet or about 7.4 meters
[h] *48* Septuagint; Hebrew *entrance was*
[i] *48* That is, about 5 1/4 feet or about 1.6 meters
[j] *49* That is, about 35 feet or about 11 meters
[k] *49* Septuagint; Hebrew *eleven*
[l] *49* That is, about 21 feet or about 6.4 meters
[m] *49* Hebrew; Septuagint *Ten steps led up to it*
[n] *1* That is, about 11 feet or about 3.2 meters; also in verses 3, 5 and 8
[o] *1* One Hebrew manuscript and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *side, the width of the tent*
[p] *2* That is, about 18 feet or about 5.3 meters
[q] *2* That is, about 8 3/4 feet or about 2.7 meters; also in verses 9, 11 and 12
[r] *2* That is, about 70 feet long and 35 feet wide or about 21 meters long and 11 meters wide
[s] *3* That is, about 3 1/2 feet or about 1.1 meters; also in verse 22
[t] *3* That is, about 12 feet or about 3.7 meters
[u] *5* That is, about 7 feet or about 2.1 meters

DATES IN THE BOOK OF EZEKIEL

The prophecies in the Book of Ezekiel often provide a date. The dates are counted from the beginning of the exile in 597 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar captured Jerusalem and carried King Jehoiachin to Babylon (2Ki 24:10–16). So each year is a "year in exile," expressed as a certain "year of the exile of King Jehoiachin" (Eze 1:2) or "year of our exile" (Eze 33:21; 40:1). One exception is the 30th year of Eze 1:1, where "30" is probably Ezekiel's age.

Reference in Ezekiel	Year in Exile	Month	Day	Modern Calendar	Prophecy
1:1	(30th)	4th	5th	July 31, 593 B.C.	Ezekiel's vision of God
1:2	5th	–	5th	July 31, 593 B.C.	Receives the word of the Lord
8:1	6th	6th	5th	Sept. 17, 592 B.C.	Detestable things in the temple
20:1	7th	5th	10th	Aug. 9, 591 B.C.	The rebellion of Israel
24:1	9th	10th	10th	Jan. 15, 588 B.C.	The cooking pot
29:1	10th	10th	12th	Jan. 7, 587 B.C.	Proclamation against Egypt
30:20	11th	1st	7th	Apr. 29, 587 B.C.	Proclamation against Pharaoh
31:1	11th	3rd	1st	June 21, 587 B.C.	Assyria an example for Egypt
26:1	11th	–	1st	Feb. 12, 586 B.C.?	Proclamation against Tyre
33:21	12th	10th	5th	Jan. 8, 585 B.C.	News of Jerusalem's capture
32:1	12th	12th	1st	Mar. 3, 585 B.C.	Lamentation for Pharaoh and Egypt
32:17	12th	–	15th	Mar. 17, 585 B.C.	Lamentation for Egypt
40:1	25th	1st	10th	Apr. 28, 573 B.C.	Visions of the new temple
29:17	27th	1st	1st	Apr. 26, 571 B.C.	Egypt is Babylon's wages for Tyre

around the wall of the temple to serve as supports for the side rooms, so that the supports were not inserted into the wall of the temple. 7The side rooms all around the temple were wider at each successive level. The structure surrounding the temple was built in ascending stages, so that the rooms widened as one went upward. A stairway went up from the lowest floor to the top floor through the middle floor.

8I saw that the temple had a raised base all around it, forming the foundation of the side rooms. It was the length of the rod, six long cubits. 9The outer wall of the side rooms was five cubits thick. The open area between the side rooms of the temple 10and the priests' rooms was twenty cubits wide all around the temple. 11There were entrances to the side rooms from the open area, one on the north and another on the south; and the base adjoining the open area was five cubits wide all around.

12The building facing the temple courtyard on the west side was seventy cubits[a] wide. The wall of the building was five cubits thick all around, and its length was ninety cubits.[b]

13Then he measured the temple; it was a hundred cubits[c] long, and the temple courtyard and the building with its walls were also a hundred cubits long. 14The width of the temple courtyard on the east, including the front of the temple, was a hundred cubits.

15Then he measured the length of the building facing the courtyard at the rear of the temple, including its galleries on each side; it was a hundred cubits.

The main hall, the inner sanctuary and the portico facing the court, 16as well as the thresholds and the narrow windows and galleries around the three of them—everything beyond and including the threshold was covered with wood. The floor, the wall up to the windows, and the windows were covered. 17In the space above the outside of the entrance to the inner sanctuary and on the walls at regular intervals all around the inner and outer sanctuary 18were carved cherubim and palm trees. Palm trees alternated with cherubim. Each cherub had two faces: 19the face of a human being toward the palm tree on one side and the face of a lion toward the palm tree on the other. They were carved all around the whole temple. 20From the

[a] *12* That is, about 123 feet or about 37 meters [b] *12* That is, about 158 feet or about 48 meters [c] *13* That is, about 175 feet or about 53 meters; also in verses 14 and 15

floor to the area above the entrance, cherubim and palm trees were carved on the wall of the main hall.

21 The main hall had a rectangular doorframe, and the one at the front of the Most Holy Place was similar. 22 There was a wooden altar three cubits[a] high and two cubits square[b]; its corners, its base[c] and its sides were of wood. The man said to me, "This is the table that is before the LORD." 23 Both the main hall and the Most Holy Place had double doors. 24 Each door had two leaves—two hinged leaves for each door. 25 And on the doors of the main hall were carved cherubim and palm trees like those carved on the walls, and there was a wooden overhang on the front of the portico. 26 On the sidewalls of the portico were narrow windows with palm trees carved on each side. The side rooms of the temple also had overhangs.

The Rooms for the Priests

42 1 Then the man led me northward into the outer court and brought me to the rooms opposite the temple courtyard and opposite the outer wall on the north side. 2 The building whose door faced north was a hundred cubits long and fifty cubits wide.[d] 3 Both in the section twenty cubits[e] from the inner court and in the section opposite the pavement of the outer court, gallery faced gallery at the three levels. 4 In front of the rooms was an inner passageway ten cubits wide and a hundred cubits[f] long.[g] Their doors were on the north. 5 Now the upper rooms were narrower, for the galleries took more space from them than from the rooms on the lower and middle floors of the building. 6 The rooms on the top floor had no pillars, as the courts had; so they were smaller in floor space than those on the lower and middle floors. 7 There was an outer wall parallel to the rooms and the outer court; it extended in front of the rooms for fifty cubits. 8 While the row of rooms on the side next to the outer court was fifty cubits long, the row on the side nearest the sanctuary was a hundred cubits long. 9 The lower rooms had an entrance on the east side as one enters them from the outer court.

10 On the south side[h] along the length of the wall of the outer court, adjoining the temple courtyard and opposite the outer wall, were rooms 11 with a passageway in front of them. These were like the rooms on the north; they had the same length and width, with similar exits and dimensions. Similar to the doorways on the north 12 were the doorways of the rooms on the south. There was a doorway at the beginning of the passageway that was parallel to the corresponding wall extending eastward, by which one enters the rooms.

13 Then he said to me, "The north and south rooms facing the temple courtyard are the priests' rooms, where the priests who approach the LORD will eat the most holy offerings. There they will put the most holy offerings—the grain offerings, the sin offerings[i] and the guilt offerings—for the place is holy. 14 Once the priests enter the holy precincts, they are not to go into the outer court until they leave behind the garments in which they minister, for these are holy. They are to put on other clothes before they go near the places that are for the people."

15 When he had finished measuring what was inside the temple area, he led me out by the east gate and measured the area all around: 16 He measured the east side with the measuring rod; it was five hundred cubits.[j,k] 17 He measured the north side; it was five hundred cubits[l] by the measuring rod. 18 He measured the south side; it was five hundred cubits by the measuring rod. 19 Then he turned to the west side and measured; it was five hundred cubits by the measuring rod. 20 So he measured the area on all four sides. It had a wall around it, five hundred cubits long and five hundred cubits wide, to separate the holy from the common.

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[a] *22* That is, about 5 1/4 feet or about 1.5 meters
[b] *22* Septuagint; Hebrew *long* [c] *22* Septuagint; Hebrew *length* [d] *2* That is, about 175 feet long and 88 feet wide or about 53 meters long and 27 meters wide [e] *3* That is, about 35 feet or about 11 meters [f] *4* Septuagint and Syriac; Hebrew *and one cubit* [g] *4* That is, about 18 feet wide and 175 feet long or about 5.3 meters wide and 53 meters long
[h] *10* Septuagint; Hebrew *Eastward* [i] *13* Or *purification offerings* [j] *16* See Septuagint of verse 17; Hebrew *rods*; also in verses 18 and 19. [k] *16* Five hundred cubits equal about 875 feet or about 265 meters; also in verses 17, 18 and 19.
[l] *17* Septuagint; Hebrew *rods*

TRANSITION

The Glory of God Returns

In perhaps September, 592 b.c., Ezekiel received his first t emple vision (E ze 8:1). A t that time he saw the glory of God depart from the temple (11:22, 23). A bout 19 y ears later, perhaps in April, 573 b.c., Ezekiel saw in a second temple vision G od's return. As God had left the old temple by the eastern gate, so now he returned by way of the same gate (43:1–5). The East Gate was the outer public entrance to the temple complex.

• **Ezekiel 43:1—48:35**

Ezekiel

God's Glory Returns to the Temple

43 :1 Then the man brought me to the gate
facing east, 2and I saw the glory of the
God of Israel coming from the east. His voice
was like the roar of rushing waters, and the land
was radiant with his glory. 3The vision I saw
was like the vision I had seen when he[a] came to
destroy the city and like the visions I had seen
by the Kebar River, and I fell facedown. 4The
glory of the LORD entered the temple through
the gate facing east. 5Then the Spirit lifted me
up and brought me into the inner court, and the
glory of the LORD filled the temple.

6While the man was standing beside me, I
heard someone speaking to me from inside the
temple. 7He said: "Son of man, this is the place
of my throne and the place for the soles of my
feet. This is where I will live among the Israelites forever. The people of Israel will never
again defile my holy name — neither they nor
their kings — by their prostitution and the funeral offerings[b] for their kings at their death.[c]
8When they placed their threshold next to my
threshold and their doorposts beside my doorposts, with only a wall between me and them,
they defiled my holy name by their detestable
practices. So I destroyed them in my anger.
9Now let them put away from me their prostitution and the funeral offerings for their kings,
and I will live among them forever.

10"Son of man, describe the temple to the
people of Israel, that they may be ashamed
of their sins. Let them consider its perfection, 11and if they are ashamed of all they have
done, make known to them the design of the
temple — its arrangement, its exits and entrances — its whole design and all its regulations[d] and laws. Write these down before them
so that they may be faithful to its design and
follow all its regulations.

12"This is the law of the temple: All the surrounding area on top of the mountain will be
most holy. Such is the law of the temple.

[a] *3* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate; most Hebrew manuscripts *I* [b] *7* Or *the memorial monuments*; also in verse 9 [c] *7* Or *their high places* [d] *11* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *regulations and its whole design* [e] *13* That is, about 21 inches or about 53 centimeters; also in verses 14 and 17. The long cubit is the basic unit for linear measurement throughout Ezekiel 40–48. [f] *13,17* That is, about 11 inches or about 27 centimeters [g] *14* That is, about 3 1/2 feet high and 1 3/4 feet wide or about 105 centimeters high and 53 centimeters wide [h] *14* That is, about 7 feet high and 1 3/4 feet wide or about 2.1 meters high and 53 centimeters wide [i] *16* That is, about 21 feet or about 6.4 meters [j] *17* That is, about 25 feet or about 7.4 meters [k] *19* Or *purification offering*; also in verses 21, 22 and 25

The Great Altar Restored

13"These are the measurements of the altar
in long cubits,[e] that cubit being a cubit and a
handbreadth: Its gutter is a cubit deep and a
cubit wide, with a rim of one span[f] around the
edge. And this is the height of the altar: 14From
the gutter on the ground up to the lower ledge
that goes around the altar it is two cubits high,
and the ledge is a cubit wide.[g] From this lower
ledge to the upper ledge that goes around the
altar it is four cubits high, and that ledge is also
a cubit wide.[h] 15Above that, the altar hearth is
four cubits high, and four horns project upward
from the hearth. 16The altar hearth is square,
twelve cubits[i] long and twelve cubits wide.
17The upper ledge also is square, fourteen cubits[j] long and fourteen cubits wide. All around
the altar is a gutter of one cubit with a rim of
half a cubit.[f] The steps of the altar face east."

18Then he said to me, "Son of man, this is
what the Sovereign LORD says: These will be the
regulations for sacrificing burnt offerings and
splashing blood against the altar when it is built:
19You are to give a young bull as a sin offering[k]
to the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok,
who come near to minister before me, declares
the Sovereign LORD. 20You are to take some of
its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar
and on the four corners of the upper ledge and
all around the rim, and so purify the altar and
make atonement for it. 21You are to take the bull
for the sin offering and burn it in the designated
part of the temple area outside the sanctuary.

22"On the second day you are to offer a male
goat without defect for a sin offering, and the
altar is to be purified as it was purified with the
bull. 23When you have finished purifying it, you
are to offer a young bull and a ram from the
flock, both without defect. 24You are to offer
them before the LORD, and the priests are to
sprinkle salt on them and sacrifice them as a
burnt offering to the LORD.

25"For seven days you are to provide a male
goat daily for a sin offering; you are also to
provide a young bull and a ram from the flock,
both without defect. 26For seven days they are
to make atonement for the altar and cleanse it;
thus they will dedicate it. 27At the end of these
days, from the eighth day on, the priests are
to present your burnt offerings and fellowship
offerings on the altar. Then I will accept you,
declares the Sovereign LORD."

The Priesthood Restored

44 1Then the man brought me back to the
outer gate of the sanctuary, the one facing east, and it was shut. 2The LORD said to me,

"This gate is to remain shut. It must not be opened; no one may enter through it. It is to remain shut because the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered through it. 3The prince himself is the only one who may sit inside the gateway to eat in the presence of the LORD. He is to enter by way of the portico of the gateway and go out the same way."

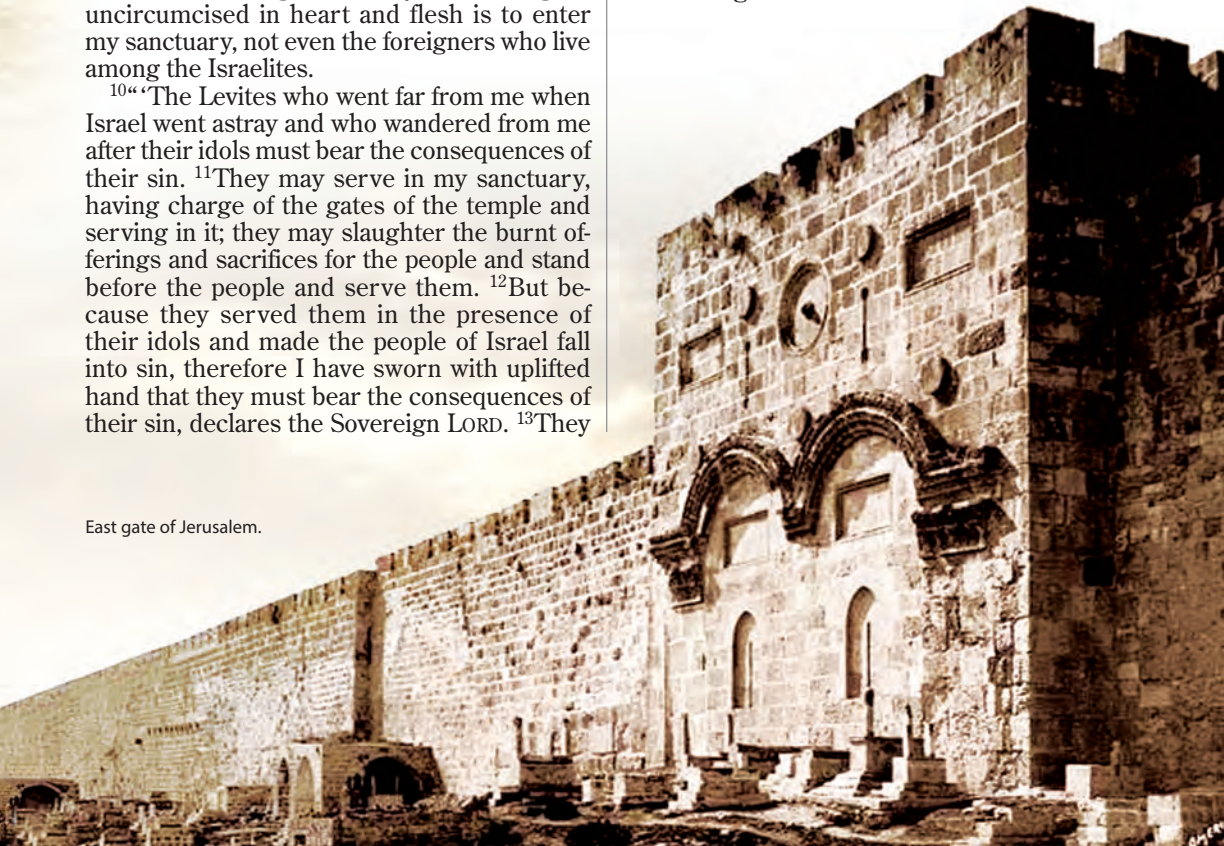
4Then the man brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple. I looked and saw the glory of the LORD filling the temple of the LORD, and I fell facedown.

5The LORD said to me, "Son of man, look carefully, listen closely and give attention to everything I tell you concerning all the regulations and instructions regarding the temple of the LORD. Give attention to the entrance to the temple and all the exits of the sanctuary. 6Say to rebellious Israel, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Enough of your detestable practices, people of Israel! 7In addition to all your other detestable practices, you brought foreigners uncircumcised in heart and flesh into my sanctuary, desecrating my temple while you offered me food, fat and blood, and you broke my covenant. 8Instead of carrying out your duty in regard to my holy things, you put others in charge of my sanctuary. 9This is what the Sovereign LORD says: No foreigner uncircumcised in heart and flesh is to enter my sanctuary, not even the foreigners who live among the Israelites.

10" 'The Levites who went far from me when Israel went astray and who wandered from me after their idols must bear the consequences of their sin. 11They may serve in my sanctuary, having charge of the gates of the temple and serving in it; they may slaughter the burnt offerings and sacrifices for the people and stand before the people and serve them. 12But because they served them in the presence of their idols and made the people of Israel fall into sin, therefore I have sworn with uplifted hand that they must bear the consequences of their sin, declares the Sovereign LORD. 13They are not to come near to serve me as priests or come near any of my holy things or my most holy offerings; they must bear the shame of their detestable practices. 14And I will appoint them to guard the temple for all the work that is to be done in it.

15" 'But the Levitical priests, who are descendants of Zadok and who guarded my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me, are to come near to minister before me; they are to stand before me to offer sacrifices of fat and blood, declares the Sovereign LORD. 16They alone are to enter my sanctuary; they alone are to come near my table to minister before me and serve me as guards.

17" 'When they enter the gates of the inner court, they are to wear linen clothes; they must not wear any woolen garment while ministering at the gates of the inner court or inside the temple. 18They are to wear linen turbans on their heads and linen undergarments around their waists. They must not wear anything that makes them perspire. 19When they go out into the outer court where the people are, they are to take off the clothes they have been ministering in and are to leave them in the sacred rooms, and put on other clothes, so that the people are not consecrated through contact with their garments.



East gate of Jerusalem.

20 "'They must not shave their heads or let
their hair grow long, but they are to keep the
hair of their heads trimmed. 21 No priest is to
drink wine when he enters the inner court.
22 They must not marry widows or divorced
women; they may marry only virgins of Isra-
elite descent or widows of priests. 23 They are
to teach my people the difference between the
holy and the common and show them how to
distinguish between the unclean and the clean.
24 "'In any dispute, the priests are to serve
as judges and decide it according to my ordi-
nances. They are to keep my laws and my de-
crees for all my appointed festivals, and they
are to keep my Sabbaths holy.
25 "'A priest must not defile himself by going
near a dead person; however, if the dead per-
son was his father or mother, son or daughter,
brother or unmarried sister, then he may de-
file himself. 26 After he is cleansed, he must wait
seven days. 27 On the day he goes into the inner
court of the sanctuary to minister in the sanc-
tuary, he is to offer a sin offering[a] for himself,
declares the Sovereign LORD.
28 "'I am to be the only inheritance the priests
have. You are to give them no possession in Is-
rael; I will be their possession. 29 They will eat
the grain offerings, the sin offerings and the
guilt offerings; and everything in Israel devot-
ed[b] to the LORD will belong to them. 30 The best
of all the firstfruits and of all your special gifts
will belong to the priests. You are to give them
the first portion of your ground meal so that
a blessing may rest on your household. 31 The
priests must not eat anything, whether bird or
animal, found dead or torn by wild animals.

Israel Fully Restored

45 1 "'When you allot the land as an inher-
itance, you are to present to the LORD a
portion of the land as a sacred district, 25,000
cubits[c] long and 20,000[d] cubits[e] wide; the en-
tire area will be holy. 2 Of this, a section 500
cubits[f] square is to be for the sanctuary, with
50 cubits[g] around it for open land. 3 In the sa-
cred district, measure off a section 25,000 cu-
bits long and 10,000 cubits[h] wide. In it will be
the sanctuary, the Most Holy Place. 4 It will be
the sacred portion of the land for the priests,
who minister in the sanctuary and who draw
near to minister before the LORD. It will be a
place for their houses as well as a holy place for
the sanctuary. 5 An area 25,000 cubits long and
10,000 cubits wide will belong to the Levites,
who serve in the temple, as their possession
for towns to live in.[i]
6 "'You are to give the city as its property an
area 5,000 cubits[j] wide and 25,000 cubits long,
adjoining the sacred portion; it will belong to
all Israel.
7 "'The prince will have the land bordering
each side of the area formed by the sacred dis-
trict and the property of the city. It will extend
westward from the west side and eastward
from the east side, running lengthwise from
the western to the eastern border parallel to
one of the tribal portions. 8 This land will be
his possession in Israel. And my princes will
no longer oppress my people but will allow the
people of Israel to possess the land according
to their tribes.
9 "'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: You
have gone far enough, princes of Israel! Give
up your violence and oppression and do what
is just and right. Stop dispossessing my people,
declares the Sovereign LORD. 10 You are to use
accurate scales, an accurate ephah[k] and an ac-
curate bath.[l] 11 The ephah and the bath are to
be the same size, the bath containing a tenth of
a homer and the ephah a tenth of a homer; the
homer is to be the standard measure for both.
12 The shekel[m] is to consist of twenty gerahs.
Twenty shekels plus twenty-five shekels plus
fifteen shekels equal one mina.[n]
13 "'This is the special gift you are to of-
fer: a sixth of an ephah[o] from each homer
of wheat and a sixth of an ephah[p] from each
homer of barley. 14 The prescribed portion of

Trade & Economics
Standard weights from the ancient world show many variations in size. The call for "accurate scales" (Eze 45:10), however, would be satisfied by maintaining consistency within a certain region and by fair play on the part of sellers. Scales from the Roman world used a pan hanging from one end of a beam. Such scales have been recovered undamaged from the ruins of Pompeii.

[a] *27* Or *purification offering*; also in verse 29
[b] *29* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD.
[c] *1* That is, about 8 miles or about 13 kilometers; also in verses 3, 5 and 6
[d] *1* Septuagint (see also verses 3 and 5 and 48:9); Hebrew *10,000*
[e] *1* That is, about 6 1/2 miles or about 11 kilometers
[f] *2* That is, about 875 feet or about 265 meters
[g] *2* That is, about 88 feet or about 27 meters
[h] *3* That is, about 3 1/3 miles or about 5.3 kilometers; also in verse 5
[i] *5* Septuagint; Hebrew *temple; they will have as their possession 20 rooms*
[j] *6* That is, about 1 2/3 miles or about 2.7 kilometers
[k] *10* An ephah was a dry measure having the capacity of about 3/5 bushel or about 22 liters.
[l] *10* A bath was a liquid measure equaling about 6 gallons or about 22 liters.
[m] *12* A shekel weighed about 2/5 ounce or about 12 grams.
[n] *12* That is, 60 shekels; the common mina was 50 shekels. Sixty shekels were about 1 1/2 pounds or about 690 grams.
[o] *13* That is, probably about 6 pounds or about 2.7 kilograms
[p] *13* That is, probably about 5 pounds or about 2.3 kilograms

The Prince in the Temple (Eze 46:2)

In 586 B.C. the Babylonians destroyed the Jerusalem temple. As part of his prophecy of hope following this destruction, Ezekiel envisioned a new temple in a restored Jerusalem (Eze 40–48). The "glory of the LORD," which had departed from the old temple (Eze 10:18, 19), returns to this new temple (Eze 43:1–5). Ezekiel then described to the people the design for the new temple, including the regulations and laws related to it (Eze 43:10, 11).

A "prince" will rule in this restored Jerusalem. The prince will have certain prerogatives, such as owning special property in Jerusalem around the holy space of the temple (45:6, 7). More significantly, only the prince may enter the east gate (44:1–3), the gate through which God's glory had reentered the temple (43:4).

The prince will be the civil ruler, but also a part of the religious organization. He will lead the people in their proper worship. During the Sabbath sacrifices, the prince offers burnt and peace sacrifices via the east gate, itself a large room, while the people look on from the outside (Eze 46:2). Additionally, the sacrificial duty of the prince extends to the monthly New Moon sacrifice (46:6, 7), as well as freewill burnt and fellowship offerings (46:12).

Yet the prince must also be along when the people offer their sacrifices. The people are not free to roam in the temple courts; they enter via the north or south gate, escorted by the prince, and leave via the opposite gate (46:9, 10).

In the restored Jerusalem of Ezekiel's vision, then, the prince combines in his own body the civic and the sacred role to maintain the city in purity and righteousness. He orders the life of the people around the temple, which again will be filled with the glory of the Lord.

olive oil, measured by the bath, is a tenth of a bath[a] from each cor (which consists of ten baths or one homer, for ten baths are equivalent to a homer). 15Also one sheep is to be taken from every flock of two hundred from the well-watered pastures of Israel. These will be used for the grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the people, declares the Sovereign LORD. 16All the people of the land will be required to give this special offering to the prince in Israel. 17It will be the duty of the prince to provide the burnt offerings, grain offerings and drink offerings at the festivals, the New Moons and the Sabbaths—at all the appointed festivals of Israel. He will provide the sin offerings,[b] grain offerings, burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to make atonement for the Israelites.

18"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: In the first month on the first day you are to take a young bull without defect and purify the sanctuary. 19The priest is to take some of the blood of the sin offering and put it on the doorposts of the temple, on the four corners of the upper ledge of the altar and on the gateposts of the inner court. 20You are to do the same on the seventh day of the month for anyone who sins unintentionally or through ignorance; so you are to make atonement for the temple.

21"'In the first month on the fourteenth day you are to observe the Passover, a festival lasting seven days, during which you shall eat bread made without yeast. 22On that day the prince is to provide a bull as a sin offering for himself and for all the people of the land. 23Every day during the seven days of the festival he is to provide seven bulls and seven rams without defect as a burnt offering to the LORD, and a male goat for a sin offering. 24He is to provide as a grain offering an ephah for each bull and an ephah for each ram, along with a hin[c] of olive oil for each ephah.

25"'During the seven days of the festival, which begins in the seventh month on the fifteenth day, he is to make the same provision for sin offerings, burnt offerings, grain offerings and oil.

46 1"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: The gate of the inner court facing east is to be shut on the six working days, but on the Sabbath day and on the day of the New Moon it is to be opened. 2The prince is to enter from the outside through the portico of the gateway and stand by the gatepost. The priests are to sacrifice his burnt offering and his fellowship offerings. He is to bow down in worship at the threshold of the gateway and then go out, but the gate will not be shut until evening. 3On the Sabbaths and New Moons the people of the land are to worship in the presence of the LORD at the entrance of that gateway. 4The burnt offering the prince brings to the LORD on the Sabbath day is to be six male lambs and a ram, all without defect. 5The grain offering given with the ram is to be an ephah,[d] and the grain offering with the lambs is to be as much as he pleases, along with a hin[e] of olive oil for each

[a] *14* That is, about 2 1/2 quarts or about 2.2 liters
[b] *17* Or *purification offerings*; also in verses 19, 22, 23 and 25
[c] *24* That is, about 1 gallon or about 3.8 liters
[d] *5* That is, probably about 35 pounds or about 16 kilograms; also in verses 7 and 11
[e] *5* That is, about 1 gallon or about 3.8 liters; also in verses 7 and 11

ephah. 6On the day of the New Moon he is to offer a young bull, six lambs and a ram, all without defect. 7He is to provide as a grain offering one ephah with the bull, one ephah with the ram, and with the lambs as much as he wants to give, along with a hin of oil for each ephah. 8When the prince enters, he is to go in through the portico of the gateway, and he is to come out the same way.

9"'When the people of the land come before the LORD at the appointed festivals, whoever enters by the north gate to worship is to go out the south gate; and whoever enters by the south gate is to go out the north gate. No one is to return through the gate by which they entered, but each is to go out the opposite gate. 10The prince is to be among them, going in when they go in and going out when they go out. 11At the feasts and the appointed festivals, the grain offering is to be an ephah with a bull, an ephah with a ram, and with the lambs as much as he pleases, along with a hin of oil for each ephah.

12"'When the prince provides a freewill offering to the LORD—whether a burnt offering or fellowship offerings—the gate facing east is to be opened for him. He shall offer his burnt offering or his fellowship offerings as he does on the Sabbath day. Then he shall go out, and after he has gone out, the gate will be shut.

13"'Every day you are to provide a year-old lamb without defect for a burnt offering to the LORD; morning by morning you shall provide it. 14You are also to provide with it morning by morning a grain offering, consisting of a sixth of an ephah[a] with a third of a hin[b] of oil to moisten the flour. The presenting of this grain offering to the LORD is a lasting ordinance. 15So the lamb and the grain offering and the oil shall be provided morning by morning for a regular burnt offering.

16"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: If the prince makes a gift from his inheritance to one of his sons, it will also belong to his descendants; it is to be their property by inheritance. 17If, however, he makes a gift from his inheritance to one of his servants, the servant may keep it until the year of freedom; then it will revert to the prince. His inheritance belongs to his sons only; it is theirs. 18The prince must not take any of the inheritance of the people, driving them off their property. He is to give his sons their inheritance out of his own property, so that not one of my people will be separated from their property.'"

19Then the man brought me through the entrance at the side of the gate to the sacred rooms facing north, which belonged to the priests, and showed me a place at the western end. 20He said to me, "This is the place where the priests are to cook the guilt offering and the sin offering[c] and bake the grain offering, to avoid bringing them into the outer court and consecrating the people."

21He then brought me to the outer court and led me around to its four corners, and I saw in each corner another court. 22In the four corners of the outer court were enclosed[d] courts, forty cubits long and thirty cubits wide;[e] each of the courts in the four corners was the same size. 23Around the inside of each of the four courts was a ledge of stone, with places for fire built all around under the ledge. 24He said to me, "These are the kitchens where those who minister at the temple are to cook the sacrifices of the people."

The River From the Temple

47 1The man brought me back to the entrance to the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. 2He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was trickling from the south side.

3As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits[f] and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. 4He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. 5He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. 6He asked me, "Son of man, do you see this?"

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. 7When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. 8He said to me, "This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah,[g] where it enters the Dead Sea. When it empties into

[a] *14* That is, probably about 6 pounds or about 2.7 kilograms
[b] *14* That is, about 1 1/2 quarts or about 1.3 liters
[c] *20* Or *purification offering* [d] *22* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [e] *22* That is, about 70 feet long and 53 feet wide or about 21 meters long and 16 meters wide [f] *3* That is, about 1,700 feet or about 530 meters [g] *8* Or *the Jordan Valley*

the sea, the salty water there becomes fresh. 9Swarms of living creatures will live wherever the river flows. There will be large numbers of fish, because this water flows there and makes the salt water fresh; so where the river flows everything will live. 10Fishermen will stand along the shore; from En Gedi to En Eglaim there will be places for spreading nets. The fish will be of many kinds—like the fish of the Mediterranean Sea. 11But the swamps and marshes will not become fresh; they will be left for salt. 12Fruit trees of all kinds will grow on both banks of the river. Their leaves will not wither, nor will their fruit fail. Every month they will bear fruit, because the water from the sanctuary flows to them. Their fruit will serve for food and their leaves for healing."

The Boundaries of the Land

13This is what the Sovereign LORD says: "These are the boundaries of the land that you will divide among the twelve tribes of Israel as their inheritance, with two portions for Joseph. 14You are to divide it equally among them. Because I swore with uplifted hand to give it to your ancestors, this land will become your inheritance.

15"This is to be the boundary of the land:

"On the north side it will run from the Mediterranean Sea by the Hethlon road past Lebo Hamath to Zedad, 16Berothah[a] and Sibraim (which lies on the border between Damascus and Hamath), as far as Hazer Hattikon, which is on the border of Hauran. 17The boundary will extend from the sea to Hazar Enan,[b] along the northern border of Damascus, with the border of Hamath to the north. This will be the northern boundary.

18"On the east side the boundary will run between Hauran and Damascus, along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel, to the Dead Sea and as far as Tamar.[c] This will be the eastern boundary.

19"On the south side it will run from Tamar as far as the waters of Meribah Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea. This will be the southern boundary.

20"On the west side, the Mediterranean Sea will be the boundary to a point opposite Lebo Hamath. This will be the western boundary.

21"You are to distribute this land among yourselves according to the tribes of Israel. 22You are to allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the foreigners residing among you and who have children. You are to consider them as native-born Israelites; along with you they are to be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel. 23In whatever tribe a foreigner resides, there you are to give them their inheritance," declares the Sovereign LORD.

The Division of the Land

48 1"These are the tribes, listed by name: At the northern frontier, Dan will have one portion; it will follow the Hethlon road to Lebo Hamath; Hazar Enan and the northern border of Damascus next to Hamath will be part of its border from the east side to the west side.

2"Asher will have one portion; it will border the territory of Dan from east to west.

3"Naphtali will have one portion; it will border the territory of Asher from east to west.

4"Manasseh will have one portion; it will border the territory of Naphtali from east to west.

5"Ephraim will have one portion; it will border the territory of Manasseh from east to west.

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[a] *15,16* See Septuagint and 48:1; Hebrew *road to go into Zedad, 16Hamath, Berothah.* [b] *17* Hebrew *Enon,* a variant of *Enan* [c] *18* See Syriac; Hebrew *Israel. You will measure to the Dead Sea.*

6"Reuben will have one portion; it will border
the territory of Ephraim from east to west.
7"Judah will have one portion; it will border
the territory of Reuben from east to west.
8"Bordering the territory of Judah from east
to west will be the portion you are to present
as a special gift. It will be 25,000 cubits[a] wide,
and its length from east to west will equal one
of the tribal portions; the sanctuary will be in
the center of it.
9"The special portion you are to offer to the
LORD will be 25,000 cubits long and 10,000 cu-
bits[b] wide. 10This will be the sacred portion for
the priests. It will be 25,000 cubits long on the
north side, 10,000 cubits wide on the west side,
10,000 cubits wide on the east side and 25,000
cubits long on the south side. In the center of
it will be the sanctuary of the LORD. 11This will
be for the consecrated priests, the Zadokites,
who were faithful in serving me and did not go
astray as the Levites did when the Israelites
went astray. 12It will be a special gift to them
from the sacred portion of the land, a most holy
portion, bordering the territory of the Levites.
13"Alongside the territory of the priests, the
Levites will have an allotment 25,000 cubits
long and 10,000 cubits wide. Its total length
will be 25,000 cubits and its width 10,000 cu-
bits. 14They must not sell or exchange any of it.
This is the best of the land and must not pass
into other hands, because it is holy to the LORD.
15"The remaining area, 5,000 cubits[c] wide
and 25,000 cubits long, will be for the common
use of the city, for houses and for pastureland.
The city will be in the center of it 16and will
have these measurements: the north side 4,500
cubits,[d] the south side 4,500 cubits, the east
side 4,500 cubits, and the west side 4,500 cu-
bits. 17The pastureland for the city will be 250
cubits[e] on the north, 250 cubits on the south,
250 cubits on the east, and 250 cubits on the
west. 18What remains of the area, bordering on
the sacred portion and running the length of it,
will be 10,000 cubits on the east side and 10,000
cubits on the west side. Its produce will supply
food for the workers of the city. 19The workers
from the city who farm it will come from all the
tribes of Israel. 20The entire portion will be a
square, 25,000 cubits on each side. As a special
gift you will set aside the sacred portion, along
with the property of the city.

21"What remains on both sides of the area
formed by the sacred portion and the proper-
ty of the city will belong to the prince. It will
extend eastward from the 25,000 cubits of the
sacred portion to the eastern border, and west-
ward from the 25,000 cubits to the western bor-
der. Both these areas running the length of the
tribal portions will belong to the prince, and
the sacred portion with the temple sanctuary
will be in the center of them. 22So the property
of the Levites and the property of the city will
lie in the center of the area that belongs to the
prince. The area belonging to the prince will lie
between the border of Judah and the border of
Benjamin.
23"As for the rest of the tribes: Benjamin will
have one portion; it will extend from the east
side to the west side.
24"Simeon will have one portion; it will bor-
der the territory of Benjamin from east to
west.
25"Issachar will have one portion; it will bor-
der the territory of Simeon from east to west.
26"Zebulun will have one portion; it will bor-
der the territory of Issachar from east to west.
27"Gad will have one portion; it will border
the territory of Zebulun from east to west.
28"The southern boundary of Gad will run
south from Tamar to the waters of Meribah
Kadesh, then along the Wadi of Egypt to the
Mediterranean Sea.
29"This is the land you are to allot as an inher-
itance to the tribes of Israel, and these will be
their portions," declares the Sovereign LORD.

The Gates of the New City

30"These will be the exits of the city: Begin-
ning on the north side, which is 4,500 cubits
long, 31the gates of the city will be named af-
ter the tribes of Israel. The three gates on the
north side will be the gate of Reuben, the gate
of Judah and the gate of Levi.
32"On the east side, which is 4,500 cubits
long, will be three gates: the gate of Joseph,
the gate of Benjamin and the gate of Dan.
33"On the south side, which measures 4,500
cubits, will be three gates: the gate of Simeon,
the gate of Issachar and the gate of Zebulun.
34"On the west side, which is 4,500 cubits
long, will be three gates: the gate of Gad, the
gate of Asher and the gate of Naphtali.
35"The distance all around will be 18,000 cu-
bits.[f]
"And the name of the city from that time on
will be:

THE LORD IS THERE."

[a] *8* That is, about 8 miles or about 13 kilometers; also in verses 9, 10, 13, 15, 20 and 21 [b] *9* That is, about 3 1/3 miles or about 5.3 kilometers; also in verses 10, 13 and 18 [c] *15* That is, about 1 2/3 miles or about 2.7 kilometers [d] *16* That is, about 1 1/2 miles or about 2.4 kilometers; also in verses 30, 32, 33 and 34 [e] *17* That is, about 440 feet or about 135 meters [f] *35* That is, about 6 miles or about 9.5 kilometers

TRANSITION

Nebuchadnezzar's Siege of Tyre

After destroying Jerusalem in 586 b.c., Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, moved north and laid siege to the fortress city of Tyre. This was a formidable task, for not only was Tyre on an island, just off the coast, but it was a great seaport, able to supply itself from the sea. For 13 years, Nebuchadnezzar sought to bring it to heel, but without success. In 572 b.c. he gave up and lifted the siege.

The prophet Ezekiel had had much to say about Tyre in earlier years (Eze 27; 28). He had foretold the eventual humbling of Tyre's pride and the desolation of the city. In the 27th year of Jehoiachin's exile (possibly April, 571 b.c.; Eze 29:17), after Nebuchadnezzar had lifted the siege, Ezekiel received a new message. He declared that God would allow Nebuchadnezzar to conquer Egypt as a sort of consolation prize for his futile efforts at Tyre (29:17–21). While the prophecies against Egypt in Eze 30:1–19 are not dated specifically to this time, they can be understood as a further elaboration of this promise.

- **Ezekiel 29:17–21**
- **Ezekiel 30:1–19**

Ezekiel 29:17–21

Nebuchadnezzar's Reward

29:17 In the twenty-seventh year, in the first month on the first day, the word of the LORD came to me: 18"Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon drove his army in a hard campaign against Tyre; every head was rubbed bare and every shoulder made raw. Yet he and his army got no reward from the campaign he led against Tyre. 19Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am going to give Egypt to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he will carry off its wealth. He will loot and plunder the land as pay for his army. 20I have given him Egypt as a reward for his efforts because he and his army did it for me, declares the Sovereign LORD.

21"On that day I will make a horn[a] grow for the Israelites, and I will open your mouth among them. Then they will know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 30:1–19

A Lament Over Egypt

30:1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2"Son of man, prophesy and say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'Wail and say,
"Alas for that day!"

3For the day is near,
the day of the LORD is near—
a day of clouds,
a time of doom for the nations.
4A sword will come against Egypt,
and anguish will come upon Cush.[b]
When the slain fall in Egypt,
her wealth will be carried away
and her foundations torn down.

5Cush and Libya, Lydia and all Arabia, Kub and the people of the covenant land will fall by the sword along with Egypt.

6"'This is what the LORD says:

"'The allies of Egypt will fall
and her proud strength will fail.
From Migdol to Aswan
they will fall by the sword within her,
declares the Sovereign LORD.
7"'They will be desolate
among desolate lands,
and their cities will lie
among ruined cities.
8Then they will know that I am the LORD,
when I set fire to Egypt
and all her helpers are crushed.

9"'On that day messengers will go out from me in ships to frighten Cush out of her complacency. Anguish will take hold of them on the day of Egypt's doom, for it is sure to come.

10"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'I will put an end to the hordes of Egypt
by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.
11He and his army—the most ruthless of nations—
will be brought in to destroy the land.
They will draw their swords against Egypt
and fill the land with the slain.
12I will dry up the waters of the Nile
and sell the land to an evil nation;
by the hand of foreigners
I will lay waste the land and everything in it.

I the LORD have spoken.

13"'This is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"'I will destroy the idols
and put an end to the images in Memphis.
No longer will there be a prince in Egypt,
and I will spread fear throughout the land.

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[a] *21* *Horn* here symbolizes strength. [b] *4* That is, the upper Nile region; also in verses 5 and 9

Egypt's City of Sun Worship (Eze 30:17)

The prophet Ezekiel pronounced judgment upon several Egyptian cities, one by the name of Heliopolis (Eze 30:17), sometimes called Aven. In the Hebrew language, "Aven" is probably a different pronunciation for the Hebrew name "On." On was an important Egyptian city in the Delta region. In patriarchal times, Joseph had married the daughter of the priest of On (Ge 41:45). The city is now identified with Tell Hisn, a site in the northern suburbs of modern Cairo.

Although the city of On was never a major political center, the local priesthood wielded a strong religious influence throughout Egyptian history. On was known primarily for the worship of solar deities and, during Egypt's New Kingdom period (c. 1550–1069 B.C.), played a major role in Egyptian theology of the kingship. Kings were considered to be the image of the sun god on earth.

One of the most controversial monarchs of the New Kingdom, Pharaoh Akhenaten (1352–1336 B.C.), built a temple in honor of the sun disk at On. He introduced the worship of this object to Egypt, describing it as having the attributes of transcendence and even uniqueness. The sun worship so prominent in On is reflected in "Heliopolis," which is merely Greek for "city of the sun." So also Jeremiah calls the city "the temple of the sun in Egypt" (Jer 43:13).

The prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel both prophesied of the Babylonian campaign against Egypt in 567 B.C. Jeremiah proclaims that Nebuchadnezzar would "demolish the sacred pillars" in "the temple of the sun in Egypt" (Jer 43:10, 13); Ezekiel, that by Nebuchadnezzar's hand "the young men of Heliopolis" would fall (Eze 30:10, 17).

14 I will lay waste Upper Egypt,
set fire to Zoan
and inflict punishment on Thebes.
15 I will pour out my wrath on Pelusium,
the stronghold of Egypt,
and wipe out the hordes of Thebes.
16 I will set fire to Egypt;
Pelusium will writhe in agony.
Thebes will be taken by storm;
Memphis will be in constant distress.
17 The young men of Heliopolis and Bubastis
will fall by the sword,
and the cities themselves will go into captivity.
18 Dark will be the day at Tahpanhes
when I break the yoke of Egypt;
there her proud strength will come to an end.
She will be covered with clouds,
and her villages will go into captivity.
19 So I will inflict punishment on Egypt,
and they will know that I am the LORD.'"

Politics & Government

The Egyptians employed mercenary soldiers from the countries around them. Cush (Ethiopia) was to the south, Libya to the west, and Lydia in what is today Turkey. "Kub" (Eze 30:5) is possibly another Hebrew term for Libya. The relative strength of Egypt and these countries fluctuated. There were periods when Egypt was ruled by Ethiopians as well as by Libyans.

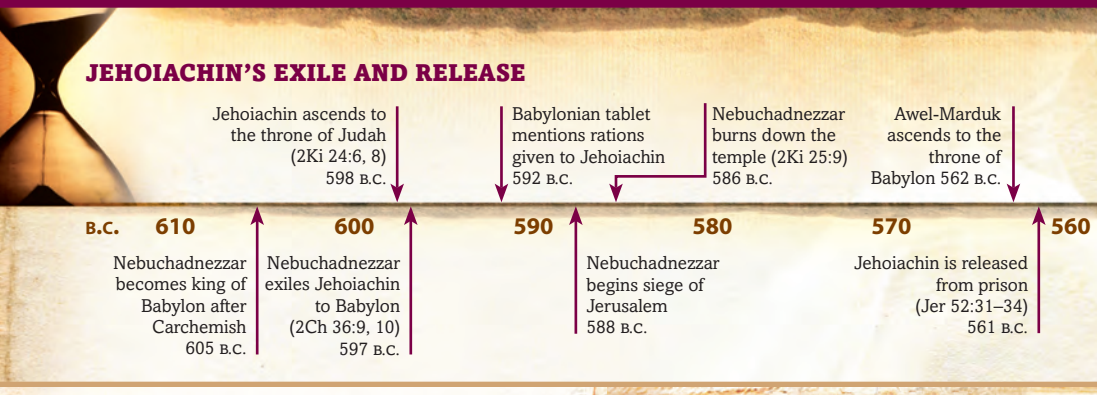
TRANSITION

Prophetic Account: Hope for the Future

King Nebuchadnezzar died in 562 b.c. and was succeeded briefly by his son Amel-Marduk, or as the Bible spells it, Awel-Marduk. By this time the Neo-Babylonian Empire had reached its peak. It began to decline almost immediately in the rush of kings and usurpers that followed (see "Exile in Babylon" at Eze 33:1).

The prophetic account of the history of Israel led up to a climactic destruction. Jerusalem, the temple, the kingdom, and the unbroken line of Davidic kings had all come to an end. That prophetic history ends, though, with a faint note of hope: Jehoiachin, the rightful king of Judah who had been taken captive to Babylon, was released from prison. He assumed a place in the court of Awel-Marduk, where he "for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table" (2Ki 25:29). The historical appendix to the Book of Jeremiah (Jer 52:31–34) records that Jehoiachin remained in Babylon "till the day of his death" (52:34).

JEHOIACHIN'S EXILE AND RELEASE



Jehoiachin's release came in the 37th year of his captivity (possibly March, 561 b.c.). As a hope for a restored Israel it was not much, and the picture of the Davidic king serving in a foreign king's court was hardly flattering to Israel's dignity. Still, the line of David was not completely cut off, which left some hope of eventual restoration. After all, David himself began by serving in another king's court (1Sa 16–20).

- **2 Kings 25:27–30**
- **Jeremiah 52:31–34**

2 Kings 25:27–30

Jehoiachin Released

25 :27 In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Awel-Marduk became king of Babylon, he released Jehoiachin king of Judah from prison. He did this on the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month. [28]He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. [29]So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. [30]Day by day the king gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived.

Jeremiah 52:31–34

Jehoiachin Released

52 :31 In the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the year Awel-Marduk became king of Babylon, on the twenty-fifth day of the twelfth month, he released Jehoiachin king of Judah and freed him from prison. [32]He spoke kindly to him and gave him a seat of honor higher than those of the other kings who were with him in Babylon. [33]So Jehoiachin put aside his prison clothes and for the rest of his life ate regularly at the king's table. [34]Day by day the king of Babylon gave Jehoiachin a regular allowance as long as he lived, till the day of his death.

TRANSITION

Isaiah and the Fall of Babylon

The prophet Isaiah, son of Amoz, lived during the Neo-Assyrian Empire, almost 200 years before the time of the Neo-Babylonian Empire (626–539 b.c.). Nevertheless, the Book of Isaiah records some prophecies (Isa 13:1—14:23; 21:1–17) in which Babylon's fall is described.

Some scholars suggest that these oracles refer to the Babylon of Isaiah's own day. During Assyria's rule in the 8th century b.c., Babylon was a continual thorn in the Assyrian side. The Babylonian ruler, Marduk-Baladan, twice managed to declare independence from Assyria (721–710 and 703–702 b.c.). The destruction of Babylon that Isaiah prophesies, then, would describe the assault of the Assyrian king Sargon in about 710 b.c., which put down Babylon's first rebellion. While this interpretation is surely possible, it seems odd. Marduk-Baladan was a guerrilla leader, who spent much of his time hiding in the swamps. As such, he bears little resemblance to the great, world ruler described in Isa 14.

Other scholars understand these oracles as referring to the later and much greater Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar and his successors in the 6th century b.c. This king of Babylon was the one "who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble" (Isa 14:16). The Medes (13:17; 21:2) contributed to this later Babylon's downfall. Israel would return from captivity in this Babylon (14:1, 2). All of these details fit the later Babylon far better than the earlier, and so these prophecies can be associated with the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Although Isa 33–35 do not name Babylon, several strong indicators suggest reading these chapters in light of Babylon's destruction of Jerusalem in 586 b.c. and the aftermath of that event. In Isa 21 Babylon is called a looter (21:2, 9), and Isa 33:1 calls down woe on "the destroyer" in very similar language. Also, the judgments of Jer 49:7–22 and Obadiah condemn Edom for its part in Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem. Reminiscent of these passages is Isa 34, which calls down a

Awel-Marduk Extends Goodwill (Jer 52:31)

Awel-Marduk ruled from 562 to 560 B.C. as the third king of the Chaldean dynasty of Babylon. His Accadian name, Amel-Marduk, means "man of Marduk." Little is known of his short reign, which was quite different from that of his famous father, Nebuchadnezzar II, whom he succeeded. Nebuchadnezzar conducted several campaigns, including the conquering of Jerusalem, while no military engagements of Awel-Marduk are recorded in the known ancient literature.

The only mention of Awel-Marduk in the Bible appears in two virtually identical references to the release of King Jehoiachin of Judah (2Ki 25:27; Jer 52:31). Jehoiachin was taken captive and exiled to Babylon in 597 B.C. by Nebuchadnezzar II. The historian of the books of Kings dates Jehoiachin's release to the 37th year of his captivity, which is usually reckoned as March, 561 B.C. Awel-Marduk did not allow the Judean king to leave, but rather placed him under house arrest, while treating him kindly (2Ki 25:28–30).

Greek, Jewish, and Latin sources later than the Bible have more to say about Awel-Marduk, calling him by the name "Evil-Merodach." Unfortunately, much of this material is probably more legendary than actual. Some of the stories about Awel-Marduk, or Evil-Merodach, come from Jewish Midrash, which is extensive Jewish commentary on biblical passages. The Babylonian chronicler Berossus does write that Evil-Merodach was assassinated soon after he released Jehoiachin.

curse on Edom in "retribution, to uphold Zion's cause" (34:8). Finally, the promise of Isa 35 that "those the Lord has rescued" will return to Zion (35:10) makes the most sense when read in light of the Babylonian captivity.

Because these chapters of Isaiah fit the later time period so well, many have suggested that they were not prophesied by the 8th-century Isaiah at all. At the very least, some propose that Isaiah's original words were expanded by 6th-century editors to apply more closely to their own time (see "Isaiah and Cyrus the Persian" at Isa 40:1). Others, though, accept Isaiah as the author and treat these words as a foretelling of the distant future.

- **Isaiah 13:1—14:23**
- **Isaiah 21:1–17**
- **Isaiah 33:1—35:10**

Isaiah 13:1—14:23

A Prophecy Against Babylon

13:1 A prophecy against Babylon that Isaiah son of Amoz saw:

2 Raise a banner on a bare hilltop,
shout to them;
beckon to them
to enter the gates of the nobles.
3 I have commanded those I prepared for battle;
I have summoned my warriors to carry out my wrath—
those who rejoice in my triumph.

4 Listen, a noise on the mountains,
like that of a great multitude!
Listen, an uproar among the kingdoms,
like nations massing together!
The Lord Almighty is mustering
an army for war.
5 They come from faraway lands,
from the ends of the heavens—
the Lord and the weapons of his wrath—
to destroy the whole country.

6 Wail, for the day of the Lord is near;
it will come like destruction from the Almighty.[a]
7 Because of this, all hands will go limp,
every heart will melt with fear.
8 Terror will seize them,
pain and anguish will grip them;
they will writhe like a woman in labor.
They will look aghast at each other,
their faces aflame.

9 See, the day of the Lord is coming
—a cruel day, with wrath and fierce anger—
to make the land desolate
and destroy the sinners within it.
10 The stars of heaven and their constellations
will not show their light.
The rising sun will be darkened
and the moon will not give its light.
11 I will punish the world for its evil,
the wicked for their sins.
I will put an end to the arrogance of the haughty
and will humble the pride of the ruthless.
12 I will make people scarcer than pure gold,
more rare than the gold of Ophir.
13 Therefore I will make the heavens tremble;
and the earth will shake from its place
at the wrath of the Lord Almighty,
in the day of his burning anger.

[a] 6 Hebrew *Shaddai*

14 Like a hunted gazelle,
like sheep without a shepherd,
they will all return to their own people,
they will flee to their native land.
15 Whoever is captured will be thrust through;
all who are caught will fall by the sword.
16 Their infants will be dashed to pieces before their eyes;
their houses will be looted and their wives violated.

17 See, I will stir up against them the Medes,
who do not care for silver
and have no delight in gold.
18 Their bows will strike down the young men;
they will have no mercy on infants,
nor will they look with compassion on children.
19 Babylon, the jewel of kingdoms,
the pride and glory of the Babylonians,[a]
will be overthrown by God
like Sodom and Gomorrah.
20 She will never be inhabited
or lived in through all generations;
there no nomads will pitch their tents,
there no shepherds will rest their flocks.
21 But desert creatures will lie there,
jackals will fill her houses;
there the owls will dwell,
and there the wild goats will leap about.
22 Hyenas will inhabit her strongholds,
jackals her luxurious palaces.
Her time is at hand,
and her days will not be prolonged.

14 1 The LORD will have compassion on Jacob;
once again he will choose Israel
and will settle them in their own land.
Foreigners will join them
and unite with the descendants of Jacob.
2 Nations will take them
and bring them to their own place.
And Israel will take possession of the nations
and make them male and female servants in the LORD's land.
They will make captives of their captors
and rule over their oppressors.

Brick panels from the Procession Way that ran from the Marduk temple to the Ishtar Gate and the Akitu Temple.

Geography & Environment
In the ancient world, the values of life were largely experienced through personal relations and group activities. So isolated areas, such as deserts, and the animals found there were viewed with distaste and fear. The owl (Isa 13:21), a nocturnal bird of prey, was fitted for desert life.

3 On the day the LORD gives you relief from your suffering and turmoil and from the harsh labor forced on you, 4 you will take up this taunt against the king of Babylon:

How the oppressor has come to an end!
How his fury[b] has ended!
5 The LORD has broken the rod of the wicked,
the scepter of the rulers,
6 which in anger struck down peoples
with unceasing blows,
and in fury subdued nations
with relentless aggression.
7 All the lands are at rest and at peace;
they break into singing.
8 Even the junipers and the cedars of Lebanon
gloat over you and say,
"Now that you have been laid low,
no one comes to cut us down."

9 The realm of the dead below is all astir
to meet you at your coming;
it rouses the spirits of the departed to greet you—
all those who were leaders in the world;
it makes them rise from their thrones—
all those who were kings over the nations.
10 They will all respond,
they will say to you,
"You also have become weak, as we are;
you have become like us."
11 All your pomp has been brought down to the grave,
along with the noise of your harps;

[a] *19* Or *Chaldeans* [b] *4* Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint and Syriac; the meaning of the word in the Masoretic Text is uncertain.

A Failed Assault on Heaven (Isa 14:12–15)

The prophet Isaiah uses mythological language in a proverb mocking the king of Babylon (Isa 14:4, 22). His references to the morning star, the ascent into the heavens, the mount of assembly, and to the realm of the dead (or the pit) would all have been familiar to his readers from the myths of the ancient Near East.

The name "morning star," or "Lucifer" in other translations (Isa 14:12), is a Latin translation of the Hebrew word *helel,* meaning "shining one." The morning star refers to the Day Star, Venus, and the prophet further identifies this morning star as "son of the dawn" (14:12). Similar language appears with the Ugaritic deities Shahar and Shalim. Shahar was the god of dawn or morning; Shalim, the god of dusk or evening. In another Ugaritic text, Shahar (morning) appears together with Athtar, the star deity who is also identified with Venus. So the ancient myths possibly had made Isaiah's readers familiar with the morning star whose father was the god of morning.

Isaiah's taunt of the morning star for wanting to ascend into heaven (14:13) may reflect the Ugaritic myth of Athtar, the Venus star deity. Athtar attempts to ascend to the throne of Baal, but is not able and is forced to return to his own, lower position in the pantheon. Athtar was not storming heaven, only sitting on the vacated throne of Baal. He excuses himself from the position upon realizing that he is too small. Nevertheless, a morning star ascending to heaven was known in Canaanite myth.

In Isaiah's proverb, the morning star desires to sit on "the mount of assembly" located "on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon" (14:13). Similarly, Canaanite myths spoke of the mountain home of Baal on Saphon, and also of a mount of assembly.

In Isaiah's proverb, the morning star fails to ascend to heaven and is brought down to the realm of the dead, the netherworld also called the pit (14:15). Similarly in ancient Near Eastern mythology gods could die and be sent to Mot's netherworld. The reason that Baal's throne was vacant in the Ugaritic myth was that Mot had vanquished Baal and taken him to the realm of the dead.

maggots are spread out beneath you
and worms cover you.

12 How you have fallen from heaven,
morning star, son of the dawn!
You have been cast down to the earth,
you who once laid low the nations!
13 You said in your heart,
"I will ascend to the heavens;
I will raise my throne
above the stars of God;
I will sit enthroned on the mount of
assembly,
on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon.[a]
14 I will ascend above the tops of the
clouds;
I will make myself like the Most High."
15 But you are brought down to the realm
of the dead,
to the depths of the pit.

16 Those who see you stare at you,
they ponder your fate:
"Is this the man who shook the earth
and made kingdoms tremble,
17 the man who made the world a wilderness,
who overthrew its cities
and would not let his captives go home?"

18 All the kings of the nations lie in state,
each in his own tomb.
19 But you are cast out of your tomb
like a rejected branch;
you are covered with the slain,
with those pierced by the sword,
those who descend to the stones of the
pit.
Like a corpse trampled underfoot,
20 you will not join them in burial,
for you have destroyed your land
and killed your people.

Let the offspring of the wicked
never be mentioned again.
21 Prepare a place to slaughter his
children
for the sins of their ancestors;
they are not to rise to inherit the land
and cover the earth with their cities.

22 "I will rise up against them,"
declares the LORD Almighty.
"I will wipe out Babylon's name and
survivors,
her offspring and descendants,"
declares the LORD.

[a] *13* Or *of the north*; Zaphon was the most sacred mountain of the Canaanites.

Beliefs & Ideas

The planet Venus was an important subject for ancient mythology. It is bright when it rises, but when the sun comes up, Venus becomes invisible like any other star. The prophet mocks the king of Babylon, calling him "morning star" (Isa 14:12), a translation of the Hebrew word for the Day Star Venus. The king was trying to rival God, like Venus tried to rival the sun, and the prophet rebuked him in these terms.

23 "I will turn her into a place for owls
and into swampland;
I will sweep her with the broom of
destruction,"
declares the LORD Almighty.

Isaiah 21:1–17

A Prophecy Against Babylon

21 :1 A prophecy against the Desert by the Sea:

Like whirlwinds sweeping through the
southland,
an invader comes from the desert,
from a land of terror.

2 A dire vision has been shown to me:
The traitor betrays, the looter takes loot.
Elam, attack! Media, lay siege!
I will bring to an end all the groaning she
caused.

3 At this my body is racked with pain,
pangs seize me, like those of a woman in
labor;
I am staggered by what I hear,
I am bewildered by what I see.
4 My heart falters,
fear makes me tremble;
the twilight I longed for
has become a horror to me.

5 They set the tables,
they spread the rugs,
they eat, they drink!
Get up, you officers,
oil the shields!

6 This is what the Lord says to me:

"Go, post a lookout
and have him report what he sees.
7 When he sees chariots
with teams of horses,
riders on donkeys
or riders on camels,
let him be alert,
fully alert."

8 And the lookout[a] shouted,

"Day after day, my lord, I stand on the
watchtower;
every night I stay at my post.
9 Look, here comes a man in a chariot
with a team of horses.
And he gives back the answer:
'Babylon has fallen, has fallen!
All the images of its gods
lie shattered on the ground!'"

10 My people who are crushed on the
threshing floor,
I tell you what I have heard
from the LORD Almighty,
from the God of Israel.

A Prophecy Against Edom

11 A prophecy against Dumah[b]:

Someone calls to me from Seir,
"Watchman, what is left of the night?
Watchman, what is left of the night?"
12 The watchman replies,
"Morning is coming, but also the
night.
If you would ask, then ask;
and come back yet again."

A Prophecy Against Arabia

13 A prophecy against Arabia:

You caravans of Dedanites,
who camp in the thickets of Arabia,
14 bring water for the thirsty;
you who live in Tema,
bring food for the fugitives.
15 They flee from the sword,
from the drawn sword,
from the bent bow
and from the heat of battle.

16 This is what the Lord says to me: "Within one year, as a servant bound by contract would count it, all the splendor of Kedar will come to an end. 17 The survivors of the archers, the warriors of Kedar, will be few." The LORD, the God of Israel, has spoken.

Isaiah 33:1—35:10

Distress and Help

33 :1 Woe to you, destroyer,
you who have not been destroyed!
Woe to you, betrayer,
you who have not been betrayed!
When you stop destroying,
you will be destroyed;
when you stop betraying,
you will be betrayed.

2 LORD, be gracious to us;
we long for you.
Be our strength every morning,
our salvation in time of distress.
3 At the uproar of your army, the peoples
flee;
when you rise up, the nations scatter.

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[a] *8* Dead Sea Scrolls and Syriac; Masoretic Text *A lion*
[b] *11* *Dumah*, a wordplay on *Edom*, means *silence* or *stillness.*

TIME CAPSULE		560 to 556 B.C.
560		Anaximander of Miletus is first known Greek prose writer
559		Cyrus II ascends throne of Persia and founds the Achaemenid dynasty
559–331		Achaemenid dynasty marks a period of the Persian Empire's dominance
559–530		Cyrus the Great of Persia
556–539		Nabonidus, king of Babylon, promotes the moon god Sin

4 Your plunder, O nations, is harvested as by
young locusts;
like a swarm of locusts people pounce
on it.

5 The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high;
he will fill Zion with his justice and
righteousness.
6 He will be the sure foundation for your times,
a rich store of salvation and wisdom and
knowledge;
the fear of the LORD is the key to this
treasure.[a]

7 Look, their brave men cry aloud in the
streets;
the envoys of peace weep bitterly.
8 The highways are deserted,
no travelers are on the roads.
The treaty is broken,
its witnesses[b] are despised,
no one is respected.
9 The land dries up and wastes away,
Lebanon is ashamed and withers;
Sharon is like the Arabah,
and Bashan and Carmel drop their leaves.

10 "Now will I arise," says the LORD.
"Now will I be exalted;
now will I be lifted up.
11 You conceive chaff,
you give birth to straw;
your breath is a fire that consumes you.
12 The peoples will be burned to ashes;
like cut thornbushes they will be set ablaze."

13 You who are far away, hear what I have
done;
you who are near, acknowledge my
power!
14 The sinners in Zion are terrified;
trembling grips the godless:
"Who of us can dwell with the consuming
fire?
Who of us can dwell with everlasting
burning?"
15 Those who walk righteously
and speak what is right,
who reject gain from extortion
and keep their hands from accepting
bribes,
who stop their ears against plots of murder
and shut their eyes against contemplating
evil—
16 they are the ones who will dwell on the
heights,
whose refuge will be the mountain
fortress.
Their bread will be supplied,
and water will not fail them.

17 Your eyes will see the king in his beauty
and view a land that stretches afar.
18 In your thoughts you will ponder the former
terror:
"Where is that chief officer?
Where is the one who took the revenue?
Where is the officer in charge of the
towers?"
19 You will see those arrogant people no
more,
people whose speech is obscure,
whose language is strange and
incomprehensible.

20 Look on Zion, the city of our festivals;
your eyes will see Jerusalem,
a peaceful abode, a tent that will not be
moved;
its stakes will never be pulled up,
nor any of its ropes broken.
21 There the LORD will be our Mighty One.
It will be like a place of broad rivers and
streams.
No galley with oars will ride them,
no mighty ship will sail them.
22 For the LORD is our judge,
the LORD is our lawgiver,
the LORD is our king;
it is he who will save us.

[a] 6 Or *is a treasure from him* [b] 8 Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text / *the cities*

Geography & Environment
Lebanon is on the Mediterranean coast north of Israel. Although it is a very small country, it includes a wide range of climates and is famous even today for the quality and variety of its fruits and vegetables. Apples, cherries, bananas, and oranges are all grown in Lebanon. The prophet warned of the destruction of this rich vegetation (Isa 33:9).

Lilith, a Deadly Demon (Isa 34:14)

The prophet Isaiah describes the total desolation which God would visit upon Edom for its hostility to God (Isa 34:2, 5). Among the descriptions of God's wrath is the sole reference in Scripture to a well-known Mesopotamian demon—Lilith.

Later Jewish tradition connected the name "Lilith" with the Hebrew word for "night," giving the traditional English translation "night creature" (Isa 34:14). However as a Mesopotamian name, "Lilith" comes from the Sumerian word *lil,* meaning "wind" (or "spirit").

The earliest records and amulets from Mesopotamia show that people there feared the Lilu, a group of particularly malevolent demons. Lilith herself was believed to attack both babies and mothers in childbirth, eating their flesh and sucking their blood. The only protection from the Lilu was to call upon the king of demons for help.

Jewish inscriptions and amulets describe Lilith in a similar fashion, but with additional features. She was known as a woman with long hair and wings, attacking men who slept alone. Jewish incantation bowls have been found which petition God to defeat and bind Lilith as she seeks her human prey.

For Isaiah, and his listeners, the threat of Lilith finding "places of rest" (Isa 34:14) amongst humans was nothing but terrifying. Where once the Edomite cities housed wisdom and life and cultured society, there would now be wasteland. Edom would become uninhabitable, the domain of wild animals and desert creatures. The nobility that once led the land would be gone (34:12). No human would dare to dwell in the area (34:10), for Lilith insures its perpetual desolation.

23 Your rigging hangs loose:
The mast is not held secure,
the sail is not spread.
Then an abundance of spoils will be divided
and even the lame will carry off plunder.
24 No one living in Zion will say, "I am ill";
and the sins of those who dwell there will be forgiven.

Judgment Against the Nations

34 1 Come near, you nations, and listen;
pay attention, you peoples!
Let the earth hear, and all that is in it,
the world, and all that comes out of it!
2 The LORD is angry with all nations;
his wrath is on all their armies.
He will totally destroy[a] them,
he will give them over to slaughter.
3 Their slain will be thrown out,
their dead bodies will stink;
the mountains will be soaked with their blood.
4 All the stars in the sky will be dissolved
and the heavens rolled up like a scroll;
all the starry host will fall
like withered leaves from the vine,
like shriveled figs from the fig tree.

5 My sword has drunk its fill in the heavens;
see, it descends in judgment on Edom,
the people I have totally destroyed.
6 The sword of the LORD is bathed in blood,
it is covered with fat—
the blood of lambs and goats,
fat from the kidneys of rams.
For the LORD has a sacrifice in Bozrah
and a great slaughter in the land of Edom.
7 And the wild oxen will fall with them,
the bull calves and the great bulls.
Their land will be drenched with blood,
and the dust will be soaked with fat.

8 For the LORD has a day of vengeance,
a year of retribution, to uphold Zion's cause.
9 Edom's streams will be turned into pitch,
her dust into burning sulfur;
her land will become blazing pitch!
10 It will not be quenched night or day;
its smoke will rise forever.
From generation to generation it will lie desolate;
no one will ever pass through it again.
11 The desert owl[b] and screech owl[b] will possess it;
the great owl[b] and the raven will nest there.
God will stretch out over Edom
the measuring line of chaos
and the plumb line of desolation.
12 Her nobles will have nothing there to be called a kingdom,
all her princes will vanish away.
13 Thorns will overrun her citadels,
nettles and brambles her strongholds.
She will become a haunt for jackals,
a home for owls.
14 Desert creatures will meet with hyenas,
and wild goats will bleat to each other;
there the night creatures will also lie down
and find for themselves places of rest.

[a] *2* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them; also in verse 5. [b] *11* The precise identification of these birds is uncertain.

15 The owl will nest there and lay eggs,
she will hatch them, and care for her young
under the shadow of her wings;
there also the falcons will gather,
each with its mate.

16 Look in the scroll of the LORD and read:

None of these will be missing,
not one will lack her mate.
For it is his mouth that has given the order,
and his Spirit will gather them together.
17 He allots their portions;
his hand distributes them by measure.
They will possess it forever
and dwell there from generation to
generation.

Joy of the Redeemed

35 1 The desert and the parched land will
be glad;
the wilderness will rejoice and blossom.
Like the crocus, 2 it will burst into bloom;
it will rejoice greatly and shout for joy.
The glory of Lebanon will be given to it,
the splendor of Carmel and Sharon;
they will see the glory of the LORD,
the splendor of our God.

3 Strengthen the feeble hands,
steady the knees that give way;
4 say to those with fearful hearts,
"Be strong, do not fear;
your God will come,
he will come with vengeance;
with divine retribution
he will come to save you."

5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened
and the ears of the deaf unstopped.
6 Then will the lame leap like a deer,
and the mute tongue shout for joy.
Water will gush forth in the wilderness
and streams in the desert.

TIME CAPSULE		555 to 547 B.C.
555		Anaximander proposes a mathematical model of the universe
553		Nabonidus exiles himself to Tema
550–350		Sparta develops the best defensive army in Greece
550		Cyrus defeats the Median Empire and King Astyages
550		Cyrus successfully unites the Persian and Median tribes
547		Cyrus defeats Lydia and King Croesus

7 The burning sand will become a pool,
the thirsty ground bubbling springs.
In the haunts where jackals once lay,
grass and reeds and papyrus will grow.

8 And a highway will be there;
it will be called the Way of Holiness;
it will be for those who walk on that Way.
The unclean will not journey on it;
wicked fools will not go about on it.
9 No lion will be there,
nor any ravenous beast;
they will not be found there.
But only the redeemed will walk there,
10 and those the LORD has rescued will
return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

TRANSITION

Daniel and Belshazzar

Babylon's might declined fastest during the reign of Nabonidus (556– 539 b.c.), who left the city of Babylon to live in an oasis in the Arabian desert and worship the moon god Sin (see "Exile in Babylon" at Eze 33:1). His son, Bel-shar-usur, was left as regent over the city of Babylon.

The Book of Daniel, which spells Bel-shar-usur as "Belshazzar," refers to Nebuchadnezzar as Belshazzar's father (Da 5:2). This could be a metaphorical reference to Nebuchadnezzar as the father (or founder) of the kingdom; Belshazzar was not even related to Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel also calls Belshazzar "King" (5:1), which he never was officially. Still, while his father, Nabonidus, was absent, he was the closest thing to a king that Babylon had.

Belshazzar served as coregent in Babylon for his father, Nabonidus, sometime around 545 b.c. Nothing more is heard of Belshazzar after 543 b.c., when Nabonidus returned from Arabian Tema and took sole control of Babylon. Daniel's contempt for this "King," as well as the unflattering comparison made between Belshazzar and the great Nebuchadnezzar (Da 5:18–22), suggest that Nabonidus's son was far from deserving his borrowed title.

• **Daniel 5:1–31**

Daniel

The Writing on the Wall

5 **:1** King Belshazzar gave a great banquet for a thousand of his nobles and drank wine with them. 2 While Belshazzar was drinking his wine, he gave orders to bring in the gold and

silver goblets that Nebuchadnezzar his father[a] had taken from the temple in Jerusalem, so that the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines might drink from them. 3So they brought in the gold goblets that had been taken from the temple of God in Jerusalem, and the king and his nobles, his wives and his concubines drank from them. 4As they drank the wine, they praised the gods of gold and silver, of bronze, iron, wood and stone.

5Suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote on the plaster of the wall, near the lampstand in the royal palace. The king watched the hand as it wrote. 6His face turned pale and he was so frightened that his legs became weak and his knees were knocking.

7The king summoned the enchanters, astrologers[b] and diviners. Then he said to these wise men of Babylon, "Whoever reads this writing and tells me what it means will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around his neck, and he will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

8Then all the king's wise men came in, but they could not read the writing or tell the king what it meant. 9So King Belshazzar became even more terrified and his face grew more pale. His nobles were baffled.

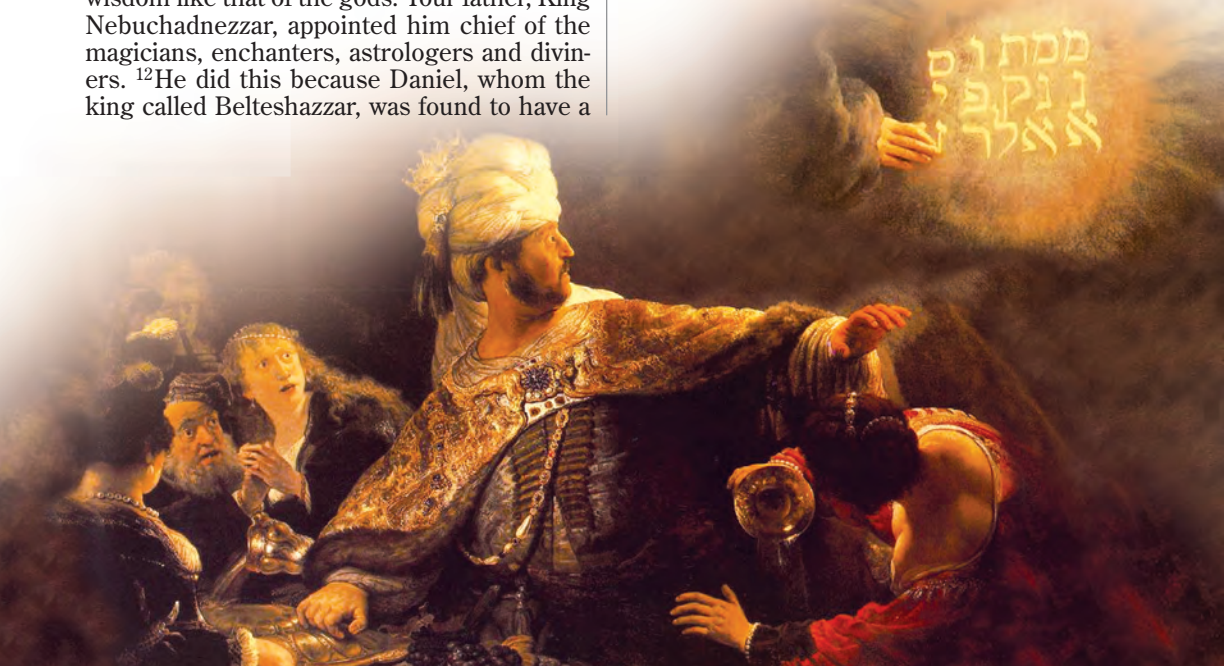
10The queen,[c] hearing the voices of the king and his nobles, came into the banquet hall. "May the king live forever!" she said. "Don't be alarmed! Don't look so pale! 11There is a man in your kingdom who has the spirit of the holy gods in him. In the time of your father he was found to have insight and intelligence and wisdom like that of the gods. Your father, King Nebuchadnezzar, appointed him chief of the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners. 12He did this because Daniel, whom the king called Belteshazzar, was found to have a keen mind and knowledge and understanding, and also the ability to interpret dreams, explain riddles and solve difficult problems. Call for Daniel, and he will tell you what the writing means."

13So Daniel was brought before the king, and the king said to him, "Are you Daniel, one of the exiles my father the king brought from Judah? 14I have heard that the spirit of the gods is in you and that you have insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom. 15The wise men and enchanters were brought before me to read this writing and tell me what it means, but they could not explain it. 16Now I have heard that you are able to give interpretations and to solve difficult problems. If you can read this writing and tell me what it means, you will be clothed in purple and have a gold chain placed around your neck, and you will be made the third highest ruler in the kingdom."

17Then Daniel answered the king, "You may keep your gifts for yourself and give your rewards to someone else. Nevertheless, I will read the writing for the king and tell him what it means.

18"Your Majesty, the Most High God gave your father Nebuchadnezzar sovereignty and greatness and glory and splendor. 19Because of the high position he gave him, all the nations and peoples of every language dreaded and feared him. Those the king wanted to put to death, he put to death; those he wanted to

[a] *2* Or *ancestor*; or *predecessor*; also in verses 11, 13 and 18
[b] *7* Or *Chaldeans*; also in verse 11 [c] *10* Or *queen mother*



spare, he spared; those he wanted to promote, he promoted; and those he wanted to humble, he humbled. 20But when his heart became arrogant and hardened with pride, he was deposed from his royal throne and stripped of his glory. 21He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal; he lived with the wild donkeys and ate grass like the ox; and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven, until he acknowledged that the Most High God is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth and sets over them anyone he wishes.

22"But you, Belshazzar, his son,[a] have not humbled yourself, though you knew all this. 23Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways. 24Therefore he sent the hand that wrote the inscription.

25"This is the inscription that was written:

MENE, MENE, TEKEL, PARSIN

26"Here is what these words mean:

Mene[b]: God has numbered the days of your reign and brought it to an end.

27 *Tekel*[c]: You have been weighed on the scales and found wanting.

28 *Peres*[d]: Your kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and Persians."

29Then at Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.

30That very night Belshazzar, king of the Babylonians,[e] was slain, 31and Darius the Mede took over the kingdom, at the age of sixty-two.[f]

[a] *22* Or *descendant*; or *successor* [b] *26* *Mene* can mean *numbered* or *mina* (a unit of money). [c] *27* *Tekel* can mean *weighed* or *shekel*. [d] *28* *Peres* (the singular of *Parsin*) can mean *divided* or *Persia* or *a half mina* or *a half shekel*. [e] *30* Or *Chaldeans* [f] *31* In Aramaic texts this verse (5:31) is numbered 6:1.

TRANSITION

Isaiah and Cyrus the Persian

The Babylon of King Nabonidus began to totter. In 550 b.c. Cyrus the Persian captured Ecbatana, the capital of the Median Empire, and began to look south toward Babylon. To a Babylonian population disgusted with the absentee king Nabonidus and his coregent Belshazzar, the prospect of a Persian conquest was quite attractive. In 539 b.c. Cyrus would march into Babylon as a conqueror, greeted by shouts of joy from the conquered.

The latter chapters of the Book of Isaiah have for centuries been recognized as different from the earlier chapters (see "The Book of Isaiah" at Isa 6:1). The language and style of Isa 40–55 are distinct, but the most remarkable difference is the tone. Whereas Isa 1–39 had spoken almost exclusively of judgment and disaster, the new section begins with God's call: "Comfort, comfort my people" (40:1). These chapters declare not judgment but salvation, hope, and restoration.

It is not difficult to identify when this salvation is to be: Israel will return from the Babylonian exile. In these chapters, Jerusalem is spoken of as uninhabited and in ruins, and the temple itself as destroyed, but both city and temple will be rebuilt (44:26–28). Israel's return from Babylon is pictured as a second Exodus, with God making a way in the wilderness (40:3, 4; 43:19) and causing water to spring up in the desert (43:20; 44:3; 48:21).

God promises to deliver his people from Babylon. Furthermore, through the prophet, God even names the one through whom this great salvation would come about: Cyrus "my shepherd" (44:28; 45:1). These words of comfort seem directed to the Judean exiles in Babylon just before the city of Babylon fell to Cyrus's Persian armies.

There is little argument, then, concerning the time spoken of in Isa 40–55. There is much more disagreement as to when and by whom these chapters were written. Many scholars hold that these oracles came from an unknown prophet who lived in Cyrus's own time, during the Babylonian captivity, and who predicted the approaching end of the exile. This prophet, often called "Second Isaiah," would have considered himself a disciple of the great Isaiah of Jerusalem. Indeed, some scholars suggest that Second Isaiah may have been the one who preserved the collection of Isaiah's oracles found in Isa 1–39.

Others, though, accept the traditional association of these words with the original Isaiah. The two parts of the book (chs. 1–39 and 40–55) always appear together in the ancient manuscripts, and several key themes appear in both parts. Regardless of who wrote Isa 40–55, these chapters speak of a future event: the glorious return from exile that will be authorized by Cyrus the Persian.

• Isaiah 40:1—45:25

Needing Comfort in Exile (Isa 40:1, 2)

The prophet announces God's decree, "Comfort my people" (Isa 40:1, 2). This message of comfort was very appropriate since, along with the prophecies of Isa 40–55, it addresses the Judean experience of exile to Babylon in the 6th century B.C. Not all of the people of Judah were taken to Babylon (see 2Ki 25:8–12). Those who were, the exilic community, were the old Judean aristocracy. Previously they had held positions of power, status, and wealth in Jerusalem. In Babylon, though, life would be very different.

Defeated subjects who were forced from their homeland were allowed to live in ethnic enclaves in Babylon. Initially they probably worked at menial tasks, such as digging ditches to improve the Babylonian irrigation canals. Later on, some Judeans did find prosperity in Babylonian society, largely by assimilating to it. Yet, for people who had been the native aristocracy, the forced move to a Diaspora community was probably like being sent to 20th-century concentration, labor, or refugee camps. Such social change would have stretched to the limit the exilic community's conviction that Yahweh had elected the Judeans from all the people of the earth.

Meanwhile, society in Judah had utterly disintegrated following the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The deaths caused by the Babylonian invasion, the exile of the aristocracy, and the destruction of the temple gutted Judah of all institutions that had held the society together. Only the tribal area of Benjamin, north of Jerusalem, seemed to escape societal disintegration. In Judah itself, population plummeted 90 percent following the disaster. Thus the exiles in Babylon could not look to their past for hope; there they found only the consequences of their sin.

What the exiles needed—hope, comfort, tender words, a future—could be found only in the faithfulness of Yahweh, their God. The prophet offers exactly that message in Isa 40, pointing away from the sins of the past, away from the conditions of the present, to a future when the exiles would experience divine faithfulness and be restored to their land.

Isaiah

Comfort for God's People

40 :1 Comfort, comfort my people,
says your God.
2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her hard service has been completed,
that her sin has been paid for,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.

3 A voice of one calling:
"In the wilderness prepare
the way for the LORD[a];
make straight in the desert
a highway for our God.[b]
4 Every valley shall be raised up,
every mountain and hill made low;
the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.
5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all people will see it together.
For the mouth of the LORD
has spoken."

6 A voice says, "Cry out."
And I said, "What shall I cry?"

"All people are like grass,
and all their faithfulness is like the
flowers of the field.
7 The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the LORD blows on
them.
Surely the people are grass.
8 The grass withers and the flowers fall,
but the word of our God endures forever."

9 You who bring good news to Zion,
go up on a high mountain.
You who bring good news to Jerusalem,[c]
lift up your voice with a shout,
lift it up, do not be afraid;
say to the towns of Judah,
"Here is your God!"
10 See, the Sovereign LORD comes with
power,
and he rules with a mighty arm.
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.
11 He tends his flock like a shepherd:
He gathers the lambs in his arms
and carries them close to his heart;
he gently leads those that have young.

12 Who has measured the waters in the hollow
of his hand,
or with the breadth of his hand marked
off the heavens?
Who has held the dust of the earth in a
basket,
or weighed the mountains on the scales
and the hills in a balance?

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[a] *3* Or *A voice of one calling in the wilderness: / "Prepare the way for the LORD* [b] *3* Hebrew; Septuagint *make straight the paths of our God* [c] *9* Or *Zion, bringer of good news, / go up on a high mountain. / Jerusalem, bringer of good news*

13 Who can fathom the Spirit[a] of the LORD,
or instruct the LORD as his counselor?
14 Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten
him,
and who taught him the right way?
Who was it that taught him knowledge,
or showed him the path of
understanding?

15 Surely the nations are like a drop in a
bucket;
they are regarded as dust on the scales;
he weighs the islands as though they
were fine dust.
16 Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires,
nor its animals enough for burnt
offerings.
17 Before him all the nations are as nothing;
they are regarded by him as worthless
and less than nothing.

18 With whom, then, will you compare God?
To what image will you liken him?
19 As for an idol, a metalworker casts it,
and a goldsmith overlays it with gold
and fashions silver chains for it.
20 A person too poor to present such an
offering
selects wood that will not rot;
they look for a skilled worker
to set up an idol that will not topple.

21 Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
Has it not been told you from the
beginning?
Have you not understood since the earth
was founded?
22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the
earth,
and its people are like grasshoppers.
He stretches out the heavens like a canopy,
and spreads them out like a tent to
live in.
23 He brings princes to naught
and reduces the rulers of this world to
nothing.

24 No sooner are they planted,
no sooner are they sown,
no sooner do they take root in the
ground,
than he blows on them and they wither,
and a whirlwind sweeps them away like
chaff.

25 "To whom will you compare me?
Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.
26 Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens:
Who created all these?
He who brings out the starry host one by
one
and calls forth each of them by name.
Because of his great power and mighty
strength,
not one of them is missing.

27 Why do you complain, Jacob?
Why do you say, Israel,
"My way is hidden from the LORD;
my cause is disregarded by my God"?
28 Do you not know?
Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He will not grow tired or weary,
and his understanding no one can
fathom.
29 He gives strength to the weary
and increases the power of the weak.
30 Even youths grow tired and weary,
and young men stumble and fall;
31 but those who hope in the LORD
will renew their strength.
They will soar on wings like eagles;
they will run and not grow weary,
they will walk and not be faint.

The Helper of Israel

41 1 "Be silent before me, you islands!
Let the nations renew their strength!
Let them come forward and speak;
let us meet together at the place of
judgment.

2 "Who has stirred up one from the east,
calling him in righteousness to his
service[b]?
He hands nations over to him
and subdues kings before him.
He turns them to dust with his sword,
to windblown chaff with his bow.
3 He pursues them and moves on
unscathed,
by a path his feet have not traveled
before.

[a] 13 Or *mind* [b] 2 Or *east, / whom victory meets at every step*

Beliefs & Ideas

The Bible normally refers to the physical sky with words that portray it as something stretched out and flattened, like hammered metal, or like a canopy (Isa 40:22). This imagery emphasizes the immense energy required to create and sustain the framework of space. The heavens are also remote from human influence and unchanged by time.

4 Who has done this and carried it through,
calling forth the generations from the beginning?
I, the LORD—with the first of them
and with the last—I am he."

5 The islands have seen it and fear;
the ends of the earth tremble.
They approach and come forward;
6 they help each other
and say to their companions, "Be strong!"
7 The metalworker encourages the goldsmith,
and the one who smooths with the hammer
spurs on the one who strikes the anvil.
One says of the welding, "It is good."
The other nails down the idol so it will not topple.

8 "But you, Israel, my servant,
Jacob, whom I have chosen,
you descendants of Abraham my friend,
9 I took you from the ends of the earth,
from its farthest corners I called you.
I said, 'You are my servant';
I have chosen you and have not rejected you.
10 So do not fear, for I am with you;
do not be dismayed, for I am your God.
I will strengthen you and help you;
I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

11 "All who rage against you
will surely be ashamed and disgraced;
those who oppose you
will be as nothing and perish.
12 Though you search for your enemies,
you will not find them.
Those who wage war against you
will be as nothing at all.
13 For I am the LORD your God
who takes hold of your right hand
and says to you, Do not fear;
I will help you.
14 Do not be afraid, you worm Jacob,
little Israel, do not fear,
for I myself will help you," declares the LORD,
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel.
15 "See, I will make you into a threshing sledge,
new and sharp, with many teeth.
You will thresh the mountains and crush them,
and reduce the hills to chaff.
16 You will winnow them, the wind will pick them up,
and a gale will blow them away.
But you will rejoice in the LORD
and glory in the Holy One of Israel.

17 "The poor and needy search for water,
but there is none;
their tongues are parched with thirst.
But I the LORD will answer them;
I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.
18 I will make rivers flow on barren heights,
and springs within the valleys.
I will turn the desert into pools of water,
and the parched ground into springs.
19 I will put in the desert
the cedar and the acacia, the myrtle and the olive.
I will set junipers in the wasteland,
the fir and the cypress together,
20 so that people may see and know,
may consider and understand,
that the hand of the LORD has done this,
that the Holy One of Israel has created it.

21 "Present your case," says the LORD.
"Set forth your arguments," says Jacob's King.
22 "Tell us, you idols,
what is going to happen.
Tell us what the former things were,
so that we may consider them
and know their final outcome.
Or declare to us the things to come,
23 tell us what the future holds,
so we may know that you are gods.
Do something, whether good or bad,
so that we will be dismayed and filled with fear.
24 But you are less than nothing
and your works are utterly worthless;
whoever chooses you is detestable.

25 "I have stirred up one from the north, and he comes—
one from the rising sun who calls on my name.
He treads on rulers as if they were mortar,
as if he were a potter treading the clay.
26 Who told of this from the beginning, so we could know,
or beforehand, so we could say, 'He was right'?
No one told of this,
no one foretold it,
no one heard any words from you.

27 I was the first to tell Zion, 'Look, here they are!'
I gave to Jerusalem a messenger of good news.
28 I look but there is no one—
no one among the gods to give counsel,
no one to give answer when I ask them.
29 See, they are all false!
Their deeds amount to nothing;
their images are but wind and confusion.

The Servant of the LORD

42 1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen one in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will bring justice to the nations.
2 He will not shout or cry out,
or raise his voice in the streets.
3 A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.
In faithfulness he will bring forth justice;
4 he will not falter or be discouraged
till he establishes justice on earth.
In his teaching the islands will put their hope."

5 This is what God the LORD says—
the Creator of the heavens, who stretches them out,
who spreads out the earth with all that springs from it,
who gives breath to its people,
and life to those who walk on it:
6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness;
I will take hold of your hand.
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people
and a light for the Gentiles,
7 to open eyes that are blind,
to free captives from prison
and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

8 "I am the LORD; that is my name!
I will not yield my glory to another
or my praise to idols.
9 See, the former things have taken place,
and new things I declare;
before they spring into being
I announce them to you."

Song of Praise to the LORD

10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise from the ends of the earth,
you who go down to the sea, and all that is in it,
you islands, and all who live in them.
11 Let the wilderness and its towns raise their voices;
let the settlements where Kedar lives rejoice.
Let the people of Sela sing for joy;
let them shout from the mountaintops.
12 Let them give glory to the LORD
and proclaim his praise in the islands.
13 The LORD will march out like a champion,
like a warrior he will stir up his zeal;
with a shout he will raise the battle cry
and will triumph over his enemies.

14 "For a long time I have kept silent,
I have been quiet and held myself back.
But now, like a woman in childbirth,
I cry out, I gasp and pant.
15 I will lay waste the mountains and hills
and dry up all their vegetation;
I will turn rivers into islands
and dry up the pools.
16 I will lead the blind by ways they have not known,
along unfamiliar paths I will guide them;
I will turn the darkness into light before them
and make the rough places smooth.
These are the things I will do;
I will not forsake them.
17 But those who trust in idols,
who say to images, 'You are our gods,'
will be turned back in utter shame.

Israel Blind and Deaf

18 "Hear, you deaf;
look, you blind, and see!
19 Who is blind but my servant,
and deaf like the messenger I send?
Who is blind like the one in covenant with me,
blind like the servant of the LORD?
20 You have seen many things, but you pay no attention;
your ears are open, but you do not listen."
21 It pleased the LORD
for the sake of his righteousness
to make his law great and glorious.
22 But this is a people plundered and looted,
all of them trapped in pits
or hidden away in prisons.
They have become plunder,
with no one to rescue them;
they have been made loot,
with no one to say, "Send them back."

23 Which of you will listen to this
or pay close attention in time to come?

24 Who handed Jacob over to become loot,
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not the LORD,
against whom we have sinned?
For they would not follow his ways;
they did not obey his law.
25 So he poured out on them his burning
anger,
the violence of war.
It enveloped them in flames, yet they did
not understand;
it consumed them, but they did not take it
to heart.

Israel's Only Savior

43 1 But now, this is what the LORD says—
he who created you, Jacob,
he who formed you, Israel:
"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are
mine.
2 When you pass through the waters,
I will be with you;
and when you pass through the rivers,
they will not sweep over you.
When you walk through the fire,
you will not be burned;
the flames will not set you ablaze.
3 For I am the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;
I give Egypt for your ransom,
Cush[a] and Seba in your stead.
4 Since you are precious and honored in my
sight,
and because I love you,
I will give people in exchange for you,
nations in exchange for your life.
5 Do not be afraid, for I am with you;
I will bring your children from the east
and gather you from the west.
6 I will say to the north, 'Give them up!'
and to the south, 'Do not hold them back.'
Bring my sons from afar
and my daughters from the ends of the
earth—
7 everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."
8 Lead out those who have eyes but are blind,
who have ears but are deaf.
9 All the nations gather together
and the peoples assemble.
Which of their gods foretold this
and proclaimed to us the former things?
Let them bring in their witnesses to prove
they were right,
so that others may hear and say, "It is
true."
10 "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD,
"and my servant whom I have chosen,
so that you may know and believe me
and understand that I am he.
Before me no god was formed,
nor will there be one after me.
11 I, even I, am the LORD,
and apart from me there is no savior.
12 I have revealed and saved and
proclaimed—
I, and not some foreign god among you.
You are my witnesses," declares the LORD,
"that I am God.
13 Yes, and from ancient days I am he.
No one can deliver out of my hand.
When I act, who can reverse it?"

God's Mercy and Israel's Unfaithfulness

14 This is what the LORD says—
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
"For your sake I will send to Babylon
and bring down as fugitives all the
Babylonians,[b]
in the ships in which they took pride.
15 I am the LORD, your Holy One,
Israel's Creator, your King."

16 This is what the LORD says—
he who made a way through the sea,
a path through the mighty waters,
17 who drew out the chariots and horses,
the army and reinforcements together,
and they lay there, never to rise again,
extinguished, snuffed out like a wick:
18 "Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.

[a] *3* That is, the upper Nile region [b] *14* Or *Chaldeans*

Can God Really Do This "New Thing"? (Isa 43:19)

If the exiles were to return to Jerusalem, they somehow had to escape the political and military control of the Neo-Babylonian regime. Even in the years just prior to the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C., this would have been a tall order for a small, politically and militarily insignificant community. Yet the prophet claims that this is precisely what will happen: God will do "a new thing" (Isa 43:19).

This "new thing" was a subtle reference to the military defeat of the Babylonians (43:14, 15). The prophet invokes images of the Exodus from Egypt when the Lord defeated Pharaoh and freed the Israelites from slavery (43:16, 17). This time the Lord would lead the exilic community back across the wilderness to their ancestral home in Judah (43:19). What a hopeful announcement this was for the Judeans in Babylon! That God would restore them to the land he had given them was the blunt political reality of the prophet's message.

Yet because the Judeans were still subject to Babylonian power, the announcement was also risky. The message rang of subversion and rebellion, qualities that the Neo-Babylonian regime met with brutal and violent displays of power in their subjected communities. Perhaps this explains why the community did not enthusiastically endorse the prophet's message—why they had not "called on" the Lord (43:22–24). To do so would have meant really believing that God's power was stronger than the Babylonians, a high-stakes political gamble if they were wrong!

19 See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not
perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.
20 The wild animals honor me,
the jackals and the owls,
because I provide water in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland,
to give drink to my people, my chosen,
21 the people I formed for myself
that they may proclaim my praise.

22 "Yet you have not called on me, Jacob,
you have not wearied yourselves for[a] me,
Israel.
23 You have not brought me sheep for burnt
offerings,
nor honored me with your sacrifices.
I have not burdened you with grain
offerings
nor wearied you with demands for
incense.
24 You have not bought any fragrant calamus
for me,
or lavished on me the fat of your
sacrifices.
But you have burdened me with your sins
and wearied me with your offenses.

25 "I, even I, am he who blots out
your transgressions, for my own sake,
and remembers your sins no more.
26 Review the past for me,
let us argue the matter together;
state the case for your innocence.
27 Your first father sinned;
those I sent to teach you rebelled against
me.
28 So I disgraced the dignitaries of your
temple;
I consigned Jacob to destruction[b]
and Israel to scorn.

Israel the Chosen

44 1 "But now listen, Jacob, my servant,
Israel, whom I have chosen.
2 This is what the LORD says—
he who made you, who formed you in the
womb,
and who will help you:
Do not be afraid, Jacob, my servant,
Jeshurun,[c] whom I have chosen.
3 For I will pour water on the thirsty land,
and streams on the dry ground;
I will pour out my Spirit on your offspring,
and my blessing on your descendants.
4 They will spring up like grass in a
meadow,
like poplar trees by flowing streams.
5 Some will say, 'I belong to the LORD';
others will call themselves by the name of
Jacob;
still others will write on their hand, 'The
LORD's,'
and will take the name Israel.

The LORD, Not Idols

6 "This is what the LORD says—
Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD
Almighty:
I am the first and I am the last;
apart from me there is no God.
7 Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it.
Let him declare and lay out before me

[a] *22* Or *Jacob; / surely you have grown weary of*
[b] *28* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. [c] *2* *Jeshurun* means *the upright one*, that is, Israel.

what has happened since I established my
ancient people,
and what is yet to come—
yes, let them foretell what will come.
8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid.
Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long
ago?
You are my witnesses. Is there any God
besides me?
No, there is no other Rock; I know not
one."

9 All who make idols are nothing,
and the things they treasure are
worthless.
Those who would speak up for them are
blind;
they are ignorant, to their own shame.
10 Who shapes a god and casts an idol,
which can profit nothing?
11 People who do that will be put to shame;
such craftsmen are only human beings.
Let them all come together and take their
stand;
they will be brought down to terror and
shame.

12 The blacksmith takes a tool
and works with it in the coals;
he shapes an idol with hammers,
he forges it with the might of his arm.
He gets hungry and loses his strength;
he drinks no water and grows faint.
13 The carpenter measures with a line
and makes an outline with a marker;
he roughs it out with chisels
and marks it with compasses.

Science & Technology
Blacksmiths (Isa 44:12) work with iron and fire, and in traditional societies are often regarded with suspicion and fear. They produced weapons and armor as well as plows. Woodworkers made furniture and other domestic products, including looms and doorposts. Wood craftsmanship (Isa 44:13) had reached very high standards centuries before the prophets.

He shapes it in human form,
human form in all its glory,
that it may dwell in a shrine.
14 He cut down cedars,
or perhaps took a cypress or oak.
He let it grow among the trees of the
forest,
or planted a pine, and the rain made it
grow.
15 It is used as fuel for burning;
some of it he takes and warms
himself,
he kindles a fire and bakes bread.
But he also fashions a god and
worships it;
he makes an idol and bows down to it.
16 Half of the wood he burns in the fire;
over it he prepares his meal,
he roasts his meat and eats his fill.
He also warms himself and says,
"Ah! I am warm; I see the fire."
17 From the rest he makes a god, his idol;
he bows down to it and worships.
He prays to it and says,
"Save me! You are my god!"

The Temple Slave of the Lord (Isa 44:5)

The expression "my servant" (Isa 44:1) is found often throughout Isa 40–55. The designation "the Lord's" in Isa 44:5 possibly gives a clue to the social world from which the image of "my servant" arises. This servant belonged to Yahweh, just as temple slaves in the ancient Near East belonged to the god whose temple they served.

Slavery existed throughout the Neo-Babylonian society. In fact, a large and important group of temple slaves performed much of the work in and around temple properties. Slavery did not necessarily mean low status. Most temple slaves did do menial agricultural work with small compensation. Yet some became important functionaries overseeing the god's economic resources, the resources of the temple and its priests. While temple slaves would never be free, their position could bring a share of power, wealth, and honor.

Neo-Babylonian temple slaves were marked on their foreheads or on the back of their hand with the expression "belonging to . . ." Added to this expression was the name of the Babylonian deity who literally owned them. The prophet's expression "I belong to the Lord" (Isa 44:5) draws from this imagery of Neo-Babylonian temple slavery to depict how the Lord "owns" his servant Israel.

We do not know if the Judeans built a temple in Babylon or not. However, when the first group of exiles returned to Jerusalem around 538 or 537 B.C., a class of temple slaves called "the temple servants" returned with them (Ezr 2:58). When Nehemiah was governor of Judea in 445 B.C., the temple servants were recognized members of the temple personnel, which also included priests, Levites, gatekeepers, and musicians (Ne 10:28). Anyone familiar with Neo-Babylonian temple slavery as practiced within the Judean exilic community would know the meaning of "I belong to the Lord."

Cyrus, the Lord's Anointed (Isa 45:1)

In 559 B.C. Cyrus the Great became the ruler and founder of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia, which expanded quickly in all directions to become a world empire. Arising from the desert fringes of Mesopotamia, Cyrus ultimately conquered the Neo-Babylonian Empire and absorbed it into his realm in 539 B.C. The defeat of Babylon expanded the Persian Empire to include almost all of the ancient Near East. Only Egypt remained independent.

The ancient mind would ask, "What god has empowered this Persian king, Cyrus?" The Judean prophet answered by identifying Cyrus as a world leader chosen by Yahweh, the God of Israel (Isa 45:1–7). Even more amazingly, the prophet uses language reserved for Israelite and Judean kings to describe God's election of Cyrus. Cyrus is Yahweh's "anointed" (Isa 45:1), the agent by which the Babylonian subjection of the Judean exilic community would be ended.

The social-political force of the prophet's oracle had a potentially explosive quality. Not only did the prophet speak of the military downfall of the ruling junta—the Babylonians, but he also picked a rival monarch as the precise agent of Babylon's demise. This message smacked of political subversion. If heard by the "wrong" people, it could bring a sharp reprisal on himself, and possibly on the whole Judean community by the Babylonian authorities. Ancient Near Eastern regimes were always anxious to beat down a possible uprising before it occurred.

18 They know nothing, they understand
nothing;
their eyes are plastered over so they
cannot see,
and their minds closed so they cannot
understand.
19 No one stops to think,
no one has the knowledge or
understanding to say,
"Half of it I used for fuel;
I even baked bread over its coals,
I roasted meat and I ate.
Shall I make a detestable thing from what
is left?
Shall I bow down to a block of wood?"
20 Such a person feeds on ashes; a deluded
heart misleads him;
he cannot save himself, or say,
"Is not this thing in my right hand a
lie?"

21 "Remember these things, Jacob,
for you, Israel, are my servant.
I have made you, you are my servant;
Israel, I will not forget you.
22 I have swept away your offenses like a
cloud,
your sins like the morning mist.
Return to me,
for I have redeemed you."

23 Sing for joy, you heavens, for the LORD
has done this;
shout aloud, you earth beneath.
Burst into song, you mountains,
you forests and all your trees,
for the LORD has redeemed Jacob,
he displays his glory in Israel.

Jerusalem to Be Inhabited

24 "This is what the LORD says—
your Redeemer, who formed you in the
womb:

I am the LORD,
the Maker of all things,
who stretches out the heavens,
who spreads out the earth by myself,
25 who foils the signs of false prophets
and makes fools of diviners,
who overthrows the learning of the wise
and turns it into nonsense,
26 who carries out the words of his servants
and fulfills the predictions of his
messengers,

who says of Jerusalem, 'It shall be
inhabited,'
of the towns of Judah, 'They shall be
rebuilt,'
and of their ruins, 'I will restore them,'
27 who says to the watery deep, 'Be dry,
and I will dry up your streams,'
28 who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd
and will accomplish all that I please;
he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt,"
and of the temple, "Let its foundations be
laid."'

45 1 "This is what the LORD says to his
anointed,
to Cyrus, whose right hand I take
hold of
to subdue nations before him
and to strip kings of their armor,
to open doors before him
so that gates will not be shut:
2 I will go before you
and will level the mountains[a];

[a] 2 Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint; the meaning of the word in the Masoretic Text is uncertain.

I will break down gates of bronze
and cut through bars of iron.
3 I will give you hidden treasures,
riches stored in secret places,
so that you may know that I am the LORD,
the God of Israel, who summons you by name.
4 For the sake of Jacob my servant,
of Israel my chosen,
I summon you by name
and bestow on you a title of honor,
though you do not acknowledge me.
5 I am the LORD, and there is no other;
apart from me there is no God.
I will strengthen you,
though you have not acknowledged me,
6 so that from the rising of the sun
to the place of its setting
people may know there is none besides me.
I am the LORD, and there is no other.
7 I form the light and create darkness,
I bring prosperity and create disaster;
I, the LORD, do all these things.

8 "You heavens above, rain down my righteousness;
let the clouds shower it down.
Let the earth open wide,
let salvation spring up,
let righteousness flourish with it;
I, the LORD, have created it.

9 "Woe to those who quarrel with their Maker,
those who are nothing but potsherds
among the potsherds on the ground.
Does the clay say to the potter,
'What are you making?'
Does your work say,
'The potter has no hands'?
10 Woe to the one who says to a father,
'What have you begotten?'
or to a mother,
'What have you brought to birth?'

11 "This is what the LORD says—
the Holy One of Israel, and its Maker:
Concerning things to come,
do you question me about my children,
or give me orders about the work of my hands?
12 It is I who made the earth
and created mankind on it.
My own hands stretched out the heavens;
I marshaled their starry hosts.
13 I will raise up Cyrus[a] in my righteousness:
I will make all his ways straight.
He will rebuild my city
and set my exiles free,
but not for a price or reward,
says the LORD Almighty."

14 This is what the LORD says:

"The products of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush,[b]
and those tall Sabeans—
they will come over to you
and will be yours;
they will trudge behind you,
coming over to you in chains.
They will bow down before you
and plead with you, saying,
'Surely God is with you, and there is no other;
there is no other god.'"

Geography & Environment
Cush (Isa 45:14) refers to areas south of Egypt, corresponding roughly to the northern Sudan. The Sabeans came either from this area or from across the Red Sea in southern Arabia. These regions were sources of gold. By means of international trade and control of trade routes through their land, the Sabeans developed into a strong commercial power.

15 Truly you are a God who has been hiding himself,
the God and Savior of Israel.
16 All the makers of idols will be put to shame and disgraced;
they will go off into disgrace together.
17 But Israel will be saved by the LORD
with an everlasting salvation;
you will never be put to shame or disgraced,
to ages everlasting.

18 For this is what the LORD says—
he who created the heavens,
he is God;
he who fashioned and made the earth,
he founded it;
he did not create it to be empty,
but formed it to be inhabited—
he says:
"I am the LORD,
and there is no other.

[a] *13* Hebrew *him* [b] *14* That is, the upper Nile region

19 I have not spoken in secret,
from somewhere in a land of
darkness;
I have not said to Jacob's descendants,
'Seek me in vain.'
I, the LORD, speak the truth;
I declare what is right.

20 "Gather together and come;
assemble, you fugitives from the
nations.
Ignorant are those who carry about idols
of wood,
who pray to gods that cannot save.
21 Declare what is to be, present it—
let them take counsel together.
Who foretold this long ago,
who declared it from the distant past?
Was it not I, the LORD?
And there is no God apart from me,
a righteous God and a Savior;
there is none but me.

22 "Turn to me and be saved,
all you ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other.

TIME CAPSULE		538 to 536 B.C.
538		Cyrus Cylinder announces that Marduk chose Cyrus to conquer the world
538		Cyrus issues proclamation of freedom for the Jews (Ezr 1:2–4)
538		First group of exiles returns to Jerusalem
538		Sheshbazzar returns temple vessels to Jerusalem
537		Zerubbabel and Joshua begin construction of a new temple (Ezr 3:8)
536		Work is stopped on the Jerusalem temple

23 By myself I have sworn,
my mouth has uttered in all integrity
a word that will not be revoked:
Before me every knee will bow;
by me every tongue will swear.
24 They will say of me, 'In the LORD alone
are deliverance and strength.'"
All who have raged against him
will come to him and be put to shame.
25 But all the descendants of Israel
will find deliverance in the LORD
and will make their boast in him.

[a] 1 Or *are but beasts and cattle*

TRANSITION

Babylon and Her Idols

As Cyrus and his armies were gaining strength, before capturing Babylon in 539 b.c., the prophet proclaimed that Babylon and her gods were doomed. Bel and Nebo, two important Babylonian gods, would themselves be taken in to captivity (Isa 46:1, 2). It was common in the ancient Near East to see wars between nations as wars between those nations' respective gods. Thus, Babylon's victory over Assyria would have been considered a victory for Babylon's gods, and the approach of Cyrus as the challenge of Persia's deities.

The prophet radically alters this prevailing view. No section of Scripture declares God's uniqueness so clearly as does Isa 40–55. "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me" (Isa 46:9; see 45:5, 6, 14, 18). Since there is only one God, Cyrus must not be a representative of Persia's gods. Whether he knows it himself or not, he is sent by the one God, the God of Israel (45:4). Moreover, Babylon's gods will be humiliated, not because they are weaker than another nation's gods but because they are mere idols. Gods that can be carried on cattle (46:1) or on one's shoulders (46:7) are no gods at all.

Babylon's religion involved not only sacrifice to idols but also faith in astrology. The prophet's spirited satire of Babylon's idolatry extended also to her star gazers and soothsayers (47:12, 13). Mostly, though, Babylon adored herself. She claimed to be eternal (47:7), all-powerful (47:8), and all-wise (47:10). Claiming for herself the status of God himself, she would be desolated suddenly (47:9–11).

• Isaiah 46:1—48:22

Isaiah

Gods of Babylon

46 **:1** Bel bows down, Nebo stoops low;
their idols are borne by beasts of
burden.[a]
The images that are carried about are
burdensome,
a burden for the weary.
2 They stoop and bow down together;
unable to rescue the burden,
they themselves go off into captivity.

3 "Listen to me, you descendants of Jacob,
all the remnant of the people of Israel,
you whom I have upheld since your birth,
and have carried since you were born.
4 Even to your old age and gray hairs
I am he, I am he who will sustain you.
I have made you and I will carry you;
I will sustain you and I will rescue you.

No Middle Ground (Isa 47:1)

The prophet uses theological satire relentlessly in attacks upon the Neo-Babylonian society in which the exiled Judeans would find themselves (Isa 41:6, 7; 44:9–20; 46:1, 2). The satire eventually turns directly against the Neo-Babylonians, declaring Babylon's impending doom (Isa 47:1–15).

The image of "Virgin Daughter Babylon" (Isa 47:1) emphasizes the reversal of social and political fortunes that will befall the Babylonians. The Babylonians had showed God's elect, the exilic community, no mercy, even forcing the elderly into forced labor (47:6). The prophet therefore declares that God will remove the privileged Babylonians from their position of wealth, power, and honor. From a situation described as "tender" and "delicate" (47:1), they would face abject conditions, lacking even the resources to heat their own homes (47:14).

Social, economic, and political issues were at stake behind the prophet's message of deliverance for the exilic community. Cyrus's rise and the exiles' deliverance would mean the end of the Babylonians' luxurious life. Yet "Virgin Daughter Babylon" still controlled the social and political life of the exiled Judean community. Talk of Babylonian demise was risky business.

There was no middle ground. The prophet forced the issue for his people: Should the community stand with the prophet and take the political risk of reprisal by the Neo-Babylonians? Or should the community attempt to maintain the status quo and continue to work with—and under the control of—their Neo-Babylonian overlords? They should listen to what the prophet declared concerning those overlords: no one would save them (47:15).

5 "With whom will you compare me or count
me equal?
To whom will you liken me that we may
be compared?
6 Some pour out gold from their bags
and weigh out silver on the scales;
they hire a goldsmith to make it into a god,
and they bow down and worship it.
7 They lift it to their shoulders and carry it;
they set it up in its place, and there it stands.
From that spot it cannot move.
Even though someone cries out to it, it
cannot answer;
it cannot save them from their troubles.

8 "Remember this, keep it in mind,
take it to heart, you rebels.
9 Remember the former things, those of long
ago;
I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is none like me.
10 I make known the end from the beginning,
from ancient times, what is still to come.
I say, 'My purpose will stand,
and I will do all that I please.'
11 From the east I summon a bird of prey;
from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my
purpose.
What I have said, that I will bring about;
what I have planned, that I will do.
12 Listen to me, you stubborn-hearted,
you who are now far from my
righteousness.
13 I am bringing my righteousness near,
it is not far away;
and my salvation will not be delayed.
I will grant salvation to Zion,
my splendor to Israel.

The Fall of Babylon

47 1 "Go down, sit in the dust,
Virgin Daughter Babylon;
sit on the ground without a throne,
queen city of the Babylonians.[a]
No more will you be called
tender or delicate.
2 Take millstones and grind flour;
take off your veil.
Lift up your skirts, bare your legs,
and wade through the streams.
3 Your nakedness will be exposed
and your shame uncovered.
I will take vengeance;
I will spare no one."

4 Our Redeemer—the LORD Almighty is his
name—
is the Holy One of Israel.

5 "Sit in silence, go into darkness,
queen city of the Babylonians;
no more will you be called
queen of kingdoms.
6 I was angry with my people
and desecrated my inheritance;
I gave them into your hand,
and you showed them no mercy.
Even on the aged
you laid a very heavy yoke.
7 You said, 'I am forever—
the eternal queen!'
But you did not consider these things
or reflect on what might happen.

8 "Now then, listen, you lover of pleasure,
lounging in your security

[a] *1* Or *Chaldeans*; also in verse 5

and saying to yourself,
'I am, and there is none besides me.
I will never be a widow
or suffer the loss of children.'
9 Both of these will overtake you
in a moment, on a single day:
loss of children and widowhood.
They will come upon you in full measure,
in spite of your many sorceries
and all your potent spells.
10 You have trusted in your wickedness
and have said, 'No one sees me.'
Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you
when you say to yourself,
'I am, and there is none besides me.'
11 Disaster will come upon you,
and you will not know how to conjure it
away.
A calamity will fall upon you
that you cannot ward off with a ransom;
a catastrophe you cannot foresee
will suddenly come upon you.

12 "Keep on, then, with your magic spells
and with your many sorceries,
which you have labored at since
childhood.
Perhaps you will succeed,
perhaps you will cause terror.
13 All the counsel you have received has only
worn you out!
Let your astrologers come forward,
those stargazers who make predictions
month by month,
let them save you from what is coming
upon you.
14 Surely they are like stubble;
the fire will burn them up.
They cannot even save themselves
from the power of the flame.
These are not coals for warmth;
this is not a fire to sit by.
15 That is all they are to you—
these you have dealt with
and labored with since childhood.
All of them go on in their error;
there is not one that can save you.

Beliefs & Ideas

The belief that the stars control human destiny was widespread in ancient times. Ancient kings maintained astrologers in their courts to give an opinion about whether a certain time was right for a project, or what events to expect (Isa 47:13). In addition to fortune-telling, astrologers had some factual knowledge of astronomy, which they used for establishing a calendar.

Stubborn Israel

48 1 "Listen to this, you descendants of
Jacob,
you who are called by the name of Israel
and come from the line of Judah,
you who take oaths in the name of the LORD
and invoke the God of Israel—
but not in truth or righteousness—
2 you who call yourselves citizens of the holy
city
and claim to rely on the God of Israel—
the LORD Almighty is his name:
3 I foretold the former things long ago,
my mouth announced them and I made
them known;
then suddenly I acted, and they came to
pass.
4 For I knew how stubborn you were;
your neck muscles were iron,
your forehead was bronze.
5 Therefore I told you these things long ago;
before they happened I announced them
to you
so that you could not say,
'My images brought them about;
my wooden image and metal god
ordained them.'
6 You have heard these things; look at them all.
Will you not admit them?

"From now on I will tell you of new things,
of hidden things unknown to you.
7 They are created now, and not long ago;
you have not heard of them before today.
So you cannot say,
'Yes, I knew of them.'
8 You have neither heard nor understood;
from of old your ears have not been open.
Well do I know how treacherous you are;
you were called a rebel from birth.
9 For my own name's sake I delay my wrath;
for the sake of my praise I hold it back
from you,
so as not to destroy you completely.
10 See, I have refined you, though not as
silver;
I have tested you in the furnace of
affliction.
11 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do this.
How can I let myself be defamed?
I will not yield my glory to another.

Israel Freed

12 "Listen to me, Jacob,
Israel, whom I have called:
I am he;
I am the first and I am the last.

The New Exodus (Isa 48:20, 21)

With the command "Leave Babylon" (Isa 48:20), the prophet explicitly encouraged the Judean exiles to leave their homes in Babylon and return to their own land. He did not advise them to sneak out, but rather to go publicly and joyously, with "shouts of joy."

The journey would be a new Exodus. The prophet invokes the memory of the Israelites' trip from Egypt to the land of Canaan following the first Exodus (48:21). The people could remember stories of Moses drawing drinking water from a rock (Ex 17:6). Though now a desert faced the people between Babylon and Judah, they need not worry: as God had provided for Israel's escape from Egyptian tyranny during Moses' time, so would he now provide for these exiles to escape from Babylonian rule.

There was one problem, though. The Babylonians had not yet been removed from power. Still the command "Leave" is given. To leave Babylon would be to take political liberty that the Babylonians were not ready to offer. The prophet challenged the people's faith in God to redeem them, even though their redemption would be rebellion against the Babylonian regime!

13 My own hand laid the foundations of the earth,
and my right hand spread out the heavens;
when I summon them,
they all stand up together.

14 "Come together, all of you, and listen:
Which of the idols has foretold these things?
The LORD's chosen ally
will carry out his purpose against Babylon;
his arm will be against the Babylonians.[a]
15 I, even I, have spoken;
yes, I have called him.
I will bring him,
and he will succeed in his mission.

16 "Come near me and listen to this:

"From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret;
at the time it happens, I am there."

And now the Sovereign LORD has sent me,
endowed with his Spirit.

17 This is what the LORD says—
your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel:
"I am the LORD your God,
who teaches you what is best for you,
who directs you in the way you should go.
18 If only you had paid attention to my commands,
your peace would have been like a river,
your well-being like the waves of the sea.
19 Your descendants would have been like the sand,
your children like its numberless grains;
their name would never be blotted out
nor destroyed from before me."

20 Leave Babylon,
flee from the Babylonians!
Announce this with shouts of joy
and proclaim it.
Send it out to the ends of the earth;
say, "The LORD has redeemed his servant Jacob."
21 They did not thirst when he led them through the deserts;
he made water flow for them from the rock;
he split the rock
and water gushed out.

22 "There is no peace," says the LORD, "for the wicked."

[a] *14* Or *Chaldeans*; also in verse 20

TRANSITION

The Servant of the Lord

A "servant of the Lord" is one who voluntarily serves God, as did Abraham (Ps 105:42). The phrase "my servant" appears frequently in Isa 41–53. Sometimes the phrase describes the entire nation of Israel, God's chosen Jacob (41:8). This meaning is found most often in chs. 41–48. But the nation Israel proved to be an unproductive servant. Assigned to bring "light for the Gentiles, to open eyes" (42:6, 7), she herself became blind (42:18–20).

The most important passages concerning "my servant" are the famous Servant Songs (42:1–4; 49:1–6; 50:4–11; 52:13—53:12). Sometimes in these songs, the servant again is identified with the nation of Israel (49:3), but at other times the servant appears to be an individual, working to bring salvation to Israel and the nations (49:4, 5).

It is difficult to know how these poems would have been understood by their first hearers. Perhaps some prophet or king was identified as the servant. Since the time of Christ, however, Christians have identified Jesus himself as the Servant of the Lord who brought salvation to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews (see Matt. 12:18–21, quoting Isa 42:1–4).

• **Isaiah 49:1—51:23**

Isaiah

The Servant of the LORD

49 :1 Listen to me, you islands;
hear this, you distant nations:
Before I was born the LORD called me;
from my mother's womb he has spoken my name.
2 He made my mouth like a sharpened sword,
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
he made me into a polished arrow
and concealed me in his quiver.
3 He said to me, "You are my servant,
Israel, in whom I will display my splendor."
4 But I said, "I have labored in vain;
I have spent my strength for nothing at all.
Yet what is due me is in the LORD's hand,
and my reward is with my God."

5 And now the LORD says—
he who formed me in the womb to be his servant
to bring Jacob back to him
and gather Israel to himself,
for I am[a] honored in the eyes of the LORD
and my God has been my strength—
6 he says:
"It is too small a thing for you to be my servant
to restore the tribes of Jacob
and bring back those of Israel I have kept.
I will also make you a light for the Gentiles,
that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth."

7 This is what the LORD says—
the Redeemer and Holy One of Israel—
to him who was despised and abhorred by the nation,
to the servant of rulers:
"Kings will see you and stand up,
princes will see and bow down,
because of the LORD, who is faithful,
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

Restoration of Israel

8 This is what the LORD says:

"In the time of my favor I will answer you,
and in the day of salvation I will help you;
I will keep you and will make you
to be a covenant for the people,
to restore the land
and to reassign its desolate inheritances,
9 to say to the captives, 'Come out,'
and to those in darkness, 'Be free!'

"They will feed beside the roads
and find pasture on every barren hill.
10 They will neither hunger nor thirst,
nor will the desert heat or the sun beat down on them.
He who has compassion on them will guide them
and lead them beside springs of water.
11 I will turn all my mountains into roads,
and my highways will be raised up.
12 See, they will come from afar—
some from the north, some from the west,
some from the region of Aswan.[b]"

13 Shout for joy, you heavens;
rejoice, you earth;
burst into song, you mountains!
For the LORD comforts his people
and will have compassion on his afflicted ones.

14 But Zion said, "The LORD has forsaken me,
the Lord has forgotten me."

15 "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast
and have no compassion on the child she has borne?
Though she may forget,
I will not forget you!

[a] *5* Or *him, / but Israel would not be gathered; / yet I will be*
[b] *12* Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text *Sinim*

A Light for the Gentiles (Isa 49:3–7)

The tone and subject of the prophet's oracles changed, turning dark. No longer did he speak of Babylon's demise or the exiles' return to Judah, though his oracles seemingly still addressed the same exiled community. Conflict seemed to lurk beneath the prophet's words. His attempt to persuade his people seemingly had produced little, if any, results. He felt as if he had labored "in vain" and "for nothing at all" (Isa 49:4).

Instead of narrowing his task, however, God widened the prophet's mission. No longer content to address only the Judean exilic community, God would give the prophet as "a light for the Gentiles" (49:6). In this way, the Judean exilic community's rejection of the prophet's message would lead to the inclusion of all persons, Jews and Gentiles, into the restorative purposes of God. Through his servant, the prophet, God would proclaim salvation "to the ends of the earth" (49:6).

Intimidation Denied (Isa 50:4)

A conflict escalated between those who accepted the prophet's message and those who rejected it. On the bright side, the prophet developed a following among those who stood with the prophet (Isa 50:8) and who feared the Lord and obeyed "the word of his servant" (50:10). Therefore, the prophet spoke with "a well-instructed tongue" (50:4), leading those who would believe.

On the darker side, the prophet also had evoked strong resistance, most likely from within his own community. His faithfulness to proclaim the word of the Lord produced a violent reaction. The prophet received beatings, the pulling of his beard, insults, being spit upon—all tactics to intimidate, humiliate, and discredit him (50:5, 6). The Judean leaders who had accommodated themselves to Babylonian society found his message dangerous and wished to silence him.

Yet the torture did not change the prophet's stance. It seems, instead, to have hardened his resolve: he set his face "like flint" against his opposition (50:7). The prophet could not be shamed, for torment ultimately awaited those who tormented him (50:11). God, after all, was on his side (50:9).

16 See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands;
your walls are ever before me.
17 Your children hasten back,
and those who laid you waste depart from you.
18 Lift up your eyes and look around;
all your children gather and come to you.
As surely as I live," declares the Lord,
"you will wear them all as ornaments;
you will put them on, like a bride.

19 "Though you were ruined and made desolate
and your land laid waste,
now you will be too small for your people,
and those who devoured you will be far away.
20 The children born during your bereavement
will yet say in your hearing,
'This place is too small for us;
give us more space to live in.'
21 Then you will say in your heart,
'Who bore me these?
I was bereaved and barren;
I was exiled and rejected.
Who brought these up?
I was left all alone,
but these—where have they come from?'"

22 This is what the Sovereign Lord says:

"See, I will beckon to the nations,
I will lift up my banner to the peoples;
they will bring your sons in their arms
and carry your daughters on their hips.
23 Kings will be your foster fathers,
and their queens your nursing mothers.
They will bow down before you with their faces to the ground;
they will lick the dust at your feet.
Then you will know that I am the Lord;
those who hope in me will not be disappointed."

24 Can plunder be taken from warriors,
or captives be rescued from the fierce[a]?

25 But this is what the Lord says:

"Yes, captives will be taken from warriors,
and plunder retrieved from the fierce;
I will contend with those who contend with you,
and your children I will save.
26 I will make your oppressors eat their own flesh;
they will be drunk on their own blood, as with wine.
Then all mankind will know
that I, the Lord, am your Savior,
your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

Israel's Sin and the Servant's Obedience

50 1 This is what the Lord says:

"Where is your mother's certificate of divorce
with which I sent her away?
Or to which of my creditors
did I sell you?
Because of your sins you were sold;
because of your transgressions your mother was sent away.
2 When I came, why was there no one?
When I called, why was there no one to answer?
Was my arm too short to deliver you?
Do I lack the strength to rescue you?
By a mere rebuke I dry up the sea,
I turn rivers into a desert;
their fish rot for lack of water
and die of thirst.

[a] *24* Dead Sea Scrolls, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Septuagint and verse 25); Masoretic Text *righteous*

3 I clothe the heavens with darkness
and make sackcloth its covering."

4 The Sovereign LORD has given me a well-
instructed tongue,
to know the word that sustains the weary.
He wakens me morning by morning,
wakens my ear to listen like one being
instructed.
5 The Sovereign LORD has opened my ears;
I have not been rebellious,
I have not turned away.
6 I offered my back to those who beat me,
my cheeks to those who pulled out my
beard;
I did not hide my face
from mocking and spitting.
7 Because the Sovereign LORD helps me,
I will not be disgraced.
Therefore have I set my face like flint,
and I know I will not be put to shame.
8 He who vindicates me is near.
Who then will bring charges
against me?
Let us face each other!
Who is my accuser?
Let him confront me!
9 It is the Sovereign LORD who helps me.
Who will condemn me?
They will all wear out like a garment;
the moths will eat them up.

10 Who among you fears the LORD
and obeys the word of his servant?
Let the one who walks in the dark,
who has no light,
trust in the name of the LORD
and rely on their God.
11 But now, all you who light fires
and provide yourselves with flaming
torches,
go, walk in the light of your fires
and of the torches you have set ablaze.
This is what you shall receive from my
hand:
You will lie down in torment.

Everlasting Salvation for Zion

51 1 "Listen to me, you who pursue
righteousness
and who seek the LORD:
Look to the rock from which you were cut
and to the quarry from which you were
hewn;
2 look to Abraham, your father,
and to Sarah, who gave you birth.
When I called him he was only one man,
and I blessed him and made him many.
3 The LORD will surely comfort Zion
and will look with compassion on all her
ruins;
he will make her deserts like Eden,
her wastelands like the garden of the
LORD.
Joy and gladness will be found in her,
thanksgiving and the sound of singing.

4 "Listen to me, my people;
hear me, my nation:
Instruction will go out from me;
my justice will become a light to the
nations.
5 My righteousness draws near speedily,
my salvation is on the way,
and my arm will bring justice to the
nations.
The islands will look to me
and wait in hope for my arm.
6 Lift up your eyes to the heavens,
look at the earth beneath;
the heavens will vanish like smoke,
the earth will wear out like a garment
and its inhabitants die like flies.
But my salvation will last forever,
my righteousness will never fail.

7 "Hear me, you who know what is right,
you people who have taken my
instruction to heart:
Do not fear the reproach of mere mortals
or be terrified by their insults.

Arts & Literature
The Hebrews were not seafarers, and they found the ocean dangerous and frightening. In the Bible the sea is usually a symbol for disorder and chaos (Isa 51:10). Rahab (51:9) was one name given to the chaos monster in pagan mythology. The prophet alludes to popular literature in describing Israel's escape from Egypt across the Red Sea, which was a similar conquest over the threatening waters.

8 For the moth will eat them up like a garment;
the worm will devour them like wool.
But my righteousness will last forever,
my salvation through all generations."

9 Awake, awake, arm of the LORD,
clothe yourself with strength!
Awake, as in days gone by,
as in generations of old.
Was it not you who cut Rahab to pieces,
who pierced that monster through?
10 Was it not you who dried up the sea,
the waters of the great deep,
who made a road in the depths of the sea
so that the redeemed might cross over?
11 Those the LORD has rescued will return.
They will enter Zion with singing;
everlasting joy will crown their heads.
Gladness and joy will overtake them,
and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

12 "I, even I, am he who comforts you.
Who are you that you fear mere mortals,
human beings who are but grass,
13 that you forget the LORD your Maker,
who stretches out the heavens
and who lays the foundations of the earth,
that you live in constant terror every day
because of the wrath of the oppressor,
who is bent on destruction?
For where is the wrath of the oppressor?
14 The cowering prisoners will soon be set free;
they will not die in their dungeon,
nor will they lack bread.
15 For I am the LORD your God,
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar—
the LORD Almighty is his name.
16 I have put my words in your mouth
and covered you with the shadow of my hand—
I who set the heavens in place,
who laid the foundations of the earth,
and who say to Zion, 'You are my people.'"

The Cup of the LORD's Wrath

17 Awake, awake!
Rise up, Jerusalem,
you who have drunk from the hand of the LORD
the cup of his wrath,
you who have drained to its dregs
the goblet that makes people stagger.
18 Among all the children she bore
there was none to guide her;
among all the children she reared
there was none to take her by the hand.
19 These double calamities have come upon you—
who can comfort you?—
ruin and destruction, famine and sword—
who can[a] console you?
20 Your children have fainted;
they lie at every street corner,
like antelope caught in a net.
They are filled with the wrath of the LORD,
with the rebuke of your God.

21 Therefore hear this, you afflicted one,
made drunk, but not with wine.
22 This is what your Sovereign LORD says,
your God, who defends his people:
"See, I have taken out of your hand
the cup that made you stagger;
from that cup, the goblet of my wrath,
you will never drink again.
23 I will put it into the hands of your tormentors,
who said to you,
'Fall prostrate that we may walk on you.'
And you made your back like the ground,
like a street to be walked on."

[a] *19* Dead Sea Scrolls, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Masoretic Text */ how can I*

TRANSITION

The Suffering Servant

The servant of the L ord brings salvation (see "The Servant of the Lord" at Isa 49:1). That salvation comes about in a startling new fashion, though. There will be no w ars, plagues, and flight, as when G od brought Israel out of Egypt (Isa 52:12). Nor shall this salv ation cost Israel (52:3). I nstead, salvation shall be brought by the servant's suffering and death (53:4–6).

To the Judean e xiles in Bab ylon, the mes - sage was simply that their suffering was over. God had redeemed his people in a new and marvelous way. Since the passion of Chr ist, though, Christians have recognized a much more specific fulfillmen t to the final S ervant

See, My Servant (Isa 52:13)

The words "See, my servant" (Isa 52:13) begin a definitive description of the servant through whom God would deliver Israel from their sins (Isa 52:13—53:12). From the earliest days of the church, Christians have considered this "servant" to represent prophetically Jesus Christ, and with good reason. In a very profound sense, the life of Christ reflects and fulfills the life of the servant.

What is said about the servant is nothing less than tragic. Like the servant, Jesus proclaimed good news to the community. Like the servant, Jesus' good news threatened those who had most accommodated themselves to the foreigners: the prophet's exilic community with the Babylonians; Jesus' Jerusalem priesthood with the Romans. Like the servant, Jesus did not alter his message, and like the servant, he paid for it by his life—disgraced, shamed, and held in no account.

Jesus, therefore, relived and fulfilled the theological and social dynamics encountered by the servant. No one expected that the Messiah would come as a servant: quiet, unassuming, and suffering. This servant "was pierced for our transgressions"; he was "oppressed and afflicted"; yet, by "his wounds we are healed" (53:5, 7). In raising Jesus from the dead, God has allotted Jesus "a portion among the great" (53:12), "raised and lifted up and highly exalted" (52:13). For so many reasons, Christians cannot read Isa 52:13—53:12 without hearing echoes of the life of Christ.

Song. Christ himself is the promised servant. He was the one who "took up our pain and bore our suffering" (53:4), and on him God laid "the iniquity of us all" (53:6). The salvation proclaimed in the New Testament, a salvation that depends not on morality or on earthly power but rather on the servant's humble self-sacrifice, finds its most powerful expression in Isa 52:13—53:12, written centuries before Christ.

• Isaiah 52:1—55:13

Isaiah

52:1 Awake, awake, Zion,
clothe yourself with strength!
Put on your garments of splendor,
Jerusalem, the holy city.
The uncircumcised and defiled
will not enter you again.
2 Shake off your dust;
rise up, sit enthroned, Jerusalem.
Free yourself from the chains on your neck,
Daughter Zion, now a captive.

3 For this is what the LORD says:

"You were sold for nothing,
and without money you will be redeemed."

4 For this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"At first my people went down to Egypt to live;
lately, Assyria has oppressed them.

5 "And now what do I have here?" declares the LORD.

"For my people have been taken away for nothing,
and those who rule them mock,[a]"
declares the LORD.

"And all day long
my name is constantly blasphemed.
6 Therefore my people will know my name;
therefore in that day they will know
that it is I who foretold it.
Yes, it is I."

7 How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
"Your God reigns!"
8 Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;
together they shout for joy.
When the LORD returns to Zion,
they will see it with their own eyes.
9 Burst into songs of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
10 The LORD will lay bare his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth will see
the salvation of our God.

11 Depart, depart, go out from there!
Touch no unclean thing!
Come out from it and be pure,
you who carry the articles of the LORD's house.
12 But you will not leave in haste
or go in flight;
for the LORD will go before you,
the God of Israel will be your rear guard.

The Suffering and Glory of the Servant

13 See, my servant will act wisely[b];
he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.

[a] 5 Dead Sea Scrolls and Vulgate; Masoretic Text *wail*
[b] 13 Or *will prosper*

14 Just as there were many who were appalled at him[a]—
his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any human being
and his form marred beyond human likeness—
15 so he will sprinkle many nations,[b]
and kings will shut their mouths because of him.
For what they were not told, they will see,
and what they have not heard, they will understand.

53 1 Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?
2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot,
and like a root out of dry ground.
He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him,
nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
3 He was despised and rejected by mankind,
a man of suffering, and familiar with pain.
Like one from whom people hide their faces
he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

7 He was oppressed and afflicted,
yet he did not open his mouth;
he was led like a lamb to the slaughter,
and as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
8 By oppression[c] and judgment he was taken away.
Yet who of his generation protested?
For he was cut off from the land of the living;
for the transgression of my people he was punished.[d]
9 He was assigned a grave with the wicked,
and with the rich in his death,
though he had done no violence,
nor was any deceit in his mouth.
10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer,
and though the LORD makes[e] his life an offering for sin,
he will see his offspring and prolong his days,
and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.
11 After he has suffered,
he will see the light of life[f] and be satisfied[g];
by his knowledge[h] my righteous servant will justify many,
and he will bear their iniquities.
12 Therefore I will give him a portion among the great,[i]
and he will divide the spoils with the strong,[j]
because he poured out his life unto death,
and was numbered with the transgressors.
For he bore the sin of many,
and made intercession for the transgressors.

The Future Glory of Zion

54 1 "Sing, barren woman,
you who never bore a child;
burst into song, shout for joy,
you who were never in labor;
because more are the children of the desolate woman
than of her who has a husband,"
says the LORD.
2 "Enlarge the place of your tent,
stretch your tent curtains wide,
do not hold back;
lengthen your cords,
strengthen your stakes.

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[a] *14* Hebrew *you* [b] *15* Or *so will many nations be amazed at him* (see also Septuagint) [c] *8* Or *From arrest* [d] *8* Or *generation considered / that he was cut off from the land of the living, / that he was punished for the transgression of my people?* [e] *10* Hebrew *though you make* [f] *11* Dead Sea Scrolls (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text does not have *the light of life.* [g] *11* Or (with Masoretic Text) *11 He will see the fruit of his suffering / and will be satisfied* [h] *11* Or *by knowledge of him* [i] *12* Or *many* [j] *12* Or *numerous*

Architecture & Building
The Arabs of the desert, known as the bedouin, live in tents made of dark goat hair. The floor plan of these tents is rectangular with an interior curtain dividing the tent into two parts. A standard tent is made of 6 to 8 lengths of cloth held up by 9 interior poles. The overall size can be up to 6 by 10 yards. Large tents are made twice the size of a standard tent (Isa 54:2).

The Heritage of Barren "Servants" (Isa 54:17)

The prophet changed his message in a subtle, but important way. No longer did he speak of a single "servant"; now he spoke of the plural "servants." These servants were the Judean exiles, whose city Jerusalem was in ruins. Yet the prophet offered a message of hope as he turned to address "the heritage of the servants of the LORD" (Isa 54:17).

The situation of these "servants" is similar to that of a barren woman (Isa 54:1). In antiquity a single woman or a woman unable to bear children was in a vulnerable social and economic situation. Such a woman bore social shame from a society which believed infertility indicated a curse from God. Additionally, in a society where children provided "social security," a barren or single woman could be left economically destitute upon the death of her husband. The barren woman provided a powerful image to describe the uncertain situation the people faced when they returned to their desolate city Jerusalem.

But God saw these servants much differently. Though barren, shamed, and a widow, the servants were not destitute. Judah had not been divorced. Her estranged husband would take her back, and she would yet bear children (54:5–10). They were not forsaken; on the contrary, their "husband" owned the wealth of all creation!

The prophet did not deny the servants' current predicament: they were "afflicted" and "not comforted" (54:11). Yet because God was their husband, the future was anything but bleak: God would have mercy on them (54:8). The foundations and walls of their city would be rebuilt and inhabited by their children (54:11–13). This was their "heritage" as God's servants.

3 For you will spread out to the right and to the left;
your descendants will dispossess nations
and settle in their desolate cities.

4 "Do not be afraid; you will not be put to shame.
Do not fear disgrace; you will not be humiliated.
You will forget the shame of your youth
and remember no more the reproach of your widowhood.
5 For your Maker is your husband—
the LORD Almighty is his name—
the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;
he is called the God of all the earth.
6 The LORD will call you back
as if you were a wife deserted and distressed in spirit—
a wife who married young,
only to be rejected," says your God.
7 "For a brief moment I abandoned you,
but with deep compassion I will bring you back.
8 In a surge of anger
I hid my face from you for a moment,
but with everlasting kindness
I will have compassion on you,"
says the LORD your Redeemer.

9 "To me this is like the days of Noah,
when I swore that the waters of Noah would never again cover the earth.
So now I have sworn not to be angry with you,
never to rebuke you again.

10 Though the mountains be shaken
and the hills be removed,
yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken
nor my covenant of peace be removed,"
says the LORD, who has compassion on you.

11 "Afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted,
I will rebuild you with stones of turquoise,[a]
your foundations with lapis lazuli.
12 I will make your battlements of rubies,
your gates of sparkling jewels,
and all your walls of precious stones.
13 All your children will be taught by the LORD,
and great will be their peace.
14 In righteousness you will be established:
Tyranny will be far from you;
you will have nothing to fear.
Terror will be far removed;
it will not come near you.
15 If anyone does attack you, it will not be my doing;
whoever attacks you will surrender to you.

16 "See, it is I who created the blacksmith
who fans the coals into flame
and forges a weapon fit for its work.
And it is I who have created the destroyer to wreak havoc;
17 no weapon forged against you will prevail,
and you will refute every tongue that accuses you.

[a] *11* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD,
and this is their vindication from me,"
declares the LORD.

Invitation to the Thirsty

55 [1]"Come, all you who are thirsty,
come to the waters;
and you who have no money,
come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk
without money and without cost.
[2]Why spend money on what is not bread,
and your labor on what does not satisfy?
Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good,
and you will delight in the richest of fare.
[3]Give ear and come to me;
listen, that you may live.
I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
my faithful love promised to David.
[4]See, I have made him a witness to the peoples,
a ruler and commander of the peoples.
[5]Surely you will summon nations you know not,
and nations you do not know will come running to you,
because of the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
for he has endowed you with splendor."

[6]Seek the LORD while he may be found;
call on him while he is near.
[7]Let the wicked forsake their ways
and the unrighteous their thoughts.
Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them,
and to our God, for he will freely pardon.

[8]"For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways,"
declares the LORD.
[9]"As the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

[10]As the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and do not return to it
without watering the earth
and making it bud and flourish,
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,
[11]so is my word that goes out from my mouth:
It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
[12]You will go out in joy
and be led forth in peace;
the mountains and hills
will burst into song before you,
and all the trees of the field
will clap their hands.
[13]Instead of the thornbush will grow the juniper,
and instead of briers the myrtle will grow.
This will be for the LORD's renown,
for an everlasting sign,
that will endure forever."

TIME CAPSULE	530 to 522 B.C.
530–522	Cambyses of Persia builds naval fleet with Ionians and Phoenicians
530	Capital of Cush is transferred to Meroe
526–525	Psammetichus III is last pharaoh of Egypt's 26th Dynasty
525	Cambyses conquers Sais, capital of Egypt's 26th Dynasty
522	Cambyses dies while en route to Persia

TRANSITION

Priestly Account: Hope for the Future

The prediction of Isa 45 tha t Cyrus the Great would capture Babylon and end the exile bestows great honor on the P ersian leader. He is called G od's "anointed" (Isa 45:1; Hebrew *messiah*), but his ac tion was more than just a favor for the Judeans. Archaeological finds from Cyrus's reign (559–530 b.c.) show that it was his standard policy to release all the captive peoples in the lands he c onquered. He also allowed religious freedom in his many provinces. These wise policies were continued by his successors, and such t olerance engendered a great deal of lo yalty among the P ersian Empire's subjects.

Whatever Cyrus's reasons were, in 538 b.c. he proclaimed a release for the peoples held captive by Babylon. The exiled Judeans, recognizing God himself at work in Cyrus's proclamation of freedom, saw all their hopes fulfilled at once. The prophet Jeremiah's promise that the exile would end after 70 years (Jer 29:10) had come true.

It is with C yrus's proclamation and the promise that it holds f or a r estored temple that the priestly historian concludes the Book of Chronicles (2Ch 36:22, 23). Thus the Chronicler, like the prophetic historian of Kings, ends with a ray of hope. But where 2 Kings ended with a faint hope—the elevation of the cap-

Cyrus Allows the Judeans to Go Home (2Ch 36:22, 23)

When Cyrus II ascended the throne of Persia in 559 B.C., he became the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty. In a string of military victories, Cyrus proceeded to conquer the largest territory in known history up to that time, stretching from the Indus River to central Anatolia.

The first major victories allowed Cyrus to successfully unite the Persian tribes and the Medes into a mighty kingdom. After defeating the Median Empire and its last king, Astyages, in 550 B.C., Cyrus declared himself the successor to the Median kings. Just 3 years later, in 547 B.C., a victory over Lydia and their king, Croesus, expanded Cyrus's empire toward Greece. At this point Cyrus turned his attention to his primary enemy, the Neo-Babylonian Empire.

Cyrus's crowning achievement was the conquest of Babylon and their king, Nabonidus, in 539 B.C. Virtually all of the Near East (excluding Egypt) was now under his authority. As with the victory of Media, Cyrus ruled Babylon not as a conquering foreigner, but as a successor to the previous Babylonian kings. This policy meant that the conquered people could maintain their local customs and culture, as well as their deities. Thus Cyrus restored honor and dignity to the Babylonian god Marduk.

Such a tolerant policy of allowing local cultures some autonomy in regard to their traditions had its advantages for Cyrus. This method was in direct contradiction to the harsh policies of deportation employed by the Assyrian and Chaldean kingdoms. Cyrus, though a conquering king, could also appear to be a benevolent king who assisted conquered peoples in preserving their sacred traditions.

Just as Cyrus respected the god Marduk of the Babylonians, so also did he respect the God Yahweh of the Judeans. Cyrus's proclamation (2Ch 36:22, 23) allowed the Judeans to return to Judea, to rebuild the Jerusalem temple, and to carry back the sacred objects which were confiscated by Babylon (Ezra 1:7–11). The Judean understanding of this restoration event placed a high view on Cyrus as the one Yahweh had anointed to overcome all nations (Isa 45:1–7).

tive Jehoiachin to a position in the court of Babylon (2Ki 25:27–30)—Chronicles presents a brilliant new future. The exiled Judeans will return to the land of their fathers.

• **2 Chronicles 36:22, 23**

2 Chronicles

36 :22 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

23 "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:
"'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the LORD their God be with them.'"

WISDOM IN THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The teaching tradition that is called "wisdom" appears in the Bible in the books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job. The wisdom tradition is associated most of all with the figure of Solomon. Ecclesiastes, as well as proverbs ascribed to Solomon, are often read in light of his reputation for wisdom (see "The Book of Proverbs" at Pr 1:1). The Book of Job and certain other proverbs, though, can be read in light of the larger world of non-Israelite wisdom.

Wisdom teachings dealt with universal matters that apply just as well in every age.

Wisdom teachings appear to have several underlying assumptions. First, the proverbs of the wisdom teachers, or sages, assume that the world is orderly. Everything on earth happens for a just reason. This fairly optimistic premise is followed by an even more hopeful thought: human beings are able to understand that order. The world and its workings are comprehensible; therefore, the goal of the wise is to search out the underlying order of the world. Finally, the source of this knowledge is very human. The way to uncover the fixed principles by which the world operates is, first, through one's own experience and observation, and second, through tradition, which is the experience of those who have come before.

Wisdom, as represented by this general description, is not unique to Israel and the Bible. In fact, the true center of the wisdom tradition in the ancient world seems to have been Egypt. The Egyptian sages were famous throughout the ancient Near East, and enough Egyptian wisdom writings have been discovered to indicate that this fame was deserved. Other wisdom writings have been found in Mesopotamia, especially in Babylon, and the Bible itself testifies to the fame of Edomite sages (Jer 49:7; Ob 1:8).

Wisdom teaching, then, was common in many cultures. Following the assumptions of wisdom, many people believ ed that humans, through their own experience, observation, and tr adition, could search out and c omprehend the fix ed principles behind an orderly world. These assumptions appear essentially unchanged thr oughout the wisdom literature of the ancient orient. Even more impressive, they r emained essentially unchanged by time. Ancient oriental wisdom endur ed with only minor variations for over 1,000 years, and it was still an impor tant tradition up t o and dur ing the time of Christ.

Israel's version of wisdom teaching is somewhat distinct, though. The basic assumptions of wisdom were quite secular. They spoke of worldly matters and had little t o say about God. Wisdom was sought through human experience, not through prayer or any direct divine revelation. Israel's sages, not quite comfortable with such a focus, sought to incorporate God more fully. As a result, Israel's central theme was "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Pr 9:10). Devotion and obedience to God were seen as pr ior to and mor e important than the human quest for wisdom.

Some wisdom t eachings are attributed to Solomon, and these can be r ead in the c ontext of his reign. Most wisdom lit erature, however, is not so easily associated with a par ticular person or time . Indeed, wisdom seems rather uninterested in questions of chr onological time. The sages sough t to expound universal and eternal principles, and were less concerned with specific historical events.

Wisdom teachings largely ignored the fluc tuating fortunes of hist orical kings and k ingdoms, which perhaps explains why wisdom did not change greatly over time. Wisdom resisted new ideas and fads, preferring to pass on ancient and deep-rooted traditions. Indeed, many proverb collections are presented as a parent's instruction to a child (P r 1:8; 4:1; 31:1). Wisdom teachings dealt with universal matters that apply just as w ell in every age, such as family r elationships, wealth, hard work, and honesty.

TRANSITION

Words of the Wise

The Book of Proverbs is a c ollection of short, pithy instructions. It is, in fac t, a c ollection of collections of pr overbs and wisdom t eachings. While these collections appear in the Bible, they also show similarities to non-Israelite wisdom. By placing dev otion and obedienc e to God above the human quest for wisdom, the Israelite sages were distinct from other wisdom t eachers. But af ter giving primary position t o God, they proceeded to search for wisdom by the same secular methods as other cultur es: they stressed personal experience and tradition. As a result, the Book of Proverbs remains one of the most secular of all biblical books.

Two collections in the B ook of P roverbs are identified by introductory attributions ascribing these teachings to "the wise" (Pr 22:17; 24:23). Many of the proverbs found in these collections (Pr 22:17—24:22 and 24:23– 34), as w ell as the outline by which they are arranged, appear also in a book of Egyptian wisdom, called *The Instruction of Amen-em-hotep.* The relationship is too close to be c oincidental. While it is difficult t o tell which is oldest, it is clear that both the biblical proverbs and the Egyptian texts are versions of a single wisdom discourse.

• Proverbs 22:17—24:34

Proverbs

Thirty Sayings of the Wise

Saying 1

22 :17 Pay attention and turn your ear to
the sayings of the wise;
apply your heart to what I teach,
18 for it is pleasing when you keep them in
your heart
and have all of them ready on your lips.
19 So that your trust may be in the LORD,
I teach you today, even you.
20 Have I not written thirty sayings for you,
sayings of counsel and knowledge,
21 teaching you to be honest and to speak the
truth,
so that you bring back truthful reports
to those you serve?

Saying 2

22 Do not exploit the poor because they are
poor
and do not crush the needy in court,
23 for the LORD will take up their case
and will exact life for life.

Saying 3

24 Do not make friends with a hot-tempered
person,
do not associate with one easily angered,
25 or you may learn their ways
and get yourself ensnared.

Saying 4

26 Do not be one who shakes hands in
pledge
or puts up security for debts;
27 if you lack the means to pay,
your very bed will be snatched from
under you.

Saying 5

28 Do not move an ancient boundary stone
set up by your ancestors.

Saying 6

29 Do you see someone skilled in their
work?
They will serve before kings;
they will not serve before officials of low
rank.

Saying 7

23 1 When you sit to dine with a ruler,
note well what[a] is before you,
2 and put a knife to your throat
if you are given to gluttony.
3 Do not crave his delicacies,
for that food is deceptive.

Saying 8

4 Do not wear yourself out to get rich;
do not trust your own cleverness.
5 Cast but a glance at riches, and they are
gone,
for they will surely sprout wings
and fly off to the sky like an eagle.

Saying 9

6 Do not eat the food of a begrudging host,
do not crave his delicacies;
7 for he is the kind of person
who is always thinking about the cost.[b]
"Eat and drink," he says to you,
but his heart is not with you.
8 You will vomit up the little you have
eaten
and will have wasted your compliments.

Saying 10

9 Do not speak to fools,
for they will scorn your prudent words.

Saying 11

10 Do not move an ancient boundary stone
or encroach on the fields of the
fatherless,
11 for their Defender is strong;
he will take up their case against you.

Saying 12

12 Apply your heart to instruction
and your ears to words of knowledge.

Saying 13

13 Do not withhold discipline from a child;
if you punish them with the rod, they will
not die.
14 Punish them with the rod
and save them from death.

Saying 14

15 My son, if your heart is wise,
then my heart will be glad indeed;
16 my inmost being will rejoice
when your lips speak what is right.

Saying 15

17 Do not let your heart envy sinners,
but always be zealous for the fear of the
LORD.
18 There is surely a future hope for you,
and your hope will not be cut off.

Saying 16

19 Listen, my son, and be wise,
and set your heart on the right path:
20 Do not join those who drink too much wine
or gorge themselves on meat,
21 for drunkards and gluttons become poor,
and drowsiness clothes them in rags.

Saying 17

22 Listen to your father, who gave you life,
and do not despise your mother when she
is old.
23 Buy the truth and do not sell it—
wisdom, instruction and insight as well.
24 The father of a righteous child has great
joy;
a man who fathers a wise son rejoices in
him.

Culture & Society

The city gate was the place where trials were conducted, as well as where commercial transactions took place. Warnings about the proper conduct to follow "in court" (Pr 22:22) are directed to those who took part in civic affairs, and to those who held positions of responsibility. The Bible advises those with power to accept God's concern for the poor and weak and make that concern their own (Pr 29:14).

[a] *1* Or *who* [b] *7* Or *for as he thinks within himself, / so he is*; or *for as he puts on a feast, / so he is*

25 May your father and mother rejoice;
may she who gave you birth be joyful!

Saying 18

26 My son, give me your heart
and let your eyes delight in my ways,
27 for an adulterous woman is a deep pit,
and a wayward wife is a narrow well.
28 Like a bandit she lies in wait
and multiplies the unfaithful among men.

Saying 19

29 Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaints?
Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?
30 Those who linger over wine,
who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.
31 Do not gaze at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup,
when it goes down smoothly!
32 In the end it bites like a snake
and poisons like a viper.
33 Your eyes will see strange sights,
and your mind will imagine confusing things.
34 You will be like one sleeping on the high seas,
lying on top of the rigging.
35 "They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt!
They beat me, but I don't feel it!
When will I wake up
so I can find another drink?"

Saying 20

24 1 Do not envy the wicked,
do not desire their company;
2 for their hearts plot violence,
and their lips talk about making trouble.

Saying 21

3 By wisdom a house is built,
and through understanding it is established;
4 through knowledge its rooms are filled
with rare and beautiful treasures.

Saying 22

5 The wise prevail through great power,
and those who have knowledge muster their strength.
6 Surely you need guidance to wage war,
and victory is won through many advisers.

Saying 23

7 Wisdom is too high for fools;
in the assembly at the gate they must not open their mouths.

Saying 24

8 Whoever plots evil
will be known as a schemer.
9 The schemes of folly are sin,
and people detest a mocker.

Saying 25

10 If you falter in a time of trouble,
how small is your strength!
11 Rescue those being led away to death;
hold back those staggering toward slaughter.
12 If you say, "But we knew nothing about this,"
does not he who weighs the heart perceive it?
Does not he who guards your life know it?
Will he not repay everyone according to what they have done?

Saying 26

13 Eat honey, my son, for it is good;
honey from the comb is sweet to your taste.
14 Know also that wisdom is like honey for you:
If you find it, there is a future hope for you,
and your hope will not be cut off.

Saying 27

15 Do not lurk like a thief near the house of the righteous,
do not plunder their dwelling place;
16 for though the righteous fall seven times, they rise again,
but the wicked stumble when calamity strikes.

Saying 28

17 Do not gloat when your enemy falls;
when they stumble, do not let your heart rejoice,
18 or the LORD will see and disapprove
and turn his wrath away from them.

Saying 29

19 Do not fret because of evildoers
or be envious of the wicked,
20 for the evildoer has no future hope,
and the lamp of the wicked will be snuffed out.

Saying 30

21 Fear the LORD and the king, my son,
and do not join with rebellious officials,
22 for those two will send sudden destruction on them,
and who knows what calamities they can bring?

Further Sayings of the Wise

23 These also are sayings of the wise:

To show partiality in judging is not good:
24 Whoever says to the guilty, "You are innocent,"
will be cursed by peoples and denounced by nations.
25 But it will go well with those who convict the guilty,
and rich blessing will come on them.

26 An honest answer
is like a kiss on the lips.

27 Put your outdoor work in order
and get your fields ready;
after that, build your house.

28 Do not testify against your neighbor without cause—
would you use your lips to mislead?
29 Do not say, "I'll do to them as they have done to me;
I'll pay them back for what they did."

30 I went past the field of a sluggard,
past the vineyard of someone who has no sense;
31 thorns had come up everywhere,
the ground was covered with weeds,
and the stone wall was in ruins.
32 I applied my heart to what I observed
and learned a lesson from what I saw:
33 A little sleep, a little slumber,
a little folding of the hands to rest—
34 and poverty will come on you like a thief
and scarcity like an armed man.

[a] *1* With a different word division of the Hebrew; Masoretic Text *utterance to Ithiel, / to Ithiel and Ukal:*

TRANSITION

The Wisdom of Agur and Lemuel

The final two chapters of Proverbs are attributed to men named Agur and Lemuel. Neither of these men are mentioned elsewhere. Appearing in both attributions (Pr 30:1; 31:1) is the Hebrew word *massa',* which can be translated as "prophecy" or "utterance," as it is used by the prophets (Isa 17:1; 19:1). The word might also be the name of a place—Massa (Ge 25:14; 1Ch 1:30). If so, the attributions might associate Agur and Lemuel with a country or city named "Massa." For instance, Pr 31:1 would begin, "The sayings of King Lemuel, king of Massa, [which] his mother taught him."

Even if these teachers are not from a place called Massa, they do not appear to be Israelite. There was no King Lemuel in Israel, and the name "Agur" is not formed in a typical Hebrew fashion. Agur's name does appear in Sabean inscriptions, and in light of that foreign source, it is interesting that the teachings of Agur include some of the most religiously oriented of all the proverbs in the book.

• **Proverbs 30:1—31:31**

Proverbs

Sayings of Agur

30:1 The sayings of Agur son of Jakeh—
an inspired utterance.

This man's utterance to Ithiel:

"I am weary, God,
but I can prevail.[a]
2 Surely I am only a brute, not a man;
I do not have human understanding.
3 I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I attained to the knowledge of the Holy One.
4 Who has gone up to heaven and come down?
Whose hands have gathered up the wind?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a cloak?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is his name, and what is the name of his son?
Surely you know!

5 "Every word of God is flawless;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.
6 Do not add to his words,
or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.

7 "Two things I ask of you, LORD;
do not refuse me before I die:
8 Keep falsehood and lies far from me;
give me neither poverty nor riches,
but give me only my daily bread.
9 Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you
and say, 'Who is the LORD?'

Humans in Heaven (Pr 30:4)

Agur asks in his proverb, "Who has gone up to heaven?" (Pr 30:1, 4). In the ancient mythology of Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine, human beings did not enter heaven. The common belief was that the gods had created people for the express purpose of serving on earth. The gods did not have to worry about menial tasks; they had human servants to feed and care for them. The closest humans were allowed to approach heaven was as priests working in the temples.

Myths from Mesopotamia attempt to explain why humans are not in heaven. The story of Adapa is a Mesopotamian myth known from a tablet found at Ashur and at Tell el-Amarna, Egypt, dating from around 1350 B.C. The myth relates how the priest Adapa went to heaven and was offered food that would have made him immortal and allowed him to stay in heaven. He refused the food, for reasons that are not clear, and was cast out of heaven.

The story of Etana is credited as the work of Lu-Nanna, an official in the court of Shulgi, king of Ur (2094–2047 B.C.). It tells how Etana tried to reach heaven by flying up on the back of an eagle, but the gods threw him back to earth. Heaven is for gods; earth is for humans.

In contrast to these Mesopotamian myths is the story of Elijah. This prophet of Yahweh was so important that he was taken, while still alive, into heaven by God (2Ki 2:1, 11, 12). Unlike other humans, this one person was worthy of heaven. The story would have been more wondrous in Elijah's time than now, since people then did not think that humans, living or dead, were allowed into the realm of the gods. Agur, in his proverb, is skeptical that heaven is accessible to humans—it is God's realm (Pr 30:4).

Or I may become poor and steal,
and so dishonor the name of my God.

10 "Do not slander a servant to their master,
or they will curse you, and you will pay
for it.

11 "There are those who curse their fathers
and do not bless their mothers;
12 those who are pure in their own eyes
and yet are not cleansed of their filth;
13 those whose eyes are ever so haughty,
whose glances are so disdainful;
14 those whose teeth are swords
and whose jaws are set with knives
to devour the poor from the earth
and the needy from among mankind.

15 "The leech has two daughters.
'Give! Give!' they cry.

"There are three things that are never
satisfied,
four that never say, 'Enough!':
16 the grave, the barren womb,
land, which is never satisfied with water,
and fire, which never says, 'Enough!'

17 "The eye that mocks a father,
that scorns an aged mother,
will be pecked out by the ravens of the
valley,
will be eaten by the vultures.

18 "There are three things that are too
amazing for me,
four that I do not understand:
19 the way of an eagle in the sky,
the way of a snake on a rock,
the way of a ship on the high seas,
and the way of a man with a young
woman.

20 "This is the way of an adulterous woman:
She eats and wipes her mouth
and says, 'I've done nothing wrong.'

21 "Under three things the earth trembles,
under four it cannot bear up:
22 a servant who becomes king,
a godless fool who gets plenty to eat,
23 a contemptible woman who gets married,
and a servant who displaces her
mistress.

24 "Four things on earth are small,
yet they are extremely wise:
25 Ants are creatures of little strength,
yet they store up their food in the
summer;
26 hyraxes are creatures of little power,
yet they make their home in the crags;
27 locusts have no king,
yet they advance together in ranks;
28 a lizard can be caught with the hand,
yet it is found in kings' palaces.

29 "There are three things that are stately in
their stride,
four that move with stately bearing:

Marriage & Family

The status of women in the ancient world was not the same in every culture. For example, Roman women were more independent than Greek women. The Book of Proverbs describes the "wife of noble character" (Pr 31:10) as a woman who has authority over her household economy and is free to do many different things. She is industrious (31:13–15) and resourceful (31:16–19).

Wine or Intoxicating Drink (Pr 31:4)

One characteristic of Hebrew poetry is the repetition of similar thoughts in couplets, such as the repeated objects "wine" and "beer" in Pr 31:4 (NIV). These two items appear in parallel, demonstrating that the author considered them in more or less the same light. In other passages wine and some other intoxicating drink are similarly mentioned together ("fermented drink," Lev 10:9; "beer," 1Sa 1:15).

There is evidence, from later times, that the difference between "wine" and intoxicating drink could be one of concentration rather than of formula. The juice of the grapes was stored in full strength in jars soon after the squeezing process. When it came time to drink the juice, water was mixed with it. The amount of water added determined whether the product was considered "wine" or intoxicating drink. In New Testament times we know that the most common mixture for "wine" was three or more parts of water for each portion of juice.

Intoxicating drink was a mixture of juice and water with a stronger portion of juice. Drinking the juice without diluting it was thought to make one mad. So it was that Hannah protested to the priest Eli that her actions were due to grief, not to drunkenness, because she had not been drinking "beer" or even wine (1Sa 1:15, 16). Similarly, kings and princes were warned to abstain from anything that would obscure their reason, causing them to fail in their responsibilities of leadership (Pr 31:4, 5).

30 a lion, mighty among beasts,
who retreats before nothing;
31 a strutting rooster, a he-goat,
and a king secure against revolt.[a]

32 "If you play the fool and exalt yourself,
or if you plan evil,
clap your hand over your mouth!
33 For as churning cream produces butter,
and as twisting the nose produces blood,
so stirring up anger produces strife."

Sayings of King Lemuel

31 1 The sayings of King Lemuel—an inspired utterance his mother taught him.

2 Listen, my son! Listen, son of my womb!
Listen, my son, the answer to my prayers!
3 Do not spend your strength[b] on women,
your vigor on those who ruin kings.

4 It is not for kings, Lemuel—
it is not for kings to drink wine,
not for rulers to crave beer,
5 lest they drink and forget what has been decreed,
and deprive all the oppressed of their rights.
6 Let beer be for those who are perishing,
wine for those who are in anguish!
7 Let them drink and forget their poverty
and remember their misery no more.

8 Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves,
for the rights of all who are destitute.
9 Speak up and judge fairly;
defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Epilogue: The Wife of Noble Character

10 [c] A wife of noble character who can find?
She is worth far more than rubies.
11 Her husband has full confidence in her
and lacks nothing of value.
12 She brings him good, not harm,
all the days of her life.
13 She selects wool and flax
and works with eager hands.
14 She is like the merchant ships,
bringing her food from afar.
15 She gets up while it is still night;
she provides food for her family
and portions for her female servants.
16 She considers a field and buys it;
out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.
17 She sets about her work vigorously;
her arms are strong for her tasks.
18 She sees that her trading is profitable,
and her lamp does not go out at night.
19 In her hand she holds the distaff
and grasps the spindle with her fingers.
20 She opens her arms to the poor
and extends her hands to the needy.
21 When it snows, she has no fear for her household;
for all of them are clothed in scarlet.
22 She makes coverings for her bed;
she is clothed in fine linen and purple.
23 Her husband is respected at the city gate,
where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.
24 She makes linen garments and sells them,
and supplies the merchants with sashes.
25 She is clothed with strength and dignity;
she can laugh at the days to come.
26 She speaks with wisdom,
and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

[a] *31* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.
[b] *3* Or *wealth* [c] *10* Verses 10-31 are an acrostic poem, the verses of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

27 She watches over the affairs of her household
and does not eat the bread of idleness.
28 Her children arise and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praises her:
29 "Many women do noble things,
but you surpass them all."
30 Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting;
but a woman who fears the LORD is to be
praised.
31 Honor her for all that her hands have done,
and let her works bring her praise at the
city gate.

TRANSITION

The Book of Job

The Book of Job is a work of unparalleled magnificence and power. Its depth of thought and feeling, its shining moments of insight, and the transcendent poetry of the central section all give this book a unique place, not only in Scripture but in all of world literature.

This book also stands apart in terms of its historical setting. On the one hand, certain aspects of Job's life sound much like the life of Abraham. His wealth, like Abraham's, was based on numbers of domestic animals. Like Abraham, he offered his own sacrifices to God, without a priestly intermediary. For reasons such as these, many scholars have set the book in Abraham's time during the Middle Bronze Age (2000–1500 b.c.).

Nevertheless, the Book of Job itself offers no historical specificity. Within the Old Testament, where geographical and chronological specificity are common, the introduction of Job has all the vagueness of the traditional opening "Once upon a time, in a faraway land." We are told only that "in the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job" (Job 1:1).

The location of the land of Uz is uncertain, but it was more likely in Edom than in Israel. The name Uz appears several times as an Edomite name (Ge 36:28; 1Ch 1:42). Associating Uz with Edom makes sense. Job's three friends appear as wisdom teachers, and Edom was famous for its wise men (see "Wisdom in the Ancient Near East" at Pr 22:17). Indeed Job's first friend, Eliphaz the Temanite, also has an Edomite name (see Ge 36:15, 16). If Job was an Edomite, then he would not come from the time of Abraham, since the Edomites descended from Abraham's grandson Esau.

Besides a geographical setting that is possibly Edomite and at least non-Israelite, all that the Book of Job provides is the intellectual setting of the wisdom tradition. The wisdom setting is by far the most important context. The book both speaks within and speaks against the teaching of the sages, as represented by Job's three friends Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. As these friends try to "comfort" Job, they present the wisdom worldview in speeches that are little more than strings of proverbs. And when Job opposes the friends, he opposes some of wisdom's basic assumptions.

Most significantly, Job rejects wisdom's view that the world is orderly, that all is arranged according to just principles. His tragedy is not just. Righteousness does not always result in good fortune. Bad things do happen to good people. His friends' argument—that Job must have sinned to deserve such suffering—only indicates the poverty of this particular aspect of wisdom teaching. Job also rejects the idea that wisdom is to be sought from tradition. If his three friends represent the teachings of tradition, he wants nothing to do with it (Job 12:2, 3).

Nevertheless, Job does not give up his search for enlightenment and never completely gives up his hope for justice. Nor does he surrender his faith in knowledge by experience. Indeed, it is experience that he seeks: he demands that he be allowed to see God, to present his complaint before him. Job's wish is granted in God's majestic appearance and speech (Job 38–41). Not all of Job's questions are answered, but it is enough for Job to have experienced God himself.

The Book of Job belongs in the context of Israel's wisdom tradition, but at what point in the long history of Israel's wisdom? The story of Job was evidently known to the prophet Ezekiel, preaching in exile in Babylon, who used Job as an example of righteousness (Eze 14:14, 20). More certain than when Job's story takes place or when the Book of Job was written is that it came to prominence during and after the Babylonian captivity. It is not hard to imagine why. A people stunned by the destruction of all that they had held dear—their nation, their city, their temple—dealt with the same questions that Job himself confronted.

Since a definite historical setting for the Book of Job is unknown, one can read the book in light of the suffering of the exile and the questions the exiles faced. The prologue (Job 1; 2) concerns the question of Job's motive for serving God. Satan insinuates that people lead upright lives because of selfishness, not because of love for God. God, however, expresses his complete confidence in his servant Job before the hosts of heaven, citing Job to prove that a person can live a blameless and upright life.

• **Job 1:1—2:13**

Job

Prologue

1:1 In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. 2 He

Enter the Adversary—Satan (Job 1:6–12)

In the scenes of the heavenly assembly (Job 1; 2), only one heavenly being, other than God himself, is identified. This character is referred to in Hebrew only by his title, which means "the adversary." In English he is called "Satan" (Job 1:6; 2:1). The Adversary is a divine figure, one of the "angels," who serves under and reports to Yahweh.

In the human royal courts of the ancient Near East, one officer of the king's court was assigned to seek out and report any behavior contrary to the laws or proclamations of the ruler. The Adversary performed this office for Yahweh in heaven, and so could be considered "the divine prosecuting attorney." It was his responsibility to bring charges and produce proofs. The case being brought against Job is a test, as both God and the Adversary know that Job has been blameless (Job 1:8).

The behavior of the Adversary conforms to the accepted manner of secondary level deities in Canaanite mythology. The Adversary differs in one sense from the deities portrayed in the Ugaritic myths: he accepts orders from his superior and carries them out only within the guidelines established by God, never breaking the rules imposed upon him. The responsibility for Job's ordeal lies with God, who instigated the debate and authorized the activity proposed and carried out by the Adversary (Job 1:12; 2:3).

In the Book of Job the Adversary is a member of the divine court in good standing. The idea for this character could have had its source in almost any human royal court. Later, the idea developed into Satan as the embodiment of all evil, as is found in some New Testament passages (Ro 16:20). Such a development begins to show in the Chronicler's figure of Satan as a divine being opposing the will of God (1Ch 21:1).

had seven sons and three daughters, 3and he owned seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen and five hundred donkeys, and had a large number of servants. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East.

4His sons used to hold feasts in their homes on their birthdays, and they would invite their three sisters to eat and drink with them. 5When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom.

6One day the angels[a] came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan[b] also came with them. 7The LORD said to Satan, "Where have you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it."

8Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil."

9"Does Job fear God for nothing?" Satan replied. 10"Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. 11But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face."

12The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD.

13One day when Job's sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, 14a messenger came to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing nearby, 15and the Sabeans attacked and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

16While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the heavens and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

17While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The Chaldeans formed three raiding parties and swept down on your camels and made off with them. They put the servants to the sword, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

[a] *6* Hebrew *the sons of God* [b] *6* Hebrew *satan* means *adversary.*

Geography & Environment

The raiders who attacked Job may have come from Arabia, south of Israel. Sabeans (Job 1:15) are identified with Saba or Sheba in south Arabia, the home of the queen who visited Solomon (1Ki 10:1). The Chaldean raiders (Job 1:17) were not the rulers of the Neo-Babylonian Empire, but rather tribes living in northern Arabia. Such marauders made the wilderness dangerous, even though it might have looked tranquil.

Broken Pottery from the Ashes (Job 2:8)

It may seem curious that Job would scrape himself with a "piece of broken pottery" (Job 2:8). Pottery fragments, though, were one of the most common items in the ancient world.

Clay was used to make everything from cooking pots to large storage jars. Containers were formed by hand, while being rotated to help the forming process. Once crafted, large numbers of pots were collected in ovens, where they were hardened by high-temperature baking.

Large pots, which could reach over 6 feet in height, had pointed bases and were buried in the ground, with the earth becoming the most stable of all settings. Most pots, however, were easily held in one hand. The life expectancy of these pots, especially those used daily, was short, perhaps less than a year. Once a pot was broken, its shards were left where they fell. Archaeologists collect and use these broken pieces to locate and date ancient sites.

That Job used a "piece of broken pottery" to scrape his sores tells us that he was sitting in an area of habitation, where pots had been broken. Evidently that piece was a broken piece from a cooking pot, since he was sitting among the ashes.

18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and
daughters were feasting and drinking wine at
the oldest brother's house, 19 when suddenly
a mighty wind swept in from the desert and
struck the four corners of the house. It col-
lapsed on them and they are dead, and I am
the only one who has escaped to tell you!"
20 At this, Job got up and tore his robe and
shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in
worship 21 and said:

"Naked I came from my mother's womb,
and naked I will depart.[a]
The LORD gave and the LORD has taken
away;
may the name of the LORD be praised."

22 In all this, Job did not sin by charging God
with wrongdoing.

2 1 On another day the angels[b] came to pre-
sent themselves before the LORD, and Satan
also came with them to present himself before
him. 2 And the LORD said to Satan, "Where have
you come from?"

Satan answered the LORD, "From roaming
throughout the earth, going back and forth
on it."

3 Then the LORD said to Satan, "Have you con-
sidered my servant Job? There is no one on
earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a
man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still
maintains his integrity, though you incited me
against him to ruin him without any reason."

4 "Skin for skin!" Satan replied. "A man will
give all he has for his own life. 5 But now stretch
out your hand and strike his flesh and bones,
and he will surely curse you to your face."

6 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, he
is in your hands; but you must spare his life."

7 So Satan went out from the presence of the
LORD and afflicted Job with painful sores from
the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.
8 Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and
scraped himself with it as he sat among the
ashes.

9 His wife said to him, "Are you still maintain-
ing your integrity? Curse God and die!"

10 He replied, "You are talking like a foolish[c]
woman. Shall we accept good from God, and
not trouble?"

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

11 When Job's three friends, Eliphaz the Te-
manite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Na-
amathite, heard about all the troubles that had
come upon him, they set out from their homes
and met together by agreement to go and sym-
pathize with him and comfort him. 12 When
they saw him from a distance, they could hard-
ly recognize him; they began to weep aloud,
and they tore their robes and sprinkled dust
on their heads. 13 Then they sat on the ground
with him for seven days and seven nights. No
one said a word to him, because they saw how
great his suffering was.

[a] *21* Or *will return there* [b] *1* Hebrew *the sons of God*
[c] *10* The Hebrew word rendered *foolish* denotes moral deficiency.

TRANSITION

Job: That Day—May It Turn to Darkness

When Job finally br eaks his silenc e, his words express doubt about the entire wisdom worldview (ch. 3). The wisdom t eachers taught first of all tha t the w orld was orderly and just. Israel's sages, seeking to incorporate God more fully in to the wisdom tr adition, emphasized God's role as the wise Creator of this good world (see Pr 8:22–31). Job's speech, while never actually accusing God, undercuts this c omforting picture of benev olent creation.

In the Bible, God begins creation by making light and darkness and naming them day and night (Ge 1:3–5). Job's speech reverses this picture by calling down curses on day and night (Job 3:3–8) and rejecting the gift of light (3:20, 24). In Genesis, God rested after creating the world, but Job finds no rest on earth (3:26) and wishes for the only rest he can imagine—the rest of death (3:13, 17).

• Job 3:1–26

Job

Job Speaks

3 **:1** After this, Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. [2]He said:

[3]"May the day of my birth perish,
and the night that said, 'A boy is conceived!'
[4]That day—may it turn to darkness;
may God above not care about it;
may no light shine on it.
[5]May gloom and utter darkness claim it once more;
may a cloud settle over it;
may blackness overwhelm it.
[6]That night—may thick darkness seize it;
may it not be included among the days of the year
nor be entered in any of the months.
[7]May that night be barren;
may no shout of joy be heard in it.
[8]May those who curse days[a] curse that day,
those who are ready to rouse Leviathan.
[9]May its morning stars become dark;
may it wait for daylight in vain
and not see the first rays of dawn,
[10]for it did not shut the doors of the womb on me
to hide trouble from my eyes.

[11]"Why did I not perish at birth,
and die as I came from the womb?
[12]Why were there knees to receive me
and breasts that I might be nursed?
[13]For now I would be lying down in peace;
I would be asleep and at rest
[14]with kings and rulers of the earth,
who built for themselves places now lying in ruins,
[15]with princes who had gold,
who filled their houses with silver.
[16]Or why was I not hidden away in the ground like a stillborn child,
like an infant who never saw the light of day?
[17]There the wicked cease from turmoil,
and there the weary are at rest.
[18]Captives also enjoy their ease;
they no longer hear the slave driver's shout.
[19]The small and the great are there,
and the slaves are freed from their owners.

[20]"Why is light given to those in misery,
and life to the bitter of soul,
[21]to those who long for death that does not come,
who search for it more than for hidden treasure,
[22]who are filled with gladness
and rejoice when they reach the grave?
[23]Why is life given to a man
whose way is hidden,
whom God has hedged in?
[24]For sighing has become my daily food;
my groans pour out like water.
[25]What I feared has come upon me;
what I dreaded has happened to me.
[26]I have no peace, no quietness;
I have no rest, but only turmoil."

[a] 8 Or *curse the sea*

TRANSITION

Eliphaz: Who, Being Innocent, Has Ever Perished?

After Job's first speech (ch. 3), the Book of Job proceeds with three rounds of speeches: each friend speaks in turn and is answered by Job. As the first round (4:1—14:22) begins, Eliphaz the Temanite defends the traditional wisdom view of an orderly world (chs. 4; 5).

In this just and orderly world, the sages taught, righteousness is rewarded and wickedness is punished. Many proverbs express this notion. For instance, Pr 10:27 says, "The fear of the Lord adds length to life, but the years of the wicked are cut short" (see also Pr 10:3, 24, 28, 30). Eliphaz expresses this view as an attempt at comfort: Job's own fear of the Lord should be his hope (Job 4:6).

In the midst of his traditional teachings, Eliphaz includes a surprising account of an angelic vision (4:12—5:7). This account is curious, first, because wisdom teachers did not usually rely on direct revelations, and second because the angel's message that humans cannot be righteous (4:17) is also uncharacteristic of wisdom. As he closes his speech, however, Eliphaz returns to the traditional wisdom theme that God will reward righteousness.

• Job 4:1—5:27

Humans Are Not Perfect Before God (Job 4:18, 19)

Eliphaz employs a kind of rabbinic logic which argues from an example of greater importance to one of lesser importance. If the point is true of the greater, then it should be true of the lesser. In this case, he argues from angels to humans.

God's angels are his "servants" (Job 4:18). The angels were heavenly beings who carried out the orders of the superior gods. In the Old Testament and in texts from Ugarit, these messengers do exactly as they are commanded; they have no free will. This picture of angels sets up the first stage of Eliphaz's argument.

However powerful they may be, the angels are only servants of God and are not perfect as is God. However innocent of wrongdoing angels may appear to humans, before God even they are not without fault. How, then, can Job, a mere human being who is less than the obedient angels (Job 4:19), claim to be innocent before God? Eliphaz was convinced that no human could claim to be just before God since the angels, who are greater than Job, cannot make such a claim.

Job

Eliphaz

4 :1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2 "If someone ventures a word with you, will
you be impatient?
But who can keep from speaking?
3 Think how you have instructed many,
how you have strengthened feeble hands.
4 Your words have supported those who
stumbled;
you have strengthened faltering knees.
5 But now trouble comes to you, and you are
discouraged;
it strikes you, and you are dismayed.
6 Should not your piety be your confidence
and your blameless ways your hope?

7 "Consider now: Who, being innocent, has
ever perished?
Where were the upright ever destroyed?
8 As I have observed, those who plow evil
and those who sow trouble reap it.
9 At the breath of God they perish;
at the blast of his anger they are no more.
10 The lions may roar and growl,
yet the teeth of the great lions are
broken.
11 The lion perishes for lack of prey,
and the cubs of the lioness are scattered.

12 "A word was secretly brought to me,
my ears caught a whisper of it.
13 Amid disquieting dreams in the night,
when deep sleep falls on people,
14 fear and trembling seized me
and made all my bones shake.
15 A spirit glided past my face,
and the hair on my body stood on end.
16 It stopped,
but I could not tell what it was.
A form stood before my eyes,
and I heard a hushed voice:
17 'Can a mortal be more righteous than God?
Can even a strong man be more pure
than his Maker?
18 If God places no trust in his servants,
if he charges his angels with error,
19 how much more those who live in houses of
clay,
whose foundations are in the dust,
who are crushed more readily than a
moth!
20 Between dawn and dusk they are broken to
pieces;
unnoticed, they perish forever.
21 Are not the cords of their tent pulled up,
so that they die without wisdom?'

5 1 "Call if you will, but who will answer you?
To which of the holy ones will you turn?
2 Resentment kills a fool,
and envy slays the simple.
3 I myself have seen a fool taking root,
but suddenly his house was cursed.
4 His children are far from safety,
crushed in court without a defender.
5 The hungry consume his harvest,
taking it even from among thorns,
and the thirsty pant after his wealth.
6 For hardship does not spring from the soil,
nor does trouble sprout from the
ground.
7 Yet man is born to trouble
as surely as sparks fly upward.

8 "But if I were you, I would appeal to God;
I would lay my cause before him.
9 He performs wonders that cannot be
fathomed,
miracles that cannot be counted.
10 He provides rain for the earth;
he sends water on the countryside.
11 The lowly he sets on high,
and those who mourn are lifted to safety.
12 He thwarts the plans of the crafty,
so that their hands achieve no success.

13 He catches the wise in their craftiness,
and the schemes of the wily are swept away.
14 Darkness comes upon them in the daytime;
at noon they grope as in the night.
15 He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth;
he saves them from the clutches of the powerful.
16 So the poor have hope,
and injustice shuts its mouth.

17 "Blessed is the one whom God corrects;
so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty.[a]
18 For he wounds, but he also binds up;
he injures, but his hands also heal.
19 From six calamities he will rescue you;
in seven no harm will touch you.
20 In famine he will deliver you from death,
and in battle from the stroke of the sword.
21 You will be protected from the lash of the tongue,
and need not fear when destruction comes.
22 You will laugh at destruction and famine,
and need not fear the wild animals.
23 For you will have a covenant with the stones of the field,
and the wild animals will be at peace with you.
24 You will know that your tent is secure;
you will take stock of your property and find nothing missing.
25 You will know that your children will be many,
and your descendants like the grass of the earth.
26 You will come to the grave in full vigor,
like sheaves gathered in season.

27 "We have examined this, and it is true.
So hear it and apply it to yourself."

[a] *17* Hebrew *Shaddai*; here and throughout Job
[b] *6* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.

TRANSITION

Job: What Does Your Arguing Prove?

The traditional wisdom expressed by Eliphaz—that in an orderly world the righteous will prosper—did nothing for Job. Job knows that he is innocent and yet is suffering. Job is as disappointed by Eliphaz's heavy-handed comfort as a desert caravan is disappointed by a dry stream (6:15–20). Job rejects his friend's words of traditional wisdom as having no bearing on his particular case (6:24–26).

In this second speech (chs. 7; 8), Job still does not explicitly accuse God. Nevertheless, his words again reveal his struggle against the traditional picture of God. In ch. 3 Job questioned the goodness of God's creation. In ch. 7 he questions God's benevolence. The great hymn of Ps 8 expresses wonder that God should love humanity—"What is mankind that you are mindful of them?" (Ps 8:4)—but Job turns that sentiment on its head and wishes that God would leave humanity alone. "What is mankind that you make so much of them . . . and test them every moment?" (Job 7:17, 18).

• Job 6:1—7:21

Job

Job

6:1 Then Job replied:

2 "If only my anguish could be weighed
and all my misery be placed on the scales!
3 It would surely outweigh the sand of the seas—
no wonder my words have been impetuous.
4 The arrows of the Almighty are in me,
my spirit drinks in their poison;
God's terrors are marshaled against me.
5 Does a wild donkey bray when it has grass,
or an ox bellow when it has fodder?
6 Is tasteless food eaten without salt,
or is there flavor in the sap of the mallow[b]?
7 I refuse to touch it;
such food makes me ill.

8 "Oh, that I might have my request,
that God would grant what I hope for,
9 that God would be willing to crush me,
to let loose his hand and cut off my life!
10 Then I would still have this consolation—
my joy in unrelenting pain—
that I had not denied the words of the Holy One.

11 "What strength do I have, that I should still hope?
What prospects, that I should be patient?
12 Do I have the strength of stone?
Is my flesh bronze?
13 Do I have any power to help myself,
now that success has been driven from me?

Nabonidus in Tema (Job 6:19)

The city of Tema was at the crossroads of three important trade routes running through northern Arabia. An oasis was nearby, allowing the city to exist in this desert region. Caravans passing through Tema (Job 6:19) would have been familiar with streams that run during the rainy season, but dry up when they are most needed. Such streams were an appropriate illustration for Job to employ in describing his undependable "friends" (Job 6:15–20).

Tema is mentioned in Assyrian sources by the 8th century B.C. Semanite and Sabean caravans paid tribute to Tiglath-Pileser III (744–727 B.C.). By the end of the 7th century B.C., Tema was in competition with Dedan for control of the incense trade in the region.

The last of the late Babylonian monarchs, Nabonidus (556–539 B.C.), penetrated this area around 553 or 552 B.C. Leaving the capital Babylon to be ruled by his son Belshazzar, Nabonidus camped out at Tema for a decade. It is possible that he saw fit to make Tema his residence for such an extended period in order to control the major trade routes.

Numerous inscriptions, both in Aramaic and in Thamudic (the local Tema script), suggest that Tema continued as a major trading center during the Persian period (559–331 B.C.). Tema in northwest Arabia worked closely with the Sabeans from Saba (or Sheba) in southwest Arabia to dominate the incense trade. It is natural then that Job should mention Tema and Sheba together (Job 6:19).

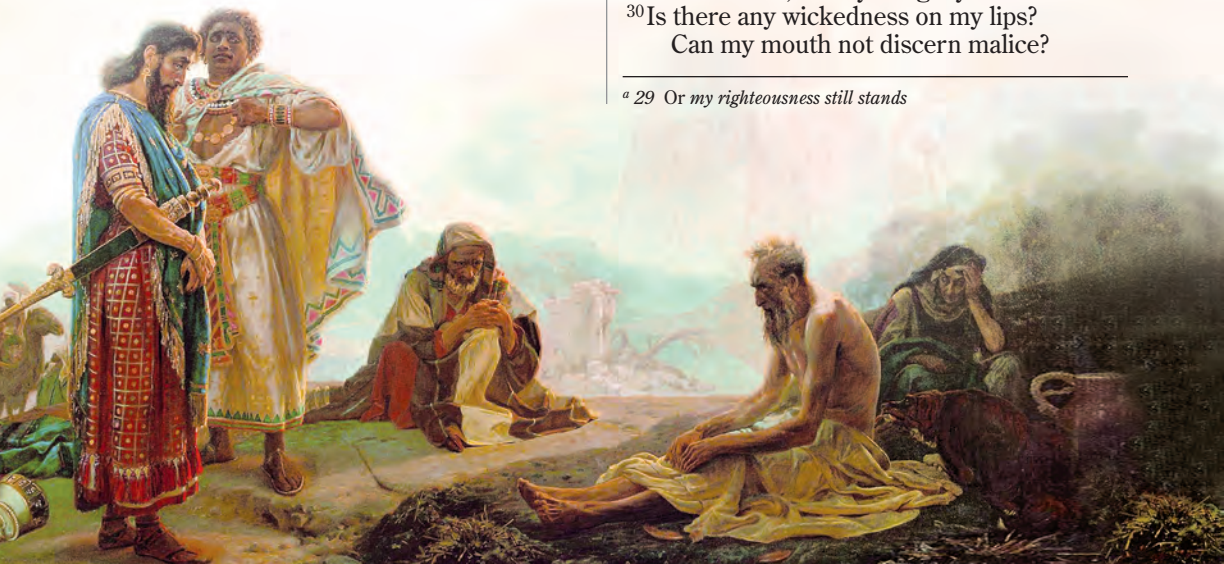
14 "Anyone who withholds kindness from a
friend
forsakes the fear of the Almighty.
15 But my brothers are as undependable as
intermittent streams,
as the streams that overflow
16 when darkened by thawing ice
and swollen with melting snow,
17 but that stop flowing in the dry season,
and in the heat vanish from their
channels.
18 Caravans turn aside from their routes;
they go off into the wasteland and perish.
19 The caravans of Tema look for water,
the traveling merchants of Sheba look in
hope.
20 They are distressed, because they had been
confident;
they arrive there, only to be disappointed.

21 Now you too have proved to be of no help;
you see something dreadful and are
afraid.
22 Have I ever said, 'Give something on my
behalf,
pay a ransom for me from your wealth,
23 deliver me from the hand of the enemy,
rescue me from the clutches of the
ruthless'?

24 "Teach me, and I will be quiet;
show me where I have been wrong.
25 How painful are honest words!
But what do your arguments prove?
26 Do you mean to correct what I say,
and treat my desperate words as wind?
27 You would even cast lots for the fatherless
and barter away your friend.

28 "But now be so kind as to look at me.
Would I lie to your face?
29 Relent, do not be unjust;
reconsider, for my integrity is at stake.[a]
30 Is there any wickedness on my lips?
Can my mouth not discern malice?

[a] 29 Or *my righteousness still stands*



7 1 "Do not mortals have hard service on earth?
Are not their days like those of hired laborers?
2 Like a slave longing for the evening shadows,
or a hired laborer waiting to be paid,
3 so I have been allotted months of futility,
and nights of misery have been assigned to me.
4 When I lie down I think, 'How long before I get up?'
The night drags on, and I toss and turn until dawn.
5 My body is clothed with worms and scabs,
my skin is broken and festering.
6 "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle,
and they come to an end without hope.
7 Remember, O God, that my life is but a breath;
my eyes will never see happiness again.
8 The eye that now sees me will see me no longer;
you will look for me, but I will be no more.
9 As a cloud vanishes and is gone,
so one who goes down to the grave does not return.
10 He will never come to his house again;
his place will know him no more.
11 "Therefore I will not keep silent;
I will speak out in the anguish of my spirit,
I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.
12 Am I the sea, or the monster of the deep,
that you put me under guard?
13 When I think my bed will comfort me
and my couch will ease my complaint,
14 even then you frighten me with dreams
and terrify me with visions,
15 so that I prefer strangling and death,
rather than this body of mine.
16 I despise my life; I would not live forever.
Let me alone; my days have no meaning.
17 "What is mankind that you make so much of them,
that you give them so much attention,
18 that you examine them every morning
and test them every moment?
19 Will you never look away from me,
or let me alone even for an instant?
20 If I have sinned, what have I done to you,
you who see everything we do?
Why have you made me your target?
Have I become a burden to you?[a]
21 Why do you not pardon my offenses
and forgive my sins?
For I will soon lie down in the dust;
you will search for me, but I will be no more."

[a] *20* A few manuscripts of the Masoretic Text, an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition and Septuagint; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *I have become a burden to myself.*

Science & Technology

Cloth is woven by passing one thread, the weft, back and forth through fixed threads called the warp. A loom is any device that holds the warp. A shuttle is a spool or frame that carries the weft. It moves back and forth in a repetitive motion, ending its task when the length of cloth is finished. Job compares his passing days to the shuttle shooting to and fro between the warp threads (Job 7:6).

TRANSITION

Bildad: Ask the Former Generation

Job's second friend, Bildad the Shuhite, discards all pretense at offering comfort (ch. 8). Bildad's whole purpose is to defend the traditional wisdom teachings that had been passed from generation to generation. Job's own experience of injustice is unimportant to Bildad, compared with the time-honored teachings of "the former generation" and "what their ancestors learned" (8:8).

Bildad takes one step beyond the wisdom teaching that the righteous prosper and the wicked suffer. Turning the teaching around, Bildad concludes that Job's children must have been wicked since they died (8:4). Indeed, if Job were really pure, he would not be suffering either (8:6). This reformulation of the teaching might appear logical, but it is unjustified. While biblical wisdom writings, such as appear in Proverbs, do teach that the wicked will suffer, they never permit the reverse reasoning that everyone who suffers is being punished for wickedness.

• Job 8:1–22

Job

Bildad

8 **:1** Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:
2 "How long will you say such things?
Your words are a blustering wind.
3 Does God pervert justice?
Does the Almighty pervert what is right?

4 When your children sinned against him,
he gave them over to the penalty of their sin.
5 But if you will seek God earnestly
and plead with the Almighty,
6 if you are pure and upright,
even now he will rouse himself on your behalf
and restore you to your prosperous state.
7 Your beginnings will seem humble,
so prosperous will your future be.

8 "Ask the former generation
and find out what their ancestors learned,
9 for we were born only yesterday and know nothing,
and our days on earth are but a shadow.
10 Will they not instruct you and tell you?
Will they not bring forth words from their understanding?
11 Can papyrus grow tall where there is no marsh?
Can reeds thrive without water?
12 While still growing and uncut,
they wither more quickly than grass.
13 Such is the destiny of all who forget God;
so perishes the hope of the godless.
14 What they trust in is fragile[a];
what they rely on is a spider's web.
15 They lean on the web, but it gives way;
they cling to it, but it does not hold.
16 They are like a well-watered plant in the sunshine,
spreading its shoots over the garden;
17 it entwines its roots around a pile of rocks
and looks for a place among the stones.
18 But when it is torn from its spot,
that place disowns it and says, 'I never saw you.'
19 Surely its life withers away,
and[b] from the soil other plants grow.

20 "Surely God does not reject one who is blameless
or strengthen the hands of evildoers.
21 He will yet fill your mouth with laughter
and your lips with shouts of joy.

Arts & Literature
The stars are conventionally grouped into constellations named after mythological figures (Job 9:9). Orion is the hunter, and can be recognized by three bright stars in a row. The Pleiades are a faint group of stars. Six can be seen with the naked eye, but according to tradition there are seven. They are named as an example of distant and mysterious natural beauty.

22 Your enemies will be clothed in shame,
and the tents of the wicked will be no more."

TRANSITION
Job: How Then Can I Dispute with Him?

In his third speech (chs. 9; 10), Job rejects the whole notion of a just mor al order in the world. The righteous do not alw ays prosper, and the "land falls in to the hands of the wicked" (9:24). Job does not see tha t God makes any distinction between the righteous and the wicked (9:22), and God's power might not always be used for good. The great Creator of the world can also shake the earth and seal off the light of the stars (9:6, 7); the God who fashioned Job can also destroy him (10:8).

Even as Job speaks these despairing words, a part of him r efuses to accept this pic ture of a capr icious God. God must be just . Job longs to take his case before God, to plead his innocence in G od's presence, but he cannot imagine how a frail human could stand before Almighty God (9:3, 14–16). Believing that God must long for justice, Job en visions a mediator, someone who could stand before God and plead Job's case for him (9:32–35).

• **Job 9:1—10:22**

Job
Job

9 :1 Then Job replied:

2 "Indeed, I know that this is true.
But how can mere mortals prove their innocence before God?
3 Though they wished to dispute with him,
they could not answer him one time out of a thousand.
4 His wisdom is profound, his power is vast.
Who has resisted him and come out unscathed?
5 He moves mountains without their knowing it
and overturns them in his anger.
6 He shakes the earth from its place
and makes its pillars tremble.
7 He speaks to the sun and it does not shine;
he seals off the light of the stars.
8 He alone stretches out the heavens
and treads on the waves of the sea.
9 He is the Maker of the Bear[c] and Orion,
the Pleiades and the constellations of the south.

[a] *14* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] *19* Or *Surely all the joy it has / is that*
[c] *9* Or *of Leo*

10 He performs wonders that cannot be
fathomed,
miracles that cannot be counted.
11 When he passes me, I cannot see him;
when he goes by, I cannot perceive him.
12 If he snatches away, who can stop him?
Who can say to him, 'What are you
doing?'
13 God does not restrain his anger;
even the cohorts of Rahab cowered at his
feet.

14 "How then can I dispute with him?
How can I find words to argue with him?
15 Though I were innocent, I could not answer
him;
I could only plead with my Judge for
mercy.
16 Even if I summoned him and he responded,
I do not believe he would give me a
hearing.
17 He would crush me with a storm
and multiply my wounds for no reason.
18 He would not let me catch my breath
but would overwhelm me with misery.
19 If it is a matter of strength, he is mighty!
And if it is a matter of justice, who can
challenge him[a]?
20 Even if I were innocent, my mouth would
condemn me;
if I were blameless, it would pronounce
me guilty.

21 "Although I am blameless,
I have no concern for myself;
I despise my own life.
22 It is all the same; that is why I say,
'He destroys both the blameless and the
wicked.'
23 When a scourge brings sudden death,
he mocks the despair of the innocent.
24 When a land falls into the hands of the
wicked,
he blindfolds its judges.
If it is not he, then who is it?

25 "My days are swifter than a runner;
they fly away without a glimpse of joy.
26 They skim past like boats of papyrus,
like eagles swooping down on their prey.
27 If I say, 'I will forget my complaint,
I will change my expression, and smile,'
28 I still dread all my sufferings,
for I know you will not hold me innocent.
29 Since I am already found guilty,
why should I struggle in vain?
30 Even if I washed myself with soap
and my hands with cleansing powder,
31 you would plunge me into a slime pit
so that even my clothes would
detest me.

32 "He is not a mere mortal like me that I
might answer him,
that we might confront each other in
court.
33 If only there were someone to mediate
between us,
someone to bring us together,
34 someone to remove God's rod from me,
so that his terror would frighten me no
more.
35 Then I would speak up without fear of
him,
but as it now stands with me, I cannot.

10 1 "I loathe my very life;
therefore I will give free rein to my
complaint
and speak out in the bitterness of my
soul.
2 I say to God: Do not declare me guilty,
but tell me what charges you have
against me.
3 Does it please you to oppress me,
to spurn the work of your hands,
while you smile on the plans of the
wicked?
4 Do you have eyes of flesh?
Do you see as a mortal sees?
5 Are your days like those of a mortal
or your years like those of a strong
man,
6 that you must search out my faults
and probe after my sin—
7 though you know that I am not guilty
and that no one can rescue me from your
hand?

8 "Your hands shaped me and made me.
Will you now turn and destroy me?
9 Remember that you molded me like clay.
Will you now turn me to dust again?
10 Did you not pour me out like milk
and curdle me like cheese,
11 clothe me with skin and flesh
and knit me together with bones and
sinews?
12 You gave me life and showed me kindness,
and in your providence watched over my
spirit.

13 "But this is what you concealed in your
heart,
and I know that this was in your mind:

[a] *19* See Septuagint; Hebrew *me.*

Babylonian Job and Other Innocent Sufferers (Job 10:2)

Ancient people believed that gods governed the universe based on some principle of right and wrong. They were confident that pious acts would result in well-being, but aware that wrongdoing would result in misfortune or distress. When misfortune struck, they would consult the gods to discover the cause of their misfortune. If innocent, they would seek divine justice from the gods. So Job, not understanding why he must suffer, calls on God, "Tell me what charges you have against me" (Job 10:2).

Ancient Near Eastern literary efforts that grapple with the problem of unjust human suffering are not unique to the Scriptures. From Mesopotamia there are at present four known documents that are superficially similar to the Book of Job: *Man and His God*; *I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom*; *The Babylonian Theodicy*; *Dialogue Between a Master and His Slave*.

In a copy of the Sumerian *Man and His God* from the early 2nd millennium B.C., an individual complains about his plight to his deity. He accuses his god of becoming angry and leaving him unprotected from unscrupulous human enemies, who know that the worshiper's god will not harm them. Finally, the sufferer forgoes his right to protest divine actions and confesses his own guilt. The relationship between himself and his god is repaired.

Despite being unjustly placed in an unfortunate condition, the sufferer in *I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom* still extols the virtues of his god. He does complain that his god's face is far from him, and concludes that the gods must have a different system of merit that cannot be known by humans. Nonetheless, he encourages humans to continue to perform the proper cultic acts of worship.

The Babylonian Theodicy has often been labeled "The Babylonian Job." The sufferer in this case disputes, like Job, with an educated friend. The sufferer implies that the gods are to be blamed for much of the suffering that occurs. He also maintains that morality is not profitable, as the gods ultimately have no regard for it. The story ends with the sufferer calling upon his god to "pasture his flock."

The *Dialogue Between a Master and His Slave* has only occasional similarities to the Book of Job. Many of the conditions of the master's distress can be compared to that of Job.

14 If I sinned, you would be watching me
and would not let my offense go unpunished.
15 If I am guilty—woe to me!
Even if I am innocent, I cannot lift my head,
for I am full of shame
and drowned in[a] my affliction.
16 If I hold my head high, you stalk me like a lion
and again display your awesome power against me.
17 You bring new witnesses against me
and increase your anger toward me;
your forces come against me wave upon wave.

18 "Why then did you bring me out of the womb?
I wish I had died before any eye saw me.
19 If only I had never come into being,
or had been carried straight from the womb to the grave!
20 Are not my few days almost over?
Turn away from me so I can have a moment's joy
21 before I go to the place of no return,
to the land of gloom and utter darkness,
22 to the land of deepest night,
of utter darkness and disorder,
where even the light is like darkness."

TRANSITION

Zophar: God Has Even Forgotten Some of Your Sin

Believing that the world has a just moral order, Bildad implied that Job's calamities were the result of sin (8:4–6). Now Job's third friend, Zophar the Naamathite, goes the next step and flatly states that Job deserves his suffering. In fact, Job is getting off easy: "God has even forgotten some of your sin" (11:6).

Much of Zophar's speech (ch. 11) asserts that God is too mysterious for Job, a mere man, to understand (11:7, 8). While this is true, Zophar somewhat spoils the effect by his confidence that he, also a mere man, is able to explain God's ways to Job.

• **Job 11:1–20**

Job

Zophar

11:1 Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

2 "Are all these words to go unanswered?
Is this talker to be vindicated?
3 Will your idle talk reduce others to silence?
Will no one rebuke you when you mock?
4 You say to God, 'My beliefs are flawless
and I am pure in your sight.'
5 Oh, how I wish that God would speak,
that he would open his lips against you

[a] *15* Or *and aware of*

6 and disclose to you the secrets of wisdom,
for true wisdom has two sides.
Know this: God has even forgotten some
of your sin.

7 "Can you fathom the mysteries of God?
Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?
8 They are higher than the heavens above—
what can you do?
They are deeper than the depths below—
what can you know?
9 Their measure is longer than the earth
and wider than the sea.

10 "If he comes along and confines you in
prison
and convenes a court, who can oppose
him?
11 Surely he recognizes deceivers;
and when he sees evil, does he not take
note?
12 But the witless can no more become wise
than a wild donkey's colt can be born
human.[a]

13 "Yet if you devote your heart to him
and stretch out your hands to him,
14 if you put away the sin that is in your hand
and allow no evil to dwell in your tent,
15 then, free of fault, you will lift up your face;
you will stand firm and without fear.
16 You will surely forget your trouble,
recalling it only as waters gone by.
17 Life will be brighter than noonday,
and darkness will become like morning.
18 You will be secure, because there is hope;
you will look about you and take your rest
in safety.
19 You will lie down, with no one to make you
afraid,
and many will court your favor.
20 But the eyes of the wicked will fail,
and escape will elude them;
their hope will become a dying gasp."

[a] 12 Or *wild donkey can be born tame*

TRANSITION

Job: Your Proverbs of Ashes

As Job's friends grow more bold in their defense of traditional wisdom and in their accusations against Job, Job himself grows more frustrated with their trite answers. "Who does not know all these things?" he demands (12:3).

Moreover, the friends' answers are wrong. The wicked *do* prosper (12:5, 6), and God does not always act benevolently (12:17–25). The friends' "maxims are proverbs of ashes" (13:12) that cannot explain these facts. Job seeks an explanation from God himself, even if getting that answer would mean Job's death (13:15).

Again, Job's speech (chs. 12–14) concludes with a new hope. Wisdom theology said almost nothing about a life after death, preferring to focus on this world and this life. With an inspiration born of sorrow, Job imagines the possibility that he might find justice after death (14:14–17).

• **Job 12:1—14:22**

Job

Job

12:1 Then Job replied:

2 "Doubtless you are the only people who
matter,
and wisdom will die with you!
3 But I have a mind as well as you;
I am not inferior to you.
Who does not know all these things?

4 "I have become a laughingstock to my
friends,
though I called on God and he
answered—
a mere laughingstock, though righteous
and blameless!

5 Those who are at ease have contempt for misfortune
as the fate of those whose feet are slipping.
6 The tents of marauders are undisturbed,
and those who provoke God are secure—
those God has in his hand.[a]

7 "But ask the animals, and they will teach you,
or the birds in the sky, and they will tell you;
8 or speak to the earth, and it will teach you,
or let the fish in the sea inform you.
9 Which of all these does not know
that the hand of the LORD has done this?
10 In his hand is the life of every creature
and the breath of all mankind.
11 Does not the ear test words
as the tongue tastes food?
12 Is not wisdom found among the aged?
Does not long life bring understanding?

13 "To God belong wisdom and power;
counsel and understanding are his.
14 What he tears down cannot be rebuilt;
those he imprisons cannot be released.
15 If he holds back the waters, there is drought;
if he lets them loose, they devastate the land.
16 To him belong strength and insight;
both deceived and deceiver are his.
17 He leads rulers away stripped
and makes fools of judges.
18 He takes off the shackles put on by kings
and ties a loincloth[b] around their waist.
19 He leads priests away stripped
and overthrows officials long established.
20 He silences the lips of trusted advisers
and takes away the discernment of elders.
21 He pours contempt on nobles
and disarms the mighty.
22 He reveals the deep things of darkness
and brings utter darkness into the light.
23 He makes nations great, and destroys them;
he enlarges nations, and disperses them.
24 He deprives the leaders of the earth of their reason;
he makes them wander in a trackless waste.
25 They grope in darkness with no light;
he makes them stagger like drunkards.

13 1 "My eyes have seen all this,
my ears have heard and understood it.
2 What you know, I also know;
I am not inferior to you.
3 But I desire to speak to the Almighty
and to argue my case with God.
4 You, however, smear me with lies;
you are worthless physicians, all of you!
5 If only you would be altogether silent!
For you, that would be wisdom.
6 Hear now my argument;
listen to the pleas of my lips.
7 Will you speak wickedly on God's behalf?
Will you speak deceitfully for him?
8 Will you show him partiality?
Will you argue the case for God?
9 Would it turn out well if he examined you?
Could you deceive him as you might deceive a mortal?
10 He would surely call you to account
if you secretly showed partiality.
11 Would not his splendor terrify you?
Would not the dread of him fall on you?
12 Your maxims are proverbs of ashes;
your defenses are defenses of clay.

13 "Keep silent and let me speak;
then let come to me what may.
14 Why do I put myself in jeopardy
and take my life in my hands?
15 Though he slay me, yet will I hope in him;
I will surely[c] defend my ways to his face.
16 Indeed, this will turn out for my deliverance,
for no godless person would dare come before him!
17 Listen carefully to what I say;
let my words ring in your ears.
18 Now that I have prepared my case,
I know I will be vindicated.
19 Can anyone bring charges against me?
If so, I will be silent and die.

20 "Only grant me these two things, God,
and then I will not hide from you:
21 Withdraw your hand far from me,
and stop frightening me with your terrors.
22 Then summon me and I will answer,
or let me speak, and you reply to me.
23 How many wrongs and sins have I committed?
Show me my offense and my sin.
24 Why do you hide your face
and consider me your enemy?
25 Will you torment a windblown leaf?
Will you chase after dry chaff?
26 For you write down bitter things against me
and make me reap the sins of my youth.

[a] 6 Or *those whose god is in their own hand* [b] 18 Or *shackles of kings / and ties a belt* [c] 15 Or *He will surely slay me; I have no hope — / yet I will*

27 You fasten my feet in shackles;
you keep close watch on all my paths
by putting marks on the soles of my feet.

28 "So man wastes away like something rotten,
like a garment eaten by moths.

14 1 "Mortals, born of woman,
are of few days and full of trouble.
2 They spring up like flowers and wither
away;
like fleeting shadows, they do not endure.
3 Do you fix your eye on them?
Will you bring them[a] before you for
judgment?
4 Who can bring what is pure from the impure?
No one!
5 A person's days are determined;
you have decreed the number of his
months
and have set limits he cannot exceed.
6 So look away from him and let him alone,
till he has put in his time like a hired
laborer.

7 "At least there is hope for a tree:
If it is cut down, it will sprout again,
and its new shoots will not fail.
8 Its roots may grow old in the ground
and its stump die in the soil,
9 yet at the scent of water it will bud
and put forth shoots like a plant.
10 But a man dies and is laid low;
he breathes his last and is no more.
11 As the water of a lake dries up
or a riverbed becomes parched and dry,
12 so he lies down and does not rise;
till the heavens are no more, people will
not awake
or be roused from their sleep.

13 "If only you would hide me in the grave
and conceal me till your anger has
passed!
If only you would set me a time
and then remember me!
14 If someone dies, will they live again?
All the days of my hard service
I will wait for my renewal[b] to come.
15 You will call and I will answer you;
you will long for the creature your hands
have made.
16 Surely then you will count my steps
but not keep track of my sin.
17 My offenses will be sealed up in a bag;
you will cover over my sin.

18 "But as a mountain erodes and crumbles
and as a rock is moved from its place,
19 as water wears away stones
and torrents wash away the soil,
so you destroy a person's hope.
20 You overpower them once for all, and they
are gone;
you change their countenance and send
them away.
21 If their children are honored, they do not
know it;
if their offspring are brought low, they do
not see it.
22 They feel but the pain of their own bodies
and mourn only for themselves."

[a] *3* Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac; Hebrew *me*
[b] *14* Or *release*

Beliefs & Ideas

Job asserts what seems to be a fatalistic doctrine: the number of days a person will live has already been fixed by God (Job 14:5). His fatalism is pessimistic inasmuch as he compares the days of life to the unending work of the "hired laborer" (14:6). The tradition of wisdom literature considers such questions in a characteristic way and does not suggest that they can be answered without patience and effort.

TRANSITION

Words of the Wise Eliphaz: What the Wise Have Declared

The second cycle of speeches (15:1—21:34) repeats many of the issues begun in the first cycle, but the speakers are less polite. The debate has become an angry argument.

Job takes issue with his friends' source of wisdom. The wisdom teachers sought understanding from both personal observation and from tradition. Job, however, finds that his observations do not mesh with traditional understandings, so he rejects tradition (ch. 12). Such independent thinking was shocking to an ancient Near Eastern mind, and Eliphaz devotes much of his second speech (ch. 15) to affirming the value of time-honored wisdom. He asks how Job can claim to know more than "the gray-haired and the aged" (15:10). The rest of Eliphaz's speech comes from ancient and established tradition: "What the wise have declared . . . from their ancestors" (15:18).

•Job 15:1–35

Job

Eliphaz

15 :1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:
2 "Would a wise person answer with empty
notions
or fill their belly with the hot east wind?

Bureaucratic Reports in Heaven (Job 15:15)

Eliphaz reflects the belief that humans are not pure, since even God's "holy ones" in the heavens are not pure (Job 15:15). These holy ones were members of the heavenly council, an assembly that was prominent in the religious thought of Syria-Palestine and of Edom. In the prologue of Job are scenes of the heavenly council before God (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6). The members of the council are gods, called the "angels" (Job 1:6), who are shown reporting in to the highest deity, Yahweh, their ruler.

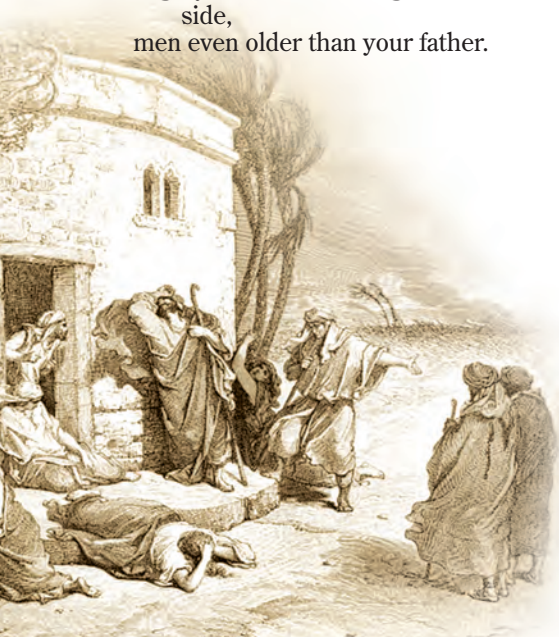
Like department chairs, field generals, or vice presidents, deities had days when they were to report their activities to their superior. The action in the heavenly scenes in Job (Job 1:6; 2:1) takes place on the days these reports are due, and the gods show up at God's throne room. Each deity was assigned to care for and control a particular aspect of the universe; the assembly was to make certain all was going well.

The hierarchy of heaven reflected that of a city-state or empire on earth. An earthly king ruled by means of a large bureaucracy, answerable to the head of the hierarchy. Each officer in the human bureaucracy was expected to carry out individual assignments in perfect accord with the desires of the king and to report regularly. The king, in turn, was understood to be responsible to the patron deity of the kingdom and was to render a regular accounting.

The Book of Job, therefore, begins in an ordinary way, describing another day for reports. The gods check in and Yahweh inspects them. It is cosmic bureaucracy at work. The members of the bureaucracy were certainly inferior to Yahweh himself. They were often found in error (Job 4:18) and did not earn Yahweh's trust (15:15).

3 Would they argue with useless words,
with speeches that have no value?
4 But you even undermine piety
and hinder devotion to God.
5 Your sin prompts your mouth;
you adopt the tongue of the crafty.
6 Your own mouth condemns you, not mine;
your own lips testify against you.

7 "Are you the first man ever born?
Were you brought forth before the hills?
8 Do you listen in on God's council?
Do you have a monopoly on wisdom?
9 What do you know that we do not know?
What insights do you have that we do not have?
10 The gray-haired and the aged are on our side,
men even older than your father.



11 Are God's consolations not enough for you,
words spoken gently to you?
12 Why has your heart carried you away,
and why do your eyes flash,
13 so that you vent your rage against God
and pour out such words from your mouth?

14 "What are mortals, that they could be pure,
or those born of woman, that they could be righteous?
15 If God places no trust in his holy ones,
if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes,
16 how much less mortals, who are vile and corrupt,
who drink up evil like water!

17 "Listen to me and I will explain to you;
let me tell you what I have seen,
18 what the wise have declared,
hiding nothing received from their ancestors
19 (to whom alone the land was given
when no foreigners moved among them):
20 All his days the wicked man suffers torment,
the ruthless man through all the years stored up for him.
21 Terrifying sounds fill his ears;
when all seems well, marauders attack him.
22 He despairs of escaping the realm of darkness;
he is marked for the sword.
23 He wanders about for food like a vulture;
he knows the day of darkness is at hand.

24 Distress and anguish fill him with terror;
troubles overwhelm him, like a king
poised to attack,
25 because he shakes his fist at God
and vaunts himself against the Almighty,
26 defiantly charging against him
with a thick, strong shield.

27 "Though his face is covered with fat
and his waist bulges with flesh,
28 he will inhabit ruined towns
and houses where no one lives,
houses crumbling to rubble.
29 He will no longer be rich and his wealth will
not endure,
nor will his possessions spread over the
land.
30 He will not escape the darkness;
a flame will wither his shoots,
and the breath of God's mouth will carry
him away.
31 Let him not deceive himself by trusting
what is worthless,
for he will get nothing in return.
32 Before his time he will wither,
and his branches will not flourish.
33 He will be like a vine stripped of its unripe
grapes,
like an olive tree shedding its blossoms.
34 For the company of the godless will be
barren,
and fire will consume the tents of those
who love bribes.
35 They conceive trouble and give birth to evil;
their womb fashions deceit."

TRANSITION

Job: My Witness Is in Heaven

Eliphaz's rote recital of traditional wisdom concerning the fate of the wicked (15:20–35) leaves Job unmoved. Job calls such trite formulations "long-winded speeches" (16:3). In his reply (chs. 16; 17), Job again appeals to his own tragic experience of injustice. In stylized language that is reminiscent of the psalmic laments, he describes his own pain and shame (16:7–17; see Ps. 22:7; 38:2).

Despite his suffering, Job does not give up hope that he might be vindicated before God. He envisioned a mediator who would take his case to God (Job 9:33); now he declares his witness to be "in heaven . . . on high" (16:19). There must be justice before God, somehow. Job's hope, depending on an unknown witness, is surely a hope dredged from the pit of despair, but it is hope nonetheless. For the first time Job appears not to long for death (17:13–15).

• Job 16:1—17:16

16 :1 Then Job replied:

2 "I have heard many things like these;
you are miserable comforters, all of you!
3 Will your long-winded speeches never
end?
What ails you that you keep on arguing?
4 I also could speak like you,
if you were in my place;
I could make fine speeches against you
and shake my head at you.
5 But my mouth would encourage you;
comfort from my lips would bring you
relief.

6 "Yet if I speak, my pain is not relieved;
and if I refrain, it does not go away.
7 Surely, God, you have worn me out;
you have devastated my entire
household.
8 You have shriveled me up—and it has
become a witness;
my gauntness rises up and testifies
against me.
9 God assails me and tears me in his anger
and gnashes his teeth at me;
my opponent fastens on me his piercing
eyes.
10 People open their mouths to jeer at me;
they strike my cheek in scorn
and unite together against me.
11 God has turned me over to the ungodly
and thrown me into the clutches of the
wicked.
12 All was well with me, but he
shattered me;
he seized me by the neck and
crushed me.
He has made me his target;
13 his archers surround me.
Without pity, he pierces my kidneys
and spills my gall on the ground.
14 Again and again he bursts upon me;
he rushes at me like a warrior.

15 "I have sewed sackcloth over my skin
and buried my brow in the dust.
16 My face is red with weeping,
dark shadows ring my eyes;
17 yet my hands have been free of violence
and my prayer is pure.

18 "Earth, do not cover my blood;
may my cry never be laid to rest!
19 Even now my witness is in heaven;
my advocate is on high.

20 My intercessor is my friend[a]
as my eyes pour out tears to God;
21 on behalf of a man he pleads with God
as one pleads for a friend.

22 "Only a few years will pass
before I take the path of no return.

17 1 My spirit is broken,
my days are cut short,
the grave awaits me.
2 Surely mockers surround me;
my eyes must dwell on their hostility.

3 "Give me, O God, the pledge you demand.
Who else will put up security for me?
4 You have closed their minds to
understanding;
therefore you will not let them triumph.
5 If anyone denounces their friends for
reward,
the eyes of their children will fail.

6 "God has made me a byword to everyone,
a man in whose face people spit.
7 My eyes have grown dim with grief;
my whole frame is but a shadow.
8 The upright are appalled at this;
the innocent are aroused against the
ungodly.
9 Nevertheless, the righteous will hold to
their ways,
and those with clean hands will grow
stronger.

10 "But come on, all of you, try again!
I will not find a wise man among you.
11 My days have passed, my plans are
shattered.
Yet the desires of my heart
12 turn night into day;
in the face of the darkness light is near.
13 If the only home I hope for is the grave,
if I spread out my bed in the realm of
darkness,
14 if I say to corruption, 'You are my father,'
and to the worm, 'My mother' or 'My
sister,'
15 where then is my hope—
who can see any hope for me?
16 Will it go down to the gates of death?
Will we descend together into the dust?"

TRANSITION

Bildad: The Lamp of a Wicked Man

Bildad's second speech (ch. 18) adds nothing new to the argument. His theme—that the wicked will be punished—is the same theme that Eliphaz presented (ch. 15). Even the words that Bildad chooses are trite and repetitive. His assertion "The lamp of a wicked man is snuffed out" (18:5) is a well-worn proverbial theme appearing twice in the Book of Proverbs (Pr 13:9; 24:20). The friends' arguments are beginning to sound weary.

• **Job 18:1–21**

Job

Bildad

18 **:1** Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

2 "When will you end these speeches?
Be sensible, and then we can talk.
3 Why are we regarded as cattle
and considered stupid in your sight?
4 You who tear yourself to pieces in your
anger,
is the earth to be abandoned for your
sake?
Or must the rocks be moved from their
place?

5 "The lamp of a wicked man is snuffed out;
the flame of his fire stops burning.
6 The light in his tent becomes dark;
the lamp beside him goes out.
7 The vigor of his step is weakened;
his own schemes throw him down.
8 His feet thrust him into a net;
he wanders into its mesh.
9 A trap seizes him by the heel;
a snare holds him fast.
10 A noose is hidden for him on the ground;
a trap lies in his path.
11 Terrors startle him on every side
and dog his every step.
12 Calamity is hungry for him;
disaster is ready for him when he falls.
13 It eats away parts of his skin;
death's firstborn devours his limbs.
14 He is torn from the security of his tent
and marched off to the king of terrors.
15 Fire resides[b] in his tent;
burning sulfur is scattered over his
dwelling.
16 His roots dry up below
and his branches wither above.
17 The memory of him perishes from the
earth;
he has no name in the land.
18 He is driven from light into the realm of
darkness
and is banished from the world.

[a] *20* Or *My friends treat me with scorn* [b] *15* Or *Nothing he had remains*

Paraded Before the King of Terrors (Job 18:14)

Bildad paints a graphic picture of the terrible fate of the wicked (Job 18:5–21). Death is the end for those who are wicked before God, and Bildad describes the realm of death with many allusions to the Canaanite god Mot and his abode.

In the Ugaritic myths from 1400 to 1200 B.C., Mot is the god of death and the netherworld. He is presented as being ravenous, having an insatiable appetite for the flesh of the living. His land is beneath the earth, where fire, barrenness, darkness, and slime all collect. Where Mot dwells there is no life and no renown. Metals and jewels that are mined are part of his realm, because they are under the ground. Similarly, Pluto, the god of the netherworld in Greek mythology, also ruled over the materials beneath the surface of the earth.

People in ancient Israel believed that everyone who died would go to dwell in the land of the dead. The wicked, it was thought, were condemned to descend to the pit earlier than the norm. Fear of Mot and his realm of death could be used to frighten the living into behaving. Indeed, one did not want to meet quickly with Mot, the "king of terrors" (Job 18:14) who ruled over the spirits of the dead.

The god Mot is mentioned in the Bible occasionally where Death is described as a person. Yahweh personally addresses "death" in Hos 13:14. In Job 28, Job asserts that wisdom belongs only to God, and he quotes the speech of Death. The netherworld (which Job calls "Destruction") and Death say, "A rumor . . . has reached our ears," but they do not know of wisdom's whereabouts (Job 28:22). If Mot does not know wisdom, with all the people who ever lived assembled in his realm, and he being a god as well, then wisdom truly is God's and God's alone.

19 He has no offspring or descendants among his people,
no survivor where once he lived.
20 People of the west are appalled at his fate;
those of the east are seized with horror.
21 Surely such is the dwelling of an evil man;
such is the place of one who does not know God."

TRANSITION

Job: My Redeemer Lives

Where Bildad had resorted to the language of proverbial wisdom, Job's response to Bildad (ch. 19) adopts language more like the psalms. To the people of the ancient Near East, the worst fate that could befall someone was to be cut off from one's family and clan. Job describes his condition in terms of this horrible isolation. He is alienated from his family, his servants, and his friends (19:13–22; see Ps. 39:12).

From this isolation, though, Job expresses a most astonishing hope. Elements of all his earlier hopes—for a mediator (9:33), a witness (16:19), even for life after death (14:14–17) are now drawn together. Alienated from his own family, Job declares that *somewhere* there must be a redeemer who will stand on his side (19:25–27).

• **Job 19:1–29**

Job

Job

19 :1 Then Job replied:

2 "How long will you torment me
and crush me with words?
3 Ten times now you have reproached me;
shamelessly you attack me.
4 If it is true that I have gone astray,
my error remains my concern alone.
5 If indeed you would exalt yourselves above me
and use my humiliation against me,
6 then know that God has wronged me
and drawn his net around me.

7 "Though I cry, 'Violence!' I get no response;
though I call for help, there is no justice.
8 He has blocked my way so I cannot pass;
he has shrouded my paths in darkness.
9 He has stripped me of my honor
and removed the crown from my head.
10 He tears me down on every side till I am gone;
he uproots my hope like a tree.
11 His anger burns against me;
he counts me among his enemies.
12 His troops advance in force;
they build a siege ramp against me
and encamp around my tent.

13 "He has alienated my family from me;
my acquaintances are completely estranged from me.
14 My relatives have gone away;
my closest friends have forgotten me.
15 My guests and my female servants count me a foreigner;
they look on me as on a stranger.
16 I summon my servant, but he does not answer,
though I beg him with my own mouth.

17 My breath is offensive to my wife;
I am loathsome to my own family.
18 Even the little boys scorn me;
when I appear, they ridicule me.
19 All my intimate friends detest me;
those I love have turned against me.
20 I am nothing but skin and bones;
I have escaped only by the skin of my teeth.[a]

21 "Have pity on me, my friends, have pity,
for the hand of God has struck me.
22 Why do you pursue me as God does?
Will you never get enough of my flesh?

23 "Oh, that my words were recorded,
that they were written on a scroll,
24 that they were inscribed with an iron tool on[b] lead,
or engraved in rock forever!
25 I know that my redeemer[c] lives,
and that in the end he will stand on the earth.[d]
26 And after my skin has been destroyed,
yet[e] in[f] my flesh I will see God;
27 I myself will see him
with my own eyes—I, and not another.
How my heart yearns within me!

28 "If you say, 'How we will hound him,
since the root of the trouble lies in him,[g]'
29 you should fear the sword yourselves;
for wrath will bring punishment by the sword,
and then you will know that there is judgment.[h]"

TRANSITION

Zophar: The Portion for a Wicked Man

Job's thoughts may soar upward, ranging farther at each speech in his search for hope, but his friends' responses remain solidly earthbound. Zophar's second speech (ch. 20) only repeats the theme presented by Eliphaz and Bildad—that eventually the wicked will come to a sticky end (20:12–15).

Like the other friends, Zophar does not openly accuse Job of being wicked, but the implication is hard to miss. Zophar even twists Job's own words against him. With transcendent insight, Job had declared that his redeemer would "in the end . . . stand on the earth" (19:25; literally "on the dust"). Using an almost identical phrase, Zophar says that a wicked man's strength "will lie with him in the dust" (20:11).

• Job 20:1–29

Job

Zophar

20 **:1** Then Zophar the Naamathite replied:

2 "My troubled thoughts prompt me to answer
because I am greatly disturbed.
3 I hear a rebuke that dishonors me,
and my understanding inspires me to reply.

4 "Surely you know how it has been from of old,
ever since mankind[i] was placed on the earth,
5 that the mirth of the wicked is brief,
the joy of the godless lasts but a moment.
6 Though the pride of the godless person reaches to the heavens
and his head touches the clouds,
7 he will perish forever, like his own dung;
those who have seen him will say,
'Where is he?'
8 Like a dream he flies away, no more to be found,
banished like a vision of the night.
9 The eye that saw him will not see him again;
his place will look on him no more.
10 His children must make amends to the poor;
his own hands must give back his wealth.
11 The youthful vigor that fills his bones
will lie with him in the dust.

12 "Though evil is sweet in his mouth
and he hides it under his tongue,
13 though he cannot bear to let it go
and lets it linger in his mouth,
14 yet his food will turn sour in his stomach;
it will become the venom of serpents within him.

[a] *20* Or *only by my gums* [b] *24* Or *and* [c] *25* Or *vindicator* [d] *25* Or *on my grave* [e] *26* Or *And after I awake, / though this body has been destroyed, / then* [f] *26* Or *destroyed, / apart from* [g] *28* Many Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Vulgate; most Hebrew manuscripts *me* [h] *29* Or *sword, / that you may come to know the Almighty* [i] *4* Or *Adam*

Arts & Literature

The recording of thoughts or words in writing is a persistent theme in literature. The earliest books so far discovered are in the form of small tablets hinged together like a greeting card. The surfaces of the tablets were coated with wax that was easily written on with a stylus of wood, bone, or metal. The wax was smoothed out and used again. Job, though, wants his words written on stone (Job 19:23, 24).

15 He will spit out the riches he swallowed;
God will make his stomach vomit them up.
16 He will suck the poison of serpents;
the fangs of an adder will kill him.
17 He will not enjoy the streams,
the rivers flowing with honey and cream.
18 What he toiled for he must give back uneaten;
he will not enjoy the profit from his trading.
19 For he has oppressed the poor and left them destitute;
he has seized houses he did not build.

20 "Surely he will have no respite from his craving;
he cannot save himself by his treasure.
21 Nothing is left for him to devour;
his prosperity will not endure.
22 In the midst of his plenty, distress will overtake him;
the full force of misery will come upon him.
23 When he has filled his belly,
God will vent his burning anger against him
and rain down his blows on him.
24 Though he flees from an iron weapon,
a bronze-tipped arrow pierces him.
25 He pulls it out of his back,
the gleaming point out of his liver.
Terrors will come over him;
26 total darkness lies in wait for his treasures.
A fire unfanned will consume him
and devour what is left in his tent.
27 The heavens will expose his guilt;
the earth will rise up against him.
28 A flood will carry off his house,
rushing waters[a] on the day of God's wrath.
29 Such is the fate God allots the wicked,
the heritage appointed for them by God."

[a] 28 Or *The possessions in his house will be carried off, / washed away* [b] 13 Or *in an instant*

TRANSITION

Job: Why Do the Wicked Live?

Throughout the second round of speeches (chs. 15–21), Job's three friends described in exhaustive detail the supposed fate of the wicked. As that round concludes, Job replies to all three (ch. 21), flatly rejecting traditional wisdom that the wicked always suffer. Experience does not support that claim. Instead, Job points out that the wicked often lead long lives, enjoying the fruits of their evil (21:7–16).

As he speaks, Job mocks the proverb quoted by Bildad—"The lamp of a wicked man is snuffed out" (18:5; see Pr 13:9; 24:20). With obvious scorn, Job queries, "How often is the lamp of the wicked snuffed out?" (Job 21:17). The friends' proverbial wisdom is simply inadequate.

• **Job 21:1–34**

Job

Job

21:1 Then Job replied:

2 "Listen carefully to my words;
let this be the consolation you give me.
3 Bear with me while I speak,
and after I have spoken, mock on.

4 "Is my complaint directed to a human being?
Why should I not be impatient?
5 Look at me and be appalled;
clap your hand over your mouth.
6 When I think about this, I am terrified;
trembling seizes my body.
7 Why do the wicked live on,
growing old and increasing in power?
8 They see their children established around them,
their offspring before their eyes.
9 Their homes are safe and free from fear;
the rod of God is not on them.
10 Their bulls never fail to breed;
their cows calve and do not miscarry.
11 They send forth their children as a flock;
their little ones dance about.
12 They sing to the music of timbrel and lyre;
they make merry to the sound of the pipe.
13 They spend their years in prosperity
and go down to the grave in peace.[b]
14 Yet they say to God, 'Leave us alone!
We have no desire to know your ways.
15 Who is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
What would we gain by praying to him?'
16 But their prosperity is not in their own hands,
so I stand aloof from the plans of the wicked.

17 "Yet how often is the lamp of the wicked
snuffed out?
How often does calamity come upon
them,
the fate God allots in his anger?
18 How often are they like straw before the
wind,
like chaff swept away by a gale?
19 It is said, 'God stores up the punishment of
the wicked for their children.'
Let him repay the wicked, so that they
themselves will experience it!
20 Let their own eyes see their destruction;
let them drink the cup of the wrath of the
Almighty.
21 For what do they care about the families
they leave behind
when their allotted months come to an
end?

22 "Can anyone teach knowledge to God,
since he judges even the highest?
23 One person dies in full vigor,
completely secure and at ease,
24 well nourished in body,[a]
bones rich with marrow.
25 Another dies in bitterness of soul,
never having enjoyed anything good.
26 Side by side they lie in the dust,
and worms cover them both.

27 "I know full well what you are thinking,
the schemes by which you would
wrong me.
28 You say, 'Where now is the house of the
great,
the tents where the wicked lived?'
29 Have you never questioned those who travel?
Have you paid no regard to their
accounts—
30 that the wicked are spared from the day of
calamity,
that they are delivered from[b] the day of
wrath?
31 Who denounces their conduct to their face?
Who repays them for what they have
done?
32 They are carried to the grave,
and watch is kept over their tombs.
33 The soil in the valley is sweet to them;
everyone follows after them,
and a countless throng goes[c] before
them.

34 "So how can you console me with your
nonsense?
Nothing is left of your answers but
falsehood!"

TRANSITION

Eliphaz: Is Not Your Wickedness Great?

The third round of speeches (chs. 22–31) discards all civility and moves from argument to accusations. In the squabble, the calm order of speakers is disturbed by interruptions and words out of order. Zophar is never identified as speaking at all.

In his third speech (ch. 22), Eliphaz takes the next logical step in the friends' argument: he accuses Job directly. He imagines Job's specific sins, and, warming to his theme, describes Job as a heartless villain who had oppressed widows and orphans (22:5–9). The conclusion is a moving appeal for repentance (22:21–30), but the effect of this is somewhat spoiled since Eliphaz calls on Job to repent of sins that Job has never committed.

• **Job 22:1–30**

Job

Eliphaz

22:1 Then Eliphaz the Temanite replied:

2 "Can a man be of benefit to God?
Can even a wise person benefit him?
3 What pleasure would it give the Almighty if
you were righteous?
What would he gain if your ways were
blameless?

4 "Is it for your piety that he rebukes you
and brings charges against you?
5 Is not your wickedness great?
Are not your sins endless?
6 You demanded security from your relatives
for no reason;
you stripped people of their clothing,
leaving them naked.
7 You gave no water to the weary
and you withheld food from the
hungry,
8 though you were a powerful man, owning
land—
an honored man, living on it.
9 And you sent widows away empty-handed
and broke the strength of the
fatherless.
10 That is why snares are all around you,
why sudden peril terrifies you,
11 why it is so dark you cannot see,
and why a flood of water covers you.

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[a] *24* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[b] *30* Or *wicked are reserved for the day of calamity, / that they are brought forth to*
[c] *33* Or *them, / as a countless throng went*

12 "Is not God in the heights of heaven?
And see how lofty are the highest stars!
13 Yet you say, 'What does God know?
Does he judge through such darkness?
14 Thick clouds veil him, so he does not see us
as he goes about in the vaulted heavens.'
15 Will you keep to the old path
that the wicked have trod?
16 They were carried off before their time,
their foundations washed away by a flood.
17 They said to God, 'Leave us alone!
What can the Almighty do to us?'
18 Yet it was he who filled their houses with good things,
so I stand aloof from the plans of the wicked.
19 The righteous see their ruin and rejoice;
the innocent mock them, saying,
20 'Surely our foes are destroyed,
and fire devours their wealth.'

21 "Submit to God and be at peace with him;
in this way prosperity will come to you.
22 Accept instruction from his mouth
and lay up his words in your heart.
23 If you return to the Almighty, you will be restored:
If you remove wickedness far from your tent
24 and assign your nuggets to the dust,
your gold of Ophir to the rocks in the ravines,
25 then the Almighty will be your gold,
the choicest silver for you.
26 Surely then you will find delight in the Almighty
and will lift up your face to God.
27 You will pray to him, and he will hear you,
and you will fulfill your vows.
28 What you decide on will be done,
and light will shine on your ways.
29 When people are brought low and you say,
'Lift them up!'
then he will save the downcast.
30 He will deliver even one who is not innocent,
who will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands."

[a] 2 Septuagint and Syriac; Hebrew / *the hand on me*
[b] 2 Or *heavy on me in*

TRANSITION

Job: He Is Not There

Except for a brief assertion that God knows Job's innocence (23:10–12), Job does not reply to Eliphaz's accusations. Instead, Job focuses on the wider issue —the problem of evil (chs. 23; 24). First, Job says that he seeks God everywhere, but God is not there (23:8, 9). Next, Job extends God's silence to others who suffer. The dying and wounded, like Job, cry aloud to God for help, and like Job, they receive no reply (24:12).

Part of Job's complaint—the absence of God—will be answered when God shows himself to Job (chs. 38–41). But Job's other observation—the presence of injustice in the world—will remain valid, and that injustice alone is enough to refute the simplistic wisdom teachings offered by Job's friends.

• **Job 23:1—24:25**

Job

Job

23 **:1** Then Job replied:

2 "Even today my complaint is bitter;
his hand[a] is heavy in spite of[b] my groaning.
3 If only I knew where to find him;
if only I could go to his dwelling!
4 I would state my case before him
and fill my mouth with arguments.
5 I would find out what he would answer me,
and consider what he would say to me.
6 Would he vigorously oppose me?
No, he would not press charges against me.
7 There the upright can establish their innocence before him,
and there I would be delivered forever from my judge.

8 "But if I go to the east, he is not there;
if I go to the west, I do not find him.
9 When he is at work in the north, I do not see him;
when he turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of him.
10 But he knows the way that I take;
when he has tested me, I will come forth as gold.
11 My feet have closely followed his steps;
I have kept to his way without turning aside.
12 I have not departed from the commands of his lips;
I have treasured the words of his mouth more than my daily bread.

13 "But he stands alone, and who can oppose him?
He does whatever he pleases.
14 He carries out his decree against me,
and many such plans he still has in store.
15 That is why I am terrified before him;
when I think of all this, I fear him.
16 God has made my heart faint;
the Almighty has terrified me.
17 Yet I am not silenced by the darkness,
by the thick darkness that covers my face.

24 1 "Why does the Almighty not set times for judgment?
Why must those who know him look in vain for such days?
2 There are those who move boundary stones;
they pasture flocks they have stolen.
3 They drive away the orphan's donkey
and take the widow's ox in pledge.
4 They thrust the needy from the path
and force all the poor of the land into hiding.
5 Like wild donkeys in the desert,
the poor go about their labor of foraging food;
the wasteland provides food for their children.
6 They gather fodder in the fields
and glean in the vineyards of the wicked.
7 Lacking clothes, they spend the night naked;
they have nothing to cover themselves in the cold.
8 They are drenched by mountain rains
and hug the rocks for lack of shelter.
9 The fatherless child is snatched from the breast;
the infant of the poor is seized for a debt.
10 Lacking clothes, they go about naked;
they carry the sheaves, but still go hungry.
11 They crush olives among the terraces[a];
they tread the winepresses, yet suffer thirst.

Agriculture & Herding
In an agricultural and pastoral society, it is a serious social crime to steal someone's sheep, or to confiscate someone's land by moving the boundary stones. Such stones were erected to indicate the separation of fields and territories. Land in Israel was supposed to be held by each family in perpetuity as a trust from God. Removing landmarks violated this trust (Job 24:2).

12 The groans of the dying rise from the city,
and the souls of the wounded cry out for help.
But God charges no one with wrongdoing.

13 "There are those who rebel against the light,
who do not know its ways
or stay in its paths.
14 When daylight is gone, the murderer rises up,
kills the poor and needy,
and in the night steals forth like a thief.
15 The eye of the adulterer watches for dusk;
he thinks, 'No eye will see me,'
and he keeps his face concealed.
16 In the dark, thieves break into houses,
but by day they shut themselves in;
they want nothing to do with the light.
17 For all of them, midnight is their morning;
they make friends with the terrors of darkness.

18 "Yet they are foam on the surface of the water;
their portion of the land is cursed,
so that no one goes to the vineyards.
19 As heat and drought snatch away the melted snow,
so the grave snatches away those who have sinned.
20 The womb forgets them,
the worm feasts on them;
the wicked are no longer remembered
but are broken like a tree.
21 They prey on the barren and childless woman,
and to the widow they show no kindness.
22 But God drags away the mighty by his power;
though they become established, they have no assurance of life.
23 He may let them rest in a feeling of security,
but his eyes are on their ways.
24 For a little while they are exalted, and then they are gone;
they are brought low and gathered up like all others;
they are cut off like heads of grain.

25 "If this is not so, who can prove me false
and reduce my words to nothing?"

[a] *11* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

TRANSITION

Bildad: A Mortal Who Is But a Maggot

Of several psalms having echoes in the Book of Job, the most significant is the great hymn of Ps 8. While praising God, Ps 8 at the same time exalts humanity as God's particular creation, having a particular relationship to the Divine. Job has already parodied Ps 8:4, wishing that God might be a little less particular in his attentions (Job 7:17). Now Bildad echoes the same psalm, but with a different intention. Using language similar to Ps 8:3–5, Bildad demeans humanity as being utterly separated from God (Job 25:5, 6).

Just as Bildad is warming up, though, Job interrupts. Job has had enough of his friends' words.

• Job 25:1–6

Job

Bildad

25 **:1** Then Bildad the Shuhite replied:

2 "Dominion and awe belong to God;
he establishes order in the heights of heaven.
3 Can his forces be numbered?
On whom does his light not rise?
4 How then can a mortal be righteous before God?
How can one born of woman be pure?
5 If even the moon is not bright
and the stars are not pure in his eyes,
6 how much less a mortal, who is but a maggot—
a human being, who is only a worm!"

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[a] 6 Hebrew *Abaddon*

TRANSITION

Job: The Fear of the Lord—That Is Wisdom

When Job cuts short Bildad's final speech, the dialogue falls apart. The ensuing speeches (chs. 26; 27) are not always clear as to who is speaking. One passage describes the fate of the wicked (27:13–23) in phrases that sound like something Job's friends would say, not Job. Perhaps this passage is Zophar's final speech, shouted over Job's words. Or perhaps here Job is sarcastically mimicking his friends' teachings. In either case, rational argument is absent.

Because Job has rejected the easy formulations of his friends' wisdom teachings, he might appear to have rejected the wisdom tradition entirely. He does not, though. Instead, Job seeks a deeper wisdom. In a poem of astonishing power and beauty (ch. 28), Job speaks of a profound wisdom, comprehensible only to God (28:23, 24). The greatest wisdom for humans, then, is reverence for that profound God—"the fear of the Lord—that is wisdom" (28:28; see Pr 9:10).

Job concludes his speech by contrasting the peace and prosperity of his former state to the shame and suffering he experiences now (chs. 29; 30). Then in a solemn fourfold vow he swears to his innocence of wrongdoing (ch. 31). With this vow, "the words of Job are ended" (31:40).

• Job 26:1—31:40

Job

Job

26 **:1** Then Job replied:

2 "How you have helped the powerless!
How you have saved the arm that is feeble!
3 What advice you have offered to one without wisdom!
And what great insight you have displayed!
4 Who has helped you utter these words?
And whose spirit spoke from your mouth?

5 "The dead are in deep anguish,
those beneath the waters and all that live in them.
6 The realm of the dead is naked before God;
Destruction[a] lies uncovered.
7 He spreads out the northern skies over empty space;
he suspends the earth over nothing.
8 He wraps up the waters in his clouds,
yet the clouds do not burst under their weight.
9 He covers the face of the full moon,
spreading his clouds over it.
10 He marks out the horizon on the face of the waters
for a boundary between light and darkness.
11 The pillars of the heavens quake,
aghast at his rebuke.
12 By his power he churned up the sea;
by his wisdom he cut Rahab to pieces.
13 By his breath the skies became fair;
his hand pierced the gliding serpent.
14 And these are but the outer fringe of his works;
how faint the whisper we hear of him!
Who then can understand the thunder of his power?"

The Realm of the Dead for All the Dead Without Distinction (Job 26:5, 6)

In the world of ancient Judah and Israel, people were never expected to enter heaven after death. With the exception of Elijah (2Ki 2:11), and possibly of Enoch, who entered heaven alive (Ge 5:24), humans who died went to a watery domain known as the realm of the dead (Job 26:5, 6).

The understanding of the afterlife in Judah and Israel resembled that current in Mesopotamia and Syria-Palestine. Under the earth, in a dark muddy realm, was the realm of the dead—the netherworld where all the souls of the dead go, whether good or evil. The popular notion in Egypt of an afterlife with a touch of hope for a good eternity did not influence Palestine, despite Egyptian control of Canaan for a millennium. In Palestine, the realm of the dead was understood as a place of darkness, meaninglessness, and hopelessness. Once entering the netherworld, one had to stay there. The prospect of eternity in a most unpleasant place made a long life in this world quite desirable.

The dead retained their individuality in the netherworld, and one could have contact with them. Tubes have been found in the tombs of Palestine from the Bronze Age through the Hellenistic period which allowed food or wine to be dropped into the netherworld. The living sought information from the dead through necromancy, as Saul attempted to consult Samuel's spirit rising from the realm of the dead (1Sa 28:11–19). This form of inquiry was forbidden by Israelite law (Dt 18:10, 11).

The cultures surrounding Judah and Israel had deities who ruled the netherworld. In Mesopotamia the divine couple Nergal and Ereshkigal hanged the corpses of the dead on butchers' hooks like slabs of meat. Egypt's afterlife under the rule of Osiris was more appealing, if you survived the journey to the land of the blessed dead. Syria-Palestine had the god Mot (meaning "death"), who was hungry to devour the living. The voraciousness of the netherworld and the mercilessness of its ruler, Mot, is reflected in the "devouring" and "king of terrors" of Job 18:11–14.

Job's Final Word to His Friends

27 1 And Job continued his discourse:

2 "As surely as God lives, who has denied me
justice,
the Almighty, who has made my life
bitter,
3 as long as I have life within me,
the breath of God in my nostrils,
4 my lips will not say anything wicked,
and my tongue will not utter lies.
5 I will never admit you are in the right;
till I die, I will not deny my integrity.
6 I will maintain my innocence and never let
go of it;
my conscience will not reproach me as
long as I live.

7 "May my enemy be like the wicked,
my adversary like the unjust!
8 For what hope have the godless when they
are cut off,
when God takes away their life?
9 Does God listen to their cry
when distress comes upon them?
10 Will they find delight in the Almighty?
Will they call on God at all times?

11 "I will teach you about the power of God;
the ways of the Almighty I will not
conceal.
12 You have all seen this yourselves.
Why then this meaningless talk?

13 "Here is the fate God allots to the wicked,
the heritage a ruthless man receives from
the Almighty:

14 However many his children, their fate is the
sword;
his offspring will never have enough to
eat.
15 The plague will bury those who survive
him,
and their widows will not weep for them.
16 Though he heaps up silver like dust
and clothes like piles of clay,
17 what he lays up the righteous will wear,
and the innocent will divide his silver.
18 The house he builds is like a moth's
cocoon,
like a hut made by a watchman.
19 He lies down wealthy, but will do so no
more;
when he opens his eyes, all is gone.
20 Terrors overtake him like a flood;
a tempest snatches him away in the night.
21 The east wind carries him off, and he is
gone;
it sweeps him out of his place.
22 It hurls itself against him without mercy
as he flees headlong from its power.
23 It claps its hands in derision
and hisses him out of his place."

Interlude: Where Wisdom Is Found

28 1 There is a mine for silver
and a place where gold is refined.
2 Iron is taken from the earth,
and copper is smelted from ore.
3 Mortals put an end to the darkness;
they search out the farthest recesses
for ore in the blackest darkness.

4 Far from human dwellings they cut a shaft,
in places untouched by human feet;
far from other people they dangle and
sway.
5 The earth, from which food comes,
is transformed below as by fire;
6 lapis lazuli comes from its rocks,
and its dust contains nuggets of gold.
7 No bird of prey knows that hidden path,
no falcon's eye has seen it.
8 Proud beasts do not set foot on it,
and no lion prowls there.
9 People assault the flinty rock with their
hands
and lay bare the roots of the mountains.
10 They tunnel through the rock;
their eyes see all its treasures.
11 They search[a] the sources of the rivers
and bring hidden things to light.

12 But where can wisdom be found?
Where does understanding dwell?
13 No mortal comprehends its worth;
it cannot be found in the land of the
living.
14 The deep says, "It is not in me";
the sea says, "It is not with me."
15 It cannot be bought with the finest gold,
nor can its price be weighed out in silver.
16 It cannot be bought with the gold of Ophir,
with precious onyx or lapis lazuli.
17 Neither gold nor crystal can compare
with it,
nor can it be had for jewels of gold.
18 Coral and jasper are not worthy of mention;
the price of wisdom is beyond rubies.
19 The topaz of Cush cannot compare
with it;
it cannot be bought with pure gold.

20 Where then does wisdom come from?
Where does understanding dwell?
21 It is hidden from the eyes of every living
thing,
concealed even from the birds in the sky.
22 Destruction[b] and Death say,
"Only a rumor of it has reached our ears."
23 God understands the way to it
and he alone knows where it dwells,
24 for he views the ends of the earth
and sees everything under the heavens.
25 When he established the force of the wind
and measured out the waters,
26 when he made a decree for the rain
and a path for the thunderstorm,
27 then he looked at wisdom and
appraised it;
he confirmed it and tested it.
28 And he said to the human race,
"The fear of the Lord—that is wisdom,
and to shun evil is understanding."

[a] *11* Septuagint, Aquila and Vulgate; Hebrew *They dam up*
[b] *22* Hebrew *Abaddon*

Science & Technology
From early times people have dug mines in search of metals and precious stones. The first metals to be found and used were gold, silver, iron, and copper—all of which occur in their native state in the earth. Both metals and their ores were the object of searches deep underground (Job 28:1–5). The Greeks lit fires in their mines to create a flow of air for the diggers.

Job's Final Defense

29 1 Job continued his discourse:
2 "How I long for the months gone by,
for the days when God watched over me,
3 when his lamp shone on my head
and by his light I walked through
darkness!
4 Oh, for the days when I was in my prime,
when God's intimate friendship blessed
my house,
5 when the Almighty was still with me
and my children were around me,
6 when my path was drenched with cream
and the rock poured out for me streams
of olive oil.

7 "When I went to the gate of the city
and took my seat in the public square,
8 the young men saw me and stepped aside
and the old men rose to their feet;
9 the chief men refrained from speaking
and covered their mouths with their
hands;
10 the voices of the nobles were hushed,
and their tongues stuck to the roof of
their mouths.
11 Whoever heard me spoke well of me,
and those who saw me
commended me,
12 because I rescued the poor who cried for
help,
and the fatherless who had none to assist
them.
13 The one who was dying blessed me;
I made the widow's heart sing.
14 I put on righteousness as my clothing;
justice was my robe and my turban.
15 I was eyes to the blind
and feet to the lame.

16 I was a father to the needy;
I took up the case of the stranger.
17 I broke the fangs of the wicked
and snatched the victims from their teeth.

18 "I thought, 'I will die in my own house,
my days as numerous as the grains of sand.
19 My roots will reach to the water,
and the dew will lie all night on my branches.
20 My glory will not fade;
the bow will be ever new in my hand.'

21 "People listened to me expectantly,
waiting in silence for my counsel.
22 After I had spoken, they spoke no more;
my words fell gently on their ears.
23 They waited for me as for showers
and drank in my words as the spring rain.
24 When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it;
the light of my face was precious to them.[a]
25 I chose the way for them and sat as their chief;
I dwelt as a king among his troops;
I was like one who comforts mourners.

30 1 "But now they mock me,
men younger than I,
whose fathers I would have disdained
to put with my sheep dogs.
2 Of what use was the strength of their hands to me,
since their vigor had gone from them?
3 Haggard from want and hunger,
they roamed[b] the parched land
in desolate wastelands at night.
4 In the brush they gathered salt herbs,
and their food[c] was the root of the broom bush.
5 They were banished from human society,
shouted at as if they were thieves.
6 They were forced to live in the dry stream beds,
among the rocks and in holes in the ground.
7 They brayed among the bushes
and huddled in the undergrowth.
8 A base and nameless brood,
they were driven out of the land.

9 "And now those young men mock me in song;
I have become a byword among them.
10 They detest me and keep their distance;
they do not hesitate to spit in my face.
11 Now that God has unstrung my bow and afflicted me,
they throw off restraint in my presence.
12 On my right the tribe[d] attacks;
they lay snares for my feet,
they build their siege ramps against me.
13 They break up my road;
they succeed in destroying me.
'No one can help him,' they say.
14 They advance as through a gaping breach;
amid the ruins they come rolling in.
15 Terrors overwhelm me;
my dignity is driven away as by the wind,
my safety vanishes like a cloud.

16 "And now my life ebbs away;
days of suffering grip me.
17 Night pierces my bones;
my gnawing pains never rest.
18 In his great power God becomes like clothing to me[e];
he binds me like the neck of my garment.
19 He throws me into the mud,
and I am reduced to dust and ashes.

20 "I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer;
I stand up, but you merely look at me.
21 You turn on me ruthlessly;
with the might of your hand you attack me.
22 You snatch me up and drive me before the wind;
you toss me about in the storm.
23 I know you will bring me down to death,
to the place appointed for all the living.

24 "Surely no one lays a hand on a broken man
when he cries for help in his distress.
25 Have I not wept for those in trouble?
Has not my soul grieved for the poor?
26 Yet when I hoped for good, evil came;
when I looked for light, then came darkness.

Culture & Society
Ostracism, or social rejection, is imposed in traditional or village societies as a way of punishing offenders and discouraging misbehavior. The rejection is often accompanied by insulting songs or chants (Job 30:9). This kind of treatment is most effective when a person's highest social value is honor, rather than wealth or power. Shame and honor are opposites in these "honor-shame" societies.

[a] *24* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain. [b] *3* Or *gnawed* [c] *4* Or *fuel* [d] *12* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain. [e] *18* Hebrew; Septuagint *power he grasps my clothing*

27 The churning inside me never stops;
days of suffering confront me.
28 I go about blackened, but not by the sun;
I stand up in the assembly and cry for help.
29 I have become a brother of jackals,
a companion of owls.
30 My skin grows black and peels;
my body burns with fever.
31 My lyre is tuned to mourning,
and my pipe to the sound of wailing.

31 1 "I made a covenant with my eyes
not to look lustfully at a young woman.
2 For what is our lot from God above,
our heritage from the Almighty on high?
3 Is it not ruin for the wicked,
disaster for those who do wrong?
4 Does he not see my ways
and count my every step?

5 "If I have walked with falsehood
or my foot has hurried after deceit—
6 let God weigh me in honest scales
and he will know that I am blameless—
7 if my steps have turned from the path,
if my heart has been led by my eyes,
or if my hands have been defiled,
8 then may others eat what I have sown,
and may my crops be uprooted.

9 "If my heart has been enticed by a woman,
or if I have lurked at my neighbor's door,
10 then may my wife grind another man's grain,
and may other men sleep with her.
11 For that would have been wicked,
a sin to be judged.
12 It is a fire that burns to Destruction[a];
it would have uprooted my harvest.

13 "If I have denied justice to any of my servants,
whether male or female,
when they had a grievance against me,
14 what will I do when God confronts me?
What will I answer when called to account?
15 Did not he who made me in the womb make them?
Did not the same one form us both within our mothers?

16 "If I have denied the desires of the poor
or let the eyes of the widow grow weary,
17 if I have kept my bread to myself,
not sharing it with the fatherless—
18 but from my youth I reared them as a father would,
and from my birth I guided the widow—
19 if I have seen anyone perishing for lack of clothing,
or the needy without garments,
20 and their hearts did not bless me
for warming them with the fleece from my sheep,
21 if I have raised my hand against the fatherless,
knowing that I had influence in court,
22 then let my arm fall from the shoulder,
let it be broken off at the joint.
23 For I dreaded destruction from God,
and for fear of his splendor I could not do such things.

24 "If I have put my trust in gold
or said to pure gold, 'You are my security,'
25 if I have rejoiced over my great wealth,
the fortune my hands had gained,
26 if I have regarded the sun in its radiance
or the moon moving in splendor,
27 so that my heart was secretly enticed
and my hand offered them a kiss of homage,
28 then these also would be sins to be judged,
for I would have been unfaithful to God on high.

29 "If I have rejoiced at my enemy's misfortune
or gloated over the trouble that came to him—
30 I have not allowed my mouth to sin
by invoking a curse against their life—
31 if those of my household have never said,
'Who has not been filled with Job's meat?'—
32 but no stranger had to spend the night in the street,
for my door was always open to the traveler—
33 if I have concealed my sin as people do,[b]
by hiding my guilt in my heart
34 because I so feared the crowd
and so dreaded the contempt of the clans
that I kept silent and would not go outside—

35 ("Oh, that I had someone to hear me!
I sign now my defense—let the Almighty answer me;
let my accuser put his indictment in writing.
36 Surely I would wear it on my shoulder,
I would put it on like a crown.

[a] 12 Hebrew *Abaddon* [b] 33 Or *as Adam did*

Mistaking the Sun and Moon for Deities (Job 31:26–28)

As Job takes an oath of innocence (Job 31), he swears that he has never been enticed to worship the sun or moon (31:26, 27). Possibly worshipers threw kisses to these celestial deities, since kissing was part of idol worship (1Ki 19:18; Hos 13:2). Job again swears that he has not gestured such kisses (Job 31:27). Job's oath reflects the popularity of both the sun and the moon as deities in Syria-Palestine.

Yareah, the moon god, is mentioned in the Ugaritic ritual and mythological texts, dating around 1400 to 1200 B.C. In one narrative Yareah is a guest at a drinking feast of the gods, but there is little mention of him otherwise. The moon god Sin of Harran was worshiped throughout Syria-Palestine and Mesopotamia from the 3rd millennium through at least the Hellenistic period (332–37 B.C.). The characteristic crescent moon with dangling tassels, which symbolized this deity, has been found on numerous inscriptions and steles (stone slabs), including those discovered in Judah and Israel.

Much more is known about Shemesh. This deity, who could appear as either feminine (sun goddess) or masculine (sun god), was important in all ancient Near Eastern pantheons. In Ugarit the goddess Shapshu (meaning "sun") was the arbiter of divine judgment as proclaimed by the chief god El. In this she mirrored an image, found from Egypt to Mesopotamia, of the sun as a god of justice.

People of the ancient Near East believed that the sun god rode through the sky by day and the netherworld at night, and thus saw and knew all human activity. Such knowledge made Shemesh useful for locating anyone who was to receive a message from El. In the Ugaritic texts, El sends Shapshu to order Baal and Mot to stop fighting. In Egyptian thought, the sun god (who had several names, including Re and Aton) was believed to be the creator of the universe each morning.

37 I would give him an account of my every
step;
I would present it to him as to a ruler.) —
38 "if my land cries out against me
and all its furrows are wet with tears,
39 if I have devoured its yield without
payment
or broken the spirit of its tenants,
40 then let briers come up instead of wheat
and stinkweed instead of barley."

The words of Job are ended.

TRANSITION

Elihu: I Am Full of Words

When the argument between Job and his three friends at last collapses into silence, a fifth speaker appears for the first time, a certain Elihu the Buzite. Perhaps Elihu's long monologue (chs. 32–37) is meant to promote some reconciliation between Job and the friends, but it seems unlikely to do so. Elihu makes clear his scorn for all the previous speakers. Job's friends did not speak with wisdom, as expected (32:11, 12), and as for Job, he "speaks without knowledge" (34:35).

Elihu's words, like those of the three friends, often contain passages of great insight, insight that is unfortunately spoiled by its style of delivery. For instance, Elihu speaks with great fervor of God's majesty (36:5—37:24), but that reverent speech is prefaced with Elihu's pompous claim, "Be assured that my words are not false; one who has perfect knowledge is with you" (36:4). Given such a beginning, it is difficult to imagine that Elihu's long-winded reasonings would effect any reconciliation.

• **Job 32:1—37:24**

Job

Elihu

32 :1 So these three men stopped answering Job, because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2 But Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry with Job for justifying himself rather than God. 3 He was also angry with the three friends, because they had found no way to refute Job, and yet had condemned him.[a] 4 Now Elihu had waited before speaking to Job because they were older than he. 5 But when he saw that the three men had nothing more to say, his anger was aroused.

6 So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite said:

"I am young in years,
and you are old;
that is why I was fearful,
not daring to tell you what I know.
7 I thought, 'Age should speak;
advanced years should teach wisdom.'
8 But it is the spirit[b] in a person,
the breath of the Almighty, that gives
them understanding.
9 It is not only the old[c] who are wise,
not only the aged who understand what is
right.

10 "Therefore I say: Listen to me;
I too will tell you what I know.
11 I waited while you spoke,
I listened to your reasoning;
while you were searching for words,

[a] *3* Masoretic Text; an ancient Hebrew scribal tradition *Job, and so had condemned God* [b] *8* Or *Spirit*; also in verse 18
[c] *9* Or *many*; or *great*

12 I gave you my full attention.
But not one of you has proved Job wrong;
none of you has answered his arguments.
13 Do not say, 'We have found wisdom;
let God, not a man, refute him.'
14 But Job has not marshaled his words
against me,
and I will not answer him with your
arguments.

15 "They are dismayed and have no more to
say;
words have failed them.
16 Must I wait, now that they are silent,
now that they stand there with no reply?
17 I too will have my say;
I too will tell what I know.
18 For I am full of words,
and the spirit within me compels me;
19 inside I am like bottled-up wine,
like new wineskins ready to burst.
20 I must speak and find relief;
I must open my lips and reply.
21 I will show no partiality,
nor will I flatter anyone;
22 for if I were skilled in flattery,
my Maker would soon take me away.

33 1 "But now, Job, listen to my words;
pay attention to everything I say.
2 I am about to open my mouth;
my words are on the tip of my tongue.
3 My words come from an upright heart;
my lips sincerely speak what I know.
4 The Spirit of God has made me;
the breath of the Almighty gives me life.
5 Answer me then, if you can;
stand up and argue your case
before me.
6 I am the same as you in God's sight;
I too am a piece of clay.
7 No fear of me should alarm you,
nor should my hand be heavy on you.

8 "But you have said in my hearing—
I heard the very words—
9 'I am pure, I have done no wrong;
I am clean and free from sin.
10 Yet God has found fault with me;
he considers me his enemy.
11 He fastens my feet in shackles;
he keeps close watch on all my paths.'

12 "But I tell you, in this you are not right,
for God is greater than any mortal.
13 Why do you complain to him
that he responds to no one's words[a]?
14 For God does speak—now one way, now
another—
though no one perceives it.
15 In a dream, in a vision of the night,
when deep sleep falls on people
as they slumber in their beds,
16 he may speak in their ears
and terrify them with warnings,
17 to turn them from wrongdoing
and keep them from pride,
18 to preserve them from the pit,
their lives from perishing by the sword.[b]

19 "Or someone may be chastened on a bed of
pain
with constant distress in their bones,
20 so that their body finds food repulsive
and their soul loathes the choicest meal.
21 Their flesh wastes away to nothing,
and their bones, once hidden, now stick
out.
22 They draw near to the pit,
and their life to the messengers of
death.[c]
23 Yet if there is an angel at their side,
a messenger, one out of a thousand,
sent to tell them how to be upright,
24 and he is gracious to that person and says
to God,
'Spare them from going down to the pit;
I have found a ransom for them—
25 let their flesh be renewed like a child's;
let them be restored as in the days of
their youth'—
26 then that person can pray to God and find
favor with him,
they will see God's face and shout for joy;
he will restore them to full well-being.
27 And they will go to others and say,
'I have sinned, I have perverted what is
right,
but I did not get what I deserved.
28 God has delivered me from going down to
the pit,
and I shall live to enjoy the light of life.'

[a] 13 Or *that he does not answer for any of his actions*
[b] 18 Or *from crossing the river* [c] 22 Or *to the place of the dead*

Beliefs & Ideas

Ancient people commonly understood that divine revelation could be received in dreams (Job 33:14–16). Such dreams were not always self-interpreting, as shown by the experiences of Joseph (Ge 40) and Daniel (Da 2). In the *Iliad*, Homer depicts the gods as appearing to their favorite subjects in dreams. The dreams clarified the dreamers' thoughts as much as they introduced any new idea.

29 "God does all these things to a person—
twice, even three times—
30 to turn them back from the pit,
that the light of life may shine on them.

31 "Pay attention, Job, and listen to me;
be silent, and I will speak.
32 If you have anything to say, answer me;
speak up, for I want to vindicate you.
33 But if not, then listen to me;
be silent, and I will teach you wisdom."

34 1 Then Elihu said:

2 "Hear my words, you wise men;
listen to me, you men of learning.
3 For the ear tests words
as the tongue tastes food.
4 Let us discern for ourselves what is right;
let us learn together what is good.

5 "Job says, 'I am innocent,
but God denies me justice.
6 Although I am right,
I am considered a liar;
although I am guiltless,
his arrow inflicts an incurable wound.'
7 Is there anyone like Job,
who drinks scorn like water?
8 He keeps company with evildoers;
he associates with the wicked.
9 For he says, 'There is no profit
in trying to please God.'

10 "So listen to me, you men of understanding.
Far be it from God to do evil,
from the Almighty to do wrong.
11 He repays everyone for what they have done;
he brings on them what their conduct deserves.
12 It is unthinkable that God would do wrong,
that the Almighty would pervert justice.
13 Who appointed him over the earth?
Who put him in charge of the whole world?
14 If it were his intention
and he withdrew his spirit[a] and breath,
15 all humanity would perish together
and mankind would return to the dust.

16 "If you have understanding, hear this;
listen to what I say.
17 Can someone who hates justice govern?
Will you condemn the just and mighty One?
18 Is he not the One who says to kings, 'You are worthless,'
and to nobles, 'You are wicked,'
19 who shows no partiality to princes
and does not favor the rich over the poor,
for they are all the work of his hands?
20 They die in an instant, in the middle of the night;
the people are shaken and they pass away;
the mighty are removed without human hand.

21 "His eyes are on the ways of mortals;
he sees their every step.
22 There is no deep shadow, no utter darkness,
where evildoers can hide.
23 God has no need to examine people further,
that they should come before him for judgment.
24 Without inquiry he shatters the mighty
and sets up others in their place.
25 Because he takes note of their deeds,
he overthrows them in the night and they are crushed.
26 He punishes them for their wickedness
where everyone can see them,
27 because they turned from following him
and had no regard for any of his ways.
28 They caused the cry of the poor to come before him,
so that he heard the cry of the needy.

[a] 14 Or *Spirit*

Olive trees of Jordan

29 But if he remains silent, who can condemn
him?
If he hides his face, who can see him?
Yet he is over individual and nation alike,
30 to keep the godless from ruling,
from laying snares for the people.

31 "Suppose someone says to God,
'I am guilty but will offend no more.
32 Teach me what I cannot see;
if I have done wrong, I will not do so
again.'
33 Should God then reward you on your terms,
when you refuse to repent?
You must decide, not I;
so tell me what you know.

34 "Men of understanding declare,
wise men who hear me say to me,
35 'Job speaks without knowledge;
his words lack insight.'
36 Oh, that Job might be tested to the utmost
for answering like a wicked man!
37 To his sin he adds rebellion;
scornfully he claps his hands among us
and multiplies his words against God."

35 1 Then Elihu said:

2 "Do you think this is just?
You say, 'I am in the right, not God.'
3 Yet you ask him, 'What profit is it to me,[a]
and what do I gain by not sinning?'

4 "I would like to reply to you
and to your friends with you.
5 Look up at the heavens and see;
gaze at the clouds so high above you.
6 If you sin, how does that affect him?
If your sins are many, what does that do
to him?
7 If you are righteous, what do you give to
him,
or what does he receive from your hand?
8 Your wickedness only affects humans like
yourself,
and your righteousness only other
people.

9 "People cry out under a load of oppression;
they plead for relief from the arm of the
powerful.
10 But no one says, 'Where is God my Maker,
who gives songs in the night,
11 who teaches us more than he teaches[b] the
beasts of the earth
and makes us wiser than[c] the birds in the
sky?'
12 He does not answer when people cry out
because of the arrogance of the wicked.
13 Indeed, God does not listen to their empty
plea;
the Almighty pays no attention to it.
14 How much less, then, will he listen
when you say that you do not see him,
that your case is before him
and you must wait for him,
15 and further, that his anger never punishes
and he does not take the least notice of
wickedness.[d]
16 So Job opens his mouth with empty talk;
without knowledge he multiplies words."

36 1 Elihu continued:

2 "Bear with me a little longer and I will show
you
that there is more to be said in God's
behalf.
3 I get my knowledge from afar;
I will ascribe justice to my Maker.
4 Be assured that my words are not false;
one who has perfect knowledge is with
you.

5 "God is mighty, but despises no one;
he is mighty, and firm in his purpose.
6 He does not keep the wicked alive
but gives the afflicted their rights.
7 He does not take his eyes off the righteous;
he enthrones them with kings
and exalts them forever.
8 But if people are bound in chains,
held fast by cords of affliction,
9 he tells them what they have done—
that they have sinned arrogantly.
10 He makes them listen to correction
and commands them to repent of their
evil.
11 If they obey and serve him,
they will spend the rest of their days in
prosperity
and their years in contentment.
12 But if they do not listen,
they will perish by the sword[e]
and die without knowledge.

13 "The godless in heart harbor resentment;
even when he fetters them, they do not
cry for help.
14 They die in their youth,
among male prostitutes of the shrines.

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[a] *3* Or *you* [b] *10,11* Or *night, / 11 who teaches us by*
[c] *11* Or *us wise by* [d] *15* Symmachus, Theodotion and Vulgate; the meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.
[e] *12* Or *will cross the river*

15 But those who suffer he delivers in their suffering;
he speaks to them in their affliction.

16 "He is wooing you from the jaws of distress
to a spacious place free from restriction,
to the comfort of your table laden with choice food.
17 But now you are laden with the judgment due the wicked;
judgment and justice have taken hold of you.
18 Be careful that no one entices you by riches;
do not let a large bribe turn you aside.
19 Would your wealth or even all your mighty efforts
sustain you so you would not be in distress?
20 Do not long for the night,
to drag people away from their homes.[a]
21 Beware of turning to evil,
which you seem to prefer to affliction.

22 "God is exalted in his power.
Who is a teacher like him?
23 Who has prescribed his ways for him,
or said to him, 'You have done wrong'?
24 Remember to extol his work,
which people have praised in song.
25 All humanity has seen it;
mortals gaze on it from afar.
26 How great is God—beyond our understanding!
The number of his years is past finding out.

27 "He draws up the drops of water,
which distill as rain to the streams[b];
28 the clouds pour down their moisture
and abundant showers fall on mankind.
29 Who can understand how he spreads out the clouds,
how he thunders from his pavilion?
30 See how he scatters his lightning about him,
bathing the depths of the sea.
31 This is the way he governs[c] the nations
and provides food in abundance.
32 He fills his hands with lightning
and commands it to strike its mark.
33 His thunder announces the coming storm;
even the cattle make known its approach.[d]

37 1 "At this my heart pounds
and leaps from its place.
2 Listen! Listen to the roar of his voice,
to the rumbling that comes from his mouth.
3 He unleashes his lightning beneath the whole heaven
and sends it to the ends of the earth.
4 After that comes the sound of his roar;
he thunders with his majestic voice.
When his voice resounds,
he holds nothing back.
5 God's voice thunders in marvelous ways;
he does great things beyond our understanding.
6 He says to the snow, 'Fall on the earth,'
and to the rain shower, 'Be a mighty downpour.'
7 So that everyone he has made may know his work,
he stops all people from their labor.[e]
8 The animals take cover;
they remain in their dens.
9 The tempest comes out from its chamber,
the cold from the driving winds.
10 The breath of God produces ice,
and the broad waters become frozen.
11 He loads the clouds with moisture;
he scatters his lightning through them.
12 At his direction they swirl around
over the face of the whole earth
to do whatever he commands them.
13 He brings the clouds to punish people,
or to water his earth and show his love.

14 "Listen to this, Job;
stop and consider God's wonders.
15 Do you know how God controls the clouds
and makes his lightning flash?

[a] *20* The meaning of the Hebrew for verses 18-20 is uncertain.
[b] *27* Or *distill from the mist as rain*
[c] *31* Or *nourishes*
[d] *33* Or *announces his coming— / the One zealous against evil*
[e] *7* Or *work, / he fills all people with fear by his power*

Were You There at the Beginning? (Job 38:7)

Public building projects in the ancient Near East were begun with religious rituals, including liturgical singing in praise of the major deities. Kings ritually, if not actually, helped set the foundations of temples and symbolically aided the construction workers in laying walls and fastening gates. In Job 38:4–7, the universe is pictured as a great building project by God. All the inhabitants of heaven sing for joy as the foundations of the earth are laid (Job 38:7).

The heavenly beings who sing and shout are "the morning stars" and "the angels" (38:7). In the group of languages called Northwest Semitic, which includes Hebrew, "angels" is a standard way to describe the pantheon of deities. The specific mention of the morning stars may reflect Egyptian notions that creation begins anew each morning just as light appears along the horizon. Thus creation begins anew when the morning stars are in the sky. God reminds Job that he was not present, and cannot know what happened at creation when the heavenly choir sang (Job 38:4).

16 Do you know how the clouds hang poised,
those wonders of him who has perfect knowledge?
17 You who swelter in your clothes
when the land lies hushed under the south wind,
18 can you join him in spreading out the skies,
hard as a mirror of cast bronze?

19 "Tell us what we should say to him;
we cannot draw up our case because of our darkness.
20 Should he be told that I want to speak?
Would anyone ask to be swallowed up?
21 Now no one can look at the sun,
bright as it is in the skies
after the wind has swept them clean.
22 Out of the north he comes in golden splendor;
God comes in awesome majesty.
23 The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power;
in his justice and great righteousness, he does not oppress.
24 Therefore, people revere him,
for does he not have regard for all the wise in heart?[a]"

[a] 24 Or *for he does not have regard for any who think they are wise.* [b] 7 Hebrew *the sons of God*

TRANSITION

Where Were You?

At last God appears, in person, in a whirlwind, and discloses himself to Job. With a series of rhetorical questions, God presents himself as the God of creation, magnificent and mysterious (38:1—40:2). God alone created all, and he alone understands his handiwork.

God's message to Job is not entirely new. Eliphaz, Elihu, and Job himself also spoke of God's creative mystery (Job 15:7–9; 28:23–27; 36:26—37:12). Comparable passages appear outside the Book of Job, such as the wisdom teachings of Agur, whose rhetorical question (Pr 30:4) is strikingly similar to those that God asks Job. Nevertheless, when God himself speaks this familiar theme, Job is silenced (Job 40:3–5).

• **Job 38:1—40:5**

Job

The Lord Speaks

38 :1 Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said:

2 "Who is this that obscures my plans
with words without knowledge?
3 Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.

4 "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation?
Tell me, if you understand.
5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know!
Who stretched a measuring line across it?
6 On what were its footings set,
or who laid its cornerstone—
7 while the morning stars sang together
and all the angels[b] shouted for joy?

8 "Who shut up the sea behind doors
when it burst forth from the womb,
9 when I made the clouds its garment
and wrapped it in thick darkness,
10 when I fixed limits for it
and set its doors and bars in place,
11 when I said, 'This far you may come and no farther;
here is where your proud waves halt'?

12 "Have you ever given orders to the morning,
or shown the dawn its place,
13 that it might take the earth by the edges
and shake the wicked out of it?

14 The earth takes shape like clay under a seal;
its features stand out like those of a garment.
15 The wicked are denied their light,
and their upraised arm is broken.

16 "Have you journeyed to the springs of the sea
or walked in the recesses of the deep?
17 Have the gates of death been shown to you?
Have you seen the gates of the deepest darkness?
18 Have you comprehended the vast expanses of the earth?
Tell me, if you know all this.

19 "What is the way to the abode of light?
And where does darkness reside?
20 Can you take them to their places?
Do you know the paths to their dwellings?
21 Surely you know, for you were already born!
You have lived so many years!

22 "Have you entered the storehouses of the snow
or seen the storehouses of the hail,
23 which I reserve for times of trouble,
for days of war and battle?
24 What is the way to the place where the lightning is dispersed,
or the place where the east winds are scattered over the earth?
25 Who cuts a channel for the torrents of rain,
and a path for the thunderstorm,
26 to water a land where no one lives,
an uninhabited desert,
27 to satisfy a desolate wasteland
and make it sprout with grass?
28 Does the rain have a father?
Who fathers the drops of dew?
29 From whose womb comes the ice?
Who gives birth to the frost from the heavens
30 when the waters become hard as stone,
when the surface of the deep is frozen?

Arts & Literature
While many ancient people believed that the stars were gods and goddesses, Israel believed that God created the constellations. Orion (Job 38:31) is the name of not only one of the constellations, but also of a giant hunter in mythology. The mythological Orion was killed by the goddess Artemis. The Bear (38:32) is the constellation Ursa Major.

31 "Can you bind the chains[a] of the Pleiades?
Can you loosen Orion's belt?
32 Can you bring forth the constellations in their seasons[b]
or lead out the Bear[c] with its cubs?
33 Do you know the laws of the heavens?
Can you set up God's[d] dominion over the earth?

34 "Can you raise your voice to the clouds
and cover yourself with a flood of water?
35 Do you send the lightning bolts on their way?
Do they report to you, 'Here we are'?
36 Who gives the ibis wisdom[e]
or gives the rooster understanding?[f]
37 Who has the wisdom to count the clouds?
Who can tip over the water jars of the heavens
38 when the dust becomes hard
and the clods of earth stick together?

39 "Do you hunt the prey for the lioness
and satisfy the hunger of the lions
40 when they crouch in their dens
or lie in wait in a thicket?
41 Who provides food for the raven
when its young cry out to God
and wander about for lack of food?

39 1 "Do you know when the mountain goats give birth?
Do you watch when the doe bears her fawn?
2 Do you count the months till they bear?
Do you know the time they give birth?
3 They crouch down and bring forth their young;
their labor pains are ended.
4 Their young thrive and grow strong in the wilds;
they leave and do not return.

5 "Who let the wild donkey go free?
Who untied its ropes?
6 I gave it the wasteland as its home,
the salt flats as its habitat.
7 It laughs at the commotion in the town;
it does not hear a driver's shout.
8 It ranges the hills for its pasture
and searches for any green thing.

9 "Will the wild ox consent to serve you?
Will it stay by your manger at night?

[a] *31* Septuagint; Hebrew *beauty* [b] *32* Or *the morning star in its season* [c] *32* Or *out Leo* [d] *33* Or *their* [e] *36* That is, wisdom about the flooding of the Nile [f] *36* That is, understanding of when to crow; the meaning of the Hebrew for this verse is uncertain.

10 Can you hold it to the furrow with a
harness?
Will it till the valleys behind you?
11 Will you rely on it for its great strength?
Will you leave your heavy work to it?
12 Can you trust it to haul in your grain
and bring it to your threshing floor?

13 "The wings of the ostrich flap joyfully,
though they cannot compare
with the wings and feathers of the stork.
14 She lays her eggs on the ground
and lets them warm in the sand,
15 unmindful that a foot may crush them,
that some wild animal may trample them.
16 She treats her young harshly, as if they
were not hers;
she cares not that her labor was in vain,
17 for God did not endow her with wisdom
or give her a share of good sense.
18 Yet when she spreads her feathers to run,
she laughs at horse and rider.

19 "Do you give the horse its strength
or clothe its neck with a flowing mane?
20 Do you make it leap like a locust,
striking terror with its proud snorting?
21 It paws fiercely, rejoicing in its strength,
and charges into the fray.
22 It laughs at fear, afraid of nothing;
it does not shy away from the sword.
23 The quiver rattles against its side,
along with the flashing spear and lance.
24 In frenzied excitement it eats up the
ground;
it cannot stand still when the trumpet
sounds.
25 At the blast of the trumpet it snorts, 'Aha!'
It catches the scent of battle from afar,
the shout of commanders and the battle
cry.

26 "Does the hawk take flight by your wisdom
and spread its wings toward the south?
27 Does the eagle soar at your command
and build its nest on high?
28 It dwells on a cliff and stays there at night;
a rocky crag is its stronghold.
29 From there it looks for food;
its eyes detect it from afar.
30 Its young ones feast on blood,
and where the slain are, there it is."

40 1 The LORD said to Job:
2 "Will the one who contends with the
Almighty correct him?
Let him who accuses God answer him!"

3 Then Job answered the LORD:

4 "I am unworthy—how can I reply to you?
I put my hand over my mouth.
5 I spoke once, but I have no answer—
twice, but I will say no more."

TRANSITION

Look at Behemoth

After Job has bo wed before God's pres-ence, God speaks again. Whereas in his first speech (38:1—40:2) G od described natural creation, in his sec ond speech (40:6—41:34) he speaks of creatures that transcend the nat-ural. The monsters Behemoth and L eviathan are sometimes associa ted with the hippo -potamus and the cr ocodile, but in Job 40; 41 they are described in supernatural language, like legendary sea monst ers (see 41:19, 20). But even these creatures are subject to God—"Everything under hea ven belongs t o me" (41:11).

• Job 40:6—41:34

Job

40 :6 Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm:

7 "Brace yourself like a man;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.

8 "Would you discredit my justice?
Would you condemn me to justify
yourself?
9 Do you have an arm like God's,
and can your voice thunder like his?
10 Then adorn yourself with glory and
splendor,
and clothe yourself in honor and majesty.
11 Unleash the fury of your wrath,
look at all who are proud and bring them
low,
12 look at all who are proud and humble
them,
crush the wicked where they stand.
13 Bury them all in the dust together;
shroud their faces in the grave.
14 Then I myself will admit to you
that your own right hand can save you.

15 "Look at Behemoth,
which I made along with you
and which feeds on grass like an ox.
16 What strength it has in its loins,
what power in the muscles of its belly!
17 Its tail sways like a cedar;
the sinews of its thighs are close-knit.

Leviathan, the Sea Serpent (Job 41:1)

In Job 41 God continues his speech to Job (see Job 40:1, 6), describing Leviathan, a creature familiar to Job (Job 3:8). This picture of the ultimate sea serpent contrasts the powerlessness of humans against the all-powerful might of God. Although some have supposed that Job 41 speaks of a crocodile or whale, the description of the sea creature is not one that is familiar from nature.

The questions asked of Job stress in minute detail how powerful and how invincible the sea serpent is in the eyes of humans. They cannot even imagine fishing or hunting for this monster. It cannot possibly belong to mere mortals. God himself, however, created this creature to "frolic" in the sea (Ps 104:25, 26). A contrast reveals the unfathomable power of God: While Leviathan terrifies humans, to God it is simply his "little rubber ducky." Leviathan is greater than any other living thing, save one. God alone has no fear of this creature.

There are a number of myths concerning a huge serpent coming from a variety of African cultures. The serpent is presented as an ally of the highest deity. To keep the world from disintegrating, the snake encircles it and grasps its own tail in its mouth, physically holding the universe together. Earthquakes are understood as the serpent moving. Should the serpent die, or cease constricting the land, the world would dissolve back into the sea.

Artistic depiction of Leviathan

Leviathan appears as Lothan in mythological texts dating around 1400 B.C. In these texts from Ugarit, a Canaanite city-state on the northeast coast of the Mediterranean, the serpent Lothan is associated with the god of the sea, Yam, whom Baal defeats in battle. Possibly a story similar to this Canaanite myth was known in Israel, telling how God defeated Leviathan long ago and placed the serpent in its current status. Imagery from such a story remains in Ps 74:13, 14, which describes God's victory over Leviathan and the sea monsters.

The original readers of the Book of Job must have recognized in Job 41 the awesome power of God. If at one time in mythological narratives Leviathan was opposed to God, now the sea serpent had become one of God's most impressive servants.

18 Its bones are tubes of bronze,
its limbs like rods of iron.
19 It ranks first among the works of God,
yet its Maker can approach it with his sword.
20 The hills bring it their produce,
and all the wild animals play nearby.
21 Under the lotus plants it lies,
hidden among the reeds in the marsh.
22 The lotuses conceal it in their shadow;
the poplars by the stream surround it.
23 A raging river does not alarm it;
it is secure, though the Jordan should surge against its mouth.
24 Can anyone capture it by the eyes,
or trap it and pierce its nose?

41[a] 1 "Can you pull in Leviathan with a fishhook
or tie down its tongue with a rope?
2 Can you put a cord through its nose
or pierce its jaw with a hook?
3 Will it keep begging you for mercy?
Will it speak to you with gentle words?
4 Will it make an agreement with you
for you to take it as your slave for life?
5 Can you make a pet of it like a bird
or put it on a leash for the young women in your house?
6 Will traders barter for it?
Will they divide it up among the merchants?
7 Can you fill its hide with harpoons
or its head with fishing spears?
8 If you lay a hand on it,
you will remember the struggle and never do it again!
9 Any hope of subduing it is false;
the mere sight of it is overpowering.
10 No one is fierce enough to rouse it.
Who then is able to stand against me?
11 Who has a claim against me that I must pay?
Everything under heaven belongs to me.

12 "I will not fail to speak of Leviathan's limbs,
its strength and its graceful form.

[a] In Hebrew texts 41:1-8 is numbered 40:25-32, and 41:9-34 is numbered 41:1-26.

13 Who can strip off its outer coat?
Who can penetrate its double coat of armor[a]?
14 Who dares open the doors of its mouth,
ringed about with fearsome teeth?
15 Its back has[b] rows of shields
tightly sealed together;
16 each is so close to the next
that no air can pass between.
17 They are joined fast to one another;
they cling together and cannot be parted.
18 Its snorting throws out flashes of light;
its eyes are like the rays of dawn.
19 Flames stream from its mouth;
sparks of fire shoot out.
20 Smoke pours from its nostrils
as from a boiling pot over burning reeds.
21 Its breath sets coals ablaze,
and flames dart from its mouth.
22 Strength resides in its neck;
dismay goes before it.
23 The folds of its flesh are tightly joined;
they are firm and immovable.
24 Its chest is hard as rock,
hard as a lower millstone.
25 When it rises up, the mighty are terrified;
they retreat before its thrashing.
26 The sword that reaches it has no effect,
nor does the spear or the dart or the javelin.
27 Iron it treats like straw
and bronze like rotten wood.
28 Arrows do not make it flee;
slingstones are like chaff to it.
29 A club seems to it but a piece of straw;
it laughs at the rattling of the lance.
30 Its undersides are jagged potsherds,
leaving a trail in the mud like a threshing sledge.
31 It makes the depths churn like a boiling caldron
and stirs up the sea like a pot of ointment.
32 It leaves a glistening wake behind it;
one would think the deep had white hair.
33 Nothing on earth is its equal—
a creature without fear.
34 It looks down on all that are haughty;
it is king over all that are proud."

[a] *13* Septuagint; Hebrew *double bridle* [b] *15* Or *Its pride is its* [c] *11* Hebrew *him a kesitah*; a kesitah was a unit of money of unknown weight and value.

TRANSITION

Job: Now My Eyes Have Seen You

God never does answer all of Job's questions, most noticeably the question about why the innocent suffer. Instead, God simply discloses himself as the source and master of all creation. It is enough. In the presence of God himself, Job bows and accepts God's mystery (42:1–6).

At last, Job's former glory is reinstated. Perhaps more importantly, though, Job is vindicated. His three friends and their simplistic wisdom are routed, whereas Job's angry questions and profound insights into true wisdom receive God's approval (42:8). In the epilogue of the book (42:7–17) Job's situation is reversed and his blessings restored.

• **Job 42:1–17**

Job

Job

42 :1 Then Job replied to the LORD:

2 "I know that you can do all things;
no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
3 You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?'
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me to know.

4 "You said, 'Listen now, and I will speak;
I will question you,
and you shall answer me.'
5 My ears had heard of you
but now my eyes have seen you.
6 Therefore I despise myself
and repent in dust and ashes."

Epilogue

7 After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has. 8 So now take seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and sacrifice a burnt offering for yourselves. My servant Job will pray for you, and I will accept his prayer and not deal with you according to your folly. You have not spoken the truth about me, as my servant Job has." 9 So Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite and Zophar the Naamathite did what the LORD told them; and the LORD accepted Job's prayer.

10 After Job had prayed for his friends, the LORD restored his fortunes and gave him twice as much as he had before. 11 All his brothers and sisters and everyone who had known him before came and ate with him in his house. They comforted and consoled him over all the trouble the LORD had brought on him, and each one gave him a piece of silver[c] and a gold ring.

12 The LORD blessed the latter part of Job's

life more than the former part. He had fourteen thousand sheep, six thousand camels, a thousand yoke of oxen and a thousand donkeys. 13And he also had seven sons and three daughters. 14The first daughter he named Jemimah, the second Keziah and the third Keren-Happuch. 15Nowhere in all the land were there found women as beautiful as Job's daughters, and their father granted them an inheritance along with their brothers.

16After this, Job lived a hundred and forty years; he saw his children and their children to the fourth generation. 17And so Job died, an old man and full of years.

The Persian Empire

Cyrus the Persian captured the city of Babylon in 539 b.c. The whole of the Neo -Babylonian Empire was his shortly thereafter, including the land of Palestine. He established one of the most successful and enduring of the great ancient empires.

Part of Cyrus's success came from his practice of showing respect for the religious beliefs of his captured peoples. In his first year, according to both Persian records and the biblical account, he proclaimed that all the captive peoples whom the Babylonians had dragged into exile should be allowed to go free (2Ch 36:22, 23; Ezra 1:1–4). Cyrus demanded political obedience, particularly regarding the universal requirement of taxes, but unlike the Assyrian and Babylonian rulers, he did not seek to impose his own religion on his subjects.

When Cyrus died in 530 b.c., he was succeeded by his son Cambyses (530–522 b.c.). There are some indications that Cambyses was mentally unstable and perhaps epileptic, but he evidently inherited some of his father's ability as a general. In 525 b.c. Cambyses captured Egypt. The Persian Empire had now exceeded the geographic boundaries of any of the earlier empires.

The Persian Empire exceeded the geographic boundaries of any of the earlier empires.

While Cambyses was returning from the conquest of Egypt, word reached him that he had been deposed by someone claiming to be his brother. For reasons not completely clear, Cambyses committed suicide. One of his officers, named Darius, took his place. Darius put down that rebellion and several others in the next few years, and in the end it was Darius who reigned as the next Persian emperor (522–486 b.c.). Known as Darius the Great, Darius I was as gifted an administrator as Cyrus was a general, and under his rule the extensive organization of the Persian Empire took place. The resulting system of regional governors, satraps, and official inspectors was bulky but effective.

During Darius's reign, a new player appeared in the political life of the ancient Near East: Greece. Darius expanded the Persian Empire through the region of Asia Minor and sought to go the next step, into the Greek peninsula. Greece at this time consisted of many independent city-states, but faced with such a formidable invader, these states joined together. Under Miltiades, a general from the city of Athens, the Greek alliance turned Darius's armies back at the battle of Marathon (490 b.c.).

Darius's son Xerxes I (486– 465 b.c.) invaded Greece again in 480 b.c., but after some initial success was also turned back. His successor, Artaxerxes I (465–424 b.c.), ultimately gave up Persian designs on Greek land and signed the Peace of Callias in 449 b.c. The empire was beginning to face internal problems, such as rebellions in Babylon and Egypt. It no longer had the resources to wage new wars of conquest.

Under Persian rule, the Jews faced their own internal disputes. When Cyrus proclaimed that captive peoples could return to their homeland, some of the exiled Jews discovered that they would rather stay where they were. Many had become quite comfortable living in foreign lands, and the prospect of returning home to start over in the ruined city of Jerusalem was daunting.

Several small groups of Jews did return to Jerusalem, though. The first group was led in 538 or 537 b.c. by one Sheshbazzar (Ezr 1:8–11), who became the first Judean governor after the exile, but otherwise is totally unknown. A second group, led by a direct descendant of King David, named Zerubbabel, was more successful. Under the leadership of Zerubbabel and a priest named Joshua, this group arrived in Jerusalem and immediately began rebuilding the temple.

In Palestine, though, the returning exiles were confronted by the people who had not been taken to Babylon, who had been on the land all that time, and the confrontation was not friendly. The returned exiles saw those who had stayed in Palestine as mixed-breed Jews who defiled the true worship of God. This was particularly so for the inhabitants of the region of Samaria, the Samaritans, whom the returned exiles regarded with a dislike and suspicion that would still be evident in

the New Testament, 500 years later. Both Jews and Samaritans claimed descent from Abraham and worshiped Abraham's God, but they were deeply separated from each other.

So Judaism was divided. First, Jews were divided between those in Palestine (the returned exiles) and those scattered throughout the Persian Empire (the "Diaspora" or "dispersion"). Second, even those in Palestine were split between the returned exiles, who saw themselves as the ethnically and religiously pure remnant of their nation and faith, and the ones who had stayed behind in the land, like the Samaritans.

TRANSITION

The Book of Ezra

The story of the Jews' return from exile and the restoration of their ruined temple and city is told in the Book of Ezra and continued in the Book of Nehemiah. The central figure is Ezra, a scribe from a priestly family. But Ezra himself does not appear in the book until ch. 7. The earlier chapters are devoted to the rebuilding of the temple by the returned exiles under the political leader Zerubbabel and the priestly leader Joshua. To rebuild the temple, they had to overcome opposition from "the peoples around them" (Ezr 4:1–5), but in the end they completed the structure.

Tradition holds that the author of the book is Ezra himself. If so, then Ezra may have also been the Chronicler, the author of the priestly history found in 1 and 2 Chronicles, because the Book of Ezra picks up at the precise moment that Chronicles leaves off. Chronicles ends (2Ch 36:22, 23), and the Book of Ezra begins (Ezra 1:1–4), with the decree of Cyrus in 538 b.c. that allowed the exiles to return. Other scholars believe that one or more editors compiled the material now known as 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah.

• **Ezra 1:1—2:70**

Ezra

Cyrus Helps the Exiles to Return

1 **:1** In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing:

2 "This is what Cyrus king of Persia says:

"'The LORD, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. 3 Any of his people among you may go up to Jerusalem in Judah and build the temple of the LORD, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem, and may their God be with them. 4 And in any locality where survivors may now be living, the people are to provide them with silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with freewill offerings for the temple of God in Jerusalem.'"

5 Then the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and Levites — everyone whose heart God had moved — prepared to go up and build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem. 6 All their neighbors assisted them with articles of silver and gold, with goods and livestock, and with valuable gifts, in addition to all the freewill offerings.

7 Moreover, King Cyrus brought out the articles belonging to the temple of the LORD, which Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and had placed in the temple of his god.[a] 8 Cyrus king of Persia had them brought by Mithredath the treasurer, who counted them out to Sheshbazzar the prince of Judah.

9 This was the inventory:

gold dishes	30
silver dishes	1,000
silver pans[b]	29
10 gold bowls	30
matching silver bowls	410
other articles	1,000

11 In all, there were 5,400 articles of gold and of silver. Sheshbazzar brought all these along with the exiles when they came up from Babylon to Jerusalem.

[a] *7* Or *gods* [b] *9* The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

Cyrus's Religious Propaganda (Ezr 1:2–4)

Cyrus, king of Persia, proclaimed that the God of heaven had given him the empire because of the ruthless deportation practices of the Babylonians. God had called Cyrus to allow peoples displaced by the Babylonians to return to their homes. Judah's God also had commanded him to build the Jerusalem temple (Ezr 1:2).

Apparently Cyrus issued proclamations to specific groups of deported persons. One proclamation, appearing in the Book of Ezra (Ezr 1:2–4), was for the Jews; another for the Babylonians has been found on what is called the Cyrus Cylinder. Both proclamations probably were issued in 538 B.C., at the end of the period in which Cyrus conquered the city of Babylon. While the proclamations announced new freedom for the conquered peoples, they also paid reverence to the captive gods.

In the Cyrus Cylinder, the king announced that the "Lord of the gods" (meaning Babylon's god Marduk) chose him (Cyrus) to conquer the world and set the religious situation in Babylonia right after years of abuse. According to the proclamation, all the sanctuaries were in ruins, and Marduk wished for Cyrus to rebuild them for the Babylonian people. For this reason Marduk allowed Cyrus to conquer Babylon.

Cyrus also claimed it was the will of Marduk to return items that were brought to Babylon during the rule of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. Statues of other gods, along with implements used in their worship, would be returned when conquered peoples returned to their homelands. Temples would be rebuilt and worship restored.

Certainly Cyrus believed that his empire was built with the help of the god who ruled over the entire earth. In writing to various peoples, he called that deity by the name of the highest god of the people to whom he wrote. This might be a classic case of political propaganda, or Cyrus may have assumed that there was one god, who was called different names by different peoples. In either case, Cyrus both appealed to the gods to support his kingship and to the peoples of his new empire to accept him as rightful ruler.

The List of the Exiles Who Returned

2 [1]Now these are the people of the province
who came up from the captivity of the exiles, whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive to Babylon (they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to their own town, [2]in company with Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum and Baanah):

The list of the men of the people of Israel:

[3]the descendants of Parosh	2,172
[4]of Shephatiah	372
[5]of Arah	775
[6]of Pahath-Moab (through the line of Jeshua and Joab)	2,812
[7]of Elam	1,254
[8]of Zattu	945
[9]of Zakkai	760
[10]of Bani	642
[11]of Bebai	623
[12]of Azgad	1,222
[13]of Adonikam	666
[14]of Bigvai	2,056
[15]of Adin	454
[16]of Ater (through Hezekiah)	98
[17]of Bezai	323
[18]of Jorah	112
[19]of Hashum	223
[20]of Gibbar	95
[21]the men of Bethlehem	123
[22]of Netophah	56
[23]of Anathoth	128
[24]of Azmaveth	42
[25]of Kiriath Jearim,[a] Kephirah and Beeroth	743
[26]of Ramah and Geba	621
[27]of Mikmash	122
[28]of Bethel and Ai	223
[29]of Nebo	52
[30]of Magbish	156
[31]of the other Elam	1,254
[32]of Harim	320
[33]of Lod, Hadid and Ono	725
[34]of Jericho	345
[35]of Senaah	3,630
[36]The priests:	
the descendants of Jedaiah (through the family of Jeshua)	973
[37]of Immer	1,052
[38]of Pashhur	1,247
[39]of Harim	1,017
[40]The Levites:	
the descendants of Jeshua and Kadmiel (of the line of Hodaviah)	74
[41]The musicians:	
the descendants of Asaph	128
[42]The gatekeepers of the temple:	
the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita and Shobai	139

[a] *25* See Septuagint (see also Neh. 7:29); Hebrew *Kiriath Arim.*

TIME CAPSULE		522 to 520 B.C.
522		A magi named Gaumata pretends to be Cambyses' younger brother Bardiya
522–486		Darius I, the Great, kills Gaumata and ascends Persia's throne
521		Darius suppresses rebellion in Babylonia
520		Zechariah and Haggai prophesy to the postexilic community
520		Work on the Jerusalem temple is resumed

43 The temple servants:

the descendants of
Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,
44 Keros, Siaha, Padon,
45 Lebanah, Hagabah, Akkub,
46 Hagab, Shalmai, Hanan,
47 Giddel, Gahar, Reaiah,
48 Rezin, Nekoda, Gazzam,
49 Uzza, Paseah, Besai,
50 Asnah, Meunim, Nephusim,
51 Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,
52 Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha,
53 Barkos, Sisera, Temah,
54 Neziah and Hatipha

55 The descendants of the servants of Solomon:

the descendants of
Sotai, Hassophereth, Peruda,
56 Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,
57 Shephatiah, Hattil,
Pokereth-Hazzebaim and Ami

58 The temple servants and the descendants of the servants of Solomon 392

59 The following came up from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon and Immer, but they could not show that their families were descended from Israel:

60 The descendants of
Delaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda 652

61 And from among the priests:

The descendants of
Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai (a man who had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by that name).
62 These searched for their family records, but they could not find them and so were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. 63 The governor ordered them not to eat any of the most sacred food until there was a priest ministering with the Urim and Thummim.

64 The whole company numbered 42,360, 65 besides their 7,337 male and female slaves; and they also had 200 male and female singers. 66 They had 736 horses, 245 mules, 67 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys.

68 When they arrived at the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, some of the heads of the families gave freewill offerings toward the rebuilding of the house of God on its site. 69 According to their ability they gave to the treasury for this work 61,000 darics[a] of gold, 5,000 minas[b] of silver and 100 priestly garments.

70 The priests, the Levites, the musicians, the gatekeepers and the temple servants settled in their own towns, along with some of the other people, and the rest of the Israelites settled in their towns.

[a] *69* That is, about 1,100 pounds or about 500 kilograms
[b] *69* That is, about 3 tons or about 2.8 metric tons

TRANSITION

Restoring Worship in Jerusalem

The exact dates for the returns led by Sheshbazzar (Ezr 1:11) and by Zerubbabel (Ezr 2:2) are unknown. Some have identified Sheshbazzar with Zerubbabel, but such an identification is not certain. Sheshbazzar could be considered the earlier leader, whose place was later taken by Zerubbabel.

After arriving in Jerusalem, the returnees reestablished their forms of worship, erecting an altar as the first step in restoring the sacrificial system (Ezr 3:3). The 7th month (3:1), corresponding to September–October, was an appropriate time for the people to assemble in Jerusalem, since three holy days were celebrated at that time. Scholars commonly suggest that this 7th month occurred in either 538 or 537 b.c., thus shortly after Cyrus's proclamation. The 2nd year "after their arrival" (3:8), when work began on the temple's foundation, would then be either 537 or 536 b.c.

The prophets Haggai and Zechariah encouraged the people to finish their task of rebuilding the temple (Ezr 5:1, 2). The work of both prophets is dated in the 2nd year of Darius I (Hag 1:1; Zec 1:1), thus in 520 b.c. some scholars suppose that the account in Ezra 3:8–13 of laying the temple's foundation actually refers to Zerubbabel's work in 520 b.c. (see Hag 1:14, 15).

• Ezra 3:1—4:5

Laying the Foundation of the Second Temple (Ezr 3:8–13)

Judah's temple, the house of Yahweh, had remained desolate since its destruction by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. In the 2nd year after the exiles returned from Babylon, around 537 or 536 B.C., Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, and Joshua the high priest broke ground to begin the construction of a new temple (Ezr 3:8). The event was met with great ceremony and joy, but also with sadness (3:9–13). The structure was much smaller than the previous temple of King Solomon, which had been built on the same site.

The joy and grief reveal that laying the foundation of the second temple was an event of great importance. The temple had an indispensable theological function to play. It was the very center of God's presence in Judah. It was the point where sacrifices were made in response to Yahweh's gracious choice of Israel as his people.

Yet the temple had important political and economic roles to play in society as well. It was the institution that held all of Judean society together, past as well as present and future. It gave political identity to the people. Access to its courts identified who was properly a citizen and who was excluded.

Economically, rooms in the temple functioned as a treasury—the society's bank. Because of the temple's demands for tithes and offerings, a large portion of the Judean economy passed through temple personnel and storehouses. Without the temple, the Judean people had little chance of pulling together as a coherent society to face the challenges of the future.

The laying of the foundation for this new temple, therefore, represented the rebirth of the kingdom of Judah. Given their past, Judeans could well appreciate that such an event was worthy of both great joy and sadness.

Ezra

Rebuilding the Altar

3 :1 When the seventh month came and the
Israelites had settled in their towns, the
people assembled together as one in Jerusalem. [2]Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates began to build the altar of the God of Israel to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in accordance with what is written in the Law of Moses the man of God. [3]Despite their fear of the peoples around them, they built the altar on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices. [4]Then in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles with the required number of burnt offerings prescribed for each day. [5]After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred festivals of the LORD, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the LORD. [6]On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid.

Rebuilding the Temple

[7]Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and gave food and drink and olive oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so that they would bring cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorized by Cyrus king of Persia.

[8]In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak and the rest of the people (the priests and the Levites and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem) began the work. They appointed Levites twenty years old and older to supervise the building of the house of the LORD. [9]Joshua and his sons and brothers and Kadmiel and his sons (descendants of Hodaviah[a]) and the sons of Henadad and their sons and brothers—all Levites—joined together in supervising those working on the house of God.

[10]When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel. [11]With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD:

"He is good;
his love toward Israel endures forever."

And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. [12]But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. [13]No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.

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[a] *9* Hebrew *Yehudah,* a variant of *Hodaviah*

Opposition to the Rebuilding

4 [1]When the enemies of Judah and Benjamin heard that the exiles were building a temple for the LORD, the God of Israel, [2]they came to Zerubbabel and to the heads of the families and said, "Let us help you build because, like you, we seek your God and have been sacrificing to him since the time of Esarhaddon king of Assyria, who brought us here."

[3]But Zerubbabel, Joshua and the rest of the heads of the families of Israel answered, "You have no part with us in building a temple to our God. We alone will build it for the LORD, the God of Israel, as King Cyrus, the king of Persia, commanded us."

[4]Then the peoples around them set out to discourage the people of Judah and make them afraid to go on building.[a] [5]They bribed officials to work against them and frustrate their plans during the entire reign of Cyrus king of Persia and down to the reign of Darius king of Persia.

TRANSITION

Opposition to the Temple

Ezra 4:5 reports that the rebuilding of the temple was frustrated during the last years of Cyrus's reign (539–530 b.c.) until the time of Darius (522–486 b.c.). Strangely, though, the passage that follows (Ezra 4:6–23) describes events that took place during the reigns of the two kings who succeeded Darius: Xerxes (4:6) and Artaxerxes I (4:7, 11, 23). The appearance of Xerxes and Artaxerxes at this point in Ezra (4:6, 7) presents a curious chronological problem.

Xerxes, also known as Xerxes I (486–465 b.c.), was the son of Darius. Artaxerxes I (465–424 b.c.) was Darius's grandson and Xerxes' son. After describing events during their later reigns (between 486 and 424 b.c.), the narrative returns to the 2nd year of Darius's reign (520 b.c.; Ezra 4:24). Since Xerxes and Artaxerxes reigned after Darius, the events of 4:6–23 are definitely reported out of chronological order. Perhaps this passage was inserted into the middle of Darius's reign to serve as an example of the kind of tactics employed by the "enemies of Judah and Benjamin" (4:1). See "Opposition to Rebuilding Jerusalem" at Ezra 4:6.

• Ezra 4:24—5:1

Ezra

4:24 Thus the work on the house of God in Jerusalem came to a standstill until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia.

[a] *4* Or *and troubled them as they built*

Tattenai's Letter to Darius

5 [1]Now Haggai the prophet and Zechariah the prophet, a descendant of Iddo, prophesied to the Jews in Judah and Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, who was over them.

TRANSITION

The Book of Haggai

The "enemies of Judah and Benjamin," whose help in rebuilding the temple Zerubbabel and Joshua had rejected (Ezr 4:1–3), were successful in stopping the work on the temple. The foundation had been laid before the work stopped (Ezra 3:10, 11), but nothing further was done from that point. The work stoppage lasted from sometime during Cyrus's reign (c. 536 b.c.) until the 2nd year of Darius I (520 b.c.).

At that time two prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, arose to urge the completion of the temple construction. The ministries of these two prophets, who were contemporaries, are dated specifically in 520 b.c. (Ezr 4:24—5:1; Hag 1:1; Zec 1:1). The Book of Ezra reports that in that year Haggai and Zechariah prophesied and the Jews "set to work to rebuild the house of God" (Ezr 5:1, 2). The Book of Haggai consists of the call to complete the temple.

Prophecy in the years after the exile was different from the great prophecies of such preexilic prophets as Isaiah and Jeremiah. To begin with, the earlier prophets tended to speak about, and to, the kings. But in the restored Judah after the exile there was no king. Prophets very often spoke to the priests and elders instead. Indeed, many of the prophets themselves seemed to have a priestly perspective. This is certainly true of Haggai, who speaks primarily of the temple and of the particularly priestly concern of ritual defilement (Hag 2:10–14).

• Haggai 1:1—2:23

Haggai

A Call to Build the House of the LORD

1:1 In the second year of King Darius, on the first day of the sixth month, the word of the LORD came through the prophet Haggai to

Politics & Government

Cyrus the Great was the king of Persia who conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. The Babylonians had brought the religious idols of subject peoples to Babylon, and Cyrus allowed these idols to be returned to their original peoples (Ezr 4:3). He was not the only ruler to allow alien religions to exist peacefully in his empire, since this policy made rebellion less likely.

Starting Over in a Difficult Land (Hag 1:6)

The Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem left Judean society in shambles (2Ki 25:11, 12). Later, power struggles within the Judean community further emptied the society of necessary leadership and institutions (Jer 41:1–3). Archaeological surveys suggest that Judah lost 90 percent of its population during these years. Judean society in the land of Judah had collapsed.

So it remained for approximately 50 years. Then the Persians conquered Babylon in 539 B.C. About 538 B.C. Cyrus the Great decreed that the Jews could return to their land and rebuild the temple and their society. An enthusiastic group of Judean exiles made the journey with high hopes (Ezr 1:11).

Yet the depopulation of the area had taken its toll on the environment. Jerusalem must have been a mess. There is no evidence that anyone attempted to rebuild the city after the destruction of 586 B.C. The returnees to the site of Jerusalem would have been met by wild animals, weeds, dirt, and mounds of debris in the very locations where their ancestors' homes once stood.

The new economy, like the old, depended upon agricultural production. Yet the fields would have suffered from 50 years of neglect. Land would have grown hard and become overgrown with brush. It must have taken intensive manual labor and a lengthy time to get the fields—and thus the economy—to return to productivity again.

Finally, the weather did not cooperate. The prophet Haggai warned of a drought: "because of you the heavens have withheld their dew and the earth its crops" (Hag 1:10). Difficult circumstances had grown desperate.

Haggai aptly describes the dire straits of the community that had returned to Jerusalem: "You have planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but never have enough" (Hag 1:6). The task of starting over in the land had proven to be very difficult.

Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah,
and to Joshua son of Jozadak,[a] the high priest:
2This is what the LORD Almighty says: "These
people say, 'The time has not yet come to re-
build the LORD's house.'"
3Then the word of the LORD came through
the prophet Haggai: 4"Is it a time for you your-
selves to be living in your paneled houses,
while this house remains a ruin?"
5Now this is what the LORD Almighty says:
"Give careful thought to your ways. 6You have
planted much, but harvested little. You eat, but
never have enough. You drink, but never have
your fill. You put on clothes, but are not warm.
You earn wages, only to put them in a purse
with holes in it."
7This is what the LORD Almighty says: "Give
careful thought to your ways. 8Go up into the
mountains and bring down timber and build
my house, so that I may take pleasure in it
and be honored," says the LORD. 9"You ex-
pected much, but see, it turned out to be little.
What you brought home, I blew away. Why?"
declares the LORD Almighty. "Because of my
house, which remains a ruin, while each of you
is busy with your own house. 10Therefore, be-
cause of you the heavens have withheld their
dew and the earth its crops. 11I called for a
drought on the fields and the mountains, on
the grain, the new wine, the olive oil and every-
thing else the ground produces, on people and
livestock, and on all the labor of your hands."

12Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua
son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the whole
remnant of the people obeyed the voice of the
LORD their God and the message of the prophet
Haggai, because the LORD their God had sent
him. And the people feared the LORD.
13Then Haggai, the LORD's messenger, gave
this message of the LORD to the people: "I am
with you," declares the LORD. 14So the LORD
stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel son of Sheal-
tiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua
son of Jozadak, the high priest, and the spirit
of the whole remnant of the people. They came
and began to work on the house of the LORD Al-
mighty, their God, 15on the twenty-fourth day
of the sixth month.

[a] *1* Hebrew *Jehozadak*, a variant of *Jozadak*; also in verses 12 and 14

TIME CAPSULE		518 to 500 B.C.
518		Darius I reestablishes order and control in Egypt
515		Dedication of the second temple in Jerusalem
513		Darius leads expedition into Scythia, expanding the Persian Empire
509		Etruscan rule ends and the Roman republic is proclaimed
500		Rise of democracy in Athens
500		The Babylonians work out a regular 19-year cycle
500		Persians begin a royal mounted messenger service

The Promised Glory of the New House

2 In the second year of King Darius, [1]on the
twenty-first day of the seventh month, the
word of the LORD came through the prophet
Haggai: [2]"Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel,
governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak,[a]
the high priest, and to the remnant of the peo-
ple. Ask them, [3]'Who of you is left who saw this
house in its former glory? How does it look to
you now? Does it not seem to you like noth-
ing? [4]But now be strong, Zerubbabel,' declares
the LORD. 'Be strong, Joshua son of Jozadak,
the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the
land,' declares the LORD, 'and work. For I am
with you,' declares the LORD Almighty. [5]'This is
what I covenanted with you when you came out
of Egypt. And my Spirit remains among you.
Do not fear.'

[6]"'This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'In a
little while I will once more shake the heavens
and the earth, the sea and the dry land. [7]I will
shake all nations, and what is desired by all na-
tions will come, and I will fill this house with
glory,' says the LORD Almighty. [8]'The silver is
mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD
Almighty. [9]'The glory of this present house will
be greater than the glory of the former house,'
says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will
grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty."

Blessings for a Defiled People

[10]On the twenty-fourth day of the ninth
month, in the second year of Darius, the word
of the LORD came to the prophet Haggai: [11]"This
is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Ask the priests
what the law says: [12]If someone carries conse-
crated meat in the fold of their garment, and
that fold touches some bread or stew, some
wine, olive oil or other food, does it become
consecrated?'"

The priests answered, "No."

[13]Then Haggai said, "If a person defiled by
contact with a dead body touches one of these
things, does it become defiled?"

"Yes," the priests replied, "it becomes de-
filed."

[14]Then Haggai said, "'So it is with this peo-
ple and this nation in my sight,' declares the
LORD. 'Whatever they do and whatever they of-
fer there is defiled.

[15]"'Now give careful thought to this from this
day on[b]—consider how things were before one
stone was laid on another in the LORD's tem-
ple. [16]When anyone came to a heap of twenty
measures, there were only ten. When anyone
went to a wine vat to draw fifty measures, there
were only twenty. [17]I struck all the work of your
hands with blight, mildew and hail, yet you did
not return to me,' declares the LORD. [18]'From
this day on, from this twenty-fourth day of the
ninth month, give careful thought to the day
when the foundation of the LORD's temple was
laid. Give careful thought: [19]Is there yet any
seed left in the barn? Until now, the vine and
the fig tree, the pomegranate and the olive tree
have not borne fruit.

"'From this day on I will bless you.'"

Zerubbabel the LORD's Signet Ring

[20]The word of the LORD came to Haggai a
second time on the twenty-fourth day of the
month: [21]"Tell Zerubbabel governor of Judah
that I am going to shake the heavens and the
earth. [22]I will overturn royal thrones and shat-
ter the power of the foreign kingdoms. I will
overthrow chariots and their drivers; horses
and their riders will fall, each by the sword of
his brother.

[23]"'On that day,' declares the LORD Almighty,
'I will take you, my servant Zerubbabel son of
Shealtiel,' declares the LORD, 'and I will make
you like my signet ring, for I have chosen you,'
declares the LORD Almighty."

[a] *2* Hebrew *Jehozadak*, a variant of *Jozadak*; also in verse 4
[b] *15* Or *to the days past*

TRANSITION

The Book of Zechariah

Haggai's companion in prophecy was Zechariah, but Zechariah's work is quite different from Haggai's. He is less exclusively concerned with the temple, for instance, and does not sound quite so priestly. Most obviously, though, he presents his message in a very different fashion. Where Haggai had preached prose sermons, Zechariah describes visionary experiences, often in poetry—or at least in very poetic prose.

Zechariah's visions are every bit as historically specific as Haggai's speeches, though. Both the governor Zerubbabel (Zec 4:6–10) and the high priest Joshua are identified. Zechariah calls these two leaders of the returned exiles the "two who are anointed" (4:14).

Zechariah seems to envision not just a rebuilt temple but a restored nation and a glorious new Jerusalem, with a Davidic king at its head. Zerubbabel, like the Messiah, was from the line of David. The possibilities of this connection would not have been missed by Zechariah's original audience. Joshua the high priest is also described in messianic language. He is called the "Branch" (Zec 6:12), a word used by the prophets Isaiah (Isa 4:2) and Jeremiah (Jer 23:5) to refer to the Messiah.

After chs. 1–8, though, the Book of Zechariah changes dramatically. Chapters 9–14 still include visions, but these visions are much more obscure and no longer come with their own interpretation. The clear references to identifiable historical persons are gone. It becomes much more difficult to date these chapters, but they are different enough from chs. 1–8 that many scholars consider them to be speaking of a later time. See "The Apocalyptic Visions of Zechariah" at Zec 9:1.

Zechariah's ministry began during the 2nd year of Darius I, approximately in November of 520 b.c. (Zec 1:1). The foundation of the second temple had been sitting abandoned for possibly 16 years by this time, and Zechariah encourages a disheartened postexilic community. In the month of Shebat (probably February, 519 b.c.), Zechariah received his first vision (Zec 1:7).

• **Zechariah 1:1—6:15**

Zechariah

A Call to Return to the LORD

1:1 In the eighth month of the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo:

2"The LORD was very angry with your ancestors. 3Therefore tell the people: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Return to me,' declares the LORD Almighty, 'and I will return to you,' says the LORD Almighty. 4Do not be like your ancestors, to whom the earlier prophets proclaimed: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Turn from your evil ways and your evil practices.' But they would not listen or pay attention to me, declares the LORD. 5Where are your ancestors now? And the prophets, do they live forever? 6But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your ancestors?

"Then they repented and said, 'The LORD Almighty has done to us what our ways and practices deserve, just as he determined to do.'"

The Man Among the Myrtle Trees

7On the twenty-fourth day of the eleventh month, the month of Shebat, in the second year of Darius, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Zechariah son of Berekiah, the son of Iddo.

8During the night I had a vision, and there before me was a man mounted on a red horse. He was standing among the myrtle trees in a ravine. Behind him were red, brown and white horses.

9I asked, "What are these, my lord?"

The angel who was talking with me answered, "I will show you what they are."

10Then the man standing among the myrtle trees explained, "They are the ones the LORD has sent to go throughout the earth."

11And they reported to the angel of the LORD who was standing among the myrtle trees, "We have gone throughout the earth and found the whole world at rest and in peace."

12Then the angel of the LORD said, "LORD Almighty, how long will you withhold mercy from Jerusalem and from the towns of Judah, which you have been angry with these seventy years?" 13So the LORD spoke kind and comforting words to the angel who talked with me.

14Then the angel who was speaking to me said, "Proclaim this word: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I am very jealous for Jerusalem and Zion, 15and I am very angry with the nations that feel secure. I was only a little angry, but they went too far with the punishment.'

16"Therefore this is what the LORD says: 'I will return to Jerusalem with mercy, and there my house will be rebuilt. And the measuring line will be stretched out over Jerusalem,' declares the LORD Almighty.

17"Proclaim further: This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'My towns will again overflow with prosperity, and the LORD will again comfort Zion and choose Jerusalem.'"

Four Horns and Four Craftsmen

18Then I looked up, and there before me were four horns. 19I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these?"

He answered me, "These are the horns that scattered Judah, Israel and Jerusalem."

20Then the LORD showed me four craftsmen. 21I asked, "What are these coming to do?"

He answered, "These are the horns that scattered Judah so that no one could raise their head, but the craftsmen have come to terrify them and throw down these horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter its people."[a]

A Man With a Measuring Line

2[b] 1Then I looked up, and there before me was a man with a measuring line in his hand. 2I asked, "Where are you going?"

He answered me, "To measure Jerusalem, to find out how wide and how long it is."

3While the angel who was speaking to me was leaving, another angel came to meet him

[a] *21* In Hebrew texts 1:18-21 is numbered 2:1-4.
[b] In Hebrew texts 2:1-13 is numbered 2:5-17.

Clothing, Symbols of Inner Being (Zec 3:1–5)

The Satan who accused the high priest Joshua was acting as the Adversary, the heavenly officer in charge of finding those who break the laws of God. God intervened on Joshua's behalf.

Joshua, as high priest, represented the people of Jerusalem before Yahweh. In the ancient Near East high priests interceded for their people with the gods. But no high priest was allowed before any deity when in a state of ritual uncleanness or in improper clerical garments. Anyone who approached a god without the proper garments was punished with death. The official cultic clothing was to be worn properly so that the rituals would be pure and properly performed. A clean garment reflected a clean soul.

The Adversary, Satan, correctly opposed the priest in this case on two grounds. The Jerusalem which Joshua represented before Yahweh had defamed itself, causing the exile in the first place (2Ki 23:26, 27), and for this alone the Adversary had cause to oppose Joshua's appearing before Yahweh. Yet in addition, the priest, while approaching God, wore filthy garments in clear violation of priestly rules.

The Adversary's accusation was accurate, but he did not understand the extent of God's forgiveness. Yahweh had delivered the people of Jerusalem from exile, not so much because they deserved to return, but because God granted them grace. The change in Judah's status is symbolized by God's clothing of Joshua in clean garments (Zec 3:4, 5). The high priest did not do this for himself, but God, through mercy, reinstated Joshua and Jerusalem—they were "a burning stick snatched from the fire" (3:2).

4 and said to him: "Run, tell that young man, 'Jerusalem will be a city without walls because of the great number of people and animals in it. 5 And I myself will be a wall of fire around it,' declares the LORD, 'and I will be its glory within.'

6 "Come! Come! Flee from the land of the north," declares the LORD, "for I have scattered you to the four winds of heaven," declares the LORD.

7 "Come, Zion! Escape, you who live in Daughter Babylon!" 8 For this is what the LORD Almighty says: "After the Glorious One has sent me against the nations that have plundered you—for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye— 9 I will surely raise my hand against them so that their slaves will plunder them.[a] Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me.

10 "Shout and be glad, Daughter Zion. For I am coming, and I will live among you," declares the LORD. 11 "Many nations will be joined with the LORD in that day and will become my people. I will live among you and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. 12 The LORD will inherit Judah as his portion in the holy land and will again choose Jerusalem. 13 Be still before the LORD, all mankind, because he has roused himself from his holy dwelling."

Clean Garments for the High Priest

3 1 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan[b] standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"

3 Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. 4 The angel said to those who were standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes."

Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put fine garments on you."

5 Then I said, "Put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him, while the angel of the LORD stood by.

6 The angel of the LORD gave this charge to Joshua: 7 "This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'If you will walk in obedience to me and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here.

8 "'Listen, High Priest Joshua, you and your associates seated before you, who are men symbolic of things to come: I am going to bring my servant, the Branch. 9 See, the stone I have set in front of Joshua! There are seven eyes[c] on that one stone, and I will engrave an inscription on it,' says the LORD Almighty, 'and I will remove the sin of this land in a single day.

Beliefs & Ideas

The Hebrew word *satan* means "accuser" or "adversary." In time it became the proper name for the chief of the demons. The figure of Satan sometimes appears when God is described as surrounded by his court of angels and other spiritual beings. In heavenly affairs, Satan the Adversary brings charges against humans (Job 1:6–12). In Zechariah's vision (Zec 3:1, 2), Satan accuses the high priest Joshua.

[a] *8,9* Or *says after . . . eye:* 9 *"I . . . plunder them."*
[b] *1* Hebrew *satan* means *adversary.* [c] *9* Or *facets*

Wickedness Carried to Babylonia (Zec 5:11)

In a vision Zechariah describes a woman in a basket who symbolizes wickedness (Zec 5:6–8). The basket of wickedness is carried away to a permanent location in "the country of Babylonia" (Zec 5:10, 11). One could wonder why in this vision Babylonia is chosen as the dwelling place for wickedness.

A name used in Genesis for Babylonia, "Shinar," was known from ancient times. In the first list of nations (Ge 10) Shinar is named as the land in which the legendary Nimrod began his kingdom (Ge 10:8–10). Nimrod's first cities—Akkad, Uruk, and Babel—point to a location for the land of Shinar in the southern part of the Tigris-Euphrates valley (now in modern Iraq).

Shinar housed the first known civilization in history. The first cities and temple building were located here, dating as early as the end of the 5th millennium B.C. Moreover, the first writing script has been found at the site of Uruk, where texts written in Sumerian date to about 3200 B.C. Civilization based on the Sumerian model continued in the Tigris-Euphrates valley until the end of the 1st millennium B.C. Abraham is said to have come from Ur of the Chaldeans (Ge 11:31), a major Sumerian center in Shinar.

The ancient land of Shinar consisted approximately of the territories later called "Babylonia." Possibly the name "Shinar" was identified in some sense with Babylonia in later times. That would explain why in some Bible translations Shinar is listed as a place where the Jews were exiled (Isa 11:11) and as the place to which Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, took vessels from the Jerusalem temple (Da 1:2), though the NIV calls both places Babylonia. The translators of the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) even translated the Hebrew word for "Shinar" in Zec 5:11 with the Greek word for "Babylonia."

Babylon was the place of Judah's captivity. It acquired a reputation as a world power that was hostile to God, and one that would be punished for its hostility (see Jer 25:12). At the time of Zechariah's prophecy in 520 B.C., the name "Babylon," or its more ancient designation "Shinar," would have been considered appropriate for the place where wickedness would dwell.

10 "'In that day each of you will invite your
neighbor to sit under your vine and fig tree,'
declares the LORD Almighty."

The Gold Lampstand and the Two Olive Trees

4 1Then the angel who talked with me returned and woke me up, like someone awakened from sleep. 2He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a solid gold lampstand with a bowl at the top and seven lamps on it, with seven channels to the lamps. 3Also there are two olive trees by it, one on the right of the bowl and the other on its left."

4I asked the angel who talked with me, "What are these, my lord?"

5He answered, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I replied.

6So he said to me, "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

7"What are you, mighty mountain? Before Zerubbabel you will become level ground. Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of 'God bless it! God bless it!'"

8Then the word of the LORD came to me: 9"The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this temple; his hands will also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you.

10"Who dares despise the day of small things, since the seven eyes of the LORD that range throughout the earth will rejoice when they see the chosen capstone[a] in the hand of Zerubbabel?"

11Then I asked the angel, "What are these two olive trees on the right and the left of the lampstand?"

12Again I asked him, "What are these two olive branches beside the two gold pipes that pour out golden oil?"

13He replied, "Do you not know what these are?"

"No, my lord," I said.

14So he said, "These are the two who are anointed to[b] serve the Lord of all the earth."

The Flying Scroll

5 1I looked again, and there before me was a flying scroll.

2He asked me, "What do you see?"

I answered, "I see a flying scroll, twenty cubits long and ten cubits wide.[c]"

3And he said to me, "This is the curse that

[a] *10* Or *the plumb line* [b] *14* Or *two who bring oil and*
[c] *2* That is, about 30 feet long and 15 feet wide or about 9 meters long and 4.5 meters wide

is going out over the whole land; for according to what it says on one side, every thief will be banished, and according to what it says on the other, everyone who swears falsely will be banished. 4The LORD Almighty declares, 'I will send it out, and it will enter the house of the thief and the house of anyone who swears falsely by my name. It will remain in that house and destroy it completely, both its timbers and its stones.'"

The Woman in a Basket

5Then the angel who was speaking to me came forward and said to me, "Look up and see what is appearing."

6I asked, "What is it?"

He replied, "It is a basket." And he added, "This is the iniquity[a] of the people throughout the land."

7Then the cover of lead was raised, and there in the basket sat a woman! 8He said, "This is wickedness," and he pushed her back into the basket and pushed its lead cover down on it.

9Then I looked up—and there before me were two women, with the wind in their wings! They had wings like those of a stork, and they lifted up the basket between heaven and earth.

10"Where are they taking the basket?" I asked the angel who was speaking to me.

11He replied, "To the country of Babylonia[b] to build a house for it. When the house is ready, the basket will be set there in its place."

Four Chariots

6 1I looked up again, and there before me were four chariots coming out from between two mountains—mountains of bronze. 2The first chariot had red horses, the second black, 3the third white, and the fourth dappled—all of them powerful. 4I asked the angel who was speaking to me, "What are these, my lord?"

5The angel answered me, "These are the four spirits[c] of heaven, going out from standing in the presence of the Lord of the whole world. 6The one with the black horses is going toward the north country, the one with the white horses toward the west,[d] and the one with the dappled horses toward the south."

7When the powerful horses went out, they were straining to go throughout the earth. And he said, "Go throughout the earth!" So they went throughout the earth.

8Then he called to me, "Look, those going toward the north country have given my Spirit[e] rest in the land of the north."

[a] 6 Or *appearance* [b] 11 Hebrew *Shinar* [c] 5 Or *winds* [d] 6 Or *horses after them* [e] 8 Or *spirit* [f] 11 Hebrew *Jehozadak*, a variant of *Jozadak* [g] 13 Or *there* [h] 14 Syriac; Hebrew *Helem* [i] 14 Or *and the gracious one, the*

Arts & Literature

The colors available to the earliest painters were taken from the earth. Together with carbon black, they ranged from red to yellow to white. These are possibly the four colors of Zechariah's chariots (Zec 6:1–3), although it is not certain what color is meant by "dappled" (6:3). When no example is given, a color name in a language such as Hebrew can be impossible to define exactly.

A Crown for Joshua

9The word of the LORD came to me: 10"Take silver and gold from the exiles Heldai, Tobijah and Jedaiah, who have arrived from Babylon. Go the same day to the house of Josiah son of Zephaniah. 11Take the silver and gold and make a crown, and set it on the head of the high priest, Joshua son of Jozadak.[f] 12Tell him this is what the LORD Almighty says: 'Here is the man whose name is the Branch, and he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the LORD. 13It is he who will build the temple of the LORD, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he[g] will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.' 14The crown will be given to Heldai,[h] Tobijah, Jedaiah and Hen[i] son of Zephaniah as a memorial in the temple of the LORD. 15Those who are far away will come and help to build the temple of the LORD, and you will know that the LORD Almighty has sent me to you. This will happen if you diligently obey the LORD your God."

TRANSITION

Replacing Fasting with Obedience

The occasion for this message was the arrival of a deputation, possibly of Samaritans from Bethel, in the 4th year of Darius (Zec 7:1, 2). The month of Kislev was probably December, 518 b.c. Since work on the new temple had been under way for about 2 years, they wondered whether to continue the fasts commemorating the burning of the city and temple in 586 b.c. (7:3).

The weeping and fasting in the 5th month recalled the month when the temple had been destroyed (2Ki 25:8–10). Such religious actions had been observed for the nearly 70 years since Jerusalem's fall in 586 b.c. (Zec 7:5). The prophet Zechariah answers that God cares more for righteousness than religious forms.

• **Zechariah 7:1—8:23**

THE DATES OF HAGGAI AND ZECHARIAH

Haggai and Zechariah provide dates for some of their prophecies. The dates are counted from the 1st year of Darius I, that is, from April, 521 B.C. Darius actually ascended Persia's throne in September, 522 B.C., but did not secure his position until 521 B.C. The "second year of King Darius" (Hag 1:1; Zec 1:1) is reckoned as beginning in April, 520 B.C. The rebuilt temple was dedicated in March, 515 B.C. (Ezra 6:15).

Reference	Month	Day	Year	Modern Calendar
Haggai				
1:1	6th	1st	2nd	August 29, 520 B.C.
1:15	6th	24th		September 21, 520 B.C.
2:1	7th	21st		October 17, 520 B.C.
2:10, 18, 20	9th	24th		December 18, 520 B.C.
Zechariah				
1:1	8th	–	2nd	November, 520 B.C.
1:7	11th	24th		February 15, 519 B.C.
7:1	9th	4th	4th	December 7, 518 B.C.

Zechariah

Justice and Mercy, Not Fasting

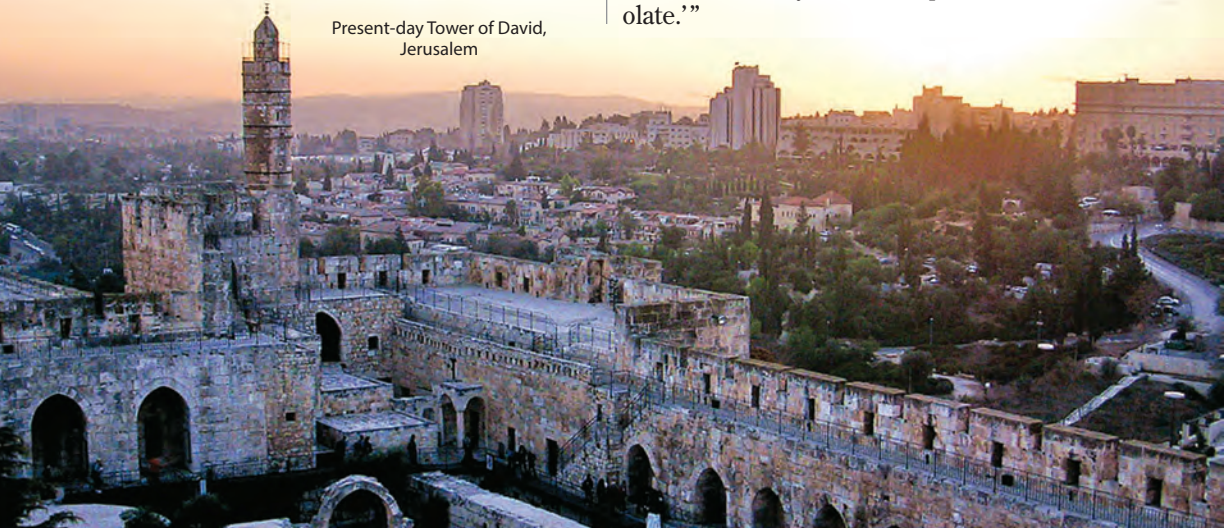
7 :1 In the fourth year of King Darius, the
word of the LORD came to Zechariah on the
fourth day of the ninth month, the month of
Kislev. [2]The people of Bethel had sent Sharezer
and Regem-Melek, together with their men, to
entreat the LORD [3]by asking the priests of the
house of the LORD Almighty and the prophets,
"Should I mourn and fast in the fifth month, as
I have done for so many years?"

[4]Then the word of the LORD Almighty came
to me: [5]"Ask all the people of the land and the
priests, 'When you fasted and mourned in the
fifth and seventh months for the past seventy
years, was it really for me that you fasted? [6]And
when you were eating and drinking, were you
not just feasting for yourselves? [7]Are these not
the words the LORD proclaimed through the
earlier prophets when Jerusalem and its sur-
rounding towns were at rest and prosperous,
and the Negev and the western foothills were
settled?'"

[8]And the word of the LORD came again to
Zechariah: [9]"This is what the LORD Almighty
said: 'Administer true justice; show mercy and
compassion to one another. [10]Do not oppress
the widow or the fatherless, the foreigner or
the poor. Do not plot evil against each other.'

[11]"But they refused to pay attention; stub-
bornly they turned their backs and covered
their ears. [12]They made their hearts as hard
as flint and would not listen to the law or to the
words that the LORD Almighty had sent by his
Spirit through the earlier prophets. So the LORD
Almighty was very angry.

[13]"'When I called, they did not listen; so
when they called, I would not listen,' says the
LORD Almighty. [14]'I scattered them with a whirl-
wind among all the nations, where they were
strangers. The land they left behind them was
so desolate that no one traveled through it.
This is how they made the pleasant land des-
olate.'"



Present-day Tower of David, Jerusalem

The Lord Promises to Bless Jerusalem

8 [1]The word of the Lord Almighty came to me.
[2]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I am very jealous for Zion; I am burning with jealousy for her."
[3]This is what the Lord says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the Faithful City, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."
[4]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Once again men and women of ripe old age will sit in the streets of Jerusalem, each of them with cane in hand because of their age. [5]The city streets will be filled with boys and girls playing there."
[6]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "It may seem marvelous to the remnant of this people at that time, but will it seem marvelous to me?" declares the Lord Almighty.
[7]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "I will save my people from the countries of the east and the west. [8]I will bring them back to live in Jerusalem; they will be my people, and I will be faithful and righteous to them as their God."
[9]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Now hear these words, 'Let your hands be strong so that the temple may be built.' This is also what the prophets said who were present when the foundation was laid for the house of the Lord Almighty. [10]Before that time there were no wages for people or hire for animals. No one could go about their business safely because of their enemies, since I had turned everyone against their neighbor. [11]But now I will not deal with the remnant of this people as I did in the past," declares the Lord Almighty.
[12]"The seed will grow well, the vine will yield its fruit, the ground will produce its crops, and the heavens will drop their dew. I will give all these things as an inheritance to the remnant of this people. [13]Just as you, Judah and Israel, have been a curse[a] among the nations, so I will save you, and you will be a blessing.[b] Do not be afraid, but let your hands be strong."
[14]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Just as I had determined to bring disaster on you and showed no pity when your ancestors angered me," says the Lord Almighty, [15]"so now I have determined to do good again to Jerusalem and Judah. Do not be afraid. [16]These are the things you are to do: Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts; [17]do not plot evil against each other, and do not love to swear falsely. I hate all this," declares the Lord.
[18]The word of the Lord Almighty came to me.
[19]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "The fasts of the fourth, fifth, seventh and tenth months will become joyful and glad occasions and happy festivals for Judah. Therefore love truth and peace."
[20]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "Many peoples and the inhabitants of many cities will yet come, [21]and the inhabitants of one city will go to another and say, 'Let us go at once to entreat the Lord and seek the Lord Almighty. I myself am going.' [22]And many peoples and powerful nations will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord Almighty and to entreat him."
[23]This is what the Lord Almighty says: "In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of one Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that God is with you.'"

[a] *13* That is, your name has been used in cursing (see Jer. 29:22); or, you have been regarded as under a curse.
[b] *13* Or *and your name will be used in blessings* (see Gen. 48:20); or *and you will be seen as blessed*

TRANSITION

Tattenai's Opposition

When Zerubbabel and Joshua resumed work on the temple in 520 b.c., local opposition reappeared. Tattenai, one of the Persian Empire's many local officials, tried to halt the work through intimidation, taking down the names of those doing the work (Ezr 5:4, 10). When that failed, he wrote an official letter to King Darius, reporting the Jewish settlers' insubordination. To Tattenai's probable surprise and dismay, his letter had an opposite effect from that he intended. Darius discovered that the Jews did indeed have royal permission for their work, and he commanded Tattenai to help the Jews and to pay their expenses from Tattenai's own regional tax collections (6:8–10).

The portion of the Book of Ezra from Ezra 4:8 through 6:18 is not written in Hebrew, but rather in the related language of Aramaic. Since Aramaic evidently served as the trade language of both the Babylonian and Persian empires, it is easy to see why the official letters of chs. 5 and 6 (as well as those of chs. 4 and 7) are in that language. Yet the switch of language may also serve as a reminder that the Jews, while back in their hereditary land, were still under foreign control. When the book describes the Passover celebration, that most Jewish of observances, the language reverts to Hebrew (6:19–22).

The temple was finished and dedicated

in the month of Adar of Darius's 6th year, corresponding to March, 515 b.c. In the following month of Nisan, the 1st month of the year, the Jews celebrated the Passover (6:19). Apparently the month name "Nisan" was taken from the Babylonian language, for this 1st month had been known by the Canaanite name "Aviv" after the Exodus (Dt 16:1). Though the name of the month had changed, the Jews were again observing Passover at their temple during their 1st month. The exiles (Ezr 6:19) were really the people of the covenant again.

• **Ezra 5:2—6:22**

Ezra

5 **:2** Then Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and Joshua son of Jozadak set to work to rebuild the house of God in Jerusalem. And the prophets of God were with them, supporting them.

3 At that time Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates went to them and asked, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?" 4 They[a] also asked, "What are the names of those who are constructing this building?" 5 But the eye of their God was watching over the elders of the Jews, and they were not stopped until a report could go to Darius and his written reply be received.

6 This is a copy of the letter that Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates, the officials of Trans-Euphrates, sent to King Darius. 7 The report they sent him read as follows:

To King Darius:

Cordial greetings.

8 The king should know that we went to the district of Judah, to the temple of the great God. The people are building it with large stones and placing the timbers in the walls. The work is being carried on with diligence and is making rapid progress under their direction.

9 We questioned the elders and asked them, "Who authorized you to rebuild this temple and to finish it?" 10 We also asked them their names, so that we could write down the names of their leaders for your information.

11 This is the answer they gave us:

"We are the servants of the God of heaven and earth, and we are rebuilding the temple that was built many years ago, one that a great king of Israel built and finished. 12 But because our ancestors angered the God of heaven, he gave them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean, king of Babylon, who destroyed this temple and deported the people to Babylon.

13 "However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babylon, King Cyrus issued a decree to rebuild this house of God. 14 He even removed from the temple[b] of Babylon the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to the temple[b] in Babylon. Then King Cyrus gave them to a man named Sheshbazzar, whom he had appointed governor, 15 and he told him, 'Take these articles and go and deposit them in the temple in Jerusalem. And rebuild the house of God on its site.'

16 "So this Sheshbazzar came and laid the foundations of the house of God in Jerusalem. From that day to the present it has been under construction but is not yet finished."

17 Now if it pleases the king, let a search be made in the royal archives of Babylon to see if King Cyrus did in fact issue a decree to rebuild this house of God in Jerusalem. Then let the king send us his decision in this matter.

The Decree of Darius

6 1 King Darius then issued an order, and they searched in the archives stored in the treasury at Babylon. 2 A scroll was found in the citadel of Ecbatana in the province of Media, and this was written on it:

Memorandum:

3 In the first year of King Cyrus, the king issued a decree concerning the temple of God in Jerusalem:

Let the temple be rebuilt as a place to present sacrifices, and let its foundations be laid. It is to be sixty cubits[c] high and sixty cubits wide, 4 with three courses of large stones and one of timbers. The costs are to be paid by the royal treasury. 5 Also, the gold and silver articles of the house of God, which Nebuchadnezzar took from the temple in Jerusalem and brought to Babylon, are to be returned to their places

[a] *4* See Septuagint; Aramaic *We.* [b] *14* Or *palace*
[c] *3* That is, about 90 feet or about 27 meters

in the temple in Jerusalem; they are to be deposited in the house of God.

6 Now then, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and you other officials of that province, stay away from there. 7 Do not interfere with the work on this temple of God. Let the governor of the Jews and the Jewish elders rebuild this house of God on its site.

8 Moreover, I hereby decree what you are to do for these elders of the Jews in the construction of this house of God:

Their expenses are to be fully paid out of the royal treasury, from the revenues of Trans-Euphrates, so that the work will not stop. 9 Whatever is needed — young bulls, rams, male lambs for burnt offerings to the God of heaven, and wheat, salt, wine and olive oil, as requested by the priests in Jerusalem — must be given them daily without fail, 10 so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.

11 Furthermore, I decree that if anyone defies this edict, a beam is to be pulled from their house and they are to be impaled on it. And for this crime their house is to be made a pile of rubble. 12 May God, who has caused his Name to dwell there, overthrow any king or people who lifts a hand to change this decree or to destroy this temple in Jerusalem.

I Darius have decreed it. Let it be carried out with diligence.

Completion and Dedication of the Temple

13 Then, because of the decree King Darius had sent, Tattenai, governor of Trans-Euphrates, and Shethar-Bozenai and their associates carried it out with diligence. 14 So the elders of the Jews continued to build and prosper under the preaching of Haggai the prophet and Zechariah, a descendant of Iddo. They finished building the temple according to the command of the God of Israel and the decrees of Cyrus, Darius and Artaxerxes, kings of Persia. 15 The temple was completed on the third day of the month Adar, in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius.

16 Then the people of Israel — the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles — celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. 17 For the dedication of this house of God they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred male lambs and, as a sin offering[a] for all Israel, twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel. 18 And they installed the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their groups for the service of God at Jerusalem, according to what is written in the Book of Moses.

The Passover

19 On the fourteenth day of the first month, the exiles celebrated the Passover. 20 The priests and Levites had purified themselves and were all ceremonially clean. The Levites slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the exiles, for their relatives the priests and for themselves. 21 So the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean

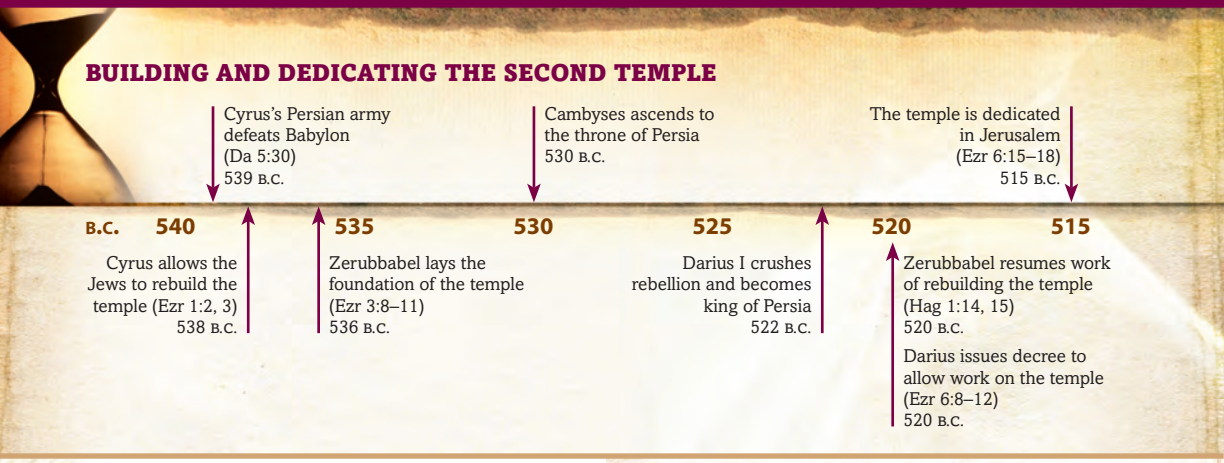
[a] *17* Or *purification offering*

Passover and Society (Ezr 6:19, 20)

Passover was reinstituted as a central feast of the Jews after the second temple was completed. The feast celebrated God's faithfulness to Israel in delivering his people from slavery under Egypt (Ex 12:1–20). Having finished the temple in the month of Adar (Ezr 6:15), the returned exiles observed Passover at its appropriate time in the following month of Nisan (Ezr 6:19).

Years before, during the reign of King Josiah (640–609 B.C.), Passover had been celebrated after a restoration of the first temple. Josiah's incomparable Passover, greater than any celebration "since the days of the prophet Samuel" (2Ch 35:18), demanded an immense number of sacrificial animals for the festival to feed all Israel. It was not individual Judahites that brought these animals, but rather the powerful in society; the king, his leaders, and certain powerful Levites (2Ch 35:7–9) provided the thousands of animals necessary for the sacrifice and feast. The peasants ate from the bounty of the king and the temple.

Josiah's Passover, then, was a public feast, celebrated through the generosity of the king and the temple aristocracy of the kingdom. But in the second temple period, the Passover sacrifice, a "year-old" lamb "without defect" (Ex 12:5), would have exceeded the financial means of many Jews. Most of the society would have been village peasants, living at a bare subsistence level. Meat was a luxury reserved for the wealthy; any animals the Jewish peasants might have had were too valuable to consume as a meal! It is interesting, therefore, that the priests and Levites slaughtered lambs for the people (Ezra 6:20), assuming a role not specified for them in the Law of Moses (Ex. 12:3–6).



practices of their Gentile neighbors in order to seek the LORD, the God of Israel. 22For seven days they celebrated with joy the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because the LORD had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.

TRANSITION

Darius the Mede

Of all the chronological puzzles in the Book of Daniel, the most perplexing is the mention of "Darius the Mede." According to the apparent chronology of Daniel, this king *succeeded* Belshazzar, the son of Nabonidus, last of the Babylonian kings (Da 5:30, 31). But he apparently ruled before Cyrus (Da 6:28).

Identifying "Darius the Mede" is difficult since none of the extensive Babylonian or Persian records mention such a Median king in Babylon or anywhere else in the time between Belshazzar and Cyrus. There was a King Darius, but he was a Persian, not a Mede, and he reigned after, not before, Cyrus and Cyrus's son Cambyses (see "The Persian Empire" at Ezr 1:1). So the enigma remains: Who was Darius the Mede?

Some scholars believe that the stories involving Darius the Mede are highly embroidered accounts from which no genuine historical person will ever be identified. Others have suggested that "Darius" actually refers to Cyrus, who did indeed follow Belshazzar in Babylon, and who took that city at the head of both Median and Persian forces. Yet another solution proposes that Darius was not actually king, but was one of Cyrus's officials, named Gaubaruwa, who had been granted certain royal powers. These suggestions locate the story of Da 6 sometime around 539 b.c.

A third possibility is that the person intended by "Darius the Mede" was actually the later king of Persia, Darius I (522–486 b.c.). He might have been called a Mede, since his empire and its laws had roots in both Media and Persia. Darius's decree in Da 6 is called "the law of the Medes and Persians" (6:12, 15). Moreover, Darius is described as organizing an official bureaucracy of 120 satraps (Da 6:1, 2), which was indeed Darius I's most lasting contribution to the Persian Empire. Reading Da 6 in the context of Darius I locates the story around or after 522 b.c.

Darius the Mede may never be identified. Whoever he was, he ruled over the world's greatest empire and issued the world's most solemn decrees ("the law of the Medes and Persians"; Da 6:8). But, as Da 6 makes clear, neither his worldly power nor his unchangeable laws can stand against the sovereignty of Daniel's God.

• **Daniel 6:1–28**

Daniel

Daniel in the Den of Lions

6[a] **:1** It pleased Darius to appoint 120 satraps to rule throughout the kingdom, 2with three administrators over them, one of whom was Daniel. The satraps were made accountable to them so that the king might not suffer loss. 3Now Daniel so distinguished himself among the administrators and the satraps by his exceptional qualities that the king planned to set him over the whole kingdom. 4At this, the administrators and the satraps tried to find grounds for charges against Daniel in his conduct of government affairs, but they were unable to do so. They could find no corruption in him, because he was trustworthy and neither corrupt nor negligent. 5Finally these men said, "We will never find any basis for charges against this man Daniel unless it has something to do with the law of his God."

[a] In Aramaic texts 6:1-28 is numbered 6:2-29.

The Medes and Persians (Da 6:8)

The kingdom of Media is first mentioned in Assyrian sources describing the 9th-century campaign of Assyria's Shalmaneser III (858–824 B.C.) into the land of the Medes. Media was apparently situated in the area of modern west-central Iran and flourished for the next two centuries, according to the same Assyrian sources.

In the Assyrian texts the Medes are pictured in these centuries as comprised of a group of small autonomous tribes. The Greek historian Herodotus (484–425 B.C.) gives a legendary account of a unification of Median tribes occurring during the 7th century B.C. By the late 7th century the unified Median tribes, led by Cyaxares (c. 625–585 B.C.), were allied with the Chaldeans against Assyria. The unified Medes thus contributed to the downfall of the Assyrian capital of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

The Median kingdom continued under Astyages (c. 585–550 B.C.), successor of Cyaxares, until the middle of the 6th century B.C. In 550 B.C. Cyrus of Persia successfully united the Persian and Median tribes, though it is uncertain whether the Medes were conquered or were peacefully incorporated into Cyrus's empire.

Cyrus was apparently related to the royal houses of both Media and Persia. Thus the union of the two nations may have been accomplished as the result of Cyrus's legal claim to the throne. Media continued to be geographically distinct even under Persian government, and the Medes were second only to the Persians in importance in the Persian Empire. So even after Persia absorbed Media in 550 B.C., the Medes continued to be recognized as a distinct people. This situation is evident in the recurring phrase "the law of the Medes and Persians" (Da 6:8, 12, 15).

6 So these administrators and satraps went as
a group to the king and said: "May King Dari-
us live forever! 7 The royal administrators, pre-
fects, satraps, advisers and governors have all
agreed that the king should issue an edict and
enforce the decree that anyone who prays to
any god or human being during the next thir-
ty days, except to you, Your Majesty, shall be
thrown into the lions' den. 8 Now, Your Majesty,
issue the decree and put it in writing so that
it cannot be altered — in accordance with the
law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot
be repealed." 9 So King Darius put the decree
in writing.

10 Now when Daniel learned that the decree
had been published, he went home to his up-
stairs room where the windows opened toward
Jerusalem. Three times a day he got down on
his knees and prayed, giving thanks to his God,
just as he had done before. 11 Then these men
went as a group and found Daniel praying and
asking God for help. 12 So they went to the king
and spoke to him about his royal decree: "Did
you not publish a decree that during the next
thirty days anyone who prays to any god or hu-
man being except to you, Your Majesty, would
be thrown into the lions' den?"

The king answered, "The decree stands — in
accordance with the law of the Medes and Per-
sians, which cannot be repealed."

13 Then they said to the king, "Daniel, who
is one of the exiles from Judah, pays no atten-
tion to you, Your Majesty, or to the decree you
put in writing. He still prays three times a day."
14 When the king heard this, he was greatly dis-
tressed; he was determined to rescue Daniel
and made every effort until sundown to save
him.

15 Then the men went as a group to King Da-
rius and said to him, "Remember, Your Majes-
ty, that according to the law of the Medes and
Persians no decree or edict that the king issues
can be changed."

16 So the king gave the order, and they
brought Daniel and threw him into the lions'
den. The king said to Daniel, "May your God,
whom you serve continually, rescue you!"

17 A stone was brought and placed over the
mouth of the den, and the king sealed it with
his own signet ring and with the rings of his
nobles, so that Daniel's situation might not
be changed. 18 Then the king returned to his
palace and spent the night without eating and
without any entertainment being brought to
him. And he could not sleep.

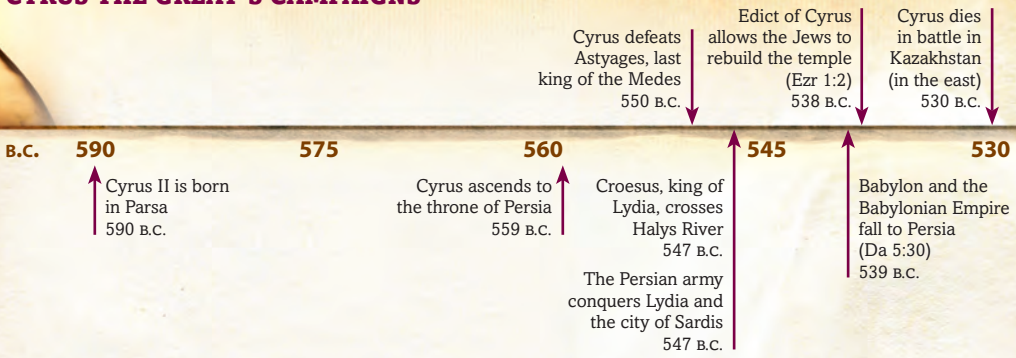
19 At the first light of dawn, the king got
up and hurried to the lions' den. 20 When he
came near the den, he called to Daniel in an
anguished voice, "Daniel, servant of the living
God, has your God, whom you serve continu-
ally, been able to rescue you from the lions?"

21 Daniel answered, "May the king live for-
ever! 22 My God sent his angel, and he shut the
mouths of the lions. They have not hurt me,
because I was found innocent in his sight. Nor
have I ever done any wrong before you, Your
Majesty."

23 The king was overjoyed and gave orders
to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel
was lifted from the den, no wound was found
on him, because he had trusted in his God.

24 At the king's command, the men who had

CYRUS THE GREAT'S CAMPAIGNS



falsely accused Daniel were brought in and thrown into the lions' den, along with their wives and children. And before they reached the floor of the den, the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

25 Then King Darius wrote to all the nations and peoples of every language in all the earth:

"May you prosper greatly!

26 "I issue a decree that in every part of my kingdom people must fear and revere the God of Daniel.

"For he is the living God
and he endures forever;
his kingdom will not be destroyed,
his dominion will never end.
27 He rescues and he saves;
he performs signs and wonders
in the heavens and on the earth.
He has rescued Daniel
from the power of the lions."

28 So Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus[a] the Persian.

[a] 28 Or *Darius, that is, the reign of Cyrus*

TIME CAPSULE	499 to 490 B.C.
499	Aristagora of Miletus leads Ionian rebellion against Persia
495–400	The Elephantine Papyri are written in Aramaic
494	Persians win naval battle and capture Miletus
492	Persian army invades Thrace
490	Beginning of the First Persian War
490	Darius I is defeated by the Athenians at Marathon

TRANSITION

Priestly Genealogies

Among the returned exiles in Jerusalem were probably several factions. The most influential of these was the priestly faction. The high priest Joshua served as a coruler with Zerubbabel, and the next major Jewish leader to appear in Jerusalem would be the priestly scribe Ezra (see "Ezra the Teacher of the Law" at Ezr 7:1).

A traditional concern of the Jewish priests was genealogies, the records of who descended from which ancestors. The priests were the ones responsible for maintaining genealogical records, which explains why the genealogies that are preserved tend to be most complete when they describe the priestly families. Perhaps their task to record and preserve the Israelite bloodlines made the priests the ones most concerned about avoiding intermarriage with non-Jews (see Ezr 9; 10).

The priestly history of the kingdom of Israel begins with a series of priestly genealogies (1Ch 1–9). These serve as a sort of historical shorthand to bridge the generations from the first man, Adam (1Ch 1:1), to the first king, Saul (1Ch 9:35–44), after which the historical narrative itself begins in 1Ch 10.

That, at least, is the purpose of these genealogies in their current location at the beginning of the Book of 1 Chronicles. But in fact, the genealogies of 1Ch 1–9 go much further than just to King Saul. The names in ch. 9 appear to be the names of priests and Levites who lived in Jerusalem after the return from Babylonian exile (see 1Ch 9:1, 2). Perhaps the genealogies of 1Ch 1–9 were collected originally for the returned exiles and only later were adapted by the priestly writer of Chronicles to serve as a brief historical prologue to his history of the kingdom.

These genealogies, as a priestly summary of Israelite history, served two important purposes for the community of returned exiles. First, they demonstrated to that ragtag

group of refugees that they were part of a much larger, much more impressive divine plan, which began with Adam and continued through Abraham (1Ch 1:28), Israel (Jacob, 2:1), Aaron (6:50), and David (3:1). These lists also stressed that Israel's future hope rested on the priests. Aaron, Moses' priestly brother, receives more space than Moses himself (6:49–53). Moreover, long sections are devoted to the names, duties, and dwellings of the priests and Levites (6:31–81; 9:3–34).

• 1 Chronicles 1:1—9:34

1 Chronicles

Historical Records From Adam to Abraham

To Noah's Sons

1:1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, 2Kenan, Mahalalel,
Jared, 3Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, Noah.

4The sons of Noah:[a]
Shem, Ham and Japheth.

The Japhethites

5The sons[b] of Japheth:
Gomer, Magog, Madai, Javan, Tubal,
Meshek and Tiras.
6The sons of Gomer:
Ashkenaz, Riphath[c] and Togarmah.
7The sons of Javan:
Elishah, Tarshish, the Kittites and the
Rodanites.

The Hamites

8The sons of Ham:
Cush, Egypt, Put and Canaan.
9The sons of Cush:
Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Raamah and Sabteka.
The sons of Raamah:
Sheba and Dedan.
10Cush was the father[d] of
Nimrod, who became a mighty warrior
on earth.
11Egypt was the father of
the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, 12Pathrusites, Kasluhites (from
whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites.
13Canaan was the father of
Sidon his firstborn,[e] and of the Hittites,
14Jebusites, Amorites, Girgashites, 15Hivites, Arkites, Sinites, 16Arvadites, Zemarites and Hamathites.

The Semites

17The sons of Shem:
Elam, Ashur, Arphaxad, Lud and Aram.
The sons of Aram:[f]
Uz, Hul, Gether and Meshek.
18Arphaxad was the father of Shelah,
and Shelah the father of Eber.
19Two sons were born to Eber:
One was named Peleg,[g] because in his
time the earth was divided; his brother
was named Joktan.
20Joktan was the father of
Almodad, Sheleph, Hazarmaveth, Jerah,
21Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22Obal,[h] Abimael, Sheba, 23Ophir, Havilah and Jobab.
All these were sons of Joktan.

24Shem, Arphaxad,[i] Shelah,
25Eber, Peleg, Reu,
26Serug, Nahor, Terah
27and Abram (that is, Abraham).

The Family of Abraham

28The sons of Abraham:
Isaac and Ishmael.

Descendants of Hagar

29These were their descendants:
Nebaioth the firstborn of Ishmael, Kedar,
Adbeel, Mibsam, 30Mishma, Dumah,
Massa, Hadad, Tema, 31Jetur, Naphish
and Kedemah. These were the sons of
Ishmael.

Descendants of Keturah

32The sons born to Keturah, Abraham's concubine:
Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak and Shuah.
The sons of Jokshan:
Sheba and Dedan.
33The sons of Midian:
Ephah, Epher, Hanok, Abida and Eldaah.
All these were descendants of Keturah.

Descendants of Sarah

34Abraham was the father of Isaac.
The sons of Isaac:
Esau and Israel.

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[a] *4* Septuagint; Hebrew does not have this line. [b] *5* *Sons* may mean *descendants* or *successors* or *nations*; also in verses 6-9, 17 and 23. [c] *6* Many Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate (see also Septuagint and Gen. 10:3); most Hebrew manuscripts *Diphath* [d] *10* *Father* may mean *ancestor* or *predecessor* or *founder*; also in verses 11, 13, 18 and 20. [e] *13* Or *of the Sidonians, the foremost* [f] *17* One Hebrew manuscript and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 10:23); most Hebrew manuscripts do not have this line. [g] *19* *Peleg* means *division.* [h] *22* Some Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac (see also Gen. 10:28); most Hebrew manuscripts *Ebal* [i] *24* Hebrew; some Septuagint manuscripts *Arphaxad, Cainan* (see also note at Gen. 11:10)

These Are the Kings (1Ch 1:43)

One form of genealogical record that was known in ancient Mesopotamia was the "king list." In Assyria, the Assyrian King List preserved a detailed list of Assyrian kings and their general lengths of reign for about 1,000 years. The oldest version of the King List is a 10th-century B.C. manuscript.

The Assyrian King List begins by listing the rulers sequentially, extending from the earliest times of Assyria to Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.). Some later narrative sections are short chronicles listing the years of reign, the king's ancestors, and sometimes a prose narration. The King List probably functioned in the later periods as a chronological aid. Yet a broader purpose was to support the belief that kingship in Assyria descended in a continuous line with few interruptions, as if every king officially belonged to the same dynasty.

The King List is divided into a number of sections. The first section is a list of 17 names mentioned without ancestral lists, tribal relationships, or lengths of reign. At the end of the section is the statement, "These are kings who dwelt in tents." The Chronicler uses a very similar statement, "These were the kings," in order to introduce his king list for Edom (1:43). The Edomites inhabited the territory of Esau's descendants, so an Edomite King List was an appropriate insertion into the genealogy of Abraham's grandson Esau (1Ch 1:28–54).

Esau's Sons

35 The sons of Esau:
Eliphaz, Reuel, Jeush, Jalam and Korah.
36 The sons of Eliphaz:
Teman, Omar, Zepho,[a] Gatam and Kenaz;
by Timna: Amalek.[b]
37 The sons of Reuel:
Nahath, Zerah, Shammah and Mizzah.

The People of Seir in Edom

38 The sons of Seir:
Lotan, Shobal, Zibeon, Anah, Dishon, Ezer and Dishan.
39 The sons of Lotan:
Hori and Homam. Timna was Lotan's sister.
40 The sons of Shobal:
Alvan,[c] Manahath, Ebal, Shepho and Onam.
The sons of Zibeon:
Aiah and Anah.
41 The son of Anah:
Dishon.
The sons of Dishon:
Hemdan,[d] Eshban, Ithran and Keran.
42 The sons of Ezer:
Bilhan, Zaavan and Akan.[e]
The sons of Dishan[f]:
Uz and Aran.

The Rulers of Edom

43 These were the kings who reigned in Edom before any Israelite king reigned:
Bela son of Beor, whose city was named Dinhabah.
44 When Bela died, Jobab son of Zerah from Bozrah succeeded him as king.
45 When Jobab died, Husham from the land of the Temanites succeeded him as king.
46 When Husham died, Hadad son of Bedad, who defeated Midian in the country of Moab, succeeded him as king. His city was named Avith.
47 When Hadad died, Samlah from Masrekah succeeded him as king.
48 When Samlah died, Shaul from Rehoboth on the river[g] succeeded him as king.
49 When Shaul died, Baal-Hanan son of Akbor succeeded him as king.
50 When Baal-Hanan died, Hadad succeeded him as king. His city was named Pau,[h] and his wife's name was Mehetabel daughter of Matred, the daughter of Me-Zahab. 51 Hadad also died.

The chiefs of Edom were:
Timna, Alvah, Jetheth, 52 Oholibamah, Elah, Pinon, 53 Kenaz, Teman, Mibzar, 54 Magdiel and Iram. These were the chiefs of Edom.

Israel's Sons

2 1 These were the sons of Israel:
Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, 2 Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad and Asher.

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[a] *36* Many Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also Gen. 36:11); most Hebrew manuscripts *Zephi* [b] *36* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 36:12); Hebrew *Gatam, Kenaz, Timna and Amalek*
[c] *40* Many Hebrew manuscripts and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 36:23); most Hebrew manuscripts *Alian* [d] *41* Many Hebrew manuscripts and some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 36:26); most Hebrew manuscripts *Hamran* [e] *42* Many Hebrew and Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 36:27); most Hebrew manuscripts *Zaavan, Jaakan* [f] *42* See Gen. 36:28; Hebrew *Dishon,* a variant of *Dishan* [g] *48* Possibly the Euphrates
[h] *50* Many Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts, Vulgate and Syriac (see also Gen. 36:39); most Hebrew manuscripts *Pai*

Judah

To Hezron's Sons

3 The sons of Judah:
Er, Onan and Shelah. These three were born to him by a Canaanite woman, the daughter of Shua. Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the LORD's sight; so the LORD put him to death. 4 Judah's daughter-in-law Tamar bore Perez and Zerah to Judah. He had five sons in all.

5 The sons of Perez:
Hezron and Hamul.
6 The sons of Zerah:
Zimri, Ethan, Heman, Kalkol and Darda[a]—five in all.
7 The son of Karmi:
Achar,[b] who brought trouble on Israel by violating the ban on taking devoted things.[c]
8 The son of Ethan:
Azariah.
9 The sons born to Hezron were:
Jerahmeel, Ram and Caleb.[d]

From Ram Son of Hezron

10 Ram was the father of
Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, the leader of the people of Judah. 11 Nahshon was the father of Salmon,[e] Salmon the father of Boaz, 12 Boaz the father of Obed and Obed the father of Jesse.
13 Jesse was the father of
Eliab his firstborn; the second son was Abinadab, the third Shimea, 14 the fourth Nethanel, the fifth Raddai, 15 the sixth Ozem and the seventh David. 16 Their sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail. Zeruiah's three sons were Abishai, Joab and Asahel. 17 Abigail was the mother of Amasa, whose father was Jether the Ishmaelite.

Caleb Son of Hezron

18 Caleb son of Hezron had children by his wife Azubah (and by Jerioth). These were her sons: Jesher, Shobab and Ardon. 19 When Azubah died, Caleb married Ephrath, who bore him Hur. 20 Hur was the father of Uri, and Uri the father of Bezalel.
21 Later, Hezron, when he was sixty years old, married the daughter of Makir the father of Gilead. He made love to her, and she bore him Segub. 22 Segub was the father of Jair, who controlled twenty-three towns in Gilead. 23 (But Geshur and Aram captured Havvoth Jair,[f] as well as Kenath with its surrounding settlements—sixty towns.) All these were descendants of Makir the father of Gilead.

24 After Hezron died in Caleb Ephrathah, Abijah the wife of Hezron bore him Ashhur the father[g] of Tekoa.

Jerahmeel Son of Hezron

25 The sons of Jerahmeel the firstborn of Hezron:
Ram his firstborn, Bunah, Oren, Ozem and[h] Ahijah. 26 Jerahmeel had another wife, whose name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam.
27 The sons of Ram the firstborn of Jerahmeel:
Maaz, Jamin and Eker.
28 The sons of Onam:
Shammai and Jada.
The sons of Shammai:
Nadab and Abishur.
29 Abishur's wife was named Abihail, who bore him Ahban and Molid.
30 The sons of Nadab:
Seled and Appaim. Seled died without children.
31 The son of Appaim:
Ishi, who was the father of Sheshan.
Sheshan was the father of Ahlai.
32 The sons of Jada, Shammai's brother:
Jether and Jonathan. Jether died without children.
33 The sons of Jonathan:
Peleth and Zaza.
These were the descendants of Jerahmeel.
34 Sheshan had no sons—only daughters.
He had an Egyptian servant named Jarha. 35 Sheshan gave his daughter in marriage to his servant Jarha, and she bore him Attai.
36 Attai was the father of Nathan,
Nathan the father of Zabad,
37 Zabad the father of Ephlal,
Ephlal the father of Obed,
38 Obed the father of Jehu,
Jehu the father of Azariah,
39 Azariah the father of Helez,
Helez the father of Eleasah,

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[a] *6* Many Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 1 Kings 4:31); most Hebrew manuscripts *Dara* [b] *7* *Achar* means *trouble*; *Achar* is called *Achan* in Joshua. [c] *7* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them. [d] *9* Hebrew *Kelubai*, a variant of *Caleb* [e] *11* Septuagint (see also Ruth 4:21); Hebrew *Salma* [f] *23* Or *captured the settlements of Jair* [g] *24* *Father* may mean *civic leader* or *military leader*; also in verses 42, 45, 49-52 and possibly elsewhere. [h] *25* Or *Oren and Ozem, by*

40 Eleasah the father of Sismai,
Sismai the father of Shallum,
41 Shallum the father of Jekamiah,
and Jekamiah the father of Elishama.

The Clans of Caleb

42 The sons of Caleb the brother of Jerahmeel:
Mesha his firstborn, who was the father of Ziph, and his son Mareshah,[a] who was the father of Hebron.
43 The sons of Hebron:
Korah, Tappuah, Rekem and Shema.
44 Shema was the father of Raham, and Raham the father of Jorkeam. Rekem was the father of Shammai. 45 The son of Shammai was Maon, and Maon was the father of Beth Zur.
46 Caleb's concubine Ephah was the mother of Haran, Moza and Gazez. Haran was the father of Gazez.
47 The sons of Jahdai:
Regem, Jotham, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah and Shaaph.
48 Caleb's concubine Maakah was the mother of Sheber and Tirhanah. 49 She also gave birth to Shaaph the father of Madmannah and to Sheva the father of Makbenah and Gibea. Caleb's daughter was Aksah. 50 These were the descendants of Caleb.

The sons of Hur the firstborn of Ephrathah:
Shobal the father of Kiriath Jearim, 51 Salma the father of Bethlehem, and Hareph the father of Beth Gader.
52 The descendants of Shobal the father of Kiriath Jearim were:
Haroeh, half the Manahathites, 53 and the clans of Kiriath Jearim: the Ithrites, Puthites, Shumathites and Mishraites. From these descended the Zorathites and Eshtaolites.
54 The descendants of Salma:
Bethlehem, the Netophathites, Atroth Beth Joab, half the Manahathites, the Zorites, 55 and the clans of scribes[b] who lived at Jabez: the Tirathites, Shimeathites and Sucathites. These are the Kenites who came from Hammath, the father of the Rekabites.[c]

The Sons of David

3 1 These were the sons of David born to him in Hebron:
The firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel;
the second, Daniel the son of Abigail of Carmel;
2 the third, Absalom the son of Maakah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;
the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith;
3 the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;
and the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah.
4 These six were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months.
David reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years,
5 and these were the children born to him there:
Shammua,[d] Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. These four were by Bathsheba[e] daughter of Ammiel. 6 There were also Ibhar, Elishua,[f] Eliphelet, 7 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia, 8 Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet—nine in all. 9 All these were the sons of David, besides his sons by his concubines. And Tamar was their sister.

The Kings of Judah

10 Solomon's son was Rehoboam,
Abijah his son,
Asa his son,
Jehoshaphat his son,
11 Jehoram[g] his son,
Ahaziah his son,
Joash his son,
12 Amaziah his son,
Azariah his son,
Jotham his son,
13 Ahaz his son,
Hezekiah his son,
Manasseh his son,
14 Amon his son,
Josiah his son.
15 The sons of Josiah:
Johanan the firstborn,
Jehoiakim the second son,
Zedekiah the third,
Shallum the fourth.
16 The successors of Jehoiakim:
Jehoiachin[h] his son,
and Zedekiah.

The Royal Line After the Exile

17 The descendants of Jehoiachin the captive:
Shealtiel his son, 18 Malkiram, Pedaiah,

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[a] *42* The meaning of the Hebrew for this phrase is uncertain.
[b] *55* Or *of the Sopherites* [c] *55* Or *father of Beth Rekab*
[d] *5* Hebrew *Shimea*, a variant of *Shammua*
[e] *5* One Hebrew manuscript and Vulgate (see also Septuagint and 2 Samuel 11:3); most Hebrew manuscripts *Bathshua*
[f] *6* Two Hebrew manuscripts (see also 2 Samuel 5:15 and 1 Chron. 14:5); most Hebrew manuscripts *Elishama*
[g] *11* Hebrew *Joram*, a variant of *Jehoram* [h] *16* Hebrew *Jeconiah*, a variant of *Jehoiachin*; also in verse 17

Genealogy and Messianic Hopes (1Ch 3:9)

The books of Chronicles were written after the Jews had rebuilt Jerusalem. The Babylonians had destroyed the city and temple in 586 B.C., carrying many of the Judean people into exile (2Ki 25:1–12). When the Judean descendants returned from exile in Babylon about 50 years later, they were concerned about establishing continuity with the life of their people before the exile. One means of showing continuity was the long genealogical lists of names, as found in 1Ch 1–9.

Genealogies recorded the continuity of families through the disaster of exile and beyond. To show an unbroken family line with Judean ancestors before the exile became a way of establishing continuity and thus claiming a proper role in the postexilic society.

Family lineage became very important in the rebuilding of the Judean society. Certain families had specific roles before the exile. Without proof of the proper pedigree one could be excluded from these roles in the postexilic community. One such example is the returning Jews who claimed to be priests but could not prove their family's priestly lineage; they were excluded from the priesthood in the postexilic community (Ezr 2:62).

In the preexilic period, the family of David had held a specific and important role in the Judean society—the role of king. Yet following the exile, after the governorship of Zerubbabel, a descendant of David, native rule of the Judean society went to non-Davidic governors.

The genealogical list of the "sons of David" (1Ch 3:1) subtly supports the restoration of a Davidic king in postexilic Jerusalem. The exile had happened, yet the descendants of David should still be the rightful rulers of Israel. The Davidic genealogy (1Ch 3:1–24) reminded the readers that God was not yet done with the line of David in Israel.

Shenazzar, Jekamiah, Hoshama and Nedabiah.
19 The sons of Pedaiah:
Zerubbabel and Shimei.
The sons of Zerubbabel:
Meshullam and Hananiah.
Shelomith was their sister.
20 There were also five others:
Hashubah, Ohel, Berekiah, Hasadiah and Jushab-Hesed.
21 The descendants of Hananiah:
Pelatiah and Jeshaiah, and the sons of Rephaiah, of Arnan, of Obadiah and of Shekaniah.
22 The descendants of Shekaniah:
Shemaiah and his sons:
Hattush, Igal, Bariah, Neariah and Shaphat—six in all.
23 The sons of Neariah:
Elioenai, Hizkiah and Azrikam—three in all.
24 The sons of Elioenai:
Hodaviah, Eliashib, Pelaiah, Akkub, Johanan, Delaiah and Anani—seven in all.

Other Clans of Judah

4 1 The descendants of Judah:
Perez, Hezron, Karmi, Hur and Shobal.
2 Reaiah son of Shobal was the father of Jahath, and Jahath the father of Ahumai and Lahad. These were the clans of the Zorathites.
3 These were the sons[a] of Etam:
Jezreel, Ishma and Idbash. Their sister was named Hazzelelponi. 4 Penuel was the father of Gedor, and Ezer the father of Hushah.
These were the descendants of Hur, the firstborn of Ephrathah and father[b] of Bethlehem.
5 Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah.
6 Naarah bore him Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni and Haahashtari. These were the descendants of Naarah.
7 The sons of Helah:
Zereth, Zohar, Ethnan, 8 and Koz, who was the father of Anub and Hazzobebah and of the clans of Aharhel son of Harum.

9 Jabez was more honorable than his brothers. His mother had named him Jabez,[c] saying, "I gave birth to him in pain." 10 Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that you would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.

11 Kelub, Shuhah's brother, was the father of Mehir, who was the father of Eshton.
12 Eshton was the father of Beth Rapha, Paseah and Tehinnah the father of Ir Nahash.[d] These were the men of Rekah.

13 The sons of Kenaz:
Othniel and Seraiah.

[a] *3* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Vulgate); Hebrew *father* [b] *4* *Father* may mean *civic leader* or *military leader*; also in verses 12, 14, 17, 18 and possibly elsewhere. [c] *9* *Jabez* sounds like the Hebrew for *pain.* [d] *12* Or *of the city of Nahash*

The sons of Othniel:
Hathath and Meonothai.[a] 14Meonothai was the father of Ophrah.
Seraiah was the father of Joab,
the father of Ge Harashim.[b] It was called this because its people were skilled workers.
15The sons of Caleb son of Jephunneh:
Iru, Elah and Naam.
The son of Elah:
Kenaz.
16The sons of Jehallelel:
Ziph, Ziphah, Tiria and Asarel.
17The sons of Ezrah:
Jether, Mered, Epher and Jalon. One of Mered's wives gave birth to Miriam, Shammai and Ishbah the father of Eshtemoa. 18(His wife from the tribe of Judah gave birth to Jered the father of Gedor, Heber the father of Soko, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah.) These were the children of Pharaoh's daughter Bithiah, whom Mered had married.
19The sons of Hodiah's wife, the sister of Naham:
the father of Keilah the Garmite, and Eshtemoa the Maakathite.
20The sons of Shimon:
Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-Hanan and Tilon.
The descendants of Ishi:
Zoheth and Ben-Zoheth.
21The sons of Shelah son of Judah:
Er the father of Lekah, Laadah the father of Mareshah and the clans of the linen workers at Beth Ashbea, 22Jokim, the men of Kozeba, and Joash and Saraph, who ruled in Moab and Jashubi Lehem. (These records are from ancient times.)
23They were the potters who lived at Netaim and Gederah; they stayed there and worked for the king.

Simeon

24The descendants of Simeon:
Nemuel, Jamin, Jarib, Zerah and Shaul;
25Shallum was Shaul's son, Mibsam his son and Mishma his son.
26The descendants of Mishma:
Hammuel his son, Zakkur his son and Shimei his son.
27Shimei had sixteen sons and six daughters, but his brothers did not have many children; so their entire clan did not become as numerous as the people of Judah. 28They lived in Beersheba, Moladah, Hazar Shual, 29Bilhah, Ezem, Tolad, 30Bethuel, Hormah, Ziklag, 31Beth Marcaboth, Hazar Susim, Beth Biri and Shaaraim. These were their towns until the reign of David. 32Their surrounding villages were Etam, Ain, Rimmon, Token and Ashan — five towns — 33and all the villages around these towns as far as Baalath.[c] These were their settlements. And they kept a genealogical record.

34Meshobab, Jamlech, Joshah son of Amaziah, 35Joel, Jehu son of Joshibiah, the son of Seraiah, the son of Asiel, 36also Elioenai, Jaakobah, Jeshohaiah, Asaiah, Adiel, Jesimiel, Benaiah, 37and Ziza son of Shiphi, the son of Allon, the son of Jedaiah, the son of Shimri, the son of Shemaiah.

38The men listed above by name were leaders of their clans. Their families increased greatly, 39and they went to the outskirts of Gedor to the east of the valley in search of pasture for their flocks. 40They found rich, good pasture, and the land was spacious, peaceful and quiet. Some Hamites had lived there formerly.
41The men whose names were listed came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah. They attacked the Hamites in their dwellings and also the Meunites who were there and completely destroyed[d] them, as is evident to this day. Then they settled in their place, because there was pasture for their flocks. 42And five hundred of these Simeonites, led by Pelatiah, Neariah, Rephaiah and Uzziel, the sons of Ishi, invaded the hill country of Seir. 43They killed the remaining Amalekites who had escaped, and they have lived there to this day.

Reuben

5 1The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel (he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father's marriage bed, his rights as firstborn were given to the sons of Joseph son of Israel; so he could not be listed in the genealogical record in accordance with his birthright, 2and though Judah was the strongest of his brothers and a ruler came from him, the rights of the firstborn belonged to Joseph) — 3the sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel:
Hanok, Pallu, Hezron and Karmi.
4The descendants of Joel:
Shemaiah his son, Gog his son,
Shimei his son, 5Micah his son,
Reaiah his son, Baal his son,

[a] *13* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Vulgate; Hebrew does not have *and Meonothai.* [b] *14* *Ge Harashim* means *valley of skilled workers.* [c] *33* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also Joshua 19:8); Hebrew *Baal* [d] *41* The Hebrew term refers to the irrevocable giving over of things or persons to the LORD, often by totally destroying them.

The King Nicknamed "Pul" (1Ch 5:26)

Tiglath-Pileser III ruled Assyria from 744 to 727 B.C., restoring the empire to military greatness in the mid-8th century B.C. As early as 738 B.C. he began receiving tribute from Samaria, Damascus, and Tyre. That King Menahem of Israel paid tribute to Assyria is confirmed by both biblical (2Ki 15:19) and Assyrian sources. In 734 B.C. the Assyrian monarch invaded Palestine and captured Gaza.

Soon thereafter, King Rezin of the Aramean capital Damascus led a rebellion against Assyrian rule, supported by King Pekah of Israel. Damascus was captured by Tiglath-Pileser, and the Aramean kingdom was ended, being incorporated into the Assyrian Empire in 732 B.C. Further, Assyrian sources record that portions of Gilead and Galilee were captured and many of the elite classes were sent into exile.

The Chronicler recorded his genealogies about three centuries after Tiglath-Pileser's life. Yet he recalls the Assyrian king who carried so many "into exile" (1Ch 5:5, 26), and who was known as "Pul king of Assyria" (5:26). Until recently it was not understood that the Assyrian king Pul was the same monarch as Tiglath-Pileser. Pul (or Pulu) apparently was a nickname. The king's Assyrian name, Tukulti-apil-esharra, contains the element *apil,* from which Pul probably developed. The nickname has been found in cuneiform records (clay tablets etched with wedge-shaped writing, then baked for permanence).

6 and Beerah his son, whom Tiglath-Pileser[a] king of Assyria took into exile.
Beerah was a leader of the Reubenites.
7 Their relatives by clans, listed according to their genealogical records:
Jeiel the chief, Zechariah, 8 and Bela son of Azaz, the son of Shema, the son of Joel. They settled in the area from Aroer to Nebo and Baal Meon. 9 To the east they occupied the land up to the edge of the desert that extends to the Euphrates River, because their livestock had increased in Gilead.
10 During Saul's reign they waged war against the Hagrites, who were defeated at their hands; they occupied the dwellings of the Hagrites throughout the entire region east of Gilead.

Gad

11 The Gadites lived next to them in Bashan, as far as Salekah:
12 Joel was the chief, Shapham the second, then Janai and Shaphat, in Bashan.
13 Their relatives, by families, were:
Michael, Meshullam, Sheba, Jorai, Jakan, Zia and Eber — seven in all.
14 These were the sons of Abihail son of Huri, the son of Jaroah, the son of Gilead, the son of Michael, the son of Jeshishai, the son of Jahdo, the son of Buz.
15 Ahi son of Abdiel, the son of Guni, was head of their family.
16 The Gadites lived in Gilead, in Bashan and its outlying villages, and on all the pasturelands of Sharon as far as they extended.
17 All these were entered in the genealogical records during the reigns of Jotham king of Judah and Jeroboam king of Israel.

18 The Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh had 44,760 men ready for military service — able-bodied men who could handle shield and sword, who could use a bow, and who were trained for battle. 19 They waged war against the Hagrites, Jetur, Naphish and Nodab. 20 They were helped in fighting them, and God delivered the Hagrites and all their allies into their hands, because they cried out to him during the battle. He answered their prayers, because they trusted in him. 21 They seized the livestock of the Hagrites — fifty thousand camels, two hundred fifty thousand sheep and two thousand donkeys. They also took one hundred thousand people captive, 22 and many others fell slain, because the battle was God's. And they occupied the land until the exile.

The Half-Tribe of Manasseh

23 The people of the half-tribe of Manasseh were numerous; they settled in the land from Bashan to Baal Hermon, that is, to Senir (Mount Hermon).
24 These were the heads of their families: Epher, Ishi, Eliel, Azriel, Jeremiah, Hodaviah and Jahdiel. They were brave warriors, famous men, and heads of their families. 25 But they were unfaithful to the God of their ancestors

Science & Technology
The bow was a deadly weapon of ancient armies (1Ch 5:18). Its most advanced form, the composite, recurved bow, was made of specially chosen layers of wood, horn, and sinew. To be strung, the limbs of such a bow had to be bent over backwards. Experienced archers with a large supply of arrows could maintain a devastating rate of fire. The range of a recurved bow was about 150 yards.

[a] *6* Hebrew *Tilgath-Pilneser,* a variant of *Tiglath-Pileser*; also in verse 26

and prostituted themselves to the gods of the peoples of the land, whom God had destroyed before them. 26So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria (that is, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria), who took the Reubenites, the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh into exile. He took them to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river of Gozan, where they are to this day.

Levi

6[a] 1The sons of Levi:
Gershon, Kohath and Merari.
2The sons of Kohath:
Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.
3The children of Amram:
Aaron, Moses and Miriam.
The sons of Aaron:
Nadab, Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar.
4Eleazar was the father of Phinehas,
Phinehas the father of Abishua,
5Abishua the father of Bukki,
Bukki the father of Uzzi,
6Uzzi the father of Zerahiah,
Zerahiah the father of Meraioth,
7Meraioth the father of Amariah,
Amariah the father of Ahitub,
8Ahitub the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Ahimaaz,
9Ahimaaz the father of Azariah,
Azariah the father of Johanan,
10Johanan the father of Azariah (it was he who served as priest in the temple Solomon built in Jerusalem),
11Azariah the father of Amariah,
Amariah the father of Ahitub,
12Ahitub the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Shallum,
13Shallum the father of Hilkiah,
Hilkiah the father of Azariah,
14Azariah the father of Seraiah,
and Seraiah the father of Jozadak.[b]
15Jozadak was deported when the LORD sent Judah and Jerusalem into exile by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar.

16The sons of Levi:
Gershon,[c] Kohath and Merari.
17These are the names of the sons of Gershon:
Libni and Shimei.
18The sons of Kohath:
Amram, Izhar, Hebron and Uzziel.
19The sons of Merari:
Mahli and Mushi.
These are the clans of the Levites listed according to their fathers:
20Of Gershon:
Libni his son, Jahath his son,
Zimmah his son, 21Joah his son,
Iddo his son, Zerah his son
and Jeatherai his son.
22The descendants of Kohath:
Amminadab his son, Korah his son,
Assir his son, 23Elkanah his son,
Ebiasaph his son, Assir his son,
24Tahath his son, Uriel his son,
Uzziah his son and Shaul his son.
25The descendants of Elkanah:
Amasai, Ahimoth,
26Elkanah his son,[d] Zophai his son,
Nahath his son, 27Eliab his son,
Jeroham his son, Elkanah his son
and Samuel his son.[e]
28The sons of Samuel:
Joel[f] the firstborn
and Abijah the second son.
29The descendants of Merari:
Mahli, Libni his son,
Shimei his son, Uzzah his son,
30Shimea his son, Haggiah his son
and Asaiah his son.

The Temple Musicians

31These are the men David put in charge of the music in the house of the LORD after the ark came to rest there. 32They ministered with music before the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, until Solomon built the temple of the LORD in Jerusalem. They performed their duties according to the regulations laid down for them.
33Here are the men who served, together with their sons:
From the Kohathites:
Heman, the musician,
the son of Joel, the son of Samuel,
34the son of Elkanah, the son of Jeroham,
the son of Eliel, the son of Toah,
35the son of Zuph, the son of Elkanah,
the son of Mahath, the son of Amasai,
36the son of Elkanah, the son of Joel,
the son of Azariah, the son of Zephaniah,
37the son of Tahath, the son of Assir,
the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah,
38the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath,
the son of Levi, the son of Israel;

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[a] In Hebrew texts 6:1-15 is numbered 5:27-41, and 6:16-81 is numbered 6:1-66. [b] *14* Hebrew *Jehozadak*, a variant of *Jozadak*; also in verse 15 [c] *16* Hebrew *Gershom*, a variant of *Gershon*; also in verses 17, 20, 43, 62 and 71 [d] *26* Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac; most Hebrew manuscripts *Ahimoth 26and Elkanah. The sons of Elkanah:* [e] *27* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 1 Samuel 1:19,20 and 1 Chron. 6:33,34); Hebrew does not have *and Samuel his son.* [f] *28* Some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also 1 Samuel 8:2 and 1 Chron. 6:33); Hebrew does not have *Joel.*

39 and Heman's associate Asaph, who served
at his right hand:
Asaph son of Berekiah, the son of Shimea,
40 the son of Michael, the son of Baaseiah,[a]
the son of Malkijah, 41 the son of Ethni,
the son of Zerah, the son of Adaiah,
42 the son of Ethan, the son of Zimmah,
the son of Shimei, 43 the son of Jahath,
the son of Gershon, the son of Levi;
44 and from their associates, the Merarites, at
his left hand:
Ethan son of Kishi, the son of Abdi,
the son of Malluk, 45 the son of Hashabiah,
the son of Amaziah, the son of Hilkiah,
46 the son of Amzi, the son of Bani,
the son of Shemer, 47 the son of Mahli,
the son of Mushi, the son of Merari,
the son of Levi.

48 Their fellow Levites were assigned to all the other duties of the tabernacle, the house of God. 49 But Aaron and his descendants were the ones who presented offerings on the altar of burnt offering and on the altar of incense in connection with all that was done in the Most Holy Place, making atonement for Israel, in accordance with all that Moses the servant of God had commanded.

50 These were the descendants of Aaron:
Eleazar his son, Phinehas his son,
Abishua his son, 51 Bukki his son,
Uzzi his son, Zerahiah his son,
52 Meraioth his son, Amariah his son,
Ahitub his son, 53 Zadok his son
and Ahimaaz his son.

54 These were the locations of their settlements allotted as their territory (they were assigned to the descendants of Aaron who were from the Kohathite clan, because the first lot was for them):

55 They were given Hebron in Judah with its surrounding pasturelands. 56 But the fields and villages around the city were given to Caleb son of Jephunneh.

57 So the descendants of Aaron were given Hebron (a city of refuge), and Libnah,[b] Jattir, Eshtemoa, 58 Hilen, Debir, 59 Ashan, Juttah[c] and Beth Shemesh, together with their pasturelands. 60 And from the tribe of Benjamin they were given Gibeon,[d] Geba, Alemeth and Anathoth, together with their pasturelands.

The total number of towns distributed among the Kohathite clans came to thirteen.

61 The rest of Kohath's descendants were allotted ten towns from the clans of half the tribe of Manasseh.

62 The descendants of Gershon, clan by clan, were allotted thirteen towns from the tribes of Issachar, Asher and Naphtali, and from the part of the tribe of Manasseh that is in Bashan.

63 The descendants of Merari, clan by clan, were allotted twelve towns from the tribes of Reuben, Gad and Zebulun.

64 So the Israelites gave the Levites these towns and their pasturelands. 65 From the tribes of Judah, Simeon and Benjamin they allotted the previously named towns.

66 Some of the Kohathite clans were given as their territory towns from the tribe of Ephraim.

67 In the hill country of Ephraim they were given Shechem (a city of refuge), and Gezer,[e] 68 Jokmeam, Beth Horon, 69 Aijalon and Gath Rimmon, together with their pasturelands.

70 And from half the tribe of Manasseh the Israelites gave Aner and Bileam, together with their pasturelands, to the rest of the Kohathite clans.

71 The Gershonites received the following:
From the clan of the half-tribe of Manasseh they received Golan in Bashan and also Ashtaroth, together with their pasturelands;

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[a] *40* Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts, one Septuagint manuscript and Syriac *Maaseiah*
[b] *57* See Joshua 21:13; Hebrew *given the cities of refuge: Hebron, Libnah.*
[c] *59* Syriac (see also Septuagint and Joshua 21:16); Hebrew does not have *Juttah.*
[d] *60* See Joshua 21:17; Hebrew does not have *Gibeon.*
[e] *67* See Joshua 21:21; Hebrew *given the cities of refuge: Shechem, Gezer.*

Musical lyre

72 from the tribe of Issachar
they received Kedesh, Daberath, 73 Ramoth and Anem, together with their pasturelands;
74 from the tribe of Asher
they received Mashal, Abdon, 75 Hukok and Rehob, together with their pasturelands;
76 and from the tribe of Naphtali
they received Kedesh in Galilee, Hammon and Kiriathaim, together with their pasturelands.

77 The Merarites (the rest of the Levites) received the following:
From the tribe of Zebulun
they received Jokneam, Kartah,[a] Rimmono and Tabor, together with their pasturelands;
78 from the tribe of Reuben across the Jordan east of Jericho
they received Bezer in the wilderness, Jahzah, 79 Kedemoth and Mephaath, together with their pasturelands;
80 and from the tribe of Gad
they received Ramoth in Gilead, Mahanaim, 81 Heshbon and Jazer, together with their pasturelands.

Issachar

7 1 The sons of Issachar:
Tola, Puah, Jashub and Shimron — four in all.
2 The sons of Tola:
Uzzi, Rephaiah, Jeriel, Jahmai, Ibsam and Samuel — heads of their families. During the reign of David, the descendants of Tola listed as fighting men in their genealogy numbered 22,600.
3 The son of Uzzi:
Izrahiah.
The sons of Izrahiah:
Michael, Obadiah, Joel and Ishiah. All five of them were chiefs. 4 According to their family genealogy, they had 36,000 men ready for battle, for they had many wives and children.
5 The relatives who were fighting men belonging to all the clans of Issachar, as listed in their genealogy, were 87,000 in all.

Benjamin

6 Three sons of Benjamin:
Bela, Beker and Jediael.
7 The sons of Bela:
Ezbon, Uzzi, Uzziel, Jerimoth and Iri, heads of families — five in all. Their genealogical record listed 22,034 fighting men.
8 The sons of Beker:
Zemirah, Joash, Eliezer, Elioenai, Omri, Jeremoth, Abijah, Anathoth and Alemeth. All these were the sons of Beker. 9 Their genealogical record listed the heads of families and 20,200 fighting men.
10 The son of Jediael:
Bilhan.
The sons of Bilhan:
Jeush, Benjamin, Ehud, Kenaanah, Zethan, Tarshish and Ahishahar. 11 All these sons of Jediael were heads of families. There were 17,200 fighting men ready to go out to war.
12 The Shuppites and Huppites were the descendants of Ir, and the Hushites[b] the descendants of Aher.

Naphtali

13 The sons of Naphtali:
Jahziel, Guni, Jezer and Shillem[c] — the descendants of Bilhah.

Manasseh

14 The descendants of Manasseh:
Asriel was his descendant through his Aramean concubine. She gave birth to Makir the father of Gilead. 15 Makir took a wife from among the Huppites and Shuppites. His sister's name was Maakah.
Another descendant was named Zelophehad, who had only daughters.
16 Makir's wife Maakah gave birth to a son and named him Peresh. His brother was named Sheresh, and his sons were Ulam and Rakem.
17 The son of Ulam:
Bedan.
These were the sons of Gilead son of Makir, the son of Manasseh. 18 His sister Hammoleketh gave birth to Ishhod, Abiezer and Mahlah.
19 The sons of Shemida were:
Ahian, Shechem, Likhi and Aniam.

Ephraim

20 The descendants of Ephraim:
Shuthelah, Bered his son,

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[a] *77* See Septuagint and Joshua 21:34; Hebrew does not have *Jokneam, Kartah.* [b] *12* Or *Ir. The sons of Dan: Hushim,* (see Gen. 46:23); Hebrew does not have *The sons of Dan.*
[c] *13* Some Hebrew and Septuagint manuscripts (see also Gen. 46:24 and Num. 26:49); most Hebrew manuscripts *Shallum*

Tahath his son, Eleadah his son,
Tahath his son, 21Zabad his son
and Shuthelah his son.
Ezer and Elead were killed by the native-born men of Gath, when they went down to seize their livestock. 22Their father Ephraim mourned for them many days, and his relatives came to comfort him. 23Then he made love to his wife again, and she became pregnant and gave birth to a son. He named him Beriah,[a] because there had been misfortune in his family. 24His daughter was Sheerah, who built Lower and Upper Beth Horon as well as Uzzen Sheerah.
25Rephah was his son, Resheph his son,[b]
Telah his son, Tahan his son,
26Ladan his son, Ammihud his son,
Elishama his son, 27Nun his son
and Joshua his son.
28Their lands and settlements included Bethel and its surrounding villages, Naaran to the east, Gezer and its villages to the west, and Shechem and its villages all the way to Ayyah and its villages. 29Along the borders of Manasseh were Beth Shan, Taanach, Megiddo and Dor, together with their villages. The descendants of Joseph son of Israel lived in these towns.

Asher

30The sons of Asher:
Imnah, Ishvah, Ishvi and Beriah. Their sister was Serah.
31The sons of Beriah:
Heber and Malkiel, who was the father of Birzaith.
32Heber was the father of Japhlet, Shomer and Hotham and of their sister Shua.
33The sons of Japhlet:
Pasak, Bimhal and Ashvath.
These were Japhlet's sons.
34The sons of Shomer:
Ahi, Rohgah,[c] Hubbah and Aram.
35The sons of his brother Helem:
Zophah, Imna, Shelesh and Amal.
36The sons of Zophah:
Suah, Harnepher, Shual, Beri, Imrah,
37Bezer, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Ithran[d] and Beera.
38The sons of Jether:
Jephunneh, Pispah and Ara.
39The sons of Ulla:
Arah, Hanniel and Rizia.
40All these were descendants of Asher—heads of families, choice men, brave warriors and outstanding leaders. The number of men ready for battle, as listed in their genealogy, was 26,000.

The Genealogy of Saul the Benjamite

8 1Benjamin was the father of Bela his firstborn,
Ashbel the second son, Aharah the third,
2Nohah the fourth and Rapha the fifth.
3The sons of Bela were:
Addar, Gera, Abihud,[e] 4Abishua, Naaman, Ahoah, 5Gera, Shephuphan and Huram.
6These were the descendants of Ehud, who were heads of families of those living in Geba and were deported to Manahath:
7Naaman, Ahijah, and Gera, who deported them and who was the father of Uzza and Ahihud.

[a] *23* *Beriah* sounds like the Hebrew for *misfortune.*
[b] *25* Some Septuagint manuscripts; Hebrew does not have *his son.* [c] *34* Or *of his brother Shomer: Rohgah* [d] *37* Possibly a variant of *Jether* [e] *3* Or *Gera the father of Ehud*

Stele at Gezer

8 Sons were born to Shaharaim in Moab after he had divorced his wives Hushim and Baara. 9 By his wife Hodesh he had
Jobab, Zibia, Mesha, Malkam, 10 Jeuz,
Sakia and Mirmah. These were his sons,
heads of families. 11 By Hushim he had
Abitub and Elpaal.
12 The sons of Elpaal:
Eber, Misham, Shemed (who built Ono
and Lod with its surrounding villages),
13 and Beriah and Shema, who were
heads of families of those living in Aijalon and who drove out the inhabitants
of Gath.
14 Ahio, Shashak, Jeremoth, 15 Zebadiah,
Arad, Eder, 16 Michael, Ishpah and Joha
were the sons of Beriah.
17 Zebadiah, Meshullam, Hizki, Heber, 18 Ishmerai, Izliah and Jobab were the sons of
Elpaal.
19 Jakim, Zikri, Zabdi, 20 Elienai, Zillethai, Eliel, 21 Adaiah, Beraiah and Shimrath were
the sons of Shimei.
22 Ishpan, Eber, Eliel, 23 Abdon, Zikri, Hanan, 24 Hananiah, Elam, Anthothijah,
25 Iphdeiah and Penuel were the sons of
Shashak.
26 Shamsherai, Shehariah, Athaliah, 27 Jaareshiah, Elijah and Zikri were the sons of
Jeroham.
28 All these were heads of families, chiefs as
listed in their genealogy, and they lived in Jerusalem.

29 Jeiel[a] the father[b] of Gibeon lived in Gibeon.
His wife's name was Maakah, 30 and his
firstborn son was Abdon, followed by
Zur, Kish, Baal, Ner,[c] Nadab, 31 Gedor,
Ahio, Zeker 32 and Mikloth, who was the
father of Shimeah. They too lived near
their relatives in Jerusalem.
33 Ner was the father of Kish, Kish the father
of Saul, and Saul the father of Jonathan,
Malki-Shua, Abinadab and Esh-Baal.[d]
34 The son of Jonathan:
Merib-Baal,[e] who was the father of Micah.
35 The sons of Micah:
Pithon, Melek, Tarea and Ahaz.
36 Ahaz was the father of Jehoaddah, Jehoaddah was the father of Alemeth, Azmaveth and Zimri, and Zimri was the father
of Moza. 37 Moza was the father of Binea;
Raphah was his son, Eleasah his son and
Azel his son.
38 Azel had six sons, and these were their
names:
Azrikam, Bokeru, Ishmael, Sheariah,
Obadiah and Hanan. All these were the
sons of Azel.
39 The sons of his brother Eshek:
Ulam his firstborn, Jeush the second
son and Eliphelet the third. 40 The sons
of Ulam were brave warriors who could
handle the bow. They had many sons
and grandsons—150 in all.
All these were the descendants of Benjamin.

9 1 All Israel was listed in the genealogies recorded in the book of the kings of Israel
and Judah. They were taken captive to Babylon
because of their unfaithfulness.

The People in Jerusalem

2 Now the first to resettle on their own property in their own towns were some Israelites,
priests, Levites and temple servants.
3 Those from Judah, from Benjamin, and
from Ephraim and Manasseh who lived in Jerusalem were:
4 Uthai son of Ammihud, the son of Omri,
the son of Imri, the son of Bani, a descendant of Perez son of Judah.
5 Of the Shelanites[f]:
Asaiah the firstborn and his sons.
6 Of the Zerahites:
Jeuel.
The people from Judah numbered 690.
7 Of the Benjamites:
Sallu son of Meshullam, the son of Hodaviah, the son of Hassenuah;
8 Ibneiah son of Jeroham; Elah son of
Uzzi, the son of Mikri; and Meshullam
son of Shephatiah, the son of Reuel, the
son of Ibnijah.
9 The people from Benjamin, as listed
in their genealogy, numbered 956. All
these men were heads of their families.
10 Of the priests:
Jedaiah; Jehoiarib; Jakin;
11 Azariah son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of
Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the official
in charge of the house of God;
12 Adaiah son of Jeroham, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malkijah; and Maasai son
of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of
Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith,
the son of Immer.

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[a] *29* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 9:35); Hebrew does not have *Jeiel*. [b] *29* *Father* may mean *civic leader* or *military leader*. [c] *30* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also 9:36); Hebrew does not have *Ner*. [d] *33* Also known as *Ish-Bosheth* [e] *34* Also known as *Mephibosheth* [f] *5* See Num. 26:20; Hebrew *Shilonites*.

Not Just Guarding the Gates (1Ch 9:17, 18)

In the genealogies of priestly and Levitical families is a long list of names and assignments of Levitical gatekeepers. We might suppose that there were more important matters to be recorded than the temple's night watchmen and custodians. The books of Chronicles, however, show that the temple gatekeepers played very significant roles in a temple-centered society with crude locks and keys.

In one role the gatekeepers functioned essentially as secret service agents, controlling the inner city security of Jerusalem. For instance, when Joash was established on Judah's throne, Levitical gatekeepers were the security force that ensured a successful transition of power (2Ch 23:3–5). After Joash had become king, his safety and the purity of the temple became the responsibility of these same gatekeepers.

The Chronicler also records that some gatekeepers held substantial political power themselves. By guarding doorways a gatekeeper could play the role of the royal "chief of staff," controlling access to the king. A certain Shallum, the "chief," guarded the "King's Gate on the east" (1Ch 9:17, 18). Another gatekeeper, a certain Zechariah, is called a "wise counselor" (1Ch 26:14), which is a phrase the Chronicler reserves for royal advisors (1Ch 27:32, 33).

A significant role for the gatekeepers was their control of temple offerings and the temple payroll. Kore, a gatekeeper of the East Gate, and his kin, gatekeepers all, were "in charge of the freewill offerings given to God," a responsibility that included distributing allotments by divisions (2Ch 31:14–16). Without bank vaults persons of great integrity were necessary to ensure the proper financial care of the temple and its personnel.

Thus it is evident why Chronicles records the appointment of these officials. Theirs was an office that was "entrusted" (1Ch 9:26); they were crucial to the daily operation of Jerusalem and the temple.

13 The priests, who were heads of families,
numbered 1,760. They were able men,
responsible for ministering in the house
of God.
14 Of the Levites:
Shemaiah son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, a Merarite;
15 Bakbakkar, Heresh, Galal and Mattaniah son of Mika, the son of Zikri, the son
of Asaph; 16 Obadiah son of Shemaiah,
the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun;
and Berekiah son of Asa, the son of Elkanah, who lived in the villages of the
Netophathites.
17 The gatekeepers:
Shallum, Akkub, Talmon, Ahiman and
their fellow Levites, Shallum their chief
18 being stationed at the King's Gate on
the east, up to the present time. These
were the gatekeepers belonging to the
camp of the Levites. 19 Shallum son of
Kore, the son of Ebiasaph, the son of Korah, and his fellow gatekeepers from his
family (the Korahites) were responsible
for guarding the thresholds of the tent
just as their ancestors had been responsible for guarding the entrance to the
dwelling of the LORD. 20 In earlier times
Phinehas son of Eleazar was the official
in charge of the gatekeepers, and the
LORD was with him. 21 Zechariah son of
Meshelemiah was the gatekeeper at the
entrance to the tent of meeting.
22 Altogether, those chosen to be gatekeepers
at the thresholds numbered 212. They were
registered by genealogy in their villages. The
gatekeepers had been assigned to their positions of trust by David and Samuel the seer.
23 They and their descendants were in charge
of guarding the gates of the house of the
LORD—the house called the tent of meeting.
24 The gatekeepers were on the four sides: east,
west, north and south. 25 Their fellow Levites
in their villages had to come from time to time
and share their duties for seven-day periods.
26 But the four principal gatekeepers, who were
Levites, were entrusted with the responsibility
for the rooms and treasuries in the house of
God. 27 They would spend the night stationed
around the house of God, because they had to
guard it; and they had charge of the key for
opening it each morning.
28 Some of them were in charge of the articles
used in the temple service; they counted them
when they were brought in and when they
were taken out. 29 Others were assigned to take
care of the furnishings and all the other articles
of the sanctuary, as well as the special flour
and wine, and the olive oil, incense and spices.
30 But some of the priests took care of mixing

Trade & Economics

The temple area contained more than just the building used for worship. Different aspects of social life took place around the temple, not the least of which was the keeping and guarding of public money (1Ch 9:26, 27). Pagan temples typically were centers for more than religious activity, and this diversity required large temple staffs. New Testament temples had temple police with powers of arrest.

the spices. 31A Levite named Mattithiah, the
firstborn son of Shallum the Korahite, was en-
trusted with the responsibility for baking the
offering bread. 32Some of the Kohathites, their
fellow Levites, were in charge of preparing for
every Sabbath the bread set out on the table.
33Those who were musicians, heads of Levite
families, stayed in the rooms of the temple and
were exempt from other duties because they
were responsible for the work day and night.
34All these were heads of Levite families,
chiefs as listed in their genealogy, and they
lived in Jerusalem.

TRANSITION

The Book of Esther

The reign of the Persian king Darius I (522–486 b.c.) was as successful as it was long. He established a workable system of government, and he built splendid buildings, extensive roads, and even a canal in Egypt between the Nile River and the Red Sea. His only significant failure was his defeat in 490 b.c. in the battle of Marathon, which halted his intended invasion of the Greek peninsula.

Darius was succeeded by his son Xerxes I (486–465 b.c.), who achieved significantly less than his father. Xerxes seemed content to rest on his father's laurels, except that he too tried an invasion of Greece in 480 b.c. He too was driven back.

In the Book of Esther, Xerxes is caricatured as a weak and foolish king, with no mind of his own. But the book is not really about Xerxes. Like the narratives of Da 1–6, the Book of Esther was meant to encourage Jews living in a foreign land. Indeed, during the Persian period, most Jews lived outside of Palestine, surrounded by potential enemies. These Jews of the Diaspora (meaning "dispersion") faced different pressures and different problems than those Jews who had returned to Palestine. Thus the Diaspora Jews began to develop a different religious focus.

The most striking difference between the religion of the Diaspora and the religion of the returned exiles had to do with intermarriage. Where Ezra and Nehemiah would rage at the Palestinian Jews who married outside of the faith (Ezr 9; 10; Ne 13:23–28), the Book of Esther reports calmly and without apology of Esther's marriage to the Persian Xerxes.

Moreover, whereas the Palestinian Jews were vocal and very demonstrative about their beliefs, the Jews of the Diaspora had learned to be prudent with their faith. Esther did not tell her husband that she was a Jew. Even more striking, the story of Esther tells very clearly how God protected his people by providing them an advocate in the king's own court, yet the book recounts God's providence without ever actually mentioning the name of God. The Jews of the Diaspora were willing to die for their faith, but they did not court trouble. Until they had to take a stand, they maintained a sort of underground religion.

Some historical problems pertain to the Book of Esther. In all the royal records and histories from the court of Xerxes, there is no mention of a Queen Vashti, a Queen Esther, a prime minister named Mordecai, or a massacre of Jewish enemies. For this reason, some scholars suggest that the book was not intended as a historical narrative but rather as an instructional work of fiction. Others, though, maintain the book's historicity, noting especially the feast of Purim, which is still celebrated today. Purim commemorates the events described in the book, and supposedly the Jews would be unlikely to establish such a feast for the plot of a fictional short story.

The narrative begins in the 3rd year of Xerxes' reign (Est 1:3), which was 483 b.c. The first return of Jews to Jerusalem had already occurred (537 b.c.), but the later returns under Ezra (possibly 458 b.c.) and Nehemiah (445 b.c.) were still in the future. The banquet which the king gave (1:5) should perhaps be identified with the assembly at Shushan that Herodotus, the Greek historian, reports was called by Xerxes in 483 b.c. Much magnificence and abundance were undoubtedly calculated to impress the leaders of the empire that the emperor had the power and wealth to rule as he wished.

• **Esther 1:1–22**

Esther

Queen Vashti Deposed

1 :1 This is what happened during the time
of Xerxes,[a] the Xerxes who ruled over 127
provinces stretching from India to Cush[b]: 2At
that time King Xerxes reigned from his royal
throne in the citadel of Susa, 3and in the third
year of his reign he gave a banquet for all his
nobles and officials. The military leaders of
Persia and Media, the princes, and the nobles
of the provinces were present.
4For a full 180 days he displayed the vast
wealth of his kingdom and the splendor and
glory of his majesty. 5When these days were
over, the king gave a banquet, lasting seven days, in the enclosed garden of the king's
palace, for all the people from the least to the
greatest who were in the citadel of Susa. 6The

[a] *1* Hebrew *Ahasuerus*; here and throughout Esther
[b] *1* That is, the upper Nile region

The Weak and Temperamental King (Est 1:1)

In the Book of Esther, Xerxes (Est 1:1) is the king of Persia who chose Esther as his queen. He has been identified with the celebrated Xerxes I (486–465 B.C.), the fourth major king of the Persian Achaemenid dynasty (559–331 B.C.). Shortly after the outset of his reign, Xerxes quelled a rebellion in Babylon, destroying the city and carrying away the statue of Marduk, the city's patron deity.

Xerxes is best known from the writings of Herodotus (484–425 B.C.), the Greek historian who wrote the history of the wars between Greece and Persia. The son of Darius I, the Great (522–486 B.C.), Xerxes continued his father's intervention in Greek affairs, preparing a massive invasion of Greece in 480 B.C. Despite winning the first battle at Thermopylae, the venture proved fatal. The Persian navy was decisively defeated at the Bay of Salamis. Dejected, Xerxes fled Greece before the final defeat of his army at Plataea in 479 B.C.

The Persian name for Xerxes means "mighty man," which is ironic in view of this king's description in the Book of Esther and in the writings of Herodotus. Herodotus depicts Xerxes as an incompetent and fickle monarch, not unlike the portrayal of Xerxes in Esther. His roller-coaster temperament is witnessed in his reaction to Vashti's rejection (Est 1:9–12) and to Esther's plea for her people (Est 7:1–10).

garden had hangings of white and blue linen, fastened with cords of white linen and purple material to silver rings on marble pillars. There were couches of gold and silver on a mosaic pavement of porphyry, marble, mother-of-pearl and other costly stones. 7Wine was served in goblets of gold, each one different from the other, and the royal wine was abundant, in keeping with the king's liberality. 8By the king's command each guest was allowed to drink with no restrictions, for the king instructed all the wine stewards to serve each man what he wished.

9Queen Vashti also gave a banquet for the women in the royal palace of King Xerxes.

10On the seventh day, when King Xerxes was in high spirits from wine, he commanded the seven eunuchs who served him—Mehuman, Biztha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar and Karkas— 11to bring before him Queen Vashti, wearing her royal crown, in order to display her beauty to the people and nobles, for she was lovely to look at. 12But when the attendants delivered the king's command, Queen Vashti refused to come. Then the king became furious and burned with anger.

13Since it was customary for the king to consult experts in matters of law and justice, he spoke with the wise men who understood the times 14and were closest to the king—Karshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena and Memukan, the seven nobles of Persia and Media who had special access to the king and were highest in the kingdom.

15"According to law, what must be done to Queen Vashti?" he asked. "She has not obeyed the command of King Xerxes that the eunuchs have taken to her."

16Then Memukan replied in the presence of the king and the nobles, "Queen Vashti has done wrong, not only against the king but also against all the nobles and the peoples of all the provinces of King Xerxes. 17For the queen's conduct will become known to all the women, and so they will despise their husbands and say, 'King Xerxes commanded Queen Vashti to be brought before him, but she would not come.' 18This very day the Persian and Median women of the nobility who have heard about the queen's conduct will respond to all the king's nobles in the same way. There will be no end of disrespect and discord.

19"Therefore, if it pleases the king, let him issue a royal decree and let it be written in the laws of Persia and Media, which cannot be repealed, that Vashti is never again to enter the presence of King Xerxes. Also let the king give her royal position to someone else who is better than she. 20Then when the king's edict is proclaimed throughout all his vast realm, all the women will respect their husbands, from the least to the greatest."

21The king and his nobles were pleased with this advice, so the king did as Memukan proposed. 22He sent dispatches to all parts of the kingdom, to each province in its own script and to each people in their own language, proclaiming that every man should be ruler over his own household, using his native tongue.

Politics & Government

Xerxes displayed the magnificence of his kingdom (Est 1:1–4) much like other ancient monarchs, including the pharaohs of Egypt. Kings presented themselves to their people regularly in a formal manner, at designated locations or by parading along a certain route. Sometimes they had ulterior motives. For example, Antony and Cleopatra presented themselves as leaders of a new era, probably trying to challenge the Roman state.

Mordecai, Esther's Famous Guardian (Est 2:5–7)

One of the main characters in the Book of Esther is Mordecai, who is described as Esther's guardian and adoptive father (Est 2:5, 7). The name "Mordecai" is a Gentile name, likely derived from the Babylonian name "Marduk," the head of Babylon's pantheon of gods. Mordecai would have also had a Jewish name, just as Esther's Jewish name was Hadassah (Est 2:7).

An official named "Marduka" is mentioned in a Babylonian tablet found in modern central Iraq. The tablet is dated to the reign of Xerxes I (486–465 B.C.), a king identified with the "Xerxes" of the Book of Esther (Est 1:1). Marduka was a scribe of the governor of Babylon. The same name (written with the consonants *mrdk*) has also been found in Aramaic papyri of the same century, representing an official in northern Mesopotamia.

Some scholars have concluded that either of these Mesopotamian documents could indeed be naming the Mordecai who was Esther's guardian. At least, the existence of officials with the name "Mordecai" in this period supports the picture of Mordecai as a famous person in the Persian Empire (Est 9:4).

TRANSITION

Esther Is Made Queen

The process by which a new queen would be chosen involved the bureaucracy of the Persian Empire. Officers were appointed "in every province" (Est 2:3), reflecting the administrative structure of governmental provinces, called satrapies, which had been unified under Darius I. Great pains, involving 12 months of beauty treatments (2:12), were taken to ready a woman for one night with the emperor. Not until four years had elapsed did Esther enter the royal palace in Xerxes' 7th year (2:16). The month of Tebeth corresponds to December-January, 479 B.C.

Mordecai and Esther were cousins, but her response as a daughter to him (2:7) suggests that there may have been a considerable age difference between them. A brief genealogy (2:5, 6) notes that more than a century before, Mordecai's ancestor Kish had been exiled from Jerusalem in 597 B.C. when the Babylonians captured King Jehoiachin (2Ki 24:10–12).

• **Esther 2:1–23**

Esther

Esther Made Queen

2:1 Later when King Xerxes' fury had subsided, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what he had decreed about her.
2 Then the king's personal attendants proposed,
"Let a search be made for beautiful young virgins for the king. 3 Let the king appoint commissioners in every province of his realm to bring
all these beautiful young women into the harem at the citadel of Susa. Let them be placed
under the care of Hegai, the king's eunuch,
who is in charge of the women; and let beauty treatments be given to them. 4 Then let the
young woman who pleases the king be queen
instead of Vashti." This advice appealed to the king, and he followed it.

5 Now there was in the citadel of Susa a Jew
of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai son
of Jair, the son of Shimei, the son of Kish, 6 who had been carried into exile from Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, among those taken captive with Jehoiachin[a] king of Judah. 7 Mordecai had a cousin named Hadassah, whom he had brought up because she had neither father nor mother. This young woman, who was also known as Esther, had a lovely figure and was beautiful. Mordecai had taken her as his own daughter when her father and mother died.

8 When the king's order and edict had been proclaimed, many young women were brought to the citadel of Susa and put under the care of Hegai. Esther also was taken to the king's palace and entrusted to Hegai, who had charge of the harem. 9 She pleased him and won his favor. Immediately he provided her with her beauty treatments and special food. He assigned to her seven female attendants selected from the king's palace and moved her and her attendants into the best place in the harem.

10 Esther had not revealed her nationality and family background, because Mordecai had forbidden her to do so. 11 Every day he walked back and forth near the courtyard of the harem to find out how Esther was and what was happening to her.

12 Before a young woman's turn came to go in to King Xerxes, she had to complete twelve months of beauty treatments prescribed for the women, six months with oil of myrrh and six with perfumes and cosmetics. 13 And this is how she would go to the king: Anything she wanted was given her to take with her from the harem to the king's palace. 14 In the evening she would go there and in the morning return to another part of the harem to the care of Shaashgaz, the king's eunuch who was in charge of the concubines. She would not return to the king unless he was pleased with her and summoned her by name.

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[a] *6* Hebrew *Jeconiah,* a variant of *Jehoiachin*

15When the turn came for Esther (the young
woman Mordecai had adopted, the daughter of
his uncle Abihail) to go to the king, she asked
for nothing other than what Hegai, the king's eu-
nuch who was in charge of the harem, suggest-
ed. And Esther won the favor of everyone who
saw her. 16She was taken to King Xerxes in the
royal residence in the tenth month, the month of
Tebeth, in the seventh year of his reign.
17Now the king was attracted to Esther more
than to any of the other women, and she won
his favor and approval more than any of the
other virgins. So he set a royal crown on her
head and made her queen instead of Vashti.
18And the king gave a great banquet, Esther's
banquet, for all his nobles and officials. He pro-
claimed a holiday throughout the provinces
and distributed gifts with royal liberality.

Mordecai Uncovers a Conspiracy

19When the virgins were assembled a second
time, Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate.
20But Esther had kept secret her family back-
ground and nationality just as Mordecai had
told her to do, for she continued to follow Mor-
decai's instructions as she had done when he
was bringing her up.
21During the time Mordecai was sitting at
the king's gate, Bigthana[a] and Teresh, two of
the king's officers who guarded the doorway,
became angry and conspired to assassinate
King Xerxes. 22But Mordecai found out about
the plot and told Queen Esther, who in turn re-
ported it to the king, giving credit to Mordecai.
23And when the report was investigated and
found to be true, the two officials were impaled
on poles. All this was recorded in the book of
the annals in the presence of the king.

[a] *21* Hebrew *Bigthan,* a variant of *Bigthana*

TRANSITION

Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews

Haman tried to mask his pett y revenge against Mordecai with the slaughter of an entire people. In the 1st month of Xerxes' 12th year (March–April, 474 b.c.), the lot was cast to determine the right day for the destruction of the Jews. The lot selected the 12th month, Adar (Est 3:7), and the or der was sent out to every-one in the administr ative chain t o execute the tragic operation when that month arrived (3:12, 13). The feast of Purim, which commem-orates the ev ents of this story, takes its name from the Hebrew word *pur,* meaning "lot."

• **Esther 3:1—8:17**

Esther

Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews

3 :1 After these events, King Xerxes honored
Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite,
elevating him and giving him a seat of honor
higher than that of all the other nobles. 2All the
royal officials at the king's gate knelt down and
paid honor to Haman, for the king had com-
manded this concerning him. But Mordecai
would not kneel down or pay him honor.
3Then the royal officials at the king's gate
asked Mordecai, "Why do you disobey the
king's command?" 4Day after day they spoke to
him but he refused to comply. Therefore they
told Haman about it to see whether Mordecai's
behavior would be tolerated, for he had told
them he was a Jew.
5When Haman saw that Mordecai would
not kneel down or pay him honor, he was en-
raged. 6Yet having learned who Mordecai's
people were, he scorned the idea of killing
only Mordecai. Instead Haman looked for a
way to destroy all Mordecai's people, the Jews,
throughout the whole kingdom of Xerxes.
7In the twelfth year of King Xerxes, in the
first month, the month of Nisan, the *pur* (that
is, the lot) was cast in the presence of Haman
to select a day and month. And the lot fell on[b]
the twelfth month, the month of Adar.
8Then Haman said to King Xerxes, "There is
a certain people dispersed among the peoples
in all the provinces of your kingdom who keep
themselves separate. Their customs are differ-
ent from those of all other people, and they do
not obey the king's laws; it is not in the king's
best interest to tolerate them. 9If it pleases the
king, let a decree be issued to destroy them,
and I will give ten thousand talents[c] of silver
to the king's administrators for the royal trea-
sury."
10So the king took his signet ring from his fin-
ger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha,

[b] *7* Septuagint; Hebrew does not have *And the lot fell on.*
[c] *9* That is, about 375 tons or about 340 metric tons

TIME CAPSULE	486 to 479 B.C.
486–465	Xerxes I of Persia is also known as Ahasuerus
484–425	Greek historian Herodotus
484	Herodotus refers to the use of rollers for transporting weights
480	Xerxes invades Greece
480	Xerxes is defeated by the Athenians at Salamis
479	Xerxes' army suffers final defeat at Plataea

Trade & Economics

There was no postal service for the general public until long after biblical times. Most ancient delivery services were a function of the government and were reserved for official business. The Egyptians instituted such a service as early as 2000 B.C. The Persians developed a system of their own that the Romans imitated to some extent. Documents in various scripts were delivered by couriers (Est 3:12, 13).

the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews. 11"Keep the money," the king said to Haman, "and do with the people as you please."

12Then on the thirteenth day of the first month the royal secretaries were summoned. They wrote out in the script of each province and in the language of each people all Haman's orders to the king's satraps, the governors of the various provinces and the nobles of the various peoples. These were written in the name of King Xerxes himself and sealed with his own ring. 13Dispatches were sent by couriers to all the king's provinces with the order to destroy, kill and annihilate all the Jews—young and old, women and children—on a single day, the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, the month of Adar, and to plunder their goods. 14A copy of the text of the edict was to be issued as law in every province and made known to the people of every nationality so they would be ready for that day.

15The couriers went out, spurred on by the king's command, and the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa. The king and Haman sat down to drink, but the city of Susa was bewildered.

Mordecai Persuades Esther to Help

4 1When Mordecai learned of all that had been done, he tore his clothes, put on sackcloth and ashes, and went out into the city, wailing loudly and bitterly. 2But he went only as far as the king's gate, because no one clothed in sackcloth was allowed to enter it. 3In every province to which the edict and order of the king came, there was great mourning among the Jews, with fasting, weeping and wailing. Many lay in sackcloth and ashes.

4When Esther's eunuchs and female attendants came and told her about Mordecai, she was in great distress. She sent clothes for him to put on instead of his sackcloth, but he would not accept them. 5Then Esther summoned Hathak, one of the king's eunuchs assigned to attend her, and ordered him to find out what was troubling Mordecai and why.

6So Hathak went out to Mordecai in the open square of the city in front of the king's gate. 7Mordecai told him everything that had happened to him, including the exact amount of money Haman had promised to pay into the royal treasury for the destruction of the Jews. 8He also gave him a copy of the text of the edict for their annihilation, which had been published in Susa, to show to Esther and explain it to her, and he told him to instruct her to go into the king's presence to beg for mercy and plead with him for her people.

9Hathak went back and reported to Esther what Mordecai had said. 10Then she instructed him to say to Mordecai, 11"All the king's officials and the people of the royal provinces know that for any man or woman who ap-

The Persian Empire

The rise of Persia was rapid. In 550 b.c. Cyrus the Persian inherited the kingdom of the Medes. In 547 b.c. he captured the Lydian capital of Sardis. In 539 b.c. he took Babylon without a fight. By 500 b.c. the Persian Empire stretched from India in the east through Asia Minor to Greece in the west, and included Egypt and some of coastal Africa to the south.

proaches the king in the inner court without being summoned the king has but one law: that they be put to death unless the king extends the gold scepter to them and spares their lives. But thirty days have passed since I was called to go to the king."

12When Esther's words were reported to Mordecai, 13he sent back this answer: "Do not think that because you are in the king's house you alone of all the Jews will escape. 14For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?"

15Then Esther sent this reply to Mordecai: 16"Go, gather together all the Jews who are in Susa, and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast as you do. When this is done, I will go to the king, even though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish."

17So Mordecai went away and carried out all of Esther's instructions.

Esther's Request to the King

5 1On the third day Esther put on her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, in front of the king's hall. The king was sitting on his royal throne in the hall, facing the entrance. 2When he saw Queen Esther standing in the court, he was pleased with her and held out to her the gold scepter that was in his hand. So Esther approached and touched the tip of the scepter.

3Then the king asked, "What is it, Queen Esther? What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be given you."

4"If it pleases the king," replied Esther, "let the king, together with Haman, come today to a banquet I have prepared for him."

5"Bring Haman at once," the king said, "so that we may do what Esther asks."

So the king and Haman went to the banquet Esther had prepared. 6As they were drinking wine, the king again asked Esther, "Now what is your petition? It will be given you. And what is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted."

7Esther replied, "My petition and my request is this: 8If the king regards me with favor and if it pleases the king to grant my petition and fulfill my request, let the king and Haman come tomorrow to the banquet I will prepare for them. Then I will answer the king's question."

Haman's Rage Against Mordecai

9Haman went out that day happy and in high spirits. But when he saw Mordecai at the king's gate and observed that he neither rose nor showed fear in his presence, he was filled with rage against Mordecai. 10Nevertheless, Haman restrained himself and went home.

Calling together his friends and Zeresh, his wife, 11Haman boasted to them about his vast wealth, his many sons, and all the ways the king had honored him and how he had elevated him above the other nobles and officials. 12"And that's not all," Haman added. "I'm the only person Queen Esther invited to accompany the

The swooning of Esther by Antoine Coipel (c. 1704) Musée de Louvre, Paris.

king to the banquet she gave. And she has invited me along with the king tomorrow. 13But all this gives me no satisfaction as long as I see that Jew Mordecai sitting at the king's gate."

14His wife Zeresh and all his friends said to him, "Have a pole set up, reaching to a height of fifty cubits,[a] and ask the king in the morning to have Mordecai impaled on it. Then go with the king to the banquet and enjoy yourself." This suggestion delighted Haman, and he had the pole set up.

Mordecai Honored

6 1That night the king could not sleep; so he ordered the book of the chronicles, the record of his reign, to be brought in and read to him. 2It was found recorded there that Mordecai had exposed Bigthana and Teresh, two of the king's officers who guarded the doorway, who had conspired to assassinate King Xerxes.

3"What honor and recognition has Mordecai received for this?" the king asked.

"Nothing has been done for him," his attendants answered.

4The king said, "Who is in the court?" Now Haman had just entered the outer court of the palace to speak to the king about impaling Mordecai on the pole he had set up for him.

5His attendants answered, "Haman is standing in the court."

"Bring him in," the king ordered.

6When Haman entered, the king asked him, "What should be done for the man the king delights to honor?"

Now Haman thought to himself, "Who is there that the king would rather honor than me?" 7So he answered the king, "For the man the king delights to honor, 8have them bring a royal robe the king has worn and a horse the king has ridden, one with a royal crest placed on its head. 9Then let the robe and horse be entrusted to one of the king's most noble princes. Let them robe the man the king delights to honor, and lead him on the horse through the city streets, proclaiming before him, 'This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!'"

10"Go at once," the king commanded Haman. "Get the robe and the horse and do just as you have suggested for Mordecai the Jew, who sits at the king's gate. Do not neglect anything you have recommended."

11So Haman got the robe and the horse. He robed Mordecai, and led him on horseback through the city streets, proclaiming before him, "This is what is done for the man the king delights to honor!"

12Afterward Mordecai returned to the king's gate. But Haman rushed home, with his head covered in grief, 13and told Zeresh his wife and all his friends everything that had happened to him.

His advisers and his wife Zeresh said to him, "Since Mordecai, before whom your downfall has started, is of Jewish origin, you cannot stand against him—you will surely come to ruin!" 14While they were still talking with him, the king's eunuchs arrived and hurried Haman away to the banquet Esther had prepared.

Haman Impaled

7 1So the king and Haman went to Queen Esther's banquet, 2and as they were drinking wine on the second day, the king again asked, "Queen Esther, what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? Even up to half the kingdom, it will be granted."

3Then Queen Esther answered, "If I have found favor with you, Your Majesty, and if it pleases you, grant me my life—this is my petition. And spare my people—this is my request. 4For I and my people have been sold to be destroyed, killed and annihilated. If we had merely been sold as male and female slaves, I would have kept quiet, because no such distress would justify disturbing the king.[b]"

5King Xerxes asked Queen Esther, "Who is he? Where is he—the man who has dared to do such a thing?"

6Esther said, "An adversary and enemy! This vile Haman!"

Then Haman was terrified before the king and queen. 7The king got up in a rage, left his wine and went out into the palace garden. But Haman, realizing that the king had already decided his fate, stayed behind to beg Queen Esther for his life.

8Just as the king returned from the palace garden to the banquet hall, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was reclining.

The king exclaimed, "Will he even molest the queen while she is with me in the house?"

As soon as the word left the king's mouth, they covered Haman's face. 9Then Harbona, one of the eunuchs attending the king, said, "A pole reaching to a height of fifty cubits[a] stands by Haman's house. He had it set up for Mordecai, who spoke up to help the king."

The king said, "Impale him on it!" 10So they impaled Haman on the pole he had set up for Mordecai. Then the king's fury subsided.

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[a] *14,9* That is, about 75 feet or about 23 meters
[b] *4* Or *quiet, but the compensation our adversary offers cannot be compared with the loss the king would suffer*

The King's Edict in Behalf of the Jews

8 [1]That same day King Xerxes gave Queen
Esther the estate of Haman, the enemy of
the Jews. And Mordecai came into the pres-
ence of the king, for Esther had told how he
was related to her. [2]The king took off his signet
ring, which he had reclaimed from Haman, and
presented it to Mordecai. And Esther appoint-
ed him over Haman's estate.

[3]Esther again pleaded with the king, falling
at his feet and weeping. She begged him to put
an end to the evil plan of Haman the Agagite,
which he had devised against the Jews. [4]Then
the king extended the gold scepter to Esther
and she arose and stood before him.

[5]"If it pleases the king," she said, "and if he
regards me with favor and thinks it the right
thing to do, and if he is pleased with me, let
an order be written overruling the dispatches
that Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite,
devised and wrote to destroy the Jews in all the
king's provinces. [6]For how can I bear to see di-
saster fall on my people? How can I bear to see
the destruction of my family?"

[7]King Xerxes replied to Queen Esther and to
Mordecai the Jew, "Because Haman attacked
the Jews, I have given his estate to Esther, and
they have impaled him on the pole he set up.
[8]Now write another decree in the king's name
in behalf of the Jews as seems best to you, and
seal it with the king's signet ring—for no doc-
ument written in the king's name and sealed
with his ring can be revoked."

[9]At once the royal secretaries were sum-
moned—on the twenty-third day of the third
month, the month of Sivan. They wrote out
all Mordecai's orders to the Jews, and to the
satraps, governors and nobles of the 127 prov-
inces stretching from India to Cush.[a] These or-
ders were written in the script of each province
and the language of each people and also to the
Jews in their own script and language. [10]Mor-
decai wrote in the name of King Xerxes, sealed
the dispatches with the king's signet ring, and
sent them by mounted couriers, who rode fast
horses especially bred for the king.

[11]The king's edict granted the Jews in every
city the right to assemble and protect them-
selves; to destroy, kill and annihilate the armed
men of any nationality or province who might
attack them and their women and children,[b]
and to plunder the property of their enemies.
[12]The day appointed for the Jews to do this in
all the provinces of King Xerxes was the thir-
teenth day of the twelfth month, the month of
Adar. [13]A copy of the text of the edict was to
be issued as law in every province and made
known to the people of every nationality so that
the Jews would be ready on that day to avenge
themselves on their enemies.

[14]The couriers, riding the royal horses, went
out, spurred on by the king's command, and
the edict was issued in the citadel of Susa.

The Triumph of the Jews

[15]When Mordecai left the king's presence,
he was wearing royal garments of blue and
white, a large crown of gold and a purple robe
of fine linen. And the city of Susa held a joyous
celebration. [16]For the Jews it was a time of hap-
piness and joy, gladness and honor. [17]In every
province and in every city to which the edict
of the king came, there was joy and gladness
among the Jews, with feasting and celebrating.
And many people of other nationalities became
Jews because fear of the Jews had seized them.

[a] *9* That is, the upper Nile region [b] *11* Or *province, together with their women and children, who might attack them;*

TRANSITION

The Countermand to Save the Jews

By Xerxes' reign, the Persian Empire had been in existence about 60 years and had assumed the basic form that it was to follow for the next 150. It was thoroughly hierarchical in structure, moving upward from people groups to regions to provinces (satrapies), of which there were 127. Over these the king reigned. While in theory the king was supreme and sovereign, his power was restricted by a system of laws which even he could not annul, and by a bureaucracy that was already becoming calcified.

Because the law giving the enemies of the Jews the right to kill them could not be revoked, another law had to be announced that would nullify the first. This second law gave the Jews the right to retaliate (Est 8:11). When the 12th month arrived (Est 9:1), God accomplished the care of his people through the rise of Mordecai, who had faith in God's providential activity (see 9:3, 4; 4:14).

The Book of Esther gives the historical background for the feast of Purim, one of the Jewish feasts not commanded in the Pentateuch. The one day of feasting at Purim is now observed on two separate days because it was first celebrated in the villages on the 14th day, but in the city of Susa on the 15th day (9:17–19).

• **Esther 9:1—10:3**

The Citadel of Susa, and Susa (Est 9:6–15)

Susa was a great city in the area of modern southwestern Iran, existing as early as the 4th millennium B.C. At one time it was a major city of the Elamites, who inhabited Susa for three millenniums.

It seems that Susa reached its zenith during the Persian period (559–331 B.C.). Darius I (522–486 B.C.) chose Susa as the main capital of his empire. It is evident that this Persian monarch completely changed the design of the existing city, which he divided into two parts separated by a canal. The citadel, or palace, of Susa was the fortified royal city to the west. The writer of the Book of Esther carefully distinguishes between "the citadel of Susa" (Est 9:6–12) and the unfortified town to the east, which was simply called "Susa" (Est 9:13–16).

The king's residence was at the citadel of Susa, where the women's quarters for the harem were also located (Est 2:3). The division of Susa into two halves explains why the writer of the Book of Esther describes the king's command being executed on the 13th day in the citadel of Susa (Est 9:1, 11, 12) and then on the 14th day in the unfortified Susa (Est 9:14, 15).

Almost nothing is known of the lower city, as excavations have been concentrated on the upper citadel, which was surrounded by massive fortifications. In the citadel of Susa was the immense royal palace, as well as numerous residences presumably designed for the use of the elite classes. The palace was the setting for the Book of Esther, and the writer apparently had a familiarity with the citadel area.

Esther

9:1 On the thirteenth day of the twelfth
month, the month of Adar, the edict commanded by the king was to be carried out. On this day the enemies of the Jews had hoped to overpower them, but now the tables were turned and the Jews got the upper hand over those who hated them. [2]The Jews assembled in their cities in all the provinces of King Xerxes to attack those determined to destroy them. No one could stand against them, because the people of all the other nationalities were afraid of them. [3]And all the nobles of the provinces, the satraps, the governors and the king's administrators helped the Jews, because fear of Mordecai had seized them. [4]Mordecai was prominent in the palace; his reputation spread throughout the provinces, and he became more and more powerful.

[5]The Jews struck down all their enemies with the sword, killing and destroying them, and they did what they pleased to those who hated them. [6]In the citadel of Susa, the Jews killed and destroyed five hundred men. [7]They also killed Parshandatha, Dalphon, Aspatha, [8]Poratha, Adalia, Aridatha, [9]Parmashta, Arisai, Aridai and Vaizatha, [10]the ten sons of Haman son of Hammedatha, the enemy of the Jews. But they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

[11]The number of those killed in the citadel of Susa was reported to the king that same day. [12]The king said to Queen Esther, "The Jews have killed and destroyed five hundred men and the ten sons of Haman in the citadel of Susa. What have they done in the rest of the king's provinces? Now what is your petition? It will be given you. What is your request? It will also be granted."

[13]"If it pleases the king," Esther answered, "give the Jews in Susa permission to carry out this day's edict tomorrow also, and let Haman's ten sons be impaled on poles."

[14]So the king commanded that this be done. An edict was issued in Susa, and they impaled the ten sons of Haman. [15]The Jews in Susa came together on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and they put to death in Susa three hundred men, but they did not lay their hands on the plunder.

[16]Meanwhile, the remainder of the Jews who were in the king's provinces also assembled to protect themselves and get relief from their enemies. They killed seventy-five thousand of them but did not lay their hands on the plunder. [17]This happened on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar, and on the fourteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

[18]The Jews in Susa, however, had assembled on the thirteenth and fourteenth, and then on the fifteenth they rested and made it a day of feasting and joy.

[19]That is why rural Jews—those living in villages—observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar as a day of joy and feasting, a day for giving presents to each other.

Purim Established

[20]Mordecai recorded these events, and he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the provinces of King Xerxes, near and far, [21]to have them celebrate annually the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month of Adar [22]as the time when the Jews got relief from their enemies, and as the month when their sorrow was turned into joy and their mourning into a day of celebration. He wrote them to observe the days as days of feasting and joy and giving presents of food to one another and gifts to the poor.

23 So the Jews agreed to continue the celebration they had begun, doing what Mordecai had written to them. 24 For Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of all the Jews, had plotted against the Jews to destroy them and had cast the *pur* (that is, the lot) for their ruin and destruction. 25 But when the plot came to the king's attention,[a] he issued written orders that the evil scheme Haman had devised against the Jews should come back onto his own head, and that he and his sons should be impaled on poles. 26 (Therefore these days were called Purim, from the word *pur*.) Because of everything written in this letter and because of what they had seen and what had happened to them, 27 the Jews took it on themselves to establish the custom that they and their descendants and all who join them should without fail observe these two days every year, in the way prescribed and at the time appointed. 28 These days should be remembered and observed in every generation by every family, and in every province and in every city. And these days of Purim should never fail to be celebrated by the Jews — nor should the memory of these days die out among their descendants.

29 So Queen Esther, daughter of Abihail, along with Mordecai the Jew, wrote with full authority to confirm this second letter concerning Purim. 30 And Mordecai sent letters to all the Jews in the 127 provinces of Xerxes' kingdom — words of goodwill and assurance — 31 to establish these days of Purim at their designated times, as Mordecai the Jew and Queen Esther had decreed for them, and as they had established for themselves and their descendants in regard to their times of fasting and lamentation. 32 Esther's decree confirmed these regulations about Purim, and it was written down in the records.

The Greatness of Mordecai

10 1 King Xerxes imposed tribute throughout the empire, to its distant shores. 2 And all his acts of power and might, together with a full account of the greatness of Mordecai, whom the king had promoted, are they not written in the book of the annals of the kings of Media and Persia? 3 Mordecai the Jew was second in rank to King Xerxes, preeminent among the Jews, and held in high esteem by his many fellow Jews, because he worked for the good of his people and spoke up for the welfare of all the Jews.

[a] *25* Or *when Esther came before the king Ahasuerus*

TRANSITION

Opposition to Rebuilding Jerusalem

During the reign of Darius I (522–486 b.c.), the prophets Haggai and Zechariah had encouraged the returned exiles to finish the task of rebuilding the temple (Ezr 5:1, 2). Their neighbors, who were already living in Judah and Jerusalem when the exiles arrived, had opposed the temple project (Ezr 5:3–17). King Darius, however, overruled these objections, and the temple was completed in Darius's 6th year and dedicated in the spring (March, 515 b.c.). Local opposition to the returned exiles did not end there, though. It seems to have resumed under the reign of Darius's son and successor, Xerxes I (Xerxes, 486–465 b.c.).

Xerxes' reign was troubled and undistinguished, marked by internal unrest in the conquered lands of Babylon and Egypt and by his failed invasion of Greece in 480 b.c. In 465 b.c. Xerxes was assassinated and succeeded by a younger son, Artaxerxes I (465–424 b.c.). Throughout his long reign, Artaxerxes faced rebellions, notably in Egypt and Cyprus. By the end of his rule, the Persian Empire was considerably less impressive than it had been at its peak, under Darius.

During the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes, the local opponents to the returned exiles waged a letter-writing campaign, complaining about the continued rebuilding of Jerusalem. While this same tactic had been used earlier, during Darius's reign, this time it worked. Artaxerxes consulted the histories and found that Jerusalem had a reputation for being rebellious. Having no desire for more rebellions, he put a stop to the rebuilding. The temple was complete, but the city of Jerusalem was still in ruins.

The Book of Ezra reports this record from the reigns of Xerxes and Artaxerxes (4:6–23) before the record from Darius's reign (chs. 5; 6), thus out of sequence. The final editor of the book apparently included it in the earlier context in order to serve as an example of the sort of opposition that had temporarily halted the work on the temple in the days of Darius (see "Opposition to the Temple" at Ezr 4:24).

- **Ezra 4:6–23**

Ezra

Later Opposition Under Xerxes and Artaxerxes

4 **:6** At the beginning of the reign of Xerxes,[b] they lodged an accusation against the people of Judah and Jerusalem.

7 And in the days of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Bishlam, Mithredath, Tabeel and the rest of his associates wrote a letter to Artaxerxes.

[b] *6* Hebrew

The Great and Honorable Ashurbanipal (Ezr 4:10)

The king called "Ashurbanipal" and described as "great and honorable" was apparently well known to Ezra's readers. He is mentioned in Scripture only in Ezra 4:10, and modern scholars have been unable to determine his identity with certainty.

The letter sent to Artaxerxes I of Persia (465–424 B.C.) claims that Ashurbanipal deported people from Babylonia to Samaria at some undetermined period before Ezra's time (Ezr 4:8–10). The settling of captives in other cities (4:10) fits what is known about Assyrian deportation policies, so Ashurbanipal was possibly an Assyrian king. Such deportations were carried out by the later Assyrian kings, Shalmaneser V (726–722 B.C.) and Sargon II (721–705 B.C.).

Another attempt to identify Ezra's Ashurbanipal has compared him to the Ashurbanipal known to be the last prominent Assyrian monarch (668–627 B.C.). This Assyrian king was the destroyer of the Elamites, who are named among the people groups deported to Samaria by Ashurbanipal (Ezr 4:9).

The letter was written in Aramaic script and in the Aramaic language.[a,b]

8 Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary wrote a letter against Jerusalem to Artaxerxes the king as follows:

9 Rehum the commanding officer and Shimshai the secretary, together with the rest of their associates — the judges, officials and administrators over the people from Persia, Uruk and Babylon, the Elamites of Susa, 10 and the other people whom the great and honorable Ashurbanipal deported and settled in the city of Samaria and elsewhere in Trans-Euphrates.

11 (This is a copy of the letter they sent him.)

To King Artaxerxes,

From your servants in Trans-Euphrates:

12 The king should know that the people who came up to us from you have gone to Jerusalem and are rebuilding that rebellious and wicked city. They are restoring the walls and repairing the foundations.

13 Furthermore, the king should know that if this city is built and its walls are restored, no more taxes, tribute or duty will be paid, and eventually the royal revenues will suffer.[c] 14 Now since we are under obligation to the palace and it is not proper for us to see the king dishonored, we are sending this message to inform the king, 15 so that a search may be made in the archives of your predecessors. In these records you will find that this city is a rebellious city, troublesome to kings and provinces, a place with a long history of sedition. That is why this city was destroyed. 16 We inform the king that if this city is built and its walls are restored, you will be left with nothing in Trans-Euphrates.

17 The king sent this reply:

To Rehum the commanding officer, Shimshai the secretary and the rest of their associates living in Samaria and elsewhere in Trans-Euphrates:

Greetings.

18 The letter you sent us has been read and translated in my presence. 19 I issued an order and a search was made, and it was found that this city has a long history of revolt against kings and has been a place of rebellion and sedition. 20 Jerusalem has had powerful kings ruling over the whole of Trans-Euphrates, and taxes, tribute and duty were paid to them. 21 Now issue an order to these men to stop work, so that this city will not be rebuilt until I so order. 22 Be careful not to neglect this matter. Why let this threat grow, to the detriment of the royal interests?

23 As soon as the copy of the letter of King Artaxerxes was read to Rehum and Shimshai the secretary and their associates, they went immediately to the Jews in Jerusalem and compelled them by force to stop.

[a] *7* Or *written in Aramaic and translated* [b] *7* The text of 4:8–6:18 is in Aramaic. [c] *13* The meaning of the Aramaic for this clause is uncertain.

TRANSITION

The Book of Malachi

Much is uncertain about the prophetic Book of Malachi. Nothing is known of the prophet outside of the words in the book. Indeed, it is not even certain that "Malachi" is a name. In Hebrew, the name "Malachi" (Mal 1:1) simply means "my messenger" (as it is translated in Mal 3:1), and it could be understood as an anonymous prophet, designated as God's messenger.

Edom Will Not Return (Mal 1:2–5)

To the south and east of the Dead Sea, between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba, lies a hilly, dry land that was called Edom or Seir during Old Testament times. As neighbors, Judah and Edom often encountered each other in the course of their individual histories.

The people of Edom, the Edomites, were related to the Israelites. Edomite origins traced back to Esau, the twin brother of Jacob (Ge 36:1). As between Esau and Jacob, the sons of Isaac and grandsons of Abraham, rivalry seems to have characterized the relationship between Israel and Edom. This rivalry apparently became especially acute, certainly from the Judean perspective, during the postexilic period.

Though Edomites and the Judeans were related, when the Babylonians utterly destroyed Judah and Jerusalem in 586 B.C., the Edomites either assisted the Babylonians or at least did nothing to aid their relatives. Archaeological results indicate that at this time the Edomites remained unscathed by the Babylonian fury.

The Edomites took Judah's misfortune as an opportunity to settle on Judean land, and, at least from the Judean viewpoint, this encroachment added insult to injury. The Judeans had been either killed or dispersed; the land was empty. The Edomites merely claimed "squatter rights," as they expanded their kingdom to the west. The Jews who returned from exile found much less land available than had once belonged to their ancestors.

In the face of Judah's political misfortunes and the rivalry with Edom which continued to flourish in the postexilic period, the prophet Malachi proclaimed that God loved Judah (Jacob), not Edom (Esau; Mal 1:2, 3). The Judeans were restored while the Edomites would never again exist as a nation (1:4). Edom was invaded and overthrown by the Nabatean Arabs around the 5th century B.C., and by 312 B.C. Nabateans had gained control of Petra, the former capital of Edom, once known for its strong defenses (Ps 60:9).

Also uncertain is the book's historical context. When did this prophet live? To whom were these words directed? No one can be completely sure, but some guesses are more probable than others. For instance, Malachi's emphasis on the temple and on correct priestly ritual indicates that he spoke at a time when there was a temple standing, either before the temple was destroyed in 586 b.c. or after the second temple was completed in 515 b.c. The later time is suggested by the reference to Judah's political ruler as "your governor" (Mal 1:8), since it was during the Persian period that Judah no longer had a king.

Malachi's preaching has a very priestly tone. The sins that he condemns are sins of inappropriate worship: offering blemished sacrifices (1:8, 14), carelessness on the part of priests (2:7, 8), and neglecting the temple tithes (3:8–10). Such an emphasis fits well in the priest-dominated community of returned exiles, though Malachi's criticism of unworthy priests would surely not have been popular among the priests themselves. One period in which Malachi's preaching could have occurred would be the generation after the rebuilding of the temple, when the priests and people had grown complacent.

This at least was the situation that was encountered by Ezra and Nehemiah when they arrived in Jerusalem (around 458 and 445 b.c.). Since both leaders instituted reforms to rectify the very problems that are described in Malachi, perhaps the most likely time for the Book of Malachi is early in the reign of Artaxerxes I (465–424 b.c.), just before the arrival of the reformer Ezra in 458 b.c.

Malachi

1 **:1** A prophecy: The word of the LORD to Israel through Malachi.[a]

Israel Doubts God's Love

[2]"I have loved you," says the LORD.

"But you ask, 'How have you loved us?'

"Was not Esau Jacob's brother?" declares the LORD. "Yet I have loved Jacob, [3]but Esau I have hated, and I have turned his hill country into a wasteland and left his inheritance to the desert jackals."

[4]Edom may say, "Though we have been crushed, we will rebuild the ruins."

But this is what the LORD Almighty says: "They may build, but I will demolish. They will be called the Wicked Land, a people always under the wrath of the LORD. [5]You will see it with your own eyes and say, 'Great is the LORD—even beyond the borders of Israel!'

Breaking Covenant Through Blemished Sacrifices

[6]"A son honors his father, and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?" says the LORD Almighty.

"It is you priests who show contempt for my name.

"But you ask, 'How have we shown contempt for your name?'

[7]"By offering defiled food on my altar.

[a] *1 Malachi* means *my messenger.*

"But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?'

"By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. 8When you offer blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice lame or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.

9"Now plead with God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"—says the LORD Almighty.

10"Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you," says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. 11My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

12"But you profane it by saying, 'The Lord's table is defiled,' and, 'Its food is contemptible.' 13And you say, 'What a burden!' and you sniff at it contemptuously," says the LORD Almighty.

"When you bring injured, lame or diseased animals and offer them as sacrifices, should I accept them from your hands?" says the LORD. 14"Cursed is the cheat who has an acceptable male in his flock and vows to give it, but then sacrifices a blemished animal to the Lord. For I am a great king," says the LORD Almighty, "and my name is to be feared among the nations.

Additional Warning to the Priests

2 1"And now, you priests, this warning is for you. 2If you do not listen, and if you do not resolve to honor my name," says the LORD Almighty, "I will send a curse on you, and I will curse your blessings. Yes, I have already cursed them, because you have not resolved to honor me.

3"Because of you I will rebuke your descendants[a]; I will smear on your faces the dung from your festival sacrifices, and you will be carried off with it. 4And you will know that I have sent you this warning so that my covenant with Levi may continue," says the LORD Almighty. 5"My covenant was with him, a covenant of life and peace, and I gave them to him; this called for reverence and he revered me and stood in awe of my name. 6True instruction was in his mouth and nothing false was found on his lips. He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and turned many from sin.

7"For the lips of a priest ought to preserve knowledge, because he is the messenger of the LORD Almighty and people seek instruction from his mouth. 8But you have turned from the way and by your teaching have caused many to stumble; you have violated the covenant with Levi," says the LORD Almighty. 9"So I have caused you to be despised and humiliated before all the people, because you have not followed my ways but have shown partiality in matters of the law."

Breaking Covenant Through Divorce

10Do we not all have one Father[b]? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our ancestors by being unfaithful to one another?

11Judah has been unfaithful. A detestable thing has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem: Judah has desecrated the sanctuary the LORD loves by marrying women who worship a foreign god. 12As for the man who does this, whoever he may be, may the LORD remove him from the tents of Jacob[c]—even though he brings an offering to the LORD Almighty.

13Another thing you do: You flood the LORD's altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. 14You ask, "Why?" It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant.

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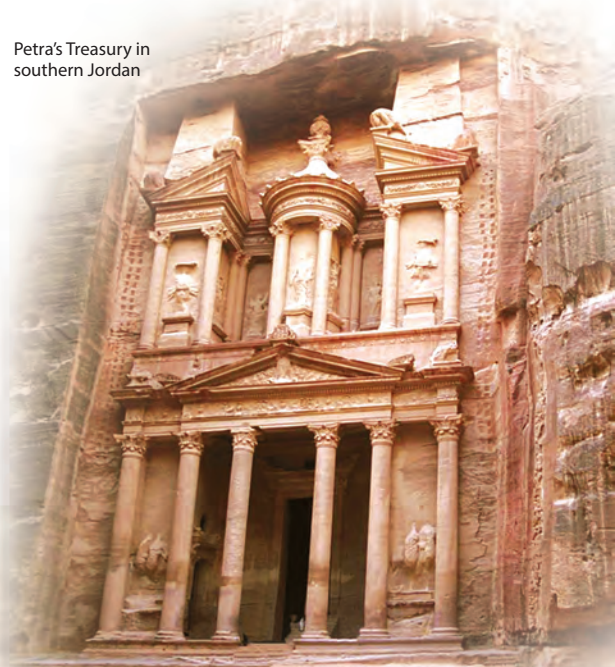
[a] *3* Or *will blight your grain* [b] *10* Or *father*
[c] *12* Or *12May the LORD remove from the tents of Jacob anyone who gives testimony in behalf of the man who does this*



Petra's Treasury in southern Jordan

15 Has not the one God made you? You belong to him in body and spirit. And what does the one God seek? Godly offspring.[a] So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful to the wife of your youth.

16 "The man who hates and divorces his wife," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "does violence to the one he should protect,"[b] says the LORD Almighty.

So be on your guard, and do not be unfaithful.

Breaking Covenant Through Injustice

17 You have wearied the LORD with your words.

"How have we wearied him?" you ask.

By saying, "All who do evil are good in the eyes of the LORD, and he is pleased with them" or "Where is the God of justice?"

3 1 "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the LORD will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, 4 and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the LORD, as in days gone by, as in former years.

5 "So I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me," says the LORD Almighty.

Breaking Covenant by Withholding Tithes

6 "I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed. 7 Ever since the time of your ancestors you have turned away from my decrees and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return to you," says the LORD Almighty.

"But you ask, 'How are we to return?'

8 "Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me.

"But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?'

"In tithes and offerings. 9 You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. 10 Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. 11 I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe," says the LORD Almighty. 12 "Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land," says the LORD Almighty.

Israel Speaks Arrogantly Against God

13 "You have spoken arrogantly against me," says the LORD.

"Yet you ask, 'What have we said against you?'

14 "You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? 15 But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly evildoers prosper, and even when they put God to the test, they get away with it.'"

The Faithful Remnant

16 Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name.

17 "On the day when I act," says the LORD Almighty, "they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him. 18 And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.

Judgment and Covenant Renewal

4[c] 1 "Surely the day is coming; it will burn like a furnace. All the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble, and the day that is coming

TIME CAPSULE		478 to 465 B.C.
478–477		Athens forms the Delian League alliance on island of Delos
472		The Etemenanki destroyed by the Persian king Xerxes I
469–399		Socrates, Greek philosopher
466		Athenians defeat Persian forces in Pamphylia
465–424		Artaxerxes I of Persia is known as Longimanus

[a] *15* The meaning of the Hebrew for the first part of this verse is uncertain. [b] *16* Or *"I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "because the man who divorces his wife covers his garment with violence,"* [c] In Hebrew texts 4:1-6 is numbered 3:19-24.

Sun God or Sun of Righteousness (Mal 4:2)

The prophet Malachi borrowed the imagery of sun worship when he mentioned the "rays" of the "sun of righteousness" (Mal 4:2). Another prophet, Ezekiel, saw in his temple vision some two dozen men worshiping the sun (Eze 8:16). For Ezekiel, this may have been the worst example of turning away from Yahweh. The prophets knew there was no sun god, but many Judeans still worshiped Shamash, the Canaanite sun deity.

The sun god was thought to traverse the heavens by day in his chariot drawn by horses. At night the god traveled the length of the underworld. Because this deity was able to see all the living and the dead, the sun god was called upon to witness a person's innocence, and was thus the god of justice.

Worship of the sun in Judah seems to have been a long-standing activity. The horses set up for the god at the temple (2Ki 23:11) indicate that worship of the sun was accepted by the priests of Yahweh. Possibly devotees kissed the back of their hands to honor the sun god (Job 31:27). Kissing was a sign of submission, as shown by Assyrian reliefs where dignitaries assume this attitude before the king.

Hymns to the sun god were used in temple worship. Even one of Israel's psalms (Ps 104:19, 22) appears to be an adapted form of an Egyptian hymn, composed about 1350 B.C. to Egypt's sun god Aten. The psalm was probably taken over from Egyptian or Canaanite sun worship and rewritten to praise Yahweh.

The winged disk was a popular symbol for the sun god in the ancient Near East. Malachi responds that justice or righteousness should not be sought from an Egyptian or Canaanite sun god, but from Yahweh, who "will rise with healing in its rays" (Mal 4:2).

will set them on fire," says the LORD Almighty. "Not a root or a branch will be left to them. 2But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays. And you will go out and frolic like well-fed calves. 3Then you will trample on the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I act," says the LORD Almighty.

4"Remember the law of my servant Moses, the decrees and laws I gave him at Horeb for all Israel.

5"See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. 6He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction."

TRANSITION

Ezra the Teacher of the Law

Artaxerxes I may have halted work on the walls of Jerusalem (Ezr 4:21), but it was still Persian policy to permit and encourage captive peoples to worship in their own ways. Following this policy, Artaxerxes allowed yet another group of exiled Jews to return to Jerusalem to establish the worship of Israel's God. Under the leadership of a priestly scribe named Ezra, the group arrived in Jerusalem in the king's 7th year (Ezr 7:8), which for Artaxerxes I was 458 b.c. Some scholars locate this return in 428 b.c. (the 37th year of Artaxerxes I) or in 398 b.c. (the 7th year of Artaxerxes II). See "The Book of Nehemiah" at Ne 1:1.

In the history of the returned exiles, the figure of Ezra towers above all others. If the return from captivity in Babylon was seen as a new Exodus (and it often was), then Ezra was seen as the new Moses. Like Moses, he led the people through the wilderness with only God for protection (Ezr 8:21–23), settled disputes (Ezr 9; 10), and proclaimed the law (Ne 8). The picture of Ezra in later Jewish tradition became even more Mosaic. There is even a legend that the Books of Moses were destroyed when the temple fell, but God miraculously restored them to Ezra.

At the same time, Ezra represents a new type of leader, never before seen in Israel. He was a religious reformer without a king. Although he arrived with the permission and approval of Artaxerxes, he did not use royal authority as a basis for his reforms. Furthermore, although much of Ezra's reform was concentrated on the temple, the temple was not the whole focus of his work, as it seemed to be to earlier priestly leaders such as Joshua.

Ezra's focus and authority was Scripture, which at that time meant the Books of Moses. In the years before the exile, Scripture had not been treated as particularly significant. Indeed, when a part of the Law of Moses was found and read during King Josiah's reign, the king and people had evidently never heard such a message before (2Ki 22:8–13). Israelite worship had been concentrated on the temple, not the law. During the exile, though, that changed. Without a temple, the Jews had to find a new center for their faith. They became the people of the Book. In this context, a new kind of religious leader arose. The Hebrew word for these leaders, usually translated "teachers," means in a sense "bookmen," learned men who were able to read and write. Ezra represents this new sort of leader. Although he is from the high priestly line of Aaron (Ezr 7:1–5), his true authority comes

Ezra, Nehemiah, and the Persian King (Ezr 7:1)

Three kings of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia (559–331 B.C.) all bore the name Artaxerxes. Although the Bible does not differentiate between these three, Artaxerxes I, known as Longimanus (465–424 B.C.), is probably the monarch who is mentioned during the period of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Artaxerxes I was the son of Xerxes. Their dynasty experienced serious difficulties during both their reigns. Rebels assassinated the father Xerxes as well as Artaxerxes' brother Darius. As king, Artaxerxes himself faced trouble on different fronts, dealing with an Egyptian rebellion, which was quelled in 455 B.C., and with a rebellion of one of his own satraps in 449 B.C. He was also fearful of a rebellion in Jerusalem. Possibly for this reason Artaxerxes was not interested in continuing the rebuilding of Jerusalem (Ezr 4:7–23).

In Artaxerxes' 7th year (458 B.C.) the Jewish teacher Ezra was sent from Babylon to Jerusalem as an emissary of the Persian king. Evidently Ezra was commissioned to organize the province of Judah along Persian designs (see Ezr 7:25, 26). Artaxerxes established tax-free status for the Jerusalem temple and its personnel (Ezr 7:24).

Later Artaxerxes did allow the walls of Jerusalem to be rebuilt at the request of Nehemiah (Ne 1:1—2:8). Nehemiah's mission to Jerusalem is dated in Artaxerxes' 20th year (445 B.C.), and the king's decision may show the city's relative political insignificance at that time.

from his standing as "a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses" (7:6).

In Ezra 7:27—9:15, the Book of Ezra shifts to a first-person memoir format. Ezra tells his own story. While this may not seem unusual to modern readers, it is a striking new development in biblical history. The thoughts and feelings of the human actor are more clear, but the thoughts of God are less accessible, being presented through that human's consciousness.

The arduous journey from Babylon to Jerusalem took four months, from the 1st month to the 5th month of the year (Ezr 7:9; 8:31). Soon upon arriving, Ezra had to address the practice of mixed marriages among the Jewish community in Judah and Jerusalem. This practice had also been a problem for the Israelites at the time of the Exodus from Egypt (Nu 25:1–9). In that original Exodus, the priest Phinehas put a stop to the practice. In this second Exodus, from Babylon, the priest Ezra took charge. An assembly was convened in the 9th month (Ezr 10:9), and a three-month investigation of the problem undertaken from the 10th month until the 1st month of the following year (10:16, 17). Ezra had to help the Jews arrive at a new understanding of themselves and of the distinctiveness of their faith in God.

• Ezra 7:1—10:44

Ezra

Ezra Comes to Jerusalem

7 :1 After these things, during the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra son of Seraiah, the son of Azariah, the son of Hilkiah,
2 the son of Shallum, the son of Zadok, the son of Ahitub,
3 the son of Amariah, the son of Azariah, the son of Meraioth,
4 the son of Zerahiah, the son of Uzzi, the son of Bukki,
5 the son of Abishua, the son of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the chief priest—
6 this Ezra came up from Babylon. He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given. The king had granted him everything he asked, for the hand of the LORD his God was on him.
7 Some of the Israelites, including priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers and temple servants, also came up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of King Artaxerxes.

8 Ezra arrived in Jerusalem in the fifth month of the seventh year of the king.
9 He had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him.
10 For Ezra had devoted himself to the study and observance of the Law of the LORD, and to teaching its decrees and laws in Israel.

King Artaxerxes' Letter to Ezra

11 This is a copy of the letter King Artaxerxes had given to Ezra the priest, a teacher of the Law, a man learned in matters concerning the commands and decrees of the LORD for Israel:

12 Artaxerxes, king of kings,

To Ezra the priest, teacher of the Law of the God of heaven:

Greetings.

13 Now I decree that any of the Israelites in my kingdom, including priests and Levites, who volunteer to go to Jerusalem with you, may go.
14 You are sent by the king and his seven advisers to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem with regard to the Law of your God, which is in your hand.
15 Moreover, you are to take with

The Levitical Singers (Ezr 7:24)

During the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, various groups were associated with the temple, including priests, Levites, gatekeepers, musicians, and temple servants (Ezr 7:24; Ne 7:73; 10:28). We should not think that these "musicians" of the temple were merely a church choir. The role of Levitical musicians went much beyond one of simply making music.

King David appointed Levitical musicians to accompany the ark of the covenant as it was brought up to Jerusalem (1Ch 15:16–25). They transformed the hard work of a "moving day" into a joyous, holy procession of Yahweh. Levitical musicians were also present under King Solomon when the ark of the covenant was placed in the temple and the first temple sacrifices were made (2Ch 5:7, 11, 12).

Later Judahite kings employed musicians on important occasions. In the Passover celebrations led by kings Hezekiah (2Ch 30:21, 22) and Josiah (2Ch 35:15, 16), Levitical musicians accompanied the sacrifices with songs of praise. Before King Jehoshaphat led his army out to battle a coalition of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir (Edom), the Levitical musicians sang praises in the temple (2Ch 20:18, 19).

The Chronicler reports a function of the Levitical musicians that is surprising to us today. When Jehoshaphat led his forces into battle, the musicians were advancing before the Judahite army (2Ch 20:21, 22). It is common for armies to go into battle by marching to the beat of music. In addition, song or music, particularly the sound of horns or trumpets, was often used in antiquity as a way of communicating battle orders above the din of battle (Jdg 7:16–18; Job 39:24, 25). Thus the Levitical musicians had been an important group before the exile, but still were in Ezra's time, as they were granted tax exemption by the Persian king Artaxerxes (Ezr 7:24).

you the silver and gold that the king and his advisers have freely given to the God of Israel, whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, [16]together with all the silver and gold you may obtain from the province of Babylon, as well as the freewill offerings of the people and priests for the temple of their God in Jerusalem. [17]With this money be sure to buy bulls, rams and male lambs, together with their grain offerings and drink offerings, and sacrifice them on the altar of the temple of your God in Jerusalem.

[18]You and your fellow Israelites may then do whatever seems best with the rest of the silver and gold, in accordance with the will of your God. [19]Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God. [20]And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you are responsible to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury.

[21]Now I, King Artaxerxes, decree that all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates are to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, the teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you— [22]up to a hundred talents[a] of silver, a hundred cors[b] of wheat, a hundred baths[c] of wine, a hundred baths[c] of olive oil, and salt without limit. [23]Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should his wrath fall on the realm of the king and of his sons? [24]You are also to know that you have no authority to impose taxes, tribute or duty on any of the priests, Levites, musicians, gatekeepers, temple servants or other workers at this house of God.

[25]And you, Ezra, in accordance with the wisdom of your God, which you possess, appoint magistrates and judges to administer justice to all the people of Trans-Euphrates—all who know the laws of your God. And you are to teach any who do not know them. [26]Whoever does not obey the law of your God and the law of the king must surely be punished by death, banishment, confiscation of property, or imprisonment.[d]

[27]Praise be to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, who has put it into the king's heart to bring honor to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem in this way [28]and who has extended his good favor to me before the king and his advisers and all the king's powerful officials. Because the hand of the LORD my God was on me, I took courage and gathered leaders from Israel to go up with me.

Politics & Government
Kings were considered representatives of the gods of their nations. In Egypt, the pharaoh was honored as if he were divine. The personal, absolute power of kings on their throne was felt on the local level, far from the palace and court, presumably because there was no competing power. The Bible presents God as having direct access to the will of any reigning monarch (Ezr 7:27; Pr 21:1).

[a] *22* That is, about 3 3/4 tons or about 3.4 metric tons
[b] *22* That is, probably about 18 tons or about 16 metric tons
[c] *22* That is, about 600 gallons or about 2,200 liters
[d] *26* The text of 7:12-26 is in Aramaic.

List of the Family Heads Returning With Ezra

8 [1]These are the family heads and those registered with them who came up with me from Babylon during the reign of King Artaxerxes:

[2]of the descendants of Phinehas, Gershom;
of the descendants of Ithamar, Daniel;
of the descendants of David, Hattush [3]of the descendants of Shekaniah;

of the descendants of Parosh, Zechariah, and with him were registered 150 men;
[4]of the descendants of Pahath-Moab, Elihoenai son of Zerahiah, and with him 200 men;
[5]of the descendants of Zattu,[a] Shekaniah son of Jahaziel, and with him 300 men;
[6]of the descendants of Adin, Ebed son of Jonathan, and with him 50 men;
[7]of the descendants of Elam, Jeshaiah son of Athaliah, and with him 70 men;
[8]of the descendants of Shephatiah, Zebadiah son of Michael, and with him 80 men;
[9]of the descendants of Joab, Obadiah son of Jehiel, and with him 218 men;
[10]of the descendants of Bani,[b] Shelomith son of Josiphiah, and with him 160 men;
[11]of the descendants of Bebai, Zechariah son of Bebai, and with him 28 men;
[12]of the descendants of Azgad, Johanan son of Hakkatan, and with him 110 men;
[13]of the descendants of Adonikam, the last ones, whose names were Eliphelet, Jeuel and Shemaiah, and with them 60 men;
[14]of the descendants of Bigvai, Uthai and Zakkur, and with them 70 men.

The Return to Jerusalem

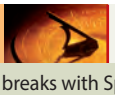
[15]I assembled them at the canal that flows toward Ahava, and we camped there three days. When I checked among the people and the priests, I found no Levites there. [16]So I summoned Eliezer, Ariel, Shemaiah, Elnathan, Jarib, Elnathan, Nathan, Zechariah and Meshullam, who were leaders, and Joiarib and Elnathan, who were men of learning, [17]and I ordered them to go to Iddo, the leader in Kasiphia. I told them what to say to Iddo and his fellow Levites, the temple servants in Kasiphia, so that they might bring attendants to us for the house of our God. [18]Because the gracious hand of our God was on us, they brought us Sherebiah, a capable man, from the descendants of Mahli son of Levi, the son of Israel, and Sherebiah's sons and brothers, 18 in all; [19]and Hashabiah, together with Jeshaiah from the descendants of Merari, and his brothers and nephews, 20 in all. [20]They also brought 220 of the temple servants—a body that David and the officials had established to assist the Levites. All were registered by name.

[21]There, by the Ahava Canal, I proclaimed a fast, so that we might humble ourselves before our God and ask him for a safe journey for us and our children, with all our possessions. [22]I was ashamed to ask the king for soldiers and horsemen to protect us from enemies on the road, because we had told the king, "The gracious hand of our God is on everyone who looks to him, but his great anger is against all who forsake him." [23]So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.

[24]Then I set apart twelve of the leading priests, namely, Sherebiah, Hashabiah and ten of their brothers, [25]and I weighed out to them the offering of silver and gold and the articles that the king, his advisers, his officials and all Israel present there had donated for the house of our God. [26]I weighed out to them 650 talents[c] of silver, silver articles weighing 100 talents,[d] 100 talents[d] of gold, [27]20 bowls of gold valued at 1,000 darics,[e] and two fine articles of polished bronze, as precious as gold.

[28]I said to them, "You as well as these articles are consecrated to the LORD. The silver and gold are a freewill offering to the LORD, the God of your ancestors. [29]Guard them carefully until you weigh them out in the chambers of the house of the LORD in Jerusalem before the leading priests and the Levites and the family heads of Israel." [30]Then the priests and Levites received the silver and gold and sacred articles that had been weighed out to be taken to the house of our God in Jerusalem.

[31]On the twelfth day of the first month we set

TIME CAPSULE		464 to 455 B.C.
464	Athens breaks with Sparta to ally with Argos	
462–461	Pericles leads Athens to replace aristocratic constitution with democracy	
460–404	Conflict between Sparta and Athens	
458	Jewish teacher Ezra sent from Babylon to Jerusalem	
455–403	Archives from the house of Murashu	

[a] *5* Some Septuagint manuscripts (also 1 Esdras 8:32); Hebrew does not have *Zattu*. [b] *10* Some Septuagint manuscripts (also 1 Esdras 8:36); Hebrew does not have *Bani*.
[c] *26* That is, about 24 tons or about 22 metric tons
[d] *26* That is, about 3 3/4 tons or about 3.4 metric tons
[e] *27* That is, about 19 pounds or about 8.4 kilograms

out from the Ahava Canal to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was on us, and he protected us from enemies and bandits along the way. 32So we arrived in Jerusalem, where we rested three days.

33On the fourth day, in the house of our God, we weighed out the silver and gold and the sacred articles into the hands of Meremoth son of Uriah, the priest. Eleazar son of Phinehas was with him, and so were the Levites Jozabad son of Jeshua and Noadiah son of Binnui. 34Everything was accounted for by number and weight, and the entire weight was recorded at that time.

35Then the exiles who had returned from captivity sacrificed burnt offerings to the God of Israel: twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven male lambs and, as a sin offering,[a] twelve male goats. All this was a burnt offering to the LORD. 36They also delivered the king's orders to the royal satraps and to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, who then gave assistance to the people and to the house of God.

Ezra's Prayer About Intermarriage

9 1After these things had been done, the leaders came to me and said, "The people of Israel, including the priests and the Levites, have not kept themselves separate from the neighboring peoples with their detestable practices, like those of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. 2They have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, and have mingled the holy race with the peoples around them. And the leaders and officials have led the way in this unfaithfulness."

3When I heard this, I tore my tunic and cloak, pulled hair from my head and beard and sat down appalled. 4Then everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel gathered around me because of this unfaithfulness of the exiles. And I sat there appalled until the evening sacrifice.

5Then, at the evening sacrifice, I rose from my self-abasement, with my tunic and cloak torn, and fell on my knees with my hands spread out to the LORD my God 6and prayed:

"I am too ashamed and disgraced, my God, to lift up my face to you, because our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens. 7From the days of our ancestors until now, our guilt has been great. Because of our sins, we and our kings and our priests have been subjected to the sword and captivity, to pillage and humiliation at the hand of foreign kings, as it is today.

8"But now, for a brief moment, the LORD our God has been gracious in leaving us a remnant and giving us a firm place[b] in his sanctuary, and so our God gives light to our eyes and a little relief in our bondage. 9Though we are slaves, our God has not forsaken us in our bondage. He has shown us kindness in the sight of the kings of Persia: He has granted us new life to rebuild the house of our God and repair its ruins, and he has given us a wall of protection in Judah and Jerusalem.

10"But now, our God, what can we say

[a] *35* Or *purification offering* [b] *8* Or *a foothold*

The Return from Exile
Cyrus the Persian captured Babylon in 539 b.c., opening the way for captive Judah to return to her homeland. The Edict of Cyrus in 538 b.c. allowed Jewish exiles not only to return to Judah, but also to rebuild the temple. Two major expeditions are reported among the several returning caravans. The first led by Sheshbazzar occurred soon after the edict, possibly in 537 b.c. The second led by Ezra is placed in either 458, 428, or 398 b.c.

after this? For we have forsaken the commands [11]you gave through your servants the prophets when you said: 'The land you are entering to possess is a land polluted by the corruption of its peoples. By their detestable practices they have filled it with their impurity from one end to the other. [12]Therefore, do not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters for your sons. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them at any time, that you may be strong and eat the good things of the land and leave it to your children as an everlasting inheritance.'

[13]"What has happened to us is a result of our evil deeds and our great guilt, and yet, our God, you have punished us less than our sins deserved and have given us a remnant like this. [14]Shall we then break your commands again and intermarry with the peoples who commit such detestable practices? Would you not be angry enough with us to destroy us, leaving us no remnant or survivor? [15]LORD, the God of Israel, you are righteous! We are left this day as a remnant. Here we are before you in our guilt, though because of it not one of us can stand in your presence."

The People's Confession of Sin

10 [1]While Ezra was praying and confessing, weeping and throwing himself down before the house of God, a large crowd of Israelites—men, women and children—gathered around him. They too wept bitterly. [2]Then Shekaniah son of Jehiel, one of the descendants of Elam, said to Ezra, "We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples around us. But in spite of this, there is still hope for Israel. [3]Now let us make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children, in accordance with the counsel of my lord and of those who fear the commands of our God. Let it be done according to the Law. [4]Rise up; this matter is in your hands. We will support you, so take courage and do it."

[5]So Ezra rose up and put the leading priests and Levites and all Israel under oath to do what had been suggested. And they took the oath. [6]Then Ezra withdrew from before the house of God and went to the room of Jehohanan son of Eliashib. While he was there, he ate no food and drank no water, because he continued to mourn over the unfaithfulness of the exiles.

[7]A proclamation was then issued throughout Judah and Jerusalem for all the exiles to assemble in Jerusalem. [8]Anyone who failed to appear within three days would forfeit all his property, in accordance with the decision of the officials and elders, and would himself be expelled from the assembly of the exiles.

[9]Within the three days, all the men of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem. And on the twentieth day of the ninth month, all the people were sitting in the square before the house of God, greatly distressed by the occasion and because of the rain. [10]Then Ezra the priest stood up and said to them, "You have been unfaithful; you have married foreign women, adding to Israel's guilt. [11]Now honor[a] the LORD, the God of your ancestors, and do his will. Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives."

[12]The whole assembly responded with a loud voice: "You are right! We must do as you say. [13]But there are many people here and it is the rainy season; so we cannot stand outside. Besides, this matter cannot be taken care of in a day or two, because we have sinned greatly in this thing. [14]Let our officials act for the whole assembly. Then let everyone in our towns who has married a foreign woman come at a set time, along with the elders and judges of each town, until the fierce anger of our God in this matter is turned away from us." [15]Only Jonathan son of Asahel and Jahzeiah son of Tikvah, supported by Meshullam and Shabbethai the Levite, opposed this.

[16]So the exiles did as was proposed. Ezra the priest selected men who were family heads, one from each family division, and all of them designated by name. On the first day of the tenth month they sat down to investigate the cases, [17]and by the first day of the first month they finished dealing with all the men who had married foreign women.

Those Guilty of Intermarriage

[18]Among the descendants of the priests, the following had married foreign women:

From the descendants of Joshua son of Jozadak, and his brothers: Maaseiah, Eliezer, Jarib and Gedaliah. [19](They all gave their hands in pledge to put away their wives, and for their guilt they each presented a ram from the flock as a guilt offering.)

[20]From the descendants of Immer:
Hanani and Zebadiah.

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[a] *11* Or *Now make confession to*

21 From the descendants of Harim:
Maaseiah, Elijah, Shemaiah, Jehiel and Uzziah.
22 From the descendants of Pashhur:
Elioenai, Maaseiah, Ishmael, Nethanel, Jozabad and Elasah.

23 Among the Levites:

Jozabad, Shimei, Kelaiah (that is, Kelita), Pethahiah, Judah and Eliezer.
24 From the musicians:
Eliashib.
From the gatekeepers:
Shallum, Telem and Uri.

25 And among the other Israelites:

From the descendants of Parosh:
Ramiah, Izziah, Malkijah, Mijamin, Eleazar, Malkijah and Benaiah.
26 From the descendants of Elam:
Mattaniah, Zechariah, Jehiel, Abdi, Jeremoth and Elijah.
27 From the descendants of Zattu:
Elioenai, Eliashib, Mattaniah, Jeremoth, Zabad and Aziza.
28 From the descendants of Bebai:
Jehohanan, Hananiah, Zabbai and Athlai.
29 From the descendants of Bani:
Meshullam, Malluk, Adaiah, Jashub, Sheal and Jeremoth.
30 From the descendants of Pahath-Moab:
Adna, Kelal, Benaiah, Maaseiah, Mattaniah, Bezalel, Binnui and Manasseh.
31 From the descendants of Harim:
Eliezer, Ishijah, Malkijah, Shemaiah, Shimeon, 32 Benjamin, Malluk and Shemariah.
33 From the descendants of Hashum:
Mattenai, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Jeremai, Manasseh and Shimei.
34 From the descendants of Bani:
Maadai, Amram, Uel, 35 Benaiah, Bedeiah, Keluhi, 36 Vaniah, Meremoth, Eliashib, 37 Mattaniah, Mattenai and Jaasu.
38 From the descendants of Binnui:[a]
Shimei, 39 Shelemiah, Nathan, Adaiah, 40 Maknadebai, Shashai, Sharai, 41 Azarel, Shelemiah, Shemariah, 42 Shallum, Amariah and Joseph.
43 From the descendants of Nebo:
Jeiel, Mattithiah, Zabad, Zebina, Jaddai, Joel and Benaiah.

44 All these had married foreign women, and some of them had children by these wives.[b]

[a] *37,38* See Septuagint (also 1 Esdras 9:34); Hebrew *Jaasu 38and Bani and Binnui,* [b] *44* Or *and they sent them away with their children*

TRANSITION

The Book of Nehemiah

Closely associated with the Book of Ezra is the Book of Nehemiah. Where Ezra was the religious leader in Jerusalem, Nehemiah became the secular leader, the official governor of the Persian province of Judah (Ne 5:14). Nehemiah's great concern was the ruined state of the city, left without walls since Artaxerxes I had earlier halted the repairs (Ezr 4:21). Using his position as a trusted servant in the inner court of Artaxerxes, Nehemiah obtained permission to resume that labor and complete the walls of Jerusalem. He began his work in the 20th year of Artaxerxes' reign (445 b.c.; Ne 1:1).

The chronology of Ezra and Nehemiah is perplexing. They seem to have been contemporaries in Jerusalem, but neither makes much mention of the other. Although the Book of Nehemiah recounts one incident involving Ezra (Ezra's reading of the Law of Moses to the people; Ne 8) and twice mentions the two leaders together (Ne 8:9; 12:26), Ezra and Nehemiah appear to have carried on their reforms separately. Also puzzling is that Ezra put an end to the practice of intermarriage between the returned Jews and the people of the land (Ezra 9; 10), yet Nehemiah had to deal with the same problem (Ne 13:23–28). The priestly laxity that Nehemiah encountered (13:4–9) is especially strange coming so soon after Ezra's reforms.

For these reasons, many scholars believe that Ezra actually came after Nehemiah, perhaps during the reign of Artaxerxes II (404–359 b.c.). If Ezra arrived in the 7th year of this Artaxerxes' reign (Ezr 7:8), thus in about 398 b.c., Ezra's work would have been the final word in the reform efforts. Using this date, however, makes it impossible for Ezra and Nehemiah to have been contemporaries, despite Ne 8:9; 12:26. Furthermore, Ezra's proclamation of the Law of Moses (Ne 8) would have occurred long after Nehemiah's time.

Another proposal speculates that the number now reading "7th year" in Ezra 7:7, 8 was damaged, and originally read "37th year." If Ezra arrived in the 37th year of Artaxerxes I (about 428 b.c.), Ezra's reforms would have occurred after those of Nehemiah, but still during Nehemiah's years in Jerusalem. To change Ezra 7:7, 8 hypothetically, though, is a questionable basis for such a conclusion, and the traditional order of Ezr 7—Ne 13 seems most likely. Ezra's reforms began in 458 b.c., but like all religious revivals, they did not affect everyone nor did they last forever. When Nehemiah arrived 13 years later, there was still much to be done.

As in the Book of Ezra, parts of the Book of Nehemiah are told in the her o's own words. From these portions, called Nehemiah's memoirs, one not only learns the history, but much about Nehemiah himself: an impatient, often

THE MINISTRIES OF EZRA AND NEHEMIAH

Nehemiah's arrival in Jerusalem in 445 B.C. is supported by contemporary records from Elephantine. But whether Ezra arrived in 458 B.C., well before Nehemiah, is questioned. Ezra led several reforms. Yet Nehemiah found many of the immoral behaviors which Ezra supposedly corrected still being practiced. So some scholars suppose Ezra came to Jerusalem after Nehemiah, maybe in 428 or 398 B.C.

Date	Event	Reference	Chronology	Comments
538 B.C.	The Edict of Cyrus allows the first exiles to return to Jerusalem under Sheshbazzar	Ezra 1:1–11	Cyrus conquered Babylon in 539 B.C	Sheshbazzar may be another name for Zerubbabel (Ezr 2:2; 3:8; Zec 4:6)
515 B.C.	The temple is completed and dedicated	Ezra 6:13–18	The 6th year of Darius I is 515 B.C.	
458 B.C.	Ezra arrives in Jerusalem	Ezra 7:7, 8	The 7th year of Artaxerxes I is 458 B.C.	This dating puts Ezra in Jerusalem before Nehemiah
445 B.C.	Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem	Ne 2:1	The 20th year of Artaxerxes I is 445 B.C.	Records from Elephantine confirm that Nehemiah came during the reign of Artaxerxes I
433 B.C.	Nehemiah returns to the Persian court for an unknown period of time	Ne 5:14; 13:6	The 32nd year of Artaxerxes I is 433 B.C.	
428 B.C.	Another proposal for Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem	Ezra 7:7, 8	The 37th year of Artaxerxes I is 428 B.C	For this date, Ezra 7:7 has to be changed from 7th to 37th year
398 B.C.	A third proposal for Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem	Ezra 7:7, 8	The 7th year of Artaxerxes II (not Artaxerxes I) is 398 B.C.	The Bible does not include the numeral I or II to identify the king precisely

difficult, but incorruptible man who sought no human reward but only to serve his God (Ne 13:14, 22, 31).

• **Nehemiah 1:1–11**

Nehemiah

Nehemiah's Prayer

1:1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, [2]Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

[3]They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

[4]When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. [5]Then I said:

"LORD, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, [6]let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. [7]We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

8 "Remember the instruction you gave
your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are
unfaithful, I will scatter you among the na-
tions, 9 but if you return to me and obey
my commands, then even if your exiled
people are at the farthest horizon, I will
gather them from there and bring them to
the place I have chosen as a dwelling for
my Name.'
10 "They are your servants and your peo-
ple, whom you redeemed by your great
strength and your mighty hand. 11 Lord, let
your ear be attentive to the prayer of this
your servant and to the prayer of your ser-
vants who delight in revering your name.
Give your servant success today by grant-
ing him favor in the presence of this man."

I was cupbearer to the king.

TRANSITION

Nehemiah Sent to Jerusalem

Kislev was the Babylonian name for the 9th month of the Jewish calendar, corresponding to November–December. At that time Nehemiah had received the disquieting news from Jerusalem concerning distress among the returned exiles (Ne 1:1–3). After more than three months had passed, Nehemiah was in the king's presence during Nisan, the 1st month of the Jewish calendar (Ne 2:1). Both Kislev and Nisan are reckoned in the 20th year of Artaxerxes (445 b.c.).

• **Nehemiah 2:1—6:14**

Nehemiah

Artaxerxes Sends Nehemiah to Jerusalem

2 :1 In the month of Nisan in the twentieth
year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was
brought for him, I took the wine and gave it
to the king. I had not been sad in his presence
before, 2 so the king asked me, "Why does your
face look so sad when you are not ill? This can
be nothing but sadness of heart."

I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the
king, "May the king live forever! Why should
my face not look sad when the city where my
ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates
have been destroyed by fire?"
4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I
answered the king, "If it pleases the king and
if your servant has found favor in his sight, let
him send me to the city in Judah where my an-
cestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."
6 Then the king, with the queen sitting beside
him, asked me, "How long will your journey
take, and when will you get back?" It pleased
the king to send me; so I set a time.
7 I also said to him, "If it pleases the king,
may I have letters to the governors of Trans-
Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-
conduct until I arrive in Judah? 8 And may I
have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the royal park,
so he will give me timber to make beams for
the gates of the citadel by the temple and for
the city wall and for the residence I will occu-
py?" And because the gracious hand of my God
was on me, the king granted my requests. 9 So I
went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and
gave them the king's letters. The king had also
sent army officers and cavalry with me.
10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah
the Ammonite official heard about this, they
were very much disturbed that someone had
come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

Nehemiah Inspects Jerusalem's Walls

11 I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there
three days 12 I set out during the night with a
few others. I had not told anyone what my God
had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There
were no mounts with me except the one I was
riding on.
13 By night I went out through the Valley Gate
toward the Jackal[a] Well and the Dung Gate,
examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had
been broken down, and its gates, which had
been destroyed by fire. 14 Then I moved on to-
ward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool,
but there was not enough room for my mount
to get through; 15 so I went up the valley by
night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back
and reentered through the Valley Gate. 16 The
officials did not know where I had gone or what
I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing
to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials
or any others who would be doing the work.
17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble
we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates

Arts & Literature

Ancient itineraries like Nehemiah's (Ne 2:11–15) are interesting because they can be compared with the features of the land and any buildings that remain on it, in ruins or intact. The Greek writer Pausanias, who lived in the 2nd century A.D., wrote an elaborate account of his travels in Greece. He visited notable buildings and monuments that often can be seen today essentially as he described them.

[a] *13* Or *Serpent* or *Fig*

Geshem the Arab (Ne 2:19)

Nehemiah names three specific opponents who attempted to thwart his plans for rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem in the mid-5th century B.C. (Ne 2:19). Sanballat the Horonite is identified as the governor of Samaria in documents from the Jewish colony at Elephantine in southern Egypt. Tobiah, described as an "Ammonite official," was possibly a governor over Ammon. The third opponent, Geshem the Arab, likewise was a governor under Persian rule.

The name "Geshem," which probably means "big man" in Arabic, is often mentioned in Nabatean and northern Arabian inscriptions. Geshem was apparently an important person, since Sanballat threatened to send a letter to the Persian king quoting Geshem. The letter would have contained a false report accusing the Jews of planning to rebel against Persian rule (Ne 6:5, 6).

Three sources possibly refer to the Geshem who opposed Nehemiah. A 5th-century B.C. Aramaic inscription from Egypt refers to a certain "Qaynu, the son of Gashmu, the king of Kedar." Kedar was one of the main Arab groups in this period. Moreover, both a contemporary account and a king list from Dedan mention Gashmu. If Nehemiah's "Geshem the Arab" was indeed a Kedarite king, his influence would have stretched from northern Arabia to include Judah.

have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." 18I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

19But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?"

20I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

Builders of the Wall

3 1Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. 2The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zakkur son of Imri built next to them.

3The Fish Gate was rebuilt by the sons of Hassenaah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. 4Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section. Next to him Meshullam son of Berekiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs, and next to him Zadok son of Baana also made repairs. 5The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.[a]

6The Jeshanah[b] Gate was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid its beams and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place. 7Next to them, repairs were made by men from Gibeon and Mizpah—Melatiah of Gibeon and Jadon of Meronoth—places under the authority of the governor of Trans-Euphrates. 8Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the next section; and Hananiah, one of the perfume-makers, made repairs next to that. They restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. 9Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section. 10Adjoining this, Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house, and Hattush son of Hashabneiah made repairs next to him. 11Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. 12Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section with the help of his daughters.

13The Valley Gate was repaired by Hanun and the residents of Zanoah. They rebuilt it and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place. They also repaired a thousand cubits[c] of the wall as far as the Dung Gate.

14The Dung Gate was repaired by Malkijah son of Rekab, ruler of the district of Beth Hakkerem. He rebuilt it and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place.

15The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shallun son of Kol-Hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah. He rebuilt it, roofing it over and putting its doors and bolts and bars in place. He also repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam,[d] by the King's Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of David. 16Beyond him, Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of a half-district of Beth Zur, made repairs up to a point opposite the

[a] *5* Or *their Lord* or *the governor* [b] *6* Or *Old* [c] *13* That is, about 1,500 feet or about 450 meters [d] *15* Hebrew *Shelah,* a variant of *Shiloah,* that is, Siloam

tombs[a] of David, as far as the artificial pool and the House of the Heroes.

17Next to him, the repairs were made by the Levites under Rehum son of Bani. Beside him, Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, carried out repairs for his district. 18Next to him, the repairs were made by their fellow Levites under Binnui[b] son of Henadad, ruler of the other half-district of Keilah. 19Next to him, Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section, from a point facing the ascent to the armory as far as the angle of the wall. 20Next to him, Baruch son of Zabbai zealously repaired another section, from the angle to the entrance of the house of Eliashib the high priest. 21Next to him, Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired another section, from the entrance of Eliashib's house to the end of it.

22The repairs next to him were made by the priests from the surrounding region. 23Beyond them, Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs in front of their house; and next to them, Azariah son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs beside his house. 24Next to him, Binnui son of Henadad repaired another section, from Azariah's house to the angle and the corner, 25and Palal son of Uzai worked opposite the angle and the tower projecting from the upper palace near the court of the guard. Next to him, Pedaiah son of Parosh 26and the temple servants living on the hill of Ophel made repairs up to a point opposite the Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower. 27Next to them, the men of Tekoa repaired another section, from the great projecting tower to the wall of Ophel.

28Above the Horse Gate, the priests made repairs, each in front of his own house. 29Next to them, Zadok son of Immer made repairs opposite his house. Next to him, Shemaiah son of Shekaniah, the guard at the East Gate, made repairs. 30Next to him, Hananiah son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. Next to them, Meshullam son of Berekiah made repairs opposite his living quarters. 31Next to him, Malkijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and the merchants, opposite the Inspection Gate, and as far as the room above the corner; 32and between the room above the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and merchants made repairs.

Opposition to the Rebuilding

4[c] 1When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, 2and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"

3Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!"

4Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. 5Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of[d] the builders.

6So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

7But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. 8They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. 9But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.

10Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall."

TIME CAPSULE		455 to 449 B.C.
455		Artaxerxes I quells an Egyptian rebellion
454		Athens's fleet destroyed while supporting Egypt against Persia
450		Overshot waterwheel used in the marketplace, Athens
450		Winches in use in Greece
449		Artaxerxes I halts rebellion of one of his own satraps
449		The Peace of Callias negotiated between Persia and Athens

[a] *16* Hebrew; Septuagint, some Vulgate manuscripts and Syriac *tomb* [b] *18* Two Hebrew manuscripts and Syriac (see also Septuagint and verse 24); most Hebrew manuscripts *Bavvai* [c] In Hebrew texts 4:1-6 is numbered 3:33-38, and 4:7-23 is numbered 4:1-17. [d] *5* Or *have aroused your anger before*

11 Also our enemies said, "Before they know
it or see us, we will be right there among them
and will kill them and put an end to the work."
12 Then the Jews who lived near them came
and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn,
they will attack us."
13 Therefore I stationed some of the people
behind the lowest points of the wall at the ex-
posed places, posting them by families, with
their swords, spears and bows. 14 After I looked
things over, I stood up and said to the nobles,
the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't
be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is
great and awesome, and fight for your families,
your sons and your daughters, your wives and
your homes."
15 When our enemies heard that we were
aware of their plot and that God had frustrated
it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own
work.
16 From that day on, half of my men did the
work, while the other half were equipped with
spears, shields, bows and armor. The officers
posted themselves behind all the people of Ju-
dah 17 who were building the wall. Those who
carried materials did their work with one hand
and held a weapon in the other, 18 and each of
the builders wore his sword at his side as he
worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet
stayed with me.
19 Then I said to the nobles, the officials and
the rest of the people, "The work is extensive
and spread out, and we are widely separated
from each other along the wall. 20 Wherev-
er you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us
there. Our God will fight for us!"
21 So we continued the work with half the
men holding spears, from the first light of dawn
till the stars came out. 22 At that time I also said
to the people, "Have every man and his help-
er stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can
serve us as guards by night and as workers by
day." 23 Neither I nor my brothers nor my men
nor the guards with me took off our clothes;
each had his weapon, even when he went for
water.[a]

Nehemiah Helps the Poor

5 1 Now the men and their wives raised a great
outcry against their fellow Jews. 2 Some
were saying, "We and our sons and daughters
are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay
alive, we must get grain."
3 Others were saying, "We are mortgaging
our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get
grain during the famine."
4 Still others were saying, "We have had to
borrow money to pay the king's tax on our
fields and vineyards. 5 Although we are of the
same flesh and blood as our fellow Jews and
though our children are as good as theirs, yet
we have to subject our sons and daughters to
slavery. Some of our daughters have already
been enslaved, but we are powerless, because
our fields and our vineyards belong to others."
6 When I heard their outcry and these charg-
es, I was very angry. 7 I pondered them in my
mind and then accused the nobles and officials.
I told them, "You are charging your own people
interest!" So I called together a large meeting
to deal with them 8 and said: "As far as possible,
we have bought back our fellow Jews who were
sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your
own people, only for them to be sold back to
us!" They kept quiet, because they could find
nothing to say.
9 So I continued, "What you are doing is not
right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God
to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?
10 I and my brothers and my men are also lend-
ing the people money and grain. But let us stop
charging interest! 11 Give back to them imme-
diately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and

[a] *23* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.

Limestone cylinder-seal, Mesopotamia, depicts the worship of the sun-god Shamash

houses, and also the interest you are charging them—one percent of the money, grain, new wine and olive oil."

12"We will give it back," they said. "And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say."

Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. 13I also shook out the folds of my robe and said, "In this way may God shake out of their house and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may such a person be shaken out and emptied!"

At this the whole assembly said, "Amen," and praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

14Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. 15But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels[a] of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. 16Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we[b] did not acquire any land.

17Furthermore, a hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations. 18Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some poultry were prepared for me, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine of all kinds. In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because the demands were heavy on these people.

19Remember me with favor, my God, for all I have done for these people.

Further Opposition to the Rebuilding

6 1When word came to Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab and the rest of our enemies that I had rebuilt the wall and not a gap was left in it—though up to that time I had not set the doors in the gates— 2Sanballat and Geshem sent me this message: "Come, let us meet together in one of the villages[c] on the plain of Ono."

But they were scheming to harm me; 3so I sent messengers to them with this reply: "I am carrying on a great project and cannot go down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and go down to you?" 4Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.

5Then, the fifth time, Sanballat sent his aide to me with the same message, and in his hand was an unsealed letter 6in which was written:

> "It is reported among the nations—and Geshem[d] says it is true—that you and the Jews are plotting to revolt, and therefore you are building the wall. Moreover, according to these reports you are about to become their king 7and have even appointed prophets to make this proclamation about you in Jerusalem: 'There is a king in Judah!' Now this report will get back to the king; so come, let us meet together."

8I sent him this reply: "Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head."

9They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed."

But I prayed, "Now strengthen my hands."

10One day I went to the house of Shemaiah son of Delaiah, the son of Mehetabel, who was shut in at his home. He said, "Let us meet in the house of God, inside the temple, and let us close the temple doors, because men are coming to kill you—by night they are coming to kill you."

11But I said, "Should a man like me run away? Or should someone like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!" 12I realized that God had not sent him, but that he had prophesied against me because Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him. 13He had been hired to intimidate me so that I would commit a sin by doing this, and then they would give me a bad name to discredit me.

14Remember Tobiah and Sanballat, my God, because of what they have done; remember also the prophet Noadiah and how she and the rest of the prophets have been trying to intimidate me.

Culture & Society
The economy of the ancient world had practically no middle class. Like modern corporations, rich men and rulers had many dependents who, socially, were retainers, servants, and slaves. The powerful person was responsible to protect his clients and slaves. It was a mark of shame to a ruler if his dependents were not protected or did not have enough to eat "at his table" (Ne 5:17).

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[a] *15* That is, about 1 pound or about 460 grams [b] *16* Most Hebrew manuscripts; some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint, Vulgate and Syriac *I* [c] *2* Or *in Kephirim* [d] *6* Hebrew *Gashmu,* a variant of *Geshem*

Aramaic Writings at Elephantine (Ne 7:7)

Elephantine is an island in the Nile River in Upper Egypt, near the city of Aswan. The Judeans who settled in Egypt during the Babylonian exile developed thriving Jewish communities there. The Elephantine Jewish colony left an impressive collection of papyri and ostraca (fragmented pottery, often with portions of inscriptions on them). Many of these papyri and ostraca tell us much about the world of these 5th-century B.C. Jews.

In this period, Elephantine was a mercenary garrison of the Achaemenid dynasty of Persia (559–331 B.C.). The Jews of Elephantine wrote in the Aramaic language, the international language of commerce at that time. Included in the Aramaic collection are many literary works which come from the time of Darius I (522–486 B.C.), confirming that this Persian king sent documents throughout the empire (see Da 6:25). Over thirty private letters in Aramaic have been uncovered, as well as numerous legal contracts concerning marriage, adoption, property transfer, and release from slavery.

The Elephantine writings also contain lists consisting of Egyptian, Jewish, Aramaic, and Accadian personal names. Many of these names show variant spellings, very similar to the variant spellings found in lists of personal names in the Bible. Among the names listed in Ne 7 are two examples of differing spellings: Mispereth and Nehum (Ne 7:7). In the list of people who returned from Babylon with Zerubbabel (Ezr 2), "Mispereth" is spelled "Mispar" and "Nehum" is spelled "Rehum" (Ezr 2:2).

TRANSITION

Building the Walls

The rebuilding of the walls was completed in only 52 days (Ne 6:15). This span of time occurred during the 5th and 6th months, known as Ab and Elul. Faced with difficult circumstances, but with God's help, Nehemiah was able to accomplish his first task just 5 months after requesting permission of the Persian emperor in the 1st month (Nisan) of the Jewish year (Ne 2:1–5).

• **Nehemiah 6:15—7:73a**

Nehemiah

6 :15 So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days.

Opposition to the Completed Wall

[16]When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

[17]Also, in those days the nobles of Judah were sending many letters to Tobiah, and replies from Tobiah kept coming to them. [18]For many in Judah were under oath to him, since he was son-in-law to Shekaniah son of Arah, and his son Jehohanan had married the daughter of Meshullam son of Berekiah. [19]Moreover, they kept reporting to me his good deeds and then telling him what I said. And Tobiah sent letters to intimidate me.

7 [1]After the wall had been rebuilt and I had set the doors in place, the gatekeepers, the musicians and the Levites were appointed. [2]I put in charge of Jerusalem my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah the commander of the citadel, because he was a man of integrity and feared God more than most people do. [3]I said to them, "The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot. While the gatekeepers are still on duty, have them shut the doors and bar them. Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and some near their own houses."

The List of the Exiles Who Returned

[4]Now the city was large and spacious, but there were few people in it, and the houses had not yet been rebuilt. [5]So my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles, the officials and the common people for registration by families. I found the genealogical record of those who had been the first to return. This is what I found written there:

[6]These are the people of the province who came up from the captivity of the exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon had taken captive (they returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his own town, [7]in company with Zerubbabel, Joshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum and Baanah):

The list of the men of Israel:

[8]the descendants of Parosh	2,172
[9]of Shephatiah	372
[10]of Arah	652
[11]of Pahath-Moab (through the line of Jeshua and Joab)	2,818
[12]of Elam	1,254
[13]of Zattu	845
[14]of Zakkai	760
[15]of Binnui	648
[16]of Bebai	628
[17]of Azgad	2,322

18 of Adonikam 667
19 of Bigvai 2,067
20 of Adin 655
21 of Ater (through Hezekiah) 98
22 of Hashum 328
23 of Bezai 324
24 of Hariph 112
25 of Gibeon 95

26 the men of Bethlehem and Netophah 188
27 of Anathoth 128
28 of Beth Azmaveth 42
29 of Kiriath Jearim, Kephirah and Beeroth 743
30 of Ramah and Geba 621
31 of Mikmash 122
32 of Bethel and Ai 123
33 of the other Nebo 52
34 of the other Elam 1,254
35 of Harim 320
36 of Jericho 345
37 of Lod, Hadid and Ono 721
38 of Senaah 3,930

39 The priests:

the descendants of Jedaiah (through the family of Jeshua) 973
40 of Immer 1,052
41 of Pashhur 1,247
42 of Harim 1,017

43 The Levites:

the descendants of Jeshua (through Kadmiel through the line of Hodaviah) 74

44 The musicians:

the descendants of Asaph 148

45 The gatekeepers:

the descendants of Shallum, Ater, Talmon, Akkub, Hatita and Shobai 138

46 The temple servants:

the descendants of Ziha, Hasupha, Tabbaoth,
47 Keros, Sia, Padon,
48 Lebana, Hagaba, Shalmai,
49 Hanan, Giddel, Gahar,
50 Reaiah, Rezin, Nekoda,
51 Gazzam, Uzza, Paseah,
52 Besai, Meunim, Nephusim,
53 Bakbuk, Hakupha, Harhur,
54 Bazluth, Mehida, Harsha,
55 Barkos, Sisera, Temah,
56 Neziah and Hatipha

57 The descendants of the servants of Solomon:

the descendants of Sotai, Sophereth, Perida,
58 Jaala, Darkon, Giddel,
59 Shephatiah, Hattil, Pokereth-Hazzebaim and Amon

60 The temple servants and the descendants of the servants of Solomon 392

61 The following came up from the towns of Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addon and Immer, but they could not show that their families were descended from Israel:

62 the descendants of Delaiah, Tobiah and Nekoda 642

63 And from among the priests:

the descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai (a man who had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by that name).

64 These searched for their family records, but they could not find them and so were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. 65 The governor, therefore, ordered them not to eat any of the most sacred food until there should be a priest ministering with the Urim and Thummim.

66 The whole company numbered 42,360, 67 besides their 7,337 male and female slaves; and they also had 245 male and female singers. 68 There were 736 horses, 245 mules,[a] 69 435 camels and 6,720 donkeys.

70 Some of the heads of the families contributed to the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 darics[b] of gold, 50 bowls and 530 garments for priests. 71 Some of

Trade & Economics

A daric was a gold coin first issued by the Persian king Darius and named for him. It was one of the very first coinages, appearing in 517 B.C. Darics were widely imitated, and the name was used for amounts of money, not necessarily the literal coin.

[a] *68* Some Hebrew manuscripts (see also Ezra 2:66); most Hebrew manuscripts do not have this verse. [b] *70* That is, about 19 pounds or about 8.4 kilograms

the heads of the families gave to the treasury for the work 20,000 darics[a] of gold and 2,200 minas[b] of silver. 72The total given by the rest of the people was 20,000 darics of gold, 2,000 minas[c] of silver and 67 garments for priests.

73The priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the musicians and the temple servants, along with certain of the people and the rest of the Israelites, settled in their own towns.

[a] *71* That is, about 375 pounds or about 170 kilograms; also in verse 72 [b] *71* That is, about 1 1/3 tons or about 1.2 metric tons [c] *72* That is, about 1 1/4 tons or about 1.1 metric tons [d] *8* Or *God, translating it*

TRANSITION

Ezra Reads the Law

At Ne 7:73 the Book of Nehemiah changes. First, the narrative is no longer told in Nehemiah's own words; the governor's memoir is temporarily suspended. Second, the main character in Ne 7:73—8:18 is not Nehemiah but Ezra the teacher of the Law (who is not mentioned at all in Ne 1–7).

These sudden changes are made much more striking by another curiosity. The apocryphal book of 3 Esdras and the writings of the Jewish historian Josephus both tell the story of Ezra, but in those accounts, the event described in Ne 8 comes immediately after Ezra 10. In other words, in those ancient texts, Ne 8 is not a part of the story of Nehemiah at all, but instead a part of the story of Ezra. Many scholars suggest that Ne 8 was once a part of the Book of Ezra, but was later placed in the middle of the Book of Nehemiah by the editing process that tied these books together.

If Ne 8 was originally part of the Book of Ezra, then it is uncertain when Ezra read the Law of Moses in the square (Ne 8:1–3). Nevertheless, it is at least possible to read Ne 8 following the building of the walls. According to Ne 8:9, Nehemiah was present at Ezra's reading, and such an event would have been an appropriate way to dedicate the recently completed city walls.

It is also possible to read Ne 8–10 in the context of the people renewing their covenant with God. The 7th month, Tishri (Ne 7:73b), corresponding to September–October, was an important time of sacred assemblies. The walls had been completed in the preceding month of Elul (Ne 6:15), and the timing was now right to gather in Jerusalem for festival celebration and covenant renewal. On the 1st day of the month Ezra read the Law (8:2); for seven days during the month the people observed the Festival of Tabernacles (8:18); and on the 24th day they made a public confession of sins (9:1–3). Finally, the leaders publicly signed the covenant (10:1–27), and the people, beginning with the priesthood, joined the covenant by taking an oath (10:28, 29).

• Nehemiah 7:73b–10:39

Nehemiah

Ezra Reads the Law

7:73b When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns,
8 1all the people came together as one in the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the teacher of the Law to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded for Israel.

2So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

4Ezra the teacher of the Law stood on a high wooden platform built for the occasion. Beside him on his right stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah and Maaseiah; and on his left were Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah and Meshullam.

5Ezra opened the book. All the people could see him because he was standing above them; and as he opened it, the people all stood up. 6Ezra praised the LORD, the great God; and all the people lifted their hands and responded, "Amen! Amen!" Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

7The Levites—Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan and Pelaiah—instructed the people in the Law while the people were standing there. 8They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear[d] and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.

9Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

10Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our

Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."

11The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve."

12Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

13On the second day of the month, the heads of all the families, along with the priests and the Levites, gathered around Ezra the teacher to give attention to the words of the Law. 14They found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded through Moses, that the Israelites were to live in temporary shelters during the festival of the seventh month 15and that they should proclaim this word and spread it throughout their towns and in Jerusalem: "Go out into the hill country and bring back branches from olive and wild olive trees, and from myrtles, palms and shade trees, to make temporary shelters"—as it is written.[a]

16So the people went out and brought back branches and built themselves temporary shelters on their own roofs, in their courtyards, in the courts of the house of God and in the square by the Water Gate and the one by the Gate of Ephraim. 17The whole company that had returned from exile built temporary shelters and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this. And their joy was very great.

18Day after day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the festival for seven days, and on the eighth day, in accordance with the regulation, there was an assembly.

The Israelites Confess Their Sins

9 1On the twenty-fourth day of the same month, the Israelites gathered together, fasting and wearing sackcloth and putting dust on their heads. 2Those of Israelite descent had separated themselves from all foreigners. They stood in their places and confessed their sins and the sins of their ancestors. 3They stood where they were and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day, and spent another quarter in confession and in worshiping the LORD their God. 4Standing on the stairs of the Levites were Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani and Kenani. They cried out with loud voices to the LORD their God. 5And the Levites—Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah and Pethahiah—said: "Stand up and praise the LORD your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting.[b]"

"Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. 6You alone are the LORD. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

7"You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham. 8You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites. You have kept your promise because you are righteous.

9"You saw the suffering of our ancestors in Egypt; you heard their cry at the Red Sea.[c] 10You sent signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his officials and all the people of his land, for you knew how arrogantly the Egyptians treated them. You made a name for yourself, which remains to this day. 11You divided the sea before them, so that they passed through it on dry ground, but you hurled their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into mighty waters. 12By day you led them with a pillar of cloud, and by night with a pillar of fire to give them light on the way they were to take.

13"You came down on Mount Sinai; you spoke to them from heaven. You gave them regulations and laws that are just and right, and decrees and commands that are good. 14You made known to them your holy Sabbath and gave them commands, decrees and laws through your servant Moses. 15In their hunger you gave them bread from heaven and in their thirst you brought them water from the rock; you told them to go in and take possession of the land you had sworn with uplifted hand to give them.

16"But they, our ancestors, became arrogant and stiff-necked, and they did not obey your commands. 17They refused to listen and failed to remember the miracles you performed among them. They became stiff-necked and in their rebellion appointed a leader in order to return to

[a] *15* See Lev. 23:37-40. [b] *5* Or *God for ever and ever*
[c] *9* Or *the Sea of Reeds*

their slavery. But you are a forgiving God,
gracious and compassionate, slow to anger
and abounding in love. Therefore you did
not desert them, 18even when they cast
for themselves an image of a calf and said,
'This is your god, who brought you up out
of Egypt,' or when they committed awful
blasphemies.

19"Because of your great compassion
you did not abandon them in the wilder-
ness. By day the pillar of cloud did not
fail to guide them on their path, nor the
pillar of fire by night to shine on the way
they were to take. 20You gave your good
Spirit to instruct them. You did not with-
hold your manna from their mouths, and
you gave them water for their thirst. 21For
forty years you sustained them in the wil-
derness; they lacked nothing, their clothes
did not wear out nor did their feet become
swollen.

22"You gave them kingdoms and na-
tions, allotting to them even the remotest
frontiers. They took over the country of Si-
hon[a] king of Heshbon and the country of
Og king of Bashan. 23You made their chil-
dren as numerous as the stars in the sky,
and you brought them into the land that
you told their parents to enter and possess.
24Their children went in and took posses-
sion of the land. You subdued before them
the Canaanites, who lived in the land;
you gave the Canaanites into their hands,
along with their kings and the peoples of
the land, to deal with them as they pleased.
25They captured fortified cities and fertile
land; they took possession of houses filled
with all kinds of good things, wells already
dug, vineyards, olive groves and fruit trees
in abundance. They ate to the full and were
well-nourished; they reveled in your great
goodness.

26"But they were disobedient and re-
belled against you; they turned their backs
on your law. They killed your prophets,
who had warned them in order to turn
them back to you; they committed awful
blasphemies. 27So you delivered them into
the hands of their enemies, who oppressed
them. But when they were oppressed they
cried out to you. From heaven you heard
them, and in your great compassion you
gave them deliverers, who rescued them
from the hand of their enemies.

28"But as soon as they were at rest, they
again did what was evil in your sight. Then
you abandoned them to the hand of their
enemies so that they ruled over them.
And when they cried out to you again, you
heard from heaven, and in your compas-
sion you delivered them time after time.

29"You warned them in order to turn
them back to your law, but they became
arrogant and disobeyed your commands.
They sinned against your ordinances, of
which you said, 'The person who obeys
them will live by them.' Stubbornly they
turned their backs on you, became
stiff-necked and refused to listen. 30For
many years you were patient with them.
By your Spirit you warned them through
your prophets. Yet they paid no attention,
so you gave them into the hands of the
neighboring peoples. 31But in your great
mercy you did not put an end to them or
abandon them, for you are a gracious and
merciful God.

32"Now therefore, our God, the great
God, mighty and awesome, who keeps his
covenant of love, do not let all this hard-
ship seem trifling in your eyes—the hard-
ship that has come on us, on our kings
and leaders, on our priests and prophets,
on our ancestors and all your people, from
the days of the kings of Assyria until today.
33In all that has happened to us, you have
remained righteous; you have acted faith-
fully, while we acted wickedly. 34Our kings,
our leaders, our priests and our ancestors
did not follow your law; they did not pay
attention to your commands or the statutes
you warned them to keep. 35Even while
they were in their kingdom, enjoying your
great goodness to them in the spacious
and fertile land you gave them, they did
not serve you or turn from their evil ways.

36"But see, we are slaves today, slaves
in the land you gave our ancestors so
they could eat its fruit and the other good
things it produces. 37Because of our sins,

[a] *22* One Hebrew manuscript and Septuagint; most Hebrew manuscripts *Sihon, that is, the country of the*

Culture & Society

A covenant is a written agreement or contract between two or more parties. Such agreements spell out obligations and rights and may also prescribe penalties. In biblical times the written word had an aura of permanence and authority that is more diluted today when so much more is recorded. Thus Nehemiah and the leaders speak of the "binding agreement," or covenant, which they had written (Ne 9:38).

its abundant harvest goes to the kings you have placed over us. They rule over our bodies and our cattle as they please. We are in great distress.

The Agreement of the People

38"In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it."[a]

10[b] 1Those who sealed it were:

Nehemiah the governor, the son of Hakaliah.

Zedekiah, 2Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah,
3Pashhur, Amariah, Malkijah,
4Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluk,
5Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah,
6Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch,
7Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin,
8Maaziah, Bilgai and Shemaiah.
These were the priests.

9The Levites:

Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui of the sons of Henadad, Kadmiel,
10and their associates: Shebaniah,
Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan,
11Mika, Rehob, Hashabiah,
12Zakkur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah,
13Hodiah, Bani and Beninu.

14The leaders of the people:

Parosh, Pahath-Moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani,
15Bunni, Azgad, Bebai,
16Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin,
17Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur,
18Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai,
19Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai,
20Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir,
21Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua,
22Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah,
23Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub,
24Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek,
25Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah,
26Ahiah, Hanan, Anan,
27Malluk, Harim and Baanah.

28"The rest of the people—priests, Levites, gatekeepers, musicians, temple servants and all who separated themselves from the neighboring peoples for the sake of the Law of God, together with their wives and all their sons and daughters who are able to understand— 29all these now join their fellow Israelites the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the LORD our Lord.

30"We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the peoples around us or take their daughters for our sons.

31"When the neighboring peoples bring merchandise or grain to sell on the Sabbath, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on any holy day. Every seventh year we will forgo working the land and will cancel all debts.

32"We assume the responsibility for carrying out the commands to give a third of a shekel[c] each year for the service of the house of our God: 33for the bread set out on the table; for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings; for the offerings on the Sabbaths, at the New Moon feasts and at the appointed festivals; for the holy offerings; for sin offerings[d] to make atonement for Israel; and for all the duties of the house of our God.

34"We—the priests, the Levites and the people—have cast lots to determine when each of our families is to bring to the house of our God at set times each year a contribution of wood to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the Law.

35"We also assume responsibility for bringing to the house of the LORD each year the firstfruits of our crops and of every fruit tree.

36"As it is also written in the Law, we will bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, of our herds and of our flocks to the house of our God, to the priests ministering there.

37"Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and olive oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work. 38A priest descended from Aaron is to accompany the Levites when they receive the tithes, and the Levites are to bring a tenth of the tithes up to the house of our God, to the storerooms of the treasury. 39The people of Israel, including the Levites,

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[a] *38* In Hebrew texts this verse (9:38) is numbered 10:1.
[b] In Hebrew texts 10:1-39 is numbered 10:2-40.
[c] *32* That is, about 1/8 ounce or about 4 grams
[d] *33* Or *purification offerings*

Tithe and Loyalty (Ne 10:37, 38)

An old Canaanite tribute called the "tenth" or "tithe" was payment of a lesser important king to a more powerful one. Tablets from the ancient city of Ugarit, located on the Mediterranean coast, mention such a payment. A king of a smaller village would pay the 10 percent tax, as a representative for his city. His payment was a sign of loyalty to the regional ruler. In return, the more powerful king was obligated to protect those subjects who had paid their tithe.

In the Bible, the payment of tithes became a sign of loyalty to the Israelite God (Mal 3:8–10). The tithe was taken from the harvest and the herds, both of which were crucial to Israel's physical existence (Dt 14:22, 23). Bringing God his just due obligated him to his duties as Savior and Protector (Mal 3:11). So it was that Nehemiah led the postexilic Jewish community, much in need of God's protection, in the bringing of the tithes to the Levites and to the temple.

are to bring their contributions of grain, new wine and olive oil to the storerooms, where the articles for the sanctuary and for the ministering priests, the gatekeepers and the musicians are also kept.

"We will not neglect the house of our God."

TRANSITION

Wisdom Psalms

The wisdom tradition was one of the most enduring of all ancient Near Eastern traditions, but as time passed it changed slightly, at least in Israel. Some late books of Jewish wisdom place new stress on reverence toward, and obedience to, the Torah. This new Torah-centered teaching, often called "scribal wisdom," was not typical of earlier wisdom writings like the Book of Proverbs. It does appear, however, in the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, written about 180 b.c. and also known as *The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach*.

A few hints of scribal wisdom do appear in the "wisdom psalms." These few psalms offer calm and measured advice, drawing simple distinctions between the righteous and the wicked in ways reminiscent of the Book of Proverbs. The entire Book of Psalms is introduced by one of these wisdom psalms (Ps. 1), which describes in stark contrast the lifestyle of the righteous (1:1–3) and of the wicked (1:4, 5).

One psalm especially fits the description of scribal wisdom. The longest psalm in the Book of Psalms (Ps 119) offers an extended meditation on the beauty and usefulness of the Torah. It even uses the literary device of alphabetic acrostic, which is typical of wisdom writings (for instance, Pr 31:10–31). Each verse within a particular stanza of the Hebrew Ps 119 begins with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Many other psalms, while not as clearly wisdom psalms, contain elements of wisdom thought. For instance, Ps 49 speaks on a favorite wisdom theme, the vanity of worldly wealth, and Ps 111 uses the wisdom slogan "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (111:10; see Pr 1:7). The contrast between the righteous and the wicked appears in parts of Ps 36, 37, 91, and 112.

Still, most of the psalms that contain wisdom elements are not exclusively wisdom psalms, but can be classed as other psalm types. For example, Ps 111 is a hymn (see "The Last Word in Praise" at Ps 104). Even Ps 91 is a mixed psalm. Its meditative tone and its reflection on the fate of the wicked provide a strong wisdom flavor. Yet Ps 91 could easily be understood as a song of trust (see "David's Laments" at Ps 4).

The three psalms (Ps 1; 91; 119) are without any superscription or any other indication of their date. Nevertheless, the "scribal wisdom" of Ps 1 and 119 is likely related to the new emphasis on the Scripture that characterized Judaism after the exile. Just as a new sort of priestly leader developed in the position of the scribe (see "Ezra the the Teacher of the Law" at Ezra 7:1), so a new Torah-centered type of wisdom developed in the new world that the returned exiles faced.

• Psalms 1; 91; 119

PSALM 1

Blessed is the one
who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
or sit in the company of mockers,
2 but whose delight is in the law of the LORD,
and who meditates on his law day and night.
3 That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
whatever they do prospers.

4 Not so the wicked!
They are like chaff
that the wind blows away.
5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

Agriculture & Herding
After grain is harvested, the edible kernels have to be separated from the stem and leaves. This is done by crushing or tearing the plants. The broken grain is thrown into the wind, allowing the waste parts, the "chaff" (Ps 1:4), to blow away while the heavier kernels fall to the ground. This winnowing of chaff from kernels was a familiar part of village life in Palestine.

6 For the LORD watches over the way of the
righteous,
but the way of the wicked leads to
destruction.

PSALM 91

Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most
High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.[a]
2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and
my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."

3 Surely he will save you
from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
4 He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and
rampart.
5 You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the
darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
7 A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.
8 You will only observe with your eyes
and see the punishment of the wicked.

9 If you say, "The LORD is my refuge,"
and you make the Most High your
dwelling,
10 no harm will overtake you,
no disaster will come near your tent.

Arts & Literature
The poetic imagery in Ps 91:5, 6 stands for the calamities that might happen at night or day, whether warfare, sickness, robbery, or death. In the ancient world each of these was thought to be a god. The psalmist thus refers to powers that threaten human life, but also to God's power over all events. God's protection is continuous through night and day.

11 For he will command his angels concerning
you
to guard you in all your ways;
12 they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot
against a stone.
13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the
serpent.

14 "Because he[b] loves me," says the LORD, "I
will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges
my name.
15 He will call on me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
16 With long life I will satisfy him
and show him my salvation."

PSALM 119[c]

א Aleph

Blessed are those whose ways are
blameless,
who walk according to the law of the
LORD.
2 Blessed are those who keep his statutes
and seek him with all their heart—
3 they do no wrong
but follow his ways.
4 You have laid down precepts
that are to be fully obeyed.
5 Oh, that my ways were steadfast
in obeying your decrees!
6 Then I would not be put to shame
when I consider all your commands.
7 I will praise you with an upright heart
as I learn your righteous laws.
8 I will obey your decrees;
do not utterly forsake me.

ב Beth

9 How can a young person stay on the path of
purity?
By living according to your word.
10 I seek you with all my heart;
do not let me stray from your commands.
11 I have hidden your word in my heart
that I might not sin against you.
12 Praise be to you, LORD;
teach me your decrees.

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[a] *1* Hebrew *Shaddai* [b] *14* That is, probably the king
[c] This psalm is an acrostic poem, the stanzas of which begin with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet; moreover, the verses of each stanza begin with the same letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

Arts & Literature
The acrostic is a common device in biblical poetry. In an acrostic poem, each line or series of lines begins with a certain letter. Usually the letters follow the order of the alphabet from beginning to end. The purpose is to aid in memorization (Ps 119:16), or to give the composition a sense of completeness. Each of the 22 stanzas in Ps 119 has lines beginning with the same Hebrew letter.

13 With my lips I recount
all the laws that come from your mouth.
14 I rejoice in following your statutes
as one rejoices in great riches.
15 I meditate on your precepts
and consider your ways.
16 I delight in your decrees;
I will not neglect your word.

ג Gimel

17 Be good to your servant while I live,
that I may obey your word.
18 Open my eyes that I may see
wonderful things in your law.
19 I am a stranger on earth;
do not hide your commands from me.
20 My soul is consumed with longing
for your laws at all times.
21 You rebuke the arrogant, who are accursed,
those who stray from your commands.
22 Remove from me their scorn and contempt,
for I keep your statutes.
23 Though rulers sit together and slander me,
your servant will meditate on your decrees.
24 Your statutes are my delight;
they are my counselors.

ד Daleth

25 I am laid low in the dust;
preserve my life according to your word.
26 I gave an account of my ways and you answered me;
teach me your decrees.
27 Cause me to understand the way of your precepts,
that I may meditate on your wonderful deeds.
28 My soul is weary with sorrow;
strengthen me according to your word.
29 Keep me from deceitful ways;
be gracious to me and teach me your law.
30 I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
I have set my heart on your laws.
31 I hold fast to your statutes, LORD;
do not let me be put to shame.
32 I run in the path of your commands,
for you have broadened my understanding.

ה He

33 Teach me, LORD, the way of your decrees,
that I may follow it to the end.[a]
34 Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law
and obey it with all my heart.
35 Direct me in the path of your commands,
for there I find delight.
36 Turn my heart toward your statutes
and not toward selfish gain.
37 Turn my eyes away from worthless things;
preserve my life according to your word.[b]
38 Fulfill your promise to your servant,
so that you may be feared.
39 Take away the disgrace I dread,
for your laws are good.
40 How I long for your precepts!
In your righteousness preserve my life.

ו Waw

41 May your unfailing love come to me, LORD,
your salvation, according to your promise;
42 then I can answer anyone who taunts me,
for I trust in your word.
43 Never take your word of truth from my mouth,
for I have put my hope in your laws.
44 I will always obey your law,
for ever and ever.
45 I will walk about in freedom,
for I have sought out your precepts.
46 I will speak of your statutes before kings
and will not be put to shame,
47 for I delight in your commands
because I love them.
48 I reach out for your commands, which I love,
that I may meditate on your decrees.

ז Zayin

49 Remember your word to your servant,
for you have given me hope.
50 My comfort in my suffering is this:
Your promise preserves my life.
51 The arrogant mock me unmercifully,
but I do not turn from your law.

[a] *33* Or *follow it for its reward* [b] *37* Two manuscripts of the Masoretic Text and Dead Sea Scrolls; most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text *life in your way*

52 I remember, LORD, your ancient laws,
and I find comfort in them.
53 Indignation grips me because of the wicked,
who have forsaken your law.
54 Your decrees are the theme of my song
wherever I lodge.
55 In the night, LORD, I remember your name,
that I may keep your law.
56 This has been my practice:
I obey your precepts.

ח Heth

57 You are my portion, LORD;
I have promised to obey your words.
58 I have sought your face with all my heart;
be gracious to me according to your promise.
59 I have considered my ways
and have turned my steps to your statutes.
60 I will hasten and not delay
to obey your commands.
61 Though the wicked bind me with ropes,
I will not forget your law.
62 At midnight I rise to give you thanks
for your righteous laws.
63 I am a friend to all who fear you,
to all who follow your precepts.
64 The earth is filled with your love, LORD;
teach me your decrees.

ט Teth

65 Do good to your servant
according to your word, LORD.
66 Teach me knowledge and good judgment,
for I trust your commands.
67 Before I was afflicted I went astray,
but now I obey your word.
68 You are good, and what you do is good;
teach me your decrees.
69 Though the arrogant have smeared me with lies,
I keep your precepts with all my heart.
70 Their hearts are callous and unfeeling,
but I delight in your law.
71 It was good for me to be afflicted
so that I might learn your decrees.
72 The law from your mouth is more precious to me
than thousands of pieces of silver and gold.

י Yodh

73 Your hands made me and formed me;
give me understanding to learn your commands.
74 May those who fear you rejoice when they see me,
for I have put my hope in your word.
75 I know, LORD, that your laws are righteous,
and that in faithfulness you have afflicted me.
76 May your unfailing love be my comfort,
according to your promise to your servant.
77 Let your compassion come to me that I may live,
for your law is my delight.
78 May the arrogant be put to shame for wronging me without cause;
but I will meditate on your precepts.
79 May those who fear you turn to me,
those who understand your statutes.
80 May I wholeheartedly follow your decrees,
that I may not be put to shame.

כ Kaph

81 My soul faints with longing for your salvation,
but I have put my hope in your word.
82 My eyes fail, looking for your promise;
I say, "When will you comfort me?"
83 Though I am like a wineskin in the smoke,
I do not forget your decrees.
84 How long must your servant wait?
When will you punish my persecutors?
85 The arrogant dig pits to trap me,
contrary to your law.
86 All your commands are trustworthy;
help me, for I am being persecuted without cause.
87 They almost wiped me from the earth,
but I have not forsaken your precepts.
88 In your unfailing love preserve my life,
that I may obey the statutes of your mouth.

ל Lamedh

89 Your word, LORD, is eternal;
it stands firm in the heavens.
90 Your faithfulness continues through all generations;
you established the earth, and it endures.
91 Your laws endure to this day,
for all things serve you.
92 If your law had not been my delight,
I would have perished in my affliction.
93 I will never forget your precepts,
for by them you have preserved my life.
94 Save me, for I am yours;
I have sought out your precepts.

Lights for the Night (Ps 119:105)

In Old Testament times people used small lamps to furnish artificial light. Ancient lamps were essentially small ceramic bowls that were customized during construction to have a "nose" on one edge. The purpose of this extension was to hold a wick. Wicks of cloth were laid in the nose and extended into the oil in the lamp's bowl.

The light produced was not brilliant but necessary for finding one's way. In Ps 119:105 the writer compares God's word with a lamp. While the light from that word does not blind the eyes, it does point the way for its hearers.

95 The wicked are waiting to destroy me,
but I will ponder your statutes.
96 To all perfection I see a limit,
but your commands are boundless.

מ Mem

97 Oh, how I love your law!
I meditate on it all day long.
98 Your commands are always with me
and make me wiser than my enemies.
99 I have more insight than all my teachers,
for I meditate on your statutes.
100 I have more understanding than the elders,
for I obey your precepts.
101 I have kept my feet from every evil path
so that I might obey your word.
102 I have not departed from your laws,
for you yourself have taught me.
103 How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
104 I gain understanding from your precepts;
therefore I hate every wrong path.

נ Nun

105 Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.
106 I have taken an oath and confirmed it,
that I will follow your righteous laws.
107 I have suffered much;
preserve my life, LORD, according to your word.
108 Accept, LORD, the willing praise of my mouth,
and teach me your laws.
109 Though I constantly take my life in my hands,
I will not forget your law.
110 The wicked have set a snare for me,
but I have not strayed from your precepts.
111 Your statutes are my heritage forever;
they are the joy of my heart.
112 My heart is set on keeping your decrees
to the very end.[a]

ס Samekh

113 I hate double-minded people,
but I love your law.
114 You are my refuge and my shield;
I have put my hope in your word.
115 Away from me, you evildoers,
that I may keep the commands of my God!
116 Sustain me, my God, according to your promise, and I will live;
do not let my hopes be dashed.
117 Uphold me, and I will be delivered;
I will always have regard for your decrees.
118 You reject all who stray from your decrees,
for their delusions come to nothing.
119 All the wicked of the earth you discard like dross;
therefore I love your statutes.
120 My flesh trembles in fear of you;
I stand in awe of your laws.

ע Ayin

121 I have done what is righteous and just;
do not leave me to my oppressors.
122 Ensure your servant's well-being;
do not let the arrogant oppress me.
123 My eyes fail, looking for your salvation,
looking for your righteous promise.
124 Deal with your servant according to your love
and teach me your decrees.
125 I am your servant; give me discernment
that I may understand your statutes.
126 It is time for you to act, LORD;
your law is being broken.
127 Because I love your commands
more than gold, more than pure gold,
128 and because I consider all your precepts right,
I hate every wrong path.

[a] *112* Or *decrees / for their enduring reward*

פ Pe

129 Your statutes are wonderful;
therefore I obey them.
130 The unfolding of your words gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.
131 I open my mouth and pant,
longing for your commands.
132 Turn to me and have mercy on me,
as you always do to those who love your name.
133 Direct my footsteps according to your word;
let no sin rule over me.
134 Redeem me from human oppression,
that I may obey your precepts.
135 Make your face shine on your servant
and teach me your decrees.
136 Streams of tears flow from my eyes,
for your law is not obeyed.

צ Tsadhe

137 You are righteous, LORD,
and your laws are right.
138 The statutes you have laid down are righteous;
they are fully trustworthy.
139 My zeal wears me out,
for my enemies ignore your words.
140 Your promises have been thoroughly tested,
and your servant loves them.
141 Though I am lowly and despised,
I do not forget your precepts.
142 Your righteousness is everlasting
and your law is true.
143 Trouble and distress have come upon me,
but your commands give me delight.
144 Your statutes are always righteous;
give me understanding that I may live.

ק Qoph

145 I call with all my heart; answer me, LORD,
and I will obey your decrees.
146 I call out to you; save me
and I will keep your statutes.
147 I rise before dawn and cry for help;
I have put my hope in your word.
148 My eyes stay open through the watches of the night,
that I may meditate on your promises.
149 Hear my voice in accordance with your love;
preserve my life, LORD, according to your laws.
150 Those who devise wicked schemes are near,
but they are far from your law.
151 Yet you are near, LORD,
and all your commands are true.
152 Long ago I learned from your statutes
that you established them to last forever.

ר Resh

153 Look on my suffering and deliver me,
for I have not forgotten your law.
154 Defend my cause and redeem me;
preserve my life according to your promise.
155 Salvation is far from the wicked,
for they do not seek out your decrees.
156 Your compassion, LORD, is great;
preserve my life according to your laws.
157 Many are the foes who persecute me,
but I have not turned from your statutes.
158 I look on the faithless with loathing,
for they do not obey your word.
159 See how I love your precepts;
preserve my life, LORD, in accordance with your love.
160 All your words are true;
all your righteous laws are eternal.

ש Sin and Shin

161 Rulers persecute me without cause,
but my heart trembles at your word.
162 I rejoice in your promise
like one who finds great spoil.
163 I hate and detest falsehood
but I love your law.
164 Seven times a day I praise you
for your righteous laws.
165 Great peace have those who love your law,
and nothing can make them stumble.
166 I wait for your salvation, LORD,
and I follow your commands.
167 I obey your statutes,
for I love them greatly.
168 I obey your precepts and your statutes,
for all my ways are known to you.

ת Taw

169 May my cry come before you, LORD;
give me understanding according to your word.
170 May my supplication come before you;
deliver me according to your promise.
171 May my lips overflow with praise,
for you teach me your decrees.
172 May my tongue sing of your word,
for all your commands are righteous.

173 May your hand be ready to help me,
for I have chosen your precepts.
174 I long for your salvation, LORD,
and your law gives me delight.
175 Let me live that I may praise you,
and may your laws sustain me.
176 I have strayed like a lost sheep.
Seek your servant,
for I have not forgotten your commands.

TRANSITION

The Names of the Returned Exiles

By the end of Nehemiah's labors, when Jerusalem stood whole once more, a new spirit seems to have come over the people. They were proud to be Jews, proud of their holy city, and conscious of having been a part of a great restoration. Perhaps as a part of this new pride, the Jews of Jerusalem had their names preserved and recorded alongside the names of other restoration leaders, from the days of Zerubbabel and Joshua (Ne 12:1) to the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (12:26). Now all that was left was to dedicate the new walls of the city (12:27–30).

• **Nehemiah 11:1—12:30**

Nehemiah

The New Residents of Jerusalem

11 :1 Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem. The rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten of them to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns. 2 The people commended all who volunteered to live in Jerusalem.

3 These are the provincial leaders who settled in Jerusalem (now some Israelites, priests, Levites, temple servants and descendants of Solomon's servants lived in the towns of Judah, each on their own property in the various towns, 4 while other people from both Judah and Benjamin lived in Jerusalem):

From the descendants of Judah:

Athaiah son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shephatiah, the son of Mahalalel, a descendant of Perez; 5 and Maaseiah son of Baruch, the son of Kol-Hozeh, the son of Hazaiah, the son of Adaiah, the son of Joiarib, the son of Zechariah, a descendant of Shelah. 6 The descendants of Perez who lived in Jerusalem totaled 468 men of standing.

7 From the descendants of Benjamin:

Sallu son of Meshullam, the son of Joed, the son of Pedaiah, the son of Kolaiah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Jeshaiah, 8 and his followers, Gabbai and Sallai — 928 men. 9 Joel son of Zikri was their chief officer, and Judah son of Hassenuah was over the New Quarter of the city.

10 From the priests:

Jedaiah; the son of Joiarib; Jakin; 11 Seraiah son of Hilkiah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Zadok, the son of Meraioth, the son of Ahitub, the official in charge of the house of God, 12 and their associates, who carried on work for the temple — 822 men; Adaiah son of Jeroham, the son of Pelaliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malkijah, 13 and his associates, who were heads of families — 242 men; Amashsai son of Azarel, the son of Ahzai, the son of Meshillemoth, the son of Immer, 14 and his[a] associates, who were men of standing — 128. Their chief officer was Zabdiel son of Haggedolim.

15 From the Levites:

Shemaiah son of Hasshub, the son of Azrikam, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Bunni; 16 Shabbethai and Jozabad, two of the heads of the Levites, who had charge of the outside work of the house of God; 17 Mattaniah son of Mika, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, the director who led in thanksgiving and prayer; Bakbukiah, second among his associates; and Abda son of Shammua, the son of Galal, the son of Jeduthun. 18 The Levites in the holy city totaled 284.

19 The gatekeepers:

Akkub, Talmon and their associates, who kept watch at the gates — 172 men.

20 The rest of the Israelites, with the priests and Levites, were in all the towns of Judah, each on their ancestral property.

21 The temple servants lived on the hill of Ophel, and Ziha and Gishpa were in charge of them.

22 The chief officer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Mika. Uzzi was one of Asaph's descendants, who were the musicians responsible for the service of the house of God. 23 The musicians were under the king's orders, which regulated their daily activity.

[a] *14* Most Septuagint manuscripts; Hebrew *their*

Zerubbabel the Governor (Ne 12:1)

The name "Zerubbabel" (Ne 12:1) is a Babylonian name, most likely meaning "seed of Babylon." Zerubbabel was from a Judean family but had grown up in Babylon. In his adult years, however, he had the opportunity to return to his ancestral home in Jerusalem.

Zerubbabel was descended from royalty (1Ch 3:17–19). His grandfather had been Jehoiachin (or Jeconiah), the king of Judah whom the Babylonians had taken out of Jerusalem into captivity in 597 B.C. Since Zerubbabel was thus an heir to the throne of David, and the rightful king of Judah, some Judeans hoped that Judah might regain a degree of national power under his leadership. He was compared to a "signet ring" (Hag 2:23), an instrument belonging to a king, used to impress a seal of his authority.

The political situation of Judah, however, had changed since Zerubbabel's grandfather had ruled. The Persians now were in control. While a Persian king did appoint Zerubbabel to be the governor of the Persian province of Judah, he would not be given the power of a king. The "governor of Judah" (Hag 1:1) was given charge of the local political situation in Judah and Jerusalem, but would not rule a kingdom.

During Zerubbabel's oversight, the returnees from the exile completed rebuilding the temple. With Zerubbabel in Jerusalem and the temple completed, hopes were inspired for a rebirth of the Davidic monarchy. Many hoped that Zerubbabel would become more than governor—to rise as Israel's king. But after the temple rebuilding, Zerubbabel no longer appears in any known records. Regardless, a Davidic messianic hope never again departed from Israel.

24 Pethahiah son of Meshezabel, one of
the descendants of Zerah son of Judah, was
the king's agent in all affairs relating to the
people.
25 As for the villages with their fields, some
of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath Arba and
its surrounding settlements, in Dibon and its
settlements, in Jekabzeel and its villages, 26 in
Jeshua, in Moladah, in Beth Pelet, 27 in Hazar
Shual, in Beersheba and its settlements, 28 in
Ziklag, in Mekonah and its settlements, 29 in
En Rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, 30 Zanoah,
Adullam and their villages, in Lachish and its
fields, and in Azekah and its settlements. So
they were living all the way from Beersheba to
the Valley of Hinnom.
31 The descendants of the Benjamites from
Geba lived in Mikmash, Aija, Bethel and its
settlements, 32 in Anathoth, Nob and Ananiah,
33 in Hazor, Ramah and Gittaim, 34 in Hadid, Ze-
boim and Neballat, 35 in Lod and Ono, and in
Ge Harashim.
36 Some of the divisions of the Levites of Ju-
dah settled in Benjamin.

TIME CAPSULE		447 to 437 B.C.
447–438		The Parthenon erected on the Acropolis in Athens
445		Athens and Sparta agree to 30-year nonaggression pact
445		Nehemiah's mission to Jerusalem
445		Nehemiah becomes governor of Judea
437		Final walls of Jerusalem completed according to Josephus

Priests and Levites

12 1 These were the priests and Levites who
returned with Zerubbabel son of Shealti-
el and with Joshua:
Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra,
2 Amariah, Malluk, Hattush,
3 Shekaniah, Rehum, Meremoth,
4 Iddo, Ginnethon,[a] Abijah,
5 Mijamin,[b] Moadiah, Bilgah,
6 Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah,
7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiah and Jedaiah.
These were the leaders of the priests and their
associates in the days of Joshua.
8 The Levites were Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel,
Sherebiah, Judah, and also Mattaniah, who, to-
gether with his associates, was in charge of the
songs of thanksgiving. 9 Bakbukiah and Unni,
their associates, stood opposite them in the ser-
vices.
10 Joshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim
the father of Eliashib, Eliashib the father of Joi-
ada, 11 Joiada the father of Jonathan, and Jona-
than the father of Jaddua.
12 In the days of Joiakim, these were the
heads of the priestly families:
of Seraiah's family, Meraiah;
of Jeremiah's, Hananiah;
13 of Ezra's, Meshullam;
of Amariah's, Jehohanan;
14 of Malluk's, Jonathan;
of Shekaniah's,[c] Joseph;

[a] *4* Many Hebrew manuscripts and Vulgate (see also verse 16); most Hebrew manuscripts *Ginnethoi*
[b] *5* A variant of *Miniamin* [c] *14* Very many Hebrew manuscripts, some Septuagint manuscripts and Syriac (see also verse 3); most Hebrew manuscripts *Shebaniah's*

THE PERSIAN KINGS

The Persian Empire profoundly altered the course of Judah's history. For the Jews this was a period of restoration and reconstruction. For the Persians it was a period of imperial expansion. Several Persian kings are mentioned in the Bible.

Date	King	Reference
559–530 B.C.	Cyrus the Great • conquered Babylon and ordered the temple to be rebuilt, 539 B.C.	Da 1:21; Isa 44:28; 2Ch 36:22, 23; Ezr 1:1–4
530–522 B.C.	Cambyses II • son of Cyrus • invaded Egypt, 525 B.C.	
522 B.C.	Smerdis • a magi named Gaumata who pretended to be Cambyses' younger brother Bardiya • led a rebellion against Cambyses	
522–486 B.C.	Darius I • defeated by the Athenians at Marathon, 490 B.C.	Ezr 4:5; Hag 1:1; Zec 1:1
486–465 B.C.	Xerxes I (or Ahasuerus) • son of Darius I • defeated by the Athenians at Salamis, 480 B.C.	Ezr 4:6; Est 1:1
465–424 B.C.	Artaxerxes I • son of Xerxes I	Ezr 7:7–26; Ne 2:1–8; 13:6, 7
424 B.C.	Xerxes II • son of Artaxerxes I	
423–404 B.C.	Darius II • son of Artaxerxes I	Ne 12:22

15 of Harim's, Adna;
of Meremoth's,[a] Helkai;
16 of Iddo's, Zechariah;
of Ginnethon's, Meshullam;
17 of Abijah's, Zikri;
of Miniamin's and of Moadiah's, Piltai;
18 of Bilgah's, Shammua;
of Shemaiah's, Jehonathan;
19 of Joiarib's, Mattenai;
of Jedaiah's, Uzzi;
20 of Sallu's, Kallai;
of Amok's, Eber;
21 of Hilkiah's, Hashabiah;
of Jedaiah's, Nethanel.

22 The family heads of the Levites in the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan and Jaddua, as well as those of the priests, were recorded in the reign of Darius the Persian. 23 The family heads among the descendants of Levi up to the time of Johanan son of Eliashib were recorded in the book of the annals. 24 And the leaders of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah, Jeshua son of Kadmiel, and their associates, who stood opposite them to give praise and thanksgiving, one section responding to the other, as prescribed by David the man of God.

25 Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon and Akkub were gatekeepers who guarded the storerooms at the gates. 26 They served in the days of Joiakim son of Joshua, the son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest, the teacher of the Law.

Dedication of the Wall of Jerusalem

27 At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, the Levites were sought out from where they lived and were brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully the dedication with songs of thanksgiving and with the music of cymbals, harps and lyres. 28 The musicians also were

[a] *15* Some Septuagint manuscripts (see also verse 3); Hebrew *Meraioth's*

Religion & Worship
The central place of worship was at Jerusalem, and the people were expected to be present there to celebrate the major festivals. Thus they became pilgrims ascending to the temple in the Holy City (Ps 122:1, 2). The series of psalms called the "songs of ascents" (Ps 120–134) are suitable to accompany such pilgrimages, describing feelings of religious anticipation and delight.

brought together from the region around Jerusalem—from the villages of the Netophathites, [29]from Beth Gilgal, and from the area of Geba and Azmaveth, for the musicians had built villages for themselves around Jerusalem. [30]When the priests and Levites had purified themselves ceremonially, they purified the people, the gates and the wall.

TRANSITION

Songs of Ascents

After the workers had finished rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, the Levitical musicians and their instruments were summoned, and the city was formally dedicated in ceremonies that included the singing of psalms. It is impossible to know exactly which psalms were sung, of course. Surely many of the old psalms, from the days of Solomon's temple, were used, but others may have been written specifically for use in the second temple.

One group of psalms (Ps 120–134), all linked by the superscription "A song of ascents," has a particularly clear connection to temple worship. The title indicates that these songs were sung by worshipers on their way up the hill toward the gates of Jerusalem and the temple. The psalms speak of the joy of worshiping in the Lord's house (Ps 122; 134), of the need for purity of heart in the true worshiper (Ps 125; 128; 131), and call for God's blessing in distress (Ps 120; 129; 130; 132). All the songs of ascents appear together, suggesting that at one time they formed an independent collection, a temple songbook, which was later incorporated as a block into the Book of Psalms.

Some of these psalms may be quite old. Several have the superscription "Of David," and one, "Of Solomon" (Ps 127). Others, though, obviously were composed after the Babylonian exile: one psalmist praises God for his mighty restoration of "the fortunes of Zion" (Ps 126:1). Such a clear historical reference makes it likely that the Songs of Ascents were put together in this collection for use in the second temple. If so, then some of these psalms may well have been sung at the dedication of the rebuilt Jerusalem, on Mount Zion "which cannot be shaken but endures forever" (Ps 125:1).

• **Psalms 120–134**

PSALM 120

A song of ascents.

I call on the LORD in my distress,
and he answers me.
[2]Save me, LORD,
from lying lips
and from deceitful tongues.

[3]What will he do to you,
and what more besides,
you deceitful tongue?
[4]He will punish you with a warrior's sharp arrows,
with burning coals of the broom bush.

[5]Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek,
that I live among the tents of Kedar!
[6]Too long have I lived
among those who hate peace.
[7]I am for peace;
but when I speak, they are for war.

PSALM 121

A song of ascents.

I lift up my eyes to the mountains—
where does my help come from?
[2]My help comes from the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

[3]He will not let your foot slip—
he who watches over you will not slumber;
[4]indeed, he who watches over Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.

[5]The LORD watches over you—
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;
[6]the sun will not harm you by day,
nor the moon by night.

[7]The LORD will keep you from all harm—
he will watch over your life;
[8]the LORD will watch over your coming and going
both now and forevermore.

PSALM 122

A song of ascents. Of David.

I rejoiced with those who said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD."
[2]Our feet are standing
in your gates, Jerusalem.

[3]Jerusalem is built like a city
that is closely compacted together.

4 That is where the tribes go up—
the tribes of the LORD—
to praise the name of the LORD
according to the statute given to Israel.
5 There stand the thrones for judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May those who love you be secure.
7 May there be peace within your walls
and security within your citadels."
8 For the sake of my family and friends,
I will say, "Peace be within you."
9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your prosperity.

PSALM 123

A song of ascents.

I lift up my eyes to you,
to you who sit enthroned in heaven.
2 As the eyes of slaves look to the hand of their master,
as the eyes of a female slave look to the hand of her mistress,
so our eyes look to the LORD our God,
till he shows us his mercy.

3 Have mercy on us, LORD, have mercy on us,
for we have endured no end of contempt.
4 We have endured no end
of ridicule from the arrogant,
of contempt from the proud.

PSALM 124

A song of ascents. Of David.

If the LORD had not been on our side—
let Israel say—
2 if the LORD had not been on our side
when people attacked us,
3 they would have swallowed us alive
when their anger flared against us;
4 the flood would have engulfed us,
the torrent would have swept over us,
5 the raging waters
would have swept us away.

6 Praise be to the LORD,
who has not let us be torn by their teeth.
7 We have escaped like a bird
from the fowler's snare;
the snare has been broken,
and we have escaped.

8 Our help is in the name of the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

PSALM 125

A song of ascents.

Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion,
which cannot be shaken but endures forever.
2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the LORD surrounds his people
both now and forevermore.

3 The scepter of the wicked will not remain
over the land allotted to the righteous,
for then the righteous might use
their hands to do evil.

4 LORD, do good to those who are good,
to those who are upright in heart.
5 But those who turn to crooked ways
the LORD will banish with the evildoers.

Peace be on Israel.

PSALM 126

A song of ascents.

When the LORD restored the fortunes of[a] Zion,
we were like those who dreamed.[b]
2 Our mouths were filled with laughter,
our tongues with songs of joy.
Then it was said among the nations,
"The LORD has done great things for them."
3 The LORD has done great things for us,
and we are filled with joy.

4 Restore our fortunes,[c] LORD,
like streams in the Negev.
5 Those who sow with tears
will reap with songs of joy.
6 Those who go out weeping,
carrying seed to sow,
will return with songs of joy,
carrying sheaves with them.

PSALM 127

A song of ascents. Of Solomon.

Unless the LORD builds the house,
the builders labor in vain.
Unless the LORD watches over the city,
the guards stand watch in vain.
2 In vain you rise early
and stay up late,

[a] 1 Or *LORD brought back the captives to*
[b] 1 Or *those restored to health*
[c] 4 Or *Bring back our captives*

toiling for food to eat—
for he grants sleep to[a] those he loves.

3 Children are a heritage from the LORD,
offspring a reward from him.
4 Like arrows in the hands of a warrior
are children born in one's youth.
5 Blessed is the man
whose quiver is full of them.
They will not be put to shame
when they contend with their opponents
in court.

PSALM 128

A song of ascents.

Blessed are all who fear the LORD,
who walk in obedience to him.
2 You will eat the fruit of your labor;
blessings and prosperity will be yours.
3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots
around your table.
4 Yes, this will be the blessing
for the man who fears the LORD.

5 May the LORD bless you from Zion;
may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.
6 May you live to see your children's
children—
peace be on Israel.

PSALM 129

A song of ascents.

"They have greatly oppressed me from
my youth,"
let Israel say;
2 "they have greatly oppressed me from my
youth,
but they have not gained the victory over
me.
3 Plowmen have plowed my back
and made their furrows long.
4 But the LORD is righteous;
he has cut me free from the cords of the
wicked."

Marriage & Family
People in agricultural and nonindustrial economies usually considered it desirable to have many children. The psalmist described children as a gift or reward from God (Ps 127:3). The Romans, however, experienced a decline in their birthrate, so severe that they tried to resist it with different kinds of legislation favoring large families.

5 May all who hate Zion
be turned back in shame.
6 May they be like grass on the roof,
which withers before it can grow;
7 a reaper cannot fill his hands with it,
nor one who gathers fill his arms.
8 May those who pass by not say to them,
"The blessing of the LORD be on you;
we bless you in the name of the LORD."

PSALM 130

A song of ascents.

Out of the depths I cry to you, LORD;
2 Lord, hear my voice.
Let your ears be attentive
to my cry for mercy.

3 If you, LORD, kept a record of sins,
Lord, who could stand?
4 But with you there is forgiveness,
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

5 I wait for the LORD, my whole being waits,
and in his word I put my hope.
6 I wait for the Lord
more than watchmen wait for the
morning,
more than watchmen wait for the
morning.

7 Israel, put your hope in the LORD,
for with the LORD is unfailing love
and with him is full redemption.
8 He himself will redeem Israel
from all their sins.

PSALM 131

A song of ascents. Of David.

My heart is not proud, LORD,
my eyes are not haughty;
I do not concern myself with great matters
or things too wonderful for me.
2 But I have calmed and quieted myself,
I am like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child I am content.

3 Israel, put your hope in the LORD
both now and forevermore.

PSALM 132

A song of ascents.

LORD, remember David
and all his self-denial.

[a] 2 Or *eat— / for while they sleep he provides for*

2 He swore an oath to the LORD,
he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob:
3 "I will not enter my house
or go to my bed,
4 I will allow no sleep to my eyes
or slumber to my eyelids,
5 till I find a place for the LORD,
a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob."

6 We heard it in Ephrathah,
we came upon it in the fields of Jaar:[a]
7 "Let us go to his dwelling place,
let us worship at his footstool, saying,
8 'Arise, LORD, and come to your resting place,
you and the ark of your might.
9 May your priests be clothed with your righteousness;
may your faithful people sing for joy.'"

10 For the sake of your servant David,
do not reject your anointed one.

11 The LORD swore an oath to David,
a sure oath he will not revoke:
"One of your own descendants
I will place on your throne.
12 If your sons keep my covenant
and the statutes I teach them,
then their sons will sit
on your throne for ever and ever."

13 For the LORD has chosen Zion,
he has desired it for his dwelling, saying,
14 "This is my resting place for ever and ever;
here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it.
15 I will bless her with abundant provisions;
her poor I will satisfy with food.
16 I will clothe her priests with salvation,
and her faithful people will ever sing for joy.

17 "Here I will make a horn[b] grow for David
and set up a lamp for my anointed one.
18 I will clothe his enemies with shame,
but his head will be adorned with a radiant crown."

PSALM 133

A song of ascents. Of David.

How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!
2 It is like precious oil poured on the head,
running down on the beard,
running down on Aaron's beard,
down on the collar of his robe.
3 It is as if the dew of Hermon
were falling on Mount Zion.
For there the LORD bestows his blessing,
even life forevermore.

PSALM 134

A song of ascents.

Praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD
who minister by night in the house of the LORD.
2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary
and praise the LORD.

3 May the LORD bless you from Zion,
he who is the Maker of heaven and earth.

[a] 6 Or *heard of it in Ephrathah, / we found it in the fields of Jearim.* (See 1 Chron. 13:5,6) (And no quotation marks around verses 7-9) [b] 17 *Horn* here symbolizes strong one, that is, king. [c] 31 Or *go alongside* [d] 31 Or *proceed alongside*

TRANSITION

Nehemiah and the Levites

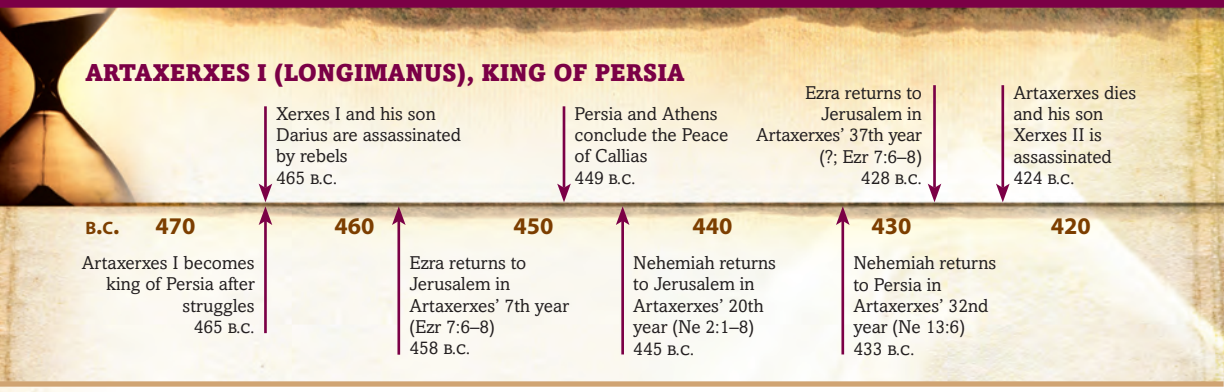
The Book of Nehemiah began as Nehemiah's own memoirs, and Nehemiah himself told the story in the first person. At Ne 7:73, though, the narrative changed to a third person account, even when speaking of Nehemiah himself (8:9; 12:26). At Ne 12:31, Nehemiah's own account resumes (except for a brief third-person passage in 12:44–47).

Although Nehemiah represented the secular arm of Jerusalem's revival—with Ezra representing the spiritual aspect—Nehemiah seems to have taken a great deal of interest in the priestly offices of the temple. He even took it upon himself to appoint choirs from the Levitical singers (12:31). Even for the duly appointed Persian governor, Jerusalem's religious life was centered on the priests.

• **Nehemiah 12:31–47**

Nehemiah

12 **:31** I had the leaders of Judah go up on top of[c] the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to give thanks. One was to proceed on top of[d] the wall to the right, toward the Dung Gate. 32 Hoshaiah and half the leaders of Judah followed them, 33 along with Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, 35 as well as some priests with trumpets, and also Zechariah son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micaiah, the son of Zakkur, the son of Asaph, 36 and his associates—Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah and



Hanani—with musical instruments prescribed by David the man of God. Ezra the teacher of the Law led the procession. [37]At the Fountain Gate they continued directly up the steps of the City of David on the ascent to the wall and passed above the site of David's palace to the Water Gate on the east.

[38]The second choir proceeded in the opposite direction. I followed them on top of[a] the wall, together with half the people—past the Tower of the Ovens to the Broad Wall, [39]over the Gate of Ephraim, the Jeshanah[b] Gate, the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate. At the Gate of the Guard they stopped.

[40]The two choirs that gave thanks then took their places in the house of God; so did I, together with half the officials, [41]as well as the priests—Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah and Hananiah with their trumpets— [42]and also Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malkijah, Elam and Ezer. The choirs sang under the direction of Jezrahiah. [43]And on that day they offered great sacrifices, rejoicing because God had given them great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. The sound of rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard far away.

[44]At that time men were appointed to be in charge of the storerooms for the contributions, firstfruits and tithes. From the fields around the towns they were to bring into the storerooms the portions required by the Law for the priests and the Levites, for Judah was pleased with the ministering priests and Levites. [45]They performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did also the musicians and gatekeepers, according to the commands of David and his son Solomon. [46]For long ago, in the days of David and Asaph, there had been directors for the musicians and for the songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. [47]So in the days of Zerubbabel and of Nehemiah, all Israel contributed the daily portions for the musicians and the gatekeepers. They also set aside the portion for the other Levites, and the Levites set aside the portion for the descendants of Aaron.

[a] *38* Or *them alongside* [b] *39* Or *Old*

TRANSITION

The Last Word in Praise

Most of the songs of praise that appear near the end of the Book of Psalms lack superscriptions. Because they are not specified as being psalms of David or of another psalmist, and perhaps because they appear at the end of the biblical book, these hymns are often considered the latest of the psalms. Perhaps they were written during the Persian era, to be sung in the rebuilt temple. Such a hymn as Ps 136 was certainly intended for use in public worship; one can almost hear the Levitical singer chanting a verse and the congregation responding to each line with the refrain, "His love endures forever."

Many of these late hymns follow the same pattern, beginning and often ending with the refrain "Praise the Lord" (Hebrew *hallelujah;* Ps 111–113; 117; 135; 146–150). Such a frequent pattern seems to indicate that regular and fairly rigid patterns for public songs of praise had developed in the restored temple. Apparently instrumental accompaniment was common: Ps 150 calls for various instruments to be used in praising God, just as Levitical instruments were used at the dedication of the walls (Ne 12:27).

It is significant to find so many hymns near the end of the Book of Psalms. Most of the laments—the songs of complaint and petition to God—appear early in the Psalter, whereas the greatest concentration of hymns of praise is at the end. Reading the Book of Psalms from start to finish, then, is a journey from distress and supplication to thanksgiving and praise.

• Psalms 104; 107; 111–118; 135; 136; 145–150

The Aten, the Egyptian Sun Disk (Ps 104:10–18)

The *Hymn to the Sun Disk* was composed by the Egyptian king Akhenaten (1352–1336 B.C.). It describes the Aten, which was the Egyptian sun deity, as the creator and sustainer of the universe and of life itself. Akhenaten's hymn exhibits characteristics that some have considered to be monotheistic. These characteristics, however, tend toward what is known as henotheism or monolatry—the worship of one god without denying the existence of others.

There are some detailed but superficial literary similarities between the Egyptian hymn and Ps 104. For example, the hymn describes the Nile as being in the sky, descending and making waves on the mountains to water the fields. Similarly, Yahweh from his "upper chambers" waters the valleys and hills (Ps 104:10, 13). The *Hymn to the Sun Disk* mentions beasts that are satisfied with their pasture, along with trees, plants, and birds which fly from their nests. Similarly, Yahweh provides all things necessary to life, caring for animal, plant, and bird life (Ps 104:11, 12, 14–18).

Clearly, Akhenaten's *Hymn to the Sun Disk* describes the solar deity much the same as Ps 104 describes Yahweh. Some scholars have supposed, because of common themes in these writings, in many other Egyptian sun hymns, and even in a Mesopotamian hymn to the sun god Shamash, that the psalmist of Ps 104 used some of these writings as sources. However, more likely there were well-known expressions common to Middle- and Near-Eastern cultures that provided a literary framework within which the psalm was written.

PSALM 104

Praise the LORD, my soul.

LORD my God, you are very great;
you are clothed with splendor and majesty.
2 The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment;
he stretches out the heavens like a tent
3 and lays the beams of his upper chambers on their waters.
He makes the clouds his chariot
and rides on the wings of the wind.
4 He makes winds his messengers,[a]
flames of fire his servants.

5 He set the earth on its foundations;
it can never be moved.
6 You covered it with the watery depths as with a garment;
the waters stood above the mountains.
7 But at your rebuke the waters fled,
at the sound of your thunder they took to flight;
8 they flowed over the mountains,
they went down into the valleys,
to the place you assigned for them.
9 You set a boundary they cannot cross;
never again will they cover the earth.

10 He makes springs pour water into the ravines;
it flows between the mountains.
11 They give water to all the beasts of the field;
the wild donkeys quench their thirst.
12 The birds of the sky nest by the waters;
they sing among the branches.
13 He waters the mountains from his upper chambers;
the land is satisfied by the fruit of his work.
14 He makes grass grow for the cattle,
and plants for people to cultivate—
bringing forth food from the earth:
15 wine that gladdens human hearts,
oil to make their faces shine,
and bread that sustains their hearts.
16 The trees of the LORD are well watered,
the cedars of Lebanon that he planted.
17 There the birds make their nests;
the stork has its home in the junipers.
18 The high mountains belong to the wild goats;
the crags are a refuge for the hyrax.

19 He made the moon to mark the seasons,
and the sun knows when to go down.
20 You bring darkness, it becomes night,
and all the beasts of the forest prowl.
21 The lions roar for their prey
and seek their food from God.
22 The sun rises, and they steal away;
they return and lie down in their dens.
23 Then people go out to their work,
to their labor until evening.

[a] *4* Or *angels*

24 How many are your works, LORD!
In wisdom you made them all;
the earth is full of your creatures.
25 There is the sea, vast and spacious,
teeming with creatures beyond number—
living things both large and small.
26 There the ships go to and fro,
and Leviathan, which you formed to frolic there.

27 All creatures look to you
to give them their food at the proper time.
28 When you give it to them,
they gather it up;
when you open your hand,
they are satisfied with good things.
29 When you hide your face,
they are terrified;
when you take away their breath,
they die and return to the dust.
30 When you send your Spirit,
they are created,
and you renew the face of the ground.

31 May the glory of the LORD endure forever;
may the LORD rejoice in his works—
32 he who looks at the earth, and it trembles,
who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

33 I will sing to the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
34 May my meditation be pleasing to him,
as I rejoice in the LORD.
35 But may sinners vanish from the earth
and the wicked be no more.

Praise the LORD, my soul.

Praise the LORD.[a]

PSALM 107

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story—
those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,
3 those he gathered from the lands,
from east and west, from north and south.[b]

4 Some wandered in desert wastelands,
finding no way to a city where they could settle.
5 They were hungry and thirsty,
and their lives ebbed away.
6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress.
7 He led them by a straight way
to a city where they could settle.
8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,
9 for he satisfies the thirsty
and fills the hungry with good things.

10 Some sat in darkness, in utter darkness,
prisoners suffering in iron chains,
11 because they rebelled against God's commands
and despised the plans of the Most High.
12 So he subjected them to bitter labor;
they stumbled, and there was no one to help.
13 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.
14 He brought them out of darkness, the utter darkness,
and broke away their chains.

[a] *35* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; in the Septuagint this line stands at the beginning of Psalm 105. [b] *3* Hebrew *north and the sea*

15 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his
unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind,
16 for he breaks down gates of bronze
and cuts through bars of iron.

17 Some became fools through their rebellious
ways
and suffered affliction because of their
iniquities.
18 They loathed all food
and drew near the gates of death.
19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he saved them from their distress.
20 He sent out his word and healed them;
he rescued them from the grave.
21 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his
unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.
22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings
and tell of his works with songs of joy.

23 Some went out on the sea in ships;
they were merchants on the mighty
waters.
24 They saw the works of the LORD,
his wonderful deeds in the deep.
25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest
that lifted high the waves.
26 They mounted up to the heavens and went
down to the depths;
in their peril their courage melted away.
27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards;
they were at their wits' end.
28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their
trouble,
and he brought them out of their distress.
29 He stilled the storm to a whisper;
the waves of the sea[a] were hushed.
30 They were glad when it grew calm,
and he guided them to their desired
haven.
31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his
unfailing love
and his wonderful deeds for mankind.
32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the
people
and praise him in the council of the
elders.

33 He turned rivers into a desert,
flowing springs into thirsty ground,
34 and fruitful land into a salt waste,
because of the wickedness of those who
lived there.

35 He turned the desert into pools of water
and the parched ground into flowing
springs;
36 there he brought the hungry to live,
and they founded a city where they could
settle.
37 They sowed fields and planted vineyards
that yielded a fruitful harvest;
38 he blessed them, and their numbers greatly
increased,
and he did not let their herds diminish.

39 Then their numbers decreased, and they
were humbled
by oppression, calamity and sorrow;
40 he who pours contempt on nobles
made them wander in a trackless waste.
41 But he lifted the needy out of their affliction
and increased their families like flocks.
42 The upright see and rejoice,
but all the wicked shut their mouths.

43 Let the one who is wise heed these things
and ponder the loving deeds of the LORD.

PSALM 111[b]

Praise the LORD.[c]

I will extol the LORD with all my heart
in the council of the upright and in the
assembly.

2 Great are the works of the LORD;
they are pondered by all who delight in
them.
3 Glorious and majestic are his deeds,
and his righteousness endures forever.
4 He has caused his wonders to be
remembered;
the LORD is gracious and compassionate.
5 He provides food for those who fear him;
he remembers his covenant forever.

6 He has shown his people the power of his
works,
giving them the lands of other nations.
7 The works of his hands are faithful and just;
all his precepts are trustworthy.

[a] *29* Dead Sea Scrolls; Masoretic Text */ their waves* [b] This psalm is an acrostic poem, the lines of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. [c] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*

TIME CAPSULE		434 to 425 B.C.
434–404	Sparta defeats Athens in Peloponnesian War	
433	Nehemiah returns from Persia to Judah	
428	Possible date for Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem	
428–347	Plato, Greek philosopher	
425–388	Aristophanes, Athenian writer of comedy	

8 They are established for ever and ever,
enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.
9 He provided redemption for his people;
he ordained his covenant forever—
holy and awesome is his name.

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom;
all who follow his precepts have good understanding.
To him belongs eternal praise.

PSALM 112[a]

Praise the LORD.[b]

Blessed are those who fear the LORD,
who find great delight in his commands.
2 Their children will be mighty in the land;
the generation of the upright will be blessed.
3 Wealth and riches are in their houses,
and their righteousness endures forever.
4 Even in darkness light dawns for the upright,
for those who are gracious and compassionate and righteous.
5 Good will come to those who are generous and lend freely,
who conduct their affairs with justice.

6 Surely the righteous will never be shaken;
they will be remembered forever.
7 They will have no fear of bad news;
their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the LORD.
8 Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear;
in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.
9 They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor,
their righteousness endures forever;
their horn[c] will be lifted high in honor.

10 The wicked will see and be vexed,
they will gnash their teeth and waste away;
the longings of the wicked will come to nothing.

PSALM 113

Praise the LORD.[d]

Praise the LORD, you his servants;
praise the name of the LORD.
2 Let the name of the LORD be praised,
both now and forevermore.
3 From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets,
the name of the LORD is to be praised.

4 The LORD is exalted over all the nations,
his glory above the heavens.
5 Who is like the LORD our God,
the One who sits enthroned on high,
6 who stoops down to look
on the heavens and the earth?

7 He raises the poor from the dust
and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
8 he seats them with princes,
with the princes of his people.
9 He settles the childless woman in her home
as a happy mother of children.

Praise the LORD.

PSALM 114

When Israel came out of Egypt,
Jacob from a people of foreign tongue,
2 Judah became God's sanctuary,
Israel his dominion.

3 The sea looked and fled,
the Jordan turned back;
4 the mountains leaped like rams,
the hills like lambs.

5 Why was it, sea, that you fled?
Why, Jordan, did you turn back?
6 Why, mountains, did you leap like rams,
you hills, like lambs?

7 Tremble, earth, at the presence of the Lord,
at the presence of the God of Jacob,
8 who turned the rock into a pool,
the hard rock into springs of water.

PSALM 115

Not to us, LORD, not to us
but to your name be the glory,
because of your love and faithfulness.

2 Why do the nations say,
"Where is their God?"
3 Our God is in heaven;
he does whatever pleases him.
4 But their idols are silver and gold,
made by human hands.
5 They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but cannot see.

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[a] This psalm is an acrostic poem, the lines of which begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. [b] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah* [c] *9* *Horn* here symbolizes dignity. [d] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; also in verse 9

6 They have ears, but cannot hear,
noses, but cannot smell.
7 They have hands, but cannot feel,
feet, but cannot walk,
nor can they utter a sound with their throats.
8 Those who make them will be like them,
and so will all who trust in them.

9 All you Israelites, trust in the LORD—
he is their help and shield.
10 House of Aaron, trust in the LORD—
he is their help and shield.
11 You who fear him, trust in the LORD—
he is their help and shield.

12 The LORD remembers us and will bless us:
He will bless his people Israel,
he will bless the house of Aaron,
13 he will bless those who fear the LORD—
small and great alike.

14 May the LORD cause you to flourish,
both you and your children.
15 May you be blessed by the LORD,
the Maker of heaven and earth.

16 The highest heavens belong to the LORD,
but the earth he has given to mankind.
17 It is not the dead who praise the LORD,
those who go down to the place of silence;
18 it is we who extol the LORD,
both now and forevermore.

Praise the LORD.[a]

PSALM 116

I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.
2 Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

3 The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave came over me;
I was overcome by distress and sorrow.
4 Then I called on the name of the LORD:
"LORD, save me!"

5 The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.
6 The LORD protects the unwary;
when I was brought low, he saved me.

7 Return to your rest, my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.

8 For you, LORD, have delivered me from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,
9 that I may walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.

10 I trusted in the LORD when I said,
"I am greatly afflicted";
11 in my alarm I said,
"Everyone is a liar."

12 What shall I return to the LORD
for all his goodness to me?

13 I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.
14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his faithful servants.
16 Truly I am your servant, LORD;
I serve you just as my mother did;
you have freed me from my chains.

17 I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the LORD.
18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,
19 in the courts of the house of the LORD—
in your midst, Jerusalem.

Praise the LORD.[a]

PSALM 117

Praise the LORD, all you nations;
extol him, all you peoples.
2 For great is his love toward us,
and the faithfulness of the LORD endures forever.

Praise the LORD.[a]

PSALM 118

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

2 Let Israel say:
"His love endures forever."
3 Let the house of Aaron say:
"His love endures forever."

[a] *18,19,2* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*

Religion & Worship
A religious vow was a voluntary promise made to God, often like a bargain, to be fulfilled if God answered a certain petition. There was no requirement to make a vow, but if one was made, the maker was not permitted to break it, unless the vow itself was unlawful. The payment of a vow was sometimes an expression of thanksgiving (Ps 116:12, 14).

4 Let those who fear the LORD say:
"His love endures forever."

5 When hard pressed, I cried to the LORD;
he brought me into a spacious place.
6 The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?
7 The LORD is with me; he is my helper.
I look in triumph on my enemies.

8 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in humans.
9 It is better to take refuge in the LORD
than to trust in princes.
10 All the nations surrounded me,
but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.
11 They surrounded me on every side,
but in the name of the LORD I cut them down.
12 They swarmed around me like bees,
but they were consumed as quickly as burning thorns;
in the name of the LORD I cut them down.
13 I was pushed back and about to fall,
but the LORD helped me.
14 The LORD is my strength and my defense[a];
he has become my salvation.

15 Shouts of joy and victory
resound in the tents of the righteous:
"The LORD's right hand has done mighty things!
16 The LORD's right hand is lifted high;
the LORD's right hand has done mighty things!"
17 I will not die but live,
and will proclaim what the LORD has done.
18 The LORD has chastened me severely,
but he has not given me over to death.
19 Open for me the gates of the righteous;
I will enter and give thanks to the LORD.
20 This is the gate of the LORD
through which the righteous may enter.
21 I will give you thanks, for you answered me;
you have become my salvation.

22 The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
23 the LORD has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes.
24 The LORD has done it this very day;
let us rejoice today and be glad.

25 LORD, save us!
LORD, grant us success!

26 Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD.
From the house of the LORD we bless you.[b]
27 The LORD is God,
and he has made his light shine on us.
With boughs in hand, join in the festal procession
up[c] to the horns of the altar.

28 You are my God, and I will praise you;
you are my God, and I will exalt you.

29 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
his love endures forever.

PSALM 135

Praise the LORD.[d]

Praise the name of the LORD;
praise him, you servants of the LORD,
2 you who minister in the house of the LORD,
in the courts of the house of our God.

3 Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good;
sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.
4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own,
Israel to be his treasured possession.

5 I know that the LORD is great,
that our Lord is greater than all gods.
6 The LORD does whatever pleases him,
in the heavens and on the earth,
in the seas and all their depths.
7 He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth;
he sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.

8 He struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
the firstborn of people and animals.
9 He sent his signs and wonders into your midst, Egypt,
against Pharaoh and all his servants.
10 He struck down many nations
and killed mighty kings—
11 Sihon king of the Amorites,
Og king of Bashan,
and all the kings of Canaan—
12 and he gave their land as an inheritance,
an inheritance to his people Israel.

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[a] *14* Or *song* [b] *26* The Hebrew is plural. [c] *27* Or *Bind the festal sacrifice with ropes / and take it* [d] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; also in verses 3 and 21

Amorites on the Move (Ps 135:11)

The Amorites are well known from Accadian records (c. 2200 B.C.) as the inhabitants of Amurru. The term "Amorite" originally meant "westerner," indicating people living west of Mesopotamia, apparently in a region around the upper Habor (Khabur) and Balikh River valleys in Syria. Here the Amorites employed dry-farming methods and lived in small urban centers.

Amorites eventually migrated east. The Sumerian 3rd Dynasty of Ur (c. 2100 B.C.) records the slow Amorite infiltration of Mesopotamia. After the fall of Ur numerous Amorite dynasties began to appear in Asshur, Babylon, Mari, Uruk, and elsewhere. Both the Babylonians and Assyrians claimed to be of Amorite descent.

Similar Amorite movement occurred along the Mediterranean coast. By 1900 B.C. an Amorite dynasty ruled the city of Ugarit on the Syrian coast. During the Late Bronze Age (1500–1200 B.C.) an Amorite kingdom existed in the Orontes River Valley in Syria, as is recorded in cuneiform texts from Alalakh and from the Amarna archives in Egypt.

The Amorite migration reached farther south into parts of the Transjordan and Palestine. Amorites were among the nations that inhabited Canaan prior to the Israelite conquest (Ge 15:19–21). "Amorite" became a general term for the peoples of Canaan (Ge 48:22; Jos 24:15). The prophet Ezekiel describes the inhabitants of Jerusalem as partly descended from Amorites (Eze 16:3).

The migrations of the Amorites thus placed them among the local populations encountered by Israelites during the conquest. Israel's victory over them became fixed in Israelite history as a high point of the invasion. In particular, the defeat of "Sihon king of the Amorites" and his capital at Heshbon was celebrated both in a proverb (Nu 21:26–31) and with psalms (Ps 135:10, 11; 136:18, 19).

13 Your name, LORD, endures forever,
your renown, LORD, through all
generations.
14 For the LORD will vindicate his people
and have compassion on his servants.

15 The idols of the nations are silver and
gold,
made by human hands.
16 They have mouths, but cannot speak,
eyes, but cannot see.
17 They have ears, but cannot hear,
nor is there breath in their mouths.
18 Those who make them will be like them,
and so will all who trust in them.

19 All you Israelites, praise the LORD;
house of Aaron, praise the LORD;
20 house of Levi, praise the LORD;
you who fear him, praise the LORD.
21 Praise be to the LORD from Zion,
to him who dwells in Jerusalem.

Praise the LORD.

PSALM 136

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good.
His love endures forever.
2 Give thanks to the God of gods.
His love endures forever.
3 Give thanks to the Lord of lords:
His love endures forever.

4 to him who alone does great wonders,
His love endures forever.
5 who by his understanding made the
heavens,
His love endures forever.
6 who spread out the earth upon the waters,
His love endures forever.
7 who made the great lights—
His love endures forever.
8 the sun to govern the day,
His love endures forever.
9 the moon and stars to govern the night;
His love endures forever.

10 to him who struck down the firstborn of
Egypt
His love endures forever.
11 and brought Israel out from among them
His love endures forever.
12 with a mighty hand and outstretched arm;
His love endures forever.

13 to him who divided the Red Sea[a] asunder
His love endures forever.
14 and brought Israel through the midst of it,
His love endures forever.
15 but swept Pharaoh and his army into the
Red Sea;
His love endures forever.

16 to him who led his people through the
wilderness;
His love endures forever.

17 to him who struck down great kings,
His love endures forever.
18 and killed mighty kings—
His love endures forever.
19 Sihon king of the Amorites
His love endures forever.

[a] *13* Or *the Sea of Reeds*; also in verse 15

20 and Og king of Bashan—
His love endures forever.
21 and gave their land as an inheritance,
His love endures forever.
22 an inheritance to his servant Israel.
His love endures forever.

23 He remembered us in our low estate
His love endures forever.
24 and freed us from our enemies.
His love endures forever.
25 He gives food to every creature.
His love endures forever.

26 Give thanks to the God of heaven.
His love endures forever.

PSALM 145[a]

A psalm of praise. Of David.

I will exalt you, my God the King;
I will praise your name for ever and ever.
2 Every day I will praise you
and extol your name for ever and ever.

3 Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.
4 One generation commends your works to another;
they tell of your mighty acts.
5 They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—
and I will meditate on your wonderful works.[b]
6 They tell of the power of your awesome works—
and I will proclaim your great deeds.
7 They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.

8 The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love.

9 The LORD is good to all;
he has compassion on all he has made.
10 All your works praise you, LORD;
your faithful people extol you.
11 They tell of the glory of your kingdom
and speak of your might,
12 so that all people may know of your mighty acts
and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.
13 Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and your dominion endures through all generations.

The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does.[c]
14 The LORD upholds all who fall
and lifts up all who are bowed down.
15 The eyes of all look to you,
and you give them their food at the proper time.
16 You open your hand
and satisfy the desires of every living thing.

17 The LORD is righteous in all his ways
and faithful in all he does.
18 The LORD is near to all who call on him,
to all who call on him in truth.
19 He fulfills the desires of those who fear him;
he hears their cry and saves them.
20 The LORD watches over all who love him,
but all the wicked he will destroy.

21 My mouth will speak in praise of the LORD.
Let every creature praise his holy name
for ever and ever.

PSALM 146

Praise the LORD.[d]

Praise the LORD, my soul.

2 I will praise the LORD all my life;
I will sing praise to my God as long as I live.
3 Do not put your trust in princes,
in human beings, who cannot save.
4 When their spirit departs, they return to the ground;
on that very day their plans come to nothing.
5 Blessed are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God.

6 He is the Maker of heaven and earth,
the sea, and everything in them—
he remains faithful forever.
7 He upholds the cause of the oppressed
and gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets prisoners free,
8 the LORD gives sight to the blind,
the LORD lifts up those who are bowed down,
the LORD loves the righteous.

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[a] This psalm is an acrostic poem, the verses of which (including verse 13b) begin with the successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. [b] *5* Dead Sea Scrolls and Syriac (see also Septuagint); Masoretic Text *On the glorious splendor of your majesty / and on your wonderful works I will meditate*
[c] *13* One manuscript of the Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls and Syriac (see also Septuagint); most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text do not have the last two lines of verse 13.
[d] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; also in verse 10

9 The LORD watches over the foreigner
and sustains the fatherless and the widow,
but he frustrates the ways of the wicked.

10 The LORD reigns forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.

Praise the LORD.

PSALM 147

Praise the LORD.[a]

How good it is to sing praises to our God,
how pleasant and fitting to praise him!

2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem;
he gathers the exiles of Israel.
3 He heals the brokenhearted
and binds up their wounds.
4 He determines the number of the stars
and calls them each by name.
5 Great is our Lord and mighty in power;
his understanding has no limit.
6 The LORD sustains the humble
but casts the wicked to the ground.

7 Sing to the LORD with grateful praise;
make music to our God on the harp.

8 He covers the sky with clouds;
he supplies the earth with rain
and makes grass grow on the hills.
9 He provides food for the cattle
and for the young ravens when they call.

10 His pleasure is not in the strength of the horse,
nor his delight in the legs of the warrior;
11 the LORD delights in those who fear him,
who put their hope in his unfailing love.

12 Extol the LORD, Jerusalem;
praise your God, Zion.

13 He strengthens the bars of your gates
and blesses your people within you.
14 He grants peace to your borders
and satisfies you with the finest of wheat.

15 He sends his command to the earth;
his word runs swiftly.
16 He spreads the snow like wool
and scatters the frost like ashes.
17 He hurls down his hail like pebbles.
Who can withstand his icy blast?
18 He sends his word and melts them;
he stirs up his breezes, and the waters flow.

19 He has revealed his word to Jacob,
his laws and decrees to Israel.
20 He has done this for no other nation;
they do not know his laws.[b]

Praise the LORD.

PSALM 148

Praise the LORD.[c]

Praise the LORD from the heavens;
praise him in the heights above.
2 Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his heavenly hosts.
3 Praise him, sun and moon;
praise him, all you shining stars.
4 Praise him, you highest heavens
and you waters above the skies.

5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for at his command they were created,
6 and he established them for ever and ever—
he issued a decree that will never pass away.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth,
you great sea creatures and all ocean depths,
8 lightning and hail, snow and clouds,
stormy winds that do his bidding,
9 you mountains and all hills,
fruit trees and all cedars,
10 wild animals and all cattle,
small creatures and flying birds,
11 kings of the earth and all nations,
you princes and all rulers on earth,
12 young men and women,
old men and children.

13 Let them praise the name of the LORD,
for his name alone is exalted;
his splendor is above the earth and the heavens.
14 And he has raised up for his people a horn,[d]
the praise of all his faithful servants,
of Israel, the people close to his heart.

Praise the LORD.

Science & Technology

The physical power available to an ancient army was basically the muscle power of men and animals. They did not use explosives or gasoline, kerosene, and oil. Consequently, the "legs of the warrior" and the "strength of the horse" (Ps 147:10) refer precisely to military power. Yet God does not delight in physical strength.

[a] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; also in verse 20 [b] *20* Masoretic Text; Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint *nation; / he has not made his laws known to them* [c] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; also in verse 14 [d] *14* *Horn* here symbolizes strength.

Praise God, All Heaven and Earth (Ps 148:13)

Hymns from Egypt to Mesopotamia are filled with praises to the deity. On the feast day of any given deity, the hymns named the god as the highest god of the pantheon on that particular day. Whether it was a hymn to Amon of Egypt or to Ishtar of Babylon, the singers praised that deity for creating the world, for ruling over the other gods, for unsurpassed wisdom, and for the blessings which the worshipers had received from the deity. Always, the deity to whom the song was directed was called the greatest of all the gods.

Such a hymn is Ps 148, possibly composed for a day set aside as holy to Yahweh. After the exile this psalm could have been sung daily since, at least in Judah's later years, all days were thought holy to Yahweh. In the hymn, the residents of heaven are joined in their praise of Yahweh by inanimate objects, all of creation from heaven to earth (Ps 148:7–10). Moreover, the song assumes that all peoples everywhere praise God who created them (148:11, 12). Language and motifs that are used elsewhere in the ancient world for other gods are reserved in Ps 148 exclusively for Yahweh.

The ancient world understood that one never sings hymns of praise alone, but always with the entire universe. This idea of solidarity with the entire created order was carried over into the early church and still remains a central aspect of Orthodox Christian liturgy.

PSALM 149

Praise the LORD.[a]

Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise in the assembly of his faithful people.

2 Let Israel rejoice in their Maker;
let the people of Zion be glad in their King.
3 Let them praise his name with dancing
and make music to him with timbrel and harp.
4 For the LORD takes delight in his people;
he crowns the humble with victory.
5 Let his faithful people rejoice in this honor
and sing for joy on their beds.

6 May the praise of God be in their mouths
and a double-edged sword in their hands,
7 to inflict vengeance on the nations
and punishment on the peoples,
8 to bind their kings with fetters,
their nobles with shackles of iron,
9 to carry out the sentence written against them—
this is the glory of all his faithful people.

Praise the LORD.

PSALM 150

Praise the LORD.[b]

Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.
2 Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.
3 Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
4 praise him with timbrel and dancing,
praise him with the strings and pipe,
5 praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.

6 Let everything that has breath praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD.

[a] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; also in verse 9 [b] *1* Hebrew *Hallelu Yah*; also in verse 6

TRANSITION

Nehemiah's Religious Reforms

Nehemiah began his term of office in 445 b.c., and his greatest accomplishment was the rebuilding of the city walls. They were completed in only 52 days (Ne 6:15), but these quickly erected walls may have been just makeshift structures. The Jewish historian Josephus writes that the final walls took over two years, being completed in 437 b.c.

Nehemiah remained in Jerusalem until the 32nd year of Artaxerxes (433 b.c.), at which time he returned to Artaxerxes' court (Ne 13:6). Soon, though, he convinced the Persian king to reappoint him to Judah, and he returned to find matters in an unacceptable state.

Nehemiah, like Ezra, was a purist in religious matters. True worship was only possible by the undefiled, and to Nehemiah that disqualified all of the people who had remained in the land during the exile. Only the returned exiles, who had kept the faith pure even while in captivity, were acceptable. When Nehemiah found that Tobiah, an Ammonite official (Ne 2:19), had been given rooms in the temple itself, he was aghast and removed Tobiah with characteristic promptness (Ne 13:7–9). Nehemiah also restored the official support of the Levitical ministers (13:10–14) and resumed enforcement of Sabbath laws (13:15–22).

Tobiah, the Enemy of Nehemiah (Ne 13:7)

Sometime after 433 B.C., Nehemiah returned from Persia to Judah only to find that his personal enemy Tobiah had wormed his way into the temple itself (Ne 13:7). Tobiah was not a Judean, but an Ammonite. The "evil thing" that Nehemiah discovered was that the high priest had taken an Ammonite into the temple, something forbidden in the Law of Moses (13:1).

There were several conflicts between Nehemiah and Tobiah. First Tobiah opposed Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls (Ne 2:10, 19). Accusations that Nehemiah was rebelling against the Persian king who had appointed him Judah's governor failed to stop the work. Tobiah further ridiculed the walls (Ne 4:3) and then plotted with others to attack Jerusalem before the walls could be completed (4:11, 15). These attempts likewise failed.

Tobiah was nothing if not persistent. He, with others, attempted to lure Nehemiah away from Jerusalem in order to assassinate him (6:1, 2). Later on, Tobiah sent him threatening letters (6:19).

Attempting to infiltrate the temple was possibly Tobiah's new strategy to undermine Nehemiah's authority. Most likely he wished to rule over Jerusalem himself, even though he was an Ammonite, not a Judean. He most likely desired to absorb Judah into his own realm, since, as an "Ammonite official" (2:19), he possibly held a position in Ammon similar to Sanballat's in Samaria and Nehemiah's in Judah.

Tobiah was from a powerful, wealthy Ammonite family who impacted Jewish history later on. Archaeologists have discovered a palace-fortress just to the east of Judah from a century after Nehemiah's time. The fortress has the name "Tobiah" inscribed at the entrance. Unable to gather control of Jerusalem, Tobiah and his family eventually carved out landholdings and political power in Ammon, just east of the Jordan River.

The exclusivism of Nehemiah and Ezra is sometimes troubling. Though intended to protect the faith from idolatrous influences, it often seems excessively severe. After all, some of the people so utterly rejected also worshiped the God of Israel. Not everyone felt as Nehemiah did. The Eliashib who installed Tobiah in his temple apartment was none other than the high priest himself (Ne 3:1), who evidently regarded his neighbors with more tolerance (see "Isaiah and the Restoration" at Isa 56:1).

• **Nehemiah 13:1–22**

Nehemiah

Nehemiah's Final Reforms

13 **:1** On that day the Book of Moses was
read aloud in the hearing of the people
and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the
assembly of God, [2]because they had not met
the Israelites with food and water but had hired
Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our
God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) [3]When the people heard this law, they
excluded from Israel all who were of foreign
descent.

[4]Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put
in charge of the storerooms of the house of our
God. He was closely associated with Tobiah,
[5]and he had provided him with a large room
formerly used to store the grain offerings and
incense and temple articles, and also the tithes
of grain, new wine and olive oil prescribed for
the Levites, musicians and gatekeepers, as well
as the contributions for the priests.

[6]But while all this was going on, I was not in
Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the
king. Some time later I asked his permission
[7]and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned
about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house
of God. [8]I was greatly displeased and threw all
Tobiah's household goods out of the room. [9]I
gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put
back into them the equipment of the house of
God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

[10]I also learned that the portions assigned to
the Levites had not been given to them, and
that all the Levites and musicians responsible for the service had gone back to their own
fields. [11]So I rebuked the officials and asked
them, "Why is the house of God neglected?"
Then I called them together and stationed
them at their posts.

[12]All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new
wine and olive oil into the storerooms. [13]I put
Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a
Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zakkur, the
son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because they
were considered trustworthy. They were made
responsible for distributing the supplies to
their fellow Levites.

[14]Remember me for this, my God, and do not
blot out what I have so faithfully done for the
house of my God and its services.

[15]In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in
grain and loading it on donkeys, together with

Religion & Worship
The prohibition against work on the Sabbath is a religious obligation, not an arrangement imposed by an employer or government. A man could be executed for "gathering wood on the Sabbath day" (Nu 15:32–36). Nehemiah did not impose such a strict penalty, but he did try to stop daily work on the 7th day. Working on that day "desecrates" it, making it like any other day (Ne 13:18).

wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. 16People from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. 17I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day? 18Didn't your ancestors do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity on us and on this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath."

19When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the Sabbath day. 20Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. 21But I warned them and said, "Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will arrest you." From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. 22Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Remember me for this also, my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.

TRANSITION

The Sabbath After the Exile

When the Jerusalem temple was destroyed in 586 b.c., the Jews in exile had to find and emphasize religious practices that did not require a physical temple. One was Scripture (see "Ezra the Teacher of the Law" at Ezra 7:1). Another was the observance of the Sabbath. Although the Sabbath law was one of Israel's most ancient, being the fourth commandment (Ex 20:8–11), it was not treated as a central truth of the faith until after the temple had been destroyed. To Jews living in foreign lands, the visible distinctive of Sabbath observance became an essential mark of the true believer. It was no less than a public statement of faith.

Even after some exiled Jews returned to Jerusalem and rebuilt the temple, Sabbath observance remained a nonnegotiable element of true worship. When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem for a second term as governor, one of his first actions was to enforce the Sabbath laws. As always, he was abrupt and severe, even offering threats of physical violence (Ne 13:21).

For some, the Sabbath day was a reminder and an opportunity to give thanks to God for His great blessings. This, at least, was the perspective of the anonymous psalmist responsible for Ps 92. Others, though, would simply treat the Sabbath as another law to be followed, and Nehemiah's heavy-handed enforcement of the Sabbath law only added to that legalism. By the time of Christ, legalism had almost obliterated the joy of Sabbath thanksgiving that is so evident in Ps 92 (see Mk 2:23–28).

• Psalm 92

PSALM 92[a]

A psalm. A song. For the Sabbath day.

It is good to praise the LORD
and make music to your name, O Most High,
2proclaiming your love in the morning
and your faithfulness at night,
3to the music of the ten-stringed lyre
and the melody of the harp.

4For you make me glad by your deeds, LORD;
I sing for joy at what your hands have done.
5How great are your works, LORD,
how profound your thoughts!
6Senseless people do not know,
fools do not understand,
7that though the wicked spring up like grass
and all evildoers flourish,
they will be destroyed forever.

8But you, LORD, are forever exalted.

9For surely your enemies, LORD,
surely your enemies will perish;
all evildoers will be scattered.
10You have exalted my horn[b] like that of a wild ox;
fine oils have been poured on me.
11My eyes have seen the defeat of my adversaries;
my ears have heard the rout of my wicked foes.

[a] In Hebrew texts 92:1-15 is numbered 92:2-16. [b] *10 Horn* here symbolizes strength.

The Nehemiah Memoirs (Ne 13:31)

Portions of the Book of Nehemiah use the first-person pronouns "I" and "me" in recounting the events of the story. Apparently, the final editor of the book used a firsthand account written by Nehemiah himself to complete the story begun in Chronicles and the Book of Ezra. Called by scholars the "Nehemiah memoirs," the account provides Nehemiah's own perspective of the events and the resistance he faced in attempting to restore Jerusalem to a place of prominence among its neighbors.

The Book of Nehemiah concludes with Nehemiah's short prayer: "Remember me with favor, my God" (Ne 13:31). Nehemiah repeats a similar prayer throughout his memoirs, asking that God remember certain deeds and persons (Ne 5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29). As he recounted the events of his life, he was apparently confident that God approved of his actions.

Similar forms of autobiographical inscriptions have been discovered in Egypt from the same historical period as Nehemiah. The statue inscription of Udjahorresnet is from an Egyptian who, like Ezra and Nehemiah, was appointed to an important governmental post by the Persians. The *Long Biographical Inscription of Petosiris* is from a wealthy high priest of the Egyptian god Thoth. Both inscriptions seem to have been written by the individuals, and then posted after their deaths to commemorate their lives before the public and their gods. Both writings ask for people and the gods to "remember" them and their deeds.

Nehemiah may have written his memoirs as part of a similar funerary custom. Following Nehemiah's death, then, his memoirs became an excellent source of Judah's history, dealing with the restoration of the temple and of Jerusalem's walls.

12 The righteous will flourish like a palm tree,
they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon;
13 planted in the house of the LORD,
they will flourish in the courts of our God.
14 They will still bear fruit in old age,
they will stay fresh and green,
15 proclaiming, "The LORD is upright;
he is my Rock, and there is no
wickedness in him."

TRANSITION

Nehemiah and Foreign Wives

Both Ezra and Nehemiah vehemently (and in Nehemiah's case, violently) opposed the intermarriage of returned exiles and the people of the land. When Ezra heard of such marriages, he tore his clothes and pulled his own hair and beard (Ezr 9:3). Nehemiah, less introspective, pulled the hair of those who had intermarried (Ne 13:25). To these leaders the problem was serious: any connection with the foreign or unclean could result in an adulterated faith.

Not everyone, not even every religious leader, agreed. The high priest Eliashib himself evidently regarded such marriages with indulgence (Ne 13:28), and among some of the Jews in exile intermarriage appeared to be unremarkable. The author of the Book of Esther related Esther's marriage to a Persian king without apology or comment (see "The Book of Esther" at Est 1:1). The Book of Ruth, which many scholars feel was written sometime during the Persian period, deliberately points out that the great King David himself had a Moabite ancestress (Ruth 1:4; 4:13–22; see Ne 13:23).

• **Nehemiah 13:23–31**

Nehemiah

13 :23 Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. 24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. 25 I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. 26 Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. 27 Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?"

28 One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.

29 Remember them, my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites.

30 So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task. 31 I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the firstfruits.

Remember me with favor, my God.

TRANSITION

The Book of Joel

Nothing is known about the prophet Joel except for what the Book of Joel itself offers. All information beyond the name of his father, Pethuel (Joel 1:1), must be concluded by examining Joel's prophecies.

Joel prophesied in Jerusalem at a time when there was a temple standing (Joel 2:17), but beyond that no one is certain when Joel was active. Some scholars have suggested that Joel was one of the earliest of prophets, prophesying in the 8th century B.C., even before Amos and Hosea. Others place him later, even as late as the Persian period. The book can be read in a context, such as the time of the Persian Empire, when Jerusalem had no king. Joel calls for a national day of fasting and repentance, to be led by the elders and the priests (1:14; 2:15–17). Had Joel prophesied during the monarchy, the king would surely have had a part in such a solemn assembly.

The Persian era suits Joel's prophecies in other ways. Like Malachi, Joel shows a strong priestly orientation. He sees repentance as an official priestly task instead of an individual responsibility (Joel 2:17). He refers once to the Greeks (3:6), a reference that would make the most sense when the Greek city-states were gaining international recognition for their wars against Persia. Finally, Joel shows an amazing awareness of earlier prophecies, quoting extensively from their works. His most interesting quotation (Joel 3:10) reverses an earlier prophecy found in both Isaiah (Isa 2:4) and Micah (Mic 4:3). Now plowshares would become swords and pruning hooks, spears.

In whatever era Joel spoke, the immediate concern of his prophecy was a plague of locusts. To an agricultural society, the vast swarms of locusts that occasionally appeared in the ancient Near East spelled famine and death. Joel uses one such disaster to call the people back to true faith in God. The locust swarm was a "day of the Lord," and a still more devastating, universal day of the Lord was still to come (Joel 2:30, 31; 3:14–16). Only if the people truly repented could Jerusalem become the holy and eternal city that it was meant to be (3:17, 20, 21).

• **Joel 1:1—3:21**

Plants & Animals

The precise meanings of Joel's four kinds of locusts are unclear (Joel 1:4). Locusts are grasshoppers whose form and behavior change when they migrate in large numbers and swarm together. An adult locust has a wingspan of 5 inches and can fly 100 miles in a day. A locust swarm may number billions of locusts and eat several tons of leaves in a day.

Joel

1:1 The word of the LORD that came to Joel son of Pethuel.

An Invasion of Locusts

2 Hear this, you elders;
listen, all who live in the land.
Has anything like this ever happened in your days
or in the days of your ancestors?
3 Tell it to your children,
and let your children tell it to their children,
and their children to the next generation.
4 What the locust swarm has left
the great locusts have eaten;
what the great locusts have left
the young locusts have eaten;
what the young locusts have left
other locusts[a] have eaten.

5 Wake up, you drunkards, and weep!
Wail, all you drinkers of wine;
wail because of the new wine,
for it has been snatched from your lips.
6 A nation has invaded my land,
a mighty army without number;
it has the teeth of a lion,
the fangs of a lioness.
7 It has laid waste my vines
and ruined my fig trees.
It has stripped off their bark
and thrown it away,
leaving their branches white.

8 Mourn like a virgin in sackcloth
grieving for the betrothed of her youth.
9 Grain offerings and drink offerings
are cut off from the house of the LORD.
The priests are in mourning,
those who minister before the LORD.
10 The fields are ruined,
the ground is dried up;
the grain is destroyed,
the new wine is dried up,
the olive oil fails.

11 Despair, you farmers,
wail, you vine growers;
grieve for the wheat and the barley,
because the harvest of the field is destroyed.
12 The vine is dried up
and the fig tree is withered;

[a] *4* The precise meaning of the four Hebrew words used here for locusts is uncertain.

The Day of Judgment (Joel 1:15)

Among the Old Testament prophets the phrase "day of the LORD" (or "day of Yahweh") meant disaster and destruction for Judah and Israel. The prophet Joel could only announce, "Alas for that day!" (Joel 1:15). In the ancient Near East, the "day" of a deity meant a time of celebration in which that particular deity was honored as the most powerful god of the pantheon. In the liturgical calendars of Egypt and Mesopotamia, there were holy days set aside all through the year for the worship of the various deities.

In the cultures of both Egypt and Mesopotamia, banquets and celebrations marked each god's day. In Egyptian festivals, the image of the god was brought from the temple and carried through the streets. In Mesopotamia, the statues of many gods might be brought in procession to the temple of the god whose day it was to join the celebration. As supreme ruler for that day, the deity was asked to bring justice to the world. Loyal worshipers were expected to be rewarded and the wicked punished.

The people of Judah similarly considered the day of Yahweh to be one of festivals and good times. Prophets like Joel (Joel 1:15) and Amos (Amos 5:18), however, proclaimed a contrasting view. They agreed that Yahweh would indeed bring judgment and true justice on that day. But, since the people had not lived by the rules of God, the judgment that would come would result in their own destruction. The Judeans did not understand that their request for justice was a call for their own condemnation.

the pomegranate, the palm and the apple[a] tree—
all the trees of the field—are dried up.
Surely the people's joy
is withered away.

A Call to Lamentation

13 Put on sackcloth, you priests, and mourn;
wail, you who minister before the altar.
Come, spend the night in sackcloth,
you who minister before my God;
for the grain offerings and drink offerings
are withheld from the house of your God.
14 Declare a holy fast;
call a sacred assembly.
Summon the elders
and all who live in the land
to the house of the LORD your God,
and cry out to the LORD.

15 Alas for that day!
For the day of the LORD is near;
it will come like destruction from the Almighty.[b]

16 Has not the food been cut off
before our very eyes—
joy and gladness
from the house of our God?
17 The seeds are shriveled
beneath the clods.[c]
The storehouses are in ruins,
the granaries have been broken down,
for the grain has dried up.
18 How the cattle moan!
The herds mill about
because they have no pasture;
even the flocks of sheep are suffering.

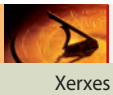
19 To you, LORD, I call,
for fire has devoured the pastures in the wilderness
and flames have burned up all the trees of the field.
20 Even the wild animals pant for you;
the streams of water have dried up
and fire has devoured the pastures in the wilderness.

An Army of Locusts

2 1 Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy hill.
Let all who live in the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming.
It is close at hand—
2 a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and blackness.
Like dawn spreading across the mountains
a large and mighty army comes,
such as never was in ancient times
nor ever will be in ages to come.

3 Before them fire devours,
behind them a flame blazes.

[a] 12 Or possibly *apricot* [b] 15 Hebrew *Shaddai*
[c] 17 The meaning of the Hebrew for this word is uncertain.

TIME CAPSULE 	424 to 404 B.C.
424	Xerxes II is assassinated after a few weeks as king
423–404	Darius II defeats his brother in civil war to become king of Persia
410	Temple of Yahweh at Elephantine destroyed by priests of Khnum
407	Darius's son Cyrus becomes commander in chief of the Persian army
404	Amyrtaeus expels Persians from Upper Egypt

Before them the land is like the garden of Eden,
behind them, a desert waste—
nothing escapes them.
4 They have the appearance of horses;
they gallop along like cavalry.
5 With a noise like that of chariots
they leap over the mountaintops,
like a crackling fire consuming stubble,
like a mighty army drawn up for battle.

6 At the sight of them, nations are in anguish;
every face turns pale.
7 They charge like warriors;
they scale walls like soldiers.
They all march in line,
not swerving from their course.
8 They do not jostle each other;
each marches straight ahead.
They plunge through defenses
without breaking ranks.
9 They rush upon the city;
they run along the wall.
They climb into the houses;
like thieves they enter through the windows.

10 Before them the earth shakes,
the heavens tremble,
the sun and moon are darkened,
and the stars no longer shine.
11 The LORD thunders
at the head of his army;
his forces are beyond number,
and mighty is the army that obeys his command.
The day of the LORD is great;
it is dreadful.
Who can endure it?

Rend Your Heart

12 "Even now," declares the LORD,
"return to me with all your heart,
with fasting and weeping and mourning."

13 Rend your heart
and not your garments.
Return to the LORD your God,
for he is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and abounding in love,
and he relents from sending calamity.
14 Who knows? He may turn and relent
and leave behind a blessing—
grain offerings and drink offerings
for the LORD your God.

15 Blow the trumpet in Zion,
declare a holy fast,
call a sacred assembly.
16 Gather the people,
consecrate the assembly;
bring together the elders,
gather the children,
those nursing at the breast.
Let the bridegroom leave his room
and the bride her chamber.
17 Let the priests, who minister before the LORD,
weep between the portico and the altar.
Let them say, "Spare your people, LORD.
Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn,
a byword among the nations.
Why should they say among the peoples,
'Where is their God?'"

The LORD's Answer

18 Then the LORD was jealous for his land
and took pity on his people.

19 The LORD replied[a] to them:

"I am sending you grain, new wine and olive oil,
enough to satisfy you fully;
never again will I make you
an object of scorn to the nations.

20 "I will drive the northern horde far from you,
pushing it into a parched and barren land;
its eastern ranks will drown in the Dead Sea
and its western ranks in the Mediterranean Sea.
And its stench will go up;
its smell will rise."

Surely he has done great things!
21 Do not be afraid, land of Judah;
be glad and rejoice.
Surely the LORD has done great things!
22 Do not be afraid, you wild animals,
for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green.
The trees are bearing their fruit;
the fig tree and the vine yield their riches.
23 Be glad, people of Zion,
rejoice in the LORD your God,
for he has given you the autumn rains
because he is faithful.
He sends you abundant showers,
both autumn and spring rains, as before.
24 The threshing floors will be filled with grain;
the vats will overflow with new wine and oil.

[a] *18,19* Or *LORD will be jealous . . . / and take pity . . . / 19 The LORD will reply*

Tyre and Sidon, the Economic Oppressors (Joel 3:4–6)

The coastline of Palestine was (and still is) crucially important for the political and economic balance of power in the Near East. The Persians sought to establish a western section of their empire, extending from Egypt, located south of Tyre and Sidon, all the way to Asia Minor and Greece to the north. Tyre and Sidon, as a central point in this western section, were important for providing fleets for trade and for fighting the Greeks.

When the Jews returned to Jerusalem during the Persian period, Tyre and Sidon possessed both wealth and a degree of political importance. In contrast, the small Persian province of Judah was poor and politically important only as the back door into Egypt.

City-states in "the regions of Philistia," as well as Tyre and Sidon (Joel 3:4), seemingly took economic advantage of Judah, their weaker neighbor to the east. For instance, during Nehemiah's governorship of Judah, "people from Tyre" sold fish and other goods in Jerusalem on the Sabbath (Ne 13:16). While Nehemiah shut down this practice, there is no doubt that Judah operated under a strong trade deficit with coastal city-states like Tyre and Sidon.

Economically, this would have drained Judah of its precious metals and other resources—Yahweh's silver and gold (Joel 3:5). Lacking goods to pay their debts, Judeans would have been forced to trade in the one commodity they possessed—their own sons and daughters. The coastal traders would have sold them to the Greeks, the available market. The Greeks, in turn, would "send them far from their homeland" (Joel 3:6) into Greece or Asia Minor.

Because of such economic exploitation of God's people, the prophet Joel announced God's judgment against "Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia." What they had done to the Judeans would soon happen to them (Joel 3:4, 7, 8).

25 "I will repay you for the years the locusts
have eaten—
the great locust and the young locust,
the other locusts and the locust
swarm[a]—
my great army that I sent among you.
26 You will have plenty to eat, until you are full,
and you will praise the name of the LORD
your God,
who has worked wonders for you;
never again will my people be shamed.
27 Then you will know that I am in Israel,
that I am the LORD your God,
and that there is no other;
never again will my people be shamed.

The Day of the LORD

28 "And afterward,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.
29 Even on my servants, both men and
women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days.
30 I will show wonders in the heavens
and on the earth,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.
31 The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and
dreadful day of the LORD.
32 And everyone who calls
on the name of the LORD will be saved;
for on Mount Zion and in Jerusalem
there will be deliverance,
as the LORD has said,
even among the survivors
whom the LORD calls.[b]

The Nations Judged

3 [c] 1 "In those days and at that time,
when I restore the fortunes of Judah and
Jerusalem,
2 I will gather all nations
and bring them down to the Valley of
Jehoshaphat.[d]
There I will put them on trial
for what they did to my inheritance, my
people Israel,
because they scattered my people among
the nations
and divided up my land.
3 They cast lots for my people
and traded boys for prostitutes;
they sold girls for wine to drink.

4 "Now what have you against me, Tyre and Sidon and all you regions of Philistia? Are you repaying me for something I have done? If you are paying me back, I will swiftly and speedily return on your own heads what you have done. 5 For you took my silver and my gold and carried off my finest treasures to your temples.[e] 6 You sold the people of Judah and Jerusalem to

[a] *25* The precise meaning of the four Hebrew words used here for locusts is uncertain. [b] *32* In Hebrew texts 2:28-32 is numbered 3:1-5. [c] In Hebrew texts 3:1-21 is numbered 4:1-21. [d] *2* *Jehoshaphat* means *the LORD judges*; also in verse 12. [e] *5* Or *palaces*

the Greeks, that you might send them far from their homeland.
7"See, I am going to rouse them out of the places to which you sold them, and I will return on your own heads what you have done. 8I will sell your sons and daughters to the people of Judah, and they will sell them to the Sabeans, a nation far away." The LORD has spoken.

9Proclaim this among the nations:
Prepare for war!
Rouse the warriors!
Let all the fighting men draw near and attack.
10Beat your plowshares into swords
and your pruning hooks into spears.
Let the weakling say,
"I am strong!"
11Come quickly, all you nations from every side,
and assemble there.

Bring down your warriors, LORD!

12"Let the nations be roused;
let them advance into the Valley of Jehoshaphat,
for there I will sit
to judge all the nations on every side.
13Swing the sickle,
for the harvest is ripe.
Come, trample the grapes,
for the winepress is full
and the vats overflow—
so great is their wickedness!"

14Multitudes, multitudes
in the valley of decision!
For the day of the LORD is near
in the valley of decision.
15The sun and moon will be darkened,
and the stars no longer shine.
16The LORD will roar from Zion
and thunder from Jerusalem;
the earth and the heavens will tremble.
But the LORD will be a refuge for his people,
a stronghold for the people of Israel.

Blessings for God's People

17"Then you will know that I, the LORD your God,
dwell in Zion, my holy hill.
Jerusalem will be holy;
never again will foreigners invade her.

18"In that day the mountains will drip new wine,
and the hills will flow with milk;
all the ravines of Judah will run with water.
A fountain will flow out of the LORD's house
and will water the valley of acacias.[a]
19But Egypt will be desolate,
Edom a desert waste,
because of violence done to the people of Judah,
in whose land they shed innocent blood.
20Judah will be inhabited forever
and Jerusalem through all generations.
21Shall I leave their innocent blood unavenged?
No, I will not."

The LORD dwells in Zion!

[a] *18* Or *Valley of Shittim*

Sea fortress in Sidon

TRANSITION

Isaiah and the Restoration

The chronology of the Book of Isaiah is very complicated. Undoubtedly, different prophecies in the book speak of time periods that are centuries apart. The prophet Isaiah lived in Judah during the reigns of Ahaz (735–715 b.c.) and Hezekiah (715–686 b.c.), and most of the early passages in the book refer to those kings and to the Assyrian Empire, which was expanding at that time. Most of these prophecies are dark and pessimistic, speaking of inevitable judgment and destruction, because Judah had refused to hear God's words.

Strikingly different are the oracles of salvation in Isa 40–55, which promise a return from exile and a rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple (Isa 44:28). These prophecies explicitly name Cyrus the Persian (44:28; 45:1), identifying the approaching salvation as the restoration of Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile, almost 200 years after the prophet Isaiah himself was active. Scholars differ as to whether the prophecies in these chapters should be understood as foretellings of the distant future by Isaiah himself or rather as the words of an anonymous prophet of the exile, who saw himself as a spiritual descendant of the great Isaiah (see "Isaiah and Cyrus the Persian" at Isa 40:1).

A third major shift in the Book of Isaiah begins at ch. 56. Where chs. 40–55 spoke of a day when the temple would be restored, chs. 56–66 assume that a temple is standing (56:7; 66:6). Since these final chapters follow immediately after the prophecies of the temple's restoration, it is reasonable to assume that they speak of the second temple, built during the Persian era. As is the case with chs. 40–55, some believe chs. 56–66 are the foretellings of the 8th-century prophet Isaiah, while others consider them the work of a post exilic prophet following in Isaiah's tradition.

If the prophecies of Isa 56–66 do speak of the second temple period, it is remarkable how much their message is in tension with the actual practices of the second temple. All the leaders of the community of returned exiles were meticulous about avoiding foreigners, but the prophet declares that foreigners will be God's servants (Isa 56:3–8). He promises a time when the temple will be "a house of prayer for all nations" (56:7), and when the sacrifices of foreigners will be acceptable on the temple altar. The theme of the faithful Gentiles is resoundingly repeated in chs. 60–62, where the Gentiles will come to God's light (60:3), will build the city walls (60:10), and will see the righteousness of God's people (62:2). If certain members of the restoration community in Jerusalem opposed the exclusivism of Ezra and Nehemiah, as seems likely, they had powerful support in these prophecies.

Isaiah

Salvation for Others

56 **:1** This is what the LORD says:

"Maintain justice
and do what is right,
for my salvation is close at hand
and my righteousness will soon be revealed.
2 Blessed is the one who does this—
the person who holds it fast,
who keeps the Sabbath without desecrating it,
and keeps their hands from doing any evil."

3 Let no foreigner who is bound to the LORD say,
"The LORD will surely exclude me from his people."
And let no eunuch complain,
"I am only a dry tree."

4 For this is what the LORD says:

"To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths,
who choose what pleases me
and hold fast to my covenant—
5 to them I will give within my temple and its walls
a memorial and a name
better than sons and daughters;
I will give them an everlasting name
that will endure forever.
6 And foreigners who bind themselves to the LORD
to minister to him,
to love the name of the LORD,
and to be his servants,
all who keep the Sabbath without desecrating it
and who hold fast to my covenant—
7 these I will bring to my holy mountain
and give them joy in my house of prayer.
Their burnt offerings and sacrifices
will be accepted on my altar;
for my house will be called
a house of prayer for all nations."
8 The Sovereign LORD declares—
he who gathers the exiles of Israel:
"I will gather still others to them
besides those already gathered."

God's Accusation Against the Wicked

9 Come, all you beasts of the field,
come and devour, all you beasts of the forest!

A Eunuch and a Foreigner in God's House (Isa 56:3)

The prophet addressed the status that two different groups would have in the future Jerusalem: the "foreigner" (Isa 56:3, 6) and the eunuch (56:3). The Book of Deuteronomy excluded both of these groups from taking part in the temple ceremonies (Dt 23:1–3). They never could be fully a part of God's people.

In God's future Jerusalem, however, a different situation will prevail. In the future temple, ethnic origin or physical defects will no longer determine one's status. Rather, what matters will be obedience to God's covenant, particularly keeping the Sabbath (Isa 56:2, 4, 6).

The future, therefore, would bring about a reversal of the present status of these excluded people. Eunuchs were restricted by the Law of Moses because self-mutilation was often performed in honor of a heathen god (1Ki 18:28). In addition, a person with a defect was deemed unfit for service to God. Faithful eunuchs, however, will have a place within the future temple that will more than compensate for their lack of descendants (Isa 56:5).

The faithful "foreigners" can also become God's servants (56:6). They will have more than just access to the temple. God will grant them full participation as part of his own people by accepting their sacrifices. The temple will indeed become "a house of prayer for all nations" (56:7).

10 Israel's watchmen are blind,
they all lack knowledge;
they are all mute dogs,
they cannot bark;
they lie around and dream,
they love to sleep.
11 They are dogs with mighty appetites;
they never have enough.
They are shepherds who lack
understanding;
they all turn to their own way,
they seek their own gain.
12 "Come," each one cries, "let me get
wine!
Let us drink our fill of beer!
And tomorrow will be like today,
or even far better."

57 1 The righteous perish,
and no one takes it to heart;
the devout are taken away,
and no one understands
that the righteous are taken away
to be spared from evil.
2 Those who walk uprightly
enter into peace;
they find rest as they lie in death.

3 "But you—come here, you children of a
sorceress,
you offspring of adulterers and
prostitutes!

Cults & Supernatural
Archaeological evidence reveals that child sacrifice was practiced in the ancient Mediterranean area (Isa 57:5). The bodies were buried in clay urns, and inscriptions written on the urns have been found stating to which god the child was sacrificed. The largest burial area so far discovered is in ancient Carthage, the city in north Africa that the Romans destroyed in 146 B.C.

4 Who are you mocking?
At whom do you sneer
and stick out your tongue?
Are you not a brood of rebels,
the offspring of liars?
5 You burn with lust among the oaks
and under every spreading tree;
you sacrifice your children in the ravines
and under the overhanging crags.
6 The idols among the smooth stones of the
ravines are your portion;
indeed, they are your lot.
Yes, to them you have poured out drink
offerings
and offered grain offerings.
In view of all this, should I relent?
7 You have made your bed on a high and lofty
hill;
there you went up to offer your
sacrifices.
8 Behind your doors and your doorposts
you have put your pagan symbols.
Forsaking me, you uncovered your bed,
you climbed into it and opened it wide;
you made a pact with those whose beds you
love,
and you looked with lust on their naked
bodies.
9 You went to Molek[a] with olive oil
and increased your perfumes.
You sent your ambassadors[b] far away;
you descended to the very realm of the
dead!
10 You wearied yourself by such going about,
but you would not say, 'It is hopeless.'
You found renewal of your strength,
and so you did not faint.

11 "Whom have you so dreaded and feared
that you have not been true to me,

[a] 9 Or *to the king* [b] 9 Or *idols*

and have neither remembered me
nor taken this to heart?
Is it not because I have long been silent
that you do not fear me?
12 I will expose your righteousness and your works,
and they will not benefit you.
13 When you cry out for help,
let your collection of idols save you!
The wind will carry all of them off,
a mere breath will blow them away.
But whoever takes refuge in me
will inherit the land
and possess my holy mountain."

Comfort for the Contrite

14 And it will be said:

"Build up, build up, prepare the road!
Remove the obstacles out of the way of my people."
15 For this is what the high and exalted One says—
he who lives forever, whose name is holy:
"I live in a high and holy place,
but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit,
to revive the spirit of the lowly
and to revive the heart of the contrite.
16 I will not accuse them forever,
nor will I always be angry,
for then they would faint away because of me—
the very people I have created.
17 I was enraged by their sinful greed;
I punished them, and hid my face in anger,
yet they kept on in their willful ways.
18 I have seen their ways, but I will heal them;
I will guide them and restore comfort to Israel's mourners,
19 creating praise on their lips.
Peace, peace, to those far and near,"
says the LORD. "And I will heal them."
20 But the wicked are like the tossing sea,
which cannot rest,
whose waves cast up mire and mud.
21 "There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."

True Fasting

58 1 "Shout it aloud, do not hold back.
Raise your voice like a trumpet.
Declare to my people their rebellion
and to the descendants of Jacob their sins.
2 For day after day they seek me out;
they seem eager to know my ways,
as if they were a nation that does what is right
and has not forsaken the commands of its God.
They ask me for just decisions
and seem eager for God to come near them.
3 'Why have we fasted,' they say,
'and you have not seen it?
Why have we humbled ourselves,
and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please
and exploit all your workers.
4 Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife,
and in striking each other with wicked fists.
You cannot fast as you do today
and expect your voice to be heard on high.
5 Is this the kind of fast I have chosen,
only a day for people to humble themselves?
Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed
and for lying in sackcloth and ashes?
Is that what you call a fast,
a day acceptable to the LORD?

6 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
7 Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

TIME CAPSULE		404 to 386 B.C.
404–359		Artaxerxes II becomes king of Persia, defeating his younger brother Cyrus
401		Chariots with sickles on the wheels used at Cunaxa
400		Invention of the screw
398		Possible date for Ezra's arrival in Jerusalem
390		Rome is sacked by the Gauls
386		Artaxerxes claims all Greek cities in the Peace of Antalkidas

Tough Times in Jerusalem (Isa 58:10)

In Isa 58:1–14 the prophet most likely describes the situation in Jerusalem soon after the exiles returned home. Life was hard upon their return. Not only did the community have to reclaim the land for farming and reconstruct the city; they had to rebuild all their economic institutions from the ground up.

The prophet criticized the Judean leaders for the way religious devotion had become a substitute for ethical behavior. These people exhibited an active piety in beseeching God's blessing on their new endeavor to pick up the pieces in Jerusalem. One cannot fault their religious sincerity. They were daily in prayer (Isa 58:2) and pursued an active program of fasting (58:3). They obeyed the proper guidelines—the "just decisions" (58:2)—for their religious behavior.

Yet God was not impressed. No matter how properly "religious" their behavior was, it did not address the real need of the community: the need to share the scarce resources that were available to the returnees. The leaders possessed what little wealth had awaited the exiles when they returned to Jerusalem.

The situation in Jerusalem after the exile showed a huge gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots." Jerusalem had its share of the hungry, the homeless, and those who lacked adequate clothing (58:7). These people were a part of the exilic community; they were from the Judean leaders' "own flesh and blood" (58:7). Nevertheless, the "haves" did not see the necessity of relating their religious devotion to their social and economic practice.

God thought that they should. The prophetic oracle promised the full restoration of Jerusalem (58:12), but only if the "haves" would extend themselves to those hungry and afflicted (58:10).

8 Then your light will break forth like the dawn,
and your healing will quickly appear;
then your righteousness[a] will go before you,
and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard.
9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer;
you will cry for help, and he will say:
Here am I.

"If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
10 and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.
11 The LORD will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
12 Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.

13 "If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath
and from doing as you please on my holy day,
if you call the Sabbath a delight
and the LORD's holy day honorable,
and if you honor it by not going your own way
and not doing as you please or speaking idle words,
14 then you will find your joy in the LORD,
and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land
and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob."
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

Sin, Confession and Redemption

59 1 Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save,
nor his ear too dull to hear.
2 But your iniquities have separated you from your God;
your sins have hidden his face from you,
so that he will not hear.
3 For your hands are stained with blood,
your fingers with guilt.
Your lips have spoken falsely,
and your tongue mutters wicked things.
4 No one calls for justice;
no one pleads a case with integrity.
They rely on empty arguments, they utter lies;
they conceive trouble and give birth to evil.
5 They hatch the eggs of vipers
and spin a spider's web.
Whoever eats their eggs will die,
and when one is broken, an adder is hatched.

[a] 8 Or *your righteous One*

A Mound of Ruins (Isa 58:12)

Since rainfall occurs only during the winter months in Canaan, cities there needed to be built near perennial springs. For defensive purposes cities also needed to be built on higher ground. Thus in ancient times cities were built on the hills closest to a perennial water source.

Because Canaan was on the major path of Egyptians going toward Asia and of Asians going toward Egypt, the cities and towns of Canaan were regularly destroyed by invaders. In addition, Canaan regularly suffered from the effects of earthquakes and other natural disasters. Once destroyed, ancient cities were most often just rebuilt on top of the ruins of the old cities. The old city was already in the most defensible location closest to the water, so the city inhabitants just rebuilt on the same spot.

During the rebuilding process, some stones could be easily reused and were. Others were just allowed to become part of the foundation. Mud bricks, a common building material, were often displaced and, thus, became unusable. After a time, the original small hills grew into large mounds, many of which can still be seen today. Some of these hills, called "tells," are made up of 20 and more cities that were built, destroyed, and rebuilt.

The prophet described this process by noting that some powers that were then strong would become a "heap of ruins" (Isa 17:1) and some of them would never again be rebuilt (Isa 25:2). Yet there was a message of hope for Judah: certain Judeans would return to Judah's ruined cities and rebuild "the ancient ruins" with new foundations (Isa 58:12).

6 Their cobwebs are useless for clothing;
they cannot cover themselves with what they make.
Their deeds are evil deeds,
and acts of violence are in their hands.
7 Their feet rush into sin;
they are swift to shed innocent blood.
They pursue evil schemes;
acts of violence mark their ways.
8 The way of peace they do not know;
there is no justice in their paths.
They have turned them into crooked roads;
no one who walks along them will know peace.

9 So justice is far from us,
and righteousness does not reach us.
We look for light, but all is darkness;
for brightness, but we walk in deep shadows.
10 Like the blind we grope along the wall,
feeling our way like people without eyes.
At midday we stumble as if it were twilight;
among the strong, we are like the dead.
11 We all growl like bears;
we moan mournfully like doves.
We look for justice, but find none;
for deliverance, but it is far away.

12 For our offenses are many in your sight,
and our sins testify against us.
Our offenses are ever with us,
and we acknowledge our iniquities:
13 rebellion and treachery against the Lord,
turning our backs on our God,
inciting revolt and oppression,
uttering lies our hearts have conceived.
14 So justice is driven back,
and righteousness stands at a distance;
truth has stumbled in the streets,
honesty cannot enter.
15 Truth is nowhere to be found,
and whoever shuns evil becomes a prey.

The Lord looked and was displeased
that there was no justice.
16 He saw that there was no one,
he was appalled that there was no one to intervene;
so his own arm achieved salvation for him,
and his own righteousness sustained him.
17 He put on righteousness as his breastplate,
and the helmet of salvation on his head;
he put on the garments of vengeance
and wrapped himself in zeal as in a cloak.
18 According to what they have done,
so will he repay

wrath to his enemies
and retribution to his foes;
he will repay the islands their due.
19 From the west, people will fear the name of the LORD,
and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory.
For he will come like a pent-up flood
that the breath of the LORD drives along.[a]

20 "The Redeemer will come to Zion,
to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,"
declares the LORD.

21 "As for me, this is my covenant with them," says the LORD. "My Spirit, who is on you, will not depart from you, and my words that I have put in your mouth will always be on your lips, on the lips of your children and on the lips of their descendants—from this time on and forever," says the LORD.

TRANSITION

God's Glory upon God's City

The oracles of the first section of the Book of Isaiah (chs. 1–39) speak predominantly of sin and judgment. By contrast, the prophecies of Isa 40–55 proclaim only salvation and joy (see "Isaiah and Cyrus the Persian" at Isa 40:1). The final section of the Book of Isaiah (chs. 56–66) contains both words of judgment (such as Isa 59) and words of salvation (such as Isa 60–62). The oracles of hope in Isa 60–62 are of surpassing power, though, and easily overpower the prophet's condemnations.

The hopeful tone begins at Isa 60:1 with the announcement: "Arise, shine, for your light has come." The darkness of Jerusalem's broken walls and temple would be replaced with light and brightness as God's glory rose upon the city. Israel would be nurtured rather than oppressed by the mighty nations (Isa 60:10–12).

God's plan for Jerusalem included an unfading glory that is actually God's presence. God would glorify Mount Zion and his people with his glory (60:19). This theme emerges from the three poems of chs. 60–62. While ch. 60 emphasizes the brilliance of God's city, ch. 61 announces glory in the form of justice to the poor (61:8), and ch. 62 reveals God's purpose for Jerusalem: the city would demonstrate his righteousness to all the earth (62:1, 2, 7, 11, 12).

• Isaiah 60:1—66:24

Isaiah

The Glory of Zion

60 :1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
2 See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the LORD rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
3 Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

4 "Lift up your eyes and look about you:
All assemble and come to you;
your sons come from afar,
and your daughters are carried on the hip.
5 Then you will look and be radiant,
your heart will throb and swell with joy;
the wealth on the seas will be brought to you,
to you the riches of the nations will come.
6 Herds of camels will cover your land,
young camels of Midian and Ephah.
And all from Sheba will come,
bearing gold and incense
and proclaiming the praise of the LORD.
7 All Kedar's flocks will be gathered to you,
the rams of Nebaioth will serve you;
they will be accepted as offerings on my altar,
and I will adorn my glorious temple.

8 "Who are these that fly along like clouds,
like doves to their nests?
9 Surely the islands look to me;
in the lead are the ships of Tarshish,[b]
bringing your children from afar,
with their silver and gold,
to the honor of the LORD your God,
the Holy One of Israel,
for he has endowed you with splendor.

10 "Foreigners will rebuild your walls,
and their kings will serve you.
Though in anger I struck you,
in favor I will show you compassion.
11 Your gates will always stand open,
they will never be shut, day or night,
so that people may bring you the wealth of the nations—
their kings led in triumphal procession.
12 For the nation or kingdom that will not serve you will perish;
it will be utterly ruined.

13 "The glory of Lebanon will come to you,
the juniper, the fir and the cypress together,
to adorn my sanctuary;
and I will glorify the place for my feet.

[a] 19 Or *When enemies come in like a flood, / the Spirit of the LORD will put them to flight* [b] 9 Or *the trading ships*

Jerusalem, the Future World Center (Isa 60:14)

In Isa 60 is a vision of a new Jerusalem which would become the world imperial center. All the nations would converge upon Jerusalem, bringing their wealth as tribute to the city's king, the Lord God (Isa 60:4–7).

Very similar imagery is found in pictures in the ceremonial hall in Persepolis, the capital of the Persian Empire. On the stairway that leads up to the throne of the Persian king, who was considered the "King of Kings," stand carvings of other kings in various ethnic dress. Each king bears a valuable, unique gift from his own country to offer to the Great King.

The Great King is not directly represented in the pictures—he is there in concept. Yet in the center, accompanying the king, is an image of the Persian god, Ahura Mazda. Ahura Mazda was represented by a winged sun, indicating his rule of light over "all the earth" to fight back the forces of darkness. The Great King, therefore, was considered to be Ahura Mazda's representative.

The prophet uses very similar imagery to articulate God's promise to Jerusalem. The city's gates will "always stand open," allowing kings to approach "in triumphal procession," bringing "the wealth of the nations" (60:11). Jerusalem, not Persepolis, will be the imperial center of the world.

Furthermore, the prophet depicts God in solar imagery similar to that found at Persepolis. Yet this imagery represents, not Ahura Mazda, the Persian god, but Yahweh, the God of Israel at the center of the city. Yahweh, not Ahura Mazda, will rule in Jerusalem. Yahweh, not Ahura Mazda, will be an "everlasting light" (60:19).

These prophecies offered great hope for the returnees, a hope reechoed for all people in the Book of Revelation (Rev 21:23). Though a "thick darkness" may cover the earth, Yahweh will arise over Jerusalem as a sunrise, and his glory will attract peoples from afar (Isa 60:1–3).

14 The children of your oppressors will come
bowing before you;
all who despise you will bow down at your feet
and will call you the City of the LORD,
Zion of the Holy One of Israel.

15 "Although you have been forsaken and hated,
with no one traveling through,
I will make you the everlasting pride
and the joy of all generations.
16 You will drink the milk of nations
and be nursed at royal breasts.
Then you will know that I, the LORD, am your Savior,
your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.
17 Instead of bronze I will bring you gold,
and silver in place of iron.
Instead of wood I will bring you bronze,
and iron in place of stones.
I will make peace your governor
and well-being your ruler.
18 No longer will violence be heard in your land,
nor ruin or destruction within your borders,
but you will call your walls Salvation
and your gates Praise.
19 The sun will no more be your light by day,
nor will the brightness of the moon shine on you,
for the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your God will be your glory.
20 Your sun will never set again,
and your moon will wane no more;
the LORD will be your everlasting light,
and your days of sorrow will end.
21 Then all your people will be righteous
and they will possess the land forever.
They are the shoot I have planted,
the work of my hands,
for the display of my splendor.
22 The least of you will become a thousand,
the smallest a mighty nation.
I am the LORD;
in its time I will do this swiftly."

The Year of the LORD's Favor

61 1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,[a]

Arts & Literature

The Greek poet Hesiod lists the four ages of man as gold, silver, bronze, and iron. A similar list of materials in decreasing order of value is found in Da 2:32, and with some variation in Isa 60:17. The metals are listed in order of their prestige and rarity. In the New Testament, Paul uses a similar figure in 1Co 3:12.

[a] *1* Hebrew; Septuagint *the blind*

2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn,
3 and provide for those who grieve in Zion—
to bestow on them a crown of beauty
instead of ashes,
the oil of joy
instead of mourning,
and a garment of praise
instead of a spirit of despair.
They will be called oaks of righteousness,
a planting of the LORD
for the display of his splendor.

4 They will rebuild the ancient ruins
and restore the places long devastated;
they will renew the ruined cities
that have been devastated for generations.
5 Strangers will shepherd your flocks;
foreigners will work your fields and vineyards.
6 And you will be called priests of the LORD,
you will be named ministers of our God.
You will feed on the wealth of nations,
and in their riches you will boast.

7 Instead of your shame
you will receive a double portion,
and instead of disgrace
you will rejoice in your inheritance.
And so you will inherit a double portion in your land,
and everlasting joy will be yours.

8 "For I, the LORD, love justice;
I hate robbery and wrongdoing.
In my faithfulness I will reward my people
and make an everlasting covenant with them.
9 Their descendants will be known among the nations
and their offspring among the peoples.
All who see them will acknowledge
that they are a people the LORD has blessed."

10 I delight greatly in the LORD;
my soul rejoices in my God.
For he has clothed me with garments of salvation
and arrayed me in a robe of his righteousness,
as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest,
and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

11 For as the soil makes the sprout come up
and a garden causes seeds to grow,
so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness
and praise spring up before all nations.

Zion's New Name

62 1 For Zion's sake I will not keep silent,
for Jerusalem's sake I will not remain quiet,
till her vindication shines out like the dawn,
her salvation like a blazing torch.
2 The nations will see your vindication,
and all kings your glory;
you will be called by a new name
that the mouth of the LORD will bestow.
3 You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD's hand,
a royal diadem in the hand of your God.
4 No longer will they call you Deserted,
or name your land Desolate.
But you will be called Hephzibah,[a]
and your land Beulah[b];
for the LORD will take delight in you,
and your land will be married.
5 As a young man marries a young woman,
so will your Builder marry you;
as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride,
so will your God rejoice over you.

6 I have posted watchmen on your walls, Jerusalem;
they will never be silent day or night.
You who call on the LORD,
give yourselves no rest,
7 and give him no rest till he establishes Jerusalem
and makes her the praise of the earth.

8 The LORD has sworn by his right hand
and by his mighty arm:
"Never again will I give your grain
as food for your enemies,
and never again will foreigners drink the new wine
for which you have toiled;
9 but those who harvest it will eat it
and praise the LORD,
and those who gather the grapes will drink it
in the courts of my sanctuary."

10 Pass through, pass through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people.
Build up, build up the highway!
Remove the stones.
Raise a banner for the nations.

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[a] *4 Hephzibah* means *my delight is in her.* [b] *4 Beulah* means *married.*

No Longer Deserted (Isa 62:4, 12)

The prophet had encouraging news for the people of Jerusalem. The difficulties of the present time in Jerusalem would not compare with the glories to come in the new, restored Jerusalem of the future.

The years Jerusalem spent under foreign rulers had taken their toll. Things must have been hard, for we learn that Jerusalem was nicknamed "Deserted" and its surrounding land, "Desolate" (Isa 62:4). High rates of Persian taxation contributed to Jerusalem's economic troubles.

In the Persian Empire taxation was done, not by the exchange of money, but in agricultural produce. Though the Judeans had worked hard to grow their produce, much of the crop went to support the Persian king, his court, and his armies. In other words, Judean grain became food for Judah's enemies, and foreigners drank her wine (Isa 62:8). Economic resources were taken out of the community, rather than used within it to spur the local economy.

God promised to change this situation. In the future Jerusalem, those who gather their crops will also eat of them; those who produce wine will also drink of it (62:9). Then Jerusalem's name will no longer be "Deserted," but rather "the City No Longer Deserted" (62:12).

11 The LORD has made proclamation
to the ends of the earth:
"Say to Daughter Zion,
'See, your Savior comes!
See, his reward is with him,
and his recompense accompanies him.'"
12 They will be called the Holy People,
the Redeemed of the LORD;
and you will be called Sought After,
the City No Longer Deserted.

God's Day of Vengeance and Redemption

63 1 Who is this coming from Edom,
from Bozrah, with his garments stained crimson?
Who is this, robed in splendor,
striding forward in the greatness of his strength?

"It is I, proclaiming victory,
mighty to save."

2 Why are your garments red,
like those of one treading the winepress?

3 "I have trodden the winepress alone;
from the nations no one was with me.
I trampled them in my anger
and trod them down in my wrath;
their blood spattered my garments,
and I stained all my clothing.
4 It was for me the day of vengeance;
the year for me to redeem had come.
5 I looked, but there was no one to help,
I was appalled that no one gave support;
so my own arm achieved salvation for me,
and my own wrath sustained me.
6 I trampled the nations in my anger;
in my wrath I made them drunk
and poured their blood on the ground."

Praise and Prayer

7 I will tell of the kindnesses of the LORD,
the deeds for which he is to be praised,
according to all the LORD has done for us—
yes, the many good things
he has done for Israel,
according to his compassion and many kindnesses.
8 He said, "Surely they are my people,
children who will be true to me";
and so he became their Savior.
9 In all their distress he too was distressed,
and the angel of his presence saved them.[a]
In his love and mercy he redeemed them;
he lifted them up and carried them
all the days of old.
10 Yet they rebelled
and grieved his Holy Spirit.
So he turned and became their enemy
and he himself fought against them.

11 Then his people recalled[b] the days of old,
the days of Moses and his people—
where is he who brought them through the sea,
with the shepherd of his flock?
Where is he who set
his Holy Spirit among them,

[a] 9 Or *Savior* 9 *in their distress. / It was no envoy or angel / but his own presence that saved them* [b] 11 Or *But may he recall*

TIME CAPSULE **384 to 356 B.C.**

384–322	Aristotle, Greek philosopher
360	The Great Revolt of the Satraps (against Persia)
359–336	Philip II becomes king of Macedon
359–338	Artaxerxes III is poisoned by Bagoas
356	Alexander the Great is born to Philip II of Macedon

A Petition to Our Father in Heaven (Isa 64:8–12)

The exiles faced a sorry state of affairs in Jerusalem immediately following their return from Babylon. The city of Jerusalem and its temple were still in ruins (Isa 64:10, 11). The Babylonians had laid siege to the city for 18 months, eventually destroying it in 586 B.C. (2Ki 25:1, 2). What was left were ashes, arrowheads, and fallen buildings. In fact, the whole region, the "sacred cities" (Isa 64:10), was laid waste. Apparently, both Jerusalem and Judah were mostly uninhabited during the time between 586 and 538 B.C.

The prophet, as a representative of the whole community, turned to God for aid. He called upon the Lord as "Father," invoking the special relationship between Israel and her God (64:8). The term "Father" should not be understood according to our modern conceptions of fatherhood. "Father" was not so much a term of endearment, as it was a word of authority and ownership. Under Israelite law a man's children were legally his property, over which he exercised much power.

The community was helpless before God as "Father" like clay in the hands of a potter (64:8). The prophet interceded for the people for forgiveness so that God's faithfulness might be revealed again in a restored Jerusalem.

12 who sent his glorious arm of power
to be at Moses' right hand,
who divided the waters before them,
to gain for himself everlasting renown,
13 who led them through the depths?
Like a horse in open country,
they did not stumble;
14 like cattle that go down to the plain,
they were given rest by the Spirit of the LORD.
This is how you guided your people
to make for yourself a glorious name.

15 Look down from heaven and see,
from your lofty throne, holy and glorious.
Where are your zeal and your might?
Your tenderness and compassion are withheld from us.
16 But you are our Father,
though Abraham does not know us
or Israel acknowledge us;
you, LORD, are our Father,
our Redeemer from of old is your name.
17 Why, LORD, do you make us wander from your ways
and harden our hearts so we do not revere you?
Return for the sake of your servants,
the tribes that are your inheritance.
18 For a little while your people possessed your holy place,
but now our enemies have trampled down your sanctuary.
19 We are yours from of old;
but you have not ruled over them,
they have not been called[a] by your name.

64[b] 1 Oh, that you would rend the heavens and come down,
that the mountains would tremble before you!
2 As when fire sets twigs ablaze
and causes water to boil,
come down to make your name known to your enemies
and cause the nations to quake before you!
3 For when you did awesome things that we did not expect,
you came down, and the mountains trembled before you.
4 Since ancient times no one has heard,
no ear has perceived,
no eye has seen any God besides you,
who acts on behalf of those who wait for him.
5 You come to the help of those who gladly do right,
who remember your ways.
But when we continued to sin against them,
you were angry.
How then can we be saved?
6 All of us have become like one who is unclean,
and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags;
we all shrivel up like a leaf,
and like the wind our sins sweep us away.
7 No one calls on your name
or strives to lay hold of you;
for you have hidden your face from us
and have given us over to[c] our sins.

8 Yet you, LORD, are our Father.
We are the clay, you are the potter;
we are all the work of your hand.
9 Do not be angry beyond measure, LORD;
do not remember our sins forever.

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[a] *19* Or *We are like those you have never ruled, / like those never called* [b] In Hebrew texts 64:1 is numbered 63:19b, and 64:2-12 is numbered 64:1-11. [c] *7* Septuagint, Syriac and Targum; Hebrew *have made us melt because of*

Feeding the Gods of Fortune (Isa 65:11)

It was a common practice throughout the ancient world to set out fine feasts for the gods. In the large temple complexes of Mesopotamia and Egypt the statues of the deities were served with regular meals daily by the priests. Other offerings of food were brought by devotees as gifts, along with their petitions for help from the gods.

The prophet accused a group of Judeans of ignoring God and turning their attention to other deities. Rather than the old Canaanite gods and goddesses, however, the Judeans worshiped Fortune and Destiny. Apparently, these gods were honored with the practice of serving meals, since the prophet charges the worshipers with providing "a table" and "bowls of mixed wine" for the deities (Isa 65:11).

"Fortune" was a god of luck. This deity is mentioned in a number of inscriptions which have been recovered from Jordan to Spain, covering a period from 300 to 180 B.C. "Destiny," appears to be a god of fortune. Although Destiny was a male deity, he was possibly related to the Arabian goddess Manât. The Koran identifies Manât as one of the deities worshiped by the pre-Islamic Arabs. Perhaps given the struggles of rebuilding Jerusalem, the returned exiles thought that "Fortune" and "Destiny" might assist them in their building project.

Deities of fortune, like the Greek god Tyche, could bring either good or bad fortunes. Worshipers assumed that these deities could wreak havoc on a person's life should they take a dislike to an individual. The meal and drink were intended to gain the favor of these gods so that they would direct the worshipers' destinies toward a good life. The prophet condemns the Judeans for assuming that these gods could affect life, and thus rejecting God as the sole power in the world.

Oh, look on us, we pray,
for we are all your people.
10 Your sacred cities have become a
wasteland;
even Zion is a wasteland, Jerusalem a
desolation.
11 Our holy and glorious temple, where our
ancestors praised you,
has been burned with fire,
and all that we treasured lies in ruins.
12 After all this, LORD, will you hold yourself
back?
Will you keep silent and punish us
beyond measure?

Judgment and Salvation

65 1 "I revealed myself to those who did not
ask for me;
I was found by those who did not seek me.
To a nation that did not call on my name,
I said, 'Here am I, here am I.'
2 All day long I have held out my hands
to an obstinate people,
who walk in ways not good,
pursuing their own imaginations—
3 a people who continually provoke me
to my very face,
offering sacrifices in gardens
and burning incense on altars of brick;
4 who sit among the graves
and spend their nights keeping secret
vigil;
who eat the flesh of pigs,
and whose pots hold broth of impure
meat;
5 who say, 'Keep away; don't come near me,
for I am too sacred for you!'
Such people are smoke in my nostrils,
a fire that keeps burning all day.

6 "See, it stands written before me:
I will not keep silent but will pay back in
full;
I will pay it back into their laps—
7 both your sins and the sins of your
ancestors,"
says the LORD.
"Because they burned sacrifices on the
mountains
and defied me on the hills,
I will measure into their laps
the full payment for their former
deeds."

8 This is what the LORD says:

"As when juice is still found in a cluster of
grapes
and people say, 'Don't destroy it,
there is still a blessing in it,'
so will I do in behalf of my servants;
I will not destroy them all.
9 I will bring forth descendants from Jacob,
and from Judah those who will possess
my mountains;
my chosen people will inherit them,
and there will my servants live.
10 Sharon will become a pasture for flocks,
and the Valley of Achor a resting place for
herds,
for my people who seek me.

11 "But as for you who forsake the LORD
and forget my holy mountain,
who spread a table for Fortune
and fill bowls of mixed wine for Destiny,

12 I will destine you for the sword,
and all of you will fall in the slaughter;
for I called but you did not answer,
I spoke but you did not listen.
You did evil in my sight
and chose what displeases me."

13 Therefore this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

"My servants will eat,
but you will go hungry;
my servants will drink,
but you will go thirsty;
my servants will rejoice,
but you will be put to shame.
14 My servants will sing
out of the joy of their hearts,
but you will cry out
from anguish of heart
and wail in brokenness of spirit.
15 You will leave your name
for my chosen ones to use in their curses;
the Sovereign LORD will put you to death,
but to his servants he will give another name.
16 Whoever invokes a blessing in the land
will do so by the one true God;
whoever takes an oath in the land
will swear by the one true God.
For the past troubles will be forgotten
and hidden from my eyes.

New Heavens and a New Earth

17 "See, I will create
new heavens and a new earth.
The former things will not be remembered,
nor will they come to mind.
18 But be glad and rejoice forever
in what I will create,
for I will create Jerusalem to be a delight
and its people a joy.
19 I will rejoice over Jerusalem
and take delight in my people;
the sound of weeping and of crying
will be heard in it no more.

Food & Drink
The products of the vineyard were extremely important in ancient times. Wine was put up in large clay jars and shipped all over the Mediterranean. The cultivation of grapes was a well-developed skill. Ancient writers described how to plant, prune, and tend grapevines. This occupation required time and patience, flourishing only in times of peace (Isa 65:21).

TIME CAPSULE **351 to 336 B.C.**

351–350	Persia suffers defeat by Egypt
343	Persian army regains domination of Egypt
338–336	Arses, son of Artaxerxes III, is poisoned by Bagoas
338	The Macedonians defeat Athens and Thebes
338	Philip II founds the Corinthian League to liberate Greek cities
336	Assassination of Alexander's father

20 "Never again will there be in it
an infant who lives but a few days,
or an old man who does not live out his years;
the one who dies at a hundred
will be thought a mere child;
the one who fails to reach[a] a hundred
will be considered accursed.
21 They will build houses and dwell in them;
they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit.
22 No longer will they build houses and others live in them,
or plant and others eat.
For as the days of a tree,
so will be the days of my people;
my chosen ones will long enjoy
the work of their hands.
23 They will not labor in vain,
nor will they bear children doomed to misfortune;
for they will be a people blessed by the LORD,
they and their descendants with them.
24 Before they call I will answer;
while they are still speaking I will hear.
25 The wolf and the lamb will feed together,
and the lion will eat straw like the ox,
and dust will be the serpent's food.
They will neither harm nor destroy
on all my holy mountain,"
says the LORD.

Judgment and Hope

66 1 This is what the LORD says:
"Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
Where is the house you will build for me?
Where will my resting place be?

[a] *20* Or *the sinner who reaches*

2 Has not my hand made all these things,
and so they came into being?"
declares the LORD.

"These are the ones I look on with favor:
those who are humble and contrite in spirit,
and who tremble at my word.
3 But whoever sacrifices a bull
is like one who kills a person,
and whoever offers a lamb
is like one who breaks a dog's neck;
whoever makes a grain offering
is like one who presents pig's blood,
and whoever burns memorial incense
is like one who worships an idol.
They have chosen their own ways,
and they delight in their abominations;
4 so I also will choose harsh treatment for them
and will bring on them what they dread.
For when I called, no one answered,
when I spoke, no one listened.
They did evil in my sight
and chose what displeases me."

5 Hear the word of the LORD,
you who tremble at his word:
"Your own people who hate you,
and exclude you because of my name, have said,
'Let the LORD be glorified,
that we may see your joy!'
Yet they will be put to shame.
6 Hear that uproar from the city,
hear that noise from the temple!
It is the sound of the LORD
repaying his enemies all they deserve.

7 "Before she goes into labor,
she gives birth;
before the pains come upon her,
she delivers a son.
8 Who has ever heard of such things?
Who has ever seen things like this?
Can a country be born in a day
or a nation be brought forth in a moment?
Yet no sooner is Zion in labor
than she gives birth to her children.
9 Do I bring to the moment of birth
and not give delivery?" says the LORD.
"Do I close up the womb
when I bring to delivery?" says your God.
10 "Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice greatly with her,
all you who mourn over her.
11 For you will nurse and be satisfied
at her comforting breasts;
you will drink deeply
and delight in her overflowing abundance."

12 For this is what the LORD says:

"I will extend peace to her like a river,
and the wealth of nations like a flooding stream;
you will nurse and be carried on her arm
and dandled on her knees.
13 As a mother comforts her child,
so will I comfort you;
and you will be comforted over Jerusalem."

14 When you see this, your heart will rejoice
and you will flourish like grass;
the hand of the LORD will be made known to his servants,
but his fury will be shown to his foes.
15 See, the LORD is coming with fire,
and his chariots are like a whirlwind;
he will bring down his anger with fury,
and his rebuke with flames of fire.
16 For with fire and with his sword
the LORD will execute judgment on all people,
and many will be those slain by the LORD.

17 "Those who consecrate and purify themselves to go into the gardens, following one

Satyr playing the aulos. Side A from a Lucanian (Metapontium) red-figure skyphos, ca. 400–390 b.c., by Creusa.

who is among those who eat the flesh of pigs, rats and other unclean things—they will meet their end together with the one they follow," declares the LORD.

18"And I, because of what they have planned and done, am about to come[a] and gather the people of all nations and languages, and they will come and see my glory.

19"I will set a sign among them, and I will send some of those who survive to the nations—to Tarshish, to the Libyans[b] and Lydians (famous as archers), to Tubal and Greece, and to the distant islands that have not heard of my fame or seen my glory. They will proclaim my glory among the nations. 20And they will bring all your people, from all the nations, to my holy mountain in Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD—on horses, in chariots and wagons, and on mules and camels," says the LORD. "They will bring them, as the Israelites bring their grain offerings, to the temple of the LORD in ceremonially clean vessels. 21And I will select some of them also to be priests and Levites," says the LORD.

22"As the new heavens and the new earth that I make will endure before me," declares the LORD, "so will your name and descendants endure. 23From one New Moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will come and bow down before me," says the LORD. 24"And they will go out and look on the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; the worms that eat them will not die, the fire that burns them will not be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind."

TRANSITION

The Apocalyptic Visions of Zechariah

The prophet Zechariah prophesied during the reign of Darius I (522–486 b.c.). Along with his fellow prophet Haggai, he inspired the newly returned exiles in Jerusalem to finish rebuilding the temple (Zec 1:1; Ezr 5:1; see "The Book of Zechariah" at Zec 1:1). The oracles of Zec 1–8 are filled with symbolic vision reports, but they are still very specific. Such restoration leaders as Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest are mentioned by name (Zec 3:1; 4:6–10).

At ch. 9, though, the Book of Zechariah changes. Symbolic visions are no longer interpreted by a helpful angelic guide, as were the visions in the first half of the book. Indeed, the prophecies of Zec 9–14 are among the most difficult to place in historical context. Some scholars place them in Darius's reign, along with the first half of the book, while others date them much later in the Persian period, or even after the Persian Empire had been replaced by the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great (see "The Greek Empire" at Da 7:1).

Reading Zec 9–14 in the Greek era is suggested by the mention of Greece (Zec 9:13), and by the list of conquered cities (9:1–8), which supposedly follow the path of Alexander the Great's conquest of Palestine in 332 b.c. The destruction of Tyre (9:2–4) is particularly telling, since Alexander was the only conqueror of the ancient world who succeeded in capturing that island fortress. Still, a list of cities and one mention of Greece does not mean that these chapters were written after Alexander. Greece had been an important international player at least since the Greek alliance defeated Darius I at Marathon in 490 b.c.

The prophecies of Zec 9–14 do not appear to be speaking of the same historical context as Zec 1–8. What time they do speak of, however, is uncertain. It was a time when the Persian province of Judah was under bad leadership (10:2, 3), faced economic oppression and distress (11:5), and had turned to idolatry (13:1, 2). Such conditions could have existed either before the arrival of Nehemiah as governor in 445 b.c. or sometime after his tenure had ended.

• Zechariah 9:1—10:12

Zechariah

Judgment on Israel's Enemies

9:1 A prophecy:

The word of the LORD is against the land of Hadrak
and will come to rest on Damascus—
for the eyes of all people and all the tribes of Israel
are on the LORD—[c]
2and on Hamath too, which borders on it,
and on Tyre and Sidon, though they are very skillful.
3Tyre has built herself a stronghold;
she has heaped up silver like dust,
and gold like the dirt of the streets.
4But the Lord will take away her possessions
and destroy her power on the sea,
and she will be consumed by fire.
5Ashkelon will see it and fear;
Gaza will writhe in agony,
and Ekron too, for her hope will wither.
Gaza will lose her king
and Ashkelon will be deserted.

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[a] *18* The meaning of the Hebrew for this clause is uncertain.
[b] *19* Some Septuagint manuscripts *Put* (Libyans); Hebrew *Pul*
[c] *1* Or *Damascus. / For the eye of the* LORD *is on all people, / as well as on the tribes of Israel,*

Alexander's Siege of Tyre (Zec 9:3, 4)

Tyre's fortunes changed through a dramatic event at the end of the Persian period (559–331 B.C.). The city had furnished troops, ships, and a seemingly impregnable port for Persian naval encounters in the Mediterranean during two centuries. The prophet Zechariah describes Tyre's demise with a prophecy often related to this time period. God would destroy Tyre's "power on the sea" (Zec 9:3, 4).

Alexander the Great was the first to completely subdue Tyre. His Greco-Macedonian armies laid siege to the island in 332 B.C., successfully storming the city after 7 months. The campaign required the building of a massive causeway, 300 yards wide and about half a mile long, extending from the mainland to the island, using the remains of destroyed buildings. Reputedly, over 30,000 citizens of Tyre were sold into slavery, and 2,000 of that city-state's leaders were crucified. Tyre never again reached the economic and political prominence it had enjoyed in previous centuries.

6 A mongrel people will occupy Ashdod,
and I will put an end to the pride of the Philistines.
7 I will take the blood from their mouths,
the forbidden food from between their teeth.
Those who are left will belong to our God
and become a clan in Judah,
and Ekron will be like the Jebusites.
8 But I will encamp at my temple
to guard it against marauding forces.
Never again will an oppressor overrun my people,
for now I am keeping watch.

The Coming of Zion's King

9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,
lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.
10 I will take away the chariots from Ephraim
and the warhorses from Jerusalem,
and the battle bow will be broken.
He will proclaim peace to the nations.
His rule will extend from sea to sea
and from the River[a] to the ends of the earth.
11 As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you,
I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit.
12 Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope;
even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.
13 I will bend Judah as I bend my bow
and fill it with Ephraim.
I will rouse your sons, Zion,
against your sons, Greece,
and make you like a warrior's sword.

The Lord Will Appear

14 Then the LORD will appear over them;
his arrow will flash like lightning.
The Sovereign LORD will sound the trumpet;
he will march in the storms of the south,
15 and the LORD Almighty will shield them.
They will destroy
and overcome with slingstones.
They will drink and roar as with wine;
they will be full like a bowl
used for sprinkling[b] the corners of the altar.
16 The LORD their God will save his people on that day
as a shepherd saves his flock.
They will sparkle in his land
like jewels in a crown.
17 How attractive and beautiful they will be!
Grain will make the young men thrive,
and new wine the young women.

The Lord Will Care for Judah

10 1 Ask the LORD for rain in the springtime;
it is the LORD who sends the thunderstorms.
He gives showers of rain to all people,
and plants of the field to everyone.
2 The idols speak deceitfully,
diviners see visions that lie;
they tell dreams that are false,
they give comfort in vain.
Therefore the people wander like sheep
oppressed for lack of a shepherd.

Agriculture & Herding

The relative prestige of a riding animal is determined by several factors, including size, rarity, and cost. Although horses are not always as useful as mules or donkeys (Zec 9:9, 10), they have maintained a high rank in many cultures. The nomads of northern Arabia kept horses even when their camels had to carry water for the horses to drink.

[a] *10* That is, the Euphrates [b] *15* Or *bowl, / like*

Whatever Happened to the Philistines? (Zec 9:6)

During the 9th century B.C. the Philistines were in decline. They paid tribute to Judah while Jehoshaphat was king (872–848 B.C.; 2Ch 17:10, 11), although they tried to become independent under Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram (848–841 B.C.; 2Ch 21:16, 17). Toward the end of the century, when the Assyrians began to raid Palestine, Philistia faced another master. The Assyrian king Adad-nirari III (810–783 B.C.) claims in his inscriptions to have placed Philistine cities under heavy tribute in his 5th year (c. 805 B.C.).

Philistia did not fall under complete Assyrian domination until the invasion of Tiglath-Pileser III in 734 B.C. During that campaign Philistine towns were subdued and became vassals of Assyria. The Assyrians allowed the Philistine city-states a degree of self-government as long as they paid tribute. That arrangement crumbled, however, when the city of Ashdod rebelled against Assyrian rule in 713 B.C. The rebellion was subsequently crushed by the Assyrian king Sargon II during campaigns in 713 and 712, and the region was incorporated into the empire as an Assyrian province.

By the end of the 8th century B.C., the Philistine cities became established as a buffer zone between Assyria and hostile Egypt to the south. Eventually Egypt was able to dominate Philistia after the fall of Assyria in 612 B.C. The Egyptian pharaoh Psammetichus I (664–610 B.C.) besieged Ashdod for 29 years, eventually conquering the city.

During the Persian period (559–331 B.C.) the Philistines lost their distinct identity and were mixed with other Palestinian cultural peoples. The prophet Zechariah warned of the decline of the Philistines, and particularly of a "mongrel people" that would inhabit Ashdod (Zec 9:6).

3 "My anger burns against the shepherds,
and I will punish the leaders;
for the LORD Almighty will care
for his flock, the people of Judah,
and make them like a proud horse in
battle.
4 From Judah will come the cornerstone,
from him the tent peg,
from him the battle bow,
from him every ruler.
5 Together they[a] will be like warriors in
battle
trampling their enemy into the mud of the
streets.
They will fight because the LORD is with
them,
and they will put the enemy horsemen to
shame.

6 "I will strengthen Judah
and save the tribes of Joseph.
I will restore them
because I have compassion on them.
They will be as though
I had not rejected them,
for I am the LORD their God
and I will answer them.
7 The Ephraimites will become like
warriors,
and their hearts will be glad as with
wine.
Their children will see it and be joyful;
their hearts will rejoice in the LORD.
8 I will signal for them
and gather them in.
Surely I will redeem them;
they will be as numerous as before.
9 Though I scatter them among the peoples,
yet in distant lands they will
remember me.
They and their children will survive,
and they will return.
10 I will bring them back from Egypt
and gather them from Assyria.
I will bring them to Gilead and Lebanon,
and there will not be room enough for
them.
11 They will pass through the sea of trouble;
the surging sea will be subdued
and all the depths of the Nile will dry up.
Assyria's pride will be brought down
and Egypt's scepter will pass away.
12 I will strengthen them in the LORD
and in his name they will live securely,"
declares the LORD.

[a] *4,5* Or *ruler, all of them together.* / *5* *They*

TRANSITION

The Vision of the Shepherds

A good illustration of the difficulty in dating the prophecies of Zechariah is the vision of the shepherds (Zec 11:4–17). In this vision God dismisses three shepherds in one month (11:8). The term "shepherd" is a fr equent term for a ruler, but which three rulers are these? Several guesses have been offered: the flurry of short-lived kings in the nor thern kingdom of Israel just before Assyria destroyed it in 722 b.c.; or some otherwise unknown high priests or governors during the Persian era; or high priests in Jerusalem during the late Greek period (about 100 b.c.). The guesses range over more than half a millennium, and none is any more certain than any other.

If Zec 9–14 speaks of the time during the Persian period, after the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah, then the shepherds may have been governors of that era. In the tiny Persian province of Judah of the later Persian Empire, governors were frequent and usually oppressive (12:5, 6). Zechariah's vision of God's coming eternal kingdom (ch. 14) would have been as living waters (14:8) to the oppressed people of Jerusalem.

• **Zechariah 11:1—13:9**

Zechariah

11 **:1** Open your doors, Lebanon,
so that fire may devour your cedars!
2 Wail, you juniper, for the cedar has fallen;
the stately trees are ruined!
Wail, oaks of Bashan;
the dense forest has been cut down!
3 Listen to the wail of the shepherds;
their rich pastures are destroyed!
Listen to the roar of the lions;
the lush thicket of the Jordan is ruined!

Two Shepherds

4 This is what the LORD my God says: "Shepherd the flock marked for slaughter. 5 Their buyers slaughter them and go unpunished. Those who sell them say, 'Praise the LORD, I am rich!' Their own shepherds do not spare them. 6 For I will no longer have pity on the people of the land," declares the LORD. "I will give everyone into the hands of their neighbors and their king. They will devastate the land, and I will not rescue anyone from their hands."

7 So I shepherded the flock marked for slaughter, particularly the oppressed of the flock. Then I took two staffs and called one Favor and the other Union, and I shepherded the flock. 8 In one month I got rid of the three shepherds.

The flock detested me, and I grew weary of them 9 and said, "I will not be your shepherd. Let the dying die, and the perishing perish. Let those who are left eat one another's flesh."

10 Then I took my staff called Favor and broke it, revoking the covenant I had made with all the nations. 11 It was revoked on that day, and so the oppressed of the flock who were watching me knew it was the word of the LORD.

12 I told them, "If you think it best, give me my pay; but if not, keep it." So they paid me thirty pieces of silver.

13 And the LORD said to me, "Throw it to the potter"—the handsome price at which they valued me! So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them to the potter at the house of the LORD.

14 Then I broke my second staff called Union, breaking the family bond between Judah and Israel.

15 Then the LORD said to me, "Take again the equipment of a foolish shepherd. 16 For I am going to raise up a shepherd over the land who will not care for the lost, or seek the young, or heal the injured, or feed the healthy, but will eat the meat of the choice sheep, tearing off their hooves.

17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd,
who deserts the flock!
May the sword strike his arm and his right eye!
May his arm be completely withered,
his right eye totally blinded!"

Jerusalem's Enemies to Be Destroyed

12 1 A prophecy: The word of the LORD concerning Israel.

The LORD, who stretches out the heavens, who lays the foundation of the earth, and who forms the human spirit within a person, declares: 2 "I am going to make Jerusalem a cup that sends all the surrounding peoples reeling. Judah will be besieged as well as Jerusalem. 3 On that day, when all the nations of the earth are gathered against her, I will make Jerusalem an immovable rock for all the nations. All who try to move it will injure themselves. 4 On that day I will strike every horse with panic and its rider with madness," declares the LORD. "I will keep a watchful eye over Judah, but I will blind all the horses of the nations. 5 Then the clans of Judah will say in their hearts, 'The people of Jerusalem are strong, because the LORD Almighty is their God.'

6 "On that day I will make the clans of Judah like a firepot in a woodpile, like a flaming torch among sheaves. They will consume all the surrounding peoples right and left, but Jerusalem will remain intact in her place.

7 "The LORD will save the dwellings of Judah first, so that the honor of the house of David and of Jerusalem's inhabitants may not be greater than that of Judah. 8 On that day the LORD will shield those who live in Jerusalem, so that the feeblest among them will be like David, and the house of David will be like God, like the angel of the LORD going before them. 9 On that day I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem.

Mourning for the One They Pierced

10 "And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a

Banishing the Names (Zec 13:2)

The prophet Zechariah proclaims a time when the worship of other gods in Judah will be ended, the names of the gods will be removed, and they will be forgotten by the people of the land. Yahweh specifically says, "I will banish the names of the idols from the land" (Zec 13:2). Zechariah's prophecy (Zec 13:1–6) reflects a hope for the future of Judah when its religion shall be purified of both idolatry and false prophecy. Such a reform has a historical precedent in Egypt's Amarna period.

The Amarna period of Egypt (c. 1360–1333 B.C.) essentially coincided with the reign of Pharaoh Amenhotep IV (1352–1336 B.C.). This time saw a vast change in the theology of Egypt. The new king reduced the official pantheon to the sun-disk god Aten and himself as Aten's loyal regent. The reform of the official Egyptian cult included building an entire new capital at Amarna, where the god-king would live and Aten alone would be worshiped.

As Zechariah announced the banishing of idols' names, so also did Amenhotep. The king ordered the names of other gods to be removed from the monuments of Egypt. The names were literally cut out with chisels, even from inscriptions of personal names that included the god's name. The pharaoh even changed his own name from Amenhotep, which included the divine name Amen (or Amon), to Akhenaten, which contained his patron deity's name Aten.

When Akhenaten died, the worshipers of the other gods in the Egyptian pantheon had their revenge. They took their chisels and chipped out the name of Aten from Akhenaten's monumental buildings. The capital at Amarna was abandoned and, for much of the rest of ancient Egyptian history, the rule of Akhenaten and his sun-disk god were effectively forgotten.

spirit[a] of grace and supplication. They will look on[b] me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son. 11On that day the weeping in Jerusalem will be as great as the weeping of Hadad Rimmon in the plain of Megiddo. 12The land will mourn, each clan by itself, with their wives by themselves: the clan of the house of David and their wives, the clan of the house of Nathan and their wives, 13the clan of the house of Levi and their wives, the clan of Shimei and their wives, 14and all the rest of the clans and their wives.

Cleansing From Sin

13 1"On that day a fountain will be opened to the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to cleanse them from sin and impurity.

2"On that day, I will banish the names of the idols from the land, and they will be remembered no more," declares the LORD Almighty. "I will remove both the prophets and the spirit of impurity from the land. 3And if anyone still prophesies, their father and mother, to whom they were born, will say to them, 'You must die, because you have told lies in the LORD's name.' Then their own parents will stab the one who prophesies.

4"On that day every prophet will be ashamed of their prophetic vision. They will not put on a prophet's garment of hair in order to deceive. 5Each will say, 'I am not a prophet. I am a farmer; the land has been my livelihood since my youth.[c]' 6If someone asks, 'What are these wounds on your body[d]?' they will answer, 'The wounds I was given at the house of my friends.'

The Shepherd Struck, the Sheep Scattered

7"Awake, sword, against my shepherd,
against the man who is close to me!"
declares the LORD Almighty.
"Strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered,
and I will turn my hand against the little ones.
8In the whole land," declares the LORD,
"two-thirds will be struck down and perish;
yet one-third will be left in it.
9This third I will put into the fire;
I will refine them like silver
and test them like gold.
They will call on my name
and I will answer them;
I will say, 'They are my people,'
and they will say, 'The LORD is our God.'"

TIME CAPSULE		336 to 332 B.C.
336–331		Darius III is the last Persian king
334		Alexander wins battle at Granicus River against Persia
333		Darius suffers severe defeat at battle of Issos
332–37		Hellenistic period
332		Alexander's armies lay siege to the island of Tyre

[a] *10* Or *the Spirit* [b] *10* Or *to* [c] *5* Or *farmer; a man sold me in my youth* [d] *6* Or *wounds between your hands*

TRANSITION

The Last Battle Won

The prophecies of Zec 9–14 are often called apocalyptic writing, a literary style that included many symbolic visions. Apocalyptic literature offered consolation to oppressed and persecuted people, and very often included a comforting vision of God's eternal kingdom, which will replace all the oppressive kingdoms of this present world (see "Ezekiel's Apocalyptic Prophecies" at Eze 38:1). The vision of Zec 14, with its picture of a final battle (14:3) and an eternal spring of living waters (14:8) has much in common with both Eze 38 and 39 and with Rev 20–22, two other apocalyptic visions. To struggling Jewish settlers oppressed by wicked and self-serving governors (Zec 12:5, 6), Zechariah offered a future hope.

Like the prophecies of Isa 56–66, those of Zec 9–14 speak of the restored Jerusalem, but without the priestly emphasis of such Persian era prophets as Haggai and Malachi. Where the priestly prophets stressed the role of God's holy temple, Zechariah offered a radical vision of a time when no temple will be necessary. Instead, everything in Jerusalem, from the harnesses of the horses to the pots and pans of the kitchen, will be holy to God (14:20, 21). Also like Isa 56–66, Zechariah rejects the exclusivism of such leaders as Ezra and Nehemiah. All nations and families of the earth will be able to worship God and keep the Jewish celebration of the Festival of Tabernacles (14:16–19).

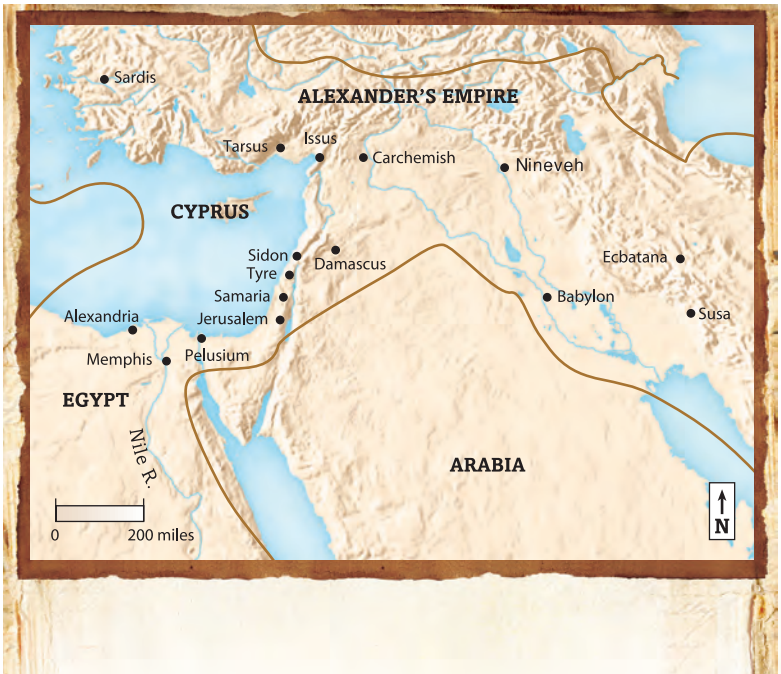
• **Zechariah 14:1–21**

Zechariah

The LORD Comes and Reigns

14 **:1** A day of the LORD is coming, Jerusalem, when your possessions will be plundered and divided up within your very walls.
2 I will gather all the nations to Jerusalem to
fight against it; the city will be captured, the
houses ransacked, and the women raped. Half
of the city will go into exile, but the rest of the
people will not be taken from the city. 3 Then
the LORD will go out and fight against those
nations, as he fights on a day of battle. 4 On that
day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives,
east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives
will be split in two from east to west, forming a
great valley, with half of the mountain moving
north and half moving south. 5 You will flee by
my mountain valley, for it will extend to Azel.
You will flee as you fled from the earthquake[a]
in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Then the
LORD my God will come, and all the holy ones
with him.
6 On that day there will be neither sunlight
nor cold, frosty darkness. 7 It will be a unique
day—a day known only to the LORD—with no
distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.
8 On that day living water will flow out from
Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and
half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in
summer and in winter.

[a] 5 Or 5 *My mountain valley will be blocked and will extend to Azel. It will be blocked as it was blocked because of the earthquake*



Alexander's Greek Empire
In 334 b.c. a 22-year-old Alexander began a military quest to destroy the Persian Empire. Moving from west to east, he was victorious in battle at Issus in 333 b.c. against the Persian Darius III. Moving south, Alexander defeated the Phoenicians at Tyre in 332 b.c., swept through Palestine, and conquered Egypt in 331 b.c. Darius III was defeated again near Nineveh. Alexander's campaigns secured vast territory for the Greek Empire before he died in 323 b.c.

9 The LORD will be king over the whole earth.
On that day there will be one LORD, and his
name the only name.
10 The whole land, from Geba to Rimmon,
south of Jerusalem, will become like the Ara-
bah. But Jerusalem will be raised up high from
the Benjamin Gate to the site of the First Gate,
to the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Han-
anel to the royal winepresses, and will remain
in its place. 11 It will be inhabited; never again
will it be destroyed. Jerusalem will be secure.
12 This is the plague with which the LORD
will strike all the nations that fought against
Jerusalem: Their flesh will rot while they are
still standing on their feet, their eyes will rot in
their sockets, and their tongues will rot in their
mouths. 13 On that day people will be stricken
by the LORD with great panic. They will seize
each other by the hand and attack one anoth-
er. 14 Judah too will fight at Jerusalem. The
wealth of all the surrounding nations will be
collected—great quantities of gold and silver
and clothing. 15 A similar plague will strike the
horses and mules, the camels and donkeys,
and all the animals in those camps.

16 Then the survivors from all the nations
that have attacked Jerusalem will go up year
after year to worship the King, the LORD Al-
mighty, and to celebrate the Festival of Taber-
nacles. 17 If any of the peoples of the earth do
not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King,
the LORD Almighty, they will have no rain. 18 If
the Egyptian people do not go up and take
part, they will have no rain. The LORD[a] will
bring on them the plague he inflicts on the na-
tions that do not go up to celebrate the Festival
of Tabernacles. 19 This will be the punishment
of Egypt and the punishment of all the nations
that do not go up to celebrate the Festival of
Tabernacles.
20 On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be in-
scribed on the bells of the horses, and the
cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like
the sacred bowls in front of the altar. 21 Every
pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the
LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice
will take some of the pots and cook in them.
And on that day there will no longer be a Ca-
naanite[b] in the house of the LORD Almighty.

[a] *18* Or *part, then the LORD* [b] *21* Or *merchant*

Eilat Mountains, Israel

Between the Two Testaments

During this time, that is little known to the Bible but fully attested in the Apocrypha, the faith of the Jewish people was tested both by oppression and freedom.

(332–37 B.C.)

The Old Testament provides scant information on events following the end of the Persian period (c. 331 B.C.). One prophecy of Zechariah (Zec 9) possibly refers to the conquests of Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. At least one interpretation of Daniel's later visions (particularly Da 8–11) refers to events after Alexander's Greek kingdom was divided, resulting eventually in the Ptolemies and the Seleucids of the 2nd century B.C. Yet, for the most part, the Old Testament is silent on the approximately 300 years before the birth of Jesus Christ (c. 5 B.C.). This epoch is known appropriately as "the intertestamental period" since it is the time between the testaments—between the last writings of the Old Testament and the first writings of the New.

For Judea, the epoch is characterized not only as "between the testaments," but also as between Persian rule and Greek rule, between Greek rule and Judean independence, between independence and Roman rule, with Herod the Great on the throne. It was a time when the faith of the Jewish people was tested, both by oppression and freedom. It is a time little known to the Bible, but fully attested in the Apocrypha.

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

Archaeology hints of extensive building and rebuilding during this period. All over Palestine, cities were rebuilt by the Greek Ptolemies from Egypt, or by the Greek Seleucids from Syria. Samaria was settled by colonists from Macedonia, and coastal cities in Palestine became Greek. East of the Jordan River, there were many Greek colonies (called the Decapolis in the Gospels). Specific archaeological data is scanty because so much of the building material was reused by later peoples.

The Jewish colony in Egypt continued to thrive. Papyrus documents list Jewish names in Alexandria and all the way up the Nile to present-day Aswan. The Nash Papyrus, a small fragment from this period containing the Ten Commandments in Hebrew, shows that at least some Jews in Egypt could still read Hebrew.

In Palestine itself, one important monument is the painted tombs of Marisa, in southern Judah. These tombs were carved out of the rock and painted elaborately, with the spaces between the paintings being filled with inscriptions and graffiti. The city of Marisa had been the capital of Edomite territory in southern Judah, a region eventually influenced by Greek culture. Names recovered from the tombs are Greek, Phoenician, and Idumean (all of southern Palestine eventually became known as Idumea).

Coins in Palestine show the succession of rulers. Many coins are from the Seleucid rulers of Syria, but coins dated after the Maccabean revolt of 166 B.C. indicate a free Judea. The Judean coins show the Hasmonean rulers becoming more and more secular. ("Hasmonean" derives from the family to which the Maccabees belonged. It was the name applied to the dynasty of Maccabean high priests and kings who ruled Judea between 142 B.C. and 63 B.C.)

One of the most famous archaeological remains from the period is the early occupation at Qumran, south of Jericho on the shores of the Dead Sea. Qumran was apparently settled by a sect of strict Jews who did not approve of the Hasmoneans being both kings and high priests. Josephus, the Jewish historian of the 1st century A.D., tells us that the founders of Qumran were the Essenes, a kind of

monastic community. Their settlement was later abandoned and then resettled. It was near Qumran that the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947.

THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

At the beginning of the period the most influential people were the Greeks and their successors. Alexander the Great founded colonies for his soldiers all over his empire. His generals who succeeded him ruled in Syria (the Seleucids) and in Egypt (the Ptolemies), and continued the ancient struggle between Asia and Africa for control of Palestine. While they fought each other over Palestine, both agreed on the importance of establishing Greek culture in the land. The increasing Greek influence would lead ultimately to revolt on the part of the Jews and to defeat of the ruling Seleucids. The incredible struggle of the Jewish people against Greek culture culminated in a Jewish political kingdom independent of Gentile control.

Other peoples figure importantly in this time of Jewish history. The Edomites, who had long been an enemy of Israel, lost their territory in Transjordan and the Sinai to the rising power of the Nabatean Arabs. Many Edomites moved to southern Judah, where they became known as Idumeans. The Idumeans were conquered by the Jews and forced to convert to Judaism, but, ironically, an Idumean would come to rule the Jewish state. Not only was Herod the Great an Idumean, but his brother-in-law was descended from the priests of Koze, an ancient Edomite god.

By 312 B.C. the Nabateans established themselves at Petra, the former capital of Edom, and in this great center they carved homes and temples out of the sandstone. By controlling the desert highways south of the Dead Sea, they became great traders, dominating much of the spice trade in the Middle East.

The Samaritans inhabited the area immediately north of Jerusalem and Judea. Tension between Samaritans and Jews goes back at least to the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple (538 B.C.). Yet a definite break between these groups occurred around either 388 or 332 B.C. when the Samaritans built a rival temple on Mount Gerizim, claiming Shechem rather than Jerusalem as the location of the true house of God. Both the temple and the city were destroyed by the Jewish ruler John Hyrcanus around 129 B.C.

At the close of the period the most powerful people were the Romans. The first record of Romans in Palestine is the treaty entered into by Judas Maccabeus and the Senate of Rome. Judea and Rome became allies just as Rome was beginning to consolidate its power and expand its territory. The alliance was helpful to the Jews for a few decades, then the Romans moved into Palestine and took control in 63 B.C. Pompey, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony (and Cleopatra), Augustus, and Crassus are Romans associated with Jewish history. Herod the Great was a friend of Caesar, Antony, and Augustus, changing sides with the changes of power in Rome.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The books associated with this period are found primarily in the Apocrypha. The books of Maccabees exalt Jewish martyrs and encourage the Jews to be strong in their faith. The history of the Jewish revolt that began in 166 B.C. is told in 1 and 2 Maccabees. Stories about the Jews' struggle with Greek culture are found in 3 and 4 Maccabees. The Wisdom of Jesus Son of Sirach (also called Ecclesiasticus) covers ethics in public life, standing in the tradition of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. The writer wrote in Jerusalem around 180 B.C.

These apocryphal books provide the background for a period almost unknown to the Old Testament, except for the last chapters of the Book of Daniel. The apocalyptic visions of Da 7; 8 reveal the kingdoms that came after Babylon, extending at least as far as the Greek Empire established by Alexander and possibly to the Roman Empire. Daniel's vision of 70 "sevens" or "weeks" (Da 9) points toward either Greek or Roman times of the 2nd or 1st century B.C. The Greek kingdoms that controlled Palestine during the 2nd century B.C., particularly the reign of Antiochus IV (175–164 B.C.), come into view in Da 10–12.

These visions of Daniel reveal that the trials of God's people would get worse before they got better. Other empires would succeed Babylon, and the later ones would persecute the Jews for their religion, threatening not only their lives, but the continued worship of God. But there is a further

Artaxerxes I

message: the pagan kings would not be able to ignore or defy God. Exalt themselves as they might, they would be brought low before the God of Israel. The final outcome would be determined not by earthly armies, but by heavenly ones.

THE GREEK EMPIRE

The Persian Empire continued for another century after the death of Artaxerxes I (424 B.C.). Various kings of varying ability ruled Persia, but no great advances were made by the empire, and no new territories were added. Indeed, some of the empire's conquered territories were lost. Egypt, at the far southwestern end of the empire, rebelled several times, and in 404 B.C. finally won independence from its Persian overlords.

Besides rebellions within its own dominion, Persia's most significant threat continued to be the growing power of the independent city-states of Greece. Both Darius I (522–486 B.C.) and Xerxes I (486–465 B.C.) attempted to invade Greece but were turned back. Later Persian kings gave up plans for conquest, being content simply to keep the Greeks from encroaching on Persian territory. This goal was made easier by wars between the fiercely independent Greek city-states, such as the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta (434–404 B.C.). While the Greeks fought each other, the Persian kings Artaxerxes I (465–424 B.C.), Xerxes II (424 B.C.), and Darius II (423–404 B.C.) were able to concentrate their military forces in Asia Minor, making that area a buffer between Greece and the rest of the Persian Empire.

Despite continuous conflict between the Greek city-states, this century was the golden age in Greece. The city of Athens, which had led the Greek alliance against Darius I and Xerxes I, became the center of Greek politics, literature, and philosophy. In Athenian politics, this was the age of Pericles. In literature, this century saw such Greek dramatists as Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Athenian philosophers of this time included Socrates, Plato, and near the end of the century, Aristotle.

Despite great diversity, Greek art and thought shared a few significant presuppositions. Most important of these was a new emphasis on the beauty and value of the human being. Before this time, most cultures saw people as weak creatures, helpless before the more powerful forces of nature and of the gods. In 5th-century Greece, this view changed. Humans came to be perceived as having intrinsic value as well as the strength to overcome (or at least endure) the worst that fate or the gods could offer. The Stoic philosopher Protagoras summarized this humanism with his dictum, "Man is the measure of all things." This philosophical position was to prove much more enduring and influential in world history than any of the military or political achievements of Athens.

No human glory lasts forever, and the glory of Persia and of the Greek city-states began to fail simultaneously. In Persia, the collapse came from within. After Artaxerxes II (404–359 B.C.), Persia was ruled by a series of violent, ambitious men, most of whom gained the throne by assassinating their predecessor and all possible rivals. One of these, Artaxerxes III (359–338 B.C.) seemed to be restoring Persian might—he even recaptured Egypt in 343 B.C.—but that return to glory was illusory. Artaxerxes III was poisoned and replaced by his son Arses (338–336 B.C.).

Alexander's conquests, in their swiftness and effectiveness, are the stuff of military legend.

The threat to Greece came from without, from the land of Macedon to the north. The king of Macedon, Philip II (359–336 B.C.), marched his armies south and by 338 B.C. had captured the whole Greek peninsula. Although not a Greek himself, Philip had his son tutored in Greek thought by none other than the great Greek thinker Aristotle. When Philip was murdered in 336 B.C., his son was ready to expand both the kingdom of Macedon and the culture of Greece into Persian territory. Philip's son was named Alexander (336–323 B.C.).

Alexander the Great's conquests, in their swiftness and effectiveness, are the stuff of military legend. In 334 B.C. Alexander crossed the Hellespont into Asia Minor and overcame all opposition. He met the main Persian force, under Darius III (336–331 B.C.) in 333 B.C. and routed it, sending Darius himself fleeing. Before pressing on into Mesopotamia, the center of Persian power, Alexander marched south and conquered Palestine and Egypt in 332 B.C. Moving north again, he took Mesopotamia in 331 B.C. and everything else he could find to conquer by 327 B.C. The new Greek Empire stretched from Macedon to Egypt, from Greece to India. Alexander himself died of a fever in Babylon in 323 B.C. at the age of 33.

Upon Alexander's death, his generals began fighting over his newly acquired empire. The next few decades were marked by a series of shifting alliances, intrigues, and wars. No one general was strong enough to take control of the whole empire. At first the empire was divided into four parts, but by 280 B.C. three separate dynasties were established: the Antigonids in Macedonia, the Ptolemies in Egypt, and the Seleucids in Persia and Syria.

The land of Palestine, which included Judah and Jerusalem, was at first a part of the Ptolemaic kingdom, centered in Egypt. In about 200 B.C., however, Palestine was captured by the Seleucid king

Antiochus III (223–187 B.C.). Now Judah was part of the Seleucid kingdom, based in Syria. The Jews, who had been largely left alone under Ptolemaic rule, now faced danger. The Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.) sought to establish Greek religion and culture in his realm and to wipe out all rival beliefs. He outlawed the Jewish faith, burned all copies he could find of the Jewish Scripture, and in 167 B.C. sacrificed pigs to Zeus on the altar of the Jerusalem temple. Faithful Jews rebelled and in 164 B.C. were able to cleanse and rededicate the temple, a rededication still celebrated today in the Festival of Dedication, or Hanukkah.

For 300 years after the death of Alexander, the ancient world was controlled by the descendants of his Greek generals. Greek became the official language of trade, and Greek culture found its way into every land. As early as 215 B.C., though, a rival to Greek power began to appear to the west—Rome. In 30 B.C. the last of the Hellenistic (Greek) kingdoms, the Ptolemaic dynasty in Egypt, was absorbed into the new Roman Empire.

Double daric of Artaxerxes II, Babylonia, ca. 330–300, Persian king running holding a bow.

TRANSITION

The Apocalyptic Visions of Daniel

The young Jewish exile Daniel interpreted a dream for the king of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar (Da 2). That interpretation was a foretelling of future kingdoms and empires, starting with the Babylonians and moving through the Persian and Greek empires. Since Daniel's dream interpretation was part of a narrative from the time of Nebuchadnezzar (Da 2), it could be read in that context (see "Daniel's Time in Babylon" at Da 2:1).

Several of Daniel's own visions appear to parallel Nebuchadnezzar's dream narrated in Da 2. Like that dream, the visions of Da 7; 8 describe the kingdoms that will follow the kingdom of Babylon and extend at least as far as the Greek Empire established by Alexander. Unlike that dream, these visions are not part of a narrative. They are dated as received in Belshazzar's 1st and 3rd years (Da 7:1; 8:1), but it is not known when he began to rule. Some think that Belshazzar's father Nabonidus left him as regent over the city of Babylon when Nabonidus departed for Tema in 553 B.C., though that is not certain. The dates report only that Daniel received these visions sometime before 545 B.C. The content of the visions, however, extends far beyond the time of Daniel and Belshazzar, and so can be read in light of the Greek Empire.

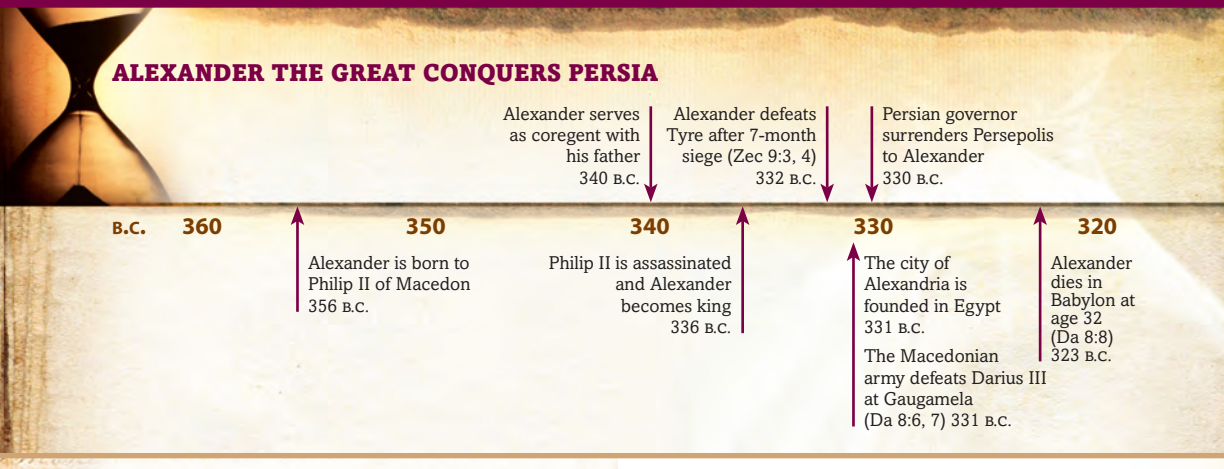
Daniel's visions are the best examples of apocalyptic literature in all the Old Testament. Apocalyptic literature was a particularly Jewish form of writing, fairly common in the centuries after the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. Apocalyptic texts usually presented symbolic visions, with every detail appearing to have a specific hidden meaning, though not always explaining it. The primary purpose of apocalyptic writing was to comfort those who were persecuted for their faith. Such comfort was found in knowing that all the kingdoms of earth, however powerful they might appear, would one day be crushed and replaced by God's eternal kingdom, in which the faithful would be vindicated (Da 2:44, 45; 7:27; 8:25).

Apocalyptic visions thus refer to two or even three separate time frames. First, there is the time of the visionary, which in Da 7; 8 is the reign of Nabonidus and Belshazzar. Second, there is the time of persecution to which the comfort is offered. That time, for Da 7; 8, may be the time of Daniel, or it may be a much later persecution, the time of the future events described in the visions. Finally, there is the final time—an ultimate day of the Lord, when all will be set right, a time sometime after the persecutions.

The visions of Da 7; 8 speak of a series of kingdoms, beginning with the Babylonian Empire. Exactly which kingdoms is not completely clear, however. The four beasts (Da 7:3–7), for instance, might refer to (1) Babylon (the lion), (2) Media (the bear), (3) Persia (the leopard), and (4) Greece (the terrifying beast). Alternately, the last three kingdoms could be Persia, Greece, and Rome. Thus the last beast, in which Daniel is most interested, could be either the Greek Empire or the Roman Empire.

The little "horn" of Da 7:8, then, would be a proud king of this last kingdom, who would greatly persecute God's people. Should that kingdom be Greece, the little horn might refer to Antiochus IV, the Seleucid ruler who defiled the Jerusalem temple in 167 B.C. References to Greece in Daniel give this interpretation some support: the vision of Da 8 specifically identifies the final kingdom as Greece (Da 8:21), and Da 10; 11 include some clear references to the time of Antiochus (see "Daniel and the Greeks" at Da 10:1). Other scholars, interpreting the fourth kingdom as Rome, have identified the little horn as Nero Caesar, or as some other figure who persecuted Christians.

The indeterminate nature of the vision has resulted in other interpretations throughout history. During the English Civil War of the



17th century, for instance, the Puritan rebels against the throne identified the little horn as the English king. At the same time, the royalist Sir Thomas More identified the little horn as Oliver Cromwell, the Puritan leader. By nature, apocalyptic literature always appears to apply to one's own time. To interpret an apocalyptic vision it is important to seek the original reference of the vision— the Greek or Roman persecutions, for instance. Having done this, it is still appropriate to seek one's own situation in the vision's symbols and to find one's own comfort in its promises.

• **Daniel 7:1–28**

Daniel

Daniel's Dream of Four Beasts

7 :1 In the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon, Daniel had a dream, and visions passed through his mind as he was lying in bed. He wrote down the substance of his dream.

[2]Daniel said: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me were the four winds of heaven churning up the great sea. [3]Four great beasts, each different from the others, came up out of the sea.

[4]"The first was like a lion, and it had the wings of an eagle. I watched until its wings were torn off and it was lifted from the ground so that it stood on two feet like a human being, and the mind of a human was given to it.

[5]"And there before me was a second beast, which looked like a bear. It was raised up on one of its sides, and it had three ribs in its mouth between its teeth. It was told, 'Get up and eat your fill of flesh!'

[6]"After that, I looked, and there before me was another beast, one that looked like a leopard. And on its back it had four wings like those of a bird. This beast had four heads, and it was given authority to rule.

[7]"After that, in my vision at night I looked, and there before me was a fourth beast— terrifying and frightening and very powerful. It had large iron teeth; it crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. It was different from all the former beasts, and it had ten horns.

[8]"While I was thinking about the horns, there before me was another horn, a little one, which came up among them; and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. This horn had eyes like the eyes of a human being and a mouth that spoke boastfully.

[9]"As I looked,

"thrones were set in place,
and the Ancient of Days took his seat.
His clothing was as white as snow;
the hair of his head was white like wool.
His throne was flaming with fire,
and its wheels were all ablaze.
[10]A river of fire was flowing,
coming out from before him.
Thousands upon thousands attended him;
ten thousand times ten thousand stood
before him.
The court was seated,
and the books were opened.

[11]"Then I continued to watch because of the boastful words the horn was speaking. I kept

Plants & Animals

The Syrian bear is a type of European brown bear, closely related to the grizzly bear but not so large. Brown bears can grow to over 500 pounds, making them about the same size as a lion. Their diet is mostly vegetable, although they can eat meat (Dan 7:5). They are not aggressive toward humans, but are ferocious if their cubs are threatened.

looking until the beast was slain and its body destroyed and thrown into the blazing fire. 12 (The other beasts had been stripped of their authority, but were allowed to live for a period of time.)

13 "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man,[a] coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. 14 He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

TIME CAPSULE		331 to 327 B.C.
331	Darius retreats to Ecbatana, as Alexander takes Babylon and Susa	
330	The Persian governor surrenders Persepolis to Alexander	
330	Darius is assassinated by Bessos, satrap of Bactria	
330	Lycurgus rebuilds Dionysus theater in Athens	
327	Alexander conquers all of Persia before age 30	

The Interpretation of the Dream

15 "I, Daniel, was troubled in spirit, and the visions that passed through my mind disturbed me. 16 I approached one of those standing there and asked him the meaning of all this.

"So he told me and gave me the interpretation of these things: 17 'The four great beasts are four kings that will rise from the earth. 18 But the holy people of the Most High will receive the kingdom and will possess it forever—yes, for ever and ever.'

19 "Then I wanted to know the meaning of the fourth beast, which was different from all the others and most terrifying, with its iron teeth and bronze claws—the beast that crushed and devoured its victims and trampled underfoot whatever was left. 20 I also wanted to know about the ten horns on its head and about the other horn that came up, before which three of them fell—the horn that looked more imposing than the others and that had eyes and a mouth that spoke boastfully. 21 As I watched, this horn was waging war against the holy people and defeating them, 22 until the Ancient of Days came and pronounced judgment in favor of the holy people of the Most High, and the time came when they possessed the kingdom.

23 "He gave me this explanation: 'The fourth beast is a fourth kingdom that will appear on earth. It will be different from all the other kingdoms and will devour the whole earth, trampling it down and crushing it. 24 The ten horns are ten kings who will come from this kingdom. After them another king will arise, different from the earlier ones; he will subdue three kings. 25 He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time.[b]

26 "'But the court will sit, and his power will be taken away and completely destroyed forever. 27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of all the kingdoms under heaven will be handed over to the holy people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.'

28 "This is the end of the matter. I, Daniel, was deeply troubled by my thoughts, and my face turned pale, but I kept the matter to myself."

[a] *13* The Aramaic phrase *bar enash* means *human being*. The phrase *son of man* is retained here because of its use in the New Testament as a title of Jesus, probably based largely on this verse. [b] *25* Or *for a year, two years and half a year*

The Persian Province of Elam (Da 8:2)

By the time of Daniel (6th century B.C.), the territory of Elam was already a very ancient land. Located in modern southwest Iran in the province of Khuzistan, Elam shows evidence of beginning urbanization as early as the late 4th millennium B.C., with Susa as its major center. The Elamites flourished there until the 7th century B.C. when they were overrun by the Medes and Persians.

Susa was the religious center of Elam during the Neo-Elamite kingdom of the 8th century B.C. The Assyrians waged various campaigns against the Neo-Elamite kings, and in 646 B.C. the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal destroyed the city.

The Persians eventually took the part of Elam called Anshan. After the Assyrian Empire was destroyed (609 B.C.), the Medes annexed most of Elam. When the Persians, in turn, began to control Media, all of Elam became a Persian administrative district. After the 6th century B.C., Elam was never again an independent nation.

The fortunes of Susa turned for the better under the Persian Empire. During the reign of King Darius I (522–486 B.C.), Susa was restored to its position of influence and power in the region. It was evidently the winter capital of the Achaemenid kings of Persia. The rebuilt city consisted of two parts separated by a canal: a lower city and a fortified royal city.

Daniel's vision placed him in the Persian "province of Elam" (Da 8:2). In the vision was the city of Susa and the fortified royal city, referred to as "the citadel" (8:2). The Ulai Canal, by which Daniel stood, flowed north of Susa. Some scholars believe that Ulai was an artificial irrigation canal and not a natural river. Possibly Ulai was the canal separating the two parts of Susa.

TRANSITION

Daniel and Alexander

Though the vision of Da 7 could refer ultimately to either the Greek Empire or the Roman Empire, the vision of Da 8 clearly speaks of Greece. The ram, with which the dream begins, is the Medo-Persian Empire (8:3, 4, 20). This ram is conquered by a goat from the west, which can hardly refer to anything except the Macedonian and Greek armies under Alexander that swept the old Persian Empire away (8:21).

The "horns" of Da 8 reflect the Greek Empire. At first the goat has one "prominent horn," representing Alexander himself (8:5, 21). After this horn is broken off, four horns replace it, representing the four generals who replaced Alexander (8:8, 22). The little horn which grew "to the south" (8:9), and blasphemed and defiled the temple (8:11, 12), sounds very much like the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes (see "The Greek Empire" at Da 7:1).

• **Daniel 8:1–27**

Daniel

Daniel's Vision of a Ram and a Goat

8 **:1** In the third year of King Belshazzar's reign, I, Daniel, had a vision, after the one that had already appeared to me. 2In my vision I saw myself in the citadel of Susa in the province of Elam; in the vision I was beside the Ulai Canal. 3I looked up, and there before me was a ram with two horns, standing beside the canal, and the horns were long. One of the horns was longer than the other but grew up later. 4I watched the ram as it charged toward the west and the north and the south. No animal could stand against it, and none could rescue from its power. It did as it pleased and became great.

5As I was thinking about this, suddenly a goat with a prominent horn between its eyes came from the west, crossing the whole earth without touching the ground. 6It came toward the two-horned ram I had seen standing beside the canal and charged at it in great rage. 7I saw it attack the ram furiously, striking the ram and shattering its two horns. The ram was powerless to stand against it; the goat knocked it to the ground and trampled on it, and none could rescue the ram from its power. 8The goat became very great, but at the height of its power the large horn was broken off, and in its place four prominent horns grew up toward the four winds of heaven.

9Out of one of them came another horn, which started small but grew in power to the south and to the east and toward the Beautiful Land. 10It grew until it reached the host of the heavens, and it threw some of the starry host down to the earth and trampled on them. 11It set itself up to be as great as the commander of the army of the LORD; it took away the daily sacrifice from the LORD, and his sanctuary was thrown down. 12Because of rebellion, the LORD's people[a] and the daily sacrifice were given over to it. It prospered in everything it did, and truth was thrown to the ground.

13Then I heard a holy one speaking, and another holy one said to him, "How long will it take for the vision to be fulfilled—the vision concerning the daily sacrifice, the rebellion

[a] *12* Or *rebellion, the armies*

Alexander the Great (Da 8:21)

Alexander the Great, born to Philip II of Macedon and Olympias of Epirus in 356 B.C., is depicted in Daniel's vision (Da 8:5, 21) and prophecy (Da 11:3). After the assassination of his father in 336 B.C., Alexander inherited the rising kingdom of Macedon, the Greek-speaking state north of modern Greece. He was able to sustain his father's recent conquests in Greece and then manipulate the Greek city-states to join him in the conquest of the great Persian Empire.

Before the age of thirty (327 B.C.) Alexander had conquered all of Persia, from Lycia to the Indus River. He then returned to Babylon and prepared to make the city his new capital. Some have suggested that Alexander attempted to create a universal state that broke down the cultural barriers between Greece and Persia. He may also have contemplated the conquest of the western Mediterranean world, but if so, that ambition was cut off by his premature death in 323 B.C.

Following the decease of Alexander, the empire broke up and was divided among four of his generals, symbolized by the four horns (Da 8:8, 22) and the four winds (Da 11:4). One of these generals, Ptolemy I, founded the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt, which he ruled himself from 305 to 282 B.C. The Ptolemies initially controlled Palestine until being defeated by the Seleucids in 200 B.C.

Alexander's conquests had far-reaching effects on the Near East. Greek language and culture were introduced to this area, considerably reshaping Near Eastern civilization. This mixture of Greek and Near Eastern civilizations became known as Hellenism.

Hellenism greatly influenced Israel's culture, especially through the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. The Septuagint became the Scripture of the early Christians. New Testament writers frequently quoted the Septuagint (as does Paul in Ro 15:12) as a source of inspired teaching (see Ro 15:4). Other Jewish writers, such as Philo and Josephus, interpreted the Septuagint allegorically and quoted it often.

that causes desolation, the surrender of the sanctuary and the trampling underfoot of the LORD's people?"

14 He said to me, "It will take 2,300 evenings and mornings; then the sanctuary will be reconsecrated."

The Interpretation of the Vision

15 While I, Daniel, was watching the vision and trying to understand it, there before me stood one who looked like a man. 16 And I heard a man's voice from the Ulai calling, "Gabriel, tell this man the meaning of the vision."

17 As he came near the place where I was standing, I was terrified and fell prostrate. "Son of man,"[a] he said to me, "understand that the vision concerns the time of the end."

18 While he was speaking to me, I was in a deep sleep, with my face to the ground. Then he touched me and raised me to my feet.

19 He said: "I am going to tell you what will happen later in the time of wrath, because the vision concerns the appointed time of the end.[b] 20 The two-horned ram that you saw represents the kings of Media and Persia. 21 The shaggy goat is the king of Greece, and the large horn between its eyes is the first king. 22 The four horns that replaced the one that was broken off represent four kingdoms that will emerge from his nation but will not have the same power.

23 "In the latter part of their reign, when rebels have become completely wicked, a fierce-looking king, a master of intrigue, will arise. 24 He will become very strong, but not by his own power. He will cause astounding devastation and will succeed in whatever he does. He will destroy those who are mighty, the holy people. 25 He will cause deceit to prosper, and he will consider himself superior. When they feel secure, he will destroy many and take his stand against the Prince of princes. Yet he will be destroyed, but not by human power.

26 "The vision of the evenings and mornings that has been given you is true, but seal up the vision, for it concerns the distant future."

27 I, Daniel, was worn out. I lay exhausted for several days. Then I got up and went about the king's business. I was appalled by the vision; it was beyond understanding.

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[a] *17* The Hebrew phrase *ben adam* means *human being*. The phrase *son of man* is retained as a form of address here because of its possible association with "Son of Man" in the New Testament. [b] *19* Or *because the end will be at the appointed time*

TRANSITION

The Seventy Sevens

Biblical texts concerning the future are not usually specific about dates. One exception to this rule is Jeremiah's prophecy that the exiles in Babylon would return to Jerusalem, but not until 70 years had passed (Jer 25:11, 12; 29:10). Even here, Jeremiah emphasizes not a specific date, but rather that the exiles should not expect the return to occur in their own lifetime. We cannot be certain of either the exact beginning point or the exact end point of Jeremiah's 70-year period.

Jeremiah had prophesied that the Exile in Babylon would last 70 years. The fall of Babylon caused the exiled Daniel to recall Jeremiah's 70 years (Da 9:2) and pray for restoration. The vision that Daniel receives (Da 9:24–27) does not explain the 70 years, but does offer a second interpretation. Full restoration would come not in 70 years but in 70 "sevens" or "weeks" (Da 9:24). If the 70 "sevens" or "weeks" represent 70 periods of 7 years each (thus 70 x 7 = 490 years), the vision would be pointing to some time in the 2nd or 1st century B.C.

Despite the apparent specificity of the prophecy, the exact years represented by the vision's 70 sevens cannot be calculated. To begin with, it is not certain where to begin counting—70 sevens starting when? Perhaps it is from 538 B.C., the year of Cyrus's decree allowing the exiles to return and rebuild Jerusalem (Da 9:25). Or it may be from 520 B.C., the date of the actual rebuilding of the temple. Or perhaps it is from the date of the vision itself. But that date itself is unclear, because the vision is dated from the 1st year of "Darius son of Xerxes (a Mede by descent)" (Da 9:1, 2). The first Darius to be king was not a Mede, but a Persian, and Xerxes was his son, not his father (see "Darius the Mede" at Da 6:1).

In the end, the exact dates are less important than the theological message of the chapter. Full restoration of the punished people of God cannot and will not be immediate. Just as the sins of the Jews were long-standing sins, stubbornly clung to by unfaithful Israel, so the restoration will take longer than just one generation to be completed. As in chs. 7 and 8, Da 9 points toward the final years of the 1st millennium B.C., to some great salvation in either Greek or Roman times.

• **Daniel 9:1–27**

Daniel

Daniel's Prayer

9:1 In the first year of Darius son of Xerxes[a] (a Mede by descent), who was made ruler over the Babylonian[b] kingdom— [2]in the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, understood from the Scriptures, according to the word of the LORD given to Jeremiah the prophet, that the desolation of Jerusalem would last seventy years. [3]So I turned to the Lord God and pleaded with him in prayer and petition, in fasting, and in sackcloth and ashes.

[4]I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed:

"Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, [5]we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. [6]We have not listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our ancestors, and to all the people of the land.

[7]"Lord, you are righteous, but this day we are covered with shame—the people of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, both near and far, in all the countries where you have scattered us because of our unfaithfulness to you. [8]We and our kings, our princes and our ancestors are covered with shame, LORD, because we have sinned against you. [9]The Lord our God is merciful and forgiving, even though we have rebelled against him; [10]we have not obeyed the LORD our God or kept the laws he gave us through his servants the prophets. [11]All Israel has transgressed your law and turned away, refusing to obey you.

"Therefore the curses and sworn judgments written in the Law of Moses, the servant of God, have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against you. [12]You have fulfilled the words spoken against us and against our rulers by bringing on us great disaster. Under the whole heaven nothing has ever been done like what has been done to Jerusalem. [13]Just as it is written in the Law of Moses, all this disaster has come on us, yet we have not sought the favor of the LORD our God by turning from our sins and giving attention to your truth. [14]The LORD did not hesitate to bring the disaster on us, for the LORD our God is righteous in everything he does; yet we have not obeyed him.

[15]"Now, Lord our God, who brought your people out of Egypt with a mighty hand and who made for yourself a name that endures to this day, we have sinned, we have done wrong. [16]Lord, in keeping

[a] *1* Hebrew *Ahasuerus* [b] *1* Or *Chaldean*

THE 70 YEARS OF JEREMIAH

Jeremiah prophesied that Israel would be captive in Babylon for 70 years (Jer 25:11, 12; 29:10). His prophecy was recalled in the writings of the Chronicler (2Ch 36:20, 21) and of the prophets (Da 9:2; and probably Zec 1:12).

Various important events have been interpreted as marking either the beginning point or end point of the 70-year period. The actual spans of years between any of the possible beginning points (612, 605, 586 B.C.) and the possible end points (538, 520, 515 B.C.) do not provide any interval of exactly 70 years. The number 70 is probably a round figure, which represents the length of one lifetime (Ps 90:10). In other words, any of the exact spans (of 74, 67, 66, or 71 years) could correspond to the significant number 70.

Beginning Year and Event	Span	Ending Year and Event
612 B.C. Babylon conquers Nineveh; (Na 1:1, 14)	74 years	538 B.C. Cyrus allows Jews to rebuild temple (Ezr 1:1–4)
605 B.C. Battle of Carchemish; Nebuchadnezzar becomes king (Jer 46:2)	67 years	538 B.C. Cyrus allows Jews to rebuild temple (Ezr 1:1–4)
586 B.C. Fall of Jerusalem (Jer 52:12)	66 years	520 B.C. Jews resume rebuilding the temple (Hag 1:14, 15)
586 B.C. Fall of Jerusalem (Jer 52:12)	71 years	515 B.C. Jews celebrate the dedication of the temple (Ezr 6:15–18)

with all your righteous acts, turn away your anger and your wrath from Jerusalem, your city, your holy hill. Our sins and the iniquities of our ancestors have made Jerusalem and your people an object of scorn to all those around us.

17"Now, our God, hear the prayers and petitions of your servant. For your sake, Lord, look with favor on your desolate sanctuary. 18Give ear, our God, and hear; open your eyes and see the desolation of the city that bears your Name. We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your great mercy. 19Lord, listen! Lord, forgive! Lord, hear and act! For your sake, my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name."

The Seventy "Sevens"

20While I was speaking and praying, confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel and making my request to the LORD my God for his holy hill— 21while I was still in prayer, Gabriel, the man I had seen in the earlier vision, came to me in swift flight about the time of the evening sacrifice. 22He instructed me and said to me, "Daniel, I have now come to give you insight and understanding. 23As soon as you began to pray, a word went out, which I have come to tell you, for you are highly esteemed. Therefore, consider the word and understand the vision:

24"Seventy 'sevens'[a] are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish[b] transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the Most Holy Place.[c]

25"Know and understand this: From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One,[d] the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. 26After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be put to death and will have nothing.[e] The people of the ruler who will come will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. 27He will confirm a covenant with many for one 'seven.'[f] In the middle

[a] *24* Or *'weeks'*; also in verses 25 and 26 [b] *24* Or *restrain* [c] *24* Or *the most holy One* [d] *25* Or *an anointed one*; also in verse 26 [e] *26* Or *death and will have no one*; or *death, but not for himself* [f] *27* Or *'week'*

of the 'seven'[a] he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And at the temple[b] he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him."[c][d]

[a] 27 Or *'week'* [b] 27 Septuagint and Theodotion; Hebrew *wing* [c] 27 Or *it* [d] 27 Or *And one who causes desolation will come upon the wing of the abominable temple, until the end that is decreed is poured out on the desolated city* [e] 1 Or *true and burdensome*

TRANSITION

Daniel and the Greeks

The final vision of the Book of Daniel (Da 10–12) is the clearest in terms of its historical context. Although it certainly may be reinterpreted to apply to other and later times, it also certainly speaks of events in the 2nd century B.C., when the Greek kingdoms controlled Palestine.

The vision begins with a description of the heavenly messenger who brought the vision to Daniel (Da 10:4–9). This messenger is clad in radiant gold and his eyes are fiery. Daniel is frightened, but the messenger gives him courage to face the vision (10:10, 18).The apocalyptic visions of the New Testament writer John, described in the Book of Revelation, begin in almost exactly the same way (Rev 1:12–20).

As the vision itself is revealed (Da 11:2—12:3), its relation to the historical events of the Greek Empire becomes apparent. As the last kings of Persia are ruling, a great king shall arise in Greece who will "rule with great power" (11:2, 3). This king must be Alexander (336–323 B.C.). After the great king dies, though, his kingdom will be divided among those who are not his heirs (11:4), the Greek generals who divided Alexander's empire. After this, the vision is only interested in two of those kingdoms, the ones most closely concerned with the land of Judah and Jerusalem. These are the kings of the South (the Ptolemies, based in Egypt) and the kings of the North (the Seleucids, based in Syria).

The vision describes the relations between the Ptolemies and the Seleucids in amazing detail. For instance, the attempted marriage alliance between the two kingdoms (11:6) probably refers to an event of 250 B.C. The Ptolemies and Seleucids were briefly united in the troubled marriage of Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy II (285–246 B.C.), to the Seleucid king Antiochus II (261–246 B.C.).

Various Seleucid kings are alluded to in Da 11. Antiochus III (223–187 B.C.) was the king who finally captured Judah and Jerusalem from the Ptolemies (11:11–19). His immediate successor, Seleucus IV (187–175 B.C.), had a mostly peaceful reign, though in the end he was murdered (11:20). The hated Antiochus IV (175–164 B.C.) attempted to stamp out all religions except those of Greece and showed a particular hatred for the religion of the Jews (11:21–45). The vision first describes his military campaigns against Egypt (11:25–28), then his persecutions of the Jews (11:30–39). Antiochus IV outlawed Jewish religion, forced Jews to eat pork or die, burned the Jewish Scriptures, and in the worst act of all, set up an altar to the Greek god Zeus in the Jerusalem temple (the "abomination that causes desolation," 11:31).

The rest of the vision is somewhat less specific. The distant future seems to be the focus of ch. 12, which offers the general prediction that all such evil worldly kingdoms will fall at the last day before the eternal victory of Israel's God (12:1–3). Although it is easy to be diverted by the specifics of the historical visions, this is the heart of all apocalyptic writing: the promise that God will one day right all wrongs and His faithful will dwell with Him "like the stars for ever and ever" (12:3).

Historical specificity such as appears in Da 11 is rare in biblical prophecy. It is especially remarkable since Daniel's exile is placed more than 400 years before the events so minutely described in the vision (Da 1:1–7). Because of this, many scholars suggest that the visions of Da 7–12 were actually written in Palestine during the persecutions of Antiochus IV (167 B.C.), and attributed after the fact to the famous exile Daniel. Such late attributions are fairly common in other apocalyptic writings of Greek and Roman times and would have been a familiar literary device to the original readers.

Other scholars emphasize that accurate foretelling of the future is possible for God, even down to minute details, and accept Daniel's authorship. Whether these visions were written during the Babylonian exile (597–538 B.C.) or during the reign of Antiochus IV (175–164 B.C.), the message is the same: the faithful ones who are persecuted, particularly those persecuted by Antiochus, can take heart. God will overcome His enemies at last.

• **Daniel 10:1—12:13**

Daniel

Daniel's Vision of a Man

10:1 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a revelation was given to Daniel (who was called Belteshazzar). Its message was true and it concerned a great war.[e] The understanding of the message came to him in a vision.

[2]At that time I, Daniel, mourned for three weeks. [3]I ate no choice food; no meat or wine touched my lips; and I used no lotions at all until the three weeks were over.

[4]On the twenty-fourth day of the first month, as I was standing on the bank of the great river,

Beliefs &Ideas

Ancient people believed that the destinies of nations were determined by a council of heavenly beings. Each nation was assigned to a certain heavenly power or prince (Da 10:13). In the Bible this relation of heaven and earth expresses God's interest in human affairs and also his power over them. God can act in the nations by dispatching an appropriate messenger (Da 10:11).

the Tigris, 5I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. 6His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

7I, Daniel, was the only one who saw the vision; those who were with me did not see it, but such terror overwhelmed them that they fled and hid themselves. 8So I was left alone, gazing at this great vision; I had no strength left, my face turned deathly pale and I was helpless. 9Then I heard him speaking, and as I listened to him, I fell into a deep sleep, my face to the ground.

10A hand touched me and set me trembling on my hands and knees. 11He said, "Daniel, you who are highly esteemed, consider carefully the words I am about to speak to you, and stand up, for I have now been sent to you." And when he said this to me, I stood up trembling.

12Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them. 13But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia. 14Now I have come to explain to you what will happen to your people in the future, for the vision concerns a time yet to come."

15While he was saying this to me, I bowed with my face toward the ground and was speechless. 16Then one who looked like a man[a] touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and began to speak. I said to the one standing before me, "I am overcome with anguish because of the vision, my lord, and I feel very weak. 17How can I, your servant, talk with you, my lord? My strength is gone and I can hardly breathe."

18Again the one who looked like a man touched me and gave me strength. 19"Do not be afraid, you who are highly esteemed," he said. "Peace! Be strong now; be strong."

When he spoke to me, I was strengthened and said, "Speak, my lord, since you have given me strength."

20So he said, "Do you know why I have come to you? Soon I will return to fight against the prince of Persia, and when I go, the prince of Greece will come; 21but first I will tell you what is written in the Book of Truth. (No one supports me against them except Michael, your

11 prince. 1And in the first year of Darius the Mede, I took my stand to support and protect him.)

[a] *16* Most manuscripts of the Masoretic Text; one manuscript of the Masoretic Text, Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint *Then something that looked like a human hand*

Ptolemaic Control of Palestine

Alexander's death resulted in the breakup of his empire into smaller kingdoms ruled by his generals. Two of those generals, Ptolemy and Seleucus, became established in the regions around Palestine. By 275 B.C. the Ptolemies were controlling Egypt, Palestine, Cyrene, Phoenicia, Cyprus, and the coast of Asia Minor. The Seleucids controlled Mesopotamia, Syria, and most of Asia Minor and Iran.

Who Was Darius the Mede? (Da 11:1)

A date for the 1st year of "Darius the Mede" (Da 11:1) is uncertain because the identity of this Darius is uncertain. The Book of Daniel reports that "Darius the Mede" took over the Chaldean-Babylonian kingdom following the death of Babylon's king Belshazzar (Da 5:30, 31). Both Greek and Babylonian sources, however, give credit to Cyrus the Great of Persia for conquering Babylon in 539 B.C. Who, then, was Darius the Mede?

There is no mention of anyone by the name of Darius the Mede outside of the Bible. Nor is there any mention of this Darius in the Bible outside of the Book of Daniel. The other "Darius" in Scripture is Darius I (522–486 B.C.), the king of Persia named in the books of Ezra (Ezr 4:5, 24) and Nehemiah (Ne 12:22), who ruled years after the fall of Babylon. Thus, ancient sources do not answer the question, Who was Darius the Mede?

Some scholars identify Darius the Mede with a governor of Gutium named Gaubaruwa. Gaubaruwa could be considered "a Mede" since Gutium was a Babylonian term for Media in this period. A royal inscription known as the Nabonidus Chronicle relates how Gaubaruwa captured Babylon on behalf of Cyrus. Gaubaruwa was then appointed by Cyrus to be vice-regent over the whole of Mesopotamia, a rule cut short by Gaubaruwa's death less than a year later. The Book of Daniel might refer to this appointment in noting that Darius "was made ruler" (Da 9:1).

It is plausible that Gaubaruwa was Darius the Mede. Several kings bore the name "Darius," and it could have been used by Gaubaruwa as a throne name. If this Darius really was an older man of 62 years when assuming rule of Babylon (Da 5:31), his quick death would be understandable. Nevertheless, scholars have not yet been able to explain the relationship of Darius with the little-known Gaubaruwa.

The Kings of the South and the North

2 "Now then, I tell you the truth: Three more
kings will arise in Persia, and then a fourth,
who will be far richer than all the others. When
he has gained power by his wealth, he will stir
up everyone against the kingdom of Greece.
3 Then a mighty king will arise, who will rule
with great power and do as he pleases. 4 After
he has arisen, his empire will be broken up and
parceled out toward the four winds of heaven.
It will not go to his descendants, nor will it have
the power he exercised, because his empire
will be uprooted and given to others.

5 "The king of the South will become strong,
but one of his commanders will become even
stronger than he and will rule his own kingdom
with great power. 6 After some years, they will
become allies. The daughter of the king of the
South will go to the king of the North to make
an alliance, but she will not retain her power,
and he and his power[a] will not last. In those
days she will be betrayed, together with her
royal escort and her father[b] and the one who
supported her.

7 "One from her family line will arise to take
her place. He will attack the forces of the king
of the North and enter his fortress; he will
fight against them and be victorious. 8 He will

[a] 6 Or *offspring* [b] 6 Or *child* (see Vulgate and Syriac)

Seleucid Control of Palestine
Antiochus III, king of Syria, expanded the boundaries of the Seleucid Kingdom in numerous battles with the Ptolemies. In 221 B.C. he captured part of Palestine, only to lose most of it in 217 B.C. Returning in 201 B.C., he finally defeated the Ptolemies in 198 B.C. with the aid and support of the Jews. Palestine enjoyed freedom until 175 B.C., when Antiochus IV oppressed the Jews, causing the Maccabean revolt in 167 B.C.

Antiochus IV—Epiphanes or Epimanes? (Da 11:21–31)

Thirteen kings of the Greek Seleucid dynasty from Syria bore the name of Antiochus. Antiochus III (223–187 B.C.), the great conqueror, was eventually defeated by the Romans at Magnesia in 190 B.C. and forced to send his son as a hostage to Rome. That son, Antiochus IV (175–164 B.C.), would return from Rome to become one of the cruelest rulers of the Seleucid dynasty. He is likely the "king of the North" alluded to in Daniel's prophecy (11:21–45).

Ancient historians describe the character of Antiochus as volatile and unstable. The Greek historian Polybius (who published about 145 B.C.) gave him the nickname Epimanes, meaning "mad." Like his father, Antiochus sought to create a united Seleucid empire from a variety of diverse elements, not only politically, but culturally and religiously. Those who refused to be fully assimilated, such as the Jews, were considered a threat and forced into a policy of Hellenization.

In 169 B.C. Antiochus attacked the city of Jerusalem and looted the temple (2Mc 5:11–21). Two years later he again attacked that Jewish city on a Sabbath, killing the male children and enslaving other inhabitants. The city walls were demolished and a military garrison was established. After prohibiting any Jewish religious rituals and forbidding the reading of the Scriptures, Antiochus performed a pagan sacrifice to Zeus in the temple, erecting an altar to Zeus over the altar of burnt offering. This desecration is alluded to as the "abomination that causes desolation" (Da 11:31).

Soon thereafter came violent resistance from the Jews. By 164 B.C. Judas Maccabeus had freed Jerusalem from Seleucid hands. Antiochus died in October of that year, during a campaign against Persia. The nickname Epimanes ("mad") was possibly more relevant than his surname Epiphanes (meaning "the manifest god"). The Seleucid ruler had insanely persecuted the Jews, but his persecutions did not last. In December, 164 B.C., exactly 3 years after he defiled the temple and just 2 months after his death, Judas dedicated a new altar of burnt offering.

also seize their gods, their metal images and their valuable articles of silver and gold and carry them off to Egypt. For some years he will leave the king of the North alone. 9Then the king of the North will invade the realm of the king of the South but will retreat to his own country. 10His sons will prepare for war and assemble a great army, which will sweep on like an irresistible flood and carry the battle as far as his fortress.

11"Then the king of the South will march out in a rage and fight against the king of the North, who will raise a large army, but it will be defeated. 12When the army is carried off, the king of the South will be filled with pride and will slaughter many thousands, yet he will not remain triumphant. 13For the king of the North will muster another army, larger than the first; and after several years, he will advance with a huge army fully equipped.

TIME CAPSULE		327 to 323 B.C.
327	Alexander marries the Iranian princess Roxane	
327	Alexander's army begins campaign against India	
323	Macedonian armies use catapults for shooting arrows	
323	Alexander dies prematurely of fever	
323	Alexander's empire divided among four of his generals	
323	Ptolemy I hijacks Alexander's body and takes it to Egypt	

14"In those times many will rise against the king of the South. Those who are violent among your own people will rebel in fulfillment of the vision, but without success. 15Then the king of the North will come and build up siege ramps and will capture a fortified city. The forces of the South will be powerless to resist; even their best troops will not have the strength to stand. 16The invader will do as he pleases; no one will be able to stand against him. He will establish himself in the Beautiful Land and will have the power to destroy it. 17He will determine to come with the might of his entire kingdom and will make an alliance with the king of the South. And he will give him a daughter in marriage in order to overthrow the kingdom, but his plans[a] will not succeed or help him. 18Then he will turn his attention to the coastlands and will take many of them, but a commander will put an end to his insolence and will turn his insolence back on him. 19After this, he will turn back toward the fortresses of his own country but will stumble and fall, to be seen no more.

20"His successor will send out a tax collector to maintain the royal splendor. In a few years, however, he will be destroyed, yet not in anger or in battle.

21"He will be succeeded by a contemptible person who has not been given the honor of royalty. He will invade the kingdom when its people feel secure, and he will seize it through intrigue. 22Then an overwhelming army will be

[a] *17* Or *but she*

swept away before him; both it and a prince of the covenant will be destroyed. [23]After coming to an agreement with him, he will act deceitfully, and with only a few people he will rise to power. [24]When the richest provinces feel secure, he will invade them and will achieve what neither his fathers nor his forefathers did. He will distribute plunder, loot and wealth among his followers. He will plot the overthrow of fortresses—but only for a time.

[25]"With a large army he will stir up his strength and courage against the king of the South. The king of the South will wage war with a large and very powerful army, but he will not be able to stand because of the plots devised against him. [26]Those who eat from the king's provisions will try to destroy him; his army will be swept away, and many will fall in battle. [27]The two kings, with their hearts bent on evil, will sit at the same table and lie to each other, but to no avail, because an end will still come at the appointed time. [28]The king of the North will return to his own country with great wealth, but his heart will be set against the holy covenant. He will take action against it and then return to his own country.

[29]"At the appointed time he will invade the South again, but this time the outcome will be different from what it was before. [30]Ships of the western coastlands will oppose him, and he will lose heart. Then he will turn back and vent his fury against the holy covenant. He will return and show favor to those who forsake the holy covenant.

[31]"His armed forces will rise up to desecrate the temple fortress and will abolish the daily sacrifice. Then they will set up the abomination that causes desolation. [32]With flattery he will corrupt those who have violated the covenant, but the people who know their God will firmly resist him.

[33]"Those who are wise will instruct many, though for a time they will fall by the sword or be burned or captured or plundered. [34]When they fall, they will receive a little help, and many who are not sincere will join them. [35]Some of the wise will stumble, so that they may be refined, purified and made spotless until the time of the end, for it will still come at the appointed time.

The King Who Exalts Himself

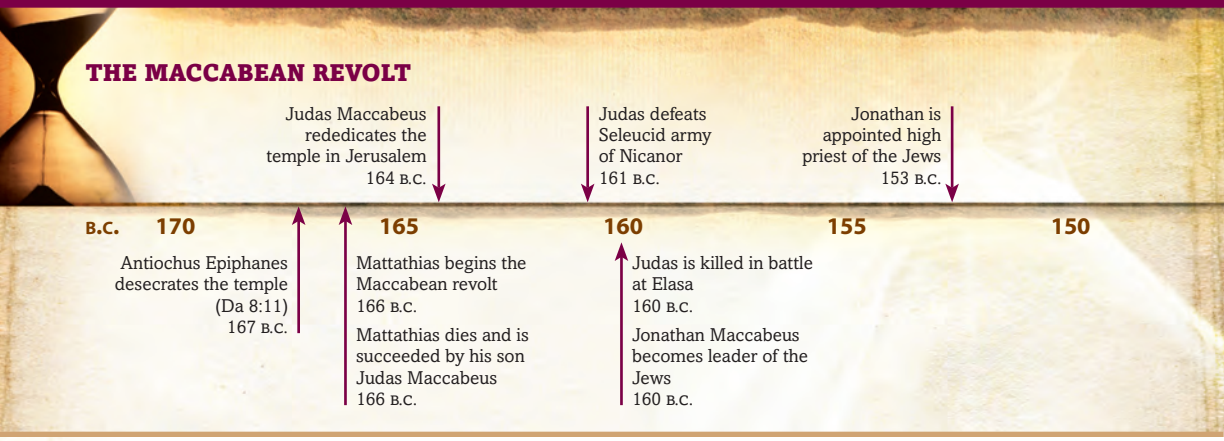
[36]"The king will do as he pleases. He will exalt and magnify himself above every god and will say unheard-of things against the God of gods. He will be successful until the time of wrath is completed, for what has been determined must take place. [37]He will show no regard for the gods of his ancestors or for the one desired by women, nor will he regard any god, but will exalt himself above them all. [38]Instead of them, he will honor a god of fortresses; a god unknown to his ancestors he will honor with gold and silver, with precious stones and costly gifts. [39]He will attack the mightiest fortresses with the help of a foreign god and will greatly honor those who acknowledge him. He will make them rulers over many people and will distribute the land at a price.[a]

[40]"At the time of the end the king of the South will engage him in battle, and the king of the North will storm out against him with chariots and cavalry and a great fleet of ships. He will invade many countries and sweep through them like a flood. [41]He will also invade

[a] *39* Or *land for a reward*

Expansion of Palestine Under the Maccabees

At the time of the Maccabean revolt, the Jewish leaders controlled a very small portion of their former land. Between 166 and 76 B.C., however, several men led the Jews to expand their area of control: Jonathan, brother and successor to Judas Maccabeus; John Hyrcanus; Aristobulus; and Alexander Jannaeus.



the Beautiful Land. Many countries will fall, but Edom, Moab and the leaders of Ammon will be delivered from his hand. 42He will extend his power over many countries; Egypt will not escape. 43He will gain control of the treasures of gold and silver and all the riches of Egypt, with the Libyans and Cushites[a] in submission. 44But reports from the east and the north will alarm him, and he will set out in a great rage to destroy and annihilate many. 45He will pitch his royal tents between the seas at[b] the beautiful holy mountain. Yet he will come to his end, and no one will help him.

The End Times

12 1"At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. 2Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. 3Those who are wise[c] will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. 4But you, Daniel, roll up and seal the words of the scroll until the time of the end. Many will go here and there to increase knowledge."

5Then I, Daniel, looked, and there before me stood two others, one on this bank of the river and one on the opposite bank. 6One of them said to the man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, "How long will it be before these astonishing things are fulfilled?"

7The man clothed in linen, who was above the waters of the river, lifted his right hand and his left hand toward heaven, and I heard him swear by him who lives forever, saying, "It will be for a time, times and half a time.[d] When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed."

8I heard, but I did not understand. So I asked, "My lord, what will the outcome of all this be?"

9He replied, "Go your way, Daniel, because the words are rolled up and sealed until the time of the end. 10Many will be purified, made spotless and refined, but the wicked will continue to be wicked. None of the wicked will understand, but those who are wise will understand.

11"From the time that the daily sacrifice is abolished and the abomination that causes desolation is set up, there will be 1,290 days. 12Blessed is the one who waits for and reaches the end of the 1,335 days.

13"As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance."

TIME CAPSULE		319 to 305 B.C.
319		Ptolemy I unsuccessfully attempts to control Palestine
312–250		The early Seleucid kings found many cities with the name "Antioch"
312		Nabateans gain control of Petra, the former capital of Edom
305–282		Ptolemy I founds the Ptolemaic dynasty of Egypt

[a] *43* That is, people from the upper Nile region [b] *45* Or *the sea and* [c] *3* Or *who impart wisdom* [d] *7* Or *a year, two years and half a year*

The Roman Empire

The cruelty of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164 B.C.) soon caused a revolt led by a Jewish family known as the Maccabees (166–160 B.C.). The Maccabean revolt ultimately secured Jewish independence from Syria, and the Maccabees (or Hasmoneans) governed Judea for almost a century, starting in 142 B.C.

Hasmonean is the name given to the dynasty of Jewish rulers who held power following the Maccabean revolt. Under Judas Maccabeus the Jews gained independence from their Syrian rulers. Jewish leadership passed from Judas to his brother Jonathan and then to another brother Simon. Simon Maccabeus became high priest of the Jews and further established the family in power. When Simon's son, John Hyrcanus I (135–104 B.C.), succeeded his father, this signaled the beginning of the Hasmonean dynasty. Their rule continued under Aristobulus (104–103 B.C.), Alexander Jannaeus (103–76 B.C.), Salome Alexandra (76–67 B.C.), and Aristobulus II (67–63 B.C.).

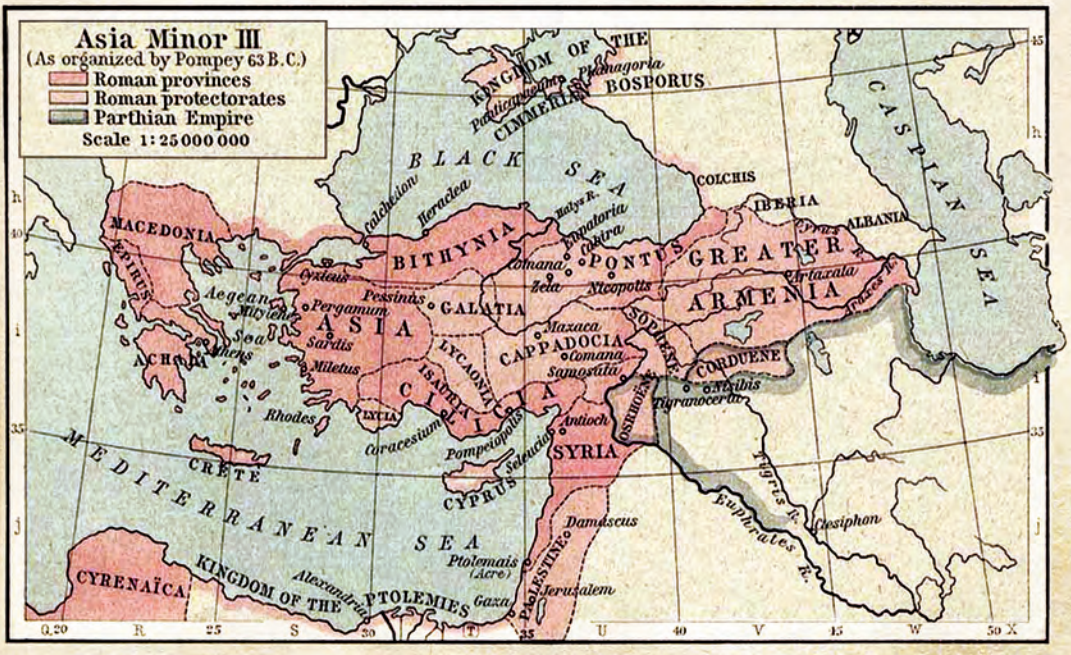
The Hasmonean rulers were recognized by Rome, but their period of rule was troubled by constant war with their neighbors, political infighting, murder, terrorism, and conflict between the Pharisees and the Sadducees. Although Judea was nominally still a province of Syria, in practical terms the country was independent and remained so until 63 B.C., when Rome invaded. The Romans sent the famous general Pompey the Great to end Hasmonean rule and to establish Roman authority in Jerusalem.

Pompey's occupation of Syria marks the beginning of the Roman period in Palestine.

According to tradition, Rome was founded in 753 B.C. by Romulus, who became its first king. The little kingdom grew in size and importance, absorbing its immediate neighbors through the reign of seven kings, until the tyranny of Tarquinius Superbus drove the people to revolt and to take the government into their own hands. A republic was established, and Roman citizens had a voice in governmental affairs.

During the period of the republic, Rome extended her borders throughout all of Italy and much of the known world. The Roman occupation of Syria under Pompey in 63 B.C. marks the beginning of the Roman period in Palestine, and for the next century Roman soldiers were stationed in Jerusalem. Under the watchful eye of Rome, Herod the Great (37–4 B.C.) became governor of Galilee (47 B.C.) and later ruler of Judea (37 B.C.). As king, Herod controlled not only the political life in Judea, but also the important office of high priest, although the religious affairs of the nation were led by the Pharisees and Sadducees.

By defeating Antony and Cleopatra in 31 B.C., Octavian became the head of the Roman Empire. He ruled under the title of Augustus, bringing a period of peace and prosperity to the empire until his death in A.D. 14. It was during the reign of Augustus, and just before the death of Herod the Great, that Jesus Christ was born (about 5 B.C.). With this event the chronology of the Old Testament era formally comes to an end.



TIME CAPSULE	305 to 200 B.C.
305–281	Seleucus I founds the dating system known as the Seleucid Era
305–240	Callimachus, Greek poet
301	Seleucus conquers Syria; Ptolemy controls Palestine
285–246	Ptolemy II co-rules with his sister Arsinoe II
281–261	Antiochus I establishes Seleucid ruler cult
280	Dynasty of the Antigonids established in Macedonia
280	Dynasty of the Ptolemies established in Egypt
280	Dynasty of the Seleucids established in Persia and Syria
274–271	First Syrian War (Antiochus I vs. Ptolemy II)
264–241	First Punic War (Rome vs. Carthage)
261–246	Antiochus II marries his half sister Laodice
260–253	Second Syrian War (Antiochus II vs. Ptolemy II)
250	Ptolemies and Seleucids are united in the marriage of Berenice and Antiochus II (Da 11:6)
246–241	Third Syrian War (Seleucus II vs. Ptolemy III)
246–225	Seleucus II invades Egypt but is repulsed (Da 11:9)
246–222	Ptolemy III retaliates against Seleucids for his sister's death (Da 11:7, 8)
238–224	The Parthian Empire
225–223	Seleucus III and his brother Antiochus III are defeated by Egypt (Da 11:10)
223–187	Antiochus III rules the Greek Seleucid dynasty of Syria
221–217	Fourth Syrian War (Antiochus III vs. Ptolemy IV)
222–204	Ptolemy IV loses control of Upper Egypt to Nubian kings
218–201	Second Punic War (Rome vs. Carthage)
218	Romans take control of the island of Malta
217	Ptolemy IV defeats Antiochus III at battle of Raphia (Da 11:11, 12)
215	Rome begins to rival Greek power in the West
204–180	Ptolemy V marries Cleopatra I (Da 11:17)
202–200	Fifth Syrian War (Antiochus III vs. Ptolemy V)
200	Ptolemies lose control of Palestine to the Seleucids (Da 11:13–15)

TIME CAPSULE	192 to 129 B.C.
192–189	War between Rome and the Seleucids
190	The Romans defeat Antiochus III at Magnesia (Da 11:18, 19)
188	Treaty of Apamea between Antiochus III and Rome
187–175	Seleucus IV raises monies to pay the Romans (Da 11:20)
180	Jesus, son of Sirach, writes Ecclesiasticus
175–164	Antiochus IV is one of the cruelest rulers of the Seleucid dynasty
175	Antiochus deposes Onias III as high priest and appoints Jason
172	Menelaus supplants Jason as high priest
170	Antiochus invades Egypt (Da 11:25–28)
169	Antiochus attacks Jerusalem and loots the temple (2Mc 5:11–21)
168	Romans force Antiochus to leave Egypt (Da 11:29, 30)
168–30	Ptolemies fall under Roman control
167	Antiochus offers sacrifices to Zeus on the altar of the temple (Da 11:31)
166–160	The Maccabees lead revolt against Seleucids
164	Judas Maccabeus frees Jerusalem from the Seleucids
164	Antiochus IV dies during campaign against Persia
164	Judas Maccabeus dedicates new altar of burnt offering
162	Demetrius I seizes control in Syria
160	Judas Maccabeus dies and Jonathan assumes command
152	Jonathan becomes high priest
149–146	Third Punic War (Rome vs. Carthage)
146	Romans destroy Greek Corinth
145	Greek historian Polybius publishes
143	Jonathan Maccabeus is murdered
142	Simon Maccabeus is recognized as high priest
142	Hasmonean dynasty governs an independent Judea
135–104	John Hyrcanus I inscribes his own name on coins
129	John Hyrcanus destroys the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim

TIME CAPSULE	104 to 63 B.C.
104–103	Aristobulus I conquers Galilee
103–76	Alexander Jannaeus is supported by Sadducees
90–85	Pharisees rebel against Jannaeus
76–67	Salome Alexandra, widow of Jannaeus, rules as queen
76	Alexandra makes peace with the Pharisees
76	Alexandra appoints her son Hyrcanus II as high priest
67–63	Aristobulus II seizes throne with support of Sadducees
65	Hyrcanus II besieges Jerusalem
64	Roman general Pompey ends Seleucid rule in Syria
63	Pompey takes control of Palestine
63	Gaius Octavius (Augustus Caesar) is born
63	Pompey captures Jerusalem, and Rome takes control of Palestine
63–40	Hyrcanus II serves as high priest in Judea

TIME CAPSULE	60 to 37 B.C.
60–30	Diodorus Siculus writes a world history
48	Julius Caesar defeats Pompey to become Roman ruler
47	City of Tarsus adopts name "Iuliopolis" in honor of Julius Caesar
47	Herod the Great becomes governor of Galilee
44	Romans rebuild Corinth
44	Julius Caesar is assassinated by Brutus and Cassius
44	Julius Caesar's will makes Gaius Octavius his adopted son
42	The Triumvirate gains victory over Caesar's murderers
42	Tarsus made a free city by Antony
40	Roman Senate appoints Herod the Great to rule Judea
37–4	Herod the Great rules as king of Judea
37	The Romans conquer Jerusalem for Herod the Great

The Coming of the Messiah

The Herods are overshadowed by the great events that occurred during their time: the ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of the Messiah.

(37 B.C.—A.D. 30)

The epoch that witnessed the Messiah's coming actually began with the rise to power of King Herod the Great. The lives of Herod and his sons were closely connected with the earthly life of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. According to the Gospel of Matthew, Herod the Great ordered the deaths of all male children in Bethlehem who were under the age of two (Mt 2), an order that forced Joseph to flee, taking his wife and young child to Egypt.

After Herod's death, his sons continued to impact the life of the Messiah. One of Herod's sons was partly responsible for the Messiah becoming known as "Jesus of Nazareth." When Joseph returned from Egypt with Mary and Jesus, he chose to avoid Judea. Herod's son Archelaus ruled over Judea and was worse than his father, so Joseph (with Jesus) settled in Nazareth of Galilee. Herod Antipas, another son of Herod the Great, ordered the death of John the Baptist and held a mock "hearing" of Jesus after his arrest. Despite having positions of power, the Herodian family was overshadowed by the great events that occurred during their time: the ministry, crucifixion, and resurrection of the Messiah, bringing victory over sin, death, and the devil.

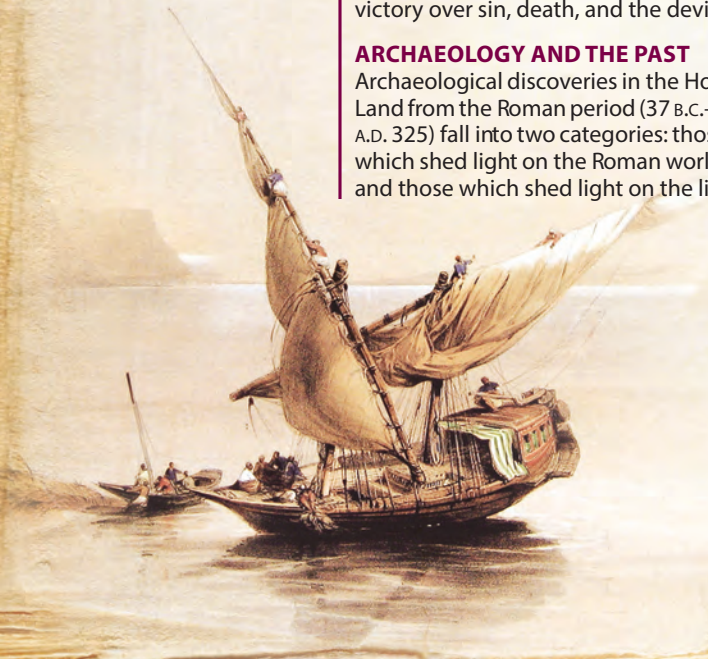
ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

Archaeological discoveries in the Holy Land from the Roman period (37 B.C.—A.D. 325) fall into two categories: those which shed light on the Roman world, and those which shed light on the life of Jesus. Sometimes the same archaeological find fits into both categories.

The Roman period, archaeologically, is the world of Herod the Great. Among his many building accomplishments is the great seaport Caesarea Maritima. Excavations have uncovered the theater, the harbor, vast warehouses, temples, and one important inscription. A stone bearing the name of Pontius Pilate, the governor, reminds us that Caesarea was also the headquarters of Roman forces occupying the land. Military installations were placed all over Judea, since it was a border province. Roman Jericho, built on a site different from both Old Testament Jericho and the modern city, was also the work of Herod. The ruins of a magnificent palace and baths have been uncovered in Jericho's excavations.

In Jerusalem are more remains of Herod's building programs. The Wailing Wall is actually part of the great retaining wall Herod built around the Temple Mount to make a surface large enough for the temple rebuilding project. On the western side of the Old City, at a site called the Tower of David, are the remains of one of the towers Herod built to defend the city. It is probably the tower called Phasael, as described by Josephus. Either in one of these towers, or in his great palace nearby, Herod and his soldiers mocked Jesus.

The ministry of Jesus is illumined by archaeology. In Galilee, the famous "Jesus boat" was discovered in a lake during a drought. One can picture Jesus, Peter, and the others setting out across the lake in such a boat, since it is much like the ones used by fishermen of the 1st century. In Capernaum, the center of Jesus' Galilean ministry, are at least two possible links to Jesus. The synagogue that visitors see is dated to the 4th century, but more recent excavations have shown the foundations of a 1st-century building underneath it. Since



synagogues were always built on the same site, the 1st-century synagogue may have been where Jesus preached. Nearby are the ruins of an octagonal church. Archaeologists believe that this ancient church is on the site of Peter's house, and that the foundations discovered underneath the church are literally the remains of the building where Jesus stayed while in Capernaum.

Around Jerusalem are many reminders of Jesus' ministry. Just over the Mount of Olives is the village of Bethany, where we find a 1st-century tomb belonging to a wealthy family. This is the traditional tomb of Lazarus, having a vestibule chamber and a small inner chamber. Somewhere on the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane. Whether it was located at the Church of All Nations or nearby at the "Tomb of Mary" is debated. But beyond debate is the reality that Jesus prayed in this vicinity.

Jesus Christ marked a new beginning in God's dealings with His people.

Excavations at the southern end of the Temple Mount have uncovered the steps that led up to the temple. Several steps remain in an unrestored condition, and represent the way 1st-century persons, including Jesus, usually entered the temple. The steps are also identified as the "rabbis' teaching steps," meaning that Jesus likely sat on them, teaching His disciples and the crowds.

On the north end of the Old City are twin pools which possibly represent the Pool of Bethesda, where Jesus healed a lame man. The colonnades mentioned in John's Gospel (Jn 5:2) stood along the sides of the pools and on the causeway between them. Back on the south end of the city are the remains of the Essene Gate, a 1st-century gate that led into Jerusalem. Nearby the gate are the remains of the house of Caiaphas, who was high priest at the time of Jesus' trial. A dank, cold basement cell reminds us that Jesus may have been imprisoned there for at least a few hours. A paved courtyard above reminds us of Peter's denial by the high priest's house.

One of the most powerful archaeological remains is the discovery of a man who had been crucified. Johanan, the name inscribed in the stone box that held his bones, had nail marks in his wrists, and one nail driven through the heel bones. The wood of the cross had been cut apart and buried with him. Johanan's bones illustrate crucifixion, a common method of execution for the Romans, and possibly suggest the way Jesus himself was executed.

Archaeologists almost universally agree that the site of Jesus' tomb is located inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. At two points in the church, one can actually see what is left of the hill of Calvary. The traditional site of Jesus' burial is found very near other 1st-century tombs.

THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

Peoples outside Judea and Galilee were also prominent in this period. The Nabateans were an Arabic people, with their capital at Petra to the south. The daughter of the Nabatean king Aretas IV married Herod Antipas. When Antipas threw her over for his own sister-in-law Herodias, war broke out between Herod Antipas and the Nabateans. This was the same Herod who beheaded John the Baptist and held a hearing for Jesus at the request of Pilate.

Southeast of the Sea of Galilee were the cities of the Decapolis. Founded by Greeks and Macedonians, the Decapolis was united not by political organization, but by Hellenistic culture and institutions. Gerasa has been excavated, and one can see the city walls, temples, the marketplace, and paved streets with colonnades. The only remains of 1st-century Philadelphia are the ruins of a Roman theater, near the downtown heart of a bustling, modern city.

The Gospels mention such groups as the Samaritans, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Zealots. The Samaritans and Jews suffered a long history of hatred for each other, going back to the fall of Israel in 722 B.C. But out of this background of hatred, Jesus identified a Samaritan as one who was truly a neighbor to a Jewish person in need. The Sadducees were the priestly aristocracy in Jerusalem, the leaders of the people. They walked a fine line between Jewish nationalism and keeping the peace with their Roman overlords. The Pharisees were a group of laymen dedicated to the keeping of the Law (Torah). They had a saying: if all Israel would keep Torah perfectly for just one day, the Messiah would come. Some Pharisees opposed Jesus; others befriended him—warning him of trouble, speaking for him at his trial, providing a place for his burial. The Zealots were the revolutionary underground. Jesus' disciple Simon "the Zealot" probably belonged to one of the 1st-century groups who actively opposed Roman rule.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The biblical books relating the time of the Messiah are the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Although they tell us almost everything we know about the life and teachings of Jesus, they are not true biographies. Rather, they are theological documents telling who Jesus is and why he is important. They say little about Jesus' family background and youth, and nothing about his physical appearance. They concentrate almost totally on Jesus' ministry, but even here they do not give enough information to reconstruct the history of those years with absolute certainty. Rather, they focus on Jesus' person and his teachings, and give considerable

attention to his death and resurrection and the surrounding events.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the Synoptic Gospels. The name "Synoptic" means that they view the life of Jesus from a common perspective. After introducing Jesus in different ways depending on their purpose, they relate the ministry of John the Baptist, the baptism and temptation of Jesus, his ministry in Galilee, his journey to Judea and ministry there, his final week in Jerusalem, his death, and his resurrection.

The Gospel of John differs from the Synoptics in a number of ways. It tells us more about Jesus' early ministry in Judea. John also records long thematic discourses by Jesus instead of the usual shorter sayings of the Synoptics. More than the Synoptics, John includes theological reflection on the meaning of Jesus' life and death. The four Gospels together give us a more complete picture of Jesus than any one of them would by itself.

INTRODUCTIONS TO JESUS CHRIST

Each of the four Gospels uniquely introduces the story of Jesus Christ as marking a new beginning in God's dealings with his people. The Gospel of Mark uses a brief superscription (Mk 1:1) and prophetic announcement (1:2, 3) to make it clear that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, a truth previously declared by the prophets. Matthew begins his Gospel with a genealogy (Mt 1:1–17), showing his Jewish readers that Jesus is truly the Messiah by tracing his ancestors back to David. That Jesus' ancestry goes back also to Abraham evidences Jesus' fulfillment of God's promises to Israel.

Two Gospel writers, John and Luke, alert their readers concerning their purpose for writing a Gospel. Luke provides a brief preface (Lk 1:1–4) in which he sets out his intention. In a prologue, John begins with a clear statement about Jesus' preexistence and divinity. He wanted his readers to know and believe that "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God" (Jn 20:30, 31).

TRANSITION

The Prehistory of Jesus

The prologue of John's Gospel locates the beginning of the story of Jesus in timeless eternity, before the dawn of creation (see Php 2:5–11; Col 1:15–20). John at once identifies "the Word" as God *the Son* and distinguishes Him from God *the Father.* Although there was a time when Jesus of Nazareth did not exist, there never was a time when the Word did not exist.

Yet John announces a time when "the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14). The Word became incarnate in this Jesus. This event, the Incarnation, marks the time when the Revealer of God became a specific human being. After the Incarnation, John's Gospel never again refers to Jesus as "the Word." Since the Incarnation, God may be known in the person and work of Jesus.

• **John 1:1–18**

TIME CAPSULE		36 to 31 B.C.
36–33		Relations between Octavian and Antony break down
36		Cleopatra visits Herod to impose rent
31		Octavian defeats Antony at the battle of Actium
31		Herod the Great changes allegiance from Antony to Octavian
31		Octavian dominates the Roman Empire
31		Tomb of Jason west of Jerusalem is damaged by earthquake

John

The Word Became Flesh

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the
Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through
him all things were made; without him nothing
was made that has been made. 4 In him was life,
and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The
light shines in the darkness, and the darkness
has not overcome[a] it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose
name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all
might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he
came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in
the world, and though the world was made
through him, the world did not recognize him.
11 He came to that which was his own, but his
own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did
receive him, to those who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God—
13 children born not of natural descent, nor of
human decision or a husband's will, but born
of God.

14 The Word became flesh and made his
dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the
glory of the one and only Son, who came from
the Father, full of grace and truth.

[a] 5 Or *understood*

The Word Becomes Flesh (Jn 1:14)

John's Gospel describes Jesus' preexistence by identifying him as the divine "Word" (Jn 1:1), or, as expressed in the Greek language, the *Logos*. Many Greek philosophers spoke of the *Logos* as universal Reason. People familiar with Greek thought could have understood John to be proclaiming Jesus as the organizing principle or "Reason" behind the universe.

Some Jewish people adapted the Greek idea of *Logos* to fit the traditional Jewish idea of the Word. But more thought of the Word in traditionally Jewish categories. They identified God's creative Word with divine Wisdom, which they also identified with God's Law (the Torah). They brought various ideas together: that God created all things through the Law or Wisdom (Jn 1:3), that the Word was life and light (1:4), and that Wisdom had been with God from the beginning (1:2).

In the prologue of his Gospel, John declares something that neither the Greek philosophers nor the Jewish teachers conceived: the Word became flesh and dwelt among his people. To the Greeks *Logos* was invisible reason, not part of the material world. To the Jewish teachers Wisdom was a divine attribute of Yahweh. But to John the Word was the divine Christ who became a human being. The Word's glory was "full of grace and truth," revealing to us the full character of God (Jn 1:14, 17, 18).

15 (John testified concerning him. He cried
out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when
I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed
me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his
fullness we have all received grace in place of
grace already given. 17 For the law was given
through Moses; grace and truth came through
Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but
the one and only Son, who is himself God and[a]
is in closest relationship with the Father, has
made him known.

[a] *18* Some manuscripts *but the only Son, who* [b] *1* Or *been surely believed*

TRANSITION

Introduction and Dedication

The author of the third Gospel introduces his historical work, identifying his sources and purpose. Luke's Gospel is dedicated to a distinguished patron, Theophilus, whose name in Greek means "lover of God." Theophilus already had been instructed in Christian teachings, but Luke wished to provide him with "certainty" (Lk 1:4). Luke is alone among the Gospel writers in beginning his account with a preface that explains in some detail his procedure and desire to write an "orderly account" (1:3).

• **Luke 1:1–4**

Luke

Introduction

1:1 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled[b]
among us, 2 just as they were handed down to
us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. 3 With this in
mind, since I myself have carefully investigated
everything from the beginning, I too decided
to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the
certainty of the things you have been taught.

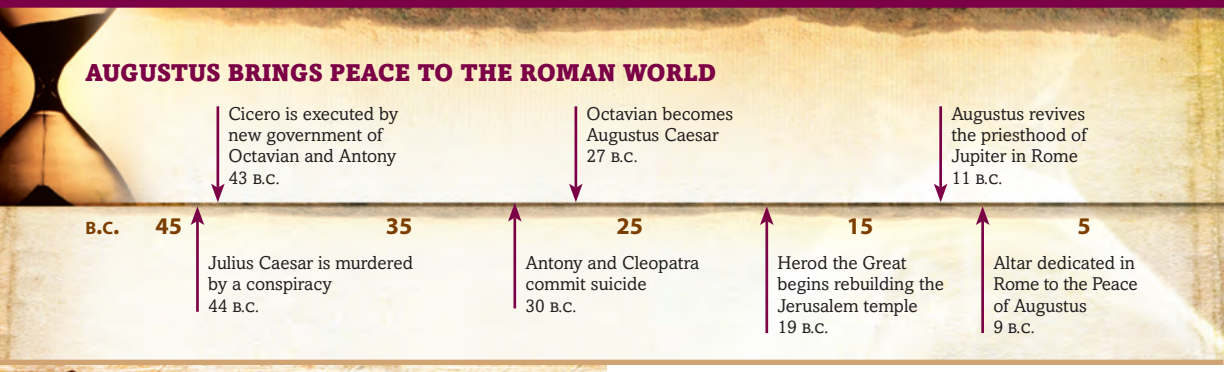
EARLY LIVES OF JOHN THE BAPTIST AND JESUS

Elizabeth and Mary, the mothers of John and Jesus, were either blood relatives or close kinswomen (Lk 1:36). The angel Gabriel appeared to both families—to Elizabeth's husband and to Mary herself—and announced their future sons John and Jesus. Even before birth, these babies were named (Lk 1:13, 31) and set apart for unique missions (1:16, 17, 32, 33).

Even before birth, these babies were named and set apart for unique missions.

Practically nothing is known of John's boyhood, except that he "grew and became strong in spirit" (Luke 1:80). Only slightly more is known of Jesus' upbringing. Early in his life Jesus was taken to Nazareth, a town of Galilee, and there raised by his mother, Mary, and her husband, Joseph, a carpenter by trade. Hence the Child was known as "Jesus of Nazareth" (Mk 1:24).

Jesus was his mother's firstborn child; he had four brothers (James, Joses, Judas, and Simon) and an unspecified number of sisters (Mk 6:3). The only incident preserved from his first 30 years (after his infancy) was his trip to Jerusalem with Joseph and Mary when he was 12 years old (Lk 2:41–50). Occurring in the year that, as a Jewish boy, he attained the age of religious responsibility, the trip was at a crucial juncture of his development.



TRANSITION

The Birth of John the Baptist

Luke gives an extraordinary glimpse of ordinary, pious Jews at the time. We should not imagine that everyone was as spiritually bankrupt as the Jewish leaders who later opposed Jesus. The lives of the barren, old Elizabeth and the young, virgin Mary intersect at the point of God's unexpected favor to his humble servants. Elizabeth was from the tribe of Levi (Lk 1:5) and was also related to Mary (1:36). Because Elizabeth was barren and elderly, the birth of John the Baptist is presented by Luke as a special work of God.

Luke implies that John was born 6 months before Jesus (Lk 1:26) and that the two were relatives (1:36). No other Gospel mentions their kinship, and John's Gospel raises a question: If Jesus and John the Baptist were related, why did John not recognize Jesus at the time of his baptism (Jn 1:31)? Some think that the Baptist knew Jesus, but did not recognize him as the Messiah. Geography allows for another possibility: Luke indicates that John was raised in the wilderness of Judea (Lk 1:80), whereas Jesus was raised in Nazareth of Galilee (2:39). During their early years they were separated by quite a distance by ancient standards, possibly distant enough to be unfamiliar with each other as adults.

• **Luke 1:5–80**

Luke

The Birth of John the Baptist Foretold

1:5 In the time of Herod king of Judea there
was a priest named Zechariah, who be-
longed to the priestly division of Abijah; his
wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.
6 Both of them were righteous in the sight of
God, observing all the Lord's commands and
decrees blamelessly. 7 But they were childless
because Elizabeth was not able to conceive,
and they were both very old.

8 Once when Zechariah's division was on
duty and he was serving as priest before God,
9 he was chosen by lot, according to the custom
of the priesthood, to go into the temple of the
Lord and burn incense. 10 And when the time
for the burning of incense came, all the assem-
bled worshipers were praying outside.

11 Then an angel of the Lord appeared to
him, standing at the right side of the altar of in-
cense. 12 When Zechariah saw him, he was star-
tled and was gripped with fear. 13 But the angel
said to him: "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your
prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will
bear you a son, and you are to call him John.
14 He will be a joy and delight to you, and many
will rejoice because of his birth, 15 for he will
be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to
take wine or other fermented drink, and he will
be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is
born. 16 He will bring back many of the people
of Israel to the Lord their God. 17 And he will go
on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of
Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their
children and the disobedient to the wisdom of
the righteous—to make ready a people pre-
pared for the Lord."

18 Zechariah asked the angel, "How can I be
sure of this? I am an old man and my wife is
well along in years."

19 The angel said to him, "I am Gabriel. I
stand in the presence of God, and I have been
sent to speak to you and to tell you this good
news. 20 And now you will be silent and not able
to speak until the day this happens, because
you did not believe my words, which will come
true at their appointed time."

21 Meanwhile, the people were waiting for

Arts & Literature

Ancient books were often dedicated to a noble or prominent person. The title "most excellent" indicates that Theophilus was a person of high standing (Lk 1:3). He probably helped Luke with time, space, and materials for his work. The formal style of Luke's dedication announces that the book is the serious work of a responsible person.

Zechariah and wondering why he stayed so long in the temple. 22When he came out, he could not speak to them. They realized he had seen a vision in the temple, for he kept making signs to them but remained unable to speak.

23When his time of service was completed, he returned home. 24After this his wife Elizabeth became pregnant and for five months remained in seclusion. 25"The Lord has done this for me," she said. "In these days he has shown his favor and taken away my disgrace among the people."

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

26In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

34"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

35The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called[a] the Son of God. 36Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37For no word from God will ever fail."

38"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

39At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Mary's Song

46And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord
47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
48for he has been mindful
of the humble state of his servant.
From now on all generations will call me
blessed,
49 for the Mighty One has done great things
for me—
holy is his name.
50His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.
51He has performed mighty deeds with his
arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in
their inmost thoughts.
52He has brought down rulers from their
thrones
but has lifted up the humble.

[a] 35 Or *So the child to be born will be called holy,*

53 He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.
54 He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful
55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors."

56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

The Birth of John the Baptist

57 When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. 58 Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.

59 On the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to name him after his father Zechariah, 60 but his mother spoke up and said, "No! He is to be called John."

61 They said to her, "There is no one among your relatives who has that name."

62 Then they made signs to his father, to find out what he would like to name the child. 63 He asked for a writing tablet, and to everyone's astonishment he wrote, "His name is John." 64 Immediately his mouth was opened and his tongue set free, and he began to speak, praising God. 65 All the neighbors were filled with awe, and throughout the hill country of Judea people were talking about all these things. 66 Everyone who heard this wondered about it, asking, "What then is this child going to be?" For the Lord's hand was with him.

Zechariah's Song

67 His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied:

68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel,
because he has come to his people and
redeemed them.
69 He has raised up a horn[a] of salvation
for us
in the house of his servant David
70 (as he said through his holy prophets of
long ago),
71 salvation from our enemies
and from the hand of all who hate us—
72 to show mercy to our ancestors
and to remember his holy covenant,
73 the oath he swore to our father Abraham:
74 to rescue us from the hand of our enemies,
and to enable us to serve him without
fear
75 in holiness and righteousness before him
all our days.

76 And you, my child, will be called a prophet
of the Most High;
for you will go on before the Lord to
prepare the way for him,
77 to give his people the knowledge of
salvation
through the forgiveness of their sins,
78 because of the tender mercy of our God,
by which the rising sun will come to us
from heaven
79 to shine on those living in darkness
and in the shadow of death,
to guide our feet into the path of peace."

80 And the child grew and became strong in spirit[b]; and he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel.

[a] *69* *Horn* here symbolizes a strong king. [b] *80* Or *in the Spirit*

Herod's Kingdom at Jesus' Birth

Born in Idumea, Herod the Great was a Jew by religion, but was also immersed in Greek culture and politically loyal to Rome. The Roman emperor Augustus Caesar appointed Herod over a kingdom including the regions of Idumea, Judea, Perea, Samaria, Gaulanitis, Iturea, Traconitis, Batanea, and Auranitis.

TRANSITION

The Genealogy of Jesus

The first Gospel begins, like 1 Chronicles, with a genealogy. This account of the ancestors of Jesus Christ sets his story within the sacred history of the people of Israel. As

Abraham's descendant, Jesus is identified as a Jew. As David's descendant, he is located more narrowly in Israel's royal family. Matthew's account follows Chronicles, but omits some generations, apparently grouping the descendants into sets of fourteen (Mt 1:17). The mention of four non-Jewish women—Tamar (1:3), Rahab, Ruth (1:5), Uriah's wife (1:6)—anticipates the Gospel's conclusion, which calls for the evangelization of all nations.

Numerous attempts have been made to account for the disagreements between Matthew's and Luke's genealogies (see "The Genealogy of Jesus" at Luke 3:23). Some have proposed that Matthew provides Joseph's genealogy and Luke, Mary's. But Luke describes Mary as related to Elizabeth from the tribe of Levi (Lk 1:5, 36) while placing Jesus in the tribe of Judah (3:33), making it improbable that Luke's genealogy is actually Mary's. Probably the discrepancies between the genealogies arise from the different sources used by the two evangelists.

• Matthew 1:1–17

Matthew

The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah

1:1 This is the genealogy[a] of Jesus the Messiah[b] the son of David, the son of Abraham:

2 Abraham was the father of Isaac,
Isaac the father of Jacob,
Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers,
3 Judah the father of Perez and Zerah,
whose mother was Tamar,
Perez the father of Hezron,
Hezron the father of Ram,
4 Ram the father of Amminadab,
Amminadab the father of Nahshon,
Nahshon the father of Salmon,
5 Salmon the father of Boaz, whose mother was Rahab,
Boaz the father of Obed, whose mother was Ruth,
Obed the father of Jesse,
6 and Jesse the father of King David.

David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife,
7 Solomon the father of Rehoboam,
Rehoboam the father of Abijah,
Abijah the father of Asa,
8 Asa the father of Jehoshaphat,
Jehoshaphat the father of Jehoram,
Jehoram the father of Uzziah,
9 Uzziah the father of Jotham,
Jotham the father of Ahaz,
Ahaz the father of Hezekiah,
10 Hezekiah the father of Manasseh,
Manasseh the father of Amon,
Amon the father of Josiah,
11 and Josiah the father of Jeconiah[c] and his brothers at the time of the exile to Babylon.

12 After the exile to Babylon:
Jeconiah was the father of Shealtiel,
Shealtiel the father of Zerubbabel,
13 Zerubbabel the father of Abihud,
Abihud the father of Eliakim,
Eliakim the father of Azor,
14 Azor the father of Zadok,
Zadok the father of Akim,
Akim the father of Elihud,
15 Elihud the father of Eleazar,
Eleazar the father of Matthan,
Matthan the father of Jacob,
16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

17 Thus there were fourteen generations in all from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the exile to Babylon, and fourteen from the exile to the Messiah.

Culture & Society

An honorable genealogy was necessary for a person to have a place in society. The genealogy given by Matthew is divided into three groups of fourteen (Mt 1:17), a system recalling the numbers 3 and 7, which ancient people thought were significant or perfect. David and the Babylonian captivity are the high and low points of the period covered.

TRANSITION

The Birth of Jesus

No one knows precisely when Jesus was born. Even his year of birth is only an educated guess based on the information available. The intention of the medieval creators of our calendar was to set the date of Jesus' birth at A.D. 1. They simply miscalculated. The Jewish historian Josephus places the death of Herod the Great in 4 B.C., and both Matthew (Mt 2:1) and Luke (Lk 1:5) presume that Herod was king at the time of Jesus' birth. But it is not clear how much before Herod's death Jesus was born.

We know that Herod became king of the Jews in 37 B.C. Outside of Matthew (Mt 2:16),

[a] *1* Or *is an account of the origin* [b] *1* Or *Jesus Christ. Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek) both mean *Anointed One*; also in verse 18. [c] *11* That is, Jehoiachin; also in verse 12

no historical record mentions Herod's slaughter of the infants in Bethlehem. Josephus does write that Herod ordered the murders of members of his own family to protect his throne. So it is not surprising that a few peasant children in Bethlehem went unnoticed among Herod's many atrocities, leaving us no help with dating. Since Herod's calculations led him to target children under two years old, Jesus' birth likely occurred one or two years before Herod's death—in either 6 or 5 B.C.

A date of about 5 B.C. could fit with Luke's note that Augustus, who reigned from 27 B.C. to A.D. 14, was the Roman emperor when Jesus was born (Lk 2:1). Luke's mention of Quirinius (2:2), however, creates a problem. After Herod died, Rome divided his territory among his surviving sons. Archelaus ruled in Judea (see Mt 2:22) until he was deposed by the Romans in A.D. 6. Only then was Quirinius appointed governor, after serving for more than a decade as commander of the Roman troops in the area. Perhaps Luke simply identified him by his later office.

Some have tried to specify Jesus' birth date by appeal to astronomical phenomena that might explain the star of Bethlehem (Mt 2:2, 7, 9, 10). Halley's comet appeared in 12 or 11 B.C. and another comet in 5 B.C. But in antiquity comets were thought to forecast evil, not blessed, events. In 7 B.C. a rare (once every 794 years) conjunction of the planets Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn occurred in the constellation Pisces. Whether Matthew's star was any of these is pure speculation. For ancient people the star confirmed again that Jesus was the Messiah who fulfilled Balaam's star prophecy (Nu 24:17).

- **Matthew 1:18–25**
- **Luke 2:1–20**

Matthew 1:18–25

Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son

1:18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. [19]Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet[b] did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

[20]But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21]She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him

[a] *18* Or *The origin of Jesus the Messiah was like this*
[b] *19* Or *was a righteous man and*

TIME CAPSULE		30 to 27 B.C.
30		Herod the Great meets Octavian in Alexandria, Egypt
30		Octavian confirms Herod the Great as king of Judea
30		Herod executes Hyrcanus II
29		Herod the Great executes his wife Mariamne
27–A.D. 14		Augustus Caesar is founder and emperor
27–25		Herod builds city of Sebaste in Samaria
27		Roman Senate gives the title "Augustus" to Gaius Octavian

Betrayal and Betrothal (Mt 1:18)

The betrothal of Mary and Joseph (Mt 1:18) involved much more than engagement does today. Even though a young Jewish man was considered an adult around age 13, he would work for a few years to save up for his marriage, around the age of 18 or 20. After the making of a legal contract between the two families, the young man and the woman (who was normally between the ages of 12 and 16) were "betrothed."

That Mary became pregnant after their betrothal, but before their wedding, prompted Joseph to "divorce her" (Mt 1:19). A betrothed couple could not sleep together before the wedding. In fact, Galilean parents normally kept the man and woman from spending time together privately until the wedding (normally a year after betrothal). Thus, Joseph would not have known Mary very well, and should not be blamed for mistrusting her and deciding to end the betrothal.

The commitment of a betrothal was so legally binding that a divorce was required to break it off (1:19). Joseph had little choice. If a man's betrothed wife became pregnant, people would assume that she had regarded him as an inadequate man and this would publicly humiliate him. Worse yet, should he not divorce her most people would assume that he was the one who had gotten her pregnant, and he would bear great shame in a culture that was obsessed with shame and honor.

Jewish law required a man to divorce a wife who had been unfaithful. Joseph could have divorced Mary publicly in a court. The court would not only establish his innocence, but also profit him financially: he would get to keep all of Mary's dowry (the money her father gave her for her marriage). By planning to divorce her privately (writing out a certificate of divorce for her in front of two witnesses), Joseph elected to forfeit profit rather than shame her any further.

Augustus, the First Roman Emperor (Lk 2:1)

Luke refers to "Caesar Augustus" as the Roman emperor who ruled the Mediterranean world during the birth and youth of Jesus (Lk 2:1). The Roman Senate gave the title "Augustus" to this ruler in 27 B.C. He was born Gaius Octavius in 63 B.C., the great-nephew of the famous Julius Caesar.

In his will Julius Caesar made Octavius his adopted son. The untimely death of the dictator in 44 B.C. by assassination was the beginning of Octavius's path to the emperorship. He changed his name to Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian.

Octavian, as he was now called, sided with Mark Antony against the assassins of his adopted father. He initiated a coalition of three dictators—himself, Antony, and Marcus Lepidus—known as "the Triumvirate." The three not only gained victory over Caesar's murderers by 42 B.C., but also carried out the bloodiest purge in Rome's history. From 36 to 33 B.C. there was a break in relations between Octavian and Antony, culminating in Octavian's dominion over the empire by 31 B.C.

After 27 B.C. Octavian became known as "Augustus," the name bestowed on him by the Senate. He was the first Roman emperor, reigning solely as ruler of the Roman realm for more than 40 years (27 B.C.–A.D. 14). In essence, Augustus was the second founder of Rome, reorganizing it as an empire, and presiding over the Silver Age of Latin literature, dominated by names like Virgil, Livy, and Ovid.

Augustus did not change foreign policy in Palestine much from that of his predecessors. He continued the employment of client kingdoms in the remote parts of the Roman Empire and in 30 B.C. confirmed Herod the Great as ruler of Judea.

the name Jesus,[a] because he will save his people from their sins."

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"[b] (which means "God with us").

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Luke 2:1–20

The Birth of Jesus

2 **:1** In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. 2 (This was the first census that took place while[c] Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 And everyone went to their own town to register.

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

15 When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

16 So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. 17 When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, 18 and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. 20 The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

[a] *21* *Jesus* is the Greek form of *Joshua,* which means *the* LORD *saves.* [b] *23* Isaiah 7:14 [c] *2* Or *This census took place before*

TRANSITION

Jesus Presented in the Temple

Luke indicates that "on the eighth day . . . it was time" for the circumcision of Jesus (Lk 2:21).

Since the Jews considered the day of birth as the first day, this would be 7 days by our way of counting. The mother of a newborn son was deemed ceremonially unclean for 7 days (Lev 12:2), after which the parents had to take the child to the temple for circumcision. She was then considered unclean for an additional 33 days, after which she would go to the temple to offer a sacrifice for her purification (Lk 2:22).

• Luke 2:21–38

Luke

2:21 On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

Jesus Presented in the Temple

22When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord 23(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male is to be consecrated to the Lord"[a]), 24and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is said in the Law of the Lord: "a pair of doves or two young pigeons."[b]

25Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. 26It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. 27Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, 28Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

29"Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss[c] your servant in peace.
30For my eyes have seen your salvation,
31 which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
32a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."

33The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. 34Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: "This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, 35so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."

36There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.[d] She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

TIME CAPSULE		25 to 22 B.C.
25		Antioch in Pisidia passes into Roman hands
25		Rome annexes kingdom of Amyntas to form province of Galatia
24		Herod relieves drought and plague in Judea
23		Cyrus becomes a senatorial province of Rome
23		Herod builds a square (the Praetorium?) in front of the palace
22		Herod the Great begins construction of Caesarea, a new seaport
22		The ruler of the Ethiopians signs a treaty with Rome

TRANSITION

Jesus Escapes to Egypt

The visit of the wise men occurred some months after the birth of Jesus. Joseph and Mary were no longer in the stable, but living in a house (see Mt 2:11) in Bethlehem, a village about 5 miles south of Jerusalem. The family fled from there to Egypt to escape the plot of Herod, who apparently feared the new King would replace him.

Herod died in 4 B.C., and Mt 2:16, 19 suggests that Jesus may have been one to two years old at that time (see "The Birth of Jesus" at Mt 1:18). Herod's death meant that Joseph could take his young child and wife Mary back to Israel (Mt 2:19–21).

• Matthew 2:1–21

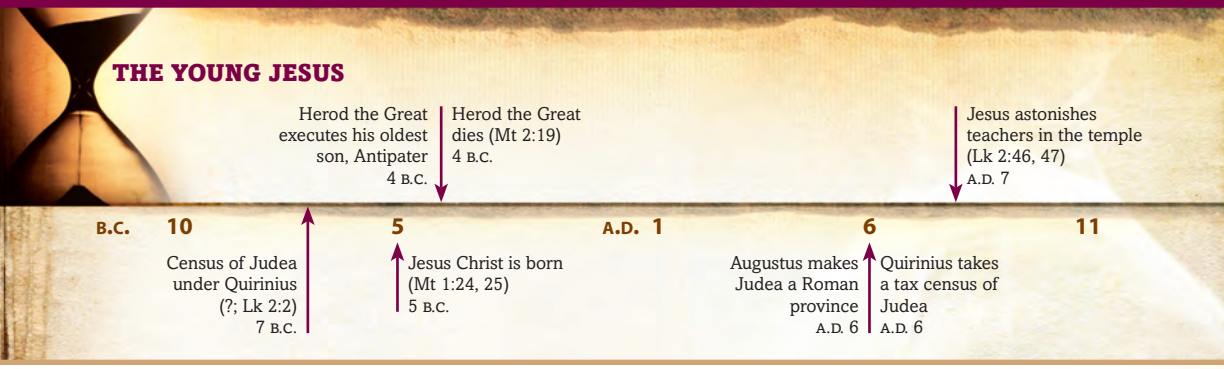
Matthew

The Magi Visit the Messiah

2:1 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi[e] from the east came to Jerusalem 2and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

3When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. 4When he

[a] *23* Exodus 13:2,12 [b] *24* Lev. 12:8 [c] *29* Or *promised, / now dismiss* [d] *37* Or *then had been a widow for eighty-four years.* [e] *1* Traditionally *wise men*



had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. 5"In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

6" 'But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;
for out of you will come a ruler
who will shepherd my people Israel.'[a]"

7Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. 8He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

9After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. 10When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. 11On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. 12And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

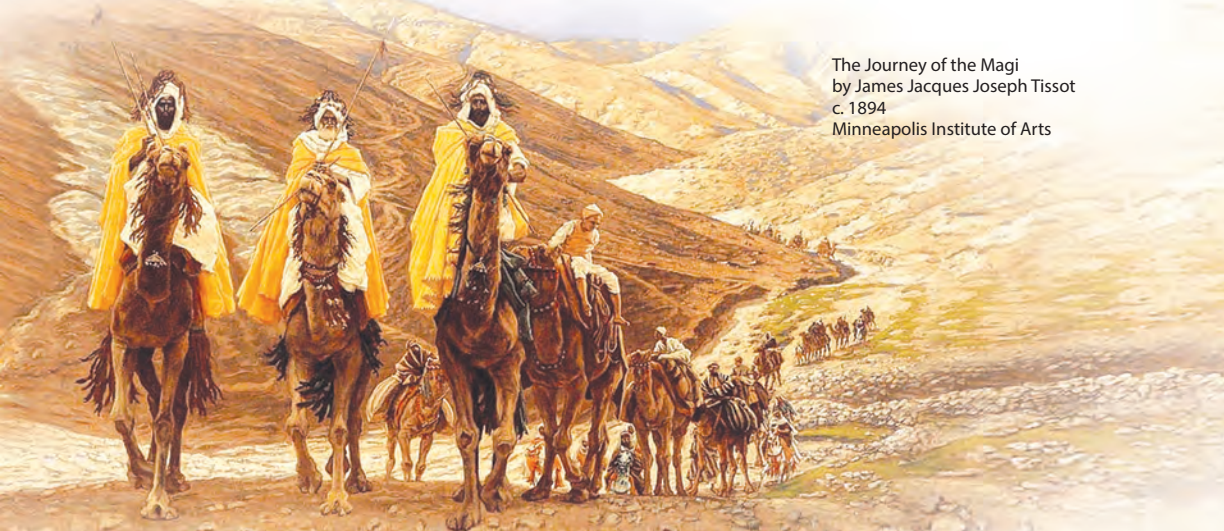
Trade & Economics
The gifts given to Jesus by the foreign rulers were luxury items (Mt 2:11), like the symbolic gifts exchanged by rulers today, and like the wealth brought by Gentiles to Israel's king (Ps 72:10; Isa 60:6). Frankincense and myrrh are resins or gums taken from plants that grow in Arabia or the Horn of Africa. They were used for incense and perfume.

The Escape to Egypt

13When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

14So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, 15where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was

[a] *6* Micah 5:2,4



The Journey of the Magi
by James Jacques Joseph Tissot
c. 1894
Minneapolis Institute of Arts

Judea Groans Under Archelaus (Mt 2:22)

Archelaus was the eldest son of Herod the Great (37–4 B.C.), the Roman-appointed king of Judea. He was the principal heir of his father's kingdom and was given the territory of Judea and Samaria, which he ruled himself from 4 B.C. to A.D. 6. Most of our information concerning Archelaus comes from the Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 37–100), who states that the monarch was raised in Rome.

Although Archelaus was not as harsh a ruler as his father, his reign was marked by great unrest. He rigorously oppressed the Jews, culminating in 3,000 Jewish deaths in the temple precincts during a Passover celebration. He also continually interfered in the election of the Jewish high priest.

Jewish unrest climaxed in a large-scale rebellion which had to be quelled by the Romans. Because of instability in the region, the Roman emperor Augustus (27 B.C.–A.D. 14) decided to depose Archelaus and exiled him to Gaul in A.D. 6. Roman governors or procurators were appointed by the emperor to rule the Palestinian provinces.

Joseph's fear of returning to Judea with the young Jesus (Mt 2:22) is understandable in light of the conditions during the short time Archelaus was in office. Tension and unrest in Judea probably made Galilee seem a much safer region in which to raise a child.

fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."[a]

16When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. 17Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

18"A voice is heard in Ramah,
weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children
and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."[b]

The Return to Nazareth

19After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt 20and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

21So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel.

TRANSITION

Jesus' Childhood in Nazareth of Galilee

Matthew's Gospel does not specify Joseph's hometown, but indicates that he decided not to return to Bethlehem of Judea to avoid living in the territory of Archelaus. The choice to settle instead in Nazareth of Galilee fulfilled a messianic prophecy (Mt 2:23), for which no corresponding verse is found in the Old Testament.

Luke's Gospel, however, presumes that Joseph and Mary were residents of Nazareth (Lk 1:26; 2:4, 39). Jesus' birth in Bethlehem occurred because of a census that required his parents to return to their ancestral home (2:1–4). Not mentioning the family's flight to Egypt, Luke reports only that from Bethlehem they traveled to Jerusalem (2:21–38) before returning home to Nazareth where Jesus was raised.

Obviously, the details of Jesus' childhood were buried in obscurity. Such things did not matter when he was thought to be only the son of simple peasants. After his death and resurrection, these differing accounts of his childhood did agree on two central points: he was born in Bethlehem in fulfillment of popular messianic expectations, but he was better known as "Jesus of Nazareth" (Mt 26:71; Mk 1:24; 16:6; Lk 18:37). The so-called "Infancy Gospels" among the New Testament apocrypha offer wild speculation about events surrounding the youth of their wonder-child hero.

- **Matthew 2:22, 23**
- **Luke 2:39, 40**

Matthew 2:22, 23

2:22 But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, 23and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

Luke 2:39, 40

2:39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. 40And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

[a] *15* Hosea 11:1 [b] *18* Jer. 31:15

TIME CAPSULE	20 to 12 B.C.
20–A.D. 50	Historian Philo is part of wealthy Jewish family of Alexandria
20	The Parthians return captured standards and prisoners to Augustus
20	Herod the Great meets Augustus in Syria
20	Herod receives the region of Gaulanitis from Augustus
20–19	Herod begins rebuilding the temple in Jerusalem
20	Herod cuts taxes
19	Death of Virgil, Roman poet and friend of Augustus
19	The *Aeneid* manuscript is still incomplete at the poet Virgil's death
18	Herod the Great visits Augustus in Rome
17	Augustus appoints the children of M. V. Agrippa as his heirs
15	M. V. Agrippa presents sacrifices at the temple in Jerusalem
15	Veterans of two legions colonize Berytus (Beirut)
15	Quirinius becomes praetor of Rome
15	Herod invites M. V. Agrippa to visit Judea
12	Augustus becomes "high priest" of Rome, the "Pontifex Maximus"
12	Quirinius elected consul of Rome

TRANSITION

Jesus Visits the Temple

The date of Jesus' visit to the temple depends on the year of his birth (see "The Birth of Jesus" at Mt 1:18). If he were born in 5 B.C., this temple event could have occurred about A.D. 7. However, the date also depends on how exact we understand the age 12 (Lk 2:42).

The circumstances described in this event do not present Jesus as a child-prodigy. A Jewish boy was considered a man, accountable to the Law's demands, following his bar mitzvah at age 13. (Bar mitzvah, meaning "son of the commandment," is a religious rite of passage comparable to catechism and confirmation in some Christian traditions.) It was customary for Jewish parents to take their son to the temple one or two years before he turned 13. Thus Jesus' visit to the temple at this age, as well as his questions of and by the teachers of the Law, are consistent with normal Jewish practice. He took his relationship with God seriously. What was exceptional was his level of understanding (Lk 2:47).

• **Luke 2:41–52**

Luke

The Boy Jesus at the Temple

2 :41 Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover.
42 When he was twelve years old, they went up
to the festival, according to the custom. 43 After the festival was over, while his parents were
returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind
in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it.
44 Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for
him among their relatives and friends. 45 When
they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. 46 After three days they
found him in the temple courts, sitting among
the teachers, listening to them and asking
them questions. 47 Everyone who heard him
was amazed at his understanding and his answers. 48 When his parents saw him, they were
astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why
have you treated us like this? Your father and I
have been anxiously searching for you."
49 "Why were you searching for me?" he
asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my
Father's house?"[a] 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them.
51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them
and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52 And Jesus
grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with
God and man.

[a] *49* Or *be about my Father's business*

The Journeys of Jesus' Birth

The decree of Caesar Augustus required Mary and Joseph to leave the Galilean city of Nazareth and register for the census in the Judean city of Bethlehem. After Jesus was born and circumcised, his parents took him to the temple in Jerusalem (Lk 2:1–40). Joseph fled from Bethlehem, taking his family to Egypt to escape from Herod the Great. Returning from Egypt after Herod's death, Jesus' family settled in Nazareth (Mt 2:13–23).

BEGINNING OF JESUS' MINISTRY

John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus' ministry. The silence of John's early years was broken by his thundering call to repentance sometime around A.D. 26 or 27, shortly before Jesus began his ministry. Matthew's Gospel pictures John preaching in the wilderness of Judea (Mt 3:1), calling people to repentance and baptism (3:3–10), announcing Jesus as the Coming One (3:11, 12), and baptizing him (3:13–17).

According to the Synoptic Gospels, the main phase of Jesus' ministry began in Galilee after John's imprisonment by Herod Antipas. Possibly John's arrest was a signal for Jesus to proclaim his message in Galilee: "The time has come . . . The kingdom of God has come near" (Mk 1:14, 15). In the Gospel of John, however, there is indication that Jesus ministered for a short time in Judea, while John the Baptist was still preaching (Jn 3:22—4:3). Some of John's disciples even became concerned because Jesus was "baptizing more disciples than John" (Jn 3:36; 4:1). John reassured his followers: Jesus' ministry was given to him by God; John himself was only a forerunner (3:27, 28).

TRANSITION

John the Baptist

The description of John the Baptist in Matthew and Mark (Mt 3:4; Mk 1:6) resembles that of Elijah in 2Ki 1:8. There were popular expectations of an Elijah-like figure who would prepare for the coming of the Messiah, and both Gospels explicitly report that Jesus identified John as the fulfillment (Mt 11:14; 17:10–13; Mk 9:11–13). But according to the Fourth Gospel, John himself denied this identification (Jn 1:21, 25). Possibly the Baptist did not realize the true significance of his role. He could only describe himself as a herald preparing the way for the Lord's coming (Jn 1:23).

Luke dates the beginning of John's ministry as the 15th year of the Roman emperor Tiberius (Lk 3:1). Tiberius had a 2-year coregency with Augustus, his adoptive father, before Augustus died. Depending on whether Luke refers to the beginning of the coregency or of Tiberius's independent rule, the 15th year would be A.D. 26 or 28. Pontius Pilate was the Roman procurator (or governor) of Judea from A.D. 26 to 36. Caiaphas was the Jewish high priest from A.D. 18 to 36.

- **Matthew 3:1–12**
- **Mark 1:1–8**
- **Luke 3:1–18**
- **John 1:19–28**

Matthew 3:1–12

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3:1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea [2]and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." [3]This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"[a]

[4]John's clothes were made of camel's hair, and he had a leather belt around his waist. His food was locusts and wild honey. [5]People went out to him from Jerusalem and all Judea and the whole region of the Jordan. [6]Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River.

[7]But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? [8]Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. [9]And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. [10]The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

[11]"I baptize you with[b] water for repentance. But after me comes one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not worthy to carry. He will baptize you with[b] the Holy Spirit and fire. [12]His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

Mark 1:1–8

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

1:1 The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah,[c] the Son of God,[d] [2]as it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

[a] *3* Isaiah 40:3 [b] *11* Or *in* [c] *1* Or *Jesus Christ. Messiah* (Hebrew) and *Christ* (Greek) both mean *Anointed One.*
[d] *1* Some manuscripts do not have *the Son of God.*

Culture & Society

John the Baptist's rough appearance probably reminded his hearers of Elijah (2Ki 1:7, 8). The camel hair of John's garb was more rustic than linen or wool. His visible isolation and independence correspond to his spiritual and ethical independence. Thus he was preaching his message in the wilderness, not in the town (Mt 3:1, 4; 11:7–9).

John's Baptism of Repentance (Mk 1:4)

Some people who claimed to be especially holy lived in the wilderness. Also, Jewish people anticipated a new exodus through the wilderness (Isa 40:3), so many who claimed to be prophets or messiahs gathered followings in wilderness areas. Only there were they usually safe from interference by the established Jewish and Roman authorities. Thus John the Baptist began his ministry "in the wilderness" (Mk 1:4).

Like other ancient peoples, Jewish people had many symbolic rituals involving water. They washed themselves before festivals and after contact with anything they considered impure. A washing ritual was also performed when a person was initiated into a wilderness sect like the Essenes (who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls). But John's baptism was different from these ritual washings; it was a once-for-all baptism, like the kind Gentiles experienced when they converted to Judaism.

In John's day, Jewish people had special ways to practice baptism. Normally a person would strip naked, step down into the baptismal pool, and dunk himself or herself completely under water. But John's baptisms were different. The persons baptized did not perform the rite on themselves, and so presumably did not strip naked. Jewish people generally detested nakedness, and *public* nude baptisms would have been scandalous.

John had a message for those who came for baptism: water alone could not change them; they needed genuine repentance. This was also true for baptisms of Gentiles into Judaism and baptisms of Jews becoming Essenes; both required a pure heart as well as water. Yet while Jewish people often spoke of "repentance" as a regular act each time one sinned, John preached a special repentance, a turning from sin to God. John thus expected from his own people the kind of repentance they expected of Gentiles who converted to Judaism (Mt 3:8, 9).

"I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way"[a] —
3 "a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.'"[b]

4 And so John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 5 The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. 6 John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. 7 And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. 8 I baptize you with[c] water, but he will baptize you with[c] the Holy Spirit."

Luke 3:1–18

John the Baptist Prepares the Way

3 :1 In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar — when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, Herod tetrarch of Galilee, his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and Traconitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene — 2 during the high-priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. 3 He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. 4 As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet:

"A voice of one calling in the wilderness,
'Prepare the way for the Lord,
make straight paths for him.
5 Every valley shall be filled in,
every mountain and hill made low.
The crooked roads shall become straight,
the rough ways smooth.
6 And all people will see God's salvation.'"[d]

7 John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? 8 Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. 9 The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce

[a] *2* Mal. 3:1 [b] *3* Isaiah 40:3 [c] *8* Or *in* [d] *6* Isaiah 40:3-5

TIME CAPSULE	12 to 10 B.C.
12	Death of Augustus's friend and son-in-law (M. V. Agrippa)
12	An altar is dedicated to Roma and Augustus in Lyon, France
11	Augustus revives the priesthood of Jupiter in Rome
10	Dedication of Caesarea, Herod's seaport
10	Herod Antipas gives a display of gladiators at Caesarea
10	Birth of Herod Agrippa I (Ac 12:1)

good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire."

10 "What should we do then?" the crowd asked.

11 John answered, "Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same."

12 Even tax collectors came to be baptized. "Teacher," they asked, "what should we do?"

13 "Don't collect any more than you are required to," he told them.

14 Then some soldiers asked him, "And what should we do?"

He replied, "Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay."

15 The people were waiting expectantly and were all wondering in their hearts if John might possibly be the Messiah. 16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with[a] water. But one who is more powerful than I will come, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with[a] the Holy Spirit and fire. 17 His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." 18 And with many other words John exhorted the people and proclaimed the good news to them.

John 1:19–28

John the Baptist Denies Being the Messiah

1:19 Now this was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders[b] in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. 20 He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Messiah."

21 They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

22 Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"[c]

24 Now the Pharisees who had been sent 25 questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"

26 "I baptize with[d] water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. 27 He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."

28 This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

TRANSITION

The Baptism of Jesus

In the Synoptic Gospels Jesus' baptism marks his inauguration as the servant Messiah and the dawning of the new age of the Spirit. The Spirit is the agent of a new beginning. The open heaven, the descending dove, and the confirming heavenly voice highlight the ultimate revelatory significance of the baptism. Jesus was anointed by the Spirit of God as the Messiah and the Servant of the Lord described centuries earlier by the prophet Isaiah (Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1).

Mark's account of Jesus' baptism was open to several possible false interpretations. Readers of his Gospel might conclude (1) that Jesus was a repentant sinner (see Mk 1:4, 9), or (2) that he was inferior to John who baptized him (1:9), or (3) that he became the Son of God at his baptism (1:10, 11).

The other evangelists denied such speculations early in their Gospels. The birth narratives in Matthew and Luke emphasize that Jesus was conceived of the Holy Spirit (Mt 1:20), and even as a baby was the Christ (Lk 2:11). He was neither sinful nor inferior prior to his baptism. John's prologue makes it clear that Jesus did not become the Son of God through baptism, but had been such from eternity (Jn 1:1–18).

Each evangelist further reformulates the baptism story to preclude any confusion Mark's account might allow. Matthew introduces a dialogue between John and Jesus in which Jesus explained his true motive for receiving baptism ("to fulfill all righteousness," Mt 3:15) and John acknowledged his inferiority to Jesus (3:14). Luke reports the imprisonment of John (Lk 3:19, 20) before describing Jesus' baptism. In his baptism narrative Luke nowhere refers to John and describes the Spirit as coming upon Jesus in response to his own prayer (3:21).

The Fourth Gospel stresses John's inferiority to Jesus (Jn 1:6–8, 19–37) and never mentions Jesus' baptism by John nor John's preaching of repentance. John served only as a witness to Jesus: (1) that Jesus received the abiding Spirit; (2) that he is the One who baptizes with the Spirit; and (3) that he is the Son of God (Jn 1:32–34).

- **Matthew 3:13–17**
- **Mark 1:9–11**
- **Luke 3:21, 22**
- **John 1:29–34**

[a] *16* Or *in* [b] *19* The Greek term traditionally translated *the Jews* (*hoi Ioudaioi*) refers here and elsewhere in John's Gospel to those Jewish leaders who opposed Jesus; also in 5:10, 15, 16; 7:1, 11, 13; 9:22; 18:14, 28, 36; 19:7, 12, 31, 38; 20:19.
[c] *23* Isaiah 40:3 [d] *26* Or *in*; also in verses 31 and 33 (twice)

Matthew 3:13–17

The Baptism of Jesus

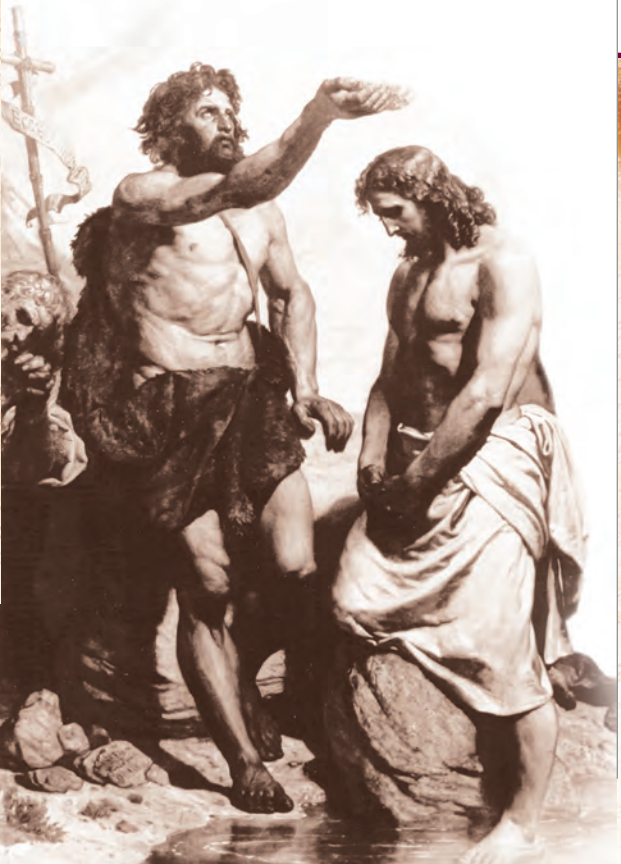
3 :13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the
Jordan to be baptized by John. [14]But John
tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be bap-
tized by you, and do you come to me?"
[15]Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is prop-
er for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness."
Then John consented.
[16]As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up
out of the water. At that moment heaven was
opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descend-
ing like a dove and alighting on him. [17]And a
voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom
I love; with him I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9–11

The Baptism and Testing of Jesus

1 :9 At that time Jesus came from Nazareth
in Galilee and was baptized by John in the
Jordan. [10]Just as Jesus was coming up out of
the water, he saw heaven being torn open and
the Spirit descending on him like a dove. [11]And
a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son,
whom I love; with you I am well pleased."

[a] *34* See Isaiah 42:1; many manuscripts *is the Son of God.*



Luke 3:21, 22

The Baptism and Genealogy of Jesus

3 :21 When all the people were being bap-
tized, Jesus was baptized too. And as he
was praying, heaven was opened [22]and the
Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form
like a dove. And a voice came from heaven:
"You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am
well pleased."

John 1:29–34

John Testifies About Jesus

1 :29 The next day John saw Jesus com-
ing toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb
of God, who takes away the sin of the world!
[30]This is the one I meant when I said, 'A man
who comes after me has surpassed me because
he was before me.' [31]I myself did not know him,
but the reason I came baptizing with water was
that he might be revealed to Israel."
[32]Then John gave this testimony: "I saw the
Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and
remain on him. [33]And I myself did not know
him, but the one who sent me to baptize with
water told me, 'The man on whom you see the
Spirit come down and remain is the one who
will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' [34]I have seen
and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."[a]

TRANSITION

The Genealogy of Jesus

The genealogy in Luke's Gospel moves in reverse of the order found in Matthew's genealogy (see "The Genealogy of Jesus" at Mt 1:1). Luke continues beyond Abraham, all the way back to Adam, thus setting the story of Jesus within the history of God's dealings with all humanity.

Luke introduces the genealogy with the comment that Jesus "began his ministry" (Lk 3:23). By referring to the beginning of Jesus' ministry before relating the temptation, Luke makes Jesus' victory over Satan's temptations the first event of his ministry. Matthew and Mark begin Jesus' ministry after the temptation (see "Early Ministry in Galilee" at Mt 4:12).

According to the Synoptics, Jesus did not begin his ministry until John completed his. Matthew's and Mark's Gospels place Jesus' ministry in Galilee after the arrest of John the Baptist (Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14). In Luke's presentation, John's arrest is recorded before Jesus' baptism, as well as before his ministry (Lk 3:19, 20, 23). Only in the Fourth Gospel do Jesus and John seem to minister simultaneously before John fades from the scene.

Luke puts Jesus' age at "about thirty years"

at the time he began to minister (Lk 3:23). If Jesus were born in 5 B.C., He would have been 30 during part of A.D. 26 and A.D. 27. It is possible chronologically that Jesus and John could have ministered at the same time around A.D. 26 (see "John the Baptist" at Mt 3:1). However, we should not attempt precise dates since the Gospels offer different conceptions as to what marked the beginning of Jesus' ministry.

• Luke 3:23–38

Luke

3:23 Now Jesus himself was about thirty years old when he began his ministry. He was the son, so it was thought, of Joseph,
the son of Heli, 24the son of Matthat,
the son of Levi, the son of Melki,
the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph,
25the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos,
the son of Nahum, the son of Esli,
the son of Naggai, 26the son of Maath,
the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein,
the son of Josek, the son of Joda,
27the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa,
the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel,
the son of Neri, 28the son of Melki,
the son of Addi, the son of Cosam,
the son of Elmadam, the son of Er,
29the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer,
the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat,
the son of Levi, 30the son of Simeon,
the son of Judah, the son of Joseph,
the son of Jonam, the son of Eliakim,
31the son of Melea, the son of Menna,
the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan,
the son of David, 32the son of Jesse,
the son of Obed, the son of Boaz,
the son of Salmon,[a] the son of Nahshon,
33the son of Amminadab, the son of Ram,[b]
the son of Hezron, the son of Perez,
the son of Judah, 34the son of Jacob,
the son of Isaac, the son of Abraham,
the son of Terah, the son of Nahor,
35the son of Serug, the son of Reu,
the son of Peleg, the son of Eber,
the son of Shelah, 36the son of Cainan,
the son of Arphaxad, the son of Shem,
the son of Noah, the son of Lamech,
37the son of Methuselah, the son of Enoch,
the son of Jared, the son of Mahalalel,
the son of Kenan, 38the son of Enosh,
the son of Seth, the son of Adam,
the son of God.

[a] *32* Some early manuscripts *Sala* [b] *33* Some manuscripts *Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni*; other manuscripts vary widely.

TRANSITION

The Temptation of Jesus

In all three Synoptics Jesus' temptation is not that of any ordinary individual, but of the Messiah, the Spirit-anointed Servant and Son of God (Ps 2:7; Isa 42:1), as the heavenly voice affirmed at his baptism (Mt 3:17). The Spirit led Jesus to face the question of what kind of Messiah he would be.

During the Intertestamental Period many Jews had come to believe that somehow Satan had wrested from God control of this earth. Thus, when Jesus emerged victorious from his test by Satan, he could announce the good news of the nearness of the kingdom of God (Mk 1:15; Mt 4:17), the messianic age (Lk 4:14–22), or the age of the Spirit (Jn 4:23, 24; 7:37–39).

The order of the three temptations is different in Matthew and Luke. Matthew's order moves toward a more logical climax: "tell these stones to become bread" (Mt 4:3); "throw yourself down" (4:6); "All this I will give you" (4:9). Luke's order, making the temple the last temptation, moves Jesus once again toward his destiny in Jerusalem: "tell this stone to become bread" (Lk 4:3); "give you all their authority and splendor" (4:6, 7); "throw yourself down from here" (4:9). See "Jesus' Final Journey" at Mt 8:18.

• Matthew 4:1–11
• Mark 1:12, 13
• Luke 4:1–13

TIME CAPSULE	9 to 8 B.C.
9–7	Sentius Saturninus, governor of Syria, conducts census
9	Aretas IV becomes ruler of Nabatea (southwest of Judea)
9	Dedication in Rome of the altar to the Peace of Augustus
8	Augustus conducts census
8	Death of the Roman poet Horace

TIME CAPSULE	7 to 4 B.C.
7	Herod the Great executes his sons Alexander and Aristobulus
7	Census of Judea under Quirinius (?; Lk 2:2)
5	Birth of Jesus Christ (Mt 1:24, 25)
4	Wise men from the East visit Jesus (Mt 2:1–12)
4	Herod the Great executes his oldest son, Antipater

LUKE & THE CAREER OF QUIRINIUS

Luke's Gospel lists a census that was conducted at the time of Jesus' birth, "while Quirinius was governor of Syria" (Lk 2:1, 2). Further, Luke indicates that John the Baptist began preaching in the 15th year of Tiberius Caesar (3:1) and that Jesus was about 30 years old when he began to minister (3:23). Scholars are uncertain how to coordinate Luke's chronological information with the varied career of P. Sulpicius Quirinius.

Year	Event
31 B.C.	Augustus Caesar becomes emperor of Rome (31 B.C.–A.D. 14)
15 B.C.	Quirinius becomes praetor of Rome
14 B.C.	Quirinius, as governor of Crete and Cyrene, defeats desert tribe
12 B.C.	Quirinius elected consul of Rome
5 B.C.	Quirinius, as governor of Pamphylia and Galatia, subdues tribes in south Galatia
5 B.C.	Jesus is born 1 or 2 years before Herod's death (Mt 2:1, 16), and about 30 years before Tiberius's 15th year
4 B.C.	Herod the Great dies in March; Archelaus is made ruler of Judea at Passover in April
A.D. 2	Quirinius becomes chief advisor to Augustus's grandson Gaius
A.D. 6	Archelaus is deposed, and Judea becomes a Roman province, subject to taxes by census
A.D. 6	Quirinius, as governor of Syria, conducts census in Syria and surrounding territories
A.D. 14	Tiberius Caesar becomes emperor of Rome (A.D. 14–37)
A.D. 21	Public funeral for Quirinius
A.D. 26	15th year of Tiberius, counting from his coregency with Augustus

The census taken by Quirinius in A.D. 6 is too late for Jesus' birth. Some think that Quirinius was governor of Syria twice, taking a census both times. Others think it would be highly unusual for Quirinius to conduct a census before his appointment in A.D. 6. While some historians regard Luke's information as flawed, others accept his statements as proof that Quirinius's career was unusual.

Matthew 4:1–11

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4 :1 Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the
wilderness to be tempted[a] by the devil. 2After
fasting forty days and forty nights, he was
hungry. 3The tempter came to him and said,
"If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to
become bread."

4Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall
not live on bread alone, but on every word that
comes from the mouth of God.'[b]"

5Then the devil took him to the holy city
and had him stand on the highest point of the
temple. 6"If you are the Son of God," he said,
"throw yourself down. For it is written:

"'He will command his angels concerning
you,
and they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot
against a stone.'[c]"

7Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do
not put the Lord your God to the test.'[d]"

8Again, the devil took him to a very high
mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of
the world and their splendor. 9"All this I will
give you," he said, "if you will bow down and
worship me."

10Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan!
For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God,
and serve him only.'[e]"

11Then the devil left him, and angels came
and attended him.

Mark 1:12, 13

1 :12 At once the Spirit sent him out into the
wilderness, 13and he was in the wilderness
forty days, being tempted[a] by Satan. He was
with the wild animals, and angels attended him.

[a] *1, 13* The Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*.
[b] *4* Deut. 8:3 [c] *6* Psalm 91:11,12 [d] *7* Deut. 6:16
[e] *10* Deut. 6:13

Luke 4:1–13

Jesus Is Tested in the Wilderness

4:1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, [2]where for forty days he was tempted[a] by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

[3]The devil said to him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."

[4]Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man shall not live on bread alone.'[b]"

[5]The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. [6]And he said to him, "I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. [7]If you worship me, it will all be yours."

[8]Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.'[c]"

[9]The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down from here. [10]For it is written:

"'He will command his angels concerning you
to guard you carefully;
[11]they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot
against a stone.'[d]"

[12]Jesus answered, "It is said: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'[e]"

[13]When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

TRANSITION

Beginning of the Public Ministry

The Fourth Gospel emphasizes that John the Baptist was the one who came to bear witness of the Light (Jn 1:6, 7, 34). In keeping with this emphasis, the Gospel writer John begins his account of Jesus' ministry by reporting that the first persons to follow Jesus were responding to the Baptist's testimony. Previously Andrew had been a disciple of the Baptist (1:35–37, 40).

The place where the Baptist had been baptizing disciples is reported in John 1:28 as Bethabara of Judea in some Greek manuscripts and as Bethany of Perea in others. Neither place can be located with certainty. Many of Jesus' earliest followers, however, were from areas farther north surrounding the Sea of Galilee, such as Bethsaida (1:44). This group of followers increased as they told family members and friends about Jesus (1:41, 45), and as Jesus himself summoned people, "Follow me" (1:43). Jesus shortly left the region of the Baptist's ministry at the Jordan River and went to Galilee (1:43).

• John 1:35–51

John

John's Disciples Follow Jesus

1:35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. [36]When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

[37]When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. [38]Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?"

[39]"Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and they spent that day with him. It was about four in the afternoon.

[40]Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. [41]The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). [42]And he brought him to Jesus.

Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter[f]).

[a] *2* The Greek for *tempted* can also mean *tested*. [b] *4* Deut. 8:3 [c] *8* Deut. 6:13 [d] *11* Psalm 91:11,12 [e] *12* Deut. 6:16 [f] *42* *Cephas* (Aramaic) and *Peter* (Greek) both mean *rock*.

THE GALILEAN MINISTRY

Jesus' ministry is traditionally divided into segments: a Galilean ministry, a journey toward Jerusalem, a Judean ministry, and the Passion Week in Jerusalem. Whereas Matthew, Mark, and Luke narrate only one visit to Jerusalem as the climax of Jesus' ministry, John recounts that Jesus regularly followed the practice of Palestinian Jews by observing the pilgrimage festivals. The three festivals of Passover (Unleavened Bread), Pentecost (Weeks), and Tabernacles involved pilgrimages to Jerusalem (Dt 16:16; see Jn 5:1; 7:2–10). As a consequence of this attention to festivals, John's Gospel includes several trips back and forth between Galilee and Judea that are not mentioned by the Synoptic Gospels. What emerges from a comparison of the four Gospels is a complementary view of Jesus' public ministry: Matthew, Mark, and Luke emphasize his activities in his native Galilee; John gives most of his attention to Jesus' work in Jerusalem and surrounding Judea.

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

43 The next day Jesus decided to leave for
Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, "Fol-
low me."
44 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from
the town of Bethsaida. 45 Philip found Nathana-
el and told him, "We have found the one Moses
wrote about in the Law, and about whom the
prophets also wrote — Jesus of Nazareth, the
son of Joseph."
46 "Nazareth! Can anything good come from
there?" Nathanael asked.
"Come and see," said Philip.
47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching,
he said of him, "Here truly is an Israelite in
whom there is no deceit."
48 "How do you know me?" Nathanael asked.
Jesus answered, "I saw you while you were
still under the fig tree before Philip called you."
49 Then Nathanael declared, "Rabbi, you are
the Son of God; you are the king of Israel."
50 Jesus said, "You believe[a] because I told you
I saw you under the fig tree. You will see great-
er things than that." 51 He then added, "Very
truly I tell you,[b] you[b] will see 'heaven open, and
the angels of God ascending and descending
on'[c] the Son of Man."

[a] *50* Or *Do you believe . . . ?* [b] *51* The Greek is plural.
[c] *51* Gen. 28:12

Jesus' Baptism and Temptation
Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee to be baptized by John the Baptist. While John had been baptizing near Aenon and Salim (Jn 3:23), the exact location of Jesus' baptism is uncertain. Immediately after his baptism, Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness of Judea below Jericho.

TRANSITION

The First of Seven Signs

In Cana of Galilee Jesus performed the first of several signs. John's account of Jesus' public ministry (Jn 1:19—12:50) is often called "the Book of Signs," because John had a special interest in the role that signs played in revealing Jesus' relationship with the Father (see Jn 20:30, 31). Traditionally, seven miracles have been isolated as being particular "signs" for John: transformation of water into wine (2:1–11), healing of a nobleman's son (4:46–54), cure of a paralytic (5:1–15), the feeding of the 5,000 (6:1–15), walking on the lake (6:16–21), healing a blind man (ch. 9), and raising Lazarus (ch. 11).

Two of these signs are specifically numbered (2:11; 4:54), causing some scholars to think that John had access to a "signs source." Supposedly, this signs source was a collection of stories about wonders performed by Jesus. When writing his Gospel, John would have drawn from this source, which was known in his community. If such a source existed, we cannot determine its specific content. Interspersed among the seven miracles are statements that Jesus performed many other signs (see 2:23; 3:2; 6:2).

• **John 2:1–12**

John

Jesus Changes Water Into Wine

2 :1 On the third day a wedding took place
at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,
2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited
to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus'
mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

TIME CAPSULE		4 to 2 B.C.
4		Herod the Great slaughters children under two years (Mt 2:13–15)
4		Death of Herod the Great (Mt 2:19)
4		The Jews petition Rome not to leave the Herods in power
4		Herod's kingdom is divided for three of his sons
4–A.D. 6		Archelaus rules as ethnarch of Judea and Samaria (Mt 2:22)
4–A.D. 39		Herod Antipas rules as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea
4–A.D. 34		Philip rules as tetrarch of Gaulanitis
2		Augustus is named the "father of his country"

Waterpots for Purification (Jn 2:6)

On several occasions, such as before festivals (Jn 11:55) and after contracting ritual impurity, Jewish people would ceremonially purify themselves. One purification ritual involved a tank of water known as a *mikveh,* and for a *mikveh* to be valid, it had to contain at least 40 seahs of water (about 120 gallons, each seah equaling approximately 3 gallons). The amount of water at the Cana wedding Jesus attended would have been more than enough to fill a *mikveh* tank; each of the 6 stone vessels held 20 or more gallons (Jn 2:1, 6).

The 6 waterpots were available at the wedding because of the "kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing" (Jn 2:6), and the large amount of water would suggest a *mikveh.* Very religious Jews, however, insisted on using only "living water" for a *mikveh*—that is, rainwater or fresh water from a stream, rather than water drawn from a well. Some Jews even settled for dirty, stagnant rainwater to avoid violating custom by using drawn water. Only more lenient Jews would use the drawn water in the Cana waterpots for a *mikveh.*

Possibly the waterpots at Cana were used specifically for ritual washing of the hands, rather than for the *mikveh.* The tradition of some Jews called for pouring water over the hands before eating (Mk 7:3). Since John's Gospel does not specify what type of purification ritual was connected with the waterpots, we cannot know whether Jesus' Cana host was any more or less observant of proper Jewish custom than his contemporaries.

Jewish tradition greatly praised weddings, but did not approve using for wedding wine any vessels set aside for ritual purposes. Holy vessels set aside for sacred purposes were not to be used for profane purposes. Jesus, however, knew that the host would be the laughingstock of his community for years to come if he ran out of wine at his wedding. (Wedding celebrations normally lasted 7 days.) Jesus' wedding gift—filling the waterpots with wine—valued his friend's honor more highly than the religious tradition of his contemporaries.

4 "Woman,[a] why do you involve me?" Jesus
replied. "My hour has not yet come."
5 His mother said to the servants, "Do what-
ever he tells you."
6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind
used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each
holding from twenty to thirty gallons.[b]
7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with
water"; so they filled them to the brim.
8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out
and take it to the master of the banquet."
They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet
tasted the water that had been turned into
wine. He did not realize where it had come
from, though the servants who had drawn the
water knew. Then he called the bridegroom
aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the
choice wine first and then the cheaper wine af-
ter the guests have had too much to drink; but
you have saved the best till now."
11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was
the first of the signs through which he revealed
his glory; and his disciples believed in him.
12 After this he went down to Capernaum
with his mother and brothers and his disciples.
There they stayed for a few days.

[a] *4* The Greek for *Woman* does not denote any disrespect.
[b] *6* Or from about 75 to about 115 liters

Modern-day Galilee

TRANSITION

Jesus' First Visit to Jerusalem

Matthew, Mark, and Luke mention only one visit of Jesus to Jerusalem during his ministry (see "The Galilean Ministry" at Jn 1:35). Thus Jesus' "cleansing of the temple" raises a chronological question regarding when this incident in Jerusalem may have occurred. All four evangelists report Jesus' prophetic demonstration, which provoked direct challenges to his authority from the religious leadership in Jerusalem (Mt 21:23–27; Mk 11:27–33; Lk 20:1–8; Jn 2:18–22).

Comparing John with the Synoptics leads us to ask whether the temple cleansing occurred once or twice, and whether it happened at the beginning or end of Jesus' ministry. John reports the incident early in his Gospel account. The other evangelists, though, associate it with the events of Jesus' Passion (see "Monday: Cleansing the Temple" at Mt 21:12). Some suggest that Jesus "cleansed" the temple both at the outset and at the conclusion of his ministry. Others believe that John and the Synoptics report a single event at different points in their Gospels for theological or literary reasons. Supposedly John located the cleansing early to emphasize that Jesus encountered opposition from priests even at the beginning of his ministry.

The Jewish leaders misunderstood Jesus' saying regarding the temple (Jn 2:19). Jesus' body was the temple that would be destroyed in his crucifixion, but raised up in his resurrection (2:21, 22). He was not speaking of the building that Herod had begun to reconstruct 46 years previously. The task of rebuilding the temple began in Herod's 18th year (c. 20–19 B.C.) and continued beyond his lifetime. A passage of 46 years would date this Jerusalem visit of Jesus in about A.D. 27, at the spring Passover celebration.

• John 2:13–25

John

Jesus Clears the Temple Courts

2 :13 When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
14 In the temple courts he found people selling
cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at
tables exchanging money. 15 So he made a whip
out of cords, and drove all from the temple
courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the
coins of the money changers and overturned
their tables. 16 To those who sold doves he
said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my
Father's house into a market!" 17 His disciples
remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your
house will consume me."[a]

18 The Jews then responded to him, "What
sign can you show us to prove your authority
to do all this?"
19 Jesus answered them, "Destroy this tem-
ple, and I will raise it again in three days."
20 They replied, "It has taken forty-six years
to build this temple, and you are going to raise
it in three days?" 21 But the temple he had spo-
ken of was his body. 22 After he was raised from
the dead, his disciples recalled what he had
said. Then they believed the scripture and the
words that Jesus had spoken.
23 Now while he was in Jerusalem at the
Passover Festival, many people saw the signs
he was performing and believed in his name.[b]
24 But Jesus would not entrust himself to them,
for he knew all people. 25 He did not need any
testimony about mankind, for he knew what
was in each person.

TRANSITION

Nicodemus, the Pharisee

John's mention of the Passover (Jn 2:13, 23) gives the impression that Nicodemus came to Jesus during this feast, immediately following the temple cleansing. This Pharisee, who was a member of Judea's ruling class (3:1), asserted that Jesus' signs revealed him to be "a teacher who has come from God" (3:2; see 2:18, 23). Such a statement from one who himself was "Israel's teacher" (3:10) emphasizes John's view that the conflict between Jesus and the Jewish religious leaders would focus on authority, or more particularly the origin of authority.

John is clear about the origin of Jesus' own authority and that of his followers: it comes "from above." As the "Son of Man" who "came from heaven" (3:13), Jesus could reveal "heavenly things" (3:12). Likewise, his followers knew about these heavenly things, for they had been "born again" or "from above" (3:3, 5–7). After Jesus had left Jerusalem, John the Baptist emphasized this same point during a controversy with Jewish leaders (3:22–36).

• John 3:1–36

John

Jesus Teaches Nicodemus

3 :1 Now there was a Pharisee, a man named
Nicodemus who was a member of the Jew-
ish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night
and said, "Rabbi, we know that you are a teach-
er who has come from God. For no one could
perform the signs you are doing if God were
not with him."
3 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one

[a] *17* Psalm 69:9 [b] *23* Or *in him*

Born of Water and the Spirit (Jn 3:5)

When Jesus spoke of being "born again" (Jn 3:3), He literally meant "from above," that is, "from God." Nicodemus failed to understand, so Jesus explained the concept in more familiar terms: "born of water and the Spirit" (3:5).

Not certain, however, is what the expression "born of water and the Spirit" meant to Jesus and Nicodemus. One possibility is that "born of water" was compared to Jewish baptism. A Gentile who converted to Judaism came to be viewed as a new person, cleansed from his or her former life. Converted Gentiles immersed themselves in water to symbolize the cleansing of their former impurity as Gentiles. If this is what Jesus wanted Nicodemus to grasp, he was treating him like a spiritual Gentile: though a teacher of Israel, Nicodemus himself needed to convert to the true faith promised to Israel—a new life given by the Holy Spirit to those believing in Jesus.

Yet Jesus may have intended not a *physical* water for conversion, but a sort of *spiritual* water. The Gospel of John applies the symbolism of water to the Spirit (Jn 7:37–39), possibly reflecting God's promise to purify his people someday from spiritual uncleanness and put his Spirit within them (Eze 36:25–27). If Jesus intended water as such a symbol, then "born of water and the Spirit" would refer not to two different experiences, but to a single one. In other words, Jesus meant not a physical Jewish proselyte baptism, but a *spiritual* proselyte baptism, a conversion by the Spirit of God.

In the exchange with Nicodemus, Jesus saw the Pharisee's real need and came immediately to the heart of the matter. A transformation of the heart by the Holy Spirit would enable him to see fullness of life in the kingdom of God.

can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.[a]"

4"How can someone be born when they are old?" Nicodemus asked. "Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!"

5Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit[b] gives birth to spirit. 7You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You[c] must be born again.' 8The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."[d]

9"How can this be?" Nicodemus asked.

10"You are Israel's teacher," said Jesus, "and do you not understand these things? 11Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man.[e] 14Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up,[f] 15that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him."[g]

16For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son. 19This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

John Testifies Again About Jesus

22After this, Jesus and his disciples went out into the Judean countryside, where he spent some time with them, and baptized. 23Now John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were coming and being baptized. 24(This was before John was put in prison.) 25An argument developed between some of John's disciples

Religion & Worship
Baptism is a ritual of bathing that was practiced by the Jews before New Testament times. Forms of baptism were used in other religions as well. It is a natural symbol of cleansing or purification. Baptism announces the beginning of a new life, marking the transition from paganism to Judaism, or for the church, from unbelief to Christ (Jn 2:11; 3:22).

[a] *3* The Greek for *again* also means *from above*; also in verse 7. [b] *6* Or *but spirit* [c] *7* The Greek is plural. [d] *8* The Greek for *Spirit* is the same as that for *wind*. [e] *13* Some manuscripts *Man, who is in heaven* [f] *14* The Greek for *lifted up* also means *exalted*. [g] *15* Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 21.

and a certain Jew over the matter of ceremonial washing. [26]They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—look, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

[27]To this John replied, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven. [28]You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him.' [29]The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. [30]He must become greater; I must become less."[a]

[31]The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. The one who comes from heaven is above all. [32]He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. [33]Whoever has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. [34]For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God[b] gives the Spirit without limit. [35]The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands. [36]Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on them.

[a] *30* Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 36.
[b] *34* Greek *he* [c] *9* Or *do not use dishes Samaritans have used*

TRANSITION

Through Samaria to Galilee

John's remark that Jesus "had to go through Samaria" to return to Galilee (Jn 4:4) may reflect a spiritual necessity of his ministry. Most Jews en route to Galilee traveled through the region of Perea east of the Jordan River rather than take the more direct route through Samaria. There were deep-seated prejudices between the Jews and the Samaritans, going back to at least the period of the restoration of Judah following the Babylonian exile. Jesus, however, had a mission to Samaritans as well as to Jews.

Figuring prominently in John 4 are two aspects of Jewish and Samaritan religious differences: the place of worship and the promised Messiah. The Samaritans had opposed the reconstruction of the Jerusalem temple in 538 B.C. (Ezra 4:1–5). Furthermore, they had constructed their own temple to the God of Abraham on Mount Gerizim in either 388 or 332 B.C. Fishing to divert attention from her personal life, the Samaritan woman posed a theological question about the place where one ought to worship (Jn 4:19, 20).

The second aspect—the coming Messiah—develops from the sacred Scriptures used by Jews and Samaritans. The Jews already recognized two divisions of Scripture—the Law and the Prophets (Mt 5:17). Believing that Israel's prophets had supported the rival Jerusalem temple, the Samaritans rejected the division called "the Prophets" and accepted only the Law of Moses or Torah (the books of Genesis through Deuteronomy) as Scripture. Thus, Samaritan expectations about the Messiah centered in the promise of a prophet like Moses (Dt 18:15–19) who would be a teacher (Jn 4:25), rather than a political figure like the messianic Son of David expected by many Jews. As was previously the case with Nicodemus (Jn 3:4, 9), both the Samaritan woman (4:11, 12, 15) and Jesus' own disciples (4:31–33) were so fixed on the literal, physical meaning of his words that they failed to understand the spiritual significance.

• John 4:1–45

John

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

4:1 Now Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard that he was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John— [2]although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. [3]So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

[4]Now he had to go through Samaria. [5]So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. [6]Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about noon.

[7]When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" [8](His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

[9]The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.[c])

[10]Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."

[11]"Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? [12]Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?"

[13]Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this

water will be thirsty again, [14]but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life."

[15]The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

[16]He told her, "Go, call your husband and come back."

[17]"I have no husband," she replied.

Jesus said to her, "You are right when you say you have no husband. [18]The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true."

[19]"Sir," the woman said, "I can see that you are a prophet. [20]Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem."

[21]"Woman," Jesus replied, "believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. [22]You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. [23]Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. [24]God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

[25]The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us."

[26]Then Jesus declared, "I, the one speaking to you—I am he."

The Disciples Rejoin Jesus

[27]Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

[28]Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, [29]"Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?" [30]They came out of the town and made their way toward him.

[31]Meanwhile his disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat something."

[32]But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you know nothing about."

[33]Then his disciples said to each other, "Could someone have brought him food?"

[34]"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work. [35]Don't you have a saying, 'It's still four months until harvest'? I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. [36]Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together. [37]Thus the saying 'One sows and another reaps' is true. [38]I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefits of their labor."

Many Samaritans Believe

[39]Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I ever did." [40]So when the Samaritans came to him, they urged him to stay with them, and he stayed two days. [41]And because of his words many more became believers.

[42]They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world."

Samarian hills

Marveling over Jesus with a Woman (Jn 4:27)

Jesus' encounter with a woman at Jacob's well could look very ambiguous (Jn 4:6–8). In fact, 1st-century cultural norms gave Jesus' disciples reason to be troubled. Jesus had crossed ethnic, moral, and gender barriers that most of his contemporaries felt should not be crossed.

A history of ethnic conflict had left little chance of positive interaction between Jewish people and the Samaritans (4:9). They ridiculed each other's holy places, and once the Samaritans had even defiled the Jerusalem temple. The Judeans for their part had completely destroyed the Samaritan temple on Mount Gerizim nearly two centuries before. By Jewish standards, Samaritan drinking vessels were technically unclean, so Jesus' request for water probably led the woman to think that he was not very religious (4:7).

Jesus also crossed a moral barrier. This woman came alone to draw water from the well (4:7), maybe because she was not welcome among the other women of the village. Her personal life was probably considered loose by Samaritan standards, since she had been married five times and was not married to the man with whom she was living. Talking with this woman at a well was an ambiguous situation. Even the Samaritan woman, telling Jesus that she was unmarried, may have misread his motives, though he quickly set the matter straight (4:17, 18).

Finally, Jesus crossed a gender barrier in force among his fellow Jews. Many sages, such as Jesus son of Sirach, warned against being seen speaking with women, offering two reasons. First, one could easily fall prey to temptation; second, one could get a bad reputation because of what people might think, even if the woman turned out to be one's sister.

That the disciples were astonished to find Jesus talking with this woman fits their culture. That they said nothing shows their respect for and trust in Jesus (4:27).

Jesus Heals an Official's Son

43 After the two days he left for Galilee.
44 (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that
a prophet has no honor in his own country.)
45 When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done
in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they
also had been there.

one praised him" (4:15). Nevertheless, Jesus' reading of Isa 61:1, 2 provides a more extensive summary of his ministry. Although Jesus was met by opposition from the beginning, Luke insists that "Joseph's son" ministered "in the power of the Spirit" (Lk 4:14, 18, 22).

- **Matthew 4:12–22**
- **Mark 1:14–20**
- **Luke 4:14–30**

TRANSITION

Early Ministry in Galilee

Matthew and Mark begin their accounts of Jesus' Galilean ministry by summarizing the content of his preaching in a virtual slogan: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near" (Mt 4:17; see Mk 1:15). Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John immediately accepted Jesus' call. Matthew is particularly interested in the events of Jesus' life that fulfill Old Testament prophecies (Mt 1:22, 23; 2:5, 6). Both the inception of the ministry in Galilee and its positive reception are for Matthew yet further fulfillments of prophecy (Mt 4:13–16).

Luke, however, begins his account with Jesus' rejection in the synagogue of his hometown of Nazareth (Lk 4:14–30). This choice may seem a strange illustration that Jesus "was teaching in their synagogues, and every-

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 2 to 6
2		Death of Lucius, son of M. V. Agrippa and heir of Augustus
4		Death of Gaius, grandchild and designated successor of Augustus
4		The *Lex Aelia Sentia* provides for registration of Roman citizens
5		Ovid composes *Metamorphoses*
6		Caesarea becomes the provincial capital
6–15		Annas is high priest in Jerusalem (Lk 3:2)
6–9		Coponius is prefect or governor of Judea
6		Augustus deposes Archelaus and exiles him to Gaul

Matthew 4:12–22

Jesus Begins to Preach

4:12 When Jesus heard that John had
been put in prison, he withdrew to Galilee.
13 Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Ca-
pernaum, which was by the lake in the area of
Zebulun and Naphtali— 14 to fulfill what was
said through the prophet Isaiah:

15 "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali,
the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan,
Galilee of the Gentiles—
16 the people living in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of the shadow of
death
a light has dawned."[a]

17 From that time on Jesus began to preach,
"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come
near."

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

18 As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Gal-
ilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter
and his brother Andrew. They were casting
a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.
19 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will
send you out to fish for people." 20 At once they
left their nets and followed him.
21 Going on from there, he saw two other
brothers, James son of Zebedee and his broth-
er John. They were in a boat with their father
Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called
them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and
their father and followed him.

Mark 1:14–20

Jesus Announces the Good News

1:14 After John was put in prison, Jesus went
into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of
God. 15 "The time has come," he said. "The
kingdom of God has come near. Repent and
believe the good news!"

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

16 As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee,
he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting
a net into the lake, for they were fishermen.
17 "Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will
send you out to fish for people." 18 At once they
left their nets and followed him.
19 When he had gone a little farther, he saw
James son of Zebedee and his brother John in
a boat, preparing their nets. 20 Without delay he
called them, and they left their father Zebedee
in the boat with the hired men and followed
him.

Luke 4:14–30

Jesus Rejected at Nazareth

4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the pow-
er of the Spirit, and news about him spread
through the whole countryside. 15 He was
teaching in their synagogues, and everyone
praised him.
16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been
brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went
into the synagogue, as was his custom. He
stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the proph-
et Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he
found the place where it is written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the
prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."[b]

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back
to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of
everyone in the synagogue were fastened on
him. 21 He began by saying to them, "Today this
scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."
22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at
the gracious words that came from his lips.
"Isn't this Joseph's son?" they asked.
23 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote
this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself!'

[a] *16* Isaiah 9:1,2 [b] *19* Isaiah 61:1,2 (see Septuagint); Isaiah 58:6

Geography & Environment
The Sea of Galilee is about 13 miles by 8 miles in size. This freshwater lake, once known by the names Kinnereth, Gennesar, and Tiberias, supports a great number of fish (Mt 4:18). The steep hills surrounding the small lake can channel the winds and cause sudden dangerous storms upon the water's surface (Mk 4:37).

Health & Medicine
Several proverbs concerning doctors, such as "Physician, heal yourself!" (Lk 4:23), are known in the ancient world. Herodotus (died about 425 B.C.) describes a public area where the sick could meet and exchange what they knew about their problems and what treatments were effective. Minor surgery was fairly common. At its best the medical treatment of antiquity was marked by compassion and common sense.

Simon Peter's House at Capernaum (Mk 1:29)

Capernaum was a city on the northwest bank of the Sea of Galilee. After leaving Nazareth, Jesus moved to this city, where he began his early ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:13). One place Jesus visited in Capernaum was the house of Simon Peter, which is sometimes identified by the disciple's name (Mt 8:14; Mk 1:29; Lk 4:38), but other times as simply "the house" (Mt 17:24, 25; Mk 9:33).

Archaeologists have recently discovered in Capernaum what they consider to be Simon Peter's house. The plan of the house had three courts arranged around a series of living rooms. It appears to have been built in the Hellenistic period (332–37 B.C.)—possibly two centuries before Peter's occupation. Later in the apostolic period, portions of the house were transformed into a house church.

And you will tell me, 'Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'"

24"Truly I tell you," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown. 25I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. 26Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. 27And there were many in Israel with leprosy[a] in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian."

28All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. 29They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. 30But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

TRANSITION

Teaching with Authority

Mark and Luke both associate Jesus' teaching with his authority over evil spirits (Mk 1:22, 27; Lk 4:32, 36). Mark, though, goes so far as to identify such actions by Jesus as being themselves a "new teaching" (Mk 1:27). More space in Mark's Gospel is devoted to Jesus' miraculous works and less space to his "sayings" than any of the other Gospels. Mark is particularly interested in associating Jesus the miracle worker with Jesus the teacher. For Mark, what Jesus does is as much a part of his teaching as what he says.

- **Mark 1:21–28**
- **Luke 4:31–37**

Mark 1:21–28

Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit

1:21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24"What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

25"Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" 26The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

27The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him." 28News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Luke 4:31–37

Jesus Drives Out an Impure Spirit

4:31 Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath he taught the people. 32They were amazed at his teaching, because his words had authority.

33In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an impure spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice, 34"Go away! What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

35"Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.

36All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What words these are! With authority and power he gives orders to impure spirits and they come out!" 37And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.

TRANSITION

Healing the Sick

The brief accounts of the healings of Peter's mother-in-law and of others in the village highlight particular interests of the evangelists.

[a] *27* The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

Matthew once again links the details of Jesus' life with Israel's prophetic tradition (Mt 8:17 cites Isa 53:4).

Mark uses this episode to introduce his theme of the "Messianic secret" (Mk 1:43, 44; 3:11, 12). For Mark, only Jesus' death on the cross can reveal what it really means for Jesus to be the Messiah and "Son of God" (Mk 15:39). So in Mark's presentation, Jesus is careful to keep his identity secret so as to avoid the popular misconceptions about what the work of the Messiah would be. For that reason, Jesus "would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was" (Mk 1:34).

- **Matthew 8:14–17**
- **Mark 1:29–34**
- **Luke 4:38–41**

Matthew 8:14–17

Jesus Heals Many

8:14 When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. 15He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

16When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. 17This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"He took up our infirmities
and bore our diseases."[a]

Mark 1:29–34

Jesus Heals Many

1:29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. 30Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. 31So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

32That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. 33The whole town gathered at the door, 34and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Luke 4:38–41

Jesus Heals Many

4:38 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

40At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. 41Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.

TRANSITION

Departing Capernaum

Matthew and Mark emphasized the radical obedience exhibited by Jesus' first disciples in accepting his call (Mt 4:18–22; Mk 1:16–20). Luke, however, provides further insight into an experience with Jesus that led Simon Peter, James, and John to leave their businesses to follow Jesus. They witnessed a catch of fish so large that it astounded even these professional fishermen.

Having heard Jesus' teaching (Lk 5:3), Peter said to him, "Because you say so, I will let down the nets" (5:5), even though they had met with no success in their fishing endeavors that night. Jesus then used their extraordinary success as a kind of parable, telling the fishermen, "From now on you will fish for people" (5:10). During these earliest stages of Jesus' Galilean ministry (Lk 4:38–41, 44), including her eat the lakeshore, his followers received personal knowledge of his teaching and miracles. In response, they were willing to accept his call to discipleship.

- **Matthew 4:23–25**
- **Mark 1:35–39**
- **Luke 4:42—5:11**

Matthew 4:23–25

Jesus Heals the Sick

4:23 Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Religion & Worship

The word "synagogue" (Lk 4:38) comes from a Greek word meaning "meeting place" or "congregation." By the time of Jesus, the Jews had established synagogues everywhere they lived. The oldest synagogue excavated so far in Judea dates from about A.D. 100. It was located near the city gates, a traditional place for public business.

[a] *17* Isaiah 53:4 (see Septuagint)

24 News about him spread all over Syria, and
people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the
demon-possessed, those having seizures, and
the paralyzed; and he healed them. 25 Large
crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis,[a] Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan
followed him.

Mark 1:35–39

Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place

1:35 Very early in the morning, while it was
still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and
went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.
36 Simon and his companions went to look for
him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

38 Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere
else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach
there also. That is why I have come." 39 So he
traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their
synagogues and driving out demons.

Luke 4:42—5:11

4:42 At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for
him and when they came to where he was, they
tried to keep him from leaving them. 43 But he
said, "I must proclaim the good news of the
kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." 44 And he kept on
preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Jesus Calls His First Disciples

5 1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake
of Gennesaret,[b] the people were crowding
around him and listening to the word of God.
2 He saw at the water's edge two boats, left
there by the fishermen, who were washing
their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the
one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put
out a little from shore. Then he sat down and
taught the people from the boat.

4 When he had finished speaking, he said to
Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down
the nets for a catch."

5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked
hard all night and haven't caught anything. But
because you say so, I will let down the nets."

6 When they had done so, they caught such
a large number of fish that their nets began to
break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the
other boat to come and help them, and they
came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus'
knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am
a sinful man!" 9 For he and all his companions
were astonished at the catch of fish they had
taken, 10 and so were James and John, the sons
of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid;
from now on you will fish for people." 11 So they
pulled their boats up on shore, left everything
and followed him.

[a] *25* That is, the Ten Cities [b] *1* That is, the Sea of Galilee

Jesus' Galilean Ministry

Jesus began his public ministry at Cana, turning water into wine. When his hometown of Nazareth rejected him, he established a base of ministry in the prosperous fishing town of Capernaum (Mk 2:1). Healing miracles occurred at Nain, Gennesaret, and Bethsaida.

TRANSITION

Cleansing the Leper

The cleansing and healing of a leper, an outcast from society, is a second instance of Mark's "Messianic secret" theme (see "Healing the Sick" at Mt 8:14). Mark highlights two dynamics of Jesus' secret identity. First, those who did not completely understand Jesus' Messiahship, supposing him to be only a miracle worker or healer, could in fact hinder his ability to accomplish his ministry. Because of their reactions, Jesus "could no longer enter a town openly" (Mk 1:45). Second, Mark shows that those whose lives had genuinely been changed by the gospel were not able to contain their excitement and enthusiasm about what God had done for them (see Mk 5:18–20).

Luke's narrative does not mention the leper spreading the news of his cleansing. Perhaps Luke wished to downplay any appearance of the leper disobeying Jesus' instructions. It is enough for Luke to note simply that a report

concerning Jesus did spread as a result of this healing (Lk 5:15).

- **Matthew 8:1–4**
- **Mark 1:40–45**
- **Luke 5:12–16**

Matthew 8:1–4

Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

8:1 When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. [2]A man with leprosy[a] came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

[3]Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. [4]Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Mark 1:40–45

Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

1:40 A man with leprosy[a] came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

[41]Jesus was indignant.[b] He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" [42]Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

[43]Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: [44]"See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." [45]Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

Luke 5:12–16

Jesus Heals a Man With Leprosy

5:12 While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy.[a] When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

[13]Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

[14]Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

Cults & Supernatural

By the time of Augustus (27 B.C.–A.D. 14), one of the most popular religious cults was the worship of Asclepius. Much like the multitudes sought out Jesus (Lk 5:15), people would go to temples hoping that Asclepius would heal their sicknesses. They stayed overnight at the temple, and the god was supposed to visit them in a dream in the night, bringing them healing.

[15]Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. [16]But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

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[a] *2,40,12* The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin. [b] *41* Many manuscripts *Jesus was filled with compassion*

TRANSITION

Events in Capernaum

Each of the Synoptic Gospels recounts a cluster of exchanges in Capernaum between Jesus and certain Jewish religious teachers. The encounters emphasize the importance of forgiveness in Jesus' ministry, a focus which is established in the opening report of the healing of a paralytic. Jesus used his ability to perform miraculous healings as proof "that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (Mk 2:10).

Eating a meal in a tax collector's house was the occasion to show that God's forgiveness was now readily available to all. Jesus could now fellowship with "sinners" without being tainted by the ritual impurity that concerned the teachers of the law and Pharisees (Lk 5:30). Although Jesus came to call sinners to repentance (Mk 2:17), his ministry was a time to celebrate this forgiveness rather than to fast or mourn (Mt 9:14, 15).

Traditional religion believed that God alone forgave sins (Lk 5:21). So Jesus' new offer of forgiveness marked a radical change in God's dealings with humanity. Jesus did not reject all Jewish practice. The time would come when his own disciples would resume the spiritual discipline of fasting (Lk 5:35). But to try to force Jesus' ministry into the traditional religious patterns would have resulted in both his own failure and the unnecessary destruction of what God had done in the past. This point is illustrated by a parable of garments and wineskins (Lk 5:36–39).

- **Matthew 9:1–17**
- **Mark 2:1–22**
- **Luke 5:17–39**

Matthew 9:1–17

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

9:1 Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. 2Some men brought to him a paralyzed man, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."

3At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"

4Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? 5Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? 6But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "Get up, take your mat and go home." 7Then the man got up and went home. 8When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to man.

The Calling of Matthew

9As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

10While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. 11When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

12On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. 13But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'[a] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

14Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?"

15Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

16"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse. 17Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

[a] *13* Hosea 6:6

Mark 2:1–22

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

2:1 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. 2They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. 3Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. 4Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. 5When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

6Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, 7"Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?"

8Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? 9Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? 10But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the man, 11"I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." 12He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

Jesus Calls Levi and Eats With Sinners

13Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. 14As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

15While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. 16When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Politics & Government
The Roman government farmed out the job of collecting taxes. Regional tax collectors bid for the responsibility of taxing a certain area, then they generated their own income by collecting a surplus over what they owed to Rome. This system invited abuse, and those associated with it were usually unpopular in Judea (Mk 2:14).

17On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is
not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.
I have not come to call the righteous, but sin-
ners."

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

18Now John's disciples and the Pharisees
were fasting. Some people came and asked
Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the
disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours
are not?"
19Jesus answered, "How can the guests of
the bridegroom fast while he is with them?
They cannot, so long as they have him with
them. 20But the time will come when the bride-
groom will be taken from them, and on that day
they will fast.
21"No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on
an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will
pull away from the old, making the tear worse.
22And no one pours new wine into old wineskins.
Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and
both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined.
No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."

Luke 5:17–39

Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man

5:17 One day Jesus was teaching, and Phar-
isees and teachers of the law were sitting
there. They had come from every village of
Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And
the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal
the sick. 18Some men came carrying a para-
lyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into
the house to lay him before Jesus. 19When they
could not find a way to do this because of the
crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered
him on his mat through the tiles into the mid-
dle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus.
20When Jesus saw their faith, he said,
"Friend, your sins are forgiven."
21The Pharisees and the teachers of the law
began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fel-
low who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive
sins but God alone?"
22Jesus knew what they were thinking and
asked, "Why are you thinking these things in
your hearts? 23Which is easier: to say, 'Your
sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?
24But I want you to know that the Son of Man
has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he
said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up,
take your mat and go home." 25Immediately
he stood up in front of them, took what he had
been lying on and went home praising God.
26Everyone was amazed and gave praise to
God. They were filled with awe and said, "We
have seen remarkable things today."

Jesus Calls Levi and Eats With Sinners

27After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax
collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax
booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, 28and
Levi got up, left everything and followed him.
29Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at
his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors
and others were eating with them. 30But the
Pharisees and the teachers of the law who be-
longed to their sect complained to his disciples,
"Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors
and sinners?"
31Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy
who need a doctor, but the sick. 32I have not
come to call the righteous, but sinners to re-
pentance."

Food & Drink
Cups and jars were made of pottery and metal. Another more portable kind of vessel was made of leather, typically from a single goatskin. New wine put into such a bottle would ferment. A new bottle would be strong and could stretch without breaking under the pressure of the gases produced by fermentation, but an old one might burst (Lk 5:37, 38).

Jesus Questioned About Fasting

33They said to him, "John's disciples often fast
and pray, and so do the disciples of the Phari-
sees, but yours go on eating and drinking."
34Jesus answered, "Can you make the friends
of the bridegroom fast while he is with them?
35But the time will come when the bridegroom
will be taken from them; in those days they will
fast."
36He told them this parable: "No one tears
a piece out of a new garment to patch an old
one. Otherwise, they will have torn the new
garment, and the patch from the new will not
match the old. 37And no one pours new wine
into old wineskins. Otherwise, the new wine
will burst the skins; the wine will run out and
the wineskins will be ruined. 38No, new wine
must be poured into new wineskins. 39And no
one after drinking old wine wants the new, for
they say, 'The old is better.'"

TRANSITION

Lord of the Sabbath

Two events—the disciples plucking grain and Jesus healing a man 's hand on the S abbath—have often been understood as express-

ing Jesus' authority over the Law of Moses. This concern is certainly expressed in the assertion: "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath" (Mt 12:8). But the evangelists have a more primary concern. In both events Jesus emphasized that keeping the spirit and intent of the law was more important than strictly adhering to the letter of its ritual requirements.

This point is emphasized by Jesus' question to those in the synagogue: "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" (Mk 3:4). Both Matthew and Mark address this issue in the story about the grain. Mark recounts Jesus' interpretation that the law was given for humanity's benefit; humanity was not created for the sake of the law (Mk 2:27). Matthew reports Jesus' reference to Hos 6:6, stressing God's desire for humans to put mercy, concern for people, before sacrifice as legalistic ritual observance (Mt 12:7).

- **Matthew 12:1–14**
- **Mark 2:23—3:6**
- **Luke 6:1–11**

Matthew 12:1–14

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

12 :1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. [2]When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, "Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath."

[3]He answered, "Haven't you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? [4]He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. [5]Or haven't you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? [6]I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. [7]If you had known what these words mean, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice,'[a] you would not have condemned the innocent. [8]For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

[9]Going on from that place, he went into their synagogue, [10]and a man with a shriveled hand was there. Looking for a reason to bring charges against Jesus, they asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

[11]He said to them, "If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? [12]How much more valuable is a person than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."

[13]Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." So he stretched it out and it was completely restored, just as sound as the other. [14]But the Pharisees went out and plotted how they might kill Jesus.

Mark 2:23—3:6

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

2 :23 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. [24]The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

[25]He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? [26]In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions."

[27]Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. [28]So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

3 [1]Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. [2]Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. [3]Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Stand up in front of everyone."

[4]Then Jesus asked them, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?" But they remained silent.

[5]He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. [6]Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 6 to 7
6	Augustus makes Judea a Roman province
6	Quirinius conducts a tax census of Syria and Judea
6–7	Judas the Galilean leads resistance against Romans (Ac 5:37)
7	Jesus questions the teachers in the temple (Lk 2:46)

[a] 7 Hosea 6:6

Luke 6:1–11

Jesus Is Lord of the Sabbath

6:1 One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and his disciples began to pick some heads of grain, rub them in their hands and eat the kernels. [2]Some of the Pharisees asked, "Why are you doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"

[3]Jesus answered them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? [4]He entered the house of God, and taking the consecrated bread, he ate what is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." [5]Then Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."

[6]On another Sabbath he went into the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was shriveled. [7]The Pharisees and the teachers of the law were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal on the Sabbath. [8]But Jesus knew what they were thinking and said to the man with the shriveled hand, "Get up and stand in front of everyone." So he got up and stood there.

[9]Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"

[10]He looked around at them all, and then said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was completely restored. [11]But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law were furious and began to discuss with one another what they might do to Jesus.

TRANSITION

Jesus' Followers

Mark presents the continuing growth of Jesus' ministry by contrasting two groups of his followers: a "large crowd" (Mk 3:7) and the "twelve" (3:14). These groups differ not only in their size, but also in their relationship to Jesus. The exuberance of the crowd remained a potential hazard to Jesus' ministry (3:9), so Jesus continued to silence the unclean spirits that exclaimed his identity (3:11, 12; see "Healing the Sick" at Mt 8:14). In contrast to the hindering crowd, Jesus selected twelve men who would "be with him" and extend his preaching and healing ministry (Mk 3:14, 15).

Luke likewise mentions both the multitude and the twelve, although in the opposite order. He may have placed the multitude last as a transition to his "Sermon on the Plain." The sermon is so-named because it was preached in a "level place" (Lk 6:17). The multitude, along with "a large crowd of his disciples," thus became the extended audience for that sermon (6:17, 20).

Matthew mentions only the multitude in this account, having already listed the twelve apostles earlier (Mt 10:2–4). In keeping with his interest in prophetic fulfillment, Matthew compares Jesus' efforts to limit the spread of his fame to the unassuming attitude of the Servant in the prophecies of Isaiah (Mt 12:18–21; Isa 42:1–4). Jesus came in humility and gentleness as the prophesied Servant.

- **Matthew 12:15–21**
- **Mark 3:7–19**
- **Luke 6:12–19**

Matthew 12:15–21

God's Chosen Servant

12:15 Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. A large crowd followed him, and he healed all who were ill. [16]He warned them not to tell others about him. [17]This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

[18]"Here is my servant whom I have chosen,
the one I love, in whom I delight;
I will put my Spirit on him,
and he will proclaim justice to the nations.
[19]He will not quarrel or cry out;
no one will hear his voice in the streets.
[20]A bruised reed he will not break,
and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out,
till he has brought justice through to victory.
[21] In his name the nations will put their hope."[a]

Mark 3:7–19

Crowds Follow Jesus

3:7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. [8]When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. [9]Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. [10]For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. [11]Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." [12]But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

[a] *21* Isaiah 42:1-4

Zealots Against the Romans (Lk 6:15)

The Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 37–100) provides the main source of information concerning a group known as the Zealots. The term "Zealots" refers to those who had a "zeal" for the Law (the Torah). Yet such zeal went beyond the Law. This mix of malcontents in Judea led the land against Rome during the Jewish War (A.D. 66–70). Their ranks appear to have included priests, bandit refugees, and others, and their goal was political independence from Rome.

Josephus reports about a number of Jerusalemites, under the leadership of the priest Eleazar, who in A.D. 66 stopped the sacrifices being made in the city on behalf of Caesar. This was considered by Rome a declaration of political independence, and it precipitated a civil war in the area. Eleazar's forces were joined by other revolutionaries and were successful in holding off a Roman legion in A.D. 68. It is to this coalition that Josephus first referred by the term "Zealots."

Eleazar ultimately used the temple as his fortress against the advances of the Roman general Vespasian. When Vespasian became emperor in A.D. 69, his son Titus assumed command of the war against the Jews. A great number of the Zealots were killed during Titus's siege of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The term "Zealot" eventually came to refer not only to the coalition of forces under Eleazar, but to all revolutionary groups who struggled against the Romans in the 1st century A.D.

One of Jesus' disciples, Simon, was "called the Zealot" (Lk 6:15). Certainly, Simon was not involved with the Zealot movement during the Jewish Wars, which occurred almost 40 years after Jesus' death. Probably "the Zealot" was applied to Simon in a general way because he was a malcontent who wanted the end of Roman rule in Palestine.

Jesus Appoints the Twelve

13 Jesus went up on a mountainside and called
to him those he wanted, and they came to him.
14 He appointed twelve[a] that they might be with
him and that he might send them out to preach
15 and to have authority to drive out demons.
16 These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to
whom he gave the name Peter), 17 James son
of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he
gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons
of thunder"), 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew,
Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus,
Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19 and Judas Is-
cariot, who betrayed him.

Luke 6:12–19

The Twelve Apostles

6 :12 One of those days Jesus went out to a
mountainside to pray, and spent the night
praying to God. 13 When morning came, he
called his disciples to him and chose twelve
of them, whom he also designated apostles:
14 Simon (whom he named Peter), his broth-
er Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew,
15 Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus,
Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 Judas son
of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a
traitor.

Blessings and Woes

17 He went down with them and stood on
a level place. A large crowd of his disciples
was there and a great number of people from
all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the
coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, 18 who
had come to hear him and to be healed of their
diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits
were cured, 19 and the people all tried to touch
him, because power was coming from him and
healing them all.

[a] 14 Some manuscripts *twelve—designating them apostles—*

TRANSITION

Sermon on the Mount or Plain

The presentations of Jesus' teachings in Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount" (Mt 5–7) and Luke's "Sermon on the Plain" (Lk 6:20–49) illustrate the so-called "Synoptic problem." There are tremendous similarities between their presentations, but also differences. The name "Synoptic" means that the Gospels view the life of Jesus from a common perspective. Yet the three Synoptic Gospels vary in what material they include and in how they arrange specific events, and such differences are apparent between Matthew's and Luke's sermons.

Some believe these differences resulted because Jesus repeated his teachings on various occasions and each evangelist provided only a summary of Jesus' teaching in each episode. Thus, Luke's "Sermon" is about a third the length of Matthew's. Others think these differences show that both Matthew and Luke used an earlier collection of Jesus' teachings that did not reveal the original setting in which the teachings were given. Thus, Matthew gathers a number of sayings from this collection or source for his "Sermon on the Mount," whereas Luke independently uses the source in forming his "Sermon on the Plain" and later treatment of prayer (see "Unassuming Godliness" at Mt 6:1). The source is usually called the "Q" source, apparently from the German word *Quelle,* meaning "source."

The Tiny Hebrew *Yod* (Mt 5:18)

Jewish people learned the Bible from early childhood, and Gentile observers sometimes praised them as a "nation of philosophers" because of their devotion to learning. Jewish teachers emphasized the absolute importance of the law in many ways. One way was to point out the necessity of keeping even the least commandment of the law. Yet another way was to emphasize the details of the law.

Such details might concern which commandments were more or less important. For instance, the teachers often regarded the law about the bird's nest (Dt 22:6, 7) as the least commandment, and honoring one's parents (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16) as the greatest. Both commandments included the promises "you may live long" and "it may go well with you" (which Jewish teachers sometimes interpreted as "have eternal life"). Thus God would give people the same reward for keeping the least commandment as for the greatest.

This equal reward was to Jewish teachers a graphic way of saying not to neglect even the smallest commandment (Mt 5:19). While they acknowledged that everyone, including themselves, had sinned, they warned that a person could not pick and choose among commandments, deciding that one was small enough to be ignored. To purposely reject any commandment was tantamount to rejecting God's right to rule one's life.

Jewish stories also emphasized the importance of keeping the details of the law. When Sarai's name was changed to Sarah, the letter *yod* (the smallest Hebrew letter) was removed from her name. According to some Jewish teachers, the *yod* cried out from generation to generation, lamenting, "God, you have taken me from the Bible. When will you restore me to the Bible?" Finally, when Moses' servant received the name "Joshua," the *yod* was restored.

In another story Solomon tried to uproot a *yod* from the Bible, whereupon God promised that a thousand Solomons would come and go, but God would not let a single *yod* be taken from the Bible. "So you see," said the teachers, "not even the smallest letter can pass from God's Word." Jesus probably alluded to a popular story line: not a single "letter," meaning a *yod*, would pass from the Bible (Mt 5:18). Thus disciples should pay attention to all that the Bible teaches.

Matthew had a theological interest in presenting Jesus as a "new Moses" who calls in to being the church as a "new Israel." Comparisons with Moses develop this theme. Matthew presents five major sermons by Jesus (Mt 5–7; 10; 13:1–52; 18; 24; 25), possibly alluding to the traditional "Five Books of Moses." The first of Matthew's sermons is set "on a mountainside" (Mt 5:1) and discusses fulfilling the law (5:17–48), recalling Moses receiving the law on Mount Sinai.

- **Matthew 5:1–48**
- **Luke 6:20–36**

Matthew 5:1–48

Introduction to the Sermon on the Mount

5 **:1** Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he
went up on a mountainside and sat down.
His disciples came to him, [2]and he began to
teach them.

Food & Drink
The salt used in ancient times was not refined, and there was always some proportion of chemicals present in addition to sodium chloride. If the fraction useful for flavoring food was leached away by dampness, what remained was without value. It was sometimes strewn on paths like gravel, since it was "no longer good for anything" (Mt 5:13).

The Beatitudes

He said:

[3]"Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
[4]Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.
[5]Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.
[6]Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for
righteousness,
for they will be filled.
[7]Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.
[8]Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.
[9]Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.
[10]Blessed are those who are persecuted
because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[11]"Blessed are you when people insult you,
persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil
against you because of me. [12]Rejoice and be
glad, because great is your reward in heaven,
for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

[13]"You are the salt of the earth. But if the
salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty

again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

14"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. 15Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

The Fulfillment of the Law

17"Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. 19Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Murder

21"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder,[a] and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' 22But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister[b,c] will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,'[d] is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, 24leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

25"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. 26Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

[a] *21* Exodus 20:13 [b] *22* The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a fellow disciple, whether man or woman; also in verse 23. [c] *22* Some manuscripts *brother or sister without cause* [d] *22* An Aramaic term of contempt [e] *27* Exodus 20:14 [f] *31* Deut. 24:1 [g] *37* Or *from evil* [h] *38* Exodus 21:24; Lev. 24:20; Deut. 19:21

Adultery

27"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.'[e] 28But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. 30And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

Divorce

31"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'[f] 32But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Oaths

33"Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.' 34But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; 35or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. 36And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. 37All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.[g]

Eye for Eye

38"You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.'[h] 39But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. 40And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. 41If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. 42Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

TIME CAPSULE **A.D. 9 to 12**

9–12	Marcus Ambibulus is prefect or governor of Judea
9	Three Roman legions under Varus are destroyed in Germany
9	The *Lex Papia Poppaea* provides for registration of Roman citizens
12–15	Annius Rufus is prefect or governor of Judea

Love for Enemies

43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love
your neighbor[a] and hate your enemy.' 44 But I
tell you, love your enemies and pray for those
who persecute you, 45 that you may be children
of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to
rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain
on the righteous and the unrighteous. 46 If you
love those who love you, what reward will you
get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?
47 And if you greet only your own people, what
are you doing more than others? Do not even
pagans do that? 48 Be perfect, therefore, as your
heavenly Father is perfect.

Luke 6:20–36

6 **:20** Looking at his disciples, he said:

"Blessed are you who are poor,
for yours is the kingdom of God.
21 Blessed are you who hunger now,
for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who weep now,
for you will laugh.
22 Blessed are you when people hate you,
when they exclude you and insult you
and reject your name as evil,
because of the Son of Man.

23 "Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

24 "But woe to you who are rich,
for you have already received your
comfort.
25 Woe to you who are well fed now,
for you will go hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will mourn and weep.
26 Woe to you when everyone speaks well of
you,
for that is how their ancestors treated the
false prophets.

Love for Enemies

27 "But to you who are listening I say: Love
your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
28 bless those who curse you, pray for those
who mistreat you. 29 If someone slaps you on
one cheek, turn to them the other also. If some-
one takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt
from them. 30 Give to everyone who asks you,
and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not
demand it back. 31 Do to others as you would
have them do to you.

32 "If you love those who love you, what cred-
it is that to you? Even sinners love those who
love them. 33 And if you do good to those who
are good to you, what credit is that to you?
Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those
from whom you expect repayment, what cred-
it is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners,

[a] *43* Lev. 19:18

Praying to Our Father (Mt 6:7, 9)

Jesus cautioned his disciples not to pray "like pagans," "babbling" and with "many words" (Mt 6:7). When Greeks and Romans prayed, they often called deities by as many different names and titles as possible. Also, their prayers frequently reminded the deity of any favors he or she owed the worshiper because of sacrifices the worshiper had offered.

Jewish people, however, were not supposed to barter with God or try to impress him with titles. They were to approach God with confidence that he was their Father, as the Old Testament taught them (see Ex 4:22; Isa 63:16). Most children in the ancient world saw their father as a strong provider and protector (with whom they did not need to bargain). Jewish prayers therefore regularly invoked God as "Our Father in heaven," and trusted him to provide (Mt 6:8, 9; 7:7–11).

Teaching His disciples to pray (Mt 6:9, 10), Jesus adapted a fairly common Jewish prayer called the *Kaddish* that came to be prayed regularly in the synagogues: "Exalted and hallowed be his great name . . . and may he cause his kingdom to rule . . ." This was a prayer for the future kingdom. The Jewish people longed for the ultimate coming of God's reign when he would rule the earth unchallenged and restore justice and mercy in all the world. At that time God's name would be "proved holy," shown to be holy (Eze 39:7, 27); people would no longer "profane" it by swearing oaths by it lightly or living in such a way as to dishonor it.

"Hallowing God's name" was a central principle of Jewish ethics: Live even among the Gentiles in such a manner that people will honor God. The reverse of such honorable behavior, "profaning God's name," was considered so odious that some teachers insisted those plotting to do evil should disguise themselves as Gentiles first! Those who would utter this prayer in sincerity—who yearn for God's name to be shown holy in the age to come—must live in the present in such a way as to honor that name now.

expecting to be repaid in full. 35But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

TRANSITION

Unassuming Godliness

Common religious practices included giving (Mt 6:2–4), praying (6:5–15), and fasting (6:16–18). The Jewish religious leaders considered keeping the law and these three practices as the most important proofs of piety. Jesus did not condemn these pious deeds or rebuke the expectation of reward, but he did warn that these practices should not be done to receive human recognition.

Jesus offered the Lord's Prayer as a pattern for his disciples. Luke associates the teachings about prayer (Lk 11:1–13) with Jesus' journey to Jerusalem (Lk 9–18), and does not include them with the Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6). See "Jesus' Final Journey" at Mt 8:18.

Both Matthew and Luke contrasted trusting in material wealth for security with seeking the kingdom of God (Mt 6:19–34; Lk 12:22–34). True treasures are to be found "in heaven," not "on earth" (Mt 6:19, 20). Again Luke associates these teachings not with the Sermon, but with the journey to Jerusalem (Lk 12).

- **Matthew 6:1–34**
- **Luke 11:1–4**
- **Luke 12:22–34**

Matthew 6:1–34

Giving to the Needy

6:1 "Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

2"So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 3But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, 4so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Prayer

5"And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. 7And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. 8Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9"This, then, is how you should pray:

"'Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,

10 your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11 Give us today our daily bread.
12 And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
13 And lead us not into temptation,[a]
but deliver us from the evil one.[b]'

14 For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Fasting

16 "When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 17 But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, 18 so that it will not be obvious to others that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Treasures in Heaven

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,[c] your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy,[d] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Do Not Worry

25 "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? 26 Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? 27 Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life[e]?

28 "And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. 29 Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 30 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith? 31 So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Luke 11:1–4

Jesus' Teaching on Prayer

11:1 One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

2 He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"'Father,[f]
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.[g]
3 Give us each day our daily bread.
4 Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.[h]
And lead us not into temptation.[i]'"

Luke 12:22–34

Do Not Worry

12:22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. 23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. 24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! 25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life[j]? 26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

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[a] *13* The Greek for *temptation* can also mean *testing*.
[b] *13* Or *from evil*; some late manuscripts *one, / for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.*
[c] *22* The Greek for *healthy* here implies *generous*.
[d] *23* The Greek for *unhealthy* here implies *stingy*.
[e] *27* Or *single cubit to your height*
[f] *2* Some manuscripts *Our Father in heaven*
[g] *2* Some manuscripts *come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*
[h] *4* Greek *everyone who is indebted to us*
[i] *4* Some manuscripts *temptation, but deliver us from the evil one*
[j] *25* Or *single cubit to your height*

27"Consider how the wild flowers grow. They
do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Sol-
omon in all his splendor was dressed like one
of these. 28If that is how God clothes the grass
of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow
is thrown into the fire, how much more will he
clothe you—you of little faith! 29And do not set
your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not
worry about it. 30For the pagan world runs af-
ter all such things, and your Father knows that
you need them. 31But seek his kingdom, and
these things will be given to you as well.
32"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Fa-
ther has been pleased to give you the kingdom.
33Sell your possessions and give to the poor.
Provide purses for yourselves that will not
wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never
fail, where no thief comes near and no moth
destroys. 34For where your treasure is, there
your heart will be also.

TRANSITION

Doing the Will of God

Both Matthew and Luke end their sermons with Jesus' emphasis on doing God's will. At the end of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, Jesus challenged his listeners to enter the "narrow gate" (Mt 7:13, 14). Both evangelists close with an illustration emphasizing the supreme importance of obedience. The obedient person is likened to one who builds his house on a rock that stands the storms (Mt 7:24–27; Lk 6:46–49).

- **Matthew 7:1–29**
- **Luke 6:37–49**
- **Luke 11:5–13**

Matthew 7:1–29

Judging Others

7 :1 "Do not judge, or you too will be judged.
2For in the same way you judge others, you
will be judged, and with the measure you use,
it will be measured to you.
3"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust
in your brother's eye and pay no attention to
the plank in your own eye? 4How can you say
to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of
your eye,' when all the time there is a plank
in your own eye? 5You hypocrite, first take
the plank out of your own eye, and then you
will see clearly to remove the speck from your
brother's eye.
6"Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not
throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may
trample them under their feet, and turn and
tear you to pieces.

Ask, Seek, Knock

7"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you
will find; knock and the door will be opened to
you. 8For everyone who asks receives; the one
who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks,
the door will be opened.
9"Which of you, if your son asks for bread,
will give him a stone? 10Or if he asks for a fish,
will give him a snake? 11If you, then, though
you are evil, know how to give good gifts to
your children, how much more will your Fa-
ther in heaven give good gifts to those who ask
him! 12So in everything, do to others what you
would have them do to you, for this sums up
the Law and the Prophets.

The Narrow and Wide Gates

13"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide
is the gate and broad is the road that leads to
destruction, and many enter through it. 14But
small is the gate and narrow the road that leads
to life, and only a few find it.

True and False Prophets

15"Watch out for false prophets. They come
to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they
are ferocious wolves. 16By their fruit you will
recognize them. Do people pick grapes from
thornbushes, or figs from thistles? 17Likewise,
every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree
bears bad fruit. 18A good tree cannot bear bad
fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.
19Every tree that does not bear good fruit is
cut down and thrown into the fire. 20Thus, by
their fruit you will recognize them.

True and False Disciples

21"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord,
Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but
only the one who does the will of my Father
who is in heaven. 22Many will say to me on that
day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your
name and in your name drive out demons and
in your name perform many miracles?' 23Then
I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away
from me, you evildoers!'

The Wise and Foolish Builders

24"Therefore everyone who hears these
words of mine and puts them into practice is
like a wise man who built his house on the
rock. 25The rain came down, the streams rose,
and the winds blew and beat against that house;
yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation

Culture & Society
In traditional societies the protocols of hospitality are formal at every level of society, not just in the courts of state or diplomacy. A householder has the duty to receive guests and help them on their way (Lk 11:8). He also has the responsibility of protecting the society from interlopers or people who are not what they seem.

on the rock. [26]But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. [27]The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

[28]When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, [29]because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Luke 6:37–49

Judging Others

6:37 "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. [38]Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."

[39]He also told them this parable: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? [40]The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

[41]"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? [42]How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

A Tree and Its Fruit

[43]"No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. [44]Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briers. [45]A good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and an evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

The Wise and Foolish Builders

[46]"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? [47]As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. [48]They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. [49]But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

Luke 11:5–13

11:5 Then Jesus said to them, "Suppose you have a friend, and you go to him at midnight and say, 'Friend, lend me three loaves of bread; [6]a friend of mine on a journey has come to me, and I have no food to offer him.' [7]And suppose the one inside answers, 'Don't bother me. The door is already locked, and my children and I are in bed. I can't get up and give you anything.' [8]I tell you, even though he will not get up and give you the bread because of friendship, yet because of your shameless audacity[a] he will surely get up and give you as much as you need.

[9]"So I say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. [10]For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

[11]"Which of you fathers, if your son asks for[b] a fish, will give him a snake instead? [12]Or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? [13]If you then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

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[a] *8* Or *yet to preserve his good name* [b] *11* Some manuscripts *for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for*

TRANSITION

In Capernaum and Nain

Since the 2nd century A.D. Christian theologians have discussed the relationship of John's "second sign" (Jn 4:54; see "The First of Seven Signs" at Jn 2:1) to the healing stories in Mt 8:5–13 and Lk 7:1–10. The similarities in the stories have suggested to some that the same healing is described in all three accounts. In addition, the Greek word which Matthew uses for "ser-

vant" (Mt 8:6) can designate either a "servant" (Lk 7:7) or a "son" (Jn 4:46 uses the usual Greek word for "son"). All agree that at least Matthew and Luke are recounting a single incident.

Matthew contrasts the faith of the Gentile centurion with that of many of Jesus' fellow Jews (Mt 8:10–12). Possibly Jesus and the centurion speak directly with each other in Matthew's account to highlight this contrast. Luke's account indicates that the centurion sent Jewish intermediaries (Lk 7:3–5). Luke also describes the boy as "about to die" (7:2), and follows his healing with the report of Jesus raising the dead son of a widow residing in Nain (7:11–17). Thus Luke prepares for Jesus' response to John the Baptist: "the dead are raised" (7:22).

- **Matthew 8:5–13**
- **Luke 7:1–17**
- **John 4:46–54**

Matthew 8:5–13

The Faith of the Centurion

8:5 When Jesus had entered Capernaum,
a centurion came to him, asking for help.
6"Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

7Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"

8The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

10When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 11I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

13Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.

Punica granatum (pomegranate) tree in Maresha, Israel, in August

Politics & Government

A centurion was a soldier in the Roman legions who had command of a unit of approximately 80 men (thus not 100 men, as one might conclude from the name "centurion"). Centurions were generally practical career men. It was a responsible position (Lk 7:6–8), and centurions sometimes accumulated a certain amount of wealth during their careers.

Luke 7:1–17

The Faith of the Centurion

7:1 When Jesus had finished saying all this
to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum. 2There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die. 3The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this, 5because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue." 6So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. 7That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. 8For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

9When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel." 10Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son

11Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went

along with him. 12As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. 13When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry."

14Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I say to you, get up!" 15The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

16They were all filled with awe and praised God. "A great prophet has appeared among us," they said. "God has come to help his people." 17This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

John 4:46–54

4:46 Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

48"Unless you people see signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe."

49The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies."

50"Go," Jesus replied, "your son will live."

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. 51While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 52When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him."

53Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and his whole household believed.

54This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 13 to 15
13	Tiberius begins coregency with Augustus
14–31	Sejanus, prefect of Rome, increases size of Praetorian guard
14	Augustus dies and Tiberius becomes emperor (Lk 3:1)
14	The Senate makes Augustus one of the gods of Rome
15–26	Valerius Gratus is prefect or governor of Judea

TRANSITION

Jesus Allays John's Doubts

Matthew's and Luke's accounts of the delegation from John the Baptist to Jesus agree almost word for word. Only brief sections in the middle of this story differ (see Mt 11:12–14 and Lk 7:29, 30).

Three basic issues were at stake as John the Baptist sent his followers to ask Jesus if he was truly the "one who is to come," the promised Messiah (Mt 11:2, 3; Lk 7:19). First, was the Baptist to maintain his belief that Jesus was indeed the coming One? It may have been that the Baptist was expecting more emphasis upon judgment in Jesus' ministry (see Mt 3:7–12). Jesus responded by directing John's attention to other signs of his Galilean ministry fulfilling prophetic expectation (Mt 11:4–6).

The second issue concerned Jesus' identification of the Baptist as the prophet who would prepare for the coming Messiah (Lk 7:24–28). The Jewish expectation for the future was for Elijah to return, as promised in the Old Testament (Mal 4:5). In Matthew's account Jesus identified the Baptist as fulfilling the promise (Mt 11:14).

Finally, Jesus criticized those in "this generation" who rejected both his own ministry and that of the Baptist (Mt 11:16–19). Luke's account points out that the Pharisees and lawyers, by rejecting the Baptist, had rejected the very will and purpose of God (Lk 7:29, 30).

- **Matthew 11:2–19**
- **Luke 7:18–35**

Matthew 11:2–19

11:2 When John, who was in prison, heard about the deeds of the Messiah, he sent his disciples 3to ask him, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

4Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: 5The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy[a] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 6Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

7As John's disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 8If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings' palaces. 9Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than

[a] *5* The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

Matthew and Old Testament Fulfillment (Mt 11:10)

Matthew quotes the words of Malachi, which in the Old Testament read, "I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me" (Mal 3:1). The Old Testament words seemed to speak of an agent Yahweh would send to prepare for a coming day of judgment. This messenger was identified as the prophet Elijah (Mal 4:5), who became a major figure in Jewish hope for the future age. Matthew, though, reinterpreted Mal 3:1 to refer to John the Baptist: "this is the one about whom it is written" (Mt 11:9–11).

By preparing the way for Jesus, John the Baptist fulfilled the role prophesied of Elijah. In his Gospel, Matthew emphasizes the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, so he makes it clear to his readers that Jesus identified John as Elijah (Mt 17:11–13) and that John was the one spoken of by the prophets (Mt 3:3).

Matthew also announced fulfillment of Hosea's prophecy, "Out of Egypt I called my Son" (Mt 2:15). The first line of this verse in the Old Testament (Hos 11:1) shows that the prophet was actually referring to God calling Israel out of Egypt in the Exodus. But Matthew reinterpreted the words as a picture of God's providing salvation by bringing the child Jesus back from Egypt.

Some critics have accused Matthew of quoting the Old Testament out of context. They fail, however, to recognize Matthew's method of applying the Old Testament. The problem is not that Matthew does not know the Hosea passage, but that he applies it in a different way than most modern readers would expect.

When Matthew cites from the prophet Hosea, he is making a broader point about Jesus' place in Israel's history. Jesus was the heir of Israel's history (Mt 1:1–17), who went into exile in Egypt as Judah did in Babylon, and who spent 40 days being tested in the wilderness (4:1, 2) as Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness. Ancient Jewish readers, conversant in the Bible and more accustomed to various methods of applying Scripture, would have caught Matthew's point more readily than do modern readers.

a prophet. 10This is the one about whom it is written:

"'I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'[a]

11Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. 12From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence,[b] and violent people have been raiding it. 13For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. 14And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. 15Whoever has ears, let them hear.

16"To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others:

17"'We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not mourn.'

18For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' 19The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her deeds."

[a] *10* Mal. 3:1 [b] *12* Or *been forcefully advancing*
[c] *22* The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin. [d] *27* Mal. 3:1

Luke 7:18–35

Jesus and John the Baptist

7:18 John's disciples told him about all these things. Calling two of them, 19he sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?"

20When the men came to Jesus, they said, "John the Baptist sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or should we expect someone else?'"

21At that very time Jesus cured many who had diseases, sicknesses and evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. 22So he replied to the messengers, "Go back and report to John what you have seen and heard: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy[c] are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. 23Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me."

24After John's messengers left, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? 25If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear expensive clothes and indulge in luxury are in palaces. 26But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27This is the one about whom it is written:

"'I will send my messenger ahead of you,
who will prepare your way before you.'[d]

28 I tell you, among those born of women there
is no one greater than John; yet the one who is
least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."
29 (All the people, even the tax collectors,
when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged
that God's way was right, because they had
been baptized by John. 30 But the Pharisees and
the experts in the law rejected God's purpose
for themselves, because they had not been bap-
tized by John.)
31 Jesus went on to say, "To what, then, can I
compare the people of this generation? What
are they like? 32 They are like children sitting in
the marketplace and calling out to each other:

"'We played the pipe for you,
and you did not dance;
we sang a dirge,
and you did not cry.'

33 For John the Baptist came neither eating
bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has
a demon.' 34 The Son of Man came eating and
drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and
a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sin-
ners.' 35 But wisdom is proved right by all her
children."

TRANSITION

Anointing in Galilee

Luke's report of a woman anointing Jesus focuses on the question of Jesus' identity. Since the woman who anointed Jesus "lived a sinful life" (Lk 7:37), Simon the Pharisee began to question within himself whether Jesus was genuinely a prophet (7:39). By his response, Jesus validated his prophetic credentials. Not only was he aware of her sinful past (7:47), but he also knew Simon's thoughts as well. By forgiving the woman's sins (7:48), Jesus made clear to those assembled that he was more than just a prophet (7:49). The woman possibly already believed that Jesus brought forgiveness, and thus offered duties which went well beyond the usual customs of hospitality and respect (7:44–47).

The other Gospels relate similar stories about a woman who anointed Jesus (see Mt 26:6–13; Mk 14:3–9; Jn 12:1–8). Their accounts, however, are located specifically in Bethany and focus on the preparation for Jesus' burial. See "Plot, Anointing, Betrayal" at Mt 26:1.

• **Luke 7:36–50**

Luke

Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman

7:36 When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table.
37 A woman in that town who lived a sinful life
learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's
house, so she came there with an alabaster jar
of perfume. 38 As she stood behind him at his
feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with
her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair,
kissed them and poured perfume on them.
39 When the Pharisee who had invited him
saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were
a prophet, he would know who is touching him
and what kind of woman she is—that she is a
sinner."
40 Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have some-
thing to tell you."
"Tell me, teacher," he said.
41 "Two people owed money to a certain
moneylender. One owed him five hundred de-
narii,[a] and the other fifty. 42 Neither of them had
the money to pay him back, so he forgave the
debts of both. Now which of them will love him
more?"
43 Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had
the bigger debt forgiven."
"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.
44 Then he turned toward the woman and
said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came
into your house. You did not give me any water
for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears
and wiped them with her hair. 45 You did not
give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I
entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You
did not put oil on my head, but she has poured
perfume on my feet. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her
many sins have been forgiven—as her great
love has shown. But whoever has been for-
given little loves little."
48 Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are for-
given."

[a] *41* A denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see Matt. 20:2).

49 The other guests began to say among
themselves, "Who is this who even forgives
sins?"
50 Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has
saved you; go in peace."

TRANSITION

Jesus and Beelzebul

Each of the Synoptic Gospels reports Jesus' opponents claiming that his power came from Beelzebul and that his supernatural deeds resulted from demonic influence. Mark indicates that at least some of Jesus' own people, his family and relatives, had this concern, thinking he was "out of his mind" (Mk 3:21, 31–35). Matthew and Luke, though, separate Jesus' family from this allegation. In Matthew's account, the family did not arrive for their visit until after Jesus had countered the charge by the Pharisees (Mt 12:24, 46–50). Luke reports the family's visit at an earlier stage of Jesus' ministry (Lk 8:19–21), thus not connecting it with the Beelzebul accusation. Only Luke tells of a woman who showed the proper response to Jesus' healings and exorcisms: rather than associate him with demons, she offered a blessing for his mother (Lk 11:27, 28).

- **Matthew 12:22–50**
- **Mark 3:20–35**
- **Luke 11:14–36**
- **Luke 8:19–21**

Matthew 12:22–50

Jesus and Beelzebul

12 :22 Then they brought him a demon-
possessed man who was blind and mute,
and Jesus healed him, so that he could both
talk and see. 23 All the people were astonished
and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"
24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they
said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the prince of de-
mons, that this fellow drives out demons."
25 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to
them, "Every kingdom divided against itself
will be ruined, and every city or household
divided against itself will not stand. 26 If Satan
drives out Satan, he is divided against himself.
How then can his kingdom stand? 27 And if I
drive out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do
your people drive them out? So then, they will
be your judges. 28 But if it is by the Spirit of God
that I drive out demons, then the kingdom of
God has come upon you.
29 "Or again, how can anyone enter a strong
man's house and carry off his possessions un-
less he first ties up the strong man? Then he
can plunder his house.
30 "Whoever is not with me is against me,
and whoever does not gather with me scat-
ters. 31 And so I tell you, every kind of sin and
slander can be forgiven, but blasphemy against
the Spirit will not be forgiven. 32 Anyone who
speaks a word against the Son of Man will be
forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the
Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this
age or in the age to come.
33 "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good,
or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for
a tree is recognized by its fruit. 34 You brood of
vipers, how can you who are evil say anything
good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is
full of. 35 A good man brings good things out
of the good stored up in him, and an evil man
brings evil things out of the evil stored up in

Offspring of Vipers (Mt 12:34)

Jesus' contemporaries considered the Pharisees to be model religious people. Yet in some of Jesus' encounters with Pharisees (Mt 3:7; 12:24), He called them a "brood of vipers" (Mt 12:34), that is, "offspring of snakes." Calling someone a snake was an insult, but calling someone the "child of a snake" was even worse.

Even though the Greek historian Herodotus (484–425 B.C.) lived 5 centuries before Jesus, an idea that Herodotus had about Arabian vipers was still associated with vipers in general by many people of Jesus' day. Although most reptiles lay eggs, people believed that viper eggs hatched inside their mother's stomach. The baby vipers would then eat their way through their mother's stomach to be born, killing their mother in the process. According to some ancient writers (including Herodotus), mother vipers ate the father vipers while the mothers were pregnant, so the baby vipers avenged their father by killing the mother.

Murdering one's mother or father was the crime ancient people thought most horrible. Even if one killed one parent to avenge the murder of the other, Greeks thought the child who committed this avenging murder would be hounded by avenging spirits called the "Furies." Jewish people also considered the murder of parents or other blood relatives to be an inconceivably wicked crime.

By calling the religious Pharisees "children of vipers," Jesus may have compared them with parent murderers, thus implying that they were the most vile and evil people possible. Since he openly associated the title with murder and bloodshed (Mt 23:33–35), the Pharisees were no doubt offended.

him. [36]But I tell you that everyone will have to give account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken. [37]For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Sign of Jonah

[38]Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you."

[39]He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. [40]For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. [41]The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. [42]The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here.

[43]"When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. [44]Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. [45]Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first. That is how it will be with this wicked generation."

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

[46]While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. [47]Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."

[48]He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" [49]Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. [50]For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 15 to 18
15		Annas is deposed from the high priesthood
17		Gnaeus Piso is made legate of Syria
17		Syria and Judea petition Rome to lower their taxes
18–36		Caiaphas is high priest in Jerusalem (Mt 26:3, 57)
18		Ovid, the Roman poet, dies in exile

Mark 3:20–35

Jesus Accused by His Family and by Teachers of the Law

3:20 Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. [21]When his family[a] heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, "He is out of his mind."

[22]And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, "He is possessed by Beelzebul! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons."

[23]So Jesus called them over to him and began to speak to them in parables: "How can Satan drive out Satan? [24]If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. [25]If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. [26]And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. [27]In fact, no one can enter a strong man's house without first tying him up. Then he can plunder the strong man's house. [28]Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, [29]but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin."

[30]He said this because they were saying, "He has an impure spirit."

[31]Then Jesus' mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. [32]A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, "Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you."

[33]"Who are my mother and my brothers?" he asked.

[34]Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! [35]Whoever does God's will is my brother and sister and mother."

Luke 11:14–36

Jesus and Beelzebul

11:14 Jesus was driving out a demon that was mute. When the demon left, the man who had been mute spoke, and the crowd was amazed. [15]But some of them said, "By Beelzebul, the prince of demons, he is driving out demons." [16]Others tested him by asking for a sign from heaven.

[a] *21* Or *his associates*

17 Jesus knew their thoughts and said to
them: "Any kingdom divided against itself will
be ruined, and a house divided against itself
will fall. 18 If Satan is divided against himself,
how can his kingdom stand? I say this because
you claim that I drive out demons by Beelze-
bul. 19 Now if I drive out demons by Beelzebul,
by whom do your followers drive them out? So
then, they will be your judges. 20 But if I drive
out demons by the finger of God, then the king-
dom of God has come upon you.
21 "When a strong man, fully armed, guards
his own house, his possessions are safe. 22 But
when someone stronger attacks and overpow-
ers him, he takes away the armor in which the
man trusted and divides up his plunder.
23 "Whoever is not with me is against me, and
whoever does not gather with me scatters.
24 "When an impure spirit comes out of a per-
son, it goes through arid places seeking rest
and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return
to the house I left.' 25 When it arrives, it finds
the house swept clean and put in order. 26 Then
it goes and takes seven other spirits more wick-
ed than itself, and they go in and live there. And
the final condition of that person is worse than
the first."
27 As Jesus was saying these things, a woman
in the crowd called out, "Blessed is the mother
who gave you birth and nursed you."
28 He replied, "Blessed rather are those who
hear the word of God and obey it."

The Sign of Jonah

29 As the crowds increased, Jesus said, "This
is a wicked generation. It asks for a sign, but
none will be given it except the sign of Jonah.
30 For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so
also will the Son of Man be to this generation.
31 The Queen of the South will rise at the judg-
ment with the people of this generation and
condemn them, for she came from the ends of
the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom; and
now something greater than Solomon is here.
32 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judg-
ment with this generation and condemn it, for
they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and
now something greater than Jonah is here.

The Lamp of the Body

33 "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place
where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. In-
stead they put it on its stand, so that those
who come in may see the light. 34 Your eye is
the lamp of your body. When your eyes are
healthy,[a] your whole body also is full of light.
But when they are unhealthy,[b] your body also
is full of darkness. 35 See to it, then, that the
light within you is not darkness. 36 Therefore, if
your whole body is full of light, and no part of
it dark, it will be just as full of light as when a
lamp shines its light on you."

Luke 8:19–21

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

8:19 Now Jesus' mother and brothers came
to see him, but they were not able to get
near him because of the crowd. 20 Someone told
him, "Your mother and brothers are standing
outside, wanting to see you."
21 He replied, "My mother and brothers are
those who hear God's word and put it into prac-
tice."

TRANSITION

Parables by the Sea

Each of the Synoptic Gospels relates Jesus' parable of the sower with his purpose for teaching in parables. Jesus used parables not only to reveal spiritual truth, but also to conceal it from those who were "outside" (Mark 4:11). The somewhat atypical parable of the sower works well to illustrate this purpose. It is really an allegory where each type of soil symbolizes a type of response to the gospel. Since the symbolism was not immediately obvious, Jesus had to explain it to his disciples if they were to understand it properly (Mt 13:18–23; Mk 4:13–20; Lk 8:11–15).

The same is true of the parable of the tares which Jesus also explained as an allegory (Mt 13:24–30, 36–43). Contrasting these two parables with others Jesus told shows that most of his parables were very short stories that clearly illustrated a single spiritual truth. Most of the parables are to be interpreted as either simple metaphors or similes rather than as allegories.

- **Matthew 13:1–52**
- **Mark 4:1–34**
- **Luke 8:1–18**
- **Luke 13:18–21**

Matthew 13:1–52

The Parable of the Sower

13:1 That same day Jesus went out of the
house and sat by the lake. 2 Such large
crowds gathered around him that he got into a
boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on
the shore. 3 Then he told them many things in
parables, saying: "A farmer went out to sow his

[a] *34* The Greek for *healthy* here implies *generous*.
[b] *34* The Greek for *unhealthy* here implies *stingy*.

seed. 4As he was scattering the seed, some fell
along the path, and the birds came and ate it
up. 5Some fell on rocky places, where it did not
have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because
the soil was shallow. 6But when the sun came
up, the plants were scorched, and they with-
ered because they had no root. 7Other seed fell
among thorns, which grew up and choked the
plants. 8Still other seed fell on good soil, where
it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty
times what was sown. 9Whoever has ears, let
them hear."

10The disciples came to him and asked,
"Why do you speak to the people in parables?"

11He replied, "Because the knowledge of
the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been
given to you, but not to them. 12Whoever has
will be given more, and they will have an abun-
dance. Whoever does not have, even what they
have will be taken from them. 13This is why I
speak to them in parables:

"Though seeing, they do not see;
though hearing, they do not hear or
understand.

14In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

"'You will be ever hearing but never
understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never
perceiving.
15For this people's heart has become
calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.'[a]

16But blessed are your eyes because they see,
and your ears because they hear. 17For truly I
tell you, many prophets and righteous people
longed to see what you see but did not see it,
and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

18"Listen then to what the parable of the sow-
er means: 19When anyone hears the message
about the kingdom and does not understand
it, the evil one comes and snatches away what
was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown
along the path. 20The seed falling on rocky
ground refers to someone who hears the word
and at once receives it with joy. 21But since they
have no root, they last only a short time. When
trouble or persecution comes because of the
word, they quickly fall away. 22The seed falling
among the thorns refers to someone who hears
the word, but the worries of this life and the
deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, mak-
ing it unfruitful. 23But the seed falling on good
soil refers to someone who hears the word and
understands it. This is the one who produces a
crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times
what was sown."

The Parable of the Weeds

24Jesus told them another parable: "The king-
dom of heaven is like a man who sowed good
seed in his field. 25But while everyone was
sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds
among the wheat, and went away. 26When the
wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the
weeds also appeared.

27"The owner's servants came to him and
said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your
field? Where then did the weeds come from?'

28"'An enemy did this,' he replied.

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to
go and pull them up?'

29"'No,' he answered, 'because while you are
pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat
with them. 30Let both grow together until the
harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters:
First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles
to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring
it into my barn.'"

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

31He told them another parable: "The king-
dom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a
man took and planted in his field. 32Though it
is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows,
it is the largest of garden plants and becomes
a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its
branches."

33He told them still another parable: "The
kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a wom-
an took and mixed into about sixty pounds[b] of
flour until it worked all through the dough."

34Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd
in parables; he did not say anything to them

Agriculture & Herding
Jesus' parables taught spiritual truths through practical illustrations, such as sowing of seed. Plowing in ancient Israel was not deep, and it could be done either before or after the sower scattered the seed. Rainfall was irregular and often inadequate. The success of a growing season in a particular plot could not be predicted, and for that reason a good harvest was all the more appreciated (Mt 13:8).

[a] *15* Isaiah 6:9,10 (see Septuagint) [b] *33* Or about 27 kilograms

without using a parable. [35]So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

"I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden since the
creation of the world."[a]

The Parable of the Weeds Explained

[36]Then he left the crowd and went into the house. His disciples came to him and said, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field."

[37]He answered, "The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. [38]The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the people of the kingdom. The weeds are the people of the evil one, [39]and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.

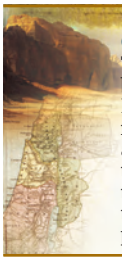
[40]"As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age. [41]The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil. [42]They will throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. [43]Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Whoever has ears, let them hear.

The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

[44]"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

[45]"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. [46]When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

[a] *35* Psalm 78:2



Geography & Environment

The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake, small but deep, with good fishing (Mt 13:47). Fishermen threw their dragnets by hand from small boats, and dragged the nets along the bottom of the lake. The edge of the net was pulled down by weights to snare the fish. Fish were a very important part of the Roman diet, and the Mediterranean Sea provided them.

The Parable of the Net

[47]"Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. [48]When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. [49]This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous [50]and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[51]"Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

"Yes," they replied.

[52]He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

Mark 4:1–34

The Parable of the Sower

4 :1 Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. [2]He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: [3]"Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. [4]As he was scattering the seed, some fell

How to Understand a Parable (Mk 4:2)

Ministers today often use sermon illustrations to help their hearers understand a sermon's point. In the same way, ancient Jewish teachers often told stories to illustrate whatever moral principle they were trying to communicate. Sometimes these parables had one central point. In other cases, such as Jesus' parable of the sower and the four soils (Mk 4:2–8), parables included several points of comparison.

Sometimes sages would tell a parable or a riddle which hearers would understand only if they had the key to interpretation. Usually only disciples of that teacher who spent enough time with him to learn his teachings would understand his point. This might happen with Jewish teachers who felt that some subjects in particular were best discussed only in private or in very small gatherings.

With some parables, then, the details had symbolic significance. This teaching device was a way of encouraging students to consider deeply the teacher's words and to weed out the uncommitted. The stories conveyed truth to attentive hearers who were eager to understand. At the same time the figurative language sometimes veiled truth from persons who did not want to believe it. While the multitude heard Jesus' parable (Mk 4:1, 2), only his disciples sought its meaning in private (Mk 4:10; Luke 8:9).

Because Jewish parables were usually stories, we understand Jesus' parables best when we consider them as stories. For the disciples, Jesus interpreted the details of the parable of the sower (Mk 4:13–20). For the most part, however, rather than reading meaning into every detail, we should try to catch the lesson or lessons of the story as a whole.

along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. 6But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

9Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

10When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables 12so that,

"'they may be ever seeing but never
perceiving,
and ever hearing but never
understanding;
otherwise they might turn and be
forgiven!'[a]"

13Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? 14The farmer sows the word. 15Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. 16Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. 17But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. 18Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. 20Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown."

A Lamp on a Stand

21He said to them, "Do you bring in a lamp to put it under a bowl or a bed? Instead, don't you put it on its stand? 22For whatever is hidden is meant to be disclosed, and whatever is concealed is meant to be brought out into the open. 23If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear."

24"Consider carefully what you hear," he continued. "With the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and even more. 25Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them."

The Parable of the Growing Seed

26He also said, "This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. 27Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. 28All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. 29As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come."

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

30Again he said, "What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use

[a] *12* Isaiah 6:9,10

to describe it? 31It is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth. 32Yet when planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade."

33With many similar parables Jesus spoke the word to them, as much as they could understand. 34He did not say anything to them without using a parable. But when he was alone with his own disciples, he explained everything.

Luke 8:1–18

The Parable of the Sower

8:1 After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, 2and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; 3Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

4While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable: 5"A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up. 6Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture. 7Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants. 8Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown."

When he said this, he called out, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

9His disciples asked him what this parable meant. 10He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that,

> "'though seeing, they may not see;
> though hearing, they may not
> understand.'[a]

11"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. 12Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. 14The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. 15But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

A Lamp on a Stand

16"No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand, so that those who come in can see the light. 17For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. 18Therefore consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more; whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them."

Science & Technology
Clay lamps from as early as 3000 B.C. have been found in Mesopotamia. The typical clay lamp has a reservoir for the oil and a channel or groove to hold the wick (Lk 8:16). Different kinds of oil were used for fuel, notably olive oil and other vegetable oils, but other fuels included fish or animal fat, and possibly petroleum.

Luke 13:18–21

The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

13:18 Then Jesus asked, "What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? 19It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds perched in its branches."

20Again he asked, "What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? 21It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds[b] of flour until it worked all through the dough."

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 18 to 26
18	Antipas builds city of Tiberias by the Sea of Galilee
19	Tiberius expels the Jews from Rome
26–36	Pontius Pilate is prefect of Judea (Mk 15:1)
26	The 15th year of Tiberius (counting from his coregency)
26	Tiberius begins period of retirement on island of Capri

[a] *10* Isaiah 6:9 [b] *21* Or about 27 kilograms

TRANSITION

Crossing to the East Shore

Jesus' brief visit to the region of the Decapolis, east of the Sea of Galilee, was marked by two episodes: the calming of a storm and the healing of demon possession. Both episodes focus on the fear and awe of those who witnessed the happenings (Lk 8:25, 34–37), and on Jesus' ability to bring peace. Jesus demonstrated his authority over both the natural and supernatural realms by calming the storm on the lake (Mk 4:39) and by ending the violence caused by the unclean spirits named "Legion" (Mk 5:2–5, 9, 15).

Matthew's account of the exorcism provides considerably less detail than do the accounts of Mark and Luke. Such matters as the man's living conditions among the tombs (Mk 5:2–5; Lk 8:27, 29) and the name "Legion" (Mk 5:9; Lk 8:30) are not mentioned. More significantly, Matthew states that there were "two demon-possessed men" (Mt 8:28). Similarly Matthew reports the healing of two blind men (Mt 20:29–34), whereas Mark and Luke mention only one (Mk 10:46–52; Lk 18:35–43). Some have suggested that Matthew mentions two men in both cases to confirm the validity of their testimony in accordance with Dt 19:15 (see Mt 18:16).

- **Matthew 8:23–34**
- **Mark 4:35—5:20**
- **Luke 8:22–39**

Matthew 8:23–34

Jesus Calms the Storm

8:23 Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. 24Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. 25The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!"

26He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

27The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

Jesus Restores Two Demon-Possessed Men

28When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes,[a] two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. 29"What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

30Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. 31The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

32He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. 33Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. 34Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

Mark 4:35—5:20

Jesus Calms the Storm

4:35 That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." 36Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. 37A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. 38Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

39He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

40He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

41They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man

5 1They went across the lake to the region of the Gerasenes.[a] 2When Jesus got out of the boat, a man with an impure spirit came from the tombs to meet him. 3This man lived in the tombs, and no one could bind him anymore, not even with a chain. 4For he had often been chained hand and foot, but he tore the chains apart and broke the irons on his feet. No one was strong enough to subdue him. 5Night and day among the tombs and in the hills he would cry out and cut himself with stones.

6When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and fell on his knees in front of him. 7He shouted at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God's name don't torture me!" 8For Jesus had said to him, "Come out of this man, you impure spirit!"

9Then Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"My name is Legion," he replied, "for we are

[a] *28,1* Some manuscripts *Gergesenes*; other manuscripts *Gerasenes*

many." [10]And he begged Jesus again and again not to send them out of the area.

[11]A large herd of pigs was feeding on the nearby hillside. [12]The demons begged Jesus, "Send us among the pigs; allow us to go into them." [13]He gave them permission, and the impure spirits came out and went into the pigs. The herd, about two thousand in number, rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

[14]Those tending the pigs ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. [15]When they came to Jesus, they saw the man who had been possessed by the legion of demons, sitting there, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. [16]Those who had seen it told the people what had happened to the demon-possessed man — and told about the pigs as well. [17]Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.

[18]As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon-possessed begged to go with him. [19]Jesus did not let him, but said, "Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." [20]So the man went away and began to tell in the Decapolis[a] how much Jesus had done for him. And all the people were amazed.

Luke 8:22–39

Jesus Calms the Storm

8:22 One day Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. [23]As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger.

[24]The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we're going to drown!"

He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters; the storm subsided, and all was calm. [25]"Where is your faith?" he asked his disciples.

In fear and amazement they asked one another, "Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him."

Jesus Restores a Demon-Possessed Man

[26]They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes,[b] which is across the lake from Galilee. [27]When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. [28]When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" [29]For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

[30]Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"

"Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. [31]And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

[32]A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. [33]When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

[34]When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, [35]and the people

The Storm on the Sea of Galilee
by Rembrandt
Oil on canvas. 1633.

[a] *20* That is, the Ten Cities [b] *26* Some manuscripts *Gadarenes*; other manuscripts *Gergesenes*; also in verse 37

Cities of the Decapolis (Mk 5:20)

After crossing the Sea of Galilee, also known as Lake Tiberias (Jn 6:1), Jesus and his disciples encountered a demon-possessed man in the "region of the Gerasenes" (Mk 5:1). Gadara was one of several cities which were known as "the Decapolis." The Greek word *dekapolis* means "ten cities," and in Jesus' time it referred to a group of Hellenistic cities on the east side of the Jordan River in the vicinity of Lake Tiberias.

The cities of the Decapolis were founded by Greeks and Macedonians soon after Alexander's conquest of Palestine in the late 4th century B.C. Although commonly assumed to be a league of independent entities, the cities were actually associated because of their Hellenistic character. Various Greek cultural attributes, such as religion, architecture, sculpture, painting, and town planning, contributed to their unity. This Hellenistic culture made the Decapolis distinct from nearby towns of Jewish, Nabatean, and other cultures.

The Decapolis was also a distinct administrative region set up by the Romans and appended to the province of Syria. Just as the Romans assigned Pontius Pilate to serve as governor over the province of Judea, so was a provincial governor, according to a Greek inscription, assigned to the Decapolis region.

The demon-possessed man who was cured by Jesus spread the news of the healing to other cities of the Decapolis (Mk 5:20). People in these Gentile cities often feared miracle workers as some sort of magicians, so word of mouth might possibly calm their misunderstandings. No rejection of Jesus is reported when he himself traveled through the Decapolis region (Mk 7:31).

went out to see what had happened. When they
came to Jesus, they found the man from whom
the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet,
dressed and in his right mind; and they were
afraid. [36]Those who had seen it told the peo-
ple how the demon-possessed man had been
cured. [37]Then all the people of the region of the
Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because
they were overcome with fear. So he got into
the boat and left.

[38]The man from whom the demons had gone
out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him
away, saying, [39]"Return home and tell how
much God has done for you." So the man went
away and told all over town how much Jesus
had done for him.

TRANSITION

Returning to the West Shore

As with the reports of the exorcism of Legion (see "Crossing to the East Shore" at Mt 8:23), Matthew recounts the healings of Jairus's daughter and of the woman with a hemorrhage in considerably less detail than do Mark and Luke. Matthew's emphasis is on the role of faith in the healings rather than on the manner in which they were accomplished. While Mark relates Jesus' foreign language phrase, *Talitha koum* (Mk 5:41), Matthew omits such detail, possibly because it resembles incantations of the Hellenistic magic texts. Instead, he reports the additional healings of two blind men and a mute demon-possessed man, again explicitly emphasizing the blind men's faith (Mt 9:28, 29).

Keeping a secret of the new life given Jairus's previously deceased daughter would have been impossible (Mt 9:26). Some have thought that when Jesus charged her parents "not to tell anyone what had happened" (Lk 8:56), he was referring specifically to what had transpired in the girl's room. Perhaps Jesus wanted to leave open the possibility in the minds of some that the girl had actually only been sleeping (Mt 9:24; Mk 5:39; Lk 8:52), lest his fame for raising the dead should become a hindrance to his continuing ministry (see "Healing the Sick" at Mt 8:14).

- **Matthew 9:18–34**
- **Mark 5:21–43**
- **Luke 8:40–56**

Matthew 9:18–34

Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

9:18 While he was saying this, a synagogue
leader came and knelt before him and said,
"My daughter has just died. But come and put
your hand on her, and she will live." [19]Jesus got
up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

[20]Just then a woman who had been subject
to bleeding for twelve years came up behind
him and touched the edge of his cloak. [21]She
said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will
be healed."

[22]Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart,
daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you."
And the woman was healed at that moment.

[23]When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and people playing pipes, [24]he said, "Go away. The girl
is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at
him. [25]After the crowd had been put outside,
he went in and took the girl by the hand, and
she got up. [26]News of this spread through all
that region.

Jesus Heals the Blind and the Mute

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind
men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on
us, Son of David!"
28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men
came to him, and he asked them, "Do you be-
lieve that I am able to do this?"
"Yes, Lord," they replied.
29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "Ac-
cording to your faith let it be done to you";
30 and their sight was restored. Jesus warned
them sternly, "See that no one knows about
this." 31 But they went out and spread the news
about him all over that region.
32 While they were going out, a man who
was demon-possessed and could not talk was
brought to Jesus. 33 And when the demon was
driven out, the man who had been mute spoke.
The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like
this has ever been seen in Israel."
34 But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince
of demons that he drives out demons."

Mark 5:21–43

Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

5:21 When Jesus had again crossed over by
boat to the other side of the lake, a large
crowd gathered around him while he was by
the lake. 22 Then one of the synagogue leaders,
named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus,
he fell at his feet. 23 He pleaded earnestly with
him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come
and put your hands on her so that she will be
healed and live." 24 So Jesus went with him.
A large crowd followed and pressed around
him. 25 And a woman was there who had been
subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had
suffered a great deal under the care of many
doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead
of getting better she grew worse. 27 When
she heard about Jesus, she came up behind
him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 be-
cause she thought, "If I just touch his clothes,
I will be healed." 29 Immediately her bleeding
stopped and she felt in her body that she was
freed from her suffering.
30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone
out from him. He turned around in the crowd
and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"
31 "You see the people crowding against you,"
his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask,
'Who touched me?'"
32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who
had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what
had happened to her, came and fell at his feet
and, trembling with fear, told him the whole
truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith
has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from
your suffering."
35 While Jesus was still speaking, some peo-
ple came from the house of Jairus, the syna-
gogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they
said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?"
36 Overhearing[a] what they said, Jesus told
him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."
37 He did not let anyone follow him except
Peter, James and John the brother of James.
38 When they came to the home of the syna-
gogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with
people crying and wailing loudly. 39 He went
in and said to them, "Why all this commotion
and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep."
40 But they laughed at him.
After he put them all out, he took the child's
father and mother and the disciples who were
with him, and went in where the child was. 41 He
took her by the hand and said to her, *"Talitha
koum!"* (which means "Little girl, I say to you,
get up!"). 42 Immediately the girl stood up and
began to walk around (she was twelve years
old). At this they were completely astonished.
43 He gave strict orders not to let anyone know
about this, and told them to give her something
to eat.

Luke 8:40–56

Jesus Raises a Dead Girl and Heals a Sick Woman

8:40 Now when Jesus returned, a crowd
welcomed him, for they were all expecting
him. 41 Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue
leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading
with him to come to his house 42 because his
only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.
As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost
crushed him. 43 And a woman was there who
had been subject to bleeding for twelve years,[b]

Arts & Literature
Aramaic is a Semitic language, closely related to Arabic and Hebrew. It was widely used in Syria by 1000 B.C. In the 6th century B.C. the Persians made it the language of diplomacy and official business, and from that time it was common all over the Near East. Aramaic is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls and was the language spoken by Jesus, as represented by the Aramaic phrase, "Talitha koum" (Mk 5:41).

[a] *36* Or *Ignoring* [b] *43* Many manuscripts *years, and she had spent all she had on doctors*

Scandalous Faith (Lk 8:43, 44)

The rationale behind some of Israel's laws is not always clear to us. So it is with legislation governing the uncleanness of bloody discharges from the body. According to the Law of Moses (Lev 15:25–28), a flow of blood rendered a woman ceremonially unclean, and communicated uncleanness to anyone she touched. The woman Jesus encountered (Lk 8:43, 44) had experienced a continual flow of blood (not simply a monthly discharge) that most likely forced her to remain single. If the problem started after her marriage, it probably led her husband to divorce her. In her case, ceremonial uncleanness made her an outcast of her society.

Since she had had the problem for 12 years, much of her life had been consumed by this illness. Because many people died in their forties, her problem probably began sometime after puberty; she may have felt like half her adult life was already lost. Furthermore, in a culture where women remained economically dependent on men, this woman's disease had most likely exhausted her livelihood (8:43 in certain manuscripts). She was desperate—so desperate that she would allow *nothing* to deter her from Jesus.

Anyone this woman touched would be rendered unclean, so it was scandalous for her to press her way to Jesus through the crowd. Even touching Jesus' garment would make him unclean. If she was going to touch him, she must do so without announcing her intentions (see Lev 15:26, 27).

Once the woman was healed, Jesus was unashamed to be identified publicly with her hardship (Lk 8:46). His greater concern was that she, as well as those looking on, should realize that her "faith" (8:48) was the source of the healing. Jesus' power, unlike that of some other proclaimed wonder-workers of his day, was not simply "magic."

but no one could heal her. 44She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

45"Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

46But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."

47Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."

49While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher anymore."

50Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."

51When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. 52Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep."

53They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" 55Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. 56Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

TRANSITION

Rejection at Nazareth

Even at the midpoint of his Galilean ministry, Jesus continued to be met with resistance and unbelief in his hometown of Nazareth (see Lk 4:16–30). Mark once again closely connects Jesus' miracles and his teachings: the people wondered "what's this wisdom" Jesus possessed to be able to perform "these remarkable miracles" (Mk 6:2; see "Teaching with Authority" at Mk 1:21).

Matthew characteristically maintains more of a distinction between teaching and miracles, speaking of them individually: "this wisdom and these miraculous powers" (Mt 13:54). Being attracted to Jesus' miraculous works is not sufficient to make one a true disciple of his. Faith, for Matthew, is crucial, and the limited miracles performed in Nazareth are directly attributed to the people's "lack of faith" (Mt 13:58; see "Returning to the West Shore" at Mt 9:18).

- **Matthew 13:53–58**
- **Mark 6:1–6**

Matthew 13:53–58

A Prophet Without Honor

13 **:53** When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. 54Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. 55"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56Aren't all his sis-

ters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" [57]And they took offense at him.

But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home."

[58]And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.

Mark 6:1–6

A Prophet Without Honor

6:1 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. [2]When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

"Where did this man get these things?" they asked. "What's this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? [3]Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph,[a] Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.

[4]Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home." [5]He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. [6]He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

Then Jesus went around teaching from village to village.

[a] *3* Greek *Joses*, a variant of *Joseph* [b] *2* Some manuscripts *Bethzatha*; other manuscripts *Bethsaida* [c] *3,4* Some manuscripts include here, wholly or in part, *paralyzed—and they waited for the moving of the waters.* [4]*From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had.*

TRANSITION

Jesus' Second Visit to Jerusalem

According to John's Gospel, Jesus returned to Jerusalem to attend a pilgrimage festival (see "The Galilean Ministry" at Jn 1:35). During this visit, he healed a lame man at the Pool of Bethesda. When, at Jesus' instruction, the man carried his bed away from the pool, he came into violation of the Sabbath prohibition against work (Jn 5:8–10). Jesus defended his healing works by associating them with those of his "Father," but the opposition from the Jewish religious authorities only continued to mount. Not only had Jesus broken the Sabbath, but now he "was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God" (5:17, 18). John records Jesus' extended defense of his special relationship with the Father and of the witnesses that testified to that relationship.

It is impossible to identify the "Jewish festival" (5:1), which forms the setting for this healing account. It could have been Pentecost. John explicitly identified Passover as the occasion for Jesus' previous pilgrimage (Jn 2:13, 23), and Pentecost is the next festival after the combined festival of Passover and Unleavened Bread. Furthermore, the Festival of Pentecost was traditionally associated with the giving of the law to Moses at Mount Sinai. Thus Jesus' allusions to the writings of Moses (5:39, 45–47) were possibly prompted by the occasion of Pentecost.

Jesus' first Jerusalem pilgrimage might be dated to the spring Passover celebration of A.D. 27 (see "Jesus' First Visit to Jerusalem" at Jn 2:13). This second pilgrimage could represent the Pentecost occurring only several weeks later, or be understood as Pentecost of the following year, early summer of A.D. 28. On the other hand, it could have been Passover of spring, A.D. 28, or the Festival of Tabernacles in fall, A.D. 28.

• **John 5:1–47**

John

The Healing at the Pool

5:1 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. [2]Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda[b] and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. [3]Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. [4][c] [5]One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. [6]When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?"

[7]"Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me."

[8]Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." [9]At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, [10]and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, "It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat."

[11]But he replied, "The man who made me well said to me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"

[12]So they asked him, "Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?"

The Pool of Bethesda (Jn 5:2)

John's Gospel mentions a pool that was known in Aramaic as "Bethesda" or, as listed in some manuscripts, "Bethzatha" (Jn 5:2). The exact site of the pool has not been determined, although one of the Dead Sea Scrolls indicates that people who visited Jerusalem in Jesus' day knew where it was.

The "five covered colonnades" of Bethesda (5:2) have led to comparisons with the porticoes, or porches, of the ancient twin pools archaeologists found under St. Anne's monastery in Jerusalem. Porches ran along all four sides of the pools, plus one through the center, dividing them. In the vicinity of the pools archaeologists discovered a votive offering that looks just like what pagans offered to gods at healing sanctuaries. If Bethesda is the same site as these twin pools, it continued to be used for healing long after Jesus' day.

Regardless of whether the twin pools represent the actual site of the Pool of Bethesda, the lame man's hope in the pool resembles the practices of surrounding cultures. Many people in antiquity went to healing sanctuaries, which often included a pool, to seek healing from gods like Asclepius or Apollo. Likewise, the lame man was probably hoping for an angel to heal him. The statement about the angel stirring the waters (Jn 5:3b, 4) is missing in many early Greek manuscripts of John's Gospel, but may reflect an early tradition or local customs related to the pool.

The man was no doubt weak and hopeless after 38 years of confinement and affliction (Jn 5:5). Jesus, unlike the water of the pool, offered him real healing.

13 The man who was healed had no idea who
it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the
crowd that was there.
14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and
said to him, "See, you are well again. Stop sin-
ning or something worse may happen to you."
15 The man went away and told the Jewish lead-
ers that it was Jesus who had made him well.

The Authority of the Son

16 So, because Jesus was doing these things
on the Sabbath, the Jewish leaders began to
persecute him. 17 In his defense Jesus said to
them, "My Father is always at his work to this
very day, and I too am working." 18 For this rea-
son they tried all the more to kill him; not only
was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even
calling God his own Father, making himself
equal with God.

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 26 to 27
26	John the Baptist begins to preach (Mt 3:1)
26	Annas is named along with Caiaphas as co-high priest (Lk 3:2)
27	John baptizes Jesus (Mt 3:13)
27	Jesus changes water into wine (Jn 2:7–9)
27	Rebuilding of the temple still in progress after 46 years (Jn 2:20)

19 Jesus gave them this answer: "Very truly
I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself;
he can do only what he sees his Father doing,
because whatever the Father does the Son also
does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows
him all he does. Yes, and he will show him even
greater works than these, so that you will be
amazed. 21 For just as the Father raises the
dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives
life to whom he is pleased to give it. 22 More-
over, the Father judges no one, but has entrust-
ed all judgment to the Son, 23 that all may honor
the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever
does not honor the Son does not honor the Fa-
ther, who sent him.
24 "Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my
word and believes him who sent me has eternal
life and will not be judged but has crossed over
from death to life. 25 Very truly I tell you, a time
is coming and has now come when the dead
will hear the voice of the Son of God and those
who hear will live. 26 For as the Father has life
in himself, so he has granted the Son also to
have life in himself. 27 And he has given him au-
thority to judge because he is the Son of Man.
28 "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is com-
ing when all who are in their graves will hear
his voice 29 and come out—those who have
done what is good will rise to live, and those
who have done what is evil will rise to be con-
demned. 30 By myself I can do nothing; I judge

only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

Testimonies About Jesus

31"If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. 32There is another who testifies in my favor, and I know that his testimony about me is true.

33"You have sent to John and he has testified to the truth. 34Not that I accept human testimony; but I mention it that you may be saved. 35John was a lamp that burned and gave light, and you chose for a time to enjoy his light.

36"I have testimony weightier than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to finish—the very works that I am doing—testify that the Father has sent me. 37And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, 38nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. 39You study[a] the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, 40yet you refuse to come to me to have life.

41"I do not accept glory from human beings, 42but I know you. I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts. 43I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him. 44How can you believe since you accept glory from one another but do not seek the glory that comes from the only God[b]?

45"But do not think I will accuse you before the Father. Your accuser is Moses, on whom your hopes are set. 46If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. 47But since you do not believe what he wrote, how are you going to believe what I say?"

[a] *39* Or *39 Study* [b] *44* Some early manuscripts *the Only One*

TRANSITION

Mission of the Twelve

Mark and Luke treat the mission of the twelve disciples during Jesus' Galilean ministry in summary fashion. Matthew, on the other hand, was especially interested in the mission of the church (see Mt 28:18–20) and so devotes considerable attention to Jesus' instructions to his disciples regarding their mission.

Jesus' instruction on mission is the second of Matthew's five major teaching sections (see "Sermon on the Mount or Plain" at Mt 5:1). Matthew presents the disciples' mission as an extension of Jesus' own continuing ministry. Jesus' compassion for people and his prayer that God would "send out workers" (9:35–38) introduces the episode. During the disciples' mission Jesus actively continued his own ministry (11:1). Whereas Mark and Luke listed the names of the twelve apostles much earlier in their accounts of Jesus' ministry (Mk 3:13–19; Lk 6:13–16), Matthew reserves the listing until this occasion (Mt 10:2–4).

- **Matthew 9:35—11:1**
- **Mark 6:7–13**
- **Luke 9:1–6**

Matthew 9:35—11:1

The Workers Are Few

9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

10 1Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out impure spirits and to heal every disease and sickness.

2These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; 3Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; 4Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

5These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Do not go among the Gentiles or enter any town of the Samaritans. 6Go rather to the lost sheep of Israel. 7As you go, proclaim this message: 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.' 8Heal the sick, raise the

Geography & Environment

The Samaritans (Mt 10:5) lived in the area immediately to the north of Jerusalem and Judea. They called themselves Israelites, claiming that their ancestors survived the fall of Israel to Assyria in 722 B.C. But Judeans thought Samaritans were descended from colonists brought to Samaria by the Assyrians. Samaritan worshipers followed the five books of Moses, and established a temple of their own on Mount Gerizim.

HEROD & JUDEA UNDER ROME'S AUGUSTUS

In early 30 B.C. Herod the Great met with Octavian and bargained to keep his life and throne. From that time on, Herod remained a client of Rome. After his death, Herod's sons squandered the favor with Rome that Herod had enjoyed.

Year	Event
31 B.C.	Octavian, great-nephew of Julius Caesar, defeats his rivals in the Battle of Actium
27 B.C.	Octavian becomes "Caesar Augustus"
19 B.C.	In Jerusalem, Herod the Great begins construction of the temple
18 B.C.	Herod the Great visits Rome
12 B.C.	Augustus is named "high priest" of Rome and worshiped in the provinces
10 B.C.	Herod names a city "Caesarea" in honor of Augustus Caesar
4 B.C.	Herod the Great dies and his kingdom is divided into three parts for his sons Archelaus, Antipas, and Philip
2 B.C.	Augustus is named "father of his country"
A.D. 6	Archelaus is deposed and Judea becomes a Roman province
A.D. 14	Augustus dies and the Senate makes him one of the gods of Rome
A.D. 28	Herod Antipas beheads John the Baptist (Mt 14:1–11)
A.D. 39	Antipas is deposed by the emperor Caligula

dead, cleanse those who have leprosy,[a] drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.

9"Do not get any gold or silver or copper to take with you in your belts— 10no bag for the journey or extra shirt or sandals or a staff, for the worker is worth his keep. 11Whatever town or village you enter, search there for some worthy person and stay at their house until you leave. 12As you enter the home, give it your greeting. 13If the home is deserving, let your peace rest on it; if it is not, let your peace return to you. 14If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, leave that home or town and shake the dust off your feet. 15Truly I tell you, it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

16"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. 17Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. 18On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. 19But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, 20for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

21"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 22You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. 23When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

24"The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. 25It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

26"So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. 27What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. 28Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. 29Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.[b] 30And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

32"Whoever acknowledges me before others,

[a] *8* The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin. [b] *29* Or *will*; or *knowledge*

I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. 33But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

34"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.35For I have come to turn

"'a man against his father,
a daughter against her mother,
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—
36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'[a]

37"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

40"Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."

[a] *36* Micah 7:6 [b] *1* Greek *in their towns*

Jesus and John the Baptist

11 1After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and preach in the towns of Galilee.[b]

Mark 6:7–13

6:7 Calling the Twelve to him, he began to send them out two by two and gave them authority over impure spirits.

8These were his instructions: "Take nothing for the journey except a staff—no bread, no bag, no money in your belts. 9Wear sandals but not an extra shirt. 10Whenever you enter a house, stay there until you leave that town. 11And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."

12They went out and preached that people should repent. 13They drove out many demons and anointed many sick people with oil and healed them.

Luke 9:1–6

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

9:1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, 2and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. 3He told them: "Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. 4Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. 5If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." 6So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

TRANSITION

Death of John the Baptist

The Jewish historian Josephus wrote in his *Antiquities of the Jews* that John the Baptist was imprisoned and executed by Herod Antipas. Antipas, who ruled as tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 B.C.–A.D. 39), apparently perceived the Baptist to be a threat to lead an insurrection.

The Gospel of Mark provides the most extensive and detailed account of the circumstances surrounding the death of the Baptist. But even all Mark's detail did not prevent later writers from embellishing the story with legendary elements. The New Testament does not mention either the name of the "daughter of Herodias" (Mk 6:22) or her "seven veils." The traditional name "Salome" probably comes from Josephus, who wrote that Herod Philip

Immorality and Herod's Politics (Mk 6:17)

Herod Antipas was the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea (4 B.C.–A.D. 39). Reports of Jesus' works made Herod's guilty conscience remember his crime against John the Baptist (Mk 6:14). John had boldly denounced Herod's immorality in marrying his brother's wife (6:18). The law prohibited adultery and incest; sleeping with one's brother's wife was considered incestuous as well as adulterous (Lev 18:16). But given his political problems in 1st-century Galilee, Antipas may have viewed John's moral criticisms as a political threat that could stir unrest.

While Antipas was planning to marry his brother's wife, his first wife realized that he was also planning to divorce her. She fled home to her father, Aretas IV, ruler of the Nabatean Arabs, reporting Antipas's intentions, and Aretas was enraged that Antipas would treat his daughter so lightly. This created friction between the two kingdoms, and some Nabateans living in Antipas's territory of Perea made his father-in-law's enmity even more delicate. Aretas invaded Antipas's kingdom in A.D. 36 (sometime after Herod had executed John), and would have destroyed it had not the Romans intervened. Many Galileans felt this defeat was God's judgment on Antipas for executing the Baptist.

This political embarrassment was not the last problem Antipas's liaison with Herodias caused him. When in A.D. 37 her brother Agrippa I was appointed "king" of Gaulanitis, Herodias persuaded her husband Herod Antipas to request the same title. So enraged was the emperor at Antipas for making such a request, however, that he banished him to Gaul in A.D. 39, and Herodias went off into exile with him. The Gospel of Mark ironically refers to Antipas as "King Herod" (Mk 6:14), even though he was technically only a "tetrarch" (Mt 14:1). Possibly under Herodias's influence Antipas thought himself a king.

was married to a daughter of Herodias by that name.

Both Matthew and Mark recount the Baptist's imprisonment and execution by Herod as a kind of literary flashback. There was a superstitious belief that Jesus was actually the resurrected John the Baptist, and even Herod himself was inclined toward this superstition (Mt 14:1, 2; Mk 6:14).

Luke's treatment differs considerably. John's imprisonment is reported before beginning the account of Jesus' public ministry (Lk 3:19, 20). Maybe Luke wished to avoid the insinuation that Jesus and the Baptist were engaged in rival ministries. Only Luke connects the superstition that Jesus was a resurrected prophet with the reason Herod was curious about Jesus and desired "to see him" (Lk 9:9). Herod's curiosity prepares the way literarily for Jesus' "trial" before Herod, which only Luke reports (Lk 23:6–12).

- **Matthew 14:1–12**
- **Mark 6:14–29**
- **Luke 3:19, 20**
- **Luke 9:7–9**

Matthew 14:1–12

John the Baptist Beheaded

14:1 At that time Herod the tetrarch heard
the reports about Jesus, 2and he said to
his attendants, "This is John the Baptist; he has
risen from the dead! That is why miraculous
powers are at work in him."

3Now Herod had arrested John and bound
him and put him in prison because of Herodi-
as, his brother Philip's wife, 4for John had been
saying to him: "It is not lawful for you to have
her." 5Herod wanted to kill John, but he was
afraid of the people, because they considered
John a prophet.

6On Herod's birthday the daughter of Hero-
dias danced for the guests and pleased Herod
so much 7that he promised with an oath to give
her whatever she asked. 8Prompted by her
mother, she said, "Give me here on a platter the
head of John the Baptist." 9The king was dis-
tressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner
guests, he ordered that her request be granted
10and had John beheaded in the prison. 11His
head was brought in on a platter and given to
the girl, who carried it to her mother. 12John's
disciples came and took his body and buried it.
Then they went and told Jesus.

Mark 6:14–29

John the Baptist Beheaded

6:14 King Herod heard about this, for Jesus'
name had become well known. Some were
saying,[a] "John the Baptist has been raised from
the dead, and that is why miraculous powers
are at work in him."

15Others said, "He is Elijah."

And still others claimed, "He is a prophet,
like one of the prophets of long ago."

16But when Herod heard this, he said, "John,
whom I beheaded, has been raised from the
dead!"

17For Herod himself had given orders to
have John arrested, and he had him bound
and put in prison. He did this because of He-
rodias, his brother Philip's wife, whom he had
married. 18For John had been saying to Herod,

[a] *14* Some early manuscripts *He was saying*

"It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." [19]So Herodias nursed a grudge against John and wanted to kill him. But she was not able to, [20]because Herod feared John and protected him, knowing him to be a righteous and holy man. When Herod heard John, he was greatly puzzled[a]; yet he liked to listen to him.

[21]Finally the opportune time came. On his birthday Herod gave a banquet for his high officials and military commanders and the leading men of Galilee. [22]When the daughter of[b] Herodias came in and danced, she pleased Herod and his dinner guests.

The king said to the girl, "Ask me for anything you want, and I'll give it to you." [23]And he promised her with an oath, "Whatever you ask I will give you, up to half my kingdom."

[24]She went out and said to her mother, "What shall I ask for?"

"The head of John the Baptist," she answered.

[25]At once the girl hurried in to the king with the request: "I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptist on a platter."

[26]The king was greatly distressed, but because of his oaths and his dinner guests, he did not want to refuse her. [27]So he immediately sent an executioner with orders to bring John's head. The man went, beheaded John in the prison, [28]and brought back his head on a platter. He presented it to the girl, and she gave it to her mother. [29]On hearing of this, John's disciples came and took his body and laid it in a tomb.

Luke 3:19, 20

3:19 But when John rebuked Herod the tetrarch because of his marriage to Herodias, his brother's wife, and all the other evil things he had done, [20]Herod added this to them all: He locked John up in prison.

Luke 9:7–9

9:7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead, [8]others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life. [9]But Herod said, "I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?" And he tried to see him.

[a] *20* Some early manuscripts *he did many things* [b] *22* Some early manuscripts *When his daughter*

TRANSITION

Feeding the 5,000

The feeding of 5,000 people is the only event from Jesus' ministry preceding his last week in Jerusalem that is reported in all four New Testament Gospels. All the accounts agree upon the basic matters: the number fed totaled 5,000; the available food was "five loaves of bread and two fish"; the quantity of leftovers was "twelve basketfuls." Only Matthew explicitly notes that the number 5,000 did not include "women and children" (Mt 14:21).

The miraculous supply of bread in "a remote place" (Mt 14:15) calls to mind Moses' provision of manna during the Exodus (Ex 16). According to John's Gospel, the miracle convinced some that Jesus was in fact the long-expected "Prophet" like Moses (Jn 6:14; see Dt 18:15).

John's Gospel places this miracle just before a Passover (Jn 6:4), the second of three Passovers mentioned in the Fourth Gospel. The first (Jn 2:13, 23) was possibly in A.D. 27 (see "Jesus' First Visit to Jerusalem" at Jn 2:13). Thus, this feeding story should be dated to the spring of either A.D. 28 or 29. If the undesignated "Jewish festivals" in Jn 5:1 is Pentecost or Tabernacles, the 5,000 feeding could have occurred in A.D. 28. If the "festival" of Jn 5:1 is Passover, then the 5,000 were fed in A.D. 29 (see "Jesus' Second Visit to Jerusalem" at Jn 5:1). The third Passover mentioned by John was the occasion of Jesus' death (Jn 13:1), usually dated to A.D. 30.

- **Matthew 14:13–21**
- **Mark 6:30–44**
- **Luke 9:10–17**
- **John 6:1–15**

Matthew 14:13–21

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

14:13 When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. [14]When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

[15]As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so

Beliefs & Ideas

The ancients considered remote or deserted places distasteful and threatening. The positive values of community, civilization, and safety from animals or outlaws were found in towns and cities, not in the wilderness. People had to have a certain level of motivation before they would follow Jesus or John the Baptist to the desert (Mt 14:13).

they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

16 Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

17 "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

18 "Bring them here to me," he said. 19 And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. 20 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. 21 The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Mark 6:30–44

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

6:30 The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. 31 Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

32 So they went away by themselves in a boat to a solitary place. 33 But many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. 34 When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.

35 By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. 36 Send the people away so that they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat."

37 But he answered, "You give them something to eat."

They said to him, "That would take more than half a year's wages[a]! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?"

38 "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see."

When they found out, they said, "Five—and two fish."

39 Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. 40 So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. 41 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. 44 The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

Luke 9:10–17

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

9:10 When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, 11 but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

12 Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here."

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[a] *37* Greek *take two hundred denarii*

Hill of Bethsaida

13He replied, "You give them something to
eat."
They answered, "We have only five loaves
of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy
food for all this crowd." 14(About five thousand
men were there.)
But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit
down in groups of about fifty each." 15The dis-
ciples did so, and everyone sat down. 16Taking
the five loaves and the two fish and looking up
to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them.
Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute
to the people. 17They all ate and were satisfied,
and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of
broken pieces that were left over.

John 6:1–15

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand

6:1 Some time after this, Jesus crossed to
the far shore of the Sea of Galilee (that is,
the Sea of Tiberias), 2and a great crowd of peo-
ple followed him because they saw the signs
he had performed by healing the sick. 3Then
Jesus went up on a mountainside and sat down
with his disciples. 4The Jewish Passover Festi-
val was near.
5When Jesus looked up and saw a great
crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip,
"Where shall we buy bread for these people to
eat?" 6He asked this only to test him, for he al-
ready had in mind what he was going to do.
7Philip answered him, "It would take more
than half a year's wages[a] to buy enough bread
for each one to have a bite!"
8Another of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Pe-
ter's brother, spoke up, 9"Here is a boy with
five small barley loaves and two small fish, but
how far will they go among so many?"
10Jesus said, "Have the people sit down."
There was plenty of grass in that place, and
they sat down (about five thousand men were
there). 11Jesus then took the loaves, gave
thanks, and distributed to those who were seat-
ed as much as they wanted. He did the same
with the fish.
12When they had all had enough to eat, he
said to his disciples, "Gather the pieces that
are left over. Let nothing be wasted." 13So they
gathered them and filled twelve baskets with
the pieces of the five barley loaves left over by
those who had eaten.
14After the people saw the sign Jesus per-
formed, they began to say, "Surely this is
the Prophet who is to come into the world."
15Jesus, knowing that they intended to come
and make him king by force, withdrew again to
a mountain by himself.

[a] 7 Greek *take two hundred denarii*

TRANSITION

Walking on the Water

Each evangelist closely ties Jesus' walking on water with the preceding story of feeding the 5,000. For Mark, the inability of the disciples to understand that earlier miracle affected their understanding of who Jesus truly was in this instance as well (Mk 6:52; see Jn 6:26, 27). Some think that Jesus' walking on water is parallel to Old Testament theophanies or visionary appearances in which God strides across the waters as a symbol of control over evil and chaos (see Ps 77:19; 107:23–29; Job 9:8).

While in Mark, the disciples lacked understanding, Matthew stresses that the miracle of walking on water confirmed their belief that Jesus was "the Son of God" (Mt 14:33). Only Matthew reports Peter's walking on the sea, and his subsequent sinking illustrates the weakness of faith that is diminished by doubt (14:31). Faith must remain focused upon Jesus and not have its attention divided by harsh circumstances (Mt 14:28–30).

- **Matthew 14:22–33**
- **Mark 6:45–52**
- **John 6:16–21**

Matthew 14:22–33

Jesus Walks on the Water

14:22 Immediately Jesus made the disci-
ples get into the boat and go on ahead
of him to the other side, while he dismissed
the crowd. 23After he had dismissed them, he
went up on a mountainside by himself to pray.
Later that night, he was there alone, 24and the
boat was already a considerable distance from
land, buffeted by the waves because the wind
was against it.
25Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to
them, walking on the lake. 26When the disci-
ples saw him walking on the lake, they were
terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out
in fear.
27But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take
courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."
28"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to
come to you on the water."
29"Come," he said.
Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked
on the water and came toward Jesus. 30But
when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, be-
ginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

31 Immediately Jesus reached out his hand
and caught him. "You of little faith," he said,
"why did you doubt?"
32 And when they climbed into the boat, the
wind died down. 33 Then those who were in the
boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the
Son of God."

Mark 6:45–52

Jesus Walks on the Water

6:45 Immediately Jesus made his disciples
get into the boat and go on ahead of him to
Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. 46 Af-
ter leaving them, he went up on a mountainside
to pray.
47 Later that night, the boat was in the middle
of the lake, and he was alone on land. 48 He saw
the disciples straining at the oars, because the
wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he
went out to them, walking on the lake. He was
about to pass by them, 49 but when they saw
him walking on the lake, they thought he was
a ghost. They cried out, 50 because they all saw
him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said,
"Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." 51 Then
he climbed into the boat with them, and
the wind died down. They were completely
amazed, 52 for they had not understood about
the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

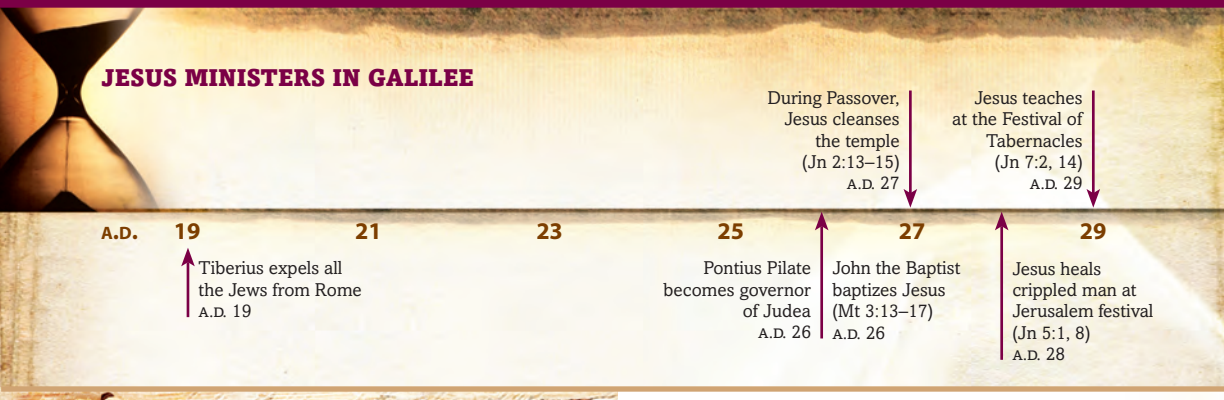
John 6:16–21

Jesus Walks on the Water

6:16 When evening came, his disciples
went down to the lake, 17 where they got
into a boat and set off across the lake for Ca-
pernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had
not yet joined them. 18 A strong wind was blow-
ing and the waters grew rough. 19 When they
had rowed about three or four miles,[a] they saw
Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the wa-
ter; and they were frightened. 20 But he said to
them, "It is I; don't be afraid." 21 Then they were
willing to take him into the boat, and immedi-
ately the boat reached the shore where they
were heading.

[a] *19* Or about 5 or 6 kilometers

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 27 to 29
27		Jesus attends the spring Passover in Jerusalem (Jn 2:13)
28		The 15th year of Tiberius (based on his sole reign)
28		Jesus attends a festival (Passover?) in Jerusalem (Jn 5:1)
29		Herod Antipas orders the death of John the Baptist (Mk 6:27)
29		Pontius Pilate strikes coins in Jerusalem and Caesarea



TRANSITION

Popularity at Gennesaret and Capernaum

Much of Jesus' early ministry occurred on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew and Mark each provide brief comments about the success of Jesus' ministry in Gennesaret, where the crowds flocked for healing, bringing the sick with them, and hoping for a brief encounter with Jesus.

John provides a longer treatment about a controversy that arose in the nearby city of Capernaum (about 3 miles east of Gennesaret along the shore of the Sea of Galilee). Jesus' popularity was still increasing because of the miracles which he performed, yet the people misunderstood the true meaning of his works. Although they had eaten the multiplied loaves, they had not understood the miracle as a "sign" that would give spiritual insight (Jn 6:26, 27; see "The First of Seven Signs" at Jn 2:1). The people longed only for Jesus to improve the circumstances of their physical lives (see Jn 6:15). Rather, Jesus was "the bread of life" that would forever provide the spiritual nourishment they needed (Jn 6:48–51).

Some suggest that with this episode (especially Jn 6:53–58) the Gospel of John explains the Lord's Supper. When John recounts the Last Supper (Jn 13), he does not report the institution of the sacrament, as do the Synoptic Gospels (Mt 26:26–29; Mk 14:22–25; Lk 22:15–20).

- **Matthew 14:34–36**
- **Mark 6:53–56**
- **John 6:22–71**

Matthew 14:34–36

14:34 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. 35And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him 36and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

Mark 6:53–56

6:53 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. 54As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. 55They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. 56And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

John 6:22–71

6:22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. 23Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.

Jesus the Bread of Life

25When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

26Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. 27Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval."

28Then they asked him, "What must we do to do the works God requires?"

29Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent."

30So they asked him, "What sign then will

you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? 31Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'[a]"

32Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. 33For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

34"Sir," they said, "always give us this bread."

35Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. 37All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. 38For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. 39And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. 40For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day."

41At this the Jews there began to grumble about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42They said, "Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

43"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. 44"No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them, and I will raise them up at the last day. 45It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.'[b] Everyone who has heard the Father and learned from him comes to me. 46No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. 47Very truly I tell you, the one who believes has eternal life. 48I am the bread of life. 49Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. 50But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. 51I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

52Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

53Jesus said to them, "Very truly I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. 54Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. 55For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. 56Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them. 57Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. 58This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your ancestors ate manna and died, but whoever feeds on this bread will live forever." 59He said this while teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum.

Many Disciples Desert Jesus

60On hearing it, many of his disciples said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?"

61Aware that his disciples were grumbling about this, Jesus said to them, "Does this offend you? 62Then what if you see the Son of Man ascend to where he was before! 63The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you—they are full of the Spirit[c] and life. 64Yet there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus had known from the beginning which of them did not believe and who would betray him. 65He went on to say, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless the Father has enabled them."

66From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

67"You do not want to leave too, do you?" Jesus asked the Twelve.

68Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God."

70Then Jesus replied, "Have I not chosen you, the Twelve? Yet one of you is a devil!" 71(He meant Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, who, though one of the Twelve, was later to betray him.)

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[a] *31* Exodus 16:4; Neh. 9:15; Psalm 78:24,25
[b] *45* Isaiah 54:13 [c] *63* Or *are Spirit*; or *are spirit*

TRANSITION

Controversy over Traditions

The "tradition of the elders" (Mt 15:2) contained hundreds of rules, which Jewish teachers had developed over the centuries to ensure that the people properly kept God's law. Jesus called these teachers "hypocrites" because they emphasized the many commandments of their human tradition, being concerned only with outward conduct while they ignored the inner dynamic and moral demands of the law. This is the only episode

in which Mark reports Jesus referring to his Pharisaic opponents as "hypocrites" (Mk 7:6). Matthew, by contrast, recounts several such instances (especially in Mt 23).

The details of this particular controversy show that "hypocrisy" for Jesus was not "saying one thing and doing another." The Pharisees did observe the ritual washings which Jesus' disciples had occasionally neglected (Mk 7:2, 3). In the Jewish literature of this period written in Greek, a "hypocrite" was a godless person who substituted human standards and desires for God's commandments. Thus, when people scrupulously observed traditions that had the effect of countering God's command (Mt 15:3–6; Mk 7:9–13), they became "hypocrites" not because their actions were inconsistent but because they consistently ignored God's will. Ritual purity cannot cleanse a person defiled by his or her own evil actions (Mt 15:17–20; Mk 7:15, 18–23).

- **Matthew 15:1–20**
- **Mark 7:1–23**

Matthew 15:1–20

That Which Defiles

15:1 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, [2]"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

[3]Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? [4]For God said, 'Honor your father and mother'[a] and 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'[b] [5]But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is 'devoted to God,' [6]they are not to 'honor their father or mother' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. [7]You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

[8]"'These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
[9]They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.'[c]"

[10]Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. [11]What goes into someone's mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them."

[12]Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

[13]He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. [14]Leave them; they are blind guides.[d] If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

[15]Peter said, "Explain the parable to us."

[16]"Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them. [17]"Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? [18]But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. [19]For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. [20]These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them."

Mark 7:1–23

That Which Defiles

7:1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus [2]and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. [3](The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. [4]When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.[e])

[5]So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?"

[6]He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

"'These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
[7]They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.'[f]

[8]You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."

[9]And he continued, "You have a fine way of

Religion & Worship

The Jews maintained a clear distinction between themselves and the cultures around them. Their regulations about food and drink were a constant reminder that they belonged to the God who had delivered them from Egypt. Their traditions expanded; the "tradition of the elders" (Mk 7:3) contained hundreds of rules which Jewish teachers had developed over the centuries.

[a] *4* Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16 [b] *4* Exodus 21:17; Lev. 20:9 [c] *9* Isaiah 29:13 [d] *14* Some manuscripts *blind guides of the blind* [e] *4* Some early manuscripts *pitchers, kettles and dining couches* [f] *6,7* Isaiah 29:13

setting aside the commands of God in order to observe[a] your own traditions! [10]For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,'[b] and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'[c] [11]But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God) — [12]then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. [13]Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

[14]Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. [15]Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them." [16][d]

[17]After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. [18]"Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? [19]For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

[20]He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them. [21]For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come — sexual immorality, theft, murder, [22]adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. [23]All these evils come from inside and defile a person."

TRANSITION

Ministry in Gentile Regions

The "region of Tyre and Sidon" (Mt 15:21; Mk 7:24) and the Decapolis (Mk 7:31), which bordered the southeastern shore of the Sea of Galilee, were predominantly Gentile territories. Jesus may have come here in order to teach his disciples privately, but his ministry soon extended to non-Jews.

Matthew's and Mark's accounts of Jesus' ministry in these areas reveal the special interests of each writer. As he did earlier in his Gospel (see "Returning to the West Shore" at Mt 9:18), Matthew omits any details which have possible magical connotations, such as the healing of the deaf man (see Mk 7:33, 34). Rather he emphasizes the role of faith, evident in the exorcism of the Canaanite woman's daughter (Mt 15:28).

Mark continues to develop his theme of the "Messianic secret" (Mk 7:24, 36; see "Healing the Sick" at Mt 8:14). But the more earnestly Jesus commanded the people to remain silent about what he had done, "the more they kept talking about it" (7:36).

- **Matthew 15:21–31**
- **Mark 7:24–37**

Matthew 15:21–31

The Faith of a Canaanite Woman

15:21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. [22]A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is demon-possessed and suffering terribly."

[23]Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

[24]He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

[25]The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

[26]He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

[27]"Yes it is, Lord," she said. "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

[28]Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

[29]Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down. [30]Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them. [31]The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Mark 7:24–37

Jesus Honors a Syrophoenician Woman's Faith

7:24 Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre.[e] He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. [25]In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. [26]The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

[27]"First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

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[a] *9* Some manuscripts *set up*
[b] *10* Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16
[c] *10* Exodus 21:17; Lev. 20:9
[d] *16* Some manuscripts include here the words of 4:23.
[e] *24* Many early manuscripts *Tyre and Sidon*

28 "Lord," she replied, "even the dogs under
the table eat the children's crumbs."
29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you
may go; the demon has left your daughter."
30 She went home and found her child lying
on the bed, and the demon gone.

Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man

31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and
went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee
and into the region of the Decapolis.[a] 32 There
some people brought to him a man who was
deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged
Jesus to place his hand on him.
33 After he took him aside, away from the
crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's
ears. Then he spit and touched the man's
tongue. 34 He looked up to heaven and with a
deep sigh said to him, *"Ephphatha!"* (which
means "Be opened!"). 35 At this, the man's ears
were opened, his tongue was loosened and he
began to speak plainly.
36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone.
But the more he did so, the more they kept
talking about it. 37 People were overwhelmed
with amazement. "He has done everything
well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear
and the mute speak."

[a] *31* That is, the Ten Cities

TRANSITION

Feeding the 4,000

The feeding of 4,000 people is a miracle similar to the feeding of the 5,000 (see "Feeding the 5,000" at Mt 14:13). Indeed, the similarities between the two feeding miracles has led some to suggest that the story of feeding 4,000 is simply a variation of the earlier account. It seems implausible that Jesus' disciples would respond in precisely the same way on this later occasion—questioning how to feed so many people (Mt 15:33)—if they had witnessed the earlier miracle (see Mt 14:15–17).

Still, others suggest that this miracle in Gentile territory is the complement to the previous miraculous feeding of Jews. The numbers of loaves, baskets, and people in the two stories differ. Furthermore, the disciples simply could not comprehend the true power of God in Jesus' miracles. Mark commented specifically that they did not properly understand the first feeding miracle (Mk 6:52). Both he and Matthew report that Jesus later chastised his disciples for failing to remember his ability to provide bread, demonstrated by these two miracles (Mt 16:9, 10; Mk 8:17–21).

- **Matthew 15:32–39**
- **Mark 8:1–10**

Matthew 15:32–39

15 **:32** Jesus called his disciples to him and
said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days
and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send
them away hungry, or they may collapse on the
way."
33 His disciples answered, "Where could we
get enough bread in this remote place to feed
such a crowd?"
34 "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus
asked.
"Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish."
35 He told the crowd to sit down on the
ground. 36 Then he took the seven loaves and
the fish, and when he had given thanks, he
broke them and gave them to the disciples, and
they in turn to the people. 37 They all ate and
were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked
up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were

Who Gets the Children's Bread? (Mk 7:27)

While Jesus was in the Gentile territory of Phoenicia, he was approached by a woman who was "a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia" (Mk 7:26). She was a member of the Greek-speaking ruling class of Phoenicia. Citizens of Phoenician cities like Tyre and Sidon had long been influenced by Greek culture. This particular woman belonged to a class of people who often took for themselves the grain raised by poor Jews living in these regions.

That this powerful woman must come to a Jewish prophet and beg help for her daughter suggests a reversal of roles (Mk 7:25). Jesus challenged the woman's faith. Just as her class may have been taking the bread of poor Jews in neighboring areas, the "bread" of miracles from Israel's God belonged to Israel first of all. Israel had priority before Gentiles during Jesus' earthly ministry just as one's children had priority over dogs (7:27).

Jesus put the woman off with the expression "dogs," but he did not insult her as harshly as it may sound to our ears today. Jewish people viewed dogs negatively, as scavengers, the way we today might view rats. As a well-to-do Greek, however, the woman was more likely to think of dogs as household pets. By willingly acknowledging her secondary place, yet also refusing to settle for anything less than a miracle, she demonstrated her humility and faith, and thus won her request.

left over. [38]The number of those who ate was four thousand men, besides women and children. [39]After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

Mark 8:1–10

Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

8:1 During those days another large crowd gathered. Since they had nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples to him and said, [2]"I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. [3]If I send them home hungry, they will collapse on the way, because some of them have come a long distance."

[4]His disciples answered, "But where in this remote place can anyone get enough bread to feed them?"

[5]"How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked.

"Seven," they replied.

[6]He told the crowd to sit down on the ground. When he had taken the seven loaves and given thanks, he broke them and gave them to his disciples to distribute to the people, and they did so. [7]They had a few small fish as well; he gave thanks for them also and told the disciples to distribute them. [8]The people ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. [9]About four thousand were present. After he had sent them away, [10]he got into the boat with his disciples and went to the region of Dalmanutha.

TRANSITION

Teaching About the Pharisees

The Gospel of Mark, in one of its characteristic features, consistently describes Jesus' disciples as having trouble understanding their Teacher. That tendency toward misunderstanding is evident in two accounts from Mark and Matthew concerning the Pharisees. Following a dispute with the Pharisees regarding Jesus' miracles (Mk 8:11, 12), Jesus warned his disciples to "watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees" (8:15). His disciples believed he was chastising them for a lack of provisions (8:16). A lack of food was certainly no problem for Jesus, and reminding them of the two miraculous feedings, Jesus asked, "Do you still not understand?" (8:21).

Mark seems to use the story of a blind man in Bethsaida to illustrate the disciples' own plight. Just as the man only gradually regained his sight through Jesus' ministry (Mk 8:23–25), so also the disciples only gradually, and with much repeated effort, came to see who Jesus was (see "The Christ and His Disciples" at Mt 16:13).

By contrast Matthew shows the disciples being able to understand what Jesus was teaching them, albeit with a little prompting (Mt 16:8–12). The Pharisees and Sadducees were more interested in testing Jesus (16:1) than in considering the significance of his ministry, and this spiritual insensitivity receives more attention in Matthew's Gospel.

- **Matthew 16:1–12**
- **Mark 8:11–26**

Matthew 16:1–12

The Demand for a Sign

16:1 The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven.

[2]He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' [3]and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.[a] [4]A wicked and adulterous generation looks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah." Jesus then left them and went away.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

[5]When they went across the lake, the disciples forgot to take bread. [6]"Be careful," Jesus said to them. "Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."

[7]They discussed this among themselves and said, "It is because we didn't bring any bread."

[8]Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked, "You of little faith, why are you talking among yourselves about having no bread? [9]Do you still not understand? Don't you remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? [10]Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many basketfuls you gathered? [11]How is it you don't understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." [12]Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Mark 8:11–26

8:11 The Pharisees came and began to question Jesus. To test him, they asked him for a sign from heaven. [12]He sighed deep-

[a] *2,3* Some early manuscripts do not have *When evening comes . . . of the times.*

ly and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to it." [13]Then he left them, got back into the boat and crossed to the other side.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Herod

[14]The disciples had forgotten to bring bread, except for one loaf they had with them in the boat. [15]"Be careful," Jesus warned them. "Watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees and that of Herod."

[16]They discussed this with one another and said, "It is because we have no bread."

[17]Aware of their discussion, Jesus asked them: "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not see or understand? Are your hearts hardened? [18]Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear? And don't you remember? [19]When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

"Twelve," they replied.

[20]"And when I broke the seven loaves for the four thousand, how many basketfuls of pieces did you pick up?"

They answered, "Seven."

[21]He said to them, "Do you still not understand?"

Jesus Heals a Blind Man at Bethsaida

[22]They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man and begged Jesus to touch him. [23]He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?"

[24]He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around."

[25]Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly. [26]Jesus sent him home, saying, "Don't even go into[a] the village."

[a] *26* Some manuscripts *go and tell anyone in* [b] *18* The Greek word for *Peter* means *rock.* [c] *18* That is, the realm of the dead [d] *19* Or *will have been*

TRANSITION

The Christ and His Disciples

Peter's confession at Caesarea Philippi, identifying Jesus as "God's Messiah" (Lk 9:20), marked an important milestone in Jesus' ministry. Nevertheless, the disciples still needed to learn much about the nature of Jesus' Messiahship, as was demonstrated when Peter rejected Jesus' first prediction of his eventual death and resurrection in Jerusalem (Mt 16:21–23). They were still focused not on "the concerns of God, but merely human concerns" (Mk 8:33).

Jesus' disciples still held the popular conception that the Messiah would bring political and economic success to God's people. Their misconception was exposed by the call for a true disciple to "deny themselves and take up their cross" (Mt 16:24; Mk 8:34). Thus, Jesus emphasized placing spiritual life ahead of physical life (Mk 8:36). The Son of Man himself was willing to lose his life to bring spiritual benefit to all.

- **Matthew 16:13–28**
- **Mark 8:27—9:1**
- **Luke 9:18–27**

Matthew 16:13–28

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

16:13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

[14]They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets."

[15]"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

[16]Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

Religion & Worship

"Messiah" (equivalent to "Christ") comes from the Hebrew word *mashiach* meaning "anointed" (Mt 16:16). Anointing is a ritual of applying oil to something. Ancient people were anointed to mark them as having a public appointment from God as a political or religious leader. The Jews anticipated a Messianic King who would bring deliverance and salvation for his people.

[17]Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. [18]And I tell you that you are Peter,[b] and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades[c] will not overcome it. [19]I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[d] loosed in heaven." [20]Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

Jesus Predicts His Death

[21]From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law,

The City of Several Names (Mt 16:13)

In the city of Caesarea Philippi, about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" They first answered with several names—John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah—before one disciple acknowledged Jesus as Israel's promised Savior (Mt 16:13–16). Interestingly, Jesus' question would be answered in a city that went through a series of name changes, each time to honor some god or man other than the Son of God.

The name this city had before the Hellenistic period (beginning c. 332 B.C.) is unknown. According to the Greek historian Polybius, by the time of the Seleucid king Antiochus III (c. 223–187 B.C.) the site was called "Panion," after the Greek god Pan.

The northern district of Galilee was given to Herod the Great in 20 B.C. Herod subsequently built a great temple there in honor of the emperor Augustus Caesar. According to the Jewish historian Josephus, this district was bequeathed to Herod's son Philip when he succeeded his father in 4 B.C. Philip enlarged the city and renamed it "Caesarea" in honor of Caesar. "Philippi" was added to the name to distinguish it from Caesarea Maritima, the great Mediterranean coastal city.

Five decades later Agrippa II enlarged the city even more and renamed it "Neronias," after the Roman emperor Nero. This name seems to have been used only rarely, and the name reverted back to Paneas (i.e., Panion) during the Byzantine period (after A.D. 330).

The compound name Caesarea Philippi was thus the name of the town when Jesus visited there (Mt 16:13). In a city whose various names remembered Pan, Caesar, Nero, and Philip the tetrarch, a disciple answered his Teacher, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God" (Mt 16:16).

and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

22 Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord!" he said. "This shall never happen to you!"

23 Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

24 Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 25 For whoever wants to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. 26 What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? 27 For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

28 "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Mark 8:27—9:1

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

8:27 Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way he asked them, "Who do people say I am?"

28 They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets."

29 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "You are the Messiah."

30 Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.

Jesus Predicts His Death

31 He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again. 32 He spoke plainly about this, and Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him.

33 But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter. "Get behind me, Satan!" he said. "You do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns."

The Way of the Cross

34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up

[a] *25* The Greek word means either *life* or *soul*; also in verse 26.

their cross and follow me. 35For whoever wants
to save their life[a] will lose it, but whoever loses
their life for me and for the gospel will save it.
36What good is it for someone to gain the whole
world, yet forfeit their soul? 37Or what can any-
one give in exchange for their soul? 38If anyone
is ashamed of me and my words in this adul-
terous and sinful generation, the Son of Man
will be ashamed of them when he comes in his
Father's glory with the holy angels."

9 1And he said to them, "Truly I tell you,
some who are standing here will not taste
death before they see that the kingdom of God
has come with power."

Luke 9:18–27

Peter Declares That Jesus Is the Messiah

9:18 Once when Jesus was praying in pri-
vate and his disciples were with him, he
asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"

19They replied, "Some say John the Baptist;
others say Elijah; and still others, that one of
the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

20"But what about you?" he asked. "Who do
you say I am?"

Peter answered, "God's Messiah."

Jesus Predicts His Death

21Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to
anyone. 22And he said, "The Son of Man must
suffer many things and be rejected by the el-
ders, the chief priests and the teachers of the
law, and he must be killed and on the third day
be raised to life."

23Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants
to be my disciple must deny themselves and
take up their cross daily and follow me. 24For
whoever wants to save their life will lose it,
but whoever loses their life for me will save it.
25What good is it for someone to gain the whole
world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self?
26Whoever is ashamed of me and my words,
the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when
he comes in his glory and in the glory of the
Father and of the holy angels.

27"Truly I tell you, some who are standing
here will not taste death before they see the
kingdom of God."

[a] *35* The Greek word means either *life* or *soul*; also in verses 36 and 37.

TRANSITION

The Transfiguration

Jesus' transfiguration was a visionary rev-
elation (Mt 17:9) of the divine glory that the
Son (Mk 9:7) possessed from his incarnation
(see Jn 1:14). A brief scene in Luke's Gospel
clarifies what was at stake, not only in the
vision, but in Jesus' ministry: Jesus discussed
his "departure" with Moses and Elijah (Lk 9:31).
The Greek word translated "departure" (*exo-
dos*) refers in literary Greek to the process of
"death." It recalls the "Exodus" from Egypt as
an earlier process of divine redemption. Thus,
Jesus' impending death and resurrection,
also an "Exodus," would further extend God's
redemption to humanity.

- **Matthew 17:1–13**
- **Mark 9:2–13**
- **Luke 9:28–36**

Matthew 17:1–13

The Transfiguration

17:1 After six days Jesus took with him
Peter, James and John the brother of
James, and led them up a high mountain by
themselves. 2There he was transfigured be-
fore them. His face shone like the sun, and his
clothes became as white as the light. 3Just then
there appeared before them Moses and Elijah,
talking with Jesus.

4Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us
to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shel-
ters—one for you, one for Moses and one for
Elijah."

5While he was still speaking, a bright cloud
covered them, and a voice from the cloud said,
"This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am
well pleased. Listen to him!"

6When the disciples heard this, they fell face-
down to the ground, terrified. 7But Jesus came
and touched them. "Get up," he said. "Don't be
afraid." 8When they looked up, they saw no one
except Jesus.

9As they were coming down the mountain,
Jesus instructed them, "Don't tell anyone what
you have seen, until the Son of Man has been
raised from the dead."

10The disciples asked him, "Why then do the
teachers of the law say that Elijah must come
first?"

11Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah comes
and will restore all things. 12But I tell you, Eli-
jah has already come, and they did not rec-
ognize him, but have done to him everything
they wished. In the same way the Son of Man is
going to suffer at their hands." 13Then the dis-
ciples understood that he was talking to them
about John the Baptist.

Mark 9:2–13

The Transfiguration

9 :2 After six days Jesus took Peter, James
and John with him and led them up a high
mountain, where they were all alone. There he
was transfigured before them. [3]His clothes be-
came dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the
world could bleach them. [4]And there appeared
before them Elijah and Moses, who were talk-
ing with Jesus.

[5]Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us
to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one
for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." [6](He
did not know what to say, they were so fright-
ened.)

[7]Then a cloud appeared and covered them,
and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my
Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

[8]Suddenly, when they looked around, they
no longer saw anyone with them except Jesus.

[9]As they were coming down the mountain,
Jesus gave them orders not to tell anyone what
they had seen until the Son of Man had risen
from the dead. [10]They kept the matter to them-
selves, discussing what "rising from the dead"
meant.

[11]And they asked him, "Why do the teachers
of the law say that Elijah must come first?"

[12]Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does
come first, and restores all things. Why then is
it written that the Son of Man must suffer much
and be rejected? [13]But I tell you, Elijah has
come, and they have done to him everything
they wished, just as it is written about him."

Daily Life & Customs

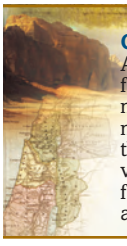
A kind of soap was used in Mesopotamia in very early times, although it was not refined or made into bars. But soap was hardly known in Egypt or Palestine, and launderers used other means to "bleach" clothing (Mk 9:3). Ashes or natural substances like sodium carbonate and fuller's earth (a kind of superfine clay) were used to remove grease and dirt. Also, wet clothes were pounded on stones.

The Transfiguration by Rafael Sanzio de Urbino, 1518–1520 located in Florence, Italy

Luke 9:28–36

The Transfiguration

9:28 About eight days after Jesus said this, he took Peter, John and James with him and went up onto a mountain to pray. 29As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. 30Two men, Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor, talking with Jesus. 31They spoke about his departure,[a] which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem. 32Peter and his companions were very sleepy, but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory and the two men standing with him. 33As the men were leaving Jesus, Peter said to him, "Master, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." (He did not know what he was saying.)



Geography & Environment
A possible location for the Mount of Transfiguration (Lk 9:28) is Mount Hermon, in modern Lebanon. This is part of a long mountain range. In the highest reaches there is beautiful snow in the descending valleys, providing a source of water for the fields below. Snow is rare in Jerusalem and most of the surrounding country.

34While he was speaking, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him." 36When the voice had spoken, they found that Jesus was alone. The disciples kept this to themselves and did not tell anyone at that time what they had seen.

[a] *31* Greek *exodos* [b] *21* Some manuscripts include here words similar to Mark 9:29.

TRANSITION

Faithless Generation

The disciples continued in their struggle to develop a faithful response to what God was doing in Jesus. Their inability to perform an exorcism led Jesus to despair about the "unbelieving generation" and the limited time remaining for him to reach them (Mk 9:19). Continuing his characteristic emphasis on faith, Matthew explained that the disciples' failure to do Jesus' work was rooted in their own "little faith" (Mt 17:19, 20). They still had not grasped the spiritual aspect of Jesus' Messianic mission, so they could only respond to the predictions of his impending death and resurrection with misunderstanding (Mk 9:31, 32; Lk 9:44, 45) and sorrow (Mt 17:22, 23).

- **Matthew 17:14–23**
- **Mark 9:14–32**
- **Luke 9:37–45**

Matthew 17:14–23

Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy

17:14 When they came to the crowd, a man approached Jesus and knelt before him. 15"Lord, have mercy on my son," he said. "He has seizures and is suffering greatly. He often falls into the fire or into the water. 16I brought him to your disciples, but they could not heal him."

17"You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy here to me." 18Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of the boy, and he was healed at that moment.

19Then the disciples came to Jesus in private and asked, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"

20He replied, "Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." [21][b]

Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time

22When they came together in Galilee, he said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. 23They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life." And the disciples were filled with grief.

Mark 9:14–32

Jesus Heals a Boy Possessed by an Impure Spirit

9:14 When they came to the other disciples, they saw a large crowd around them and the teachers of the law arguing with them. 15As soon as all the people saw Jesus, they were overwhelmed with wonder and ran to greet him.

16"What are you arguing with them about?" he asked.

17A man in the crowd answered, "Teacher, I brought you my son, who is possessed by a spirit that has robbed him of speech. 18Whenever it seizes him, it throws him to the ground. He foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth and becomes rigid. I asked your disciples to drive out the spirit, but they could not."

19"You unbelieving generation," Jesus replied,

"how long shall I stay with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring the boy to me."
20So they brought him. When the spirit saw Jesus, it immediately threw the boy into a convulsion. He fell to the ground and rolled around, foaming at the mouth.
21Jesus asked the boy's father, "How long has he been like this?"
"From childhood," he answered. 22"It has often thrown him into fire or water to kill him. But if you can do anything, take pity on us and help us."
23"'If you can'?" said Jesus. "Everything is possible for one who believes."
24Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"
25When Jesus saw that a crowd was running to the scene, he rebuked the impure spirit. "You deaf and mute spirit," he said, "I command you, come out of him and never enter him again."
26The spirit shrieked, convulsed him violently and came out. The boy looked so much like a corpse that many said, "He's dead." 27But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him to his feet, and he stood up.
28After Jesus had gone indoors, his disciples asked him privately, "Why couldn't we drive it out?"
29He replied, "This kind can come out only by prayer.[a]"

Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time

30They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, 31because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise." 32But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

Luke 9:37–45

Jesus Heals a Demon-Possessed Boy

9:37 The next day, when they came down from the mountain, a large crowd met him. 38A man in the crowd called out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 39A spirit seizes him and he suddenly screams; it throws him into convulsions so that he foams at the mouth. It scarcely ever leaves him and is destroying him. 40I begged your disciples to drive it out, but they could not."
41"You unbelieving and perverse generation," Jesus replied, "how long shall I stay with you and put up with you? Bring your son here."
42Even while the boy was coming, the demon threw him to the ground in a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the impure spirit, healed the boy and gave him back to his father. 43And they were all amazed at the greatness of God.

Jesus Predicts His Death a Second Time

While everyone was marveling at all that Jesus did, he said to his disciples, 44"Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men." 45But they did not understand what this meant. It was hidden from them, so that they did not grasp it, and they were afraid to ask him about it.

TRANSITION

Being Christ's Disciple

During a visit to Capernaum, Jesus began teaching his disciples about the differences between the kingdom of God that he proclaimed and the political kingdom which most people expected the Messiah to establish. Matthew's unique story about the temple tax (Mt 17:24–27) points out that membership in God's kingdom is not about domination, such as receiving tribute from "duty and taxes," but about becoming children of God. Each of the Synoptic Gospels emphasizes that one's status in God's kingdom depends upon receiving others and being received oneself as a child (Mt 18:1–5; Mk 9:33–38; Lk 9:46–48).

Jesus made two points regarding membership in the kingdom. First, membership in God's kingdom is open to a broad range of people. All are to be considered God's children unless their actions in opposition to God's work demand that they be excluded (Mk 9:40; Lk 9:49, 50). Jesus' second point identified such opposing acts. Any action that caused one of these "little ones" to fall was in danger of judgment (Mk 9:42; see Mt 18:6–9) and of being removed from the community of faith (Mt 18:7).

- **Matthew 17:24—18:9**
- **Mark 9:33–50**
- **Luke 9:46–50**

Matthew 17:24—18:9

The Temple Tax

17:24 After Jesus and his disciples arrived in Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma temple tax came to Peter and asked, "Doesn't your teacher pay the temple tax?"
25"Yes, he does," he replied.

[a] *29* Some manuscripts *prayer and fasting*

When Peter came into the house, Jesus was the first to speak. "What do you think, Simon?" he asked. "From whom do the kings of the earth collect duty and taxes—from their own children or from others?"

26"From others," Peter answered.

"Then the children are exempt," Jesus said to him. 27"But so that we may not cause offense, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours."

The Greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven

18 1At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

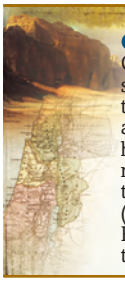
2He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. 3And he said: "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5And whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Causing to Stumble

6"If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea. 7Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to stumble! Such things must come, but woe to the person through whom they come! 8If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. 9And if your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.

Mark 9:33–50

9 :33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the road?" 34But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest.



Geography & Environment
Capernaum was a village on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. According to the Gospels (Mt 4:13), the city became a kind of headquarters for Jesus and his disciples. Often the Gospel accounts mention a house in Capernaum, sometimes describing it simply as "the house" (Mk 9:33). It probably belonged to Simon Peter, and has been the object of excavation in recent decades.

35Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."

36He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 37"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."

Synagogue ruins at Capernaum

Whoever Is Not Against Us Is for Us

38"Teacher," said John, "we saw someone
driving out demons in your name and we told
him to stop, because he was not one of us."
39"Do not stop him," Jesus said. "For no one
who does a miracle in my name can in the next
moment say anything bad about me, 40for who-
ever is not against us is for us. 41Truly I tell
you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my
name because you belong to the Messiah will
certainly not lose their reward.

Causing to Stumble

42"If anyone causes one of these little ones—
those who believe in me—to stumble, it would
be better for them if a large millstone were
hung around their neck and they were thrown
into the sea. 43If your hand causes you to stum-
ble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life
maimed than with two hands to go into hell,
where the fire never goes out. [44][a] 45And if
your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is
better for you to enter life crippled than to have
two feet and be thrown into hell. [46][a] 47And if
your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It
is better for you to enter the kingdom of God
with one eye than to have two eyes and be
thrown into hell, 48where

"'the worms that eat them do not die,
and the fire is not quenched.'[b]

49Everyone will be salted with fire.
50"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how
can you make it salty again? Have salt among
yourselves, and be at peace with each other."

Luke 9:46–50

9:46 An argument started among the dis-
ciples as to which of them would be the
greatest. 47Jesus, knowing their thoughts, took
a little child and had him stand beside him.
48Then he said to them, "Whoever welcomes
this little child in my name welcomes me; and
whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who
sent me. For it is the one who is least among
you all who is the greatest."
49"Master," said John, "we saw someone driv-
ing out demons in your name and we tried to
stop him, because he is not one of us."
50"Do not stop him," Jesus said, "for whoever
is not against you is for you."

[a] *44,46* Some manuscripts include here the words of verse 48.
[b] *48* Isaiah 66:24

TRANSITION

Attending the Festival of Tabernacles

One of Jesus' several visits to Jerusalem recorded in the Gospel of John was to attend the Festival of Tabernacles. Jesus made that trip to Jerusalem secretly, but began to openly teach in the temple about midway through the festival (Jn 7:2, 10–14). If the unidentified festival of Jn 5:1 refers to either Passover or Tabernacles of A.D. 28, this Festival of Tabernacles would have occurred during the fall of A.D. 29 (see "Jesus' Second Visit to Jerusalem" at Jn 5:1).

At the time of this celebration of the Festival of Tabernacles opposition to Jesus' ministry continued to mount (Jn 7:1, 2). Yet John's Gospel shows that Jesus remained firmly in control of the events: his "time" was not governed by the world's schedule, but by the Father (7:6, 8). Jesus refused to be manipulated by his family into revealing himself before this divinely ordained time (7:3–8), and his opponents failed in their attempt to seize him "because his hour had not yet come" (7:30).

Jesus used the traditional practices of the Jewish religious festival to set the stage for his message. The Festival of Tabernacles had come to be closely associated with prayers

FROM GALILEE TO JERUSALEM

The second traditional segment of Jesus' ministry is his journey from his native Galilee toward Jerusalem during the final year of his life. The Synoptic Gospels relate only one visit to Jerusalem by Jesus during his ministry (Mt 19:1), a visit that ended with his crucifixion. The Gospel of John, however, reports a series of visits corresponding to the traditional Jewish pilgrimage festivals (see "The Galilean Ministry" at Jn 1:35).

The Teacher was moving steadfastly toward the climax of his earthly ministry.

Only Luke gives extended attention to Jesus' specific journey from Galilee to Judea. Much of the information about Jesus' ministry that is unique to the Gospel of Luke is found in a large section (Lk 9:51—18:14) in which Luke emphasizes Jesus' ultimate destination (see Lk 9:53; 13:22, 33). Teachings on the meaning of discipleship are given by a Teacher who was moving steadfastly toward the climax of his earthly ministry. See "Jesus' Final Journey" at Mt 8:18.

for the fall rains that were necessary to assure a bountiful springtime harvest. On the final day of the festival, the priest would present a special offering of water, along with the daily drink offering of wine, in thanksgiving and prayer to the God who supplies the life-giving rains. It may have been at the very moment of that ritual that Jesus announced, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink" (7:37).

Worshipers at the Festival of Tabernacles may have also made associations between the festival and the ancient Israelites' wanderings in the wilderness. In such a case, Jesus could have suggested a connection with the rock that miraculously provided the Israelites with water in the wilderness (Ex 17:1–6). His promise of "rivers of living water" (Jn 7:38) is identified by John as referring to the Holy Spirit (7:39).

• John 7:1–52

John

Jesus Goes to the Festival of Tabernacles

7 :1 After this, Jesus went around in Galilee.
He did not want[a] to go about in Judea
because the Jewish leaders there were looking
for a way to kill him. [2]But when the Jewish Festival
of Tabernacles was near, [3]Jesus' brothers
said to him, "Leave Galilee and go to Judea, so
that your disciples there may see the works
you do. [4]No one who wants to become a public
figure acts in secret. Since you are doing these
things, show yourself to the world." [5]For even
his own brothers did not believe in him.

[6]Therefore Jesus told them, "My time is not
yet here; for you any time will do. [7]The world
cannot hate you, but it hates me because I testify
that its works are evil. [8]You go to the festival.
I am not[b] going up to this festival, because my
time has not yet fully come." [9]After he had said
this, he stayed in Galilee.

[10]However, after his brothers had left for the
festival, he went also, not publicly, but in secret.
[11]Now at the festival the Jewish leaders were
watching for Jesus and asking, "Where is he?"

[12]Among the crowds there was widespread
whispering about him. Some said, "He is a
good man."

Others replied, "No, he deceives the people."
[13]But no one would say anything publicly about
him for fear of the leaders.

Jesus Teaches at the Festival

[14]Not until halfway through the festival did
Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin
to teach. [15]The Jews there were amazed and
asked, "How did this man get such learning
without having been taught?"

[16]Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my
own. It comes from the one who sent me.
[17]Anyone who chooses to do the will of God
will find out whether my teaching comes from
God or whether I speak on my own. [18]Whoever
speaks on their own does so to gain personal
glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one
who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing
false about him. [19]Has not Moses given you the
law? Yet not one of you keeps the law. Why are
you trying to kill me?"

[20]"You are demon-possessed," the crowd answered. "Who is trying to kill you?"

[21]Jesus said to them, "I did one miracle, and
you are all amazed. [22]Yet, because Moses gave
you circumcision (though actually it did not
come from Moses, but from the patriarchs),
you circumcise a boy on the Sabbath. [23]Now if a
boy can be circumcised on the Sabbath so that
the law of Moses may not be broken, why are
you angry with me for healing a man's whole
body on the Sabbath? [24]Stop judging by mere
appearances, but instead judge correctly."

Division Over Who Jesus Is

[25]At that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask, "Isn't this the man they
are trying to kill? [26]Here he is, speaking publicly, and they are not saying a word to him.
Have the authorities really concluded that he
is the Messiah? [27]But we know where this man
is from; when the Messiah comes, no one will
know where he is from."

[28]Then Jesus, still teaching in the temple
courts, cried out, "Yes, you know me, and you
know where I am from. I am not here on my
own authority, but he who sent me is true. You
do not know him, [29]but I know him because I
am from him and he sent me."

[30]At this they tried to seize him, but no one
laid a hand on him, because his hour had not
yet come. [31]Still, many in the crowd believed

Arts & Literature
The literacy rate of any ancient society is hard to estimate. Inscriptions on public buildings, casual graffiti scratched on the walls of Pompeii, and the wide range of things written on papyrus show that writing was not confined to a caste of priests. When the people in Jerusalem were amazed at how Jesus the Galilean could "get such learning" (Jn 7:15), they were surprised that he could teach, not that he could read.

[a] *1* Some manuscripts *not have authority* [b] *8* Some manuscripts *not yet*

The Spirit and Rivers of Living Water (Jn 7:38)

The Festival of Tabernacles was celebrated at the end of the grape harvest in September and October. With all harvests completed, the 7 days of this festival were a time for great joy. About halfway through the celebration, Jesus began teaching at the temple (Jn 7:2, 14), and on the last day he appealed to "Scripture" (7:37, 38).

What Scripture Jesus had in mind is a mystery since the Old Testament does not speak of "rivers of living water" flowing from a person's heart. There were passages, however, from which Jewish people seem to have read during the Festival of Tabernacles, such as Zechariah 14 and Ezekiel 47. These texts talked about rivers of living water flowing from Jerusalem or from the temple, and in Jesus' day, Jewish people often spoke of Jerusalem and the temple as the "navel of the earth." So it seems that Jesus appealed to the prophecy of water flowing from the temple in the end time.

Most 1st-century Jews would have known of this prophecy. Visitors to the festival watched priests march in solemn procession from the Pool of Siloam into the temple, where they poured out sacred water at the base of the altar. This ritual pointed to the coming rivers of water that the prophets had promised. Those who witnessed the festival event returned home to tell others, and souvenir jars depicting the ritual have been found in other parts of the ancient world.

The Gospel writer John explains Jesus' promise of "rivers of living water" as referring to the Spirit (Jn 7:39). His interpretation borrows from the Old Testament prophets who sometimes portrayed the "pouring out" of the Spirit as water (Isa 44:3; Eze 36:25–27). In the "rivers of living water" John saw the Holy Spirit which Jesus would send after he had been glorified (Jn 20:22).

in him. They said, "When the Messiah comes, will he perform more signs than this man?"

32 The Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him. Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him.

33 Jesus said, "I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me. 34 You will look for me, but you will not find me; and where I am, you cannot come."

35 The Jews said to one another, "Where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him? Will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks? 36 What did he mean when he said, 'You will look for me, but you will not find me,' and 'Where I am, you cannot come'?"

37 On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them."[a] 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

Culture & Society

Educational practice during Jesus' time was influenced by Greek education (Jn 7:35), whose centerpiece was the poems of Homer. Hebrew education was less formal, but the parents were charged with teaching their children the history, customs, and laws that in effect make up the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. The Romans had a set of traditional laws that all children were supposed to memorize.

40 On hearing his words, some of the people said, "Surely this man is the Prophet."

41 Others said, "He is the Messiah."

Still others asked, "How can the Messiah come from Galilee? 42 Does not Scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem, the town where David lived?" 43 Thus the people were divided because of Jesus. 44 Some wanted to seize him, but no one laid a hand on him.

Unbelief of the Jewish Leaders

45 Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees, who asked them, "Why didn't you bring him in?"

46 "No one ever spoke the way this man does," the guards replied.

47 "You mean he has deceived you also?" the Pharisees retorted. 48 "Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him? 49 No! But this mob that knows nothing of the law—there is a curse on them."

50 Nicodemus, who had gone to Jesus earlier and who was one of their own number, asked, 51 "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?"

52 They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Look into it, and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee."

[a] *37,38* Or *me. And let anyone drink* 38 *who believes in me." As Scripture has said, "Out of him* (or *them*) *will flow rivers of living water."*

TRANSITION

Forgiving an Adulteress

In this memorable story about a woman caught in adultery, Jesus doodled in the dirt while the crowd, whom he had confronted with their own sins, slowly departed without stoning her. Scholars are divided, however, over whether the story was originally part of the Gospel of John. It is found in the vast majority of Greek manuscripts of the Fourth Gospel, but is not found in any of the earliest manuscripts. In some Greek manuscripts it appears in three other places in the Gospel of John (after Jn 7:36; 7:44; 21:25) or even in the Gospel of Luke (after Lk 21:38). Moreover, the Greek in Jn 7:53—8:11 is of a markedly different style and character than that found in the remainder of the Fourth Gospel. Though it is uncertain whether the story was an original part of John's Gospel, it is still possible that it preserves an actual event from Jesus' ministry.

• John 7:53—8:11

[The earliest manuscripts and many other ancient witnesses do not have John 7:53—8:11. A few manuscripts include these verses, wholly or in part, after John 7:36, John 21:25, Luke 21:38 or Luke 24:53.]

John

7:53 *Then they all went home,*

8 [1] *but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.*
[2] *At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them.* [3] *The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group* [4] *and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.* [5] *In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"* [6] *They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.*

But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. [7] *When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her."* [8] *Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.*

[9] *At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there.* [10] *Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"*

[11] *"No one, sir," she said.*

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

TRANSITION

Discussions with the Pharisees

Another debate with the Pharisees continues Jesus' teaching on the occasion of the Festival of Tabernacles (see "Attending the Festival of Tabernacles" at Jn 7:1). Given associations between the festival and the Israelites' wilderness wanderings, Jesus' statement, "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12) possibly recalled the presence of God as a pillar of fire leading the Israelites in the wilderness (Ex 13:21).

The recurring theme of Jesus' discussions was his relationship with God the Father. His use of the phrase "I am" as a type of personal address (Jn 8:58) indicates his unique relationship with the Father. Among Jesus' Jewish contemporaries this phrase was understood as an expression of God's personal name (see Ex 3:14), so for Jesus to claim it for himself was to claim unity with God.

• John 8:12–59

John

Dispute Over Jesus' Testimony

8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

[13] The Pharisees challenged him, "Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid."

[14] Jesus answered, "Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. [15] You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. [16] But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. [17] In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. [18] I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me."

[19] Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"

"You do not know me or my Father," Jesus replied. "If you knew me, you would know my Father also." [20] He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

Dispute Over Who Jesus Is

[21] Once more Jesus said to them, "I am going away, and you will look for me, and you will die in your sin. Where I go, you cannot come."

22This made the Jews ask, "Will he kill himself? Is that why he says, 'Where I go, you cannot come'?"

23But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. 24I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am he, you will indeed die in your sins."

25"Who are you?" they asked.

"Just what I have been telling you from the beginning," Jesus replied. 26"I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is trustworthy, and what I have heard from him I tell the world."

27They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. 28So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up[a] the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. 29The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." 30Even as he spoke, many believed in him.

Dispute Over Whose Children Jesus' Opponents Are

31To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. 32Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

33They answered him, "We are Abraham's descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?"

34Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. 35Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. 37I know that you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word. 38I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you are doing what you have heard from your father.[b]"

39"Abraham is our father," they answered.

"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would[c] do what Abraham did. 40As it is, you are looking for a way to kill me, a man who has told you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. 41You are doing the works of your own father."

"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."

42Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I have come here from God. I have not come on my own; God sent me. 43Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. 44You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! 46Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? 47Whoever belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."

Jesus' Claims About Himself

48The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"

49"I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. 50I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. 51Very truly I tell you, whoever obeys my word will never see death."

52At this they exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that whoever obeys your word will never taste death. 53Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

54Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. 55Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. 56Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 29
29		In spring, Jesus attends the Passover in Jerusalem (Jn 6:4)
29		Jesus walks on the water (Jn 6:19)
29		Peter confesses that Jesus is the Messiah (Lk 9:20)
29		Jesus attends the fall Festival of Tabernacles (Jn 7:2, 14)
29		Jesus attends the winter Festival of Dedication (Jn 10:22)

[a] *28* The Greek for *lifted up* also means *exalted.*
[b] *38* Or *presence. Therefore do what you have heard from the Father.* [c] *39* Some early manuscripts *"If you are Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then*

57"You are not yet fifty years old," they said to
him, "and you have seen Abraham!"
58"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered,
"before Abraham was born, I am!" 59At this,
they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus
hid himself, slipping away from the temple
grounds.

TRANSITION

Healing the Man Born Blind

Jesus proclaimed, "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12; 9:5) and demonstrated what he meant by healing a man with congenital blindness. Jesus' presence in the world as "light" served first as a source of revelation, revealing "the works of God" (Jn 9:3) in overcoming affliction. But this "light" was also a source of judgment (see Jn 3:19–21). The healing provoked a crisis because it was performed on the Sabbath (9:16; see "Lord of the Sabbath" at Mt 12:1). By self-righteously condemning Jesus as a "sinner" for this breach of Sabbath observance traditions, Jesus' Pharisaic opponents brought themselves under judgment (Jn 9:39–41).

Conversely, the man who was healed received not only physical sight but also increasing spiritual insight. As he reflected upon what had happened to him, he gradually proceeded from referring to his benefactor as "The man they call Jesus" (9:11) to saying that "He is a prophet" (9:17), and ultimately to confessing belief that he is "the Son of Man" (9:35–38).

• **John 9:1–41**

John

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

9:1 As he went along, he saw a man blind
from birth. 2His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"
3"Neither this man nor his parents sinned,"
said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4As long as it is day, we must do the works of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work. 5While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."
6After saying this, he spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes. 7"Go," he told him, "wash in the Pool of Siloam" (this word means "Sent"). So the man went and washed, and came home seeing.
8His neighbors and those who had formerly seen him begging asked, "Isn't this the same man who used to sit and beg?" 9Some claimed that he was.
Others said, "No, he only looks like him."
But he himself insisted, "I am the man."
10"How then were your eyes opened?" they asked.
11He replied, "The man they call Jesus made some mud and put it on my eyes. He told me to go to Siloam and wash. So I went and washed, and then I could see."
12"Where is this man?" they asked him.
"I don't know," he said.

The Pharisees Investigate the Healing

13They brought to the Pharisees the man who had been blind. 14Now the day on which Jesus had made the mud and opened the man's eyes was a Sabbath. 15Therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. "He put mud on my eyes," the man replied, "and I washed, and now I see."
16Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."
But others asked, "How can a sinner perform such signs?" So they were divided.
17Then they turned again to the blind man, "What have you to say about him? It was your eyes he opened."
The man replied, "He is a prophet."
18They still did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they sent for the man's parents. 19"Is this your son?" they asked. "Is this the one you say was born blind? How is it that now he can see?"
20"We know he is our son," the parents answered, "and we know he was born blind. 21But how he can see now, or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He is of age; he will speak for himself." 22His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who already had decided that anyone who acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23That was why his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."
24A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God by telling the truth," they said. "We know this man is a sinner."
25He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!"
26Then they asked him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?"
27He answered, "I have told you already and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear

Put Out of the Synagogue (Jn 9:22)

In Jesus' day various groups competed for power in Jerusalem. The Sadducees held the most formal power, since they were backed by the Romans. The Pharisees, however, were more popular with the people, and often held prominent roles in the Jerusalem synagogues. Ironically, the Pharisees used their control of the synagogues to wield authority over the very people whom they were supposed to be serving.

When Jesus miraculously helped a blind man receive his sight, the people brought the healed man to the Pharisees (Jn 9:8–13). Because the healing occurred on a Sabbath, the Pharisees were much concerned about Jesus violating their interpretation of Sabbath laws. In their view, a Sabbath-breaker could not have healed anyone by God's power (9:16).

The blind man's parents, being questioned concerning their son's healing, dared not counter the Pharisees' view (9:20–22). John's Gospel makes it clear that the parents feared being "put out of the synagogue" (9:22). This could mean excommunication, that is exclusion from the synagogue community. Severely erring members of synagogues were sometimes disciplined by beatings, or by temporary or long-term exclusion from their synagogues.

By the time John wrote his Gospel, more than 60 years after Jesus' death, Jewish Christians were being threatened with excommunication from their synagogues because of their belief in Jesus as the Messiah. John warns of this conflict (Jn 16:2). By retelling the time that Jesus healed the blind man and defended him against those who persecuted him for his faith, John encouraged his own readers in their situation: Jesus would be with them as well.

it again? Do you want to become his disciples too?"

28 Then they hurled insults at him and said,
"You are this fellow's disciple! We are disciples
of Moses! 29 We know that God spoke to Moses, but as for this fellow, we don't even know
where he comes from."

30 The man answered, "Now that is remarkable! You don't know where he comes from, yet
he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does
not listen to sinners. He listens to the godly
person who does his will. 32 Nobody has ever
heard of opening the eyes of a man born blind.
33 If this man were not from God, he could do
nothing."

34 To this they replied, "You were steeped in
sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!" And they
threw him out.

Spiritual Blindness

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown him out,
and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?"

36 "Who is he, sir?" the man asked. "Tell me
so that I may believe in him."

37 Jesus said, "You have now seen him; in fact,
he is the one speaking with you."

38 Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and
he worshiped him.

39 Jesus said,[a] "For judgment I have come
into this world, so that the blind will see and
those who see will become blind."

40 Some Pharisees who were with him heard
him say this and asked, "What? Are we blind
too?"

41 Jesus said, "If you were blind, you would
not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you
can see, your guilt remains.

[a] *38,39* Some early manuscripts do not have *Then the man said . . . 39 Jesus said.*

TRANSITION

Jesus, the Good Shepherd

It is uncertain how closely Jesus' parable of the Good Shepherd (Jn 10:1–6) should be tied to the healing of the blind man (see "Healing the Man Born Blind" at Jn 9:1). Some scholars believe this exchange with Jewish leaders occurred sometime later, during the 2-month period separating Jesus' visits to Jerusalem for the Festival of Tabernacles (Jn 7:2) and for the Festival of Dedication (now known as Hanukkah; Jn 10:22). Others, though, since there is no introductory statement in Jn 10:1, consider this parable to be the continuation of Jesus' response to "some Pharisees" following the blind man's healing (see Jn 9:40, 41). Some of those who heard Jesus' teaching on this parable did refer back to the healing of the blind man (10:21).

Whether or not Jesus' parable continued his response to the controversy over the blind man's healing, the illustration of the shepherd's relationship to his sheep can be read as an allegory of that event. Just as the sheep know the voice of the shepherd and follow only him and not strangers (10:4, 5), so the healed blind man refused to heed those who advised him to renounce Jesus (see Jn 9:24–33). Those who had sought to bar others from fellowship with God's people (9:22) can be likened to "a thief and a robber" within the sheepfold (10:1).

• **John 10:1–21**

John

The Good Shepherd and His Sheep

10:1 "Very truly I tell you Pharisees, anyone who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber. [2]The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. [3]The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. [4]When he has brought out all his own, he goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. [5]But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." [6]Jesus used this figure of speech, but the Pharisees did not understand what he was telling them.

[7]Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. [8]All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. [9]I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved.[a] They will come in and go out, and find pasture. [10]The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

[11]"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. [12]The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. [13]The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

[14]"I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me— [15]just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. [16]I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. [17]The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. [18]No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."

[19]The Jews who heard these words were again divided. [20]Many of them said, "He is demon-possessed and raving mad. Why listen to him?"

[21]But others said, "These are not the sayings of a man possessed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

[a] 9 Or *kept safe*

TRANSITION

Through Samaria Toward Jerusalem

Luke begins his account of the journey to Jerusalem with Jesus traveling to Judea through Samaria, the region directly between Galilee and Judea (Lk 9:52). Mark and Matthew do not mention this direct route through Samaria, but rather a route around Samaria through Perea, called "the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan" (Mt 19:1; Mk 10:1).

JESUS' FINAL JOURNEY

The Galilean portion of his ministry now completed, Jesus began a journey to Jerusalem to meet his destiny, a destiny of which he was well aware and which he faced willingly (Mk 8:31; 9:30, 31). In the Synoptic Gospels, this journey is Jesus' only visit to Jerusalem, while in John it is simply the last of several journeys. Though the Gospels differ concerning the number of journeys, they necessarily agree that Jesus made a final such journey shortly before his death. About this final journey the Gospels differ only in the amount of information they provide concerning its various events.

Luke's "travel narrative" is a unique account of Jesus' journey from Galilee to Jerusalem.

By far the greatest amount of information on Jesus' teachings and deeds while on this journey is in the Gospel of Luke. Luke's unique account of the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (Lk 9:51—18:14) is called his "travel narrative." There are only a few places in the narrative where the other Gospels offer parallels to Luke's version of events, and these occur mostly toward the end of the journey when Jesus is in Judea but has not yet arrived at Jerusalem.

Matthew and Luke report some of Jesus' same teachings, but do so in different settings. While in Luke's Gospel these teachings were spoken on the road to Jerusalem (Lk 9:57), Matthew places most of them earlier in Jesus' ministry (Mt 8:18, 19). Many scholars believe that most of Luke's information for the travel narrative came from two written sources, one which was apparently available only to him (called the "L" source for "Luke"), and one which was also employed by Matthew (called the "Q" source).

Waiting to Bury Their Dead (Mt 8:21)

One of Jesus' disciples requested, "First let me go and bury my father" (Mt 8:21). This request may sound reasonable to modern readers who suppose that the disciple's father had just died and the burial would not take long. That was not the case, however, in 1st-century Jewish culture.

Immediately after a person died, family members and professional mourners would gather to weep and wail. As soon as the body was ready, they would carry it on a stretcher to the family tomb, while other people in town who heard or saw the procession would quickly join it to share the family's sorrow. Members of the immediate family would continue heavy grieving for one week, while friends and neighbors would bring food or other items to relieve the family of its other obligations.

For 1st-century Jews, honoring parents was one of life's highest obligations, and burying one's parents was considered a most important way to honor them. No son whose father had just died would be talking with Jesus in public before the father's body had been laid in a tomb. The son would be preparing the body for immediate transport to the tomb.

So what was this disciple asking of Jesus? Possibly the father was not yet dead. Even today in the Middle East, the expression "Wait until I bury my father" expresses a desire to wait until the father has died before embarking too far from home. The disciple may have wanted to wait until his aged father died before following Jesus.

Yet it is also possible that the disciple's father had been dead for some time. Jewish people in the 1st century let the flesh rot off of a corpse's bones for a year, then returned to the tomb and gathered the bones into a box which they deposited into a slot in the tomb wall. If the disciple was referring to such a reburial, known as *secondary* burial, then he was asking for as much as a year's delay in following Jesus.

Some teachers claimed special honor, but no other teacher claimed that following him was as important as burying one's parents. Only God himself warranted that role. Those who did not recognize Jesus' true identity may have viewed him as arrogant or anti-family to demand, "Let the dead bury their own dead" (8:22).

Luke's report of Jesus' rejection by a Samaritan village (Lk 9:53) reflects the hostility between Jews and Samaritans. Jesus knew that he would face opposition in Samaria and wished to encounter it head-on, demonstrating his courage and his determination to fulfill his destiny in spite of all opposition. The Samaritan encounter also allowed him to teach his disciples how to handle such opposition, a lesson they surely needed. They would have called down fire from heaven to punish this village for rejecting their Master. But Jesus rebukes the disciples: lashing out in anger is not the way to handle opposition (Lk 9:55).

Since following Jesus would involve rejection and suffering, his followers could not be half-hearted. Both Luke and Matthew record Jesus' teachings that disciples must be completely committed (Mt 8:20–22; Lk 9:58–62). They could not allow excuses, such as the death of a loved one or the need to say farewell to family members, to delay them from following.

- **Matthew 8:18–22**
- **Luke 9:51–62**

Matthew 8:18–22

The Cost of Following Jesus

8:18 When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. [19]Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

[20]Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

[21]Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."

[22]But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Luke 9:51–62

Samaritan Opposition

9:51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. [52]And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; [53]but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. [54]When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them[a]?" [55]But Jesus turned and rebuked them. [56]Then he and his disciples went to another village.

The Cost of Following Jesus

[57]As they were walking along the road, a

[a] *54* Some manuscripts *them, just as Elijah did*

man said to him, "I will follow you wherever you go."
58 Jesus replied, "Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."
59 He said to another man, "Follow me."
But he replied, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father."
60 Jesus said to him, "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God."
61 Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family."
62 Jesus replied, "No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God."

[a] *23* That is, the realm of the dead [b] *1* Some manuscripts *seventy*; also in verse 17

TRANSITION

Mission of the 72 Disciples

Jesus sent out a large group of disciples to prepare the way for him (Lk 10:1). Just as harvest workers must labor with great haste to bring in their crops before it is too late, so too did Jesus instruct these disciples to hurry and not to concern themselves with insignificant matters such as what they would eat or where they would stay (10:7, 8). They would face great opposition along the way, and Jesus instructed them on how to handle being rejected by a town. Such unreceptive Galilean cities as Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were more guilty than the Gentile cities of Phoenicia, who would have repented if they had witnessed Jesus' work (10:13–15).

Only Luke suggests that Jesus ever sent out such a large group of disciples. All three Synoptic Gospels agree that Jesus sent out the twelve disciples to preach and to heal (Lk 9:1–6). Luke, however, mentions this second mission with a much larger group of 72 disciples. The other evangelists do not give the impression that Jesus had such a large and devoted group of followers, while Luke presents the "workers" as more plentiful and the "harvest" as more abundant.

Most of the material in Luke's story of the mission of 72 disciples is also found in Matthew. The different sayings of Jesus in Lk 10:1–24 are sprinkled throughout Mt 9–11 (Mt 9:37; 10:7–16, 40; 11:20–27). Possibly both evangelists found these sayings in a common source, each choosing to fit them into his account in a different way.

- **Matthew 11:20–30**
- **Luke 10:1–24**

Matthew 11:20–30

Woe on Unrepentant Towns

11:20 Then Jesus began to denounce the towns in which most of his miracles had been performed, because they did not repent.
21 "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I tell you, it will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. 23 And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down to Hades.[a] For if the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. 24 But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."

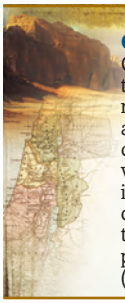
The Father Revealed in the Son

25 At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. 26 Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.
27 "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.
28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Luke 10:1–24

Jesus Sends Out the Seventy-Two

10:1 After this the Lord appointed seventy-two[b] others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. 2 He told them, "The harvest is



Geography & Environment
Chorazin and Bethsaida, located close to the north shore of Lake Galilee, are named along with Capernaum in Jesus' announcement of judgment against the cities of Galilee (Mt 11:21, 23). Chorazin was a town of medium size and, according to Jewish literature, a center for producing wheat. "Bethsaida in Galilee" was the home of some of Jesus' disciples, particularly Philip, Andrew, and Peter (Jn 1:44; 12:21).

plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord
of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers
into his harvest field. 3Go! I am sending you
out like lambs among wolves. 4Do not take a
purse or bag or sandals; and do not greet any-
one on the road.
5"When you enter a house, first say, 'Peace to
this house.' 6If someone who promotes peace
is there, your peace will rest on them; if not, it
will return to you. 7Stay there, eating and drink-
ing whatever they give you, for the worker de-
serves his wages. Do not move around from
house to house.
8"When you enter a town and are welcomed,
eat what is offered to you. 9Heal the sick who
are there and tell them, 'The kingdom of God
has come near to you.' 10But when you enter a
town and are not welcomed, go into its streets
and say, 11'Even the dust of your town we wipe
from our feet as a warning to you. Yet be sure
of this: The kingdom of God has come near.' 12I
tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for
Sodom than for that town.
13"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Beth-
saida! For if the miracles that were performed
in you had been performed in Tyre and Sidon,
they would have repented long ago, sitting
in sackcloth and ashes. 14But it will be more

Last Journey to Jerusalem
On his last tr ip to Jerusalem, Jesus appar ently took the longer route from Scythopolis, crossing to the east bank of the Jordan River to travel south. Recrossing the Jordan River near Jer icho, he asc ended the moun tain to Bethany and finally ar rived at Jerusalem. This route bypassed Samaria altogether.

Geography & Environment
Tyre and Sidon (Lk 10:13, 14) are ancient seaports along the Mediterranean coast, between Israel and Berytus. Today Berytus is Beirut. Tyre was defeated by Alexander the Great in 332 B.C. after a 7-month siege and a hard struggle, including the building of a causeway from the mainland to the island. Just north of Tyre is Sidon, which had the reputation of being the oldest Phoenician port.

bearable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment
than for you. 15And you, Capernaum, will you
be lifted to the heavens? No, you will go down
to Hades.[a]
16"Whoever listens to you listens to me;
whoever rejects you rejects me; but whoever
rejects me rejects him who sent me."
17The seventy-two returned with joy and
said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in
your name."
18He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning
from heaven. 19I have given you authority to
trample on snakes and scorpions and to over-
come all the power of the enemy; nothing will
harm you. 20However, do not rejoice that the
spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your
names are written in heaven."
21At that time Jesus, full of joy through the
Holy Spirit, said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of
heaven and earth, because you have hidden
these things from the wise and learned, and re-
vealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for
this is what you were pleased to do.
22"All things have been committed to me by
my Father. No one knows who the Son is ex-
cept the Father, and no one knows who the Fa-
ther is except the Son and those to whom the
Son chooses to reveal him."
23Then he turned to his disciples and said
privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see what
you see. 24For I tell you that many prophets and
kings wanted to see what you see but did not
see it, and to hear what you hear but did not
hear it."

[a] *15* That is, the realm of the dead

TRANSITION
Compassion and Mercy from a Samaritan

A lawyer tested Jesus with a question about how to inherit eternal life. Both Mark and Matthew include a similar st ory, in which a teacher of the la w (Mk 12:28) and a P harisee (Mt 22:34–36) question Jesus concerning which is the g reatest commandment. Only in

Luke's Gospel does the lawyer ask a second question. Having been told that to inherit eternal life he must love his neighbor as himself, he asks Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Lk 10:29). In answer, Jesus delivered one of the best known of his parables: the parable of the good Samaritan.

On the surface, this parable offers the simple teaching that a "neighbor" is anyone with whom one comes into contact, especially those in need. The specific identities of the characters involved, however, moves the parable beyond a simple moral lesson. The man who is beaten and robbed was traveling "from Jerusalem to Jericho" (Lk 10:30), which marks him almost certainly as a Jew. The priest and Levite passed by without helping the man, perhaps because they did not wish to defile themselves by contact with blood or with (presumably) a dead body. The Samaritan, a mortal enemy of all Jews, took pity on the man and offered him an extraordinary degree of assistance.

If Jesus' sole intention had been to say that one's neighbor includes everyone, there would have been no need to identify the actors as a "Levite," a "priest," and a "Samaritan." Jesus was also critiquing the heartlessness of those Jews who allowed the Law to thwart their humanity. With this parable Luke continues a favorite theme: the inclusion of all nations in the people of God. Even a Samaritan can aspire to eternal life!

• **Luke 10:25–37**

Luke

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

10:25 On one occasion an expert in the
law stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he
asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
26"What is written in the Law?" he replied.
"How do you read it?"
27He answered, "'Love the Lord your God
with all your heart and with all your soul and
with all your strength and with all your mind'[a];
and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'[b]"
28"You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."
29But he wanted to justify himself, so he
asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"
30In reply Jesus said: "A man was going
down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was
attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his
clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him
half dead. 31A priest happened to be going down
the same road, and when he saw the man, he
passed by on the other side. 32So too, a Levite,
when he came to the place and saw him, passed
by on the other side. 33But a Samaritan, as he
traveled, came where the man was; and when
he saw him, he took pity on him. 34He went to
him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil
and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.
35The next day he took out two denarii[c] and
gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,'
he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you
for any extra expense you may have.'
36"Which of these three do you think was a
neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of
robbers?"
37The expert in the law replied, "The one
who had mercy on him."
Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

[a] *27* Deut. 6:5 [b] *27* Lev. 19:18 [c] *35* A denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see Matt. 20:2).

TRANSITION

Visiting in Bethany

On the journey toward Jerusalem, Jesus was welcomed into the home of two sisters, Mary and Martha. Luke does not indicate a location, but John's Gospel informs us that Mary and Martha were from Bethany, where they lived with their brother Lazarus (Jn 11:1). Since Bethany is in Judea just outside of Jerusalem, Jesus' journey would have been almost complete, having already passed through all of Samaria and northern Judea. Yet Luke makes comments later that the journey continued for quite some time (Lk 13:22; 17:11), and even at these later points Jesus is nowhere near Judea; he is still passing through Galilee and Samaria. Obviously, Luke's travel narrative does not follow a continuous geographical progression.

The two women reacted differently to Jesus' arrival. Mary listened to what Jesus said, while Martha complained about having to do the customarily female serving tasks alone (Lk 10:40). It is highly significant that Jesus took the side not of Martha, who assumed the traditional female role, but of Mary, who presumed to act like a male disciple. The picture of Jesus allowing and encouraging Mary to act as would a male disciple continues the generally favorable treatment of women in Luke's Gospel (Lk 1:24–63; 2:36–38; 8:1–3; 24:1–10).

• **Luke 10:38–42**

Luke

At the Home of Martha and Mary

10:38 As Jesus and his disciples were on
their way, he came to a village where a
woman named Martha opened her home to

him. 39She had a sister called Mary, who sat
at the Lord's feet listening to what he said.
40But Martha was distracted by all the prepa-
rations that had to be made. She came to him
and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister
has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her
to help me!"
41"Martha, Martha," the Lord answered,
"you are worried and upset about many things,
42but few things are needed—or indeed only
one.[a] Mary has chosen what is better, and it
will not be taken away from her."

TRANSITION

Hypocrisy of the Lawyers and Pharisees

Jesus' invitation to dine with a Pharisee results in a wide-ranging series of curses directed against his opponents, the experts in the law (lawyers) and Pharisees (Lk 11:37–52). Jesus condemned the Pharisees for being excessively concerned with trivial matters, such as ritual purity and tithing, while failing to pursue important matters such as social justice and ethical behavior. The lawyers also are denounced for sharing in the perpetuation of injustice, but they are singled out for criticism for their fathers' part in killing the prophets (Lk 11:47).

On this occasion Jesus' opponents began laying a trap in order to accuse him of some crime (Lk 11:53, 54). By noting this, Luke anticipates Jesus' arrest, trials, and crucifixion, which all the evangelists do in different ways.

Luke presents these sayings of Jesus as a single speech, given while a guest in the house of a Pharisee. While for Luke this event occurred during the journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, Matthew shows Jesus giving these sayings on several occasions, in a different order, and at times both before and after the journey, but not during it.

Unlike the experts in the law and Pharisees, who receive nothing but condemnation, the disciples are both warned and reassured. Jesus reassured them of God's love and concern for them, but counseled them on the price of unbelief and the rewards of faith (Lk 12:1–12).

• Luke 11:37—12:12

Luke

Woes on the Pharisees and the Experts in the Law

11:37 When Jesus had finished speaking,
a Pharisee invited him to eat with him;
so he went in and reclined at the table. 38But
the Pharisee was surprised when he noticed
that Jesus did not first wash before the meal.

39Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you
Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish,
but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.
40You foolish people! Did not the one who made
the outside make the inside also? 41But now as
for what is inside you—be generous to the
poor, and everything will be clean for you.
42"Woe to you Pharisees, because you give
God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other
kinds of garden herbs, but you neglect justice
and the love of God. You should have practiced
the latter without leaving the former undone.
43"Woe to you Pharisees, because you love
the most important seats in the synagogues
and respectful greetings in the marketplaces.
44"Woe to you, because you are like un-
marked graves, which people walk over with-
out knowing it."
45One of the experts in the law answered
him, "Teacher, when you say these things, you
insult us also."
46Jesus replied, "And you experts in the law,
woe to you, because you load people down with
burdens they can hardly carry, and you your-
selves will not lift one finger to help them.
47"Woe to you, because you build tombs for
the prophets, and it was your ancestors who
killed them. 48So you testify that you approve of
what your ancestors did; they killed the proph-
ets, and you build their tombs. 49Because of
this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them
prophets and apostles, some of whom they will
kill and others they will persecute.' 50Therefore
this generation will be held responsible for the
blood of all the prophets that has been shed
since the beginning of the world, 51from the
blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who
was killed between the altar and the sanctuary.
Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held re-
sponsible for it all.
52"Woe to you experts in the law, because
you have taken away the key to knowledge.
You yourselves have not entered, and you have
hindered those who were entering."

[a] *42* Some manuscripts *but only one thing is needed*

Religion & Worship

The Pharisees were not the only ones concerned about ritual matters (Lk 11:39). The approved religion of Rome focused on performing rituals exactly as they were prescribed. If an error was made in the ritual, the Romans displayed their piety by starting over from the beginning, and continuing this way until everything was correct. Otherwise they felt that their religious service was ineffective.

Science & Technology
An ancient key was a piece of wood or metal that could be passed through a hole in a door and used to move a latch or crossbar inside. Protection was provided by making the shape of the key complex. The Egyptians put wooden pins in the crossbar that kept it from moving until the right key was used to push the pins just the right amount. The illustration of "keys" signified access to spiritual teaching (Lk 11:52; Mt 16:19).

53 When Jesus went outside, the Pharisees
and the teachers of the law began to oppose
him fiercely and to besiege him with questions,
54 waiting to catch him in something he might
say.

Warnings and Encouragements

12 1 Meanwhile, when a crowd of many
thousands had gathered, so that they
were trampling on one another, Jesus began to
speak first to his disciples, saying: "Be[a] on your
guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which
is hypocrisy. 2 There is nothing concealed that
will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not
be made known. 3 What you have said in the
dark will be heard in the daylight, and what you
have whispered in the ear in the inner rooms
will be proclaimed from the roofs.

4 "I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of
those who kill the body and after that can do no
more. 5 But I will show you whom you should
fear: Fear him who, after your body has been
killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes,
I tell you, fear him. 6 Are not five sparrows sold
for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgot-
ten by God. 7 Indeed, the very hairs of your
head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are
worth more than many sparrows.

8 "I tell you, whoever publicly acknowledges
me before others, the Son of Man will also
acknowledge before the angels of God. 9 But
whoever disowns me before others will be dis-
owned before the angels of God. 10 And every-
one who speaks a word against the Son of Man
will be forgiven, but anyone who blasphemes
against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven.

11 "When you are brought before synagogues, rulers and authorities, do not worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say, 12 for the Holy Spirit will teach you at that time what you should say."

[a] 1 Or *speak to his disciples, saying: "First of all, be*

TRANSITION

Earthly or Heavenly Treasures

Some parts of Jesus' teaching about this lifetime which Luke places with the journey to Jerusalem are covered by Matthew in his Sermon on the Mount. Luke's lessons on seeking treasures in heaven rather than security on earth (Lk 12:22–34) are paralleled in Matthew's Sermon (see "Unassuming Godliness" at Mt 6:1). Others, including the parable of the rich fool, appear only in Luke (Lk 12:13–21). The message of all these teachings is the same: people should not concern themselves excessively with their material needs, but should concentrate on their spiritual development and worry about answering for themselves at the final judgment. They should not worry as much about this life as about the next.

• **Luke 12:13–21**

The Sea of Galilee

Luke

The Parable of the Rich Fool

12:13 Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

[14]Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" [15]Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

[16]And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. [17]He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

[18]"Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. [19]And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry."'

[20]"But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

[21]"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

TRANSITION

Be Watchful for the Son of Man

Using parables of servants, stewards, and masters, Jesus commented about being watchful and prepared. His teachings apply equally well both to one's own death and to the end of the world. In both cases, people cannot simply assume that they have all the time in the world to prepare themselves. Death as well as the Second Coming of Christ may occur at any time, and believers should always be ready for both. While some of Jesus' comments (Lk 12:42–48) may be taken in either of these two ways, others (12:49–59) are more clearly directed toward the Second Coming and the end of the world.

Although Jesus had come to bring "peace" (see Lk 2:14, 19:38), ironically the effect of his coming was just the opposite. He inspired passionate responses on two sides: devotion and acceptance by some and utter rejection by others. Because each side's response to Jesus meant so much to them, his coming caused division among people, even schisms among families (Lk 12:52, 53). Unfortunately, many were not able to see how near their judgment was, in spite of all the signs Jesus had given (12:54–59).

• Luke 12:35–59

Marriage & Family

A marriage was a union of two families, not just of two people. The formalities and celebrations could continue for several days, or even into the night. Jesus told a parable of a midnight procession that took place during wedding festivities (Mt 25:1–6). One could never know exactly when someone would return from a wedding feast (Lk 12:36).

Luke

Watchfulness

12:35 "Be dressed ready for service and keep your lamps burning, [36]like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him. [37]It will be good for those servants whose master finds them watching when he comes. Truly I tell you, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them. [38]It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak. [39]But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. [40]You also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him."

[41]Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?"

[42]The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? [43]It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. [44]Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. [45]But suppose the servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the other servants, both men and women, and to eat and drink and get drunk. [46]The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

[47]"The servant who knows the master's will and does not get ready or does not do what the master wants will be beaten with many blows. [48]But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

A Pool and Tower in Siloam (Lk 13:4)

The Gihon spring was a major water source for the city of Jerusalem from the time of David and Solomon (10th century B.C.; 1Ki 1:33, 45). Water was channeled from the western side of the Kidron Valley outside of Jerusalem and collected into reservoirs or pools.

In the 8th century B.C. King Hezekiah constructed a tunnel to bring water from the Gihon spring for storage in a reservoir within the city. The project was done in anticipation of a siege of Jerusalem by the Assyrians (2Ki 20:20); thus, the water supply of the city would be secure during the siege, which finally occurred in 701 B.C. Water from the southern end of Hezekiah's tunnel is still used today by Jerusalem's inhabitants.

Most scholars think that Hezekiah's tunnel emptied into what is known today as the Pool of Siloam. It was possibly called the "Upper Pool" in Hezekiah's time (2Ki 18:17; Isa 7:3). The Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 37–100) described Siloam as a fountain, and located it near the tunnel that Hezekiah constructed. In Jesus' time, Siloam was a well-known area, containing both a pool, where Jesus sent a blind man to wash (Jn 9:7, 11), as well as a tower. Although there is no material evidence for a "tower in Siloam" (Lk 13:4), presumably it was near the pool of the same name.

Not Peace but Division

49 "I have come to bring fire on the earth, and
how I wish it were already kindled! 50 But I have
a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am
under until it is completed! 51 Do you think I
came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you,
but division. 52 From now on there will be five
in one family divided against each other, three
against two and two against three. 53 They will
be divided, father against son and son against
father, mother against daughter and daughter
against mother, mother-in-law against daugh-
ter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-
in-law."

Interpreting the Times

54 He said to the crowd: "When you see a
cloud rising in the west, immediately you say,
'It's going to rain,' and it does. 55 And when the
south wind blows, you say, 'It's going to be hot,'
and it is. 56 Hypocrites! You know how to inter-
pret the appearance of the earth and the sky.
How is it that you don't know how to interpret
this present time?

57 "Why don't you judge for yourselves what
is right? 58 As you are going with your adver-
sary to the magistrate, try hard to be recon-
ciled on the way, or your adversary may drag
you off to the judge, and the judge turn you
over to the officer, and the officer throw you
into prison. 59 I tell you, you will not get out until
you have paid the last penny."

TRANSITION

Necessity of Repentance

Receiving the news about a group of Galileans killed by the Roman governor Pontius Pilate, Jesus taught the crowds once more that death may come at any moment, and stressed the consequent need for repentance. The Galileans were deliberately murdered; they did not die because they were especially guilty, any more than did the Judeans who were accidentally killed when a tower fell on them. Death often comes unexpectedly, and not just to the guilty (Lk 13:4).

Those who are alive, unlike the dead, still have the chance to repent, but their time is short. Just as a planter will not wait forever for his fig tree to bear fruit, neither will God wait forever for evildoers to repent (13:6–9).

• **Luke 13:1–9**

Luke

Repent or Perish

13 :1 Now there were some present at that
time who told Jesus about the Galileans
whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sac-
rifices. 2 Jesus answered, "Do you think that
these Galileans were worse sinners than all
the other Galileans because they suffered this
way? 3 I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you
too will all perish. 4 Or those eighteen who died
when the tower in Siloam fell on them — do you
think they were more guilty than all the others

living in Jerusalem? 5I tell you, no! But unless
you repent, you too will all perish."
6Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig
tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to
look for fruit on it but did not find any. 7So he
said to the man who took care of the vineyard,
'For three years now I've been coming to look
for fruit on this fig tree and haven't found any.
Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?'
8"'Sir,' the man replied, 'leave it alone for one
more year, and I'll dig around it and fertilize it.
9If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut
it down.'"

TRANSITION

Restoring a Deformed Body

Somewhere in Jewish territory, possibly still in Galilee, Jesus stopped at a synagogue. His act of healing a woman on the Sabbath brought criticism from the synagogue leader (Lk 13:14). Jesus had clashed several times previously with the Pharisees and teachers of the law on precisely this issue (Mt 12:9–14; Mk 3:1–6; Lk 6:6–11).

On this occasion Jesus pointed out the inconsistency and lack of compassion of his Jewish opponents (Lk 13:15, 16). Leading one's animals to water on the Sabbath was a common and accepted practice, even though technically it counted as "working" on the supposed day of rest. If this was accepted, why should not Jesus be allowed to heal on the Sabbath? Is not a human being at least as valuable as a farm animal?

• **Luke 13:10–17**

Luke

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman on the Sabbath

13 :10 On a Sabbath Jesus was teaching in
one of the synagogues, 11and a woman
was there who had been crippled by a spirit for
eighteen years. She was bent over and could
not straighten up at all. 12When Jesus saw her,
he called her forward and said to her, "Woman,
you are set free from your infirmity." 13Then
he put his hands on her, and immediately she
straightened up and praised God.
14Indignant because Jesus had healed on the
Sabbath, the synagogue leader said to the people, "There are six days for work. So come and
be healed on those days, not on the Sabbath."
15The Lord answered him, "You hypocrites!
Doesn't each of you on the Sabbath untie your
ox or donkey from the stall and lead it out to
give it water? 16Then should not this woman,
a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan has kept
bound for eighteen long years, be set free on
the Sabbath day from what bound her?"
17When he said this, all his opponents were
humiliated, but the people were delighted with
all the wonderful things he was doing.

TRANSITION

Entry into the Kingdom

When questioned concerning the number of people who will be saved, Jesus hinted that it will be only a few (Lk 13:23, 24). Stressing that the way to salvation is more difficult than the way to damnation, he urged people to enter by the "narrow door." Moreover, he warned that those who try entering by this door only after it is too late would not succeed (13:25). Contrary to popular Jewish belief, Jesus insisted that not every Israelite would be saved, and neither is salvation restricted to Israel: those who are saved will come from all directions (13:29).

Luke reminds his readers that Jesus' ultimate destination is Jerusalem (13:22). Surprisingly, some Pharisees warned Jesus of Herod's desire to kill him, advising him to "go somewhere else" (13:31). The death threat implies that Jesus was still in Galilee, because Herod Antipas was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea from 4 B.C. until A.D. 39. Jesus' response (13:32, 33) emphasized again that he was still on the way to Jerusalem, even if he had not yet left Galilee or had returned there momentarily. It was his destiny to die in Jerusalem, and nothing could stop him short of that city.

• **Luke 13:22–35**

Luke

The Narrow Door

13 :22 Then Jesus went through the towns
and villages, teaching as he made his
way to Jerusalem. 23Someone asked him,
"Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?"
He said to them, 24"Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I
tell you, will try to enter and will not be able
to. 25Once the owner of the house gets up and
closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, 'Sir, open the door for us.'
"But he will answer, 'I don't know you or
where you come from.'
26"Then you will say, 'We ate and drank with
you, and you taught in our streets.'
27"But he will reply, 'I don't know you or
where you come from. Away from me, all you
evildoers!'
28"There will be weeping there, and gnash-

ing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. 29People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God. 30Indeed there are those who are last who will be first, and first who will be last."

Jesus' Sorrow for Jerusalem

31At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, "Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you."

32He replied, "Go tell that fox, 'I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.' 33In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!

34"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 35Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'[a]"

[a] *35* Psalm 118:26 [b] *5* Some manuscripts *donkey*

TRANSITION

Meal with a Pharisee

Relations between Jesus and the Pharisees were not always hostile. On several occasions Pharisees invited him to eat with them (Lk 7:36; 11:37; 14:1). Controversy erupted, however, over Jesus healing on the Sabbath (Lk 14:2–6; see 6:6–11; 13:10–17). There were exceptions to the rule about work on the Sabbath, and Jesus argued that his extraordinary work of healing should certainly be an exception (Lk 14:5).

The selfish behavior of the guests, vying for the best places at the dinner, led Jesus to comment on the "reversal of fortunes." Those who seek prestige and honor for themselves will not find it, while those who humble themselves will be honored above all the rest (14:7–14).

The parable of the great banquet (14:15–24) illustrates the "reversal of fortunes" theme: the rich and powerful are debased, while the poor and unfortunate are exalted. The irony of the parable is that those who are invited do not even accept the invitation, let alone seek the "best places." Their families and businesses are more important to them, so the host invites instead people who would otherwise be considered undesirable: the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame (14:21). The analogy is probably to the teachers of the law and Pharisees, who, though reputed for their wisdom and piety, rejected Jesus, while those of poor reputation, both Jews of lesser social standing and Gentiles, followed him immediately.

• **Luke 14:1–24**

Luke

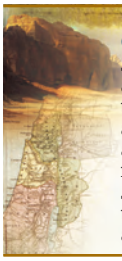
Jesus at a Pharisee's House

14:1 One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat in the house of a prominent Pharisee, he was being carefully watched. 2There in front of him was a man suffering from abnormal swelling of his body. 3Jesus asked the Pharisees and experts in the law, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?" 4But they remained silent. So taking hold of the man, he healed him and sent him on his way.

5Then he asked them, "If one of you has a child[b] or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath day, will you not immediately pull it out?" 6And they had nothing to say.

7When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honor at the table, he told them this parable: 8"When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. 9If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, 'Give this person your seat.' Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. 10But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all the other guests. 11For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

12Then Jesus said to his host, "When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. 13But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the



Geography & Environment

Jerusalem is in the hill country of Judea and is not a natural crossroads or the center of an agricultural region. The city was a political and religious center (Lk 13:33), and its commercial importance derived from this function. The population in Jesus' time was 25,000 or 30,000, but grew to five times that number during pilgrimage festivals (Lk 2:42).

crippled, the lame, the blind, [14]and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

The Parable of the Great Banquet

[15]When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, "Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God."

[16]Jesus replied: "A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. [17]At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

[18]"But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

[19]"Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

[20]"Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

[21]"The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

[22]"'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

[23]"Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. [24]I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

TRANSITION

Calling for Commitment

Total commitment is necessary for discipleship, and devotion to one's family is not a legitimate excuse for failing to heed Jesus' call. The idea of following Jesus was so radical and so new that a decision to become his disciple could very well lead to a split within families (see Lk 12:51–53). Because of this, Jesus' disciples must be prepared for the family hatred that might result from their unpopular decisions, and be willing to go so far as to lose their families altogether (Lk 14:26).

With the demands of discipleship being so rigorous, Jesus advised people to consider well whether they had what it takes to follow him (14:28, 31). Just as salt can lose its flavor, so too can disciples lose their zeal when faced with poverty and persecution (14:34, 35).

• **Luke 14:25–35**

Luke

The Cost of Being a Disciple

14:25 Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: [26]"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. [27]And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

[28]"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? [29]For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, [30]saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'

[31]"Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won't he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? [32]If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. [33]In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

[34]"Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? [35]It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.

"Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

TRANSITION

Parables of the Lost

In three parables Jesus spoke about things that are lost and then found: a sheep, a coin, and a son. Matthew reports only the lost sheep parable, using it to emphasize the Father's desire that none of the "little ones" be lost (Mt 18:10, 14). Luke suggests that the teachings all occurred on one occasion when the teachers of the law and Pharisees complained about Jesus' association with tax collectors and sinners.

Judging from the manner in which Jesus answered his opponents, they must have thought he cared more for sinners than for the righteous. They seemed resentful of the disproportionate amount of attention Jesus was giving to the lowest people in Jewish society. Jesus answered that God will always take the initiative in seeking out what is lost, and there is always great rejoicing when that which was lost is found (Lk 15:7).

With the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11–32), Jesus made two points clear. First, he was not neglecting the righteous to look for sinners. The father deals very fairly with

the elder son, who still receives his inheritance (15:31). Second, Jesus associated with tax collectors and sinners precisely because they were in need of repentance and because they exhibited a willingness to repent. The younger son is grieved by his sins, and it is his sincere repentance that leads to his acceptance by his father (15:21, 24).

In many ways, the parable of the prodigal son is more about the extraordinary love of the father than it is about either of the two sons. Similarly, God's love and mercy are greater than the teachers of the law and Pharisees could understand.

- **Matthew 18:10–14**
- **Luke 15:1–32**

Matthew 18:10–14

The Parable of the Wandering Sheep

18:10 "See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven. [11][a]

12"What do you think? If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? 13And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off. 14In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should perish.

Luke 15:1–32

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

15:1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. 2But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them."

3Then Jesus told them this parable: 4"Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

The Parable of the Lost Coin

8"Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins[b] and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' 10In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

The Parable of the Lost Son

11Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

Politics & Government
Roman citizens traditionally did not have to pay taxes. The tax collectors appointed by Rome collected tax from the colonies and allies of the Roman Empire. Collectors often exploited the people, and were classed with robbers, thieves, and sinners (Lk 15:1). In Syria, ill will toward taxation erupted in resistance and unrest over a census, which was the first step for imposing property and personal taxes.

[a] *11* Some manuscripts include here the words of Luke 19:10.
[b] *8* Greek *ten drachmas*, each worth about a day's wages

Robe, Ring, Sandals, and Calf (Lk 15:22, 23)

In the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11–32), Jesus stressed the value of a lost sinner. The way ancient stories normally went, Jesus' hearers would expect the wayward son to get his just deserts: he had grievously insulted his father, so he should spend the remainder of his life feeding unclean pigs. Instead, Jesus portrayed the son returning home to a father who graciously receives him. Although running was considered undignified for older Jewish men, the father throws his dignity to the wind to embrace his beloved son (15:20).

The son seeks not to regain his status in his father's house, but only to be a "hired servant" (15:19). Yet the father, not answering directly, responds in a manner much more dramatic. He calls for the fatted calf—enough food to feed the whole village, normally reserved for the most special of occasions. He also calls for the best robe in the house, most probably his own, and for a ring, in all likelihood the family signet ring, symbolizing reinstatement to sonship. Lastly he furnishes sandals, worn by the sons of well-to-do households but rarely by hired servants.

The father's answer through these actions represents God's mercy to repentant sinners: "No! I will not receive you as a servant. I will receive you only as a son." The elder brother, protesting that he had been "slaving" in the fields, saw himself as a faithful servant who had not received any reward (15:29), yet he needed to learn a lesson: It is always right to rejoice over a life that is restored.

13 "Not long after that, the younger son got
together all he had, set off for a distant country
and there squandered his wealth in wild living.
14 After he had spent everything, there was a
severe famine in that whole country, and he be-
gan to be in need. 15 So he went and hired him-
self out to a citizen of that country, who sent
him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill
his stomach with the pods that the pigs were
eating, but no one gave him anything.
17 "When he came to his senses, he said,
'How many of my father's hired servants have
food to spare, and here I am starving to death!
18 I will set out and go back to my father and say
to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven
and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be
called your son; make me like one of your hired
servants.' 20 So he got up and went to his father.
"But while he was still a long way off, his
father saw him and was filled with compas-
sion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms
around him and kissed him.
21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned
against heaven and against you. I am no longer
worthy to be called your son.'
22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick!
Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring
on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring
the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast
and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead
and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So
they began to celebrate.
25 "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field.
When he came near the house, he heard music
and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants
and asked him what was going on. 27 'Your
brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father
has killed the fattened calf because he has him
back safe and sound.'
28 "The older brother became angry and re-
fused to go in. So his father went out and plead-
ed with him. 29 But he answered his father,
'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you
and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you nev-
er gave me even a young goat so I could cele-
brate with my friends. 30 But when this son of
yours who has squandered your property with
prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened
calf for him!'
31 "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always
with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But
we had to celebrate and be glad, because this
brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he
was lost and is found.'"

TRANSITION

Parables on Wealth

In two separate parables Luke treats the dangers of wealth, although in different ways. In between these parables is a series of wisdom sayings from Jesus.

The parable of the unjust steward (16:1–8) is one of the most puzzling in the Gospels. A dishonest manager, informed that he will be fired, provides for his future economic security by making friends of his master's debtors. The lesson is not that Christians should be dishonest and self-serving. Indeed, it is not the manager's apparent commission of fraud that is praiseworthy, but rather his prudence and resourcefulness. He used the means available to him to maximum benefit.

The wisdom sayings (16:9–18) include a warning to "money-loving" Pharisees. The wealthy may appear to others to be upright and may think to themselves that they have God's approval, but God's standards of judgment are different from those of humans (16:14, 15).

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus (16:19–31) illustrates again Luke's theme of the reversal of fortunes (see "Meal with a Pharisee" at Lk 14:1). Lazarus, who is not described as virtuous but only as poor, is comforted after death with Abraham. The rich man, whose only sin is that he is rich (and perhaps that he did not feed a hungry Lazarus), is faced with eternal torment in Hades. Abraham advises that those who do not heed "Moses and the Prophets" will not be convinced to repent even by a resurrection (16:31). This saying obviously foreshadows the rejection that will continue to greet the Christian message even after the resurrection of Jesus.

• Luke 16:1–31

Luke

The Parable of the Shrewd Manager

16:1 Jesus told his disciples: "There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. 2So he called him in and asked him, 'What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.'

3"The manager said to himself, 'What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg— 4I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.'

5"So he called in each one of his master's debtors. He asked the first, 'How much do you owe my master?'

6"'Nine hundred gallons[a] of olive oil,' he replied.

"The manager told him, 'Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.'

7"Then he asked the second, 'And how much do you owe?'

"'A thousand bushels[b] of wheat,' he replied.

"He told him, 'Take your bill and make it eight hundred.'

8"The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. 9I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.

10"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. 11So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? 12And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own?

13"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

14The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. 15He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.

Additional Teachings

16"The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing their way into it. 17It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.

[a] *6* Or about 3,000 liters [b] *7* Or about 30 tons

18 "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and the man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

19 "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. 20 At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores 21 and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

25 "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. 26 And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

27 "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 28 for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

29 "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

30 " 'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

31 "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.' "

TRANSITION

Guidelines for Disciples

Jesus offered guidelines to the disciples on how to handle sin. First, disciples must avoid leading others into temptation (Mt 18:6, 7; Lk 17:1, 2). The punishment for this offense would be severe. Second, if other disciples sin, they must be taken aside and corrected (Mt 18:15–20; Lk 17:3). Third, if disciples repent, they must *always* be forgiven (Mt 18:21, 22; Lk 17:3, 4).

Matthew's Gospel illustrates these guidelines with the parable of the unforgiving servant (Mt 18:23–35), emphasizing two themes. First, God will always forgive sins, no matter how serious, as long as there is sincere repentance. The amount of the debt that is forgiven by the king is an incredibly huge sum (18:24). The second theme is also found in the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9–15): the only thing that can cause God not to forgive our sins is our refusal to forgive the sins of others.

- **Matthew 18:15–35**
- **Luke 17:1–10**

Matthew 18:15–35

Dealing With Sin in the Church

18 **:15** "If your brother or sister[a] sins,[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'[c] 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

18 "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[d] loosed in heaven.

19 "Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

21 Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

22 Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.[e]

23 "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. 24 As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold[f] was brought to him. 25 Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

26 "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' 27 The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

28 "But when that servant went out, he found

[a] *15* The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a fellow disciple, whether man or woman; also in verses 21 and 35. [b] *15* Some manuscripts *sins against you* [c] *16* Deut. 19:15 [d] *18* Or *will have been* [e] *22* Or *seventy times seven* [f] *24* Greek *ten thousand talents*; a talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer's wages.

one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins.[a] He grabbed him and began to choke him. 'Pay back what you owe me!' he demanded.

29"His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.'

30"But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. 31When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

32"Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. 33Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' 34In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

35"This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

Luke 17:1–10

Sin, Faith, Duty

17:1 Jesus said to his disciples: "Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. 2It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble. 3So watch yourselves.

"If your brother or sister[b] sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 4Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them."

5The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

6He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you.

7"Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? 8Won't he rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? 9Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? 10So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.'"

[a] *28* Greek *a hundred denarii*; a denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer (see 20:2). [b] *3* The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a fellow disciple, whether man or woman. [c] *12* The Greek word traditionally translated *leprosy* was used for various diseases affecting the skin.

TRANSITION

Passing Through Samaria and Galilee

The miracle which Jesus performed while journeying through Samaria and Galilee is strongly reminiscent of an earlier healing of leprosy which took place near the beginning of his Galilean ministry (see "Cleansing the Leper" at Mt 8:1). The point of difference between the two healings is not simply that Jesus healed ten lepers instead of one, but that only one of the lepers returned to praise God. Furthermore, the grateful leper was a Samaritan (Lk 17:16), while presumably the other nine lepers were Jews. Just as in the parable of the good Samaritan (Lk 10:29–37), the behavior of a hated Samaritan proved to be better than that of the Jews themselves.

Luke's Gospel continues its theme of inclusiveness. Faith arises from unexpected sources: women, tax collectors, and Samaritans. The leper who was shunned by Jewish society was the only one who expressed his thanks.

• **Luke 17:11–19**

Luke

Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy

17:11 Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. 12As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy[c] met him. They stood at a distance 13and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

14When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went, they were cleansed.

15One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. 16He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan.

17Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? 18Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" 19Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."

TRANSITION

The Coming of the Kingdom

In response to a question posed to him by some Pharisees about the kingdom of God, Jesus suggested that those who ask when the kingdom will come are misunderstanding it. Although he had previously hinted that one could "see" the kingdom of God (Lk 9:27), Jesus also taught his followers that the kingdom of God is not a place and does not come at a particular time. Indeed, the kingdom had "come near" (Lk 10:9) to them and had "come upon" them (Lk 11:20). When Jesus said to the Pharisees, "The kingdom of God is in your midst" (17:21), he possibly meant that it was in their midst in the person of himself or that it was within their reach, if only they would repent and believe.

Jesus did distinguish, apparently, between the kingdom of God and the "days of the Son of Man" (17:22). These "days" will occur at a definite time and be accompanied by certain events (17:22–37). Not everything is known about the timing of the end, and Jesus cautioned against trying to decipher its coming from any supposed "signs." But he did provide a dire warning: the end of the age will be characterized by a great judgment, resulting in destruction for some and salvation for others.

• **Luke 17:20–37**

Luke

The Coming of the Kingdom of God

17:20 Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, [21]nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."[a]

[22]Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. [23]People will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. [24]For the Son of Man in his day[b] will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. [25]But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

[26]"Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. [27]People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all.

[28]"It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. [29]But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

Politics & Government

The Roman consul Marius (died 88 B.C.) gave each Roman legion a silver eagle as its symbolic standard. In 20 B.C. Augustus, working by diplomacy rather than by open fighting, was able to retrieve Roman military standards that had been captured by the Parthians, Rome's enemies beyond Syria to the east. In A.D. 70 the Romans destroyed the Jerusalem temple and offered sacrifices to their silver eagle standards (cf. Lk 17:37).

[30]"It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. [31]On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. [32]Remember Lot's wife! [33]Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. [34]I tell you, on that night two people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. [35]Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left." [36][c]

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[a] *21* Or *is within you* [b] *24* Some manuscripts do not have *in his day.* [c] *36* Some manuscripts include here words similar to Matt. 24:40.

Jewish Pilgrimage to Jerusalem

Galilean Jews traveled to Jerusalem for three major Jewish festivals. The route from Capernaum to Ginae on through Samaria and Bethel was the most direct pilgrimage route. It was also cooler in hot weather to travel along the mountain ridges. An alternate route went south from Scythopolis along the west bank of the Jordan River to Jericho.

37 "Where, Lord?" they asked.

He replied, "Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather."

TRANSITION

Parables on Prayer

Luke's unique travel narrative comes to an end with two parables about prayer. The parable of the unjust judge (Lk 18:1–8) concerns the efficacy of prayer and the reward for persistence. If a judge who lacks respect for people (Lk 18:2) will finally listen to the plea of a determined widow, *how much more* then will a loving and gracious God listen to the prayers of the faithful? Similar teachings encouraging prayer are the parable of the persistent friend (Lk 11:5–8) and one from Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus compares God's good gifts to the simple requests that most people grant their children (Mt 7:11).

The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Lk 18:9–14) concerns the necessity of humility and true repentance in prayer. Certainly, fasts and tithes are pleasing to God, but the Pharisee's self-righteousness and self-congratulatory attitude are not. Pride in good works prevents the Pharisee from being "justified," while the tax collector—whose profession was notorious for immoral and even criminal behavior—humbly acknowledges his sin in true repentance and is redeemed in God's eyes.

• **Luke 18:1–14**

Luke

The Parable of the Persistent Widow

18:1 Then Jesus told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up. 2 He said: "In a certain town there was a judge who neither feared God nor cared what people thought. 3 And there was a widow in that town who kept coming to him with the plea, 'Grant me justice against my adversary.'

4 "For some time he refused. But finally he said to himself, 'Even though I don't fear God or care what people think, 5 yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will see that she gets justice, so that she won't eventually come and attack me!'"

6 And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. 7 And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? 8 I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector

9 To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.'

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, 'God, have mercy on me, a sinner.'

14 "I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

FINAL MINISTRY IN JUDEA

Luke presents the teachings of his long travel narrative (Lk 9:51—18:14) as taking place while Jesus was on the way from Galilee to Jerusalem. In contrast, Matthew and Mark indicate very briefly that Jesus departed from Galilee and arrived in Judea (Mt 19:1; Mk 10:1). No direct announcement of Jesus' entry into Judea appears in Luke's Gospel, but Jesus' location "approached Jericho" (Lk 18:35), which is in Judea, is a clear sign that Luke's much longer account of Jesus' journey is nearing its conclusion.

Judea was a dangerous place for Jesus, yet he continued to preach until arriving in Jerusalem.

The narration of Jesus' ministry in John's Gospel indicates several trips between Galilee and Judea, while Jesus attended the feasts in Jerusalem (see "The Galilean Ministry" at Jn 1:35). Thus much more of John's story takes place in Judea than does that of the Synoptics. Some events of John's account occur in Judea shortly before the last week of Jesus' life, and these can be considered in connection with his final ministry there. Judea was a very dangerous place for Jesus, yet in spite of this danger he continued to preach and heal right up until the time of his arrival in Jerusalem.

No Divorce—Except for Immorality (Mt 19:3–9)

Two leading schools of Pharisees debated over what constituted appropriate grounds for divorce. The school of Hillel said that divorce was unfortunate, but that a man could divorce his wife for simply burning his toast. By contrast, the school of Shammai declared that a man could divorce his wife only if she had been sexually unfaithful in some manner, either by adultery or some other form of promiscuity.

Jesus entered the debate over grounds for divorce when the Pharisees questioned him whether a man could divorce his wife "for any and every reason" (Mt 19:3). While the Shammaites objected to divorces based on weak grounds, they never went so far as Jesus. He replied by allowing divorce in only one situation: when the wife had committed "sexual immorality" (19:9). To divorce and remarry for any other reason was, to Jesus, adultery.

Scholars debate what exactly Jesus had in mind by "sexual immorality." Many think that he was referring to incest or other specific forms of immorality. Normally, though, when the term "sexual immorality" appears without explanation it refers to sexual misconduct of any sort. It would be natural in Jesus' culture for him to comment on marital unfaithfulness in general while speaking of divorce. When ancient divorces went to court, a charge of immorality could determine who got the wife's dowry.

In Mark's and Luke's Gospels, Jesus' prohibition of divorce offers no exceptions—not even that of sexual immorality (Mk 10:11, 12; Lk 16:18). Some scholars understand these sayings to be rhetorical overstatements, a common Jewish teaching technique. Jesus used the technique when commenting on the seriousness of sin (Mt 5:29) and on loving riches more than God (Mt 19:24). This would not weaken Jesus' opposition to divorce, but would recognize that he considered the innocent party in a divorce, and allowed exceptions for those divorced or betrayed against their will (Mt 5:32; see 1Co 7:15).

TRANSITION

Marriage, Divorce, and Children

Judaism, based on the Law of Moses, allowed males to obtain a divorce easily. Jesus overturned this "easy" divorce law, an interpretation of Dt 24:1–4, and pointed to a more important scriptural principle in the story of creation. In marriage a man and a woman become "one flesh" and cannot then be separated (Ge 2:24). Jesus further argued that the divorce law was only granted by God because of the Jews' hardness of heart (Mt 19:8).

The essence of Jesus' teaching on divorce appears in all three Gospels, though Luke presents it in a very brief form while Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem (Lk 16:18). While Mark and Luke indicate a total prohibition on divorce, Matthew allows an exception for "sexual immorality" (Mt 19:9; see Mt 5:32). While Matthew and Luke follow Jewish marriage customs which allowed only men to divorce their wives, Mark includes also the Roman custom allowing women to divorce their husbands. Only Matthew's Gospel shows the disciples questioning the wisdom of marriage altogether (Mt 19:10).

The Synoptics relate an episode in which the disciples try to prevent some children (or infants) from being brought to Jesus. Perhaps they thought Jesus had more important things to do. But Jesus indignantly corrected them: the kingdom of God "belongs" to such as children (Mt 19:14). This may be so because children believe things easily and are not skeptical and doubting like many adults, or because children (like women, Samaritans, the sick, and tax collectors) had little or no status in Jewish society in comparison to their place in the kingdom of God.

- **Matthew 19:1–15**
- **Mark 10:1–16**
- **Luke 18:15–17**

Matthew 19:1–15

Divorce

19 :1 When Jesus had finished saying these
things, he left Galilee and went into the
region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan.
[2]Large crowds followed him, and he healed
them there.

[3]Some Pharisees came to him to test him.
They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce
his wife for any and every reason?"

[4]"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the
beginning the Creator 'made them male and
female,'[a] [5]and said, 'For this reason a man will
leave his father and mother and be united to his
wife, and the two will become one flesh'[b]? [6]So
they are no longer two, but one flesh. There-
fore what God has joined together, let no one
separate."

[7]"Why then," they asked, "did Moses com-
mand that a man give his wife a certificate of
divorce and send her away?"

[8]Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to di-
vorce your wives because your hearts were
hard. But it was not this way from the begin-
ning. [9]I tell you that anyone who divorces his
wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries
another woman commits adultery."

[10]The disciples said to him, "If this is the situ-
ation between a husband and wife, it is better
not to marry."

[11]Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept
this word, but only those to whom it has been
given. [12]For there are eunuchs who were born

[a] *4* Gen. 1:27 [b] *5* Gen. 2:24

that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it."

The Little Children and Jesus

13Then people brought little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them. But the disciples rebuked them.
14Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." 15When he had placed his hands on them, he went on from there.

Mark 10:1–16

Divorce

10:1 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.
2Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"
3"What did Moses command you?" he replied.
4They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."
5"It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law," Jesus replied. 6"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.'[a] 7'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife,[b] 8and the two will become one flesh.'[c] So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."
10When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11He answered, "Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery."

The Little Children and Jesus

13People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." 16And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Luke 18:15–17

The Little Children and Jesus

18:15 People were also bringing babies to Jesus for him to place his hands on them. When the disciples saw this, they rebuked them. 16But Jesus called the children to him and said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom

[a] *6* Gen. 1:27 [b] *7* Some early manuscripts do not have *and be united to his wife.* [c] *8* Gen. 2:24

Jesus Opposes Divorce (Mk 10:11, 12)

Many people in the ancient world believed that divorce was unfortunate; a few Jewish teachers, such as those in the school of Shammai, even believed that it was usually contrary to Scripture. But divorce was quite common, and no one went as far as Jesus in condemning it. To him, anyone who divorced husband or wife and married another was committing adultery (Mk 10:11, 12).

Jesus confronted ancient concepts of marriage by declaring remarriage after a divorce to be adultery. Many scholars understand him to imply that a man who divorces without legitimate grounds remains married, in God's sight, to his original wife. Thus he commits adultery against her if he remarries. Other scholars point out that Jesus, like many ancient teachers, often offered general statements of principle which did not cover every circumstance or articulate every exception. Thus it makes sense that Jesus would have allowed divorce in the case of a spouse's unfaithfulness (Mt 5:32; 19:9) or abandonment (1Co 7:15).

Many scholars also think that Jesus was protecting the innocent party in a divorce. Both schools of Pharisees limited the right of divorce to the husband alone. Jewish men had the right to divorce their wives, but the reverse was not true: women did not divorce; they "were divorced" (Mt 5:32; Lk 16:18). Jesus possibly was defending women against being divorced frivolously.

A few women in Jesus' time could divorce their husbands. Among the Romans either the husband or the wife could initiate a divorce. So Mark, who writes his Gospel to Gentile readers, mentions the circumstance of a woman divorcing her husband (Mk 10:12). An upper-class Jewish woman, such as Herodias (Mk 6:17), being influenced by Greek custom, might also initiate a divorce. To all Jesus stressed that the psychological and physical bonds formed by marriage must not be broken—by husband or wife.

of God belongs to such as these. 17Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

TRANSITION

Riches and Discipleship

A rich young man asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Following the commandments was a requirement the young man expected, but he became shocked and went away grieving when told to sell all of his possessions. Jesus perceived that the rich young man's problem was not that he owned many possessions, but that he *cared more* about them than he did about doing God's will.

The disciples too were shocked to hear Jesus comment about how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Traditional Jewish wisdom held that great riches were a sign of God's favor and blessing, while sickness and poverty were a sign of God's curse. Peter reminded Jesus that the disciples had given up everything to follow him, and Jesus assured Peter that there would be rewards for all who faithfully followed him (Mt 19:27–29). Nevertheless, such rewards would be based on God's graciousness, not on human merit (see "The Laborers in the Vineyard" at Mt 20:1).

- **Matthew 19:16–30**
- **Mark 10:17–31**
- **Luke 18:18–30**

Matthew 19:16–30

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

19 :16 Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

17"Why do you ask me about what is good?" Jesus replied. "There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments."

18"Which ones?" he inquired.

Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, 19honor your father and mother,'[a] and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'[b]"

20"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

21Jesus answered, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."

22When the young man heard this, he went away sad, because he had great wealth.

23Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. 24Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."

Arts & Literature

Jesus' saying about a camel is a kind of proverb, a colorful illustration of impossibility. A rich man who loves his riches more than God can no more enter God's kingdom than a camel can pass through the "eye of a needle" (Mt 19:24). Many people at that time would have been puzzled to hear that the rich were at a disadvantage in anything, since money opened so many doors.

25When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astonished and asked, "Who then can be saved?"

26Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

27Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?"

28Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife[c] or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life. 30But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first.

Mark 10:17–31

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

10 :17 As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

18"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. 19You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, you shall not defraud, honor your father and mother.'[d]"

20"Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy."

21Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One

[a] *19* Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20 [b] *19* Lev. 19:18
[c] *29* Some manuscripts do not have *or wife*. [d] *19* Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20

thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."
22At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth.
23Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!"
24The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus said again, "Children, how hard it is[a] to enter the kingdom of God! 25It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."
26The disciples were even more amazed, and said to each other, "Who then can be saved?"
27Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God."
28Then Peter spoke up, "We have left everything to follow you!"
29"Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields for me and the gospel 30will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age: homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields—along with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31But many who are first will be last, and the last first."

Luke 18:18–30

The Rich and the Kingdom of God

18:18 A certain ruler asked him, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"
19"Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. 20You know the commandments: 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.'[b]"
21"All these I have kept since I was a boy," he said.
22When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me."
23When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. 24Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! 25Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God."
26Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?"
27Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."
28Peter said to him, "We have left all we had to follow you!"
29"Truly I tell you," Jesus said to them, "no one who has left home or wife or brothers or sisters or parents or children for the sake of the kingdom of God 30will fail to receive many times as much in this age, and in the age to come eternal life."

TRANSITION

The Laborers in the Vineyard

Only Matthew's Gospel relates the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. The point of the parable is that the owner of the vineyard was not unfair to the workers hired early in the morning, since he paid them exactly what he had promised. If he is more generous to the workers who come later, he is within his rights to do so. Likewise, God's rewards are not earned by the time we serve or the energy we expend. They are his gracious gifts to all who follow him faithfully. Matthew's parable explains the proverb "first will be last" (Mt 19:30; 20:16).

- **Matthew 20:1–16**

Matthew

The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard

20:1 "For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. 2He agreed to pay them a denarius[c] for the day and sent them into his vineyard.

[a] *24* Some manuscripts *is for those who trust in riches*
[b] *20* Exodus 20:12-16; Deut. 5:16-20 [c] *2* A denarius was the usual daily wage of a day laborer.

Augustus denarius. 27 B.C.–A.D. 14.
CAESARI AVGVSTO, laureate head left.

Trade & Economics

The denarius was a common unit of currency in the Roman Empire for over 4 centuries (Mt 20:9). First minted in 211 B.C., this silver coin weighed about an eighth of an ounce, a weight between that of a penny and a nickel. Julius Caesar paid soldiers 225 denarii per year, and Augustus paid the same but supplemented it with awards and gifts.

3 "About nine in the morning he went out and
saw others standing in the marketplace doing
nothing. 4 He told them, 'You also go and work
in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is
right.' 5 So they went.

"He went out again about noon and about
three in the afternoon and did the same thing.
6 About five in the afternoon he went out and
found still others standing around. He asked
them, 'Why have you been standing here all
day long doing nothing?'

7 "'Because no one has hired us,' they answered.

"He said to them, 'You also go and work in
my vineyard.'

8 "When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, 'Call the workers and
pay them their wages, beginning with the last
ones hired and going on to the first.'

9 "The workers who were hired about five
in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. 10 So when those came who were hired
first, they expected to receive more. But each
one of them also received a denarius. 11 When
they received it, they began to grumble against
the landowner. 12 'These who were hired last
worked only one hour,' they said, 'and you
have made them equal to us who have borne
the burden of the work and the heat of the day.'

13 "But he answered one of them, 'I am not
being unfair to you, friend. Didn't you agree to
work for a denarius? 14 Take your pay and go.
I want to give the one who was hired last the
same as I gave you. 15 Don't I have the right to
do what I want with my own money? Or are you
envious because I am generous?'

16 "So the last will be first, and the first will
be last."

TRANSITION

At the Festival of Dedication

John reports that Jesus was in Jerusalem during the Festival of Dedication (Hanukkah). This festival was celebrated in winter (Jn 10:22), and the particular festival visited by Jesus was probably in December of A.D. 29 (see "Attending the Festival of Tabernacles" at Jn 7:1). It is not clear whether Jesus had remained in Jerusalem during the 2 months since the Festival of Tabernacles or had recently returned to the city.

Jesus disputed with his opponents over two issues concerning his identity. First, they challenged him to state "plainly" whether he was "the Messiah" (Jn 10:24). The nationalist character of the Festival of Dedication would have encouraged questions about Israel's Messiah. The festival commemorated the rededication of the temple in 165 B.C. by Judas Maccabeus, who had led Judea's war of independence against the Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes.

Jesus' opponents raised a second issue, charging that Jesus had committed "blasphemy" by making himself God (10:33). He had performed messianic "works" and claimed that these works bore witness to him (10:25). Jewish leaders would not have considered that claim in itself blasphemous, for they did not believe that the Messiah would be a divine figure. Rather, it was Jesus' claim of a unique relationship with God that sparked their charge: he actually said, "I and the Father are one" (10:30). The continued opposition Jesus met in Jerusalem (10:39) was quite a contrast to the acceptance he found in Perea, on the east side of the Jordan River (10:41, 42).

• **John 10:22–42**

John

Further Conflict Over Jesus' Claims

10 :22 Then came the Festival of Dedication[a] at Jerusalem. It was winter, 23 and
Jesus was in the temple courts walking in Solomon's Colonnade. 24 The Jews who were there
gathered around him, saying, "How long will
you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you
do not believe. The works I do in my Father's
name testify about me, 26 but you do not believe
because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow
me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they shall
never perish; no one will snatch them out of
my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to
me, is greater than all[b]; no one can snatch them
out of my Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are
one."

31 Again his Jewish opponents picked up
stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them,
"I have shown you many good works from the
Father. For which of these do you stone me?"

[a] *22* That is, Hanukkah [b] *29* Many early manuscripts *What my Father has given me is greater than all*

THE TEMPLES OF YAHWEH

The "Solomon's Colonnade" (Jn 10:23) through which Jesus walked was a colonnade on the east side of Herod's temple. In order to gain favor with the Jews, Herod the Great began rebuilding the Jerusalem temple in his 18th year (20–19 B.C.). The main structure was completed in 18 months, but the project was still under way in Jesus' time (Jn 2:20). Herod's building was one of a series of structures constructed over the years for the worship of Yahweh.

Building	Date	Size	Location	Reference
Tabernacle under Moses	Completed in 1445 B.C. or 1274 B.C.	15 x 45 feet	A movable sanctuary	Ex 40:17
First temple under Solomon	Completed in 959 B.C. Destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.	30 x 90 feet	Jerusalem	1Ki 6:37, 38
Second temple under Zerubbabel and Joshua	Completed and dedicated in 515 B.C	30 x 90 feet	Jerusalem	Ezr 6:15, 16
Third temple under Herod the Great	Begun in 20–19 B.C. Still under way after A.D. 26. Destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70	30 x 90 feet inside, surrounded by 35 acres of pavement, courtyards, and buildings	Jerusalem	Jn 2:20; Mk 13:1, 2

33 "We are not stoning you for any good
work," they replied, "but for blasphemy, be-
cause you, a mere man, claim to be God."
34 Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in
your Law, 'I have said you are "gods"'[a]? 35 If he
called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God
came — and Scripture cannot be set aside —
36 what about the one whom the Father set
apart as his very own and sent into the world?
Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy be-
cause I said, 'I am God's Son'? 37 Do not believe
me unless I do the works of my Father. 38 But if
I do them, even though you do not believe me,
believe the works, that you may know and un-
derstand that the Father is in me, and I in the
Father." 39 Again they tried to seize him, but he
escaped their grasp.
40 Then Jesus went back across the Jordan to
the place where John had been baptizing in the
early days. There he stayed, 41 and many people
came to him. They said, "Though John never
performed a sign, all that John said about this
man was true." 42 And in that place many be-
lieved in Jesus.

[a] *34* Psalm 82:6

TRANSITION

The Raising of Lazarus

The story of Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is the turning point in John's Gospel. Not only is this miracle the last of the "signs" emphasized by John (Jn 11:47; see "The First of Seven Signs" at Jn 2:1), it is also the climax of Jesus' public ministry. Repeatedly John mentions how this miracle revealed Jesus and led people to believe (11:4, 15, 25–27, 40, 42, 45).

Raising Lazarus from the dead dramatically concluded Jesus' public ministry among the Jews (11:54). While some came to believe in him because of this great miracle, his opponents, alarmed at Jesus' growing popularity, resolved "to take his life" (11:53). A threat of execution had already hung over Jesus (11:8, 16), but now the religious authorities decided that his popularity threatened to provoke intervention by the Roman military. The priest Caiaphas advised that Jesus must die so that the Romans would not take away the privileges of the Jewish nation (11:48). But John interprets the priest's political calculation as an indirect prophecy that Jesus would die for the salvation of the Jews and of people everywhere who would believe in him (11:51, 52).

• John 11:1–57

John

The Death of Lazarus

11:1 Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. 2 (This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair.) 3 So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

4 When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's Son may be glorified through it." 5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. 6 So when he heard that Lazarus was sick, he stayed where he was two more days, 7 and then he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

8 "But Rabbi," they said, "a short while ago the Jews there tried to stone you, and yet you are going back?"

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? Anyone who walks in the daytime will not stumble, for they see by this world's light. 10 It is when a person walks at night that they stumble, for they have no light."

11 After he had said this, he went on to tell them, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep; but I am going there to wake him up."

12 His disciples replied, "Lord, if he sleeps, he will get better." 13 Jesus had been speaking of his death, but his disciples thought he meant natural sleep.

14 So then he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead, 15 and for your sake I am glad I was not there, so that you may believe. But let us go to him."

16 Then Thomas (also known as Didymus[a]) said to the rest of the disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

Jesus Comforts the Sisters of Lazarus

17 On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. 18 Now Bethany was less than two miles[b] from Jerusalem, 19 and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. 20 When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home.

21 "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."

23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; 26 and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

27 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

28 After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." 29 When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her,

[a] *16* *Thomas* (Aramaic) and *Didymus* (Greek) both mean *twin*.
[b] *18* Or about 3 kilometers

Roman Control of Palestine

Following a successful military campaign against the Seleucids in 64 B.C., Pompey turned the Roman armies southward and took control of Jerusalem in 63 B.C. Initially the Roman army had been invited by some of the Jews to protect them from the Nabateans. Once the Romans became established in Palestine, they never left, despite repeated Jewish revolts against Roman control. In Jesus' time, Jewish leaders feared the strength of Rome (Jn 11:48).

noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

32When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. 34"Where have you laid him?" he asked.

"Come and see, Lord," they replied.

35Jesus wept.

36Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!"

37But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"

Jesus Raises Lazarus From the Dead

38Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance. 39"Take away the stone," he said.

"But, Lord," said Martha, the sister of the dead man, "by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days."

40Then Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?"

41So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me."

43When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" 44The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face.

Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go."

The Plot to Kill Jesus

45Therefore many of the Jews who had come to visit Mary, and had seen what Jesus did, believed in him. 46But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47Then the chief priests and the Pharisees called a meeting of the Sanhedrin.

"What are we accomplishing?" they asked. "Here is this man performing many signs. 48If we let him go on like this, everyone will believe in him, and then the Romans will come and take away both our temple and our nation."

49Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! 50You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

Politics & Government

From the time of Julius Caesar (died 44 B.C.) through the time of Augustus (died A.D. 14) and beyond, Roman law protected the Jewish religion. Various aspects of Jewish life were protected, such as collecting the temple tax, holding religious services, and exercising some self-government and police authority in Judea. The chief priests feared that Jesus would cause the Romans to take away these privileges (Jn 11:48).

51He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, 52and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. 53So from that day on they plotted to take his life.

54Therefore Jesus no longer moved about publicly among the people of Judea. Instead he withdrew to a region near the wilderness, to a village called Ephraim, where he stayed with his disciples.

55When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, many went up from the country to Jerusalem for their ceremonial cleansing before the Passover. 56They kept looking for Jesus, and as they stood in the temple courts they asked one another, "What do you think? Isn't he coming to the festival at all?" 57But the chief priests and the Pharisees had given orders that anyone who found out where Jesus was should report it so that they might arrest him.

TRANSITION

Greatness and Discipleship

Shortly before his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem, Jesus predicted his passion for a third and final time. Since Jesus' humiliating death on a cross was such a stumbling block for so many people, each of the Synoptic writers repeat continually the message that Jesus knew beforehand he would die and faced death willingly, and that the crucifixion was part of God's plan for the forgiveness of sins for all people. The idea of a suffering Messiah was strange to most Jews of the time, as shown in part by the befuddled reaction of the disciples to the passion prediction (Lk 18:34).

According to Mark's Gospel, James and John reacted to the passion prediction by seeking honor from Jesus when he is in his glory (Mk 10:37). Their selfish request shows that they were still thinking in terms of an earthly kingdom for Jesus and were preoccupied with

greatness, fame, and glory. They had not yet taken to heart Jesus' repeated message that Christian discipleship is really about service to others. Matthew's Gospel lessens the negative image of James and John by depicting their mother, not the disciples themselves, as the one making the request (Mt 20:20).

- **Matthew 20:17–28**
- **Mark 10:32–45**
- **Luke 18:31–34**

Matthew 20:17–28

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

20:17 Now Jesus was going up to Jerusalem. On the way, he took the Twelve
aside and said to them, [18]"We are going up to
Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and the teachers
of the law. They will condemn him to death
[19]and will hand him over to the Gentiles to
be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the
third day he will be raised to life!"

A Mother's Request

[20]Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came
to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down,
asked a favor of him.

[21]"What is it you want?" he asked.

She said, "Grant that one of these two sons of
mine may sit at your right and the other at your
left in your kingdom."

[22]"You don't know what you are asking,"
Jesus said to them. "Can you drink the cup I
am going to drink?"

"We can," they answered.

[23]Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink
from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not
for me to grant. These places belong to those for
whom they have been prepared by my Father."

[24]When the ten heard about this, they were
indignant with the two brothers. [25]Jesus called
them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their
high officials exercise authority over them.
[26]Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to
become great among you must be your servant, [27]and whoever wants to be first must be
your slave— [28]just as the Son of Man did not
come to be served, but to serve, and to give his
life as a ransom for many."

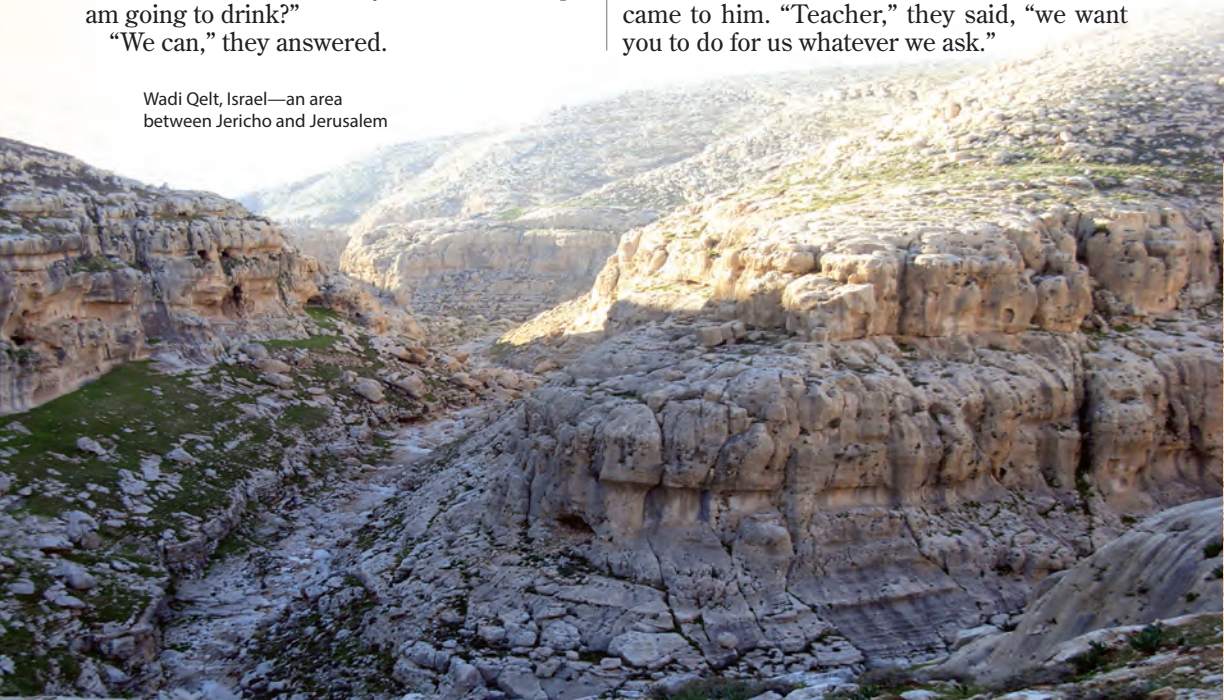
Mark 10:32–45

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

10:32 They were on their way up to Jerusalem, with Jesus leading the way, and
the disciples were astonished, while those who
followed were afraid. Again he took the Twelve
aside and told them what was going to happen
to him. [33]"We are going up to Jerusalem," he
said, "and the Son of Man will be delivered over
to the chief priests and the teachers of the law.
They will condemn him to death and will hand
him over to the Gentiles, [34]who will mock him
and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three
days later he will rise."

The Request of James and John

[35]Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee,
came to him. "Teacher," they said, "we want
you to do for us whatever we ask."



Wadi Qelt, Israel—an area between Jericho and Jerusalem

36 "What do you want me to do for you?" he
asked.
37 They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right
and the other at your left in your glory."
38 "You don't know what you are asking,"
Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be
baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"
39 "We can," they answered.
Jesus said to them, "You will drink the cup
I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am
baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is
not for me to grant. These places belong to
those for whom they have been prepared."
41 When the ten heard about this, they be-
came indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus
called them together and said, "You know that
those who are regarded as rulers of the Gen-
tiles lord it over them, and their high officials
exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you.
Instead, whoever wants to become great among
you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants
to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the
Son of Man did not come to be served, but to
serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Luke 18:31–34

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

18:31 Jesus took the Twelve aside and told
them, "We are going up to Jerusalem,
and everything that is written by the proph-
ets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. 32 He
will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will
mock him, insult him and spit on him; 33 they
will flog him and kill him. On the third day he
will rise again."
34 The disciples did not understand any of
this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and
they did not know what he was talking about.

TRANSITION

Passing Through Jericho Toward Jerusalem

All three Synoptic Gospels recount how Jesus healed a blind beggar while passing through the city of Jericho on his way to Jerusalem. Matthew's Gospel mentions the healing of two blind men (Mt 20:30, 34), of which one may have been Bartimaeus (Mk 10:46). This episode is another in a long line of stories which illustrate (in varying degrees in the different Gospels) the remarkable faith of the people that Jesus healed. Bartimaeus proclaimed his faith in Jesus as the Messiah by calling him "Son of David" (Mk 10:47; 12:35). The blind man was fully confident in Jesus' power to heal him.

Two episodes unique to Luke's Gospel continue Jesus' progress toward Jerusalem. In the city of Jericho Jesus sought out a tax collector, a story illustrating Luke's favorite theme of Jesus' concern for the "lost" and the outcast (Lk 19:1–10). Contrary to the assumptions of the crowd, Jesus proclaimed Zacchaeus to be a faithful son of Abraham (19:9). Even a tax collector such as Zacchaeus could be saved.

In another unique account (19:11–27), Luke explains that Jesus told the parable of the pounds to correct the mistaken impression that the kingdom of God would appear immediately. Jesus was now "near Jerusalem" (19:11), and some Jews expected a political revolution to take place in the city.

- **Matthew 20:29–34**
- **Mark 10:46–52**
- **Luke 18:35—19:27**

Matthew 20:29–34

Two Blind Men Receive Sight

20:29 As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him.
30 Two blind men were sitting by the roadside,
and when they heard that Jesus was going by,
they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy
on us!"
31 The crowd rebuked them and told them to
be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord,
Son of David, have mercy on us!"
32 Jesus stopped and called them. "What do
you want me to do for you?" he asked.
33 "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight."
34 Jesus had compassion on them and
touched their eyes. Immediately they received
their sight and followed him.

Mark 10:46–52

Blind Bartimaeus Receives His Sight

10:46 Then they came to Jericho. As
Jesus and his disciples, together with a
large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man,
Bartimaeus (which means "son of Timaeus"),
was sitting by the roadside begging. 47 When
he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he be-
gan to shout, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy
on me!"
48 Many rebuked him and told him to be qui-
et, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David,
have mercy on me!"
49 Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."
So they called to the blind man, "Cheer up!
On your feet! He's calling you." 50 Throwing his
cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to
Jesus.

51 "What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus
asked him.
The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see."
52 "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed
you." Immediately he received his sight and
followed Jesus along the road.

Luke 18:35 — 19:27

A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight

18 :35 As Jesus approached Jericho, a
blind man was sitting by the roadside
begging. 36 When he heard the crowd going by,
he asked what was happening. 37 They told him,
"Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."
38 He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have
mercy on me!"
39 Those who led the way rebuked him and
told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the
more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"
40 Jesus stopped and ordered the man to be
brought to him. When he came near, Jesus asked
him, 41 "What do you want me to do for you?"
"Lord, I want to see," he replied.
42 Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight;
your faith has healed you." 43 Immediately he
received his sight and followed Jesus, praising God. When all the people saw it, they also
praised God.

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

19 1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing
through. 2 A man was there by the name
of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and
was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was,
but because he was short he could not see over
the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.
5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up
and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he
came down at once and welcomed him gladly.
7 All the people saw this and began to mutter,
"He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."
8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the
Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of
my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four
times the amount."
9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has
come to this house, because this man, too, is a
son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to
seek and to save the lost."

The Parable of the Ten Minas

11 While they were listening to this, he went
on to tell them a parable, because he was
near Jerusalem and the people thought that
the kingdom of God was going to appear at
once. 12 He said: "A man of noble birth went
to a distant country to have himself appointed king and then to return. 13 So he called ten
of his servants and gave them ten minas.[a]
'Put this money to work,' he said, 'until I
come back.'
14 "But his subjects hated him and sent a delegation after him to say, 'We don't want this man
to be our king.'
15 "He was made king, however, and returned
home. Then he sent for the servants to whom
he had given the money, in order to find out
what they had gained with it.
16 "The first one came and said, 'Sir, your
mina has earned ten more.'
17 "'Well done, my good servant!' his master
replied. 'Because you have been trustworthy in
a very small matter, take charge of ten cities.'
18 "The second came and said, 'Sir, your mina
has earned five more.'
19 "His master answered, 'You take charge of
five cities.'
20 "Then another servant came and said, 'Sir,
here is your mina; I have kept it laid away in
a piece of cloth. 21 I was afraid of you, because
you are a hard man. You take out what you did
not put in and reap what you did not sow.'
22 "His master replied, 'I will judge you by
your own words, you wicked servant! You
knew, did you, that I am a hard man, taking out
what I did not put in, and reaping what I did not
sow? 23 Why then didn't you put my money on
deposit, so that when I came back, I could have
collected it with interest?'
24 "Then he said to those standing by, 'Take
his mina away from him and give it to the one
who has ten minas.'
25 "'Sir,' they said, 'he already has ten!'
26 "He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who
has, more will be given, but as for the one who
has nothing, even what they have will be taken
away. 27 But those enemies of mine who did not
want me to be king over them — bring them
here and kill them in front of me.'"

[a] *13* A mina was about three months' wages.

TRANSITION

Returning to Bethany Before the Passover

All four Gospels relate stories of a woman who anoints Jesus. There are significant differences among these accounts, with only Matthew and Mark being in close agreement (see

"Plot, Anointing, Betrayal" at Mt 26:1). Some scholars suppose that the different accounts arose from only a single anointing incident. Others have concluded that there were three separate anointings—one reported by Luke, another by John, and a third by Matthew and Mark. Yet others see just two separate incidents—one related by Luke, and the other by Matthew, Mark, and John.

The anointing account in John's Gospel is closer to Matthew's and Mark's than to Luke's. Only Luke places the incident in the house of a Pharisee who questions why Jesus is anointed by "a sinner" (see "Anointing in Galilee" at Lk 7:36–50). John concurs with Matthew and Mark that the anointing occurred in Bethany and figuratively prepared Jesus for his later burial (Jn 12:7).

On other details John differs from Matthew and Mark. The exact location in Bethany where the anointing took place is the house of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha in John's Gospel, but the house of Simon the leper in Mark's and Matthew's Gospels. Also different is John's timing of the event. He places it "six days before the Passover" (Jn 12:1), thus before the Triumphal Entry (see "Sunday: The Triumphal Entry" at Mt 21:1). In contrast, Matthew and Mark place it only two days before Passover (Mk 14:1, 3) and thus after Jesus' entry into Jerusalem.

• **John 12:1–11**

John

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

12:1 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. [2]Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. [3]Then Mary took about a pint[a] of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

[4]But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, [5]"Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages.[b]" [6]He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

[7]"Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. [8]You will always have the poor among you,[c] but you will not always have me."

[9]Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. [10]So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, [11]for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

[a] *3* Or about 0.5 liter [b] *5* Greek *three hundred denarii*
[c] *8* See Deut. 15:11.

TRANSITION

Sunday: The Triumphal Entry

Jesus' entry into Jerusalem was hailed by the populace as a decisive event. His foreknowledge of where to find a colt on which he was to ride (Mt 21:2) indicates that this event played a predetermined role in his mission. Large crowds welcomed him along the approach down the Mount of Olives to the Kidron Valley and up the hill to the Temple Mount. They chanted a refrain from the Psalms, "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" (Mk 11:9; Ps 118:25, 26).

The Gospel writers capture the full significance of Jesus' climactic arrival in Jerusalem. Both Matthew (Mt 21:5) and John (Jn 12:15) interpret the Triumphal Entry according to the prophecy of Zec 9:9—Jesus is the Messianic King coming to his bride, Zion (Jerusalem). He was greeted by the hailing of the multitudes, and the response, John reports, like the raising

JESUS' FINAL WEEK IN JERUSALEM

All four Gospels stress the importance of Jesus' final week in Jerusalem. The account of this week occupies fully the last half of the Fourth Gospel (Jn 12–21) and roughly the last one-third of both Matthew (Mt 21–28) and Mark (Mk 11–16). Early in his own Gospel, Luke announces that Jesus "set out for Jerusalem" (Lk 9:51).

During the final week of his life, often called "Passion Week," Jesus fulfilled his mission.

As Jesus determined to move steadfastly toward Jerusalem, he thus moved toward his own death. The final week of his life is often called "Passion Week," an appropriate name since the word "passion" is derived from the Latin word for "suffering." Each of the Gospels reveals that Jerusalem was the place where Jesus fulfilled his mission by being handed over to the rulers, dying for the sins of the world, and being raised from the dead on the 3rd day.

of Lazarus before, aroused fears of a popular uprising in the minds of the religious leaders who opposed Jesus (Jn 12:19).

In spite of such acclamation, Jesus wept over the city. Only Luke's Gospel presents Jesus as aware that he would be rejected by the people, and that destruction lay ahead for them (Lk 19:41–44). Such destruction tragically occurred during the Roman occupation of A.D. 70.

- **Matthew 21:1–11**
- **Mark 11:1–11**
- **Luke 19:28–44**
- **John 12:12–19**

Matthew 21:1–11

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

21 :1 As they approached Jerusalem and
came to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, [2]saying to them,
"Go to the village ahead of you, and at once
you will find a donkey tied there, with her colt
by her. Untie them and bring them to me. [3]If
anyone says anything to you, say that the Lord
needs them, and he will send them right away."

[4]This took place to fulfill what was spoken
through the prophet:

[5]"Say to Daughter Zion,
'See, your king comes to you,
gentle and riding on a donkey,
and on a colt, the foal of a donkey.'"[a]

[6]The disciples went and did as Jesus had instructed them. [7]They brought the donkey and
the colt and placed their cloaks on them for
Jesus to sit on. [8]A very large crowd spread their
cloaks on the road, while others cut branches
from the trees and spread them on the road.
[9]The crowds that went ahead of him and those
that followed shouted,

"Hosanna[b] to the Son of David!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord!"[c]

"Hosanna[b] in the highest heaven!"

Architecture & Building
For his spectacular reconstruction of the temple Herod the Great prepared a platform more than 33 acres in size, five times the area of the Acropolis in Athens. The result was a temple precinct that included courts, porches, a fortress, and other buildings in addition to the sanctuary. Each year at Passover more than 100,000 pilgrims visited Herod's Temple Mount for the festival. Thus Jesus observed a crowded and busy scene (Mk 11:11).

[10]When Jesus entered Jerusalem, the whole
city was stirred and asked, "Who is this?"

[11]The crowds answered, "This is Jesus, the
prophet from Nazareth in Galilee."

Mark 11:1–11

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

11 :1 As they approached Jerusalem and
came to Bethphage and Bethany at the
Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples, [2]saying to them, "Go to the village ahead
of you, and just as you enter it, you will find a
colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden.
Untie it and bring it here. [3]If anyone asks you,
'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs
it and will send it back here shortly.'"

[4]They went and found a colt outside in the
street, tied at a doorway. As they untied it,
[5]some people standing there asked, "What are
you doing, untying that colt?" [6]They answered
as Jesus had told them to, and the people let
them go. [7]When they brought the colt to Jesus
and threw their cloaks over it, he sat on it.
[8]Many people spread their cloaks on the road,
while others spread branches they had cut in
the fields. [9]Those who went ahead and those
who followed shouted,

"Hosanna![d]"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of
the Lord!"[c]

[10]"Blessed is the coming kingdom of our
father David!"

"Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

[11]Jesus entered Jerusalem and went into
the temple courts. He looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out
to Bethany with the Twelve.

Luke 19:28–44

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

19 :28 After Jesus had said this, he went
on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. [29]As
he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the
hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of
his disciples, saying to them, [30]"Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will
find a colt tied there, which no one has ever
ridden. Untie it and bring it here. [31]If anyone

[a] *5* Zech. 9:9 [b] *9* A Hebrew expression meaning "Save!" which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 15
[c] *9,9* Psalm 118:25,26 [d] *9* A Hebrew expression meaning "Save!" which became an exclamation of praise; also in verse 10

asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'"

32 Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them. 33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, "Why are you untying the colt?"

34 They replied, "The Lord needs it."

35 They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it. 36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

38 "Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"[a]

"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples!"

40 "I tell you," he replied, "if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out."

41 As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it 42 and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. 43 The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. 44 They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

John 12:12–19

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

12:12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting,

"Hosanna![b]"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"[c]

"Blessed is the king of Israel!"

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

15 "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey's colt."[d]

16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

[a] *38* Psalm 118:26 [b] *13* A Hebrew expression meaning "Save!" which became an exclamation of praise
[c] *13* Psalm 118:25,26 [d] *15* Zech. 9:9

TRANSITION

Monday: Cleansing the Temple

Due to overcrowding in the city, perhaps, Jesus and the disciples stayed with friends in Bethany, a small village over the crest of the Mount of Olives, two miles to the east of Jerusalem (Mk 11:11). In Mark's account, they reentered the city on "the next day" (11:12), thus on Monday, and on this day Jesus cursed the fig tree (11:14) and cleansed the temple (11:15). Matthew's account, however, presents a different sequence: Jesus cleansed the temple while it was still the 1st day (Sunday), and only then retreated to Bethany (Mt 21:17).

The Law of Moses commanded worship and sacrifice to be celebrated at a central sanctuary, a place that "God will choose" (Dt 12:5–7). This place came to be identified with Jerusalem, and naturally Israel's most solemn festival, Passover, was held in that city. Passover was a pilgrim festival, drawing 100,000 or more pilgrims to Jerusalem each spring. Like other observant Jews, Jesus and his followers arrived early in order to purchase a lamb for slaughter, to procure a place to celebrate the feast, and to undergo the necessary rites of purification.

The commercial ventures of the temple were overseen by the Sadducees and were very lucrative. Jesus justified his attack on the animal dealers and currency exchangers by quoting the prophet Isaiah, "my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Isa 56:7). Matthew, who writes his Gospel for a primarily Jewish audience, omits the phrase "for all nations," being irrelevant for his audience. Mark possibly includes the phrase to show that Jesus is also Savior of the Gentiles. The commercialization of the temple took place in the Court of the Gentiles, depriving Gentiles of their only place to worship. Jesus responded to such profiteering with anger and decisive action.

The Synoptic Gospels place the temple cleansing during Jesus' final week in Jerusalem. The Gospel of John, however, places it at the outset of Jesus' ministry (Jn 2:13–22). One way of reconciling this difference is to assume that there were two temple cleansings, one early in Jesus' ministry (John's Gospel) and one late (the Synoptics). John's early placement of the episode is probably theologically motivated, maybe to show the opposition to Jesus at the beginning of his ministry (see "Jesus' First Visit to Jerusalem" at Jn 2:13).

- **Matthew 21:12–17**
- **Mark 11:12–19**
- **Luke 19:45–48**

Matthew 21:12–17

Jesus at the Temple

21:12 Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves. 13"It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,'[a] but you are making it 'a den of robbers.'[b]"

14The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them. 15But when the chief priests and the teachers of the law saw the wonderful things he did and the children shouting in the temple courts, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were indignant.

16"Do you hear what these children are saying?" they asked him.

"Yes," replied Jesus, "have you never read,

"'From the lips of children and infants
you, Lord, have called forth your
praise'[c]?"

Religion & Worship
The temple area had been rebuilt by Herod so as to include not only the main building but other buildings, gates, and porches. Animals and birds to be used for sacrifice were sold there, and the foreign currency of visitors was exchanged for the coins required for offerings and taxes (Mt 21:12). The temple was the most important social center for Jews, and crowds gathered there every day.

17And he left them and went out of the city to Bethany, where he spent the night.

Mark 11:12–19

Jesus Curses a Fig Tree and Clears the Temple Courts

11:12 The next day as they were leaving Bethany, Jesus was hungry. 13Seeing in the distance a fig tree in leaf, he went to find out if it had any fruit. When he reached it, he found nothing but leaves, because it was not the season for figs. 14Then he said to the tree, "May no one ever eat fruit from you again." And his disciples heard him say it.

15On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves, 16and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts. 17And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations'[a]? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'[b]"

[a] *13,17* Isaiah 56:7 [b] *13,17* Jer. 7:11 [c] *16* Psalm 8:2 (see Septuagint)

Money Changers in the Temple Court (Mt 21:12)

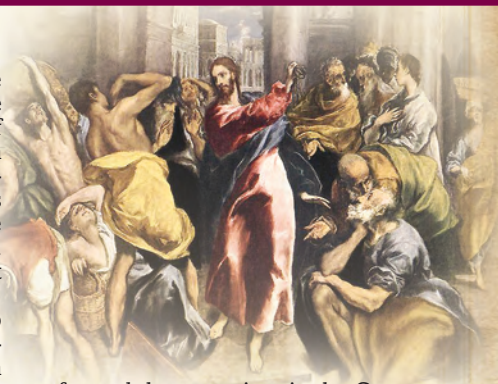
The temple in Jerusalem had always been divided into courts. Even in Solomon's temple there was a court to which some were forbidden. All the people had access to the outer court called the "great courtyard" (1Ki 7:12). The inner court, however, was reserved only for priests, and was thus called the "courtyard of the priests" (2Ch 4:9).

Herod's temple, though still under construction in Jesus' time (Mt 21:12), was enormously impressive, consisting of four courts. The large outer Court of the Gentiles was an open-air quadrangle measuring some 500 yards long by 325 yards wide, enclosed by rows of tall columns. This was the only part of the temple open to Gentiles (non-Jews).

Each of the remaining three courts of the temple was restricted to certain people. All three courts—the Court of Women, the Court of Israel, the Court of Priests—were located in the temple proper, a sublime edifice measuring some 150 yards by 100 yards. This complex stood in the middle of the Court of the Gentiles, but only Jews were allowed to enter its first court—the Court of Women. Only Jewish men were admitted to the Court of Israel.

When Jesus observed the tables of the money changers who were "selling there" (Mt 21:12), he was standing in the Court of the Gentiles. Only in this area were the merchants allowed to sell sheep and doves for sacrifice at Passover, and to exchange foreign currency for the required temple offering. This outer court was the site of Jesus' dramatic temple cleansing.

House of Prayer, Den of Robbers (Mk 11:15–17)



The ground plan of courts in Herod's temple restricted the access of some people. Jewish women were kept out of the Court of Israel, which was on a higher level than the Court of Women. Gentiles were kept farther out, forbidden also from the Court of Women. Jewish people were extremely concerned that Gentiles not move from the Court of the Gentiles to the rest of the temple. Posted signs warned that any Gentile proceeding further would do so at the cost of his or her life. One of the accusations hurled against the apostle Paul was that he "brought Greeks into the temple" (Ac 21:28).

Those who came to the temple for Passover needed to buy lambs and other animals. They also needed money changers because the local currencies of the places they came from were different from the standard used in the temple. Merchants performed these services in the Court of the Gentiles, but in doing so were distracting the Gentiles who came to worship God. In reaction, Jesus quoted the prophet Isaiah (Isa 56:7) to emphasize God's plan for his temple: "My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations" (Mk 11:17).

Jesus also quoted the prophet Jeremiah's words about treating the temple court like a "den of robbers" (Jer 7:11; Mk 11:17). Just as robbers feel safe when bringing their loot to their den, Jeremiah's contemporaries believed that, regardless of how they lived, God would not destroy his own temple (Jer 7:4). The prophet warned them, however, that because of their disobedience they should not seek refuge in God's house—he would destroy their temple (Jer 7:14).

Jesus had a similar message of judgment for his generation. They should not trust in the temple to protect them while they neither understood nor obeyed God's message. As Jeremiah had smashed a pot to symbolize the city's destruction (Jer 19:10–12), Jesus similarly announced the temple's impending doom (Mk 13:2).

18 The chief priests and the teachers of the
law heard this and began looking for a way
to kill him, for they feared him, because the
whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.
19 When evening came, Jesus and his disci-
ples[a] went out of the city.

Luke 19:45–48

Jesus at the Temple

19:45 When Jesus entered the temple courts, he began to drive out those who were selling. 46 "It is written," he said to them, "'My house will be a house of prayer'[b]; but you have made it 'a den of robbers.'[c]"

47 Every day he was teaching at the temple. But the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the leaders among the people were trying to kill him. 48 Yet they could not find any way to do it, because all the people hung on his words.

[a] *19* Some early manuscripts *came, Jesus* [b] *46* Isaiah 56:7
[c] *46* Jer. 7:11

TRANSITION

Tuesday: Faith and Forgiveness

As he did after the 1st day (Mk 11:11), Jesus withdrew from the city at the close of the 2nd day also (11:19). Mark's account now indicates the beginning of the 3rd day, "in the morning" (11:20), thus Tuesday. On this day Mark describes the withering of the fig tree (11:21), which Jesus had cursed the previous day. Like Mark, Matthew notes the beginning of a new day "in the morning" (Mt 21:18). For Matthew, though, this is only the 2nd day (Monday), and the fig tree is cursed and withers on this same day (21:19–22).

Both Matthew and Mark relate the cleansing of the temple to the cursing of the fig tree. The activity in the temple, like the fig tree, had the appearance of life but could be as fruitless as was the greed of the money changers. Mark links the two events by recording the cursing of the tree before the temple episode and the withering of the tree after (Mk 11:14, 21). The fig tree was often a symbol of judgment upon Israel in the Old Testament (Jer 8:13), and Mark uses this symbolism to represent judgment upon the religious observances in the temple.

- **Matthew 21:18–22**
- **Mark 11:20–26**

Matthew 21:18–22

Jesus Curses a Fig Tree

21:18 Early in the morning, as Jesus was on his way back to the city, he was hungry. 19 Seeing a fig tree by the road, he went up to it but found nothing on it except leaves. Then he said to it, "May you never bear fruit again!" Immediately the tree withered.

20When the disciples saw this, they were
amazed. "How did the fig tree wither so quick-
ly?" they asked.
21Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you, if you have
faith and do not doubt, not only can you do what
was done to the fig tree, but also you can say to
this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,'
and it will be done. 22If you believe, you will re-
ceive whatever you ask for in prayer."

Mark 11:20–26

11:20 In the morning, as they went along,
they saw the fig tree withered from the
roots. 21Peter remembered and said to Jesus,
"Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has with-
ered!"
22"Have faith in God," Jesus answered.
23"Truly[a] I tell you, if anyone says to this moun-
tain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does
not doubt in their heart but believes that what
they say will happen, it will be done for them.
24Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in
prayer, believe that you have received it, and it
will be yours. 25And when you stand praying,
if you hold anything against anyone, forgive
them, so that your Father in heaven may for-
give you your sins." [26][b]

TRANSITION

Questioning Jesus' Authority

Opposition to Jesus came not from the Jewish people in general, but primarily from their religious leaders and rulers, especially from the high Jewish council, the Sanhedrin. The center of this opposition was located in Jerusalem, and particularly in the temple. So it was in the temple precincts that various opposing factions engaged Jesus in a series of verbal altercations.

The Gospel writers record a number of these controversies as occurring during Jesus' final week in Jerusalem. The challenges to Jesus appear as a series of rapid-fire encounters during a single day (see Mt 22:23), but they may have taken place over a longer period of time.

Jesus' questioners were those who considered themselves religious: the Pharisees, Herodians, Sadducees, and teachers of the law. Only Matthew's Gospel relates the parable of the two sons (Mt 21:28–32), which condemns the self-righteous attitude of the Jewish leaders. While the first son (21:29) in the parable represents those who responded to the preaching of John the Baptist, the second son (21:30) represents those who claimed to be religious but rejected Jesus (21:31).

- **Matthew 21:23–32**
- **Mark 11:27–33**
- **Luke 20:1–8**

Matthew 21:23–32

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

21:23 Jesus entered the temple courts,
and, while he was teaching, the chief
priests and the elders of the people came to
him. "By what authority are you doing these
things?" they asked. "And who gave you this
authority?"
24Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one ques-
tion. If you answer me, I will tell you by what
authority I am doing these things. 25John's bap-
tism—where did it come from? Was it from
heaven, or of human origin?"
They discussed it among themselves and
said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask,
'Then why didn't you believe him?' 26But if
we say, 'Of human origin'—we are afraid of
the people, for they all hold that John was a
prophet."
27So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."
Then he said, "Neither will I tell you by what
authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

28"What do you think? There was a man who
had two sons. He went to the first and said,
'Son, go and work today in the vineyard.'
29"'I will not,' he answered, but later he
changed his mind and went.
30"Then the father went to the other son and
said the same thing. He answered, 'I will, sir,'
but he did not go.
31"Which of the two did what his father
wanted?"
"The first," they answered.
Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax
collectors and the prostitutes are entering the
kingdom of God ahead of you. 32For John came
to you to show you the way of righteousness,
and you did not believe him, but the tax collec-
tors and the prostitutes did. And even after you
saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Mark 11:27–33

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

11:27 They arrived again in Jerusalem,
and while Jesus was walking in the tem-
ple courts, the chief priests, the teachers of the
law and the elders came to him. 28"By what au-
thority are you doing these things?" they asked.
"And who gave you authority to do this?"
29Jesus replied, "I will ask you one ques-

[a] *22,23* Some early manuscripts *"If you have faith in God," Jesus answered, 23"truly* [b] *26* Some manuscripts include here words similar to Matt. 6:15.

tion. Answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. [30]John's baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin? Tell me!"

[31]They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' [32]But if we say, 'Of human origin' . . ." (They feared the people, for everyone held that John really was a prophet.)

[33]So they answered Jesus, "We don't know."

Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

Luke 20:1–8

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

20:1 One day as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple courts and proclaiming the good news, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, together with the elders, came up to him. [2]"Tell us by what authority you are doing these things," they said. "Who gave you this authority?"

[3]He replied, "I will also ask you a question. Tell me: [4]John's baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?"

[5]They discussed it among themselves and said, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will ask, 'Why didn't you believe him?' [6]But if we say, 'Of human origin,' all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet."

[7]So they answered, "We don't know where it was from."

[8]Jesus said, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things."

[a] *42* Psalm 118:22,23 [b] *44* Some manuscripts do not have verse 44.

TRANSITION

Answering by Parables

The controversies range over a variety of topics, with the Jewish leaders testing Jesus by calling into question his God-given authority. Jesus responded often in parables that challenged official Judaism (Lk 20:19). All three synoptic Gospels recount the parable of the vineyard and wicked vinedressers, which Jesus adapted from the prophet Isaiah for his own situation (Isa 5:1–7). Matthew's parable of the wedding feast (Mt 22:1–14) shows that rejection of Jesus would bring judgment.

- **Matthew 21:33—22:14**
- **Mark 12:1–12**
- **Luke 20:9–19**

Matthew 21:33—22:14

The Parable of the Tenants

21:33 "Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. [34]When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to collect his fruit.

[35]"The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third. [36]Then he sent other servants to them, more than the first time, and the tenants treated them the same way. [37]Last of all, he sent his son to them. 'They will respect my son,' he said.

[38]"But when the tenants saw the son, they said to each other, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him and take his inheritance.' [39]So they took him and threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

[40]"Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?"

[41]"He will bring those wretches to a wretched end," they replied, "and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time."

[42]Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures:

> "'The stone the builders rejected
> has become the cornerstone;
> the Lord has done this,
> and it is marvelous in our eyes'[a]?

[43]"Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit. [44]Anyone who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed."[b]

[45]When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus' parables, they knew he was talking about them. [46]They looked for a way to arrest him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that he was a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

22 [1]Jesus spoke to them again in parables, saying: [2]"The kingdom of heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding banquet for

Agriculture & Herding

Grapes were an important crop that yielded fruit, fruit juice, wine, and raisins. Vineyards required skill and care to manage successfully (Mt 21:33), and wine was shipped in jars marked with the place of origin to indicate its quality. In all, the cultivation of grapes was considered to be a sign of peace and civilization.

DIVISION OF HEROD'S KINGDOM

The territories under Herod the Great's rule included Judea, Galilee, and Gaulanitis, as well as surrounding regions. Upon Herod's death, his kingdom was divided among three sons. Archelaus received Judea, the primary portion of the kingdom. Antipas and Philip received lesser positions as tetrarchs over small territories. The Herodian dynasty gradually lost power, with Herod's grandson Agrippa I and great-grandson Agrippa II the last descendants to rule.

B.C. / A.D.	JUDEA	GALILEE	GAULANITIS
50	with Samaria and Idumea	and Perea	with Batanea, Traconitis, and Auranitis (north and east of Galilee)
40	40 B.C.—Herod the Great appointed to rule Judea		
	37 B.C.—Herod completes his conquest of Judea		
30	30 B.C.—Samaria added to Herod's kingdom	**HEROD THE GREAT**	23 B.C. 20 B.C.
20	19 B.C.—Herod begins construction of the temple		additions to Herod's kingdom
10		4 B.C.—death of Herod	
B.C. / A.D.	**ARCHELAUS**, ethnarch A.D. 6—Archelaus banished	**HEROD ANTIPAS**	**PHILIP**
10		Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee (Lk 3:1)	Philip, tetrarch (Lk 3:1)
20	Judea is under **Roman governors**, including Pontius Pilate, A.D. 26–36	Herodians oppose Jesus (Mk 12:13)	
30		A.D. 39—Herod Antipas banished	A.D. 34—death of Philip
			Under Roman rule
40	A.D. 41—Claudius gives Judea to Agrippa I (Ac 12:1)	**AGRIPPA I** A.D. 44—death of Agrippa I	A.D. 37—Philip's area is given to Agrippa I
50	Under **Roman governors**, including		A.D. 53—Philip's area and part of Galilee is given to
60	Antonius Felix, A.D. 52–59 (Ac 23:26) Porcius Festus, A.D. 59–62 (Ac 24:27)		**AGRIPPA II** (Ac 25:13)
70	Jewish rebellion, A.D. 66–70		

After the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, Palestine became an imperial colony, with Caesarea Maritima as the capital.

his son. [3]He sent his servants to those who had been invited to the banquet to tell them to come, but they refused to come.

[4]"Then he sent some more servants and said, 'Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet.'

[5]"But they paid no attention and went off—one to his field, another to his business. [6]The rest seized his servants, mistreated them and killed them. [7]The king was enraged. He sent his army and destroyed those murderers and burned their city.

[8]"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding banquet is ready, but those I invited did not deserve to come. [9]So go to the street corners and invite to the banquet anyone you find.' [10]So the servants went out into the streets and gathered all the people they could find, the bad as well as the good, and the wedding hall was filled with guests.

[11]"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. [12]He asked, 'How did you get in here without wedding clothes, friend?' The man was speechless.

[13]"Then the king told the attendants, 'Tie him hand and foot, and throw him outside, into

Culture & Society
A wedding party was a substantial, almost public affair. Guests wore their best clothes as participants in an important ritual of the social order. A person who attended without being properly dressed proclaimed indifference, not so much to the one holding the party, but to the people of the village and their common interests. Jesus' hearers would sense the dishonor of a guest lacking the appropriate wedding garment (Mt 22:11).

the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'
14"For many are invited, but few are chosen."

Mark 12:1–12

The Parable of the Tenants

12 :1 Jesus then began to speak to them in parables: "A man planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a pit for the wine-press and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place. 2At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants to collect from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. 3But they seized him, beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 4Then he sent another servant to them; they struck this man on the head and treated him shamefully. 5He sent still another, and that one they killed. He sent many others; some of them they beat, others they killed.

6"He had one left to send, a son, whom he loved. He sent him last of all, saying, 'They will respect my son.'
7"But the tenants said to one another, 'This is the heir. Come, let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' 8So they took him and killed him, and threw him out of the vineyard.
9"What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others. 10Haven't you read this passage of Scripture:

"'The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
11the Lord has done this,
and it is marvelous in our eyes'[a]?"

12Then the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders looked for a way to arrest him because they knew he had spoken the parable against them. But they were afraid of the crowd; so they left him and went away.

Luke 20:9–19

The Parable of the Tenants

20 :9 He went on to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. 10At harvest time he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11He sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away

[a] *11* Psalm 118:22,23

Landowners of Galilee (Mk 12:9)

Jesus' parables are geographically set in Galilee, the northern part of Judean territory in New Testament times. A parable about owners of vineyards (Mk 12:1–9) was quite appropriate for Jesus' audience in the rural economic conditions of Galilee.

The name "Galilee" likely means "the circle" or "district," and appears in the expression "Galilee (district) of the Gentiles" (Mt 4:15). The Jewish historian Josephus gives a detailed description of the area and its administrative structure. Except for a few notable larger cities, such as Chorazin, Sepphoris, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, Galilee was a rural area.

Josephus describes Galilee as an agriculturally fertile area which grew grapes, figs, olives, and wheat. Galilee was also well situated to take advantage of already existing trade routes. The Via Maris, a major highway, forked on its way north at Megiddo, with one branch going by the Sea of Galilee to Hazor. Caravans of traders would use this route when traveling from Damascus towards the Mediterranean coast.

During the Hellenistic period (after 332 B.C.), Galilee flourished with landowners of large estates, employing sharecroppers and unskilled laborers. The Zenon papyri (3rd century B.C.) describe a certain Zenon, who toured and inspected a number of estates in the region. This source, along with a handful of others, presents Galilee as an area of concentrated agricultural production, increasingly concerned with water supply and tenant housing. While some of Jesus' parables show evidence of small family estates, others reflect the existence of absentee landlords who lived away from their land (Mk 12:1).

Social structure in Galilee likely depended on whether an individual owned land. While many Galileans were small landowners, there were a number of elites in the region. Certainly among the upper class were the "leading men of Galilee" (Mk 6:21), who attended Herod's birthday feast.

empty-handed. [12]He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.

[13]"Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.'

[14]"But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. 'This is the heir,' they said. 'Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.' [15]So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

"What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? [16]He will come and kill those tenants and give the vineyard to others."

When the people heard this, they said, "God forbid!"

[17]Jesus looked directly at them and asked, "Then what is the meaning of that which is written:

"'The stone the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone'[a]?

[18]Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces; anyone on whom it falls will be crushed."

[19]The teachers of the law and the chief priests looked for a way to arrest him immediately, because they knew he had spoken this parable against them. But they were afraid of the people.

TRANSITION

Questioned by Pharisees and Herodians

The Pharisees sent "their disciples to him along with the Herodians" (Mt 22:16), presenting Jesus with an apparently "no-win" situation. If he told them to pay taxes to Rome, the Pharisees would discredit Jesus with the Jews. The Herodians, who supported the Roman occupation, would brand Jesus as a traitor to Rome if he did not support taxation. Jesus' answer challenged both groups. The denarius (Mt 22:19) bore the image of the emperor Tiberius Caesar and thus supported Rome's right to require taxes.

- **Matthew 22:15–22**
- **Mark 12:13–17**
- **Luke 20:20–26**

Matthew 22:15–22

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

22:15 Then the Pharisees went out and laid plans to trap him in his words. [16]They sent their disciples to him along with the Herodians. "Teacher," they said, "we know that you are a man of integrity and that you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are. [17]Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax[b] to Caesar or not?"

[18]But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, "You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me? [19]Show me the coin used for paying the tax." They brought him a denarius, [20]and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

[21]"Caesar's," they replied.

Then he said to them, "So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

[22]When they heard this, they were amazed. So they left him and went away.

Trade & Economics

The coins in circulation in Palestine included both Roman and local issues. The typical Roman coin had on one side a portrait of the emperor or another important person (Mt 22:20). On the other side was a symbolic design, like a temple. The lettering around the imperial portraits had recently begun to include the letters "DIV," signifying "divine." Julius Caesar was the first living person to appear on official Roman coins.

Mark 12:13–17

Paying the Imperial Tax to Caesar

12:13 Later they sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to Jesus to catch him in his words. [14]They came to him and said, "Teacher, we know that you are a man of integrity. You aren't swayed by others, because you pay no attention to who they are; but you teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. Is it right to pay the imperial tax[b] to Caesar or not? [15]Should we pay or shouldn't we?"

But Jesus knew their hypocrisy. "Why are you trying to trap me?" he asked. "Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." [16]They brought the coin, and he asked them, "Whose image is this? And whose inscription?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

[17]Then Jesus said to them, "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

And they were amazed at him.

Luke 20:20–26

Paying Taxes to Caesar

20:20 Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be sincere. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he

[a] *17* Psalm 118:22 [b] *17,14* A special tax levied on subject peoples, not on Roman citizens

said, so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. [21]So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. [22]Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?"

[23]He saw through their duplicity and said to them, [24]"Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription are on it?"

"Caesar's," they replied.

[25]He said to them, "Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's."

[26]They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

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[a] *32* Exodus 3:6

TRANSITION

Questioned by Sadducees

The Sadducees were the priestly sect among the Jews that had charge of the temple sacrificial system. They were more aristocratic than the other sects, and being theologically more liberal, they did not believe in an afterlife or the resurrection. The story of the seven brothers may have been one of their stock illustrations to ridicule the idea of a resurrection. While the doctrine of the Sadducees was opposed to the Pharisees, they were like the Pharisees in trying to discredit Jesus.

- **Matthew 22:23–33**
- **Mark 12:18–27**
- **Luke 20:27–40**

Matthew 22:23–33

Marriage at the Resurrection

22:23 That same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. [24]"Teacher," they said, "Moses told us that if a man dies without having children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for him. [25]Now there were seven brothers among us. The first one married and died, and since he had no children, he left his wife to his brother. [26]The same thing happened to the second and third brother, right on down to the seventh. [27]Finally, the woman died. [28]Now then, at the resurrection, whose wife will she be of the seven, since all of them were married to her?"

[29]Jesus replied, "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God. [30]At the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. [31]But about the resurrection of the dead—have you not read what God said to you, [32]'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'[a]? He is not the God of the dead but of the living."

[33]When the crowds heard this, they were astonished at his teaching.

Mark 12:18–27

Marriage at the Resurrection

12:18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. [19]"Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. [20]Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children.

21 The second one married the widow, but he
also died, leaving no child. It was the same with
the third. 22 In fact, none of the seven left any
children. Last of all, the woman died too. 23 At
the resurrection[a] whose wife will she be, since
the seven were married to her?"

24 Jesus replied, "Are you not in error be-
cause you do not know the Scriptures or the
power of God? 25 When the dead rise, they
will neither marry nor be given in marriage;
they will be like the angels in heaven. 26 Now
about the dead rising — have you not read in
the Book of Moses, in the account of the burn-
ing bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God
of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of
Jacob'[b]? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of
the living. You are badly mistaken!"

Luke 20:27–40

The Resurrection and Marriage

20:27 Some of the Sadducees, who say
there is no resurrection, came to Jesus
with a question. 28 "Teacher," they said, "Moses
wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and
leaves a wife but no children, the man must
marry the widow and raise up offspring for his
brother. 29 Now there were seven brothers. The
first one married a woman and died childless.
30 The second 31 and then the third married her,
and in the same way the seven died, leaving no
children. 32 Finally, the woman died too. 33 Now
then, at the resurrection whose wife will she
be, since the seven were married to her?"

34 Jesus replied, "The people of this age mar-
ry and are given in marriage. 35 But those who
are considered worthy of taking part in the
age to come and in the resurrection from the
dead will neither marry nor be given in mar-
riage, 36 and they can no longer die; for they are
like the angels. They are God's children, since
they are children of the resurrection. 37 But in
the account of the burning bush, even Moses
showed that the dead rise, for he calls the Lord
'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and
the God of Jacob.'[b] 38 He is not the God of the
dead, but of the living, for to him all are alive."

39 Some of the teachers of the law responded,
"Well said, teacher!" 40 And no one dared to ask
him any more questions.

TRANSITION

Questioned by a Scribe

While some Jewish leaders tried to trap Jesus into making discrediting statements, one sincere scribe asked about God's true purpose (Mt 22:36). In Matthew's Gospel, Jesus returned a question to the Pharisees, challenging the false understanding of who Christ would be. He would not be only a human "son of David" (22:42), an earthly king. David himself had called the Messiah his "Lord" (Ps 110:1). How then could the Pharisees call him anything less?

- **Matthew 22:34–46**
- **Mark 12:28–37**
- **Luke 20:41–44**

Matthew 22:34–46

The Greatest Commandment

22:34 Hearing that Jesus had silenced the
Sadducees, the Pharisees got together.
35 One of them, an expert in the law, tested him
with this question: 36 "Teacher, which is the
greatest commandment in the Law?"

37 Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God
with all your heart and with all your soul and
with all your mind.'[c] 38 This is the first and
greatest commandment. 39 And the second is
like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'[d] 40 All
the Law and the Prophets hang on these two
commandments."

Whose Son Is the Messiah?

41 While the Pharisees were gathered togeth-
er, Jesus asked them, 42 "What do you think
about the Messiah? Whose son is he?"

"The son of David," they replied.

43 He said to them, "How is it then that David,
speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord'? For he
says,

44 "'The Lord said to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet."'[e]

45 If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be
his son?" 46 No one could say a word in reply,
and from that day on no one dared to ask him
any more questions.

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[a] *23* Some manuscripts *resurrection, when people rise from the dead,* [b] *26,37* Exodus 3:6 [c] *37* Deut. 6:5
[d] *39* Lev. 19:18 [e] *44* Psalm 110:1

Politics & Government

The traditional Law of Israel was part of the education of all Jews (Mt 22:40). The Romans also had a traditional law called the Twelve Tables, that their children memorized. This law had civil, criminal, and religious provisions. Unlike the Law of Moses, the text of Twelve Tables has been preserved only in fragments.

Mark 12:28–37

The Greatest Commandment

12:28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

29"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.[a] 30Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'[b] 31The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'[c] There is no commandment greater than these."

32"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 33To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."

34When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.

Whose Son Is the Messiah?

35While Jesus was teaching in the temple courts, he asked, "Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David? 36David himself, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared:

"'The Lord said to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand
until I put your enemies
under your feet."'[d]

37David himself calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

The large crowd listened to him with delight.

Luke 20:41–44

Whose Son Is the Messiah?

20:41 Then Jesus said to them, "Why is it said that the Messiah is the son of David? 42David himself declares in the Book of Psalms:

"'The Lord said to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand
43until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet."'[d]

44David calls him 'Lord.' How then can he be his son?"

[a] *29* Or *The Lord our God is one Lord* [b] *30* Deut. 6:4,5 [c] *31* Lev. 19:18 [d] *36,43* Psalm 110:1 [e] *5* That is, boxes containing Scripture verses, worn on forehead and arm

TRANSITION

Beware of the Teachers of the Law

Only Matthew's Gospel provides Jesus' long condemnation of the teachers of the law and Pharisees (Mt 23:1–36), denouncing their hypocrisy and disobedience, and pronouncing seven judgments of woe on them. They are characterized as selfish religious officials who "devour widows' houses" (Mk 12:40). Apparently the teachers of the law mismanaged the property of widows which had been entrusted to them in the wills of the widows' dead husbands.

Mark and Luke contrast these teachers of the law, who took advantage of others, with the widow who had little (Mk 12:42; Lk 21:2). She put in all that she had; her love was not calculating.

- **Matthew 23:1–39**
- **Mark 12:38–44**
- **Luke 20:45—21:4**

Matthew 23:1–39

A Warning Against Hypocrisy

23:1 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2"The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3So you must be careful to do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

5"Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries[e] wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others.

8"But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. 9And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven. 10Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one Instructor, the Messiah. 11The greatest among you will be your servant. 12For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

Weightier Matters of the Law (Mt 23:23)

The teachers of the law and Pharisees were among the most respected religious people of Jesus' day. Jesus, however, criticized them as teachers who were preoccupied with petty rules and ignored the truly important religious principles. Although some other outsiders (as well as certain later Jewish teachers) also criticized the teachers of the law and Pharisees, most people thought highly of them and would have been shocked by Jesus' criticisms.

In Old Testament times the Israelites mainly lived on livestock and crops, and, following the Law of Moses, gathered a tithe (one tenth) of their produce into storehouses or granaries (Mal 3:10). The law commanded the Israelites to use the tithes to support the priests and Levites, who spiritually served God and the people (Nu 18:21–24). At the end of every third year, a part of the tithe was used for the poor, as well as for the Levites (Dt 14:28, 29; 26:12).

In Jesus' day the Pharisees were particularly scrupulous about tithing. According to Matthew, they tithed mint, dill, and cumin—all common garden herbs (Mt 23:23). Luke mentions another herb, rue (Lk 11:42). In Aramaic, Jesus' native language in Galilee, the word "rue" sounds very similar to the word "dill," which possibly explains why Matthew names one and Luke the other. Because the law emphasized tithing foods, some Pharisees debated whether one need tithe such vegetables as these, especially cumin. Jesus called these very conservative Pharisees "hypocrites" (Mt 23:23), because they were concerned only with outward matters, while neglecting inward purity.

Seven Woes on the Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees

13"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. [14][a]

15"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to win a single convert, and when you have succeeded, you make them twice as much a child of hell as you are.

16"Woe to you, blind guides! You say, 'If anyone swears by the temple, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gold of the temple is bound by that oath.' 17You blind fools! Which is greater: the gold, or the temple that makes the gold sacred? 18You also say, 'If anyone swears by the altar, it means nothing; but anyone who swears by the gift on the altar is bound by that oath.' 19You blind men! Which is greater: the gift, or the altar that makes the gift sacred? 20Therefore, anyone who swears by the altar swears by it and by everything on it. 21And anyone who swears by the temple swears by it and by the one who dwells in it. 22And anyone who swears by heaven swears by God's throne and by the one who sits on it.

23"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. 24You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

25"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

27"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. 28In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

29"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You build tombs for the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous. 30And you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' 31So you testify against yourselves that you are the descendants of those who murdered the prophets. 32Go ahead, then, and complete what your ancestors started!

33"You snakes! You brood of vipers! How will you escape being condemned to hell? 34There-

Religion & Worship

Jesus' statement that the Pharisees went over land and sea to make converts does not mean that they sent out missionaries (Mt 23:15). Rather, it expressed the arrogant assumption of some Pharisees that they should make others just like themselves. Judaism itself attracted people because of its moral standards and its pure monotheism, but Pharisaic teachings did not necessarily make a convert a better person.

[a] *14* Some manuscripts include here words similar to Mark 12:40 and Luke 20:47.

fore I am sending you prophets and sages and teachers. Some of them you will kill and crucify; others you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town. 35And so upon you will come all the righteous blood that has been shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Berekiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. 36Truly I tell you, all this will come on this generation.

37"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. 38Look, your house is left to you desolate. 39For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.'[a]"

Mark 12:38–44

Warning Against the Teachers of the Law

12:38 As he taught, Jesus said, "Watch out for the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, 39and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 40They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

The Widow's Offering

41Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. 42But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

43Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. 44They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

Luke 20:45—21:4

Warning Against the Teachers of the Law

20:45 While all the people were listening, Jesus said to his disciples, 46"Beware of the teachers of the law. They like to walk around in flowing robes and love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and have the most important seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at banquets. 47They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely."

The Widow's Offering

21 1As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. 2He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. 3"Truly I tell you," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. 4All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on."

TRANSITION

Discourse While on the Mount of Olives

The Kidron Valley falls away beneath the Mount of Olives, leaving a spectacular panorama of Jerusalem and the Temple Mount to the west. The vista from the Mount of Olives provides the setting for a final discourse of Jesus on future events.

The discourse warns of approaching tribulation. The first focus is the near future and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman army. All three Synoptics warn of this impending catastrophe, but Luke provides an explicit allusion to the sack of Jerusalem under Titus in A.D. 70. Some scholars think that Luke's writing of Jerusalem being "surrounded by armies" (Lk 21:20) and "trampled on by the Gentiles" (21:24) indicates that the fall of Jerusalem in that year had already taken place, thus Luke recorded Jesus' words in light of the actual calamity that befell the city. Other scholars suppose that Lk 21:20 is an actual prediction of the Romans crushing the Jewish revolt.

The second focus of the Mount of Olives discourse is the distant future. "Eschatology" is the technical term in Judaism that refers to events attending the end of time. The destruction of Jerusalem was seen by Jesus and the Gospel writers as a symbol or anticipation of the catastrophes of the end time, before which the Son of Man will return in glory. Jesus' instruction to the disciples on what to say when they are hailed before the authorities is included by Mark and Luke in this eschatological discourse (Mk 13:9–13; Lk 12:12–19). Matthew's Gospel reports these words earlier as part of Jesus' mission instructions to the twelve disciples (Mt 10:17–22). See "Mission of the Twelve" at Mt 9:35.

- **Matthew 24:1–35**
- **Mark 13:1–31**
- **Luke 21:5–33**

[a] *39* Psalm 118:26

Herod, the Great Builder (Mt 24:1)

More architectural remains in Israel date from the reign of Herod the Great (37–4 B.C.) than from any other historical personality. He initiated numerous diverse projects, including temples, gymnasiums, harbors, and other buildings.

Herod was born in the late 70s B.C. to a noble family in Idumea. His Idumean ancestors had been forcibly converted to Judaism by the late 2nd century B.C. Antipater, Herod's father, had been a close confidant of Hyrcanus II, one of the Jewish Hasmonean kings. The Romans conquered Judea in 63 B.C., and Herod, who became governor of Galilee in 47 B.C., knew that to be successful he would need to cooperate with Rome. After numerous struggles, Herod was able with Roman help to claim the throne of Judea in 37 B.C., and to rule there for 33 years.

In Jerusalem alone Herod had a number of important building projects. The Antonia Fortress, a combined palace and fortress which dominated the Temple Mount, was named after Mark Antony. The central palace was the largest of Herod's palaces. His building activity produced a theater and amphitheater, numerous fortifications, and the most famous of all his projects—the Temple Mount. Unfortunately, because of the Roman destruction of the city in A.D. 70, nearly all of the material remains of Herod's period have disappeared.

In his 18th year (20–19 B.C.), Herod began rebuilding the Jerusalem temple and enlarging the sacred precincts surrounding it. The new temple probably followed the original plan of the second temple, but on a more elaborate scale. Modern excavations have exposed large parts of the western and southern Temple Mount walls, as well as a monumental stairway, gates, a plaza, and evidence of adjoining roads. The temple "buildings" (Mt 24:1) were certainly impressive in Jesus' day, even though secondary construction around the temple was still in progress.

Matthew 24:1–35

The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times

24 :1 Jesus left the temple and was walking away when his disciples came up to
him to call his attention to its buildings. 2"Do
you see all these things?" he asked. "Truly I tell
you, not one stone here will be left on another;
every one will be thrown down."

3As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives,
the disciples came to him privately. "Tell us,"
they said, "when will this happen, and what will
be the sign of your coming and of the end of
the age?"

4Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one de-
ceives you. 5For many will come in my name,
claiming, 'I am the Messiah,' and will deceive
many. 6You will hear of wars and rumors of
wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed.
Such things must happen, but the end is still
to come. 7Nation will rise against nation, and
kingdom against kingdom. There will be fam-
ines and earthquakes in various places. 8All
these are the beginning of birth pains.

9"Then you will be handed over to be perse-
cuted and put to death, and you will be hated by
all nations because of me. 10At that time many
will turn away from the faith and will betray and
hate each other, 11and many false prophets will
appear and deceive many people. 12Because of
the increase of wickedness, the love of most
will grow cold, 13but the one who stands firm to
the end will be saved. 14And this gospel of the
kingdom will be preached in the whole world
as a testimony to all nations, and then the end
will come.

15"So when you see standing in the holy
place 'the abomination that causes desolation,'[a]
spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the
reader understand— 16then let those who are
in Judea flee to the mountains. 17Let no one
on the housetop go down to take anything out
of the house. 18Let no one in the field go back
to get their cloak. 19How dreadful it will be in
those days for pregnant women and nursing
mothers! 20Pray that your flight will not take
place in winter or on the Sabbath. 21For then
there will be great distress, unequaled from the
beginning of the world until now—and never
to be equaled again.

22"If those days had not been cut short, no
one would survive, but for the sake of the elect
those days will be shortened. 23At that time if
anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messi-
ah!' or, 'There he is!' do not believe it. 24For
false messiahs and false prophets will appear
and perform great signs and wonders to de-
ceive, if possible, even the elect. 25See, I have
told you ahead of time.

26"So if anyone tells you, 'There he is, out
in the wilderness,' do not go out; or, 'Here he
is, in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. 27For
as lightning that comes from the east is visi-
ble even in the west, so will be the coming of
the Son of Man. 28Wherever there is a carcass,
there the vultures will gather.

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[a] *15* Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11

29"Immediately after the distress of those days

"'the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'[a]

30"Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth[b] will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory.[c] 31And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.

32"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 33Even so, when you see all these things, you know that it[d] is near, right at the door. 34Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 35Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Mark 13:1–31

The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times

13:1 As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!"

2"Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down."

3As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, 4"Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?"

5Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. 6Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. 7When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. 8Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.

9"You must be on your guard. You will be handed over to the local councils and flogged in the synagogues. On account of me you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. 10And the gospel must first be preached to all nations. 11Whenever you are arrested and brought to trial, do not worry beforehand about what to say. Just say whatever is given you at the time, for it is not you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.

12"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. 13Everyone will hate you because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved.

14"When you see 'the abomination that causes desolation'[e] standing where it[d] does not belong—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. 15Let no one on the housetop go down or enter the house to take anything out. 16Let no one in the field go back to get their cloak. 17How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! 18Pray that this will not take place in winter, 19because those will be days of distress unequaled from the beginning, when God created the world, until now—and never to be equaled again.

20"If the Lord had not cut short those days, no one would survive. But for the sake of the elect, whom he has chosen, he has shortened them. 21At that time if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Messiah!' or, 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. 22For false messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. 23So be on your guard; I have told you everything ahead of time.

24"But in those days, following that distress,

"'the sun will be darkened,
and the moon will not give its light;
25the stars will fall from the sky,
and the heavenly bodies will be
shaken.'[a]

26"At that time people will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27And he will send his angels and gather his

Plants & Animals

The fig tree has been cultivated around the Mediterranean for thousands of years. This large tree gives fruit from early to late summer. Like grapes, figs can be eaten fresh or dried. In the winter, the leaves fall off, but new shoots appear in spring and so announce that summer is near (Mt 24:32). Jesus' parable of the fig tree encouraged people to watch for the coming of God's future kingdom (Lk 21:31).

[a] *29,25* Isaiah 13:10; 34:4 [b] *30* Or *the tribes of the land* [c] *30* See Daniel 7:13-14. [d] *33,14* Or *he* [e] *14* Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11

The Abomination That Causes Desolation (Mk 13:14)

Matthew and Mark refer to the "abomination that causes desolation," assuming that their readers will know what it is (Mt 24:15; Mk 13:14). Modern scholars differ among themselves as to whether this "abomination" will be repeated in the future, but most agree that at least part of it has already occurred. The prophecies of Daniel speak of an abomination which would lead to desolation (Da 9:27; 11:31; 12:11). Later writings, such as 1 Maccabees and the Psalms of Solomon, use Daniel's terms to describe the repeated attacks on Jerusalem's temple.

One Jewish historian who lived in the 1st century A.D., Josephus, describes the war of A.D. 66–70 similarly as a desolating sacrilege. Josephus believed that when Jewish patriots slaughtered the priests in the Jerusalem temple, they defiled the temple, hence inviting destruction (see Mt 23:38—24:2). Early Christian writers tell us that before the Romans closed in on Jerusalem, the Jewish patriots began to seize control of the city, forcing the Christians to flee.

In A.D. 70, just 3½ years after the desecrating slaughter in the temple, the Romans finally took Jerusalem. They slaughtered or enslaved most of the Jerusalemites, but according to Josephus self-proclaimed prophets promised those who were taking refuge in the temple that God would protect the sacred building. But God did not, and after the Romans burned the temple they placed on it their standards, bearing the insignia of the emperor who was worshiped as a god.

Most Jewish people, including the Essenes who wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, considered the Roman standards to be idolatrous. Some preferred to die rather than allow the standards into Jerusalem. Tragically, the Romans now offered sacrifices to their standards on the site of the temple. Judean Jews revolted again in A.D. 132, and were again brutally suppressed by the Romans around 135. After that, the Romans built a pagan temple on the site once reserved for the worship of Israel's God. These acts were truly "abominations."

elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of the heavens.

28"Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its twigs get tender and its leaves come out, you know that summer is near. 29Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that it[a] is near, right at the door. 30Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 31Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

Luke 21:5–33

The Destruction of the Temple and Signs of the End Times

21:5 Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, 6"As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down."

7"Teacher," they asked, "when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?"

8He replied: "Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and, 'The time is near.' Do not follow them. 9When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away."

10Then he said to them: "Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. 11There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven.

12"But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. 13And so you will bear testimony to me. 14But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. 15For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. 16You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. 17Everyone will hate you because of me. 18But not a hair of your head will perish. 19Stand firm, and you will win life.

20"When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. 21Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out,

[a] *29* Or *he*

Politics & Government

At the death of Augustus in A.D. 14, the Roman army numbered about 260,000 men. About half were Roman citizens, 22 legions of 5,000 to 6,000 men each. Legions were subdivided into cohorts and centuries, with a centurion over each century. The noncitizen troops were "auxiliaries" drawn from tribes, allies, and provincials, and organized in regiments. These Roman armies "surrounded" Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Lk 21:20).

and let those in the country not enter the city.
22For this is the time of punishment in fulfillment of all that has been written. 23How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people.
24They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

25"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. 26People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. 27At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. 28When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."

29He told them this parable: "Look at the fig tree and all the trees. 30When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. 31Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

32"Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. 33Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.

[a] *36* Some manuscripts do not have *nor the Son.*

TRANSITION

Parables from the Mount of Olives

Portions of Jesus' teaching appear in different contexts in the different Gospels. Matthew supplements the eschatological discourse on the Mount of Olives by the addition of five parables, none of which appear in Mark's Gospel. The last of these parables, the judgment of the nations (Mt 25:31–46), is found only in Matthew's Gospel. The other four parables are reported by Luke as well as by Matthew: the flood (Mt 24:37–44); the faithful and evil servants (24:45–51); the ten virgins (25:1–13); the talents (25:14–30). Luke's Gospel, however, places these parables in different contexts, all prior to Jesus' final week in Jerusalem.

Various explanations have been offered to account for these differences in the placement of Jesus' sayings and parables. In some instances it is reasonable to assume that Jesus taught the same things more than once, and that the different Gospels preserve the teachings at various points in his ministry. The differing arrangements of sayings, however, suggest yet another explanation. The early church often remembered a saying but not its context. Shorn of a context, a saying or parable depended on the discretion and purpose of each Gospel writer for its placement in the Gospel. The church father Papias (who died in A.D. 135) recognized this early in the 2nd century, writing, "Mark wrote accurately all that [Peter] taught about Jesus, though not always in the order of the things said and done by Jesus."

- **Matthew 24:36—25:46**
- **Mark 13:32–37**
- **Luke 21:34–38**

Matthew 24:36—25:46

The Day and Hour Unknown

24:36 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son,[a] but only the Father. 37As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 38For in the days before the flood, people were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, up to the day Noah entered the ark; 39and they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. 40Two men will be in the field; one will be taken and the other left.
41Two women will be grinding with a hand mill; one will be taken and the other left.

42"Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. 43But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into. 44So you also must be ready, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

45"Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time? 46It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. 47Truly I tell you, he will put him in charge of all his possessions. 48But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, 'My master is staying away a long time,' 49and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. 50The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. 51He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

25 1"At that time the kingdom of heaven will
be like ten virgins who took their lamps
and went out to meet the bridegroom. 2Five
of them were foolish and five were wise. 3The
foolish ones took their lamps but did not take
any oil with them. 4The wise ones, however,
took oil in jars along with their lamps. 5The
bridegroom was a long time in coming, and
they all became drowsy and fell asleep.

6"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the
bridegroom! Come out to meet him!'

7"Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed
their lamps. 8The foolish ones said to the wise,
'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going
out.'

9"'No,' they replied, 'there may not be
enough for both us and you. Instead, go to
those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.'

10"But while they were on their way to buy
the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins
who were ready went in with him to the wed-
ding banquet. And the door was shut.

11"Later the others also came. 'Lord, Lord,'
they said, 'open the door for us!'

12"But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I don't
know you.'

13"Therefore keep watch, because you do not
know the day or the hour.

The Parable of the Bags of Gold

14"Again, it will be like a man going on a jour-
ney, who called his servants and entrusted his
wealth to them. 15To one he gave five bags of
gold, to another two bags, and to another one
bag,[a] each according to his ability. Then he
went on his journey. 16The man who had re-
ceived five bags of gold went at once and put
his money to work and gained five bags more.
17So also, the one with two bags of gold gained
two more. 18But the man who had received one
bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid
his master's money.

19"After a long time the master of those ser-
vants returned and settled accounts with them.
20The man who had received five bags of gold
brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you
entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have
gained five more.'

21"His master replied, 'Well done, good and
faithful servant! You have been faithful with
a few things; I will put you in charge of many
things. Come and share your master's happi-
ness!'

22"The man with two bags of gold also came.
'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two
bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

23"His master replied, 'Well done, good and
faithful servant! You have been faithful with
a few things; I will put you in charge of many
things. Come and share your master's happi-
ness!'

24"Then the man who had received one bag
of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you
are a hard man, harvesting where you have not
sown and gathering where you have not scat-
tered seed. 25So I was afraid and went out and
hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what
belongs to you.'

26"His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy ser-
vant! So you knew that I harvest where I have
not sown and gather where I have not scat-
tered seed? 27Well then, you should have put
my money on deposit with the bankers, so that
when I returned I would have received it back
with interest.

[a] *15* Greek *five talents . . . two talents . . . one talent*; also throughout this parable; a talent was worth about 20 years of a day laborer's wage.

In Jesus' parable of the wise and foolish virgins (Mt 25:1–13), taking enough oil to keep the lamps burning represented spiritual preparedness in obedience to Jesus' teaching. Not taking enough oil to keep the lamps burning represented disobedience to Christ.

28 "'So take the bag of gold from him and give
it to the one who has ten bags. 29 For whoever
has will be given more, and they will have an
abundance. Whoever does not have, even what
they have will be taken from them. 30 And throw
that worthless servant outside, into the dark-
ness, where there will be weeping and gnash-
ing of teeth.'

The Sheep and the Goats

31 "When the Son of Man comes in his glo-
ry, and all the angels with him, he will sit on
his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be
gathered before him, and he will separate the
people one from another as a shepherd sepa-
rates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will put
the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.
34 "Then the King will say to those on his
right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Fa-
ther; take your inheritance, the kingdom pre-
pared for you since the creation of the world.
35 For I was hungry and you gave me something
to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something
to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me
in, 36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was
sick and you looked after me, I was in prison
and you came to visit me.'
37 "Then the righteous will answer him,
'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed
you, or thirsty and give you something to
drink? 38 When did we see you a stranger and
invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe
you? 39 When did we see you sick or in prison
and go to visit you?'
40 "The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, what-
ever you did for one of the least of these broth-
ers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'
41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'De-
part from me, you who are cursed, into the eter-
nal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.
42 For I was hungry and you gave me nothing
to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to
drink, 43 I was a stranger and you did not invite
me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe
me, I was sick and in prison and you did not
look after me.'
44 "They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we
see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or need-
ing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help
you?'
45 "He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever
you did not do for one of the least of these, you
did not do for me.'
46 "Then they will go away to eternal punish-
ment, but the righteous to eternal life."

[a] *33* Some manuscripts *alert and pray*

Mark 13:32–37

The Day and Hour Unknown

13 **:32** "But about that day or hour no one
knows, not even the angels in heaven,
nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard!
Be alert[a]! You do not know when that time will
come. 34 It's like a man going away: He leaves
his house and puts his servants in charge, each
with their assigned task, and tells the one at the
door to keep watch.
35 "Therefore keep watch because you do not
know when the owner of the house will come
back—whether in the evening, or at midnight,
or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. 36 If he
comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleep-
ing. 37 What I say to you, I say to everyone:
'Watch!'"

Luke 21:34–38

21 **:34** "Be careful, or your hearts will be
weighed down with carousing, drunk-
enness and the anxieties of life, and that day
will close on you suddenly like a trap. 35 For it
will come on all those who live on the face of
the whole earth. 36 Be always on the watch, and
pray that you may be able to escape all that is
about to happen, and that you may be able to
stand before the Son of Man."
37 Each day Jesus was teaching at the tem-
ple, and each evening he went out to spend the
night on the hill called the Mount of Olives,
38 and all the people came early in the morning
to hear him at the temple.

TRANSITION

Discourse on His Own Death

Between the Triumphal Entry and the Last Supper, the Synoptics record the great controversies in the temple, the parables, and the eschatological discourse on the Mount of Olives. The Gospel of John passes over in silence all of these. The only echo of them in John is a simple but trenchant quotation from the prophet Isaiah about the blindness of the people and their hardness of heart (Jn 12:39–41).

The Triumphal Entry and the Last Supper are connected in the Fourth Gospel instead by a brief soliloquy of Jesus on his impending death. His powerful illustration of the dying and germinating of a seed symbolizes the meaning of his death: the grain of wheat must die before it can reproduce itself (Jn 12:24). Similarly, the Son of Man must be "lifted up" on a cross to draw "all people" to himself (Jn 12:32–34).

• **John 12:20–50**

John

Jesus Predicts His Death

12:20 Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. [21]They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." [22]Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

[23]Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. [24]Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. [25]Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. [26]Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

[27]"Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. [28]Father, glorify your name!"

Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." [29]The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

[30]Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. [31]Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. [32]And I, when I am lifted up[a] from the earth, will draw all people to myself." [33]He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

[34]The crowd spoke up, "We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, 'The Son of Man must be lifted up'? Who is this 'Son of Man'?"

[35]Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. [36]Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Belief and Unbelief Among the Jews

[37]Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. [38]This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

"Lord, who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the Lord
been revealed?"[b]

[39]For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

[40]"He has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts,
so they can neither see with their eyes,
nor understand with their hearts,
nor turn—and I would heal them."[c]

[41]Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.

[42]Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; [43]for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

[44]Then Jesus cried out, "Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. [45]The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. [46]I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

[47]"If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. [48]There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. [49]For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. [50]I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

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[a] *32* The Greek for *lifted up* also means *exalted.*
[b] *38* Isaiah 53:1 [c] *40* Isaiah 6:10

TRANSITION

Plot, Anointing, Betrayal

Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve disciples, entered into conspiracy with the chief priests to betray Jesus into their hands. The chief priests stood at the pinnacle of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, and Judas's pact with them indicates that the plot against Jesus was hatched by the Jewish leaders rather than by the people as a whole.

The motive for Judas's betrayal is obscure. As treasurer of the twelve disciples, he must have enjoyed rank among them, but evidently either his person or office inclined him to opportunism and even greed (Jn 12:4–6). Luke (Lk 22:3) and John (Jn 13:2, 27) ascribe his betrayal of Jesus as the work of Satan. Only Matthew records the betrayal price of thirty silver pieces, recalling perhaps Zec 11:12 and assuring his readers that this monstrous deed was foreseen by God.

Between the plotting of the Jewish leaders and Judas's betrayal, Matthew and Mark include a story of Jesus' anointing by an unnamed woman of Bethany. A similar though not identical story appears in John's Gospel (Jn 12:1–8), where the woman is identified as Mary, the sister of Lazarus, from Bethany (12:3). A third anointing of Jesus by a contrite woman who washed his feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair in the house of Simon the Pharisee appears early in Luke's Gospel (Lk 7:36–50).

The exact relation of these stories to each other is uncertain, given the differences between them (see "Returning to Bethany Before the Passover" at Jn 12:1). Luke's story is the most remote from the others. John's story is possibly a different version of Matthew's and Mark's anointing at Bethany, and may even preserve the anointing's more historical placement before the Triumphal Entry. Mark frequently sandwiches two different stories together to achieve a single theological purpose, and in the placement of the anointing could have been followed by Matthew.

Mark indicates the timing of the chief priests' plotting: the Passover and Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away (Mk 14:1; see Mt 26:2). Because Mark and John disagree on whether the Last Supper was a Passover meal (see "Thursday: Preparation for the Last Supper" at Mt 26:17), it is impossible to know certainly that the Passover was on Friday, and whether "two days before Passover" was thus a Wednesday.

- **Matthew 26:1–16**
- **Mark 14:1–11**
- **Luke 22:1–6**

Matthew 26:1–16

The Plot Against Jesus

26:1 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, 2"As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

3Then the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled in the palace of the high priest, whose name was Caiaphas, 4and they schemed to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. 5"But not during the festival," they said, "or there may be a riot among the people."

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

6While Jesus was in Bethany in the home of Simon the Leper, 7a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, which she poured on his head as he was reclining at the table.

8When the disciples saw this, they were indignant. "Why this waste?" they asked. 9"This perfume could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor."

10Aware of this, Jesus said to them, "Why are you bothering this woman? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 11The poor you will always have with you,[a] but you will not always have me. 12When she poured this perfume on my body, she did it to prepare me for burial. 13Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

14Then one of the Twelve—the one called Judas Iscariot—went to the chief priests 15and asked, "What are you willing to give me if I deliver him over to you?" So they counted out for him thirty pieces of silver. 16From then on Judas watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Mark 14:1–11

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

14:1 Now the Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread were only two days away, and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were scheming to arrest Jesus secretly and kill him. 2"But not during the festival," they said, "or the people may riot."

3While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of Simon the Leper, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very expensive perfume, made of pure nard. She broke the jar and poured the perfume on his head.

4Some of those present were saying indignantly to one another, "Why this waste of perfume? 5It could have been sold for more than a year's wages[b] and the money given to the poor." And they rebuked her harshly.

6"Leave her alone," said Jesus. "Why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. 7The poor you will always have with

Daily Life & Customs

Alabaster is a soft, translucent stone that can be easily carved and polished. It was often used as a substitute for glass. Alabaster perfume bottles were sealed, disposable containers that were opened by breaking and then discarded when empty (Mt 26:7). The value of spices, ointments, and perfumes was much higher relative to other goods than it is today.

[a] *11* See Deut. 15:11. [b] *5* Greek *than three hundred denarii*

you,[a] and you can help them any time you want. But you will not always have me. [8]She did what she could. She poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. [9]Truly I tell you, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her."

[10]Then Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went to the chief priests to betray Jesus to them. [11]They were delighted to hear this and promised to give him money. So he watched for an opportunity to hand him over.

Luke 22:1–6

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

22:1 Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread, called the Passover, was approaching, [2]and the chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus, for they were afraid of the people. [3]Then Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve. [4]And Judas went to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and discussed with them how he might betray Jesus. [5]They were delighted and agreed to give him money. [6]He consented, and watched for an opportunity to hand Jesus over to them when no crowd was present.

TRANSITION

Thursday: Preparation for the Last Supper

The four Gospels record that Jesus shared a farewell meal with his disciples on the eve of his crucifixion. All of the Gospels agree that Jesus was placed in the tomb on late Friday, immediately before the Sabbath began at sundown. Friday was known as the Preparation Day—the day before the Sabbath (Mk 15:42; Lk 23:54; Jn 19:31). So the last supper of Jesus with his disciples was eaten on Thursday, the previous night.

The Synoptics present the Last Supper as being the Passover meal. Passover began at sunset with the meal ushering in the new day, the 15th of Nisan. The celebration was the focal point of a week-long festival in Jerusalem commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. Each of the Synoptics relates that Jesus knew where he and his disciples would "eat the Passover," and sent them to prepare (Mk 14:12–16).

In John's Gospel, the Last Supper was not the Passover meal. John does not report Jesus sending the disciples ahead in to Jerusalem to prepare the Passover room, nor does he record Jesus' familiar words of institution during the course of the meal (Mk 14:22–25). Rather he suggests that Jesus was crucified on the day *before* Passover began—"the day of Preparation of the Passover" (Jn 19:14, 16). In John's sequence, the Last Supper was celebrated on Passover eve, and Jesus was tried the next day while the Jewish authorities themselves were preparing to eat the Passover meal (18:28).

Various suggestions attempt to account for the discrepancy between John and the Synoptics. One possibility is that John's account follows a different calendar. More probably, however, John makes Jesus' death coincide with the sacrifice of the Passover lamb in the temple. This powerfully signifies that Jesus is "the Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29) who is killed at the same time the lambs are being prepared for the evening Passover meal (19:14).

All four Gospels set the Last Supper in the context of Judas's betrayal of Jesus. In each account, Jesus announces that the betrayer is present among them at the meal. Matthew (Mt 26:25) and John (Jn 13:26) specifically identify the betrayer to be Judas. In ancient Judaism, table fellowship was the supreme act of intimacy and trust. Judas's betrayal at a meal—and in the Synoptics, a Passover meal—thus heightens its treachery.

- **Matthew 26:17–29**
- **Mark 14:12–25**
- **Luke 22:7–30**
- **John 13:18–30**

Matthew 26:17–29

The Last Supper

26:17 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?"

[18]He replied, "Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, 'The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.'" [19]So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover.

[20]When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. [21]And while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me."

[22]They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, "Surely you don't mean me, Lord?"

[23]Jesus replied, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. [24]The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born."

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[a] *7* See Deut. 15:11.

25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him,
said, "Surely you don't mean me, Rabbi?"
Jesus answered, "You have said so."
26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread,
and when he had given thanks, he broke it and
gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat;
this is my body."
27 Then he took a cup, and when he had giv-
en thanks, he gave it to them, saying, "Drink
from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the[a]
covenant, which is poured out for many for the
forgiveness of sins. 29 I tell you, I will not drink
from this fruit of the vine from now on until
that day when I drink it new with you in my
Father's kingdom."

Mark 14:12–25

The Last Supper

14:12 On the first day of the Festival of
Unleavened Bread, when it was cus-
tomary to sacrifice the Passover lamb, Jesus'
disciples asked him, "Where do you want us
to go and make preparations for you to eat the
Passover?"
13 So he sent two of his disciples, telling them,
"Go into the city, and a man carrying a jar of
water will meet you. Follow him. 14 Say to the
owner of the house he enters, 'The Teacher
asks: Where is my guest room, where I may
eat the Passover with my disciples?' 15 He will
show you a large room upstairs, furnished and
ready. Make preparations for us there."
16 The disciples left, went into the city and
found things just as Jesus had told them. So
they prepared the Passover.
17 When evening came, Jesus arrived with the
Twelve. 18 While they were reclining at the ta-
ble eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you
will betray me — one who is eating with me."
19 They were saddened, and one by one they
said to him, "Surely you don't mean me?"
20 "It is one of the Twelve," he replied, "one
who dips bread into the bowl with me. 21 The
Son of Man will go just as it is written about
him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son
of Man! It would be better for him if he had not
been born."
22 While they were eating, Jesus took bread,
and when he had given thanks, he broke it and
gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is
my body."
23 Then he took a cup, and when he had given
thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank
from it.
24 "This is my blood of the[a] covenant, which is
poured out for many," he said to them. 25 "Truly
I tell you, I will not drink again from the fruit
of the vine until that day when I drink it new in
the kingdom of God."

Luke 22:7–30

The Last Supper

22:7 Then came the day of Unleavened
Bread on which the Passover lamb had
to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John,
saying, "Go and make preparations for us to
eat the Passover."
9 "Where do you want us to prepare for it?"
they asked.
10 He replied, "As you enter the city, a man
carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow
him to the house that he enters, 11 and say to
the owner of the house, 'The Teacher asks:
Where is the guest room, where I may eat the
Passover with my disciples?' 12 He will show
you a large room upstairs, all furnished. Make
preparations there."
13 They left and found things just as Jesus had
told them. So they prepared the Passover.
14 When the hour came, Jesus and his apos-
tles reclined at the table. 15 And he said to them,
"I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover
with you before I suffer. 16 For I tell you, I will
not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the
kingdom of God."
17 After taking the cup, he gave thanks and
said, "Take this and divide it among you. 18 For
I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of
the vine until the kingdom of God comes."
19 And he took bread, gave thanks and broke
it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body
given for you; do this in remembrance of me."
20 In the same way, after the supper he took
the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant
in my blood, which is poured out for you.[b] 21 But
the hand of him who is going to betray me is
with mine on the table. 22 The Son of Man will
go as it has been decreed. But woe to that man
who betrays him!" 23 They began to question
among themselves which of them it might be
who would do this.
24 A dispute also arose among them as to
which of them was considered to be greatest.
25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gen-
tiles lord it over them; and those who exercise
authority over them call themselves Benefac-
tors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead,
the greatest among you should be like the

[a] *28,24* Some manuscripts *the new* [b] *19,20* Some manuscripts do not have *given for you . . . poured out for you.*

His Body, His Blood, and Passover (Mk 14:22, 24)

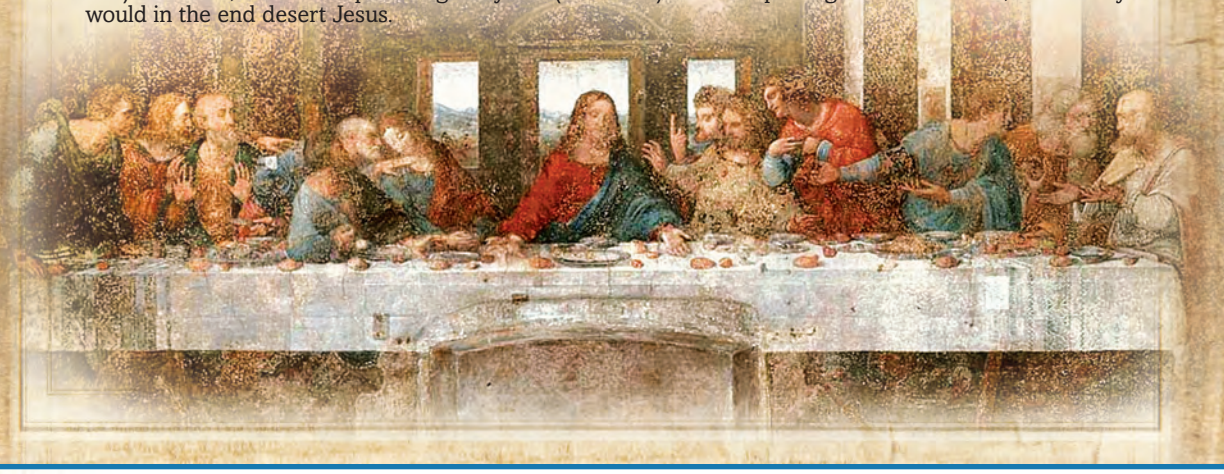
The Synoptic Gospels present Jesus sharing the Passover meal as his last supper with the disciples. He reinterpreted the common elements of the celebration in the light of a new covenant. The unleavened bread became his body (Mk 14:22) and the wine became his blood (14:26).

Customarily, the head of a Jewish household would explain each of the elements of the Passover meal. When explaining the bread, he would announce, "This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate when they came from the land of Egypt." He was not suggesting that it was the literal bread eaten by their ancestors, which was by then over 1,000 years old, but that it represented the bread their ancestors ate. This was one way Jewish people could identify with their ancestors whom God had first redeemed from captivity.

The head of the household normally blessed the bread and wine at other meals as well, but at Passover, when four cups of red wine were drunk, he would lift the cup a handbreadth above the table and recite a special blessing. Jewish men normally sat in chairs for meals, but they reclined on couches in typical Greek fashion when eating at banquets like the Passover. With their feet pointed away from the center of the room (see Lk 7:38) and their heads more toward the center (see Jn 13:23), they generally reclined on one elbow, using the other arm to reach the food on the table beside them.

Jesus' remark about the "blood of the covenant" (Mk 14:24) looked back to when God redeemed Israel from Egypt (Ex 24:8). By his blood being "poured out for many," Jesus possibly alluded to the suffering servant pouring out his life (Isa 53:12). He saw himself as redeeming his people by his own death.

Jewish people customarily finished their meal by singing more psalms from the Hallel (Ps 113–118). Likewise, Jesus' disciples sang "a hymn" (Mk 14:26) before departing for Gethsemane, where they would in the end desert Jesus.



youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. 27For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. 28You are those who have stood by me in my trials. 29And I confer on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, 30so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

John 13:18–30

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

13:18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned[a] against me.'[b]

19"I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. 20Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

21After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

22His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. 23One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. 24Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

25Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

26Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

[a] *18* Greek *has lifted up his heel* [b] *18* Psalm 41:9

27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

So Jesus told him, "What you are about to do, do quickly." 28 But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. 29 Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. 30 As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

TRANSITION

Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet

The four Gospels differ regarding the purpose of the solemn meal that Jesus shared with his disciples during Passion Week. For the Synoptics, the Last Supper was the inauguration of a new covenant in the body and blood of Jesus. John's Gospel alludes to the Last Supper, but does so for the purpose of introducing the new commandment of love.

John omits the words of institution found in the Synoptics (see Mk 14:22–25), but instead recounts the footwashing of the disciples. The Passover meal included a handwashing ritual called *rehaz,* and Jesus may have altered the ritual into a footwashing. It is not certain whether the ritual occurred during or after the meal, since some Greek manuscripts read "supper being ended" in Jn 13:2, instead of "the evening meal was in progress."

There was no precedent for a footwashing at the Passover ritual. Indeed, even a Jewish slave could not be required to wash his master's feet; such an act was only required of a non-Jewish slave! This abject deed demonstrates the sacrificial humility and love of Jesus, which is subsequently interpreted by the new commandment (Jn 13:31–35). The washing of the disciples' feet is a demonstration of the love that Jesus' disciples are to have for one another.

- **John 13:1–17**
- **John 13:31–35**

John 13:1–17

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

13 :1 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; 4 so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

John 13:31–35

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

13 :31 When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him,[a] God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once.

[a] *32* Many early manuscripts do not have *If God is glorified in him.*

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 30
30	Jesus makes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:8–11)	
30	Jesus attends the Passover (Lk 22:1, 7)	
30	Jesus is arrested (Lk 22:54)	
30	Jesus stands trial before Pilate (Mt 27:11)	
30	Herod Antipas questions Jesus (Lk 23:6–12)	

33 "My children, I will be with you only a little
longer. You will look for me, and just as I told
the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going,
you cannot come.
34 "A new command I give you: Love one an-
other. As I have loved you, so you must love
one another. 35 By this everyone will know that
you are my disciples, if you love one another."

TRANSITION

Warnings About Denial

Following the Last Supper, each of the Gospels records a conversation between Jesus and Peter. Jesus predicts Peter's defection along with the disciples, but Peter vigorously protests his willingness and even ability to follow Jesus to death if necessary. Then follows the famous pronouncement that Peter will deny Jesus three times before the cock crows.

Luke's Gospel regards the defection of Peter, as it regarded the defection of Judas (Lk 22:3), as a Satanic temptation that could be resisted only by divine assistance and intervention (Lk 22:31, 32). The saying of Jesus about procuring a purse, bag, and a sword appears in no other Gospel (Lk 22:35–38). Though this picturesque saying was intended to prepare the disciples for future tribulations, they took it literally. When two swords were actually presented, Jesus ended the conversation with "Enough" (of such nonsense).

- **Matthew 26:30–35**
- **Mark 14:26–31**
- **Luke 22:31–38**
- **John 13:36–38**

Matthew 26:30–35

26:30 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

31 Then Jesus told them, "This very night you
will all fall away on account of me, for it is writ-
ten:

"'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep of the flock will be
scattered.'[a]

32 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you
into Galilee."
33 Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on ac-
count of you, I never will."
34 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this
very night, before the rooster crows, you will
disown me three times."
35 But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die
with you, I will never disown you." And all the
other disciples said the same.

Mark 14:26–31

14:26 When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

27 "You will all fall away," Jesus told them, "for
it is written:

"'I will strike the shepherd,
and the sheep will be scattered.'[a]

28 But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you
into Galilee."
29 Peter declared, "Even if all fall away, I will
not."
30 "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "today—
yes, tonight—before the rooster crows twice[b]
you yourself will disown me three times."
31 But Peter insisted emphatically, "Even if I
have to die with you, I will never disown you."
And all the others said the same.

Luke 22:31–38

22:31 "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked
to sift all of you as wheat. 32 But I have
prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not
fail. And when you have turned back, strength-
en your brothers."
33 But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with
you to prison and to death."
34 Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before
the rooster crows today, you will deny three
times that you know me."
35 Then Jesus asked them, "When I sent you
without purse, bag or sandals, did you lack any-
thing?"
"Nothing," they answered.
36 He said to them, "But now if you have a
purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don't
have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one. 37 It
is written: 'And he was numbered with the
transgressors'[c]; and I tell you that this must be
fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is
reaching its fulfillment."
38 The disciples said, "See, Lord, here are two
swords."
"That's enough!" he replied.

John 13:36–38

13:36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord,
where are you going?"
Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you can-
not follow now, but you will follow later."

[a] *31,27* Zech. 13:7 [b] *30* Some early manuscripts do not have *twice*. [c] *37* Isaiah 53:12

37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you
now? I will lay down my life for you."
38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay
down your life for me? Very truly I tell you,
before the rooster crows, you will disown me
three times!

TRANSITION

Farewell Discourses with Disciples

The Fourth Gospel presents a more distinctive portrait of Jesus than do the other three Gospels. One of John's most important characteristics is his extensive discourse material, especially the series of discourses delivered by Jesus to the disciples in an upper room following the Last Supper. These farewell discourses, which are entirely absent in the Synoptic Gospels, comprise four chapters in John (chs. 14–17). Jesus prepares his disciples for his death and departure to the Father. Among his final instructions to them are commandments to abide in his life and love, forewarnings of hatred and persecutions, and a final prayer (ch. 17) for the unity of his followers.

• **John 14:1–24**

John

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

14 **:1** "Do not let your hearts be troubled.
You believe in God[a]; believe also in me.
2 My Father's house has many rooms; if that
were not so, would I have told you that I am
going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And
if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come
back and take you to be with me that you also
may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the
place where I am going."

Jesus the Way to the Father

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know
where you are going, so how can we know the
way?"
6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth
and the life. No one comes to the Father except
through me. 7 If you really know me, you will
know[b] my Father as well. From now on, you do
know him and have seen him."
8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and
that will be enough for us."
9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Phil-
ip, even after I have been among you such a
long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen
the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. 12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

15 "If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And
I will ask the Father, and he will give you an-
other advocate to help you and be with you for-
ever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot
accept him, because it neither sees him nor
knows him. But you know him, for he lives with
you and will be[c] in you. 18 I will not leave you
as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long,
the world will not see me anymore, but you will
see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On
that day you will realize that I am in my Father,
and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever
has my commands and keeps them is the one
who loves me. The one who loves me will be
loved by my Father, and I too will love them
and show myself to them."
22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, "But,
Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us
and not to the world?"
23 Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will
obey my teaching. My Father will love them,
and we will come to them and make our home
with them. 24 Anyone who does not love me will
not obey my teaching. These words you hear
are not my own; they belong to the Father who
sent me.

TRANSITION

Help from the Holy Spirit

The most unique aspect of the farewell discourses is Jesus' teaching about the Holy Spirit, whom he calls "the Advocate" (Jn 15:26), the helper of believers. The Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus and guides disciples "into all the truth" (16:13–15). Continuing the work of Jesus, the Spirit teaches and brings to remembrance the words and teachings of Jesus (14:26). Many scholars believe that such statements about the Spirit help explain the uniqueness of the

[a] *1* Or *Believe in God and is* [b] *7* Some manuscripts *If you really knew me, you would know* [c] *17* Some early manuscripts

Gospel of John. John 's presentation of Jesus, in other words, is determined less by the exact words and deeds of Jesus than by the *meaning* of the incarnation as revealed by later inspiration from the Holy Spirit.
• **John 14:25—16:33**

John

14:25 "All this I have spoken while still with you. [26]But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. [27]Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

[28]"You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. [29]I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. [30]I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, [31]but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

"Come now; let us leave.

The Vine and the Branches

15 [1]"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. [2]He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes[a] so that it will be even more fruitful. [3]You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. [4]Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

[5]"I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. [6]If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. [7]If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. [8]This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

[9]"As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. [10]If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. [11]I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. [12]My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. [13]Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. [14]You are my friends if you do what I command. [15]I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. [16]You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. [17]This is my command: Love each other.

The World Hates the Disciples

[18]"If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. [19]If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. [20]Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.'[b] If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. [21]They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. [22]If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. [23]Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. [24]If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.[25]But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: 'They hated me without reason.'[c]

The Work of the Holy Spirit

[26]"When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. [27]And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

Architecture & Building
In 9 B.C. Augustus dedicated the Altar of Peace in Rome, a marble altar in an enclosure 38 by 35 feet. The altar was decorated with carved garlands and other sculptures illustrating the peace and prosperity that Augustus announced as his gift to the world. Jesus announced yet a greater peace from the indwelling Holy Spirit (Jn 14:27).

[a] *2* The Greek for *he prunes* also means *he cleans.*
[b] *20* John 13:16 [c] *25* Psalms 35:19; 69:4

Friendship with the Master (Jn 15:15)

In the Roman world, a "friend" was often a political ally who owed one a favor, or a more powerful patron on whom one could depend. But the traditional Greek concept of friendship remained influential even during the apostle Paul's day. Paul had urged the financially well-off Christians of Corinth to treat Christians in Jerusalem as friends by sharing all things in common. Friends treated one another as "equals" (2Co 8:13, 14).

Jesus said to his disciples: "I have called you friends" (Jn 15:15). While he was not implying that as his friends they were his equals, he was offering to share with them what belonged to him. John's Gospel describes this assurance specifically as the promise of the Spirit sharing Jesus' *words* with the disciples, so they would know Jesus' heart (see 16:13–15).

The intimacy pictured between Jesus and the disciples fits the ancient ideal of friendship, which stressed both loyalty and the sharing of secrets. Among the Greeks, the highest expression of a friend's loyalty was to die for a friend, and Jesus summoned his disciples to lay down their lives for him and for one another, as he was about to do for them (15:12–14). But servants often proved no less loyal than friends, so Jesus spoke of an intimacy greater than that between the average master and servant. Greek literature often stressed how friends share secrets with one another in confidence, and Jesus had shared with the disciples all the words he had heard from his Father (15:15).

Some Jewish writers in Jesus' day stressed that being God's friend, as exemplified by Abraham and Moses, was even greater than being God's servant. Jesus thus bestowed on his disciples such an honor of intimacy with himself.

16 [1]"All this I have told you so that you
will not fall away. [2]They will put you out
of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming
when anyone who kills you will think they are
offering a service to God. [3]They will do such
things because they have not known the Fa-
ther or me. [4]I have told you this, so that when
their time comes you will remember that
I warned you about them. I did not tell you
this from the beginning because I was with
you, [5]but now I am going to him who sent
me. None of you asks me, 'Where are you
going?' [6]Rather, you are filled with grief be-
cause I have said these things. [7]But very truly
I tell you, it is for your good that I am going
away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not
come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.
[8]When he comes, he will prove the world to
be in the wrong about sin and righteousness
and judgment: [9]about sin, because people do
not believe in me; [10]about righteousness, be-
cause I am going to the Father, where you
can see me no longer; [11]and about judgment,
because the prince of this world now stands
condemned.

[12]"I have much more to say to you, more
than you can now bear. [13]But when he, the
Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into
all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he
will speak only what he hears, and he will tell
you what is yet to come. [14]He will glorify me
because it is from me that he will receive what
he will make known to you. [15]All that belongs
to the Father is mine. That is why I said the
Spirit will receive from me what he will make
known to you."

The Disciples' Grief Will Turn to Joy

[16]Jesus went on to say, "In a little while you
will see me no more, and then after a little
while you will see me."

[17]At this, some of his disciples said to one
another, "What does he mean by saying, 'In a
little while you will see me no more, and then
after a little while you will see me,' and 'Be-
cause I am going to the Father'?" [18]They kept
asking, "What does he mean by 'a little while'?
We don't understand what he is saying."

[19]Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him
about this, so he said to them, "Are you ask-
ing one another what I meant when I said, 'In a
little while you will see me no more, and then
after a little while you will see me'? [20]Very truly
I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the
world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief
will turn to joy. [21]A woman giving birth to a
child has pain because her time has come; but
when her baby is born she forgets the anguish
because of her joy that a child is born into the
world. [22]So with you: Now is your time of grief,
but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and
no one will take away your joy. [23]In that day you

Health & Medicine

In ancient times babies were born at home, not in hospitals. Assisting the process of birth were midwives, local women with experience, rather than doctors. Since practically no scientific medical knowledge existed, a high mortality rate was common for infants and children. Yet in the people's everyday experience of these natural events, the joy of birth was greater than the anguish of the birth process (Jn 16:21).

will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

25"Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. 26In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father."

29Then Jesus' disciples said, "Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. 30Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God."

31"Do you now believe?" Jesus replied. 32"A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

33"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."

TRANSITION

Jesus' High Priestly Prayer

The longest recorded prayer of Jesus (Jn 17:1–26) is called the high priestly prayer. On the eve of the crucifixion Jesus interceded for his people, praying this prayer for all who would believe in him throughout time (Jn 17:20).

- **John 17:1–26**

John

Jesus Prays to Be Glorified

17 :1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

"Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. 2For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. 3Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. 4I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. 5And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

6"I have revealed you[a] to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. 7Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. 8For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. 9I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. 10All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. 11I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of[b] your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. 12While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by[c] that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

13"I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. 14I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. 15My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. 16They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. 17Sanctify them by[d] the truth; your word is truth. 18As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. 19For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

20"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, 21that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23I in them and you in me—so

[a] *6* Greek *your name* [b] *11* Or *Father, keep them faithful to* [c] *12* Or *kept them faithful to* [d] *17* Or *them to live in accordance with*

that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

24"Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

25"Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. 26I have made you[a] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them."

[a] *26* Greek *your name* [b] *50* Or *"Why have you come, friend?"*

TRANSITION

Jesus' Prayer and Arrest in Gethsemane

After the Last Supper, Jesus retired to an olive grove in the Kidron Valley. Matthew and Mark call the place "Gethsemane," a Hebrew word meaning "olive press" (Mt 26:36; Mk 14:32), whereas John simply designates it a garden (Jn 18:1). There, according to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus prayed in great anguish and sorrow to be spared the ordeal of crucifixion. But the Father remained silent and the disciples succumbed to sleep.

The Gospel of John omits the account of Jesus' prayerful agony and records only his arrest in Gethsemane. The presence of a "detachment of soldiers" in the garden (Jn 18:3) indicates that Roman as well as Jewish authorities were responsible for the arrest. John underscores Jesus' royal authority by recording a hesitancy and trepidation on the part of the soldiers at the moment of encounter (18:4–9).

According to the Synoptic Gospels, the arrest occurred on the heels of Jesus' prayer. Matthew reminds his readers that Jesus was not powerless to prevent his seizure, but allows it in fulfillment of God's will (Mt 26:52–54; see Jn 18:11). Mark includes a singular and curious note about a young man fleeing naked in the wake of Jesus' arrest (Mk 14:51, 52). As some have supposed, the Gospel writer is possibly making a disguised reference to himself.

- **Matthew 26:36–56**
- **Mark 14:32–52**
- **Luke 22:39–53**
- **John 18:1–11**

Matthew 26:36–56

Gethsemane

26 :36 Then Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." 37He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. 38Then he said to them, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me."

39Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

40Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Couldn't you men keep watch with me for one hour?" he asked Peter. 41"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

42He went away a second time and prayed, "My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done."

43When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. 44So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing.

45Then he returned to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour has come, and the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 46Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

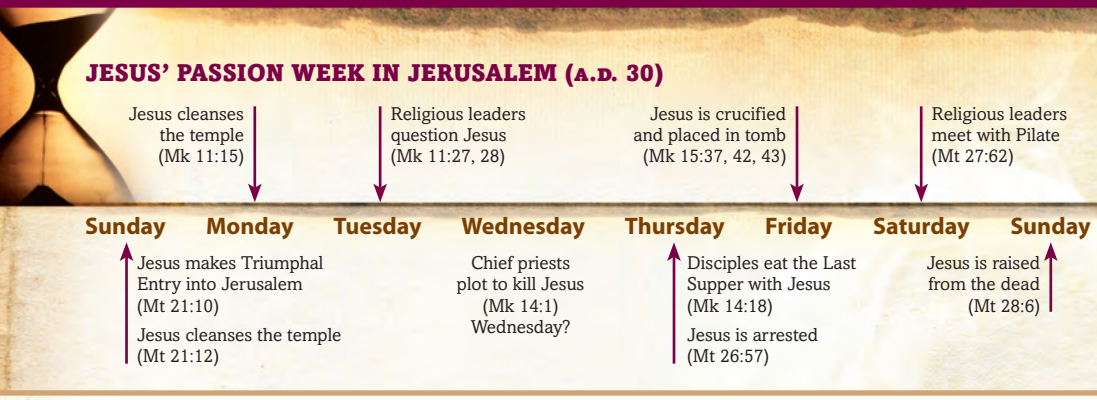
Jesus Arrested

47While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. 48Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him." 49Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him.

50Jesus replied, "Do what you came for, friend."[b]

Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. 51With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

52"Put your sword back in its place," Jesus said to him, "for all who draw the sword will die by the sword. 53Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? 54But



how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?"

55 In that hour Jesus said to the crowd, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I sat in the temple courts teaching, and you did not arrest me. 56 But this has all taken place that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Mark 14:32–52

Gethsemane

14:32 They went to a place called Gethsemane, and Jesus said to his disciples, "Sit here while I pray." 33 He took Peter, James and John along with him, and he began to be deeply distressed and troubled. 34 "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

35 Going a little farther, he fell to the ground and prayed that if possible the hour might pass from him. 36 "*Abba*,[a] Father," he said, "everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will."

37 Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. "Simon," he said to Peter, "are you asleep? Couldn't you keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Arts & Literature

A cup is a common symbol for a person's destiny in life, prepared by God and given from heaven through the unfolding of temporal events. A bitter cup would symbolize trials and hardship, such as Jesus' cup symbolizing his suffering and death (Mk 14:36). In the *Iliad* Homer describes the divine sovereignty in terms of two jars, one of good and one of suffering.

39 Once more he went away and prayed the same thing. 40 When he came back, he again found them sleeping, because their eyes were heavy. They did not know what to say to him.

41 Returning the third time, he said to them, "Are you still sleeping and resting? Enough! The hour has come. Look, the Son of Man is delivered into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise! Let us go! Here comes my betrayer!"

Jesus Arrested

43 Just as he was speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, appeared. With him was a crowd armed with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests, the teachers of the law, and the elders.

44 Now the betrayer had arranged a signal with them: "The one I kiss is the man; arrest him and lead him away under guard." 45 Going at once to Jesus, Judas said, "Rabbi!" and kissed him. 46 The men seized Jesus and arrested him. 47 Then one of those standing near drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear.

48 "Am I leading a rebellion," said Jesus, "that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? 49 Every day I was with you, teaching in the temple courts, and you did not arrest me. But the Scriptures must be fulfilled." 50 Then everyone deserted him and fled.

51 A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, 52 he fled naked, leaving his garment behind.

Luke 22:39–53

Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives

22:39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to

[a] *36* Aramaic for *father*

them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." [41]He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, [42]"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." [43]An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. [44]And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.[a]

[45]When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. [46]"Why are you sleeping?" he asked them. "Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation."

Jesus Arrested

[47]While he was still speaking a crowd came up, and the man who was called Judas, one of the Twelve, was leading them. He approached Jesus to kiss him, [48]but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

[49]When Jesus' followers saw what was going to happen, they said, "Lord, should we strike with our swords?" [50]And one of them struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his right ear.

[51]But Jesus answered, "No more of this!" And he touched the man's ear and healed him.

[52]Then Jesus said to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard, and the elders, who had come for him, "Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come with swords and clubs? [53]Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me. But this is your hour—when darkness reigns."

[a] *43,44* Many early manuscripts do not have verses 43 and 44.

John 18:1–11

Jesus Arrested

18:1 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

[2]Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. [3]So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

[4]Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?"

[5]"Jesus of Nazareth," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) [6]When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

[7]Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?"

"Jesus of Nazareth," they said.

[8]Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go."

9This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me."[a]

10Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.)

11Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?"

TRANSITION

Jesus' Trial Before the Sanhedrin

Following his arrest, Jesus underwent two trials: one before the Sanhedrin and a second before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. The Sanhedrin, the high Jewish council, was given complete freedom by the Roman government over religious affairs and limited freedom in political affairs. It consisted of seventy elders and teachers of the law (who could be either Sadducees or Pharisees), plus a presider known as the high priest, who was elected annually to renewable terms in office.

Jesus was hauled before the Sanhedrin on false charges of plotting to overthrow the temple (Mt 26:61; Mk 14:58). The Synoptic Gospels record a hearing before Caiaphas, who was high priest from A.D. 18 to 36, whereas John records a preliminary hearing before Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas (Jn 18:13). Jesus remained silent until pressed by the high priest to answer whether he was the Son of God or not. According to Mark, Jesus affirmed the question (Mk 14:62). Yet even the ambiguous responses recorded by Matthew and Luke (Mt 26:64; Lk 22:70) are not a denial of the question, since they were understood as blasphemy deserving of death.

All four Gospels interweave Peter's courtyard experience with the Sanhedrin trial, contrasting the faithful confession of Jesus with the denial by Peter. Jesus' hearing in "the house of the high priest" (Lk 22:54) permitted him a view of Peter standing in the courtyard (22:55, 61). The Fourth Gospel appears to base its knowledge of the trial, in part at least, on "the other disciple" (Jn 18:16), which may refer to the apostle John. Otherwise all the disciples had fled (Mk 14:50), and their absence may account for the greater divergences in the Gospel reports of the trial.

- **Matthew 26:57–75**
- **Mark 14:53–72**
- **Luke 22:54–71**
- **John 18:12–27**

Matthew 26:57–75

Jesus Before the Sanhedrin

26:57 Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, where the teachers of the law and the elders had assembled. 58But Peter followed him at a distance, right up to the courtyard of the high priest. He entered and sat down with the guards to see the outcome.

59The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for false evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death. 60But they

[a] *9* John 6:39

Annas and Caiaphas the High Priests (Mt 26:57)

Caiaphas was the Jewish high priest at the time of Jesus' crucifixion, exercising an active role in his trial proceedings (Mt 26:3, 57, 62). However, another high priest, Annas, seems to have been influential at the same time as Caiaphas. Since the office of high priest was usually occupied by only one person, the situation of these two high priests is somewhat perplexing.

The Jewish historian Josephus makes clear the relationship between Annas and Caiaphas. He writes that Annas was appointed high priest by the Romans in A.D. 6 and deposed in A.D. 15. Caiaphas was high priest at a later time, being appointed in A.D. 18 and not deposed until A.D. 36. Caiaphas's approximately 18-year tenure as high priest was a relatively long time compared to most Roman appointees. At any rate, he had a very close relationship with the Roman authorities, which likely explains his long tenure in office.

Luke's writings, both his Gospel and Acts, place Annas's influence as high priest much later than A.D. 15, the date when Josephus states Annas was deposed. Luke names Annas and Caiaphas together as co-high priests in about A.D. 26 (the 15th year of Tiberius; Lk 3:2). Furthermore, Ac 4:6 lists Annas as high priest and Caiaphas as belonging to the family of the high priest, not long after Jesus' death, about A.D. 30 or 31.

Apparently, Annas's influence continued long beyond A.D. 15, the date when he last served officially as high priest. According to Josephus, five of Annas's sons were also appointed high priest at various times. Moreover, John's Gospel informs us that Annas was a relative (father-in-law) of Caiaphas (Jn 18:13). Possibly Annas retained a position of leadership within the high priestly family, while his son-in-law, Caiaphas, served as the appointed high priest.

did not find any, though many false witnesses came forward.

Finally two came forward [61]and declared, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'"

[62]Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" [63]But Jesus remained silent.

The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

[64]"You have said so," Jesus replied. "But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."[a]

[65]Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. [66]What do you think?"

"He is worthy of death," they answered.

[67]Then they spit in his face and struck him with their fists. Others slapped him [68]and said, "Prophesy to us, Messiah. Who hit you?"

Peter Disowns Jesus

[69]Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. "You also were with Jesus of Galilee," she said.

[70]But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

[71]Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

[72]He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

[73]After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

[74]Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!"

Immediately a rooster crowed. [75]Then Peter remembered the word Jesus had spoken: "Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." And he went outside and wept bitterly.

Mark 14:53–72

Jesus Before the Sanhedrin

14 **:53** They took Jesus to the high priest, and all the chief priests, the elders and the teachers of the law came together. [54]Peter followed him at a distance, right into the courtyard of the high priest. There he sat with the guards and warmed himself at the fire.

[55]The chief priests and the whole Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus so that they could put him to death, but they did not find any. [56]Many testified falsely against him, but their statements did not agree.

[57]Then some stood up and gave this false testimony against him: [58]"We heard him say, 'I will destroy this temple made with human hands and in three days will build another, not made with hands.'" [59]Yet even then their testimony did not agree.

[60]Then the high priest stood up before them and asked Jesus, "Are you not going to answer? What is this testimony that these men are bringing against you?" [61]But Jesus remained silent and gave no answer.

Again the high priest asked him, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?"

[62]"I am," said Jesus. "And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

[63]The high priest tore his clothes. "Why do we need any more witnesses?" he asked. [64]"You have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?"

They all condemned him as worthy of death. [65]Then some began to spit at him; they blindfolded him, struck him with their fists, and said, "Prophesy!" And the guards took him and beat him.

Peter Disowns Jesus

[66]While Peter was below in the courtyard, one of the servant girls of the high priest came by. [67]When she saw Peter warming himself, she looked closely at him.

"You also were with that Nazarene, Jesus," she said.

[68]But he denied it. "I don't know or understand what you're talking about," he said, and went out into the entryway.[b]

[69]When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." [70]Again he denied it.

After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."

[71]He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about."

[72]Immediately the rooster crowed the second time.[c] Then Peter remembered the word

[a] *64* See Psalm 110:1; Daniel 7:13. [b] *68* Some early manuscripts *entryway and the rooster crowed* [c] *72* Some early manuscripts do not have *the second time.*

Jesus had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows twice[a] you will disown me three times." And he broke down and wept.

Luke 22:54–71

Peter Disowns Jesus

22:54 Then seizing him, they led him away and took him into the house of the high priest. Peter followed at a distance. 55And when some there had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and had sat down together, Peter sat down with them. 56A servant girl saw him seated there in the firelight. She looked closely at him and said, "This man was with him."

57But he denied it. "Woman, I don't know him," he said.

58A little later someone else saw him and said, "You also are one of them."

"Man, I am not!" Peter replied.

59About an hour later another asserted, "Certainly this fellow was with him, for he is a Galilean."

60Peter replied, "Man, I don't know what you're talking about!" Just as he was speaking, the rooster crowed. 61The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: "Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times." 62And he went outside and wept bitterly.

The Guards Mock Jesus

63The men who were guarding Jesus began mocking and beating him. 64They blindfolded him and demanded, "Prophesy! Who hit you?" 65And they said many other insulting things to him.

Jesus Before Pilate and Herod

66At daybreak the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law, met together, and Jesus was led before them. 67"If you are the Messiah," they said, "tell us."

Jesus answered, "If I tell you, you will not believe me, 68and if I asked you, you would not answer. 69But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the mighty God."

70They all asked, "Are you then the Son of God?"

He replied, "You say that I am."

71Then they said, "Why do we need any more testimony? We have heard it from his own lips."

John 18:12–27

18:12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him 13and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. 14Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Peter's First Denial

15Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, 16but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

17"You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter.

He replied, "I am not."

18It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

19Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

20"I have spoken openly to the world," Jesus replied. "I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. 21Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said."

22When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" he demanded.

23"If I said something wrong," Jesus replied, "testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?" 24Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter's Second and Third Denials

25Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "I am not."

26One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" 27Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

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[a] *72* Some early manuscripts do not have *twice*.

TRANSITION

Friday: Before Pilate the Governor

On the morning of the next day, Friday, Jesus faced the second of two trials: a hearing before Pontius Pilate. Pilate was procurator or governor of Judea from A.D. 26 to 36. As might be expected, the charges before Pilate changed from Jewish legal allegations to political allegations, especially that Jesus claimed to be "king of the Jews" (Mk 15:2).

The Synoptic Gospels report that Jesus remained silent during the interrogation, responding only briefly and vaguely to Pilate's questions (Mt 27:14). John's Gospel, however, relates how Pilate engaged Jesus in reluctant conversation, with Jesus explaining that his kingdom is not of this world (Jn 18:36).

The hearing before Pilate is augmented by three incidents. Judas's remorse at betraying Jesus resulted in an attempt to return the ransom money, and in Judas's suicide by hanging (see Ac 1:18). Only Matthew includes this story (Mt 27:3–10), likely to show his Jewish readers a fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. The Old Testament quotation in Mt 27:9, 10 is largely from Zec 11:12, 13, but Matthew may have ascribed it to the better-known prophet Jeremiah because he refers to the buying of a field (Jer 32:6–9).

A second incident is the warning about Jesus' innocence that Pilate received from his wife (Mt 27:19). Although Matthew's source for this information is unknown, it effectively heightens Pilate's guilt in the sentencing of Jesus.

Only Luke's Gospel reports the third incident: an additional hearing of Jesus before Herod Antipas (Lk 23:6–12). That Pilate would refer Jesus to Antipas is understandable, since Roman rulers were customarily in Jerusalem during Jewish festivals, and since Jesus came from Galilee, over which Antipas had jurisdiction. Luke may have included this incident because it supported the prophecy of Ps 2:1, 2, wherein kings and rulers plotted against God's anointed (see Ac 4:25–28).

Pilate deserves no sympathy for his dilemma in sentencing Jesus. As governor, he was authorized with plenary power by Rome, so his weakness and vacillation should not be mistaken for virtue. Josephus recounts Pilate's effective and indeed ruthless use of that power on a number of occasions. By choosing the path of least resistance in Jesus' case, Pilate was responsible for a monstrous evil: the release of a convicted assassin and the condemning of the righteous Son of God to torture and death.

- **Matthew 27:1–26**
- **Mark 15:1–15**
- **Luke 23:1–25**
- **John 18:28–40**

Matthew 27:1–26

Judas Hangs Himself

27 :1 Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. [2]So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

[3]When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. [4]"I have sinned," he said, "for I have betrayed innocent blood."

"What is that to us?" they replied. "That's your responsibility."

[5]So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

[6]The chief priests picked up the coins and said, "It is against the law to put this into the treasury, since it is blood money." [7]So they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners. [8]That is why it has been called the Field of Blood to this day. [9]Then what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet was fulfilled: "They took the thirty pieces of silver, the price set on him by the people of Israel, [10]and they used them to buy the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."[a]

Jesus Before Pilate

[11]Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

[12]When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. [13]Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" [14]But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.

[15]Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. [16]At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus[b] Barabbas. [17]So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" [18]For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him.

[19]While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I

[a] *10* See Zech. 11:12,13; Jer. 19:1-13; 32:6-9. [b] *16* Many manuscripts do not have *Jesus*; also in verse 17.

have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

20But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

21"Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

22"What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

23"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

24When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!"

25All the people answered, "His blood is on us and on our children!"

26Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Politics & Government

Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea from A.D. 26 to 36 (Mk 15:1). He was appointed as "prefect," his exact title, by the emperor, to whom he reported directly. The prefect or governor (later called procurator) had the power to impose the death penalty, as well as having a certain military authority. The official residence of the governor was Caesarea.

Mark 15:1–15

Jesus Before Pilate

15 **:1** Very early in the morning, the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin, made their plans. So they bound Jesus, led him away and handed him over to Pilate.

2"Are you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate.

"You have said so," Jesus replied.

3The chief priests accused him of many things. 4So again Pilate asked him, "Aren't you going to answer? See how many things they are accusing you of."

5But Jesus still made no reply, and Pilate was amazed.

6Now it was the custom at the festival to release a prisoner whom the people requested. 7A man called Barabbas was in prison with the insurrectionists who had committed murder in the uprising. 8The crowd came up and asked Pilate to do for them what he usually did.

9"Do you want me to release to you the king of the Jews?" asked Pilate, 10knowing it was out of self-interest that the chief priests had handed Jesus over to him. 11But the chief priests stirred up the crowd to have Pilate release Barabbas instead.

12"What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them.

13"Crucify him!" they shouted.

14"Why? What crime has he committed?" asked Pilate.

But they shouted all the louder, "Crucify him!"

15Wanting to satisfy the crowd, Pilate released Barabbas to them. He had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified.

Luke 23:1–25

23 **:1** Then the whole assembly rose and led him off to Pilate. 2And they began to accuse him, saying, "We have found this man subverting our nation. He opposes payment of taxes to Caesar and claims to be Messiah, a king."

Governor Pilate's Unhappy Constituents (Mk 15:7)

In A.D. 26, Pontius Pilate replaced Valerius Gratus as governor of Judea. Pilate is mentioned not only in the Gospel accounts, but also by the Jewish writers Josephus (A.D. 37–100) and Philo (20 B.C.–A.D. 50), and by the Roman historian Tacitus (A.D. 56–117?). In addition, the name "Pilate" appears on coins, and in an inscription found at Caesarea Maritima.

As a governor, Pilate was responsible for the administration of the province of Judea, including judicial matters. Josephus states that Pilate had the power to "execute." He was also responsible for collecting taxes and tribute, disbursing funds to the provinces, and sending revenues to Rome. Even so, the office of governor of Judea was not the most prestigious in the Roman Empire.

A number of incidents occurred during Pilate's rule (A.D. 26–36) that resulted in skirmishes between the governor and the Jews. Pilate got off to a bad start when he introduced into Jerusalem images in honor of the reigning emperor, Tiberius. These articles, religiously offensive to the Jews, aroused such a protest that Pilate transported the items to Caesarea.

In another incident, Pilate constructed an aqueduct with the use of Jewish funds, giving rise to rebellion that was put down with bloodshed. Josephus, however, reports that the Jews were upset not over the money involved, but over what was done with the water. Scholars have concluded that the unrest was due to the lack of concern by Pilate for the water's ritual purity as it came into Jerusalem.

Tensions sometimes erupted into riots. Mark's Gospel reports "the uprising" (Mk 15:7) that apparently was well known in Jesus' time, though now unknown. The Gospel of Luke describes an encounter with "Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices" (Lk 13:1). Josephus and Philo also report events which may be connected to these Gospel references. Jesus' opponents made the most of these tensions between a Roman governor and his Jewish constituency, accusing Jesus of "opposing Caesar" (Jn 19:12).

3 So Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of
the Jews?"
"You have said so," Jesus replied.
4 Then Pilate announced to the chief priests
and the crowd, "I find no basis for a charge
against this man."
5 But they insisted, "He stirs up the people all
over Judea by his teaching. He started in Gali-
lee and has come all the way here."
6 On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was
a Galilean. 7 When he learned that Jesus was
under Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Her-
od, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.
8 When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly
pleased, because for a long time he had been
wanting to see him. From what he had heard
about him, he hoped to see him perform a sign
of some sort. 9 He plied him with many ques-
tions, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 The
chief priests and the teachers of the law were
standing there, vehemently accusing him.
11 Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and
mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe,
they sent him back to Pilate. 12 That day Herod
and Pilate became friends — before this they
had been enemies.
13 Pilate called together the chief priests,
the rulers and the people, 14 and said to them,
"You brought me this man as one who was
inciting the people to rebellion. I have exam-
ined him in your presence and have found no
basis for your charges against him. 15 Neither
has Herod, for he sent him back to us; as you
can see, he has done nothing to deserve death.
16 Therefore, I will punish him and then release
him." [17] *a*
18 But the whole crowd shouted, "Away with
this man! Release Barabbas to us!" 19 (Barabbas
had been thrown into prison for an insurrection
in the city, and for murder.)
20 Wanting to release Jesus, Pilate appealed to
them again. 21 But they kept shouting, "Crucify
him! Crucify him!"
22 For the third time he spoke to them: "Why?
What crime has this man committed? I have
found in him no grounds for the death penalty.
Therefore I will have him punished and then
release him."
23 But with loud shouts they insistently de-
manded that he be crucified, and their shouts
prevailed. 24 So Pilate decided to grant their de-
mand. 25 He released the man who had been
thrown into prison for insurrection and mur-
der, the one they asked for, and surrendered
Jesus to their will.

John 18:28–40

Jesus Before Pilate

18 :28 Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus
from Caiaphas to the palace of the Ro-
man governor. By now it was early morning,
and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did
not enter the palace, because they wanted to
be able to eat the Passover. 29 So Pilate came

a *17* Some manuscripts include here words similar to Matt. 27:15 and Mark 15:6.

A Kingdom of Truth (Jn 18:36)

The concept of "kingdom" in Jesus' time was rooted in the Old Testament: "kingdom" most often referred to the reign or royal authority of a king. Jewish people prayed daily for the coming of God's reign. When they prayed for his kingdom, they did not doubt that God reigned over his creation in the present. Yet they longed for the day when God would rule unchallenged and all peoples would acknowledge him. Most Jews associated this kingdom with the coming of a Jewish king who would lead his people to victory over their enemies.

The Romans, however, guarded the title "king." Anyone who, without the emperor's permission, claimed to be even a client king was committing the offense of high treason. Jewish leaders, like the high priest Caiaphas and the Jerusalem aristocracy who helped keep peace for the Romans, therefore wanted to stop any would-be kings who might stir up trouble with Rome (Jn 11:47–50).

The governor, by contrast, understood Jesus' kingdom in very different terms. As a Roman, he knew reports of Cynic philosophers who wandered around claiming to be kings while possessing nothing. Such philosophers lacked respect for rulers, yet were without political ambition for themselves. As thinkers, they spoke about truth and about reigning, but to a Roman pragmatist they were at worst insane but harmless. Pilate, therefore, did not see Jesus as a threat, as did the Jewish religious leaders. Although Pilate asked Jesus, "You are a king, then!" (Jn 18:37), he actually misapprehended the nature of the mission Jesus claimed to fulfill (18:36).

out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?"

30 "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you."

31 Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law."

"But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. 32 This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

34 "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?"

35 "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?"

36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place."

37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

38 "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. 39 But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?"

40 They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

TRANSITION

Sentenced to Crucifixion

Jesus was delivered by Pilate to be scourged before execution. Commonly practiced before crucifixion, the scourge consisted of a leather whip with bone, rock, or metal in the ends that ripped the flesh from a prisoner's back. Scourging severely weakened a prisoner, thereby hastening death on the cross, or sometimes was fatal itself. In addition to the scourge, Jesus was subjected to the soldiers' mockery about him being "king of the Jews."

The scourging and mocking took place in the Praetorium. This area, which John identifies as "the Stone Pavement" (Jn 19:13), functioned as the Roman governor's headquarters. It was often also the governor's residence, and Mark describes it as a "palace" (Mk 15:16). Some think that the Praetorium was located at Herod the Great's palace in the western part of Jerusalem. One archaeologist identified the Praetorium with the square in front of the palace, which Herod built in 23 B.C.

The accounts of Matthew and Mark report Jesus being crucified following the flagellation, but John's Gospel relates a continuation of the hearing (Jn 19:8–11). The effect of this long hearing before the governor reinforces Jesus' innocence. Pilate appealed for Jesus' release, but ceased such efforts when faced with a new political threat. The governor would not risk accusations of disloyalty to Caesar (Jn 19:12, 15). In the end, the blame for Jesus' death falls on the religious leaders and the crowd, as well as Pilate.

- **Matthew 27:27–31**
- **Mark 15:16–20**
- **John 19:1–16**

Mocking the So-Called King (Jn 19:2)

Often playing games to pass time, soldiers were known to beat and ridicule those they were about to execute. So they mocked Jesus, kneeling before him to imitate the eastern Mediterranean custom of bowing before kings. Their salutation "Hail!" was the standard way Romans saluted their emperor. Many Romans and especially Greeks disliked the Jews, hence as the soldiers mocked a condemned Jewish man as "king of the Jews" (Jn 19:3), they may have been mocking the land of Judea as a whole.

Part of the soldiers' charade involved placing upon Jesus the regalia of a king: crown, robe, and scepter. The staff parodies a scepter (Mt 27:29). The soldiers may have had a bamboo cane available, since they frequently used such for military floggings. Roman soldiers wore scarlet robes, so the robe they draped on Jesus was possibly a faded scarlet (Mt 27:28), if it was one of theirs. Possibly they imitated the purple robe (Jn 19:2) of the Greek rulers who reigned in the eastern Mediterranean before the Roman conquest.

The soldiers mocked Jesus with words they thought were false, yet some of those words turned out, in the end, to be true. The Jewish people expected a king who would deliver them from the Romans, and the crowds hailed Jesus during his Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. The Romans, who executed anyone they considered to be a threat to Judea's political stability, crucified Jesus on the charge of claiming to be "king of the Jews." They failed to realize that Jesus' kingship was real, just not of this world.

Matthew 27:27–31

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

27 **:27** Then the governor's soldiers took
Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered
the whole company of soldiers around him.
28 They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on
him, 29 and then twisted together a crown of
thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in
his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him
and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they
said. 30 They spit on him, and took the staff and
struck him on the head again and again. 31 After
they had mocked him, they took off the robe
and put his own clothes on him. Then they led
him away to crucify him.

Mark 15:16–20

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

15 **:16** The soldiers led Jesus away into
the palace (that is, the Praetorium) and
called together the whole company of soldiers.
17 They put a purple robe on him, then twisted
together a crown of thorns and set it on him.
18 And they began to call out to him, "Hail, king
of the Jews!" 19 Again and again they struck him
on the head with a staff and spit on him. Falling
on their knees, they paid homage to him. 20 And
when they had mocked him, they took off the
purple robe and put his own clothes on him.
Then they led him out to crucify him.

John 19:1–16

Jesus Sentenced to Be Crucified

19 **:1** Then Pilate took Jesus and had him
flogged. 2 The soldiers twisted together
a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They
clothed him in a purple robe 3 and went up to
him again and again, saying, "Hail, king of the
Jews!" And they slapped him in the face.

4 Once more Pilate came out and said to the
Jews gathered there, "Look, I am bringing him
out to you to let you know that I find no basis
for a charge against him." 5 When Jesus came
out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple
robe, Pilate said to them, "Here is the man!"

6 As soon as the chief priests and their offi-
cials saw him, they shouted, "Crucify! Crucify!"

But Pilate answered, "You take him and cru-
cify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge
against him."

7 The Jewish leaders insisted, "We have a law,
and according to that law he must die, because
he claimed to be the Son of God."

8 When Pilate heard this, he was even more
afraid, 9 and he went back inside the palace.
"Where do you come from?" he asked Jesus,
but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 "Do you refuse
to speak to me?" Pilate said. "Don't you realize
I have power either to free you or to crucify
you?"

11 Jesus answered, "You would have no power
over me if it were not given to you from above.
Therefore the one who handed me over to you
is guilty of a greater sin."

12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free,
but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, "If you let
this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Any-
one who claims to be a king opposes Caesar."

13 When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus
out and sat down on the judge's seat at a place
known as the Stone Pavement (which in Ara-
maic is Gabbatha). 14 It was the day of Prepara-
tion of the Passover; it was about noon.

"Here is your king," Pilate said to the Jews.

15 But they shouted, "Take him away! Take
him away! Crucify him!"

"Shall I crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the chief priests answered.

16Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus.

TRANSITION

Crucifixion at Golgotha

The crucifixion of Jesus is related in all the Gospels with reserve and brevity and without sentimentality. The dominant theme lies on the mockery rather than on the physical suffering of Jesus.

The details of the crucifixion, however, vary in the Gospel accounts more than usual, doubtlessly due to the different theological emphases of the Gospel writers. Only Luke, from his interest in outsiders and the outcast, reports Jesus' compassion on the women of Jerusalem (Lk 23:27–32) and on the repentant thief on the cross (23:39–43). Only Matthew reports the opening of the tombs at the death of Jesus and the entry of the saints into the Holy City. This unusual story (Mt 27:51–53) may reflect Matthew's purpose of showing that the Old Covenant leads to and is fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

Significant variations are found in the Fourth Gospel. Only John records the argument between Pilate and the chief priests about the sign on the cross reading "The King of the Jews" (Jn 19:19–22). Only John mentions that Jesus' tunic was not divided (19:24; see Ps 22:18). Only John tells how Jesus entrusted his mother to the beloved disciple at the cross (19:25–27), an episode that heightens the authority of that disciple in John's Gospel.

Another account unique to John provides a final reminder that Jesus is the true Passover lamb (19:31–37). The soldiers forego the breaking of Jesus' legs, fulfilling the words of Ps 34:20: "Not one of his bones will be broken" (Jn 19:36). The piercing of Jesus' side, at which blood and water flow forth (symbolizing Holy Communion and baptism), further emphasizes that the Christian sacraments originate from and supersede the Jewish Passover celebration.

- **Matthew 27:32–56**
- **Mark 15:21–41**
- **Luke 23:26–49**
- **John 19:17–37**

Matthew 27:32–56

The Crucifixion of Jesus

27:32 As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene, named Simon, and they forced him to carry the cross. 33They came to a place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). 34There they offered Jesus wine to drink, mixed with gall; but after tasting it, he refused to drink it. 35When they had crucified him, they divided up his clothes by casting lots. 36And sitting down, they kept watch over him there. 37Above his head they placed the written charge against him: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38Two rebels were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. 39Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads 40and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!" 41In the same way the chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 42"He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! He's the king of Israel! Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. 43He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now if he wants him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'" 44In the same way the rebels who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The Death of Jesus

45From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. 46About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *"Eli, Eli,*[a] *lema sabachthani?"* (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").[b]

47When some of those standing there heard this, they said, "He's calling Elijah."

48Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge. He filled it with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. 49The rest said, "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to save him."

50And when Jesus had cried out again in a loud voice, he gave up his spirit.

51At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth shook, the rocks split 52and the tombs broke open. The bodies of many holy people who had

[a] *46* Some manuscripts *Eloi, Eloi* [b] *46* Psalm 22:1

Religion & Worship

Jesus was crucified during the Passover festival. The exact day of Passover is determined by the lunar calendar, and always falls during the full moon. In a solar eclipse, the moon passes in front of the sun, which cannot occur when the moon is full. This means that the darkness during the crucifixion was not the effect of an eclipse (Mt 27:45).

died were raised to life. 53They came out of the tombs after Jesus' resurrection and[a] went into the holy city and appeared to many people.

54When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

55Many women were there, watching from a distance. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to care for his needs. 56Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph,[b] and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Mark 15:21–41

The Crucifixion of Jesus

15 **:21** A certain man from Cyrene, Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus, was passing by on his way in from the country, and they forced him to carry the cross. 22They brought Jesus to the place called Golgotha (which means "the place of the skull"). 23Then they offered him wine mixed with myrrh, but he did not take it. 24And they crucified him. Dividing up his clothes, they cast lots to see what each would get.

25It was nine in the morning when they crucified him. 26The written notice of the charge against him read: THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27They crucified two rebels with him, one on his right and one on his left. [28][c] 29Those who passed by hurled insults at him, shaking their heads and saying, "So! You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, 30come down from the cross and save yourself!" 31In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. "He saved others," they said, "but he can't save himself! 32Let this Messiah, this king of Israel, come down now from the cross, that we may see and believe." Those crucified with him also heaped insults on him.

The Death of Jesus

33At noon, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. 34And at three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, *"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?"* (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").[d]

35When some of those standing near heard this, they said, "Listen, he's calling Elijah."

36Someone ran, filled a sponge with wine vinegar, put it on a staff, and offered it to Jesus to drink. "Now leave him alone. Let's see if Elijah comes to take him down," he said.

37With a loud cry, Jesus breathed his last.

38The curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. 39And when the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died,[e] he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

40Some women were watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph,[f] and Salome. 41In Galilee these women had followed him and cared for his needs. Many other women who had come up with him to Jerusalem were also there.

Luke 23:26–49

The Crucifixion of Jesus

23 **:26** As the soldiers led him away, they seized Simon from Cyrene, who was on his way in from the country, and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27A large number of people followed him, including women who mourned and wailed for him. 28Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children. 29For the time will come when you will say, 'Blessed are the childless women, the wombs that never bore and the breasts that never nursed!' 30Then

> "'they will say to the mountains, "Fall on us!"
> and to the hills, "Cover us!"'[g]

31For if people do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

32Two other men, both criminals, were also led out with him to be executed. 33When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. 34Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."[h] And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

35The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is God's Messiah, the Chosen One."

36The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar 37and said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

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[a] *53* Or *tombs, and after Jesus' resurrection they*
[b] *56* Greek *Joses*, a variant of *Joseph*
[c] *28* Some manuscripts include here words similar to Luke 22:37.
[d] *34* Psalm 22:1
[e] *39* Some manuscripts *saw that he died with such a cry*
[f] *40* Greek *Joses*, a variant of *Joseph*; also in verse 47
[g] *30* Hosea 10:8
[h] *34* Some early manuscripts do not have this sentence.

Arts & Literature
The Hebrew Bible represents some of the earliest writings to be translated into another language. The Hebrew was translated into Greek between the 3rd and 1st centuries B.C. This translation is known as the Septuagint, abbreviated LXX, because tradition said it was made by 70 scholars working independently. By Jesus' time people were familiar with the same content appearing in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew (Lk 23:38).

38 There was a written notice above him,
which read: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.
39 One of the criminals who hung there
hurled insults at him: "Aren't you the Messiah?
Save yourself and us!"
40 But the other criminal rebuked him. "Don't
you fear God," he said, "since you are under
the same sentence? 41 We are punished justly,
for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But
this man has done nothing wrong."
42 Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when
you come into your kingdom.[a]"
43 Jesus answered him, "Truly I tell you, to-
day you will be with me in paradise."

The Death of Jesus

44 It was now about noon, and darkness came
over the whole land until three in the after-
noon, 45 for the sun stopped shining. And the
curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46 Jesus
called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your
hands I commit my spirit."[b] When he had said
this, he breathed his last.
47 The centurion, seeing what had happened,
praised God and said, "Surely this was a right-
eous man." 48 When all the people who had
gathered to witness this sight saw what took
place, they beat their breasts and went away.
49 But all those who knew him, including the
women who had followed him from Galilee,
stood at a distance, watching these things.

John 19:17–37

19 :17 Carrying his own cross, he went
out to the place of the Skull (which in
Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they cru-
cified him, and with him two others — one on
each side and Jesus in the middle.
19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to
the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING
OF THE JEWS. 20 Many of the Jews read this sign,
for the place where Jesus was crucified was
near the city, and the sign was written in Ar-
amaic, Latin and Greek. 21 The chief priests of
the Jews protested to Pilate, "Do not write 'The
King of the Jews,' but that this man claimed to
be king of the Jews."
22 Pilate answered, "What I have written, I
have written."
23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they
took his clothes, dividing them into four shares,
one for each of them, with the undergarment
remaining. This garment was seamless, woven
in one piece from top to bottom.
24 "Let's not tear it," they said to one another.
"Let's decide by lot who will get it."
This happened that the scripture might be
fulfilled that said,

[a] *42* Some manuscripts *come with your kingly power*
[b] *46* Psalm 31:5

Kreuzabnahme (Descent from the Cross),
16th Century,
Located in Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen
by Jacopo Tintoretto (Robusti)

"They divided my clothes among them
and cast lots for my garment."[a]

So this is what the soldiers did.

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother,
his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas,
and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his
mother there, and the disciple whom he loved
standing nearby, he said to her, "Woman,[b] here
is your son," 27 and to the disciple, "Here is your
mother." From that time on, this disciple took
her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

28 Later, knowing that everything had now
been finished, and so that Scripture would
be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar
of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a
sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the
hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. 30 When
he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is fin-
ished." With that, he bowed his head and gave
up his spirit.

31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the
next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because
the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left
on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked
Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies
taken down. 32 The soldiers therefore came and
broke the legs of the first man who had been
crucified with Jesus, and then those of the oth-
er. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found
that he was already dead, they did not break
his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced
Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow
of blood and water. 35 The man who saw it has
given testimony, and his testimony is true. He
knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so
that you also may believe. 36 These things hap-
pened so that the scripture would be fulfilled:
"Not one of his bones will be broken,"[c] 37 and,
as another scripture says, "They will look on
the one they have pierced."[d]

[a] *24* Psalm 22:18 [b] *26* The Greek for *Woman* does not denote any disrespect. [c] *36* Exodus 12:46; Num. 9:12; Psalm 34:20 [d] *37* Zech. 12:10

Health & Medicine

A crucified person could not breathe freely. When exhaustion set in, death came by suffocation, which could take several days. But the legs were needed to raise the body for breathing, and death came much more quickly when the victim's legs were broken. Since Jewish law forbade leaving a body exposed overnight, the Jews requested the breaking of the legs (Jn 19:31–33).

TRANSITION

The Burial of Jesus

After the crucifixion, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Joseph is presented as a righteous seeker of the kingdom of God (Mk 15:43) and a secret follower of Jesus (Jn 19:38). Though he was a member of the Sanhedrin, the council that delivered Jesus to the Roman authorities, he did not consent to the council's actions (Lk 23:50, 51). Upon receiving permission from Pilate, Joseph took Jesus' body down from the cross and placed it in a rock tomb near the site of the crucifixion before the onset of the Sabbath. A group of women (Lk 23:55), including Mary Magdalene (Mt 27:61), observed the burial.

Nicodemus, a Pharisee, came to Joseph of Arimathea to assist in the burial of Jesus (Jn 19:39). Earlier he had come to Jesus "at night" (Jn 3:1, 2), possibly because he wished their meeting to be secret. When the Pharisees pushed for Jesus' arrest, Nicodemus argued a legitimate point of law that Jesus deserved a hearing (7:50–52). The plea fell on deaf ears. Appearing only in John's Gospel, Nicodemus is an example of one whose regard for Jesus as a teacher from God was based primarily on Jesus' miraculous signs. He seems to have been sincere in his approach to Jesus, but lacked understanding of the salvation he offered.

Friday was the "Preparation Day" for the Sabbath (Mt 27:62). The conference of the priests and Pharisees with Pilate occurred on Saturday, the Sabbath day itself. Only Matthew's Gospel records this incident, revealing the insincere piety of the Jewish leaders: they were so concerned about Jesus' claim to rise "after three days" (27:63) that they were willing to violate the Jewish Sabbath.

- **Matthew 27:57–66**
- **Mark 15:42–47**
- **Luke 23:50–56**
- **John 19:38–42**

Matthew 27:57–66

The Burial of Jesus

27:57 As evening approached, there came
a rich man from Arimathea, named Jo-
seph, who had himself become a disciple of
Jesus. 58 Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus'
body, and Pilate ordered that it be given to
him. 59 Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a
clean linen cloth, 60 and placed it in his own
new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He
rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to
the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene
and the other Mary were sitting there opposite
the tomb.

Culture & Society
In the ancient world people considered it extremely important how and where the dead were buried. In Palestine, tombs were rooms or groups of rooms cut into the hillsides. The individual chambers and the tomb as a whole needed to be shut securely because of animals and vandals. Joseph's "new tomb" (Mt 27:60) was possibly a family burial crypt, which generally held more than one body.

The Guard at the Tomb

62 The next day, the one after Preparation
Day, the chief priests and the Pharisees went
to Pilate. 63 "Sir," they said, "we remember that
while he was still alive that deceiver said, 'After
three days I will rise again.' 64 So give the order
for the tomb to be made secure until the third
day. Otherwise, his disciples may come and
steal the body and tell the people that he has
been raised from the dead. This last deception
will be worse than the first."
65 "Take a guard," Pilate answered. "Go,
make the tomb as secure as you know how."
66 So they went and made the tomb secure by
putting a seal on the stone and posting the
guard.

Mark 15:42–47

The Burial of Jesus

15 **:42** It was Preparation Day (that is, the
day before the Sabbath). So as evening
approached, 43 Joseph of Arimathea, a promi-
nent member of the Council, who was himself
waiting for the kingdom of God, went boldly to
Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 44 Pilate was
surprised to hear that he was already dead.
Summoning the centurion, he asked him if
Jesus had already died. 45 When he learned
from the centurion that it was so, he gave the
body to Joseph. 46 So Joseph bought some linen
cloth, took down the body, wrapped it in the lin-
en, and placed it in a tomb cut out of rock. Then
he rolled a stone against the entrance of the
tomb. 47 Mary Magdalene and Mary the moth-
er of Joseph saw where he was laid.

Luke 23:50–56

The Burial of Jesus

23 **:50** Now there was a man named Jo-
seph, a member of the Council, a good
and upright man, 51 who had not consented to
their decision and action. He came from the Ju-
dean town of Arimathea, and he himself was
waiting for the kingdom of God. 52 Going to Pi-
late, he asked for Jesus' body. 53 Then he took
it down, wrapped it in linen cloth and placed it
in a tomb cut in the rock, one in which no one
had yet been laid. 54 It was Preparation Day, and
the Sabbath was about to begin.
55 The women who had come with Jesus from
Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and
how his body was laid in it. 56 Then they went
home and prepared spices and perfumes. But
they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the
commandment.

John 19:38–42

The Burial of Jesus

19 **:38** Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked
Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph
was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he
feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permis-
sion, he came and took the body away. 39 He
was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who
earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus
brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about
seventy-five pounds.[a] 40 Taking Jesus' body,
the two of them wrapped it, with the spices,
in strips of linen. This was in accordance with
Jewish burial customs. 41 At the place where
Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and
in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had
ever been laid. 42 Because it was the Jewish day
of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby,
they laid Jesus there.

[a] *39* Or about 34 kilograms

Beliefs & Ideas
Burial within city limits was objectionable for reasons of health if nothing else (Jn 19:41, 42). The oldest Roman law, the Twelve Tables, prohibited burial within the traditional limits of the city of Rome. This particular law was observed until the 4th century A.D., though a special exception was made for the ashes of the emperor Trajan in A.D. 117.

TRANSITION

Sunday: Morning at the Tomb

The Gospels agree that Jesus was raised bodily from the dead on Sunday, the first day of the week. They also agree that Mary Magdalene was the first witness of the empty tomb, and most probably of the resurrected Lord. This is an important piece of historical evidence, since the testimony of a woman was of no legal value in ancient Jewish society. Had some early church writers invented a story of the resurrection, they would not have emphasized Mary's witness in the narrative.

Like the crucifixion accounts, the resurrection accounts diverge in a number of particulars. Only Matthew reports an earthquake and the rolling away of the stone from the tomb (Mt 28:2). Since Matthew also reported an earthquake at the crucifixion (27:51), the second earthquake may show the equal significance of the resurrection. Matthew and Mark speak of one angel at the tomb (Mt 28:5; Mk 16:5), whereas Luke and John speak of two (Lk 24:4; Jn 20:12). Matthew and Mark report only the women visiting the empty tomb, while Luke and John tell of a visit by Peter (Lk 24:12), with John relating a footrace between Peter and the beloved disciple to the tomb (Jn 20:3–8).

- **Matthew 28:1–8**
- **Mark 16:1–8**
- **Luke 24:1–12**
- **John 20:1–13**

Matthew 28:1–8

Jesus Has Risen

28 :1 After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.

2 There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. 4 The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.

5 The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. 6 He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. 7 Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."

8 So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples.

Mark 16:1–8

Jesus Has Risen

16 :1 When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices so that they might go to anoint Jesus' body. 2 Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they were on their way to the tomb 3 and they asked each other, "Who will roll the stone away from the entrance of the tomb?"

4 But when they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had been rolled away. 5 As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man dressed in a white robe sitting on the right side, and they were alarmed.

6 "Don't be alarmed," he said. "You are looking for Jesus the Nazarene, who was crucified. He has risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid him. 7 But go, tell his disciples and Peter, 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"

8 Trembling and bewildered, the women went out and fled from the tomb. They said nothing to anyone, because they were afraid.[a]

Luke 24:1–12

Jesus Has Risen

24 :1 On the first day of the week, very early in the morning, the women took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4 While they were wondering about this, suddenly two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning stood beside them. 5 In their fright the women bowed down with their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? 6 He is not here; he has risen! Remember how he told you, while he was still with you in Galilee: 7 'The Son of Man must be delivered over to the hands of sinners, be crucified and on the third day be raised again.'" 8 Then they remembered his words.

9 When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. 10 It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But

[a] *8* Some manuscripts have the following ending between verses 8 and 9, and one manuscript has it after verse 8 (omitting verses 9-20): *Then they quickly reported all these instructions to those around Peter. After this, Jesus himself also sent out through them from east to west the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation. Amen.*

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 30 to 31
30	Jesus is crucified (Jn 19:17, 18)
30	Jesus ascends to heaven (Lk 24:51)
31	Sejanus is executed for plotting against Caligula
31	Annas is named along with Caiaphas as co-high priest (Ac 4:6)

they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense. 12Peter, however, got up and ran to the tomb. Bending over, he saw the strips of linen lying by themselves, and he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.

John 20:1–13

The Empty Tomb

20:1 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

3So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9(They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

11Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him."

TRANSITION

Early Resurrection Appearances

The women met the resurrected Lord outside the tomb, near Jerusalem, and again were instructed to tell the disciples to go to Galilee (Mt 28:7, 10). Jesus' appearance to one woman, Mary Magdalene, is specifically noted by John and Mark. Overcome by grief, and with tear-dimmed eyes, Mary did not immediately recognize the Lord.

Matthew is the only evangelist to report the Jewish religious leaders' cover-up of the resurrection (Mt 28:11–15). Since Matthew's Gospel is intended for Jewish readers, this story helps explain the disappointing response of Jews to the gospel.

- **Matthew 28:9–15**
- **Mark 16:9–11**
- **John 20:14–18**

Matthew 28:9–15

28:9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. 10Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The Guards' Report

11While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. 12When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, 13telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' 14If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." 15So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

Mark 16:9–11

[The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20.]

16:9 *When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. 10She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. 11When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.*

John 20:14–18

20:14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").
17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"
18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

TRANSITION

Appearances in Judea: Emmaus and Jerusalem

Jesus next appeared to two disciples who were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, an encounter Luke describes in considerable detail (Lk 24:13–35), but which Mark alludes to only briefly (Mk 16:12, 13). These two disciples thought Jesus would set up a political kingdom; therefore, his death was to them a tragedy (Lk 24:21).

Another appearance of the resurrected Jesus was to the disciples gathered in Jerusalem. Jesus demonstrated that he was not a ghost by revealing his scars (Lk 24:39, 40; Jn 20:20). Commanding the disciples to remain in Jerusalem and await "power from on high" (Lk 24:49) signified the coming of the Holy Spirit. This power arrived, according to Luke's sequel in the Book of Acts (Ac 2:1–13), at the day of Pentecost, 40 days after the ascension. For Luke, Pentecost begins the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, just as the baptism of Jesus began the dispensation of the incarnation.

The Gospel of John, by contrast, suggests that the Holy Spirit was bestowed while the resurrected Jesus was still with the disciples. The effects of the Spirit are not described by John, however. Some understand Jesus' injunction "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn 20:22) to anticipate the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. Others see it as a fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit emphasized prominently in John 15; 16.

- **Mark 16:12, 13**
- **Luke 24:13–49**
- **John 20:19–31**

Mark 16:12, 13

16:12 *Afterward Jesus appeared in a different form*
to two of them while they were walking in the country. *13 These returned and reported it to the rest; but they*
did not believe them either.

Luke 24:13–49

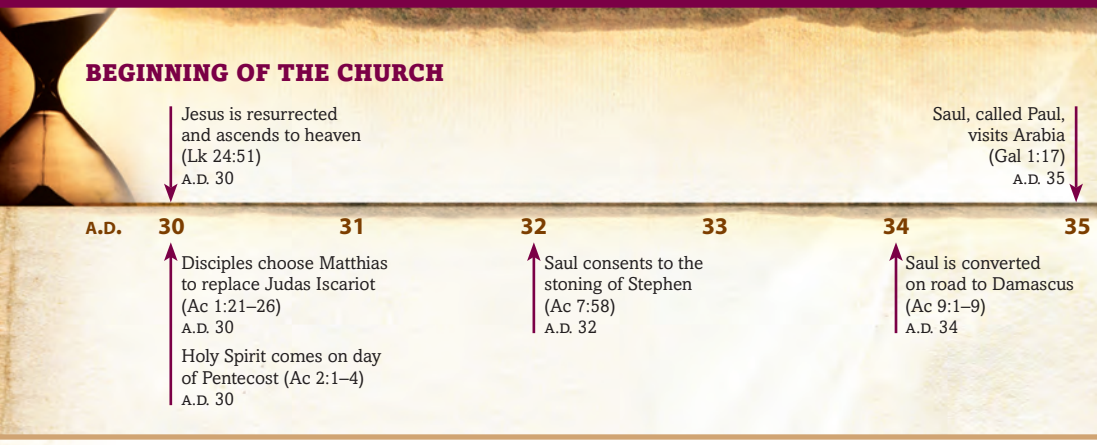
On the Road to Emmaus

24:13 Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles[a] from Jerusalem. 14 They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. 15 As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; 16 but they were kept from recognizing him.
17 He asked them, "What are you discussing together as you walk along?"
They stood still, their faces downcast. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?"
19 "What things?" he asked.
"About Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. 20 The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. 22 In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning 23 but didn't find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. 24 Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus."
25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" 27 And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.
28 As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. 29 But they urged him strongly, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them.

Beliefs & Ideas

The Law of Moses prohibited omen interpretation, magic, and divination (Dt 18:10, 11). Yet at the same time God was able to communicate by means of dreams (Mt 2:12), visions (Lk 24:23), or movements of the stars (Mt 2:9). An obvious factor in this distinction is that no one can compel God to reveal the future. Efforts to do so were not only futile, but condemned as evil.

[a] *13* Or about 11 kilometers



30 When he was at the table with them, he
took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to
give it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened
and they recognized him, and he disappeared
from their sight. 32 They asked each other,
"Were not our hearts burning within us while
he talked with us on the road and opened the
Scriptures to us?"

Appearances of the Risen Christ

The event of Jesus' resurrection is evident in various Gospel accounts which record his post-resurrection appearances. Several appearances occurred in and around Jerusalem, but Jesus was seen also beyond Jerusalem— on the way to the village of Emmaus and in Galilee by the Sea of Galilee. Not the least is Paul's vision of the resurrected Christ on the road to Damascus.

33 They got up and returned at once to Jeru-
salem. There they found the Eleven and those
with them, assembled together 34 and saying,
"It is true! The Lord has risen and has ap-
peared to Simon." 35 Then the two told what
had happened on the way, and how Jesus
was recognized by them when he broke the
bread.

Jesus Appears to the Disciples

36 While they were still talking about this,
Jesus himself stood among them and said to
them, "Peace be with you."
37 They were startled and frightened, think-
ing they saw a ghost. 38 He said to them, "Why
are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in
your minds? 39 Look at my hands and my feet.
It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does
not have flesh and bones, as you see I have."
40 When he had said this, he showed them
his hands and feet. 41 And while they still did
not believe it because of joy and amazement,
he asked them, "Do you have anything here to
eat?" 42 They gave him a piece of broiled fish,
43 and he took it and ate it in their presence.
44 He said to them, "This is what I told you
while I was still with you: Everything must be
fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of
Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms."
45 Then he opened their minds so they could
understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them,
"This is what is written: The Messiah will suf-
fer and rise from the dead on the third day,
47 and repentance for the forgiveness of sins
will be preached in his name to all nations, be-
ginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of
these things. 49 I am going to send you what
my Father has promised; but stay in the city
until you have been clothed with power from
on high."

Breathing New Life (Jn 20:22)

Many Jewish people thought long and hard about Adam's fall into sin, and expected the end time to resemble the primeval paradise, before that fall. In the Creation story, God first creates Adam in paradise, personally breathing into him "the breath of life" (Ge 2:7). Through the Old Testament prophets, God also promised someday to send the breath of his Spirit again to bring new life to his people (Eze 37:4–14). Some Jewish interpreters seem to have connected Genesis 2:7 with Ezekiel 37, anticipating God's breathing of new life through the Spirit.

By "breathing" on his disciples (Jn 20:22), Jesus probably symbolized this promise of new life associated with the coming of God's Spirit. Later Jewish writings connected the Spirit's coming with empowerment to prophesy for God, and similarly John's Gospel connects the Spirit with empowerment of the disciples to witness about Jesus (Jn 20:23; see 15:26, 27).

The disciples should have understood these connections, because Jewish tradition of their day emphasized two aspects of the Spirit's work in the Old Testament: purification and prophetic empowerment. Some Jewish groups, especially the Essenes, associated the Spirit with purification of one's heart. Most Jewish people (including the Essenes), however, associated the Spirit with the empowerment the biblical prophets possessed to hear from God and to speak for him. Jesus provided for his disciples both the purifying gift of new life and empowerment for their mission.

John 20:19–31

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

20:19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" [20]After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord.

[21]Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." [22]And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. [23]If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

[24]Now Thomas (also known as Didymus[a]), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. [25]So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

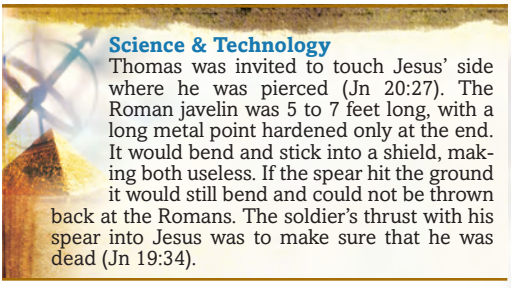
But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe."

[26]A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" [27]Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe."

[28]Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

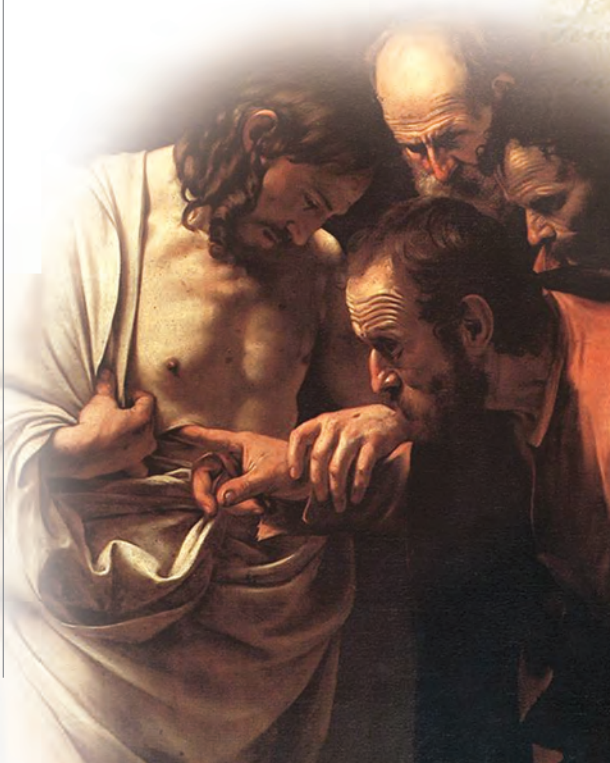
[29]Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

[a] *24 Thomas* (Aramaic) and *Didymus* (Greek) both mean *twin*.



Science & Technology

Thomas was invited to touch Jesus' side where he was pierced (Jn 20:27). The Roman javelin was 5 to 7 feet long, with a long metal point hardened only at the end. It would bend and stick into a shield, making both useless. If the spear hit the ground it would still bend and could not be thrown back at the Romans. The soldier's thrust with his spear into Jesus was to make sure that he was dead (Jn 19:34).



The Purpose of John's Gospel

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the
presence of his disciples, which are not record-
ed in this book. 31 But these are written that you
may believe[a] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son
of God, and that by believing you may have life
in his name.

TRANSITION

Later Appearances in Galilee

Matthew, Mark, and John each record appear-
ances of Jesus to the disciples in Galilee. Each
account is quite different, suggesting that Jesus
made several post-resurrection appearances to
his followers. According to Matthew's Gospel,
the disciples were visited by Jesus as they gath-
ered on a mountain (Mt 28:16), as he had earlier
predicted (28:10). As they worshiped Jesus, he
delivered the Great Commission to go and make
disciples of all nations (28:19).

In John's Gospel, Jesus appears to the disci-
ples by the Sea of Galilee (Jn 21:1). The Sea of
Galilee, or Kinnereth, had been renamed Sea of
Tiberias for the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar.
During a meal with the disciples on the shore,
Jesus told Peter to "feed" his sheep (21:17), a
metaphorical way of describing the Great Com-
mission.

Resembling Matthew's Great Commission,
Mark's Gospel presents Jesus instructing the
disciples to go and preach the gospel (Mk 16:15,
16). Several signs are predicted for believers,
including speaking in tongues, handling deadly
serpents, and drinking poison without being
harmed (16:17, 18). These miraculous signs (see
Mt 10:1; Lk 10:19) are regarded as signs of faith
in the ending of Mark.

The Galilean appearance of Jesus in Mark's
Gospel is recorded in what is known as Mark's
"secondary ending" (Mk 16:9–20). These last
twelve verses of Mark are absent from the ear-
liest Greek manuscripts. They are a secondary
ending combining elements from the resurrec-
tion appearances of the other three Gospels.
Scholars suppose that Mark's Gospel originally
ended at 16:8, with the abrupt ending there
indicating either the loss of the original end-
ing of the manuscript or perhaps Mark's death
before he finished the Gospel.

- **Matthew 28:16–20**
- **Mark 16:14–18**
- **John 21:1–25**

Matthew 28:16–20

The Great Commission

28:16 Then the eleven disciples went to
Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus
had told them to go. 17 When they saw him,
they worshiped him; but some doubted. 18 Then
Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in
heaven and on earth has been given to me.
19 Therefore go and make disciples of all na-
tions, baptizing them in the name of the Father
and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and
teaching them to obey everything I have com-
manded you. And surely I am with you always,
to the very end of the age."

Mark 16:14–18

16:14 *Later Jesus appeared to the Eleven as they
were eating; he rebuked them for their lack of faith
and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen
him after he had risen.*

*15 He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach
the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is bap-
tized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be
condemned. 17 And these signs will accompany those who
believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will
speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up snakes with their
hands; and when they drink deadly poison, it will not hurt
them at all; they will place their hands on sick people, and
they will get well."*

John 21:1–25

Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish

21:1 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his
disciples, by the Sea of Galilee.[b] It hap-
pened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also
known as Didymus[c]), Nathanael from Cana in
Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other dis-
ciples were together. 3 "I'm going out to fish,"
Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll
go with you." So they went out and got into the
boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the
shore, but the disciples did not realize that it
was Jesus.

5 He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you
any fish?"

"No," they answered.

6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side
of the boat and you will find some." When they
did, they were unable to haul the net in be-
cause of the large number of fish.

7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to
Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter
heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his
outer garment around him (for he had taken it
off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other dis-
ciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of
fish, for they were not far from shore, about a

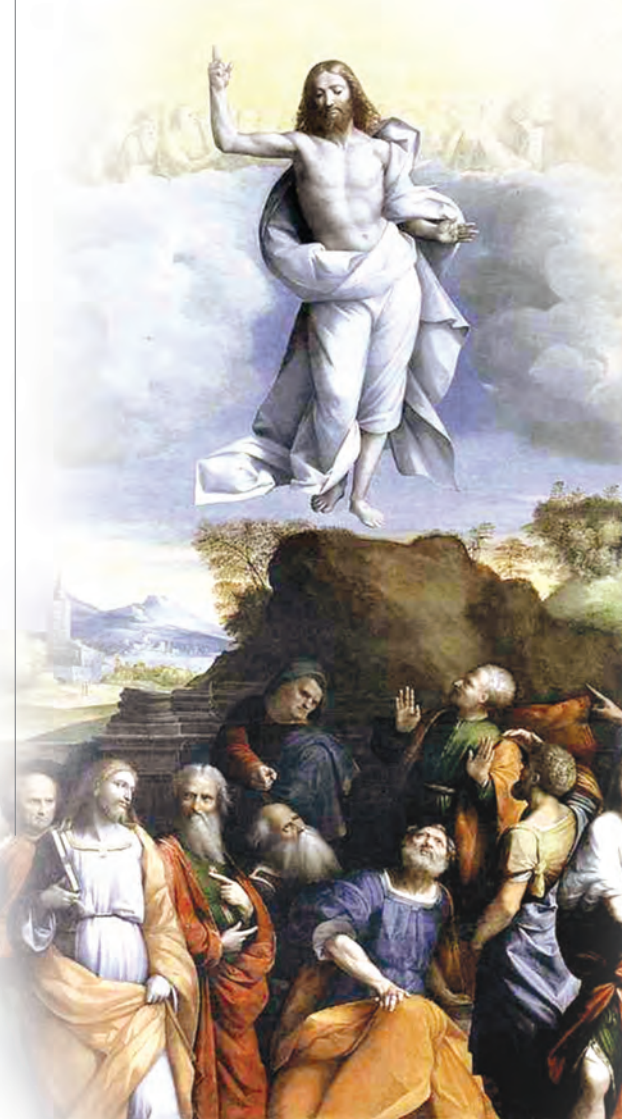
[a] *31* Or *may continue to believe* [b] *1* Greek *Tiberias*
[c] *2 Thomas* (Aramaic) and *Didymus* (Greek) both mean *twin*.

hundred yards.[a] [9]When they landed, they saw
a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and
some bread.
[10]Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the
fish you have just caught." [11]So Simon Peter
climbed back into the boat and dragged the net
ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even
with so many the net was not torn. [12]Jesus said
to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of
the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?"
They knew it was the Lord. [13]Jesus came, took
the bread and gave it to them, and did the same
with the fish. [14]This was now the third time
Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was
raised from the dead.

Jesus Reinstates Peter

[15]When they had finished eating, Jesus said
to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love
me more than these?"
"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love
you."
Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."
[16]Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do
you love me?"
He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I
love you."
Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."
[17]The third time he said to him, "Simon son
of John, do you love me?"
Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the
third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord,
you know all things; you know that I love you."
Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. [18]Very truly I
tell you, when you were younger you dressed
yourself and went where you wanted; but when
you are old you will stretch out your hands,
and someone else will dress you and lead you
where you do not want to go." [19]Jesus said this
to indicate the kind of death by which Peter
would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Fol-
low me!"
[20]Peter turned and saw that the disciple
whom Jesus loved was following them. (This
was the one who had leaned back against Jesus
at the supper and had said, "Lord, who is go-
ing to betray you?") [21]When Peter saw him, he
asked, "Lord, what about him?"

[22]Jesus answered, "If I want him to remain
alive until I return, what is that to you? You
must follow me." [23]Because of this, the rumor
spread among the believers that this disci-
ple would not die. But Jesus did not say that
he would not die; he only said, "If I want him
to remain alive until I return, what is that to
you?"
[24]This is the disciple who testifies to these
things and who wrote them down. We know
that his testimony is true.
[25]Jesus did many other things as well. If ev-
ery one of them were written down, I suppose
that even the whole world would not have room
for the books that would be written.



[a] *8* Or about 90 meters

The Ascension of Christ (Mk 16:19)

Since his birth in Bethlehem by the miracle of the incarnation, Christ had lived physically on earth. But 40 days after the resurrection, his earthly ministry ceased with his ascension into heaven (Mk 16:19; Lk 24:50, 51). To a large extent the ascension was for the benefit of Jesus' followers. They could no longer expect his physical presence. They must now wait for the promised Holy Spirit through whom the work of Jesus would continue.

The ascension marked the beginning of Christ's intercession for his followers at the right hand of God. There he makes continual intercession for all believers (Ro 8:34; Heb 4:14; 6:20; 7:25). Although Christ is not physically present with his people today, he is no less concerned for them or less active on their behalf. Christians enjoy peace, hope, and security because Christ is their advocate with the Father (1Jn 2:1).

The ascension set in motion the coming of the Holy Spirit with his gifts for believers (Jn 14:16–18, 26; 16:7–15; Ac 2:23; Eph 4:11, 12). God determined that the presence of Jesus would be replaced by the presence of the Holy Spirit, who could be everywhere at the same time. Jesus' followers now enjoy the presence of the Spirit and the operation of the Spirit's gifts through them.

One additional result of the ascension is that Jesus began his heavenly reign at the right hand of the Father (1Co 15:20–28). This reign will last until his second coming, when he will return to the earth as the reigning Messiah (Ac 3:20, 21).

Finally, the ascension of Christ is the pledge of his second coming: "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven" (Ac 1:11). Jesus will return to earth in bodily form just as he ascended into heaven.

TRANSITION

Jesus Ascends from the Mount of Olives

Mark and Luke conclude their Gospels with the ascension of Jesus. The disciples watched as Jesus was taken into heaven from the Mount of Olives at Bethany to the east of Jerusalem (Lk 24:50). Mark's Gospel shows the disciples fulfilling their commission as they went forth "everywhere" and preached (Mk 16:20). Luke's emphasis, however, is that the disciples would not begin their missionary activity until after they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (see Ac 1:12–14). Thus his Gospel closes with the disciples returning to Jerusalem and devoting themselves to worship in the temple (Lk 24:52, 53).

- **Mark 16:19, 20**
- **Luke 24:50–53**

Mark 16:19, 20

16:19 *After the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, he was taken up into heaven and he sat at the right hand of God.* [20] *Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it.*

Luke 24:50–53

The Ascension of Jesus

24:50 When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. [51] While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. [52] Then they worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. [53] And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

The Church Age

As the gospel spread beyond Judea to Samaria and the Gentile world, many converted to the belief that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Ac 8:37, note).

(A.D. 30–100)

The beginning of the church is a fascinating story of the Holy Spirit at work, leading the followers of Jesus into new ways and new worlds. The period from roughly A.D. 30 to 100 saw the glory of the first Pentecost, the struggle of the church to organize for mission, the conversion of Saul (Paul), the mission to the Gentiles, and the spread of the faith to Rome, Alexandria, and Antioch (the three greatest cities of the Roman Empire). Dozens of other cities and villages in Asia Minor, Greece, and Egypt would hear the Good News concerning the Man of Nazareth: "God has raised this Jesus to life" (Ac 2:32).

As the gospel spread beyond Judea to Samaria and the Gentile world, many converted to the belief that "Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Ac 8:37, note). The new believers met with opposition. Gentiles called these disciples of Christ by the name "Christians" (Ac 26:28; 1Pe 4:16), but did so with an element of scorn. Another scornful label for the early Christian movement was "the Way" (Ac 19:9). The term was appropriate, though, for Christ had made a "new and living way" for people to enter into the presence of God (Heb 10:20).

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PAST

Archaeological finds from this period are a rich treasure, even when narrowly restricted to those directly connected with the church. The most significant of the riches are those associated with Jerusalem and the journeys of Paul.

In Jerusalem are two inscriptions that possibly reflect this period. The Theodotus Inscription, discovered on the hill known as the Ophel, describes a synagogue built specifically for visitors and immigrants from abroad. This Ophel synagogue has been identified with the Synagogue of the Freedmen, some of whose members opposed Stephen (Ac 6:9). A second inscription once stood in the temple, marking the boundaries beyond which Gentiles were not permitted to go, on pain of death. A crowd accused Paul of bringing a Gentile into the temple, in direct violation of this ban (Ac 21:28).

The destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70 left ruins, some of which have remained. The most famous of these is a restored room from the lowest floors of the home of a member of one of the high priestly families, the house of Kathros. The Christians left Jerusalem at the outbreak of the Jewish revolt in A.D. 66 and went to Pella (modern Jordan), escaping the destruction of the city. They returned after the war and built a church under the leadership of Simeon, a cousin of Jesus. Many archaeologists believe that a small part of that church can still be seen today, behind what is called "David's Tomb."

Archaeological treasures abound in the cities of Paul's journeys. In Antioch of Pisidia, for example, is the *Monumentum Ancyranum,* on which is carved the deeds of Augustus Caesar and the hope for universal peace. Christianity was able to spread quickly in a Roman world because of the Roman peace. The excavated city square in Antioch featured a temple of the Anatolian god Men, showing that Christianity existed also in a cosmopolitan world, steeped in ancient cultures and religions, all under the aegis of Rome.

The ancient city of Ephesus has remains that reflect Paul's long ministry there. The temple and the statues of the Greek goddess Artemis, who became identified with the Roman goddess Diana, help explain why the Ephesians might riot when the worship of Artemis was threatened by Christianity. In Asia, Artemis assumed characteristics of the mother goddess,

and her temple was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, still magnificent in ruins. Also among the excavations in Ephesus were a collection of papyri with magical formulas written on them. The ancient world was much taken with magic, used both as a blessing and a curse, and the papyri recall the magic books that were burned during Paul's time (Ac 19:19).

The accounts of Paul's travels mention his experiences in the agora, or marketplace, of two cities. Philippi was a trading city, and Lydia, one of Paul's converts, likely operated her business (she bought and sold expensive purple cloth) near what is now the ruins of the agora (Ac 16:14, 19). The ruins of another agora still exists in Athens, where Paul first encountered the Athenian philosophers (Ac 17:17).

Archaeological finds are rich in Corinth, in the city that existed in Paul's day. Corinthian ruins include the marketplace and a stone bench identified as the bema, the judgment seat where Paul was brought before the proconsul Gallio. Also from Corinth is an inscription mentioning Gallio. Everywhere he went, Paul was in touch with Roman authorities, either because he was in trouble with them, or because they were protecting him, or both. Inscriptions from Corinth identify the meat market, and also name "Lucian the butcher." Butchers and meat markets recall Paul's writing to the Corinthian church over the issue of eating meat from the market that had been sacrificed to idols (1Co 10:25).

The ruins of Rome, Paul's final destination, are overwhelming, and remind us of the persecution that the church endured. The Colosseum was the site of athletic events, chariot races, and gladiatorial combats. It is quite likely that Christians lost their lives there, thrown to the lions or other forms of torture. The magnificent arch of Titus is a monument to the Roman victory over the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem. On it are carved Roman soldiers carrying the menorah (the golden lampstand) and table from the temple. The catacombs, or underground cemeteries, of Rome remind us that Christians were an illegal organization, and they often met in secret in the cemeteries.

In its early years, Christianity was regarded by Rome as a sect of Judaism, and was ignored.

THE PEOPLES AND GROUPS

All of the New Testament story unfolds under the reign of emperors of the Roman Empire, which reached the height of its power from about A.D. 100 to 175. Of the various emperors who ruled during the New Testament period, Claudius was responsible for expelling the Jews from Rome (Ac 18:2), and Nero was the emperor to whom Paul appealed his case (Ac 25:11). The destruction of Jerusalem was accomplished in the year A.D. 70 by the Roman general Titus, who later became emperor himself.

Christianity developed amongst a rich mixture of religious cults represented in the Roman world. The most striking feature of Roman religion was its ability to merge the best features of several religions. As the empire expanded, it imported and assimilated many religious ideas and pagan gods from Greece and the Orient. Roman gods were fused and identified with the gods of the Greeks. Buildings, temples, and monuments to these gods were erected. Astrological beliefs and magical practices flourished.

An "imperial ruler cult" developed in the 1st century B.C. Then the Roman Senate voted to deify Julius Caesar and to dedicate a temple to his honor. Among all the emperors, only Julius Caesar, Augustus, and Claudius were deified. This phenomenon apparently had more political than religious meaning.

THE BIBLICAL LITERATURE

The beginnings of the Christian church are related in the Book of Acts, the letters of Paul, and the general letters that make up the rest of the New Testament. Acts might more accurately be called the "Acts of the Holy Spirit," for Luke shows the role of the Spirit in guiding and strengthening the church. The Spirit's activity is prominent in the founding of the church through the work of Stephen, Philip, Peter, and especially Paul.

Paul's letters are the oldest Christian documents we have, and make up the bulk of the New Testament. Galatians was possibly the earliest letter. Shortly thereafter are 1 and 2 Thessalonians, written on Paul's second missionary journey, and 1 and 2 Corinthians and Romans, written on the third journey. The letters of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon all give indication of being written in prison. The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus are called the Pastoral Letters, addressing not churches, but pastors. Paul's letters tell us a great deal about the problems the churches faced as a result of their faith; opposition came from outside (pagan and public hostility) and from inside (heresies and persons struggling for position and power).

The General Letters and the Book of Revelation tell us most of what we know about the early church beyond Paul. Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians. It emphasizes the humanity of Jesus, his perfect sacrifice, and his bringing forgiveness to all. The letter of James reminds Christians that real faith leads to faithful living, affecting the little acts of daily life.

The key to 1 Peter is hope in Christ, even in times of persecution. It was written for the church in Asia Minor, and may originally have been a treatise on the meaning of baptism for daily life. The letters of Jude and 2 Peter were written to counter false teachers. The early church expected Jesus to return at any minute, and 2 Peter calls on the church to live faithfully in anticipation of that return. Jude reminds its readers that God's grace is not an excuse for immoral living.

Of the three letters associated with John, 1 John is a sermon, calling for a return to the fundamental of the faith: Jesus came in the flesh for our salvation. Of the two letters written by "the elder," 2 John emphasizes the commandment to love, while 3 John is a warning against a false teacher (already appearing in the church!).

The Book of Revelation calls the church to be faithful and stand firm. In the great cosmic struggle between good and evil, a struggle in which Christ will prevail, faithful Christians will share in his final triumph.

THE GOSPEL TO THE JEWS

Under Roman rule the Jews were given a special status with certain legal rights. They were permitted to practice their own religion and to build their synagogues. They also were exempt from military service and were not required to appear in court on the Sabbath. Relationships between the Jews and the Romans were mostly positive. The birth and development of Christianity took place among the Jews and within the borders of the Roman Empire. In its early years, Christianity was regarded by Rome as a sect of Judaism, and was thus ignored.

The Gospels ended with an emphasis on the ascension of the risen Christ (Mk 16:19, 20; Lk 24:50–53). The Book of Acts opens with special attention to this important event in Christian history (Ac 1:1–11). The eleven apostles, and many other Jewish believers, were joyous after witnessing the Ascension. Yet they were at a loss to know what to do next, other than selecting a successor to Judas. All this mingling of hope and uncertainty vanished at Pentecost.

Henceforth, with courage and power, they gave witness to their conviction that Jesus was alive. Their claim was confirmed by undeniable miracles performed in his name (Ac 4:14). The witness of these Christians brought consternation to persons responsible for Jesus' death. Those who killed him thought they had disposed of him. Now his authority and power were stirring Jerusalem more than ever. There was intense opposition led by Saul of Tarsus and the rulers in Jerusalem. Yet the gospel spread rapidly to Judea, Samaria, and the entire Mediterranean world.

TRANSITION

The Book of Acts

The Book of Acts is the second of a two-volume set, the first volume being the Gospel of Luke. Both books are addressed to Theophilus and written by one of Paul's associates named Luke "the doctor" (Col 4:14). The author of Acts was a companion of Paul in many of his journeys, as implied by his use of the pronoun "we" to indicate he was traveling with Paul (see Ac 16:10). He was also with Paul during his imprisonment in Rome (2Ti 4:11).

Luke shows the link between what he reported in his Gospel and what he now reports in this book: the events of Jesus' ministry are the foundation for the results obtained by the message of his Spirit-inspired witnesses. Since the risen Christ was not seen in public, the burden of proof for the resurrection event lay with those who had firsthand experience of his postresurrection appearances (see 1Co 15:4–8). The Gospels, Acts, and Paul's letters are at great pains to convince the reader that Jesus' appearances were not fantasy or the result of wishful thinking, but rather "hard evidence" which calls for faith.

The date of Luke's writing is not easily determined. The author possibly concluded his account two years after Paul's imprisonment in Rome, about A.D. 62 (Ac 28:30). Luke writes to Theophilus (meaning "lover of God"), who was probably a prominent Gentile believer. Theophilus had been "taught" concerning matters related in Luke's Gospel (see Lk 1:3, 4), and so may have assisted Luke in his research.

• **Acts 1:1–8**

Acts

Jesus Taken Up Into Heaven

1:1 In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach [2]until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. [3]After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. [4]On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. [5]For

The Number "12" (Ac 1:26)

Soon after the apostle Judas Iscariot had betrayed Jesus, Judas met with a rather ignoble end (Ac 1:18). The disciples felt it essential to fill the vacancy left by Judas, thus maintaining the number of 12 apostles. So a certain Matthias "was added to the eleven apostles" (Ac 1:26). His appointment restored Jesus' apostles to their original number of 12.

It does not take a mathematical wizard to see that the number 12 played an important role. Why? Why replace Judas anyway? The group of Jesus' followers gathered in the upper room had nominated both Matthias and a certain Joseph Barsabbas (Ac 1:23). Why not add both Matthias and Joseph? What is the significance of the number 12?

Various numbers in ancient times had symbolic significance. The number "7" was particularly favored, but so also was the number "12." This number reaches far back in the Book of Genesis to the 12 sons of Jacob, named Israel. These 12 sons became the 12 tribes of Israel, the totality of the people of Israel, the kingdom of the Jews. Any Jew of the day would recognize the political significance of the number 12.

Perhaps the number 12 also represented the 12 tribes of the new "Israel." Israel would now live on in the church! Matthias's appointment as a "witness" of Jesus' resurrection (1:22) again brought the apostles' number to completion. They were now prepared for the future, whatever lay ahead.

During the Last Supper, Jesus had granted a kingdom to the disciples, telling them that they would "sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lk 22:29, 30). They had not forgotten. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, the apostles asked him when he would "restore the kingdom to Israel" (Ac 1:6). By bringing their number back to 12, they prepared themselves for God to fulfill his promises to Israel. With the day of Pentecost approaching, they did not have long to wait.

John baptized with[a] water, but in a few days you will be baptized with[a] the Holy Spirit."

[6]Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

[7]He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. [8]But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

TRANSITION

The Ascension

As does the Gospel of John, Luke emphasizes Jesus' departure to the Father. This was the last the disciples were to see of their Master—something they had long dreaded (Jn 14:5). Luke reports a period of approximately 40 days (Ac 1:3) after Jesus' resurrection during which he appeared alive to his disciples. The climax of these appearances came on the Mount of Olives (or Olivet), a ridge east of Jerusalem that is slightly higher than the parallel ridge on which Jerusalem itself lies. Here, only "a Sabbath day's walk" (Ac 1:12; about 2/3 mile) from the city, Jesus ascended into heaven. Now the disciples were alone until "another advocate" (Jn 14:16) came at Pentecost.

• **Acts 1:9–26**

Acts

1:9 After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

[10]They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. [11]"Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

Matthias Chosen to Replace Judas

[12]Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day's walk[b] from the city. [13]When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. [14]They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

[15]In those days Peter stood up among the believers (a group numbering about a hundred and twenty) [16]and said, "Brothers and sisters,[c] the Scripture had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit spoke long ago through David concerning Judas, who served as guide for those who arrested Jesus. [17]He was one of our number and shared in our ministry."

[18](With the payment he received for his

[a] *5* Or *in* [b] *12* That is, about 5/8 mile or about 1 kilometer
[c] *16* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 6:3; 11:29; 12:17; 16:40; 18:18, 27; 21:7, 17; 28:14, 15.

wickedness, Judas bought a field; there he fell headlong, his body burst open and all his intestines spilled out. 19Everyone in Jerusalem heard about this, so they called that field in their language Akeldama, that is, Field of Blood.)

20"For," said Peter, "it is written in the Book of Psalms:

"'May his place be deserted;
let there be no one to dwell in it,'[a]

and,

"'May another take his place of leadership.'[b]

21Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus was living among us, 22beginning from John's baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection."

23So they nominated two men: Joseph called Barsabbas (also known as Justus) and Matthias. 24Then they prayed, "Lord, you know everyone's heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen 25to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs." 26Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.

[a] *20* Psalm 69:25 [b] *20* Psalm 109:8 [c] *4* Or *languages*; also in verse 11 [d] *9* That is, the Roman province by that name

TRANSITION

The Day of Pentecost

The day of Pentecost came 50 days after the offering of the first grain (Lev 23:10, 15, 16) at the Passover observances. It was a celebration of the wheat harvest, with pilgrims gathering from various nations of the Roman world. The crowd included Jews living outside of Palestine, as well as proselytes (Gentiles who had accepted the Jewish faith). Luke lists their homelands beginning in the East (Ac 2:9), then in Asia Minor (2:9, 10), and on to other Mediterranean areas—North Africa, Rome, and Crete (2:11).

Less than two months had passed since Jesus had been executed. In a sermon to the crowd on this occasion, Peter solemnly charged the Jewish leaders with crucifying the "man accredited by God," their Messiah. Yet while they were responsible, Jesus' death was no accident: he was "handed over . . . by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge" (Ac 2:22, 23).

• **Acts 2:1–47**

Acts

The Holy Spirit Comes at Pentecost

2:1 When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. 2Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them. 4All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues[c] as the Spirit enabled them.

5Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. 6When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard their own language being spoken. 7Utterly amazed, they asked: "Aren't all these who are speaking Galileans? 8Then how is it that each of us hears them in our native language? 9Parthians, Medes and Elamites; residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,[d] 10Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya near Cyrene; visitors from Rome 11(both Jews and converts to Judaism); Cretans and Arabs—we hear them declaring the wonders of God in our own tongues!" 12Amazed and perplexed, they asked one another, "What does this mean?"

13Some, however, made fun of them and said, "They have had too much wine."

Peter Addresses the Crowd

14Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. 15These people are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! 16No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

17"'In the last days, God says,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your young men will see visions,
your old men will dream dreams.

Geography & Environment

Many nations of the Roman world were represented among the gathering of pilgrims in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost. The list of peoples (Ac 2:8–11) includes the Parthians to the east of Jerusalem and Rome to the west. North it includes Asia Minor (modern Turkey), and south the coast of Africa (Libya). The largest community of Jews outside Judea was in Egypt.

The Spirit of Prophecy (Ac 2:17)

Old Testament passages associate the Spirit with creation, with new life, and with empowerment for various divine missions, most often for the mission of a prophet. By Jesus' day, Jewish interpreters most frequently emphasized prophetic empowerment: the Spirit empowered God's servants to hear him and to speak his message the way he desired.

Many Jewish people believed that God had withdrawn the Spirit after the death of the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The general assumption was that prophecy continued occasionally on a lower level, but the full restoration of the Spirit was yet to come. Prophets like Isaiah and Ezekiel had promised the final restoration of the Spirit (Isa 44:3; Eze 39:29). Nevertheless, the Spirit was not expected until the end times, in the period in which the Messiah would come, and most Jewish people did not believe that the Messiah had come yet.

Peter, recognizing that the Messiah had come in Jesus and that the Spirit who empowered the prophets was now fully active among God's people, chose an Old Testament text about the outpouring of the Spirit of prophecy (Joel 2:28–32). To make it clear that Joel's prophecy refers to the end times, Peter added explanatory words to his quote of Joel: "in the last days" (Ac 2:17).

Further, Peter was teaching that the end times had already begun because the Messiah had already come and taken his heavenly throne (2:34–36). Thus *some* "signs on the earth" (2:19) had been fulfilled by Jesus (2:22). This in turn meant that the time of salvation of which Joel spoke had also arrived. Thus Peter viewed the Spirit of prophecy as an end-time gift. God's servants should consider themselves to be empowered by the same Spirit who empowered Isaiah, Jeremiah, Huldah, Samuel, Deborah, and others.

So thoroughly did Peter wish to emphasize this point that he took a liberty used sometimes by Jewish interpreters in his day. He added some more explanatory words to the text he was quoting: "And they will prophesy" (2:18).

18 Even on my servants, both men and
women,
I will pour out my Spirit in those days,
and they will prophesy.
19 I will show wonders in the heavens above
and signs on the earth below,
blood and fire and billows of smoke.
20 The sun will be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood
before the coming of the great and
glorious day of the Lord.
21 And everyone who calls
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'[a]

22 "Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. 23 This man was handed over to you by God's deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men,[b] put him to death by nailing him to the cross. 24 But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him. 25 David said about him:

"'I saw the Lord always before me.
Because he is at my right hand,
I will not be shaken.
26 Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue
rejoices;
my body also will rest in hope,
27 because you will not abandon me to the
realm of the dead,
you will not let your holy one see decay.
28 You have made known to me the paths of
life;
you will fill me with joy in your
presence.'[c]

29 "Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. 30 But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. 31 Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. 32 God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. 33 Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34 For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,

[a] *21* Joel 2:28-32 [b] *23* Or *of those not having the law* (that is, Gentiles) [c] *28* Psalm 16:8-11 (see Septuagint)

" 'The Lord said to my Lord:
"Sit at my right hand
35 until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet." '[a]

36 "Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."

40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

The Fellowship of the Believers

42 They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. 43 Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. 44 All the believers were together and had everything in common. 45 They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. 46 Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, 47 praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

[a] *35* Psalm 110:1

TRANSITION

The Early Christians in Jerusalem

The healing of the lame man (Ac 3:1—4:31) and the miraculous deliverance of Peter and John from prison (5:12–42) are examples of the witness of the early Christians in Jerusalem. This witness brought them into conflict with the Jewish authorities, for the "notable sign" shown by the disciples (4:16) was done publicly and therefore placed the religious leaders in an embarrassing position. The people had accepted the explanation given by the disciples—God had healed the lame man.

While the early Christians lacked temporal resources, they were not short on spiritual power. Some people supposed that these followers of Jesus were just another sect of Judaism, or were trying to start a new mystery religion around Jesus of Nazareth. But miracles were convincing others that the disciples were truly serving God, so the temple officials moved to suppress the people's interest in the new religion. One Pharisee, the highly respected Gamaliel, suggested that this movement might fail, as had that led in A.D. 6 or 7 by the insurrectionist Judas the Galilean (Ac 5:37–39).

• **Acts 3:1—5:42**

Acts

Peter Heals a Lame Beggar

3:1 One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. 2 Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple

The Nations of the Pentecost

In the 1st century A.D., Jewish communities were located primarily in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, where Greek was the common language, but also existed as far west as Italy and as far east as Babylonia. In addition to people from the nations shown here, those present on the day of Pentecost (Ac 2:9–11) included visitors from Mesopotamia and even farther east, from Parthia, Media, and Elam (present-day Iran).

Begging at the Gate of the Temple (Ac 3:2)

The Jerusalem temple was a unique type of religious building. Unlike churches and synagogues, the temple was not meant to seat large numbers of people for prayer and worship. It was understood quite literally as the "house of Yahweh."

As the dwelling place of God, the temple was a holy place. The closer a person moved to the Most Holy Place in the middle of the temple itself, the more restricted was the access. Barriers served to keep out those who might profane the sacred space. The temple stood as an isolated building in the midst of a series of courtyards enclosed by walls. Gates regulated access to the courtyards.

The temple was built for God to inhabit, not for humans. The only humans meant to live regularly in the temple precincts were priests, whose job was to "serve" the Lord, overseeing the sacrifices and maintaining the temple property. Others were merely guests, visitors who might linger in the outer courts and/or offer sacrifices for the priests to place on the altar. Sacrifices were no doubt often offered in hopes of receiving some favor from God in return.

The architecture and social dynamics of the temple explain the presence of a lame beggar at the gate (Ac 3:2). Whereas the man's lameness itself would not necessarily have hindered him, lameness was frowned upon within the temple courtyards. Lame priests were prohibited from offering sacrifices in the temple (Lev 21:18), and lame animals could not serve as sacrifices (Dt 15:21). Thus the lame beggar remained outside the temple walls.

For his purpose, however, a temple gate was the perfect place to be. There he was assured of a constant traffic flow of those most able to give to him. Furthermore, those visiting the courtyard to seek the beneficence of God perhaps would recognize as well God's desire for them to exercise beneficence toward others. If the secret to success in business is location, location, location, the lame man was in the prime spot for his "work." Yet when Peter and John came by (Ac 3:6), he got more than he ever bargained for!

gate called Beautiful, where he was put every
day to beg from those going into the temple
courts. 3When he saw Peter and John about to
enter, he asked them for money. 4Peter looked
straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said,
"Look at us!" 5So the man gave them his atten-
tion, expecting to get something from them.

6Then Peter said, "Silver or gold I do not
have, but what I do have I give you. In the
name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." 7Tak-
ing him by the right hand, he helped him up,
and instantly the man's feet and ankles became
strong. 8He jumped to his feet and began to
walk. Then he went with them into the tem-
ple courts, walking and jumping, and praising
God. 9When all the people saw him walking
and praising God, 10they recognized him as the
same man who used to sit begging at the tem-
ple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled
with wonder and amazement at what had hap-
pened to him.

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 30 to 31
30		Jesus ascends to heaven (Ac 1:9)
30		The disciples choose Matthias to replace Judas Iscariot (Ac 1:26)
30		The day of Pentecost (Ac 2:1)
30		Peter addresses the Sanhedrin (Ac 4:5)
31		Annas is named along with Caiaphas as co–high priests (Ac 4:6)

Peter Speaks to the Onlookers

11While the man held on to Peter and John,
all the people were astonished and came run-
ning to them in the place called Solomon's
Colonnade. 12When Peter saw this, he said to
them: "Fellow Israelites, why does this sur-
prise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our
own power or godliness we had made this man
walk? 13The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,
the God of our fathers, has glorified his servant
Jesus. You handed him over to be killed, and
you disowned him before Pilate, though he had
decided to let him go. 14You disowned the Holy
and Righteous One and asked that a murder-
er be released to you. 15You killed the author
of life, but God raised him from the dead. We
are witnesses of this. 16By faith in the name of
Jesus, this man whom you see and know was
made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith that
comes through him that has completely healed
him, as you can all see.

17"Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you
acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. 18But
this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold
through all the prophets, saying that his Mes-
siah would suffer. 19Repent, then, and turn to
God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that
times of refreshing may come from the Lord,
20and that he may send the Messiah, who has
been appointed for you—even Jesus. 21Heav-
en must receive him until the time comes for
God to restore everything, as he promised
long ago through his holy prophets. 22For Mo-

ses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. 23Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.'[a]

24"Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. 25And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.'[b] 26When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."

Peter and John Before the Sanhedrin

4 1The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. 2They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. 3They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. 4But many who heard the message believed; so the number of men who believed grew to about five thousand.

5The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. 7They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

8Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! 9If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, 10then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. 11Jesus is

> "'the stone you builders rejected,
> which has become the cornerstone.'[c]

12Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

13When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. 14But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. 15So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. 16"What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. 17But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

18Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. 19But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

21After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened. 22For the man who was miraculously healed was over forty years old.

The Believers Pray

23On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. 24When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. "Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. 25You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David:

> "'Why do the nations rage
> and the peoples plot in vain?
> 26The kings of the earth rise up
> and the rulers band together
> against the Lord
> and against his anointed one.[d]'[e]

27Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. 28They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. 29Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. 30Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."

31After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.

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[a] *23* Deut. 18:15,18,19 [b] *25* Gen. 22:18; 26:4
[c] *11* Psalm 118:22 [d] *26* That is, Messiah or Christ
[e] *26* Psalm 2:1,2

The Believers Share Their Possessions

32 All the believers were one in heart and
mind. No one claimed that any of their posses-
sions was their own, but they shared every-
thing they had. 33 With great power the apostles
continued to testify to the resurrection of the
Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully
at work in them all 34 that there were no needy
persons among them. For from time to time
those who owned land or houses sold them,
brought the money from the sales 35 and put it
at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to
anyone who had need.
36 Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the
apostles called Barnabas (which means "son
of encouragement"), 37 sold a field he owned
and brought the money and put it at the apos-
tles' feet.

Ananias and Sapphira

5 1 Now a man named Ananias, together with
his wife Sapphira, also sold a piece of prop-
erty. 2 With his wife's full knowledge he kept
back part of the money for himself, but brought
the rest and put it at the apostles' feet.
3 Then Peter said, "Ananias, how is it that Sa-
tan has so filled your heart that you have lied to
the Holy Spirit and have kept for yourself some
of the money you received for the land? 4 Didn't
it belong to you before it was sold? And after
it was sold, wasn't the money at your disposal?
What made you think of doing such a thing? You
have not lied just to human beings but to God."
5 When Ananias heard this, he fell down and
died. And great fear seized all who heard what
had happened. 6 Then some young men came
forward, wrapped up his body, and carried him
out and buried him.
7 About three hours later his wife came in, not
knowing what had happened. 8 Peter asked her,
"Tell me, is this the price you and Ananias got
for the land?"
"Yes," she said, "that is the price."
9 Peter said to her, "How could you conspire
to test the Spirit of the Lord? Listen! The feet
of the men who buried your husband are at the
door, and they will carry you out also."
10 At that moment she fell down at his feet
and died. Then the young men came in and,
finding her dead, carried her out and buried
her beside her husband. 11 Great fear seized the
whole church and all who heard about these
events.

The Apostles Heal Many

12 The apostles performed many signs and
wonders among the people. And all the believ-
ers used to meet together in Solomon's Col-
onnade. 13 No one else dared join them, even
though they were highly regarded by the peo-
ple. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and
women believed in the Lord and were added
to their number. 15 As a result, people brought
the sick into the streets and laid them on beds
and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might
fall on some of them as he passed by. 16 Crowds
gathered also from the towns around Jerusa-
lem, bringing their sick and those tormented
by impure spirits, and all of them were healed.

The Apostles Persecuted

17 Then the high priest and all his associates,
who were members of the party of the Sadduc-
cees, were filled with jealousy. 18 They arrest-
ed the apostles and put them in the public jail.
19 But during the night an angel of the Lord
opened the doors of the jail and brought them
out. 20 "Go, stand in the temple courts," he said,
"and tell the people all about this new life."
21 At daybreak they entered the temple
courts, as they had been told, and began to
teach the people.
When the high priest and his associates ar-
rived, they called together the Sanhedrin — the
full assembly of the elders of Israel — and sent
to the jail for the apostles. 22 But on arriving at
the jail, the officers did not find them there. So
they went back and reported, 23 "We found the
jail securely locked, with the guards standing
at the doors; but when we opened them, we
found no one inside." 24 On hearing this report,
the captain of the temple guard and the chief
priests were at a loss, wondering what this
might lead to.
25 Then someone came and said, "Look! The
men you put in jail are standing in the temple
courts teaching the people." 26 At that, the cap-
tain went with his officers and brought the
apostles. They did not use force, because they
feared that the people would stone them.
27 The apostles were brought in and made to
appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned
by the high priest. 28 "We gave you strict orders
not to teach in this name," he said. "Yet you

Beliefs & Ideas

Peter and the apostles boldly proclaimed the principle that even supreme human authorities, like the high priest and the council, must yield to the law of God (Ac 5:27–29). A similar principle provides the theme of the Greek tragedy *Antigone*. There Antigone says that no human being can overrule the unwritten, unchangeable laws of heaven.

have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man's blood."

29 Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings! 30 The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. 31 God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. 32 We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him."

33 When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death. 34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. 35 Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. 36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. 37 After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. 38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God."

40 His speech persuaded them. They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

41 The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. 42 Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah.

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[a] *1* That is, Jews who had adopted the Greek language and culture

TRANSITION

Stephen, the First Martyr

The church grew so rapidly that the disciples had to appoint men to distribute goods. With the choice of seven deacons from among the Greek-speaking Jews (Ac 6:1–7), the gospel began to reach beyond Palestinian Judaism. One of the deacons, Stephen, directly challenged the central role of the temple and the law, bringing him into conflict with the Synagogue of the Freedmen (6:9–14).

The synagogue was a local assembly of Jews who met for prayer and scripture exposition. In cities throughout the Roman world, synagogues became the focal point of Jewish life. The Synagogue of the Freedmen included Greek-speaking (Hellenistic) Jews whose ancestors had been slaves of the Romans, later set free. Thus Stephen, a Hellenist himself, was accused of blasphemy by those of his own cultural group.

Stephen was ultimately brought before the Sanhedrin (6:12), which consisted of religious leaders from the various Jewish sects in Jerusalem. There he spoke on a theme that was not well received by his audience: Israel's rejection of God's leaders had now climaxed in the Jewish authorities' rejection of Jesus. Further, he used the history of Israel to show that God does not dwell in the temple (7:44–50). Stephen's execution sometime around A.D. 32 marked the beginning of "a great persecution" against the early Christians (7:57—8:3). A young Pharisee named Saul, who served as custodian for Stephen's executioners (7:58), would lead that persecution.

• **Acts 6:1—8:3**

Acts

The Choosing of the Seven

6 :1 In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews[a] among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. 2 So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. 3 Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 4 and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word."

5 This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.

7 So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

Stephen Seized

8 Now Stephen, a man full of God's grace and power, performed great wonders and signs

Food for the Hellenist Widows (Ac 6:1)

Tensions developed in the Jerusalem church over alleged discrimination on the basis of language and culture. Scholars differ in their descriptions of the two opposing groups: the "Hebraic Jews" and the "Hellenistic Jews." The Hebraic Jews are often described as Aramaic-speaking Jews native to Palestine. The Hellenistic Jews were possibly Greek-speaking Jews from outside of Palestine. Most Jews in Jerusalem, however, would have spoken Greek as at least one language, so more likely the Hellenistic Jews were Diaspora (foreign) Jews, or their children, who had settled in Jerusalem. Some of these foreign Jews probably had come from places such as Cyrene, Alexandria, Cilicia, or Asia (Ac 6:9).

Widows were a disadvantaged segment of ancient society, invariably poor and easily oppressed. Jewish people traditionally cared for the widows and other poor through the charity collections of local synagogues. The Hellenistic synagogues, however, probably had more widows to care for than other synagogues, hence were stretched to the limit in their capacity to help. Since it was considered pious to spend one's last days in Jerusalem, many foreign Jewish men moved to Jerusalem when they retired, eventually leaving an inordinate number of foreign Jewish widows needing support.

This broader societal problem spilled over into the church: how would they care for the foreign Jewish widows among them? And how could they be sure to keep this minority group within the church from feeling second-class? Most people in antiquity simply told offended minorities to be quiet, but the apostles had a different solution: they selected members of the Hellenist minority to run the food distribution program. All seven of those selected have Greek names (6:5), suggesting that all or most were foreign Jews. These seven Hellenistic Jews were commissioned for the office of charity distributor, a highly respected position in Jerusalem (6:6).

among the people. [9]Opposition arose, however, from members of the Synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called)—Jews of Cyrene and Alexandria as well as the provinces of Cilicia and Asia—who began to argue with Stephen. [10]But they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke.

[11]Then they secretly persuaded some men to say, "We have heard Stephen speak blasphemous words against Moses and against God."

[12]So they stirred up the people and the elders and the teachers of the law. They seized Stephen and brought him before the Sanhedrin. [13]They produced false witnesses, who testified, "This fellow never stops speaking against this holy place and against the law. [14]For we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs Moses handed down to us."

[15]All who were sitting in the Sanhedrin looked intently at Stephen, and they saw that his face was like the face of an angel.

Stephen's Speech to the Sanhedrin

7 [1]Then the high priest asked Stephen, "Are these charges true?"

[2]To this he replied: "Brothers and fathers, listen to me! The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham while he was still in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Harran. [3]'Leave your

Jews of Cyrene Visit Jerusalem (Ac 6:9)

Cyrene was a major city in North Africa founded by the Greeks in the 7th century B.C. It became a flourishing city, blessed with a fertile surrounding countryside. Specific individuals from Cyrene appear in Scripture. One Cyrenian named Simon was forced by the Romans to carry the cross of Jesus (Lk 23:26). Another, Lucius, was a principal teacher of the Christians at the church in Antioch (Ac 13:1).

Like Crete, Cyrene had a large Jewish population that was settled there by the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt, beginning with Ptolemy I in the 4th century B.C. This population was apparently still substantial during the New Testament period, and traveled from Cyrene to Jerusalem. Cyrenians are named among the Jews who were in Jerusalem for the day of Pentecost (Ac 2:1, 5, 10). They are also among the Jews who attended the Synagogue of the Freedmen in Jerusalem (Ac 6:9).

What exactly the Synagogue of the Freedmen was is not certain. The name "Freedmen" indicates the worshipers were either Jews that had been freed from slavery, or were Jews descended from slaves. The groups named in Acts 6:9 (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, Cilicians, Asians) could have attended one synagogue, or each group could have had their own synagogue in Jerusalem.

Cities with large Jewish populations often had several synagogues, and certainly Jerusalem did. A Synagogue of the Alexandrians in Jerusalem is known to have belonged to a Rabbi Zadok around A.D. 100. An inscription found just south of Jerusalem reports that someone named Theodotus built a synagogue complete with a guesthouse for those "coming from abroad." We do not know that Jews of Cyrene actually stayed in this guesthouse, but Cyrenians were among those who came "from abroad" to visit Jerusalem, and may have been populous enough to have their own synagogue.

country and your people,' God said, 'and go to the land I will show you.'[a]

4"So he left the land of the Chaldeans and settled in Harran. After the death of his father, God sent him to this land where you are now living. 5He gave him no inheritance here, not even enough ground to set his foot on. But God promised him that he and his descendants after him would possess the land, even though at that time Abraham had no child. 6God spoke to him in this way: 'For four hundred years your descendants will be strangers in a country not their own, and they will be enslaved and mistreated. 7But I will punish the nation they serve as slaves,' God said, 'and afterward they will come out of that country and worship me in this place.'[b] 8Then he gave Abraham the covenant of circumcision. And Abraham became the father of Isaac and circumcised him eight days after his birth. Later Isaac became the father of Jacob, and Jacob became the father of the twelve patriarchs.

9"Because the patriarchs were jealous of Joseph, they sold him as a slave into Egypt. But God was with him 10and rescued him from all his troubles. He gave Joseph wisdom and enabled him to gain the goodwill of Pharaoh king of Egypt. So Pharaoh made him ruler over Egypt and all his palace.

11"Then a famine struck all Egypt and Canaan, bringing great suffering, and our ancestors could not find food. 12When Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent our forefathers on their first visit. 13On their second visit, Joseph told his brothers who he was, and Pharaoh learned about Joseph's family. 14After this, Joseph sent for his father Jacob and his whole family, seventy-five in all. 15Then Jacob went down to Egypt, where he and our ancestors died. 16Their bodies were brought back to Shechem and placed in the tomb that Abraham had bought from the sons of Hamor at Shechem for a certain sum of money.

17"As the time drew near for God to fulfill his promise to Abraham, the number of our people in Egypt had greatly increased. 18Then 'a new king, to whom Joseph meant nothing, came to power in Egypt.'[c] 19He dealt treacherously with our people and oppressed our ancestors by forcing them to throw out their newborn babies so that they would die.

20"At that time Moses was born, and he was no ordinary child.[d] For three months he was cared for by his family. 21When he was placed outside, Pharaoh's daughter took him and brought him up as her own son. 22Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.

23"When Moses was forty years old, he decided to visit his own people, the Israelites. 24He saw one of them being mistreated by an Egyptian, so he went to his defense and avenged him by killing the Egyptian. 25Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not. 26The next day Moses came upon two Israelites who were fighting. He tried to reconcile them by saying, 'Men, you are brothers; why do you want to hurt each other?'

27"But the man who was mistreating the other pushed Moses aside and said, 'Who made you ruler and judge over us? 28Are you thinking of killing me as you killed the Egyptian yesterday?'[e] 29When Moses heard this, he fled to Midian, where he settled as a foreigner and had two sons.

30"After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. 31When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to get a closer look, he heard the Lord say: 32'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.'[f] Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

33"Then the Lord said to him, 'Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground. 34I have indeed seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their groaning and have come down to set them free. Now come, I will send you back to Egypt.'[g]

35"This is the same Moses they had rejected with the words, 'Who made you ruler and judge?' He was sent to be their ruler and deliverer by God himself, through the angel who appeared to him in the bush. 36He led them out of Egypt and performed wonders and signs in

[a] *3* Gen. 12:1 [b] *7* Gen. 15:13,14 [c] *18* Exodus 1:8
[d] *20* Or *was fair in the sight of God* [e] *28* Exodus 2:14
[f] *32* Exodus 3:6 [g] *34* Exodus 3:5,7,8,10

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 32 to 34
32	A temple to Bel is dedicated in Palmyra
32	Philip the evangelist preaches to an Ethiopian official
34	Philip the tetrarch dies (Lk 3:1)
34	Saul is converted (Ac 9:3)
34–37	Saul spends 3 years in Arabia and Damascus (Gal 1:17)

Egypt, at the Red Sea and for forty years in the wilderness.

37"'This is the Moses who told the Israelites, 'God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your own people.'[a] 38He was in the assembly in the wilderness, with the angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our ancestors; and he received living words to pass on to us.

39"But our ancestors refused to obey him. Instead, they rejected him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt. 40They told Aaron, 'Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who led us out of Egypt—we don't know what has happened to him!'[b] 41That was the time they made an idol in the form of a calf. They brought sacrifices to it and reveled in what their own hands had made. 42But God turned away from them and gave them over to the worship of the sun, moon and stars. This agrees with what is written in the book of the prophets:

"'Did you bring me sacrifices and offerings
forty years in the wilderness, people of Israel?
43You have taken up the tabernacle of Molek
and the star of your god Rephan,
the idols you made to worship.
Therefore I will send you into exile'[c] beyond Babylon.

Stoning of Saint Stephen,
Kölner Dam,
Cologne, Germany

44"Our ancestors had the tabernacle of the covenant law with them in the wilderness. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen. 45After receiving the tabernacle, our ancestors under Joshua brought it with them when they took the land from the nations God drove out before them. It remained in the land until the time of David, 46who enjoyed God's favor and asked that he might provide a dwelling place for the God of Jacob.[d] 47But it was Solomon who built a house for him.

48"However, the Most High does not live in houses made by human hands. As the prophet says:

49"'Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is my footstool.
What kind of house will you build for me?
says the Lord.
Or where will my resting place be?
50Has not my hand made all these things?'[e]

51"You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! 52Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him— 53you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it."

The Stoning of Stephen

54When the members of the Sanhedrin heard this, they were furious and gnashed their teeth at him. 55But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. 56"Look," he said, "I see heaven open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God."

57At this they covered their ears and, yelling at the top of their voices, they all rushed at him, 58dragged him out of the city and began to stone him. Meanwhile, the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul.

59While they were stoning him, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." 60Then

[a] *37* Deut. 18:15 [b] *40* Exodus 32:1 [c] *43* Amos 5:25-27 (see Septuagint) [d] *46* Some early manuscripts *the house of Jacob* [e] *50* Isaiah 66:1,2

he fell on his knees and cried out, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." When he had said this, he fell asleep.

8 [1]And Saul approved of their killing him.

The Church Persecuted and Scattered

On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. [2]Godly men buried Stephen and mourned deeply for him. [3]But Saul began to destroy the church. Going from house to house, he dragged off both men and women and put them in prison.

TRANSITION

Philip and the Samaritan Pentecost

Philip "proclaimed the Messiah" to the Samaritans (Ac 8:5) in fulfillment of his Master's mandate (Ac 1:8). Their reception of Philip's message about the kingdom of God and about Jesus Christ was a significant step in the spread of the gospel. Samaritans, who were considered heretics by orthodox Jews, had received Christ. Perhaps the Samaritans accepted the gospel more readily than Jews because they did not have to unlearn previous misconceptions about the coming Messiah.

Though the Samaritans were baptized with water in the name of Jesus, they still needed to receive the baptism with the Holy Spirit, as had the disciples on the day of Pentecost. So the Jerusalem church sent Peter and John in order that these new believers might hear the message about the Holy Spirit (8:15). As the apostles continued to preach in many villages of Samaria, Samaritans became an accepted part of the church (8:25).

• Acts 8:4–40

Acts

Philip in Samaria

8:4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went. [5]Philip went down to a city in Samaria and proclaimed the Messiah there. [6]When the crowds heard Philip and saw the signs he performed, they all paid close attention to what he said. [7]For with shrieks, impure spirits came out of many, and many who were paralyzed or lame were healed. [8]So there was great joy in that city.

Simon the Sorcerer

[9]Now for some time a man named Simon had practiced sorcery in the city and amazed all the people of Samaria. He boasted that he was someone great, [10]and all the people, both high and low, gave him their attention and exclaimed, "This man is rightly called the Great Power of God." [11]They followed him because he had amazed them for a long time with his sorcery. [12]But when they believed Philip as he proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. [13]Simon himself believed and was baptized. And he followed Philip everywhere, astonished by the great signs and miracles he saw.

[14]When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. [15]When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, [16]because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [17]Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES

Following Jesus' ascension in rapid succession was Pentecost and the birth of the church, as distinct from a mere Jewish sect. Thousands of Jews became believers. This new church met in the temple courts and the Jewish synagogues, as well as in private homes of believers (Ac 5:42). Yet the Good News would not be contained in Jerusalem; soon it was taken to the Samaritans and to the "God-fearers" in Caesarea and Antioch (10:2; 11:19, 20).

Soon the gospel was taken to the Samaritans and to the "God-fearers."

God himself made it clear that Gentiles should be included in his church. Philip was sent and directed by an angel (8:26) and by the Spirit (8:29) to the desert region near Gaza, where he made the first Gentile convert, a court official who served Kandake, the queen of the Ethiopians. An angel also directed the Roman officer Cornelius to send for Peter (10:3, 5). By a vision (10:9–16) and by the Spirit (10:19) Peter was instructed to go.

As Peter preached on Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit fell upon the Gentiles. This miracle of divine grace was God's gift to the Gentile believers and his answer to those who questioned sharing the gospel with non-Jews. Eventually, the Jerusalem church acknowledged acceptance of Gentiles (11:18), and Antioch became a center of the Gentile church (11:26). Nevertheless, the first non-Jews to be evangelized by the early church were the Samaritans.

Simon Magus, the Great Power (Ac 8:9–11)

In the city of Samaria was one Samaritan who considered himself "someone great" (Ac 8:9). The wonder-worker Simon is even reported to have been called "the Great Power of God" by the people of Samaria (8:10). Simon is well known outside of Scripture. According to early Christian sources, he was from Gitta, a Samaritan village. Later Christian sources describe him as a *Magus,* or magician, and suggest that he used his abilities for propagandistic purposes.

Later writers disagreed with Simon's title "Great Power of God." Justin Martyr, in the 2nd century A.D., claimed that Simon used demonic forces to imitate Christianity, reporting that he performed wonders by demons in Rome during the reign of Claudius (A.D. 41–54). Justin claims that Simon had a large following.

Simon's teachings were labeled heretical. Irenaeus, in the late 2nd century A.D., stated that Simon was the source of all heresies, even identifying himself with the Christian Trinity. He was usually associated by the early church with some of the Gnostic heresies. Hippolytus wrote in the early 3rd century A.D. of Simon's claim that he would be raised on the third day after his death. The resurrection claims were not fulfilled, since, as Hippolytus explains, Simon was "not the Christ."

Other Christian literature portrayed Simon as a fake and an antichrist, and even as a disciple of John the Baptist! In sum, Simon was a Samaritan who practiced elements of syncretism—mixing Christian and non-Christian elements. In Acts, Luke reports Peter's rebuke of Simon (Ac 8:20–23). The magician was later condemned by the church, which likely embellished tales about him, seeing him as a model of the anti-Christ.

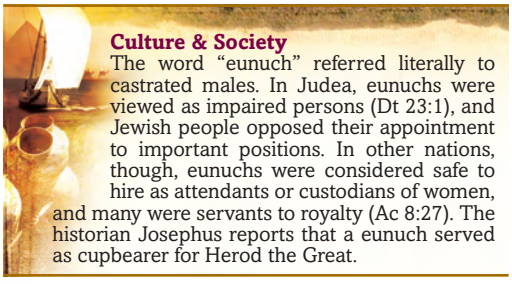
18 When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he
offered them money 19 and said, "Give me also
this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my
hands may receive the Holy Spirit."
20 Peter answered: "May your money perish
with you, because you thought you could buy
the gift of God with money! 21 You have no part
or share in this ministry, because your heart is
not right before God. 22 Repent of this wicked-
ness and pray to the Lord in the hope that he
may forgive you for having such a thought in
your heart. 23 For I see that you are full of bit-
terness and captive to sin."
24 Then Simon answered, "Pray to the Lord
for me so that nothing you have said may hap-
pen to me."
25 After they had further proclaimed the word
of the Lord and testified about Jesus, Peter and
John returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gos-
pel in many Samaritan villages.

Philip and the Ethiopian

26 Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, "Go
south to the road—the desert road—that goes
down from Jerusalem to Gaza." 27 So he started
out, and on his way he met an Ethiopian[a] eu-
nuch, an important official in charge of all the
treasury of the Kandake (which means "queen
of the Ethiopians"). This man had gone to Jeru-
salem to worship, 28 and on his way home was
sitting in his chariot reading the Book of Isaiah
the prophet. 29 The Spirit told Philip, "Go to that
chariot and stay near it."
30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard
the man reading Isaiah the prophet. "Do you
understand what you are reading?" Philip
asked.
31 "How can I," he said, "unless someone ex-
plains it to me?" So he invited Philip to come up
and sit with him.
32 This is the passage of Scripture the eunuch
was reading:

"He was led like a sheep to the slaughter,
and as a lamb before its shearer is
silent,
so he did not open his mouth.
33 In his humiliation he was deprived of
justice.
Who can speak of his descendants?
For his life was taken from the earth."[b]

34 The eunuch asked Philip, "Tell me, please,
who is the prophet talking about, himself or
someone else?" 35 Then Philip began with that
very passage of Scripture and told him the
good news about Jesus.
36 As they traveled along the road, they came
to some water and the eunuch said, "Look,
here is water. What can stand in the way of my



Culture & Society
The word "eunuch" referred literally to castrated males. In Judea, eunuchs were viewed as impaired persons (Dt 23:1), and Jewish people opposed their appointment to important positions. In other nations, though, eunuchs were considered safe to hire as attendants or custodians of women, and many were servants to royalty (Ac 8:27). The historian Josephus reports that a eunuch served as cupbearer for Herod the Great.

[a] *27* That is, from the southern Nile region
[b] *33* Isaiah 53:7,8 (see Septuagint)

Kandake's Eunuch Believes (Ac 8:27)

Luke gives us much information about the person that Philip evangelized and eventually baptized. The man was from Ethiopia, was a eunuch, served a queen as her treasurer, and had gone to worship in Jerusalem (Ac 8:27). This new convert's background makes his conversion to Christianity significant.

Ethiopia was an area south of Egypt. Because Ethiopia (Cush) and Egypt were so close geographically, they are often mentioned together in Scripture (see Ps. 68:31; Eze 30:4; Nah. 3:9). But Ethiopia is not close to Jerusalem, so Kandake's eunuch had traveled from a distant location. Being from Ethiopia may have given him some prominence. The Greek historian Herodotus (484?–425? B.C.) described Ethiopians as taller and more handsome than any people.

The eunuch served "under Kandake." Kandake is not a personal name, but a title, like pharaoh. As the pharaoh was king of Egypt, so the candace was queen of Meroe, a kingdom on the Nile River south of Egypt. From Acts 8:27 it appears that "Kandake" could be used as a name for Meroe's queens just as "Pharaoh" was used as a name for Egypt's kings. The eunuch worked for someone of high authority.

His position added to his status since as the queen's treasurer he exercised great authority. It was common in Eastern countries for eunuchs to hold positions of high authority in a queen's court. This eunuch was an important person.

Nevertheless, he was a eunuch, and eunuchs were excluded from religious service in Israel (Dt 23:1). The law prohibited them from serving as priests, who were required to have a whole body, free from blemishes (Lev 21:17–20). The eunuch could worship in Jerusalem and read the sacred Scriptures (Ac 8:28), but could not be a full member of the Jewish religion.

This eunuch represents a significant conversion to Christianity. With him, the Christian faith reached out to a distant land, to someone in the service of a queen, to someone who himself had high position. More importantly, it reached out to one who previously was an "outsider" to Israel's religion.

being baptized?" [37][a] 38And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him. 39When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing. 40Philip, however, appeared at Azotus and traveled about, preaching the gospel in all the towns until he reached Caesarea.

[a] *37* Some manuscripts include here *Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." The eunuch answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."*

TRANSITION

Spreading Beyond Judea and Samaria

Christians continued to disperse from Jerusalem and the surrounding regions, eventually reaching Damascus in Syria. Because of extradition permits authorized by Rome, letters from the high priest gave Saul jurisdiction over Jews in Damascus. On the way there, however, Saul met the risen Jesus (Ac 9:5). Through this dramatic encounter, Saul, the zealous Pharisee who led and intensified the persecution against the disciples, became God's "chosen instrument" (9:15) to bear Christ's name before the Gentiles.

The new Christian Saul confounded the Jews by his training, experience, and boldness. But the persecutor became the persecuted, and Saul was forced to flee Damascus. He finally arrived in Jerusalem in A.D. 37. Despite his three-year absence visiting Arabia and reports of his ministry in Damascus, the disciples in Jerusalem could not believe Saul had become a Christian (9:26). Some miracles seem incredible.

The period following Saul's conversion was one of relative calm for the church. Peter began to evangelize outside of Jerusalem, healing the sick and raising the dead in the power of Jesus, as Jesus himself had done. These miracles led to a widespread acceptance of the gospel (9:35, 42).

• **Acts 9:1–43**

Acts

Saul's Conversion

9:1 Meanwhile, Saul was still breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples. He went to the high priest 2and asked

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 35 to 36
35		The Roman army crosses the Euphrates River
35		Saul preaches Christ in Damascus (Ac 9:20)
35		Peter restores Dorcas to life
35		Peter meets the centurion Cornelius (Ac 10:25)
36		Agrippa I meets Emperor Tiberius on the island of Capri
36		Pontius Pilate recalled to Rome for misconduct
36		Caiaphas is deposed from the high priesthood

him for letters to the synagogues in Damascus, so that if he found any there who belonged to the Way, whether men or women, he might take them as prisoners to Jerusalem. 3As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him. 4He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

5"Who are you, Lord?" Saul asked.

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," he replied. 6"Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do."

7The men traveling with Saul stood there speechless; they heard the sound but did not see anyone. 8Saul got up from the ground, but when he opened his eyes he could see nothing. So they led him by the hand into Damascus. 9For three days he was blind, and did not eat or drink anything.

10In Damascus there was a disciple named Ananias. The Lord called to him in a vision, "Ananias!"

"Yes, Lord," he answered.

11The Lord told him, "Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. 12In a vision he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight."

13"Lord," Ananias answered, "I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he has done to your holy people in Jerusalem. 14And he has come here with authority from the chief priests to arrest all who call on your name."

15But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. 16I will show him how much he must suffer for my name."

17Then Ananias went to the house and entered it. Placing his hands on Saul, he said, "Brother Saul, the Lord—Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here—has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit." 18Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized, 19and after taking some food, he regained his strength.

Saul in Damascus and Jerusalem

Saul spent several days with the disciples in Damascus. 20At once he began to preach in the synagogues that Jesus is the Son of God. 21All those who heard him were astonished and asked, "Isn't he the man who raised havoc in Jerusalem among those who call on this name? And hasn't he come here to take them as prisoners to the chief priests?" 22Yet Saul grew more and more powerful and baffled the Jews living in Damascus by proving that Jesus is the Messiah.

23After many days had gone by, there was a conspiracy among the Jews to kill him, 24but Saul learned of their plan. Day and night they kept close watch on the city gates in order to kill him. 25But his followers took him by night and lowered him in a basket through an opening in the wall.

26When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. 27But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus. 28So Saul stayed with them and moved about freely in Jerusalem, speaking boldly in the name of the Lord. 29He talked and debated with the Hellenistic Jews,[a] but they tried to kill him. 30When the believers learned of this, they took him down to Caesarea and sent him off to Tarsus.

31Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee and Samaria enjoyed a time of peace and was strengthened. Living in the fear of the Lord and encouraged by the Holy Spirit, it increased in numbers.

Aeneas and Dorcas

32As Peter traveled about the country, he went to visit the Lord's people who lived in Lydda. 33There he found a man named Aeneas, who was paralyzed and had been bedridden for eight years. 34"Aeneas," Peter said to him, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and roll up your mat." Immediately Aeneas got up. 35All those who lived in Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

[a] *29* That is, Jews who had adopted the Greek language and culture

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 37
37–41	Caligula is emperor of Rome
37–44	Herod Agrippa I
37–100	Life of Jewish historian Josephus
37	In Rome a temple is dedicated to "the Divine Augustus"

Science & Technology
Tanning (Ac 9:43) is the process of treating animal skin to make it into leather. Organic and inorganic chemicals are used to prevent decomposition and to make the leather flexible, strong, and attractive. Hard leather was used for shields and containers; soft leather was used for clothing and shoes. Parchment was a smooth, thin leather that was prepared for writing.

36 In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. 37 About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. 38 Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, "Please come at once!"

39 Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them.

40 Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, "Tabitha, get up." She opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. 41 He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. 42 This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. 43 Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

TRANSITION

Peter's Missionary Work

The Book of Acts records two missionary journeys made by Peter. On his first trip he confirmed the evangelistic work of Philip in Samaria (Ac 8:14). Peter subsequently made a trip along the Mediterranean coast from Joppa to Caesarea, where a Roman garrison was commanded by the officer Cornelius. Peter's ministry to the Gentile household of Cornelius was accepted by the Jerusalem church only when Peter convinced them that the Gentiles had become believers in the same sense as had Jesus' followers, who were filled with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (11:1–18).

The church continued to grow as a result of persecution, for the scattered Christians shared their faith in their new home cities (11:19). Meanwhile, in Jerusalem, opposition to the church continued to mount: Herod Agrippa I, whom the emperor Caligula had given the title "king," had James executed and arrested Peter. Agrippa died in A.D. 44 of abdominal pains, according to Josephus (12:23).

The first church to include Gentile Christians was the church at Antioch. More innovative than the Jerusalem church, Antioch became the center of missionary outreach to Gentiles, yet still maintained close ties with Jerusalem. Josephus and other historians record the famine that occurred in A.D. 46 or 47, during the reign of Claudius Caesar (A.D. 41–54). Christians at Antioch sent to Judea by way of Barnabas and Saul their collection for famine relief (11:27–30).

• **Acts 10:1—12:25**

Acts

Cornelius Calls for Peter

10:1 At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. 2 He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly. 3 One day at about three in the afternoon he had a vision. He distinctly saw an angel of God, who came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

4 Cornelius stared at him in fear. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to the poor have come up as a memorial offering before God. 5 Now send men to Joppa to bring back a man named Simon who is called Peter. 6 He is staying with Simon the tanner, whose house is by the sea."

7 When the angel who spoke to him had gone, Cornelius called two of his servants and a devout soldier who was one of his attendants. 8 He told them everything that had happened and sent them to Joppa.

Peter's Vision

9 About noon the following day as they were on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up on the roof to pray. 10 He became hungry and wanted something to eat, and while the meal was being prepared, he fell into a trance. 11 He saw heaven opened and something like a large sheet being let down to earth by its four corners. 12 It contained all kinds of four-footed animals, as well as reptiles and birds. 13 Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

14 "Surely not, Lord!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything impure or unclean."

15 The voice spoke to him a second time, "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean."

Who Was the God-Fearing Cornelius? (Ac 10:1, 2)

Caesarea Maritima, the coastal city and home of Cornelius, served as the capital for the province of Judea. As such, the city contained the residence for the Roman governor of Judea, as well as a regular Roman garrison (Ac 10:1). A legion of the Roman army was comprised of ten cohorts; five cohorts of about 600 soldiers each were stationed at Caesarea, while another cohort remained garrisoned on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

Centurions, like Cornelius, commanded units, called centuries, that generally averaged 80 men. In contrast to high-class Romans who aspired to higher offices, centurions usually began as regular soldiers and worked their way up through the ranks. Army service for males usually began around age 17, and roughly half of the enlisters who survived the required 20 years of service were highly rewarded.

The devout Cornelius (10:2) was a member of the "God-fearers," a class of religious people named in many ancient Jewish sources. God-fearers, while not full converts to Judaism, did respect Israel's God and his teachings. Inscriptions reveal that many soldiers were interested in foreign religions like Judaism.

Just who was part of Cornelius's household is uncertain, since Roman regulations prohibited soldiers from marrying. Officials usually looked the other way while soldiers stationed in various places held illegal concubines, but centurions, who were moved more frequently, probably developed fewer relationships even with concubines. Unless Cornelius was retired or (as often happened) was breaking official rules, his household may have consisted primarily of servants (10:7).

Roman custom expected members of a household (whether wives and children or servants) to follow the religion of the head of the household. It was thus natural for Cornelius to have spread his faith to "all his family" (10:2).

16 This happened three times, and immediately the sheet was taken back to heaven.
17 While Peter was wondering about the meaning of the vision, the men sent by Cornelius found out where Simon's house was and stopped at the gate. 18 They called out, asking if Simon who was known as Peter was staying there.
19 While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Spirit said to him, "Simon, three[a] men are looking for you. 20 So get up and go downstairs. Do not hesitate to go with them, for I have sent them."
21 Peter went down and said to the men, "I'm the one you're looking for. Why have you come?"
22 The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius the centurion. He is a righteous and God-fearing man, who is respected by all the Jewish people. A holy angel told him to ask you to come to his house so that he could hear what you have to say." 23 Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 37 to 38
37		Herod Agrippa I becomes king of Philip's part of Syria
37		Josephus, the Jewish historian, is born in Jerusalem
37		Saul escapes from Damascus in a basket (Ac 9:25)
37		Saul visits Jerusalem, then goes to Syria (Gal 1:21)
37		Roman emperor Nero is born
38		Agrippa I returns to Palestine with the favor of Caligula

Geography & Environment

Caesarea was the capital of the Roman province of Judea (Ac 10:24), and was called Caesarea Maritima to distinguish it from another Caesarea. Herod the Great refurbished the harbor at great expense, even building huge piers that are now underwater. Before these piers were discovered, the ancient descriptions of them seemed to be obvious exaggerations.

Peter at Cornelius's House

The next day Peter started out with them, and some of the believers from Joppa went along. 24 The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them and had called together his relatives and close friends. 25 As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. 26 But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself."
27 While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. 28 He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that

[a] *19* One early manuscript *two*; other manuscripts do not have the number.

I should not call anyone impure or unclean.
29So when I was sent for, I came without raising any objection. May I ask why you sent for me?"

30Cornelius answered: "Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me 31and said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and remembered your gifts to the poor. 32Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, who lives by the sea.' 33So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

34Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right. 36You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, announcing the good news of peace through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. 37You know what has happened throughout the province of Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John preached— 38how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.

39"We are witnesses of everything he did in the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on a cross, 40but God raised him from the dead on the third day and caused him to be seen. 41He was not seen by all the people, but by witnesses whom God had already chosen— by us who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. 42He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one whom God appointed as judge of the living and the dead. 43All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name."

44While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. 45The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. 46For they heard them speaking in tongues[a] and praising God.

Then Peter said, 47"Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." 48So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Peter Explains His Actions

11 1The apostles and the believers throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God. 2So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcised believers criticized him 3and said, "You went into

[a] *46* Or *other languages*

Those "Christians" in Antioch (Ac 11:26)

When Barnabas came to Antioch, he found a group of people who were already disciples of Jesus Christ as Lord (Ac 11:22–24). Soon Saul joined Barnabas, teaching many disciples in the city. It is here in Antioch that these disciples were identified with the term "Christian," a term appearing only here and twice elsewhere in Scripture (Ac 26:28; 1Pe 4:16).

The word "Christian" is commonly assumed to be of Latin derivation, being found in the 2nd-century A.D. writings of such Latin authors as Tacitus, Suetonius, and Pliny the Younger. Pliny, the Roman governor of Bithynia and Pontus, writes around A.D. 111 to the emperor Trajan that those who admitted to being "Christians" were thus persecuted.

But the Romans were probably not the first to refer to certain people as "Christians." In the 1st century, followers of a certain leader were identified by attaching the ending "-ians" to the leader's name. Thus the followers of Herod were called "Herod*ians*" (Mk 3:6). In the same way, those who followed Christ and were devoted to him were eventually called "Christ*ians*."

There is no evidence that the followers of Jesus used the term to describe themselves. In fact, the other two occurrences of the term "Christian" in Scripture seem to imply an element of scorn. In Acts 26:28 Agrippa does not really intend to become a "Christian" himself, and in 1Pe 4:16 Peter possibly speaks of those who were suffering precisely because they claimed to be "Christians."

The term "Christian" probably originated with the Gentile population in Antioch, rather than with the followers of Christ themselves. The Gentiles, being unfamiliar with Jewish religion, could have thought "Christ" was a name, rather than recognizing it as a title for the Messiah. Thus, by about A.D. 46, the Antiochan Gentiles had distinguished the "Christians" from both Jews and pagans.

the house of uncircumcised men and ate with them."

4 Starting from the beginning, Peter told them the whole story: 5 "I was in the city of Joppa praying, and in a trance I saw a vision. I saw something like a large sheet being let down from heaven by its four corners, and it came down to where I was. 6 I looked into it and saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, reptiles and birds. 7 Then I heard a voice telling me, 'Get up, Peter. Kill and eat.'

8 "I replied, 'Surely not, Lord! Nothing impure or unclean has ever entered my mouth.'

9 "The voice spoke from heaven a second time, 'Do not call anything impure that God has made clean.' 10 This happened three times, and then it was all pulled up to heaven again.

11 "Right then three men who had been sent to me from Caesarea stopped at the house where I was staying. 12 The Spirit told me to have no hesitation about going with them. These six brothers also went with me, and we entered the man's house. 13 He told us how he had seen an angel appear in his house and say, 'Send to Joppa for Simon who is called Peter. 14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: 'John baptized with[a] water, but you will be baptized with[a] the Holy Spirit.' 17 So if God gave them the same gift he gave us who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could stand in God's way?"

18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, even to Gentiles God has granted repentance that leads to life."

The Church in Antioch

19 Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews. 20 Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. 21 The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

22 News of this reached the church in Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. 23 When he arrived and saw what the grace of

[a] *16* Or *in*

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 38 to 41
38		The Jews in Alexandria, Egypt, suffer severe persecution
38		Riots in Alexandria between Jews and Gentiles
39		Herod Antipas is deposed and sent into exile
40		Caligula orders his statue to be placed in the temple
40		Herod Agrippa I persuades Caligula not to set up the statue
41		Caligula is assassinated

God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. 24He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

25Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, 26and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.

27During this time some prophets came down from Jerusalem to Antioch. 28One of them, named Agabus, stood up and through the Spirit predicted that a severe famine would spread over the entire Roman world. (This happened during the reign of Claudius.) 29The disciples, as each one was able, decided to provide help for the brothers and sisters living in Judea. 30This they did, sending their gift to the elders by Barnabas and Saul.

Peter's Miraculous Escape From Prison

12 1It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them. 2He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword. 3When he saw that this met with approval among the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Festival of Unleavened Bread. 4After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

5So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

6The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance. 7Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

8Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him. 9Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision. 10They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

11Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord has sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."

12When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying. 13Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

15"You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

16But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished. 17Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

18In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter. 19After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed.

Herod's Death

Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there. 20He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. After securing the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

21On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people. 22They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man." 23Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

24But the word of God continued to spread and flourish.

Barnabas and Saul Sent Off

25When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from[a] Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.

[a] *25* Some manuscripts *to*

Worship the Emperor (Ac 12:20–23)

Reverence for rulers or emperors did not begin in Rome. In fact, the Romans were rather late in accepting such a practice. While they revered the spirits of their dead ancestors—and especially the spirit of the head of their family—they regarded their political leaders as merely men.

The worship of living rulers was practiced in many nations, including Egypt, Persia, and Greece. Alexander the Great established his own cult of worshipers in Alexandria in Egypt.

Augustus Caesar (27 B.C.–A.D. 14) was the first Roman emperor to combine the ideas of ruler worship and ancestor worship in creating an imperial cult. He made it a sign of his subjects' loyalty to him and the Roman state. He did, however, exempt the Jews from this cult.

Caligula (A.D. 37–41), who was known for being somewhat unbalanced, proclaimed himself a god and loved to dress up as Jupiter. In A.D. 40 he even ordered that a statue of himself as Jupiter be erected in the temple in Jerusalem. Faced with a likely revolt by the Jewish populace, the Roman governor Petronius managed to get the order canceled.

It is surprising that Herod Agrippa I (A.D. 41–44), just a few years after the incident with Caligula, would allow himself to be worshiped as a god (Ac 12:20–23). According to Acts, his failure to discourage the shouts of the people, "The voice of a god, not of a man!" (v. 22), and give glory to God, resulted in a violent death. The Jewish historian Josephus recorded that Agrippa died 5 days after an attack of abdominal pains.

TRANSITION

Paul's First Missionary Journey

Paul's first missionary journey took him to Cyprus, and then to Asia Minor, where he visited Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. This journey, setting out around A.D. 46, marked the first time a church had purposefully sent out missionaries. It was natural for Paul and Barnabas to evangelize first in Cyprus since it was Barnabas's home (see Ac 4:36).

The missionary strategy was to reach out first to the Jewish population. Since the synagogues were the centers of Jewish community life in the cities that Paul visited, they were the most appropriate places to begin preaching Christ. Only when rejected by the Jews did Paul and Barnabas turn to the Gentiles with the gospel (Ac 13:46).

• **Acts 13:1—14:28**

Acts

13:1 Now in the church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. [2]While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." [3]So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.

On Cyprus

[4]The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. [5]When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in

THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILE WORLD

The entire Book of Acts is an expansion and fulfillment of the promise "you will be . . . witnesses in Jerusalem, . . . Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Ac 1:8). The gospel had already spread beyond Judea to the Samaritans (8:5), to an Ethiopian (8:27), to God-fearing Gentiles in the household of Cornelius (10:44, 45), and to Hellenists at Antioch (11:20). In the remainder of the account of Acts, Luke describes how the gospel was carried into the Gentile world. This new initiative was begun by the church at Antioch sending out Barnabas and Saul (13:2, 3).

This new initiative into the Gentile world was begun by the church at Antioch.

The change of thrust towards pagan non-Jews rather than to skeptical Jews is made clear by Paul's announcement in Antioch of Pisidia: "we now turn to the Gentiles" (13:46). Paul (Saul's Roman name) now focused his strategy on Gentile evangelism. His sermons, as recorded in Acts, indicate the way the Good News was presented to Gentiles (13:16–41) and to a sophisticated audience (17:22–31), emphasizing the activity of the Holy Spirit and the power of Jesus' resurrection.

The great increase of Gentile converts caused alarm among many of the Jewish Christians in Judea. They feared that too many Gentiles would hurt the character of the church. Militant Jewish nationalists were already beginning a movement to require Gentile converts to become circumcised and follow the Jewish law. The stage was set for a Jerusalem conference of church leaders (Ac 15); the problem was how to reconcile the new communities of believers with the customs of Jewish law.

Multicultural Prophets at Antioch (Ac 13:1)

Five leaders are named as prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch of Syria: Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul (Ac 13:1). Most 1st-century Jewish people believed that prophecy was rare in their own time, so the leadership of "prophets" in the Antioch church would have struck them forcefully.

Simeon and Manaen (which in Hebrew is "Menahem") are common Jewish names. Simeon's surname "Niger" was a frequent Roman name, making it possible that he, like Saul (Paul), was a Roman citizen. On the other hand, "Niger" seems to be a nickname rather than his birth name, and its Latin meaning ("black") could suggest that Simeon was descended from North African converts to Judaism.

Manaen had been "brought up" (13:1) with Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee. This phrase sometimes described those who shared the same wet nurse, meaning that Manaen possibly had been a high-status servant in the royal household. When slaves grew up with a master's son, the two often became close, and the son often freed the slave after inheriting him. Even when not freed, slaves of royal families wielded considerable power and status in society, sometimes more power than local aristocrats.

In Greek society, friendships from youth often led to political alliances and favors in adulthood. But Herod Antipas, Manaen's patron, had lost his position when the emperor banished him to Gaul in A.D. 39. Manaen's influence undoubtedly had dwindled by A.D. 46 when Paul and Barnabas were sent out by the Antioch church.

Lucius was a common Greek name, but that does not determine his ethnic background. Many Jews had Greek names, especially outside Palestine. Cyrene, his place of origin, had a very large Jewish population, so Lucius was possibly a Hellenistic Jew.

The other named Antioch prophets were Barnabas, a Levite who originated from Cyprus (Ac 4:36), and Saul, the Pharisee from Cilicia (Ac 22:3; 23:6). The combined cultural backgrounds of these five individuals brought to the church a diversified staff of prophetic leaders.

the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper.

6 They traveled through the whole island
until they came to Paphos. There they met a
Jewish sorcerer and false prophet named Bar-
Jesus, 7 who was an attendant of the proconsul,
Sergius Paulus. The proconsul, an intelligent
man, sent for Barnabas and Saul because he
wanted to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas
the sorcerer (for that is what his name means)
opposed them and tried to turn the proconsul
from the faith. 9 Then Saul, who was also called
Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked straight
at Elymas and said, 10 "You are a child of the
devil and an enemy of everything that is right!
You are full of all kinds of deceit and trick-
ery. Will you never stop perverting the right
ways of the Lord? 11 Now the hand of the Lord
is against you. You are going to be blind for a
time, not even able to see the light of the sun."

Immediately mist and darkness came over
him, and he groped about, seeking someone
to lead him by the hand. 12 When the procon-
sul saw what had happened, he believed, for
he was amazed at the teaching about the Lord.

In Pisidian Antioch

13 From Paphos, Paul and his companions
sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left
them to return to Jerusalem. 14 From Perga
they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sab-
bath they entered the synagogue and sat down.

Paul Goes to Galatia

Paul and Barnabas were sent out from the church at Antioch to the cities of Galatia in Asia Minor. This first missionary journey (Ac 13; 14) took them to Cyprus, and then to Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. The Jewish synagogues in these cities provided Paul a platform for preaching the gospel. At times, however, he encountered opposition even from the synagogues.

Women of High Standing in Antioch in Pisidia (Ac 13:50)

Many cities with the name "Antioch" were founded by the early Seleucid kings from about 312 to 250 B.C. Two of the most important were Antioch in Pisidia and Antioch in Syria, both mentioned in the New Testament.

Antioch in Pisidia passed into Roman hands in 25 B.C. during the reign of Augustus Caesar (27 B.C.–A.D. 14). Augustus transformed the city into a Roman colony and transplanted large numbers of Roman citizens to live there. In fact, inscriptions from Antioch show a preponderance of Roman personal names as well as a substantial minority of Jewish inhabitants. Antioch was a prominent city. A large number of its citizenry entered into the Roman Senate, and numerous building projects were completed there.

The apostle Paul visited Antioch in Pisidia at least once during his missionary journeys. The city was a natural target for Paul since many prominent Roman citizens lived there. On his first journey, about A.D. 46, his visit began in the Jewish synagogue (Ac 13:13, 14), but his preaching reached both Jew and Gentile (13:42, 48).

When some members of the Jewish community reacted against Paul, they enlisted the support of "God-fearing women of high standing" in opposition to him (13:50). These women probably belonged to some of the Roman families brought by Augustus to colonize the city. The Jewish faith had found some converts among aristocratic women who had influence through their wealthy and politically powerful husbands. Such public clout forced Paul and Barnabas to leave town (13:50, 51).

15 After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to
them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of
exhortation for the people, please speak."
16 Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand
and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles
who worship God, listen to me! 17 The God of
the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he
made the people prosper during their stay in
Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of
that country; 18 for about forty years he en-
dured their conduct[a] in the wilderness; 19 and
he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving
their land to his people as their inheritance.
20 All this took about 450 years.

"After this, God gave them judges until the
time of Samuel the prophet. 21 Then the people
asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of
Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled for-
ty years. 22 After removing Saul, he made Da-
vid their king. God testified concerning him: 'I
have found David son of Jesse, a man after my
own heart; he will do everything I want him
to do.'

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 41 to 44
41	The Roman army declares Claudius emperor	
41	Agrippa I reads from Deuteronomy at the Festival of Tabernacles	
43	The emperor Claudius travels to Britain	
44–48	Famine, as predicted by Agabus (Ac 11:28)	
44	Herod Agrippa I dies suddenly in Caesarea (Ac 12:23)	
44	Judea again becomes a Roman province	

23 "From this man's descendants God has
brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he
promised. 24 Before the coming of Jesus, John
preached repentance and baptism to all the
people of Israel. 25 As John was completing his
work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am
not the one you are looking for. But there is
one coming after me whose sandals I am not
worthy to untie.'

26 "Fellow children of Abraham and you God-
fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of
salvation has been sent. 27 The people of Jeru-
salem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus,
yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words
of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.
28 Though they found no proper ground for a
death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him
executed. 29 When they had carried out all that
was written about him, they took him down
from the cross and laid him in a tomb. 30 But
God raised him from the dead, 31 and for many
days he was seen by those who had traveled
with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are
now his witnesses to our people.

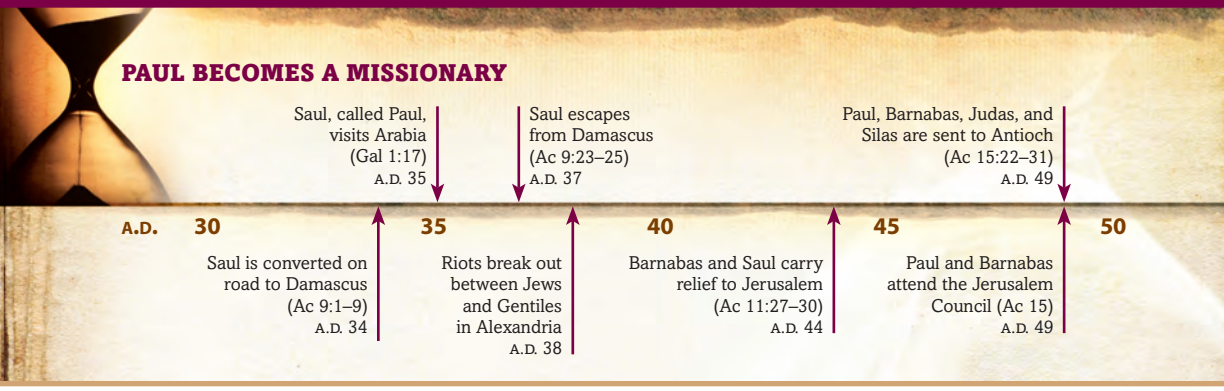
32 "We tell you the good news: What God
promised our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for
us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is
written in the second Psalm:

"'You are my son;
today I have become your father.'[b]

34 God raised him from the dead so that he will
never be subject to decay. As God has said,

"'I will give you the holy and sure blessings
promised to David.'[c]

[a] *18* Some manuscripts *he cared for them* [b] *33* Psalm 2:7
[c] *34* Isaiah 55:3



35 So it is also stated elsewhere:

"'You will not let your holy one see decay.'[a]

36 "Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. 37 But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

38 "Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. 39 Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. 40 Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

41 "'Look, you scoffers,
wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe,
even if someone told you.'[b]"

42 As Paul and Barnabas were leaving the synagogue, the people invited them to speak further about these things on the next Sabbath. 43 When the congregation was dismissed, many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who talked with them and urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. 45 When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy. They began to contradict what Paul was saying and heaped abuse on him.

46 Then Paul and Barnabas answered them boldly: "We had to speak the word of God to you first. Since you reject it and do not consider yourselves worthy of eternal life, we now turn to the Gentiles. 47 For this is what the Lord has commanded us:

"'I have made you[c] a light for the Gentiles,
that you[c] may bring salvation to the ends
of the earth.'[d]"

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

49 The word of the Lord spread through the whole region. 50 But the Jewish leaders incited the God-fearing women of high standing and the leading men of the city. They stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them from their region. 51 So they shook the dust off their feet as a warning to them and went to Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

In Iconium

14 1 At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed. 2 But the Jews who refused to believe stirred up the other Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. 3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to perform signs and wonders. 4 The people of the city were divided; some sided with the Jews, others with the apostles. 5 There was a plot afoot among both Gentiles and Jews, together with their leaders, to mistreat them and stone them. 6 But they found out about it and fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe and to the surrounding country, 7 where they continued to preach the gospel.

In Lystra and Derbe

8 In Lystra there sat a man who was lame. He had been that way from birth and had never walked. 9 He listened to Paul as he was speaking. Paul looked directly at him, saw that he had faith to be healed 10 and called out, "Stand

[a] *35* Psalm 16:10 (see Septuagint) [b] *41* Hab. 1:5
[c] *47* The Greek is singular. [d] *47* Isaiah 49:6

up on your feet!" At that, the man jumped up and began to walk.

[11]When the crowd saw what Paul had done, they shouted in the Lycaonian language, "The gods have come down to us in human form!" [12]Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul they called Hermes because he was the chief speaker. [13]The priest of Zeus, whose temple was just outside the city, brought bulls and wreaths to the city gates because he and the crowd wanted to offer sacrifices to them.

[14]But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: [15]"Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heavens and the earth and the sea and everything in them. [16]In the past, he let all nations go their own way. [17]Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy." [18]Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.

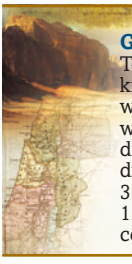
[19]Then some Jews came from Antioch and Iconium and won the crowd over. They stoned Paul and dragged him outside the city, thinking he was dead. [20]But after the disciples had gathered around him, he got up and went back into the city. The next day he and Barnabas left for Derbe.

The Return to Antioch in Syria

[21]They preached the gospel in that city and won a large number of disciples. Then they returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, [22]strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God," they said. [23]Paul and Barnabas appointed elders[a] for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust. [24]After going through Pisidia, they came into Pamphylia, [25]and when they had preached the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

[26]From Attalia they sailed back to Antioch, where they had been committed to the grace of God for the work they had now completed. [27]On arriving there, they gathered the church together and reported all that God had done through them and how he had opened a door of faith to the Gentiles. [28]And they stayed there a long time with the disciples.

[a] *23* Or *Barnabas ordained elders*; or *Barnabas had elders elected*



Geography & Environment

Today Antioch (Ac 14:26) is not very well known, but in New Testament times it was one of the largest cities in the Roman world, comparable to Rome or Alexandria in population. Antioch of Syria (to distinguish it from Antioch in Pisidia) is 310 miles north of Jerusalem and about 12 miles inland from the Mediterranean coast, on the banks of the Orontes River.

TRANSITION

Conference in Jerusalem

The many Gentiles won to Christ precipitated the Jerusalem Council, where it was decided that circumcision would not be required of Gentile Christians. Attempts to place this conference chronologically are complicated by apparent differences between Luke's description of the event and Paul's account in Gal 2:1–10. The most notable difference in the accounts is the issue of circumcision itself. In Luke's account, circumcision is the central concern. In Paul's account, circumcision was at best incidental to the conference. If the issue had been decisively settled there, he could have simply appealed to the "apostolic decree" (Ac 15:23–29) when he was disputing with the Judaizers in Galatia.

Several suggestions have been offered for relating Luke's and Paul's accounts. A first proposal holds that, despite the differences, the similarities between Ac 15 and Gal 2 suggest that these accounts are two reports of the same event. A second proposal, though, identifies the events described in Gal 2 with Paul's second visit to Jerusalem, correlating that visit with the famine-relief trip mentioned in Ac 11:27–30. (Paul's first visit to Jerusalem is mentioned in Gal 1:18.) In both of these views, the Jerusalem Council is usually dated around A.D. 49.

A third proposal arises because during Paul's final visit to Jerusalem, James appeared to inform him for the first time about the ruling of the conference (see Ac 21:17–25). So, it is supposed, Paul was not at the meeting during which the decision regarding circumcision of Gentiles was reached. In this view, the events described by Paul in Gal 2 are usually associated with the visit to Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 18:22, and dated about A.D. 52.

The conference settled the matter. The Gentiles were not required to keep the law or to be circumcised. They were directed to abstain from practices that were offensive to the Jews and made it particularly hard for them to have table fellowship with Gentiles (Ac 15:29).

• **Acts 15:1–35**

Acts

The Council at Jerusalem

15 :1 Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the
believers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot
be saved." 2This brought Paul and Barnabas
into sharp dispute and debate with them. So
Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with
some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to
see the apostles and elders about this question.
3The church sent them on their way, and as
they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria,
they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the believers very glad.
4When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God
had done through them.

5Then some of the believers who belonged
to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said,
"The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses."

6The apostles and elders met to consider this
question. 7After much discussion, Peter got up
and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that
some time ago God made a choice among you
that the Gentiles might hear from my lips the
message of the gospel and believe. 8God, who
knows the heart, showed that he accepted
them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as
he did to us. 9He did not discriminate between
us and them, for he purified their hearts by
faith. 10Now then, why do you try to test God
by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that
neither we nor our ancestors have been able to
bear? 11No! We believe it is through the grace
of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they
are."

12The whole assembly became silent as they
listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the
signs and wonders God had done among the
Gentiles through them. 13When they finished,
James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen
to me. 14Simon[a] has described to us how God
first intervened to choose a people for his name
from the Gentiles. 15The words of the prophets
are in agreement with this, as it is written:

16"'After this I will return
and rebuild David's fallen tent.
Its ruins I will rebuild,
and I will restore it,
17that the rest of mankind may seek the Lord,
even all the Gentiles who bear my name,
says the Lord, who does these things'[b]—
18 things known from long ago.[c]

19"It is my judgment, therefore, that we
should not make it difficult for the Gentiles
who are turning to God. 20Instead we should
write to them, telling them to abstain from food
polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from
the meat of strangled animals and from blood.
21For the law of Moses has been preached in
every city from the earliest times and is read in
the synagogues on every Sabbath."

The Council's Letter to Gentile Believers

22Then the apostles and elders, with the
whole church, decided to choose some of
their own men and send them to Antioch with
Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called
Barsabbas) and Silas, men who were leaders

[a] *14* Greek *Simeon*, a variant of *Simon*; that is, Peter
[b] *17* Amos 9:11,12 (see Septuagint) [c] *17,18* Some manuscripts *things'— / 18the Lord's work is known to him from long ago*

Paul Goes to Greece
Paul's second missionary journey (Ac 15:39—18:22) took him, along with Silas, back to Asia Minor, then over to Europe to the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth. Young Timothy joined them in Lystra, accompanying them through Macedonia and Achaia (present-day Greece). The gospel spread further as Paul came into contact with Roman authorities and Greek philosophers.

among the believers. 23With them they sent the following letter:

The apostles and elders, your brothers,

To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia:

Greetings.

24We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. 25So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— 26men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. 28It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: 29You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things.

Farewell.

30So the men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. 31The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. 32Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the believers. 33After spending some time there, they were sent off by the believers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. [34][a] 35But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

TRANSITION

The Letter to the Galatians

The most crucial factor in dating the letter to the Galatians is the relationship between the journey of Paul to Jerusalem mentioned in Gal 2:1 and the Jerusalem Council mentioned in Acts 15 (see "Conference in Jerusalem" at Ac 15:1). If the decision of the council in Acts 15 had been common knowledge when the letter was written, Paul would surely have used the council's decision in defense of Gentile freedom and especially in his rebuke of Peter (Gal 2:11–13). It is therefore possible that Galatians is Paul's earliest letter, and was written by A.D. 49 just prior to the Jerusalem Council of Acts 15. Those who associate Paul's account in Gal 2:1–10 with the Jerusalem visit mentioned in Acts 18:22 date this letter to about A.D. 53, and thus after the Thessalonian letters.

The destination of this letter to Galatia was a group of churches that Paul himself had founded (Gal 1:2, 8, 9; 4:19). His close relationship with them is reflected in 4:11–14. Until the 18th century most readers understood "Galatia" to be the territory in the heart of Asia Minor whose boundaries included Bithynia and Pontus on the north, Phrygia on the southwest, and Cappadocia on the east. However, the Book of Acts offers no record of Paul evangelizing in this "North Galatian" area, apart from brief hints (Ac 16:6; 18:23).

The "South Galatian" theory understands Galatia to refer to the Roman province of Paul's day, which included Pisidia, Lycaonia, and parts of Phrygia and Cappadocia. Also included were the cities of Antioch, Lystra, Derbe, and Iconium which Paul visited on both his first (Ac 13; 14) and second (Ac 16) missionary journeys.

• Galatians 1:1–24

Galatians

1:1 Paul, an apostle—sent not from men nor by a man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead— 2and all the brothers and sisters[b] with me,

To the churches in Galatia:

3Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, 4who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, 5to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

No Other Gospel

6I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel— 7which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. 8But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse! 9As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel

[a] *34* Some manuscripts include here *But Silas decided to remain there.* [b] *2* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in verse 11; and in 3:15; 4:12, 28, 31; 5:11, 13; 6:1, 18.

other than what you accepted, let them be under God's curse!

10Am I now trying to win the approval of human beings, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ.

Paul Called by God

11I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel I preached is not of human origin. 12I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ.

13For you have heard of my previous way of life in Judaism, how intensely I persecuted the church of God and tried to destroy it. 14I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15But when God, who set me apart from my mother's womb and called me by his grace, was pleased 16to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, my immediate response was not to consult any human being. 17I did not go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was, but I went into Arabia. Later I returned to Damascus.

18Then after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Cephas[a] and stayed with him fifteen days. 19I saw none of the other apostles — only James, the Lord's brother. 20I assure you before God that what I am writing you is no lie.

21Then I went to Syria and Cilicia. 22I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. 23They only heard the report: "The man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." 24And they praised God because of me.

[a] *18* That is, Peter

Paul on the Road to Damascus

Following Stephen's death, Paul became actively involved in the Jewish persecution of Christians (Gal 1:13). Armed with letters from the high priest, Paul set out from Jerusalem to Damascus intending to bring back any followers of Christ as prisoners. But while approaching Damascus, he was confronted by the resurrected Jesus in a blinding encounter.

TRANSITION

Paul Corrects Peter

Paul took Titus, an uncircumcised Gentile convert, to Jerusalem in order to establish that Gentiles did not have to be circumcised to be Christians. This second visit to Jerusalem occurred, according to Paul, after a period of 14 years (Gal 2:1). If Paul means 14 years after his conversion (Gal 1:15), the date would be about A.D. 47–48; however, if he means 14 years after his first Jerusalem visit (Gal 1:18), the date would be about A.D. 51–52.

Within a very short time after Paul's presentation of the gospel to them, the Galatians were influenced by an outside group (Gal 1:6). Known to scholars as "the Judaizers," this heretical group maintained that all Christians, whether of Jewish or of Gentile ancestry, must observe the Mosaic law. Precisely when the Judaizers raised the issue of circumcision is not known, but Paul offered two types of response to their teaching. First, he appealed to the precedent of how the Jewish leadership of the church had received Gentile converts in the past, including his earlier confrontation with Peter over this very issue in Antioch (2:1–21). Second, he developed a theological argument about the purpose of the law and the responsibilities of Christian life (3:1—6:18).

• **Galatians 2:1—6:18**

Galatians

Paul Accepted by the Apostles

2:1 Then after fourteen years, I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. 2I went in response to a revelation and, meeting privately with those esteemed as leaders, I presented to them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. I wanted to be sure I was not running and

Christians of Antioch in Syria (Gal 2:11)

The city of Antioch in Syria was founded by the first Seleucid king, Seleucus I (c. 300 B.C.). Situated on the Orontes River, it was the largest of all cities that bore the name "Antioch." Ancient estimates of its size vary from 200,000 to 600,000 inhabitants. According to the Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 37–100), the city also had a substantial Jewish population (*Antiquities of the Jews,* 12.119).

The Roman general Pompey took Antioch in 64 B.C. and declared it a free city. It then became the capital of the Roman province of Syria and the third largest city in the empire. The extant buildings, temples, aqueduct, masonry works, hippodrome, and gridlike street plan of Antioch attest to its great importance.

This great city became a center for Christianity. Many believers fled there after the stoning of Stephen and preached to Antioch's Jewish population (Ac 11:19). But in Antioch were also Gentiles who had converted to Judaism. Some of them, such as Nicolas, called "a convert to Judaism" (Ac 6:5), also accepted Christianity. Soon the church in Antioch faced the task of unifying its Jewish and Gentile members.

The Antioch Christian community prospered. For a year Barnabas and Paul taught these believers, who were the first to be called "Christians" (Ac 11:25, 26). That this church had ample resources can be seen by their sending relief to the Jerusalem church (Ac 11:27–30).

Questions arose, however, concerning Jewish-Gentile relations. Eventually the Antioch congregation sent a delegation (including Paul and Barnabas) to Jerusalem to debate the issue of the circumcision of the Gentiles (Ac 14:26—15:2). That issue found some degree of resolution, but other tensions would surface. So the church of Antioch in Syria became the scene for another debate, this time over whether Jewish Christians should eat together with Gentile Christians (Gal 2:11–13).

had not been running my race in vain. 3Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek. 4This matter arose because some false believers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves. 5We did not give in to them for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might be preserved for you.

6As for those who were held in high esteem — whatever they were makes no difference to me; God does not show favoritism — they added nothing to my message. 7On the contrary, they recognized that I had been entrusted with the task of preaching the gospel to the uncircumcised,[a] just as Peter had been to the circumcised.[b] 8For God, who was at work in Peter as an apostle to the circumcised, was also at work in me as an apostle to the Gentiles. 9James, Cephas[c] and John, those esteemed as pillars, gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship when they recognized the grace given to me. They agreed that we should go to the Gentiles, and they to the circumcised. 10All they asked was that we should continue to remember the poor, the very thing I had been eager to do all along.

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 46
46–120	Life of Plutarch, Greek philosopher
46–48	Sergius Paulus rules as proconsul
46	Barnabas and Saul (Paul) appointed
46	Beginning of Paul's first missionary journey (Ac 13:4)
46	Paul visits Antioch in Pisidia
46	Josephus's date for the revolt by Theudas (Ac 5:36)

Paul Opposes Cephas

11When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

14When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Ce-

[a] *7* That is, Gentiles [b] *7* That is, Jews; also in verses 8 and 9 [c] *9* That is, Peter; also in verses 11 and 14

phas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you
live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it,
then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish
customs?
15"We who are Jews by birth and not sinful
Gentiles 16know that a person is not justified
by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus
Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ
Jesus that we may be justified by faith in[a]
Christ and not by the works of the law, because
by the works of the law no one will be justified.
17"But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ,
we Jews find ourselves also among the sinners,
doesn't that mean that Christ promotes sin?
Absolutely not! 18If I rebuild what I destroyed,
then I really would be a lawbreaker.
19"For through the law I died to the law so
that I might live for God. 20I have been crucified
with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives
in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by
faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave
himself for me. 21I do not set aside the grace
of God, for if righteousness could be gained
through the law, Christ died for nothing!"[b]

Faith or Works of the Law

3 1You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched
you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ
was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2I would
like to learn just one thing from you: Did you
receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or
by believing what you heard? 3Are you so fool-
ish? After beginning by means of the Spirit,
are you now trying to finish by means of the
flesh?[c] 4Have you experienced[d] so much in
vain—if it really was in vain? 5So again I ask,
does God give you his Spirit and work miracles
among you by the works of the law, or by your
believing what you heard? 6So also Abraham
"believed God, and it was credited to him as
righteousness."[e]
7Understand, then, that those who have faith
are children of Abraham. 8Scripture foresaw
that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and
announced the gospel in advance to Abraham:
"All nations will be blessed through you."[f] 9So
those who rely on faith are blessed along with
Abraham, the man of faith.
10For all who rely on the works of the law are
under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is every-
one who does not continue to do everything
written in the Book of the Law."[g] 11Clearly no
one who relies on the law is justified before
God, because "the righteous will live by faith."[h]
12The law is not based on faith; on the contrary,
it says, "The person who does these things will
live by them."[i] 13Christ redeemed us from the
curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for
it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung
on a pole."[j] 14He redeemed us in order that the
blessing given to Abraham might come to the
Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith
we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

The Law and the Promise

15Brothers and sisters, let me take an exam-
ple from everyday life. Just as no one can set
aside or add to a human covenant that has been
duly established, so it is in this case. 16The
promises were spoken to Abraham and to his
seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds,"
meaning many people, but "and to your seed,"[k]
meaning one person, who is Christ. 17What I
mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years lat-
er, does not set aside the covenant previous-
ly established by God and thus do away with
the promise. 18For if the inheritance depends
on the law, then it no longer depends on the
promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abra-
ham through a promise.
19Why, then, was the law given at all? It was
added because of transgressions until the Seed
to whom the promise referred had come. The
law was given through angels and entrusted
to a mediator. 20A mediator, however, implies
more than one party; but God is one.
21Is the law, therefore, opposed to the prom-
ises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had
been given that could impart life, then right-
eousness would certainly have come by the
law. 22But Scripture has locked up everything
under the control of sin, so that what was prom-
ised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ,
might be given to those who believe.

Children of God

23Before the coming of this faith,[l] we were
held in custody under the law, locked up until
the faith that was to come would be revealed.
24So the law was our guardian until Christ came
that we might be justified by faith. 25Now that
this faith has come, we are no longer under a
guardian.
26So in Christ Jesus you are all children of
God through faith, 27for all of you who were

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[a] *16* Or *but through the faithfulness of . . . justified on the basis of the faithfulness of* [b] *21* Some interpreters end the quotation after verse 14. [c] *3* In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit. [d] *4* Or *suffered* [e] *6* Gen. 15:6 [f] *8* Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18 [g] *10* Deut. 27:26 [h] *11* Hab. 2:4 [i] *12* Lev. 18:5 [j] *13* Deut. 21:23 [k] *16* Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 24:7 [l] *22,23* Or *through the faithfulness of Jesus . . .* [23]*Before faith came*

Abba, Father (Gal 4:6)

Following some Old Testament models, Jewish prayers often addressed God as "Father," "our Father," or "our Father in heaven." They normally avoided, however, the more familiar title "Abba" (although one early sage is said to have compared God with an "abba").

Children called their fathers "Abba," a title of endearment, intimacy, and respect. Adults continued the practice, though apparently less frequently, again emphasizing the intimacy of the father-child relationship. Jesus' use of this title in prayer (Mk 14:36) demonstrated his distinctive intimacy with the heavenly Father, an intimacy which provided the model for those who followed him by the Spirit (Rom. 8:15).

Jesus' native language was Aramaic (a Semitic language related to Hebrew), and *abba* is an Aramaic word. The Gospels, however, were written in Greek rather than in Aramaic, "Abba" being one of the few original Aramaic words preserved in a Gospel. What is most surprising is that Paul's Greek-speaking readers in Galatia already knew what "Abba" meant (Gal 4:6). Especially the Roman readers (Ro 8:15) could not have learned from Paul since he had not visited Rome before writing his letter there. Possibly the early Christians picked up Jesus' use of "Abba" to represent the intimacy with God which Jesus had provided for them as well.

To understand what "father" meant in Jesus' world may be helpful to many Christians today who grow up in broken homes or other family structures that are quite different from ancient Mediterranean families. Children generally viewed their fathers as strong and dependable, as affectionate, and as providers (Mt 7:9–11). For the early Christians to call God "Abba" was for them to recognize a special intimacy with the heavenly Father on whom they depended.

baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

4 1What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces[a] of the world. 4But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship.[b] 6Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, *"Abba*,[c] Father." 7So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

Paul's Concern for the Galatians

8Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. 9But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable forces[d]? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? 10You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! 11I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you.

12I plead with you, brothers and sisters, become like me, for I became like you. You did me no wrong. 13As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you, 14and even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus himself. 15Where, then, is your blessing of me now? I can testify that, if you could have done so, you would have torn out your eyes and given them to me. 16Have I now become your enemy by telling you the truth?

17Those people are zealous to win you over, but for no good. What they want is to alienate you from us, so that you may have zeal for them. 18It is fine to be zealous, provided the purpose is good, and to be so always, not just when I am with you. 19My dear children, for whom I am again in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in you, 20how I wish I could be with you now and change my tone, because I am perplexed about you!

Hagar and Sarah

21Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? 22For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. 23His son by the slave woman was born according to the flesh, but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a divine promise.

24These things are being taken figuratively: The women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children

[a] *3* Or *under the basic principles* [b] *5* The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a legal term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture.
[c] *6* Aramaic for *Father* [d] *9* Or *principles*

Arts & Literature
Allegory was a method of interpretation that had been used by the Greeks in reading Homer. In allegory, the characters, actions, and other parts of a story are understood to be symbols standing for other things. In metaphor, there is a comparison, but in allegory, the symbols are like a code used to make assertions about things for which they stand. Paul's allegory interprets the Old Testament (Gal 4:24).

who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. 25Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. 26But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. 27For it is written:

"Be glad, barren woman,
you who never bore a child;
shout for joy and cry aloud,
you who were never in labor;
because more are the children of the
desolate woman
than of her who has a husband."[a]

28Now you, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise. 29At that time the son born according to the flesh persecuted the son born by the power of the Spirit. It is the same now. 30But what does Scripture say? "Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman's son."[b] 31Therefore, brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman.

Freedom in Christ

5 1It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

2Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. 3Again I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. 4You who are trying to be justified by the law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace. 5For through the Spirit we eagerly await by faith the righteousness for which we hope. 6For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value. The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

7You were running a good race. Who cut in on you to keep you from obeying the truth? 8That kind of persuasion does not come from the one who calls you. 9"A little yeast works through the whole batch of dough." 10I am confident in the Lord that you will take no other view. The one who is throwing you into confusion, whoever that may be, will have to pay the penalty. 11Brothers and sisters, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished. 12As for those agitators, I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!

Life by the Spirit

13You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh[c]; rather, serve one another humbly in love. 14For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."[d] 15If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

16So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever[e] you want. 18But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.

19The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; 20idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions 21and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. 24Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25Since we live by the

Religion & Worship
Circumcision, the operation to remove a fold of skin from the male parts, is usually performed on infants. All Jews practiced it as a sign of the covenant that God made with them through Abraham. If a person converted to Judaism, circumcision was a definitive step to take. When Christians said it was not necessary, they were clearly separating themselves from Judaism (Gal 5:3–6; 6:13).

[a] *27* Isaiah 54:1 [b] *30* Gen. 21:10 [c] *13* In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verses 16, 17, 19 and 24; and in 6:8.
[d] *14* Lev. 19:18 [e] *17* Or *you do not do what*

Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. [26]Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Doing Good to All

6 [1]Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. [2]Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. [3]If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves. [4]Each one should test their own actions. Then they can take pride in themselves alone, without comparing themselves to someone else, [5]for each one should carry their own load. [6]Nevertheless, the one who receives instruction in the word should share all good things with their instructor.

[7]Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. [8]Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. [9]Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. [10]Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

Not Circumcision but the New Creation

[11]See what large letters I use as I write to you with my own hand!

[12]Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. [13]Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. [14]May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which[a] the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. [15]Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. [16]Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to[b] the Israel of God.

[17]From now on, let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

[18]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers and sisters. Amen.

TRANSITION

The Letter of James

The writer of this letter identifies himself only as "James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1:1). The name "James" has usually been identified with the James who led the church in Jerusalem (Ac 15:13). Paul referred to this James as "the Lord's brother" (see Mk 6:3) and included him among the "apostles" (Gal 1:19). He also characterized him as one of the "pillars" of the church (Gal 2:9). When Peter left Palestine (Ac 12:17), James seems to have become the leader of the Jerusalem church.

Since the early centuries, however, there has been disagreement about whether James, the Lord's brother, actually wrote this letter. There are no allusions to a personal relationship with Jesus, and indeed Jesus is only mentioned twice (Jas 1:1; 2:1). Both the quality of the letter's Greek and the structure of its arguments have suggested to some that the author was a Hellenistic Jew rather than a Jew from Palestine. If so, then the letter is pseudonymous, and the actual author associated the work with James the Just (as he was later known) by using his name. It is also possible the letter was written by a Hellenistic Jew actually named "James," who is otherwise unknown to us.

No evidence determines exactly when the letter was written. Scholars who believe the letter to be an authentic work of James the Just necessarily date it before his martyrdom in A.D. 62. Since the letter does not hint at any controversy over the issue of circumcision, some would date it around A.D. 45, before the Jerusalem Council (see "Conference in Jerusalem" at Ac 15:1). Others, however, would place it late in James's life after the controversy had diminished. Those who view the letter as pseudonymous usually date it in the last quarter of the 1st century (c. 75–100).

• James 1:1—5:20

James

1:1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ,

To the twelve tribes scattered among the nations:

Greetings.

Trials and Temptations

[2]Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters,[c] whenever you face trials of many kinds, [3]because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. [4]Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [5]If any of

[a] *14* Or *whom* [b] *16* Or *rule and to* [c] *2* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in verses 16 and 19; and in 2:1, 5, 14; 3:10, 12; 4:11; 5:7, 9, 10, 12, 19.

Various Trials of the Poor (Jas 1:2)

The letter of James seems especially to address the trials of the poor (Jas 1:2), suggesting a right response to poverty and suffering. In Judea at this time, wealthy Sadducean priests were seizing the tithes that rightfully belonged to the poorer priests. In Galilee, rich landlords were repressing the poor peasants who worked on their estates. Similar situations existed throughout much of the Roman Empire, which was therefore primed for violence. In Rome, shortages of grain often led to riots.

Conditions like these partially contributed to a revolt against Rome in Judea in the year A.D. 66—a revolt which led to widespread destruction and enslavement. Meanwhile a wave of violence was unleashed in Rome itself, and before Jerusalem fell in A.D. 70 Rome had discarded four emperors. Wealth, poverty, repression, and violence were the standard fare of the day.

The letter of James was written to encourage Christians who were suffering. The opening prologue summarizes the appropriate responses to their trials, responses which the rest of the letter discusses: wisdom (1:5), faith (1:6–8), and endurance (1:9–11). The letter also describes tensions between the rich and the poor: The wealthy are arrogant against the poor (2:1–4), and even repress them (2:6, 7) and withhold their wages (5:4). Yet the poor are advised not to retaliate with violence in deed (4:1, 2) or, perhaps more tempting, in words (4:11; 5:9).

you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. 6But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. 7That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. 8Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.

Daily Life & Customs

Ancient societies did not change their fashion of clothing every year. Certain garments and styles could persist for generations. At the same time, there was room for people to exercise vanity and to advertise their rank in society (Jas 2:2). Rings and other items of jewelry clearly had such functions.

9Believers in humble circumstances ought to take pride in their high position. 10But the rich should take pride in their humiliation—since they will pass away like a wild flower. 11For the sun rises with scorching heat and withers the plant; its blossom falls and its beauty is destroyed. In the same way, the rich will fade away even while they go about their business.

12Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him.

13When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. 15Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

16Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. 17Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. 18He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.

Listening and Doing

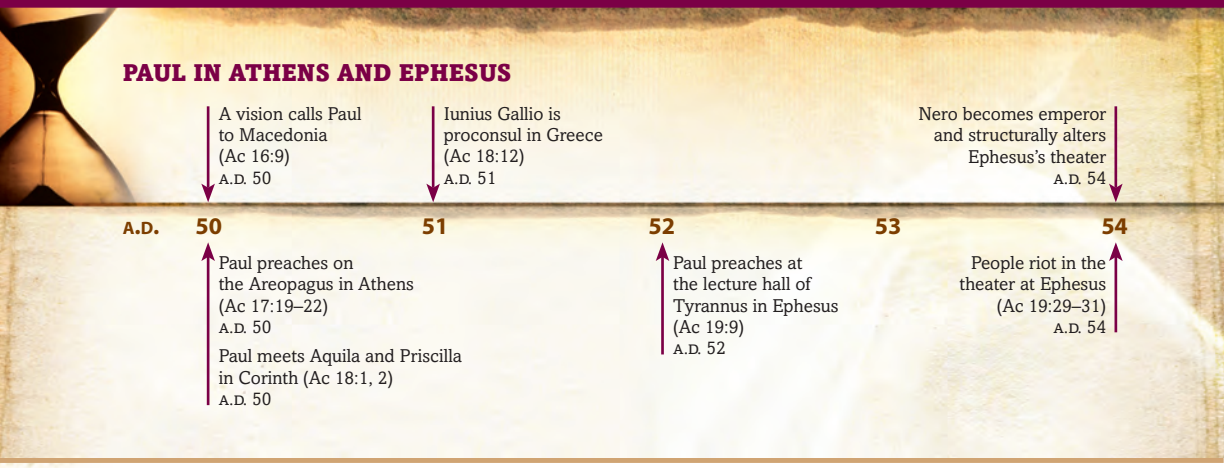
19My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. 21Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

22Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. 23Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror 24and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. 25But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

26Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion

TIME CAPSULE A.D. 48 to 49

48	Paul and Barnabas return to Antioch in Syria
49	Paul and Barnabas attend the Jerusalem Council (Ac 15)
49	Claudius expels Jews from Rome (Ac 18:2)
49	Seneca becomes Nero's tutor
49	Paul's letter to the Galatians (if to "South Galatia")



is worthless. [27]Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Favoritism Forbidden

2 [1]My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. [2]Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. [3]If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," [4]have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts?

[5]Listen, my dear brothers and sisters: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him? [6]But you have dishonored the poor. Is it not the rich who are exploiting you? Are they not the ones who are dragging you into court? [7]Are they not the ones who are blaspheming the noble name of him to whom you belong?

[8]If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself,"[a] you are doing right. [9]But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. [10]For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. [11]For he who said, "You shall not commit adultery,"[b] also said, "You shall not murder."[c] If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker.

[12]Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, [13]because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment.

Faith and Deeds

[14]What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? [15]Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. [16]If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? [17]In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

[18]But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. [19]You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

[20]You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless[d]? [21]Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? [22]You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did. [23]And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness,"[e] and he was called God's friend. [24]You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone.

[25]In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction? [26]As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

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[a] *8* Lev. 19:18 [b] *11* Exodus 20:14; Deut. 5:18
[c] *11* Exodus 20:13; Deut. 5:17 [d] *20* Some early manuscripts *dead* [e] *23* Gen. 15:6

Taming the Tongue

3 [1]Not many of you should become teachers,
my fellow believers, because you know that
we who teach will be judged more strictly. [2]We
all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never
at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep
their whole body in check.

[3]When we put bits into the mouths of horses
to make them obey us, we can turn the whole
animal. [4]Or take ships as an example. Although
they are so large and are driven by strong
winds, they are steered by a very small rud-
der wherever the pilot wants to go. [5]Likewise,
the tongue is a small part of the body, but it
makes great boasts. Consider what a great for-
est is set on fire by a small spark. [6]The tongue
also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of
the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the
whole course of one's life on fire, and is itself
set on fire by hell.

[7]All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and
sea creatures are being tamed and have been
tamed by mankind, [8]but no human being can
tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of
deadly poison.

[9]With the tongue we praise our Lord and Fa-
ther, and with it we curse human beings, who
have been made in God's likeness. [10]Out of
the same mouth come praise and cursing. My
brothers and sisters, this should not be. [11]Can
both fresh water and salt water flow from the
same spring? [12]My brothers and sisters, can a
fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs?
Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water.

Two Kinds of Wisdom

[13]Who is wise and understanding among
you? Let them show it by their good life, by
deeds done in the humility that comes from
wisdom. [14]But if you harbor bitter envy and
selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast
about it or deny the truth. [15]Such "wisdom"
does not come down from heaven but is earth-
ly, unspiritual, demonic. [16]For where you have
envy and selfish ambition, there you find disor-
der and every evil practice.

[17]But the wisdom that comes from heaven is
first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate,
submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, im-
partial and sincere. [18]Peacemakers who sow in
peace reap a harvest of righteousness.

Submit Yourselves to God

4 [1]What causes fights and quarrels among
you? Don't they come from your desires
that battle within you? [2]You desire but do not
have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get
what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do
not have because you do not ask God. [3]When
you ask, you do not receive, because you ask
with wrong motives, that you may spend what
you get on your pleasures.

[4]You adulterous people,[a] don't you know
that friendship with the world means enmity
against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses
to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy
of God. [5]Or do you think Scripture says with-
out reason that he jealously longs for the spirit
he has caused to dwell in us[b]? [6]But he gives us
more grace. That is why Scripture says:

"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."[c]

[7]Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the
devil, and he will flee from you. [8]Come near to
God and he will come near to you. Wash your
hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts,
you double-minded. [9]Grieve, mourn and wail.
Change your laughter to mourning and your
joy to gloom. [10]Humble yourselves before the
Lord, and he will lift you up.

[11]Brothers and sisters, do not slander one
another. Anyone who speaks against a broth-
er or sister[d] or judges them speaks against the
law and judges it. When you judge the law, you
are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on
it. [12]There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the
one who is able to save and destroy. But you—
who are you to judge your neighbor?

Boasting About Tomorrow

[13]Now listen, you who say, "Today or tomor-
row we will go to this or that city, spend a year
there, carry on business and make money."
[14]Why, you do not even know what will happen
tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that
appears for a little while and then vanishes. [15]In-
stead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we
will live and do this or that." [16]As it is, you boast
in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting
is evil. [17]If anyone, then, knows the good they
ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

Warning to Rich Oppressors

5 [1]Now listen, you rich people, weep and wail
because of the misery that is coming on
you. [2]Your wealth has rotted, and moths have
eaten your clothes. [3]Your gold and silver are
corroded. Their corrosion will testify against

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[a] *4* An allusion to covenant unfaithfulness; see Hosea 3:1.
[b] *5* Or *that the spirit he caused to dwell in us envies intensely;* or *that the Spirit he caused to dwell in us longs jealously*
[c] *6* Prov. 3:34 [d] *11* The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family.

you and eat your flesh like fire. You have hoarded wealth in the last days. [4]Look! The wages you failed to pay the workers who mowed your fields are crying out against you. The cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord Almighty. [5]You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter.[a] [6]You have condemned and murdered the innocent one, who was not opposing you.

Patience in Suffering

[7]Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. [8]You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. [9]Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!

[10]Brothers and sisters, as an example of patience in the face of suffering, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord. [11]As you know, we count as blessed those who have persevered. You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy.

[12]Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear—not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to say is a simple "Yes" or "No." Otherwise you will be condemned.

The Prayer of Faith

[13]Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. [14]Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. [15]And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. [16]Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

[17]Elijah was a human being, even as we are. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. [18]Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

[19]My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, [20]remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

TRANSITION

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Paul's second missionary journey took him back to Asia Minor, then over to Europe to the cities of Philippi (Ac 16:11–40), Thessalonica (17:1–9), Berea (17:10–15), Athens (17:16–34), and Corinth (18:1–17). Most scholars agree that this trip ended about A.D. 52 when Paul returned to Antioch (18:22), but the beginning of the trip is variously dated between 46 and 50.

A disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over whether John Mark should accompany them on the new mission resulted in two missions instead of only one (15:37–40). Barnabas and Mark went one direction, while Paul ministered with Silas throughout this journey (15:40), with Timothy joining them at Lystra (16:1–3). The gospel spread further as Paul came into contact with Roman authorities and Greek philosophers.

• **Acts 15:36—18:11**

Acts

Disagreement Between Paul and Barnabas

15 :36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." [37]Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, [38]but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. [39]They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, [40]but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. [41]He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

16 [1]Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. [2]The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. [3]Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. [4]As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. [5]So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

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[a] *5* Or *yourselves as in a day of feasting*

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having
been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching
the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they
came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not
allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and
went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul
had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing
and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia
and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision,
we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia,
concluding that God had called us to preach
the gospel to them.

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed
straight for Samothrace, and the next day we
went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled
to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city
of that district[a] of Macedonia. And we stayed
there several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city
gate to the river, where we expected to find
a place of prayer. We sat down and began to
speak to the women who had gathered there.
14 One of those listening was a woman from
the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in
purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The
Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's
message. 15 When she and the members of her
household were baptized, she invited us to her
home. "If you consider me a believer in the
Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house."
And she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

16 Once when we were going to the place of
prayer, we were met by a female slave who had
a spirit by which she predicted the future. She
earned a great deal of money for her owners
by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and the
rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants
of the Most High God, who are telling you the
way to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many
days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he
turned around and said to the spirit, "In the
name of Jesus Christ I command you to come
out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

19 When her owners realized that their hope
of making money was gone, they seized Paul
and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20 They brought
them before the magistrates and said, "These
men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an
uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us
Romans to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul
and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to
be stripped and beaten with rods. 23 After they
had been severely flogged, they were thrown
into prison, and the jailer was commanded
to guard them carefully. 24 When he received
these orders, he put them in the inner cell and
fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other
prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly
there was such a violent earthquake that the
foundations of the prison were shaken. At once
all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's
chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and
when he saw the prison doors open, he drew
his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped.
28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We
are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and
fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then
brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must
I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus,
and you will be saved — you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord
to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At
that hour of the night the jailer took them and
washed their wounds; then immediately he
and all his household were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal
before them; he was filled with joy because he
had come to believe in God — he and his whole
household.

35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent
their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." 36 The jailer told Paul, "The
magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be
released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

37 But Paul said to the officers: "They beat
us publicly without a trial, even though we are
Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And
now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No!
Let them come themselves and escort us out."

38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed.
39 They came to appease them and escorted
them from the prison, requesting them to leave
the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the
prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they

[a] *12* The text and meaning of the Greek for *the leading city of that district* are uncertain.

Nighttime Exit to Berea (Ac 17:10)

The Egnatian Way was a main east-west highway in Paul's time. On his second missionary journey Paul traveled the Egnatian Way from Philippi through Amphipolis and Apollonia, finally arriving at Thessalonica. The highway ran on from Thessalonica westward toward Pella. However, in departing from Thessalonica, Paul left this main highway and turned south toward Berea (Ac 17:10).

Berea was a town in the southwest portion of the Roman province of Macedonia (now northern Greece). Cicero, the Roman writer, describes Berea as "off the beaten track" (*Pisonem* 36). We can imagine Paul and Silas, needing to avoid authorities that might have pursued them, traveling under duress, by night, and not on the Egnatian Way. These were not pleasant conditions in which to make the 50-mile journey from Thessalonica to Berea.

met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

In Thessalonica

17 [1]When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. [2]As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, [3]explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. [4]Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

[5]But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.[a] [6]But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, [7]and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." [8]When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. [9]Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

In Berea

[10]As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. [11]Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. [12]As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

[13]But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. [14]The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. [15]Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

[a] *5* Or *the assembly of the people*

Stoics, Epicureans, and a Babbler (Ac 17:18)

In Athens, Paul encountered the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers (Ac 17:18). Epicureans, who held little influence outside the academic elite of their day, dismissed popular Greek notions about the gods. If deities existed, Epicureans argued, one could know them only in terms of physical phenomena like stars or planets. In Epicurean philosophy the supreme goal was pleasure, defined especially as the absence of pain.

By contrast, the more popular Stoics opposed pleasure, criticized Epicureans, and usually professed belief in the gods. Nevertheless, Stoics had interpretations of the gods that were quite different from those held by the common people. Sometimes Stoics focused on the supreme deity, whom they saw as ruling and permeating the universe.

Paul could not appeal simultaneously to both of these groups as he addressed them at the Areopagus. Most of what he says fits both Christian and Stoic teaching (Ac 17:22–29). Only after he had won his audience's ear did he present distinctive Christian theology (17:30, 31).

In 399 B.C. the council of the Areopagus had accused Socrates of introducing new gods, so with the charge against Paul of proclaiming "foreign gods" (17:18) the Athenians were treating him as they had their most famous thinker. Such a charge had once been a capital offense in Athens; they had stoned to death a priestess for the same crime.

Paul's philosophic critics called him a "babbler" (17:18). In Greek, the term originally referred to birds pecking up grain, but by Paul's time it meant worthless persons—perhaps somewhat like the traditional American insult "birdbrain." Yet this "babbler's" sermon was not a failure, and resulted in new believers, including the influential Dionysius (17:33, 34). A tradition from Eusebius reports that Dionysius the Areopagite became the first Christian bishop of Athens.

In Athens

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens,
he was greatly distressed to see that the city
was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the syna-
gogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks,
as well as in the marketplace day by day with
those who happened to be there. 18 A group of
Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to de-
bate with him. Some of them asked, "What is
this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked,
"He seems to be advocating foreign gods."
They said this because Paul was preaching
the good news about Jesus and the resurrec-
tion. 19 Then they took him and brought him to
a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said
to him, "May we know what this new teaching
is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing
some strange ideas to our ears, and we would
like to know what they mean." 21 (All the Athe-
nians and the foreigners who lived there spent
their time doing nothing but talking about and
listening to the latest ideas.)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Ar-
eopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that
in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I
walked around and looked carefully at your ob-
jects of worship, I even found an altar with this
inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ig-
norant of the very thing you worship—and this
is what I am going to proclaim to you.

24 "The God who made the world and every-
thing in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and
does not live in temples built by human hands.
25 And he is not served by human hands, as if
he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives
everyone life and breath and everything else.
26 From one man he made all the nations, that
they should inhabit the whole earth; and he
marked out their appointed times in history
and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did
this so that they would seek him and perhaps
reach out for him and find him, though he is
not far from any one of us. 28 'For in him we
live and move and have our being.'[a] As some
of your own poets have said, 'We are his off-
spring.'[b]

29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring,
we should not think that the divine being is
like gold or silver or stone—an image made
by human design and skill. 30 In the past God
overlooked such ignorance, but now he com-
mands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For
he has set a day when he will judge the world
with justice by the man he has appointed. He
has given proof of this to everyone by raising
him from the dead."

[a] *28* From the Cretan philosopher Epimenides [b] *28* From the Cilician Stoic philosopher Aratus

Geography & Environment
Paul spoke at the Areopagus, whose name was associated with Ares, the Greek god of war (Ac 17:22). In Greek, the name "Areopagus" means "hill of Ares" or "Mars' Hill." It is the name of a hill below the Acropolis in Athens, and also of the traditional law court of Athens, which once met on or near the hill. A little farther from the Acropolis and below the Areopagus was the agora, the city marketplace.

Paul Before the Areopagus (Ac 17:19)

In A.D. 50 Paul visited Athens and began preaching in the agora, the marketplace which in ancient Greece served as the center of public life (Ac 17:17). Paul was summoned by the Athenians to the Areopagus, where he preached his sermon about the "unknown God" (Ac 17:19–23). The purpose of his visit to the Areopagus and its council is not certain, but he may have been on trial to defend his beliefs. We know of one individual from the Areopagus council, Dionysius, who became convinced of the truthfulness of Paul's message (Ac 17:34).

The Areopagus was a prominent hill in Athens (nearly 400 feet high) that was associated with the Greek god of war, Ares. Although ancient references to the council of the Areopagus are few, it is evident that it was an aristocratic body that advised the king. It then assumed royal functions after the Athenians deposed their monarchy (sometime before 800 B.C.). With the rise of democracy in 500 B.C. the council lost some of its power and became largely an esteemed group with religious functions.

By the 1st century A.D. the council of the Areopagus had regained much of its former authority. The assembly to which Paul preached was again the chief governing body in Athens, a position it would keep until the advent of Christian domination in the 4th century A.D.

32 When they heard about the resurrection
of the dead, some of them sneered, but others
said, "We want to hear you again on this sub-
ject." 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of
the people became followers of Paul and be-
lieved. Among them was Dionysius, a member
of the Areopagus, also a woman named Dama-
ris, and a number of others.

In Corinth

18 1 After this, Paul left Athens and went to
Corinth. 2 There he met a Jew named Aq-
uila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come
from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Clau-
dius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul
went to see them, 3 and because he was a tent-
maker as they were, he stayed and worked with
them. 4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the syn-
agogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.
5 When Silas and Timothy came from Mac-
edonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to
preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was
the Messiah. 6 But when they opposed Paul and
became abusive, he shook out his clothes in
protest and said to them, "Your blood be on
your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now
on I will go to the Gentiles."
7 Then Paul left the synagogue and went next
door to the house of Titius Justus, a worship-
er of God. 8 Crispus, the synagogue leader, and
his entire household believed in the Lord; and
many of the Corinthians who heard Paul be-
lieved and were baptized.
9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision:
"Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be
silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one is going
to attack and harm you, because I have many
people in this city." 11 So Paul stayed in Corinth
for a year and a half, teaching them the word
of God.

TRANSITION

The First Letter to the Thessalonians

Paul, Silas, and Timothy came to Thessalonica on Paul's second missionary journey (Ac 17:1–9). Paul's stay at Thessalonica was brief, at most only a few months. From there he went to Berea (17:10), on to Athens (17:15), and then to Corinth (18:1). From Athens Paul sent Timothy to encourage the Thessalonians, and when Timothy returned to him at Corinth, the apostle was overjoyed at the news of the strong faith of the Thessalonians. From Corinth he wrote the first Thessalonian letter in late A.D. 50 or early 51. First Thessalonians is one of the earliest of Paul's letters, and thus also one of the first books in the New Testament to be written.

Thessalonica, now called Salonika, was an ancient Greek city, the capital of the Roman province of Macedonia. Paul began his ministry there in the Jewish synagogue; however, the church that resulted included not only Jews, but also a number of devout Greeks and many leading women. Many Jews of Thessalonica did not become believers, and the synagogue rulers eventually rejected Paul and drove him from the town (Ac 17:10).

Paul had not had time in Thessalonica to instruct his converts as thoroughly as he would have liked. Thus, in this letter he wanted to express his joy at their steadfastness, encourage them in the midst of suffering, and correct misconceptions about the Lord's return.

• 1 Thessalonians 1:1—2:20

1 Thessalonians

1 :1 Paul, Silas[a] and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God
the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

Grace and peace to you.

[a] *1* Greek *Silvanus*, a variant of *Silas*

Geography & Environment
Thessalonica (1Th 1:1) was located about 200 miles north of Athens, on the main road leading from Rome to Byzantium (that is, Istanbul). As the capital of the province of Macedonia, the city had been Pompey's headquarters during the civil war that he lost to Julius Caesar. It was a prosperous trading city, as well as the home of Paul's coworkers, Aristarchus and Secundus (Ac 20:4).

Thanksgiving for the Thessalonians' Faith

2We always thank God for all of you and
continually mention you in our prayers. 3We
remember before our God and Father your
work produced by faith, your labor prompted
by love, and your endurance inspired by hope
in our Lord Jesus Christ.
4For we know, brothers and sisters[a] loved by
God, that he has chosen you, 5because our gos-
pel came to you not simply with words but also
with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep con-
viction. You know how we lived among you for
your sake. 6You became imitators of us and of
the Lord, for you welcomed the message in the
midst of severe suffering with the joy given by
the Holy Spirit. 7And so you became a model to
all the believers in Macedonia and Achaia. 8The
Lord's message rang out from you not only in
Macedonia and Achaia—your faith in God has
become known everywhere. Therefore we do
not need to say anything about it, 9for they
themselves report what kind of reception you
gave us. They tell how you turned to God from
idols to serve the living and true God, 10and to
wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised
from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from
the coming wrath.

Paul's Ministry in Thessalonica

2 1You know, brothers and sisters, that our
visit to you was not without results. 2We
had previously suffered and been treated out-
rageously in Philippi, as you know, but with the
help of our God we dared to tell you his gospel
in the face of strong opposition. 3For the appeal
we make does not spring from error or impure
motives, nor are we trying to trick you. 4On the
contrary, we speak as those approved by God
to be entrusted with the gospel. We are not
trying to please people but God, who tests our
hearts. 5You know we never used flattery, nor
did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God
is our witness. 6We were not looking for praise
from people, not from you or anyone else, even
though as apostles of Christ we could have
asserted our authority. 7Instead, we were like
young children[b] among you.
Just as a nursing mother cares for her chil-
dren, 8so we cared for you. Because we loved
you so much, we were delighted to share with
you not only the gospel of God but our lives
as well. 9Surely you remember, brothers and
sisters, our toil and hardship; we worked night
and day in order not to be a burden to anyone
while we preached the gospel of God to you.
10You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy,
righteous and blameless we were among you
who believed. 11For you know that we dealt
with each of you as a father deals with his own
children, 12encouraging, comforting and urg-
ing you to live lives worthy of God, who calls
you into his kingdom and glory.
13And we also thank God continually be-
cause, when you received the word of God,
which you heard from us, you accepted it not
as a human word, but as it actually is, the word
of God, which is indeed at work in you who be-
lieve. 14For you, brothers and sisters, became
imitators of God's churches in Judea, which
are in Christ Jesus: You suffered from your
own people the same things those churches
suffered from the Jews 15who killed the Lord
Jesus and the prophets and also drove us out.
They displease God and are hostile to every-
one 16in their effort to keep us from speaking
to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. In
this way they always heap up their sins to the
limit. The wrath of God has come upon them
at last.[c]

Paul's Longing to See the Thessalonians

17But, brothers and sisters, when we were
orphaned by being separated from you for a
short time (in person, not in thought), out of
our intense longing we made every effort to
see you. 18For we wanted to come to you—cer-
tainly I, Paul, did, again and again—but Satan
blocked our way. 19For what is our hope, our
joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the
presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is
it not you? 20Indeed, you are our glory and joy.

[a] *4* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 2:1, 9, 14, 17; 3:7; 4:1, 10, 13; 5:1, 4, 12, 14, 25, 27.
[b] *7* Some manuscripts *were gentle* [c] *16* Or *them fully*

TRANSITION
Good News from Thessalonica
From Thessalonica the missionaries had gone to Berea (Ac 17:10–15). Silas and Timothy stayed there, while Paul went on to Athens.

Alone in the City of Philosophers (1Th 3:1)

In A.D. 50 Paul sent Timothy to minister in Thessalonica while he remained alone in Athens (1Th 3:1–3). Paul was confronted by what was considered the city with the greatest academic tradition of the region. Here Paul met various philosophers (Ac 17:18). Here he met Athenians who spent much time discussing and debating "the latest ideas" (Ac 17:21). The city's intellectual life had a long history prior to Paul's visit.

The Greek city-state of Athens was composed of the city of Athens proper, along with the entire peninsula of Attica, more than 1,000 square miles. By the 7th century B.C. the Attic peninsula was unified under the control of Athens, and the Athenian monarchy had been replaced with a ruling class aristocracy.

All philosophy did not originate in the region; however, Athens did become the center of Greek philosophy in the 4th century B.C. Socrates (469–399 B.C.), Plato (428–347 B.C.), and Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) all made their greatest contributions while residing in Athens. During the Hellenistic period (beginning around 332 B.C.) Athens continued to house some of the most important philosophical schools in the Mediterranean world, including representatives of the Stoics, Cynics, Skeptics, and Epicureans.

Athens finally became subject to Rome in the early part of the 1st century B.C. Although Athenians lost their international political autonomy, the Romans were content to allow them local political rule. Roman senators sent their sons to study in Athens, which continued its preeminence in the field of philosophy and culture on into the 1st century A.D. In Paul's time, discussions of philosophical matters flourished in the agora (or marketplace), and there certain Athenian philosophers discovered Paul and his "new teaching" (Ac 17:17–19).

Anxious because of the severe persecution the Christians faced at Thessalonica, he asked Timothy to return to that city and encourage them (1Th 3:2). Paul went on to Corinth, where Timothy later joined him with news of the faith and courage of the Thessalonians (Ac 18:1, 5).

How the missionary loved his converts! After such deep anxiety over them, their standing "firm in the Lord" (1Th 3:8) gave him a new lease on life. Yet the faith of the Thessalonians still lacked full instruction because Paul's stay with them had been cut short, so now he wrote, providing the needed instruction (4:1—5:24).

• **1 Thessalonians 3:1—5:28**

1 Thessalonians

3 **:1** So when we could stand it no longer,
we thought it best to be left by ourselves
in Athens. [2]We sent Timothy, who is our brother and co-worker in God's service in spreading
the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you in your faith, [3]so that no one would be
unsettled by these trials. For you know quite
well that we are destined for them. [4]In fact,
when we were with you, we kept telling you
that we would be persecuted. And it turned out
that way, as you well know. [5]For this reason,
when I could stand it no longer, I sent to find
out about your faith. I was afraid that in some
way the tempter had tempted you and that our
labors might have been in vain.

Timothy's Encouraging Report

[6]But Timothy has just now come to us from
you and has brought good news about your
faith and love. He has told us that you always
have pleasant memories of us and that you
long to see us, just as we also long to see you.
[7]Therefore, brothers and sisters, in all our distress and persecution we were encouraged
about you because of your faith. [8]For now we
really live, since you are standing firm in the
Lord. [9]How can we thank God enough for you
in return for all the joy we have in the presence
of our God because of you? [10]Night and day we
pray most earnestly that we may see you again
and supply what is lacking in your faith.

[11]Now may our God and Father himself and
our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come
to you. [12]May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you. [13]May
he strengthen your hearts so that you will be
blameless and holy in the presence of our God
and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all
his holy ones.

Living to Please God

4 [1]As for other matters, brothers and sisters,
we instructed you how to live in order to
please God, as in fact you are living. Now we
ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do
this more and more. [2]For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the
Lord Jesus.

[3]It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality;
[4]that each of you should learn to control your
own body[a] in a way that is holy and honorable,

[a] *4* Or *learn to live with your own wife*; or *learn to acquire a wife*

Pictures of the End Times (1Th 4:16)

The "voice of the archangel" and the "trumpet call of God" (1Th 4:16) emphasize the divine authority behind Paul's description of Jesus' return. The images and pictures Paul uses for the end times overlap with those of other Jews of his time, though he omits most elements found in contemporary Jewish descriptions. What Paul does describe especially matches Jesus' picture of the end times (trumpet, clouds, angels, times and seasons, sudden destruction).

Jewish readers familiar with the Old Testament recognized the importance of trumpets for gathering the assembly, sometimes to battle. Gentile readers probably knew the Roman use of trumpets to gather troops or to send signals in battle. Most relevant, Jewish tradition, as emphasized in a daily synagogue prayer, portrayed the gathering of Israel in the end times as accompanied by the sounding of a trumpet.

The highest archangel, according to Jewish tradition, was Michael (Da 10:13), who was also the special patron for Israel. Each nation had a guardian angel, but Michael was especially powerful, as the guardian of God's chosen people. Jewish traditions sometimes gave Michael special prominence in the final battle, though, for Paul, Jesus fulfilled this function himself (1Th 4:16).

The "loud command," conjoined with the trumpet, may picture the battle cry offered by a commander. The Old Testament sometimes portrays God as a divine warrior, occasionally mentioning his battle cry (Isa 42:13).

Jesus' teaching about the end times (Mt 24) is probably the background for Paul's own teaching, which he claimed was by "the Lord's word" (1Th 4:15). As Jesus described the coming Son of Man, he applied to himself a variety of end-time descriptions that the Old Testament and Judaism normally reserved only for God (Mt 24:30, 31). Similarly, Paul applies these same descriptions to the coming Christ.

5 not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do
not know God; 6 and that in this matter no one
should wrong or take advantage of a brother or
sister.[a] The Lord will punish all those who com-
mit such sins, as we told you and warned you
before. 7 For God did not call us to be impure,
but to live a holy life. 8 Therefore, anyone who
rejects this instruction does not reject a human
being but God, the very God who gives you his
Holy Spirit.

9 Now about your love for one another we
do not need to write to you, for you yourselves
have been taught by God to love each other.
10 And in fact, you do love all of God's family
throughout Macedonia. Yet we urge you, broth-
ers and sisters, to do so more and more, 11 and
to make it your ambition to lead a quiet life: You
should mind your own business and work with
your hands, just as we told you, 12 so that your
daily life may win the respect of outsiders and
so that you will not be dependent on anybody.

Believers Who Have Died

13 Brothers and sisters, we do not want you
to be uninformed about those who sleep in
death, so that you do not grieve like the rest
of mankind, who have no hope. 14 For we be-
lieve that Jesus died and rose again, and so we
believe that God will bring with Jesus those
who have fallen asleep in him. 15 According to
the Lord's word, we tell you that we who are
still alive, who are left until the coming of the
Lord, will certainly not precede those who have
fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself will come
down from heaven, with a loud command, with
the voice of the archangel and with the trum-
pet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise
first. 17 After that, we who are still alive and are
left will be caught up together with them in the
clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we
will be with the Lord forever. 18 Therefore en-
courage one another with these words.

The Day of the Lord

5 1 Now, brothers and sisters, about times and
dates we do not need to write to you, 2 for
you know very well that the day of the Lord
will come like a thief in the night. 3 While peo-
ple are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction
will come on them suddenly, as labor pains on
a pregnant woman, and they will not escape.

4 But you, brothers and sisters, are not in

[a] *6* The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family.

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 50
50	Claudius adopts Nero
50	Beginning of Paul's second missionary journey (Ac 15:36)
50	Plutarch, author of the *Lives*, is born
50	A vision calls Paul to Macedonia
50	Paul preaches in Athens (Ac 17)
50–51	Paul writes 1 Thessalonians from Corinth

darkness so that this day should surprise you
like a thief. 5You are all children of the light
and children of the day. We do not belong to
the night or to the darkness. 6So then, let us
not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be
awake and sober. 7For those who sleep, sleep
at night, and those who get drunk, get drunk at
night. 8But since we belong to the day, let us be
sober, putting on faith and love as a breastplate,
and the hope of salvation as a helmet. 9For God
did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive
salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. 10He
died for us so that, whether we are awake or
asleep, we may live together with him. 11There-
fore encourage one another and build each oth-
er up, just as in fact you are doing.

Final Instructions

12Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to
acknowledge those who work hard among you,
who care for you in the Lord and who admon-
ish you. 13Hold them in the highest regard in
love because of their work. Live in peace with
each other. 14And we urge you, brothers and
sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive,
encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be
patient with everyone. 15Make sure that no-
body pays back wrong for wrong, but always
strive to do what is good for each other and for
everyone else.

16Rejoice always, 17pray continually, 18give
thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's
will for you in Christ Jesus.

19Do not quench the Spirit. 20Do not treat
prophecies with contempt 21but test them all;
hold on to what is good, 22reject every kind of evil.

23May God himself, the God of peace, sanc-
tify you through and through. May your whole
spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the
coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24The one
who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.

25Brothers and sisters, pray for us. 26Greet
all God's people with a holy kiss. 27I charge you
before the Lord to have this letter read to all
the brothers and sisters.

28The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with
you.

Daily Life & Customs

Kisses were a common greeting for family, friends, and respected acquaintances. The "holy kiss" (1Th 5:26) was not a romantic kiss on the lips or face. For example, in one form known today, as the parties shook hands they leaned forward repeatedly, bowing and repeating stylized formulas of greeting near the other person's ear.

TRANSITION

The Second Letter to the Thessalonians

It appears that several issues Paul addressed in 1 Thessalonians were still very much alive when the second Thessalonian letter was written: the suffering of Christians, idleness, and the Lord's return. Thus, Paul could have written this letter from Corinth a few months after writing 1 Thessalonians, probably late in A.D. 51.

While both letters are very concerned with the second coming of Christ, some scholars question whether Paul is the author of both. In 1 Thessalonians, Paul was so certain of the nearness of Christ's return that he anticipated both himself and some of the Thessalonians being alive to see it (1Th 4:15). A somewhat different view is expressed in 2 Thessalonians. Several specific events, some involving "the man of lawlessness," must transpire before the Lord's coming (2Th 2:1–12). Those who are convinced that Paul's theology about the end of time could not have changed to this degree in only a few months conclude that 2 Thessalonians is a pseudonymous letter. Some later writer, writing sometime after Paul's death (A.D. 80–100), but using his name (2Th 3:17), addressed mounting concerns about the delay in Christ's return.

• 2 Thessalonians 1:1—3:18

2 Thessalonians

1:1 Paul, Silas[a] and Timothy,

To the church of the Thessalonians in God
our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2Grace and peace to you from God the Fa-
ther and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3We ought always to thank God for you,
brothers and sisters,[b] and rightly so, because
your faith is growing more and more, and the
love all of you have for one another is increas-
ing. 4Therefore, among God's churches we
boast about your perseverance and faith in all
the persecutions and trials you are enduring.

5All this is evidence that God's judgment is
right, and as a result you will be counted wor-
thy of the kingdom of God, for which you are
suffering. 6God is just: He will pay back trou-
ble to those who trouble you 7and give relief to

[a] *1* Greek *Silvanus*, a variant of *Silas* [b] *3* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 2:1, 13, 15; 3:1, 6, 13.

you who are troubled, and to us as well. This will happen when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven in blazing fire with his powerful angels. 8He will punish those who do not know God and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. 9They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might 10on the day he comes to be glorified in his holy people and to be marveled at among all those who have believed. This includes you, because you believed our testimony to you.

11With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. 12We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.[a]

The Man of Lawlessness

2 1Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers and sisters, 2not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by the teaching allegedly from us—whether by a prophecy or by word of mouth or by letter—asserting that the day of the Lord has already come. 3Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness[b] is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. 4He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

5Don't you remember that when I was with you I used to tell you these things? 6And now you know what is holding him back, so that he may be revealed at the proper time. 7For the secret power of lawlessness is already at work; but the one who now holds it back will continue to do so till he is taken out of the way. 8And then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will overthrow with the breath of his mouth and destroy by the splendor of his coming. 9The coming of the lawless one will be in accordance with how Satan works. He will use all sorts of displays of power through signs and wonders that serve the lie, 10and all the ways that wickedness deceives those who are perishing. They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 11For this reason God sends them a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie 12and so that all will be condemned who have not believed the truth but have delighted in wickedness.

Trade & Economics

Some of the philosophers of the ancient world considered themselves above everyday work. The Cynics styled themselves as wandering beggars, proud of their otherworldliness and not ashamed to beg. Their refusal to work (2Th 3:6–8) did not result from simple laziness, but rather from their rejection of community standards and tradition.

Stand Firm

13But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers and sisters loved by the Lord, because God chose you as firstfruits[c] to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

15So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings[d] we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter.

16May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, 17encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.

Request for Prayer

3 1As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you. 2And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith. 3But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. 4We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 51 to 52
51	Silas and Timothy arrive in Corinth from Macedonia (Ac 18:5)
51	Paul writes 2 Thessalonians from Corinth
51	Paul appears before Gallio (Ac 18:12)
52–59	Antonius Felix is procurator or governor of Judea (Ac 23:26)
52	Ananias is summoned to Rome to explain local unrest

[a] *12* Or *God and Lord, Jesus Christ* [b] *3* Some manuscripts *sin* [c] *13* Some manuscripts *because from the beginning God chose you* [d] *15* Or *traditions*

things we command. [5]May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance.

Warning Against Idleness

[6]In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching[a] you received from us. [7]For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, [8]nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. [9]We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. [10]For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat."

[11]We hear that some among you are idle and disruptive. They are not busy; they are busybodies. [12]Such people we command and urge in the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and earn the food they eat. [13]And as for you, brothers and sisters, never tire of doing what is good.

[14]Take special note of anyone who does not obey our instruction in this letter. Do not associate with them, in order that they may feel ashamed. [15]Yet do not regard them as an enemy, but warn them as you would a fellow believer.

Final Greetings

[16]Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with all of you.

[17]I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand, which is the distinguishing mark in all my letters. This is how I write.

[18]The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

[a] *6* Or *tradition*

TRANSITION

Paul Before Gallio

The emperor Claudius Caesar (A.D. 41–54), while favorable toward the Jews early in his reign, later forbade their assembly. Suetonius, a Roman historian, indicates that Claudius "expelled from Rome the Jews, who were constantly rioting under the leadership of Chrestus." Two Jewish refugees affected by this expulsion (which is dated in A.D. 49 by Orosius, a church historian) were Aquila and Priscilla. Luke records that when Paul stayed with them in Corinth, they "had recently come from Italy" because of Claudius's edict (Ac 18:2, 3).

During a period of 18 months Paul established a flourishing Christian congregation (18:11). In A.D. 51 he was brought before Gallio, the Roman proconsul of Achaia (southern Greece). The archaeological remains of Gallio's judgment hall have now been discovered. Perhaps more important, however, is an inscription found at Delphi that mentions Gallio and fixes his brief proconsulship over Achaia (about one year) in A.D. 51–52. The likelihood, then, that Paul founded the church in Corinth in A.D. 51 is one of the most certain points for establishing the chronology of Paul's ministry.

After leaving Corinth, Paul accompanied Priscilla and Aquila to Ephesus. He left them there and sailed to Caesarea. He next greeted the church at Jerusalem before returning to his home base in Antioch.

• Acts 18:12–22

Ruins at Caesarea

Gallio Rules the Province of Achaia (Ac 18:12)

L. Iunius Gallio Annaeanus was the brother of the celebrated Latin writer and Stoic philosopher Seneca. Gallio held a number of important administrative posts within the Roman Empire, including that of proconsul of Achaia (southern Greece). Apparently, Paul visited Corinth, the capital of Achaia, during Gallio's term of office as proconsul (Ac 18:12).

Gallio is often mentioned in the writings of Seneca, as well as in those of Pliny the Elder. Moreover, a number of fragments from an inscription at Delphi dated to A.D. 52 mention Iunius Gallio. The text of the inscription, which has been interpreted as a letter from Emperor Claudius to Delphi, appears to concern the resettlement of Delphi.

Because of the mention of Gallio in the Delphi inscription and in Acts, scholars have supposed that Paul's first stay in Corinth must have occurred around A.D. 51–52, the date usually set for Gallio's term of office. The account of Paul before Gallio shows conflict between Paul and the Jews, as well as the hesitancy of Roman officials to become involved with religious quarrels.

Paul's Jewish opponents attempted to use legal means to silence his preaching. Their appeal to the Jewish Law of Moses failed, however, as Gallio, the Roman proconsul, refused to accept the Jewish charges, telling them to settle the matter themselves. His response is in accord with Roman legal tradition followed in Rome's conquered provinces.

What Gallio thought of the Jews or of the Christians is not known. He did not allow Paul to defend himself, as Paul was able to do in other instances (Ac 24:10). Furthermore, he "showed no concern whatever" about the beating of Sosthenes, the synagogue ruler (Ac 18:17). Possibly Gallio was influenced by his brother Seneca, who criticized some Jewish customs, stating that the "vanquished" (meaning the Jews) had given laws to "their victors" (the Romans).

Acts

18:12 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united
attack on Paul and brought him to the place
of judgment. 13"This man," they charged, "is
persuading the people to worship God in ways
contrary to the law."
14Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio
said to them, "If you Jews were making a com-
plaint about some misdemeanor or serious
crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen
to you. 15But since it involves questions about
words and names and your own law—settle
the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of
such things." 16So he drove them off. 17Then
the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the syn-
agogue leader and beat him in front of the pro-
consul; and Gallio showed no concern what-
ever.

Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos

18Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time.
Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed
for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.
Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cen-
chreae because of a vow he had taken. 19They
arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla
and Aquila. He himself went into the syna-
gogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20When
they asked him to spend more time with them,
he declined. 21But as he left, he promised, "I
will come back if it is God's will." Then he set
sail from Ephesus. 22When he landed at Caes-
area, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the
church and then went down to Antioch.

Politics & Government
A judgment seat was a platform something like the outdoor stages used today for concerts or speakers. The courts conducted their business from such a platform. The judgment seat in Corinth has been excavated, and it is possible today to stand where Paul stood in A.D. 51, and face the deserted platform where Gallio sat to preside over the court (Ac 18:12).

TRANSITION

Paul's Third Missionary Journey

On Paul's third missionary journey he visited the plac es in G alatia and P hrygia (Ac 18:23) which he had ev angelized on his first journey. He also revisited Macedonia and Greece (20:1–3), evangelized on his sec ond. But the focus of the third journey was Ephesus

in western Asia Minor (19:1—20:1). Here the gospel dramatically overturned paganism and its magic (see "Commotion in Ephesus" at Ac 19:23). This journey concluded with Paul's fateful trip to Jerusalem (21:1–14).

Paul taught daily in Ephesus as he had done in Corinth. Ephesus was the political and religious center of the province of Asia, so visitors, as well as residents, heard and shared the gospel. After teaching for three months in the Jewish synagogue, Paul retreated to the school of Tyrannus (19:8, 9). Luke indicates a long ministry for Paul over a two-year period (19:10), while his total stay in Ephesus lasted approximately three years (20:31), usually dated from A.D. 52 to 55. One result of this Asian ministry was the planting of the church at Colossae by Epaphras (see Col 4:12).

• **Acts 18:23—19:22**

Acts

18 **:23** After spending some time in Antioch, Paul set out from there and traveled from place to place throughout the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

[24]Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was a learned man, with a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures. [25]He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor[a] and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. [26]He began to speak boldly in the synagogue. When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

[27]When Apollos wanted to go to Achaia, the brothers and sisters encouraged him and wrote to the disciples there to welcome him. When he arrived, he was a great help to those who by grace had believed. [28]For he vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah.

Paul in Ephesus

19 [1]While Apollos was at Corinth, Paul took the road through the interior and arrived at Ephesus. There he found some disciples [2]and asked them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when[b] you believed?"

They answered, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit."

[3]So Paul asked, "Then what baptism did you receive?"

"John's baptism," they replied.

[4]Paul said, "John's baptism was a baptism of repentance. He told the people to believe in the one coming after him, that is, in Jesus." [5]On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. [6]When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues[c] and prophesied. [7]There were about twelve men in all.

[8]Paul entered the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months, arguing persuasively about the kingdom of God. [9]But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way. So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and had discussions daily in the lecture hall of Tyrannus. [10]This went on for two years, so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.

[11]God did extraordinary miracles through

[a] *25* Or *with fervor in the Spirit* [b] *2* Or *after* [c] *6* Or *other languages*

Asia and Greece Revisited
On the third missionary journey (Ac 18:23—21:16), Paul visited the places in Galatia and Phrygia which he had evangelized on his first journey. He also revisited Macedonia and Greece, evangelized on his second journey. But the focus of the third journey was Ephesus in western Asia Minor, where he settled for more than two years. Here the gospel dramatically overturned paganism and its magic.

Early Jewish Missionaries (Ac 19:13, 14)

Missionary work among the Jews in the Greco-Roman world took place in the everyday lives of the people. Jewish "missionaries" were active in the marketplace, competing for devotion to their God amidst various other persons who were advocating devotion to their own god. Such competition often occurred in displays of power over spiritual forces. The missionary whose god proved his or her power by signs of superiority over other gods could make a strong case for a person to change religious devotion.

These "missionaries," both Jewish and non-Jewish, therefore were often wanderers, migrants who traveled from city to city to show the power of their deity. Their missionary work was also their livelihood. In response to their activity, the missionaries hoped to receive adequate compensation to keep their operations afloat. A century later, the Christian critic Celsus described such Jewish and non-Jewish missionary activity in a not-so-complimentary way: "There are many who, although of no name, are moved without scruples and on the slightest occasion, whether within or without the cultic places, gesturing like inspired persons, they beg and roam in cities and camps" (Origen, *Contra Celsum* 7.8–10).

Competitive missionary activity is the setting behind the "Jews who went around driving out evil spirits" and the "seven sons of Sceva" (Ac 19:13, 14). Impressed by the works of Paul, these missionaries sought to prove their God's superiority over other gods in order to convert people to the synagogue, and they even appealed to "the name of the Lord Jesus" (19:13). Yet the evil spirit knew the difference between the Jewish missionaries and the Christian Paul, turning on the missionaries (19:15, 16).

This public display strengthened the credibility of the Christian missionaries in Ephesus. The name of Jesus was "held in high honor," leading many to convert from pagan magical arts (19:17–19). The Jewish missionaries had inadvertently turned into missionaries for Christ and his church!

Paul, 12so that even handkerchiefs and aprons
that had touched him were taken to the sick,
and their illnesses were cured and the evil spir-
its left them.

13Some Jews who went around driving out
evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the
Lord Jesus over those who were demon-pos-
sessed. They would say, "In the name of the
Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you
to come out." 14Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish
chief priest, were doing this. 15One day the evil
spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul
I know about, but who are you?" 16Then the
man who had the evil spirit jumped on them
and overpowered them all. He gave them such
a beating that they ran out of the house naked
and bleeding.

17When this became known to the Jews and
Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized
with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was
held in high honor. 18Many of those who be-
lieved now came and openly confessed what
they had done. 19A number who had practiced
sorcery brought their scrolls together and
burned them publicly. When they calculated
the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty
thousand drachmas.[a] 20In this way the word of
the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

21After all this had happened, Paul decided[b]
to go to Jerusalem, passing through Macedo-
nia and Achaia. "After I have been there," he
said, "I must visit Rome also." 22He sent two of
his helpers, Timothy and Erastus, to Macedo-
nia, while he stayed in the province of Asia a
little longer.

[a] *19* A drachma was a silver coin worth about a day's wages.
[b] *21* Or *decided in the Spirit*

TRANSITION

The First Letter to the Corinthians

The apostle Paul is almost universally recognized as the author of 1 Corinthians. In the letter, probably written about A.D. 55 during the third missionary journey, he remarked, "I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost" (1Co 16:8). Since he was planning his departure, he probably wrote 1 Corinthians during the last of his three years in Ephesus (Ac 20:31).

The Corinth which Paul knew had been founded as a Roman colony during the century before Christ. It was strategically located in the Roman province of Achaia on a narrow strip of land between the Aegean Sea and the Adriatic, with two adjoining ports. Corinth's location made it a center of the trade routes passing from east to west. Prosperity brought luxury and immorality. The expression "To live like a Corinthian" to one Athenian writer meant living in gross immorality.

The church which Paul had established in Corinth during his second missionary journey (Ac 18:1–17) was very diverse, including men and women, rich and poor. The report from Chloe's household informed Paul of divisions in the church; they were developing conflicting loyalties to different human teachers (1Co 1:10–13). He wanted them to understand that salvation is not based on human wisdom or personalities, but on Christ crucified and the work of God in building his church.

• 1 Corinthians 1:1—4:21

1 Corinthians

1:1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ
Jesus by the will of God, and our brother
Sosthenes,

2To the church of God in Corinth, to those
sanctified in Christ Jesus and called to be his
holy people, together with all those every-
where who call on the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ—their Lord and ours:

3Grace and peace to you from God our Fa-
ther and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving

4I always thank my God for you because of
his grace given you in Christ Jesus. 5For in him
you have been enriched in every way—with
all kinds of speech and with all knowledge—
6God thus confirming our testimony about
Christ among you. 7Therefore you do not lack
any spiritual gift as you eagerly wait for our
Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. 8He will also
keep you firm to the end, so that you will be
blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.
9God is faithful, who has called you into fellow-
ship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

A Church Divided Over Leaders

10I appeal to you, brothers and sisters,[a] in
the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of
you agree with one another in what you say and
that there be no divisions among you, but that
you be perfectly united in mind and thought.
11My brothers and sisters, some from Chloe's
household have informed me that there are
quarrels among you. 12What I mean is this:
One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I fol-
low Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas[b]"; still
another, "I follow Christ."

13Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for
you? Were you baptized in the name of Paul?
14I thank God that I did not baptize any of you
except Crispus and Gaius, 15so no one can say
that you were baptized in my name. 16(Yes, I
also baptized the household of Stephanas;
beyond that, I don't remember if I baptized
anyone else.) 17For Christ did not send me to
baptize, but to preach the gospel—not with
wisdom and eloquence, lest the cross of Christ
be emptied of its power.

Christ Crucified Is God's Power and Wisdom

18For the message of the cross is foolishness
to those who are perishing, but to us who are
being saved it is the power of God. 19For it is
written:

Geography & Environment
Corinth was located near the isthmus of land joining the mainland of Greece to the peninsula called the Peloponnesus (1Co 1:2). It was the site of the Isthmian Games, an important competition similar to the Olympic Games. Not only men but women competed in these games, with the prize being a sprig of celery. The Isthmian Games were held in A.D. 49 and 51.

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise;
the intelligence of the intelligent I will
frustrate."[c]

20Where is the wise person? Where is the
teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher
of this age? Has not God made foolish the wis-
dom of the world? 21For since in the wisdom
of God the world through its wisdom did not
know him, God was pleased through the fool-
ishness of what was preached to save those
who believe. 22Jews demand signs and Greeks
look for wisdom, 23but we preach Christ cru-
cified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolish-
ness to Gentiles, 24but to those whom God has
called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power

[a] *10* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in verses 11 and 26; and in 2:1; 3:1; 4:6; 6:8; 7:24, 29; 10:1; 11:33; 12:1; 14:6, 20, 26, 39; 15:1, 6, 50, 58; 16:15, 20.
[b] *12* That is, Peter [c] *19* Isaiah 29:14

The books burned by magic practitioners in Ephesus were worth "fifty thousand drachmas." (Ac 19:19)

of God and the wisdom of God. 25For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

26Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. 27But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. 28God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, 29so that no one may boast before him. 30It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31Therefore, as it is written: "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord."[a]

2 1And so it was with me, brothers and sisters. When I came to you, I did not come with eloquence or human wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God.[b] 2For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3I came to you in weakness with great fear and trembling. 4My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

God's Wisdom Revealed by the Spirit

6We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. 7No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. 8None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. 9However, as it is written:

> "What no eye has seen,
> what no ear has heard,
> and what no human mind has
> conceived"[c]—
> the things God has prepared for those
> who love him—

10these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit.

The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. 11For who knows a person's thoughts except their own spirit within them? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. 12What we have received is not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may understand what God has freely given us. 13This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words.[d] 14The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. 15The person with the Spirit makes judgments about all things, but such a person is not subject to merely human judgments, 16for,

> "Who has known the mind of the Lord
> so as to instruct him?"[e]

But we have the mind of Christ.

The Church and Its Leaders

3 1Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. 2I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans? 4For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not mere human beings?

5What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. 6I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow. 7So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. 8The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor. 9For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building.

Arts & Literature
The highest skill taught in ancient education was public address and debate. People were familiar with the distinction between what someone said and how he said it, and from the time of Socrates they were reminded to be suspicious of speakers with exceptional skills in rhetoric (1Co 2:4). Someone clever but unprincipled might use such skill to deceive and mislead.

[a] *31* Jer. 9:24 [b] *1* Some manuscripts *proclaimed to you God's mystery* [c] *9* Isaiah 64:4 [d] *13* Or *Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual* [e] *16* Isaiah 40:13

Of Paul or Apollos? Patronage at Corinth (1Co 3:1–9)

Modern western societies teach their citizens that all persons should have equal access to the goods and services provided by the society. Despite all evidence to the contrary, it is supposedly not "*who* you know" but "*what* you know" that obtains for a person what is desired in life. We are taught that "equal rights" means "equal opportunity," and equal rights are equally possessed by all.

The Greco-Roman world, however, did not operate under such an illusion, but according to a different principle: it was who you knew that really mattered. Access to the society's goods and services arose from knowing the right person in the right place. Such a social system is called "patronage," a system built on the presupposition of social inequality. The more powerful person in the relationship (the patron) had access to goods and services that the person of lower status (the client) needed or wanted.

In return for a favor, a client granted the patron loyalty and honor that increased the patron's status and influence. Possibly the Christians at Corinth reflected the patronage system when they expressed their loyalty to particular Christian leaders. Perhaps the Gentile Christians claimed to "follow Paul" (1Co 3:4), considering themselves his disciples. The intellectuals of the Corinthian church may have supported the Alexandrian leader Apollos, who had ministered in Corinth (Ac 19:1). Rather, Paul preferred for himself and Apollos to be viewed only as ministers who served the church according to the gifts and abilities they had received from God (3:5).

10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a
foundation as a wise builder, and someone else
is building on it. But each one should build
with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation
other than the one already laid, which is Jesus
Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation
using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or
straw, 13 their work will be shown for what it is,
because the Day will bring it to light. It will be
revealed with fire, and the fire will test the qual-
ity of each person's work. 14 If what has been
built survives, the builder will receive a reward.
15 If it is burned up, the builder will suffer loss
but yet will be saved—even though only as one
escaping through the flames.

16 Don't you know that you yourselves are
God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in
your midst? 17 If anyone destroys God's temple,
God will destroy that person; for God's temple
is sacred, and you together are that temple.

18 Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you
think you are wise by the standards of this age,
you should become "fools" so that you may
become wise. 19 For the wisdom of this world
is foolishness in God's sight. As it is written:
"He catches the wise in their craftiness"[a];
20 and again, "The Lord knows that the thoughts of
the wise are futile."[b] 21 So then, no more boast-
ing about human leaders! All things are yours,
22 whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas[c] or the
world or life or death or the present or the fu-
ture—all are yours, 23 and you are of Christ,
and Christ is of God.

The Nature of True Apostleship

4 1 This, then, is how you ought to regard
us: as servants of Christ and as those en-
trusted with the mysteries God has revealed.
2 Now it is required that those who have been
given a trust must prove faithful. 3 I care very
little if I am judged by you or by any human
court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. 4 My
conscience is clear, but that does not make me
innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 5 There-
fore judge nothing before the appointed time;
wait until the Lord comes. He will bring to light
what is hidden in darkness and will expose the
motives of the heart. At that time each will re-
ceive their praise from God.

6 Now, brothers and sisters, I have applied
these things to myself and Apollos for your
benefit, so that you may learn from us the
meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what
is written." Then you will not be puffed up in
being a follower of one of us over against the
other. 7 For who makes you different from any-
one else? What do you have that you did not
receive? And if you did receive it, why do you
boast as though you did not?

8 Already you have all you want! Already you
have become rich! You have begun to reign—
and that without us! How I wish that you really
had begun to reign so that we also might reign
with you! 9 For it seems to me that God has put
us apostles on display at the end of the proces-
sion, like those condemned to die in the arena.
We have been made a spectacle to the whole
universe, to angels as well as to human beings.
10 We are fools for Christ, but you are so wise in
Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You
are honored, we are dishonored! 11 To this very
hour we go hungry and thirsty, we are in rags,
we are brutally treated, we are homeless. 12 We
work hard with our own hands. When we are
cursed, we bless; when we are persecuted, we
endure it; 13 when we are slandered, we answer
kindly. We have become the scum of the earth,

[a] *19* Job 5:13 [b] *20* Psalm 94:11 [c] *22* That is, Peter

the garbage of the world—right up to this moment.

Paul's Appeal and Warning

14 I am writing this not to shame you but to
warn you as my dear children. 15 Even if you
had ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do
not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I be-
came your father through the gospel. 16 There-
fore I urge you to imitate me. 17 For this reason I
have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love,
who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you
of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees
with what I teach everywhere in every church.
18 Some of you have become arrogant, as if
I were not coming to you. 19 But I will come to
you very soon, if the Lord is willing, and then I
will find out not only how these arrogant peo-
ple are talking, but what power they have. 20 For
the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but
of power. 21 What do you prefer? Shall I come to
you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in
love and with a gentle spirit?

[a] 5 In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit. [b] 5 Or *of his body*

TRANSITION

Paul's Authority and Letter

Paul addressed three specific areas in which the Corinthians had rejected his authority: They had condoned incest by one of their members (1Co 5:1–13), compromised their Christian witness by suing one another in the secular courts (6:1–11), and allowed some of their members to visit prostitutes (6:12–20). In an earlier letter (5:9), he had already written to the Corinthians dealing with some of these matters.

This earlier letter would necessarily have predated what is now known to us as 1 Corinthians. Some scholars believe it may be preserved in what is now known as 2 Corinthians (supposing that 2 Corinthians itself is made up of parts of several letters; see "The Second Letter to the Corinthians" at 2Co 1:1). Others, though, point out that sexual immorality—the topic of the earlier letter (1Co 5:9)—is addressed only in 2Co 12:21. They conclude that this earlier letter was simply not preserved, perhaps being lost by the early church.

• 1 Corinthians 5:1—6:20

1 Corinthians

Dealing With a Case of Incest

5:1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father's wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn't you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? 3 For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. 4 So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,[a,b] so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord.

6 Your boasting is not good. Don't you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival,

Patrons, Clients, and Puffed-Up Christians (1Co 4:6)

In a patronage system, social power and status was not so much based on wealth, but on friendships. The greater the number and status of those friends who owed you honor, the more your influence increased in the society. Even a client's own status depended on the status and influence of the patron being honored. Having friends in high places helped "broker" situations into results that were desired.

Of course, this led to great social competition between clients of different patrons and between the patrons themselves. Who a person "belonged to" could determine how much access that person had to what the Greco-Roman world offered. This seems to be the background for the divisions in the church at Corinth. Rather than one church, the body of Christ, the Corinthians seemed to think of themselves as clients of specific Christian leaders, perhaps of those by whose ministry they had come to believe in Jesus Christ. Perhaps they even saw these leaders as special "brokers" to God.

Apparently, inner-church patronage systems led to competition, even jealousy and quarreling within the church. By allowing their conduct to mirror the surrounding social world, these puffed-up Corinthian Christians were in danger of fragmenting their fragile unity (1Co 4:6). Paul saw these divisions as a sign of the spiritual immaturity of these believers. In his view, the patronage system belonged to the world, "the present evil age" (Gal 1:4). Ultimately, for Paul, not patronage, but cooperation mattered in the church, for it was neither the planter nor the waterer, but God who made "things grow" (1Co 3:7).

not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. 11But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister[a] but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people.

12What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? 13God will judge those outside. "Expel the wicked person from among you."[b]

Lawsuits Among Believers

6 1If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people? 2Or do you not know that the Lord's people will judge the world? And if you are to judge the world, are you not competent to judge trivial cases? 3Do you not know that we will judge angels? How much more the things of this life! 4Therefore, if you have disputes about such matters, do you ask for a ruling from those whose way of life is scorned in the church? 5I say this to shame you. Is it possible that there is nobody among you wise enough to judge a dispute between believers? 6But instead, one brother takes another to court—and this in front of unbelievers!

7The very fact that you have lawsuits among you means you have been completely defeated already. Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated? 8Instead, you yourselves cheat and do wrong, and you do this to your brothers and sisters. 9Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men[c] 10nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Sexual Immorality

12"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but I will not be mastered by anything. 13You say, "Food for the stomach and the stomach for food, and God will destroy them both." The body, however, is not meant for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14By his power God raised the Lord from the dead, and he will raise us also. 15Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ himself? Shall I then take the members of Christ and unite them with a prostitute? Never! 16Do you not know that he who unites himself with a prostitute is one with her in body? For it is said, "The two will become one flesh."[d] 17But whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.[e]

18Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but whoever sins sexually, sins against their own body. 19Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.

[a] *11* The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family; also in 8:11, 13. [b] *13* Deut. 13:5; 17:7; 19:19; 21:21; 22:21,24; 24:7 [c] *9* The words *men who have sex with men* translate two Greek words that refer to the passive and active participants in homosexual acts. [d] *16* Gen. 2:24 [e] *17* Or *in the Spirit*

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 52 to 54
52	Paul, Priscilla, and Aquila sail from Corinth (Ac 18:18)
52	Paul returns to Antioch in Syria
52	Paul preaches in the school of Tyrannus in Ephesus (Ac 19:9)
53	Herod Agrippa II receives parts of Syria
53	Paul's letter to the Galatians (if to "North Galatia")
54	Nero becomes emperor

TRANSITION

Questions from the Corinthians

Paul's writing of 1 Corinthians was apparently prompted by the visit with him in Ephesus of a delegation from the Corinthian church. This delegation from "Chloe's household" (1Co 1:11) may also have included Stephanas (the head of another important household), Fortunatus, and Achaicus (16:15–17). They seem to have brought not only an oral report (5:1), but perhaps also a formal letter.

Paul answered each of the questions raised in their letter to him, usually indicating his tran-

sition from topic to topic by the phrase "now about" (see 7:25; 8:1; 12:1; 16:1, 12). His instructions to them covered Christian marriage and sexual practice (7:1–40). They might eat food that had been offered to idols, but they should do nothing that gave even the appearance of idol worship (8:1—11:1). Church worship should be conducted decently and with consideration for others (11:2–34). Spiritual gifts should be used for building up others (12:1–31) in true Christian love (13:1–13). Prophecy is better than tongues because it edifies (14:1–40). Because Christ has risen (15:1–11), we, too, will rise (15:12–34) with a new spiritual body (15:35–58).

• **1 Corinthians 7:1—15:58**

1 Corinthians

Concerning Married Life

7 **:1** Now for the matters you wrote about:
"It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." [2]But since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. [3]The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. [4]The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. [5]Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. [6]I say this as a concession, not as a command. [7]I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

[8]Now to the unmarried[a] and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do. [9]But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.

[10]To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. [11]But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.

[12]To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her. [13]And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. [14]For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy.

[15]But if the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. [16]How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Concerning Change of Status

[17]Nevertheless, each person should live as a believer in whatever situation the Lord has assigned to them, just as God has called them. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. [18]Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. [19]Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts. [20]Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

[21]Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. [22]For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave. [23]You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of human beings. [24]Brothers and sisters, each person, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

Concerning the Unmarried

[25]Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. [26]Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for a man to remain as he is. [27]Are you pledged to a woman? Do not seek to be released. Are you free from such a commitment?

Marriage & Family
Jewish people regarded marriage as the natural duty of men and women. In line with Jewish tradition, Paul suggested that a person should marry in order to avoid sexual immorality (1Co 7:9). The apostle also understood marriage and celibacy to be gifts of God (7:7). When he advocated remaining single (7:8), he was conscious of people's usual expectation that adult men, and especially religious leaders, would marry.

[a] 8 Or *widowers*

Divorce and Remarriage at Corinth (1Co 7:15)

Jewish law permitted only the husband to initiate a divorce. Only under extreme circumstances could the wife request a court to compel a husband to divorce her. By contrast, Roman law viewed marriage as a matter of mutual consent, and so dissolved a marriage if either party requested it. Under Roman divorce, the children went to the father. Rapid remarriage was customary and society encouraged it (especially for young women), so the church congregation in Corinth probably included some new converts who had been remarried one or more times before their conversions.

Paul addressed the Christians who wanted to divorce spiritually incompatible spouses. Offering his own judgment, he contended that spiritual incompatibility did not provide adequate grounds for a divorce (1Co 7:12–14). In addition, by giving the command of "the Lord" (1Co 7:10, 11), he seemed to cite Jesus' general prohibition of divorce (Mk 10:11, 12).

Ancient interpreters commonly qualified general principles, modifying or interpreting them to account for specific situations. In this manner Paul interprets Jesus' general principle as needing to be qualified for those who are divorced against their will. In cases in which an unbelieving mate deserted the marriage, Paul declared, the believer was "not bound" (7:15).

In using the phrase "not bound," Paul was echoing the exact language of ancient divorce contracts, which spoke of marriage as "binding" a woman to her husband and divorce as "loosing" or "freeing" a woman for remarriage. Such divorce terminology appears in Jewish texts, such as the Mishnah, and in actual 1st-century Jewish divorce contracts that have been recovered. Ancient readers would have understood "not bound" as Paul's permission for an abandoned person to remarry.

Do not look for a wife. 28But if you do marry,
you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries,
she has not sinned. But those who marry will
face many troubles in this life, and I want to
spare you this.
29What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that
the time is short. From now on those who have
wives should live as if they do not; 30those who
mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy,
as if they were not; those who buy something,
as if it were not theirs to keep; 31those who use
the things of the world, as if not engrossed in
them. For this world in its present form is pass-
ing away.
32I would like you to be free from concern.
An unmarried man is concerned about the
Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord.
33But a married man is concerned about the
affairs of this world—how he can please his
wife— 34and his interests are divided. An un-
married woman or virgin is concerned about
the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to
the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married
woman is concerned about the affairs of this
world—how she can please her husband. 35I
am saying this for your own good, not to re-
strict you, but that you may live in a right way
in undivided devotion to the Lord.
36If anyone is worried that he might not be
acting honorably toward the virgin he is en-
gaged to, and if his passions are too strong[a]
and he feels he ought to marry, he should do
as he wants. He is not sinning. They should
get married. 37But the man who has settled
the matter in his own mind, who is under no
compulsion but has control over his own will,
and who has made up his mind not to mar-
ry the virgin—this man also does the right
thing. 38So then, he who marries the virgin
does right, but he who does not marry her
does better.[b]
39A woman is bound to her husband as long
as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free
to marry anyone she wishes, but he must be-
long to the Lord. 40In my judgment, she is hap-
pier if she stays as she is—and I think that I
too have the Spirit of God.

Concerning Food Sacrificed to Idols

8 1Now about food sacrificed to idols: We
know that "We all possess knowledge."
But knowledge puffs up while love builds up.
2Those who think they know something do not
yet know as they ought to know. 3But whoever
loves God is known by God.[c]
4So then, about eating food sacrificed to
idols: We know that "An idol is nothing at all in
the world" and that "There is no God but one."
5For even if there are so-called gods, wheth-
er in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are
many "gods" and many "lords"), 6yet for us
there is but one God, the Father, from whom

[a] *36* Or *if she is getting beyond the usual age for marriage*
[b] *36-38* Or *36If anyone thinks he is not treating his daughter properly, and if she is getting along in years* (or *if her passions are too strong*), *and he feels she ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. He should let her get married. 37But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind to keep the virgin unmarried—this man also does the right thing. 38So then, he who gives his virgin in marriage does right, but he who does not give her in marriage does better.*
[c] *2,3* An early manuscript and another ancient witness *think they have knowledge do not yet know as they ought to know. 3But whoever loves truly knows.*

all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

7But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. 8But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

9Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. 10For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? 11So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. 12When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

Paul's Rights as an Apostle

9 1Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are you not the result of my work in the Lord? 2Even though I may not be an apostle to others, surely I am to you! For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

3This is my defense to those who sit in judgment on me. 4Don't we have the right to food and drink? 5Don't we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord's brothers and Cephas[a]?

6Or is it only I and Barnabas who lack the right to not work for a living?

7Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat its grapes? Who tends a flock and does not drink the milk? 8Do I say this merely on human authority? Doesn't the Law say the same thing? 9For it is written in the Law of Moses: "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain."[b] Is it about oxen that God is concerned? 10Surely he says this for us, doesn't he? Yes, this was written for us, because whoever plows and threshes should be able to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. 11If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? 12If others have this right of support from you, shouldn't we have it all the more?

But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.

13Don't you know that those who serve in the temple get their food from the temple, and that those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? 14In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.

15But I have not used any of these rights. And I am not writing this in the hope that you will do such things for me, for I would rather die than allow anyone to deprive me of this boast. 16For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! 17If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. 18What then is my reward? Just this: that in preaching the gospel I may offer it free of

[a] *5* That is, Peter [b] *9* Deut. 25:4

Arch through which runners entered the Olympic grounds to race.

Running in the Olympics (1Co 9:24–27)

Foot racing was the most important event at the famous Olympic Games of Greece. The Olympic Games were held every four years in Olympia, a plain located about 125 miles west of Athens, and 75 miles west of Corinth. It was the main shrine of the Greek god Zeus.

Paul's Corinthian readers would have been well familiar with runners in the Games (1Co 9:24). The athletic contests at Olympia were founded in 776 B.C. and held continuously for more than a thousand years. They did not cease until A.D. 393 when the Roman emperor Theodosius abolished them because they were pagan.

The Corinthians were also familiar with the crown that was the winning prize (1Co 9:25). Statues show the athletes completely naked, but probably they had some covering. The prize for the winner was a crown made of laurel leaves, or an imitation crown made of golden leaves. With this crown went great fame, if not a stipend of money from the city.

Athletic events were very popular, and thus a good illustration for preaching. Paul wanted his readers to understand that the need to train and the desire to win applies to spiritual life as it does to athletic contests. Like a runner Paul disciplined his own body (1Co 9:27). His prize would last forever (1Co 9:25), and would thus be of much greater value than the athlete's prize of leaves.

Colossal bust of Zeus known as "Jupiter of Versailles"

charge, and so not make full use of my rights as a preacher of the gospel.

Paul's Use of His Freedom

19 Though I am free and belong to no one, I
have made myself a slave to everyone, to win
as many as possible. 20 To the Jews I became
like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the
law I became like one under the law (though
I myself am not under the law), so as to win
those under the law. 21 To those not having
the law I became like one not having the law
(though I am not free from God's law but am
under Christ's law), so as to win those not hav-
ing the law. 22 To the weak I became weak, to
win the weak. I have become all things to all
people so that by all possible means I might
save some. 23 I do all this for the sake of the gos-
pel, that I may share in its blessings.

The Need for Self-Discipline

24 Do you not know that in a race all the run-
ners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in
such a way as to get the prize. 25 Everyone who
competes in the games goes into strict training.
They do it to get a crown that will not last, but
we do it to get a crown that will last forever.
26 Therefore I do not run like someone running
aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating
the air. 27 No, I strike a blow to my body and
make it my slave so that after I have preached
to others, I myself will not be disqualified for
the prize.

Warnings From Israel's History

10 1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of
the fact, brothers and sisters, that our
ancestors were all under the cloud and that
they all passed through the sea. 2 They were
all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the
sea. 3 They all ate the same spiritual food 4 and
drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank
from the spiritual rock that accompanied them,
and that rock was Christ. 5 Nevertheless, God
was not pleased with most of them; their bodies
were scattered in the wilderness.

6 Now these things occurred as examples to
keep us from setting our hearts on evil things
as they did. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of
them were; as it is written: "The people sat
down to eat and drink and got up to indulge
in revelry."[a] 8 We should not commit sexual
immorality, as some of them did — and in one
day twenty-three thousand of them died. 9 We
should not test Christ,[b] as some of them did —
and were killed by snakes. 10 And do not grum-
ble, as some of them did — and were killed by
the destroying angel.

11 These things happened to them as exam-
ples and were written down as warnings for
us, on whom the culmination of the ages has
come. 12 So, if you think you are standing firm,
be careful that you don't fall! 13 No temptation[c]

[a] *7* Exodus 32:6 [b] *9* Some manuscripts *test the Lord*
[c] *13* The Greek for *temptation* and *tempted* can also mean *testing* and *tested*.

has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted[a] beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted,[a] he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

Idol Feasts and the Lord's Supper

14 Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry. 15 I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. 16 Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? 17 Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

18 Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar? 19 Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything? 20 No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. 21 You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons. 22 Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

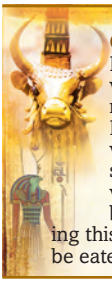
The Believer's Freedom

23 "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. 24 No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

25 Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, 26 for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."[b]

27 If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. 28 But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. 29 I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? 30 If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why

[a] *13* The Greek for *temptation* and *tempted* can also mean *testing* and *tested*. [b] *26* Psalm 24:1 [c] *3* Or *of the wife is her husband* [d] *4-7* Or *4 Every man who prays or prophesies with long hair dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with no covering of hair dishonors her head—she is just like one of the "shorn women." 6 If a woman has no covering, let her be for now with short hair; but since it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair shorn or shaved, she should grow it again. 7 A man ought not to have long hair*
[e] *10* Or *have a sign of authority on her*



Cults & Supernatural

Meat was eaten frequently in connection with religious sacrifices. Birds were sacrificed often; oxen on special occasions. Leftover meat was kept by the priests and worshipers. What they did not use themselves would be sold in the marketplace, with or without information that it had been sacrificed. Paul warned against eating this meat in a pagan temple, but allowed it to be eaten in a household (1Co 8:10; 10:25).

am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved. **11** 1 Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

On Covering the Head in Worship

2 I praise you for remembering me in everything and for holding to the traditions just as I passed them on to you. 3 But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man,[c] and the head of Christ is God. 4 Every man who prays or prophesies with his head covered dishonors his head. 5 But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head—it is the same as having her head shaved. 6 For if a woman does not cover her head, she might as well have her hair cut off; but if it is a disgrace for a woman to have her hair cut off or her head shaved, then she should cover her head.

7 A man ought not to cover his head,[d] since he is the image and glory of God; but woman is the glory of man. 8 For man did not come from woman, but woman from man; 9 neither was man created for woman, but woman for man. 10 It is for this reason that a woman ought to have authority over her own[e] head, because of the angels. 11 Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman. 12 For as woman came from man, so also man is born of woman. But everything comes from God.

13 Judge for yourselves: Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? 14 Does not the very nature of things teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a disgrace to him, 15 but that if a woman has long hair, it is her glory? For long hair is given to her as a

Covering a Woman's Head (1Co 11:5, 6)

Proper conduct in worship is expressed in different ways in different times and places. Paul was concerned that the conduct of women at the church in Corinth was not following the then current customs for public worship (1Co 11:5, 6). Accepted social custom called for Jewish and Christian women to cover their hair.

Customs varied somewhat. Lower-class women in much of the Mediterranean world covered their heads, especially in the eastern Mediterranean. Far to the east, conservative women veiled even their faces; in most other places, they simply wore a shawl that covered their hair. Many ancient texts inform us why married women needed to cover their heads: hair was the crown of the woman's beauty, and for a wife to expose this to the public gaze was to act promiscuous. Thus uncovered hair could symbolize seductiveness.

Not all women in Corinth were this conservative, however. Upper-class women were especially prone to showing off their hairstyles, requiring them to keep their heads uncovered. Because the Corinthian churches met in well-to-do members' homes, affluent and poorer women came into contact with one another, producing a clash of different views concerning covering their heads. To one group, uncovered heads represented progressive freedom; to the other, ostentation and seduction.

Paul thus faced a serious conflict in the church that had to be addressed gently. Arraying a variety of arguments—some traditionally Jewish, some more in keeping with Greco-Roman moralists' tastes—he acknowledged the Corinthian women's freedom but called on them to use it responsibly for the sake of others who might stumble. Those who might still be contentious about this issue should bow to custom: other Christian churches did not allow women to worship with uncovered heads; neither should the Corinthians (11:16).

covering. 16If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice—nor do the churches of God.

Correcting an Abuse of the Lord's Supper

17In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval. 20So then, when you come together, it is not the Lord's Supper you eat, 21for when you are eating, some of you go ahead with your own private suppers. As a result, one person remains hungry and another gets drunk. 22Don't you have homes to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God by humiliating those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you? Certainly not in this matter!

23For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me." 25In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

27So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. 28Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. 29For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. 30That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. 31But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment. 32Nevertheless, when we are judged in this way by the Lord, we are being disciplined so that we will not be finally condemned with the world.

33So then, my brothers and sisters, when you gather to eat, you should all eat together. 34Anyone who is hungry should eat something at home, so that when you meet together it may not result in judgment.

And when I come I will give further directions.

Concerning Spiritual Gifts

12 1Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. 2You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. 3Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.

4There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6There are different kinds of working, but in

all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

7 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. 8 To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, 10 to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues,[a] and to still another the interpretation of tongues.[a] 11 All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.

Unity and Diversity in the Body

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by[b] one Spirit so as to form one body — whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. 28 And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues[c]? Do all interpret? 31 Now eagerly desire the greater gifts.

[a] *10* Or *languages*; also in verse 28 [b] *13* Or *with*; or *in*
[c] *30* Or *other languages*

Bronze box mirror: Eros intervening in quarrel between two Pans
Metropolitan Museum of Art: Greek and Roman Art

In a Mirror or Face to Face (1Co 13:12)

Ancient people often made mirrors from bronze, and the bronze of Corinth was especially famous as the best bronze of the ancient Mediterranean world. Some Corinthian bronze had even been imported to Jerusalem for use in the temple. Nevertheless, the best of ancient mirrors provided only an imperfect reflection, leading some philosophers to use the analogy of an imperfect mirror to depict mortals' imperfect attempts to understand the deity.

Paul apparently uses the same analogy. The present, partial state of our knowledge of God compares to seeing "only a reflection as in a mirror" (1Co 13:12). This contrasts with the full knowledge of God available when Christ returns, which will be like seeing "face to face."

Jewish traditions likewise contrasted Moses' face-to-face revelation of God with the partial revelation seen by most other prophets (Nu 12:8; Dt 34:10). In the present, God's people receive spiritual gifts that partly reveal God, but in the future, such gifts will be unnecessary because believers will know God face to face, as Moses did.

Paul anticipated this future age when he would know God directly (1Co 13:12; see Jer 31:31–34), and his expectation influenced his ideas about spiritual gifts. The gifts which the Corinthians valued so highly were only for this life, and in the future age there would be no more need for the gifts of prophecies, tongues, or knowledge (13:8–10). The reflection of the dim mirror would become a face-to-face view.

Love Is Indispensable

And yet I will show you the most excellent way.

13 [1]If I speak in the tongues[a] of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. [2]If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. [3]If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast,[b] but do not have love, I gain nothing.

[4]Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. [5]It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. [6]Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. [7]It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

[8]Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. [9]For we know in part and we prophesy in part, [10]but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. [11]When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. [12]For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

[13]And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Intelligibility in Worship

14 [1]Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. [2]For anyone who speaks in a tongue[c] does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. [3]But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. [4]Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. [5]I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,[d] but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues,[d] unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.

[6]Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? [7]Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? [8]Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? [9]So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. [10]Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. [11]If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. [12]So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.

[13]For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. [14]For if I pray in a tongue, my

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[a] *1* Or *languages* [b] *3* Some manuscripts *body to the flames*
[c] *2* Or *in another language*; also in verses 4, 13, 14, 19, 26 and 27 [d] *5* Or *in other languages*; also in verses 6, 18, 22, 23 and 39

Ask at Home, Not at Church (1Co 14:34, 35)

Although specific conditions varied from one part of the ancient Mediterranean to another, the Roman world valued the quietness and subordination of wives. Some writers even longed for earlier days when Roman matrons had been even more quiet and submissive. Paul appears to be respecting the culture of his time when he says, "Women should remain silent in the churches" (1Co 14:34).

The specific sort of quietness Paul intends is debated. It is doubtful that he calls for *absolute* silence of women in church, because he permitted prayer and prophecy under appropriate conditions (1Co 11:4, 5). Suggestions as to what Paul was prohibiting women from doing include teaching Scripture or weighing prophecy (14:29). But the only clue in his letter points to the asking of questions (14:35). Possibly Paul exhorted the women to ask their questions privately rather than publicly.

In ancient lecture settings, including Jewish teachers who expounded Torah, the Law, hearers learned more by asking questions than by simply listening. Yet, as Plutarch wrote in *On Lectures,* it was considered rude for the unlearned to ask questions because their questioning slowed everyone else down. Women were on the whole far less educated than men (although exceptions existed) and prone to ask less educated questions. An additional problem for a place like Corinth may have been the cultural impropriety of women asking questions in what was normally a male-dominated lecture setting.

What is striking in view of 1st-century culture is not Paul's limitation of the Corinthian women but his concern for their learning. Only rarely did ancient writers exhort husbands to take an interest in their wives' education (Greek men were on average more than a decade older than their wives). When writers did suggest instructing wives, they sometimes added words like, "For if left to themselves, women produce only base passion and folly." Paul's concern that husbands take an interest in their wives' learning was among the more progressive voices of his day.

spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 15So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. 16Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer,[a] say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? 17You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

18I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. 19But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. 21In the Law it is written:

> "With other tongues
> and through the lips of foreigners
> I will speak to this people,
> but even then they will not listen to me,
> says the Lord."[b]

22Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. 23So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? 24But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, 25as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

Good Order in Worship

26What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. 27If anyone speaks in a tongue, two — or at the most three — should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. 28If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.

29Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33For God is not a God of disorder but of peace — as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

34Women[c] should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. 35If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.[d]

36Or did the word of God originate with you?

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[a] *16* The Greek word for *inquirer* is a technical term for someone not fully initiated into a religion; also in verses 23 and 24. [b] *21* Isaiah 28:11,12 [c] *33,34* Or *peace. As in all the congregations of the Lord's people,* 34*women* [d] *34,35* In a few manuscripts these verses come after verse 40.

Or are you the only people it has reached? 37If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. 38But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.[a]

39Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. 40But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

The Resurrection of Christ

15 1Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. 2By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

3For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance[b]: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, 4that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, 5and that he appeared to Cephas,[c] and then to the Twelve. 6After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. 7Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, 8and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

9For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 11Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed.

The Resurrection of the Dead

12But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? 13If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. 14And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. 15More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. 16For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. 17And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. 18Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. 19If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied.

20But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. 21For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. 22For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. 23But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. 24Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. 25For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. 26The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 27For he "has put everything under his feet."[d] Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. 28When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all.

29Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them? 30And as for us, why do we endanger ourselves every hour? 31I face death every day—yes, just as surely as I boast about you in Christ Jesus our Lord. 32If I fought wild beasts in Ephesus with no more than human hopes, what have I gained? If the dead are not raised,

"Let us eat and drink,
for tomorrow we die."[e]

33Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character."[f] 34Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.

The Resurrection Body

35But someone will ask, "How are the dead

Culture & Society
Public contests to entertain people with the spectacle of death were extremely popular in the Roman world. Throughout the empire Romans built stadiums where professional gladiators, prisoners, and slaves fought wild animals and each other to the death for sport. Paul's figure of speech "fought wild beasts" (1Co 15:32) probably describes his human enemies as wild animals, not claiming that he actually fought in the arena.

[a] *38* Some manuscripts *But anyone who is ignorant of this will be ignorant* [b] *3* Or *you at the first* [c] *5* That is, Peter [d] *27* Psalm 8:6 [e] *32* Isaiah 22:13 [f] *33* From the Greek poet Menander

EVIDENCE FOR DATING NEW TESTAMENT EVENTS

A number of events recorded in the New Testament can be dated with reasonable certainty. The evidence that allows us to determine specific dates comes from a variety of sources.

Event	Date	Evidence Source	New Testament Connection	Reference
Reign of Augustus Caesar	27 B.C.–A.D. 14	Roman history	Reigned during NT times	Lk 2:1
Death of Herod the Great	4 B.C.	An eclipse of the moon mentioned by Josephus	Jesus was born before Herod died	Mt 2:19
15th year of Tiberius Caesar	A.D. 26 or 28	Possible definitions of when his rule began	Date is cited by Luke	Lk 3:1
Passover during Passion Week	A.D. 30 or 33	Astronomical calculation of the phases of the moon	Last Supper and crucifixion of Jesus	Lk 22:15; Jn 19:14
Death of Herod Agrippa I	A.D. 44	Josephus	Event is described in Acts	Acts 12:20–23
Famine	A.D. 44–48	Ancient writers	Famine relief sent from Antioch to Jerusalem	Ac 11:28–30
Edict of Claudius	A.D. 49	Orosius, writing in A.D. 416–417	Aquila and Priscilla left Rome for Corinth	Ac 18:1, 2; 1Co 16:19
Term of office for Gallio	A.D. 51–52	Ancient inscription discovered at Delphi, Greece	Paul appeared before Gallio	Ac 18:12

raised? With what kind of body will they come?”
36How foolish! What you sow does not come to
life unless it dies. 37When you sow, you do not
plant the body that will be, but just a seed, per-
haps of wheat or of something else. 38But God
gives it a body as he has determined, and to
each kind of seed he gives its own body. 39Not
all flesh is the same: People have one kind of
flesh, animals have another, birds another and
fish another. 40There are also heavenly bodies
and there are earthly bodies; but the splendor
of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the
splendor of the earthly bodies is another. 41The
sun has one kind of splendor, the moon anoth-
er and the stars another; and star differs from
star in splendor.

42So will it be with the resurrection of the
dead. The body that is sown is perishable, it is
raised imperishable; 43it is sown in dishonor, it
is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is
raised in power; 44it is sown a natural body, it
is raised a spiritual body.

If there is a natural body, there is also a spir-
itual body. 45So it is written: “The first man
Adam became a living being”[a]; the last Adam,
a life-giving spirit. 46The spiritual did not come
first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual.
47The first man was of the dust of the earth; the
second man is of heaven. 48As was the earthly

[a] *45* Gen. 2:7

man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the heavenly man, so also are those who are of heaven. 49And just as we have borne the image of the earthly man, so shall we[a] bear the image of the heavenly man.

50I declare to you, brothers and sisters, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable. 51Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed— 52in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. 53For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality. 54When the perishable has been clothed with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality, then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory."[b]

55"Where, O death, is your victory?
Where, O death, is your sting?"[c]

56The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. 57But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

TRANSITION

Paul's Future Plans

As is typical of his letters, Paul concluded with final instructions and greetings. He also related future plans for himself and his missionary companions, which included receiving the Corinthians' gift for Jerusalem (1Co 16:1–3). Paul had organized a collection from the Gentile churches to help the poor believers in Jerusalem. The collection was widespread, being contributed by churches from at least Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia (see Ro 15:26, 27; 2Co 9:1, 2).

Future plans also included a visit of Paul to Corinth. He would continue his ministry in Ephesus until the day of Pentecost (16:8), in late spring of A.D. 55. His original plans had been to travel at that time from Ephesus straight to Corinth, and he was apparently criticized for deciding to pass through Macedonia first (16:5, 6; 2Co 1:15–17). From Ephesus Paul did send Timothy to Macedonia along with Erastus, the commissioner of public works for Corinth (Ac 19:22; Ro 16:23). That trip probably included Timothy's visit to the Corinthian church (1Co 4:17; 16:10).

• 1 Corinthians 16:1–24

1 Corinthians

The Collection for the Lord's People

16:1 Now about the collection for the Lord's people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. 2On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. 3Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. 4If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me.

Personal Requests

5After I go through Macedonia, I will come to you—for I will be going through Macedonia. 6Perhaps I will stay with you for a while, or even spend the winter, so that you can help me on my journey, wherever I go. 7For I do not want to see you now and make only a passing visit; I hope to spend some time with you, if the Lord permits. 8But I will stay on at Ephesus until Pentecost, 9because a great door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many who oppose me.

10When Timothy comes, see to it that he has nothing to fear while he is with you, for he is carrying on the work of the Lord, just as I am. 11No one, then, should treat him with contempt. Send him on his way in peace so that he may return to me. I am expecting him along with the brothers.

12Now about our brother Apollos: I strongly urged him to go to you with the brothers. He was quite unwilling to go now, but he will go when he has the opportunity.

13Be on your guard; stand firm in the faith; be courageous; be strong. 14Do everything in love.

15You know that the household of Stephanas were the first converts in Achaia, and they have devoted themselves to the service of the Lord's people. I urge you, brothers and sisters, 16to submit to such people and to everyone who joins in the work and labors at it. 17I was glad when Stephanas, Fortunatus and Achaicus arrived, because they have supplied what was lacking from you. 18For they refreshed my spirit and yours also. Such men deserve recognition.

Final Greetings

19The churches in the province of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla[d] greet you

[a] *49* Some early manuscripts *so let us* [b] *54* Isaiah 25:8
[c] *55* Hosea 13:14 [d] *19* Greek *Prisca*, a variant of *Priscilla*

Paul Versus the Goddess Artemis (Ac 19:24–28)

The Ephesian silversmith Demetrius incited a riot against Paul for preaching in Ephesus that gods "made by human hands" are not really gods (Ac 19:26). Ephesus had as many as a quarter million inhabitants, making it the largest city in the province of Asia. Its size was reason enough for Paul to found a church in Ephesus, but another significant factor was religion: Ephesus was the cult center for the worship of Artemis.

Artemis was a very popular Greek goddess. In Greek religion she was the virgin goddess of the hunt and the moon, and the daughter of the Greek god Zeus. In Roman religion she was identified as the goddess Diana.

Part of what made Artemis important to Ephesus was her temple. It was the largest temple in Asia Minor (modern Turkey). The top of the platform it was built on (that would be the floor of the temple) was 168 feet, 9 inches wide by 365 feet, 9 inches long. The columns were 6 feet in diameter and almost 58 feet tall. By comparison, the floor of the Parthenon at Athens was only about two-thirds the size of the temple at Ephesus, and the Parthenon's columns were only a little more than 34 feet high.

The temple of Artemis was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world. Its size and magnificence made it an attraction for tourists and pilgrims. For Ephesus, it was a place for worship, but also a treasury and a storehouse.

Paul took on a sizable opponent in Artemis. She had become the guardian deity of Ephesus. She influenced the politics, culture, and economy of the city. The people of Ephesus were prepared to defend Artemis against any who would threaten her, and Paul's gospel threatened to destroy the profit of the craftsmen who made silver shrines of the goddess.

warmly in the Lord, and so does the church that meets at their house. 20All the brothers and sisters here send you greetings. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

21I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand.

22If anyone does not love the Lord, let that person be cursed! Come, Lord[a]!

23The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you.

24My love to all of you in Christ Jesus. Amen.[b]

[a] *22* The Greek for *Come, Lord* reproduces an Aramaic expression (*Marana tha*) used by early Christians.
[b] *24* Some manuscripts do not have *Amen*.

TRANSITION

Commotion in Ephesus

Paul's work in Ephesus during his third missionary journey (ca. A.D. 54) began to turn the allegiance of some from paganism to Christ. When the success of the gospel threatened the trade of silversmiths in Ephesus, money motivated an attack against Paul. A civil disturbance was instigated by Demetrius, a silversmith who manufactured devotional shrines for the worship of the Greek goddess Artemis.

"Artemis of the Ephesians" (Ac 19:34) was the mother goddess of Asia. Her temple in Ephesus was one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, and people came from all parts of the Roman world to worship her. A legend told of an image "which fell from heaven" that was kept in Artemis's temple (19:35). The "image" may have been a meteorite similar to others that were venerated at various places in the ancient world, most notably the "image of the Great Mother" brought to Rome from Pessinus.

• Acts 19:23—20:1

Acts

The Riot in Ephesus

19 **:23** About that time there arose a great disturbance about the Way. 24A silversmith named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Artemis, brought in a lot of business for the craftsmen there. 25He called them together, along with the workers in related trades, and said: "You know, my friends, that we receive a good income from this business. 26And you see and hear how this fellow Paul has convinced and led astray large numbers of people here in Ephesus and in practically the whole province of Asia. He says that gods made by human hands are no gods at all. 27There is danger not only that our trade will lose its good name, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis will be discredited; and the goddess herself, who is worshiped throughout the province of Asia and the world, will be robbed of her divine majesty."

28When they heard this, they were furious and began shouting: "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29Soon the whole city was in an uproar. The people seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia, and all of them rushed into the theater together. 30Paul wanted to appear before the crowd, but the disciples would not let him. 31Even some of the officials of the province, friends of Paul, sent him a message begging him not to venture into the theater.

32The assembly was in confusion: Some were shouting one thing, some another. Most of the people did not even know why they were there.

Architecture & Building
The Greek goddess Artemis (Ac 19:34) was Diana to the Romans. Her temple at Ephesus was one of the largest Greek temples, with columns 58 feet high standing on a platform 169 by 366 feet. Surviving copies of the statue of Artemis of Ephesus are decorated with what appear to be numerous breasts, but which also could represent grapes, olives, or eggs.

33The Jews in the crowd pushed Alexander to
the front, and they shouted instructions to him.
He motioned for silence in order to make a de-
fense before the people. 34But when they real-
ized he was a Jew, they all shouted in unison
for about two hours: "Great is Artemis of the
Ephesians!"
35The city clerk quieted the crowd and said:
"Fellow Ephesians, doesn't all the world know
that the city of Ephesus is the guardian of the
temple of the great Artemis and of her image,
which fell from heaven? 36Therefore, since
these facts are undeniable, you ought to calm
down and not do anything rash. 37You have
brought these men here, though they have
neither robbed temples nor blasphemed our
goddess. 38If, then, Demetrius and his fellow
craftsmen have a grievance against anybody,
the courts are open and there are proconsuls.
They can press charges. 39If there is anything
further you want to bring up, it must be settled
in a legal assembly. 40As it is, we are in danger
of being charged with rioting because of what
happened today. In that case we would not be
able to account for this commotion, since there
is no reason for it." 41After he had said this, he
dismissed the assembly.

Through Macedonia and Greece

20 1When the uproar had ended, Paul sent
for the disciples and, after encouraging
them, said goodbye and set out for Macedonia.

TRANSITION

The Second Letter to the Corinthians

The letter of 2 Corinthians was written perhaps 6 months to a year after Paul wrote 1 Corinthians, possibly in A.D. 55 at the end of his long ministry in Ephesus (Ac 20:31). The Corinthian church required Paul's continual care. Shortly after his founding mission in Corinth, he sent a letter instructing the church "not to associate with sexually immoral people" (1Co 5:9). Later, a delegation from Corinth came to Ephesus asking for Paul's guidance; they returned, possibly carrying the letter of 1 Corinthians with them (1Co 16:17–19). Timothy visited Corinth (1Co 4:17; 16:10, 11) and probably returned to Paul in Ephesus with news of opposition to Paul and continued division in the church.

Such unchristian practices in Corinth required correction. Paul made a painful visit (2Co 1:23—2:1), which did not resolve these problems. He then sent a letter written "severely" and delivered to the Corinthians by Titus (2Co 2:3–5). When finally Paul was reconciled to the church, he wrote to them both to celebrate their restored relationship and to have them prepare for yet another visit (2Co 1:13–16).

Scholars disagree over whether 2 Corinthians is a single letter, or was compiled from several shorter letters. Some think there were four letters: Paul's earlier letter (1Co 5:9); 1 Corinthians; the letter in which he wrote "severely" (2Co 2:3–5); and 2 Corinthians. In this case, 1 Corinthians would have been the second letter Paul wrote to the Corinthian church; and 2 Corinthians, at least the fourth. Thus, one option is to accept that 2 Corinthians was originally written as it now appears in the New Testament, and suppose that the earlier letter against sexual immorality and the letter written "severely" have been lost.

An alternative is to suppose that the earlier letter, warning against sexual immorality, is part of 2 Corinthians (see "Paul's Authority and Letter" at 1Co 5:1). Similarly, the four final chapters (2Co 10–13) are considered to be the letter written "severely," the letter written "out of great distress and anguish of heart" (2Co 2:4). Those favoring this option point to a marked contrast: the positive relationship between Paul and the Corinthians evidenced in the early chapters of 2 Corinthians versus Paul's harsh attacks on some in Corinth in 2Co 10–13.

• 2 Corinthians 1:1—2:11

2 Corinthians

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

To the church of God in Corinth, together with all his holy people throughout Achaia:

2Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise to the God of All Comfort

3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, 4who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. 5For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort

abounds through Christ. 6If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer. 7And our hope for you is firm, because we know that just as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

8We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters,[a] about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia. We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired of life itself. 9Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. 10He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, 11as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many.

Paul's Change of Plans

12Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, with integrity[b] and godly sincerity. We have done so, relying not on worldly wisdom but on God's grace. 13For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, 14as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus.

15Because I was confident of this, I wanted to visit you first so that you might benefit twice. 16I wanted to visit you on my way to Macedonia and to come back to you from Macedonia, and then to have you send me on my way to Judea. 17Was I fickle when I intended to do this? Or do I make my plans in a worldly manner so that in the same breath I say both "Yes, yes" and "No, no"?

18But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not "Yes" and "No." 19For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us—by me and Silas[c] and Timothy—was not "Yes" and "No," but in him it has always been "Yes." 20For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God. 21Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, 22set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

23I call God as my witness—and I stake my life on it—that it was in order to spare you that I did not return to Corinth. 24Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm.

2 1So I made up my mind that I would not make another painful visit to you. 2For if I grieve you, who is left to make me glad but you whom I have grieved? 3I wrote as I did, so that when I came I would not be distressed by those who should have made me rejoice. I had confidence in all of you, that you would all share my joy. 4For I wrote you out of great distress and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to grieve you but to let you know the depth of my love for you.

Forgiveness for the Offender

5If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. 6The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. 7Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

[a] *8* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 8:1; 13:11. [b] *12* Many manuscripts *holiness* [c] *19* Greek *Silvanus*, a variant of *Silas*

TRANSITION

Paul Seeks a Report from Titus

Instead of leaving Ephesus and visiting Corinth on the w ay to Macedonia, Paul went to Troas (see 2C o 1:8, 16). Ha ving previously sent Titus to Corinth with the letter commanding punishment of the off ender (2:3–8), Paul was anxious t o meet Titus in Troas to receive word from Corinth. Not finding him there, Paul left Troas for Macedonia, possibly to meet Titus as he returned.

It seems strange that in ch. 7 Paul returns to discussing his and Titus's travels without any renewed introduction (7:5–16). That sudden change of topic to Paul's travel plans and his sending of Titus to Corinth might suggest that the portion of 2 C orinthians in 2:14—7:4 is part of another lett er, and was inserted (after

2:13) by a later editor who compiled 2 Corinthians as it now appears in the NewTestament. This brief letter (2:14—7:4), describing Paul's view of an apostle's ministry, would have been written between his writing of 1 Corinthians and his "painful visit" to Corinth (see "The Second Letter to the Corinthians" at 2Co 1:1).

• 2 Corinthians 2:12—7:16

2 Corinthians

Ministers of the New Covenant

2 :12 Now when I went to Troas to preach
the gospel of Christ and found that the Lord
had opened a door for me, [13]I still had no peace
of mind, because I did not find my brother Titus there. So I said goodbye to them and went
on to Macedonia.

[14]But thanks be to God, who always leads
us as captives in Christ's triumphal procession
and uses us to spread the aroma of the knowledge of him everywhere. [15]For we are to God
the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who
are being saved and those who are perishing.
[16]To the one we are an aroma that brings death;
to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who
is equal to such a task? [17]Unlike so many, we do
not peddle the word of God for profit. On the
contrary, in Christ we speak before God with
sincerity, as those sent from God.

3 [1]Are we beginning to commend ourselves
again? Or do we need, like some people, letters of recommendation to you or from you?
[2]You yourselves are our letter, written on our
hearts, known and read by everyone. [3]You
show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but
with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets
of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

[4]Such confidence we have through Christ
before God. [5]Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our
competence comes from God. [6]He has made
us competent as ministers of a new covenant—
not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter
kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Politics & Government
The triumph was a tradition of the Roman state. A general who had won an important victory in war was entitled to ride in a splendid chariot with his troops marching fully armed, leading prisoners and booty captured in the fighting. During the celebration, which could last several days, important prisoners were executed. Paul pictured the spread of the gospel as a parade of victory (2Co 2:14).

The Greater Glory of the New Covenant

[7]Now if the ministry that brought death,
which was engraved in letters on stone, came
with glory, so that the Israelites could not look
steadily at the face of Moses because of its glory, transitory though it was, [8]will not the ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious? [9]If
the ministry that brought condemnation was
glorious, how much more glorious is the ministry that brings righteousness! [10]For what was
glorious has no glory now in comparison with
the surpassing glory. [11]And if what was transitory came with glory, how much greater is the
glory of that which lasts!

[12]Therefore, since we have such a hope, we
are very bold. [13]We are not like Moses, who
would put a veil over his face to prevent the
Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. [14]But their minds were made dull, for
to this day the same veil remains when the old
covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. [15]Even
to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers
their hearts. [16]But whenever anyone turns to
the Lord, the veil is taken away. [17]Now the Lord
is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord
is, there is freedom. [18]And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate[a] the Lord's glory, are
being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord,
who is the Spirit.

Present Weakness and Resurrection Life

4 [1]Therefore, since through God's mercy we
have this ministry, we do not lose heart.
[2]Rather, we have renounced secret and shameful ways; we do not use deception, nor do we
distort the word of God. On the contrary, by
setting forth the truth plainly we commend
ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight
of God. [3]And even if our gospel is veiled, it is
veiled to those who are perishing. [4]The god of
this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers,
so that they cannot see the light of the gospel
that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. [5]For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves
as your servants for Jesus' sake. [6]For God, who
said, "Let light shine out of darkness,"[b] made
his light shine in our hearts to give us the light
of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in
the face of Christ.

[7]But we have this treasure in jars of clay to
show that this all-surpassing power is from God
and not from us. [8]We are hard pressed on ev-

[a] *18* Or *reflect* [b] *6* Gen. 1:3

Letters of Recommendation (2Co 3:1–3)

Western culture has a long history of personal references. Without phones or faxes, the typical recommendations in the Greco-Roman world took the form of letters. The writer of the letter often requested, on the basis of his or her previous relationship with the recipient, that the recipient welcome, provide hospitality for, and cooperate with the person being recommended.

Usually the recommended person also delivered the letter. The writer, who was well known to and respected by the letter's recipient, would thus presuppose a face-to-face encounter between the one he was recommending and the recipient. Someone who lacked a letter of recommendation could appear to be a vagrant out to take advantage of the hospitality of others.

The letters could be quite short. After an initial greeting, the sender would identify the recommended person, providing a brief background introduction. A specific request and the purpose of the recommendation was followed by a statement of appreciation. In closing, the sender would often provide a "blessing," a wish for the well-being of the recipient.

Early Christians wrote these letters to form a support network among the widely dispersed churches. One group of "brothers and sisters" wrote a letter of recommendation for the Alexandrian Jewish Christian named Apollos, asking them to "welcome him" (Ac 18:27). The apostle Paul recommended Epaphroditus to the Philippian church, including a commendation within his broader letter (Php 2:25–30).

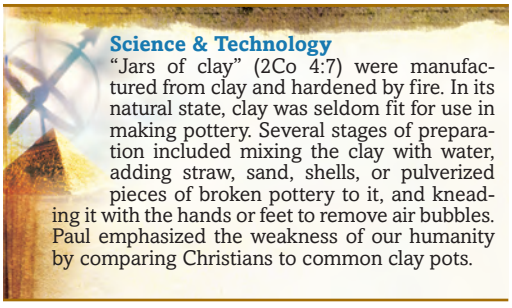
Paul saw no need to provide "letters of recommendation" on his behalf to the church at Corinth (2Co 3:1). Recommendations served to introduce strangers who lacked credibility. Paul, on the other hand, had started the Corinthian church—he was, in a sense, their Christian father (see 1Co 4:15).

Nor did Paul need recommendation from the Corinthian believers themselves. Their own lives authenticated his mission, proving his apostolic authority better than any letter could. They were a recommendation "written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God" (2Co 3:3). What better recommendation could one get?

ery side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; 9persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. 10We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. 11For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that his life may also be revealed in our mortal body.12So then, death is at work in us, but life is at work in you.

13It is written: "I believed; therefore I have spoken."[a] Since we have that same spirit of[b] faith, we also believe and therefore speak, 14because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus from the dead will also raise us with Jesus and present us with you to himself. 15All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God.

[a] *13* Psalm 116:10 (see Septuagint) [b] *13* Or *Spirit-given*



Science & Technology

"Jars of clay" (2Co 4:7) were manufactured from clay and hardened by fire. In its natural state, clay was seldom fit for use in making pottery. Several stages of preparation included mixing the clay with water, adding straw, sand, shells, or pulverized pieces of broken pottery to it, and kneading it with the hands or feet to remove air bubbles. Paul emphasized the weakness of our humanity by comparing Christians to common clay pots.

16Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Awaiting the New Body

5 1For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. 2Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, 3because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. 4For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. 5Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

6Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7For we live by faith, not by sight. 8We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord. 9So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. 10For we must all appear

before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.

The Ministry of Reconciliation

11 Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade others. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience. 12 We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart. 13 If we are "out of our mind," as some say, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you. 14 For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. 15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

16 So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:[a] The old has gone, the new is here! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: 19 that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. 20 We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. 21 God made him who had no sin to be sin[b] for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

6 1 As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. 2 For he says,

"In the time of my favor I heard you,
and in the day of salvation I helped you."[c]

I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.

Paul's Hardships

3 We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. 12 We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. 13 As a fair exchange — I speak as to my children — open wide your hearts also.

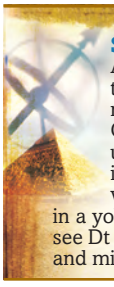
Warning Against Idolatry

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? 15 What harmony is there between Christ and Belial[d]? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? 16 What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

"I will live with them
and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they will be my people."[e]

[a] *17* Or *Christ, that person is a new creation.* [b] *21* Or *be a sin offering* [c] *2* Isaiah 49:8 [d] *15* Greek *Beliar*, a variant of *Belial* [e] *16* Lev. 26:12; Jer. 32:38; Ezek. 37:27

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 54 to 55
54	The riot at Ephesus (Ac 19:23)
54–55	Paul imprisoned in Ephesus (?)
55	Paul writes 1 Corinthians from Ephesus
55	Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Ephesus
55	Pallas loses his position as financial secretary
55	Paul leaves Ephesus after day of Pentecost (1Co 16:8)
55–56	Paul travels through Macedonia to Greece (Ac 20:1)



Science & Technology

A yoke was usually a wooden beam shaped to fit over the necks of two animals, harnessing them to a plow or similar tool. Oxen were the most common animals used for working the land, and a yoke linking a pair of oxen together allowed them to work efficiently. An ox and a donkey put in a yoke would be unequally "yoked" (2Co 6:14; see Dt 22:10). They could not pull the load evenly and might want to go different directions.

17 Therefore,

"Come out from them
and be separate,
says the Lord.
Touch no unclean thing,
and I will receive you."[a]

18 And,

"I will be a Father to you,
and you will be my sons and
daughters,
says the Lord Almighty."[b]

7 1 Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Paul's Joy Over the Church's Repentance

2 Make room for us in your hearts. We have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have exploited no one. 3 I do not say this to condemn you; I have said before that you have such a place in our hearts that we would live or die with you. 4 I have spoken to you with great frankness; I take great pride in you. I am greatly encouraged; in all our troubles my joy knows no bounds.

5 For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn—conflicts on the outside, fears within. 6 But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, 7 and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.

8 Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while— 9 yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. 10 Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. 11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. 12 So even though I wrote to you, it was neither on account of the one who did the wrong nor on account of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. 13 By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you. 14 I had boasted to him about you, and you have not embarrassed me. But just as everything we said to you was true, so our boasting about you to Titus has proved to be true as well. 15 And his affection for you is all the greater when he remembers that you were all obedient, receiving him with fear and trembling. 16 I am glad I can have complete confidence in you.

[a] *17* Isaiah 52:11; Ezek. 20:34,41 [b] *18* 2 Samuel 7:14; 7:8

TRANSITION

The Offering for Jerusalem's Christians

On his third missionary journey Paul raised an offering to relieve the poverty of the Christians in Jerusalem and to demonstrate the unity of the Jewish and Gentile churches (see 1Co 16:1–4; Ro 15:25–28). Corinth was in Achaia, just south of Macedonia, from which Paul was writing. The Christians in Corinth, a great commercial center, were better off financially than those in Macedonia and Jerusalem, yet Paul encouraged the Corinthians to participate in this offering by praising the generosity of the Macedonians (2Co 8:1–4).

The apparent repetition of instructions regarding the offering (compare 8:1–6 with 9:1–5) suggests that 2Co 9 may be part of a brief letter that Paul wrote to the Corinthians just in advance of his third and final visit with them. If so, a previous letter, written after the tensions between Paul and the Corinthians had been relieved, could have consisted of 2Co 1:3—2:13 and 7:5—8:24. See "The Second Letter to the Corinthians" at 2Co 1:1.

• 2 Corinthians 8:1—9:15

2 Corinthians

The Collection for the Lord's People

8 :1 And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches. 2 In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. 3 For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, 4 they urgently pleaded

Paul's Collection for Jerusalem (2Co 8:16–24)

Paul's letters addressed the specific issues that arose within the congregations he had planted. One issue, however, that Paul consistently addressed was of his own making: a financial offering for the church in Jerusalem.

This collection for the Jerusalem church seems to have originated at the so-called Jerusalem Council (Ac 15; Gal 2:1–10). While the apostles and elders of the council agreed that Paul could pursue his mission to the Gentiles, they asked that he "remember the poor" (Gal 2:10), indirectly referring to an offering for the Jerusalem church. The collection, therefore, stood at the very foundation of Paul's missionary work.

The offering remained a cornerstone in Paul's ministry. He mentioned the collection in writing to churches at Corinth (1Co 16:1–4) and at Rome (Ro 15:25–27). He praised churches in Macedonia and Achaia for their generosity in giving (Ro 15:26; 2Co 8:1–4).

Why would Jerusalem ask for such an offering, and why would Paul keep the offering central to his mission among the Gentiles, the non-Jews? Possibly because he saw his ministry as fulfilling the promises of the Jewish Scriptures, the Old Testament. In the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as Paul believed, the end times had already begun, and through Jesus, God had begun to fulfill the end time promises found in the Scriptures. Among these eschatological promises, especially those in the Book of Isaiah, Jerusalem bore special prominence. Isaiah looks toward a new age centered in Jerusalem, where God unites both Jew and Gentile in worship to him (Is. 66:18–21).

No wonder the collection was central to Paul's mission; it *was* Paul's mission. The offering brought the wealth of the Gentiles to Jerusalem, signaling the fulfillment of God's plan for Israel through Jesus. Paul finally returned to Jerusalem with the offering and delivered it to the church there around A.D. 57 (Ac 21:15–17; 24:17).

with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. 5And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 6So we urged Titus, just as he had earlier made a beginning, to bring also to completion this act of grace on your part. 7But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you[a]—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.

8I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

10And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.

13Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, 15as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."[b]

Geography & Environment

The Macedonian churches had produced an example of generosity. Among the provinces, Macedonia was worse off economically than Achaia, in which Corinth was located. Since Corinth was a great commercial center, the Christians there were much better off financially than those in either Macedonia or Jerusalem. In spite of their poverty, the Macedonians gave far beyond what one would expect (2Co 8:1–4).

Titus Sent to Receive the Collection

16Thanks be to God, who put into the heart of Titus the same concern I have for you. 17For Titus not only welcomed our appeal, but he is coming to you with much enthusiasm and on his own initiative. 18And we are sending along with him the brother who is praised by all the churches for his service to the gospel. 19What is more, he was chosen by the churches to accompany us as we carry the offering, which we administer in order to honor the Lord himself and to show our eagerness to help. 20We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. 21For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of man.

22In addition, we are sending with them our

[a] *7* Some manuscripts *and in your love for us*
[b] *15* Exodus 16:18

brother who has often proved to us in many ways that he is zealous, and now even more so because of his great confidence in you. [23]As for Titus, he is my partner and co-worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives of the churches and an honor to Christ. [24]Therefore show these men the proof of your love and the reason for our pride in you, so that the churches can see it.

9 [1]There is no need for me to write to you about this service to the Lord's people. [2]For I know your eagerness to help, and I have been boasting about it to the Macedonians, telling them that since last year you in Achaia were ready to give; and your enthusiasm has stirred most of them to action. [3]But I am sending the brothers in order that our boasting about you in this matter should not prove hollow, but that you may be ready, as I said you would be. [4]For if any Macedonians come with me and find you unprepared, we—not to say anything about you—would be ashamed of having been so confident. [5]So I thought it necessary to urge the brothers to visit you in advance and finish the arrangements for the generous gift you had promised. Then it will be ready as a generous gift, not as one grudgingly given.

Generosity Encouraged

[6]Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. [7]Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. [8]And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. [9]As it is written:

> "They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor;
> their righteousness endures forever."[a]

[10]Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. [11]You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

[12]This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. [13]Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. [14]And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. [15]Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

[a] *9* Psalm 112:9

TIME CAPSULE A.D. 56 to 57

56	Roman historian Tacitus is born
56	Paul sends the letter to the Romans from Corinth
57	Nero compels senators to fight in the stadium
57	Paul encourages the Ephesian elders in Miletus
57	Paul sails from Miletus to Tyre

TRANSITION

Paul's Third Visit to Corinth

In the final chapters of 2 Corinthians, Paul defends himself against false t eachers who had come to Corinth and claimed authority greater than his. They mistook the "gentleness of Christ" (2Co 10:1) in Paul's life for weakness, claiming that he was braver in his letters than he would be in a face-to-face encounter (10:10). I n response Paul argues that the authority they claim is based on comparing themselves with each other and not on ha v-ing the commendation of God (10:18).

Paul wrote this def ense of his apost olic authority in adv ance of his thir d visit t o Corinth (12:14; 13:1), and thus af ter his "painful visit" (see 1:23—2:1). Paul's uncharacteristic personal boasts (12:1) and his harsh condemnations of his opponen ts are in stark contrast to his warm regard for the Corinthians in other parts of 2 C orinthians (see 7:8–11, 16). P ossibly these chapters were written soon after the "painful visit" while emotions w ere still high on both sides, whereas the earlier chapters were written later once Paul and the Corinthians had been reconciled (see "The Offering for Jerusalem's Christians" at 2Co 8:1).

Still, 2 Corinthians could have been written by Paul as it now appears in the New Testament. The apostle could have made reconciliation with some of the C orinthians while y et dealing with other opponents in the church.

• **2 Corinthians 10:1—13:14**

2 Corinthians

Paul's Defense of His Ministry

10 **:1** By the humility and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you—I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold"

toward you when away! 2I beg you that when
I come I may not have to be as bold as I ex-
pect to be toward some people who think that
we live by the standards of this world. 3For
though we live in the world, we do not wage
war as the world does. 4The weapons we fight
with are not the weapons of the world. On the
contrary, they have divine power to demolish
strongholds. 5We demolish arguments and ev-
ery pretension that sets itself up against the
knowledge of God, and we take captive every
thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6And we
will be ready to punish every act of disobedi-
ence, once your obedience is complete.

7You are judging by appearances.[a] If any-
one is confident that they belong to Christ,
they should consider again that we belong to
Christ just as much as they do. 8So even if I
boast somewhat freely about the authority the
Lord gave us for building you up rather than
tearing you down, I will not be ashamed of it. 9I
do not want to seem to be trying to frighten you
with my letters. 10For some say, "His letters are
weighty and forceful, but in person he is unim-
pressive and his speaking amounts to nothing."
11Such people should realize that what we are
in our letters when we are absent, we will be in
our actions when we are present.

12We do not dare to classify or compare our-
selves with some who commend themselves.
When they measure themselves by themselves
and compare themselves with themselves, they
are not wise. 13We, however, will not boast be-
yond proper limits, but will confine our boast-
ing to the sphere of service God himself has
assigned to us, a sphere that also includes you.
14We are not going too far in our boasting, as
would be the case if we had not come to you,
for we did get as far as you with the gospel of
Christ. 15Neither do we go beyond our lim-
its by boasting of work done by others. Our
hope is that, as your faith continues to grow,
our sphere of activity among you will greatly
expand, 16so that we can preach the gospel in
the regions beyond you. For we do not want
to boast about work already done in someone
else's territory. 17But, "Let the one who boasts
boast in the Lord."[b] 18For it is not the one who
commends himself who is approved, but the
one whom the Lord commends.

Culture & Society
In the culture of the 1st century, exchanging gifts was an important way of establishing and continuing particular social relations. A person's refusal of a gift could be interpreted as a refusal to accept the giver as an equal, or as a declaration that no social relation was desired. In other words, Paul's refusal was open to serious misinterpretation (2Co 11:7).

Paul and the False Apostles

11 1I hope you will put up with me in a lit-
tle foolishness. Yes, please put up with
me! 2I am jealous for you with a godly jealou-
sy. I promised you to one husband, to Christ,
so that I might present you as a pure virgin to
him. 3But I am afraid that just as Eve was de-
ceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds
may somehow be led astray from your sincere
and pure devotion to Christ. 4For if someone
comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than
the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a dif-
ferent spirit from the Spirit you received, or a
different gospel from the one you accepted,
you put up with it easily enough.

5I do not think I am in the least inferior to
those "super-apostles."[c] 6I may indeed be un-
trained as a speaker, but I do have knowledge.
We have made this perfectly clear to you in ev-
ery way. 7Was it a sin for me to lower myself in
order to elevate you by preaching the gospel
of God to you free of charge? 8I robbed other
churches by receiving support from them so
as to serve you. 9And when I was with you and
needed something, I was not a burden to any-
one, for the brothers who came from Macedo-
nia supplied what I needed. I have kept myself
from being a burden to you in any way, and will
continue to do so. 10As surely as the truth of
Christ is in me, nobody in the regions of Achaia
will stop this boasting of mine. 11Why? Because
I do not love you? God knows I do!

12And I will keep on doing what I am doing in
order to cut the ground from under those who
want an opportunity to be considered equal
with us in the things they boast about. 13For
such people are false apostles, deceitful work-
ers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. 14And
no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as
an angel of light. 15It is not surprising, then, if
his servants also masquerade as servants of
righteousness. Their end will be what their ac-
tions deserve.

Paul Boasts About His Sufferings

16I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool. But
if you do, then tolerate me just as you would
a fool, so that I may do a little boasting. 17In
this self-confident boasting I am not talking as
the Lord would, but as a fool. 18Since many are

[a] *7* Or *Look at the obvious facts* [b] *17* Jer. 9:24 [c] *5* Or *to the most eminent apostles*

boasting in the way the world does, I too will boast. 19You gladly put up with fools since you are so wise! 20In fact, you even put up with anyone who enslaves you or exploits you or takes advantage of you or puts on airs or slaps you in the face. 21To my shame I admit that we were too weak for that!

Whatever anyone else dares to boast about—I am speaking as a fool—I also dare to boast about. 22Are they Hebrews? So am I. Are they Israelites? So am I. Are they Abraham's descendants? So am I. 23Are they servants of Christ? (I am out of my mind to talk like this.) I am more. I have worked much harder, been in prison more frequently, been flogged more severely, and been exposed to death again and again. 24Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. 25Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was pelted with stones, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, 26I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my fellow Jews, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false believers. 27I have labored and toiled and have often gone without sleep; I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. 28Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. 29Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn?

30If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. 31The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, who is to be praised forever, knows that I am not lying. 32In Damascus the governor under King Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. 33But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands.

Daily Life & Customs

Travel was a frequent activity in the Roman world, although it was dangerous. There were many robbers (Lk 10:30; 2Co 11:26), who stole not only possessions but sometimes the travelers themselves, selling them or using them as slaves. Augustus stationed the army along the roads to put down this menace, and earned the people's gratitude for improving the security of their daily lives.

Paul's Vision and His Thorn

12 1I must go on boasting. Although there is nothing to be gained, I will go on to visions and revelations from the Lord. 2I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago was caught up to the third heaven. Whether it was in the body or out of the body I do not know—God knows. 3And I know that this man—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, but God knows— 4was caught up to paradise and heard inexpressible things, things that no one is permitted to tell. 5I will boast about a man like that, but I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. 6Even if I should choose to boast, I would not be a fool, because I would be speaking the truth. But I refrain, so no one will think more of me than is warranted by what I do or say, 7or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. 8Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. 9But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. 10That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

Roman road through ancient Corinth

How Immoral Was Corinth? (2Co 12:21)

Corinth was a large Greek city on the northeast coast of the Peloponnesus, the peninsula that forms the south part of Greece. Paul wrote at least two letters (1 and 2 Corinthians) to the Christians there. He was aware of the undesirable behavior of some in the church, behavior which he names as "impurity, sexual sin and debauchery" (2Co 12:21). Such behavior might be expected in a city that had been characterized as sexually immoral.

Actually, history had witnessed two Corinths. The "Greek Corinth" was well known from classical antiquity as a major power in the Greek world. The Romans destroyed that city in 146 B.C., and not until about a century later did they rebuild "Roman Corinth" in 44 B.C. Within a half century, Corinth had regained its economic preeminence in the Aegean world, as well as its leadership of the Isthmian Games. The new Roman Corinth, like the old Greek city, was a prosperous commercial center.

This prosperity resulted in jealousy of a rival Greek city. Athens could look back on its past as a glorious age. But it could not match the commercial and financial success of Corinth. Jealousy may explain why it was often Athenians who made slanderous remarks concerning Corinth's character, identifying Greek Corinth with fornication. Aristophanes was an Athenian writer of comedy, producing plays between 425 and 388 B.C. He used the phrase "to Corinthianize" or "to live like a Corinthian" as an expression of immoral conduct. Plato (427–347 B.C.), the great philosopher of Athens, used the phrase "a Corinthian girl" to refer to a prostitute.

Roman Corinth also was associated with immoral behavior. The novelist Apuleius, writing a humorous work called *Metamorphoses* in the 2nd century A.D., tells of sexual misconduct in Corinth. But Apuleius was partly educated in Athens, and it was possibly there that he heard of Corinth's reputation.

Such characterizations could reflect that Corinth really was more immoral than other Greek cities. On the other hand, the immoral reputation of Corinth could have been enhanced by Athenian authors who were antagonistic towards the city. In reality then, Corinth, though immoral, was possibly no more corrupt than any other contemporary Greek trading city.

Paul's Concern for the Corinthians

11 I have made a fool of myself, but you drove
me to it. I ought to have been commended by
you, for I am not in the least inferior to the "su-
per-apostles,"[a] even though I am nothing. 12 I
persevered in demonstrating among you the
marks of a true apostle, including signs, won-
ders and miracles. 13 How were you inferior to
the other churches, except that I was never a
burden to you? Forgive me this wrong!

14 Now I am ready to visit you for the third
time, and I will not be a burden to you, because
what I want is not your possessions but you.
After all, children should not have to save up
for their parents, but parents for their children.
15 So I will very gladly spend for you everything
I have and expend myself as well. If I love you
more, will you love me less? 16 Be that as it may,
I have not been a burden to you. Yet, crafty fel-
low that I am, I caught you by trickery! 17 Did
I exploit you through any of the men I sent to
you? 18 I urged Titus to go to you and I sent our
brother with him. Titus did not exploit you, did
he? Did we not walk in the same footsteps by
the same Spirit?

19 Have you been thinking all along that we
have been defending ourselves to you? We
have been speaking in the sight of God as
those in Christ; and everything we do, dear
friends, is for your strengthening. 20 For I am
afraid that when I come I may not find you as I
want you to be, and you may not find me as you
want me to be. I fear that there may be discord,
jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, slander,
gossip, arrogance and disorder. 21 I am afraid
that when I come again my God will humble
me before you, and I will be grieved over many
who have sinned earlier and have not repented
of the impurity, sexual sin and debauchery in
which they have indulged.

Final Warnings

13 1 This will be my third visit to you. "Ev-
ery matter must be established by the
testimony of two or three witnesses."[b] 2 I al-
ready gave you a warning when I was with you
the second time. I now repeat it while absent:
On my return I will not spare those who sinned
earlier or any of the others, 3 since you are de-
manding proof that Christ is speaking through
me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is
powerful among you. 4 For to be sure, he was
crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's
power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by
God's power we will live with him in our deal-
ing with you.

5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are
in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize
that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course,
you fail the test? 6 And I trust that you will dis-
cover that we have not failed the test. 7 Now
we pray to God that you will not do anything

[a] *11* Or *the most eminent apostles* [b] *1* Deut. 19:15

wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. 8For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. 9We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored. 10This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.

Final Greetings

11Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

12Greet one another with a holy kiss. 13All God's people here send their greetings.

14May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

TRANSITION

Paul's Trip Through Macedonia

After leaving Ephesus, Paul sailed across to Macedonia, possibly in the winter of A.D. 55–56, and later went to Greece. Most of the three-month stay in Greece (Ac 20:3) was probably spent in Corinth with Gaius, the city's treasurer. From Gaius's large house, Paul wrote the letter to the Romans (Ro 16:23). This was Paul's third and final visit to Corinth, after which he returned to Macedonia and sailed from Philippi to Troas en route to Jerusalem.

• **Acts 20:2, 3a**

Acts

20:2 He traveled through that area, speaking many words of encouragement to the people, and finally arrived in Greece, 3where he stayed three months.

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[a] *3* Or *who according to the flesh* [b] *4* Or *was declared with power to be the Son of God* [c] *5* Or *that is* [d] *13* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 7:1, 4; 8:12, 29; 10:1; 11:25; 12:1; 15:14, 30; 16:14, 17.

TRANSITION

The Letter to the Romans

From the earliest time, no one has questioned that the author of this epistle was Paul. Paul probably wrote Romans from Corinth. Gaius, who was Paul's host at the time of writing (Ro 16:23), had been one of the prominent converts of his ministry in Corinth (1Co 1:14). Phoebe, who delivered the epistle, was a member of the church in Cenchrea, a harbor town near Corinth (16:1, 2).

The letter is to be dated toward the latter part of Paul's missionary work when he was engaged in the collection of a fund for the church in Jerusalem. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians while traveling from Ephesus to Corinth, the collection was still incomplete (2Co 8:1–7). At the time he wrote to the Romans, this collection seems to have been completed (15:26–28). Therefore, it is likely that Paul wrote the epistle to the Romans from Corinth when he stayed there for three months in A.D. 56 at the end of his third missionary journey, before he traveled to Jerusalem (15:25; Ac 20:2, 3).

• **Romans 1:1—15:13**

Romans

1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— 2the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life[a] was a descendant of David, 4and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power[b] by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. 5Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience that comes from[c] faith for his name's sake. 6And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

7To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be his holy people:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's Longing to Visit Rome

8First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because your faith is being reported all over the world. 9God, whom I serve in my spirit in preaching the gospel of his Son, is my witness how constantly I remember you 10in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

11I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— 12that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith. 13I do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters,[d] that I planned many times to come to you (but have been prevented from doing so until now) in order that I

Shameful and Unnatural Lusts (Ro 1:27)

Greek culture rarely frowned upon, and indeed frequently promoted, male homosexual intercourse. Many well-to-do males lusted after boys and had sex with them. Because most males did not marry much before age 30, younger men had three primary opportunities for sex: with slaves, with prostitutes (respectable high-class ones or other people's slaves), or with each other. Close male bonds in many parts of Greek society made sex with other males a frequent option.

By the 1st century, many upper-class Roman males had adopted Greek values toward homosexual behavior, exhibiting such conduct at fashionable parties. At the same time, Roman society as a whole was far less disposed to such practices than Greek society had been (especially that of Athens). Some Roman philosophers, like Seneca, spoke against homosexual practice. Some philosophers regarded sex with members of a person's own gender as "against nature."

Jewish society opposed homosexual behavior even more. Literature from early Jewish sources gives indication of Jewish adulterers, Jewish fornicators, and Jewish males committing sexual sins, but homosexual behavior is treated in Jewish writings as a distinctively *Gentile* sin. Jewish writers also viewed homosexual behavior as "against nature," and as a sin which warranted God's judgment.

As Paul discussed how God judges Jews and Gentiles, he made a point that Jewish Christian readers who looked down on Gentiles would quickly grasp. First he addressed sins that his readers would agree are sinful as a prelude to mentioning other sins that they themselves possibly did not condemn. If they agreed that homosexual practices were "shameful lusts" (Ro 1:26, 27), how could they approve of other "such things" (Ro 1:29–32)? Thus he prepared his readers for the realization that "*all* have sinned" (Ro 3:23).

might have a harvest among you, just as I have had among the other Gentiles.

14 I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. 15 That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. 17 For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed — a righteousness that is by faith from first to last,[a] just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."[b]

God's Wrath Against Sinful Humanity

18 The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of people, who suppress the truth by their wickedness, 19 since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 20 For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator — who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28 Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32 Although they know God's righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

God's Righteous Judgment

2 1 You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass

[a] *17* Or *is from faith to faith* [b] *17* Hab. 2:4

judgment do the same things. 2Now we know
that God's judgment against those who do
such things is based on truth. 3So when you,
a mere human being, pass judgment on them
and yet do the same things, do you think you
will escape God's judgment? 4Or do you show
contempt for the riches of his kindness, for-
bearance and patience, not realizing that God's
kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?
5But because of your stubbornness and your
unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath
against yourself for the day of God's wrath,
when his righteous judgment will be revealed.
6God "will repay each person according to
what they have done."[a] 7To those who by per-
sistence in doing good seek glory, honor and
immortality, he will give eternal life. 8But for
those who are self-seeking and who reject the
truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and
anger. 9There will be trouble and distress for
every human being who does evil: first for the
Jew, then for the Gentile; 10but glory, honor
and peace for everyone who does good: first for
the Jew, then for the Gentile. 11For God does
not show favoritism.
12All who sin apart from the law will also per-
ish apart from the law, and all who sin under
the law will be judged by the law. 13For it is not
those who hear the law who are righteous in
God's sight, but it is those who obey the law
who will be declared righteous. 14(Indeed,
when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by
nature things required by the law, they are a
law for themselves, even though they do not
have the law. 15They show that the require-
ments of the law are written on their hearts,
their consciences also bearing witness, and
their thoughts sometimes accusing them and
at other times even defending them.) 16This
will take place on the day when God judges
people's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my
gospel declares.

The Jews and the Law

17Now you, if you call yourself a Jew; if you
rely on the law and boast in God; 18if you know
his will and approve of what is superior because
you are instructed by the law; 19if you are con-
vinced that you are a guide for the blind, a light
for those who are in the dark, 20an instructor of
the foolish, a teacher of little children, because
you have in the law the embodiment of knowl-
edge and truth— 21you, then, who teach oth-
ers, do you not teach yourself? You who preach
against stealing, do you steal? 22You who say
that people should not commit adultery, do you
commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you
rob temples? 23You who boast in the law, do
you dishonor God by breaking the law? 24As it
is written: "God's name is blasphemed among
the Gentiles because of you."[b]
25Circumcision has value if you observe the
law, but if you break the law, you have become
as though you had not been circumcised. 26So
then, if those who are not circumcised keep the
law's requirements, will they not be regarded
as though they were circumcised? 27The one
who is not circumcised physically and yet
obeys the law will condemn you who, even
though you have the[c] written code and circum-
cision, are a lawbreaker.
28A person is not a Jew who is one only out-
wardly, nor is circumcision merely outward
and physical. 29No, a person is a Jew who is
one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision
of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written
code. Such a person's praise is not from other
people, but from God.

God's Faithfulness

3 1What advantage, then, is there in being a
Jew, or what value is there in circumcision?
2Much in every way! First of all, the Jews have
been entrusted with the very words of God.
3What if some were unfaithful? Will their un-
faithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? 4Not at
all! Let God be true, and every human being a
liar. As it is written:

"So that you may be proved right when you
speak
and prevail when you judge."[d]

5But if our unrighteousness brings out God's
righteousness more clearly, what shall we say?
That God is unjust in bringing his wrath on us?
(I am using a human argument.) 6Certainly
not! If that were so, how could God judge the
world? 7Someone might argue, "If my false-
hood enhances God's truthfulness and so in-
creases his glory, why am I still condemned as

Architecture & Building
Temples were public buildings used not only for religion but also as treasuries. Thus the Parthenon in Athens safeguarded the gold and silver of the Athenians, although in one emergency it was coined and used to finance a war. To call people temple robbers (Ro 2:22) was to describe them as openly disregarding universal standards of religion and morality.

[a] *6* Psalm 62:12; Prov. 24:12
[b] *24* Isaiah 52:5 (see Septuagint); Ezek. 36:20,22
[c] *27* Or *who, by means of a*
[d] *4* Psalm 51:4

a sinner?" [8]Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is just!

No One Is Righteous

[9]What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. [10]As it is written:

"There is no one righteous, not even one;
[11] there is no one who understands;
there is no one who seeks God.
[12]All have turned away,
they have together become worthless;
there is no one who does good,
not even one."[a]
[13]"Their throats are open graves;
their tongues practice deceit."[b]
"The poison of vipers is on their lips."[c]
[14] "Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness."[d]
[15]"Their feet are swift to shed blood;
[16] ruin and misery mark their ways,
[17]and the way of peace they do not know."[e]
[18] "There is no fear of God before their eyes."[f]

[19]Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. [20]Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.

Righteousness Through Faith

[21]But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. [22]This righteousness is given through faith in[g] Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, [23]for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, [24]and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. [25]God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement,[h] through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— [26]he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

[27]Where, then, is boasting? It is excluded. Because of what law? The law that requires works? No, because of the law that requires faith. [28]For we maintain that a person is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. [29]Or is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, [30]since there is only one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through that same faith. [31]Do we, then, nullify the law by this faith? Not at all! Rather, we uphold the law.

Abraham Justified by Faith

4 [1]What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? [2]If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. [3]What does Scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."[i]

[4]Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. [5]However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. [6]David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

[7]"Blessed are those
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
[8]Blessed is the one
whose sin the Lord will never count
against them."[j]

[9]Is this blessedness only for the circumcised, or also for the uncircumcised? We have been saying that Abraham's faith was credited to him as righteousness. [10]Under what circum-

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 57
57		Agabus warns Paul not to go to Jerusalem (Ac 21:10)
57		Paul, Luke, and disciples from Caesarea proceed to Jerusalem
57		Paul visits the temple and is arrested there (Ac 21:30)
57		Paul appears before Felix (Ac 24)
57–59		Paul imprisoned in Caesarea

[a] *12* Psalms 14:1-3; 53:1-3; Eccles. 7:20 [b] *13* Psalm 5:9
[c] *13* Psalm 140:3 [d] *14* Psalm 10:7 (see Septuagint)
[e] *17* Isaiah 59:7,8 [f] *18* Psalm 36:1 [g] *22* Or *through the faithfulness of* [h] *25* The Greek for *sacrifice of atonement* refers to the atonement cover on the ark of the covenant (see Lev. 16:15,16). [i] *3* Gen. 15:6; also in verse 22
[j] *8* Psalm 32:1,2

stances was it credited? Was it after he was circumcised, or before? It was not after, but before! 11And he received circumcision as a sign, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12And he is then also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also follow in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised.

13It was not through the law that Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world, but through the righteousness that comes by faith. 14For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, 15because the law brings wrath. And where there is no law there is no transgression.

16Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. 17As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations."[a] He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

18Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, "So shall your offspring be."[b] 19Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead—since he was about a hundred years old—and that Sarah's womb was also dead. 20Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22This is why "it was credited to him as righteousness." 23The words "it was credited to him" were written not for him alone, 24but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead. 25He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification.

Peace and Hope

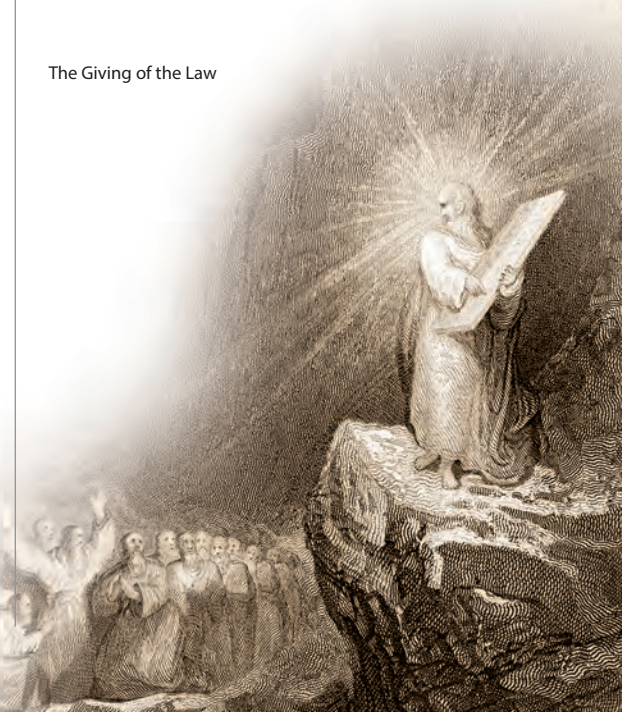
5 1Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we[c] have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we[d] boast in the hope of the glory of God. 3Not only so, but we[d] also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; 4perseverance, character; and character, hope. 5And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

6You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

9Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! 10For if, while we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! 11Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Death Through Adam, Life Through Christ

12Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned—



The Giving of the Law

[a] *17* Gen. 17:5 [b] *18* Gen. 15:5 [c] *1* Many manuscripts *let us* [d] *2,3* Or *let us*

13To be sure, sin was in the world before the
law was given, but sin is not charged against
anyone's account where there is no law. 14Nev-
ertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam
to the time of Moses, even over those who did
not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam,
who is a pattern of the one to come.

15But the gift is not like the trespass. For if
the many died by the trespass of the one man,
how much more did God's grace and the gift
that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus
Christ, overflow to the many! 16Nor can the
gift of God be compared with the result of one
man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and
brought condemnation, but the gift followed
many trespasses and brought justification.
17For if, by the trespass of the one man, death
reigned through that one man, how much
more will those who receive God's abundant
provision of grace and of the gift of righteous-
ness reign in life through the one man, Jesus
Christ!

18Consequently, just as one trespass result-
ed in condemnation for all people, so also one
righteous act resulted in justification and life
for all people. 19For just as through the disobe-
dience of the one man the many were made sin-
ners, so also through the obedience of the one
man the many will be made righteous.

20The law was brought in so that the tres-
pass might increase. But where sin increased,
grace increased all the more, 21so that, just as
sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign
through righteousness to bring eternal life
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dead to Sin, Alive in Christ

6 1What shall we say, then? Shall we go on
sinning so that grace may increase? 2By
no means! We are those who have died to sin;
how can we live in it any longer? 3Or don't you
know that all of us who were baptized into
Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4We
were therefore buried with him through bap-
tism into death in order that, just as Christ was
raised from the dead through the glory of the
Father, we too may live a new life.

5For if we have been united with him in a
death like his, we will certainly also be unit-
ed with him in a resurrection like his. 6For we
know that our old self was crucified with him
so that the body ruled by sin might be done
away with,[a] that we should no longer be slaves
to sin— 7because anyone who has died has
been set free from sin.

8Now if we died with Christ, we believe that
we will also live with him. 9For we know that
since Christ was raised from the dead, he can-
not die again; death no longer has mastery
over him. 10The death he died, he died to sin
once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.

11In the same way, count yourselves dead to
sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12There-
fore do not let sin reign in your mortal body
so that you obey its evil desires. 13Do not offer
any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of
wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God
as those who have been brought from death to
life; and offer every part of yourself to him as
an instrument of righteousness. 14For sin shall
no longer be your master, because you are not
under the law, but under grace.

Slaves to Righteousness

15What then? Shall we sin because we are not
under the law but under grace? By no means!
16Don't you know that when you offer your-
selves to someone as obedient slaves, you are
slaves of the one you obey—whether you are
slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obe-
dience, which leads to righteousness? 17But
thanks be to God that, though you used to
be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from
your heart the pattern of teaching that has now
claimed your allegiance. 18You have been set
free from sin and have become slaves to righ-
teousness.

19I am using an example from everyday life
because of your human limitations. Just as you
used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity
and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now
offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness
leading to holiness. 20When you were slaves
to sin, you were free from the control of right-
eousness. 21What benefit did you reap at that
time from the things you are now ashamed of?
Those things result in death! 22But now that
you have been set free from sin and have be-
come slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads
to holiness, and the result is eternal life. 23For
the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is
eternal life in[b] Christ Jesus our Lord.

Released From the Law, Bound to Christ

7 1Do you not know, brothers and sisters—
for I am speaking to those who know the
law—that the law has authority over someone
only as long as that person lives? 2For example,
by law a married woman is bound to her hus-
band as long as he is alive, but if her husband
dies, she is released from the law that binds
her to him. 3So then, if she has sexual rela-

[a] 6 Or *be rendered powerless* [b] 23 Or *through*

Warring with the Evil Impulse Within (Ro 7:21–23)

When Paul wrote about living life under the law of God (Ro 7), perhaps he was describing, from his new Christian perspective, his own genuine experience under the law. The Church Fathers were divided (as are modern readers) on whether Paul wrote of his present experience or of his preconversion experience. Whichever, he agonized over the battle to do God's will, saying, "Evil is right there with me" (Ro 7:21).

Jewish people commonly believed that a child was born with a *yetzer hara,* an evil impulse. When a Jewish boy entered adulthood, he would accept responsibility for the commandments (a custom which later evolved into bar mitzvah, the religious rite of passage). According to Jewish belief, once a boy accepted the commandments, he found in God's law strength to overcome his evil impulse. After this, two impulses—good and evil—would battle within him, in a struggle similar to Paul's description.

Philosophers also discussed a struggle, one between human reason and human passion. In the philosophers' view, a person overcame passions by depending on reason. Jewish teachers felt that one overcame the evil impulse by learning Torah, the Law. For Paul, however, the battle appeared futile, because mere knowledge without transformation of character could not bring victory. Any solution to the struggle depending on human effort, whether on a person's reason or on knowledge of Torah, was inadequate.

Victory was possible, Paul realized, through God's Spirit (8:2–4). Interestingly, one strand of Jewish tradition emphasized that in the end times, when the Messiah came, God would publicly slay the evil impulse. For Paul, the Messiah's work of delivering from sin was an accomplished act of history (Ro 6:5, 11), and the gift of the Spirit was the foretaste of future glory (8:23).

tions with another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress if she marries another man.

4So, my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God. 5For when we were in the realm of the flesh,[a] the sinful passions aroused by the law were at work in us, so that we bore fruit for death. 6But now, by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.

The Law and Sin

7What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."[b] 8But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of coveting. For apart from the law, sin was dead. 9Once I was alive apart from the law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. 10I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. 11For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. 12So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.

13Did that which is good, then, become death to me? By no means! Nevertheless, in order that sin might be recognized as sin, it used what is good to bring about my death, so that through the commandment sin might become utterly sinful.

14We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. 15I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. 16And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. 17As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. 18For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature.[c] For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. 19For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. 20Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it.

21So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. 22For in my inner being I delight in God's law; 23but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. 24What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature[d] a slave to the law of sin.

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[a] *5* In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit. [b] *7* Exodus 20:17; Deut. 5:21
[c] *18* Or *my flesh* [d] *25* Or *in the flesh*

Life Through the Spirit

8 [1]Therefore, there is now no condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus, [2]because
through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who
gives life has set you[a] free from the law of sin
and death. [3]For what the law was powerless
to do because it was weakened by the flesh,[b]
God did by sending his own Son in the likeness
of sinful flesh to be a sin offering.[c] And so he
condemned sin in the flesh, [4]in order that the
righteous requirement of the law might be ful-
ly met in us, who do not live according to the
flesh but according to the Spirit.

[5]Those who live according to the flesh have
their minds set on what the flesh desires; but
those who live in accordance with the Spirit
have their minds set on what the Spirit desires.
[6]The mind governed by the flesh is death, but
the mind governed by the Spirit is life and
peace. [7]The mind governed by the flesh is hos-
tile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor
can it do so. [8]Those who are in the realm of the
flesh cannot please God.

[9]You, however, are not in the realm of the
flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed
the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone
does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not
belong to Christ. [10]But if Christ is in you, then
even though your body is subject to death be-
cause of sin, the Spirit gives life[d] because of
righteousness. [11]And if the Spirit of him who
raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he
who raised Christ from the dead will also give
life to your mortal bodies because of[e] his Spirit
who lives in you.

[12]Therefore, brothers and sisters, we have an
obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live ac-
cording to it. [13]For if you live according to the
flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to
death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

[14]For those who are led by the Spirit of God
are the children of God. [15]The Spirit you re-
ceived does not make you slaves, so that you
live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received
brought about your adoption to sonship.[f] And
by him we cry, *"Abba,*[g] Father." [16]The Spirit
himself testifies with our spirit that we are
God's children. [17]Now if we are children, then
we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with
Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in
order that we may also share in his glory.

Present Suffering and Future Glory

[18]I consider that our present sufferings are
not worth comparing with the glory that will
be revealed in us. [19]For the creation waits in
eager expectation for the children of God to
be revealed. [20]For the creation was subjected
to frustration, not by its own choice, but by
the will of the one who subjected it, in hope
[21]that[h] the creation itself will be liberated from
its bondage to decay and brought into the free-
dom and glory of the children of God.

[22]We know that the whole creation has been
groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up
to the present time. [23]Not only so, but we our-
selves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit,
groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adop-
tion to sonship, the redemption of our bodies.
[24]For in this hope we were saved. But hope that
is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what
they already have? [25]But if we hope for what we
do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

[26]In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our
weakness. We do not know what we ought to
pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for
us through wordless groans. [27]And he who
searches our hearts knows the mind of the
Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's
people in accordance with the will of God.

[28]And we know that in all things God works
for the good of those who love him, who[i] have
been called according to his purpose. [29]For
those God foreknew he also predestined to
be conformed to the image of his Son, that he
might be the firstborn among many brothers
and sisters. [30]And those he predestined, he
also called; those he called, he also justified;
those he justified, he also glorified.

More Than Conquerors

[31]What, then, shall we say in response to these
things? If God is for us, who can be against us?
[32]He who did not spare his own Son, but gave
him up for us all—how will he not also, along
with him, graciously give us all things? [33]Who
will bring any charge against those whom God
has chosen? It is God who justifies. [34]Who then
is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus
who died—more than that, who was raised to
life—is at the right hand of God and is also in-
terceding for us. [35]Who shall separate us from
the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or

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[a] *2* The Greek is singular; some manuscripts *me*
[b] *3* In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verses 4-13. [c] *3* Or *flesh, for sin* [d] *10* Or *you, your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive* [e] *11* Some manuscripts *bodies through*
[f] *15* The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture; also in verse 23. [g] *15* Aramaic for *father*
[h] *20,21* Or *subjected it in hope.* [21]*For* [i] *28* Or *that all things work together for good to those who love God, who*; or *that in all things God works together with those who love him to bring about what is good—with those who*

persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36As it is written:

"For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."[a]

37No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,[b] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's Anguish Over Israel

9 1I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit— 2I have great sorrow and unceasing anguish in my heart. 3For I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my people, those of my own race, 4the people of Israel. Theirs is the adoption to sonship; theirs the divine glory, the covenants, the receiving of the law, the temple worship and the promises. 5Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of the Messiah, who is God over all, forever praised![c] Amen.

God's Sovereign Choice

6It is not as though God's word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. 7Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham's children. On the contrary, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."[d] 8In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring. 9For this was how the promise was stated: "At the appointed time I will return, and Sarah will have a son."[e]

10Not only that, but Rebekah's children were conceived at the same time by our father Isaac. 11Yet, before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad—in order that God's purpose in election might stand: 12not by works but by him who calls—she was told, "The older will serve the younger."[f] 13Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."[g]

14What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! 15For he says to Moses,

"I will have mercy on whom I have mercy,
and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion."[h]

16It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God's mercy. 17For Scripture says to Pharaoh: "I raised you up for this very purpose, that I might display my power in you and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth."[i] 18Therefore God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, and he hardens whom he wants to harden.

19One of you will say to me: "Then why does God still blame us? For who is able to resist his will?" 20But who are you, a human being, to talk back to God? "Shall what is formed say to the one who formed it, 'Why did you make me like this?'"[j] 21Does not the potter have the right to make out of the same lump of clay some pottery for special purposes and some for common use?

22What if God, although choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction? 23What if he did this to make the riches of his glory known to the objects of his mercy, whom he prepared in advance for glory— 24even us, whom he also called, not only from the Jews but also from the Gentiles? 25As he says in Hosea:

"I will call them 'my people' who are not my people;
and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one,"[k]

26and,

"In the very place where it was said to them,
'You are not my people,'
there they will be called 'children of the living God.'"[l]

Science & Technology

Pottery is one of the oldest and most widely known technologies. The raw material is clay, which is abundant and has no economic value until it is formed into a vessel and dried or fired. The same store of clay is easily transformed into whatever shape the potter intends, or that the client may have specified (Ro 9:21). Some pottery is so cheap it is thrown away after one use.

[a] *36* Psalm 44:22 [b] *38* Or *nor heavenly rulers*
[c] *5* Or *Messiah, who is over all. God be forever praised!* Or *Messiah. God who is over all be forever praised!*
[d] *7* Gen. 21:12 [e] *9* Gen. 18:10,14 [f] *12* Gen. 25:23
[g] *13* Mal. 1:2,3 [h] *15* Exodus 33:19 [i] *17* Exodus 9:16
[j] *20* Isaiah 29:16; 45:9 [k] *25* Hosea 2:23 [l] *26* Hosea 1:10

27 Isaiah cries out concerning Israel:

"Though the number of the Israelites be
like the sand by the sea,
only the remnant will be saved.
28 For the Lord will carry out
his sentence on earth with speed and
finality."[a]

29 It is just as Isaiah said previously:

"Unless the Lord Almighty
had left us descendants,
we would have become like Sodom,
we would have been like Gomorrah."[b]

Israel's Unbelief

30 What then shall we say? That the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have obtained it, a righteousness that is by faith; 31 but the people of Israel, who pursued the law as the way of righteousness, have not attained their goal. 32 Why not? Because they pursued it not by faith but as if it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone. 33 As it is written:

"See, I lay in Zion a stone that causes people
to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall,
and the one who believes in him will
never be put to shame."[c]

10 1 Brothers and sisters, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. 2 For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. 3 Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. 4 Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

5 Moses writes this about the righteousness that is by the law: "The person who does these things will live by them."[d] 6 But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'"[e] (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'"[f] (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,"[g] that is, the message concerning faith that we proclaim: 9 If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."[h] 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."[i]

14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"[j]

16 But not all the Israelites accepted the good news. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our message?"[k] 17 Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ. 18 But I ask: Did they not hear? Of course they did:

"Their voice has gone out into all the earth,
their words to the ends of the world."[l]

19 Again I ask: Did Israel not understand? First, Moses says,

"I will make you envious by those who are
not a nation;
I will make you angry by a nation that has
no understanding."[m]

20 And Isaiah boldly says,

"I was found by those who did not seek me;
I revealed myself to those who did not
ask for me."[n]

21 But concerning Israel he says,

"All day long I have held out my hands
to a disobedient and obstinate people."[o]

The Remnant of Israel

11 1 I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. 2 God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew. Don't you know what Scripture says in the passage about Elijah — how he appealed to God against Israel: 3 "Lord, they have killed your prophets and torn down your altars; I am the only one left, and they are trying to kill me"[p]? 4 And what was God's answer to him? "I have reserved for myself seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal."[q] 5 So too, at the present

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[a] *28* Isaiah 10:22,23 (see Septuagint) [b] *29* Isaiah 1:9
[c] *33* Isaiah 8:14; 28:16 [d] *5* Lev. 18:5 [e] *6* Deut. 30:12
[f] *7* Deut. 30:13 [g] *8* Deut. 30:14 [h] *11* Isaiah 28:16 (see Septuagint) [i] *13* Joel 2:32 [j] *15* Isaiah 52:7
[k] *16* Isaiah 53:1 [l] *18* Psalm 19:4 [m] *19* Deut. 32:21
[n] *20* Isaiah 65:1 [o] *21* Isaiah 65:2 [p] *3* 1 Kings 19:10,14
[q] *4* 1 Kings 19:18

time there is a remnant chosen by grace. [6]And if by grace, then it cannot be based on works; if it were, grace would no longer be grace.

[7]What then? What the people of Israel sought so earnestly they did not obtain. The elect among them did, but the others were hardened, [8]as it is written:

"God gave them a spirit of stupor,
eyes that could not see
and ears that could not hear,
to this very day."[a]

[9]And David says:

"May their table become a snare and a trap,
a stumbling block and a retribution for them.
[10]May their eyes be darkened so they cannot see,
and their backs be bent forever."[b]

Ingrafted Branches

[11]Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious. [12]But if their transgression means riches for the world, and their loss means riches for the Gentiles, how much greater riches will their full inclusion bring!

[13]I am talking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle to the Gentiles, I take pride in my ministry [14]in the hope that I may somehow arouse my own people to envy and save some of them. [15]For if their rejection brought reconciliation to the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? [16]If the part of the dough offered as firstfruits is holy, then the whole batch is holy; if the root is holy, so are the branches.

[17]If some of the branches have been broken off, and you, though a wild olive shoot, have been grafted in among the others and now share in the nourishing sap from the olive root, [18]do not consider yourself to be superior to those other branches. If you do, consider this: You do not support the root, but the root supports you. [19]You will say then, "Branches were broken off so that I could be grafted in." [20]Granted. But they were broken off because of unbelief, and you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but tremble. [21]For if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either.

[22]Consider therefore the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness. Otherwise, you also will be cut off. [23]And if they do not persist in unbelief, they will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. [24]After all, if you were cut out of an olive tree that is wild by nature, and contrary to nature were grafted into a cultivated olive tree, how much more readily will these, the natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree!

All Israel Will Be Saved

[25]I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in, [26]and in this way[c] all Israel will be saved. As it is written:

"The deliverer will come from Zion;
he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
[27]And this is[d] my covenant with them
when I take away their sins."[e]

[28]As far as the gospel is concerned, they are enemies for your sake; but as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, [29]for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. [30]Just as you who were at one time disobedient to God have now received mercy as a result of their disobedience, [31]so they too have now become disobedient in order that they too may now[f] receive mercy as a result of God's mercy to you. [32]For God has bound everyone over to disobedience so that he may have mercy on them all.

Doxology

[33]Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and[g] knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!
[34]"Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?"[h]
[35]"Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay them?"[i]
[36]For from him and through him and for him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.

A Living Sacrifice

12 [1]Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper

[a] *8* Deut. 29:4; Isaiah 29:10 [b] *10* Psalm 69:22,23 [c] *26* Or *and so* [d] *27* Or *will be* [e] *27* Isaiah 59:20,21; 27:9 (see Septuagint); Jer. 31:33,34 [f] *31* Some manuscripts do not have *now.* [g] *33* Or *riches and the wisdom and the* [h] *34* Isaiah 40:13 [i] *35* Job 41:11

worship. 2Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Humble Service in the Body of Christ

3For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your[a] faith; 7if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead,[b] do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Love in Action

9Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. 10Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. 11Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord. 12Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer. 13Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.

14Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. 16Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.[c] Do not be conceited.

17Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. 18If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. 19Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"[d] says the Lord. 20On the contrary:

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.
In doing this, you will heap burning coals
on his head."[e]

21Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Politics & Government
The governing authorities in Palestine were the emperor of Rome and those established or appointed by him (Ro 13:1). Augustus was the first emperor of Rome, and he ruled in peace for more than 40 years. Most of the regions familiar to Paul were ruled by a Roman provincial governor, or by the family of the Herods. In Jerusalem, the Jewish governing authorities had a temple police and could collect some taxes.

Submission to Governing Authorities

13 1Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. 2Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 3For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. 4For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. 5Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

6This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. 7Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.

Love Fulfills the Law

8Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law. 9The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet,"[f] and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."[g] 10Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

The Day Is Near

11And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our sal-

[a] *6* Or *the* [b] *8* Or *to provide for others* [c] *16* Or *willing to do menial work* [d] *19* Deut. 32:35 [e] *20* Prov. 25:21,22 [f] *9* Exodus 20:13-15,17; Deut. 5:17-19,21 [g] *9* Lev. 19:18

THE ROMAN EMPIRE RULES PALESTINE

The people of Rome developed the last civilization of the ancient world in the West, and had a significant impact upon Palestine during the New Testament era. During the apostle Paul's ministry, the Romans were the "governing authorities" (Ro 13:1) to whom he urged Christians to submit.

Date	Event
A.D. 37	Nero is born. Caligula succeeds Tiberius as emperor.
A.D. 40	Caligula orders a statue of himself to be placed in the temple at Jerusalem. Herod Agrippa I persuades him to cancel the order.
A.D. 41	Caligula is assassinated. The new emperor appoints Herod Agrippa I to rule Judea.
A.D. 44	Herod Agrippa I dies (Ac 12). Judea becomes a province again.
A.D. 52–59	Antonius Felix is governor of Judea (Ac 23:24).
A.D. 54	Claudius dies, probably poisoned by his wife, and Nero becomes emperor.
A.D. 59–62	Porcius Festus is governor of Judea (Ac 24:27—25:1).
A.D. 64	The Great Fire burns in the city of Rome (July 19–28). Nero blames it on the Christians and persecutes them.
A.D. 66	The Jews in Palestine rebel against Rome.
A.D. 68	Nero commits suicide.
A.D. 70	Jerusalem is conquered by Titus. Jews are forbidden to live there.

vation is nearer now than when we first believed. 12The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. 13Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.[a]

The Weak and the Strong

14 1Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters. 2One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them. 4Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

5One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. 6Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. 8If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

10You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister[b]? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11It is written:

> "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord,
> 'every knee will bow before me;
> every tongue will acknowledge God.'"[c]

Culture & Society

The Romans obtained many of their slaves through warfare. In addition, some criminals and pirates engaged in the business of capturing people and selling them as slaves. Slaves could be bought in markets without their origin being known, while children of slaves were slaves from birth. Paul did not discuss the abolition of slavery, but did speak to masters and slaves on how to live within that culture's institutions (Ro 14:4).

[a] *14* In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit. [b] *10* The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family; also in verses 13, 15 and 21. [c] *11* Isaiah 45:23

12So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

13Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. 14I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. 15If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. 16Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. 17For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, 18because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

19Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. 20Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. 21It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

22So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. 23But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.[a]

15 1We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. 2Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. 3For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me."[b] 4For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope.

5May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, 6so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

7Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. 8For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews[c] on behalf of God's truth, so that the promises made to the patriarchs might be confirmed 9and, moreover, that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written:

"Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles;
I will sing the praises of your name."[d]

10Again, it says,

"Rejoice, you Gentiles, with his people."[e]

11And again,

"Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles;
let all the peoples extol him."[f]

12And again, Isaiah says,

"The Root of Jesse will spring up,
one who will arise to rule over the nations;
in him the Gentiles will hope."[g]

13May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

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[a] *23* Some manuscripts place 16:25-27 here; others after 15:33.
[b] *3* Psalm 69:9 [c] *8* Greek *circumcision*
[d] *9* 2 Samuel 22:50; Psalm 18:49 [e] *10* Deut. 32:43
[f] *11* Psalm 117:1 [g] *12* Isaiah 11:10 (see Septuagint)

TRANSITION

Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles

Having ministered in the eastern Mediterranean area for many years, Paul planned to take the gospel farther west to Spain and to visit the Romans on his way (Ro 15:24). Even though Paul had never been to Rome, many Roman Christians who had labored with Paul elsewhere knew him. Among them were Priscilla and Aquila (Ac 18:2, 3), as well as Rufus and his mother (Ro 16:13). Paul hoped that Rome could serve as the home base for his missions in the West, as Antioch had in the East, and may have written this letter in order to solicit support from the Roman church for his mission.

That Paul sent so many greetings (16:3–15) and apparently knew so many people in a city he had yet to visit strikes some scholars as odd. He also seems to have written a conclusion to the letter already in Ro 15:30–33. Since many of the people who receive personal greetings in ch. 16 are associated with Ephesus elsewhere in the New Testament, some scholars suggest that Paul had two copies of the letter made. One copy, ending at 15:33, was sent to the church at Rome. Paul then added a personal postscript to the other copy and had it delivered to the church at Ephesus.

• **Romans 15:14—16:27**

Romans

Paul the Minister to the Gentiles

15:14 I myself am convinced, my brothers and sisters, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with knowledge and competent to instruct one another. 15Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me 16to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

17Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God. 18I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me in leading the Gentiles to obey God by what I have said and done— 19by the power of signs and wonders, through the power of the Spirit of God. So from Jerusalem all the way around to Illyricum, I have fully proclaimed the gospel of Christ. 20It has always been my ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so that I would not be building on someone else's foundation. 21Rather, as it is written:

> "Those who were not told about him will see,
> and those who have not heard will understand."[a]

22This is why I have often been hindered from coming to you.

Paul's Plan to Visit Rome

23But now that there is no more place for me to work in these regions, and since I have been longing for many years to visit you, 24I plan to do so when I go to Spain. I hope to see you while passing through and to have you assist me on my journey there, after I have enjoyed your company for a while. 25Now, however, I am on my way to Jerusalem in the service of the Lord's people there. 26For Macedonia and Achaia were pleased to make a contribution for the poor among the Lord's people in Jerusalem. 27They were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have shared in the Jews' spiritual blessings, they owe it to the Jews to share with them their material blessings. 28So after I have completed this task and have made sure that they have received this contribution, I will go to Spain and visit you on the way. 29I know that when I come to you, I will come in the full measure of the blessing of Christ.

30I urge you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me. 31Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favorably received by the Lord's people there, 32so that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed. 33The God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Personal Greetings

16 1I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon[b,c] of the church in Cenchreae. 2I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

3Greet Priscilla[d] and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus. 4They risked their lives for me. Not only I but all the churches of the Gentiles are grateful to them.

5Greet also the church that meets at their house.

Greet my dear friend Epenetus, who was the first convert to Christ in the province of Asia.

6Greet Mary, who worked very hard for you.

7Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among[e] the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.

8Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.

9Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.

10Greet Apelles, whose fidelity to Christ has stood the test.

Greet those who belong to the household of Aristobulus.

11Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.

Greet those in the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord.

12Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, those women who work hard in the Lord.

Greet my dear friend Persis, another woman who has worked very hard in the Lord.

13Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother, who has been a mother to me, too.

14Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the other brothers and sisters with them.

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[a] *21* Isaiah 52:15 (see Septuagint) [b] *1* Or *servant*
[c] *1* The word *deacon* refers here to a Christian designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Phil. 1:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8,12. [d] *3* Greek *Prisca*, a variant of *Priscilla* [e] *7* Or *are esteemed by*

Servant of the Church at Cenchreae (Ro 16:1, 2)

Located on the prosperous isthmus of Corinth, Cenchreae was a port city, seven miles east of Corinth. Much of Corinth's wealth came from this town, which by Paul's time hosted many foreign religions and was more religiously tolerant than some other less cosmopolitan locations. Phoebe, a woman of the church at Cenchreae, delivered Paul's letter to the Roman Christians (Ro 16:1).

Paul calls Phoebe a "deacon of the church" (16:1). By "deacon" Paul could have meant a "servant" of the gospel, as he described himself and Apollos (1Co 3:5). The word "deacon" might also describe Phoebe as the owner of the home in which the church met. Paul also calls her a "benefactor" (Ro 16:2), which in Greek generally referred to "patrons" who hosted religious associations, like churches, in their homes. Women patrons, although in the minority, did exist in ancient times.

The phrase "deacon of the church" may well correspond to the Jewish title *chazzan,* the person in charge of the synagogue building. (Like churches, synagogues without adequate resources to build special structures typically began in homes.) Jewish synagogues highly respected the office of *chazzan,* which was usually filled by men.

Though women's roles had improved in much of Greco-Roman society, 1st-century cultural prejudices still restricted opportunities for the average woman. Paul, though, did not hesitate to support women's roles to his Roman readers. He commends various ministries of many women, including Phoebe, Priscilla (16:3), Mary (16:6), and Junia, whom he calls an apostle (16:7).

15 Greet Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the Lord's people
who are with them.
16 Greet one another with a holy kiss.
All the churches of Christ send greetings.

17 I urge you, brothers and sisters, to watch
out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the
teaching you have learned. Keep away from
them. 18 For such people are not serving our
Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth
talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. 19 Everyone has heard about your
obedience, so I rejoice because of you; but I
want you to be wise about what is good, and
innocent about what is evil.
20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

21 Timothy, my co-worker, sends his greetings to you, as do Lucius, Jason and Sosipater,
my fellow Jews.
22 I, Tertius, who wrote down this letter, greet
you in the Lord.
23 Gaius, whose hospitality I and the whole
church here enjoy, sends you his greetings.
Erastus, who is the city's director of public works, and our brother Quartus send you their greetings. [24] [a]

25 Now to him who is able to establish you
in accordance with my gospel, the message I
proclaim about Jesus Christ, in keeping with
the revelation of the mystery hidden for long
ages past, 26 but now revealed and made known
through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all the Gentiles might come to the obedience that comes
from [b] faith— 27 to the only wise God be glory
forever through Jesus Christ! Amen.

[a] *24* Some manuscripts include here *May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with all of you. Amen.* [b] *26* Or *that is*

Culture & Society

"Tertius" and "Quartus" are the Latin words for "third" and "fourth" and were names given to slaves (Ro 16:22, 23). Tertius, Paul's secretary for the Book of Romans, is a good example of the wide range of jobs that slaves had in the Roman world. Persons born as slaves could be educated for jobs requiring literacy, or educated adults could be enslaved through conquest in war.

TRANSITION

En Route to Jerusalem

The account of Paul's travels to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey (Ac 20:3b—21:16) is one of three segments in

the Book of Acts known as the "we" passages (also 16:10–18; 27:1—28:16). These accounts appear to relate firsthand reports of events at which the author of Acts was personally present.

Scholars differ over the significance the "we" passages have concerning the authorship of Acts as a whole. Since Paul was known to have had an associate named Luke (Phm 1:24; Col 4:14; 2Ti 4:11), these firsthand accounts might support the traditional view that Luke wrote Acts. Other scholars suggest that the "we" passages may represent a source used by the author of Acts. In this case, the author of the source for the "we" passages need not have been the author of the entire book.

At Tyre Paul heard the first Spirit-inspired prediction of trouble facing him at Jerusalem (Ac 21:4). But Paul was undeterred. His destination was Jerusalem, hoping to be there by the day of Pentecost in A.D. 57. After that, he planned to visit Rome (see 19:21).

• **Acts 20:3b—21:16**

Acts

20 **:3b** Because some Jews had plotted against him just as he was about to sail for Syria, he decided to go back through Macedonia. 4He was accompanied by Sopater son of Pyrrhus from Berea, Aristarchus and Secundus from Thessalonica, Gaius from Derbe, Timothy also, and Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia. 5These men went on ahead and waited for us at Troas. 6But we sailed from Philippi after the Festival of Unleavened Bread, and five days later joined the others at Troas, where we stayed seven days.

Eutychus Raised From the Dead at Troas

7On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight. 8There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were meeting. 9Seated in a window was a young man named Eutychus, who was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. When he was sound asleep, he fell to the ground from the third story and was picked up dead. 10Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!" 11Then he went upstairs again and broke bread and ate. After talking until daylight, he left. 12The people took the young man home alive and were greatly comforted.

Paul's Farewell to the Ephesian Elders

13We went on ahead to the ship and sailed for Assos, where we were going to take Paul aboard. He had made this arrangement because he was going there on foot. 14When he met us at Assos, we took him aboard and went on to Mitylene. 15The next day we set sail from there and arrived off Chios. The day after that we crossed over to Samos, and on the following day arrived at Miletus. 16Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus to avoid spending time in the province of Asia, for he was in a hurry to reach Jerusalem, if possible, by the day of Pentecost.

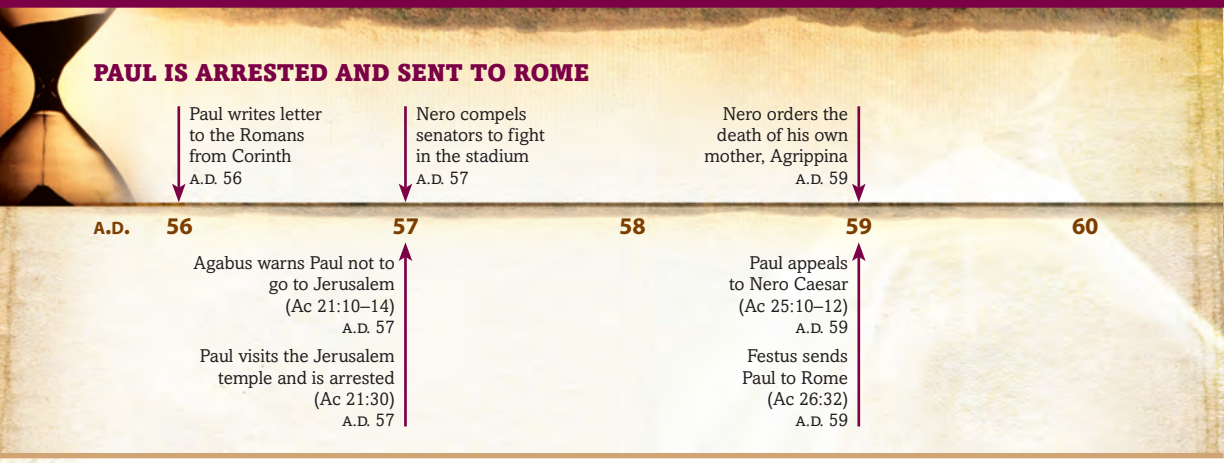
17From Miletus, Paul sent to Ephesus for the elders of the church. 18When they arrived, he said to them: "You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia. 19I served the Lord with great humility and with tears and in the midst of severe testing by the plots of my Jewish opponents. 20You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house. 21I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

22"And now, compelled by the Spirit, I am going to Jerusalem, not knowing what will happen to me there. 23I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me. 24However, I consider my life worth nothing to me; my only aim is to finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me—the task of testifying to the good news of God's grace.

25"Now I know that none of you among whom I have gone about preaching the kingdom will ever see me again. 26Therefore, I declare to you today that I am innocent of the blood of any of you. 27For I have not hesitated to proclaim to you the whole will of God. 28Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God,[a] which he bought with his own blood.[b] 29I know that after I leave, savage wolves will come in among you and will not spare the flock. 30Even from your own number men will arise and distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after them. 31So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears.

32"Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. 33I have not coveted anyone's silver or gold or clothing. 34You yourselves know

[a] *28* Many manuscripts *of the Lord his own Son.* [b] *28* Or *with the blood of*



that these hands of mine have supplied my own needs and the needs of my companions. 35In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

36When Paul had finished speaking, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. 37They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. 38What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship.

On to Jerusalem

21 1After we had torn ourselves away from them, we put out to sea and sailed straight to Kos. The next day we went to Rhodes and from there to Patara. 2We found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, went on board and set sail.3After sighting Cyprus and passing to the south of it, we sailed on to Syria. We landed at Tyre, where our ship was to unload its cargo. 4We sought out the disciples there and stayed with them seven days. Through the Spirit they urged Paul not to go on to Jerusalem. 5When it was time to leave, we left and continued on our way. All of them, including wives and children, accompanied us out of the city, and there on the beach we knelt to pray. 6After saying goodbye to each other, we went aboard the ship, and they returned home.

7We continued our voyage from Tyre and landed at Ptolemais, where we greeted the brothers and sisters and stayed with them for a day. 8Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven. 9He had four unmarried daughters who prophesied.

10After we had been there a number of days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. 11Coming over to us, he took Paul's belt, tied his own hands and feet with it and said, "The Holy Spirit says, 'In this way the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem will bind the owner of this belt and will hand him over to the Gentiles.'"

12When we heard this, we and the people there pleaded with Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. 13Then Paul answered, "Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." 14When he would not be dissuaded, we gave up and said, "The Lord's will be done."

15After this, we started on our way up to Jerusalem. 16Some of the disciples from Caesarea accompanied us and brought us to the home of Mnason, where we were to stay. He was a man from Cyprus and one of the early disciples.

THE GOSPEL FROM JERUSALEM TO ROME

Acts presents Rome as the guardian of law and order, a situation which often worked to the advantage of Paul and the gospel. Christians were expected to observe Roman law and not to get involved in disorderly, suspicious, or treasonous activity. The Romans, for their part, recognized Christianity as a legal and valid religion with the right to exist.

God used Paul's imprisonment to bring him to Rome, the heart of the world.

Paul's Roman citizenship granted him certain privileges as well as protection from Jewish fanaticism. His defense before the Roman governors Felix and Festus, as well as his specific appeal to plead his case before Caesar (Ac 25:10–12) are

examples of Roman civil and legal law protecting Christianity.

The final chapters of Acts portray Paul as a witness for Jesus Christ on trial for the gospel. He defends himself before a Jerusalem crowd (Ac 22:1–21), before Felix (24:10–21), and before King Agrippa (26:1–32). He was not found guilty of any crime by the Romans, but they kept him in prison to satisfy the Jews. In the view of the author of Acts, God used Paul's imprisonment to bring him to Rome, the heart of the world, and to make him a witness there.

Paul's appearance in Rome was ironic, because he came as a prisoner and not as a missionary (Ac 28:19, 20). In a Roman house he was held in confinement awaiting a trial that apparently never took place.

TRANSITION

Paul Arrested in the Temple

After arriving in Jerusalem, Paul went to James, the brother of Jesus, and to the elders telling them about his work among the Gentiles. The leaders of the church rejoiced over the conversion of Gentiles, but they were worried about Jewish hostility. Rumors were circulating that Paul had taught Jews living outside of Palestine not to keep the Jewish law. To avoid a dispute, Paul was urged to join with four men who had taken a Nazirite vow. By accompanying them to the temple and paying the expenses of the sacrificial offerings, Paul would demonstrate that as a Jew he was keeping the law, despite his witnessing to Gentiles.

Paul was also accused of profaning the temple by bringing a Gentile into its inner courts. Gentiles were allowed in the outer court, called appropriately the Court of the Gentiles, but they were forbidden to come into the Court of Women or the Court of Israel. Signs warned that Gentiles entering these courts would be put to death.

Though Paul had not brought Gentiles into the temple, accusations of such led to an attack against him. The mob stopped beating Paul only because the Roman soldiers intervened to save his life.

• Acts 21:17—23:22

Acts

Paul's Arrival at Jerusalem

21 :17 When we arrived at Jerusalem, the brothers and sisters received us warmly. [18]The next day Paul and the rest of us went to see James, and all the elders were present. [19]Paul greeted them and reported in detail what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

[20]When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. [21]They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. [22]What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, [23]so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. [24]Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law. [25]As for the Gentile believers, we have written to them our decision that they should abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality."

[26]The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them.

Paul Arrested

[27]When the seven days were nearly over, some Jews from the province of Asia saw Paul at the temple. They stirred up the whole crowd and seized him, [28]shouting, "Fellow Israelites, help us! This is the man who teaches everyone everywhere against our people and our law and this place. And besides, he has brought Greeks into the temple and defiled this holy place." [29](They had previously seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with Paul and assumed that Paul had brought him into the temple.)

[30]The whole city was aroused, and the people came running from all directions. Seizing Paul, they dragged him from the temple, and immediately the gates were shut. [31]While they were trying to kill him, news reached the commander of the Roman troops that the whole city of Jerusalem was in an uproar. [32]He at once took some officers and soldiers and ran down to the crowd. When the rioters saw the commander and his soldiers, they stopped beating Paul.

[33]The commander came up and arrested him and ordered him to be bound with two chains. Then he asked who he was and what he had done. [34]Some in the crowd shouted one thing and some another, and since the commander

Rabbi Gamaliel, Paul's Teacher (Ac 22:3)

Gamaliel was a leading Pharisee and a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin in the New Testament period. As a rabbi, he was well known for his ability to interpret the Torah, having the respect of "all the people" (Ac 5:34). According to one tradition, he was the disciple of the famous rabbi Hillel, whose rabbinical school he represented. Yet another tradition knew Gamaliel to be Hillel's grandson.

Later Jewish sources applauded Gamaliel for upholding the purity of the Law (Torah) and for maintaining its dietary regulations. In other matters, though, he is reported to have held liberal views concerning divorce, keeping the Sabbath, and accepting the Targums (Jewish commentary upon the Torah). This more liberal side of Gamaliel is consistent with his counseling of the Sanhedrin, as Luke relates in Acts. When the Sanhedrin would have killed Peter and some of the apostles, Gamaliel rose to urge a wait-and-see attitude (Ac 5:33–35). The council should let God take care of misguided radicals like the apostles, Gamaliel advised (5:38, 39).

Paul claimed to have been a disciple of Gamaliel, having "studied under" the rabbi (Ac 22:3). In one sense, though, Paul the disciple did not follow in his teacher's steps. While Gamaliel had urged restraint in dealing with Jesus' followers, Paul persecuted them zealously until his conversion.

could not get at the truth because of the uproar, he ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. 35When Paul reached the steps, the violence of the mob was so great he had to be carried by the soldiers. 36The crowd that followed kept shouting, "Get rid of him!"

Paul Speaks to the Crowd

37As the soldiers were about to take Paul into the barracks, he asked the commander, "May I say something to you?"

"Do you speak Greek?" he replied. 38"Aren't you the Egyptian who started a revolt and led four thousand terrorists out into the wilderness some time ago?"

39Paul answered, "I am a Jew, from Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no ordinary city. Please let me speak to the people."

Culture & Society

Tensions in Judea grew worse and worse during the decades leading up to the war between Judea and Rome. The historian Josephus describes a new kind of terrorist called *Sicarii,* who would approach a target in daytime in a crowded place, stab the victim with daggers, and then disappear into the crowd (Ac 21:38). The Latin word *sica* means "dagger" and *sicarii* means "dagger men."

40After receiving the commander's permission, Paul stood on the steps and motioned to the crowd. When they were all silent, he said to
22 them in Aramaic[a]: 1"Brothers and fathers, listen now to my defense."

2When they heard him speak to them in Aramaic, they became very quiet.

Then Paul said: 3"I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. I studied under Gamaliel and was thoroughly trained in the law of our ancestors. I was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. 4I persecuted the followers of this Way to their death, arresting both men and women and throwing them into prison, 5as the high priest and all the Council can themselves testify. I even obtained letters from them to their associates in Damascus, and went there to bring these people as prisoners to Jerusalem to be punished.

6"About noon as I came near Damascus, suddenly a bright light from heaven flashed around me. 7I fell to the ground and heard a voice say to me, 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute me?'

8"'Who are you, Lord?' I asked.

"'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom you are persecuting,' he replied. 9My companions saw the light, but they did not understand the voice of him who was speaking to me.

10"'What shall I do, Lord?' I asked.

"'Get up,' the Lord said, 'and go into Damascus. There you will be told all that you have been assigned to do.' 11My companions led me by the hand into Damascus, because the brilliance of the light had blinded me.

12"A man named Ananias came to see me. He was a devout observer of the law and highly respected by all the Jews living there. 13He stood beside me and said, 'Brother Saul, receive your sight!' And at that very moment I was able to see him.

14"Then he said: 'The God of our ancestors has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. 15You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. 16And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

17"When I returned to Jerusalem and was praying at the temple, I fell into a trance 18and

[a] *40* Or possibly *Hebrew*; also in 22:2

saw the Lord speaking to me. 'Quick!' he said. 'Leave Jerusalem immediately, because the people here will not accept your testimony about me.'

19"'Lord,' I replied, 'these people know that I went from one synagogue to another to imprison and beat those who believe in you. 20And when the blood of your martyr[a] Stephen was shed, I stood there giving my approval and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him.'

21"Then the Lord said to me, 'Go; I will send you far away to the Gentiles.'"

Paul the Roman Citizen

22The crowd listened to Paul until he said this. Then they raised their voices and shouted, "Rid the earth of him! He's not fit to live!"

23As they were shouting and throwing off their cloaks and flinging dust into the air, 24the commander ordered that Paul be taken into the barracks. He directed that he be flogged and interrogated in order to find out why the people were shouting at him like this. 25As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"

26When the centurion heard this, he went to the commander and reported it. "What are you going to do?" he asked. "This man is a Roman citizen."

27The commander went to Paul and asked, "Tell me, are you a Roman citizen?"

"Yes, I am," he answered.

28Then the commander said, "I had to pay a lot of money for my citizenship."

"But I was born a citizen," Paul replied.

29Those who were about to interrogate him withdrew immediately. The commander himself was alarmed when he realized that he had put Paul, a Roman citizen, in chains.

Paul Before the Sanhedrin

30The commander wanted to find out exactly why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So the next day he released him and ordered the chief priests and all the members of the Sanhedrin to assemble. Then he brought Paul and had him stand before them.

23 1Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, "My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day." 2At this the high priest Ananias ordered those standing near Paul to strike him on the mouth. 3Then Paul said to him, "God will strike you, you whitewashed wall! You sit there to judge me according to the law, yet you yourself violate the law by commanding that I be struck!"

4Those who were standing near Paul said, "How dare you insult God's high priest!"

5Paul replied, "Brothers, I did not realize that he was the high priest; for it is written: 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'[b]"

6Then Paul, knowing that some of them were Sadducees and the others Pharisees, called out in the Sanhedrin, "My brothers, I am a Pharisee, descended from Pharisees. I stand on trial because of the hope of the resurrection of the dead." 7When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. 8(The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees believe all these things.)

9There was a great uproar, and some of the teachers of the law who were Pharisees stood up and argued vigorously. "We find nothing wrong with this man," they said. "What if a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?" 10The dispute became so violent that the commander was afraid Paul would be torn to pieces by them. He ordered the troops to go down and take him away from them by force and bring him into the barracks.

[a] *20* Or *witness* [b] *5* Exodus 22:28

Before the Governor at Caesarea (Ac 23:23, 24)

The seaport of Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast was first founded as a trading station by the Sidonian king Strato in the 4th century B.C. It was subsequently occupied by the Ptolemies and Hasmoneans, among others, and eventually made into a fortified port city with an expanded harbor. But it is Herod the Great (37–4 B.C.) who is known as the builder of the city.

Caesarea was in a ruined state when Herod began building operations in 22 B.C. His dream was to have an international port built in a Roman provincial style that would challenge Egypt's Alexandria as the leading trading center in the eastern Mediterranean. The city was completed in about a dozen years according to the Jewish historian Josephus (our primary source of information about Herod's Caesarea). It was an engineering wonder, with many unique features. The builders used a siltation system and made use of hydraulic concrete (poured into the sea as liquid but hardened underwater). The harbor complex was the most elaborate of its day.

After Herod's time, the Roman procurators made Caesarea the official seat of rule. During Jesus' time Pontius Pilate governed Judea from Caesarea, and archaeologists have discovered a fragment of an inscription bearing Pilate's name at the theater there. Antonius Felix was the procurator (or governor) ruling at Caesarea between A.D. 52 and 59, which explains why Paul the prisoner was taken there to stand before him (Ac 23:23, 24).

11 The following night the Lord stood near
Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have tes-
tified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also
testify in Rome."

The Plot to Kill Paul

12 The next morning some Jews formed a con-
spiracy and bound themselves with an oath not
to eat or drink until they had killed Paul. 13 More
than forty men were involved in this plot. 14 They
went to the chief priests and the elders and said,
"We have taken a solemn oath not to eat any-
thing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now then, you
and the Sanhedrin petition the commander to
bring him before you on the pretext of wanting
more accurate information about his case. We
are ready to kill him before he gets here."

16 But when the son of Paul's sister heard of
this plot, he went into the barracks and told
Paul.

17 Then Paul called one of the centurions and
said, "Take this young man to the commander;
he has something to tell him." 18 So he took him
to the commander.

The centurion said, "Paul, the prisoner, sent
for me and asked me to bring this young man
to you because he has something to tell you."

19 The commander took the young man by
the hand, drew him aside and asked, "What is
it you want to tell me?"

20 He said: "Some Jews have agreed to ask
you to bring Paul before the Sanhedrin tomor-
row on the pretext of wanting more accurate
information about him. 21 Don't give in to them,
because more than forty of them are waiting in
ambush for him. They have taken an oath not
to eat or drink until they have killed him. They
are ready now, waiting for your consent to their
request."

22 The commander dismissed the young man
with this warning: "Don't tell anyone that you
have reported this to me."

TRANSITION

Paul Escorted to Caesarea

Citizens of Rome had special privileges including freedom from punishment until they had been tried and convicted. Because Paul had appealed for protection and a legal hearing under his rights as a Roman citizen, he was conducted by a military contingent to the governor's residence in the port city of Caesarea. Paul received an initial hearing before the Roman governor Antonius Felix within a week of arriving (Ac 24:1), but Felix declined to issue a ruling in the case. Even two years later (24:27), probably in July of A.D. 59, Paul's case still awaited adjudication. Felix was succeeded as governor by Porcius Festus at that time.

• **Acts 23:23—24:27**

Acts

Paul Transferred to Caesarea

23 :23 Then he called two of his centuri-
ons and ordered them, "Get ready a
detachment of two hundred soldiers, seventy
horsemen and two hundred spearmen[a] to go
to Caesarea at nine tonight. 24 Provide horses
for Paul so that he may be taken safely to Gov-
ernor Felix."

25 He wrote a letter as follows:

26 Claudius Lysias,

To His Excellency, Governor Felix:

[a] *23* The meaning of the Greek for this word is uncertain.

Greetings.

27This man was seized by the Jews and
they were about to kill him, but I came
with my troops and rescued him, for I
had learned that he is a Roman citizen. 28I
wanted to know why they were accusing
him, so I brought him to their Sanhedrin.
29I found that the accusation had to do with
questions about their law, but there was no
charge against him that deserved death or
imprisonment. 30When I was informed of
a plot to be carried out against the man,
I sent him to you at once. I also ordered
his accusers to present to you their case
against him.

31So the soldiers, carrying out their orders, took Paul with them during the night and brought him as far as Antipatris. 32The next day they let the cavalry go on with him, while they returned to the barracks. 33When the cavalry arrived in Caesarea, they delivered the letter to the governor and handed Paul over to him. 34The governor read the letter and asked what province he was from. Learning that he was from Cilicia, 35he said, "I will hear your case when your accusers get here." Then he ordered that Paul be kept under guard in Herod's palace.

Paul's Trial Before Felix

24 1Five days later the high priest Ananias went down to Caesarea with some of the elders and a lawyer named Tertullus, and they brought their charges against Paul before the governor. 2When Paul was called in, Tertullus presented his case before Felix: "We have enjoyed a long period of peace under you, and your foresight has brought about reforms in this nation. 3Everywhere and in every way, most excellent Felix, we acknowledge this with profound gratitude. 4But in order not to weary you further, I would request that you be kind enough to hear us briefly.

5"We have found this man to be a troublemaker, stirring up riots among the Jews all over the world. He is a ringleader of the Nazarene sect 6and even tried to desecrate the temple; so we seized him. [7][a] 8By examining him yourself you will be able to learn the truth about all these charges we are bringing against him."

9The other Jews joined in the accusation, asserting that these things were true.

10When the governor motioned for him to speak, Paul replied: "I know that for a number of years you have been a judge over this nation; so I gladly make my defense. 11You can easily verify that no more than twelve days ago I went up to Jerusalem to worship. 12My accusers did not find me arguing with anyone at the temple, or stirring up a crowd in the synagogues or anywhere else in the city. 13And they cannot prove to you the charges they are now making against me. 14However, I admit that I worship the God of our ancestors as a follower of the Way, which they call a sect. I believe everything that is in accordance with the Law and that is written in the Prophets, 15and I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. 16So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.

17"After an absence of several years, I came to Jerusalem to bring my people gifts for the poor and to present offerings. 18I was ceremonially clean when they found me in the temple courts doing this. There was no crowd with me, nor was I involved in any disturbance. 19But there are some Jews from the province of Asia, who ought to be here before you and bring charges if they have anything against me. 20Or these who are here should state what crime they found in me when I stood before the Sanhedrin— 21unless it was this one thing I shouted as I stood in their presence: 'It is concerning the resurrection of the dead that I am on trial before you today.'"

22Then Felix, who was well acquainted with the Way, adjourned the proceedings. "When Lysias the commander comes," he said, "I will decide your case."23He ordered the centurion to keep Paul under guard but to give him some freedom and permit his friends to take care of his needs.

24Several days later Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish. He sent for Paul and listened to him as he spoke about faith in Christ Jesus. 25As Paul talked about righteousness, self-control and the judgment to come, Felix was afraid and said, "That's enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you." 26At the same time he was hoping that Paul would offer him a bribe, so he sent for him frequently and talked with him.

27When two years had passed, Felix was succeeded by Porcius Festus, but because Felix wanted to grant a favor to the Jews, he left Paul in prison.

[a] *6-8* Some manuscripts include here *him, and we would have judged him in accordance with our law. 7But the commander Lysias came and took him from us with much violence, 8ordering his accusers to come before you.*

When Did Festus Take Office? (Ac 24:27)

Luke comments in Acts on a transfer of power that occurred while Paul was held in prison. The Roman procurator (or governor) of Judea, Antonius Felix, was replaced by Porcius Festus (Ac 24:27). The new procurator faced a situation left by Felix: Paul had been detained in prison while Felix dealt with other matters (Ac 24:24–26). Now Festus would need to hear Paul's case and decide whether to grant him passage to Rome for trial. The Jewish historian Josephus had a high regard for Festus, whom he contrasted with Felix, Festus's predecessor.

Just when Festus succeeded Felix as procurator is not exactly known. Both Josephus and Luke claim that he followed Felix. Josephus further says that Festus died four years before the Jewish war against Rome, which began in A.D. 66, thus making it A.D. 62 when Festus was succeeded by the next procurator, Albinus. But when Festus first took office and judged Paul's case is not as easy to determine.

One later source, Jerome's Latin version of Eusebius, claims that Festus took office in the emperor Nero's 2nd year, that is, A.D. 56. Complicating this date, though, is Josephus's statement that the previous procurator, Felix, received support from his brother Pallas when Felix left office and returned to Rome. Pallas lost his own position as financial secretary in A.D. 55, making it questionable whether he could have helped his brother after that time. Festus, then, would have taken office by A.D. 55.

The information regarding when Felix left office and Festus took over simply prevents any definite date from being established. Pallas is described as extremely wealthy by two Roman historians, Tacitus and Dio Cassius, so even after he was no longer financial secretary his wealth would have allowed him to help his brother Felix. It is also known that Felix was in office in A.D. 53 and ruled for "a number of years" (Ac 24:10), and Josephus writes considerably of Felix's time in office. While a specific year remains unsettled, most scholars suggest that Festus succeeded Felix around A.D. 59, ruling until his death in A.D. 62.

TRANSITION

The Letter to the Philippians

Paul's immediate purpose for writing a letter to the Philippians was to thank them for a gift they had sent him (Php 4:14–18). Their messenger, Epaphroditus, had recovered from a serious illness and could carry this letter as he returned to Philippi (2:25–30). Paul's authorship of the letter to the Philippians has never been seriously questioned. There has been frequent and vigorous debate, however, over the date as well as the place of writing.

One view is that Paul wrote Philippians from Rome between A.D. 61 and 63. Paul was in prison (Php 1:12–14), and references to the "palace guard" (1:13) and "Caesar's household" (4:22) might suggest imprisonment in Rome. If so, this letter would have been written sometime after Paul was first placed under Roman guard (Ac 28:16).

Other scholars believe that Philippians was written earlier, either around A.D. 54 or 55 during Paul's ministry in Ephesus (Ac 19), or about A.D. 57–59 during his imprisonment at Caesarea (Ac 24–26). The terms "Caesar's household" and "palace guard," important evidence for a Roman imprisonment, could instead refer to Roman authorities in provincial cities like Ephesus or Caesarea. The location of Ephesus is favored because of hints that frequent travels were made between the prison and Philippi (Php 1:26; 2:19, 23–26; 4:18), suggesting that Paul was nearer to Philippi than imprisonment in Rome would allow.

That Paul wrote this letter from either Ephesus or Caesarea can be questioned. The Book of Acts does not mention Paul's ever being in prison in Ephesus, although Paul did write from Ephesus about some threat that he faced in Asia, the Roman province of which Ephesus was the chief city (2Co 1:8–11). The Book of Acts does refer to a Caesarean imprisonment, but Caesarea was much farther from Philippi than was either Ephesus or Rome.

Wherever Paul was imprisoned, the Philippians supported him (Php 1:7). In one of his most personal letters, Paul is concerned, yet confident, that God will bring the Philippians' faith to maturity (2:15).

• **Philippians 1:1—4:23**

Philippians

1:1 Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus,

To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons[a]:

[2]Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

[3]I thank my God every time I remember you. [4]In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy [5]because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, [6]being confident of this, that he who began a good work in

[a] *1* The word *deacons* refers here to Christians designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in Romans 16:1 and 1 Tim. 3:8,12.

you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

7It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. 8God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

9And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, 10so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, 11filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

Paul's Chains Advance the Gospel

12Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters,[a] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. 13As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard[b] and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. 14And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.

Yes, and I will continue to rejoice, 19for I know that through your prayers and God's provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ what has happened to me will turn out for my deliverance.[c] 20I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. 21For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! 23I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; 24but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. 25Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, 26so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.

Life Worthy of the Gospel

27Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit,[d] striving together as one for the faith of the gospel 28without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Imitating Christ's Humility

2 1Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6Who, being in very nature[e] God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be used to his own
advantage;
7rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature[f] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

[a] *12* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in verse 14; and in 3:1, 13, 17; 4:1, 8, 21.
[b] *13* Or *whole palace* [c] *19* Or *vindication*; or *salvation*
[d] *27* Or *in one spirit* [e] *6* Or *in the form of* [f] *7* Or *the form*

TIME CAPSULE A.D. 58 to 59

58	Domitius Corbulo is procurator, or governor, of Syria
59–62	Porcius Festus is procurator, or governor, of Judea (Ac 24:27)
59	Nero orders the death of his mother, Agrippina
59	Paul appeals to Caesar (Ac 25:11)
59	Festus decides to send Paul to Rome
59	Paul appears before Agrippa II and Bernice
59	Paul shipwrecked on the island of Malta

8 And being found in appearance as a
man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest
place
and gave him the name that is above
every name,
10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should
bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the
earth,
11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus
Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Do Everything Without Grumbling

12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

14 Do everything without grumbling or arguing, 15 so that you may become blameless and pure, "children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation."[a] Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky 16 as you hold firmly to the word of life. And then I will be able to boast on the day of Christ that I did not run or labor in vain. 17 But even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service coming from your faith, I am glad and rejoice with all of you. 18 So you too should be glad and rejoice with me.

Timothy and Epaphroditus

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. 23 I hope, therefore, to send him as soon as I see how things go with me. 24 And I am confident in the Lord that I myself will come soon.

25 But I think it is necessary to send back to you Epaphroditus, my brother, co-worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger, whom you sent to take care of my needs. 26 For he longs for all of you and is distressed because you heard he was ill. 27 Indeed he was ill, and almost died. But God had mercy on him, and not on him only but also on me, to spare me sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you may be glad and I may have less anxiety. 29 So then, welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honor people like him, 30 because he almost died for the work of Christ. He risked his life to make up for the help you yourselves could not give me.

Religion & Worship
Every morning and evening an animal sacrifice accompanied by a drink offering was presented at the temple. For this the priests took somewhat more than a quart of wine and poured it out on the ground at the base of the altar. Paul likens his own life to the animal sacrifice and libation that were familiar practices in the ancient world (Php 2:17).

No Confidence in the Flesh

3 1 Further, my brothers and sisters, rejoice in the Lord! It is no trouble for me to write the same things to you again, and it is a safeguard for you. 2 Watch out for those dogs, those evildoers, those mutilators of the flesh. 3 For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh— 4 though I myself have reasons for such confidence.

If someone else thinks they have reasons to put confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; in regard to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as for zeal, persecuting the church; as for righteousness based on the law, faultless.

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in[b] Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith. 10 I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, 11 and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.

12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on

[a] *15* Deut. 32:5 [b] *9* Or *through the faithfulness of*

Paul's Pedigree as a Pharisee (Php 3:4–6)

Much has been written about the Pharisees in the time of Jesus, yet remarkably little was written by them. Firsthand writings exist from only two persons who identified themselves with the Pharisees: Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian and apologist, and Paul of Tarsus, also known as the apostle Paul. Neither Josephus nor Paul resembles the Pharisees written about elsewhere!

Paul recognized that his time as a Pharisee established for him a pedigree within Judaism that was quite impressive. His own summary of his pre-Christian life (Php 3:4–6), therefore, gives us insight into the convictions of at least some Pharisees. For one thing, to be a Pharisee meant for Paul that he interpreted the law, the Jewish Torah in a certain way (3:5). Josephus also writes that Pharisees had their own interpretation of the law.

Another conviction that Paul links to his pedigree as a Pharisee is zeal. "Zeal" characterizes those within Judaism who used violence against other Jews for violating the Torah. These Pharisees lived by their particular interpretations, and they were zealous to preserve the traditions of the fathers (Gal 1:14) and Israel's integrity. The Pharisee Saul demonstrated his own zeal for Judaism by "persecuting the church" (Php 3:6).

Another example of such zeal appeared during the Maccabean war (166–160 B.C.), 200 years before Paul's time. The war broke out when the priest Mattathias "burned with zeal" and killed a fellow Jew who was sacrificing to Greek gods in violation of the Torah (1Mc 2:23–26). Mattathias cried out, "Let every one who is zealous for the law and supports the covenant come out with me!" (1Mc 2:27).

Reflecting on his time as a Pharisee, Paul counted himself amongst the most intense followers of the law, zealous to the point of using violence to protect Israel from Torah desecration. No wonder he persecuted the church. In the view of the Pharisees, the first Christians, as a Jewish group that was lax in the observance of the law, represented the defilement of Israel! Saul the Pharisee had lived out his commitment to Israel through the law; Paul the apostle would live it out through Jesus Christ (Php 3:7–9).

to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. [13]Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, [14]I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

Following Paul's Example

[15]All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things. And if on some point you think differently, that too God will make clear to you. [16]Only let us live up to what we have already attained.

[17]Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. [18]For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. [19]Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. [20]But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, [21]who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

Closing Appeal for Steadfastness and Unity

4 [1]Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

[2]I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. [3]Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life.

Final Exhortations

[4]Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! [5]Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. [6]Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. [7]And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

[8]Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. [9]Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

Thanks for Their Gifts

[10]I rejoiced greatly in the Lord that at last you renewed your concern for me. Indeed, you were concerned, but you had no opportunity to show it. [11]I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content

Women Leaders in the Philippian Church (Php 4:2, 3)

Paul's letters provide insight into the social makeup of the small early Christian communities in the Greco-Roman world. In his letter to the Philippian church, the first two persons he mentions by name are women: Euodia and Syntyche (Php 4:2). When Paul describes them as "these women . . . [who] have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel" and includes them in the category of "co-workers" (4:3), he indicates that they joined with him as equal partners in his missionary and teaching activity.

The exact nature of their leadership roles in the church at Philippi is not certain. The authority of both women in the church was sufficient, however, for Paul to encourage them to seek harmony with one another (4:2). He even called on someone addressed as "true companion" to "help these women" (4:3). Perhaps he was concerned that competition between them for the Philippians' loyalty and affection might fracture the young Philippian church. Perhaps the church met in the houses of these two women; competition between them, then, would have been a temptation.

Paul was concerned that Euodia and Syntyche "be of the same mind in the Lord" (4:2). His concern could not have run too deep, though. Along with Clement, he believed that both Euodia's and Syntyche's names were "in the book of life" (4:3). Nevertheless, both women needed to seek the mind of Christ, not their own.

Women played important leadership roles in Paul's churches, two examples being Phoebe in the church at Cenchreae (Ro 16:1) and Priscilla in Ephesus (1Co 16:19). Particularly in Macedonia, where women often assumed prominent roles in religious cults, it would be natural to find female leaders in a church. Paul supported women's roles in the Christian communities and instructed believers: "nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).

whatever the circumstances. 12I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13I can do all this through him who gives me strength.

14Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. 15Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; 16for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. 17Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. 18I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. 19And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.

20To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

21Greet all God's people in Christ Jesus. The brothers and sisters who are with me send greetings. 22All God's people here send you greetings, especially those who belong to Caesar's household.

23The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.[a]

TRANSITION

Paul Appeals to Caesar

Felix was succeeded as governor by Porcius Festus in the summer of A.D. 59 or 60. Like his predecessor Felix, Festus wanted to please the Jewish leadership, so he asked Paul to stand trial in Jerusalem. Paul, though, refused and used his prerogative as a Roman citizen to appeal, over the jurisdiction of the governor, to the emperor.

After Paul's appeal, Festus decided to present the problem to King Agrippa II. He and Bernice were children of Herod Agrippa I, who died at Caesarea (Ac 12:23). The king apparently welcomed the opportunity to hear Paul. Paul was equally pleased to bear witness before such a distinguished audience and a relatively friendly king. Both Festus and Agrippa II concurred that Paul's appeal to Caesar had removed the case from their legal jurisdiction (25:12; 26:32).

• Acts 25:1—26:32

Acts

Paul's Trial Before Festus

25:1 Three days after arriving in the province, Festus went up from Caesarea to Jerusalem, 2where the chief priests and the Jewish leaders appeared before him and presented the charges against Paul. 3They requested Festus, as a favor to them, to have Paul transferred to Jerusalem, for they were preparing an ambush to kill him along the way. 4Festus answered, "Paul is being held at Caesarea,

[a] *23* Some manuscripts do not have *Amen*.

and I myself am going there soon. 5Let some of your leaders come with me, and if the man has done anything wrong, they can press charges against him there."

6After spending eight or ten days with them, Festus went down to Caesarea. The next day he convened the court and ordered that Paul be brought before him. 7When Paul came in, the Jews who had come down from Jerusalem stood around him. They brought many serious charges against him, but they could not prove them.

8Then Paul made his defense: "I have done nothing wrong against the Jewish law or against the temple or against Caesar."

9Festus, wishing to do the Jews a favor, said to Paul, "Are you willing to go up to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there on these charges?"

10Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. 11If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"

12After Festus had conferred with his council, he declared: "You have appealed to Caesar. To Caesar you will go!"

Festus Consults King Agrippa

13A few days later King Agrippa and Bernice arrived at Caesarea to pay their respects to Festus. 14Since they were spending many days there, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. He said: "There is a man here whom Felix left as a prisoner. 15When I went to Jerusalem, the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him and asked that he be condemned.

16"I told them that it is not the Roman custom to hand over anyone before they have faced their accusers and have had an opportunity to defend themselves against the charges. 17When they came here with me, I did not delay the case, but convened the court the next day and ordered the man to be brought in. 18When his accusers got up to speak, they did not charge him with any of the crimes I had expected. 19Instead, they had some points of dispute with him about their own religion and about a dead man named Jesus who Paul claimed was alive. 20I was at a loss how to investigate such matters; so I asked if he would be willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial there on these charges. 21But when Paul made his appeal to be held over for the Emperor's decision, I ordered him held until I could send him to Caesar."

22Then Agrippa said to Festus, "I would like to hear this man myself."

He replied, "Tomorrow you will hear him."

Paul Before Agrippa

23The next day Agrippa and Bernice came with great pomp and entered the audience room with the high-ranking military officers and the prominent men of the city. At the command of Festus, Paul was brought in. 24Festus said: "King Agrippa, and all who are present with us, you see this man! The whole Jewish community has petitioned me about him in Jerusalem and here in Caesarea, shouting that he ought not to live any longer. 25I found he had done nothing deserving of death, but because he made his appeal to the Emperor I decided to send him to Rome. 26But I have nothing definite to write to His Majesty about him. Therefore I have brought him before all of you, and especially before you, King Agrippa, so that as a result of this investigation I may have something to write. 27For I think it is unreasonable to send a prisoner on to Rome without specifying the charges against him."

26 1Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You have permission to speak for yourself."

So Paul motioned with his hand and began his defense: 2"King Agrippa, I consider myself fortunate to stand before you today as I make my defense against all the accusations of the Jews, 3and especially so because you are well acquainted with all the Jewish customs and controversies. Therefore, I beg you to listen to me patiently.

4"The Jewish people all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. 5They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that I conformed to the strictest sect of our religion,

Politics & Government

In A.D. 54 the Roman Senate conferred the powers of emperor on Nero, who was the Caesar at the time Paul stood trial (Ac 25:10). Nero's mother, Agrippina, seems to have poisoned her husband, Claudius, so that her son could become emperor in his place. Nero was proud, cruel, and in the end a victim of delusions. He executed members of his own family. His enemies forced him to commit suicide in A.D. 68.

Agrippa, Paul's Judge (Ac 25:23)

Marcus Julius Agrippa was the Roman name of Agrippa II, the last of the Herodian dynasty of five Roman-appointed kings in Palestine. He and his father, Agrippa I, were descended from the Jewish-born Herod the Great, ruler of Judea at the time of Christ's birth (Mt 2:1).

The writings of the Jewish historian Josephus (A.D. 37–100) provide the most information about Agrippa. Since he was too young to receive the throne of Judea in A.D. 44 when his father died, the Romans appointed a governor. Agrippa himself was given other territories to rule, notably in Galilee.

At the beginning of the Jewish revolt in A.D. 66 Agrippa came to Jerusalem to quell the disorder. Unsuccessful in this venture, he became an ardent Roman sympathizer. Josephus (*The Wars of the Jews* 2:345) attributes a speech to Agrippa in which he warned that the Romans were much too strong for the Jews to resist, and thus they should side with them. After the revolt in A.D. 70 the Romans gave Agrippa additional territory in reward for his loyalty.

In A.D. 59 the apostle Paul stood trial before Agrippa, who was considered an expert on Jewish affairs, and was interested in Paul's case (Ac 25:13—26:32). The king was accompanied at the trial by his sister Bernice (25:13, 23). Rumors about Agrippa, who apparently never married, having an incestuous relationship with Bernice were denied by Josephus while supported by the Roman writer Juvenal. Paul's judge was a Jewish king, a Roman sympathizer, and a man of questionable moral reputation. As Paul defended his Christian faith, he appealed to Agrippa's Jewish background, challenging even him to become a believing Jew (26:2, 3, 26, 27).

living as a Pharisee. 6And now it is because of
my hope in what God has promised our ancestors that I am on trial today. 7This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. King Agrippa, it is because of this hope that these Jews are accusing me. 8Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

9"I too was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth. 10And that is just what I did in Jerusalem. On the authority of the chief priests I put many of the Lord's people in prison, and when they were put to death, I cast my vote against them. 11Many a time I went from one synagogue to another to have them punished, and I tried to force them to blaspheme. I was so obsessed with persecuting them that I even hunted them down in foreign cities.

12"On one of these journeys I was going to Damascus with the authority and commission of the chief priests. 13About noon, King Agrippa, as I was on the road, I saw a light from heaven, brighter than the sun, blazing around me and my companions. 14We all fell to the ground, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic,[a] 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.'

15"Then I asked, 'Who are you, Lord?'

"'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting,' the Lord replied. 16'Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me. 17I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them 18to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'

19"So then, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the vision from heaven. 20First to those in Damascus, then to those in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and then to the Gentiles, I preached that they should repent and turn to God and demonstrate their repentance by their deeds. 21That is why some Jews seized me in the temple courts and tried to kill me. 22But God has helped me to this very day; so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen— 23that the Messiah would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would bring the message of light to his own people and to the Gentiles."

24At this point Festus interrupted Paul's defense. "You are out of your mind, Paul!" he shouted. "Your great learning is driving you insane."

25"I am not insane, most excellent Festus," Paul replied. "What I am saying is true and reasonable. 26The king is familiar with these things, and I can speak freely to him. I am convinced that none of this has escaped his notice, because it was not done in a corner. 27King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do."

28Then Agrippa said to Paul, "Do you think that in such a short time you can persuade me to be a Christian?"

29Paul replied, "Short time or long—I pray

[a] *14* Or *Hebrew*

to God that not only you but all who are listening to me today may become what I am, except for these chains."

30The king rose, and with him the governor and Bernice and those sitting with them. 31After they left the room, they began saying to one another, "This man is not doing anything that deserves death or imprisonment."

32Agrippa said to Festus, "This man could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar."

TRANSITION

The Voyage to Rome

All the participants in the trial at Caesarea, even Agrippa, agreed that Paul was innocent. Christianity was not a crime before a Roman court, and Paul should rightfully have been set free (Ac 26:32). Instead, after having spent approximately two years in Roman custody in Caesarea, Paul was sent by ship to Rome (ca. A.D. 59 or 60).

The voyage to Rome did not turn out to be a pleasure cruise. Contrary winds had delayed the grain ship until fall weather made sailing dangerous (Ac 27:7, 8). It was already late September or early October, the time when the fast on the Day of Atonement was observed (27:9). This late season, plus Paul's God-given foresight, led to his bold prediction: "our voyage is going to be disastrous" (27:9, 10). After departing the island of Crete late in the fall, his party was shipwrecked on Malta during a storm.

Paul spent the three winter months ministering on the island of Malta. According to Pliny the Elder, the seas could open up for safe sailing as early as February, though weather conditions could delay a voyage until sometime in March. So it was possibly in the spring of A.D. 60 that Paul's journey finally reached Italy. Forum of Appius, 43 miles from Rome, and Three Taverns, 33 miles from Rome (Ac 28:15), were well-known stopping places on the main highway from southern Italy to Rome.

• **Acts 27:1—28:15**

Acts

Paul Sails for Rome

27:1 When it was decided that we would sail for Italy, Paul and some other prisoners were handed over to a centurion named Julius, who belonged to the Imperial Regiment. 2We boarded a ship from Adramyttium about to sail for ports along the coast of the province of Asia, and we put out to sea. Aristarchus, a Macedonian from Thessalonica, was with us.

3The next day we landed at Sidon; and Julius, in kindness to Paul, allowed him to go to his friends so they might provide for his needs. 4From there we put out to sea again and passed to the lee of Cyprus because the winds were against us. 5When we had sailed across the open sea off the coast of Cilicia and Pamphylia, we landed at Myra in Lycia. 6There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship sailing for Italy and put us on board. 7We made slow headway for many days and had difficulty arriving off Cnidus. When the wind did not allow us to hold our course, we sailed to the lee of Crete, opposite Salmone. 8We moved along the coast with difficulty and came to a place called Fair Havens, near the town of Lasea.

9Much time had been lost, and sailing had already become dangerous because by now it was after the Day of Atonement.[a] So Paul warned them, 10"Men, I can see that our voyage is going to be disastrous and bring great loss to ship and cargo, and to our own lives also." 11But the centurion, instead of listening to what Paul said, followed the advice of the pilot and of the owner of the ship. 12Since the harbor was unsuitable to winter in, the majority decided that we should sail on, hoping to reach Phoenix and winter there. This was a harbor in Crete, facing both southwest and northwest.

The Storm

13When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity; so they weighed anchor and sailed along the shore of Crete. 14Before very long, a wind of hurricane force, called the Northeaster, swept down from the island. 15The ship was caught by the storm and could not head into the wind; so we gave way to it and were driven along. 16As we passed to the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were hardly able to make the lifeboat secure, 17so the men hoisted it aboard. Then they passed ropes under the ship itself to hold it together. Because they were afraid they would run aground on

Trade & Economics

Merchant ships in the 1st century were made of wood and powered by sail. They were mostly from 50 to 120 feet long, and thus could carry 200 to 300 tons of cargo. Passengers also traveled on cargo ships (Ac 27:6). The weather was dangerous after mid-September, and except for emergencies, the sea was closed to shipping between November 12 and March 10.

[a] 9 That is, Yom Kippur

the sandbars of Syrtis, they lowered the sea anchor[a] and let the ship be driven along. 18We took such a violent battering from the storm that the next day they began to throw the cargo overboard. 19On the third day, they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. 20When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days and the storm continued raging, we finally gave up all hope of being saved.

21After they had gone a long time without food, Paul stood up before them and said: "Men, you should have taken my advice not to sail from Crete; then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. 22But now I urge you to keep up your courage, because not one of you will be lost; only the ship will be destroyed. 23Last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood beside me 24and said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul. You must stand trial before Caesar; and God has graciously given you the lives of all who sail with you.' 25So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me. 26Nevertheless, we must run aground on some island."

The Shipwreck

27On the fourteenth night we were still being driven across the Adriatic[b] Sea, when about midnight the sailors sensed they were approaching land. 28They took soundings and found that the water was a hundred and twenty feet[c] deep. A short time later they took soundings again and found it was ninety feet[d] deep. 29Fearing that we would be dashed against the rocks, they dropped four anchors from the stern and prayed for daylight. 30In an attempt to escape from the ship, the sailors let the lifeboat down into the sea, pretending they were going to lower some anchors from the bow. 31Then Paul said to the centurion and the soldiers, "Unless these men stay with the ship, you cannot be saved." 32So the soldiers cut the ropes that held the lifeboat and let it drift away.

33Just before dawn Paul urged them all to eat. "For the last fourteen days," he said, "you have been in constant suspense and have gone without food—you haven't eaten anything. 34Now I urge you to take some food. You need it to survive. Not one of you will lose a single hair from his head." 35After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. 36They were all encouraged and ate some food themselves. 37Altogether there were 276 of us on board. 38When they had eaten as much as they wanted, they lightened the ship by throwing the grain into the sea.

39When daylight came, they did not recognize the land, but they saw a bay with a sandy beach, where they decided to run the ship aground if they could. 40Cutting loose the anchors, they left them in the sea and at the same time untied the ropes that held the rudders. Then they hoisted the foresail to the wind and made for the beach. 41But the ship struck a sandbar and ran aground. The bow stuck fast and would not move, and the stern was broken to pieces by the pounding of the surf.

42The soldiers planned to kill the prisoners to prevent any of them from swimming away and escaping. 43But the centurion wanted to spare Paul's life and kept them from carrying out their plan. He ordered those who could

[a] *17* Or *the sails* [b] *27* In ancient times the name referred to an area extending well south of Italy. [c] *28* Or about 37 meters [d] *28* Or about 27 meters

On to Rome
In Jerusalem following his third missionary journey, Paul struggled with Jews who accused him of profaning the temple (Ac 21:26–34). He was placed in Roman custody in Caesarea for two years, but, after appealing to the emperor, was sent by ship to Rome. During this fourth journey (Ac 27:1—28:16), Paul's party departed from the island of Crete only to be shipwrecked on Malta by a great storm. Three months later he finally arrived at the imperial city.

The Islanders of Malta (Ac 28:1, 2)

Late in the autumn of A.D. 59 a ship carrying the apostle Paul to Rome was shipwrecked on a small island. About 60 miles south of Sicily lies the island of Malta, and on the northern part of Malta is the site traditionally called "St. Paul's Bay." Some scholars believe that St. Paul's Bay fits the description of Ac 27:39 which mentions "a bay with a sandy beach," meaning a bay with a beach suitable to run aground a ship.

Before 700 B.C. Malta was a Phoenician trading colony. Diodorus Siculus, who between 60 to 30 B.C. wrote a world history, described Malta as the place where traders stopped off for trade with Spain. The island was also located on the shipping route from Rome to Egypt.

Ramla Bay, Gozo, Malta. Taken from the western cliff.

Phoenician culture and language existed on Malta long after the Romans took control of the island in 218 B.C. The Maltese people spoke Punic, a Phoenician language of ancient Carthage. Luke refers to them as "islanders" (Ac 28:2, 4), but he does not mean they were primitive or uncivilized. The Greek word *barbaros,* which is translated "islanders," was used by Greeks for foreigners, meaning those who were not Greek. Luke calls the Maltese people *barbaros* only because they were of Phoenician descent and did not speak Greek.

The Maltese islanders were a religious people. One of their beliefs was that someone guilty of murder, or some such crime, who escaped a tragic death (such as Paul did at sea) would soon face some other form of death. So they concluded that a Phoenician deity had caused Paul's viper attack. Luke expresses their idea in Greek thought: "the goddess Justice" will not allow a guilty Paul to live (Ac 28:4).

When Paul survived, the islanders' pagan beliefs led them to mistake Paul himself for a god (28:6). But the writer Luke credits the safety of Paul and those with him to another deity: God is the true protector who had a mission for Paul to fulfill (Ac 27:21–26).

swim to jump overboard first and get to land. 44The rest were to get there on planks or on other pieces of the ship. In this way everyone reached land safely.

Paul Ashore on Malta

28 1Once safely on shore, we found out that the island was called Malta. 2The islanders showed us unusual kindness. They built a fire and welcomed us all because it was raining and cold. 3Paul gathered a pile of brushwood and, as he put it on the fire, a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened itself on his hand. 4When the islanders saw the snake hanging from his hand, they said to each other, "This man must be a murderer; for though he escaped from the sea, the goddess Justice has not allowed him to live." 5But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. 6The people expected him to swell up or suddenly fall dead; but after waiting a long time and seeing nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and said he was a god.

7There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and showed us generous hospitality for three days. 8His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. 9When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured. 10They honored us in many ways; and when we were ready to sail, they furnished us with the supplies we needed.

Paul's Arrival at Rome

11After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island—it was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. 12We put in at Syracuse and stayed there three days. 13From there we set sail and arrived at Rhegium. The next day the south wind came up, and on the following day we reached Puteoli. 14There we found some brothers and sisters who invited us to spend a week with them. And so we came to Rome. 15The brothers and sisters there had heard that we were coming, and they traveled as far as the Forum of Appius and the Three Taverns to meet us. At the sight of these people Paul thanked God and was encouraged.

TRANSITION

Imprisonment in Rome

According to the Book of Acts, Paul spent two years under house arrest in Rome (Ac 28:16, 30). Acts is silent, however, regarding

what happened to him at the end of that time, in late A.D. 62 or early 63. Some scholars argue that Luke intended the prophecy of Paul's martyrdom (Ac 20:24, 38) to inform the reader about his fate. Paul's execution under Nero sometime between the summers of A.D. 62 and 64 would also fit with two developments in Roman history of this period. First, Nero reinstated laws against treason in early 62, and Paul's execution may have been ordered based on such a charge (though Paul claims innocence of such; see Ac 25:8). Second, Nero married Poppaea in the spring of A.D. 62. Her strong support of the Jews may have negatively influenced the disposition of Paul's case.

Other scholars have suggested that Paul, after two years of imprisonment, was released about A.D. 63. He then carried on further missionary work in Macedonia (see 1Ti 1:3) and, according to some early Christian traditions, possibly also in Spain (see Ro 15:28). Details of the end of Paul's life are unknown. Apparently he was subsequently rearrested and imprisoned, and Tertullian describes Paul's execution by beheading. Eusebius, the church historian, dates Paul's death in A.D. 67.

• **Acts 28:16–31**

Acts

28:16 When we got to Rome, Paul was allowed to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him.

Paul Preaches at Rome Under Guard

17 Three days later he called together the local Jewish leaders. When they had assembled,
Paul said to them: "My brothers, although I
have done nothing against our people or against
the customs of our ancestors, I was arrested
in Jerusalem and handed over to the Romans.
18 They examined me and wanted to release me,
because I was not guilty of any crime deserving
death. 19 The Jews objected, so I was compelled
to make an appeal to Caesar. I certainly did not
intend to bring any charge against my own people. 20 For this reason I have asked to see you
and talk with you. It is because of the hope of
Israel that I am bound with this chain."

21 They replied, "We have not received any
letters from Judea concerning you, and none
of our people who have come from there has
reported or said anything bad about you. 22 But
we want to hear what your views are, for we
know that people everywhere are talking
against this sect."

23 They arranged to meet Paul on a certain
day, and came in even larger numbers to the
place where he was staying. He witnessed to
them from morning till evening, explaining
about the kingdom of God, and from the Law
of Moses and from the Prophets he tried to
persuade them about Jesus. 24 Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not
believe. 25 They disagreed among themselves
and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth
to your ancestors when he said through Isaiah
the prophet:

26 "'Go to this people and say,
"You will be ever hearing but never
understanding;
you will be ever seeing but never
perceiving."
27 For this people's heart has become
calloused;
they hardly hear with their ears,
and they have closed their eyes.
Otherwise they might see with their eyes,
hear with their ears,
understand with their hearts
and turn, and I would heal them.'[a]

28 "Therefore I want you to know that God's
salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and
they will listen!" [29] [b]

30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in
his own rented house and welcomed all who
came to see him. 31 He proclaimed the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus
Christ — with all boldness and without hindrance!

[a] *27* Isaiah 6:9,10 (see Septuagint) [b] *29* Some manuscripts include here *After he said this, the Jews left, arguing vigorously among themselves.*

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 60 to 61
60		The Romans defeat the Druids and stop their human sacrifices
60		Boudicca (Boadicea) leads a revolt against the Romans in Britain
60		Paul and Luke arrive at Rome (Ac 28:16)
60		Earthquake strikes Anatolia near Colossae and Laodicea
61		Nero puts Gentiles over Caesarea, capital of Judea

TRANSITION

The Letter to Philemon

Philemon probably lived in the Lycus Valley where Colossae and Laodicea were located (see Col 4:15). He was a close friend of Paul, indebted to him spiritually, and a helper in his

More Than a Slave (Phm 1:16)

Roman law in some respects treated slaves as persons but also viewed them economically as property. While slaves could hold property and buy their freedom, they also could be beaten and interrogated under torture. In the rare case where a head of a household was murdered by one of his slaves, all of his slaves would be executed. Thus, the term "dear brother" (Phm 1:16), as Paul calls Onesimus, indicated something more than a slave.

Onesimus was probably a household slave, the only type of slave addressed in Paul's letters, which were written to urban congregations. Household slaves had greater opportunities for social advancement than did free peasants, and, in prominent households, often became powerful. Indeed, some noble women even married slaves of Caesar, thereby becoming slaves, to increase their social status! By saving money on the side, household slaves often purchased their freedom, and, with help from their former slaveholders, sometimes attained social prominence and wealth.

Slaveholders would send their trusted slaves, especially the more educated ones, on errands, often with money. Occasionally a slave chose to escape rather than return home, dangerous as such a venture was. Such may be the situation faced by Onesimus.

Roman law required Paul to return Onesimus to his master, Philemon, or else face severe punishment. Paul does not advise Philemon to receive back Onesimus as a slave; he invites Philemon to embrace him as a brother. The letter to Philemon took the form of a "letter of recommendation," in which a person of equal or higher status asked a favor for a person of lower status.

Escaped slaves, once recaptured, normally received severe punishment. One option for the slave was to seek out an advocate who would beseech the slaveowner on the slave's behalf. In one situation, a close parallel to Paul's letter, a Roman writer requested clemency for an escaped slave. Paul, however, asks not merely for clemency, but for Onesimus's freedom.

ministry (Phm 1:1, 19). Onesimus, Philemon's slave, had run away and been converted by Paul. Paul offers two reasons for writing this letter to Philemon: (1) an appeal for him to receive Onesimus as a brother in Christ (1:10–17), and (2) a request for him to prepare a guest room for Paul's coming visit (1:22).

The letters to Philemon and to the Colossians were possibly written by Paul at the same time, about A.D. 62, during his imprisonment at Rome (Ac 28:16–31). Paul described himself both as a prisoner (Phm 1:1, 9, 23) and as being aged (1:9). Many of the people mentioned in Philemon are also mentioned in Colossians: Archippus (Col 4:17), Onesimus (Col 4:9), Epaphras (Col 1:7; 4:12), Mark, Aristarchus (Col 4:10), Demas, and Luke (Col 4:14). Onesimus and Tychicus (Col 4:7–9) were the bearers of these letters.

An earlier imprisonment, either in Ephesus around A.D. 54 or 55 or in Caesarea, has also been suggested as the time of Paul's writing (see "The Letter to the Philippians" at Php 1:1). Ephesus is closer to Colossae than is Rome, thus the close proximity of Ephesus would make more likely both the capture of the runaway slave Onesimus, as well as Paul's own hopes to visit Philemon in the near future (Phm 1:22). Nevertheless, the chance that Paul wrote from his Caesarean imprisonment (see "Paul Escorted to Caesarea" at Ac 23:23) has been considered, although Caesarea is even farther from Colossae than Rome.

• Philemon 1:1–25

Philemon

1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother,

To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker— 2also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home:

3Grace and peace to you[a] from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

4I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, 5because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. 6I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. 7Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people.

Paul's Plea for Onesimus

8Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, 9yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus— 10that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus,[b] who became my son while I was in chains.

[a] *3* The Greek is plural; also in verses 22 and 25; elsewhere in this letter "you" is singular. [b] *10* *Onesimus* means *useful.*

Politics & Government

In the Roman Empire, slaves were not permitted to marry, and any children they did have belonged to their owners. Slaves were at the service of their owners, male or female, who were free to punish or kill any slave who had "done any wrong" to them (Phm 1:18). Even though there were few slave revolts, the fear that slaves would revolt or harm their owners was always present.

11 Formerly he was useless to you, but now he
has become useful both to you and to me.
12 I am sending him — who is my very
heart — back to you. 13 I would have liked to
keep him with me so that he could take your
place in helping me while I am in chains for
the gospel. 14 But I did not want to do anything
without your consent, so that any favor you do
would not seem forced but would be voluntary.
15 Perhaps the reason he was separated from
you for a little while was that you might have
him back forever — 16 no longer as a slave, but
better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very
dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fel-
low man and as a brother in the Lord.
17 So if you consider me a partner, welcome
him as you would welcome me. 18 If he has done
you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it
to me. 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own
hand. I will pay it back — not to mention that
you owe me your very self. 20 I do wish, brother,
that I may have some benefit from you in the
Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. 21 Confident
of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that
you will do even more than I ask.
22 And one thing more: Prepare a guest room
for me, because I hope to be restored to you in
answer to your prayers.

23 Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ
Jesus, sends you greetings. 24 And so do Mark,
Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow work-
ers.
25 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with
your spirit.

TRANSITION

The Letter to the Colossians

The Book of Colossians is closely related to the books of Ephesians and Philemon. Colossians was probably written before Ephesians, with which it shares main ideas and a general outline. Ephesians seems to expand some of the key ideas of Colossians.

Paul wrote this epistle from prison, as he did Philippians and Philemon. Some scholars believe this was during a first imprisonment in Rome (see "Imprisonment in Rome" at Ac 28:16). Colossians could then have been written about A.D. 62, not long before Paul's release. Yet others would place the writing of this letter during an Ephesian imprisonment around A.D. 54 or 55 (see "The Letter to the Philippians" at Php 1:1, and "The Letter to Philemon" at Phm 1:1).

The significant difference of the Greek vocabulary and style in Colossians from that of other Pauline letters raises a question whether Paul actually wrote Colossians. Some scholars argue that the theology of the letter and the understanding and organization of the church are more developed than in letters Paul himself wrote. This may indicate that Colossians was written by one of Paul's associates in the decade following his death (perhaps between A.D. 70–75).

Colossae was located on the south bank of the Lycus River near Laodicea and Hierapolis in western Asia Minor, about 100 miles east of Ephesus on the important trade route between Ephesus and the Euphrates Valley. Paul had never visited Colossae, but the gospel had been preached there, as well as in Laodicea and Hierapolis, while he was in Ephesus.

This letter deals primarily with doctrinal heresy that possibly mixed Judaism with some early form of Gnosticism. Jesus was superhuman, but not truly God. He was greater than human beings, but not great enough to be the Savior. Those who believe in Christ must go through angels to get to the deeper levels of spirituality. Paul built a positive case for the Christian truth in order to show the Colossians the futility of ideas such as these.

• **Colossians 1:1—4:18**

Colossians

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters[a] in Christ:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.[b]

Thanksgiving and Prayer

3 We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, 4 because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's

[a] *2* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 4:15. [b] *2* Some manuscripts *Father and the Lord Jesus Christ*

people— [5]the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel [6]that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. [7]You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant,[a] who is a faithful minister of Christ on our[b] behalf, [8]and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

[9]For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives,[c] [10]so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, [11]being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, [12]and giving joyful thanks to the Father, who has qualified you[d] to share in the inheritance of his holy people in the kingdom of light. [13]For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, [14]in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Supremacy of the Son of God

[15]The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. [16]For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. [17]He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18]And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. [19]For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, [20]and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

[21]Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of[e] your evil behavior. [22]But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— [23]if you continue in your faith, established and firm, and do not move from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

[a] *7* Or *slave* [b] *7* Some manuscripts *your* [c] *9* Or *all spiritual wisdom and understanding* [d] *12* Some manuscripts *us* [e] *21* Or *minds, as shown by*

Religion & Worship

Among the most popular religions of the ancient world were the so-called mystery religions. Details of the initiations, rituals, and doctrines of these religions were kept secret from outsiders. Standard elements were purification, fasting, sacrifice, and ceremonial banquets. Early Christianity showed similarities to the mystery religions, including the idea of "mystery" (Col 1:25–27).

Paul's Labor for the Church

[24]Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. [25]I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— [26]the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people. [27]To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

[28]He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. [29]To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.

2 [1]I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. [2]My goal is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, [3]in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. [4]I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. [5]For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how disciplined you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

Spiritual Fullness in Christ

[6]So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, [7]rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as

you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

8See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces[a] of this world rather than on Christ.

9For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, 10and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority. 11In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh[b] was put off when you were circumcised by[c] Christ, 12having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

13When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you[d] alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, 14having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. 15And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.[e]

Freedom From Human Rules

16Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. 17These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. 18Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you. Such a person also goes into great detail about what they have seen; they are puffed up with idle notions by their unspiritual mind. 19They have lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

20Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: 21"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? 22These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. 23Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Living as Those Made Alive in Christ

3 1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your[f] life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. 6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.[g] 7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. 8But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. 16Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 62 to 64
62		Paul writes to Philemon from Rome
62		Paul writes to the Colossians and Ephesians from Rome (?)
62		The apostle James is stoned to death
62		Festus is succeeded by Albinus as procurator
63		Nero sends a military expedition to Ethiopia
64–141		Life of the Greek writer Philo of Byblos

[a] *8* Or *the basic principles*; also in verse 20 [b] *11* In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verse 13. [c] *11* Or *put off in the circumcision of* [d] *13* Some manuscripts *us* [e] *15* Or *them in him* [f] *4* Some manuscripts *our* [g] *6* Some early manuscripts *coming on those who are disobedient*

Family Values in the Household (Col 3:18, 19)

Romans in the 1st century felt that religions from the East, such as Judaism, Christianity, and the worship of Isis, undermined traditional Roman family values. Because religious groups were sometimes expelled from Rome, members of persecuted minority religions often adopted traditional "household codes" to prove that they would uphold traditional Roman values. Philosophers from the time of Aristotle onward detailed these "household codes," which showed the male head of the household how to rule his wife, children, and slaves.

The structure of these traditional codes was adopted in Christian letters, including wives, husbands (and fathers), children, slaves, and slaveholders (Col 3:18—4:1). The Christian adaptation balanced commands for those who were socially inferior (wives, children, slaves) with responsibilities for the socially superior (husbands, fathers, masters).

The Christian codes, such as one in Eph 5, differ considerably from traditional household codes. They address wives, children, and slaves themselves, and not just the male head of the household. They do not tell the husband how to "rule" his wife, but how to love her (Eph 5:25). Although traditional Greek and Roman values demanded the wife's quiet obedience, the Christian code defines "submission" primarily in terms of respect (Eph 5:33). The wife's submission was based on the broader Christian virtue of servanthood, which applied to all Christians—husbands as well as wives (Eph 5:21).

psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. 17And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Instructions for Christian Households

18Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21Fathers,[a] do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, 24since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

4 1Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Further Instructions

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Final Greetings

7Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant[b] in the Lord. 8I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our[c] circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. 9He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) 11Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews[d] among my coworkers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. 12Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. 13I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for

[a] *21* Or *Parents* [b] *7* Or *slave*; also in verse 12 [c] *8* Some manuscripts *that he may know about your* [d] *11* Greek *only ones of the circumcision group*

Health & Medicine

The range of medical tools that have been recovered by archaeologists, especially from the ruins of Pompeii and Herculaneum, show that doctors, such as Luke (Col 4:14), performed many kinds of physical procedures. The equipment for childbirth and delivery is quite modern in its appearance, although made of bronze rather than steel.

Cities in the Lycus Valley (Col 4:12, 13)

Near the end of Paul's letter to the Colossians is a comment concerning a Christian named Epaphras. Apparently, Epaphras had worked fervently for the cause of Christians in Colossae, as well as for those in Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col 4:12, 13). These three cities—Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis—were the largest cities in the Lycus Valley of Anatolian Phrygia.

All three cities were situated near the Lycus River: Colossae being about 11 miles southeast of Laodicea and 15 miles southeast of Hierapolis. Their locations positioned them on a major trade route from the Orient to the Aegean coast, and all were prosperous in the textile industry. Colossae, in particular, was known primarily for its purple wool.

The city of Colossae had been a major center for at least five centuries before Paul's time. However, it was eventually overshadowed in influence by Laodicea. The Colossae addressed in Paul's letter, now part of the Roman province of Asia Minor, was a smaller, less important city, while Laodicea had become the most prominent city in the Lycus Valley. At the letter's close, the Colossians are urged to forward the writing to the church in Laodicea, and also to read what was sent to Laodicea (Col 4:16).

In the early A.D. 60s an earthquake rocked this area of Anatolia. Laodicea, though destroyed by the natural disaster, was able to rebuild. The threat of such earthquakes, however, may have caused the local population of Colossae to relocate to the nearby town of Chonaz.

those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. [14]Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. [15]Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

[16]After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

[17]Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the ministry you have received in the Lord."

[18]I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

TRANSITION

The Letter to the Ephesians

Although the first verse in most manuscripts of this letter reads "To God's holy people in Ephesus," other early copies lack the words "in Ephesus." The letter also does not follow Paul's usual practice of including personal greetings to many friends in the city to which he wrote. One 2nd-century writer even cites this letter by the title "To the Laodiceans." It may be that Paul sent copies of this letter to a number of churches in the region, either supplying the name of each city in the opening greeting or leaving the destination out if the copy was to circulate to several churches.

Ephesians is closely related to Colossians. No other two letters are so similar as these, either in outline and outlook, or in general theme. Half of the verses in Ephesians contain expressions identical to those in Colossians. It is as though Paul wrote Colossians first to meet some special needs of the church there, and then felt that a letter to be circulated among all the churches in Asia Minor ought to elaborate on some of the Colossian themes. The similarities could suggest that both letters were written at about the same time, being composed during Paul's Caesarean or Roman imprisonments (see "The Letter to the Colossians" at Col 1:1).

As is the case with Colossians, there are doubts whether Paul actually wrote the letter to the Ephesians. Like Colossians, the language and theological development in Ephesians is more elaborate than that found in Paul's earlier letters. The tremendous similarities between these two letters leads some to conclude that Ephesians was actually based on Colossians. Some have even suggested that Ephesians may have been written as a kind of introduction to Paul's theology by an associate who was collecting Paul's letters in the years after his death.

Ephesus was a chief city of the west coast of Asia Minor, situated at the mouth of the Cayster River. Paul visited the city on the return part of his second missionary journey, staying only briefly (Ac 18:19–21). He returned on his third journey to spend more than two years strengthening the church (Ac 19). The letter to the Ephesians was also intended to strengthen them, making them more conscious of their oneness in Christ.

• **Ephesians 1:1—6:24**

Ephesians

1 :1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,

To God's holy people in Ephesus,[a] the faithful in Christ Jesus:

[2]Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ

[3]Praise be to the God and Father of our

[a] *1* Some early manuscripts do not have *in Ephesus.*

Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. 4For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love 5he[a] predestined us for adoption to sonship[b] through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— 6to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. 7In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, 9he[c] made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

11In him we were also chosen,[d] having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. 13And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

Thanksgiving and Prayer

15For this reason, ever since I heard about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all God's people, 16I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. 17I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit[e] of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. 18I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, 19and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength 20he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, 21far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. 22And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, 23which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.

Made Alive in Christ

2 1As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, 2in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. 3All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh[f] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. 4But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. 6And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9not by works, so that no one can boast. 10For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Jew and Gentile Reconciled Through Christ

11Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (which is done in the body by human hands)— 12remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. 13But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

14For he himself is our peace, who has made

Architecture & Building

The temple built by Herod the Great was standing throughout the New Testament period up to the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. In the temple area there was a wall about four and a half feet high that only Jews could go beyond (Eph 2:14). There were warning notices carved in the wall, one of which was discovered almost intact in 1871.

[a] *4,5* Or *sight in love.* 5*He* [b] *5* The Greek word for *adoption to sonship* is a legal term referring to the full legal standing of an adopted male heir in Roman culture. [c] *8,9* Or *us with all wisdom and understanding.* 9*And he* [d] *11* Or *were made heirs* [e] *17* Or *a spirit* [f] *3* In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit.

WRITERS OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The "Apostolic Fathers" were a group of writers of the early Christian church who are thought to have been affiliated with the apostles or with their disciples. One of the fathers, Ignatius, was familiar with Paul's letters, especially the letter to the Ephesians, and himself wrote to the church "in Ephesus" (Eph 1:1).

Writer/Writings	Date	Description
Clement	died A.D. 96	Bishop of Rome. His first letter mentions the deaths of Peter and Paul.
Ignatius	A.D. 35–107	Bishop of Antioch, executed at Rome. He wrote seven letters to the churches.
Papias	A.D. 60–130	A friend of Polycarp. He discusses how Matthew and Mark wrote their Gospels.
Polycarp	A.D. 69–155	An important church leader executed because he would not renounce Christ. He had probably met the apostle John.
Didache	1st century	The Didache ("Teaching") describes the "two ways" of life and death, and tells about worship and order in the church.
Barnabas	1st century	The Letter of Barnabas (not the apostle Barnabas) is about Judaism and Christianity.
Diognetus	2nd century	An anonymous letter of Christian instruction written to Diognetus, who is otherwise unknown.
Hermas	2nd century	Hermas wrote *The Shepherd*, a book of instruction that was highly regarded in the early church.

the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, [15]by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, [16]and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. [17]He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. [18]For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

[19]Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, [20]built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. [21]In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. [22]And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

God's Marvelous Plan for the Gentiles

3 [1]For this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles—

[2]Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, [3]that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. [4]In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, [5]which was not made known to people in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. [6]This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

[7]I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. [8]Although I am less than the least of all the Lord's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the boundless riches of Christ, [9]and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. [10]His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, [11]according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. [12]In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. [13]I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.

A Prayer for the Ephesians

[14]For this reason I kneel before the Father,

15 from whom every family[a] in heaven and on
earth derives its name. 16 I pray that out of his
glorious riches he may strengthen you with
power through his Spirit in your inner be-
ing, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts
through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted
and established in love, 18 may have power, to-
gether with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp
how wide and long and high and deep is the
love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that sur-
passes knowledge — that you may be filled to
the measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasur-
ably more than all we ask or imagine, accord-
ing to his power that is at work within us, 21 to
him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
throughout all generations, for ever and ever!
Amen.

Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ

4 1 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you
to live a life worthy of the calling you have
received. 2 Be completely humble and gentle;
be patient, bearing with one another in love.
3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the
Spirit through the bond of peace. 4 There is one
body and one Spirit, just as you were called to
one hope when you were called; 5 one Lord, one
faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all,
who is over all and through all and in all.

7 But to each one of us grace has been given
as Christ apportioned it. 8 This is why it[b] says:

"When he ascended on high,
he took many captives
and gave gifts to his people."[c]

9 (What does "he ascended" mean except that
he also descended to the lower, earthly re-
gions[d]? 10 He who descended is the very one
who ascended higher than all the heavens, in
order to fill the whole universe.) 11 So Christ
himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the
evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to
equip his people for works of service, so that
the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all
reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of
the Son of God and become mature, attaining
to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

14 Then we will no longer be infants, tossed
back and forth by the waves, and blown here
and there by every wind of teaching and by the
cunning and craftiness of people in their deceit-
ful scheming. 15 Instead, speaking the truth in
love, we will grow to become in every respect
the mature body of him who is the head, that is,
Christ. 16 From him the whole body, joined and
held together by every supporting ligament,
grows and builds itself up in love, as each part
does its work.

Instructions for Christian Living

17 So I tell you this, and insist on it in the
Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gen-
tiles do, in the futility of their thinking. 18 They
are darkened in their understanding and sepa-
rated from the life of God because of the igno-
rance that is in them due to the hardening of
their hearts. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they
have given themselves over to sensuality so as
to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they
are full of greed.

20 That, however, is not the way of life you
learned 21 when you heard about Christ and
were taught in him in accordance with the

[a] *15* The Greek for *family* (*patria*) is derived from the Greek for *father* (*pater*). [b] *8* Or *God* [c] *8* Psalm 68:18
[d] *9* Or *the depths of the earth*

Wives Submitting to Husbands (Eph 5:22)

The nature of marriage in Asia Minor was very different from marriage today. In the Greek culture that was dominant in and around Ephesus, husbands were on average 12 or more years older than their wives, were usually more educated, and held much higher social status, than their wives. In one traditional Greek formulation, men used prostitutes for pleasure and wives only to bear them legitimate children.

In most of the Greco-Roman world, marital practices placed women at a disadvantage. Marriage contracts forbade a woman to leave the marital home without her husband's permission. In parts of the eastern Mediterranean, a wife not wearing a shawl over her hair in public could be divorced for unfaithfulness, and a woman not divorced or widowed was under the legal control of her father or husband.

Paul's command "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands" (Eph 5:22) is at least partly related to concern for Christian witness within the surrounding culture, and is quite mild in comparison to the rest of his culture. What is significant is that Paul modified the culture's values, calling on all believers to submit (5:21), and allowing the husband-wife relationship to be affected by the God-human relationship. Wives were to submit "as . . . to the Lord" (Eph 5:22), and husbands were to love their wives "as Christ loved the church" (5:25). While Romans and Greeks supposed that husbands would love their wives, Paul listed such as a command.

truth that is in Jesus. 22You were taught, with
regard to your former way of life, to put off
your old self, which is being corrupted by its
deceitful desires; 23to be made new in the at-
titude of your minds; 24and to put on the new
self, created to be like God in true righteous-
ness and holiness.

25Therefore each of you must put off false-
hood and speak truthfully to your neighbor,
for we are all members of one body. 26"In your
anger do not sin"[a]: Do not let the sun go down
while you are still angry, 27and do not give the
devil a foothold. 28Anyone who has been steal-
ing must steal no longer, but must work, doing
something useful with their own hands, that
they may have something to share with those
in need.

29Do not let any unwholesome talk come out
of your mouths, but only what is helpful for
building others up according to their needs,
that it may benefit those who listen. 30And do
not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom
you were sealed for the day of redemption.
31Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger,
brawling and slander, along with every form
of malice. 32Be kind and compassionate to one
another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ
5 God forgave you. 1Follow God's example,
therefore, as dearly loved children 2and
walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us
and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offer-
ing and sacrifice to God.

3But among you there must not be even a
hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of im-
purity, or of greed, because these are improp-
er for God's holy people. 4Nor should there be
obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which
are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. 5For
of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure
or greedy person—such a person is an idol-
ater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of
Christ and of God.[b] 6Let no one deceive you
with empty words, for because of such things
God's wrath comes on those who are disobedi-
ent. 7Therefore do not be partners with them.

8For you were once darkness, but now you
are light in the Lord. Live as children of light
9(for the fruit of the light consists in all good-
ness, righteousness and truth) 10and find out
what pleases the Lord. 11Have nothing to do
with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather
expose them. 12It is shameful even to mention
what the disobedient do in secret. 13But every-
thing exposed by the light becomes visible—
and everything that is illuminated becomes a
light. 14This is why it is said:

"Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you."

15Be very careful, then, how you live—not
as unwise but as wise, 16making the most of
every opportunity, because the days are evil.
17Therefore do not be foolish, but understand
what the Lord's will is. 18Do not get drunk on
wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be
filled with the Spirit, 19speaking to one another
with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit.
Sing and make music from your heart to the
Lord, 20always giving thanks to God the Father
for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus
Christ.

Instructions for Christian Households

21Submit to one another out of reverence for
Christ.

[a] *26* Psalm 4:4 (see Septuagint) [b] *5* Or *kingdom of the Messiah and God*

Slaves, Obey! (Eph 6:5–9)

Paul had no reason to address the issue of slavery per se in his letters to churches. He touched on the behavior of different groups within the churches, discussing how slaves should respond to their situation, but he did not write concerning whether or not slavery itself should be abolished. His advice to slaves was to "obey," serving as if doing the will of God (Eph 6:5, 6).

Advocating revolt was not a practical solution. Individual slaves often escaped and some small groups revolted, but all three earlier, full-scale slave wars which occurred in the Roman world, seeking to liberate more slaves, had ended in violent defeat. In view of the persecution Christians faced as a small sect sometimes viewed as socially subversive, it was far more important to urge all Christians to work for the time being within the social system that already existed.

Some philosophers (especially the Stoics) affirmed the theoretical equality of masters and servants. What these philosophers meant by equality was probably that slaves were personally equal in humanity, rather than that all slaves should be freed. Nevertheless, some did question whether slavery should exist, and long before Paul's time Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) had complained of philosophers who suggested that slavery was against nature, by which they meant that it was immoral.

Paul explains his position somewhat more fully than did the philosophers. After calling on slaves to serve their masters, he calls on masters to serve their slaves—"treat your slaves in the same way" (Eph 6:9). Such advice was hardly conventional in the traditional household codes, which instructed masters how to *rule* their slaves. Instead, Paul advises Christian masters to serve Christ by acting differently than pagan masters. Their "Master . . . in heaven" (6:9) would judge both them and their slaves on the same basis. We can imagine that, had the question been put to him, Paul would have regarded slavery itself as contrary to God's will.

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. 23 For the husband
is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of
the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so
also wives should submit to their husbands in
everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ
loved the church and gave himself up for her
26 to make her holy, cleansing[a] her by the washing with water through the word, 27 and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without
stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy
and blameless. 28 In this same way, husbands
ought to love their wives as their own bodies.
He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all,
no one ever hated their own body, but they feed
and care for their body, just as Christ does the
church— 30 for we are members of his body.
31 "For this reason a man will leave his father
and mother and be united to his wife, and the
two will become one flesh."[b] 32 This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ
and the church. 33 However, each one of you
also must love his wife as he loves himself, and
the wife must respect her husband.

6 1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord,
for this is right. 2 "Honor your father and
mother"—which is the first commandment
with a promise— 3 "so that it may go well with
you and that you may enjoy long life on the
earth."[c]

4 Fathers,[d] do not exasperate your children;
instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just
as you would obey Christ. 6 Obey them not only
to win their favor when their eye is on you, but
as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from
your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you
were serving the Lord, not people, 8 because
you know that the Lord will reward each one
for whatever good they do, whether they are
slave or free.

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same
way. Do not threaten them, since you know
that he who is both their Master and yours is
in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

The Armor of God

10 Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his
mighty power. 11 Put on the full armor of God,
so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. 12 For our struggle is not against
flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against
the authorities, against the powers of this dark
world and against the spiritual forces of evil in
the heavenly realms. 13 Therefore put on the
full armor of God, so that when the day of evil
comes, you may be able to stand your ground,
and after you have done everything, to stand.
14 Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of
righteousness in place, 15 and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. 16 In addition to all this, take up the

[a] *26* Or *having cleansed* [b] *31* Gen. 2:24 [c] *3* Deut. 5:16
[d] *4* Or *Parents*

Science & Technology
The Roman shield as depicted on the Trajan column of A.D. 113 was a curved rectangle, like part of the side of a cylinder. It covered from the shoulders to the middle of the thighs and was decorated with stylized lightning bolts. Julius Caesar described how a group of soldiers could interlock their shields like roof tiles and march together protected that way (Eph 6:16).

shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. 17Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. 19Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, 20for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should.

Final Greetings

21Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful servant in the Lord, will tell you everything, so that you also may know how I am and what I am doing. 22I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage you.

23Peace to the brothers and sisters,[a] and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 24Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with an undying love.[b]

TRANSITION

The First Letter to Timothy

The letters of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus constitute a subgroup among the letters of Paul. They are addressed not to churches, but to pastors, Paul's younger colleagues in ministry. Therefore, since the 18th century, these three letters, sharing similar characteristics and contents, have been called the Pastoral Letters. They presume a time after the close of the Book of Acts and near the end of Paul's life.

The first verse of each letter identifies Paul as the author. Some scholars, however, dispute this claim, since the differences in language and style between these letters and Paul's other letters seem very great. These three short books contain more than 300 words found in no other book that names Paul as its author. Moreover, if Paul was martyred around A.D. 64 at the end of his Roman imprisonment (see "Imprisonment in Rome" at Ac 28:16), he would not have had opportunity to write these letters. In that case, an editor or compiler could have produced these letters in the last quarter of the 1st century or first quarter of the 2nd century.

Yet Paul's authorship of the Pastoral Letters is accepted by those who argue that Paul was released from his Roman imprisonment in late A.D. 62 or early A.D. 63. The only specific historical reference (1Ti 1:3) hints at a period of further travel and ministry, during which Paul had stationed Timothy at Ephesus. The letter known as 1 Timothy could then have been written about A.D. 65, in order to provide pastoral care and guidance to a young church leader.

Timothy, a native of Lystra in Asia Minor, was the son of a Jewish mother and Gentile father (Ac 16:1, 2). He was a convert of the apostle Paul, who had evangelized Lystra on his first missionary journey. Timothy joined Paul and Silas on the second missionary journey and traveled with them to Greece. Paul sent him to visit the Thessalonian and Corinthian churches (see 1Co 4:17; 1Th 3:2). In the letter, Timothy is warned against false teaching and given guidance on how to handle it.

• 1 Timothy 1:1—6:21

1 Timothy

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the command of God our Savior and of Christ Jesus our hope,

2To Timothy my true son in the faith:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Timothy Charged to Oppose False Teachers

3As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer 4or to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. Such things promote controversial speculations rather than advancing God's work—which is by faith. 5The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. 6Some have departed from these and have turned to meaningless talk. 7They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.

8We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. 9We also know that the law is made not

[a] *23* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family. [b] *24* Or *Grace and immortality to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Learn Quietly but Do Not Teach (1Ti 2:11, 12)

Although exceptions existed in antiquity, women were generally far less educated than men. Jewish women were far less likely to be trained in the law. Although they heard it taught in the synagogue, they were not accepted as students for study under Jewish teachers. There is evidence of only one woman fully trained as a rabbi in early Judaism, and most male rabbis refused to heed her. In such a context, the admonition for women to "learn in quietness" (1Ti 2:11) might prove more striking for its emphasis on learning than for an emphasis on doing so quietly, which was considered the appropriate way for all novices to learn.

Understanding the situation addressed in the letter of 1 Timothy helps explain the instruction not to "permit a woman to teach" (2:12). Men rarely respected and still less often promoted women's leadership. Minority sects like Christianity were sometimes accused of subverting the traditional Roman social order, which supported male dominance. If female authority was allowed in the church, opposition may have increased against the small Christian community.

More significant was the local situation in the church. False teachers had apparently found support in homes headed by widows (1Ti 1:6, 7; 5:13–15). False teaching was apparently still a problem for "gullible women" when the letter of 2 Timothy was written (2Ti 3:6, 7). So the instructions for a woman to "learn" but not to "teach" may be aimed at keeping the women, who in this congregation had proved particularly susceptible to false teaching, from spreading it.

for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, 10for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine 11that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me.

The Lord's Grace to Paul

12I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has given me strength, that he considered me trustworthy, appointing me to his service. 13Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

15Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 16But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his immense patience as an example for those who would believe in him and receive eternal life. 17Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The Charge to Timothy Renewed

18Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, 19holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. 20Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.

Instructions on Worship

2 1I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people— 2for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. 3This is good, and pleases God our Savior, 4who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 5For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. 7And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

8Therefore I want the men everywhere to pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing. 9I also want the women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, adorning themselves, not with elaborate hairstyles or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, 10but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

Religion & Worship

The Jewish people had the duty to offer sacrifices to God in the temple regularly on behalf of the Roman emperor (1Ti 2:2). In A.D. 66, Eleazar, the son of the high priest Ananias, ended this traditional observance. According to the contemporary historian Josephus, Eleazar's affront to the Romans was the beginning of the war that ended in A.D. 70 with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Husband of One Wife (1Ti 3:2, 12)

One of the qualifications for being an overseer or deacon in the early church was for a man to be (literally in the Greek) "husband of one wife" (1Ti 3:2, 12). Just what this qualification means concerning the marital history of a man desiring to become a church leader has been debated.

One interpretation understands the meaning to be the "husband of only one wife in a lifetime." A widower would thus be prohibited from remarrying and serving as an overseer. Yet few people in the ancient world thought it praiseworthy for widowers to remain single.

Another interpretation is the "husband of one living wife." A widower could thus remarry and be an overseer, but a divorced man could not. No one in the ancient world, however, regarded a validly divorced husband as still married to his previous wife.

Yet a third interpretation is the "husband of one wife at a time." In this case, only a man involved in polygamy would be prohibited from service as an overseer. But polygamy was not practiced either in Ephesus (1Ti 1:3) or in Crete (Titus 1:5), where the letters of 1 Timothy and Titus were written.

More likely, "husband of one wife" carries a similar meaning to the phrase rendered "faithful to her husband" in 1 Timothy 5:9, which is literally "the wife of one man," and addresses the more pervasive issue of being faithful in a marriage, hence the NIV rendering. Greek men apparently used the phrase "wife of one man" to mean "a wife so faithful and loving that I never needed to divorce her." So a "husband of one wife" would refer to a committed and faithful husband.

Husbands faithful to their current wives were needed to lead the church in Ephesus. False teachers were forbidding marriage (1Ti 4:3) and apparently manipulating some of the widows (2Ti 3:6, 7). Since the false teachers were taking advantage of unstable families, stable heads of households were desired to occupy positions of prominence and leadership in the church.

11 A woman[a] should learn in quietness and
full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman
to teach or to assume authority over a man;[b]
she must be quiet. 13 For Adam was formed
first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one
deceived; it was the woman who was deceived
and became a sinner. 15 But women[c] will be
saved through childbearing—if they continue
in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

Qualifications for Overseers and Deacons

3 1 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever as-
pires to be an overseer desires a noble task.
2 Now the overseer is to be above reproach,
faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled,
respectable, hospitable, able to teach, 3 not giv-
en to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not
quarrelsome, not a lover of money. 4 He must
manage his own family well and see that his
children obey him, and he must do so in a man-
ner worthy of full[d] respect. 5 (If anyone does not
know how to manage his own family, how can
he take care of God's church?) 6 He must not be
a recent convert, or he may become conceited
and fall under the same judgment as the devil.
7 He must also have a good reputation with out-
siders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and
into the devil's trap.

8 In the same way, deacons[e] are to be worthy
of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine,
and not pursuing dishonest gain. 9 They must
keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a
clear conscience. 10 They must first be tested;
and then if there is nothing against them, let
them serve as deacons.

11 In the same way, the women[f] are to be wor-
thy of respect, not malicious talkers but tem-
perate and trustworthy in everything.

12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife and
must manage his children and his household
well. 13 Those who have served well gain an ex-
cellent standing and great assurance in their
faith in Christ Jesus.

Reasons for Paul's Instructions

14 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am
writing you these instructions so that, 15 if I am
delayed, you will know how people ought to
conduct themselves in God's household, which
is the church of the living God, the pillar and
foundation of the truth. 16 Beyond all question,
the mystery from which true godliness springs
is great:

He appeared in the flesh,
  was vindicated by the Spirit,[g]
was seen by angels,
  was preached among the nations,
was believed on in the world,
  was taken up in glory.

4 1 The Spirit clearly says that in later times
some will abandon the faith and follow de-
ceiving spirits and things taught by demons.

[a] *11* Or *wife*; also in verse 12 [b] *12* Or *over her husband*
[c] *15* Greek *she* [d] *4* Or *him with proper* [e] *8* The word *deacons* refers here to Christians designated to serve with the overseers/elders of the church in a variety of ways; similarly in verse 12; and in Romans 16:1 and Phil. 1:1. [f] *11* Possibly deacons' wives or women who are deacons
[g] *16* Or *vindicated in spirit*

Widows in the Household (1Ti 5:8)

The fundamental social institution of the Greco-Roman world was the household. The ancient household included far more people than the modern nuclear family of a husband, wife, and two and one-third children. Everyone involved in the "family business" under the rule of a male administrator, called the "father," was part of the household. Thus the Greco-Roman household consisted of relatives plus various dependents: the father's wife, his slaves, children, as well as clients—those who gave the father honor and influence in exchange for material favors.

Households, particularly the fathers, ranked themselves socially in terms of honor, prestige, and influence. The more honor a father received, the more prestige and influence he gathered. Wealth, therefore, was not important to accumulate in order to gain more wealth. Wealth was important so that a father might parade his honor. Wealth enabled a father to lavish gifts on his dependents, thereby making more people honor their father as their benefactor.

One household member who especially needed protection was the widow. In New Testament times, widows had virtually no means of supporting themselves. The early church felt responsible to care for Christian widows, but problems arose in ministering to their needs. As new structures and guidelines had to be developed, the church eventually distinguished between widows who really needed support and those who should be commended to the care of their household (1Ti 5:3–5, 8). A Christian father who did not provide for a widow of his household was deemed "worse than an unbeliever" (5:8). Even in non-Christian households of the Greco-Roman world, the head of the household supported poor widows.

2 Such teachings come through hypocritical
liars, whose consciences have been seared as
with a hot iron. 3 They forbid people to marry
and order them to abstain from certain foods,
which God created to be received with thanks-
giving by those who believe and who know the
truth. 4 For everything God created is good,
and nothing is to be rejected if it is received
with thanksgiving, 5 because it is consecrated
by the word of God and prayer.

6 If you point these things out to the broth-
ers and sisters,[a] you will be a good minister
of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the
faith and of the good teaching that you have fol-
lowed. 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths
and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be
godly. 8 For physical training is of some value,
but godliness has value for all things, holding
promise for both the present life and the life
to come. 9 This is a trustworthy saying that de-
serves full acceptance. 10 That is why we labor
and strive, because we have put our hope in the
living God, who is the Savior of all people, and
especially of those who believe.

11 Command and teach these things. 12 Don't
let anyone look down on you because you are
young, but set an example for the believers in
speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in puri-
ty. 13 Until I come, devote yourself to the public
reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teach-
ing. 14 Do not neglect your gift, which was given
you through prophecy when the body of elders
laid their hands on you.

15 Be diligent in these matters; give yourself
wholly to them, so that everyone may see your
progress. 16 Watch your life and doctrine close-
ly. Persevere in them, because if you do, you
will save both yourself and your hearers.

Widows, Elders and Slaves

5 1 Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but
exhort him as if he were your father. Treat
younger men as brothers, 2 older women as
mothers, and younger women as sisters, with
absolute purity.

3 Give proper recognition to those widows
who are really in need. 4 But if a widow has chil-
dren or grandchildren, these should learn first
of all to put their religion into practice by caring
for their own family and so repaying their par-
ents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to
God. 5 The widow who is really in need and left
all alone puts her hope in God and continues
night and day to pray and to ask God for help.
6 But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead
even while she lives. 7 Give the people these
instructions, so that no one may be open to
blame. 8 Anyone who does not provide for their
relatives, and especially for their own house-
hold, has denied the faith and is worse than an
unbeliever.

9 No widow may be put on the list of widows
unless she is over sixty, has been faithful to
her husband, 10 and is well known for her good
deeds, such as bringing up children, showing
hospitality, washing the feet of the Lord's peo-
ple, helping those in trouble and devoting her-
self to all kinds of good deeds.

11 As for younger widows, do not put them

[a] 6 The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family.

on such a list. For when their sensual desires overcome their dedication to Christ, they want to marry. 12Thus they bring judgment on themselves, because they have broken their first pledge. 13Besides, they get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also busybodies who talk nonsense, saying things they ought not to. 14So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. 15Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.

16If any woman who is a believer has widows in her care, she should continue to help them and not let the church be burdened with them, so that the church can help those widows who are really in need.

17The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching. 18For Scripture says, "Do not muzzle an ox while it is treading out the grain,"[a] and "The worker deserves his wages."[b] 19Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses. 20But those elders who are sinning you are to reprove before everyone, so that the others may take warning. 21I charge you, in the sight of God and Christ Jesus and the elect angels, to keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism.

22Do not be hasty in the laying on of hands, and do not share in the sins of others. Keep yourself pure.

23Stop drinking only water, and use a little wine because of your stomach and your frequent illnesses.

24The sins of some are obvious, reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them. 25In the same way, good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not obvious cannot remain hidden forever.

6 1All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered. 2Those who have believing masters should not show them disrespect just because they are fellow believers. Instead, they should serve them even better because their masters are dear to them as fellow believers and are devoted to the welfare[c] of their slaves.

False Teachers and the Love of Money

These are the things you are to teach and insist on. 3If anyone teaches otherwise and does not agree to the sound instruction of our Lord Jesus Christ and to godly teaching, 4they are conceited and understand nothing. They have an unhealthy interest in controversies and quarrels about words that result in envy, strife, malicious talk, evil suspicions 5and constant friction between people of corrupt mind, who have been robbed of the truth and who think that godliness is a means to financial gain.

6But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

Final Charge to Timothy

11But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. 12Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses. 13In the sight of God, who gives life to everything, and of Christ Jesus, who while testifying before Pontius Pilate made the good confession, I charge you 14to keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 15which God will bring about in his own time—God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, 16who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honor and might forever. Amen.

[a] *18* Deut. 25:4 [b] *18* Luke 10:7 [c] *2* Or *and benefit from the service*

TIME CAPSULE A.D. 64

64	Nero begins construction of his "Golden Palace"
64	Fire rages in Rome for 9 days
64	Nero blames Christians for the Great Fire
64	Peter and Paul executed under Nero (?)
64–65	Paul travels to Macedonia (?; if released)

Cults & Supernatural

The Gnostics proclaimed a kind of "knowledge" which could help certain spiritual people to escape from the deception and futility of a world dominated by an evil god. Gnostic ideas were already circulating in the 1st century, but it is not known how close their followers were to Christianity or Judaism. Certainly, the early church faced human speculations that were "falsely called knowledge" (1Ti 6:20).

17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their
hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to
put their hope in God, who richly provides us
with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Com-
mand them to do good, to be rich in good
deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.
19 In this way they will lay up treasure for them-
selves as a firm foundation for the coming age,
so that they may take hold of the life that is
truly life.

20 Timothy, guard what has been entrusted
to your care. Turn away from godless chatter
and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called
knowledge, 21 which some have professed and
in so doing have departed from the faith.

Grace be with you all.

[a] 5 Or *ordain* [b] 6 Or *children are trustworthy* [c] 12 From the Cretan philosopher Epimenides

TRANSITION

The Letter to Titus

Considerable doubts have been raised about whether Paul actually wrote this letter to Titus (see "The First Letter to Timothy" at 1Ti 1:1). Those who accept Paul's authorship believe the letter to Titus was probably written shortly after 1 Timothy, but before the apostle's rearrest and imprisonment in A.D. 66. Paul had left Titus in Crete to oversee the work on that island (Titus 1:5).

Little is known about Titus (he is never mentioned in Acts). He was an uncircumcised Greek who was apparently converted to Christianity under Paul's ministry (Gal 2:1). He played an important role in Paul's relationship with the Corinthian church (2Co 7:6, 7; 8:16; 12:18).

The letter was written to encourage Titus in his task of organizing, instructing, and appointing leaders for the churches of Crete (Titus 1:5). It was also intended to help him stop the false teachers who threatened church authority, unity, and morality (1:10–16; 3:9–11).

• **Titus 1:1—3:15**

Titus

1 :1 Paul, a servant of God and an apostle
of Jesus Christ to further the faith of God's
elect and their knowledge of the truth that
leads to godliness— 2 in the hope of eternal
life, which God, who does not lie, promised be-
fore the beginning of time, 3 and which now at
his appointed season he has brought to light
through the preaching entrusted to me by the
command of God our Savior,

4 To Titus, my true son in our common faith:

Grace and peace from God the Father and
Christ Jesus our Savior.

Appointing Elders Who Love What Is Good

5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you
might put in order what was left unfinished
and appoint[a] elders in every town, as I direct-
ed you. 6 An elder must be blameless, faithful
to his wife, a man whose children believe[b]
and are not open to the charge of being wild
and disobedient. 7 Since an overseer manages
God's household, he must be blameless—not
overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to
drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishon-
est gain. 8 Rather, he must be hospitable, one
who loves what is good, who is self-controlled,
upright, holy and disciplined. 9 He must hold
firmly to the trustworthy message as it has
been taught, so that he can encourage others
by sound doctrine and refute those who op-
pose it.

Rebuking Those Who Fail to Do Good

10 For there are many rebellious people, full
of meaningless talk and deception, especial-
ly those of the circumcision group. 11 They
must be silenced, because they are disrupt-
ing whole households by teaching things they
ought not to teach—and that for the sake of
dishonest gain. 12 One of Crete's own proph-
ets has said it: "Cretans are always liars, evil
brutes, lazy gluttons."[c] 13 This saying is true.
Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they
will be sound in the faith 14 and will pay no at-
tention to Jewish myths or to the merely hu-
man commands of those who reject the truth.
15 To the pure, all things are pure, but to those
who are corrupted and do not believe, noth-
ing is pure. In fact, both their minds and con-
sciences are corrupted. 16 They claim to know
God, but by their actions they deny him. They
are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing
anything good.

An Ancient Prophet from Crete (Titus 1:12)

Crete is a large southern Aegean island with a very ancient past going back as early as 6000 B.C. The earliest civilization in European history was found at Crete, dating as early as the 3rd millennium B.C. The small states that were built around palaces and flourishing sea-trading routes have been named the Minoan civilization, reminiscent of King Minos of Greek legend. The Minoan period experienced its high point from about 2000 B.C. (when the first palace was built) until around 1400 B.C.

When the Minoan civilization ended, Cretan culture declined, until dominated mostly by traders and soldiers. Decline is possibly reflected in the description of Cretans as "liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12), which comes from Epimenides, a Cretan poet of about 600 B.C. (also quoted in Ac 17:28). Cretans were described in a similar manner (as liars and gluttons) in the writings of various authors, such as Greek poet Callimachus (c. 305–240 B.C.), Roman historian Livy (59 B.C.–A.D. 17), and Greek philosopher Plutarch (ca. A.D. 46–120).

In New Testament times there was a substantial Jewish population on this Roman-controlled island. Some of these Cretan Jews apparently took on similar characteristics to those named by Epimenides, and the quote from Epimenides illustrates the charge that these members of the Jewish community were insubordinate. Titus was appointed to Crete partly to stop the Judaizing tendencies of "those of the circumcision group" (Titus 1:10).

Doing Good for the Sake of the Gospel

2 [1]You, however, must teach what is appropriate to sound doctrine. [2]Teach the older men to be temperate, worthy of respect, self-controlled, and sound in faith, in love and in endurance.

[3]Likewise, teach the older women to be reverent in the way they live, not to be slanderers or addicted to much wine, but to teach what is good. [4]Then they can urge the younger women to love their husbands and children, [5]to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

[6]Similarly, encourage the young men to be self-controlled. [7]In everything set them an example by doing what is good. In your teaching show integrity, seriousness [8]and soundness of speech that cannot be condemned, so that those who oppose you may be ashamed because they have nothing bad to say about us.

[9]Teach slaves to be subject to their masters in everything, to try to please them, not to talk back to them, [10]and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive.

[11]For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. [12]It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, [13]while we wait for the blessed hope—the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ, [14]who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

[15]These, then, are the things you should teach. Encourage and rebuke with all authority. Do not let anyone despise you.

Saved in Order to Do Good

3 [1]Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good, [2]to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and always to be gentle toward everyone.

[3]At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. [4]But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, [5]he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, [6]whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, [7]so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. [8]This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good. These things are excellent and profitable for everyone.

[9]But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. [10]Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them. [11]You may be sure that such people are warped and sinful; they are self-condemned.

Final Remarks

[12]As soon as I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, do your best to come to me at Nicopolis,

because I have decided to winter there. [13]Do everything you can to help Zenas the lawyer and Apollos on their way and see that they have everything they need. [14]Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives.

[15]Everyone with me sends you greetings. Greet those who love us in the faith.

Grace be with you all.

TRANSITION

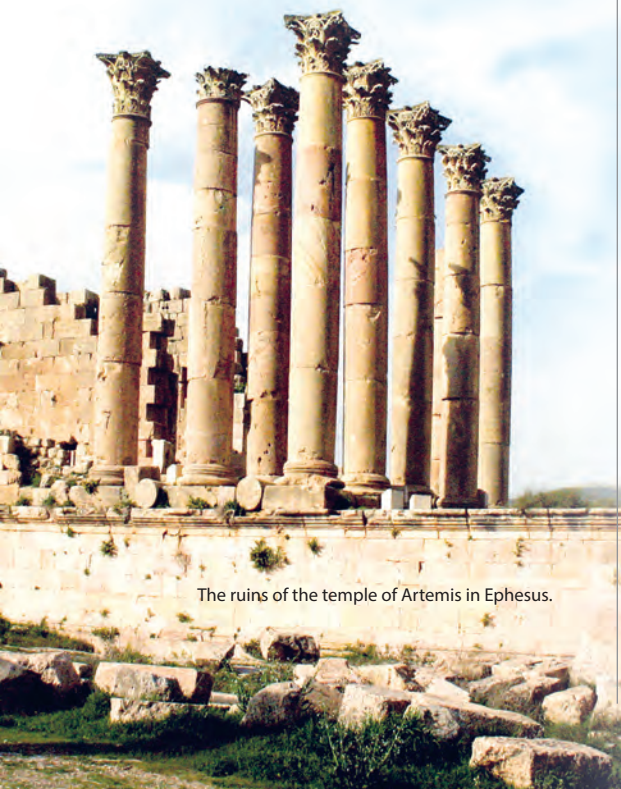
The Second Letter to Timothy

As with the other Pastoral Letters, the letter of 2 Timothy is often not considered to be an original letter of Paul's (see "The First Letter to Timothy" at 1Ti 1:1). Those who do accept Paul's authorship believe that 2 Timothy was probably written in A.D. 67, after Paul had been rearrested. Companions who were recently with him had departed (2Ti 4:10), leaving him alone—"Only Luke is with me" (4:11). Presumably, Timothy was still in Ephesus (4:19), where Paul had left Priscilla and Aquila at the end of his second journey (Ac 18:18, 19), and where he had stationed Timothy to oversee the work in Asia Minor (see 1Ti 1:3).

The letter of 2 Timothy describes Paul as a prisoner in Rome at the time of writing (2Ti 1:16, 17). The apostle had already endured a "first defense" (4:16) and had been delivered (4:17). Presumably that was a preliminary hearing; he now faced formal trial. Paul expected a negative verdict and the death sentence. He had reached the end of his course in this life; death was imminent (4:6).

The primary object of this letter was to strengthen Timothy so that he would endure in the face of opposition from false teachers. He is encouraged to carry on the gospel ministry and to train others who will take up that ministry after he is gone.

• 2 Timothy 1:1—4:22



The ruins of the temple of Artemis in Ephesus.

2 Timothy

1:1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, in keeping with the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus,

[2]To Timothy, my dear son:

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Thanksgiving

[3]I thank God, whom I serve, as my ancestors did, with a clear conscience, as night and day I constantly remember you in my prayers. [4]Recalling your tears, I long to see you, so that I may be filled with joy. [5]I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also.

Appeal for Loyalty to Paul and the Gospel

[6]For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. [7]For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. [8]So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God. [9]He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, [10]but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. [11]And of this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher. [12]That is why I am suffering as I am. Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

[13]What you heard from me, keep as the

The Who's Who of Banqueting (2Ti 2:20, 21)

The Greco-Roman society developed intricate social customs and rituals in order to rank people as honorable or shameful, socially superior or inferior. One of these rituals was the banquet. As a formal dinner party, the banquet helped mark people in their proper "rank" within the society.

As the host, the head of the household, called the "father," occupied the social pinnacle at the banquet. People would not usually attend the banquet given by someone of lesser social standing than themselves. Various arrangements of the banquet ranked the participants socially, such as the seating or reclining assignments. The closer an attendee was to the host, the more status or honor that one possessed at the banquet.

In a spacious "large house" (2Ti 2:20) of an extremely wealthy household, a banquet could involve many, many people, all indebted to the father or head of household. Not only access to the host, but also food and serving dishes would mark "who's who" at the banquet. Those possessing sufficient honor or status would eat from platters of precious metals; the common freemen would eat from earthenware with wooden utensils.

The banquet and its social code possibly provide the background for the imagery of vessels in the letter of 2 Timothy (2Ti 2:20, 21). Within the "large house" of God the Father, moral purity is the distinguishing mark of a vessel "for special purposes"; implied, though not stated, is that impurity marks a vessel "for common use." Thus in the visible church are people of various kinds—some for good, others regrettably unworthy.

pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. 14Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

Examples of Disloyalty and Loyalty

15You know that everyone in the province of Asia has deserted me, including Phygelus and Hermogenes.

16May the Lord show mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, because he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chains. 17On the contrary, when he was in Rome, he searched hard for me until he found me. 18May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus.

The Appeal Renewed

2 1You then, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. 2And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others. 3Join with me in suffering, like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. 4No one serving as a soldier gets entangled in civilian affairs, but rather tries to please his commanding officer. 5Similarly, anyone who competes as an athlete does not receive the victor's crown except by competing according to the rules. 6The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. 7Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.

8Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel, 9for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God's word is not chained. 10Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

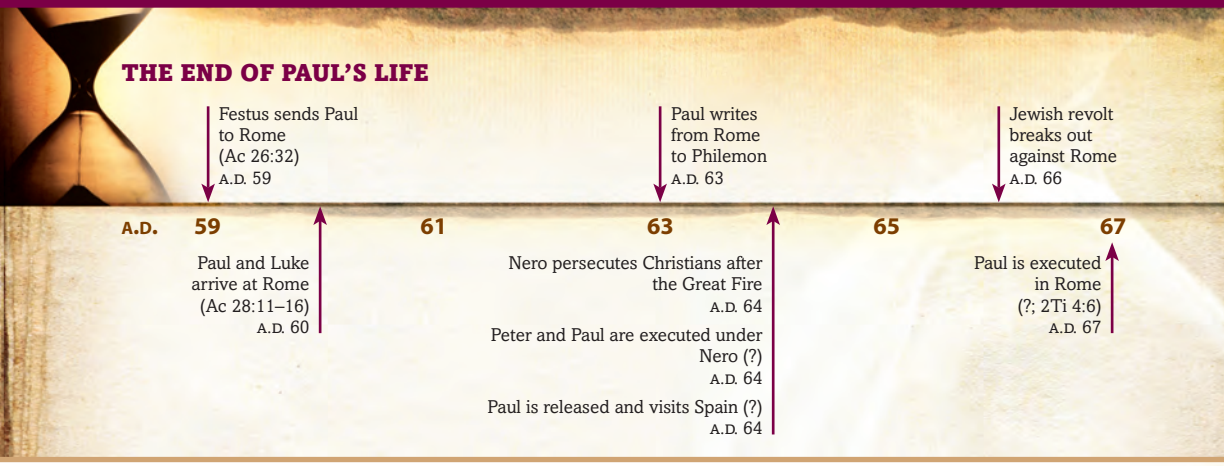
11Here is a trustworthy saying:

If we died with him,
we will also live with him;
12if we endure,
we will also reign with him.
If we disown him,
he will also disown us;
13if we are faithless,
he remains faithful,
for he cannot disown himself.

Dealing With False Teachers

14Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. 15Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. 16Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some. 19Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

20In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay;



some are for special purposes and some for common use. [21]Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

[22]Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. [23]Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. [24]And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. [25]Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, [26]and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

3 [1]But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. [2]People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, [3]without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, [4]treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— [5]having a form of godliness but denying its power. Have nothing to do with such people.

[6]They are the kind who worm their way into homes and gain control over gullible women, who are loaded down with sins and are swayed by all kinds of evil desires, [7]always learning but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth. [8]Just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so also these teachers oppose the truth. They are men of depraved minds, who, as far as the faith is concerned, are rejected. [9]But they will not get very far because, as in the case of those men, their folly will be clear to everyone.

A Final Charge to Timothy

[10]You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, [11]persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. [12]In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, [13]while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. [14]But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, [15]and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. [16]All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, [17]so that the servant of God[a] may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

4 [1]In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: [2]Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. [3]For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. [4]They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. [5]But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.

[a] *17* Or *that you, a man of God,*

6For I am already being poured out like a
drink offering, and the time for my departure
is near. 7I have fought the good fight, I have
finished the race, I have kept the faith. 8Now
there is in store for me the crown of righteous-
ness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will
award to me on that day—and not only to me,
but also to all who have longed for his appear-
ing.

Personal Remarks

9Do your best to come to me quickly, 10for
Demas, because he loved this world, has de-
serted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Cres-
cens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.
11Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring
him with you, because he is helpful to me in my
ministry. 12I sent Tychicus to Ephesus. 13When
you come, bring the cloak that I left with Car-
pus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the
parchments.

14Alexander the metalworker did me a great
deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what
he has done. 15You too should be on your guard
against him, because he strongly opposed our
message.

16At my first defense, no one came to my sup-
port, but everyone deserted me. May it not be
held against them. 17But the Lord stood at my
side and gave me strength, so that through me
the message might be fully proclaimed and all
the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered
from the lion's mouth. 18The Lord will rescue
me from every evil attack and will bring me
safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glo-
ry for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

19Greet Priscilla[a] and Aquila and the house-
hold of Onesiphorus. 20Erastus stayed in Cor-
inth, and I left Trophimus sick in Miletus. 21Do
your best to get here before winter. Eubulus
greets you, and so do Pudens, Linus, Claudia
and all the brothers and sisters.[b]

22The Lord be with your spirit. Grace be with
you all.

Culture & Society

The awards given in Greek athletic competition were wreaths, or crowns woven from leaves, or else gold imitations of such crowns. The honor of these awards overshadowed whatever money accompanied them. Aspects of athletic competition, such as the "race" and "crown" (2Ti 4:7, 8), were appropriate figures to describe the finish of life as a faithful Christian.

TRANSITION

The First Letter of Peter

If Simon Peter was the author of the letter of 1 Peter, he probably wrote it around A.D. 63 or 64, shortly before the beginning of Nero's persecution of Christians at Rome. The name "Babylon" (1Pe 5:13), then, is likely a figurative description of Rome. According to early church tradition, Peter was martyred during the reign of Nero in about A.D. 64. Peter's scribe, Silas (5:12), may have been responsible for much of the letter's style and vocabulary.

Some scholars reject Peter's authorship: the good style and extensive literary vocabulary of the author could not have come from a Galilean fisherman. Moreover, the letter shows the influence of Paul's theology and vocabulary, such as the expression "in Christ."

If Peter was not the author, the letter could have been written sometime after A.D. 70. The symbolic reference to Rome as "Babylon," found in several early Christian writings (see Rev 17:5), probably resulted from Rome's destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, a tragic event that repeated the conquest by Babylon in 586 B.C. The link between being "a Christian" and criminal offenses (4:14–16) might suggest a date around A.D. 90–95, well after Peter's death. The earliest evidence for an official governmental persecution being enforced on more than a local basis is found during the reign of the emperor Domitian (A.D. 81–96).

The Christians who received this letter lived in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia (1Pe 1:1), regions located in Asia Minor. Many of them seem to have been Gentiles (2:10) who were facing persecution from non-Christians around them and perhaps also from government officials. This letter was written primarily to bring them a message of hope and encouragement.

• 1 Peter 1:1—5:14

1 Peter

1:1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ,

To God's elect, exiles scattered throughout
the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia,
Asia and Bithynia, 2who have been chosen ac-
cording to the foreknowledge of God the Fa-
ther, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit,
to be obedient to Jesus Christ and sprinkled
with his blood:

Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

[a] *19* Greek *Prisca*, a variant of *Priscilla* [b] *21* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family.

Persecuted in Bithynia (1Pe 1:1)

Bithynia, combined with the nearby territory of Pontus, formed a Roman province in northwest Anatolia. It had been an important kingdom during the Hellenistic period (332–37 B.C.), and a center of Greek language and culture. Although Paul did not evangelize in the region (Ac 16:7), the salutation in 1Pe 1:1, addressing Christians in Pontus and Bithynia, shows that Christianity had reached there by other means.

One of the earliest evidences of the Roman awareness of Christianity comes from Bithynia. The letters to the emperor Trajan from Pliny the Younger describe various reasons for the persecution of Christians (*Epistulae* 10.95–96). Pliny was the provincial governor of Bithynia and Pontus in A.D. 111–113. In his official correspondence he expresses to Trajan his alarm regarding the spread of Christianity.

The correspondence between this governor and his emperor offers one look at how the Romans dealt with the Christian religion in Bithynia and Pontus. According to Pliny, it appears that persecution had trimmed the ranks of Christians in the area. Trajan responds to Pliny that Christians should not actively be sought out. However, he allows that those who refused to perform certain Roman orders were to be punished. The letter of 1 Peter to Christians in Bithynia, Pontus, and other regions offers encouragement during similar persecutions (1Pe 1:6, 7).

Praise to God for a Living Hope

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord
Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given
us new birth into a living hope through the res-
urrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 and
into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil
or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for
you, 5 who through faith are shielded by God's
power until the coming of the salvation that
is ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In all
this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little
while you may have had to suffer grief in all
kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the
proven genuineness of your faith — of greater
worth than gold, which perishes even though
refined by fire — may result in praise, glory and
honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. 8 Though
you have not seen him, you love him; and even
though you do not see him now, you believe
in him and are filled with an inexpressible and
glorious joy, 9 for you are receiving the end re-
sult of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets,
who spoke of the grace that was to come to
you, searched intently and with the greatest
care, 11 trying to find out the time and circum-
stances to which the Spirit of Christ in them
was pointing when he predicted the sufferings
of the Messiah and the glories that would fol-
low. 12 It was revealed to them that they were
not serving themselves but you, when they
spoke of the things that have now been told
you by those who have preached the gospel to
you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even
angels long to look into these things.

Be Holy

13 Therefore, with minds that are alert and
fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be
brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed
at his coming. 14 As obedient children, do not
conform to the evil desires you had when you
lived in ignorance. 15 But just as he who called
you is holy, so be holy in all you do; 16 for it is
written: "Be holy, because I am holy."[a]

17 Since you call on a Father who judges each
person's work impartially, live out your time
as foreigners here in reverent fear. 18 For you
know that it was not with perishable things
such as silver or gold that you were redeemed
from the empty way of life handed down to you
from your ancestors, 19 but with the precious
blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or de-
fect. 20 He was chosen before the creation of the
world, but was revealed in these last times for
your sake. 21 Through him you believe in God,
who raised him from the dead and glorified
him, and so your faith and hope are in God.

22 Now that you have purified yourselves by
obeying the truth so that you have sincere love
for each other, love one another deeply, from
the heart.[b] 23 For you have been born again, not
of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through
the living and enduring word of God. 24 For,

"All people are like grass,
and all their glory is like the flowers of
the field;
the grass withers and the flowers fall,
25 but the word of the Lord endures
forever."[c]

Arts & Literature

Poets commonly compare human life that is fragile and short to the brief life of plants that bloom and die in a single season. By contrast, the king was compared to a tree that bore fruit year after year. Such comparisons of human life to plants are used many times in Scripture with different nuances (1Pe 1:24).

[a] *16* Lev. 11:44,45; 19:2 [b] *22* Some early manuscripts *from a pure heart* [c] *25* Isaiah 40:6-8 (see Septuagint)

And this is the word that was preached to you.
2 [1]Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind. [2]Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, [3]now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

The Living Stone and a Chosen People

[4]As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him— [5]you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house[a] to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. [6]For in Scripture it says:

> "See, I lay a stone in Zion,
> a chosen and precious cornerstone,
> and the one who trusts in him
> will never be put to shame."[b]

[7]Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

> "The stone the builders rejected
> has become the cornerstone,"[c]

[8]and,

> "A stone that causes people to stumble
> and a rock that makes them fall."[d]

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

Nero, the fifth emperor of Rome, is known for his persecution of Christians.

[9]But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. [10]Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Living Godly Lives in a Pagan Society

[11]Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. [12]Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

[13]Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, [14]or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. [15]For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. [16]Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as God's slaves. [17]Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

[18]Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. [19]For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. [20]But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. [21]To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

> [22]"He committed no sin,
> and no deceit was found in his mouth."[e]

[23]When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. [24]"He himself bore our sins"

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[a] *5* Or *into a temple of the Spirit* [b] *6* Isaiah 28:16
[c] *7* Psalm 118:22 [d] *8* Isaiah 8:14 [e] *22* Isaiah 53:9

Wives, Husbands, and Religion (1Pe 3:1)

In the Roman world, wives were expected to follow their husbands' religion. Many women, however, were drawn to other religious groups, like Judaism and Christianity, often provoking their husbands' anger. This marital conflict over religion often caused religious groups to face hostility, and the groups frequently responded by upholding Greek and Roman traditional family values, insofar as they could accommodate them.

The letter of 1 Peter advocates submission to all the authority figures of that day, including emperors, governors, slave masters, and husbands (1Pe 2:13, 14, 18; 3:1). Similarly, ancient writers who delineated proper societal roles usually included sections on how the male head of the household should rule both wife and slaves.

An emphasis on the adornment of the heart rather than on outward appearance (3:3) was common in ancient speeches and writings. Greek and Roman ideals for wifely behavior included submission, meekness, and quietness. Greek and Roman moralists exhorted wives to a meekness that included avoiding all ostentation, dressing simply rather than drawing attention to oneself. These moralists typically pointed out that women could "adorn" themselves with meekness rather than costly garments.

Moralists often drew on examples from the past, because people generally thought that past matrons had been more obedient than were those of their own day. Jewish readers, as well as Gentiles who had begun learning the Old Testament, would recognize Sarah as an ultimate example of proper behavior. Sarah's address of Abraham as "lord" (3:6) probably reflects the standard Hebrew title of respect for husbands (although her use of this title is most frequent in the apocryphal Testament of Abraham written in Greek).

The letter of 1 Peter exhorts wives whose husbands may have already been distrustful of Christian teaching, suspecting it would subvert their wives' obedience. The model for how to best win over these husbands to Christianity involves adopting the societal norms of a wife's submissiveness and loyalty to her husband.

in his body on the cross, so that we might die to
sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds
you have been healed." 25For "you were like
sheep going astray,"[a] but now you have re-
turned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your
souls.

3 1Wives, in the same way submit yourselves
to your own husbands so that, if any of
them do not believe the word, they may be
won over without words by the behavior of
their wives, 2when they see the purity and rev-
erence of your lives. 3Your beauty should not
come from outward adornment, such as elab-
orate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewel-
ry or fine clothes. 4Rather, it should be that of
your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gen-
tle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in
God's sight. 5For this is the way the holy wom-
en of the past who put their hope in God used
to adorn themselves. They submitted them-
selves to their own husbands, 6like Sarah, who
obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You
are her daughters if you do what is right and do
not give way to fear.

7Husbands, in the same way be considerate
as you live with your wives, and treat them with
respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with
you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing
will hinder your prayers.

[a] *24,25* Isaiah 53:4,5,6 (see Septuagint)
[b] *12* Psalm 34:12-16

Suffering for Doing Good

8Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sym-
pathetic, love one another, be compassionate
and humble. 9Do not repay evil with evil or
insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil
with blessing, because to this you were called
so that you may inherit a blessing. 10For,

"Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.
11They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.
12For the eyes of the Lord are on the
righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those
who do evil."[b]

13Who is going to harm you if you are ea-
ger to do good? 14But even if you should suffer

Culture & Society

The women of the Roman Empire are known for the care they expended on their hairstyles (1Pe 3:3). This outward emphasis is apparent in the numerous surviving portrait sculptures which show the exact way the hair was piled up, coiled, and fastened. Roman writers sometimes criticized these excesses when they attacked luxury and recommended the simplicity of the past.

THE PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

The letter of 1 Peter was written primarily to bring a message of hope and encouragement to Christians under persecution. Many of them were being persecuted by non-Christians around them, and perhaps also by government officials. Christians faced animosity particularly from several Roman emperors.

Date	Emperor
A.D. 64	Nero (54–68) Nero blamed the Christians for the Great Fire in Rome and punished them cruelly.
A.D. 95	Domitian (81–96) Domitian accused some high-ranking people of atheism. There is some evidence of persecution in the provinces especially.
A.D. 111	Trajan (98–117) Pliny the Younger corresponded with the emperor Trajan. The decision was that Christians should be punished if known, but should not be hunted down.
A.D. 125	Hadrian (117–138) Hadrian continued Trajan's policy; Christians were entitled to due process and should not be hunted down.
A.D. 155	Antoninus Pius (138–161) Polycarp was martyred in Syria for refusal to serve pagan gods. Another possible date for this event is 167–168, during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–180).
A.D. 202	Septimius Severus (193–211) Severus made it against the law for anyone to be converted to Judaism or to Christianity.

for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear
their threats[a]; do not be frightened."[b] 15But in
your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be
prepared to give an answer to everyone who
asks you to give the reason for the hope that
you have. But do this with gentleness and re-
spect, 16keeping a clear conscience, so that
those who speak maliciously against your
good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of
their slander. 17For it is better, if it is God's
will, to suffer for doing good than for doing
evil. 18For Christ also suffered once for sins,
the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you
to God. He was put to death in the body but
made alive in the Spirit. 19After being made
alive,[c] he went and made proclamation to the
imprisoned spirits— 20to those who were dis-
obedient long ago when God waited patiently
in the days of Noah while the ark was being
built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were
saved through water, 21and this water symbol-
izes baptism that now saves you also—not the
removal of dirt from the body but the pledge
of a clear conscience toward God.[d] It saves you
by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, 22who has
gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—
with angels, authorities and powers in submis-
sion to him.

Living for God

4 1Therefore, since Christ suffered in his
body, arm yourselves also with the same
attitude, because whoever suffers in the body
is done with sin. 2As a result, they do not live
the rest of their earthly lives for evil human
desires, but rather for the will of God. 3For
you have spent enough time in the past doing
what pagans choose to do—living in debauch-
ery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and
detestable idolatry. 4They are surprised that
you do not join them in their reckless, wild
living, and they heap abuse on you. 5But they
will have to give account to him who is ready
to judge the living and the dead. 6For this is
the reason the gospel was preached even to
those who are now dead, so that they might
be judged according to human standards in re-
gard to the body, but live according to God in
regard to the spirit.

7The end of all things is near. Therefore be
alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.
8Above all, love each other deeply, because love
covers over a multitude of sins. 9Offer hospitali-
ty to one another without grumbling. 10Each of

[a] *14* Or *fear what they fear* [b] *14* Isaiah 8:12
[c] *18,19* Or *but made alive in the spirit,* 19*in which also*
[d] *21* Or *but an appeal to God for a clear conscience*

you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. 11If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Suffering for Being a Christian

12Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. 13But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. 14If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. 15If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. 16However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 17For it is time for judgment to begin with God's household; and if it begins with us, what will the outcome be for those who do not obey the gospel of God? 18And,

"If it is hard for the righteous to be saved,
what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"[a]

19So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.

To the Elders and the Flock

5 1To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: 2Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; 3not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. 4And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

5In the same way, you who are younger, submit yourselves to your elders. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because,

"God opposes the proud
but shows favor to the humble."[b]

6Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

8Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.

10And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. 11To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Final Greetings

12With the help of Silas,[c] whom I regard as a faithful brother, I have written to you briefly,

[a] *18* Prov. 11:31 (see Septuagint) [b] *5* Prov. 3:34
[c] *12* Greek *Silvanus*, a variant of *Silas*

Regions of the Dispersion
The letter of 1 Peter is addressed to "God's elect, exiles scattered throughout the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia" (1Pe 1:1). The author wrote from Rome, as indicated by the code name "Babylon" (1Pe 5:13), and encouraged these exiles in various areas of Asia Minor to be strong in the faith as they encountered persecutions.

encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.

[13]She who is in Babylon, chosen together with you, sends you her greetings, and so does my son Mark. [14]Greet one another with a kiss of love.

Peace to all of you who are in Christ.

TRANSITION

The Letter of Jude

The Jude (or Judas) named as the author of this letter (v. 1) is most probably the half brother of Jesus (see Mt 13:55). He is identified as the "brother of James" (Jude 1:1), another half brother of Jesus. Some scholars have doubted whether Jude actually wrote this letter, raising questions similar to those raised about James's authorship of the letter bearing his name (see "The Letter of James" at Jas 1:1). As with the letter of James, however, others accept the book as an authentic letter by Jude himself.

Exactly when Jude wrote the letter depends to some extent on its relationship with the letter of 2 Peter. The marked similarity of wording between Jude 1:4–19 and 2 Peter 2:1—3:3 indicates direct literary dependence. Yet it cannot be proven whether the 2 Peter passage was borrowed from Jude, or Jude borrowed from 2 Peter, or both letters used ideas from a common source that no longer exists. The apparent literary relationship between the two letters might mean that Jude was written at roughly the same time as 2 Peter (see "The Second Letter of Peter" at 2Pe 1:1).

Jude wrote this letter to a group of Christians who were being led astray by false teachers. He urges them to fight for the truth (Jude 1:3).

• Jude 1:1–25

Jude

1:1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James,

To those who have been called, who are loved in God the Father and kept for[a] Jesus Christ:

[2]Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance.

The Sin and Doom of Ungodly People

[3]Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt compelled to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to God's holy people. [4]For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about[b] long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord.

[5]Though you already know all this, I want to remind you that the Lord[c] at one time delivered his people out of Egypt, but later destroyed those who did not believe. [6]And the angels who did not keep their positions of authority but abandoned their proper dwelling—these he has kept in darkness, bound with everlasting chains for judgment on the great Day. [7]In a similar way, Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding towns gave themselves up to sexual immorality and perversion. They serve as an example of those who suffer the punishment of eternal fire.

[8]In the very same way, on the strength of their dreams these ungodly people pollute their own bodies, reject authority and heap abuse on celestial beings. [9]But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"[d] [10]Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct—as irrational animals do—will destroy them.

[11]Woe to them! They have taken the way of Cain; they have rushed for profit into Balaam's error; they have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

[12]These people are blemishes at your love feasts, eating with you without the slightest qualm—shepherds who feed only themselves. They are clouds without rain, blown along by the wind; autumn trees, without fruit and uprooted—twice dead. [13]They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever.

[14]Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied about them: "See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones [15]to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him."[e] [16]These people are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage.

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[a] *1* Or *by*; or *in* [b] *4* Or *individuals who were marked out for condemnation* [c] *5* Some early manuscripts *Jesus* [d] *9* Jude is alluding to the Jewish *Testament of Moses* (approximately the first century A.D.). [e] *14,15* From the Jewish *First Book of Enoch* (approximately the first century B.C.)

QUOTATION OF GREEK LITERATURE

The New Testament quotes often from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, and once from the Jewish apocryphal book of 1 Enoch (see Jude 1:14, 15). New Testament writers also referred to Greek literature, quoting the works of Greek authors dating as far back as 600 B.C.

Quotation: "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12).
From: *De oraculis* by Epimenides (about 600 B.C.)

Epimenides was a wandering religious teacher. The quotation in Titus also resembles a line from Hesiod's *Theogony*, a better-known poem.

Quotation: "A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud" (2Pe 2:22).
From: A fragment of Heraclitus (about 500 B.C.)

Heraclitus was an early philosopher. There is a proverb known from other sources that seems to be closer than Heraclitus's fragment to what Peter is saying.

Quotation: "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" (Ac 26:14).
From: *Bacchae*, 794, by Euripides (485–406 B.C.)

The line is a familiar proverb, and the phrase in Acts 26 may not be quoted directly from Euripides.

Quotation: "Bad company corrupts good character" (1Co 15:33).
From: *Thais* by Menander (343–293 B.C.)

Menander, a writer of dramatic comedy, was from Athens. The quotation was a common proverb by Paul's time.

Quotation: "We are his offspring" (Ac 17:28).
From: *Phenomena*, 5, by Aratus (314–240 B.C.)

The *Phenomena* was a famous poem dealing mainly with astronomy.

A Call to Persevere

17 But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. 18 They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." 19 These are the people who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

20 But you, dear friends, by building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

22 Be merciful to those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.[a]

Doxology

24 To him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy—
25 to the only God our Savior be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

[a] *22,23* The Greek manuscripts of these verses vary at several points.

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 65 to 70
65	Nero orders his tutor Seneca to commit suicide	
66	Roman procurator Florus takes treasure from the Jerusalem temple	
66	Outbreak of the Jewish revolt against Rome	
67	Nero orders his general Domitius Corbulo to kill himself	
67	Roman forces kill 11,000 Samaritans	
67	Paul is arrested and executed in Rome (?)	
68	Nero, age 30, is forced to commit suicide	
69	Troops in Caesarea hail Vespasian as emperor	
69	An impostor pretends to be Nero in Greece	
70	Titus defeats Jerusalem and burns down the temple	

TRANSITION

The Second Letter of Peter

Two New Testament letters bear the name of Simon P eter (1Pe 1:1; 2P e 1:1). The two have little in c ommon with each other ,

and the differences in style, vocabulary, and theology between 1 and 2 Peter have led some scholars to doubt whether Peter was the author of 2 Peter. Other scholars recognize these differences, but still accept Peter's authorship of the second letter. Differences in style and vocabulary are explained as the result of Peter using a different secretary to write the second letter, and by treating differing subject matter.

The author of the letter refers to "our dear brother Paul" and to "all his letters" (2Pe 3:15, 16). Some suppose that if Peter wrote the letter he would never have implied that Paul's writings were equal to "the other Scriptures" (3:16). Moreover, it seems unlikely that Paul's letters would have been gathered into a formal collection prior to Peter's and Paul's martyrdoms under Nero. Nevertheless, others point out that the apostles wrote and taught with a consciousness of having divine authority, as Paul did in his earliest letters (1Co 2:13; Gal 1:1).

Those who accept Peter's authorship believe he probably wrote in the early 60s, not long before his death. Since the letter of 2 Peter apparently acknowledges the existence of 1 Peter (2Pe 3:1), it would necessarily have been written after 1 Peter. If an unknown author wrote the letter, its composition might date to the late 1st century or early 2nd century.

The similarities between 2 Peter and Jude do not necessarily determine when 2 Peter may have been written. While 2Pe 2:1—3:3 appears to quote word for word from Jude 1:4–19 (see "The Letter of Jude" at Jude 1:1), it is possible that 2 Peter depended on Jude, or that Peter and Jude used a common source, or even that Jude copied Peter.

The letter is written out of past oral concern to counter false teachings and their influence on the lives of early Christians. Certain teachers, for their own personal gain, were promising that people could be Christians and still live immoral lives. The writer of this letter is concerned that there be a check against this false teaching and immoral living even after he is gone (1:12–15).

• 2 Peter 1:1—3:18

2 Peter

1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ,

To those who through the righteousness of
our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received
a faith as precious as ours:

[2]Grace and peace be yours in abundance
through the knowledge of God and of Jesus
our Lord.

Confirming One's Calling and Election

[3]His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. [4]Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.

[5]For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; [6]and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; [7]and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. [8]For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. [9]But whoever does not have them is nearsighted and blind, forgetting that they have been cleansed from their past sins.

[10]Therefore, my brothers and sisters,[a] make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, [11]and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Prophecy of Scripture

[12]So I will always remind you of these things, even though you know them and are firmly established in the truth you now have. [13]I think it is right to refresh your memory as long as I live in the tent of this body, [14]because I know that I will soon put it aside, as our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. [15]And I will make every effort to see that after my departure you will always be able to remember these things.

[16]For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. [17]He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."[b] [18]We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain.

[19]We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. [20]Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation

[a] *10* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family. [b] *17* Matt. 17:5; Mark 9:7; Luke 9:35

Beliefs & Ideas

The official and unofficial religions practiced in the Roman world included many stories about various gods. It was known that these stories were not historical accounts, and the expression "cleverly devised stories" (2Pe 1:16), like the English word "myth," was used as an insult meaning "false." People who heard the gospel knew the difference between myth and history.

of things. 21For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

False Teachers and Their Destruction

2 1But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them—bringing swift destruction on themselves. 2Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. 3In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping.

4For if God did not spare angels when they sinned, but sent them to hell,[a] putting them in chains of darkness[b] to be held for judgment; 5if he did not spare the ancient world when he brought the flood on its ungodly people, but protected Noah, a preacher of righteousness, and seven others; 6if he condemned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah by burning them to ashes, and made them an example of what is going to happen to the ungodly; 7and if he rescued Lot, a righteous man, who was distressed by the depraved conduct of the lawless 8(for that righteous man, living among them day after day, was tormented in his righteous soul by the lawless deeds he saw and heard)— 9if this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. 10This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh[c] and despise authority.

Bold and arrogant, they are not afraid to heap abuse on celestial beings; 11yet even angels, although they are stronger and more powerful, do not heap abuse on such beings when bringing judgment on them from[d] the Lord. 12But these people blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like unreasoning animals, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like animals they too will perish.

13They will be paid back with harm for the harm they have done. Their idea of pleasure is to carouse in broad daylight. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their pleasures while they feast with you.[e] 14With eyes full of adultery, they never stop sinning; they seduce the unstable; they are experts in greed—an accursed brood! 15They have left the straight way and wandered off to follow the way of Balaam son of Bezer,[f] who loved the wages of wickedness. 16But he was rebuked for his wrongdoing by a donkey—an animal without speech—who spoke with a human voice and restrained the prophet's madness.

17These people are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. 18For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of the flesh, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. 19They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for

Sites of the Transfiguration

None of the gospel accounts exactly locate the high mountain on which the transfiguration of Jesus took place (2Pe 1:16–18). Matthew and Mark link the event closely to Peter's prior confession of faith made in Caesarea Philippi, thus suggesting Mount Hermon to the north as a plausible site. The account in Luke ties the event closely to Jesus' departure from Galilee en route to Jerusalem, making Mount Tabor a credible possibility as well.

[a] *4* Greek *Tartarus* [b] *4* Some manuscripts *in gloomy dungeons* [c] *10* In contexts like this, the Greek word for *flesh* (*sarx*) refers to the sinful state of human beings, often presented as a power in opposition to the Spirit; also in verse 18. [d] *11* Many manuscripts *beings in the presence of* [e] *13* Some manuscripts *in their love feasts* [f] *15* Greek *Bosor*

"people are slaves to whatever has mastered them." 20If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and are overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. 21It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. 22Of them the proverbs are true: "A dog returns to its vomit,"[a] and, "A sow that is washed returns to her wallowing in the mud."

The Day of the Lord

3 1Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. 2I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

3Above all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. 4They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our ancestors died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." 5But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens came into being and the earth was formed out of water and by water. 6By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. 7By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly.

8But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. 9The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

10But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything done in it will be laid bare.[b]

11Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives 12as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming.[c] That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. 13But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

14So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 15Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. 16He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.

17Therefore, dear friends, since you have been forewarned, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of the lawless and fall from your secure position. 18But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

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[a] *22* Prov. 26:11 [b] *10* Some manuscripts *be burned up*
[c] *12* Or *as you wait eagerly for the day of God to come*

TRANSITION

The Letter to the Hebrews

Unlike the letters recognized as written by Paul, the letter to the Hebrews is not signed by its author, nor are the addressees named. It is not a circular letter to be read in several churches. The many exhortations remind us of a sermon. Hebrews deals with Christ's priesthood and sacrifice much more thoroughly than any other New Testament book.

Even the early church fathers were uncertain who wrote this letter. The mention of Timothy (Heb 13:23) has led some to think that Paul or one of his associates wrote the letter. Apollos has been suggested because the style and content of Hebrews reflect a Jew versed in Greek learning and literary style (see Ac 18:24–28). Other suggestions include Barnabas, Luke, Silas, Aquila, or Priscilla as possible authors. But after considering all the evidence, many scholars agree that the authorship of this letter remains unknown.

Hebrews was certainly written during the last half of the 1st century. It is quoted at length in a letter written about A.D. 95 to the church at Corinth by Clement, a leader in the church at Rome. If not written during the lifetime of Paul, Hebrews was most likely written during the lifetime of Paul's younger associate, Timothy (13:23).

Almost all of Hebrews is exposition of Old Testament passages. The author uses Jewish methods of interpretation common in the synagogues of his day. He differs from Jewish interpreters, however, in that he sees Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament. The let-

ter is a masterful description of the salvation obtained by Christ's priesthood and sacrifice interwoven with exhortation for Christians to persevere in the benefits of this salvation.
• **Hebrews 1:1—13:25**

Hebrews

God's Final Word: His Son

1:1 In the past God spoke to our ancestors
through the prophets at many times and in
various ways, [2]but in these last days he has spo-
ken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir
of all things, and through whom also he made
the universe. [3]The Son is the radiance of God's
glory and the exact representation of his be-
ing, sustaining all things by his powerful word.
After he had provided purification for sins, he
sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in
heaven. [4]So he became as much superior to the
angels as the name he has inherited is superior
to theirs.

The Son Superior to Angels

[5]For to which of the angels did God ever say,

"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father"[a]?

Or again,

"I will be his Father,
and he will be my Son"[b]?

[6]And again, when God brings his firstborn into
the world, he says,

"Let all God's angels worship him."[c]

[7]In speaking of the angels he says,

"He makes his angels spirits,
and his servants flames of fire."[d]

[8]But about the Son he says,

"Your throne, O God, will last for ever and
ever;
a scepter of justice will be the scepter of
your kingdom.
[9]You have loved righteousness and hated
wickedness;
therefore God, your God, has set you
above your companions
by anointing you with the oil of joy."[e]

[10]He also says,

"In the beginning, Lord, you laid the
foundations of the earth,
and the heavens are the work of your
hands.
[11]They will perish, but you remain;
they will all wear out like a garment.
[12]You will roll them up like a robe;
like a garment they will be changed.
But you remain the same,
and your years will never end."[f]

[13]To which of the angels did God ever say,

"Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet"[g]?

[14]Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to
serve those who will inherit salvation?

Warning to Pay Attention

2 [1]We must pay the most careful attention,
therefore, to what we have heard, so that
we do not drift away. [2]For since the message
spoken through angels was binding, and ev-
ery violation and disobedience received its just
punishment, [3]how shall we escape if we ignore
so great a salvation? This salvation, which was
first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to
us by those who heard him. [4]God also testified
to it by signs, wonders and various miracles,
and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed ac-
cording to his will.

[a] *5* Psalm 2:7 [b] *5* 2 Samuel 7:14; 1 Chron. 17:13
[c] *6* Deut. 32:43 (see Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint)
[d] *7* Psalm 104:4 [e] *9* Psalm 45:6,7 [f] *12* Psalm 102:25-27
[g] *13* Psalm 110:1

Religion & Worship
Angels apparently played some role when Moses received the law on Mount Sinai (Gal 3:19). The Old Testament already described the presence of a heavenly army of angels at Sinai (Ps 68:17 and probably Dt 33:2, if "holy ones" refers to angels). Jewish tradition outside the Bible further developed the idea of "the message spoken through angels" (Heb 2:2).

Jesus Made Fully Human

5 It is not to angels that he has subjected the
world to come, about which we are speaking.
6 But there is a place where someone has tes-
tified:

"What is mankind that you are mindful of
them,
a son of man that you care for him?
7 You made them a little[a] lower than the
angels;
you crowned them with glory and honor
8 and put everything under their feet."[b,c]

In putting everything under them,[d] God left nothing that is not subject to them.[d] Yet at present we do not see everything subject to them.[d] 9 But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.

10 In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. 11 Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.[e] 12 He says,

"I will declare your name to my brothers
and sisters;
in the assembly I will sing your praises."[f]

13 And again,

"I will put my trust in him."[g]

And again he says,

"Here am I, and the children God has
given me."[h]

14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—
15 and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. 16 For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. 17 For this reason he had to be made like them,[i] fully human in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.
18 Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

Jesus Greater Than Moses

3 1 Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest. 2 He was faithful to the one who appointed him, just as Moses was faithful in all God's house. 3 Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself. 4 For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. 5 "Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house,"[j] bearing witness to what would be spoken by God in the future. 6 But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory.

Warning Against Unbelief

7 So, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you hear his voice,
8 do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion,
during the time of testing in the
wilderness,
9 where your ancestors tested and tried me,
though for forty years they saw what I
did.
10 That is why I was angry with that
generation;
I said, 'Their hearts are always going
astray,
and they have not known my ways.'
11 So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.'"[k]

12 See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so

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[a] *7* Or *them for a little while* [b] *6-8* Psalm 8:4-6
[c] *7,8* Or *7You made him a little lower than the angels;/ you crowned him with glory and honor/ 8and put everything under his feet."* [d] *8* Or *him* [e] *11* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in verse 12; and in 3:1, 12; 10:19; 13:22. [f] *12* Psalm 22:22 [g] *13* Isaiah 8:17
[h] *13* Isaiah 8:18 [i] *17* Or *like his brothers* [j] *5* Num. 12:7
[k] *11* Psalm 95:7-11

that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. 14We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. 15As has just been said:

"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts
as you did in the rebellion."[a]

16Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? 17And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness? 18And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? 19So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

A Sabbath-Rest for the People of God

4 1Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. 2For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed.[b] 3Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

"So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.'"[c]

And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. 4For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "On the seventh day God rested from all his works."[d] 5And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

6Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, 7God again set a certain day, calling it "Today." This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted:

"Today, if you hear his voice,
do not harden your hearts."[a]

8For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. 9There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works,[e] just as God did from his. 11Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

12For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. 13Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Jesus the Great High Priest

14Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven,[f] Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. 15For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. 16Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

5 1Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. 2He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. 3This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. 4And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.

5In the same way, Christ did not take on himself the glory of becoming a high priest. But God said to him,

"You are my Son;
today I have become your Father."[g]

[a] *15,7* Psalm 95:7,8 [b] *2* Some manuscripts *because those who heard did not combine it with faith* [c] *3* Psalm 95:11; also in verse 5 [d] *4* Gen. 2:2 [e] *10* Or *labor* [f] *14* Greek *has gone through the heavens* [g] *5* Psalm 2:7

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 70 to 75
70	Prayer becomes a substitute for sacrifices in the temple
70–75	Followers of Paul write Colossians and Ephesians (?)
71	Titus celebrates a triumph for his victory over Judea
74	Masada falls to the Romans and its defenders commit suicide
75	Vessels from the Jerusalem temple are displayed at Rome
75	Josephus publishes *The Jewish War*
75	Trajan (later emperor) is in Syria as a soldier

Melchizedek in Jewish Tradition (Heb 5:8–10)

The author of Hebrews uses the figure of Melchizedek to clarify the nature of the priesthood of Christ. Melchizedek, whose name means "king of righteousness" (Heb 7:2), appears briefly in Genesis as the king of Salem (Ge 14:18–20). Despite being mentioned only in Genesis and one psalm (Ps 110:4), the mystery of Melchizedek's figure inspired much interpretive activity in Judaism during the second temple period.

Such intrigue was not lost on serious interpreters of the Old Testament in antiquity. Melchizedek emerges as the central figure in a fragmentary document found at Qumran. This document, entitled "11QMelchizedek," consists largely of interpretive comments on Old Testament passages, and presents Melchizedek as an important figure in God's judgment upon the earth in the end times.

Another fragmentary text, called "Melchizedek," was found at Nag Hammadi in Egypt. It seemingly contains much older traditions from a group of Jews who found the origins of their theology in the person of Seth, the son of Adam born after Cain killed Abel (Ge 4:25). In this tradition Melchizedek, "priest of God Most High," receives special revelations concerning Jesus from heavenly messengers. In a second group of revelations, Melchizedek himself becomes Jesus, and is both crucified and raised as savior! Such ideas make Jesus the new appearance of Melchizedek.

The author of Hebrews reads the Melchizedek tradition in a restrained manner compared to the speculations current at that time. Ultimately, he is not so much interested in Melchizedek, as in Christ, who was the high priest "in the order of Melchizedek" (Heb 5:8–10). Christ's heavenly priesthood surpasses any earthly priesthood, even the priesthood of the king of Salem (Heb 7:15–17).

6 And he says in another place,

"You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek."[a]

7 During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he
offered up prayers and petitions with fervent
cries and tears to the one who could save him
from death, and he was heard because of his
reverent submission. 8 Son though he was, he
learned obedience from what he suffered 9 and,
once made perfect, he became the source of
eternal salvation for all who obey him 10 and
was designated by God to be high priest in the
order of Melchizedek.

Warning Against Falling Away

11 We have much to say about this, but it is
hard to make it clear to you because you no
longer try to understand. 12 In fact, though by
this time you ought to be teachers, you need
someone to teach you the elementary truths of
God's word all over again. You need milk, not
solid food! 13 Anyone who lives on milk, being
still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. 14 But solid food is for
the mature, who by constant use have trained
themselves to distinguish good from evil.

6 1 Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken
forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to
death,[b] and of faith in God, 2 instruction about
cleansing rites,[c] the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.
3 And God permitting, we will do so.

4 It is impossible for those who have once
been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, 5 who
have tasted the goodness of the word of God
and the powers of the coming age 6 and who
have fallen[d] away, to be brought back to repentance. To their loss they are crucifying the Son
of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. 7 Land that drinks in the rain often
falling on it and that produces a crop useful to
those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. 8 But land that produces thorns and
thistles is worthless and is in danger of being
cursed. In the end it will be burned.

9 Even though we speak like this, dear
friends, we are convinced of better things in
your case—the things that have to do with salvation. 10 God is not unjust; he will not forget
your work and the love you have shown him
as you have helped his people and continue to
help them. 11 We want each of you to show this
same diligence to the very end, so that what
you hope for may be fully realized. 12 We do not
want you to become lazy, but to imitate those
who through faith and patience inherit what
has been promised.

The Certainty of God's Promise

13 When God made his promise to Abraham,
since there was no one greater for him to swear
by, he swore by himself, 14 saying, "I will surely bless you and give you many descendants."[e]
15 And so after waiting patiently, Abraham received what was promised.

16 People swear by someone greater than

[a] *6* Psalm 110:4 [b] *1* Or *from useless rituals* [c] *2* Or *about baptisms* [d] *6* Or *age, 6 if they fall* [e] *14* Gen. 22:17

themselves, and the oath confirms what is said and puts an end to all argument. 17Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. 18God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope set before us may be greatly encouraged. 19We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, 20where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered on our behalf. He has become a high priest forever, in the order of Melchizedek.

Melchizedek the Priest

7 1This Melchizedek was king of Salem and priest of God Most High. He met Abraham returning from the defeat of the kings and blessed him, 2and Abraham gave him a tenth of everything. First, the name Melchizedek means "king of righteousness"; then also, "king of Salem" means "king of peace." 3Without father or mother, without genealogy, without beginning of days or end of life, resembling the Son of God, he remains a priest forever.

4Just think how great he was: Even the patriarch Abraham gave him a tenth of the plunder! 5Now the law requires the descendants of Levi who become priests to collect a tenth from the people—that is, from their fellow Israelites—even though they also are descended from Abraham. 6This man, however, did not trace his descent from Levi, yet he collected a tenth from Abraham and blessed him who had the promises. 7And without doubt the lesser is blessed by the greater. 8In the one case, the tenth is collected by people who die; but in the other case, by him who is declared to be living. 9One might even say that Levi, who collects the tenth, paid the tenth through Abraham, 10because when Melchizedek met Abraham, Levi was still in the body of his ancestor.

Jesus Like Melchizedek

11If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? 12For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also. 13He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. 14For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. 15And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, 16one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life. 17For it is declared:

"You are a priest forever,
in the order of Melchizedek."[a]

18The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless 19(for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God.

20And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, 21but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him:

"The Lord has sworn
and will not change his mind:
'You are a priest forever.'"[a]

22Because of this oath, Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant.

23Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; 24but because Jesus lives forever, he has a permanent priesthood. 25Therefore he is able to save completely[b] those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

26Such a high priest truly meets our need—one who is holy, blameless, pure, set apart from sinners, exalted above the heavens. 27Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself. 28For the law appoints as high priests men in all their weakness; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever.

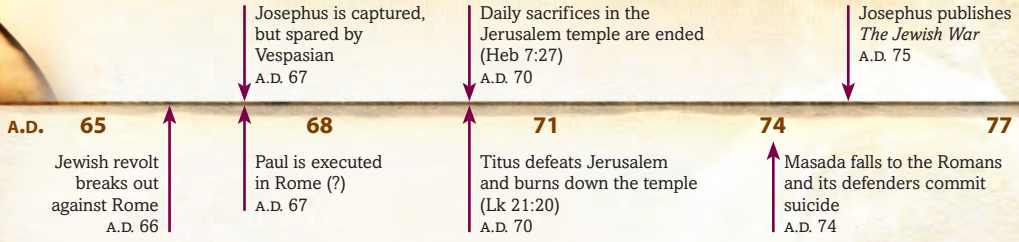
The High Priest of a New Covenant

8 1Now the main point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne

Religion & Worship
Jewish priests offered sacrifices at only one location—the temple in Jerusalem (Heb 7:27; 10:11). Every morning and every night a lamb was sacrificed, as required by the Law of Moses (Ex 29:38–42). The body was divided without breaking the bones and then burned on the altar. On Sabbaths and holidays other sacrifices were scheduled, and individuals and families could bring sacrifices of their own.

[a] *17,21* Psalm 110:4 [b] *25* Or *forever*

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM



of the Majesty in heaven, [2]and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by a mere human being.

[3]Every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices, and so it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. [4]If he were on earth, he would not be a priest, for there are already priests who offer the gifts prescribed by the law. [5]They serve at a sanctuary that is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."[a] [6]But in fact the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.

[7]For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. [8]But God found fault with the people and said[b]:

"The days are coming, declares the Lord,
when I will make a new covenant
with the people of Israel
and with the people of Judah.
[9]It will not be like the covenant
I made with their ancestors
when I took them by the hand
to lead them out of Egypt,
because they did not remain faithful to my covenant,
and I turned away from them,
declares the Lord.
[10]This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel
after that time, declares the Lord.
I will put my laws in their minds
and write them on their hearts.
I will be their God,
and they will be my people.
[11]No longer will they teach their neighbor,
or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,'
because they will all know me,
from the least of them to the greatest.
[12]For I will forgive their wickedness
and will remember their sins no more."[c]

[13]By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear.

Worship in the Earthly Tabernacle

9 [1]Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary. [2]A tabernacle was set up. In its first room were the lampstand and the table with its consecrated bread; this was called the Holy Place. [3]Behind the second curtain was a room called the Most Holy Place, [4]which had the golden altar of incense and the gold-covered ark of the covenant. This ark contained the gold jar of manna, Aaron's staff that had budded, and the stone tablets of the covenant. [5]Above the ark were the cherubim of the Glory, overshadowing the atonement cover. But we cannot discuss these things in detail now.

[6]When everything had been arranged like this, the priests entered regularly into the outer room to carry on their ministry. [7]But only the high priest entered the inner room, and

Arts & Literature
The sacred lampstand (Heb 9:2) became the central symbol of Judaism, often appearing on grave markers and coins. In A.D. 70 the Romans captured the lampstand of Herod's temple, taking it to Rome, where it was kept in the Temple of Peace near the Forum, only to be lost when the city was overrun by barbarians in A.D. 410. Judging from a depiction of the lampstand on the arch of Titus, it was about 40 inches tall.

[a] *5* Exodus 25:40 [b] *8* Some manuscripts may be translated *fault and said to the people.* [c] *12* Jer. 31:31-34

that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance. 8The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning. 9This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. 10They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings — external regulations applying until the time of the new order.

The Blood of Christ

11But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here,[a] he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation. 12He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, thus obtaining[b] eternal redemption. 13The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. 14How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,[c] so that we may serve the living God!

15For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

16In the case of a will,[d] it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, 17because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. 18This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect without blood. 19When Moses had proclaimed every command of the law to all the people, he took the blood of calves, together with water, scarlet wool and branches of hyssop, and sprinkled the scroll and all the people. 20He said, "This is the blood of the covenant, which God has commanded you to keep."[e] 21In the same way, he sprinkled with the blood both the tabernacle and everything used in its ceremonies. 22In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

23It was necessary, then, for the copies of the heavenly things to be purified with these sacrifices, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. 24For Christ did not enter a sanctuary made with human hands that was only a copy of the true one; he entered heaven itself, now to appear for us in God's presence. 25Nor did he enter heaven to offer himself again and again, the way the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood that is not his own. 26Otherwise Christ would have had to suffer many times since the creation of the world. But he has appeared once for all at the culmination of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27Just as people are destined to die once, and after that to face judgment, 28so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him.

Christ's Sacrifice Once for All

10 1The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming — not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship. 2Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.

[a] *11* Some early manuscripts *are to come* [b] *12* Or *blood, having obtained* [c] *14* Or *from useless rituals* [d] *16* Same Greek word as *covenant*; also in verse 17 [e] *20* Exodus 24:8

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 79 to 89
79	The volcano Vesuvius erupts, burying Pompeii and Herculaneum
80–100	Unknown author writes letter of 2 Thessalonians (?)
80	Dedication of the Colosseum in Rome
81	Domitian becomes emperor
82	Domitian improves the standards of Roman coinage
84	Domitian restores the temple of Apollo at Delphi, Greece
84	Dacians cross the Danube and attack the Romans
89	Domitian banishes philosophers from Italy
89	Domitian executes one of the Vestal Virgins for incest

Holding Unswervingly to the Hope (Heb 10:23–25)

The writer of Hebrews addresses Christians faced with persecution from a Roman society that threatened the church's morale. To prevent the church from disintegrating from within, the writer encourages these Christians: "hold unswervingly to the hope" (Heb 10:23–25). A series of letters between the Roman governor Pliny and the emperor Trajan offers the Roman perspective on the process whereby Christians were examined in times of persecution.

Pliny writes the emperor for advice on how to treat Christians. It seems that local merchants were upset because Christians refused to participate in the civic religious rites, thus cutting down the meat sales at festivals. Pliny states, "I have never been present at an examination of Christians. Consequently, I do not know the nature or the extent of the punishments usually meted out to them, nor the grounds for starting an investigation and how far it should be pressed" (*Epistulae* 96).

Trajan's reply provides some insight into the nature of a Christian's examination. The emperor made the practice of Christianity illegal, responding that when Christians "are brought before you and the charge against them is proved, they must be punished, but in the case of anyone who denies that he is a Christian, and makes it clear that he is not by offering prayers to our gods, he is to be pardoned" (*Epistulae* 10.97).

Apparently, a person accused of being a Christian was brought into court before the governor. Asked if he or she was a Christian, the accused could offer a quick public prayer to the Roman gods, quite possibly to the emperor himself. Refusal to do so meant execution. For Christians to "hold unswervingly to the hope [they] possess," publicly confessing Jesus Christ as Lord, was tantamount to signing their own death warrant.

3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of
sins. 4 It is impossible for the blood of bulls and
goats to take away sins.
5 Therefore, when Christ came into the
world, he said:

"Sacrifice and offering you did not
desire,
but a body you prepared for me;
6 with burnt offerings and sin offerings
you were not pleased.
7 Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about
me in the scroll—
I have come to do your will, my
God.'"[a]

8 First he said, "Sacrifices and offerings, burnt
offerings and sin offerings you did not desire,
nor were you pleased with them"—though
they were offered in accordance with the law.
9 Then he said, "Here I am, I have come to do
your will." He sets aside the first to establish
the second. 10 And by that will, we have been
made holy through the sacrifice of the body of
Jesus Christ once for all.
11 Day after day every priest stands and per-
forms his religious duties; again and again he
offers the same sacrifices, which can never
take away sins. 12 But when this priest had of-
fered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat
down at the right hand of God, 13 and since that
time he waits for his enemies to be made his
footstool. 14 For by one sacrifice he has made
perfect forever those who are being made holy.
15 The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about
this. First he says:

16 "This is the covenant I will make with them
after that time, says the Lord.
I will put my laws in their hearts,
and I will write them on their minds."[b]

17 Then he adds:

"Their sins and lawless acts
I will remember no more."[c]

18 And where these have been forgiven, sacri-
fice for sin is no longer necessary.

A Call to Persevere in Faith

19 Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we
have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place
by the blood of Jesus, 20 by a new and living way
opened for us through the curtain, that is, his
body, 21 and since we have a great priest over
the house of God, 22 let us draw near to God
with a sincere heart and with the full assurance
that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled
to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and hav-
ing our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us
hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for
he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us con-
sider how we may spur one another on toward
love and good deeds, 25 not giving up meeting
together, as some are in the habit of doing, but
encouraging one another—and all the more as
you see the Day approaching.
26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we
have received the knowledge of the truth, no
sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful ex-
pectation of judgment and of raging fire that

[a] *7* Psalm 40:6-8 (see Septuagint) [b] *16* Jer. 31:33
[c] *17* Jer. 31:34

will consume the enemies of God. 28Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay,"[a] and again, "The Lord will judge his people."[b] 31It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. 33Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. 34You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. 35So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.

36You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. 37For,

"In just a little while,
he who is coming will come
and will not delay."[c]

38And,

"But my righteous[d] one will live by faith.
And I take no pleasure
in the one who shrinks back."[e]

[a] *30* Deut. 32:35 [b] *30* Deut. 32:36; Psalm 135:14
[c] *37* Isaiah 26:20; Hab. 2:3 [d] *38* Some early manuscripts *But the righteous* [e] *38* Hab. 2:4 (see Septuagint)
[f] *5* Gen. 5:24

39But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved.

Faith in Action

11 1Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. 2This is what the ancients were commended for.

3By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

4By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith Abel still speaks, even though he is dead.

5By faith Enoch was taken from this life, so that he did not experience death: "He could not be found, because God had taken him away."[f] For before he was taken, he was commended as one who pleased God. 6And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

7By faith Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his faith he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that is in keeping with faith.

8By faith Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. 9By faith he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. 10For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and

Persecution of the faithful. Lunette of the main gate, church Saint-Etienne du Mont, Paris.

builder is God. 11And by faith even Sarah, who was past childbearing age, was enabled to bear children because she[a] considered him faithful who had made the promise. 12And so from this one man, and he as good as dead, came descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sand on the seashore.

13All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.

17By faith Abraham, when God tested him, offered Isaac as a sacrifice. He who had embraced the promises was about to sacrifice his one and only son, 18even though God had said to him, "It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned."[b] 19Abraham reasoned that God could even raise the dead, and so in a manner of speaking he did receive Isaac back from death.

20By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.

21By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of Joseph's sons, and worshiped as he leaned on the top of his staff.

22By faith Joseph, when his end was near, spoke about the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and gave instructions concerning the burial of his bones.

23By faith Moses' parents hid him for three months after he was born, because they saw he was no ordinary child, and they were not afraid of the king's edict.

24By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. 27By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. 28By faith he kept the Passover and the application of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the firstborn of Israel.

29By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned.

30By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days.

31By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient.[c]

32And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, 33who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, 34quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. 35Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. 36Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. 37They were put to death by stoning;[d] they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— 38the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground.

39These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, 40since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

12 1Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he

Beliefs & Ideas

The Hebrews thought it very important how and where a person was buried. Abraham's negotiations for a burial plot are carefully recorded (Ge 23:3–9). Joseph's dying words include instructions about his burial (Ge 50:25), as the New Testament itself notices (Heb 11:22). It was a calamity for a person's body to be left in the open or in some other way disgraced.

[a] *11* Or *By faith Abraham, even though he was too old to have children—and Sarah herself was not able to conceive—was enabled to become a father because he* [b] *18* Gen. 21:12
[c] *31* Or *unbelieving* [d] *37* Some early manuscripts *stoning; they were put to the test;*

The Tortured "Others" (Heb 11:35–38)

The author of Hebrews provides a long list of characters whose faithfulness to God was exemplary for the author's audience (Heb 11:4–35). Yet also listed vaguely are unnamed "others" who were tortured, refusing to deny their faith (11:35, 36).

The Greek word translated "tortured" (11:35) refers to a means of execution in which a prisoner was stretched out on a rack or a wheel and beaten to death. Such was the case with a certain Eleazar, a Jewish martyr of the Maccabean period. This priest refused to violate Jewish law by eating pork, and, "welcoming death with honor rather than life with pollution, went up to the rack on his own accord, spitting out the flesh" (2Mc 6:19).

The types of persecutions that some faithful had endured are frightening: flogging, chains, imprisonment, stoning, being sawed in two, wandering in deserts, mountains, and caves (Heb 11:36–38). An early Christian story called the *Acts of Thekla* details such a situation. Through the miraculous intervention of God, Thekla, a female convert under Paul's teaching, survived two civil proceedings that threatened to take her life. In the end, though, there was no place for her as an unwed Christian woman in the city. She thus "dwelt in a cave seventy-two years, living upon herbs and water. And she enlightened many by the word of God."

These various tortures may also represent possible situations that the recipients of the letter to the Hebrews themselves had to face. The author of Hebrews himself may have been imprisoned, and the community to which he wrote had already endured persecution "in a great conflict full of suffering" (10:32), even having their goods confiscated (10:34). If they remained faithful, they would be spiritual heirs of the tortured "others."

endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
3 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

God Disciplines His Children

4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood.
5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says,

"My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline,
and do not lose heart when he rebukes you,
6 because the Lord disciplines the one he loves,
and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son."[a]

7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father?
8 If you are not disciplined — and everyone undergoes discipline — then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all.
9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live!
10 They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness.
11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

12 Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees.
13 "Make level paths for your feet,"[b] so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.

Warning and Encouragement

14 Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.
15 See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.
16 See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.
17 Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

The Mountain of Fear and the Mountain of Joy

18 You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm;
19 to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them,
20 because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death."[c]
21 The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."[d]

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the

[a] *5,6* Prov. 3:11,12 (see Septuagint) [b] *13* Prov. 4:26
[c] *20* Exodus 19:12,13 [d] *21* See Deut. 9:19.

city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

25See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? 26At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."[a] 27The words "once more" indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

28Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, 29for our "God is a consuming fire."[b]

Concluding Exhortations

13 1Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. 2Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it. 3Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

4Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral. 5Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said,

"Never will I leave you;
never will I forsake you."[c]

6So we say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid.
What can mere mortals do to me?"[d]

Politics & Government

Imprisonment involved physical suffering, but in addition it exposed the prisoner to extreme shame. The legal system incorporated disgrace and the destruction of personal dignity (Mk 14:65) into the punishments that were imposed. As a result, prisoners were usually deserted by all but the truest friends (2Ti 4:10, 11). Yet Christians were advised to sympathize with those who so suffered (Heb 13:3).

7Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. 8Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

9Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings. It is good for our hearts to be strengthened by grace, not by eating ceremonial foods, which is of no benefit to those who do so. 10We have an altar from which those who minister at the tabernacle have no right to eat.

11The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. 12And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood. 13Let us, then, go to him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace he bore. 14For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

15Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. 16And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.

17Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

18Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honorably in every way. 19I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon.

Benediction and Final Greetings

20Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, 21equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22Brothers and sisters, I urge you to bear with my word of exhortation, for in fact I have written to you quite briefly.

23I want you to know that our brother Timothy has been released. If he arrives soon, I will come with him to see you.

24Greet all your leaders and all the Lord's people. Those from Italy send you their greetings.

25Grace be with you all.

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[a] *26* Haggai 2:6 [b] *29* Deut. 4:24 [c] *5* Deut. 31:6
[d] *6* Psalm 118:6,7

TRANSITION

The First Letter of John

The writer of 1 John does not mention his own name or his position in the church, as does the author of 2 and 3 John, who identifies himself as "the elder" (2Jn 1:1; 3Jn 1:1). Early church tradition held that 1 John, like the Gospel of John, was written by the apostle John, son of Zebedee. Irenaeus, a 2nd-century church father, quoted John's disciple, Polycarp, to confirm John's authorship of this letter.

There have been debates about the authorship of the Johannine letters going back to the 2nd century. One view is that John the apostle wrote all the New Testament books that bear his name. Another view is that the Gospel and 1 John were written by the same author (who may or may not have been John the apostle), while 2 and 3 John were written by another "elder" of the churches around Ephesus. Such was the view already of Jerome and possibly also Origen. Finally, some believe all three letters (1, 2, and 3 John) to be by the same author, but not the author who wrote the Gospel.

Many scholars suppose that the Johannine letters were written in the general sequence indicated by their arrangement in the New Testament. Thus, after the Gospel of John, 1 John was the first letter written and was followed later by the roughly contemporaneous letters 2 and 3 John. Those who accept authorship by John, the son of Zebedee, for the Gospel, letters, and Revelation (see "The Revelation to John" at Rev 1:1) place the letters before his exile to Patmos, where he wrote the Book of the Revelation. John lived until about A.D. 100, and the letter of 1 John is often dated between A.D. 85 and 95.

This letter was probably sent to a group of Christians living in Asia Minor who were troubled by false teachers. Although these teachers had left the church, they were trying to persuade Christians to follow their false teaching. John writes to show that no true knowledge of God is possible without commitment to the divine-human Son of God (1Jn 5:13). Fellowship with God will be evidenced by faith in Christ, obedience to his commands, and love for others.

• **1 John 1:1—5:21**

1 John

The Incarnation of the Word of Life

1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 2The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. 3We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4We write this to make our[a] joy complete.

Light and Darkness, Sin and Forgiveness

5This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. 7But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all[b] sin.

8If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 10If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us.

2 1My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. 2He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.

Love and Hatred for Fellow Believers

3We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands. 4Whoever says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth is not in that person. 5But if anyone obeys his word, love for God[c] is truly made complete in them. This is how we know we are in him: 6Whoever claims to live in him must live as Jesus did.

7Dear friends, I am not writing you a new command but an old one, which you have had since the beginning. This old command is the message you have heard. 8Yet I am writing you

[a] *4* Some manuscripts *your* [b] *7* Or *every* [c] *5* Or *word, God's love*

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 90 to 96
90	Jewish council at Jamnia discusses the Scriptures	
93	Josephus publishes *Antiquities of the Jews*	
95	Quintilian, famous teacher of rhetoric, dies	
95	John is imprisoned on the island of Patmos	
96	Clement, bishop of Rome, dies	

a new command; its truth is seen in him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.

9 Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates a brother or sister[a] is still in the darkness. 10 Anyone who loves their brother and sister[b] lives in the light, and there is nothing in them to make them stumble. 11 But anyone who hates a brother or sister is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness. They do not know where they are going, because the darkness has blinded them.

Reasons for Writing

12 I am writing to you, dear children,
because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.
13 I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil one.

14 I write to you, dear children,
because you know the Father.
I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men,
because you are strong,
and the word of God lives in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.

On Not Loving the World

15 Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father[c] is not in them. 16 For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world. 17 The world and its desires pass away, but whoever does the will of God lives forever.

Warnings Against Denying the Son

18 Dear children, this is the last hour; and as you have heard that the antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have come. This is how we know it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they did not really belong to us. For if they had belonged to us, they would have remained with us; but their going showed that none of them belonged to us.

20 But you have an anointing from the Holy One, and all of you know the truth.[d] 21 I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. 22 Who is the liar? It is whoever denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a person is the antichrist—denying the Father and the Son. 23 No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.

24 As for you, see that what you have heard from the beginning remains in you. If it does, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father. 25 And this is what he promised us—eternal life.

26 I am writing these things to you about those who are trying to lead you astray. 27 As for you, the anointing you received from him remains in you, and you do not need anyone to teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about all things and as that anointing is real, not counterfeit—just as it has taught you, remain in him.

God's Children and Sin

28 And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming.

29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.

3 1 See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears,[e] we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. 3 All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.

4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. The one who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 9 No one who is born of

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[a] *9* The Greek word for *brother or sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family; also in verse 11; and in 3:15, 17; 4:20; 5:16. [b] *10* The Greek word for *brother and sister* (*adelphos*) refers here to a believer, whether man or woman, as part of God's family; also in 3:10; 4:20, 21. [c] *15* Or *world, the Father's love* [d] *20* Some manuscripts *and you know all things* [e] *2* Or *when it is made known*

God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. 10This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.

More on Love and Hatred

11For this is the message you heard from the beginning: We should love one another. 12Do not be like Cain, who belonged to the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own actions were evil and his brother's were righteous. 13Do not be surprised, my brothers and sisters,[a] if the world hates you. 14We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love each other. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 15Anyone who hates a brother or sister is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life residing in him.

16This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. 17If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person? 18Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.

19This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: 20If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. 21Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 22and receive from him anything we ask, because we keep his commands and do what pleases him. 23And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 24The one who keeps God's commands lives in him, and he in them. And this is how we know that he lives in us: We know it by the Spirit he gave us.

On Denying the Incarnation

4 1Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world.

4You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. 5They are from the world and therefore speak from the viewpoint of the world, and the world listens to them. 6We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit[b] of truth and the spirit of falsehood.

God's Love and Ours

7Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. 10This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

13This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. 14And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. 15If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. 16And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 17This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. 18There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Beliefs & Ideas

From the earliest days the Christian church was plagued by proponents of false teaching. The New Testament does not describe any systems of false doctrine, but false teachers arose from within the congregations and appeared as visitors (Ac 20:29). John's advice was that the truth has one origin, God. Though having many disguises, the false teachers were consistent in their denial of Christ (1Jn 4:2, 3).

[a] *13* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in verse 16. [b] *6* Or *spirit*

19We love because he first loved us. 20Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. 21And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

Faith in the Incarnate Son of God

5 1Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. 2This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, 4for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. 5Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

6This is the one who came by water and blood—Jesus Christ. He did not come by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. 7For there are three that testify: 8the[a] Spirit, the water and the blood; and the three are in agreement. 9We accept human testimony, but God's testimony is greater because it is the testimony of God, which he has given about his Son. 10Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. 11And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.

Concluding Affirmations

13I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life. 14This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. 15And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

16If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that. 17All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.

18We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. 19We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. 20We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

21Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

TRANSITION

The Second Letter of John

According to early church tradition, the letter of 2 John was written by the apostle John, the same person who wrote 1 John. Yet the author does not refer to himself as an apostle, but rather as "the elder" (2Jn 1:1). "Elder" was a term of respect used by both Jews and Christians for venerated religious teachers, and could have been used of John later in his life (see 1Pe 5:1). Some scholars suppose that the elder John who wrote this letter may have been a disciple of the apostle John (see "The First Letter of John" at 1Jn 1:1).

The letter of 2 John was probably written in the final decade of the 1st century. It has the form and size of a nomal personal letter of the 1st century. The address—"To the lady chosen by God and to her children" (2Jn 1:1)— may well have been a figurative way of referring to a local church and its members, probably in Asia Minor.

The false teachers threatening this church held the same error as those confronted in 1 John. This letter is an earnest plea to continue to love one another and so obey Christ's commandment. The other side of the admonition is to reject the subtle deceivers who deny that Jesus Christ truly became a human being.

• 2 John 1:1–13

2 John

1:1 The elder,

To the lady chosen by God and to her children, whom I love in the truth—and not I only, but also all who know the truth— 2because of the truth, which lives in us and will be with us forever:

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[a] *7,8* Late manuscripts of the Vulgate *testify in heaven: the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one.* 8*And there are three that testify on earth: the* (not found in any Greek manuscript before the fourteenth century)

Trade & Economics
The paper (2Jn 1:12) of the 1st century was made of papyrus, a tall reed found abundantly in Egypt, which still grows further south along the Nile. Making this paper was an important industry, and the Egyptians exported it all over the Mediterranean world. Tens of thousands of original papyrus documents have survived, including numerous personal letters (though none of the New Testament).

3 Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and from Jesus Christ, the Father's Son,
will be with us in truth and love.

4 It has given me great joy to find some of
your children walking in the truth, just as the
Father commanded us. 5 And now, dear lady, I
am not writing you a new command but one
we have had from the beginning. I ask that we
love one another. 6 And this is love: that we walk
in obedience to his commands. As you have
heard from the beginning, his command is that
you walk in love.
7 I say this because many deceivers, who do
not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in
the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any
such person is the deceiver and the antichrist.
8 Watch out that you do not lose what we[a] have
worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully.
9 Anyone who runs ahead and does not contin-
ue in the teaching of Christ does not have God;
whoever continues in the teaching has both
the Father and the Son. 10 If anyone comes to
you and does not bring this teaching, do not
take them into your house or welcome them.
11 Anyone who welcomes them shares in their
wicked work.
12 I have much to write to you, but I do not
want to use paper and ink. Instead, I hope to
visit you and talk with you face to face, so that
our joy may be complete.

13 The children of your sister, who is chosen
by God, send their greetings.

[a] 8 Some manuscripts *you* [b] 5 The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family.

TRANSITION

The Third Letter of John

The letter of 3 John was probably written by the author of 1 and 2 John sometime in the last decade of the first century (see "The First Letter of John" at 1Jn 1:1). The subjects discussed are less doctrinal and more administrative than in 1 and 2 John, applying Christian principles to church life. The letter addresses an individual named Gaius, who probably attended a church in a city of Asia Minor, and reflects a time when Christian evangelists traveled from town to town preaching the gospel. These missionaries depended on the hospitality of local Christians.

It is apparent that Diotrephes had gained control of the church, and in his arrogance had rejected the leadership of "the elder" and his representatives. Gaius is commended for continuing to walk in Christian truth, showing generosity to local church members, and aiding traveling evangelists. Diotrephes is condemned for his prideful rejection of the apostle, domination of the local church, and refusal to give hospitality. Finally, Demetrius, a fellow Christian and perhaps the bearer of this letter, is recommended to the confidence of the church.

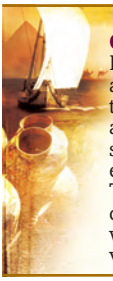
•3 John 1:1–14

3 John

1:1 The elder,

To my dear friend Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

2 Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good
health and that all may go well with you, even
as your soul is getting along well. 3 It gave me
great joy when some believers came and testi-
fied about your faithfulness to the truth, telling
how you continue to walk in it. 4 I have no great-
er joy than to hear that my children are walking
in the truth.
5 Dear friend, you are faithful in what you
are doing for the brothers and sisters,[b] even
though they are strangers to you. 6 They have
told the church about your love. Please send
them on their way in a manner that honors
God. 7 It was for the sake of the Name that they
went out, receiving no help from the pagans.
8 We ought therefore to show hospitality to
such people so that we may work together for
the truth.



Culture & Society
It was customary for some teachers to travel about, being supported by their students in the towns they visited. Christian teachers as well as pagan philosophers did this. The system was open to abuse, because travelers could easily conceal their background. The New Testament advises the aiding of traveling evangelists (3Jn 1:6–8), while warning of people who use religion for private ends (2Jn 1:10).

9I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who
loves to be first, will not welcome us. 10So when
I come, I will call attention to what he is doing,
spreading malicious nonsense about us. Not
satisfied with that, he even refuses to welcome
other believers. He also stops those who want
to do so and puts them out of the church.
11Dear friend, do not imitate what is evil but
what is good. Anyone who does what is good
is from God. Anyone who does what is evil has
not seen God. 12Demetrius is well spoken of
by everyone—and even by the truth itself. We
also speak well of him, and you know that our
testimony is true.
13I have much to write you, but I do not want
to do so with pen and ink. 14I hope to see you
soon, and we will talk face to face.

Peace to you. The friends here send their
greetings. Greet the friends there by name.

Josephus, a Jewish historian whose works provide important background information for the New Testament period.

APOCALYPTIC WRITINGS AND THE END TIMES

Several of the later prophets, especially Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah, share certain literary characteristics which are also found in the Olivet discourse (Mk 13) and the Book of Revelation. Some of these characteristics are the use of fantastic imagery, vivid colors, and numbers with symbolic significance. In the view of some interpreters, these writings also seem to give more attention to explaining the upheavals which will attend the end of time than to contemporary events. Because they explain these otherwise mysterious events, the writings are often called "apocalyptic" from the Greek word *apokalyptō,* meaning "to disclose, uncover."

Biblical prophecy was not given in order that we might create a timetable for future events.

There is also a body of nonbiblical Jewish literature which falls into the category known as apocalyptic. These writings share several common themes: (1) a pessimism over the present; (2) a belief that God will miraculously intervene at the end of time to save his own; (3) the belief that God has secretly disclosed to a chosen few the secrets of the end times; (4) the conviction that these secrets are hidden from the common people in special visions which include secret numbers, strange images, and key phrases. The biblical writings classified as apocalyptic share in the literary features of this noncanonical apocalyptic literature.

Throughout history apocalyptic literature has been most popular when current conditions have turned chaotic. At such times there has been a tendency to find remarkable similarities between one's own situation and the biblical prophecies. This tendency should be resisted. Biblical prophecy was not given in order that we might create a timetable for future events. Rather its authors intended to stimulate obedience to and confidence in God, who remained firmly in control of both contemporary events and the future.

TRANSITION

The Revelation to John

The tradition that John the apostle wrote Revelation was widely held during the 2nd century. While the author often names himself as "John," the term "apostle" is never added, although he appears to be a man of stature in the churches (Rev 1:1, 4, 9). He never claims to have been an eyewitness of Jesus.

There are significant differences between the Greek style of the Revelation and that of the Gospel and letters of John. In the 3rd century these variations of the original language prompted scholars to question the apostle John's authorship of the Revelation. A debate still continues over whether the John who wrote this book is to be identified with John the apostle, John the elder (see "The First Letter of John" at 1Jn 1:1), or an otherwise unknown John.

Dating the composition of Revelation is complicated, but Nero (A.D. 54–68) and Domitian (A.D. 81–96) are the Roman emperors whose reigns correspond most closely with the persecutions reflected in the book. The

intensity of these persecutions fits better in Domitian's reign than in Nero's.

Four broad schools of interpretation have been applied to the visions and symbolism of Rev 4–22. (1) "Preterists" view these chapters as referring only to the period of the Roman Empire during John's lifetime and immediately after. (2) "Historicists" view them as describing events that would occur throughout the church age from the ascension of Jesus to his second coming. (3) "Futurists" maintain that chs. 4–22 deal chiefly with events of the end times that surround Christ's second coming. (4) "Idealists" maintain that these chapters do not prophesy actual events, but paint a symbolic picture of the cosmic conflict between the kingdom of God and the forces of evil.

Elements from all of these views are helpful in understanding the Revelation. This book certainly had relevance to the situation that surrounded its first readers. Yet its primary focus seems to be on events associated with the return of Christ. Also the conflict between God and Satan is often reflected by different symbolic pictures throughout the book. The differing interpretations come closer to each other when we remember that the events of the end times are often an intensification of what Christians have faced throughout the church age.

• Revelation 1:1—3:22

Revelation

Prologue

1:1 The revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show his servants what must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant John, 2who testifies to everything he saw—that is, the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ. 3Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Greetings and Doxology

4John,

To the seven churches in the province of Asia:

Grace and peace to you from him who is, and who was, and who is to come, and from the seven spirits[a] before his throne, 5and from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth.

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, 6and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

7"Look, he is coming with the clouds,"[b]
and "every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him";
and all peoples on earth "will mourn
because of him."[c]
So shall it be! Amen.

8"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

John's Vision of Christ

9I, John, your brother and companion in the suffering and kingdom and patient endurance that are ours in Jesus, was on the island of Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. 10On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, 11which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

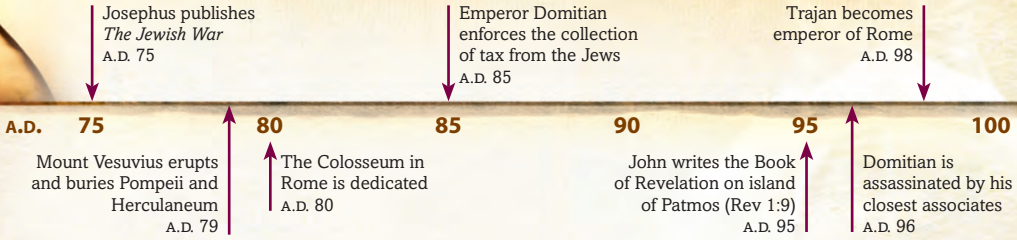
12I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, 13and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man,[d] dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. 14The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. 15His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. 16In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.

17When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. 18I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.

19"Write, therefore, what you have seen, what is now and what will take place later. 20The mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand and of the seven golden lampstands is this: The seven stars are the angels[e] of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

[a] *4* That is, the sevenfold Spirit [b] *7* Daniel 7:13
[c] *7* Zech. 12:10 [d] *13* See Daniel 7:13. [e] *20* Or *messengers*

THE BOOK OF REVELATION IN TROUBLED TIMES



To the Church in Ephesus

2 [1]"To the angel[a] of the church in Ephesus write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand and walks among the seven golden lampstands. [2]I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. [3]You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.

[4]Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. [5]Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. [6]But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

[7]Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.

To the Church in Smyrna

[8]"To the angel of the church in Smyrna write:

These are the words of him who is the First and the Last, who died and came to life again. [9]I know your afflictions and your poverty—yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. [10]Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor's crown.

[11]Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who is victorious will not be hurt at all by the second death.

[a] *1* Or *messenger*; also in verses 8, 12 and 18

The Seven Churches of Revelation
The churches of seven cities (Rev 1:11) were recipients of an apocalyptic letter from God, which John was called to write while exiled on the island of Patmos. By commendation, rebuke, and warning, the people of God were exhorted to remain faithful in adversity. These churches held significant roles in the Christian experience of Asia Minor as a result of their location within a transportation network linking different parts of the region.

To the Church in Pergamum

12 "To the angel of the church in Pergamum write:

These are the words of him who has the sharp, double-edged sword. 13 I know where you live — where Satan has his throne. Yet you remain true to my name. You did not renounce your faith in me, not even in the days of Antipas, my faithful witness, who was put to death in your city — where Satan lives.

14 Nevertheless, I have a few things against you: There are some among you who hold to the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to entice the Israelites to sin so that they ate food sacrificed to idols and committed sexual immorality. 15 Likewise, you also have those who hold to the teaching of the Nicolaitans. 16 Repent therefore! Otherwise, I will soon come to you and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who is victorious, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to the one who receives it.

To the Church in Thyatira

18 "To the angel of the church in Thyatira write:

These are the words of the Son of God, whose eyes are like blazing fire and whose feet are like burnished bronze. 19 I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance, and that you are now doing more than you did at first.

20 Nevertheless, I have this against you: You tolerate that woman Jezebel, who calls herself a prophet. By her teaching she misleads my servants into sexual immorality and the eating of food sacrificed to idols. 21 I have given her time to repent of her immorality, but she is unwilling. 22 So I will cast her on a bed of suffering, and I will make those who commit adultery with her suffer intensely, unless they repent of her ways. 23 I will strike her children dead. Then all the churches will know that I am he who searches hearts and minds, and I will repay each of you according to your deeds.

24 Now I say to the rest of you in Thyatira, to you who do not hold to her teaching and have not learned Satan's so-called deep secrets, 'I will not impose any other burden on you, 25 except to hold on to what you have until I come.'

26 To the one who is victorious and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations — 27 that one 'will rule them with an iron scepter and will dash them to pieces like pottery'[a] — just as I have received authority from my Father. 28 I will also give that one the morning star. 29 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Sardis

3 1 "To the angel[b] of the church in Sardis write:

These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits[c] of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. 2 Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. 3 Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you.

4 Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. 5 The one who is victorious will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge that name before my Father and his angels. 6 Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Philadelphia

7 "To the angel of the church in Philadelphia write:

These are the words of him who is holy and true, who holds the key of David. What he opens no one can shut, and what he shuts no one can open. 8 I know your deeds. See, I have placed before you an open door that no one can shut. I know that you have little strength, yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name. 9 I will make those who are of the synagogue of Satan, who claim to be Jews though they are not, but are liars — I will make them come and fall down at your feet and

[a] *27* Psalm 2:9 [b] *1* Or *messenger*; also in verses 7 and 14
[c] *1* That is, the sevenfold Spirit

acknowledge that I have loved you. 10Since you have kept my command to endure patiently, I will also keep you from the hour of trial that is going to come on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth.

11I am coming soon. Hold on to what you have, so that no one will take your crown. 12The one who is victorious I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name. 13Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

To the Church in Laodicea

14"To the angel of the church in Laodicea write:

These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God's creation. 15I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17You say, 'I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.' But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. 18I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.

19Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. 20Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

21To the one who is victorious, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I was victorious and sat down with my Father on his throne. 22Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit says to the churches."

TRANSITION

A Revelation of Heaven

The open "door" (Rev 4:1) gave opportunity for John to see things transpiring in heaven. The vision of God's throne in chs. 4; 5, revealing the adoration of God the Creator by all the inhabitants of heaven, lays the foundation for the rest of Revelation. The God whom John saw is beyond description, but his throne fills the entire scene, giving us an awareness of his power.

The "scroll" (Rev. 5:1) contained God's plan for his creation as revealed in the remaining chapters of Revelation: judgment on the wicked, deliverance for the righteous, and establishment of his kingdom. In ch. 5 Christ is the Lamb who by his death and resurrection has brought about the salvation of humanity. Thus he alone is worthy to open the scroll of destiny and to share equal praise with God the Father. Because God is both the Creator and Redeemer, the future is secure in his hands.

• **Revelation 4:1—5:14**

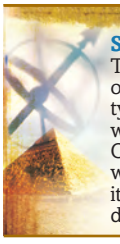
Revelation

The Throne in Heaven

4:1 After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." 2At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. 3And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne. 4Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. 5From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. In front of the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits[a] of God. 6Also in front of the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal.

In the center, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. 7The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. 8Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under its wings. Day and night they never stop saying:

[a] *5* That is, the sevenfold Spirit



Science & Technology

The ruby is a translucent, reddish variety of chalcedony (Rev 4:3). Chemically it is a type of quartz. "Jasper" translates a Hebrew word that came over into Greek from the Old Testament (Ex 28:20). It is not known what stone is meant, though some have said it is diamond. The ancients could not polish diamonds or other hard stones.

The Heavenly Scroll (Rev 5:1–5)

The "throne" is an important theological image in the Book of Revelation. The throne is the seat of God, from whence he rules both heaven and earth. God rules, not merely over souls, but over all aspects of his creation. In this royal setting appears the image of the heavenly scroll containing God's plan for his creation. Seven seals prevent any created being from opening the scroll (Rev 5:1–5).

In the ancient Near East, sealed scrolls were the means by which royal authority was exercised over a king's domain. A royal official would inscribe the king's will onto a scroll. The king would seal the scroll with a ring pressed into a wax seal. The scroll would remain bound until it was unsealed and read by the properly designated royal official. Then the king's will could be carried out in the kingdom.

In the ancient Near East this administrative method was transferred to the divine realm. The high god was imaged as possessing heavenly books, sealed shut. It was believed that the future of the world was inscribed on these books, and, at the proper time, the designated heavenly figure would unseal a book, releasing the events recorded in it to take place upon the earth.

The vision of John utilizes the scroll metaphor to depict the unfolding of the will of God on earth. Yet without any properly authorized person to open the scroll, God's will remained merely inscribed in the scroll, and not actualized on earth. Unchecked by the divine will, injustice could continue to reign upon the earth. Thus John wept, for no one was found worthy to unseal the scroll (Rev 5:4).

Yet One was found who is worthy—the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" appearing as a Lamb standing "as if it had been slain" (5:5, 6). The Lion-Lamb, the one who conquers through death, was worthy to open the seals. Through him the will of God could unfold upon the earth. As the seals are opened, God's judgment springs forth that ultimately leads to the new, purified, just creation. "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain" (5:12).

"'Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord God Almighty,'[a]
who was, and is, and is to come."

9Whenever the living creatures give glory, honor and thanks to him who sits on the throne and who lives for ever and ever, 10the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say:

11"You are worthy, our Lord and God,
to receive glory and honor and power,
for you created all things,
and by your will they were created
and have their being."

The Scroll and the Lamb

5 1Then I saw in the right hand of him who sat on the throne a scroll with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals. 2And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" 3But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. 4I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside. 5Then one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep! See, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals."

6Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing at the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. The Lamb had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits[b] of God sent out into all the earth. 7He went and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of

[a] 8 Isaiah 6:3 [b] 6 That is, the sevenfold Spirit

Trade & Economics
Until after New Testament times, papyrus documents were normally rolled rather than folded. Like a school diploma, they were tied with strings or ribbons. For contracts and wills, the knots could be sealed with wax to keep any unauthorized person from secretly changing the contents. In most cases, papyrus scrolls did not have writing on both sides (Rev 5:1).

incense, which are the prayers of God's people. [9]And they sang a new song, saying:

"You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slain,
and with your blood you purchased for God
persons from every tribe and language
and people and nation.
[10]You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,
and they will reign[a] on the earth."

[11]Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels, numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand. They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. [12]In a loud voice they were saying:

"Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain,
to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength
and honor and glory and praise!"

[13]Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, saying:

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"

[14]The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and worshiped.

TRANSITION

The Sevenfold Plagues

Three series of sevenfold plagues (seven seals, seven trumpets, seven bowls) form the center of John's vision. Some believe the seven seals (Rev 6:1—8:5) represent the suffering of the world throughout church history, leading up to the end times. The seven trumpets (8:6—9:21; 11:15–19) and the seven bowls (15:1—16:21) would represent the intensified sufferings that immediately precede the return of Christ. Others think the seals, trumpets, and bowls all describe with increasing intensity the suffering immediately before Christ returns. For still others, the seals, trumpets, and bowls do not form a chronological sequence, but rather symbolize the intensity of evil and chaos experienced by John and his readers. In any case, the sufferings described differ more in degree than in kind from those some Christians have always experienced.

The plagues are interrupted by two interludes. Following trumpets one through six is an interlude (10:1—11:14) before the seventh trumpet sounds (11:15–19). The angel assures Christians that there will be no further delay; the time of the seventh trumpet is the time of the end (10:5–7). Another interlude (12:1—14:20) separates the seven trumpets and the seven bowls. The purpose of this series of visions (14:1–20) is to give Christians courage, and to assure them of their ultimate triumph. This will be especially needed as they face intense persecution (ch. 13).

• Revelation 6:1—16:21

Revelation

The Seals

6:1 I watched as the Lamb opened the first of the seven seals. Then I heard one of the four living creatures say in a voice like thunder, "Come!" [2]I looked, and there before me was a white horse! Its rider held a bow, and he was given a crown, and he rode out as a conqueror bent on conquest.

[3]When the Lamb opened the second seal, I heard the second living creature say, "Come!" [4]Then another horse came out, a fiery red one. Its rider was given power to take peace from the earth and to make people kill each other. To him was given a large sword.

[5]When the Lamb opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, "Come!" I looked, and there before me was a black horse! Its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand. [6]Then I heard what sounded like a voice among the four living creatures, saying, "Two pounds[b] of wheat for a day's wages,[c] and six pounds[d] of barley for a day's wages,[c] and do not damage the oil and the wine!"

[7]When the Lamb opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth living creature say, "Come!" [8]I looked, and there before me was a pale horse! Its rider was named Death, and Hades was following close behind him. They were given power over a fourth of the earth to kill by sword, famine and plague, and by the wild beasts of the earth.

[9]When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain because of the word of God and the testimony they had maintained. [10]They called out in a loud voice, "How long, Sovereign Lord, holy and true, until you judge the inhabitants of the earth and avenge our blood?" [11]Then each of them was given a white robe, and they were told to wait a little longer, until the full number of their fellow servants, their broth-

[a] *10* Some manuscripts *they reign* [b] *6* Or about 1 kilogram
[c] *6* Greek *a denarius* [d] *6* Or about 3 kilograms

Sealed Judgments (Rev 6:5, 6)

People in the 1st-century Mediterranean world tied shut legal documents with strings, which then were fixed in place by having hot wax seals (often seven) stamped over them. These seals authenticated the contents of a document. To open the document a person had to break the seals; thus unbroken seals affirmed that no one had tampered with the document. In John's vision, the opening of the first four seals revealed God's judgment on the world (Rev 6:1–8).

Opening the third seal resulted in severe famine (6:5, 6). The "pair of scales" (6:5) probably implies rationing of wheat and barley, which constituted the basic staples of a common person's diet. The low supply of wheat had driven its price ten times its average: two pounds of wheat was only a day's worth of food, yet it cost a denarius, a day's wage (6:6). Thus heads of families would have to buy the cheaper barley instead, so their families could eat as well. Still, even the six pounds of barley (that also cost a day's wage) would barely feed the whole family. Families were often large, and in conditions such as these, some children in peasant families would die.

People regularly used oil and wine. They used oil for washing and anointing, as well as for lighting lamps. They mixed wine with (on average) two parts water to drink with many meals. Still, oil and wine were not necessities for life, like the wheat and barley, and their availability may have underscored the reality of God's judgment on some crops but not others. The food shortages were not caused by mere drought conditions; God himself was responsible.

ers and sisters,[a] were killed just as they had been.

12 I watched as he opened the sixth seal.
There was a great earthquake. The sun turned
black like sackcloth made of goat hair, the
whole moon turned blood red, 13 and the stars
in the sky fell to earth, as figs drop from a fig
tree when shaken by a strong wind. 14 The
heavens receded like a scroll being rolled up,
and every mountain and island was removed
from its place.

15 Then the kings of the earth, the princes,
the generals, the rich, the mighty, and every-
one else, both slave and free, hid in caves and
among the rocks of the mountains. 16 They
called to the mountains and the rocks, "Fall on
us and hide us[b] from the face of him who sits
on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!
17 For the great day of their[c] wrath has come,
and who can withstand it?"

144,000 Sealed

7 1 After this I saw four angels standing at the
four corners of the earth, holding back the
four winds of the earth to prevent any wind
from blowing on the land or on the sea or on
any tree. 2 Then I saw another angel coming
up from the east, having the seal of the living
God. He called out in a loud voice to the four
angels who had been given power to harm the
land and the sea: 3 "Do not harm the land or
the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the
foreheads of the servants of our God." 4 Then I
heard the number of those who were sealed:
144,000 from all the tribes of Israel.

5 From the tribe of Judah 12,000 were sealed,
from the tribe of Reuben 12,000,
from the tribe of Gad 12,000,
6 from the tribe of Asher 12,000,
from the tribe of Naphtali 12,000,
from the tribe of Manasseh 12,000,
7 from the tribe of Simeon 12,000,
from the tribe of Levi 12,000,
from the tribe of Issachar 12,000,
8 from the tribe of Zebulun 12,000,
from the tribe of Joseph 12,000,
from the tribe of Benjamin 12,000.

The Great Multitude in White Robes

9 After this I looked, and there before me was
a great multitude that no one could count, from
every nation, tribe, people and language, stand-
ing before the throne and before the Lamb.
They were wearing white robes and were hold-
ing palm branches in their hands. 10 And they
cried out in a loud voice:

"Salvation belongs to our God,
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb."

11 All the angels were standing around the
throne and around the elders and the four
living creatures. They fell down on their faces
before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying:

"Amen!
Praise and glory
and wisdom and thanks and honor
and power and strength
be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!"

13 Then one of the elders asked me, "These
in white robes—who are they, and where did
they come from?"

[a] *11* The Greek word for *brothers and sisters* (*adelphoi*) refers here to believers, both men and women, as part of God's family; also in 12:10; 19:10.
[b] *16* See Hosea 10:8.
[c] *17* Some manuscripts *his*

14 I answered, "Sir, you know."
And he said, "These are they who have come
out of the great tribulation; they have washed
their robes and made them white in the blood
of the Lamb. 15 Therefore,

"they are before the throne of God
and serve him day and night in his temple;
and he who sits on the throne
will shelter them with his presence.
16 'Never again will they hunger;
never again will they thirst.
The sun will not beat down on them,'[a]
nor any scorching heat.
17 For the Lamb at the center of the throne
will be their shepherd;
'he will lead them to springs of living
water.'[a]
'And God will wipe away every tear from
their eyes.'[b]"

The Seventh Seal and the Golden Censer

8 1 When he opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven for about half an hour.
2 And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and seven trumpets were given to them.
3 Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. 4 The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand. 5 Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and hurled it on the earth; and there came peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning and an earthquake.

The Trumpets

6 Then the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared to sound them.

TIME CAPSULE	A.D. 96 to 107
96	Domitian is assassinated by his closest associates
98	Trajan becomes emperor
100	The Alexandrians have a synagogue in Jerusalem
107	Ignatius, early Christian writer, is executed in Rome
107	Trajan sponsors 123 days of games with 10,000 gladiators

7 The first angel sounded his trumpet, and there came hail and fire mixed with blood, and it was hurled down on the earth. A third of the earth was burned up, a third of the trees were burned up, and all the green grass was burned up.
8 The second angel sounded his trumpet, and something like a huge mountain, all ablaze, was thrown into the sea. A third of the sea turned into blood, 9 a third of the living creatures in the sea died, and a third of the ships were destroyed.
10 The third angel sounded his trumpet, and a great star, blazing like a torch, fell from the sky on a third of the rivers and on the springs of water— 11 the name of the star is Wormwood.[c] A third of the waters turned bitter, and many people died from the waters that had become bitter.
12 The fourth angel sounded his trumpet, and a third of the sun was struck, a third of the moon, and a third of the stars, so that a third of them turned dark. A third of the day was without light, and also a third of the night.
13 As I watched, I heard an eagle that was flying in midair call out in a loud voice: "Woe! Woe! Woe to the inhabitants of the earth, because of the trumpet blasts about to be sounded by the other three angels!"

9 1 The fifth angel sounded his trumpet, and I saw a star that had fallen from the sky to the earth. The star was given the key to the shaft of the Abyss. 2 When he opened the Abyss, smoke rose from it like the smoke from a gigantic furnace. The sun and sky were darkened by the smoke from the Abyss. 3 And out of the smoke locusts came down on the earth and were given power like that of scorpions of the earth. 4 They were told not to harm the grass of the earth or any plant or tree, but only those people who did not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 They were not allowed to kill them but only to torture them for five months. And the agony they suffered was like that of the sting of a scorpion when it strikes. 6 During those days people will seek death but will not find it; they will long to die, but death will elude them.
7 The locusts looked like horses prepared for battle. On their heads they wore something like crowns of gold, and their faces resembled human faces. 8 Their hair was like women's hair, and their teeth were like lions' teeth. 9 They had breastplates like breastplates of iron, and the sound of their wings was like the thundering of many horses and chariots rushing into battle.

[a] *16,17* Isaiah 49:10 [b] *17* Isaiah 25:8 [c] *11* Wormwood is a bitter substance.

10 They had tails with stingers, like scorpions,
and in their tails they had power to torment
people for five months. 11 They had as king over
them the angel of the Abyss, whose name in
Hebrew is Abaddon and in Greek is Apollyon
(that is, Destroyer).
12 The first woe is past; two other woes are
yet to come.
13 The sixth angel sounded his trumpet, and
I heard a voice coming from the four horns of
the golden altar that is before God. 14 It said
to the sixth angel who had the trumpet, "Re-
lease the four angels who are bound at the
great river Euphrates." 15 And the four angels
who had been kept ready for this very hour
and day and month and year were released to
kill a third of mankind. 16 The number of the
mounted troops was twice ten thousand times
ten thousand. I heard their number.
17 The horses and riders I saw in my vision
looked like this: Their breastplates were fiery
red, dark blue, and yellow as sulfur. The heads
of the horses resembled the heads of lions,
and out of their mouths came fire, smoke and
sulfur. 18 A third of mankind was killed by the
three plagues of fire, smoke and sulfur that
came out of their mouths. 19 The power of the
horses was in their mouths and in their tails;
for their tails were like snakes, having heads
with which they inflict injury.
20 The rest of mankind who were not killed by
these plagues still did not repent of the work of
their hands; they did not stop worshiping de-
mons, and idols of gold, silver, bronze, stone
and wood — idols that cannot see or hear or
walk. 21 Nor did they repent of their murders,
their magic arts, their sexual immorality or
their thefts.

[a] 9 Ezek. 3:3

The Angel and the Little Scroll

10 1 Then I saw another mighty angel com-
ing down from heaven. He was robed in
a cloud, with a rainbow above his head; his face
was like the sun, and his legs were like fiery
pillars. 2 He was holding a little scroll, which lay
open in his hand. He planted his right foot on
the sea and his left foot on the land, 3 and he
gave a loud shout like the roar of a lion. When
he shouted, the voices of the seven thunders
spoke. 4 And when the seven thunders spoke,
I was about to write; but I heard a voice from
heaven say, "Seal up what the seven thunders
have said and do not write it down."
5 Then the angel I had seen standing on the
sea and on the land raised his right hand to
heaven. 6 And he swore by him who lives for
ever and ever, who created the heavens and
all that is in them, the earth and all that is in
it, and the sea and all that is in it, and said,
"There will be no more delay! 7 But in the days
when the seventh angel is about to sound his
trumpet, the mystery of God will be accom-
plished, just as he announced to his servants
the prophets."
8 Then the voice that I had heard from heav-
en spoke to me once more: "Go, take the scroll
that lies open in the hand of the angel who is
standing on the sea and on the land."
9 So I went to the angel and asked him to give
me the little scroll. He said to me, "Take it and
eat it. It will turn your stomach sour, but 'in
your mouth it will be as sweet as honey.'[a]"
10 I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and
ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth,
but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned
sour. 11 Then I was told, "You must prophesy
again about many peoples, nations, languages
and kings."

The island of Patmos

THE FATE OF JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, as the capital of Palestine, faced attack from various armies, contending for control of the territory surrounding the sacred city. Eventually the Roman Empire reduced Jerusalem to a city-state under Roman domination.

Date	Event
332 B.C.	Palestine is conquered by Alexander the Great.
167 B.C.	Antiochus IV dedicates the Jerusalem temple to Zeus, the Greek god of Olympus. The Maccabean revolt begins.
164 B.C.	The Maccabees rededicate the temple to God.
142 B.C.	Simon Maccabeus is made high priest. Palestine is independent until 63 B.C.
63 B.C.	The Roman general Pompey takes advantage of a struggle between the Jewish rulers of Palestine and captures Jerusalem for Rome.
40 B.C.	The Romans return Herod the Great to Judea as a king under Roman authority.
A.D. 6	The Romans grow tired of unrest in Palestine and make Judea, Samaria, and Idumea (Edom) into the Roman province of Judea.
A.D. 39	The emperor Gaius Caligula tries to erect a statue of himself in the temple.
A.D. 66	The Jews rebel against Roman authority.
A.D. 70	The Romans defeat Jerusalem, destroy the temple, and begin to gather the temple tax as a Roman government tax.
A.D. 115–118	Fierce Jewish rebellion occurs in the provinces outside Palestine, but is put down by the Romans.
A.D. 132	Bar Kochba leads a Jewish revolt in Palestine. "Kochba" means "star" (Nu 24:17).
A.D. 135	The Bar Kochba rebellion is defeated. Jerusalem is renamed "Aelia Capitolina" as a Roman colony and Jews are forbidden to live there.

The Two Witnesses

11 [1]I was given a reed like a measuring rod and was told, "Go and measure the temple of God and the altar, with its worshipers. [2]But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for 42 months. [3]And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for 1,260 days, clothed in sackcloth." [4]They are "the two olive trees" and the two lampstands, and "they stand before the Lord of the earth."[a] [5]If anyone tries to harm them, fire comes from their mouths and devours their enemies. This is how anyone who wants to harm them must die. [6]They have power to shut up the heavens so that it will not rain during the time they are prophesying; and they have power to turn the waters into blood and to strike the earth with every kind of plague as often as they want.

[7]Now when they have finished their testimony, the beast that comes up from the Abyss will attack them, and overpower and kill them. [8]Their bodies will lie in the public square of the great city—which is figuratively called Sodom and Egypt—where also their Lord was crucified. [9]For three and a half days some from every people, tribe, language and nation will gaze on their bodies and refuse them burial. [10]The inhabitants of the earth will gloat over them and will celebrate by sending each other gifts, because these two prophets had tormented those who live on the earth.

[11]But after the three and a half days the breath[b] of life from God entered them, and they stood on their feet, and terror struck those who saw them. [12]Then they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." And they went up to heaven in a cloud, while their enemies looked on.

[13]At that very hour there was a severe earthquake and a tenth of the city collapsed. Seven

Agriculture & Herding
The olive tree is a small tree characterized by a long life. Its hardwood, which shows a rich grain when finished, was used for ornamental carpentry. Its fruit was pressed for oil, and the oil used for cooking or as a fuel for lamps (Rev 11:4). The Mediterranean cultural area can almost be defined as the area where olives are grown.

[a] *4* See Zech. 4:3,11,14. [b] *11* Or *Spirit* (see Ezek. 37:5,14)

Symbolic Pictures of Heavenly Conflict (Rev 12:1)

The Book of Revelation frequently uses visions, symbols, and images that the first readers would have understood. The vision of the woman clothed with the sun, moon, and stars (Rev 12) portrays the salvation struggle between good and evil.

Throughout the Greco-Roman world people told stories of divine deliverers destined to defeat evil dragons. The dragon tried to slay the newborn deliverer, but the deliverer miraculously survived, grew up, and returned to slay the dragon. In one version of the story, the emperor seems to have claimed to be the dragon-slayer. In Revelation, the wicked emperor is himself a pawn of the dragon, and the true ruler, the child Jesus, is the One who will triumph over all the world's kingdoms (Rev 12:5).

The writer of Revelation has interwoven echoes from the Old Testament. The woman with sun, moon, and twelve stars can be interpreted as Israel (see Ge 37:9), as in some later Jewish traditions about twelve stars. The Old Testament portrays the faithful remnant of Israel as God's virgin bride, in contrast to a portrayal of unfaithful Israel as a prostitute. The Old Testament and the Dead Sea Scrolls portray the righteous remnant of Israel laboring and giving birth to a child, symbolizing the future restoration of God's people (Isa 66:7–10; Mic 5:3).

In Revelation, the woman's first child (Rev 12:2–5) is often interpreted as Jesus and her other "offspring" as Christian believers (12:17). As John wrote to 1st-century churches in Asia (Rev 1:4, 11), his imagery of a woman birthing her child and of conflict with the dragon would have been familiar to his readers.

thousand people were killed in the earthquake,
and the survivors were terrified and gave glory
to the God of heaven.
14 The second woe has passed; the third woe
is coming soon.

The Seventh Trumpet

15 The seventh angel sounded his trumpet,
and there were loud voices in heaven, which
said:

"The kingdom of the world has become
the kingdom of our Lord and of his
Messiah,
and he will reign for ever and ever."

16 And the twenty-four elders, who were seated
on their thrones before God, fell on their faces
and worshiped God, 17 saying:

"We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty,
the One who is and who was,
because you have taken your great
power
and have begun to reign.
18 The nations were angry,
and your wrath has come.
The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the
prophets
and your people who revere your name,
both great and small—
and for destroying those who destroy the
earth."

19 Then God's temple in heaven was opened,
and within his temple was seen the ark of his
covenant. And there came flashes of lightning,
rumblings, peals of thunder, an earthquake
and a severe hailstorm.

The Woman and the Dragon

12 1 A great sign appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon
under her feet and a crown of twelve stars on
her head. 2 She was pregnant and cried out in
pain as she was about to give birth. 3 Then another sign appeared in heaven: an enormous
red dragon with seven heads and ten horns and
seven crowns on its heads. 4 Its tail swept a third
of the stars out of the sky and flung them to the
earth. The dragon stood in front of the woman
who was about to give birth, so that it might devour her child the moment he was born. 5 She
gave birth to a son, a male child, who "will rule
all the nations with an iron scepter."[a] And her
child was snatched up to God and to his throne.
6 The woman fled into the wilderness to a place
prepared for her by God, where she might be
taken care of for 1,260 days.
7 Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and

[a] 5 Psalm 2:9

Beliefs & Ideas
Some teachers said it was necessary to know the names of angels in order to gain access to the heavens (see Col 2:18). By contrast, the names of only two angels appear in the Bible: Michael (Da 10:13; Rev 12:7) and Gabriel (Da 8:16; Lk 1:19). A third angel, Raphael, appears in the apocryphal book Tobit. According to Tobit, Raphael is one of seven angels that stand before God (Tb 12:15).

his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. 8But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. 9The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

10Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

"Now have come the salvation and the power
and the kingdom of our God,
and the authority of his Messiah.
For the accuser of our brothers and sisters,
who accuses them before our God day and night,
has been hurled down.
11They triumphed over him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;
they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death.
12Therefore rejoice, you heavens
and you who dwell in them!
But woe to the earth and the sea,
because the devil has gone down to you!
He is filled with fury,
because he knows that his time is short."

13When the dragon saw that he had been hurled to the earth, he pursued the woman who had given birth to the male child. 14The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a time, times and half a time, out of the serpent's reach. 15Then from his mouth the serpent spewed water like a river, to overtake the woman and sweep her away with the torrent. 16But the earth helped the woman by opening its mouth and swallowing the river that the dragon had spewed out of his mouth. 17Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to wage war against the rest of her offspring—those who keep God's commands and hold fast their testimony about Jesus.

The Beast out of the Sea

13 1The dragon[a] stood on the shore of the sea. And I saw a beast coming out of the sea. It had ten horns and seven heads, with ten crowns on its horns, and on each head a blasphemous name. 2The beast I saw resembled a leopard, but had feet like those of a bear and a mouth like that of a lion. The dragon gave the beast his power and his throne and great authority. 3One of the heads of the beast seemed to have had a fatal wound, but the fatal wound had been healed. The whole world was filled with wonder and followed the beast. 4People worshiped the dragon because he had given authority to the beast, and they also worshiped the beast and asked, "Who is like the beast? Who can wage war against it?"

5The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for forty-two months. 6It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. 7It was given power to wage war against God's holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation. 8All inhabitants of the earth will worship the beast—all whose names have not been written in the Lamb's book of life, the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world.[b]

9Whoever has ears, let them hear.

10"If anyone is to go into captivity,
into captivity they will go.
If anyone is to be killed[c] with the sword,
with the sword they will be killed."[d]

This calls for patient endurance and faithfulness on the part of God's people.

The Beast out of the Earth

11Then I saw a second beast, coming out of the earth. It had two horns like a lamb, but it spoke like a dragon. 12It exercised all the authority of the first beast on its behalf, and made the earth and its inhabitants worship the first beast, whose fatal wound had been healed. 13And it performed great signs, even causing fire to come down from heaven to the earth in full view of the people. 14Because of the signs it was given power to perform on behalf of the first beast, it deceived the inhabitants of the earth. It ordered them to set up an image in honor of

[a] *1* Some manuscripts *And I* [b] *8* Or *written from the creation of the world in the book of life belonging to the Lamb who was slain* [c] *10* Some manuscripts *anyone kills* [d] *10* Jer. 15:2

Is Nero's Number 666? (Rev 13:18)

How did ancients "calculate the number" of a person (Rev 13:18)? There is a well-known system for both Hebrew and Greek in which the letters of the alphabet are used for numbers. The first letter of the alphabet is the number "one," the second letter is "two," and so forth. In this system the letters of a name are changed to numbers, and the numbers are then added to arrive at a total.

No one knows the identity of the man or beast whose number is 666 (Rev 13:18); however, one candidate is Nero. When the Hebrew consonants of "Nero Caesar" are calculated, the total is 666. These consonants, NRWN QSR, have been discovered written just this way in a manuscript, dated about A.D. 55–56, found 15 miles southeast of Jerusalem.

Like the beast, Nero was also a persecutor of the church. He was born in A.D. 37 and became emperor in A.D. 54, when he was only 17 years old. After a few years in office, he began to use his powers to put to death anyone he wanted out of the way.

In A.D. 64 a terrible fire burned down about half of the city of Rome. Nero was rumored to have started this fire himself, but afterward he said the Christians were to blame for it. Reports say that Nero used Christians as lamps, burning them to death in his garden.

Nero killed his closest advisors and members of his own family. Eventually, other politicians rose against him; he was deserted, had to flee Rome, and committed suicide in A.D. 68, not quite 30 years old. After he died, there were persistent rumors that he would return from the grave (see Rev 13:3, 12, 14 where the first beast lived again). All this does not prove that Nero is the man of Rev 13:18; however, it is possible that the number 666 was associated with his name by the time Revelation was written.

the beast who was wounded by the sword and
yet lived. 15The second beast was given power
to give breath to the image of the first beast, so
that the image could speak and cause all who re-
fused to worship the image to be killed. 16It also
forced all people, great and small, rich and poor,
free and slave, to receive a mark on their right
hands or on their foreheads, 17so that they could
not buy or sell unless they had the mark, which
is the name of the beast or the number of its
name.

18This calls for wisdom. Let the person who
has insight calculate the number of the beast,
for it is the number of a man.[a] That number is
666.

The Lamb and the 144,000

14 1Then I looked, and there before me
was the Lamb, standing on Mount Zion,
and with him 144,000 who had his name and
his Father's name written on their foreheads.
2And I heard a sound from heaven like the roar
of rushing waters and like a loud peal of thun-
der. The sound I heard was like that of harpists
playing their harps. 3And they sang a new song
before the throne and before the four living
creatures and the elders. No one could learn
the song except the 144,000 who had been
redeemed from the earth. 4These are those
who did not defile themselves with women, for
they remained virgins. They follow the Lamb
wherever he goes. They were purchased from
among mankind and offered as firstfruits to
God and the Lamb. 5No lie was found in their
mouths; they are blameless.

The Three Angels

6Then I saw another angel flying in midair,
and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to
those who live on the earth—to every nation,
tribe, language and people. 7He said in a loud
voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because
the hour of his judgment has come. Worship
him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea
and the springs of water."

8A second angel followed and said, "'Fallen!
Fallen is Babylon the Great,'[b] which made all
the nations drink the maddening wine of her
adulteries."

9A third angel followed them and said in a
loud voice: "If anyone worships the beast and
its image and receives its mark on their fore-
head or on their hand, 10they, too, will drink
the wine of God's fury, which has been poured
full strength into the cup of his wrath. They will
be tormented with burning sulfur in the pres-
ence of the holy angels and of the Lamb. 11And
the smoke of their torment will rise for ever
and ever. There will be no rest day or night for
those who worship the beast and its image, or

[a] 18 Or *is humanity's number* [b] 8 Isaiah 21:9

TIME CAPSULE **A.D. 111 to 115**

111–113	Pliny is procurator or governor in Bithynia
111	Trajan and Pliny correspond about Christians
115	Trajan is in Antioch during an earthquake
115–117	Armed revolt by Jews in North Africa, Egypt, and elsewhere
115	Mesopotamia becomes a Roman province

for anyone who receives the mark of its name."
12This calls for patient endurance on the part of
the people of God who keep his commands and
remain faithful to Jesus.
13Then I heard a voice from heaven say,
"Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in
the Lord from now on."
"Yes," says the Spirit, "they will rest from
their labor, for their deeds will follow them."

Harvesting the Earth and Trampling the Winepress

14I looked, and there before me was a white
cloud, and seated on the cloud was one like a
son of man[a] with a crown of gold on his head
and a sharp sickle in his hand. 15Then another
angel came out of the temple and called in a
loud voice to him who was sitting on the cloud,
"Take your sickle and reap, because the time
to reap has come, for the harvest of the earth
is ripe." 16So he who was seated on the cloud
swung his sickle over the earth, and the earth
was harvested.
17Another angel came out of the temple in
heaven, and he too had a sharp sickle. 18Still
another angel, who had charge of the fire, came
from the altar and called in a loud voice to him
who had the sharp sickle, "Take your sharp
sickle and gather the clusters of grapes from
the earth's vine, because its grapes are ripe."
19The angel swung his sickle on the earth, gath-
ered its grapes and threw them into the great
winepress of God's wrath. 20They were tram-
pled in the winepress outside the city, and blood
flowed out of the press, rising as high as the
horses' bridles for a distance of 1,600 stadia.[b]

Seven Angels With Seven Plagues

15 1I saw in heaven another great and mar-
velous sign: seven angels with the seven
last plagues—last, because with them God's
wrath is completed. 2And I saw what looked
like a sea of glass glowing with fire and, stand-
ing beside the sea, those who had been victori-
ous over the beast and its image and over the
number of its name. They held harps given
them by God 3and sang the song of God's ser-
vant Moses and of the Lamb:

"Great and marvelous are your deeds,
Lord God Almighty.
Just and true are your ways,
King of the nations.[c]
4Who will not fear you, Lord,
and bring glory to your name?
For you alone are holy.
All nations will come
and worship before you,
for your righteous acts have been
revealed."[d]

5After this I looked, and I saw in heaven the
temple—that is, the tabernacle of the covenant
law—and it was opened. 6Out of the temple
came the seven angels with the seven plagues.
They were dressed in clean, shining linen and
wore golden sashes around their chests. 7Then
one of the four living creatures gave to the sev-
en angels seven golden bowls filled with the
wrath of God, who lives for ever and ever. 8And
the temple was filled with smoke from the glo-
ry of God and from his power, and no one could
enter the temple until the seven plagues of the
seven angels were completed.

The Seven Bowls of God's Wrath

16 1Then I heard a loud voice from the
temple saying to the seven angels, "Go,
pour out the seven bowls of God's wrath on the
earth."
2The first angel went and poured out his bowl
on the land, and ugly, festering sores broke out
on the people who had the mark of the beast
and worshiped its image.
3The second angel poured out his bowl on
the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a
dead person, and every living thing in the sea
died.
4The third angel poured out his bowl on the
rivers and springs of water, and they became
blood. 5Then I heard the angel in charge of the
waters say:

"You are just in these judgments, O Holy
One,
you who are and who were;

TIME CAPSULE		A.D. 116 to 130
116		Trajan reaches the Persian Gulf, but does not go to India
117		Hadrian becomes emperor
122		Hadrian's Wall becomes the Roman border in Britain
129		Hadrian is in Antioch, Syria
130		A triumphal arch is dedicated to Hadrian in Arabia
130		Hadrian plans a temple to Jupiter at Jerusalem
130		Hadrian is in Egypt

[a] *14* See Daniel 7:13. [b] *20* That is, about 180 miles or about 300 kilometers [c] *3* Some manuscripts *ages*
[d] *3,4* Phrases in this song are drawn from Psalm 111:2,3; Deut. 32:4; Jer. 10:7; Psalms 86:9; 98:2.

6 for they have shed the blood of your holy
people and your prophets,
and you have given them blood to drink
as they deserve."

7 And I heard the altar respond:

"Yes, Lord God Almighty,
true and just are your judgments."

8 The fourth angel poured out his bowl on the sun, and the sun was allowed to scorch people with fire. 9 They were seared by the intense heat and they cursed the name of God, who had control over these plagues, but they refused to repent and glorify him.

10 The fifth angel poured out his bowl on the throne of the beast, and its kingdom was plunged into darkness. People gnawed their tongues in agony 11 and cursed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, but they refused to repent of what they had done.

12 The sixth angel poured out his bowl on the great river Euphrates, and its water was dried up to prepare the way for the kings from the East. 13 Then I saw three impure spirits that looked like frogs; they came out of the mouth of the dragon, out of the mouth of the beast and out of the mouth of the false prophet. 14 They are demonic spirits that perform signs, and they go out to the kings of the whole world, to gather them for the battle on the great day of God Almighty.

15 "Look, I come like a thief! Blessed is the one who stays awake and remains clothed, so as not to go naked and be shamefully exposed."

16 Then they gathered the kings together to the place that in Hebrew is called Armageddon.

17 The seventh angel poured out his bowl into the air, and out of the temple came a loud voice from the throne, saying, "It is done!" 18 Then there came flashes of lightning, rumblings, peals of thunder and a severe earthquake. No earthquake like it has ever occurred since mankind has been on earth, so tremendous was the quake. 19 The great city split into three parts, and the cities of the nations collapsed. God remembered Babylon the Great and gave her the cup filled with the wine of the fury of his wrath. 20 Every island fled away and the mountains could not be found. 21 From the sky huge hailstones, each weighing about a hundred pounds,[a] fell on people. And they cursed God on account of the plague of hail, because the plague was so terrible.

[a] *21* Or about 45 kilograms

TRANSITION

The Sinful City and the Antichrist

The great prostitute, identified with Babylon (Rev 17:5), is a powerful and wealthy center of human civilization that leads the kings and all the earth in rebellion against God. As ancient Babylon led people away from God and into idolatry and wickedness, so the prostitute sets the nations against him. Rome in the 1st century may have been one manifestation of the prostitute; the "seven hills" (17:9) could recall the original city of Rome that was built on seven hills.

Other societies and governments in human history have also seemed to be in open rebellion against God. This great prostitute is empowered by the beast, the Antichrist. The church, by contrast, is likened to a wife united with her Husband, Christ, at his return (19:7, 8). John's vision continues as the beast and his armies prepare for a battle that cannot be won. Christ has already secured the victory. The beast and his prophet are captured, and his armies are destroyed by the sword from Christ's mouth (19:15).

• **Revelation 17:1—19:21**

Revelation

Babylon, the Prostitute on the Beast

17 :1 One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the punishment of the great prostitute, who sits by many waters. 2 With her the kings of the earth committed adultery, and the inhabitants of the earth were intoxicated with the wine of her adulteries."

3 Then the angel carried me away in the Spirit into a wilderness. There I saw a woman sitting on a scarlet beast that was covered with blasphemous names and had seven heads and ten horns. 4 The woman was dressed in purple and scarlet, and was glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls. She held a golden cup in her hand, filled with abominable things and the filth of her adulteries. 5 The name written on her forehead was a mystery:

BABYLON THE GREAT
THE MOTHER OF PROSTITUTES
AND OF THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

6 I saw that the woman was drunk with the blood of God's holy people, the blood of those who bore testimony to Jesus.

When I saw her, I was greatly astonished. 7 Then the angel said to me: "Why are you astonished? I will explain to you the mystery of the woman and of the beast she rides, which has the seven heads and ten horns. 8 The beast,

Seven Kings and Seven Hills (Rev 17:9–11)

John is shown a vision of a woman on a scarlet beast, a beast described as having "seven heads" (Rev 17:3). The first interpretation, which identifies the seven heads as seven hills (17:9), is obvious enough: ancients called Rome the "city on seven hills." Rome annually celebrated a festival recalling its origin on "seven mountains," and this was the city that was currently reigning over the nations (17:18). Without question, in John's day the epitome of the world system was Rome.

The second interpretation, identifying the seven heads with seven kings (17:10, 11), is more complicated. The sixth king is announced as reigning at that time ("one is," 17:10). If the Book of Revelation was written during the reign of the emperor Domitian, it would be possible to count back from Domitian and determine which ruler might qualify to be the one that was to return and "remain for only a little while" (17:10). One such calculation points to Nero.

Once Vespasian's dynasty (which included his sons Titus and Domitian) had been established, few people would have considered the three brief usurpers who followed Nero (Galba, Otho, Vitellius) as true kings. Some calculations skip these three emperors, thus allowing the six kings to include both Nero and Domitian. Many people anticipated Nero's return even well into Domitian's reign. Indeed, shortly before the Book of Revelation was written, a Nero impostor even tricked the Parthian armies into following him into the Roman Empire (though he was quickly proved an impostor).

Many scholars do not identify the seven kings precisely with seven specific Roman emperors. More importantly, John's interpretation of seven kings does not imply that in writing Revelation he supposed that Nero would literally return from the dead. Rather, he probably uses the popular image of a new "Nero" to communicate a message: "If you thought Nero was bad, wait till you see the final evil ruler." Besides claiming to be a god, Nero was the first emperor to actively martyr Christians. He is a fitting model for other evil rulers of history, especially the final one often known as the antichrist (1Jn 2:18).

which you saw, once was, now is not, and yet will come up out of the Abyss and go to its destruction. The inhabitants of the earth whose names have not been written in the book of life from the creation of the world will be astonished when they see the beast, because it once was, now is not, and yet will come.

9"This calls for a mind with wisdom. The seven heads are seven hills on which the woman sits. 10They are also seven kings. Five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come; but when he does come, he must remain for only a little while. 11The beast who once was, and now is not, is an eighth king. He belongs to the seven and is going to his destruction.

12"The ten horns you saw are ten kings who have not yet received a kingdom, but who for one hour will receive authority as kings along with the beast. 13They have one purpose and will give their power and authority to the beast. 14They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers."

15Then the angel said to me, "The waters you saw, where the prostitute sits, are peoples, multitudes, nations and languages. 16The beast and the ten horns you saw will hate the prostitute. They will bring her to ruin and leave her naked; they will eat her flesh and burn her with fire. 17For God has put it into their hearts to accomplish his purpose by agreeing to hand over to the beast their royal authority, until God's words are fulfilled. 18The woman you saw is the great city that rules over the kings of the earth."

Geography & Environment
The city of Rome was famous for being built on seven hills (Rev 17:9). At the time of Cicero, these hills were known as the Palatine, Capitoline, Caelian, Aventine, Esquiline, Viminal, and Quirinal. In 378 B.C. all of the hills except the Esquiline were enclosed by the Wall of Servius. The Palatine was the location of the Roman emperor's residence, from which he did official business.

Lament Over Fallen Babylon

18 1After this I saw another angel coming down from heaven. He had great authority, and the earth was illuminated by his splendor. 2With a mighty voice he shouted:

"'Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great!'[a]
She has become a dwelling for demons
and a haunt for every impure spirit,
a haunt for every unclean bird,
a haunt for every unclean and detestable animal.
3For all the nations have drunk
the maddening wine of her adulteries.
The kings of the earth committed adultery with her,
and the merchants of the earth grew rich from her excessive luxuries."

[a] 2 Isaiah 21:9

A Tragic Loss of Business! (Rev 18:12)

John received a series of visions revealing the fall of the evil kingdom. The woes of the coming judgments are echoed in various dirges, one given by merchants (Rev 18:11–18). These merchants mourn because their financial profit from the wicked city has come to an end: "no one buys their cargoes anymore" (18:11).

The items described in Rev 18:12 represent many of the luxurious products that were imported by Rome and other cities in John's day. One product, purple dye, recalls the city of Thyatira, in Asia Minor, which was known as an industrial center and manufacturer of the dye. The few inscriptions found there show a thriving civic and social life for about five centuries until the 3rd century A.D. Not only was Thyatira known for its purple dye; it was also a major center of wool trade.

Josephus describes a Jewish colony in Thyatira. Thus, it is not surprising that Paul could encounter a Jewish "dealer in purple cloth" who hailed from Thyatira (Ac 16:14). Lydia was evidently a wealthy woman who engaged in the trade of purple dye and cloth, and owned her own home, emphasizing her financial independence. In fact, she hosted a gathering of Jesus' followers at her home (Ac 16:40), typical of many Jewish women at that time who were benefactors of synagogues.

Merchants, such as Lydia, became rich by trading luxuries, like purple dye and cloth, that could be afforded only by a few. The wicked city in John's vision represented a great trading center, and the loss of business from such a place would indeed provoke the merchants' demonstration of grief and mourning (Rev 18:19).

Warning to Escape Babylon's Judgment

4 Then I heard another voice from heaven say:

"'Come out of her, my people,'[a]
so that you will not share in her sins,
so that you will not receive any of her plagues;
5 for her sins are piled up to heaven,
and God has remembered her crimes.
6 Give back to her as she has given;
pay her back double for what she has done.
Pour her a double portion from her own cup.
7 Give her as much torment and grief
as the glory and luxury she gave herself.
In her heart she boasts,
'I sit enthroned as queen.
I am not a widow;[b]
I will never mourn.'
8 Therefore in one day her plagues will overtake her:
death, mourning and famine.
She will be consumed by fire,
for mighty is the Lord God who judges her.

Threefold Woe Over Babylon's Fall

9 "When the kings of the earth who committed adultery with her and shared her luxury see the smoke of her burning, they will weep and mourn over her. 10 Terrified at her torment, they will stand far off and cry:

"'Woe! Woe to you, great city,
you mighty city of Babylon!
In one hour your doom has come!'

11 "The merchants of the earth will weep and mourn over her because no one buys their cargoes anymore— 12 cargoes of gold, silver, precious stones and pearls; fine linen, purple, silk and scarlet cloth; every sort of citron wood, and articles of every kind made of ivory, costly wood, bronze, iron and marble; 13 cargoes of cinnamon and spice, of incense, myrrh and frankincense, of wine and olive oil, of fine flour and wheat; cattle and sheep; horses and carriages; and human beings sold as slaves.

14 "They will say, 'The fruit you longed for is gone from you. All your luxury and splendor have vanished, never to be recovered.' 15 The merchants who sold these things and gained their wealth from her will stand far off, terrified at her torment. They will weep and mourn 16 and cry out:

"'Woe! Woe to you, great city,
dressed in fine linen, purple and scarlet,
and glittering with gold, precious stones and pearls!
17 In one hour such great wealth has been brought to ruin!'

"Every sea captain, and all who travel by ship, the sailors, and all who earn their living from the sea, will stand far off. 18 When they see the smoke of her burning, they will exclaim, 'Was there ever a city like this great city?' 19 They will throw dust on their heads, and with weeping and mourning cry out:

"'Woe! Woe to you, great city,
where all who had ships on the sea
became rich through her wealth!
In one hour she has been brought to ruin!'

[a] *4* Jer. 51:45 [b] *7* See Isaiah 47:7,8.

20 "Rejoice over her, you heavens!
Rejoice, you people of God!
Rejoice, apostles and prophets!
For God has judged her
with the judgment she imposed on you."

The Finality of Babylon's Doom

21 Then a mighty angel picked up a boulder the size of a large millstone and threw it into the sea, and said:

"With such violence
the great city of Babylon will be thrown down,
never to be found again.
22 The music of harpists and musicians, pipers and trumpeters,
will never be heard in you again.
No worker of any trade
will ever be found in you again.
The sound of a millstone
will never be heard in you again.
23 The light of a lamp
will never shine in you again.
The voice of bridegroom and bride
will never be heard in you again.
Your merchants were the world's important people.
By your magic spell all the nations were led astray.
24 In her was found the blood of prophets and of God's holy people,
of all who have been slaughtered on the earth."

Threefold Hallelujah Over Babylon's Fall

19 1 After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting:

"Hallelujah!
Salvation and glory and power belong to our God,
2 for true and just are his judgments.
He has condemned the great prostitute
who corrupted the earth by her adulteries.
He has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

Science & Technology
Linen is a cloth made from fibers of the flax plant. The Egyptians could make linen cloth so fine (Rev 19:8) it was practically transparent, as well as coarse and thick like canvas. The techniques for preparing and weaving linen were known from the earliest recorded times in Egypt, as evidenced by wall paintings in tombs.

3 And again they shouted:

"Hallelujah!
The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever."

4 The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried:

"Amen, Hallelujah!"

5 Then a voice came from the throne, saying:

"Praise our God,
all you his servants,
you who fear him,
both great and small!"

6 Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting:

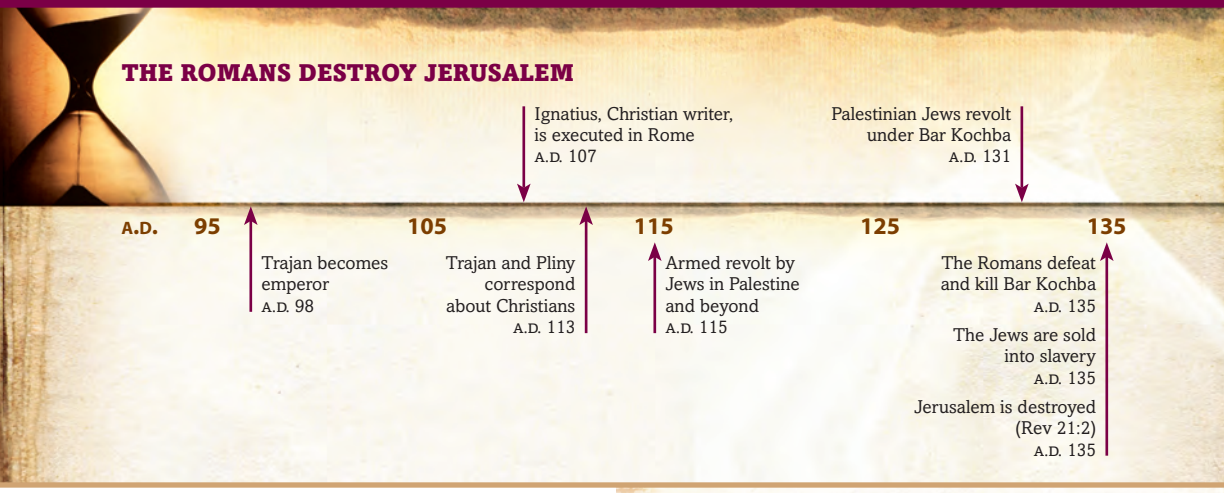
"Hallelujah!
For our Lord God Almighty reigns.
7 Let us rejoice and be glad
and give him glory!
For the wedding of the Lamb has come,
and his bride has made herself ready.
8 Fine linen, bright and clean,
was given her to wear."
(Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of God's holy people.)

9 Then the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!" And he added, "These are the true words of God."
10 At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus."

The Heavenly Warrior Defeats the Beast

11 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter."[a] He

[a] *15* Psalm 2:9



treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written:

KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

17And I saw an angel standing in the sun, who cried in a loud voice to all the birds flying in midair, "Come, gather together for the great supper of God, 18so that you may eat the flesh of kings, generals, and the mighty, of horses and their riders, and the flesh of all people, free and slave, great and small."

19Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army. 20But the beast was captured, and with it the false prophet who had performed the signs on its behalf. With these signs he had deluded those who had received the mark of the beast and worshiped its image. The two of them were thrown alive into the fiery lake of burning sulfur. 21The rest were killed with the sword coming out of the mouth of the rider on the horse, and all the birds gorged themselves on their flesh.

TRANSITION

The Millennium

The term "millennium," coming from the Latin *mille,* "one thousand," is used to identify the 1,000-year rule of Chr ist with his sain ts (Rev 20:4–7). This is the only plac e in the New Testament where such a per iod is descr ibed. Christians are divided o ver how to interpret the 1,000-year reign and the events surrounding it.

Some believe that the binding of Satan represents Christ's victory on the cross. The 1,000 years is, then, symbolic of the church age during which the saints will rule spiritually with Christ. Satan's rebellion at the end of the 1,000 years is his final desper ate attempt to challenge God before the return of Christ to judge the world. This view is called amillennialism because it does not believ e in a millennial period separate from the church age.

Others believe that the vic tories of Chr ist (19:1–21) and the binding of S atan (20:1–3) represent the g radual triumph of the gospel throughout the chur ch age. The millennium is, then, symbolic of an indet erminate time of earthly harmony after the pr ogress of the gospel has resulted in the kingdom of God on earth. Only after this time will Chr ist return to finally defeat Satan (20:7–10) and judge the world (20:11–15). This view is k nown as post-millennialism because it t eaches that Christ will not return until after the millennium.

Other Christians believe that 19:1–21 depicts Christ's Second Coming which will culminate in the binding of S atan (20:1–3), after which the sain ts will be r aised and rule with Christ on ear th for a per iod symbolized by 1,000 y ears (20:4–6). At the end of this period Satan will be r eleased for one last rebellion and will be destr oyed (20:7–10). Then the unrighteous will be raised and all will be judged (20:11– 15). This position is called premillennialism since it teaches the return of Christ before the millennium.

• Revelation 20:1–15

Revelation

The Thousand Years

20:1 And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. 2He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a

thousand years. 3He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.

4I saw thrones on which were seated those who had been given authority to judge. And I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded because of their testimony about Jesus and because of the word of God. They[a] had not worshiped the beast or its image and had not received its mark on their foreheads or their hands. They came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5(The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6Blessed and holy are those who share in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them, but they will be priests of God and of Christ and will reign with him for a thousand years.

The Judgment of Satan

7When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison 8and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth—Gog and Magog—and to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore. 9They marched across the breadth of the earth and surrounded the camp of God's people, the city he loves. But fire came down from heaven and devoured them. 10And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.

The Judgment of the Dead

11Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. 12And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. 13The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. 14Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. 15Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire.

[a] *4* Or *God; I also saw those who*

The Great Last Judgment
by Pieter Paul Rubens
c. 1617
Kunstareal Art Museum
in Munich, Germany

TRANSITION

A New Heaven and a New Earth

The dominant theme of Rev 6–20 is tribulation and death. A new mood is set in chs. 21; 22 that moves from time into eternity and provides a description of the eternal blessedness of God's people in the renewed creation. John's first vision depicts this blessedness in general (21:1–8). When God dwells with humanity, he himself will tenderly remove all "mourning" and "pain" just as he promised (21:4, 5; see 7:17).

The second vision describes the New Jerusalem (21:9–21) and life in it (21:22—22:5). The description of this city as made of "every kind of precious stone" and translucent "gold" suggests a glory and beauty that surpass human experience and imagination—realities for which there are no human words (21:18–21). God's splendor will be fully revealed. It will be the source of joy and light. Life in the New Jerusalem will surpass the blessings of the Garden of Eden.

In all this John's message is that God's victory has already been won. The Lamb is "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS" (19:16).

• **Revelation 21:1—22:21**

Revelation

A New Heaven and a New Earth

21 **:1** Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth,"[a] for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. [2]I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. [3]And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. [4]'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death'[b] or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."

[5]He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."

[6]He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. [7]Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. [8]But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

The New Jerusalem, the Bride of the Lamb

[9]One of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues came and said to me, "Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb." [10]And he carried me away in the Spirit to a mountain great and high, and showed me the Holy City, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God. [11]It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. [12]It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. [13]There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. [14]The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

[15]The angel who talked with me had a measuring rod of gold to measure the city, its gates and its walls. [16]The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia[c] in length, and as wide and high as it is long. [17]The angel measured the wall using human measurement, and it was 144 cubits[d] thick.[e] [18]The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. [19]The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third agate, the fourth emerald, [20]the fifth onyx, the sixth ruby, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth turquoise, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.[f] [21]The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass.

[22]I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. [23]The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. [24]The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. [25]On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. [26]The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. [27]Nothing impure will

[a] *1* Isaiah 65:17 [b] *4* Isaiah 25:8 [c] *16* That is, about 1,400 miles or about 2,200 kilometers [d] *17* That is, about 200 feet or about 65 meters [e] *17* Or *high* [f] *20* The precise identification of some of these precious stones is uncertain.

The Return to Paradise (Rev 22:1–5)

No book in the New Testament depends upon imagery supplied from the Old Testament for its message as does the Book of Revelation. Perhaps this characteristic appears in no more dramatic fashion in the book than in the description of the new creation (Rev 22:1–5), and particularly in the imagery of the tree of life.

The tree of life appears in the midst of the New Jerusalem, growing on both sides of the river that flows from the throne (22:2). Fruit from the tree is available for all the citizenry to eat, making life in the New Jerusalem full, abundant, and eternal. This tree brings about the "healing of the nations" (22:2).

The tree of life first appeared in the Old Testament story of Eden, the garden that God planted for the first humans (Ge 2). According to the Genesis account, the tree was "in the middle of the garden" (Ge 2:9), and openly accessible to humanity before sin entered the world. After the fall, however, God banned the humans from the garden, precisely to keep them away from the tree of life (Ge 3:22). The tree of life thus belonged to humanity before sin entered the world, when all creation reflected the goodness in which God had created it.

The location for the tree of life is linked to paradise. Traditionally, the word "Eden" has been viewed as meaning "delight" or "luxury." This view is reflected in the Septuagint, where the Greek translation for "garden of Eden" is "paradise of Delight." Again in the *First Book of Enoch* the tree of life appears in paradise. Enoch journeys to God's mountain paradise where the tree of life is kept. The tree's fruit will be given to the righteous when the tree is planted in the New Jerusalem (1 Enoch 24:2—25:7).

John's vision repeats these allusions. Fruit from the tree of life, located in the "paradise of God," is promised to "the one who is victorious" (Rev 2:7). The inexpressible abundance of the tree is symbolized in its yield being available "every month" (22:2).

ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

Eden Restored

22 [1]Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb [2]down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. [3]No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. [4]They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. [5]There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

John and the Angel

[6]The angel said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. The Lord, the God who inspires the prophets, sent his angel to show his servants the things that must soon take place."

[7]"Look, I am coming soon! Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy written in this scroll."

[8]I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to me. [9]But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your fellow prophets and with all who keep the words of this scroll. Worship God!"

[10]Then he told me, "Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this scroll, because the time is near. [11]Let the one who does wrong continue to do wrong; let the vile person continue to be vile; let the one who does right continue to do right; and let the holy person continue to be holy."

Epilogue: Invitation and Warning

[12]"Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. [13]I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

[14]"Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. [15]Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

[16]"I, Jesus, have sent my angel to give you[a] this testimony for the churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the bright Morning Star."

[17]The Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let the one who hears say, "Come!" Let the

[a] *16* The Greek is plural.

one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life.

TIME CAPSULE **A.D. 132 to 139**

132	The Jews in Palestine revolt under Bar Kochba
135	The Romans defeat and kill Bar Kochba
135	The Jews are sold into slavery and expelled from Jerusalem
135	Jerusalem is destroyed
139	The Romans rename Judea "Syria Palestina"

18 I warn everyone who hears the words of
the prophecy of this scroll: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to that person the
plagues described in this scroll. 19 And if anyone takes words away from this scroll of prophecy, God will take away from that person any
share in the tree of life and in the Holy City,
which are described in this scroll.

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes,
I am coming soon."

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God's
people. Amen.

CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY BIBLE
CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL TOPICS

The background notes in *The Chronological Study Bible* offer cultural and historical information on several topics, which are grouped under eight categories:

Art and Literature	Personalities
Daily Life and Customs	Places and Geography
Gods and Goddesses	Politics and Government
Peoples and Nations	Religion and Worship

The topics listed below are followed by the titles and page numbers of background notes where information is found on that topic. For example, to locate information on the deity Dagon, see the category "Gods and Goddesses," which references the background note titled *Dagon Breaks Before God.*

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CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY BIBLE
GLOSSARY

When we read about the life and times of ancient biblical peoples, we encounter many names, places, and things that are unfamiliar to us today. The Glossary describes and explains many of the subjects mentioned in the notes of *The Chronological Study Bible.*

A

ACHAEMENID The dynasty ruling the Persian Empire founded by Cyrus the Great when he conquered Babylon, 559 B.C. Darius, Artaxerxes, and Xerxes I belong to this dynasty. It was finally overthrown by Alexander the Great in 330 B.C.

ACHAIA The Roman province corresponding to modern Greece, south of Macedonia.

ADAD Along with Shamash, an Assyrian deity in charge of omens. *See* SHAMASH.

ADAD-NIRARI I
Ruler of Assyria 1308–1274 B.C.

ADAD-NIRARI III
Ruler of Assyria 810–783 B.C.

ADAPA Character in an Akkadian myth who must remain outside heaven.

ADAR The 12th month of the Babylonian calendar. Adar begins in March of the modern calendar.

ADONIS Originally a Phoenician god of vegetation and fertility worshiped at Byblos (near modern Beirut, Lebanon) and introduced to the Greeks probably via Cyprus. Adonis spends part of the year with Aphrodite and another part in Hades.

ADRAMMELEK The name of a son of Sennacherib; also, a deity worshiped by Syrians in Samaria after the Assyrian conquest of 722 B.C.

AEGEAN The Aegean Sea is 150 miles wide, lying between Greece and Asia Minor (modern Turkey); Macedonia and Thrace are to its north and Crete to the south. There are many islands in the Aegean.

AGADE *See* AKKAD.

AGORA The Greek word for *marketplace.*

AGRIPPA I, II *See* HEROD AGRIPPA I, II.

AHASUERUS *See* XERXES.

AHURA MAZDA The Persian God, proclaimed by Zoroaster, and represented by a solar disk with wings. As the force of light he fights against darkness. The king of Persia was his representative.

AKHENATEN *See* AMENHOTEP IV.

AKKAD A city in Mesopotamia that Sargon the Great (c. 2350 B.C.) made the capital of his empire; also spelled Agade and Accad. Sargon's dynasty controlled Mesopotamia for two centuries, until Akkad fell, to be succeeded by Ur.

AKKADIAN The language of Akkad, a Semitic language that continued in use and influence long after the fall of Akkad in about 2100 B.C. It used the Sumerian writing system.

ALALAKH A city located on the Orontes river 20 miles east of Antioch, in northern Syria. Alalakh was conquered by the Hittites about 1370 B.C., and abandoned after the invasion of the Sea Peoples in 1194 B.C.

ALTAR A platform or table for religious offerings, typically animal sacrifices.

AMALEKITES Nomadic people who lived south of Israel and toward Egypt; descendants of Esau. They were traditional enemies of Israel.

AMARNA A city on the Nile, 200 miles south of Cairo; founded by Amenhotep IV (1352–1336 B.C.). In 1887 several hundred clay tablets were discovered there, consisting of correspondence between Egypt and other countries.

AMASIS *See* HOPHRA.

AMENEMHET I Ruler of Egypt 1963–1934 B.C., first pharaoh of the twelfth dynasty; this dynasty promoted irrigation and mining, and was in power for more than two hundred years.

AMENHOTEP III Ruler of Egypt 1390–1352 B.C. Amenhotep's reign was peaceful and prosperous. His diplomatic correspondence is extensively recorded in the Amarna letters.

AMENHOTEP IV Also called Akhenaten; ruler of Egypt 1352–1336 B.C. His wife was Nefertiti. Akhenaten instituted exclusive worship of the sun god Aten, but his reforms did not survive him. He built a new capital at Amarna.

AMMONITES A people reportedly descended from Lot. The Ammonites lived east of the Jordan and were traditional enemies of Israel.

AMON The god of the Egyptian city of Thebes, and the primary god of the Egyptians. Akhenaten tried to replace Amon with Aten, the sun god, but his reforms were reversed by his son Tutankhamun.

AMORITES Ancient inhabitants of northern Mesopotamia and the area to the west as far as Syria and Palestine. They were at Ugarit by 1900 B.C. and at Byblos by 1800 B.C. Hammurabi of Babylon (1792–1750 B.C.) was an Amorite; many texts relating to the Amorites were discovered at Mari.

AN The chief deity of Uruk and head of the Sumerian pantheon.

ANAMMELEK A deity who, like Adrammelek, was worshiped in Samaria after the Assyrian conquest of 722 B.C. *See* ADRAMMELEK.

ANATH A goddess of war worshiped in Palestine, also regarded as the sister or spouse of the storm god Baal.

ANATOLIA Asia Minor; the large peninsula separating the eastern Mediterranean from the Black Sea; this is today eastern Turkey.

ANNALS History written year by year; a continuous account of current events.

ANTIOCH An important city of the ancient world, located in northern Syria near the Mediterranean coast. Antioch was comparable in size to Rome and Alexandria. Pisidian Antioch is another city, much smaller, 300 miles to the west in Anatolia.

ANTIOCHUS IV EPIPHANES Ruler of Syria 175–164 B.C., one of the Seleucid kings. He desecrated the Jerusalem temple and made Judaism unlawful, precipitating the Maccabean revolt. *See* JUDAS MACCABEUS.

APOCALYPTIC Writings about what has been revealed concerning the end of the age, with its associated upheavals and changes, and the divine interventions.

APOCRYPHA Several books often included in Bibles along with the 27 books of the Old Testament; also called Deuterocanonicals.

APSU One of the two original gods in the Babylonian creation story; Apsu and Tiamat were gods of fresh and salt water.

AQUEDUCT A pipe or channel for water supply, especially those built by the Romans going cross-country on arches.

ARABIA The world's largest peninsula, between Africa, Mesopotamia, and Persia. The southwest boundary is the Red Sea, and beyond it lie Egypt and Sudan.

ARACHNE A young woman in Greek mythology who challenges the goddess Athena to a contest of weaving. The goddess drives Arachne to suicide, and then transforms her into a spider that must weave forever.

ARAD An archaeological site in Judah, about halfway between Masada and Beersheba. There are remains of an ancient city dating from 3000 to 2700 B.C., and additional remains of a fortified city and a temple dating from 1200 B.C.

ARAM The ancient nation north and east of Israel, in the same area as the modern country of Syria. The capital was Damascus.

ARAMAIC A Semitic language similar to Hebrew. Aramaic was the common international commercial speech of the ancient Near East throughout the Persian period (559–331 B.C.). It was still the primary language of Palestine in the time of Jesus.

ARAM NAHARAIM *See* MESOPOTAMIA.

ARARAT A country made famous by Noah's ark (Ge 8:4), which came to rest in its mountains. Ararat included parts of modern Iran, Iraq, and southern Russia.

ARCHANGEL A higher order of heavenly being; the Bible names Gabriel and Michael

as archangels, and Raphael is named in the Book of Tobit, in the Apocrypha.

AREOPAGUS The traditional law court of Athens, which originally met on a small hill below the Acropolis. The name means "hill of Ares," Ares being Mars, the god of war.

ARK OF THE COVENANT A wood and gold chest specially built to hold the two tablets of the law given to Moses. It was kept in the inner part of the tabernacle and was also carried into battle.

ARPAD A province and capital city near Hamath in northern Syria. Arpad was conquered by the Assyrians in 740 B.C. and again in 720 B.C.

ARTAXERXES I Also called Artaxerxes Longimanus; ruler of Persia 465–424 B.C.

ARTEMIS A Greek goddess of the moon, women, and the wilderness; the same as the Roman goddess Diana, whose main shrine was at Aricia, near Rome.

ARYANS Related groups of nomadic peoples that moved into northwestern India in 1500 B.C. They spread across Mesopotamia, including Media and Persia. Ultimately they migrated to Europe, and are also called Indo-Europeans. *See* MEDIA; PERSIA.

ASHDOD One of the five main cities of the Philistines, remembered for its part in capturing the ark of the covenant (1Sa 5:1–7).

ASHERAH Goddess of ancient Palestine; at Ugarit the wife of El and mother of Baal. The name *asherah* is also used for the sacred poles or trees that marked the sites where the goddess was worshiped.

ASHIMA A god worshiped by Syrians living in Samaria. The name may refer to Asherah, the Canaanite goddess. *See* ASHERAH.

ASHKELON One of the five main cities of the Philistines.

ASHTORETH A fertility goddess worshiped in ancient Palestine. She was called Ishtar in Babylon and Astarte in Ugarit.

ASHUR The first capital of Assyria, located 56 miles south of ancient Nineveh. *Ashur* is also the name of the main god of Assyria, and as such appears in many Assyrian names.

ASHUR-DAN III Ruler of Assyria who destroyed the city of Harran in 763 B.C.

ASHUR-UBALLIT Ruler of Assyria 1363–1328 B.C. During his reign Nineveh was incorporated into the Assyrian Empire. *See* NINEVEH.

ASHURNASIRPAL II Ruler of Assyria 883–859 B.C.; father of Shalmaneser III. He conducted successful military campaigns in the west, exacting tribute from the Phoenicians. His capital was at Calah. *See* CALAH.

ASHURBANIPAL The last powerful king of Assyria, c. 668–627 B.C. He conquered Memphis and Thebes. The large library that he established at Nineveh was discovered in 1853.

ASIA MINOR Anatolia. *See* ANATOLIA.

ASSHUR *See* ASHUR.

ASSYRIA Ancient empire in Mesopotamia, north of Babylonia. The main cities were Ashur, Calah, and Nineveh. Notable kings were Shalmaneser I, Tiglath-Pileser I, and Ashurbanipal. The empire ended with the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C.

ASSYRIAN KING LIST An ancient list of the kings of Assyria with the lengths of their reigns, covering about 1,000 years.

ASSYRIAN REVIVAL The period of Assyrian power under the reigns of Tiglath-Pileser III, Shalmaneser V, Sargon II, and Sennacherib, spanning 744 to 681 B.C.

ASTARTE *See* ASHTORETH.

ASTROLOGY The study of the sun, moon, stars, and planets in order to discern their supposed influence on human affairs.

ASTYAGES Ruler of the Median Empire 585–550 B.C.; grandfather of Cyrus the Great.

ATEN The ancient Egyptian name for the solar disk, which Amenhotep IV (1352–1336 B.C.) attempted to establish as the supreme god in Egypt. His reforms were reversed by his son Tutankhamun.

ATHENA The Greek goddess said to have sprung fully armed from the head of Zeus. Athena commonly appears as a warrior but is also known for her skill in crafts, or intelligence. She is associated with the city of

Athens, and the Parthenon was her main temple.

ATHTAR A Ugaritic god who tried unsuccessfully to usurp the throne of Baal.

ATON *See* ATEN.

ATRAHASIS Hero from a myth that is similar to the Gilgamesh Epic.

AVEN *See* HELIOPOLIS.

AWEL-MARDUK Ruler of Babylon 562–560 B.C., the third king of the Babylonian Chaldean dynasty and the son of Nebuchadnezzar II. Also known as Evil-Merodach. *See* MARDUK.

AZEKAH A fortified city 17 miles southwest of Jerusalem and 12 miles northeast of Lachish.

B

BAAL The main god of the Canaanites, a storm and fertility god; prominent in Ugaritic myths. "Baal" means "lord" or "owner." Baal was given particular names, associated with different locations or types of worship.

BABEL Hebrew for "Babylon." The tower of Babel was possibly a ziggurat.

BABYLON Literally "gate of god," an ancient city on the Euphrates River, about 50 miles south of modern Baghdad. It reached its greatest height under Nebuchadnezzar II, and was conquered by the forces of Alexander the Great in 330 B.C.

BABYLONIA Ancient empire in Mesopotamia, south of Assyria; the capital was Babylon. Notable kings were Hammurabi, Nebuchadnezzar I, and Nebuchadnezzar II. Babylon was often under the power of Assyria; in 559 B.C. it was conquered by Persia.

BABYLONIAN CHRONICLES Records kept by the ancient Babylonians that give a brief report of yearly events, preserved on clay tablets of different shapes and sizes.

BASALT A very fine-grained black rock, often used by the Egyptians for architecture and sculpture.

BEDOUIN Arab nomadic tribes that have a distinctive culture.

BEL MARDUK *See* MARDUK.

BELSHAZZAR Son of Nabonidus, the last king of Babylon. Belshazzar ruled as coregent alongside Nabonidus (ruled 556–539 B.C.) for three years or more.

BEN-HADAD The name of two and possibly three kings of Syria. The name is similar to a title, and it is not always clear which Ben-Hadad is meant. *See* HAZAEL.

BENJAMIN The youngest son of Jacob, and the tribe descending from him. The name means "son of the right hand" or "son of the south." Also, a tribe mentioned in the Mari tablets (c. 1800 B.C.).

BETH SHEMESH The name of three cities in ancient Israel: one in upper Galilee in the area of Naphtali (Jos 19:38); one in lower Galilee in Issachar (19:22); and a third, the most important, in Judah (Jos 15:10).

BITHYNIA Roman province, organized by Pompey in 63 B.C.; it occupied the northwest coast of Asia Minor (modern Turkey), north of Galatia and Asia.

BLESSING The communication of good intentions, normally from a superior to an inferior. Blessing was regarded as a purposeful and effective act, not merely a social form.

BRONZE AGE The archaeological period during which bronze was the most important metal in use. Bronze is a hard, strong alloy of copper and tin. It was displaced by iron, especially for weapons, after about 1200 B.C.

BYBLOS One of the world's oldest cities, near Beirut, Lebanon. It was already inhabited in 5000 B.C., and in the 2nd millennium B.C. was a Phoenician seaport.

BYZANTINE The time and culture associated with Byzantium (Constantinople, modern Istanbul), from about A.D. 400 to 1450.

C

CALAH The capital of Assyria, also called Nimrud, on the east bank of the Tigris River south of Nineveh. The city was rebuilt by Shalmaneser I (1273–1244 B.C.), then abandoned until being restored by Ashurnasirpal II (883–859 B.C.).

CALAMUS Or "sweet flag," a plant with two rows of flat, swordlike leaves 3 to 6 feet long. It produces a perfume and a kind of medicine.

CANAAN The area east of the Mediterranean occupied by Israel after leaving Egypt under Moses.

CARCHEMISH A Hittite city on the northern Euphrates, 100 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea. At Carchemish in 605 B.C., Nebuchadnezzar II defeated the Egyptians and forced them out of Palestine.

CARTHAGE A Phoenician colony and seaport on the north African coast, founded about 800 B.C. The Romans fought several wars with Carthage and destroyed it in 146 B.C. In 29 B.C. it was rebuilt by Augustus.

CASSIA A tree with a fragrance resembling cinnamon. The buds are a substitute for cloves, and the small leaves have medicinal value.

CHALDEANS A people from southern Mesopotamia, adjacent to the Persian Gulf. The term *Chaldean* is sometimes a synonym for Babylonian.

CHEMOSH The national god of Moab. Evidently Chemosh was worshiped with human sacrifice (2Ki 3:26, 27).

CHERUBIM Superior spiritual beings close to God; the Hebrew word *cherubim* is the plural of *cherub.* Translated "living creatures" in Ezekiel and Revelation.

CHRONICLER The conventional name for the author of 1 and 2 Chronicles, understood to have a particular point of view.

CISTERN A large container for storing water, usually dug or built underground. In ancient Palestine there were both public and private cisterns.

CONCUBINE An additional wife or mistress whose legal status is lower than that of a normal wife.

CONSUL The highest office in the Roman republic; there were always two consuls, newly elected each year. The consulship continued in the Roman Empire, but no longer as the highest office.

CORINTH Prosperous port city in Greece, on the isthmus (3.7 miles wide) separating the mainland from the Peloponnesus.

COVENANT A solemn agreement or promise between two or more parties. A covenant was established with a document or ceremony that expressed and underlined the terms of agreement. For example, the sacrifice of animals could illustrate the consequences of breaking a covenant.

CUBIT A linear measure of about 18 inches, corresponding to the distance from elbow to fingertips.

CULT Religious service or acts of worship; a particular religion.

CUNEIFORM An ancient method of writing, using marks pressed into clay with a triangular pen or stylus. If the clay was baked or burned afterward, it became a permanent record.

CUSH *See* ETHIOPIA.

CYAXERES Ruler of Media 625–585 B.C.; he extended Median power throughout Assyria and as far west as Anatolia (Asia Minor).

CYNICISM A popular Greek philosophy, whose teachers and disciples advertised their independence by refusing to work and by flaunting social standards.

CYRUS CYLINDER A clay cylinder with a cuneiform inscription in which Cyrus the Great tells how he conquered and administered Babylon. The cylinder is 10 inches long and was discovered in about 1880.

CYRUS II Cyrus the Great, who reigned 559–530 B.C. He founded the Persian Achaemenid empire, which came to an end when it was conquered by Alexander the Great in 331 B.C.

D

DAGON Or "Dagan," a god of agriculture or fertility, the chief god of the Philistines, but also known in Ugarit, Mari, and Sumer.

DAMASCUS Ancient and modern capital of Syria. The name sometimes refers to Syria as a whole.

DARIUS I Ruler of the Medo-Persian Empire 522–486 B.C. "Darius" was the name or

throne name of at least three Persian rulers, Darius I being the most prominent.

DEACON An official worker in the early church, distinguished from teachers and preachers.

DEBIR Another name for Kiriath Sepher, an ancient city near Hebron. It was captured by Joshua's army, recaptured by the Canaanites, and finally taken again by Caleb (Jos 15:13–17).

DELTA REGION The Nile delta is the semicircular, fertile region formed by branches of the Nile flowing into the Mediterranean Sea. It is about 165 miles east to west.

DENARIUS The main unit of Roman currency in New Testament times. It was a silver coin weighing about 4 grams, and was one day's wage for common workers.

DESTINY A god of fortune or luck worshiped in Judah after the Babylonian exile. Translated as Meni in some Bible versions, Destiny is possibly related to the goddess Mani worshiped by the Arabs before the coming of Islam.

DIANA *See* ARTEMIS.

DIASPORA A term referring to Jews outside Israel, taken from a Greek word meaning "scattered."

DIODORUS A Greek historian from Sicily, Diodorus Siculus wrote over a period of 30 years a history of the world in 40 books, of which 15 have survived.

DIVINERS Persons considered to have supernatural powers of understanding or predicting events.

DOMITIAN Emperor of Rome A.D. 81 to 96. There is some evidence that Christians were persecuted during his reign.

DOR A stronghold on the northern Palestinian coast occupied by Israel in the time of David. It was for a time the capital of an Assyrian province.

DYNASTY A succession of rulers from a particular family. Thus, the "12th dynasty" of Egypt would refer to the twelfth of the series of families and their descendants who ruled Egypt.

E

EBLA Ancient city in northern Syria, 50 miles east of Ugarit and the Mediterranean and about 35 miles southwest of Aleppo; an important trading center. The city archives have yielded many thousands of clay tablets, mostly economic records. The language is Semitic.

ECSTATIC A person who experiences a trance, vision, or reverie.

EDOM The country southeast of the Dead Sea and south of Moab, often at war with Israel, sometimes called "Seir." The original inhabitants were the Horites.

EGYPTIAN EXECRATION TEXTS Curses written on broken pieces of pottery dating from about 1800 B.C. These texts name cities and kings of the time, including Jerusalem, and as such are important historical evidence.

EKRON The most northern of the five leading cities of Philistia. It was not captured by the Jews until after the death of Joshua.

EL The chief god in the Canaanite pantheon or council of gods. El is also a general word for deity, especially the supreme deity, and is used of God in the Bible.

ELAMITES A people from what is today Iran. Their origins appear to go back to Elam, son of Shem (Ge 10:22), although some maintain they were Caucasian and not Semitic. After the Assyrians conquered Samaria, they sent Elamites there.

ELEPHANTINE A Jewish colony that was settled in southern Egypt 550 B.C. or before, and was supposed to defend the southern border of Egypt. Many papyrus documents from this colony have been discovered and published.

ELLIL The warrior god who is angered by the survival of the few humans in the Babylonian flood story.

EMMER A variety of wheat.

ENLIL Sumerian god of the city of Nippur, the most important religious center of Sumer. *See* SUMER.

ENMERKAR A Sumerian king and character in a 3rd-millennium epic.

ENUMA ELISH A Babylonian poem relating the story of the creation of the physical world. The poem was composed about the time of Nebuchadnezzar I (1133–1116 B.C.) to honor Marduk as king of the gods.

EPHRAIMITES The Hebrew tribe descended from Ephraim, the second son born to Joseph in Egypt.

EPICUREANS Followers of the philosophy of Epicurus (341–270 B.C.), who held that the highest goal was rational happiness, or tranquillity, in this life.

ERECH *See* URUK.

ERESHKIGAL A female deity in ancient Babylonian myth, the queen of the dead and the wife of Nergal, king of the dead.

ESARHADDON Ruler of Assyria 680–669 B.C., maintaining its dominance over Babylon. He was also active in building.

ESHNUNNA One of the cities in Mesopotamia overpowered by Amorites about 2000 B.C.

ESSENES A Jewish religious group of New Testament times that pursued asceticism, separation, and purity. The Dead Sea Scrolls are a collection of literature hidden by Essenes before A.D. 70.

ETANA Character in a Sumerian myth who tries but fails to enter heaven.

ETHIOPIA Conventional translation of the Hebrew word *Cush*, referring to the remote region of southern Egypt and beyond; it is not the same as modern Ethiopia.

EUNUCH A male person who has been neutered. Ancient kings and the Roman emperors often employed eunuchs at court.

EUPHRATES An important river that flows from Armenia to the southwest, then turns southeast, and finally empties into the Persian Gulf. The Euphrates passes close to the Tigris River. Mesopotamia is the area bounded by these two rivers.

EUSEBIUS Bishop of Caesarea and the first important church historian; died A.D. 339.

EXILES Usual designation of the Jewish captives taken to Babylon following the Babylonian conquest of Judah. Such deportations occurred in 597 and 586 B.C. In 538 B.C. Cyrus the Great permitted the exiles to return to Jerusalem.

EXODUS The name of the second book of the Old Testament, from the Greek for "going out." Also, the miraculous departure of Israel from Egypt.

F

FIELD COMMANDER A high-ranking officer in the ancient Assyrian army, similar to a modern chief of staff. (Some Bible versions translate this term "Rabshakeh.")

FORTUNE Like Destiny, a god of fortune or luck worshiped in Judah after the Babylonian exile. *See* DESTINY.

FRANKINCENSE The resin of trees from north India and Arabia producing a hard, fragrant yellow gum.

G

GAD *See* FORTUNE.

GALATIA A region in middle Anatolia (modern Turkey). The name refers specifically to the Roman province Galatia, or else to an undefined area north of it, where Galatian people lived.

GALBANUM A gum extracted from an herb that grows in Palestine. The hardened gum gives a strong but pleasant scent when burned.

GALLIO Brother of the Roman writer Seneca. Gallio was proconsul in Greece and heard Paul's case, A.D. 51 (Ac 18:12).

GAMES The ancient Greeks held organized athletic contests at four main locations; these were the Isthmian, Nemean, Olympian, and Pythian games. There was also a contest at Athens (the Panathenaia), as well as other lesser ones.

GATEKEEPERS Officials at the Jerusalem temple who controlled offerings and pay for the priests, and were a security force to guarantee a smooth transition of power when a ruler died.

GATH One of the five main cities of the Philistines; its inhabitants were called "Gittites."

GAZA The most important of the five main cities of the Philistines, on the Mediterranean coast 50 miles from Jerusalem. Gaza was the capital of Canaan for several centuries (1550–1150 B.C.).

GEDALIAH Appointed governor of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar II and assassinated after 2 months in office.

GENTILE Any person who is not a Jew.

GESHEM THE ARAB One of the three opponents of Nehemiah's program to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

GIHON SPRING The main source of water for Jerusalem in Old Testament times. In 701 B.C. Hezekiah built the Siloam tunnel to bring its waters into the city.

GILEADITES Israelites who lived on the east side of the Jordan River. There was also an Israelite tribe called Gilead.

GILGAL The first camp established by Joshua after crossing the Jordan. Gilgal became a town close to the northern border of Judah.

GILGAMESH EPIC A Sumerian poem 3,000 lines long describing the legendary deeds of Gilgamesh, king of Uruk. This popular epic dates from as early as 2000 B.C. and contains a flood story.

GUDEA Ruler of the Sumerians about 2000 B.C. He was guided by a dream to build a temple to the god Ningirsu at Lagash, north of Ur.

GULF OF AQABA The northeastern extension of the Red Sea, between the Sinai Peninsula and Arabia. Ezion Geber is at the north end of the gulf.

H

HABIRU Or "Hapiru"; bandits, migrants, or refugees noticed all over the Middle East from about 2000 to 1000 B.C. It has been suggested that the Hebrews were Habiru.

HADAD Another name for Baal.

HALLEL A Hebrew word meaning "praise," referring to Psalms 113–118.

HAMATH A Syrian city on the Orontes River about 125 miles north of Damascus. Hamath became the capital of a small Hittite kingdom, but was finally subjugated by Assyria.

HAMMURABI Ammorite king of Babylon (1792–1750 B.C.), who made Babylon a great city. His law code inscribed on a column of hard stone (diorite) was discovered in 1901 and is now in the Louvre.

HARRAN A city in northwestern Mesopotamia, 60 miles east of Carchemish; located on important trade routes; home of Laban (Ge 27:43).

HASMONEAN A name given to the Jewish dynasty founded by Judas Maccabeus in 167 B.C. *See* JUDAS MACCABEUS.

HAZAEL Ruled Aram (also called Syria) about 842–800 B.C. Hazael made northern Israel a vassal of Aram. Southern Israel (Judah) also paid tribute to Aram during Hazael's reign.

HAZOR An ancient city about 9 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. Hazor was destroyed by the Hebrews in the 13th century B.C. (Jos 11:10, 11) and was rebuilt during Solomon's reign.

HELIOPOLIS An important ancient city of Egypt in the northern Nile delta.

HELLENISTIC Influenced by the international Greek culture that developed outside Greece itself following the conquests of Alexander the Great.

HELLENISTS In the New Testament, those Jews who spoke Greek rather than Aramaic or Hebrew.

HENOTHEISM Worshiping one god as supreme, but without denying the existence of others.

HEROD AGRIPPA I That is, Iulius Agrippa I, grandson of Herod the Great. In A.D. 37 he succeeded as tetrarch to the areas ruled by Philip, and in 39 to those of Herod Antipas. He died suddenly in Caesarea in 44 (Ac 12).

HEROD AGRIPPA II That is, Iulius Agrippa II, son of Iulius Agrippa I. He ruled part of Lebanon, and then Galilee and Judea, A.D. 50–66. He helped the Romans during the revolt of A.D. 66–70 and received additional territory. His sister was Bernice (Ac 25:13).

HEROD ANTIPAS Son of Herod the Great; became tetrarch of Galilee in 4 B.C. (see Luke 3:1; 9:7–9; 23:6–12). Herod Antipas was deposed and exiled by the emperor Gaius Caligula in A.D. 39.

HEROD THE GREAT Ruler of Judea, 37 to 4 B.C.; famous for his building programs and for his outrage at Jesus' birth (Mt 2).

HERODOTUS The first Greek historian (484–425 B.C.), often called "the father of history." He traveled throughout the Near East and wrote a history of the world.

HIGH PLACES Places where the gods of early Palestine were worshiped, usually having altars and sacred poles.

HILLEL The founder of one of two schools (or "houses") of Pharisaic tradition; active at the end of the 1st century B.C. The tradition of Hillel was less strict than that of Shammai.

HIRAM King of Tyre during the reigns of David and Solomon. Hiram sent materials and artisans to help build David's house and Solomon's temple and palace.

HITTITES An Indo-European people who controlled Anatolia (today eastern Turkey) by 1800 B.C. Their capital was at Hattusa (Boghazköy). Later their power extended south into Syria.

HOPHRA Ruler of Egypt 589–570 B.C. He resisted Babylonian power in Palestine. In 570 B.C. his general Amasis overthrew him, and he died in battle in 567 B.C.

HORITES The original inhabitants of Edom.

HORUS Egyptian god of the sky, light, and goodness. Horus was the son of Isis, the goddess of nature, and of Osiris, the god of the underworld.

HOUSEHOLD GODS Small idols belonging to a particular household. Also called "teraphim," in some versions, after the Hebrew word.

HURRIANS A people from northeastern Mesopotamia who lived in many parts of the Near East, becoming powerful and influential in the late 2nd millennium B.C. Thousands of cuneiform texts illustrating Hurrian family laws were found at Nuzi, a city in what is now northern Iraq. *See* NUZI.

HYKSOS A people of mixed Semitic and Asiatic origin who ruled Egypt for more than a century (1648–1540 B.C.).

I

INANNA The Sumerian goddess of love, whose yearly reunion with the god Dumuzi was thought to bring renewed fertility to the earth.

INDUS RIVER A river 1,700 miles long, originating in western Tibet from a meeting of glacial streams. It flows northwest and then turns south through Pakistan, and at last empties into the Arabian Sea.

IRENAEUS Bishop of Lyons (France); Christian writer and theologian; lived about A.D. 130–202.

ISHTAR The Mesopotamian goddess of love and war, worshiped throughout the Old Testament period.

ISIN A city between the Tigris and the Euphrates, 70 miles southeast of Babylon. It was a Sumerian power for over 225 years, until defeated by Hammurabi in about 1781 B.C.

ISIS The most popular Egyptian goddess, worshiped also at Rome. Isis was the goddess of life, the wife of Osiris, and the mother of Horus.

IVAH A city in Syria.

J

JABBOK RIVER A river 60 miles long that empties into the Jordan from the east. The Ammonites lived along this river.

JEBUSITES The original inhabitants of Jerusalem.

JERICHO An ancient city 5 miles west of the Jordan and 7 miles north of the Dead Sea; 840 feet below sea level. Jericho is called "the City of Palms" in Dt 34:3.

JEROBOAM First king of northern Israel c. 930–909 B.C., formed by the division of Israel into ten northern tribes (Israel) and two southern (Judah). Jeroboam promoted idolatry and corrupted the priesthood. *See* REHOBOAM.

JEROBOAM II King of northern Israel, 793–753 B.C.

JEROME Christian monk, scholar, and writer who died about A.D. 420. Jerome knew Hebrew as well as Greek. His standard translation of the Bible into Latin is called the Vulgate.

JERUSALEM The biblical city, 33 miles east of the Mediterranean and 2,500 feet above sea level. Jerusalem is first mentioned by name in Egyptian texts of the 19th century B.C.

JESUS CHRIST These words come from the Greek rendering of two Hebrew words, the first being a personal name (Joshua) meaning "God saves," and the second a word meaning "anointed one" or "Messiah."

JEZREEL VALLEY The east-west valley separating Samaria and Galilee, providing a way from the Mediterranean coast to the Jordan River. During biblical times many battles were fought in this valley.

JOSEPHUS Jewish historian who lived c. A.D. 37–100. Captured during the Jewish revolt against Rome, Josephus gained the favor of the Roman general Vespasian and was spared. He wrote an official history of the war, including the fall of Jerusalem, which he witnessed.

JUDAHITES People of Judah.

JUDAS MACCABEUS Leader of the Jewish revolt against Antiochus IV Epiphanes, beginning in 169 B.C. In 164 B.C. Judas rededicated the Jerusalem temple. He founded the Hasmonean dynasty, which remained in power until 63 B.C.

JUSTIN MARTYR A Christian writer who was martyred at Rome about A.D. 165. His writings are a defense of Christianity against paganism.

JUVENAL Roman writer of Latin satire; died about A.D. 130.

K

KARNAK A city on the Nile near ancient Thebes, 300 miles south of Memphis. Karnak is famous for its remains of temples, which occupied a square mile, built by Thutmose III, Ramesses II, and others.

KEBAR A river or large canal near Babylon (Eze 1:1). Sometimes spelled Chebar. *See* EUPHRATES; BABYLON.

KENITES The name "Kenite" is derived from a Hebrew word denoting smiths or metalworkers. The Kenites were a people found in southern Palestine from earliest times.

KETHIB Literally meaning "written," used to indicate a designated word or phrase as it stands in the traditional Hebrew Bible. *See* QERE.

KINGU
A subsidiary god in Babylonian myth.

KIR HARASETH A Moabite city, also called "Kir of Moab," located just east of the Dead Sea.

KUTHAH A Sumerian and Babylonian city located about 20 miles northeast of Babylon. (Known elsewhere as Cuth.)

L

LACHISH An ancient city in Judah, 30 miles southwest of Jerusalem and west of Hebron. Lachish was destroyed by Joshua in the 13th century B.C., by Sennacherib in 701 B.C. (2Ki 18:13–15), and by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. Lachish is a very important archaeological site, especially for pottery and ostraca (pieces of pottery used for writing on).

LACHISH LETTERS Letters found at Lachish, near Jerusalem, dating from the time of Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem, 586 B.C. The letters are written on fragments of pottery (ostraca) and document the coming fall of Lachish.

LAMENT FOR UR A Sumerian poem written in response to the fall of Ur in 2004 B.C.

LAURIUM A location southeast of Athens where the ancient Greeks had mines for silver.

LEGEND OF AQHAT A Ugaritic legend from the 2nd millennium B.C. A certain Daniel is the main character. Daniel's son Aqhat is killed by the goddess Anath; Aqhat's sister determines to take revenge, and then the story breaks off.

LEVIRATE MARRIAGE A law in Israel (Dt 25:5) providing that when a man died leaving a wife but not a son, the man's brother or nearest male relative must marry the widow and bear a son in the dead relative's name.

This would keep the man's inheritance within his family. *Levir* is the Latin word for "brother-in-law."

LEVITES The descendants of Levi, the third son of the patriarch Jacob. The Levites were appointed to be priests and to care for the temple.

LIBYA In ancient times, the northern part of Africa west of Egypt.

LILITH A Mesopotamian demon believed to attack babies and mothers in childbirth. The name is derived from a Sumerian word meaning "wind."

LOGOS The Greek word usually translated "word" or "idea," used philosophically with related meanings.

LOTHAN A mythical sea monster identified in Ugaritic texts with the sea god Yam, who is defeated in battle by Baal.

LYCUS RIVER A river in Anatolia (Asia Minor) that joins the Maeander River near Colosse.

LYDIA A district in western Anatolia Asia Minor whose main city was Sardis.

M

MACCABEES The early rulers of the Hasmonean dynasty that began in 167 B.C. with Judas Maccabeus. *See* JUDAS MACCABEUS.

MAGIC The attempt to govern events and human experience through supernatural means, commonly associated with the occult.

MAGUS A magician or astrologer (from the Greek word, *magos*). Singular form of magi.

MARDUK The chief god of Babylon, who appears as the chief deity in the Babylonian epic, the Enuma Elish. Also spelled Merodach.

MARDUK-BALADAN II Ruler of Babylonia 721–710 B.C. and 703–702 B.C. An outstanding king who resisted the Assyrians. He was defeated in 710, and again in 702 after a brief return to power.

MARI An ancient city on the Euphrates River, halfway between Babylon and the Mediterranean Sea; occupied as early as 3000 B.C. Thousands of clay tablets were discovered at Mari, mostly administrative archives, dating from the decades just before the conquest of Mari by Hammurabi in about 1760 B.C.

MASORETIC TEXT The text of the Bible as preserved by Jewish scholars from ancient times to the middle ages.

MEDIA An Indo-European nation occupying what is now northwestern Iran. The Medes became part of the Persian Empire through the efforts of Cyrus the Great, who defeated them in battle in 550 B.C.

MEGIDDO An ancient city near Mount Carmel. Megiddo is in the Jezreel Valley, that connects the coast with the interior; it is also on the main road from Egypt to Damascus. As a result, Megiddo has been the site of important battles in both ancient and modern times.

MENI *See* DESTINY.

MERENPTAH (or Merneptah) Ruler of Egypt after the death of Ramesses II. His armies fought in Palestine, and he mentioned Israel on a famous stone monument (a stele) commemorating his victories.

MERODACH Alternate spelling of Marduk. *See* MARDUK.

MESOPOTAMIA The region between and next to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, two rivers that flow from Armenia southeast to the Persian Gulf. Assyria, Babylonia, and Sumer were in Mesopotamia. Some Bible translations call this region *Aram Naharaim*.

MIDDLE ASSYRIAN EMPIRE The period of Assyrian history beginning with the reign of Shalmaneser I (1273–1244 B.C.). He enlarged Assyria's borders and successfully resisted invasions by the Babylonians and other powers in the region. *See* SHALMANESER I.

MILLSTONES Large stones used in pairs to grind grain into flour. An upper stone is rubbed back and forth or rotated against a lower stone, milling the grain in between.

MITANNI A Hurrian state in northern Mesopotamia, including more than a single city. Mitanni was the leading power in the region from about 1500 to 1350 B.C., fostering wide travel, trade, and diplomacy. *See* HITTITES.

MIZPAH A place not certainly identified but probably about 10 miles north of Jerusalem.

MOAB Moab was located on the plateau southeast of the Dead Sea. The Moabites descended from Lot and were traditional enemies of Israel.

MOABITE STONE An inscribed basalt slab 28 by 44 inches in size, now in the Louvre, Paris. It was made about 850 B.C. to record a Moabite victory over Israel.

MOLEK (or Milcom) A god probably first worshiped by the Phoenicians. The name as given in the Old Testament combines the Hebrew words *melech* and *bosheth*, meaning "king" and "shame." Molek (also spelled Molech and Moloch) was worshiped by sacrificing children in fire. *See* PHOENICIA.

MONOLATRY Worshiping one god only.

MORNING STAR Venus; the Hebrew for this phrase in Isa 14:12 is literally "shining one." This was translated "Lucifer" in Latin, meaning literally "light carrier."

MOT The god of death in Ugaritic mythology, a monster who swallows the living. Mot is in conflict with Baal and is defeated by him.

MYRRH A small plant found in Palestine whose gum gives off a pleasant perfume.

N

NABATEA An Arab kingdom whose capital was at Petra, south of the Dead Sea, and whose influence extended far into the surrounding territory. The Nabateans flourished during the period between the Old and New Testaments. *See* EDOM; NEGEV.

NABONIDUS Last king of Babylonia (556–539 B.C.). During part of his reign he was in Tema, Arabia, while his son Belshazzar ruled for him in Babylon.

NABOPOLASSAR Ruler of Babylonia and Assyria 626–605 B.C.; father of Nebuchadnezzar II.

NAG HAMMADI A location in Egypt where a collection of Gnostic books written on papyrus was discovered in 1947.

NANNA The Sumerian moon god in the 2nd millennium B.C. *See* LAMENT FOR UR.

NARD Also called spikenard; an East Indian plant producing a pleasant fragrance.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR I Ruler of Babylonia 1133–1116 B.C. He conquered the Elamites and returned a statue of Marduk to Babylonia, proclaiming Marduk to be the creator and ruler of all things. *See* ELAMITES; ENUMA ELISH.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR II Ruler of Babylonia 605–562 B.C.; built the hanging gardens of Babylon. He defeated Pharaoh Necho at Carchemish in 605 B.C., and destroyed Jerusalem in 589 B.C.

NECHO II Ruler of Egypt 610–595 B.C. He occupied parts of Palestine but was pushed back by Nebuchadnezzar II after the battle of Carchemish, 605 B.C.

NECROMANCY The practice of magic through supposed contact with the dead.

NEGEV The desert region of southern Judah. The Hebrew word is sometimes translated simply "the South."

NEHUSHTAN The name given to the bronze serpent set up by Moses in the desert (2Ki 18:4).

NEO-ASSYRIAN EMPIRE The period of Assyrian rule dating from Ashur-dan II (934–912 B.C.) to the fall of Nineveh in 612 B.C. The period includes Shalmaneser III, who set up the Black Obelisk that mentions King Jehu of Israel submitting to Assyria.

NERGAL SHAREZER A Babylonian official present at the siege of Jerusalem in 588–586 B.C.

NERO Born A.D. 37; became emperor of Rome in A.D. 54. After he murdered his own mother in 59, Nero became uncontrolled and cruel, if not insane. He was forced to commit suicide in 68.

NILE The Nile River. Some Bible translations use the word *Sihor* to mean the Nile or one of its eastern branches.

NIMRUD *See* CALAH.

NINEVEH One of the world's oldest cities, on the Tigris River 300 miles northwest of Babylon and 600 miles northwest of the Persian Gulf. Nineveh became the capital of the

Assyrian Empire under Sennacherib (704–681 B.C.); it fell to the Babylonians in 612 B.C.

NINHURSAG A goddess appearing in the Babylonian flood story.

NINURTA A deity of the Assyrian pantheon.

NO The Hebrew name for the city of Thebes in Egypt. *See* THEBES.

NUZI A city of the 2nd millennium B.C., 9 miles from modern Kirkut in Iraq. Many texts concerning family law and dating from approximately 1400 B.C. have been recovered at Nuzi.

O

OBELISK A kind of monument consisting of a freestanding tapered stone column with flat sides.

OMRI Ruled northern Israel sometime between 885 and 874 B.C. He was made king by the army but did not have the support of the nation. Samaria was his capital. *See* JEROBOAM.

OSIRIS A principal god of ancient Egypt, the brother and husband of Isis, and the father of Horus.

OSTRACA A Greek word referring to broken pieces of pottery, used in ancient times as something to write on. Many historically valuable ostraca have been unearthed in Egypt and southern Judah.

P

PADDAN ARAM Abraham's home in northern Mesopotamia; also known as Aramnaharaim.

PALESTINE The general area occupied by Israel in the Bible, on the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea. The name is derived from the Hebrew word for "Philistia."

PALMYRA A city in Syria 120 miles northeast of Damascus, once wealthy and powerful, but now a ruin in an oasis.

PANTHEON An array of gods, usually with different powers, worshiped by a group or race of people. The word comes from Greek and means "of all gods."

PAPYRUS A tall reed native to the Nile, and also the paper that the ancient Egyptians manufactured from it. Papyrus was sold in rolls made by gluing together single sheets.

PARABLE A brief moral story or comparison like those used by Jesus.

PASSOVER The festival celebrating Israel's escape from Egypt under Moses, which was also the occasion of the original Passover.

PATRONAGE A social system in which the rich and powerful support dependents called clients, who give them their allegiance. It was typical of the Roman world.

PEKAH Ruled northern Israel 740–732 B.C. Pekah and the king of Syria, Rezin, made war against the southern kingdom for refusing to help them in a fight against Assyria. The Assyrians killed Rezin, and Pekah was assassinated.

PERSEPOLIS Persia's ancient capital. The Persian monarch decorated the ceremonial hall with sculptures and pictures depicting his claim to world sovereignty.

PERSIA A plateau east of Mesopotamia, surrounded by mountain ranges. The Persian Empire was expanded by Cyrus the Great beginning in 550 B.C. At one time it included Anatolia, Palestine, Mesopotamia, and east to the Indus River, an extent of 2,700 miles.

PHARAOH The title used for the rulers of ancient Egypt.

PHARISEES A section or party of the Jews prominent during New Testament times, known for their dedication to religion, especially matters concerning ritual purity.

PHILISTINES The people living on the Mediterranean coast west of Israel. There were five main cities in the Philistine federation: Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, Gaza, and Gath.

PHILO Jewish philosopher and scholar from Alexandria (20 B.C.–A.D. 50). Philo wrote biblical commentaries and philosophy, and is remembered for his allegorical exegesis of the Old Testament.

PHOENICIA The Mediterranean country north of Israel, including the ports of Tyre, Sidon, and Berytus (modern Beirut). The

Phoenicians engaged in shipping all over the Mediterranean; they had an important colony at Carthage, north Africa.

PISIDIAN ANTIOCH *See* ANTIOCH.

PLINY Roman writer and provincial governor; died about A.D. 112. He described the eruption of Vesuvius as an eyewitness, and his correspondence mentions the persecution of Christians.

POLEMIC A kind of writing or speech whose purpose is to argue against opposing views.

POSTEXILIC Events after the exile of the Jews to Babylon, that is, after 538 B.C., when refugees began to return from Babylon to Jerusalem.

POTSHERD A broken piece of pottery. *See* OSTRACA.

PREEXILIC Events before the exile of the Jews to Babylon, that is, before the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.

PREEXISTENCE The existence of Jesus Christ before He was incarnated and born to Mary.

PRISM An inscribed tablet or stone in the shape of a cylinder with flat sides.

PROCONSUL A kind of Roman provincial governor.

PROCURATOR A civil servant of the Roman emperor. There were many different levels of procurator.

PROSELYTE A convert.

PSAMMETICHUS I Ruler of Egypt 664–610 B.C., an ally of Assyria; son of Necho I and father of Necho II. Psammetichus I captured Memphis and Thebes, reuniting Egypt. His capital was at Sais, and he began what is called the Saite dynasty.

PSEUDONYMOUS Published or circulated under another name than that of the actual author.

PTOLEMAIC DYNASTY Ptolemy I (ruled 305–282 B.C.) was one of four generals who inherited Alexander the Great's empire when he died. Ptolemy received Egypt, and his family formed the Ptolemaic dynasty, which controlled Egypt until defeated by the Seleucids in 200 B.C. *See* SELEUCID.

PUL Another name for Assyria's King Tiglath-Pileser III.

Q

QERE Meaning "to be read," a marginal notation in the Hebrew Bible indicating a traditional alternative reading for a word or phrase in the text. *See* KETHIB.

QUEEN HATSHEPSUT Ruler of Egypt 1479–1457 B.C., although her nephew Thutmose III (1479–1425) was nominally pharaoh during her rule.

QUEEN OF HEAVEN A fertility goddess mentioned in Jeremiah (Jer 7:18; 44:17) and possibly to be identified with Astarte.

QUMRAN A community near the Dead Sea where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. *See* ESSENES.

R

RABBI The conventional Hebrew title for a teacher.

RAMESSES II Ruler of Egypt 1279–1213 B.C. He was active in war and as a builder. He concluded a peace treaty with the Hittites.

RAMESSES III Ruler of Egypt 1184–1153 B.C., in the 20th Dynasty. He was the last of Egypt's great kings and a brilliant soldier, who repelled several powerful invaders. He was also a great builder.

RAS SHAMRA The modern location of ancient Ugarit, in Syria. *See* UGARIT.

RE (or Ra) The sun god of ancient Egypt, having a human body and the head of a hawk.

REKABITES A religious community founded by Jehonadab (often spelled Jonadab). Apparently the object of this group was to maintain the purity of the Hebrew religion.

RED SEA The conventional translation of a Hebrew name, more correctly translated "Reed Sea" or "Marsh Sea." This sea formed the boundary between Egypt and the desert to the east, while the Red Sea itself extends far to the south.

REHOBOAM Ruler of Judah c. 930–913 B.C., after his father Solomon. Rehoboam alienated the northern tribes of Israel, splitting the kingdom into north and south. Judah and Benjamin became the southern kingdom, and the other ten tribes were the northern kingdom, with Jeroboam as their king.

RELIGION Beliefs about the divine, and practices depending on these beliefs.

REZIN Ruler of Damascus c. 740 B.C., and died resisting the Assyrian invasion under Tiglath-Pileser III, 732 B.C.

RITUAL Religious actions or ceremonies performed in a way prescribed by tradition or law.

ROME The city on the Tiber River in Italy; traditionally founded by Romulus and Remus, 753 B.C.; capital of the Roman Empire, which was founded 27 B.C. by Augustus Caesar.

S

SABA The country of the Sabeans in southwestern Arabia; also called Sheba. The Sabeans had contact with Africa across the Red Sea and with Tema in northern Arabia.

SACRIFICE A religious offering, often an animal. Animal sacrifice was a normal part of ancient religion, practiced everywhere, and subject to many different interpretations.

SADDUCEES An aristocratic, conservative party of the Jews prominent during New Testament times. As a distinct party they did not survive the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.

SAFFRON A plant grown from a bulb, with a pleasant aroma and an extract used as a food coloring.

SAMARIA The capital city of the northern kingdom of Israel during the period of divided monarchy after Solomon (1Ki 12). Samaria can also refer to the northern kingdom as a whole. *See* JEROBOAM; REHOBOAM.

SAMARITAN A person from Samaria, the country north of Judea.

SAMARITAN PENTATEUCH The text of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible as preserved from ancient times by the Samaritans.

SANBALLAT One of the opponents of Nehemiah's rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in the 5th century B.C. Documents from the Jewish colony at Elephantine in southern Egypt record that Sanballat was governor of Samaria.

SARGON OF ACCAD King of Sumer, c. 2350 B.C. Because of Sargon's conquests, Sumer is generally regarded as the first world empire.

SARGON II King of Assyria 721–705 B.C.; he deported people from Samaria to Assyria. He also defeated an Egyptian army at the border of Egypt.

SCYTHIA The region northeast of the Roman Empire, including what is today Poland, Hungary, and the Ukraine.

SCYTHIANS Nomads who emigrated to the Near East from the Caucasus in the 8th century B.C. For some reason they became a stock example of uncivilized barbarians.

SEA PEOPLES Groups of people who invaded the Middle East, destroying many cities, in the 12th century B.C.

SEIR Another name for Edom. *See* EDOM.

SELEUCID Refers to the kingdom north of Palestine, founded and called Syria in 312 B.C. by Seleucus, one of Alexander the Great's surviving generals.

SEMINOMADS More or less settled tribes, not living in villages or towns.

SEMIPRECIOUS STONES Ornamental stones of many kinds used in jewelry, crafts, and architecture, but not including the "precious" stones (diamond, emerald, ruby, sapphire), which are much more rare.

SEMITIC The Semitic languages are a family of related languages that includes Arabic, Aramaic, Hebrew, and Ugaritic. The Semitic peoples are the original speakers of these languages, nominally descended from Shem.

SENNACHERIB Ruler of Assyria 704–681 B.C.; son of Sargon II. His capital was Nineveh. He threatened Jerusalem in 691 B.C. but was suddenly turned back; he destroyed Babylon in 689 B.C. He was assassinated by his sons.

SEPHARVAIM A place whose inhabitants the Assyrians brought to Samaria after 722 B.C.; the exact location is unknown.

SEPTUAGINT The Greek version of the Old Testament, translated in Alexandria between 250 and 150 B.C. The name "Septuagint" and the abbreviation LXX come from the tradition that there were seventy translators.

SERAPHIM Superior guardian angels in the presence of God.

SESOSTRIS I Ruler of Egypt 1943–1898 B.C., including 10 years as coruler with his father, Amenemhet I.

SHAHAR Ugaritic deity, the god of dawn.

SHALIM Ugaritic deity, the god of dusk or evening.

SHALMAN An abbreviation of the name Shalmaneser used by several Assyrian kings.

SHALMANESER I Ruler of Assyria 1273–1244 B.C. He was the greatest warrior of the Middle Assyrian period. He conquered the Hittites, Hurrians, and Arameans, and defeated the Egyptians at Carchemish.

SHALMANESER III Ruler of Assyria 858–824 B.C. He tried repeatedly to conquer the regions west of Assyria, including Damascus.

SHALMANESER V Ruler of Assyria 726–722 B.C. He continued the western conquests and the collection of tribute begun by Shalmaneser I through IV.

SHAMASH The Mesopotamian sun god, also associated with justice. In the ancient Middle East worship of the sun was widespread.

SHAMMAI The founder of a school of thought within the Pharisees, active at the end of the 1st century B.C. The other school is that of Hillel. *See* HILLEL.

SHAMSHI-ADAD I Ruler of the city-state of Ashur 1813–1781 B.C. He extended Assyrian power as far as the Mediterranean Sea, making Assyria in effect an empire. After he died, Assyria was overrun by Hammurabi of Babylon.

SHAPSHU A Ugaritic sun goddess.

SHECHEM An ancient fortified city 30 miles north of Jerusalem in the hill country of Palestine. Shechem was prosperous during the 2nd millennium B.C.

SHEMESH The sun god prominent in ancient Near-Eastern pantheons, whether as feminine or masculine (goddess or god).

SHEOL The Hebrew word for the realm of the dead, thought of as dark and gloomy. The word is sometimes used in poetic descriptions.

SHILOH A town in central Palestine, where Joshua put the tabernacle along with the ark of the covenant after his conquest of Canaan. Shiloh was then the center of worship until the ark was brought to Jerusalem by King David.

SHINAR *See* BABYLONIA.

SHISHAK Ruler of Egypt c. 945–924 B.C., and founder of Egypt's 22nd Dynasty. In the 5th year of Rehoboam, Shishak raided Judah (1Ki 14:25–28).

SHULAMMITE Or "Shunammite," a person from Shunem, a town in Issachar, north of the Jezreel Valley.

SIDON The oldest Phoenician seaport, about 22 miles south of modern Beirut. Sidon is closely associated with the nearby city of Tyre.

SIEGE WALL A wall built by an army to prevent movement of the enemy. Another kind of siege wall was a ramp leading from ground level to the top of a city wall to give the attackers a way up.

SIN A moon god worshiped in Syria, Palestine, and Mesopotamia from the 3rd millennium B.C. through at least the Hellenistic period (332–37 B.C.).

SINAI PENINSULA The triangle-shaped desert between Israel and Egypt. The north boundary is the Mediterranean Sea, and the south is the two northern extensions of the Red Sea, one ending at Suez and one at Ezion Geber. *See* GULF OF AQABA.

SKEPTICS Followers of the philosophy that nothing can be known for certain.

SO Identified as the king of Egypt in 2Ki 17:4; possibly Osorkon IV (730–715 B.C.); or an Egyptian general; or a geographical name.

SODOM One of the "cities of the plain" (Ge 13:12). Any possible remains of the city are now thought to be submerged in the Dead Sea.

STELE A column or pillar of stone with inscriptions.

STOICS Followers of the philosophical school founded by Zeno, who came to Athens 313 B.C. Stoicism emphasized ethics, responsibility, and rational behavior.

STRABO Greek historian, probably a Roman citizen; lived about 64 B.C. to A.D. 21 and wrote about geography and politics.

SUCCOTH-BENOTH A deity worshiped by Babylonians resettled in Samaria after the Assyrian conquest of Samaria in 722 B.C. This god was a consort of Marduk. *See* MARDUK.

SUMER Ancient nation in southern Mesopotamia, dating from about 3000 to 2000 B.C.; sometimes referred to as Shinar. A considerable amount of Sumerian literature survives; the language continued to be used for long after the political end of Sumer.

SUSA Spelled *Shushan* in some translations, a town and a fortified citadel in southwestern Iran. The city was at the height of its power under the Persians in the 6th century B.C.

SUZERAIN A person or state exercising rule over other less powerful persons or states, called vassals.

SYNAGOGUE A Greek term meaning "congregation," normally referring to the regular meetings and meeting places of the Jews.

SYRIA An important Roman province, whose boundaries fluctuated but typically included what is today Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. In the Old Testament it was known as Aram. *See* ARAM.

SYRIAC Syriac is a Semitic language and a branch of Aramaic. The Syriac versions are early translations of the Bible, both Old and New Testaments, made between about the 2nd and 6th centuries A.D.

SYRO-PHOENICIAN From the area including Syria and Phoenicia, or the eastern Mediterranean coast and interior.

T

TABERNACLE A tent or shelter. In the Bible the term refers to the movable structure housing the ark, and to the temporary shelters used for the Festival of Tabernacles.

TALMUD The written record of Jewish traditions concerning the Bible, law, ethics, and many other subjects, essentially completed by A.D. 500.

TAMARISK A small tree common in the Middle East.

TAMMUZ A deity in Sumerian myth, the husband and brother of Ishtar. His yearly return from the underworld was said to restore the earth's fertility.

TARGUM Ancient Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible.

TELL A mound (*tell* in Arabic) covering the remains of an ancient city. Successive populations built their buildings on the ruins of what went before them, resulting in a hill with the earliest buildings at the lowest levels. Such tells are often the sites of modern towns.

TEMA An oasis in northern Arabia; the name derives from the Hebrew word meaning "south country."

TEMPLE SERVANTS Called Nethinim in some Bible translations, these were a special class of temple servants that returned from the Babylonian exile. The temple servants were one of five groups associated with the temple, along with priests, Levites, gatekeepers, and musicians.

TETRARCH A name used by the Romans for a local king ruling with their help.

THEBES A city 400 miles south of Cairo; second largest city of ancient Egypt. Flourished during the 16th to 11th centuries B.C. Some Bible translations use the Hebrew name, *No Amon*.

THEODICY An argument that defends God's justice, especially one that explains why there is evil in nature and society.

THEOPHANY An appearance of God, for example, at the burning bush or on Mount Sinai.

THUTMOSE I Ruler of Egypt 1504–1492 B.C. He expanded Egypt to the south, and in the East his armies reached the Euphrates. He was the first ruler to be buried in what became the Valley of the Kings.

THUTMOSE III Ruler of Egypt 1479–1425 B.C. He succeeded Hatshepsut to the throne, and then in a series of campaigns conquered Palestine and Syria as far as Carchemish and the Euphrates. His rule made Egypt powerful and prosperous.

TIAMAT Ruler of the chaotic waters who is defeated by Marduk, in the Gilgamesh Epic.

TIGLATH-PILESER I Ruler of Assyria 1114–1076 B.C. He wanted to establish a world empire, but his reign was followed by several centuries of national weakness.

TIGLATH-PILESER III Ruler of Assyria 744–727 B.C., a successful commander whose conquests reached as far as Egypt.

TIGRIS A river flowing from the region of Lake Van in Armenia southeast to the Persian Gulf. Mesopotamia is the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates.

TIRHAKAH Pharaoh of Egypt 690–664 B.C.; he was from Cush (that is, Ethiopia, or southern Egypt and Sudan).

TIRZAH The capital of northern Israel in the early 9th century B.C.

TISHBITE From Tishbe, a place evidently in Gilead, east of the Jordan.

TITHE Literally, a "tenth," a conventional assessment of taxes.

TOBIAH One of the three opponents of Nehemiah's rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

TOPHETH Or "Tophet," a place in the Valley of Ben Hinnom (2Ki 23:10) where the god Molek was worshiped by sacrificing children in fire. This valley is on the south side of Jerusalem and is called Gehenna in the New Testament.

TORAH The Law, that is, the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy.

TRANSJORDAN The territory across the Jordan River, that is, on the east bank.

TRIBUTE A tax that those who are defeated are forced to pay to the victor.

TUKULTI-NINURTA I Ruler of Assyria c. 1243–1207 B.C.; conquered Babylon.

TUTANKHAMUN Ruler of Egypt 1336–1327 B.C. His tomb, practically intact and containing fabulous wealth, was discovered by Lord Carnarvon and Howard Carter in 1922.

TYCHE The Greek word for fortune, or fate, often personified as a goddess.

TYRE A Phoenician port on a small island off the Mediterranean coast north of Israel. Tyre repelled all foreign invaders until 332 B.C., when Alexander the Great built a causeway to the island and conquered it.

U

UGARIT An ancient seaport in north Syria, occupied from 6000 B.C. to 1180 B.C.; today called Ras Shamra. Ugarit traded widely with other ancient nations. Excavation there has yielded the oldest example of the alphabet written down in order, and other important cuneiform documents.

ULAI A river near the fortified city of Susa (Shushan) in Persia. The Ulai may have been an artificial canal.

UNLEAVENED Made without yeast, or leaven, like crackers and tortillas.

UR An important Sumerian city on the Euphrates River, 150 miles southeast of Babylon; the original home of Abraham. Excavations at Ur uncovered rich royal tombs containing remains of servants buried with their king.

URARTU A small nation north of ancient Assyria that had threatened Assyria with conquest but was ultimately conquered during the reign of Tiglath-Pileser III.

URUK Ancient city 40 miles southeast of Ur, occupied from before 3500 B.C. The earliest known ziggurat is here, as are also the earliest written documents, clay tablets with Sumerian inscriptions. (Some Bible translations call this city *Erech*.)

USSHER, JAMES Archbishop of Armagh (Ireland), who prepared a chronology of the Bible. He died in A.D. 1656.

UTNAPISHTIM The survivor of the flood in the Gilgamesh Epic.

V

VALLEY OF HINNOM A valley below Jerusalem where children were sacrificed by fire to Baal, Chemosh, or Molek. The valley is called Gehenna in the New Testament.

VASSAL A person or state ruled by another, more powerful person or state, in an arrangement established by convention or treaty.

VICE-REGENT A person who rules for and in the place of another.

VULGATE The standard Latin translation of the Bible prepared by Jerome, who died about A.D. 420.

W

WILDERNESS A term used in the Bible for the uninhabited areas of the Middle East, typically desert or near-desert.

X

XERXES Xerxes I, also called Ahasuerus, the son of Darius I the Great and the ruler of Persia 486–465 B.C. Xerxes's navy was defeated by Athens at the battle of Salamis, 479 B.C.

Y

YAHWEH The probable pronunciation of the personal name of God, recorded in Hebrew as four consonants without vowels (YHWH). Translations usually write "LORD" instead of Yahweh.

YAREAH A moon god of Ugarit.

Z

ZERUBBABEL Appointed by the Persian king to be governor of the Jews returning to Judah from Babylon. Zerubbabel began the rebuilding of the Jerusalem temple around 537 or 536 B.C.

ZIGGURAT A pyramidlike tower, built in step formation with stairways to the top. More than two dozen ziggurats are known to have existed in ancient Mesopotamia. The gods were thought to dwell at the tops of these buildings.

ZODIAC The constellations of stars through which the sun, moon, and planets seem to pass during the year as seen from the earth. Twelve prominent constellations on this path yield the twelve signs of the zodiac.

ZOROASTRIANISM The religion of Persia, founded by Zoroaster in the 6th century or possibly the 10th century B.C. This prophet, also called Zarathustra, taught that there were two gods, one good and one evil, fighting for universal control. In the end the good god, Ahura Mazda, would prevail.

CONCORDANCE

The NIV Concordance, created by John R. Kohlenberger III, has been developed specifically for use with the New International Version (NIV). Like all concordances, it is a special index that contains an alphabetical listing of words used in the Bible text.

This concordance contains 2,474 word entries, with more than 10,000 Scripture references. Each word entry is followed by significant Scripture references in which that particular word is found, as well as by a brief excerpt from the surrounding context. In the context, the entry word is abbreviated by its first letter in bold print. Other forms of the entry word and related words indexed in this concordance are in parentheses.

This concordance also contains 155 biographical entries for significant people in the Bible. The descriptive phrases replace the brief context surrounding each occurrence of the name. In those instances where more than one Bible character has the same name, that name is placed under one block entry, and each person is given a number (1), (2), etc.

Two entries are marked with an asterisk (*). LORD* and LORD'S* list occurrences of the proper name of God, Yahweh, spelled "LORD" and "LORD's" in the NIV. These entries are distinguished from LORD and LORD's, which list occurrences of the title "Lord" and "Lord's."

This concordance is a valuable tool for Bible study. While one of its key purposes is to help the reader find forgotten references to familiar verses, it can also be used to do word studies and to locate and trace biblical themes. Whenever you find a significant context, be sure to read at least the whole verse in the NIV to discover its fuller meaning in its larger context.

AARON

Priesthood of (Ex 28:1; Nu 17; Heb 5:1–4; 7), garments (Ex 28; 39), consecration (Ex 29), ordination (Lev 8).

Spokesman for Moses (Ex 4:14–16, 27–31; 7:1–2). Supported Moses' hands in battle (Ex 17:8–13). Built golden calf (Ex 32; Dt 9:20). Talked against Moses (Nu 12). Priesthood opposed (Nu 16); staff budded (Nu 17). Forbidden to enter land (Nu 20:1–12). Death (Nu 20:22–29; 33:38–39).

ABANDON

Dt 4: 31 he will not **a** or destroy you
1Ti 4: 1 in later times some will **a** the faith

ABBA

Ro 8: 15 And by him we cry, "**A**, Father."
Gal 4: 6 the Spirit who calls out, "**A**,

ABEL

Second son of Adam (Ge 4:2). Offered proper sacrifice (Ge 4:4; Heb 11:4). Murdered by Cain (Ge 4:8; Mt 23:35; Lk 11:51; 1Jn 3:12).

ABIGAIL

Wife of Nabal (1Sa 25:30); pled for his life with David (1Sa 25:14–35). Became David's wife (1Sa 25:36–42).

ABIJAH

Son of Rehoboam; king of Judah (1Ki 14:31—15:8; 2Ch 12:16—14:1).

ABILITY (ABLE)

Ezr 2: 69 According to their **a** they gave
2Co 1: 8 far beyond our **a** to endure,
8: 3 were able, and even beyond their **a**.

ABIMELEK

1. King of Gerar who took Abraham's wife Sarah, believing her to be his sister (Ge 20). Later made a covenant with Abraham (Ge 21:22–33).

2. King of Gerar who took Isaac's wife Rebekah, believing her to be his sister (Ge 26:1–11). Later made a covenant with Isaac (Ge 26:12–31).

ABLE (ABILITY ENABLE ENABLED ENABLES)

Eze 7: 19 gold will not be **a** to deliver them
Da 3: 17 the God we serve is **a** to deliver us
Ro 8: 39 will be **a** to separate us
14: 4 the Lord is **a** to make them stand.
16: 25 to him who is **a** to establish you
2Co 9: 8 God is **a** to bless you abundantly,
Eph 3: 20 him who is **a** to do immeasurably
2Ti 1: 12 that he is **a** to guard what I have
3: 15 which are **a** to make you wise
Heb 7: 25 he is **a** to save completely
Jude : 24 To him who is **a** to keep you
Rev 5: 5 He is **a** to open the scroll and its

ABOLISH

Mt 5: 17 think that I have come to **a** the Law

ABOMINATION

Da 11: 31 set up the **a** that causes desolation.

ABOUND (ABOUNDING ABOUNDS)

2Co 9: 8 you will **a** in every good work.
Php 1: 9 your love may **a** more and more

ABOUNDING (ABOUND)

Ex 34: 6 to anger, **a** in love and faithfulness,
Ps 86: 5 **a** in love to all who call to you.

ABOUNDS (ABOUND)

2Co 1: 5 also our comfort **a** through Christ.

ABRAHAM

Covenant relation with the Lord (Ge 12:1–3; 13:14–17; 15; 17; 22:15–18; Ex 2:24; Ne 9:8; Ps 105; Mic 7:20; Lk 1:68–75; Ro 4; Heb 6:13–15).

Called from Ur, via Harran, to Canaan (Ge 12:1; Ac 7:2–4; Heb 11:8–10). Moved to Egypt, nearly

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

lost Sarah to Pharoah (Ge 12:10–20). Divided the land with Lot (Ge 13). Saved Lot from four kings (Ge 14:1–16); blessed by Melchizedek (Ge 14:17–20; Heb 7:1–20). Declared righteous by faith (Ge 15:6; Ro 4:3; Gal 3:6–9). Fathered Ishmael by Hagar (Ge 16).

Name changed from Abram (Ge 17:5; Ne 9:7). Circumcised (Ge 17; Ro 4:9–12). Entertained three visitors (Ge 18); promised a son by Sarah (Ge 18:9–15; 17:16). Moved to Gerar; nearly lost Sarah to Abimelek (Ge 20). Fathered Isaac by Sarah (Ge 21:1–7; Ac 7:8; Heb 11:11–12); sent away Hagar and Ishmael (Ge 21:8–21; Gal 4:22–30). Tested by offering Isaac (Ge 22; Heb 11:17–19; Jas 2:21–24). Sarah died; bought field of Ephron for burial (Ge 23). Secured wife for Isaac (Ge 24). Death (Ge 25:7–11).

ABSALOM

Son of David by Maakah (2Sa 3:3; 1Ch 3:2). Killed Amnon for rape of his sister Tamar; banished by David (2Sa 13). Returned to Jerusalem; received by David (2Sa 14). Rebelled against David; seized kingdom (2Sa 15–17). Killed (2Sa 18).

ABSTAIN (ABSTAINS)

1Pe 2:11 and exiles, to **a** from sinful desires,

ABSTAINS (ABSTAIN)

Ro 14:6 and whoever **a** does so to the Lord

ABUNDANCE (ABUNDANT)

Lk 12:15 not consist in an **a** of possessions."
Jude :2 peace and love be yours in **a**.

ABUNDANT (ABUNDANCE)

Dt 28:11 will grant you **a** prosperity—
Ps 145:7 They celebrate your **a** goodness
Pr 28:19 work their land will have **a** food,
Ro 5:17 who receive God's **a** provision

ABUSE

2Pe 2:11 do not heap **a** on such beings

ACCEPT (ACCEPTED ACCEPTS)

Ex 23:8 "Do not **a** a bribe, for a bribe
Pr 10:8 The wise in heart **a** commands,
19:20 Listen to advice and **a** discipline,
Ro 15:7 **A** one another, then, just as Christ
Jas 1:21 humbly **a** the word planted in you,

ACCEPTED (ACCEPT)

Lk 4:24 "no prophet is **a** in his hometown.

ACCEPTS (ACCEPT)

Ps 6:9 the Lord **a** my prayer.
Jn 13:20 whoever **a** anyone I send **a** me;

ACCOMPANY

Mk 16:17 these signs will **a** those who believe:

ACCOMPLISH

Isa 55:11 but will **a** what I desire and achieve

ACCORD

Nu 24:13 not do anything of my own **a**,
Jn 10:18 me, but I lay it down of my own **a**.

ACCOUNT (ACCOUNTABLE)

Mt 12:36 will have to give **a** on the day
Ro 14:12 of us will give an **a** of ourselves
Heb 4:13 of him to whom we must give **a**.

ACCOUNTABLE (ACCOUNT)

Eze 33:6 I will hold the watchman **a** for
Ro 3:19 and the whole world held **a** to God.

ACCUSATION (ACCUSE)

1Ti 5:19 not entertain an **a** against an elder

ACCUSE (ACCUSATION)

Pr 3:30 Do not **a** anyone for no reason—
Lk 3:14 money and don't **a** people falsely—

ACHAN

Sin at Jericho caused defeat at Ai; stoned (Jos 7; 22:20; 1Ch 2:7).

ACHE

Pr 14:13 Even in laughter the heart may **a**,

ACKNOWLEDGE

Mt 10:32 also **a** before my Father in heaven.
1Th 5:12 **a** those who work hard among you,
Php 2:11 every tongue **a** that Jesus Christ is
1Jn 4:3 spirit that does not **a** Jesus is not

ACQUIT

Ex 23:7 to death, for I will not **a** the guilty.

ACTION (ACTIONS ACTIVE ACTS)

Jas 2:17 if it is not accompanied by **a**,

ACTIONS (ACTION)

Gal 6:4 Each one should test their own **a**.
Titus 1:16 God, but by their **a** they deny him.

ACTIVE (ACTION)

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is alive and **a**.

ACTS (ACTION)

Ps 145:12 people may know of your mighty **a**
150:2 Praise him for his **a** of power;
Isa 64:6 all our righteous **a** are like filthy

ADAM

First man (Ge 1:26—2:25; Ro 5:14; 1Ti 2:13). Sin of (Ge 3; Hos 6:7; Ro 5:12–21). Children of (Ge 4:1—5:5). Death of (Ge 5:5; Ro 5:12–21; 1Co 15:22).

ADD

Dt 12:32 do not **a** to it or take away from it.
Pr 30:6 Do not **a** to his words, or he will
Lk 12:25 by worrying can **a** a single hour
Rev 22:18 them, God will **a** to that person

ADMIRABLE

Php 4:8 whatever is lovely, whatever is **a**—

ADMONISH

Col 3:16 and **a** one another with all wisdom

ADOPTION

Ro 8:23 wait eagerly for our **a** to sonship,
Eph 1:5 he predestined us for **a** to sonship

ADORE

SS 1:4 How right they are to **a** you!

ADORNMENT (ADORNS)

1Pe 3:3 should not come from outward **a**,

ADORNS (ADORNMENT)
Ps 93: 5 holiness **a** your house for endless
ADULTERY
Ex 20: 14 "You shall not commit **a**.
Mt 5: 27 was said, 'You shall not commit **a**.'
5: 28 lustfully has already committed **a**
5: 32 a divorced woman commits **a**.
15: 19 murder, **a**, sexual immorality, theft,
ADULTS
1Co14: 20 but in your thinking be **a**.
ADVANCED
Job 32: 7 **a** years should teach wisdom.'
ADVANTAGE
Ex 22: 22 "Do not take **a** of the widow
Dt 24: 14 Do not take **a** of a hired worker
1Th 4: 6 should wrong or take **a** of a brother
ADVERSITY
Pr 17: 17 a brother is born for a time of **a**.
ADVICE
1Ki 12: 8 Rehoboam rejected the **a** the elders
12: 14 he followed the **a** of the young men
Pr 12: 5 but the **a** of the wicked is deceitful.
12: 15 to them, but the wise listen to **a**.
19: 20 Listen to **a** and accept discipline,
20: 18 Plans are established by seeking **a**;
ADVOCATE
Jn 14: 16 he will give you another **a** to help
14: 26 But the **A**, the Holy Spirit,
1Jn 2: 1 sin, we have an **a** with the Father—
AFFECTION
2Pe 1: 7 and to godliness, mutual **a**; and to mutual **a**, love.
AFFLICTION
Ro 12: 12 patient in **a**, faithful in prayer.
AFRAID (FEAR)
Ge 26: 24 Do not be **a**, for I am with you;
Ex 3: 6 because he was **a** to look at God.
Ps 27: 1 of my life—of whom shall I be **a**?
56: 3 When I am **a**, I put my trust in
Pr 3: 24 you lie down, you will not be **a**;
Jer 1: 8 Do not be **a** of them, for I am
Mt 8: 26 of little faith, why are you so **a**?"
10: 28 Do not be **a** of those who kill
10: 31 So don't be **a**; you are worth more
Mk 5: 36 said, Jesus told him, "Don't be **a**;
Jn 14: 27 hearts be troubled and do not be **a**.
Heb13: 6 Lord is my helper; I will not be **a**.
AGED
Job 12: 12 Is not wisdom found among the **a**?
Pr 17: 6 children are a crown to the **a**,
AGREE
Mt 18: 19 earth **a** about anything they ask for,
Ro 7: 16 want to do, I **a** that the law is good.
AHAB
Son of Omri; king of Israel (1Ki 16:28—22:40), husband of Jezebel (1Ki 16:31). Promoted Baal worship (1Ki 16:31–33); opposed by Elijah (1Ki 17:1; 18; 21), a prophet (1Ki 20:35–43), Micaiah (1Ki 22:1–28). Defeated Ben-Hadad (1Ki 20). Killed for failing to kill Ben-Hadad and for murder of Naboth (1Ki 20:35—21:40).
AHAZ
Son of Jotham; king of Judah, (2Ki 16; 2Ch 28; Isa 7).
AHAZIAH
1. Son of Ahab; king of Israel (1Ki 22:51–2Ki 1:18; 2Ch 20:35–37).
2. Son of Jehoram; king of Judah (2Ki 8:25–29; 9:14–29), also called Jehoahaz (2Ch 21:17—22:9; 25:23).
AIM
1Co 7: 34 Her **a** is to be devoted to the Lord
AIR
1Co 9: 26 not fight like a boxer beating the **a**.
Eph 2: 2 the ruler of the kingdom of the **a**,
1Th 4: 17 clouds to meet the Lord in the **a**.
ALABASTER
Mt 26: 7 him with an **a** jar of very expensive
ALERT
Jos 8: 4 far from it. All of you be on the **a**.
Mk 13: 33 Be **a**! You do not know
Eph 6: 18 be **a** and always keep on praying
1Pe 1: 13 with minds that are **a** and fully
ALIENATED
Gal 5: 4 the law have been **a** from Christ;
ALIVE (LIVE)
Ac 1: 3 convincing proofs that he was **a**.
Ro 6: 11 to sin but **a** to God in Christ Jesus.
1Co15: 22 die, so in Christ all will be made **a**.
Heb 4: 12 the word of God is **a** and active.
ALMIGHTY (MIGHT)
Ge 17: 1 to him and said, "I am God **A**;
Job 11: 7 Can you probe the limits of the **A**?
33: 4 the breath of the **A** gives me life.
Ps 91: 1 will rest in the shadow of the **A**.
Isa 6: 3 "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord **A**;
ALTAR
Ge 22: 9 Abraham built an **a** there
Ex 27: 1 "Build an **a** of acacia wood,
1Ki 18: 30 he repaired the **a** of the Lord,
2Ch 4: 1 a bronze **a** twenty cubits long,
4: 19 the golden **a**; the tables
ALWAYS
Ps 16: 8 I keep my eyes **a** on the Lord.
26: 3 for I have **a** been mindful of your
51: 3 and my sin is **a** before me.
Mt 26: 11 The poor you will **a** have with you,
28: 20 And surely I am with you **a**,
1Co13: 7 It **a** protects, **a** trusts, **a** hopes,
Php 4: 4 Rejoice in the Lord **a**. I will say it
1Pe 3: 15 **A** be prepared to give an answer

AMAZIAH
Son of Joash; king of Judah (2Ki 14; 2Ch 25).

AMBASSADORS
2Co 5: 20 We are therefore Christ's **a**,

AMBITION
Ro 15: 20 It has always been my **a** to preach
1Th 4: 11 make it your **a** to lead a quiet life:

AMON
Son of Manasseh; king of Judah (2Ki 21:18–26; 1Ch 3:14; 2Ch 33:21–25).

ANANIAS
1. Husband of Sapphira; died for lying to God (Ac 5:1–11).
2. Disciple who baptized Saul (Ac 9:10–19).
3. High priest at Paul's arrest (Ac 22:30—24:1).

ANCESTORS
Heb 1: 1 spoke to our **a** through the prophets

ANCHOR
Heb 6: 19 We have this hope as an **a**

ANCIENT
Da 7: 9 and the **A** of Days took his seat.

ANDREW
Apostle; brother of Simon Peter (Mt 4:18; 10:2; Mk 1:16–18, 29; 3:18; 13:3; Lk 6:14; Jn 1:35–44; 6:8–9; 12:22; Ac 1:13).

ANGEL (ANGELS ARCHANGEL)
Ps 34: 7 The **a** of the Lord encamps
Ac 6: 15 his face was like the face of an **a**.
2Co 11: 14 Satan himself masquerades as an **a**
Gal 1: 8 or an **a** from heaven should preach

ANGELS (ANGEL)
Ps 8: 5 a little lower than the **a**
91: 11 command his **a** concerning you
Mt 18: 10 that their **a** in heaven always see
25: 41 fire prepared for the devil and his **a**.
Lk 20: 36 for they are like the **a**.
1Co 6: 3 you not know that we will judge **a**?
Heb 1: 4 the **a** as the name he has inherited
1: 14 Are not all **a** ministering spirits
2: 7 them a little lower than the **a**;
13: 2 hospitality to **a** without knowing it.
1Pe 1: 12 Even **a** long to look into these
2Pe 2: 4 if God did not spare **a** when they

ANGER (ANGERED ANGRY)
Ex 32: 10 that my **a** may burn against them
34: 6 slow to **a**, abounding in love
Dt 29: 28 In furious **a** and in great wrath
2Ki 22: 13 Great is the Lord's **a** that burns
Ps 30: 5 For his **a** lasts only a moment,
Pr 15: 1 wrath, but a harsh word stirs up **a**.

ANGERED (ANGER)
Pr 22: 24 do not associate with one easily **a**,
1Co 13: 5 it is not easily **a**, it keeps no record

ANGRY (ANGER)
Ps 2: 12 he will be **a** and your way will lead
Pr 29: 22 An **a** person stirs up conflict,
Jas 1: 19 to speak and slow to become **a**,

ANOINT
Ps 23: 5 You **a** my head with oil;
Jas 5: 14 **a** them with oil in the name

ANOTHER
1Pe 3: 8 love one **a**, be compassionate

ANT
Pr 6: 6 Go to the **a**, you sluggard;

ANTICHRIST
1Jn 2: 18 have heard that the **a** is coming,
2Jn : 7 person is the deceiver and the **a**.

ANTIOCH
Ac 11: 26 were called Christians first at **A**.

ANXIETY (ANXIOUS)
Pr 12: 25 **A** weighs down the heart,
1Pe 5: 7 Cast all your **a** on him because he

ANXIOUS (ANXIETY)
Php 4: 6 Do not be **a** about anything,

APOLLOS
Christian from Alexandria, learned in the Scriptures; instructed by Aquila and Priscilla (Ac 18:24–28). Ministered at Corinth (Ac 19:1; 1Co 1:12; 3; Titus 3:13).

APOSTLES
See also Andrew, Bartholomew, James, John, Judas, Matthew, Nathanael, Paul, Peter, Philip, Simon, Thaddaeus, Thomas.
Ac 1: 26 so he was added to the eleven **a**.
2: 43 and signs performed by the **a**.
1Co 12: 28 placed in the church first of all **a**,
15: 9 For I am the least of the **a** and do
2Co 11: 13 For such people are false **a**,
Eph 2: 20 built on the foundation of the **a**

APPEAR (APPEARANCE APPEARING)
Mk 13: 22 false prophets will **a** and perform
2Co 5: 10 we must all **a** before the judgment
Col 3: 4 you also will **a** with him in glory.
Heb 9: 24 now to **a** for us in God's presence.
9: 28 and he will **a** a second time,

APPEARANCE (APPEAR)
1Sa 16: 7 People look at the outward **a**,

APPEARING (APPEAR)
2Ti 4: 8 to all who have longed for his **a**.
Titus 2: 13 the **a** of the glory of our great God

APPLY
Pr 22: 17 **a** your heart to what I teach,
23: 12 **A** your heart to instruction and

APPROACH
Eph 3: 12 we may **a** God with freedom
Heb 4: 16 then **a** God's throne of grace

APPROVED
2Ti 2: 15 to present yourself to God as one **a**,

AQUILA
Husband of Priscilla; co-worker with Paul, in-

structor of Apollos (Ac 18; Ro 16:3; 1Co 16:19; 2Ti 4:19).

ARARAT
Ge 8: 4 to rest on the mountains of **A**.

ARCHANGEL (ANGEL)
1Th 4: 16 with the voice of the **a**
Jude : 9 But even the **a** Michael, when he

ARCHITECT
Heb11: 10 whose **a** and builder is God.

ARGUING
Php 2: 14 everything without grumbling or **a**,

ARK
Ge 6: 14 So make yourself an **a** of cypress
Dt 10: 5 put the tablets in the **a** I had made,
2Ch35: 3 "Put the sacred **a** in the temple
Heb 9: 4 This **a** contained the gold jar

ARM (ARMY)
Nu 11: 23 "Is the Lord's **a** too short?
1Pe 4: 1 **a** yourselves also with the same

ARMAGEDDON
Rev 16: 16 place that in Hebrew is called **A**.

ARMOR (ARMY)
1Ki 20: 11 his **a** should not boast like one who
Eph 6: 11 Put on the full **a** of God, so that
6: 13 Therefore put on the full **a** of God,

ARMS (ARMY)
Dt 33: 27 underneath are the everlasting **a**.
Ps 18: 32 It is God who **a** me with strength
Pr 31: 20 She opens her **a** to the poor
Isa 40: 11 He gathers the lambs in his **a**
Mk 10: 16 And he took the children in his **a**,

ARMY (ARM ARMOR ARMS)
Ps 33: 16 king is saved by the size of his **a**;
Rev 19: 19 the rider on the horse and his **a**.

AROMA
2Co 2: 15 the pleasing **a** of Christ among
2: 16 one we are an **a** that brings death;
2: 16 to the other, an **a** that brings life.

ARRAYED
Ps 110: 3 **A** in holy splendor, your young
Isa 61: 10 **a** me in a robe of his righteousness,

ARROGANT
Ro 11: 20 Do not be **a**, but tremble.

ARROWS
Eph 6: 16 can extinguish all the flaming **a**

ASA
King of Judah (1Ki 15:8–24; 1Ch 3:10; 2Ch 14–16).

ASCENDED
Eph 4: 8 "When he **a** on high, he took many

ASCRIBE
1Ch16: 28 **A** to the Lord, all you families
16: 28 **a** to the Lord glory and strength.
Job 36: 3 I will **a** justice to my Maker.
Ps 29: 2 **A** to the Lord the glory due his

ASHAMED (SHAME)
Lk 9: 26 Whoever is **a** of me and my words, the Son of Man will be **a** of them
Ro 1: 16 For I am not **a** of the gospel,
2Ti 1: 8 So do not be **a** of the testimony
2: 15 worker who does not need to be **a**

ASSIGNED
Mk 13: 34 each with their **a** task, and tells
1Co 3: 5 as the Lord has **a** to each his task.
7: 17 whatever situation the Lord has **a**

ASSOCIATE
Pr 22: 24 do not **a** with one easily angered,
Ro 12: 16 be willing to **a** with people of low
1Co 5: 11 you must not **a** with anyone who
2Th 3: 14 Do not **a** with them, in order

ASSURANCE
Heb10: 22 and with the full **a** that faith brings,

ASTRAY
Pr 10: 17 ignores correction leads others **a**.
Isa 53: 6 have gone **a**, each of us has turned
Jer 50: 6 their shepherds have led them **a**
1Pe 2: 25 For "you were like sheep going **a**,"
1Jn 3: 7 do not let anyone lead you **a**.

ATHALIAH
Evil queen of Judah (2Ki 11; 2Ch 23).

ATHLETE
2Ti 2: 5 competes as an **a** does not receive

ATONEMENT
Ex 25: 17 "Make an **a** cover of pure gold—
30: 10 Once a year Aaron shall make **a**
Lev 17: 11 blood that makes **a** for one's life.
23: 27 this seventh month is the Day of **A**.
Nu 25: 13 God and made **a** for the Israelites."
Ro 3: 25 presented Christ as a sacrifice of **a**,
Heb 2: 17 that he might make **a** for the sins

ATTENTION
Pr 4: 1 pay **a** and gain understanding.
5: 1 My son, pay **a** to my wisdom,
22: 17 Pay **a** and turn your ear
Titus1: 14 and will pay no **a** to Jewish myths

ATTITUDE (ATTITUDES)
Eph 4: 23 made new in the **a** of your minds;
1Pe 4: 1 yourselves also with the same **a**,

ATTITUDES (ATTITUDE)
Heb 4: 12 the thoughts and **a** of the heart.

ATTRACTIVE
Titus2: 10 teaching about God our Savior **a**.

AUTHORITIES (AUTHORITY)
Ro 13: 5 it is necessary to submit to the **a**,
13: 6 for the **a** are God's servants,
Titus3: 1 to be subject to rulers and **a**,
1Pe 3: 22 **a** and powers in submission to him.

AUTHORITY (AUTHORITIES)
Mt 7: 29 he taught as one who had **a**,
9: 6 the Son of Man has **a** on earth

Mt 28: 18 "All **a** in heaven and on earth has
Ro 13: 1 for there is no **a** except
13: 2 rebels against the **a** is rebelling
1Co 11: 10 ought to have **a** over her own head,
1Ti 2: 2 for kings and all those in **a**, that we
2: 12 to teach or to assume **a** over a man;
Heb 13: 17 your leaders and submit to their **a**,

AVENGE (VENGEANCE)
Dt 32: 35 It is mine to **a**; I will repay.

AVOID
Pr 20: 3 It is to one's honor to **a** strife,
20: 19 so **a** anyone who talks too much.
1Th 4: 3 you should **a** sexual immorality;
2Ti 2: 16 **A** godless chatter, because those
Titus 3: 9 But **a** foolish controversies

AWAKE
Ps 17: 15 when I **a**, I will be satisfied
1Th 5: 6 asleep, but let us be **a** and sober.

AWE (AWESOME)
Job 25: 2 "Dominion and **a** belong to God;
Ps 119: 120 of you; I stand in **a** of your laws.
Isa 29: 23 will stand in **a** of the God of Israel.
Jer 33: 9 they will be in **a** and will tremble
Hab 3: 2 I stand in **a** of your deeds, Lord.
Mal 2: 5 me and stood in **a** of my name.
Mt 9: 8 saw this, they were filled with **a**;
Lk 7: 16 They were all filled with **a**
Ac 2: 43 Everyone was filled with **a**
Heb 12: 28 acceptably with reverence and **a**,

AWESOME (AWE)
Ge 28: 17 and said, "How **a** is this place!
Ex 15: 11 majestic in holiness, **a** in glory,
Dt 7: 21 is among you, is a great and **a** God.
10: 17 God, mighty and **a**, who shows no
28: 58 revere this glorious and **a** name—
Jdg 13: 6 looked like an angel of God, very **a**.
Ne 1: 5 the great and **a** God, who keeps his
9: 32 God, mighty and **a**, who keeps his
Job 10: 16 again display your **a** power against
37: 22 God comes in **a** majesty.
Ps 45: 4 your right hand achieve **a** deeds.
47: 2 For the Lord Most High is **a**,
66: 5 has done, his **a** deeds for mankind!
68: 35 You, God, are **a** in your sanctuary;
89: 7 he is more **a** than all who surround
99: 3 praise your great and **a** name—
111: 9 holy and **a** is his name.
145: 6 tell of the power of your **a** works—
Da 9: 4 the great and **a** God, who keeps his

BAAL
1Ki 18: 25 Elijah said to the prophets of **B**,

BAASHA
King of Israel (1Ki 15:16—16:7; 2Ch 16:1–6).

BABIES (BABY)
Lk 18: 15 bringing **b** to Jesus for him to place
1Pe 2: 2 Like newborn **b**, crave pure

BABY (BABIES)
Isa 49: 15 "Can a mother forget the **b** at her
Lk 1: 44 the **b** in my womb leaped for joy.
2: 12 You will find a **b** wrapped in cloths
Jn 16: 21 **b** is born she forgets the anguish

BABYLON
Ps 137: 1 By the rivers of **B** we sat and wept

BACKSLIDING
Jer 3: 22 I will cure you of **b**."
Eze 37: 23 save them from all their sinful **b**,

BAGS
Mt 25: 15 To one he gave five **b** of gold, to another two **b**, and to another one

BALAAM
Prophet who attempted to curse Israel (Nu 22–24; Dt 23:4–5; 2Pe 2:15; Jude 11). Killed (Nu 31:8; Jos 13:22).

BALM
Jer 8: 22 Is there no **b** in Gilead? Is there no

BANISH
Jer 25: 10 will **b** from them the sounds of joy

BANQUET
SS 2: 4 Let him lead me to the **b** hall,
Lk 14: 13 But when you give a **b**,

BAPTIZE (BAPTIZED)
Mt 3: 11 "I **b** you with water for repentance.
3: 11 He will **b** you with the Holy Spirit
Mk 1: 8 I **b** you with water, but he will **b**
1Co 1: 17 For Christ did not send me to **b**,

BAPTIZED (BAPTIZE)
Mt 3: 6 they were **b** by him in the Jordan
Mk 1: 9 and was **b** by John in the Jordan.
10: 38 be **b** with the baptism I am **b** with?"
16: 16 believes and is **b** will be saved,
Jn 4: 2 in fact it was not Jesus who **b**,
Ac 1: 5 For John **b** with water, but in a few

BARABBAS
Mt 27: 17 release to you: Jesus **B**, or Jesus

BARBS
Nu 33: 55 remain will become **b** in your eyes

BARE
Heb 4: 13 and laid **b** before the eyes of him

BARNABAS
Disciple, originally Joseph (Ac 4:36), prophet (Ac 13:1), apostle (Ac 14:14). Brought Paul to apostles (Ac 9:27), Antioch (Ac 11:22–29; Gal 2:1–13), on the first missionary journey (Ac 13–14). Together at Jerusalem Council, they separated over John Mark (Ac 15). Later co-workers (1Co 9:6; Col 4:10).

BARTHOLOMEW
Apostle (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14; Ac 1:13). Possibly also known as Nathanael (Jn 1:45–49; 21:2).

BATH
Jn 13: 10 who have had a **b** need only

BATHSHEBA
Wife of Uriah who committed adultery with and became wife of David (2Sa 11), mother of Solomon (2Sa 12:24; 1Ki 1–2; 1Ch 3:5).

BATTLE
2Ch20: 15 For the **b** is not yours, but God's.
Ps 24: 8 mighty, the Lord mighty in **b**.
Ecc 9: 11 to the swift or the **b** to the strong,

BEAR (BEARING BIRTH BIRTHRIGHT BORE BORN FIRSTBORN NEWBORN)
Ge 4: 13 punishment is more than I can **b**.
Ps 38: 4 me like a burden too heavy to **b**.
Isa 53: 11 many, and he will **b** their iniquities.
Da 7: 5 beast, which looked like a **b**.
Mt 7: 18 A good tree cannot **b** bad fruit,
Jn 15: 2 branch that does **b** fruit he prunes
15: 16 so that you might go and **b** fruit—
Ro 15: 1 We who are strong ought to **b**
1Co 10: 13 tempted beyond what you can **b**.
Col 3: 13 **B** with each other and forgive one

BEARING (BEAR)
Eph 4: 2 patient, **b** with one another in love.
Col 1: 10 **b** fruit in every good work,

BEAST
Rev 13: 18 calculate the number of the **b**, for it

BEAT (BEATING)
Isa 2: 4 They will **b** their swords
Joel 3: 10 **B** your plowshares into swords

BEATING (BEAT)
1Co 9: 26 I do not fight like a boxer **b** the air.
1Pe 2: 20 if you receive a **b** for doing wrong

BEAUTIFUL (BEAUTY)
Ge 6: 2 the daughters of humans were **b**,
12: 11 "I know what a **b** woman you are.
12: 14 saw that Sarai was a very **b** woman.
24: 16 The woman was very **b**, a virgin;
26: 7 of Rebekah, because she is **b**."
29: 17 had a lovely figure and was **b**.
Pr 11: 22 snout is a **b** woman who shows no
Ecc 3: 11 He has made everything **b** in its
Isa 4: 2 the Branch of the Lord will be **b**
52: 7 How **b** on the mountains are the
Eze 20: 6 and honey, the most **b** of all lands.
Zec 9: 17 How attractive and **b** they will be!
Mt 23: 27 which look **b** on the outside
26: 10 She has done a **b** thing to me.
Ro 10: 15 "How **b** are the feet of those who

BEAUTY (BEAUTIFUL)
Ps 27: 4 to gaze on the **b** of the Lord
45: 11 the king be enthralled by your **b**;
Pr 31: 30 is deceptive, and **b** is fleeting;
Isa 33: 17 Your eyes will see the king in his **b**
53: 2 He had no **b** or majesty to attract
61: 3 them a crown of **b** instead of ashes,
Eze 28: 12 full of wisdom and perfect in **b**.
1Pe 3: 4 unfading **b** of a gentle and quiet

BED
Heb 13: 4 and the marriage **b** kept pure,

BEELZEBUL
Lk 11: 15 said, "By **B**, the prince of demons,

BEER
Pr 20: 1 Wine is a mocker and **b** a brawler;

BEERSHEBA
Jdg 20: 1 all Israel from Dan to **B**

BEGINNING
Ge 1: 1 In the **b** God created the heavens
Ps 102: 25 In the **b** you laid the foundations
111: 10 of the Lord is the **b** of wisdom;
Pr 1: 7 the Lord is the **b** of knowledge,
4: 7 The **b** of wisdom is this:
Jn 1: 1 In the **b** was the Word,
1Jn 1: 1 That which was from the **b**,
Rev 21: 6 and the Omega, the **B** and the End.

BEHAVE (BEHAVIOR)
Ro 13: 13 us **b** decently, as in the daytime,

BEHAVIOR (BEHAVE)
Pr 1: 3 receiving instruction in prudent **b**,

BELIEVE (BELIEVED BELIEVER BELIEVERS BELIEVES BELIEVING)
Pr 14: 15 The simple **b** anything,
Mt 18: 6 those who **b** in me—
21: 22 If you **b**, you will receive whatever
Mk 1: 15 Repent and **b** the good news!"
9: 24 the boy's father exclaimed, "I do **b**;
16: 17 accompany those who **b**:
Lk 8: 50 just **b**, and she will be healed."
24: 25 how slow to **b** all that the prophets
Jn 1: 7 so that through him all might **b**.
3: 18 does not **b** stands condemned
6: 29 to **b** in the one he has sent."
10: 38 even though you do not **b** me,
11: 27 "I **b** that you are the Messiah,
14: 1 You **b** in God; **b** also in me.
14: 11 **B** me when I say that I am
16: 30 This makes us **b** that you came
16: 31 "Do you now **b**?" Jesus replied.
17: 21 the world may **b** that you have sent
20: 27 into my side. Stop doubting and **b**."
20: 31 may **b** that Jesus is the Messiah,
Ac 16: 31 They replied, "**B** in the Lord Jesus,
24: 14 I **b** everything that is in accordance
Ro 3: 22 faith in Jesus Christ to all who **b**.
4: 11 he is the father of all who **b**
10: 9 **b** in your heart that God raised
10: 14 how can they **b** in the one of whom
1Th 4: 14 For we **b** that Jesus died and rose
2Th 2: 11 delusion so that they will **b** the lie
1Ti 4: 10 and especially of those who **b**.
Titus 1: 6 a man whose children **b** and are
Heb 11: 6 comes to him must **b** that he exists
Jas 2: 19 You **b** that there is one God. Good!
Even the demons **b** that—
1Jn 4: 1 Dear friends, do not **b** every spirit,

BELIEVED (BELIEVE)
Ge 15: 6 Abram **b** the Lord, and he
Jnh 3: 5 The Ninevites **b** God. A fast was
Jn 1: 12 to those who **b** in his name,
2: 22 Then they **b** the scripture
3: 18 already because they have not **b**
20: 8 also went inside. He saw and **b**.
20: 29 who have not seen and yet have **b**."
Ac 13: 48 were appointed for eternal life **b**.
Ro 4: 3 "Abraham **b** God, and it was
10: 14 call on the one they have not **b** in?
1Co 15: 2 Otherwise, you have **b** in vain.
Gal 3: 6 So also Abraham "**b** God, and it
2Ti 1: 12 because I know whom I have **b**,
Jas 2: 23 that says, "Abraham **b** God, and it

BELIEVER (BELIEVE)
1Co 7: 12 brother has a wife who is not a **b**
2Co 6: 15 what does a **b** have in common

BELIEVERS (BELIEVE)
Ac 4: 32 All the **b** were one in heart
5: 12 all the **b** used to meet together
1Co 6: 5 to judge a dispute between **b**?
1Ti 4: 12 set an example for the **b** in speech,
1Pe 2: 17 love the family of **b**, fear God,

BELIEVES (BELIEVE)
Mk 9: 23 is possible for one who **b**."
11: 23 **b** that what they say will happen,
16: 16 Whoever **b** and is baptized
Jn 3: 16 whoever **b** in him shall not perish
3: 36 Whoever **b** in the Son has eternal
5: 24 **b** him who sent me has eternal life
6: 35 and whoever **b** in me will never be
6: 40 and **b** in him shall have eternal life,
6: 47 you, the one who **b** has eternal life.
7: 38 Whoever **b** in me, as Scripture has
Ro 1: 16 salvation to everyone who **b**:
9: 33 the one who **b** in him will never be
10: 4 righteousness for everyone who **b**.
1Jn 5: 1 Everyone who **b** that Jesus is
5: 5 Only the one who **b** that Jesus is

BELIEVING (BELIEVE)
Jn 11: 26 whoever lives by **b** in me will never
20: 31 by **b** you may have life in his name.

BELONG (BELONGS)
Dt 29: 29 The secret things **b** to the Lord
Job 25: 2 "Dominion and awe **b** to God;
Ps 47: 9 for the kings of the earth **b** to God;
95: 4 and the mountain peaks **b** to him.
Jn 8: 44 You **b** to your father, the devil,
15: 19 As it is, you do not **b** to the world,
Ro 1: 6 those Gentiles who are called to **b**
7: 4 that you might **b** to another, to him
14: 8 we live or die, we **b** to the Lord.
Gal 5: 24 Those who **b** to Christ Jesus have
1Th 5: 8 But since we **b** to the day, let us be

BELONGS (BELONG)
Job 41: 11 Everything under heaven **b** to me.
Ps 111: 10 To him **b** eternal praise.
Eze 18: 4 For everyone **b** to me, the parent as
Jn 8: 47 Whoever **b** to God hears what God
Ro 12: 5 each member **b** to all the others.

BELOVED (LOVE)
Dt 33: 12 "Let the **b** of the Lord rest
SS 2: 16 My **b** is mine and I am his;
7: 10 I belong to my **b**, and his desire is

BELT
Isa 11: 5 Righteousness will be his **b**
Eph 6: 14 the **b** of truth buckled around your

BENEFICIAL (BENEFIT)
1Co 10: 23 but not everything is **b**.

BENEFIT (BENEFICIAL BENEFITS)
Ro 6: 22 the **b** you reap leads to holiness,
2Co 4: 15 All this is for your **b**,

BENEFITS (BENEFIT)
Ps 103: 2 my soul, and forget not all his **b**—
Jn 4: 38 and you have reaped the **b** of their

BENJAMIN
Twelfth son of Jacob by Rachel (Ge 35:16–24; 46:19–21; 1Ch 2:2). Jacob refused to send him to Egypt, but relented (Ge 42–45).

BEREAN
Ac 17: 11 the **B** Jews were of more noble

BESTOWS
Ps 84: 11 the Lord **b** favor and honor;

BETHLEHEM
Mt 2: 1 After Jesus was born in **B** in Judea,

BETRAY
Pr 25: 9 do not **b** another's confidence,

BIND (BINDS)
Dt 6: 8 and **b** them on your foreheads.
Pr 6: 21 **B** them always on your heart;
Isa 61: 1 He has sent me to **b**
Mt 16: 19 whatever you **b** on earth will be

BINDS (BIND)
Ps 147: 3 and **b** up their wounds.
Isa 30: 26 when the Lord **b** up the bruises

BIRDS
Mt 8: 20 "Foxes have dens and **b** have nests,

BIRTH (BEAR)
Ps 58: 3 Even from **b** the wicked go astray;
Mt 1: 18 This is how the **b** of Jesus
1Pe 1: 3 great mercy he has given us new **b**

BIRTHRIGHT (BEAR)
Ge 25: 34 up and left. So Esau despised his **b**.

BLAMELESS
Ge 17: 1 walk before me faithfully and be **b**.
Job 1: 1 This man was **b** and upright;
Ps 84: 11 from those whose walk is **b**.
119: 1 are those whose ways are **b**,
Pr 19: 1 poor whose walk is **b** than a fool
1Co 1: 8 so that you will be **b** on the day
Eph 5: 27 any other blemish, but holy and **b**.

Php 2: 15 that you may become **b** and pure,
1Th 3: 13 your hearts so that you will be **b**
5: 23 body be kept **b** at the coming of
Titus1: 6 An elder must be **b**, faithful to his
Heb 7: 26 one who is holy, **b**, pure, set apart
2Pe 3: 14 spotless, **b** and at peace with him.

BLASPHEMES
Mk 3: 29 whoever **b** against the Holy Spirit

BLEMISH
1Pe 1: 19 Christ, a lamb without **b** or defect.

BLESS (BLESSED BLESSING BLESSINGS)
Ge 12: 3 I will **b** those who **b** you,
Ro 12: 14 **B** those who persecute you;

BLESSED (BLESS)
Ge 1: 22 God **b** them and said, "Be fruitful
2: 3 Then God **b** the seventh day
22: 18 all nations on earth will be **b**,
Ps 1: 1 **B** is the one who does not walk
2: 12 **B** are all who take refuge in him.
33: 12 **B** is the nation whose God is
41: 1 **B** are those who have regard
84: 5 **B** are those whose strength is
106: 3 **B** are those who act justly,
112: 1 **B** are those who fear the Lord,
118: 26 **B** is he who comes in the name
Pr 29: 18 **b** is the one who heeds wisdom's
31: 28 Her children arise and call her **b**;
Mt 5: 3 "**B** are the poor in spirit, for theirs
5: 4 **B** are those who mourn, for they
5: 5 **B** are the meek, for they will
5: 6 **B** are those who hunger and thirst
5: 7 **B** are the merciful, for they will
5: 8 **B** are the pure in heart, for they
5: 9 **B** are the peacemakers, for they
5: 10 **B** are those who are persecuted
5: 11 "**B** are you when people insult you,
Lk 1: 48 on all generations will call me **b**,
Jn 12: 13 "**B** is he who comes in the name
Ac 20: 35 'It is more **b** to give than
Titus2: 13 while we wait for the **b** hope—
Jas 1: 12 **B** is the one who perseveres under
Rev 1: 3 **B** is the one who reads aloud
22: 14 "**B** are those who wash their robes,

BLESSING (BLESS)
Eze 34: 26 there will be showers of **b**.

BLESSINGS (BLESS)
Pr 10: 6 **B** crown the head of the righteous,

BLIND
Mt 15: 14 If the **b** lead the **b**, both will fall
23: 16 "Woe to you, **b** guides! You say,
Jn 9: 25 I do know. I was **b** but now I see!"

BLOOD
Ge 9: 6 "Whoever sheds human **b**, by humans shall their **b** be shed;
Ex 12: 13 The **b** will be a sign for you
Ex 24: 8 "This is the **b** of the covenant
Lev 17: 11 For the life of a creature is in the **b**,
17: 11 it is the **b** that makes atonement
Ps 72: 14 for precious is their **b** in his sight.
Pr 6: 17 hands that shed innocent **b**,
Mt 26: 28 This is my **b** of the covenant,
Ro 3: 25 through the shedding of his **b**—
5: 9 have now been justified by his **b**,
1Co 11: 25 cup is the new covenant in my **b**;
Eph 1: 7 we have redemption through his **b**,
2: 13 brought near by the **b** of Christ.
Col 1: 20 by making peace through his **b**,
Heb 9: 12 once for all by his own **b**,
9: 22 everything be cleansed with **b**,
1Pe 1: 19 but with the precious **b** of Christ,
1Jn 1: 7 and the **b** of Jesus, his Son,
Rev 1: 5 has freed us from our sins by his **b**,
5: 9 with your **b** you purchased for God
7: 14 them white in the **b** of the Lamb.
12: 11 over him by the **b** of the Lamb

BLOT (BLOTS)
Ex 32: 32 **b** me out of the book you have
Ps 51: 1 to your great compassion **b** out my
Rev 3: 5 I will never **b** out the name

BLOTS (BLOT)
Isa 43: 25 "I, even I, am he who **b** out your

BLOWN
Eph 4: 14 and **b** here and there by every wind
Jas 1: 6 the sea, **b** and tossed by the wind.

BOAST
1Ki 20: 11 his armor should not **b** like one
Ps 44: 8 In God we make our **b** all day long,
Pr 27: 1 Do not **b** about tomorrow, for you
1Co 1: 31 "Let the one who boasts **b**
Gal 6: 14 May I never **b** except in the cross
Eph 2: 9 not by works, so that no one can **b**.

BOAZ
Wealthy Bethlehemite who showed favor to Ruth (Ru 2), married her (Ru 4). Ancestor of David (Ru 4:18–22; 1Ch 2:12–15), Jesus (Mt 1:5–16; Lk 3:23–32).

BODIES (BODY)
Ro 12: 1 to offer your **b** as a living sacrifice,
1Co 6: 15 not know that your **b** are members
6: 19 not know that your **b** are temples
Eph 5: 28 to love their wives as their own **b**.

BODY (BODIES)
Zec 13: 6 are these wounds on your **b**?'
Mt 10: 28 can destroy both soul and **b** in hell.
10: 28 be afraid of those who kill the **b**
26: 26 "Take and eat; this is my **b**."
Jn 13: 10 their whole **b** is clean.
1Co 11: 24 "This is my **b**, which is for you;
12: 12 Just as a **b**, though one, has many
Eph 5: 30 for we are members of his **b**.

BOLD (BOLDNESS)
Pr 21: 29 The wicked put up a **b** front,

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Pr 28: 1 but the righteous are as **b** as a lion.

BOLDNESS (BOLD)
Ac 4: 29 to speak your word with great **b**.

BONDAGE
Ezr 9: 9 God has not forsaken us in our **b**.

BOOK (BOOKS)
Jos 1: 8 Keep this **B** of the Law always
Ne 8: 8 They read from the **B** of the Law
Jn 20: 30 which are not recorded in this **b**.
Php 4: 3 whose names are in the **b** of life.
Rev 21: 27 are written in the Lamb's **b** of life.

BOOKS (BOOK)
Ecc 12: 12 Of making many **b** there is no end,

BORE (BEAR)
Isa 53: 4 up our pain and **b** our suffering,

BORN (BEAR)
Isa 9: 6 For to us a child is **b**, to us a son is
Jn 3: 7 my saying, 'You must be **b** again.'
1Pe 1: 23 For you have been **b** again,
1Jn 4: 7 Everyone who loves has been **b**
5: 1 that Jesus is the Christ is **b** of God,

BORROWER
Pr 22: 7 and the **b** is slave to the lender.

BOUGHT
Ac 20: 28 which he **b** with his own blood.
1Co 6: 20 you were **b** at a price.
7: 23 You were **b** at a price;
2Pe 2: 1 the sovereign Lord who **b** them—

BOUNDLESS
Eph 3: 8 the Gentiles the **b** riches of Christ,

BOW
Ps 95: 6 Come, let us **b** down in worship,
Isa 45: 23 Before me every knee will **b**;
Ro 14: 11 Lord, 'every knee will **b** before me;
Php 2: 10 name of Jesus every knee should **b**,

BRANCH (BRANCHES)
Isa 4: 2 that day the **B** of the Lord will be
Jer 33: 15 I will make a righteous **B** sprout

BRANCHES (BRANCH)
Jn 15: 5 "I am the vine; you are the **b**.

BRAVE
2Sa 2: 7 then, be strong and **b**, for Saul your

BREAD
Dt 8: 3 that man does not live on **b** alone
Pr 30: 8 riches, but give me only my daily **b**.
Isa 55: 2 spend money on what is not **b**,
Mt 4: 4 'Man shall not live on **b** alone,
6: 11 Give us today our daily **b**.
Jn 6: 35 Jesus declared, "I am the **b** of life.
21: 13 took the **b** and gave it to them,
1Co 11: 23 the night he was betrayed, took **b**,

BREAK (BREAKING BROKEN)
Nu 30: 2 he must not **b** his word but must
Jdg 2: 1 'I will never **b** my covenant
Ps 2: 9 You will **b** them with a rod of iron;
Isa 42: 3 A bruised reed he will not **b**,
Mt 12: 20 A bruised reed he will not **b**,

BREAKING (BREAK)
Jas 2: 10 just one point is guilty of **b** all of it.

BREASTPIECE (BREASTPLATE)
Ex 28: 15 "Fashion a **b** for making decisions

BREASTPLATE (BREASTPIECE)
Isa 59: 17 He put on righteousness as his **b**,
Eph 6: 14 the **b** of righteousness in place,
1Th 5: 8 putting on faith and love as a **b**,

BREATHED (GOD-BREATHED)
Ge 2: 7 **b** into his nostrils the breath of life,
Jn 20: 22 with that he **b** on them and said,

BRIBE
Ex 23: 8 "Do not accept a **b**, for a **b** blinds
Pr 6: 35 he will refuse a **b**, however great it

BRIDE
Rev 19: 7 and his **b** has made herself ready.

BRIGHTER (BRIGHTNESS)
Pr 4: 18 shining ever **b** till the full light

BRIGHTNESS (BRIGHTER)
2Sa 22: 13 Out of the **b** of his presence bolts
Da 12: 3 who are wise will shine like the **b**

BROAD
Mt 7: 13 gate and **b** is the road that leads

BROKEN (BREAK)
Ps 51: 17 My sacrifice, O God, is a **b** spirit;
Ecc 4: 12 of three strands is not quickly **b**.

BROKENHEARTED (HEART)
Ps 34: 18 The Lord is close to the **b**
109: 16 the poor and the needy and the **b**.
147: 3 He heals the **b** and binds up their
Isa 61: 1 He has sent me to bind up the **b**,

BROTHER (BROTHER'S BROTHERS)
Pr 17: 17 a **b** is born for a time of adversity.
18: 24 a friend who sticks closer than a **b**.
Mt 18: 15 "If your **b** or sister sins,
Mk 3: 35 Whoever does God's will is my **b**
Lk 17: 3 "If your **b** or sister sins against you,
1Co 8: 13 if what I eat causes my **b** or sister
1Jn 2: 10 who loves their **b** and sister

BROTHER'S (BROTHER)
Ge 4: 9 "Am I my **b** keeper?"

BROTHERS (BROTHER)
Mt 25: 40 did for one of the least of these **b**
Mk 10: 29 "no one who has left home or **b**
Heb 13: 1 Keep on loving one another as **b**

BUILD (BUILDING BUILDS BUILT)
Mt 16: 18 on this rock I will **b** my church,
Ac 20: 32 which can **b** you up and give you
1Co 3: 10 But each one should **b** with care.
14: 12 excel in those that **b** up the church.
1Th 5: 11 one another and **b** each other up,

BUILDING (BUILD)
1Co 3: 9 you are God's field, God's **b**.

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2Co10: 8 authority the Lord gave us for **b**
Eph 4: 29 only what is helpful for **b** others

BUILDS (BUILD)
Ps 127: 1 Unless the Lord **b** the house,
1Co 8: 1 puffs up while love **b** up.

BUILT (BUILD)
Mt 7: 24 is like a wise man who **b** his house
1Co14: 26 so that the church may be **b** up.
Eph 2: 20 **b** on the foundation of the apostles
4: 12 that the body of Christ may be **b**

BURDEN (BURDENED BURDENS)
Ps 38: 4 overwhelmed me like a **b** too heavy
Mt 11: 30 my yoke is easy and my **b** is light."

BURDENED (BURDEN)
Gal 5: 1 do not let yourselves be **b** again

BURDENS (BURDEN)
Ps 68: 19 our Savior, who daily bears our **b**.
Gal 6: 2 Carry each other's **b**, and in this

BURIED
Ro 6: 4 We were therefore **b** with him
1Co15: 4 that he was **b**, that he was raised

BURNING
Lev 6: 9 the fire must be kept **b** on the altar.
Ro 12: 20 you will heap **b** coals on his head."

BUSINESS
Da 8: 27 got up and went about the king's **b**.
1Th 4: 11 You should mind your own **b**

BUSY
1Ki 20: 40 While your servant was **b** here
2Th 3: 11 are not **b**; they are busybodies.
Titus2: 5 pure, to be **b** at home, to be kind,

CAESAR
Mt 22: 21 give back to **C** what is Caesar's,

CAIN
Firstborn of Adam (Ge 4:1), murdered brother Abel (Ge 4:1–16; 1Jn 3:12).

CALEB
Judahite who spied out Canaan (Nu 13:6); allowed to enter land because of faith (Nu 13:30—14:38; Dt 1:36). Possessed Hebron (Jos 14:6—15:19).

CALF
Ex 32: 4 into an idol cast in the shape of a **c**,
Lk 15: 23 Bring the fattened **c** and kill it.

CALL (CALLED CALLING CALLS)
Ps 145: 18 Lord is near to all who **c** on him,
Pr 31: 28 children arise and **c** her blessed;
Isa 5: 20 Woe to those who **c** evil good
55: 6 **c** on him while he is near.
65: 24 Before they **c** I will answer;
Jer 33: 3 '**C** to me and I will answer you
Mt 9: 13 I have not come to **c** the righteous,
Ro 10: 12 richly blesses all who **c** on him,
11: 29 gifts and his **c** are irrevocable.
1Th 4: 7 For God did not **c** us to be impure,

CALLED (CALL)
1Sa 3: 5 and said, "Here I am; you **c** me."
2Ch 7: 14 my people, who are **c** by my name,
Ps 34: 6 This poor man **c**, and the Lord
Mt 21: 13 "'My house will be **c** a house
Ro 8: 30 And those he predestined, he also **c**; those he **c**, he also justified;
1Co 7: 15 God has **c** us to live in peace.
Gal 5: 13 and sisters, were **c** to be free.
1Pe 2: 9 the praises of him who **c** you

CALLING (CALL)
Jn 1: 23 voice of one **c** in the wilderness,
Ac 22: 16 your sins away, **c** on his name.'
Eph 4: 1 worthy of the **c** you have received.
2Pe 1: 10 every effort to confirm your **c**

CALLS (CALL)
Joel 2: 32 everyone who **c** on the name
Jn 10: 3 He **c** his own sheep by name
Ro 10: 13 "Everyone who **c** on the name

CALM
Pr 29: 11 but the wise bring **c** in the end.

CAMEL
Mt 19: 24 easier for a **c** to go through the eye
23: 24 strain out a gnat but swallow a **c**.

CANAAN
1Ch16: 18 **C** as the portion you will inherit."

CANCELED
Col 2: 14 having **c** the charge of our legal

CAPITAL
Dt 21: 22 someone guilty of a **c** offense is put

CARE (CAREFUL CAREFULLY CARES CARING)
Ps 8: 4 human beings that you **c** for them?
Pr 29: 7 The righteous **c** about justice
Lk 10: 34 him to an inn and took **c** of him.
Jn 21: 16 Jesus said, "Take **c** of my sheep."
1Co 3: 10 But each one should build with **c**.
Eph 5: 29 but they feed and **c** for their body,
Heb 2: 6 a son of man that you **c** for him?
1Pe 5: 2 of God's flock that is under your **c**,

CAREFUL (CARE)
Ex 23: 13 "Be **c** to do everything I have said
Dt 6: 3 be **c** to obey so that it may go well
Jos 23: 6 be **c** to obey all that is written
23: 11 So be very **c** to love the Lord
Pr 13: 24 one who loves their children is **c**
Mt 6: 1 "Be **c** not to practice your
Ro 12: 17 Be **c** to do what is right in the eyes
1Co 8: 9 Be **c**, however, that the exercise of
Eph 5: 15 Be very **c**, then, how you live—

CAREFULLY (CARE)
Pr 12: 26 righteous choose their friends **c**,

CARES (CARE)
Ps 55: 22 Cast your **c** on the Lord and he
Na 1: 7 He **c** for those who trust in him,
1Th 2: 7 Just as a nursing mother **c** for her

1Pe 5: 7 on him because he **c** for you.

CARING (CARE)
1Ti 5: 4 practice by **c** for their own family

CARRIED (CARRY)
Ex 19: 4 and how I **c** you on eagles' wings
Heb13: 9 Do not be **c** away by all kinds
2Pe 1: 21 God as they were **c** along

CARRIES (CARRY)
Dt 32: 11 to catch them and **c** them aloft.
Isa 40: 11 arms and **c** them close to his heart;

CARRY (CARRIED CARRIES)
Lk 14: 27 whoever does not **c** their cross
Gal 6: 2 **C** each other's burdens, and in this
6: 5 each one should **c** their own load.

CAST
Ps 22: 18 them and **c** lots for my garment.
55: 22 **C** your cares on the Lord and he
Jn 19: 24 them and **c** lots for my garment."
1Pe 5: 7 **C** all your anxiety on him because

CATTLE
Ps 50: 10 and the **c** on a thousand hills.

CAUGHT
1Th 4: 17 are left will be **c** up together

CAUSE (CAUSES)
Pr 24: 28 against your neighbor without **c**—
Ecc 8: 3 Do not stand up for a bad **c**, for he
Mt 18: 7 the things that **c** people to stumble!
Ro 14: 21 that will **c** your brother or sister
1Co10: 32 Do not **c** anyone to stumble,

CAUSES (CAUSE)
Isa 8: 14 he will be a stone that **c** people
Mt 18: 6 "If anyone **c** one of these little

CEASE
Ps 46: 9 He makes wars **c** to the ends

CELEBRATE
Ps 2: 11 fear and **c** his rule with trembling.

CENSER
Lev 16: 12 is to take a **c** full of burning coals

CENTURION
Mt 8: 5 Capernaum, a **c** came to him,

CERTAINTY
Lk 1: 4 you may know the **c** of the things
Jn 17: 8 They knew with **c** that I came

CHAFF
Ps 1: 4 They are like **c** that the wind blows

CHAINED
2Ti 2: 9 But God's word is not **c**.

CHAMPION
Ps 19: 5 like a **c** rejoicing to run his course.

CHANGE (CHANGED)
1Sa 15: 29 does not lie or **c** his mind;
Ps 110: 4 has sworn and will not **c** his mind:
Jer 7: 5 If you really **c** your ways and your
Mal 3: 6 "I the Lord do not **c**. So you,
Mt 18: 3 unless you **c** and become like little
Heb 7: 21 has sworn and will not **c** his mind:
Jas 1: 17 lights, who does not **c** like shifting

CHANGED (CHANGE)
1Co15: 51 not all sleep, but we will all be **c**—

CHARACTER
Ru 3: 11 that you are a woman of noble **c**.
Pr 31: 10 A wife of noble **c** who can find?
Ro 5: 4 perseverance, **c**; and **c**, hope.
1Co15: 33 "Bad company corrupts good **c**."

CHARGE
Ro 8: 33 will bring any **c** against those
2Co11: 7 the gospel of God to you free of **c**?
2Ti 4: 1 and his kingdom, I give you this **c**:

CHARIOTS
2Ki 6: 17 and **c** of fire all around Elisha.
Ps 20: 7 Some trust in **c** and some in horses

CHARM
Pr 31: 30 **C** is deceptive, and beauty is

CHASE
Pr 12: 11 who **c** fantasies have no sense.

CHATTER (CHATTERING)
1Ti 6: 20 Turn away from godless **c**
2Ti 2: 16 Avoid godless **c**, because those who

CHATTERING (CHATTER)
Pr 10: 8 but a **c** fool comes to ruin.
10: 10 grief, and a **c** fool comes to ruin.

CHEAT (CHEATED)
Mal 1: 14 "Cursed is the **c** who has
1Co 6: 8 you yourselves **c** and do wrong,

CHEATED (CHEAT)
Lk 19: 8 if I have **c** anybody out of anything,
1Co 6: 7 Why not rather be **c**?

CHEEK
Mt 5: 39 turn to them the other **c** also.

CHEERFUL (CHEERS)
Pr 15: 13 A happy heart makes the face **c**,
15: 15 the **c** heart has a continual feast.
17: 22 A **c** heart is good medicine,
2Co 9: 7 for God loves a **c** giver.

CHEERS (CHEERFUL)
Pr 12: 25 the heart, but a kind word **c** it up.

CHILD (CHILDHOOD CHILDLESS CHILDREN)
Pr 22: 15 Folly is bound up in the heart of a **c**,
23: 13 not withhold discipline from a **c**;
29: 15 but a **c** left undisciplined disgraces
Isa 9: 6 For to us a **c** is born, to us a son is
11: 6 and a little **c** will lead them.
66: 13 As a mother comforts her **c**, so will
Mt 18: 2 He called a little **c** to him,
Lk 1: 42 and blessed is the **c** you will bear!
1: 80 And the **c** grew and became strong
1Co13: 11 When I was a **c**, I talked like a **c**,
1Jn 5: 1 loves the father loves his **c** as well.

CHILDHOOD (CHILD)
1Co 13: 11 I put the ways of **c** behind me.
CHILDLESS (CHILD)
Ps 113: 9 settles the **c** woman in her home
CHILDREN (CHILD)
Dt 4: 9 Teach them to your **c** and to their **c**
11: 19 Teach them to your **c**,
Ps 8: 2 Through the praise of **c** and infants
Pr 13: 24 spares the rod hates their **c**,
17: 6 parents are the pride of their **c**.
20: 11 Even small **c** are known by their
22: 6 Start **c** off on the way they should
29: 17 Discipline your **c**, and they will
31: 28 Her **c** arise and call her blessed;
Mt 7: 11 how to give good gifts to your **c**,
11: 25 and revealed them to little **c**.
18: 3 change and become like little **c**,
19: 14 said, "Let the little **c** come to me,
21: 16 "'From the lips of **c** and infants
Mk 9: 37 these little **c** in my name welcomes
10: 14 them, "Let the little **c** come to me,
10: 16 And he took the **c** in his arms,
13: 12 **C** will rebel against their parents
Lk 10: 21 and revealed them to little **c**.
18: 16 said, "Let the little **c** come to me,
Jn 12: 36 so that you may become **c** of light."
Ro 8: 16 with our spirit that we are God's **c**.
2Co 12: 14 **c** should not have to save for
Eph 6: 1 **C**, obey your parents in the Lord,
6: 4 Fathers, do not exasperate your **c**;
Col 3: 20 **C**, obey your parents in everything,
3: 21 do not embitter your **c**, or they will
1Ti 3: 4 well and see that his **c** obey him,
3: 12 and must manage his **c** and his
5: 10 such as bringing up **c**,
Heb 12: 7 God is treating you as his **c**.
1Jn 3: 1 that we should be called **c** of God!
CHOOSE (CHOOSES CHOSE CHOSEN)
Dt 30: 19 Now **c** life, so that you and your
Jos 24: 15 **c** for yourselves this day whom you
Pr 8: 10 **C** my instruction instead of silver,
Jn 15: 16 You did not **c** me, but I chose you
Ac 15: 14 God first intervened to **c** a people
CHOOSES (CHOOSE)
Jn 7: 17 who **c** to do the will of God
CHOSE (CHOOSE)
Ge 13: 11 Lot **c** for himself the whole plain
Ps 33: 12 the people he **c** for his inheritance.
Jn 15: 16 but I **c** you and appointed you so
1Co 1: 27 But God **c** the foolish things
Eph 1: 4 For he **c** us in him before
2Th 2: 13 because God **c** you as firstfruits
CHOSEN (CHOOSE)
Isa 41: 8 whom I have **c**, you descendants
Mt 22: 14 many are invited, but few are **c**."
Lk 10: 42 Mary has **c** what is better, and it
23: 35 if he is God's Messiah, the **C** One."
Jn 15: 19 but I have **c** you out of the world.
1Pe 1: 20 He was **c** before the creation
2: 9 But you are a **c** people, a royal
CHRIST (CHRIST'S CHRISTIAN MESSIAH)
Jn 1: 41 found the Messiah" (that is, the **C**).
Ro 3: 22 faith in Jesus **C** to all who believe.
5: 6 powerless, **C** died for the ungodly.
5: 8 we were still sinners, **C** died for us.
5: 17 life through the one man, Jesus **C**!
6: 4 just as **C** was raised from the dead
8: 1 for those who are in **C** Jesus,
8: 9 does not have the Spirit of **C**, they do not belong to **C**.
8: 35 separate us from the love of **C**?
10: 4 **C** is the culmination of the law so
14: 9 **C** died and returned to life so that
15: 3 even **C** did not please himself but,
1Co 1: 23 but we preach **C** crucified:
2: 2 while I was with you except Jesus **C**
3: 11 one already laid, which is Jesus **C**.
5: 7 For **C**, our Passover lamb, has been
8: 6 Jesus **C**, through whom all things
10: 4 them, and that rock was **C**.
10: 9 We should not test **C**, as some
11: 1 as I follow the example of **C**.
11: 3 that the head of every man is **C**,
11: 3 and the head of **C** is God.
12: 27 Now you are the body of **C**,
15: 3 that **C** died for our sins according
15: 14 And if **C** has not been raised,
15: 22 die, so in **C** all will be made alive.
15: 57 victory through our Lord Jesus **C**.
2Co 3: 3 show that you are a letter from **C**,
4: 5 but Jesus **C** as Lord, and ourselves
5: 10 before the judgment seat of **C**,
5: 17 if anyone is in **C**, the new creation
11: 2 to **C**, so that I might present you as
Gal 2: 20 I have been crucified with **C**
3: 13 **C** redeemed us from the curse
6: 14 in the cross of our Lord Jesus **C**,
Eph 1: 3 and Father of our Lord Jesus **C**,
3: 8 Gentiles the boundless riches of **C**,
4: 13 whole measure of the fullness of **C**.
5: 2 just as **C** loved us and gave himself
5: 23 head of the wife as **C** is the head
5: 25 just as **C** loved the church and gave
Php 1: 21 to live is **C** and to die is gain.
1: 27 manner worthy of the gospel of **C**.
4: 19 to the riches of his glory in **C** Jesus.
Col 1: 27 which is **C** in you, the hope
1: 28 present everyone fully mature in **C**.
2: 6 as you received **C** Jesus as Lord,
2: 17 the reality, however, is found in **C**.
3: 15 Let the peace of **C** rule in your
2Th 2: 1 the coming of our Lord Jesus **C**
1Ti 1: 15 **C** Jesus came into the world to save
2: 5 and mankind, the man **C** Jesus,
2Ti 2: 3 like a good soldier of **C** Jesus.

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2Ti 3:15 salvation through faith in **C** Jesus.
Titus 2:13 our great God and Savior, Jesus **C**,
Heb 3:14 We have come to share in **C**,
9:14 will the blood of **C**, who through
9:15 For this reason **C** is the mediator
9:28 so **C** was sacrificed once to take
10:10 of the body of Jesus **C** once for all.
13:8 Jesus **C** is the same yesterday
1Pe 1:19 but with the precious blood of **C**,
2:21 called, because **C** suffered for you,
3:18 For **C** also suffered once for sins,
4:14 insulted because of the name of **C**,
1Jn 2:22 whoever denies that Jesus is the **C**.
3:16 Jesus **C** laid down his life for us.
5:1 who believes that Jesus is the **C**
Rev 20:4 reigned with **C** a thousand years.

CHRISTIAN (CHRIST)
1Pe 4:16 if you suffer as a **C**, do not be

CHRIST'S (CHRIST)
2Co 5:14 For **C** love compels us, because we
5:20 We are therefore **C** ambassadors,
12:9 so that **C** power may rest on me.

CHURCH
Mt 16:18 and on this rock I will build my **c**,
18:17 if they refuse to listen even to the **c**,
Ac 20:28 Be shepherds of the **c** of God,
1Co 5:12 mine to judge those outside the **c**?
14:4 one who prophesies edifies the **c**.
14:12 excel in those that build up the **c**.
14:26 done so that the **c** may be built up.
Eph 5:23 wife as Christ is the head of the **c**,
Col 1:24 the sake of his body, which is the **c**.

CIRCUMCISED
Ge 17:10 Every male among you shall be **c**.
Gal 2:8 in Peter as an apostle to the **c**,

CIRCUMSTANCES
Php 4:11 to be content whatever the **c**.
1Th 5:18 give thanks in all **c**; for this is God's

CITIZENS (CITIZENSHIP)
Eph 2:19 but fellow **c** with God's people

CITIZENSHIP (CITIZENS)
Php 3:20 But our **c** is in heaven.

CITY
Heb 13:14 here we do not have an enduring **c**,

CIVILIAN
2Ti 2:4 a soldier gets entangled in **c** affairs,

CLAIM (CLAIMS)
Pr 25:6 do not **c** a place among his great
1Jn 1:6 If we **c** to have fellowship with him
1:8 If we **c** to be without sin,
1:10 If we **c** we have not sinned,

CLAIMS (CLAIM)
Jas 2:14 if someone **c** to have faith but has
1Jn 2:6 Whoever **c** to live in him must live
2:9 Anyone who **c** to be in the light

CLAP
Ps 47:1 **C** your hands, all you nations;
Isa 55:12 trees of the field will **c** their hands.

CLAY
Isa 45:9 Does the **c** say to the potter,
64:8 We are the **c**, you are the potter;
Jer 18:6 "Like **c** in the hand of the potter,
La 4:2 are now considered as pots of **c**,
Da 2:33 of iron and partly of baked **c**.
Ro 9:21 the same lump of **c** some pottery
2Co 4:7 this treasure in jars of **c** to show
2Ti 2:20 and silver, but also of wood and **c**;

CLEAN
Lev 16:30 you will be **c** from all your sins.
Ps 24:4 one who has **c** hands and a pure
Mt 12:44 swept **c** and put in order.
23:25 You **c** the outside of the cup
Mk 7:19 this, Jesus declared all foods **c**.)
Jn 13:10 you are **c**, though not every one
15:3 You are already **c** because
Ac 10:15 impure that God has made **c**."
Ro 14:20 All food is **c**, but it is wrong

CLING
Ps 63:8 I **c** to you; your right hand upholds
Ro 12:9 Hate what is evil; **c** to what is good.

CLOAK
2Ki 4:29 "Tuck your **c** into your belt,

CLOSE (CLOSER)
Ps 34:18 The Lord is **c**
Isa 40:11 and carries them **c** to his heart;
Jer 30:21 near and he will come **c** to me—

CLOSER (CLOSE)
Ex 3:5 "Do not come any **c**," God said.
Pr 18:24 friend who sticks **c** than a brother.

CLOTHE (CLOTHED CLOTHES CLOTHING)
Ps 45:3 **c** yourself with splendor
Isa 52:1 Zion, **c** yourself with strength!
Ro 13:14 **c** yourselves with the Lord Jesus
Col 3:12 **c** yourselves with compassion,
1Pe 5:5 **c** yourselves with humility toward

CLOTHED (CLOTHE)
Ps 30:11 my sackcloth and **c** me with joy,
Pr 31:25 She is **c** with strength and dignity;
Lk 24:49 the city until you have been **c**

CLOTHES (CLOTHE)
Mt 6:25 food, and the body more than **c**?
6:28 "And why do you worry about **c**?
Jn 11:44 "Take off the grave **c** and let him

CLOTHING (CLOTHE)
Dt 22:5 nor a man wear women's **c**,
Mt 7:15 They come to you in sheep's **c**,

CLOUD (CLOUDS)
Ex 13:21 them in a pillar of **c** to guide them
Isa 19:1 the Lord rides on a swift **c** and is
Lk 21:27 of Man coming in a **c** with power

Heb12: 1 by such a great **c** of witnesses,

CLOUDS (CLOUD)
Ps 104: 3 He makes the **c** his chariot and
Da 7: 13 man, coming with the **c** of heaven.
Mk 13: 26 Man coming in **c** with great power
1Th 4: 17 them in the **c** to meet the Lord

CO-HEIRS (INHERIT)
Ro 8: 17 heirs of God and **c** with Christ,

COALS
Pr 25: 22 will heap burning **c** on his head,
Ro 12: 20 this, you will heap burning **c** on his

COAT
Lk 6: 29 If someone takes your **c**, do not

COLD
Pr 25: 25 Like **c** water to a weary soul is
Mt 10: 42 anyone gives even a cup of **c** water
24: 12 the love of most will grow **c**,

COMFORT (COMFORTED COMFORTS)
Ps 23: 4 your rod and your staff, they **c** me.
119: 52 ancient laws, and I find **c** in them.
119: 76 May your unfailing love be my **c**,
Zec 1: 17 the Lord will again **c** Zion
1Co14: 3 strengthening, encouraging and **c**.
2Co 1: 4 that we can **c** those in any trouble
2: 7 you ought to forgive and **c** him,

COMFORTED (COMFORT)
Mt 5: 4 who mourn, for they will be **c**.

COMFORTS (COMFORT)
Job 29: 25 I was like one who **c** mourners.
Isa 49: 13 For the Lord **c** his people
51: 12 "I, even I, am he who **c** you.
66: 13 As a mother **c** her child, so will I
2Co 1: 4 who **c** us in all our troubles,
7: 6 But God, who **c** the downcast,

COMMAND (COMMANDED COMMANDING COMMANDMENT COMMANDMENTS COMMANDS)
Ex 7: 2 You are to say everything I **c** you,
Nu 24: 13 to go beyond the **c** of the Lord—
Dt 4: 2 Do not add to what I **c** you and do
30: 16 For I **c** you today to love
32: 46 so that you may **c** your children
Ps 91: 11 he will **c** his angels concerning you
148: 5 for at his **c** they were created,
Pr 6: 23 For this **c** is a lamp, this teaching is
13: 13 whoever respects a **c** is rewarded.
Ecc 8: 2 Obey the king's **c**, I say,
Joel 2: 11 mighty is the army that obeys his **c**.
Jn 13: 34 "A new **c** I give you:
15: 12 My **c** is this: Love each other as I
1Co14: 37 I am writing to you is the Lord's **c**.
Gal 5: 14 is fulfilled in keeping this one **c**:
1Ti 1: 5 The goal of this **c** is love,
Heb11: 3 the universe was formed at God's **c**,
1Jn 3: 23 And this is his **c**: to believe
2Jn : 6 his **c** is that you walk in love.

COMMANDED (COMMAND)
Ps 33: 9 came to be; he **c**, and it stood firm.
Mt 28: 20 to obey everything I have **c** you.
1Co 9: 14 way, the Lord has **c** that those who
1Jn 3: 23 and to love one another as he **c** us.

COMMANDING (COMMAND)
2Ti 2: 4 rather tries to please his **c** officer.

COMMANDMENT (COMMAND)
Jos 22: 5 be very careful to keep the **c**
Mt 22: 38 This is the first and greatest **c**.
Ro 7: 12 and the **c** is holy,
Eph 6: 2 is the first **c** with a promise—

COMMANDMENTS (COMMAND)
Ex 20: 6 those who love me and keep my **c**.
34: 28 words of the covenant—the Ten **C**.
Dt 7: 9 those who love him and keep his **c**.
Ecc 12: 13 Fear God and keep his **c**, for this is
Da 9: 4 those who love him and keep his **c**,
Mt 22: 40 the Prophets hang on these two **c**."

COMMANDS (COMMAND)
Dt 11: 27 you obey the **c** of the Lord your
Ps 112: 1 who find great delight in his **c**.
119: 47 in your **c** because I love them.
119: 86 All your **c** are trustworthy;
119: 98 Your **c** are always with me
119:127 I love your **c** more than gold,
119:143 me, but your **c** give me delight.
119:172 word, for all your **c** are righteous.
Pr 3: 1 but keep my **c** in your heart,
10: 8 The wise in heart accept **c**,
Mt 5: 19 teaches these **c** will be called great
Jn 14: 15 "If you love me, keep my **c**.
14: 21 Whoever has my **c** and keeps them
Ac 17: 30 now he **c** all people everywhere
1Co 7: 19 Keeping God's **c** is what counts.
1Jn 5: 3 this is love for God: to keep his **c**.
And his **c** are not burdensome,

COMMEND (COMMENDED COMMENDS)
Ecc 8: 15 So I **c** the enjoyment of life,
1Pe 2: 14 wrong and to **c** those who do right.

COMMENDED (COMMEND)
Ro 13: 3 do what is right and you will be **c**.
Heb11: 39 These were all **c** for their faith,

COMMENDS (COMMEND)
2Co10: 18 but the one whom the Lord **c**.

COMMIT (COMMITS COMMITTED)
Ex 20: 14 "You shall not **c** adultery.
Ps 37: 5 **C** your way to the Lord;
Mt 5: 27 was said, 'You shall not **c** adultery.'
Lk 23: 46 into your hands I **c** my spirit."
Ac 20: 32 "Now I **c** you to God
1Co10: 8 We should not **c** sexual immorality,
1Pe 4: 19 to God's will should **c** themselves

COMMITS (COMMIT)
Pr 6: 32 a man who **c** adultery has no sense;
29: 22 hot-tempered person **c** many sins.

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Mt 19: 9 marries another woman **c** adultery."

COMMITTED (COMMIT)
Nu 5: 7 must confess the sin they have **c**.
1Ki 8: 61 may your hearts be fully **c**
2Ch 16: 9 those whose hearts are fully **c**
Mt 5: 28 lustfully has already **c** adultery
2Co 5: 19 And he has **c** to us the message
1Pe 2: 22 "He **c** no sin, and no deceit was

COMMON
Pr 22: 2 Rich and poor have this in **c**:
1Co 10: 13 has overtaken you except what is **c**
2Co 6: 14 and wickedness have in **c**?

COMPANION
Pr 13: 20 for a **c** of fools suffers harm.
28: 7 a **c** of gluttons disgraces his father.
29: 3 but a **c** of prostitutes squanders his

COMPANY
Pr 24: 1 the wicked, do not desire their **c**;
Jer 15: 17 I never sat in the **c** of revelers,
1Co 15: 33 "Bad **c** corrupts good character."

COMPARED (COMPARING)
Eze 31: 2 "'Who can be **c** with you

COMPARING (COMPARED)
Ro 8: 18 present sufferings are not worth **c**
2Co 8: 8 of your love by **c** it
Gal 6: 4 without **c** themselves to someone

COMPASSION (COMPASSIONATE COMPASSIONS)
Ex 33: 19 I will have **c** on whom I will have **c**.
Ne 9: 19 your great **c** you did not abandon
9: 28 in your **c** you delivered them time
Ps 51: 1 to your great **c** blot out my
103: 4 pit and crowns you with love and **c**,
103: 13 As a father has **c** on his children,
145: 9 he has **c** on all he has made.
Isa 49: 13 will have **c** on his afflicted ones.
49: 15 and have no **c** on the child she has
Hos 2: 19 and justice, in love and **c**.
11: 8 all my **c** is aroused.
Jnh 3: 9 with **c** turn from his fierce anger so
Mt 9: 36 saw the crowds, he had **c** on them,
Mk 8: 2 "I have **c** for these people;
Ro 9: 15 I will have **c** on whom I have **c**."
Col 3: 12 clothe yourselves with **c**, kindness,
Jas 5: 11 The Lord is full of **c** and mercy.

COMPASSIONATE (COMPASSION)
Ne 9: 17 gracious and **c**, slow to anger
Ps 103: 8 The Lord is **c** and gracious,
112: 4 for those who are gracious and **c**
Eph 4: 32 Be kind and **c** to one another,
1Pe 3: 8 love one another, be **c** and humble.

COMPASSIONS (COMPASSION)
La 3: 22 not consumed, for his **c** never fail.

COMPEL (COMPELLED COMPELS)
Lk 14: 23 lanes and **c** them to come in,

COMPELLED (COMPEL)
Ac 20: 22 "And now, **c** by the Spirit, I am
1Co 9: 16 boast, since I am **c** to preach.

COMPELS (COMPEL)
2Co 5: 14 For Christ's love **c** us, because we

COMPETENCE (COMPETENT)
2Co 3: 5 but our **c** comes from God.

COMPETENT (COMPETENCE)
Ro 15: 14 and **c** to instruct one another.
1Co 6: 2 are you not **c** to judge trivial cases?
2Co 3: 5 Not that we are **c** in ourselves
3: 6 He has made us **c** as ministers

COMPETES
1Co 9: 25 Everyone who **c** in the games goes
2Ti 2: 5 anyone who **c** as an athlete does

COMPLACENT
Am 6: 1 Woe to you who are **c** in Zion,

COMPLETE
Jn 15: 11 in you and that your joy may be **c**.
16: 24 will receive, and your joy will be **c**.
17: 23 they may be brought to **c** unity.
Ac 20: 24 **c** the task the Lord Jesus has given
Php 2: 2 then make my joy **c** by being
Col 4: 17 it that you **c** the ministry you have
Jas 1: 4 so that you may be mature and **c**,
2: 22 faith was made **c** by what he did.

CONCEAL (CONCEALED CONCEALS)
Ps 40: 10 I do not **c** your love and your
Pr 25: 2 It is the glory of God to **c** a matter;

CONCEALED (CONCEAL)
Jer 16: 17 me, nor is their sin **c** from my eyes.
Mt 10: 26 for there is nothing **c** that will not
Mk 4: 22 whatever is **c** is meant to be

CONCEALS (CONCEAL)
Pr 28: 13 Whoever **c** their sins does not

CONCEITED
Gal 5: 26 Let us not become **c**,
1Ti 6: 4 they are **c** and understand nothing.

CONCEIVE (CONCEIVED)
Isa 7: 14 The virgin will **c** and give birth
Mt 1: 23 "The virgin will **c** and give birth

CONCEIVED (CONCEIVE)
Mt 1: 20 because what is **c** in her is
1Co 2: 9 and what no human mind has **c**"—

CONCERN (CONCERNED)
Eze 36: 21 I had **c** for my holy name,
1Co 7: 32 I would like you to be free from **c**.
12: 25 that its parts should have equal **c**
2Co 11: 28 of my **c** for all the churches.

CONCERNED (CONCERN)
Jnh 4: 10 "You have been **c** about this plant,
1Co 7: 32 An unmarried man is **c**

CONDEMN (CONDEMNATION CONDEMNED CONDEMNING CONDEMNS)
Job 40: 8 you **c** me to justify yourself?

Isa 50: 9 Who will **c** me? They will all wear
Lk 6: 37 Do not **c**, and you will not be
Jn 3: 17 Son into the world to **c** the world,
12: 48 words I have spoken will **c** them
Ro 2: 27 yet obeys the law will **c** you who,
1Jn 3: 20 If our hearts **c** us, we know that

CONDEMNATION (CONDEMN)
Ro 5: 18 just as one trespass resulted in **c**
8: 1 there is now no **c** for those who are
2Co 3: 9 that brought **c** was glorious,

CONDEMNED (CONDEMN)
Ps 34: 22 who takes refuge in him will be **c**.
Mt 12: 37 and by your words you will be **c**."
23: 33 How will you escape being **c**
Jn 3: 18 Whoever believes in him is not **c**,
16: 11 prince of this world now stands **c**.
Ro 14: 23 whoever has doubts is **c** if they eat,
1Co 11: 32 that we will not be finally **c**
Heb 11: 7 By his faith he **c** the world

CONDEMNING (CONDEMN)
Pr 17: 15 the guilty and **c** the innocent—
Ro 2: 1 you are **c** yourself, because you

CONDEMNS (CONDEMN)
Pr 14: 34 exalts a nation, but sin **c** any people
Ro 8: 34 Who then is the one who **c**?

CONDUCT
Pr 20: 11 is their **c** really pure and upright?
21: 8 but the **c** of the innocent is upright.
Ecc 6: 8 how to **c** themselves before others?
Jer 4: 18 "Your own **c** and actions have
17: 10 each person according to their **c**,
Eze 7: 3 I will judge you according to your **c**
1Ti 3: 15 how people ought to **c** themselves

CONFESS (CONFESSION)
Lev 16: 21 and **c** over it all the wickedness
26: 40 if they will **c** their sins and the sins
Nu 5: 7 **c** the sin they have committed.
Ps 38: 18 I **c** my iniquity; I am troubled by
Jas 5: 16 Therefore **c** your sins to each other
1Jn 1: 9 If we **c** our sins, he is faithful

CONFESSION (CONFESS)
2Co 9: 13 accompanies your **c** of the gospel

CONFIDENCE
Ps 71: 5 Lord, my **c** since my youth.
Pr 11: 13 A gossip betrays a **c**,
25: 9 to court, do not betray another's **c**,
31: 11 Her husband has full **c** in her
Isa 32: 17 will be quietness and **c** forever.
Jer 17: 7 in the Lord, whose **c** is in him.
Php 3: 3 and who put no **c** in the flesh—
Heb 4: 16 God's throne of grace with **c**,
10: 19 since we have **c** to enter the Most
10: 35 So do not throw away your **c**;
11: 1 Now faith is **c** in what we hope
13: 17 Have **c** in your leaders and submit
1Jn 5: 14 This is the **c** we have

CONFIRM
2Pe 1: 10 make every effort to **c** your calling

CONFLICT
Pr 6: 14 his heart—he always stirs up **c**.
6: 19 a person who stirs up **c**
10: 12 Hatred stirs up **c**, but love covers
15: 18 A hot-tempered person stirs up **c**,
16: 28 A perverse person stirs up **c**,
28: 25 The greedy stir up **c**,
29: 22 An angry person stirs up **c**,

CONFORM (CONFORMED)
Ro 12: 2 not **c** to the pattern of this world,
1Pe 1: 14 do not **c** to the evil desires you had

CONFORMED (CONFORM)
Ro 8: 29 predestined to be **c** to the image

CONQUERORS
Ro 8: 37 are more than **c** through him who

CONSCIENCE (CONSCIENCES)
Ro 13: 5 but also as a matter of **c**.
1Co 8: 7 a god, and since their **c** is weak,
8: 12 this way and wound their weak **c**,
10: 25 without raising questions of **c**,
10: 29 being judged by another's **c**?
Heb 10: 22 to cleanse us from a guilty **c**
1Pe 3: 16 keeping a clear **c**, so that those who

CONSCIENCES (CONSCIENCE)
Ro 2: 15 hearts, their **c** also bearing witness,
1Ti 4: 2 whose **c** have been seared as
Titus 1: 15 their minds and **c** are corrupted.
Heb 9: 14 cleanse our **c** from acts that lead

CONSCIOUS
Ro 3: 20 through the law we become **c** of
1Pe 2: 19 unjust suffering because they are **c**

CONSECRATE (CONSECRATED)
Ex 13: 2 "**C** to me every firstborn male.
Lev 20: 7 "'**C** yourselves and be holy,

CONSECRATED (CONSECRATE)
Ex 29: 43 and the place will be **c** by my glory.
1Ti 4: 5 because it is **c** by the word of God

CONSIDER (CONSIDERATE CONSIDERED CONSIDERS)
1Sa 12: 24 **c** what great things he has done
Job 37: 14 stop and **c** God's wonders.
Ps 8: 3 When I **c** your heavens, the work
143: 5 and **c** what your hands have done.
Lk 12: 24 **C** the ravens: They do not sow
12: 27 "**C** how the wild flowers grow.
Php 3: 8 I **c** everything a loss because
Heb 10: 24 And let us **c** how we may spur one
Jas 1: 2 **C** it pure joy, my brothers
1: 26 Those who **c** themselves religious

CONSIDERATE (CONSIDER)
Titus 3: 2 to be peaceable and **c**, and always
Jas 3: 17 then peace-loving, **c**, submissive,
1Pe 2: 18 only to those who are good and **c**,
3: 7 the same way be **c** as you live

CONSIDERED (CONSIDER)
Job 1: 8 "Have you **c** my servant Job?
2: 3 "Have you **c** my servant Job?
Ps 44: 22 we are **c** as sheep to be slaughtered.
Isa 53: 4 yet we **c** him punished by God,
Ro 8: 36 all day long; we are **c** as sheep to be
CONSIDERS (CONSIDER)
Pr 31: 16 She **c** a field and buys it; out of her
Ro 14: 5 One person **c** one day more sacred
CONSIST
Lk 12: 15 life does not **c** in an abundance
CONSOLATION
Ps 94: 19 within me, your **c** brought me joy.
CONSTRUCTIVE
1Co10: 23 but not everything is **c**.
CONSUME (CONSUMING)
Jn 2: 17 "Zeal for your house will **c** me."
CONSUMING (CONSUME)
Dt 4: 24 For the Lord your God is a **c** fire,
Heb12: 29 for our "God is a **c** fire."
CONTAIN
1Ki 8: 27 the highest heaven, cannot **c** you.
2Pe 3: 16 His letters **c** some things that are
CONTAMINATES
2Co 7: 1 from everything that **c** body
CONTEMPLATE
2Co 3: 18 unveiled faces **c** the Lord's glory,
CONTEMPT
Pr 14: 31 oppresses the poor shows **c** for
17: 5 Whoever mocks the poor shows **c**
18: 3 so does **c**, and with shame comes
Da 12: 2 others to shame and everlasting **c**.
Ro 2: 4 do you show **c** for the riches of his
Gal 4: 14 did not treat me with **c** or scorn.
1Th 5: 20 Do not treat prophecies with **c**
CONTEND
Jude : 3 urge you to **c** for the faith that was
CONTENT (CONTENTMENT)
Pr 13: 25 The righteous eat to their hearts' **c**,
Php 4: 11 to be **c** whatever the circumstances.
4: 12 learned the secret of being **c** in any
1Ti 6: 8 clothing, we will be **c** with that.
Heb13: 5 and be **c** with what you have,
CONTENTMENT (CONTENT)
1Ti 6: 6 But godliness with **c** is great gain.
CONTINUAL (CONTINUE)
Pr 15: 15 but the cheerful heart has a **c** feast.
CONTINUE (CONTINUAL)
Php 2: 12 **c** to work out your salvation
2Ti 3: 14 **c** in what you have learned and
1Jn 5: 18 born of God does not **c** to sin;
Rev22: 11 let the one who does right **c** to do
22: 11 let the holy person **c** to be holy."
CONTRITE
Ps 51: 17 a broken and **c** heart you, God,
Isa 57: 15 and to revive the heart of the **c**.
66: 2 who are humble and **c** in spirit,
CONTROL (CONTROLLED SELF-CONTROL SELF-CONTROLLED)
1Co 7: 9 But if they cannot **c** themselves,
7: 37 but has **c** over his own will,
1Th 4: 4 should learn to **c** your own body
CONTROLLED (CONTROL)
Ps 32: 9 understanding but must be **c** by bit
CONTROVERSIES
Titus3: 9 But avoid foolish **c** and genealogies
CONVERSATION
Col 4: 6 Let your **c** be always full of grace,
CONVERT
1Ti 3: 6 He must not be a recent **c**, or he
CONVICTION
Heb 3: 14 we hold our original **c** firmly
CONVINCED (CONVINCING)
Ro 8: 38 I am **c** that neither death nor life,
2Ti 1: 12 am **c** that he is able to guard what I
3: 14 have learned and have become **c** of,
CONVINCING (CONVINCED)
Ac 1: 3 and gave many **c** proofs that he was
CORNELIUS
Roman to whom Peter preached; first Gentile Christian (Ac 10).
CORNERSTONE (STONE)
Ps 118: 22 builders rejected has become the **c**;
Isa 28: 16 a precious **c** for a sure foundation;
Eph 2: 20 Christ Jesus himself as the chief **c**.
1Pe 2: 6 a chosen and precious **c**,
2: 7 rejected has become the **c**,"
CORRECT (CORRECTING CORRECTION CORRECTS)
2Ti 4: 2 **c**, rebuke and encourage—
CORRECTING (CORRECT)
2Ti 3: 16 **c** and training in righteousness,
CORRECTION (CORRECT)
Pr 10: 17 but whoever ignores **c** leads others
12: 1 but whoever hates **c** is stupid.
15: 5 whoever heeds **c** shows prudence.
15: 10 the one who hates **c** will die.
CORRECTS (CORRECT)
Job 5: 17 "Blessed is the one whom God **c**;
Pr 9: 7 Whoever **c** a mocker invites insults
CORRUPT (CORRUPTS)
Ge 6: 11 Now the earth was **c** in God's sight
CORRUPTS (CORRUPT)
Ecc 7: 7 into a fool, and a bribe **c** the heart.
1Co15: 33 "Bad company **c** good character."
Jas 3: 6 It **c** the whole body, sets the whole
COST
Pr 4: 7 Though it **c** all you have,
Isa 55: 1 milk without money and without **c**.
Rev 21: 6 thirsty I will give water without **c**

COUNSEL (COUNSELOR)
1Ki 22: 5 "First seek the **c** of the Lord."
Pr 15: 22 Plans fail for lack of **c**,
Rev 3: 18 I **c** you to buy from me gold
COUNSELOR (COUNSEL)
Isa 9: 6 And he will be called Wonderful **C**,
COUNT (COUNTING COUNTS)
Ro 4: 8 Lord will never **c** against them."
6: 11 **c** yourselves dead to sin but alive
COUNTING (COUNT)
2Co 5: 19 not **c** people's sins against them.
COUNTRY
Jn 4: 44 prophet has no honor in his own **c**.
COUNTS (COUNT)
Jn 6: 63 the flesh **c** for nothing.
1Co 7: 19 God's commands is what **c**.
Gal 5: 6 **c** is faith expressing itself through
COURAGE (COURAGEOUS)
Ac 23: 11 stood near Paul and said, "Take **c**!
COURAGEOUS (COURAGE)
Dt 31: 6 Be strong and **c**. Do not be afraid
Jos 1: 6 Be strong and **c**, because you will
1Co 16: 13 firm in the faith; be **c**; be strong.
COURSE
Ps 19: 5 a champion rejoicing to run his **c**.
Pr 15: 21 understanding keeps a straight **c**.
COURTS
Ps 84: 10 your **c** than a thousand elsewhere;
100: 4 thanksgiving and his **c** with praise;
COVENANT (COVENANTS)
Ge 9: 9 "I now establish my **c** with you
Ex 19: 5 if you obey me fully and keep my **c**,
1Ch 16: 15 He remembers his **c** forever,
Job 31: 1 "I made a **c** with my eyes not
Jer 31: 31 I will make a new **c** with the people
1Co 11: 25 "This cup is the new **c** in my blood;
Gal 4: 24 One **c** is from Mount Sinai
Heb 9: 15 Christ is the mediator of a new **c**,
COVENANTS (COVENANT)
Ro 9: 4 the **c**, the receiving of the law,
Gal 4: 24 The women represent two **c**.
COVER (COVER-UP COVERED COVERS)
Ps 91: 4 He will **c** you with his feathers,
Jas 5: 20 and **c** over a multitude of sins.
COVERED (COVER)
Ps 32: 1 are forgiven, whose sins are **c**.
Isa 6: 2 With two wings they **c** their faces,
Ro 4: 7 are forgiven, whose sins are **c**.
1Co 11: 4 with his head **c** dishonors his head.
COVERS (COVER)
Pr 10: 12 conflict, but love **c** over all wrongs.
1Pe 4: 8 because love **c** over a multitude
COVER-UP (COVER)
1Pe 2: 16 do not use your freedom as a **c**
COVET
Ex 20: 17 "You shall not **c** your neighbor's
Ro 13: 9 "You shall not **c**," and whatever
COWARDLY
Rev 21: 8 But the **c**, the unbelieving, the vile,
CRAFTINESS (CRAFTY)
1Co 3: 19 "He catches the wise in their **c**";
CRAFTY (CRAFTINESS)
Ge 3: 1 the serpent was more **c** than any
2Co 12: 16 Yet, **c** fellow that I am, I caught you
CRAVE
Pr 23: 3 Do not **c** his delicacies, for that
1Pe 2: 2 babies, **c** pure spiritual milk,
CREATE (CREATED CREATION CREATOR)
Ps 51: 10 **C** in me a pure heart, O God,
Isa 45: 18 he did not **c** it to be empty,
CREATED (CREATE)
Ge 1: 1 In the beginning God **c** the heavens
1: 21 So God **c** the great creatures
1: 27 So God **c** mankind in his own
1: 27 male and female he **c** them.
Ps 148: 5 for at his command they were **c**,
Ro 1: 25 and served **c** things rather than
1Co 11: 9 neither was man **c** for woman,
Col 1: 16 For in him all things were **c**:
1Ti 4: 4 For everything God **c** is good,
Rev 10: 6 who **c** the heavens and all that is
CREATION (CREATE)
Mk 16: 15 preach the gospel to all **c**.
Jn 17: 24 because you loved me before the **c**
Ro 8: 19 For the **c** waits in eager expectation
8: 39 nor anything else in all **c**, will be
2Co 5: 17 is in Christ, the new **c** has come:
Col 1: 15 God, the firstborn over all **c**.
1Pe 1: 20 He was chosen before the **c**
Rev 13: 8 was slain from the **c** of the world.
CREATOR (CREATE)
Ge 14: 22 Most High, **C** of heaven and earth,
Isa 42: 5 Lord says—the **C** of the heavens,
Ro 1: 25 created things rather than the **C**—
CREATURE (CREATURES)
Lev 17: 11 For the life of a **c** is in the blood,
CREATURES (CREATURE)
Ge 6: 19 into the ark two of all living **c**,
Ps 104: 24 the earth is full of your **c**.
CREDIT (CREDITED)
Ro 4: 24 whom God will **c** righteousness—
1Pe 2: 20 it to your **c** if you receive a beating
CREDITED (CREDIT)
Ge 15: 6 and he **c** it to him as righteousness.
Ro 4: 5 their faith is **c** as righteousness.
Gal 3: 6 it was **c** to him as righteousness."
Jas 2: 23 it was **c** to him as righteousness,"
CRIED (CRY)
Ps 18: 6 I **c** to my God for help.

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

CRIMSON
Isa 1:18 though they are red as **c**, they shall
CRIPPLED
Mk 9:45 to enter life **c** than to have two feet
CRITICISM
2Co 8:20 want to avoid any **c** of the way we
CROOKED
Pr 10:9 whoever takes **c** paths will be
Php 2:15 fault in a warped and **c** generation."
CROSS
Mt 10:38 Whoever does not take up their **c**
Lk 9:23 take up their **c** daily and follow me.
Ac 2:23 to death by nailing him to the **c**.
1Co 1:17 lest the **c** of Christ be emptied of
Gal 6:14 in the **c** of our Lord Jesus Christ,
Php 2:8 even death on a **c**!
Col 1:20 through his blood, shed on the **c**.
2:14 taken it away, nailing it to the **c**.
2:15 triumphing over them by the **c**.
Heb12:2 joy set before him he endured the **c**,
CROWD
Ex 23:2 pervert justice by siding with the **c**,
CROWN (CROWNED CROWNS)
Pr 4:9 and present you with a glorious **c**."
10:6 Blessings **c** the head
12:4 noble character is her husband's **c**,
17:6 Children's children are a **c**
Isa 61:3 on them a **c** of beauty instead
Zec 9:16 in his land like jewels in a **c**.
Mt 27:29 then twisted together a **c** of thorns
1Co 9:25 to get a **c** that will last forever.
2Ti 4:8 store for me the **c** of righteousness,
Rev 2:10 will give you life as your victor's **c**.
CROWNED (CROWN)
Ps 8:5 the angels and **c** them with glory
Pr 14:18 the prudent are **c** with knowledge.
Heb 2:7 you **c** them with glory and honor
CROWNS (CROWN)
Rev 4:10 They lay their **c** before the throne
19:12 fire, and on his head are many **c**.
CRUCIFIED (CRUCIFY)
Mt 20:19 to be mocked and flogged and **c**.
27:38 Two rebels were **c** with him,
Lk 24:7 be **c** and on the third day be raised
Jn 19:18 they **c** him, and with him two
Ac 2:36 Jesus, whom you **c**, both Lord
Ro 6:6 that our old self was **c** with him so
1Co 1:23 but we preach Christ **c**:
2:2 you except Jesus Christ and him **c**.
Gal 2:20 I have been **c** with Christ and I no
5:24 Christ Jesus have **c** the flesh with
CRUCIFY (CRUCIFIED CRUCIFYING)
Mt 27:22 They all answered, "**C** him!"
27:31 Then they led him away to **c** him.
CRUCIFYING (CRUCIFY)
Heb 6:6 their loss they are **c** the Son of God
CRUSH (CRUSHED)
Ge 3:15 he will **c** your head, and you will
Isa 53:10 it was the Lord's will to **c** him
Ro 16:20 peace will soon **c** Satan under your
CRUSHED (CRUSH)
Ps 34:18 and saves those who are **c** in spirit.
Isa 53:5 he was **c** for our iniquities;
2Co 4:8 pressed on every side, but not **c**;
CRY (CRIED)
Ps 34:15 and his ears are attentive to their **c**;
40:1 he turned to me and heard my **c**.
130:1 Out of the depths I **c** to you,
CULMINATION
Ro 10:4 Christ is the **c** of the law so
CUP
Ps 23:5 my head with oil; my **c** overflows.
Mt 10:42 anyone gives even a **c** of cold water
23:25 You clean the outside of the **c**
26:39 may this **c** be taken from me.
1Co11:25 "This **c** is the new covenant in my
CURSE (CURSED)
Dt 11:26 you today a blessing and a **c**—
21:23 is hung on a pole is under God's **c**.
Lk 6:28 bless those who **c** you,
Gal 1:8 to you, let them be under God's **c**!
3:13 redeemed us from the **c** of the law by
becoming a **c** for us,
Rev22:3 No longer will there be any **c**.
CURSED (CURSE)
Ge 3:17 "**C** is the ground because of you;
Dt 27:15 "**C** is anyone who makes an idol—
27:16 "**C** is anyone who dishonors their
27:17 "**C** is anyone who moves their
27:18 "**C** is anyone who leads the blind
27:19 "**C** is anyone who withholds justice
27:20 "**C** is anyone who sleeps with his
27:21 "**C** is anyone who has sexual
27:22 "**C** is anyone who sleeps with his
27:23 "**C** is anyone who sleeps with his
27:24 "**C** is anyone who kills their
27:25 "**C** is anyone who accepts a bribe
27:26 "**C** is anyone who does not uphold
Ro 9:3 I could wish that I myself were **c**
Gal 3:10 "**C** is everyone who does not
CURTAIN
Ex 26:33 Hang the **c** from the clasps
26:33 The **c** will separate the Holy Place
Lk 23:45 the **c** of the temple was torn in two.
Heb10:20 way opened for us through the **c**,
CYMBAL
1Co13:1 a resounding gong or a clanging **c**.
DANCE (DANCING)
Ecc 3:4 a time to mourn and a time to **d**,
Mt 11:17 the pipe for you, and you did not **d**;
DANCING (DANCE)
Ps 30:11 You turned my wailing into **d**;

Ps 149: 3 Let them praise his name with **d**

DANGER
Pr 27: 12 The prudent see **d** and take refuge,
Ro 8: 35 or nakedness or **d** or sword?

DANIEL
Hebrew exile to Babylon, name changed to Belteshazzar (Da 1:6–7). Refused to eat unclean food (Da 1:8–21). Interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dreams (Da 2; 4), writing on the wall (Da 5). Thrown into lions' den (Da 6). Visions of (Da 7–12).

DARK (DARKEST DARKNESS)
Ro 2: 19 a light for those who are in the **d**,
2Pe 1: 19 it, as to a light shining in a **d** place,

DARKEST (DARK)
Ps 23: 4 though I walk through the **d** valley,

DARKNESS (DARK)
Ge 1: 4 he separated the light from the **d**.
2Sa 22: 29 the Lord turns my **d** into light.
Job 34: 22 utter **d**, where evildoers can hide.
Jn 3: 19 but people loved **d** instead of light
2Co 6: 14 fellowship can light have with **d**?
Eph 5: 8 For you were once **d**, but now you
1Pe 2: 9 out of **d** into his wonderful light.
1Jn 1: 5 in him there is no **d** at all.
2: 9 a brother or sister is still in the **d**.

DAUGHTERS
Joel 2: 28 Your sons and **d** will prophesy,

DAVID
Son of Jesse (Ru 4:17–22; 1Ch 2:13–15), ancestor of Jesus (Mt 1:1–17; Lk 3:31).

Anointed king by Samuel (1Sa 16:1–13). Musician to Saul (1Sa 16:14–23; 18:10). Killed Goliath (1Sa 17). Relation with Jonathan (1Sa 18:1–4; 19–20; 23:16–18; 2Sa 1). Disfavor of Saul (1Sa 18:6—23:29). Spared Saul's life (1Sa 24; 26). Among Philistines (1Sa 21:10–14; 27–30). Lament for Saul and Jonathan (2Sa 1).

Anointed king of Judah (2Sa 2:1–11); of Israel (2Sa 5:1–4; 1Ch 11:1–3). Promised eternal dynasty (2Sa 7; 1Ch 17; Ps 132). Adultery with Bathsheba (2Sa 11–12). Absalom's revolt (2Sa 14–18). Last words (2Sa 23:1–7). Death (1Ki 2:10–12; 1Ch 29:28).

DAWN
Ps 37: 6 righteous reward shine like the **d**,

DAY (DAYS)
Ge 1: 5 God called the light "**d**,"
Ex 20: 8 "Remember the Sabbath **d**
Lev 23: 28 because it is the **D** of Atonement,
Nu 14: 14 them in a pillar of cloud by **d**
Jos 1: 8 meditate on it **d** and night,
Ps 84: 10 Better is one **d** in your courts than
96: 2 proclaim his salvation **d** after **d**.
118: 24 The Lord has done it this very **d**;
Pr 27: 1 do not know what a **d** may bring.
Joel 2: 31 great and dreadful **d** of the Lord.
Ob : 15 "The **d** of the Lord is near for all
Lk 11: 3 Give us each **d** our daily bread.
Ac 17: 11 examined the Scriptures every **d**
2Co 4: 16 we are being renewed **d** by **d**.
1Th 5: 2 the **d** of the Lord will come like
2Pe 3: 8 With the Lord a **d** is like a thousand

DAYS (DAY)
Dt 17: 19 he is to read it all the **d** of his life so
Ps 23: 6 love will follow me all the **d** of my
90: 10 Our **d** may come to seventy years,
Ecc 12: 1 Creator in the **d** of your youth,
Joel 2: 29 I will pour out my Spirit in those **d**.
Mic 4: 1 In the last **d** the mountain
Heb 1: 2 in these last **d** he has spoken to us
2Pe 3: 3 that in the last **d** scoffers will come,

DEACONS
1Ti 3: 8 way, **d** are to be worthy of respect,

DEAD (DIE)
Dt 18: 11 or spiritist or who consults the **d**.
Mt 28: 7 'He has risen from the **d** and is
Ro 6: 11 count yourselves **d** to sin but alive
Eph 2: 1 you were **d** in your transgressions
1Th 4: 16 and the **d** in Christ will rise first.
Jas 2: 17 is not accompanied by action, is **d**.
2: 26 so faith without deeds is **d**.

DEATH (DIE)
Nu 35: 16 the murderer is to be put to **d**.
Ps 116: 15 of the Lord is the **d** of his faithful
Pr 8: 36 all who hate me love **d**."
14: 12 right, but in the end it leads to **d**.
Ecc 7: 2 for **d** is the destiny of everyone;
Isa 25: 8 he will swallow up **d** forever.
53: 12 he poured out his life unto **d**,
Jn 5: 24 but has crossed over from **d** to life.
Ro 5: 12 **d** through sin, and in this way **d**
6: 23 For the wages of sin is **d**,
8: 13 Spirit you put to **d** the misdeeds
1Co 15: 21 For since **d** came through a man,
15: 31 I face **d** every day—yes, just as
15: 55 "Where, O **d**, is your victory?
1Pe 3: 18 He was put to **d** in the body
Rev 1: 18 I hold the keys of **d** and Hades.
20: 6 The second **d** has no power over
20: 14 The lake of fire is the second **d**.
21: 4 There will be no more **d**'

DEBAUCHERY
Ro 13: 13 not in sexual immorality and **d**,
Eph 5: 18 drunk on wine, which leads to **d**.

DEBORAH
Prophetess who led Israel to victory over Canaanites (Jdg 4–5).

DEBT (DEBTORS DEBTS)
Ro 13: 8 except the continuing **d** to love

DEBTORS (DEBT)
Mt 6: 12 as we also have forgiven our **d**.

DEBTS (DEBT)
Dt 15: 1 seven years you must cancel **d**.
Mt 6: 12 And forgive us our **d**, as we
DECAY
Ps 16: 10 will you let your faithful one see **d**.
Ac 2: 27 will not let your holy one see **d**.
DECEIT (DECEIVE)
Mk 7: 22 greed, malice, **d**, lewdness, envy,
1Pe 2: 1 yourselves of all malice and all **d**,
2: 22 and no **d** was found in his mouth."
DECEITFUL (DECEIVE)
Jer 17: 9 The heart is **d** above all things
2Co 11: 13 are false apostles, **d** workers,
DECEITFULNESS (DECEIVE)
Mk 4: 19 the **d** of wealth and the desires
Heb 3: 13 of you may be hardened by sin's **d**.
DECEIVE (DECEIT DECEITFUL DECEITFULNESS DECEIVED DECEPTIVE)
Lev 19: 11 "'Do not **d** one another.
Pr 14: 5 An honest witness does not **d**,
Mt 24: 5 am the Messiah,' and will **d** many.
Ro 16: 18 flattery they **d** the minds of naive
1Co 3: 18 Do not **d** yourselves. If any of you
Gal 6: 3 they are not, they **d** themselves.
Eph 5: 6 no one **d** you with empty words,
Jas 1: 22 to the word, and so **d** yourselves.
Jas 1: 26 rein on their tongues **d** themselves,
1Jn 1: 8 we **d** ourselves and the truth is not
DECEIVED (DECEIVE)
Ge 3: 13 said, "The serpent **d** me, and I ate."
Gal 6: 7 Do not be **d**: God cannot be
1Ti 2: 14 And Adam was not the one **d**; it was the woman who was **d**
2Ti 3: 13 to worse, deceiving and being **d**.
Jas 1: 16 Don't be **d**, my dear brothers
DECENCY
1Ti 2: 9 modestly, with **d** and propriety,
DECEPTIVE (DECEIVE)
Pr 31: 30 Charm is **d**, and beauty is fleeting;
Col 2: 8 through hollow and **d** philosophy,
DECLARE (DECLARED DECLARING)
1Ch 16: 24 **D** his glory among the nations,
Ps 19: 1 The heavens **d** the glory of God;
96: 3 **D** his glory among the nations,
Isa 42: 9 taken place, and new things I **d**;
Ro 10: 9 If you **d** with your mouth, "Jesus is
DECLARED (DECLARE)
Mk 7: 19 saying this, Jesus **d** all foods clean.)
Ro 2: 13 the law who will be **d** righteous.
3: 20 no one will be **d** righteous
DECLARING (DECLARE)
Ps 71: 8 **d** your splendor all day long.
Ac 2: 11 hear them **d** the wonders of God
DECREED (DECREES)
La 3: 37 it happen if the Lord has not **d** it?
Lk 22: 22 Son of Man will go as it has been **d**.
DECREES (DECREED)
Lev 10: 11 Israelites all the **d** the Lord has
Ps 119: 112 on keeping your **d** to the very end.
DEDICATE (DEDICATION)
Pr 20: 25 It is a trap to **d** something rashly
DEDICATION (DEDICATE)
1Ti 5: 11 sensual desires overcome their **d**
DEED (DEEDS)
Col 3: 17 whether in word or **d**, do it all
DEEDS (DEED)
1Sa 2: 3 knows, and by him **d** are weighed.
Ps 65: 5 us with awesome and righteous **d**,
66: 3 to God, "How awesome are your **d**!
78: 4 next generation the praiseworthy **d**
86: 10 you are great and do marvelous **d**;
92: 4 For you make me glad by your **d**,
111: 3 Glorious and majestic are his **d**,
Hab 3: 2 I stand in awe of your **d**, Lord.
Mt 5: 16 that they may see your good **d**
11: 19 wisdom is proved right by her **d**."
Ac 26: 20 their repentance by their **d**.
Jas 2: 14 claims to have faith but has no **d**?
2: 20 that faith without **d** is useless?
1Pe 2: 12 they may see your good **d**
DEEP (DEPTH)
1Co 2: 10 things, even the **d** things of God.
1Ti 3: 9 must keep hold of the **d** truths
DEER
Ps 42: 1 As the **d** pants for streams of water,
DEFEND (DEFENSE)
Ps 74: 22 Rise up, O God, and **d** your cause;
Pr 31: 9 **d** the rights of the poor and needy.
Jer 50: 34 He will vigorously **d** their cause so
DEFENSE (DEFEND)
Ps 35: 23 Awake, and rise to my **d**!
Php 1: 16 put here for the **d** of the gospel.
DEFERRED
Pr 13: 12 Hope **d** makes the heart sick,
DEFILE (DEFILED)
Da 1: 8 Daniel resolved not to **d** himself
DEFILED (DEFILE)
Isa 24: 5 The earth is **d** by its people;
DEFRAUD
Lev 19: 13 "'Do not **d** or rob your neighbor.
DEITY
Col 2: 9 Christ all the fullness of the **D** lives
DELIGHT (DELIGHTS)
1Sa 15: 22 "Does the Lord **d** in burnt
Ps 1: 2 but whose **d** is in the law
16: 3 noble ones in whom is all my **d**."
35: 9 the Lord and **d** in his salvation.
37: 4 Take **d** in the Lord, and he will
43: 4 of God, to God, my joy and my **d**.
51: 16 You do not **d** in sacrifice,
119: 77 I may live, for your law is my **d**.

Isa 42: 1 my chosen one in whom I **d**;
55: 2 you will **d** in the richest of fare.
61: 10 I **d** greatly in the Lord;
Jer 9: 24 earth, for in these I **d**,"
15: 16 they were my joy and my heart's **d**,
Mic 7: 18 angry forever but **d** to show mercy.
Zep 3: 17 He will take great **d** in you;
Mt 12: 18 the one I love, in whom I **d**;
1Co13: 6 Love does not **d** in evil but rejoices
2Co12: 10 for Christ's sake, I **d** in weaknesses,

DELIGHTS (DELIGHT)
Ps 22: 8 deliver him, since he **d** in him."
35: 27 who **d** in the well-being of his
36: 8 them drink from your river of **d**.
Pr 3: 12 he loves, as a father the son he **d** in.
12: 22 **d** in people who are trustworthy.
29: 17 will bring you the **d** you desire.

DELILAH
Woman who betrayed Samson (Jdg 16:4–22).

DELIVER (DELIVERANCE DELIVERED DELIVERER DELIVERS)
Ps 72: 12 he will **d** the needy who cry out,
79: 9 **d** us and forgive our sins for your
Da 3: 17 the God we serve is able to **d** us
Mt 6: 13 but **d** us from the evil one.'
2Co 1: 10 that he will continue to **d** us,

DELIVERANCE (DELIVER)
Ps 3: 8 From the Lord comes **d**.
32: 7 and surround me with songs of **d**.
33: 17 A horse is a vain hope for **d**;

DELIVERED (DELIVER)
Ps 34: 4 he **d** me from all my fears.
Ro 4: 25 He was **d** over to death for our sins

DELIVERER (DELIVER)
Ps 18: 2 is my rock, my fortress and my **d**;
40: 17 You are my help and my **d**;
140: 7 my strong **d**, you shield my head
144: 2 stronghold and my **d**, my shield,

DELIVERS (DELIVER)
Ps 34: 17 he **d** them from all their troubles.
34: 19 the Lord **d** him from them all;
37: 40 The Lord helps them and **d** them;

DEMANDED
Lk 12: 20 This very night your life will be **d**
12: 48 been given much, much will be **d**;

DEMONS
Mt 12: 27 And if I drive out **d** by Beelzebul,
Mk 5: 15 been possessed by the legion of **d**,
Ro 8: 38 life, neither angels nor **d**,
Jas 2: 19 Good! Even the **d** believe that—

DEMONSTRATE (DEMONSTRATES)
Ac 26: 20 **d** their repentance by their deeds.
Ro 3: 26 he did it to **d** his righteousness

DEMONSTRATES (DEMONSTRATE)
Ro 5: 8 God **d** his own love for us in this:

DEN
Da 6: 16 and threw him into the lions' **d**.
Mt 21: 13 but you are making it 'a **d**

DENARIUS
Mk 12: 15 "Bring me a **d** and let me look

DENIED (DENY)
1Ti 5: 8 has **d** the faith and is worse than

DENIES (DENY)
1Jn 2: 23 No one who **d** the Son has

DENY (DENIED DENIES DENYING)
Ex 23: 6 "Do not **d** justice to your poor
Job 27: 5 till I die, I will not **d** my integrity.
La 3: 35 **d** people their rights before the
Lk 9: 23 be my disciple must **d** themselves
Titus1: 16 but by their actions they **d** him.

DENYING (DENY)
Eze 22: 29 the foreigner, **d** them justice.
2Ti 3: 5 a form of godliness but **d** its power.
2Pe 2: 1 even **d** the sovereign Lord who

DEPART (DEPARTED)
Ge 49: 10 The scepter will not **d** from Judah,
Job 1: 21 mother's womb, and naked I will **d**.
Mt 25: 41 to those on his left, '**D** from me,
Php 1: 23 I desire to **d** and be with Christ,

DEPARTED (DEPART)
1Sa 4: 21 "The Glory has **d** from Israel"—
Ps 119:102 I have not **d** from your laws,

DEPOSIT
2Co 1: 22 put his Spirit in our hearts as a **d**,
5: 5 who has given us the Spirit as a **d**,
Eph 1: 14 who is a **d** guaranteeing our
2Ti 1: 14 Guard the good **d** that was entrusted

DEPRAVED (DEPRAVITY)
Ro 1: 28 God gave them over to a **d** mind,
2Pe 2: 7 was distressed by the **d** conduct

DEPRAVITY (DEPRAVED)
Ro 1: 29 of wickedness, evil, greed and **d**.

DEPRIVE
Dt 24: 17 Do not **d** the foreigner
Pr 18: 5 and so **d** the innocent of justice.
Isa 10: 2 to **d** the poor of their rights
29: 21 with false testimony **d** the innocent
1Co 7: 5 Do not **d** each other except

DEPTH (DEEP)
Ro 8: 39 neither height nor **d**, nor anything
11: 33 the **d** of the riches of the wisdom

DESERTED (DESERTS)
Mt 26: 56 all the disciples **d** him and fled.
2Ti 1: 15 in the province of Asia has **d** me,

DESERTING (DESERTS)
Gal 1: 6 you are so quickly **d** the one who

DESERTS (DESERTED DESERTING)
Zec 11: 17 shepherd, who **d** the flock!

DESERVE (DESERVES)
Ps 103: 10 he does not treat us as our sins **d**

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Jer 21: 14 I will punish you as your deeds **d**,
Mt 22: 8 those I invited did not **d** to come.
Ro 1: 32 those who do such things **d** death,

DESERVES (DESERVE)
Lk 10: 7 for the worker **d** his wages.
1Ti 5: 18 and "The worker **d** his wages."

DESIRABLE (DESIRE)
Pr 22: 1 name is more **d** than great riches;

DESIRE (DESIRABLE DESIRES)
Ge 3: 16 Your **d** will be for your husband,
Dt 5: 21 You shall not set your **d** on your
Ps 40: 6 and offering you did not **d**—
40: 8 I **d** to do your will, my God;
73: 25 earth has nothing I **d** besides you.
Pr 3: 15 nothing you **d** can compare
10: 24 what the righteous **d** will be
11: 23 The **d** of the righteous ends only
19: 2 **D** without knowledge is not good
Isa 26: 8 and renown are the **d** of our hearts.
53: 2 appearance that we should **d** him.
55: 11 but will accomplish what I **d**
Hos 6: 6 For I **d** mercy, not sacrifice,
Mt 9: 13 'I **d** mercy, not sacrifice.'
Ro 7: 18 For I have the **d** to do what is good,
1Co 12: 31 Now eagerly **d** the greater gifts.
14: 1 and eagerly **d** gifts of the Spirit,
Php 1: 23 I **d** to depart and be with Christ,
Heb 13: 18 **d** to live honorably in every way.
Jas 1: 15 after **d** has conceived, it gives birth

DESIRES (DESIRE)
Ge 4: 7 it **d** to have you, but you must rule
1Ch 29: 18 keep these **d** and thoughts
Ps 34: 12 life and **d** to see many good days,
37: 4 will give you the **d** of your heart.
103: 5 who satisfies your **d** with good
145: 19 He fulfills the **d** of those who fear
Pr 11: 6 the unfaithful are trapped by evil **d**.
19: 22 What a person **d** is unfailing love;
Mk 4: 19 and the **d** for other things come
Ro 8: 5 minds set on what the Spirit **d**.
13: 14 how to gratify the **d** of the flesh.
Gal 5: 16 and you will not gratify the **d**
5: 17 For the flesh **d** what is contrary
1Ti 3: 1 to be an overseer **d** a noble task.
6: 9 harmful **d** that plunge people
2Ti 2: 22 Flee the evil **d** of youth and pursue
Jas 1: 20 the righteousness that God **d**.
4: 1 from your **d** that battle within you?
1Pe 2: 11 to abstain from sinful **d**,
1Jn 2: 17 The world and its **d** pass away,

DESOLATE
Isa 54: 1 the children of the **d** woman than

DESPAIR
Isa 61: 3 of praise instead of a spirit of **d**.
2Co 4: 8 perplexed, but not in **d**;

DESPISE (DESPISED DESPISES)
Job 42: 6 Therefore I **d** myself and repent
Pr 1: 7 fools **d** wisdom and instruction.
3: 11 do not **d** the Lord's discipline,
14: 21 It is a sin to **d** one's neighbor,
15: 32 disregard discipline **d** themselves,
23: 22 do not **d** your mother when she is
Zec 4: 10 "Who dares **d** the day of small
Lk 16: 13 devoted to the one and **d** the other.
Titus 2: 15 Do not let anyone **d** you.

DESPISED (DESPISE)
Ge 25: 34 and left. So Esau **d** his birthright.
Isa 53: 3 He was **d** and rejected by mankind,
1Co 1: 28 of this world and the **d** things—

DESPISES (DESPISE)
Pr 15: 20 but a foolish man **d** his mother.

DESTINED (DESTINY)
Lk 2: 34 "This child is **d** to cause the falling

DESTINY (DESTINED PREDESTINED)
Ps 73: 17 then I understood their final **d**.
Ecc 7: 2 for death is the **d** of everyone;

DESTITUTE
Pr 31: 8 for the rights of all who are **d**.
Heb 11: 37 in sheepskins and goatskins, **d**,

DESTROY (DESTROYED DESTROYS DESTRUCTION)
Pr 1: 32 complacency of fools will **d** them;
11: 9 the godless **d** their neighbors,
Mt 10: 28 of the One who can **d** both soul

DESTROYED (DESTROY)
Job 19: 26 And after my skin has been **d**,
1Co 8: 11 is **d** by your knowledge.
15: 26 The last enemy to be **d** is death.
2Co 5: 1 if the earthly tent we live in is **d**,
Heb 10: 39 those who shrink back and are **d**,
2Pe 3: 10 the elements will be **d** by fire,

DESTROYS (DESTROY)
Pr 6: 32 whoever does so **d** himself.
18: 9 his work is brother to one who **d**.
28: 24 wrong," is partner to one who **d**.
Ecc 9: 18 but one sinner **d** much good.
1Co 3: 17 If anyone **d** God's temple, God will

DESTRUCTION (DESTROY)
Ps 1: 6 the way of the wicked leads to **d**.
Pr 16: 18 Pride goes before **d**, a haughty
Hos 13: 14 Where, O grave, is your **d**?
Mt 7: 13 broad is the road that leads to **d**,
Gal 6: 8 flesh, from the flesh will reap **d**;
2Th 1: 9 will be punished with everlasting **d**
1Ti 6: 9 that plunge people into ruin and **d**.
2Pe 2: 1 bringing swift **d** on themselves.
3: 16 other Scriptures, to their own **d**.

DETERMINED (DETERMINES)
Job 14: 5 A person's days are **d**;
Isa 14: 26 This is the plan **d** for the whole
Da 11: 36 what has been **d** must take place.

DETERMINES (DETERMINED)
Ps 147: 4 He **d** the number of the stars

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

1Co12: 11 them to each one, just as he **d**.

DETESTABLE (DETESTS)
Pr 21: 27 The sacrifice of the wicked is **d**—
28: 9 even their prayers are **d**.
Isa 1: 13 Your incense is **d** to me.
Lk 16: 15 What people value highly is **d**
Titus1: 16 They are **d**, disobedient and unfit

DETESTS (DETESTABLE)
Dt 22: 5 the Lord your God **d** anyone who
23: 18 the Lord your God **d** them both.
25: 16 the Lord your God **d** anyone who
Pr 11: 1 The Lord **d** dishonest scales,
12: 22 The Lord **d** lying lips, but he
15: 8 The Lord **d** the sacrifice
15: 9 The Lord **d** the way
15: 26 The Lord **d** the thoughts
16: 5 The Lord **d** all the proud
17: 15 the Lord **d** them both.
20: 23 The Lord **d** differing weights,

DEVIL (DEVIL'S)
Mt 13: 39 the enemy who sows them is the **d**.
25: 41 the eternal fire prepared for the **d**
Lk 4: 2 forty days he was tempted by the **d**.
8: 12 then the **d** comes and takes away
Eph 4: 27 and do not give the **d** a foothold.
2Ti 2: 26 and escape from the trap of the **d**,
Jas 4: 7 Resist the **d**, and he will flee
1Pe 5: 8 Your enemy the **d** prowls around
1Jn 3: 8 who does what is sinful is of the **d**,
Rev 12: 9 that ancient serpent called the **d**,

DEVIL'S (DEVIL)
Eph 6: 11 your stand against the **d** schemes.
1Ti 3: 7 into disgrace and into the **d** trap.
1Jn 3: 8 was to destroy the **d** work.

DEVISED
2Pe 1: 16 we did not follow cleverly **d** stories

DEVOTE (DEVOTED DEVOTING DEVOTION DEVOUT)
Job 11: 13 "Yet if you **d** your heart to him
Jer 30: 21 who is he who will **d** himself to be
Col 4: 2 **D** yourselves to prayer,
1Ti 4: 13 **d** yourself to the public reading
Titus3: 8 may be careful to **d** themselves

DEVOTED (DEVOTE)
Ezr 7: 10 For Ezra had **d** himself to the study
Ac 2: 42 They **d** themselves to the apostles'
Ro 12: 10 Be **d** to one another in love.
1Co 7: 34 Her aim is to be **d** to the Lord

DEVOTING (DEVOTE)
1Ti 5: 10 **d** herself to all kinds of good deeds.

DEVOTION (DEVOTE)
1Ch28: 9 serve him with wholehearted **d**
1Co 7: 35 way in undivided **d** to the Lord.
2Co11: 3 your sincere and pure **d** to Christ.

DEVOUR
2Sa 2: 26 to Joab, "Must the sword **d** forever?
Mk 12: 40 They **d** widows' houses
1Pe 5: 8 lion looking for someone to **d**.

DEVOUT (DEVOTE)
Lk 2: 25 Simeon, who was righteous and **d**.

DIE (DEAD DEATH DIED DIES)
Ge 2: 17 eat from it you will certainly **d**."
Ex 11: 5 Every firstborn son in Egypt will **d**,
Ru 1: 17 Where you **d** I will **d**, and there I
2Ki 14: 6 each will **d** for their own sin."
Pr 5: 23 For lack of discipline they will **d**,
10: 21 many, but fools **d** for lack of sense.
11: 7 placed in mortals **d** with them;
15: 10 one who hates correction will **d**.
23: 13 them with the rod, they will not **d**.
Ecc 3: 2 a time to be born and a time to **d**,
Isa 66: 24 the worms that eat them will not **d**,
Eze 3: 18 wicked person will **d** for their sin,
18: 4 one who sins is the one who will **d**.
33: 8 wicked person will **d** for their sin,
Mt 26: 52 all who draw the sword will **d**
Jn 11: 25 in me will live, even though they **d**;
11: 26 by believing in me will never **d**.
Ro 5: 7 Very rarely will anyone **d**
14: 8 and if we **d**, we **d** for the Lord.
1Co15: 22 For as in Adam all **d**, so in Christ
Php 1: 21 to live is Christ and to **d** is gain.
Heb 9: 27 as people are destined to **d** once,
Rev 14: 13 Blessed are the dead who **d**

DIED (DIE)
Ro 5: 6 Christ **d** for the ungodly.
6: 2 We are those who have **d** to sin;
6: 8 Now if we **d** with Christ, we believe
14: 15 someone for whom Christ **d**.
1Co 8: 11 for whom Christ **d**, is destroyed
15: 3 that Christ **d** for our sins according
2Co 5: 14 one **d** for all, and therefore all **d**.
Col 3: 3 For you **d**, and your life is now
1Th 5: 10 He **d** for us so that, whether we are
2Ti 2: 11 If we **d** with him, we will also live
Heb 9: 15 that he has **d** as a ransom to set
Rev 2: 8 Last, who **d** and came to life again.

DIES (DIE)
Job 14: 14 If someone **d**, will they live again?
1Co15: 36 does not come to life unless it **d**.

DIFFERENCE (DIFFERENT)
Ro 10: 12 For there is no **d** between Jew

DIFFERENT (DIFFERENCE)
1Co12: 4 There are **d** kinds of gifts,
2Co11: 4 or a **d** gospel from the one you

DIGNITY
Pr 31: 25 She is clothed with strength and **d**;

DIGS
Pr 26: 27 Whoever **d** a pit will fall into it;

DILIGENCE (DILIGENT)
Heb 6: 11 show this same **d** to the very end,

DILIGENT (DILIGENCE)
Pr 21: 5 The plans of the **d** lead to profit as

1Ti 4:15 Be **d** in these matters;

DIRECT (DIRECTS)
Ps 119:35 **D** me in the path of your
119:133 **D** my footsteps according to your
Jer 10:23 it is not for them to **d** their steps.
2Th 3:5 May the Lord **d** your hearts

DIRECTS (DIRECT)
Ps 42:8 By day the Lord **d** his love,
Isa 48:17 who **d** you in the way you should

DIRGE
Mt 11:17 we sang a **d**, and you did not

DISAPPEAR
Mt 5:18 until heaven and earth **d**,
Lk 16:17 earth to **d** than for the least stroke

DISASTER
Ps 57:1 your wings until the **d** has passed.
Pr 3:25 Have no fear of sudden **d**
17:5 whoever gloats over **d** will not go
Isa 45:7 I bring prosperity and create **d**;
Eze 7:5 Unheard-of **d**! See, it comes!

DISCERN (DISCERNING)
Ps 19:12 But who can **d** their own errors?
139:3 You **d** my going out and my lying
Php 1:10 you may be able to **d** what is best

DISCERNING (DISCERN)
Pr 14:6 knowledge comes easily to the **d**.
15:14 The **d** heart seeks knowledge,
17:10 A rebuke impresses a **d** person
17:24 A **d** person keeps wisdom in view,
17:28 and **d** if they hold their tongues.
19:25 rebuke the **d**, and they will gain
28:11 and **d** sees how deluded they are.

DISCIPLE (DISCIPLES)
Mt 10:42 of these little ones who is my **d**,
Lk 14:27 and follow me cannot be my **d**.

DISCIPLES (DISCIPLE)
Mt 28:19 go and make **d** of all nations,
Jn 8:31 my teaching, you are really my **d**.
13:35 will know that you are my **d**, if you
Ac 11:26 The **d** were called Christians first

DISCIPLINE (DISCIPLINED DISCIPLINES)
Ps 38:1 your anger or **d** me in your wrath.
39:11 rebuke and **d** anyone for their sin,
94:12 Blessed is the one you **d**, Lord,
Pr 3:11 do not despise the Lord's **d**,
5:12 You will say, "How I hated **d**!
5:23 For lack of **d** they will die,
10:17 Whoever heeds **d** shows the way
12:1 Whoever loves **d** loves knowledge,
13:18 Whoever disregards **d** comes
13:24 their children is careful to **d** them.
15:5 A fool spurns a parent's **d**,
15:32 disregard **d** despise themselves,
19:18 **D** your children, for in that there is
19:20 Listen to advice and accept **d**,
Pr 22:15 the rod of **d** will drive it far away.
23:13 Do not withhold **d** from a child;
29:17 **D** your children, and they will give
Heb12:5 do not make light of the Lord's **d**,
12:7 Endure hardship as **d**;
12:11 No **d** seems pleasant at the time,
Rev 3:19 Those whom I love I rebuke and **d**.

DISCIPLINED (DISCIPLINE)
Jer 31:18 'You **d** me like an unruly calf,
1Co11:32 we are being **d** so that we will not
Col 2:5 delight to see how **d** you are
Titus1:8 upright, holy and **d**.
Heb12:7 For what children are not **d** by

DISCIPLINES (DISCIPLINE)
Dt 8:5 so the Lord your God **d** you.
Pr 3:12 because the Lord **d** those he
Heb12:6 the Lord **d** the one he loves,
12:10 but God **d** us for our good,

DISCLOSED
Lk 8:17 nothing hidden that will not be **d**,

DISCOURAGED
Jos 1:9 do not be **d**, for the Lord your
10:25 "Do not be afraid; do not be **d**.
1Ch28:20 Do not be afraid or **d**,
Isa 42:4 or be **d** till he establishes justice
Col 3:21 children, or they will become **d**.

DISCREDITED
2Co 6:3 so that our ministry will not be **d**.

DISCRETION
1Ch22:12 May the Lord give you **d**
Pr 1:4 knowledge and **d** to the young—
2:11 **D** will protect you,
5:2 that you may maintain **d** and your
8:12 I possess knowledge and **d**.
11:22 beautiful woman who shows no **d**.

DISCRIMINATED
Jas 2:4 have you not **d** among yourselves

DISFIGURED
Isa 52:14 his appearance was so **d** beyond

DISGRACE (DISGRACEFUL DISGRACES)
Pr 11:2 then comes **d**, but with humility
19:26 is a child who brings shame and **d**.
Ac 5:41 worthy of suffering **d** for the Name.
Heb13:13 the camp, bearing the **d** he bore.

DISGRACEFUL (DISGRACE)
Pr 10:5 sleeps during harvest is a **d** son.
17:2 servant will rule over a **d** son

DISGRACES (DISGRACE)
Pr 28:7 companion of gluttons **d** his father.
29:15 left undisciplined **d** its mother.

DISGUISE
Pr 26:24 Enemies **d** themselves with their

DISHONEST
Pr 11:1 The Lord detests **d** scales,
29:27 The righteous detest the **d**;

Lk 16: 10 whoever is **d** with very little will
1Ti 3: 8 wine, and not pursuing **d** gain.

DISHONOR (DISHONORS)
Lev 18: 7 "'Do not **d** your father by having
Pr 30: 9 and so **d** the name of my God.
1Co 13: 5 It does not **d** others, it is not
15: 43 it is sown in **d**, it is raised in glory;

DISHONORS (DISHONOR)
Dt 27: 16 is anyone who **d** their father

DISMAYED
Isa 41: 10 do not be **d**, for I am your God.

DISOBEDIENCE (DISOBEY)
Ro 5: 19 as through the **d** of the one man
11: 32 has bound everyone over to **d** so
Heb 2: 2 and **d** received its just punishment,
4: 6 did not go in because of their **d**,
4: 11 by following their example of **d**.

DISOBEDIENT (DISOBEY)
2Ti 3: 2 proud, abusive, **d** to their parents,
Titus 1: 6 to the charge of being wild and **d**.
1: 16 **d** and unfit for doing anything

DISOBEY (DISOBEDIENCE DISOBEDIENT)
Dt 11: 28 the curse if you **d** the commands
2Ch 24: 20 'Why do you **d** the Lord's
Ro 1: 30 of doing evil; they **d** their parents;

DISORDER
1Co 14: 33 For God is not a God of **d**
2Co 12: 20 slander, gossip, arrogance and **d**.
Jas 3: 16 there you find **d** and every evil

DISOWN
Pr 30: 9 I may have too much and **d** you
Mt 10: 33 will **d** before my Father in heaven.
26: 35 to die with you, I will never **d** you."
2Ti 2: 12 If we **d** him, he will also **d** us;

DISPLAY (DISPLAYS)
Eze 39: 21 "I will **d** my glory among
1Ti 1: 16 Christ Jesus might **d** his immense

DISPLAYS (DISPLAY)
Isa 44: 23 Jacob, he **d** his glory in Israel.

DISPUTE (DISPUTES)
Pr 17: 14 the matter before a **d** breaks out.
1Co 6: 1 If any of you has a **d** with another,

DISPUTES (DISPUTE)
Pr 18: 18 Casting the lot settles **d** and keeps

DISQUALIFIED
1Co 9: 27 I myself will not be **d** for the prize.

DISREGARD
Pr 15: 32 Those who **d** discipline despise

DISREPUTE
2Pe 2: 2 will bring the way of truth into **d**.

DISSENSION
Ro 13: 13 debauchery, not in **d** and jealousy.

DISTINGUISH
1Ki 3: 9 and to **d** between right and wrong.
Heb 5: 14 have trained themselves to **d** good

DISTORT
2Co 4: 2 nor do we **d** the word of God.
2Pe 3: 16 ignorant and unstable people **d**,

DISTRESS (DISTRESSED)
Ps 18: 6 In my **d** I called to the Lord;
Jnh 2: 2 "In my **d** I called to the Lord,
Jas 1: 27 and widows in their **d** and to keep

DISTRESSED (DISTRESS)
Ro 14: 15 sister is **d** because of what you eat,

DIVIDED (DIVISION)
Mt 12: 25 "Every kingdom **d** against itself
Lk 23: 34 **d** up his clothes by casting lots.
1Co 1: 13 Is Christ **d**? Was Paul crucified

DIVINATION
Lev 19: 26 "'Do not practice **d** or seek

DIVINE
Ro 1: 20 his eternal power and **d** nature—
2Co 10: 4 they have **d** power to demolish
2Pe 1: 4 may participate in the **d** nature,

DIVISION (DIVIDED DIVISIONS DIVISIVE)
Lk 12: 51 peace on earth? No, I tell you, but **d**.
1Co 12: 25 there should be no **d** in the body,

DIVISIONS (DIVISION)
Ro 16: 17 to watch out for those who cause **d**
1Co 1: 10 and that there be no **d** among you,
11: 18 as a church, there are **d** among you,

DIVISIVE (DIVISION)
Titus 3: 10 Warn a **d** person once,

DIVORCE (DIVORCES)
Mt 19: 3 for a man to **d** his wife for any
1Co 7: 11 a husband must not **d** his wife.

DIVORCES (DIVORCE)
Mal 2: 16 man who hates and **d** his wife,"

DOCTOR
Mt 9: 12 "It is not the healthy who need a **d**,

DOCTRINE
1Ti 4: 16 Watch your life and **d** closely.
Titus 2: 1 what is appropriate to sound **d**.

DOMINION
Ps 22: 28 for **d** belongs to the Lord and he

DOOR
Ps 141: 3 keep watch over the **d** of my lips.
Mt 6: 6 close the **d** and pray to your Father,
7: 7 and the **d** will be opened to you.
Rev 3: 20 I stand at the **d** and knock.

DOORKEEPER
Ps 84: 10 I would rather be a **d** in the house

DOUBLE-EDGED
Heb 4: 12 Sharper than any **d** sword,
Rev 1: 16 of his mouth was a sharp, **d** sword.
2: 12 of him who has the sharp, **d** sword.

DOUBLE-MINDED (MIND)
Ps 119: 113 I hate **d** people, but I love your law.

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Jas 1: 8 Such a person is **d** and unstable

DOUBT
Mt 14: 31 faith," he said, "why did you **d**?"
21: 21 if you have faith and do not **d**,
Mk 11: 23 and does not **d** in their heart
Jas 1: 6 you must believe and not **d**,
Jude : 22 Be merciful to those who **d**;

DOWNCAST
Ps 42: 5 Why, my soul, are you **d**?
2Co 7: 6 who comforts the **d**, comforted us

DRAW (DRAWING DRAWS)
Mt 26: 52 "for all who **d** the sword will die
Jn 12: 32 earth, will **d** all people to myself."
Heb10: 22 let us **d** near to God with a sincere

DRAWING (DRAW)
Lk 21: 28 your redemption is **d** near."

DRAWS (DRAW)
Jn 6: 44 the Father who sent me **d** them,

DREADFUL
Heb10: 31 It is a **d** thing to fall into the hands

DRESS
1Ti 2: 9 want the women to **d** modestly,

DRINK (DRUNK DRUNKARDS DRUNKENNESS)
Pr 5: 15 **D** water from your own cistern,
Lk 12: 19 eat, **d** and be merry."'
Jn 7: 37 who is thirsty come to me and **d**.
1Co12: 13 were all given the one Spirit to **d**.

DRIVES
1Jn 4: 18 But perfect love **d** out fear,

DROP
Pr 17: 14 so **d** the matter before a dispute
Isa 40: 15 Surely the nations are like a **d**

DRUNK (DRINK)
Eph 5: 18 Do not get **d** on wine, which leads

DRUNKARDS (DRINK)
Pr 23: 21 for **d** and gluttons become poor,
1Co 6: 10 the greedy nor **d** nor slanderers

DRUNKENNESS (DRINK)
Lk 21: 34 **d** and the anxieties of life,
Ro 13: 13 not in carousing and **d**,
Gal 5: 21 and envy; **d**, orgies, and the like.
1Pe 4: 3 living in debauchery, lust, **d**, orgies,

DRY
Isa 53: 2 and like a root out of **d** ground.
Eze 37: 4 bones and say to them, '**D** bones,

DUST
Ge 2: 7 a man from the **d** of the ground
Ps 103: 14 he remembers that we are **d**.
Ecc 3: 20 come from **d**, and to **d** all return.

DUTY
Ecc 12: 13 for this is the **d** of all mankind.
Ac 23: 1 I have fulfilled my **d** to God in all
1Co 7: 3 husband should fulfill his marital **d**

DWELL (DWELLING DWELLS)
1Ki 8: 27 "But will God really **d** on earth?
Ps 23: 6 I will **d** in the house of the Lord
Isa 43: 18 do not **d** on the past.
Eph 3: 17 Christ may **d** in your hearts
Col 1: 19 to have all his fullness **d** in him,
3: 16 of Christ **d** among you richly

DWELLING (DWELL)
Eph 2: 22 built together to become a **d**

DWELLS (DWELL)
1Co 3: 16 that God's Spirit **d** in your midst?

EAGER
Pr 31: 13 and flax and works with **e** hands.
1Pe 5: 2 dishonest gain, but **e** to serve;

EAGLE'S (EAGLES)
Ps 103: 5 your youth is renewed like the **e**.

EAGLES (EAGLE'S)
Isa 40: 31 They will soar on wings like **e**;

EAR (EARS)
1Co 2: 9 eye has seen, what no **e** has heard,
12: 16 And if the **e** should say, "Because I

EARS (EAR)
Job 42: 5 My **e** had heard of you but now my
Ps 34: 15 and his **e** are attentive to their cry;
Pr 21: 13 Whoever shuts their **e** to the cry
2Ti 4: 3 to say what their itching **e** want

EARTH (EARTHLY)
Ge 1: 1 God created the heavens and the **e**.
Ps 24: 1 The **e** is the Lord's,
108: 5 let your glory be over all the **e**.
Isa 6: 3 the whole **e** is full of his glory."
51: 6 the **e** will wear out like a garment
55: 9 the heavens are higher than the **e**,
66: 1 throne, and the **e** is my footstool.
Jer 23: 24 "Do not I fill heaven and **e**?"
Hab 2: 20 let all the **e** be silent before him.
Mt 6: 10 will be done, on **e** as it is in heaven.
16: 19 you bind on **e** will be bound
24: 35 Heaven and **e** will pass away,
28: 18 and on **e** has been given to me.
Lk 2: 14 on **e** peace to those on whom his
1Co10: 26 for, "The **e** is the Lord's,
Php 2: 10 heaven and on **e** and under the **e**,
2Pe 3: 13 to a new heaven and a new **e**,

EARTHLY (EARTH)
Php 3: 19 Their mind is set on **e** things.
Col 3: 2 on things above, not on **e** things.

EAST
Ps 103: 12 as far as the **e** is from the west,

EASY
Mt 11: 30 For my yoke is **e** and my burden is

EAT (EATING)
Ge 2: 17 you must not **e** from the tree
Isa 55: 1 have no money, come, buy and **e**!
65: 25 the lion will **e** straw like the ox,
Mt 26: 26 his disciples, saying, "Take and **e**;

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Ro 14: 2 faith allows them to **e** anything,
1Co 8: 13 if what I **e** causes my brother
10: 31 So whether you **e** or drink
2Th 3: 10 is unwilling to work shall not **e**."

EATING (EAT)
Ro 14: 17 kingdom of God is not a matter of **e**

EDICT
Heb11: 23 they were not afraid of the king's **e**.

EDIFIES
1Co14: 4 speaks in a tongue **e** themselves,

EFFECT
Isa 32: 17 its **e** will be quietness
Heb 9: 18 was not put into **e** without blood.

EFFORT
Lk 13: 24 "Make every **e** to enter through
Ro 9: 16 depend on human desire or **e**,
14: 19 Let us therefore make every **e** to do
Eph 4: 3 Make every **e** to keep the unity
Heb 4: 11 make every **e** to enter that rest,
12: 14 Make every **e** to live in peace
2Pe 1: 5 make every **e** to add to your faith
3: 14 make every **e** to be found spotless,

ELAH
Son of Baasha; king of Israel (1Ki 16:6–14).

ELDERLY (ELDERS)
Lev 19: 32 show respect for the **e** and revere

ELDERS (ELDERLY)
1Ti 5: 17 The **e** who direct the affairs

ELECTION
Ro 9: 11 God's purpose in **e** might stand:
2Pe 1: 10 to confirm your calling and **e**.

ELI
High priest in youth of Samuel (1Sa 1–4). Blessed Hannah (1Sa 1:12–18); raised Samuel (1Sa 2:11–26).

ELIJAH
Prophet; predicted famine in Israel (1Ki 17:1; Jas 5:17). Fed by ravens (1Ki 17:2–6). Raised Sidonian widow's son (1Ki 17:7–24). Defeated prophets of Baal at Carmel (1Ki 18:16–46). Ran from Jezebel (1Ki 19:1–9). Prophesied death of Azariah (2Ki 1). Succeeded by Elisha (1Ki 19:19–21; 2Ki 2:1–18). Taken to heaven in whirlwind (2Ki 2:11–12).

Return prophesied (Mal 4:5–6); equated with John the Baptist (Mt 17:9–13; Mk 9:9–13; Lk 1:17). Appeared with Moses in transfiguration of Jesus (Mt 17:1–8; Mk 9:1–8).

ELISHA
Prophet; successor of Elijah (1Ki 19:16–21); inherited his cloak (2Ki 2:1–18). Miracles of (2Ki 2–6).

ELIZABETH
Mother of John the Baptist, relative of Mary (Lk 1:5–58).

EMBITTER
Col 3: 21 Fathers, do not **e** your children,

EMPEROR
1Pe 2: 17 of believers, fear God, honor the **e**.

EMPTY
Mt 12: 36 for every **e** word they have spoken.
Eph 5: 6 no one deceive you with **e** words,
1Pe 1: 18 you were redeemed from the **e** way

ENABLE (ABLE)
Lk 1: 74 to **e** us to serve him without fear
Ac 4: 29 **e** your servants to speak your word

ENABLED (ABLE)
Lev 26: 13 **e** you to walk with heads held high.
Jn 6: 65 me unless the Father has **e** them."

ENABLES (ABLE)
Php 3: 21 by the power that **e** him to bring

ENCAMPS
Ps 34: 7 the Lord **e** around those who fear

ENCOURAGE (ENCOURAGEMENT ENCOURAGING)
Ps 10: 17 you **e** them, and you listen to their
Ac 15: 32 said much to **e** and strengthen
Ro 12: 8 if it is to **e**, then give
1Th 4: 18 Therefore **e** one another with these
2Ti 4: 2 correct, rebuke and **e**—
Titus2: 6 Similarly, **e** the young men to be
Heb 3: 13 But **e** one another daily, as long as

ENCOURAGEMENT (ENCOURAGE)
Ac 4: 36 (which means "son of **e**"),
Ro 15: 4 the **e** they provide we might have
15: 5 **e** give you the same attitude of
Heb12: 5 completely forgotten this word of **e**

ENCOURAGING (ENCOURAGE)
1Co14: 3 their strengthening, **e** and comfort.
Heb10: 25 habit of doing, but **e** one another—

END
Ps 119: 33 that I may follow it to the **e**.
Pr 14: 12 right, but in the **e** it leads to death.
19: 20 the **e** you will be counted among
23: 32 In the **e** it bites like a snake
Ecc 12: 12 making many books there is no **e**,
Mt 10: 22 stands firm to the **e** will be saved.
Lk 21: 9 but the **e** will not come right away."
1Co15: 24 Then the **e** will come, when he

ENDURANCE (ENDURE)
Ro 15: 4 so that through the **e** taught
15: 5 May the God who gives **e**
2Co 1: 6 you patient **e** of the same sufferings
Col 1: 11 might so that you may have great **e**
1Ti 6: 11 faith, love, **e** and gentleness.
Titus2: 2 and sound in faith, in love and in **e**.

ENDURE (ENDURANCE ENDURES)
Ps 72: 17 May his name **e** forever;
Pr 12: 19 Truthful lips **e** forever, but a lying
27: 24 for riches do not **e** forever,
Ecc 3: 14 everything God does will **e** forever;
Mal 3: 2 who can **e** the day of his coming?
2Ti 2: 12 if we **e**, we will also reign with him.

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Heb12: 7 **E** hardship as discipline;
Rev 3: 10 kept my command to **e** patiently,

ENDURES (ENDURE)
Ps 112: 9 poor, their righteousness **e** forever;
136: 1 His love e forever.
Da 9: 15 yourself a name that **e** to this day,
1Pe 1: 25 but the word of the Lord **e** forever."

ENEMIES (ENEMY)
Ps 23: 5 before me in the presence of my **e**.
Mic 7: 6 a man's **e** are the members of his
Mt 5: 44 love your **e** and pray for those who
Lk 20: 43 until I make your **e** a footstool

ENEMY (ENEMIES ENMITY)
Pr 24: 17 Do not gloat when your **e** falls;
25: 21 If your **e** is hungry, give him food
27: 6 trusted, but an **e** multiplies kisses.
1Co15: 26 The last **e** to be destroyed is death.
1Ti 5: 14 and to give the **e** no opportunity
Jas 4: 4 of the world becomes an **e** of God.

ENJOY (JOY)
Dt 6: 2 and so that you may **e** long life.
Eph 6: 3 and that you may **e** long life
Heb11: 25 than to **e** the fleeting pleasures

ENJOYMENT (JOY)
Ecc 4: 8 why am I depriving myself of **e**?"
1Ti 6: 17 us with everything for our **e**.

ENLIGHTENED (LIGHT)
Eph 1: 18 eyes of your heart may be **e** in
Heb 6: 4 for those who have once been **e**,

ENMITY (ENEMY)
Ge 3: 15 I will put **e** between you

ENOCH
Walked with God and taken by him (Ge 5:18–24; Heb 11:5). Prophet (Jude 14).

ENTANGLED (ENTANGLES)
2Ti 2: 4 soldier gets **e** in civilian affairs,
2Pe 2: 20 Jesus Christ and are again **e** in it

ENTANGLES (ENTANGLED)
Heb12: 1 hinders and the sin that so easily **e**.

ENTER (ENTERED ENTERS)
Ps 100: 4 **E** his gates with thanksgiving
Mt 5: 20 will certainly not **e** the kingdom
7: 13 "**E** through the narrow gate.
18: 8 It is better for you to **e** life maimed
Mk 10: 15 like a little child will never **e** it."
10: 23 the rich to **e** the kingdom of God!"

ENTERED (ENTER)
Ro 5: 12 just as sin **e** the world through one
Heb 9: 12 he **e** the Most Holy Place once

ENTERS (ENTER)
Mk 7: 18 that nothing that **e** a person
Jn 10: 2 The one who **e** by the gate is

ENTERTAIN
1Ti 5: 19 Do not **e** an accusation against

ENTHRALLED
Ps 45: 11 Let the king be **e** by your beauty;

ENTHRONED (THRONE)
1Sa 4: 4 who is **e** between the cherubim.
Ps 2: 4 The One **e** in heaven laughs;
102: 12 But you, Lord, sit **e** forever;
Isa 40: 22 He sits **e** above the circle

ENTICE
Pr 1: 10 if sinful men **e** you, do not give
2Pe 2: 18 they **e** people who are just escaping

ENTIRE
Gal 5: 14 For the **e** law is fulfilled in keeping

ENTRUSTED (TRUST)
1Ti 6: 20 guard what has been **e** to your care.
2Ti 1: 12 to guard what I have **e** to him until
1: 14 good deposit that was **e** to you—
Jude : 3 once for all **e** to God's holy people.

ENVY
Pr 3: 31 Do not **e** the violent or choose any
14: 30 to the body, but **e** rots the bones.
1Co13: 4 It does not **e**, it does not boast,

EPHRAIM
1. Second son of Joseph (Ge 41:52; 46:20). Blessed as firstborn by Jacob (Ge 48).
2. Synonymous with Northern Kingdom (Isa 7:17; Hos 5).

EQUAL
Isa 40: 25 Or who is my **e**?" says the Holy
Jn 5: 18 Father, making himself **e** with God.
1Co12: 25 its parts should have **e** concern

EQUIP (EQUIPPED)
Eph 4: 12 to **e** his people for works of service,
Heb13: 21 **e** you with everything good

EQUIPPED (EQUIP)
2Ti 3: 17 God may be thoroughly **e** for every

ERROR
Jas 5: 20 the **e** of their way will save them

ESAU
Firstborn of Isaac, twin of Jacob (Ge 25:21–26). Also called Edom (Ge 25:30). Sold Jacob his birthright (Ge 25:29–34); lost blessing (Ge 27). Reconciled to Jacob (Gen 33).

ESCAPE (ESCAPING)
Ro 2: 3 think you will **e** God's judgment?
Heb 2: 3 how shall we **e** if we ignore so great

ESCAPING (ESCAPE)
1Co 3: 15 only as one **e** through the flames.

ESTABLISH (ESTABLISHED ESTABLISHES)
Ge 6: 18 But I will **e** my covenant with you,
1Ch28: 7 I will **e** his kingdom forever if he is
Ro 10: 3 of God and sought to **e** their own,

ESTABLISHED (ESTABLISH)
Ps 8: 2 infants you have **e** a stronghold

ESTABLISHES (ESTABLISH)
Pr 16: 9 course, but the Lord **e** their steps.

ESTEEM (ESTEEMED)
Isa 53: 3 and we held him in low **e**.
ESTEEMED (ESTEEM)
Pr 22: 1 to be **e** is better than silver or gold.
ESTHER
Jewess who lived in Persia; cousin of Mordecai (Est 2:7). Chosen queen of Xerxes (Est 2:8–18). Foiled Haman's plan to exterminate the Jews (Est 3–4; 7–9).
ETERNAL (ETERNITY)
Ps 16: 11 with **e** pleasures at your right hand.
111: 10 To him belongs **e** praise.
119: 89 Your word, Lord, is **e**;
Isa 26: 4 the Lord himself, is the Rock **e**.
Mt 19: 16 good thing must I do to get **e** life?"
25: 41 the **e** fire prepared for the devil
25: 46 but the righteous to **e** life."
Jn 3: 15 who believes may have **e** life
3: 16 him shall not perish but have **e** life.
3: 36 believes in the Son has **e** life,
4: 14 of water welling up to **e** life."
5: 24 believes him who sent me has **e** life
6: 47 the one who believes has **e** life.
6: 68 You have the words of **e** life.
10: 28 I give them **e** life, and they shall
17: 3 Now this is **e** life: that they know
Ro 1: 20 his **e** power and divine nature—
6: 23 of God is **e** life in Christ Jesus our
2Co 4: 17 for us an **e** glory that far outweighs
4: 18 temporary, but what is unseen is **e**.
1Ti 1: 16 believe in him and receive **e** life.
1: 17 Now to the King **e**, immortal,
Heb 9: 12 thus obtaining **e** redemption.
1Jn 5: 11 God has given us **e** life, and this life
5: 13 you may know that you have **e** life.
ETERNITY (ETERNAL)
Ps 93: 2 you are from all **e**.
Ecc 3: 11 has also set **e** in the human heart;
ETHIOPIAN
Jer 13: 23 Can an **E** change his skin
EUNUCHS
Mt 19: 12 choose to live like **e** for the sake
EVANGELIST (EVANGELISTS)
2Ti 4: 5 do the work of an **e**, discharge all
EVANGELISTS (EVANGELIST)
Eph 4: 11 the **e**, the pastors and teachers,
EVE
2Co 11: 3 afraid that just as **E** was deceived
1Ti 2: 13 For Adam was formed first, then **E**.
EVEN-TEMPERED
Pr 17: 27 whoever has understanding is **e**.
EVER (EVERLASTING FOREVER)
Ex 15: 18 "The Lord reigns for **e** and **e**."
Dt 8: 19 you **e** forget the Lord your God
Ps 5: 11 you be glad; let them **e** sing for joy.
10: 16 The Lord is King for **e** and **e**;
25: 3 one who hopes in you will **e** be put
45: 6 throne, O God, will last for **e** and **e**;
52: 8 I trust in God's unfailing love for **e**
89: 33 nor will I **e** betray my faithfulness.
145: 1 I will praise your name for **e** and **e**.
Pr 4: 18 shining **e** brighter till the full light
5: 19 may you **e** be intoxicated with her
Isa 66: 8 Who has **e** heard of such things?
Jer 31: 36 "will Israel **e** cease being a nation
Da 7: 18 possess it forever—yes, for **e** and **e**.'
12: 3 like the stars for **e** and **e**.
Mk 4: 12 "'they may be **e** seeing but never
Jn 1: 18 No one has **e** seen God, but
Rev 1: 18 now look, I am alive for **e** and **e**!
22: 5 And they will reign for **e** and **e**.
EVER-INCREASING (INCREASE)
Ro 6: 19 to impurity and to **e** wickedness,
2Co 3: 18 into his image with **e** glory,
EVERLASTING (EVER)
Dt 33: 27 and underneath are the **e** arms.
Ne 9: 5 your God, who is from **e** to **e**."
Ps 90: 2 world, from **e** to **e** you are God.
139: 24 in me, and lead me in the way **e**.
Isa 9: 6 Mighty God, **E** Father,
33: 14 of us can dwell with **e** burning?"
35: 10 **e** joy will crown their heads.
45: 17 by the Lord with an **e** salvation;
54: 8 **e** kindness I will have compassion
55: 3 I will make an **e** covenant with you,
63: 12 them, to gain for himself **e** renown,
Jer 31: 3 "I have loved you with an **e** love;
Da 9: 24 to bring in **e** righteousness, to seal
12: 2 some to **e** life, others to shame and **e** contempt.
2Th 1: 9 will be punished with **e** destruction
Jude : 6 bound with **e** chains for judgment
EVER-PRESENT
Ps 46: 1 and strength, an **e** help in trouble.
EVIDENCE (EVIDENT)
Jn 14: 11 on the **e** of the works themselves.
EVIDENT (EVIDENCE)
Php 4: 5 Let your gentleness be **e** to all.
EVIL (EVILDOER EVILDOERS)
Ge 2: 9 of the knowledge of good and **e**.
Job 1: 1 he feared God and shunned **e**.
1: 8 a man who fears God and shuns **e**."
34: 10 Far be it from God to do **e**,
Ps 23: 4 will fear no **e**, for you are with me;
34: 14 Turn from **e** and do good;
51: 4 and done what is **e** in your sight;
97: 10 those who love the Lord hate **e**,
101: 4 have nothing to do with what is **e**.
Pr 8: 13 To fear the Lord is to hate **e**;
11: 27 **e** comes to one who searches for it.
Isa 5: 20 who call **e** good and good **e**,
13: 11 I will punish the world for its **e**,
Hab 1: 13 Your eyes are too pure to look on **e**;

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Mt 5:45 He causes his sun to rise on the **e**
6:13 but deliver us from the **e** one.'
7:11 you are **e**, know how to give
12:35 an **e** man brings **e** things out of the **e**
Jn 17:15 you protect them from the **e** one.
Ro 2:9 for every human being who does **e**:
12:9 Hate what is **e**; cling to what is
12:17 Do not repay anyone **e** for **e**.
16:19 and innocent about what is **e**.
1Co13:6 Love does not delight in **e**
14:20 In regard to **e** be infants, but in
Eph 6:16 all the flaming arrows of the **e** one.
1Th 5:22 reject every kind of **e**.
1Ti 6:10 of money is a root of all kinds of **e**.
2Ti 2:22 Flee the **e** desires of youth
Jas 1:13 For God cannot be tempted by **e**,
1Pe 2:16 your freedom as a cover-up for **e**;
3:9 Do not repay **e** with **e** or insult
3:9 the contrary, repay **e** with blessing,

EVILDOER (EVIL)
Pr 24:20 for the **e** has no future hope,

EVILDOERS (EVIL)
Pr 24:19 Do not fret because of **e** or be

EXACT
Heb 1:3 the **e** representation of his being,

EXALT (EXALTED EXALTS)
Ps 30:1 I will **e** you, Lord, for you lifted
34:3 let us **e** his name together.
118:28 you are my God, and I will **e** you.
Isa 24:15 **e** the name of the Lord, the God
Mt 23:12 For those who **e** themselves will be

EXALTED (EXALT)
2Sa 22:47 **E** be my God, the Rock, my Savior!
1Ch29:11 you are **e** as head over all.
Ne 9:5 and may it be **e** above all blessing
Ps 21:13 Be **e** in your strength, Lord;
46:10 I will be **e** among the nations,
57:5 Be **e**, O God, above the heavens;
97:9 you are **e** far above all gods.
99:2 he is **e** over all the nations.
108:5 Be **e**, O God, above the heavens;
148:13 the Lord, for his name alone is **e**;
Isa 6:1 high and **e**, seated on a throne;
12:4 and proclaim that his name is **e**.
33:5 The Lord is **e**, for he dwells
Eze 21:26 The lowly will be **e** and the **e** will
Mt 23:12 who humble themselves will be **e**.
Php 1:20 now as always Christ will be **e**
2:9 Therefore God **e** him to the highest

EXALTS (EXALT)
Ps 75:7 He brings one down, he **e** another.
Pr 14:34 Righteousness **e** a nation, but sin

EXAMINE (EXAMINED)
Ps 26:2 try me, **e** my heart and my mind;
Jer 17:10 search the heart and **e** the mind,
La 3:40 Let us **e** our ways and test them,
1Co11:28 to **e** themselves before they eat
2Co13:5 **E** yourselves to see whether you

EXAMINED (EXAMINE)
Ac 17:11 **e** the Scriptures every day to see

EXAMPLE (EXAMPLES)
Jn 13:15 I have set you an **e** that you should
1Co11:1 Follow my **e**, as I follow the **e**
1Ti 4:12 set an **e** for the believers in speech,
Titus2:7 everything set them an **e** by doing
1Pe 2:21 leaving you an **e**, that you should

EXAMPLES (EXAMPLE)
1Co10:6 Now these things occurred as **e**
10:11 things happened to them as **e**
1Pe 5:3 to you, but being **e** to the flock.

EXASPERATE
Eph 6:4 Fathers, do not **e** your children;

EXCEL (EXCELLENT)
1Co14:12 try to **e** in those that build
2Co 8:7 you also **e** in this grace of giving.

EXCELLENT (EXCEL)
1Co12:31 yet I will show you the most **e** way.
Php 4:8 if anything is **e** or praiseworthy—
1Ti 3:13 have served well gain an **e** standing
Titus3:8 These things are **e** and profitable

EXCHANGED
Ro 1:23 **e** the glory of the immortal God
1:25 **e** the truth about God for a lie,

EXCUSE (EXCUSES)
Jn 15:22 now they have no **e** for their sin.
Ro 1:20 made, so that people are without **e**.

EXCUSES (EXCUSE)
Lk 14:18 "But they all alike began to make **e**.

EXISTS
Heb 2:10 and through whom everything **e**,
11:6 to him must believe that he **e**

EXPECT (EXPECTATION)
Mt 24:44 at an hour when you do not **e** him.

EXPECTATION (EXPECT)
Ro 8:19 waits in eager **e** for the children
Heb10:27 but only a fearful **e** of judgment

EXPEL
1Co 5:13 "**E** the wicked person from among

EXPENSIVE
1Ti 2:9 or gold or pearls or **e** clothes,

EXPLOIT
Pr 22:22 Do not **e** the poor because they are
2Co12:17 I **e** you through any of the men

EXPOSE
1Co 4:5 and will **e** the motives of the heart.
Eph 5:11 of darkness, but rather **e** them.

EXTENDS
Pr 31:20 poor and **e** her hands to the needy.
Lk 1:50 His mercy **e** to those who fear him,

EXTINGUISHED
2Sa 21:17 the lamp of Israel will not be **e**."

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EXTOL
Job 36: 24 Remember to **e** his work,
Ps 34: 1 I will **e** the Lord at all times;
68: 4 **e** him who rides on the clouds;
95: 2 thanksgiving and **e** him with music
109: 30 mouth I will greatly **e** the Lord;
111: 1 I will **e** the Lord with all my
115: 18 it is we who **e** the Lord,
117: 1 **e** him, all you peoples.
145: 2 and **e** your name for ever
145: 10 your faithful people **e** you.
147: 12 **E** the Lord, Jerusalem;

EXTORT
Lk 3: 14 "Don't **e** money and don't accuse

EYE (EYES)
Ex 21: 24 **e** for **e**, tooth for tooth,
Ps 94: 9 Does he who formed the **e** not see?
Mt 5: 29 If your right **e** causes you
5: 38 have heard that it was said, '**E** for **e**,
7: 3 speck of sawdust in your brother's **e**
1Co 2: 9 "What no **e** has seen, what no ear
Col 3: 22 not only when their **e** is on you
Rev 1: 7 and "every **e** will see him,

EYES (EYE)
Nu 33: 55 remain will become barbs in your **e**
Jos 23: 13 your backs and thorns in your **e**,
2Ch16: 9 For the **e** of the Lord range
Job 31: 1 "I made a covenant with my **e** not
36: 7 not take his **e** off the righteous;
Ps 119: 18 Open my **e** that I may see
121: 1 I lift up my **e** to the mountains—
141: 8 But my **e** are fixed on you,
Pr 3: 7 Do not be wise in your own **e**;
4: 25 Let your **e** look straight ahead;
15: 3 The **e** of the Lord are
Isa 6: 5 and my **e** have seen the King,
Hab 1: 13 Your **e** are too pure to look on evil;
Jn 4: 35 open your **e** and look at the fields!
2Co 4: 18 So we fix our **e** not on what is seen,
Heb12: 2 fixing our **e** on Jesus, the pioneer
Jas 2: 5 who are poor in the **e** of the world
1Pe 3: 12 For the **e** of the Lord are
Rev 7: 17 away every tear from their **e**.'"
21: 4 will wipe every tear from their **e**.

EZEKIEL
Priest called to be prophet to the exiles (Eze 1–3).

EZRA
Priest and teacher of the Law who led a return of exiles to Israel to reestablish temple and worship (Ezr 7–8). Corrected intermarriage of priests (Ezr 9–10). Read Law at celebration of Feast of Tabernacles (Neh 8).

FACE (FACES)
Ge 32: 30 "It is because I saw God **f** to **f**,
Ex 34: 29 that his **f** was radiant because he
Nu 6: 25 the Lord make his **f** shine on you
1Ch16: 11 and his strength; seek his **f** always.
2Ch 7: 14 and seek my **f** and turn from their
Ps 4: 6 Let the light of your **f** shine on us.
27: 8 My heart says of you, "Seek his **f**!"
31: 16 Let your **f** shine on your servant;
105: 4 and his strength; seek his **f** always.
119:135 Make your **f** shine on your servant
Isa 50: 7 Therefore have I set my **f** like flint,
Mt 17: 2 His **f** shone like the sun, and his
1Co13: 12 in a mirror; then we shall see **f** to **f**.
2Co 4: 6 glory displayed in the **f** of Christ.
1Pe 3: 12 the **f** of the Lord is against those
Rev 1: 16 His **f** was like the sun shining in all

FACES (FACE)
2Co 3: 18 unveiled **f** contemplate the Lord's

FACTIONS
Gal 5: 20 rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, **f**

FADE
1Pe 5: 4 of glory that will never **f** away.

FAIL (FAILING FAILINGS FAILS)
1Ch28: 20 He will not **f** you or forsake you
2Ch34: 33 they did not **f** to follow the Lord,
Ps 89: 28 my covenant with him will never **f**.
Pr 15: 22 Plans **f** for lack of counsel,
Isa 51: 6 my righteousness will never **f**.
La 3: 22 for his compassions never **f**.
2Co13: 5 unless, of course, you **f** the test?

FAILING (FAIL)
1Sa 12: 23 I should sin against the Lord by **f**

FAILINGS (FAIL)
Ro 15: 1 to bear with the **f** of the weak

FAILS (FAIL)
1Co13: 8 Love never **f**. But where there are

FAINT
Isa 40: 31 weary, they will walk and not be **f**.

FAIR
Pr 1: 3 doing what is right and just and **f**;
Col 4: 1 your slaves with what is right and **f**,

FAITH (FAITHFUL FAITHFULLY FAITHFULNESS FAITHLESS)
2Ch20: 20 Have **f** in the Lord your God
20: 20 have **f** in his prophets
Mt 9: 29 "According to your **f** let it be done
17: 20 if you have **f** as small as a mustard
24: 10 many will turn away from the **f**
Mk 11: 22 "Have **f** in God," Jesus answered.
Lk 7: 9 I have not found such great **f** even
12: 28 will he clothe you—you of little **f**!
17: 5 said to the Lord, "Increase our **f**!"
18: 8 comes, will he find **f** on the earth?"
Ac 14: 9 him, saw that he had **f** to be healed
14: 27 how he had opened a door of **f**
Ro 1: 12 encouraged by each other's **f**.
1: 17 "The righteous will live by **f**."
1: 17 righteousness that is by **f** from first
3: 22 righteousness is given through **f**

Ro 3:25 of his blood—to be received by **f**.
4:5 their **f** is credited as righteousness.
5:1 we have been justified through **f**,
10:17 **f** comes from hearing the message,
14:1 Accept the one whose **f** is weak,
14:23 that does not come from **f** is sin.
16:26 the obedience that comes from **f**—
1Co 13:2 have a **f** that can move mountains,
13:13 three remain: **f**, hope and love.
16:13 stand firm in the **f**; be courageous;
2Co 5:7 For we live by **f**, not by sight.
13:5 to see whether you are in the **f**;
Gal 2:16 we may be justified by **f** in Christ
2:20 body, I live by **f** in the Son of God,
3:11 "the righteous will live by **f**."
3:24 that we might be justified by **f**.
Eph 2:8 you have been saved, through **f**—
4:5 one Lord, one **f**, one baptism;
6:16 take up the shield of **f**,
Col 1:23 if you continue in your **f**,
1Th 5:8 be sober, putting on **f** and love as
1Ti 2:15 if they continue in **f**,
4:1 later times some will abandon the **f**
5:8 has denied the **f** and is worse than
6:12 Fight the good fight of the **f**.
2Ti 3:15 salvation through **f** in Christ Jesus.
4:7 finished the race, I have kept the **f**.
Phm :6 with us in the **f** may be effective
Heb 10:38 my righteous one will live by **f**.
11:1 Now **f** is confidence in what we
11:3 By **f** we understand that the
11:5 By **f** Enoch was taken from this
11:6 without **f** it is impossible to please
11:7 By **f** Noah, when warned
11:7 By his **f** he condemned the world
11:8 By **f** Abraham, when called to go
11:17 By **f** Abraham, when God tested
11:20 By **f** Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau
11:21 By **f** Jacob, when he was dying,
11:22 By **f** Joseph, when his end was
11:24 By **f** Moses, when he had grown
11:31 By **f** the prostitute Rahab,
12:2 Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of **f**.
Jas 2:14 Can such **f** save them?
2:17 In the same way, **f** by itself, if it is
2:26 is dead, so **f** without deeds is dead.
2Pe 1:5 effort to add to your **f** goodness;
1Jn 5:4 overcome the world, even our **f**.
Jude :3 contend for the **f** that was once

FAITHFUL (FAITH)

Nu 12:7 he is **f** in all my house.
Dt 7:9 he is the **f** God, keeping his
32:4 A **f** God who does no wrong,
2Sa 22:26 "To the **f** you show yourself **f**,
Ps 16:10 will you let your **f** one see decay.
25:10 and **f** toward those who keep
31:23 Love the Lord, all his **f** people!
33:4 right and true; he is **f** in all he does.
37:28 just and will not forsake his **f** ones.
97:10 for he guards the lives of his **f** ones
116:15 is the death of his **f** servants.
145:13 all he promises and **f** in all he does.
145:17 in all his ways and **f** in all he does.
146:6 he remains **f** forever.
Pr 31:26 and **f** instruction is on her tongue.
Mt 25:21 'Well done, good and **f** servant!
25:21 You have been **f** with a few things;
Ro 12:12 patient in affliction, **f** in prayer.
1Co 4:2 been given a trust must prove **f**.
10:13 And God is **f**; he will not let you be
1Th 5:24 The one who calls you is **f**, and he
1Ti 3:2 to be above reproach, **f** to his wife,
2Ti 2:13 he remains **f**, for he cannot disown
Heb 3:6 Christ is **f** as the Son over God's
10:23 profess, for he who promised is **f**.
1Pe 4:10 as **f** stewards of God's grace in its
4:19 themselves to their **f** Creator
1Jn 1:9 he is **f** and just and will forgive us
Rev 1:5 who is the **f** witness, the firstborn
2:10 Be **f**, even to the point of death,
19:11 whose rider is called **F** and True.

FAITHFULLY (FAITH)

Dt 11:13 So if you **f** obey the commands
1Sa 12:24 and serve him **f** with all your heart;
1Ki 2:4 if they walk **f** before me with all

FAITHFULNESS (FAITH)

Ps 51:6 you desired **f** even in the womb;
57:10 your **f** reaches to the skies.
85:10 Love and **f** meet together;
86:15 to anger, abounding in love and **f**.
89:1 make your **f** known through all
89:14 love and **f** go before you.
91:4 his **f** will be your shield
117:2 the **f** of the Lord endures forever.
119:75 and that in **f** you have afflicted me.
Pr 3:3 Let love and **f** never leave you;
Isa 11:5 and **f** the sash around his waist.
La 3:23 new every morning; great is your **f**.
Hab 2:4 righteous person will live by his **f**—
Ro 3:3 their unfaithfulness nullify God's **f**?
Gal 5:22 forbearance, kindness, goodness, **f**,

FAITHLESS (FAITH)

Ps 119:158 I look on the **f** with loathing,
Jer 3:22 "Return, **f** people; I will cure you
2Ti 2:13 if we are **f**, he remains faithful,

FALL (FALLEN FALLS)

Ps 37:24 he will not **f**, for the Lord
69:9 of those who insult you **f** on me.
Pr 11:28 who trust in their riches will **f**,
Lk 11:17 a house divided against itself will **f**.
Jn 16:1 you so that you will not **f** away.
Ro 3:23 and **f** short of the glory of God,
14:4 own master, servants stand or **f**.

FALLEN (FALL)

2Sa 1:19 How the mighty have **f**!

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Isa 14: 12 How you have **f** from heaven,
1Co 15: 20 of those who have **f** asleep.
Gal 5: 4 you have **f** away from grace.
1Th 4: 15 precede those who have **f** asleep.
Heb 6: 6 and who have **f** away, to be brought

FALLS (FALL)
Pr 24: 17 Do not gloat when your enemy **f**;
Jn 12: 24 a kernel of wheat **f** to the ground

FALSE (FALSEHOOD FALSELY)
Ex 20: 16 shall not give **f** testimony against
23: 1 "Do not spread **f** reports.
Pr 13: 5 The righteous hate what is **f**,
19: 5 A **f** witness will not go unpunished,
Mt 7: 15 "Watch out for **f** prophets.
19: 18 steal, you shall not give **f** testimony,
24: 11 and many **f** prophets will appear
Php 1: 18 whether from **f** motives or true,
1Ti 1: 3 not to teach **f** doctrines any longer
2Pe 2: 1 there will be **f** teachers among you.

FALSEHOOD (FALSE)
Ps 119: 163 and detest **f** but I love your law.
Pr 30: 8 Keep **f** and lies far from me;
Eph 4: 25 each of you must put off **f**

FALSELY (FALSE)
Lev 19: 12 "'Do not swear **f** by my name
Lk 3: 14 money and don't accuse people **f**—
1Ti 6: 20 ideas of what is **f** called knowledge,

FALTER
Pr 24: 10 If you **f** in a time of trouble,
Isa 42: 4 he will not **f** or be discouraged till

FAMILIES (FAMILY)
Ps 68: 6 God sets the lonely in **f**, he leads

FAMILY (FAMILIES)
Pr 31: 15 she provides food for her **f**
Lk 9: 61 go back and say goodbye to my **f**."
12: 52 in one **f** divided against each other,
1Ti 3: 4 He must manage his own **f** well
3: 5 know how to manage his own **f**,
5: 4 practice by caring for their own **f**

FAMINE
Ge 41: 30 seven years of **f** will follow them.
Am 8: 11 I will send a **f** through the land—
Ro 8: 35 or persecution or **f** or nakedness

FAN
2Ti 1: 6 this reason I remind you to **f**

FAST
Dt 13: 4 serve him and hold **f** to him.
Jos 22: 5 to hold **f** to him and to serve him
23: 8 to hold **f** to the Lord your God,
Ps 119: 31 I hold **f** to your statutes, Lord;
139: 10 me, your right hand will hold me **f**.
Mt 6: 16 "When you **f**, do not look somber
1Pe 5: 12 the true grace of God. Stand **f** in it.

FATHER (FATHER'S FATHERLESS FATHERS)
Ge 2: 24 That is why a man leaves his **f**
Ge 17: 4 You will be the **f** of many nations.
Ex 20: 12 "Honor your **f** and your mother,
21: 15 "Anyone who attacks their **f**
21: 17 "Anyone who curses their **f**
Lev 18: 7 "'Do not dishonor your **f**
19: 3 must respect your mother and **f**,
Dt 5: 16 "Honor your **f** and your mother,
21: 18 son who does not obey his **f**
Ps 27: 10 Though my **f** and mother forsake
68: 5 A **f** to the fatherless, a defender
Pr 10: 1 A wise son brings joy to his **f**,
23: 22 Listen to your **f**, who gave you life,
23: 24 The **f** of a righteous child has great
28: 7 of gluttons disgraces his **f**.
29: 3 loves wisdom brings joy to his **f**,
Isa 9: 6 Everlasting **F**, Prince of Peace.
Mt 6: 9 "'Our **F** in heaven, hallowed be
10: 37 "Anyone who loves their **f**
15: 4 said, 'Honor your **f** and mother'
19: 5 this reason a man will leave his **f**
Lk 12: 53 **f** against son and son against **f**,
23: 34 Jesus said, "**F**, forgive them,
Jn 6: 44 unless the **F** who sent me draws
6: 46 from God; only he has seen the **F**.
8: 44 You belong to your **f**, the devil,
10: 30 I and the **F** are one."
14: 6 comes to the **F** except through me.
14: 9 who has seen me has seen the **F**.
Ro 4: 11 he is the **f** of all who believe
2Co 6: 18 And, "I will be a **F** to you, and you
Eph 6: 2 "Honor your **f** and mother"—
Heb 12: 7 are not disciplined by their **f**?

FATHER'S (FATHER)
Pr 13: 1 wise son heeds his **f** instruction,
19: 13 A foolish child is a **f** ruin,
Lk 2: 49 know I had to be in my **F** house?"
Jn 2: 16 Stop turning my **F** house
10: 29 can snatch them out of my **F** hand.
14: 2 My **F** house has many rooms;

FATHERLESS (FATHER)
Dt 10: 18 He defends the cause of the **f**
24: 17 the foreigner or the **f** of justice,
24: 19 the foreigner, the **f** and the widow,
Ps 68: 5 A father to the **f**, a defender
Pr 23: 10 or encroach on the fields of the **f**,

FATHERS (FATHER)
Lk 11: 11 "Which of you **f**, if your son asks
Eph 6: 4 **F**, do not exasperate your children;
Col 3: 21 **F**, do not embitter your children,

FATHOM
Job 11: 7 "Can you **f** the mysteries of God?
Ps 145: 3 his greatness no one can **f**.
Ecc 3: 11 no one can **f** what God has done
Isa 40: 28 his understanding no one can **f**.
1Co 13: 2 of prophecy and can **f** all mysteries

FAULT (FAULTS)
Mt 18: 15 sins, go and point out their **f**,

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Php 2: 15 of God without **f** in a warped
Jas 1: 5 generously to all without finding **f**,
Jude : 24 his glorious presence without **f**

FAULTFINDERS
Jude : 16 These people are grumblers and **f**;

FAULTS (FAULT)
Ps 19: 12 Forgive my hidden **f**.

FAVORITISM
Ex 23: 3 do not show **f** to a poor person
Lev 19: 15 to the poor or **f** to the great,
Ac 10: 34 true it is that God does not show **f**
Ro 2: 11 For God does not show **f**.
Gal 2: 6 God does not show **f**—
Eph 6: 9 heaven, and there is no **f** with him.
Col 3: 25 for their wrongs, and there is no **f**.
1Ti 5: 21 and to do nothing out of **f**.
Jas 2: 1 Lord Jesus Christ must not show **f**.
2: 9 But if you show **f**, you sin and are

FEAR (AFRAID FEARS)
Dt 6: 13 **F** the Lord your God, serve him
10: 12 you but to **f** the Lord your God,
31: 12 learn to **f** the Lord your God
Ps 19: 9 The **f** of the Lord is pure,
23: 4 the darkest valley, I will **f** no evil,
27: 1 and my salvation—whom shall I **f**?
91: 5 You will not **f** the terror of night,
111: 10 The **f** of the Lord is
Pr 8: 13 To **f** the Lord is to hate evil;
9: 10 The **f** of the Lord is
10: 27 The **f** of the Lord adds length
14: 27 The **f** of the Lord is a fountain
15: 33 instruction is to **f** the Lord,
16: 6 through the **f** of the Lord evil is
19: 23 The **f** of the Lord leads to life;
29: 25 **F** of man will prove to be a snare,
Ecc 5: 7 Therefore **f** God.
Isa 11: 3 will delight in the **f** of the Lord.
41: 10 So do not **f**, for I am with you;
Lk 12: 5 will show you whom you should **f**:
Php 2: 12 to work out your salvation with **f**
1Jn 4: 18 There is no **f** in love. But perfect love
drives out **f**,

FEARS (FEAR)
Job 1: 8 a man who **f** God and shuns evil."
Ps 34: 4 he delivered me from all my **f**.
Pr 31: 30 a woman who **f** the Lord is to be
1Jn 4: 18 The one who **f** is not made perfect

FEED
Jn 21: 15 Jesus said, "**F** my lambs."
21: 17 Jesus said, "**F** my sheep.
Ro 12: 20 "If your enemy is hungry, **f** him;
Jude : 12 shepherds who **f** only themselves.

FEET (FOOT)
Ps 8: 6 you put everything under their **f**:
22: 16 they pierce my hands and my **f**.
40: 2 he set my **f** on a rock and gave me
110: 1 enemies a footstool for your **f**."
Ps 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my **f**
Ro 10: 15 "How beautiful are the **f** of those
1Co 12: 21 And the head cannot say to the **f**,
15: 25 has put all his enemies under his **f**.
Heb 12: 13 "Make level paths for your **f**,"

FELLOWSHIP
2Co 6: 14 **f** can light have with darkness?
13: 14 the **f** of the Holy Spirit be with you
1Jn 1: 6 If we claim to have **f** with him
1: 7 light, we have **f** with one another,

FEMALE
Ge 1: 27 male and **f** he created them.
Gal 3: 28 nor is there male and **f**, for you are

FERVOR
Ro 12: 11 but keep your spiritual **f**,

FIDELITY
Ro 1: 31 no understanding, no **f**, no love,

FIELD (FIELDS)
Mt 6: 28 See how the flowers of the **f** grow.
13: 38 The **f** is the world, and the good
1Co 3: 9 you are God's **f**, God's building.

FIELDS (FIELD)
Lk 2: 8 shepherds living out in the **f**
Jn 4: 35 open your eyes and look at the **f**!

FIERY (FIRE)
1Pe 4: 12 do not be surprised at the **f** ordeal

FIG (FIGS)
Ge 3: 7 so they sewed **f** leaves together

FIGHT (FOUGHT)
Ex 14: 14 The Lord will **f** for you;
Dt 1: 30 is going before you, will **f** for you,
3: 22 the Lord your God himself will **f**
Ne 4: 20 Our God will **f** for us!"
Ps 35: 1 **f** against those who **f** against me.
Jn 18: 36 my servants would **f** to prevent my
1Co 9: 26 I do not **f** like a boxer beating
2Co 10: 4 The weapons we **f** with are not
1Ti 1: 18 them you may **f** the battle well,
6: 12 **F** the good **f** of the faith.
2Ti 4: 7 I have fought the good **f**, I have

FIGS (FIG)
Lk 6: 44 People do not pick **f**

FILL (FILLED FILLS FULL FULLNESS FULLY)
Ge 1: 28 **f** the earth and subdue it.
Ps 16: 11 you will **f** me with joy in your
81: 10 wide your mouth and I will **f** it.
Pr 28: 19 chase fantasies will have their **f**
Hag 2: 7 and I will **f** this house with glory,'
Jn 6: 26 you ate the loaves and had your **f**.
Ac 2: 28 you will **f** me with joy in your
Ro 15: 13 May the God of hope **f** you with all

FILLED (FILL)
Ps 72: 19 may the whole earth be **f** with his
119: 64 The earth is **f** with your love,
Isa 11: 9 for the earth will be **f**

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Eze 43: 5 glory of the Lord **f** the temple.
Hab 2: 14 For the earth will be **f**
Lk 1: 15 he will be **f** with the Holy Spirit
1: 41 Elizabeth was **f** with the Holy Spirit.
Jn 12: 3 the house was **f** with the fragrance
Ac 2: 4 of them were **f** with the Holy Spirit
4: 8 Then Peter, **f** with the Holy Spirit,
9: 17 and be **f** with the Holy Spirit."
13: 9 called Paul, **f** with the Holy Spirit,
Eph 5: 18 Instead, be **f** with the Spirit,
Php 1: 11 **f** with the fruit of righteousness

FILLS (FILL)
Nu 14: 21 of the Lord **f** the whole earth,
Ps 107: 9 and **f** the hungry with good things.
Eph 1: 23 him who **f** everything in every way.

FILTHY
Isa 64: 6 all our righteous acts are like **f** rags;
Col 3: 8 and **f** language from your lips.

FIND (FINDS FOUND)
Nu 32: 23 be sure that your sin will **f** you out.
Dt 4: 29 you will **f** him if you seek him
1Sa 23: 16 and helped him **f** strength in God.
Ps 91: 4 under his wings you will **f** refuge;
112: 1 Lord, who **f** great delight in his
Pr 14: 22 those who plan what is good **f** love
31: 10 wife of noble character who can **f**?
Jer 6: 16 and you will **f** rest for your souls.
Mt 7: 7 seek and you will **f**;
11: 29 and you will **f** rest for your souls.
16: 25 loses their life for me will **f** it.
Lk 18: 8 will he **f** faith on the earth?"
Jn 10: 9 come in and go out, and **f** pasture.

FINDS (FIND)
Ps 62: 1 Truly my soul **f** rest in God;
119: 162 promise like one who **f** great spoil.
Pr 18: 22 He who **f** a wife **f** what is good
Mt 7: 8 the one who seeks **f**; and to the one
10: 39 Whoever **f** their life will lose it,
Lk 12: 37 whose master **f** them watching
15: 4 go after the lost sheep until he **f** it?

FINISH (FINISHED)
Jn 4: 34 him who sent me and to **f** his work.
5: 36 that the Father has given me to **f**—
Ac 20: 24 my only aim is to **f** the race
2Co 8: 11 Now **f** the work, so that your eager
Gal 3: 3 are you now trying to **f** by means
Jas 1: 4 Let perseverance **f** its work so

FINISHED (FINISH)
Ge 2: 2 seventh day God had **f** the work he
Jn 19: 30 the drink, Jesus said, "It is **f**."
2Ti 4: 7 the good fight, I have **f** the race,

FIRE (FIERY)
Ex 13: 21 in a pillar of **f** to give them light,
Lev 6: 12 The **f** on the altar must be kept
Isa 30: 27 and his tongue is a consuming **f**.
Jer 23: 29 "Is not my word like **f**,"
Mt 3: 11 you with the Holy Spirit and **f**.
5: 22 will be in danger of the **f** of hell.
25: 41 the eternal **f** prepared for the devil
Mk 9: 43 hell, where the **f** never goes out.
Ac 2: 3 to be tongues of **f** that separated
1Co 3: 13 It will be revealed with **f**, and the **f**
Heb 12: 29 for our "God is a consuming **f**."
Jas 3: 5 what a great forest is set on **f**
2Pe 3: 10 the elements will be destroyed by **f**,
Jude : 23 by snatching them from the **f**;
Rev 20: 14 **f**. The lake of **f** is the second death.

FIRM
Ex 14: 13 Stand **f** and you will see
2Ch 20: 17 stand **f** and see the deliverance
Ps 33: 11 plans of the Lord stand **f** forever,
37: 23 The Lord makes **f** the steps
40: 2 and gave me a **f** place to stand.
89: 2 that your love stands **f** forever,
119: 89 it stands **f** in the heavens.
Zec 8: 23 nations will take **f** hold of one Jew
Mk 13: 13 the one who stands **f** to the end
1Co 16: 13 on your guard; stand **f** in the faith;
2Co 1: 24 because it is by faith you stand **f**.
Eph 6: 14 Stand **f** then, with the belt of truth
Col 4: 12 that you may stand **f** in all the will
2Th 2: 15 stand **f** and hold fast to the teachings
2Ti 2: 19 God's solid foundation stands **f**,
Heb 6: 19 anchor for the soul, **f** and secure.
1Pe 5: 9 Resist him, standing **f** in the faith,

FIRST
Isa 44: 6 I am the **f** and I am the last;
48: 12 I am the **f** and I am the last.
Mt 5: 24 **F** go and be reconciled to them;
6: 33 But seek **f** his kingdom and his
7: 5 **f** take the plank out of your own
20: 27 wants to be **f** must be your slave—
22: 38 This is the **f** and greatest
23: 26 **F** clean the inside of the cup
Mk 13: 10 the gospel must **f** be preached to all
Ac 11: 26 disciples were called Christians **f**
Ro 1: 16 **f** to the Jew, then to the Gentile.
1Co 12: 28 in the church **f** of all apostles,
2Co 8: 5 They gave themselves **f** of all
1Ti 2: 13 For Adam was formed **f**, then Eve.
Jas 3: 17 comes from heaven is **f** of all pure;
1Jn 4: 19 We love because he **f** loved us.
3Jn : 9 who loves to be **f**, will not welcome
Rev 1: 17 I am the **F** and the Last.
2: 4 have forsaken the love you had at **f**.

FIRSTBORN (BEAR)
Ex 11: 5 Every **f** son in Egypt will die,

FIRSTFRUITS
Ex 23: 19 "Bring the best of the **f** of your soil

FISH
Mk 1: 17 I will send you out to **f** for people."
Lk 5: 10 from now on you will **f** for people."

FITTING
Ps 33: 1 it is **f** for the upright to praise him.

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Ps 147: 1 how pleasant and **f** to praise him!
Pr 19: 10 It is not **f** for a fool to live
26: 1 in harvest, honor is not **f** for a fool.
1Co 14: 40 everything should be done in a **f**
Col 3: 18 your husbands, as is **f** in the Lord.
Heb 2: 10 to glory, it was **f** that God,

FIX (FIXING)
Dt 11: 18 **F** these words of mine in your
Pr 4: 25 **f** your gaze directly before you.
2Co 4: 18 So we **f** our eyes not on what is
Heb 3: 1 calling, **f** your thoughts on Jesus,

FIXING (FIX)
Heb 12: 2 **f** our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer

FLAME (FLAMES FLAMING)
2Ti 1: 6 you to fan into **f** the gift of God,

FLAMES (FLAME)
1Co 3: 15 only as one escaping through the **f**.

FLAMING (FLAME)
Eph 6: 16 you can extinguish all the **f** arrows

FLASH
1Co 15: 52 in a **f**, in the twinkling of an eye,

FLATTER (FLATTERING FLATTERY)
Ps 12: 2 they **f** with their lips but harbor
Job 32: 21 no partiality, nor will I **f** anyone;
Jude : 16 **f** others for their own advantage.

FLATTERING (FLATTER)
Ps 12: 3 May the Lord silence all **f** lips
Pr 26: 28 it hurts, and a **f** mouth works ruin.

FLATTERY (FLATTER)
Ro 16: 18 **f** they deceive the minds of naive
1Th 2: 5 You know we never used **f**, nor did

FLAWLESS
2Sa 22: 31 The Lord's word is **f**;
Job 11: 4 'My beliefs are **f** and I am pure
Ps 12: 6 And the words of the Lord are **f**,
18: 30 The Lord's word is **f**;
Pr 30: 5 "Every word of God is **f**; he is
SS 5: 2 my darling, my dove, my **f** one.

FLEE
Ps 139: 7 Where can I **f** from your presence?
1Co 6: 18 **F** from sexual immorality.
10: 14 my dear friends, **f** from idolatry.
1Ti 6: 11 man of God, **f** from all this,
2Ti 2: 22 **F** the evil desires of youth
Jas 4: 7 the devil, and he will **f** from you.

FLEETING
Ps 89: 47 Remember how **f** is my life.
Pr 31: 30 is deceptive, and beauty is **f**;

FLESH
Ge 2: 23 bone of my bones and **f** of my **f**;
2: 24 to his wife, and they become one **f**.
Job 19: 26 yet in my **f** I will see God;
Eze 11: 19 of stone and give them a heart of **f**.
36: 26 of stone and give you a heart of **f**.
Mt 26: 41 spirit is willing, but the **f** is weak."
Mk 10: 8 and the two will become one **f**.'
Jn 1: 14 The Word became **f** and made his
6: 51 bread is my **f**, which I will give
Ro 8: 4 do not live according to the **f** but
8: 8 realm of the **f** cannot please God.
1Co 6: 16 said, "The two will become one **f**."
Gal 3: 3 trying to finish by means of the **f**?
5: 19 The acts of the **f** are obvious:
5: 24 crucified the **f** with its passions
Eph 5: 31 and the two will become one **f**."
6: 12 For our struggle is not against **f**

FLOCK (FLOCKS)
Isa 40: 11 He tends his **f** like a shepherd:
Eze 34: 2 not shepherds take care of the **f**?
Zec 11: 17 shepherd, who deserts the **f**!
Mt 26: 31 the sheep of the **f** will be scattered.'
Ac 20: 28 all the **f** of which the Holy Spirit
1Pe 5: 2 of God's **f** that is under your care,

FLOCKS (FLOCK)
Lk 2: 8 keeping watch over their **f** at night.

FLOG
Ac 22: 25 **f** a Roman citizen who hasn't even

FLOODGATES
Mal 3: 10 will not throw open the **f** of heaven

FLOURISHING
Ps 52: 8 am like an olive tree **f** in the house

FLOW (FLOWING)
Nu 13: 27 and it does **f** with milk and honey!
Jn 7: 38 of living water will **f** from within

FLOWERS
Isa 40: 7 The grass withers and the **f** fall,
Lk 12: 27 "Consider how the wild **f** grow.

FLOWING (FLOW)
Ex 3: 8 a land **f** with milk and honey—

FOLDING
Pr 6: 10 a little **f** of the hands to rest—

FOLLOW (FOLLOWS)
Ex 23: 2 "Do not **f** the crowd in doing
Lev 18: 4 laws and be careful to **f** my decrees.
Dt 5: 1 Learn them and be sure to **f** them.
Ps 23: 6 love will **f** me all the days of my
Mt 16: 24 and take up their cross and **f** me.
Jn 10: 4 his sheep **f** him because they know
1Co 14: 1 **F** the way of love and eagerly desire
Eph 5: 1 **F** God's example, therefore,
Rev 14: 4 They **f** the Lamb wherever he goes.

FOLLOWS (FOLLOW)
Jn 8: 12 Whoever **f** me will never walk

FOOD (FOODS)
Pr 20: 13 awake and you will have **f** to spare.
22: 9 for they share their **f** with the poor.
25: 21 enemy is hungry, give him **f** to eat;
31: 15 she provides **f** for her family
Da 1: 8 to defile himself with the royal **f**
Jn 6: 27 Do not work for **f** that spoils, but for **f** that endures to eternal life,

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1Co 8: 8 **f** does not bring us near to God;
1Ti 6: 8 But if we have **f** and clothing,
Jas 2: 15 sister is without clothes and daily **f**.

FOODS (FOOD)
Mk 7: 19 this, Jesus declared all **f** clean.)

FOOL (FOOLISH FOOLISHNESS FOOLS)
Ps 14: 1 The **f** says in his heart, "There
Pr 15: 5 A **f** spurns a parent's discipline,
26: 5 Answer a **f** according to his folly,
Mt 5: 22 And anyone who says, 'You **f**!'

FOOLISH (FOOL)
Pr 10: 1 a **f** son brings grief to his mother.
17: 25 A **f** son brings grief to his father
Mt 7: 26 practice is like a **f** man who built
25: 2 Five of them were **f** and five were
1Co 1: 27 God chose the **f** things of the world

FOOLISHNESS (FOOL)
1Co 1: 18 of the cross is **f** to those who are
1: 25 the **f** of God is wiser than human
2: 14 Spirit of God but considers them **f**,
3: 19 of this world is **f** in God's sight.

FOOLS (FOOL)
Pr 14: 9 **F** mock at making amends for sin,
17: 28 Even **f** are thought wise if they
18: 2 **F** find no pleasure in understanding
28: 26 who trust in themselves are **f**,
1Co 4: 10 We are **f** for Christ, but you are so

FOOT (FEET FOOTHOLD)
Jos 1: 3 every place where you set your **f**,
Isa 1: 6 the sole of your **f** to the top of your
1Co 12: 15 Now if the **f** should say, "Because I

FOOTHOLD (FOOT)
Eph 4: 27 and do not give the devil a **f**.

FORBEARANCE
Ro 3: 25 his **f** he had left the sins committed
Gal 5: 22 love, joy, peace, **f**, kindness,

FORBID
1Co 14: 39 and do not **f** speaking in tongues.

FOREIGNER (FOREIGNERS)
Ex 22: 21 "Do not mistreat or oppress a **f**,

FOREIGNERS (FOREIGNER)
1Pe 2: 11 urge you, as **f** and exiles, to abstain

FOREKNEW (KNOW)
Ro 8: 29 those God **f** he also predestined
11: 2 not reject his people, whom he **f**.

FOREVER (EVER)
1Ch 16: 15 He remembers his covenant **f**,
16: 34 for he is good; his love endures **f**.
Ps 9: 7 The Lord reigns **f**;
23: 6 dwell in the house of the Lord **f**.
33: 11 plans of the Lord stand firm **f**,
86: 12 I will glorify your name **f**.
92: 8 But you, Lord, are **f** exalted.
110: 4 "You are a priest **f**, in the order
119: 111 Your statutes are my heritage **f**;
Jn 6: 51 Whoever eats this bread will live **f**.
14: 16 to help you and be with you **f**—
1Co 9: 25 do it to get a crown that will last **f**.
1Th 4: 17 And so we will be with the Lord **f**.
Heb 13: 8 the same yesterday and today and **f**.
1Pe 1: 25 the word of the Lord endures **f**."
1Jn 2: 17 does the will of God lives **f**.

FORFEIT
Lk 9: 25 and yet lose or **f** their very self?

FORGAVE (FORGIVE)
Ps 32: 5 And you **f** the guilt of my sin.
Lk 7: 42 him back, so he **f** the debts of both.
Eph 4: 32 other, just as in Christ God **f** you.
Col 2: 13 He **f** us all our sins,
3: 13 Forgive as the Lord **f** you.

FORGET (FORGETS FORGETTING)
Dt 6: 12 that you do not **f** the Lord,
Ps 103: 2 my soul, and **f** not all his benefits—
137: 5 If I **f** you, Jerusalem, may my right
Isa 49: 15 Though she may **f**, I will not **f** you!
Heb 6: 10 will not **f** your work and the love

FORGETS (FORGET)
Jn 16: 21 is born she **f** the anguish because
Jas 1: 24 immediately **f** what he looks like.

FORGETTING (FORGET)
Php 3: 13 **F** what is behind and straining

FORGIVE (FORGAVE FORGIVENESS FORGIVING)
2Ch 7: 14 and I will **f** their sin and will heal
Ps 19: 12 **F** my hidden faults.
Mt 6: 12 And **f** us our debts, as we also have
6: 14 if you **f** other people when they sin
18: 21 many times shall I **f** my brother
Mk 11: 25 anything against anyone, **f** them,
Lk 11: 4 **F** us our sins, for we also **f** everyone
23: 34 "Father, **f** them, for they do not
Col 3: 13 **F** as the Lord forgave you.
1Jn 1: 9 and will **f** us our sins and purify

FORGIVENESS (FORGIVE)
Ps 130: 4 But with you there is **f**, so that we
Ac 10: 43 in him receives **f** of sins through
Eph 1: 7 through his blood, the **f** of sins,
Col 1: 14 we have redemption, the **f** of sins.
Heb 9: 22 the shedding of blood there is no **f**.

FORGIVING (FORGIVE)
Ne 9: 17 But you are a **f** God,
Eph 4: 32 to one another, **f** each other, just as

FORMED
Ge 2: 7 the Lord God **f** a man
Ps 103: 14 for he knows how we are **f**,
Isa 45: 18 be empty, but **f** it to be inhabited—
Ro 9: 20 what is **f** say to the one who **f** it,
1Ti 2: 13 For Adam was **f** first, then Eve.
Heb 11: 3 that the universe was **f** at God's

FORSAKE (FORSAKEN)
Jos 1: 5 I will never leave you nor **f** you.

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Jos 24: 16 us to **f** the Lord to serve other
2Ch15: 2 you, but if you **f** him, he will **f** you.
Ps 27: 10 Though my father and mother **f** me,
Isa 55: 7 Let the wicked **f** their ways
Heb13: 5 will I leave you; never will I **f** you."

FORSAKEN (FORSAKE)
Ezr 9: 9 God has not **f** us in our bondage.
Ps 22: 1 God, my God, why have you **f** me?
37: 25 I have never seen the righteous **f**
Mt 27: 46 my God, why have you **f** me?").
Rev 2: 4 You have **f** the love you had at first.

FORTIFIED
Pr 18: 10 name of the Lord is a **f** tower;

FORTRESS
Ps 18: 2 is my rock, my **f** and my deliverer;
71: 3 me, for you are my rock and my **f**.

FOUGHT (FIGHT)
2Ti 4: 7 I have **f** the good fight, I have

FOUND (FIND)
1Ch28: 9 If you seek him, he will be **f** by you;
Isa 55: 6 Seek the Lord while he may be **f**;
Da 5: 27 on the scales and **f** wanting.
Lk 15: 6 I have **f** my lost sheep.'
15: 9 I have **f** my lost coin.'
Ac 4: 12 Salvation is **f** in no one else,

FOUNDATION
Isa 28: 16 a precious cornerstone for a sure **f**;
1Co 3: 11 can lay any **f** other than the one
Eph 2: 20 built on the **f** of the apostles
2Ti 2: 19 God's solid **f** stands firm,

FOXES
Mt 8: 20 "**F** have dens and birds have nests,

FRANKINCENSE
Mt 2: 11 him with gifts of gold, **f** and myrrh.

FREE (FREED FREEDOM FREELY)
Ps 146: 7 The Lord sets prisoners **f**,
Jn 8: 32 truth, and the truth will set you **f**."
Ro 6: 18 You have been set **f** from sin
Gal 3: 28 neither slave nor **f**, nor is there
1Pe 2: 16 Live as **f** people, but do not use

FREED (FREE)
Rev 1: 5 has **f** us from our sins by his blood,

FREEDOM (FREE)
Ro 8: 21 brought into the **f** and glory
2Co 3: 17 the Spirit of the Lord is, there is **f**.
Gal 5: 13 But do not use your **f** to indulge
1Pe 2: 16 do not use your **f** as

FREELY (FREE)
Isa 55: 7 to our God, for he will **f** pardon.
Mt 10: 8 **F** you have received; **f** give.
Ro 3: 24 and all are justified **f** by his grace
Eph 1: 6 which he has **f** given us in the One

FRIEND (FRIENDS)
Ex 33: 11 face to face, as one speaks to a **f**.
Pr 17: 17 A **f** loves at all times, and a brother
Pr 18: 24 there is a **f** who sticks closer than
27: 6 Wounds from a **f** can be trusted,
27: 10 Do not forsake your **f** or a **f** of your
Jas 4: 4 to be a **f** of the world becomes

FRIENDS (FRIEND)
Pr 16: 28 and a gossip separates close **f**.
18: 24 who has unreliable **f** soon comes
Zec 13: 6 I was given at the house of my **f**.'
Jn 15: 13 to lay down one's life for one's **f**.

FRUIT (FRUITFUL)
Ps 1: 3 which yields its **f** in season
Pr 11: 30 The **f** of the righteous is a tree
Mt 7: 16 By their **f** you will recognize them.
Jn 15: 2 branch that does bear **f** he prunes
Gal 5: 22 But the **f** of the Spirit is love, joy,
Rev 22: 2 bearing twelve crops of **f**, yielding its **f** every month.

FRUITFUL (FRUIT)
Ge 1: 22 "Be **f** and increase in number
Ps 128: 3 wife will be like a **f** vine within
Jn 15: 2 so that it will be even more **f**.

FULFILL (FULFILLED FULFILLMENT)
Ps 116: 14 I will **f** my vows to the Lord
Mt 5: 17 to abolish them but to **f** them.
1Co 7: 3 The husband should **f** his marital

FULFILLED (FULFILL)
Pr 13: 19 A longing **f** is sweet to the soul,
Mk 14: 49 But the Scriptures must be **f**."
Ro 13: 8 whoever loves others has **f** the law.

FULFILLMENT (FULFILL)
Ro 13: 10 Therefore love is the **f** of the law.

FULL (FILL)
Ps 127: 5 Blessed is the man whose quiver is **f**
Pr 31: 11 Her husband has **f** confidence in her
Isa 6: 3 the whole earth is **f** of his glory."
Lk 6: 45 speaks what the heart is **f** of.
Jn 10: 10 may have life, and have it to the **f**.
Ac 6: 3 who are known to be **f** of the Spirit

FULLNESS (FILL)
Col 1: 19 to have all his **f** dwell in him,
2: 9 in Christ all the **f** of the Deity lives

FULLY (FILL)
1Ki 8: 61 may your hearts be **f** committed
2Ch16: 9 whose hearts are **f** committed
Ps 119: 4 precepts that are to be **f** obeyed.
119:138 righteous; they are **f** trustworthy.
1Co15: 58 Always give yourselves **f**

FUTURE
Ps 37: 37 a **f** awaits those who seek peace.
Pr 23: 18 There is surely a **f** hope for you,
Ro 8: 38 neither the present nor the **f**,

GABRIEL
Angel who interpreted Daniel's visions (Da 8:16–26; 9:20–27); announced births of John (Lk 1:11–20), Jesus (Lk 1:26–38).

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GAIN (GAINED)
Ps 60:12 With God we will **g** the victory,
Mk 8:36 for someone to **g** the whole world,
1Co 13:3 but do not have love, I **g** nothing.
Php 1:21 me, to live is Christ and to die is **g**.
3:8 them garbage, that I may **g** Christ
1Ti 6:6 with contentment is great **g**.
1Pe 5:2 not pursuing dishonest **g**, but eager

GAINED (GAIN)
Ro 5:2 through whom we have **g** access

GALILEE
Isa 9:1 in the future he will honor **G**

GALL
Mt 27:34 Jesus wine to drink, mixed with **g**;

GAP
Eze 22:30 stand before me in the **g** on behalf

GARBAGE
Php 3:8 I consider them **g**, that I may gain

GARDENER
Jn 15:1 true vine, and my Father is the **g**.

GARMENT (GARMENTS)
Ps 102:26 they will all wear out like a **g**.
Mt 9:16 the patch will pull away from the **g**,
Jn 19:23 This **g** was seamless, woven in one
19:24 them and cast lots for my **g**."

GARMENTS (GARMENT)
Ge 3:21 The Lord God made **g** of skin
Isa 61:10 For he has clothed me with **g**
63:1 with his **g** stained crimson?

GATE (GATES)
Mt 7:13 "Enter through the narrow **g**.
Jn 10:9 I am the **g**; whoever enters through

GATES (GATE)
Ps 100:4 Enter his **g** with thanksgiving
Mt 16:18 the **g** of Hades will not overcome

GATHER (GATHERS)
Zec 14:2 I will **g** all the nations to Jerusalem
Mt 12:30 and whoever does not **g** with me
23:37 longed to **g** your children together,

GATHERS (GATHER)
Isa 40:11 He **g** the lambs in his arms
Mt 23:37 as a hen **g** her chicks under her

GAVE (GIVE)
Ezr 2:69 their ability they **g** to the treasury
Job 1:21 The Lord **g** and the Lord has
Jn 3:16 so loved the world that he **g** his
2Co 8:5 They **g** themselves first of all
Gal 2:20 loved me and **g** himself for me.
1Ti 2:6 who **g** himself as a ransom for all

GAZE
Ps 27:4 to **g** on the beauty of the Lord
Pr 4:25 fix your **g** directly before you.

GENEALOGIES
1Ti 1:4 themselves to myths and endless **g**.

GENERATIONS
Ps 22:30 **g** will be told about the Lord.
102:12 renown endures through all **g**.
145:13 dominion endures through all **g**.
Lk 1:48 now on all **g** will call me blessed,
Eph 3:5 other **g** as it has now been revealed

GENEROUS
Ps 112:5 Good will come to those who are **g**
Pr 22:9 The **g** will themselves be blessed,
2Co 9:5 Then it will be ready as a **g** gift,
1Ti 6:18 and to be **g** and willing to share.

GENTILE (GENTILES)
Ro 1:16 first to the Jew, then to the **G**.
10:12 no difference between Jew and **G**—

GENTILES (GENTILE)
Isa 42:6 for the people and a light for the **G**,
Ro 3:9 **G** alike are all under the power
11:13 as I am the apostle to the **G**, I take
1Co 1:23 block to Jews and foolishness to **G**,

GENTLE (GENTLENESS)
Pr 15:1 A **g** answer turns away wrath,
Mt 11:29 for I am **g** and humble in heart,
21:5 to you, **g** and riding on a donkey,
1Co 4:21 I come in love and with a **g** spirit?
1Pe 3:4 unfading beauty of a **g** and quiet

GENTLENESS (GENTLE)
2Co 10:1 By the humility and **g** of Christ,
Gal 5:23 **g** and self-control.
Php 4:5 Let your **g** be evident to all.
Col 3:12 kindness, humility, **g** and patience.
1Ti 6:11 faith, love, endurance and **g**.
1Pe 3:15 But do this with **g** and respect,

GETHSEMANE
Mt 26:36 his disciples to a place called **G**,

GIDEON
Judge, also called Jerub-Baal; freed Israel from Midianites (Jdg 6–8; Heb 11:32). Given sign of fleece (Jdg 8:36–40).

GIFT (GIFTS)
Pr 21:14 A **g** given in secret soothes anger,
Mt 5:23 you are offering your **g** at the altar
Ac 2:38 you will receive the **g** of the Holy
Ro 6:23 the **g** of God is eternal life in Christ
1Co 7:7 of you has your own **g** from God;
2Co 8:12 the **g** is acceptable according
9:15 be to God for his indescribable **g**!
Eph 2:8 yourselves, it is the **g** of God—
1Ti 4:14 Do not neglect your **g**, which was
2Ti 1:6 you to fan into flame the **g** of God,
Jas 1:17 good and perfect **g** is from above,
1Pe 4:10 should use whatever **g** you have

GIFTS (GIFT)
Ro 11:29 for God's **g** and his call are
12:6 We have different **g**,
1Co 12:4 There are different kinds of **g**,
12:31 Now eagerly desire the greater **g**.

1Co 14: 1 and eagerly desire **g** of the Spirit,
14: 12 Since you are eager for **g**

GILEAD

Jer 8: 22 Is there no balm in **G**? Is there no

GIVE (GAVE GIVEN GIVER GIVES GIVING)

Nu 6: 26 toward you and **g** you peace."'
1Sa 1: 11 forget your servant but **g** her a son,
1: 11 I will **g** him to the Lord for all
2Ch 15: 7 be strong and do not **g** up, for your
Pr 21: 26 the righteous **g** without sparing.
23: 26 **g** me your heart and let your eyes
28: 27 Those who **g** to the poor will lack
30: 8 but **g** me only my daily bread.
Eze 36: 26 I will **g** you a new heart and put
Mt 6: 11 **G** us today our daily bread.
10: 8 Freely you have received; freely **g**.
22: 21 them, "So **g** back to Caesar what is
Mk 8: 37 what can anyone **g** in exchange
Lk 6: 38 **G**, and it will be given to you.
11: 13 Father in heaven **g** the Holy Spirit
Jn 10: 28 I **g** them eternal life, and they shall
13: 34 "A new command I **g** you:
Ac 20: 35 'It is more blessed to **g** than
Ro 12: 8 encourage, then **g** encouragement;
12: 8 if it is giving, then **g** generously;
13: 7 **G** to everyone what you owe them:
14: 12 then, each of us will **g** an account
2Co 9: 7 should **g** what you have decided
Rev 14: 7 voice, "Fear God and **g** him glory,

GIVEN (GIVE)

Nu 8: 16 Israelites who are to be **g** wholly
Ps 115: 16 but the earth he has **g** to mankind.
Isa 9: 6 a son is **g**, and the government
Mt 6: 33 all these things will be **g** to you as
7: 7 "Ask and it will be **g** to you;
Lk 22: 19 saying, "This is my body **g** for you;
Jn 3: 27 can receive only what is **g** them
Ro 5: 5 Holy Spirit, who has been **g** to us.
1Co 4: 2 those who have been **g** a trust must
12: 13 and we were all **g** the one Spirit
Eph 4: 7 of us grace has been **g** as Christ

GIVER (GIVE)

Pr 18: 16 ushers the **g** into the presence
2Co 9: 7 for God loves a cheerful **g**.

GIVES (GIVE)

Ps 119: 130 unfolding of your words **g** light;
Pr 14: 30 A heart at peace **g** life to the body,
15: 30 good news **g** health to the bones.
Isa 40: 29 He **g** strength to the weary
Mt 10: 42 anyone **g** even a cup of cold water
Jn 6: 63 The Spirit **g** life; the flesh counts
1Co 15: 57 He **g** us the victory through our
2Co 3: 6 the letter kills, but the Spirit **g** life.

GIVING (GIVE)

Ne 8: 8 **g** the meaning so that the people
Ps 19: 8 Lord are right, **g** joy to the heart.
Mt 6: 4 so that your **g** may be in secret.
2Co 8: 7 you also excel in this grace of **g**.

GLAD (GLADNESS)

Ps 31: 7 I will be **g** and rejoice in your love,
46: 4 whose streams make **g** the city
97: 1 Lord reigns, let the earth be **g**;
118: 24 let us rejoice today and be **g**.
Zec 2: 10 "Shout and be **g**, Daughter Zion.
Mt 5: 12 Rejoice and be **g**, because great is

GLADNESS (GLAD)

Ps 45: 15 Led in with joy and **g**, they enter
51: 8 Let me hear joy and **g**;
100: 2 Worship the Lord with **g**;
Jer 31: 13 I will turn their mourning into **g**;

GLORIFIED (GLORY)

Jn 13: 31 "Now the Son of Man is **g** and God is **g** in him.
Ro 8: 30 those he justified, he also **g**.
2Th 1: 10 he comes to be **g** in his holy people

GLORIFY (GLORY)

Ps 34: 3 **G** the Lord with me; let us exalt
86: 12 I will **g** your name forever.
Mt 5: 16 deeds and **g** your Father in heaven.
Jn 13: 32 God will **g** the Son in himself,
17: 1 **G** your Son, that your Son may **g**

GLORIOUS (GLORY)

Ps 45: 13 All **g** is the princess within her
111: 3 **G** and majestic are his deeds,
145: 5 They speak of the **g** splendor
Isa 4: 2 the Lord will be beautiful and **g**,
12: 5 Lord, for he has done **g** things;
42: 21 to make his law great and **g**.
63: 15 from your lofty throne, holy and **g**.
Mt 19: 28 Son of Man sits on his **g** throne,
Lk 9: 30 and Elijah, appeared in **g** splendor,
Ac 2: 20 of the great and **g** day of the Lord.
2Co 3: 8 of the Spirit be even more **g**?
Php 3: 21 so that they will be like his **g** body.
Jude : 24 you before his **g** presence without

GLORY (GLORIFIED GLORIFY GLORIOUS)

Ex 15: 11 awesome in **g**, working wonders?
33: 18 said, "Now show me your **g**."
1Sa 4: 21 "The **G** has departed from Israel"
1Ch 16: 24 Declare his **g** among the nations,
16: 28 ascribe to the Lord **g**
29: 11 power and the **g** and the majesty
Ps 8: 5 crowned them with **g** and honor.
19: 1 The heavens declare the **g** of God;
24: 7 that the King of **g** may come in.
29: 1 beings, ascribe to the Lord **g**
34: 2 I will **g** in the Lord;
72: 19 the whole earth be filled with his **g**.
96: 3 Declare his **g** among the nations,
Pr 19: 11 is to one's **g** to overlook an offense.
25: 2 It is the **g** of God to conceal
25: 2 a matter is the **g** of kings.

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Isa 6: 3 the whole earth is full of his **g**."
42: 8 I will not yield my **g** to another
48: 11 I will not yield my **g** to another.
Eze 43: 2 and I saw the **g** of the God of Israel
Mt 24: 30 of heaven, with power and great **g**.
25: 31 the Son of Man comes in his **g**,
Mk 8: 38 in his Father's **g** with the holy
13: 26 in clouds with great power and **g**.
Lk 2: 9 and the **g** of the Lord shone around
2: 14 "**G** to God in the highest heaven,
Jn 1: 14 have seen his **g**, the **g** of the one
17: 5 your presence with the **g** I had
17: 24 and to see my **g**, the **g** you have
Ac 7: 2 God of **g** appeared to our father
Ro 1: 23 exchanged the **g** of the immortal
3: 23 and fall short of the **g** of God,
8: 18 with the **g** that will be revealed
9: 4 theirs the divine **g**, the covenants,
1Co 10: 31 you do, do it all for the **g** of God.
11: 7 since he is the image and **g** of God;
11: 7 but woman is the **g** of man.
15: 43 sown in dishonor, it is raised in **g**;
2Co 3: 10 what was glorious has no **g** now
3: 18 faces contemplate the Lord's **g**,
4: 17 us an eternal **g** that far outweighs
Php 4: 19 the riches of his **g** in Christ Jesus.
Col 1: 27 is Christ in you, the hope of **g**.
3: 4 you also will appear with him in **g**.
1Ti 3: 16 on in the world, was taken up in **g**.
Titus 2: 13 appearing of the **g** of our great God
Heb 1: 3 The Son is the radiance of God's **g**
2: 7 crowned them with **g** and honor
1Pe 1: 24 all their **g** is like the flowers
Rev 4: 11 to receive **g** and honor and power,
21: 23 for the **g** of God gives it light,

GLUTTONS

Titus 1: 12 always liars, evil brutes, lazy **g**."

GNASHING

Mt 8: 12 will be weeping and **g** of teeth."

GNAT

Mt 23: 24 You strain out a **g** but swallow

GOAL

2Co 5: 9 So we make it our **g** to please him,
Php 3: 14 on toward the **g** to win the prize

GOAT (GOATS SCAPEGOAT)

Isa 11: 6 leopard will lie down with the **g**,

GOATS (GOAT)

Nu 7: 17 five male **g** and five male lambs

GOD (GOD'S GODLINESS GODLY GODS)

Ge 1: 1 beginning **G** created the heavens
1: 2 of **G** was hovering over the waters.
1: 26 Then **G** said, "Let us make
1: 27 So **G** created mankind in his own
1: 31 **G** saw all that he had made, and it
2: 3 Then **G** blessed the seventh day
2: 22 the Lord **G** made a woman
3: 21 The Lord **G** made garments
3: 23 So the Lord **G** banished him
5: 22 walked faithfully with **G** 300 years
6: 2 sons of **G** saw that the daughters
9: 16 everlasting covenant between **G**
17: 1 to him and said, "I am **G** Almighty;
21: 33 name of the Lord, the Eternal **G**.
22: 8 "**G** himself will provide the lamb
28: 12 the angels of **G** were ascending
32: 28 because you have struggled with **G**
32: 30 "It is because I saw **G** face to face,
35: 10 **G** said to him, "Your name is
41: 51 said, "It is because **G** has made me
50: 20 me, but **G** intended it for good
Ex 2: 24 **G** heard their groaning and he
3: 6 he said, "I am the **G** of your father,
3: 6 because he was afraid to look at **G**.
6: 7 know that I am the Lord your **G**,
8: 10 is no one like the Lord our **G**.
13: 18 So **G** led the people around
15: 2 He is my **G**, and I will praise him,
17: 9 with the staff of **G** in my hands."
19: 3 Then Moses went up to **G**,
20: 2 "I am the Lord your **G**,
20: 5 the Lord your **G**, am a jealous **G**,
20: 19 But do not have **G** speak to us
22: 28 "Do not blaspheme **G** or curse
31: 18 stone inscribed by the finger of **G**.
34: 6 the compassionate and gracious **G**,
34: 14 name is Jealous, is a jealous **G**.
Lev 18: 21 not profane the name of your **G**.
19: 2 I, the Lord your **G**, am holy.
26: 12 walk among you and be your **G**,
Nu 22: 38 I must speak only what **G** puts
23: 19 **G** is not human, that he should lie,
Dt 1: 17 anyone, for judgment belongs to **G**.
3: 22 the Lord your **G** himself will
3: 24 For what **g** is there in heaven
4: 24 **G** is a consuming fire, a jealous **G**.
4: 31 the Lord your **G** is a merciful **G**;
4: 39 day that the Lord is **G** in heaven
5: 11 the name of the Lord your **G**,
5: 14 is a sabbath to the Lord your **G**.
5: 26 voice of the living **G** speaking
6: 4 The Lord our **G**, the Lord is
6: 5 Love the Lord your **G** with all
6: 13 Fear the Lord your **G**, serve him
6: 16 Do not put the Lord your **G**
7: 9 is **G**; he is the faithful **G**,
7: 12 the Lord your **G** will keep his
7: 21 is a great and awesome **G**.
8: 5 the Lord your **G** disciplines you.
10: 12 what does the Lord your **G** ask you
but to fear the Lord your **G**,
10: 14 To the Lord your **G** belong
10: 17 For the Lord your **G** is **G** of gods
11: 13 to love the Lord your **G**
13: 3 The Lord your **G** is testing you
13: 4 It is the Lord your **G** you must

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Dt 15: 6 the Lord your **G** will bless you
19: 9 to love the Lord your **G**
25: 16 the Lord your **G** detests anyone
29: 29 things belong to the Lord our **G**,
30: 2 return to the Lord your **G**
30: 16 today to love the Lord your **G**,
30: 20 you may love the Lord your **G**,
31: 6 the Lord your **G** goes with you;
32: 3 Oh, praise the greatness of our **G**!
32: 4 A faithful **G** who does no wrong,
33: 27 The eternal **G** is your refuge,
Jos 1: 9 the Lord your **G** will be with you
14: 8 the Lord my **G** wholeheartedly.
22: 5 to love the Lord your **G**, to walk
22: 34 that the Lord is **G**.
23: 11 careful to love the Lord your **G**.
23: 14 the Lord your **G** gave you has
Jdg 16: 28 Please, **G**, strengthen me just once
Ru 1: 16 be my people and your **G** my **G**.
1Sa 2: 2 there is no Rock like our **G**.
2: 3 for the Lord is a **G** who knows,
2: 25 **G** may mediate for the offender;
10: 26 men whose hearts **G** had touched.
12: 12 the Lord your **G** was your king.
17: 26 defy the armies of the living **G**?"
17: 46 know that there is a **G** in Israel.
30: 6 found strength in the Lord his **G**.
2Sa 14: 14 But that is not what **G** desires;
22: 3 my **G** is my rock, in whom I take
22: 31 "As for **G**, his way is perfect:
1Ki 4: 29 **G** gave Solomon wisdom and very
8: 23 there is no **G** like you in heaven
8: 27 "But will **G** really dwell on earth?
8: 61 committed to the Lord our **G**,
18: 21 If the Lord is **G**, follow him;
18: 37 are **G**, and that you are turning
20: 28 think the Lord is a **g** the hills
2Ki 19: 15 you alone are **G** over all
1Ch 16: 35 Cry out, "Save us, **G** our Savior;
28: 2 for the footstool of our **G**, and I
28: 9 acknowledge the **G** of your father,
29: 10 Lord, the **G** of our father Israel,
29: 17 my **G**, that you test the heart and
2Ch 2: 4 for the Name of the Lord my **G**
5: 14 the Lord filled the temple of **G**.
6: 18 will **G** really dwell on earth
18: 13 can tell him only what my **G** says."
20: 6 you not the **G** who is in heaven?
25: 8 for **G** has the power to help
30: 9 for the Lord your **G** is gracious
33: 12 the favor of the Lord his **G**
Ezr 8: 22 "The gracious hand of our **G** is
9: 6 my **G**, to lift up my face to you,
9: 13 our **G**, you have punished us less
Ne 1: 5 the great and awesome **G**,
8: 8 from the Book of the Law of **G**,
9: 17 But you are a forgiving **G**,
9: 32 "Now therefore, our **G**, the great **G**,
Job 1: 1 he feared **G** and shunned evil.
2: 10 Shall we accept good from **G**,
4: 17 mortal be more righteous than **G**?
5: 17 is the one whom **G** corrects;
11: 7 you fathom the mysteries of **G**?
19: 26 yet in my flesh I will see **G**;
22: 13 Yet you say, 'What does **G** know?
25: 4 a mortal be righteous before **G**?
33: 14 For **G** does speak—now one way,
34: 12 unthinkable that **G** would do wrong,
36: 26 How great is **G**—
37: 22 **G** comes in awesome majesty.
Ps 18: 2 my **G** is my rock, in whom I take
18: 28 my **G** turns my darkness into light.
19: 1 The heavens declare the glory of **G**;
22: 1 My **G**, my **G**, why have you
29: 3 the **G** of glory thunders, the Lord
31: 14 I say, "You are my **G**."
40: 3 mouth, a hymn of praise to our **G**.
40: 8 I desire to do your will, my **G**;
42: 2 My soul thirsts for **G**, for the living
42: 2 When can I go and meet with **G**?
42: 11 Put your hope in **G**, for I will yet
45: 6 O **G**, will last for ever and ever;
46: 1 **G** is our refuge and strength,
46: 10 "Be still, and know that I am **G**;
47: 7 For **G** is the King of all the earth;
50: 3 Our **G** comes and will not be silent
51: 1 O **G**, according to your unfailing
51: 10 O **G**, and renew a steadfast spirit
51: 17 sacrifice, O **G**, is a broken spirit;
62: 7 and my honor depend on **G**;
65: 5 and righteous deeds, **G** our Savior,
66: 1 Shout for joy to **G**, all the earth!
66: 16 Come and hear, all you who fear **G**;
68: 6 **G** sets the lonely in families,
71: 17 my youth, **G**, you have taught
71: 19 Who is like you, **G**?
71: 22 harp for your faithfulness, my **G**;
73: 26 but **G** is the strength of my heart
77: 13 What **g** is as great as our **G**?
78: 19 They spoke against **G**;
81: 1 Sing for joy to **G** our strength;
84: 2 my flesh cry out for the living **G**.
84: 10 the house of my **G** than dwell
86: 12 you, Lord my **G**, with all my heart;
89: 7 of the holy ones **G** is greatly feared;
90: 2 to everlasting you are **G**.
91: 2 fortress, my **G**, in whom I trust."
95: 7 for he is our **G** and we are
100: 3 Know that the Lord is **G**. It is he
108: 1 My heart, O **G**, is steadfast;
113: 5 Who is like the Lord our **G**,
139: 23 Search me, **G**, and know my heart;
Pr 3: 4 a good name in the sight of **G**
25: 2 It is the glory of **G** to conceal
30: 5 "Every word of **G** is flawless;
Ecc 3: 11 can fathom what **G** has done

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Ecc 11: 5 cannot understand the work of **G**,
12: 13 of the matter: Fear **G** and keep his
Isa 9: 6 Mighty **G**, Everlasting Father,
37: 16 you alone are **G** over all
40: 3 in the desert a highway for our **G**.
40: 8 the word of our **G** endures forever."
40: 28 The Lord is the everlasting **G**,
41: 10 not be dismayed, for I am your **G**.
44: 6 apart from me there is no **G**.
52: 7 who say to Zion, "Your **G** reigns!"
55: 7 and to our **G**, for he will freely
57: 21 says my **G**, "for the wicked."
59: 2 have separated you from your **G**;
61: 10 my soul rejoices in my **G**.
62: 5 so will your **G** rejoice over you.
Jer 23: 23 "Am I only a **G** nearby,"
31: 33 I will be their **G**, and they will be
32: 27 the Lord, the **G** of all mankind.
Eze 28: 13 You were in Eden, the garden of **G**;
Da 3: 17 the **G** we serve is able to deliver us
9: 4 the great and awesome **G**,
Hos 12: 6 But you must return to your **G**;
Joel 2: 13 Return to the Lord your **G**, for he
Am 4: 12 Israel, prepare to meet your **G**."
Mic 6: 8 and to walk humbly with your **G**.
Na 1: 2 is a jealous and avenging **G**;
Zec 14: 5 Then the Lord my **G** will come,
Mal 3: 8 "Will a mere mortal rob **G**?
Mt 1: 23 (which means "**G** with us").
5: 8 pure in heart, for they will see **G**.
6: 24 You cannot serve both **G**
19: 6 Therefore what **G** has joined
19: 26 but with **G** all things are possible."
22: 21 Caesar's, and to **G** what is God's."
22: 37 "'Love the Lord your **G** with all
27: 46 (which means "My **G**, my **G**,
Mk 12: 29 The Lord our **G**, the Lord is one.
16: 19 at the right hand of **G**.
Lk 1: 37 For no word from **G** will ever fail."
1: 47 my spirit rejoices in **G** my Savior,
10: 9 'The kingdom of **G** has come near
10: 27 "'Love the Lord your **G** with all
18: 19 "No one is good—except **G** alone.
Jn 1: 1 and the Word was with **G**, and the Word was **G**.
1: 18 No one has ever seen **G**, but
1: 18 who is himself **G** and is in closest
3: 16 For **G** so loved the world that he
4: 24 **G** is spirit, and his worshipers must
7: 17 to do the will of **G** will find
14: 1 You believe in **G**;
20: 28 said to him, "My Lord and my **G**!"
Ac 2: 24 But **G** raised him from the dead,
5: 4 lied just to human beings but to **G**."
5: 29 "We must obey **G** rather than
7: 55 to heaven and saw the glory of **G**,
17: 23 inscription: to an unknown **g**.
20: 27 to you the whole will of **G**.
Ac 20: 32 "Now I commit you to **G**
Ro 1: 17 righteousness of **G** is revealed—
2: 11 For **G** does not show favoritism.
3: 4 Let **G** be true, and every human
3: 23 and fall short of the glory of **G**,
4: 24 **G** will credit righteousness—
5: 8 **G** demonstrates his own love for us
6: 23 the gift of **G** is eternal life in Christ
8: 28 in all things **G** works for the good
11: 22 the kindness and sternness of **G**:
14: 12 give an account of ourselves to **G**.
1Co 1: 20 not **G** made foolish the wisdom
2: 9 the things **G** has prepared for those
3: 6 it, but **G** has been making it grow.
6: 20 Therefore honor **G** with your
7: 24 they were in when **G** called them.
8: 8 food does not bring us near to **G**;
10: 13 **G** is faithful; he will not let you
10: 31 you do, do it all for the glory of **G**.
14: 33 For **G** is not a **G** of disorder
15: 28 him, so that **G** may be all in all.
2Co 1: 9 not rely on ourselves but on **G**,
2: 14 But thanks be to **G**, who always
3: 5 our competence comes from **G**.
4: 7 this all-surpassing power is from **G**
5: 19 that **G** was reconciling the world
5: 21 become the righteousness of **G**.
6: 16 we are the temple of the living **G**.
9: 7 for **G** loves a cheerful giver.
9: 8 **G** is able to bless you abundantly,
Gal 2: 6 **G** does not show favoritism—
6: 7 **G** cannot be mocked.
Eph 2: 10 **G** prepared in advance for us
4: 6 one **G** and Father of all, who is
Php 2: 6 being in very nature **G**, did not consider equality with **G**
4: 19 And my **G** will meet all your needs
1Th 2: 4 not trying to please people but **G**,
4: 7 For **G** did not call us to be impure,
4: 9 yourselves have been taught by **G**
5: 9 For **G** did not appoint us to suffer
1Ti 2: 5 there is one **G** and one mediator
4: 4 For everything **G** created is good,
5: 4 for this is pleasing to **G**.
Titus 2: 13 of the glory of our great **G**
Heb 1: 1 the past **G** spoke to our ancestors
4: 12 For the word of **G** is alive
6: 10 **G** is not unjust; he will not forget
10: 31 fall into the hands of the living **G**.
11: 6 faith it is impossible to please **G**,
12: 10 but **G** disciplines us for our good,
12: 29 for our "**G** is a consuming fire."
13: 15 us continually offer to **G** a sacrifice
Jas 1: 13 For **G** cannot be tempted by evil,
2: 19 You believe that there is one **G**.
2: 23 "Abraham believed **G**, and it was
4: 4 the world becomes an enemy of **G**.
4: 8 Come near to **G** and he will come

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

1Pe 4:11 who speaks the very words of **G**.
2Pe 1:21 from **G** as they were carried along
1Jn 1:5 him and declare to you: **G** is light;
2:5 love for **G** is truly made complete
3:20 that **G** is greater than our hearts,
4:7 another, for love comes from **G**.
4:7 has been born of **G** and knows **G**.
4:9 This is how **G** showed his love
4:11 Dear friends, since **G** so loved us,
4:12 No one has ever seen **G**; but if we
4:16 Whoever lives in love lives in **G**,
Rev 4:8 holy is the Lord **G** Almighty,'
7:17 **G** will wipe away every tear
19:6 For our Lord **G** Almighty reigns.

GOD-BREATHED (BREATHED)
2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is **G** and is useful

GODLINESS (GOD)
1Ti 2:2 quiet lives in all **g** and holiness.
4:8 value, but **g** has value for all things,
6:6 **g** with contentment is great gain.
6:11 and pursue righteousness, **g**, faith,

GODLY (GOD)
2Co 7:10 **G** sorrow brings repentance
11:2 jealous for you with a **g** jealousy.
2Ti 3:12 live a **g** life in Christ Jesus will be
2Pe 3:11 You ought to live holy and **g** lives

GOD'S (GOD)
2Ch20:15 For the battle is not yours, but **G**.
Job 37:14 stop and consider **G** wonders.
Ps 52:8 I trust in **G** unfailing love for ever
69:30 I will praise **G** name in song
Mk 3:35 Whoever does **G** will is my brother
Jn 10:36 because I said, 'I am **G** Son'?
Ro 2:3 think you will escape **G** judgment?
2:4 that **G** kindness is intended
3:3 nullify **G** faithfulness?
7:22 my inner being I delight in **G** law;
9:16 desire or effort, but on **G** mercy.
11:29 for **G** gifts and his call are
12:2 test and approve what **G** will is—
13:6 for the authorities are **G** servants,
1Co 7:19 Keeping **G** commands is what
2Co 6:2 now is the time of **G** favor, now is
Eph 1:7 with the riches of **G** grace
5:1 Follow **G** example, therefore,
1Th 4:3 It is **G** will that you should be
5:18 for this is **G** will for you in Christ
1Ti 6:1 so that **G** name and our teaching
2Ti 2:19 **G** solid foundation stands firm,
Titus1:7 an overseer manages **G** household,
Heb 1:3 The Son is the radiance of **G** glory
9:24 to appear for us in **G** presence.
11:3 was formed at **G** command,
1Pe 2:15 For it is **G** will that by doing good
3:4 which is of great worth in **G** sight.

GODS (GOD)
Ex 20:3 shall have no other **g** before me.
Ac 19:26 by human hands are no **g** at all.

GOLD
Job 23:10 tested me, I will come forth as **g**.
Ps 19:10 precious than **g**, than much pure **g**;
119:127 love your commands more than **g**,
Pr 22:1 esteemed is better than silver or **g**.

GOLGOTHA
Jn 19:17 (which in Aramaic is called **G**).

GOLIATH
Philistine giant killed by David (1Sa 17; 21:9).

GOOD
Ge 1:4 God saw that the light was **g**,
1:31 he had made, and it was very **g**.
2:18 "It is not **g** for the man to be alone.
50:20 God intended it for **g**
Job 2:10 Shall we accept **g** from God,
Ps 14:1 there is no one who does **g**.
34:8 Taste and see that the Lord is **g**;
37:3 Trust in the Lord and do **g**;
84:11 no **g** thing does he withhold
86:5 are forgiving and **g**,
103:5 your desires with **g** things so
119:68 You are **g**, and what you do is **g**;
133:1 How **g** and pleasant it is
147:1 How **g** it is to sing praises to our
Pr 3:4 and a **g** name in the sight of God
11:27 Whoever seeks **g** finds favor,
13:21 are rewarded with **g** things.
17:22 A cheerful heart is **g** medicine,
18:22 He who finds a wife finds what is **g**
22:1 A **g** name is more desirable than
31:12 She brings him **g**, not harm,
Isa 5:20 Woe to those who call evil **g** and **g**
52:7 the feet of those who bring **g** news,
Jer 6:16 ask where the **g** way is, and walk
Mic 6:8 shown you, O mortal, what is **g**.
Mt 5:45 sun to rise on the evil and the **g**,
7:17 Likewise, every **g** tree bears **g** fruit,
12:35 A **g** man brings **g** things out of the **g**
19:17 "There is only One who is **g**.
25:21 'Well done, **g** and faithful servant!
Mk 3:4 to do **g** or to do evil, to save life
8:36 What **g** is it for someone to gain
Lk 6:27 do **g** to those who hate you,
Jn 10:11 "I am the **g** shepherd. The **g**
Ro 8:28 for the **g** of those who love him,
10:15 feet of those who bring **g** news!"
12:9 Hate what is evil; cling to what is **g**.
1Co 10:24 their own **g**, but the **g** of others.
15:33 company corrupts **g** character."
2Co 9:8 you will abound in every **g** work.
Gal 6:9 us not become weary in doing **g**,
6:10 let us do **g** to all people,
Eph 2:10 in Christ Jesus to do **g** works,
Php 1:6 he who began a **g** work in you will
1Th 5:21 test them all; hold on to what is **g**,
2Th 3:13 never tire of doing what is **g**.

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1Ti 3: 7 have a **g** reputation with outsiders,
4: 4 For everything God created is **g**,
6: 12 Fight the **g** fight of the faith.
6: 18 do **g**, to be rich in **g** deeds,
2Ti 3: 17 equipped for every **g** work.
4: 7 I have fought the **g** fight, I have
Heb12: 10 but God disciplines us for our **g**,
1Pe 2: 3 you have tasted that the Lord is **g**.
2: 12 Live such **g** lives among the pagans

GOSPEL
Ro 1: 16 For I am not ashamed of the **g**,
15: 16 duty of proclaiming the **g** of God,
1Co 1: 17 to baptize, but to preach the **g**—
9: 16 Woe to me if I do not preach the **g**!
15: 1 to remind you of the **g** I preached
Gal 1: 7 trying to pervert the **g** of Christ.
Php 1: 27 a manner worthy of the **g** of Christ.
1: 27 as one for the faith of the **g**

GOSSIP
Pr 11: 13 A **g** betrays a confidence,
16: 28 and a **g** separates close friends.
18: 8 of a **g** are like choice morsels;
26: 20 without a **g** a quarrel dies down.
2Co12: 20 slander, **g**, arrogance and disorder.

GOVERNED
Ro 8: 6 the mind **g** by the Spirit is life

GRACE (GRACIOUS)
Ps 45: 2 lips have been anointed with **g**,
Jn 1: 17 **g** and truth came through Jesus
Ac 20: 32 to God and to the word of his **g**,
Ro 3: 24 by his **g** through the redemption
5: 15 that came by the **g** of the one man,
5: 17 God's abundant provision of **g**
5: 20 increased, **g** increased all the more,
6: 14 are not under the law, but under **g**.
11: 6 if it were, **g** would no longer be **g**.
2Co 6: 1 you not to receive God's **g** in vain.
8: 9 you know the **g** of our Lord Jesus
12: 9 to me, "My **g** is sufficient for you,
Gal 2: 21 I do not set aside the **g** of God,
5: 4 you have fallen away from **g**.
Eph 1: 7 with the riches of God's **g**
2: 5 it is by **g** you have been saved.
2: 7 the incomparable riches of his **g**,
2: 8 For it is by **g** you have been saved,
Php 1: 7 all of you share in God's **g** with me.
Col 4: 6 conversation be always full of **g**,
2Th 2: 16 **g** gave us eternal encouragement
2Ti 2: 1 be strong in the **g** that is in Christ
Titus2: 11 For the **g** of God has appeared
3: 7 having been justified by his **g**,
Heb 2: 9 the **g** of God he might taste death
4: 16 approach God's throne of **g**
4: 16 **g** to help us in our time of need.
Jas 4: 6 But he gives us more **g**. That is why
2Pe 3: 18 grow in the **g** and knowledge of

GRACIOUS (GRACE)
Nu 6: 25 face shine on you and be **g** to you;
Isa 30: 18 the Lord longs to be **g** to you;

GRAIN
Ecc 11: 1 Ship your **g** across the sea;
1Co 9: 9 an ox while it is treading out the **g**."

GRANTED
Php 1: 29 For it has been **g** to you on behalf

GRASS
Ps 103: 15 The life of mortals is like **g**,
1Pe 1: 24 the **g** withers and the flowers fall,

GRAVE (GRAVES)
Pr 7: 27 Her house is a highway to the **g**,
Hos13: 14 Where, O **g**, is your destruction?

GRAVES (GRAVE)
Jn 5: 28 are in their **g** will hear his voice
Ro 3: 13 "Their throats are open **g**;

GREAT (GREATER GREATEST GREATNESS)
Ge 12: 2 "I will make you into a **g** nation,
Dt 10: 17 gods and Lord of lords, the **g** God,
2Sa 22: 36 your help has made me **g**.
Ps 19: 11 in keeping them there is **g** reward.
89: 1 sing of the Lord's **g** love forever;
103: 11 so **g** is his love for those who fear
108: 4 For **g** is your love, higher than
119:165 **G** peace have those who love your
145: 3 **G** is the Lord and most worthy
Pr 23: 24 father of a righteous child has **g** joy
Isa 42: 21 his righteousness to make his law **g**
La 3: 23 **g** is your faithfulness.
Mk 10: 43 become **g** among you must be your
Lk 21: 27 in a cloud with power and **g** glory.
1Ti 6: 6 with contentment is **g** gain.
Titus2: 13 appearing of the glory of our **g** God
Heb 2: 3 if we ignore so **g** a salvation?
1Jn 3: 1 See what **g** love the Father has

GREATER (GREAT)
Mk 12: 31 is no commandment **g** than these."
Jn 1: 50 You will see **g** things than that."
15: 13 **G** love has no one than this:
1Co12: 31 Now eagerly desire the **g** gifts.
Heb11: 26 as of **g** value than the treasures
1Jn 3: 20 that God is **g** than our hearts,
4: 4 is in you is **g** than the one who is

GREATEST (GREAT)
Mt 22: 38 is the first and **g** commandment.
Lk 9: 48 least among you all who is the **g**."
1Co13: 13 But the **g** of these is love.

GREATNESS (GREAT)
Ps 145: 3 his **g** no one can fathom.
150: 2 praise him for his surpassing **g**.
Isa 9: 7 the **g** of his government and peace
63: 1 forward in the **g** of his strength?

GREED (GREEDY)
Lk 12: 15 guard against all kinds of **g**;
Ro 1: 29 wickedness, evil, **g** and depravity.
Eph 5: 3 or of **g**, because these are improper

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Col 3: 5 desires and **g**, which is idolatry.
2Pe 2: 14 they are experts in **g**—

GREEDY (GREED)
Pr 15: 27 The **g** bring ruin to their
1Co 6: 10 thieves nor the **g** nor drunkards
Eph 5: 5 No immoral, impure or **g** person—

GREEN
Ps 23: 2 makes me lie down in **g** pastures,

GREW (GROW)
Lk 2: 52 And Jesus **g** in wisdom and stature,
Ac 16: 5 in the faith and **g** daily in numbers.

GRIEF (GRIEVE)
Ps 10: 14 you consider their **g** and take it
Pr 14: 13 ache, and rejoicing may end in **g**.
La 3: 32 Though he brings **g**, he will show
Jn 16: 20 grieve, but your **g** will turn to joy.
1Pe 1: 6 have had to suffer **g** in all kinds

GRIEVE (GRIEF)
Eph 4: 30 do not **g** the Holy Spirit of God,
1Th 4: 13 so that you do not **g** like the rest

GROUND
Ge 3: 17 it,' "Cursed is the **g** because of you;
Ex 3: 5 where you are standing is holy **g**."
Eph 6: 13 you may be able to stand your **g**,

GROW (GREW)
Pr 13: 11 money little by little makes it **g**.
1Co 3: 6 it, but God has been making it **g**.
2Pe 3: 18 But **g** in the grace and knowledge

GRUMBLE (GRUMBLING)
1Co 10: 10 do not **g**, as some of them did—
Jas 5: 9 Don't **g** against one another,

GRUMBLING (GRUMBLE)
Jn 6: 43 "Stop **g** among yourselves,"
1Pe 4: 9 hospitality to one another without **g**.

GUARANTEEING (GUARANTOR)
2Co 1: 22 as a deposit, **g** what is to come.
Eph 1: 14 is a deposit **g** our inheritance until

GUARANTOR (GUARANTEEING)
Heb 7: 22 Jesus has become the **g** of a better

GUARD (GUARDIAN, GUARDIAN-REDEEMER)
Ps 141: 3 Set a **g** over my mouth, Lord;
Pr 4: 23 Above all else, **g** your heart,
13: 3 Those who **g** their lips preserve
21: 23 Those who **g** their mouths and
Isa 52: 12 God of Israel will be your rear **g**.
Mk 13: 33 Be on **g**! Be alert! You do not know
1Co 16: 13 Be on your **g**; stand firm
Php 4: 7 will **g** your hearts and your minds
1Ti 6: 20 **g** what has been entrusted to your

GUARDIAN (GUARD)
Gal 3: 25 come, we are no longer under a **g**.

GUARDIAN-REDEEMER (GUARD)
Ru 3: 9 since you are a **g** of our family."

GUIDE
Ex 13: 21 of cloud to **g** them on their way
Ex 15: 13 In your strength you will **g** them
Ne 9: 19 cloud did not fail to **g** them on
Ps 25: 5 **G** me in your truth and teach me,
48: 14 he will be our **g** even to the end.
67: 4 and **g** the nations of the earth.
73: 24 You **g** me with your counsel,
139: 10 even there your hand will **g** me,
Pr 6: 22 When you walk, they will **g** you;
Isa 58: 11 The Lord will **g** you always;
Jn 16: 13 he will **g** you into all the truth.

GUILTY
Ex 34: 7 does not leave the **g** unpunished;
Jn 8: 46 Can any of you prove me **g** of sin?
Heb 10: 22 to cleanse us from a **g** conscience
Jas 2: 10 at just one point is **g** of breaking all

HADES
Mt 16: 18 the gates of **H** will not overcome it.
Lk 16: 23 In **H**, where he was in torment,

HAGAR
Servant of Sarah, wife of Abraham, mother of Ishmael (Ge 16:1–6; 25:12). Driven away by Sarah while pregnant (Ge 16:5–16); after birth of Isaac (Ge 21:9–21; Gal 4:21–31).

HAGGAI
Post-exilic prophet who encouraged rebuilding of the temple (Ezr 5:1; 6:14; Hag 1–2).

HAIR (HAIRS)
Lk 21: 18 not a **h** of your head will perish.
1Co 11: 6 for a woman to have her **h** cut off

HAIRS (HAIR)
Mt 10: 30 even the very **h** of your head are all

HALLELUJAH
Rev 19: 1, multitude in heaven shouting: "**H**!

HALLOWED (HOLY)
Mt 6: 9 Father in heaven, **h** be your name,

HAND (HANDIWORK HANDS)
Ps 16: 8 With him at my right **h**, I will not
37: 24 the Lord upholds him with his **h**.
139: 10 even there your **h** will guide me,
Ecc 9: 10 Whatever your **h** finds to do, do it
Mt 6: 3 not let your left **h** know what your right **h** is doing,
Jn 10: 28 one will snatch them out of my **h**.
1Co 12: 15 say, "Because I am not a **h**, I do not

HANDIWORK (HAND WORK)
Eph 2: 10 For we are God's **h**,

HANDS (HAND)
Ps 22: 16 they pierce my **h** and my feet.
24: 4 one who has clean **h** and a pure
31: 5 Into your **h** I commit my spirit;
31: 15 My times are in your **h**;
Pr 10: 4 but diligent **h** bring wealth.
31: 20 and extends her **h** to the needy.
Isa 55: 12 trees of the field will clap their **h**.
65: 2 out my **h** to an obstinate people,
Lk 23: 46 into your **h** I commit my spirit."

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1Th 4:11 business and work with your **h**,
1Ti 2: 8 lifting up holy **h** without anger
5:22 not be hasty in the laying on of **h**,

HANNAH
Wife of Elkanah, mother of Samuel (1Sa 1). Prayer at dedication of Samuel (1Sa 2:1–10). Blessed (1Sa 2:18–21).

HAPPY
Ps 68: 3 may they be **h** and joyful.
Pr 15:13 A **h** heart makes the face cheerful,
Ecc 3:12 better for people than to be **h**
Jas 5:13 Is anyone **h**? Let them sing songs

HARD (HARDEN HARDSHIP)
Ge 18:14 Is anything too **h** for the Lord?
Ps 118: 5 When **h** pressed, I cried
Mt 19:23 it is **h** for someone who is rich
1Co 4:12 We work **h** with our own hands.
1Th 5:12 those who work **h** among you,

HARDEN (HARD)
Ro 9:18 he hardens whom he wants to **h**.
Heb 3: 8 do not **h** your hearts as you did

HARDHEARTED (HEART)
Dt 15: 7 do not be **h** or tightfisted toward

HARDSHIP (HARD)
Ro 8:35 Shall trouble or **h** or persecution
2Ti 4: 5 endure **h**, do the work
Heb12: 7 Endure **h** as discipline;

HARM
Ps 121: 6 the sun will not **h** you by day,
Pr 3:29 not plot **h** against your neighbor,
31:12 good, not **h**, all the days of her life.
Ro 13:10 Love does no **h** to a neighbor.
1Jn 5:18 and the evil one cannot **h** them.

HARMONY
Ro 12:16 Live in **h** with one another.
2Co 6:15 What **h** is there between Christ

HARVEST
Mt 9:37 "The **h** is plentiful but the workers
Jn 4:35 at the fields! They are ripe for **h**.
Gal 6: 9 at the proper time we will reap a **h**
Heb12:11 it produces a **h** of righteousness

HASTE (HASTY)
Pr 21: 5 lead to profit as surely as **h** leads
29:20 you see someone who speaks in **h**?

HASTY (HASTE)
Pr 19: 2 how much more will **h** feet miss
Ecc 5: 2 do not be **h** in your heart to utter
1Ti 5:22 Do not be **h** in the laying

HATE (HATED HATES HATRED)
Lev 19:17 "'Do not **h** a fellow Israelite
Ps 5: 5 You **h** all who do wrong;
45: 7 righteousness and **h** wickedness;
97:10 those who love the Lord **h** evil,
139:21 Do I not **h** those who **h** you,
Pr 8:13 To fear the Lord is to **h** evil; I **h**
Am 5:15 **H** evil, love good;
Mt 5:43 your neighbor and **h** your enemy.'
Lk 6:27 do good to those who **h** you,
Ro 12: 9 **H** what is evil; cling to what is

HATED (HATE)
Mt 10:22 be **h** by everyone because of me,
Ro 9:13 "Jacob I loved, but Esau I **h**."
Eph 5:29 all, no one ever **h** their own body,
Heb 1: 9 righteousness and **h** wickedness;

HATES (HATE)
Pr 6:16 There are six things the Lord **h**,
13:24 spares the rod **h** their children,
Mal 2:16 "The man who **h** and divorces his
Jn 3:20 Everyone who does evil **h** the light,
1Jn 2: 9 to be in the light but **h** a brother

HATRED (HATE)
Pr 10:12 **H** stirs up conflict, but love covers

HAUGHTY
Pr 16:18 destruction, a **h** spirit before a fall.

HAY
1Co 3:12 costly stones, wood, **h** or straw,

HEAD (HEADS HOTHEADED)
Ge 3:15 he will crush your **h**, and you will
Ps 23: 5 You anoint my **h** with oil;
Pr 25:22 will heap burning coals on his **h**,
Isa 59:17 the helmet of salvation on his **h**;
Mt 8:20 of Man has no place to lay his **h**."
Ro 12:20 will heap burning coals on his **h**."
1Co11: 3 the **h** of every man is Christ, and the **h** of the woman is man, and the **h** of Christ is God.
12:21 And the **h** cannot say to the feet,
Eph 5:23 the husband is the **h** of the wife as Christ is the **h**
2Ti 4: 5 keep your **h** in all situations,
Rev 19:12 fire, and on his **h** are many crowns.

HEADS (HEAD)
Lev 26:13 you to walk with **h** held high.
Isa 35:10 everlasting joy will crown their **h**.

HEAL (HEALED HEALING HEALS)
2Ch 7:14 their sin and will **h** their land.
Ps 41: 4 **h** me, for I have sinned against
Mt 10: 8 **H** the sick, raise the dead,
Lk 4:23 'Physician, **h** yourself!'
5:17 Lord was with Jesus to **h** the sick.

HEALED (HEAL)
Isa 53: 5 him, and by his wounds we are **h**.
Mt 9:22 he said, "your faith has **h** you."
14:36 and all who touched it were **h**.
Ac 4:10 that this man stands before you **h**.
14: 9 saw that he had faith to be **h**
Jas 5:16 each other so that you may be **h**.
1Pe 2:24 "by his wounds you have been **h**."

HEALING (HEAL)
Eze 47:12 for food and their leaves for **h**."
Mal 4: 2 righteousness will rise with **h** in its
1Co12: 9 to another gifts of **h** by that one

1Co 12: 30 Do all have gifts of **h**? Do all speak
Rev 22: 2 the tree are for the **h** of the nations.

HEALS (HEAL)
Ex 15: 26 for I am the Lord, who **h** you."
Ps 103: 3 your sins and **h** all your diseases,
147: 3 He **h** the brokenhearted and binds

HEALTH (HEALTHY)
Pr 3: 8 This will bring **h** to your body
15: 30 good news gives **h** to the bones.

HEALTHY (HEALTH)
Mk 2: 17 "It is not the **h** who need a doctor,

HEAR (HEARD HEARING HEARS)
Dt 6: 4 **H**, O Israel: The Lord our God,
31: 13 law, must **h** it and learn to fear
2Ch 7: 14 then I will **h** from heaven,
Ps 94: 9 he who fashioned the ear not **h**?
Isa 29: 18 day the deaf will **h** the words
65: 24 they are still speaking I will **h**.
Mt 11: 15 Whoever has ears, let them **h**.
Jn 8: 47 The reason you do not **h** is that
2Ti 4: 3 what their itching ears want to **h**.

HEARD (HEAR)
Job 42: 5 My ears had **h** of you but now my
Isa 66: 8 Who has ever **h** of such things?
Mt 5: 21 "You have **h** that it was said
5: 27 "You have **h** that it was said,
5: 33 you have **h** that it was said
5: 38 "You have **h** that it was said,
5: 43 "You have **h** that it was said,
1Co 2: 9 what no ear has **h**, and what no
1Th 2: 13 which you **h** from us, you accepted
2Ti 1: 13 What you **h** from me, keep as
Jas 1: 25 not forgetting what they have **h**,

HEARING (HEAR)
Ro 10: 17 faith comes from **h** the message,

HEARS (HEAR)
Jn 5: 24 whoever **h** my word and believes
1Jn 5: 14 according to his will, he **h** us.
Rev 3: 20 If anyone **h** my voice and opens

HEART (BROKENHEARTED HARD-HEARTED HEARTS WHOLEHEARTEDLY)
Ex 25: 2 everyone whose **h** prompts them
Lev 19: 17 not hate a fellow Israelite in your **h**.
Dt 4: 29 him if you seek him with all your **h**
6: 5 Lord your God with all your **h**
10: 12 Lord your God with all your **h**
15: 10 and do so without a grudging **h**;
30: 6 you may love him with all your **h**
30: 10 Lord your God with all your **h**
Jos 22: 5 and to serve him with all your **h**
1Sa 13: 14 sought out a man after his own **h**
16: 7 but the Lord looks at the **h**."
2Ki 23: 3 and decrees with all his **h** and
1Ch 28: 9 for the Lord searches every **h**
2Ch 7: 16 eyes and my **h** will always be there.
Job 22: 22 and lay up his words in your **h**.
Job 37: 1 "At this my **h** pounds and leaps
Ps 14: 1 says in his **h**, "There is no God."
19: 14 this meditation of my **h** be pleasing
37: 4 will give you the desires of your **h**.
45: 1 My **h** is stirred by a noble theme as
51: 10 Create in me a pure **h**, O God,
51: 17 a broken and contrite **h** you, God,
66: 18 If I had cherished sin in my **h**,
86: 11 give me an undivided **h**, that I may
119: 11 in my **h** that I might not sin against
139: 23 Search me, God, and know my **h**;
Pr 3: 5 Trust in the Lord with all your **h**
4: 21 sight, keep them within your **h**;
4: 23 guard your **h**, for everything you
7: 3 write them on the tablet of your **h**.
13: 12 Hope deferred makes the **h** sick,
14: 13 Even in laughter the **h** may ache,
15: 30 eyes brings joy to the **h**, and good
17: 22 A cheerful **h** is good medicine,
24: 17 stumble, do not let your **h** rejoice,
27: 19 the face, so one's life reflects the **h**.
Ecc 3: 11 also set eternity in the human **h**;
8: 5 the wise **h** will know the proper
SS 4: 9 You have stolen my **h**, my sister,
Isa 40: 11 and carries them close to his **h**;
57: 15 and to revive the **h** of the contrite.
Jer 17: 9 The **h** is deceitful above all things
29: 13 when you seek me with all your **h**.
Eze 36: 26 I will give you a new **h** and put
Mt 5: 8 Blessed are the pure in **h**, for they
6: 21 treasure is, there your **h** will be
12: 34 mouth speaks what the **h** is full of.
22: 37 the Lord your God with all your **h**
Lk 6: 45 mouth speaks what the **h** is full of.
Ro 2: 29 is circumcision of the **h**,
10: 10 it is with your **h** that you believe
Eph 5: 19 music from your **h** to the Lord,
6: 6 doing the will of God from your **h**.
Col 3: 23 you do, work at it with all your **h**,
1Pe 1: 22 one another deeply, from the **h**.

HEARTS (HEART)
Dt 11: 18 Fix these words of mine in your **h**
1Ki 8: 39 do, since you know their **h** (for you
8: 61 may your **h** be fully committed
Ps 62: 8 pour out your **h** to him, for God is
Jer 31: 33 their minds and write it on their **h**.
Lk 16: 15 of others, but God knows your **h**.
24: 32 "Were not our **h** burning within us
Jn 14: 1 "Do not let your **h** be troubled.
Ac 15: 9 for he purified their **h** by faith.
Ro 2: 15 of the law are written on their **h**,
1Co 14: 25 the secrets of their **h** are laid bare.
2Co 3: 2 written on our **h**, known and read
3: 3 of stone but on tablets of human **h**.
4: 6 shine in our **h** to give us the light
Eph 3: 17 may dwell in your **h** through faith.
Col 3: 1 Christ, set your **h** on things above,
Heb 3: 8 do not harden your **h** as you did

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Heb10: 16 I will put my laws in their **h**, and I
1Jn 3: 20 that God is greater than our **h**,

HEAT
2Pe 3: 12 and the elements will melt in the **h**.

HEAVEN (HEAVENLY HEAVENS)
Ge 14: 19 Most High, Creator of **h** and earth.
1Ki 8: 27 even the highest **h**, cannot contain
2Ki 2: 1 take Elijah up to **h** in a whirlwind,
2Ch 7: 14 then I will hear from **h**, and I will
Isa 14: 12 How you have fallen from **h**,
66: 1 "**H** is my throne, and the earth is
Da 7: 13 man, coming with the clouds of **h**.
Mt 6: 9 "'Our Father in **h**, hallowed be
6: 20 up for yourselves treasures in **h**,
16: 19 you the keys of the kingdom of **h**;
16: 19 bind on earth will be bound in **h**,
19: 23 is rich to enter the kingdom of **h**.
24: 35 **H** and earth will pass away, but my
26: 64 and coming on the clouds of **h**."
28: 18 "All authority in **h** and on earth has
Mk 16: 19 was taken up into **h**
Lk 15: 7 **h** over one sinner who repents
18: 22 and you will have treasure in **h**.
Ro 10: 6 heart, 'Who will ascend into **h**?'"
2Co 5: 1 an eternal house in **h**, not built
12: 2 ago was caught up to the third **h**.
Php 2: 10 in **h** and on earth and under
3: 20 But our citizenship is in **h**.
1Th 1: 10 and to wait for his Son from **h**,
Heb 8: 5 a copy and shadow of what is in **h**.
9: 24 he entered **h** itself, now to appear
2Pe 3: 13 we are looking forward to a new **h**
Rev 21: 1 I saw "a new **h** and a new earth,"

HEAVENLY (HEAVEN)
2Co 5: 2 clothed instead with our **h** dwelling,
Eph 1: 3 who has blessed us in the **h** realms
1: 20 at his right hand in the **h** realms,
2Ti 4: 18 bring me safely to his **h** kingdom.
Heb12: 22 of the living God, the **h** Jerusalem.

HEAVENS (HEAVEN)
Ge 1: 1 In the beginning God created the **h**
1Ki 8: 27 The **h**, even the highest heaven,
2Ch 2: 6 since the **h**, even the highest **h**,
Ps 8: 3 When I consider your **h**, the work
19: 1 The **h** declare the glory of God;
102: 25 the **h** are the work of your hands.
108: 4 is your love, higher than the **h**;
119: 89 it stands firm in the **h**.
139: 8 If I go up to the **h**, you are there;
Isa 51: 6 the **h** will vanish like smoke,
55: 9 "As the **h** are higher than the earth,
65: 17 will create new **h** and a new earth.
Joel 2: 30 I will show wonders in the **h**
Eph 4: 10 ascended higher than all the **h**,
2Pe 3: 10 The **h** will disappear with a roar;

HEBREW
Ge 14: 13 and reported this to Abram the **H**.

HEEDS
Pr 13: 1 A wise son **h** his father's
13: 18 whoever **h** correction is honored.
15: 5 but whoever **h** correction shows
15: 32 but the one who **h** correction gains

HEEL
Ge 3: 15 head, and you will strike his **h**."

HEIRS (INHERIT)
Ro 8: 17 **h** of God and co-heirs with Christ,
Gal 3: 29 and **h** according to the promise.
Eph 3: 6 gospel the Gentiles are **h** together
1Pe 3: 7 as **h** with you of the gracious gift

HELL
Mt 5: 22 will be in danger of the fire of **h**.
2Pe 2: 4 but sent them to **h**, putting them

HELMET
Isa 59: 17 and the **h** of salvation on his head;
Eph 6: 17 Take the **h** of salvation
1Th 5: 8 and the hope of salvation as a **h**.

HELP (HELPED HELPER HELPING HELPS)
2Sa 22: 36 You make your saving **h** my shield;
Ps 18: 6 I cried to my God for **h**.
30: 2 called to you for **h**, and you healed
46: 1 an ever-present **h** in trouble.
70: 4 long for your saving **h** always say,
79: 9 **H** us, God our Savior, for the glory
121: 1 where does my **h** come from?
Isa 41: 10 I will strengthen you and **h** you;
Jnh 2: 2 the realm of the dead I called for **h**,
Mk 9: 24 **h** me overcome my unbelief!"
Ac 16: 9 over to Macedonia and **h** us."

HELPED (HELP)
1Sa 7: 12 "Thus far the Lord has **h** us."

HELPER (HELP)
Ge 2: 18 I will make a **h** suitable for him."
Ps 10: 14 you are the **h** of the fatherless.
Heb13: 6 confidence, "The Lord is my **h**;

HELPING (HELP)
Ac 9: 36 always doing good and **h** the poor.
1Co12: 28 gifts of healing, of **h**, of guidance,
1Ti 5: 10 **h** those in trouble and devoting

HELPS (HELP)
Ro 8: 26 the Spirit **h** us in our weakness.

HEN
Mt 23: 37 as a **h** gathers her chicks under her

HERITAGE (INHERIT)
Ps 127: 3 Children are a **h** from the Lord,

HEROD

1. King of Judea who tried to kill Jesus (Mt 2; Lk 1:5).

2. Son of 1. Tetrarch of Galilee who arrested and beheaded John the Baptist (Mt 14:1–12; Mk 6:14–29; Lk 3:1, 19–20; 9:7–9); tried Jesus (Lk 23:6–15).

3. Grandson of 1. King of Judea who killed James (Ac 12:2); arrested Peter (Ac 12:3–19). Death (Ac 12:19–23).

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HERODIAS

Wife of Herod the Tetrarch who persuaded her daughter to ask for John the Baptist's head (Mt 14:1–12; Mk 6:14–29).

HEZEKIAH

King of Judah. Restored the temple and worship (2Ch 29–31). Sought the Lord for help against Assyria (2Ki 18–19; 2Ch 32:1–23; Isa 36–37). Illness healed (2Ki 20:1–11; 2Ch 32:24–26; Isa 38). Judged for showing Babylonians his treasures (2Ki 20:12–21; 2Ch 32:31; Isa 39).

HID (HIDE)

Ge 3: 8 they **h** from the Lord God among
Ex 2: 2 child, she **h** him for three months.
Jos 6: 17 because she **h** the spies we sent.
Heb11: 23 faith Moses' parents **h** him for

HIDDEN (HIDE)

Ps 19: 12 Forgive my **h** faults.
119: 11 I have **h** your word in my heart
Pr 2: 4 and search for it as for **h** treasure,
Isa 59: 2 your sins have **h** his face from you,
Mt 5: 14 A town built on a hill cannot be **h**.
13: 44 heaven is like treasure **h** in a field.
Col 1: 26 that has been kept **h** for ages
2: 3 in whom are **h** all the treasures
3: 3 and your life is now **h** with Christ

HIDE (HID HIDDEN)

Ps 17: 8 **h** me in the shadow of your wings
143: 9 Lord, for I **h** myself in you.

HIGH

Isa 57: 15 "I live in a **h** and holy place,

HILL (HILLS)

Mt 5: 14 town built on a **h** cannot be hidden.

HILLS (HILL)

Ps 50: 10 and the cattle on a thousand **h**.

HINDER (HINDERS)

1Sa 14: 6 Nothing can **h** the Lord
Mt 19: 14 do not **h** them, for the kingdom
1Co 9: 12 anything rather than **h** the gospel
1Pe 3: 7 so that nothing will **h** your prayers.

HINDERS (HINDER)

Heb12: 1 let us throw off everything that **h**

HINT

Eph 5: 3 you there must not be even a **h**

HOLD

Ex 20: 7 Lord will not **h** anyone guiltless
Lev 19: 13 "'Do not **h** back the wages
Jos 22: 5 to **h** fast to him and to serve him
Ps 73: 23 you **h** me by my right hand.
Pr 4: 4 "Take **h** of my words with all your
Isa 54: 2 tent curtains wide, do not **h** back;
Mk 11: 25 if you **h** anything against anyone,
Php 2: 16 as you **h** firmly to the word of life.
3: 12 which Christ Jesus took **h** of me.
Col 1: 17 and in him all things **h** together.
1Th 5: 21 test them all; **h** on to what is good,
1Ti 6: 12 Take **h** of the eternal life
Heb10: 23 Let us **h** unswervingly to the hope

HOLINESS (HOLY)

Ex 15: 11 majestic in **h**, awesome in glory,
Ps 29: 2 the Lord in the splendor of his **h**.
96: 9 the Lord in the splendor of his **h**;
Ro 6: 19 to righteousness leading to **h**.
2Co 7: 1 perfecting **h** out of reverence
Eph 4: 24 God in true righteousness and **h**.
Heb12: 10 in order that we may share in his **h**.
12: 14 without **h** no one will see the Lord.

HOLY (HALLOWED HOLINESS)

Ex 19: 6 kingdom of priests and a **h** nation.'
20: 8 the Sabbath day by keeping it **h**.
Lev 11: 44 and be **h**, because I am **h**.
20: 7 yourselves and be **h**, because I am
20: 26 You are to be **h** to me because I,
21: 8 Lord am **h**—I who make you **h**.
22: 32 Do not profane my **h** name,
Ps 24: 3 Who may stand in his **h** place?
77: 13 Your ways, God, are **h**. What god is
99: 3 great and awesome name—he is **h**.
99: 5 worship at his footstool; he is **h**.
99: 9 for the Lord our God is **h**.
111: 9 **h** and awesome is his name.
Isa 5: 16 the **h** God will be proved **h** by his
6: 3 "**H**, **h**, **h** is the Lord Almighty;
40: 25 who is my equal?" says the **H** One.
57: 15 who lives forever, whose name is **h**:
Eze 28: 25 I will be proved **h** through them
Da 9: 24 and to anoint the Most **H** Place.
Hab 2: 20 The Lord is in his **h** temple;
Ac 2: 27 will not let your **h** one see decay.
Ro 7: 12 the law is **h**, and the commandment is **h**,
12: 1 sacrifice, **h** and pleasing to God—
2Th 1: 10 to be glorified in his **h** people
2Ti 1: 9 saved us and called us to a **h** life—
3: 15 you have known the **H** Scriptures,
Titus1: 8 upright, **h** and disciplined.
1Pe 1: 15 is **h**, so be **h** in all you do;
1: 16 "Be **h**, because I am **h**."
2: 9 a royal priesthood, a **h** nation,
2Pe 3: 11 You ought to live **h** and godly lives
Rev 4: 8 "'**H**, **h**, **h** is the Lord God

HOME (HOMES)

Dt 6: 7 Talk about them when you sit at **h**
Ps 84: 3 Even the sparrow has found a **h**,
Pr 3: 33 he blesses the **h** of the righteous.
Mk 10: 29 "no one who has left **h** or brothers
Jn 14: 23 and make our **h** with them.
Titus2: 5 pure, to be busy at **h**, to be kind,

HOMES (HOME)

Ne 4: 14 daughters, your wives and your **h**."
1Ti 5: 14 to manage their **h** and to give

HOMOSEXUALITY

1Ti 1: 10 for those practicing **h**, for slave

HONEST
Lev 19: 36 **h** weights, an **h** ephah and an **h** hin.
Dt 25: 15 must have accurate and **h** weights
Job 31: 6 let God weigh me in **h** scales and
Pr 12: 17 An **h** witness tells the truth,

HONEY
Ex 3: 8 a land flowing with milk and **h**—
Ps 19: 10 they are sweeter than **h**, than **h**
119:103 taste, sweeter than **h** to my mouth!

HONOR (HONORABLE HONORABLY HONORED HONORS)
Ex 20: 12 "**H** your father and your mother,
Nu 25: 13 he was zealous for the **h** of his God
Dt 5: 16 "**H** your father and your mother,
1Sa 2: 30 Those who **h** me I will **h**, but those
Ps 8: 5 crowned them with glory and **h**.
Pr 3: 9 **H** the Lord with your wealth,
11: 16 A kindhearted woman gains **h**,
15: 33 and humility comes before **h**.
20: 3 It is to one's **h** to avoid strife,
31: 31 **H** her for all that her hands have
Mt 15: 4 '**H** your father and mother'
Ro 12: 10 **H** one another above yourselves.
1Co 6: 20 Therefore **h** God with your bodies.
Eph 6: 2 "**H** your father and mother"—
1Ti 5: 17 church well are worthy of double **h**,
Heb 2: 7 crowned them with glory and **h**
Rev 4: 9 **h** and thanks to him who sits

HONORABLE (HONOR)
1Th 4: 4 body in a way that is holy and **h**,

HONORABLY (HONOR)
Heb13: 18 and desire to live **h** in every way.

HONORED (HONOR)
Ps 12: 8 what is vile is **h** by the human race.
Pr 13: 18 but whoever heeds correction is **h**.
1Co12: 26 if one part is **h**, every part rejoices
Heb13: 4 Marriage should be **h** by all,

HONORS (HONOR)
Ps 15: 4 but **h** those who fear the Lord;
Pr 14: 31 is kind to the needy **h** God.
3Jn : 6 their way in a manner that **h** God.

HOOKS
Isa 2: 4 and their spears into pruning **h**.
Joel 3: 10 and your pruning **h** into spears.

HOPE (HOPES)
Job 13: 15 he slay me, yet will I **h** in him;
Ps 42: 5 Put your **h** in God, for I will yet
62: 5 rest in God; my **h** comes from him.
119: 74 for I have put my **h** in your word.
130: 7 Israel, put your **h** in the Lord,
147: 11 put their **h** in his unfailing love.
Pr 13: 12 **H** deferred makes the heart sick,
Isa 40: 31 but those who **h** in the Lord will
Ro 5: 4 and character, **h**.
8: 24 But **h** that is seen is no **h** at all.
12: 12 Be joyful in **h**, patient in affliction,
Ro 15: 4 they provide we might have **h**.
1Co13: 13 three remain: faith, **h** and love.
15: 19 for this life we have **h** in Christ,
Col 1: 27 is Christ in you, the **h** of glory.
1Th 5: 8 and the **h** of salvation as a helmet.
1Ti 6: 17 to put their **h** in God, who richly
Titus2: 13 while we wait for the blessed **h**—
Heb 6: 19 We have this **h** as an anchor
11: 1 faith is confidence in what we **h**
1Jn 3: 3 All who have this **h** in him purify

HOPES (HOPE)
1Co13: 7 trusts, always **h**, always perseveres.

HORSE
Ps 147: 10 is not in the strength of the **h**,
Pr 26: 3 A whip for the **h**, a bridle
Zec 1: 8 me was a man mounted on a red **h**.
Rev 6: 2 and there before me was a white **h**!
6: 4 Then another **h** came out, a fiery
6: 5 and there before me was a black **h**!
6: 8 and there before me was a pale **h**!
19: 11 and there before me was a white **h**,

HOSANNA
Mt 21: 9 shouted, "**H** to the Son of David!"

HOSHEA
Last king of Israel (2Ki 15:30; 17:1–6).

HOSPITABLE (HOSPITALITY)
1Ti 3: 2 respectable, **h**, able to teach,
Titus1: 8 he must be **h**, one who loves what

HOSPITALITY (HOSPITABLE)
Ro 12: 13 people who are in need. Practice **h**.
1Ti 5: 10 showing **h**, washing the feet
Heb13: 2 shown **h** to angels without knowing
1Pe 4: 9 Offer **h** to one another without

HOSTILE
Ro 8: 7 governed by the flesh is **h** to God;

HOT
1Ti 4: 2 have been seared as with a **h** iron.
Rev 3: 15 that you are neither cold nor **h**.

HOT-TEMPERED
Pr 15: 18 A **h** person stirs up conflict,
19: 19 A **h** person must pay the penalty;
22: 24 not make friends with a **h** person,
29: 22 and a **h** person commits many sins.

HOTHEADED (HEAD)
Pr 14: 16 but a fool is **h** and yet feels secure.

HOUR
Ecc 9: 12 one knows when their **h** will come:
Mt 6: 27 worrying add a single **h** to your life?
Lk 12: 40 an **h** when you do not expect him."
Jn 12: 23 "The **h** has come for the Son
12: 27 this very reason I came to this **h**.

HOUSE (HOUSEHOLD HOUSEHOLDS STOREHOUSE)
Ex 20: 17 shall not covet your neighbor's **h**.
Ps 23: 6 in the **h** of the Lord forever.
84: 10 in the **h** of my God than dwell

Ps 122: 1 "Let us go to the **h** of the Lord."
127: 1 Unless the Lord builds the **h**,
Pr 7: 27 Her **h** is a highway to the grave,
21: 9 of the roof than share a **h**
Isa 56: 7 my **h** will be called a **h** of prayer
Zec 13: 6 I was given at the **h** of my friends.'
Mt 7: 24 is like a wise man who built his **h**
12: 29 can anyone enter a strong man's **h**
21: 13 "'My **h** will be called a **h**
Mk 3: 25 If a **h** is divided against itself, that **h**
Lk 11: 17 a **h** divided against itself will fall.
Jn 2: 16 Stop turning my Father's **h**
12: 3 the **h** was filled with the fragrance
14: 2 My Father's **h** has many rooms;
Heb 3: 3 of a **h** has greater honor than the **h**

HOUSEHOLD (HOUSE)
Jos 24: 15 But as for me and my **h**, we will
Mic 7: 6 are the members of his own **h**.
Mt 10: 36 will be the members of his own **h**.'
12: 25 or **h** divided against itself will not
1Ti 3: 12 manage his children and his **h** well.
3: 15 to conduct themselves in God's **h**,

HOUSEHOLDS (HOUSE)
Pr 15: 27 The greedy bring ruin to their **h**,

HUMAN (HUMANITY)
Ge 9: 6 "Whoever sheds **h** blood,
1Sa 15: 29 for he is not a **h** being, that he
Ac 5: 29 obey God rather than **h** beings!
2Pe 1: 21 never had its origin in the **h** will,

HUMANITY (HUMAN)
Heb 2: 14 he too shared in their **h** so

HUMBLE (HUMBLED HUMILIATE HUMILIATING HUMILITY)
2Ch 7: 14 will **h** themselves and pray and
Ps 25: 9 He guides the **h** in what is right
Pr 3: 34 favor to the **h** and oppressed.
Isa 66: 2 those who are **h** and contrite
Mt 11: 29 for I am gentle and **h** in heart,
Eph 4: 2 Be completely **h** and gentle;
Jas 4: 10 **H** yourselves before the Lord,
1Pe 5: 6 **H** yourselves, therefore,

HUMBLED (HUMBLE)
Mt 23: 12 who exalt themselves will be **h**,
Php 2: 8 he **h** himself by becoming obedient

HUMILIATE (HUMBLE)
Pr 25: 7 for him to **h** you before his nobles.

HUMILIATING (HUMBLE)
1Co 11: 22 God by **h** those who have nothing?

HUMILITY (HUMBLE)
Pr 11: 2 but with **h** comes wisdom.
15: 33 Lord, and **h** comes before honor.
2Co 10: 1 the **h** and gentleness of Christ,
Php 2: 3 in **h** value others above yourselves,
1Pe 5: 5 with **h** toward one another,

HUNGRY
Ps 107: 9 and fills the **h** with good things.
Ps 146: 7 oppressed and gives food to the **h**.
Pr 25: 21 If your enemy is **h**, give him food
Eze 18: 7 his food to the **h** and provides
Mt 25: 35 For I was **h** and you gave me
Lk 1: 53 has filled the **h** with good things
Jn 6: 35 comes to me will never go **h**,
Ro 12: 20 "If your enemy is **h**, feed him;

HURT (HURTS)
Ecc 8: 9 lords it over others to his own **h**.
Mk 16: 18 it will not **h** them
Rev 2: 11 one who is victorious will not be **h**

HURTS (HURT)
Ps 15: 4 who keeps an oath even when it **h**,
Pr 26: 28 A lying tongue hates those it **h**,

HUSBAND (HUSBAND'S HUSBANDS)
1Co 7: 3 The **h** should fulfill his marital
7: 3 and likewise the wife to her **h**.
7: 4 her own body but yields it to her **h**.
7: 4 the **h** does not have authority over
7: 10 wife must not separate from her **h**.
7: 11 And a **h** must not divorce his wife.
7: 13 And if a woman has a **h** who is not
7: 39 But if her **h** dies, she is free
2Co 11: 2 I promised you to one **h**, to Christ,
Eph 5: 23 For the **h** is the head of the wife as
5: 33 and the wife must respect her **h**.

HUSBAND'S (HUSBAND)
Pr 12: 4 of noble character is her **h** crown,

HUSBANDS (HUSBAND)
Eph 5: 22 yourselves to your own **h** as you do
5: 25 **H**, love your wives, just as Christ
Titus 2: 4 the younger women to love their **h**
1Pe 3: 1 yourselves to your own **h** so that,
3: 7 **H**, in the same way be considerate

HYMN
1Co 14: 26 each of you has a **h**, or a word

HYPOCRISY (HYPOCRITE HYPOCRITES)
Mt 23: 28 on the inside you are full of **h**
1Pe 2: 1 of all malice and all deceit, **h**, envy,

HYPOCRITE (HYPOCRISY)
Mt 7: 5 You **h**, first take the plank

HYPOCRITES (HYPOCRISY)
Ps 26: 4 deceitful, nor do I associate with **h**.
Mt 6: 5 do not be like the **h**, for they love

HYSSOP
Ps 51: 7 Cleanse me with **h**, and I will be

IDLE (IDLENESS)
1Th 5: 14 those who are **i** and disruptive,
2Th 3: 6 away from every believer who is **i**
1Ti 5: 13 they get into the habit of being **i**

IDLENESS (IDLE)
Pr 31: 27 and does not eat the bread of **i**.

IDOL (IDOLATRY IDOLS)
Isa 44: 17 From the rest he makes a god, his **i**;
1Co 8: 4 We know that "An **i** is nothing

IDOLATRY (IDOL)
Col 3: 5 evil desires and greed, which is **i**.
IDOLS (IDOL)
1Co 8: 1 Now about food sacrificed to **i**:
IGNORANT (IGNORE)
1Co15: 34 there are some who are **i** of God—
Heb 5: 2 to deal gently with those who are **i**
1Pe 2: 15 good you should silence the **i** talk
2Pe 3: 16 **i** and unstable people distort,
IGNORE (IGNORANT IGNORES)
Dt 22: 1 not **i** it but be sure to take it back
Ps 9: 12 he does not **i** the cries
Heb 2: 3 escape if we **i** so great a salvation?
IGNORES (IGNORE)
Pr 10: 17 whoever **i** correction leads others
ILLUMINATED
Rev 18: 1 and the earth was **i** by his splendor.
IMAGE
Ge 1: 26 "Let us make mankind in our **i**,
1: 27 God created mankind in his own **i**, in the **i** of God he created them;
Ro 8: 29 to be conformed to the **i** of his Son,
1Co11: 7 since he is the **i** and glory of God;
2Co 3: 18 into his **i** with ever-increasing glory,
Col 1: 15 The Son is the **i** of the invisible
3: 10 in knowledge in the **i** of its Creator.
IMAGINE
Eph 3: 20 more than all we ask or **i**,
IMITATE (IMITATORS)
1Co 4: 16 Therefore I urge you to **i** me.
Heb 6: 12 but to **i** those who through faith
13: 7 of their way of life and **i** their faith.
3Jn : 11 do not **i** what is evil but what is
IMITATORS (IMITATE)
1Th 1: 6 You became **i** of us and of the Lord,
2: 14 became **i** of God's churches
IMMANUEL
Isa 7: 14 birth to a son, and will call him **I**.
Mt 1: 23 they will call him **I**" (which means
IMMORAL (IMMORALITY)
1Co 5: 9 to associate with sexually **i** people
5: 10 the people of this world who are **i**,
5: 11 or sister but is sexually **i** or greedy,
6: 9 Neither the sexually **i** nor idolaters
Eph 5: 5 No **i**, impure or greedy person—
Heb12: 16 See that no one is sexually **i**, or is
13: 4 the adulterer and all the sexually **i**.
Rev 21: 8 the sexually **i**, those who practice
22: 15 arts, the sexually **i**, the murderers,
IMMORALITY (IMMORAL)
Mt 5: 32 except for sexual **i**, makes her
19: 9 except for sexual **i**, and marries
1Co 6: 13 is not meant for sexual **i**
6: 18 Flee from sexual **i**. All other sins
10: 8 We should not commit sexual **i**,
Gal 5: 19 sexual **i**, impurity and debauchery;
Eph 5: 3 must not be even a hint of sexual **i**,
1Th 4: 3 that you should avoid sexual **i**;
Jude : 4 grace of our God into a license for **i**
IMMORTAL (IMMORTALITY)
Ro 1: 23 exchanged the glory of the **i** God
1Ti 1: 17 Now to the King eternal, **i**,
6: 16 who alone is **i** and who lives
IMMORTALITY (IMMORTAL)
Ro 2: 7 and **i**, he will give eternal life.
1Co15: 53 and the mortal with **i**.
2Ti 1: 10 and **i** to light through the gospel.
IMPERISHABLE
1Pe 1: 23 seed, but of **i**, through the living
IMPORTANCE (IMPORTANT)
1Co15: 3 I passed on to you as of first **i**:
IMPORTANT (IMPORTANCE)
Mt 23: 23 have neglected the more **i** matters
Mk 12: 29 "The most **i** one," answered Jesus,
12: 33 as yourself is more **i** than all burnt
Php 1: 18 The **i** thing is that in every way,
IMPOSSIBLE
Mt 17: 20 Nothing will be **i** for you."
Lk 18: 27 "What is **i** with man is possible
Heb 6: 18 in which it is **i** for God to lie,
11: 6 without faith it is **i** to please God,
IMPROPER
Eph 5: 3 because these are **i** for God's holy
IMPURE (IMPURITY)
Ac 10: 15 "Do not call anything **i** that God
Eph 5: 5 No immoral, **i** or greedy person—
1Th 4: 7 For God did not call us to be **i**,
Rev 21: 27 Nothing **i** will ever enter it,
IMPURITY (IMPURE)
Ro 1: 24 hearts to sexual **i** for the degrading
Eph 5: 3 or of any kind of **i**, or of greed,
INCENSE
Ex 40: 5 Place the gold altar of **i** in front
Ps 141: 2 my prayer be set before you like **i**;
INCOME
Ecc 5: 10 is never satisfied with their **i**.
1Co16: 2 of money in keeping with your **i**,
INCOMPARABLE
Eph 2: 7 ages he might show the **i** riches
INCREASE (EVER-INCREASING INCREASED INCREASING)
Ge 1: 22 "Be fruitful and **i** in number and
Ps 62: 10 though your riches **i**, do not set
Lk 17: 5 said to the Lord, "**I** our faith!"
1Th 3: 12 May the Lord make your love **i**
INCREASED (INCREASE)
Ac 6: 7 of disciples in Jerusalem **i** rapidly,
Ro 5: 20 where sin **i**, grace **i** all the more,
INCREASING (INCREASE)
Ac 6: 1 the number of disciples was **i**,
2Th 1: 3 all of you have for one another is **i**.

2Pe 1: 8 these qualities in **i** measure,
INDEPENDENT
1Co11: 11 in the Lord woman is not **i** of man, nor is man **i** of woman.
INDESCRIBABLE
2Co 9: 15 Thanks be to God for his **i** gift!
INDISPENSABLE
1Co12: 22 body that seem to be weaker are **i**,
INEFFECTIVE
2Pe 1: 8 they will keep you from being **i**
INEXPRESSIBLE
2Co12: 4 up to paradise and heard **i** things,
1Pe 1: 8 are filled with an **i** and glorious joy,
INFANTS
Mt 21: 16 the lips of children and **i** you, Lord,
1Co14: 20 In regard to evil be **i**, but in your
INHERIT (CO-HEIRS HEIRS HERITAGE INHERITANCE)
Ps 37: 11 the meek will **i** the land and enjoy
37: 29 The righteous will **i** the land
Mt 5: 5 the meek, for they will **i** the earth.
Mk 10: 17 "what must I do to **i** eternal life?"
1Co15: 50 cannot **i** the kingdom of God,
INHERITANCE (INHERIT)
Dt 4: 20 to be the people of his **i**, as you
Pr 13: 22 A good person leaves an **i** for their
Eph 1: 14 deposit guaranteeing our **i** until
5: 5 has any **i** in the kingdom of Christ
Heb 9: 15 receive the promised eternal **i**—
1Pe 1: 4 This **i** is kept in heaven for you,
INIQUITIES (INIQUITY)
Ps 78: 38 he forgave their **i** and did not
103: 10 or repay us according to our **i**.
Isa 59: 2 your **i** have separated you from
Mic 7: 19 hurl all our **i** into the depths
INIQUITY (INIQUITIES)
Ps 51: 2 Wash away all my **i** and cleanse me
Isa 53: 6 has laid on him the **i** of us all.
INJUSTICE
2Ch19: 7 the Lord our God there is no **i**
INNOCENT
Pr 17: 26 a fine on the **i** is not good,
Mt 10: 16 shrewd as snakes and as **i** as doves.
27: 4 said, "for I have betrayed **i** blood."
1Co 4: 4 clear, but that does not make me **i**.
INSCRIPTION
Mt 22: 20 image is this? And whose **i**?"
INSOLENT
Ro 1: 30 **i**, arrogant and boastful;
INSTITUTED
Ro 13: 2 is rebelling against what God has **i**,
INSTRUCT (INSTRUCTED INSTRUCTION)
Ps 32: 8 I will **i** you and teach you
Pr 9: 9 **I** the wise and they will be wiser
Ro 15: 14 and competent to **i** one another.
INSTRUCTED (INSTRUCT)
2Ti 2: 25 Opponents must be gently **i**,
INSTRUCTION (INSTRUCT)
Pr 1: 3 for receiving **i** in prudent behavior,
1: 7 but fools despise wisdom and **i**.
1: 8 your father's **i** and do not forsake
4: 1 Listen, my sons, to a father's **i**;
4: 13 Hold on to **i**, do not let it go;
6: 23 correction and **i** are the way to life,
8: 10 Choose my **i** instead of silver,
8: 33 Listen to my **i** and be wise;
13: 1 A wise son heeds his father's **i**,
13: 13 Whoever scorns **i** will pay for it,
16: 20 Whoever gives heed to **i** prospers,
16: 21 and gracious words promote **i**.
23: 12 Apply your heart to **i** and your ears
23: 23 wisdom, **i** and insight as well.
Isa 8: 20 Consult God's **i** and the testimony
1Co14: 6 or prophecy or word of **i**?
14: 26 hymn, or a word of **i**, a revelation,
Eph 6: 4 in the training and **i** of the Lord.
1Th 4: 8 who rejects this **i** does not reject
2Th 3: 14 anyone who does not obey our **i**
1Ti 6: 3 sound **i** of our Lord Jesus Christ
2Ti 4: 2 with great patience and careful **i**.
INSULT (INSULTS)
Pr 12: 16 but the prudent overlook an **i**.
Mt 5: 11 are you when people **i** you,
Lk 6: 22 when they exclude you and **i** you
1Pe 3: 9 not repay evil with evil or **i** with **i**.
INSULTS (INSULT)
Pr 9: 7 corrects a mocker invites **i**;
INTEGRITY
1Ki 9: 4 walk before me faithfully with **i**
Job 2: 3 And he still maintains his **i**,
27: 5 till I die, I will not deny my **i**.
Pr 10: 9 Whoever walks in **i** walks securely,
11: 3 The **i** of the upright guides them,
29: 10 The bloodthirsty hate a person of **i**
Titus2: 7 In your teaching show **i**,
INTELLIGENCE
Isa 29: 14 the **i** of the intelligent will vanish."
1Co 1: 19 the **i** of the intelligent I will
INTELLIGIBLE
1Co14: 19 I would rather speak five **i** words
INTERCEDE (INTERCEDES INTERCESSION)
Heb 7: 25 him, because he always lives to **i**
INTERCEDES (INTERCEDE)
Ro 8: 26 the Spirit himself **i** for us through
INTERCESSION (INTERCEDE)
Isa 53: 12 and made **i** for the transgressors.
1Ti 2: 1 **i** and thanksgiving be made for all
INTEREST
Ne 5: 10 But let us stop charging **i**!

INTERESTS
1Co 7: 34 and his **i** are divided.
Php 2: 4 not looking to your own **i** but each of you to the **i** of the others.
2: 21 everyone looks out for their own **i**,

INTERMARRY (MARRY)
Dt 7: 3 Do not **i** with them. Do not give

INVESTIGATED
Lk 1: 3 I myself have carefully **i** everything

INVISIBLE
Ro 1: 20 of the world God's **i** qualities—
Col 1: 15 The Son is the image of the **i** God,
1Ti 1: 17 eternal, immortal, **i**, the only God,

INVITE (INVITED INVITES)
Lk 14: 13 you give a banquet, **i** the poor,

INVITED (INVITE)
Mt 22: 14 "For many are **i**, but few are
25: 35 I was a stranger and you **i** me in,

INVITES (INVITE)
1Co10: 27 If an unbeliever **i** you to a meal

IRON
1Ti 4: 2 have been seared as with a hot **i**.
Rev 2: 27 'will rule them with an **i** scepter

IRREVOCABLE
Ro 11: 29 for God's gifts and his call are **i**.

ISAAC
Son of Abraham by Sarah (Ge 17:19; 21:1–7; 1Ch 1:28). Offered up by Abraham (Ge 22; Heb 11:17–19). Rebekah taken as wife (Ge 24). Fathered Esau and Jacob (Ge 25:19–26; 1Ch 1:34). Tricked into blessing Jacob (Ge 27). Father of Israel (Ex 3:6; Dt 29:13; Ro 9:10).

ISAIAH
Prophet to Judah (Isa 1:1). Called by the Lord (Isa 6).

ISHMAEL
Son of Abraham by Hagar (Ge 16; 1Ch 1:28). Blessed, but not son of covenant (Ge 17:18–21; Gal 4:21–31). Sent away by Sarah (Ge 21:8–21).

ISRAEL (ISRAELITES)
1. Name given to Jacob (see JACOB).
2. Corporate name of Jacob's descendants; often specifically Northern Kingdom.
Dt 6: 4 Hear, O **I**: The Lord our God,
1Sa 4: 21 "The Glory has departed from **I**"—
Isa 27: 6 **I** will bud and blossom and fill all
Jer 31: 10 'He who scattered **I** will gather
Eze 39: 23 that the people of **I** went into exile
Mk 12: 29 'Hear, O **I**: The Lord our God,
Lk 22: 30 judging the twelve tribes of **I**.
Ro 9: 6 all who are descended from **I** are **I**.
11: 26 and in this way all **I** will be saved.
Eph 3: 6 Gentiles are heirs together with **I**,

ISRAELITES (ISRAEL)
Ex 14: 22 the **I** went through the sea on dry
Ex 16: 35 The **I** ate manna forty years,
Hos 1: 10 "Yet the **I** will be like the sand
Ro 9: 27 number of the **I** be like the sand

ITCHING
2Ti 4: 3 say what their **i** ears want to hear.

JACOB
Second son of Isaac, twin of Esau (Ge 25:21–26; 1Ch 1:34). Bought Esau's birthright (Ge 25:29–34); tricked Isaac into blessing him (Ge 27:1–37). Abrahamic covenant perpetuated through (Ge 28:13–15; Mal 1:2). Vision at Bethel (Ge 28:10–22). Wives and children (Ge 29:1—30:24; 35:16–26; 1Ch 2–9). Wrestled with God; name changed to Israel (Ge 32:22–32). Sent sons to Egypt during famine (Ge 42–43). Settled in Egypt (Ge 46). Blessed Ephraim and Manasseh (Ge 48). Blessed sons (Ge 49:1–28; Heb 11:21). Death (Ge 49:29–33). Burial (Ge 50:1–14).

JAMES
1. Apostle; brother of John (Mt 4:21–22; 10:2; Mk 3:17; Lk 5:1–10). At transfiguration (Mt 17:1–13; Mk 9:1–13; Lk 9:28–36). Killed by Herod (Ac 12:2).
2. Apostle; son of Alphaeus (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15).
3. Brother of Jesus (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3; Lk 24:10; Gal 1:19) and Judas (Jude 1). With believers before Pentecost (Ac 1:13). Leader of church at Jerusalem (Ac 12:17; 15; 21:18; Gal 2:9, 12). Author of epistle (Jas 1:1).

JAPHETH
Son of Noah (Ge 5:32; 1Ch 1:4–5). Blessed (Ge 9:18–28).

JARS
2Co 4: 7 we have this treasure in **j** of clay

JEALOUS (JEALOUSY)
Ex 20: 5 am a **j** God, punishing the children
34: 14 whose name is **J**, is a **j** God.
Dt 4: 24 God is a consuming fire, a **j** God.
Joel 2: 18 Then the Lord was **j** for his land
Zec 1: 14 I am very **j** for Jerusalem and Zion,
2Co11: 2 am **j** for you with a godly jealousy.

JEALOUSY (JEALOUS)
1Co 3: 3 For since there is **j** and quarreling
2Co11: 2 I am jealous for you with a godly **j**.
Gal 5: 20 hatred, discord, **j**, fits of rage,

JEHOAHAZ
1. Son of Jehu; king of Israel (2Ki 13:1–9).
2. Son of Josiah; king of Judah (2Ki 23:31–34; 2Ch 36:1–4).

JEHOASH
Son of Jehoahaz; king of Israel (2Ki 13–14; 2Ch 25).

JEHOIACHIN
Son of Jehoiakim; king of Judah exiled by Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki 24:8–17; 2Ch 36:8–10; Jer

22:24–30; 24:1). Raised from prisoner status (2Ki 25:27–30; Jer 52:31–34).

JEHOIAKIM

Son of Josiah; king of Judah (2Ki 23:34—24:6; 2Ch 36:4–8; Jer 22:18–23; 36).

JEHORAM

Son of Jehoshaphat; king of Judah (2Ki 8:16–24).

JEHOSHAPHAT

Son of Asa; king of Judah (1Ki 22:41–50; 2Ki 3; 2Ch 17–20).

JEHU

King of Israel (1Ki 19:16–19; 2Ki 9–10).

JEPHTHAH

Judge from Gilead who delivered Israel from Ammon (Jdg 10:6—12:7). Made rash vow concerning his daughter (Jdg 11:30–40).

JEREMIAH

Prophet to Judah (Jer 1:1–3). Called by the Lord (Jer 1). Put in stocks (Jer 20:1–3). Threatened for prophesying (Jer 11:18–23; 26). Opposed by Hananiah (Jer 28). Scroll burned (Jer 36). Imprisoned (Jer 37). Thrown into cistern (Jer 38). Forced to Egypt with those fleeing Babylonians (Jer 43).

JEROBOAM

1. Official of Solomon; rebelled to become first king of Israel (1Ki 11:26–40; 12:1–20; 2Ch 10). Idolatry (1Ki 12:25–33); judgment for (1Ki 13–14; 2Ch 13).

2. Son of Jehoash; king of Israel (1Ki 14:23–29).

JERUSALEM

2Ki 23: 27 and I will reject **J**, the city I chose,
2Ch 6: 6 now I have chosen **J** for my Name
Ne 2: 17 let us rebuild the wall of **J**,
Ps 122: 6 Pray for the peace of **J**:
125: 2 As the mountains surround **J**,
137: 5 If I forget you, **J**, may my right
Isa 40: 9 You who bring good news to **J**,
65: 18 for I will create **J** to be a delight
Joel 3: 17 **J** will be holy; never again will
Zep 3: 16 On that day they will say to **J**,
Zec 2: 4 man, '**J** will be a city without walls
8: 8 I will bring them back to live in **J**;
14: 8 living water will flow out from **J**,
Mt 23: 37 "**J**, **J**, you who kill the prophets
Lk 13: 34 "**J**, **J**, you who kill the prophets
21: 24 **J** will be trampled
Jn 4: 20 where we must worship is in **J**."
Ac 1: 8 and you will be my witnesses in **J**,
Gal 4: 25 to the present city of **J**,
Rev 21: 2 the new **J**, coming down

JESUS

LIFE: Genealogy (Mt 1:1–17; Lk 3:21–37). Birth announced (Mt 1:18–25; Lk 1:26–45). Birth (Mt 2:1–12; Lk 2:1–40). Escape to Egypt (Mt 2:13–23). As a boy in the temple (Lk 2:41–52). Baptism (Mt 3:13–17; Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21–22; Jn 1:32–34). Temptation (Mt 4:1–11; Mk 1:12–13; Lk 4:1–13). Ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:12—18:35; Mk 1:14—9:50; Lk 4:14—13:9; Jn 1:35—2:11; 4; 6), Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–8; Mk 9:2–8; Lk 9:28–36), on the way to Jerusalem (Mt 19–20; Mk 10; Lk 13:10—19:27), in Jerusalem (Mt 21–25; Mk 11–13; Lk 19:28—21:38; Jn 2:12—3:36; 5; 7–12). Last supper (Mt 26:17–35; Mk 14:12–31; Lk 22:1–38; Jn 13–17). Arrest and trial (Mt 26:36—27:31; Mk 14:43—15:20; Lk 22:39—23:25; Jn 18:1—19:16). Crucifixion (Mt 27:32–66; Mk 15:21–47; Lk 23:26–55; Jn 19:28–42). Resurrection and appearances (Mt 28; Mk 16; Lk 24; Jn 20–21; Ac 1:1–11; 7:56; 9:3–6; 1Co 15:1–8; Rev 1:1–20).

MIRACLES. Healings: official's son (Jn 4:43–54), demoniac in Capernaum (Mk 1:23–26; Lk 4:33–35), Peter's mother-in-law (Mt 8:14–17; Mk 1:29–31; Lk 4:38–39), leper (Mt 8:2–4; Mk 1:40–45; Lk 5:12–16), paralytic (Mt 9:1–8; Mk 2:1–12; Lk 5:17–26), cripple (Jn 5:1–9), shriveled hand (Mt 12:10–13; Mk 3:1–5; Lk 6:6–11), centurion's servant (Mt 8:5–13; Lk 7:1–10), widow's son raised (Lk 7:11–17), demoniac (Mt 12:22–23; Lk 11:14), Gadarene demoniacs (Mt 8:28–34; Mk 5:1–20; Lk 8:26–39), woman's bleeding and Jairus' daughter (Mt 9:18–26; Mk 5:21–43; Lk 8:40–56), blind man (Mt 9:27–31), mute man (Mt 9:32–33), Canaanite woman's daughter (Mt 15:21–28; Mk 7:24–30), deaf man (Mk 7:31–37), blind man (Mk 8:22–26), demoniac boy (Mt 17:14–18; Mk 9:14–29; Lk 9:37–43), ten lepers (Lk 17:11–19), man born blind (Jn 9:1–7), Lazarus raised (Jn 11), crippled woman (Lk 13:11–17), man with dropsy (Lk 14:1–6), two blind men (Mt 20:29–34; Mk 10:46–52; Lk 18:35–43), Malchus' ear (Lk 22:50–51). Other Miracles: water to wine (Jn 2:1–11), catch of fish (Lk 5:1–11), storm stilled (Mt 8:23–27; Mk 4:37–41; Lk 8:22–25), 5,000 fed (Mt 14:15–21; Mk 6:35–44; Lk 9:10–17; Jn 6:1–14), walking on water (Mt 14:25–33; Mk 6:48–52; Jn 6:15–21), 4,000 fed (Mt 15:32–39; Mk 8:1–9), money from fish (Mt 17:24–27), fig tree cursed (Mt 21:18–22; Mk 11:12–14), catch of fish (Jn 21:1–14).

MAJOR TEACHING: Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7; Lk 6:17–49), to Nicodemus (Jn 3), to Samaritan woman (Jn 4), Bread of Life (Jn 6:22–59), at Feast of Tabernacles (Jn 7–8), woes to Pharisees (Mt 23; Lk 11:37–54), Good Shepherd (Jn 10:1–18), Olivet Discourse (Mt 24–25; Mk 13; Lk 21:5–36), Upper Room Discourse (Jn 13–16).

PARABLES: Sower (Mt 13:3–23; Mk 4:3–25; Lk 8:5–18), seed's growth (Mk 4:26–29), wheat and weeds (Mt 13:24–30, 36–43), mustard seed (Mt 13:31–32; Mk 4:30–32), yeast (Mt 13:33; Lk 13:20–21), hidden treasure (Mt 13:44), valuable pearl (Mt 13:45–46), net (Mt 13:47–51), house owner (Mt 13:52), good Samaritan (Lk 10:25–37), unmerciful servant (Mt 18:15–35), lost sheep (Mt 18:10–14; Lk 15:4–7), lost coin (Lk 15:8–10), prodigal son

(Lk 15:11–32), dishonest manager (Lk 16:1–13), rich man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19–31), persistent widow (Lk 18:1–8), Pharisee and tax collector (Lk 18:9–14), payment of workers (Mt 20:1–16), tenants and the vineyard (Mt 21:28–46; Mk 12:1–12; Lk 20:9–19), wedding banquet (Mt 22:1–14), faithful servant (Mt 24:45–51), ten virgins (Mt 25:1–13), talents (Mt 25:1–30; Lk 19:12–27).

DISCIPLES see APOSTLES. Call of (Jn 1:35–51; Mt 4:18–22; 9:9; Mk 1:16–20; 2:13–14; Lk 5:1–11, 27–28). Named Apostles (Mk 3:13–19; Lk 6:12–16). Twelve sent out (Mt 10; Mk 6:7–11; Lk 9:1–5). Seventy sent out (Lk 10:1–24). Defection of (Jn 6:60–71; Mt 26:56; Mk 14:50–52). Final commission (Mt 28:16–20; Jn 21:15–23; Ac 1:3–8).

Ac 2:32 God has raised this **J** to life, and we
9:5 Saul asked. "I am **J**, whom you are
15:11 of our Lord **J** that we are saved,
16:31 "Believe in the Lord **J**, and you will
Ro 3:24 redemption that came by Christ **J**.
5:17 life through the one man, **J** Christ!
8:1 for those who are in Christ **J**,
1Co 2:2 I was with you except **J** Christ
8:6 and there is but one Lord, **J** Christ,
12:3 and no one can say, "**J** is Lord,"
2Co 4:5 but **J** Christ as Lord, and ourselves
Gal 2:16 of the law, but by faith in **J** Christ.
3:28 for you are all one in Christ **J**.
5:6 in Christ **J** neither circumcision
Eph 2:10 in Christ **J** to do good works,
2:20 with Christ **J** himself as the chief
Php 1:6 until the day of Christ **J**.
2:5 have the same mindset as Christ **J**:
2:10 name of **J** every knee should bow,
Col 3:17 do it all in the name of the Lord **J**,
2Th 2:1 the coming of our Lord **J** Christ
1Ti 1:15 **J** came into the world to save
2Ti 3:12 life in Christ **J** will be persecuted,
Titus 2:13 our great God and Savior, **J** Christ,
Heb 2:9 But we do see **J**, who was made
3:1 fix your thoughts on **J**, whom we
4:14 into heaven, **J** the Son of God,
7:22 **J** has become the guarantor
7:24 but because **J** lives forever, he has
12:2 fixing our eyes on **J**, the pioneer
2Pe 1:16 of our Lord **J** Christ in power,
1Jn 1:7 and the blood of **J**, his Son,
2:1 **J** Christ, the Righteous One.
2:6 to live in him must live as **J** did.
4:15 acknowledges that **J** is the Son
Rev 22:20 Amen. Come, Lord **J**.

JEW (JEWS JUDAISM)

Zec 8:23 take firm hold of one **J** by the hem
Ro 1:16 first to the **J**, then to the Gentile.
10:12 there is no difference between **J**
1Co 9:20 To the Jews I became like a **J**,
Gal 3:28 There is neither **J** nor Gentile,

JEWELRY (JEWELS)

1Pe 3:3 wearing of gold **j** or fine clothes.

JEWELS (JEWELRY)

Isa 61:10 as a bride adorns herself with her **j**.
Zec 9:16 in his land like **j** in a crown.

JEWS (JEW)

Mt 2:2 who has been born king of the **J**?
27:11 him, "Are you the king of the **J**?"
Jn 4:22 know, for salvation is from the **J**.
Ro 3:29 Or is God the God of **J** only?
1Co 1:22 **J** demand signs and Greeks look
9:20 To the **J** I became like a Jew, to win
12:13 whether **J** or Gentiles,
Rev 3:9 claim to be **J** though they are not,

JEZEBEL

Sidonian wife of Ahab (1Ki 16:31). Promoted Baal worship (1Ki 16:32–33). Killed prophets of the Lord (1Ki 18:4, 13). Opposed Elijah (1Ki 19:1–2). Had Naboth killed (1Ki 21). Death prophesied (1Ki 21:17–24). Killed by Jehu (2Ki 9:30–37).

JOASH

Son of Ahaziah; king of Judah. Sheltered from Athaliah by Jehoiada (2Ki 11; 2Ch 22:10—23:21). Repaired temple (2Ki 12; 2Ch 24).

JOB

Wealthy man from Uz; feared God (Job 1:1–5). Righteousness tested by disaster (Job 1:6–22), personal affliction (Job 2). Maintained innocence in debate with three friends (Job 3–31), Elihu (Job 32–37). Rebuked by the Lord (Job 38–41). Vindicated and restored to greater stature by the Lord (Job 42). Example of righteousness (Eze 14:14, 20).

JOHN

1. Son of Zechariah and Elizabeth (Lk 1). Called the Baptist (Mt 3:1–12; Mk 1:2–8). Witness to Jesus (Mt 3:11–12; Mk 1:7–8; Lk 3:15–18; Jn 1:6–35; 3:27–30; 5:33–36). Doubts about Jesus (Mt 11:2–6; Lk 7:18–23). Arrest (Mt 4:12; Mk 1:14). Execution (Mt 14:1–12; Mk 6:14–29; Lk 9:7–9). Ministry compared to Elijah (Mt 11:7–19; Mk 9:11–13; Lk 7:24–35).

2. Apostle; brother of James (Mt 4:21–22; 10:2; Mk 3:17; Lk 5:1–10). At transfiguration (Mt 17:1–13; Mk 9:1–13; Lk 9:28–36). Desire to be greatest (Mk 10:35–45). Leader of church at Jerusalem (Ac 4:1–3; Gal 2:9). Elder who wrote epistles (2Jn 1; 3Jn 1). Prophet who wrote Revelation (Rev 1:1; 22:8).

3. Cousin of Barnabas, co-worker with Paul, (Ac 12:12—13:13; 15:37), see MARK.

JOIN (JOINED)

Pr 23:20 not **j** those who drink too much
24:21 do not **j** with rebellious officials,
Ro 15:30 to **j** me in my struggle by praying
2Ti 1:8 **j** with me in suffering
2Ti 2:3 **J** with me in suffering, like a good

JOINED (JOIN)
Mt 19: 6 Therefore what God has **j** together,
Mk 10: 9 Therefore what God has **j** together,
Eph 2: 21 the whole building is **j** together
4: 16 body, **j** and held together by every

JOINTS
Heb 4: 12 soul and spirit, **j** and marrow;

JOKING
Eph 5: 4 foolish talk or coarse **j**, which are

JONAH
Prophet in days of Jeroboam II (2Ki 14:25). Called to Nineveh; fled to Tarshish (Jnh 1:1–3). Cause of storm; thrown into sea (Jnh 1:4–16). Swallowed by fish (Jnh 1:17). Prayer (Jnh 2). Preached to Nineveh (Jnh 3). Attitude reproved by the Lord (Jnh 4). Sign of (Mt 12:39–41; Lk 11:29–32).

JONATHAN
Son of Saul (1Sa 13:16; 1Ch 8:33). Valiant warrior (1Sa 13–14). Relation to David (1Sa 18:1–4; 19–20; 23:16–18). Killed at Gilboa (1Sa 31). Mourned by David (2Sa 1).

JORAM
Son of Ahab; king of Israel (2Ki 3; 8–9; 2Ch 22).

JORDAN
Nu 34: 12 boundary will go down along the **J**
Jos 4: 22 'Israel crossed the **J** on dry ground.'
Mt 3: 6 baptized by him in the **J** River.

JOSEPH
1. Son of Jacob by Rachel (Ge 30:24; 1Ch 2:2). Favored by Jacob, hated by brothers (Ge 37:3–4). Dreams (Ge 37:5–11). Sold by brothers (Ge 37:12–36). Served Potiphar; imprisoned by false accusation (Ge 39). Interpreted dreams of Pharaoh's servants (Ge 40), of Pharaoh (Ge 41:4–40). Made greatest in Egypt (Ge 41:41–57). Sold grain to brothers (Ge 42–45). Brought Jacob and sons to Egypt (Ge 46–47). Sons Ephraim and Manasseh blessed (Ge 48). Blessed (Ge 49:22–26; Dt 33:13–17). Death (Ge 50:22–26; Ex 13:19; Heb 11:22). 12,000 from (Rev 7:8).

2. Husband of Mary, mother of Jesus (Mt 1:16–24; 2:13–19; Lk 1:27; 2; Jn 1:45).

3. Disciple from Arimathea, who gave his tomb for Jesus' burial (Mt 27:57–61; Mk 15:43–47; Lk 23:50–53).

4. Original name of Barnabas (Ac 4:36).

JOSHUA
1. Son of Nun; name changed from Hoshea (Nu 13:8, 16; 1Ch 7:27). Fought Amalekites under Moses (Ex 17:9–14). Servant of Moses on Sinai (Ex 24:13; 32:17). Spied Canaan (Nu 13). With Caleb, allowed to enter land (Nu 14:6, 30). Succeeded Moses (Dt 1:38; 31:1–8; 34:9).

Charged Israel to conquer Canaan (Jos 1). Crossed Jordan (Jos 3–4). Circumcised sons of wilderness wanderings (Jos 5). Conquered Jericho (Jos 6), Ai (Jos 7–8), five kings at Gibeon (Jos 10:1–28), southern Canaan (Jos 10:29–43), northern Canaan (Jos 11–12). Defeated at Ai (Jos 7). Deceived by Gibeonites (Jos 9). Renewed covenant (Jos 8:30–35; 24:1–27). Divided land among tribes (Jos 13–22). Last words (Jos 23). Death (Jos 24:28–31).

2. High priest during rebuilding of temple (Hag 1–2; Zec 3:1–9; 6:11).

JOSIAH
Son of Amon; king of Judah (2Ki 22–23; 2Ch 34–35).

JOTHAM
Son of Azariah (Uzziah); king of Judah (2Ki 15:32–38; 2Ch 26:21—27:9).

JOY (ENJOY ENJOYMENT JOYFUL OVERJOYED REJOICE REJOICES REJOICING)
Dt 16: 15 hands, and your **j** will be complete.
1Ch 16: 27 and **j** are in his dwelling place.
Ne 8: 10 for the **j** of the Lord is your
Est 9: 22 their sorrow was turned into **j**
Job 38: 7 and all the angels shouted for **j**?
Ps 4: 7 Fill my heart with **j** when their
21: 6 glad with the **j** of your presence.
30: 11 sackcloth and clothed me with **j**,
43: 4 God, to God, my **j** and my delight.
51: 12 to me the **j** of your salvation
66: 1 Shout for **j** to God, all the earth!
96: 12 all the trees of the forest sing for **j**.
107: 22 tell of his works with songs of **j**.
119: 111 forever; they are the **j** of my heart.
Pr 10: 1 A wise son brings **j** to his father,
10: 28 The prospect of the righteous is **j**,
12: 20 those who promote peace have **j**.
15: 30 in a messenger's eyes brings **j**
Isa 35: 10 everlasting **j** will crown their heads
51: 11 Gladness and **j** will overtake them,
55: 12 You will go out in **j** and be led
Lk 1: 44 the baby in my womb leaped for **j**.
2: 10 will cause great **j** for all the people.
Jn 15: 11 and that your **j** may be complete.
16: 20 grieve, but your grief will turn to **j**.
2Co 8: 2 trial, their overflowing **j** and their
Php 2: 2 then make my **j** complete by being
4: 1 love and long for, my **j** and crown,
1Th 2: 19 our **j**, or the crown in which we
Phm : 7 Your love has given me great **j**
Heb 12: 2 the **j** set before him he endured
Jas 1: 2 Consider it pure **j**, my brothers
1Pe 1: 8 an inexpressible and glorious **j**,
2Jn : 4 It has given me great **j** to find some
3Jn : 4 I have no greater **j** than to hear

JOYFUL (JOY)
Ps 100: 2 come before him with **j** songs.
Pr 23: 25 may she who gave you birth be **j**!
Hab 3: 18 I will be **j** in God my Savior.

JUDAH
1. Son of Jacob by Leah (Ge 29:35; 35:23; 1Ch

2:1). Tribe of blessed as ruling tribe (Ge 49:8–12; Dt 33:7).
2. Name used for people and land of Southern Kingdom.
Jer 13: 19 All **J** will be carried into exile,
Zec 10: 4 From **J** will come the cornerstone,
Heb 7: 14 that our Lord descended from **J**,

JUDAISM (JEW)
Gal 1: 13 of my previous way of life in **J**,

JUDAS
1. Apostle (Lk 6:16; Jn 14:22; Ac 1:13). Probably also called Thaddaeus (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18).
2. Brother of James and Jesus (Mt 13:55; Mk 6:3), also called Jude (Jude 1).
3. Apostle, also called Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus (Mt 10:4; 26:14–56; Mk 3:19; 14:10–50; Lk 6:16; 22:3–53; Jn 6:71; 12:4; 13:2–30; 18:2–11). Suicide of (Mt 27:3–5; Ac 1:16–25).

JUDGE (JUDGED JUDGES JUDGING JUDGMENT)
Ge 18: 25 Will not the **J** of all the earth do
1Ch 16: 33 Lord, for he comes to **j** the earth.
Joel 3: 12 there I will sit to **j** all the nations
Mt 7: 1 "Do not **j**, or you too will be
Jn 7: 24 but instead **j** correctly."
12: 47 For I did not come to **j** the world,
Ac 17: 31 set a day when he will **j** the world
1Co 4: 3 indeed, I do not even **j** myself.
6: 2 the Lord's people will **j** the world?
2Ti 4: 1 who will **j** the living and the dead,
4: 8 the righteous **J**, will award to me
Jas 4: 12 who are you to **j** your neighbor?
Rev 20: 4 who had been given authority to **j**.

JUDGED (JUDGE)
Mt 7: 1 "Do not judge, or you too will be **j**.
Jn 5: 24 will not be **j** but has crossed over
Jas 3: 1 who teach will be **j** more strictly.
Rev 20: 12 The dead were **j** according to what

JUDGES (JUDGE)
Jdg 2: 16 Then the Lord raised up **j**,
Ps 9: 8 and **j** the peoples with equity.
58: 11 there is a God who **j** the earth."
Ro 2: 16 God **j** people's secrets through Jesus
Heb 4: 12 it **j** the thoughts and attitudes
Rev 19: 11 With justice he **j** and wages war.

JUDGING (JUDGE)
Mt 19: 28 **j** the twelve tribes of Israel.
Jn 7: 24 Stop **j** by mere appearances,
2Co 10: 7 You are **j** by appearances.

JUDGMENT (JUDGE)
Dt 1: 17 of anyone, for **j** belongs to God.
Ps 1: 5 the wicked will not stand in the **j**,
119: 66 Teach me knowledge and good **j**,
Ecc 12: 14 God will bring every deed into **j**,
Isa 66: 16 his sword the Lord will execute **j**
Mt 5: 21 who murders will be subject to **j**.'
10: 15 Gomorrah on the day of **j** than
Mt 12: 36 the day of **j** for every empty word
Jn 5: 22 but has entrusted all **j** to the Son,
16: 8 about sin and righteousness and **j**:
Ro 14: 10 will all stand before God's **j** seat.
14: 13 Therefore let us stop passing **j**
1Co 11: 29 eat and drink **j** on themselves.
11: 31 we would not come under such **j**.
2Co 5: 10 we must all appear before the **j** seat
Heb 9: 27 to die once, and after that to face **j**,
10: 27 only a fearful expectation of **j**
1Pe 4: 17 For it is time for **j** to begin
Jude : 6 everlasting chains for **j** on the great

JUST (JUSTICE JUSTIFICATION JUSTIFIED JUSTIFY JUSTLY)
Dt 32: 4 are perfect, and all his ways are **j**.
Ps 37: 28 For the Lord loves the **j** and will
111: 7 of his hands are faithful and **j**;
Pr 1: 3 doing what is right and **j** and fair;
2: 8 for he guards the course of the **j**
Da 4: 37 does is right and all his ways are **j**.
Ro 3: 26 time, so as to be **j** and the one who
Heb 2: 2 received its **j** punishment,
1Jn 1: 9 he is faithful and **j** and will forgive
Rev 16: 7 true and **j** are your judgments."

JUSTICE (JUST)
Ex 23: 2 do not pervert **j** by siding
23: 6 "Do not deny **j** to your poor people
Job 37: 23 in his **j** and great righteousness,
Ps 9: 16 Lord is known by his acts of **j**;
11: 7 the Lord is righteous, he loves **j**;
45: 6 a scepter of **j** will be the scepter
101: 1 I will sing of your love and **j**;
Pr 21: 15 When **j** is done, it brings joy
29: 4 By **j** a king gives a country stability,
29: 26 is from the Lord that one gets **j**.
Isa 9: 7 and upholding it with **j**
28: 17 I will make **j** the measuring line
30: 18 For the Lord is a God of **j**.
42: 1 and he will bring **j** to the nations.
42: 4 be discouraged till he establishes **j**
56: 1 "Maintain **j** and do what is right,
61: 8 "For I, the Lord, love **j**;
Eze 34: 16 I will shepherd the flock with **j**.
Am 5: 15 maintain **j** in the courts.
5: 24 But let **j** roll on like a river,
Zec 7: 9 'Administer true **j**; show mercy
Lk 11: 42 you neglect **j** and the love of God.

JUSTIFICATION (JUST)
Ac 13: 39 sin, a **j** you were not able to obtain
Ro 4: 25 sins and was raised to life for our **j**.
5: 18 one righteous act resulted in **j**

JUSTIFIED (JUST)
Ro 3: 24 all are **j** freely by his grace through
3: 28 that a person is **j** by faith apart
5: 1 since we have been **j** through faith,
5: 9 Since we have now been **j** by his
8: 30 he called, he also **j**; those he **j**,

1Co 6: 11 you were **j** in the name of the Lord
Gal 2: 16 that a person is not **j** by the works
3: 11 relies on the law is **j** before God,
3: 24 came that we might be **j** by faith.

JUSTIFY (JUST)
Gal 3: 8 that God would **j** the Gentiles

JUSTLY (JUST)
Ps 106: 3 Blessed are those who act **j**,
Mic 6: 8 To act **j** and to love mercy

KEEP (KEEPER KEEPING KEEPS KEPT)
Ge 31: 49 "May the Lord **k** watch between
Ex 20: 6 love me and **k** my commandments.
Nu 6: 24 Lord bless you and **k** you;
Ps 18: 28 You, Lord, **k** my lamp burning;
19: 13 **K** your servant also from willful
121: 7 The Lord will **k** you from all
141: 3 **k** watch over the door of my lips.
Pr 4: 24 **K** your mouth free of perversity;
17: 28 are thought wise if they **k** silent,
Isa 26: 3 You will **k** in perfect peace those
Am 5: 13 Therefore the prudent **k** quiet
Mt 10: 10 staff, for the worker is worth his **k**.
Lk 12: 35 service and **k** your lamps burning,
Gal 5: 25 let us **k** in step with the Spirit.
Eph 4: 3 Make every effort to **k** the unity
1Ti 5: 22 the sins of others. **K** yourself pure.
2Ti 4: 5 you, **k** your head in all situations,
Heb 13: 5 **K** your lives free from the love
Jas 1: 26 and yet do not **k** a tight rein on
2: 8 If you really **k** the royal law found
1Jn 5: 3 love for God: to **k** his commands.
Jude : 24 To him who is able to **k** you

KEEPER (KEEP)
Ge 4: 9 "Am I my brother's **k**?"

KEEPING (KEEP)
Ex 20: 8 the Sabbath day by **k** it holy.
Ps 19: 11 in **k** them there is great reward.
Mt 3: 8 Produce fruit in **k** with repentance.
Lk 2: 8 **k** watch over their flocks at night.
1Co 7: 19 **K** God's commands is what counts.
2Pe 3: 9 Lord is not slow in **k** his promise,

KEEPS (KEEP)
1Co 13: 5 angered, it **k** no record of wrongs.
Jas 2: 10 For whoever **k** the whole law

KEPT (KEEP)
Ps 130: 3 Lord, **k** a record of sins, Lord,
2Ti 4: 7 finished the race, I have **k** the faith.
1Pe 1: 4 This inheritance is **k** in heaven

KEYS
Mt 16: 19 will give you the **k** of the kingdom

KILL (KILLS)
Mt 17: 23 will **k** him, and on the third day

KILLS (KILL)
Lev 24: 21 whoever **k** a human being is to be
2Co 3: 6 for the letter **k**, but the Spirit gives

KIND (KINDNESS KINDS)
Ge 1: 24 animals, each according to its **k**."
2Ch 10: 7 "If you will be **k** to these people
Pr 11: 17 Those who are **k** benefit themselves,
12: 25 the heart, but a **k** word cheers it up.
14: 21 blessed is the one who is **k**
14: 31 whoever is **k** to the needy honors
19: 17 Whoever is **k** to the poor lends
Da 4: 27 by being **k** to the oppressed.
Lk 6: 35 because he is **k** to the ungrateful
1Co 13: 4 Love is patient, love is **k**.
15: 35 what **k** of body will they come?"
Eph 4: 32 Be **k** and compassionate to one
2Ti 2: 24 but must be **k** to everyone,
Titus 2: 5 to be **k**, and to be subject to their

KINDNESS (KIND)
Ac 14: 17 He has shown **k** by giving you rain
Ro 11: 22 but **k** to you, provided that you continue in his **k**.
Gal 5: 22 peace, forbearance, **k**, goodness,
Eph 2: 7 expressed in his **k** to us in Christ

KINDS (KIND)
1Co 12: 4 There are different **k** of gifts,
1Ti 6: 10 of money is a root of all **k** of evil.

KING (KINGDOM KINGS)
1. Kings of Judah and Israel: see Saul, David, Solomon.
2. Kings of Judah: see Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Athaliah (Queen), Joash, Amaziah, Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, Zedekiah.
3. Kings of Israel: see Jeroboam I, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II, Zechariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekah, Pekahiah, Hoshea.
Jdg 17: 6 In those days Israel had no **k**;
1Sa 12: 12 'No, we want a **k** to rule over us'—
12: 12 the Lord your God was your **k**.
Ps 24: 7 that the **K** of glory may come in.
Isa 32: 1 a **k** will reign in righteousness
Zec 9: 9 See, your **k** comes to you,
1Ti 6: 15 the **K** of kings and Lord of lords,
Rev 19: 16 thigh he has this name written: **k**

KINGDOM (KING)
Ex 19: 6 you will be for me a **k** of priests
1Ch 29: 11 Yours, Lord, is the **k**;
Ps 45: 6 justice will be the scepter of your **k**.
Da 4: 3 His **k** is an eternal **k**;
Mt 3: 2 for the **k** of heaven has come near."
5: 3 spirit, for theirs is the **k** of heaven.
6: 10 your **k** come, your will be done,
6: 33 But seek first his **k** and his
7: 21 Lord,' will enter the **k** of heaven,
11: 11 the **k** of heaven is greater than he.
13: 24 "The **k** of heaven is like a man who

Mt 13:31 "The **k** of heaven is like a mustard
13:33 "The **k** of heaven is like yeast
13:44 "The **k** of heaven is like treasure
13:45 the **k** of heaven is like a merchant
13:47 the **k** of heaven is like a net that
16:19 you the keys of the **k** of heaven;
18:23 the **k** of heaven is like a king who
19:24 who is rich to enter the **k** of God."
24:7 rise against nation, and **k** against **k**.
24:14 gospel of the **k** will be preached
25:34 the **k** prepared for you since
Mk 9:47 you to enter the **k** of God with one
10:14 for the **k** of God belongs to such as
10:23 for the rich to enter the **k** of God!"
Lk 10:9 'The **k** of God has come near
12:31 But seek his **k**, and these things
17:21 is,' because the **k** of God is in your
Jn 3:5 one can enter the **k** of God unless
18:36 said, "My **k** is not of this world.
1Co 6:9 wrongdoers will not inherit the **k**
15:24 when he hands over the **k** to God
Rev 1:6 has made us to be a **k** and priests
11:15 "The **k** of the world has become

KINGS (KING)
Ps 2:2 The **k** of the earth rise
72:11 May all **k** bow down to him and all
Da 7:24 ten horns are ten **k** who will come
1Ti 2:2 for **k** and all those in authority,
Rev 1:5 and the ruler of the **k** of the earth.

KISS
Ps 2:12 **K** his son, or he will be angry
Pr 24:26 An honest answer is like a **k**
Lk 22:48 the Son of Man with a **k**?"

KNEE (KNEES)
Isa 45:23 Before me every **k** will bow;
Ro 14:11 Lord, 'every **k** will bow before me;
Php 2:10 name of Jesus every **k** should bow,

KNEES (KNEE)
Isa 35:3 hands, steady the **k** that give way;
Heb12:12 your feeble arms and weak **k**.

KNEW (KNOW)
Job 23:3 If only I **k** where to find him;
Jnh 4:2 I **k** that you are a gracious
Mt 7:23 tell them plainly, 'I never **k** you.

KNOCK
Mt 7:7 **k** and the door will be opened
Rev 3:20 I stand at the door and **k**.

KNOW (FOREKNEW KNEW KNOWING KNOWLEDGE KNOWN KNOWS)
Dt 18:21 "How can we **k** when a message
Job 19:25 I **k** that my redeemer lives,
42:3 things too wonderful for me to **k**.
Ps 46:10 says, "Be still, and **k** that I am God;
73:11 Does the Most High **k** anything?"
139:1 Lord, and you **k** me.
139:23 Search me, God, and **k** my heart;
Pr 27:1 you do not **k** what a day may bring.
Jer 24:7 I will give them a heart to **k** me,
31:34 because they will all **k** me,
Mt 6:3 let your left hand **k** what your right
24:42 because you do not **k** on what day
Lk 1:4 so that you may **k** the certainty
Jn 3:11 you, we speak of what we **k**, and we
4:22 worship what you do not **k**;
9:25 One thing I do **k**. I was blind
10:14 I **k** my sheep and my sheep **k** me—
17:3 that they **k** you, the only true God,
21:24 We **k** that his testimony is true.
Ac 1:7 "It is not for you to **k** the times
Ro 6:6 we **k** that our old self was crucified
7:18 I **k** that good itself does not dwell
8:28 we **k** that in all things God works
1Co 2:2 I resolved to **k** nothing while I was
6:15 Do you not **k** that your bodies are
6:19 Do you not **k** that your bodies are
8:2 do not yet **k** as they ought to **k**.
13:12 Now I **k** in part; then I shall **k** fully,
15:58 because you **k** that your labor
Php 3:10 I want to **k** Christ—yes, to **k**
2Ti 1:12 because I **k** whom I have believed,
Jas 4:14 do not even **k** what will happen
1Jn 2:4 Whoever says, "I **k** him," but does
3:14 We **k** that we have passed
3:16 This is how we **k** what love is:
5:2 This is how we **k** that we love
5:13 may **k** that you have eternal life.

KNOWING (KNOW)
Ge 3:5 will be like God, **k** good and evil."
Php 3:8 worth of **k** Christ Jesus my Lord,

KNOWLEDGE (KNOW)
Ge 2:9 the tree of the **k** of good and evil.
Job 42:3 that obscures my plans without **k**?'
Ps 19:2 night after night they reveal **k**.
139:6 Such **k** is too wonderful for me,
Pr 1:7 of the Lord is the beginning of **k**,
10:14 The wise store up **k**, but the mouth
12:1 Whoever loves discipline loves **k**,
13:16 All who are prudent act with **k**,
19:2 Desire without **k** is not good—
Isa 11:9 the **k** of the Lord as the waters
Hab 2:14 will be filled with the **k** of the glory
Ro 11:33 riches of the wisdom and **k** of God!
1Co 8:1 But **k** puffs up while love builds up.
8:11 Christ died, is destroyed by your **k**.
13:2 can fathom all mysteries and all **k**,
2Co 2:14 aroma of the **k** of him everywhere.
4:6 of the **k** of God's glory displayed
Eph 3:19 know this love that surpasses **k**—
Col 2:3 all the treasures of wisdom and **k**.
1Ti 6:20 ideas of what is falsely called **k**,
2Pe 3:18 grow in the grace and **k** of our Lord

KNOWN (KNOW)
Ps 16:11 You make **k** to me the path of life;
105:1 make **k** among the nations what he

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Isa 46:10 I make **k** the end
Mt 10:26 or hidden that will not be made **k**.
Ro 1:19 since what may be **k** about God is
11:34 "Who has **k** the mind of the Lord?
15:20 the gospel where Christ was not **k**,
2Co 3:2 our hearts, **k** and read by everyone.
2Pe 2:21 than to have **k** it and then to turn

KNOWS (KNOW)
1Sa 2:3 for the Lord is a God who **k**,
Job 23:10 But he **k** the way that I take;
Ps 44:21 since he **k** the secrets of the heart?
94:11 The Lord **k** all human plans; he **k**
Ecc 8:7 Since no one **k** the future, who can
Mt 6:8 your Father **k** what you need
24:36 about that day or hour no one **k**,
Ro 8:27 searches our hearts **k** the mind
2Ti 2:19 "The Lord **k** those who are his,"

LABAN
Brother of Rebekah (Ge 24:29–51), father of Rachel and Leah (Ge 29–31).

LABOR
Ex 20:9 Six days you shall **l** and do all your
Isa 55:2 your **l** on what does not satisfy?
Mt 6:28 They do not **l** or spin.
1Co 3:8 rewarded according to their own **l**.
15:58 know that your **l** in the Lord is not

LACK (LACKING LACKS)
Pr 15:22 Plans fail for **l** of counsel,
Col 2:23 but they **l** any value in restraining

LACKING (LACK)
Ro 12:11 Never be **l** in zeal, but keep your
Jas 1:4 and complete, not **l** anything.

LACKS (LACK)
Jas 1:5 If any of you **l** wisdom, you should

LAID (LAY)
Isa 53:6 and the Lord has **l** on him
1Co 3:11 other than the one already **l**,
1Jn 3:16 Jesus Christ **l** down his life for us.

LAKE
Rev 19:20 into the fiery **l** of burning sulfur.
20:14 The **l** of fire is the second death.

LAMB (LAMB'S LAMBS)
Ge 22:8 "God himself will provide the **l**
Ex 12:21 and slaughter the Passover **l**.
Isa 11:6 The wolf will live with the **l**,
53:7 he was led like a **l** to the slaughter,
Jn 1:29 "Look, the **L** of God, who takes
1Co 5:7 our Passover **l**, has been sacrificed.
1Pe 1:19 a **l** without blemish or defect.
Rev 5:6 Then I saw a **L**, looking as if it had
5:12 "Worthy is the **L**, who was slain,
14:4 as firstfruits to God and the **L**.

LAMB'S (LAMB)
Rev 21:27 names are written in the **L** book

LAMBS (LAMB)
Lk 10:3 you out like **l** among wolves.
Jn 21:15 Jesus said, "Feed my **l**."

LAMENT
2Sa 1:17 took up this **l** concerning Saul

LAMP (LAMPS)
2Sa 22:29 You, Lord, are my **l**;
Ps 18:28 You, Lord, keep my **l** burning;
119:105 Your word is a **l** to my feet
Pr 31:18 and her **l** does not go out at night.
Lk 8:16 "No one lights a **l** and hides it
Rev 21:23 gives it light, and the Lamb is its **l**.

LAMPS (LAMP)
Mt 25:1 be like ten virgins who took their **l**
Lk 12:35 service and keep your **l** burning,

LAND
Ge 1:10 God called the dry ground "**l**,"
1:11 said, "Let the **l** produce vegetation:
12:7 your offspring I will give this **l**."
Ex 3:8 a **l** flowing with milk and honey—
Nu 35:33 Bloodshed pollutes the **l**,
Dt 34:1 Lord showed him the whole **l**—
Jos 13:2 "This is the **l** that remains:
14:4 Levites received no share of the **l**
2Ch 7:14 their sin and will heal their **l**.
7:20 then I will uproot Israel from my **l**,
Eze 36:24 bring you back into your own **l**.

LANGUAGE
Ge 11:1 Now the whole world had one **l**
Jn 8:44 speaks his native **l**, for he is a liar
Ac 2:6 heard their own **l** being spoken.
Col 3:8 slander, and filthy **l** from your lips.
Rev 5:9 God persons from every tribe and **l**

LAST (LASTING LASTS LATTER)
2Sa 23:1 These are the **l** words of David:
Isa 44:6 I am the first and I am the **l**;
Mt 19:30 But many who are first will be **l**,
Mk 10:31 will be **l**, and the **l** first."
Jn 15:16 fruit that will **l**—and so
Ro 1:17 that is by faith from first to **l**,
2Ti 3:1 will be terrible times in the **l** days.
2Pe 3:3 in the **l** days scoffers will come,
Rev 1:17 I am the First and the **L**.
22:13 the First and the **L**, the Beginning

LASTING (LAST)
Ex 12:14 to the Lord—a **l** ordinance.
Lev 24:8 of the Israelites, as a **l** covenant.
Nu 25:13 have a covenant of a **l** priesthood,
Heb 10:34 had better and **l** possessions.

LASTS (LAST)
Ps 30:5 For his anger **l** only a moment,
2Co 3:11 greater is the glory of that which **l**!

LATTER (LAST)
Job 42:12 The Lord blessed the **l** part

LAUGH (LAUGHS)
Ecc 3:4 a time to weep and a time to **l**,

LAUGHS (LAUGH)
Ps 2:4 The One enthroned in heaven **l**;

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Ps 37: 13 but the Lord **l** at the wicked, for he

LAVISHED
Eph 1: 8 that he **l** on us. With all wisdom
1Jn 3: 1 See what great love the Father has **l**

LAW (LAWS)
Dt 31: 11 you shall read this **l** before them
31: 26 "Take this Book of the **L** and place
Jos 1: 8 Keep this Book of the **L** always
Ne 8: 8 from the Book of the **L** of God,
Ps 1: 2 delight is in the **l** of the Lord,
19: 7 The **l** of the Lord is perfect,
119: 18 may see wonderful things in your **l**.
119: 72 The **l** from your mouth is more
119: 97 Oh, how I love your **l**! I meditate
119:165 peace have those who love your **l**,
Jer 31: 33 "I will put my **l** in their minds
Mt 5: 17 that I have come to abolish the **L**
7: 12 you, for this sums up the **L**
22: 40 All the **L** and the Prophets hang
Lk 16: 17 stroke of a pen to drop out of the **L**.
Jn 1: 17 For the **l** was given through Moses;
Ro 2: 12 All who sin apart from the **l** will
2: 15 requirements of the **l** are written
5: 13 account where there is no **l**.
5: 20 The **l** was brought in so
6: 14 because you are not under the **l**,
7: 6 we have been released from the **l** so
7: 12 So then, the **l** is holy,
8: 3 For what the **l** was powerless to do
10: 4 Christ is the culmination of the **l**
13: 10 love is the fulfillment of the **l**.
Gal 3: 13 curse of the **l** by becoming a curse
3: 24 So the **l** was our guardian until
5: 3 he is obligated to obey the whole **l**.
5: 4 by the **l** have been alienated
5: 14 For the entire **l** is fulfilled
Heb 7: 19 (for the **l** made nothing perfect),
10: 1 The **l** is only a shadow of the good
Jas 1: 25 the perfect **l** that gives freedom,
2: 10 For whoever keeps the whole **l**

LAWLESSNESS
2Th 2: 3 occurs and the man of **l** is revealed,
2: 7 the secret power of **l** is already
1Jn 3: 4 sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is **l**.

LAWS (LAW)
Lev 25: 18 and be careful to obey my **l**,
Ps 119: 30 I have set my heart on your **l**.
119:120 fear of you; I stand in awe of your **l**.
Heb 8: 10 I will put my **l** in their minds
10: 16 I will put my **l** in their hearts, and I

LAY (LAID LAYING)
Job 22: 22 and **l** up his words in your heart.
Isa 28: 16 "See, I **l** a stone in Zion, a tested
Mt 8: 20 of Man has no place to **l** his head."
Jn 10: 15 and I **l** down my life for the sheep.
15: 13 to **l** down one's life for one's
1Co 3: 11 no one can **l** any foundation other
1Jn 3: 16 we ought to **l** down our lives for
Rev 4: 10 They **l** their crowns before

LAYING (LAY)
1Ti 5: 22 not be hasty in the **l** on of hands,
Heb 6: 1 not **l** again the foundation

LAZARUS
1. Poor man in Jesus' parable (Lk 16:19–31).
2. Brother of Mary and Martha whom Jesus raised from the dead (Jn 11:1—12:19).

LAZY
Pr 10: 4 **L** hands make for poverty,
Heb 6: 12 We do not want you to become **l**,

LEAD (LEADERS LEADS LED)
Ex 15: 13 love you will **l** the people you have
Ps 27: 11 **l** me in a straight path because
61: 2 **l** me to the rock that is higher than I.
139: 24 and **l** me in the way everlasting.
143: 10 may your good Spirit **l** me on level
Ecc 5: 6 Do not let your mouth **l** you
Isa 11: 6 and a little child will **l** them.
Da 12: 3 those who **l** many to righteousness,
Mt 6: 13 And **l** us not into temptation,
1Jn 3: 7 do not let anyone **l** you astray.

LEADERS (LEAD)
Heb13: 7 Remember your **l**, who spoke
13: 17 Have confidence in your **l**

LEADS (LEAD)
Ps 23: 2 he **l** me beside quiet waters,
Pr 19: 23 The fear of the Lord **l** to life;
Isa 40: 11 he gently **l** those that have young.
Mt 7: 13 gate and broad is the road that **l**
Jn 10: 3 sheep by name and **l** them out.
Ro 14: 19 every effort to do what **l** to peace
2Co 2: 14 God, who always **l** us as captives

LEAH
Wife of Jacob (Ge 29:16–30); bore six sons and one daughter (Ge 29:31—30:21; 34:1; 35:23).

LEAN
Pr 3: 5 **l** not on your own understanding;

LEARN (LEARNED LEARNING)
Isa 1: 17 **L** to do right; seek justice.
Mt 11: 29 my yoke upon you and **l** from me,

LEARNED (LEARN)
Php 4: 11 I have **l** to be content whatever
2Ti 3: 14 know those from whom you **l** it,

LEARNING (LEARN)
Pr 1: 5 the wise listen and add to their **l**,
2Ti 3: 7 always **l** but never able to come

LED (LEAD)
Isa 53: 7 he was **l** like a lamb
Am 2: 10 **l** you forty years in the wilderness
Ro 8: 14 For those who are **l** by the Spirit

LEFT
Jos 1: 7 turn from it to the right or to the **l**,
Pr 4: 27 Do not turn to the right or the **l**;

Mt 6: 3 do not let your **l** hand know what
25: 33 on his right and the goats on his **l**.

LEGION
Mk 5: 9 "My name is **L**," he replied,

LEND (LENDS)
Dt 15: 8 freely **l** them whatever they need.
Ps 37: 26 are always generous and **l** freely;
Lk 6: 34 Even sinners **l** to sinners,

LENDS (LEND)
Pr 19: 17 kind to the poor **l** to the Lord,

LENGTH (LONG)
Pr 10: 27 fear of the Lord adds **l** to life,

LEPROSY
2Ki 7: 3 Now there were four men with **l**

LETTER (LETTERS)
Mt 5: 18 not the smallest **l**, not the least
2Co 3: 2 You yourselves are our **l**,
3: 6 not of the **l** but of the Spirit; for the **l** kills,
2Th 3: 14 not obey our instruction in this **l**.

LETTERS (LETTER)
2Co 3: 7 which was engraved in **l** on stone,
10: 10 "His **l** are weighty and forceful,
2Pe 3: 16 He writes the same way in all his **l**,

LEVEL
Ps 143: 10 good Spirit lead me on **l** ground.
Isa 26: 7 The path of the righteous is **l**;
Heb 12: 13 "Make **l** paths for your feet,"

LEVI (LEVITES)
1. Son of Jacob by Leah (Ge 29:34; 46:11; 1Ch 2:1). Tribe of blessed (Ge 49:5–7; Dt 33:8–11), chosen as priests (Nu 3–4), numbered (Nu 3:39; 26:62), allotted cities, but not land (Nu 18; 35; Dt 10:9; Jos 13:14; 21), land (Eze 48:8–22), 12,000 from (Rev 7:7).
2. See MATTHEW.

LEVITES (LEVI)
Nu 1: 53 The **L** are to be responsible
8: 6 "Take the **L** from among all
18: 21 "I give to the **L** all the tithes

LEWDNESS
Mk 7: 22 malice, deceit, **l**, envy, slander,

LIAR (LIE)
Pr 19: 22 better to be poor than a **l**.
Jn 8: 44 for he is a **l** and the father of lies.
Ro 3: 4 be true, and every human being a **l**.

LIBERATED
Ro 8: 21 the creation itself will be **l** from its

LIE (LIAR LIED LIES LYING)
Lev 19: 11 "'Do not **l**. "'Do not deceive
Nu 23: 19 that he should **l**, not a human
Dt 6: 7 when you **l** down and when you
Ps 23: 2 He makes me **l** down in green
Isa 11: 6 the leopard will **l** down
Eze 34: 14 There they will **l** down in good
Ro 1: 25 the truth about God for a **l**,
Col 3: 9 Do not **l** to each other, since you
Heb 6: 18 which it is impossible for God to **l**,

LIED (LIE)
Ac 5: 4 You have not **l** just to human

LIES (LIE)
Ps 34: 13 evil and your lips from telling **l**.
Jn 8: 44 for he is a liar and the father of **l**.

LIFE (LIVE)
Ge 2: 7 into his nostrils the breath of **l**,
2: 9 of the garden were the tree of **l**
9: 11 Never again will all **l** be destroyed
Ex 21: 23 injury, you are to take **l** for **l**,
Lev 17: 14 because the **l** of every creature is its
24: 18 must make restitution—**l** for **l**.
Dt 30: 19 Now choose **l**, so that you and your
Ps 16: 11 make known to me the path of **l**;
23: 6 will follow me all the days of my **l**,
34: 12 Whoever of you loves **l** and desires
39: 4 let me know how fleeting my **l** is.
49: 7 one can redeem the **l** of another
104: 33 I will sing to the Lord all my **l**;
Pr 6: 23 and instruction are the way to **l**,
7: 23 little knowing it will cost him his **l**.
8: 35 For those who find me find **l**
11: 30 fruit of the righteous is a tree of **l**,
21: 21 righteousness and love finds **l**,
Eze 37: 5 enter you, and you will come to **l**.
Da 12: 2 some to everlasting **l**,
Mt 6: 25 do not worry about your **l**,
7: 14 and narrow the road that leads to **l**,
10: 39 whoever loses their **l** for my sake
16: 25 wants to save their **l** will lose it,
20: 28 to give his **l** as a ransom for many."
Mk 10: 45 to give his **l** as a ransom for many."
Lk 12: 15 **l** does not consist in an abundance
12: 22 do not worry about your **l**,
14: 26 yes, even their own **l**—
Jn 1: 4 In him was **l**, and that **l** was the light
3: 15 who believes may have eternal **l**
3: 36 believes in the Son has eternal **l**,
4: 14 of water welling up to eternal **l**."
5: 24 has crossed over from death to **l**.
6: 35 Jesus declared, "I am the bread of **l**.
6: 47 the one who believes has eternal **l**.
6: 68 You have the words of eternal **l**.
10: 10 I have come that they may have **l**,
10: 15 and I lay down my **l** for the sheep.
10: 28 I give them eternal **l**, and they shall
11: 25 "I am the resurrection and the **l**.
14: 6 am the way and the truth and the **l**.
15: 13 lay down one's **l** for one's friends.
20: 31 by believing you may have **l** in his
Ac 13: 48 appointed for eternal **l** believed.
Ro 4: 25 was raised to **l** for our justification.
6: 13 have been brought from death to **l**;
6: 23 God is eternal **l** in Christ Jesus our

Ro 8: 38 convinced that neither death nor **l**,
1Co 15: 19 If only for this **l** we have hope
2Co 3: 6 the letter kills, but the Spirit gives **l**.
Gal 2: 20 The **l** I now live in the body, I live
Eph 4: 1 to live a **l** worthy of the calling you
Php 2: 16 as you hold firmly to the word of **l**.
Col 1: 10 you may live a **l** worthy of the Lord
1Th 4: 12 your daily **l** may win the respect
1Ti 4: 8 the present **l** and the **l** to come.
4: 16 Watch your **l** and doctrine closely.
6: 19 take hold of the **l** that is truly **l**.
2Ti 3: 12 live a godly **l** in Christ Jesus will be
Jas 1: 12 person will receive the crown of **l**
3: 13 Let them show it by their good **l**,
1Pe 3: 10 "Whoever would love **l** and see
2Pe 1: 3 a godly **l** through our knowledge
1Jn 3: 14 we have passed from death to **l**,
5: 11 God has given us eternal **l**, and this **l**
Rev 13: 8 written in the Lamb's book of **l**,
20: 12 was opened, which is the book of **l**.
21: 27 are written in the Lamb's book of **l**.
22: 2 side of the river stood the tree of **l**,

LIFT (LIFTED LIFTING)

Ps 121: 1 I **l** up my eyes to the mountains—
134: 2 **L** up your hands in the sanctuary
La 3: 41 Let us **l** up our hearts and our hands

LIFTED (LIFT)

Ps 40: 2 He **l** me out of the slimy pit,
Jn 3: 14 so the Son of Man must be **l** up,
12: 32 I, when I am **l** up from the earth,

LIFTING (LIFT)

1Ti 2: 8 **l** up holy hands without anger

LIGHT (ENLIGHTENED)

Ge 1: 3 "Let there be **l**," and there was **l**.
2Sa 22: 29 Lord turns my darkness into **l**.
Job 38: 19 "What is the way to the abode of **l**?
Ps 4: 6 Let the **l** of your face shine on us.
19: 8 are radiant, giving **l** to the eyes.
27: 1 The Lord is my **l** and my
56: 13 walk before God in the **l** of life.
76: 4 You are radiant with **l**,
104: 2 The Lord wraps himself in **l** as
119:105 lamp to my feet and a **l** for my path.
119:130 unfolding of your words gives **l**;
Isa 2: 5 let us walk in the **l** of the Lord.
9: 2 in darkness have seen a great **l**;
49: 6 also make you a **l** for the Gentiles,
Mt 4: 16 shadow of death a **l** has dawned."
5: 16 way, let your **l** shine before others,
11: 30 yoke is easy and my burden is **l**."
Jn 3: 19 **L** has come into the world,
8: 12 he said, "I am the **l** of the world.
2Co 4: 6 made his **l** shine in our hearts
6: 14 Or what fellowship can **l** have
11: 14 masquerades as an angel of **l**.
1Ti 6: 16 and who lives in unapproachable **l**,
1Pe 2: 9 of darkness into his wonderful **l**.
1Jn 1: 5 God is **l**; in him there is no darkness
1: 7 But if we walk in the **l**, as he is
Rev 21: 23 for the glory of God gives it **l**,

LIGHTNING

Da 10: 6 his face like **l**, his eyes like flaming
Mt 24: 27 For as **l** that comes from the east is
28: 3 His appearance was like **l**, and his

LIKENESS

Ge 1: 26 in our **l**, so that they may rule over
Ps 17: 15 will be satisfied with seeing your **l**.
Isa 52: 14 his form marred beyond human **l**
Ro 8: 3 his own Son in the **l** of sinful flesh
Php 2: 7 a servant, being made in human **l**.
Jas 3: 9 who have been made in God's **l**.

LION

Isa 11: 7 and the **l** will eat straw like the ox.
1Pe 5: 8 around like a roaring **l** looking
Rev 5: 5 See, the **L** of the tribe of Judah,

LIPS

Ps 34: 1 his praise will always be on my **l**.
119:171 May my **l** overflow with praise,
Pr 13: 3 who guard their **l** preserve their
27: 2 an outsider, and not your own **l**.
Isa 6: 5 For I am a man of unclean **l**, and I
Mt 21: 16 read, "'From the **l** of children
Col 3: 8 and filthy language from your **l**.

LISTEN (LISTENING)

Dt 30: 20 Lord your God, **l** to his voice,
Pr 1: 5 let the wise **l** and add to their
12: 15 to them, but the wise **l** to advice.
Jn 10: 27 My sheep **l** to my voice;
Jas 1: 19 Everyone should be quick to **l**,
1: 22 Do not merely **l** to the word,

LISTENING (LISTEN)

1Sa 3: 9 Lord, for your servant is **l**.'"
Pr 18: 13 To answer before **l**—that is folly

LIVE (ALIVE LIFE LIVES LIVING)

Ex 20: 12 that you may **l** long in the land
33: 20 face, for no one may see me and **l**."
Dt 8: 3 that man does not **l** on bread alone
Job 14: 14 If someone dies, will they **l** again?
Ps 119:175 Let me **l** that I may praise you,
Isa 55: 3 come to me; listen, that you may **l**.
Eze 37: 3 "Son of man, can these bones **l**?"
Hab 2: 4 the righteous person will **l** by his
Mt 4: 4 'Man shall not **l** on bread alone,
Ac 17: 24 not **l** in temples built by human
17: 28 'For in him we **l** and move and
Ro 1: 17 "The righteous will **l** by faith."
2Co 5: 7 For we **l** by faith, not by sight.
Gal 2: 20 The life I now **l** in the body,
5: 25 Since we **l** by the Spirit, let us keep
Php 1: 21 me, to **l** is Christ and to die is gain.
1Th 5: 13 **L** in peace with each other.
2Ti 3: 12 who wants to **l** a godly life
Heb 12: 14 Make every effort to **l** in peace
1Pe 1: 17 **l** out your time as foreigners here

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LIVES (LIVE)
Job 19: 25 I know that my redeemer **l**,
Pr 11: 30 and the one who is wise saves **l**.
Isa 57: 15 he who **l** forever, whose name is
Da 3: 28 to give up their **l** rather than serve
Jn 14: 17 he **l** with you and will be in you.
Gal 2: 20 I no longer live, but Christ **l** in me.
Heb 13: 5 Keep your **l** free from the love
2Pe 3: 11 You ought to live holy and godly **l**
1Jn 3: 16 to lay down our **l** for our brothers
4: 16 Whoever **l** in love **l** in God,

LIVING (LIVE)
Ge 2: 7 life, and the man became a **l** being.
Jer 2: 13 the spring of **l** water, and have dug
Mt 22: 32 the God of the dead but of the **l**."
Jn 7: 38 said, rivers of **l** water will flow
Ro 12: 1 to offer your bodies as a **l** sacrifice,
Heb 10: 31 to fall into the hands of the **l** God.
Rev 1: 18 I am the **L** One; I was dead,

LOAD
Gal 6: 5 each one should carry their own **l**.

LOCUSTS
Mt 3: 4 His food was **l** and wild honey.

LOFTY
Ps 139: 6 for me, too **l** for me to attain.

LONELY
Ps 68: 6 God sets the **l** in families, he leads

LONG (LENGTH LONGED LONGING LONGS)
1Ki 18: 21 "How **l** will you waver between
Jn 9: 4 As **l** as it is day, we must do
Eph 3: 18 to grasp how wide and **l** and high
1Pe 1: 12 Even angels **l** to look into these

LONGED (LONG)
Mt 13: 17 righteous people **l** to see what you
23: 37 how often I have **l** to gather your
2Ti 4: 8 to all who have **l** for his appearing.

LONGING (LONG)
Pr 13: 19 A **l** fulfilled is sweet to the soul,
2Co 5: 2 **l** to be clothed instead with our

LONGS (LONG)
Isa 30: 18 Yet the Lord **l** to be gracious

LOOK (LOOKING LOOKS)
Job 31: 1 my eyes not to **l** lustfully at a young
Ps 34: 5 Those who **l** to him are radiant;
Pr 4: 25 Let your eyes **l** straight ahead;
Isa 60: 5 Then you will **l** and be radiant,
Hab 1: 13 Your eyes are too pure to **l** on evil;
Zec 12: 10 They will **l** on me, the one they
Mk 13: 21 is the Messiah!' or, '**L**, there he is!'
Lk 24: 39 **L** at my hands and my feet. It is I
Jn 1: 36 by, he said, "**L**, the Lamb of God!"
4: 35 open your eyes and **l** at the fields!
19: 37 "They will **l** on the one they have
Jas 1: 27 to **l** after orphans and widows
1Pe 1: 12 Even angels long to **l** into these

LOOKING (LOOK)
Rev 5: 6 a Lamb, **l** as if it had been slain,

LOOKS (LOOK)
1Sa 16: 7 but the Lord **l** at the heart."
Lk 9: 62 puts a hand to the plow and **l** back
Php 2: 21 everyone **l** out for their own interests,

LORD (LORD'S LORDING)
Ne 4: 14 Remember the **L**, who is great
Job 28: 28 human race, "The fear of the **L**—
Ps 54: 4 the **L** is the one who sustains me.
62: 12 and with you, **L**, is unfailing love";
86: 5 You, **L**, are forgiving and good,
110: 1 The Lord says to my **l**:
147: 5 Great is our **L** and mighty in power
Isa 6: 1 died, I saw the **L**, high and exalted,
Da 9: 4 "**L**, the great and awesome God,
Mt 3: 3 'Prepare the way for the **L**,
4: 7 'Do not put the **L** your God
7: 21 "Not everyone who says to me, '**L**,
22: 37 "'Love the **L** your God with all
22: 44 "'The **L** said to my **L**: "Sit at my
Mk 12: 11 the **L** has done this, and it is
12: 29 The **L** our God, the **L** is one.
Lk 2: 9 An angel of the **L** appeared to
6: 46 "Why do you call me, '**L**, **L**,'
10: 27 "'Love the **L** your God with all
Ac 2: 21 on the name of the **L** will be saved.'
16: 31 "Believe in the **L** Jesus, and you
Ro 10: 9 "Jesus is **L**," and believe in your
10: 13 the name of the **L** will be saved."
12: 11 your spiritual fervor, serving the **L**.
14: 8 we live or die, we belong to the **L**.
1Co 1: 31 the one who boasts boast in the **L**."
3: 5 as the **L** has assigned to each his
7: 34 to be devoted to the **L** in both body
11: 23 The **L** Jesus, on the night he was
12: 3 "Jesus is **L**," except by the Holy
15: 57 victory through our **L** Jesus Christ.
16: 22 let that person be cursed! Come, **L**!
2Co 3: 17 Now the **L** is the Spirit, and where
8: 5 gave themselves first of all to the **L**,
10: 17 the one who boasts boast in the **L**."
Gal 6: 14 in the cross of our **L** Jesus Christ,
Eph 4: 5 one **L**, one faith, one baptism;
5: 10 and find out what pleases the **L**.
5: 19 music from your heart to the **L**,
Php 2: 11 acknowledge that Jesus Christ is **L**,
3: 1 and sisters, rejoice in the **L**!
4: 4 Rejoice in the **L** always. I will say it
Col 2: 6 as you received Christ Jesus as **L**,
3: 17 do it all in the name of the **L** Jesus,
3: 23 working for the **L**, not for human
4: 17 you have received in the **L**."
1Th 3: 12 May the **L** make your love increase
5: 2 day of the **L** will come like a thief
5: 23 at the coming of our **L** Jesus Christ.
2Th 2: 1 the coming of our **L** Jesus Christ

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2Ti 2: 19 "The **L** knows those who are his,"
Heb 12: 14 holiness no one will see the **L**.
13: 6 confidence, "The **L** is my helper;
Jas 4: 10 Humble yourselves before the **L**,
1Pe 1: 25 the word of the **L** endures forever."
2: 3 you have tasted that the **L** is good.
3: 15 in your hearts revere Christ as **L**.
2Pe 1: 16 the coming of our **L** Jesus Christ
2: 1 sovereign **L** who bought them—
3: 9 The **L** is not slow in keeping his
Jude : 14 the **L** is coming with thousands
Rev 4: 8 holy is the **L** God Almighty,'
4: 11 "You are worthy, our **L** and God,
17: 14 triumph over them because he is **L**
22: 20 Amen. Come, **L** Jesus.

LORD'S (LORD)

Ac 21: 14 up and said, "The **L** will be done."
1Co 10: 26 "The earth is the **L**, and everything
11: 26 you proclaim the **L** death until he
2Co 3: 18 faces contemplate the **L** glory,
2Ti 2: 24 And the **L** servant must not be
Jas 4: 15 "If it is the **L** will, we will live

LORDING (LORD)

1Pe 5: 3 not **l** it over those entrusted to you,

LORD* (LORD'S*; this is the proper name of God, Yahweh, spelled "LORD" in the NIV)

Ge 2: 4 when the **L** God made the earth
2: 7 the **L** God formed a man
3: 21 The **L** God made garments of skin
7: 16 Then the **L** shut him in.
15: 6 Abram believed the **L**, and he
18: 14 Is anything too hard for the **L**?
31: 49 "May the **L** keep watch between
Ex 3: 2 There the angel of the **L** appeared
9: 12 But the **L** hardened Pharaoh's heart
14: 30 That day the **L** saved Israel
20: 2 "I am the **L** your God, who
33: 11 The **L** would speak to Moses face
40: 34 glory of the **L** filled the tabernacle.
Lev 19: 2 'Be holy because I, the **L** your God,
Nu 8: 5 The **L** said to Moses:
14: 21 glory of the **L** fills the whole earth,
Dt 2: 7 The **L** your God has blessed you
5: 9 for I, the **L** your God, am a jealous
6: 4 The **L** our God, the **L** is one.
6: 5 Love the **L** your God with all your
6: 16 Do not put the **L** your God
10: 14 **L** your God belong the heavens,
10: 17 For the **L** your God is God of gods
11: 1 Love the **L** your God and keep his
28: 1 If you fully obey the **L** your God
30: 16 you today to love the **L** your God,
30: 20 For the **L** is your life, and he will
31: 6 for the **L** your God goes with you;
Jos 22: 5 to love the **L** your God, to walk
24: 15 household, we will serve the **L**."
1Sa 1: 28 So now I give him to the **L**.
2: 2 "There is no one holy like the **L**;
7: 12 "Thus far the **L** has helped us."
12: 22 his great name the **L** will not reject
15: 22 as much as in obeying the **L**?
2Sa 22: 2 "The **L** is my rock, my fortress
1Ki 2: 3 and observe what the **L** your God
8: 11 the glory of the **L** filled his temple.
8: 61 fully committed to the **L** our God,
18: 21 If the **L** is God, follow him;
2Ki 13: 23 But the **L** was gracious to them
1Ch 16: 8 Give praise to the **L**, proclaim his
16: 23 Sing to the **L**, all the earth;
28: 9 for the **L** searches every heart
29: 11 Yours, **L**, is the kingdom;
2Ch 5: 14 the glory of the **L** filled the temple
16: 9 the **L** range throughout the earth
19: 6 for mere mortals but for the **L**,
30: 9 for the **L** your God is gracious
Ne 1: 5 "**L**, the God of heaven, the great
Job 1: 21 The **L** gave and the **L** has taken
38: 1 the **L** spoke to Job out of the storm.
42: 9 did what the **L** told them;
Ps 1: 2 whose delight is in the law of the **L**,
9: 9 The **L** is a refuge for the oppressed,
12: 6 the words of the **L** are flawless,
16: 8 I keep my eyes always on the **L**.
19: 7 The law of the **L** is perfect,
19: 14 heart be pleasing in your sight, **L**,
23: 1 The **L** is my shepherd, I lack
23: 6 dwell in the house of the **L** forever.
27: 1 The **L** is the stronghold of my life
27: 4 to gaze on the beauty of the **L**
29: 1 ascribe to the **L** glory and strength.
32: 2 one whose sin the **L** does not count
33: 12 is the nation whose God is the **L**,
33: 18 the eyes of the **L** are on those who
34: 3 Glorify the **L** with me; let us exalt
34: 7 of the **L** encamps around those
34: 8 Taste and see that the **L** is good;
34: 18 The **L** is close to the brokenhearted
37: 4 Take delight in the **L**, and he will
40: 1 I waited patiently for the **L**;
47: 2 For the **L** Most High is awesome,
48: 1 Great is the **L**, and most worthy
55: 22 Cast your cares on the **L** and he
75: 8 In the hand of the **L** is a cup full
84: 11 For the **L** God is a sun and shield;
86: 11 Teach me your way, **L**, that I may
89: 5 heavens praise your wonders, **L**,
95: 1 Come, let us sing for joy to the **L**;
96: 1 Sing to the **L** a new song;
98: 4 Shout for joy to the **L**, all the earth,
100: 1 Shout for joy to the **L**, all the earth.
103: 1 Praise the **L**, my soul; all my
103: 8 The **L** is compassionate
104: 1 Praise the **L**, my soul. **L** my God,
107: 8 to the **L** for his unfailing love
110: 1 The **L** says to my lord: "Sit at my

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Ps 113: 4 The **L** is exalted over all the nations
115: 1 Not to us, **L**, not to us but to your
116: 15 the sight of the **L** is the death of his
118: 1 Give thanks to the **L**, for he is good;
118: 24 The **L** has done it this very day;
121: 2 My help comes from the **L**,
121: 5 The **L** watches over you—the **L** is
125: 2 so the **L** surrounds his people both
127: 1 Unless the **L** builds the house,
127: 3 Children are a heritage from the **L**,
130: 3 If you, **L**, kept a record of sins,
135: 6 The **L** does whatever pleases him,
136: 1 Give thanks to the **L**, for he is good.
139: 1 You have searched me, **L**, and you
144: 3 **L**, what are human beings that you
145: 3 Great is the **L** and most worthy
145: 18 The **L** is near to all who call on him,
Pr 1: 7 The fear of the **L** is the beginning
3: 5 Trust in the **L** with all your heart
3: 9 Honor the **L** with your wealth,
3: 12 because the **L** disciplines those he
3: 19 By wisdom the **L** laid the earth's
5: 21 your ways are in full view of the **L**,
6: 16 There are six things the **L** hates,
10: 27 The fear of the **L** adds length to life,
11: 1 The **L** detests dishonest scales,
12: 22 The **L** detests lying lips, but he
14: 26 Whoever fears the **L** has a secure
15: 3 The eyes of the **L** are everywhere,
16: 2 but motives are weighed by the **L**.
16: 4 The **L** works out everything to its
16: 9 but the **L** establishes their steps.
16: 33 but its every decision is from the **L**.
18: 10 name of the **L** is a fortified tower;
18: 22 and receives favor from the **L**.
19: 14 but a prudent wife is from the **L**.
19: 17 is kind to the poor lends to the **L**,
21: 3 acceptable to the **L** than sacrifice.
21: 30 plan that can succeed against the **L**.
21: 31 battle, but victory rests with the **L**.
22: 2 The **L** is the Maker of them all.
24: 18 or the **L** will see and disapprove
31: 30 a woman who fears the **L** is to be
Isa 6: 3 holy, holy is the **L** Almighty;
11: 2 The Spirit of the **L** will rest on him
11: 9 of the **L** as the waters cover the sea.
12: 2 The **L**, the **L** himself, is my strength
24: 1 the **L** is going to lay waste the earth
25: 8 The Sovereign **L** will wipe away
29: 15 to hide their plans from the **L**,
33: 6 the fear of the **L** is the key to this
35: 10 those the **L** has rescued will return.
40: 5 For the mouth of the **L** has spoken.
40: 7 because the breath of the **L** blows
40: 10 the Sovereign **L** comes with power,
40: 28 The **L** is the everlasting God,
40: 31 in the **L** will renew their strength.
42: 8 "I am the **L**; that is my name!
Isa 43: 11 I am the **L**, and apart from me
44: 24 I am the **L**, the Maker of all things,
45: 5 I am the **L**, and there is no other;
45: 21 Was it not I, the **L**? And there is no
51: 11 Those the **L** has rescued will return
53: 6 the **L** has laid on him the iniquity
53: 10 the will of the **L** will prosper in his
55: 6 Seek the **L** while he may be found;
58: 8 of the **L** will be your rear guard.
58: 11 The **L** will guide you always;
59: 1 the arm of the **L** is not too short
61: 3 a planting of the **L** for the display
61: 10 I delight greatly in the **L**;
Jer 1: 9 Then the **L** reached out his hand
9: 24 in these I delight," declares the **L**.
16: 19 **L**, my strength and my fortress,
17: 7 is the one who trusts in the **L**,
La 3: 40 and let us return to the **L**.
Eze 1: 28 of the likeness of the glory of the **L**.
Hos 1: 7 but I, the **L** their God, will save
3: 5 return and seek the **L** their God
6: 1 "Come, let us return to the **L**.
Joel 2: 1 for the day of the **L** is coming.
2: 11 The day of the **L** is great;
3: 14 day of the **L** is near in the valley
Am 5: 18 you who long for the day of the **L**!
Jnh 1: 3 But Jonah ran away from the **L**
Mic 4: 2 the word of the **L** from Jerusalem.
6: 8 what does the **L** require of you?
Na 1: 2 The **L** is a jealous and avenging
1: 3 The **L** is slow to anger but great
Hab 2: 14 of the **L** as the waters cover the sea.
2: 20 The **L** is in his holy temple;
Zep 3: 17 The **L** your God is with you,
Zec 1: 17 and the **L** will again comfort Zion
9: 16 The **L** their God will save his people
14: 5 Then the **L** my God will come,
14: 9 On that day there will be one **L**,
Mal 4: 5 and dreadful day of the **L** comes.

LORD'S* (LORD*; this is the proper name of God, Yahweh, spelled "LORD's" in the NIV)

Ex 34: 34 he entered the **L** presence to speak
Nu 14: 41 you disobeying the **L** command?
Dt 6: 18 is right and good in the **L** sight,
32: 9 For the **L** portion is his people,
Jos 21: 45 all the **L** good promises to Israel
Ps 24: 1 The earth is the **L**,
32: 10 the **L** unfailing love surrounds
89: 1 I will sing of the **L** great love
103: 17 the **L** love is with those who fear
Pr 3: 11 do not despise the **L** discipline,
Isa 24: 14 west they acclaim the **L** majesty.
62: 3 a crown of splendor in the **L** hand,
Jer 48: 10 who is lax in doing the **L** work!
La 3: 22 Because of the **L** great love we are
Mic 4: 1 the mountain of the **L** temple will

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LOSE (LOSES LOSS LOST)
1Sa 17: 32 "Let no one **l** heart on account
Mt 10: 39 Whoever finds their life will **l** it,
Lk 9: 25 and yet **l** or forfeit their very self?
Jn 6: 39 that I shall **l** none of all those
Heb 12: 3 will not grow weary and **l** heart.
12: 5 not **l** heart when he rebukes you,

LOSES (LOSE)
Mt 5: 13 But if the salt **l** its saltiness,
Lk 15: 4 a hundred sheep and **l** one of them.
15: 8 has ten silver coins and **l** one.

LOSS (LOSE)
Ro 11: 12 their **l** means riches for the Gentiles,
1Co 3: 15 the builder will suffer **l** but yet will
Php 3: 8 I consider everything a **l** because

LOST (LOSE)
Ps 73: 2 I had nearly **l** my foothold.
Jer 50: 6 "My people have been **l** sheep;
Eze 34: 4 the strays or searched for the **l**.
34: 16 I will search for the **l** and bring
Lk 15: 4 go after the **l** sheep until he finds
15: 6 I have found my **l** sheep.'
15: 9 I have found my **l** coin.'
15: 24 he was **l** and is found.'
19: 10 came to seek and to save the **l**."
Php 3: 8 for whose sake I have **l** all things.

LOT (LOTS)
Nephew of Abraham (Ge 11:27; 12:5). Chose to live in Sodom (Ge 13). Rescued from four kings (Ge 14). Rescued from Sodom (Ge 19:1–29; 2Pe 2:7). Fathered Moab and Ammon by his daughters (Ge 19:30–38).
Est 3: 7 the **l**) was cast in the presence
9: 24 the **l**) for their ruin and destruction.
Pr 16: 33 The **l** is cast into the lap, but its
18: 18 Casting the **l** settles disputes
Ecc 3: 22 their work, because that is their **l**.
Ac 1: 26 cast lots, and the **l** fell to Matthias;

LOTS (LOT)
Ps 22: 18 them and cast **l** for my garment.
Mt 27: 35 divided up his clothes by casting **l**.

LOVE (BELOVED LOVED LOVELY LOVER LOVERS LOVES LOVING)
Ge 22: 2 son, your only son, whom you **l**—
Ex 15: 13 In your unfailing **l** you will lead
20: 6 showing **l** to a thousand generations
34: 6 abounding in **l** and faithfulness,
Lev 19: 18 but **l** your neighbor as yourself.
19: 34 **L** them as yourself, for you were
Nu 14: 18 abounding in **l** and forgiving sin
Dt 5: 10 showing **l** to a thousand generations
6: 5 **L** the Lord your God with all
7: 13 He will **l** you and bless you
10: 12 to **l** him, to serve the Lord your
11: 13 to **l** the Lord your God
13: 6 or the wife you **l**, or your closest
30: 6 you may **l** him with all your heart
Jos 22: 5 to **l** the Lord your God, to walk
1Ki 3: 3 Solomon showed his **l**
8: 23 you who keep your covenant of **l**
2Ch 5: 13 his **l** endures forever."
Ne 1: 5 covenant of **l** with those who **l** him
Ps 18: 1 I **l** you, Lord, my strength.
23: 6 **l** will follow me all the days of my
25: 6 your great mercy and **l**, for they are
31: 16 save me in your unfailing **l**.
32: 10 Lord's unfailing **l** surrounds
33: 5 the earth is full of his unfailing **l**.
33: 18 whose hope is in his unfailing **l**,
36: 5 Your **l**, Lord,
36: 7 How priceless is your unfailing **l**,
45: 7 You **l** righteousness and hate
51: 1 God, according to your unfailing **l**;
57: 10 For great is your **l**,
63: 3 Because your **l** is better than life,
66: 20 prayer or withheld his **l** from me!
77: 8 his unfailing **l** vanished forever?
85: 7 Show us your unfailing **l**, Lord,
85: 10 **L** and faithfulness meet together;
86: 13 For great is your **l** toward me;
89: 1 sing of the Lord's great **l** forever;
89: 33 but I will not take my **l** from him,
92: 2 proclaiming your **l** in the morning
94: 18 slipping," your unfailing **l**, Lord,
100: 5 is good and his **l** endures forever;
101: 1 I will sing of your **l** and justice;
103: 4 crowns you with **l** and compassion,
103: 8 slow to anger, abounding in **l**.
103: 11 so great is his **l** for those who fear
107: 8 to the Lord for his unfailing **l**
108: 4 For great is your **l**, higher than
116: 1 I **l** the Lord, for he heard my
118: 1 he is good; his **l** endures forever.
119: 47 your commands because I **l** them.
119: 64 The earth is filled with your **l**,
119: 76 May your unfailing **l** be my
119: 97 Oh, how I **l** your law! I meditate
119:119 dross; therefore I **l** your statutes.
119:124 your servant according to your **l**
119:132 do to those who **l** your name.
119:159 See how I **l** your precepts;
119:163 detest falsehood but I **l** your law.
119:165 peace have those who **l** your law,
122: 6 "May those who **l** you be secure.
130: 7 for with the Lord is unfailing **l**
136: 1 His **l** endures forever.
143: 8 bring me word of your unfailing **l**,
145: 8 slow to anger and rich in **l**.
145: 20 Lord watches over all who **l** him,
147: 11 put their hope in his unfailing **l**.
Pr 3: 3 Let **l** and faithfulness never leave
4: 6 **l** her, and she will watch over you.
5: 19 you ever be intoxicated with her **l**.
8: 17 I **l** those who **l** me, and those who
9: 8 rebuke the wise and they will **l** you.
10: 12 but **l** covers over all wrongs.

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Pr 14: 22 those who plan what is good find **l**
15: 17 with **l** than a fattened calf
17: 9 Whoever would foster **l** covers
19: 22 a person desires is unfailing **l**;
20: 6 Many claim to have unfailing **l**,
20: 13 Do not **l** sleep or you will grow
20: 28 **L** and faithfulness keep a king safe;
21: 21 righteousness and **l** finds life,
27: 5 is open rebuke than hidden **l**.
Ecc 9: 6 Their **l**, their hate and their
9: 9 whom you **l**, all the days of this
SS 2: 4 and let his banner over me be **l**.
8: 6 for **l** is as strong as death,
8: 7 Many waters cannot quench **l**;
Isa 5: 1 sing for the one I **l** a song about his
16: 5 In **l** a throne will be established;
38: 17 In your **l** you kept me from the pit
54: 10 yet my unfailing **l** for you will not
55: 3 my faithful **l** promised to David.
61: 8 "For I, the Lord, **l** justice;
63: 9 In his **l** and mercy he redeemed
Jer 5: 31 and my people **l** it this way.
31: 3 loved you with an everlasting **l**;
32: 18 You show **l** to thousands but bring
33: 11 his **l** endures forever."
La 3: 22 of the Lord's great **l** we are not
3: 32 so great is his unfailing **l**.
Eze 33: 32 more than one who sings **l** songs
Da 9: 4 covenant of **l** with those who **l** him
Hos 2: 19 and justice, in **l** and compassion.
3: 1 **L** her as the Lord loves
11: 4 of human kindness, with ties of **l**.
12: 6 maintain **l** and justice, and wait
Joel 2: 13 slow to anger and abounding in **l**,
Am 5: 15 Hate evil, **l** good; maintain justice
Mic 3: 2 you who hate good and **l** evil;
6: 8 to **l** mercy and to walk humbly
Zep 3: 17 his **l** he will no longer rebuke you,
Zec 8: 19 Therefore **l** truth and peace."
Mt 3: 17 said, "This is my Son, whom I **l**;
5: 44 **l** your enemies and pray for those
6: 24 will hate the one and **l** the other,
17: 5 said, "This is my Son, whom I **l**;
19: 19 '**l** your neighbor as yourself.'"
22: 37 "'**L** the Lord your God with all
Lk 6: 32 "If you **l** those who **l** you,
7: 42 which of them will **l** him more?"
20: 13 I will send my son, whom I **l**;
Jn 13: 34 command I give you: **L** one another.
13: 35 my disciples, if you **l** one another."
14: 15 "If you **l** me, keep my commands.
15: 13 Greater **l** has no one than this:
15: 17 This is my command: **L** each other.
21: 15 do you **l** me more than these?"
Ro 5: 5 because God's **l** has been poured
5: 8 God demonstrates his own **l** for us
8: 28 for the good of those who **l** him,
8: 35 separate us from the **l** of Christ?
Ro 8: 39 separate us from the **l** of God that
12: 9 **L** must be sincere. Hate what is
12: 10 Be devoted to one another in **l**.
13: 8 continuing debt to **l** one another,
13: 9 "**L** your neighbor as yourself."
13: 10 Therefore **l** is the fulfillment
1Co 2: 9 prepared for those who **l** him—
8: 1 puffs up while **l** builds up.
13: 1 but do not have **l**, I am only
13: 2 but do not have **l**, I am nothing.
13: 3 but do not have **l**, I gain nothing.
13: 4 **L** is patient, **l** is kind. It does not
13: 6 **L** does not delight in evil
13: 8 **L** never fails. But where there are
13: 13 these three remain: faith, hope and **l**.
But the greatest of these is **l**.
14: 1 Follow the way of **l** and eagerly
16: 14 Do everything in **l**.
2Co 5: 14 For Christ's **l** compels us,
8: 8 sincerity of your **l** by comparing it
8: 24 show these men the proof of your **l**
Gal 5: 6 is faith expressing itself through **l**.
5: 13 serve one another humbly in **l**.
5: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is **l**, joy,
Eph 1: 4 holy and blameless in his sight. In **l**
2: 4 But because of his great **l** for us,
3: 17 being rooted and established in **l**,
3: 18 high and deep is the **l** of Christ,
3: 19 and to know this **l** that surpasses
4: 2 bearing with one another in **l**.
4: 15 speaking the truth in **l**, we will
5: 2 and walk in the way of **l**, just as
5: 25 Husbands, **l** your wives, just as
5: 28 to **l** their wives as their own bodies.
5: 33 must **l** his wife as he loves himself,
Php 1: 9 that your **l** may abound more
2: 2 having the same **l**, being one
Col 1: 5 **l** that spring from the hope stored
2: 2 in heart and united in **l**,
3: 14 And over all these virtues put on **l**,
3: 19 **l** your wives and do not be harsh
1Th 1: 3 your labor prompted by **l**, and your
4: 9 been taught by God to **l** each other.
5: 8 on faith and **l** as a breastplate,
2Th 3: 5 Lord direct your hearts into God's **l**
1Ti 1: 5 The goal of this command is **l**,
2: 15 faith, **l** and holiness with propriety.
4: 12 conduct, in **l**, in faith and in purity.
6: 10 For the **l** of money is a root of all
6: 11 faith, **l**, endurance and gentleness.
2Ti 1: 7 us power, **l** and self-discipline.
2: 22 faith, **l** and peace, along with those
3: 10 faith, patience, **l**, endurance,
Titus 2: 4 women to **l** their husbands
Phm : 9 to appeal to you on the basis of **l**.
Heb 6: 10 the **l** you have shown him as you
10: 24 may spur one another on toward **l**
13: 5 your lives free from the **l** of money

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Jas 1: 12 has promised to those who **l** him.
2: 5 he promised those who **l** him?
2: 8 "**L** your neighbor as yourself,"
1Pe 1: 22 you have sincere **l** for each other,
2: 17 everyone, **l** the family of believers,
3: 8 be sympathetic, **l** one another,
3: 10 For, "Whoever would **l** life and see
4: 8 Above all, **l** each other deeply,
4: 8 because **l** covers over a multitude
5: 14 Greet one another with a kiss of **l**.
2Pe 1: 7 and to mutual affection, **l**.
1: 17 saying, "This is my Son, whom I **l**;
1Jn 2: 5 **l** for God is truly made complete
2: 15 Do not **l** the world or anything
3: 1 See what great **l** the Father has
3: 10 who does not **l** their brother
3: 11 We should **l** one another.
3: 14 to life, because we **l** each other.
3: 16 This is how we know what **l** is:
3: 18 let us not **l** with words or speech
3: 23 **l** one another as he commanded
4: 7 one another, for **l** comes from God.
4: 8 not know God, because God is **l**.
4: 9 is how God showed his **l** among us:
4: 10 This is **l**: not that we loved God,
4: 11 us, we also ought to **l** one another.
4: 12 but if we **l** one another, God lives
4: 16 God is **l**. Whoever lives in **l** lives
4: 17 This is how **l** is made complete
4: 18 There is no fear in **l**. But perfect **l**
4: 19 We **l** because he first loved us.
4: 20 whoever does not **l** their brother
4: 21 loves God must also **l** their brother
5: 2 we know that we **l** the children
5: 3 In fact, this is **l** for God: to keep his
2Jn : 5 I ask that we **l** one another.
: 6 his command is that you walk in **l**.
Jude : 12 are blemishes at your **l** feasts,
: 21 yourselves in God's **l** as you wait
Rev 2: 4 You have forsaken the **l** you had
3: 19 Those whom I **l** I rebuke
12: 11 they did not **l** their lives so much

LOVED (LOVE)

Ge 24: 67 she became his wife, and he **l** her;
37: 3 Now Israel **l** Joseph more than any
Dt 7: 8 it was because the Lord **l** you
1Sa 1: 5 a double portion because he **l** her,
20: 17 because he **l** him as he **l** himself.
Ps 44: 3 light of your face, for you **l** them.
Jer 2: 2 youth, how as a bride you **l** me
31: 3 "I have **l** you with an everlasting
Hos 2: 23 to the one I called 'Not my **l** one.'
3: 1 though she is **l** by another man
9: 10 became as vile as the thing they **l**.
11: 1 "When Israel was a child, I **l** him,
Mal 1: 2 "I have **l** you," says the Lord.
Mk 12: 6 one left to send, a son, whom he **l**.
Jn 3: 16 For God so **l** the world that he gave
3: 19 people **l** darkness instead of light
11: 5 Now Jesus **l** Martha and her sister
12: 43 for they **l** human praise more than
13: 1 in the world, he **l** them to the end.
13: 23 the disciple whom Jesus **l**,
13: 34 As I have **l** you, so you must love
14: 21 The one who loves me will be **l**
15: 9 "As the Father has **l** me, so have I **l**
15: 12 Love each other as I have **l** you.
19: 26 disciple whom he **l** standing
Ro 8: 37 conquerors through him who **l** us.
9: 13 "Jacob I **l**, but Esau I hated."
9: 25 'my **l** one' who is not my **l** one,"
11: 28 they are **l** on account
Gal 2: 20 who **l** me and gave himself for me.
Eph 5: 2 just as Christ **l** us and gave himself
5: 25 just as Christ **l** the church and gave
2Th 2: 16 who **l** us and by his grace gave us
2Ti 4: 10 for Demas, because he **l** this world,
Heb 1: 9 You have **l** righteousness and hated
1Jn 4: 10 not that we **l** God, but that he **l** us
4: 11 since God so **l** us, we also ought
4: 19 We love because he first **l** us.

LOVELY (LOVE)

Ps 84: 1 How **l** is your dwelling place,
SS 2: 14 voice is sweet, and your face is **l**.
5: 16 sweetness itself; he is altogether **l**.
Php 4: 8 is pure, whatever is **l**, whatever is

LOVER (LOVE)

1Ti 3: 3 not quarrelsome, not a **l** of money.

LOVERS (LOVE)

2Ti 3: 2 People will be **l** of themselves,
3: 3 brutal, not **l** of the good,
3: 4 **l** of pleasure rather than **l** of God—

LOVES (LOVE)

Ps 11: 7 Lord is righteous, he **l** justice;
33: 5 The Lord **l** righteousness
34: 12 Whoever of you **l** life and desires
127: 2 for he grants sleep to those he **l**.
Pr 3: 12 the Lord disciplines those he **l**,
12: 1 Whoever **l** discipline **l** knowledge,
17: 17 A friend **l** at all times, and
17: 19 Whoever **l** a quarrel **l** sin;
22: 11 One who **l** a pure heart and who
Mt 10: 37 "Anyone who **l** their father
Lk 7: 47 has been forgiven little **l** little."
Jn 3: 35 The Father **l** the Son and has
10: 17 The reason my Father **l** me is that I
14: 21 The one who **l** me will be loved
14: 23 "Anyone who **l** me will obey my
Ro 13: 8 for whoever **l** others has fulfilled
2Co 9: 7 for God **l** a cheerful giver.
Eph 5: 28 He who **l** his wife **l** himself.
5: 33 must love his wife as he **l** himself,
Heb 12: 6 the Lord disciplines the one he **l**,
1Jn 4: 7 Everyone who **l** has been born
5: 1 who **l** the father **l** his child

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3Jn : 9 but Diotrephes, who **l** to be first,
Rev 1: 5 To him who **l** us and has freed us

LOVING (LOVE)
Ps 25: 10 All the ways of the Lord are **l**
Heb 13: 1 Keep on **l** one another as brothers
1Jn 5: 2 by **l** God and carrying out his

LOWLY
Job 5: 11 The **l** he sets on high, and those
Pr 29: 23 low, but the **l** in spirit gain honor.
Isa 57: 15 to revive the spirit of the **l**
Eze 21: 26 The **l** will be exalted and
Mt 18: 4 whoever takes the **l** position
1Co 1: 28 God chose the **l** things of this

LUKE
Co-worker with Paul (Col 4:14; 2Ti 4:11; Phm 24).

LUKEWARM
Rev 3: 16 So, because you are **l**—

LUST
Pr 6: 25 Do not **l** in your heart after her
Col 3: 5 impurity, **l**, evil desires and greed,
1Th 4: 5 not in passionate **l** like the pagans,
1Jn 2: 16 the **l** of the flesh, the **l** of the eyes,

LYING (LIE)
Pr 6: 17 haughty eyes, a **l** tongue,
26: 28 A **l** tongue hates those it hurts,

MACEDONIA
Ac 16: 9 a vision of a man of **M** standing

MADE (MAKE)
Ge 1: 16 God **m** two great lights—
1: 25 God **m** the wild animals according
2: 22 the Lord God **m** a woman
2Ki 19: 15 You have **m** heaven and earth.
Ps 95: 5 for he **m** it, and his hands formed
100: 3 It is he who **m** us, and we are his;
139: 14 I am fearfully and wonderfully **m**;
Ecc 3: 11 He has **m** everything beautiful in
Mk 2: 27 "The Sabbath was **m** for man,
Jn 1: 3 Through him all things were **m**;
Ac 17: 24 "The God who **m** the world
Heb 1: 2 whom also he **m** the universe.
Rev 14: 7 Worship him who **m** the heavens,

MAGI
Mt 2: 1 **M** from the east came to Jerusalem

MAGOG
Eze 38: 2 of the land of **M**, the chief prince
39: 6 I will send fire on **M** and on those
Rev 20: 8 Gog and **M**—and to gather them

MAIMED
Mt 18: 8 It is better for you to enter life **m**

MAJESTIC (MAJESTY)
Ex 15: 6 hand, Lord, was **m** in power.
15: 11 **m** in holiness, awesome in glory,
Ps 8: 1 **m** is your name in all the earth!
29: 4 the voice of the Lord is **m**.
111: 3 Glorious and **m** are his deeds,
SS 6: 10 sun, **m** as the stars in procession?
2Pe 1: 17 came to him from the **M** Glory,

MAJESTY (MAJESTIC)
Ex 15: 7 your **m** you threw down those who
Dt 33: 26 and on the clouds in his **m**.
1Ch 16: 27 Splendor and **m** are before him;
Est 1: 4 the splendor and glory of his **m**.
Job 37: 22 God comes in awesome **m**.
40: 10 clothe yourself in honor and **m**.
Ps 45: 4 In your **m** ride forth victoriously
93: 1 Lord reigns, he is robed in **m**;
145: 5 the glorious splendor of your **m**—
Isa 53: 2 beauty or **m** to attract us to him,
Eze 31: 2 can be compared with you in **m**?
2Pe 1: 16 but we were eyewitnesses of his **m**.
Jude : 25 only God our Savior be glory, **m**,

MAKE (MADE MAKER MAKES MAKING)
Ge 1: 26 "Let us **m** mankind in our image,
2: 18 I will **m** a helper suitable for him."
12: 2 "I will **m** you into a great nation,
Ex 22: 3 steals must certainly **m** restitution,
Nu 6: 25 the Lord **m** his face shine on you
Ps 108: 1 sing and **m** music with all my soul.
Isa 14: 14 I will **m** myself like the Most
29: 16 formed it, "You did not **m** me"?
Jer 31: 31 "when I will **m** a new covenant
Mt 3: 3 Lord, **m** straight paths for him.'"
28: 19 go and **m** disciples of all nations,
Lk 13: 24 "**M** every effort to enter through
Ro 14: 19 Let us therefore **m** every effort to
2Co 5: 9 So we **m** it our goal to please him,
Eph 4: 3 **M** every effort to keep the unity
Col 4: 5 **m** the most of every opportunity.
1Th 4: 11 **m** it your ambition to lead a quiet
Heb 4: 11 **m** every effort to enter that rest,
12: 14 **M** every effort to live in peace
2Pe 1: 5 **m** every effort to add to your faith
3: 14 **m** every effort to be found spotless,

MAKER (MAKE)
Job 4: 17 man be more pure than his **M**?
36: 3 I will ascribe justice to my **M**.
Ps 95: 6 us kneel before the Lord our **M**;
Pr 22: 2 The Lord is the **M** of them all.
Isa 45: 9 to those who quarrel with their **M**,
54: 5 For your **M** is your husband—
Jer 10: 16 these, for he is the **M** of all things,

MAKES (MAKE)
1Co 3: 7 but only God, who **m** things grow.

MAKING (MAKE)
Ps 19: 7 are trustworthy, **m** wise the simple.
Ecc 12: 12 Of **m** many books there is no end,
Jn 5: 18 Father, **m** himself equal with God.
Eph 5: 16 **m** the most of every opportunity,

MALE
Ge 1: 27 **m** and female he created them.
Gal 3: 28 nor free, nor is there **m** and female,

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MALICE (MALICIOUS)
Ro 1: 29 envy, murder, strife, deceit and **m**.
Col 3: 8 anger, rage, **m**, slander, and filthy
1Pe 2: 1 rid yourselves of all **m** and all

MALICIOUS (MALICE)
1Ti 3: 11 not **m** talkers but temperate
6: 4 envy, strife, **m** talk, evil suspicions

MAN (MANKIND MEN WOMAN WOMEN)
Ge 2: 7 the Lord God formed a **m**
2: 18 not good for the **m** to be alone.
2: 23 for she was taken out of **m**."
Dt 8: 3 **m** does not live on bread alone
1Sa 13: 14 sought out a **m** after his own heart
Ps 127: 5 Blessed is the **m** whose quiver is
Pr 30: 19 way of a **m** with a young woman.
Isa 53: 3 by mankind, a **m** of suffering,
Mt 19: 5 this reason a **m** will leave his father
Lk 4: 4 '**M** shall not live on bread alone.'"
Ro 5: 12 entered the world through one **m**,
1Co 7: 2 **m** should have sexual relations
11: 3 that the head of every **m** is Christ,
11: 3 and the head of the woman is **m**,
13: 11 When I became a **m**, I put the ways
Php 2: 8 being found in appearance as a **m**,
1Ti 2: 5 and mankind, the **m** Christ Jesus,
2: 12 or to assume authority over a **m**;

MANAGE
Jer 12: 5 how will you **m** in the thickets
1Ti 3: 4 He must **m** his own family well
3: 12 to his wife and must **m** his children
5: 14 to **m** their homes and to give

MANASSEH
1. Firstborn of Joseph (Ge 41:51; 46:20). Blessed (Ge 48).
2. Son of Hezekiah; king of Judah (2Ki 21:1–18; 2Ch 33:1–20).

MANGER
Lk 2: 12 in cloths and lying in a **m**."

MANKIND (MAN)
Ge 1: 26 "Let us make **m** in our image,

MANNA
Ex 16: 31 people of Israel called the bread **m**.
Dt 8: 16 He gave you **m** to eat
Jn 6: 49 Your ancestors ate the **m**
Rev 2: 17 I will give some of the hidden **m**.

MANNER
1Co 11: 27 in an unworthy **m** will be guilty
Php 1: 27 conduct yourselves in a **m** worthy

MARITAL (MARRY)
Ex 21: 10 of her food, clothing and **m** rights.
1Co 7: 3 husband should fulfill his **m** duty

MARK (MARKS)
Cousin of Barnabas (Col 4:10; 2Ti 4:11; Phm 24; 1Pe 5:13), see JOHN.
Ge 4: 15 the Lord put a **m** on Cain so
Rev 13: 16 to receive a **m** on their right hands

MARKS (MARK)
Jn 20: 25 "Unless I see the nail **m** in his
Gal 6: 17 I bear on my body the **m** of Jesus.

MARRED
Isa 52: 14 and his form **m** beyond human

MARRIAGE (MARRY)
Mt 22: 30 neither marry nor be given in **m**;
24: 38 marrying and giving in **m**,
Heb 13: 4 **M** should be honored by all,

MARRIED (MARRY)
Ro 7: 2 by law a **m** woman is bound to her
1Co 7: 33 But a **m** man is concerned
7: 36 is not sinning. They should get **m**.

MARRIES (MARRY)
Mt 5: 32 anyone who **m** a divorced woman
19: 9 and **m** another woman commits
Lk 16: 18 the man who **m** a divorced woman

MARRY (INTERMARRY MARITAL MARRIAGE MARRIED MARRIES)
Mt 22: 30 people will neither **m** nor be given
1Co 7: 9 they should **m**, for it is better to **m**
1Ti 5: 14 So I counsel younger widows to **m**,

MARTHA
Sister of Mary and Lazarus (Lk 10:38–42; Jn 11; 12:2).

MARVELED
Lk 2: 33 mother **m** at what was said

MARY
1. Mother of Jesus (Mt 1:16–25; Lk 1:27–56; 2:1–40). With Jesus at temple (Lk 2:41–52), at the wedding in Cana (Jn 2:1–5), questioning his sanity (Mk 3:21), at the cross (Jn 19:25–27). Among disciples after Ascension (Ac 1:14).
2. Magdalene; former demoniac (Lk 8:2). Helped support Jesus' ministry (Lk 8:1–3). At the cross (Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40; Jn 19:25), burial (Mt 27:61; Mk 15:47). Saw angel after resurrection (Mt 28:1–10; Mk 16:1–9; Lk 24:1–12); also Jesus (Jn 20:1–18).
3. Sister of Martha and Lazarus (Jn 11). Washed Jesus' feet (Jn 12:1–8).

MASQUERADES
2Co 11: 14 for Satan himself **m** as an angel

MASTER (MASTERED MASTERS)
Mt 10: 24 teacher, nor a servant above his **m**.
24: 46 servant whose **m** finds him doing
25: 21 "His **m** replied, 'Well done,
Ro 6: 14 For sin shall no longer be your **m**,
14: 4 To their own **m**, servants stand
2Ti 2: 21 useful to the **M** and prepared to do

MASTERED (MASTER)
1Co 6: 12 but I will not be **m** by anything.
2Pe 2: 19 are slaves to whatever has **m** them."

MASTERS (MASTER)
Mt 6: 24 "No one can serve two **m**.
Eph 6: 5 obey your earthly **m** with respect

Eph 6: 9 **m**, treat your slaves in the same
Titus2: 9 be subject to their **m** in everything,

MATTHEW
Apostle; former tax collector (Mt 9:9–13; 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15; Ac 1:13). Also called Levi (Mk 2:14–17; Lk 5:27–32).

MATURE (MATURITY)
Eph 4: 13 of the Son of God and become **m**,
Php 3: 15 who are **m** should take such a view
Heb 5: 14 But solid food is for the **m**,
Jas 1: 4 its work so that you may be **m**

MATURITY (MATURE)
Heb 6: 1 Christ and be taken forward to **m**,

MEAL
1Co10: 27 If an unbeliever invites you to a **m**
Heb12: 16 single **m** sold his inheritance rights

MEANING
Ne 8: 8 and giving the **m** so that the people

MEANS
1Co 9: 22 by all possible **m** I might save some.

MEAT
Ro 14: 6 eats **m** does so to the Lord,
14: 21 It is better not to eat **m** or drink

MEDIATOR
1Ti 2: 5 one God and one **m** between God
Heb 8: 6 which he is **m** is superior to the old
9: 15 this reason Christ is the **m** of a new
12: 24 to Jesus the **m** of a new covenant,

MEDICINE
Pr 17: 22 A cheerful heart is good **m**,

MEDITATE (MEDITATES MEDITATION)
Jos 1: 8 **m** on it day and night, so that you
Ps 119: 15 I **m** on your precepts and consider
119: 78 but I will **m** on your precepts.
119: 97 I **m** on it all day long.
145: 5 I will **m** on your wonderful works.

MEDITATES (MEDITATE)
Ps 1: 2 who **m** on his law day and night.

MEDITATION (MEDITATE)
Ps 19: 14 this **m** of my heart be pleasing
104: 34 May my **m** be pleasing to him, as I

MEDIUM
Lev 20: 27 or woman who is a **m** or spiritist

MEEK
Ps 37: 11 But the **m** will inherit the land
Mt 5: 5 Blessed are the **m**, for they will

MEET (MEETING)
Ps 85: 10 Love and faithfulness **m** together;
Am 4: 12 Israel, prepare to **m** your God."
1Th 4: 17 the clouds to **m** the Lord in the air.

MEETING (MEET)
Heb10: 25 not giving up **m** together, as some

MELCHIZEDEK
Ge 14: 18 **M** king of Salem brought out bread
Ps 110: 4 a priest forever, in the order of **M**."
Heb 7: 11 one in the order of **M**,

MELT
2Pe 3: 12 the elements will **m** in the heat.

MEMBERS
Mic 7: 6 a man's enemies are the **m** of his
Ro 12: 4 of us has one body with many **m**,
1Co 6: 15 your bodies are **m** of Christ
Eph 4: 25 for we are all **m** of one body.
Col 3: 15 since as **m** of one body you were

MEN (MAN)
Ro 1: 27 **M** committed shameful acts with other **m**,
1Ti 2: 8 Therefore I want the **m** everywhere

MENAHEM
King of Israel (2Ki 15:17–22).

MERCIFUL (MERCY)
Dt 4: 31 the Lord your God is a **m** God;
Ne 9: 31 for you are a gracious and **m** God.
Mt 5: 7 Blessed are the **m**, for they will be
Lk 6: 36 Be **m**, just as your Father is **m**.
Heb 2: 17 in order that he might become a **m**
Jude : 22 Be **m** to those who doubt;

MERCY (MERCIFUL)
Ex 33: 19 have **m** on whom I will have **m**,
Ps 25: 6 Lord, your great **m** and love,
Isa 63: 9 his love and **m** he redeemed them;
Hos 6: 6 For I desire **m**, not sacrifice,
Mic 6: 8 to love **m** and to walk humbly
Hab 3: 2 in wrath remember **m**.
Mt 12: 7 mean, 'I desire **m**, not sacrifice,'
23: 23 justice, **m** and faithfulness.
Ro 9: 15 "I will have **m** on whom I have **m**,
Eph 2: 4 love for us, God, who is rich in **m**,
Jas 2: 13 **M** triumphs over judgment.
1Pe 1: 3 In his great **m** he has given us new

MESSAGE
Isa 53: 1 Who has believed our **m**
Jn 12: 38 who has believed our **m**
Ro 10: 17 faith comes from hearing the **m**,
1Co 1: 18 the **m** of the cross is foolishness
2Co 5: 19 to us the **m** of reconciliation.

MESSIAH (CHRIST MESSIAHS)
Mt 1: 16 of Jesus who is called the **M**.
16: 16 "You are the **M**, the Son
22: 42 "What do you think about the **M**?
Jn 1: 41 "We have found the **M**" (that is,
4: 25 that **M**" (called Christ) "is coming.
20: 31 may believe that Jesus is the **M**,
Ac 2: 36 you crucified, both Lord and **M**."
5: 42 the good news that Jesus is the **M**.
9: 22 by proving that Jesus is the **M**.
17: 3 proving that the **M** had to suffer
18: 28 the Scriptures that Jesus was the **M**.
26: 23 that the **M** would suffer and,

MESSIAHS (MESSIAH)
Mt 24: 24 For false **m** and false prophets will

METHUSELAH
Ge 5: 27 **M** lived a total of 969 years,

MICHAEL
Archangel (Jude 9); warrior in angelic realm, protector of Israel (Da 10:13, 21; 12:1; Rev 12:7).

MIDWIVES
Ex 1: 17 The **m**, however, feared God

MIGHT (ALMIGHTY MIGHTY)
Jdg 16: 30 Then he pushed with all his **m**,
2Sa 6: 14 before the Lord with all his **m**,
Ps 21: 13 we will sing and praise your **m**.
Zec 4: 6 'Not by **m** nor by power, but by my
1Ti 6: 16 To him be honor and **m** forever.

MIGHTY (MIGHT)
Ex 6: 1 of my **m** hand he will let them go;
Dt 7: 8 he brought you out with a **m** hand
2Sa 1: 19 How the **m** have fallen!
23: 8 the names of David's **m** warriors:
Ps 24: 8 and **m**, the Lord **m** in battle.
50: 1 The **M** One, God, the Lord,
89: 8 are **m**, and your faithfulness
136: 12 a **m** hand and outstretched arm;
147: 5 Great is our Lord and **m** in power;
Isa 9: 6 Wonderful Counselor, **M** God,
Zep 3: 17 you, the **M** Warrior who saves.
Eph 6: 10 in the Lord and in his **m** power.

MILE
Mt 5: 41 If anyone forces you to go one **m**,

MILK
Ex 3: 8 a land flowing with **m** and honey—
Isa 55: 1 buy wine and **m** without money
1Co 3: 2 I gave you **m**, not solid food,
Heb 5: 12 You need **m**, not solid food!
1Pe 2: 2 crave pure spiritual **m**, so that by it

MILLSTONE (STONE)
Lk 17: 2 with a **m** tied around their neck

MIND (DOUBLE-MINDED MINDFUL MINDS MINDSET)
1Sa 15: 29 does not lie or change his **m**;
1Ch28: 9 devotion and with a willing **m**,
Ps 26: 2 me, examine my heart and my **m**;
Mt 22: 37 all your soul and with all your **m**.'
Ac 4: 32 believers were one in heart and **m**.
Ro 7: 25 then, I myself in my **m** am a slave
8: 7 The **m** governed by the flesh is
12: 2 by the renewing of your **m**.
1Co 2: 9 what no human **m** has conceived"
14: 14 spirit prays, but my **m** is unfruitful.
2Co13: 11 another, be of one **m**, live in peace.
Php 3: 19 Their **m** is set on earthly things.
1Th 4: 11 You should **m** your own business
Heb 7: 21 sworn and will not change his **m**:

MINDFUL (MIND)
Ps 8: 4 is mankind that you are **m** of them,
Lk 1: 48 he has been **m** of the humble state
Heb 2: 6 is mankind that you are **m** of them,

MINDS (MIND)
Ps 7: 9 the righteous God who probes **m**
Isa 26: 3 peace those whose **m** are steadfast,
Jer 31: 33 "I will put my law in their **m**
Eph 4: 23 new in the attitude of your **m**;
Col 3: 2 Set your **m** on things above,
Heb 8: 10 I will put my laws in their **m**
Rev 2: 23 he who searches hearts and **m**,

MINDSET (MIND)
Php 2: 5 have the same **m** as Christ Jesus:

MINISTERING (MINISTRY)
Heb 1: 14 Are not all angels **m** spirits sent

MINISTRY (MINISTERING)
Ac 6: 4 to prayer and the **m** of the word."
2Co 5: 18 gave us the **m** of reconciliation:
2Ti 4: 5 discharge all the duties of your **m**.

MIRACLES
1Ch16: 12 done, his **m**, and the judgments he
Ps 77: 14 You are the God who performs **m**;
Mt 11: 20 most of his **m** had been performed,
11: 21 the **m** that were performed in you
Mk 6: 2 What are these remarkable **m** he is
Ac 2: 22 accredited by God to you by **m**,
19: 11 did extraordinary **m** through Paul,
1Co12: 28 then **m**, then gifts of healing,
Heb 2: 4 wonders and various **m**, and by

MIRE
Ps 40: 2 slimy pit, out of the mud and **m**;
Isa 57: 20 whose waves cast up **m** and mud.

MIRIAM
Sister of Moses and Aaron (Nu 26:59). Led dancing at Red Sea (Ex 15:20–21). Struck with leprosy for criticizing Moses (Nu 12). Death (Nu 20:1).

MIRROR
Jas 1: 23 who looks at his face in a **m**

MISERY
Ex 3: 7 "I have indeed seen the **m** of my
Jdg 10: 16 he could bear Israel's **m** no longer.
Hos 5: 15 in their **m** they will earnestly seek
Ro 3: 16 ruin and **m** mark their ways,
Jas 5: 1 because of the **m** that is coming

MISLED
1Co15: 33 Do not be **m**:

MISS
Pr 19: 2 more will hasty feet **m** the way!

MIST
Hos 6: 4 Your love is like the morning **m**,
Jas 4: 14 You are a **m** that appears for a little

MISUSE
Ex 20: 7 "You shall not **m** the name
Dt 5: 11 "You shall not **m** the name
Ps 139: 20 your adversaries **m** your name.

MOCK (MOCKED MOCKER MOCKERS MOCKING)
Ps 22: 7 All who see me **m** me;

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Pr 14: 9 Fools **m** at making amends for sin,
Mk 10: 34 who will **m** him and spit on him,

MOCKED (MOCK)
Mt 27: 29 knelt in front of him and **m** him.
27: 41 of the law and the elders **m** him.
Gal 6: 7 not be deceived: God cannot be **m**.

MOCKER (MOCK)
Pr 9: 7 corrects a **m** invites insults;
9: 12 you are a **m**, you alone will suffer.
20: 1 Wine is a **m** and beer a brawler;
22: 10 Drive out the **m**, and out goes

MOCKERS (MOCK)
Ps 1: 1 take or sit in the company of **m**,

MOCKING (MOCK)
Isa 50: 6 I did not hide my face from **m**

MODEL
1Th 1: 7 And so you became a **m** to all
2Th 3: 9 to offer ourselves as a **m** for you

MOMENT
Job 20: 5 the joy of the godless lasts but a **m**.
Ps 30: 5 For his anger lasts only a **m**, but his
Isa 66: 8 a nation be brought forth in a **m**?
Gal 2: 5 We did not give in to them for a **m**,

MONEY
Ecc 5: 10 loves **m** never has enough;
Isa 55: 1 and you who have no **m**, come,
Mt 6: 24 You cannot serve both God and **m**.
Lk 9: 3 bag, no bread, no **m**, no extra shirt.
1Co16: 2 you should set aside a sum of **m**
1Ti 3: 3 not quarrelsome, not a lover of **m**.
6: 10 the love of **m** is a root of all kinds
2Ti 3: 2 themselves, lovers of **m**, boastful,
Heb13: 5 your lives free from the love of **m**

MOON
Ps 121: 6 you by day, nor the **m** by night.
Joel 2: 31 the **m** to blood before the coming
1Co15: 41 the **m** another and the stars

MORNING
Ge 1: 5 was evening, and there was **m**—
Dt 28: 67 In the **m** you will say, "If only it
Ps 5: 3 In the **m**, Lord, you hear my
2Pe 1: 19 and the **m** star rises in your hearts.
Rev 22: 16 of David, and the bright **M** Star."

MORTAL
1Co15: 53 and the **m** with immortality.

MOSES

Levite; brother of Aaron (Ex 6:20; 1Ch 6:3). Put in basket into Nile; discovered and raised by Pharaoh's daughter (Ex 2:1–10). Fled to Midian after killing Egyptian (Ex 2:11–15). Married to Zipporah, fathered Gershom (Ex 2:16–22).

Called by the Lord to deliver Israel (Ex 3–4). Pharaoh's resistance (Ex 5). Ten plagues (Ex 7–11). Passover and Exodus (Ex 12–13). Led Israel through Red Sea (Ex 14). Song of deliverance (Ex 15:1–21). Brought water from rock (Ex 17:1–7). Raised hands to defeat Amalekites (Ex 17:8–16). Delegated judges (Ex 18; Dt 1:9–18).

Received Law at Sinai (Ex 19–23; 25–31; Jn 1:17). Announced Law to Israel (Ex 19:7–8; 24; 35). Broke tablets because of golden calf (Ex 32; Dt 9). Saw glory of the Lord (Ex 33–34). Supervised building of tabernacle (Ex 36–40). Set apart Aaron and priests (Lev 8–9). Numbered tribes (Nu 1–4; 26). Opposed by Aaron and Miriam (Nu 12). Sent spies into Canaan (Nu 13). Announced forty years of wandering for failure to enter land (Nu 14). Opposed by Korah (Nu 16). Forbidden to enter land for striking rock (Nu 20:1–13; Dt 1:37). Lifted bronze snake for healing (Nu 21:4–9; Jn 3:14). Final address to Israel (Dt 1–33). Succeeded by Joshua (Nu 27:12–23; Dt 34). Death (Dt 34:5–12).

"Law of Moses" (1Ki 2:3; Ezr 3:2; Mk 12:26; Lk 24:44). "Book of Moses" (2Ch 25:12; Ne 13:1). "Song of Moses" (Ex 15:1–21; Rev 15:3). "Prayer of Moses" (Ps 90).

MOTHER (MOTHER'S)
Ge 2: 24 why a man leaves his father and **m**
3: 20 because she would become the **m**
Ex 20: 12 "Honor your father and your **m**,
Lev 20: 9 they have cursed their father or **m**,
Dt 5: 16 "Honor your father and your **m**,
21: 18 does not obey his father and **m**
27: 16 who dishonors their father or **m**."
1Sa 2: 19 Each year his **m** made him a little
Ps 113: 9 her home as a happy **m** of children.
Pr 23: 25 May your father and **m** rejoice;
29: 15 left undisciplined disgraces its **m**.
31: 1 utterance his **m** taught him.
Isa 49: 15 "Can a **m** forget the baby at her
66: 13 As a **m** comforts her child, so will I
Mt 10: 37 or **m** more than me is not worthy
15: 4 said, 'Honor your father and **m**'
19: 5 a man will leave his father and **m**
Mk 7: 10 'Honor your father and **m**,' and,
10: 19 honor your father and **m**.'"
Jn 19: 27 to the disciple, "Here is your **m**."

MOTHER'S (MOTHER)
Job 1: 21 "Naked I came from my **m** womb,
Pr 1: 8 do not forsake your **m** teaching.

MOTHS
Mt 6: 19 where **m** and vermin destroy,

MOTIVES
Pr 16: 2 but **m** are weighed by the Lord.
1Co 4: 5 and will expose the **m** of the heart.
Php 1: 18 way, whether from false **m** or true,
1Th 2: 3 not spring from error or impure **m**,
Jas 4: 3 because you ask with wrong **m**,

MOUNTAIN (MOUNTAINS)
Mic 4: 2 let us go up to the **m** of the Lord,
Mt 17: 20 you can say to this **m**,

MOUNTAINS (MOUNTAIN)
Isa 52: 7 beautiful on the **m** are the feet

Isa 55: 12 the **m** and hills will burst into song
1Co13: 2 if I have a faith that can move **m**,

MOURN (MOURNING)
Ecc 3: 4 a time to **m** and a time to dance,
Isa 61: 2 of our God, to comfort all who **m**,
Mt 5: 4 Blessed are those who **m**, for they
Ro 12: 15 **m** with those who **m**.

MOURNING (MOURN)
Jer 31: 13 I will turn their **m** into gladness;
Rev 21: 4 There will be no more death' or **m**

MOUTH
Ps 19: 14 May these words of my **m** and this
40: 3 He put a new song in my **m**,
119:103 taste, sweeter than honey to my **m**!
Pr 27: 2 praise you, and not your own **m**;
Isa 51: 16 I have put my words in your **m**
Mt 12: 34 the **m** speaks what the heart is full
15: 11 but what comes out of their **m**,
Ro 10: 9 If you declare with your **m**,

MUD
Ps 40: 2 slimy pit, out of the **m** and mire;
Isa 57: 20 whose waves cast up mire and **m**.
2Pe 2: 22 returns to her wallowing in the **m**."

MULTITUDE (MULTITUDES)
Isa 31: 1 who trust in the **m** of their chariots
1Pe 4: 8 because love covers over a **m**
Rev 7: 9 there before me was a great **m**

MULTITUDES (MULTITUDE)
Joel 3: 14 **M**, **m** in the valley of decision!

MURDER (MURDERER MURDERERS)
Ex 20: 13 "You shall not **m**.
Mt 15: 19 **m**, adultery, sexual immorality,
Ro 13: 9 "You shall not **m**," "You shall not
Jas 2: 11 commit adultery but do commit **m**,

MURDERER (MURDER)
Nu 35: 16 a **m**; the **m** is to be put to death.
Jn 8: 44 He was a **m** from the beginning,
1Jn 3: 15 hates a brother or sister is a **m**,

MURDERERS (MURDER)
1Ti 1: 9 kill their fathers or mothers, for **m**,
Rev 21: 8 vile, the **m**, the sexually immoral,

MUSIC
Ps 27: 6 sing and make **m** to the Lord.
95: 2 and extol him with **m** and song.
98: 4 burst into jubilant song with **m**;
108: 1 sing and make **m** with all my soul.
Eph 5: 19 make **m** from your heart to the Lord,

MUSTARD
Mt 13: 31 kingdom of heaven is like a **m** seed,
17: 20 you have faith as small as a **m** seed,

MUZZLE
Dt 25: 4 Do not **m** an ox while it is treading
Ps 39: 1 I will put a **m** on my mouth while
1Co 9: 9 Do not **m** an ox while it is treading

MYRRH
Mt 2: 11 gifts of gold, frankincense and **m**.
Mk 15: 23 offered him wine mixed with **m**,

MYSTERY
Ro 16: 25 the revelation of the **m** hidden
1Co15: 51 Listen, I tell you a **m**: We will not
Eph 5: 32 This is a profound **m**—but I am
Col 1: 26 the **m** that has been kept hidden
1Ti 3: 16 the **m** from which true godliness

MYTHS
1Ti 4: 7 Have nothing to do with godless **m**

NADAB
Son of Jeroboam I; king of Israel (1Ki 15:25–32).

NAIL (NAILING)
Jn 20: 25 "Unless I see the **n** marks in his

NAILING (NAIL)
Ac 2: 23 him to death by **n** him to the cross.
Col 2: 14 has taken it away, **n** it to the cross.

NAKED
Ge 2: 25 Adam and his wife were both **n**,
Job 1: 21 womb, and **n** I will depart.
Isa 58: 7 you see the **n**, to clothe them,
2Co 5: 3 are clothed, we will not be found **n**.

NAME
Ex 3: 15 "This is my **n** forever, the **n** you
20: 7 "You shall not misuse the **n**
Dt 5: 11 "You shall not misuse the **n**
28: 58 this glorious and awesome **n**—
1Ki 5: 5 will build the temple for my **N**.'
2Ch 7: 14 people, who are called by my **n**,
Ps 34: 3 let us exalt his **n** together.
103: 1 my inmost being, praise his holy **n**.
147: 4 the stars and calls them each by **n**.
Pr 22: 1 A good **n** is more desirable than
30: 4 What is his **n**, and what is the **n**
Isa 40: 26 and calls forth each of them by **n**.
57: 15 who lives forever, whose **n** is holy:
Jer 14: 7 Lord, for the sake of your **n**.
Da 12: 1 everyone whose **n** is found written
Joel 2: 32 the **n** of the Lord will be saved;
Zec 14: 9 one Lord, and his **n** the only **n**.
Mt 1: 21 you are to give him the **n** Jesus,
6: 9 in heaven, hallowed be your **n**,
18: 20 where two or three gather in my **n**,
Jn 10: 3 He calls his own sheep by **n**
16: 24 not asked for anything in my **n**.
Ac 4: 12 is no other **n** under heaven given
Ro 10: 13 on the **n** of the Lord will be saved."
Php 2: 9 the **n** that is above every **n**,
Col 3: 17 do it all in the **n** of the Lord Jesus,
Heb 1: 4 the angels as the **n** he has inherited
Rev 20: 15 whose **n** was not found written

NAOMI
Mother-in-law of Ruth (Ru 1). Advised Ruth to seek marriage with Boaz (Ru 2–4).

NARROW
Mt 7: 13 "Enter through the **n** gate.

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NATHANAEL

Apostle (Jn 1:45–49; 21:2). Probably also called Bartholomew (Mt 10:3).

NATION (NATIONS)

Ge 12: 2 "I will make you into a great **n**,
Ps 33: 12 Blessed is the **n** whose God is
Pr 14: 34 Righteousness exalts a **n**, but sin
Isa 65: 1 a **n** that did not call on my name,
1Pe 2: 9 a holy **n**, God's special possession,
Rev 7: 9 could count, from every **n**, tribe,

NATIONS (NATION)

Ge 17: 4 You will be the father of many **n**.
18: 18 and all **n** on earth will be blessed
Ex 19: 5 of all **n** you will be my treasured
Ne 1: 8 I will scatter you among the **n**,
Ps 96: 3 Declare his glory among the **n**,
Isa 40: 15 Surely the **n** are like a drop
Eze 36: 23 has been profaned among the **n**,
Hag 2: 7 what is desired by all **n** will come,
Zec 8: 23 **n** will take firm hold of one Jew
14: 2 I will gather all the **n** to Jerusalem
Mt 28: 19 go and make disciples of all **n**,
Rev 21: 24 The **n** will walk by its light,

NATURAL (NATURE)

1Co 15: 44 it is sown a **n** body, it is raised

NATURE (NATURAL)

Php 2: 6 Who, being in very **n** God, did not

NAZARENE

Mt 2: 23 that he would be called a **N**.

NAZIRITE

Jdg 13: 7 because the boy will be a **N** of God

NECESSARY

Ro 13: 5 it is **n** to submit to the authorities,

NEED (NEEDS NEEDY)

Mt 6: 8 knows what you **n** before you ask
Ro 12: 13 the Lord's people who are in **n**.
1Co 12: 21 say to the hand, "I don't **n** you!"
1Jn 3: 17 sister in **n** but has no pity on them,

NEEDLE

Mt 19: 24 to go through the eye of a **n** than

NEEDS (NEED)

Isa 58: 11 he will satisfy your **n**
Php 4: 19 God will meet all your **n** according

NEEDY (NEED)

Pr 14: 21 is the one who is kind to the **n**.
14: 31 is kind to the **n** honors God.
31: 20 and extends her hands to the **n**.
Mt 6: 2 "So when you give to the **n**, do not

NEGLECT (NEGLECTED)

Ne 10: 39 "We will not **n** the house of our
Ps 119: 16 I will not **n** your word.
Ac 6: 2 for us to **n** the ministry of the word
1Ti 4: 14 not **n** your gift, which was given

NEGLECTED (NEGLECT)

Mt 23: 23 But you have **n** the more important

NEHEMIAH

Cupbearer of Artaxerxes (Ne 2:1); governor of Israel (Ne 8:9). Returned to Jerusalem to rebuild walls (Ne 2–6). With Ezra, reestablished worship (Ne 8). Prayer confessing nation's sin (Ne 9). Dedicated wall (Ne 12).

NEIGHBOR (NEIGHBOR'S)

Ex 20: 16 give false testimony against your **n**.
Lev 19: 18 people, but love your **n** as yourself.
Pr 27: 10 better a **n** nearby than a relative far
Mt 19: 19 and 'love your **n** as yourself.'"
Lk 10: 29 asked Jesus, "And who is my **n**?"
Ro 13: 10 Love does no harm to a **n**.

NEIGHBOR'S (NEIGHBOR)

Ex 20: 17 "You shall not covet your **n** house.
Dt 5: 21 "You shall not covet your **n** wife.
19: 14 not move your **n** boundary stone
Pr 25: 17 Seldom set foot in your **n** house—

NEW

Ps 40: 3 He put a **n** song in my mouth,
Ecc 1: 9 there is nothing **n** under the sun.
Isa 65: 17 I will create **n** heavens and a **n**
Jer 31: 31 I will make a **n** covenant
Eze 36: 26 I will give you a **n** heart and put a **n** spirit in you;
Mt 9: 17 they pour **n** wine into **n** wineskins,
Lk 22: 20 "This cup is the **n** covenant in my
2Co 5: 17 in Christ, the **n** creation has come:
Eph 4: 24 and to put on the **n** self,
2Pe 3: 13 to a **n** heaven and a **n** earth,
1Jn 2: 8 Yet I am writing you a **n** command;

NEWBORN (BEAR)

1Pe 2: 2 Like **n** babies, crave pure spiritual

NEWS

Isa 52: 7 the feet of those who bring good **n**,
Mk 1: 15 Repent and believe the good **n**!"
Lk 2: 10 I bring you good **n** that will cause
Ac 5: 42 proclaiming the good **n** that Jesus
17: 18 Paul was preaching the good **n**
Ro 10: 15 feet of those who bring good **n**!"

NICODEMUS

Pharisee who visited Jesus at night (Jn 3). Argued fair treatment of Jesus (Jn 7:50–52). With Joseph, prepared Jesus for burial (Jn 19:38–42).

NIGHT

Job 35: 10 Maker, who gives songs in the **n**,
Ps 1: 2 meditates on his law day and **n**.
91: 5 You will not fear the terror of **n**,
Jn 3: 2 He came to Jesus at **n** and said,
1Th 5: 2 Lord will come like a thief in the **n**.
5: 5 We do not belong to the **n**
Rev 21: 25 shut, for there will be no **n** there.

NOAH

Righteous man (Eze 14:14, 20) called to build ark (Ge 6–8; Heb 11:7; 1Pe 3:20; 2Pe 2:5). God's covenant with (Ge 9:1–17). Drunkenness of

(Ge 9:18–23). Blessed sons, cursed Canaan (Ge 9:24–27).

NOBLE
Ru 3: 11 you are a woman of **n** character.
Ps 45: 1 by a **n** theme as I recite my verses
Pr 12: 4 **n** character is her husband's crown,
31: 10 wife of **n** character who can find?
31: 29 "Many women do **n** things, but
Isa 32: 8 But the **n** make **n** plans, and by **n**
Lk 8: 15 good soil stands for those with a **n**
Php 4: 8 whatever is **n**, whatever is right,

NOTHING
Ne 9: 21 they lacked **n**, their clothes did not
Jer 32: 17 **N** is too hard for you.
Jn 15: 5 apart from me you can do **n**.

NULLIFY
Ro 3: 31 we, then, **n** the law by this faith?

OATH
Dt 7: 8 and kept the **o** he swore to your

OBEDIENCE (OBEY)
2Ch31: 21 of God's temple and in **o** to the law
Ro 1: 5 all the Gentiles to the **o** that comes
6: 16 to death, or to **o**, which leads
2Jn : 6 that we walk in **o** to his commands.

OBEDIENT (OBEY)
Lk 2: 51 with them and was **o** to them.
Php 2: 8 himself by becoming **o** to death—
1Pe 1: 14 As **o** children, do not conform

OBEY (OBEDIENCE OBEDIENT OBEYED)
Ex 12: 24 "**O** these instructions as a lasting
Dt 6: 3 be careful to **o** so that it may go
13: 4 Keep his commands and **o** him;
21: 18 son who does not **o** his father
30: 2 God and **o** him with all your heart
32: 46 to **o** carefully all the words
1Sa 15: 22 To **o** is better than sacrifice,
Ps 119: 34 your law and **o** it with all my heart.
Mt 28: 20 to **o** everything I have commanded
Jn 14: 23 who loves me will **o** my teaching.
Ac 5: 29 must **o** God rather than human
Ro 6: 16 you are slaves of the one you **o**—
Gal 5: 3 he is obligated to **o** the whole law.
Eph 6: 1 **o** your parents in the Lord, for this
6: 5 heart, just as you would **o** Christ.
Col 3: 20 **o** your parents in everything,
1Ti 3: 4 and see that his children **o** him,

OBEYED (OBEY)
Ps 119: 4 precepts that are to be fully **o**.
Jnh 3: 3 Jonah **o** the word of the Lord
Jn 17: 6 to me and they have **o** your word.
Heb11: 8 as his inheritance, **o** and went,
1Pe 3: 6 who **o** Abraham and called him

OBLIGATED
Ro 1: 14 I am **o** both to Greeks
Gal 5: 3 that he is **o** to obey the whole law.

OBSCENITY
Eph 5: 4 Nor should there be **o**, foolish talk

OBSOLETE
Heb 8: 13 "new," he has made the first one **o**;

OBTAINED
Ro 9: 30 not pursue righteousness, have **o** it,
Php 3: 12 Not that I have already **o** all this,

OFFENSE (OFFENSIVE)
Pr 17: 9 would foster love covers over an **o**,
19: 11 it is to one's glory to overlook an **o**.

OFFENSIVE (OFFENSE)
Ps 139: 24 See if there is any **o** way in me,

OFFER (OFFERED OFFERING OFFERINGS)
Ro 12: 1 **o** your bodies as a living sacrifice,
Heb13: 15 let us continually **o** to God

OFFERED (OFFER)
Heb 7: 27 sins once for all when he **o** himself.

OFFERING (OFFER)
Ge 22: 8 provide the lamb for the burnt **o**,
Ps 40: 6 Sacrifice and **o** you did not desire
Isa 53: 10 the Lord makes his life an **o**
Mt 5: 23 if you are **o** your gift at the altar
Eph 5: 2 himself up for us as a fragrant **o**
Heb10: 5 "Sacrifice and **o** you did not desire,

OFFERINGS (OFFER)
Mal 3: 8 we robbing you?' "In tithes and **o**.
Mk 12: 33 is more important than all burnt **o**

OFFICER
2Ti 2: 4 tries to please his commanding **o**.

OFFSPRING
Ge 3: 15 and between your **o** and hers;
12: 7 "To your **o** I will give this land."

OIL
Ps 23: 5 You anoint my head with **o**;
Isa 61: 3 the **o** of joy instead of mourning,
Heb 1: 9 by anointing you with the **o** of joy."

OLIVE (OLIVES)
Zec 4: 3 Also there are two **o** trees by it,
Ro 11: 17 though a wild **o** shoot, have been
Rev 11: 4 They are "the two **o** trees"

OLIVES (OLIVE)
Jas 3: 12 can a fig tree bear **o**, or a grapevine

OMEGA
Rev 1: 8 "I am the Alpha and the **O**,"

OMRI
King of Israel (1Ki 16:21–26).

OPINIONS
1Ki 18: 21 will you waver between two **o**?
Pr 18: 2 but delight in airing their own **o**.

OPPORTUNITY
Ro 7: 11 sin, seizing the **o** afforded
Gal 6: 10 as we have **o**, let us do good to all
Eph 5: 16 making the most of every **o**,
Col 4: 5 make the most of every **o**.

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

1Ti 5:14 to give the enemy no **o** for slander.
OPPOSES
Jas 4:6 "God **o** the proud but shows favor
1Pe 5:5 "God **o** the proud but shows favor
OPPRESS (OPPRESSED)
Ex 22:21 "Do not mistreat or **o** a foreigner,
Zec 7:10 Do not **o** the widow
OPPRESSED (OPPRESS)
Ps 9:9 The Lord is a refuge for the **o**,
Isa 53:7 He was **o** and afflicted, yet he did
Zec 10:2 the people wander like sheep **o**
ORDERLY
1Co14:40 be done in a fitting and **o** way.
ORGIES
Gal 5:21 drunkenness, **o**, and the like.
1Pe 4:3 lust, drunkenness, **o**,
ORIGIN
2Pe 1:21 For prophecy never had its **o**
ORPHANS
Jn 14:18 I will not leave you as **o**;
Jas 1:27 to look after **o** and widows in their
OUTCOME
Heb13:7 Consider the **o** of their way of life
1Pe 4:17 what will the **o** be for those who do
OUTSIDERS
Col 4:5 wise in the way you act toward **o**;
1Th 4:12 daily life may win the respect of **o**
1Ti 3:7 also have a good reputation with **o**,
OUTSTANDING
SS 5:10 and ruddy, **o** among ten thousand.
Ro 13:8 Let no debt remain **o**,
OUTSTRETCHED
Ex 6:6 I will redeem you with an **o** arm
Jer 27:5 power and **o** arm I made the earth
Eze 20:33 with a mighty hand and an **o** arm
OUTWEIGHS
2Co 4:17 an eternal glory that far **o** them all.
OVERCOME (OVERCOMES)
Mt 16:18 and the gates of Hades will not **o** it.
Mk 9:24 help me **o** my unbelief!"
Jn 16:33 But take heart! I have **o** the world."
Ro 12:21 Do not be **o** by evil, but **o** evil
1Jn 5:4 is the victory that has **o** the world,
OVERCOMES (OVERCOME)
1Jn 5:4 everyone born of God **o** the world.
5:5 Who is it that **o** the world?
OVERFLOW (OVERFLOWS)
Ps 119:171 May my lips **o** with praise, for you
Ro 15:13 so that you may **o** with hope
2Co 4:15 may cause thanksgiving to **o**
1Th 3:12 love increase and **o** for each other
OVERFLOWS (OVERFLOW)
Ps 23:5 anoint my head with oil; my cup **o**.
OVERJOYED (JOY)
Da 6:23 The king was **o** and gave orders
Mt 2:10 they saw the star, they were **o**.
Jn 20:20 disciples were **o** when they saw
Ac 12:14 she was so **o** she ran back without
1Pe 4:13 that you may be **o** when his glory
OVERSEER (OVERSEERS)
1Ti 3:1 to be an **o** desires a noble task.
3:2 Now the **o** is to be above reproach,
Titus1:7 Since an **o** manages God's
OVERSEERS (OVERSEER)
Ac 20:28 the Holy Spirit has made you **o**.
Php 1:1 together with the **o** and deacons:
OVERWHELMED
Ps 38:4 My guilt has **o** me like a burden
65:3 When we were **o** by sins,
Mt 26:38 "My soul is **o** with sorrow
Mk 7:37 People were **o** with amazement.
OWE
Ro 13:7 Give to everyone what you **o** them:
Phm :19 that you **o** me your very self.
OX
Dt 25:4 Do not muzzle an **o** while it is
Isa 11:7 the lion will eat straw like the **o**.
1Co 9:9 "Do not muzzle an **o** while it is
PAGANS
Mt 5:47 Do not even **p** do that?
1Pe 2:12 such good lives among the **p** that,
PAIN (PAINFUL PAINS)
Job 33:19 on a bed of **p** with constant distress
Jn 16:21 to a child has **p** because her time
PAINFUL (PAIN)
Ge 3:17 through **p** toil you will eat food
Heb12:11 seems pleasant at the time, but **p**.
PAINS (PAIN)
Ge 3:16 "I will make your **p** in childbearing
PALMS
Isa 49:16 engraved you on the **p** of my hands
PANTS
Ps 42:1 As the deer **p** for streams of water, so my soul **p** for you,
PARADISE
Lk 23:43 today you will be with me in **p**."
2Co12:4 was caught up to **p** and heard
Rev 2:7 tree of life, which is in the **p** of God.
PARALYZED
Mk 2:3 bringing to him a **p** man,
PARDON (PARDONS)
Isa 55:7 and to our God, for he will freely **p**.
PARDONS (PARDON)
Mic 7:18 like you, who **p** sin and forgives
PARENT (PARENT'S PARENTS)
Pr 17:21 is no joy for the **p** of a godless fool.
PARENT'S (PARENT)
Pr 15:5 A fool spurns a **p** discipline,
PARENTS (PARENT)
Ex 20:5 for the sin of the **p** to the third

Pr 17: 6 **p** are the pride of their children.
Lk 18: 29 sisters or **p** or children for the sake
21: 16 You will be betrayed even by **p**,
Ro 1: 30 of doing evil; they disobey their **p**;
2Co 12: 14 not have to save up for their **p**,
Eph 6: 1 Children, obey your **p** in the Lord,
Col 3: 20 obey your **p** in everything,
2Ti 3: 2 disobedient to their **p**, ungrateful,

PARTIALITY
Dt 10: 17 who shows no **p** and accepts no
2Ch 19: 7 our God there is no injustice or **p**
Lk 20: 21 that you do not show **p** but teach

PARTICIPATION
1Co 10: 16 bread that we break a **p** in the body

PASS
Ex 12: 13 I see the blood, I will **p** over you.
La 1: 12 nothing to you, all you who **p** by?
Lk 21: 33 but my words will never **p** away.
1Co 13: 8 there is knowledge, it will **p** away.

PASSION (PASSIONS)
1Co 7: 9 to marry than to burn with **p**.

PASSIONS (PASSION)
Gal 5: 24 have crucified the flesh with its **p**
Titus 2: 12 to ungodliness and worldly **p**,

PASSOVER
Ex 12: 11 Eat it in haste; it is the Lord's **P**.
Dt 16: 1 celebrate the **P** of the Lord your
1Co 5: 7 For Christ, our **P** lamb, has been

PAST
Isa 43: 18 do not dwell on the **p**.
Ro 15: 4 was written in the **p** was written
Heb 1: 1 the **p** God spoke to our ancestors

PASTORS
Eph 4: 11 the evangelists, the **p** and teachers,

PASTURE (PASTURES)
Ps 37: 3 dwell in the land and enjoy safe **p**.
100: 3 are his people, the sheep of his **p**.
Jer 50: 7 their verdant **p**, the Lord,
Eze 34: 13 I will **p** them on the mountains
Jn 10: 9 come in and go out, and find **p**.

PASTURES (PASTURE)
Ps 23: 2 He makes me lie down in green **p**,

PATCH
Mt 9: 16 No one sews a **p** of unshrunk cloth

PATH (PATHS)
Ps 27: 11 me in a straight **p** because of my
119: 9 person stay on the **p** of purity?
119: 105 to my feet and a light for my **p**.
Pr 15: 19 the **p** of the upright is a highway.
15: 24 The **p** of life leads upward
Isa 26: 7 The **p** of the righteous is level;
Lk 1: 79 guide our feet into the **p** of peace."
2Co 6: 3 no stumbling block in anyone's **p**,

PATHS (PATH)
Ps 23: 3 He guides me along the right **p**
Ps 25: 4 ways, Lord, teach me your **p**.
Pr 3: 6 and he will make your **p** straight.
Ro 11: 33 and his **p** beyond tracing out!
Heb 12: 13 "Make level **p** for your feet,"

PATIENCE (PATIENT)
Pr 19: 11 A person's wisdom yields **p**; it is
2Co 6: 6 understanding, **p** and kindness;
Col 1: 11 may have great endurance and **p**,
3: 12 humility, gentleness and **p**.

PATIENT (PATIENCE PATIENTLY)
Pr 15: 18 the one who is **p** calms a quarrel.
Ro 12: 12 Be joyful in hope, **p** in affliction,
1Co 13: 4 Love is **p**, love is kind. It does not
Eph 4: 2 be **p**, bearing with one another
1Th 5: 14 help the weak, be **p** with everyone.

PATIENTLY (PATIENT)
Ps 40: 1 I waited **p** for the Lord;
Ro 8: 25 we do not yet have, we wait for it **p**.

PATTERN
Ro 5: 14 who is a **p** of the one to come.
12: 2 not conform to the **p** of this world,
2Ti 1: 13 keep as the **p** of sound teaching,

PAUL

Also called Saul (Ac 13:9). Pharisee from Tarsus (Ac 9:11; Php 3:5). Apostle (Gal 1). At stoning of Stephen (Ac 8:1). Persecuted Church (Ac 9:1–2; Gal 1:13). Vision of Jesus on road to Damascus (Ac 9:4–9; 26:12–18). In Arabia (Gal 1:17). Preached in Damascus; escaped death through the wall in a basket (Ac 9:19–25). In Jerusalem; sent back to Tarsus (Ac 9:26–30).

Brought to Antioch by Barnabas (Ac 11:22–26). First missionary journey to Cyprus and Galatia (Ac 13–14). Stoned at Lystra (Ac 14:19–20). At Jerusalem council (Ac 15). Split with Barnabas over Mark (Ac 15:36–41).

Second missionary journey with Silas (Ac 16–20). Called to Macedonia (Ac 16:6–10). Freed from prison in Philippi (Ac 16:16–40). In Thessalonica (Ac 17:1–9). Speech in Athens (Ac 17:16–33). In Corinth (Ac 18). In Ephesus (Ac 19). Return to Jerusalem (Ac 20). Farewell to Ephesian elders (Ac 20:13–38). Arrival in Jerusalem (Ac 21:1–26). Arrested (Ac 21:27–36). Addressed crowds (Ac 22), Sanhedrin (Ac 23:1–11). Transferred to Caesarea (Ac 23:12–35). Trial before Felix (Ac 24), Festus (Ac 25:1–12). Before Agrippa (Ac 25:13—26:32). Voyage to Rome; shipwreck (Ac 27). Arrival in Rome (Ac 28).

PAY (REPAID REPAY)
Lev 26: 43 They will **p** for their sins because
Pr 22: 17 **P** attention and turn your ear
Mt 22: 17 Is it right to **p** the imperial tax
Ro 13: 6 This is also why you **p** taxes,
2Pe 1: 19 you will do well to **p** attention to it,

PEACE (PEACEMAKERS)
Nu 6: 26 toward you and give you **p**."'

Ps 34: 14 and do good; seek **p** and pursue it.
85: 10 righteousness and **p** kiss each
119:165 Great **p** have those who love your
122: 6 Pray for the **p** of Jerusalem:
Pr 14: 30 A heart at **p** gives life to the body,
17: 1 Better a dry crust with **p** and quiet
Isa 9: 6 Everlasting Father, Prince of **P**.
26: 3 in perfect **p** those whose minds are
48: 22 "There is no **p**," says the Lord,
Zec 9: 10 He will proclaim **p** to the nations.
Mt 10: 34 I did not come to bring **p**,
Lk 2: 14 and on earth **p** to those on whom
Jn 14: 27 **P** I leave with you; my **p** I give you.
16: 33 so that in me you may have **p**.
Ro 5: 1 we have **p** with God through our
1Co 7: 15 God has called us to live in **p**.
14: 33 is not a God of disorder but of **p**—
Gal 5: 22 Spirit is love, joy, **p**, forbearance,
Eph 2: 14 For he himself is our **p**, who has
Php 4: 7 the **p** of God, which transcends
Col 1: 20 by making **p** through his blood,
3: 15 Let the **p** of Christ rule in your
1Th 5: 3 people are saying, "**P** and safety,"
2Th 3: 16 the Lord of **p** himself give you **p**
2Ti 2: 22 love and **p**, along with those who
1Pe 3: 11 they must seek **p** and pursue it.
Rev 6: 4 power to take **p** from the earth

PEACEMAKERS (PEACE)
Mt 5: 9 Blessed are the **p**, for they will be
Jas 3: 18 **P** who sow in peace reap a harvest

PEARL (PEARLS)
Rev 21: 21 each gate made of a single **p**.

PEARLS (PEARL)
Mt 7: 6 do not throw your **p** to pigs.
13: 45 like a merchant looking for fine **p**.
1Ti 2: 9 or gold or **p** or expensive clothes,
Rev 21: 21 The twelve gates were twelve **p**,

PEKAH
King of Israel (2Ki 15:25–31; Isa 7:1).

PEKAHIAH
Son of Menahem; king of Israel (2Ki 15:22–26).

PEN
Mt 5: 18 not the least stroke of a **p**,

PENTECOST
Ac 2: 1 When the day of **P** came, they were

PEOPLE (PEOPLES)
Dt 32: 9 For the Lord's portion is his **p**,
Ru 1: 16 Your **p** will be my **p** and your God
2Ch 7: 14 if my **p**, who are called by my
Ps 133: 1 it is when God's **p** live together
Jer 24: 7 They will be my **p**, and I will be
Zec 2: 11 in that day and will become my **p**.
Mt 4: 19 I will send you out to fish for **p**."
Lk 2: 10 will cause great joy for all the **p**.
Jn 12: 32 earth, will draw all **p** to myself."
Ac 15: 14 to choose a **p** for his name
Ro 5: 12 and in this way death came to all **p**,
8: 27 for God's **p** in accordance
1Co 9: 22 I have become all things to all **p** so
2Co 6: 16 their God, and they will be my **p**."
Eph 1: 18 glorious inheritance in his holy **p**,
6: 18 keep on praying for all the Lord's **p**.
1Ti 2: 4 who wants all **p** to be saved
2Ti 2: 2 entrust to reliable **p** who will also
Titus 2: 14 himself a **p** that are his very own,
Heb 9: 27 Just as **p** are destined to die once,
1Pe 2: 9 But you are a chosen **p**, a royal
Rev 5: 8 which are the prayers of God's **p**.
19: 8 the righteous acts of God's holy **p**.)
21: 3 They will be his **p**, and God

PEOPLES (PEOPLE)
Da 7: 14 **p** of every language worshiped him
Mic 4: 1 the hills, and **p** will stream to it.

PERCEIVING
Isa 6: 9 be ever seeing, but never **p**.'

PERFECT (PERFECTER PERFECTION)
SS 6: 9 but my dove, my **p** one, is unique,
Isa 26: 3 in **p** peace those whose minds are
Mt 5: 48 Be **p**, therefore, as your heavenly Father is **p**.
Ro 12: 2 his good, pleasing and **p** will.
2Co 12: 9 my power is made **p** in weakness."
Col 3: 14 binds them all together in **p** unity.
Heb 9: 11 more **p** tabernacle that is not made
10: 14 he has made **p** forever those who
Jas 1: 17 good and **p** gift is from above,
1: 25 looks intently into the **p** law
3: 2 never at fault in what they say is **p**,
1Jn 4: 18 But **p** love drives out fear,

PERFECTER (PERFECT)
Heb 12: 2 on Jesus, the pioneer and **p** of faith.

PERFECTION (PERFECT)
Ps 119: 96 To all **p** I see a limit, but your
Heb 7: 11 If **p** could have been attained

PERFORMS
Ps 77: 14 You are the God who **p** miracles;

PERISH (PERISHABLE)
Ps 102: 26 They will **p**, but you remain;
Lk 13: 3 you repent, you too will all **p**.
Jn 10: 28 eternal life, and they shall never **p**;
Col 2: 22 that are all destined to **p** with use,
Heb 1: 11 They will **p**, but you remain;
2Pe 3: 9 you, not wanting anyone to **p**,

PERISHABLE (PERISH)
1Co 15: 42 The body that is sown is **p**, it is

PERJURERS
1Ti 1: 10 for slave traders and liars and **p**—

PERMIT
1Ti 2: 12 I do not **p** a woman to teach

PERSECUTE (PERSECUTED PERSECUTION)
Mt 5: 11 **p** you and falsely say all kinds

Jn 15: 20 persecuted me, they will **p** you
Ac 9: 4 "Saul, Saul, why do you **p** me?"
Ro 12: 14 Bless those who **p** you; bless and

PERSECUTED (PERSECUTE)
1Co 4: 12 when we are **p**, we endure it;
2Ti 3: 12 godly life in Christ Jesus will be **p**,

PERSECUTION (PERSECUTE)
Ro 8: 35 trouble or hardship or **p** or famine

PERSEVERANCE (PERSEVERE)
Ro 5: 3 we know that suffering produces **p**;
5: 4 **p**, character; and character, hope.
Heb12: 1 let us run with **p** the race marked
Jas 1: 3 testing of your faith produces **p**.
2Pe 1: 6 and to self-control, **p**; and to **p**,

PERSEVERE (PERSEVERANCE PERSEVERED PERSEVERES)
1Ti 4: 16 **P** in them, because if you do,
Heb10: 36 You need to **p** so that when you

PERSEVERED (PERSEVERE)
Heb11: 27 he **p** because he saw him who is
Jas 5: 11 count as blessed those who have **p**.
Rev 2: 3 You have **p** and have endured

PERSEVERES (PERSEVERE)
1Co13: 7 trusts, always hopes, always **p**.
Jas 1: 12 one who **p** under trial because,

PERSUADE
2Co 5: 11 to fear the Lord, we try to **p** others.

PERVERSION (PERVERT)
Lev 18: 23 sexual relations with it; that is a **p**.
Jude : 7 up to sexual immorality and **p**.

PERVERT (PERVERSION)
Gal 1: 7 are trying to **p** the gospel of Christ.

PESTILENCE
Ps 91: 6 the **p** that stalks in the darkness,

PETER
Apostle, brother of Andrew, also called Simon (Mt 10:2; Mk 3:16; Lk 6:14; Ac 1:13), and Cephas (Jn 1:42). Confession of Christ (Mt 16:13–20; Mk 8:27–30; Lk 9:18–27). At transfiguration (Mt 17:1–8; Mk 9:2–8; Lk 9:28–36; 2Pe 1:16–18). Caught fish with coin (Mt 17:24–27). Denial of Jesus predicted (Mt 26:31–35; Mk 14:27–31; Lk 22:31–34; Jn 13:31–38). Denied Jesus (Mt 26:69–75; Mk 14:66–72; Lk 22:54–62; Jn 18:15–27). Commissioned by Jesus to shepherd his flock (Jn 21:15–23).

Speech at Pentecost (Ac 2). Healed beggar (Ac 3:1–10). Speech at temple (Ac 3:11–26), before Sanhedrin (Ac 4:1–22). In Samaria (Ac 8:14–25). Sent by vision to Cornelius (Ac 10). Announced salvation of Gentiles in Jerusalem (Ac 11; 15). Freed from prison (Ac 12). Inconsistency at Antioch (Gal 2:11–21). At Jerusalem Council (Ac 15).

PHARISEES
Mt 5: 20 surpasses that of the **P**

PHILIP
1. Apostle (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:14; Jn 1:43–48; 14:8; Ac 1:13).
2. Deacon (Ac 6:1–7); evangelist in Samaria (Ac 8:4–25), to Ethiopian (Ac 8:26–40).

PHILOSOPHY
Col 2: 8 through hollow and deceptive **p**,

PHYLACTERIES
Mt 23: 5 They make their **p** wide

PHYSICAL
1Ti 4: 8 For **p** training is of some value,
Jas 2: 16 does nothing about their **p** needs,

PIECES
Ge 15: 17 and passed between the **p**.
Jer 34: 18 two and then walked between its **p**.

PIERCE (PIERCED)
Ps 22: 16 they **p** my hands and my feet.

PIERCED (PIERCE)
Isa 53: 5 he was **p** for our transgressions,
Zec 12: 10 the one they have **p**, and they will
Jn 19: 37 will look on the one they have **p**."

PIGS
Mt 7: 6 do not throw your pearls to **p**.

PILATE
Governor of Judea. Questioned Jesus (Mt 27:1–26; Mk 15:15; Lk 22:66—23:25; Jn 18:28—19:16); sent him to Herod (Lk 23:6–12); consented to his crucifixion when crowds chose Barabbas (Mt 27:15–26; Mk 15:6–15; Lk 23:13–25; Jn 19:1–10).

PILLAR
Ge 19: 26 back, and she became a **p** of salt.
Ex 13: 21 by night in a **p** of fire to give them
1Ti 3: 15 the **p** and foundation of the truth.

PIT
Ps 40: 2 He lifted me out of the slimy **p**,
103: 4 who redeems your life from the **p**
Mt 15: 14 the blind, both will fall into a **p**."

PITIED
1Co15: 19 we are of all people most to be **p**.

PLAGUE
2Ch 6: 28 famine or **p** comes to the land,

PLAIN
Ro 1: 19 God has made it **p** to them.

PLAN (PLANNED PLANS)
Pr 14: 22 those who **p** what is good find love
Eph 1: 11 to the **p** of him who works

PLANK
Mt 7: 3 attention to the **p** in your own eye?
Lk 6: 41 attention to the **p** in your own eye?

PLANNED (PLAN)
Ps 40: 5 have done, the things you **p** for us.
Isa 46: 11 what I have **p**, that I will do.
Heb11: 40 since God had **p** something better

PLANS (PLAN)
Ps 20: 4 heart and make all your **p** succeed.
33: 11 But the **p** of the Lord stand firm
Pr 20: 18 **P** are established by seeking advice;
Isa 32: 8 But the noble make noble **p**,

PLANTED (PLANTS)
Ps 1: 3 person is like a tree **p** by streams
Mt 15: 13 Father has not **p** will be pulled
1Co 3: 6 I **p** the seed, Apollos watered it,
PLANTS (PLANTED)
1Co 3: 7 neither the one who **p** nor the one
9: 7 Who **p** a vineyard and does not eat
PLATTER
Mk 6: 25 head of John the Baptist on a **p**."
PLAYED
Lk 7: 32 "'We **p** the pipe for you, and you
1Co14: 7 what tune is being **p** unless there is
PLEADED
2Co12: 8 Three times I **p** with the Lord
PLEASANT (PLEASE)
Ps 16: 6 lines have fallen for me in **p** places;
133: 1 and **p** it is when God's people live
147: 1 how **p** and fitting to praise him!
Heb12: 11 No discipline seems **p** at the time,
PLEASE (PLEASANT PLEASED PLEASES PLEASING PLEASURE PLEASURES)
Pr 20: 23 and dishonest scales do not **p** him.
Jer 6: 20 your sacrifices do not **p** me."
Jn 5: 30 for I seek not to **p** myself but him
Ro 8: 8 realm of the flesh cannot **p** God.
15: 2 Each of us should **p** our neighbors
1Co 7: 32 how he can **p** the Lord.
10: 33 even as I try to **p** everyone in every
2Co 5: 9 So we make it our goal to **p** him,
Gal 1: 10 If I were still trying to **p** people,
1Th 4: 1 you how to live in order to **p** God,
2Ti 2: 4 tries to **p** his commanding officer.
Heb11: 6 faith it is impossible to **p** God,
PLEASED (PLEASE)
Mt 3: 17 with him I am well **p**."
1Co 1: 21 God was **p** through the foolishness
Col 1: 19 God was **p** to have all his fullness
Heb11: 5 commended as one who **p** God.
2Pe 1: 17 with him I am well **p**."
PLEASES (PLEASE)
Ps 135: 6 The Lord does whatever **p** him,
Pr 15: 8 the prayer of the upright **p** him.
Jn 3: 8 The wind blows wherever it **p**.
8: 29 alone, for I always do what **p** him."
Col 3: 20 in everything, for this **p** the Lord.
1Ti 2: 3 is good, and **p** God our Savior,
1Jn 3: 22 his commands and do what **p** him.
PLEASING (PLEASE)
Ps 104: 34 May my meditation be **p** to him,
Ro 12: 1 living sacrifice, holy and **p** to God
Php 4: 18 an acceptable sacrifice, **p** to God.
Heb13: 21 he work in us what is **p** to him,
PLEASURE (PLEASE)
Ps 147: 10 His **p** is not in the strength
Pr 21: 17 loves **p** will become poor;
Eze 18: 32 For I take no **p** in the death
Eph 1: 5 in accordance with his **p** and will—
1: 9 of his will according to his good **p**,
2Ti 3: 4 lovers of **p** rather than lovers
PLEASURES (PLEASE)
Ps 16: 11 with eternal **p** at your right hand.
Heb11: 25 than to enjoy the fleeting **p** of sin.
2Pe 2: 13 reveling in their **p** while they feast
PLENTIFUL
Mt 9: 37 "The harvest is **p** but the workers
PLOW (PLOWSHARES)
Lk 9: 62 "No one who puts a hand to the **p**
PLOWSHARES (PLOW)
Isa 2: 4 They will beat their swords into **p**
Joel 3: 10 Beat your **p** into swords and your
PLUNDER
Ex 3: 22 And so you will **p** the Egyptians."
POINT
Jas 2: 10 yet stumbles at just one **p** is guilty
POISON
Mk 16: 18 and when they drink deadly **p**,
Jas 3: 8 It is a restless evil, full of deadly **p**.
POLLUTE (POLLUTED)
Nu 35: 33 "'Do not **p** the land where you
Jude : 8 these ungodly people **p** their own
POLLUTED (POLLUTE)
Ezr 9: 11 is a land **p** by the corruption
Pr 25: 26 a **p** well are the righteous who give
Ac 15: 20 to abstain from food **p** by idols,
Jas 1: 27 oneself from being **p** by the world.
PONDER
Ps 64: 9 of God and **p** what he has done.
119: 95 me, but I will **p** your statutes.
POOR (POVERTY)
Dt 15: 4 need be no **p** people among you,
15: 11 There will always be **p** people
Ps 34: 6 This **p** man called, and the Lord
82: 3 uphold the cause of the **p**
112: 9 freely scattered their gifts to the **p**,
Pr 13: 7 another pretends to be **p**, yet has
14: 31 oppresses the **p** shows contempt
19: 1 Better the **p** whose walk is
19: 17 Whoever is kind to the **p** lends
22: 2 Rich and **p** have this in common:
22: 9 they share their food with the **p**.
28: 6 Better the **p** whose walk is
31: 20 She opens her arms to the **p**
Isa 61: 1 to proclaim good news to the **p**.
Mt 5: 3 "Blessed are the **p** in spirit,
11: 5 good news is proclaimed to the **p**.
19: 21 your possessions and give to the **p**,
26: 11 The **p** you will always have
Mk 12: 42 a **p** widow came and put in two
Ac 10: 4 and gifts to the **p** have come up as
1Co13: 3 If I give all I possess to the **p**
2Co 8: 9 yet for your sake he became **p**,
Jas 2: 2 and a **p** man in filthy old clothes

PORTION
Dt 32: 9 For the Lord's **p** is his people,
2Ki 2: 9 "Let me inherit a double **p** of your
La 3: 24 to myself, "The Lord is my **p**;

POSSESS (POSSESSING POSSESSION POSSESSIONS)
Nu 33: 53 for I have given you the land to **p**.

POSSESSING (POSSESS)
2Co 6: 10 nothing, and yet **p** everything.

POSSESSION (POSSESS)
Ge 15: 7 give you this land to take **p** of it."
Nu 13: 30 go up and take **p** of the land,
Eph 1: 14 of those who are God's **p**—

POSSESSIONS (POSSESS)
Lk 12: 15 not consist in an abundance of **p**."
2Co 12: 14 because what I want is not your **p**
1Jn 3: 17 If anyone has material **p** and sees

POSSIBLE
Mt 19: 26 but with God all things are **p**."
Mk 9: 23 "Everything is **p** for one who
10: 27 all things are **p** with God."
Ro 12: 18 If it is **p**, as far as it depends on you
1Co 9: 22 by all **p** means I might save some.

POT (POTSHERDS POTTER POTTERY)
2Ki 4: 40 of God, there is death in the **p**!"
Jer 18: 4 the potter formed it into another **p**,

POTSHERDS (POT)
Isa 45: 9 but **p** among the **p** on the ground.

POTTER (POT)
Isa 29: 16 Can the pot say to the **p**,
45: 9 Does the clay say to the **p**,
64: 8 We are the clay, you are the **p**;
Jer 18: 6 do with you, Israel, as this **p** does?"
Ro 9: 21 Does not the **p** have the right

POTTERY (POT)
Ro 9: 21 of clay some **p** for special purposes

POUR (POURED)
Ps 62: 8 **p** out your hearts to him, for God
Joel 2: 28 I will **p** out my Spirit on all people.
Mal 3: 10 **p** out so much blessing that there
Ac 2: 17 I will **p** out my Spirit on all people.

POURED (POUR)
Ac 10: 45 the Holy Spirit had been **p** out
Ro 5: 5 because God's love has been **p**

POVERTY (POOR)
Pr 14: 23 but mere talk leads only to **p**.
21: 5 profit as surely as haste leads to **p**.
30: 8 give me neither **p** nor riches,
Mk 12: 44 she, out of her **p**, put in everything
2Co 8: 2 their extreme **p** welled up in rich
8: 9 you through his **p** might become

POWER (POWERFUL POWERS)
1Ch 29: 11 greatness and the **p** and the glory
2Ch 32: 7 for there is a greater **p** with us than
Job 36: 22 "God is exalted in his **p**. Who is
Ps 63: 2 and beheld your **p** and your glory.
68: 34 Proclaim the **p** of God,
147: 5 Great is our Lord and mighty in **p**;
Pr 24: 5 The wise prevail through great **p**,
Isa 40: 10 Sovereign Lord comes with **p**,
Zec 4: 6 'Not by might nor by **p**, but by my
Mt 22: 29 the Scriptures or the **p** of God.
24: 30 of heaven, with **p** and great glory.
Ac 1: 8 you will receive **p** when the Holy
4: 33 With great **p** the apostles
10: 38 with the Holy Spirit and **p**,
Ro 1: 16 because it is the **p** of God
1Co 1: 18 us who are being saved it is the **p**
15: 56 is sin, and the **p** of sin is the law.
2Co 12: 9 so that Christ's **p** may rest on me.
Eph 1: 19 his incomparably great **p** for us
Php 3: 10 to know the **p** of his resurrection
Col 1: 11 strengthened with all **p** according
2Ti 1: 7 us timid, but gives us **p**,
Heb 7: 16 of the **p** of an indestructible life.
Rev 4: 11 to receive glory and honor and **p**,
19: 1 glory and **p** belong to our God,
20: 6 second death has no **p** over them,

POWERFUL (POWER)
Ps 29: 4 The voice of the Lord is **p**;
Lk 24: 19 **p** in word and deed before God
2Th 1: 7 in blazing fire with his **p** angels.
Heb 1: 3 sustaining all things by his **p** word.
Jas 5: 16 prayer of a righteous person is **p**

POWERLESS
Ro 5: 6 when we were still **p**, Christ died
8: 3 what the law was **p** to do because it

POWERS (POWER)
Ro 8: 38 present nor the future, nor any **p**,
1Co 12: 10 to another miraculous **p**,
Col 1: 16 whether thrones or **p** or rulers
2: 15 And having disarmed the **p**

PRACTICE
Lev 19: 26 "'Do not **p** divination or seek
Mt 23: 3 for they do not **p** what they preach.
Lk 8: 21 hear God's word and put it into **p**."
Ro 12: 13 who are in need. **P** hospitality.
1Ti 5: 4 put their religion into **p** by caring

PRAISE (PRAISED PRAISES PRAISING)
Ex 15: 2 and I will **p** him, my father's God,
Dt 32: 3 Oh, **p** the greatness of our God!
Ru 4: 14 "**P** be to the Lord, who this day
2Sa 22: 47 **P** be to my Rock!
1Ch 16: 25 the Lord and most worthy of **p**;
2Ch 20: 21 to **p** him for the splendor of his
Ps 8: 2 Through the **p** of children
33: 1 it is fitting for the upright to **p** him.
34: 1 his **p** will always be on my lips.
40: 3 mouth, a hymn of **p** to our God.
48: 1 and most worthy of **p**, in the city
68: 19 **P** be to the Lord, to God our Savior,
89: 5 The heavens **p** your wonders,

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Ps 100: 4 give thanks to him and **p** his name.
105: 2 Sing to him, sing **p** to him;
106: 1 **P** the Lord. Give thanks
119:175 Let me live that I may **p** you,
139: 14 I **p** you because I am fearfully
145: 21 Let every creature **p** his holy name
146: 1 **P** the Lord. **P** the Lord, my soul.
150: 2 **p** him for his surpassing greatness.
150: 6 Let everything that has breath **p** the Lord. **P** the Lord.
Pr 27: 2 Let someone else **p** you, and not
27: 21 but people are tested by their **p**.
31: 31 let her works bring her **p** at the city
Mt 21: 16 Lord, have called forth your **p**'?"
Jn 12: 43 they loved human **p** more than **p** from God.
Eph 1: 6 to the **p** of his glorious grace,
1: 12 might be for the **p** of his glory.
1: 14 to the **p** of his glory.
Heb13: 15 offer to God a sacrifice of **p**—
Jas 5: 13 Let them sing songs of **p**.

PRAISED (PRAISE)
1Ch29: 10 David **p** the Lord in the presence
Ne 8: 6 Ezra **p** the Lord, the great God;
Da 2: 19 Then Daniel **p** the God of heaven
Ro 9: 5 who is God over all, forever **p**!
1Pe 4: 11 God may be **p** through Jesus Christ

PRAISES (PRAISE)
2Sa 22: 50 I will sing the **p** of your name.
Ps 47: 6 Sing **p** to God, sing **p**; sing **p**
147: 1 good it is to sing **p** to our God,
Pr 31: 28 her husband also, and he **p** her:

PRAISING (PRAISE)
Ac 10: 46 speaking in tongues and **p** God.
1Co14: 16 when you are **p** God in the Spirit,

PRAY (PRAYED PRAYER PRAYERS PRAYING)
Dt 4: 7 our God is near us whenever we **p**
1Sa 12: 23 the Lord by failing to **p** for you.
2Ch 7: 14 will humble themselves and **p**
Job 42: 8 My servant Job will **p** for you,
Ps 122: 6 **P** for the peace of Jerusalem:
Mt 5: 44 and **p** for those who persecute you,
6: 5 for they love to **p** standing
6: 9 "This, then, is how you should **p**:
26: 36 here while I go over there and **p**."
Lk 6: 28 you, **p** for those who mistreat you.
18: 1 them that they should always **p**
22: 40 them, "**P** that you will not fall
Ro 8: 26 not know what we ought to **p** for,
1Co14: 13 in a tongue should **p** that they may
1Th 5: 17 **p** continually,
Jas 5: 13 Let them **p**. Is anyone happy?
5: 16 **p** for each other so that you may be

PRAYED (PRAY)
1Sa 1: 27 I **p** for this child, and the Lord
Jnh 2: 1 From inside the fish Jonah **p**
Mk 14: 35 and **p** that if possible the hour

PRAYER (PRAY)
2Ch30: 27 for their **p** reached heaven, his holy
Ezr 8: 23 about this, and he answered our **p**.
Ps 6: 9 the Lord accepts my **p**.
86: 6 Hear my **p**, Lord; listen to my
Pr 15: 8 the **p** of the upright pleases him.
Isa 56: 7 house will be called a house of **p**
Mt 21: 13 house will be called a house of **p**,'
Mk 11: 24 whatever you ask for in **p**,
Jn 17: 15 My **p** is not that you take them
Ac 6: 4 will give our attention to **p**
Php 4: 6 every situation, by **p** and petition,
Jas 5: 15 the **p** offered in faith will make
1Pe 3: 12 and his ears are attentive to their **p**,

PRAYERS (PRAY)
1Ch 5: 20 He answered their **p**, because they
Mk 12: 40 and for a show make lengthy **p**.
1Pe 3: 7 so that nothing will hinder your **p**.
Rev 5: 8 which are the **p** of God's people.

PRAYING (PRAY)
Mk 11: 25 And when you stand **p**, if you hold
Jn 17: 9 I am not **p** for the world,
Ac 16: 25 Silas were **p** and singing hymns
Eph 6: 18 always keep on **p** for all the Lord's

PREACH (PREACHED PREACHING)
Mt 23: 3 they do not practice what they **p**.
Mk 16: 15 and **p** the gospel to all creation.
Ac 9: 20 At once he began to **p**
Ro 10: 15 how can anyone **p** unless they are
15: 20 to **p** the gospel where Christ was
1Co 1: 17 to baptize, but to **p** the gospel—
1: 23 but we **p** Christ crucified:
9: 14 that those who **p** the gospel should
9: 16 Woe to me if I do not **p** the gospel!
2Co10: 16 so that we can **p** the gospel
Gal 1: 8 heaven should **p** a gospel other
2Ti 4: 2 **P** the word; be prepared in season

PREACHED (PREACH)
Mk 13: 10 the gospel must first be **p** to all
Ac 8: 4 who had been scattered **p** the word
1Co 9: 27 so that after I have **p** to others,
15: 1 remind you of the gospel I **p** to you
2Co11: 4 a Jesus other than the Jesus we **p**,
Gal 1: 8 a gospel other than the one we **p**
Php 1: 18 false motives or true, Christ is **p**.
1Ti 3: 16 angels, was **p** among the nations,

PREACHING (PREACH)
Ro 10: 14 can they hear without someone **p**
1Co 9: 18 in **p** the gospel I may offer it free
1Ti 4: 13 of Scripture, to **p** and to teaching.
5: 17 especially those whose work is **p**

PRECEPTS
Ps 19: 8 The **p** of the Lord are right,
111: 7 all his **p** are trustworthy.
111: 10 all who follow his **p** have good
119: 40 How I long for your **p**!

Ps 119: 69 I keep your **p** with all my heart.
119:104 I gain understanding from your **p**;
119:159 See how I love your **p**; preserve my

PRECIOUS
Ps 19: 10 They are more **p** than gold,
116: 15 **P** in the sight of the Lord is
Pr 8: 11 for wisdom is more **p** than rubies,
Isa 28: 16 stone, a **p** cornerstone for a sure
1Pe 1: 19 but with the **p** blood of Christ,
2: 6 a chosen and **p** cornerstone,
2Pe 1: 4 us his very great and **p** promises,

PREDESTINED (DESTINY)
Ro 8: 29 **p** to be conformed to the image
8: 30 And those he **p**, he also called;
Eph 1: 5 he **p** us for adoption to sonship
1: 11 been **p** according to the plan

PREDICTION
Jer 28: 9 Lord only if his **p** comes true."

PREPARE (PREPARED)
Ps 23: 5 You **p** a table before me
Am 4: 12 to you, Israel, **p** to meet your God."
Jn 14: 2 that I am going there to **p** a place

PREPARED (PREPARE)
Mt 25: 34 the kingdom **p** for you since
1Co 2: 9 the things God has **p** for those who
Eph 2: 10 which God **p** in advance for us
2Ti 4: 2 be **p** in season and out of season;
1Pe 3: 15 Always be **p** to give an answer

PRESENCE (PRESENT)
Ex 25: 30 Put the bread of the **P** on this table
Ezr 9: 15 not one of us can stand in your **p**."
Ps 31: 20 the shelter of your **p** you hide them
89: 15 who walk in the light of your **p**,
90: 8 secret sins in the light of your **p**.
139: 7 Where can I flee from your **p**?
Jer 5: 22 "Should you not tremble in my **p**?
Heb 9: 24 now to appear for us in God's **p**.
Jude : 24 before his glorious **p** without fault

PRESENT (PRESENCE)
2Co 11: 2 that I might **p** you as a pure virgin
Eph 5: 27 and to **p** her to himself as a radiant
2Ti 2: 15 Do your best to **p** yourself to God

PRESERVES
Ps 119: 50 Your promise **p** my life.

PRESS (PRESSED PRESSURE)
Php 3: 14 I **p** on toward the goal to win

PRESSED (PRESS)
Lk 6: 38 A good measure, **p** down,

PRESSURE (PRESS)
2Co 1: 8 We were under great **p**, far beyond
11: 28 I face daily the **p** of my concern

PREVAILS
1Sa 2: 9 "It is not by strength that one **p**;

PRICE
Job 28: 18 the **p** of wisdom is beyond rubies.
1Co 6: 20 you were bought at a **p**.
7: 23 You were bought at a **p**;

PRIDE (PROUD)
Pr 8: 13 I hate **p** and arrogance,
16: 18 **P** goes before destruction,
Da 4: 37 those who walk in **p** he is able
Gal 6: 4 can take **p** in themselves alone,
Jas 1: 9 to take **p** in their high position.

PRIEST (PRIESTHOOD PRIESTS)
Heb 4: 14 a great high **p** who has ascended
4: 15 do not have a high **p** who is unable
7: 26 Such a high **p** truly meets our need
8: 1 We do have such a high **p**, who sat

PRIESTHOOD (PRIEST)
Heb 7: 24 lives forever, he has a permanent **p**.
1Pe 2: 5 a spiritual house to be a holy **p**,
2: 9 people, a royal **p**, a holy nation,

PRIESTS (PRIEST)
Ex 19: 6 you will be for me a kingdom of **p**
Rev 5: 10 a kingdom and **p** to serve our God,

PRINCE
Isa 9: 6 Everlasting Father, **P** of Peace.
Jn 12: 31 now the **p** of this world will be
Ac 5: 31 him to his own right hand as **P**

PRISON (PRISONER)
Isa 42: 7 blind, to free captives from **p**
Mt 25: 36 I was in **p** and you came to visit
Rev 20: 7 Satan will be released from his **p**

PRISONER (PRISON)
Ro 7: 23 making me a **p** of the law of sin
Eph 3: 1 the **p** of Christ Jesus for the sake

PRIVILEGE
2Co 8: 4 for the **p** of sharing in this service

PRIZE
1Co 9: 24 Run in such a way as to get the **p**.
Php 3: 14 on toward the goal to win the **p**

PROCLAIM (PROCLAIMED)
1Ch 16: 23 **p** his salvation day after day.
Ps 19: 1 the skies **p** the work of his hands.
50: 6 the heavens **p** his righteousness,
68: 34 **P** the power of God, whose majesty
118: 17 will **p** what the Lord has done.
Zec 9: 10 He will **p** peace to the nations.
Ac 20: 27 I have not hesitated to **p** to you
Ro 10: 8 concerning faith that we **p**:
1Co 11: 26 cup, you **p** the Lord's death until

PROCLAIMED (PROCLAIM)
Ro 15: 19 I have fully **p** the gospel of Christ.
Col 1: 23 has been **p** to every creature under

PRODUCE (PRODUCES)
Mt 3: 8 **P** fruit in keeping with repentance.
3: 10 does not **p** good fruit will be cut

PRODUCES (PRODUCE)
Pr 30: 33 so stirring up anger **p** strife."
Ro 5: 3 that suffering **p** perseverance;

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Heb12: 11 it **p** a harvest of righteousness
PROFANE
Lev 22: 32 Do not **p** my holy name, for I must
PROFESS
1Ti 2: 10 for women who **p** to worship God.
Heb 4: 14 let us hold firmly to the faith we **p**.
10: 23 unswervingly to the hope we **p**,
PROMISE (PROMISED PROMISES)
1Ki 8: 20 Lord has kept the **p** he made:
Ac 2: 39 The **p** is for you and your children
Gal 3: 14 faith we might receive the **p**
1Ti 4: 8 holding **p** for both the present life
2Pe 3: 9 Lord is not slow in keeping his **p**,
PROMISED (PROMISE)
Ex 3: 17 I have **p** to bring you up out of
Dt 26: 18 his treasured possession as he **p**,
Ps 119: 57 I have **p** to obey your words.
Ro 4: 21 had power to do what he had **p**.
Heb10: 23 we profess, for he who **p** is faithful.
2Pe 3: 4 say, "Where is this 'coming' he **p**?
PROMISES (PROMISE)
Jos 21: 45 of all the Lord's good **p** to Israel
Ro 9: 4 law, the temple worship and the **p**.
2Pe 1: 4 us his very great and precious **p**,
PROMPTED
1Th 1: 3 by faith, your labor **p** by love,
2Th 1: 11 and your every deed **p** by faith.
PROPHECIES (PROPHESY)
1Co13: 8 But where there are **p**, they will
1Th 5: 20 Do not treat **p** with contempt
PROPHECY (PROPHESY)
1Co14: 1 gifts of the Spirit, especially **p**.
2Pe 1: 20 that no **p** of Scripture came
PROPHESY (PROPHECIES PROPHECY PROPHESYING PROPHET PROPHETS)
Joel 2: 28 Your sons and daughters will **p**,
Mt 7: 22 did we not **p** in your name
1Co14: 39 be eager to **p**, and do not forbid
PROPHESYING (PROPHESY)
Ro 12: 6 If your gift is **p**, then prophesy
PROPHET (PROPHESY)
Dt 18: 18 for them a **p** like you from among
Am 7: 14 neither a **p** nor the son of a **p**,
Mt 10: 41 Whoever welcomes a **p** as a **p** will
Lk 4: 24 "no **p** is accepted in his hometown.
PROPHETS (PROPHESY)
Ps 105: 15 do my **p** no harm."
Mt 5: 17 come to abolish the Law or the **P**;
7: 12 for this sums up the Law and the **P**.
24: 24 messiahs and false **p** will appear
Lk 24: 25 believe all that the **p** have spoken!
Ac 10: 43 All the **p** testify about him
1Co12: 28 apostles, second **p**, third teachers,
14: 32 The spirits of **p** are subject
Eph 2: 20 foundation of the apostles and **p**,
Heb 1: 1 ancestors through the **p** at many
1Pe 1: 10 the **p**, who spoke of the grace
PROSPER (PROSPERITY PROSPERS)
Pr 28: 25 who trust in the Lord will **p**.
PROSPERITY (PROSPER)
Ps 73: 3 when I saw the **p** of the wicked.
PROSPERS (PROSPER)
Ps 1: 3 whatever they do **p**.
PROSTITUTE (PROSTITUTES)
1Co 6: 15 of Christ and unite them with a **p**?
PROSTITUTES (PROSTITUTE)
Mt 21: 31 **p** are entering the kingdom of God
Lk 15: 30 your property with **p** comes home,
PROSTRATE
Dt 9: 18 again I fell **p** before the Lord
PROTECT (PROTECTS)
Ps 32: 7 you will **p** me from trouble
Pr 2: 11 Discretion will **p** you,
Jn 17: 11 **p** them by the power of your name,
PROTECTS (PROTECT)
1Co13: 7 It always **p**, always trusts,
PROUD (PRIDE)
Pr 16: 5 The Lord detests all the **p**
Ro 12: 16 Do not be **p**, but be willing
1Co13: 4 envy, it does not boast, it is not **p**.
PROVE
1Co 4: 2 been given a trust must **p** faithful.
PROVIDE (PROVIDED PROVIDES)
Ge 22: 8 "God himself will **p** the lamb
Isa 43: 20 because I **p** water in the wilderness
1Ti 5: 8 Anyone who does not **p** for their
PROVIDED (PROVIDE)
Jnh 1: 17 Now the Lord **p** a huge fish
4: 6 the Lord God **p** a leafy plant
4: 7 dawn the next day God **p** a worm,
4: 8 rose, God **p** a scorching east wind,
PROVIDES (PROVIDE)
1Ti 6: 17 who richly **p** us with everything
1Pe 4: 11 do so with the strength God **p**,
PROVOKED
Ecc 7: 9 Do not be quickly **p** in your spirit,
PRUDENT
Pr 14: 15 the **p** give thought to their steps.
19: 14 but a **p** wife is from the Lord.
Am 5: 13 Therefore the **p** keep quiet in such
PRUNING
Isa 2: 4 and their spears into **p** hooks.
Joel 3: 10 and your **p** hooks into spears.
PSALMS
Eph 5: 19 speaking to one another with **p**,
Col 3: 16 with all wisdom through **p**,
PUBLICLY
Ac 20: 20 have taught you **p** and from house
PUFFS
1Co 8: 1 knowledge **p** up while love builds

PUNISH (PUNISHED)
Ex 32:34 to **p**, I will **p** them for their sin."
Pr 23:13 if you **p** them with the rod,
Isa 13:11 I will **p** the world for its evil,
1Pe 2:14 by him to **p** those who do wrong

PUNISHED (PUNISH)
La 3:39 should the living complain when **p**
2Th 1:9 They will be **p** with everlasting
Heb10:29 to be **p** who has trampled the Son

PURE (PURIFIES PURIFY PURITY)
2Sa 22:27 to the **p** you show yourself **p**,
Ps 24:4 who has clean hands and a **p** heart,
51:10 Create in me a **p** heart, O God,
Pr 20:9 can say, "I have kept my heart **p**;
Isa 52:11 Come out from it and be **p**,
Hab 1:13 Your eyes are too **p** to look on evil;
Mt 5:8 Blessed are the **p** in heart, for they
2Co11:2 I might present you as a **p** virgin
Php 4:8 whatever is **p**, whatever is lovely,
1Ti 5:22 the sins of others. Keep yourself **p**.
Titus1:15 To the **p**, all things are **p**,
2:5 to be self-controlled and **p**, to be
Heb13:4 all, and the marriage bed kept **p**,
1Jn 3:3 purify themselves, just as he is **p**.

PURGE
Pr 20:30 and beatings **p** the inmost being.

PURIFIES (PURE)
1Jn 1:7 of Jesus, his Son, **p** us from all sin.

PURIFY (PURE)
Titus2:14 to **p** for himself a people that are
1Jn 1:9 and **p** us from all unrighteousness.
3:3 this hope in him **p** themselves,

PURITY (PURE)
Ps 119:9 person stay on the path of **p**?
2Co 6:6 in **p**, understanding,
1Ti 4:12 conduct, in love, in faith and in **p**.

PURPOSE
Pr 19:21 it is the Lord's **p** that prevails.
Isa 55:11 achieve the **p** for which I sent it.
Ro 8:28 been called according to his **p**.

PURSES
Lk 12:33 Provide **p** for yourselves that will

PURSUE
Ps 34:14 and do good; seek peace and **p** it.
2Ti 2:22 of youth and **p** righteousness, faith,
1Pe 3:11 they must seek peace and **p** it.

QUALITIES (QUALITY)
2Pe 1:8 if you possess these **q** in increasing

QUALITY (QUALITIES)
1Co 3:13 and the fire will test the **q** of each

QUARREL (QUARRELSOME)
Pr 15:18 the one who is patient calms a **q**.
17:14 Starting a **q** is like breaching a dam
17:19 Whoever loves a **q** loves sin;

QUARRELSOME (QUARREL)
Pr 19:13 **q** wife is like the constant dripping
1Ti 3:3 gentle, not **q**, not a lover of money.
2Ti 2:24 the Lord's servant must not be **q**

QUENCH
1Th 5:19 Do not **q** the Spirit.

QUICK-TEMPERED
Titus1:7 not **q**, not given to drunkenness,

QUIET (QUIETNESS)
Ps 23:2 he leads me beside **q** waters,
Lk 19:40 "if they keep **q**, the stones will cry
1Ti 2:2 peaceful and **q** lives in all godliness
1Pe 3:4 beauty of a gentle and **q** spirit,

QUIETNESS (QUIET)
Isa 30:15 in **q** and trust is your strength,
32:17 its effect will be **q** and confidence
1Ti 2:11 woman should learn in **q** and full

QUIVER
Ps 127:5 Blessed is the man whose **q** is full

RACE
Ecc 9:11 The **r** is not to the swift or
1Co 9:24 that in a **r** all the runners run,
2Ti 4:7 I have finished the **r**, I have kept
Heb12:1 with perseverance the **r** marked

RACHEL
Daughter of Laban (Ge 29:16); wife of Jacob (Ge 29:28); bore two sons (Ge 30:22–24; 35:16–24; 46:19).

RADIANCE (RADIANT)
Heb 1:3 The Son is the **r** of God's glory

RADIANT (RADIANCE)
Ex 34:29 that his face was **r** because he had
Ps 34:5 Those who look to him are **r**;
SS 5:10 My beloved is **r** and ruddy,
Isa 60:5 Then you will look and be **r**,
Eph 5:27 her to himself as a **r** church,

RAIN (RAINBOW)
Mt 5:45 and sends **r** on the righteous

RAINBOW (RAIN)
Ge 9:13 I have set my **r** in the clouds, and it

RAISED (RISE)
Ro 4:25 was **r** to life for our justification.
10:9 your heart that God **r** him
1Co15:4 he was **r** on the third day according

RAN (RUN)
Jnh 1:3 But Jonah **r** away from the Lord

RANSOM
Mt 20:28 to give his life as a **r** for many."
Heb 9:15 he has died as a **r** to set them free

RAVENS
1Ki 17:6 The **r** brought him bread and meat
Lk 12:24 Consider the **r**: They do not sow

READ (READS)
Jos 8:34 Joshua **r** all the words of the law—
Ne 8:8 understood what was being **r**.
2Co 3:2 hearts, known and **r** by everyone.

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

READS (READ)
Rev 1: 3 is the one who **r** aloud the words
REAL (REALITY)
Jn 6: 55 For my flesh is **r** food and my blood is **r** drink.
REALITY (REAL)
Col 2: 17 the **r**, however, is found in Christ.
REAP (REAPS)
Job 4: 8 evil and those who sow trouble **r** it.
2Co 9: 6 generously will also **r** generously.
REAPS (REAP)
Gal 6: 7 A man **r** what he sows.
REASON
1Pe 3: 15 asks you to give the **r** for the hope
REBEKAH
Sister of Laban, secured as bride for Isaac (Ge 24). Mother of Esau and Jacob (Ge 25:19–26). Taken by Abimelek as sister of Isaac; returned (Ge 26:1–11). Encouraged Jacob to trick Isaac out of blessing (Ge 27:1–17).
REBEL
Mt 10: 21 children will **r** against their parents
REBUKE (REBUKING)
Pr 9: 8 **r** the wise and they will love you.
27: 5 Better is open **r** than hidden love.
Lk 17: 3 or sister sins against you, **r** them;
2Ti 4: 2 correct, **r** and encourage—
Rev 3: 19 Those whom I love I **r**
REBUKING (REBUKE)
2Ti 3: 16 and is useful for teaching, **r**,
RECEIVE (RECEIVED RECEIVES)
Ac 1: 8 you will **r** power when the Holy
20: 35 more blessed to give than to **r**.'"
2Co 6: 17 no unclean thing, and I will **r** you."
Rev 4: 11 to **r** glory and honor and power,
RECEIVED (RECEIVE)
Mt 6: 2 they have **r** their reward in full.
10: 8 Freely you have **r**; freely give.
1Co 11: 23 For I **r** from the Lord what I
Col 2: 6 just as you **r** Christ Jesus as Lord,
1Pe 4: 10 should use whatever gift you have **r**
RECEIVES (RECEIVE)
Mt 7: 8 For everyone who asks **r**;
Ac 10: 43 who believes in him **r** forgiveness
RECKONING
Isa 10: 3 What will you do on the day of **r**,
RECOGNIZE (RECOGNIZED)
Mt 7: 16 By their fruit you will **r** them.
RECOGNIZED (RECOGNIZE)
Mt 12: 33 be bad, for a tree is **r** by its fruit.
Ro 7: 13 in order that sin might be **r** as sin,
RECOMPENSE
Isa 40: 10 him, and his **r** accompanies him.
RECONCILE (RECONCILED RECONCILIATION)
Eph 2: 16 and in one body to **r** both of them
RECONCILED (RECONCILE)
Mt 5: 24 First go and be **r** to them;
Ro 5: 10 were **r** to him through the death
2Co 5: 18 who **r** us to himself through Christ
RECONCILIATION (RECONCILE)
Ro 5: 11 whom we have now received **r**.
11: 15 For if their rejection brought **r**
2Co 5: 18 and gave us the ministry of **r**:
5: 19 committed to us the message of **r**.
RECORD
Ps 130: 3 you, Lord, kept a **r** of sins, Lord,
RED
Isa 1: 18 though they are **r** as crimson,
REDEEM (REDEEMED REDEEMER REDEMPTION)
2Sa 7: 23 out to **r** as a people for himself,
Ps 49: 7 No one can **r** the life of another
Gal 4: 5 to **r** those under the law, that we
REDEEMED (REDEEM)
Gal 3: 13 Christ **r** us from the curse of the law
1Pe 1: 18 you were **r** from the empty way
REDEEMER (REDEEM)
Job 19: 25 I know that my **r** lives,
REDEMPTION (REDEEM)
Ps 130: 7 love and with him is full **r**.
Lk 21: 28 because your **r** is drawing near."
Ro 8: 23 to sonship, the **r** of our bodies.
Eph 1: 7 we have **r** through his blood,
Col 1: 14 in whom we have **r**, the forgiveness
Heb 9: 12 blood, thus obtaining eternal **r**.
REFUGE
Nu 35: 11 some towns to be your cities of **r**,
Dt 33: 27 The eternal God is your **r**,
Ru 2: 12 wings you have come to take **r**."
Ps 46: 1 God is our **r** and strength,
91: 2 "He is my **r** and my fortress,
REHOBOAM
Son of Solomon (1Ki 11:43; 1Ch 3:10). Harsh treatment of subjects caused divided kingdom (1Ki 12:1–24; 14:21–31; 2Ch 10–12).
REIGN (REIGNS)
Ro 6: 12 not let sin **r** in your mortal body
1Co 15: 25 he must **r** until he has put all his
2Ti 2: 12 if we endure, we will also **r** with
Rev 20: 6 **r** with him for a thousand years.
REIGNS (REIGN)
Ex 15: 18 "The Lord **r** for ever and ever."
REJECTED (REJECTS)
Ps 118: 22 stone the builders **r** has become
Isa 53: 3 was despised and **r** by mankind,
1Ti 4: 4 nothing is to be **r** if it is received
1Pe 2: 4 **r** by humans but chosen by God
2: 7 stone the builders **r** has become
REJECTS (REJECTED)
Lk 10: 16 whoever **r** me **r** him who sent me."

Jn 3:36 whoever **r** the Son will not see life,

REJOICE (JOY)
Ps 66:6 come, let us **r** in him.
118:24 let us **r** today and be glad.
Pr 5:18 you **r** in the wife of your youth.
Lk 10:20 but **r** that your names are written
15:6 together and says, '**R** with me;
Ro 12:15 **R** with those who **r**;
Php 4:4 **R** in the Lord always. I will say it again: **R**!

REJOICES (JOY)
Isa 61:10 my soul **r** in my God.
Lk 1:47 and my spirit **r** in God my Savior,
1Co12:26 is honored, every part **r** with it.
13:6 delight in evil but **r** with the truth.

REJOICING (JOY)
Ps 30:5 night, but **r** comes in the morning.
Lk 15:7 the same way there will be more **r**
Ac 5:41 **r** because they had been counted

RELIABLE
2Ti 2:2 entrust to **r** people who will also be

RELIGION
1Ti 5:4 of all to put their **r** into practice
Jas 1:27 **R** that God our Father accepts as

REMAIN (REMAINS)
Nu 33:55 you allow to **r** will become barbs
Jn 15:7 If you **r** in me and my words **r**
Ro 13:8 Let no debt **r** outstanding,
1Co13:13 And now these three **r**:

REMAINS (REMAIN)
Ps 146:6 he **r** faithful forever.
2Ti 2:13 if we are faithless, he **r** faithful,
Heb 7:3 Son of God, he **r** a priest forever.

REMEMBER (REMEMBERS REMEMBRANCE)
Ex 20:8 "**R** the Sabbath day by keeping it
1Ch16:12 **R** the wonders he has done,
Ecc 12:1 **R** your Creator in the days of your
Jer 31:34 and will **r** their sins no more."
Gal 2:10 we should continue to **r** the poor,
Php 1:3 I thank my God every time I **r** you.
Heb 8:12 and will **r** their sins no more."

REMEMBERS (REMEMBER)
Ps 103:14 are formed, he **r** that we are dust.
111:5 he **r** his covenant forever.
Isa 43:25 own sake, and **r** your sins no more.

REMEMBRANCE (REMEMBER)
1Co11:24 is for you; do this in **r** of me."

REMIND
Jn 14:26 will **r** you of everything I have said

REMOVED
Ps 30:11 you **r** my sackcloth and clothed me
103:12 so far has he **r** our transgressions
Jn 20:1 that the stone had been **r**

RENEW (RENEWED RENEWING)
Ps 51:10 and **r** a steadfast spirit within me.
Isa 40:31 in the Lord will **r** their strength.

RENEWED (RENEW)
Ps 103:5 that your youth is **r** like the eagle's.
2Co 4:16 yet inwardly we are being **r** day

RENEWING (RENEW)
Ro 12:2 transformed by the **r** of your mind.

RENOUNCE (RENOUNCES)
Da 4:27 **R** your sins by doing what is right,

RENOUNCES (RENOUNCE)
Pr 28:13 confesses and **r** them finds mercy.

RENOWN
Isa 63:12 to gain for himself everlasting **r**,
Jer 32:20 have gained the **r** that is still yours.

REPAID (PAY)
Lk 14:14 you will be **r** at the resurrection
Col 3:25 Anyone who does wrong will be **r**

REPAY (PAY)
Dt 32:35 It is mine to avenge; I will **r**.
Ru 2:12 May the Lord **r** you for what you
Ro 12:19 I will **r**," says the Lord.
1Pe 3:9 the contrary, **r** evil with blessing,

REPENT (REPENTANCE REPENTS)
Job 42:6 I despise myself and **r** in dust
Jer 15:19 "If you **r**, I will restore you that you
Mt 4:17 time on Jesus began to preach, "**R**,
Lk 13:3 But unless you **r**, you too will all
17:3 and if they **r**, forgive them.
Ac 2:38 Peter replied, "**R** and be baptized,
17:30 all people everywhere to **r**.

REPENTANCE (REPENT)
Lk 3:8 Produce fruit in keeping with **r**.
5:32 call the righteous, but sinners to **r**."
Ac 26:20 demonstrate their **r** by their deeds.
2Co 7:10 Godly sorrow brings **r** that leads

REPENTS (REPENT)
Lk 15:10 of God over one sinner who **r**."

REPROACH
1Ti 3:2 Now the overseer is to be above **r**,

REPUTATION
1Ti 3:7 also have a good **r** with outsiders,

REQUESTS
Ps 20:5 May the Lord grant all your **r**.
Php 4:6 present your **r** to God.

REQUIRE
Mic 6:8 what does the Lord **r** of you?

RESCUE (RESCUES)
Da 6:20 been able to **r** you from the lions?"
2Pe 2:9 the Lord knows how to **r** the godly

RESCUES (RESCUE)
1Th 1:10 who **r** us from the coming wrath.

RESIST
Jas 4:7 **R** the devil, and he will flee
1Pe 5:9 **R** him, standing firm in the faith,

RESOLVED
Da 1:8 Daniel **r** not to defile himself

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1Co 2: 2 For I **r** to know nothing while I

RESPECT (RESPECTABLE)
Lev 19: 3 of you must **r** your mother
19: 32 show **r** for the elderly and revere
Mal 1: 6 a master, where is the **r** due me?"
1Th 4: 12 that your daily life may win the **r**
1Ti 3: 4 do so in a manner worthy of full **r**.
1Pe 2: 17 Show proper **r** to everyone,
3: 7 them with **r** as the weaker partner

RESPECTABLE (RESPECT)
1Ti 3: 2 self-controlled, **r**, hospitable,

REST
Ex 31: 15 seventh day is a day of sabbath **r**,
Ps 91: 1 the Most High will **r** in the shadow
Jer 6: 16 and you will find **r** for your souls.
Mt 11: 28 burdened, and I will give you **r**.

RESTITUTION
Ex 22: 3 who steals must certainly make **r**,
Lev 6: 5 must make **r** in full, add a fifth

RESTORE
Ps 51: 12 **R** to me the joy of your salvation
Gal 6: 1 by the Spirit should **r** that person

RESURRECTION
Mt 22: 30 the **r** people will neither marry nor
Lk 14: 14 be repaid at the **r** of the righteous."
Jn 11: 25 said to her, "I am the **r** and the life.
Ro 1: 4 in power by his **r** from the dead:
1Co 15: 12 say that there is no **r** of the dead?
Php 3: 10 yes, to know the power of his **r**
Rev 20: 5 This is the first **r**.

RETRIBUTION
Jer 51: 56 For the Lord is a God of **r**;

RETURN
2Ch 30: 9 If you **r** to the Lord, then your
Ne 1: 9 but if you **r** to me and obey my
Isa 55: 11 It will not **r** to me empty, but will
Hos 6: 1 "Come, let us **r** to the Lord.
Joel 2: 12 "**r** to me with all your heart,

REVEALED (REVELATION)
Dt 29: 29 but the things **r** belong to us
Isa 40: 5 the glory of the Lord will be **r**,
Mt 11: 25 and **r** them to little children.
Ro 1: 17 the righteousness of God is **r**—
8: 18 with the glory that will be **r** in us.

REVELATION (REVEALED)
Gal 1: 12 I received it by **r** from Jesus Christ.
Rev 1: 1 The **r** from Jesus Christ,

REVENGE (VENGEANCE)
Lev 19: 18 "'Do not seek **r** or bear a grudge
Ro 12: 19 Do not take **r**, my dear friends,

REVERE (REVERENCE)
Ps 33: 8 all the people of the world **r** him.

REVERENCE (REVERE)
Lev 19: 30 and have **r** for my sanctuary.
Ps 5: 7 in **r** I bow down toward your holy
Col 3: 22 of heart and **r** for the Lord.
1Pe 3: 2 see the purity and **r** of your lives.

REVIVE
Ps 85: 6 Will you not **r** us again, that your
Isa 57: 15 to **r** the spirit of the lowly and to **r**

REWARD (REWARDED)
Ps 19: 11 in keeping them there is great **r**.
127: 3 the Lord, offspring a **r** from him.
Pr 19: 17 he will **r** them for what they have
25: 22 head, and the Lord will **r** you.
Jer 17: 10 to **r** each person according to their
Mt 5: 12 because great is your **r** in heaven,
6: 5 they have received their **r** in full.
16: 27 he will **r** each person according
1Co 3: 14 the builder will receive a **r**.
Rev 22: 12 My **r** is with me, and I will give

REWARDED (REWARD)
Ru 2: 12 May you be richly **r** by the Lord,
Ps 18: 24 The Lord has **r** me according
Pr 14: 14 and the good **r** for theirs.
1Co 3: 8 and they will each be **r** according

RICH (RICHES)
Pr 23: 4 Do not wear yourself out to get **r**;
Jer 9: 23 or the **r** boast of their riches,
Mt 19: 23 for someone who is **r** to enter
2Co 6: 10 poor, yet making many **r**;
8: 9 his poverty might become **r**.
1Ti 6: 17 Command those who are **r** in this

RICHES (RICH)
Ps 119: 14 statutes as one rejoices in great **r**.
Pr 30: 8 give me neither poverty nor **r**,
Isa 10: 3 Where will you leave your **r**?
Ro 9: 23 to make the **r** of his glory known
11: 33 the depth of the **r** of the wisdom
Eph 2: 7 he might show the incomparable **r**
3: 8 to the Gentiles the boundless **r**
Col 1: 27 among the Gentiles the glorious **r**

RID
Ge 21: 10 "Get **r** of that slave woman and her
1Co 5: 7 Get **r** of the old yeast, so that you
Gal 4: 30 "Get **r** of the slave woman and her

RIGHT (RIGHTS)
Ge 18: 25 not the Judge of all the earth do **r**?"
Ex 15: 26 God and do what is **r** in his eyes,
Dt 5: 32 do not turn aside to the **r**
Ps 16: 8 With him at my **r** hand, I will not
19: 8 The precepts of the Lord are **r**,
63: 8 your **r** hand upholds me.
110: 1 "Sit at my **r** hand until I make your
Pr 4: 27 Do not turn to the **r** or the left;
14: 12 There is a way that appears to be **r**,
Isa 1: 17 Learn to do **r**; seek justice.
Jer 23: 5 do what is just and **r** in the land.
Hos 14: 9 The ways of the Lord are **r**;
Mt 6: 3 know what your **r** hand is doing,
Jn 1: 12 he gave the **r** to become children
Ro 9: 21 Does not the potter have the **r**

Ro 12: 17 careful to do what is **r** in the eyes
Eph 1: 20 and seated him at his **r** hand
Php 4: 8 whatever is **r**, whatever is pure,

RIGHTEOUS (RIGHTEOUSNESS)
Ps 34: 15 eyes of the Lord are on the **r**,
37: 25 yet I have never seen the **r** forsaken
119:137 You are **r**, Lord, and your laws
143: 2 no one living is **r** before you.
Pr 3: 33 but he blesses the home of the **r**.
11: 30 The fruit of the **r** is a tree of life,
18: 10 the **r** run to it and are safe.
Isa 64: 6 all our **r** acts are like filthy rags;
Hab 2: 4 but the **r** person will live by his
Mt 5: 45 and sends rain on the **r**
9: 13 For I have not come to call the **r**,
13: 49 and separate the wicked from the **r**
25: 46 but the **r** to eternal life."
Ro 1: 17 "The **r** will live by faith."
3: 10 "There is no one **r**, not even one;
1Ti 1: 9 that the law is made not for the **r**
Jas 2: 24 is considered **r** by what they do
1Pe 3: 18 for sins, the **r** for the unrighteous,
1Jn 3: 7 is right is **r**, just as he is **r**.
Rev 19: 8 (Fine linen stands for the **r** acts

RIGHTEOUSNESS (RIGHTEOUS)
Ge 15: 6 and he credited it to him as **r**.
1Sa 26: 23 rewards everyone for their **r**
Ps 9: 8 He rules the world in **r** and judges
45: 7 You love **r** and hate wickedness;
85: 10 **r** and peace kiss each other.
89: 14 **R** and justice are the foundation
111: 3 deeds, and his **r** endures forever.
Pr 14: 34 **R** exalts a nation, but sin
21: 21 Whoever pursues **r** and love finds
Isa 59: 17 He put on **r** as his breastplate,
Eze 18: 20 The **r** of the righteous will be
Da 9: 24 to bring in everlasting **r**, to seal
12: 3 and those who lead many to **r**,
Mal 4: 2 the sun of **r** will rise with healing
Mt 5: 6 those who hunger and thirst for **r**,
5: 20 you that unless your **r** surpasses
6: 1 practice your **r** in front of others
6: 33 seek first his kingdom and his **r**,
Ro 3: 25 He did this to demonstrate his **r**,
4: 3 and it was credited to him as **r**."
4: 9 faith was credited to him as **r**.
6: 13 to him as an instrument of **r**.
2Co 5: 21 we might become the **r** of God.
Gal 2: 21 **r** could be gained through the law,
3: 6 and it was credited to him as **r**."
Eph 6: 14 with the breastplate of **r** in place,
Php 3: 9 not having a **r** of my own
2Ti 3: 16 correcting and training in **r**,
4: 8 is in store for me the crown of **r**,
Heb 11: 7 and became heir of the **r** that is
2Pe 2: 21 not to have known the way of **r**,

RIGHTS (RIGHT)
La 3: 35 deny people their **r** before the Most

RISE (RAISED)
Isa 26: 19 their bodies will **r**—let those who
Mt 27: 63 'After three days I will **r** again.'
Jn 5: 29 who have done what is good will **r**
1Th 4: 16 and the dead in Christ will **r** first.

ROAD
Mt 7: 13 gate and broad is the **r** that leads

ROBBERS
Jer 7: 11 Name, become a den of **r** to you?
Lk 19: 46 you have made it 'a den of **r**.'"
Jn 10: 8 come before me are thieves and **r**,

ROCK
Ps 18: 2 The Lord is my **r**, my fortress
40: 2 he set my feet on a **r** and gave me
Mt 7: 24 man who built his house on the **r**.
16: 18 on this **r** I will build my church,
Ro 9: 33 and a **r** that makes them fall,
1Co 10: 4 them, and that **r** was Christ.

ROD
Ps 23: 4 your **r** and your staff, they comfort
Pr 13: 24 Whoever spares the **r** hates their
23: 13 if you punish them with the **r**,

ROOM (ROOMS)
Mt 6: 6 go into your **r**, close the door
Lk 2: 7 there was no guest **r** available
Jn 21: 25 the whole world would not have **r**

ROOMS (ROOM)
Jn 14: 2 My Father's house has many **r**;

ROOT
Isa 53: 2 and like a **r** out of dry ground.
1Ti 6: 10 the love of money is a **r** of all kinds

ROYAL
Jas 2: 8 If you really keep the **r** law found
1Pe 2: 9 are a chosen people, a **r** priesthood,

RUIN (RUINS)
Pr 18: 24 unreliable friends soon comes to **r**,
19: 3 person's own folly leads to their **r**,
1Ti 6: 9 desires that plunge people into **r**

RUINS (RUIN)
2Ti 2: 14 value, and only **r** those who listen.

RULE (RULER RULERS RULES)
1Sa 12: 12 'No, we want a king to **r** over us'—
Ps 119:133 to your word; let no sin **r** over me.
Zec 9: 10 His **r** will extend from sea to sea
Col 3: 15 peace of Christ **r** in your hearts,
Rev 2: 27 that one 'will **r** them with an iron

RULER (RULE)
Eph 2: 2 of the **r** of the kingdom of the air,
1Ti 6: 15 the blessed and only **R**, the King

RULERS (RULE)
Ps 2: 2 and the **r** band together against
8: 6 You made them **r** over the works
Col 1: 16 or powers or **r** or authorities;

RULES (RULE)
Ps 103: 19 heaven, and his kingdom **r** over all.

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Lk 22:26 and the one who **r** like the one who
2Ti 2:5 by competing according to the **r**.

RUMORS
Mt 24:6 You will hear of wars and **r** of wars,

RUN (RAN)
Isa 40:31 they will **r** and not grow weary,
1Co 9:24 **R** in such a way as to get the prize.
Heb12:1 let us **r** with perseverance the race

RUTH
Moabitess; widow who went to Bethlehem with mother-in-law Naomi (Ru 1). Gleaned in field of Boaz; shown favor (Ru 2). Proposed marriage to Boaz (Ru 3). Married (Ru 4:1–12); bore Obed, ancestor of David (Ru 4:13–22), Jesus (Mt 1:5).

SABBATH
Ex 20:8 "Remember the **S** day by keeping it
Dt 5:12 "Observe the **S** day by keeping it
Col 2:16 New Moon celebration or a **S** day.

SACKCLOTH
Mt 11:21 would have repented long ago in **s**

SACRED
Mt 7:6 "Do not give dogs what is **s**;
1Co 3:17 for God's temple is **s**, and you

SACRIFICE (SACRIFICED)
Ge 22:2 **S** him there as a burnt offering
Ex 12:27 'It is the Passover **s** to the Lord,
1Sa 15:22 To obey is better than **s**,
Ps 51:17 My **s**, O God, is a broken spirit;
Hos 6:6 not **s**, and acknowledgment of God
Mt 9:13 'I desire mercy, not **s**.'
Ro 12:1 to offer your bodies as a living **s**,
Heb 9:26 away with sin by the **s** of himself.
13:15 offer to God a **s** of praise—
1Jn 2:2 He is the atoning **s** for our sins,

SACRIFICED (SACRIFICE)
1Co 5:7 our Passover lamb, has been **s**.
8:1 Now about food **s** to idols:
Heb 9:28 so Christ was **s** once to take away

SADDUCEES
Mk 12:18 Then the **S**, who say there is no

SAFE (SAVE)
Ps 37:3 in the land and enjoy **s** pasture.
Pr 18:10 the righteous run to it and are **s**.

SAFETY (SAVE)
Ps 4:8 alone, Lord, make me dwell in **s**.
1Th 5:3 "Peace and **s**," destruction will

SAINTS See FAITHFUL, [GOD'S] PEOPLE

SAKE
Ps 44:22 your **s** we face death all day long;
Php 3:7 consider loss for the **s** of Christ.
Heb11:26 disgrace for the **s** of Christ as

SALT
Ge 19:26 back, and she became a pillar of **s**.
Mt 5:13 "You are the **s** of the earth.

SALVATION (SAVE)
Ex 15:2 he has become my **s**.
1Ch16:23 proclaim his **s** day after day.
Ps 27:1 The Lord is my light and my **s**—
51:12 Restore to me the joy of your **s**
62:2 Truly he is my rock and my **s**;
85:9 Surely his **s** is near those who fear
96:2 proclaim his **s** day after day.
Isa 25:9 let us rejoice and be glad in his **s**."
45:17 the Lord with an everlasting **s**;
51:6 But my **s** will last forever,
59:17 and the helmet of **s** on his head;
61:10 has clothed me with garments of **s**
Jnh 2:9 '**S** comes from the Lord.'"
Lk 2:30 For my eyes have seen your **s**,
Jn 4:22 we do know, for **s** is from the Jews.
Ac 4:12 **S** is found in no one else, for there
13:47 that you may bring **s** to the ends
Ro 11:11 **s** has come to the Gentiles to make
2Co 7:10 brings repentance that leads to **s**
Eph 6:17 Take the helmet of **s** and the sword
Php 2:12 to work out your **s** with fear
1Th 5:8 and the hope of **s** as a helmet.
2Ti 3:15 make you wise for **s** through faith
Heb 2:3 we escape if we ignore so great a **s**?
6:9 the things that have to do with **s**.
1Pe 1:10 Concerning this **s**, the prophets,
2:2 by it you may grow up in your **s**,

SAMARITAN
Lk 10:33 But a **S**, as he traveled, came where

SAMSON
Danite judge. Birth promised (Jdg 13). Married to Philistine (Jdg 14). Vengeance on Philistines (Jdg 15). Betrayed by Delilah (Jdg 16:1–22). Death (Jdg 16:23–31). Feats of strength: killed lion (Jdg 14:6), 30 Philistines (Jdg 14:19), 1,000 Philistines with jawbone (Jdg 15:13–17), carried off gates of Gaza (Jdg 16:3), pushed down temple of Dagon (Jdg 16:25–30).

SAMUEL
Ephraimite judge and prophet (Heb 11:32). Birth prayed for (1Sa 1:10–18). Dedicated to temple by Hannah (1Sa 1:21–28). Raised by Eli (1Sa 2:11, 18–26). Called as prophet (1Sa 3). Led Israel to victory over Philistines (1Sa 7). Asked by Israel for a king (1Sa 8). Anointed Saul as king (1Sa 9–10). Farewell speech (1Sa 12). Rebuked Saul for sacrifice (1Sa 13). Announced rejection of Saul (1Sa 15). Anointed David as king (1Sa 16). Protected David from Saul (1Sa 19:18–24). Death (1Sa 25:1). Returned from dead to condemn Saul (1Sa 28).

SANCTIFIED (SANCTIFY)
Ac 20:32 among all those who are **s**.
Ro 15:16 to God, **s** by the Holy Spirit.
1Co 6:11 you were **s**, you were justified
7:14 husband has been **s** through his
Heb10:29 blood of the covenant that **s** them,

SANCTIFY (SANCTIFIED SANCTIFYING)
1Th 5:23 peace, **s** you through and through.

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

SANCTIFYING (SANCTIFY)
2Th 2: 13 be saved through the **s** work

SANCTUARY
Ex 25: 8 "Then have them make a **s** for me,

SAND
Ge 22: 17 sky and as the **s** on the seashore.
Mt 7: 26 man who built his house on **s**.

SANDALS
Ex 3: 5 "Take off your **s**, for the place
Jos 5: 15 "Take off your **s**, for the place

SANG (SING)
Job 38: 7 while the morning stars **s** together
Rev 5: 9 And they **s** a new song, saying:

SARAH
Wife of Abraham, originally named Sarai; barren (Ge 11:29–31; 1Pe 3:6). Taken by Pharaoh as Abraham's sister; returned (Ge 12:10–20). Gave Hagar to Abraham; sent her away in pregnancy (Ge 16). Name changed; Isaac promised (Ge 17:15–21; 18:10–15; Heb 11:11). Taken by Abimelek as Abraham's sister; returned (Ge 20). Isaac born; Hagar and Ishmael sent away (Ge 21:1–21; Gal 4:21–31). Death (Ge 23).

SATAN
Job 1: 6 and **S** also came with them.
Zec 3: 2 to **S**, "The Lord rebuke you, **S**!
Mk 4: 15 **S** comes and takes away the word
2Co 11: 14 **S** himself masquerades as an angel
12: 7 a messenger of **S**, to torment me.
Rev 12: 9 or **S**, who leads the whole world
20: 2 **S**, and bound him for a thousand
20: 7 **S** will be released from his prison

SATISFIED (SATISFY)
Isa 53: 11 he will see the light of life and be **s**;

SATISFIES (SATISFY)
Ps 103: 5 **s** your desires with good things

SATISFY (SATISFIED SATISFIES)
Isa 55: 2 and your labor on what does not **s**?

SAUL
1. Benjamite; anointed by Samuel as first king of Israel (1Sa 9–10). Defeated Ammonites (1Sa 11). Rebuked for offering sacrifice (1Sa 13:1–15). Defeated Philistines (1Sa 14). Rejected as king for failing to annihilate Amalekites (1Sa 15). Soothed from evil spirit by David (1Sa 16:14–23). Sent David against Goliath (1Sa 17). Jealousy and attempted murder of David (1Sa 18:1–11). Gave David Michal as wife (1Sa 18:12–30). Second attempt to kill David (1Sa 19). Anger at Jonathan (1Sa 20:26–34). Pursued David: killed priests at Nob (1Sa 22), went to Keilah and Ziph (1Sa 23), life spared by David at En Gedi (1Sa 24) and in his tent (1Sa 26). Rebuked by Samuel's spirit for consulting witch at Endor (1Sa 28). Wounded by Philistines; took his own life (1Sa 31; 1Ch 10).
2. See PAUL

SAVE (SAFE SAFETY SALVATION SAVED SAVIOR)
Isa 63: 1 proclaiming victory, mighty to **s**."
Mt 1: 21 because he will **s** his people
16: 25 wants to **s** their life will lose it,
Lk 19: 10 came to seek and to **s** the lost."
Jn 3: 17 but to **s** the world through him.
1Ti 1: 15 came into the world to **s** sinners—
Jas 5: 20 of their way will **s** them from death

SAVED (SAVE)
Ps 34: 6 he **s** him out of all his troubles.
Isa 45: 22 "Turn to me and be **s**, all you ends
Joel 2: 32 the name of the Lord will be **s**;
Mk 13: 13 stands firm to the end will be **s**.
16: 16 believes and is baptized will be s,
Jn 10: 9 enters through me will be **s**.
Ac 4: 12 mankind by which we must be **s**."
16: 30 "Sirs, what must I do to be **s**?"
Ro 9: 27 the sea, only the remnant will be **s**.
10: 9 him from the dead, you will be **s**.
1Co 3: 15 will suffer loss but yet will be **s**—
15: 2 By this gospel you are **s**, if you hold
Eph 2: 5 it is by grace you have been **s**.
2: 8 For it is by grace you have been **s**,
1Ti 2: 4 who wants all people to be **s**

SAVIOR (SAVE)
Ps 89: 26 Father, my God, the Rock my **S**.'
Isa 43: 11 and apart from me there is no **s**.
Hos 13: 4 no God but me, no **S** except me.
Lk 1: 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my **S**,
2: 11 town of David a **S** has been born
Jn 4: 42 that this man really is the **S**
Eph 5: 23 his body, of which he is the **S**.
1Ti 4: 10 God, who is the **S** of all people,
Titus 2: 10 about God our **S** attractive.
2: 13 the glory of our great God and **S**,
3: 4 and love of God our **S** appeared,
1Jn 4: 14 his Son to be the **S** of the world.
Jude : 25 to the only God our **S** be glory,

SCALES
Lev 19: 36 Use honest **s** and honest weights,
Da 5: 27 You have been weighed on the **s**

SCAPEGOAT (GOAT)
Lev 16: 10 it into the wilderness as a **s**.

SCARLET
Isa 1: 18 "Though your sins are like **s**,

SCATTERED
Jer 31: 10 'He who **s** Israel will gather them
Ac 8: 4 who had been **s** preached the word

SCEPTER
Rev 19: 15 "He will rule them with an iron **s**."

SCHEMES
2Co 2: 11 For we are not unaware of his **s**.
Eph 6: 11 your stand against the devil's **s**.

SCOFFERS
2Pe 3: 3 that in the last days **s** will come,

SCORPION
Rev 9: 5 of the sting of a **s** when it strikes.
SCRIPTURE (SCRIPTURES)
Jn 10: 35 and **S** cannot be set aside—
1Ti 4: 13 yourself to the public reading of **S**,
2Ti 3: 16 All **S** is God-breathed and is useful
2Pe 1: 20 that no prophecy of **S** came
SCRIPTURES (SCRIPTURE)
Lk 24: 27 in all the **S** concerning himself.
Jn 5: 39 You study the **S** diligently because
Ac 17: 11 examined the **S** every day to see
SCROLL
Eze 3: 1 eat what is before you, eat this **s**;
SEA
Ex 14: 16 the Israelites can go through the **s**
Isa 57: 20 the wicked are like the tossing **s**,
Mic 7: 19 iniquities into the depths of the **s**.
Jas 1: 6 who doubts is like a wave of the **s**,
Rev 13: 1 I saw a beast coming out of the **s**.
SEAL (SEALS)
Jn 6: 27 God the Father has placed his **s**
2Co 1: 22 set his **s** of ownership on us,
Eph 1: 13 you were marked in him with a **s**,
SEALS (SEAL)
Rev 5: 2 "Who is worthy to break the **s**
6: 1 opened the first of the seven **s**.
SEARCH (SEARCHED SEARCHES SEARCHING)
Ps 4: 4 beds, **s** your hearts and be silent.
139: 23 **S** me, God, and know my heart;
Pr 2: 4 and **s** for it as for hidden treasure,
Jer 17: 10 "I the Lord **s** the heart
Eze 34: 16 I will **s** for the lost and bring back
Lk 15: 8 and **s** carefully until she finds it?
SEARCHED (SEARCH)
Ps 139: 1 You have **s** me, Lord, and you
SEARCHES (SEARCH)
Ro 8: 27 who **s** our hearts knows the mind
1Co 2: 10 The Spirit **s** all things, even the
SEARCHING (SEARCH)
Am 8: 12 east, **s** for the word of the Lord,
SEARED
1Ti 4: 2 whose consciences have been **s** as
SEASON
2Ti 4: 2 be prepared in **s** and out of **s**;
SEAT (SEATED SEATS)
Da 7: 9 and the Ancient of Days took his **s**.
2Co 5: 10 all appear before the judgment **s**
SEATED (SEAT)
Ps 47: 8 God is **s** on his holy throne.
Isa 6: 1 high and exalted, **s** on a throne;
Col 3: 1 Christ is, **s** at the right hand of God.
SEATS (SEAT)
Lk 11: 43 you love the most important **s**
SECRET (SECRETS)
Dt 29: 29 The **s** things belong to the Lord
Jdg 16: 6 "Tell me the **s** of your great
Ps 90: 8 you, our **s** sins in the light of your
Pr 11: 13 but a trustworthy person keeps a **s**.
Mt 6: 4 so that your giving may be in **s**.
2Co 4: 2 we have renounced **s** and shameful
Php 4: 12 have learned the **s** of being content
SECRETS (SECRET)
Ps 44: 21 since he knows the **s** of the heart?
1Co 14: 25 as the **s** of their hearts are laid bare.
SECURE (SECURITY)
Ps 112: 8 Their hearts are **s**, they will have
Heb 6: 19 an anchor for the soul, firm and **s**.
SECURITY (SECURE)
Job 31: 24 or said to pure gold, 'You are my **s**,'
SEED (SEEDS)
Lk 8: 11 The **s** is the word of God.
1Co 3: 6 I planted the **s**, Apollos watered it,
2Co 9: 10 he who supplies **s** to the sower
Gal 3: 29 you are Abraham's **s**, and heirs
1Pe 1: 23 again, not of perishable **s**,
SEEDS (SEED)
Jn 12: 24 But if it dies, it produces many **s**.
Gal 3: 16 Scripture does not say "and to **s**,"
SEEK (SEEKS SELF-SEEKING)
Dt 4: 29 you will find him if you **s** him
1Ch 28: 9 If you **s** him, he will be found
2Ch 7: 14 pray and **s** my face and turn
Ps 119: 10 I **s** you with all my heart; do not let
Isa 55: 6 **S** the Lord while he may be
65: 1 found by those who did not **s** me.
Mt 6: 33 But **s** first his kingdom and his
Lk 19: 10 For the Son of Man came to **s**
Ro 10: 20 found by those who did not **s** me;
1Co 7: 27 Do not **s** to be released.
SEEKS (SEEK)
Jn 4: 23 the kind of worshipers the Father **s**.
SEER
1Sa 9: 9 of today used to be called a **s**.)
SELF-CONTROL (CONTROL)
1Co 7: 5 tempt you because of your lack of **s**.
Gal 5: 23 gentleness and **s**.
2Pe 1: 6 and to knowledge, **s**; and to **s**,
SELF-CONTROLLED (CONTROL)
1Ti 3: 2 his wife, temperate, **s**, respectable,
Titus 1: 8 what is good, who is **s**, upright,
2: 2 worthy of respect, **s**, and sound
2: 5 to be **s** and pure, to be busy
2: 6 encourage the young men to be **s**.
2: 12 to live **s**, upright and godly lives
SELF-INDULGENCE
Mt 23: 25 inside they are full of greed and **s**.
SELFISH
Ps 119: 36 statutes and not toward **s** gain.
Pr 18: 1 unfriendly person pursues **s** ends

Gal 5:20 fits of rage, **s** ambition, dissensions,
Php 1:17 preach Christ out of **s** ambition,
2:3 Do nothing out of **s** ambition
Jas 3:14 envy and **s** ambition in your hearts,
3:16 you have envy and **s** ambition,

SELF-SEEKING (SEEK)
1Co13:5 it is not **s**, it is not easily angered,

SEND (SENDING SENT)
Isa 6:8 And I said, "Here am I. **S** me!"
Mt 9:38 to **s** out workers into his harvest
Jn 16:7 but if I go, I will **s** him to you.

SENDING (SEND)
Jn 20:21 the Father has sent me, I am **s** you."

SENSES
Lk 15:17 "When he came to his **s**, he said,
1Co15:34 Come back to your **s** as you ought,
2Ti 2:26 that they will come to their **s**

SENSUAL
Col 2:23 value in restraining **s** indulgence.

SENT (SEND)
Isa 55:11 achieve the purpose for which I **s** it.
Mt 10:40 me welcomes the one who **s** me.
Jn 4:34 "is to do the will of him who **s** me
Ro 10:15 anyone preach unless they are **s**?
1Jn 4:10 **s** his Son as an atoning sacrifice

SEPARATE (SEPARATED SEPARATES)
Mt 19:6 has joined together, let no one **s**."
Ro 8:35 Who shall **s** us from the love
1Co 7:10 A wife must not **s** from her
2Co 6:17 "Come out from them and be **s**,

SEPARATED (SEPARATE)
Isa 59:2 your iniquities have **s** you from

SEPARATES (SEPARATE)
Pr 16:28 and a gossip **s** close friends.

SERPENT
Ge 3:1 Now the **s** was more crafty than
Rev 12:9 that ancient **s** called the devil,

SERVANT (SERVANTS)
1Sa 3:10 "Speak, for your **s** is listening."
Mt 20:26 great among you must be your **s**,
25:21 'Well done, good and faithful **s**!
Php 2:7 by taking the very nature of a **s**,
2Ti 2:24 And the Lord's **s** must not be

SERVANTS (SERVANT)
Lk 17:10 do, should say, 'We are unworthy **s**;
Jn 15:15 I no longer call you **s**,

SERVE (SERVICE SERVING)
Dt 10:12 to **s** the Lord your God with all
Jos 22:5 and to **s** him with all your heart
24:15 household, we will **s** the Lord."
Mt 4:10 Lord your God, and **s** him only.'"
6:24 "No one can **s** two masters.
6:24 You cannot **s** both God and money.
20:28 but to **s**, and to give his life as
Eph 6:7 **S** wholeheartedly, as if you were

SERVICE (SERVE)
1Co12:5 There are different kinds of **s**,
Eph 4:12 to equip his people for works of **s**,

SERVING (SERVE)
Ro 12:11 your spiritual fervor, **s** the Lord.
Eph 6:7 as if you were **s** the Lord,
Col 3:24 It is the Lord Christ you are **s**.
2Ti 2:4 No one **s** as a soldier gets entangled

SEVEN (SEVENTH)
Ge 7:2 Take with you **s** pairs of every kind
Jos 6:4 march around the city **s** times,
1Ki 19:18 Yet I reserve **s** thousand in Israel—
Pr 6:16 hates, **s** that are detestable to him:
24:16 though the righteous fall **s** times,
Isa 4:1 that day **s** women will take hold
Da 9:25 comes, there will be **s** 'sevens,'
Mt 18:21 sins against me? Up to **s** times?"
Lk 11:26 takes **s** other spirits more wicked
Ro 11:4 myself **s** thousand who have not
Rev 1:4 To the **s** churches in the province
1:4 from the **s** spirits before his throne,
6:1 Lamb opened the first of the **s** seals.
8:2 I saw the **s** angels who stand before
8:2 and **s** trumpets were given to them.
10:4 And when the **s** thunders spoke,
15:7 to the **s** angels **s** golden bowls filled

SEVENTH (SEVEN)
Ge 2:2 so on the **s** day he rested from all
Ex 23:12 but on the **s** day do not work,

SEX (SEXUAL SEXUALLY)
1Co 6:9 nor men who have **s** with men

SEXUAL (SEX)
Mt 5:32 except for **s** immorality, makes her
19:9 except for **s** immorality,
1Co 6:13 is not meant for **s** immorality
6:18 Flee from **s** immorality.
7:1 a man not to have **s** relations
10:8 should not commit **s** immorality,
Eph 5:3 not be even a hint of **s** immorality,
1Th 4:3 you should avoid **s** immorality;

SEXUALLY (SEX)
1Co 5:9 associate with **s** immoral people—
6:18 but whoever sins **s**, sins against

SHADOW
Ps 36:7 take refuge in the **s** of your wings.
Heb10:1 The law is only a **s** of the good

SHALLUM
King of Israel (2Ki 15:10–16).

SHAME (ASHAMED)
Ps 22:5 they trusted and were not put to **s**.
34:5 faces are never covered with **s**.
Pr 13:18 discipline comes to poverty and **s**,
Heb12:2 scorning its **s**, and sat down

SHARE (SHARED)
Ge 21:10 that woman's son will never **s**
Lk 3:11 who has two shirts should **s**

Gal 4:30 the slave woman's son will never **s**
6: 6 the word should **s** all good things
Eph 4:28 they may have something to **s**
1Ti 6:18 to be generous and willing to **s**.
Heb12:10 order that we may **s** in his holiness.
13:16 to do good and to **s** with others,

SHARED (SHARE)
Heb 2:14 he too **s** in their humanity so

SHARON
SS 2: 1 I am a rose of **S**, a lily

SHARPER
Heb 4:12 **S** than any double-edged sword,

SHED (SHEDDING)
Ge 9: 6 by humans shall their blood be **s**;
Col 1:20 through his blood, **s** on the cross.

SHEDDING (SHED)
Heb 9:22 without the **s** of blood there is no

SHEEP
Ps 100: 3 are his people, the **s** of his pasture.
119:176 I have strayed like a lost **s**.
Isa 53: 6 We all, like **s**, have gone astray,
Jer 50: 6 "My people have been lost **s**;
Eze 34:11 I myself will search for my **s**
Mt 9:36 helpless, like **s** without a shepherd.
Jn 10: 3 He calls his own **s** by name
10:15 and I lay down my life for the **s**.
10:27 My **s** listen to my voice;
21:17 Jesus said, "Feed my **s**.
1Pe 2:25 For "you were like **s** going astray,"

SHELTER
Ps 61: 4 take refuge in the **s** of your wings.
91: 1 in the **s** of the Most High will rest

SHEM
Son of Noah (Ge 5:32; 6:10). Blessed (Ge 9:26). Descendants (Ge 10:21–31; 11:10–32).

SHEPHERD (SHEPHERDS)
Ps 23: 1 The Lord is my **s**, I lack nothing.
Isa 40:11 He tends his flock like a **s**:
Jer 31:10 will watch over his flock like a **s**.'
Eze 34:12 a **s** looks after his scattered flock
Zec 11:17 "Woe to the worthless **s**,
Mt 9:36 and helpless, like sheep without a **s**.
Jn 10:11 "I am the good **s**. The good **s** lays
10:16 there shall be one flock and one **s**.
1Pe 5: 4 And when the Chief **S** appears,

SHEPHERDS (SHEPHERD)
Jer 23: 1 "Woe to the **s** who are destroying
Lk 2: 8 there were **s** living out in the fields
Ac 20:28 Be **s** of the church of God,
1Pe 5: 2 Be **s** of God's flock that is under

SHIELD
Ps 28: 7 Lord is my strength and my **s**;
Eph 6:16 take up the **s** of faith,

SHINE (SHONE)
Ps 4: 6 Let the light of your face **s** on us.
80: 1 between the cherubim, **s** forth
Isa 60: 1 "Arise, **s**, for your light has come,
Da 12: 3 are wise will **s** like the brightness
Mt 5:16 let your light **s** before others,
13:43 the righteous will **s** like the sun
2Co 4: 6 made his light **s** in our hearts
Eph 5:14 the dead, and Christ will **s** on you."

SHIPWRECK (SHIPWRECKED)
1Ti 1:19 so have suffered **s** with regard

SHIPWRECKED (SHIPWRECK)
2Co 11:25 three times I was **s**, I spent a night

SHONE (SHINE)
Mt 17: 2 His face **s** like the sun, and his
Lk 2: 9 glory of the Lord **s** around them,
Rev 21:11 It **s** with the glory of God, and its

SHORT
Isa 59: 1 of the Lord is not too **s** to save,
Ro 3:23 and fall **s** of the glory of God,

SHOULDERS
Isa 9: 6 the government will be on his **s**.
Lk 15: 5 finds it, he joyfully puts it on his **s**

SHOWED
1Jn 4: 9 This is how God **s** his love among

SHREWD
Mt 10:16 Therefore be as **s** as snakes and as

SHUN
Job 28:28 and to **s** evil is understanding."
Pr 3: 7 fear the Lord and **s** evil.

SICK
Pr 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart **s**,
Mt 9:12 who need a doctor, but the **s**.
25:36 I was **s** and you looked after me,
Jas 5:14 Is anyone among you **s**?

SICKLE
Joel 3:13 Swing the **s**, for the harvest is ripe.

SIDE
Ps 91: 7 A thousand may fall at your **s**,
124: 1 the Lord had not been on our **s**—
2Ti 4:17 Lord stood at my **s** and gave me

SIGHT
Ps 90: 4 years in your **s** are like a day
116:15 in the **s** of the Lord is the death
2Co 5: 7 For we live by faith, not by **s**.
1Pe 3: 4 which is of great worth in God's **s**.

SIGN (SIGNS)
Isa 7:14 the Lord himself will give you a **s**:

SIGNS (SIGN)
Mt 24:24 and perform great **s** and wonders
Mk 16:17 these **s** will accompany those who
Jn 3: 2 could perform the **s** you are doing
9:16 can a sinner perform such **s**?"
20:30 Jesus performed many other **s**
1Co 1:22 Jews demand **s** and Greeks look

SILENT
Pr 17:28 are thought wise if they keep **s**,
Isa 53: 7 as a sheep before its shearers is **s**,

Hab 2:20 let all the earth be **s** before him.
1Co14:34 Women should remain **s**

SILVER
Pr 25:11 of **s** is a ruling rightly given.
Hag 2: 8 'The **s** is mine and the gold is
1Co 3:12 on this foundation using gold, **s**,

SIMON
1. See PETER.
2. Apostle, called the Zealot (Mt 10:4; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15; Ac 1:13).
3. Samaritan sorcerer (Ac 8:9–24).

SIN (SINFUL SINNED SINNER SINNERS SINNING SINS)
Nu 5: 7 and must confess the **s** they have
32:23 sure that your **s** will find you out.
Dt 24:16 each will die for their own **s**.
1Ki 8:46 there is no one who does not **s**—
2Ch 7:14 I will forgive their **s** and will heal
Ps 4: 4 Tremble and do not **s**; when you
32: 2 is the one whose **s** the Lord does
32: 5 And you forgave the guilt of my **s**.
51: 2 iniquity and cleanse me from my **s**.
66:18 If I had cherished **s** in my heart,
119:11 that I might not **s** against you.
119:133 to your word; let no **s** rule over me.
Isa 6: 7 taken away and your **s** atoned for."
Mic 7:18 you, who pardons **s** and forgives
Jn 1:29 who takes away the **s** of the world!
8:34 everyone who sins is a slave to **s**.
Ro 5:12 just as **s** entered the world through
5:20 But where **s** increased,
6:11 count yourselves dead to **s** but alive
6:23 For the wages of **s** is death,
14:23 that does not come from faith is **s**.
2Co 5:21 God made him who had no **s** to be **s**
Gal 6: 1 if someone is caught in a **s**,
Heb 9:26 to do away with **s** by the sacrifice
11:25 to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of **s**.
12: 1 and the **s** that so easily entangles.
1Pe 2:22 "He committed no **s**, and no deceit
1Jn 1: 8 If we claim to be without **s**,
3: 4 in fact, **s** is lawlessness.
3: 5 away our sins. And in him is no **s**.
3: 9 is born of God will continue to **s**,
5:18 born of God does not continue to **s**;

SINCERE
Ro 12: 9 Love must be **s**. Hate what is evil;
Heb10:22 us draw near to God with a **s** heart

SINFUL (SIN)
Ps 51: 5 Surely I was **s** at birth,
Ro 7: 5 the **s** passions aroused by the law
1Pe 2:11 to abstain from **s** desires,

SINFUL NATURE See FLESH

SING (SANG SINGING SONG SONGS)
Ps 30: 4 **S** the praises of the Lord, you his
47: 6 **S** praises to God, **s** praises; **s** praises
59:16 in the morning I will **s** of your love
Ps 89: 1 I will **s** of the Lord's great love
101: 1 I will **s** of your love and justice;
Eph 5:19 **S** and make music from your heart

SINGING (SING)
Ps 63: 5 **s** lips my mouth will praise you.
Ac 16:25 were praying and **s** hymns to God,

SINNED (SIN)
2Sa 12:13 "I have **s** against the Lord."
Job 1: 5 "Perhaps my children have **s**
Ps 51: 4 have I **s** and done what is evil
Da 9: 5 we have **s** and done wrong.
Mic 7: 9 Because I have **s** against him, I will
Lk 15:18 I have **s** against heaven and against
Ro 3:23 for all have **s** and fall short
1Jn 1:10 If we claim we have not **s**, we make

SINNER (SIN)
Ecc 9:18 war, but one **s** destroys much good.
Lk 15: 7 heaven over one **s** who repents
18:13 said, 'God, have mercy on me, a **s**.'
Jas 5:20 Whoever turns a **s** from the error
1Pe 4:18 become of the ungodly and the **s**?"

SINNERS (SIN)
Ps 1: 1 stand in the way that **s** take or sit
Pr 23:17 Do not let your heart envy **s**,
Mt 9:13 come to call the righteous, but **s**."
Ro 5: 8 While we were still **s**, Christ died
1Ti 1:15 came into the world to save **s**—

SINNING (SIN)
Ex 20:20 be with you to keep you from **s**."
1Co15:34 senses as you ought, and stop **s**;
Heb10:26 If we deliberately keep on **s** after
1Jn 3: 6 one who lives in him keeps on **s**.
3: 9 they cannot go on **s**, because they

SINS (SIN)
Ezr 9: 6 because our **s** are higher than our
Ps 19:13 your servant also from willful **s**;
32: 1 are forgiven, whose **s** are covered.
103: 3 who forgives all your **s** and heals
130: 3 Lord, kept a record of **s**, Lord,
Pr 28:13 Whoever conceals their **s** does not
Isa 1:18 "Though your **s** are like scarlet,
43:25 and remembers your **s** no more.
59: 2 your **s** have hidden his face
Eze 18: 4 The one who **s** is the one who will
Mt 1:21 will save his people from their **s**."
18:15 "If your brother or sister **s**,
Lk 11: 4 Forgive us our **s**, for we also forgive everyone who **s** against us.
17: 3 your brother or sister **s** against you,
Ac 22:16 be baptized and wash your **s** away,
1Co15: 3 Christ died for our **s** according
Eph 2: 1 dead in your transgressions and **s**,
Col 2:13 He forgave us all our **s**,
Heb 1: 3 he had provided purification for **s**,
7:27 He sacrificed for their **s** once for all
8:12 will remember their **s** no more."
10:12 for all time one sacrifice for **s**,

Jas 5:16 Therefore confess your **s** to each
5:20 and cover over a multitude of **s**.
1Pe 2:24 so that we might die to **s** and live
3:18 For Christ also suffered once for **s**,
1Jn 1:9 If we confess our **s**, he is faithful
1:9 will forgive us our **s** and purify us
Rev 1:5 freed us from our **s** by his blood,

SITS
Ps 99:1 he **s** enthroned between
Isa 40:22 He **s** enthroned above the circle
Mt 19:28 Son of Man **s** on his glorious throne,
Rev 4:9 thanks to him who **s** on the throne

SKIN
Job 19:20 escaped only by the **s** of my teeth.
19:26 And after my **s** has been destroyed,
Jer 13:23 Can an Ethiopian change his **s**

SLAIN (SLAY)
Rev 5:12 who was **s**, to receive power

SLANDER (SLANDERED SLANDERERS)
Lev 19:16 spreading **s** among your people.
1Ti 5:14 the enemy no opportunity for **s**.
Titus 3:2 to **s** no one, to be peaceable

SLANDERED (SLANDER)
1Co 4:13 when we are **s**, we answer kindly.

SLANDERERS (SLANDER)
Ro 1:30 **s**, God-haters, insolent,
1Co 6:10 nor drunkards nor **s** nor swindlers
Titus 2:3 not to be **s** or addicted to much

SLAUGHTER
Isa 53:7 he was led like a lamb to the **s**,

SLAVE (SLAVERY SLAVES)
Ge 21:10 "Get rid of that **s** woman and her
Mt 20:27 wants to be first must be your **s**—
Jn 8:34 everyone who sins is a **s** to sin.
1Co 12:13 whether Jews or Gentiles, **s** or free
Gal 3:28 Jew nor Gentile, neither **s** nor free,
4:30 the **s** woman's son will never share

SLAVERY (SLAVE)
Gal 4:3 in **s** under the elemental spiritual

SLAVES (SLAVE)
Ro 6:6 we should no longer be **s** to sin—
6:22 and have become **s** of God,
2Pe 2:19 for "people are **s** to whatever has

SLAY (SLAIN)
Job 13:15 Though he **s** me, yet will I hope

SLEEP (SLEEPING)
Ps 121:4 Israel will neither slumber nor **s**.
1Co 15:51 We will not all **s**, but we will all be

SLEEPING (SLEEP)
Mk 13:36 do not let him find you **s**.

SLOW
Ex 34:6 and gracious God, **s** to anger,
Jas 1:19 **s** to speak and **s** to become angry,
2Pe 3:9 The Lord is not **s** in keeping his

SLUGGARD (SLUGGARDS)
Pr 6:6 Go to the ant, you **s**;

SLUGGARDS (SLUGGARD)
Pr 20:4 **S** do not plow in season;

SLUMBER
Ps 121:3 he who watches over you will not **s**;
Pr 6:10 little **s**, a little folding of the hands
Ro 13:11 for you to wake up from your **s**,

SNAKE (SNAKES)
Nu 21:8 "Make a **s** and put it up on a pole;
Pr 23:32 In the end it bites like a **s**
Jn 3:14 lifted up the **s** in the wilderness,

SNAKES (SNAKE)
Mt 10:16 Therefore be as shrewd as **s** and as
Mk 16:18 they will pick up **s**

SNATCH (SNATCHING)
Jn 10:28 no one will **s** them out of my hand.

SNATCHING (SNATCH)
Jude :23 save others by **s** them from the fire;

SNOW
Ps 51:7 me, and I will be whiter than **s**.

SOAR
Isa 40:31 They will **s** on wings like eagles;

SODOM
Ge 19:24 rained down burning sulfur on **S**
Ro 9:29 we would have become like **S**,

SOIL
Ge 4:2 kept flocks, and Cain worked the **s**.
Mt 13:23 the seed falling on good **s** refers

SOLDIER
1Co 9:7 Who serves as a **s** at his own
2Ti 2:3 like a good **s** of Christ Jesus.

SOLE
Dt 28:65 resting place for the **s** of your foot.
Isa 1:6 From the **s** of your foot to the top

SOLID
2Ti 2:19 God's **s** foundation stands firm,
Heb 5:12 You need milk, not **s** food!

SOLOMON
Son of David by Bathsheba; king of Judah (2Sa 12:24; 1Ch 3:5, 10). Appointed king by David (1Ki 1); adversaries Adonijah, Joab, Shimei killed by Benaiah (1Ki 2). Asked for wisdom (1Ki 3; 2Ch 1). Judged between two prostitutes (1Ki 3:16–28). Built temple (1Ki 5–7; 2Ch 2–5); prayer of dedication (1Ki 8; 2Ch 6). Visited by Queen of Sheba (1Ki 10; 2Ch 9). Wives turned his heart from God (1Ki 11:1–13). Jeroboam rebelled against (1Ki 11:26–40). Death (1Ki 11:41–43; 2Ch 9:29–31).

Proverbs of (1Ki 4:32; Pr 1:1; 10:1; 25:1); psalms of (Ps 72; 127); song of (SS 1:1).

SON (SONS)
Ge 22:2 said, "Take your **s**, your only **s**,
Ex 11:5 Every firstborn **s** in Egypt will die,
Dt 21:18 rebellious **s** who does not obey his
Ps 2:7 He said to me, "You are my **s**;
2:12 Kiss his **s**, or he will be angry

Pr 10: 1 A wise **s** brings joy to his father,
Isa 7: 14 will conceive and give birth to a **s**,
Hos 11: 1 and out of Egypt I called my **s**.
Mt 2: 15 "Out of Egypt I called my **s**."
3: 17 said, "This is my **S**, whom I love;
11: 27 knows the **S** except the Father,
11: 27 knows the Father except the **S**
16: 16 Messiah, the **S** of the living God."
17: 5 said, "This is my **S**, whom I love;
20: 18 the **S** of Man will be delivered over
24: 30 appear the sign of the **S** of Man
24: 44 because the **S** of Man will come
27: 54 "Surely he was the **S** of God!"
28: 19 and of the **S** and of the Holy Spirit,
Mk 10: 45 even the **S** of Man did not come
14: 62 you will see the **S** of Man sitting
Lk 9: 58 the **S** of Man has no place to lay his
18: 8 when the **S** of Man comes, will he
19: 10 For the **S** of Man came to seek
Jn 3: 14 so the **S** of Man must be lifted up,
3: 16 that he gave his one and only **S**,
17: 1 Glorify your **S**, that your **S** may
Ro 8: 29 conformed to the image of his **S**,
8: 32 He who did not spare his own **S**,
1Co 15: 28 the **S** himself will be made subject
Gal 4: 30 for the slave woman's **s** will never
1Th 1: 10 and to wait for his **S** from heaven,
Heb 1: 2 days he has spoken to us by his **S**,
10: 29 punished who has trampled the **S**
1Jn 1: 7 Jesus, his **S**, purifies us from all sin.
4: 9 only **S** into the world that we might
5: 5 believes that Jesus is the **S** of God.
5: 11 eternal life, and this life is in his **S**.

SONG (SING)

Ps 40: 3 He put a new **s** in my mouth,
96: 1 Sing to the Lord a new **s**;
149: 1 Sing to the Lord a new **s**,
Isa 49: 13 burst into **s**, you mountains!
55: 12 hills will burst into **s** before you,
Rev 5: 9 And they sang a new **s**, saying:
15: 3 sang the **s** of God's servant Moses

SONGS (SING)

Job 35: 10 Maker, who gives **s** in the night,
Ps 100: 2 come before him with joyful **s**.
Eph 5: 19 hymns, and **s** from the Spirit.
Jas 5: 13 Let them sing **s** of praise.

SONS (SON)

Joel 2: 28 **s** and daughters will prophesy,
2Co 6: 18 you will be my **s** and daughters,

SORROW

Jer 31: 12 garden, and they will **s** no more.
Ro 9: 2 I have great **s** and unceasing
2Co 7: 10 Godly **s** brings repentance that

SOUL (SOULS)

Dt 6: 5 and with all your **s** and with all
10: 12 all your heart and with all your **s**,
Jos 22: 5 all your heart and with all your **s**."
Ps 23: 3 he refreshes my **s**. He guides me
42: 1 of water, so my **s** pants for you,
42: 11 Why, my **s**, are you downcast?
103: 1 Praise the Lord, my **s**;
Pr 13: 19 A longing fulfilled is sweet to the **s**,
Mt 10: 28 of the One who can destroy both **s**
16: 26 the whole world, yet forfeit their **s**?
22: 37 with all your **s** and with all your
Heb 4: 12 it penetrates even to dividing **s**

SOULS (SOUL)

Jer 6: 16 and you will find rest for your **s**.
Mt 11: 29 and you will find rest for your **s**.

SOUND

1Co 14: 8 the trumpet does not **s** a clear call,
15: 52 the trumpet will **s**, the dead will
2Ti 4: 3 will not put up with **s** doctrine.

SOVEREIGN

Da 4: 25 Most High is **s** over all kingdoms

SOW (SOWS)

Job 4: 8 and those who **s** trouble reap it.
Mt 6: 26 they do not **s** or reap or store away
2Pe 2: 22 "A **s** that is washed returns to her

SOWS (SOW)

2Co 9: 6 and whoever **s** generously will

SPARE (SPARES)

Ro 8: 32 He who did not **s** his own Son,
11: 21 God did not **s** the natural branches,

SPARES (SPARE)

Pr 13: 24 Whoever **s** the rod hates their

SPEARS

Isa 2: 4 and their **s** into pruning hooks.
Joel 3: 10 and your pruning hooks into **s**.
Mic 4: 3 and their **s** into pruning hooks.

SPECTACLE

1Co 4: 9 have been made a **s** to the whole
Col 2: 15 he made a public **s** of them,

SPIN

Mt 6: 28 They do not labor or **s**.

SPIRIT (SPIRITS SPIRITUAL)

Ge 1: 2 the **S** of God was hovering over
6: 3 said, "My **S** will not contend
2Ki 2: 9 inherit a double portion of your **s**,"
Job 33: 4 The **S** of God has made me;
Ps 31: 5 Into your hands I commit my **s**;
51: 10 and renew a steadfast **s** within me.
51: 11 or take your Holy **S** from me.
51: 17 My sacrifice, O God, is a broken **s**;
139: 7 Where can I go from your **S**?
Isa 57: 15 to revive the **s** of the lowly
63: 10 rebelled and grieved his Holy **S**.
Eze 11: 19 heart and put a new **s** in them;
36: 26 a new heart and put a new **s** in you;
Joel 2: 28 I will pour out my **S** on all people.
Zec 4: 6 but by my **S**,' says the Lord
Mt 1: 18 to be pregnant through the Holy **S**.
3: 11 He will baptize you with the Holy **S**

To locate Scripture references by page number, refer to the Index of Scripture Passages following this concordance.

Mt 3:16 he saw the **S** of God descending
4:1 led by the **S** into the wilderness
5:3 "Blessed are the poor in **s**, for
26:41 The **s** is willing, but the flesh is
28:19 and of the Son and of the Holy **S**,
Lk 1:80 child grew and became strong in **s**;
11:13 in heaven give the Holy **S** to those
Jn 4:24 God is **s**, and his worshipers must worship in the **S**
7:39 that time the **S** had not been given,
14:26 the Holy **S**, whom the Father will
16:13 But when he, the **S** of truth, comes,
20:22 and said, "Receive the Holy **S**.
Ac 1:5 will be baptized with the Holy **S**."
2:4 tongues as the **S** enabled them.
2:38 will receive the gift of the Holy **S**.
6:3 who are known to be full of the **S**
19:2 "Did you receive the Holy **S**
Ro 8:9 if indeed the **S** of God lives in you.
8:26 the **S** helps us in our weakness.
1Co 2:10 God has revealed to us by his **S**.
2:10 The **S** searches all things,
2:14 without the **S** does not accept
3:1 as people who live by the **S** but as
6:19 bodies are temples of the Holy **S**,
12:1 Now about the gifts of the **S**,
12:13 we were all baptized by one **S**
12:13 and we were all given the one **S**
14:1 and eagerly desire gifts of the **S**,
2Co 3:6 the letter kills, but the **S** gives life.
5:5 who has given us the **S** as a deposit,
Gal 5:16 say, walk by the **S**, and you will not
5:22 But the fruit of the **S** is love, joy,
5:25 Since we live by the **S**, let us keep
Gal 6:1 who live by the **S** should restore
Eph 1:13 with a seal, the promised Holy **S**,
4:30 do not grieve the Holy **S** of God,
5:18 Instead, be filled with the **S**,
5:19 hymns, and songs from the **S**.
6:17 of salvation and the sword of the **S**,
1Th 5:19 Do not quench the **S**.
2Th 2:13 the sanctifying work of the **S**
Heb 4:12 even to dividing soul and **s**,
1Pe 3:4 beauty of a gentle and quiet **s**,
2Pe 1:21 were carried along by the Holy **S**.
1Jn 4:1 do not believe every **s**, but test

SPIRITS (SPIRIT)

1Co 12:10 another distinguishing between **s**,
14:32 The **s** of prophets are subject
1Jn 4:1 but test the **s** to see whether they

SPIRITUAL (SPIRIT)

Ro 12:11 but keep your **s** fervor,
1Co 2:13 the Spirit, explaining **s** realities
15:44 a natural body, it is raised a **s** body.
Eph 1:3 realms with every **s** blessing
6:12 against the **s** forces of evil
1Pe 2:2 crave pure **s** milk, so that by it you
2:5 offering **s** sacrifices acceptable

SPLENDOR

1Ch 16:29 the Lord in the **s** of his holiness.
29:11 glory and the majesty and the **s**,
Job 37:22 of the north he comes in golden **s**;
Ps 29:2 the Lord in the **s** of his holiness.
45:3 clothe yourself with **s** and majesty.
96:6 **S** and majesty are before him;
96:9 the Lord in the **s** of his holiness;
104:1 you are clothed with **s** and majesty.
145:5 of the glorious **s** of your majesty—
Isa 61:3 the Lord for the display of his **s**.
63:1 robed in **s**, striding forward
Lk 9:30 Elijah, appeared in glorious **s**,
2Th 2:8 and destroy by the **s** of his coming.

SPOIL

Ps 119:162 promise like one who finds great **s**.

SPOTLESS

2Pe 3:14 make every effort to be found **s**,

SPREAD (SPREADING)

Ac 12:24 the word of God continued to **s**
19:20 way the word of the Lord **s** widely

SPREADING (SPREAD)

1Th 3:2 in God's service in **s** the gospel

SPRING

Jer 2:13 forsaken me, the **s** of living water,
Jn 4:14 in them a **s** of water welling
Jas 3:12 can a salt **s** produce fresh water.

SPUR

Heb 10:24 how we may **s** one another

SPURNS

Pr 15:5 A fool **s** a parent's discipline,

STAFF

Ps 23:4 your rod and your **s**, they comfort

STAKES

Isa 54:2 your cords, strengthen your **s**.

STAND (STANDING STANDS)

Ex 14:13 **S** firm and you will see
2Ch 20:17 **s** firm and see the deliverance
Ps 1:5 Therefore the wicked will not **s**
40:2 rock and gave me a firm place to **s**.
119:120 fear of you; I **s** in awe of your laws.
Eze 22:30 **s** before me in the gap on behalf
Zec 14:4 day his feet will **s** on the Mount
Mt 12:25 divided against itself will not **s**.
Ro 14:10 we will all **s** before God's judgment
1Co 15:58 dear brothers and sisters, **s** firm.
Eph 6:14 **S** firm then, with the belt of truth
2Th 2:15 **s** firm and hold fast to the teachings
Jas 5:8 be patient and **s** firm,
Rev 3:20 I **s** at the door and knock.

STANDING (STAND)

Ex 3:5 where you are **s** is holy ground."
Jos 5:15 the place where you are **s** is holy."
1Pe 5:9 Resist him, **s** firm in the faith,

STANDS (STAND)

Ps 89:2 that your love **s** firm forever,

Ps 119: 89 it **s** firm in the heavens.
2Ti 2: 19 God's solid foundation **s** firm,

STAR (STARS)
Nu 24: 17 A **s** will come out of Jacob;
Rev 22: 16 David, and the bright Morning **S**."

STARS (STAR)
Da 12: 3 like the **s** for ever and ever.
Php 2: 15 you will shine among them like **s**

STEADFAST
Ps 51: 10 and renew a **s** spirit within me.
Isa 26: 3 peace those whose minds are **s**,
1Pe 5: 10 and make you strong, firm and **s**.

STEAL
Ex 20: 15 "You shall not **s**.
Mt 19: 18 you shall not **s**, you shall not give
Eph 4: 28 has been stealing must **s** no longer,

STEP (STEPS)
Gal 5: 25 let us keep in **s** with the Spirit.

STEPS (STEP)
Pr 16: 9 but the Lord establishes their **s**.
Jer 10: 23 it is not for them to direct their **s**.
1Pe 2: 21 that you should follow in his **s**.

STICKS
Pr 18: 24 there is a friend who **s** closer than

STIFF-NECKED
Ex 34: 9 Although this is a **s** people,

STILL
Ps 46: 10 "Be **s**, and know that I am God;
Zec 2: 13 Be **s** before the Lord,

STIRS
Pr 6: 19 a person who **s** up conflict
10: 12 Hatred **s** up conflict, but love
15: 1 wrath, but a harsh word **s** up anger.
29: 22 An angry person **s** up conflict,

STONE (CORNERSTONE MILLSTONE)
1Sa 17: 50 the Philistine with a sling and a **s**;
Isa 8: 14 and Judah he will be a **s** that causes
Eze 11: 19 remove from them their heart of **s**
Mk 16: 3 "Who will roll the **s** away
Lk 4: 3 God, tell this **s** to become bread."
Jn 8: 7 the first to throw a **s** at her."
2Co 3: 3 not on tablets of **s** but on tablets

STORE
Pr 10: 14 The wise **s** up knowledge,
Mt 6: 19 "Do not **s** up for yourselves

STOREHOUSE (HOUSE)
Mal 3: 10 Bring the whole tithe into the **s**,

STRAIGHT
Pr 3: 6 and he will make your paths **s**.
4: 25 Let your eyes look **s** ahead;
15: 21 understanding keeps a **s** course.
Jn 1: 23 'Make **s** the way for the Lord.'"

STRAIN
Mt 23: 24 You **s** out a gnat but swallow

STRANGER
Mt 25: 35 I was a **s** and you invited me in,
Jn 10: 5 But they will never follow a **s**;

STRAPS
Mk 1: 7 **s** of whose sandals I am not worthy

STREAMS
Ps 1: 3 person is like a tree planted by **s**
46: 4 a river whose **s** make glad the city
Ecc 1: 7 All **s** flow into the sea, yet the sea is

STRENGTH (STRONG)
Ex 15: 2 "The Lord is my **s** and my
Dt 6: 5 all your soul and with all your **s**.
2Sa 22: 33 It is God who arms me with **s**
Ne 8: 10 the joy of the Lord is your **s**."
Ps 28: 7 The Lord is my **s** and my shield;
46: 1 God is our refuge and **s**,
96: 7 ascribe to the Lord glory and **s**.
118: 14 The Lord is my **s** and my
147: 10 pleasure is not in the **s** of the horse,
Isa 40: 31 in the Lord will renew their **s**.
Mk 12: 30 all your mind and with all your **s**.'
1Co 1: 25 of God is stronger than human **s**.
Php 4: 13 this through him who gives me **s**.
1Pe 4: 11 do so with the **s** God provides,

STRENGTHEN (STRONG)
2Ch 16: 9 to **s** those whose hearts are fully
Ps 119: 28 **s** me according to your word.
Isa 35: 3 **S** the feeble hands, steady the
41: 10 I will **s** you and help you;
Eph 3: 16 of his glorious riches he may **s** you
2Th 2: 17 and **s** you in every good deed
Heb 12: 12 **s** your feeble arms and weak knees.

STRIFE
Pr 20: 3 It is to one's honor to avoid **s**,
22: 10 out the mocker, and out goes **s**;

STRIKE
Ge 3: 15 your head, and you will **s** his heel."
Zec 13: 7 "**S** the shepherd, and the sheep will
Mt 26: 31 "'I will **s** the shepherd,

STRONG (STRENGTH STRENGTHEN)
Dt 31: 6 Be **s** and courageous. Do not be
1Ki 2: 2 "So be **s**, act like a man,
Pr 31: 17 her arms are **s** for her tasks.
SS 8: 6 for love is as **s** as death, its jealousy
Lk 2: 40 And the child grew and became **s**;
Ro 15: 1 We who are **s** ought to bear
1Co 1: 27 things of the world to shame the **s**.
16: 13 in the faith; be courageous; be **s**.
2Co 12: 10 For when I am weak, then I am **s**.
Eph 6: 10 be **s** in the Lord and in his mighty

STRUGGLE
Ro 15: 30 join me in my **s** by praying to God
Eph 6: 12 For our **s** is not against flesh
Heb 12: 4 In your **s** against sin, you have not

STUDY
Ezr 7: 10 Ezra had devoted himself to the **s**
Ecc 12: 12 end, and much **s** wearies the body.
Jn 5: 39 You **s** the Scriptures diligently

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STUMBLE (STUMBLING)
Ps 37:24 though he may **s**, he will not fall,
119:165 law, and nothing can make them **s**.
Isa 8:14 be a stone that causes people to **s**
Jer 31:9 a level path where they will not **s**,
Eze 7:19 for it has caused them to **s** into sin.
1Co10:32 Do not cause anyone to **s**,
1Pe 2:8 "A stone that causes people to **s**

STUMBLING (STUMBLE)
Ro 14:13 your mind not to put any **s** block
1Co 8:9 rights does not become a **s** block
2Co 6:3 We put no **s** block in anyone's path,

SUBDUE
Ge 1:28 fill the earth and **s** it.

SUBJECT (SUBJECTED)
1Co14:32 of prophets are **s** to the control
15:28 the Son himself will be made **s**
Titus2:5 and to be **s** to their husbands,
2:9 slaves to be **s** to their masters
3:1 Remind the people to be **s** to rulers

SUBJECTED (SUBJECT)
Ro 8:20 the creation was **s** to frustration,

SUBMISSION (SUBMIT)
1Co14:34 but must be in **s**, as the law says.
1Ti 2:11 learn in quietness and full **s**.

SUBMISSIVE (SUBMIT)
Jas 3:17 considerate, **s**, full of mercy

SUBMIT (SUBMISSION SUBMISSIVE SUBMITS)
Ro 13:5 necessary to **s** to the authorities,
1Co16:16 to **s** to such people and to everyone
Eph 5:21 **S** to one another out of reverence
Col 3:18 **s** yourselves to your husbands, as is
Heb12:9 How much more should we **s**
13:17 leaders and **s** to their authority,
Jas 4:7 **S** yourselves, then, to God.
1Pe 2:18 reverent fear of God **s** yourselves

SUBMITS (SUBMIT)
Eph 5:24 Now as the church **s** to Christ,

SUCCESSFUL
Jos 1:7 that you may be **s** wherever you go.
2Ki 18:7 he was **s** in whatever he undertook.
2Ch20:20 in his prophets and you will be **s**."

SUFFER (SUFFERED SUFFERING SUFFERINGS SUFFERS)
Isa 53:10 to crush him and cause him to **s**,
Mk 8:31 Son of Man must **s** many things
Lk 24:26 the Messiah have to **s** these things
24:46 The Messiah will **s** and rise
Php 1:29 believe in him, but also to **s** for him,
1Pe 4:16 if you **s** as a Christian, do not be

SUFFERED (SUFFER)
Heb 2:9 and honor because he **s** death,
2:18 Because he himself **s** when he was
1Pe 2:21 called, because Christ **s** for you,

SUFFERING (SUFFER)
Isa 53:3 a man of **s**, and familiar with pain.
Ac 5:41 been counted worthy of **s** disgrace
2Ti 1:8 join with me in **s** for the gospel,

SUFFERINGS (SUFFER)
Ro 8:17 if indeed we share in his **s** in order
8:18 that our present **s** are not worth
2Co 1:5 share abundantly in the **s** of Christ,
Php 3:10 and participation in his **s**,

SUFFERS (SUFFER)
Pr 13:20 for a companion of fools **s** harm.
1Co12:26 If one part **s**, every part **s** with it;

SUFFICIENT
2Co12:9 said to me, "My grace is **s** for you,

SUITABLE
Ge 2:18 I will make a helper **s** for him."

SUN
Ecc 1:9 there is nothing new under the **s**.
Mal 4:2 the **s** of righteousness will rise
Mt 5:45 He causes his **s** to rise on the evil
17:2 His face shone like the **s**, and his
Rev 1:16 His face was like the **s** shining in
21:23 The city does not need the **s**

SUPERIOR
Heb 1:4 as the name he has inherited is **s**
8:6 he is mediator is **s** to the old one,

SUPREMACY
Col 1:18 in everything he might have the **s**.

SURE
Nu 32:23 you may be **s** that your sin will find
Dt 6:17 Be **s** to keep the commands
14:22 Be **s** to set aside a tenth of all
Isa 28:16 cornerstone for a **s** foundation;

SURPASS (SURPASSES SURPASSING)
Pr 31:29 noble things, but you **s** them all."

SURPASSES (SURPASS)
Mt 5:20 that unless your righteousness **s**
Eph 3:19 to know this love that **s** knowledge

SURPASSING (SURPASS)
Ps 150:2 praise him for his **s** greatness.
2Co 3:10 in comparison with the **s** glory.
9:14 of the **s** grace God has given you.
Php 3:8 a loss because of the **s** worth

SURROUNDED
Heb12:1 since we are **s** by such a great cloud

SUSPENDS
Job 26:7 he **s** the earth over nothing.

SUSTAINING (SUSTAINS)
Heb 1:3 **s** all things by his powerful word.

SUSTAINS (SUSTAINING)
Ps 18:35 shield, and your right hand **s** me;
146:9 the foreigner and **s** the fatherless
147:6 The Lord **s** the humble but casts
Isa 50:4 to know the word that **s** the weary.

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SWALLOWED
1Co 15: 54 "Death has been **s** up in victory."
2Co 5: 4 so that what is mortal may be **s**
SWEAR
Mt 5: 34 I tell you, do not **s** an oath at all:
SWORD (SWORDS)
Ps 45: 3 Gird your **s** on your side,
Mt 10: 34 not come to bring peace, but a **s**.
26: 52 all who draw the **s** will die by the **s**.
Lk 2: 35 a **s** will pierce your own soul too."
Ro 13: 4 for rulers do not bear the **s** for no
Eph 6: 17 of salvation and the **s** of the Spirit,
Heb 4: 12 Sharper than any double-edged **s**,
Rev 1: 16 was a sharp, double-edged **s**.
SWORDS (SWORD)
Pr 12: 18 words of the reckless pierce like **s**,
Isa 2: 4 They will beat their **s**
Joel 3: 10 Beat your plowshares into **s**
SYMPATHETIC
1Pe 3: 8 be **s**, love one another,
SYNAGOGUE
Lk 4: 16 the Sabbath day he went into the **s**,
Ac 17: 2 Paul went into the **s**, and on three
TABERNACLE
Ex 40: 34 the glory of the Lord filled the **t**.
TABLE (TABLES)
Ps 23: 5 You prepare a **t** before me
TABLES (TABLE)
Ac 6: 2 word of God in order to wait on **t**.
TABLET (TABLETS)
Pr 3: 3 write them on the **t** of your heart.
7: 3 write them on the **t** of your heart.
TABLETS (TABLET)
Ex 31: 18 Sinai, he gave him the two **t**
Dt 10: 5 put the **t** in the ark I had made,
2Co 3: 3 not on **t** of stone but on **t** of human
TAKE (TAKEN TAKES TAKING TOOK)
Dt 12: 32 do not add to it or **t** away from it.
31: 26 "**T** this Book of the Law and place
Job 23: 10 But he knows the way that I **t**;
Ps 49: 17 for they will **t** nothing with them
51: 11 or **t** your Holy Spirit from me.
Mt 10: 38 Whoever does not **t** up their cross
11: 29 **T** my yoke upon you and learn
16: 24 deny themselves and **t** up their cross
TAKEN (TAKE)
Lev 6: 4 they have stolen or **t** by extortion,
Isa 6: 7 your guilt is **t** away and your sin
Mt 24: 40 one will be **t** and the other left.
Mk 16: 19 them, he was **t** up into heaven
1Ti 3: 16 on in the world, was **t** up in glory.
TAKES (TAKE)
1Ki 20: 11 not boast like one who **t** it off.'"
Jn 1: 29 who **t** away the sin of the world!
Rev 22: 19 if anyone **t** words away from this
TAKING (TAKE)
Php 2: 7 nothing by **t** the very nature
TALENT See BAGS
TAME
Jas 3: 8 no human being can **t** the tongue.
TASK
Mk 13: 34 each with their assigned **t**, and tells
Ac 20: 24 complete the **t** the Lord Jesus has
1Co 3: 5 the Lord has assigned to each his **t**.
2Co 2: 16 And who is equal to such a **t**?
TASTE (TASTED)
Ps 34: 8 **T** and see that the Lord is good;
Col 2: 21 Do not **t**! Do not touch!"?
Heb 2: 9 God he might **t** death for everyone.
TASTED (TASTE)
1Pe 2: 3 you have **t** that the Lord is good.
TAUGHT (TEACH)
Mt 7: 29 because he **t** as one who had
1Co 2: 13 but in words **t** by the Spirit,
Gal 1: 12 it from any man, nor was I **t** it;
TAX (TAXES)
Mt 22: 17 to pay the imperial **t** to Caesar
TAXES (TAX)
Ro 13: 7 you owe them: If you owe **t**, pay **t**;
TEACH (TAUGHT TEACHER TEACHERS TEACHES TEACHING)
Ex 33: 13 **t** me your ways so I may know you
Dt 4: 9 **T** them to your children and to
8: 3 to **t** you that man does not live
11: 19 **T** them to your children,
1Sa 12: 23 I will **t** you the way that is good
Ps 32: 8 **t** you in the way you should go;
51: 13 I will **t** transgressors your ways,
90: 12 **T** us to number our days, that we
143: 10 **T** me to do your will, for you are
Jer 31: 34 longer will they **t** their neighbor,
Lk 11: 1 "Lord, **t** us to pray, just as John
Jn 14: 26 will **t** you all things and will
1Ti 2: 12 I do not permit a woman to **t**
3: 2 respectable, hospitable, able to **t**,
Titus 2: 1 **t** what is appropriate to sound
Heb 8: 11 longer will they **t** their neighbor,
Jas 3: 1 that we who **t** will be judged more
1Jn 2: 27 you do not need anyone to **t** you.
TEACHER (TEACH)
Mt 10: 24 "The student is not above the **t**,
23: 8 for you have one **T**, and you are
Jn 13: 14 your Lord and **T**, have washed
TEACHERS (TEACH)
1Co 12: 28 prophets, third **t**, then miracles,
Eph 4: 11 the evangelists, the pastors and **t**,
Heb 5: 12 by this time you ought to be **t**,
TEACHES (TEACH)
1Ti 6: 3 If anyone **t** otherwise and does not
TEACHING (TEACH)
Pr 1: 8 and do not forsake your mother's **t**.

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Mt 28: 20 **t** them to obey everything I have
Jn 7: 17 out whether my **t** comes from God
14: 23 who loves me will obey my **t**.
1Ti 4: 13 of Scripture, to preaching and to **t**.
2Ti 3: 16 is God-breathed and is useful for **t**,
Titus2: 7 In your **t** show integrity,

TEAR (TEARS)
Rev 7: 17 God will wipe away every **t**

TEARS (TEAR)
Ps 126: 5 Those who sow with **t** will reap
Php 3: 18 and now tell you again even with **t**,

TEETH (TOOTH)
Mt 8: 12 will be weeping and gnashing of **t**."

TEMPERATE
1Ti 3: 2 reproach, faithful to his wife, **t**,
3: 11 not malicious talkers but **t**
Titus2: 2 Teach the older men to be **t**,

TEMPEST
Ps 55: 8 shelter, far from the **t** and storm."

TEMPLE (TEMPLES)
1Ki 8: 27 How much less this **t** I have built!
Hab 2: 20 The Lord is in his holy **t**;
1Co 3: 16 that you yourselves are God's **t**
2Co 6: 16 For we are the **t** of the living God.

TEMPLES (TEMPLE)
Ac 17: 24 does not live in **t** built by human
1Co 6: 19 your bodies are **t** of the Holy Spirit,

TEMPT (TEMPTATION TEMPTED)
1Co 7: 5 Satan will not **t** you because of

TEMPTATION (TEMPT)
Mt 6: 13 lead us not into **t**, but deliver us
26: 41 pray so that you will not fall into **t**.
1Co10: 13 No **t** has overtaken you except

TEMPTED (TEMPT)
Mt 4: 1 the wilderness to be **t** by the devil.
1Co10: 13 not let you be **t** beyond what you
Heb 2: 18 he himself suffered when he was **t**,
2: 18 able to help those who are being **t**.
4: 15 but we have one who has been **t**
Jas 1: 13 For God cannot be **t** by evil,

TEN (TENTH TITHE TITHES)
Ex 34: 28 the **T** Commandments.
Ps 91: 7 side, **t** thousand at your right hand,
Mt 25: 28 give it to the one who has **t** bags.
Lk 15: 8 suppose a woman has **t** silver coins

TENTH (TEN)
Dt 14: 22 Be sure to set aside a **t** of all

TERRIBLE (TERROR)
2Ti 3: 1 There will be **t** times in the last

TERROR (TERRIBLE)
Ps 91: 5 You will not fear the **t** of night,
Lk 21: 26 People will faint from **t**,
Ro 13: 3 rulers hold no **t** for those who do

TEST (TESTED TESTS)
Dt 6: 16 your God to the **t** as you did
Ps 139: 23 **t** me and know my anxious
Ro 12: 2 you will be able to **t** and approve
1Co 3: 13 the fire will **t** the quality of each
1Jn 4: 1 **t** the spirits to see whether they are

TESTED (TEST)
Ge 22: 1 Some time later God **t** Abraham.
Job 23: 10 when he has **t** me, I will come forth
Pr 27: 21 but people are **t** by their praise.
1Ti 3: 10 They must first be **t**;

TESTIFY (TESTIMONY)
Jn 5: 39 These are the very Scriptures that **t**

TESTIMONY (TESTIFY)
Isa 8: 20 instruction and the **t** of warning.
Lk 18: 20 you shall not give false **t**,
2Ti 1: 8 be ashamed of the **t** about our Lord

TESTS (TEST)
Pr 17: 3 for gold, but the Lord **t** the heart.
1Th 2: 4 people but God, who **t** our hearts.

THADDAEUS
Apostle (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18); probably also known as Judas son of James (Lk 6:16; Ac 1:13).

THANKFUL (THANKS)
Heb12: 28 let us be **t**, and so worship God

THANKS (THANKFUL THANKSGIVING)
Ne 12: 31 assigned two large choirs to give **t**.
Ps 100: 4 give **t** to him and praise his name.
1Co15: 57 But **t** be to God! He gives us
2Co 2: 14 But **t** be to God, who always leads
9: 15 **T** be to God for his indescribable
1Th 5: 18 give **t** in all circumstances;

THANKSGIVING (THANKS)
Ps 95: 2 Let us come before him with **t**
100: 4 Enter his gates with **t** and his
Php 4: 6 **t**, present your requests to God.
1Ti 4: 3 to be received with **t** by those who

THIEF (THIEVES)
1Th 5: 2 of the Lord will come like a **t**
Rev 16: 15 "Look, I come like a **t**!

THIEVES (THIEF)
1Co 6: 10 nor **t** nor the greedy nor drunkards

THINK (THOUGHT THOUGHTS)
Ro 12: 3 Do not **t** of yourself more highly
Php 4: 8 **t** about such things.

THIRST (THIRSTY)
Ps 69: 21 food and gave me vinegar for my **t**.
Mt 5: 6 hunger and **t** for righteousness,
Jn 4: 14 the water I give them will never **t**.

THIRSTY (THIRST)
Isa 55: 1 all you who are **t**,
Jn 7: 37 "Let anyone who is **t** come to me
Rev 22: 17 Let the one who is **t** come;

THOMAS
Apostle (Mt 10:3; Mk 3:18; Lk 6:15; Jn 11:16; 14:5; 21:2; Ac 1:13). Doubted resurrection (Jn 20:24–28).

THORN (THORNS)
2Co12: 7 I was given a **t** in my flesh,
THORNS (THORN)
Nu 33: 55 in your eyes and **t** in your sides.
Mt 27: 29 twisted together a crown of **t** and
Heb 6: 8 land that produces **t** and thistles is
THOUGHT (THINK)
Pr 14: 15 the prudent give **t** to their steps.
1Co13: 11 I talked like a child, I **t** like a child,
THOUGHTS (THINK)
Ps 139: 23 test me and know my anxious **t**.
Isa 55: 8 "For my **t** are not your **t**, neither
Heb 4: 12 it judges the **t** and attitudes
THREE
Ecc 4: 12 of **t** strands is not quickly broken.
Mt 12: 40 the Son of Man will be **t** days and **t** nights in the heart of the earth.
18: 20 where two or **t** gather in my name,
27: 63 said, 'After **t** days I will rise again.'
1Co13: 13 And now these **t** remain:
14: 27 or at the most **t**—should speak,
2Co13: 1 testimony of two or **t** witnesses."
THRESHING
2Sa 24: 18 altar to the Lord on the **t** floor
THRONE (ENTHRONED)
2Sa 7: 16 your **t** will be established
Ps 45: 6 Your **t**, O God, will last for ever
47: 8 God is seated on his holy **t**.
Isa 6: 1 high and exalted, seated on a **t**;
66: 1 "Heaven is my **t**, and the earth is
Heb 4: 16 then approach God's **t** of grace
12: 2 at the right hand of the **t** of God.
Rev 4: 10 They lay their crowns before the **t**
20: 11 I saw a great white **t** and him who
22: 3 The **t** of God and of the Lamb will
THROW
Jn 8: 7 the first to **t** a stone at her."
Heb10: 35 So do not **t** away your confidence;
12: 1 let us **t** off everything that hinders
THWART
Isa 14: 27 has purposed, and who can **t** him?
TIBNI
King of Israel (1Ki 16:21–22).
TIME (TIMES)
Est 4: 14 royal position for such a **t** as this?"
Da 7: 25 be delivered into his hands for a **t**, times and half a **t**.
Hos10: 12 for it is **t** to seek the Lord,
Ro 9: 9 "At the appointed **t** I will return,
Heb 9: 28 and he will appear a second **t**,
10: 12 had offered for all **t** one sacrifice
1Pe 4: 17 For it is **t** for judgment to begin
TIMES (TIME)
Ps 9: 9 a stronghold in **t** of trouble.
31: 15 My **t** are in your hands;
62: 8 Trust in him at all **t**, you people;
Pr 17: 17 A friend loves at all **t**,
Am 5: 13 in such **t**, for the **t** are evil.
Mt 18: 21 sins against me? Up to seven **t**?"
Ac 1: 7 "It is not for you to know the **t**
Rev 12: 14 care of for a time, **t** and half a time,
TIMID
2Ti 1: 7 God gave us does not make us **t**,
TIMOTHY
Believer from Lystra (Ac 16:1). Joined Paul on second missionary journey (Ac 16–20). Sent to settle problems at Corinth (1Co 4:17; 16:10). Led church at Ephesus (1Ti 1:3). Co-writer with Paul (1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:1; Phm 1).
TIRE (TIRED)
2Th 3: 13 never **t** of doing what is good.
TIRED (TIRE)
Ex 17: 12 When Moses' hands grew **t**,
Isa 40: 28 He will not grow **t** or weary,
TITHE (TEN)
Lev 27: 30 "'A **t** of everything
Dt 12: 17 your own towns the **t** of your grain
Mal 3: 10 Bring the whole **t**
TITHES (TEN)
Mal 3: 8 "In **t** and offerings.
TITUS
Gentile co-worker of Paul (Gal 2:1–3; 2Ti 4:10); sent to Corinth (2Co 2:13; 7–8; 12:18), Crete (Titus 1:4–5).
TODAY
Mt 6: 11 Give us **t** our daily bread.
Lk 23: 43 **t** you will be with me in paradise."
Heb 3: 13 as long as it is called "**T**,"
13: 8 Christ is the same yesterday and **t**
TOIL
Ge 3: 17 through painful **t** you will eat food
TOLERATE
Hab 1: 13 then do you **t** the treacherous?
Rev 2: 2 that you cannot **t** wicked people,
TOMB
Mt 27: 65 make the **t** as secure as you know
Lk 24: 2 the stone rolled away from the **t**,
TOMORROW
Pr 27: 1 not boast about **t**, for you do not
Isa 22: 13 drink," you say, "for **t** we die!"
Mt 6: 34 do not worry about **t**, for **t**
Jas 4: 13 "Today or **t** we will go to this
TONGUE (TONGUES)
Ps 39: 1 my ways and keep my **t** from sin;
Pr 12: 18 but the **t** of the wise brings healing.
1Co14: 2 who speaks in a **t** does not speak
14: 4 speaks in a **t** edifies themselves,
14: 13 one who speaks in a **t** should pray
14: 19 than ten thousand words in a **t**.
Php 2: 11 and every **t** acknowledge that Jesus
Jas 3: 8 no human being can tame the **t**.

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TONGUES (TONGUE)
Isa 28: 11 strange **t** God will speak to this
Mk 16: 17 they will speak in new t;
Ac 2: 4 other **t** as the Spirit enabled them.
10: 46 For they heard them speaking in **t**
19: 6 they spoke in **t** and prophesied.
1Co 12: 30 Do all speak in **t**? Do all interpret?
14: 18 I speak in **t** more than all of you.
14: 39 and do not forbid speaking in **t**.
Jas 1: 26 rein on their **t** deceive themselves,

TOOK (TAKE)
1Co 11: 23 the night he was betrayed, **t** bread,
Php 3: 12 which Christ Jesus **t** hold of me.

TOOTH (TEETH)
Ex 21: 24 eye for eye, **t** for **t**, hand for hand,
Mt 5: 38 was said, 'Eye for eye, and **t** for **t**.'

TORMENTED
Rev 20: 10 They will be **t** day and night

TORN
Gal 4: 15 you would have **t** out your eyes
Php 1: 23 I am **t** between the two: I desire

TOUCH (TOUCHED)
Ps 105: 15 "Do not **t** my anointed ones;
Lk 24: 39 **T** me and see; a ghost does not
2Co 6: 17 **T** no unclean thing, and I will
Col 2: 21 Do not taste! Do not **t**!"?

TOUCHED (TOUCH)
1Sa 10: 26 men whose hearts God had **t**.
Mt 14: 36 cloak, and all who **t** it were healed.

TOWER
Ge 11: 4 a **t** that reaches to the heavens,
Pr 18: 10 name of the Lord is a fortified **t**;

TOWN (TOWNS)
Mt 5: 14 **t** built on a hill cannot be hidden.

TOWNS (TOWN)
Nu 35: 2 to give the Levites **t** to live
35: 15 These six **t** will be a place of refuge

TRACING
Ro 11: 33 and his paths beyond **t** out!

TRADITION
Mt 15: 6 word of God for the sake of your **t**.
Col 2: 8 which depends on human **t**

TRAINING
1Co 9: 25 in the games goes into strict **t**.
2Ti 3: 16 correcting and **t** in righteousness,

TRAMPLED
Lk 21: 24 Jerusalem will be **t**
Heb 10: 29 to be punished who has **t** the Son

TRANCE
Ac 10: 10 was being prepared, he fell into a **t**.

TRANSCENDS
Php 4: 7 God, which **t** all understanding,

TRANSFIGURED
Mt 17: 2 There he was **t** before them.

TRANSFORM (TRANSFORMED)
Php 3: 21 will **t** our lowly bodies so that they

TRANSFORMED (TRANSFORM)
Ro 12: 2 be **t** by the renewing of your mind.
2Co 3: 18 are being **t** into his image

TRANSGRESSION (TRANSGRESSIONS TRANSGRESSORS)
Isa 53: 8 **t** of my people he was punished.
Ro 4: 15 where there is no law there is no **t**.

TRANSGRESSIONS (TRANSGRESSION)
Ps 32: 1 is the one whose **t** are forgiven,
51: 1 great compassion blot out my **t**.
103: 12 so far has he removed our **t** from
Isa 53: 5 But he was pierced for our **t**,
Eph 2: 1 you were dead in your **t** and sins,

TRANSGRESSORS (TRANSGRESSION)
Ps 51: 13 Then I will teach **t** your ways,
Isa 53: 12 and was numbered with the **t**.
53: 12 and made intercession for the **t**.

TREADING
Dt 25: 4 Do not muzzle an ox while it is **t**
1Co 9: 9 "Do not muzzle an ox while it is **t**

TREASURE (TREASURED TREASURES)
Isa 33: 6 of the Lord is the key to this **t**.
Mt 6: 21 where your **t** is, there your heart
2Co 4: 7 But we have this **t** in jars of clay

TREASURED (TREASURE)
Dt 7: 6 to be his people, his **t** possession.
Lk 2: 19 But Mary **t** up all these things

TREASURES (TREASURE)
Mt 6: 19 store up for yourselves **t** on earth,
Col 2: 3 in whom are hidden all the **t**
Heb 11: 26 of greater value than the **t** of Egypt,

TREAT
Lev 22: 2 sons to **t** with respect the sacred
1Ti 5: 1 **T** younger men as brothers,
1Pe 3: 7 **t** them with respect as the weaker

TREATY
Dt 7: 2 Make no **t** with them, and show

TREE
Ge 2: 9 of the garden were the **t** of life
2: 9 and the **t** of the knowledge of good
Ps 1: 3 is like a **t** planted by streams
Mt 3: 10 every **t** that does not produce good
12: 33 for a **t** is recognized by its fruit.
Rev 22: 14 may have the right to the **t** of life

TREMBLE (TREMBLING)
1Ch 16: 30 **T** before him, all the earth!
Ps 114: 7 **T**, earth, at the presence of the Lord,

TREMBLING (TREMBLE)
Ps 2: 11 fear and celebrate his rule with **t**.
Php 2: 12 out your salvation with fear and **t**,

TRESPASS
Ro 5: 17 if, by the **t** of the one man,

TRIALS
1Th 3: 3 one would be unsettled by these **t**.
Jas 1: 2 whenever you face **t** of many kinds,
2Pe 2: 9 how to rescue the godly from **t**

TRIBES
Ge 49: 28 All these are the twelve **t** of Israel,
Mt 19: 28 judging the twelve **t** of Israel.

TRIBULATION
Rev 7: 14 who have come out of the great **t**;

TRIUMPHAL (TRIUMPHING)
Isa 60: 11 their kings led in **t** procession.
2Co 2: 14 as captives in Christ's **t** procession

TRIUMPHING (TRIUMPHAL)
Col 2: 15 of them, **t** over them by the cross.

TROUBLE (TROUBLED TROUBLES)
Job 14: 1 are of few days and full of **t**.
Ps 46: 1 strength, an ever-present help in **t**.
107: 13 they cried to the Lord in their **t**,
Pr 24: 10 If you falter in a time of **t**,
Mt 6: 34 Each day has enough **t** of its own.
Jn 16: 33 In this world you will have **t**.
Ro 8: 35 Shall **t** or hardship or persecution

TROUBLED (TROUBLE)
Jn 14: 1 "Do not let your hearts be **t**.
14: 27 Do not let your hearts be **t** and do

TROUBLES (TROUBLE)
1Co 7: 28 those who marry will face many **t**
2Co 1: 4 who comforts us in all our **t**,
4: 17 momentary **t** are achieving for us

TRUE (TRUTH)
Dt 18: 22 does not take place or come **t**,
1Sa 9: 6 and everything he says comes **t**.
Ps 119: 160 All your words are **t**; all your
Jn 17: 3 the only **t** God, and Jesus Christ,
Ro 3: 4 Let God be **t**, and every human
Php 4: 8 whatever is **t**, whatever is noble,
Rev 22: 6 These words are trustworthy and **t**.

TRUMPET
1Co 14: 8 if the **t** does not sound a clear call,
15: 52 twinkling of an eye, at the last **t**.

TRUST (ENTRUSTED TRUSTED TRUSTWORTHY)
Ps 20: 7 we **t** in the name of the Lord our
37: 3 **T** in the Lord and do good;
56: 4 in God I **t** and am not afraid.
119: 42 taunts me, for I **t** in your word.
Pr 3: 5 **T** in the Lord with all your heart
Isa 30: 15 in quietness and **t** is your strength,
1Co 4: 2 been given a **t** must prove faithful.

TRUSTED (TRUST)
Ps 26: 1 I have **t** in the Lord and have not
Isa 25: 9 we **t** in him, and he saved us.
Da 3: 28 They **t** in him and defied the king's
Lk 16: 10 "Whoever can be **t** with very little

TRUSTWORTHY (TRUST)
Ps 119: 138 are righteous; they are fully **t**.
Pr 11: 13 but a **t** person keeps a secret.
Rev 22: 6 to me, "These words are **t** and true.

TRUTH (TRUE TRUTHFUL TRUTHS)
Isa 45: 19 I, the Lord, speak the **t**;
Zec 8: 16 Speak the **t** to each other,
Jn 4: 23 the Father in the Spirit and in **t**,
8: 32 Then you will know the **t**, and the **t**
14: 6 "I am the way and the **t** and the life.
16: 13 he will guide you into all the **t**.
18: 38 "What is **t**?" retorted Pilate.
Ro 1: 25 They exchanged the **t** about God
1Co 13: 6 in evil but rejoices with the **t**.
2Co 13: 8 against the **t**, but only for the **t**.
Eph 4: 15 Instead, speaking the **t** in love,
6: 14 belt of **t** buckled around your waist,
2Th 2: 10 because they refused to love the **t**
1Ti 2: 4 to come to a knowledge of the **t**.
3: 15 the pillar and foundation of the **t**.
2Ti 2: 15 correctly handles the word of **t**.
3: 7 to come to a knowledge of the **t**.
Heb 10: 26 received the knowledge of the **t**,
1Pe 1: 22 by obeying the **t** so that you have
2Pe 2: 2 and will bring the way of **t**
1Jn 1: 6 we lie and do not live out the **t**.
1: 8 ourselves and the **t** is not in us.

TRUTHFUL (TRUTH)
Jn 3: 33 it has certified that God is **t**.

TRUTHS (TRUTH)
1Ti 3: 9 keep hold of the deep **t** of the faith
Heb 5: 12 teach you the elementary **t** of God's

TRY (TRYING)
Ps 26: 2 and **t** me, examine my heart and
Isa 7: 13 Will you **t** the patience of my God
1Co 14: 12 **t** to excel in those that build
2Co 5: 11 the Lord, we **t** to persuade others.

TRYING (TRY)
2Co 5: 12 We are not **t** to commend ourselves
1Th 2: 4 We are not **t** to please people

TURN (TURNED TURNS)
Ex 32: 12 **T** from your fierce anger;
Dt 5: 32 do not **t** aside to the right
28: 14 Do not **t** aside from any
Jos 1: 7 do not **t** from it to the right
2Ch 7: 14 face and **t** from their wicked ways,
30: 9 He will not **t** his face from you
Ps 78: 6 they in **t** would tell their children.
Pr 22: 6 they are old they will not **t** from it.
Isa 29: 16 You **t** things upside down,
30: 21 Whether you **t** to the right
45: 22 "**T** to me and be saved, all you ends
55: 7 Let them **t** to the Lord, and he
Eze 33: 11 they **t** from their ways and live.
Mal 4: 6 He will **t** the hearts of the parents
Mt 5: 39 **t** to them the other cheek also.
10: 35 to **t** "'a man against his father,
Jn 12: 40 understand with their hearts, nor **t**
Ac 3: 19 and **t** to God, so that your sins may

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Ac 26: 18 and **t** them from darkness to light,
1Ti 6: 20 **T** away from godless chatter
1Pe 3: 11 must **t** from evil and do good;

TURNED (TURN)
Ps 30: 11 You **t** my wailing into dancing;
40: 1 he **t** to me and heard my cry.
Isa 53: 6 each of us has **t** to our own way;
Hos 7: 8 Ephraim is a flat loaf not **t** over.
Joel 2: 31 The sun will be **t** to darkness
Ro 3: 12 All have **t** away, they have together

TURNS (TURN)
2Sa 22: 29 the Lord **t** my darkness
Pr 15: 1 A gentle answer **t** away wrath,
Isa 44: 25 of the wise and **t** it into nonsense,
Jas 5: 20 Whoever **t** a sinner from the error

TWELVE
Ge 49: 28 All these are the **t** tribes of Israel,
Mt 10: 1 Jesus called his **t** disciples to him

TWINKLING
1Co 15: 52 a flash, in the **t** of an eye, at the last

UNAPPROACHABLE
1Ti 6: 16 immortal and who lives in **u** light,

UNBELIEF (UNBELIEVER UNBELIEVERS UNBELIEVING)
Mk 9: 24 help me overcome my **u**!"
Ro 11: 20 they were broken off because of **u**,
Heb 3: 19 able to enter, because of their **u**.

UNBELIEVER (UNBELIEF)
1Co 7: 15 But if the **u** leaves, let it be so.
10: 27 If an **u** invites you to a meal
14: 24 if an **u** or an inquirer comes in
2Co 6: 15 have in common with an **u**?
1Ti 5: 8 the faith and is worse than an **u**.

UNBELIEVERS (UNBELIEF)
1Co 6: 6 and this in front of **u**!
2Co 6: 14 Do not be yoked together with **u**.

UNBELIEVING (UNBELIEF)
1Co 7: 14 the **u** husband has been sanctified
7: 14 and the **u** wife has been sanctified
Rev 21: 8 But the cowardly, the **u**, the vile,

UNCERTAIN
1Ti 6: 17 which is so **u**, but to put their hope

UNCHANGEABLE
Heb 6: 18 that, by two **u** things in which it is

UNCIRCUMCISED
1Sa 17: 26 Who is this **u** Philistine that he
Col 3: 11 or Jew, circumcised or **u**,

UNCIRCUMCISION
1Co 7: 19 is nothing and **u** is nothing.
Gal 5: 6 neither circumcision nor **u** has any

UNCLEAN
Isa 6: 5 For I am a man of **u** lips, and I live
Ro 14: 14 Jesus, that nothing is **u** in itself.
2Co 6: 17 Touch no **u** thing, and I will

UNCONCERNED
Eze 16: 49 were arrogant, overfed and **u**;

UNCOVERED
Heb 4: 13 Everything is **u** and laid bare

UNDERSTAND (UNDERSTANDING UNDERSTANDS)
Job 42: 3 Surely I spoke of things I did not **u**,
Ps 73: 16 When I tried to **u** all this,
119:125 that I may **u** your statutes.
Lk 24: 45 so they could **u** the Scriptures.
Ac 8: 30 "Do you **u** what you are reading?"
Ro 7: 15 I do not **u** what I do. For what I
1Co 2: 14 and cannot **u** them because they
Eph 5: 17 but **u** what the Lord's will is.
2Pe 3: 16 some things that are hard to **u**,

UNDERSTANDING (UNDERSTAND)
Ps 119: 32 for you have broadened my **u**.
119:104 I gain **u** from your precepts;
147: 5 in power; his **u** has no limit.
Pr 3: 5 heart and lean not on your own **u**;
4: 7 Though it cost all you have, get **u**.
10: 23 a person of **u** delights in wisdom.
11: 12 one who has **u** holds their tongue.
15: 21 but whoever has **u** keeps a straight
15: 32 one who heeds correction gains **u**.
Isa 40: 28 and his **u** no one can fathom.
Da 5: 12 a keen mind and knowledge and **u**,
Mk 4: 12 and ever hearing but never **u**;
12: 33 with all your **u** and with all your
Php 4: 7 which transcends all **u**, will guard

UNDERSTANDS (UNDERSTAND)
1Ch 28: 9 every heart and **u** every desire

UNDIVIDED
1Ch 12: 33 to help David with **u** loyalty—
Ps 86: 11 give me an **u** heart, that I may fear
Eze 11: 19 I will give them an **u** heart and put
1Co 7: 35 in a right way in **u** devotion

UNDOING
Pr 18: 7 The mouths of fools are their **u**,

UNDYING
Eph 6: 24 Lord Jesus Christ with an **u** love.

UNFADING
1Pe 3: 4 the **u** beauty of a gentle and quiet

UNFAILING
Ps 33: 5 the earth is full of his **u** love.
119: 76 May your **u** love be my comfort,
143: 8 bring me word of your **u** love, for I
Pr 19: 22 What a person desires is **u** love;
La 3: 32 compassion, so great is his **u** love.

UNFAITHFUL
Lev 6: 2 is **u** to the Lord by deceiving
1Ch 10: 13 Saul died because he was **u**
Pr 13: 15 but the way of the **u** leads to their

UNFOLDING
Ps 119:130 The **u** of your words gives light;

UNGODLINESS
Titus2: 12 It teaches us to say "No" to **u**
UNITED (UNITY)
Ro 6: 5 For if we have been **u** with him
Php 2: 1 from being **u** with Christ, if any
Col 2: 2 encouraged in heart and **u** in love,
UNITY (UNITED)
Ps 133: 1 God's people live together in **u**!
Eph 4: 3 keep the **u** of the Spirit through
4: 13 until we all reach **u** in the faith
Col 3: 14 them all together in perfect **u**.
UNIVERSE
Heb 1: 2 through whom also he made the **u**.
UNKNOWN
Ac 17: 23 with this inscription: to an **u** god.
UNLEAVENED
Ex 12: 17 "Celebrate the Festival of **U** Bread,
UNPROFITABLE
Titus3: 9 because these are **u** and useless.
UNPUNISHED
Ex 34: 7 Yet he does not leave the guilty **u**;
Pr 19: 5 A false witness will not go **u**,
UNREPENTANT
Ro 2: 5 stubbornness and your **u** heart,
UNRIGHTEOUS
Zep 3: 5 not fail, yet the **u** know no shame.
Mt 5: 45 rain on the righteous and the **u**.
1Pe 3: 18 the righteous for the **u**, to bring
2Pe 2: 9 to hold the **u** for punishment
UNSEARCHABLE
Ro 11: 33 How **u** his judgments, and his
UNSEEN
2Co 4: 18 temporary, but what is **u** is eternal.
UNSTABLE
Jas 1: 8 double-minded and **u** in all they
2Pe 2: 14 they seduce the **u**; they are experts
3: 16 ignorant and **u** people distort,
UNTHINKABLE
Job 34: 12 It is **u** that God would do wrong,
UNVEILED
2Co 3: 18 with **u** faces contemplate the Lord's
UNWORTHY
Job 40: 4 "I am **u**—how can I reply to you?
Lk 17: 10 do, should say, 'We are **u** servants;
UPRIGHT
Job 1: 1 This man was blameless and **u**;
Pr 2: 7 He holds success in store for the **u**,
15: 8 but the prayer of the **u** pleases him.
Titus1: 8 who is self-controlled, **u**,
2: 12 **u** and godly lives in this present
UPROOTED
Jude : 12 autumn trees, without fruit and **u**
USEFUL
2Ti 2: 21 **u** to the Master and prepared to do
2Ti 3: 16 God-breathed and is **u** for teaching
USELESS
1Co15: 14 our preaching is **u** and so is your
Jas 2: 20 that faith without deeds is **u**?
UZZIAH
Son of Amaziah; king of Judah also known as Azariah (2Ki 15:1–7; 1Ch 6:24; 2Ch 26).
VAIN
Ps 33: 17 A horse is a **v** hope for deliverance;
Isa 65: 23 They will not labor in **v**, nor will
1Co15: 2 Otherwise, you have believed in **v**.
15: 58 your labor in the Lord is not in **v**.
2Co 6: 1 you not to receive God's grace in **v**.
VALLEY
Ps 23: 4 I walk through the darkest **v**,
Isa 40: 4 Every **v** shall be raised up,
Joel 3: 14 Lord is near in the **v** of decision.
VALUABLE (VALUE)
Lk 12: 24 how much more **v** you are than
VALUE (VALUABLE)
Mt 13: 46 When he found one of great **v**,
1Ti 4: 8 For physical training is of some **v**, but godliness has **v** for all things,
Heb11: 26 as of greater **v** than the treasures
VEIL
Ex 34: 33 to them, he put a **v** over his face.
2Co 3: 14 to this day the same **v** remains
VENGEANCE (AVENGE REVENGE)
Isa 34: 8 For the Lord has a day of **v**,
VICTORIES (VICTORY)
Ps 18: 50 He gives his king great **v**;
21: 1 great is his joy in the **v** you give!
VICTORIOUS (VICTORY)
Zec 9: 9 king comes to you, righteous and **v**,
Rev 2: 7 To the one who is **v**, I will give
2: 11 The one who is **v** will not be hurt
2: 17 To the one who is **v**, I will give
2: 26 To the one who is **v** and does my
3: 5 The one who is **v** will, like them,
3: 12 The one who is **v** I will make
3: 21 To the one who is **v**, I will give
21: 7 Those who are **v** will inherit all
VICTORIOUSLY (VICTORY)
Ps 45: 4 In your majesty ride forth **v**
VICTORY (VICTORIES VICTORIOUS VICTORIOUSLY)
Ps 60: 12 With God we will gain the **v**,
1Co15: 54 has been swallowed up in **v**."
15: 57 He gives us the **v** through our Lord
1Jn 5: 4 This is the **v** that has overcome
VINDICATED
1Ti 3: 16 in the flesh, was **v** by the Spirit,
VINE
Jn 15: 1 "I am the true **v**, and my Father is

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VINEGAR
Mk 15: 36 filled a sponge with wine **v**, put it
VIOLATION
Heb 2: 2 every **v** and disobedience received
VIOLENCE
Isa 60: 18 No longer will **v** be heard in your
Eze 45: 9 Give up your **v** and oppression
VIPERS
Ro 3: 13 "The poison of **v** is on their lips."
VIRGIN
Isa 7: 14 The **v** will conceive and give birth
Mt 1: 23 "The **v** will conceive and give birth
2Co 11: 2 I might present you as a pure **v**
VIRTUES
Col 3: 14 And over all these **v** put on love,
VISION
Ac 26: 19 disobedient to the **v** from heaven.
VOICE
Ps 95: 7 if only you would hear his **v**,
Isa 30: 21 your ears will hear a **v** behind you,
Jn 5: 28 are in their graves will hear his **v**
10: 3 him, and the sheep listen to his **v**.
Heb 3: 7 "Today, if you hear his **v**,
Rev 3: 20 If anyone hears my **v** and opens
VOMIT
Pr 26: 11 As a dog returns to its **v**, so fools
2Pe 2: 22 "A dog returns to its **v**," and,
VOW
Nu 30: 2 a man makes a **v** to the Lord
WAGES
Lk 10: 7 you, for the worker deserves his **w**.
Ro 4: 4 **w** are not credited as a gift but as
6: 23 the **w** of sin is death, but the gift
WAILING
Ps 30: 11 You turned my **w** into dancing;
WAIST
2Ki 1: 8 had a leather belt around his **w**."
Mt 3: 4 he had a leather belt around his **w**.
WAIT (WAITED WAITS)
Ps 27: 14 **W** for the Lord; be strong
130: 5 I **w** for the Lord, my whole being
Isa 30: 18 Blessed are all who **w** for him!
Ac 1: 4 **w** for the gift my Father promised,
Ro 8: 23 groan inwardly as we **w** eagerly
1Th 1: 10 and to **w** for his Son from heaven,
Titus 2: 13 while we **w** for the blessed hope—
WAITED (WAIT)
Ps 40: 1 I **w** patiently for the Lord;
WAITS (WAIT)
Ro 8: 19 the creation **w** in eager expectation
WALK (WALKED)
Dt 11: 19 and when you **w** along the road,
Ps 1: 1 Blessed is the one who does not **w**
23: 4 though I **w** through the darkest
89: 15 **w** in the light of your presence,
Isa 2: 5 let us **w** in the light of the Lord.
30: 21 saying, "This is the way; **w** in it."
40: 31 weary, they will **w** and not be faint.
Jer 6: 16 and **w** in it, and you will find rest
Da 4: 37 those who **w** in pride he is able
Am 3: 3 Do two **w** together unless they
Mic 6: 8 and to **w** humbly with your God.
Mk 2: 9 say, 'Get up, take your mat and **w**'?
Jn 8: 12 Whoever follows me will never **w**
1Jn 1: 7 But if we **w** in the light, as he is
2Jn : 6 his command is that you **w** in love.
WALKED (WALK)
Ge 5: 24 Enoch **w** faithfully with God;
Jos 14: 9 which your feet have **w** will be
Mt 14: 29 **w** on the water and came toward
WALL
Jos 6: 20 gave a loud shout, the **w** collapsed;
Ne 2: 17 let us rebuild the **w** of Jerusalem,
Rev 21: 12 a great, high **w** with twelve gates,
WALLOWING
2Pe 2: 22 returns to her **w** in the mud."
WANT (WANTED WANTING WANTS)
1Sa 8: 19 they said. "We **w** a king over us.
Lk 19: 14 say, 'We don't **w** this man to be our
Ro 7: 15 For what I **w** to do I do not do,
Php 3: 10 I **w** to know Christ—yes, to know
WANTED (WANT)
1Co 12: 18 of them, just as he **w** them to be.
WANTING (WANT)
Da 5: 27 weighed on the scales and found **w**.
2Pe 3: 9 with you, not **w** anyone to perish,
WANTS (WANT)
Mt 20: 26 whoever **w** to become great among
Mk 8: 35 For whoever **w** to save their life
Ro 9: 18 on whom he **w** to have mercy,
9: 18 he hardens whom he **w** to harden.
1Ti 2: 4 who **w** all people to be saved
WAR (WARS)
Isa 2: 4 nor will they train for **w** anymore.
Da 9: 26 **W** will continue until the end,
2Co 10: 3 we do not wage **w** as the world
Rev 19: 11 justice he judges and wages **w**.
WARN (WARNED WARNINGS)
Eze 3: 19 if you do **w** the wicked person
33: 9 if you do **w** the wicked person
WARNED (WARN)
Ps 19: 11 By them your servant is **w**;
WARNINGS (WARN)
1Co 10: 11 and were written down as **w** for us,
WARS (WAR)
Ps 46: 9 He makes **w** cease to the ends
Mt 24: 6 will hear of **w** and rumors of **w**,
WASH (WASHED WASHING)
Ps 51: 7 **w** me, and I will be whiter than
Jn 13: 5 and began to **w** his disciples' feet,

Ac 22:16 be baptized and **w** your sins away,
Rev 22:14 are those who **w** their robes,

WASHED (WASH)
1Co 6:11 But you were **w**, you were
Rev 7:14 they have **w** their robes and made

WASHING (WASH)
Eph 5:26 the **w** with water through the word,
Titus 3:5 saved us through the **w** of rebirth

WATCH (WATCHES WATCHING WATCHMAN)
Ge 31:49 the Lord keep **w** between you
Jer 31:10 them and will **w** over his flock like
Mt 24:42 "Therefore keep **w**, because you do
26:41 "**W** and pray so that you will not
Lk 2:8 keeping **w** over their flocks at night
1Ti 4:16 **W** your life and doctrine closely.

WATCHES (WATCH)
Ps 1:6 For the Lord **w** over the way
121:3 he who **w** over you will not

WATCHING (WATCH)
Lk 12:37 servants whose master finds them **w**

WATCHMAN (WATCH)
Eze 3:17 I have made you a **w** for the people

WATER (WATERED WATERS)
Ps 1:3 like a tree planted by streams of **w**,
22:14 I am poured out like **w**, and all my
Pr 25:21 if he is thirsty, give him **w** to drink.
Isa 49:10 and lead them beside springs of **w**.
Jer 2:13 broken cisterns that cannot hold **w**.
Zec 14:8 On that day living **w** will flow
Mk 9:41 anyone who gives you a cup of **w**
Jn 4:10 he would have given you living **w**."
7:38 rivers of living **w** will flow
Eph 5:26 washing with **w** through the word,
1Pe 3:21 this **w** symbolizes baptism that
Rev 21:6 thirsty I will give **w** without cost

WATERED (WATER)
1Co 3:6 I planted the seed, Apollos **w** it,

WATERS (WATER)
Ps 23:2 he leads me beside quiet **w**,
Isa 58:11 like a spring whose **w** never fail.
1Co 3:7 nor the one who **w** is anything,

WAVE (WAVES)
Jas 1:6 the one who doubts is like a **w**

WAVES (WAVE)
Isa 57:20 whose **w** cast up mire and mud.
Mt 8:27 the winds and the **w** obey him!"
Eph 4:14 tossed back and forth by the **w**,

WAY (WAYS)
Dt 1:33 to show you the **w** you should go.
2Sa 22:31 "As for God, his **w** is perfect:
Job 23:10 But he knows the **w** that I take;
Ps 1:1 stand in the **w** that sinners take
37:5 Commit your **w** to the Lord;
139:24 and lead me in the **w** everlasting.
Pr 14:12 is a **w** that appears to be right,
Pr 22:6 off on the **w** they should go,
Isa 30:21 behind you, saying, "This is the **w**;
53:6 of us has turned to our own **w**;
Mt 3:3 'Prepare the **w** for the Lord,
Jn 14:6 "I am the **w** and the truth
1Co 10:13 provide a **w** out so that you can
12:31 will show you the most excellent **w**.
Heb 4:15 who has been tempted in every **w**,
9:8 the **w** into the Most Holy Place had
10:20 living **w** opened for us through

WAYS (WAY)
Ex 33:13 teach me your **w** so I may know
Ps 25:10 All the **w** of the Lord are loving
51:13 I will teach transgressors your **w**,
Pr 3:6 in all your **w** submit to him, and he
16:17 who guard their **w** preserve their
Isa 55:7 Let the wicked forsake their **w**
55:8 neither are your **w** my **w**,"
Jas 3:2 We all stumble in many **w**.

WEAK (WEAKER WEAKNESS)
Mt 26:41 spirit is willing, but the flesh is **w**."
Ro 14:1 Accept the one whose faith is **w**,
1Co 1:27 chose the **w** things of the world
8:9 a stumbling block to the **w**.
9:22 To the **w** I became **w**, to win the **w**.
2Co 12:10 For when I am **w**, then I am strong.
Heb 12:12 your feeble arms and **w** knees.

WEAKER (WEAK)
1Co 12:22 seem to be **w** are indispensable,
1Pe 3:7 them with respect as the **w** partner

WEAKNESS (WEAK)
Ro 8:26 way, the Spirit helps us in our **w**.
1Co 1:25 **w** of God is stronger than human
2Co 12:9 my power is made perfect in **w**."
Heb 5:2 since he himself is subject to **w**.

WEALTH
Pr 3:9 Honor the Lord with your **w**,
Mk 10:22 away sad, because he had great **w**.
Lk 15:13 and there squandered his **w** in wild

WEAPONS
2Co 10:4 The **w** we fight with are not the **w**

WEARIES (WEARY)
Ecc 12:12 and much study **w** the body.

WEARY (WEARIES)
Isa 40:31 they will run and not grow **w**,
Mt 11:28 all you who are **w** and burdened,
Gal 6:9 not become **w** in doing good,

WEDDING
Mt 22:11 who was not wearing **w** clothes.
Rev 19:7 For the **w** of the Lamb has come,

WEEP (WEEPING WEPT)
Ecc 3:4 a time to **w** and a time to laugh,
Lk 6:21 Blessed are you who **w** now, for

WEEPING (WEEP)
Ps 30:5 **w** may stay for the night,
126:6 Those who go out **w**, carrying seed

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Mt 8: 12 where there will be **w** and gnashing
WELCOMES
Mt 18: 5 **w** one such child in my name **w** me.
2Jn : 11 Anyone who **w** them shares in
WELL
Lk 17: 19 your faith has made you **w**."
Jas 5: 15 faith will make the sick person **w**;
WEPT (WEEP)
Ps 137: 1 and **w** when we remembered Zion.
Jn 11: 35 Jesus **w**.
WEST
Ps 103: 12 as far as the east is from the **w**,
WHIRLWIND (WIND)
2Ki 2: 1 to take Elijah up to heaven in a **w**,
Hos 8: 7 They sow the wind and reap the **w**.
Na 1: 3 His way is in the **w** and the storm,
WHITE (WHITER)
Isa 1: 18 scarlet, they shall be as **w** as snow;
Da 7: 9 His clothing was as **w** as snow;
Rev 1: 14 hair on his head was **w** like wool,
3: 4 dressed in **w**, for they are worthy.
20: 11 I saw a great **w** throne and him
WHITER (WHITE)
Ps 51: 7 wash me, and I will be **w** than snow.
WHOLE
Mt 16: 26 for someone to gain the **w** world,
24: 14 in the **w** world as a testimony to all
Jn 13: 10 their **w** body is clean.
21: 25 even the **w** world would not have
Ac 20: 27 proclaim to you the **w** will of God.
Ro 3: 19 and the **w** world held accountable
8: 22 the **w** creation has been groaning
Gal 5: 3 he is obligated to obey the **w** law.
Eph 4: 13 attaining to the **w** measure
Jas 2: 10 For whoever keeps the **w** law
1Jn 2: 2 but also for the sins of the **w** world.
WHOLEHEARTEDLY (HEART)
Dt 1: 36 he followed the Lord **w**."
Eph 6: 7 Serve **w**, as if you were serving
WICKED (WICKEDNESS)
Ps 1: 1 does not walk in step with the **w**
1: 5 Therefore the **w** will not stand
73: 3 when I saw the prosperity of the **w**.
Pr 10: 20 the heart of the **w** is of little value.
11: 21 The **w** will not go unpunished,
Isa 53: 9 was assigned a grave with the **w**,
55: 7 Let the **w** forsake their ways
57: 20 But the **w** are like the tossing sea,
Eze 3: 18 that **w** person will die for their sin,
18: 23 any pleasure in the death of the **w**?
33: 14 And if I say to a **w** person,
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Eze 28: 15 you were created till **w** was found
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Isa 54: 2 stretch your tent curtains **w**, do not
Mt 7: 13 For **w** is the gate and broad is
Eph 3: 18 to grasp how **w** and long and high
WIDOW (WIDOWS)
Dt 10: 18 cause of the fatherless and the **w**,
Lk 21: 2 saw a poor **w** put in two very small
WIDOWS (WIDOW)
Jas 1: 27 orphans and **w** in their distress
WIFE (WIVES)
Ge 2: 24 and mother and is united to his **w**,
24: 67 So she became his **w**, and he loved
Ex 20: 17 shall not covet your neighbor's **w**,
Dt 5: 21 shall not covet your neighbor's **w**.
Pr 5: 18 you rejoice in the **w** of your youth.
12: 4 A **w** of noble character is her
18: 22 who finds a **w** finds what is good
19: 13 quarrelsome **w** is like the constant
31: 10 A **w** of noble character who can
Mt 19: 3 for a man to divorce his **w** for any
1Co 7: 2 sexual relations with his own **w**,
7: 33 how he can please his **w**—
Eph 5: 23 head of the **w** as Christ is the head
5: 33 must love his **w** as he loves himself,
5: 33 the **w** must respect her husband.
1Ti 3: 2 faithful to his **w**, temperate,
Rev 21: 9 you the bride, the **w** of the Lamb."
WILD
Lk 15: 13 squandered his wealth in **w** living.
Ro 11: 17 and you, though a **w** olive shoot,
WILL (WILLING WILLINGNESS)
Ps 40: 8 I desire to do your **w**, my God;
143: 10 Teach me to do your **w**, for you are
Isa 53: 10 Yet it was the Lord's **w** to crush
Mt 6: 10 kingdom come, your **w** be done,
26: 39 Yet not as I **w**, but as you **w**."
Jn 7: 17 chooses to do the **w** of God **w** find
Ac 20: 27 to you the whole **w** of God.
Ro 12: 2 test and approve what God's **w** is—
1Co 7: 37 but has control over his own **w**,
Eph 5: 17 understand what the Lord's **w** is.
Php 2: 13 for it is God who works in you to **w**
1Th 4: 3 It is God's **w** that you should be
5: 18 for this is God's **w** for you in Christ
Heb 9: 16 In the case of a **w**, it is necessary
10: 7 I have come to do your **w**,
Jas 4: 15 "If it is the Lord's **w**, we **w** live
1Jn 5: 14 ask anything according to his **w**,
Rev 4: 11 by your **w** they were created
WILLING (WILL)
Ps 51: 12 salvation and grant me a **w** spirit,
Da 3: 28 were **w** to give up their lives rather
Mt 18: 14 Father in heaven is not **w** that any
23: 37 her wings, and you were not **w**.
26: 41 The spirit is **w**, but the flesh is
WILLINGNESS (WILL)
2Co 8: 12 For if the **w** is there, the gift is
WIN
Php 3: 14 on toward the goal to **w** the prize

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1Th 4:12 your daily life may **w** the respect
WIND (WHIRLWIND)
Jas 1:6 the sea, blown and tossed by the **w**.
WINE
Pr 20:1 **W** is a mocker and beer a brawler;
Isa 55:1 buy **w** and milk without money
Mt 9:17 Neither do people pour new **w**
Lk 23:36 They offered him **w** vinegar
Ro 14:21 drink **w** or to do anything else
Eph 5:18 Do not get drunk on **w**, which
WINESKINS
Mt 9:17 people pour new wine into old **w**.
WINGS
Ru 2:12 under whose **w** you have come
Ps 17:8 hide me in the shadow of your **w**
Isa 40:31 They will soar on **w** like eagles;
Lk 13:34 gathers her chicks under her **w**,
WIPE
Rev 7:17 God will **w** away every tear
WISDOM (WISE)
1Ki 4:29 God gave Solomon **w** and very
Ps 111:10 the Lord is the beginning of **w**;
Pr 31:26 She speaks with **w**, and faithful
Jer 10:12 he founded the world by his **w**
Mt 11:19 **w** is proved right by her deeds."
Lk 2:52 And Jesus grew in **w** and stature,
Ro 11:33 the depth of the riches of the **w**
Col 2:3 are hidden all the treasures of **w**
Jas 1:5 If any of you lacks **w**, you should
WISE (WISDOM WISER)
1Ki 3:12 I will give you a **w** and discerning
Job 5:13 He catches the **w** in their craftiness,
Ps 19:7 trustworthy, making **w** the simple.
Pr 3:7 Do not be **w** in your own eyes;
9:8 rebuke the **w** and they will love
10:1 A **w** son brings joy to his father,
11:30 and the one who is **w** saves lives.
13:20 Walk with the **w** and become **w**,
17:28 Even fools are thought **w** if they
Da 12:3 Those who are **w** will shine like
Mt 11:25 hidden these things from the **w**
1Co 1:27 things of the world to shame the **w**;
2Ti 3:15 make you **w** for salvation through
WISER (WISE)
1Co 1:25 of God is **w** than human wisdom,
WITHER (WITHERS)
Ps 1:3 and whose leaf does not **w**—
WITHERS (WITHER)
Isa 40:7 The grass **w** and the flowers fall,
1Pe 1:24 the grass **w** and the flowers fall,
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Ps 84:11 no good thing does he **w** from
Pr 23:13 Do not **w** discipline from a child;
WITNESS (WITNESSES)
Jn 1:8 he came only as a **w** to the light.
WITNESSES (WITNESS)
Dt 19:15 by the testimony of two or three **w**.
Ac 1:8 and you will be my **w** in Jerusalem,
WIVES (WIFE)
Eph 5:22 **W**, submit yourselves to your own
5:25 love your **w**, just as Christ loved
1Pe 3:1 **W**, in the same way submit
WOE
Isa 6:5 "**W** to me!" I cried. "I am ruined!
WOLF
Isa 65:25 The **w** and the lamb will feed
WOMAN (MAN)
Ge 2:22 the Lord God made a **w**
3:15 put enmity between you and the **w**,
Lev 20:13 with a man as one does with a **w**,
Dt 22:5 A **w** must not wear men's clothing,
Ru 3:11 that you are a **w** of noble character.
Pr 31:30 a **w** who fears the Lord is to be
Mt 5:28 a **w** lustfully has already committed
Jn 8:3 brought in a **w** caught
Ro 7:2 by law a married **w** is bound to her
1Co 11:3 and the head of the **w** is man,
11:13 Is it proper for a **w** to pray to God
1Ti 2:11 A **w** should learn in quietness
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Job 1:21 I came from my mother's **w**,
Jer 1:5 I formed you in the **w** I knew you,
Lk 1:44 the baby in my **w** leaped for joy.
WOMEN (MAN)
Lk 1:42 "Blessed are you among **w**,
1Co 14:34 **W** should remain silent
1Ti 2:9 I also want the **w** to dress modestly,
Titus 2:3 teach the older **w** to be reverent
1Pe 3:5 the way the holy **w** of the past
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Job 42:3 things too **w** for me to know.
Ps 119:18 that I may see **w** things in your law.
119:27 I may meditate on your **w** deeds.
119:129 statutes are **w**; therefore I obey
139:6 Such knowledge is too **w** for me,
Isa 9:6 he will be called **W** Counselor,
1Pe 2:9 out of darkness into his **w** light.
WONDERS (WONDERFUL)
Job 37:14 stop and consider God's **w**.
Ps 17:7 Show me the **w** of your great love,
31:21 for he showed me the **w** of his love
Joel 2:30 I will show **w** in the heavens
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Isa 44:19 Shall I bow down to a block of **w**?"
1Co 3:12 costly stones, **w**, hay or straw,
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Dt 8:3 but on every **w** that comes
2Sa 22:31 The Lord's **w** is flawless;
Ps 119:9 By living according to your **w**.
119:11 I have hidden your **w** in my heart

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Ps 119:105 Your **w** is a lamp to my feet
Pr 12: 25 the heart, but a kind **w** cheers it up.
30: 5 "Every **w** of God is flawless; he is
Isa 55: 11 so is my **w** that goes out from my
Jn 1: 1 In the beginning was the **W**, and the **W** was with God, and the **W** was God.
1: 14 The **W** became flesh and made his
2Co 2: 17 we do not peddle the **w** of God
4: 2 nor do we distort the **w** of God.
Eph 6: 17 of the Spirit, which is the **w** of God.
Php 2: 16 as you hold firmly to the **w** of life.
2Ti 2: 15 and who correctly handles the **w**
Heb 4: 12 the **w** of God is alive and active.
Jas 1: 22 Do not merely listen to the **w**,

WORDS (WORD)
Dt 11: 18 Fix these **w** of mine in your hearts
Ps 119:103 How sweet are your **w** to my taste,
119:130 unfolding of your **w** gives light;
119:160 All your **w** are true; all your
Pr 30: 6 Do not add to his **w**, or he will
Jer 15: 16 When your **w** came, I ate them;
Mt 24: 35 but my **w** will never pass away.
Jn 6: 68 You have the **w** of eternal life.
15: 7 in me and my **w** remain in you,
1Co 14: 19 rather speak five intelligible **w**
Rev 22: 19 if anyone takes **w** away from this

WORK (HANDIWORK WORKER WORKERS WORKING WORKS)
Ex 23: 12 but on the seventh day do not **w**,
Nu 8: 11 be ready to do the **w** of the Lord.
Dt 5: 14 On it you shall not do any **w**,
Jer 48: 10 who is lax in doing the Lord's **w**!
Jn 6: 27 Do not **w** for food that spoils,
9: 4 is coming, when no one can **w**.
1Co 3: 13 test the quality of each person's **w**.
Php 1: 6 he who began a good **w** in you will
2: 12 continue to **w** out your salvation
Col 3: 23 you do, **w** at it with all your heart,
1Th 5: 12 those who **w** hard among you,
2Th 3: 10 is unwilling to **w** shall not eat."
2Ti 3: 17 equipped for every good **w**.
Heb 6: 10 he will not forget your **w**

WORKER (WORK)
Lk 10: 7 for the **w** deserves his wages.
1Ti 5: 18 and "The **w** deserves his wages."
2Ti 2: 15 a **w** who does not need to be

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Mt 9: 37 is plentiful but the **w** are few.
1Co 3: 9 For we are co-**w** in God's service;

WORKING (WORK)
Col 3: 23 all your heart, as **w** for the Lord,

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Pr 31: 31 her **w** bring her praise at the city
Ro 8: 28 in all things God **w** for the good
Eph 2: 9 not by **w**, so that no one can boast.
4: 12 to equip his people for **w** of service,

WORLD (WORLDLY)
Ps 50: 12 for the **w** is mine, and all that is
Isa 13: 11 I will punish the **w** for its evil,
Mt 5: 14 "You are the light of the **w**.
16: 26 for someone to gain the whole **w**,
Mk 16: 15 "Go into all the **w** and preach
Jn 1: 29 who takes away the sin of the **w**!
3: 16 God so loved the **w** that he gave his
8: 12 he said, "I am the light of the **w**.
15: 19 but I have chosen you out of the **w**. That is why the **w** hates you.
16: 33 I have overcome the **w**."
18: 36 said, "My kingdom is not of this **w**.
Ro 3: 19 and the whole **w** held accountable
1Co 3: 19 the wisdom of this **w** is foolishness
2Co 5: 19 that God was reconciling the **w**
10: 3 For though we live in the **w**, we do
1Ti 6: 7 For we brought nothing into the **w**,
1Jn 2: 2 but also for the sins of the whole **w**.
2: 15 not love the **w** or anything in the **w**.
Rev 13: 8 slain from the creation of the **w**.

WORLDLY (WORLD)
Titus 2: 12 to ungodliness and **w** passions,

WORMS
Mk 9: 48 where "'the **w** that eat them do

WORRY (WORRYING)
Mt 6: 25 I tell you, do not **w** about your life,
10: 19 do not **w** about what to say or how

WORRYING (WORRY)
Mt 6: 27 you by **w** add a single hour to your

WORSHIP
1Ch 16: 29 **W** the Lord in the splendor of his
Ps 95: 6 let us bow down in **w**, let us kneel
Mt 2: 2 it rose and have come to **w** him."
Jn 4: 24 his worshipers must **w** in the Spirit
Ro 12: 1 this is your true and proper **w**.

WORTH (WORTHY)
Job 28: 13 No mortal comprehends its **w**;
Pr 31: 10 She is **w** far more than rubies.
Mt 10: 31 you are **w** more than many
Ro 8: 18 sufferings are not **w** comparing
1Pe 1: 7 of greater **w** than gold,
3: 4 which is of great **w** in God's sight.

WORTHLESS
Pr 11: 4 Wealth is **w** in the day of wrath,
Jas 1: 26 themselves, and their religion is **w**.

WORTHY (WORTH)
1Ch 16: 25 is the Lord and most **w** of praise;
Eph 4: 1 live a life **w** of the calling you have
Php 1: 27 in a manner **w** of the gospel
Rev 5: 2 "Who is **w** to break the seals

WOUNDS
Pr 27: 6 **W** from a friend can be trusted,
Isa 53: 5 and by his **w** we are healed.
Zec 13: 6 'What are these **w** on your body?'
1Pe 2: 24 "by his **w** you have been healed."

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WRATH
2Ch36: 16 at his prophets until the **w**
Ps 2: 5 anger and terrifies them in his **w**,
76: 10 Surely your **w** against mankind
Pr 15: 1 A gentle answer turns away **w**,
Jer 25: 15 cup filled with the wine of my **w**
Ro 1: 18 The **w** of God is being revealed
5: 9 saved from God's **w** through him!
1Th 5: 9 God did not appoint us to suffer **w**
Rev 6: 16 and from the **w** of the Lamb!

WRESTLED
Ge 32: 24 a man **w** with him till daybreak.

WRITE (WRITING WRITTEN)
Dt 6: 9 **W** them on the doorframes of your
Pr 7: 3 **w** them on the tablet of your heart.
Heb 8: 10 minds and **w** them on their hearts.

WRITING (WRITE)
1Co14: 37 what I am **w** to you is the Lord's

WRITTEN (WRITE)
Jos 1: 8 be careful to do everything **w** in it.
Da 12: 1 everyone whose name is found **w**
Lk 10: 20 that your names are **w** in heaven."
Jn 20: 31 these are **w** that you may believe
1Co 4: 6 "Do not go beyond what is **w**."
2Co 3: 3 **w** not with ink but with the Spirit
Heb12: 23 whose names are **w** in heaven.

WRONG (WRONGDOING WRONGED WRONGS)
Ex 23: 2 not follow the crowd in doing **w**.
Nu 5: 7 restitution for the **w** they have
Job 34: 12 unthinkable that God would do **w**,
1Th 5: 15 that nobody pays back **w** for **w**,

WRONGDOING (WRONG)
Job 1: 22 not sin by charging God with **w**.

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1Co 6: 7 Why not rather be **w**?

WRONGS (WRONG)
Pr 10: 12 conflict, but love covers over all **w**.
1Co13: 5 angered, it keeps no record of **w**.

YEARS
Ps 90: 4 A thousand **y** in your sight are like
Ps 90: 10 Our days may come to seventy **y**,
2Pe 3: 8 the Lord a day is like a thousand **y**,
Rev 20: 2 and bound him for a thousand **y**.

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Heb13: 8 Jesus Christ is the same **y** and today

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Mt 11: 29 Take my **y** upon you and learn

YOKED (YOKE)
2Co 6: 14 Do not be **y** together

YOUNG (YOUTH)
Ps 119: 9 can a **y** person stay on the path
1Ti 4: 12 down on you because you are **y**,

YOUTH (YOUNG)
Ps 103: 5 your **y** is renewed like the eagle's.
Ecc 12: 1 your Creator in the days of your **y**,
2Ti 2: 22 Flee the evil desires of **y** and

ZEAL
Jn 2: 17 **Z** for your house will consume me.
Ro 12: 11 Never be lacking in **z**, but keep

ZECHARIAH
1. Son of Jeroboam II; king of Israel (2Ki 15:8–12).
2. Post-exilic prophet who encouraged rebuilding of temple (Ezr 5:1; 6:14; Zec 1:1).
3. Father of John the Baptist (Lk 1:13; 3:2).

ZEDEKIAH
Mattaniah, son of Josiah (1Ch 3:15), made king of Judah by Nebuchadnezzar (2Ki 24:17—25:7; 2Ch 36:10–14; Jer 37–39; 52:1–11).

ZERUBBABEL
Descendant of David (1Ch 3:19; Mt 1:3). Led return from exile (Ezr 2–3; Ne 7:7; Hag 1–2; Zec 4).

ZIMRI
King of Israel (1Ki 16:9–20).

ZION
Ps 137: 3 "Sing us one of the songs of **Z**!"
Jer 50: 5 They will ask the way to **Z** and
Ro 9: 33 I lay in **Z** a stone that causes people
11: 26 "The deliverer will come from **Z**;

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The Chronological
STUDY BIBLE

DAILY READING PLANS

The following plans give you a system for reading daily through *The Chronological Study Bible* in one year or two years. The two-year plan is the same as the one-year plan, except that you have an additional day to complete each reading portion. Some portions are somewhat longer than others because of the structure of *The Chronological Study Bible*. In certain cases a longer Transition is spread over more than one assignment, as indicated. In some cases two or three short Transitions are grouped into one assignment. When starting each Transition, be sure to read the Transition note at the beginning. The page number indicates the location of the Transition note.

Epoch One—
Before the Patriarchs
(Creation–2000 B.C.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Jan. 1	Jan. 1–2	The Book of Genesis, p. 3; Ge 1:1—4:26
Jan. 2	Jan. 3–4	Records of the Descendants, p. 8; Ge 5:1—6:22
Jan. 3	Jan. 5–6	How Long Was Noah in the Ark?, p. 10; Ge 7:1—11:32 (2 assignments)
Jan. 4	Jan. 7–8	How Long Was Noah in the Ark?, p. 10; Ge 7:1—11:32

Epoch Two—
The Patriarchs, Israel's Ancestors
(2000–1500 B.C.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Jan. 5	Jan. 9–10	Abram the Amorite, p. 21; Ge 12:1—15:21
Jan. 6	Jan. 11–12	The Birth of Ishmael, p. 24; Ge 16:1—20:18
Jan. 7	Jan. 13–14	The Birth of Isaac, p. 30; Ge 21:1—24:67 (2 assignments)
Jan. 8	Jan. 15–16	The Birth of Isaac, p. 30; Ge 21:1—24:67
Jan. 9	Jan. 17–18	The Close of Abraham's Life, p. 36; Ge 25:1—36:43 (4 assignments)
Jan. 10	Jan. 19–20	The Close of Abraham's Life, p. 36; Ge 25:1—36:43
Jan. 11	Jan. 21–22	The Close of Abraham's Life, p. 36; Ge 25:1—36:43
Jan. 12	Jan. 23–24	The Close of Abraham's Life, p. 36; Ge 25:1—36:43
Jan. 13	Jan. 25–26	Joseph—a Hebrew in Egypt, p. 53; Ge 37:1—46:34 (3 assignments)
Jan. 14	Jan. 27–28	Joseph—a Hebrew in Egypt, p. 53; Ge 37:1—46:34
Jan. 15	Jan. 29–30	Joseph—a Hebrew in Egypt, p. 53; Ge 37:1—46:34
Jan. 16	Jan. 31–Feb. 1	Jacob Enters Egypt, p. 66; Ge 47:1—50:26

Epoch Three—
The Rise of a Unifi d People
(1500–1200 B.C.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture r eferences
Jan. 17	Feb. 2–3	The Book of Exodus, p. 73; Ex 1:1—2:15
Jan. 18	Feb. 4–5	Moses in Midian, p. 75; Ex 2:16—6:30
Jan. 19	Feb. 6–7	From Egypt to Midian to Egypt, p. 80; Ex 7:1—12:36 (2 assignments)
Jan. 20	Feb. 8–9	From Egypt to Midian to Egypt, p. 80; Ex 7:1—12:36
Jan. 21	Feb. 10–11	The Exodus Begun, p. 87; Ex 12:37—18:27 (2 assignments)
Jan. 22	Feb. 12–13	The Exodus Begun, p. 87; Ex 12:37—18:27
Jan. 23	Feb. 14–15	At Mount Sinai, p. 95; Ex 19:1—40:38 (7 assignments)
Jan. 24	Feb. 16–17	At Mount Sinai, p. 95; Ex 19:1—40:38
Jan. 25	Feb. 18–19	At Mount Sinai, p. 95; Ex 19:1—40:38
Jan. 26	Feb. 20–21	At Mount Sinai, p. 95; Ex 19:1—40:38
Jan. 27	Feb. 22–23	At Mount Sinai, p. 95; Ex 19:1—40:38
Jan. 28	Feb. 24–25	At Mount Sinai, p. 95; Ex 19:1—40:38
Jan. 29	Feb. 26–27	At Mount Sinai, p. 95; Ex 19:1—40:38
Jan. 30	Feb. 28–Mar. 1	The Book of Leviticus, p. 120; Lev 1:1—15:33 (4 assignments)
Jan. 31	Mar. 2–3	The Book of Leviticus, p. 120; Lev 1:1—15:33
Feb. 1	Mar. 4–5	The Book of Leviticus, p. 120; Lev 1:1—15:33
Feb. 2	Mar. 6–7	The Book of Leviticus, p. 120; Lev 1:1—15:33
Feb. 3	Mar. 8–9	The Day of Atonement, p. 136; Lev 16:1—22:33 (2 assignments)
Feb. 4	Mar. 10–11	The Day of Atonement, p. 136; Lev 16:1—22:33
Feb. 5	Mar. 12–13	Israel's Festivals, p. 143; Lev 23:1—24:23
Feb. 6	Mar. 14–15	The Sabbath Years and Year of Jubilee, p. 147; Lev 25:1—27:34
Feb. 7	Mar. 16–17	The Book of Numbers, p. 151; Nu 1:1—8:26 (4 assignments)
Feb. 8	Mar. 18–19	The Book of Numbers, p. 151; Nu 1:1—8:26
Feb. 9	Mar. 20–21	The Book of Numbers, p. 151; Nu 1:1—8:26
Feb. 10	Mar. 22–23	The Book of Numbers, p. 151; Nu 1:1—8:26
Feb. 11	Mar. 24–25	Observing the Rite of the Passover, p. 163; Nu 9:1—12:16
Feb. 12	Mar. 26–27	Canaan Before the Conquest, p. 167; Nu 13:1–33

Epoch Three—The Rise of a Unifi d People (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture r eferences
Feb. 13	Mar. 28–29	Israel in the Wilderness, p. 168; Nu 14:1—20:13 (2 assignments)
Feb. 14	Mar. 30–31	Israel in the Wilderness, p. 168; Nu 14:1—20:13
Feb. 15	Apr. 1–2	Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan, p. 176; Nu 20:14—36:13 (6 assignments)
Feb. 16	Apr. 3–4	Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan, p. 176; Nu 20:14—36:13
Feb. 17	Apr. 5–6	Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan, p. 176; Nu 20:14—36:13
Feb. 18	Apr. 7–8	Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan, p. 176; Nu 20:14—36:13
Feb. 19	Apr. 9–10	Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan, p. 176; Nu 20:14—36:13
Feb. 20	Apr. 11–12	Moab: On the Doorstep of Canaan, p. 176; Nu 20:14—36:13
Feb. 21	Apr. 13–14	The Book of Deuteronomy, p. 196; Dt 1:1–4
Feb. 22	Apr. 15–16	God's Mighty Acts, p. 197; Dt 1:5—4:43
Feb. 23	Apr. 17–18	Covenantal Obedience, p. 202; Dt 4:44—28:68 (7 assignments)
Feb. 24	Apr. 19–20	Covenantal Obedience, p. 202; Dt 4:44—28:68
Feb. 25	Apr. 21–22	Covenantal Obedience, p. 202; Dt 4:44—28:68
Feb. 26	Apr. 23–24	Covenantal Obedience, p. 202; Dt 4:44—28:68
Feb. 27	Apr. 25–26	Covenantal Obedience, p. 202; Dt 4:44—28:68
Feb. 28	Apr. 27–28	Covenantal Obedience, p. 202; Dt 4:44—28:68
Mar. 1	Apr. 29–30	Covenantal Obedience, p. 202; Dt 4:44—28:68
Mar. 2	May 1–2	Moses' Final Words, p. 227; Dt 29:1—33:29
Mar. 3	May 3–4	The Death of Moses, p. 234; Dt 34:1–12
Mar. 4	May 5–6	Teach Us to Number Our Days, p. 234; Ps 90 The Book of Joshua, p. 236; Jos 1:1—5:15
Mar. 5	May 7–8	Conquering the Canaanite Cities, p. 240; Jos 6:1—14:5 (3 assignments)
Mar. 6	May 9–10	Conquering the Canaanite Cities, p. 240; Jos 6:1—14:5
Mar. 7	May 11–12	Conquering the Canaanite Cities, p. 240; Jos 6:1—14:5
Mar. 8	May 13–14	The Early Years of Conquest, p. 250; Jos 14:6—24:33 (4 assignments)
Mar. 9	May 15–16	The Early Years of Conquest, p. 250; Jos 14:6—24:33
Mar. 10	May 17–18	The Early Years of Conquest, p. 250; Jos 14:6—24:33
Mar. 11	May 19–20	The Early Years of Conquest, p. 250; Jos 14:6—24:33

Epoch Four—
From Tribes to a Nation
(1200–930 B.C.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Mar. 12	May 21–22	The Book of Judges, p. 266; Jdg 1:1—3:6
Mar. 13	May 23–24	How Long Was the Era of the Judges?, p. 269; Jdg 3:7—21:25 (7 assignments)
Mar. 14	May 25–26	How Long Was the Era of the Judges?, p. 269; Jdg 3:7—21:25
Mar. 15	May 27–28	How Long Was the Era of the Judges?, p. 269; Jdg 3:7—21:25
Mar. 16	May 29–30	How Long Was the Era of the Judges?, p. 269; Jdg 3:7—21:25
Mar. 17	May 31–June 1	How Long Was the Era of the Judges?, p. 269; Jdg 3:7—21:25
Mar. 18	June 2–3	How Long Was the Era of the Judges?, p. 269; Jdg 3:7—21:25
Mar. 19	June 4–5	How Long Was the Era of the Judges?, p. 269; Jdg 3:7—21:25
Mar. 20	June 6–7	The Book of Ruth, p. 295; Ru 1:1—4:12 From Turbulence to Rest, p. 299; Ru 4:13–22
Mar. 21	June 8–9	The Books of 1 and 2 Samuel, p. 300; 1Sa 1:1—6:21
Mar. 22	June 10–11	Samuel's Public Ministry, p. 306; 1Sa 7:1–17
Mar. 23	June 12–13	Israel Asks for a King, p. 308; 1Sa 8:1–22
Mar. 24	June 14–15	Prophetic Account: Saul and David, p. 309; 1Sa 9:1—12:25
Mar. 25	June 16–17	When Did Saul Become King?, p. 314; 1Sa 13:1—16:23
Mar. 26	June 18–19	The Shepherd's Psalm, p. 320; Ps 23
Mar. 27	June 20–21	David in Saul's Court, p. 320; 1Sa 17:1—19:17
Mar. 28	June 22–23	Protection in the Night, p. 325; Ps 59 David Flees from Saul, p. 326; 1Sa 19:18—21:15
Mar. 29	June 24–25	Among the Philistines at Gath, p. 329; Ps 56, 34 Murder in the Holy Place, p. 330; 1Sa 22:1–23 Doeg, the Evildoer, p. 331; Ps 52 Seeking God's Guidance, p. 332; 1Sa 23:1–29 David in the Desert, p. 333; Ps 63
Mar. 30	June 26–27	Hiding in the Caves, p. 333; 1Sa 24:1–22; Ps 57, 142 What's in a Name?, p. 335; 1Sa 25:1–44
Mar. 31	June 28–29	Saul's Last Days, p. 337; Psalm 54; 1Sa 26:1—30:31
Apr. 1	June 30–July 1	Israel's First King Is Dead, p. 343; 1Sa 31:1–13; 2Sa 1:1–27 Deliverance from Saul, p. 344; Ps 18
Apr. 2	July 2–3	Who Will Succeed Saul as King?, p. 346; 2Sa 2:1—4:12

Epoch Four—From Tribes to a Nation (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Apr. 3	July 4–5	When Did David Become King?, p. 350; 2Sa 5:1—7:29
Apr. 4	July 6–7	The Books of Chronicles, p. 353; 1Ch 9:35–44 Priestly Account: Saul and David, p. 354; 1Ch 10:1—11:47
Apr. 5	July 8–9	David the Fugitive, p. 356; 1Ch 12:1—15:29
Apr. 6	July 10–11	The Book of Psalms, p. 360; Ps 8, 19, 29, 32, 65, 68, 103, 108, 138
Apr. 7	July 12–13	Music in the Temple, p. 366; 1Ch 16:1–43
Apr. 8	July 14–15	Psalms of the Musicians, p. 368; Ps 96, 105, 106 (4 assignments)
Apr. 9	July 16–17	Psalms of the Musicians, p. 368; Ps 39, 62, 50, 73–76
Apr. 10	July 18–19	Psalms of the Musicians, p. 368; Ps 77–79
Apr. 11	July 20–21	Psalms of the Musicians, p. 368; Ps 80–83, 88
Apr. 12	July 22–23	A Desire to Build the Temple, p. 382; 1Ch 17:1–27 Prophetic Account: David's Reign, p. 383; 2Sa 8:1—12:14 Create in Me a Clean Heart, p. 388; Ps 51
Apr. 13	July 24–25	The Sons of David, p. 388; 2Sa 12:15—14:33
Apr. 14	July 26–27	Absalom Subverts the Nation, p. 393; 2Sa 15:1–37 A Prayer in Time of Darkness, p. 395; Ps 3 David Flees Jerusalem, p. 395; 2Sa 16:1–14 Persecution from a Benjamite, p. 396; Ps 7
Apr. 15	July 28–29	Who Will Be Commander?, p. 397; 2Sa 16:15—20:26
Apr. 16	July 30–31	The Gibeonites Are Avenged, p. 403; 2Sa 21:1–22
Apr. 17	Aug. 1–2	David's Song of Praise, p. 404; 2Sa 22:1—23:39 Priestly Account: David's Reign, p. 408; 1Ch 18:1–13
Apr. 18	Aug. 3–4	The Promise of Military Victory, p. 408; Psalm 60; 1Ch 18:14—20:8 Prophetic Account: David's Final Years, p. 411; 2Sa 24:1–25
Apr. 19	Aug. 5–6	The Books of Kings, p. 413; 1Ki 1:1—2:35 Shimei Before King Solomon, p. 416; 1Ki 2:36–46 Priestly Account: David's Final Years, p. 416; 1Ch 21:1–30
Apr. 20	Aug. 7–8	David's Laments, p. 418; Ps 4–6, 9–10 (4 assignments)
Apr. 21	Aug. 9–10	David's Laments, p. 418; Ps 11–14, 16, 17, 22
Apr. 22	Aug. 11–12	David's Laments, p. 418; Ps 25–28, 31
Apr. 23	Aug. 13–14	David's Laments, p. 418; Ps 35, 36, 38, 40, 41
Apr. 24	Aug. 15–16	David's Laments (Book II), p. 430; Ps 53, 55, 58, 61, 64, 69–71

Epoch Four—From Tribes to a Nation (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture r eferences
Apr. 25	Aug. 17–18	David's Laments (Books III–V), p. 434; Ps 86, 102, 109, 139–141, 143
Apr. 26	Aug. 19–20	The Prosperity of the Wicked, p. 438; Ps 37 Preparations for the Temple, p. 439; 1Ch 22:1–19; Psalm 30
Apr. 27	Aug. 21–22	Divisions of the Temple Personnel, p. 441; 1Ch 23:1—26:19
Apr. 28	Aug. 23–24	The Sons of Korah, p. 445; Ps 15, 24, 42–46 (2 assignments)
Apr. 29	Aug. 25–26	The Sons of Korah, p. 445; Ps 47–49, 84, 85, 87
Apr. 30	Aug. 27–28	David's Counsel to Solomon, p. 451; 1Ch 26:20—29:30
May 1	Aug. 29–30	Royal and Enthronement Psalms, p. 447; Ps 2, 20, 21, 72, 93 (2 assignments)
May 2	Aug. 31–Sept. 1	Royal and Enthronement Psalms, p. 456; Ps 94, 95, 97–99, 101, 110, 144
May 3	Sept. 2–3	Prophetic Account: Solomon's Reign, p. 456; 1Ki 3:1—4:34
May 4	Sept. 4–5	The Book of Proverbs, p. 464; Pr 1:1—9:18 (2 assignments)
May 5	Sept. 6–7	The Book of Proverbs, p. 464; Pr 1:1—9:18
May 6	Sept. 8–9	More Proverbs Ascribed to Solomon, p. 472; Pr 10:1—15:33 (2 assignments)
May 7	Sept. 10–11	More Proverbs Ascribed to Solomon, p. 472; Pr 10:1—15:33
May 8	Sept. 12–13	Miscellaneous Proverbs, p. 479; Pr 16:1—22:16
May 9	Sept. 14–15	Solomon the Builder, p. 485; 1Ki 5:1–18
May 10	Sept. 16–17	Laying the Temple's Foundation, p. 485; 1Ki 6:1–38
May 11	Sept. 18–19	Building the King's Palace, p. 487; 1Ki 7:1—9:14
May 12	Sept. 20–21	Solomon's Other Accomplishments, p. 493; 1Ki 9:15—10:29
May 13	Sept. 22–23	The Book of Ecclesiastes, p. 495; Ecc 1:1—12:14 (3 assignments)
May 14	Sept. 24–25	The Book of Ecclesiastes, p. 495; Ecc 1:1—12:14
May 15	Sept. 26–27	The Book of Ecclesiastes, p. 495; Ecc 1:1—12:14
May 16	Sept. 28–29	Solomon's Political Wives, p. 504; 1Ki 11:1–8
May 17	Sept. 30–Oct. 1	The Song of Songs, p. 504; SS 1:1—8:14
May 18	Oct. 2–3	Solomon's Decline, p. 512; 1Ki 11:9–43 Priestly Account: Solomon's Reign, p. 513; 2Ch 1:1—2:18 Solomon Begins Building the Temple, p. 515; 2Ch 3:1—4:22
May 19	Oct. 4–5	The Ceremony of the Ark, p. 517; 2Ch 5:1—7:22 Building the Royal Palaces, p. 521; 2Ch 8:1—9:31

Epoch Five—
The Fall of Two Nations
(930–586 B.C.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
May 20	Oct. 6–7	Prophetic Account: The Kingdom Divides, p. 526; 1Ki 12:1–24 First Dynasty of the Northern Kingdom, p. 527; 1Ki 12:25—14:20
May 21	Oct. 8–9	The Davidic Dynasty in Judah, p. 531; 1Ki 14:21—15:24 Unrest in Israel, p. 532; 1Ki 15:25—16:20 Priestly Account: The Kingdom Divides, p. 534; 2Ch 10:1—11:23
May 22	Oct. 10–11	Rehoboam's Apostasy, p. 535; 2Ch 12:1—13:22 Asa's Revival, p. 539; 2Ch 14:1—16:14
May 23	Oct. 12–13	Prophetic Account: Ahab and Jehoshaphat, p. 541; 1Ki 16:21–34
May 24	Oct. 14–15	Elijah in Israel, p. 543; 1Ki 17:1—19:21
May 25	Oct. 16–17	Ahab Wars with Damascus, p. 547; 1Ki 20:1—22:40 The Alliance of Judah and Israel, p. 552; 1Ki 22:41–50
May 26	Oct. 18–19	Priestly Account: Ahab and Jehoshaphat, p. 553; 2Ch 17:1—19:11 Holy War Against the Transjordan Coalition, p. 556; 2Ch 20:1–37
May 27	Oct. 20–21	Prophetic Account: Fall of Omri's Dynasty, p. 558; 1Ki 22:51–53; 2Ki 1:1–18
May 28	Oct. 22–23	Elisha in Israel, p. 559; 2Ki 2:1—8:15 (2 assignments)
May 29	Oct. 24–25	Elisha in Israel, p. 559; 2Ki 2:1—8:15
May 30	Oct. 26–27	The Royal Marriage, p. 568; 2Ki 8:16–29 Jehu Destroys Ahab's Family, p. 569; 2Ki 9:1—10:36

Epoch Five—The Fall of Two Nations (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
May 31	Oct. 28–29	Priestly Account: Fall of Omri's Dynasty, p. 573; 2Ch 21:1—22:9 Prophetic Account: Athaliah Seizes Judah's Throne, p. 575; 2Ki 11:1—12:21
June 1	Oct. 30–31	The Dynasty of Jehu in Israel, p. 577; 2Ki 13:1–25 Conspiracy Continues in Judah, p. 578; 2Ki 14:1–22 Priestly Account: Athaliah Seizes Judah's Throne, p. 580; 2Ch 22:10—23:21
June 2	Nov. 1–2	The Apostasy of Joash and Amaziah, p. 581; 2Ch 24:1—25:28
June 3	Nov. 3–4	Prophetic Account: Jeroboam and Azariah (Uzziah), p. 586; 2Ki 14:23–29 The Book of Jonah, p. 586; Jnh 1:1—4:11
June 4	Nov. 5–6	The Book of Amos, p. 589; Am 1:1—6:7
June 5	Nov. 7–8	The Book of Amos: Destruction to Come, p. 594; Am 6:8—7:9 Confrontation with Amaziah, p. 595; Am 7:10—9:15
June 6	Nov. 9–10	The Book of Hosea, p. 598; Hos 1:1—3:5 The Dates of Hosea's Ministry, p. 600; Hos 4:1—5:7 Hosea and Assyria, p.602; Hos 5:8—6:11
June 7	Nov. 11–12	Hosea and Israel's Kings, p. 603; Hos 7:1—14:9
June 8	Nov. 13–14	Azariah (Uzziah) King of Judah, p. 609; 2Ki 15:1–7
June 9	Nov. 15–16	The Book of Isaiah, p. 610; Isa 6:1–13; 1:1—5:30
June 10	Nov. 17–18	Priestly Account: Jeroboam and Uzziah (Azariah), p. 617; 2Ch 26:1–23
June 11	Nov. 19–20	Prophetic Account: Pekah Attacks Ahaz, p. 618; 2Ki 15:8–31 Jotham and Ahaz in Judah, p. 620; 2Ki 15:32—16:4
June 12	Nov. 21–22	Israel and Aram Besiege Judah, p. 621; 2Ki 16:5–9; Isa 7:1—10:4; 17:1–14
June 13	Nov. 23–24	After the Syro-Ephraimite War, p. 627; Isa 14:24–32; 2Ki 16:10–20 The Book of Micah, p. 628; Mic 1:1—2:13
June 14	Nov. 25–26	Micah's Ministry, p. 630; Mic 3:1—7:20
June 15	Nov. 27–28	Priestly Account: Pekah Attacks Ahaz, p. 635; 2Ch 27:1—28:27 Prophetic Account: Assyria's Invasions, p. 637; 2Ki 17:1–4
June 16	Nov. 29–30	A Warning to Jerusalem's Leaders, p. 637; Isa 28:1—29:24 The Fall of Samaria, p. 641; 2Ki 17:5–41

Epoch Five—The Fall of Two Nations (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture r eferences
June 17	Dec. 1–2	A New King in Judah, p. 643; 2Ki 18:1–12 Assyria, Tool in God's Hand, p. 644; Isa 10:5—12:6
June 18	Dec. 3–4	Hezekiah's Proverbs, p. 647; Pr 25:1—29:27
June 19	Dec. 5–6	The Ashdod Rebellion, p. 652; Isa 18:1—20:6; 15:1—16:14 (2 assignments)
June 20	Dec. 7–8	The Ashdod Rebellion, p. 652; Isa 22:15–25; 30:1—32:20
June 21	Dec. 9–10	Hezekiah's Illness and Recovery, p. 660; 2Ki 20:1–11; Isa 38:1–22; 2Ki 20:12–19; Isa 39:1–8 Sennacherib's Invasion, p. 663; Isa 36:1; 2Ki 18:13–16
June 22	Dec. 11–12	A Second Invasion, p. 664; 2Ki 18:17—19:7; Isa 36:2—37:7 (2 assignments)
June 23	Dec. 13–14	A Second Invasion, p. 664; 2Ki 19:8–37; Isa 37:8–38; 2Ki 20:20, 21
June 24	Dec. 15–16	After Sennacherib's Campaign, p. 671; Isa 22:1–14; 23:1–18; 24:1–23 (2 assignments)
June 25	Dec. 17–18	After Sennacherib's Campaign, p. 671; Isa 25:1—27:13
June 26	Dec. 19–20	Priestly Account: Assyria's Invasions, p. 676; 2Ch 29:1—31:21
June 27	Dec. 21–22	Hezekiah's Sickness and Rebellion, p. 680; 2Ch 32:24–31; 32:1–23; 32:32, 33 Prophetic Account: Bad and Good Kings, p. 682; 2Ki 21:1–18 Assassination in the Palace, p. 683; 2Ki 21:19–26 Josiah, the Religious Reformer, p. 684; 2Ki 22:1–20
June 28	Dec. 23–24	The Book of Zephaniah, p. 686; Zep 1:1—3:20
June 29	Dec. 25–26	Josiah Keeps the Passover, p. 690; 2Ki 23:1–25
June 30	Dec. 27–28	Priestly Account: Bad and Good Kings, p. 691; 2Ch 33:1—35:19
July 1	Dec. 29–30	Psalms of Joy and Praise, p. 695; Ps 33, 66, 67, 100
July 2	Dec. 31–Jan. 1	Prophetic Account: Josiah's Last Years, p. 698; 2Ki 23:26, 27
July 3	Jan. 2–3	The Book of Jeremiah, p. 699; Jer 1:1—6:30 (3 assignments)
July 4	Jan. 4–5	The Book of Jeremiah, p. 699; Jer 1:1—6:30
July 5	Jan. 6–7	The Book of Jeremiah, p. 699; Jer 1:1—6:30
July 6	Jan. 8–9	The Book of Nahum, p. 708; Na 1:1—3:19 The Death of Josiah, p. 712; 2Ki 23:28–34
July 7	Jan. 10–11	A Dirge for an Exiled King, p. 713; Jer 22:10–17 Priestly Account: Josiah's Last Years, p. 713; 2Ch 35:20—36:4

Epoch Five—The Fall of Two Nations (cont.)

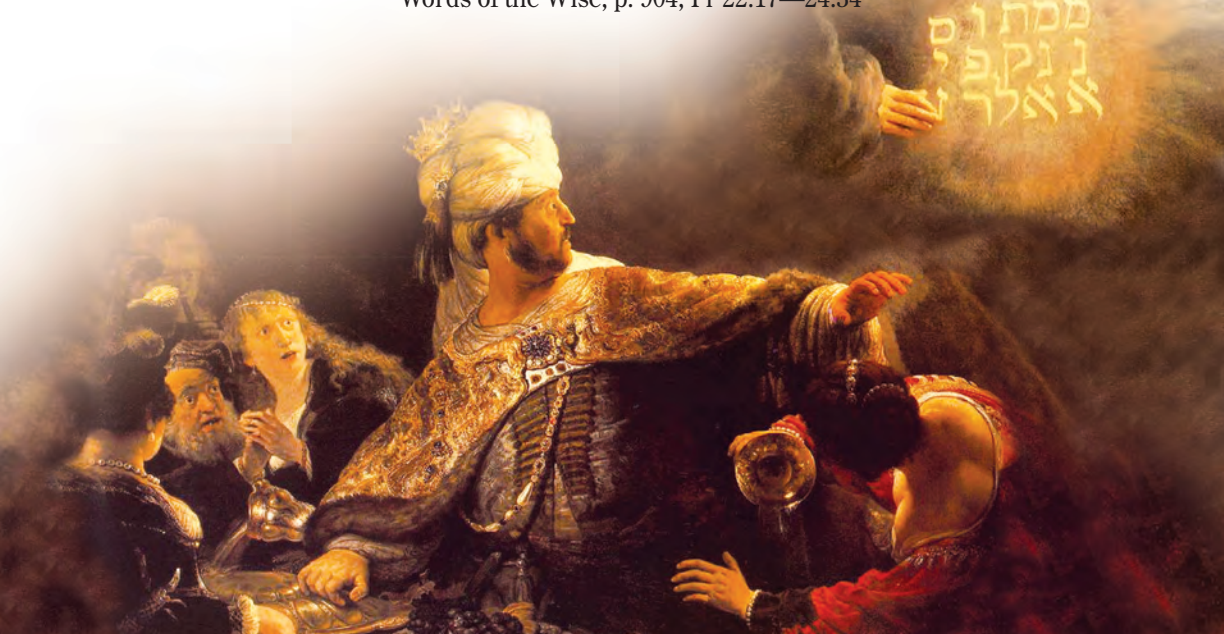
one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
July 8	Jan. 12–13	The Book of Habakkuk, p. 714; Hab 1:1—3:19 Prophetic Account: Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, p. 717; 2Ki 23:35–37
July 9	Jan. 14–15	Jeremiah's Temple Sermon, p. 718; Jer 26:1–6; 7:1—8:3; 26:7–24; 11:1—12:17
July 10	Jan. 16–17	The Battle of Carchemish, p. 722; Jer 47:1–7; 46:1–12; 13:1–14; 18:1–17
July 11	Jan. 18–19	Jeremiah's Scroll, p. 726; Jer 36:1–10; 25:1–14; 36:11–32; 45:1–5; 15:10–21
July 12	Jan. 20–21	The Drought, p. 730; Jer 14:1—15:9; 16:1—17:27; 8:4—10:16 (2 assignments)
July 13	Jan. 22–23	The Drought, p. 730; Jer 14:1—15:9; 16:1—17:27; 8:4—10:16
July 14	Jan. 24–25	Jehoiakim's Rebellion Against Babylon, p. 738; 2Ki 24:1–4 The Rekabites, p. 739; Jer 35:1–19
July 15	Jan. 26–27	False Prophets, p. 740; Jer 23:9–40; 18:18—20:18
July 16	Jan. 28–29	Do Not Hope in King Jehoiachin, p. 744; 2Ki 24:5–9; Jer 22:18–30; 13:15–27 Jehoiachin Is Taken Captive, p. 746; 2Ki 24:10–17 Priestly Account: Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin, p. 747; 2Ch 36:5–10
July 17	Jan. 30–31	Prophetic Account: Zedekiah and Jeremiah, p. 748; Jer 24:1–10 The Book of Daniel, p. 749; Da 1:1–21
July 18	Feb. 1–2	Daniel's Time in Babylon, p. 751; Da 2:1—4:37
July 19	Feb. 3–4	Zedekiah's Alliances, p. 756; 2Ki 24:18, 19; Jer 52:1, 2
July 20	Feb. 5–6	Zedekiah's Jerusalem Conference, p. 757; Jer 27:1–11; 48:1—49:39; 25:15–38; 27:12—28:17 (2 assignments)
July 21	Feb. 7–8	Zedekiah's Jerusalem Conference, p. 757; Jer 27:1–11; 48:1—49:39; 25:15–38; 27:12—28:17
July 22	Feb. 9–10	Letter to the Exiles, p. 765; Jer 29:1–32
July 23	Feb. 11–12	Oracles Against Babylon, p. 766; Jer 50:1—51:64
July 24	Feb. 13–14	Priestly Account: Zedekiah and Jeremiah, p. 773; 2Ch 36:11, 12 The Book of Ezekiel, p. 773; Eze 1:1—3:21 Prophetic Account: Rebellion Against Babylon, p. 776; 2Ki 24:20—25:3; Jer 52:3–6
July 25	Feb. 15–16	The Siege of Jerusalem, p. 777; Jer 10:17–25; 21:1—22:9; 34:1–22 Hophra's Assault, p. 780; Jer 46:13–28
July 26	Feb. 17–18	A Lull in the Siege, p. 781; Jer 37:1–21; 30:1—33:26; 23:1–8; 38:1–28 (3 assignments)

Epoch Five—The Fall of Two Nations (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture r eferences
July 27	Feb. 19–20	A Lull in the Siege, p. 781; Jer 37:1–21; 30:1—33:26; 23:1–8; 38:1–28
July 28	Feb. 21–22	A Lull in the Siege, p. 781; Jer 37:1–21; 30:1—33:26; 23:1–8; 38:1–28
July 29	Feb. 23–24	Priestly Account: Rebellion Against Babylon, p. 792; 2Ch 36:13–16 Ezekiel's Temple Vision, p. 792; Eze 8:1—11:25
July 30	Feb. 25–26	Ezekiel's Oracles Before the Fall of Jerusalem, p. 796; Eze 13:1—18:32; (4 assignments)
July 31	Feb. 27–28	Ezekiel's Oracles Before the Fall of Jerusalem, p. 796; Eze 20:1—21:17
Aug. 1	Mar. 1–2	Ezekiel's Oracles Before the Fall of Jerusalem, p. 796; Eze 22:1–22
Aug. 2	Mar. 3–4	Ezekiel's Oracles Before the Fall of Jerusalem, p. 796; Eze 23:1–49
Aug. 3	Mar. 5–6	Israel and Ammon Rebel, p. 808; Eze 21:18–32; 24:1–27
Aug. 4	Mar. 7–8	Ezekiel's Sign Acts, p. 810; Eze 3:22—7:27 Pharaoh Hophra's Assault, p. 814; Eze 29:1–16; 30:20—31:18
Aug. 5	Mar. 9–10	Prophetic Account: The Fall of Jerusalem, p. 817; 2Ki 25:4–7; Jer 52:7–11; 39:1–7; 2Ki 25:8–21; Jer 52:12–27; 39:8–10
Aug. 6	Mar. 11–12	The Book of Lamentations, p. 820; La 1:1—5:22 (2 assignments)
Aug. 7	Mar. 13–14	The Book of Lamentations, p. 820; La 1:1—5:22
Aug. 8	Mar. 15–16	Gedaliah the Governor, p. 827; 2Ki 25:22–26; Jer 39:11—44:30 (2 assignments)
Aug. 9	Mar. 17–18	Gedaliah the Governor, p. 827; 2Ki 25:22–26; Jer 39:11—44:30
Aug. 10	Mar. 19–20	Priestly Account: The Fall of Jerusalem, p. 833; 2Ch 36:17–21 The End of the Siege, p. 833; Eze 12:1–28 Has God Renounced the Covenant with David?, p. 834; Ps 89
Aug. 11	Mar. 21–22	The News Arrives in Babylon, p. 836; Eze 33:21–33; 19:1–14; 22:23–31
Aug. 12	Mar. 23–24	Oracles Against Judah's Neighbors, p. 838; Eze 25:1—28:26; 32:1–32
Aug. 13	Mar. 25–26	Despair and Anger, p. 845; Ps 137 The Book of Obadiah, p. 845; Ob 1:1–21 Various Deportations to Babylon, p. 846; Jer 52:28–30

Epoch Six—Exile and Return (586–332 B.C.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Aug. 14	Mar. 27–28	Ezekiel's Message of Hope, p. 849; Eze 33:1–20; 34:1—37:28
Aug. 15	Mar. 29–30	Ezekiel's Apocalyptic Prophecies, p. 855; Eze 38:1—39:29
Aug. 16	Mar. 31–Apr. 1	Ezekiel's Second Temple Vision, p. 858; Eze 40:1—42:20
Aug. 17	Apr. 2–3	The Glory of God Returns, p. 862; Eze 43:1—48:35
Aug. 18	Apr. 4–5	Nebuchadnezzar's Siege of Tyre, p. 870; Eze 29:17–21; 30:1–19
Aug. 19	Apr. 6–7	Prophetic Account: Hope for the Future, p. 871; 2Ki 25:27–30; Jer 52:31–34 Isaiah and the Fall of Babylon, p. 872; Isa 13:1—14:23; 21:1–17; 33:1—35:10
Aug. 20	Apr. 8–9	Daniel and Belshazzar, p. 879; Da 5:1–31
Aug. 21	Apr. 10–11	Isaiah and Cyrus the Persian, p. 881; Isa 40:1—45:25 (3 assignments)
Aug. 22	Apr. 12–13	Isaiah and Cyrus the Persian, p. 881; Isa 40:1—45:25
Aug. 23	Apr. 14–15	Isaiah and Cyrus the Persian, p. 881; Isa 40:1—45:25
Aug. 24	Apr. 16–17	Babylon and Her Idols, p. 891; Isa 46:1—48:22
Aug. 25	Apr. 18–19	The Servant of the Lord, p. 894; Isa 49:1—51:23
Aug. 26	Apr. 20–21	The Suffering Servant, p. 898; Isa 52:1—55:13
Aug. 27	Apr. 22–23	Priestly Account: Hope for the Future, p. 902; 2Ch 36:22, 23 Words of the Wise, p. 904; Pr 22:17—24:34



Epoch Six—Exile and Return (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Aug. 28	Apr. 24–25	The Wisdom of Agur and Lemuel, p. 907; Pr 30:1—31:31 The Book of Job, p. 910; Job 1:1—2:13
Aug. 29	Apr. 26–27	Job: That Day—May It Turn to Darkness, p. 912; Job 3:1–26 Eliphaz: Who, Being Innocent, Has Ever Perished?, p. 913; Job 4:1—5:27 Job: What Does Your Arguing Prove?, p. 915; Job 6:1—7:21
Aug. 30	Apr. 28–29	Bildad: Ask the Former Generation, p. 917; Job 8:1–22 Job: How Then Can I Dispute with Him?, p. 918; Job 9:1—10:22 Zophar: God Has Even Forgotten Some of Your Sin, p. 920; Job 11:1–20
Aug. 31	Apr. 30–May 1	Job: Your Proverbs of Ashes, p. 921; Job 12:1—14:22 Words of the Wise Eliphaz: What the Wise Have Declared, p. 923; Job 15:1–35 Job: My Witness Is in Heaven, p. 925; Job 16:1—17:16
Sept. 1	May 2–3	Bildad: The Lamp of a Wicked Man, p. 926; Job 18:1–21 Job: My Redeemer Lives, p. 927; Job 19:1–29 Zophar: The Portion for a Wicked Man, p. 928; Job 20:1–29 Job: Why Do the Wicked Live?, p. 929; Job 21:1–34
Sept. 2	May 4–5	Eliphaz: Is Not Your Wickedness Great?, p. 930; Job 22:1–30 Job: He Is Not There, p. 931; Job 23:1—24:25 Bildad: A Mortal Who Is But a Maggot, p. 933; Job 25:1–6
Sept. 3	May 6–7	Job: The Fear of the Lord—That Is Wisdom, p. 933; Job 26:1—31:40
Sept. 4	May 8–9	Elihu: I Am Full of Words, p. 938; Job 32:1—37:24
Sept. 5	May 10–11	Where Were You?, p. 943; Job 38:1—40:5 Look at Behemoth, p. 945; Job 40:6—41:34
Sept. 6	May 12–13	Job: Now My Eyes Have Seen You, p. 947; Job 42:1–17 The Book of Ezra, p. 949; Ezr 1:1—2:70
Sept. 7	May 14–15	Restoring Worship in Jerusalem, p. 951; Ezr 3:1—4:5 Opposition to the Temple, p. 953; Ezr 4:24—5:1 The Book of Haggai, p. 953; Hag 1:1—2:23
Sept. 8	May 16–17	The Book of Zechariah, p. 955; Zec 1:1—6:15
Sept. 9	May 18–19	Replacing Fasting with Obedience, p. 959; Zec 7:1—8:23 Tattenai's Opposition, p. 961; Ezr 5:2—6:22
Sept. 10	May 20–21	Darius the Mede, p. 964; Da 6:1–28
Sept. 11	May 22–23	Priestly Genealogies, p. 966; 1Ch 1:1—9:34 (4 assignments)
Sept. 12	May 24–25	Priestly Genealogies, p. 966; 1Ch 1:1—9:34
Sept. 13	May 26–27	Priestly Genealogies, p. 966; 1Ch 1:1—9:34

Epoch Six—Exile and Return (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Sept. 14	May 28–29	Priestly Genealogies, p. 966; 1Ch 1:1—9:34
Sept. 15	May 30–31	The Book of Esther, p. 980; Est 1:1–22 Esther Is Made Queen, p. 982; Est 2:1–23
Sept. 16	June 1–2	Haman's Plot to Destroy the Jews, p. 983; Est 3:1—8:17
Sept. 17	June 3–4	The Countermand to Save the Jews, p. 987; Est 9:1—10:3 Opposition to Rebuilding Jerusalem, p. 989; Ezr 4:6–23
Sept. 18	June 5–6	The Book of Malachi, p. 990; Mal 1:1—4:6
Sept. 19	June 7–8	Ezra the Teacher of the Law, p. 994; Ezr 7:1—10:44
Sept. 20	June 9–10	The Book of Nehemiah, p. 1000; Ne 1:1–11
Sept. 21	June 11–12	Nehemiah Sent to Jerusalem, p. 1002; Ne 2:1—6:14
Sept. 22	June 13–14	Building the Walls, p. 1007; Ne 6:15—7:73a
Sept. 23	June 15–16	Ezra Reads the Law, p. 1009; Ne 7:73b—10:39
Sept. 24	June 17–18	Wisdom Psalms, p. 1013; Ps 1, 91, 119 (2 assignments)
Sept. 25	June 19–20	Wisdom Psalms, p. 1013; Ps 1, 91, 119
Sept. 26	June 21–22	The Names of the Returned Exiles, p. 1019; Ne 11:1—12:30
Sept. 27	June 23–24	Songs of Ascents, p. 1022; Ps 120–134 Nehemiah and the Levites, p. 1025; Ne 12:31–47
Sept. 28	June 25–26	The Last Word in Praise, p. 1026; Ps 104, 107, 111–113 (3 assignments)
Sept. 29	June 27–28	The Last Word in Praise, p. 1026; Ps 114–118, 135, 136
Sept. 30	June 29–30	The Last Word in Praise, p. 1026; Ps 145–150
Oct. 1	July 1–2	Nehemiah's Religious Reforms, p. 1036; Ne 13:1–22 The Sabbath After the Exile, p. 1038; Ps 92 Nehemiah and Foreign Wives, p. 1039; Ne 13:23–31
Oct. 2	July 3–4	The Book of Joel, p. 1040; Joel 1:1—3:21
Oct. 3	July 5–6	Isaiah and the Restoration, p. 1045; Isa 56:1—59:21
Oct. 4	July 7–8	God's Glory upon God's City, p. 1050; Isa 60:1—66:24 (2 assignments)
Oct. 5	July 9–10	God's Glory upon God's City, p. 1050; Isa 60:1—66:24
Oct. 6	July 11–12	The Apocalyptic Visions of Zechariah, p. 1058; Zec 9:1—10:12
Oct. 7	July 13–14	The Vision of the Shepherds, p. 1060; Zec 11:1—13:9 The Last Battle Won, p. 1063; Zec 14:1–21

Epoch Seven—
Between the Two Testaments
(332–37 B.C.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Oct. 8	July 15–16	The Apocalyptic Visions of Daniel, p. 1068; Da 7:1–28 Daniel and Alexander, p. 1071; Da 8:1–27
Oct. 9	July 17–18	The Seventy Sevens, p. 1073; Da 9:1–27
Oct. 10	July 19–20	Daniel and the Greeks, p. 1075; Da 10:1—12:13

Epoch Eight—
The Coming of the Messiah
(37 B.C.–A.D. 30)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Oct. 11	July 21–22	The Prehistory of Jesus, p. 1086; Jn 1:1–18 Introduction and Dedication, p. 1087; Lk 1:1–4 The Birth of John the Baptist, p. 1088; Lk 1:5–80 The Genealogy of Jesus, p. 1090; Mt 1:1–17
Oct. 12	July 23–24	The Birth of Jesus, p. 1091; Mt 1:18–25; Lk 2:1–20 Jesus Presented in the Temple, p. 1093; Lk 2:21–38 Jesus Escapes to Egypt, p. 1094; Mt 2:1–21
Oct. 13	July 25–26	Jesus' Childhood in Nazareth of Galilee, p. 1096; Mt 2:22, 23; Lk 2:39, 40 Jesus Visits the Temple, p. 1097; Lk 2:41–52 John the Baptist, p. 1098; Mt 3:1–12; Mk 1:1–8; Lk 3:1–18; Jn 1:19–28
Oct. 14	July 27–28	The Baptism of Jesus, p. 1100; Mt 3:13–17; Mk 1:9–11; Lk 3:21, 22; Jn 1:29–34 The Genealogy of Jesus, p. 1101; Lk 3:23–38 The Temptation of Jesus, p. 1102; Mt 4:1–11; Mk 1:12, 13; Lk 4:1–13
Oct. 15	July 29–30	Beginning of the Public Ministry, p. 1104; Jn 1:35–51 The First of Seven Signs, p. 1105; Jn 2:1–12 Jesus' First Visit to Jerusalem, p. 1107; Jn 2:13–25 Nicodemus, the Pharisee, p. 1107; Jn 3:1–36
Oct. 16	July 31–Aug. 1	Through Samaria to Galilee, p. 1109; Jn 4:1–45 Early Ministry in Galilee, p. 1111; Mt 4:12–22; Mk 1:14–20; Lk 4:14–30
Oct. 17	Aug. 2–3	Teaching with Authority, p. 1113; Mk 1:21–28; Lk 4:31–37 Healing the Sick, p. 1113; Mt 8:14–17; Mk 1:29–34; Lk 4:38–41 Departing Capernaum, p. 1114; Mt 4:23–25; Mk 1:35–39; Lk 4:42—5:11 Cleansing the Leper, p. 1115; Mt 8:1–4; Mk 1:40–45; Lk 5:12–16
Oct. 18	Aug. 4–5	Events in Capernaum, p. 1116; Mt 9:1–17; Mk 2:1–22; Lk 5:17–39 Lord of the Sabbath, p. 1118; Mt 12:1–14; Mk 2:23—3:6; Lk 6:1–11

Epoch Eight—The Coming of the Messiah (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Oct. 19	Aug. 6–7	Jesus' Followers, p. 1120; Mt 12:15–21; Mk 3:7–19; Lk 6:12–19 Sermon on the Mount or Plain, p. 1121; Mt 5:1–48; Lk 6:20–36
Oct. 20	Aug. 8–9	Unassuming Godliness, p. 1125; Mt 6:1–34; Lk 11:1–4; 12:22–34 Doing the Will of God, p. 1127; Mt 7:1–29; Lk 6:37–49; 11:5–13
Oct. 21	Aug. 10–11	In Capernaum and Nain, p. 1128; Mt 8:5–13; Lk 7:1–17; Jn 4:46–54 Jesus Allays John's Doubts, p. 1130; Mt 11:2–19; Lk 7:18–35 Anointing in Galilee, p. 1132; Lk 7:36–50
Oct. 22	Aug. 12–13	Jesus and Beelzebul, p. 1133; Mt 12:22–50; Mk 3:20–35; Lk 11:14–36; 8:19–21 Parables by the Sea, p. 1135; Mt 13:1–52; Mk 4:1–34; Lk 8:1–18; 13:18–21
Oct. 23	Aug. 14–15	Crossing to the East Shore, p. 1140; Mt 8:23–34; Mk 4:35—5:20; Lk 8:22–39
Oct. 24	Aug. 16–17	Returning to the West Shore, p. 1142; Mt 9:18–34; Mk 5:21–43; Lk 8:40–56 Rejection at Nazareth, p. 1144; Mt 13:53–58; Mk 6:1–6 Jesus' Second Visit to Jerusalem, p. 1145; Jn 5:1–47
Oct. 25	Aug. 18–19	Mission of the Twelve, p. 1147; Mt 9:35—11:1; Mk 6:7–13; Lk 9:1–6 Death of John the Baptist, p. 1149; Mt 14:1–12; Mk 6:14–29; Lk 3:19, 20; 9:7–9
Oct. 26	Aug. 20–21	Feeding the 5,000, p. 1151; Mt 14:13–21; Mk 6:30–44; Lk 9:10–17; Jn 6:1–15 Walking on the Water, p. 1153; Mt 14:22–33; Mk 6:45–52; Jn 6:16–21 Popularity at Gennesaret and Capernaum, p. 1155; Mt 14:34–36; Mk 6:53–56; Jn 6:22–71
Oct. 27	Aug. 22–23	Controversy over Traditions, p. 1156; Mt 15:1–20; Mk 7:1–23 Ministry in Gentile Regions, p. 1158; Mt 15:21–31; Mk 7:24–37 Feeding the 4,000, p. 1159; Mt 15:32–39; Mk 8:1–10

Epoch Eight—The Coming of the Messiah (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Oct. 28	Aug. 24–25	Teaching About the Pharisees, p. 1160; Mt 16:1–12; Mk 8:11–26 The Christ and His Disciples, p. 1161; Mt 16:13–28; Mk 8:27—9:1; Lk 9:18–27 The Transfiguration, p. 1163; Mt 17:1–13; Mk 9:2–13; Lk 9:28–36
Oct. 29	Aug. 26–27	Faithless Generation, p. 1165; Mt 17:14–23; Mk 9:14–32; Lk 9:37–45 Being Christ's Disciple, p. 1166; Mt 17:24—18:9; Mk 9:33–50; Lk 9:46–50
Oct. 30	Aug. 28–29	Attending the Festival of Tabernacles, p. 1168; Jn 7:1–52 Forgiving an Adulteress, p. 1171; Jn 7:53—8:11 Discussions with the Pharisees, p. 1171; Jn 8:12–59
Oct. 31	Aug. 30–31	Healing the Man Born Blind, p. 1173; Jn 9:1–41 Jesus, the Good Shepherd, p. 1174; Jn 10:1–21 Through Samaria Toward Jerusalem, p. 1175; Mt 8:18–22; Lk 9:51–62
Nov. 1	Sept. 1–2	Mission of the 70 Disciples, p. 1177; Mt 11:20–30; Lk 10:1–24 Compassion and Mercy from a Samaritan, p. 1178; Lk 10:25–37 Visiting in Bethany, p. 1179; Lk 10:38–42 Hypocrisy of the Lawyers and Pharisees, p. 1180; Lk 11:37—12:12
Nov. 2	Sept. 3–4	Earthly or Heavenly Treasures, p. 1181; Lk 12:13–21 Be Watchful for the Son of Man, p. 1182; Lk 12:35–59 Necessity of Repentance, p. 1183; Lk 13:1–9 Restoring a Deformed Body, p. 1184; Lk 13:10–17 Entry into the Kingdom, p. 1184; Lk 13:22–35 Meal with a Pharisee, p. 1185; Lk 14:1–24
Nov. 3	Sept. 5–6	Calling for Commitment, p. 1186; Lk 14:25–35 Parables of the Lost, p. 1186; Mt 18:10–14; Lk 15:1–32 Parables on Wealth, p. 1188; Lk 16:1–31
Nov. 4	Sept. 7–8	Guidelines for Disciples, p. 1190; Mt 18:15–35; Lk 17:1–10 Passing Through Samaria and Galilee, p. 1191; Lk 17:11–19 The Coming of the Kingdom, p. 1192; Lk 17:20–37 Parables on Prayer, p. 1193; Lk 18:1–14

Epoch Eight—The Coming of the Messiah (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Nov. 5	Sept. 9–10	Marriage, Divorce, and Children, p. 1194; Mt 19:1–15; Mk 10:1–16; Lk 18:15–17 Riches and Discipleship, p. 1196; Mt 19:16–30; Mk 10:17–31; Lk 18:18–30
Nov. 6	Sept. 11–12	The Laborers in the Vineyard, p. 1197; Mt 20:1–16 At the Festival of Dedication, p. 1198; Jn 10:22–42 The Raising of Lazarus, p. 1199; Jn 11:1–57
Nov. 7	Sept. 13–14	Greatness and Discipleship, p. 1201; Mt 20:17–28; Mk 10:32–45; Lk 18:31–34 Passing Through Jericho Toward Jerusalem, p. 1203; Mt 20:29–34; Mk 10:46–52; Lk 18:35—19:27 Returning to Bethany Before the Passover, p. 1204; Jn 12:1–11
Nov. 8	Sept. 15–16	Sunday: The Triumphal Entry, p. 1205; Mt 21:1–11; Mk 11:1–11; Lk 19:28–44; Jn 12:12–19 Monday: Cleansing the Temple, p. 1207; Mt 21:12–17; Mk 11:12–19; Lk 19:45–48
Nov. 9	Sept. 17–18	Tuesday: Faith and Forgiveness, p. 1209; Mt 21:18–22; Mk 11:20–26 Questioning Jesus' Authority, p. 1210; Mt 21:23–32; Mk 11:27–33; Lk 20:1–8 Answering by Parables, p. 1211; Mt 21:33—22:14; Mk 12:1–12; Lk 20:9–19
Nov. 10	Sept. 19–20	Questioned by Pharisees and Herodians, p. 1214; Mt 22:15–22; Mk 12:13–17; Lk 20:20–26 Questioned by Sadducees, p. 1215; Mt 22:23–33; Mk 12:18–27; Lk 20:27–40 Questioned by a Scribe, p. 1216; Mt 22:34–46; Mk 12:28–37; Lk 20:41–44
Nov. 11	Sept. 21–22	Beware of the Teachers of the Law, p. 1217; Mt 23:1–39; Mk 12:38–44; Lk 20:45—21:4 Discourse While on the Mount of Olives, p. 1219; Mt 24:1–35; Mk 13:1–31; Lk 21:5–33
Nov. 12	Sept. 23–24	Parables from the Mount of Olives, p. 1223; Mt 24:36—25:46; Mk 13:32–37; Lk 21:34–38 Discourse on His Own Death, p. 1225; Jn 12:20–50 Plot, Anointing, Betrayal, p. 1226; Mt 26:1–16; Mk 14:1–11; Lk 22:1–6

Epoch Eight—The Coming of the Messiah (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture r eferences
Nov. 13	Sept. 25–26	Thursday: Preparation for the Last Supper, p. 1228; Mt 26:17–29; Mk 14:12–25; Lk 22:7–30; Jn 13:18–30 Jesus Washes the Disciples' Feet, p. 1231; Jn 13:1–17; 13:31–35
Nov. 14	Sept. 27–28	Warnings About Denial, p. 1232; Mt 26:30–35; Mk 14:26–31; Lk 22:31–38; Jn 13:36–38 Farewell Discourses with Disciples, p. 1233; Jn 14:1–24 Help from the Holy Spirit, p. 1233; Jn 14:25—16:33
Nov. 15	Sept. 29–30	Jesus' High Priestly Prayer, p. 1236; Jn 17:1–26 Jesus' Prayer and Arrest in Gethsemane, p. 1237; Mt 26:36–56; Mk 14:32–52; Lk 22:39–53; Jn 18:1–11
Nov. 16	Oct. 1–2	Jesus' Trial Before the Sanhedrin, p. 1240; Mt 26:57–75; Mk 14:53–72; Lk 22:54–71; Jn 18:12–27
Nov. 17	Oct. 3–4	Friday: Before Pilate the Governor, p. 1243; Mt 27:1–26; Mk 15:1–15; Lk 23:1–25; Jn 18:28–40
Nov. 18	Oct. 5–6	Sentenced to Crucifixion, p. 1246; Mt 27:27–31; Mk 15:16–20; Jn 19:1–16 Crucifixion at Golgotha, p. 1248; Mt 27:32–56; Mk 15:21–41; Lk 23:26–49; Jn 19:17–37
Nov. 19	Oct. 7–8	The Burial of Jesus, p. 1251; Mt 27:57–66; Mk 15:42–47; Lk 23:50–56; Jn 19:38–42 Sunday: Morning at the Tomb, p. 1252; Mt 28:1–8; Mk 16:1–8; Lk 24:1–12; Jn 20:1–13 Early Resurrection Appearances, p. 1254; Mt 28:9–15; Mk 16:9–11; Jn 20:14–18
Nov. 20	Oct. 9–10	Appearances in Judea: Emmaus and Jerusalem, p. 1255; Mk 16:12, 13; Lk 24:13–49; Jn 20:19–31 Later Appearances in Galilee, p. 1258; Mt 28:16–20; Mk 16:14–18; Jn 21:1–25 Jesus Ascends from the Mount of Olives, p. 1260; Mk 16:19, 20; Lk 24:50–53

Epoch Nine—
The Church Age
(A.D. 30–100)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture references
Nov. 21	Oct. 11–12	The Book of Acts, p. 1263; Ac 1:1–8 The Ascension, p. 1264; Ac 1:9–26 The Day of Pentecost, p. 1265; Ac 2:1–47
Nov. 22	Oct. 13–14	The Early Christians in Jerusalem, p. 1267; Ac 3:1—5:42
Nov. 23	Oct. 15–16	Stephen, the First Martyr, p. 1271; Ac 6:1—8:3
Nov. 24	Oct. 17–18	Philip and the Samaritan Pentecost, p. 1275; Ac 8:4–40 Spreading Beyond Judea and Samaria, p. 1277; Ac 9:1–43
Nov. 25	Oct. 19–20	Peter's Missionary Work, p. 1279; Ac 10:1—12:25
Nov. 26	Oct. 21–22	Paul's First Missionary Journey, p. 1284; Ac 13:1—14:28
Nov. 27	Oct. 23–24	Conference in Jerusalem, p. 1288; Ac 15:1–35 The Letter to the Galatians, p. 1290; Gal 1:1–24
Nov. 28	Oct. 25–26	Paul Corrects Peter, p. 1291; Gal 2:1—6:18
Nov. 29	Oct. 27–28	The Letter of James, p. 1296; Jas 1:1—5:20
Nov. 30	Oct. 29–30	Paul's Second Missionary Journey, p. 1300; Ac 15:36—18:11
Dec. 1	Oct. 31–Nov. 1	The First Letter to the Thessalonians, p. 1304; 1Th 1:1—2:20 Good News from Thessalonica, p. 1305; 1Th 3:1—5:28
Dec. 2	Nov. 2–3	The Second Letter to the Thessalonians, p. 1308; 2Th 1:1—3:18 Paul Before Gallio, p. 1310; Ac 18:12–22 Paul's Third Missionary Journey, p. 1311; Ac 18:23—19:22 The First Letter to the Corinthians, p. 1313; 1Co 1:1—4:21
Dec. 3	Nov. 4–5	Paul's Authority and Letter, p. 1317; 1Co 5:1—6:20
Dec. 4	Nov. 6–7	Questions from the Corinthians, p. 1318; 1Co 7:1—15:58 (2 assignments)
Dec. 5	Nov. 8–9	Questions from the Corinthians, p. 1318; 1Co 7:1—15:58
Dec. 6	Nov. 10–11	Paul's Future Plans, p. 1330; 1Co 16:1–24 Commotion in Ephesus, p. 1331; Ac 19:23—20:1 The Second Letter to the Corinthians, p. 1332; 2Co 1:1—2:11 Paul Seeks a Report from Titus, p. 1333; 2Co 2:12—7:16
Dec. 7	Nov. 12–13	The Offering for Jerusalem's Christians, p. 1337; 2Co 8:1—9:15 Paul's Third Visit to Corinth, p. 1339; 2Co 10:1—13:14 Paul's Trip Through Macedonia, p. 1343; Ac 20:2, 3a
Dec. 8	Nov. 14–15	The Letter to the Romans, p. 1343; Ro 1:1—15:13 (3 assignments)
Dec. 9	Nov. 16–17	The Letter to the Romans, p. 1343; Ro 1:1—15:13

Epoch Nine—The Church Age (cont.)

one-year	two-year	topic and Scripture r eferences
Dec. 10	Nov. 18–19	The Letter to the Romans, p. 1343; Ro 1:1—15:13
Dec. 11	Nov. 20–21	Paul's Ministry to the Gentiles, p. 1356; Ro 15:14—16:27 En Route to Jerusalem, p. 1358; Ac 20:3b—21:16
Dec. 12	Nov. 22–23	Paul Arrested in the Temple, p. 1361; Ac 21:17—23:22 Paul Escorted to Caesarea, p. 1364; Ac 23:23—24:27
Dec. 13	Nov. 24–25	The Letter to the Philippians, p. 1366; Php 1:1—4:23
Dec. 14	Nov. 26–27	Paul Appeals to Caesar, p. 1370; Ac 25:1—26:32
Dec. 15	Nov. 28–29	The Voyage to Rome, p. 1373; Ac 27:1—28:15 Imprisonment in Rome, p. 1375; Ac 28:16–31 The Letter to Philemon, p. 1376; Phm 1:1–25
Dec. 16	Nov. 30–Dec. 1	The Letter to the Colossians, p. 1378; Col 1:1—4:18
Dec. 17	Dec. 2–3	The Letter to the Ephesians, p. 1382; Eph 1:1—6:24
Dec. 18	Dec. 4–5	The First Letter to Timothy, p. 1388; 1Ti 1:1—6:21
Dec. 19	Dec. 6–7	The Letter to Titus, p. 1393; Titus 1:1—3:15 The Second Letter to Timothy, p. 1395; 2Ti 1:1—4:22
Dec. 20	Dec. 8–9	The First Letter of Peter, p. 1398; 1Pe 1:1—5:14
Dec. 21	Dec. 10–11	The Letter of Jude, p. 1404; Jude 1:1–25 The Second Letter of Peter, p. 1405; 2Pe 1:1—3:18
Dec. 22	Dec. 12–13	The Letter to the Hebrews, p. 1408; Heb 1:1—13:25 (3 assignments)
Dec. 23	Dec. 14–15	The Letter to the Hebrews, p. 1408; Heb 1:1—13:25
Dec. 24	Dec. 16–17	The Letter to the Hebrews, p. 1408; Heb 1:1—13:25
Dec. 25	Dec. 18–19	The First Letter of John, p. 1421; 1Jn 1:1—5:21 The Second Letter of John, p. 1424; 2Jn 1:1–13 The Third Letter of John, p. 1425; 3Jn 1:1–14
Dec. 26	Dec. 20–21	The Revelation to John, p. 1426; Rev 1:1—3:22 A Revelation of Heaven, p. 1430; Rev 4:1—5:14
Dec. 27	Dec. 22–23	The Sevenfold Plagues, p. 1432; Rev 6:1—16:21 (3 assignments)
Dec. 28	Dec. 24–25	The Sevenfold Plagues, p. 1432; Rev 6:1—16:21
Dec. 29	Dec. 26–27	The Sevenfold Plagues, p. 1432; Rev 6:1—16:21
Dec. 30	Dec. 28–29	The Sinful City and the Antichrist, p. 1441; Rev 17:1—19:21
Dec. 31	Dec. 30–31	The Millennium, p. 1445; Rev 20:1–15 A New Heaven and a New Earth, p. 1447; Rev 21:1—22:21

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