

unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

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First Kings

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First Kings

1 When King David was very old, even though his helpers
put many blankets on top of him at night, he still felt
cold. 2 So his officials said to him, “Your Majesty, please
allow us to search for a young virgin who can stay with you
and take care of you. She can sleep close to you and keep
you warm.”

3 *The king gave them permission,* so they searched throughout
Israel for a beautiful young woman. They found a woman
whose name was Abishag. She lived in the city of Shunem.
They brought her to the king. 4 Abishag was very beautiful.
She came to the royal court and took care of the king. *Even
though she lay in bed with him to keep him warm,* the king did
not have sexual relations with her. 5–6 After Absalom died,
David’s oldest remaining son was Adonijah, whose mother
was Haggith. He was a very handsome man. For his whole
life, his father David had not corrected him about the things
he did. Adonijah started to boast. He told people, “Now *that
Absalom has died,* I will be the next king.” He got a chariot
to ride in and horses to pull it, and he had 50 men run in
front of his chariot wherever he went.

7 One day Adonijah spoke with Joab, David’s army
commander, and with Abiathar the priest, and they promised
to help him become the next king. 8 But other important
people refused to help him. These included Zadok the priest,
Benaiah son of Jehoiada, Nathan the prophet, Shimei, Rei,
and David’s greatest soldiers.

9 One day Adonijah went to the stone of Zoheleth near
En Rogel to sacrifice some sheep and oxen and fat cattle *for
a feast*. He invited most of his brothers, King David’s other
sons, to come. He also invited most of the king’s Judean
officials to come *to the feast, where he planned to proclaim
himself king*. 10 But he did not invite Nathan, Benaiah, the
great soldiers, or his younger brother Solomon.

11 Nathan *found out what they were doing, so he went and*
said to Solomon’s mother Bathsheba, “I must tell you that
Adonijah son of Haggith is making himself the king! And
King David does not know about this! 12 Please allow me
to give you some advice about what you can do to save
your own life and your son Solomon’s life*, because otherwise
Adonijah will kill you*. 13 Go right away to King David. Say to
him, ‘Your Majesty, you solemnly promised me that my son
Solomon would become the king after you die. You said that
he would sit on your throne and rule. But instead, Adonijah
has proclaimed himself king.’ 14 Then, Bathsheba, while you
are still talking to the king, I will come in and tell him that
what you are saying to him about Adonijah is true.”

15 So Bathsheba went to see the king in his bedroom.
(He was very old, and Abishag, who was from the city of
Shunem, was taking care of him.) 16 Bathsheba bowed very
low in front of the king. Then the king asked her, “What do
you want?”

17 She replied, “Your Majesty, you solemnly promised me,
with Yahweh your God as your witness, that my son Solomon
would become the king after you died. You promised that he
would sit on your throne and rule. 18 But instead, Adonijah
has made himself king without you knowing about it. 19 He
has sacrificed many oxen and fat cattle and sheep, and he
has invited most of your sons to the celebration. He has also
invited Abiathar the priest and Joab, your army commander.
But he has not invited your son Solomon. 20 Your Majesty, all
the people of Israel are expecting you to tell them who will
become the next king after you die. 21 *If you do not confirm
that you want Solomon to be king,* then after you have died,
people will treat me and Solomon my son as rebels*, and they
will execute us because we did not help Adonijah become king*.”

22 While Bathsheba was still talking with King David, the
prophet Nathan arrived at the palace. 23 David’s servants told
him, “Nathan the prophet has come.” *David told his servants
to bring Nathan in,* so *Bathsheba left, and* Nathan came to
where the king was. He knelt down and touched the ground
with his face *to show great respect*.

24 Then Nathan said, “Your Majesty, I do not recall you
saying that Adonijah would become king after you. 25 I ask
about this because today he has gone to En Rogel and has
sacrificed many oxen, fat cattle, and sheep. He has invited all
of your other sons, Joab the army commander, and Abiathar
the priest. They are all having a feast with him and telling
him, ‘We hope that you, King Adonijah, will reign for a long
time!’ 26 But he did not invite me or Zadok the priest or
Benaiah son of Jehoiada or your son Solomon. 27 It does not
seem to me that you would have given Adonijah permission
to hold this feast without telling me and your other officials
that you wanted him to become the king after you died.”

28 Then King David said, “Tell Bathsheba to come back
here again.” So *Nathan left, and someone got Bathsheba and*
she came back and stood in front of the king.

29 King David told her, “I am going to make you a solemn
promise. I guarantee it by my devotion to Yahweh, who has
saved me from all my troubles. 30 I promised you that your
son Solomon would become the king after I died. I promised
that he would sit on my throne and rule instead of me. I
guaranteed that promise by my devotion to Yahweh, the
God whom we Israelites worship. Now I am promising that
I will make Solomon the king this very day.”

31 Bathsheba knelt down and touched her face to the
ground *to show gratitude and respect* and said, “Your Majesty,
I hope that you will continue to reign for a long time!”

32 Then King David ordered some of his servants, “Go and
tell Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah son
of Jehoiada to come here to me.” *So servants went and got
them, and* when they came in, 33 David told them, “Put my
son Solomon on the special mule that I ride as king. Gather
my royal bodyguards and have them escort him to the spring
at Gihon. 34 There the two of you, Zadok and Nathan, must
pour olive oil on his head to appoint him as the next king of
Israel. Have someone blow a ram’s horn, and have all the
people there shout, ‘We hope that King Solomon will reign
for a long time!’ 35 Then have him ride on the mule ahead of
you as you return here. Solomon should come to the palace
and sit on my throne. He will then be the king instead of
me. He is the one I have chosen to rule over all the people
of Israel and of Judah.”

36 Benaiah son of Jehoiada replied, “We will do that! We
know that Yahweh, the God whom you worship faithfully,
wants Solomon to be the next king! 37 Your Majesty, Yahweh
has helped you. We hope that he will also help Solomon and
enable him to become an even greater king than you have
been.”

38 So Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and the elite corps of royal
bodyguards put Solomon on King David’s special mule and

escorted him to the spring at Gihon. 39 There Zadok took the
container of olive oil that he had brought from the sacred
tent and poured the oil on Solomon's head to show that
he would be the next king. Then someone blew a ram's
horn, and all the people who had gathered for the ceremony
shouted, "We hope that King Solomon will reign for a long
time!" 40 Then all those people followed Solomon back to
Jerusalem. They were playing flutes and shouting joyfully.
They were making a very loud noise that echoed off the
ground.

41 As Adonijah and all his guests were finishing eating at
their celebration, they heard the noise. When Joab heard
someone blowing a ram's horn, he asked, "Why is there so
much noise in the city?"

42 While he was still speaking, Jonathan son of Abiathar
the priest, arrived. Adonijah told him, "Come in! You are
the kind of important person that someone would have sent
to bring me good news!"

43 Jonathan replied, "No, the truth is that His Majesty
King David has just made Solomon the next king. 44 David
sent Zadok, Nathan, Benaiah, and his elite corps of royal
bodyguards to go with Solomon. They put Solomon on the
special mule that David rides as king. 45 They all went to
the spring at Gihon, and there Zadok and Nathan poured
olive oil on his head to show that he would be the next king.
Then they returned from there to the city, celebrating the
whole way. Many people in the city are celebrating with
them. That is why you are hearing this loud noise. 46 Right
now, Solomon is sitting on the throne where the Israelite
king sits. 47 Furthermore, the palace officials came to His
Majesty King David and thanked him *for appointing Solomon
as the king*. They said, 'We want God to make Solomon even
more famous than you have been. We want God to enable
him to be an even better king than you have been.' When
they said that, the king, lying on his bed, bowed his head
to worship Yahweh *and show that he agreed with what they
had said*. 48 Then King David said, 'I praise Yahweh, the God
whom we Israelites worship, because he has allowed one of
my sons to become the king today while I am still alive to
hear about it.'"

49 This report made all of Adonijah's guests very afraid.
They all got up immediately and left. The group scattered in
different directions. 50 Adonijah was afraid of what Solomon
would do to him. So he went to the sacred tent and held onto
the projections at the corners of the altar *because Israelites
could do that so no one would harm them*. 51 Then someone
told Solomon, "Listen, Adonijah is afraid of you, so he has
gone to the sacred tent and is holding onto the altar. He is
saying, 'Before I leave the sacred tent, I want King Solomon
to swear to me that he will not order his soldiers to execute
me.'"

52 Solomon promised, "If he behaves honorably, I will not
harm him at all. But if I discover that he is actually disloyal
to me, I will have my soldiers execute him." 53 Then King
Solomon sent some men to get Adonijah, and they brought
him back from the altar. He came to Solomon and bowed
down respectfully in front of him. Then Solomon told him,
"You may go home."

2 Later, David realized that he was about to die, so he
gave some final instructions to his son Solomon. He said,
2 "I am about to die, as everyone on earth does. *Then you
will be the king, so* you must show strong character and great
maturity. 3 Do what Yahweh your God has told you to do.
Conduct yourself as he wants you to do. Obey every one of
the commandments that Moses recorded in the laws that he
gave us. If you do this, you will prosper in all that you do
and wherever you go. 4 If you continually do that, Yahweh
will do what he promised me. He said, 'If your descendants
do what I tell them to do, and faithfully obey my commands
with all their inner beings, they will always be the ones who
will rule Israel.' 5 There is something else that I want you
to do. You know very well how Joab son of Zeruiah acted
contrary to my wishes and interests. He murdered two men
whom I wanted to be my army commander, first Abner son
of Ner, then Amasa son of Jether. Previously those men had
led armies that were fighting wars against my army, which
Joab was commanding. But he murdered them during a
peaceful time when they were not his opponents in war. He
pretended to be friendly to them so that he could get close
to them, but then he stabbed them, and he was so close that
their blood got on his clothing. 6 I am confident that you are
wise enough to know how to make sure that he does not
die a peaceful death in old age. 7 But act kindly toward the
children of Barzillai the Gileadite. Let them eat meals with
you in the palace. Do that because Barzillai helped me when
I was running away from your older brother Absalom. 8 I
also want you to punish Shimei son of Gera, that Benjaminite
from the town of Bahurim. Remember that he cursed me
terribly on the day when I left Jerusalem and fled to the town
of Mahanaim. Later he came to welcome me back when I
was crossing the Jordan River to return to my royal palace*,
and he asked me to forgive him*. I solemnly promised him that
I would not execute him. I guaranteed that promise by my
devotion to Yahweh. 9 But now you must surely punish him.
You are a wise man, so you will know what you should do
to him. Make sure that he does not die peacefully in his old
age."

10 After David gave these instructions to Solomon, he
died. The Israelites buried him in the part of Jerusalem that
they called the City of David. 11 David had been the king of
Israel for 40 years. He had ruled for 7 years in Hebron and
for 33 years in Jerusalem. 12 Then Solomon became the king
in place of his father David. Yahweh enabled him to take
firm control of the entire kingdom.

13 One day Adonijah came to speak with Solomon's mother
Bathsheba. She asked him, "Have you come as a friend?" He
replied, "Yes, as a friend." 14 But then he said, "I want to ask
you to do something for me." She replied, "Tell me what you
want me to do." 15 He said, "You certainly know that all the
Israelite people expected me to be their king *because I am
David's oldest living son*. But that did not happen. Instead, my
younger brother became king, because that is what Yahweh
wanted. 16 But I want to request one thing from you. Please
do not refuse to do it." She replied, "Tell me what you want
me to do." 17 He said, "Please ask King Solomon to allow me
to marry Abishag, that woman from the city of Shunem. I
am sure that he will agree to do anything you ask him to
do." 18 Bathsheba replied, "All right, I will go and ask the
king to allow you to marry her."

19 So Bathsheba went to King Solomon to tell him what
Adonijah wanted. When she arrived, the king got up from
his throne and bowed down to her *to honor her*. Then he sat
down on his throne again, and he had his servants bring a
throne for her to sit on as the queen mother. He had her sit
in a place of honor on his right side. 20 Then she said, "I want
to request one small thing from you. Please do not refuse to
do it." The king replied, "I will not refuse to do what you

ask. So please tell me what you want, madam." 21 She said,
"Allow your older brother Adonijah to marry Abishag, the
woman from the city of Shunem." 22 King Solomon replied,
"You should not be asking me to allow Adonijah to marry
Abishag! That is just like asking me to allow him to be the
king instead of me. After all, he is my older brother*, so he may
still think he deserves to be the king.* If I allow this, Adonijah
will become the king *instead of me*, and only Abiathar will be
the high priest *instead of Zadok as well* and Joab will remain
the army commander." 23 Then Solomon made a solemn
promise, guaranteeing it by his devotion to Yahweh. He said,
"By asking to marry Abishag, Adonijah *has shown that he is
not truly loyal to me, so he* deserves to die! If I do not execute
him, may God kill me instead and do other terrible things to
me. 24 I solemnly promise that I am going to order someone
to execute Adonijah today! I guarantee that promise by my
devotion to Yahweh, who has made me the ruler over Israel,
as my father David was. By making me the king, Yahweh has
fulfilled his promise to David that his descendants would be
kings of Israel." 25 Then King Solomon ordered Benaiah son
of Jehoiada to go and kill Adonijah, and Benaiah did that.

26 Then Solomon *summoned* Abiathar the priest and told
him, "Go to the town of Anathoth, to your land there. You
deserve to die *as your punishment for being disloyal to me*. But I
will not execute you now, since you brought Yahweh's sacred
chest to David my father *when he had to flee from Jerusalem*.
You also endured the same troubles that he endured *because
you remained loyal to him when Absalom rebelled against him*."
27 So Solomon dismissed Abiathar from being Yahweh's high
priest. As a result, he made happen what Yahweh had said
would happen to the descendants of Eli. Many years before
at Shiloh, Yahweh had said *that someday they would no longer
serve him as priests*.

28 Joab had supported Adonijah when he tried to become
the king, although he had not supported Absalom earlier. So
when Solomon punished Adonijah and Abiathar*, who had
also supported him*, someone came and told Joab about that.
Joab ran to the sacred tent and held onto the projections at
the corners of the altar *because he thought no one would harm
him there*. 29 When someone told Solomon that Joab had run
to the sacred tent and was alongside the altar, Solomon told
Benaiah, "Go and execute Joab." 30 So Benaiah went to the
sacred tent and told Joab, "The king commands you to come
out." But Joab replied, "No, *if I must die,* I will die here." So
Benaiah went back to the king and reported how Joab had
responded when he told him to come out of the sacred tent.
31 The king replied to him, "Do just what he has said. Kill him
and bury his body. If you do that, Yahweh will not punish
me or my family for not providing justice for the two men
whom Joab killed in peacetime for what they did during a
war. 32 *When you execute Joab,* Yahweh will be punishing him
for attacking and violently killing Abner, the commander
of the army of Israel, and Amasa, the commander of the
army of Judah. Those two men were both much better men
than he was. My father David did not know that Joab was
planning to murder them. 33 Yahweh will always hold Joab
and his descendants responsible because he murdered Abner
and Amasa. But *because David had nothing to do with those
murders,* Yahweh will always make things go well for David's
descendants who rule over Israel as he did." 34 So Benaiah
went to the sacred tent and executed Joab. Joab's family
buried his body on his property in the desolate area within
the territory of the tribe of Judah. 35 Then King Solomon
appointed Benaiah to be the army commander instead of
Joab, and he appointed Zadok to be the only high priest,
instead of Abiathar being a high priest as well.

36 Then the king sent a messenger to summon Shimei.
When Shimei arrived, the king told him, "You must come and
live here in Jerusalem. Build a house for yourself and stay
in it. Do not leave the city to go anywhere else. 37 You can
be sure that if you ever leave Jerusalem and go farther from
the city than the Kidron Brook, I will have one of my soldiers
execute you, and it will be your own fault." 38 Shimei replied,
"I agree, Your Majesty. I will do what you have said." Then
Shimei *moved to Jerusalem and* stayed in the city for a long
time.

39 But three years later, two of Shimei's slaves ran away.
They fled to the city of Gath, and the king of the city,
Achish son of Maacah, allowed them to stay there. When
someone told Shimei that his slaves were in Gath, 40 he
traveled on his donkey to that city. He found his slaves
staying with King Achish, and he took them back home with
him. 41 But someone told King Solomon that Shimei had left
Jerusalem and gone to Gath, even though he was now back
in Jerusalem. 42 So the king sent a messenger to summon
Shimei. *When Shimei arrived,* he said to him, "I made you
promise solemnly, with Yahweh as your witness, that you
would not leave Jerusalem. I told you that you could be sure
that I would execute you if you ever left Jerusalem to go
anywhere else. And you replied to me, 'I agree, Your Majesty.
I will do what you have said.' 43 So you should have done
what you solemnly promised to Yahweh! You should not
have disobeyed what I commanded you!" 44 The king also
said to Shimei, "You know quite well in your inner being
what evil things you did to my father David. Now Yahweh
is going to punish you for doing those evil things. 45 But
Yahweh will bless me, and he will always enable David's
descendants to rule Israel." 46 Then the king ordered Benaiah
son of Jehoiada to execute Shimei. Benaiah took him out of
the palace and executed him with this sword. *By executing
Adonijah, Joab, and Shimei and exiling Abiathar,* Solomon
obtained complete control of the kingdom of Israel.

3 Then Solomon made a marriage alliance with Pharaoh,
the king of Egypt. Solomon married his daughter and
brought her to live in the part of Jerusalem that people called
the City of David. She lived there until Solomon's workers
had finished building his palace, the temple of Yahweh, and
the wall around Jerusalem. 2 Solomon had not yet built a
temple where people could worship Yahweh, so the Israelite
people were still offering sacrifices to him at shrines on the
tops of hills. 3 Solomon loved Yahweh, and so he obeyed
Yahweh just as his father David had done. But he, too, offered
sacrifices and burned incense on hilltop shrines *before he
built the temple*.

4 One day King Solomon went to the city of Gibeon to
offer sacrifices. He went there because the main place of
worship for the Israelites was there at that time. Solomon
offered a thousand sacrifices that he burned completely on
the altar. 5 That night, while Solomon was still at Gibeon,
Yahweh appeared to him in a dream. He told him, "Tell
me what you want, and I will give it to you." 6 Solomon
replied, "My father David worshiped you, and you always
treated him with great kindness. You did that because he
was faithful to you, he treated other people properly, and
he was honest with you about what he was truly thinking
and planning. You have continued to treat him with great
kindness by allowing me, his son, to become the next king

of Israel after him. That is what I am right now. 7 Yahweh
my God, David my father is no longer the king. You have
made me the king instead. But I am still a young man. I
do not know how I should rule the Israelites. 8 I live among
the Israelite people whom you have chosen. They are a very
large group of people. Because there are so many of them,
no one can count them. 9 So please enable me think clearly
so that I can rule your people well. Enable me to understand
whether what people are doing is right or wrong. That way I
will be able to fulfill the important task of making sure that
your people treat one another fairly."

10 Yahweh was very pleased that Solomon had asked for
this. 11 God told him, "You did not ask to live for a long time
or to become very rich or that would you be able to kill your
enemies. Instead, you asked me to enable you to become
wise so that you would be able to decide people's cases
fairly. As a result, 12 I will certainly do what you requested. I
will indeed enable you to become very wise. As a result, you
will be wiser than anyone who has already lived, and no one
who lives later will ever be as wise as you are now. 13 I will
also give you things that you did not ask for. I will enable
you to become very rich, and people will honor you greatly.
For as long as you live, no other king will have more wealth
than you, and people will not honor any other king more
than they honor you. 14 If you conduct your life as I want
you to, and if you obey everything I have commanded, just
as your father David did, then I will also enable you to live
for many years." 15 Then Solomon woke up, and he realized
that God had been speaking to him in a dream. He went back
to Jerusalem and stood in front of *the sacred tent where* the
sacred chest *was*. There he offered many sacrifices that he
burned completely on the altar. He also offered fellowship
sacrifices. Then he made a great feast for all his officials.

16 Shortly after that, two prostitutes came to King Solomon
to have him decide a dispute between them. They stood in front
of him *to present their cases*. 17 One of them said, "Your
Majesty, please help me. This woman and I live in the same
house. I gave birth to a baby while she was there in the
house. 18 Two days after I gave birth, this woman also gave
birth to a baby. No one else was there with us in the house.
19 One night while she was sleeping, this woman accidentally
rolled on top of her baby, and she smothered it and it died.
20 So she got up while it was still night. I was asleep, and
my baby boy was sleeping next to me. She picked him up
and brought him to her bed, and she brought her dead baby
boy and put him in my bed. 21 When I first woke up the next
morning, I wanted to nurse my baby boy, but I found that
he had died. However, after it got lighter, I could see that
he was not the baby boy to whom I had given birth." 22 But
the other woman said, "That is not true! The baby boy who
is alive is my son, and the baby boy who died is your son!"
Then the first woman responded, "No, the dead boy is your
son, and the living boy is my son!" And they continued to
argue that way as they stood before the king.

23 Then the king said, "Each of you is claiming that it is
your own son who is alive and that it is the other woman's
son who has died." 24 Then he told his servants, "Bring me a
sword." So his servants went and got him a sword. 25 Then
the king told his servants, "Cut the baby boy who is still
alive into two parts. Give one part to each of these women."
26 But the woman whose son was alive felt great love for
him *and did not want him to die*. So she said to the king, "No,
Your Majesty! Please do not have your servants cut him in
half *and kill him*! You may give him to the other woman."
But the other woman said to her, "No, neither you nor I
will have him *alive*." Then she told the servants, "Cut him
in half." 27 Then the king *pointed to the woman who had said
not to cut the child in half and* said, "Do not kill the child,
but give him to her. She is truly his mother." 28 The Israelite
people heard about how King Solomon had judged this case.
This made them afraid to do anything wrong, because they
knew that he would recognize that they had done wrong.
They realized that God had enabled him to be very wise so
that he could decide people's cases fairly.

4 During the time when Solomon was the king of Israel,
2 these were his most important officials. Azariah son
of Zadok was the high priest. 3 Elihoreph son of Shisha
and Ahijah son of Shisha were the official secretaries.
Jehoshaphat son of Ahilud was the man who reported to
the people everything that Solomon decided they should do.
4 Benaiah son of Jehoiada was the army commander. People
still honored and respected Zadok and Abiathar because they
had been high priests. 5 Azariah son of Nathan was in charge
of the district governors. Another of Nathan's sons, Zabud,
was an important official who was the king's chief advisor.
6 Ahishar supervised *the servants who worked in* the royal
palace. Adoniram son of Abda supervised the men whom
the king required to work for him.

7 Solomon divided Israel into twelve districts. He appointed
a man to supervise the collection of food from each district
for him and *the others who lived and worked in* the palace.
Each district governor was responsible for providing the
food for one month in each year. 8 Here is a list of their
names. Ben Hur was the governor for the hilly area where
the tribe of Ephraim lived. 9 Ben Deker was the governor
for the cities of Makaz, Shaalbim, Beth Shemesh, and Elon
Beth Hanan. 10 Ben Hesed was the governor for the region of
Arubboth, which included the city of Sokoh and the area of
Hepher. 11 Ben Abinadab was the governor for all of Naphoth
Dor. (He married Solomon's daughter Taphath.) 12 Baana
son of Ahilud was the governor for the cities of Taanach and
Megiddo and for the whole region near the city of Zarethan
on the plain below Jezreel, from the city of Beth Shan as far
as the city of Abel Meholah, including the city of Jokmeam.
13 Ben Geber was the governor for the region of Ramoth
Gilead. This region included the villages in Gilead that had
belonged to Jair son of Manasseh. This region also included
the area of Argob in Bashan. In that area there were 60
large cities. Each city had a wall around it, and the gates
in the walls had bronze bars. 14 Ahinadab son of Iddo was
the governor for the city of Mahanaim *and the surrounding
area*. 15 Ahimaaz was the governor for *the territory of the tribe
of* Naphtali. (He also married one of Solomon's daughters.
Her name was Basemath.) 16 Baana son of Hushai was the
governor for *the territory of the tribe of* Asher and the city
of Bealoth. 17 Jehoshaphat son of Paruah was the governor
for *the territory of the tribe of* Issachar. 18 Shimei son of Ela
was the governor for *the territory of the tribe of* Benjamin.
19 Geber son of Uri was the governor for the region of Gilead.
That region included the area that Sihon, the king of the
Amorites, had formerly ruled. It also included the area that
Og, the king of Bashan, had formerly ruled. One governor,
Geber, was responsible for this entire region *even though it
was very large*.

20 There were very many people in Judah and Israel at
that time, just as there are very many grains of sand on the
seashore. They had plenty of food to eat and beverages to

drink, and they were happy. 21 Solomon's kingdom extended
from the Euphrates River *in the northeast* to the region of
Philistia *in the west* and to the border of Egypt *in the southwest*.
Throughout his reign, he ruled the people groups in that
area, and they brought him tribute. 22 In order to feed all
the people who lived and worked at his palace, every day
Solomon needed more than 3,000 kilograms of fine flour
and more than 6,000 kilograms of regular flour. 23 He also
needed ten fat oxen, 20 cows that had grazed in pastures, and
100 sheep. The food for the palace also included wild game
such as deer, gazelle, and roebucks, as well as birds that
people had fed to make them fat. 24 Solomon needed such
great supplies because his kingdom included the entire area
west of the Euphrates River from the city of Tiphsah *in the*
northeast to the city of Gaza *in the southwest*. All of the kings
in that area were his subjects. And he had peaceful relations
with all of the rulers of the kingdoms that were next to his.
25 For the whole time that Solomon reigned, the people of
Judah and Israel were safe throughout their entire territory.
They were able to plant and harvest abundant crops without
anyone disturbing them. 26 Solomon had 40,000 stalls for
the horses that pulled his chariots. He had 12,000 men who
rode on horses. 27 The twelve district governors supplied the
food that King Solomon needed for himself and for all those
who ate with him in the palace. Each governor supplied food
for one month each year. They provided everything that
Solomon needed in the palace. 28 They also brought barley
and straw for the horses that pulled the chariots and for the
fast horses that messengers rode. Just as the king required
them to do, they brought these things to the stalls where the
horses stayed.

29 God enabled Solomon to be wise and to understand
things very well. God also enabled Solomon to learn about
and remember a huge number of things. 30 Solomon was
wiser than all of the wise men in the region to the east of
Israel and all of the wise men in Egypt. 31 People considered
Ethan the Ezrahite and the three sons of Mahol, Heman,
Calcol, and Darda, to be very wise. But Solomon was even
wiser than they were and wiser than anyone else. People in
all the nearby countries heard about Solomon. 32 Solomon
composed 3,000 proverbs, and he wrote 1,005 songs. 33 He
taught people about various kinds of plants, from the huge
cedar trees that grow in Lebanon to the tiny hyssop plants
that grow in cracks in walls. He also taught people about
wild animals, birds, reptiles, and fish. 34 People came from
many different parts of the world to listen to the wise things
that Solomon said. Many kings learned how wise Solomon
was, and they sent people to listen to him *and then return*
and tell them what Solomon had said.

5 Hiram, the king of the city of Tyre, had always been an
ally of King David. So when he heard that Solomon had
succeeded his father David as king, he sent messengers to
Solomon *to congratulate him*. 2 *In response,* Solomon sent his
own messengers to Hiram to give him this message: 3 "You
know that my father David wanted to build a temple in which
we could worship Yahweh our God. But he was not able to
do that, because the enemy kings around him kept attacking
him. Yahweh finally enabled him to defeat all his enemies.
4 Yahweh our God has enabled us to have peaceful relations
now with all of the countries around us. No one is attacking
us, and nothing bad is happening. 5 So I am now planning to
build a temple in which we can worship Yahweh our God. I
will be doing what Yahweh promised my father David when
he told him, 'I am going to make one of your sons the next
king after you die, and that son will build a temple where
you Israelites can worship me.' 6 So I am asking you to order
your workers to cut down cedar trees in Lebanon *to make*
lumber for me. My men will work with them, and I will pay
your workers whatever you ask. I want to hire your workers
because, as you know, none of us Israelites know how to cut
down trees as well as you Sidonians do."

7 When Hiram heard the message from Solomon, he was
very happy. He said, "I thank Yahweh today for giving David
such a wise son to rule that great nation!" 8 He sent this
message back to Solomon, "You sent messengers to ask me
to do something, and I agree to do it. I will provide as many
cedar and cypress logs as you want. 9 My workers will bring
the logs down from the Lebanon mountains to the sea. Then
they will tie the logs together to make rafts*, and they will*
float them along the coast to the place that you indicate to me.
Then my workers will untie the rafts, and your workers can
take the logs out of the sea *and bring them to Jerusalem*. In
exchange, I ask you to supply food for the people to whom
I serve meals in my palace." 10 *Solomon agreed,* so Hiram
arranged for his workers to supply all the cedar and cypress
logs that Solomon wanted. 11 Each year Solomon provided
Hiram with over 2,000 metric tons of wheat and over 4,000
liters of pure olive oil to feed the people in his palace.
12 Yahweh had promised that he would make Solomon wise,
and he did that. Solomon and Hiram made a treaty with
each other and agreed to be friends.

13 King Solomon required 30,000 Israelite men to become
his workers. 14 *Solomon's official* Adoniram supervised these
men. Each month 10,000 of them went to Lebanon and
worked for a month there. Then those men went back home
for two months *and other men went to work in Lebanon*.
15 Solomon also forced 80,000 men to cut large blocks of
stone out of the hills and 70,000 men to haul those stones *to*
Jerusalem. 16 Solomon also assigned 3,300 men to supervise
the work of all these other men. 17 The stone workers did
what King Solomon had ordered them to do. They cut huge
blocks of stone from quarries. They made sure that the stone
in the blocks was solid. They trimmed the blocks to make
them smooth and straight. That way the blocks could be
the foundation of the temple. 18 So the men who worked for
King Solomon and for King Hiram shaped the stones and
prepared the timber to build the temple. Men from the city
of Gebal *who were experts in that kind of work* helped them.

6 Solomon's workers began to build the temple 480 years
after the Israelite people left Egypt. That was the fourth
year that Solomon was the king of Israel, The workers started
constructing a temple for Yahweh in the second month of
that year, the month of Ziv. 2 Inside, the main part of the
temple was nearly 28 meters long, over 9 meters wide, and
nearly 14 meters high. 3 There was a porch in front of *the*
entrance to the Holy Place in the temple. This porch extended
across the entire width of the temple, so it was over nine
meters long. It extended nearly five meters outward from
the front of the temple. 4 There were windows in the temple
walls. The workers decorated these windows with beautiful
metal cross-pieces. 5 Against the sides and all around the
back of the outer wall of the temple, the workers built a
structure that had rooms in it *where priests could stay and also*
store items. 6 The workers built *three rows of* ledges along the
side and back walls of the temple so that the addition could
rest on them for support rather than on the temple itself.

The bottom ledge was the thickest, so the bottom floor of the addition was two and one third meters wide. *The middle ledge was less thick, so* the middle floor of the addition was two and three quarters meters wide. *The top ledge was even less thick, so* the top floor of the addition was three and a quarter meters wide. 7 When the workers cut out huge stones for the foundation of the temple at quarries, they also trimmed the stones there to make them smooth and straight. Because the workers used their hammers and chisels and other iron tools at the quarries, there was no loud noise at the site where the workers were constructing the temple. 8 To get to the middle floor of the addition, people went *into the bottom floor* through a door on the south side of the temple. From there, they could climb stairs up to the middle floor, and from there, they could climb more stairs up to the top floor. 9 After Solomon's workers finished building the walls of the temple, they made a roof for the building. They laid cedar beams across its width, and then they laid cedar boards in rows on top of the beams. 10 When the workers built the addition, its weight rested against the temple. But the workers put cedar beams on the ledges that supported the addition *as a cushion to prevent damage to the stone walls of the temple*. Each floor of the addition was two and one third meters high.

11 While his workers were constructing the temple, Yahweh told Solomon, 12 "If you continually obey everything that I commanded *in the law of Moses*, I will do for you what I promised to your father David. As for this temple that you are building, 13 I will live *in it* among the Israelite people. I will never abandon them."

14 Once Solomon's workers had finished constructing the temple's outer walls and roof, 15 they began to work on the inside of the temple. *As he instructed them to do,* they paneled the walls from the floor to the ceiling with cedar wood. They made the floor out of cypress planks. 16 The workers then built a room that extended out nine meters from the back wall of the temple. They used cedar boards to build the walls of this room. Those walls extended from the floor of the temple all the way up to its ceiling. This room was to be the Most Holy Place. 17 The front part of the temple, the Holy Place, occupied the other eighteen meters of its length. 18 The workers covered the walls inside the temple with cedar panels. They decorated the panels with carvings of gourds and blooming flowers. The cedar panels completely covered the walls. The stones of the walls did not appear anywhere. 19 And as for the room that the workers built at the back of the temple to be the Most Holy Place, where Yahweh's sacred chest would be, 20 that room was nine meters long, nine meters wide, and nine meters high on the inside. The workers covered its walls with very thin sheets of pure gold. The workers built a *small stone* altar *just outside the Most Holy Place for burning incense*. They covered this altar with panels of cedar wood. 21 Solomon's workers then also covered the walls of the Holy Place with very thin sheets of pure gold. They made gold chains and hung them across the front of the Most Holy Place. They covered the front wall of the Most Holy Place with sheets of gold. 22 In this way, the workers covered all the walls of the temple with gold. They also covered the altar just outside the Most Holy Place with gold. 23 They made large statues from olive wood of two creatures with wings to put inside the Most Holy Place. The first statue was about four and one half meters high. 24 This statute had two wings that were about two and one third meters long, so that the distance across both wings was about four and one half meters. 25 The second statue also had wings that were about four and one half meters across. Since both cherubs were the same size and shape, 26 the second cherub was about four and one half meters high, the same height as the first cherub. 27 The workers placed these statues next to each other in the Most Holy Place. They arranged their wings so that the inner wing of one touched the inner wing of the other in the center of the room, and their outer wings touched the side walls of the room. 28 The workers covered the statues with very thin sheets of gold.

29 The workers had decorated the walls of the Holy Place with artistic carvings of winged creatures and palm trees and blooming flowers *before they covered the walls with gold*. So both the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place had decorative carvings. 30 They also covered the floors of the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place with very thin sheets of gold. 31 The workers made a set of doors from olive wood to serve as the entrance to the Most Holy Place. The height and width of these doors was one fifth the height and width of the wall, *so they were about two meters high and wide*. 32 The workers carved decorations of winged creatures, palm trees, and flowers into these olive-wood doors. Then they very carefully hammered thin sheets of gold onto these decorations *so that their designs would still show under the gold*. 33 They workers made a similar entrance for the Holy Place. They built a door frame from olive wood. The opening was one fourth the width of the wall*, so it was about two and one quarter meters wide*. 34 They made two doors from cypress wood *and fastened them to the doorframe*. The doors each had two panels *with hinges in the middle*, so a person could open only half of a door if he wanted to. 35 The workers carved decorations of winged creatures, palm trees, and flowers into these doors. Then they very carefully hammered thin sheets of gold onto these decorations *so that their designs would still show under the gold*. 36 The workers created a courtyard around the temple by building a wall. The wall consisted of three rows of stone with a row of cedar beams on top.

37 They laid the foundation of the temple of Yahweh in the month of Ziv, in the fourth year that Solomon ruled. 38 Solomon's workers finished building the temple in the eighth month, the month of Bul, of the eleventh year of his reign. They had built every part of the temple according to the design they were working from. It had taken them seven years to construct the building.

7 Then Solomon had his workers build a palace for him. It took them 13 years to complete it. 2 One of the buildings they built was *a large hall whose name was* the House of the Forest of Lebanon. It was 46 meters long, 23 meters wide, and 14 meters high. The workers set up four rows of cedar pillars and laid cedar beams across the top of each row. 3 To make a roof, the workers laid cedar boards in rows on top of cedar beams that 45 pillars *in the middle of the hall* supported. Those pillars were in rows of 15*, creating four long sections within the hall*. 4 On each of the two side walls, there were three rows of windows. Each row consisted of a column of three windows. The rows on one wall were opposite the rows on the other wall. 5 All of the doors had square frames, and each window in each column was directly across from the matching window on the other wall. 6 The workers built an entranceway *for the House of the Forest of Lebanon*. It was an open space with rows of pillars on all sides. It was 23 meters long and 14 meters wide. There was a porch in front of this entranceway. It had a roof that pillars supported. 7 The workers also constructed a building whose name was

the Porch of the Throne. It had a second name, the Porch of Judgment. That was where Solomon decided the legal cases that people asked him to judge. The workers used cedar wood to make the entire floor for this building. 8 In the courtyard behind the Porch of Judgment, the workers built a residence for Solomon to live in. They made it with the same materials and in the same style as the other buildings. They also built a similar residence for his wife, who was the daughter of the king of Egypt.

9 The workers built these buildings and the walls around the palace courtyard with stone blocks. They made sure that the stone in the blocks was solid. They trimmed the blocks with saws so that the interior and exterior walls of the buildings and the courtyard walls would be straight and smooth. They used stone blocks to build the entire height of these walls. 10 The workers used huge stone blocks for the foundation of the palace. Some of these stones were about four and a half meters long, and others were over three and a half meters long. 11 The workers used other stone blocks to build the palace on top of these foundation stones. They cut those blocks to make them the sizes they needed. They also used cedar beams to build the palace. 12 The workers built a wall to create a large courtyard all around the palace. The wall consisted of three rows of stone with a row of cedar beams on top. It was just like the wall around the courtyard that surrounded the temple and the porch in front of it.

13 Solomon asked a man whose name was Hiram to come from Tyre to Jerusalem *to supervise all the work of making things from bronze for the temple*. 14 Hiram's mother was an Israelite woman from the tribe of Naphtali. His father, who had died, had been from the city of Tyre. His work had been to make things from bronze. Hiram himself was very skilled at making things from bronze. He agreed to come and help King Solomon by making all the bronze articles he needed for the temple. 15 Hiram made two bronze pillars *to put in front of the temple*. Each pillar was eight and one quarter meters tall and five and one half meters around. 16 Hiram made decorative tops for each of the pillars. He cast them in bronze. Each top was two and one quarter meters tall. 17 He formed bronze strands into the shape of nets to decorate the two pillar tops. He made seven of these networks for each pillar top. 18 Hiram made bronze decorations in the shape of pomegranates for the pillar tops. He put two rows of pomegranates around the edges of the parts of the pillar tops that the bronze nets covered. 19 Hiram made the upper portion of each pillar top in the shape of a lily. That portion was nearly two meters high. The pillars were on the porch *in front of the entrance to the temple*. 20 The lower portion of each pillar top, just above each pillar, was in the shape of a ball. That was the portion that the bronze nets covered, and that was the portion that the pomegranates decorated. There were 200 bronze pomegranates in rows around each pillar top. 21 Hiram and his helpers set up the pillars on the porch in front of the temple. Hiram named the pillar on the right side of the porch Jachin. He named the pillar on the left side of the porch Boaz. 22 Those pillars had tops in the shape of lilies. *When Hiram and his helpers set them up,* that completed his work of making the bronze pillars.

23 Hiram also made a giant water basin. People called it a sea *because it contained so much water*. Hiram made it by casting bronze *in a clay mold*. This sea was four and a half meters across its circular top, two and one third meters tall, and nearly 14 meters around. 24 All around the outer edge of the sea there were decorations in the shape of gourds. There were two rows of gourds. There were ten gourds for every 45 centimeters of the outer edge. Hiram included the gourds as part of the design of the sea when he cast it. 25 Hiram cast 12 bronze statues of oxen to be a stand for the sea. He placed the oxen in groups of three facing outward to the north, south, east, and west. Then workers put the sea on the statues of the oxen, and it covered their backs. 26 The sides of this large water basin were eight centimeters thick. When Hiram cast the basin, he made the rim curve outward, like the rim of a cup and like the petals of a lily. The basin could hold over 40,000 liters of water.

27 Hiram also made ten bronze carts *to hold and transport smaller water basins*. Each cart was nearly two meters long, nearly two meters wide, and about one and a quarter meters high. 28 Each cart had a framework of bronze bars. Hiram attached bronze panels to the sides of the framework. 29 There were figures of lions, bulls, and winged creatures on those panels. At the bottom of the panels there were decorations that looked like garlands of flowers and leaves. On top of the framework of each cart there was a pedestal *to hold a water basin*. 30 Each cart had four bronze wheels and two bronze axles. At the top corners of each cart there were bronze supports to help hold up the water basin. On those supports there were decorations of flowers and leaves. 31 Although the panels on the sides of each cart were square, the pedestal on top of the cart that held the basin was round. This pedestal was 69 centimeters across. It was open at the top *so that the basin could sit in it*. There were decorative carvings all around the rim of its opening. *Even though part of the basin rested inside the pedestal,* it still extended 46 centimeters above the pedestal. 32 The four wheels of each cart were below its panels. These wheels were 69 centimeters high. Hiram molded the axles for the wheels as part of the cart itself. 33 Hiram made the wheels of the carts to be like the wheels that people make for chariots. He cast every part of these wheels, the axles and rims and spokes and hubs, from bronze. 34 Hiram also molded the bronze supports at the top corners of each cart as part of the cart itself. 35 A round pedestal 23 centimeters high was on top of each cart. Braces held this pedestal in place. There were decorative panels on the rest of the top of the cart. Hiram cast these braces and panels as part of the cart itself. 36 Hiram decorated the surfaces of these braces and the panels with figures of winged creatures, lions, and palm trees, with decorative wreaths all around them. He did this whenever there was space for decorations. 37 That is how Hiram made the ten carts. He cast them all from the same design, so they were all the same size and shape.

38 Hiram also made ten bronze basins, one for each of the ten carts. Each basin was nearly five meters across and held 880 liters of water. 39 Hiram placed five of the carts in front of the right side of the temple, and he placed the other five in front of the left side of the temple. He put the giant water basin, the sea, by the southeast corner of the temple.

40 Hiram also made *bronze* pots *in which to boil meat*, shovels *for removing ashes*, and bowls *to catch the blood of the animals that the priests sacrificed*. So he completed all of the work that King Solomon requested him to do for Yahweh's temple. 41 *What Hiram made included* the two pillars *for the temple porch*, the two ball-shaped tops for the pillars, the two bronze nets that decorated the ball-shaped pillar tops, 42 the 400 bronze pomegranates that decorated the two networks (these pomegranates were in two rows around each bronze net and they covered the round lower parts of the pillar

tops), 43 the ten carts, the ten basins that the carts held,
44 the giant water basin that people called the sea, the 12
statues of oxen on whose backs the sea rested, 45 the pots,
the shovels, and the bowls. Hiram and his workers made all
these things that King Solomon requested him to make for
Yahweh's temple. Hiram made them all from bronze, and his
workers then polished them *so that they would gleam brightly*.
46 Hiram and his workers made these things for Solomon in
the Jordan River valley, between the cities of Succoth and
Zarethan. *They made them there because* the soil consisted of
clay *that they could use to cast things in bronze*. 47 Because
Hiram used so much bronze to make these objects, Solomon
did not command his workers to weigh them. So no one ever
knew what they weighed.

48 Solomon's workers also made all the gold items that
the priests needed to use in Yahweh's temple. They made the
golden altar and the golden table that held the sacred bread.
49 They made from pure gold the ten lampstands that stood
in front of the Most Holy Place, five on the south side and
five on the north side. They made the golden decorations on
the lampstands that looked like flowers, the golden lamps
themselves, and the golden tongs *for removing burnt parts of
the lamp wicks*. 50 Solomon's workers also made from pure
gold the dishes, wick snuffers, small bowls, incense dishes,
and pans for carrying hot coals *that the priests used in the
temple*. They also made golden sockets for the doors of the
Holy Place and for the doors of the Most Holy Place.

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

8 Solomon then sent messengers to tell all the Israelite
elders, tribal leaders, and clan leaders to come to
Jerusalem. He wanted them to join him in a ceremony to
move Yahweh's sacred chest from the City of David (the
part of Jerusalem that people now call Zion) *into the temple
that he had built*. 2 King Solomon asked the leaders to come
during the Festival of Shelters, which the Israelites observed
in the month of Ethanim, the seventh month of the year. So a
very large crowd of Israelites also came to Jerusalem at that
time to celebrate this festival. 3 When the Israelite leaders
had all arrived, the priests carried the sacred chest *from the
City of David* 4 and brought it into the temple. The Levites
who assisted the priests helped them carry into the temple the
sacred tent and all the special equipment that the priests
used only in the tent. 5 King Solomon and that large crowd
of Israelites walked ahead of Yahweh's sacred chest *as the
priests carried it to the temple*. They sacrificed a very large
number of sheep and bulls. No one was able to count how
many animals they sacrificed, because there were so many.
6 The priests carried the sacred chest into the temple and
put it where it belonged. That was in the Most Holy Place,
the special room that Solomon's workers had made at the
back of the temple. They placed the sacred chest under the
wings of the statues of the winged creatures there. 7 Then the
wings of those statues extended over the sacred chest and
over the poles that the priests used to carry it. 8 Those poles
were so long that priests who were standing in the Holy
Place at the entrance to the Most Holy Place could see their
ends. But people standing outside the temple could not see
them. Those poles are still there. 9 The only things that were
in the sacred chest were the two stone tablets that Moses
had put there at Mount Horeb. That was where Yahweh had
made a covenant with the Israelites after they left Egypt.
10 When the priests came out of the Holy Place *after putting
the sacred chest in the temple*, suddenly a cloud *that represented
Yahweh's presence* filled the temple. 11 The glorious presence
of Yahweh, which the cloud expressed, filled the temple. As
a result, the priests were not able to continue their work.

12 Solomon *looked at the temple and* said, "Yahweh said
that he would live in a dark cloud." 13 *Then Solomon prayed
to Yahweh,* "I have surely built a temple for you that you will
always be able to live in." 14 Then, while all the people stood
there *respectfully*, the king turned around and faced them,
and he asked God to make good things happen for them.
15 Then he said, "Praise Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites
worship! By his own power he has done what he promised to
my father David. Yahweh told him, 16 'I rescued the Israelite
people, who belong to me, from slavery in Egypt. But after
that, I did not choose a city anywhere in their land and ask
them to build a temple there where they would worship
me. But I did choose you to be the king of Israel.'" 17 Then
Solomon said, "My father David wanted very much to build
a temple where we Israelite people could worship Yahweh
our God. 18 But Yahweh told him, 'You wanted to build a
temple for me, and it was good that you wanted to do that.
19 However, you are not the one who is going to build it.
Instead, one of your own sons will build a temple where the
Israelites will worship me.' 20 And now Yahweh has done
what he promised to do. I have succeeded my father David as
the king of Israel, just as Yahweh promised. And I have built
a temple where we Israelite people can worship Yahweh our
God. 21 I have provided a place within the temple for the
sacred chest. It holds the two stone tablets that Moses put in
it when Yahweh made a covenant with our ancestors when
he rescued them from slavery in Egypt."

22 Then Solomon turned around again and faced the altar
in the temple courtyard. The Israelite people who had gathered
for this occasion could see and hear him. He lifted his hands
toward the sky *to pray*, 23 and he said, "Yahweh, you are the
God whom we Israelite people worship. There is no god like
you up in heaven or down here on the earth. You solemnly
promised that you would be kind to us. And that is what you
have always done for us when we have earnestly done what
you wanted us to do. 24 You promised my father David, who
served you faithfully, that his son would build a temple for
you. And we here today can all see that by your own power
you have done what you promised. 25 So now, Yahweh, the
God whom we Israelites worship, I am asking you to do the
further things you promised to my father David. You told
him that you would make sure that one of his descendants
would always be the king of Israel if they would conduct
their lives as he did. He obeyed you carefully. 26 You are the
God whom we Israelite people worship. So now please do
what you promised to do for my father David.

27 But you, God, will not really live on the earth. You
are so great that the whole sky and even the spiritual realm
beyond the sky are not a sufficient home for you. So this
temple that I have built is certainly not sufficient for you to
live in either. 28 Even so, Yahweh, my God, please grant the
requests that I make as I pray to you today. I have come to
your temple today to pray. Please do what I am earnestly
asking you to do. 29 I pray that you will always regard this
temple favorably. You said that when we Israelites built a
temple, you would be pleased to have people worship you
there. So as I face this temple *to acknowledge you* as I pray,
please answer my prayer. 30 When I pray to you, or when

Israelite people pray to you, we will face this temple *to acknowledge you*. You will be faraway in heaven where you live, but please do what we ask and forgive us *for the sins that we have committed*.

31 Suppose one person accuses another person of doing something wrong to him. Suppose the first person makes the other person stand in front of your altar outside this temple and swear, ‘I did not do that. May God punish me if I am not telling the truth!’ 32 In that case, please pay attention in heaven and decide which of these people is telling the truth. Then punish the person who is guilty with the punishment that he deserves, and reward the person who is innocent for having done what is right.

33 Suppose that the enemies of your Israelite people defeat their army in a battle because the Israelites have sinned against you. And suppose that the Israelites then admit that they have done wrong by sinning and that you are right to punish them for sinning. Suppose they stop acting in a sinful way. And suppose they face in the direction of this temple *to acknowledge you* and plead with you to help them. 34 In that case, please pay attention in heaven, and please forgive your Israelite people for the sins that they have committed. Bring back to this land that you gave to our ancestors any prisoners whom the enemy army may have captured and taken away.

35 Suppose that your Israelite people sin against you and, to punish them, you do not allow any rain to fall from the sky. Suppose that, because you are punishing them in this way, they face in the direction of this temple *to acknowledge you*, and they pray. Suppose that they admit that you are right to punish them for sinning. Suppose they stop acting in a sinful way. 36 In that case, *by not allowing rain to fall,* you would have taught them that they needed to live differently. So then please pay attention in heaven to their prayer, and forgive your Israelite people for the sins they have committed. Then send rain on this land that you have decided will belong permanently to your people.

37 Suppose the people of Israel are not able to grow enough food to eat. Or suppose a deadly disease spreads among the people. Or suppose blight or mildew ruin their crops or locusts or grasshoppers eat up their crops. Or suppose a person is in great distress because an enemy army has surrounded the city where he lives and is attacking it. Or suppose a person gets sick, or many people get sick. 38 And suppose an Israelite person recognizes in his inner being that he is suffering because you are correcting him for sinning. And suppose that he pleads with you to help him, stretching out his hands toward this temple *to acknowledge you*. 39 In that case, please pay attention to his prayer in heaven where you live. If he is truly sorry for his sins, forgive him and help him overcome the trouble he has. You are the only one who knows whether a person is truly sorry. So act toward each person as he deserves. 40 Do this so that all of the Israelites will deeply respect you throughout their lives as they live in this land that you gave to our ancestors.

41 Suppose a foreigner who does not belong to your Israelite people comes from a faraway country here to this temple because he has heard what a great God you are. 42 I know that foreigners will hear about how great you are and what powerful things you have done for your people. Some of them may come to this temple to *worship you and* pray to you. 43 In that case, please pay attention to their prayers in heaven where you live. Do for them what they ask you to do. Do that so that all the people groups in the world will know how great you are and revere you as we, your Israelite people, do. Then people all over the world will know that you are truly present in this temple that I have built.

44 Suppose that you command your people to go and fight against one of their enemies. And suppose that the Israelite soldiers pray to you *for help*. Suppose that*, to acknowledge you,* they face in the direction of this city of Jerusalem, which you have chosen as the place for this temple that I have built where we Israelites can worship you. 45 In that case, please pay attention in heaven to their prayers for help, and enable them to defeat their enemies.

46 Suppose that your people sin against you, as everyone unfortunately does, and you become angry with them. Suppose that *to punish them* you allow one of their enemies to defeat them and take many of them away as prisoners to their own country, perhaps even to a country that is far away. 47 And suppose that, while your people are in that country to which their enemy took them as captives, they sincerely repent. Suppose they plead with you there and say, ‘We confess that we have sinned by doing very wicked things.’ 48 Suppose that they start obeying you entirely again while they are still in the land of the enemy who captured them. Suppose that they pray to you for help while *to acknowledge you* they face in the direction of this land that you gave to our ancestors. Suppose that *to acknowledge you* they face in the direction of this city of Jerusalem, which you have chosen as the place for this temple that I have built where we Israelites can worship you. 49 In that case, please pay attention to their prayers for help in heaven where you live, and please rescue them. 50 Forgive them for all the sins that they have committed against you. Cause their enemies to feel kindly toward them and to treat them with kindness *and release them*. 51 I feel that I can ask you to do all of these things because we Israelites are your people. We will always belong to you. You brought our ancestors out of Egypt, where they were greatly suffering as though they were in a blazing furnace. 52 And so I ask you always to pay attention to what I or any of your Israelite people may plead for you to do. When we cry out to you in prayer, please help us. 53 Yahweh my Lord, we are your people because you chose us from all the other people groups in the world to belong to you always. That is what you told Moses, your servant, to tell our ancestors when you delivered them from slavery in Egypt.”

54 During this prayer in which Solomon asked Yahweh to do these things, he had been kneeling facing the altar and lifting his hands toward the sky. When he finished praying, he *lowered his hands and* stood up. 55 *He turned to face the crowd* and asked God to make good things happen for all the Israelite people. He said loudly, 56 “Praise Yahweh, who has allowed us Israelite people, who belong to him, to live in safety. That is just what he promised he would do. He has done every one of the good things that he promised to us through Moses, his servant. 57 I pray that Yahweh our God will always help us, just as he helped the Israelites in earlier times. I pray that he will never, ever leave us. 58 I pray that he will enable us to serve him loyally, to conduct our lives as he wants us to, and to obey all of the laws that he gave to our ancestors. 59 I pray that Yahweh our God will always remember these things I have asked as I have pleaded for his help. I pray that he will always act mercifully toward me and toward us Israelite people. I pray that he will do for us what we need each day. 60 If you do that, all the people groups in the world will know that you, Yahweh, are the only one who actually is God, and that there is no other

one who is God at all. 61 I pray that all of you Israelites will
always commit yourselves fully to Yahweh and that you will
always obey his laws, just as you are doing now."
62 Then King Solomon and all the Israelites who had come
to Jerusalem for the temple dedication offered sacrifices to
Yahweh. 63 They sacrificed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep
as fellowship sacrifices to Yahweh. In this way the king
and all the Israelites who were there dedicated Yahweh's
temple. 64 The bronze altar in front of the temple was not
big enough to hold all those sacrifices. So that day King
Solomon temporarily made the middle part of the courtyard
in front of the temple a sacred place. There he and the
people offered sacrifices that they burned completely on the
altar, the accompanying offerings of flour, and the fat of the
animals that were fellowship sacrifices. 65 Then Solomon and
all the Israelites who had come to Jerusalem celebrated the
Festival of Shelters. They celebrated it for seven days. Since
they had just celebrated the dedication of the temple for
seven days, they celebrated together for a total of 14 days.
There was a huge crowd of people there who had gathered in
Yahweh's presence. They came from many different places
in the land of Israel. 66 Once the Festival of Shelters was over,
Solomon told the people they could go back to their homes.
They asked God to make good things happen for him. As
the people went home, they were very happy because of all
the good things that Yahweh had done for David his servant
and for the Israelite people, who belonged to him.

9 After Solomon's workers had finished building the temple
and his palace and everything else that Solomon wanted
them to build, 2 Yahweh appeared to him *in a dream*. That
was the same way in which he had appeared to him earlier
at the city of Gibeon. 3 Yahweh said to him, "I agree to do
what asked me to do when you prayed to me at the temple.
I have made the temple you built a place where I will be
present in a special way so that people can always worship
me there. I will always pay attention to what people pray
when they face the temple, and I will always care deeply
about what happens there. 4 And as for you, conduct your
life as I want you to, just as your father David did. Obey
very sincerely all the laws that I have commanded you to
obey *as an Israelite*. If you do that, 5 then I will make sure
that you are the king of Israel for your whole life and that
your descendants reign as king after you. That is what I
promised to your father David. I promised him that one of
his descendants would always rule Israel. 6 But suppose that
you or one of your descendants who becomes king stops
worshiping me. Suppose you disobey the laws that I have
given to you to obey. Suppose that you start to live as people
live who worship other gods live. Suppose you even bow
down to idols that represent those gods. 7 If you do that,
then I will allow an enemy to take the Israelite people away
from this land that I have given to them. I will also allow
an enemy to destroy this temple that I have made a place
where I will be especially present. Then people throughout
the world will use the Israelites as an example of a very
bad thing happening to a nation. They will even mock other
people by saying that they are like the Israelites. 8 Even
though this temple is now very beautiful, *if you disobey me
and worship other gods,* someday everyone who sees where it
used to be will wonder whatever happened to it. They will
hiss *in contempt* and they will ask, 'Why did Yahweh allow
an enemy to take the Israelite people away from this land
and destroy their temple?' 9 Other people will reply, 'This
happened because the Israelite people abandoned Yahweh
their God. He was the one who rescued their ancestors
from slavery in Egypt. But they became loyal to other gods
instead. They lived the way people who worship those other
gods live. They even bowed down to idols that represented
those gods. That is why Yahweh caused them to experience
all these disasters.'" 10 Solomon's workers spent 20 years
building Yahweh's temple and Solomon's palace. 11 Hiram,
the king of the city of Tyre, had arranged for his workers to
provide Solomon with cedar and pine logs and with gold.
That enabled Solomon to build everything he wanted to
build. *In gratitude, after his workers had completed the building
projects,* King Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities in the region
of Galilee. 12 Hiram traveled from Tyre *to Galilee* to visit the
cities that Solomon had given to him. When he saw them,
he did not like them. 13 He said to Solomon, "My friend,
those cities that you gave me are worthless." Because of that,
Hiram called that region the Land of Cabul. That is still the
name of that region now. 14 Hiram *was so upset because he*
had provided Solomon with about 4,000 kilograms of gold
for the temple and for his palace.
15 This is an account of how King Solomon forced some of
the men who lived in the land of Israel to work hard on his
building projects. He forced them to work on the temple, his
palace, the Millo, and the wall around Jerusalem. He also
forced them to work to make the cities of Hazor, Megiddo,
and Gezer into fortresses. 16 The city of Gezer belonged to
Solomon because Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, had sent his
army to attack Gezer and capture it. His soldiers had burned
all the houses in the city and killed all the people who lived
there. They were Canaanites. Pharaoh then gave that city to
his daughter as a gift when she married Solomon. 17 Then
Solomon's workers rebuilt Gezer *as a border fortress city*.
They also built up *as border fortress cities* Lower Beth Horon,
18 Baalath, and Tamar in the desolate area in the southern
part of Judah. 19 They also built the cities where Solomon
kept supplies and the places where he kept his horses and
chariots. They also built everything else that he wanted them
to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and other places where he
had royal authority. 20 There were many people still living
in Solomon's kingdom who were not Israelites. Rather, they
were Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.
21 These people were descendants of members of those people
groups whom the Israelites were not able to kill *when they
defeated those groups and occupied the land of Canaan*. It was
those people whom Solomon forced to work hard on his
building projects. The Israelites still require those people to
work for them. 22 But Solomon did not force any Israelite
people to become slaves. Instead, some of them became
his soldiers, officials, army commanders, army officers, and
leaders of his chariot forces and troops who rode on horses.
23 Solomon also had 550 officials who supervised the men
who commanded the workers whom he forced to build all
those places.
24 Solomon had his workers build a palace for his wife,
who was the daughter of the king of Egypt. After she moved
there from the City of David*, where she had been living,*
Solomon had his workers build the Millo.
25 Three times each year, on the altar that he had built for
Yahweh in front of the temple, Solomon offered sacrifices
that the priests burned completely on the altar and fellowship
sacrifices. He also brought incense for the priests to burn with
these sacrifices. In that way Solomon made the temple the
place where the Israelites would come to worship Yahweh.

26 King Solomon also had his workers build a fleet of
ships at the city of Ezion Geber. That city is near the city of
Elath on the shore of the Sea of Reeds in the territory of the
Edomites. 27 Some of King Hiram's subjects were experienced
sailors who knew well how to sail in the ocean. He had
them go on these ships with Solomon's men. 28 They sailed
together to the region of Ophir, and from there they brought
back to Solomon about 14 metric tons of gold.

10 The queen who ruled the land of Sheba heard that
Solomon had great understanding of what Yahweh
was like. She wanted to know whether what she had heard
about him was true. So she traveled to Jerusalem to ask him
the many difficult questions she had *about God*. 2 She brought
many of her officials with her in a large caravan. The camels
were carrying spices, gemstones, and much gold *as gifts for
Solomon*. Solomon welcomed her, and she asked him about
everything she wanted to know. 3 Solomon answered all of
her questions. Not one of her questions was too difficult for
him to answer. 4 The Queen recognized that Solomon was
very wise. She toured his palace, 5 and she saw the food that
he served. She saw how his many officials sat in different
places of honor at meals. She saw how the waiters and
cupbearers wore splendid uniforms. She also saw the many
animals that he brought to the temple for the priests to burn
completely as sacrifices. What she saw overwhelmed her.
6 She told King Solomon, "Everything that I heard back in
my own country about how wisely you speak is true! 7 But
I did not believe it was true until I came here and saw it
for myself. Indeed, what people told me was only half of
what they could have told me about you. You are much
wiser and wealthier than people told me. 8 How fortunate
are your subjects! And how fortunate are your servants, who
are always standing around you and listen to the wise things
that you say! 9 I praise Yahweh, your God, who has shown
that he is pleased with you by making you the king of Israel!
Yahweh has always loved the Israelite people, and so he has
appointed you to be a king who will rule them fairly and
righteously." 10 The Queen of Sheba gave King Solomon *as
gifts from what she had brought* over 4,000 kilograms of gold,
many gemstones, and a very large amount of spices. The
spices that she gave to Solomon were the greatest quantity
of spices that anyone ever brought to Jerusalem.

11 (Solomon had built a fleet of ships that King Hiram's
men sailed. Solomon built the ships to get gold from Ophir.
But the crews also brought a large amount of sandalwood
and many gemstones back from Ophir. 12 King Solomon had
his workers use that wood to make furnishings for the temple
and for his palace. He also had them it to make harps and
lyres for the temple musicians. No one had ever brought
such sandalwood to Israel before, and no one has brought
such sandalwood to Israel since then.)

13 The Queen of Sheba admired many things in Jerusalem
and asked for them, and Solomon gave them to her. He also
gave her other generous gifts from his own riches. Then she
and the officials who had come with her returned to their
own land.

14 Each year Solomon received over 22 metric tons of gold
in tribute from kingdoms that he controlled. 15 In addition to
that, merchants and traders who traveled through and within
Israel paid him duties and tolls. Arabian kings also often
sent him gifts of gold, and the district governors submitted
the taxes they collected in gold. 16 King Solomon told his
workers to take gold and hammer it *into thin sheets and cover
those thin sheets of* gold. They used
nearly seven kilograms of gold to make each large shield.
17 He also told his workers to make 300 smaller shields. They
covered each of them with about one and a half kilograms
of gold. King Solomon put all of those shields in the House
of the Forest of Lebanon. 18 He also had his workers make
a large throne for him. The workers inlaid this throne with
ivory, and they framed the ivory with borders of very fine
gold. 19 There were six steps in front of the throne. The back
of the throne was rounded at the top. There was an armrest
on each side of the throne. There was a statue of a lion
next to each armrest. 20 There was also a statue of a lion on
both sides of each step. So altogether there were 12 statues
of lions. There was no throne like this one in any other
kingdom. 21 King Solomon and his court officials drank only
from gold cups. His craftsmen also made all of the dishes
for the House of the Forest of Lebanon by hammering out
gold. They did not make any of these things from silver. That
metal was so common during the time when Solomon ruled
that people did not consider it to be valuable. 22 They had
so much gold because King Solomon had a fleet of ships that
were able to sail out on the sea. That is where King Hiram's
ships also sailed *from Tyre*. The ships would sail to many
different ports for three years. At the end of that time, they
would bring back gold, silver, ivory, monkeys, and peacocks.

23 King Solomon became the richest and wisest king in the
world. 24 People from many different places came to listen
to the wise things that Solomon said about matters that God
had enabled him to understand. 25 Each of the people who
came to him brought presents. They brought articles made
from silver or gold, or robes, or weapons, or spices, or horses,
or mules. The people continued to do this every year.

26 Solomon acquired a great force of chariots and riders.
In his army, he had 1,400 chariots and 12,000 men who
rode on horses. Solomon had built special cities in which
to keep chariots, and he kept many of his chariots in them.
But he also kept some chariots with him in Jerusalem.
27 During the years that Solomon was king, silver became
very common in Jerusalem, just as stones are common. Cedar
wood became very plentiful, just as the wood is plentiful that
comes from the sycamore trees that grow in the foothills of
Judah. 28 Solomon imported horses from Egypt and Kue. His
purchasing agents would go to Kue and buy horses there at
the current price. 29 In Egypt, his agents bought both horses
and chariots. They paid about seven kilograms of silver for
each chariot and about two kilograms of silver for each
horse. Agents of Solomon would then resell many of the
horses and chariots to Hittite and Aramean kings.

11 King Solomon had many foreign wives. First he
married the daughter of Pharaoh, the king of
Egypt. Later he married many Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite,
Sidonian, and Hittite women. 2 He married them even though
Yahweh had told the Israelites, "You must not marry people
from those groups, because if you do, they will certainly
persuade you to worship the gods that they worship!" But
Solomon loved these women, and so he married them anyway.
3 Solomon married 700 women who were kings' daughters.
These wives led him to start worshiping foreign gods. He also
had 300 secondary wives. 4 By the time Solomon became old,
his wives persuaded him to worship the gods their people
groups worshiped. He was not completely faithful to Yahweh
his God as his father David had been. 5 Solomon worshiped
Ashtoreth, the goddess that the Sidonians worshiped. He also

worshiped Milcom, the disgusting god that the Ammonites worshiped. 6 In that way, Solomon did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. Solomon's father David had always devoted himself entirely to Yahweh, but Solomon did not. 7 On the hill that is to the east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a place to worship Chemosh, the disgusting god that the Moabites worshiped. He also built a place to worship Molech, the disgusting god that the Ammonites worshiped. 8 Solomon built similar high places for all of his foreign wives so that they could burn incense and offer sacrifices to the gods that their people groups worshiped. 9 Yahweh, the God whom the Israelites worshiped, had appeared to Solomon twice. Even so, Solomon began to worship gods other than Yahweh. So Yahweh became very angry with him. 10 *When he appeared to Solomon the second time,* Yahweh had commanded him not to worship foreign gods. But Solomon had disobeyed what Yahweh told him. 11 Yahweh told him, "You have disobeyed the laws that I gave the Israelites for their king when I made my covenant with them. So you can be sure that I am going to make someone else, one of your officials, the king of Israel. 12 But because of what I promised your father David, I will allow you to rule your kingdom while you are still living. But after you die, I will not allow your son to rule the *whole* kingdom. 13 However, I will allow him to rule some of the kingdom. I will allow him to rule one tribe. I will do that in order to honor my servant David *by allowing one of his descendants always to be a king.* And because I have chosen Jerusalem *as the location for my temple, I will allow your son to rule the tribe of Judah, whose territory includes Jerusalem*."

14 Then Yahweh enabled Hadad, a son of the king of Edom, to become Solomon's enemy *and lead the Edomites to rebel against him*. 15 This is what happened. Many years before, David's army had fought against Edom and conquered it. After the fighting was over, his army commander Joab had gone to Edom to supervise the Israelite soldiers who were burying their fellow soldiers whom the Edomites had killed during the war. While he was there, Joab tried to kill every Edomite man and boy. 16 Joab and his whole army stayed in Edom for six months so that they could kill as many Edomite males as possible. 17 Hadad was a young child at that time. But some of the officials of his father, the king of Edom, carried him away, hoping to bring him to Egypt *where he would be safe*. 18 First they fled to the region of Midian. From there, they undertook the difficult journey through the desolate area of Paran. They found guides there who traveled with them and helped them make that journey. When they got to Egypt, they asked Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, to allow them to live safely in his country. Pharaoh gave Hadad a house with some property and he ordered his servants to provide him with food regularly. 19 The king liked Hadad very much. As a result, he allowed him to marry the sister of his own wife, Queen Tahpenes. 20 Later, the sister of Tahpenes had a baby boy. The name of this son of Hadad was Genubath. Tahpenes herself nursed him in the royal palace. He grew up there with Pharaoh's sons. 21 Much later, while Hadad was still in Egypt, he learned that King David and Joab, the commander of David's army, had both died. So he asked Pharaoh, "Please allow me to return to my own country." 22 But Pharaoh said to him, "You have everything that you need here with me, so you ought to be content to stay here." Hadad replied, "I do have everything I need here, but please allow me to leave anyway," *and Pharaoh allowed him to leave, and he led the Edomites to rebel against Solomon*.

23 God also enabled another man, Rezon son of Eliada, to become Solomon's enemy. Rezon had been an official of King Hadadezer, who ruled the area of Zobah. But Rezon had stopped serving him and had run away. 24 This is what happened. David's army defeated Hadadezer and killed many of his soldiers. Rezon escaped with some other soldiers, and together they formed a group of outlaws with Rezon as their leader. They went to Damascus and settled there, and they took control of the city. 25 Just like Hadad, Rezon was an enemy of Israel for the rest of the time that Solomon was king. Rezon hated the Israelites bitterly. He eventually controlled the whole region of Aram.

26 Another man who rebelled against Solomon was one of his officials. His name was Jeroboam son of Nebat. Nebat had lived in the city of Zeredah within the territory of the tribe of Ephraim. Nebat had died, so that Jereboam's mother Zeruah was a widow. 27 This is what happened. Solomon had his workers build the Millo and finish building walls all around the City of David. 28 Jeroboam was a very skillful young man. *He had worked on these building projects, and* Solomon had seen that he was able to accomplish tasks effectively. So Solomon appointed him to supervise all the men from the tribes of Manasseh and Ephraim whom he forced to work. 29 One day as Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem *for his work in the area north of there*, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite met him on the road. The two of them were alone, away from any city. Ahijah was wearing a new robe, 30 which he took off and tore into 12 pieces. 31 He told Jeroboam, "Take ten of these pieces for yourself, because Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship, says to you, 'I am going to take the kingdom away from Solomon, and I am going to make you the ruler of ten of the tribes of Israel. 32 However, I will allow Solomon's descendants to keep ruling one tribe. I will do that in order to honor my servant David. And because I have chosen Jerusalem from all of the Israelite cities *to be the location for my temple, I will allow his descendants to rule the tribe of Judah, whose territory includes Jerusalem*. 33 I am going to do this because Solomon has become unfaithful to me *and has caused many Israelites to become unfaithful to me as well*. He has been worshiping Asherah, the goddess that the Sidonians worship, Chemosh, the god that the Moabites worship, and Molech, the god that the Ammonites worship. He has not conducted his life as I want people to. He has not obeyed my laws the way his father David did. 34 But I will not stop Solomon from ruling the entire kingdom of Israel while he is alive. Instead, I will allow him to remain as king. I will do that in order to honor David, whom I chose *to be the king of Israel* and who faithfully obeyed my laws. 35 Instead, I will stop his son from ruling the entire kingdom, and I will allow you to become the king of ten of the Israelite tribes. 36 I will allow Solomon's son to rule one tribe so that I will always see one of David's descendants ruling in Jerusalem. I chose that city to be the place where the Israelites would worship me. 37 You are now an official, but I will enable you to become the king of Israel, and you will rule all the territory that you want to rule. 38 But you must obey everything that I command you to do. You must conduct your life as I want you to. You must do things that I consider to be right. You must obey my laws as David did. If you do those things, I will help you. I will make sure that your descendants become kings of Israel after you die, as I have done for David. 39 Because of Solomon's sins, I will punish David's descendants, but I will not continue to punish them forever.'" 40 Solomon *found out what Ahijah told Jeroboam,*

and so he tried to kill Jeroboam. But Jeroboam escaped and went to Egypt. Shishak, the king of Egypt, protected him. Jeroboam stayed there until after Solomon died.

41 The book that records the events of Solomon's reign describes further things that he did and many of the wise things that he said. 42 Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all of Israel for 40 years. 43 Then Solomon died. The Israelites buried him in the part of Jerusalem that people called the City of David. Solomon's son Rehoboam became the next king.

12 Leaders from all the tribes of Israel went to the city of Shechem in order to appoint Rehoboam as their king. So Rehoboam also went there. 2 Jeroboam had fled to Egypt to escape from Solomon, and he had settled there. He learned in Egypt that Solomon had died. 3 The Israelite leaders asked him to come back to Israel*, and he did.* They went together to speak with Rehoboam. They told him, 4 "Your father Solomon forced us to work very hard, but if you allow us to work less hard and allow us to pay fewer taxes, then we will agree to be your subjects." 5 He replied, "Go away for a couple of days *to give me some time to consider that*. Then come back *and I will give you my answer*." So those leaders and Jeroboam left.

6 Then King Rehoboam asked for advice from the older men who had been officials of his father Solomon while he was still living. He asked them, "What do you think I should say in response to what these Israelite leaders have asked me to do?" 7 They replied, "We recommend that on this occasion, you humble yourself and do what they have asked. Speak kindly to them when you reply to them. If you do that, they will always be your loyal subjects." 8 But Rehoboam decided not to do what the older men had advised him to do. Instead, he asked for advice from the younger men who had been his friends since they were boys and who were now his advisors. 9 He asked them, "What do you think we should say in response to these Israelite leaders who have asked me to allow them to work less hard than my father required them to work?" 10 Those young men who were his boyhood friends replied, "This is what you should tell these people who asked you to allow them to work less hard than your father required them to work: 'I am a harsher man than my father was. 11 This is my answer to you. My father required you to work hard. But I am going to make you work even harder. My father had his overseers discipline you Israelite workers harshly. But I am going to have them discipline you even more harshly.'"

12 A couple of days after Jeroboam and the Israelite leaders first met with Rehoboam, they came to speak with him again, just as he had told them to do. 13 The king disregarded the advice that the older men had given him. Instead, he spoke roughly to the Israelite leaders. 14 He told them what the younger men had advised him to say. He said, "My father required you to work hard. But I am going to make you work even harder. My father had his overseers discipline you Israelite workers harshly. But I am going to have them discipline you even more harshly." 15 So the king did not do what the Israelite leaders wanted him to do. That was because Yahweh caused him to refuse their request. In that way, Yahweh made happen what he had told Jeroboam son of Nebat through the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite.

16 When the Israelite leaders realized that Rehoboam was not going to do what they had asked, they responded to him by shouting, "We do not want to be subjects of this descendant of King David! We will not accept this grandson of Jesse as our ruler! We Israelites should all go home! As for this descendant of David, he can rule his own tribe!" So the Israelite leaders returned to their homes.

17 (After that, the only Israelites who accepted Rehoboam as their king were the members of the tribe of Judah.) 18 King Rehoboam had an official whose name was Adoniram. He supervised the men whom Rehoboam forced to work for him. *Before the Israelite leaders left,* King Rehoboam sent out Adoniram *to try to make them obey him*. But the Israelite people killed him by throwing stones at him. When that happened, King Rehoboam got into his chariot as fast as he could and escaped to Jerusalem. 19 Ever since that time, the people of the northern tribes of Israel have refused to be subjects of descendants of King David. 20 When the people of the northern tribes heard that Jeroboam had returned from Egypt, they invited him to come to a gathering of their representatives. There they appointed him to be their king. Only the people of the tribe of Judah continued to be loyal to the kings who were descendants of David.

21 When Rehoboam got back to Jerusalem, he gathered 180,000 of the best soldiers from the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. He wanted them to fight against soldiers of the northern Israelite tribes *and defeat them* so that he could rule all of the Israelite tribes again. 22 But God spoke to the prophet Shemaiah and said to him, 23 "Here is something that I want you to tell Rehoboam son of Solomon, the king of Judah, the army of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the people of those tribes. 24 Tell them that I say that they must not go to fight against their fellow Israelites. They must all go home. Tell them that this has happened because I wanted it to happen." *So Shemaiah went and told that to them, and* they all obeyed what Yahweh had commanded them to do and went home.

25 Then Jeroboam told his workers to rebuild walls around the city of Shechem in the hilly area where the tribe of Ephraim lived. He moved to that city *and made it his capital*. Later he and his workers went from there to the city of Peniel, and they rebuilt the walls around that city *to make it a border fortress*. 26 Then Jeroboam said to himself, "It seems likely that the descendants of David will soon rule all of Israel once again. 27 If my subjects continue to go to Jerusalem and offer sacrifices to Yahweh at the temple there, soon they will want Rehoboam to be their king again. Then they will kill me and agree to become his subjects again." 28 So he asked his advisors what they thought he should do*, and then he did what they suggested*. He told his workers to make two gold statues of calves. Then he told the people whom he ruled, "It would be too difficult for you to keep traveling to Jerusalem to worship. You people of Israel, look! These statues represent the God who rescued our ancestors from slavery in Egypt *and you can worship them here*!" 29 He told his workers to place one of the statues in the city of Bethel *in the south of his kingdom* and one in the city of Dan *in the north*. 30 What Jeroboam did caused the people of his kingdom to sin *because they started worshiping these calves as idols*. They would travel all the way to the city of Dan to worship where one of the calves was. 31 Jeroboam had his workers build shrines for worship on the top of hills. He also appointed Israelite men from many different tribes to be priests, even though the law of Moses said that only men from the tribe of Levi could be priests. 32 Jeroboam also held a celebration like the Festival of Shelters that people celebrated in Judah each year. However, he held it on the

fifteenth day of the eighth month *rather than on that day in the seventh month, as the law of Moses commanded*. He went to Bethel and offered sacrifices to the golden calf statue that he had made and put there. He had the priests whom he had appointed come to Bethel and work in the shrine that his workers had built there. 33 Jeroboam offered sacrifices on the altar *in that shrine* on the fifteenth day of the eighth month. He had chosen that month himself. There on that altar he burned incense as an offering. And he declared that the people should celebrate that festival on that same day every year.

13 Yahweh commanded a prophet to go from where he lived in the kingdom of Judah to the city of Bethel*, and the prophet obeyed him*. He arrived there right at the time when Jeroboam was standing at the altar, ready to burn incense. 2 Saying what Yahweh told him to say, the prophet shouted, "This is what Yahweh says about this altar! 'I want you to know that someday King David will have a descendant whose name will be Josiah. He will come to this altar and slaughter the priests who burn incense *while offering sacrifices* at this shrine. He will burn the bones of dead people on this altar.'" 3 Then the prophet told them how they would know that what he had said was true. He said, "Yahweh has announced that he is going to make something happen so that you will know that what he has said is true. This altar will split apart, and the ashes that are on it will fall onto the ground." 4 When King Jeroboam heard what the prophet said about the altar at Bethel, at which he was standing, he pointed his finger at him and told his servants, "Seize that man!" But immediately his arm stuck in that position, and he could not lower it. 5 Then the altar split apart, and the ashes that were on it spilled out on the ground. That is exactly what the prophet had said that Yahweh had announced would happen. 6 Then the king said to the prophet, "Please pray that Yahweh will be merciful to me and heal my arm!" So the prophet prayed, and Yahweh healed the king's arm so that he could move it again. 7 Then the king said to the prophet, "Come with me to my house and I will serve you a meal. I will also give you a reward for what you have done!" 8 But the prophet replied, "Even if you gave me half of what you owned, I would not go with you, and I would not eat or drink anything here. 9 When Yahweh spoke to me, he commanded me not to eat or drink anything here, so I will not do that. He also commanded me to go home by traveling on a different road than the one I traveled on to come here." 10 Then the prophet started to return home. He walked on a different road than the one on which he had walked to come to Bethel.

11 At that time there was an old man living in Bethel who was a prophet himself. His sons came and told him what the prophet from Judah had done there on that day. They also told him what the prophet had said to the king. 12 Their father asked, "On what road did he leave to return home?" His sons had seen what road the prophet from Judah had started walking on*, so they told him which road it was*. 13 Then he said to his sons, "Get a donkey ready for me to ride." So they did that, and he got onto that donkey. 14 He went along the road to find the prophet from Judah. He found him sitting *to rest* under the large oak tree that was in that area. The old man asked him, "Are you the prophet who came from Judah?" He replied, "Yes, I am." 15 The old man said to him, "Please come home with me so that I can serve you a meal." 16 He replied, "No, I cannot accept your invitation to go with you to your house. I can not eat or drink anything with you here. 17 I must refuse because Yahweh told me, 'Do not eat or drink anything there, and do not return home on the road on which you traveled to Bethel.'" 18 Then the old man said to him, "I also am a prophet, just as you are. Yahweh sent an angel to tell me that I should bring you home with me and serve you a meal." (But the old prophet was lying when he said that.) 19 So the prophet from Judah returned with the old man to his home, and he ate a meal with him there.

20 While they were sitting at the table, Yahweh gave the old prophet a message to speak the prophet from Judah. 21 Then the man shouted to the prophet, "This is what Yahweh says to you. 'You have not done what I commanded you to do, and so you have disobeyed the instructions I gave you! 22 Instead, you have come back to this house and eaten a meal, even though I commanded you not to eat anything there. As a result, you will die, and people will not bury your body in the same place where people buried your ancestors.'" 23 When they had finished eating, the old man had his sons get his donkey ready so that the prophet from Judah could ride on it*, and the prophet left*. 24 But as he was going, a lion met him and killed him. It left the prophet's body lying on the road. The donkey stood beside it, and the lion also stood beside it. 25 When some men who were walking along that road came to that place, they were surprised to see the prophet's body on the road and the lion standing next to it. So they went into the city of Bethel, where the old man lived, and they reported what they had seen.

26 When the old man who had brought the prophet from Judah to his home heard what had happened, he said, "The man whom the lion killed is the prophet who disobeyed the instructions that Yahweh gave him. Yahweh allowed the lion to attack him and kill him. That is exactly what Yahweh said would happen in the message he gave me for him!" 27 Then he told his sons, "Get another donkey ready for me to ride." So they did that. 28 Then the old man rode on that donkey along the road on which the prophet had started to return to Judah. He came to the place where the prophet's body had fallen on the road. He saw his other donkey and the lion standing there next to the man's body. But the lion had not eaten any of the prophet's flesh, and it had not attacked the donkey. 29 The old man picked up the body of the prophet and put it on his donkey. He brought it back to Bethel so that he could mourn for him and bury his body. 30 He buried the prophet's body in the grave where people had buried other members of his family. Then he and other people who lived in the city mourned for him. They said, "We are so sorry that our fellow Israelite has died!" 31 After they had buried him, the old man told his sons, "When I die, I want you to bury me in this grave where we have just buried the prophet from Judah. Put my body next to his. 32 I want you to bury me in this grave because I am confident that the things Yahweh told this man to say about the altar here in Bethel will happen. What he said about the shrines on the tops of hills here in this kingdom will also surely happen."

33 But even after these things happened, King Jeroboam did not stop doing the evil things that he had been doing. Instead, he appointed as priests even more men who were not descendants of Levi. He appointed anyone who wanted to be a priest, and as a result, he had many priests who served at the shrines that he had his workers build on the tops of hills. 34 When Jeroboam did these evil things, he sinned against Yahweh. As a result, Yahweh did not allow his

descendants to become kings of Israel. Instead, he allowed someone to kill all of Jeroboam's living descendants.

14 Shortly after Jeroboam chose to ignore Yahweh's warning about the hilltop shrines, his son Abijah became very sick. 2 Jeroboam told his wife, "I want you to disguise yourself so that no one will recognize that you are my wife. Then go to the city of Shiloh. That is where the prophet Ahijah lives. He is the man who met me and told me that I would become the king of Israel. 3 Take with you ten loaves of bread, some small flat cakes, and a jar of honey. Give them to him *as gifts*. Tell him about our son, and he will tell you whether he will become well again." 4 So that is what his wife did. She went to Shiloh, to Ahijah's house. Ahijah was not able to see, since he was very old and his eyes were no longer healthy. 5 But *before she got there,* Yahweh told Ahijah that Jeroboam's wife was coming to inquire about their son, who was very sick. He told him that when she arrived, she would be pretending to be someone else. Yahweh told Ahijah what he should say to her.

6 So when Ahijah heard her footsteps as she entered the doorway, he said to her, "Come in. I know you are Jeroboam's wife, so do not pretend that you are someone else. Yahweh has told me to tell you some bad news. 7 Go back and tell Jeroboam this message from Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship: 'I chose you from among the common people and enabled you to become the king of *most of* my Israelite people. 8 I stopped David's descendants from ruling most of the people of the kingdom of Israel, and I allowed you to become the king of those Israelites instead. But you have not been like David, who served me very well. He obeyed my commandments very sincerely and wanted to do only things that I considered to be right. 9 But you have done more wicked things than any of the men who were kings of Israel before you. You have rejected me, and you have made me very angry by making metal images of other gods *so that you and others could worship them*. 10 Therefore, I am going to make terrible things happen to your family. I will allow someone to kill all of the males in your household, whether they are family members or servants, no matter where they live in your kingdom. I will completely destroy your family, just as fire completely destroys dung when people burn it. 11 Dogs will eat the bodies of any members of your household who die in cities. Scavenger birds will eat the bodies of any members of your household who die in the countryside.' This will surely happen, since Yahweh has said that it will happen. 12 So go back home. As soon as you return to the city where you live, your son will die. 13 People throughout Israel will mourn for him, and you will be able to bury him. He is the only one in Jeroboam's family who will receive a proper burial, because he is the only person in Jeroboam's family whose actions have pleased Yahweh. 14 Yahweh will enable a different man to become the king of Israel. That man will kill all of Jeroboam's family. This will happen very soon. In fact, Yahweh has already begun to make it happen. 15 Yahweh will punish the people of Israel. He will unsettle them, just as the strong, flowing water of a river unsettles the reeds that grow on its banks. He will finally expel the Israelite people from this good land that he gave to our ancestors. The Israelites have worshiped statues of the goddess Asherah, and by doing that, they have made Yahweh very angry. As a result, he will allow enemies to take them as captives into lands on the far side of the Euphrates River. 16 Yahweh will abandon the Israelite people because Jeroboam committed these sins of idolatry and led the Israelite people to commit them as well."

17 Then Jeroboam's wife got up and left, and she traveled back home to the city of Tirzah. Just as she was walking through the door of her house, her son died. 18 People throughout Israel mourned for him, and his family was able to bury him. That is just what Yahweh had told the prophet Ahijah, his servant, to say would happen.

19 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Jeroboam did, including the wars that his army fought and how he ruled. 20 Jeroboam ruled for 22 years. Then he died, and his son Nadab became the next king.

21 Meanwhile, Solomon's son Rehoboam was ruling Judah. He had been 41 years old when he started to rule, and he ruled for 17 years. He ruled in Jerusalem, the city that Yahweh chose to be the place where the Israelites would worship him. Rehoboam's mother's name was Naamah the Ammonitess. 22 The people of the kingdom of Judah did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. They committed more sins than their ancestors had committed. This made Yahweh very angry, because they were worshiping idols, and they should have been worshiping only him. 23 Just as the northern Israelites had done, the Judeans built places to worship foreign gods. On high hills and under big trees, they built shrines and set up stone pillars and made wooden images to represent the goddess Asherah. 24 There were also male shrine prostitutes at these places of worship. The Israelite people did the same disgraceful things that the people had done whom Yahweh had forced to leave so that the Israelites could possess the land.

25 When Rehoboam had been ruling for almost five years, King Shishak of Egypt came with his soldiers to attack Jerusalem. 26 *They defeated the Judeans, and then* his soldiers took away the valuable things they found in Yahweh's temple and in the royal palace. They also took many other valuable things they found. Because they took the gold shields that Solomon's workers had made, 27 King Rehoboam had his workers make bronze shields to replace them. He had the officers of the soldiers who guarded the entrance to his palace take care of these shields. 28 Whenever the king was going to come into the temple, those guards got those shields and held them, and *after he left the temple,* they returned the shields to their storeroom.

29 The book in which the kings of Judah recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Rehoboam did. 30 The armies of Rehoboam and Jeroboam were continually at war with one another. 31 Then Rehoboam died, and people buried him in the part of Jerusalem that people call the City of David. That is where people had buried his ancestors. Rehoboam's mother Naamah was an Ammonitess*, and that is why he became devoted to idol worship*. After Rehoboam died, his son Abijam became the next king.

15 Abijah became the king of Judah when Jeroboam had been the king of Israel for almost 18 years. 2 Abijah ruled for three years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Maacah daughter of Abishalom. 3 Abijah committed the same kind of sins that his father had committed. He was not completely faithful to Yahweh his God as his ancestor David had been. 4 But Yahweh had promised to David that one of his descendants would always be king in Jerusalem. So Yahweh allowed Abijah's son to become king after he died. Yahweh also did not allow any enemies to conquer

Jerusalem. 5 Yahweh did that because David had done the
things that he had told the Israelites were good to do. When
Yahweh had told David to do something, David had always
obeyed. The only time when David disobeyed Yahweh was
when he *had sexual relations with the wife of* Uriah the Hittite
and *tried to hide what he had done by* causing him to die in
battle. 6 The kingdoms of Judah and Israel had been enemies
when Rehoboam and Jeroboam were their kings, and they
continued to be enemies all during the time that Abijah
ruled.

7 The book in which the kings of Judah recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Abijam did, including the war that he fought against King
Jeroboam of Israel. 8 Abijah died, and the Israelites buried
him in the part of Jerusalem that people call the City of
David. His son Asa became the next king.

9 Asa started to rule Judah after Jeroboam had been the
king of Israel for almost 20 years. 10 He ruled in Jerusalem
for 41 years. His grandmother was Maacah daughter of
Abishalom. 11 Asa did the things that Yahweh had told the
Israelites were good to do, as his ancestor David had done.
12 He forced the male shrine prostitutes to leave Israel, and
he also destroyed all of the idols that his ancestors had
made. 13 His grandmother Maacah had been in the *influential*
position of queen mother, but he removed her from that
position. He did that because she had made a disgusting
wooden statue for the goddess Asherah. Asa had his servants
cut down the statue and burn it in the Kidron Valley. 14 He
did not order his servants to destroy the shrines for worship
on the top of hills. Even so, he was completely faithful to
Yahweh for the whole time that he lived. 15 He told his
servants to put in Yahweh's temple the valuable things that
his father had dedicated. He also told them to put there the
things that he had dedicated. These included gold, silver,
and other valuable articles.

16 Asa fought wars against Baasha king of Israel during the
whole time that he reigned. 17 Baasha's army invaded Judah.
They captured the city of Ramah *just north of Jerusalem*. Then
they started to build a wall around it *so that it would be a*
border fortress and they would be able to prevent people from
entering or leaving Asa's kingdom of Judah. 18 So Asa had
his officials collect all of the silver and golden articles that
were still in the storerooms in the temple and his palace.
He told them to bring those things to Damascus and give
them to Ben Hadad, the king who ruled Aram from that city.
Ben Hadad was the son of Tabrimmon and the grandson
of Hezion. Asa told his officials to tell Ben Hadad, 19 "My
father had an alliance with your father, and I would like
to have an alliance with you. *To make that alliance*, I am
giving you this silver and gold. So please break the alliance
you have with Baasha, the king of Israel*, and attack him*.
That way he will stop invading my kingdom *because he*
will have to send his army to fight your army." 20 When the
officials spoke that message to Ben Hadad, he agreed to do
what Asa wanted. He ordered his commanders to lead their
soldiers to attack some areas in the kingdom of Israel. They
attacked the cities of Ijon, Dan, and Abel Beth Maacah, the
region of Chinnereth, and the whole territory of the tribe of
Naphtali. 21 When Baasha learned that Ben Hadad's armies
were attacking Israel, he ordered his soldiers to stop building
the wall around Ramah. He and his soldiers returned to *his*
capital city of Tirzah and stayed there. 22 Then King Asa sent
messengers to tell the men throughout his kingdom of Judah
that he was requiring them all to go to Ramah. They were
to carry away the stones and timber that Baasha's soldiers
had been using to build a wall around that city. With those
stones and timber, King Asa had his workers fortify the city
of Mizpah and the city that people call Geba that is within
the territory of the tribe of Benjamin.

23 The book in which the kings of Judah recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Asa did during his reign, including the battles that his armies
won and the cities that he had his workers fortify. (When
Asa became old, he got a foot disease.) 24 Asa died, and the
Israelites buried him in the part of Jerusalem that people
call the City of David. That is where people had also buried
his ancestors. Asa's son Jehoshaphat became the next king.

25 Nadab son of Jeroboam started to rule Israel after Asa
had been the king of Judah for almost two years. Nadab ruled
Israel for two years. 26 He did many things that Yahweh had
told the Israelites were evil. He behaved in the sinful way
his father had behaved. He continued to lead the Israelites
to sin *by worshiping the calf statues at the shrines in Bethel and*
Dan. 27 King Nadab and his soldiers were attacking the city
of Gibbethon in the region of Philistia. *One of his military*
commanders, Baasha son of Ahijah from the tribe of Issachar,
plotted against him *with some of the other commanders*. Baasha
killed Nadab at Gibbethon. 28 When Baasha killed Nadab, Asa
had been the king of Judah for almost three years. Baasha
became the next king of Israel. 29 As soon as he became
king, Baasha commanded his soldiers to kill all the rest of
Jeroboam's living descendants. He made sure that none of
them survived. That is exactly what Yahweh had said would
happen in the message that he gave to Ahijah the Shilonite,
his servant. 30 Yahweh, the God whom the Israelites worship,
spoke that message because he had become very angry with
Jeroboam. Jeroboam made him angry by committing many
sins and leading the people of Israel to commit sins.

31 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Nadab did. 32 The armies of Asa and Baasha were continually
at war with one another.

33 Baasha son of Ahijah, started to rule Israel from the city
of Tirzah after Asa had been the king of Judah for almost
three years. He ruled for 24 years. 34 Baasha did many things
that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. He behaved
the way King Jeroboam had behaved. He continued to lead
the Israelites to sin *by worshiping the calf statues at the shrines*
in Bethel and Dan.

16 Then Yahweh told Jehu son of Hanani to speak a
message to Baasha. He told him to say, 2 "You were
an insignificant person, but I allowed you to become the
king of Israel. Despite that, you have done the same evil
things that King Jeroboam did. You have led the people of
Israel to commit sins, and that has made me very angry. 3 So
now I am going to destroy you and your family completely.
That is what I did to Jeroboam and his family, and I am
going to do the same thing to your family. 4 Dogs will eat
the bodies of any members of your household who die in
cities. Scavenger birds will eat the bodies of any members
of your household who die in the countryside."

5 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Baasha did, including the battles that his armies won and
other things that he did. 6 When Baasha died, the Israelites
buried him in Tirzah, *his capital city*. His son Elah became
the next king. 7 Baasha did many things that Yahweh had

told the Israelites were evil. The things he did made Yahweh very angry. Baasha did the same kind of things that King Jeroboam and his descendants who ruled as kings after him had done. Yahweh was also angry with Baasha because he killed all of Jeroboam's family. That was why Yahweh gave a message to the prophet Jehu son of Hanani *saying that he would destroy Baasha and his family*.

8 Elah son of Baasha became the king of Israel after Asa had been the king of Judah for almost 26 years. Elah ruled in Tirzah until the next year. 9 One day Elah was in Tirzah, drinking wine in the home of Arza, the official who was responsible for the royal palace there. Elah had a military officer whose name was Zimri. Zimri commanded the drivers of half of Elah's chariots. Zimri plotted *with some of the other officers* to kill him. Elah had already become drunk. 10 Zimri went into Arza's house and stabbed Elah so that he died. Then Zimri became the next king of Israel. This happened when Asa had been the king of Judah for 27 years. 11 Once Zimri became king, as soon as he could, he commanded his soldiers to kill Baasha's whole remaining family. He killed every male in Baasha's family and all of Baasha's male friends. 12 In that way Zimri destroyed Baasha's whole remaining family. That is exactly what Yahweh had said would happen in the message that he gave to the prophet Jehu about what would happen to Baasha. 13 That message was about how Baasha and his son Elah had sinned and led the Israelite people to sin. They both encouraged the people to worship worthless idols. This made Yahweh, the God whom the Israelites worship, very angry. 14 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Elah did.

15 In that way, Zimri became the next king of Israel. This happened after Asa had been the king of Judah for 27 years. But Zimri ruled in Tirzah for only seven days. At that time, the Israelite army was attacking the city of Gibbethon in the region of Philistia. 16 The soldiers in the Israelite army camp heard that Zimri had plotted against Elah and killed him. Right away, there in the camp, they appointed Omri, the commander of their army, to be the king of Israel *instead of Zimri*. 17 Then Omri led the entire Israelite army from Gibbethon to Tirzah, and they attacked that city. 18 When Zimri realized that Omri's soldiers had captured the city, he went into his palace and set it on fire. The palace burned down, and he died in the fire. 19 Zimri died that way because he had sinned by doing many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. Jeroboam had sinned and led the Israelite people to sin, and Zimri did the same kind of things. 20 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Zimri did, including how he plotted to kill King Elah.

21 After Zimri died, the Israelite soldiers disagreed about who should be the next king. Many of them wanted Tibni son of Ginath to be the king. But many others wanted Omri to be the king. 22 *The two groups of soldiers fought each other for four years, and finally* the soldiers who supported Omri defeated the ones who supported Tibni. They killed Tibni, and Omri became king. 23 Omri became king when Asa had been the king of Judah for almost 31 years. Omri ruled Israel for 12 years. For the first 6 years he ruled in Tirzah. 24 Then Omni bought the hill that people now call Samaria from a man whose name was Shemer. He paid him about 66 kilograms of silver for it. Then Omri had his workers build a city on that hill. He called the city Samaria because Shemer was the name of the man who had owned the hill previously. 25 Omri did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. He did more evil deeds than any of the kings had done who had ruled Israel before him. 26 Jeroboam had sinned and led the Israelite people to sin, and Omri did the same kind of things. They both encouraged the people to worship worthless idols. This made Yahweh, the God whom the Israelites worship, very angry. 27 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Omri did, including the victories that his armies won. 28 Then Omri died, and the Israelites buried him in Samaria. His son Ahab became the next king.

29 Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel when Asa had ruled Judah for almost 38 years. Ahab ruled Israel from the city of Samaria for 22 years. 30 Ahab did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. He did more evil deeds than any of the kings had done who had ruled Israel before him. 31 It would have been bad enough if Ahab had only committed the same kind of sins that Jeroboam did. But he did things that were even worse. He married a woman whose name was Jezebel. She was the daughter of Ethbaal, the king of the city of Sidon. *Because Jezebel worshiped the false god Baal,* Ahab started to worship Baal himself, and he even bowed down to Baal *to honor him as his lord*. 32 He built a temple in Samaria where people could worship Baal, and he put an altar in that temple for making sacrifices to Baal. 33 Ahab also made an idol that represented the goddess Asherah. He did more things to make Yahweh angry than any of the previous kings of Israel had done. 34 During the years when Ahab ruled, a man whose name was Hiel, who came from the city of Bethel, rebuilt the city of Jericho. When Hiel *and his family and servants* started restoring the foundations of the city, his oldest son Abiram died. And they had nearly finished the rebuilding and were putting the doors in the gates of the city, his youngest son Segub died. Joshua son of Nun had said this would happen to the sons of anyone who rebuilt Jericho. Yahweh had led Joshua to say that, and that is exactly what happened.

17 There was a man whose name was Elijah. He came from the city of Tishbe. He was one of the Tishbites who lived in the region of Gilead. One day he went *to Samaria* to speak with King Ahab. He told him, "Yahweh is the God whom we Israelites should worship, and he is the God whom I obey. I swear by Yahweh there will be no dew or rain for the next several years unless I say so." 2 Then Yahweh told Elijah, 3 "*The king is angry with you, so* leave this city of Samaria. Travel east and hide at the Cherith Brook, near the Jordan River. 4 When you get there, you can drink water from the brook. And I will have ravens bring food to you there." 5 So Elijah did what Yahweh commanded him to do. He went and stayed next to the Cherith Brook, near the Jordan River. 6 Every morning and every evening, the ravens brought Elijah bread and meat to eat. He drank water from the brook. 7 But after a while, because it had stopped raining anywhere in Israel, the brook dried up.

8 Then Yahweh told Elijah, 9 "Go and live in the town of Zarephath, which is near the city of Sidon. I have arranged for a widow there to give you food to eat." 10 So Elijah did what God had told him to do. He went to Zarephath. As he arrived at the gates of the town, he saw a widow there who was gathering sticks. He said to her, "Would you please bring me a cup of water to drink?" 11 As she was going to get it, he called out to her, "Would you please also bring me something to eat?" 12 But she replied, "I swear by Yahweh

your God that I do not have even a single loaf of bread in
my house. I have only a handful of flour in a jar and a little
olive oil in a jug. I was going to gather a few sticks and then
go home and make a fire so that I could cook a meal with
them. My son and I would eat that meal, and after that, we
would die *from hunger*." 13 But Elijah said to her, "Do not be
afraid *that you will die*. Go home and do what you said you
were going to do. But first, bake me a little loaf of bread
from your flour and oil and bring it to me. After that, use
what is left to prepare some food for yourself and for your
son. 14 You will be able to do that because Yahweh, the God
whom we Israelites worship, has told me, 'There will be flour
in that jar and olive oil in that jug right up to the time when
I make it rain on the earth *and crops grow again*!'" 15 So the
woman did exactly what Elijah told her to do. And she and
her son and Elijah had enough food every day from then on,
16 because there was always flour in that jar and olive oil
in that jug. That was what Yahweh had told Elijah would
happen, and that is exactly what happened.

17 Some time later, the son of the woman in whose home
Elijah was staying became sick. He kept getting sicker, and
finally he died. 18 So the woman went to Elijah and said to
him, "I have treated you kindly as a prophet, so you had
no reason to let this happen to me. It seems that you came
here to make Yahweh more aware of my sins and that he
has punished me by causing my son to die!" 19 But Elijah
replied, "Give your son to me." She was holding the boy's
body, but he took his body from her and carried it up to
the room where he was staying. He laid the boy's body
on his bed. 20 Then Elijah cried out to Yahweh, "Yahweh
my God, this widow has kindly allowed me to stay in her
home. It does not seem right that you have caused her this
tragedy and allowed her son to die!" 21 Then Elijah stretched
himself on top of the boy's body three times. He cried out to
Yahweh, "Yahweh my God, please cause this boy to become
alive again!" 22 Yahweh did what Elijah asked him to do. He
caused the boy to become alive again. 23 Then Elijah carried
the boy down from his room back into the house. He handed
him to his mother and said, "Look, your son is alive!" 24 The
woman told Elijah, "Now I know for certain that you are a
prophet and that when you say a message is from Yahweh,
it truly is!"

18 For a long time, almost three years, it did not rain in
Israel. Then Yahweh told Elijah: "Go and meet with
King Ahab so that I may make it rain again." 2 So Elijah went
to meet with Ahab. By this time, there was almost no food in
Samaria for anyone to eat. 3 *As Elijah was approaching,* Ahab
summoned one of his officials. His name was Obadiah. He
was in charge of the royal palace. (Obadiah greatly revered
Yahweh. 4 Queen Jezebel had tried to kill all of Yahweh's
prophets, but Obadiah had hidden 100 of them in two caves.
He had put 50 prophets in each cave, and he had brought
food and water to them.) 5 Ahab told Obadiah, "I want you
to go throughout the country and check every spring and
every stream bed to see whether we can find enough grass to
feed the horses and mules so that they will not all die. If we
can find grass, we will also not have to slaughter all of the
cattle." 6 They agreed to look separately in different parts of
the country. Ahab went in one direction, and Obadiah went
in another direction.

7 As Obadiah was walking along, he saw Elijah coming
toward him. Obadiah recognized Elijah, and he bowed down
respectfully to him. Then he said, "Is it really you, Elijah,
my master?" 8 Elijah replied, "Yes, it is. Now go and tell
your master Ahab that I am here." 9 Obadiah responded,
"I have done nothing wrong to deserve the punishment I
would get *if I told Ahab that*! *Because of what would happen
next,* he would order his soldiers to kill me! 10 I swear by
Yahweh your God that King Ahab sent messengers to the
rulers of every kingdom and people group around us to find
out whether you were living with them. Every ruler told
him, 'Elijah is not here.' Ahab then demanded that the ruler
solemnly swear that he was telling the truth*, and each one
did*. 11 But now you are telling me, 'Go tell your master that
Elijah is here!' 12 I believe that when I leave you, the Spirit
of Yahweh will take you away somewhere, and I will not
know where he has taken you. So when I tell Ahab that you
are here, and he comes here and discovers that you are not
here, he will kill me! But *I do not deserve to die, because* I
have revered Yahweh ever since I was a boy. 13 Sir, you must
have heard about what I did when Jezebel wanted to kill
all of Yahweh's prophets. I hid 100 of them in two caves. I
put 50 prophets in each cave and brought food and water to
them. 14 But even so, you are telling me, 'Go and tell your
master that Elijah is here.' *If I do that and he comes and finds
that you are not here,* he will kill me!" 15 But Elijah replied, "I
swear by Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies,
the God whom I serve, that I stay right here where Ahab can
find me today."

16 So Obadiah went and told Ahab that Elijah had returned.
Ahab came to meet Elijah. 17 When he saw Elijah, he said
to him, "Is it really you, *Elijah,* who have caused so much
trouble for the people of Israel?" 18 Elijah replied, "I am not
the one who has caused trouble for the people of Israel!
You and your family are the ones who have done that! You
have refused to obey Yahweh's commands, and you have
worshiped idols representing Baal instead. 19 So I want you
to command leaders from throughout Israel to meet me at
Mount Carmel. I want you to tell the 450 prophets of Baal
and the 400 prophets of Asherah to go there also. Your wife
Jezebel supports those prophets."

20 So Ahab sent messengers to command leaders from
throughout Israel to go to Mount Carmel. He brought all of
the prophets of Baal and Asherah there*, and Elijah went there
too*. 21 Then Elijah stood in front of them and said, "You
must not remain undecided any longer about who is truly
God! If Yahweh is God, then you should worship him. If Baal
is God, then you should worship him!" But the people said
nothing in reply. 22 Then Elijah told them, "I am the only
prophet of Yahweh who is still alive here in Israel, but there
are 450 prophets of Baal. 23 Now bring two bulls here. The
prophets of Baal may choose the one that they want. They
may kill it and cut it into pieces, and they may *build an altar
and put wood on it and* lay the pieces on the wood. But they
must not set the wood on fire. I will kill the other bull and
cut it in pieces and lay the pieces on wood *that I will put on
an altar that I will make*. But I will not set the wood on fire."
24 Then Elijah said to the prophets of Baal, "You must pray
specifically to Baal as your god, and I will pray specifically to
Yahweh." Then Elijah said to the Israelite leaders, "The God
who answers by sending fire *to kindle the wood and burn up
the sacrifice that is on his altar* is the true God!" The Israelite
leaders agreed to what Elijah proposed.

25 Then Elijah told the prophets of Baal, "You may go
first, since there are so many of you. Choose one of the bulls
and cut it into pieces. *Make an altar and put wood on it and
put the pieces on the wood,* but do not light a fire. Then pray

specifically to Baal as your god *and ask him to set the wood on fire*." [26] So they chose one of the bulls and cut it into pieces. *They built an altar and put wood on it,* and they placed the pieces on the altar. Then they prayed to Baal specifically as their god all through that morning. They shouted, "Baal, answer us!" Then they danced wildly around the altar that they had made. But no one spoke to them from the sky or did anything in response to their prayer. [27] About noontime, Elijah started to make fun of them. He said, "You believe that Baal is a god, so shout more loudly *to get his attention*! Perhaps *he has not answered you because* he is thinking about something else or because he is relieving himself or because he is not home right now. Maybe he is sleeping but will wake up *if you shout loudly enough*." [28] So they shouted even more loudly. They slashed themselves with swords and spears, as they typically did when they worshiped Baal, until blood covered their bodies. [29] They kept calling out to Baal until the middle of the afternoon, when it would soon be the time when it was customary to make a grain offering. But no one spoke to them from the sky or did anything in response to their prayer or paid any attention to it.

[30] Then Elijah called to the people saying, "Come over here!" So they all crowded around him. There had been an altar to Yahweh there, but people who worshiped Baal had broken it apart. Elijah repaired it. [31] To do that, he took 12 large stones, one to represent each of the tribes whose ancestors were the sons of Jacob. Yahweh had told Jacob, "Your name will now be Israel." [32] With these stones, Elijah rebuilt Yahweh's altar. Then he dug a ditch around the altar that was large enough to hold about 15 liters of grain. [33] Elijah stacked some wood on top of the stones. He *killed the bull and* cut it into pieces. Then he laid the pieces on top of the wood. [34] Then Elijah told the people there, "Fill four large jars with water, and pour the water on top of the pieces of the bull and the wood." *So they did that.* Then he told them, "Do the same thing again!" So they did it again. Then he told them, "Do it yet again!" So they did it yet again. [35] The people poured so much water on the altar that it flowed all around the altar and filled the ditch at the bottom of it. [36] It was now *late afternoon,* the time when it was customary to make a grain offering. Elijah walked up to the altar. He prayed, "Yahweh, you are the God whom our ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Israel worshiped. Prove today that you are the God whom the Israelite people should worship. Also prove that I am your servant and that I have done all these things because you told me to do them. [37] Yahweh, please give the sign that I have described and send down fire! Do that so that these people will know that you, Yahweh, are the only true God and that you are working to make them want to worship you again!" [38] Immediately Yahweh sent down fire from the sky. The fire burned up the pieces of meat, the wood, the stones, and the dirt that was around the altar. It even dried up all the water in the ditch! [39] When the people saw that, they bowed down respectfully. People throughout the crowd shouted, "Yahweh is the true God!" [40] Then Elijah commanded the people, "Seize all the prophets of Baal! Do not allow any of them to escape!" So the people seized all the prophets of Baal. They brought them down the mountain to the Kishon valley, and Elijah had the people execute them all there.

[41] Then Elijah told Ahab, "Go back up *onto Mount Carmel where your servants have provisions for you* and get something to eat and drink. *But do it quickly,* because *as a prophet,* I can hear the sound of a heavy downpour*, so I know that it will soon rain very hard*!" [42] So Ahab went back up *onto Mount Carmel* and had something to eat and drink. Elijah himself went up to the top of Mount Carmel. He bowed down reverently with his face almost to the ground *and prayed that Yahweh would make it rain*. [43] Then Elijah told his servant, "Please climb up to a place where you can look out at the sea *and see if any rain clouds are forming*." So his servant went and looked. He *came back and* told Elijah, "There are no clouds forming in the sky above the sea." Elijah kept sending him back to look, for a total of seven times. [44] When the servant went the seventh time, he came back and told Elijah, "I saw a cloud forming above the sea. It was very small, like a person's hand." Then Elijah told him, "Go and tell King Ahab to have his servants get his chariot ready so he can go home right away. If he does not do that, the rain will stop him!" [45] Very soon a strong wind drove in so many black clouds that they made the sky dark. It began to rain very hard. Ahab was rushing in his chariot back to *his palace in* the city of Jezreel. [46] Yahweh gave extra strength to Elijah. He tucked his cloak into his belt so that he could run, and he ran ahead of Ahab's chariot all the way to Jezreel.

19 When Ahab got home, he told his wife Jezebel everything that Elijah had done on Mount Carmel. He told her specifically that Elijah had commanded the people to execute all the prophets of Baal. [2] Then Jezebel sent a messenger to tell Elijah on her behalf, "I am going to have someone kill you by this time tomorrow, just as you killed all those prophets of Baal! If I do not do that, I hope the gods will kill me and do other terrible things to me." [3] When Elijah received her message, he realized he could not stay safely within the kingdom of Israel. So *he took his servant with him* and fled *far to the south* to Beersheba in the kingdom of Judah. He left his servant there. [4] Then he walked for a whole day into the desolate area *south of Beersheba*. He came to a juniper tree and sat down *in its shade*. Then he prayed that Yahweh would allow him to die. He said, "Yahweh, I cannot endure anymore. So please allow me to die, just as my ancestors died." [5] Then Elijah lay down under that juniper tree and fell asleep. While he was sleeping, an angel tapped him *and woke him up* and said to him, "*You need to* get up and eat some food." [6] Elijah looked around and saw some bread nearby that someone had baked on hot stones. He also saw a jar of water. So he ate the bread and drank some water, then he lay down to sleep again. [7] Then the angel representing Yahweh came back and tapped him again *to wake him up*. The angel said, "You need more strength to go on a long journey, so get up and eat some more food." [8] So Elijah got up and ate more food and drank more water. That made him strong enough to travel for 40 days and nights all the way to Mount Horeb, where God had appeared to the Israelites.

[9] He went into a cave there and slept in it. During that night, Yahweh spoke to him and asked, "Elijah, why are you here?" [10] Elijah replied, "Yahweh, commander of the heavenly armies, I have desperately wanted the Israelites to worship only you. But they have rejected the agreement that they made with you. They have torn down your altars, and they have killed your prophets. I am the only prophet whom they have not killed yet, and they are trying to kill me, too." [11] Yahweh told him, "Go out and stand on this mountain where I can meet with you. I will be coming very soon!" As Yahweh approached, a strong windstorm struck the mountain, and it loosened rocks *so that they fell down the*

mountainside. But Yahweh was not in the wind. Then there was an earthquake, but Yahweh was not in the earthquake.
12 Then there was a fire, but Yahweh was not in the fire. Then Elijah heard what sounded like someone whispering quietly.
13 When Elijah heard that, he covered his face with his cloak. Then he went and stood at the entrance of the cave. *Yahweh,* the person who had been whispering, asked him, "Elijah, why are you here?" 14 He replied again, "Yahweh, commander of the heavenly armies, I have desperately wanted the Israelites to worship only you. But they have rejected the agreement that they made with you. They have torn down your altars, and they have killed your prophets. I am the only prophet whom they have not killed yet, and they are trying to kill me, too."

15 Then Yahweh told him, "Go back the way you came to the wilderness near Damascus. When you arrive there, pour olive oil on the head of *the royal official* Hazael to appoint him to be the next king of Aram. 16 I also want you to pour olive oil on the head of Jehu son of Nimshi to appoint him as the next king of Israel. And I want you to pour olive oil on the head of Elisha son of Shaphat from city of Abel Meholah to appoint him as a prophet who will succeed you.
17 Hazael's soldiers will kill many people. Some people will escape from them, but Jehu's soldiers will kill many of those. Some people will even escape from them, but Elisha will kill them. 18 But no one will kill the 7,000 people in Israel who have never bowed down to worship Baal or reverently kissed his idol."

19 So Elijah went *to Abel Meholah* and found Elisha. He was plowing a field with a pair of oxen. He was also supervising the work of eleven other men who were plowing with pairs of oxen in the same field. Elijah went over to Elisha. He took off his own coat and put it on Elisha *to show that he wanted Elisha to take his place as a prophet, and then he started to walk away*. 20 Elisha left the oxen standing there and ran after Elijah. He told him, "I will go with you, but I would like to say goodbye to my parents first." Elijah replied, "Very well, go home and say goodbye to them. I have not asked you to leave without doing that." 21 So Elisha left Elijah and went back home. He killed his oxen and cut them in pieces and used the wood from the plow to build a fire to boil the meat. He distributed the meat to his family and friends, and they had a farewell feast. Then he left and went with Elijah and became his helper.

20 Later, King Ben Hadad of Aram attacked the city of Samaria. He marched there with all of his soldiers and horses and chariots. Thirty-two kings who were subject to him brought their own soldiers. They all surrounded Samaria and began fighting to conquer it. 2 Ben Hadad sent messengers into the city *to speak on his behalf* to King Ahab.
3 The messengers told Ahab, "King Ben Hadad says, 'You must give to me your silver and gold, as well as your most beautiful wives and finest children.'" 4 King Ahab responded to Ben Hadad, "I agree to do what you have demanded. I will give you anything you want, and I will become your subject." 5 The messengers *told that to Ben Hadad, and* he sent them back with another message: "I sent you a message before saying that you had to give me your silver and gold and wives and children. 6 In addition to that, about this time tomorrow, I will send some of my officials to search your palace and the houses of your officials. You must allow them to claim anything valuable of yours and bring it to me."

7 Then King Ahab summoned all the leaders of Israel. He told them, "It should be obvious that this man wants to destroy us. He sent me a message insisting that I must give him my wives and children and silver and gold, and I agreed to do that*, but now he is making further unreasonable demands*." 8 The leaders said to him, "You must not agree to his demands." The people who were in Samaria supported what the leaders said. 9 So Ahab told Ben Hadad's messengers, "Tell the king that I still agree to give him the things that he first requested. But I do not agree to what he is now demanding further." The messengers went back to King Ben Hadad and told him that. 10 Then Ben Hadad sent messengers back to Ahab. They told him on his behalf, "We will destroy your city completely. There will not be enough debris left for each of my soldiers to have a handful of it! If we do not do that, I ask the gods to destroy me completely and do other terrible things to me!" 11 King Ahab replied to the messengers, "Tell King Ben Hadad that someone who is putting on his armor *in order to fight a battle* should not boast like someone who is taking off his armor *because he has won a battle*." 12 Ben Hadad was drinking wine with his subject kings in their headquarters when the messengers returned and told him what Ahab had said. He immediately ordered his soldiers to organize an attack against the city, and they marched out to attack it.

13 At that moment, a prophet came to King Ahab and said to him, "Here is a message from Yahweh for you. He says, 'Do not be at all afraid of the large enemy army that you see! I will enable your army to defeat them today, and you will recognize that I, Yahweh, am the only true God.'"
14 Ahab asked, "Which of our soldiers will defeat them?" The prophet replied, "Yahweh says that the servants whom the district governors brought with them when they came here will defeat them." The king asked, "Should I wait for the Arameans to attack us, or should I send those men out to attack them first?" The prophet replied, "Send those men out." 15 So Ahab gathered the servants whom the district governors had brought with them. There were 232 of those young men. Then Ahab counted how many Israelite soldiers were in the city of Samaria. There were only 7,000 of them.

16 Those young mean started to attack at noon, while Ben Hadad and his 32 subject kings were drinking wine in their headquarters. They had already become drunk. 17 When those young soldiers began their attack, Ben Hadad *realized something was happening* and sent some soldiers to find out what it was. They returned and reported to him, "Some soldiers are approaching us from Samaria!" 18 He said, "If they are coming out to negotiate a surrender, take them prisoner. If they are coming out to fight with us, capture them alive." 19 Those young Israelite soldiers came out of the city *to attack the Aramean army*, and the other soldiers in the Israelite army came out of the city after them. 20 Each of them killed the Aramean soldier who came to fight with him. *When* the rest of the Aramean army *saw that, they* ran away, and the rest of the Israelite army pursued them. King Ben Hadad had to escape by getting on a horse and fleeing with his soldiers who rode horses. 21 Then King Ahab came out of the city *to lead the Israelite army*. He and his soldiers destroyed the enemy horses and chariots, and they won a great victory over the Arameans.

22 Then that same prophet went to King Ahab and told him, "The king of Aram is going to attack you with his army again in the springtime of next year. So you must increase the size of your army and make careful preparations." 23 *After*

the Israelites defeated the Aramean army, Ben Hadad's officials told him, "The gods that the Israelites worship are gods who live in the hills*, and Samaria is built on a hill*. That is why their soldiers were able to defeat us when we fought them there. But if we fight against them in the plains, we will certainly defeat them *because their gods will not be able to help them there*. 24 Here is something further that you should do. You should remove the 32 kings who have been commanding their own soldiers and replace them with trained military officers. 25 Then gather an army as large as the one that the Israelites defeated. Make sure that it has as many horses and chariots as the first army had. Then we will fight the Israelites in the plains, and we will certainly defeat them." Ben Hadad decided that they were right, so he did what they suggested.

26 In the spring of the following year, Ben Hadad gathered his soldiers and marched with them to the city of Aphek to fight against the Israelite army. 27 Then Ahab assembled the Israelite army and gave it food and equipment. The Israelite soldiers marched out to fight the Aramean soldiers, and they set up their tents opposite them. Compared with the great size of the Aramean army, which spread all over the countryside, the Israelite camp seemed like two small flocks of goats. 28 A prophet came to King Ahab and told him, "Here is a message from Yahweh for you. He says, 'The Arameans are saying that I am a god who lives in the hills, and so I will not be able to help you if they fight you in a valley. I am going to prove that they are wrong by enabling your soldiers to defeat their huge army here in this valley. Then you will recognize that I, Yahweh, am the only true God.'" 29 The two armies remained in their camps opposite each other for seven days. Then, on the seventh day, they started fighting. The Israelite army defeated the Arameans, and that day they killed 100,000 of their soldiers. 30 The other Aramean soldiers ran away into the city of Aphek. But the wall of the city collapsed and killed 27,000 more of them. Ben Hadad also escaped into the city and hid in the back room of a house.

31 His officials came to him and said, "We have heard that the kings of Israel act mercifully. So allow us to go to King Ahab *and plead for mercy*. We will wrap rough cloth around our waists *to show humility* and ropes on our heads *to indicate that we will be his slaves*. If we do that, perhaps he will not kill you." 32 *The king permitted them to do that, so* they wrapped rough cloth around their waists and put ropes on their heads and went to speak with King Ahab. They said to him, "Your subject Ben Hadad begs you not to kill him." Ahab replied, "Is he still alive? He *does not need to be my subject,* he is my brother*, another king like me*." 33 Ben Hadad's officials were listening carefully to Ahab, and when he said "brother," they quickly repeated that word. They said, "Yes, your brother*, your fellow king* Ben Hadad." Ahab said, "Go and bring him to me." *So they went and got him, and when* Ben Hadad arrived, Ahab invited him to sit in his chariot with him. 34 Ben Hadad told Ahab, "I will give back to you the Israelite cities that my father's army captured when your father was king. And I will allow you to set up market areas for your merchants in Damascus, just as my father set up market areas for his merchants in Samaria." Ahab replied, "If you make a treaty to do those things, I will allow you to go home." So Ben Hadad made a treaty with Ahab, and Ahab allowed him to go home.

35 There was a man who was part of a group of young prophets in training. He told another young prophet in the group, "Yahweh has told me to have someone hit me hard*and injure me*. So please do that." But that man refused to hit him. 36 So the first prophet said to him, "Because you refused to do what Yahweh told you to do, as soon as you leave me, a lion will kill you." And as soon as that man left, a lion suddenly came and killed him. 37 Then the prophet went to another prophet and told him, "Hit me hard, please!" So that man hit him very hard and injured him. 38 Then the prophet went and waited by the side of the road for King Ahab to come by. He put a bandage over his eyes so that the king would recognize him. 39 As the king was going by, the prophet called out to him. He said, "Your Majesty, I was fighting in the battle *against the Arameans, and one of them wounded me so that I could not fight any longer*. So another Israelite soldier brought me an *important* Aramean soldier whom he had captured. He told me, 'Guard this man! If he escapes by any means, you will deserve to die, and you will have to pay me 33 kilograms of silver to save your life!' 40 But while I was busy doing other things, the man escaped!" King Ahab said to him, "I judge that you should suffer one of the punishments you described. It is clear from your own testimony that you deserve punishment." 41 Then the prophet immediately took off the bandage that was covering his eyes, and King Ahab recognized him. He knew that he was one of the prophets. 42 The prophet told him, "Here is a message from Yahweh for you. He says, 'I wanted you to kill Ben Hadad, but even though he was your prisoner *and you could have done that*, you let him go. As a result, you are going to die instead of him, and many of your people are going to die instead of his people.'" 43 Then King Ahab continued back to Samaria. He was angry and depressed when he got home.

21 King Ahab's main palace was in the city of Samaria. But he also had a palace in the city of Jezreel. Near that palace there was a vineyard. Naboth the Jezreelite owned that vineyard. Shortly after he returned from fighting the Arameans, 2 Ahab went to Naboth and said to him, "Your vineyard is close to my palace. I would like to buy it so that I can use the land for a vegetable garden. In exchange, I will give you a better vineyard somewhere else, or if you prefer, I will pay you what your vineyard is worth in silver." 3 But Naboth replied, "I inherited that land from my ancestors *and the law of Moses does not allow me to sell it*. Yahweh would be very displeased with me if I sold that land to you*, so I will not sell it*!" 4 Ahab became angry and depressed when Naboth told him that he would not sell him the vineyard that he had inherited from his ancestors. Ahab went home and lay down on his bed. He turned his face toward the wall, and he refused to eat anything.

5 His wife Jezebel came and asked him, "Why are you so depressed? Why are you refusing to eat anything?" 6 Ahab replied, "I am depressed and not eating because of what happened when I spoke with Naboth the Jezreelite. I told him that I wanted his vineyard. I said, 'I will buy it from you for silver, or I will give you another vineyard in exchange for it.' But he told me that he would not let me have it." 7 Jezebel replied, "You are the king of Israel*, so you can have whatever you want*! Now get up and eat some food, and do not let what Naboth said bother you. I will get his vineyard for you." 8 Then Jezebel wrote letters and signed Ahab's name on them *as if he had written them himself*. She used his official seal to seal them. Then she sent them to the older leaders and other important men who lived with Naboth in Jezreel. 9 This is what she wrote in the letters: "Declare that

the people of Jezreel must not eat anything on a certain day *because someone has committed a crime and it is more important for the people of the community to investigate that crime than to eat*. Tell the people to gather in the city square, and have Naboth sit in front of them *as a person whom people have accused of committing a crime*. 10 Then get two very dishonest men and seat them opposite him *as witnesses against him*. Tell those men to testify that they heard Naboth cursing God and me, King Ahab. *Declare that he is guilty, and* take Naboth out of the city and kill him by throwing stones at him."

11 The older leaders and other important men of Naboth's city received the letters, and they did exactly what Jezebel had told them to do in the letters that she wrote. 12 They declared that on a certain day, the people of Jezreel should not eat anything. They gathered the people in the city square and made Naboth sit in front of them. 13 They brought in two very dishonest men and had them sit opposite Naboth *as witnesses against him*. There in front of the assembly they claimed that they had heard Naboth curse God and the king. *The leaders declared that he was guilty, so* the people took him outside the city and killed him by throwing stones at him. 14 Then those leaders sent messengers to Jezebel to tell her, "We have executed Naboth by stoning him." 15 When Jezebel learned that the leaders had executed Naboth by stoning him, she told Ahab, "That man Naboth who refused to sell his vineyard to you is dead. So you can go and take possession of that land." 16 When Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, he went right away to the vineyard to claim that he now owned it.

17 Then Yahweh spoke to Elijah the Tishbite. He told him, 18 "I want you to go right away and speak to Ahab, the king of Israel, whose main palace is in Samaria. He is now in Jezreel, and he has gone to the vineyard that belongs to a man whose name is Naboth. He has gone there to claim that he now owns it. 19 Give Ahab this message from me. Tell him that I say, 'I know that you have murdered Naboth and taken his land!' Give him this further message from me. Tell him that I say, 'When Naboth died, dogs came and licked up his blood. You are also going to die, and dogs will lick up your blood in that same place. Yes, this will happen to you!'" 20 *So Elijah went to meet with Ahab, and* Ahab said to him, "You have caught me, and you are here to avenge the crime I committed." Elijah answered, "Yes, I have caught you, because you are willingly doing things that Yahweh says are wrong. 21 So this is what Yahweh says to you: 'I am going to make something terrible happen to you *and your whole family*. I am going to destroy all of you. I will allow someone to kill all of the males in your household, whether they are family members or servants, no matter where they live in Israel. 22 I will allow someone to kill your entire family, just as people killed the entire families of Jeroboam son of Nebat and Baasha son of Ahijah. I will do this because you have caused me to become very angry and because you have led the Israelite people to sin.' 23 Yahweh has also told me that your wife Jezebel is going to die and that dogs will eat her body near the outer wall of Jezreel. 24 Dogs will eat the bodies of any members of your household who die in cities. Scavenger birds will eat the bodies of any members of your household who die in the countryside." 25 No other king did things that Yahweh had said were wrong as willingly as Ahab did. His wife Jezebel urged him to do those wrong things. 26 The Amorites who lived in Canaan worshiped idols and lived in very disgusting ways as a result. That is why Yahweh took their land from them and gave it to the Israelites. Ahab did those same disgusting things.

27 When Ahab heard the message from Yahweh that Elijah had spoken, *to show that he was sorry for all the sins that he had committed,* he tore his clothes. He also wore clothes made from rough, uncomfortable cloth, and he did not eat anything. He kept wearing those rough clothes even when he got into bed to sleep. He also walked very quietly. 28 Then Yahweh said to Elijah, 29 "As you are aware, Ahab is acting very humbly now because he wants me to see *that he is sorry for the evil things he has done*. So I am not going to destroy his family while he is still alive. I am going to destroy his family after he dies and his son becomes king."

22 For the next three years, the kingdoms of Aram and Israel did not fight any wars against each other. 2 Then King Jehoshaphat, who ruled Judah, went to visit King Ahab, who ruled Israel. 3 *While they were talking,* Ahab said to his officials, "The city of Ramoth in the region of Gilead really belongs to us, but the Arameans are still occupying it. We ought to do something to recapture that city." 4 Then Ahab turned toward Jehoshaphat and asked, "Will you lead your army and join me as I lead my army to fight to recapture Ramoth Gilead?" Jehoshaphat replied, "Yes, I will lead my army and join you as you lead your army. My soldiers and their horses will fight alongside your soldiers and their horses."

5 Then Jehoshaphat added, "But we should first ask Yahweh whether we should attack Ramoth Gilead." 6 So Ahab summoned his prophets. There were about 400 of them. He asked them, "Should I lead my army to fight to recapture Ramoth Gilead, or should I not do that?" They answered, "Yes, go and attack them, because God will enable your army to recapture the city so that it will belong to you again." 7 But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there still a prophet of Yahweh here whom we could ask about this?" 8 King Ahab replied, "There is still one prophet whom we can ask to tell us what Yahweh says. His name is Micaiah son of Imlah. But I hate him, because whenever he prophesies about me, he never says that anything good will happen to me. He always predicts that bad things will happen to me." Jehoshaphat replied, "I do not feel that you should assume he will do that." 9 So King Ahab told one of his officers to summon Micaiah immediately. 10 Ahab, the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, were both wearing their royal robes. They were each sitting on thrones in an open square just inside one of the gates in the wall of Samaria. Many prophets were standing in front of them and speaking messages that they said were from God. 11 One of those prophets was Zedekiah son of Kenaanah. He used iron to make some horns *like the horns that bulls have*. Then he proclaimed to Ahab, "Here is a message for you from Yahweh. He says, 'Your army will keep defeating the Arameans until you have completely destroyed them, just as a bull keeps goring another animal until it has killed it!'" 12 The other prophets who were there said the same thing. They told Ahab, "If you go and attack Ramoth Gilead, you will succeed in conquering it, because Yahweh will enable you to defeat its defenders!"

13 Meanwhile, the messenger who went to summon Micaiah told him, "Listen to me! All the other prophets are predicting that King Ahab will defeat the Arameans with his army. So be sure that you say the same thing and also predict that he will defeat them." 14 But Micaiah replied, "I swear by Yahweh that I will tell Ahab exactly what Yahweh

tells me to say." 15 When Micaiah came to Ahab, Ahab asked
him, "Micaiah, should I lead my army to fight to recapture
Ramoth Gilead, or should I not do that?" Micaiah replied,
"If you go and attack Ramoth Gilead, you will succeed in
conquering it, because Yahweh will enable you to defeat its
defenders." 16 But King Ahab *realized that Micaiah did not
really mean what he was saying, so he* told Micaiah, "I have
told you many times that you must always speak truthfully
when you say what Yahweh has revealed to you about me!"
17 So Micaiah said to him, "*The truth is that in a vision* I saw
that the Israelite soldiers had scattered on the hills, the way
sheep scatter when they do not have a shepherd. And Yahweh
said, 'Their master is dead. So let them all stop fighting and
go home.'" 18 Then Ahab said to Jehoshaphat, "I told you
that he never says that anything good will happen to me. He
always predicts that bad things will happen to me!" 19 Then
Micaiah continued, saying, "Let me tell you what Yahweh
showed to me! *In a vision* I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne.
The angels of heaven were standing on both sides of him.
20 And Yahweh asked, 'Who can persuade Ahab to lead his
army to attack Ramoth Gilead so that he will die in battle
there?' Some said to do that in one way, while others said to
do it in a different way. 21 Finally a spirit came forward and
told Yahweh, 'I will deceive him!' Yahweh asked him, 'How
will you do that?' 22 The spirit replied, 'I will go and inspire
all of Ahab's prophets to tell lies.' Yahweh said, 'You will be
successful in getting them to tell lies. Go and do that!' 23 So I
am telling you that Yahweh has caused all of your prophets
to lie to you. Yahweh has *done that because he has* decided
that something terrible is going to happen to you."

24 Then Zedekiah walked over to Micaiah and slapped him
on his face. He said, "You have said something outrageous!
Yahweh's Spirit has not left me in order to speak to you!"
25 Micaiah replied, "You will find out for yourself *to which of
us Yahweh's Spirit has truly spoken* on the day when you hide
in the back room of a house!" 26 King Ahab commanded his
soldiers, "Seize Micaiah and take him to Amon, the governor
of this city, and to my son Joash. 27 Tell them that I am
commanding them to put this man in prison and give him
only a little food to eat and a little water to drink each day
until I return safely from the battle." 28 Micaiah replied, "If
you actually return safely, it will be clear that I was not
speaking a message from Yahweh" Then he said to all those
who were standing there, "All of you, pay attention to what
I have told King Ahab!"

29 So King Ahab of Israel and King Jehoshaphat of Judah
led their armies to attack Ramoth Gilead. 30 King Ahab said
to Jehoshaphat, "When I lead my army into battle, I will
wear different clothes *so that no one will recognize that I am
the king of Israel*. But you should wear your royal robes." So
Ahab put on different clothes, and they both led their armies
into the battle. 31 The king of Aram had told the 32 men who
commanded his chariot forces, "Find the king of Israel and
pursue and kill only him. Do not pursue anyone else." 32 So
when the commanders of the Aramean chariot forces saw
Jehoshaphat *wearing his royal robes*, they shouted, "There is
the king of Israel!" They started chasing him to attack him.
But when Jehoshaphat shouted out, 33 they realized that he
was not the king of Israel. So they stopped pursuing him.
34 But one Aramean soldier shot an arrow at the Israelite
soldiers without aiming at anyone in particular. The arrow
struck Ahab where the parts of his armor joined together
and so it went through the armor and into his body. Ahab
told the driver of his chariot, "This arrow has wounded
me! So turn the chariot around and get me out of the
midst of the fighting!" 35 The Israelites and Arameans fought
desperately throughout that day. Ahab's soldiers helped him
keep standing up in his chariot facing the Aramean troops.
The blood from his wound ran down onto the floor of the
chariot. At the end of the day, he died. 36 Just as the sun was
setting, the Israelite troops began shouting to each other,
"*Since the king has died, we should stop fighting and* all return
home!"

37 After King Ahab died, his soldiers brought his body
back to Samaria and buried it there. 38 They washed his
chariot at the pool in Samaria, the same pool where the
prostitutes of the city bathed. Dogs came and licked up the
king's blood, just as Yahweh had said would happen. 39 The
book in which the kings of Israel recorded what happened
during their reigns describes further things that Ahab did.
It describes how he had his workers build a palace for him
and decorate it with much ivory. It also describes the cities
that he had his workers build. 40 When Ahab died, his son
Ahaziah became the next king.

41 Earlier, when Ahab had been ruling in Israel for
four years, Jehoshaphat son of Asa started to rule Judah.
42 Jehoshaphat was 35 years old when he started to rule, and
he ruled in Jerusalem for 25 years. His mother was Azubah
daughter of Shilhi. 43 Jehoshaphat was a good king, just as his
father Asa had been. Throughout his life, he did things that
Yahweh had told the Israelites were good to do. However, he
did not order his servants to destroy the shrines for worship
on the top of hills. So the people continued to offer sacrifices
and burn incense at those shrines. 44 Jehoshaphat also made
a peace treaty with the king of Israel.

45 The book in which the kings of Judah recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Jehoshaphat did. It describes the great things that he did
and the victories that his troops won. 46 Jehoshaphat's father
Asa had ordered the male prostitutes to leave the kingdom
of Judah, but some had not left. Jehoshaphat forced all
the remaining ones to leave. 47 At that time, Edom did not
have a king. A deputy *whom Jehoshaphat appointed* ruled
the Edomites. 48 Jehoshaphat had his workers build at Ezion
Geber a fleet of ships that were able to sail out on the sea.
He wanted them to sail to Ophir to get gold. But a storm
wrecked them there, so the ships never sailed to Ophir.
49 Then Ahaziah son of Ahab suggested to Jehoshaphat,
"Allow my sailors to go in the ships with your sailors," but
Jehoshaphat refused. 50 When Jehoshaphat died, the Judeans
buried him where they had buried his ancestors, in the part
of Jerusalem that people called the City of David. His son
Jehoram became the next king of Judah.

51 Earlier, Ahaziah son of Ahab had begun to rule Israel
from the city of Samaria when Jehoshaphat had been ruling
in Judah for 17 years. Ahaziah ruled Israel for two years.
52 Ahaziah did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites
were evil. He did the same evil things that his father and
mother had done. And he did the same evil things that
Jeroboam had done. Jeroboam was the king who had led the
Israelites to sin by worshiping idols. 53 Ahaziah worshiped
Baal and even bowed down to an idol of Baal. That made
Yahweh, the God whom the Israelites were supposed to
worship, very angry. Ahaziah angered Yahweh just as much
as his father Ahab had angered him.