


# unfoldingWord® Simplified Text

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*Second Kings*

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# Second Kings

**1** After King Ahab died, the Moabites rebelled against Israel.
2 One day, Ahaziah, the new king of Israel, was in his
room on an upper floor of his palace in Samaria. The window
of that room had wooden slats, and he fell through them *down
to the floor below* and hurt himself badly. So he sent for some
messengers and commanded them, "Go and ask Baal Zebub,
the god of Ekron, whether or not I will recover from this
injury." 3 But an angel representing Yahweh told Elijah the
Tishbite, "King Ahaziah has sent some messengers to Ekron to
ask Baal Zebub whether he is going to recover. Go and meet
those messengers and tell them to tell Ahaziah that he should
have consulted God right here in Israel. 4 Yahweh says that
you should tell King Ahaziah that because he consulted Baal
Zebub instead, he will never *recover from this injury. He will
never* get out of bed again. Instead, he is certainly going to
die." So Elijah went to meet the messengers.
5 *After Elijah told them that,* the messengers returned to the
king *instead of going to Ekron*. The king asked them, "Why have
you come back so quickly?" 6 They replied, "A man came to
meet us and told us to go back to the king who sent us and
tell him that Yahweh says he should have consulted God right
here in Israel. He should not have sent messengers to ask Baal
Zebub whether he was going to recover! The man told us to
tell you that because you did that, you will never *recover from
this injury and* get out of bed again. Instead, you are certainly
going to die." 7 The king asked them, "What did the man look
like who met you and told you that?" 8 They replied, "He was
wearing a hairy cloak, and he had a wide leather belt around
his waist." The king said, "Then that was Elijah the Tishbite!"
9 Then the king sent an officer with his fifty soldiers to seize
Elijah. They *went to look for him and* found him sitting on the
top of a hill. The officer shouted up to him, "You prophet, the
king commands you to come down here *so that we can bring
you to him*!" 10 Elijah replied to the officer, "I am a prophet,
as you say. So I command fire to come down from the sky
and burn you up along with your fifty soldiers!" Immediately
fire came down from the sky and burned up the officer and
his fifty soldiers. 11 *When the king found out about that,* he sent
another officer with fifty more soldiers to seize Elijah. *They
went to where Elijah was, and* the officer called out to him, "You
prophet, the king commands you to come down immediately!"
12 Elijah replied to the officer, "I am a prophet, as you say. So
I command fire to come down from the sky and burn you up
along with your fifty soldiers!" Then God sent fire down from
the sky, and it burned up that officer and his fifty soldiers.
13 *When the king found out about that,* he sent yet another officer
with fifty more soldiers. *They went to where Elijah was, and*
the officer went up to the top of the hill *alone*. He bowed
down *respectfully* in front of Elijah. Then he begged him to be
merciful. He said, "You prophet, please do not kill me and my
fifty soldiers! 14 We know that fire came down from the sky
and killed the first two officers and their soldiers. But please
do not kill me *and my soldiers*!" 15 Then the angel representing
Yahweh told Elijah, "Go with this man. Do not be afraid of
the king." So Elijah got up and went with the captain *and his
soldiers* to the king. 16 *When* Elijah *arrived, he* told the king,
"Yahweh says that you should not have sent messengers to
go to Ekron to ask Baal Zebub, their god, whether you would
recover. You acted as though there was no God in Israel to
consult. So you will not recover from this injury. Instead, you
will certainly die!"
17 So Ahaziah died, just as Yahweh told Elijah to say would
happen. Ahaziah had no son to succeed him as king. So
Jehoram*, another son of Ahab,* became the next king. This
happened when Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat had been ruling
Judah for almost two years. 18 The book in which the kings of
Israel recorded what happened during their reigns describes
further things that Ahaziah did.

**2** When Yahweh was about to take the prophet Elijah up
to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and his fellow prophet
Elisha left the city of Gilgal *in the territory of Ephraim, where
Elijah had been staying with a community of prophets*. 2 Elijah
told Elisha, "Yahweh has told me to go to the city of Bethel,
but I would like you to stay here." But Elisha replied, "I am
not going to separate from you. I swear by Yahweh and by
your own life that I will not do that!" So they went to Bethel
together. 3 A group of prophets lived in the city of Bethel.
Some of them came out and asked Elisha, "Do you know that
Yahweh is going to take your master Elijah away from you
today?" Elisha told them, "Yes, I know that. Please do not say
anything further about it." 4 Then Elijah told Elisha, "Yahweh
has told me to go to the city of Jericho, but I would like you to
stay here." But Elisha replied again, "I am not going to separate
from you. I swear by Yahweh and by your own life that I will
not do that!" So they went to Jericho together. 5 A group of
prophets lived in the city of Jericho. Some of them came up
to Elisha and asked him, "Do you know that Yahweh is going
to take your master Elijah away from you today?" Elisha told
them, "Yes, I know that. Please do not say anything further
about it." 6 Then Elijah told Elisha, "Yahweh has told me to
go to the Jordan River, but I would like you to stay here." But
again Elisha replied, "I am not going to separate from you.
I swear by Yahweh and by your own life that I will not do
that!" So they continued walking together. 7 Fifty men from
the group of prophets who lived in Jericho followed them.
They stood where they could watch Elijah and Elisha from a
distance as the two of them stopped at the bank of the Jordan
River. 8 Then Elijah took off his cloak and rolled it up. He hit
the water with it, and path opened up for them through the
Jordan River. The ground on this pathway became dry, and
that allowed them to walk across to the other side. 9 When
they got to the other side, Elijah told Elisha, "Tell me what you
would like me to do for you before Yahweh takes me away."
Elisha replied, "*Since I am going to be your successor,* I want you
to leave me twice as much of your spirit as you leave to any
other prophet*, as if I were your firstborn son*." 10 Elijah replied,
"You have asked for something that would be difficult for me
to make happen. But if you see me when Yahweh takes me
from you, then you will get what you have requested. If you
do not see me, then you will not get it." 11 They continued to
walk *away from the Jordan River*. They were talking together

as they walked. Suddenly a fiery chariot that fiery horses were pulling appeared. Its driver drove the chariot between Elijah and Elisha to separate them. Then a whirlwind came and lifted Elijah up into the sky. 12 When Elisha saw this, he cried out, "Oh, my master! You protected Israel so well*, but now you are gone*!" Elijah disappeared into the sky, and Elisha never saw him again. Then Elisha tore his robe into two pieces *to show that he was very sad*. 13 Elijah's cloak had fallen off when the whirlwind lifted him up. Elisha picked up the cloak and walked back to the Jordan River and stood at the water's edge. 14 He rolled up the cloak and struck the water with it. As he did that, he cried out, "If Yahweh, the God of Elijah, is present, may he do for me what he did for Elijah!" A path opened up for him through the water, and Elisha went across.

15 The group of prophets who had come from Jericho saw from a distance what had happened. They exclaimed, "Elisha now has the power that Elijah had!" They walked over to Elisha and bowed down very low in front of him *to show their respect*. 16 Then one of them told him, "Sir, we are concerned that after the Spirit of Yahweh picked up Elijah, he may have dropped him onto some mountain or into some valley. We would like to send fifty of our strongest men to look for him *on the other side of the river*." Elisha replied, "No, do not send them." 17 But they kept asking, and finally he felt embarrassed *because it appeared that he did not care about Elijah*. So he said, "Very well, send them." So they had fifty men search for three days, but they did not find Elijah. 18 Elisha went back to Jericho to wait for them. When they returned and told him they had not found Elijah, he told them, "I told you that you should not go*, because he was actually in heaven and you would not find him*!"

19 Then the leaders of Jericho came to talk with Elisha. One of them told him, "Sir, you can see that this is a very nice place to live in. But the water is harmful to drink. It is causing the women and female animals that live here to have miscarriages." 20 Elisha told them, "Put some salt in a new bowl and bring it to me." So they did that. 21 Then Elisha went out to the spring from which the people in the town got water. He threw the salt into the spring. Then he said, "Yahweh declares that he has made this water safe. Drinking it will no longer cause the women and female animals here to have miscarriages." 22 And the water became safe, just as Elisha declared it would. Since that time, it has remained pure.

23 Elisha left Jericho and went to Bethel. As he was walking along the road, a group of boys came out from Bethel and started to make fun of him. They kept shouting at him, "Go away, you bald-headed man!" 24 Elisha turned around to look at them. He declared that Yahweh had cursed them. Immediately two female bears came out of the woods and mauled *and killed* 42 of them. 25 Elisha continued past Bethel and went to Mount Carmel. After that, he returned to the city of Samaria.

**3** After Jehoshaphat had been ruling Judah for almost 18 years, Jehoram son of Ahab became the king of Israel. He ruled that kingdom from the city of Samaria for 12 years. 2 He did things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. But he did not do as many evil things as his father Ahab and his mother Jezebel had done. He destroyed the stone pillar for worshiping Baal that his father had set up. 3 However, he did not destroy the golden calves that Jeroboam son of Nebat had made. When Jeroboam made those calves, he led the Israelites to sin *by worshiping idols*. Jehoram did not lead the people to stop doing that.

4 Mesha, the king of Moab, raised sheep. Because the king of Israel controlled Moab, *every year* Mesha had to give him 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams that had full coats of wool. 5 But after King Ahab died, Mesha rebelled *and refused to pay this tribute to* the king of Israel. 6 When Mesha rebelled, King Jehoram left the city of Samaria and gathered soldiers from throughout Israel *to reconquer the Moabites*. 7 Then he sent messengers to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah. They told him on behalf of Jehoram, "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you lead your army and join me as I lead my army to fight to reconquer Moab?" Jehoshaphat told them to tell Jehoram, "Yes, I will help you. 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." 8 Jehoram then sent the messengers back to ask Jehoram, "What route should we take to attack Moab?" Jehoshaphat told them to tell Jehoram, "We should attack Moab through the desolate area in the land of Edom." 9 So the kings of Israel and Judah led their armies along that route. When they got to Edom, the king of Edom joined them with his army. They spent seven days marching around the southern end of the Sea of the Arabah. By that time, there was no water left for the soldiers or for the animals they had with them. 10 The king of Israel exclaimed, "This is a terrible situation! It seems that Yahweh has led us three kings and our armies here so that the Moabite army can defeat us!" 11 Jehoshaphat said, "We should ask Yahweh what we should do. Is one of his prophets here?" One of Jehoram's army officers replied, "Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He was Elijah's servant." 12 Jehoshaphat said, "Yahweh will give him a message for us." So those three kings went to speak with Elisha.

13 Elisha told the king of Israel, "You have no right to ask me for help! You worship Baal, just as your father and mother did, so ask Baal's prophets to help you." But Jehoram replied, "No, we want you to ask Yahweh because it seems that Yahweh has led us three kings and our armies here so that the Moabite army can defeat us." 14 Elisha replied, "I serve Yahweh, the commander of the heavenly armies. I swear by Yahweh that I am only helping you at all because you have Jehoshaphat king of Judah with you, and I respect him. 15 So bring someone to me who plays the harp." *So they did that, and* when the person played the harp, Yahweh gave Elisha the power to prophesy. 16 He said, "Yahweh is telling you to dig as many ditches as you can in this valley, 17 because he is going to make it rain too far away for you to see, but the water from the storm will flow into this valley. As a result, your soldiers, your livestock, and your pack animals will have plenty of water to drink. 18 Yahweh considers that an easy thing to do*, since he will also do something much greater*. He will enable you to defeat the army of Moab. 19 You will conquer every important city in Moab, including those that have high walls around them. You will cut down all their fruit trees. You will stop the water from flowing from their springs. And you will ruin their fertile fields by covering them with rocks." 20 Early the next morning, it was the time when the Israelites customarily offered a grain sacrifice. They suddenly saw water flowing toward them from the direction of Edom. It filled all the ditches they had dug.

21 The people of Moab learned that the three kings had come
with their armies to fight against them. So they summoned
all of their soldiers, including youths who were just learning
to fight. The Moabite soldiers set up a defensive position at
the border of their land with Edom. 22 When they got up early
the next morning, they looked over to where the other armies
were. They saw the sunrise reflecting on the water, and this
made the water look red like blood. 23 They exclaimed, "Look,
that is blood! Soldiers from those three kingdoms must have
fought and killed each other. As a result, the armies must have
destroyed each other! So let us go and take their weapons and
possessions!" 24 So they went to the area where the soldiers
from Israel, Judah, and Edom had set up their tents. But those
soldiers attacked the Moabite soldiers and forced them to
retreat. The Israelite, Judean, and Edomite soldiers pursued
them into the land of Moab. They began attacking the people
there. 25 Those soldiers destroyed the Moabite cities. Whenever
they passed fertile fields, they threw many rocks onto them.
They stopped the water from flowing from the springs. They
cut down the fruit trees. Finally *the Moabite capital of* Kir
Hareseth was the only city they had not destroyed. Israelite,
Judean, and Edomite soldiers threw stones from slings from
places all around the city and killed many of the defenders on
its walls. 26 The king of Moab realized that his enemies were
defeating him. So he gathered 700 soldiers who fought well
with swords. He led them to try to fight their way through
to where the king of Edom was leading his soldiers. But they
were not able to do that. 27 Then the king of Moab took his
oldest son, who would have become the next king after he
died, and offered him as a burnt sacrifice. He did this on top of
the city wall *so people could see it*. Then there was great anger
against the attacking soldiers, and they left and all went back
to their own countries.

**4** One day the widow of one of the young prophets came to
Elisha and pleaded with him. She told him, "My husband,
who was one of the prophets you were training, has died.
You know very well that he revered Yahweh greatly. But now
someone who lent him money has come and is demanding
repayment. *I can not pay him back, so* he is threatening to take
away two of my children as slaves *as his payment*!" 2 Elisha
replied, "What can I do to help you? Tell me, what do you
have in your house?" She replied, "I only have a container of
olive oil." 3 Elisha said, "Go out to your neighbors and borrow
from them as many empty containers as you can. 4 Bring the
containers home. Once you and your children are inside the
house, shut the door. Then pour olive oil from your container
into the containers you have borrowed. When each one is full,
set it aside and start filling another one." 5 So she left Elisha
*and borrowed as many containers as she could from her neighbors*.
Then she gathered her children inside her house and shut the
door. Her children kept bringing the containers to her, and
she kept pouring the oil from her container into them. 6 When
she had filled a certain container*, her children did not bring her
another one*. So she called to one of her sons, "Bring me another
container!" But he answered, "There are no more containers!"
Right then the olive oil stopped flowing. 7 She went to Elisha
and told him what had happened. He told her, "Now go and
sell the oil. With the money you get, repay what you owe.
There will be enough money left over for you to keep buying
food for yourself and your children."

8 One day Elisha went to the city of Shunem. There was a
wealthy woman who lived there *with her husband*. That day
she insisted that Elisha come to her house for a meal. *So he
did, and after that,* every time Elisha was in Shunem, he went
to her house to eat a meal. 9 One day the woman told her
husband, "Please listen to me. I am sure that the man who
often comes here is a holy prophet. 10 Let us please build a
small room for him on our flat roof. Let us put a bed, a table, a
chair, and a lampstand in it. If we do that, whenever he comes
here, he will have a place to stay." 11 One day Elisha came to
Shunem and went up to that room to rest. 12 He told his servant
Gehazi, "Tell the Shunamite woman *who lives here* that I want
to speak with her." So Gehazi went to get her. She came and
stood just outside Elisha's room. 13 Elisha told Gehazi, "Tell
her that we are both grateful for all the kind things that she
has done for us. Then ask her what we can do for her. Ask
whether she has a complaint that we may bring to the king
or the army commander on her behalf." *When Gehazi told her
that,* she replied, "I am living peacefully with my friends and
neighbors *and have no complaint against any of them*." 14 *After
she left,* Elisha asked, "So what we can do for her?" Gehazi
answered, "Well, she has no son, and her husband is now too
old to have children." 15 Elisha told Gehazi, "Ask her to come
back again." So Gehazi went to get her. She came and stood in
front of the open doorway of Elisha's room. 16 Elisha told her,
"By this time next year you will be holding your infant son in
your arms." But she protested, "Sir, please do not deceive me
by saying things like that. After all, you are a prophet!"

17 But a few months later, the woman became pregnant,
and she gave birth to a son at that time the following year,
just as Elisha had predicted. 18 As the boy was growing up, one
day his father was working with the men who were harvesting
his grain. The boy went out to the field to be with his father.
19 Suddenly the boy exclaimed, "My head hurts very badly!"
His father told one of his servants, "Carry him home to his
mother." 20 So the servant carried him home, and his mother
held him on her lap all that morning. But then the boy died.
21 She carried him up to Elisha's room and laid him on the
bed. She left him there and went out and closed the door.
22 Then she asked her husband *without telling him that their son
had died*, "Please send me one of the servants and a donkey.
I want to go quickly to the prophet. I will also come back
quickly." 23 Her husband responded, "Why do you want to go
to the prophet today? This is not the day when we celebrate
the new moon festival, and it is not the Sabbath*, so he will
not be leading any religious ceremonies that you can attend*." She
replied, "Please just let me go," *and he agreed.* 24 So a servant
came and saddled the donkey for her. She told her servant,
"Get the donkey moving, and let us go. Do not slow down
to make it easier for me to ride unless I tell you to do so!"
25 So they traveled as quickly as they could to Mount Carmel,
where Elisha was. When Elisha saw her in the distance, he
told Gehazi, "Look, here comes that Shunammite woman!

26 Run to her and ask her if everything is all right with her
and her husband and with her child!" *So Gehazi ran to her
and asked her,* but she told him that she did not want to stop
to answer his questions. 27 When she came to where Elisha
was, she bowed down and grasped Elisha's feet *to show that*

*she desperately wanted him to do something for her*. Gehazi came over to push her away, but Elisha told him, “Let her stay here! She is feeling great distress about something, but Yahweh has not told me at all what it is.” 28 Then she told Elisha, “Sir, I never asked you to enable me to have a son. In fact, when you told me that I would have a son, I asked you not to deceive me.” 29 Then Elisha *realized that something must have happened to her son, so he* told Gehazi, “Tuck your cloak into your belt *so that you can run fast*. Take my staff with you and go to her home. Do not stop to talk to anyone on the way. *Go quickly to where her son is and* lay the staff on the child’s face *so that Yahweh may cause him to become alive again*.” 30 But the boy’s mother said, “I swear by Yahweh and your own life that I will not leave here and go home until you agree to come with me.” So Elisha returned with her to her home. 31 Gehazi hurried quickly to the woman’s house ahead of them. When he arrived there, he laid the staff on the boy’s face. But he did not say anything, and he did not react when Gehazi spoke to him. So Gehazi went back and met Elisha, who was on his way to Shunem. He told him, “The boy did not become alive again.”

32 When Elisha arrived at the house, he found the boy lying dead on the bed in his room *where his mother had put him*. 33 Elisha went into the room by himself and shut the door. Then he prayed to Yahweh. 34 Then he climbed onto the bed and lay down on top of the boy’s body. He put his mouth on the boy’s mouth. Then he put his eyes on the boy’s eyes. Then he put his hands on the boy’s hands. He stretched his body out over the boy’s body. After that, the boy’s body started to become warm. 35 Elisha went back down to the house and walked around for a while. Then he went back up to the room. He stretched his body out over the boy’s body again. The boy sneezed seven times, and then he opened his eyes! 36 Then Elisha summoned Gehazi. He told him, “Call the boy’s mother.” So Gehazi went and got her, and when she came to the room, Elisha told her, “You may take your son.” 37 She came into the room and bowed down low in front of Elisha *to honor him and thank him*. Then she picked up her son and took him back into her house.

38 Then Elisha returned to Gilgal. At that time, there was a famine in that area. One day many young prophets had gathered to hear Elisha’s teaching. He told his servant, “Put a large pot on the fire and make some stew for these men.” 39 One of the prophets went outside to look for wild vegetables *to add to the stew*. He found a wild vine that had many gourds on it. He collected as many as he could hold in the fold of his robe and brought them back. No one there knew that those gourds were poisonous, so he cut them up and added them to the stew. 40 Those who prepared the stew served it to the prophets. But after the prophets had tasted it, *they knew something bad was in it, so* they cried out, “Sir, there is something in this stew that would kill us *if we ate more of it*!” So they could not eat it. 41 Elisha said, “Bring me some flour.” *They brought him some, and* he threw it in the pot. Then he said, “Go ahead and serve this. The prophets can now eat it safely.” So they ate it, and it did not harm them.

42 One day a man from the city of Baal Shalishah brought Elisha an offering from the first grain he harvested that year. He brought 20 loaves of barley bread and a sack of fresh grain. Elisha told his servant, “Give this food to the group of prophets so that they will have something to eat.” 43 But his servant responded, “I will not be able to feed a hundred prophets with only that much food.” But Elisha replied, “Serve it as a meal to the prophets, because Yahweh says that there will be enough food for everyone. In fact, there will be more than enough!” 44 So he served the food to the prophets. They all ate as much they wanted, and there was more than enough food. That was just what Yahweh had promised would happen.

5 A certain man whose name was Naaman was the commander of the Aramean army. Yahweh had enabled him to win many victories for Aram, and so the king of Aram admired and honored him. Naaman was a great warrior. Unfortunately, he also had leprosy. 2 Some groups of Aramean soldiers went on raids into the land of Israel. They captured a young girl and brought her back to Aram. She became a servant of Naaman’s wife. 3 One day that girl told her, “I wish that my master Naaman could go to the prophet who lives in the city of Samaria. That prophet would heal him of his leprosy.” 4 *Naaman’s wife told her husband* what the girl from Israel had said. So Naaman went and reported that to the king. 5 The king told him, “Very well, go right away to the land of Israel. I will write a letter for you to bring to the king of Israel *in which I will ask him to help you*.” So Naaman went to Israel. He brought with him *as a gift* 330 kilograms of silver, 66 kilograms of gold, and 10 sets of expensive clothing. 6 When Naaman arrived, he gave the king of Israel the letter. The king of Aram had written in it, “I am writing this letter to introduce my army commander Naaman. I want you to heal him of his leprosy.” 7 When the king read the letter, he tore his clothes *to show his distress*. He told his officials, “I am not God! I am not able to cause people to live or to die! So this man should not be asking me to cure someone of leprosy. If you think about it, the king of Aram must want a reason to attack us *and he will pretend to be offended if I do not do what he asks*.”

8 The prophet Elisha heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes. So he sent a message to the king. He told him, “You did not need to feel such distress that you tore your clothes. Send Naaman to me. He will learn that there is a prophet in Israel *through whom Yahweh can heal him*.” 9 So Naaman went with his horses and chariots to Elisha’s house, He waited outside the door. 10 But *rather than coming out to speak to Naaman,* Elisha sent a messenger to tell him, “Go to the Jordan River. Go down into its water seven times to wash yourself. Then your skin will become healthy again. You will no longer have leprosy.” 11 But this made Naaman furious, and he left Elisha’s house. He *stopped and* told his servants, “I expected him to come out of his house and stand in front of me. I was sure that he would ask Yahweh his God to heal me. I expected him to wave his hand over the area where I have leprosy and heal me! 12 Surely the Abanah River and the Pharpar River in Damascus have better water than any river in Israel! The prophet should have told me to wash in those rivers in order to become healthy again!” Naaman was so furious that he started to leave again. 13 But his servants came to him, and one of them said, “Sir, if that prophet had told you to do something difficult, you would certainly have done it. So you should certainly be willing to do a simple thing such as he described when he told you to wash yourself in the Jordan River in order to become clean.” 14 So Naaman went to the Jordan River and went down into its water seven

times, as the prophet had instructed him to do. Then his skin became smooth once again, like the skin of a young child. He no longer had leprosy.

15 Then Naaman and the soldiers who were with him returned to Elisha's house. This time Elisha met with them personally. Naaman told him, "Now I know that the God whom you Israelites worship is the only true God anywhere. Please accept these gifts that I have brought you." 16 But Elisha replied, "I swear by Yahweh, the God whom I serve, that I will not accept any gifts from you." Naaman urged him to accept something, but Elisha refused to accept anything. 17 Then Naaman said, "All right, but I have one request. From now on, I am going to offer sacrifices only to Yahweh, not to any other god. So please allow me to take back with me as much soil from Israel as two mules can carry *so that I can spread out that soil to make a place where I can worship Yahweh*. 18 But there is one thing *I will have to do* for which I ask Yahweh to forgive me. When my master, *the king of Aram,* goes into the temple of Rimmon and bows down *to the idol* there, he needs to lean on my arm for support. That requires me to bow down as well*, but I will not intend that as an act of worship*. I ask Yahweh to forgive me for bowing down *to the idol of Rimmon*." 19 Elisha replied, "*Yahweh will forgive you, so* you may return home without worrying about that." So Naaman and his servants started to travel home.

20 But then Elisha's servant Gehazi said *to himself*, "My master Elisha should have accepted the gifts that this Aramean man Naaman brought. I swear by Yahweh that I am going to catch up with him and get something from him." 21 So Gehazi ran to catch up with Naaman. When Naaman saw that a man was running after him, he stopped the chariot in which he was riding and climbed down from it in order to speak with the man. *When Gehazi arrived,* he asked him, "Is everything all right?" 22 Gehazi replied, "Yes, everything is all right. But two young prophets from the hilly area where the descendants of Ephraim live have just arrived to stay with Elisha for a while. He wants to give them something. So he sent me to ask you for a disk of *33 kilograms of* silver and two sets of clothing." 23 Naaman replied, "Certainly, and I hope you will accept two silver disks*, one for each of those prophets*." *Gehazi pretended to be reluctant, but* Naaman urged him to accept the second disk*, and Gehazi agreed*. So Naaman had his servants tie up a silver disk and a set of clothing in each of two bags. He instructed two of his servants to carry these bags back to Elisha, and they walked ahead of Gehazi as they returned. 24 When they arrived at a certain hill *in Samaria*, Gehazi took the bags from the servants and sent them back to Naaman. He brought the bags into his own house *and hid them there*. 25 Then he went to Elisha *and acted as if nothing had happened*. Elisha asked him, "Where did you go, Gehazi?" Gehazi replied, "I did not go anywhere." 26 Elisha told him, "You must realize that my spirit was there with you when Naaman got out of his chariot to talk with you! This is certainly no time to accept gifts of silver or clothing and *sell them to buy* olive groves or vineyards or sheep or oxen or male and female servants! 27 Because you have done this, you and all of your future descendants will have leprosy just as Naaman did!" Before Gehazi even left the room, he became a leper. His skin became as white as snow.

6 One day representatives of the group of prophets *in Jericho* came to Elisha, and one of them said on their behalf, "Listen, *our community has grown, so* this hall where we meet with you is now too small to hold all of us. 2 Allow us to go to the forest in the Jordan River valley and cut down some trees. Then each of us will carry some of the wood to a site where we can build a new meeting hall." And Elisha told them, "Very well, you may go and do that." 3 The one who was speaking on behalf of all of the prophets told Elisha, "Please agree to come with us." Elisha replied, "Very well, I will come with you." 4 So they went together to the Jordan River valley. The prophets began cutting down trees. 5 But while one of them was cutting down a tree, the axe head *that he had secured to a wooden handle came loose and* fell into the water. He cried out to Elisha, "This is terrible! I had to borrow that axe head*, and it will be very difficult for me to afford to replace it*." 6 Elisha replied, "Where did the axe head fall into the water?" The man showed him the place, and then Elisha cut off a stick and threw it into the water at that place. The axe head rose to the surface of the water. 7 Elisha said, "There is your axe head. You can pull it out of the water." And the man reached out and pulled the axe head out of the water.

8 At this time the king of Aram was planning to attack Israel. After discussing various possibilities with his officers, he told them to have his soldiers set up their tents in a certain place. 9 But Elisha sent messengers to tell the king of Israel, "The Aramean soldiers are going to set up their tents there, so stay away from that place." 10 The king of Israel sent soldiers to the place that Elisha had warned him about. *The soldiers discovered that the Arameans were there,* so the king stayed away from there. This happened repeatedly. 11 The king of Aram became very angry about this. He summoned his army officers and told them, "I demand to know which one of you is revealing our plans to the king of Israel!" 12 One of his officers answered, "Your Majesty, it is not any of us. Instead, there is a prophet whose name is Elisha who lives in Israel. He tells the king of Israel even our most secret plans *because Yahweh reveals them to him*." 13 The king of Aram replied, "Go and find out where he is. When you do, I will send some men there to capture him." Someone told him, "We know that he is in the city of Dothan."

14 So the king sent a large group of soldiers to Dothan with their horses and chariots. They came at night *so that no one would know they had come* and surrounded the city *so that no one could escape*. 15 Early the next morning, Elisha's servant got up and went outside the house. He saw that Aramean soldiers with their horses and chariots were surrounding the city. The servant *went back inside the house and* exclaimed to Elisha, "Oh, no! Sir, they have trapped us!" 16 Elisha replied, "Do not be afraid! There are many more soldiers defending us than there are attacking us." 17 Then Elisha prayed, "Yahweh, please enable my servant to see *the spiritual army that is defending us*!" So Yahweh enabled the servant to see spiritual realities. When he looked out, he saw that a great number of fiery horses and chariots were protecting Elisha by surrounding the hill on which people had built the city of Dothan. 18 The Aramean soldiers started to advance toward him. So Elisha prayed, "Yahweh, please make all these soldiers blind!" Yahweh answered his prayer and made them blind. 19 Then Elisha told them, "You have taken the wrong road, and so you have come to the

wrong city. Follow me, and I will take you to the man you are searching for." But he led them to the city of Samaria.

20 Once they got inside the city, Elisha prayed, "Yahweh, please enable these soldiers to see again!" And Yahweh enabled them to see again. When they looked around, they realized that they were inside Samaria. 21 When the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, "Sir, should I order my soldiers to kill them all?" 22 Elisha replied, "No, do not kill them. If your army captured enemy soldiers in a battle, you would not kill them. Give these men something to eat and drink, and then allow them to return to their king." 23 So the king of Israel told his servants to serve a big feast to them. Once they had eaten and drunk all they wanted, he sent them back home. They returned to the king of Aram *and told him what had happened*. So after that, groups of Aramean soldiers stopped going on raids into the land of Israel.

24 However, some time later, Ben Hadad king of Aram assembled his entire army and led it to the city of Samaria. His soldiers surrounded the city *and did not let anyone go into or out of it*. 25 As a result, soon there was almost no food in the city. People were paying nearly a kilogram of silver for a donkey's head. They were even paying 55 grams of silver for about a cup of dove's dung. 26 One day the king of Israel was walking on top of the city wall. A woman cried up to him, "Your Majesty, please help me!" 27 He replied, "Yahweh will have to help you. I certainly can not help you. We have no grain or wine left in the city!" 28 But then he asked, "What is your problem?" She replied, "Several days ago, that woman over there told me that *because we had no other food,* I should give up my baby boy so that we could kill and eat him. She promised that if I agreed to that, we could kill and eat her baby boy the next day. 29 So we *killed my son and* boiled his flesh and ate it. The next day, I told her to give up her son so that we could kill and eat him. But she hid her son *so that we would not do that*." 30 When the king heard what the woman said, he tore his robe *to show that he was very upset*. The people who were standing close to the wall were able to look up and see that the king was wearing rough cloth underneath his robe *to show Yahweh how sorry he was for his sins and those of the people*. 31 The king exclaimed, "I am going to order my soldiers to execute Elisha today by cutting off his head! If I do not do that, may God kill me instead and do other terrible things to me!"

32 So the king sent a soldier to execute Elisha. Elisha was sitting in his house with some of the elders of Samaria. Before the soldier arrived, Elisha spoke to the elders. He told them, "Yahweh has shown me that *the king of Israel,* that violent person, has sent a soldier here to kill me. Listen, when the soldier arrives, do not open the door. Instead, hold the door shut to keep him out. The king will be arriving shortly after that soldier." 33 While he was still speaking, the soldier arrived*, and the king arrived right after him*. The king told Elisha, "Listen, Yahweh has caused us to have this trouble. So I am not going to wait any longer for him to help us."

**7** Elisha told everyone there, "Listen to what Yahweh says. He says that at this time tomorrow, at the marketplace here in Samaria, you will be able to buy six liters of good flour for about ten grams of silver, and you will be able to buy twelve liters of barley for about ten grams of silver." 2 The officer accompanying the king told Elijah, "That could not happen even if Yahweh opened the windows of the sky *and sent grain down to us*!" Elisha responded, "*Because you have said that,* you will see it happen, but you will not eat any of the food!"

3 Now there were four men who had leprosy who were sitting outside the gate of the city of Samaria. They told each other, "We should not stay here until we starve to death. 4 If we go into the city, we will die there, since there is no food there. If we remain sitting here, we will die here. So let us go and surrender to the army of Aram. If they kill us, we will die. But they might give us food. Then we would live." 5 So when it started to get dark, those four men went to the place where the Aramean soldiers had set up their tents. But when they arrived at that place, they discovered that no soldiers were there. 6 What had happened was that Yahweh had caused the army of Aram to hear something that sounded like a large army approaching with chariots and horses. The Aramean soldiers told each other, "Listen! The king of Israel has hired the kings of Egypt and the Hittites to come and attack us with their armies!" 7 The Aramean solders were very afraid that enemy soldiers would kill them if they stayed where they were. So they all ran away, even though it was getting dark. They left their tents and their horses and donkeys behind. In fact, they did not take anything with them from the camp. 8 *That was why no one was there* when those four men who had leprosy arrived at the place where the soldiers of Aram had set up their tents. So they went into one tent and *found food and valuable things in it. So* they ate and drank what was there, and they took the silver and gold and clothes. They left that tent and hid those things. Then they came back and went into another tent. They took the things from there, and they went away and hid them as well.

9 But then they told each other, "Something very good has happened today, but we are not telling anyone about it. That is the wrong thing to do at a time like this. If we wait until it gets light in the morning*, then other people will discover what has happened, and* they will punish us *for not telling anyone*. We should go right now and tell the king's officials what has happened!" 10 So they went to the guards at the city gates and called out to them, "We went to where the army of Aram had set up their tents, but we did not see or hear anyone there. However, their horses and donkeys were still where they had tied them up, and their tents were still there too." 11 The guards shouted the news, and some people who heard it went to the palace and reported it to the king's officials. 12 It was still night, but the king got out of bed and told his officials, "The Arameans are trying to trick us! I will tell you how. They know that we are starving here, so they have left their camp and are hiding in the fields. They think that we will *discover that the camp is empty and* leave the city *to get the food they have left in it*. Then they will *come out of hiding and* capture us and conquer the city!" 13 But one of his officials said, "Please let us send out some men on five of our horses that are still alive. Those men can go and see what has actually happened. *If the Arameans are hiding in ambush and kill them,* they will be no worse off than the other Israelites who stay here in the city. After all, all of us Israelites here are about to starve to death." 14 The king agreed to send some men to find out where the army of Aram actually was. There were enough horses

alive to pull two chariots. So the men went out on those. 15 All
along the road, those men found clothing and weapons that
the Arameans had discarded while they were running away.
The men went as far as the Jordan River *and still saw no enemy
soldiers, so they knew they had left Israel and gone back to Aram*.
So the men returned to the king and reported what they had
seen.
16 Then many of the people of Samaria left the city and
went to where the army of Aram had set up their tents. They
entered all the tents and took everything. *The Arameans had
left much grain behind, and* as a result, people could buy six
liters of good flour for about ten grams of silver, and they could
buy twelve liters of barley for about ten grams of silver. That
was exactly what Yahweh had said would happen. 17 The king
appointed the officer who usually accompanied him to control
the flow of people through the city gate. But the people who
were rushing through the gate *knocked him over and* trampled
on him. As a result, he died. That was just what Elisha had
told him would happen when he came to Elisha's house with
the king. 18 Elisha had told the king, "At this time tomorrow
at the marketplace here in Samaria, you will be able to buy
six liters of good flour for about ten grams of silver. You will
be able to buy twelve liters of barley for about ten grams of
silver." 19 The captain had replied, "That could not happen
even if Yahweh opened the windows of the sky *and sent grain
down to us*!" Elisha had responded, "*Because you have said that,*
you will see it happen, but you will not eat any of the food!"
20 And that is what happened to him. The people who were
rushing through the gate *knocked him over and* trampled on
him. As a result, he died.

**8** Several years earlier, Elisha had spoken to the Shunammite
woman whose son he had made live again. He had told
her, "Yahweh is going to allow a famine to occur in Israel. This
famine will last for seven years. So you and your family should
go and live somewhere else for a while *where there will be food
to eat*." 2 The woman had done what Elisha told her to do. She
and her family had gone to live in the region of Philistia for
seven years. 3 After those seven years were over, she and her
family returned to Israel. *By this time someone else was living
in her house and on her land, so* the woman went to the king
to ask him to order that person to return her house and her
land to her. 4 *Just as she arrived,* the king was speaking with
Gehazi, Elisha's servant. The king was saying to him, "Tell me
about all the miracles that Elisha has done." 5 Just as Gehazi
was telling the king how Elisha had caused the woman's son
to become alive again, that woman came in and asked the
king to enable her to get her house and land back. Gehazi
exclaimed, "Your Majesty, this is the woman I was just telling
you about, and this is her son, whom Elisha caused to become
alive again!" 6 So the king asked her about this, and she told
him the whole story of what Elisha had done. Then the king
assigned one of his officials to help her. He told him, "Make
sure that this woman gets her house and land back. Also give
her as many crops as grew on her land while she was away."
7 Later Elisha traveled to the city of Damascus. At that time,
King Ben Hadad of Aram was very sick. When someone told
him that Elisha had come to Damascus, 8 the king told his
official Hazael, "Go and speak with Elisha. Bring him a gift
*from me*, and ask him to ask Yahweh if I will recover from
this illness." 9 So Hazael went to speak with Elisha. As a gift,
he brought him many of the goods that people produced in
Damascus. It took 40 camels to carry everything he brought.
When Hazael met with Elisha, he told him, "Your friend Ben
Hadad, the king of Aram, has sent me to ask you whether
he will recover from his illness." 10 Elisha told Hazael, "You
may go back and tell him that he will surely recover from this
illness. However, Yahweh has shown me that he is going to die
*some other way*." 11 Then Elisha looked steadily at Hazael for
a long time. That made Hazael feel embarrassed. Then Elisha
started to cry. 12 Hazael asked, "Sir, why are you crying?"
Elisha replied, "Because Yahweh has enabled me to know the
terrible things that you will do to the people of Israel. Your
soldiers will burn down their cities that now have walls around
them. They will kill their best young soldiers in battle. They
will throw their babies against stones to kill them. And they
will use their swords to split open the bellies of their pregnant
women *and kill the children in their wombs*." 13 Hazael replied,
"I am an insignificant person. I do not have the power to
do the things you have described." Elisha replied, "Yahweh
has revealed to me that you will become the king of Aram."
14 Then Hazael left Elisha and returned to the king. The king
asked Hazael, "What did Elisha tell you?" Hazael replied, "He
told me that you would surely recover." 15 But the next day*,
while the king was sleeping,* Hazael got a thick cloth and soaked
it in water. Then he spread it over the king's face so that he
would not be able to breathe. As a result, he died. Then Hazael
became the king of Aram instead of Ben Hadad.
16 After Joram son of Ahab had been ruling Israel for almost
five years, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat became one of the
rulers of Judah. Jehoshaphat continued to be a ruler himself.
17 Jehoram was 32 years old when he became a ruler, and he
ruled in Jerusalem for eight years. 18 Jehoram's wife was the
daughter of King Ahab. As a result, he behaved just as the
kings of Israel behaved who were descendants of Ahab. He
did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil.
19 However, Yahweh had promised his servant David that his
descendants would always be kings. So Yahweh did not want
to allow the enemies of the kingdom of Judah to destroy it.
20 During the time when Jehoram ruled, the Edomites
rebelled against Judah. They appointed their own king. 21 So
Joram went with his army and all of his chariots to the city
of Zair. The commanders of the Edomite army came and
surrounded them with their chariots. Jehoram had to make
a *surprise* attack at night*in order to escape*. Then the regular
soldiers ran away and went home*, so Joram was not able
to reconquer Edom*. 22 Since that time, Judah has no longer
controlled Edom. Around that same time, the people of the city
of Libnah also rebelled against Judah. 23 The book in which
the kings of Judah recorded what happened during their reigns
describes further things that Jehoram did. 24 Then Joram died,
and the Judeans buried him in the part of Jerusalem that
people called the City of David. That is where people had
buried his ancestors. Joram's son Ahaziah became the next
king.
25 After Joram son of Ahab had been ruling Israel for almost
12 years, Ahaziah son of Jehoram became the king of Judah.
26 Ahaziah was 22 years old when he became the king. He ruled
in Jerusalem for one year. His mother's name was Athaliah.
Her father was *Ahab, the son of* King Omri of Israel. 27 Because

Ahaziah's mother was a daughter of Ahab, he behaved just as
the kings of Israel behaved who were descendants of Ahab.
He did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were
evil. 28 Ahaziah led his army to join King Jehoram of Israel
and his army to fight against the army of King Hazael of
Aram. Their armies started fighting at the city of Ramoth
Gilead. The Aramean soldiers wounded Jehoram in the battle
there. 29 So King Joram left Ramah, where his army had been
fighting against the army of King Hazael of Aram. Because
the Arameans had wounded him, he went back to the city of
Jezreel to recover from his wounds. King Ahaziah of Judah
learned that he had gone there to recover. So he went to
Jezreel to visit him.

**9** Meanwhile, the prophet Elisha summoned one of the
young prophets he was training. He told him, "Tuck your
cloak into your belt *so that you can run fast*. Go to the city
of Ramoth Gilead. Take this jar of olive oil with you. 2 When
you arrive there, look for a man whose name is Jehu son of
Jehoshaphat son of Nimshi. When you find him, ask him to
come with you into a private room, away from his companions.
3 Then pour the olive oil on his head and tell him, 'Yahweh
declares that he is appointing you to be the king of Israel.'
Then open the door and run away as quickly as you can."
4 So that young prophet went to Ramoth Gilead. 5 When he
arrived, he found the officers of the army meeting together
*in the courtyard of a house*. He said, "Sir, I have a message
for you." Jehu replied, "Which one of us is the message for?"
The young prophet replied, "It is for you, sir." 6 So Jehu got
up and went with the young prophet into the house. There
the young prophet poured the olive oil on Jehu's head. Then
he told him, "Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship,
declares that he is appointing you to be the king of his Israelite
people. 7 Ahab's wife Jezebel murdered many of his prophets
and many other Israelites who worshiped him. To punish them
for these murders, Yahweh wants you to kill the entire family
of Ahab. You formerly served him as a military commander.
8 Everyone in Ahab's family must die. So kill all of the males in
his household, whether they are family members or servants,
no matter where they live in the kingdom of Israel. 9 Earlier, I
had people destroy the families of Jeroboam son of Nebat and
Baasha son of Ahijah *because those kings were so wicked*. I want
you to destroy the family of Ahab in the same way. 10 When
Jezebel dies, no one will bury her body. Instead, dogs will eat
her body on the property near the city of Jezreel *that belonged
to Naboth*." After the young prophet said this, he went out the
door and ran away.

11 When Jehu came out of the house to where the other
officers were, one of them asked him, "Is everything all right?
Why did that crazy person come and speak with you?" Jehu
replied, "You know very well what kinds of silly things young
prophets like him say." 12 They responded, "No, he must have
come to tell you something important. Tell us what he said!"
Jehu replied, "All right, this is what he said. He told me that
Yahweh said that he was appointing me to be the king of
Israel." 13 They had Jehu stand in a high place *where people
could see him*. Then they all quickly took off their cloaks and
spread them on the ground beneath his feet *to honor him*. They
blew on a ram's horn *to show that they were making an important
announcement* and shouted, "Jehu is now the king!"

14 Then Jehu and the other commanders made plans to kill
Joram so that Jehu could replace him as king. King Joram
and his army had been defending Ramoth Gilead against the
attacking army of Hazael king of Aram. 15 But the Arameans
had wounded Joram as he was fighting against their army.
Joram had returned to the city of Jezreel to recover from his
wounds. Jehu told the other commanders, "If you really want
me to be king, make sure that no one leaves this city to warn
the people of Jezreel *that I am planning to go there*."

16 Then Jehu and his officers got into their chariots and
rode to Jezreel. That was where Joram was still recovering.
King Ahaziah of Judah was there visiting Jehoram.

17 A lookout was standing on top of the tower in Jezreel. He
saw Jehu and his men approaching. He called out, "I see a lot
of men approaching!" King Jehoram *heard what the watchman
said, so he* told his soldiers, "Send someone out on a horse to
ask them whether they are coming peacefully." 18 So a man
rode out on a horse to meet Jehu. The man told him, "The king
asks whether you are coming peacefully." Jehu replied, "I do
not have to tell you that. Get into the group of men behind
me *and follow me to the city*!" The lookout in the tower *saw
this and* reported that the messenger had reached the group of
men who were approaching *and had spoken with them,* but he
was not coming back ahead of them. 19 So King Jehoram sent
another messenger to tell Jehu that he hoped he was coming
peacefully. Again Jehu replied, "I do not have to tell you that.
Get into the group of men behind me *and follow me to the city*!"
20 Then the watchman reported again, "That messenger also
reached them, but he is not coming back ahead of them. And
the leader of that group of men must be Jehu son of Nimshi,
because he is driving his chariot so recklessly!"

21 Jehoram told one of his attendants, "Get my chariot ready
for me." So his attendants did that. Then King Jehoram and
King Ahaziah each rode out in his own chariot toward Jehu.
They met Jehu just as he arrived on the property that had
belonged to Naboth. 22 When Jehoram met Jehu, he asked him,
"Have you come here peacefully, Jehu?" Jehu replied, "There
can be no peace while *you and* your mother Jezebel are leading
the Israelites to worship so many false gods and practicing
so much witchcraft!" 23 Jehoram cried out, "Ahaziah, Jehu is
rebelling against me!" Then Jehoram turned his chariot around
and tried to escape. 24 But Jehu got his bow and shot an arrow
that hit Jehoram in the back between his shoulder blades.
The arrow entered Jehoram's body and went right through
his heart. He slumped down dead in his chariot. 25 Then Jehu
told his captain Bidkar, "Take his body and throw it here onto
the field that belonged to Naboth. Remember what happened
when you and I were riding together behind King Jehoram's
father Ahab. Yahweh spoke about Ahab *through Elijah*. 26 He
said that he had seen Ahab murder Naboth and his sons the
day before. He solemnly promised that he would punish Ahab
right here in this same field! So take Jehoram's body and
throw it onto this field! That will make happen exactly what
Yahweh said would happen."

27 When King Ahaziah saw what happened, he left the
property through a pavilion that led into the adjacent palace
gardens. But Jehu *and his men* chased him. Jehu told his men,
"Shoot him as well!" *So they shot him with arrows* while he
was riding in his chariot on the road up to Gur, near the city
of Ibleam. Ahaziah continued riding in his chariot until he

reached the city of Megiddo, but he died there. 28 His officials
brought his body back to Jerusalem in his chariot. The Judeans
buried him in the tombs in the part of Jerusalem that people
called the City of David. That was where they had also buried
his ancestors.
29 Ahaziah had become the king of Judah when Joram son
of Ahab had been ruling Israel for almost 11 years.
30 Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When Jezebel the queen
mother heard what had happened, she put on eye makeup
and combed her hair to make it beautiful. Then she looked
out the window of the palace toward the street below. 31 As
Jehu was entering the city gate, she called out to him, "Your
life will not be peaceful! You will be just like Zimri, who also
murdered his king!" 32 Jehu looked up toward the window and
called out, "Will anyone there help me?" Two or three palace
officials looked down at him from windows. 33 Jehu told them,
"Throw her down!" So they threw her down, and Jehu ordered
his men to drive their chariots over her body. *This killed her,
and* some of her blood splattered on the city wall and on the
horses that were pulling the chariots. 34 Then Jehu went into
the palace and had a meal there. Then he told some of his
men, "Jezebel brought Yahweh's curse on herself *through the
idolatry and violence she committed*. However, she was a king's
daughter*, and so she should receive a proper burial*. Please take
her body and bury it." 35 But when they went to get her body
to bury it, the only things left were her skull, her feet, and the
front part of her hands. 36 When they reported this to Jehu,
he said, "That is what Yahweh said would happen!" He said
through his servant Elijah that dogs would eat Jezebel's body
on the property that belonged to Naboth. 37 Dung dissolves
into the ground *so that no one recognizes it anymore*. Yahweh
said that in the same way, no one would be able to recognize
Jezebel's body. They would just know that she died somewhere
on Naboth's property.

**10** There were 70 members of King Ahab's family living
in Samaria. Many of the officials who had served in
the royal palace in Jezreel had fled to Samaria after Jehu
rebelled. Jehu wrote a letter and sent copies of it to those
officials, to the elders of the city of Samaria, and to the people
who were caring for Ahab's family. This is what he wrote:
2 "Jehoram's sons are there with you*, and ordinarily one of
them would succeed him as king*. You are in a city that has walls
around it, and you have chariots, horses, and weapons. So as
soon as you receive this letter, 3 decide which of Jehoram's
sons you think is the most qualified to be the next king of Israel.
Proclaim his as your king, and then prepare to fight to defend
him." 4 But when they received those letters, what Jehu had
written terrified them. They said, "When two kings, Jehoram
and Ahaziah, fought against him, he killed them. We are just
ordinary people. So if we try to fight him, he will certainly kill
us." 5 So the officer in charge of the palace, the mayor of the
city, the elders of the city, and the people who were caring
for Ahab's family wrote back to Jehu. They told him, "We are
willing to be your subjects. We will do whatever you tell us
to do. We will not appoint anyone to become our king. Do
whatever you think is best." 6 So Jehu wrote back to them and
said, "If you accept me as your king and are ready to obey me,
kill all of King Ahab's male descendants. Cut off their heads
and bring them to me here in Jezreel by this time tomorrow."
Now the leaders of the city of Samaria were rearing 70 male
descendants of King Ahab. 7 When a messenger brought Jehu's
letter to the leaders of Samaria and they read it, they killed all
70 of Ahab's male descendants and cut off their heads. They
put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu at Jezreel.
8 A messenger came to Jehu and told him, "They have brought
the heads of Ahab's male descendants." Jehu responded, "Put
their heads in two piles at the city gate. Leave them there until
tomorrow morning." 9 The next morning he went out and stood
at the city gate. He told the people who had gathered there, "I
am the one who plotted against King Jehoram and killed him.
You are not guilty of doing that. And I am not guilty of killing
all of these descendants of Ahab. 10 Instead, Yahweh has done
what he said through his servant Elijah that he would do. As
a result, you can be sure that everything Yahweh said would
happen to Ahab's family has in fact happened." 11 Then Jehu
executed all the other relatives of Ahab in Jezreel. He also
executed all of Ahab's officers, close friends, and priests. He
did not allow any of them to remain alive.
12 Then Jehu left Jezreel and went toward Samaria. On his
way there, he came to Beth Eked of the Shepherds. 13 There
he met some relatives of King Ahaziah of Judah. He asked
them, "Who are you?" They replied, "We are relatives of
King Ahaziah. We are going to Jezreel to visit the family of
*Ahaziah's cousin* King Jehoram, including the other children
of his mother Jezebel." 14 Jehu told his men, "Seize them!" So
they seized them, and they killed all of them at the pit of Beth
Eked. They killed all 42 of the relatives of Ahaziah whom they
met. They did not allow any of them to remain alive.
15 Then Jehu continued to travel toward Samaria. He met
Jehonadab son of Rechab, who was coming to join him. Jehu
greeted him and told him, "I am willing to work with you.
Are you willing to work with me?" Jehonadab replied, "Yes, I
am." Jehu said, "If you are, then let us shake hands." So they
shook hands. Then Jehu helped him to get into his chariot.
16 Jehu told him, "Come with me and let me show you how
eager I am for the Israelites to worship Yahweh." So Jehu's
men arranged for Jehonadab to ride with Jehu in his chariot
*to Samaria*. 17 When they arrived in Samaria, Jehu killed all of
Ahab's relatives who were still alive there. He did not spare
any of them. That was exactly what Yahweh had told Elijah
would happen to Ahab's family.
18 Then Jehu gathered the people of Samaria and told them,
"I am going to worship Baal much more than King Ahab did.
19 So now summon all of Baal's prophets and priests and all
the other Israelites who worship Baal. I am going to offer a
great sacrifice to Baal, and I want all of them to be there. I will
have my soldiers execute any of them who do not come to the
sacrifice." But Jehu was deceiving them. He was planning to
kill everyone who worshiped Baal. 20 Then Jehu commanded,
"Announce that we are going to set aside a day to honor
Baal." So his messengers went out and proclaimed that there
would be a celebration on that day. 21 Jehu sent messengers
throughout Israel telling the people who worshiped Baal to
gather in Samaria on a certain day. All those people came that
day. They went into the huge temple of Baal and filled it from
one side to the other. 22 Then Jehu spoke to the person who
took care of the sacred robes in Baal's temple. He told him to
bring out enough robes so that everyone who worshiped Baal
would have one to wear. So the person did that. 23 Then Jehu

went into the temple of Baal with Jonadab. He told the people who were worshipers of Baal, “Look around and make sure that no one who worships Yahweh has come in. Only people who worship Baal should be here.” 24 Then he and Jonadab prepared to offer *fellowship* sacrifices and burnt offerings to Baal. But Jehu had stationed 80 of his men outside the temple. He had told them, “I want you to kill all the people who are in this temple. I will have my soldiers execute any of you who allows any of them to escape!”

25 As soon as he had finished making the burnt offerings, Jehu gave an order to the guards and officers he had stationed outside. He told them, “Go in to the temple and kill the worshipers of Baal! Do not allow any of them to escape!” So the guards and officers went in and killed every one of them. Then they dragged their bodies outside the temple. Then they went into the inner room of the temple 26 and got the sacred images of Baal that were there. They brought them out of the temple and burned them. 27 They also smashed the large stone pillar outside the temple that represented Baal. Then they tore down the temple. People then used it for a bathroom, and people continued to do that afterwards. 28 That is how Jehu ended the worship of Baal in Israel.

29 The one form of idolatry that Jehu allowed to continue was the worship of the golden statues of calves in the cities of Bethel and Dan. King Jeroboam had sinned by making those statues, and he led the people of Israel to sin by worshiping them. 30 Then Yahweh told Jehu, “I wanted someone to destroy Ahab’s descendants, and you did that. Because you obeyed me and did what I had decided was proper, I promise that your son, grandson, great-grandson, and great-great-grandson will all be kings of Israel.” 31 But Jehu did not carefully and completely obey the laws of Yahweh, the God whom the Israelites worship. He did not stop committing the sins that Jeroboam had committed, which he had also led the Israelite people to commit.

32 At that time, Yahweh began to allow enemies to conquer some of the territory of Israel. The army of King Hazael of Aram conquered much of the Israelite territory 33 east of the Jordan River. That was the region of Gilead, where the tribes of Gad and Reuben and half of the tribe of Manasseh lived. Hazael conquered territory as far south as the city of Aroer by the Arnon Valley. He conquered further territory in Gilead as far north as Bashan. 34 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Jehu did, including the victories that his armies won. 35 Then Jehu died, and the Israelites buried him in Samaria. His son Jehoahaz became the next king. 36 Jehu had ruled in Samaria as the king of Israel for 28 years.

**11** Someone told King Ahaziah’s mother Athaliah that Jehu had killed her son. She ordered soldiers to kill all the members of Ahaziah’s family who might become the next king. 2 But Jehosheba, who was King Jehoram’s daughter and Ahaziah’s half-sister, rescued Ahaziah’s very young son Joash. She hid him and his nursemaid in a room in the palace where people kept bedding supplies. So the soldiers whom Athaliah had sent did not kill him when they killed the rest of Ahaziah’s sons. 3 For the next six years, the priests hid Joash in Yahweh’s temple with Jehosheba. Meanwhile, Athaliah ruled Judah.

4 But after those six years, Jehoiada *the high priest* sent messengers to get the officers who commanded the royal bodyguards and the palace guards. He told them to come to him at the temple. He had them make a solemn agreement with him *that they would do what he told them to do*. They swore an oath *by Yahweh* in his temple *that they would do this*. Then he showed them Joash, the son of King Ahaziah. 5 He gave them these instructions. “Many of you guards will come on duty on the Sabbath day. When you do, divide yourselves into three groups. One group must guard the palace building. 6 Another group must guard the Sur Gate. The other group must guard the gate where the palace guards usually stand. This will keep anyone from leaving the palace area. 7 Many others of you guards will be going off duty on the Sabbath day. *Instead of leaving,* you must guard the temple in two groups to protect young King Joash. 8 You must arm yourselves with your weapons and stand all around the king *to protect him*. Kill anyone who approaches your ranks *to try to harm the king*. If he goes anywhere, go with him.”

9 The officers who commanded the guards did exactly what Jehoiada told them to do. Each one brought to Jehoiada the guards whom he commanded. This included the guards who were just finishing their work and those who were about to start their work on the Sabbath day. 10 Some spears and shields that had belonged to King David were in the temple. Jehoiada distributed them to the commanders of the guards *to give to their men*. 11 The guards took those weapons and formed a line all across the front of the temple. They stood between the temple building and the altar in its courtyard. In that way they provided complete protection for the king. 12 Then Jehoiada the high priest brought Joash out of the temple. He put a crown on his head and gave him a scroll that recorded Yahweh’s laws. Then he poured olive oil on Joash’s head and proclaimed that he was now the king. The people clapped their hands and shouted, “May King Joash rule for a long time!”

13 Athaliah heard the noise that the guards and the other people were making. So she came to the temple where the people had gathered. 14 She saw Joash, the new king, standing next to one of the big pillars on the temple porch. That was where new kings customarily stood. She saw that the commanders of the palace guards and musicians playing trumpets were standing next to him. She heard a crowd of ordinary Israelites shouting joyfully. Some of them were blowing trumpets. She tore her clothes *to show her distress* and shouted, “You are traitors! You have betrayed me!” 15 Jehoiada told the officers who commanded the guards, whom he had put in charge of the armed men that day, “Have the guards take her away from the temple. Kill anyone who tries to rescue her!” He said that because he did not want his men to kill her near Yahweh’s temple. 16 The guards formed two lines so that she could walk safely between them back to the palace. She walked through the entrance that horses used to get into the palace courtyard. The guards killed her there.

17 Then Jehoiada had King Joash and the people make a solemn agreement with Yahweh that they would always be loyal to him as their God. He also had the people make a solemn agreement with Joash that they would be loyal to him as their king. 18 Then the large crowd of Israelites who had gathered went to the temple of Baal. They destroyed the main altar and smashed the statues of Baal into pieces. They also

killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, right in front of the other altars in the temple. Jehoiada then stationed guards at the temple of Yahweh. 19 Then Jehoiada, the officers who commanded the guards, the royal bodyguards, and the palace guards brought the king from the temple to the palace. All the people who had gathered there followed them. Joash entered the palace at the gate where the palace guards usually stood. He sat down on the same throne where the previous kings of Judah had sat. 20 The Judeans were glad that the guards had killed Athaliah at the palace. The city of Jerusalem became peaceful after she died.

21 Joash was seven years old when he became the king of Judah.

**12** When Jehu had been ruling Israel for almost seven years, Joash became the king of Judah. He ruled in Jerusalem for 40 years. His mother was Zibiah. She was from the city of Beersheba. 2 Jehoiada the priest instructed him. As a result, throughout his life, Joash did things that pleased Yahweh. 3 However, Joash did not destroy the shrines on the tops of hills. The Judeans continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense at those places *instead of at the place that God had chosen for them in Jerusalem*.

4 Joash told the priests, "People give money to Yahweh's temple for several reasons. The law requires them to give some money to support the temple. Sometimes people dedicate people or animals to Yahweh and redeem them with money. And sometimes people just want to give money to the temple. 5 Each priest must take the money from the people who come to him, and he must use that money to pay for the repair of any damages that he discovers in the temple." 6 But after Joash had been ruling for almost 23 years, the priests still had not made repairs in the temple. 7 So Joash summoned Jehoiada and the other priests and told them, "I told you that when people gave money for various reasons, you should use it to make repairs to the temple. But you have not been doing that. So do not collect that money any longer. Instead, use it to pay workers to make the repairs." 8 The priests agreed that they would no longer collect that money or do the repair work.

9 Then Jehoiada took a chest and made a hole in its top. He put the box on the right side of the altar *in the temple courtyard*. Often people *gave some money for the temple* when they came to the temple courtyard. *When they did,* the priests who supervised the courtyard entrance put that money in the box. 10 Whenever the priests realized that there was a lot of money in the chest, they would ask the king's secretary and the high priest to come and collect it. The secretary and priest took the money out of the chest and tied it up in bags. Then they weighed the bags to determine the value of this silver that people had given to the temple. 11 Then they would distribute the money to the men who supervised the work in the temple. The supervisors would use that money to pay the carpenters and builders who did the repair work in the temple. 12 They also used the money to pay masons and stone cutters and to buy timber and stones that workers had shaped. They used the timer and stone to repair damages in the temple. They also used the money to pay for all the other expenses of the repair work. 13 But they did not use any of that money to pay for silver cups or wick trimmers or bowls or trumpets or any other silver or gold items that the priests would use in the temple. 14 Instead, the supervisors gave all of that money to the men who were doing the work of repairing the temple. 15 The men who supervised the work acted honestly. So when the king's secretary and the high priest gave them money to pay the workers, they never required them to report how they had spent that money. 16 Sometimes people gave money to the priests who offered the animals that they brought as sacrifices for guilt or sin. That money belonged to the priests, so the supervisors did not use it to repair the temple.

17 Later, Hazael king of Aram led his army to attack the city of Gath. They conquered it. Then he decided to lead his army to attack Jerusalem. 18 So King Joash of Judah got all of the gold and silver items that the previous kings, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah, had dedicated to Yahweh. He also got the gold and silver items that he had dedicated. He also got all of the gold that was in the storerooms of the temple and his palace. He sent this treasure to King Hazael *to persuade him to stop attacking Jerusalem*. So King Hazael led his army away from Jerusalem.

19 The book in which the kings of Judah recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Joash did. 20 Joash's officials plotted against him, and two of them ambushed him in Beth Millo, on the road that goes down to the district of Silla. 21 The two officials who ambushed Joash were Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer. They killed him. The Judeans buried Joash in the part of Jerusalem that people called the City of David. That is where people had also buried his ancestors. Then Joash's son Amaziah became the next king of Judah.

**13** After Joash had been ruling Judah for almost 23 years, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became the king of Israel. He ruled in the city of Samaria for 17 years. 2 Jehoahaz did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. Jeroboam son of Nebat had sinned *by making calf idols*, and he made the people of Israel sin *by worshiping those idols*. Jehoahaz sinned in that same way, and he did not repent. 3 Yahweh became very angry with the Israelite people. So he allowed the armies of King Hazael of Aram and his son Ben Hadad to defeat the Israelites many times. 4 The Arameans were treating the Israelites very badly. So Jehoahaz prayed to Yahweh for help. Yahweh saw how badly the Arameans were treating the Israelites, so he did give Jehoahaz the help he asked for. 5 Yahweh sent a leader to Israel who rescued them from the control of the Aramean king. After that, the Israelites lived peacefully as they had done previously. 6 But even after that, the Israelites continued to commit the same kind of sins that Jeroboam and his descendants committed. Jeroboam had led the people of Israel to sin *by worshiping idols*, and they continued to sin in that way. Also, the pole that people used in the worship of the goddess Asherah remained in Samaria. 7 The Aramean army killed so many of Jehoahaz's soldiers that he had only 50 men left who rode on horses. He had only 10 chariots and 10,000 other soldiers left. The Arameans were so powerful compared to the Israelites that it was as if they could knock them down and walk over them. 8 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Jehoahaz did, including the battles that he fought. 9 Jehoahaz died, and the Israelites

buried him in Samaria. Then his son Joash became the next king.

10 Jehoash son of Jehoahaz started to rule in Israel after King
Joash had been ruling in Judah for 37 years. Jehoash ruled
in Samaria for 16 years. 11 He did many things that Yahweh
had told the Israelites were evil. Jeroboam son of Nebat had
sinned *by making calf idols*, and he made the people of Israel
sin *by worshiping those idols*. Jehoash sinned in that same way,
and he did not repent. 12 The book in which the kings of Israel
recorded what happened during their reigns describes further
things that Joash did, including the victory that his army won
against the army of King Amaziah of Judah. 13 When Joash
died, the Israelites buried him in Samaria. That was where they
had buried other kings of Israel. His son Jeroboam became the
next king.

14 Then Elisha became very ill. Just before he died, King
Joash went to Elisha and cried because he was so sad that he
was going to die. He cried out, "Sir, you protected Israel so
well*, but now you are going to die*!" 15 Elisha told him, "Bring
me a bow and some arrows." So the king did that. 16 Then
Elisha told the king to hold the bow in his left hand *and the
bowstring in his right hand*. So the king did that. Elisha then
put his own hands on top of the king's hands. 17 Then Elisha
told him, "Have someone open that window through which
we can look to the east." So a servant opened it. Then Elisha
said, "Shoot an arrow *toward the east*!" So the king did that.
Then Elisha told him, "That arrow represents how Yahweh
will enable you to defeat the Aramean army. Your army will
completely defeat them at the city of Aphek." 18 Then Elisha
told him, "Pick up the other arrows." So he picked up the
arrows. Then Elisha told the king, "Hit the ground with them!"
So he hit the ground with them. But he only did that three
times. 19 This made Elisha angry with him. He exclaimed, "You
should have struck the ground five or six times! If you had
done that, your army would have completely destroyed the
Aramean army *in a series of battles*. Instead, your army is only
going to win three battles against them."

20 Then Elisha died, and the Israelites buried him. At that
time groups of raiders from Moab were coming into Israel
each year during the spring. 21 Around that time, while some
Israelites were carrying a man's body to where they wanted
to bury him, they saw a group of those raiders. They *were
afraid, so they* quickly threw that man's body into the same
tomb where Elisha's body was *and ran away*. But as soon as
the man's body touched Elisha's body, the dead man became
alive again and stood up!

22 King Hazael of Aram had treated the Israelite people badly
throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. 23 But Yahweh felt sorry
for the Israelite people, so he treated them better than they
deserved. He helped them because of the solemn agreement
he had made with *their ancestors* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
He wanted them to continue being a nation. So he still did
not allow enemies to take the Israelites away from their land.
24 When Hazael died, his son Ben Hadad became the next king
of Aram. 25 Ben Hadad son of Hazael had fought and defeated
Jehoash's father Jehoahaz. He had captured several cities.
But Joash defeated Ben Hadad three times. In that way, he
recaptured those cities and made them part of Israel again.

**14** After Jehoash son of Jehoahaz had been ruling Israel
for almost two years, Amaziah son of Joash became
the king of Judah. 2 He was 24 years old when he started to
rule, and he ruled in Jerusalem for 29 years. His mother was
Jehoaddin. She was from the city of Jerusalem. 3 Amaziah did
many things that pleased Yahweh, but not to the extent that
King David, his ancestor, had done. He did the same kind
of good things that his father Joash had done. 4 However,
Amaziah did not destroy the shrines on the tops of hills. The
Judeans continued to offer sacrifices and burn incense at those
places *instead of at the place that God had chosen for them in
Jerusalem*. 5 As soon as Amaziah was completely in control
of his kingdom, he had his soldiers execute the officials who
had murdered his father, King Joash. 6 But he did not tell his
servants to execute those officials' children. He obeyed what
Moses wrote in the book of laws that Yahweh gave him. He
wrote, "You must not execute parents for crimes that their
children commit, and you must not execute children for crimes
that their parents commit. You must only execute people for
the sins that they themselves commit." 7 Amaziah led his army
and defeated the Edomite army in the Valley of Salt. The
Judeans killed 10,000 Edomites. They captured the city of
Sela. Amaziah gave that city a new name, Joktheel, and that
is still its name.

8 Then Amaziah sent messengers to King Jehoash of Israel
to tell him, "I challenge you to a battle!" 9 But in reply,
King Jehoash had his messengers tell King Amaziah a story
that taught a lesson. They said, "Once a little thornbush was
growing in the mountains in Lebanon. It sent a message to a
great cedar tree. It told the cedar that it should allow the son
of the thornbush to marry its daughter. But as a wild animal
in Lebanon was walking along, it stepped on the thornbush
and crushed it." 10 *The messengers continued to say on behalf of
Jehoash,* "The meaning of my story is that you have become
very proud because your army defeated the army of Edom.
But you should be happy about that and not fight a further
war with me. If you cause trouble by fighting against me, you
will surely cause great harm to happen to you and to your
people."

11 But Amaziah did not withdraw his challenge. So Jehoash
led his army to fight against the army of Amaziah. They fought
a battle at the city of Beth Shemesh in Judah. 12 The Israelite
army defeated the army of Judah, and the Judean soldiers
ran away and went home. 13 Jehoash's army captured King
Amaziah at Beth Shemesh. Then they marched to Jerusalem
and tore down the wall around the city from the Ephraim
Gate to the Corner Gate. That section of the wall was about
180 meters long. 14 Jehoash's soldiers seized all the gold and
silver and valuable items that were in Yahweh's temple and
that Amaziah was keeping in the royal palace. They also took
some prisoners to make sure that Amaziah would not attack
Israel. Then Jehoash returned to Samaria.

15 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Jehoash did, including more about how he and his army
fought and defeated the army of King Amaziah of Judah.
16 When Jehoash died, the Israelites buried him in Samaria.
That was where they had buried other kings of Israel. His son
Jeroboam became the next king.

17 King Amaziah of Judah lived for 15 more years after
King Jehoash of Israel died. 18 The book in which the kings of
Judah recorded what happened during their reigns describes
further things that Amaziah did. 19 Some people in Jerusalem
plotted against Amaziah, so he ran away to the city of Lachish.
But those people sent men to follow him to Lachish, and those
men killed him there. 20 *To honor him,* his officials brought his
body back to Jerusalem in his own chariot. They buried him
in the part of Jerusalem that people called the City of David.
That was where people had also buried his ancestors. 21 Then
the Judeans appointed Amaziah's son Azariah as the next king.
He became king when he was 16 years old. 22 After his father
Amaziah died, Azariah led his army to recapture the city of
Elath. He then fortified that city.

23 When Amaziah son of Joash had been ruling Judah for
almost 15 years, Jeroboam son of Jehoash became the king
of Israel. He ruled in the city of Samaria for 41 years. 24 He
did many things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were
evil. Jeroboam son of Nebat had sinned *by making calf idols*,
and he made the people of Israel sin *by worshiping those idols*.
This Jeroboam *sinned in that same way, and he* did not repent.
25 Jeroboam led his soldiers to reconquer much of the territory
that the Israelites had previously controlled, from Lebo Hamath
*in the north* to the Sea of the Arabah in the south. That is
exactly what Yahweh, the God whom the Israelites worship,
promised would happen. He said that in a message he gave
to the prophet Jonah son of Amittai, who came from the city
of Gath Hepher. 26 Yahweh made that promise and kept it
because he saw that the Israelites' enemies were causing them
to suffer greatly. He also saw that no one at all was able to
rescue them. 27 But Yahweh had not said that he would destroy
the Israelites completely. So he enabled King Jeroboam to
rescue them.

28 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Jeroboam did. He was a strong king. He led his armies to
recapture the territories in the areas of Damascus and Hamath
that Judean kings had formerly controlled. He made them part
of his kingdom of Israel. 29 When Jeroboam died*, the Israelites
buried him in Samaria. That was where they had buried* other
kings of Israel. His son Zechariah became the next king.

**15** After Jeroboam had been ruling Israel for almost 27
years, Azariah, the son of King Amaziah, began to rule
Judah. 2 He was 16 years old when he started to rule, and he
ruled in Jerusalem for 52 years. His mother was Jecoliah. She
was from the city of Jerusalem. 3 He did things that pleased
Yahweh. He did the same good things that his father Amaziah
had done. 4 However, Azariah did not destroy the shrines on
the tops of hills. The Judeans continued to offer sacrifices and
burn incense at those places *instead of at the place that God had
chosen for them in Jerusalem*. 5 *Azariah committed a serious sin,*
and Yahweh punished him by causing him to become a leper.
Azariah remained a leper for the rest of his life. He had to live in
a house away from other people. His son Jotham was in charge
of the royal palace and decided cases that Judeans brought to
him. 6 The book in which the kings of Judah recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Azariah did. 7 When Azariah died, the Judeans buried him in
the part of Jerusalem that people called the City of David.
That is where people had also buried his ancestors. Ahaziah's
son Jotham became the next king.

8 After Azariah had been ruling Judah for almost 38 years,
Zechariah son of Jeroboam became the king of Israel. He ruled
in the city of Samaria for six months. 9 He did many things
that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. That is what
his ancestors who were kings of Israel had done. Jeroboam
son of Nebat had sinned *by making calf idols*, and he made
the people of Israel sin *by worshiping those idols*. Zechariah
*sinned in that same way, and he* did not repent. 10 Then Shallum
son of Jabesh plotted against Zechariah. He assassinated him
right in public. Then he became the next king. 11 The book in
which the kings of Israel recorded what happened during their
reigns describes further things that Zechariah did. 12 Yahweh
had told Jehu that his son, grandson, great-grandson, and
great-great-grandson would all be kings of Israel. And that is
exactly what happened.

13 After Amaziah had been ruling Judah for almost 39
years, Shallum son of Jabesh became the king of Israel. He
ruled in Samaria for one month. 14 Then Menahem son of
Gadi came from the city of Tirzah to Samaria and assassinated
Shallum. Then Menahem became the next king. 15 The book in
which the kings of Israel recorded what happened during their
reigns describes further things that Shallum did, including how
he plotted against King Zechariah. 16 After he became king,
Menahem led his soldiers from Tirzah to the city of Tiphsah.
They destroyed the city and killed the people who lived in it
and near it. His soldiers even used their swords to split open the
bellies of the pregnant women in the city *and kill the children in
their wombs*. They did that because *those people had not wanted
Menahem to be their king, so they* had not allowed him to come
into their city. 17 When Azariah had been ruling Judah for
almost 39 years, Menahem son of Gadi became the king of
Israel. He ruled in Samaria for ten years. 18 Menahem did many
things that Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. Jeroboam
son of Nebat had sinned *by making calf idols*, and he made the
people of Israel sin *by worshiping those idols*. Menahem *sinned
in that same way, and he* did not ever repent. 19 Then King Pul
of Assyria led his army to invade Israel. Menahem gave him
about 33 metric tons of silver so that he would be his ally and
help him rule Israel more powerfully. 20 Menahem obtained
that money from the rich men in Israel. He compelled each of
them to contribute three fifths of a kilogram of silver. When
Pul received that money, he ended his invasion and returned
to Assyria. 21 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded
what happened during their reigns describes further things
that Menahem did. 22 After Menahem died, his son Pekahiah
became the next king of Israel.

23 When Azariah had been ruling Judah for almost 50 years,
Pekahiah son of Menahem became the king of Israel. He ruled
in Samaria for two years. 24 Pekahiah did many things that
Yahweh had told the Israelites were evil. Jeroboam son of
Nebat had sinned *by making calf idols*, and he made the people
of Israel sin *by worshiping those idols*. Pekahiah *sinned in that
same way, and he* did not repent. 25 One of Pekahiah's military
officers, Pekah son of Remaliah, plotted against him. Together
with 50 men from the region of Gilead, he went to the fortress in
the king's palace in Samaria. There they assassinated Pekahiah
and two of his officials, Argob and Arieh. Then Pekah became
the next king. 26 The book in which the kings of Israel recorded

what happened during their reigns describes further things that Pekahiah did.

27 When Azariah had been ruling Judah for almost 52 years,
Pekah son of Remaliah became the king of Israel. He ruled in
Samaria for 20 years. 28 Pekah did many things that Yahweh
had told the Israelites were evil. Jeroboam son of Nebat had
sinned *by making calf idols*, and he made the people of Israel
sin *by worshiping those idols*. Pekah *sinned in that same way, and
he* did not repent.

29 While Pekah was the king of Israel, King Tiglath Pileser of
Assyria led his army to invade the country. They captured the
cities of Ijon, Abel Beth Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, and Hazor.
Those cities were in the parts of the regions of Gilead and
Galilee that belonged to the tribe of Naphtali. Tiglath Pileser
forced the Israelite people who had lived in those places to go
to live in Assyria. 30 Then Hoshea son of Elah, plotted against
Pekah. He assassinated him when Jotham son of Uzziah had
been ruling Judah for almost 20 years. Then Hoshea became
the next king of Israel. 31 The book in which the kings of Israel
recorded what happened during their reigns describes further
things that Pekah did.

32 When Pekah had been ruling Israel for almost two years,
Jotham son of Azariah began to rule Judah. 33 Jotham was 25
years old when he started to rule, and he ruled from Jerusalem
for 16 years. His mother was Jerusha daughter of Zadok. 34 He
did many things that pleased Yahweh, just as his father Uzziah
had done. 35 However, Jotham did not destroy the shrines on
the tops of hills. The Judeans continued to offer sacrifices and
burn incense at those places *instead of at the place that God had
chosen for them in Jerusalem*. Jotham had his workers build the
upper gate of the temple courtyard. 36 The book in which the
kings of Judah recorded what happened during their reigns
describes further things that Jotham did. 37 During the reign
of Jotham, Yahweh prompted King Rezin of Aram and King
Pekah of Israel to start planning to attack Judah. 38 When
Jotham died, the Judeans buried him in the part of Jerusalem
that people called the City of David. That is where people had
buried his ancestors. Jotham's son Ahaz became the next king.

**16** When Pekah had been ruling Israel for almost 17
years, Ahaz son of Jotham became the king of Judah.
2 Ahaz was 20 years old when he became the king of Judah. He
ruled from Jerusalem for 16 years. He did not do things that
pleased Yahweh, the God he should have worshiped, the way
his ancestor King David had done. 3 Instead, he behaved in
the same sinful way that the kings of Israel behaved. He even
burned up his son as an offering to an idol. That was one of the
disgusting things that the people groups who had previously
lived in the land of Canaan had done. Yahweh drove those
people out so that the Israelites could settle in the land. 4 He
offered sacrifices and burned incense on hilltop shrines, on
the tops of many other hills, and under many big trees.

5 Then King Rezin of Aram and King Pekah of Israel led their
armies to attack Jerusalem. Those armies surrounded the city,
but they could not defeat the army of Ahaz and conquer it.
6 (When King Rezin of Aram led his army to invade Judah, he
forced the Judeans who were occupying and defending the city
of Elath to leave. He made that city part of his own kingdom.
Arameans went to live in Elath, and they have continued to
live there.)

7 King Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath Pileser of
Assyria to tell him, "I promise that I will become your subject
king if you come and rescue me from the armies of Aram
and Israel that are attacking me." 8 Ahaz took the silver and
gold that was in Yahweh's temple and that he was keeping in
the royal palace and sent it as tribute to the king of Assyria.
9 Tiglath Pileser agreed to do what Ahaz asked. He led his army
to attack Damascus, and they captured the city. He executed
Rezin. Then his army forced the people who lived in Damascus
to leave and go to live in the city of Kir.

10 Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet King Tiglath
Pileser. He saw the altar that was there. He sent Uriah, the
high priest in Jerusalem, a drawing of the altar and a detailed
description of how to build one like it. 11 So Uriah followed the
directions that King Ahaz had sent him, and he built an altar
*in Jerusalem* like the one in Damascus. Uriah worked hard to
finish the altar before Ahaz returned from Damascus. 12 When
King Ahaz returned from Damascus, he inspected the altar *and
approved of how Uriah had built it*. Then he brought sacrifices
and offered them on the altar. 13 He burned a sacrificial animal
and a grain offering on it. He also poured a wine offering onto it.
He also scattered on it the blood from his fellowship sacrifices.
14 There was a bronze altar *in the temple courtyard* where the
Israelites considered Yahweh to be especially present. *Uriah
had positioned the new altar so that the bronze altar* was between
the new altar and the temple. Ahaz had Uriah move the bronze
altar away from the temple and put it on the right side of
his new altar. 15 Then King Ahaz ordered Uriah, "I want you
to use this new altar for the sacrifices that the priests burn
completely each morning and for the grain offering that they
offer each evening. I also want you to use it for the burnt
offerings and grain offerings that I bring. I also want you to use
it for the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and wine offerings
that the people bring. When the priests offer animals as burnt
sacrifices or fellowship sacrifices, scatter the blood of those
animals against the sides of the altar. The old bronze altar will
be only for me to use when I pray." 16 So Uriah did what the
king commanded him to do.

17 King Ahaz told his workers to take off the panels of the
bronze carts that were outside the temple. He also told them
to take off the water basins that were on them. He also had
them take the giant water basin that people called a sea off the
backs of the bronze statues of oxen that it rested on. He had
them put it on stones they spread on the ground *so the basin
would not sink into the earth*. 18 Earlier one of the kings had had
his workers build a covered walkway that people could use to
get to the temple courtyard on the Sabbath day. Another king
had made a private entrance into the temple courtyard for the
kings of Judah. Ahaz had his workers take down that walkway
and close up that entrance. Ahaz did all these things in order
to please the king of Assyria. 19 The book in which the kings of
Judah recorded what happened during their reigns describes
further things that Ahaz did. 20 When Ahaz died, the Judeans
buried him in the part of Jerusalem that people called the
City of David. That is where people had buried his ancestors.
Ahaz's son Hezekiah became the next king.

**17** Hoshea son of Elah began to rule Israel after Ahaz had
ruled Judah for 12 years. Hoshea ruled in Samaria
for 9 years. 2 He did many things that Yahweh had told the

Israelites were evil. However, he did not do as many evil things as the previous kings of Israel had done. 3 King Shalmaneser of Assyria led his army to attack and defeat the army of King Hoshea. Hoshea became a vassal of Shalmaneser, who forced the Israelites to pay him tribute each year. 4 Then Hoshea secretly plotted to rebel against the king of Assyria. He sent messengers to King So of Egypt*, asking if his army would help the Israelites become free from Assyrian control*. Hoshea also stopped paying tribute to Assyria each year. But the king of Assyria discovered what Hoshea was doing, so *he invaded and conquered Israel and* put Hoshea in prison. 5 King Shalmaneser led his army to invade Israel. They conquered the other important cities and towns in the kingdom, and then they besieged the city of Samaria. The Israelites were able to resist for three years, 6 but finally the army of Assyria defeated them and conquered the city. This happened after King Hoshea had been ruling Israel for nine years. The Assyrians took the Israelites as captives to Assyria. They made them live in the city of Halah, near the Habor River in the region of Gozan, and in cities in the kingdom of Media*, which the Assyrians had conquered*.

7 This happened because the Israelite people sinned against Yahweh their God. Even though he had rescued their ancestors from Egypt, where they were slaves to Pharaoh, they began to worship other gods. 8 They imitated the things that the people groups around them did. Those were the people groups that Yahweh had forced to leave the land so that the Israelites could settle there. The people of Israel also did the same evil things that most of their kings did. 9 The Israelite people pretended they were worshiping Yahweh their God even as they did things he had forbidden. They built shrines for idols on the hills around their cities. No matter how many or few people lived in a place, they would build a shrine for it. 10 They set up stone pillars to honor false gods and poles to worship the goddess Asherah. They set them up on the tops of many hills and under many big trees. 11 The Israelites burned incense in the places where they worshiped those false gods. That was what the people groups had done that Yahweh forced to leave so that the Israelites could live in the land. The Israelites did many wicked things that made Yahweh angry. 12 They worshiped idols, even though Yahweh had specifically commanded them not to do that. 13 Yahweh frequently sent his prophets and seers to warn the people of Israel and the people of Judah. The message that Yahweh spoke through them was, “Stop doing all the evil things you have been doing! Instead, obey all the laws that I gave to your ancestors and that my prophets are now telling you to obey.” 14 But the Israelite people did not do what the prophets told them to do. They were stubborn, just as their ancestors had been. Their ancestors had not truly believed in Yahweh their God. 15 Yahweh had given them laws to obey. He had made a covenant with their ancestors. Yahweh sent prophets to warn them to stop disobeying him. But they disregarded all those things. Instead, they worshiped worthless idols, and as a result, they became worthless themselves. Yahweh had commanded them not to do the things that the people groups did that lived near them. But they disobeyed his command. 16 The Israelite people completely disobeyed the commands that Yahweh had given them. They made two metal images of calves and worshiped them. They set up poles to worship the goddess Asherah, and they also worshiped the false god Baal. They bowed down to the sun, the moon, and stars. 17 They also burned their own sons and daughters as sacrifices to false gods. They practiced sorcery and fortune telling. They continually chose to do things that Yahweh had told them were evil. That made Yahweh very angry. 18 And because Yahweh was so angry with the Israelite people, he allowed their enemies to take them away from their country. Only the people of the tribe of Judah remained in the land.

19 But even the people of Judah did not obey the commands of Yahweh their God. Instead, they did the same evil things that the people of the northern kingdom of Israel were doing. 20 So Yahweh rejected the people of Israel and of Judah. He punished them by allowing others to make them suffer. Raiders came into their land and took away their valuable possessions. Finally, the armies of other nations defeated them and carried them away from their land as prisoners. 21 Earlier, Yahweh had led ten of the Israelite tribes to reject David’s descendants as their kings. Instead, those tribes chose Jeroboam son of Nebat to be their king. But Jeroboam led the people of Israel to stop worshiping Yahweh *and to worship idols instead*. He led them to commit serious sins. 22 The Israelite people continued to do the sinful things that Jeroboam had done. They did not stop doing those sinful things. 23 So Yahweh finally allowed a foreign army to conquer the Israelites and remove them from their land. That was just what he had told his prophets to warn them would happen. The Assyrians took the Israelite people to their own land, and they are still there.

24 To replace the Israelites, the king of Assyria ordered his soldiers to bring in groups of people from the cities of Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim. What had been the northern kingdom of Israel was now their land, and those people settled in its cities. 25 But when those people first arrived in Israel, they did not worship Yahweh. So Yahweh allowed lions to attack them, and the lions killed some of them. 26 Some officials of the king of Assyria *found out about this* and told him, “The people who have settled in the cities of Samaria do not know how to worship the God whom people should worship if they live in that land. So that God is allowing lions to attack them and kill them because they are not worshiping him properly.”

27 So the king of Assyria commanded his officers, “Get one of the priests whom you brought here from that place. Tell him to move back there and teach the people who are now living there how to worship the God of that land properly.” 28 So the officers sent back one of the Israelite priests. That priest went to live in the city of Bethel. From there he taught the people who had settled in the land how to worship Yahweh properly. 29 But the people of each of those nations also made idols to represent their own gods. They put them in the shrines that the Israelites had built on the tops of hills. Each group of people put idols representing their gods in the shrines near the cities where they lived. 30 The people from Babylon made idols to represent their god Succoth Benoth. The people from Cuthah made idols to represent their god Nergal. The people from Hamath made idols to represent their god Ashima. 31 The people from Avva made idols to represent their gods Nibhaz and Tartak. The people from Sepharvaim sacrificed their own children by burning them up on altars as offerings to their gods Adrammelech and Anammelech 32 Those people worshiped Yahweh, but they also appointed men from their own groups to be priests at the hilltop shrines. Those priests

offered sacrifices in the shrines to foreign gods. 33 So they
worshiped Yahweh, but they also worshiped their own gods,
just as the people living in their home countries did.
34 The people who live in that area still act the way the
first settlers did. Yahweh gave Jacob the new name Israel, and
he gave his descendants laws to obey. But those people do
not obey those laws. So they do not really worship Yahweh.
35 Yahweh had made a covenant with the Israelites. He had
commanded them, “Do not revere other gods or bow down to
them *to honor them*. Do not worship them or offer sacrifices
to them. 36 I, Yahweh, rescued you from slavery in Egypt by
my very great power. So I am the only God you are to revere.
I am the one to whom you must bow down *to honor*. I am the
one to whom you must offer sacrifices. 37 You must always
carefully obey all of the laws that I told Moses to write down
for you. You must not revere other gods. 38 You must never
forget the covenant that I made with you. You must not revere
other gods. 39 I, Yahweh, am the only God you are to revere. If
you do that, I will prevent any enemy from conquering you.”
40 But the people who live in what was the kingdom of Israel
*do* not carefully *obey Yahweh’s law*. Instead, they still act the
way the first settlers did. 41 Each generation of these people
has acted in the same way. They worship Yahweh, but they
also worship idols that represent their gods. That was what
their ancestors did, and that is what they still do.

**18** After Hoshea had been ruling Israel for almost three
years, Hezekiah son of Ahaz began to rule Judah.
2 Hezekiah was 25 years old when he became the king of
Judah. He ruled from Jerusalem for 29 years. His mother
was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. 3 Hezekiah did things that
pleased Yahweh, just as his ancestor King David had done.
4 He had his servants destroy the shrines that were on the
tops of hills. He also had them smash the stone pillars that
represented Baal. He had them cut down *and burn* the poles
that people had set up for worshiping the goddess Asherah.
He also broke into pieces the bronze replica of a snake that
Moses had made. Hezekiah did that because at that time, the
people were burning incense in front of it to honor it. (They
had named it Nehushtan.) 5 Hezekiah trusted in Yahweh, the
God whom the Israelites worshiped. No king who ruled Judah
before him or after him was as devoted to Yahweh as he was.
6 Hezekiah remained loyal to Yahweh and did not disobey
him. He carefully obeyed the commandments that Yahweh
had given to Moses. 7 Yahweh helped Hezekiah. As a result, he
won victories wherever he led his troops to fight their enemies.
Hezekiah refused to be a subject of the king of Assyria and
obey him. 8 Hezekiah led his army against the Philistines, and
they defeated them in battles throughout their territory as far
south as the city of Gaza and the area around it.
9 After Hezekiah had been ruling Judah for almost four
years and Hoshea had been ruling Israel for almost seven
years, the army of King Shalmaneser of Assyria invaded Israel
and surrounded the city of Samaria. 10 After three years, they
captured the city. That was when Hezekiah had been ruling
Judah for almost six years and Hoshea had been ruling Israel
for almost nine years. 11 The king of Assyria commanded his
soldiers to take the Israelites as captives to Assyria. They made
them live in the city of Halah, near the Habor River in the
region of Gozan, and in cities in the kingdom of Media*, which
the Assyrians had conquered*. 12 That happened because the
Israelites did not obey the commandments that Yahweh their
God had given them. They disobeyed the solemn agreement
that Yahweh had made with their ancestors. That agreement
included the laws that Moses had told them to obey. They
were not careful to obey those laws.
13 After Hezekiah had been ruling Judah for almost 14
years, King Sennacherib of Assyria led his army to attack all of
the cities in Judah that had walls around them. They started
capturing these cities one by one. 14 King Hezekiah sent a
message to Sennacherib at the city of Lachish, which he and
his army were trying to capture. He told him, “What I did
was wrong. Please tell your soldiers to stop attacking us. If
you do that, I will pay you whatever you tell me to pay.”
The king of Assyria told Hezekiah that he had to pay him 10,
000 kilograms of silver and 1, 000 kilograms of gold. 15 So
Hezekiah sent him all the silver that was in Yahweh’s temple
and that he was keeping in the royal palace. 16 *To get the gold
he needed,* Hezekiah had his workers strip off the gold that
he had earlier put on the doors and doorposts of the temple.
He sent all that gold to the king of Assyria. 17 But the king
of Assyria sent *three of his most important officials,* the Tartan,
the Rabsaris, and the Rabshakeh, with a large army from
the city of Lachish to persuade King Hezekiah to surrender.
When the army reached Jerusalem, they stopped alongside
the aqueduct through which water flowed from the Upper
Pool into Jerusalem. They stopped at the place where it went
under the road that led to the Field of the Fuller. 18 Those
officials sent a message to King Hezekiah *saying that they had
a message for him from the king of Assyria*. Hezekiah sent three
of his officials to speak with them. He sent Eliakim son of
Hilkiah, who was in charge of the palace. He also sent Shebna,
his official secretary, and Joah son of Asaph, the official who
reported to the people everything that Hezekiah decided they
should do.
19 The Rabshakeh told them to tell Hezekiah, “The great
king, the king of Assyria, says that you have no reason to
expect that anyone will help you fight against him. 20 You
claim that you have a strong enough army and good enough
plans to resist him. But that is only talk. *You can not resist him
alone, and* you can not depend on anyone else to help you. So
you should not have rebelled against him. 21 You are relying
on the army of Egypt to help you. But you must realize that
that is like using a broken reed as a staff for support. The
pointed end of such a staff would make a hole in the hand
of anyone who tried to use it! That is what the king of Egypt
is like. He hurts anyone who relies on him for help.” 22 *The
Rabshakeh then said to Hezekiah’s officials,* “Perhaps you will
tell me that you are relying on Yahweh your God to help you.
But he *will not help you, because* Hezekiah has insulted him
by destroying his hilltop shrines and the altars on which the
Judeans were offering sacrifices to him. Hezekiah has required
everyone who lives in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Judah to
worship only at the altar in Jerusalem. 23 *So tell Hezekiah for
me that* I am offering him a deal on behalf of my master, the
king of Assyria. I will give him 2,000 horses if he still has
enough healthy soldiers to ride on them! 24 But also tell him
that I know that even if I gave him those horses, he would
not be able to defeat even one of the weakest soldiers in our
army. Tell him I know that is why he is hoping that the king of

Egypt will send chariots and soldiers on horseback to help him.
25 Furthermore, do not think that we have come to destroy
Jerusalem without Yahweh's help. It is Yahweh himself who
told us to come here and destroy this land!"

26 Then Eliakim told the Rabshakeh on behalf of himself
and Shebna and Joah, "Sir, please speak to us in your own
Aramaic language. We understand it. Do not keep speaking to
us in our Judean language. The people who are standing on
the wall can *hear and* understand you*, and you are frightening
them*." 27 But the Rabshakeh told Eliakim, "You should not
think that my master sent me to say these things only to your
king and to you and not also to the people on the wall who
are listening! *If you do not surrender, we will besiege the city,
and soon* they will have nothing to eat but their own dung and
nothing to drink but their own urine. The three of you will
also have nothing else to eat or drink." 28 Then the Rabshakeh
directly faced the people on the wall. He shouted to them in
Judean, "Listen to this message from the great king, the king
of Assyria. 29 He says that you must not allow Hezekiah to
deceive you. Hezekiah will not be able to rescue you from
his army. 30 He says that you must not allow Hezekiah to
persuade you to rely on Yahweh by telling you that Yahweh
will certainly rescue you and that the army of Assyria will
never capture this city! 31 Do not let Hezekiah persuade you!
The king of Assyria says that you should come out of the city
and surrender to him. He says that if you do that, *instead of
being very hungry as you are now,* you will be able to eat the
grapes and figs you have grown and drink water from your
own wells. 32 He promises that you will be able to do that until
his soldiers come and take you to a land that is like your land.
It will be a land where you can grow grain to make bread and
grow grapes to make wine. It will be a land that has groves of
olive trees that produce oil and whose bees produce honey.
The king encourages you to survive *by surrendering* rather than
die *by continuing to resist*. He says that Hezekiah is deceiving
you when he says that Yahweh will rescue you and so you
must not believe him. 33 The king reminds you that none of the
gods that the people of other nations worship have been able
to prevent him from conquering those nations! 34 The gods of
Hamath and Arpad did not come and rescue the people who
lived there! The gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah did not
come and rescue the people who lived there! And even the
gods of Samaria did not prevent me from conquering it! 35 The
king reminds you that none of these gods prevented him from
conquering the people who worshiped them. So do not think
that Yahweh will prevent him from conquering Jerusalem."

36 King Hezekiah had told the people, "When the Rabshakeh
speaks to you, do not answer him." So the people who were
listening did not say anything in reply to him. 37 Then Eliakim,
Shebna, and Joah tore their clothes *because they were extremely
distressed*. They went back to Hezekiah and told him what the
Rabshakeh had said.

**19** When King Hezekiah heard what the Rabshakeh had
said, *to show how distressed he was,* he tore his regular
clothes and wore rough cloth instead. Then he went into *the
courtyard of* Yahweh's temple *to pray*. 2 Then Hezekiah sent
Eliakim, Shebna, and some of the older priests to go and speak
with the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. All those men were
also wearing rough cloth *to show their distress*. 3 The men told
Isaiah, "King Hezekiah says that we are now in great trouble.
Yahweh seems to be punishing us for our sins. Foreigners are
insulting us *because we do not seem to have a God who can help
us*. Our lives are in danger, like the lives of the mother and
child when it is time for a woman to give birth but she does
not have the strength to push her baby out. 4 The Rabshakeh
insulted the only true God. That was what his master, the
king of Assyria, sent him to do. Perhaps Yahweh your God
heard everything that he said. Perhaps he will punish him
for saying those things. King Hezekiah asks you to pray for
those of us who are still alive here in Jerusalem." 5 After the
messengers from Hezekiah told Isaiah these things, 6 Isaiah
told them to go back to the king and tell him that Yahweh
said to him, "Those soldiers of the king of Assyria insulted
me *by saying that I was no better than the false gods that other
nations worship*. But you should not let what they said make
you afraid. 7 I am going to send a spirit to Sennacherib *that
will make him anxious*. Then he will hear a rumor that will
worry him so much that he will return to his own country.
There some men will assassinate him." 8 To report what had
happened in Jerusalem, the Rabshakeh went to Libnah. He
went there because he learned that the Assyrian army had left
Lachish. The king of Assyria was then leading an attack against
Libnah. 9 Soon after that, King Sennacherib received a report
that King Tirhakah of Cush was leading his army to attack
them. *So he did not attack Jerusalem right away, but instead* he
sent more messengers to King Hezekiah. 10 The king told his
messengers to tell Hezekiah, "Yahweh your God is promising
you that my army will never capture Jerusalem. You trust
Yahweh, but he is not telling the truth, so do not believe him.
11 You have certainly heard what the armies of the kings of
Assyria have done to all the other lands they invaded. They
have completely destroyed them. So do not think that you
will escape! 12 The gods of other nations did not rescue them.
Instead, the armies of previous kings of Assyria destroyed
them. That is what happened to the people of Gozan, Haran,
and Rezeph and the Edenites who lived in Tel Assar. 13 The
Assyrians defeated and killed the kings of Hamath and Arpad
and the cities of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah."

14 The messengers gave Hezekiah a letter from the Assyrian
king that said the same thing they had told him. Hezekiah read
the letter. Then he went to the temple. The Assyrian king had
written the letter on a scroll, and Hezekiah unrolled the scroll
so that the writing would be visible as he prayed to Yahweh.
15 Then Hezekiah prayed, "Yahweh, you are the God to whom
we Israelites belong. You are present in a special way above
the statues of the winged creatures that are above the sacred
chest in your temple. You are the only true God. You rule
all the kingdoms on this earth. You are the one who created
everything on the earth and in the heavens. 16 So, Yahweh,
please pay attention to me as I speak, and look at what the
king of Assyria has written. Listen *as I read it aloud* to what
King Sennacherib has said to insult you, the only true God.
17 Yahweh, it is true that the armies of the kings of Assyria
have completely destroyed many people groups and the lands
in which they were living. 18 It is also true that they have
burned up the idols of those nations. But those were not really
gods. They were only wooden or stone statues. Humans made
them, and that is why the Assyrians were able to destroy them
so easily. 19 So now, Yahweh our God, please prevent the king

of Assyria from conquering us. That way the people in all the kingdoms of the world will know that you, Yahweh, are the only true God."

20 Then Isaiah sent a message to Hezekiah. He told him,
"Yahweh, the God to whom we Israelites belong, says that he
will do what you asked him to do when you prayed to him
about Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. 21 Yahweh says that
the people of Jerusalem will belittle him and make fun of him.
They will shake their heads to ridicule him as he runs away
from the city with his army. 22 Yahweh says that the Assyrian
king should not have insulted and made fun of him, the holy
God whom the Israelites worship. He should not have shouted
at him or proudly looked up at the sky. 23 Yahweh says that the
Assyrian king sent messengers to make fun of him. Through
those messengers, *boasting about his military conquests,* he said
that it was as if he had led his many chariots to the highest
and most distant mountains in Lebanon. He said it was as if he
and his soldiers had cut down the tallest cedar trees and best
cypress trees in Lebanon. *Boasting that he would now conquer
Jerusalem,* he said that it was as if he and his army would now
go to the place where people most want to go in Lebanon. That
is a place where workers have made a beautiful park in the
midst of the forest. 24 Yahweh says that the Assyrian king is
boasting that *in order to march through desolate regions,* he and
his soldiers have dug wells in other countries to get water. He
is also boasting that he will conquer Matsor*, which people also
call Egypt,* as easily as a person can stamp out a small puddle
of water.

25 But Yahweh says that the Assyrian king should realize
that he planned long ago for those things to happen. Now he
is causing them to occur. That is why the king's army has been
capturing and destroying many cities that were surrounded
by high walls. 26 The people who lived in those cities were not
able to resist the Assyrians. This discouraged them and shamed
them. The Assyrians destroyed them as easily as someone can
cut down green plants that are growing in a field. The Assyrians
destroyed them just as the heat of the sun destroys grass on
the roof of a house before it can grow. 27 But, Yahweh says,
he knows where the king of Assyria lives. He knows when he
leaves home and when he returns. He knows when the king
yells at him angrily. 28 Yahweh says that he has heard the king
yelling at him angrily. As a result, he is going to force him to
return to his own country *without conquering Jerusalem* by the
same route that he took to get here. It will be as if Yahweh
puts a hook in his nose and a bit in his mouth in order to make
him go where he wants him to go.

29 Here is a sign for you, Hezekiah*, to show that this message
is truly from Yahweh*. This year, you and your people will eat
wild grain. Next year, you will eat the grain that grows from
the seeds of those wild plants. But the following year, you
Israelites will be able to plant grain and harvest it. You will
be able to plant vineyards and eat the grapes. 30 The people
in Judah who remain alive will once again prosper and have
many sons and daughters, like plants whose roots go deep
down into the ground and that produce much fruit. 31 People
will survive the Assyrian invasion. Afterwards, many of them
will move from Jerusalem on Mount Zion to resettle other parts
of Judah. Yahweh will eagerly make this happen. 32 Yahweh
declares that the king of Assyria will not bring his army to this
city. His soldiers will not shoot a single arrow at it. His soldiers
will not appear outside of it carrying shields. They will not
build a high mound of dirt against the city wall to try to get
over it. 33 Yahweh says that the king of Assyria will not lead his
army to this city. Instead, they will return to their own country
by the same route that they took to get here. 34 Yahweh says
that he will defend this city and prevent the Assyrians from
destroying it. He will do that to show that he is the one true
God and because of what he promised to his servant David*,
that his descendants would always rule in Jerusalem*."

35 That night, an angel representing Yahweh went to the
place where the Assyrian soldiers had set up their tents. He
killed 185,000 of the soldiers. When the rest of the soldiers
woke up the next morning, they saw the dead bodies of all
those soldiers. 36 Then King Sennacherib had his soldiers take
down their tents, and he led them away from Israel. They
returned to Assyria, and Sennacherib remained in the city of
Nineveh. 37 One day King Sennacherib was worshiping in the
temple of his god Nisroch. *Two of his sons,* Adrammelech and
Sharezer, killed him with their swords. Then they escaped
to the region of Ararat. Sennacherib's *other* son Esarhaddon
became the next king of Assyria.

**20** Around that time, Hezekiah became so sick that he
was in danger of dying. The prophet Isaiah son of
Amoz came to him and told him, "Yahweh says that you
should tell the people in your palace what you want them
to do after you die. You should do that because you are not
going to recover from this illness. Instead, you are going to
die." 2 Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall *so that he
could have privacy* and prayed to Yahweh. He said, 3 "Yahweh,
please do not forget that I have served you loyally and I have
devoted myself entirely to you. I have done things that pleased
you." Then Hezekiah started to cry loudly. 4 Isaiah *left the
king, but* before he had crossed the middle courtyard of the
palace, Yahweh gave him a message. He said, 5 "Go back to
Hezekiah, the king of Judah, and tell him that I, Yahweh, the
God whom his ancestor King David worshiped, have heard
what he prayed. I have seen how he has been crying. Tell him
that I will heal him. Two days from now, he will be able to go
to my temple. 6 Tell him that I will enable him to live for 15
more years. Promise him that I will prevent the king of Assyria
from defeating him and conquering this city. I will defend
this city to show that I am the one true God and because of
what I promised to my servant David." 7 Isaiah *came back and
told Hezekiah what Yahweh had said, then he* told Hezekiah's
servants, "Make a paste from figs." The servants made the fig
paste and put it on the sore place on Hezekiah's body. Then
he recovered.

8 Hezekiah had asked Isaiah *when he told him that Yahweh
would heal him*, "Will Yahweh please give me a sign to show
that he is going to heal me and that two days from now I will
be able to go to his temple?" 9 Isaiah had replied, "Yahweh will
do something that will prove to you that he will do what he
promised. The shadow has gone ten steps down the stairway
*that serves as a sundial*. Do you want him to make it go back
up those ten steps?" 10 Hezekiah replied, "It would be easy to
move the shadow farther down the steps *because that is how it
always moves*. So do not ask Yahweh to do that. Instead, ask
him to make it go back up those ten steps." 11 So Isaiah prayed
earnestly to Yahweh, and Yahweh caused the shadow to go

ten steps back up the stairs that King Ahaz had his workers build *as a sundial*.

12 Berodach Baladan had become the king of Babylon after
his father Baladan died. Around this time, he learned that King
Hezekiah had been very sick. So he sent messengers to him.
They brought a gift to Hezekiah, along with a letter *that said*
*how glad Berodach Baladan was that Hezekiah had recovered*.
13 When the messengers arrived, Hezekiah listened when they
read the letter to him from Berodach Baladan. Then he showed
them all the valuable possessions he was keeping in his palace.
He showed them the silver and the gold, the spices, the special
olive oil, and the weapons for his soldiers. He showed them
all the valuable things that were in his storerooms and in
other places in his kingdom. 14 Then the prophet Isaiah went
to Hezekiah and asked him, "Where did those men come from,
and what did they say to you?" Hezekiah replied, "They came
from a country that is far from here. They came from Babylon."
15 Isaiah asked, "What did they see in your palace?" Hezekiah
replied, "I showed them everything in my palace. I showed
them all the valuable things that are in my storerooms."

16 Then Isaiah told him, "Yahweh is telling you 17 that there
will be a time when the Babylonian army will take away all the
valuable things in your palace. That includes the things that
your ancestors have put there over the years. They will leave
nothing valuable here. This is what Yahweh is telling you.
18 He is also telling you that the Babylonian army will force
some of your own descendants to go to Babylon. There they
will be eunuchs in the royal palace." 19 Then Hezekiah replied
to Isaiah, "I accept what Yahweh has said in the message
you have delivered." He said that because he was thinking,
"Even if that happens, the people of my kingdom will live
peacefully and safely for as long as I am alive." 20 The book in
which the kings of Judah recorded what happened during their
reigns describes further things that Hezekiah did, including
the victories that his armies won. That book also describes
how he had his workers build a reservoir in the city and a
tunnel to bring water into that reservoir. 21 When Hezekiah
died, his son Manasseh became the next king of Judah.

**21** Manasseh was 12 years old when he began to rule.
He ruled Judah for 55 years in Jerusalem. His mother
was Hephzibah. 2 He did many things that Yahweh had told
the Israelites were evil. He imitated the disgusting practices
of the nations that Yahweh had forced to leave the land of
Canaan so that the Israelites could settle there. 3 His father
Hezekiah had destroyed the shrines where the Judeans had
worshiped on the tops of hills. But Manasseh commanded his
workers to rebuild those shrines. He had his workers build
altars for Baal. He also had them set up a pole for the worship
of the goddess Asherah, as King Ahab of Israel had previously
done. Manasseh also bowed down to the sun, moon, and stars
to worship them. 4 He directed his workers to build altars
*for worshiping foreign gods* and to put them inside Yahweh's
temple, even though Yahweh had said, "Jerusalem will be the
place where people worship me." 5 He also had his workers
make altars for the sun, moon, and stars and put them in the
courtyards for the priests and the people in the temple area.
6 He even burned his own son as a sacrifice to a false god.
He performed rituals to practice sorcery. He allowed people
to dig pits so they could use them try to contact people who
had died. People also used those pits to try to talk to spirits
that they thought could tell them things that people otherwise
could not know. He did very many things that Yahweh had
told the Israelites were evil, and that made Yahweh very angry.
7 He placed the pole for the worship of the goddess Asherah
inside the temple building. That was the place about which
Yahweh had said to David and his son Solomon, "I will make
Jerusalem, and especially this temple, places where people
will always worship me. I chose Jerusalem for that purpose
from among all of the cities in the land of Israel. 8 And if the
Israelite people carefully obey all my commands and all the
laws that I gave to them through my servant Moses, I will not
make them wander again. They will be able to stay in this
land that I gave to their ancestors." 9 But the people did not
carefully obey Yahweh. Manasseh persuaded them to commit
sins that were even worse than the sins that the people of
the nations committed whom Yahweh destroyed so that the
Israelites could settle in the land of Canaan.

10 Yahweh sent prophets to warn Manasseh and the people
of Judah. They said, 11 "*Yahweh is angry with* King Manasseh
of Judah because he has done disgusting evil things. They
are worse than the things the Amorites did who lived in the
land before the Israelites. Manasseh has also influenced the
people of Judah to sin against Yahweh by worshiping the
idols that he has made. 12 Therefore Yahweh, the God whom
we Israelite people worship, says that he is going to make
something terrible happen to Jerusalem and the rest of Judah.
It will be so terrible that it will shock everyone who hears
about it. 13 He says that he will judge and punish the people
of Jerusalem by the same standards that he used to judge
the people of Samaria and the descendants of Ahab. When
people wipe a plate clean, they turn it over to make sure that
they have left nothing on it. In the same way, Yahweh will
destroy Jerusalem and make sure that there is nothing left
of it. 14 Some of its people will survive, but he will not help
them, even though he had chosen the Israelites as his special
people. Instead, he will allow their enemies to conquer them
and take them and all of their valuable possessions away from
their land. 15 He will do this because his people have done
things that he has told them are very evil. This has made him
very angry. They have been making him angry ever since the
time when their ancestors left Egypt."

16 Manasseh also had his soldiers kill very many innocent
people throughout the city of Jerusalem. He did this in
addition to committing sins that influenced the people of
Judah to commit sins by doing things that Yahweh had told
the Israelites were evil. 17 The book in which the kings of
Judah recorded what happened during their reigns describes
further things that Manasseh did, including the many sins that
he committed. 18 When Manasseh died, the Judeans buried
him in the garden outside his palace. A man whose name was
Uzza had previously owned that land. Manasseh's son Amon
became the next king of Judah.

19 Amon was 22 years old when he became king. He
ruled Judah from Jerusalem for two years. His mother was
Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz. She was from the city of
Jotbah. 20 He did many things that Yahweh had told the
Israelites were evil, just as his father Manasseh had done. 21 He
behaved just as his father had behaved. He worshiped the
same idols that his father had worshiped. He bowed down to

those idols to worship them. 22 He did not worship Yahweh,
the God whom his ancestors had worshiped. He did not behave
as Yahweh has said people should behave. 23 Amon's officials
plotted against him. They assassinated him in his palace. 24 But
then the people of Judah killed all those who had assassinated
King Amon. They appointed his son Josiah to be their next
king. 25 The book in which the kings of Judah recorded what
happened during their reigns describes further things that
Amon did. 26 The Judeans buried Amon in the tomb in the
garden that Uzza had formerly owned. Amon's son Josiah
became the next king.

**22** Josiah was 8 years old when he became the king of
Judah. He ruled from Jerusalem for 31 years. His
mother was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah. She was from the
city of Bozkath. 2 Josiah did things that pleased Yahweh. He
behaved in the same godly manner as his ancestor King David
had behaved. He did not behave differently at all.

3 After Josiah had been ruling for almost eighteen years,
he sent his secretary Shaphan, whose father was Azaliah and
whose grandfather was Meshullam, to Yahweh's temple. He
told him, 4 "The priests who supervise the courtyard entrance
have collected money from the people and brought it into the
temple. Go and tell the high priest Hilkiah to get that money,
count it, and put it in bags. 5 Tell him to give the money to the
men who are supervising the work of repairing the temple.
They are to use it to pay the men who are doing the actual
work of making the repairs that the temple needs. 6 They
must use it to pay carpenters and builders and masons and to
buy timber and stones that workers have shaped. The skilled
workers will use that timber and stone to repair the temple."
7 The men who supervise the work are completely honest. So
you do not need to require them to report how they spend the
money you give them.

8 *So Shaphan did that, and later* Hilkiah reported to him, "I
have found a scroll in the temple that records the laws that
God gave to Moses." Hilkiah gave the scroll to Shaphan, and
he read it. 9 Then Shaphan went to King Josiah and told him,
"I gave the priests your instructions, and they have emptied
the chest in which they were collecting money for the temple.
They have given the money to the men who are supervising
the work of repairing the temple." 10 Then Shaphan also told
the king, "Hilkiah gave me this scroll." And Shaphan read
to the king what the scroll recorded. 11 When the king heard
the laws that Shaphan was reading to him from the scroll,
he tore his robes *to show how concerned he was that Yahweh
would punish the Judeans*. 12 Then King Josiah gave special
instructions to Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Akbor son of
Micaiah, Shaphan his royal secretary, and Asaiah, his special
advisor. He told them, 13 "Now that Hilkiah has found this
scroll, I want you to go and ask Yahweh what I and the people
of Jerusalem and the rest of Judah should do about what it
says. Our ancestors did not obey the commandments that this
scroll records. They should have done everything that Moses
wrote we should do. So Yahweh must be very angry with us."

14 So Hilkiah, Ahikam, Akbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went
to consult a woman whose name was Huldah. She was a
prophetess, and she lived in the Second Quarter of Jerusalem.
She was married to Shallum, whose father was Tikvah and
whose grandfather was Harhas. Shallum took care of the
garments that the priests wore in the temple. Those five men
told Huldah about the scroll that Hilkiah had found. 15 In
response, she told them, "Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites
worship, says that wants you to say something to the man
who sent you to me. 16 Yahweh says that he is going to make
something terrible happen to this city and to the people who
live here. He is going to punish them in the way that the
scroll King Josiah read describes. 17 He is going to do that
because they stopped worshiping him and burned incense to
*honor* other gods. They made many idols, and that made him
very angry. He is so angry with them that he is going punish
them. 18 But there is something further that you are to tell
the king of Judah, who sent you to ask Yahweh about what
the scroll said. Yahweh, the God whom we Israelites worship,
says that 19 he is going to treat him mercifully. Yahweh will
do that because he was so sad and he acted humbly toward
me when he heard what Yahweh said he was going to do to
punish this city and the people who live here. Yahweh said
that he was going to do something so terrible that it would
horrify people. People would curse other places by saying they
wanted them to become like Jerusalem. But when King Josiah
heard that, he wept and tore his robes *to show his distress*. He
knew that Yahweh was watching him. That is why Yahweh
declares that he is going to treat him mercifully. 20 Yahweh
wants you to tell Josiah that because he was sorry for the
sins of Judah, Yahweh is going to allow him to die peacefully.
The Judeans will bury him in the same place where people
buried his ancestors. Yahweh is still going to cause something
terrible to happen to Jerusalem and the people who live in it.
But Josiah will not be alive to see that." The officials returned
to King Josiah and reported what Huldah had told them.

**23** King Josiah then sent messengers to summon all the
elders of Jerusalem and of the other places in the
kingdom of Judah. 2 Those elders, along with many ordinary
people from Judah and Jerusalem, gathered in the temple
courtyard with the king. Many priests and prophets also came.
A great crowd representing all the kinds of people in the city
was there. While they all listened, the king read to them from
the scroll that had been in the temple. He all of the laws that
Yahweh had given the Israelites when he made his solemn
agreement with them. 3 Then the king stood next to a pillar *on
the temple porch* and he made a solemn agreement with Yahweh
that he would live as Yahweh wanted him to live. He promised
to obey all of Yahweh's laws sincerely and devotedly. In that
way, the solemn agreement that the scroll from the temple
described became the law of Israel once again. The Judean
people who had gathered at the temple courtyard promised
to obey that solemn agreement.

4 Then the king gave a command to the high priest Hilkiah,
the other leading priests, and the priests who supervised the
courtyard entrance. He told them to remove from the temple
all the objects that people had been using to worship Baal,
Asherah, and the sun, moon, and stars. They took those outside
the city to the Kidron Valley and burned them completely
there. Then they took all the ashes to the city of Bethel.
5 Previous kings of Judah had appointed many pagan priests
to burn incense at hilltop shrines near many cities in Judah
and in the area around Jerusalem. Those priests had been
offering sacrifices to Baal and to the sun, moon, and stars.

King Josiah stopped them from doing those things. 6 Josiah ordered his servants to remove the pole for the worship of the goddess Asherah that was inside the temple building. He told them to take it outside Jerusalem to the Kidron Valley and burn it. He ordered them to pound the ashes to powder and scatter the powder in a graveyard for ordinary people that was in that area. 7 There were male prostitutes living in small houses near the temple. In those houses, women also wove articles that people used in the worship of Asherah. Josiah tore down those houses *and ended the activities that took place in them*. 8 Josiah also brought to Jerusalem all the priests who had been burning incense at hilltop shrines near other cities in Judah. He ordered his servants to demolish all of those hilltop shrines, everywhere in his kingdom. There were similar shrines in Jerusalem near the gate of Joshua, the governor of Jerusalem. That gate was to the left of the main city gate. Josiah ordered his servants to destroy those shrines as well. 9 (Josiah did not allow the priests he had brought to Jerusalem from the hilltop shrines to offer sacrifices on the altar in the temple courtyard in Jerusalem. But he did allow them to eat the food that the priests received as their share of sacrifices that people brought.) 10 There was a place that people called Topheth in the Valley of Ben Hinnom where people used to burn their children as sacrifices to the false god Molech. Josiah had his servants destroy that place *so that no one would do that anymore*. 11 Previous kings of Judah had dedicated horses to pull chariots in processions in honor of the sun. There were stables for those horses near the entrance to the temple. A royal official whose name was Nathan Melech was responsible for the horses, and he lived in an apartment near the stables. King Josiah had his servants take the horses away from the temple and destroy the chariots by burning them. 12 Previous kings of Judah had built altars *for worshiping the sun, moon, and stars* on the palace roof. They were near the room that King Ahaz had made for himself. King Manasseh had also built altars in the two courtyards in the temple area. Josiah commanded his servants to destroy all those altars. He told them to take the debris from the altars away quickly and throw it down into the Kidron Valley. 13 King Solomon had built shrines east of Jerusalem, on the south side of the Mount of Destruction, for the disgusting gods that other people groups worshiped. He built a shrine for Ashtoreth, whom the Sidonians worshiped. He built one for Chemosh, whom the Moabites worshiped. And he built one for Milcom, whom the Ammonites worshiped. Josiah commanded his servants to ruin those shrines. 14 He also had them smash the stone pillars that represented Baal. He had them cut down *and burn* the poles that people had set up for worshiping the goddess Asherah. And he had them scatter human bones on the ground there *to make those places ritually unclean*.

15 Jeroboam son of Nebat had made an altar and a shrine at Bethel. He had influenced the Israelites to sin *by worshiping idols* when he did that. Josiah had his servants tear down the altar and the shrine, and he had them burn the shrine and crush what remained into dust. He also had them burn the pole that people had been using to worship Asherah. 16 Then Josiah looked around and saw some tombs on a nearby hill. He commanded his servants to take bones out of those tombs and burn them on the altar. This made the altar ritually unclean. Josiah did exactly what Yahweh had told a prophet *many years before* to say would happen. 17 Then Josiah *saw a tomb and* asked, “Whose tomb is that?” The people of Bethel replied, “It is the tomb of the prophet who came from Judah and predicted these things that you have just done to this altar.” 18 Josiah replied, “Leave the bones of that prophet in his tomb.” So the people did not remove his bones or the bones of the old prophet who had lived in that area *and who had deceived the other prophet so that he died*. 19 Josiah also ordered his servants to destroy all the hilltop shrines that were near cities in what had been the kingdom of Israel. The kings of Israel had built those shrines and made Yahweh very angry. Josiah had his servants tear down those shrines *and burn them and crush the remains and then scatter human bones on the sites*, just as he had done to the shrine at Bethel. 20 Josiah also ordered his servants to kill all the priests of those hilltop shrines right on the altars *where they had offered sacrifices to false gods*. Then he had them burn human bones on those altars *so that no one could use them for worship again*. After that, Josiah went back to Jerusalem.

21 Then the king commanded the people, “Celebrate the Passover festival to honor Yahweh your God. That is what the Law of Moses says to do *every year*.” 22 During all the years when the judges ruled Israel, and during all the years when kings reigned in Israel and Judah, the Israelites had not celebrated Passover like that. 23 But now, after Josiah had been ruling for almost 18 years, the people of Jerusalem celebrated this Passover festival to honor Yahweh.

24 Furthermore, Josiah made the people who lived in Jerusalem and in other places in Judah stop doing detestable things. He forbade people to dig pits to try to contact people who had died or to try to talk to spirits that they thought could tell them secret things. He made the people throw away their household idols. He destroyed all the other kinds of idols. Hilkiah the priest had found a scroll in the temple that recorded the law of Moses. Josiah did all those things so that what the scroll recorded would become the law of Israel once again. 25 Josiah sincerely, devotedly, and powerfully led the Judeans to worship Yahweh once again. He obeyed all the laws of Moses. No previous king was as devoted to Yahweh as he was, and no later king was that devoted either.

26 Even so, King Manasseh had done many things that had made Yahweh extremely angry with the people of Judah, and he continued to be very angry. 27 He had said, “I will allow an enemy to take the people of Judah away to a foreign country, just as an enemy took the people of Israel away. And I will reject Jerusalem, the city that I chose to be the place for the temple in which I said people would worship me.”

28 The book in which the kings of Judah recorded what happened during their reigns describes further things that Josiah did. 29 While Josiah was the king of Judah, Pharaoh Neco of Egypt led his army north to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King Josiah led his army to fight the army of Egypt. The two armies fought at the city of Megiddo, and Josiah died in the battle there. 30 His soldiers put his body in a chariot and transported it back to Jerusalem. There the Judeans buried him in his own tomb. Then the people of Judah chose Josiah’s son Jehoahaz to be their next king. They poured olive oil on his head to show that they were appointing him as their king.

31 Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he became the king of
Judah, but he ruled from Jerusalem for only three months.
His mother was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah. She was from
the city of Libnah. 32 Jehoahaz did many things that Yahweh
had told the Israelites were evil, just as many of his ancestors
had done. 33 At the city of Riblah in the district of Hamath,
Pharaoh Neco made Jehoahaz his prisoner so that he would
no longer rule in Jerusalem. Neco then forced the people of
Judah to pay to him a tribute of about 3.3 metric tons of silver
and 33 kilograms of gold. 34 Pharaoh Neco appointed another
son of Josiah, Eliakim, to be the next king of Judah instead. He
changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But he took Jehoahaz
away to Egypt, and later Jehoahaz died there. 35 In order to
pay Neco the silver and gold that he had demanded, Jehoiakim
collected a tax from the people of Judah. He collected more
from the rich people and less from the poor people. After he
had collected the silver and gold from them, he paid it to Neco.
36 Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he became the king of
Judah, and he ruled from Jerusalem for 11 years. His mother
was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiah. She was from the city of
Rumah. 37 He did many things that Yahweh had told the
Israelites were evil, just as many of his ancestors had done.

**24** While Jehoiakim was ruling Judah, King
Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon led his army to invade
Judah. *They defeated the Judean army, and as a result, Jehoiakim
became his subject king*. But after three years, Jehoiakim rebelled
*and depended on Egypt again*. 2 Then Yahweh allowed Chaldean
*that is, Babylonian*, Aramean, Moabite, and Ammonite raiders
to come into the land of Judah and steal the people's crops and
valuable possessions. Yahweh had said through his prophets
that he would punish the Judeans, and that is just what
happened. 3 These things happened to the people of Judah
because Yahweh had decreed that they would. He had decided
to allow an enemy to take the people of Judah away to a foreign
country because of the many sins that King Manasseh had
committed. 4 Manasseh had also had his soldiers kill very many
innocent people throughout the city of Jerusalem. Yahweh
would not forgive that. 5 The book in which the kings of Judah
recorded what happened during their reigns describes further
things that Jehoiakim did. 6 When Jehoiakim died, his son
Jehoiachin became the next king. 7 The king of Babylon led
his soldiers to conquer the whole area that the Egyptians had
formerly controlled, from the brook at the boundary of Egypt
to the Euphrates River. After that, the king of Egypt did not
lead his soldiers anywhere outside of his country.
8 Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became the king
of Judah. He ruled in Jerusalem for only three months. His
mother was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan. She was from the
city of Jerusalem. 9 Jehoiachin did many things that Yahweh
had told the Israelites were evil, just as his father had done.
10 While Jehoiachin was the king, King Nebuchadnezzar
of Babylon ordered his commanders to lead their soldiers
to attack Jerusalem. They surrounded the city *and tried to
conquer it*. 11 While they were still doing that, Nebuchadnezzar
himself came to the city *with even more of his soldiers*. 12 Then
King Jehoiachin and his mother, advisors, military officers,
and palace officials all surrendered to King Nebuchadnezzar.
Nebuchadnezzar had been king for eight years when he
captured Jehoiachin. 13 Just as Yahweh had said would happen,
Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers seized everything that was in the
storerooms of Yahweh's temple and the king's palace. They
also stripped off all the gold with which King Solomon's
workers had overlaid surfaces and furniture in the temple.
14 They forced 10,000 people to leave Jerusalem and go to
Babylon. These people included the military officers and the
wealthy Judeans. They also included the skilled workers and
the metalworkers. The Babylonians left only the poorest people
in Judah. 15 They took King Jehoiachin away to Babylon. They
also took the queen mother, Jehoiachin's wives, his royal
officials, and many other prominent Judeans. They made them
all leave Jerusalem and go to Babylon. 16 In total, they took
to Babylon 7,000 wealthy people, 1,000 skilled workers and
metalworkers*, and 2,000 royal and noble people*. In that way,
Nebuchadnezzar removed from Judah everyone who could
have made a rebellion against him. 17 Then Nebuchadnezzar
appointed Jehoiachin's uncle Mattaniah to be the king of Judah
instead of him. He changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah.
18 Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king, and
he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother was
Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah. She was from the city of
Libnah. 19 Zedekiah did many things that Yahweh had told
the Israelites were evil, just as *his older brother* Jehoiakim had
done. 20 Yahweh made these things happen to the people who
lived in Jerusalem and other parts of Judah because he was
very angry with them. He finally allowed the Babylonians
to force them to leave their country. That happened when
Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

**25** *Because Zedekiah had rebelled,* King Nebuchadnezzar
led his whole army to attack Jerusalem. They arrived
there after Zedekiah had been ruling for nine years, on the
tenth day of the tenth month of that year. They surrounded
the city and built earthen ramps against its walls to help them
attack it. 2 The Babylonians kept attacking the city *for the next
two years,* until Zedekiah had been ruling for eleven years.
3 Because the Babylonians had surrounded the city, the people
could not bring in any food. By the ninth day of the *fourth month*
of that year, they had no food left. 4 Then the Chaldean soldiers
*that is, the Babylonian soldiers* broke through the city wall and
entered the city. *King Zedekiah and* the Judean soldiers tried
to escape at night *when the Chaldeans would not see them*. They
used the gate near the king's garden to go through the inner
and outer walls of the city. Zedekiah *and the soldiers* tried to
escape through the Jordan River valley. But the Chaldeans had
surrounded the city*, and some of their soldiers saw where they
went*. 5 So some Chaldean soldiers chased after King Zedekiah.
They caught up to him in the plains around the city of Jericho.
His soldiers ran away *instead of fighting to defend him*. 6 So
the Babylonian soldiers were able to capture King Zedekiah.
They brought him to Nebuchadnezzar, who was in the city of
Riblah. Nebuchadnezzar declared that Zedekiah was guilty of
rebelling against him. 7 Then he forced Zedekiah to watch as
his soldiers killed all of his sons. Then the soldiers gouged out
Zedekiah's eyes. They put bronze chains on his hands and feet
and brought him as a prisoner to the city of Babylon.
8 Nebuzaradan was one of King Nebuchadnezzar's officials.
He commanded the royal bodyguards. He arrived in Jerusalem
on the seventh day of the fifth month of that year. That was after
Nebuchadnezzar had been ruling for 19 years. 9 He ordered his

soldiers to burn down Yahweh's temple, the king's palace, and
all the important buildings in Jerusalem. 10 Then the Chaldean
soldiers who had come to Jerusalem with Nebuzaradan tore
down the walls all around Jerusalem. 11 After that, he and
his soldiers took to Babylon the people who were still alive
in Jerusalem. They also took other people who lived in the
region of Judah. Some Judeans had previously surrendered
to the Babylonian army, and they took them away too. 12 But
Nebuzaradan allowed some of the very poor people to stay in
Judah to take care of the vineyards and to plant crops in the
fields.

13 The Chaldean soldiers broke into pieces the bronze pillars,
the bronze carts, and the giant water basin that people called
the sea, all of which were in the temple courtyard, and they
took all the bronze to Babylon. 14 They also took the pots,
shovels, wick snuffers, incense dishes, and other bronze items
that the priests used for their work in the temple. 15 The
soldiers also took away the pans for carrying hot coals, the
small bowls, and all the other items that were pure gold or
pure silver. 16 There was too much bronze for the Babylonians
to weigh in the two pillars, the carts, and the giant water basin
that people called the sea. King Solomon had commanded his
workers to make those things for Yahweh's temple. 17 Each of
the pillars was eight and one quarter meters tall. The bronze
top of each pillar was one and one third meters tall. Solomon's
master craftsman had decorated the tops with bronze strands
that he had formed into the shape of nets. He had also made
bronze decorations in the shape of pomegranates for the pillar
tops.

18 Nebuzaradan took some prisoners. These included the high
priest Seraiah, Zephaniah, who was another leading priest, and
the three priests who had supervised the courtyard entrance.
19 The prisoners also included the royal official responsible
for the army, five of the king's advisors who had not fled, the
commander who recorded the names of Judean men as they
came to serve as soldiers, and 60 men who were serving as
soldiers and were still in the city. 20 Nebuzaradan took them
all as prisoners to the king of Babylon at the city of Riblah.
21 There at the city of Riblah, in the province of Hamath, the
king of Babylon had his soldiers kill all of the prisoners. That
is what happened when the Babylonians forcefully took the
people of Judah away from their land.

22 King Nebuchadnezzar allowed some people to continue
living in Judah. He appointed Gedaliah to be their governor.
Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam and the grandson of Shaphan.
23 *There were* some Judean army commanders and their soldiers
*whom the Babylonians had not captured. When they* found out
that Nebuchadnezzar had appointed Gedaliah as the governor
of Judah, the commanders and soldiers went to meet with him
at the city of Mizpah. These commanders were Ishmael son of
Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth
from the city of Netophah, and Jaazaniah, the son of a man
from the region of Maacah. 24 Gedaliah solemnly promised
them that they could remain in Judah without being afraid of
the Chaldean soldiers. He told them that if they obeyed the
king of Babylon, they could live peacefully in the land. 25 But in
the seventh month of that year, Ishmael son of Nethaniah went
to Mizpah with ten of his soldiers. Ishmael was a descendant of
King David through his grandfather Elishama. Ishmael and his
men assassinated Gedaliah. They also assassinated the Judeans
who were serving in his government and the Chaldean officials
who were there. 26 This made the Judeans who were still living
in the land very afraid of what the Chaldeans would do to
them. So a large number of them fled to Egypt. The army
commanders also fled there.

27 After the Babylonians took King Jehoiachin of Judah to
Babylon, 37 years went by. Then Nebuchadnezzar's son Evil
Merodach became the king of Babylon. On the twenty-seventh
day of the twelfth month of his first year as king, he released
Jehoiachin from prison. 28 He reassured Jehoiachin that he
would treat him well, and he gave him a position of greater
honor than the other *captive* kings whom the Babylonians
had *conquered and* brought to their royal court. 29 He gave
Jehoiachin new clothes to replace the clothes that he had been
wearing in prison, and he allowed Jehoiachin to eat meals with
him every day for the rest of his life. 30 The king of Babylon
also gave Jehoiachin money to buy the things he needed. He
gave him a regular amount that was sufficient for his needs.
The king continued to do for as long as Jehoiachin lived.