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Isaiah

Chapter 1

¹The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, that Yahweh showed him about Judah and Jerusalem during the years of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah.

²Hear, O heavens, and listen, O earth, because this is what Yahweh said:

“I have raised people since they were born,
but they have rebelled against me.

³Oxen know their owners,
and donkeys know who feeds them,
but Israel does not know;
Israel does not understand.”

⁴Terrible things will happen to this sinful nation, this people group weighted down by their sin,
these children of people who do evil things,
these sons who are unjust.
They have left Yahweh,
the Holy One of Israel.
They have turned away from him.

⁵Why do you do things for which Yahweh should punish you?
Why do you continue to rebel against him?
You are like someone whose
whole mind and heart are sick.

⁶From the bottom of the foot to the top of the head,
nothing is healthy.
There are open wounds, cuts, and sores
that have not been cleaned or bandaged,
and no one has put oil on them to heal them.

⁷Enemies have ruined your country;
they have burned your towns, and there is no one left.
Foreigners plunder the crops in your fields while you watch;

they destroy everything that they see.

⁸The city of Jerusalem has become as small as a shepherd's hut.

It is like a shelter in a vineyard;

it is like a watchman's hut in a field of melons.

It is a city surrounded by its enemies who are waiting to attack it.

⁹If Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, had not allowed a few of his people to survive,
we would have all been destroyed,

like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed.

¹⁰Listen to what Yahweh has to say to you, you rulers of Sodom!

Listen to the law of our God, you people of Gomorrah!

¹¹"What do your many sacrifices mean to me?" says Yahweh;

"I do not want any more burnt offerings of rams, or the fat of bulls.

The blood of bulls, lambs, or goats does not make me happy.

¹²When you come to my temple to worship me,

who has told you to tramp around in my courtyard while you perform all those rituals?

¹³Stop bringing to me those offerings, because they are useless to me;

I am disgusted with the incense that the priests burn!

And your feasts to celebrate the new moon each month and your Sabbath days and your other festivals—

I hate them because of the wicked things that you do!

¹⁴I hate all your celebrations of the new moon and the other festivals that you celebrate.

They are like a heavy burden that I am tired of carrying.

¹⁵So when you lift up your hands to pray to me,

I will not look at you.

Even if you pray to me often,

I will not listen to you,

because it is as though your hands are covered with the blood of people whom you have killed.

¹⁶Wash your hearts and become clean!

Get rid of your evil behavior!

Stop doing things that are wrong!

¹⁷Learn to do deeds that are good and

try to cause people to do what is just.

Stop people from mistreating others,
and defend orphans and widows when people take them to court.”

18Yahweh says, “You need to think about what you do.

Even though your sins are like scarlet red,
they will be as white as snow;

though your sins are like crimson red,
they will be as white as sheeps’ wool.

19If you are willing to obey me,
you will eat good food from the land.

20But if you turn away from me and rebel against me,
your enemies will slaughter you.”

That will happen because Yahweh said it.

21At one time you people of Jerusalem faithfully worshiped only Yahweh,
but now you have become like prostitutes who are not faithful to any husband.

The people there always acted justly and righteously,
but now your city is full of murderers.

22Your silver is no longer pure,
and your wine has become mixed with water.

23Your leaders are rebels;
they are friends of thieves.
They all want to get money
and make others to give them gifts in order to decide cases in court in their favor.

They do not defend orphans in court,
and they do not help widows to get what they should receive.

24Therefore Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the mighty God of Israel, says,
“I will get revenge against those who are against me,
and avenge myself on my enemies.

25I will raise my fist to strike you,
and I will punish you severely,
as though you were silver and I needed to heat you very greatly to melt you and get rid of the impurities.

26After that happens, I will give you good judges like you had in the past.

You will have wise counselors like you had long ago.
Then people will call your city a city where people act righteously,
a faithful city.”

²⁷Because the people of Jerusalem will do what is fair,
Yahweh will restore their city,
and he will save those who repent
because of their righteousness.

²⁸But he will crush rebels and sinners,
and those who forsake him will disappear.

²⁹“You will be ashamed because you worshiped idols under the oak trees that you thought were sacred,
and you will be disgraced because you worshiped idols in the gardens that you loved so much.

³⁰You will be like a very large tree that has withered leaves,
like a garden that has dried up because it has no water.

³¹Those among you who are very strong will become like dry wood,
and the work they do will be like a spark.
Both they and the evil things that they do will burn up,
and no one will be able to put out the fire.”

Chapter 2

¹This is a message that Yahweh gave to Isaiah son of Amoz, in a vision about Judah and Jerusalem.

²In the future, the hill on which Yahweh’s temple is built
will be the most important place on the earth.
It will be as though it is the highest mountain,
as though it has been raised up above all other hills,
and people from all over the world will come there.

³People from many people groups will say to each other,
“Come, let us go up to the hill,
to the temple of Yahweh,
to worship the God whom Jacob worshiped.
There he will teach us what he desires us to know,
in order that our behavior will please him.”

They will teach us in Jerusalem;
we will learn there what Yahweh desires to tell us.

⁴Yahweh will listen to the disputes between nations,
and he will settle their arguments.

Then, instead of fighting against each other, they will hammer their swords into plow blades,
and they will hammer their spears into pruning knives.

The armies of the nations will no longer fight against each other,
and they will not even train men to fight in battles.

⁵You descendants of Jacob,
let us behave in the way that we should because Yahweh is with us!

⁶Yahweh, you have abandoned us, your people
who are descendants of Jacob,
because everywhere your people practice the customs of people who live east of Israel.
They also perform rituals to find out what will happen in the future, like the people in Philistia do.
They make agreements with foreigners who do not know Yahweh.

⁷Israel is full of silver and gold;
there are very many treasures here.
The land is full of war horses
and war chariots.

⁸But the land is also full of idols;
the people worship things that they have made with their own hands.

⁹So now they will be humbled;
Yahweh will disgrace them.
Yahweh, do not forgive them!

¹⁰All you people should crawl into the caves in the rock cliffs!
You should hide in pits in the ground
because you will be afraid of Yahweh
and of his glorious and awesome power.

¹¹Yahweh will cause you people to no longer be arrogant
and he will stop you from being proud.
On that day people will praise and honor only Yahweh.

¹²Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has chosen a day when he will judge those who are proud, every one of them, and he will humble them.

¹³He will get rid of all those who think others should admire them, like the tall cedar trees in Lebanon, and like all the great oak trees in the region of Bashan.

¹⁴He will get rid of all those who think they are as great as all the high hills, as great as the high mountains.

¹⁵He will get rid of all those who think that they are like high towers and high strong walls inside of which they are safe.

¹⁶He will destroy all those who are rich because they own big ships that carry goods to other countries and own other beautiful ships, too.

¹⁷He will cause people to no longer be arrogant, and he will cause them to stop being proud.

On that day people will praise and honor only Yahweh.

¹⁸All idols will disappear then.

¹⁹When Yahweh comes to terrify the people on the earth, they will run to hide in caves in rock cliffs and in holes in the ground, because they are afraid of Yahweh and of his glorious and awesome power.

²⁰On that day, people will get rid of all their gold and silver idols that they made to worship, and they will throw them to the bats and rats.

²¹Then they will crawl into caves and hide in holes in the cliffs.

They will try to escape from Yahweh, who is coming to punish them; They will fear what he will do because he is glorious and awesome, when he comes to terrify the people on the earth.

²²So do not trust that people will save you, because they are as powerless as a person's breath.

People certainly cannot help you!

Chapter 3

¹Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, is about to take away from Jerusalem and other places in Judah everything that you depend on—
all food and water.

²He will take away heroes and other soldiers,
judges and prophets,
people who do rituals to find out what will happen in the future and the elders,

³army officers and other important people,
advisors, skilled craftsmen, and those who perform rituals of magic.

⁴Yahweh says, "I will appoint boys to be leaders;
young children will rule.

⁵People will treat each other cruelly:
people will fight against their neighbors.
Young people will say shameful things against older people,
and vulgar people will sneer at people whom others usually honor.

⁶At that time, someone will grab one of his brothers in his father's house and say to him,
'You still have a coat; people respect you for that.
So you be our leader!
You rule this city, which is now a pile of ruins.'

⁷But his brother will reply,
'No, I cannot help you,
because I do not have any extra food or clothes in this house.
So do not make me your leader!'"

⁸The people in Jerusalem and the other towns in Judah have disobeyed God,
because everything that the people do and say there opposes Yahweh,
the powerful and glorious one,
and they refuse to obey him.
They rebel against him.

⁹They even show on their faces that they oppose Yahweh.
They are proud about their sins,
like the people of Sodom were long ago;

they do not try to hide their sins; they talk about them.

Because of their sins, terrible things will certainly happen to them.

¹⁰You people must tell the righteous people that good things will happen to them;

they will enjoy the blessings that they will receive for their good deeds.

¹¹But terrible things will happen to wicked people;

Yahweh will pay them back for the evil things that they have done.

¹²Youths who have become leaders treat my people cruelly,

and women rule over my people.

My people, your leaders are misleading you;

they are causing you to do all kinds of evil things.

¹³It is as though Yahweh had taken his place in a courtroom

and were ready to accuse his people of breaking the covenant between themselves and him.

¹⁴He will stand up to declare why he should punish the elders and rulers of his people;

he says, "The people of Israel are like a vineyard that I planted,

but you leaders have made unable to bear any fruit.

Your houses are full of things that you have stolen from poor people.

¹⁵You should stop making my people suffer.

It is as though you were pushing the faces of poor people into the ground."

That is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says.

¹⁶Yahweh says this:

"The women of Jerusalem are haughty;

they walk around sticking their chins out,

and flirting with men with their eyes.

They walk with tiny steps

with bracelets on their ankles that jingle."

¹⁷So the Lord will cause sores to be on their heads,

and he will cause those beautiful women in Jerusalem to become bald.

¹⁸At the time that the Lord does that, he will also cause others to take away from the women of Jerusalem all of the beautiful things they like to wear—the ornaments on their ankles and their headbands, their crescent necklaces,

¹⁹their earrings and bracelets and veils, ²⁰their scarves and ankle bracelets and sashes, their perfumes and

charms. ²¹He will cause others to remove the women's finger rings and nose rings, ²²their nice robes and capes and veils and purses, ²³their mirrors and nice linen clothes, the ornaments for their heads, and the shawls.

²⁴Instead of smelling nice from perfume, they will stink;

instead of beautiful sashes, they will have ropes around their waists.

Instead of having fancy hairdos, they will be bald.

Instead of fancy robes, they will wear rough sackcloth,

Instead of beauty, scars of branding.

²⁵Your men will die by their enemies' swords,

and your soldiers will also die in battle.

²⁶People will mourn and cry at the gates of the city.

The city will be like a woman who sits on the ground because all her friends have deserted her.

Chapter 4

¹When that happens, there will be very few unmarried men.

So seven unmarried women will grab one man and say,

"Allow us all to marry you!

We will provide our own food and clothing.

All that we want is to no longer be disgraced because of not being married."

²But some day, Israel will be very beautiful and great. The people of Israel who will still be there will be very proud of the wonderful crops that will grow in their land. ³All the people who will remain in Jerusalem, who did not die when the enemy destroyed Jerusalem, will belong to the Lord—all those whose names are listed among those who live there. ⁴That will happen when the Lord washes away the guilt of the women of Jerusalem, and when he stops the violence on the streets of Jerusalem by punishing the people of Jerusalem. When he does that, it will be like a fire that burns up all the impure things. ⁵Then Yahweh will send a cloud of smoke during the days and a flaming fire during the nights to cover Jerusalem and all those who gather there; it will be like a canopy over God's glorious presence in the city. ⁶It will shelter the people from the sun during the daytime and protect them when there are windstorms and rain.

Chapter 5

¹Now I will sing a song about Yahweh, my dear friend,

and about his vineyard.

The vineyard was on a very fertile hillside.

²My friend plowed the ground and cleared away the stones.

Then he planted very good grapevines on that ground.

In the middle of the vineyard, he built a watchtower,

and he dug a winepress.

Then he waited each year to harvest some good grapes,

but the vines produced only sour grapes.

³Now this is what my friend Yahweh says:

“You people of Jerusalem and other places in Judah,

You are like my vineyard;

so you judge which of us has done what is right.

⁴What more could I have done for you

than what I have already done?

I expected you to be doing good deeds,

so it is disgusting that you were doing only evil deeds

like the vineyard that produced only sour grapes!

⁵So, I will now tell you what I will do to Judah, the place that is like my vineyard.

I will cut down the hedges,

and my vineyard will become a pasture.

I will tear down the walls of the cities

and allow wild animals to trample the land.

⁶I will cause it to become a wasteland

where the vines are not pruned and the ground is not hoed.

It will be a place where briars and thorns grow.

And I will command that no rain will fall on it.”

⁷The nation of Israel is like the vineyard of Yahweh who is commander of the angel armies.

The people of Judah are like the garden that was pleasing to him.

He expected them to be doing what is just,

but instead, what he saw was people murdering others.

He expected that they would be doing righteous deeds,

but instead, he heard people shouting for someone to help them, because others were attacking them.

⁸Terrible things will happen to those who keep acquiring houses and fields

without paying attention to the laws about who owns the land.

You use your riches to gain more and more property,

and soon there is no more property for others to buy,

and you would be the only land owners there are in that place.

⁹But I heard Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, solemnly declare this:

“Some day, many houses will have no one to live in them,

even the large and beautiful homes will be empty.

¹⁰The land that grows vines in this place should require ten pairs of oxen to work them, but this land would not produce enough grapes to make even twenty liters of wine.

When ten baskets of seed are sown on that land, that land will only produce one basket of grain at harvest time.”

¹¹Terrible things will happen to those who get up early each morning to begin drinking alcoholic drinks, and who stay awake until late at night drinking a lot more wine until they are completely drunk.

¹²They have big parties and provide lots of wine. At their parties, there are people playing harps and lyres and tambourines and flutes, but they never think about what Yahweh does or appreciate what he has created.

¹³So my people will be exiled far away because they do not know about me. Those who are now very important and honored will starve, and the other people will die from thirst.

¹⁴It is as though the place where the dead people are is eagerly looking for more Israelite people, opening its mouth to swallow them, and a huge number of people will be thrown into that place, including their leaders as well as a noisy crowd of people who enjoy living in Jerusalem.

¹⁵Yahweh will humble everyone; he will humble everyone who is proud.

¹⁶But everyone will honor Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the Holy One, because he has acted justly. God will show that he is holy by doing righteous deeds.

¹⁷Then sheep and lambs will be able to find good grass to eat; they will pass through the ruined places to eat the grass.

¹⁸Some people who are working hard to sin, working as hard as if they were dragging behind them the wrong and useless things that they are doing. Terrible things will happen to them!

¹⁹They make fun of God and say to him,

"Quickly do something to punish us!

We want to see what you will do.

You, the Holy One of Israel, should do what you are planning to do,
because we want to know what it is."

²⁰Terrible things will happen to those who say

that evil is good, and that good is evil,
that darkness is light and that light is darkness,
that what is bitter is sweet and what is sweet is bitter.

²¹Terrible things will happen to those who think that they are wise
and that they are very clever.

²²Terrible things will happen to those who think that they are heroes
because they are able to drink lots of wine,
and who boast about being able to mix good alcoholic drinks.

²³If people offer these corrupt judges money so they will not punish the wicked,
they accept that money.

These same judges punish innocent people.

²⁴Therefore, just like fires burn up stubble
and dry grass shrivels up and quickly burns in flames,
it will be as though those people have roots that will rot
and have flowers that will wither.

That will happen because they rejected the laws of Yahweh, commander of the angel armies;
they have despised the messages of the Holy One of Israel.

²⁵That is why Yahweh is extremely angry with his people;
it is as though his hand is raised and he is ready to smash them.

When he does that, the mountains will shake,
and the corpses of people will be scattered in the streets like manure.

But even when that happens, Yahweh will still be very angry;
he will be ready to punish his people again.

²⁶Yahweh will send a signal to summon armies of nations far away;
it is as though he will whistle to those soldiers who are in very remote places on the earth.
They will come very swiftly toward Jerusalem.

²⁷They will not get tired or stumble.

They will not stop to rest or to sleep.

None of their belts will be loose,

and none of them will have sandals with broken straps,

so they will all be ready to fight in battles.

²⁸Their arrows will be sharp,

and their bows will be ready to shoot those arrows in a battle.

Because their horses pull the chariots fast, sparks will shoot out from their hooves,

and the wheels of the chariots will spin like whirlwinds.

²⁹They will roar like fierce lions

that growl and then pounce on the animals they want to kill;

they will carry them off,

and no one will be able to rescue them.

³⁰Similarly, your enemies will roar over the people they are about to kill,

like the sea roars.

On that day, if someone looks across the land,

he will see only people who are in darkness and distress;

it will be as though even the sunlight is hidden by dark clouds.

Chapter 6

¹During the year that King Uzziah died, Yahweh showed me a vision. In the vision, I saw Yahweh sitting on a throne, high above everyone else. He was wearing a very long robe that covered the floor of the temple. ²Above him were hovering several winged creatures. Each of them had six wings. They covered their faces with two of their wings, they covered their feet with two of their wings, and they flew using two of their wings. ³They were calling to each other, saying,

“Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, is holy;

he is completely holy!

The entire earth is filled with his glory.”

⁴When they spoke, the sound of their cries caused the foundation beneath the doorposts of the temple to shake, and the temple was filled with smoke.

⁵Then I said, “Terrible things will happen to me, because everything that I say is sinful, and I live among people who constantly say sinful things. I will be destroyed because I have seen Yahweh, commander of the angel armies!”

⁶Then one of the winged creatures took a hot coal from the altar, using a pair of tongs. He flew to me ⁷and touched my lips with the coal. Then he said, “Look, this coal has touched your lips. Now your guilt is ended, and your sins are forgiven.”

⁸Then I heard Yahweh asking, "Whom shall I send to be a messenger to my people? Who will go and speak for us?"
I replied, "I am here. Send me!"

⁹Then he said,

"You will go and say to the people of Israel,
'Listen carefully to what I say, but you will not understand it.
You will look very carefully,
but you will not understand.'

¹⁰I will cause you people to be unable to care;
and I will cause you people to not be able to hear,
and I will cause you people to not be able to see.
Otherwise you would see with your eyes and you would recognize what it is you are looking at,
and you would hear with your ears and be able to understand what you have heard,
and you would care deeply and with understanding,
and you would turn to me so I might save you and not punish you."

¹¹Then I said, "How long do you want me to continue to do that?"

He replied, "Do it until their cities are ruined by their enemies,
until no one is living in their houses,
do it until all the crops are stolen from their fields
and the fields are ruined.

¹²Do it until Yahweh has exiled everyone far away,
and the whole land of Israel is deserted.

¹³If even one tenth of the people survive and stay there,
their enemies will invade the land again and burn everything.
But just like when they cut down an oak tree and leave a stump, and new shoots grow from that,
the people who remain in this land will be a group that is set apart for me."

Chapter 7

¹Ahaz was the son of Jotham and grandson of Uzziah. During the time that Ahaz was the king of Judah, King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah of Israel marched with their armies to attack Jerusalem. But they could not conquer it.

²Before they attacked, everyone in the palace in Jerusalem heard news that Aram and Israel were now allies. So King Ahaz and the people over whom he ruled were extremely afraid; they were shaking like trees shake in a windstorm.

³Then Yahweh said to me, "Take your son Shear-Jashub, and go to talk with King Ahaz. He is at the end of the aqueduct that brings water into the upper reservoir, near the road to the place where women wash clothes. ⁴Tell Ahaz to stop worrying. Tell him that he does not need to be afraid of those two kings, Rezin and Pekah. They are very angry with Judah, but they are unable to harm his country any more than completely burned-out coals could harm him. ⁵Yes, they are planning against him and saying, ⁶'We will attack Judah and conquer it. Then we will appoint Tabeel's son to be the king of Judah.' ⁷But this is what Yahweh, the Lord, says:

'It will not happen;

They will not conquer Jerusalem!

⁸The capital of Aram is Damascus,

but Damascus is ruled only by its unimportant King Rezin.

And as for Israel, within sixty-five years it will be conquered and completely destroyed.

⁹Israel's capital is Samaria, and Samaria is ruled only by its insignificant King Pekah.

So you do not need to be afraid of those two countries!

But you must trust me, because if you do not trust me firmly,

you will be defeated.'"

¹⁰Later, Yahweh gave me another message to tell to King Ahaz. ¹¹He said to tell him, "Request me, Yahweh your God, to do something that will enable you to be sure that I will help you. What you request can be in a place that is as high as the sky or as low as the place where the dead people are."

¹²But when I told that to the king, he refused. He said, "No, I will not ask Yahweh to do something to prove that he will help us."

¹³Then I said to him, "You people who are descendants of King David, listen! You are causing me to be tired of being patient. Are you also going to cause my God to stop being patient with you? ¹⁴Yahweh himself will do something for you to prove that he will help you. Listen to this: A young woman will become pregnant and give birth to a son. She will name him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.' ¹⁵By the time that child is old enough to eat curds and honey, he will be able to reject what is evil and choose what is good. ¹⁶And before that child is old enough to do that, the lands of the two kings that you are very afraid of will be deserted. ¹⁷But then Yahweh will cause you and your family and your entire nation to experience terrible disasters. Those disasters will be worse than any disasters that have occurred since the country of Israel separated from Judah. Yahweh will cause the army of the king of Assyria to attack you!"

¹⁸At that time, it will be as though Yahweh will whistle to summon the army from the south of Egypt as well as the army of Assyria. They will come and surround your country like flies and bees. ¹⁹They will all come and settle everywhere—in the narrow valleys and caves in the rock cliffs, on land where there are thornbushes as well as on the fertile land. ²⁰At that time Yahweh will hire the king of Assyria to come with his army from east of the Euphrates River. They will get rid of everything in your land—the crops and the people. They will destroy everything thoroughly; it will be like a barber shaving not only a man's hair but his beard and the hair on his legs. ²¹When that happens, a farmer will be able to keep alive only one young cow and two goats. ²²However, those animals will give plenty of milk, with the result that the farmer will have curds to eat. And because there will not be many people left in the land, all the people who remain there will have plenty of milk and honey. ²³Now there are many areas where there are vineyards that are worth one thousand pieces of silver, but at that time there will be only briars and thorns in those fields. ²⁴There will be only briars and thorns in the entire land, and wild animals, with the result that men will take their bows and arrows and go there to hunt and kill animals. ²⁵No one will go to where there

previously were gardens on fertile hillsides, because briars and thorns will cover those hillsides. They will be areas where only a few cattle and sheep and goats wander around searching for something to eat.

Chapter 8

¹Then Yahweh said to me, "Make a large signboard. And write clearly on it, 'Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz' which means 'quickly plunder and steal everything'." ²So I requested Uriah the high priest and Jeberekiah's son Zechariah, men who were both honest witnesses, to watch me as I was doing that.

³Then I slept with my wife, who was a prophetess, and she became pregnant and then gave birth to a son. Then Yahweh said to me, "Give him the name Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, ⁴because before he is old enough to say 'papa' or 'mama', the king of Assyria will come with his army and take away all the valuable things in Damascus and in Samaria."

⁵Yahweh spoke to me again and said, "Tell the people of Judah:

⁶I have taken good care of you people,

but you have rejected that, thinking that my help was very small,

like the small canal through which water flows from the spring of Gihon into Jerusalem.

Instead, you have been happy to request help from King Rezin and King Pekah.

⁷Therefore, I, the Lord, will soon cause the powerful army of the king of Assyria, which will be like a great flood from the Euphrates River, to attack the people of Judah.

Their soldiers will be everywhere in your country, like a river that overflows all its banks.

⁸Those soldiers will go all over Judah,

like a river whose water rises as high as a person's neck.

Their army will spread over the land quickly, like an eagle,

and they will cover your entire land!

But I, your God, will be with you!"

⁹Listen, all you people in distant countries!

You can prepare to attack Judah.

You can prepare for battle, and shout your war cries,

but your armies will be crushed!

¹⁰You can prepare for what you will do to attack Judah,

but what you plan to do will be useless!

You will not succeed,

because God is with us!

¹¹Yahweh strongly warned me not to act like the other people in Judah did. He said to me,

¹²"Do not say that everything that people do is conspiring against the government,

like other people say,
and do not be afraid of the things that other people are afraid of.

¹³I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, am the one you should consider to be holy.

I am the one you should fear,
the one you must give an account to.

¹⁴Yahweh will protect you.

But as for the other people in Israel and Judah,
Yahweh will be like a stone that causes people to stumble,
like a rock that causes them to fall down.

And as for the people of Jerusalem,
he will be like a trap or a snare.

¹⁵Many people will stumble and fall down
and never get up again.

They will experience great troubles;
they will be captured by their enemies.”

¹⁶So I say to you who are my disciples, seal up this scroll
on which I have written the messages that God has given to me,
and give his instructions to others who have accompanied me.

¹⁷I will wait to see what Yahweh will do.
He has rejected the descendants of Jacob,
but I will confidently expect him to help me.

¹⁸I and the children that Yahweh has given to me are like signs to warn the people of Israel;
we are warnings from Yahweh, commander of the angel armies,
the one who lives in his temple on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

¹⁹Some people may urge you to consult those who talk with the spirits of dead people or with those who say that they receive messages from those spirits. They whisper and mutter about what we should do in the future. But God is the one whom we should ask to guide us! It is ridiculous for people who are alive to request spirits of dead people to tell us what we should do! ²⁰Pay attention to God's instructions and teaching! If people do not say things that agree with what God teaches us, what they say is worthless. It is as though those people are in darkness. ²¹They will wander through the land, worried and hungry. And when they become very hungry, they will become very angry. They will look up toward heaven and curse God and will also curse their king. ²²They will look around the land and see only trouble and darkness and things that cause them to despair. And then they will be thrown into very black darkness.

Chapter 9

¹However, those in Judah who were distressed will not continue to suffer. Previously, Yahweh humbled the people in the land where the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali live. But in the future he will honor the people who live in the region of Galilee, along the road between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea, where many foreigners live.

²Some day in the future, it will be as though the people who walked in darkness have seen a bright light.

Yes, a bright light will shine on those who live in a land where they now have great troubles.

³Yahweh, you will cause us people in Israel to rejoice;

we will become very happy.

We will rejoice about what you have done

like people rejoice when they harvest their crops,

or like soldiers rejoice

when they divide up among themselves the things that they have captured in battle.

⁴You will cause us to no longer be slaves of those who captured us;

you will lift the heavy burdens from our shoulders.

It will be as though you have broken the weapons of those who oppressed us,

like you did when you destroyed the army of the Midian people group.

⁵The boots that the enemy soldiers wore

and their clothing which has stains of blood on them

will all be burned up;

they will be fuel for a big fire.

⁶Another reason that we will rejoice is that a special child will be born for us,

a woman will give birth to a son,

and he will be our ruler.

And his names will be 'Wonderful Counselor,' 'Mighty God,' 'Our Everlasting Father,' and 'King who causes us to have Peace.'

⁷His rule and the peace that he brings will never end.

He will rule fairly and justly,

like his ancestor King David did.

This will happen because Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, greatly desires that it happen.

⁸The Lord has warned the descendants of Jacob;

he has said that he will punish Israel.

⁹⁻¹⁰And all the people in Samaria and other places in Israel will know that,

but they are now very proud and arrogant.

They said, "Our city has been destroyed,
but we will take away the broken bricks from the ruins
and replace them with carefully cut stones.

Our sycamore fig trees have been cut down by our enemies,
but we will plant cedar trees in their place."

¹¹But Yahweh will bring the armies of Assyria, the enemies of King Rezin of Aram, to fight against Israel
and incite other nations to attack Israel.

¹²The army of Aram will come from the east,
and the army of Philistia will come from the west,
and they will destroy Israel
like a wild animal tears another animal apart and devours it.

But even after that happened, Yahweh will still be very angry with them.

He will be ready to strike them with his fist again.

¹³But even though Yahweh will punish his people like that,
they still will not return to him and worship him.

They still will not request Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, to assist them.

¹⁴Therefore, in one day Yahweh will get rid of those who are like Israel's head and those who are like its tail;
the ones who are like the top of the palm tree and the ones who are like the bottom.

¹⁵The leaders of Israel are the head,
and the prophets who tell lies are the tail.

¹⁶The leaders of the people have misled them;
they have caused the people that they are ruling to be confused.

¹⁷For that reason, Yahweh is not pleased with the young men of Israel,
and he does not even act mercifully toward the widows and orphans,
because they are all ungodly and wicked,
and they all say things that are foolish.

But Yahweh still is angry with them;
he is ready to strike them with his fist again.

¹⁸When people do wicked things,
it is like a brush fire that spreads rapidly.

It burns up not only briars and thorns;
it starts a big fire in the forests
from which clouds of smoke will rise.

¹⁹It is as though the whole land is burned black
because Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, is extremely angry with the Israelite people.
They will become like fuel for that great fire,
and no one will try to rescue even his own brother from that fire.

²⁰The Israelite people will attack their neighbors who live in houses at the right of them to get food,
but they will still be hungry.
They will kill and eat the flesh of those who live in houses at the left,
but their stomachs will still not be full.

²¹Israelites of the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim will attack each other,
and then they will both attack the people of Judah.
But even after that happens, Yahweh will still be very angry with them;
He will be ready to strike them with his fist again.

Chapter 10

¹Terrible things will happen to you judges who are unjust
and who make unfair laws.

²You refuse to help poor people,
and you do not allow them to get the things that they should get.
You allow people to steal things from widows
and do unfair things to children without fathers.

³When I punish you
by sending people from distant lands to cause you disasters,
to whom will you run to get help?
Your valuable possessions will certainly not be safe anywhere.

⁴You will be able only to stumble along as your enemies take you away with other prisoners,
or else your corpses will lie on the ground with others who have been killed.
But even after that happens,
Yahweh will still be very angry with you.

He will still be ready to strike you again with his fist.

⁵Yahweh says, "Terrible things will happen to Assyria.

It is true that their army is like a rod or a club with which I punish other nations because I am very angry with those nations.

⁶Sometimes I send the Assyrians to attack a godless nation, to fight against other people who have caused me to be angry.

I send them to capture people and to seize and take away their possessions, and to trample them like people walk on mud in the streets.

⁷But the king of Assyria does not understand; he does not realize that he is only like a weapon in my hand.

He only wants to destroy people, to get rid of many nations.

⁸He says, 'All of my army commanders will soon be kings of these nations that I conquer!

⁹We destroyed the city of Kalno as we destroyed the city of Carchemish.

We destroyed the city of Hamath as we destroyed the city of Arpad; we destroyed Samaria just like we destroyed Damascus.

¹⁰We were able to destroy all those kingdoms that were full of the images of their gods, kingdoms whose gods were stronger than the gods in Jerusalem and Samaria.

¹¹So we will defeat Jerusalem and destroy the images of gods that are there, just as we destroyed Samaria and the images that were there!

¹²But I am the Lord, and after I have used Assyria to finish what I want to do to punish the people in Jerusalem, I will punish the king of Assyria because he has been very proud and arrogant.

¹³He says, 'By my own great power I have done these things.

I have been able to do them because I am very wise and very intelligent.

My army removed the barriers at the borders of nations and carried away all their valuable things.

My mighty army has humiliated all their people.

¹⁴Like someone who reaches into a bird's nest to take away the eggs, we have taken away the treasures of other countries.

The people were not like birds that would have flapped their wings or chirp loudly to protest about their eggs being stolen;

the people did not object at all to their treasures being stolen.'

¹⁵But I am Yahweh, and I say that an ax certainly cannot boast about being stronger than the person who uses it, and a saw is not greater than the person who uses it.

A rod cannot control the one who holds it,

and a wooden club cannot lift up a person.

So the king of Assyria should not boast that he has done these things with his own wisdom and strength.

¹⁶I am the Lord Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, who will send a plague among the best soldiers of Assyria;

it will be like a fire that will kill them and get rid of their glory.

¹⁷Yahweh is like a light for the people of Israel, like a fire;

the Holy One who rules Israel is like a flame.

The soldiers of Assyria are like thorns and briars,

and Yahweh will burn them up in one day.

¹⁸There are glorious forests and fertile farmlands in Assyria, but Yahweh will completely destroy them;

they will be like a very sick person who shrivels up and then dies.

¹⁹There will be very few trees left in those forests;

even a child will be able to count them."

²⁰In the future there will be only a few people left in Israel;

not many descendants of Jacob will still be alive.

But they will no longer rely on the king of Assyria,

the king of the nation that tried to destroy them.

Instead, they will faithfully trust in Yahweh, the Holy One who rules Israel.

²¹Those Israelites will return to their mighty God.

²²Now, the people of Israel are as numerous as the grains of sand on the seashore,

but only a few of them will return from the countries to which they will be exiled.

Yahweh has decided to destroy most of the Israelites,

and that is what he must do because he is completely just.

²³Yes, the Lord Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has already decided to destroy the entire land of Israel.

²⁴This is what the Lord Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says:

"My people in Jerusalem, do not be afraid of the army of Assyria when they beat you with rods and clubs, like the men of Egypt did to your ancestors long ago.

²⁵Soon I will no longer be angry with you,

and then I will be angry with the people of Assyria and destroy them!"

²⁶Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will strike them with his whip.

He will do to them as he did when he defeated the army of the Midian people group,

and as he did when he caused the army of Egypt to drown in the Sea of Reeds.

²⁷One day in the future, Yahweh will cause the army of Assyria to stop oppressing you, his people;

he will end your suffering and your being slaves of the people of Assyria;

you will become too strong for them.

²⁸One day in the future this will be the situation: The army of Assyria has entered northern Judah near Aiath;

they have gone through Migron

and stored their supplies at Micmash, north of Jerusalem.

²⁹They have crossed through a mountain pass

and set up their tents at Geba.

People in Ramah will tremble because they are afraid.

The people of Gibeah, where King Saul was born, have all run away.

³⁰You people of Gallim will cry out for help!

They will shout to the people of the city of Laish near Jerusalem to warn them!

The people of Anathoth will suffer a lot.

³¹The people of Madmenah north of Jerusalem are all running away,

and the people of Gebim close to Jerusalem are trying to hide.

³²The soldiers of Assyria will stop at the city of Nob outside Jerusalem.

They will shake their fists

as they threaten the people on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.

³³But listen to this! Yahweh, commander of the angel armies,

with his great power will destroy the mighty army of Assyria.

It is as though they are a huge tree that he will cut down.

³⁴He will destroy the soldiers of Assyria

as men use big axes to cut down the tall trees in the forests of Lebanon.

Chapter 11

¹Like a new branch often grows from the stump of a tree,

there will be a descendant of King David who will be a new king.

²The Spirit of Yahweh will always be with him.

The Spirit will enable him to be wise and to understand many things;

The Spirit will enable him to decide what is good to do and will give him great power.

The Spirit will enable him to know Yahweh and to revere him.

³He will be glad to obey Yahweh.

He will not decide whether someone is righteous or not only by seeing what that person looks like,
or by listening to what others say about that person.

⁴He will judge the cases of needy people fairly;

and he will act justly toward poor people.

He will punish evil people as a result of what he decides;

he will get rid of wicked people because of the evil things they have done.

⁵He will always act righteously;

the good things he does will be like a belt around his waist.

He will always speak what is true;

the true words he speaks will be like a sash around his waist.

⁶When he becomes king, wolves and lambs will live together peacefully;

leopards, instead of killing baby goats,

will lie down with them.

Similarly, fat, healthy calves and lions will eat food together;

and a young child will take care of them.

⁷Cows and bears will eat together;

bear cubs and calves will lie down together.

Lions will not eat other animals;

instead, they will eat hay like cows do.

⁸Babies will play safely near the holes where cobra snakes live;

small children will even put their hands into nests of poisonous snakes,

and the snakes will not harm them.

⁹No creatures will harm or kill other creatures on Mount Zion, my holy hill;

and the earth will be filled with people who know me,

as the seas are full of water.

¹⁰At that time, a descendant of King David will hold up a flag

to signal to the people of all people groups that they should gather around him;
they will come to him to get his advice,
and the place where he lives will be glorious.

¹¹At that time, Yahweh will reach out his hand as he did long ago;
he will enable those who had been exiled from Israel to return home,
from Assyria, from northern Egypt, from southern Egypt,
from Ethiopia, from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath, and from all the distant countries near the sea.

¹²Yahweh will raise his flag among all the people groups,
and he will gather together the people of Israel who were exiled long ago.
He will gather from very distant places on the earth
the people of Judah whom he had scattered to those places.

¹³Then, the people of Israel and the people of Judah will not be jealous of each other any longer,
and they will no longer be enemies of each other.

¹⁴Their armies will join together to attack the people of Philistia to the west.
And together they will attack nations to the east;
they will defeat those nations and take away all their valuable possessions.
They will capture the areas of Edom and Moab,
and they will rule the people of the Ammon people group.

¹⁵Yahweh will make a dry road through the sea near Egypt.
It will be as though he will wave his hand over the Euphrates River
and send a strong wind to cause it to divide into seven streams,
with the result that people will be able to walk across those streams.

¹⁶Because he will make a highway for his people who are living in Assyria,
they will be able to return to their own land,
just like long ago he made a path for the people of Israel
so that they could go through the water
when they left Egypt.

Chapter 12

¹At that time, you people of Jerusalem will sing this song:
"Yahweh, we praise you!

Previously, you were angry with us,
but you are not angry now
and you have comforted us.

²Amazingly, you have come to save us,
so we will trust in you and not be afraid.

Yahweh our God, you enable us to be strong;
you are the one about whom we sing;
you have rescued us from our enemies.”

³You, his people, will greatly rejoice because he has rescued you,
like you enjoy drinking water from a fountain.

⁴At that time you will say,
“We should thank Yahweh! We should praise him!
We should tell the people of all the people groups what he has done;
we should enable them to know that he is very great!

⁵We should sing to Yahweh, because he has done wonderful things.
We should enable everyone in the world to know it!

⁶You people of Jerusalem, shout joyfully to praise Yahweh,
because he is the great Holy One whom we Israelite people worship,
and he lives among us!”

Chapter 13

¹I, Isaiah son of Amoz, received from Yahweh this message about the city of Babylon:

²Lift up a flag on the bare top of a hill,
to signal that an army should come to attack Babylon.
Shout to them and wave your hand to signal to them
that they should march through the city gates into the palaces of the proud rulers of Babylon!

³Yahweh says, “I have commanded those who are set apart to do this work for me—
I have summoned the warriors whom I have chosen to punish the people of Babylon because I am very angry with
them,
and those soldiers will be very proud when they do that.”

⁴Listen to the noise on the mountains,
which is the noise of a huge army marching!

It is the noise made by people of many people groups shouting.

Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has summoned this army to gather together.

⁵They come from countries that are far away,

from the most remote places on the earth.

They are like weapons that Yahweh will use to punish the people with whom he is very angry, and to destroy the entire country of Babylonia.

⁶You people of Babylon will scream because you will be terrified,

because it will be the time that Yahweh has determined,

the time for the all-powerful God to destroy your city.

⁷Because that will happen, all of your people will be very afraid,

with the result that they will be unable even to lift their arms.

⁸All of you will be terrified.

You will have severe pains

like a woman has when she is giving birth to a baby.

You will look at each other helplessly,

and it will show on your faces that you feel horror.

⁹Listen to this, you people of Babylon: The day that Yahweh has chosen to act is near,

the day on which he will furiously and fiercely punish you because he is very angry with you.

He will cause your land of Babylonia to be desolate,

and he will destroy all the sinners in it.

¹⁰When that happens, none of the stars will shine.

When the sun rises, it will be dark,

and there will be no light from the moon at night.

¹¹Yahweh says, "I will punish everyone in the world for the evil things that they do;

I will punish the wicked people for the sins that they have committed.

I will stop arrogant people from being proud,

and I will stop cruel people from being so arrogant.

¹²And because I will cause most people to die,

people will be harder to find than gold,

harder to find than fine gold from Ophir in Arabia.

¹³I will shake the sky,

and the earth will also move out of its place.

That will happen when I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, punish wicked people, when I show them that I am extremely angry with them.

14All the foreigners in Babylon will run around like deer that are being hunted, like sheep that do not have a shepherd.

They will try to find other people from their countries, and then they will escape from Babylon and return to their own countries.

15Anyone who is captured in Babylon will be killed by their enemies' swords.

16Their little children will be dashed to pieces on the rocks while their parents watch; their enemies will steal everything valuable from their houses and will force their wives to sleep with them.

17Look! I am going to incite the people of Media to attack Babylon.

The army of Media will attack Babylon, even if they are offered silver or gold if they promise to not attack it.

18With their arrows, the soldiers of Media will shoot the young men of Babylon; they will not even act mercifully toward infants or children!"

19Babylon has been a very beautiful city; all the people of Babylonia have been very proud of Babylon, their capital city; but God will destroy Babylon, like he destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

20No one will ever live in Babylon again.

It will be deserted forever.

Nomads will refuse to set up their tents there; shepherds will not bring their flocks of sheep to rest there.

21Animals that live in the desert will be there; jackals will live in the ruins of the houses.

Owls will live in the ruins, and ostriches and wild goats will romp around there.

22Hyenas will howl in the ruined towers, and jackals will make their dens in the ruins of the palaces that were previously very beautiful.

The time when Babylon will be destroyed is very near;

Babylon will not exist much longer.

Chapter 14

¹But Yahweh will act mercifully toward the Israelite people; he will choose the people of Israel to be his people again, and he will allow them to return here and live in their own land again. Then people from many other countries will come here and unite with the Israelite people. ²People of other nations will help them to return to their own land, and those who come from other countries will work for the Israelite people. Those who captured people of Israel will be captured by Israelite soldiers, and the people of Israel will rule over the people who previously oppressed them.

³Some day Yahweh will free you Israelite people from suffering and trouble and from being afraid, and from being cruelly treated as slaves. ⁴When that happens, you will make fun of the king of Babylon by singing a song like this:

“You treated us cruelly, but that has ended!

You insulted others and made them suffer, but you can do this no longer!

⁵You evil ruler, Yahweh has destroyed your power,
and you will oppress people no longer!

⁶You attacked people many times
because you were very angry with them,
and you subdued other nations
by causing them to suffer without stopping.

⁷But soon everything will be quiet and peaceful on the earth.
Everyone will sing again!

⁸It will be as though even the trees in the forests will joyfully sing this song,
the cyprus trees and the cedar trees in Lebanon will sing it:
‘You have been overthrown,
and now no one comes to chop us down.’

⁹The dead people are all eagerly waiting for you to go to the place where they are.
The spirits of the world leaders
will be delighted to welcome you;
those who were kings of many nations before they died
will stand up to welcome you.

¹⁰They will all shout to you together,
‘Now you are as weak as we are!’

¹¹You were very proud and powerful,
but all that ended when you died,
along with the sounds of harps being played in your palace.

Now in your grave maggots will be under you like a sheet,
and worms will cover you like a blanket.'

12You have disappeared from the earth like a star that fell from the sky;
you were very well known,
like the morning star is seen by everyone;
you destroyed many nations,
but now you have been destroyed.

13You proudly said to yourself, 'I will ascend to heaven, to my throne above God's stars.
I will rule on the mountain where the gods gather together, far in the north.

14I will ascend above the clouds and become like God himself!

15But you were not able to do that;
Instead, you were carried down to your grave,
and you went to the place where the dead people are.

16The other dead people there stare at you;
they wonder what happened to you.
They say, 'Is this the man who caused the earth to shake
and caused the people in many kingdoms to tremble?

17Is this the man who tried to cause the world to become a desert,
who conquered its cities and did not allow the people whom he captured to return to their homes?'

18All the kings of the earth who have died were greatly honored when they were buried.

19Someone will cast you aside, but not into a grave, like a branch that they throw away.

The dead cover you like a garment, those pierced by the sword, who go down to be among the stones where the dead rest.

20Your dead body will not be buried with them
because you have destroyed your land
and have caused your own people to be killed.
The descendants of wicked people like you will never be spoken of again."

21People will say, "Slaughter this man's children
because of the sins that their ancestors committed!
Do not allow them to become rulers, and conquer all the nations in the world,
and fill the world with the cities that they rule!"

²²This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says:

"I myself will cause Babylon to be conquered.

I will get rid of Babylon and its people and their descendants.

²³I will cause Babylon to be a place where owls live,

a place full of swamps;

I will destroy it completely

as though I were sweeping it with a broom.

That is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, say."

²⁴Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has also solemnly promised this:

"The things that I have planned will surely happen.

²⁵When the army of Assyria is in my land of Israel,

I will crush them.

It will be as though I had trampled them on my mountains.

My people will no longer be the slaves of the people of Assyria;

It will be as though I had taken away the burdens that were on their shoulders.

²⁶There is a plan for everyone on the earth,

a plan to show the power of Yahweh to punish all the nations.

²⁷Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has spoken,

and no one can change his mind.

When Yahweh raises his fist to strike Assyria,

no one will be able to stop him."

²⁸I received this message from Yahweh during the year that King Ahaz died:

²⁹Do not rejoice, all you people of Philistia, that the enemy army that attacked you has been defeated

and that their king is dead.

He was as dangerous as a snake,

but there will be another king,

who will be more dangerous than a cobra;

he will be like a quick-moving poisonous snake.

³⁰Those of my people who are very poor will take care of their flocks of sheep,

and the needy people will lie down safely,

but I will cause you people of Philistia who are still alive

to die from famine.

³¹So, you people of Philistia, wail at the gates of your cities!

You should be extremely afraid,

because a very powerful army will come from the north to attack you;

their chariots will stir up the dust like a cloud of smoke.

Each of their soldiers is ready to fight.

³²If messengers from Philistia come to us Israelite people,

this is what we must tell them:

“Yahweh has created Jerusalem, not Philistia,

and his people who are oppressed will be safe inside the walls of Jerusalem.”

Chapter 15

¹Isaiah received this message from Yahweh about the Moab people group:

In one night two important cities in Moab, Ar and Kir, will be destroyed.

²The people of Dibon, the capital city, will go to their temple to mourn;

they will go to their high places set on the hilltops, and there they will weep.

They will wail because of what happened to Nebo and Medeba in the south;

they will all shave the hair of their heads, and the men will cut off their beards to show that they are grieving.

³In the streets people will wear rough sackcloth,

and on their flat rooftops and in the city plazas all people will wail

with tears streaming down their faces.

⁴The people of the city of Heshbon and the towns of Elealeh in the north of Moab will cry out;

people as far away as the town of Jahaz in the south will hear them wailing.

Therefore the soldiers of Moab will tremble and cry out,

and they will be very afraid.

⁵Yahweh feels very sorry for the people of Moab;

they will flee to the towns of Zoar and Eglath Shelishiyah in the far south.

They will cry as they walk up to the town of Luhith.

All along the road to the town of Horonaim people will mourn

because their country has been destroyed.

⁶The water in the Valley of Nimrim will dry up.

The grass there will be withered;
the green plants will all be gone,
and there will be nothing left that is green.

⁷The people will pick up their possessions
and carry them across the brook of the Willows.

⁸Throughout the country of Moab, people will be crying;
people as far away as Eglaim in the south and Beer Elim in the north will hear them wailing.

⁹The stream near Dimon will become red from the blood of people who have been killed,
but I will cause the people of Moab to experience even more trouble:
lions will attack those who are trying to escape from Moab
and will also attack the people who remain in that country.

Chapter 16

¹The rulers of Moab will say to each other,

“We must send some lambs from the city of Sela as a gift to the ruler of Judah to persuade him to not allow his army to attack us anymore.

We should send them through the desert to the king in Jerusalem.”

²The women of Moab will be left alone at the fords of the Arnon River;
they will be like birds that have been pushed out of their nests.

³They will cry out, “Help us!

Tell us what we should do!

Protect us completely,

we who are running away from our enemies,

and do not betray us.

⁴Allow those of us who are fleeing from Moab to stay with you;

hide us from our enemies who want to destroy us!

Some day there will be no one to oppress us,

and our enemies will stop destroying our land.”

⁵Then Yahweh will appoint someone to be king

who will be a descendant of King David.

As this man rules, he will be merciful and truthful.

He will always do what is fair

and quickly do what is righteous.

⁶We people of Judah have heard about the people of Moab;
we have heard that they are very proud and conceited;
they are insolent,
but what they say about themselves is not true.

⁷Some day all the people in Moab will weep.
They will all mourn,
because there will be no more raisin cakes in the city of Kir Hareseth.
But more than the cakes, they mourn for the people who lived there, who were all killed.

⁸The crops in the fields of Heshbon will wither,
and the vineyards of Sibmah will wither also.
The armies of other nations will destroy Moab,
which is like a beautiful grapevine
whose branches spread north to Jazer,
and east to the desert.

Its branches spread very far west,
to the west side of the Dead Sea.

⁹So I will weep for Jazer
and for the grapevines of Sibmah.

I will shed tears for all of you.

I will cry because people will no longer shout joyfully, like they usually do
when they gather the fruit that ripens in the summer and the other crops.

¹⁰People will no longer be glad at harvest time.

No one will sing in the vineyards;
no one will shout joyfully.

No one will tread on grapes to get grape juice for wine;
there will be nothing to shout about joyfully.

¹¹I cry in my inner being for Moab;
my groaning is like a sad song played on a harp.

I am sad in my inner being for Kir Hareseth.

¹²The people of Moab will go and pray at their high places,

but that will not help them.

They will cry out to their gods in their temples,

but no one will be able to rescue them.

¹³Yahweh has already spoken those things about Moab. ¹⁴But now he says that exactly three years from now, he will destroy all the things that the people of Moab have been proud of. Even though they have a huge number of people in Moab now, only a few people will remain alive, and they will be weak.

Chapter 17

¹Isaiah received this message from Yahweh about Damascus, the capital of Aram:

“Listen carefully! Damascus will no longer be a city;

it will be only a heap of ruins!

²The towns near the city of Aroer will be abandoned.

Flocks of sheep will eat grass in the streets and lie down there,

and there will be no one to chase them away.

³The cities in Israel will not have walls around them to protect them.

The power of the kingdom of Damascus will be ended,

and the few people who will remain in Aram will be disgraced like the people in Israel were disgraced.”

That is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says.

⁴“At that time, Israel will become insignificant.

It will be like a fat person who has become very thin.

⁵The entire land will be like a field where the harvesters have cut all the grain;

there will be nothing left,

like the fields in the Valley of Rephaim after all the crops have been harvested.

⁶Only a few of the Israelite people will remain,

like the few olives that remain on the top of a tree after the workers have shaken all the other olives to the ground.

There will be only two or three olives in the top branches,

or four or five olives on the other branches.”

That is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says.

⁷Then at that time, you people of Israel will trust in God, your creator,

the Holy One of Israel.

⁸You will no longer seek to get help from your idols

or worship the idols that you have made with your own hands.

You will never again bow down in front of the poles where you worshiped the goddess Asherah.

You will never again worship at the high places that you have built to burn incense to idols.

⁹The largest cities in Israel will be abandoned, like the land that the Hiv and Amor people groups abandoned when the Israelites attacked them long ago. No people will live there.

¹⁰That will happen because you have stopped worshiping God,
who is like a huge rock on top of which you can be safe.

You have forgotten that he is the one who can hide you.

So now you plant very nice grapevines
and even unusual ones that come from other countries.

¹¹But even if they sprout leaves on the day you plant them,
and even if they produce blossoms on that same morning,
at harvest time, there will not be any grapes for you to pick.

All that you will get is much of agony and suffering.

¹²Listen! The armies of many nations will roar like the sea roars.

It will sound like noise of crashing waves.

¹³But even though their loud roaring will be like the sound of crashing waves,
when Yahweh rebukes them, they will run far away.

They will flee like chaff on the hills scatters when the wind blows,
like tumbleweeds scatter when a windstorm blows.

¹⁴And even though you people of Israel will be terrified,
in the morning your enemies will all be gone.

That is what will happen to those who invade our land and steal our possessions.

Chapter 18

¹Terrible things will happen to you people of Ethiopia!

In your land there are many boats at the upper part of the Nile River.

²Your rulers send ambassadors that sail quickly down the river in papyrus boats.

Tell your messengers to go quickly!

Go to people who are tall and who have smooth skins.

People everywhere are afraid of those people,
because they conquer and destroy other nations;
they are people who live in a land that rivers divide.

³You messengers must tell to the people of the world,
to all people everywhere,
“Look when the battle flag is lifted on top of the mountain,
and listen when the ram’s horn blows
to signal that the battle is about to begin.” ⁴Listen because Yahweh has told me this:
“I will watch quietly from where I live.

I will watch quietly like the heat that shimmers as it rises on a summer day.

I will work effectively like the cloud of mist that settles during the heat of harvest. ⁵Before the harvest, the farmer sees the grapevines making blossoms and the flowers growing into grapes,
and he knows that the time is right to cut off the new growth and spreading branches that keep the tree from growing strong.

In the same way I know when the time is right to take action against that nation, and I will send an army to attack it.

⁶All the soldiers in that nation’s army will be killed,
and their corpses will lie in the fields for vultures to eat their flesh in the summer.
Then wild animals will chew on their bones all during the winter.”

⁷At that time, the people of the nation that rivers divide will take gifts to Yahweh in Jerusalem.
Those people are tall and have smooth skins; people everywhere are afraid of those people,
because they conquer and destroy other nations,
will take gifts to Jerusalem, the city where Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, lives.

Chapter 19

¹Isaiah received this message from Yahweh about Egypt:

Listen to this! I, Yahweh, am coming toward Egypt,
riding on a fast-moving cloud.

The idols in Egypt will tremble when I appear,
and the people of Egypt will be extremely afraid.

²I will cause the people of Egypt to fight against each other:

men will fight against their brothers,
neighbors will fight against each other,
people of one city will fight against the people of another city,
people of one province will fight against the people of another province.

³The people of Egypt will become very discouraged,

and I will cause their plans to not be successful.

They will plead with idols and sorcerers and those who talk with spirits of dead people to tell them what they should do.

⁴Then I will enable someone who will treat them very cruelly to become their king.

That is what I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, say.

⁵Some day the water in the Nile River will dry up,
and the riverbed will become very dry.

⁶The branches of the river will all dry up.

The canals along the river will stink
because of the withering and rotting reeds and bulrushes.

⁷All the plants along the river and all the crops in the fields bordering the river will dry up;
then they will blow away and disappear.

⁸The fishermen will throw into the river lines with hooks on them and nets,
and then they will groan and be very discouraged;
they will be sad because there will be no fish in the river.

⁹Those who weave cloth from flax will not know what to do
because there will be no thread for them to weave.

¹⁰They will all despair
and be very discouraged.

¹¹The officials in the city of Zoan in northern Egypt are foolish.

The advice that they gave to the king was worthless.

Why do they continue to tell the king that they are wise,
that they are descendants of wise kings who lived long ago?

¹²King, where are your wise advisors now?

If you had any wise advisors, they could tell you what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has planned to do to Egypt!

¹³Yes, the officials of Zoan have become foolish,
and the leaders in the city of Memphis in northern Egypt have deceived themselves.

All the leaders of the people have caused their people to do wrong things.

¹⁴Yahweh has caused them to be very foolish,
with the result that in everything that they do, it is as though the people of Egypt stagger

like a drunken person staggers and slips in his own vomit.

¹⁵There is no one in Egypt, rich or poor, important or unimportant, who will be able to help them.

¹⁶At that time, the people of Egypt will be as helpless as women. They will tremble, being terrified because they know that Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has raised his fist, intending to strike them. ¹⁷The people of Egypt will be afraid of the people of Judah, and anyone who mentions Judah to them will cause them to be terrified, because that will remind them of what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, is planning to do to them.

¹⁸At that time, people in five cities in Egypt will solemnly declare that they will serve Yahweh. They will learn to speak the Hebrew language. One of those cities will be called "City of the Sun."

¹⁹At that time, there will be an altar for worshiping Yahweh in the center of Egypt, and there will be a pillar to honor Yahweh at the border between Egypt and Israel. ²⁰That will be a sign to indicate that Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, is worshiped in the land of Egypt. And when the people cry out to Yahweh to help them because others are oppressing them, he will send to them someone who will defend and rescue them. ²¹Yahweh will enable the people of Egypt to know who he is. At that time they will admit that he is God. They will worship him and bring to him offerings of grain and other sacrifices. They will solemnly promise to do things for Yahweh, and they will do what they promise. ²²After Yahweh has punished Egypt, he will cause their troubles to end. The people of Egypt will turn to Yahweh, and he will listen when they plead to him for help, and he will cause their troubles to cease.

²³At that time, there will be a highway between Egypt and Assyria. As a result, the people of Egypt will be able to travel easily to Assyria, and the people of Assyria will be able to travel easily to Egypt. And the people of both countries will worship Yahweh. ²⁴And Israel will be their ally. All three nations will be friendly to each other, and the people of Israel will be a blessing to the people of the entire world. ²⁵Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will bless them; he will say, "You people of Egypt are now my people. You people of Assyria, I have established your country. You people of Israel are the people whom I have chosen to belong to me."

Chapter 20

¹One year King Sargon of Assyria sent the chief commander of his army to take his soldiers to capture the city of Ashdod in Philistia. At that time, ²Yahweh told Isaiah, "Take off the rough sackcloth that you have been wearing and take off your sandals." So Isaiah did that, and then he walked around naked and barefoot for three years.

³Then Yahweh said this to the people of Judah: "My servant Isaiah has been walking around naked and barefoot for the past three years. That is to show the terrible disasters that I will cause the people of Egypt and Ethiopia to experience. ⁴What will happen is that the army of the king of Assyria will invade those countries and capture many of the people and take them away as their prisoners. They will force all of them, including both the young ones and the old ones, to walk naked and barefoot. They will also force them to have no clothes around their buttocks, which will cause the people of Egypt to be ashamed. ⁵Then the people of other countries who trusted that the armies of Egypt and Ethiopia would be able to help them will be very dismayed and afraid. ⁶They will say, 'We thought that the armies of Egypt and Ethiopia would help us and defend us, but they have been destroyed, so there is no way that we can escape from being destroyed by the army of the king of Assyria!'"

Chapter 21

¹Yahweh gave this message about a land soon to become a desert:

An army will soon come from the southern Judean wilderness to invade that land;

they are an army that causes their enemies to be terrified,

an army that will come sweeping through the wilderness from a terrible land.

²Yahweh showed me a terrifying vision:

In the vision I saw an army

that will betray people and steal their possessions after they conquer them.

Yahweh said, "You armies from Elam and Media, surround Babylon and prepare to attack it!

I will cause the groaning and suffering that Babylon caused to cease!"

³Because of that, my body is full of pain;

my pain is like the pain that women who are giving birth experience.

When I hear about and see what God is planning to do,

I am shocked.

⁴My heart shakes within me, and I tremble with fear.

Early evening is my favorite time of day,

but now terror has taken over and I am afraid.

⁵In the vision I saw that the leaders of Babylonia were preparing a great feast.

They had spread rugs for people to sit on;

everyone was eating and drinking.

But you should get up and prepare your shields, you princes of Babylon,

because you are about to be attacked!

⁶Then Yahweh said to me,

"Put a watchman on the wall of Jerusalem,

and tell him to shout what he sees.

⁷Tell him to watch for chariots pulled by pairs of horses,

and men riding camels and donkeys, coming from Babylon.

Tell the watchman to watch and listen carefully!"

⁸So I did that, and one day the watchman called out,

"Day after day I have stood on this watchtower,

and I have continued to watch during the day and during the night.

⁹A man comes riding in a chariot pulled by two horses.

I called out to him, and he answered,

'Babylon has been destroyed!

All the idols in Babylon lie in pieces on the ground!"

¹⁰My people in Judah, the army of Babylon has caused you to suffer greatly

as though you were grain that was threshed and winnowed.

But now I have told you what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, whom we Israelites worship, told me about Babylon.

¹¹Yahweh gave this message about Edom:

Someone from Edom has been calling to me saying,

“Watchman, how long will it be before the night is over?”

¹²The watchman, replied,

“It will soon be morning, but after that, it will soon be night again.

If you want to ask your question, then ask it now,

and then come back again.”

¹³Yahweh gave this message about Arabia:

Give this message to people traveling in caravans from the town of Dedan in northwest Arabia, travelers who camp in the scrub there.

Tell them to bring water for those who are thirsty.

¹⁴And you people who live in the city of Tema in northwest Arabia, must bring food for the refugees who are fleeing from their enemies.

¹⁵They are fleeing in order not to be killed by their enemies' swords and not to be shot in battles by arrows.

¹⁶Yahweh said to me,

“Exactly one year from now,

all the greatness of the region of Kedar in Arabia will end.

¹⁷Only a few of their soldiers who know well how to shoot arrows will remain alive.

That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.”

Chapter 22

¹Yahweh gave this message about Jerusalem, about the valley where Yahweh showed me this vision.

Why is everyone foolishly running up to their flat rooftops?

²Everyone in the city seems to be shouting.

There are a lot of corpses in the city,

but they were not killed by their enemies' swords.

They did not die in battles;

instead, they died from diseases and hunger.

³All the leaders of the city fled.

But then they were captured because they did not have bows and arrows to defend themselves.

Your soldiers tried to flee while the enemy army was still far away,

but they also were captured.

⁴That is why I said, "Allow me to cry alone;

do not try to comfort me about my people being slaughtered."

⁵Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has chosen a time when there will be a great uproar, soldiers marching, and people being terrified

in the valley where I received this vision.

It will be a time when our city walls will be battered down

and the people's cries for help will be heard in the mountains.

⁶The armies from Elam and Kir in Media will attack,

driving chariots and carrying shields.

⁷Our beautiful valleys will be filled with our enemies' chariots,

and the men who drive the chariots will stand outside our city gates.

⁸God will cause the walls that protect the cities in Judah to fall down.

You people of Jerusalem will run to get the weapons that are stored in the building called "the Hall of the Forest."

⁹You will see that there are many breaks in the walls of Jerusalem.

You will store water in the lower pool in the city.

¹⁰You will inspect the houses in Jerusalem,

and some of them you will tear down to use the stones to repair the city wall.

¹¹Between the walls of the city you will build a reservoir to store water from the old pool.

But you will never request help from the one who made the city;

you have never depended on Yahweh, who planned this city long ago.

¹²Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, told you to weep and mourn;

he told you to shave your heads and to wear rough sackcloth

to show that you were sorry for the sins that you had committed.

¹³But instead of doing that, you were happy and celebrated;

you slaughtered cattle and sheep

in order to cook their meat and eat it and drink wine.

You said, "Let us eat and drink all that we want to,

because it is possible that we will die tomorrow!"

¹⁴So Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, revealed this to me: "I will never forgive my people for sinning like this!"

¹⁵Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, said this to me: "Go to Shebna, the official who supervises the workers in the palace, and give this message to him:

¹⁶Who do you think you are?

Who gave you the authority to build a beautiful tomb where you will be buried,
chiseling it out of the rocky cliff high above this valley?"

¹⁷You think that you are a great man, but Yahweh is about to hurl you away.

It will be as though he had seized you,

¹⁸rolled you into a ball,

and throw you away in a large distant land.

You will die and be buried there,

and your beautiful chariots will stay there in the hands of your enemies.

And because of what happens to you, your master, the king, will be very ashamed.

¹⁹Yahweh says, "I will force you to quit working in the palace;

you will be forced out from your important position.

²⁰Then I will summon Hilkiah's son Eliakim, who has served me well, to replace you. ²¹I will make him wear your robe and fasten your sash around him, and I will give to him the authority that you had. He will be like a father to the people of Jerusalem and all the other towns in Judah. ²²I will give to him authority over what happens in the palace where King David lived; when he decides something, no one will be able to oppose it; when he refuses to do something, no one will be able to force him to do it. ²³I will cause his family to be greatly respected, because I will put him firmly in his position as supervisor of the workers in the palace, like a nail that is firmly hammered into a wall. ²⁴Others will enable him to have much responsibility, with the result that all the members of his family, even the most insignificant ones, will be honored.

²⁵Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, also says, "Shebna is like a peg that is firmly fastened to the wall. But there will be a time when I will remove him from his position; he will lose his power, and everything that he promoted will fail." That will surely happen because Yahweh has said it.

Chapter 23

¹I, Isaiah, received this message from Yahweh for you, the people in the city of Tyre:

You sailors on ships from Tarshish,

weep, because the harbor of Tyre and all the houses in the city have been destroyed.

The reports that you heard in the Island of Cyprus about Tyre are true.

²You people who live along the coast, you merchants of the city of Sidon, mourn silently.

Your sailors went across the seas to make you rich, there in Tyre.

³They sailed across deep seas
to buy grain in Egypt, grain from the Valley of Shihor.
This wealth came down the Nile River, and you, Tyre, were the place where the people of all nations traded.

⁴But now you people in Sidon should be ashamed,
because you trusted in Tyre, which has been a strong fortress on an island in the sea.
Tyre is like a woman who is saying,
“Now it is as though I have not given birth to any children,
or raised any sons or daughters.”

⁵When the people of Egypt hear what has happened to Tyre,
they will grieve very much.

⁶Sail to Tarshish and tell them what happened;
weep, you people who live along the coast.

⁷The people in the very old city of Tyre were previously joyful.
Traders from Tyre established colonies in many distant nations.

⁸People from Tyre appointed kings over other places;
their traders were wealthy;
they were as powerful and wealthy as kings.

Who caused the people of Tyre to experience this disaster?

⁹It was Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, who did it;
he did it in order to cause you people in Tyre to not be proud anymore,
to humiliate you men who are honored all over the world.

¹⁰You people of Tarshish, you must grow crops in your land instead of trading;
spread out over your land like the Nile River spreads over the land of Egypt when it floods,
because there is no harbor in Tyre for your ships now.

¹¹It is as though Yahweh stretched out his hand over the sea
and shook the kingdoms of the earth.
He commanded that in Phoenicia
all its fortresses must be destroyed.

¹²He said to the people of Sidon,
“You will never rejoice again, because you will be crushed;
even if you flee to the island of Cyprus,

you will not escape from troubles; you will have no peace.”

¹³Think about what happened in Babylonia:

the people who were in that land have disappeared.

The armies of Assyria have caused that land to become a place where wild animals from the desert live.

They built dirt ramps to the top of the walls of the city of Babylon;

then they entered the city and tore down the palaces

and caused the city to become a heap of rubble.

¹⁴So wail, you sailors on the ships of Tarshish,

because the harbor in Tyre where your ships stop is destroyed!

¹⁵For seventy years, which is as long as kings usually live, people will forget about Tyre. But then it will be rebuilt. What will happen there will be like what happened to a prostitute in this song:

¹⁶You harlot, whom people had forgotten,

play your harp well,

and sing many songs,

in order that people will remember you again.

¹⁷It is true that after seventy years Yahweh will restore Tyre. Their merchants will again earn a lot of money by buying things from and selling things to many other nations.

¹⁸But their profits will be given to Yahweh.

The merchants will not hoard their money;

instead, they will give it to Yahweh's people, for they will live in his presence,

in order that they can buy food and nice clothes.

Chapter 24

¹Some day Yahweh is going to destroy the earth.

He will devastate it and cause it to become a desert,

and he will scatter its people.

²He will scatter everyone:

priests and common people,

servants and their masters,

maids and their mistresses,

buyers and sellers,

lenders and borrowers,

people who owe money and people who are owed money.

³Nothing that is worth anything will be left on earth;
everything valuable will be destroyed.

That will surely happen because Yahweh has said it.

⁴Everything on the earth will dry up and die;
its important people will become weak and unimportant.

⁵The earth has become unacceptable to Yahweh because the people who live on it have disobeyed his laws;
they have rejected the covenant that he intends to last forever.

⁶Therefore, Yahweh will curse the earth;
the people who live on it must be punished because of the sins that they have committed.
They will be destroyed by fire,
and only a few people will remain alive.

⁷The grapevines will wither,
and there will be no grapes to make wine.
All the people who were previously happy will now groan and mourn.

⁸People will no longer play cheerful songs with tambourines,
people will no longer play joyfully on their harps,
and people will no longer shout noisily during their celebrations.

⁹People will no longer sing while they drink wine,
and all their alcoholic drinks will taste bitter.

¹⁰Towns and cities will be desolate;
every house will be locked to prevent thieves from entering, for no one will live in them.

¹¹Mobs will gather in the streets, wanting wine;
no one on the earth will be happy anymore.

¹²Cities will be ruined,
and all their gates will be battered into pieces.

¹³It will be like that all over the earth:
there will only be a few people still alive,
like what happens when workers beat all the olives off a tree and there are only a few left,
or when they harvest the grapes and there are only a few left on the vines.

¹⁴Those in the west will sing with great happiness;

they will declare that Yahweh is very great.

15Those in the east of Israel will also praise Yahweh;

those along the coastlines of the sea will praise Yahweh, the God the people Israel worship.

16We will hear people in the most distant places on the earth singing praise to Yahweh, the truly righteous one.

But now, I am very sad.

Weep for me, because I have become thin and weak.

Terrible things are happening!

Treacherous people still betray others everywhere.

17You people all over the earth,

you will be terrified,

and you will fall into deep pits and traps.

18Those who try to flee because they are terrified

will fall into deep pits,

and those who climb out of the pits

will be caught by traps.

The sky will split open and torrents of rain will fall;

the foundations of the earth will shake.

19The earth will split apart and be shattered;

it will shake violently.

20It will be as though the earth will stagger like a drunk;

it will shake like a hammock in a windstorm.

It will collapse and not be able to rise again,

because the guilt of the people who rebel against Yahweh is very great.

21At that time, Yahweh will punish the wicked powerful beings in the skies

and the wicked kings on the earth.

22They will all be gathered together and thrown into a dungeon.

They will be shut in that dungeon,

and later they will be punished.

23At that time the light of the moon and the sun will be lessened;

it will be as though they are ashamed in the presence of Yahweh,

because he, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will rule gloriously on Mount Zion,

in the presence of all the leaders of his people.

Chapter 25

¹Yahweh, you are my God;

I will honor you and praise you.

You do wonderful things;

you said long ago that you would do those things,

and now you have done them as you said that you would.

²Sometimes you have caused cities to become heaps of rubble,

cities that had strong walls around them.

You have caused palaces in foreign countries to disappear;

they will never be rebuilt.

³Therefore, people in powerful nations will declare that you are very great,

and people in nations whose leaders show mercy to no one will revere you.

⁴Yahweh, you are like a strong tower where poor people can find refuge,

a place where needy people can go when they are distressed.

You are like a place where people can find refuge in a storm

and where they can stay in the shade, out of the hot sun.

People oppress us and show us no mercy,

they are like a storm beating against a wall,

⁵and like the very strong heat in the dry land.

But you cause the noisy cries of people from foreign nations to be quiet.

Like the air cools when a cloud comes overhead,

you stop merciless people from singing songs about how great they are.

⁶Here in Jerusalem Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will prepare a wonderful feast for all the people of the world.

It will be a banquet with plenty of good meat and fine well-aged wine.

⁷People here are sad;

they are so sad that it is like a dark cloud that hangs over them,

like they experience when someone dies.

But Yahweh will enable them to quit being sad.

⁸He will get rid of death forever!

Yahweh our God will cause people to no longer mourn because someone has died.
And he will stop other people insulting and making fun of his land and us his people.
That will surely happen because Yahweh has said it!

⁹At that time, people will proclaim,

“Yahweh is our God!

We trusted in him, and he has rescued us!

Yahweh, in whom we trusted, has done it;

we should rejoice because he has saved us!”

¹⁰Yahweh will protect and bless Jerusalem.

But he will crush the people in the land of Moab;

they will be like straw that is trampled in the manure and left to rot.

¹¹Yahweh will push down the people of Moab;

they will be like a swimmer who pushes down the water with his hands; they will push their hands through the dung but never get out of it.

He will cause them to cease being proud,

and he will show that all the things that they have done are worthless.

¹²He will cause armies to tear down the high walls around the cities of Moab;

they will fall into pieces and lie in the dust.

Chapter 26

¹Some day, people in Judah will sing this song:

“Our city of Jerusalem is strong!

Yahweh protects our city;

He is like a wall that surrounds it.

²Open the gates of the city for people who are righteous;

allow people who faithfully obey Yahweh to enter the city.

³Yahweh, those who trust in you,

those who are determined to never doubt you,

you will enable them to be perfectly peaceful in their inner beings.

⁴So always trust in Yahweh,

because he is forever like a huge rock on top of which we will be safe.

⁵He humbles proud people

and destroys cities whose people are arrogant.

He causes those cities to collapse into the dust.

⁶When that happens, poor and oppressed people will trample on the ruins.

⁷But for the righteous people,

Yahweh, you do what is right;

it is as though you smooth out the paths where they walk.

⁸Yahweh, by obeying your laws

we show that we trust you to help us;

and what we desire in our inner beings is that you will be honored.

⁹All during the nights I desire to know you better,

and in the mornings I still want to be with you.

When you come to judge and punish people who live on the earth

they will learn to do what is right.

¹⁰But your acting kindly toward wicked people does not cause them to do what is good.

Even in places where people do what is right, the wicked people continue to do what is evil,

and they do not realize that you, Yahweh, are great.

¹¹Yahweh, it is as though your fist was raised up ready to strike them,

but they do not realize that.

Show them that you are very eager to help your people.

If your enemies would realize that, they would be ashamed;

make your fire burn them up because they are your enemies.

¹²Yahweh, we desire that you will allow things to go well for us;

all that we have done is what you have enabled us to do.

¹³Yahweh, our God, other masters have ruled over us,

but you are the only one whom we honor.

¹⁴Those who ruled us are now gone; they are dead;

their spirits have left this earth and they will never live again.

You punished those rulers and got rid of them,

and people do not even remember them anymore.

¹⁵Yahweh, you have enabled our nation to become great;

we are more people now, and we have more land,

so we thank you.

¹⁶Yahweh, when we were distressed, we asked you to help us;
when you disciplined us, we could barely speak out any prayer to you.

¹⁷Like pregnant women who writhe and cry out
when they are giving birth,
we suffered very much, too.

¹⁸We were pregnant and had severe pain,
but nothing good resulted from it.
We have not rescued any people or kept their enemies from conquering them,
and those in the world who were our enemies did not fall in battle.

¹⁹But Yahweh's people who have died will become alive again,
their corpses will become alive!
You whose bodies lie in graves, rise and shout joyfully!
His light will be like dew that falls on you, his people who have died,
you who are now in the place where the dead people are;
he will cause you to live again.

²⁰But now, my fellow Israelites, go home
and lock your doors!
Hide for a short time,
until Yahweh is no longer angry.

²¹Listen to this: Yahweh will come from heaven
to punish all the people on the earth for the sins that they have committed.
People will be able to see the blood of those who have been murdered;
everyone will at last know all the crimes of murder that have been committed."

Chapter 27

¹At that time, Yahweh will punish Leviathan,
the swift-moving monster,
that coiling serpent that lives in the sea.
Yahweh will kill it with his sharp, huge, and powerful sword.

²At that time, Yahweh will say,

"You Israelite people, who are like a fruitful vineyard, must sing!

³I will protect you

like a farmer waters his crops carefully in order that they will grow well.

I will guard you day and night, in order that no one harms you.

⁴I am no longer angry with my people;

if any of your enemies try to injure you like briars and thorns injure people,

I will attack them in battle;

I will get rid of them completely,

⁵unless they request me to protect them;

I strongly invite them to make peace with me!"

⁶There will be a time when the descendants of Jacob will prosper like a plant that has good roots;

they will be like trees that bud and blossom and bear a lot of fruit;

what they do will bless all the people in the world.

⁷Has Yahweh punished us Israelites

like he punished our enemies?

Has he punished us as much as he punished them?

⁸No, he has not done that,

but he did punish us Israelite people and exiled us;

we were taken away from our land

as though we were struck by a windstorm from the east.

⁹Yahweh did that in order to punish us for our sins

and remove our guilt.

As a result of our being exiled, all the altars to other gods in Israel will be demolished,

and we will be forgiven for the sins that we have committed.

There will be no more poles for worshiping the goddess Asherah or altars for burning incense to other gods;

they will all be torn down and smashed to bits.

¹⁰The cities that have strong walls around them will be empty;

like the desert, they will have no one living in them.

The houses will be abandoned,

and the streets will be full of weeds.

Calves will eat grass there and lie down there;

they will chew up all the leaves on the trees.

¹¹The Israelite people are like dry branches on a tree;

women break them off and use them to make fires under their cooking pots.

Our Israelite people do not have any sense;

so Yahweh, who created them, will not act mercifully toward them

or be kind to them.

¹²However, there will be a time when Yahweh will gather them together again; he will separate them from the people who have conquered them, like people separate wheat from chaff. He will bring them back to Israel, one by one, from the land between the Euphrates River in the northeast and the brook at the border of Egypt in the southwest. ¹³At that time, a trumpet will be blown very loudly. And those who were exiled to Assyria and Egypt and who almost died there will return to Jerusalem, to worship Yahweh on Zion, his holy hill.

Chapter 28

¹Terrible things will happen to the city of Samaria, the capital of Israel!

It is on a hill above a fertile valley;

the people who live there, who get drunk by drinking too much wine, are very proud;

it is a beautiful and glorious city,

but some day that beauty will disappear like a flower that wilts and dries up.

²Listen to this: Yahweh will cause a great army to attack it.

Their soldiers will be like a huge hailstorm or a very strong wind;

they will be everywhere, like the water of a huge flood,

and they will smash to the ground the buildings in Samaria.

³The people of Samaria are proud,

but everything that the drunks who live there think is wonderful will be trampled on by their enemies.

⁴Yes, Samaria is beautiful, set on a hill above a fertile valley, but that beauty will disappear

like a flower that wilts and dries up.

Whenever someone sees a good fig at the beginning of the season when figs become ripe, he quickly picks and eats it;

similarly, when the enemies of Israel see all the beautiful things in Samaria,

they will quickly conquer the city and take away all those things.

⁵At that time, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will be like a glorious wreath of flowers for us Israelite people

who are still alive after being exiled.

⁶He will cause our judges to want to do what is fair

when they decide people's cases.

He will enable the soldiers who stand at the city gates
to strongly defend the city when our enemies attack it.

⁷But now, our leaders stagger,
and the priests and prophets also stagger
because of drinking a lot of wine and other alcoholic drinks.
They are not able to think right;
they see visions, but they cannot understand what they mean;
they are unable to decide things correctly.

⁸All their tables are covered with their vomit;
filth is everywhere.

⁹Who will he teach so that they can learn about knowledge?
Who will listen to him so that he can teach lessons to them so they can learn?
Does he think that we are like little children who no longer drink milk,
and that we are like babies who, not long ago, were weaned?

¹⁰He continually tells us, 'Do this, do that;'
first he tells us one rule, then another rule,
he tells us only one line at a time."

¹¹So now, Yahweh will need to force them to listen to Assyrians
speaking to them in a language that they do not understand.

¹²Yahweh told his people long ago,
"This is a place where you can rest;
you are exhausted from all your travels through the desert,
but you will be able to rest in this land."

But they refused to pay attention to what he said.

¹³So Yahweh continues to tell the people of Samaria,
one line at a time, "Do this, do that,"
first one rule and then another rule.
But because of their ignoring what God said, they will be attacked and defeated;
they will be wounded and snared and captured.

¹⁴Listen to the word that Yahweh says,

you who rule over the people of Jerusalem,
you who mock and make fun of me!

¹⁵You boast and say,

“We made a promise with death to ensure that the power of death, when it passes over us, it cannot get to us.
We tried to turn our lying words into a shelter in which we could hide.

¹⁶Therefore, Yahweh our Lord says this:

“Listen to this! I am going to place in Jerusalem someone who is like a foundation stone,
he is like a stone that has been tested to determine if it is solid.

He will be like a valuable stone on which it will be safe to build a house;
and whoever trusts in him will never be disappointed.

¹⁷I will test you people of Jerusalem to find out if you will act justly and righteously,

I will measure your character like a carpenter uses a plumb line to determine if a wall is straight and level.

And then the hail will fall! And it will destroy everything you have.

Your shelter will be destroyed because it is built on a foundation of lies,
and the water from the storm will wash your shelter away.

¹⁸I will cancel the covenant that you made with death,

and I will bring to an end the covenant you made with the place where the dead dwell.

But when the vast flood comes, it will pour over you;

and day after day it will pass over you.

¹⁹When the flood comes, it will pass through and over you like the river when it overflows its banks and causes flooding everywhere.

When you finally understand the message of Yahweh, it will cause you to be terrified, not comforted.

For the bed is too short to stretch oneself on, and the covering too narrow to wrap oneself in. ²⁰You have heard people say, “Your bed is very short; you will not be able to sleep in it;

your blankets are very narrow; they will not cover you!”

²¹Yahweh will come and cause you to be defeated;

he will do to you like he did to the army of Philistia at Mount Perizim,

and like he did to the Amorites at Gibeon Valley.

What he will do will be very strange and unusual.

²²Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, has told me that he is going to destroy the entire land.

So do not ridicule what I say anymore,

because if you do that,

he will punish you even more severely.

²³Listen to what I say;

pay attention carefully.

²⁴When a farmer plows some ground, does he never plant seeds?

Does he continue to plow it and never plant anything?

²⁵No, he makes the ground very level,

and then he plants seeds—

caraway seed and cumin and wheat and barley.

He plants each kind of seed in the correct manner. He does not plant one kind of seed in the way that is not right for it.

²⁶He does that because God has taught him the correct way to do it.

²⁷Moreover, the caraway seed is not threshed with a sledge,

nor is a cartwheel rolled over the cumin;

but caraway is beaten with a stick, and the cumin with a rod.

²⁸And grain for baking bread is crushed easily,

so the farmers do not continue to pound it for a long time.

They sometimes cause their horses to pull a cart over it to thresh it,

but doing that does not grind the grain.

²⁹Yahweh, commander of the angel armies,

gives us wonderful advice about how to do things; he gives us great wisdom.

So what the farmers do is very smart, but what your leaders are doing is very stupid.

Chapter 29

¹This is a message from Yahweh:

Terrible things will happen to Jerusalem, the city where King David lived.

You people continue to celebrate your festivals each year.

²But I will cause you to experience a great disaster,

and when that happens,

people will weep and lament very much.

Your city will become like an altar to me

where people are burned as sacrifices.

³I will cause your enemies to come and camp all around your city;

they will surround it by building towers
and putting in place other things with which to attack you.

⁴Then you will talk as though you were buried deep in the ground;
it will sound like someone whispering from under the ground,
like a ghost speaking from a grave.

⁵But suddenly your enemies will be blown away like dust;
their armies will disappear
like chaff that is blown away by the wind.

It will happen very suddenly:

⁶Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will come to help you
with thunder and an earthquake and a very loud noise,
with a strong wind and a big storm and a fire that will burn up everything.

⁷Then the armies of all the nations that will be attacking Jerusalem will quickly disappear like a dream in the night.
Those who will be attacking Jerusalem will suddenly vanish.

⁸People who are asleep dream about eating food,
but when they wake up, they are still hungry.

People who are thirsty dream about drinking something,
but when they wake up they are still thirsty.

It will be like that when your enemies come to attack Mount Zion;
they will dream about conquering you, but when they wake up,
they will realize that they have not succeeded.

⁹You people of Jerusalem, be amazed and surprised about this!

Do not believe what I have said!

And continue to be blind about what Yahweh is doing.

You are stupid, but it is not because you have drunk a lot of wine.

You stagger, but not from drinking alcoholic drinks.

¹⁰Because Yahweh has prevented the prophets from understanding and telling you his messages,
it is as though he had made you go fast asleep.

¹¹Yahweh gave me visions; but for you, they are only words on a scroll that is sealed shut. If you give it to those
who can read and request they read it, they will say, "We cannot read it because the scroll is sealed." ¹²When you
give it to others who cannot read, they will say, "We cannot read it because we do not know how to read."

¹³So the Lord says, "These people pretend to worship me.

They say good things to pretend to honor me,
but they do not think about what I desire.
When they worship me,
all they do is recite rules that people have made and that they have memorized.

14Therefore, again I will do something to amaze these people;
I will perform many miracles.
And I will show that the people who tell others that they are wise are not really wise,
and I will show that the people who tell others that they are intelligent are not really intelligent.

15Terrible things will happen to those who try to conceal from me, Yahweh,
the evil things that they plan to do;
they do those deeds in the darkness
and they think, 'Yahweh certainly cannot see us;
he cannot know what we are doing!'

16They are extremely foolish!
They act as though they were the potters and I were the clay!
Something that was created should certainly never say to the one who made it,
'You did not make me!'
A jar should never say,
'The potter who made me did not know what he was doing!''

17Soon the forests in Lebanon will become fertile fields,
and abundant crops will grow in those fields,
and that will happen very soon.

18At that time, deaf people will be able to hear;
they will be able to hear when someone reads from a book;
and blind people will be able to see;
they will be able to see things when it is gloomy and even when it is dark.

19Yahweh will enable humble people to be very joyful again.
Poor people will rejoice about what the Holy One of Israel has done.

20There will be no more people who ridicule others
and no more arrogant people.
And those who plan to do evil things will be executed.

²¹Those who testify falsely in order to persuade judges to punish innocent people will vanish.
Similar things will happen to those who by lying in court persuade the judges to make unjust decisions.

²²That is why Yahweh, who rescued Abraham, says about the people of Israel,

“My people will no longer be ashamed;
no longer will they show on their faces that they are ashamed.

²³When they see that I have blessed them by giving them many children, and all that I have done for them,
they will honor the holy name of the Holy One of Israel,
and they will revere me, the God to whom they, the descendants of Jacob, belong.

²⁴When that happens, those who are not able to think well will think clearly,
and those who complain about what I am doing will accept what I am teaching them.”

Chapter 30

¹Yahweh says, “Terrible things will happen to you, my people who rebel against me.

You make plans, but what you plan is not what I want.

You have made an alliance with the rulers of Egypt,
but you did not ask my Spirit if that was what you should do.

By doing that, you have increased the number of your sins.

²You went to Egypt to ask their rulers for help,
without asking for my advice.

You have trusted in the army of the king of Egypt to protect you;
you have trusted in them

like people sit in the shade to protect themselves from the sun.

³But the result of your trusting in the king of Egypt is that you will be disappointed and disgraced;
because you trust in him, you will be humiliated.

⁴Officials from Judah have gone to the cities of Zoan and Hanes in Egypt to make treaties,

⁵but all those who trust in the king of Egypt will be humiliated,

because that nation will not be able to help you;

the treaty that you have made requesting help from them will be useless;
instead, the result will be that you will be humiliated and disgraced.”

⁶Isaiah received from Yahweh this message about the animals in the southern part of Judah, the desert part:
That area is one where people experience a lot of troubles and difficulties,

an area where there are male and female lions
and various kinds of poisonous snakes.

Caravans go through that area
taking donkeys and camels loaded with valuable goods.

They are taking them to Egypt because they hope that the army of Egypt will protect them,
but it will be useless.

⁷The promises made by the king of Egypt are worthless;
therefore I call Egypt 'Useless Rahab, the sea monster that does nothing.'

⁸Yahweh told me to write on a scroll a message,
in order that it would be a witness to the people of Judah
that would endure forever.

⁹It would remind them that they are deceitful and always rebelling against Yahweh,
and that they refuse to pay attention to what he tells them.

¹⁰They tell the people who see visions from Yahweh,

"Stop seeing visions!"

They tell the prophets,

"Do not reveal to us what is right!

Tell us pleasant things;

do not tell us visions about things that are true!

¹¹Stop doing what you have been doing;
stop telling us what the Holy One of Israel says to us!"

¹²Therefore, this is what the Holy One of Israel says:

"You have rejected my message,

and you are relying on those who oppress and deceive others.

¹³Therefore, the result of your sin of rejecting me will be that you will suddenly experience disasters;
what will happen to you will be like a cracked wall that suddenly collapses on you."

¹⁴You will be smashed like a clay jar is smashed when it is dropped
and shatters completely, with the result that there is not one piece big enough
to sweep out cinders from a stove
or to carry a little bit of water from a well.

¹⁵Yahweh, our God, the Holy One of Israel, also says this:

"I will rescue you from your enemies only if you repent and trust in what I will do for you;
you will be strong only if you quit worrying and trust in me.

But you do not want to do that.

16You said, 'No, we will escape on horses that the army of Egypt will give us!'

So you will try to escape.

You said, 'We will escape from the army of Assyria by riding on swift horses!'

But those who pursue you will also ride swiftly.

17As a result, a thousand of you will flee when only one of them pursues you!

When five of their soldiers threaten to kill you,

all of you will flee.

Only a few of you will be left, like a single flagpole on top of a mountain,

or like one single signal flag on a hilltop."

18But Yahweh wants to act kindly toward you;

he is great because he desires to act mercifully.

Do not forget he is a God who acts justly;

Yahweh is pleased with those who patiently trust in him.

19You people who live in Jerusalem, some day you will not cry anymore. Yahweh will be kind to you when you call out to him for help. He will answer you as soon as he hears you call. **20**Although now Yahweh has brought poverty on you, he, your teacher, will not hide himself from you. He will teach you many things clearly. **21**And you will hear him speak to you to guide you. Right behind you he will say, "This is the road on which you should walk; walk on this road!" **22**When that happens, you will destroy all your idols that are covered with silver or gold. You will throw them away like you throw away a filthy rag, and you will say to them, "We do not need you anymore!"

23If you do that, Yahweh will bless you by giving you good rain at the time that you plant your crops. You will have good harvests and plenty of big fields with grass for your cattle to eat. **24**After the wind blows away the chaff, the oxen and donkeys that pull the plow over your ground will have good grain to eat. **25**At that time, when your enemies have been slaughtered and their towers have collapsed, there will be streams flowing down every hill and mountain in Judah. **26**The moon will seem to shine as brightly as the sun, and the sun will seem to shine seven times as brightly as previously. That is what it will be like when Yahweh causes the suffering of his people to cease; it will be as though he is putting bandages on their wounds and healing them.

27It is as though we see Yahweh coming from far away;

he is extremely angry,

and there are thick clouds of smoke around him.

By what he says he shows that he is angry;

what he says is like a devastating fire.

28His breath is like a flood that covers his enemies up to their necks.

He will separate the nations in order to destroy some of them;
it is as though he will put horses' bridles on them so he can lead them away to destruction.

²⁹But his people will sing joyfully
like they sing during the nights when they celebrate a holy festival.

They will be very joyful,
like a large group of his people are joyful when they go up to Mount Zion in Jerusalem,
along with men playing flutes
when they are all going there to worship Yahweh.

He is like a huge rock on top of which we Israelite people are safe.

³⁰And Yahweh will enable us to hear him speaking powerfully.

He will show us that he is very powerful.

We will see him smash his enemies.

Being very angry, he will descend with a big rainstorm and thunder and hail to punish them.

³¹The soldiers of Assyria will be terrified when they hear the voice of Yahweh
and when he strikes them with his rod.

³²And while Yahweh strikes them to punish them,
his people will celebrate by playing tambourines and harps.

It will be as though Yahweh will lift up his powerful hand and defeat the Assyrian army in battle.

³³The Valley of Topheth outside Jerusalem has been prepared for a long time;

it is ready for the king of Assyria;
the funeral pyre for burning his body is wide and high,
and it will be as though Yahweh will light the fire with his breath,
which will come out like a stream of burning sulfur.

Chapter 31

¹Terrible things will happen to those who rely on Egypt to help them,
trusting in their soldiers' horses and their many chariots and their many chariot drivers,
instead of trusting that Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, will help them.

²Yahweh is very wise,
but he also causes people to experience disaster!

And when he decides to do that,

he does not change his mind!

He will strike the wicked people

and all those who help them.

³The soldiers of Egypt that you people of Judah are relying on are humans, not God!

And their horses are only horses; they are not powerful spirits!

So when Yahweh raises his fist

to strike the soldiers of Egypt whom you thought would help you,

he will also strike you who thought that you would be helped,

and you and they will stumble and fall down;

all of you will die together.

⁴But this is what Yahweh said to me:

“When a lion stands and growls over the body of a sheep that he has killed,

even if a large group of shepherds comes to chase away the lion,

even if they shout loudly,

the lion will not be afraid and will not leave.

Similarly, I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will come down

to fight my enemies on Mount Zion,

and nothing will stop me.

⁵Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, will protect Jerusalem

like a mother bird hovers over the baby birds in her nest.

He will defend the city

and rescue it from its enemies.”

⁶My people, even though you have greatly rebelled against Yahweh, return to him. ⁷When you do that, each of you will throw away the idols that you have made in sin, idols that are covered with silver and gold.

⁸The Assyrian soldiers will be killed,

but not by swords that men use.

They will be destroyed by the sword of God;

and those who are not killed will panic and flee.

And some of them will be captured and forced to become slaves.

⁹Even their very strong soldiers will be terrified;

their leaders will abandon all hope and run away from Yahweh's power!

Yahweh's presence on Mount Zion is like a fire,

like a furnace that blazes in Jerusalem.

This is what Yahweh says about the Assyrian army!

Chapter 32

¹Listen to this! Some day there will be a righteous king,
and his officials will help him to rule justly.

²Each of them will be like a shelter from the wind
and a refuge from the storm.

They will be like streams of water in the desert,
like the shade under a huge rock in a very hot and dry land.

³When that happens, those leaders will enable people who have not understood God's truth to understand it,
and they will enable those who have not paid attention to God's truth to pay attention to it.

⁴Even those who act very hastily will have good sense,
and those who cannot speak well will speak fluently and clearly.

⁵At that time, people who are foolish will no longer be admired,
and scoundrels will no longer be respected.

⁶Foolish people say things that are foolish,
and they plan to do evil things.
Their behavior is disgraceful,
and they say things about Yahweh that are false.

They do not give food to those who are hungry,
and they do not give water to those who are thirsty.

⁷Scoundrels do things that are evil and that deceive people;
they plan to do evil things;
by telling lies in court they cause poor people to have trouble,
even when what the poor people are requesting is fair.

⁸But honorable people plan to do honorable things,
and they do those honorable things, so they succeed.

⁹You women of Jerusalem who think that you are very secure
and think that everything is going well,
listen to what I say!

¹⁰After one year is ended, you who now are not worried about anything will tremble,
because there will be no grapes for you to harvest
and no other crops to harvest.

¹¹So tremble now, you women who are not worried about anything!
Take off your fancy clothes and put rough sackcloth around your waists.

¹²You will wail because you are grieving about what will happen in your fertile fields and to your fruitful grapevines,
¹³because only thorns and thistles will grow in your soil.

Your houses where you had joyful parties and your city where you have been happy will be gone.

¹⁴The king's palace will be empty;
there will be no people in the city that now is very noisy.
Wild donkeys will walk around and flocks of sheep will eat grass
in the empty forts and watchtowers.

¹⁵It will be like that until God pours his Spirit out on us from heaven.
When that happens, the deserts will become fertile fields,
and abundant crops will grow in those fertile fields.

¹⁶People will act justly in those desert areas,
and people will act righteously in those fertile fields.

¹⁷The result of their acting righteously will be that there will be peace,
the land will be tranquil, and people will be secure forever.

¹⁸My people will live in their homes peacefully, and safely, and calmly,
in places of rest.

¹⁹Even if a severe hailstorm knocks down the trees in the forest,
and all the buildings in the city are blown down,

²⁰Yahweh will greatly bless you;
you will plant seeds in fields alongside the streams
and there will be abundant crops.

Your donkeys and cattle will easily find grass to eat when you send them out into pasture.

Chapter 33

¹Terrible things will happen to you people of Assyria!
You have destroyed others,

but you have not been destroyed yet.

You have betrayed others,

but you have not been betrayed yet.

When you stop destroying others,

others will destroy you.

When you stop betraying others,

others will betray you.

²Yahweh, act kindly toward us,

because we have patiently waited for you to help us.

Enable us to be strong every day,

and rescue us when we have troubles.

³Our enemies run away when they hear your voice.

When you stand up and show that you are powerful, the people of all nations flee.

⁴And after our enemies have been defeated,

we, your people, will take away all our enemies' possessions,

like caterpillars and locusts strip off all the leaves of plants.

⁵Yahweh is greater than anyone else, and he lives in heaven,

and he will rule justly and righteously in Jerusalem.

⁶When that happens, he will enable you to live securely;

he will fully protect your possessions,

he will enable you to be wise and to know all that you need to know;

and revering Yahweh will be like a valuable treasure that he will give to you.

⁷But now, look, our messengers are crying out in the streets;

our ambassadors have gone to other countries to make peace treaties,

but they will cry bitterly because they will not succeed.

⁸No one travels on our roads.

The leaders of Assyria have broken their peace treaty with us;

they despise the people who made those treaties,

and they do not respect anyone.

⁹The land of Judah is dry and barren.

The cedar trees in Lebanon are drying up and decaying.

The Plain of Sharon along the coast is now a desert plain.

There are no more leaves on the trees in the areas of Bashan and Carmel.

¹⁰Yahweh says, "Now I will arise and show that I deserve for everyone to honor me.

¹¹You people of Assyria make plans that are as useless as chaff and straw.

Your breath will become a fire that will burn you up.

¹²Your people will be burned until only ashes remain,

like thornbushes are cut down and burned up.

¹³You people who live far away and you people who live nearby,

pay attention to what I have done and realize that I am very powerful."

¹⁴The sinners in Jerusalem will tremble because they are very afraid;

godless people will be terrified.

They say, "None of us can remain alive because this fire is burning everything;

it is like the fire on Yahweh's altar that will burn forever!"

¹⁵Those who act honestly and say what is right,

those who do not try to become rich by forcing money from people,

those who do not try to get bribes,

those who refuse to listen to people who are planning to murder someone,

those who do not join others who urge them to do what is wrong,

¹⁶they are the people who will live safely;

they will find places to be safe in the caves in the mountains.

They will have plenty of food

and water.

¹⁷You people of Judah will see the king wearing all his beautiful robes,

and you will see that he rules a land that extends far away.

¹⁸When you see that, you will think about when you were previously terrified,

and you will say, "The officers of Assyria who counted the tax money that we were forced to pay to them have disappeared!

Those men who counted our towers are gone!

¹⁹Those arrogant people who spoke a language that we could not understand are no longer here!"

²⁰At that time, you will see Mount Zion, the place where we celebrate our festivals;

You will see that Jerusalem has become a place that is calm and safe.

It will be secure,
like a tent that cannot be moved because its ropes are tight
and its stakes are firmly in the ground.

²¹Yahweh will be our mighty God;
he will be like a mighty river that will protect us
because our enemies will not be able to cross it;
no one will be able to row across it
and no warships will be able to sail across it.

²²Yahweh is our judge;
he is the one who gives us laws,
and he is our king.
He will rescue us.

²³The ropes on our enemies' boats will hang loose,
their masts will not be fastened firmly,
and their sails will not be spread out.
The treasures that they have seized will be divided among us, God's people,
and even lame people among us will get some.

²⁴And the people in Jerusalem will no longer say, "We are sick,"
because Yahweh will forgive the sins that have been committed by the people who live there.

Chapter 34

¹You people of all nations, come near and listen;
pay careful attention.
I want the world and everything that is in it to hear what I say.

²Yahweh is angry with the people of all nations;
he is furious with all their armies.
He has decided that they must be destroyed,
and he will slaughter them.

³Their corpses will not be buried,
and as a result their bodies will stink,
and the mountains will collapse because of their blood.

⁴The sky will disappear like a scroll that is rolled up and thrown away.

Stars will fall from the sky

like withered leaves fall from grapevines,

or like shriveled figs fall from fig trees.

⁵When Yahweh has finished his work of destroying objects in the sky,

he will punish the people of Edom,

the people group that he has said must be destroyed.

⁶It is as though Yahweh will have a sword that is covered with blood and fat—

the blood of lambs and goats

and the fat of the kidneys of rams to be sacrificed.

It is as though Yahweh will offer a sacrifice in Bozrah

and kill many people in other cities in Edom.

⁷Even wild oxen will be killed,

as well as young calves and big bulls.

The ground will be soaked with blood,

and the dirt will be covered with the fat of those animals.

⁸That will be the time when Yahweh gets revenge

for what those people did to the people of Judah.

⁹The streams in Edom will be full of burning pitch,

and the ground will be covered with burning sulfur and burning pitch.

¹⁰Yahweh will never finish punishing Edom with fire;

the smoke will rise forever.

No one will ever live in that land,

and no one will even travel through it.

¹¹Ravens and various kinds of owls and small animals will live there.

Yahweh will measure that land carefully;

he will measure it to decide where to cause chaos and destruction.

¹²There will be no more princes;

the people who have authority will have no kingdom to rule; the princes will disappear.

¹³The deserted palaces and fortified buildings will be full of thorns and thistles.

The ruins will be places for jackals and ostriches to live.

¹⁴Animals that live in the desert and hyenas will be there,
and wild goats will bleat to each other.

There will also be creatures that roam around at night and rest there.

¹⁵Owls will make their nests there and lay their eggs in the nests;
and when the eggs hatch, the mother birds will cover them with their wings.
There will also be hawks there,
each with its mate.

¹⁶If you read what is written in the book that contains messages from Yahweh, you will find out what he will do to Edom.

All of those animals and birds will be there,
and each one will have a mate,
because that is what Yahweh has promised,
and his spirit will cause them all to gather there.

¹⁷He has decided what parts of the land of Edom each will live in,
and those are the places where each bird or animal will live.
Their descendants will possess those areas forever,
throughout all generations.

Chapter 35

¹Some day, it will be as though the desert and other very dry areas are glad;
the desert will rejoice and flowers will blossom.

Like the rose,

²the desert will produce flowers abundantly;
it will be as though everything is rejoicing and singing!

The deserts will become as beautiful as the trees in Lebanon,
as fertile as the plains of the Sharon and the area of Carmel.

There people will see the glory of Yahweh;
they will see that he is magnificent.

³So encourage those who are tired and weak.

⁴Say to those who are afraid,

“Be strong and do not be afraid,

because our God is going to come to get revenge on his enemies;

he will pay them back for what they have done,
and he will rescue you.”

⁵When he does that, he will enable blind people to see
and enable deaf people to hear.

⁶Lame people will leap like deer,
and those who have been unable to speak will sing joyfully.

Water will gush out from springs in the desert,
and streams will flow in the desert.

⁷The very hot and dry ground will become a pool of water,
and springs will provide water for the dry land.

Grass and reeds and papyrus will grow in places where the jackals lived previously.

⁸There will be a highway through that land;
it will be called ‘the Holy Highway.’

People who are not acceptable to God will not walk on that road;
it will be only for those who conduct their lives as God wants them to,
and no wicked fools will walk on that road.

⁹There will not be any lions there
or any other dangerous animals along that road.
Only those whom Yahweh has set free will walk on it.

¹⁰Those whom Yahweh has freed will return to Jerusalem;
they will sing as they enter the city,
and they will be extremely joyful forever.

No longer will they be sad or mourn;
they will be completely joyful and glad.

Chapter 36

¹When King Hezekiah had been ruling Judah for almost fourteen years, King Sennacherib of Assyria came with his army to attack the cities in Judah that had walls around them. They did not conquer Jerusalem, but they conquered all the other cities. ²Then the king of Assyria sent a large army with some of his important officials from the city of Lachish to persuade King Hezekiah to surrender. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they stood alongside the aqueduct in which water flows into the upper pool into Jerusalem, near the road to the field where the women wash clothes. ³The Israelite officials who went out of the city to talk with them were Hilkiyah’s son Eliakim, the palace administrator, Shebna the king’s secretary, and Asaph’s son Joah, who wrote down the government decisions.

⁴Then one of Sennacherib's important officials told them to take a message to Hezekiah

from the king of Assyria, the great king. In the message, the king said to the people of Jerusalem, "What are you trusting in to rescue you? ⁵You say that you have weapons to fight us and that some other nation has promised to help you, but that is only talk. Who do you think will help you to rebel against my soldiers from Assyria? ⁶Listen to me! You are relying on the army of Egypt. But that is like when a man tries to walk while leaning on a broken reed for a walking stick. But it would pierce the hand of anyone who would lean on it! That is what the king of Egypt is like for anyone who relies on him for help. ⁷But perhaps you will say to me that you are relying on Yahweh your God to help you. In that case, I would answer that Yahweh is the one whom Hezekiah insulted by tearing down his high places and altars and forcing everyone in Jerusalem and other places in Judah to worship only in front of the altar in Jerusalem."

⁸The Assyrian official talking in front of the city continued: "So I suggest that you make a deal with my master, the king of Assyria. I will give you two thousand horses, but I do not think that you can find two thousand of your own men who can ride on them! ⁹You are expecting the king of Egypt to send chariots and men riding horses to assist you. But they certainly would not be able to resist even the most insignificant official in the army of Assyria!

¹⁰Furthermore, do not think that we have come here to attack and destroy this land without Yahweh's orders! It is Yahweh himself who told us to come here and destroy this land!"

¹¹Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the official from Assyria, "Please speak to us in your Aramaic language, because we understand it. Do not speak to us in our Hebrew language, because the people who are standing on the wall will understand it and become frightened."

¹²But the official replied, "Do you think that my master sent me to say these things only to you, and not to the people standing on the wall? If you reject this message, the people in this city will soon need to eat their own dung and drink their own urine, just as you will, because you will have nothing else to eat. "

¹³Then the official stood up and shouted in the Hebrew language to the people sitting on the wall. He said, "Listen to this message from the great king, the king of Assyria! ¹⁴He says, 'Do not allow Hezekiah to deceive you! He will not be able to rescue you! ¹⁵Do not allow him to persuade you to trust in Yahweh, saying that Yahweh will rescue you, and that the army of the king of Assyria will never capture this city!

¹⁶Do not pay attention to what Hezekiah says! This is what the king of Assyria says: "Come out of the city and surrender to me. If you do that, I will arrange for each of you to drink the wine from your own grapevines and to eat figs from your own trees, and to drink water from your own well. ¹⁷You will be able to do that until we come and take you to a land that is like your land—a land where there is grain to make bread and vineyards to produce grapes for making new wine and, where we make plenty of bread."

¹⁸Do not allow Hezekiah to trick you by saying, "Yahweh will rescue us." The gods that people of other nations worship have never rescued any of them from the power of the king of Assyria! ¹⁹Why were the gods of Hamath and Arpad cities, and the gods of Sepharvaim unable to rescue Samaria from my power? ²⁰No, no god of any nation which our armies have attacked has been able to rescue their people from me. So why do you think that Yahweh will rescue you people of Jerusalem from my power?"

²¹But the Hebrew soldiers who were listening were silent. No one said anything, because King Hezekiah had commanded them, "When the official from Assyria talks to you, do not answer him."

²²Then Eliakim and Shebna and Joah returned to Hezekiah with their clothes torn because they were extremely distressed. They told him what the official from Assyria had said.

Chapter 37

¹When King Hezekiah heard what they reported, he tore his clothes and put on clothes made of rough sackcloth because he was very distressed. Then he went into the temple of Yahweh and prayed. ²Then he sent Eliakim, Shebna, and the older priests, who were also wearing clothes made of rough sackcloth, to talk to Isaiah the prophet, son of Amoz. ³They told him, "Say this to Isaiah: 'King Hezekiah says that this is a day when we have great distress. Other nations are insulting and shaming us. We are like a woman who is about to give birth to a baby, but she does not have the strength that she needs to do it. ⁴But perhaps Yahweh our God has heard what the official from Assyria said. Perhaps God knows that the king of Assyria has sent his official to insult him, the all-powerful God. Perhaps Yahweh will punish the king of Assyria for what he said. And I, Hezekiah, request that you pray for the few of us who are still alive here in Jerusalem.'"

⁵After those men gave Isaiah that message, ⁶he told them to say to the king that Yahweh says: "Those lackeys from the king of Assyria have said evil things about me. But do not let them worry you. ⁷Listen to this: I will make Sennacherib hear some news from his own country that will worry him very much. So he will go back there, and I will make other men to assassinate him with their swords."

⁸The official from Assyria learned that his king and the army of Assyria had left the city of Lachish and were now attacking Libnah, a nearby city. So the official left Jerusalem and went to Libnah to report to the king what had happened in Jerusalem.

⁹Soon after that, King Sennacherib received a report that King Tirhakah of Ethiopia was leading his army to attack them. So he sent other messengers to Hezekiah with a letter. In the letter he wrote this to Hezekiah:

¹⁰"Do not allow your god, on whom you are relying, to deceive you by promising that he will keep my army from capturing Jerusalem." ¹¹You have certainly heard what the armies of the kings of Assyria before me did to all the other countries; our armies destroyed them completely. So you really do not think that you will escape from me, do you? ¹²Did the gods of those nations rescue them? Did they rescue the region of Gozan, or the cities of Haran and Rezep in northern Aram, or the people of the region of Eden in the city of Tel Assar? ¹³What happened to the king of Hamath and the king of Arpad? What happened to the kings of the cities of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Did their gods rescue them?"

¹⁴Hezekiah received the letter that the messengers gave him, and he read it. Then he went up to the temple and spread out the letter in front of Yahweh. ¹⁵Then Hezekiah prayed this: ¹⁶"Yahweh, Commander of the angel armies, the God to whom we Israelites belong, you are seated on your throne above the statues of the cherubim, above the sacred chest. Only you are truly God. You rule all the kingdoms on this earth. You are the one who created everything on the earth and in the sky. ¹⁷So, Yahweh, please listen to what I am saying, and look at what is happening! And listen to what Sennacherib has said to insult you, the all-powerful God!

¹⁸Yahweh, it is true that the armies of the kings of Assyria have completely destroyed many nations and ruined their land. ¹⁹And they have thrown all the idols of those nations into fires and burned them. But they were not really gods. They were only idols made of wood and stone, and that is why they were able to be destroyed. ²⁰So now, Yahweh our God, please rescue us from the power of the king of Assyria, in order that the people in all the kingdoms of the world may know that you, Yahweh, are the only one who is truly God."

²¹Then Isaiah sent a message to tell Hezekiah that Yahweh, whom the Israelites worshiped, said this to him: "Because you prayed about what King Sennacherib of Assyria said, ²²this is what I say to him:

'The people of Jerusalem despise you and make fun of you.

They will wag their heads to mock you while you flee from here.

²³Who do you think you have been despising and ridiculing?

Who do you think you were shouting at?

Who do you think you were looking at very proudly?

It was I, the Holy One whom the Israelites worship!

²⁴The messengers whom you sent made fun of me.

You said, "With my many chariots I have gone to the highest mountains,
to the highest mountains in Lebanon.

We have cut down its tallest cedar trees
and its nicest pine trees.

We have been to the most distant peaks
and to its densest forests.

²⁵We have dug wells in many countries and drunk water from them.

And by marching through the streams of Egypt,
we dried them all up!"

²⁶But I reply to him, 'Have you never heard that long ago I determined those things;

I planned it long ago,
and now I have been causing it to occur.

I planned that your army would destroy cities
and cause them to become piles of rubble.

²⁷The people in those cities have no power,
and as a result they are dismayed and discouraged.

They are as frail as grass and plants in the fields,
as frail as grass that grows on the roofs of houses
and is scorched by the hot east wind.

²⁸But I know everything about you;

I know when you are in your house and when you go outside;

I also know that you are raging against me.

²⁹So because you have raged against me

and because I have heard you speak very proudly,

it will be as though I will put a hook in your nose

and an iron bit in your mouth in order that I can take you where I wish,

and I will force you to return to your own country,

on the same road on which you came here, without conquering Jerusalem."

³⁰"This will prove to you, Hezekiah that it is I, Yahweh, who will make all this happen:

This year, you will eat only the crops that grow by themselves,
and next year the same thing will happen.

But in the third year you will plant crops and harvest them;
you will take care of your vineyards and eat the grapes.

³¹You people who are still here in Judah,
will be strong and prosper again.

³²A small number of my people will survive,
and they will spread out from Jerusalem.

That will happen because Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, is desiring very much to accomplish it."

³³"This is what Yahweh says about the king of Assyria:

'His armies will not enter Jerusalem;
they will not even shoot a single arrow into it.

His soldiers will not bring one shield up to Jerusalem,
and they will not build high mounds of dirt against the walls of the city
to enable them to attack the city.

³⁴Instead, their king will return to his own country
on the same road on which he came here.

He will not enter this city!

That will happen because I, Yahweh, have said it!

³⁵For the sake of my own reputation and because of what I promised King David, who served me well,
I will defend this city and prevent it from being destroyed."

³⁶That night, an angel from Yahweh went out to where the army of Assyria had set up their tents and killed 185,000 of their soldiers. When the rest of the soldiers woke up the next morning, they saw that there were corpses everywhere. ³⁷Then King Sennacherib left and returned home to Nineveh in Assyria and stayed there.

³⁸One day, when he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisrok, his two sons, Adrammelek and Sharezer, killed him with their swords. Then they escaped and went to the region of Ararat northwest of Nineveh. And another of Sennacherib's sons, Esarhaddon, became the king of Assyria.

Chapter 38

¹About that time, Hezekiah became very ill and was close to dying. So Isaiah went to see him and gave him this message: "This is what Yahweh says: 'You should tell the people in your palace what you want them to do after you die because you will not recover from this illness. You are going to die'"

²Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed this: ³"Yahweh, do not forget that I have always served you faithfully with all my inner being, and I have done things that pleased you!" Then Hezekiah started to cry loudly.

⁴Then Yahweh gave Isaiah this message: ⁵"Go back to Hezekiah and tell him that this is what I, the God to whom your ancestor King David belonged, say: 'I have heard what you prayed, and I have seen you crying. So listen: I will enable you to live fifteen years more. ⁶And I will rescue you and this city from the power of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city.

⁷And this is what I will do to prove to you that I will do what I have just now promised. ⁸I will cause the shadow of the sun to move ten steps backward on the stairs that were built by King Ahaz.'" So the shadow of the sun on the stairs moved backward ten steps.

⁹When King Hezekiah was almost well again, he wrote this:

¹⁰I said to myself, "In the middle of my life I am about to walk through the gates of death, and Yahweh is taking from me the rest of my years.

¹¹I said, "I will not see Yahweh again

in this world where people are alive.

I will not see my friends again,

or be with others who now are alive in this world.

¹²It is as if my life had been taken away

like a tent whose pegs have been pulled up by a shepherd and taken away.

I have to roll up my life like a weaver,

like a piece of cloth that a weaver cuts and rolls up, Yahweh has cut off my life."

Between morning and evening he will kill me off.

¹³I waited patiently all during the night,

but my pain was as though I were being torn apart by lions.

Between morning and evening he will kill me off.

¹⁴I was delirious; I chirped like a swift or a swallow

and moaned like a dove.

My eyes became tired looking up toward heaven for help.

I cried out, 'Yahweh, help me, because I am distressed!'

¹⁵But there was really nothing that I could say and ask him to reply to me,

because it was Yahweh who sent this illness.

So now I will live humbly during my remaining years

because I am very anguished within myself.

¹⁶Yahweh, the sufferings that you give are good,

because what you do and what you say bring new life and health to me.

And you have restored me
and allowed me to continue to live!

¹⁷Truly, my suffering was good for me;
you loved me,
and as a result you have rescued me from dying
and have also forgiven all my sins.

¹⁸Dead people cannot praise you;
they cannot sing to praise you.
Those who have descended to their graves
cannot expect you to faithfully do things for them.

¹⁹Only people who are still alive, like I am, can praise you.
Fathers tell their children how you are faithful,
and if I remain alive, I will do the same thing.

²⁰Yahweh will fully heal me,
so we will sing praise to him
while others praise him playing musical instruments.
We will do that every day of our lives in the temple of Yahweh."

²¹Isaiah had previously said to Hezekiah's servants, "Prepare an ointment from mashed figs, and spread it on his boil, and then he will recover." So they did that, and Hezekiah recovered.

²²And Hezekiah had previously asked, "What will Yahweh do to prove that I will recover and be able to go to his temple?"

Chapter 39

¹Soon after that, Baladan's son Marduk-Baladan, the king of Babylon, heard a report that Hezekiah had been very sick but that he had recovered. So he wrote some letters and gave them to some messengers to take to Hezekiah, along with a gift. ²When the messengers arrived, Hezekiah welcomed them gladly. Then he showed them everything that was in his treasure houses—the silver, the gold, the spices, and the nice-smelling olive oil. He also took them to see the place where they kept their soldiers' weapons, and he showed them the other valuable things that were in the storehouses. Hezekiah showed them everything that was in the palace or in other places.

³Then Isaiah went to King Hezekiah and asked him, "Where did those men come from, and what did they want?"
He replied, "They came from the far away land of Babylon."

⁴Isaiah asked him, "What did they see in your palace?"

Hezekiah replied, "They saw everything. I showed them absolutely everything that I own—all my valuable things."

⁵Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, "Listen to this message from Yahweh, commander of the angel armies: ⁶There will be a time when everything in your palace, all the valuable things that your ancestors stored there up until the present time, will be carried away to Babylon. Yahweh says that there will be nothing left. ⁷Furthermore, some of your sons will be forced to go to Babylon. They will be castrated in order that they can become servants in the palace of the king of Babylon."

⁸Then Hezekiah replied to Isaiah, "The message from Yahweh that you have given to me is good." He said that because he was thinking, "Even if that happens, there will be peace and safety here during the time that I am alive."

Chapter 40

¹Our God says, "Encourage my people!

Encourage them!

²Speak kindly to the people of Jerusalem;

tell them that their suffering is ended

Yahweh has forgiven them for the sins that they have committed.

He has fully punished them for their sins."

³Someone is shouting,

"In the desert plain make the way straight for Yahweh to come to you;

make a smooth road for our God.

⁴Fill in the valleys;

flatten every hill and every mountain.

Make the uneven ground smooth,

and make the rough places smooth.

⁵If you do that, it will become known that Yahweh is glorious,

and all people will realize it at the same time.

Those things will surely happen because it is Yahweh who has said it."

⁶Someone said to me, "Shout!"

I replied, "What should I shout?"

He replied, "Shout that people are like grass;

their faithfulness fades as quickly as flowers in the field.

⁷Grass withers and flowers dry up

when Yahweh causes a hot wind from the desert to blow on them.

And all people are like that.

⁸The grass withers and the flowers dry up,

but what our God promises will last forever.”

⁹All of you who bring good news to Zion,
shout it from the high mountain!

Every one of you who brings good news to the people who live in Jerusalem,
shout out loud the message you have to tell!

Shout it out! Do not be afraid!

Say to the people living in the cities of Judah, “Here is your God!

¹⁰Yahweh your God will be coming with power,
he will rule powerfully.

When he comes, he will bring with him the people whom he has freed from being slaves in Babylonia.

¹¹He will take care of his people
like a shepherd takes care of his sheep,
and carries the young lambs in his arms.

He carries them close to his chest
and he gently leads the female sheep
that are nursing their young lambs.

¹²There is no one like Yahweh!

Who else has measured the water in the oceans in the palm of his hand?

Who else has measured the sky?

Who else knows how much soil is in the earth?

Who else has weighed the mountains and hills on scales?

¹³And who else can advise Yahweh?

Who can teach him or advise him what he should do?

¹⁴Has Yahweh ever consulted anyone else to get advice?

Does he need someone to tell him what is right to do and how to act justly?

¹⁵Yahweh considers that the nations are as insignificant as one drop from a bucket full of water.

They are as insignificant as dust on scales.

He is able to weigh islands

as though they weighed no more than specks of dust.

¹⁶There would be not enough wood from all the trees in Lebanon
to make a suitable fire for sacrificing animals to him,

and there are not enough animals in Lebanon to offer as sacrifices to him.

¹⁷The nations of the world are completely insignificant to him;
he considers that they are worthless and less than nothing.

¹⁸So to whom can you compare God?

What image resembles him?

¹⁹Can you compare him to an idol that is made in a mold,
and then is covered with a thin sheet of gold
and decorated with silver chains?

²⁰A man who is poor cannot buy silver or gold for his idol;
so he selects a piece of wood that will not rot,
and he gives it to a craftsman
to carve an idol that will not fall over!

²¹Have you not heard this?

Do you not understand it?

Are you unable to hear what God said long ago—
messages that he gave before he created the earth?

²²God sits on his throne above the earth,
and the people on the earth below seem to be as small as grasshoppers.
He spreads out the sky like a curtain;
it is like a tent for him to live in.

²³He causes kings to have no more power,
and he causes the rulers to be worth nothing.

²⁴They start to rule, like small plants start to grow and form roots;
but then he gets rid of them
as though they withered when he blew on them,
like chaff that is blown away by the wind.

²⁵The Holy One asks,

“To whom will you compare me?
Is anyone equal to me?”

²⁶Look up toward the sky:
consider who created all the stars.

Yahweh created them, and at night he causes them to appear;
he calls each one by its name.

Because he is extremely powerful,
all of the stars are there when he calls out their names.

²⁷You people of Israel, why do you complain that Yahweh does not see the troubles that you are experiencing?
Why do you say that he does not act fairly toward you?

²⁸Have you never heard
and have you never understood
that Yahweh is the everlasting God?
He is the one who created the earth, even the most distant places on the earth.
He never becomes weak or weary,
and no one can find out how much he understands.

²⁹He strengthens those who feel weak and tired.

³⁰Even youths become faint and weary,
and young men will fall when they are exhausted.

³¹But those who trust in Yahweh will become strong again;
it will be as though they will soar as eagles do.
They will run for a long time and not become weary;
they will walk long distances and not faint.

Chapter 41

¹Yahweh says, "You people who live on islands in the ocean,
be silent in front of me while I ask you some questions!
Then you can be courageous and talk to me.
We will meet together and decide which one of us is right.

²Who has raised up this king to come from the east?
He is the one who does what is right with every step. He hands nations over to him and he defeats them,
and he tramples their kings under his feet.
He cuts their enemies and they are destroyed so they are like the dust,
and his army shoots them with bows and arrows so that they are like the chaff when the wind blows.

³Even though they are in danger, they go very swiftly as

they pursue their enemies, and nothing stops them.

⁴Who has enabled rulers to do mighty deeds like that?

Who has done that throughout all generations?

It is I, Yahweh!

I was the first one to do things like that, and I will be the last one to do them.

⁵People who live on islands in the ocean are afraid while they watch.

People in remote areas tremble and gather together.

⁶They encourage each other and say to each other,

'Be strong!'

⁷The woodworkers encourage those who make things from gold,

and the men who flatten metal encourage those who hammer it on an anvil.

They all say, 'The idol has been well made!'

Then they carefully nail down the idol in order that it will not topple over!"

⁸Yahweh continues to say, "You people of Israel are my servants;

you are descendants of Jacob, whom I chose;

you are descendants of Abraham, who I said was my friend.

⁹I summoned you from very distant places on the earth,

and I said, 'I want you to serve me.'

I have chosen you,

and I will not reject you.

¹⁰Do not be afraid,

because I will be with you.

Do not be discouraged, because I am your God.

I will enable you to be strong, and I will help you;

I will hold you up with my powerful arm by which I will rescue you, and I will be completely right to do so!

¹¹It is certain that all those who are angry with you Israelite people will be disgraced.

Those who oppose you will be wiped out;

they will all die.

¹²If you search for those who tried to conquer you,

you will not find them,

because they will all disappear.

Those who attacked you
will not exist anymore,
¹³because it will be as though I will hold you up by your right hand.

I am Yahweh, your God,
and I say to you, 'Do not be afraid,
because I will help you.'

¹⁴Although others have treated you people of Israel like worms,
do not be afraid of your enemies,
because I will help you!"

This is what Yahweh solemnly says—the one who rescues you,
the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁵He continues to say, "I will cause you to be like a new threshing sledge, very sharp and two-edged.
You will tear your enemies to bits
causing them to be like bits of chaff on the mountains.

¹⁶You will toss them up into the air,
and a strong wind will blow them away.
When that happens, you will rejoice about what I have done for you;
you will praise me, Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁷When poor and needy people need water and they have no water,
and their tongues are very dry because they are very thirsty,
I, Yahweh, will come and help them.

I, the God to whom you Israelite people belong, will never abandon them.

¹⁸I will cause rivers to flow for them on the barren hills.

I will give them fountains in the valleys.

I will fill the desert with pools of water.

Water from springs will flow into rivers,
and the rivers will flow across the dry ground.

¹⁹I will plant cedars, acacia, and myrtle, in the wilderness—
and olive trees I will plant in the desert plain— cypresses, pines, and boxtrees all together.

²⁰I will do that in order that people who see it will think about it, and they will know and understand
that it is I, Yahweh, who has done it;

it is what I, the Holy One of Israel, have done.

21I, Yahweh, the king of Israel am speaking to you nations:

Come and tell me what your idols can do for you! Argue your best in defense of them.

22Bring them here to tell us what is going to happen!

Ask them to tell us what things happened long ago,
in order that we may think about those things,
and learn if those things that they predicted really happened.

Or ask them to tell us about the future,
in order for us to know what will happen.

23Yes, those idols should tell us what will happen in the future.

If they do that, we will know that they are really gods.
Tell them to do something—either something good or something bad!
Tell them to do something that will cause us to be amazed and afraid!

24But that is impossible, because idols are absolutely worthless;
they can do nothing,
and I detest those who decide to worship idols.”

25“But I have incited a ruler who will come with his army from the north.
I have summoned him to come from his country, which is east of Israel,
and he will call on me for help.
I will enable his army to conquer other rulers;
they will trample those leaders like a man who makes clay pots first tramples the clay.

26Who told you people long ago that this would happen?
Who predicted it, with the result that we can say, “What he predicted was correct!”?
No one else said that it would happen.

27I was the first one to say to the people of Jerusalem:
‘Listen to this! I have appointed a messenger to tell good news to you!’

28None of your idols told you that.
And when I asked them questions, none of them was able to give me any answers.

29Think about it: Those idols are all useless, worthless things.
They are as meaningless as the wind.”

Chapter 42

¹Yahweh says, "I want you people to know about my servant, whom I encourage.

I have chosen him, and I am pleased with him.

I have given him my Spirit,

and he will make certain that all the people groups do what is right.

²He will not show his power by shouting

or by talking very loudly.

³He will not get rid of anyone who is weak like a smashed reed,

and he will not end the life of anyone who is helpless, like an oil lamp about to stop burning.

He will faithfully make sure that judges decide cases justly.

⁴He will not become exhausted or discouraged all during the time that he is causing things to be done justly throughout the earth.

Even people living on the islands in the oceans will confidently wait for him to teach them his laws."

⁵Yahweh our God created the sky

and spread it out.

He also created the earth and everything on it.

He gives breath to all the people on the earth and causes them to live.

And he is the one who says to his special servant,

⁶"I, Yahweh, have chosen you

to show people that I always act righteously.

I will grasp your hand and protect you,

and I will present you to my Israelite people

to be the one who will put into effect my covenant with them.

You will be like a light to the other nations.

⁷For you will enable blind people to see,

you will free those who are in prison

and release those who are in dark dungeons.

⁸I am Yahweh; that is my name.

I will not allow anyone else to receive the honor that only I deserve.

And I will not allow others to praise idols, for they should praise only me.

⁹Everything that I have prophesied has happened,

and now I will tell about other things that will happen.

I will tell you things that will happen before they happen.”

¹⁰Sing a new song to Yahweh!

Sing to praise him throughout the world!

All you people who sail across the oceans, and all you creatures that live in the oceans,

and all you people who live on islands far away, sing!

¹¹You people who live in towns in the desert, sing loudly!

You people who live in the region of Kedar in the north of Arabia, you rejoice also!

You people in the city of Sela in Edom, you also should sing joyfully;

shout to praise him from the tops of your mountains!

¹²Even people who live on distant islands should honor Yahweh

and sing to praise him.

¹³It will be as though Yahweh will march out like a mighty soldier;

he will show that he is very angry.

He will shout a battle cry,

and then he will defeat all his enemies.

¹⁴He will say, “I have remained silent for a long time;

I have restrained myself from doing what I need to do.

But now, like a woman who is giving birth to a baby, I will cry out and gasp and pant.

¹⁵I will level off the hills and mountains,

and I will cause all the plants and trees to dry up.

I will cause the rivers to become small streams, and little islands will appear in them,

and I will cause all the pools to become dry.

¹⁶My people who have been taken into exile are like blind people,

but I will lead them along a road on which they have not walked before,

on a road that they have not seen before.

They have felt very helpless, as though they were walking in the darkness,

but I will take away that darkness

and I will make smooth the road that is in front of them.

Those are the things that I will do for them;

I will not abandon them.

¹⁷But those who trust in carved idols,
and say to images, 'You are our gods,'
will be completely humiliated."

¹⁸You Israelite people who have acted toward God like deaf people, listen to what Yahweh says!
"You who have been like blind people, look!

¹⁹No people are as blind as my people, who should have been serving me.
No people are as much like deaf people as the Israelites, who should have been my messengers.
No people are as much like blind people as those whom I chose to serve me in a covenant.

²⁰You see and know what are the right things to do, but you do not do them.
You hear what I say to you, but you do not pay attention."

²¹Because Yahweh is righteous,
he has honored his glorious laws.

²²But armies have destroyed Jerusalem and have completely plundered all the valuable things,
and they have captured Yahweh's people
and taken them away and put them in prison.
They have been captured easily,
because there was no one to protect them;
there was no one to say that they should be allowed to return home.

²³Who among you will listen carefully to these things?
Who will pay attention from now on?

²⁴Who allowed the valuable possessions of the people of Israel to be stolen?
It was Yahweh, because he is the one against whom we had sinned;
we did not conduct our lives like he wanted us to,
and we did not obey his laws.

²⁵Therefore he was extremely angry with us,
and he caused our soldiers to be destroyed in battles.
It was as though he had lit a fire around us,
but we did not understand what he was trying to tell us.
His anger with us was like a fire that would burn us up,
but we did not pay attention.

Chapter 43

¹But now, you people of Israel, listen to Yahweh, the one who established your nation.

The one who caused you to become a nation says this:

“Do not be afraid,

because I have rescued you.

I have called you by your name, in order that you may belong to me. Now you are mine.

²When you experience dangerous situations,

and you have hardships as terrible as deep rivers to cross,

I will be with you.

When you have very painful troubles, as painful as fire,

you will be able to endure them, and they will not hurt you,

³because I am Yahweh, your God,

the Holy One of Israel, the one who rescues you.

I will sacrifice Egypt in your place;

and Ethiopia and Seba exchange for you.

⁴I will cause other countries to be conquered instead of your country;

I will trade them for you,

in order that you will not be killed,

because you are very precious to me

and because I love you.

⁵Do not be afraid, because I am with you.

Some day I will gather your descendants from the east and from the west.

⁶I will command the rulers of the nations to the north and to the south,

‘Allow all the people of Israel to return to their country,

from the most distant places on the earth.

⁷Allow all those who belong to me to return,

because I have caused them to become a nation in order that they would honor me;

I am the one who has done that.’

⁸Summon the people who have eyes but act as though they were blind;

summon those who have ears but act as though they were deaf.

⁹Gather people of all nations together,

ones from all people groups,
and ask them this: 'Has any of their idols foretold the things that are happening now?
And can any of them predict what will happen in the future?'
Then bring people who will testify and say 'I heard them predict things,
and what they predicted was what happened,'
but they will be lying."

10But Yahweh says, "You people of Israel are my witnesses,
and you are the ones who serve me.
I chose you in order that you would know me, believe in me,
and understand that I am the only one who is truly God.
There is no other true God.

There was no other true God previously,
and there will never be another true God.

11I, only I, am Yahweh,
and there is no other one who can save you.

12I said that I would rescue your ancestors,
and then I rescued them, and I proclaimed that I had done it.
No foreign god among you did that!
And you are witnesses that only I, Yahweh, am God.

13I am God, the one who has existed forever and who will exist forever;
no one can snatch people from my hand,
and no one can change what I have done."

14Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, is the one who rescues you, and this is what he says:
"For your sake, I will send an army to attack Babylon.
They will force the people of the city to run away from their city, and to wail in song instead of rejoice in song.

15I am Yahweh, your Holy One,
the one who caused Israel to become a nation, and the one who is really your king.

16I am Yahweh, the one who opened a path through the water,
making a road through the Sea of Reeds.

17Then I summoned the great army of Egypt
to come with all their chariots and horses.

But when they tried to pursue my people,
I caused the waves to flow over them and they drowned;
their lives ended like the light of a candle ends when someone snuffs out the wick.

18But do not think only about what happened in the past, long ago.

19Instead, consider the new thing that I am going to do.

I have already started to do it;
can you see it?

I am going to make a road through the desert.

And I will cause there to be streams in the wasteland.

20The jackals and ostriches and other wild creatures will thank me
for giving them water in the desert.

I will cause streams to appear in the dry desert
in order that my people, the ones whom I have chosen, will have water;

21I will do that for the people whom I have created and chosen to belong to me,
so that they will tell others about the wonderful things I have done for them.

22But now, you descendants of Jacob, you refuse to request my help.
You people of Israel have become tired of worshiping me.

23You have not brought to me sheep or goats for offerings to burn up on my altar;
you have not honored me with any sacrifices,
even though the offerings of grain and incense that I asked you to bring to me were not a burden to you.

24You have not bought for me any fragrant reeds,
and you have not poured out to me the sweet-smelling fat from any animal sacrifices.
But you have burdened me by all the sins that you have committed,
and made me weary because of all your iniquities.

25I am the one who is able to forgive you for all your sins;
I am the only one who can do that,
with the result that I will never think about them again.

26Tell me what I have done that you do not like.
Do you think that when you state your case, you will prove that you are innocent?

27No, what has happened is that the first ancestor of you Israelites sinned against me,
and since then, all your leaders have rebelled against me.

²⁸That is why I will cause your priests to be disgraced;
I will allow others to destroy you people of Israel
and caused you to be despised.”

Chapter 44

¹But now, you people of Israel whom Yahweh has chosen to serve him, listen to me.

²Yahweh, the one who created you, watched over you while you were being born, and helps you, says this:

“You dear people of Israel whom I have chosen,
you who serve me,
do not be afraid.

³I will pour water on your dry land
and cause streams to flow.

And I will pour out my Spirit on your descendants
and greatly bless them.

⁴They will grow up like grass grows along the water,
like willow trees grow well along a riverbank.

⁵Some of them will say, ‘I belong to Yahweh,’
and others will say, ‘We are descendants of Jacob,’
and others will write on their hands, ‘We belong to Yahweh,’
and others will say, ‘We are Israelites, and we belong to Yahweh.’”

⁶Yahweh, the King of Israel, the one who saves us, commander of the angel armies, says this:

“I am the one who begins everything and who ends everything;
there is no other God.

⁷If there is anyone like me,

he should proclaim it!

He should speak and tell me now!

He should tell what has happened since I caused my people of Israel to become a nation long ago;

he should also explain why events in the past happened the way they did,

and he should predict what will happen in the future.

⁸My people, do not be afraid.

Long ago I told you things that would happen;

you know that I predicted them, and you can testify that I did that.

There certainly is not any other God.

There is no other God who is able to protect you.”

⁹All those who make idols are foolish,

and the idols that they think highly of are worthless.

And the people who worship those idols—it is as though they were blind,
and they will be ashamed for having worshiped those idols.

¹⁰Only foolish people would make idols in a mold,

idols that would never help them at all.

¹¹Those who make idols and those who worship them will be ashamed.

Those who make idols are only human beings,

but they claim that they are making gods!

They should stand in front of God in a courtroom,

and when they hear what he says, they will be terrified,

and they will all be disgraced.

¹²Metalworkers stand in front of hot coals

in order to make idols.

They pound them with hammers and shape them.

Because they work very hard, they become hungry and weak;

they become very thirsty and feel exhausted.

¹³Then a woodcarver takes a big block of wood and he measures it;

then he marks it to show where he will cut it.

He uses a chisel and other tools

to carve it to resemble a human.

He causes it to become a very beautiful idol,

and then he puts it in a special house, where he will bow down to it.

¹⁴Before he carves an idol from that block of wood, he has already cut down a cedar tree,

or he has selected a cypress tree or an oak tree

and allowed it to grow tall in the forest.

Or he has planted a pine tree,

and the rain has watered it and caused it to grow tall.

15After he uses part of the tree to make an idol,
he uses the other part to make a fire,
either to warm himself or to bake bread.

But he uses part of the same tree to make for himself an idol to worship!
He makes an idol, and then he bows down to worship it.

16He burns part of the wood of that tree to cook his meat and eats it and becomes full,
and he burns part of it to warm himself,
and he says, "I feel warm while I am watching the flames in the fire."

17Then he takes the rest of the wood
and makes an idol which is to be his god.

He bows down to it and honors it,
and prays to it and says,
"You are my god, so save me!"

18Those people are very stupid and ignorant.
It is as though they were blind and unable to see,
as though their minds were closed and unable to think well.

19They do not think about what they are doing,
that they are taking a block of wood
and burning half of it to warm themselves
and using some of the rest to bake bread and roast some meat!
They do not say to themselves,
"It is stupid to take the rest of the wood to make a detestable idol!
It does not make sense to bow down to a block of wood!"

20They might as well be eating the ashes from a fire!
They trust in something that cannot save them;
they do not admit, "In my hand I hold something that is not really a god! "

21Yahweh says, "You descendants of Jacob,
you people of Israel who should be serving me,
I created you,
and I will not forget you.

22I have gotten rid of your sins

like the wind blows away a cloud.

It is as though your transgressions were a morning mist
that I have blown away.

Return to me

because I have rescued you.”

²³The sun and moon and stars in the sky, should sing,
and the very deepest places of the earth will should joyfully!

All the mountains and forests, and all you trees,
should sing loudly,

because Yahweh has rescued the descendants of Jacob,
and the people of Israel will praise him.

²⁴Yahweh, who saved you and created you, says this:

“I am Yahweh, the one who created everything.

I am the only one who stretched out the sky.

There was no one who was with me
when I created the earth.

²⁵I show that the false prophets are liars,

and I show that those who perform rituals to predict the future are fools.

Some people who falsely think that they are wise say that they know much,
but I show that they are foolish.

²⁶But I always cause to happen what my prophets predict.

I tell them to say to the people of Jerusalem, ‘Some day people will live here again.’

And I tell them to say to the people in other towns in Judah that I, Yahweh, say,

‘Your towns will be rebuilt;

I will cause the places that are only ruins to be rebuilt.’

²⁷When I say to the rivers, ‘Dry up!’

they will become dry.

²⁸When I say about King Cyrus, ‘He will take care of my people like a shepherd takes care of his sheep,

he will do all that I want him to do,’

he will say about Jerusalem,

‘We must rebuild it!’

and he will also say, "We must rebuild the temple!"

Chapter 45

¹Cyrus is the one whom Yahweh has appointed to be the emperor of Persia

and to whom he will give great power;

Yahweh will enable him to defeat other nations

and to take away the power of their kings.

He will cause gates of cities to be opened,

and no one will ever be able to shut them.

²This is what Yahweh says to him:

"Cyrus, I will go ahead of you

and level the mountains.

I will smash down bronze gates

and cut through their iron bars.

³I will give you treasures that people have hidden in dark secret places.

I will do that in order that you will know that I am Yahweh,

the God to whom the Israelites belong,

the God who calls you by your name.

⁴I have summoned you, calling out your name,

for the sake of the people of Israel whom I have chosen, who serve me.

Even though you do not know me,

I will give you a title that has great honor.

⁵I am Yahweh, and there is no other God.

Even though you do not know me,

I will give you power to wage war

⁶in order that everyone in the world, from the east to the west, will know that there is no other God.

I am Yahweh, and there is no other God.

⁷I created the light and the darkness.

I cause there to be peace and I cause there to be disasters.

I, Yahweh, do all those things."

⁸Yahweh also says, "Just like the rain falls on the earth to help it,

I will help my people and rescue them; I will cause them to be treated justly.

I, Yahweh, am the one who will cause both of those things to happen.

⁹Terrible things will happen to those who argue with me, because I am the one who created them.

They are like clay pots who are arguing with the Potter who made them;

they are just like every other clay pot that is made, and yet they argue with the One who made them and formed them out of the clay.

Can a lump of clay say to the potter who made him,

'Why are you making me like this?'

The clay pot cannot say 'What do you think you are doing, making me this way?' or 'You have no skill and your clay pots are not worth anything!'

¹⁰And it would be terrible if an unborn baby would say to its father,

'Why are you causing me to be born?'

or if it said to its mother,

'The result of your labor pains will be useless.'"

¹¹Yahweh, the Holy One of the Israelite people, the one who created Israel, says this to them:

"Why do you ask questions about what I do for you, my children?

Why do you instruct me about the work that I should do?

¹²I am the one who created the earth

and created people to live on it.

I stretched out the sky with my hands,

and I put the stars in their places.

¹³And I have made Cyrus to desire to do things that are right,

and I will enable him to do all those things easily. No one will be able to stop him.

His workers will rebuild my city,

and he will free my people who have been exiled.

And he will do it without my rewarding him!"

This is what Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, says.

¹⁴And this is also what I, Yahweh, say to you, my people:

"You will rule the people of Egypt and Ethiopia,

and the tall people of Seba will become your slaves.

They will come to you bringing all the things that they sell,

and it will all be yours.

They will have chains on their arms as they follow you.

They will bow down in front of you and say,

'God is with you

and he is the only God;

there is no other God.'"

15God, although we cannot see you,

you are the one to whom we Israelite people belong, the one who saves us.

16All those who make idols will be humiliated.

They will all be disgraced together.

17But you, Yahweh, will rescue us, your Israelite people,

and we will be free forever.

Never again, during all the future, will we again be humiliated and disgraced.

18Yahweh is God;

he is the one who created the sky

and created and formed the earth.

He did not want it to remain with nothing living on it;

he wanted people to live on it.

He says, "I am Yahweh;

there is no other God.

19What I proclaimed, I did not speak secretly;

I did not hide what I was saying by speaking in a dark place.

When I spoke to the descendants of Jacob,

I did not tell them

'It will be useless for you to seek for me!'

I, Yahweh, speak only what is true and what is right.

20You people who are still alive after experiencing great disasters,

should come and gather together and listen to this:

The people who carry around their wooden idols

and pray to them are foolish, because those idols cannot rescue them!

21Talk among yourselves and decide what you will say to prove that you should pray to idols.

And when you do that, I will ask you,

'Who predicted long ago what has now happened?
Did any idol tell you that those things would happen?'
No, it was only I, Yahweh, who told you,
because I am the only God; there is no other God.
I am a God who acts righteously and saves people;
there is no other one who does these things.

²²Everyone in the world should ask me to save them,
because I am the only God who can do that;
there is no other one.

²³I have solemnly declared, using my own name;
I have spoken what is true,
and I will never change what I have said:
Some day, everyone will bow in front of me,
and they will all solemnly promise to be loyal to me.

²⁴They will declare,
'Yahweh is the one who enables us to live righteously and to be strong.'
And all those who have been angry at Yahweh will come to him,
and they will be ashamed that they were angry with him.

²⁵Yahweh is the only one who will enable us Israelite people in all future times to defeat our enemies,
and then we will boast about what he has done for us.

Chapter 46

¹It is as though Bel and Nebo, the statues of the gods of Babylonia,
were bowing down as they are put on animals and carried away!
The statues are heavy burdens and will cause the animals to become tired!

²Gods and animals are all bowed down;
the gods can save neither themselves nor the beasts of burden;
the gods themselves are going into exile!

³Yahweh says, "You descendants of Jacob who were exiled,
I am not like the gods of Babylonia that must be carried;
instead, it is as though I have carried you

since you first became a nation.

I carried you even before you became a nation.

⁴I will be your God, and I will carry you for many years,
until it is as though your nation is an old man with gray hair.

I caused you to become a nation,
and I will sustain you and rescue you.

⁵There is certainly no one to whom I can be compared.

There is no one who is equal to me.

⁶So it is stupid that some people pour out gold and silver from their bags
and weigh it on a scale.

Then they hire a man who makes things from gold to make an idol from it.

After he makes an idol, they bow down and worship it!

⁷They lift it up and carry it on their shoulders.

They put it in a special place,
and it stays there.

It cannot move!

And when someone prays to it, it does not answer.

So obviously it cannot rescue anyone from his troubles!

⁸You people of Judah, do not forget this;
keep thinking about it, you sinful people!

⁹Think about the things that I did long ago.

Only I am God; I am God, and there is no one like me.

¹⁰Only I can tell what will happen in the future before it occurs;

I tell it long before it happens.

I will accomplish everything that I plan to accomplish,
and I will do everything that I want to do.

¹¹So I will summon Cyrus to come from the east like a swift and powerful eagle;
he will come from a distant country.

He will accomplish what I want him to.

He is the one who will do what I have said that I want him to do,
what I have planned.

¹²You stubborn people of Israel,
you who are completely unable to do what is right,
¹³I will rescue you,
and it will not be a long time before that happens.
I will do it soon.
I will rescue Jerusalem
and show to you Israelite people that I am glorious.”

Chapter 47

¹Yahweh also says, “You people of Babylon,
you should go and sit in the dust,
because your time to rule other countries is almost ended.
People will never again say that Babylonia is beautiful
like a very attractive young woman.
²You will be slaves, so take heavy stones
and grind grain like slave women do.
Take off your beautiful veils
and take off your robes as you prepare to cross streams to go where you will be forced to go.
³You will be naked and very ashamed.
I will have vengeance on you and will not pity you.”
⁴The one who frees us people of Judah, whom we call ‘Yahweh, Commander of the angel armies,’
is the Holy One of Israel.
⁵Yahweh says, “You people of Babylon,
sit silently in the darkness,
because no one will never again say that your city is like a queen that rules many kingdoms.
⁶I was angry with the people who belong to me,
and I punished them.
I allowed you people of Babylon to conquer them.
But when you conquered them, you did not act mercifully toward them.
You oppressed even the old people.
⁷You said, ‘We will rule other nations forever;

it is as though our city will be the queen of the world forever!

But you did not think about the things that you were doing,
or think about what would result.

⁸You people of Babylon who enjoy pleasures and who live in luxury,
listen to this:

You act as though you were gods, saying, "I am special, and there is no one better than I am,"

None of our women will ever become widows,
and none of our children will ever be killed in wars.'

⁹But both of those things will happen to you suddenly:

many of your women will become widows
and many of your children will die,
even though you perform much sorcery and many kinds of magic to prevent bad things from happening to you.

¹⁰You felt safe even though you were doing many wicked things,

and you said, 'No one will see what we are doing!'
You thought that you were very wise and knew many things,
and you said, 'We are gods, and there are no others like us,'
but you deceived yourselves.

¹¹So you will experience terrible things,

and you will not be able to prevent them by working magic.
You will experience disasters,
and you will not be able to pay any magician to keep those things from happening.
A catastrophe will happen to you suddenly,
something that you will not realize is about to happen.

¹²So continue to perform all your magic spells!

Keep doing the many kinds of sorcery that you have been doing for many years!
Perhaps doing those things will enable you to be successful;
perhaps you will be able to cause your enemies to be afraid of you!

¹³But all that has resulted from your doing all the things that the magicians have told you to do is that you have become tired!

The men who look at the stars, announce every new moon, predict what will happen
should come forward and rescue you from the disasters that you are about to experience.

¹⁴But they cannot do that, because they are like straw that is burning in a fire;

they cannot save themselves from being burned up in the flames.

They are unable to help you;

they are as useless as stubble that burns, but that fire will burn them up rather than let them enjoy the heat.

¹⁵And they will disappoint you, those with whom you faithfully worked and with whom you traveled and traded when you were younger,

and yet all of them keep doing their own foolish things;

and when you cry out for help, there is no one who can help you.”

Chapter 48

¹Descendants of Jacob,

who are also descendants of Judah and are now called the people of Israel,

listen to Yahweh!

You make solemn promises using the name of Yahweh,

and you request that the God to whom you Israelite people belong will hear you,

but you do not do it sincerely.

²You say that you live in the holy city of Jerusalem

and you insincerely say that you are relying on the God to whom you people of Israel belong,

the one who is Yahweh, commander of the angel armies.

³“Long ago I predicted what would happen.

And then suddenly, I caused those things to happen.

⁴I knew that you people were very stubborn;

I knew that your heads were as hard as iron or brass.

⁵That is why I told you those things long ago.

Long before they occurred, I announced that they would occur,

in order that when they happened you could not say

‘Our idols did it;

our statue carved out of wood or our idol made of metal caused them to happen.’

⁶You have heard those things that I predicted,

and now you have seen that they have all occurred,

so why do you not admit it?

Now I will tell you new things,

things that you have not known previously.

⁷I am causing them to happen now;
they are not things I did long ago.
So you cannot say, 'We already knew about those things.'

⁸I will tell you about things that you have never heard about or understood before.
Even long ago you did not pay attention to me.
I know that you act very deceitfully;
you have rebelled against me since you first became a nation.

⁹But for my own sake, in order that I will be honored,
I will not punish you immediately
and I will not completely get rid of you.

¹⁰I have purified you, but not the way people refine silver.
Instead, I have caused you to suffer very much to get rid of your impure behavior,

¹¹But for my own sake I will delay punishing you more;
I will delay for my own sake,
in order that my reputation will not be damaged.
I will not allow any person or any idol to be honored as I deserve to be honored."

¹²"You descendants of Jacob, you people of Israel whom I have chosen,
listen to me!
Only I am God;
I am the one who begins everything and who causes everything to end.

¹³I am the one who laid the foundation of the earth.
I stretched out the sky with my hand.
And when I tell the stars to appear,
they all do what I tell them.

¹⁴All of you, gather together and listen to me.
None of your idols has told this to you:
I, Yahweh, have chosen Cyrus to assist me,
and he will do to Babylon what I want him to do,
and his army will destroy the army of Babylonia.

¹⁵I have said it;
I have summoned Cyrus.

I have appointed him,
and he will accomplish everything that he attempts to do.

¹⁶Come close to me and listen to what I say.

Long ago I told you plainly what would happen,
and when those things occurred, I was causing them to happen.”

And now Yahweh the Lord and his Spirit have sent me, the prophet Isaiah, to give you a message.

¹⁷This is what Yahweh, the one who saves you, the Holy God of us Israelites, says:

“I am Yahweh, your God;

I teach you what is important for you to prosper;

I direct you and lead you to do the things that you should do.

¹⁸I wish that you had paid attention to my commands!

If you had done that, things would have gone well for you

like a river that flows gently;

you would have been successful again and again,

like waves that come without ceasing.

¹⁹Your descendants would have been as many as the grains of sand on the seashore
which no one can count.

I would not have needed to destroy them;

the country of Israel would not have been destroyed.

²⁰However, now I tell you,

leave Babylon!

Flee from being slaves of the people of Babylonia!

Proclaim this message joyfully;

send it to the most remote places on the earth:

‘Yahweh freed the people of Israel from being slaves in Egypt.’

²¹They were not thirsty when he led them through the desert,

because he split open the rock

and caused water to gush out for them to drink.’

²²But things will not go well like that for wicked people,” says Yahweh.

Chapter 49

¹All you people who live on islands in the ocean and in other distant areas,
pay attention to what I will say!

Yahweh called me before I was born;
he chose me when I was still in my mother's womb.

²When I grew up, he caused my messages to be like a sharp sword.

He has protected me by his hand.
He protects me like someone protects sharp arrows in a quiver.

³He said to me, "You will serve my Israelite people,
and you will cause people to honor me."

⁴I replied, "My work has been useless;
I have used my strength, but I have accomplished nothing worthwhile;
everything that I have done has been in vain.
However, Yahweh can honor me as he pleases;
my God is the one who will reward me as I deserve."

⁵Yahweh formed me when I was in my mother's womb in order that I would serve him;
he appointed me to bring the people of Israel back to himself.

Yahweh has honored me,
and he is the one who has caused me to be strong.

⁶He says to me,
"It is not enough for you to serve me
by bringing the descendants of Jacob back to worship me again;
I also want you to be like a light for the non-Israelites;
I want you to take my message about how to be saved to people all over the world."

⁷Yahweh, the one who saves us,
the Holy God of us Israelite people,
says to the one who was despised and rejected by the people of many nations,
to the one who is the slave of rulers,
"Some day kings will stand up to respect you when they see you,
and princes will bow down before you
because you serve me, Yahweh, the one who faithfully does what I promise.

I am the Holy God to whom you Israelites belong, the one who has chosen you.”

⁸This is also what Yahweh says:

“At a time when it pleases me, I will answer your prayers.

On the day when I rescue you from your oppressors, I will help you.

I will protect you and enable you to establish an agreement with other nations.

And by what you do, I will re-establish your nation of Israel

and allow you to live again in your land that was abandoned.

⁹You will say to those who were captured and exiled,

‘Leave Babylonia and return to your own country!’

And you will say to those who are in dark prisons,

‘Come out into the light!’

When that happens, they will again be like sheep

that eat grass in green pastures,

on hills where before there was no grass.

¹⁰They will not be hungry or thirsty anymore;

the hot sun will not beat upon them again.

I, Yahweh, will act mercifully toward them and lead them;

I will lead them to where there are springs of cool water.

¹¹And I will cause the mountains to become as though they were level roads,

and I will prepare good highways for my people to travel on, to return to Jerusalem.

¹²My people will return from far away;

some will come from the north, some from the west,

some from southern Egypt.”

¹³Because of what Yahweh has promised to do,

everything should shout joyfully—

the sky and the earth and the mountains should sing,

because Yahweh comforts his people,

and he will pity those who are suffering.

¹⁴The people of Jerusalem say,

“Yahweh has abandoned us;

he has forgotten about us.”

15But Yahweh replies,

“That is not true! Can a woman forget the infant that she is nursing?

Can she stop acting kindly toward the child to whom she has given birth?

But even if a woman would do that,

I will not forget you!

16Note that I have written your names on the palms of my hands;

I am always looking at the walls of your city.

17Soon your children will be returning there,

and all those who destroyed your city will leave.

18You will look around and see

all of your children coming back to you.

As surely as I live,

they will be with you for you to show to people

like a bride shows her wedding ornaments!

19Your land has been ruined and caused to become desolate,

but some day it will be filled with people,

and those who conquered you will be far away.

20The children who were born while you were exiled will return to Jerusalem and say,

‘This city is too small for us;

We need more space to live in!’

21Then you will think to yourselves,

‘It is amazing that we have all these children!

Most of our children were dead,

and the rest were exiled.

We were left here alone;

so we do not know where all these children have come from!

Who raised them?’”

22This is what Yahweh our God says:

“Watch! It is as though I will lift up my hand to signal to those who are not Israelites.

And they will carry your little sons and daughters on their shoulders

and bring them back to you.

²³Kings will serve you and will tutor your children,
and their queens will take care of your young children.

They will prostrate themselves in front of you
and lick the dust off your feet.

When that happens, you will know that I am Yahweh;
and those who trust in me will never be disappointed.”

²⁴There is no one who can snatch valuable things from a soldier who has captured those things in a war;
there is no one who can force a tyrant to free the people whom he has captured.

²⁵But Yahweh says this:

“Some day, those who have been captured will go free,
and the valuable things that tyrants have snatched from others will be returned,
because I will fight against those who fight against you,
and I will rescue your children.

²⁶And I will cause your enemies to destroy themselves
instead of murdering others.

When that happens, everyone in the world will know that I, Yahweh, am the one who saves you,
the one who rescues you from your enemies;
everyone will know that I am the mighty God to whom you descendants of Jacob belong.”

Chapter 50

¹This is also what Yahweh says:

“You Israelite people, do not think that I forced your parents to be exiled to Babylonia
like some men send away their wives
after giving them a paper
on which they state that they were divorcing them!

I certainly did not get rid of you like a man who sells his children to get money to pay what he owes.
No, the reason that I forced you to be exiled
was to punish you because of the sins that you have committed.

²When I came to you to rescue you,
why did no one answer when I called out to you?
Was there no one there to buy you back and take you home?

Did you think that I do not have the power to rescue you?

Think about this:

I can speak to a sea and cause it to become dry!

I can cause rivers to become deserts

with the result that the fish in the rivers die from thirst and rot.

³I cause the sky to become dark,

as though it was wearing black clothes because it was mourning because someone had died.”

⁴Yahweh our God has taught me to speak for him,

in order that I may encourage those who are weary.

Each morning he awakens me,

in order that I may listen to what he teaches me.

⁵Yahweh our God has spoken to me,

and I have not rejected what he told me;

I have accepted it.

⁶I allowed people to beat me on my back

and to pull out the whiskers in my beard because they hated me.

I did not turn away from them

when they made fun of me and spat on me.

⁷But because the Lord Yahweh helps me,

I will never be humiliated.

Therefore I am determined to face difficulties,

and I know that nothing will cause me to be ashamed.

⁸God is near to me; he will show others that I have been right to trust him,

so if anyone stands in front of me and accuses me in a court,

he will not be able to show that I have done anything that is wrong.

⁹The Lord Yahweh defends me in court,

so no one will be able to condemn me.

All those who accuse me will disappear

like old clothes that have been eaten by moths.

¹⁰If you honor Yahweh

and do what his servant tells you to do,

even if you are walking in darkness, and it seems that there is no light,
trust in Yahweh your God to help you; depend on him.

¹¹But you people who oppose me by lighting your own fires,
and by carrying your own flaming torches:
go ahead and live according to your own knowledge,
according to what you think is best.
Yahweh tells you what will happen to you:
he will make you die in great torment!

Chapter 51

¹Yahweh says, "You people who desire to act righteously,
who want to do what I want you to do,
listen to me!

Think about Abraham!

It is as though he were a huge rock cliff;
and when you people of Israel became a nation,
it was as though I had cut you like stones from that rocky cliff.

²Think about your ancestor Abraham and his wife Sarah, of whom all of you are descendants.

When I first spoke to Abraham,

he had no children.

But after I blessed him, he had a huge number of descendants.

³Some day I, Yahweh, will encourage Abraham's descendants again,
and I will comfort all the people who live in the ruins of Jerusalem.

The deserts in that area will become like Eden;

it will be like the garden of Yahweh.

All the people there will be joyful and happy;

they will thank me and sing.

⁴My people of Judah, listen carefully to me,

because I command you to proclaim my laws;

the right things that I will do will be like a light for the people of all the nations. ⁵I will soon rescue you and them;

by my power I will rule over the people of the earth and bless them.

The people who live in the most distant lands on earth will wait for me to help them.

⁶Look up at the sky,
and look at the earth;
see what they are like now,
because some day the sky will disappear like smoke,
and the earth will wear out like old clothes wear out,
and people on the earth will die like flies.
But I will rescue you, and you will remain free forever,
and everyone will know what I do and I will always do what is right.

⁷You people who know what things are right to do,
and who know in your inner beings what is written in my laws,
listen to me!
Do not be afraid of people who taunt you;
do not be disturbed when people revile you,

⁸because some day they will be destroyed
like clothing that moths have eaten,
like wool garments that have been eaten by worms.
Everyone will know what I do and I will always do what is right;
and I will save you, and you will be saved forever.”

⁹Yahweh, wake up and do something for us!
Show us how strong you are!
Do mighty things
like you did long ago,
when you stabbed Rahab, the sea monster, and cut it into pieces.

¹⁰Surely you are the one who dried up the sea,
and made a path through that deep water
in order that your people could cross it!

¹¹And those whom Yahweh will rescue from being exiled in Babylonia
will similarly return to Jerusalem singing.
Their being joyful forever will be like a crown on their heads.
They will not be sad or mourn anymore;

they will be completely joyful and happy.

¹²Yahweh says,

"I am the one who encourages you.

So why are you afraid of humans
who will wither and disappear like grass?

¹³You should not have forgotten me, Yahweh, the one who created your nation,
the one who stretched out the sky
and laid the foundations of the earth.

You should not be afraid of those who are angry with you
and want to destroy you.

You should not be afraid of them now,
because those angry people have now disappeared!

¹⁴Soon you people, whom your enemies have caused to be slaves in Babylonia, will be freed!

You will not remain in prison, and you will not die of hunger,

¹⁵because I am Yahweh, your God,
the one who stirs up the sea and causes the waves to roar;
I am Yahweh, commander of the angel armies!

¹⁶I have given you my message to proclaim,
and I have protected you by my hand.
I have done this in order to stretch out the sky
and lay the foundation of the earth.

And I have done this in order to say to you Israelites,
'You are my people!'"

¹⁷You people of Jerusalem, wake up!

You have experienced Yahweh severely punishing you.

Yahweh has caused you to suffer much
and to experience disaster.

Yahweh gave you this cup to drink, but this was Yahweh's cup!

He forced you to drink every drop out of that large cup, down to the bottom of the bowl. And that drink made you stagger like you had drunk strong wine. This strong wine represents the anger of God, and you are to drink all of it!

¹⁸Now you do not have any children
who are able to take your hand and guide you. You cannot help yourself.

¹⁹You have experienced these disasters:

Your country has become desolate;

your cities have been destroyed;

many people have died from hunger;

many people have been killed by your enemies' swords.

Now there is no one to weep with you and sympathize with you.

²⁰Your children have fainted and lie at the corner of every street;

they are as helpless as an antelope that has been caught in a net.

What has happened to them is because Yahweh has been very angry with them;

he has rebuked them severely.

²¹So now, you people who have suffered much,

you who were acting as if you were drunk because you were drinking from his cup.

But in truth, it is not because you have drunk out of a cup filled with wine, but because of something else that Yahweh will do.

²²Yahweh, your Lord and your God,

the one who argues your case to defend you, he says this:

"I have taken away that cup that holds my anger toward you,

and I made you experience my anger when I made you drink from that cup.

But now I have taken it from you so that you will never drink of it again.

²³Instead, I will cause those who have tormented you to suffer;

I will severely punish those who said to you,

'Lie down in order that we may walk on you;

lie down on your stomachs

in order that your backs will be like streets that we can walk on."

Chapter 52

¹You people who live in the holy city of Jerusalem, wake up!

Be strong again!

Show that your city is beautiful and glorious;

uncircumcised foreigners, those who do not honor Yahweh, will never again enter your city to attack you.

²People of Jerusalem, get up from where you have been sitting in the dust,

and sit down properly!

You people who have returned from being exiled,
take off from your neck the chains that the Babylonians fastened around your necks,

³because this is what Yahweh says:

“When you were sent as captives to Babylonia,
no one paid to make that happen.

So now you will be brought back,
and no money will be paid to anyone for your release.”

⁴Yahweh our Lord also says this:

“Long ago, my people went to Egypt to live there.

Later the soldiers of Assyria oppressed them.

⁵But now think about what is happening:

My people are being forced to be slaves again, this time by the people of Babylonia. They have taken my people away, but they never declared any just reason for taking them captive.

And the rulers of Babylon boast and make fun of them (as I, Yahweh, have said they would do),
and the other people groups in the world despise the mention of my name.

⁶But after that, my people will love me and honor me;

when that happens, they will know that I am the one who said that this would happen. I am the one who speaks,
and I say,

‘Yes, this is Yahweh who is speaking to you.’

⁷It is a wonderful thing when messengers come from across the mountains and
bring good news,

the news about God giving us peace and saving us,

the news that the God to whom we Israelite people belong is now showing everyone his power as king!

⁸The watchmen who are guarding the city will shout and sing joyfully,

because while they are watching,

they will all see Yahweh returning to Jerusalem.

⁹Jerusalem was ruined,

but the people who are there now should start to sing joyfully,

because Yahweh will encourage his people;

he will set his people free and bring them back to Jerusalem.

¹⁰Yahweh will show all the nations that he is holy and powerful.

People in the most remote places on earth will know

that he has rescued his people.

¹¹So leave the places where you were taken to when you were captured,
where everything is unacceptable to God.

You men who are carrying the items used in the temple of Yahweh,
leave there and return to Jerusalem,
and purify yourselves in order to be acceptable to worship God.

¹²But it will not be necessary for you to leave suddenly,
to flee in panic,
because Yahweh will go in front of you;
and he will also protect you from being attacked at the rear while you travel.

¹³Listen carefully!
My servant will act wisely and do all that Yahweh wants him to do,
and he will be honored more than anyone else.

¹⁴But many people will be appalled when they see what has happened to him.
Because he was beaten very badly, his appearance will be changed;
people will hardly recognize that he is a human.

¹⁵But he will purify the people of many nations by sprinkling them clean;
even kings will be silent when they stand in front of him,
because they will see someone that no one had told them about before,
and they will understand things that they had not heard about before.

Chapter 53

¹Who will believe what we have heard about God's servant?

Who will see what Yahweh does by his great power?

²While God watches, his servant will grow up fragile like a very young tree,
like a weak young plant that shoots up, a stem that is growing in dry ground.
There will be nothing beautiful or majestic about him,
nothing that would cause us to want to look at him.

³People will despise and reject him.

He will endure much pain, and he will suffer much.

Because his face will be very disfigured, people will not want to look at him; he will not even look human any more;

people will despise him and think that he is not worth paying any attention to.

⁴But he will be punished for the sicknesses within our lives;

he will endure great pain for us.

But we will think that he is being punished by God,

afflicted for his own sins.

⁵But people will pierce him through and kill him because of the evil things that we did;

they will wound him because of our sins.

They will beat him in order that things may go well with us;

because they will whip him, we will be healed.

⁶All of us have gone away from God like sheep who have strayed away from their shepherd.

We have turned away from doing the things that God wants in order to do the things that we want.

We deserve to be punished, but Yahweh will punish him instead for all of our sins.

⁷He will be abused and caused to suffer,

but he will not say anything to complain.

They will lead him to where they will execute him,

like they lead a lamb to where it will be slaughtered.

And like a sheep does not bleat when the shearer cuts off its wool,

he will not say anything to defend himself when he is killed.

⁸After he is arrested and put on trial,

he will be taken away and executed.

And no one at that time will think anything more about him.

For he will die;

he will receive all the penalties brought on by the curses against us for the wrong things we have done.

⁹Although he will never have done any wrong or deceived anyone,

people will place his corpse where wicked people are buried, and in a rich man's grave.

¹⁰But it will be Yahweh's will that he be afflicted and caused to suffer. When he dies as an offering for your own sin,

he will benefit many, many people, as if they were his children;

he will live a long time after he dies and becomes alive again,

and he will accomplish everything that Yahweh has planned.

¹¹When he sees all that he will accomplish because of his suffering,

he will be satisfied.

And because of what will have happened to him, Yahweh's righteous servant,
he will cause the guilt of many people to be ended,
because he will bear the guilt for their sins.

¹²So Yahweh will share with many people the spoils he has won from his enemies.

His servant will be like a king who divides the spoils among his soldiers,
because he put himself in danger of dying and did in fact die.

Even though people had considered him to be a sinner,
he removed the guilt of many people,
and he interceded for those who have done things that are wrong.

Chapter 54

¹Yahweh says, "You people of Jerusalem, start to sing!

You who are like women who have never given birth to children, sing loudly and shout joyfully,
because you, who are like childless women who have been abandoned by their husbands, will soon have more
children

than women who have never had any children.

²Make your tents larger;
make them wider,
and fasten them firmly with tent pegs.

³You will need to make your city much larger
because soon you and your descendants will spread all over the land.
They will force the people of other nations to leave where they are,
and you will live again in the cities that people had previously abandoned.

⁴Do not be afraid; you will no longer be ashamed.
Previously you were ashamed because your enemies conquered you
and caused your nation to be like a widow,
but soon you will not even remember that.

⁵I, Yahweh, commander of the angel armies, the Holy One of Israel, who rules over the whole earth,
the one who created you,
will be like a husband to you.

⁶Your nation was like a woman whose husband left her,
and caused you to be very sad;

you were like a young woman who
got married when she was very young,
and then her husband abandoned her.

⁷I abandoned you people of Jerusalem for a while,
but now I am saying, 'I will take you back.'

⁸I was very angry with you for a while,
and I turned away from you.

But I will act mercifully toward you
and I will faithfully love you forever.

That is what I, Yahweh, your rescuer, say to you.

⁹During the time that Noah lived,
I solemnly promised that I would never again allow a flood to cover the earth.
So now I solemnly promise that I will not be angry with you again and rebuke you.

¹⁰Even if the mountains and hills shake and collapse,
I will not stop faithfully loving you,
and I will not cancel my covenant
to cause things to go well for you.

That is what I, Yahweh, who acts mercifully, say.

¹¹You people of Jerusalem, your enemies acted very violently toward you;
it was as though your city had been battered by a severe storm,
and no one helped you.

But now I will cause your city to be rebuilt with stones made of turquoise,
and will cause the foundations of the city to be made of sapphires.

¹²I will cause the towers on the city wall to be made of rubies,
and all the gates and outer walls of the city will be made of other very valuable stones.

¹³I will be the one who will teach your children
and cause things to go well with you.

¹⁴Your government will be strong because it will act justly;
no one will oppress you;
you will not be afraid,
because nothing will come near you that will make you fear.

¹⁵If any army attacks you,
it will not be because I have incited them to do that,
and you will defeat anyone who attacks you.

¹⁶Think about this:
Blacksmiths fan the coals to make a very hot flame
in order to produce weapons that can be used in battles,
but I am the one who has produced blacksmiths!
And I am also the one who created people who destroy other people and cities.

¹⁷You will not be defeated by soldiers using weapons
that they have made to attack you,
and when others try to accuse you, you will prove that they are wrong, and you will condemn them to punishment.
That is the reward for the people who serve Yahweh.
I will defend them and show everyone else that they are right to trust me;
that is what I, Yahweh, promise.”

Chapter 55

¹“Come here! All you people who are in exile,
and listen to me!
If you are thirsty,
now is the time for you to come to me and get your water!
Now those who had no money,
you can come and buy wine and milk from me, the finest wine and the best milk!
You can get what you need from me,
and you can buy it now!
You can buy it even though you do not have any money,
and even though you could never afford it!

²Why do you spend money to buy things that do not supply what you really need?
Why do you work hard to get money to buy things that do not truly satisfy you?
Pay attention to what I say
and acquire what is really good!
If you come to me, then in your heart you will truly be happy.

³Listen to me and come to me;

pay attention to me, and if you do that, you will have new life within you.

I will make a covenant with you that will last forever

to faithfully love you like my love for King David.

⁴By what he did, I showed my power to many people groups;

I caused him to be a leader and commander over the people of many nations.

⁵And similarly, you will summon people of other nations to come to you,

nations that previously you have not heard about,

and they had not heard about you;

and they will come to you quickly

because they will have heard that I, Yahweh, your God, the Holy One of Israel, have honored you.

⁶Seek to know Yahweh while it is still possible for you to do that;

call to Yahweh while he is near!

⁷Wicked people should abandon their wicked behavior,

and evil people should stop thinking what is evil.

They should turn to Yahweh,

and if they do that, he will act mercifully toward them;

they should turn to Yahweh, their God,

because he will fully pardon them for all the wicked things that they have done.

⁸Yahweh declares that what he thinks is not the same as what you think,

and what he does is very different from what you do.

⁹Just as you people on the earth can never reach the sky,

the thoughts of Yahweh are that much higher than the way you think.

His ways are always different from what you do.

And so, you can be sure that you can never fully understand the way Yahweh thinks or know the reasons for what Yahweh does.

¹⁰Yahweh sends the rain and snow down from the sky,

and they water the ground.

When the ground becomes moist, it causes plants to sprout and grow,

with the result that the soil produces seed for the farmer to plant and grain to produce flour to make bread for people to eat.

¹¹And similarly, the things that I promise to do, I will always cause to happen;

my promises will always come true.

They will accomplish the things for which I spoke them.

¹²This is why you will leave Babylon joyfully;

you will have peace as Yahweh leads you out.

It will be as though the hills and mountains sang joyfully,

and the trees in the fields clapped their hands.

¹³Instead of thornbushes and briers,

pine trees and myrtle trees will grow in your land.

As a result of that, people will honor Yahweh much more;

and what Yahweh does will cause everyone to remember what he has promised, and they will honor him.”

Chapter 56

¹Yahweh says to all the people of Judah,

“Do the things that are fair and right,

because I will soon come to rescue you; I will soon show everyone that you have been right to trust me.

²I will bless those who faithfully obey my laws about the Sabbath days.

I will bless those who keep sacred my Sabbath days,

and who do not do any work on those days,

and who refrain from doing anything that is evil.

³Foreigners who have believed in me should not say,

‘Yahweh will surely not allow me to belong to his people.’

And eunuchs should not say,

‘Because I am deformed and unable to have children, I cannot belong to Yahweh;

I am like a tree that has completely withered.’

⁴They should not say that, because I, Yahweh, say this to the eunuchs

who obey my laws about the Sabbath,

and who choose to do the things that please me,

and who obey all the other laws of the covenant that I made with the Israelite people:

⁵I will cause people to put inside the walls of my temple a monument to them;

because of that monument, they will be honored more than they would have if they had children;

they will be honored forever.

⁶I will also bless those who are not Israelites
who join themselves to me,
who serve me and worship and love me,
who obey my laws about the Sabbath,
and who faithfully obey all the other laws of the covenant that I made with the Israelite people.

⁷I will bring them to my sacred hill in Jerusalem,
and cause them to be very joyful in my temple where people pray to me,
and I will accept the sacrifices that they burn on my altar and other sacrifices that they offer,
because my temple will be a building where people of all nations pray to me.

⁸I, Yahweh, the Lord, the one who will bring back the people of Israel who have been forced to go to other countries, say this:

I will bring from other countries many more people to join those Israelites whom I have brought back.”

⁹“You surrounding nations have armies that are like animals in the forest;
come and attack Israel!

¹⁰The Israelite leaders should be like watchdogs to protect the people,

but it is as though they were blind.

They understand nothing.

They are all like dogs that cannot bark.

Good watchdogs bark when strangers approach,

but the Israelite leaders do not warn the people that their enemies are coming.

Instead, they just want to lie down and sleep and dream.

¹¹And they are like greedy dogs;

they never get all that they want.

They are supposed to lead the people, like good shepherds lead their flocks,

but they are ignorant,

and they each do whatever they want to do.

¹²They say to each other, ‘Come, let us go and get some wine and other alcoholic drinks,

and let us become drunk!

And tomorrow we will enjoy drinking even more!”

Chapter 57

¹Righteous people die,

and no one is concerned about it.

Godly people die,

and no one understands why.

God takes them away in order that they will not endure more calamities,

²and now they have peace.

They lived righteously,

and now they rest peacefully in their graves.

³Yahweh says, "But you who practice sorcery, come here!

You who worship idols,

listen to me!

⁴Do you realize whom you are ridiculing,

and whom you are insulting?

Do you realize to whom you are sticking out your tongues?

You are insulting me, Yahweh!

You are always rebelling against me and always lying, just like your ancestors.

⁵You are eager to sleep together under every tall green tree where you worship your gods.

You kill your children as sacrifices to your idols in the dry riverbeds,

and offer them as sacrifices to your idols in the rocky caves.

⁶You take big smooth stones from the riverbeds

and worship them as your gods.

You pour out wine to be an offering to them,

and you bring grain to burn for an offering to them.

Do you think that I enjoy all those things?

⁷You sleep with idols' prostitutes on every hill and mountain,

and you go there to offer sacrifices to your gods.

⁸You have put charms behind your doors and doorposts,

and you have deserted me.

You have taken off your clothes

and climbed into your bed,

and invited more of your lovers to come to bed with you.

You have paid them to sleep with you,

and you have looked at their private parts.

⁹You have given fragrant oil and lots of perfume to kings,
and you sent representatives to distant countries to look for other gods to worship;
you even tried to send messengers to the place of the dead to search for new gods.

¹⁰You became weary because of doing all those things,
but you never said, 'It is useless for us to do that.'

You found new strength for worshiping idols,
so you continued to do so.

¹¹Was it because you were afraid of those idols more than you were afraid of me that you lied about what you were doing,

and you do not even think about me?

Was it because I did not punish you for a long time that you are not afraid of me?

¹²You think that the things that you have done are right,
but I will tell you the truth:

It will not help you to do any of those things.

¹³When you cry out for help to your collection of idols,
they will not rescue you.

The wind will blow them away; a single breath will carry them all away.

But those who trust in me will live in the land of Israel,
and they will worship me on Zion, my sacred hill."

¹⁴Yahweh will say, "Prepare yourselves to receive me,
like people build and prepare a road for a king to come on.

Get rid of the things that are causing you to sin.

¹⁵Because this is what I say—I, Yahweh, who am holy and honored more than anyone else, and who live forever:

I live in the highest heaven, where everything is holy,

but I also am with those who are humble and who are sorry for the sinful things that they have done.

I will greatly encourage those who have repented.

¹⁶I will not accuse people forever;

I will not always be angry with them,

because if I did that, people would become weak;

all the people whom I created and caused to live would die.

¹⁷I was angry with my people because they sinned by taking with force what belonged to others.

Because I was angry, I punished them and turned away from them,
but they continued sinning.

¹⁸I have seen the evil things that they continually do,
but I will restore them and lead them.

I will encourage them.

As for those who are mourning,

¹⁹I will enable them to sing songs to praise me.

I will restore all my people, those who live near Jerusalem and those who live far away,
and I will cause things to go well for them.

²⁰Wicked people do not have peace in their inner beings;
they are like a sea whose waves are always churning up mud,

²¹and I, Yahweh, say that things will never go well for those who are evil.”

Chapter 58

¹Yahweh said to me,

“Shout loudly!

Shout like a loud trumpet!

Shout to warn my Israelite people about their sins!

²They worship me every day;

they come to my temple because they say that they are eager to know what I want them to do.

They act as though they were a nation that does things that are righteous,

that would never abandon the commands of me, their God.

They request me to decide matters justly,

and they are eager that I should come to them.

³They say, ‘We have fasted to please you,

but you did not notice our doing that.

We humbled ourselves,

but you did not pay any attention!’

I will tell you why I did not pay attention.

It is because when you fast,

you do it only to please yourselves,

and you act cruelly toward all your workers.

⁴You fast, but you also quarrel and fight with each other with your fists.

Doing things like that while you fast will certainly not cause me to hear your prayers where I am, high in heaven.

⁵You bow your heads

like the tops of reeds bend when the wind blows,

and you wear rough clothes and cover your heads with ashes like people do when they are grieving.

That is what you do when you are fasting,

but do you really think that will please me?

⁶No, that is not the kind of fasting that I desire.

Instead you should seek to free those who have been unjustly put in prison,

and encourage those who are treated cruelly;

and free those who have been oppressed in any way.

⁷Share your food with those who are hungry

and to allow those who have no houses to stay in your houses.

Give clothes to those who do not have clothes,

and do not hide yourself from your relatives who need help from you.

⁸If you do those things,

what you do for others will be like a light that shines when it dawns.

The troubles that have been caused by your sins will end quickly.

Others will know about your righteous behavior,

and the glorious presence of Yahweh will protect you from behind

like I protected the Israelite people when they left Egypt.

⁹Then you will call out to me,

and I will quickly answer and say, 'I am here to help you.'

Stop oppressing people;

stop falsely accusing people;

and stop saying evil things about people.

¹⁰Give food to those who are hungry,

and give to people who are afflicted the things that they need.

Your doing that will be like a light that shines in the darkness;

instead of doing evil to people, the good things you do for people will be like the sunshine at noontime.

¹¹Yahweh will guide you continually,
and he will give you good things to satisfy you.
He will enable you to remain strong and healthy.
You will be like a garden that is well watered,
like a spring that never dries up.

¹²Your people will rebuild the cities that were destroyed long ago;
they will build houses on top of the old foundations.
People will say that you are the ones who are repairing the holes in the city walls,
and who are repairing the streets where people live.

¹³Do not travel on the Sabbath days,
and on Sabbath days do not do only the things that you delight to do.
Enjoy the Sabbath days, and consider them to be delightful.
The Sabbath days are my holy days.
Honor me, Yahweh, in everything that you do on the Sabbath days.
Do not talk about and do things to please yourselves.
If you do all the things that I have just now told you to do; listen, and I will tell you what I will do for you.

¹⁴I will enable you to be joyful.
I will greatly honor you;
it will be as though you were riding with me above the highest mountains!
I will give to you the blessings that I gave to your ancestor Jacob.
Those things will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.”

Chapter 59

¹Listen to this! Yahweh’s power is not too little to rescue you.
He has not become deaf; he can still hear you when you call to him for help.
²But you have separated yourselves from your God by the sins that you have committed.
Because of your sins, he has turned away from you,
with the result that he does not pay attention to what you request him to do.
³You do violent things to others,
with the result that your hands are stained with their blood.
You constantly tell lies,

and you say evil things about others.

⁴When you accuse someone in court, what you say is not fair and it is not true.

You accuse people falsely; you depend on the lies you tell.

You are constantly planning to cause trouble for others,

and then you do those evil things that you planned.

⁵What you plan to do to harm people is like the eggs a poisonous snake lays, like a web that a spider catches its victims in.

Cobras will hatch from those eggs,

and insects will fall into the spider's web.

⁶You cannot hide the evil deeds that you have done.

You are constantly acting violently.

⁷You are very quick to go and do evil deeds,

and you hurry to murder people who are innocent.

You are continually thinking about sinning.

Wherever you go, you destroy things and cause people to suffer.

⁸You do not know how to act peacefully or to treat others fairly.

You always are dishonest,

and those who imitate your behavior never have any peace within themselves.

⁹Because of that, God does not rescue us from our enemies,

it seems that he is not acting fairly toward us.

We expect God to give us light,

but all he gives us is darkness.

¹⁰We are like blind people who have to feel along the wall to be able to walk anywhere.

We stumble and trip at noontime like we would when it is dark.

We are like dead people who are among healthy people.

¹¹We growl like hungry bears;

we continually moan like doves.

We ask God to do what is just,

but nothing happens.

We want God to rescue us,

but it seems that he is far away.

¹²But these things are happening because it is as though our sins are piled high in the presence of God,

and it is they that testify against us.

We cannot deny it;

we know that we have done many wrong things.

¹³We know that we have rebelled against Yahweh;

we have turned away from him.

We oppress people by what we testify against them;

we do not allow them to get what they have a right to get.

We think about the lies that we can tell,

and then we tell them.

¹⁴In our courts, the judges do not decide cases fairly;

no one is acting righteously.

In plazas where people gather together, no one tells the truth;

it seems that people are not allowed to say what is true.

¹⁵No one tells the truth,

and people try to ruin the reputations of those who quit doing evil.

Yahweh looked around, and he saw that no one was doing what is just;

he was very displeased.

¹⁶He was disgusted when he saw that no one tried to help those who were being treated cruelly.

So he used his own power to rescue them;

it is because he is always righteous that he did that.

¹⁷It is as though he were a soldier who put on his armor and a helmet;

his continually doing what is right is like his armor, and his ability to rescue people is like his helmet.

His being extremely angry and his being ready to get revenge on those who do evil are like his robes.

¹⁸He will repay his enemies for the evil things that they have done.

He will severely punish even those who live far from Jerusalem.

¹⁹When that happens, people everywhere, from the east to the west, will respect and honor Yahweh,

because he will come like a rushing river that is pushed along by the strong wind that Yahweh sent.

²⁰And Yahweh says that he will come to Jerusalem to free his people;

he will come to rescue those in Judah who have stopped doing sinful things.

²¹This is what Yahweh says to his people: "This is the covenant that I will make with you: My Spirit will not leave you, and you will always have my message. You will be able to declare it, and your children and grandchildren will be able to declare it forever."

Chapter 60

¹You people of Jerusalem, stand up!

Yahweh has done glorious things for you,
and he has acted powerfully for you;
so show others that he is very great!

²But spiritual darkness has covered all the other people groups on the earth,
complete darkness,
but Yahweh will show you how great he is,
and other people will also see it.

³People of all people groups will see that he is very great by seeing what he has done for you,
and kings will come to see the wonderful things that have happened to you.

⁴Yahweh says, "Look around, and you will see the people who will be returning from exile!
Your sons will come from distant countries;
others will carry your little daughters home.

⁵When you look at this happening,
you will be very joyful in your inner beings,
because people will bring valuable goods to you from all around the world.
They will bring valuable things from many nations in ships.

⁶People will also bring valuable goods to you on herds of camels:
camels from the Midian and Ephah areas of northern Arabia.
And from Sheba in southern Arabia they will come, bringing gold and frankincense;
they will all come to praise me, Yahweh.

⁷They will bring flocks of sheep and goats from Kedar in northern Arabia and give them to you.
They will bring rams from Nebaioth for you to sacrifice on my altars,
and I will accept them happily.

At that time I will cause my temple to be very beautifully decorated.

⁸And what are those things that are
moving swiftly like clouds?
They resemble pigeons returning to their nests.

⁹But they are really ships from Tarshish that are bringing your people back here.
When your people come, they will bring with them all the valuable possessions that they have acquired,

and they will do that to honor me, Yahweh, your God, the Holy One of Israel,
because I will have greatly honored you.

¹⁰Foreigners will come and rebuild the walls of your cities,
and their kings will serve you.

Although I punished you because I was angry with you,
these things will happen now because I will act mercifully toward you because I am kind.

¹¹The gates of your cities will be open during the day and also during the night,
in order that people will be able to bring into your cities valuable things from many countries,
with their kings being led to you in the processions.

¹²And the kingdoms and nations whose people refuse to allow you to rule them will be completely destroyed.

¹³The glorious things in Lebanon will be brought to you—
lumber from cypress trees and fir trees and pine trees—
to be used to make my temple beautiful.

When that is done, my temple will truly be glorious!

¹⁴The descendants of those who oppressed you will come and bow down to you;
those who despised you will prostrate themselves in front of your feet.

They will say that your city on Mount Zion
is the City of Yahweh,
where the Holy One of Israel lives.

¹⁵Previously everyone hated you and ignored you,
but now your city will be majestic forever;
and I will cause you to be joyful forever.

¹⁶People of all nations and their kings will gladly bring their wealth to you.
When that happens, you will realize that I truly am Yahweh,
the one who saves you and rescues you from your enemies,
and that I am the mighty one to whom you Israelite people belong.

¹⁷Instead of metals that are not valuable, like bronze and iron,
I will bring to you silver and gold.

Instead of wood and stones,
I will bring you bronze and iron for your buildings.
There will be peace in your country,

and your rulers will do what is fair.

¹⁸People in your country will no longer act violently,
and people will no longer destroy your land and drive you out of it.

The people in the city will be safe,
and everyone there will praise me.

¹⁹And you will no longer need the sun and moon to give you light,
because I, Yahweh, will give you more light than the sun and moon;
I will be a glorious light for you forever.

²⁰It will seem as though the sun and moon will always be shining,
because I, Yahweh, will be an everlasting light for you.
You will never again be sad because of things that happen to you.

²¹Your people will all be righteous,
and they will occupy the land forever,
because I myself have put you there like people plant trees
in order that you will show others that I am very great.

²²At that time, the groups that are very small now will become very large clans,
and small clans will become great nations.
All those things will happen because, I, Yahweh, will cause them to happen at the right time.”

Chapter 61

¹The Spirit of Yahweh our Lord is on me;
he has appointed me to bring good news to those who are oppressed,
to comfort those who are discouraged,
and to free all those who are as though they are chained by the wrong things that they continually do.

²He has sent me to tell those who mourn
that now is the time when Yahweh will act kindly toward his people;
now is the time when our God will get revenge on their enemies.

³To all those in Jerusalem who mourn,
he will give beautiful things to wear on their heads
instead of ashes that they put on their heads to show that they were sad;
he will cause them to rejoice instead of being sad;

he will enable them to be happy instead of being discouraged.

They will be called 'people who continually do what is right,
people who are like tall oak trees that Yahweh has planted'
to show others that he is very great.

⁴Those who return from Babylon will rebuild the cities that the soldiers from Babylon tore down.
Even though those cities have been destroyed and abandoned for many years,
they will be restored.

⁵Foreigners will be the ones who will take care of your flocks of sheep and goats,
and plow your fields and take care of your grapevines.

⁶But you are the ones who will be like the priests to serve Yahweh,
to work for God.

You will enjoy valuable goods that are brought from other nations,
and you will be happy that those things have become yours.

⁷Previously you were shamed and disgraced,
but now you will have great blessings;
previously your enemies humbled you,
but now you will have many good things;
you will be happy because you will be in your land again,
and you will rejoice forever.

⁸"I, Yahweh, am very pleased with those who decide matters fairly;
I hate those who illegally take things from other people.

I will surely repay my people
for all that they have suffered in the past.
And I will make an everlasting agreement with them.

⁹Their descendants will be honored by people of other nations; their children will be honored by all the other nations.

Everyone who sees them will know that they are a nation that I, Yahweh, have blessed."

¹⁰I greatly rejoice because of what Yahweh has done!

I am happy in all my inner being,
because he has saved me and declared that I am righteous;
those blessings are like a robe that he has put on me.
I am as happy as a bridegroom in his wedding clothes,

or a bride wearing jewels.

¹Just as seeds sown in a garden sprout from the soil and grow,
Yahweh our God will cause people of all nations to act righteously,
with the result that they will praise him for doing that.

Chapter 62

¹Because I am very concerned about the people of Jerusalem,
I will do something to help them.
I will not stop praying for them
until they are rescued from their oppressors,
until that becomes as apparent to everyone as the dawn every morning,
until people can see it as clearly as they see a torch shining brightly at night.

²Some day the people of many nations will know that Yahweh has rescued you, his people.
Their kings will see that your city is very great.
And Yahweh will give your city a new name.

³It will be as though Yahweh had held you up in his hands in order that everyone can see you.
Under his authority you will be like a crown worn by a king.

⁴Your city will never again be called 'the deserted city,' and your country will never again be called 'the desolate land';

it will be called 'the land that Yahweh delights in,'
and it will also be called 'married to Yahweh.'
It will be called that because Yahweh will be delighted with you,
and it will be as though you were his bride.

⁵You people will live in all the country of Judah
like a young man lives with his bride.
And our God will be happy that you belong to him,
like a bridegroom is happy that his bride belongs to him.

⁶You people of Jerusalem, I have placed watchmen on your walls;
they will earnestly pray to Yahweh day and night.
You watchmen, you must not stop praying
and reminding Yahweh about what he has promised to do.

⁷And tell Yahweh that he should not rest

until he causes Jerusalem to be a city that is famous and admired throughout the world.

⁸Yahweh has raised his right hand to solemnly promise to the people of Jerusalem:

“I will use my power and will never again allow your enemies to defeat you;
soldiers from other nations will never come again to take away your grain
and the wine that you worked hard to produce.

⁹You yourselves will grow the grain,
and you will be the ones who will praise me, Yahweh, while you eat the bread made from the grain.

Inside the courtyards of my temple,
you yourselves will drink the wine made from the grapes that you harvested.”

¹⁰Go out through the city gates!

Prepare the highway on which people will return from other countries!

Cause the road to become smooth;
clear off all the stones;

set up signal flags to help the people groups to see the road to Jerusalem.

¹¹This is the message that Yahweh has sent to the people of every nation.

Tell the people of Israel, “The one who will rescue you is coming!

Look! He will be bringing to you your reward;
those whom he has rescued will be going ahead of him.”

¹²They will be called: “Yahweh’s own people,
and ones whom he rescued.”

And Jerusalem will be known as: “The city that Yahweh loves,”
and “The city that is no longer abandoned.”

Chapter 63

¹I ask, “Who is this who is coming from the city of Bozrah in Edom,
whose clothes are stained red from blood?

Who is this who is wearing beautiful robes?”

He replies, “It is I, Yahweh, declaring that I have defeated your enemies,
and I am able to rescue you!”

²I ask him, “What are those red spots on your clothes?

It appears that you have been treading on grapes to make wine.”

³He replies, "I have been treading on my enemies, not on grapes.

I did it myself; no one helped me.

I punished them because I was very angry with them,

and my clothes became stained with their blood.

⁴I did that because it was time for me to get revenge;

it was time to rescue my people from those who had oppressed them.

⁵I searched for someone who would enable me to help my people,

but I was amazed that there was no one to help me.

So I defeated their enemies with my own power;

I was able to do that because I was very angry.

⁶Because I was extremely angry, I punished the nations;

I caused them to stagger like drunk men,

and I caused their blood to pour out on the ground."

⁷I will tell about all the things that Yahweh has done for his people because of his faithful love for them,

and I will praise him for all that he has done.

Yahweh has done good things for us people of Israel;

he has acted mercifully toward us

and he has steadfastly and faithfully loved us.

⁸Yahweh said, "These are my people;

they will not deceive me";

so he rescued us.

⁹When we had many troubles,

he was sad also.

He sent his angel from before his presence to rescue us.

Because he loved us and was merciful to us,

he saved us;

it was as though he had picked our ancestors up and carried them all those years during which they were oppressed in Egypt.

¹⁰But we rebelled against him,

and we caused his Holy Spirit to be sad.

So he became like an enemy

who fought against us.

11Then we thought about what happened long ago,
during the time when Moses led our ancestors out of Egypt.
We cried out, "Where is the one who brought our ancestors through the Sea of Reeds
while Moses led them?

Where is the one who sent his Holy Spirit
to be among our ancestors?

12Where is the one who showed his glorious power
and caused the water to separate when Moses lifted his arm above it,
with the result that he will be honored forever?

13Where is the one who led our ancestors while they walked through the seabed?
They were like horses that were racing along and never stumbled.

14They were like cattle that walk down into a valley to rest,
and the Spirit of Yahweh enabled them to go to a place where they could rest.
Yahweh, you led your people,
and you caused yourself to be praised."

15"Yahweh, look down from heaven;
look down on us from your holy and glorious home.
You were previously very concerned about us, and you acted powerfully to help us.
But it seems that you do not act mercifully and zealously for us anymore.

16You are our father, even if
Abraham does not know what is happening to us,
and Jacob is not concerned about us, either,
but Yahweh, you are our father;
you rescued us long ago.

17Yahweh, why did you cause us to wander away from your road?
Why did you cause us to be stubborn in our inner beings,
with the result that we no longer honor you?
Help us like you did previously,
because we are the people who serve you and belong to you.

18We, your holy people, possessed your sacred temple for only a short time,
and now our enemies have destroyed it.

¹⁹Now it seems as though we never were ruled by you,
as though we never belonged to you.”

Chapter 64

¹“Yahweh, I wish that you had come down from the sky;
you would have caused the mountains to shake with fear.

²It would have been like fire burning up dead wood,
or like fire making water to boil.

Come down in order that your enemies will know who you are,
and so that the people of other nations will tremble in your presence.

³You did awesome things that we were not expecting you to do;
the mountains shook when you came down onto Mount Sinai.

⁴Since long ago no one has ever seen or heard about a God like you;
you help those who depend on you.

⁵You help those who joyfully do what is right,
those who conduct their lives as you want them to.

But we did not do that; we continued to sin,
and so you became angry with us.

We have been sinning for a long time.

It is only if we continually do what you want us to do that you will save us.

⁶We have all become people who are not fit to worship you;
all of the good things that we have done are only like bloodstained rags.

Because of our sins, we are all like leaves that dry up
and are blown away by the wind.

⁷None of our people worships you,
and no one really tries to persuade you to help him.

You have turned away from us.

It is as though you have abandoned us, so that we keep sinning and become more and more guilty.

⁸But even so, Yahweh, you are our father.

We are like clay that a potter uses,
and you created us, like a potter creates pottery.

⁹Yahweh, do not continue to be angry with us;
do not keep thinking about our sins forever.
Do not forget that we are all your people.

¹⁰All of your towns in Judah have become like the wilderness;
even Jerusalem has been destroyed.

¹¹Your glorious temple on Mountain Zion, where our ancestors worshiped you,
has been completely burned up.
And all our other beautiful things have been ruined.

¹²Yahweh, you see all those things, but it seems that you refuse to do anything to help us.
It seems that you will cause us to suffer much more.”

Chapter 65

¹This is what Yahweh said:

“I was ready to reply to my people,
but no one requested me to help them.

I was ready to help even those who did not call out to me.
I continued to say, ‘I am here to help you!’

²It is as though I had continually held out my arms to show that I was ready to help my people who rebelled
against me,
and who continually did the evil things that they wanted to do.

³They boldly continue to do things that cause me to be angry:
they offer sacrifices to their idols in their gardens,
and they burn incense to them on altars made of bricks and tiles.

⁴They remain awake at night in cemeteries,
talking with the spirits of dead people.
They eat the meat of pigs,
and their pots are full of the broth of meat that is unacceptable to me.

⁵Then they say to others,
‘Stay away from me; do not come near me,
because I am very holy,
with the result that you should not touch me.’
People like that are like smoke in my nose

from a fire that burns continually.

⁶I have written a record of all the evil things that they have done.

And I will not remain silent about all those things;

I will certainly punish these people

⁷for the sins that they and their ancestors have committed.

They have mocked me by burning incense to their idols on the hilltops.

So I will punish them like they deserve for doing those things.”

⁸This is also what Yahweh said:

“When there is a cluster of nice grapes on a vine,

people do not throw them away,

because they know that there is good juice in those grapes.

Similarly, because there are some people in Judah who faithfully serve me,

I will not get rid of all of them.

⁹I will spare some of the descendants of Jacob

who are living on the hills of Judah.

I have chosen them, and they will possess that land;

they will worship me, and they will live there.

¹⁰Then all the land from the Plain of Sharon near the Mediterranean Sea and as far east as the Valley of Achor near Jericho will become pastureland,

where their cattle and sheep will rest.

¹¹But it will be different for you who have abandoned me,

you who do not worship me on Zion, my sacred hill,

you who worship Gad and Meni, the gods who you say will bring you good luck and good fortune.

¹²It is I, not Meni, who will decide what will happen to you;

you will all be slaughtered by swords.

That will happen because you did not answer

when I called out to you.

I spoke to you,

but you did not pay attention.

Instead, you did things that I said are evil;

you chose to do things that do not please me.

¹³I, Yahweh the Lord, will give to those who worship and obey me things to eat and drink,

and they will be happy;
but all you evil people will be hungry and thirsty,
and you will be sad and disgraced.

14Those who worship and obey me will sing joyfully,
but you evil people will wail loudly
because you will be suffering in your inner beings.

15Those whom I have chosen will use your names when they curse people;
I, Yahweh the Lord, will get rid of you.
But I will give to those who worship and obey me a new name.

16The people in this land have had many troubles,
but I will cause those troubles to occur no more.
Therefore those who request me to bless them and those who solemnly promise to do something
should never forget that I am God, who faithfully do what I promise to do.

17Note this: Some day I will create a new heaven and a new earth.
They will be very wonderful, with the result that you will no longer think about all the troubles you had previously.

18Be glad and always rejoice because of what I will do:
Jerusalem will be a place where people rejoice;
the people who live there will always be happy.

19I will rejoice about Jerusalem,
and I will be delighted with my people.
People will no longer weep or cry because of being distressed.

20No child will die when it is still an infant;
all people will live until they are very old.
People will consider that anyone who is a hundred years old is still young;
they will consider that anyone who dies who is younger than that has been cursed.

21My people will build houses and then live in them.
They will plant vineyards and then eat grapes from those vineyards.

22The houses that they build, no one will take those houses away from them and live in them.
No one will take a vineyard away from its owner.
My chosen people will live a long time, like trees do,
and they will enjoy the things that they have done—

the houses that they have built and the crops that they have planted.

²³They will not work hard in vain,

and their children will not die from some calamity.

I will certainly bless their children and their grandchildren.

²⁴Before they call to me to help them, I will answer;

I will answer their prayers while they are still praying for me to do something for them.

²⁵No one will be harmed or injured anywhere on Zion, my sacred hill:

wolves and lambs will eat grass together peacefully;

lions will eat hay like oxen do, and they will not attack people.

Snakes will not hurt anyone; they will lie on the ground and eat only dirt.

That is surely what it will be like because I, Yahweh, have said it.”

Chapter 66

¹Yahweh also said this:

“All of heaven is like my throne,

and the whole earth is like my footstool.

So you could certainly not build a house

that would be adequate for me to live in and rest!

²I have created everything;

all things exist because I made them.

That is true because I, Yahweh, have said it.

The people I am most pleased with are those who are humble,

who patiently endure it when they suffer,

and who tremble when they hear me rebuking them.

³You have chosen to continually do the things that you want to do:

some of you slaughter oxen to sacrifice them to me,

but you also bring human sacrifices to your idols!

You sacrifice lambs to me,

but you kill dogs to offer them to your gods.

You offer grain to me,

but you also bring pigs' blood to your idols.

You burn incense to me,
but you also praise your idols.
You delight to do those disgusting things.

⁴When I called out to you,
you did not answer.

When I spoke, you did not pay attention.
You did many things that I say are evil,
and you chose to do things that I did not like.

So now I will punish you by causing you to experience the things that you yourselves have done, that you yourselves are afraid of.”

⁵But you people who tremble when you hear what Yahweh says,
listen to what he says now:

“Some of your people hate you and drive you away
because you belong to me.

They make fun of you, and they say,
‘Yahweh should show his glorious power!

We want to see him do something to cause you to be truly happy.’
But some day those people will be very disgraced.”

⁶At that time, you will listen to the noise in the city.
You will hear the shouting in the temple.

It will be the sound of Yahweh paying back his enemies.

⁷No one ever heard that a woman gave birth to a baby
when she was just starting to have birth pains.

⁸Certainly no one ever heard about such a thing happening,
and no one has ever seen it happen.

Similarly, no one ever heard that a nation was created in one instant,
not in one day.

But Jerusalem is like a woman who gives birth to children
as soon as she starts to have birth pains.

⁹Women certainly do not bring infants to the time when they are ready to be born and then do not allow them to be born.

Similarly, Yahweh will do for Jerusalem what he has promised to do:

he will cause Jerusalem to be full of people again.

That will happen because Yahweh has said it.

10You people in Jerusalem, rejoice!

And all you people who love Jerusalem should also be happy.

You people who were sad because of what happened to Jerusalem,
you should now be glad.

11You people in Jerusalem will have everything that you need,

like a baby that gets all it needs from its mother's breasts.

You will enjoy all the abundant and glorious things in the city.

12Yahweh has promised,

"I will cause Jerusalem to be full of valuable things that come from other nations;

those things will pour into Jerusalem; it will be like a big flood.

I will take care of the people of Jerusalem

like women care for the babies that they nurse.

13I will comfort you people in Jerusalem like mothers comfort their children."

14When you see those things happen,

you will rejoice.

Your old bones will become strong again

like in the springtime, when the grass grows.

When that happens, everyone will know that Yahweh has power to help those who worship and obey him,

but that he is angry with his enemies.

15Yahweh will come down with flames of fire,

and his chariots will come down like a whirlwind;

he will be extremely angry,

and he will punish his enemies by burning them in a fire.

16It is as though Yahweh had a big sword,

and he will judge and execute many people.

17Yahweh says, "Some of you will prepare yourselves to enter the garden of idols by washings and special diets and clothing, and you follow into that place, those who eat the meat of pigs and mice, and other things that I have forbidden you to eat. I promise you, I will stop them and they will not do this any more!"

18I know all the evil things that they all think and do. It is now time for me to gather together the people who live in all nations and who speak all languages, and to show them that I am very great.

¹⁹I will do something among them to show everyone who they are, and those whom I have spared will go to various distant countries: To Tarshish, Put, Lud (home of archers), Meshech, Tubal, Javan, and to distant islands. I will send them to proclaim to nations that have never heard about me that I am very great and glorious. ²⁰Then they will bring back here your relatives who have been exiled, like the offerings that my Israelite people used to bring in the correct manner to the temple. They will travel to Jerusalem, where my holy mountain is; they will come on horses and in chariots, in wagons, on mules and on camels. ²¹I solemnly promise that I will appoint some of them to be priests, and others to do other work in my temple. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it.

²²I also promise that just like the new heaven and the new earth will last forever, you will always have descendants, and you will always be honored. ²³At every festival to celebrate the Sabbath each week and the new moon each month, everyone will come and worship me. That will surely happen because I, Yahweh, have said it. ²⁴Then they will go out of Jerusalem and look at the corpses of those who rebelled against me. The maggots in those corpses will never die, the fire will never stop burning them, and everyone who sees their corpses will detest them.”

Contributors

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text Contributors

Nicholas Alsop
Larry T Brooks, M.Div., Assemblies of God Theological Seminary
Matt Carlton
George "Drew" Curley, M.Div., PhD, Professor of Biblical Languages
Paul M Fahnestock, M.Div. Reformed Theological Seminary, D. Min. Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
Michael Francis
Laura Glassel, MA in Bible Translation
Kailey Gregory
Jesse Griffin, BA Biblical Studies, MA Biblical Languages
C. Harry Harriss, M.Div.
Alrick G. Headley, M.Div., Th.M.
Bram van den Heuvel, M.A.
John Huffman
D. Allen Hutchison, MA in Old Testament, MA in New Testament
Robert Hunt
Demsin Lachin
Jack Messarra
Gene Mullen
Adam W. Nagelvoort, M.Div. Academic Ministries, Columbia International University
Timothy Neu, Ph.D. Biblical Studies
Kristy Nickell
Tom Nickell
Elizabeth Oakes, BA in Religious Studies, Linguistics
Perry Oakes, PhD in Old Testament, MA in Linguistics
James N. Pohlig, M.Div., MA in Linguistics, D. Litt. in Biblical Languages
Ward Pyles, M.Div., Western Baptist Theological Seminary
Susan Quigley, MA in Linguistics
Dean Ropp
Joel D. Ruark, M.A.Th., Th.M., Ph.D. in Old Testament, University of Stellenbosch
Larry Sallee, Th.M Dallas Theological Seminary, D.Min. Columbia Biblical Seminary
Peter Smircich, BA Philosophy
Christopher Smith, M.A.T.S. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Ph.D. Boston College
Leonard Smith
Dave Statezni, BA Orig langs., M.Div. Fuller Theological Seminary
David Trombold, M. Div.
James Vigen
Hendrik "Henry" de Vries
Thomas Warren, M.Div., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, D.Min, Reformed Theological Seminary
Angela Westmoreland, M.A. in Theological Studies (Biblical Language track)
Henry Whitney, BA Linguistics
Benjamin Wright, MA Applied Linguistics, Dallas International University
Door43 World Missions Community

Tischendorf Greek New Testament 8th edition Contributors

eBible.org
Clint Yale

Dr. Maurice A. Robinson
Ulrik Sandborg-Petersen
Door43 World Missions Community