

**This book contains the account
of the prophet Elijah and of
many kings who ruled Israel and
Judah until other nations
conquered Israel and Judah. We
call this book
2 Kings**

Elijah condemned King Ahaziah

¹ After King Ahab died, *the country of Moab rebelled against Israel.* ² One day, Ahaziah, *the new king of Israel*, fell through the wooden slats/boards around the edge of the flat roof of *his palace* in Samaria. He was badly injured, so he summoned some messengers and told them, "Go to Ekron city in Philistia, and ask their god Baalzebub whether I will ◀recover/become well▶."

³ But an angel from Yahweh said to Elijah, the prophet from Tishbe town, "The king of Samaria is sending some messengers to Ekron. Go and meet them and say to them, 'Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are going to Ekron to ask Baalzebub, the god of those people, *whether you will recover?*' ⁴ Yahweh says *that you should tell King Ahaziah* that he will not recover from his being injured; he will surely die.' "

⁵ *So Elijah went to meet the messengers and told that to them, and they returned to the king*

instead of going to Ekron. The king asked them, "Why did you return *so soon*?"

⁶ They replied, "A man came to meet us, and said to us, 'Return to the king who sent you and tell him that Yahweh says, "◀Is it because there no God in Israel that you are sending *messengers* to Ekron to consult Baalzebub, their god?/You seem to think there is no God in Israel, with the result that you are sending *messengers* to Ekron to ask Baalzebub, their god, *whether you will recover*.▶ [RHQ] *Go tell the king that he will not recover from being injured; instead, he will surely die.*" ' ' "

⁷ The king said to them, "The man who came to meet you and told that to you, what did he look like?"

⁸ They replied, "He was a hairy man and he had a *wide* leather belt around his waist." The king exclaimed, "That was Elijah!"

⁹ Then the king sent an officer with 50 soldiers to seize Elijah. They found Elijah sitting on the top of a hill. The officer called out to him, "Prophet, the king commands that you come down here!"

¹⁰ But Elijah replied, "I am a prophet; so, I command that fire come down from the sky and burn up you and your 50 soldiers!" Immediately, fire came down from the sky and completely burned up the officer and his 50 *soldiers*.

¹¹ *When the king found out about that*, he sent another officer with 50 more soldiers. They went *to where Elijah was*, and the officer called out

to him, "Prophet, the king commands that you come down immediately!"

¹² But Elijah replied, "I am a prophet; *to prove that*, I command that fire come down from the sky and kill you and your soldiers!" Then a fire from God came down from the sky and killed the officer and his soldiers.

¹³ *When the king heard about that* he sent another officer with 50 more soldiers. *They went to where Elijah was*, and the officer prostrated himself in front of Elijah, and said to him, "Prophet, I plead with you, be kind to me and my 50 soldiers, and ◀do not kill us/allow us to remain alive▶!" ¹⁴ *We know that* two times fire came down from the sky and killed officers and the 50 soldiers who were with them. So now, please be kind to me!"

¹⁵ Then the angel from Yahweh said to Elijah, "Go down *and go* with him. Do not be afraid of him." So Elijah went with them to the king.

¹⁶ *When Elijah arrived*, he said to the king, "This is what Yahweh says: 'You sent messengers to go to Ekron to ask Baalzebub, their god, *whether you would recover*. You acted as though [RHQ] there is no God in Israel to consult. So you will not recover from being injured; instead, you are going to die!' " ¹⁷ So Ahaziah died, which is what Yahweh told Elijah would happen. Ahaziah's *younger* brother Joram became the new king, when Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, had been ruling Judah for almost two years. Ahaziah's brother became the king because Ahaziah had no son *to become the king*.

¹⁸ *If you want to know about all the other things that Ahaziah did, they are [RHQ] written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'.*

2

Elijah is taken up to heaven

¹ When Yahweh was about to take *the prophet* Elijah up to heaven in a ◀whirlwind/twisting wind▶, Elijah and *his fellow prophet* Elisha were traveling *south* from Gilgal town. ² Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, because Yahweh has told *only* me to go to Bethel town."

But Elisha replied, "Just as certainly as Yahweh lives and you live, I will not leave you!"

So they went down *together* to Bethel. ³ A group of prophets came to Elisha *and Elijah before they entered the town*, and they asked Elisha, "Do you know that Yahweh is going to take your master/boss *Elijah* away from you today?"

Elisha answered, "Certainly I know that, but don't talk about it!" [IDM] ⁴ Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, because Yahweh has told *only* me to go to Jericho."

But Elisha replied *again*, "Just as certainly as Yahweh lives and you live, I will not leave you!"

So they went *together* to Jericho city.

⁵ *As they neared* Jericho, a group of prophets who were from there came to Elisha and said to him, "Do you know that Yahweh is going to take your master/boss *Elijah* away from you today?"

He answered again, "Certainly I know that, but don't talk about it!" [IDM]

⁶ Then Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, because Yahweh has told *only* me to go to the Jordan River."

But *again* Elisha replied, "As certainly as Yahweh lives and you live, I will not leave you!"

So they continued walking together. ⁷ Fifty men from a group of prophets *who were from Jericho* also went, but they watched from a distance as Elijah and Elisha stopped at the edge of the Jordan River. ⁸ Then Elijah rolled up his cloak and struck the water with it. A path opened up for them through the river, and they walked across *as though they were* on dry ground.

⁹ When they came to the other side, Elijah said to Elisha, "What do you want me to do for you before ◀I am taken away/Yahweh takes me away▶?"

Elisha replied, "I want to receive twice as much of your power *as you have had*, (OR enable me to very powerfully continue your ministry)."

¹⁰ Elijah replied, "You have asked for something which is difficult *for me to cause to happen*. But, if you see me when ◀I am taken from you/Yahweh takes me from you▶, you will get what you are requesting. But if you do not see me, then you will not get it."

¹¹ As they were walking and talking, suddenly a chariot that had fire *surrounding it*, pulled by horses which also had fire *surrounding them*, appeared. *The chariot driver* drove the chariot between Elijah and Elisha and separated them.

Then Elijah was taken up to heaven in a ◀whirlwind/twisting wind▶. ¹² Elisha saw it. He cried out, "My father/master! My father/master! The chariots of us Israeli people and their drivers *have taken my master away!*" *They disappeared into the sky*, and Elisha never saw Elijah again. Then Elisha tore his own robe into two pieces *to show that he was sad*. ¹³ Elijah's cloak *had fallen off when he was taken away*, so Elisha picked it up and returned to the bank of the Jordan River. ¹⁴ He *rolled up the cloak and* struck the water with it, and cried out, "Will Yahweh, the God who *enabled Elijah to perform miracles, enable me to do similar things?*" Then the water separated, and a path opened up for him, and Elisha went across.

¹⁵ When the group of prophets from Jericho saw what happened, they exclaimed, "Elisha now has the power that Elijah had!" [MTY] They walked over to him and bowed down in front of him. ¹⁶ *One of them* said, "Sir, if you permit us, 50 of our strongest men will go and search for your master *on the other side of the river*. Perhaps the Spirit of Yahweh has left him on some mountain or in some valley."

Elisha replied, "No, do not send them."

¹⁷ But they kept insisting. Finally he was tired of saying "No," and he said, "Okay, send them." So 50 men searched for three days, but they did not find Elijah. ¹⁸ They returned to Jericho, and Elisha was still there. He said to them, "I told you that you should not go, *because you would not find him!*" [RHQ]

Elisha made the water pure

¹⁹ Then the leaders of *Jericho* city came to talk with Elisha. One of them said, “Our master, we have a problem. You can see that this is a very nice place *to live in*. But the water is bad, and as a result, crops will not grow on the land.”

²⁰ Elisha said to them, “Put some salt in a new bowl and bring the bowl to me.” So they brought it to him.

²¹ Then he went out to the spring *from which the people in the town got water*. He threw the salt into the spring. Then he said, “This is what Yahweh says: ‘I have made this water good/pure. No longer will anyone die, from having drunk this water, and now crops will be able to grow.’ ” [LIT] ²² And the water became pure, just as Elisha said it would be. Since that time it has always remained pure.

Elisha cursed boys who made fun of him

²³ Elisha left *Jericho* and went up to *Bethel*. As he was walking along the road, a group of young boys from *Bethel* *saw him and* started to make fun of him. They continued shouting, “Go away, you bald-headed man!” ²⁴ Elisha turned around and looked/glared at them. He asked Yahweh to ◀curse them/do something bad to them▶. Immediately two bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of them. ²⁵ Elisha left *Bethel* and went to *Carmel Mountain*, and after that he returned to *Samaria city*.

3

The war between Israel and Moab

¹ After Jehoshaphat had been ruling Judah for almost 18 years, Ahab's son Joram became the king of Israel. He ruled in Samaria *city* for twelve years. ² He did things that Yahweh considered to be evil, but he did not do as much evil as his father and mother had done, and he got rid of the pillar *for worshiping* Baal which his father had made. ³ But he committed the sins that *King* Jeroboam had committed and which led the Israeli people to sin, and he did not stop committing those sins.

⁴ Mesha, the king of Moab, raised sheep. *Every year* he was forced to give 100,000 lambs and the wool from 100,000 rams to the king of Israel, *because his kingdom was controlled by the king of Israel.* ⁵ But after King Ahab died, Mesha rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶ So King Joram left Samaria and gathered together all his soldiers. ⁷ Then he sent this message to Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah: "The king of Moab has rebelled against me. So will your army join my army and fight against the army of Moab?"

Jehoshaphat replied, "Yes, we will help you. We are ready to do whatever you want us to. My soldiers and my horses are ready to help you."

⁸ He asked, "On which road shall we march to attack them?"

Joram replied, "We will go *south to Jerusalem, where your army will join us. Then we will all go south of the Dead Sea, and then turn north through the Edom Desert.*"

⁹ So the king of Israel *and his army* went with the kings of Judah and Edom *and their armies*. They marched for seven days. Then there was no water left for their soldiers or for their animals that carried supplies.

¹⁰ The king of Israel exclaimed, "This is a terrible situation! *It seems that Yahweh will allow the three of us to be captured by the army of [MTY] Moab!*"

¹¹ Jehoshaphat said, "Is there a prophet here who can ask Yahweh for us *what we should do?*"

One of Joram's army officers said, "Elisha, the son of Shaphat, is here. He was Elijah's assistant." [IDM]

¹² Jehoshaphat said, "*It will be good to ask him, because he speaks what Yahweh tells him to say.*"

So those three kings went to Elisha. ¹³ Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Why do you come to me [RHQ]? Go and ask those prophets that your father and mother consulted!"

But Joram replied, "*No, we want you to ask Yahweh, because it seems that Yahweh is going to allow us three kings to be captured by the army of Moab.*"

¹⁴ Elisha replied, "I serve Yahweh, the commander of the armies of angels in heaven. As surely as he lives, if I did not respect Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not even think about doing anything to help you. ¹⁵ But, bring a musician to me."

So they did that. And when the musician played *on his harp*, the power of Yahweh came on Elisha. ¹⁶ He said, "Yahweh says that he will cause this dry stream-bed to be full of water.

¹⁷ The result will be that your soldiers and your animals that carry supplies and your livestock will have plenty of water to drink. ¹⁸ That is not difficult for Yahweh to do. *But he will do more than that.* He will also enable you to defeat *the army of Moab.* ¹⁹ You will conquer all their beautiful cities, cities that have high walls around them. You must cut down all their fruit trees, stop water from flowing from their springs, and ruin their fertile fields by covering them with rocks.”

²⁰ The next morning, at the time when they offered the sacrifices *of grain*, they were surprised to see water flowing from Edom and covering the ground.

²¹ When the people of Moab heard that the three kings had come *with their armies* to fight against them, all the men who were able to fight in battles, from the youngest men to the oldest ones, were summoned, and they ◀took their positions/prepared to fight▶ at the *southern* border of their land. ²² But when they rose early the next morning, they saw that the water across from them appeared to be as red as blood. ²³ They exclaimed, “It is blood! The three enemy armies must have fought and killed each other! So let’s go and take everything that they have left!”

²⁴ But when they reached the area where the Israeli soldiers had set up their tents, the Israelis attacked the soldiers from Moab and forced them to retreat. The Israeli soldiers pursued the soldiers from Moab and killed many

of them. ²⁵ The Israelis also destroyed their cities. And whenever they passed fertile fields, they threw rocks on those fields, until the fields were covered with rocks. They stopped water from flowing from the springs and cut down the fruit trees. Finally, only *the capital city*, Kir-Hareseth, remained. The Israeli soldiers who threw stones with slings surrounded the city and attacked it. ²⁶ When the king of Moab realized that his army was being defeated, he took with him 700 men who fought with swords, and they tried to force a way through the Israeli lines of soldiers to escape to *get help from* the king of Syria, but they were unable to escape. ²⁷ Then the king of Moab took his oldest son, who would have become the next king, and killed him and offered him for a sacrifice *to their god Chemosh*, burning him on top of the city wall. The Israeli soldiers were horrified, with the result that they left that city and returned to their own country.

4

Elisha helped a poor widow

¹ One day the widow of one of *Yahweh's* prophets came to Elisha and cried out to him, "My husband, who worked with you, is dead. You know that he revered *Yahweh very much*. But now a man to whom he owed a lot of money has come to me. *And because I cannot pay back the money, he is threatening to take away my two sons to be his slaves as payment for what I owe him!*"

² Elisha replied, "What can I do to help you? Tell me, what do you have in your house?"

She replied, "We have only a container of *olive* oil; we have nothing else."

³ Elisha said, "Go to your neighbors and borrow from them as many empty jars as you can. ⁴ Then take the jars into your house with your sons. Shut the door. Then pour olive oil from your container into the other jars. When each jar is full, set it aside *and fill another jar. Keep doing that until all the jars are full.*"

⁵ *So she did what Elisha told her to do.* Her sons kept bringing jars to her, and she kept filling them. ⁶ Soon all the jars were full. So she said to one of her sons, "Bring me another jar!" But he replied, "There are no more jars!" And then the olive oil stopped flowing.

⁷ When she told Elijah *what had happened*, he said to her, "Now sell the jars of oil. And *with the money you get*, pay what you owe, and there will be enough extra money to keep buying food for yourself and your sons." *So she did that.*

Elisha caused the son of the woman from Shunem to become alive again

⁸ One day Elisha went to Shunem town. There was a wealthy woman who lived there *with her husband*. One day she invited Elisha to her house for a meal. *Elisha went there and* from then on, every time Elisha was in Shunem, he went to their house to eat a meal. ⁹ One day the woman said to her husband, "I am sure that this man who often comes here is a prophet *who brings*

messages from God. ¹⁰ I think we should make a small room for him on our *flat* roof, and put a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp in it. If we do that, whenever he comes here, he will have a place to stay." *So they did that.*

¹¹ One day Elisha returned to Shunem, and he went up to that room to rest. ¹² He said to his servant Gehazi, "Tell the woman that I want to speak to her." *So the servant went and told her.* When she came *to the doorway of Elisha's room,* ¹³ Elisha said to Gehazi, "Tell her that we both appreciate all the kind things that she has done for us. Then ask her what we can do for her. Ask, 'Do you want *me to go to the king or the army commander, to request something for you?*' "

Gehazi told her, and she replied, "No, *he does not need to do that, because my family/relatives are able to give me what I need.*"

¹⁴ *Later,* Elisha asked Gehazi, "What do you think that we can do for that woman?"

He replied, "She does not have a son, and her husband is an old man. *So maybe we should ask Yahweh to enable her to have a son.*"

¹⁵ Elisha told Gehazi, "Call her back again." *So Gehazi went and called her.* And when the woman returned, as she stood in the doorway, ¹⁶ Elisha said to her, "About this time next year you will be holding your *infant* son in your arms." But she protested, "O, sir, you are a prophet *who brings messages* from God, so please do not deceive/lie to me by saying things like that!"

¹⁷ But a few months later, the woman became pregnant, and she gave birth to a son at that time the following year, just like Elisha had predicted.

¹⁸ When the child was older, one day he went out to the fields to see his father, who was *working* with the men who were harvesting grain. ¹⁹ *Suddenly* the boy exclaimed, "My head hurts! My head *hurts a lot!*"

His father said to one of the servants, "Carry him home to his mother!" ²⁰ So the servant carried him home, and his mother held him on her lap. But at noontime the boy died. ²¹ She carried him up *the steps* to the prophet's room and laid him on the bed. She left him there and went out and shut the door.

²² She then called out to her husband, saying, "Send to me one of the servants and a donkey, so that I can ride *on it* quickly to the prophet, and then come back!" *But she did not tell her husband that their son had died.*

²³ Her husband *called out to her and* said, "Why *do you want to go* today? This is not the day when we celebrate the Festival of the New Moon, and it is not a Sabbath day!"

But she only replied, "*Just do what I requested and everything will be all right.*"

²⁴ So she *told the servant to* put saddles on *two* donkeys, and as they left, she said, "Hurry! Do not slow down unless *t* tell you to do that!" ²⁵ As they approached Carmel Mountain, where Elisha was, Elisha saw her in the distance. He said to Gehazi, "Look, the woman from Shunem is coming!" 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 did not tell Gehazi anything. She only said, "Yes, everything is fine."

²⁷ But when she came to where Elisha was, she *prostrated herself on the ground in front of Elisha and took hold of his feet.* Gehazi started to push her away, but Elisha said, "◀Do not push her away/Leave her alone▶! Something is troubling her very much, but Yahweh has not told me what it is."

²⁸ Then she said to Elisha, "O, sir, I did not ask you to enable me to give birth to a son [RHQ]. And I told you not to lie to me about that!" [RHQ]

²⁹ Then Elisha *realized that something must have happened to her son.* So he said to Gehazi, "Get ready to leave immediately. Take my staff/walking stick 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. *If you do that, perhaps Yahweh will enable him to be well.*"

³⁰ But the boy's mother said, "Just as certain as Yahweh lives and you live, I will not go home if you do not go with me." So Elisha returned with her to her home.

³¹ Gehazi hurried quickly, and *when he got to the woman's home,* he laid the staff/walking stick on the child's face, but the child did not move or say anything.

So Gehazi returned to meet Elisha *along the road,* and told him, "The child is still dead."

³² When Elisha reached the house, he saw that

the boy was lying dead on his bed. ³³ Elisha went into the room by himself and shut the door and prayed to Yahweh. ³⁴ Then he lay down on the boy's body, and put his mouth on the boy's mouth, and put his eyes on the boy's eyes, and put his hands on the boy's hands. Then the boy's body started to become warm! ³⁵ Elisha got up and walked back and forth in the room *several times*. Then he stretched his body on the boy's body again. The boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes!

³⁶ Then Elisha summoned Gehazi. He said, "Call the boy's mother!" *So Gehazi went and called her*; and when she came in, Elisha said, "Here, take your son!" ³⁷ She *gratefully* prostrated herself at Elisha's feet. Then she picked up her son and carried him downstairs.

Elisha made some stew edible

³⁸ Then Elisha returned to Gilgal. But at that time there was ◀a famine/very little food▶ in that area. One day as the group of prophets was sitting in front of Elisha *listening to what he was teaching*, he said to his servant, "Put a large pot on *the stove* and make some stew for these men."

³⁹ One of the prophets went out to the fields to gather some vegetables. But he gathered *only* some wild gourds and put them in his cloak and brought them back. He shredded them and put them in the pot, but he did not know that the gourds were poisonous. ⁴⁰ He served the stew to the prophets, but after the men had eaten only a couple bites, they cried out, "Elisha, there is something in the pot that will kill us!"

So they would not eat it. ⁴¹ Elisha said, "Bring me some flour." *They brought him some, and he* threw it in the pot and he said, "It is all right now. You can eat it." And they ate it, and it did not harm them.

Elisha multiplied food for the prophets

⁴² One day a man from Baal-Shalishah town brought to Elisha a sack of freshly cut grain and 20 loaves of barley bread, made from the first grain that they harvested *that year*.

Elisha said *to his servant*, "Give it to the group of prophets, so that they can eat it." ⁴³ But his servant exclaimed, "Do you think that we can feed 100 of us prophets with only that much?" [RHQ]

But Elisha replied, "Give it to the prophets so that they can eat it, because Yahweh says that there will be plenty for all of them, and there will be some left over!" ⁴⁴ After his servant gave it to the prophets, they ate *all that they wanted*, and there was food left over, just as Yahweh had promised.

5

Naaman was healed of leprosy

¹ A man named Naaman was the commander of the army of Syria. Yahweh had enabled him to win many victories/battles. He was a great warrior, and as a result the king of Syria greatly respected him. But he had ◀leprosy/a dreaded skin disease▶.

² *Some time previously*, groups of soldiers/marauders from Syria had raided/attacked the land of Israel, and they had captured a young girl *and taken her to Syria*. She became a servant for Naaman's wife. ³ One day, that girl said to her, "I wish that ◀my master/your husband▶ would go to see the prophet in Samaria. That prophet would heal your husband from his leprosy."

⁴ *Naaman's wife told her husband* what the girl from Israel had said, *and Naaman told that to the king*. ⁵⁻⁶ The king said to him, "Okay, go *and see the prophet*. I will write a letter for you to take to the king of Israel, *saying that I sent you*." The king wrote in the letter, "I am sending this letter with *my army commander Naaman*, who serves me *faithfully*. I want you to heal him of his disease." So Naaman, *assuming/thinking that the king of Israel was the prophet*, took the letter and 750 pounds of silver, 150 pounds of gold, and ten sets of clothing, to give to the king of Israel, *and he went to Samaria, taking along several servants*.

⁷ *When he arrived in Samaria*, he gave the letter to the king of Israel. The king read the letter. Then, being very dismayed, the king tore his clothes and said, "I am not God [RHQ]! I am not able to enable people to live or to die [RHQ]! Why does *the king* who wrote this letter request me to cure this man of his leprosy? I think that he is just wanting to start a fight with me!"

⁸ But the prophet Elisha heard that the king of Israel had torn his robe *and said that*. So he sent a message to the king, saying, "Why are you upset/frustrated [RHQ]? Send Naaman

to me, and he will find out that *because* I am a true prophet *here* in Israel, *I can help/heal him.*”

⁹ So Naaman went with his horses and chariots to Elisha’s house and waited outside the door.

¹⁰ But Elisha *did not come to the door. Instead, he* sent a messenger to Naaman, to tell him, “Go to the Jordan River and wash yourself seven times in the river. Then your skin will be restored/healed, and you will no longer have leprosy.”

¹¹ But Naaman became very angry. He said, “I thought that surely he would wave his hand over the leprosy, and pray to Yahweh his god, and heal me! ¹² Surely the Abana River and the Pharpar River in Damascus *in my own country of Syria* are [RHQ] better than any of the rivers in Israel! Why can I not wash in those rivers and be healed?” [RHQ] So he turned and walked away with great anger/disgust.

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 [RHQ] have done it. So you should certainly do what he says and wash *in the Jordan River* to be healed!” [RHQ] ¹⁴ So Naaman went down to the Jordan River and washed himself seven times, as ◀the prophet/Elisha▶ told him to do. Then his skin was restored/healed, and it became healthy/smooth, like the skin of a young child.

¹⁵ Then Naaman and those who were with him went back to talk to Elisha. They stood in front of him, and Naaman said, “Now I know that there are no real gods anywhere else in the world, but

there is a God here in Israel! So now please accept these gifts that I *have brought to you!*"

¹⁶ But Elisha replied, "Just as certainly as Yahweh, the one whom I serve, lives, I will not accept any gifts." Naaman kept urging him to *accept the gifts*, but Elisha kept refusing.

¹⁷ Then Naaman said, "Okay, but *I have one request. This dirt here in Israel is holy*, so please allow me to take some dirt from this place and put it *in sacks* on two mules. Then I will take it back home with me *and make an altar on this dirt*. From now on, I will offer sacrifices to Yahweh *on that altar*. I will not offer sacrifices to any other god. ¹⁸ However, when my master, *the king*, goes into the temple of the god Rimmon to worship him/it there, and he is leaning on my arm, I hope/desire that Yahweh will forgive me because I will have to bow down, too."

¹⁹ Elisha replied, "Go home, and do not worry about that." So Naaman *and his servants* started to travel home.

Elisha cursed Gehazi for being greedy

²⁰ But then Elisha's servant Gehazi said to himself, "It is not good that my master allowed this Syrian man to leave like this. He should have accepted his gifts. So just as certainly as Yahweh lives, I will go and catch up with Naaman and get something from him."

²¹ So Gehazi hurried to catch up with Naaman. When Naaman saw Gehazi running toward him, he *stopped* the chariot *in which he was riding*, jumped out, and went to see what Gehazi wanted. He asked him, "Is everything all right?"

²² Gehazi replied, “Yes, but two young prophets from the hilly area where the descendants of Ephraim live have just arrived. Elisha has sent me to tell you that he would like 75 pounds of silver and two sets of clothing to give to them.”

²³ Naaman replied, “Certainly! You can have 150 pounds of silver!” He urged Gehazi to take it. He also gave him two sets of clothing. He tied up the silver in two bags and gave them to two of his servants to carry back to Elisha.

²⁴ But when they arrived at the hill *where Elisha lived*, Gehazi took the silver and the clothes from Naaman’s servants and sent the servants back to Naaman. Then he took those things into his house and hid them. ²⁵ When he went to Elisha, Elisha asked him, “Where did you go, Gehazi?” Gehazi replied, “I did not go anywhere.”

²⁶ Elisha asked him, “*Do you not realize that my spirit was there when Naaman got out of his chariot to talk with you? This is certainly not [RHQ] the time to accept gifts of money and clothes and olive groves and vineyards and sheep and oxen and servants!* ²⁷ Because you have done this, you and your children and all your descendants, forever, will have leprosy just like Naaman had!” And when Gehazi left the room, he was a leper! His skin was as white as snow!

6

The axe head floated

¹ One day a group of prophets said to Elisha, “Look, this place where we meet together with

you is very small. ² Allow us to go to the Jordan *River and cut down some trees to make logs to build a new meeting place.* So Elisha said, “Okay, go.”

³ One of them said to Elisha, “Please come with us.” So Elisha replied, “Okay, I will go with you.”

⁴ So they went together. When they reached the Jordan *River*, they cut down some trees.

⁵ But while one of them was cutting down a tree, suddenly the axe head *separated from the handle and fell into the water.* He cried out to Elisha, “O, Master, what shall I do? *The axe is not mine; I borrowed it!*”

⁶ Elisha replied, “Where did it fall into the water?” After the man showed him the place, Elisha cut off a stick, and threw it into the water, and caused the iron axe head to float *on top of the water.* ⁷ Elisha said, “Take it out of the water.” So the man reached his hand down and picked up the axe head.

Elisha tricked the army of Syria

⁸ Whenever the king of Syria *prepared to send his army to fight against Israel*, he first consulted his officers, and then told them where they should set up their tents.

⁹ But each time, Elisha would send a message to warn the king of Israel, *telling him where the army of Syria was planning to attack them*, saying, “Be sure that your army does not go near that place, because the army of Syria has set up their tents there.” ¹⁰ So the king of Israel would send *messengers to warn the people who lived*

in that place, and the people would remain on guard. That happened several times.

¹¹ The king of Syria was very upset/disturbed/angry about that. So he summoned his army officers and said to them, “*Obviously* one of you is ◀betraying us/revealing our plans▶ to the king of Israel. Which one of you is doing it?”

¹² One of his officers answered, “Your Majesty, it is not one of us. Elisha the prophet *knows what we plan to do, and he* tells the king of Israel everything. He even knows what you say in your own bedroom!”

¹³ The king of Syria replied, “Go and find out where he is, and I will send *some men there* to capture him.” Someone told him, “People say that he is in Dothan *town north of Samaria.*” ¹⁴ So the king sent a large group of soldiers *to Dothan* with horses and chariots. They arrived at night and surrounded the town.

¹⁵ Early the next morning, Elisha’s servant got up and went outside the house. He saw the soldiers of Syria with their horses and chariots surrounding the town. So he went inside *the house and reported it to Elisha* and exclaimed, “O, sir! What are we going to do?”

¹⁶ Elisha replied, “Do not be afraid! Those who will be helping us will be more than those who will be helping them!”

¹⁷ Then he prayed, “Yahweh, I request that you open my servant’s eyes in order that he can see *what is out there!*” So Yahweh enabled the servant to look out and see that surrounding the

hill on which the town *was built* was a huge number of horses, and chariots made of fire!

¹⁸ When the army of Syria prepared to attack Elisha, he prayed again, saying, “Yahweh, cause all these soldiers to become blind!” Yahweh answered his prayer and caused them to be unable to see clearly.

¹⁹ Then Elisha went to them and said, “You are not on the right road; this is not the city that you are searching for. I will take you to the man whom you are searching for.” But he led them to Samaria, *the capital of Israel!*

²⁰ As soon as they entered Samaria, Elisha prayed again, saying, “Yahweh, now enable these soldiers to see correctly again!” So Yahweh enabled them to see correctly, and they were surprised to see that they were inside Samaria city.

²¹ When the king of Israel saw them, he said to Elisha, “Sir, shall I *tell my soldiers to* kill them? Shall we kill all of them?”

²² Elisha replied, “No, you must not kill them. If your army captured many of your enemies in a battle, you would certainly not [RHQ] 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 did that. He told his servants to provide a big feast for them. And when they had eaten and drunk plenty, he sent them away. They returned to the king of Syria *and told him what had happened.* So for a while after that, soldiers from Syria stopped raiding/attacking towns in Israel.

The army of Syria surrounded Samaria

²⁴ But some time later, Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, assembled his entire army, and they went to Samaria and surrounded the city *for a long time*. ²⁵ Because of that, after a while there was hardly any food left inside the city, with the result that eventually a donkey's head, *which was usually worthless*, cost eighty pieces of silver, and ◀one cup/0.3 liter▶ of dove's dung cost five pieces of silver.

²⁶ One day when the king of Israel was walking on top of the city wall, a woman cried out to him, "Your Majesty, help me!"

²⁷ He replied, "If Yahweh will not help you, I certainly cannot [RHQ] help you. I certainly [RHQ] do not have any wheat or wine! ²⁸ What is your problem?" She replied, "Several days ago, that woman *over there* said to me, '*Because we have nothing left to eat, let's kill your son today, in order that we can eat his flesh. Then tomorrow we can kill my son and eat his flesh.*'

²⁹ So we *killed my son and cut his body up and boiled his flesh and ate it*. The next day, I said to her, 'Now give your son to me, in order that we can *kill him and cook his flesh and eat it.*' But she has hidden her son!"

³⁰ When the king heard what the woman said, he tore his robe *to show that he was very distressed*. The people who were standing close to the wall were able to see that the king was wearing rough cloth underneath his robe *because he was very distressed*. ³¹ The king exclaimed, "I wish/hope that God will strike

me dead if I do not cut off the head of Elisha today, *because he is the one who has caused these terrible things to happen to us!*"

³² So the king sent an officer to get Elisha.

Before the officer arrived, Elisha was sitting in his house with some Israeli elders who were talking with him. Elisha said to them, "That murderer, *the king of Israel*, is sending someone here to kill me. Listen: When he arrives, shut the door and do not allow him to come in. And the king will be coming right behind that officer!"

³³ And while he was still speaking, the king and the officer arrived. The king said, "It is Yahweh who has caused us to have all this trouble/suffering. ◀Why should I wait any longer [RHQ] for him to do something *to help us?*/It is useless for me to wait any longer for him *to help us!*▶"

7

¹ Elisha replied to the king, "Listen to what Yahweh says: 'He says that by this time tomorrow, at the marketplace here in Samaria, you will be able to buy ◀ten pounds/five kg.▶ of fine wheat or ◀20 pounds/ten kg.▶ of barley for *only* one piece of silver.' "

² The king's officer said to Elijah, "That cannot happen! Even if Yahweh himself would open the windows of the sky *and send grain down to us*, that certainly could not [RHQ] happen!" Elisha replied, "*Because you said that*, you [SYN] will see it happen, but you will not be able to eat any of the food!"

The Syrian army became frightened and left

³ That day there were four men who had ◀leprosy/a dreaded skin disease▶ who were sitting outside the gate of Samaria city. *They said to each other, “◀Why should we wait here until we die?/It is ridiculous for us to wait here until we die.▶* [RHQ] ⁴ If we go into the city, we will die there, because there is no food there. If we remain sitting here, we will die here. So let’s go to where the army of Syria has set up their tents. If they kill us, we will die. But if they allow us to remain alive, we will not die.” ⁵ So when it was getting dark, those four men went to the camp where the army of Syria had set up their tents. But when they reached the camp, they saw that there was no one there!

⁶ What had happened was that Yahweh had caused the army of Syria to hear something that sounded like a large army marching with chariots and horses. So they said to each other, “Listen! The king of Israel has hired the kings of Egypt and the Heth people-group *and their armies*, and they have come to attack us!” ⁷ So they all ran away that evening and left their tents and their horses and donkeys there, because *they were afraid that they would be killed if they stayed there.*

⁸ When those four lepers came to the edge of the area where the soldiers of Syria had set up their tents, they went into one tent, *and saw all the things that had been left there.* So they ate and drank what was there, and they took the silver and the gold and clothes. Then they went *outside the tent* and hid those things. Then they

entered another tent, and took things from there, and then went outside and hid them, also.

⁹ But then they said to each other, “We are not doing what is right. We have good news to *tell others* today. If we do not tell it to anyone now, and if we wait until morning to tell it, we will certainly be punished *by Yahweh*. So let’s go right now to the palace and tell it to the king’s officials!”

¹⁰ So they went to the guards at the city gates and called out to them, “We went to where the army of Syria had set up their tents, but we did not see or hear anyone there. Their horses and donkeys were still tied up, but their tents were all deserted/abandoned!” ¹¹ The guards shouted the news, and some people *who heard it* went to the palace and reported it there.

¹² *When the king heard it, he got up out of his bed and said to his officials, “I will tell you what the army of Syria is planning to do. They know that we have no food here, so they have left their tents and are hiding in the fields. They think that we will leave the city to find some food, and then they will capture us and capture the city.”*

¹³ But one of his officials said, “Many of our Israeli people have already died *from <hunger/not having anything to eat>*. If those of us who are still alive all stay here, we also will die anyway. So let’s send some men with five of our horses that are still alive to go and see *what has really happened.*”

¹⁴ So they chose some men and told them to go in a chariot and find out what had happened

to the army of Syria. ¹⁵ They went as far as the Jordan River. All along the road they saw clothes and equipment that the soldiers from Syria had thrown away while they were running away very quickly. So the men returned to the king and reported *what they had seen*. ¹⁶ Then many of the people of Samaria also went *out of the city and went* to where the army of Syria had previously set up their tents. They entered all the tents and took everything. *So there was now plenty of everything!* As a result people could buy ten pounds of fine wheat or 20 pounds of barley for only one piece of silver, which was what Yahweh had said would happen!

¹⁷ The king of Israel had appointed the officer who was his assistant to supervise what was happening at the marketplace. But as he was standing near the gate, all the people *who were rushing outside the city* trampled on him, and he died, which was what Elisha had said would happen to him when Elisha previously went to talk to the king. ¹⁸ Elisha had told him that by the next day there would be plenty of food, with the result that anyone could buy ten pounds of fine wheat or 20 pounds of barley for only one piece of silver.

¹⁹ And the officer had answered, "That certainly cannot [RHQ] happen! Even if Yahweh himself would open the sky and send down some grain, that could not happen." And Elisha had replied, "*Because you said that*, you [SYN] will see it happen, but you will not be able to eat any of the food!" ²⁰ And that is what happened to

him. The people *who were rushing out of* the city gate trampled on him, and he died.

8

The widow from Shunem recovered her land

¹ After Elisha caused the son of the woman from Shunem *town* to become alive again, he told her that she should leave with her family and live somewhere else for a while, because Yahweh was going to ◀send a famine/cause food to become very scarce▶ in the land. He said that the famine would last for seven years. ² So the woman did what Elisha told her to do. She and her family went to live in *the Philistia region* for seven years.

³ After the seven years were ended, they returned to their home. The woman went to the king to request that her house and her land be given back to her. ⁴ When she arrived, the king was talking with Gehazi, Elisha's servant. The king was saying to him, "Tell me all the great things that Elisha has done." ⁵ While Gehazi was telling the king that Elisha had caused the son of a woman *from Shunem* to become alive again, that woman came in and requested the king to enable her to get her house and land back again. Gehazi exclaimed, "Your Majesty, this is the woman whose son Elisha caused to become alive again!"

⁶ When the king asked her about it, she told him *that what Gehazi had said was true*. The king summoned one of his officials and said to him, "I want everything that this woman possessed

previously, including the value of all the crops that have been harvested during these last seven years while she was away from her land, *to be given back to her.*" *So the official did that.*

Elisha predicted the death of the king of Syria

⁷ Elisha went to Damascus, *the capital of Syria*, when Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, was *very sick*. When someone told the king that Elisha was in Damascus, ⁸ the king told *one of his officials named Hazael*, "Go and talk to that prophet and take a present/gift with you to give to him. Request him to ask Yahweh if I will recover from my illness."

⁹ So Hazael went to talk with Elisha. He took with him forty camels that were carrying many kinds of goods that were produced in Damascus. When Hazael met him, he said to him, "Your friend Ben-Hadad, the king of Syria, sent me to ask you whether *you think* he will recover from his illness."

¹⁰ Elisha said to Hazael, "Go and say to him, 'Yes, you will certainly not die from this illness,' but Yahweh has shown me that he will certainly die *before he recovers.*" ¹¹ Then Elisha stared at him and had a terrified look on his face. That caused Hazael to feel uneasy/embarrassed. Then *suddenly* Elisha started to cry.

¹² Hazael said, "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: You will burn their cities with walls around them, you will kill their fine young men with a sword, you will bash the heads

of their children, and you will rip open the bellies of their pregnant women *with a sword*.”

¹³ Hazael replied, “I am *as insignificant as* [MET] a dog; ◀how could I do such things?/I would never do such terrible things!▶” [RHQ]

Elisha replied, “Yahweh has also revealed to me that you will become the king of Syria.”

¹⁴ Then Hazael left and returned to his master/boss *the king*, who asked him, “What did Elisha say?”

He replied, “He told me that you would certainly recover.” ¹⁵ But the next day, *while the king was sleeping*, Hazael took a blanket and soaked it in water. Then he spread it on the king’s face *in order that he could not breathe*, and he died. Then Hazael became the king of Syria instead of Ben-Hadad.

King Jehoram of Judah

¹⁶ After King Joram, the son of Ahab, had been ruling in Israel for almost five years, Jehoshaphat’s son Jehoram became the king of Judah. ¹⁷ He was thirty-two years old when he became the king, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eight years. ¹⁸ His wife was the daughter of King Ahab. And like everyone in Ahab’s family, he continually did the evil things that the previous kings of Israel had done. He did things that Yahweh considered to be evil. ¹⁹ But Yahweh did not want to get rid of the people of Judah, because of what he had promised David, who served him *very well*. He had promised David

that his descendants [MET] would always rule Judah.

²⁰ During the time that Jehoram ruled, *the king of Edom* rebelled against Judah, and they appointed their own king. ²¹ So Jehoram went with his army and all their chariots to Zair *city near the border of Edom*. There the army of Edom surrounded them. But during the night, Jehoram and the commanders in their chariots were able to get through the enemy lines and escaped. And all his soldiers also fled to their homes. ²² So after that, Edom was no longer controlled by Judah, and it is still like that. During that same time, the people of Libnah *city* also freed themselves from being controlled by Judah.

²³ *If you want to read about* the other things that Jehoram did, they are written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'. ²⁴ Jehoram died [EUP] and was buried where the other kings of Judah had been buried in *the part of Jerusalem called 'The City of David'*. Then Jehoram's son Ahaziah became the king.

King Ahaziah of Judah

²⁵ After Ahab's son Joram has been ruling in Israel for almost twelve years, Jehoram's son Ahaziah became the king of Judah. ²⁶ Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he started to rule. He ruled in Jerusalem for *only* one year. His mother's name was Athaliah, *the daughter of King Ahab and the granddaughter of King Omri of Israel*. ²⁷ King Ahab conducted his life just like

the members of Ahab's family had done. He did things that Yahweh considered to be very evil.

²⁸ Ahaziah's army joined the army of King Joram of Israel to fight against the army of King Hazael of Syria. Their armies started fighting at Ramoth *city* in *the Gilead region*, and the soldiers of Syria wounded Joram. ²⁹ King Joram returned to Jezreel *city* to recover from his wounds. King Ahaziah went to visit him there.

9

Jehu became the king of Israel

¹ Meanwhile, the prophet Elisha summoned one of the other prophets. He said to him, "Get ready [IDM] and go to Ramoth *city* in *the Gilead region*. Take this jar of *olive oil* with you. ² When you arrive there, search for a man named Jehu, the son of Jehoshaphat and grandson of Nimshi. Go with him into a room away from his companions, ³ and pour *some of* this oil on his head. Then say to 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 the young prophet went to Ramoth. ⁵ When he arrived, he saw that the commanders of the army were having a conference. He *looked at Jehu and* said, "Sir, I have a message for *one of you*."

Jehu replied, "Which one of us is the message for?"

The young prophet replied, "It is for you, commander/sir."

⁶ So Jehu got up and went with the young prophet into a house. There the young prophet poured some *olive* oil on Jehu's head and said to him, "Yahweh, the God whom we Israelis *worship*, declares this: 'I am appointing you to be the king of my Israeli people. ⁷ You must kill your master *King Joram*, the son of Ahab, because I want to punish *Ahab's wife* Jezebel for murdering [MTY] many of my prophets and other people who served me. ⁸ You must kill *not only Joram but* all of Ahab's family. I want to get rid of every male in the family, including young ones and old ones. ⁹ I will get rid of Ahab's family, like I got rid of the families of two other kings of Israel, Jeroboam and Baasha. ¹⁰ And *when* Jezebel *dies*, her corpse will not be buried. Dogs will eat her corpse there in Jezreel city.' "

After the young prophet said this, he left the room and ran. ¹¹ When Jehu came out of the room to where his other commanders were, they said to him, "Is everything all right? Why did that mad fellow come to you?"

He replied, "You know what kinds of things young prophets like him say."

¹² They said, "You are lying! Tell us what he said!"

He replied, "He told me that Yahweh said, 'I am appointing [MTY] you to be the king of Israel.' "

¹³ Then they all spread their cloaks on the steps of the building *for Jehu to walk out on*, and they blew trumpets and shouted, "Jehu is now the king!"

King Joram of Israel was killed

¹⁴⁻¹⁵ King Joram and his army had been defending Ramoth against the attacks by the army of the king of Syria. King Joram had returned to Jezreel city, to recover from being wounded in the battle against the army of Hazael, the king of Syria. And Jehu made plans to kill Joram. He said to his other commanders, "If helping me is truly what you want, make sure that no one leaves this city to go to warn the people of Jezreel *about what I am planning to do.*" ¹⁶ Then Jehu and his officers got into their chariots and rode to Jezreel, where Joram was still recovering. And King Ahaziah of Judah was there, visiting Joram.

¹⁷ A guard was standing in the watchtower in Jezreel. He saw Jehu and his men approaching. He called out, "I see a lot of men *who are approaching!*" King Joram *heard what the watchman said, so he* said to his soldiers, "Send someone on a horse to go and find out if they are coming to be friendly to us or to attack us."

¹⁸ So a man rode out to meet Jehu and said to him, "The king wants to know *if you are coming to be friendly to us.*"

Jehu replied, "This is not the time for you [RHQ] to be concerned about acting friendly! Turn around and come behind me!"

So the guard in the watchtower reported that the messenger had reached the group *that was approaching*, but that he was not returning *alone*.

¹⁹ So King Joram sent another messenger, who asked Jehu the same question. Again Jehu replied, "This is not the time [RHQ] for you to be

concerned about acting friendly! Turn around and follow me!”

²⁰ Then the watchman reported again, “That messenger also reached them, but he is not coming back *alone*. And *the leader of the group must be Jehu*, the son of Nimshi, because he is driving *his chariot* furiously, *like Jehu does!*”

²¹ Joram said *to his soldiers*, “Get *my chariot* ready!” So they did that. Then King Joram and King Ahaziah both rode toward Jehu, each one in his own chariot. And *it happened that they met Jehu at the field that had previously belonged to Naboth!* ²² When Joram met Jehu, he said to him, “Are you coming on a peaceful visit?”

Jehu replied, “◀How can there be peace while you and your people are prostrating themselves to worship idols and practicing very much <witchcraft/sorcery> like your mother Jezebel did?/There certainly cannot be peace while you and your people are prostrating themselves to worship idols and practicing <witchcraft/sorcery> like your mother Jezebel has been doing!▶” [RHQ]

²³ Joram cried out, “Ahaziah, they have deceived us! *They want to kill us!*” So Joram turned his chariot around and tried to flee.

²⁴ But Jehu drew his bow mightily and shot *an arrow that pierced* Joram between his shoulder blades. The arrow *went through his body and* pierced his heart, and he slumped down dead in his chariot. ²⁵ Then Jehu said to his assistant Bidkar, “Take his corpse and throw it here into the field that belonged to Naboth. *I am sure*

that you remember that when you and I were riding together *in chariots* behind King Joram's father Ahab, that Yahweh said this about Ahab: ²⁶ 'Yesterday I saw Ahab murder [MTY] Naboth and his sons here. And I solemnly promise that I will punish him right here in this same field!' So take Joram's corpse and throw it into that field! That will fulfill what Yahweh said would happen."

King Ahaziah of Judah was killed

²⁷ When King Ahaziah saw what happened, he fled *in his chariot* toward Beth-Haggan town. But Jehu pursued him and said *to his other commanders*, "Shoot him, also!" So they shot him *with arrows* while he was riding in his chariot on the road up to Gur, near Ibleam town. He continued going in his chariot until he reached Megiddo city, where he died. ²⁸ His officials took his corpse back to Jerusalem and buried it in the tombs in the *part of Jerusalem called 'The City of David'*, where his ancestors had been buried. ²⁹ Ahaziah had become the king of Judah when Joram had been ruling Israel for almost eleven years.

Queen Jezebel was killed

³⁰ Then Jehu went to Jezreel. When *Ahab's widow Jezebel* heard what had happened, she put paint/makeup on her eyelids, and combed her hair to make it beautiful, and looked out the window *of the palace toward the street below*. ³¹ While Jehu was entering the city gate, she called out to him, "You *are like* Zimri! You are

a murderer! *I think* you are certainly not [RHQ] coming on a peaceful visit!"

³² Jehu looked up toward the window, and then he said, "Who is ◀on my side/wants to help me▶? Anyone?" Two or three palace officials looked down at him *from a window and pointed to themselves*. ³³ Jehu said to them, "Throw her down here!"

So they threw her down, and *when she hit the ground and died*, 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 ate and drank. Then he said *to some of his men*, "Take the corpse of that woman whom Yahweh has cursed and bury it, because she is a king's daughter *and therefore should be buried properly*." ³⁵ But when they went to get her corpse to bury it, all that was left was only her skull and *the bones of her feet and her hands*. Everything else was gone. ³⁶ When they reported this to Jehu, he said, "That is what Yahweh said would happen! He told his servant/prophet Elijah, 'In *the city of Jezreel*, dogs will eat the flesh of Jezebel's corpse. ³⁷ Her bones will be scattered there in Jezreel like dung, with the result that no one will be able to *recognize them and say*, "These are Jezebel's bones." ' "

10

Ahab's descendants were murdered

¹ There were seventy descendants of King Ahab who were living there in Samaria. Jehu

wrote a letter *and made copies of it* and sent them to the rulers of the city, to the elders, and to those who raised and tutored Ahab's children. ² *This is what he wrote:* "You are the ones who are *taking care of* the king's descendants. You have chariots and horses and weapons, and you live in cities that have walls around them. So as soon as you receive this letter, ³ choose one of the king's sons, the one who is the best qualified, and appoint him to be your king. Then *prepare to fight to defend him.*"

⁴ But *when they got those letters from Jehu and read them*, they became very afraid. They said, "King Joram and King Ahaziah could not resist him; ◀how can we resist him?/we cannot possibly resist him!▶" [RHQ]

⁵ So the officer who was in charge of the palace and the mayor of the city sent a message to Jehu saying, "We want to serve you, and we are ready to do whatever you tell us to do. We will not appoint anyone to become our king. You do whatever you think is best."

⁶ So Jehu sent a second letter to them, writing this: "If you ◀are on my side/want to help me▶, and if you are ready to obey me, *kill King Ahab's descendants and cut off their heads and bring their heads to me here in Jezreel at this time tomorrow.*"

The seventy descendants of King Ahab were being brought up and supervised by the leaders of *Samaria* city. ⁷ When they received the letter from Jehu, they killed all seventy of Ahab's 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 descendants." So Jehu commanded that the heads should be put in two piles at the city gate and that the heads should stay there until the next morning.

⁹ The next morning he went out *to the city gate* and said to all the people, "I am the one who plotted against King Joram and killed him. You are not guilty of doing that. But *it was Yahweh, not I* [RHQ] who *commanded that all these descendants of Ahab should be killed*. ¹⁰ So you need to know that everything that Yahweh said would happen has happened. He has caused to happen what he told the prophet Elijah would happen." ¹¹ Then Jehu executed all the other relatives of Ahab in Jezreel, and all Ahab's officers, and close friends, and his priests. He did not allow any of them to remain alive.

¹² Then Jehu left *Jezreel* and went toward Samaria. While he was going there, at a place called 'Shepherds' Camp', ¹³ 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 children of Queen Jezebel and the other members of King *Joram's* family."

¹⁴ Jehu said to his men, "Seize them!" So they seized them and killed all of them at the pit named Beth-Eked. There were 42 people whom

they killed; they did not allow any of them to remain alive.

¹⁵ Then Jehu *continued to travel toward Samaria*. Along the road, he was met by Jonadab, a leader of the Rechab clan. Jehu greeted him and said to him, “Are you as devoted to me [IDM] as I am devoted to you?”

Jonadab replied, “Yes, I am.”

Jehu said, “If you are, shake hands with me.” So Jonadab shook hands with him, and Jehu helped him to get into his chariot. ¹⁶ Jehu said to him, “Come with me, and you will see that I am very devoted to Yahweh.” So they rode together to Samaria.

¹⁷ When they arrived in Samaria, Jehu killed all of Ahab’s relatives who were still alive. He did not ◀spare any of them/allow any of them to remain alive▶. That was what Yahweh told Elijah would happen.

The people who worshiped Baal were killed

¹⁸ Then Jehu summoned all the people of *Samaria*, and said to them, “King Ahab was devoted to *your god* Baal a little bit, but I will serve him much more. ¹⁹ So now summon all the prophets of Baal, all of Baal’s priests, and all the others who worship Baal. I am going to make a great sacrifice to Baal. I want all of them to be there. Any of them who is not there will be executed.” But Jehu was planning to trick them; he was planning to kill all those who worshiped Baal.

²⁰ Then Jehu commanded, “Announce that we are going to set aside a day to honor Baal.”

So they did that. ²¹ Jehu *decided what day they would gather and* sent messages throughout Israel *telling everyone what day to gather on*, and on that day, everyone who worshiped Baal came. No one stayed at home. They all went into the huge temple of Baal and filled it from one end to the other. ²² Jehu told the priest who took care of the sacred robes to bring them out and give them to the people who worshiped Baal. So the priest did that.

²³ Then Jehu went into the temple of Baal with Jonadab, and he said to the people who were there to worship Baal, "Be sure that only those who worship Baal are here. Be sure that no one who worships Yahweh has come in." ²⁴ Then he and Jonadab prepared to offer sacrifices and other offerings to Baal that would be completely burned *on the altar that was there in Samaria*. But Jehu had stationed eighty of his men outside the temple, and had said to them, "I want you to kill all the people *who are in the temple*. Anyone who allows one of them to escape will be executed!"

²⁵ As soon as Jehu *and Jonadab* had finished killing the animals that would be completely burned to be an offering to Baal, they *went outside and* said to the guards and officers, "Go in and kill all of them! Do not allow any of them to escape!" So the guards and officers went in and killed them all with their swords. Then they dragged their corpses outside the temple. Then they went into the inner room of the temple, ²⁶ and they carried out the sacred pillar of Baal

that was there, and they burned it. ²⁷ So they destroyed that pillar that honored Baal, and then they burned down the temple, and made it a public toilet. And it is still a toilet!

²⁸ That is how Jehu got rid of the worship of Baal in Israel. ²⁹ But Jehu did not quit committing the kinds of sins that Jeroboam had committed, sins that led the people of Israel to sin by worshiping the gold *statues of calves* in Bethel and Dan *cities*.

³⁰ Then Yahweh said to Jehu, "You have done what pleased me by getting rid of all of Ahab's descendants. So I promise you that your son and grandson and great-grandson and great-great-grandson will all be kings of Israel." ³¹ But Jehu did not obey all the laws of Yahweh, the God of the Israeli people. He did not stop committing the sins that Jeroboam had committed, sins that led the Israeli people to sin.

Jehu died

³² At that time, Yahweh began to cause the territory controlled by Israel to become smaller. *The army of King Hazael of Syria* conquered much of the Israeli territory. ³³ He conquered the parts east of the *Jordan River*, as far south as *Aroer town* on the *Arnon River*. That included *the Gilead and Bashan regions*, where the tribes of Gad, Reuben, and half of the tribe of Manasseh lived.

³⁴ *If you want to read more* about all the other things that Jehu did [RHQ], they are written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'.

³⁵ Jehu died [EUP], and was buried in Samaria. His son Jehoahaz became the king in place of his father. ³⁶ Jehu had ruled in Samaria as the king of Israel for twenty-eight years.

11

Queen Athaliah of Judah

¹ When King Ahaziah's mother Athaliah saw that her son had been killed, she commanded that all the members of Ahaziah's family *who might become king* must be executed. ² So Ahaziah's sons were all about to be murdered. But Jehosheba, who was King Jehoram's daughter and Ahaziah's half-sister, took Ahaziah's *very young* son Joash and hid him and ◀his nursemaid/the woman who took care of him▶ in a bedroom *in the temple*. So he was not killed. ³ He stayed with Jehosheba for six years. All during that time, he remained hidden in the temple, while Athaliah ruled *Judah*.

⁴ But during the next year, Jehoiada the Supreme Priest summoned the officers who supervised the royal bodyguards and the palace guards. He told them to come to the temple. There he required them to solemnly promise that they would do what he told them to do. And he showed King Ahaziah's son Joash to them. ⁵ He gave them these instructions: "There are three groups of you guards. When one group finishes their work on the Sabbath day, *divide yourselves into* three smaller groups. One group must guard the palace. ⁶ Another group must guard at the Sur Gate. The other group must guard at the

gate behind the other groups. ⁷ The two groups that are not working on the Sabbath day must guard the temple *to protect little King Joash*. ⁸ You must stand around the king wherever he goes, with your weapons in your hands. You must kill anyone who comes near you.”

⁹ The officers *who supervised the guards* did what Jehoiada told them to do. Each one brought to Jehoiada the guards that he supervised—the guards who were just finishing their work and those who were about to start their work on the Sabbath day. ¹⁰ The priest distributed to the commanders of the guards the spears and shields that had belonged to King David, that were kept/stored in the temple. ¹¹ Then he commanded all the guards to stand in their positions, each one with his sword in his hand, all around the young king.

¹² Then he brought Joash out. He put the crown on his head and gave him a scroll on which were written the rules *that the kings needed to obey*. Then he poured some olive oil on Joash’s head and proclaimed that he was now the king. The people all clapped their hands and shouted, “We desire/hope that the king will live for many years!”

¹³ When Athaliah heard the noise that was being made by the guards and the other people, she ran to the temple, where the people were gathered. ¹⁴ She saw the new king standing there alongside one of the big pillars, which was the place at the temple where the kings usually stood. She saw that he was surrounded by the

temple officers and men blowing trumpets, and that the people were shouting joyfully, and *some of them* were also blowing trumpets. She tore her clothes *to show her distress* and shouted, "You are traitors! You have tricked/deceived me!" ¹⁵ Jehoiada *immediately* said, "Kill her, but do not kill her here at the temple of Yahweh! Take her away between two rows of guards. And kill anyone who tries to rescue her!" ¹⁶ *She tried to flee, but* the guards seized her and took her to the palace, to the place where horses enter the courtyard. They killed her there.

¹⁷ Then Jehoiada made a solemn agreement between the king and the people, that they would always ◀obey/be faithful to▶ Yahweh. He also made an agreement requiring the people to be loyal to Joash their king. ¹⁸ Then all the people of Israel who were there went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and the statues of Baal. They also killed Mattan, the priest of Baal, in front of the altars.

Jehoiada stationed/put guards at the temple of Yahweh. ¹⁹ Then he and the officers of the temple, the officers who supervised the royal bodyguards, and the king's bodyguards brought the king from the temple to the palace. All the people *followed them*. Joash entered the palace at the Guard Gate and sat down on the throne, *which showed that he was the new king*. ²⁰ All the people of Judah rejoiced. And because Athaliah had been killed, the city was quiet/calm.

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

12

King Joash of Judah

¹ 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, from Beersheba city. ² All his life, he did what pleased Yahweh, because Jehoiada the priest instructed/taught him. ³ But the places where the people worshiped *Yahweh* on the tops of hills were not destroyed, and they 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 said to the priests, “You must take all the money which the people contribute, both the money they are required to give and the money that they themselves decide to give, as sacred offerings to buy things for the temple. ⁵ Each priest must take the money from people who know him (OR, from one of the treasurers), and he must use that money to repair the temple whenever he sees that there is something that needs to be repaired.”

⁶ But after Joash had been ruling for almost twenty-three years, the priests still had not repaired anything in the temple. ⁷ So Joash summoned Jehoiada and the other priests and said to them, “◀Why are you not repairing things in the temple?/You should have been repairing things in the temple!▶ [RHQ] From now on, you must not keep the money that you receive from people who know you (OR, the treasurers). You

must give it to the people who will be repairing things in the temple!" ⁸ The priests agreed to do that, and they also agreed that they themselves would not do the repair work.

⁹ Then Jehoiada took a chest and bored a hole in the lid. He placed it alongside the altar *for burning incense/sacrifices* that was on the right as anyone enters the temple. The priests who guarded the entrance to the temple put in the box the money that was brought to the temple. ¹⁰ Whenever they saw that there was a lot of money in the chest, the king's secretary and the Supreme Priest would come and count the money. Then they would put it in bags and tie the bags shut. ¹¹ Then, after they weighed it, they would give the money to the men who supervised the work in the temple. Then the supervisors would use that money to pay the carpenters and builders who did the repair work in the temple, ¹² and the masons and the stone cutters. Also with some of that money they bought timber and stones that had been cut to be used in the repair work, and to pay all the other expenses for the repair work. ¹³ But they did not use any of that money *to pay men* to make silver cups or wick trimmers or bowls or trumpets or any other items made of silver or gold to be used in the temple.

¹⁴ All that money was given to the men who were doing the work of repairing the temple. ¹⁵ The men who supervised the work always did things honestly, so the king's secretary and the

Supreme Priest never required that the supervisors report what they had spent the money for. ¹⁶ But the money that people gave to pay for the wrong things that they had done and the money they gave to purify themselves because of the sins that they had committed was not put in the chest. That money belonged to the priests.

¹⁷ At that time, Hazael, the king of Syria, went *with his army* and attacked Gath city and conquered it. Then he decided that they would attack Jerusalem. ¹⁸ So Joash, the king of Judah, took all the money that the previous kings, Jehoshaphat and Jehoram and Ahaziah, had dedicated to Yahweh. He added some of his own money, and all the gold that was in the rooms in the temple where valuable things were kept/stored, and the gold in his palace, and sent it all to King Hazael, *to ◀appease him/persuade him to not attack Jerusalem▶*. So King Hazael took his army away from Jerusalem.

¹⁹ *If you want to read more of* what Joash did, *it* is all written [RHQ] in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'. ²⁰⁻²¹ Joash's officials plotted against him, and two of them killed Joash on the road that goes down to *the Silla district*. The two men who did that were Jozabad, the son of Shimeath, and Jehozabad, the son of Shomer. Joash was buried in the place where his ancestors were buried, *in the part of Jerusalem called 'The City of David'*. Then Joash's son Amaziah became the king of Judah.

13

King Jehoahaz of Israel

¹ After Joash had been ruling Judah for almost 23 years, Jehu's son Jehoahaz became the king of Israel. He ruled in Samaria *city* for 17 years.

² He did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil and committed the same kind of sins that Jeroboam had committed, sins which led the people of Israel to sin. He did not stop committing those sins. ³ So Yahweh became very angry with the Israeli people, and he allowed the army of King Hazael of Syria and his son Ben-Hadad to defeat the Israelis many times.

⁴ Then Jehoahaz prayed to Yahweh *for help*, and Yahweh heeded him, because he saw that the army of the king of Syria was oppressing the Israelis. ⁵ Yahweh sent a leader to Israel, who enabled them to be freed from being controlled by Syria. After that, the Israeli people lived peacefully as they had done previously. ⁶ But they still continued to commit the same kind of sins that Jeroboam and his family had committed and which led the Israelis to *also* sin. And the statue of the goddess Asherah remained in Samaria.

⁷ Jehoahaz had only 50 men who rode on horses and ten chariots and 10,000 other soldiers, because the army of Syria had killed all the rest, trampling them like people walk on dirt.

⁸ *If you want to read about* [RHQ] everything else that Jehoahaz did, you can read about it in the scroll called "The History of the Kings of

Israel'. ⁹ Jehoahaz died [EUP] and was buried in Samaria. Then his son Jehoash became the king.

King Jehoash ruled Israel

¹⁰ Jehoash, the son of Jehoahaz, started to rule in Israel after King Joash had been ruling in Judah for 23 years. Jehoash ruled in Samaria for 17 years. ¹¹ He did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil. He refused to turn away from worshiping idols, which was the sin that *many years earlier King Jeroboam* had told the Israeli people to commit.

¹² The other things that happened while Jehoash was king and all the things that he did are written in the book called 'The Account of What the Kings of Israel Did'. In that account they wrote about Jehoash's *army's* victories, and their war with *the army of King Amaziah* of Judah. ¹³ When Jehoash died, he was buried in Samaria where the *other* kings of Israel were buried. Then his son Jeroboam became king.

Elisha died

¹⁴ Elisha became very ill. Just before he died, King Jehoash went to Elisha and cried in front of him. *Saying the same words that Elisha had said when Elijah was taken to heaven*, he said, "My father/master! My father/master! The chariots of us Israeli people and their drivers *are taking my master away!*"

¹⁵ Elisha said to him, "Bring to me a bow and some arrows!" So the king did that. ¹⁶ Then Elisha told the king to put his hands on the bow

and prepare to shoot some arrows. And then Elisha put his own hands on the king's hands.

¹⁷ Then Elisha told him, "*Have someone* open that window toward the east." So they opened it. Then Elisha said, "Shoot!" So the king did. Then Elisha said, "That is the arrow that *indicates that your army* will defeat the Syrian army. Your army will completely defeat their *army* at Aphek town."

¹⁸ Then Elisha said, "Pick up the other arrows and strike the ground with them!" So the king picked up the arrows and struck the ground three times. ¹⁹ But Elisha was angry with him. He exclaimed, "You should have struck the ground five or six times! If you had done that, your army would have defeated the Syrian *army* until they were completely wiped out! But now, *because you struck the ground only three times*, your army will defeat them only three times!"

²⁰ Then Elisha died and was buried.

Groups of raiders from Moab came to Israel each year during ◀spring/the time when the cold season was ending▶. ²¹ One year, when some Israeli people were burying a man's body, they saw a group of those raiders. *They were afraid*, so quickly they threw that man's body into the tomb where Elisha *had been buried, and they ran away*.

But as soon as the man's body touched Elisha's bones, the dead man became alive again and jumped up!

War between Israel and Syria

²² King Hazael of Syria *sent soldiers to oppress the Israeli people all during the years that Jehoahaz ruled Judah.* ²³ But Yahweh was very kind [DOU] to the Israeli people. He helped them because of the agreement that he had made with *their ancestors* Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He did not get rid of the Israelis, and he still has not rejected them.

²⁴ When Hazael the king of Syria died, his son Ben-Hadad became the king. ²⁵ *The army of King Jehoash of Israel defeated the army of King Ben-Hadad three times, and recaptured the cities that Ben-Hadad's army had captured during the time that Jehoash's father Jehoahaz was ruling Israel.*

14

King Amaziah of Judah

¹ After Jehoash had been ruling Israel for almost two years, Joash's son Amaziah became the king of Judah. ² He was 25 years old when he started to rule, and he ruled in Jerusalem for 29 years. His mother was Jehoaddin; she was from Jerusalem. ³ Amaziah did many things that pleased Yahweh, but he did not do as many things that pleased Yahweh as King David had done. He did some of the good things that his father Joash had done. ⁴ But, *like his father,* he did not tear down the places for worshipping Yahweh at pagan shrines. The people continued to burn incense *to honor Yahweh on those hills instead of in Jerusalem, the place that Yahweh had appointed.*

⁵ As soon as he was completely in control of his kingdom, he caused to be executed the officials who had murdered his father. ⁶ But he did not execute their children. He obeyed what was written in the laws that God gave to Moses: “Parents must not be executed for *the crimes/sins committed by* their children, and children must not be executed for *crimes/sins committed by* their parents. People must be executed only for the sins that they themselves *have committed.*”

⁷ Amaziah’s soldiers killed 10,000 soldiers of the Edom people-group in the Salt Valley *south of the Dead Sea*, and they captured Sela city and gave it a new name, Joktheel. That is still its name.

⁸ Then Amaziah sent messengers to King Jehoash of Israel, saying “Come here and let’s talk together.”

⁹ But King Jehoash replied to King Amaziah: “Once a thornbush growing *in the mountains* in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar tree, saying, ‘Give your daughter to my son in order that he may marry her.’ But a wild animal in Lebanon passed by the thornbush and trampled it. ¹⁰ *The meaning of what I am saying is that your army has defeated the army of Edom, so now you have become very proud. But you should be content with defeating the people of Edom, and allow your soldiers to stay at home. If you cause trouble by fighting against us, you will surely [RHQ] cause a disaster to happen to you and to your people.*”

¹¹ But Amaziah refused to heed Jehoash's message. So he marched with his army to fight against the Israeli army at Beth-Shemesh city in Judah. ¹² The Israeli army defeated the army of Judah, and all the soldiers of Judah fled and ran back home. ¹³ Jehoash's army also captured King Amaziah there, and they also marched to Jerusalem and tore down the wall that was around the city, from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate. That was a section that was about ◀200 yards/180 meters▶ long. ¹⁴ Jehoash's soldiers seized all the gold and silver that they found, and all the utensils that were in the temple, and all the valuable things that were in the palace, and took them to Samaria. They also took to Samaria some prisoners whom they had captured.

¹⁵ *If you want to know about* all the other things that Jehoash did when he was king, including when he *and his army* fought against *the army of* King Amaziah of Judah, they are written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'. ¹⁶ Jehoash died [EUP], and he was buried in Samaria, where the other kings of Israel had been buried. Then his son Jeroboam #2 became the king.

¹⁷ Amaziah, the king of Judah, lived for 15 more years after Jehoash, the king of Israel, died. ¹⁸ *If you want to know more about* everything else that Amaziah did, it is written [RHQ] in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'.

¹⁹ Some people in Jerusalem plotted against Amaziah, so he fled to Lachish city. But they

followed him there and killed him. ²⁰ They took his corpse back to Jerusalem and buried it where his ancestors had been buried, in *the part of Jerusalem called 'The City of David'*.

²¹ Then all the people of Judah appointed Amaziah's son Uzziah, when he was 16 years old, to be their king ²² After his father died, Uzziah's workers captured Elath *city*, and it came under the control of Judah again.

King Jeroboam #2 of Israel

²³ When Amaziah had been ruling Judah for almost 15 years, Jeroboam #2 became the king of Israel. He ruled in Samaria *city* for 41 years. ²⁴ He did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil. He did not stop committing the same kind of sins that Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, committed, sins which led the Israeli people to sin also. ²⁵ His soldiers conquered again some of the territory that had previously belonged to Israel, from Hamath *city* in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. That is what Yahweh, the God whom the Israelis worshiped, promised the prophet Jonah, the son of Amittai, from Gath-Hepher *town*, would happen.

²⁶ That happened because Yahweh saw that *the Israelis' enemies were causing* the Israelis to suffer very much. And there was absolutely no one [IDM] who would help them. ²⁷ But Yahweh said that he would not destroy Israel completely, so he enabled King Jeroboam #2 to rescue them.

²⁸ *If you want to know more about* everything else that Jeroboam #2 did, *about* his fighting

courageously in battles, and *about his enabling the Israelis to capture again Damascus and Hamath cities*, they are written [RHQ] in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'.²⁹ Jeroboam #2 died [EUP], *and was buried* where the other kings of Israel *were buried*, and his son Zechariah became the king.

15

King Uzziah of Judah

¹ After Jeroboam #2 had been ruling Israel for almost twenty-seven years, Uzziah, the son of King Amaziah of Judah, began to rule. ² He was 16 years old when he started to rule, and he ruled in Jerusalem for 52 years. His mother was Jecoliah, from Jerusalem. ³ He did things that Yahweh was pleased with, like his father Amaziah had done. ⁴ But, the places at the pagan shrines where they worshiped Yahweh were not destroyed, and the people continued to burn incense *to honor Yahweh* at those places *instead of in Jerusalem, the place that Yahweh had appointed*.

⁵ Yahweh caused Uzziah to become a leper, and he was a leper for the rest of his life. *He was not allowed to live in the palace*. He lived alone in a house, and his son Jotham ruled the country.

⁶ *If you want to know about everything else that Uzziah did*, it is written [RHQ] in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'. ⁷ Uzziah died [EUP], and they buried him in *the part of Jerusalem called 'The City of David'*, where his

ancestors had been buried. Then his son Jotham officially became the king.

King Zechariah of Israel

⁸ After Uzziah had been ruling Judah for almost thirty-eight years, Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam #2, became the king of Israel. He ruled in Samaria *city* for *only* six months. ⁹ He did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil, like his ancestors had done. He committed the same kind of sins that Jeroboam #1 had committed, sins which led the Israeli people to sin.

¹⁰ Then Shallum, the son of Jabesh, made plans to assassinate Zechariah. He killed him at Ibleam *town*, and then he became the king.

¹¹ Everything else that Zechariah did is written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'. ¹² When Zechariah died, *that ended the dynasty of King Jehu*. That fulfilled what Yahweh said to King Jehu would happen: "Your son and grandson and great-grandson and great-great-grandson will all be kings of Israel."

King Shallum of Israel

¹³ Shallum, the son of Jabesh, became the king of Israel after King Uzziah had been ruling Judah for almost thirty-nine years. But Shallum ruled in Samaria for *only* one month. ¹⁴ Then Menahem, the son of Gadi, went up from Tirzah *city* to Samaria and assassinated Shallum. Then Menahem became the king of Israel.

¹⁵ Everything else that Shallum did, including his killing King Zechariah, is written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'.

¹⁶ While Menahem was ruling in Samaria, he completely destroyed Tappuah *village south of Samaria* and killed all the people who lived there and in the surrounding territory. He did that because the people in that city refused to surrender to him. *With his sword* he even ripped open the bellies of pregnant women.

King Menahem of Israel

¹⁷ When King Azariah had been ruling Judah for almost thirty-nine years, Menahem, the son of Gadi, became the king of Israel. He ruled in Samaria for ten years. ¹⁸ He did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil. He committed the same kinds of sins that King Jeroboam #1 had committed, sins that led the people of Israel to sin. He continued to commit those sins for the rest of his life.

¹⁹ Then King Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria came *with his army* to attack Israel. So Menahem gave him ◀thirty-eight tons/35,000 kg.▶ of silver in order that Tiglath-Pileser would help Menahem to continue to be king and rule his country more strongly. ²⁰ Menahem obtained that money from the rich men in Israel. He compelled each of them to contribute 50 pieces of silver. So Tiglath-Pileser *took that money and* went back home.

²¹ *If you want to know more about* everything that Menahem did, it is written [RHQ] in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'.

²² Menahem died [EUP] and was buried, and his son Pekahiah became the king of Israel.

King Pekahiah of Israel

²³ When King Uzziah had been ruling Judah for almost 50 years, Menahem's son Pekahiah became the king of Israel. He ruled in Samaria for *only* two years. ²⁴ He did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil. He committed the same kind of sins that King Jeroboam #1 had committed, sins which led the people of Israel to sin. ²⁵ Then one of Pekahiah's army commanders whose name was Pekah, the son of Remaliah, planned with 50 men from *the* Gilead region to kill Pekahiah. They assassinated him in a fortified place in the king's palace in Samaria. Then Pekah became the king.

²⁶ Everything else that Pekahiah did is written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'.

King Pekah of Israel

²⁷ When King Uzziah had been ruling Judah for almost 52 years, Pekah, the son of Remaliah, became the king of Israel. He ruled in Samaria for 20 years. ²⁸ He also did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil. He committed the same kind of sins that King Jeroboam #1 had committed, sins that led the people of Israel to sin.

²⁹ While Pekah was the king, Tiglath-Pileser, the king of Assyria, came *with his army* and captured *the cities of* Ijon, Abel-Beth-Maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, and the regions of Gilead,

Galilee, and Naphtali. His army forced the Israeli people to leave their country and go to live in Assyria.

³⁰ Then Hoshea, the son of Elah, plotted to kill Pekah. He assassinated him when Uzziah's son Jotham had been ruling Judah for almost 20 years. Then Hoshea became the king of Israel.

³¹ Everything else that Pekah did is written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Israel'.

King Jotham of Judah

³² When Pekah had been ruling Israel for almost two years, Uzziah's son Jotham began to rule Judah. ³³ He was 25 years old when he started to rule, and he ruled from Jerusalem for 16 years. His mother was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok. ³⁴ He did many things that pleased Yahweh, like his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵ But he did not destroy the places on the tops of hills where the people worshiped *Yahweh*, and the people continued to burn incense there *to honor Yahweh*. Jotham's workers built the Upper Gate of the temple.

³⁶ *If you want to know more about everything else that Jotham did, it is written [RHQ] in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'.*

³⁷ It was during the time that Jotham was the king that Yahweh sent King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Israel *with their armies* to attack Judah. ³⁸ Jotham died [EUP] and was buried where his ancestors had been buried in *the part*

of Jerusalem called 'The City of David'. Then his son Ahaz became the king of Judah.

16

King Ahaz of Judah

¹ When Pekah had been ruling Israel for almost 17 years, Ahaz, the son of Jotham, became the king of Judah. ² He 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 his God, good things like his ancestor King David had done. ³ Instead, he was as sinful as the kings of Israel had been. He even sacrificed his son as an offering to idols. That was worse than the disgusting things that the people who previously lived there had done, people whom Yahweh had expelled as the Israelis were advancing through the land. ⁴ Ahaz offered sacrifices and burned incense *to honor Yahweh* on the tops of many hills and under many [HYP] big trees, *instead of in Jerusalem as Yahweh had commanded*.

⁵ While he was the king of Judah, King Rezin of Assyria and King Pekah of Israel *came with their armies* and attacked Jerusalem. They surrounded the city, but they could not conquer it. ⁶ At that time the *army of the king of Edom* expelled the people of Judah who were living in Elath city. Some of the people of Edom started to live there, and they are still living there.

⁷ King Ahaz sent messengers to King Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria, to tell this message to him: "I

promise that I will completely do what you tell me to do, *as though I was your son*. Please come and rescue us from the armies of Syria and Israel who are attacking my country.”⁸ Ahaz took the silver and gold that was in the palace and in the temple and sent it to Assyria to be a present/gift for the king of Assyria.⁹ So Tiglath-Pileser did what Ahaz requested. His army marched to Damascus and captured it, and they took the people of Damascus as prisoners to live in the capital city of Assyria, and executed *King Rezin*.

¹⁰ When King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet King Tiglath-Pileser, he saw the altar that was there. So he sent to Uriah, the Supreme Priest *in Jerusalem*, a drawing of the altar and a model that was exactly like the altar in Damascus.¹¹ So Uriah built an altar *in Jerusalem*, following the drawing that King Ahaz had sent. Uriah finished the altar before Ahaz returned *to Jerusalem* from Damascus.¹² When the king returned from Damascus, he saw the altar. He went to it¹³ and burned animal sacrifices and a grain offering on it. He also poured a wine offering on it and threw on it the blood of the offerings to maintain fellowship with God.¹⁴ The old bronze altar which had been dedicated long ago to Yahweh was between the new altar and the temple, so Ahaz moved it to the north side of his new altar, *which was bigger than the old altar*.

¹⁵ Then King Ahaz ordered Uriah: “Each morning put on this new altar the sacrifices that will be completely burned, and in the evening put on it the grain offering, along with my offering

and the offerings that the people bring, ones that will be completely burned, and my grain offering and the people's grain and wine offerings. Pour against the sides of the altar the blood of all the animals that are sacrificed. But the old bronze altar will be only for me to use to find out what Yahweh wants me to do." ¹⁶ So Uriah did what the king commanded him to do.

¹⁷ King Ahaz told his workers to take off the frames of the carts *that were outside the temple* and to take down the basins that were on them. They also took down the bronze tank from the backs of the bronze *statues of the oxen* and put it on a stone foundation. ¹⁸ Then to please the king of Assyria, Ahaz had them remove from the temple the roof under which the people walked into the temple on the Sabbath Day, and closed up the private entrance into the temple for the kings of Judah.

¹⁹ *If you want to know about the other things that Ahaz did, they are written [RHQ] in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'.* ²⁰ Ahaz died [EUP], and he was buried in *the part of Jerusalem called 'The City of David'*, where his ancestors had been buried. Then his son Hezekiah became the king.

17

When Hoshea ruled Israel

¹ Elah's son Hoshea began to rule Israel after King Ahaz had ruled Judah for twelve years. Hoshea ruled in Samaria for nine years. ² He did many things that Yahweh considered to be

evil, but he did not do as many evil things as the previous kings of Israel had done.

³ *The army of King Shalmaneser of Assyria attacked and defeated the army of King Hoshea.* As a result, the Israelis were forced to pay a lot of tribute/taxes to Assyria each year. ⁴ But several years later, Hoshea secretly planned to rebel against the rulers of Assyria. He sent messengers to So/Osorkon, the king of Egypt, *asking if his army could help the Israelis fight against the army of Assyria.* Hoshea also stopped paying the tribute/taxes that he had been paying to Assyria every year. But the king of Assyria found out about those things, so he told his officers to put Hoshea in prison. ⁵ Then he *brought the army of Assyria to Israel, and they attacked everywhere in that land. His army surrounded Samaria city for three years.* ⁶ Finally, after King Hoshea had been ruling Israel for nine years, the army of Assyria [MTY] *forcefully entered the city and captured the people.* They took the Israeli people to Assyria and forced some of them to live in Halah town. They forced others to live near the Habor River in Gozan district. They forced others to live in the towns where the Mede people-group lived.

The reason that the Israelis were defeated

⁷ Those things happened because the Israeli people had sinned against Yahweh their God. He had rescued their *ancestors* from the power [MTY] of the king of Egypt and brought them *safely* out of Egypt, but later they began to

worship other gods. ⁸ They imitated the things that the heathen/pagan people-groups did. Those were the groups that Yahweh had expelled as the Israelis occupied their land. The Israeli people also did the evil things that the kings of Israel ◀introduced/showed to them▶. ⁹ The Israeli people also secretly did many things that were not pleasing to Yahweh their God. They built shrines *to worship idols* in all their cities, including small towns and big cities with walls around them. ¹⁰ They set up stone pillars *to honor gods*, and poles *to worship the goddess Asherah* at the top of every high hill and under every *big tree*. ¹¹ The Israelis burned incense in every place where they worshiped those gods, just like the people-groups who lived there previously had done—the groups that Yahweh had expelled from the land. The Israelis did many wicked things that caused Yahweh to become angry. ¹² Yahweh warned them many times that they should not worship idols, but they did it anyway. ¹³ Yahweh frequently sent his prophets and ◀seers/those who saw visions from Yahweh▶ to warn the people of Israel and the people of Judah. The message that Yahweh gave them was, “Turn away from all your evil behavior. Obey my commands and my laws, the laws that I told your ancestors *to obey* and which I told the prophets who served me to tell to you *again*.”

¹⁴ But the Israeli people would not pay attention. They were stubborn [IDM] just like their ancestors were. Just like their ancestors did, they refused to believe in Yahweh their God. ¹⁵ They

rejected Yahweh's laws and the agreement that he had made with their ancestors. They ignored Yahweh's warnings. They worshiped worthless idols and as a result they themselves became worthless. Although Yahweh had commanded them not to imitate the evil behavior of the people-groups that lived near them, they disobeyed that command.

¹⁶ The Israeli people disobeyed all of Yahweh's commands. They made two metal calves *to worship*. They set up two poles *to worship the goddess Asherah*, and they worshiped *the god Baal*, and the sun, the moon, and the stars.

¹⁷ They also burned their own sons and daughters to be sacrifices *to those gods*. They went to fortune-tellers and they practiced sorcery. They continually chose [MET] to do *all kinds of* evil things that caused Yahweh to become angry.

¹⁸ So, because Yahweh was very angry with the Israeli people, he allowed *their enemies* to take them away *from their country*. Only the people of the tribe of Judah were left *in the land*.

¹⁹ But even the people of Judah did not obey the commands of Yahweh their God. They imitated the evil customs that the Israelis had introduced.

²⁰ So Yahweh rejected all the people of Israel and of Judah. He punished them by allowing the armies of other nations to defeat them *and take them away*. He got rid of all of them.

²¹ Earlier, when Yahweh allowed the people of Israel to separate/break away from the area [MTY] that King David *had established*, they chose Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, to be their king.

Then Jeroboam enticed the people of Israel to stop worshiping Yahweh *and to worship idols instead*. He led them to commit great sins. ²² And the Israeli people continued to do the evil things that Jeroboam introduced. They did not turn away from those sins, ²³ until finally Yahweh got rid of them. That was just what his prophets had warned would happen. The Israeli people were taken away to the land of Assyria, and they still remain there.

Other groups settled in Israel

²⁴ The king of Assyria *ordered his soldiers to take groups of people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim cities to the Samaria region, and to resettle them in the towns there, to take the place of the Israelis who lived there previously*. Those people took control over *the whole Samaria region* and lived in the towns there. ²⁵ But those people *who came from other countries* did not worship Yahweh when they first arrived in Samaria. So Yahweh sent lions to kill some of them. ²⁶ Then those people sent a message to the king of Assyria. They wrote, "We people who have resettled in the towns in Samaria do not know how to worship the God *that the Israelis worshiped* in this land. So he has sent lions among us to kill us, because we have not worshiped him correctly."

²⁷ *When the king of Assyria read this letter, he commanded his officers, "You brought many priests here from Samaria. Send one of them back there. Tell him to teach the people who are*

now living there how to worship correctly the God whom the Israelis worshiped in that land.”
²⁸ So *the officers did that*. They sent one of the Israeli priests back to Samaria. That priest went to live in Bethel city, and he taught the people there how to worship Yahweh.

²⁹ But the people *who returned from Babylon and started to live in Samaria and* continued to make their own idols. They placed them in the shrines that the Israelis had built there. The people of each people-group made idols in the cities in which they were living. 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 of Avva made idols to represent their gods Nibhaz and Tartak. The people from Sepharvaim sacrificed their own children. They completely burned them *in pits where hot fires were kept burning*, as offerings to their gods Adrammelech and Anammelech. ³² But those people also worshiped Yahweh, and they appointed from among their own groups many people to be priests at the shrines on the tops of the hills, in order that those priests could offer sacrifices for them there.

³³ So they revered Yahweh, but they also worshiped their own gods, just as the people living in the countries from which they had been taken to Samaria did. ³⁴ They still keep their old customs. They really do not worship Yahweh, and they do not obey all the laws and commands

that Yahweh gave to the descendants of Jacob, to whom he gave the new name Israel. ³⁵ Yahweh had previously made an agreement with their ancestors, commanding them not to worship other gods or bow down to honor them or do other things to please them or offer sacrifices to them. ³⁶ He had said to them, “You must have an awesome respect for me, Yahweh, the one who brought you out of Egypt with my very great power [DOU]. I am the one whom you must bow down to honor, and I am the one to whom you must offer sacrifices. ³⁷ You must always obey the laws and commands that I *told Moses to* write for you. You must not worship other gods. ³⁸ And you must not forget the agreement that I made with your ancestors. You must not revere other gods. ³⁹ Instead, you must revere me, Yahweh, your God. If you do that, I will rescue you from the power [MTY] of all your enemies.”

⁴⁰ But the people *from those foreign nations* would not heed what Yahweh said. Instead, they continued to adhere to their old customs. ⁴¹ So, they worshiped Yahweh, but they also worshiped their idols. And their descendants still do the same thing.

18

King Hezekiah started to rule Judah

¹ After King Hoshea had been ruling Israel for almost three years, Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz, began to rule Judah. ² He was 25 years old when he became the king *of Judah* and he ruled from Jerusalem for 29 years. His mother was

Abijah, the daughter of *a man whose name was Zechariah*. ³ Hezekiah did things that Yahweh considered to be right, like his ancestor King David had done. ⁴ He destroyed the places where people worshiped Yahweh on the tops of hills, and he broke into pieces the stone pillars *for worshipping the goddess Asherah*. He also broke into pieces the bronze *replica/statue of a snake* that Moses had made. He did that because the people had named it Nehushtan, and they were burning incense in front of it to honor it.

⁵ Hezekiah trusted in Yahweh, the God whom the Israelis *worshiped*. There was no king who ruled Judah before him or after him who was as *devoted to Yahweh as he was*. ⁶ He remained loyal to Yahweh and never disobeyed him. He carefully obeyed all the commandments that Yahweh had given to Moses. ⁷ Yahweh always ◀helped/was with▶ him. He was successful in everything that he did. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and refused to ◀pay taxes to him/ do what the king of Assyria wanted him to do▶. ⁸ His army defeated *the soldiers of Philistia* as far *south* as Gaza city and the nearby villages. They conquered the entire area, from the smallest watchtower to the largest cities surrounded by walls.

⁹ After King Hezekiah had been ruling Judah for almost four years, and when King Hoshea had been ruling Israel for almost seven years, *the army of King Shalmaneser of Assyria* invaded Israel and surrounded Samaria city. ¹⁰ In the third year they captured the city. That was

when Hezekiah has been ruling Judah for almost six years, and when Hoshea had been ruling Israel for almost nine years. ¹¹ The king of Assyria commanded that the people of Israel be taken to Assyria. Some of them were taken to Halah *town*, some were taken to a place near the Habor *River* in *the Gozan region*, and some were taken to cities where the Mede people-group live. ¹² That happened because the Israelis did not obey Yahweh their God. They disobeyed the agreement that Yahweh had made with their ancestors, and all the laws that Moses, the man who served Yahweh *very well*, had told them to obey. They would not obey those laws; they would not even listen to them.

The army of Assyria invaded Judah

¹³ After King Hezekiah had been ruling Judah for almost 14 years, *the army of* King Sennacherib of Assyria attacked all the cities in Judah that had walls around them. They *did not capture Jerusalem, but they* captured all the other cities. ¹⁴ King Hezekiah sent a message to Sennacherib, while Sennacherib was in Lachish, saying “What I have done was wrong. Please *tell your soldiers to stop attacking us*. If you do that, I will pay you whatever you tell me to.” So the king of Assyria said that Hezekiah must pay to him ◀ten tons/9,000 kg.▶ of silver and ◀one ton/900 kg.▶ of gold.

¹⁵ So Hezekiah gave to him all the silver that was in the temple and that was stored in the king’s palace.

Sennacherib threatened to destroy Jerusalem

¹⁶ Hezekiah's men also stripped the gold from the doors of the temple and the gold that he himself had put on the doorposts, and he sent all that gold to the king of Assyria. ¹⁷ But the king of Assyria sent a large army with some of his important officials from Lachish *city* to *persuade* King Hezekiah *to surrender*. When they arrived at Jerusalem, they stood alongside the aqueduct/channel in which water flows from the upper pool into Jerusalem, near the road to the field where the women wash clothes. ¹⁸ They sent a message requesting King Hezekiah to come to them, but the king sent three of his officials *to talk to them*. He sent Hilkiah's son Eliakim, who supervised the palace; Shebna, the official secretary; and Asaph's son Joah, who communicated the king's messages to the people.

¹⁹ One of Sennacherib's important officials told them to take this message to Hezekiah:

"This is what the king of Assyria, the great king, says: 'What are you trusting in *to rescue you* [RHQ]? ²⁰ You say that you have weapons to fight us, and some country promises *to help you, and that will enable you to defeat us*, but that is only talk [RHQ]. Who do you think will help you to rebel against my *soldiers from Assyria*?

²¹ Listen to me! You are relying on *the army of Egypt*. But that is like [MET] using a broken reed for a walking stick on which you could lean. But it would pierce the hand of anyone who would lean on it! That is what the king of Egypt would be like for anyone who relied on him *for help*.

²² But perhaps you will say to me, “No, we are ◀relying on/trusting in▶ Yahweh our God *to help us.*” *I would reply,* “Is he not the one whom you *insulted by* tearing down his shrines and altars and forcing everyone in Jerusalem and *other places in* Judah to worship only in front of the altar *in Jerusalem?*” ’

²³ So I suggest that you make a deal between you and my master/boss, the king of Assyria. I will give you 2,000 horses, but *I do not think that* you are able to find 2,000 of your men who can ride on them! ²⁴ You are expecting the king of Egypt to send chariots and men riding horses *to assist you.* But they certainly would not [RHQ] be able to resist/defeat even the most insignificant/unimportant official in the army of Assyria! ²⁵ Furthermore, ◀do you think that we have come to destroy Jerusalem without Yahweh’s help?/do not think that we have come to Jerusalem without Yahweh’s help.▶ [RHQ] It is Yahweh himself who told us to come here and destroy this land!”

²⁶ Then Eliakim, Shebna and Joah said to the official from Assyria, “Sir, please speak to us in your Aramaic language, because we understand it. Do not speak to us in our Hebrew language, because the people who are standing on the wall will understand it *and be frightened.*”

²⁷ But the official replied, “Do you think [RHQ] that my master sent me to say these things only to you and not to the people who are standing on the wall? *If you reject this message, the people in this city will soon need to eat their own dung and*

drink their own urine, just like you will, *because there will be nothing more for you to eat or drink.*"

²⁸ Then the official stood up and shouted in the Hebrew language *to the people sitting on the wall*. He said, "Listen to this message from the great king, the king of Assyria. He says, ²⁹ 'Do not allow Hezekiah to deceive you. He will not be able to rescue you from my power [MTY]. ³⁰ Do not allow him to persuade you to rely on Yahweh, saying that Yahweh will rescue you, and that the army of Assyria will never capture this city!'

³¹ "Do not pay attention to what Hezekiah says! This is what the king of Assyria says: 'Come out of the city and surrender to me. If you do that, I will arrange for each of you to drink the juice from your own grapevines, and to eat figs from your own trees, and to drink water from your own wells. ³² You will be able to do that until we come and take you to a land that is like your land—a land where there is grain to make bread and vineyards to *produce grapes for making wine*. It will be a land that has plenty of olive trees and honey. If you do what the king of Assyria commands, you will not die. You will continue to live.

'Do not allow Hezekiah to persuade you to trust in Yahweh saying that he will rescue you!

³³ The gods that people of other nations worship have never rescued them from the power [MTY] of the king of Assyria [RHQ]! ³⁴ Why were the gods of Hamath and Arpad *cities* unable to rescue their people from the king of Assyria [RHQ]? What happened to the gods of Sepharvaim,

Hena, and Ivvah, *towns that we completely destroyed and their gods disappeared* [RHQ]? Did any god rescue Samaria from my power? ³⁵ No, none of the gods of the countries *that my army attacked* rescued their people [RHQ] from me! So why do you think that Yahweh will rescue you people of Jerusalem from my power [MTY]?' "

³⁶ But the people *who were listening* stayed silent. No one said anything, because King Hezekiah had told them, "*When the official from Assyria talks to you, do not answer him.*"

³⁷ Then Eliakim the palace administrator and Shebna the court secretary and Joah the royal historian went back to Hezekiah with their clothes torn *because they were extremely distressed*, and they told him what the official from Assyria had said.

19

Hezekiah consulted the prophet Isaiah

¹ When King Hezekiah heard what they reported, he tore his clothes and put on clothes made of rough cloth *because he was very distressed*. Then he went to the temple *to ask God what to do*. ² He summoned Eliakim and Shebna and the ◀older/most important▶ priests, who were also wearing clothes made of rough sackcloth, and told them to talk to me. ³ He said to them, "Tell this to Isaiah: 'King Hezekiah says that we are having great distress/trouble now. *Other nations are causing us to be insulted and disgraced*. We are like [MET] a woman who is about to give birth to a child, but she

does not have the strength that she needs to do it. ⁴ Perhaps Yahweh your God has heard everything that the official from Assyria said. Perhaps he knows that his boss/master, the king of Assyria, sent him to insult the all-powerful God, and that Yahweh will rebuke/punish him for what he said.' And he requests that you pray for the few of us who are still alive *here in Jerusalem.*"

⁵ When the messengers from Hezekiah came to Isaiah, ⁶ Isaiah said to them, "*Go back to your boss/master and tell him, 'This is what Yahweh says: Those messengers from the king of Assyria have said evil things about me. But you should not be disturbed because of what they said. ⁷ Listen to this: I will cause Sennacherib to hear a rumor that will worry him, that a foreign army is about to attack his country. So he will return to his own country, and there I will cause him to be assassinated by men using swords.'*"

⁸ The official from Assyria found out that the King of Assyria *and his army* had left Lachish city, and that they were attacking Libnah, *which is a nearby city*. So the official went there *to report to him what had happened in Jerusalem.*

⁹ Soon after that, King Sennacherib received a report that King Tirhakah of Ethiopia was leading his army, and was coming to attack them. So before King Sennacherib left Libnah *to fight against the army from Ethiopia*, he sent other messengers to King Hezekiah with a letter. ¹⁰ *In the letter* he wrote this to Hezekiah: "Do not allow your god on whom you are relying

to deceive you by promising that *the city of Jerusalem* will not be captured by my army [MTY]. ¹¹ You have certainly heard what the armies of the kings of Assyria have done to all the other countries. Our armies have completely destroyed them. So, ◀do you think that you will escape?/do not think that your god will save you!▶ [RHQ] ¹² Did the gods of the nations that were about to be destroyed by the armies of the previous kings of Assyria rescue them? Did those gods rescue the people in the Gozan region and in Haran and Rezeph *cities in northern Syria* and the people of Eden who had been ◀deported/forced to go▶ to Tel-Assar *city*? None of the gods of those cities were able to rescue them. ¹³ What happened to the kings of Hamath and Arpad and Sepharvaim and Ivvah *cities* [RHQ]? *Most of them are dead, and the other people were deported!*"

Hezekiah prayed

¹⁴ Hezekiah took the letter that the messengers gave him, and he read it. Then he went up to the temple and spread out the letter in front of Yahweh. ¹⁵ Then Hezekiah prayed, "Yahweh, the God whom to whom we Israelis belong, you are seated on your throne above the *statues of creatures with wings, above the Sacred Chest*. Only you are truly God. You rule all the kingdoms on this earth. You are the one who created *everything on the earth and in the sky*. ¹⁶ So, Yahweh, please listen to what I am saying, and look at *what is happening*. And listen to what

King Sennacherib has said to insult you, the all-powerful God.

¹⁷ “Yahweh, it is true that *the armies of* the kings of Assyria have completely destroyed many nations, and ruined their land. ¹⁸ And they have thrown the idols of those nations into fires and burned them. But *that was not difficult to do, because* they were not gods. They were only statues made of wood and stone, idols that were shaped by humans, *and that is why they were destroyed easily.* ¹⁹ So now, Yahweh our God, please rescue us from the power [MTY] *of the king of Assyria*, in order that the people in all the kingdoms of the world will know that you, Yahweh, are the only one who is truly God.”

Isaiah predicted that the Assyrians would not conquer Jerusalem

²⁰ Then Isaiah sent this message to Hezekiah: “This is what Yahweh, the God to whom we Israelis belong, says: ‘I have heard what you prayed to me about Sennacherib, the king of Assyria. ²¹ This is what I say to him:

“The people of Jerusalem [MTY] despise you and make fun of you.

They wag/shake their heads to mock you while you flee from here.

²² Who do you think that you are despising and ridiculing?

Who do you think you were shouting at?

Who do you think you were looking at very proudly/arrogantly?

It was I, the holy God whom the Israelis worship.

23 The messengers that you sent made fun of me. You said, 'With my many chariots I have gone to the highest mountains, even to the highest mountains in Lebanon.

We have cut down its tallest cedar trees and its nicest pine/cyprus trees.

We have been to the most distant/remote peaks and to its dense forests.

24 We have dug wells in other countries and drank water from them.

And by marching through [MTY] the streams of Egypt,
we dried them all up [HYP]!" ' "

25 *'But I reply, "Have you never heard that long ago I determined that those things would happen? I planned it long ago,*

and now I have been causing it to happen.

I planned that your army would have the power to capture many cities that were surrounded by high walls, and cause them to become piles of rubble.

26 *The people who lived in those cities have no power,*

and as a result they became dismayed and discouraged.

They are as frail as plants and grass in the fields, as frail as grass that grows on the roofs of houses and is scorched by the hot east wind.

27 *"But I know everything about you.*

I know when you are in your house and
 when you go outside;
 I also know that you are ◀raging/speaking very
 angrily▶ against me.

²⁸ So, because you have raged against me,
 and because I have heard [MTY] you speak
 very proudly/arrogantly,
it will be as though I will put a hook in your nose
 and an iron ◀bit/piece of metal▶ in your
 mouth *in order that I can lead you where I
 want you to go,*
 and I will force you to return *to your own country*
 on the same road on which you came here,
without conquering Jerusalem.” ’

²⁹ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “This is what
 will happen to prove *that I am telling the truth:*

This year and next year you *and your people*
 will be able to harvest only ◀wild grain/grain
 that grows without having been planted▶.

But the following year, you *Israelis* will be
 able to plant grain and harvest it, and to plant
 vineyards and eat the grapes that you harvest.

³⁰ The people [MTY] in Judah who remain alive
 will prosper and have many children; they will
 be like plants whose roots go deep down into the
 ground and which produce much [MET].

³¹ There will be many people in Jerusalem
 [DOU] who will survive, because Yahweh, the
 commander of the armies of angels in heaven,
 wants [PRS] it to happen.

³² So this is what Yahweh, says about the king
 of Assyria:

'His armies will not enter this city;
they will not even shoot any arrows into it!
His soldiers will not march outside the city gates
carrying shields,
and they will not even build high mounds of
dirt against *the city walls*
to enable them to attack the city.

³³ Their king will return to his own country
on the same road on which he came here.
He will not enter this city!

*That will happen because I, Yahweh have said
it!*

³⁴ I will defend this city and prevent it from being
destroyed.

I will do this for the sake of my own
reputation and because of what I promised
to King David, who served me well.' "

³⁵ That night, an angel from Yahweh went
out to where the army of Assyria had put up
their tents, and killed 185,000 of their soldiers!
When the rest of their soldiers woke up the
next morning, they saw that there were corpses
everywhere! ³⁶ Then King Sennacherib left and
went home to Nineveh, *the capital of Assyria.*

³⁷ One day, when he was worshiping in the
temple of his god Nisroch, two of his sons,
Adrammelech and Sharezer, killed him with
their swords. Then they escaped and went to *the*
Ararat region, northwest of Nineveh. And another
of Sennacherib's sons, Esarhaddon, became the
king of Assyria.

20

Hezekiah's sickness and his recovery

¹ About that time, Hezekiah became very ill. *He thought that he* was about to die. Isaiah the prophet came to him and said, "This is what Yahweh says: 'You should tell the people in your palace what you want them to do after you die, because you are not going to recover from this illness. You are going to die.' "

² Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall and prayed, ³ "Yahweh, do not forget that I have always served you faithfully, and 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 ⁵ which said, "Go back to Hezekiah, the ruler of my people, and say to him, 'I, Yahweh, the God whom your ancestor King David *worshipped*, have heard what you prayed. And I have seen your tears. So, listen: I will heal you. Two days from now you will *be able to* go up to my temple. ⁶ I will enable you to live for 15 more years. And I will rescue you and this city again from the power [MTY] of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for the sake of my own reputation and because of what I promised King David, who served me *well*.' "

⁷ So Isaiah *returned to the palace and told Hezekiah what Yahweh had said. Then he said to Hezekiah's servants,* "Bring a paste made of

boiled figs. Put some of it on his boil, and he will get well.”

⁸ Then Hezekiah replied to Isaiah, “What will Yahweh do to prove that he will heal me and that two days from now I will be able to go up to the temple?”

⁹ Isaiah replied, “Yahweh will do something that will prove to you that he will do what he promised. Do you want him to cause the shadow on the stairway/sundial to go back ten steps/degrees, or to go forward ten steps/degrees?”

¹⁰ Hezekiah replied, “It is easy to cause the shadow to move forward, *because that is what it always does*. Tell him to cause it to move backward ten steps/degrees.”

¹¹ So Isaiah prayed earnestly to Yahweh, and Yahweh caused the shadow to go backward ten steps/degrees on the stairway/sundial that King Ahaz had made (OR, that workers had built for King Ahaz).

The messengers from the king of Babylon

¹² At that time, King Merodach-Baladan, the son of Baladan the *previous* King of Babylon, heard a report that King Hezekiah had been very sick. So he wrote some letters and gave them to some messengers to take to Hezekiah, along with a gift. ¹³ *When the messengers arrived*, Hezekiah welcomed them gladly. Then he showed them everything that was in his ◀treasure houses/ places where very valuable things were stored▶—the silver and gold, the spices, the nice-smelling olive oil, and all the weapons *for his*

soldiers. He showed them all the *valuable* things in his storerooms and everywhere else in his kingdom [HYP]; he showed them everything.

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 very far from here. They came from Babylonia.”

¹⁵ Isaiah asked, “What did they see in your palace?”

Hezekiah replied, “They saw everything. I showed them absolutely everything that I own—all my valuable things.”

¹⁶ *Isaiah knew that Hezekiah had done a very foolish thing.* So Isaiah said to him, “Listen to what Yahweh says to you. ¹⁷ There will be a time when everything that is still in your palace, all the valuable things that were put there by you and your ancestors, will be carried away to Babylon. There will be nothing left here! *That is what Yahweh says to you* ¹⁸ Furthermore, some of your own descendants will be forced to go there, and they will be castrated in order that they may become servants in the palace of the King of Babylon.”

¹⁹ Then Hezekiah replied to Isaiah, “That message from Yahweh that you have given to me is good.” He said that because he was thinking, “Even if that happens, there will be peace and security *in Israel* all the rest of my life.”

²⁰ *If you want to know more about* [RHQ] all the other things that Hezekiah did, about his brave deeds in battle, about his ordering a reservoir

to be built in the city and a tunnel *to be dug* to bring water into the reservoir, they are all written in the scroll called ‘The History of the Kings of Judah’. ²¹ Later Hezekiah died [EUP], and his son Manasseh became the king.

21

King Manasseh of Judah

¹ Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to rule. He ruled Judah for 55 years from Jerusalem. His mother was Hephzibah. ² He did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil. He imitated the disgusting things that were formerly done by the people of the nations that Yahweh had expelled from the land of Israel as his people advanced *through the land*. ³ He commanded his workers to rebuild the shrines *for worshiping Yahweh* that his father Hezekiah had destroyed *because they were not in the place that Yahweh had said they should worship him*. He directed his workers to build altars for worshiping Baal. He made *a statue of the goddess Asherah*, like Ahab the king of Israel had done *previously*. And Manasseh worshiped [DOU] the stars. ⁴ He directed his workers to build altars *for worshiping foreign gods* in the temple of Yahweh, about which Yahweh had said, “It is here in Jerusalem where I want people to worship [MTY] me, forever.” ⁵ He directed that altars for worshiping the stars be built in both of the courtyards outside the temple. ⁶ He even sacrificed his own son by burning *him in*

a fire. He performed rituals to practice sorcery and magic rituals. He also went to people who consulted the spirits of dead people to find out what would happen in the future. He did many things that Yahweh considered to be extremely evil, things that caused Yahweh to become very angry.

⁷ He placed the statue of the goddess Asherah in the temple, the place about which Yahweh had said to David and his son Solomon, "My temple will be here in Jerusalem. This is the city that I have chosen from all the territory of the twelve tribes of Israel, where I want people to worship me, forever. ⁸ And if the Israeli people obey all my commands and all the laws that I gave to Moses, the man who served me *very well*, I will not again force them to leave this land that I gave to their ancestors." ⁹ But the people did not heed Yahweh. And Manasseh persuaded them to commit sins that are more evil than the sins that were committed by the people of the nations that Yahweh had expelled from the land as the Israeli people advanced.

¹⁰ *These are some of the things that* the prophets said many times, messages that Yahweh had given them: ¹¹ "Manasseh, the king of Judah, has done these abominable things, things that are much worse than the things that the Amor people-group did in this land long ago. He has persuaded the people of Judah to sin by *worshipping* idols. ¹² Therefore, this is what I, Yahweh, the God whom you Israeli people worship, say: I will the cause the people of

Jerusalem and the rest of Judah to experience great disasters. It will be terrible, with the result that everyone who hears about it will be stunned [MTY]. ¹³ I will judge and punish [MET] the people of Jerusalem like I punished the family of King Ahab *of Israel*. I will ◀wipe Jerusalem clean/remove all the people from Jerusalem▶, like [MET] people wipe a plate and then turn it upside down *after they have finished eating, to show that they are now satisfied*. ¹⁴ And I will abandon the people who remain alive, and I will allow their enemies to conquer them and steal everything valuable from their land. ¹⁵ I will do this because my people have done things that I consider to be very evil, things which have caused me to become very angry. They have caused me to become angry continually, ever since their ancestors left Egypt.”

¹⁶ Manasseh *commanded his officials to kill many innocent people in Jerusalem, with the result that their blood flowed in the streets. He did this in addition to persuading the people of Judah to sin against Yahweh by worshipping idols.*

¹⁷ *If you want to know more about all the things that Manasseh did, they are written in the scroll called ‘The History of the Kings of Judah’.*

¹⁸ Manasseh died [EUP] and was buried in the garden outside his palace, the garden that Uzza *had made*. Then Manasseh’s son Amon became the king.

King Amon of Judah

¹⁹ Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king. He ruled Judah from Jerusalem for *only* two years. His mother's name was Meshullemeth. She was from Jotbah *town*, and was the granddaughter of Haruz. ²⁰ Amon did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil, like his father Manasseh had done. ²¹ He imitated the behavior of his father, and he worshiped the same idols that his father had worshiped [DOU]. ²² He abandoned Yahweh, the God whom his ancestors *had worshiped*, and did not behave as Yahweh wanted him to. ²³ Then one day some of his officials plotted to kill him. They assassinated him in the palace.

²⁴ But then the people of Judah killed all those who had assassinated King Amon, and they appointed his son Josiah to be their king.

²⁵ *If you want to read about* [RHQ] the other things that Amon did, they are written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'.

²⁶ Amon was also buried in the tomb in the garden that Uzza *had made*. Then Amon's son Josiah became the king.

22

King Josiah of Judah

¹ Josiah was eight years old when he became the king *of Judah*. He ruled from Jerusalem for 31 years. His mother was Jedidah and his grandfather was Adaiah from Bozkath *town*.

² Josiah did things that were pleasing to Yahweh and conducted his life as his ancestor King David

had done. He completely obeyed [IDM] all the laws of God.

³ After Josiah had been ruling for almost 18 years, he sent his secretary Shaphan, the son of Azaliah and grandson of Meshullam, to the temple with these instructions: ⁴ “Go to Hilkiyah, the Supreme Priest, and tell him to give me a report, telling me how much money the men who guard the doors of the temple have collected from the people *as offerings*. ⁵ Then tell him to give all that money to the men who are supervising the work of repairing the temple. ⁶ They must give that money to the carpenters, the builders, and the masons, and they should also buy the timber and the stones that they will use to repair the temple. ⁷ But the men who supervise the work will not be required to make a report on the money that is given to them, saying what they spent it for, because those men are completely honest.”

⁸ *After Shaphan said that to Hilkiyah* the king’s secretary, Hilkiyah said to Shaphan, “I have found in the temple a scroll on which is written the laws *that God gave to Moses!*” Hilkiyah gave the scroll to Shaphan, and he started to read it. ⁹ Then Shaphan *took the scroll* to the king and said to him, “Your temple guards have taken the money that was in the temple, and they have given it to the men who will supervise the work of repairing the temple.” ¹⁰ Then Shaphan said to the king, “*I have brought to you* a scroll that Hilkiyah gave to me.” And Shaphan started to read it to the king.

¹¹ When the king heard the laws that were written in the scroll that Shaphan was reading to him, he tore his clothes *because he was very dismayed*. ¹² Then he gave these instructions to Hilkiah, to Shaphan's son Ahikam, to Micaiah's son Achbor, and to Asaiah, the king's special advisor: ¹³ "Go and ask Yahweh for me and for all the people of Judah, about what is written in this scroll that has been found. Because *it is clear that* Yahweh is very angry with us because our ancestors disobeyed what was written on this scroll, things that we *should have done*."

¹⁴ So Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to ◀consult/talk with▶ a woman whose name was Huldah, who was a prophetess who lived in the newer/northern part of Jerusalem. Her husband Shallum, son of Tikvah and grandson of Harhas, took care of the robes that were worn *in the temple* (OR, *by the king*). *Those five men told her about the scroll*.

¹⁵ She said to them, "This is what Yahweh the God whom we Israelis *worship* says: 'Go back and tell the king who sent you ¹⁶ that this is what Yahweh says: "Listen to this carefully. I am going to cause all the people who live here in Jerusalem to experience a disaster, which is what was written in the scroll that the king has read. ¹⁷ I will do that because they have abandoned me, and they burn incense to *honor* other gods. They have caused me to become very angry by *worshipping* all the idols that they have made (OR, by all the wicked things that they have done), and my anger is like [MET] a fire that will not

be put out.” ¹⁸ The king of Judah sent you to inquire what I, Yahweh, wanted you to do, so this is what you should say to him: “Because you have heeded what was written in the scroll, ¹⁹ and you repented and humbled yourself when you heard what I said to warn you *about what would happen* to this city and the people who live here and because you tore your robes and wept in my presence, I have heard you. I said that I would cause this city to be abandoned. It will be a city whose name people will use when they curse someone. But I have heard what you prayed, ²⁰ so I will allow you to die [EUP] and be buried peacefully. I will cause the people who live here to experience a terrible disaster, but you will not *be alive to see it.*” ’ ’ ”

After the men heard that, they returned to King Josiah and gave him that message.

23

Josiah got rid of pagan worship

¹ Then the king summoned all the elders of Jerusalem and *of the other places in Judah*. ² They went together to the temple, along with the priests and the prophets, and many other [HYP] people, from the most important people to the least important people. And while they listened, the king read to them all of the laws that Moses had written. He read from the scroll that had been found in the temple. ³ Then the king stood next to the pillar *where the kings stood when they made important announcements*, and while

Yahweh was listening, he repeated his promise to sincerely obey [DOU] all of Yahweh's commands and regulations [DOU]. He also promised to ◀fulfill the conditions of/do what was written in▶ the agreement he made with Yahweh. And all the people also promised to obey the agreement.

⁴ Then the king commanded Hilkiah the Supreme Priest and all the other priests who assisted him and the men who guarded the entrance to the temple to bring out from the temple all the items that people had been using to worship Baal, the goddess Asherah, and the stars. *After they carried them out, they burned all those things outside the city near the Kidron Valley. Then they took all the ashes to Bethel, because that city was already considered to be desecrated/unholy.* ⁵ There were many pagan priests that the previous kings of Judah had appointed to burn incense on the altars on the tops of hills in Judah. They had been offering sacrifices to Baal, to the sun, the moon, the planets, and the stars. The king stopped them from doing those things. ⁶ He *commanded that* the statue of the goddess Asherah *be* taken out of the temple. Then they took it outside Jerusalem, down to the Kidron Brook, and burned it. Then they pounded the ashes to powder and scattered that over the graves in the public cemetery. ⁷ He also destroyed the rooms in the temple where the temple male prostitutes lived. That was where women wove robes that were used to worship the goddess Asherah.

⁸⁻⁹ Josiah also brought *to Jerusalem* all the

priests who were offering sacrifices in the other cities in Judah. He also desecrated the places on the tops of hills where the priests had burned incense *to honor idols*, from Geba *in the north* to Beersheba *in the south*. Those priests were not allowed to offer sacrifices in the temple, but they *were allowed to* eat the unleavened bread that the priests *who worked in the temple* ate. He also *commanded that* the altars that were dedicated to the goat demons near the gate built by Joshua, the mayor of Jerusalem, *be* destroyed. Those altars were at the left of the main gate into the city.

¹⁰ Josiah also desecrated the place named Topheth, in the Hinnom Valley, in order that no one could offer his son or daughter there to be completely burned for a sacrifice to *the god Molech*. ¹¹ He also removed the horses that the *previous* kings of Judah had dedicated to worshiping the sun, and he burned the chariots that were used in that worship. Those horses and chariots were kept in the courtyard outside the temple, near the entrance to the temple, and near the room where *one of Josiah's* officials, whose name was Nathan-Melech, lived.

¹² Josiah also commanded his servants to tear down the altars that the previous kings of Judah had built on the roof of the palace, above the room where King Ahaz had stayed. They also tore down the altars that had been built by King Manasseh in the two courtyards outside the temple. He commanded that they be smashed to pieces and thrown down into the Kidron Valley.

¹³ He also commanded that the altars that King Solomon had built east of Jerusalem, south of Olive Tree Hill, be desecrated. Solomon had built them for the worship of the disgusting idols—the *statue of the goddess Astarte worshiped by the people in Sidon city*, Chemosh the god of the Moab people-group, and Molech the god of the Ammon people-group. ¹⁴ They also broke into pieces the stone pillars that the Israeli people worshiped, and cut down the *pillars that honored the goddess Asherah*, and they scattered the ground there with human bones *to desecrate it*.

¹⁵ Furthermore, he commanded them to tear down the place of worship at Bethel which had been built by King Jeroboam #1, the king who persuaded the people of Israel to sin. They tore down the altar. Then they broke its stones into pieces and pounded them to become powder. They also burned the *statue of the goddess Asherah*. ¹⁶ Then Josiah looked around and saw some tombs there on the hill. He commanded his men to take the bones out of those tombs and burn them on the altar. By doing that, he desecrated the altar. That was what a prophet had predicted many years before when Jeroboam #1 was standing close to that altar at a festival.

Then Josiah looked up and saw the tomb of the prophet who had predicted that.

¹⁷ Josiah asked, “Whose tomb is that?” The people of Bethel replied, “It is the tomb of the prophet who came from Judah and predicted

that these things that you have just now done to this altar would happen.”

¹⁸ Josiah replied, “Allow his tomb to remain as it is. Do not remove the prophet’s bones from the tomb.”

So the people did not remove those bones, or the bones of the other prophet, the one who had come from Samaria.

¹⁹ In every city in Israel, at Josiah’s command, they tore down the shrines that had been built by the previous kings of Israel, which had caused Yahweh to become very angry. He did to all those shrines/altars the same thing that he had done to the altars at Bethel. ²⁰ He ordered that all the priests who offered sacrifices on the altars on the tops of hills must be killed on those altars. Then he burned human bones on every one of those altars *to desecrate them*. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

Josiah had them celebrate the Passover Festival

²¹ Then the king commanded all the people to celebrate the Passover Festival to honor Yahweh their God, which was written in the law of Moses that they should do *every year*. ²² During all the years that leaders ruled Israel and during all the years that kings had ruled Israel and Judah, they had not celebrated that festival. ²³ But now, after Josiah had been ruling for almost 18 years, to *honor* Yahweh they celebrated the Passover Festival in Jerusalem.

Other things that Josiah changed

²⁴ Furthermore, Josiah got rid of all the people in Jerusalem and other places in Judah who practiced sorcery and those who requested the spirits of dead people *to tell them what they should do*. He also removed from Jerusalem and from the other places in Judah all the household idols and all the other idols and abominable things. He did those things in order to obey what had been written in the scroll that Hilkiyah had found in the temple. ²⁵ Josiah was totally devoted to Yahweh. There had never been *in Judah or Israel* a king like him. He obeyed all the laws of Moses. And there has never since then been a king like Josiah.

²⁶ But Yahweh had become extremely angry with the people of Judah because of all the things that *King Manasseh* had done to infuriate him, and he continued to be very angry. ²⁷ He said, "I will do to Judah what I have done to Israel. I will banish the people of Judah, with the result that they will never enter my presence again. And I will reject Jerusalem, the city that I chose *to belong to me*, and I will abandon the temple, the place where I said that I [MTY] should be worshiped."

The end of Josiah's rule of Judah

²⁸ *If you want to know more about* [RHQ] all the other things that Josiah did, they are written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'.

²⁹ While Josiah was the king of Judah, King Neco of Egypt led his army north to the Euphrates River to help the king of Assyria. King

Josiah tried to stop the army of Egypt at Megiddo *city*, but Josiah was killed in a battle there. ³⁰ His officials placed his corpse in a chariot and took it back to Jerusalem, where it was buried in his own tomb, a tomb where the other previous kings had not been buried.

Then the people of Judah poured *olive* oil on *the head of* Josiah's son Joahaz, to appoint him to be the new king.

King Joahaz of Judah

³¹ Joahaz was 23 years old when he became the king *of Judah*, but he ruled from Jerusalem for *only* three months. His mother was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah from Libnah *city*. ³² Joahaz did many things that Yahweh said were evil, just like many of his ancestors had done. ³³ King Neco's *army came from Egypt and captured him and* tied him up with chains and took him as a prisoner to Riblah *town* in Hamath *district*, to prevent him from continuing to rule in Jerusalem. Neco forced the people of Judah to pay to him ◀7,500 pounds/3,400 kg.▶ of silver and ◀75 pounds/34 kg.▶ of gold. ³⁴ King Neco appointed another son of Josiah, Eliakim, to be the new king, and he changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. Then he took Joahaz to Egypt, and later Joahaz died there in Egypt.

King Jehoiakim of Judah

³⁵ King Jehoiakim collected a tax from the people *of Judah*. He collected more from the rich people and less from the poor people. He

collected silver and gold from them, in order to pay to the king of Egypt what he commanded them to give.

³⁶ Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became the king *of Judah*, and he ruled from Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother was Zebidah, the daughter of Pedaiah from Rumah town. ³⁷ He did many things that Yahweh says are evil, like his ancestors had done.

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¹ While Jehoiakim was ruling *Judah*, the army of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon invaded Judah. *They defeated the Judean army, and as a result*, Jehoiakim was required to pay a lot of tribute/taxes to King Nebuchadnezzar. But after three years, Jehoiakim rebelled. ² Then Yahweh sent raiders from Babylonia and Syria, and from the Moab and Ammon people-groups, to attack the people of Judah and get rid of them, just as Yahweh had told his prophets to warn the people would happen. ³ These things happened to the people of Judah according to what Yahweh commanded. *He had decided* to get rid of the people of Judah because of the many sins that King Manasseh *had committed*. ⁴ Manasseh had even caused many innocent people in Jerusalem to be killed, and Yahweh would not forgive that.

⁵ The other things that happened while Jehoiakim was king, and all the things that he did, are written in the scroll called 'The History of the Kings of Judah'. ⁶ When Jehoiakim died, his son Jehoiachin became the king.

⁷ *The army of the king of Babylon defeated the army of Egypt, and took control of all the area that the Egyptians formerly controlled, from the brook at the border of Egypt in the south to the Euphrates River in the north. So the army of the king of Egypt did not return to attack Judah again.*

Jehoiachin ruled Judah

⁸ Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he became the king of Judah. His mother's name was Nehushta; she was the daughter of a man from Jerusalem named Elnathan. Jehoiachin ruled in Jerusalem for *only* three months. ⁹ Jehoiachin did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil, just as his father had done.

¹⁰ *While Jehoiachin was king,* some officers of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon came *along with the whole Babylonian army* to Jerusalem, and they surrounded the city. ¹¹ While they were doing that, Nebuchadnezzar himself came to the city. ¹² Then King Jehoiachin and his mother and his advisors and important officers and palace officials all surrendered to the Babylonian army.

These things happened when Nebuchadnezzar had been king for eight years. He arrested Jehoiachin and took him to Babylon. ¹³ Just as Yahweh had said would happen, Nebuchadnezzar's *soldiers took to Babylon* all the valuable things from Yahweh's temple and from the king's palace. They cut apart all the gold items that King Solomon had put in the temple. ¹⁴ They took from Jerusalem *to Babylon* 10,000 people,

including the important officials and the best soldiers and the people who made and repaired things that were made of metal. Only the very poor people were left in Judah.

¹⁵ Nebuchadnezzar's soldiers also took to Babylon Jehoiachin's wives and officials, his mother, and *all* the important people. ¹⁶ They also took to Babylon 7,000 of the best soldiers and 1,000 men who knew how to make and repair things that are made from metal. All of these people whom they took were strong and able to fight in wars. ¹⁷ Then the king of Babylon appointed Jehoiachin's uncle, Mattaniah, to be the king *of Judah*, and he changed Mattaniah's name to Zedekiah.

Zedekiah ruled in Judah

¹⁸ When Zedekiah was twenty-one years old, he became king, and he ruled in Jerusalem for eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal; she was the daughter of a man named Jeremiah from Libnah *town*. ¹⁹ But Zedekiah did many things that Yahweh considered to be evil, just as Jehoiakim had done. ²⁰ Yahweh was very angry. So ◀and finally/after he had been patient a long time▶ he expelled the people of Jerusalem and *the other places in Judah* and sent them to Babylon.

Jerusalem was destroyed

That is what happened when Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon.

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¹ On January 15 of the ninth year that Zedekiah had been ruling, King Nebuchadnezzar arrived with his whole army, and they surrounded Jerusalem. They built ramps *made of dirt against the walls of the city*, so that they could climb up the ramps and attack the city. ² They did that for two years. ³ After Zedekiah had been ruling for eleven years, the ◀famine/shortage of food▶ had become very bad. All their food was gone. ⁴ On July 18 of that year, the Babylonian soldiers broke through part of the city wall, *and that enabled them to enter the city*. All the soldiers of Judah *wanted to escape*. But the Babylonian soldiers surrounded the city, so the *king and the soldiers of Judah* waited until it was nighttime. Then they fled through the gate that was between the two walls near the king's park. They ran across the fields and started to go down to the Jordan River Valley. ⁵ But the Babylonian soldiers chased/ran after them. They caught the king when he was by himself in the valley near the Jordan River. He was by himself because all his soldiers had abandoned him. ⁶ The Babylonian soldiers took King Zedekiah to Riblah city in Babylon. There the king of Babylon decided what they would do to punish him. ⁷ There the king of Babylon forced Zedekiah to watch as the Babylonian soldiers killed all of Zedekiah's sons. Then they gouged out Zedekiah's eyes. They put bronze chains on *his hands and feet* and then they took him to Babylon.

⁸ On August 14 of that year, after Nebuchadnezzar had been ruling for 19 years, Nebuzaradan arrived in Jerusalem. He was one of king Nebuchadnezzar's officials and captain of the men that guarded the king. ⁹ He *commanded his soldiers to burn down the temple of Yahweh, the king's palace, and all the houses in Jerusalem. So they burned down all the important buildings in the city.* ¹⁰ Then Nebuzaradan supervised all the soldiers of the Babylonian army as they tore down the walls of Jerusalem. ¹¹ Then he and his soldiers took to Babylon the people who were still living in the city, the other people *who lived in that area*, and the soldiers who had previously surrendered to the Babylonian army. 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 Babylonian soldiers broke into pieces the bronze pillars, the bronze carts with wheels, and the huge bronze basin, all of which were in the temple courtyard, and they took all the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁴ They also took the pots, the shovels, the instruments for ◀snuffing out/extinguishing▶ *the wicks of the lamps*, the dishes, and all the other bronze items that the Israeli priests had used for offering sacrifices at the temple. ¹⁵ The soldiers also took away the ◀firepans/trays for carrying burning coals▶, the basins, and *all the other items made of pure gold or pure silver.*

¹⁶ The bronze from the two pillars, the carts

with wheels, and the huge basin were very heavy; they could not be weighed. ◀Those things had been made/A man named Hiram had made these things▶ for the temple when Solomon *was the king of Israel*. ¹⁷ Each of the pillars was ◀27 feet/8 meters▶ tall. The bronze capital/top of each pillar was ◀7-1/2 feet/2.3 meters▶ high. They were each decorated all around with something that looked like a net made of bronze chains connecting bronze pomegranates.

¹⁸ Nebuzaradan took with him to Babylon Seraiah the Supreme Priest, Zephaniah his assistant, and the three men who guarded the entrance *to the temple*. ¹⁹ And they found people who were still hiding in Jerusalem. From those people he took one officer from the Judean army, five of the king's advisors, the chief secretary of the army commander who was in charge of recruiting men to join the army, and 60 other important Judean men. ²⁰ Nebuzaradan took them all to the king of Babylon at Riblah *city*. ²¹ There at Riblah, in Hamath province, the king of Babylon commanded that they all be executed.

That is what happened when the people of Judah were ◀taken forcefully/exiled▶ from their land *to Babylon*.

Gedaliah was appointed governor in Judah

²² Then King Nebuchadnezzar appointed Gedaliah, who was the son of Ahikam and grandson of Shaphan, to be the governor of the people who were still living in Judah. ²³ When all the army captains of Judah and their soldiers

who had not surrendered to Nebuchadnezzar found out that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah to be the governor, they met with him at Mizpah *town*. These army captains were Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, Johanan the son of Kareah, Seraiah the son of Tanhumeth from Netophah *town*, and Jaazaniah from the Maacah region.

²⁴ Gedaliah solemnly promised them *that the officials from Babylon were not planning to harm them*. He said, "You may live in this land *without being afraid* and serve the king of Babylon, and *if you do*, everything will go well for you."

²⁵ But in October of that year, Ishmael, whose grandfather Elishama was one of the relatives of the descendants of King David, went to Mizpah along with ten other men and assassinated/killed Gedaliah and all the men who were with him. There were also men from Judah and men from Babylon whom they assassinated.

²⁶ Then many [HYP] of the people from Judah, important people and unimportant ones, and the army captains, were very afraid of *what the Babylonians would do to them*, so they fled to Egypt.

Jehoiachin was released

²⁷ Thirty-seven years after King Jehoiachin of Judah was taken to Babylon, *Nebuchadnezzar's son* Evil-Merodach became the king of Babylon. He was kind to Jehoiachin, and on April 2 of that year, he released/freed Jehoiachin from prison.

²⁸ He always spoke kindly to Jehoiachin and

honored him more than the other kings who had been taken/exiled to Babylon. ²⁹ He gave Jehoiachin new clothes to replace the clothes that he had been wearing in prison, and he allowed Jehoiachin to eat at the king's table every day for the rest of his life. ³⁰ The king of Babylon also gave him money every day, so that he could buy the things that he needed. The king continued to do that until Jehoiachin died.

Translation for Translators
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Language: English

Dialect: American

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Note that in addition to the rules above, revising and adapting God's Word involves a great responsibility to be true to God's Word. See Revelation 22:18-19.

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