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1 Kings

Chapter 1

¹When King David was very old, even though his servants put many blankets on top of him at night, he was unable to keep warm. ²So they said to him, "Your Majesty, allow us to search for a young virgin who can stay with you and take care of you. She can sleep close to you and make you warm."

³The king gave them permission, so they searched throughout Israel for a beautiful young woman. They found a woman named Abishag, from the town of Shunem, and brought her to the king. ⁴She was truly very beautiful. She took care of the king, but the king did not have sexual relations with her.

⁵⁻⁶After Absalom died, David's oldest son was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith. He was a very handsome man. But David had never rebuked him about anything he did. After Absalom died, he thought that he would become king. So he started to boast, saying, "I will become king now." Then he provided for himself some chariots, and men to drive them, and horses to pull them, and fifty men to run as his bodyguards in front of those chariots wherever he went.

⁶⁻⁷One day he conferred with Joab, David's army commander, and Abiathar the priest, and they promised to help Adonijah. ⁸But other important people refused to help him. These included Zadok, who was also a priest, Benaiah who had supervised David's bodyguards, Nathan the prophet, Shimei and Rei, and David's most capable soldiers.

⁹One day Adonijah went to the stone of Zoheleth near En Rogel, which is near Jerusalem, to sacrifice some sheep and oxen and fattened cattle. He invited most of his brothers, King David's other sons, to come. He also invited all of the king's officials from Judah to come to the celebration. ¹⁰But he did not invite Nathan, Benaiah, or the king's most capable soldiers, or his younger brother Solomon.

¹¹Nathan found out what they were doing, so he went to Solomon's mother Bathsheba and asked her, "Have you not heard that Haggith's son Adonijah is making himself king? And King David does not know about it! ¹²So if you want to save yourself and your son Solomon from being killed, allow me to tell you what you should do. ¹³Go right away to King David. Say to him, 'Your Majesty, you solemnly promised me that my son Solomon would become the king after you die and that he would sit on your throne and rule. So why are people saying that Adonijah is now king?' ¹⁴Then, Bathsheba, while you are still talking to the king, I will come in and tell him that what you are saying to him about Adonijah is true."

¹⁵So Bathsheba went to see the king in his bedroom. He was very old, and Abishag was taking care of him.

¹⁶Bathsheba bowed very low in front of the king, and the king asked her, "What do you want?"

¹⁷She replied, "Your Majesty, you solemnly promised me, knowing that Yahweh our God was listening, that my son Solomon would become king after you die and that he would sit on your throne and rule. ¹⁸But now, Adonijah has made himself king, and you do not know anything about it. ¹⁹He has sacrificed a lot of oxen and fattened cattle and sheep, and he has invited all of your other sons to the celebration. He has also invited Abiathar the priest and Joab the commander of your army, but he did not invite your son Solomon. ²⁰Your Majesty, all the people of Israel are expecting you to tell them who is the one who will become king after you are no longer with us. ²¹If you do not do that, what will happen is that after you die people will consider that my son Solomon and I are rebelling, and they will execute us because we did not help Adonijah to become king."

²²While she was still talking to the king, Nathan came to the palace. ²³The king's servants told David, "Nathan the prophet has come." So Bathsheba left, and Nathan went into where the king was and knelt down, with his face on the ground.

²⁴Then Nathan said, "Your Majesty, have you declared that Adonijah will become king after you? ²⁵I say that because today he has gone down to En Rogel and has sacrificed a lot of oxen, fattened cattle, and sheep. And he has invited all of your other sons, Joab the army commander, and Abiathar the priest. They are all eating and drinking with him and saying, 'We hope that King Adonijah will live a long time!' ²⁶But he did not invite me or Zadok the priest or Benaiah or Solomon. ²⁷Did you say that they should do this without telling your other officials who you want to become king after you are no longer the king?"

²⁸Then King David said, "Tell Bathsheba to come in here again." So someone went and told her, and she came in and stood in front of the king.

²⁹⁻³⁰Then the king said, "Yahweh has rescued me from all my troubles. I promised you, with Yahweh the God whom we Israelites worship listening, that your son Solomon would be king after I am no longer the king. Today, as surely as Yahweh lives, I solemnly declare that I will do what I promised." ³⁰³¹Bathsheba knelt down with her face on the ground and said, "Your Majesty, I hope you will live forever!"

³²Then King David said to a servant, "Summon Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah." So a servant went and summoned them. When they came in, ³³he said to them, "Put my son Solomon on my mule. Take him with my officials down to the spring at Gihon. ³⁴There, you two, Zadok and Nathan, must anoint him with olive oil to appoint him to be the king of Israel. Then you two must blow trumpets, and all the people there must shout, 'We hope that King Solomon will live for many years!' ³⁵Then follow him back here, and he will come and sit on my throne. He will then become king instead of me. I have appointed him to be the ruler of all the people of Israel and of Judah."

³⁶Benaiah replied, "We will do that! We hope that Yahweh, who is your God and our God, will cause it to happen!

³⁷King David, Yahweh has helped you. We hope that he will also help Solomon and enable him to become an even greater king than you have been."

³⁸So Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and the two groups of men who were the king's bodyguards went and put Solomon on King David's mule and escorted him down to the spring at Gihon. ³⁹There Zadok took the container of olive oil from the sacred tent and anointed Solomon. Then two of them blew trumpets, and all the people shouted, "We hope that King Solomon will live for many years!" ⁴⁰Then all the people followed him back up to the city, shouting joyfully and playing flutes. They shouted very loudly, so that the ground shook.

⁴¹When Adonijah and all his guests were finishing eating at their celebration, they heard the noise. When Joab heard the sound of the trumpets, he asked, "What is the meaning of all that noise in the city?"

⁴²While he was still speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar the priest, arrived. Adonijah said, "Come in! You are a man whom we can trust, so you must be bringing us good news!"

⁴³Jonathan replied, "No, I do not have good news! His Majesty, King David, has made Solomon to be the king! ⁴⁴He sent Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and his own groups of bodyguards to go with Solomon. They put Solomon on King David's mule. ⁴⁵They went down to the spring at Gihon, and there Zadok and Nathan have anointed him to become the king. Now they have returned from there to the city, shouting joyfully. That is why there is that great noise that you are hearing. ⁴⁶So Solomon is now our king. ⁴⁷Furthermore, the palace officials came to His Majesty, King David, to tell him that they approved of what he had done. They said, 'We wish that God will make Solomon even more famous than you have been and enable him to be an even better king than you have been.' When they said that, the king, lying on his bed, bowed his head to worship Yahweh. ⁴⁸Then he said, 'I praise Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship, because he has allowed one of my sons to become the king today and has permitted me to see it happen.'"

⁴⁹Then all of Adonijah's guests trembled, so they all immediately got up and left and scattered. ⁵⁰Adonijah was afraid of what Solomon would do, so he went to the sacred tent and grabbed the projections at the corners of the altar, because he thought that no one would kill him there. ⁵¹But someone told Solomon, "See, Adonijah is afraid of

you, so he has gone to the sacred tent and is holding on to the altar. He is saying, 'Before I leave, I want King Solomon to solemnly promise that he will not command that I be executed.'

⁵²Solomon replied, "If he proves that he is loyal to me, I will not harm him at all. But if he does anything that is wrong, he will be executed." ⁵³So King Solomon sent some men to Adonijah, and they brought him back from the altar. He came to Solomon and bowed down in front of him. Then Solomon said to him, "Go home."

Chapter 2

¹When David knew that he was about to die, he gave these final instructions to his son Solomon:

²"I am about to die, as everyone else on earth does. Be courageous and conduct yourself as man should. ³Do what Yahweh our God tells you to do. Conduct yourself as he wants you to do. Obey all of his laws and commands and decrees and instructions that are written in the laws that Moses gave us. Do this in order that you will prosper in all that you do and wherever you go. ⁴If you continually do that, Yahweh will do what he promised me. He said, 'If your descendants do what I tell them to do, and faithfully obey my commands with all their inner beings, they will always be the ones who will rule Israel.'

⁵There is something else that I want you to do. You know what Joab did to me. He killed my two army commanders, Abner and Amasa. He murdered them violently. He is guilty of murder. ⁶Because you are wise, do to him what you think is best for you to do, but do not allow him to become old and die peacefully.

⁷But act kindly toward the sons of Barzillai, the man from the region of Gilead, and be sure that they always have enough food to eat. Do that because Barzillai helped me when I was running away from your older brother Absalom.

⁸Also, you remember Gera's son Shimei from the town of Bahurim in the area where the descendants of Benjamin live. You know what he did to me. He cursed me terribly on the day I left Jerusalem and went to the town of Mahanaim. But when he later came down to see me when I was crossing the Jordan River, I solemnly promised, while Yahweh listened, that I would not cause him to be executed. ⁹But now you must surely punish him. You are a wise man, so you will know what you should do to him. He is an old man, but be sure that his blood flows when he dies."

¹⁰Then David died and was buried in that part of Jerusalem which was called the city of David. ¹¹David had been king of Israel for forty years. He ruled for seven years in Hebron and for thirty-three years in Jerusalem. ¹²Solomon became the ruler to take the place of his father David and took control of all of the kingdom.

¹³One day Adonijah came to Solomon's mother Bathsheba. She said to him, "Have you come because you want things to go well?" He replied, "Yes."

¹⁴But then he said, "I have something to request you to do." She said, "Tell me what you want me to do."

¹⁵He said, "You know that all the Israelite people expected me to be their king because I am David's oldest son. But that did not happen. Instead, my younger brother became king, because that is what Yahweh wanted. ¹⁶Now I have one thing that I request you to do. Please do not refuse to do it." She replied, "Tell me what you want me to do."

¹⁷He said, "Please ask King Solomon to give to me Abishag, the woman from the town of Shunem, to be my wife. I am sure that he will not refuse."

¹⁸Bathsheba replied, "Very well, I will speak to the king for you."

¹⁹So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to tell him what Adonijah wanted. The king got up from his throne and went to greet her and bowed down to her. Then he sat on his throne again and asked someone to bring a chair for her. So she sat down at the king's right side.

²⁰Then she said, "I have one small thing that I want you do. Please do not say that you will not do it." The king replied, "Mother, what do you want? I will not refuse you."

²¹She said, "Allow Abishag to be given to your older brother Adonijah to be his wife."

²²The king replied angrily, "What? Are you requesting me to give Abishag to Adonijah? Does he want me to allow him to rule the kingdom, too? Because he is my older brother, does he think that he should be the king? Does he think that Abiathar should be the priest instead of Zadok, and that Joab should be the army commander instead of Benaiah because they supported him when he tried to become the king?"

²³Then Solomon solemnly promised, requesting Yahweh to listen, "I wish God to strike me and kill me if I do not cause Adonijah to be executed for requesting this! ²⁴Yahweh has appointed me to be the king and placed me here to rule as my father David did. He has promised that my descendants will be the kings of Israel. So just as surely as Yahweh lives, I solemnly promise that Adonijah will be executed today!" ²⁵So King Solomon gave orders to Benaiah to go and kill Adonijah, and Benaiah did that.

²⁶Then Solomon said to Abiathar the priest, "Go to the town of Anathoth, to your land there. You deserve to be killed, but I will not execute you now, because you were the one who supervised the men who carried Yahweh's sacred chest for David my father, and you endured all the troubles that my father endured." ²⁷So Solomon dismissed Abiathar from being the priest of Yahweh. By doing that he caused to happen what Yahweh had said many years previously at Shiloh, that some day he would get rid of the descendants of Eli.

²⁸Joab had not supported Absalom when he tried to become the king, but he had supported Adonijah. So when Joab heard what had happened, he ran to the sacred tent, and he took hold of the altar because he thought that no one would kill him there. ²⁹When someone told Solomon that Joab had run to the sacred tent and was alongside the altar, Solomon told Benaiah, "Go and execute Joab."

³⁰So Benaiah went to the sacred tent and said to Joab, "The king commands that you come out." But Joab replied, "No, I will die here." So Benaiah went back to the king and reported what he had said to Joab, and what Joab had replied.

³¹The king replied to him, "Do what he has requested. Kill him and bury his body. If you do that, I and my descendants will no longer be punished for what Joab did when he killed two men who were innocent. ³²But I hope that Yahweh will punish Joab for attacking and killing Abner, the commander of the army of Israel, and Amasa, the commander of the army of Judah, who were both much better men than he is. My father David did not even know that Joab was planning to murder them. ³³I hope that Yahweh will punish Joab and his descendants forever for his murdering Abner and Amasa. But I hope that things will go well forever for David's descendants who rule as he did."

³⁴So Benaiah went into the sacred tent and killed Joab. Joab was buried on his property in the wilderness of Judah.

³⁵Then the king appointed Benaiah to be the commander of the army instead of Joab, and he appointed Zadok to be the priest instead of Abiathar.

³⁶Then the king sent a messenger to summon Shimei, and the king said to him, "Build a house for yourself here in Jerusalem. Remain there and do not leave the city to go anywhere. ³⁷Be sure that the day that you leave Jerusalem and go across the Kidron Brook, you will be executed, and it will be your own fault."

³⁸Shimei replied, "Your Majesty, what you say is good. I will do what you have said." So Shimei remained in Jerusalem for several years.

³⁹But three years later, two of Shimei's slaves ran away. They went to stay with Maacah's son Achish, the king of the city of Gath. When someone told Shimei that they were in Gath, ⁴⁰he put a saddle on his donkey and got on the donkey and went to Gath. He found his slaves staying with King Achish and brought them back home.

⁴¹But someone told King Solomon that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath and had returned. ⁴²So the king sent a soldier to summon Shimei and said to him, "I told you to solemnly promise, knowing that Yahweh was listening, that you must not leave Jerusalem. I told you, 'Be sure that if you ever leave Jerusalem, you will be executed.' And you replied to me, 'What you have said is good; I will do what you have said.' ⁴³So why did you not do what you solemnly promised to Yahweh? Why did you disobey what I commanded you?"

⁴⁴The king also said to Shimei, "You know in your inner being all the evil things that you did to my father David. So Yahweh will now punish you for the evil things that you did. ⁴⁵But Yahweh will bless me, and he will enable David's descendants to rule forever."

⁴⁶Then the king gave a command to Benaiah son of Jehoiada. He went out and put Shimei to death.

So Solomon obtained complete control of the kingdom.

Chapter 3

¹Now Solomon made an agreement to marry the daughter of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. Then Solomon brought the king's daughter to live in the part of Jerusalem called the city of David. She lived there until Solomon's workers had finished building his house, the temple of Yahweh, and the wall around Jerusalem. ²At that time the temple of Yahweh had not yet been built, so the Israelite people were still offering sacrifices at many other places of worship. ³Solomon loved Yahweh, and he obeyed all the instructions that his father David had given him. But he also offered sacrifices and burned incense at various places.

⁴One day the king went to the city of Gibeon to offer a sacrifice there, because that was where a very famous place of worship was. He offered a thousand whole burnt sacrifices there. ⁵That night, Yahweh appeared to him at Gibeon in a dream. He asked him, "What would you like me to give to you?"

⁶Solomon replied, "You always greatly and faithfully loved my father David, who served you well. You did that because he was faithful to you and acted righteously and honestly toward you. And you have shown how greatly and faithfully you loved him by giving me to him, his son, and now I am ruling as he did before he died.

⁷Now, Yahweh my God, you have enabled me to be the king like my father was. But I am very young, like a little child. I do not know how to rule my people at all. ⁸I live among the people whom you have chosen. They are a very large group of people. There are very, very many of them; no one can count them. ⁹So please enable me to think clearly, in order that I may rule your people well. Enable me to know what is good and what is evil. If you do not do that, I will never be able to rule this great group of people who belong to you."

¹⁰Yahweh was very pleased that Solomon had requested that. ¹¹God said to him, "You did not request that you live for many years or that you become very rich or that you be able to kill all your enemies. Instead, you have requested that I enable you to be wise, in order that you will be able to know and to do what is right while you govern these people. ¹²So I will certainly do what you requested. I will enable you to be very wise. The result will be that no one who has lived before you or who will live after you will be as wise as you are. ¹³I will also give you things that you did not request. I will enable you to become very rich and honored, all of the years that you live. You will be richer and more honored than any other king. ¹⁴If you conduct your life as I want you to, and if you obey all my laws and commandments, as your father David did, I will enable you to live for many years."

¹⁵Then Solomon awoke, and he realized that God had spoken to him in a dream. Then he went to Jerusalem and stood in front of the sacred tent where the sacred chest was, and he offered many sacrifices that were completely burned on the altar and offerings to promise friendship with Yahweh. Then he made a feast for all his officials.

¹⁶One day two prostitutes came and stood in front of King Solomon. ¹⁷One of them said, "Your Majesty, this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while she was there in the house. ¹⁸On the third day after my baby was born, this woman also gave birth to a baby. Only the two of us were in the house. There was no one else there.

¹⁹But one night this woman's baby died because she accidentally rolled on top of her baby and smothered it. ²⁰So she got up at midnight and took my baby boy who was lying beside me while I was sleeping. She carried him to her bed and brought her dead baby and put it in my bed. ²¹When I awoke the next morning and was ready to nurse my baby, I saw that it was dead. But when I looked at it closely in the morning light, I saw that it was not my baby!"

²²But the other woman said, "That is not true! The baby that is alive is mine, and the baby that is dead is yours!" Then the first woman said, "No, the dead baby is yours, and the one that is alive is mine!" And they continued to argue in front of the king.

²³Then the king said, "Both of you are saying, 'My baby is the one that is alive and the one that is dead is yours.'"

²⁴So he said to one of his servants, "Bring me a sword." So the servant brought a sword to the king. ²⁵Then the king said to the servant, "Cut the baby that is alive into two parts. Give one part to each of the women."

²⁶But the woman whose baby was alive greatly loved her baby, so she said to the king, "No, Your Majesty! Do not allow him to kill the baby! Give her the child that is alive!" But the other woman said to the king, "No, cut it in half. Then it will not be her baby or my baby."

²⁷Then the king said to the servant, "Do not kill the baby. Give the baby to the woman who said, 'Do not cut the baby in half,' because she is truly the baby's mother."

²⁸All the Israelite people heard about what the king had decided, and they had an awesome respect for him. They realized that God had truly enabled him to be very wise, to judge people's matters fairly.

Chapter 4

¹Now when Solomon was king over all Israel, ²these were his most important officials:

Azariah, whose father was Zadok, was the priest.

³Shisha's sons Elihoreph and Ahijah were the official secretaries.

Ahilud's son Jehoshaphat was the one who announced to the people the king's decisions.

⁴Benaiah was the army commander.

Zadok and Abiathar were also priests.

⁵Azariah, whose father was Nathan, was in charge of the governors.

Another of Nathan's sons, Zabud, was a priest and the king's chief advisor.

⁶Ahishar supervised the servants who worked in the palace.

Abda's son Adoniram supervised the men who were forced to do work for the king.

⁷Solomon appointed twelve men to govern the districts in Israel. They also were required to provide food for the king and all the others who lived and worked in the palace. Each man was required to provide from his own district the food for one month in each year. ⁸Their names were:

Ben-Hur, for the hill area of the tribe of Ephraim.

⁹Ben-Deker, for the cities of Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon Bethhanan,

¹⁰Ben-Hesed, for the cities of Arubboth and Sokoh and the area near the city of Hopher,

¹¹Ben-Abinadab, who was married to Solomon's daughter Taphath, for all the district of Dor,

¹²Ahilud's son Baana, for the cities of Taanach and Megiddo, for all the region near the city of Zarethan, and from the city of Beth Shan south of Jezreel as far as the cities of Abel Meholah and Jokmeam,

¹³Ben-Geber, for the city of Ramoth in the region of Gilead, for the villages in Gilead that belonged to Jair, who was a descendant of Manasseh, and for the area of Argob in the region of Bashan. There were sixty large cities in that region altogether, each city with a wall around it and bronze bars across the gates.

¹⁴Iddo's son Ahinadab, for the city of Mahanaim east of the Jordan River;

¹⁵Ahimaaz, who had married Solomon's daughter Basemath, for the territory of the tribe of Naphtali,

¹⁶Hushai's son Baana, for the territory of the tribe of Asher and for the city of Aloth,

¹⁷Paruah's son Jehoshaphat, for the territory of the tribe of Issachar,

¹⁸Ela's son Shimei, for the territory of the tribe of Benjamin,

¹⁹Uri's son Geber, for the region of Gilead, the land that Sihon the king of the Amor people group formerly ruled, and Og who formerly ruled the region of Bashan.

In addition to all these, Solomon appointed one governor for the territory of the tribe of Judah.

²⁰There were as many people in Judah and Israel as there are grains of sand on the seashore. They had plenty to eat and drink, and they were happy. ²¹Solomon's kingdom extended from the Euphrates River in the northeast to the region of Philistia in the west and to the border of Egypt in the south. The conquered people in those areas paid taxes and were under Solomon's control all during his life.

²²The people whom Solomon ruled were required to bring to Solomon every day thirty donkey-loads of fine flour and sixty donkey-loads of wheat, ²³ten head of cattle that had been raised in stalls, twenty head of cattle raised in pastures, one hundred sheep, grain-fed poultry—and wild game: deer, gazelle, and roebucks. ²⁴Solomon ruled over all the area west of the Euphrates River, from the city of Tiphseh in the northeast to the city of Gaza in the southwest. He ruled over all the kings in that area. There was peace between his government and the governments of nearby countries. ²⁵All during the years that Solomon ruled, the people of Judah and Israel lived safely.

²⁶Solomon had forty thousand stalls for the horses that pulled his chariots and twelve thousand men who rode on horses.

²⁷His twelve district governors supplied the food that King Solomon needed for himself and for all those who ate in the palace. Each governor supplied food for one month each year. They provided everything that Solomon required. ²⁸They also brought stalks of barley and wheat for the fast horses that pulled the chariots and for the other work horses. They brought this fodder to the places where the horses were kept.

²⁹God enabled Solomon to be extremely wise and to have great understanding. He enjoyed learning about a huge number of things. ³⁰He was wiser than all the wise men in the regions east of Israel, and all the wise men in Egypt.

³¹Ethan from Ezrah and Heman and Kalkol and Darda and the sons of Mahol were considered to be very wise, but Solomon was wiser than all of them. People in all the nearby countries heard about Solomon. ³²He composed more than one thousand songs. ³³He talked about various kinds of plants, from the huge cedar trees in Lebanon to the tiny hyssop plants that grow in cracks in walls. He also talked about wild animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. ³⁴People

came from all over the world to hear the wise things that Solomon said. Many kings sent men to listen to him and then return and tell them what Solomon said.

Chapter 5

¹Hiram, the king of the city of Tyre, had always been a close friend of King David. When he heard that Solomon had been appointed to become the king after his father was no longer king, he sent messengers to Solomon. ²Solomon gave those messengers this message to take back to Hiram:

³"You know that my father David led his soldiers to fight many wars against his enemies in the nearby countries. So he could not try to build a temple in which we could worship Yahweh our God, until after Yahweh enabled the Israelite army to defeat all his enemies. ⁴But now Yahweh our God has enabled us to have peace with all the surrounding countries. There is no danger that we will be attacked. ⁵Yahweh promised my father David, 'Your son, whom I will enable to be king after you are no longer king, will build a temple for me, Yahweh your God.'

⁶So I am requesting that you command your workers to cut cedar trees for me. My men will work with them, and I will pay your workers whatever you decide. But my men cannot do the work alone, because they do not know how to cut down trees like your workers from the city of Sidon do."

⁷When Hiram heard the message from Solomon, he was very happy and said, "I praise Yahweh today for giving David a very wise son to rule that great nation!"

⁸He sent this message back to Solomon, "I have heard the message that you sent to me, and I am ready to do what you ask. I will provide cedar and cypress logs. ⁹My workers will bring the logs down from the Lebanon mountains to the Mediterranean Sea. Then they will tie them together to make rafts to float them in the water along the coast to the place that you indicate. Then my workers will untie the logs, and your workers will take them from there. What I want you to do is to supply food for my men."

¹⁰So Hiram arranged for his workers to supply all the cedar and cypress logs that Solomon wanted. ¹¹Each year Solomon gave Hiram 3,520 cubic meters of wheat and 416,350 liters of pure olive oil to feed his workers. ¹²Yahweh enabled Solomon to be wise, just like he had promised. Solomon and Hiram made a treaty.

¹³King Solomon forced thirty thousand men from all over Israel to become his workers. ¹⁴Adoniram was their boss. Solomon divided the men into three groups. Each month ten thousand of them went to Lebanon and worked for a month there, and then they came back home for two months. ¹⁵Solomon also forced eighty thousand men to cut stones in the hill country and seventy thousand men to haul the stones to Jerusalem. ¹⁶He also assigned 3,300 men to supervise their work. ¹⁷The king also commanded his workers to cut huge blocks of stones from the quarries and to smooth the sides of the stones. These huge stones were for the foundation of the temple. ¹⁸Solomon's workers and Hiram's workers and men from the city of Gebal shaped the stones and prepared the timber to build the temple.

Chapter 6

¹480 years after the Israelite people left Egypt, during the fourth year that Solomon ruled Israel, in the second month, that of Ziv, Solomon's workers began to build the temple.

²Inside, the main part of the temple was twenty-seven meters long, nine meters wide, and thirteen and one-half meters high. ³The front portico was four and one-half meters deep and nine meters wide, just as wide as the main part of the temple. ⁴There were openings like windows in the temple walls. The openings were narrower on the outside than on the inside. ⁵Against the two sides and the back of the temple walls, they built a structure that had rooms in it. This structure had three levels; each level was two and one-third meters high. ⁶Each room in the lowest level was two and one-third meters wide. Each room in the middle level was two and four-fifths meters wide. The

rooms in the top level were three and one-tenth meters wide. The wall of the temple at the top level was thinner than the wall at the middle level, and the wall of the middle level was thinner than the wall at the bottom level. In this way, the rooms could rest on the wall underneath them; the rooms did not need wooden beams underneath to support them.

⁷The huge stones for the foundation of the temple were cut and shaped at the quarry to become very smooth. The result was that while the workers were building the temple there was no noise, because they did not use hammers or chisels or any other iron tools there.

⁸The entrance to the bottom level of this attached structure was on the south side of the temple. There were stairs from the bottom level to the middle and top levels. ⁹So Solomon's workers finished building the framework of the temple. They made the ceiling from cedar beams and boards. ¹⁰They built the rooms alongside the main chambers with three levels, each two and one-third meters high, and joined them to the temple with cedar beams.

¹¹Then Yahweh said this to Solomon, ¹²"I want to tell you about this temple that you are building. If you continually obey all my statutes and decrees and commands, I will do for you what I promised to your father David. ¹³I will live among the Israelite people, in this temple, and I will never abandon them."

¹⁴Solomon's workers worked to finish building the temple. ¹⁵On the inside, they lined the rooms from the floor to the ceiling. They made the floor from cypress boards. ¹⁶Inside the back part of the temple they built an inner room, called the very holy place. It was nine meters long. All the walls of this room were lined with cedar boards. ¹⁷In front of the very holy place was a room that was eighteen meters long. ¹⁸The cedar boards on the walls inside the temple were decorated with carvings of gourds and flowers. The walls were completely covered with cedar boards, with the result that the stones of the walls behind them could not be seen.

¹⁹At the back of the temple they made the very holy place, in order to put the sacred chest there. ²⁰That room was nine meters long, nine meters wide, and nine meters high. They covered the walls with very thin sheets of pure gold. For burning incense they also made an altar of cedar boards. ²¹Solomon told them to cover the other walls inside the temple with very thin sheets of pure gold and to fasten gold chains across the entrance to the very holy place. ²²They covered all the walls of the temple and the altar that was outside the very holy place with very thin sheets of gold.

²³Inside the very holy place they made from olive tree wood large statues of two creatures with wings. Each one was four and one-half meters tall. ²⁴⁻²⁶They each were the same size and had the same shape. They each had two wings which were spread out. Each wing was two and one-third meters long, with the result that the distance between the outer ends of the two wings was four and one-half meters across. The height of each cherub was four and one-half meters. ²⁵⁻²⁷They put these statues next to each other in the very holy place so that the wing of the one touched the one wing of the other in the center of the room, and the outer wings touched the walls. ²⁸They covered the statues with very thin sheets of gold.

²⁹Solomon told them to decorate the walls of the main room and the very holy place by carving representations of winged creatures and palm trees and flowers. ³⁰They also covered the floor of both rooms with very thin sheets of gold.

³¹They made a set of doors from olive tree wood, and placed them at the entrance to the very holy place. The lintel and doorposts had five indented sections. ³²The doors were decorated by carving on them representations of winged creatures, palm trees, and flowers. All of these things were covered with very thin sheets of gold. ³³They made a rectangular doorframe from olive tree wood, with four indented sections, and put it between the entrance room and the main room. ³⁴They made two folding doors from cypress wood and fastened them to the doorframe. ³⁵The doors were also decorated with wood carvings of winged creatures, palm trees, and flowers, and they were also covered evenly with very thin sheets of gold.

³⁶They built a courtyard in front of the temple. The walls around the courtyard were made of cedar and stone. To make the walls, between each layer of cedar beams they put down two layers of stone.

³⁷They laid the foundation of the temple of Yahweh in the month of Ziv, in the fourth year that Solomon ruled. ³⁸In the eleventh year that he ruled, in the month of Bul, they finished building the temple and all of its parts, doing exactly what Solomon's told them to do. It required seven years to build it.

Chapter 7

¹They also built a palace for Solomon, but it required thirteen years to build it. ²One of the buildings they built was a large ceremonial hall. It was called the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon. It was forty-six meters long, twenty-three meters wide, and fourteen meters high. It was supported by four rows of cedar pillars. There were cedar beams across each row. ³The carpenters build a roof from cedar planks that were attached to beams. The carpenters made pillars to support the cedar beams. There were a total of forty-five pillars put in place, making fifteen pillars in each row to support the roof. ⁴On each of the two side walls there were three sets of windows facing each other. ⁵All the windows and doorways had rectangular frames. The windows along the long wall on one side faced the windows on the other side.

⁶They also built a long room with pillars; it was twenty-three meters long and fourteen meters wide. In front of it was a covered porch whose roof was supported by pillars.

⁷Then they made a building called the Hall of the Throne. It was also called the Hall of Justice. That was where Solomon decided about people's disputes. The entire floor was covered with cedar wood.

⁸In the courtyard behind the Hall of Judgment they built a house for Solomon to live in that was made like the other buildings. They also built the same kind of house for his wife, who was the daughter of the king of Egypt.

⁹All of these buildings and the walls around the palace courtyard were made from stones, from the foundations up to the eaves. The stones had been expensive for the workers to cut at the quarry, according to the sizes that were needed, and the sides of the stones were shaped and smoothed by cutting them with saws. ¹⁰The foundations were also made from huge blocks of expensive stones that had been prepared at the quarry. Some of them were about three and three-quarters meters long and others were about four and four-fifths meters long. ¹¹On top of the foundation stones were other expensive stones that had been cut according to the sizes they needed, as well as cedar beams. ¹²The palace courtyard, the inner courtyard in front of the temple, and the portico in front of the temple had walls made by putting down three layers of cut stones between each layer of cedar beams.

¹³⁻¹⁴There was a man who lived in the city of Tyre whose name was Hiram. He was a craftsman. His father had also lived in Tyre and had also been very skilled at making things from bronze, but Hiram's father was no longer living. His mother was from the tribe of Naphtali. Hiram was very wise and intelligent and was very skilled at making things from bronze. Solomon invited him to come to Jerusalem and supervise all the work of making things from bronze, and Hiram agreed.

¹⁴⁻¹⁵He made two bronze pillars. Each one was eight and one-third meters tall and eight and one-half around. ¹⁶He also made two gleaming bronze tops to be put on top of the pillars. Each top was two and one-third meters tall.

¹⁷Then he made bronze networks of chains like wreaths to decorate the top of each pillar. There were seven of these networks at the top of each pillar. ¹⁸Hiram also made bronze figures that resembled pomegranates. He put two rows of pomegranates over the top of each pillar. ¹⁹The top over each pillar was shaped like a lily. Each lily leaf was one and four-fifths meters tall. ²⁰These tops were placed on a bowl shaped section around which were two rows of two hundred figures of pomegranates around the top of each pillar. ²¹His helpers set up the pillars in front of the entrance of the temple. The pillar on the south side was named Jakin, and the pillar on the north side was named Boaz. ²²The bronze tops that were shaped like lilies were placed on top of the pillars.

So Hiram and his helpers completed the work of making the bronze pillars.

²³Hiram also made a very large round bronze basin called "The Sea" that was made of metal and cast in a clay mold. It was two and one-third meters tall, four and three-fifths meters across, and thirteen and three-quarters

meters around. ²⁴Around the outer edge of the rim of the "The Sea" were two rows of figures that resembled gourds that were made of bronze. But the gourds were not cast separately. They were cast in the same mold as the rest of the tank. For each meter of length around the rim of the tank there were about eighteen gourds.

²⁵Huram also cast twelve bronze statues of oxen. He placed them to face outward. He placed three of them to face north, three to face west, three to face south, and three to face east. His helpers put the large bronze tank known as "The Sea" so that it sat on the backs of the statues of the oxen. ²⁶The sides of the tank were eight centimeters thick. The rim was like the rim of a cup. It curved outward, like the petals of a lily. When the tank was full, it held about forty-four cubic meters of water.

²⁷Huram also made ten bronze carts. Each was one and four-fifths meters long, one and four-fifths meters wide, and one and one-third meters tall. ²⁸On the sides of the carts there were panels set in frames. ²⁹On those panels were bronze figures of lions, oxen, and winged creatures. Below and above the lions and bulls there were decorations of bronze wreaths. ³⁰Each cart had four bronze wheels and two axles made of bronze. At the top corners of each cart were bronze supports to hold up a basin. On these supports were also decorations of bronze wreaths. ³¹On top of each cart, under each basin, was a frame that resembled a circular collar. The top of each circular frame was forty-six centimeters above the top of the cart, and the bottom of it was twenty-three centimeters below the top of the cart. There were also engravings within square panels. ³²The wheels were sixty-nine centimeters high. They were below the panels. The wheels were connected to axles that had been cast in the same mold as the rest of the cart. ³³The wheels of the carts were like the wheels of chariots. The axles, the rims, the spokes, and the hubs were all cast from bronze.

³⁴At the top corners of each cart there were handles. These were molded into the cart itself. ³⁵There was a bronze band of twenty-three centimeters around the top of each cart. There were braces attached to the corners of each cart. The bands and the braces were cast in the same mold as the rest of the cart. ³⁶The braces and the panels on the sides of the carts were also decorated with figures of winged creatures, lions, and palm trees, whenever there was space for them, and there were bronze wreaths all around them. ³⁷That is how Hiram made the ten carts. They were all cast in the same mold, so they were all alike. They all were the same size and had the same shape.

³⁸Huram also made ten bronze basins, one basin for each of the ten stands. Each basin was one and four-fifths meters across and held 880 liters of water. ³⁹Huram placed five of the carts on the right side of the temple and five on the left side of the temple. He put the large tank known as "The Sea" on the corner that was toward the east and in the direction of the south. ⁴⁰Huram also made pots, shovels for carrying ashes, and bowls for carrying the blood of the animals that would be sacrificed. He completed all the work that King Solomon requested him to do for the temple. This is a list of the bronze things he made:

⁴¹the two pillars,

the two tops to be put on top of the pillars,

the two wreaths of chains to decorate the tops of the pillars,

⁴²the four hundred figures of pomegranates in four rows, with one hundred in each row; two of these rows were placed over the head of each pillar,

⁴³the ten carts,

the ten basins,

⁴⁴the big tank known as "The Sea,"

the twelve statues of oxen on whose backs the tank was placed,

⁴⁵the pots, shovels for the ashes of the altar, and bowls.

Huram and his workers made all these things for King Solomon and put them outside the temple. They were all made of bronze that the workmen polished for it to gleam brightly.

⁴⁶They made them by pouring melted bronze into the clay molds that Huram had set up near the Jordan River valley, between the cities of Succoth and Zarethan.

⁴⁷Solomon did not tell his workers to weigh those bronze objects, because there were many items. So no one ever knew what they weighed.

⁴⁸Solomon's workers also made all the gold items for the temple of Yahweh:

the altar,

the table where the bread of the presence was kept before God,

⁴⁹the ten lampstands that were put in front of the very holy place, five on the south side and five on the north side,

the decorations that resembled flowers,

the lamps,

the tongs to grasp the hot coals,

⁵⁰the cups, the gold lamp wick snuffers, the small lamp bowls, the dishes for incense, the pans for carrying the hot coals, and the sockets for the doors at the entrance to the very holy place and for the doors at the entrance to the main room of the temple.

Those things were all made of gold.

⁵¹So Solomon's workers finished all the work for the temple. Then they placed in the temple storerooms all the things that his father David had dedicated to Yahweh—all the silver and gold, and the other valuable items.

Chapter 8

¹Solomon then summoned to Jerusalem all the elders of Israel, all the leaders of the tribes and the leaders of the clans. He arranged for them to join in bringing to the temple Yahweh's sacred chest from Mount Zion, where it was in the part of the city called the city of David. ²So all the Israelite leaders came to King Solomon during the Festival of Shelters, in the month of Ethanim.

³When they had all arrived, the priests lifted up the sacred chest ⁴and brought it to the temple. Then the descendants of Levi who assisted the priests helped them to carry to the temple the sacred tent and all the sacred things that had been in the tent. ⁵Then King Solomon and many of the Israelite people gathered in front of Yahweh's sacred chest. And they sacrificed a huge amount of sheep and oxen. No one was able to count the sacrifices because there were very many.

⁶Then the priests brought the sacred chest into the very holy place in the temple, and they placed it under the wings of the statues of the winged creatures. ⁷The wings of those statues spread out over the sacred chest and over the poles by which it was carried. ⁸The poles were very long, with the result that the ends of the poles could be seen by people who were standing at the entrance to the very holy place, but they could not be seen by people standing outside the temple. Those poles are still there. ⁹The only things that were in the sacred chest were the two stone tablets that Moses had put there at Mount Sinai, where Yahweh made a covenant with the people after they left Egypt.

¹⁰The priests put the sacred chest in the temple. When they came out of the holy place, suddenly it was filled with a cloud. ¹¹The glory of Yahweh filled the temple, with the result that the priests were not able to continue their work.

¹²Then Solomon prayed this:

"Yahweh, you have placed the sun in the sky,
but you have decided that you would live in very dark clouds.

¹³I have built for you a splendid temple,
a place for you to live in forever."

¹⁴Then, while all the people stood there, the king turned around and faced them, and he asked God to bless them.

¹⁵He said, "Praise Yahweh, the God to whom we Israelites belong! By his own power he has done what he promised to my father David. What he promised was this:

¹⁶From the time that I brought my people out of Egypt, I have never chosen any city in Israel in which a temple should be built for my people to worship me there. But I chose you, David, to rule my people."

¹⁷Then Solomon said, "My father David wanted to build a temple in order that we Israelite people could worship Yahweh our God there. ¹⁸But Yahweh said to him, 'You have wanted to build a temple for me, and what you wanted to do was good. ¹⁹However, you are not the one who I want to build it. It is one of your sons who I want to build a temple for me.'

²⁰And now Yahweh has done what he promised to do. I have become the king of Israel to succeed my father, and I am ruling my people, as Yahweh promised. I have arranged for this temple to be built for us Israelites to worship Yahweh, the God to whom we Israelites belong. ²¹I have also provided a place in the temple for the sacred chest in which are the two stone tablets of the covenant that Yahweh made with our ancestors when he brought them out of Egypt."

²²Then Solomon stood in front of the altar which was in front of the Israelite people who had gathered there. He spread out his arms toward heaven, ²³and he prayed,

"Yahweh, the God whom we Israelite people worship, there is no god like you up in heaven or down here on the earth. You solemnly promised that you would faithfully love us. And that is what you have done for us who earnestly do what you want us to do.

²⁴You have done the things that you promised my father David, who served you very well, that you would do. Truly, you promised to do these things for him, and today we see that by your power you have done them.

²⁵So now, Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship, I am requesting that you do the other things that you promised my father that you would do. You told him that there would always be some of his descendants who would be kings in Israel, if they would conduct their lives as he did. ²⁶So now, God of us Israelite people, cause what you promised to do for my father David, who served you well, to happen.

²⁷But God, will you really live on the earth among people? There is not enough space in heaven for you to have enough space to live there. So this temple that I have commanded my workers to build is certainly too small for you to live in. ²⁸But Yahweh, my God, please listen to me while I am praying to you this day. ²⁹I pray that you would protect this temple night and day. This is the place about which you have said, 'I will always be there.' I request that you listen to me whenever I turn my face toward this temple and pray. ³⁰I request that when I pray to you and your people pray to you while they turn their faces toward this place, that in your home in heaven you will hear us and forgive us for the sins that we have committed.

³¹Suppose that people accuse someone of doing something wrong to another person, and they bring him to your altar outside this holy temple. And suppose that he says, 'I did not do that; may God punish me if I am not telling the truth.' ³²In that case, listen from heaven and decide who is telling the truth. Then punish the person who is guilty as he deserves to be punished, and declare that the other person is innocent.

³³Or suppose that your Israelite people are defeated by their enemies in a battle because they have sinned against you. Suppose also that they are forced to go to some distant country. Then suppose that they stop acting in a sinful way. Suppose that they face in the direction of this temple and acknowledge you have justly punished them. And suppose that they plead that you will forgive them. ³⁴In that case, listen to them from heaven, forgive your Israelite people for the sins that they have committed, and bring them back to this land that you gave to our ancestors.

³⁵Or suppose that you do not allow any rain to fall because your people have sinned against you. Suppose that they face in the direction of this place and admit that you have justly punished them. Suppose also that they stop acting sinfully and humbly pray to you. ³⁶In that case, listen to them in heaven and forgive your Israelite people for the sins that they have committed. Teach them the right way to conduct their lives, and then send rain on this land that you have given to your people to belong to them permanently.

³⁷Suppose that the people of this land experience famine, or suppose that there is a plague by mildew or by locusts or grasshoppers. Or suppose that their enemies surround any of their cities in order to attack them. Suppose that any of those bad things happen to them. ³⁸And suppose that your Israelite people earnestly plead with you, because they know in their inner beings that they are suffering because they have sinned. Suppose that they stretch out their arms toward this temple and pray. ³⁹In that case, listen to them from your home in heaven, and forgive them, and help them. You are the only one who knows what people are thinking, so act toward each person as he needs, ⁴⁰in order that your people may then have an awesome respect for you all the years that they live in this land that you gave to our ancestors.

⁴¹⁻⁴²There will be some foreigners who do not belong to your Israelite people who will have come here from countries far away because they have heard that you are very great, and because they have heard about the great things that you have done for your people. Suppose that people like that come here to this temple to worship you and pray. ⁴²⁻⁴³In that case, in your home in heaven listen to their prayer, and do for them what they request you to do. Do that in order that all the people groups in the world will know about you and revere you, as we your Israelite people do. Then they will know that this temple that I have caused to be built to honor you belongs to you and is where you should be worshiped.

⁴⁴Suppose that you send your people to go to fight against their enemies. And suppose that your people pray to you, wherever they are, and that they turn toward this city that you have chosen and toward this temple that I have caused to be built for you. ⁴⁵In that case, listen in heaven to their prayers. Listen to what they plead for you to do, and assist them.

⁴⁶It is true that everyone sins. So, suppose that your people sin against you and that you become angry with them. You might allow their enemies to defeat them, capture them, and take them away to their own countries, even to countries that are far away. ⁴⁷And suppose that, while your people are in those countries to which they had to go, they sincerely repent and plead with you there saying, 'We have sinned and have done things that are very wicked.'
⁴⁸Suppose that they very truly and sincerely repent while in the land of their enemies who captured them. And they turn toward this land that you gave to our ancestors. Suppose that they turn toward this city that you have chosen to be the place where we should worship you, and toward this temple that I have caused to be built for you. Suppose that they then pray to you. ⁴⁹In that case, from your home in heaven listen to them while they plead for your help, and help them. ⁵⁰Forgive them for all the sins that they have committed against you and cause their enemies to act kindly toward them. ⁵¹Do not forget that the Israelites are your people. They are your special possession. You brought our ancestors out of Egypt where they were greatly suffering as though they were in a blazing furnace.

⁵²I request that you always listen to your Israelite people and to their king, and heed their prayers whenever they call out to you to help them. ⁵³You chose them from all the other people groups in the world to belong to you, which is what you told Moses to tell them when you brought our ancestors out of Egypt."

⁵⁴After Solomon had finished praying this and pleading to Yahweh for his help, he stood up in front of the altar where he had been kneeling. He lifted up his arms. ⁵⁵Then he asked God to bless all the Israelite people. He prayed loudly, saying,

⁵⁶"Praise Yahweh, who has given us his people peace, like he promised that he would do. He has done every one of the good things that he promised to Moses, the man who served him very well. ⁵⁷I pray that our God will be with us like he was with our ancestors, and that he will never, never abandon us. ⁵⁸I pray that he will cause us to loyally serve him, to conduct our lives as he wants us to, and to obey all his commandments and statutes and decrees that he gave to our ancestors. ⁵⁹I pray that Yahweh our God will never forget these words that I have prayed, pleading for his help. I pray that he will think about them by day and by night. I pray that he will always act mercifully toward us Israelite people and toward our king, giving us the things that we need day by day. ⁶⁰If you do that, all the people groups in the world will know that you, Yahweh, are the only one who is God, and that there is no other one who is God. ⁶¹I pray that you, his people, will always be fully committed to Yahweh, and that you will obey all his statutes and commands, like you are doing now."

⁶²Then the king and all the Israelite people who were there offered sacrifices to Yahweh. ⁶³They sacrificed twenty-two thousand cattle and 120,000 sheep to restore fellowship with Yahweh. Then the king and all the people dedicated the temple.

⁶⁴On that day, the king also dedicated the middle part of the courtyard that was in front of the temple. Then he offered there sacrifices that would be completely burned on the altar, the offerings of flour and the fat of the animals that were sacrificed to restore fellowship with Yahweh. They sacrificed them there because the bronze altar was not big enough for all those sacrifices to be burned on it that day.

⁶⁵Then Solomon and all the Israelite people celebrated the Festival of Shelters for seven days and then for another seven days, before the Lord, for a total of fourteen days. There was a huge crowd of people there, some of whom had come from distant places like Hamath in the far north and the border of Egypt in the far south. ⁶⁶On the final day, Solomon sent the people to their homes. They all praised him and went home happy because of all the things that Yahweh had done to bless David and his Israelite people.

Chapter 9

¹After Solomon's workers had finished building the temple and his palace and everything else that Solomon wanted them to build, ²Yahweh appeared to him in a dream a second time, like he had appeared to him at the city of Gibeon. ³Yahweh said to him,

"I heard what you prayed and what you pleaded for me to do. I have set this house apart for myself, for me to be present in it forever.

⁴And as for you, if you conduct your life as I want you to, like your father David did, and if you very sincerely obey all the statutes and decrees that I have commanded you to obey, ⁵I will do what I promised your father that I would do. I promised him that Israel would always be ruled by his descendants.

⁶But suppose that you or your descendants stop worshiping me; suppose that you disobey the commands and decrees that I have given to you; suppose that you start to worship other gods. ⁷Then I will remove my Israelite people from the land that I have given to them. I will also abandon this temple that I have dedicated. Then people everywhere will despise Israel and make fun of it. ⁸Despite the fact that this temple is very beautiful, there will come a time when everyone who passes by will be astonished when they see it, and they will hiss and say, 'Why has Yahweh done this to this land and to this temple?' ⁹Other people will reply, 'It happened because the Israelite people abandoned Yahweh their God, the one who brought their ancestors out of Egypt. They started to accept and worship other gods. And that is why Yahweh has caused them to experience all these disasters.'"

¹⁰Solomon's workers worked for twenty years to build the temple and the palace. ¹¹Hiram, the king of the city of Tyre, had arranged for his workers to give Solomon all the cedar and pine logs and all the gold that he needed for this work. After it was all finished, King Solomon gave to Hiram twenty cities in the region of Galilee. ¹²But when Hiram went from Tyre to Galilee to see the cities that Solomon had given to him, he was not pleased with them.

¹³He said to Solomon, "My friend, those cities that you gave me are worthless." Because of that, Hiram called that region Worthless. ¹⁴Hiram gave Solomon only 4,000 kilograms of gold for those cities.

¹⁵This is a record of the work that King Solomon forced men to do. He forced them to build the temple and his palace and the landfill on the east side of the city, and the wall around Jerusalem, and to rebuild the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, and Gezer. ¹⁶The reason they needed to rebuild Gezer was that the army of the king of Egypt had attacked Gezer and captured it. Then they had burned the houses in the city and killed all the people of the Canaan people group who lived there. The king of Egypt gave that city to his daughter for a gift when she married Solomon. ¹⁷So Solomon's workers also rebuilt the city of Gezer, and they also rebuilt the city of Lower Beth Horon. ¹⁸They also rebuilt the cities of Baalath and Tamar in the wilderness in the southern part of Judah. ¹⁹They also built the cities where they kept the supplies for Solomon, the places where his horses and chariots were kept. They also built everything else that he wanted them to build, in Jerusalem and in Lebanon, and in other places in the area over which he ruled.

²⁰There were many people groups who belonged to the Amor, the Heth, the Periz, the Hiv, and the Jebus, who were not killed when the Israelites captured their land. ²¹Their descendants still lived in Israel. It was those people whom Solomon forced to become his slaves to build all those places, and they are still slaves. ²²But Solomon did not force any Israelite people to become slaves. Some of them became soldiers, servants, officials, army officers, commanders of his chariot forces, and men who rode on his horses. ²³There were 550 officials who supervised the slaves who worked to build all those places.

²⁴After Solomon's wife, who was the daughter of the king of Egypt, moved from the part of Jerusalem called the city of David to the palace that Solomon's workers built for her, Solomon told his workers to fill in the land on the east side of the city.

²⁵Three times each year Solomon brought to the temple offerings that the priests burned completely on the altar and offerings to promise friendship with Yahweh. He also brought incense to be burned in the presence of Yahweh.

And that is how his men finished building the temple.

²⁶King Solomon's workers also built a fleet of ships at the city of Ezion Geber, which is near the city of Elath, on the shore of the Sea of Reeds, in the land belonging to the Edom people group. ²⁷King Hiram sent some expert sailors to go on the ships with Solomon's workers. ²⁸They sailed to the region of Ophir and brought back to Solomon about fourteen metric tons of gold.

Chapter 10

¹The queen who ruled the land of Sheba heard that Yahweh had caused Solomon to become famous, so she traveled to Jerusalem to ask him questions that were difficult to answer. ²She came with a large group of wealthy people, and she brought camels that were loaded with spices, precious gems, and much gold. When she met Solomon, she asked him questions about all the things in which she was interested. ³Solomon answered all her questions. He explained everything that she asked about, even things that were very difficult. ⁴The queen realized that Solomon was very wise. She saw his palace, ⁵she saw the food that was served on his table every day, she saw where his officials lived, their uniforms, the servants who served the food and wine, and the sacrifices that he took to the temple to be offered. She was extremely amazed.

⁶She said to the king, "Everything that I heard in my own country about you and about how wise you are is true! ⁷But I did not believe it was true until I came here and saw it myself. But really, what they told me is only half of what they could have told me about you. You are extremely wise and rich, more than what people told me. ⁸How fortunate are your wives! And how fortunate are your servants, who are waiting to serve you, who are listening to the wise things that you say! ⁹Praise Yahweh, your God, who has shown that he is pleased with you by causing you

to become the king of Israel! God has always loved the Israelite people, and therefore he has appointed you to be their king, in order that you will rule them fairly and righteously."

¹⁰Then the queen gave to the king the things that she had brought. She gave him over 4,000 kilograms of gold and a large amount of spices and gems. Never again did King Solomon receive more spices than the queen gave him at that time.

¹¹In the ships that belong to King Hiram, in which they had previously brought gold from Ophir, they also brought a large amount of almuq wood and precious gem stones. ¹²King Solomon told his workers to use that wood to make pillars in the temple and in his palace, and also to make harps and lyres for the musicians. That wood was the largest amount of fine wood that had ever been brought to or seen in Israel.

¹³King Solomon gave to the queen from Sheba everything that she wanted. He gave her those gifts in addition to the gifts that he always gave to other rulers who visited him. Then she and the people who came with her returned to her own land.

¹⁴Each year there was brought to Solomon a total of twenty-two metric tons of gold. ¹⁵That was in addition to the taxes paid to him by the merchants and traders, and the annual taxes paid by the kings of Arabia and by the governors of the districts in Israel.

¹⁶King Solomon's workers took this gold and hammered it into thin sheets and covered two hundred large shields with those thin sheets of gold. They put six and one-half kilograms of gold on each shield. ¹⁷His workers made three hundred smaller shields. They covered each of them with one and three-quarters kilograms of gold. Then the king put those shields in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon.

¹⁸His workers also made for him a large throne. Part of it was covered with ivory, and part of it was covered with very fine gold. ¹⁹¹⁹⁻²⁰There were six steps in front of the throne. There was a statue of a lion on both sides of each step. So altogether there were twelve statues of lions. The back of the throne was rounded at the top. At each side of the throne there was an armrest and alongside each armrest there was a small statue of a lion. No throne like that had ever existed in any other kingdom. ²⁰²¹All of Solomon's cups were made of gold, and all the various dishes in the Palace of the Forest of Lebanon were made of gold. They did not make things from silver, because during the years that Solomon ruled silver was not considered to be valuable. ²²The king had a fleet of ships that sailed with the ships that King Hiram owned. Every three years the ships returned from the places to which they had sailed bringing gold, silver, ivory, monkeys, and baboons.

²³King Solomon became richer and wiser than any other king. ²⁴People from all over the world wanted to come and listen to the wise things that Solomon said, things that God had put into his mind. ²⁵All the people who came to him brought presents. They brought things made from silver or gold, or robes, or weapons, or spices, or horses, or mules. The people continued to do this every year.

²⁶Solomon acquired 1,400 chariots and twelve thousand men who rode on the horses. Solomon put some of them in Jerusalem and some of them in other cities where he kept his chariots. ²⁷During the years that Solomon was king, silver became as common in Jerusalem as stones, and lumber from cedar trees in the foothills of Judah were as plentiful as lumber from fig trees. ²⁸Solomon's agents bought horses and supervised the bringing of them into Israel from the areas of Egypt and Kue that were famous for breeding horses. ²⁹In Egypt they bought chariots and horses. They paid six and one-half kilograms of silver for each chariot and one and three-fifths kilograms of silver for each horse. They brought them to Israel. Then they sold many of them to the kings of the Hittite people group and the kings of Aram.

Chapter 11

¹King Solomon married many foreign women. First he married the daughter of the king of Egypt. He also married women from the Heth people group and from the Moab, Ammon, and Edom people groups, and from the city of

Sidon. ²He married them even though Yahweh had commanded the Israelite people saying, "Do not marry people from those areas, because if you do that, they will surely persuade you to worship the gods that they worship!"

³Solomon married seven hundred women who were kings' daughters. He also had three hundred wives who were his slaves. And his wives caused him to stop worshiping God. ⁴By the time that Solomon became old, they had persuaded him to worship the gods from their countries. He was not completely dedicated to Yahweh his God like his father David had been. ⁵Solomon worshiped Asherah, the goddess that the people of Sidon worshiped, and he worshiped Molech, the disgusting god that the Ammon people group worshiped. ⁶Thus Solomon did many things that Yahweh said were evil. He did not conduct his life as his father David had done; he did not conduct his life as Yahweh wanted him to.

⁷On the hill to the east of Jerusalem he built a place to worship Chemosh, the disgusting god that the Moab people group worshiped, and a place to worship Molech, the disgusting god that the Ammon people group worshiped.

⁸He also built places where all his foreign wives could burn incense and offer sacrifices to the gods from their own countries.

⁹⁻¹⁰Even though Yahweh, the God whom the Israelites worshiped, had appeared to Solomon two times, and had commanded him to not worship foreign gods, Solomon refused to obey Yahweh. So Yahweh was angry with Solomon. ¹⁰¹¹Yahweh said to him, "You have chosen to disobey the covenant that I made with you and to disobey what I commanded you. So I am certainly not going to allow you to rule all of your kingdom. I am going to allow one of your officials to rule. ¹²But because of what I promised your father David, I will allow you to rule all your kingdom while you are still living. After you die, I will not allow your son to rule the whole kingdom. ¹³But I will not stop him from ruling some of the kingdom. I will allow him to rule one tribe, because of what I promised to David, who served me well, and because I want David's descendants to rule in Jerusalem, where my temple is located."

¹⁴Yahweh caused Hadad, from the family of the kings in the Edom people group, to rebel against Solomon.

¹⁵⁻¹⁶What happened was that previously, when David's army had conquered Edom, his army commander Joab had gone there to help bury the Israelite soldiers who had been killed in the battle. Joab and his army remained in Edom for six months, and during that time they killed all the males of that area. ¹⁶¹⁷Hadad was a young child at that time, and he had escaped to Egypt, along with some of his father's servants from Edom. ¹⁸They went to the region of Midian, and then they went to the desert area at Paran. Some other men joined them there. Then they all traveled to Egypt and went to the king of Egypt. The king gave Hadad some land and ordered his servants to give him some food regularly. ¹⁹The king liked Hadad. As a result he gave him the sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes, to be Hadad's wife.

²⁰Later Hadad's wife gave birth to a son named Genubath. The sister of Tahpenes raised him in the palace, where he lived with the king's sons.

²¹While Hadad was in Egypt, he heard that David had died, and that Joab, the commander of David's army, was also dead. So he said to the king of Egypt, "Please allow me to return to my own country."

²²But the king said to him, "Why do you want to go back to your country? Is there something that you lack that you want me to give to you?" Hadad replied, "No, but please just allow me to go." So the king allowed him to leave, and he returned to his own country and became the king of Edom.

²³God also caused another man named Rezon son of Eliada, to rebel against Solomon. Rezon had run away from his master, King Hadadezer of the area of Zobah, north of Damascus. ²⁴Rezon then became the leader of a group of outlaws. That happened after David's army had defeated Hadadezer and had also killed all his soldiers. Rezon and his men went to Damascus and started to live there, and the people there appointed him to be their king. ²⁵All during the time that Solomon was alive, while Rezon was ruling not only Damascus but all of Aram, he was an enemy of Israel and caused trouble for Israel like Hadad did.

²⁶Another man who rebelled against Solomon was one of his officials named Jeroboam son of Nebat. He was from the city of Zeredah in the region where the tribe of Ephraim lives. His mother was a widow named Zeruah.

²⁷This is what happened. Solomon's workers were filling in the land on the east side of Jerusalem and repairing the walls around the city. ²⁸Jeroboam was a very capable young man. So, when Solomon saw that he worked very hard, he appointed him to supervise all the men who were forced to work in the areas where the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim live.

²⁹One day when Jeroboam was walking alone along the road outside of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah from the city of Shiloh met him. Ahijah was wearing a new robe, ³⁰which he took off and tore into twelve pieces. ³¹He said to Jeroboam, "Take ten of these pieces for yourself, because Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship, says to you, 'I am going to tear the kingdom from Solomon, and I am going to enable you to become the ruler of ten of the tribes of Israel. ³²Solomon's descendants will still rule one tribe, because of what I promised David, a man who served me very well, and because of Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen from all the cities in Israel to be the city where my people will worship me. ³³I am going to do this because Solomon has rejected me and has been worshipping Asherah, the goddess that the people of Sidon worship, Chemosh, the god that the Moab people group worships, and Molech, the god that the Ammon people group worships. He has not conducted his life as I wanted him to. He has not obeyed my statutes and decrees, as his father David did.

³⁴But I will not take the entire kingdom away from him. I will enable him to rule Judah all during the years that he is alive. I will do that because of what I promised to do for David, whom I chose to be the king, and who served me well, and who always obeyed my commandments and laws. ³⁵But I will take the other ten tribes of his kingdom and give them to you to rule. ³⁶I will allow Solomon's son to rule one tribe, in order that descendants of David will always rule in Jerusalem, the city that I have chosen to be the place where my people worship me. ³⁷I will enable you to become the king of Israel, and you will rule over all the territory that you want to. ³⁸If you obey all that I command you to do, and conduct your life as I want you to, and if you do what I say is right by obeying my laws and commandments like David did, I will help you. I will make sure that your descendants will rule after you die, like I promised to do for David. ³⁹Because of Solomon's sins, I will punish David's descendants, but I will not continue to punish them forever."

⁴⁰Solomon found out what Ahijah told Jeroboam, so he tried to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam escaped and went to Egypt. He went to Shishak, the king of Egypt, and stayed with him until after Solomon died.

⁴¹A record of all the other things that Solomon did, and all the wise things that he said, was written in the book of the events of Solomon. ⁴²He was king in Jerusalem and ruled over all of Israel for forty years. ⁴³Then Solomon died and was buried in the part of Jerusalem called the city of David. Then his son Rehoboam became the king.

Chapter 12

¹All the people of northern Israel went to the city of Shechem in order to appoint Rehoboam to be their king. So Rehoboam also went there. ²When Jeroboam, who was still in Egypt, heard about that, he returned from Egypt to Israel. ³The leaders of the northern tribes summoned him, and they went together to talk to Rehoboam. They said to him, ⁴"Your father Solomon forced us to work very hard, and if you allow us to work less, we will serve you faithfully."

⁵He replied, "Go away, and come back three days from now and I will give you my answer." So those leaders and Jeroboam left.

⁶Then King Rehoboam consulted his older men who had advised his father Solomon while he was still living. He asked them, "What should I say to answer these men?"

⁷They replied, "If you want to serve these people well, speak kindly to them when you reply to them. If you do that, they will always serve you faithfully."

⁸But he ignored what the older men advised him to do. Instead, he consulted the younger men who had grown up with him, who were now his advisors. ⁹He said to them, "What do you say that I should answer the men who are asking me to reduce the work that my father required from them?"

¹⁰They replied, "This is what you should tell them: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist. ¹¹What I mean is that my father required you to work hard. But I will make those loads heavier. It was as though my father whipped you, but I will whip you with scorpions.'"

¹²So three days later, Jeroboam and all the leaders came to Rehoboam again, which is what he had told them to do.

¹³The king ignored the advice of the older men and spoke harshly to the Israelite leaders. ¹⁴He told them what the younger men had advised. He said, "My father put heavy burdens of work on you, but I will put heavier burdens on you. It was as though he beat you with whips, but I will beat you with scorpions!" ¹⁵So the king did not pay any attention to the Israelite leaders. Now all this happened in order that what Yahweh wanted would occur, what he had told the prophet Ahijah about Jeroboam becoming king of the ten tribes.

¹⁶When the Israelite leaders realized that the king did not pay any attention to what they said, they shouted,

"We do not want anything to do with this descendant of King David!

We will not pay attention to what this grandson of Jesse says!

You people of Israel, let us go home!

As for this descendant of David, he can rule his own tribe!"

So the Israelite leaders returned to their homes. ¹⁷And after that, the only Israelite people whom Rehoboam ruled over were those who lived in the territory of the tribe of Judah.

¹⁸Then King Rehoboam went with Adoniram to talk to the Israelite people. Adoniram was the man who supervised all the men who were forced to work for Rehoboam. But the Israelite people killed him by throwing stones at him. When that happened, King Rehoboam quickly got in his chariot and escaped to Jerusalem. ¹⁹Ever since that time, the people of the northern tribes of Israel have been rebelling against the descendants of King David.

²⁰When the Israelite people heard that Jeroboam had returned from Egypt, they invited him to come to a meeting, and there they appointed him to be the king of Israel. Only the people of the tribe of Judah continued to be loyal to the kings descended from King David.

²¹When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he gathered 180,000 of the best soldiers from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. He wanted them to fight against the northern tribes of Israel and defeat them, in order that he could rule all the tribes of his kingdom again.

²²But God spoke to the prophet Shemaiah and said this to him: ²³"Go and tell this to Solomon's son Rehoboam, the king of Judah, and to all the people of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the people from the northern tribe who live in Judah: ²⁴'Yahweh says that you must not go to fight against your own relatives, the people of Israel. All of you must go home. What has happened is what Yahweh wanted to happen.'" So Shemaiah went and told that to them, and they all listened what Yahweh had commanded them to do, and they went home.

²⁵Then Jeroboam's workers built walls around the city of Shechem in the hill country where the descendants of Ephraim lived, and he ruled from there for a while. He and his workers then left there and went to the city of Peniel, and they built walls around that city.

²⁶⁻²⁷Then Jeroboam said to himself, "If my people continue to go to Jerusalem and offer sacrifices to Yahweh at the temple there, soon they will again become loyal to Rehoboam, the king of Judah, and they will kill me."

²⁸So he consulted his advisors, and then he did what they suggested. He told his workers to make gold statues of two calves. Then he said to the people, "You have been going to Jerusalem to worship for a long time. You are making too big an effort to keep going there. You people of Israel, look! These statues are the gods that brought

our ancestors up from Egypt! So you can worship these, here!" ²⁹He told his workers to place one of the statues in the city of Bethel in the south and one in the city of Dan in the north. ³⁰So what Jeroboam did caused the people to sin. Some of them went and worshiped the calf at Bethel, and others went and worshiped the other calf at Dan.

³¹Moses had declared that only men from the tribe of Levi would be priests, but Jeroboam also told his workers to build places on the hills where they could worship idols, and then he appointed men who were not from the tribe of Levi to be priests for the idols. ³²They had a celebration in the eighth month, on the fifteenth day, like the celebration of living in temporary shelters that occurred in Judah each year. On the altar that they built at Bethel, he offered sacrifices to the gold statues of calves that they had made, and he stationed the priests on the hills where idols were worshiped, where his workers built houses used for idolatry. ³³Jeroboam went up to that altar on that day in the eighth month that he himself had chosen. There on that altar he burned incense to be a sacrifice. And he declared that the people should celebrate that festival on that same day every year.

Chapter 13

¹One day a prophet, obeying what Yahweh commanded him to do, went from Judah north to Bethel. He arrived there right at the time that Jeroboam was standing at the altar, ready to burn incense. ²Saying what Yahweh told him to say, the prophet shouted, "This is what Yahweh says about this altar, 'I want you to know that some day a descendant of King David will be born. His name will be Josiah, and he will come here. He will slaughter at this altar the priests who are burning incense for sacrifices on the hills in this area, and he will burn the bones of dead people on this altar.'" ³Then the prophet also said, "This is what will prove to you that Yahweh has said this: This altar will be split apart, and the ashes that are on it will be scattered."

⁴When King Jeroboam heard what the prophet said about the altar at Bethel, he pointed his finger at him and said to his servants, "Seize that man!" But immediately the king's arm became paralyzed, with the result that he could not move it. ⁵(The altar split apart, and the ashes spilled out on the ground, which is what the prophet said that Yahweh had predicted would happen.)

⁶Then the king said to the prophet, "Please pray that Yahweh will be merciful to me and heal my arm!" So the prophet prayed, and Yahweh completely healed the king's arm.

⁷Then the king said to the prophet, "Come home with me and eat some food. And I will also give you a reward for what you have done!"

⁸But the prophet replied, "Even if you would promise to give me half of everything that you own, I will not go with you, and I will not eat or drink anything with you here, ⁹because Yahweh commanded me not to eat or drink anything here. He also commanded me not to return home on the road on which I came here." ¹⁰So he started to return home, but he did not go on the road on which he came to Bethel. He went on a different road.

¹¹At that time there was an old man living in Bethel who was also a prophet. His sons came and told him what the prophet from Judah had done there on that day, and they also told him what the prophet had said to the king.

¹²Their father said, "On which road did he go?" So his sons showed him the road on which the prophet from Judah had gone when he left Bethel. ¹³Then he said to his sons, "Put a saddle on my donkey." So they did that, and he got on the donkey. ¹⁴He went along the road to find the prophet from Judah. He found him sitting under an oak tree. He said to him, "Are you the prophet who came from Judah?" He replied, "Yes, I am."

¹⁵The old prophet said to him, "Come home with me and eat some food."

¹⁶He replied, "No, I am not allowed to go with you into your house, or to eat or drink anything with you, ¹⁷because Yahweh told me, 'Do not eat or drink anything here, and do not return home on the road on which you came.'"

¹⁸Then the old prophet said to him, "I also am a prophet, like you are. Yahweh sent an angel to tell me that I should take you home with me and give you some food and drink." But the old man was lying when he said that. ¹⁹But

because of what the old prophet said, the prophet from Judah returned with him to his home and ate some food and drank some water with him.

²⁰While they were sitting at the table, Yahweh spoke to the old man. ²¹Then he cried out to the prophet from Judah, "This is what Yahweh says: 'You have disobeyed him, and you have not done what he commanded you to do.

²²Instead, you have come back here and had things to eat and drink in a place where he commanded you not to do that. As a result, you will be killed, and your body will not be buried in the grave where your ancestors are buried.'"

²³When they had finished eating, the old man put a saddle on the donkey for the prophet from Judah, and the prophet from Judah left. ²⁴But as he was going, a lion met him and killed him. The prophet's corpse was lying on the road; the donkey was standing beside it, and the lion was also standing beside the corpse. ²⁵Some men passed by and were surprised to see the corpse on the road and the lion standing next to the corpse. So they went into Bethel and reported what they had seen.

²⁶When the old man who had brought the prophet from Judah to his home heard about it, he said, "That is the prophet who disobeyed what Yahweh told him to do! That is why Yahweh allowed the lion to attack him and kill him. That is what Yahweh said would happen!"

²⁷Then he said to his sons, "Put a saddle on my donkey." So they did that. ²⁸Then he rode on the donkey and found the prophet's corpse on the road, and his donkey and the lion were still standing there alongside the corpse. But the lion had not eaten any of the flesh of the prophet and had not attacked the donkey. ²⁹The old man picked up the corpse of the prophet and put it on his donkey and brought it back to Bethel, in order to mourn for him and to bury his corpse. ³⁰He buried the prophet's corpse in the grave where other people in his family had been buried. Then he and his sons mourned about him, saying, "We are very sorry, my brother!"

³¹After they had buried him, the old man said to his sons, "When I die, bury my corpse in the grave where we buried the prophet from Judah. Lay my corpse next to his corpse. ³²And do not forget what he said, things that Yahweh told him to say about the altar in Bethel, and what Yahweh told him to say about the places where they worshiped idols on the hills around the towns in Samaria. Those things will surely happen."

³³But King Jeroboam still did not stop continuing to do the evil things that he was doing. Instead, he appointed more priests from men who were not descended from Levi. He appointed as priest anyone who agreed to become one, in order that he could offer sacrifices on the hilltops. ³⁴Because he committed that sin, a few years later God got rid of most of Jeroboam's descendants and did not allow them to become kings of Israel.

Chapter 14

¹At that time, Jeroboam's son Abijah became very sick. ²Jeroboam said to his wife, "Disguise yourself in order that no one will recognize that you are my wife. Then go to the city of Shiloh, where the prophet Ahijah lives. He is the one who predicted that I would become the king of Israel. ³Take with you ten loaves of bread and some small flat cakes, and a jar of honey, and give them to him. Tell him about our son, and he will tell you what will happen to him." ⁴So his wife went to Shiloh, to Ahijah's house. Ahijah was unable to see, because he was very old and had become blind.

⁵But before she got there, Yahweh told Ahijah that Jeroboam's wife was coming to inquire about their son, who was very sick. And Yahweh told Ahijah what he should tell her.

When she came to him, she pretended to be another woman. ⁶But when Ahijah heard her footsteps as she entered the doorway, he said to her, "Come in, wife of Jeroboam! Why do you pretend that you are someone else? Yahweh has given me bad news to tell you. ⁷Go and tell Jeroboam that this is what Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship, says to you: 'I chose you from among the common people and enabled you to become the king of my Israelite people. ⁸I took most of the kingdom of Israel away from David's descendants and gave it to you. But you have not been like David, who served me very well. He obeyed all my commandments very sincerely, doing only

things that I considered to be right. ⁹But you have done more evil things than all those who ruled before you. You have rejected me, and you have caused me to become very angry by making metal images of other gods so that you and others could worship them.

¹⁰So, I am going to cause terrible things to happen to your family. I will cause all your male descendants to die, young ones and old ones. I will completely get rid of your family just like a man completely burns dung to cook his food. ¹¹The corpses of any members of your family who die in cities will be eaten by dogs. And the corpses of any members of your family who die out in the open fields will be eaten by vultures. This will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said that it will happen.'

¹²So go back home. And as soon as you enter the city, your son will die. ¹³All the Israelite people will mourn for him and bury him. He is the only one of Jeroboam's family who will be buried properly, because he is the only one of Jeroboam's family with whom Yahweh is at all pleased.

¹⁴Furthermore, Yahweh will appoint for himself a king to rule over Israel who will get rid of Jeroboam's descendants. And that will start to happen today! ¹⁵Yahweh will punish the people of Israel. He will shake them like the wind shakes the reeds that grow in a stream. He will expel the Israelite people from this good land that he gave to our ancestors. He will scatter them into countries east of the Euphrates River, because they have caused him to become very angry by worshiping statues of the goddess Asherah. ¹⁶Yahweh will abandon the Israelite people because of the sins that Jeroboam committed, sins which induced the Israelite people to commit them."

¹⁷Jeroboam's wife returned home to the city of Tirzah, the new capital of Israel. And just as she entered her house, her son died. ¹⁸All the Israelite people mourned for him and buried him, which is what Yahweh had told his servant, the prophet Ahijah, would happen.

¹⁹Everything else that Jeroboam did, and the ¹⁹record of wars that his army fought, and how he ruled, is written in the book of the events of the Kings of Israel. ²⁰Jeroboam ruled for twenty-two years. Then he died, and his son Nadab became king.

²¹Solomon's son Rehoboam ruled Judah. He was forty-one years old when he started to rule, and he ruled for seventeen years. He ruled in Jerusalem, which is the city that Yahweh chose out of all the tribes of Israel to be the place where he should be worshiped. Rehoboam's mother's name was Naamah. She was from the Ammon people group.

²²The people of Judah did many things that Yahweh said were evil. They caused him to become angry because they committed more sins than their ancestors had committed. They worshiped many other gods instead of worshiping only Yahweh. ²³They built places to worship those gods. On high hills and under big trees they set up pillars and poles for worshiping Asherah. ²⁴Also, there were male prostitutes at these places of worship. The Israelite people did the same disgraceful things that had been done by the people whom Yahweh had expelled while the Israelites were advancing through the land.

²⁵When Rehoboam had been ruling for almost five years, King Shishak of Egypt came with his army to attack Jerusalem. ²⁶They took away all the valuable things in the temple and in the king's palace, including the gold shields that Solomon's workers had made. ²⁷King Rehoboam's workers made bronze shields to replace them and put them into the hands of officers who guarded the entrance to the king's palace. ²⁸Every time that the king went into the temple, those guards carried those shields, and when he left the temple they returned the shields to the storeroom.

²⁹Everything else that Rehoboam did is written in the book of the events of the Kings of Judah. ³⁰There were wars continually between the armies of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. ³¹Then Rehoboam died, and he was buried in the part of Jerusalem called the city of David, where his ancestors were buried. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite woman. Then his son Abijah became the king.

Chapter 15

¹After Jeroboam had been the king of Israel for almost eighteen years, Abijah became the king of Judah. ²He ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah, the daughter of Abishalom.

³Abijah committed the same kind of sins that his father had committed. He was not fully dedicated to Yahweh his God, as his ancestor David had been. ⁴But, because of what Yahweh his God had promised to David, Yahweh gave Abijah a son to rule in Jerusalem after him, and in order to protect Jerusalem from their enemies. ⁵Yahweh did that because David had always done what pleased Yahweh and because David had always obeyed Yahweh. The only time when he disobeyed Yahweh was when he caused Uriah to be killed due to his sin with Bathsheba.

⁶There were wars between the armies of Rehoboam and Jeroboam all during the time that Abijah ruled.

⁷Everything else that Abijah did is written in the book of the events of the Kings of Judah. There was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. ⁸Abijah died and was buried in the part of Jerusalem called the city of David, and his son Asa became king.

⁹After Jeroboam had been the king of Israel for almost twenty years, Asa started to rule Judah. ¹⁰He ruled in Jerusalem for forty-one years. His grandmother was Maacah, the daughter of Abishalom.

¹¹Asa did what was pleasing to Yahweh, as his ancestor David had done. ¹²He got rid of the male prostitutes who were at the places where the people worshiped idols, and he also got rid of all the idols that his ancestors had made. ¹³He also removed his grandmother Maacah so that she no longer had influence in the government because of being the mother of a previous king. He did that because she had made a disgusting wooden statue of the goddess Asherah. Asa told his workers to cut down the statue and burned it in the Kidron Valley. ¹⁴He was not able to destroy all the places where the people worshiped Yahweh, but he continued to be dedicated to Yahweh all during the time that he lived. ¹⁵He told his workers to place in the temple all the items that his father had dedicated to God, and all the gold and silver things that he had dedicated to God.

¹⁶There were wars between the armies of Asa and Baasha, the king of Israel, all during the time that they ruled.

¹⁷Baasha's army invaded Judah. They captured the city of Ramah north of Jerusalem. Then they started to build a wall around it in order to prevent people from entering or leaving the area in Judah that King Asa ruled.

¹⁸So Asa told his workers to take all the silver and gold that was still in the storerooms in the temple and in the palace and gave it to some of his officials. He told them to take it to Damascus and give it to King Ben Hadad who ruled Aram. Ben Hadad was son of Tabrimmon and grandson of Hezion. He told the officials to say this to Ben Hadad: ¹⁹"I want there to be a peace treaty between me and you, like there was between my father and your father. For that purpose, I am giving you this silver and gold. So now please cancel the treaty that you made with Baasha, the king of Israel, in order that he will take his soldiers away from attacking mine, because he will be afraid of your army." ²⁰So the officials went and gave the message to Ben Hadad, and he did what Asa suggested. He sent his army commanders and their soldiers to attack some of the towns in Israel. They captured Ijon, Dan, Abel of Beth Maacah, the area near the Sea of Galilee, and all the land of the tribe of Naphtali. ²¹When Baasha heard about that, he told his soldiers to stop working at Ramah. He and his soldiers returned to Tirzah and stayed there. ²²Then King Asa sent a message to all the people in the towns in Judah, stating that they all were required to go to Ramah and carry away the stones and timber that Baasha's soldiers had been using to build a wall around the city. With those stones and timber they fortified the city of Mizpah north of Jerusalem, and Geba, a town in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

²³Everything else that Asa did, the armies that his soldiers defeated, and the names of the cities that he caused to be fortified, are all written in the book of the events of the Kings of Judah. But when Asa became old, he got a disease in his feet. ²⁴He died and was buried where his ancestors were buried in the part of Jerusalem called the city of David. Then his son Jehoshaphat became king.

²⁵After Asa had been the king of Judah for almost two years, King Jeroboam's son Nadab started to rule Israel. He ruled for two years. ²⁶He did many things that Yahweh said were evil. His behavior was sinful like his father's behavior had been, and what he did induced the people of Israel to sin.

²⁷A man named Baasha, from the tribe of Issachar, planned to harm him. He killed Nadab when Nadab and his army had surrounded the city of Gibbethon in the region of Philistia. ²⁸That was when Asa had been the king ruling Judah for almost three years. Then Baasha became the king of Israel.

²⁹As soon as he became king, he commanded his soldiers to kill all of Jeroboam's family. Doing what Yahweh had told the prophet Ahijah from Shiloh would happen, they killed all of Jeroboam's family. None of them were left.

³⁰That happened because Yahweh had become very angry with Jeroboam because of all the sins that Jeroboam had committed, and because of the sins that he had persuaded the people of Israel to commit.

³¹Everything else that Nadab did is written in Book of the Events of the Kings of Israel. ³²There were wars between the armies of King Asa and King Baasha all the time that they ruled.

³³After Asa had been the king of Judah for almost three years, Baasha son of Ahijah, started to rule Israel at the city of Tirzah. He ruled for twenty-four years. ³⁴Baasha did many things that Yahweh said were evil, and he lived a sinful life just like Jeroboam lived. Baasha's sinful life set an example for the people of Israel that encouraged them to commit sins that were like his sins.

Chapter 16

¹During the time that Baasha was king of Israel, the prophet Jehu, Hanani's son, gave Baasha this message that he had received from Yahweh: ²"You were very insignificant when I caused you to become the ruler of my Israelite people. But you have caused me to become very angry by doing the kinds of evil things that King Jeroboam did. You have also caused me to become angry by causing my people to sin. ³So now I will get rid of you and your family. I will do to you just like I did to Jeroboam and his family. ⁴The bodies of those in your family who die in this city will not be buried. They will be eaten by dogs, and the bodies of those who die in the fields will be eaten by vultures."

⁵The other things that Baasha did during the time that he ruled Israel, and the great things that his army did, are written in Book of the Events of the Kings of Israel. ⁶When Baasha died, he was buried in Tirzah, the capital city. Then his son Elah became king.

⁷Yahweh gave that message about Baasha and his family to the prophet Jehu. Baasha had done many deeds that Yahweh said were evil, which caused Yahweh to become angry. Baasha did the same kind of deeds that King Jeroboam and his family had done previously. Yahweh was also angry with Baasha because he had killed all of Jeroboam's family.

⁸After Asa had been the king of Judah for almost twenty-six years, Elah became the king of Israel. Elah ruled in Tirzah for only two years.

⁹A man named Zimri was one of Elah's army officers. He commanded the drivers of half of Elah's army's chariots. He made plans to kill Elah while Elah was in Tirzah, getting drunk at the house of a man named Arza. Arza was the man who took care of the things in the king's palace. ¹⁰Zimri went into Arza's house and killed Elah. Then he became the king of Israel. That was when Asa had been the king of Judah for twenty-seven years.

¹¹As soon as Zimri became king, he killed all of Baasha's family. He killed every male in Baasha's family and all of Baasha's male friends. ¹²So he got rid of all of Baasha's family. That was just what Yahweh told the prophet Jehu would happen. ¹³Baasha and his son Elah had sinned and induced the Israelite people to sin. They caused Yahweh, the God whom the Israelite people worshiped, to become angry, because they both urged the people to worship worthless idols.

¹⁴Everything else that Elah did is written in Book of the Events of the Kings of Israel.

¹⁵So Zimri became the king of Israel after Asa had been king of Judah for twenty-seven years. But Zimri ruled in Tirzah for only seven days. The Israelite army was besieging Gibeah, a town that belonged to the Philistine people group. ¹⁶The men in the Israelite army camp heard that Zimri had secretly planned to kill King Elah, and then had killed him. So on that day the soldiers chose Omri, the commander of their army, to become the king of Israel.

¹⁷The Israelite army was camped near Gibbethon. When they heard what Zimri had done, they left there and went to Tirzah, and surrounded the city. ¹⁸When Zimri realized that the city was about to be captured, he went into his palace and set it on fire. So the palace burned down, and he died in the fire. ¹⁹He died because he had sinned by doing many things that Yahweh said were evil. Jeroboam had induced the Israelite people to sin, and Zimri sinned just like Jeroboam had sinned.

²⁰All the other things that Zimri did, and the record of how he rebelled against King Elah, are written in Book of the Events of the Kings of Israel.

²¹After Zimri died, the Israelite people were divided among themselves. One group wanted Tibni son of Ginath, to be their king. The other group wanted Omri to be the king. ²²Those who supported Omri were stronger than those who supported Tibni. So Tibni was killed, and Omri became king.

²³Omri became king when Asa had been king of Judah for almost thirty-one years. Omri ruled Israel for twelve years. For the first six years he ruled in Tirzah. ²⁴Then he bought a hill from a man named Shemer and paid him about sixty-six kilograms of silver for it. Then Omri ordered his men to build a city on that hill, and he called it Samaria, to honor Shemer, the man who owned it previously.

²⁵But Omri did many things that Yahweh said were evil. He did more evil deeds than any of the kings who ruled Israel before he did. ²⁶When Jeroboam was previously the king, he had induced the Israelite people to sin, and Omri committed the same kind of sins that Jeroboam did. The Israelite people caused Yahweh, the God the Israelite people had worshiped, to become very angry, because they worshiped worthless idols.

²⁷Everything that Omri did, and the record of the victories that his army won, are written in Book of the Events of the Kings of Israel. ²⁸After Omri died, he was buried in Samaria, and his son Ahab became king.

²⁹Ahab became king of Israel when Asa had ruled Judah for almost thirty-eight years. Ahab ruled in the city of Samaria for twenty-two years. ³⁰Ahab did many things that Yahweh said were evil. He did more evil deeds than any of the kings who ruled Israel before he did. ³¹He committed the same kind of sins that Jeroboam did, but he did things that were worse than the things that Jeroboam did. He married a woman named Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of the city of Sidon. Then Ahab started to worship Baal, the god that the Canaan people group worshiped. ³²He built a temple in Samaria in order that the Israelite people could worship Baal there, and he put an altar there for making sacrifices to Baal. ³³He also made an idol that represented Asherah, Baal's wife. He did many more things that caused Yahweh to become angry. He did more evil things than any of the previous kings of Israel had done.

³⁴During the years that Ahab ruled, Hiel, a man from the city of Bethel, rebuilt the city of Jericho. But when he started to rebuild the city, his oldest son Abiram died. And when the city was finished, while Hiel was building the city gates, his youngest son Segub died. They died just as Yahweh had told Joshua would happen to the sons of anyone who would rebuild Jericho.

Chapter 17

¹Elijah was a prophet who lived in the city of Tishbe in the region of Gilead. One day he went to King Ahab and said to him, "Yahweh is the God whom we Israelites worship and the God whom I worship and serve. Just as certainly as Yahweh lives, there will be no dew or rain for the next few years, unless I command it to fall."

²Then Yahweh said to Elijah, ³"Because you have made the king angry with you, escape from the king and, go to the east, to the Kerith Brook, east of where it flows into the Jordan River. ⁴You will be able to drink water from the brook, and you will be able to eat what the crows bring to you, because I have commanded them to bring food to you."

⁵So Elijah did what Yahweh commanded him to do. He went and camped alongside Kerith Brook, east of the Jordan River. ⁶Crows brought bread and meat to him every morning and every evening, and he drank water from the brook.

⁷But after a while, the water in the brook dried up, because rain did not fall anywhere in the land. ⁸Then Yahweh said to Elijah, ⁹"Go and live in the village of Zarephath, near the city of Sidon. There is a widow there who will give you food to eat. I have already told her what to do about that." ¹⁰So Elijah did what God said. He went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the village, he saw a widow who was gathering sticks. He said to her, "Would you please bring me a cup of water?" ¹¹While she was going to get it, he called out to her, "Bring me a piece of bread, too!"

¹²But she replied, "Your God knows that what I am telling you is true. I do not have even one piece of bread in my house. I have only a handful of flour in a jar, and a little olive oil in a jug. I was gathering a few sticks to use these to make a fire and cook one more meal, and then after my son and I eat that, we will die from hunger."

¹³But Elijah said to her, "Do not be worried! Go home and do what you said that you were going to do. But first, bake me a little loaf of bread and bring it to me. After you do that, take what is left and prepare some food for you and your son. ¹⁴I know that you will be able to do that, because Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship, says this, 'There will always be plenty of flour and olive oil left in your containers, until the time when I send rain again and the crops grow again!'"

¹⁵So the woman did exactly what Elijah told her to do. And she and her son and Elijah had enough food every day, ¹⁶because the flour in the jar was never finished, and the jug of oil was never empty. That happened just like Yahweh had told Elijah that it would happen.

¹⁷Some time later, the woman's son became sick. He continued to get worse, and finally he died. ¹⁸So the woman went to Elijah and said to him, "You are a prophet; so why have you done this to me? Have you come here to punish me for my sins by causing my son to die?"

¹⁹But Elijah replied, "Give your son to me." So she gave her son to him, and he took the boy's body from her and carried it up the steps to the room where he stayed. He laid the boy's body on his bed. ²⁰Then Elijah cried out to Yahweh, "O Yahweh my God, this widow has kindly allowed me to stay in her home. So why have you brought this tragedy to her and caused her son to die?" ²¹Then Elijah stretched himself on top of the boy's body and called out to Yahweh saying, "Yahweh my God, please allow this boy to become alive again!" He did this three times.

²²Yahweh heard what Elijah prayed, and he caused the boy to become alive again. ²³Elijah carried the boy down the steps and gave him to his mother. He said, "Look, your son is alive!"

²⁴The woman said to Elijah, "Now I know for certain that you are a prophet and that the words that you speak are truly from Yahweh!"

Chapter 18

¹For almost three years there was no rain in Samaria. Then Yahweh said this to Elijah: "Go and meet with King Ahab and tell him that I will soon send rain." ²So Elijah went to talk to Ahab.

In Samaria there was almost no food for anyone to eat. ³There was a man there named Obadiah. He was in charge of the king's palace. He greatly revered Yahweh. ⁴One time when Queen Jezebel had tried to kill all Yahweh's

prophets, Obadiah hid a hundred of them in two caves. He put fifty prophets in each cave, and he brought food and water to them.

⁵By this time, the famine had become very severe in Samaria. So Ahab summoned Obadiah and said to him, "We must look near every spring and in every valley to see if we can find enough grass to give to some of my horses and mules, so that they will not all die." ⁶So they both started walking through the land. Obadiah went by himself in one direction, and Ahab went in another direction by himself.

⁷While Obadiah was walking along, he saw Elijah coming toward him. Obadiah recognized Elijah and bowed down in front of him and said, "Is it really you, Elijah, my master?"

⁸Elijah replied, "Yes. Now go and tell Ahab your master that I am here."

⁹Obadiah objected. He said, "Sir, I have not harmed you at all. So why are you sending me back to Ahab? He will kill me! ¹⁰Yahweh your God knows that I am telling the truth when I solemnly declare that King Ahab has searched in every kingdom to find you. Each time that some king said to him, 'Elijah is not here,' Ahab demanded that the king of that country solemnly swear that the king was telling the truth. ¹¹Now you say to me, 'Go and tell your master that Elijah is here!' ¹²But as soon as I leave you, the Spirit of Yahweh will carry you away, and I will not know where he will take you. So when I tell Ahab that you are here and he comes to me and he does not find you here, he will kill me! But I do not deserve to die because I have revered Yahweh since I was a boy. ¹³My master, have you not heard about what I did when Jezebel wanted to kill all of Yahweh's prophets? I hid a hundred of them in two caves and took food and water to them. ¹⁴Now, sir, you say, 'Go and tell your master that Elijah is here.' But if I do that, and he comes and you are not here, he will kill me!"

¹⁵But Elijah replied, "Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the one whom I serve, knows that I am telling the truth as I solemnly declare that I will go to meet with Ahab today."

¹⁶So Obadiah went to tell Ahab that Elijah had come. Ahab went to meet with him. ¹⁷When he saw Elijah, he said to him, "Is that you, the one who causes trouble for the people of Israel?"

¹⁸Elijah replied, "It is not I who have caused trouble for the people of Israel! You and your family are the ones who have caused trouble! You have refused to obey Yahweh's commands, and you have worshiped the idols of Baal instead. ¹⁹So now, command all the Israelite people to come to Mount Carmel, and be sure to bring all the 450 prophets who worship Baal and the four hundred prophets who worship the goddess Asherah, the ones to whom your wife Jezebel always invites to eat with her."

²⁰So Ahab summoned all his prophets and all the other Israelite people to the top of Mount Carmel, and Elijah went up there too. ²¹Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "How long are you going to be undecided about who is truly God? If Yahweh is God, then worship him. If Baal is truly God, then worship him!" But the people said nothing in reply, because they were afraid of what Jezebel would do to them if they admitted that they worshiped Yahweh.

²²Then Elijah said to them, "I am the only true prophet of Yahweh who is left, but Baal has 450 prophets. ²³Bring two bulls. The prophets of Baal may choose the one that they want. They must kill it and cut it into pieces and lay the pieces on the wood that is on the altar that they made. But they must not light a fire under the wood. I will kill the other bull and cut it in pieces and lay the pieces on the altar that I make. ²⁴Then they must call to their god, and I will call to Yahweh. The god who answers by lighting a fire to the wood that is on that altar is the true God!"

Then all the people thought that Elijah's suggestion was good.

²⁵Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You call to Baal first, because there are many of you. Choose one of the bulls and prepare it, and then call to your god. But do not light a fire under the wood!" ²⁶So they killed one of the bulls and cut it up and placed the pieces on the altar. Then they called out to Baal all morning. They shouted, "Baal, answer us!" But no one answered. There was no reply at all.

Then they danced wildly around the altar that they had made.

²⁷About noontime, Elijah started to make fun of them. He said, "Surely Baal is a god, so it seems that you must shout louder! Perhaps he is thinking about something, or perhaps he has gone to the toilet. Or perhaps he is traveling somewhere, or perhaps he is asleep and you need to wake him up!" ²⁸So they shouted louder. Then, doing one of the things that they frequently did when they worshiped Baal, they slashed themselves with knives and swords until a lot of blood flowed. ²⁹They continued calling out to Baal all afternoon. But there was no voice that gave a reply, no answer, no god who paid attention.

³⁰Then Elijah called to the people saying, "Come closer!" So they all crowded around him. Then Elijah repaired the altar of Yahweh that had been ruined by the prophets of Baal. ³¹Then he took twelve large stones, each one to represent one of the Israelite tribes, whose ancestors were the twelve sons of Jacob. ³²With these stones he rebuilt Yahweh's altar. Then around the altar he dug a little ditch that was large enough to hold about fifteen liters of water. ³³He piled wood on top of the stones. He killed the bull and cut it in pieces. Then he laid the pieces on top of the wood. Then he said, "Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water on top of the pieces of meat and the wood." So they did that.

³⁴Then he said, "Do the same thing again!" So they did it again. Then he said, "Do it a third time!" So they did it again.

³⁵As a result, the water flowed down below the altar and filled the ditches.

³⁶When it was time to offer the evening sacrifices, Elijah walked close to the altar and prayed. He said, "Yahweh, you who are the God that our ancestors Abraham and Isaac and Jacob worshiped, prove today that you are the God whom the Israelite people should worship, and prove that I am your servant. Prove that I have done all these things because you told me to do them. ³⁷Yahweh, answer me! Answer me in order that these people will know that you, Yahweh, are God and that you have caused them to trust in you again!"

³⁸Immediately a fire from Yahweh flashed down from the sky. The fire burned up the pieces of meat, the wood, the stones, and the dirt that was around the altar. It even dried up all the water in the ditch!

³⁹When the people saw that, they prostrated themselves on the ground and shouted, "Yahweh is God! Yahweh is God!"

⁴⁰Then Elijah commanded them, "Seize all the prophets of Baal! Do not allow any of them to escape!" So the people seized all the prophets of Baal, and took them down the mountain to the river Kishon, and Elijah killed them all there.

⁴¹Then Elijah said to Ahab, "Go and get something to eat and drink. But do it quickly, because it is soon going to rain very hard!" ⁴²So Ahab and his men left to prepare a big meal. But Elijah went back up to the top of Mount Carmel and prayed.

⁴³Then he said to his servant, "Go and look out toward the sea, to see if there are any rain clouds." So his servant went and looked, and came back and said, "I do not see anything." This happened six times. ⁴⁴But when the servant went the seventh time, he came back and said, "I saw a very small cloud above the sea. As I extend my arm, the cloud is about the size of my hand."

Then Elijah shouted to him, "Go and tell King Ahab to get his chariot ready and go home immediately! If he does not do that, the rain will stop him!" ⁴⁵Very soon the sky was full of black clouds. There was a strong wind, and then it began to rain very hard. Ahab got into his chariot and started to return to the city of Jezreel. ⁴⁶Yahweh gave extra strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt in order to run fast, and he ran ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way to Jezreel.

Chapter 19

¹When Ahab got home, he told his wife Jezebel what Elijah had done. He told her that Elijah had killed all the prophets of Baal. ²So Jezebel sent this message to Elijah, "By this time tomorrow I will have killed you, just like you killed all those prophets of Baal. If I do not do that, I hope the gods will kill me."

³When Elijah received her message, he was afraid. So taking his servant with him, he fled in order that he would not be killed. He went far south to Beersheba, in Judah. He left his servant there. ⁴Then he went by himself further south into the desert. He walked all day. He sat down under a broom tree and prayed that Yahweh would allow him to die. He said, "Yahweh, I cannot endure anymore. So allow me to die, because for me to live is no better than being with my ancestors who have died."

⁵Then he lay down under the broom tree and slept. But while he was sleeping, an angel touched him and woke him up and said to him, "Get up and eat some food!"

⁶Elijah looked around and saw some bread which had been baked on hot stones, and he also saw a jar of water. So he ate some bread and drank some water and lay down to sleep again.

⁷Then the angel who had been sent by Yahweh came again and touched him, and said, "Get up and eat some more food, because you need more strength to go on a long journey." ⁸So he got up and ate and drank some more; because he did that, he got enough strength to travel for forty days and nights to Mount Horeb, the mountain that was dedicated to God. ⁹He went into a cave there and slept there that night.

The next morning, Yahweh said to him, "Elijah, why are you here?" ¹⁰Elijah replied, "I have zealously served you, Yahweh, commander of angel armies. But the Israelite people have rejected the agreement that they made with you. They have torn down your altars, and they have killed all of your prophets. I am the only one whom they have not killed, and now they are trying to kill me, too. So I am running away from them."

¹¹Yahweh said to him, "Go out and stand in front of me on this mountain while I pass by." So Elijah did that. While he was standing there, a strong windstorm struck the mountain. As a result, rocks were loosened from the mountainside. But Yahweh was not in the wind. Then there was an earthquake, but Yahweh was not in the earthquake.

¹²Then there was a fire, but Yahweh was not in the fire. Then there was a sound like someone whispering quietly.

¹³When Elijah heard that, he wrapped his cloak around his face. He went out of the cave and stood at its entrance. And he heard Yahweh speaking to him, saying again, "Elijah, why are you here?"

¹⁴He replied again, "I have zealously served you, Yahweh, commander of angel armies. But the Israelite people have rejected the agreement that they made with you. They have torn down your altars, and they have killed all of your prophets. I am the only one whom they have not killed, and now they are trying to kill me, too. So I am running away from them."

¹⁵Then Yahweh told him, "Go back to the wilderness near Damascus. When you arrive there anoint with olive oil a man named Hazael, to appoint him to be the king of Aram. ¹⁶Then anoint Jehu son of Nimshi to be the king of Israel, and also anoint Elisha son of Shaphat, from the city of Abel Meholah, to become my prophet after you are gone. ¹⁷Hazael's army will kill many people, and those who escape from being killed by his army will be killed by Jehu's army, and those who escape from being killed by Jehu's army will be killed by Elisha. ¹⁸But you need to know that there are still seven thousand people in Israel who have never bowed to worship Baal or kissed his idol."

¹⁹So Elijah went to Aram and found Elisha as he was plowing a field with a team of oxen. There were eleven other men who were in front of him, plowing with teams of oxen in the same field. Elijah went to Elisha, and took off his own coat and put it on Elisha, to show Elisha that he wanted Elisha to take his place as a prophet. Then he started to walk away. ²⁰Elisha left the oxen standing there and ran after Elijah, and said to him, "I will go with you, but first let me kiss my parents goodbye."

Elijah replied, "Very well, go home. But do not forget why I have given my cloak to you!" ²¹So Elisha went back home. He killed his oxen and cut them in pieces and used the wood from the plow to build a fire to roast the meat. He distributed the meat to the other people in his town, and they all ate some. Then he went with Elijah and became his helper.

Chapter 20

¹Ben Hadad, the king of Aram, gathered all his army, and he brought thirty-two lesser kings to join him with their armies and horses and chariots. They marched to the city of Samaria, the capital of Israel, and surrounded it and prepared to attack it. ²Ben Hadad sent messengers into the city to King Ahab, and they said this to him: "This is what King Ben Hadad says: ³'You must give to me all your silver and gold, your good-looking wives and strongest children.'"

⁴The king of Israel replied to them, "Tell this to King Ben Hadad, 'I agree to do what you requested. You can have me and everything that I own.'"

⁵The messengers told that to Ben Hadad, and he sent them back with another message: "I sent a message to you saying that you must give me all your silver and gold and your wives and your children. ⁶But in addition to that, about this time tomorrow, I will send some of my officials to search your palace and the houses of your officials, and to bring to me everything that they see is valuable."

⁷King Ahab summoned all the leaders of Israel, and said to them, "You can see for yourselves that this man is trying to cause much trouble. He sent me a message insisting that I must give him my wives and my children, my silver and my gold, and I agreed to do that."

⁸The leaders and all the other people said to him, "Do not pay any attention to him! Do not do what he is requesting!"

⁹So Ahab said to Ben Hadad's messengers, "Tell the king that I agree to give him the things that he first requested, but I do not agree to allow his officials to take anything that they want from my palace and from the houses of my officials." So the messengers reported that to King Ben Hadad, and they returned with another message from Ben Hadad.

¹⁰In that message he said, "We will destroy your city completely, with the result that there will not be enough ashes left for each of my soldiers to have one handful! I hope that the gods will strike me dead if we do not do that!"

¹¹King Ahab replied to the messengers, "Tell King Ben Hadad this: No one wins a battle before he fights it, so do not boast before you should."

¹²Ben Hadad heard that message while he and the other rulers were drinking wine in their temporary shelters. He told his men to prepare to attack the city. So his men did that.

¹³At that moment, a prophet came to King Ahab and said to him, "This is what Yahweh says: 'Do not be at all afraid of the large enemy army that you see! I will enable your army to defeat them today, and you will know that it is I, Yahweh, who has done it.'"

¹⁴Ahab asked, "What group of our army will defeat them?" The prophet replied, "The young soldiers whom the district governors command will do it." The king asked, "Who should lead the attack?" The prophet replied, "You should!"

¹⁵So Ahab gathered the young soldiers who were commanded by the district governors. There were 232 of those men. Then he also summoned all the Israelite army. There were only seven thousand soldiers. ¹⁶They started to attack at noon, while Ben Hadad and the other rulers were getting drunk in their temporary shelters. ¹⁷The young

soldiers advanced first. Some scouts who had been sent out by Ben Hadad reported to him, "There are men coming out of Samaria"!

¹⁸He said, "It does not matter whether they are coming to fight against us or to request for peace. Capture them, but do not kill them!"

¹⁹The young Israelite soldiers went out of the city to attack the Aramean army, and the other soldiers in the Israelite army followed them. ²⁰Each Israelite soldier killed an Aramean soldier. The rest of the Aramean army then ran away, and the Israelite soldiers pursued them. But King Ben Hadad escaped riding his horse, along with some other men riding horses. ²¹Then the king of Israel went out of the city; he and his soldiers captured all the other Aramean horses and chariots, and also killed a large number of Aramean soldiers.

²²Then that same prophet went to King Ahab and said to him, "Go back and prepare your soldiers, and think carefully about what will be necessary for you to do, because the king of Aram will attack with his army again in the springtime of next year."

²³After the Aramean army was defeated, Ben Hadad's officials said to him, "The gods that the Israelites worship are gods who live in the hills. Samaria is built on a hill, and that is why their soldiers were able to defeat us. But if we fight against them in the plains, we certainly will be able to defeat them. ²⁴So, this is what you should do: You must remove the thirty-two kings who are leading your troops and replace them with army commanders. ²⁵Then gather an army like the army that was defeated. Gather an army that has as many horses and chariots as the first army had. Then we will fight the Israelites in the plains, and we will surely defeat them."

Ben Hadad agreed with them, and he did what they suggested. ²⁶In the spring of the following year, he gathered his soldiers and marched with them to the city of Aphek east of the Sea of Galilee, to fight against the Israelite army. ²⁷The Israelite army was also gathered together, and they were given the things that they needed for the battle. Then they marched out and formed two groups facing the Aramean army. Their army was very small. They resembled two small flocks of goats, whereas the Aramean army was very large and spread all over the countryside.

²⁸A prophet came to King Ahab and said to him, "This is what Yahweh says: 'The Arameans say that I am a god who lives in the hills, and that I am not a god who lives in the valleys. So I will show that they are wrong by enabling your men to defeat this huge army in the valley, and you will know that I, Yahweh, have done it.'"

²⁹The two armies stayed in their tents for seven days, in groups that faced each other. Then, on the seventh day, they started fighting. The Israelite army killed 100,000 Aramean soldiers. ³⁰The other Aramean soldiers ran away into Aphek. Then the wall of the city collapsed and killed twenty-seven thousand more Aramean soldiers.

Ben Hadad also escaped into the city and hid in the back room of a house. ³¹His officials went to him and said, "We have heard a report that the Israelites act mercifully. So allow us to go to the king of Israel, wearing coarse sacks around our waists and ropes on our heads to indicate that we will be his slaves. Perhaps if we do that, he will allow you to remain alive."

³²The king permitted them to do that, so they wrapped coarse sacks around their waists and put ropes on their heads, and they went to the king of Israel and said to him, "Ben Hadad, who greatly respects you, says, 'Please do not kill me.'" Ahab replied, "Is he still alive? He is like a brother to me!"

³³Ben Hadad's officials were trying to find out if Ahab would act mercifully, and when Ahab said "brother," they were optimistic. So they replied, "Yes, he is like your brother!" Ahab said, "Go and bring him to me." So they went and brought Ben Hadad to him. When Ben Hadad arrived, Ahab told him to get in the chariot and sit with him.

³⁴Ben Hadad said to him, "I will give back to you the towns that my father's army took from your father. And I will allow you to set up market areas for your merchants in Damascus my capital, just as my father did in Samaria your capital." Ahab replied, "Because you agree to do that, I will not execute you." So Ahab made an agreement with Ben Hadad, and allowed him to go home.

³⁵Then Yahweh spoke to a member of an association of prophets and told him to request a fellow prophet to strike him. But that man refused to do it.

³⁶So the prophet said to him, "Because you refused to obey what Yahweh told you to do, a lion will kill you as soon as you leave me." And as soon as he left that prophet, a lion suddenly met him and killed him.

³⁷Then the prophet found another prophet, and said to him, "Strike me!" So that man hit him very hard and injured him. ³⁸Then the prophet put a large bandage over his face so that no one would recognize him. Then he went and stood alongside the road, waiting for the king to come by. ³⁹When the king passed by, the prophet cried out to him, saying "Your Majesty, after I was wounded while I was fighting in a battle, a soldier brought to me one of our enemies who he had captured, and said to me, 'Guard this man! If he escapes, you must pay me thirty-three kilograms of silver; if you do not pay that, you will be executed!' ⁴⁰But while I was busy doing other things, the man escaped!" The king of Israel said to him, "That is your problem! You yourself have said that you deserve to be punished."

⁴¹The prophet immediately took off the bandage, and the king of Israel recognized that he was one of the prophets. ⁴²The prophet said to him, "This is what Yahweh says: 'You have allowed that man Ben Hadad to escape after I commanded you to be sure to execute him! Since you did not do that, you will be killed instead. And your army will be destroyed because you allowed some of his army to escape!'" ⁴³The king went back home to Samaria, very angry and depressed.

Chapter 21

¹King Ahab had a palace in the city of Jezreel. Near the palace was a vineyard owned by a man named Naboth.

²One day, Ahab went to Naboth and said to him, "Your vineyard is close to my palace. I would like to buy it, so that I can plant some vegetables there. I will give you in exchange a better vineyard somewhere else, or if you prefer, I will pay you for your vineyard."

³But Naboth replied, "That land belonged to my ancestors, so I want to keep it. I hope that Yahweh will never allow me to give that land to you!"

⁴So Ahab became very sullen and angry because of what Naboth had said. He went home and lay down on his bed. He turned his face toward the wall, and he refused to eat anything.

⁵His wife Jezebel came in and asked him, "Why are you so depressed? Why are you refusing to eat anything?"

⁶Ahab replied, "I talked to Naboth, that man from Jezreel. I told him that I wanted his vineyard. I said, 'I will buy it from you, or I will give you another vineyard for it.' But he refused to let me have it."

⁷His wife replied, "You are the king of Israel, so you can get whatever you want! Get up, and eat some food and do not worry about what Naboth said. I will get Naboth's vineyard for you."

⁸Then Jezebel wrote some letters, and she signed Ahab's name on them. She used his official seal to seal them. Then she sent them to the older leaders and other important men who lived near Naboth and who decided public matters with him. ⁹This is what she wrote in the letters: "Proclaim a day when all the people will gather together and fast. Give to Naboth an important place to sit among them. ¹⁰Then find two men who always cause trouble. Give them places to sit opposite him. Tell these men to testify that they heard Naboth say things that criticized God and the king. Then take Naboth out of the city and kill him by throwing stones at him."

¹¹The leaders received the letters and did what Jezebel had written in the letters for them to do. ¹²They declared a day on which the people would all go without food. And they gave Naboth a seat in a place where honored people sat, in front of the people. ¹³Two men who always caused trouble sat opposite Naboth. While everyone was listening, they stated that they had heard Naboth say things that criticized God and the king. So the people seized

Naboth. They took him outside the city and killed him by throwing stones at him. ¹⁴Then those leaders sent a message to Jezebel, saying, "We have executed Naboth."

¹⁵When Jezebel found out that Naboth had been killed, she told Ahab, "Naboth is dead. Now you can go and take possession of the vineyard that he refused to sell to you." ¹⁶When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he got up and went to the vineyard to claim that he now owned it.

¹⁷Then Yahweh spoke to Elijah the prophet. He said, ¹⁸"Go to Samaria and talk to Ahab, the king of Israel. He is in the vineyard of a man named Naboth. He has gone there to claim that he now owns it. ¹⁹Tell Ahab that this is what I, Yahweh, say to him, 'You have murdered Naboth and taken his land. So I am telling you this. In the same place where Naboth died and dogs came and licked up Naboth's blood, you will die and the dogs will lick up your blood, too!'"

²⁰So when Elijah met with Ahab, Ahab said to him, "You, my enemy, have found me!" Elijah answered, "Yes, I have found you. You have never stopped doing the things that Yahweh says are wrong.

²¹So this is what Yahweh says to you, 'I will soon get rid of you. I will kill you, and I will also kill every male in your household, including those who are slaves and those who are not slaves. ²²Your family will all be killed, just like the family of King Jeroboam and like the family of King Baasha were killed. I will get rid of you because you have caused me to become very angry, and you have also induced the Israelite people to sin.'

²³Yahweh has also told me that your wife Jezebel will be killed, and dogs in Jezreel will eat her body. ²⁴The dead bodies of the members of your family who die in this city will not be buried. They will be eaten by dogs, and the bodies of those who die in the fields will be eaten by vultures."

²⁵There was no man who gave himself as completely to do things that Yahweh said were evil like Ahab did. But his wife Jezebel urged him to do many of those things. ²⁶The most disgusting thing that Ahab did was to worship idols, just like the Amor people group had done. And that is why Yahweh took their land from them and gave it to the Israelites.

²⁷After Elijah finished talking to Ahab, Ahab tore his clothes to show that he was sorry for all the sins that he had committed. He put on rough clothes that were made from sacks, and he refused to eat anything. He even wore those rough clothes made from sacks when he slept, to show that he was sorry.

²⁸Then Yahweh said this to Elijah, ²⁹"I have seen that Ahab is now very sorry for all the evil things that he has done. So the things that I promised to do to his family will not happen while he is still alive. I will cause them to happen after his son becomes king. Then those things will happen to his family."

Chapter 22

¹For almost three years there was no war between Aram and Israel. ²Then King Jehoshaphat, who ruled Judah, went to visit King Ahab, who ruled Israel. ³While they were talking, Ahab said to his officials, "Do you realize that the Arameans are still occupying our city of Ramoth in the region of Gilead? And we are doing nothing to retake that city!" ⁴Then he turned toward Jehoshaphat and asked, "Will your army join my army to fight against the people of Ramoth and retake that city?"

Jehoshaphat replied, "Certainly! I will do whatever you want, and you may command my troops. You may take my horses into battle, also." ⁵Then he added, "But we should ask Yahweh first, to find out what he wants us to do." ⁶So Ahab summoned about four hundred of his prophets together, and he asked them, "Should my army go to fight the people in Ramoth and retake that city, or not?"

They answered, "Yes, go and attack them, because God will enable your army to defeat them."

⁷But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there no other prophet of Yahweh here whom we can ask?"

⁸The king of Israel replied, "There is one other man we can ask. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him, because when he prophesies he never says that anything good will happen to me. He always predicts that bad things will happen to me."

Jehoshaphat replied, "King Ahab, you should not say that!"

⁹So the king of Israel told one of his officers to summon Micaiah immediately.

¹⁰The king of Israel and the king of Judah were both wearing their royal robes and sitting on thrones at a gate in the city wall of Samaria. Many prophets were speaking messages to them. ¹¹One of them, whose name was Zedekiah son of Kenaanah, had made from iron something that resembled horns of a bull. Then he proclaimed to Ahab, "This is what Yahweh says, 'With horns like these your army will keep attacking the Arameans as a bull attacks another animal, until you completely destroy them!'"

¹²All the other prophets of Ahab agreed. They said, "Yes! If you go up to attack Ramoth in Gilead, you will be successful, because Yahweh will enable you to defeat them!"

¹³Meanwhile, the messenger who went to summon Micaiah said to him, "Listen to me! All the other prophets are predicting that the king's army will defeat the Arameans. So be sure that you agree with them and say what will be favorable."

¹⁴But Micaiah replied, "As surely as Yahweh lives, I will tell Ahab only what Yahweh tells me to say."

¹⁵When Micaiah came to Ahab, Ahab asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to fight against the people of Ramoth, or not?"

Micaiah replied, "Of course you should go! Yahweh will enable your army to defeat them!" ¹⁶But King Ahab realized that Micaiah was being sarcastic, so he said to Micaiah, "I have told you many times that you must always tell only the truth when you say what Yahweh has revealed to you!"

¹⁷So Micaiah said to him, "The truth is that in a vision I saw all the troops of Israel scattered on the mountains. They seemed to be like sheep that did not have a shepherd. And Yahweh said, 'Their master has been killed. So tell them all to go home peacefully.'"

¹⁸Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I told you that he never predicts that anything good will happen to me! He always predicts that bad things will happen to me."

¹⁹But Micaiah continued, saying, "Listen to what Yahweh showed to me! In a vision I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, with all the armies of heaven surrounding him, on his right side and on his left side. ²⁰And Yahweh said, 'Who can persuade Ahab to go to fight against the people of Ramoth, in order that he may be killed there?'

Some suggested one thing, and others suggested something else. ²¹Finally one spirit came to Yahweh and said, 'I will deceive him!'

²²Yahweh asked him, 'How will you do it?' The spirit replied, 'I will go and inspire all of Ahab's prophets to tell lies.' Yahweh said, 'You will be successful; go and do it!' ²³So now I tell you that Yahweh has let all of your prophets lie to you. Yahweh has decided that something terrible will happen to you."

²⁴Then Zedekiah walked over to Micaiah and slapped him on his face. He said, "Do you think that Yahweh's Spirit left me in order to speak to you?"

²⁵Micaiah replied, "You will find out for yourself to which of us Yahweh's Spirit has truly spoken on the day when you go into a room of some house to hide from the Aramean troops!"

²⁶King Ahab commanded his soldiers, "Seize Micaiah and take him to Amon, the governor of this city, and to my son Joash. ²⁷Tell them that I have commanded that they should put this man in prison and give him only bread and water. Do not give him anything else to eat until I return safely from the battle!"

²⁸Micaiah replied, "If you return safely, it will be clear that it was not Yahweh who told me what to say to you!" Then he said to all those who were standing there, "Do not forget what I have said to King Ahab!"

²⁹So the king of Israel and the king of Judah led their armies to Ramoth in Gilead. ³⁰King Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I will put on different clothes, in order that no one will recognize that I am the king. But you should wear your royal robe." So Ahab disguised himself, and they both went into the battle.

³¹The King of Aram had said to his thirty-two men who were driving the chariots, "Attack only the king of Israel!"

³²So when the men who were driving the Aramean chariots saw Jehoshaphat wearing the royal robes, they pursued him. They shouted, "There is the king of Israel!" But when Jehoshaphat cried out, ³³they realized that he was not the king of Israel. So they stopped pursuing him.

³⁴But one Aramean soldier shot an arrow at Ahab, without knowing that it was Ahab. The arrow struck Ahab between the places where the parts of his armor joined together. Ahab told the driver of his chariot, "Turn the chariot around and take me out of here! I have been severely wounded!" ³⁵The battle continued all the day. Ahab was sitting propped up in his chariot, facing the Aramean troops. The blood from his wound ran down to the floor of the chariot. And late in the afternoon he died. ³⁶Just as the sun was going down, someone among the Israelite troops shouted, "The battle is ended! Everyone should return home!"

³⁷So King Ahab died, and they took his body in the chariot to Samaria and buried his body there. ³⁸They washed his chariot alongside the pool in Samaria, a pool where the prostitutes bathed. And dogs came and licked the king's blood, just like Yahweh had predicted would happen.

³⁹The account of the other things that happened while Ahab was ruling, and about the palace decorated with much ivory that they built for him, and the cities that were built for him, was written in Book of the Events of the Kings of Israel. ⁴⁰When Ahab died, his body was buried where his ancestors were buried. Then his son Ahaziah became king.

⁴¹Before King Ahab died, when he had been ruling in Israel for four years, Asa's son Jehoshaphat started to rule in Judah. ⁴²Jehoshaphat was thirty-five years old when he started to rule, and he ruled in Jerusalem for twenty-five years. His mother was Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi. ⁴³Jehoshaphat was a good king, just like his father Asa had been. He did things that pleased Yahweh. But while he was king, he did not remove all the pagan altars that had been built upon the hills. So the people continued to offer sacrifices to idols on those altars and burned incense there. ⁴⁴Jehoshaphat also made a peace treaty with the king of Israel.

⁴⁵All the other things that happened while Jehoshaphat was ruling, and the great things that he did and the victories his troops won, are written in Book of the Events of the Kings of Judah. ⁴⁶Jehoshaphat removed from the land the male prostitutes that still lived in that region. These were same the male prostitutes who had lived there in the time of his father Asa.

⁴⁷At that time, there was no king in Edom. A ruler who had been appointed by Jehoshaphat ruled there.

⁴⁸Jehoshaphat ordered some Israelite men to build a fleet of ships to sail south to the region of Ophir to get gold. But they were wrecked at Ezion Geber, so the ships never sailed. ⁴⁹Before the ships were wrecked, Ahab's son Ahaziah suggested to Jehoshaphat, "Allow my sailors to go with your sailors," but Jehoshaphat refused.

⁵⁰When Jehoshaphat died, his body was buried where his ancestors were buried in Jerusalem, the city where King David had ruled. Then Jehoshaphat's son Jehoram became king.

⁵¹Before King Jehoshaphat died, when he had been ruling in Judah for seventeen years, Ahab's son Ahaziah began to rule in Israel. Ahaziah ruled in Samaria for two years. ⁵²He did many things that Yahweh said were evil, doing the

evil things that his father and mother had done and the evil things that Jeroboam had done—the king who had induced all the Israelite people to sin by worshiping idols. ⁵³Ahaziah bowed in front of Baal's idol and worshiped it. That caused Yahweh, the God who is the true God of the Israelite people as well as all the world, to become very angry, just as Ahaziah's father had caused Yahweh to become angry.

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