

Isaiah

¹ This is the vision of Isaiah son of Amoz. God showed Isaiah what would happen to Judah and Jerusalem. Isaiah saw this during the time when Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah were kings of Judah.

God's Case Against Israel

² Heaven and earth, listen! This is what the LORD says:

“I raised my children and helped them grow up,
but they have turned against me.

³ A bull knows its master,
and a donkey knows where its owner feeds it.

But Israel does not know me.
My people do not understand.”

⁴ Oh, what a sinful nation! Their guilt is like a heavy weight that they must carry. They are evil, destructive children.* They left the LORD and insulted the Holy One of Israel. They turned away and treated him like a stranger.

⁵ What good will it do to keep punishing you? You will continue to rebel. Your whole head and heart are already sick and aching.† ⁶From the bottom of your feet to the top of your head, every part of your body has wounds, cuts, and open sores. You have not taken care of them. Your wounds have not been cleaned and bandaged.

* 1:4 They ... children Or “They are destructive children of evil parents.”

† 1:5 Your whole ... aching Or “Every head and heart is already sick and aching.”

⁷ Your land is in ruins, and your cities are in flames. Your enemies have taken your land, and foreigners are taking what it produces. It looks like some foreigners destroyed it.‡

Warnings for Jerusalem

⁸ The city of Jerusalem[§] is now like an empty shed left in a vineyard. It is like an old straw hut abandoned in a field of cucumbers or like a city surrounded by enemies. ⁹ If the LORD All-Powerful had not allowed a few people to live, we would have been destroyed completely like the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. And that almost happened!

¹⁰ You officers of Sodom, listen to the LORD'S message. You people of Gomorrah,* listen to God's teaching. ¹¹ The LORD says, "Why do you continue giving me all these sacrifices? I have had enough of your sacrifices of rams and the fat from well-fed animals. I don't want the blood of those bulls, sheep, and goats. ¹² When you people come to meet with me, you trample everything in my yard. Who told you to do this?

¹³ "Don't keep bringing me those worthless sacrifices. I hate the incense you give me. I cannot stand your festivals for the New Moon, the Sabbath, and other special meeting days. I hate the evil you do during those holy times together. ¹⁴ I hate your monthly meetings and councils. They have become like heavy weights to me, and I am tired of carrying them.

‡ 1:7 It looks ... destroyed it Or "It looks like the land of the foreigners that was destroyed." This might refer to civil war in Israel or to some time when God destroyed foreign nations, such as Sodom and Gomorrah. § 1:8 city of Jerusalem Literally, "daughter Zion." See "Zion" in the Word List. * 1:10 officers of Sodom ... Gomorrah Here, this refers to leaders and people from Judah.

¹⁵ “When you raise your arms to pray to me, I will refuse to look at you. You will say more and more prayers, but I will refuse to listen because your hands are covered with blood.

¹⁶ “Wash yourselves and make yourselves clean. Stop doing the evil things I see you do. Stop doing wrong. ¹⁷ Learn to do good. Treat people fairly. Punish those who hurt others. Speak up for the widows and orphans. Argue their cases for them in court.”

¹⁸ “I, the LORD, am the one speaking to you. Come, let’s discuss this. Even if your sins are as dark as red dye, that stain can be removed and you will be as pure as wool that is as white as snow.

¹⁹ “If you listen to what I say, you will get the good things from this land. ²⁰ But if you refuse to listen and rebel against me, your enemies will destroy you.”

The LORD himself said this.

Unfaithful Jerusalem

²¹ Look at Jerusalem. She was a faithful city. What made her become like a prostitute? In the past, Jerusalem was filled with justice, and goodness should live there now. Instead, there are murderers.

²² Once you were like pure silver, but now you are like the impurities that people throw away when the silver is purified. You are like good wine that has been weakened with water. ²³ Your rulers are rebels and friends of thieves. They demand bribes and accept money for doing wrong. They take money to cheat people, and they don’t speak up for widows and orphans. They will not even listen to their cries for help.

²⁴ Because of this, the Lord GOD All-Powerful, the Mighty One of Israel, says, “Look, I will get relief from my enemies. You will not cause me any more trouble.

²⁵ People use lye to clean silver. In the same way, I will clean away all your wrongs. I will remove all the impurities from you. ²⁶ I will bring back the kind of judges you had in the beginning. Your counselors will be like those you had long ago. Then you will be called ‘The Good and Faithful City.’”

²⁷ God is good and does what is right, so he will rescue Zion and the people who come back to him. ²⁸ But all the criminals and sinners will be destroyed. Those who stopped following the LORD will be removed.

²⁹ In the future, you will be ashamed of the oak trees and special gardens[†] you chose to worship, ³⁰ because you will be like an oak tree whose leaves are dying. You will be like a garden dying without water. ³¹ Powerful people will be like small, dry pieces of wood, and what they did will be like the sparks that start a fire. These people and their works will both burn up, and no one will be able to put out that fire.

2

God’s Message to Judah and Jerusalem

¹ Isaiah son of Amoz received this message about Judah and Jerusalem.

² In the last days the mountain of the LORD’S Temple will be the highest of all mountains. It will be raised higher than the hills.

There will be a steady stream of people from all nations going there.

³ People from many places will go there and say,
“Come, let’s go up to the mountain of the LORD,

[†] 1:29 special gardens Gardens where people worshiped false gods.

to the Temple of the God of Jacob.
Then God will teach us his way of living,
and we will follow him.”

His teaching, the LORD’S message, will begin in Jerusalem
on Mount Zion
and will go out to all the world.

⁴ Then God will act as judge to end arguments between
nations.

He will decide what is right for people from many
lands.

They will stop using their weapons for war.

They will hammer their swords into plows
and use their spears to make tools for harvesting.

All fighting between nations will end.

They will never again train for war.

⁵ Family of Jacob, let us follow the LORD.

⁶ Family of Jacob, you have abandoned your people.
This is clear because they have been filled with bad
influences from the East,^{*} and now your people try to
tell the future like the Philistines. They have completely
accepted those strange ideas. ⁷ Jacob’s land has been filled
with silver and gold from other places. There are many
treasures there. His land has been filled with horses and
many chariots. ⁸ His land is full of gods that the people
bow down to worship. They made those idols themselves.
⁹ The people have become worse and worse. They have
become very low, and you leaders did nothing to lift them
up!†

* 2:6 East This usually refers to the area around Babylon. † 2:9 They ...
up Or “The people have become very low. Surely you will not forgive them!”

¹⁰ You should be afraid of the LORD! Go hide in the dirt and behind the rocks. Hide from his glorious power!

¹¹ Proud people will stop being proud. They will bow down to the ground with shame, and only the LORD will still stand high.

¹² The LORD All-Powerful has a special day planned when he will punish the proud and boastful people. They will be brought down. ¹³ They might be like the tall cedar trees from Lebanon or the great oak trees from Bashan, but they will be cut down. ¹⁴ They might be like the tall mountains and high hills ¹⁵ or like the tall towers and high walls, but they will be brought down. ¹⁶ They might be like great ships from Tarshish,[‡] filled with such wonderful cargo, but they will be brought down.

¹⁷ At that time those proud people will fall. They will bow low to the ground, and only the LORD will stand high. ¹⁸ All the idols will be gone. ¹⁹ People will go into the holes in the ground and the cracks in the rocks because they fear the LORD and his great power as he stands to shake the earth.

²⁰ At that time people will throw away their idols they made from gold and silver. They made these statues to worship, but they will throw them into holes in the ground where bats and moles live. ²¹ They will go down into cracks in the rocks and boulders because they are afraid of the LORD and his glorious power as he stands to shake the earth.

²² Stop trusting other people to save you. Do not think too highly of them; they are only humans who have not stopped breathing yet.

[‡] 2:16 ships from Tarshish This is probably a special type of cargo ship.

3

¹ Understand what I am telling you: The Lord GOD All-Powerful will take away everything Judah and Jerusalem depend on. He will take away all the food and water.

² He will take away all the heroes and soldiers. He will take away all the judges, the prophets, the fortunetellers, and the elders. ³ He will take away the army officers and important officials. He will take away the skilled counselors, the magicians, and those who try to tell the future.

⁴ He says, "I will put young boys in charge of you. They will be your leaders. ⁵ The people will turn against each other. Young people will not respect those who are older. The common people will not respect important leaders."

⁶ At that time a man will grab one of his brothers from his own family and tell him, "You have a coat,* so you will be our leader. You will be the leader over all these ruins."

⁷ But the brother will refuse and say, "I cannot help you. I don't have enough food or clothes for my own family. You will not make me your leader."

⁸ This will happen because Jerusalem has stumbled, and Judah has fallen. They turned against the LORD. They said and did things against him, right in front of his glorious eyes.

⁹ The look on their faces shows that they are guilty. They are like the people of Sodom; they don't care who sees their sin. But it will be very bad for them. They will get what they deserve.

¹⁰ Tell the good people who do what is right that good things will happen to them. They will receive a reward for what they do. ¹¹ But it will be very bad for wicked people,

* ^{3:6} coat Or "robe." This showed that a person was a leader of the people.

because they, too, will get what they deserve. They will get what they did to others. ¹² Even children will defeat my people, and women will rule over them.

My people, your guides lead you the wrong way, and they destroy the path you should follow.

God's Decision About His People

¹³ Look, the LORD is standing to judge his people. ¹⁴ The LORD is ready to present his case against the elders and leaders of his people.

He says, "You people have burned the vineyard,[†] and what you stole from the poor is still in your houses. ¹⁵ What gives you the right to hurt my people? What gives you the right to push the faces of the poor into the dirt?" The Lord GOD All-Powerful said this.

¹⁶ The LORD says, "The women in Zion have become very proud. They walk around with their heads in the air, acting like they are better than other people. They flirt with their eyes and make tinkling sounds with their ankle bracelets as they take their quick little steps."

¹⁷ The Lord will put sores on the heads of those women in Zion. The LORD will make their heads bald. ¹⁸ Then the Lord will take away everything they are proud of: the beautiful ankle bracelets, the necklaces that look like the sun and the moon, ¹⁹ the earrings, bracelets, and veils, ²⁰ the scarves, the ankle chains, the cloth belts worn around their waists, the bottles of perfume, the charms,[‡] ²¹ the signet rings, and the nose rings, ²² the fine dresses, robes, veils, and purses, ²³ the mirrors, linen dresses, turbans, and long shawls.

[†] 3:14 vineyard A garden for growing grapes. Here, this probably means Judah. [‡] 3:20 charms Things people wore on bracelets and necklaces. People thought these things would protect them from evil or danger.

²⁴ Those women now have sweet-smelling perfume, but it will get moldy and stink. Now they wear belts, but then they will have only ropes to wear. Now they have their hair fixed in fancy ways, but then their heads will be shaved—they will have no hair.[§] Now they have party dresses, but then they will have only mourning clothes. They have beauty marks on their faces now, but then they will have another mark. It will be a mark burned into their skin to show that they are slaves.

²⁵ Your men will be killed with swords. Your heroes will die in war. ²⁶ There will be crying and sadness in the meeting places by the city gates. Jerusalem will sit there empty, like a woman who has lost everything to thieves and robbers and now just sits on the ground and cries.

4

¹ At that time seven women will grab one man and say, “Please marry us! We will supply our own food and make our own clothes. You won’t have to do anything else if you let us wear your name and take away our shame.”

² At that time the LORD’S plant* will be very beautiful and glorious. The people in Israel who survived will be very proud of what the land grows. ³ And all those who are left in Zion and Jerusalem will be called holy. Their names were on the list of people in Jerusalem who were allowed to live.

⁴ The Lord will wash away the filth[†] from the daughters

[§] 3:24 they will have no hair This means that they will become slaves.

* 4:2 the LORD’S plant This might refer to the country of Judah or to the future king or Messiah. See Isaiah 5:7. [†] 4:4 wash away the filth This is like a special ceremony for washing away the blood after a menstrual period. After this a man and wife could have sexual relations.

of Zion.[‡] He will wash away the blood from Jerusalem. With a spirit of judgment that burns like fire, he will make everything pure. ⁵ Then the LORD will create a cloud of smoke in the day and a bright flame of fire[§] at night over every building and over every meeting of the people on the mountain of Zion. And there will be a covering over everyone* for protection. ⁶ It will be a shelter to protect the people from the heat of the sun and from all kinds of storms and rain.

5

Judah, God's Vineyard

¹ Now I will sing a song for my friend, my love song about his vineyard.

My friend had a vineyard
 on a very fertile hill.
² He dug and cleared the field
 and planted the best grapevines there.
 He built a tower in the middle
 and cut a winepress into the stone.
 He expected good grapes to grow there,
 but there were only rotten ones.

³ My friend said, "You people living in Jerusalem and you people of Judah,* think about me and my vineyard.

[‡] 4:4 daughters of Zion This can refer either to the small towns around Jerusalem or to the women living there. [§] 4:5 cloud of smoke ... fire

The signs God used to show that he was with his people. * 4:5 everyone Literally, "glory," but this can also mean "soul" or "person." See Psalm 16:9.

* 5:3 You people ... Judah Or "Rulers of Jerusalem and leader of Judah"

⁴ What more could I do for my vineyard?

I did everything I could.

I hoped for good grapes to grow,
but there were only rotten ones.

Why did that happen?

⁵ “Now I will tell you

what I will do to my vineyard:

I will pull up the thornbushes that protect it,
and I will burn them.

I will break down the stone wall
and use the stones for a walkway.

⁶ I will turn my vineyard into useless land.

No one will care for the plants or work in the field.

Weeds and thorns will grow there.

I will command the clouds
not to rain on it.”

⁷ The vineyard that belongs to the LORD All-Powerful is the house of Israel. The grapevine, the plant he loves, is the man of Judah.[†]

The Lord hoped for justice,
but there was only killing.

He hoped for fairness,
but there were only cries from people being treated
badly.

⁸ Look at you people! You join houses to houses and fields to fields until there is no room for anyone else. But *when the punishment comes*, you will be forced to live alone. You will be the only people in the whole land. ⁹ I

[†] 5:7 man of Judah This could mean either “the king of Judah” or simply, “people of Judah.”

heard the LORD All-Powerful make this oath: “I swear, all these houses will be destroyed. These big, fancy houses will be empty. ¹⁰ A ten-acre vineyard will make only a little wine,[‡] and many sacks of seed will grow only a little grain.[§]”

¹¹ How terrible it will be for you people who rise early in the morning and go looking for beer to drink. You stay awake late at night, getting drunk on wine. ¹² At your parties with your wine, harps, drums, flutes, and other musical instruments, you don’t see what the LORD has done. You don’t notice what his hands have made.

¹³ My people don’t really know God. So they will be captured and taken away. Everyone, the respected leaders and the common people as well, will be hungry and thirsty. ¹⁴ They will die, and the place of death will open its mouth wide and swallow many of them. Then the noisy crowds and all the beautiful, happy people who are now so comfortable will go down into the grave.

¹⁵ Everyone, common people and leaders alike, will be humbled. Those who are now so proud will bow their heads in shame. ¹⁶ The LORD All-Powerful will judge fairly, and people will honor him. They will respect the Holy God when he brings justice. ¹⁷ Then sheep will be able to go wherever they want and graze on the land that rich people once owned.

¹⁸ Look at those people! They pull their guilt and sins behind them like people pulling wagons with ropes.*

[‡] 5:10 only a little wine Literally, “one bath,” a measure that equals about 6 gallons (22 l). [§] 5:10 only a little grain Literally, “A homer of seed will grow only an ephah of grain.” A homer equals about 6 bushels (220 l). An ephah equals about 2/3 bushel (22 l). * 5:18 ropes Literally, “useless ropes.” The Hebrew words here are like those meaning “useless things,” that is, idols.

¹⁹ They say, “We wish God would hurry and do what he plans to do so that we can see it. Let the plan of the Holy One of Israel happen soon so that we can know what it is.”

²⁰ Look at those people! They say good is bad and bad is good. They think light is dark and dark is light. They think sour is sweet and sweet is sour. ²¹ They think they are so smart. They think they are very intelligent. ²² They are famous for drinking wine and are heroes known for mixing drinks. ²³ And if you pay them enough money, they will forgive a criminal. But they will not let good people be judged fairly. ²⁴ So bad things will happen to them. Their descendants will be destroyed completely, just as fire burns straw and leaves. Their descendants will be like plants with rotten roots, whose flowers have all blown away like dust in the wind.

Those people refused to obey the teachings[†] of the LORD All-Powerful. They hated the message from the Holy One of Israel. ²⁵ So the LORD became angry with his people, and he raised his hand to punish them. Even the mountains shook with fear. Dead bodies were left in the streets like garbage. And he is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing his people.

God Will Bring Armies to Punish Israel

²⁶ Look! God is giving a sign to the nations far away. He is raising a flag and whistling for them to come.

Now the enemy is coming from a faraway land and will soon enter the country. They are moving very quickly. ²⁷ The enemy soldiers never get tired and stumble. They never get sleepy and fall asleep. Their weapon belts are

[†] 5:24 teachings This can also mean “laws.” Sometimes this means the laws God gave Moses to teach to the people of Israel.

always ready. Their sandal straps never break. ²⁸ Their arrows are sharp. Their bows are strung and ready to shoot. The horses' hooves are as hard as flint. Clouds of dust rise from behind their chariots.

²⁹ The shouts of the enemy sound like the roar of lions. Like strong, young lions, they growl and grab their prey. The captives struggle and try to escape, but there is no one to save them. ³⁰ Then there is a roar as loud as the ocean waves, and the captives turn their faces to the ground. And there is only darkness closing in as the light fades away in a black cloud.

6

God Calls Isaiah to Be a Prophet

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died,* I saw the Lord sitting on a very high and wonderful throne. His long robe filled the Temple. ² Seraph angels stood around him. Each angel had six wings. They used two wings to cover their faces, two wings to cover their bodies, and two wings to fly. ³ The angels were calling to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD All-Powerful. His Glory fills the whole earth." ⁴ The sound was so loud that it caused the frame around the door to shake, and the Temple was filled with smoke.†

⁵ I was frightened and said, "Oh, no! I will be destroyed. I am not pure enough to speak to God, and I live among people who are not pure enough to speak to him.‡ But I have seen the King, the LORD All-Powerful."

* 6:1 year ... died This was probably 740 B.C. † 6:4 smoke This showed that God was in the Temple. See Exodus 40:34-35. ‡ 6:5 I am not pure ... him Literally, "I am a man of unclean lips and live among people of unclean lips."

⁶ There was a fire on the altar. One of the Seraph angels used a pair of tongs to take a hot coal from the fire. Then the angel flew to me with it in his hand. ⁷ Then he touched my mouth with the hot coal and said, “When this hot coal touched your lips, your guilt was taken away, and your sins were erased.[§]”

⁸ Then I heard the Lord’s voice, saying, “Who can I send? Who will go for us?”

So I said, “Here I am. Send me!”

⁹ Then the Lord said, “Go and tell the people, ‘Listen closely, but don’t understand. Look closely, but don’t learn.’ ¹⁰ Confuse them. Make them unable to understand what they hear and see. If you don’t do this, they might really look with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their minds. Then they might come back to me and be healed!”

¹¹ Then I asked, “Lord, how long should I do this?”

He answered, “Do this until the cities are destroyed and all the people are gone. Do this until there is no one left living in the houses and the land is destroyed and empty.”

¹² The LORD will make the people go far away, and there will be large areas of empty land in the country. ¹³ A tenth of the people will be allowed to stay in the land, but it will be destroyed again. They will be like an oak tree. When the tree is chopped down, a stump is left. This stump will be a very special seed that will grow again.

7

Trouble With Aram

¹ Ahaz was the son of Jotham, who was the son of Uzziah. Rezin was the king of Aram, Pekah son of

§ 6:7 erased Or “atoned” or “covered over.”

Remaliah* was the king of Israel. When Ahaz was king of Judah, Rezin and Pekah went up to Jerusalem to attack it, but they were not able to defeat the city.†

² The family of David received a message that said, “The armies of Aram and Ephraim have joined together in one camp.” When King Ahaz heard this message, he and the people became frightened. They shook with fear like trees of the forest blowing in the wind.

³ Then the LORD told Isaiah, “You and your son Shear Jashub‡ should go out and talk to Ahaz. Go to the place where the water flows into the Upper Pool,§ on the street that leads up to Laundryman’s Field.

⁴ “Tell Ahaz, ‘Be careful, but be calm. Don’t be afraid. Don’t let those two men, Rezin and Remaliah’s son,* frighten you! They are like two burning sticks. They might be hot now, but soon they will be nothing but smoke. Rezin, Aram, and Remaliah’s son became angry ⁵ and made plans against you. They said, ⁶ “Let’s go fight against Judah and divide it among ourselves. Then we will make Tabeel’s son the new king of Judah.” ’ ’ ”

⁷ But the Lord GOD says, “Their plan will not succeed. It will not happen ⁸ because Aram depends on its capital Damascus, and Damascus is led by its weak king Rezin. And don’t worry about Ephraim. Within 65 years it will be crushed, no longer a nation. ⁹ Ephraim depends on its

* 7:1 Pekah son of Remaliah A king of northern Israel. He ruled about 740-731 B.C. † 7:1 Rezin and Pekah ... the city Or “Rezin and Pekah went up to attack Jerusalem, but they were not able to fight.” ‡ 7:3 Shear Jashub This is a name that means “a few people will come back.” § 7:3 Upper Pool Probably the Pool of Siloam at the southern tip of the City of David, just above the older pool now called the Red Pool. * 7:4 Remaliah’s son Pekah, the king of northern Israel. He ruled about 740-731 B.C.

capital Samaria, and Samaria is led by Remaliah's son. So you have no reason to fear. Believe this, or you will not survive."

Immanuel—God Is With Us

¹⁰ Then the LORD spoke to Ahaz again ¹¹ and said, "Ask for a sign from the LORD your God to prove to yourself that this is true. You can ask for any sign you want. The sign can come from a place as deep as Sheol[†] or as high as the skies.[‡]"

¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask for a sign as proof. I will not test the LORD."

¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Family of David, listen very carefully! Is it not enough that you would test the patience of humans? Will you now test the patience of my God?"

¹⁴ But the Lord will still show you this sign:

The young woman is pregnant[§]
and will give birth to a son.

She will name him Immanuel.*

¹⁵ He will eat milk curds and honey[†]

as he learns to choose good and refuse evil.

¹⁶ But before he is old enough to make that choice,
the land of the two kings you fear will be empty.

[†] 7:11 The sign ... Sheol Or "Make your request deep." The Hebrew word for "question" is like the word for Sheol. [‡] 7:11 The sign ... skies Literally, "make your request very high." [§] 7:14 And here ... pregnant Or "Look at this young woman. She is pregnant." The ancient Greek version (quoted in Matthew 1:23) translates "young woman" in this passage with a word meaning "virgin" and has "Look! The virgin will become pregnant." * 7:14 Immanuel This name means "God is with us." [†] 7:15 milk curds and honey This refers to some of the first solid foods, something like yogurt, that were fed to a baby. This is also the food that even the poor can find to eat. Also in verse 22.

¹⁷ “But the LORD will bring troubled times to you. These troubles will be worse than anything that has happened since the time Israel separated from Judah. This will happen to your people and to your father’s family when God brings the king of Assyria to fight against you.

¹⁸ “At that time the LORD will call for the ‘Fly’ that is now near the streams of Egypt, and he will call for the ‘Bee’ that is now in the country of Assyria. Those enemies will come to your country. ¹⁹ They will settle in the deep valleys and in the caves, by the thornbushes and watering holes. ²⁰ The Lord will use Assyria to punish Judah. Assyria will be hired and used like a razor to shave off Judah’s beard and to remove the hair from his head and body.[‡]

²¹ “At that time someone might keep only one young cow and two sheep alive. ²² But there will be enough milk for them to eat milk curds. In fact, everyone left in the country will eat milk curds and honey. ²³ There are now fields that have 1000 grapevines, and each grapevine is worth 1000 pieces of silver. But those fields will be covered with weeds and thorns. ²⁴ That land will be wild and used only as a hunting ground where people go with bows and arrows. ²⁵ People once worked the soil and grew food on these hills, but at that time they will not go there, because the fields will be covered with weeds and thorns. It will be a place where cattle graze and sheep wander.”

8

Assyria Is Coming Soon

[‡] 7:20 shave ... body This means that the people of Judah would be humiliated and treated like slaves.

¹ The LORD told me, “Get a large scroll,^{*} and use an ordinary pen[†] to write these words: ‘This is for Maher Shalal Hash Baz.’[‡]”

² I found some men who could be trusted to serve as witnesses: Uriah the priest and Zechariah son of Jeberekiah. They watched me write those words. ³ Then I went to my wife, the woman prophet. She became pregnant and had a son. The LORD told me, “Name the boy Maher Shalal Hash Baz.” ⁴ He said that because before the boy learns to say “Mama” and “Daddy,” God will take all the wealth and riches from Damascus[§] and Samaria and give them to the king of Assyria.

⁵ The LORD spoke to me again. ⁶ He said, “These people^{*} refuse to accept the slow-moving waters of Shiloah.[†] They prefer Rezin and Remaliah’s son.” ⁷ But the Lord will bring the king of Assyria and all his power against them. The Assyrians will come like their swift moving river, like water that rises and spills over its banks. ⁸ This water will be like a flash flood as it passes through Judah. It will rise to Judah’s throat and almost drown him.

But he will spread his wings over your whole country, Immanuel.[‡]

^{*} 8:1 scroll This Hebrew word might also mean a clay or stone tablet.

[†] 8:1 ordinary pen Literally, “stylus of a man.” This might be a pen for writing on clay. [‡] 8:1 Maher Shalal Hash Baz This means “There will soon be looting and stealing.”

[§] 8:4 Damascus A city in the country of Aram (Syria). ^{*} 8:6 These people Probably Judeans who wanted to join Rezin and Pekah. Also in verse 11.

[†] 8:6 Shiloah A channel that carried water from Gihon Spring to a pool at the south end of the City of David (Jerusalem). Men from David’s family were anointed to be kings there.

[‡] 8:8 But he ... Immanuel Or “Immanuel, it will spread throughout your whole country.” This might be a promise of God’s protection, or it might be a warning about Assyria’s power.

⁹ All you nations, prepare for war.

You will be defeated.

Listen, all you faraway countries!

Prepare for battle.

You will be defeated.

¹⁰ Make your plans for the fight.

Your plans will be defeated.

Give orders to your armies,

but your orders will be useless,

because God is with us![§]

Warnings to Isaiah

¹¹ The LORD spoke to me with his great power and warned* me not to be like these people. He said, ¹² “Don’t think there is a plan against you just because the people say there is. Don’t be afraid of what they fear. Don’t let them frighten you!”

¹³ The LORD All-Powerful is the one you should fear. He is the one you should respect.† He is the one who should frighten you. ¹⁴ If you people would respect him, he would be a safe place‡ for you. But you don’t respect him, so he is like a stone that you stumble over. He is a rock that makes both families of Israel fall. He has become a trap that all the people of Jerusalem will fall into. ¹⁵ (Many people will trip over this rock. They will fall and be broken. They will be caught in the trap.)

[§] 8:10 God is with us In Hebrew this is like the name Immanuel. * 8:11 warned Or “prevented.” † 8:13 respect Literally, “consider holy.” ‡ 8:14 safe place Or “holy place.”

¹⁶ *The Lord said, “Write this agreement.[§] Tie it up and seal it so that it cannot be changed. Give these teachings to my followers for safekeeping.”*

¹⁷ The LORD has turned away from the family of Jacob.
But I will wait for him.
I trust that he will come to save us.

¹⁸ Here I am with the children the LORD has given me. We are here as signs from the LORD All-Powerful, who lives on Mount Zion. He is using us to show his plans for the people of Israel.

¹⁹ The people will say, “Go to the fortunetellers and wizards who mumble and chirp like birds. Ask them what to do.” But I say, “Shouldn’t people go to their God for help? Why go to the dead to get help for the living?”

²⁰ You should follow the teachings and the agreement.* I swear, if you follow those other things, there is no future for you. ²¹ When the enemy comes, there will be hard times and hunger. And when he becomes hungry, he will become angry. He will say curses in the name of his king and his gods. Then he will lift his head upwards *like a roaring lion*. ²² And when the captives turn their faces to the ground, there is only a depressing darkness closing in—the dark sadness of people forced to leave their country.

9

A New Day Is Coming

[§] 8:16 Write this agreement Or “Take a document.” This could refer to the large scroll in verse 1 or to the promise that follows in verse 17. ^{*} 8:20 agreement This usually means the agreement God made with Israel through Moses. Here, it probably means the agreement in verse 17.

¹ But there will be an end to the gloom those people suffered. In the past, people thought the land of Zebulun and Naphtali was not important. But later, that land will be honored—the land along the sea, the land east of the Jordan River, and Galilee where people from other nations live. ² Those people lived in darkness, but they will see a great light. They lived in a place as dark as death, but a great light will shine on them.

³ God, you will make the nation grow, and you will make the people happy. They will rejoice in your presence as they do at harvest time. It will be like the joy when people take their share of things they have won in war. ⁴ That will happen because you will lift the heavy yoke off their shoulders and take away their heavy burden. You will take away the rod that the enemy used to punish your people, as you did when you defeated Midian.*

⁵ Every boot that marched in battle and every uniform stained with blood will be destroyed and thrown into the fire. ⁶ This will happen when the special child is born. God will give us a son who will be responsible for leading the people. His name will be “Wonderful Counselor, Powerful God, Father Who Lives Forever, Prince of Peace.” ⁷ His power will continue to grow, and there will be peace without end. This will establish him as the king sitting on David’s throne and ruling his kingdom. He will rule with goodness and justice forever and ever. The strong love† that the LORD All-Powerful has for his people will make this happen!

God Will Punish Israel

* 9:4 as you ... Midian See Judges 7:15-25. † 9:7 strong love The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

⁸ The Lord gave a command against Jacob and someone in Israel fell.[‡] ⁹ So all the people in Ephraim, including the ruler in Samaria, learned their lesson.

Those people are very proud and boastful now. They say, ¹⁰ “Yes, those bricks fell, but we will rebuild with strong stone. Yes, those little trees were chopped down, but we will plant new trees. And they will be large, strong trees.”

¹¹ The LORD found people to go up and fight against Rezin. He stirred up Rezin’s enemies. ¹² As for Israel, the Arameans are in front of him and the Philistines are behind him. And they are both eating away at him. But the Lord is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing Israel.

¹³ The people did not stop sinning. They did not come to the LORD All-Powerful for help. ¹⁴ So the LORD cut off Israel’s head and tail. He took away the branch and the stalk in one day. ¹⁵ (The head means the elders and important leaders. The tail means the prophets who told lies.)

¹⁶ Their guides are leading them the wrong way, so those who follow them will be destroyed. ¹⁷ All of them are evil. So the Lord is not happy with the young men, and he will not show mercy to their widows and orphans. That is because they are evil hypocrites. They tell lies.

The Lord has punished them, but he is not finished yet. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing his people.

¹⁸ That evil was like a small fire that started among the weeds and thorns and then spread to the larger bushes in the forest. Finally, it became a giant fire, and everything went up in smoke.

‡ 9:8 Or “The Lord sent a command to Jacob and it happened to Israel.”

¹⁹ The LORD All-Powerful was angry, so the land was burned. The people were fuel for the fire. No one showed any compassion to anyone else. ²⁰ People looked to the right and grabbed whatever they could, but they were still hungry. They grabbed whatever was on their left, but still they were not satisfied. So they turned on themselves and began to eat the bodies of their own children. ²¹ Manasseh fought against Ephraim, and Ephraim fought against Manasseh. Then both of them turned on Judah.

But the Lord is not finished punishing his people. He is still angry, and his arm is raised to continue punishing them.

10

¹ Just look at those lawmakers who write evil laws and make life hard for the people. ² They are not fair to the poor. They take away the rights of the poor and allow people to steal from widows and orphans.

³ Lawmakers, you will have to explain what you have done. What will you do then? Your destruction is coming from a faraway country. Where will you run for help? Your money and your riches will not help you. ⁴ You will have to bow down like a prisoner. You will fall down like a dead man, but that will not help you. God will still be angry and ready to punish you.

God Will Punish Assyria's Pride

⁵ The Lord says, "I will use Assyria like a stick. In my anger I will use Assyria to punish Israel. ⁶ I will send Assyria to fight against the people who do evil. I am angry with them, and I will command Assyria to fight against them. Assyria will defeat them and take their wealth. Israel will be like dirt for Assyria to walk on in the streets.

⁷ “But Assyria does not understand that I will use him. He does not think of himself as my tool. He only wants to destroy other people. He only plans to destroy many nations. ⁸ Assyria says to himself, ‘All of my officers are like kings! ⁹ The city of Calno is no better than the city of Carchemish. Arpad is like Hamath, and Samaria is like Damascus. ¹⁰ I defeated those evil kingdoms and now I control them. The idols those people worship are better than the idols of Jerusalem and Samaria. ¹¹ I defeated Samaria and her gods. I will also defeat Jerusalem and the idols her people have made.’ ”

¹² When the Lord finishes doing what he planned to Jerusalem and Mount Zion, he will punish Assyria. The king of Assyria is very proud. His pride made him do many bad things, so God will punish him.

¹³ The king of Assyria said, “I am very wise. By my own wisdom and power I have done many great things. I have defeated many nations. I have taken their wealth and their people as slaves. I am a very powerful man. ¹⁴ With my own hands I have taken the riches of all these people—like someone taking eggs from a bird’s nest. A bird often leaves its nest and eggs, and there is nothing to protect the nest. There is no bird to chirp and fight with its wings and beak, so anyone can come take the eggs. And there is no one to stop me from taking all the people on earth.”

¹⁵ An ax is not better than the one who cuts with it. A saw is not better than the one who uses it. Is a stick stronger than the one who picks it up? It can’t do anything to the person who is using it to punish someone! ¹⁶ But Assyria doesn’t understand this. So the Lord GOD All-Powerful will send a terrible disease against him. He will lose his wealth and power like a sick man losing weight. Then Assyria’s glory will be destroyed. It will be

like a fire burning until everything is gone. ¹⁷ The Light of Israel* will be like a fire. The Holy One will be like a flame. He will be like a fire that first begins to burn the weeds and thorns ¹⁸ and then spreads to burn up the tall trees and vineyards. Finally, everything will be destroyed—even the people. Assyria will be like a rotting log. ¹⁹ There will be a few trees left standing in the forest—so few that even a child could count them.

²⁰ Then the people from Jacob’s family who are left living in Israel will stop depending on the one who beat them. They will learn to depend on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. ²¹ Those who are left in Jacob’s family will again follow the Powerful God.†

²² Israel, your people are as many as the sands of the sea, but only a few of them will be left to come back to God. But before that happens, your country will be destroyed. God has announced that he will destroy the land. And then justice will come into the land like a river flowing full. ²³ The Lord GOD All-Powerful really will destroy this land.

²⁴ The Lord GOD All-Powerful says, “My people living in Zion, don’t be afraid of Assyria! Yes, he will beat you, and it will be just as the time when Egypt beat you with a stick. ²⁵ But after a short time my anger will stop. I will be satisfied that Assyria has punished you enough.”

²⁶ Then the LORD All-Powerful will beat Assyria with a whip, just as he defeated Midian at Raven Rock.‡ He will

* ^{10:17} The Light of Israel This is a name for God, like “The Holy One” in the next sentence. See “Israel” in the Word List. † ^{10:21} Powerful God See Isaiah 9:6. ‡ ^{10:26} Midian at Raven Rock Or “Midian at the Rock of Oreb.” See Judges 7:25.

punish his enemies, as he did when he raised his stick over the sea[§] and led his people from Egypt.

²⁷ He will take away the troubles Assyria brought you —troubles that are like heavy weights carried with a yoke on your neck. But that yoke will be taken off your neck. The burden will be lifted from your shoulders.

The Army of Assyria Invades Israel

²⁸ * The army of Assyria will enter near the “Ruins” (Aiath). The army will walk on the “Threshing Floor” (Migron). It will keep its food in the “Storehouse” (Mic-mash). ²⁹ The army will cross the river at the “Crossing” (Maabarah) and sleep at Geba. Ramah will be afraid. The people at Gibeah of Saul[†] will run away.

³⁰ Cry out, Bath Gallim[‡]! Laishah, listen! Anathoth, answer me! ³¹ The people of Madmenah are running away. The people of Gebim[§] are hiding. ³² This day the army will stop at Nob and prepare to fight against Mount Zion, the hill of Jerusalem.

³³ Look, the Lord GOD All-Powerful will use his great power and chop down that great tree. Their highest officials will be brought down. Their most important leaders will be humbled. ³⁴ God will cut down his enemies. Like the tall trees of Lebanon he will cut them down with an ax.

§ 10:26 he raised ... sea See Exodus 14:1-15:21. * 10:28 Isaiah uses names with double meanings to describe the different ways the Assyrian army would fight against Judah. † 10:29 Geba, Ramah ... Gibeah of Saul Towns north of Jerusalem. ‡ 10:30 Bath Gallim Gallim, a city south of Jerusalem. This name means “daughter of the waves,” and might refer to birds that make loud noises by the shore. § 10:31 Gebim An unknown city. This name is like the Hebrew word for “pit” or “cistern,” a hole in the ground for storing water.

11

The King of Peace Is Coming

¹ A small tree* will begin to grow from the stump of Jesse.† That branch will grow from Jesse's roots. ² The LORD'S Spirit will always be with that new king to give him wisdom, understanding, guidance, and power. The Spirit will help him know and respect the LORD. ³ He will find joy in obeying the LORD.

This king will not judge people by the way things look. He will not judge by listening to rumors. ⁴⁻⁵ He will judge the poor fairly and honestly. He will be fair when he decides what to do for the poor of the land. If he decides people should be beaten, he will give the command, and they will be beaten. If he decides people must die, he will give the command, and those evil people will be killed. Goodness and fairness will be like a belt he wears around his waist.

⁶ Then wolves will live at peace with lambs, and leopards will lie down in peace with young goats. Calves, lions, and bulls will all live together in peace. A little child will lead them. ⁷ Bears and cattle will eat together in peace, and all their young will lie down together and will not hurt each other. Lions will eat hay like cattle. ⁸ Even snakes will not hurt people. Babies will be able to play near a cobra's‡ hole and put their hands into the nest of a poisonous snake.

⁹ People will stop hurting each other. People on my holy mountain will not want to destroy things because they will know the LORD. The world will be full of knowledge about him, like the sea is full of water.

* 11:1 small tree That is, a new king will come from the family of David.

† 11:1 Jesse King David's father. ‡ 11:8 cobra A very poisonous snake.

¹⁰ At that time there will be someone special from Jesse's family. He will be like a flag that all the nations gather around. The nations will come to him and ask him what they should do. And the place where he is will be filled with glory.

¹¹ At that time the Lord will again reach out and take his people who are left in countries like Assyria, North Egypt, South Egypt, Ethiopia, Elam, Babylonia, Hamath, and other faraway countries around the world. ¹² He will gather the people of Israel and Judah who were forced to leave their country. They were scattered to all the faraway places on earth. But he will raise the flag as a sign for the other nations, and he will gather his people together again.

¹³ Then Ephraim will not be jealous of Judah, and Judah will have no enemies left. And Judah will not cause trouble for Ephraim. ¹⁴ But Ephraim and Judah will attack the Philistines. These two nations will be like birds flying down to catch a small animal. Together, they will take the riches from the people in the East. § Ephraim and Judah will control Edom, Moab, and the people in Ammon.*

¹⁵ Just as the LORD divided the Red Sea near Egypt, † he will raise his arm in anger over the Euphrates River and hit it. It will divide into seven small rivers. They will be so small that the people can walk across with their sandals on. ¹⁶ Then God's people who are left in Assyria will have a way to leave. It will be just like the time God took the people out of Egypt.

§ 11:14 East This usually refers to the area around Babylon. * 11:14 Edom, Moab, Ammon Three countries east of Israel. They were Israel's enemies for many years. † 11:15 the LORD ... Egypt Or "the LORD will dry up the tongue of the Sea of Egypt."

12

A Song of Praise to God

¹ At that time you will say,
 “I praise you, LORD!

You have been angry with me,
 but don’t be angry with me now.

Show your love to me.

² God is the one who saves me.
 I trust him, and I am not afraid.
 The LORD YAH is my strength.

He saves me, and I sing songs of praise about him.*”

³ You people will get your water from the spring of
 salvation.

Then you will be happy.

⁴ At that time you will say,
 “Praise the LORD and call out his name!
 Tell everyone what he has done
 and how wonderful he is.”

⁵ Sing songs of praise about the LORD,
 because he has done great things.
 Spread this news about God throughout the whole world.
 Let all people know these things.

⁶ People of Zion, shout about these things!
 The Holy One of Israel is with you in a powerful way.
 So sing and be happy!

13

God’s Message to Babylon

* 12:2 The LORD YAH ... him Literally, “YAH, YAHWEH is my strength and praise. And he becomes my salvation.” This comes from the victory song of Moses in Exodus 15:2.

¹ God showed Isaiah son of Amoz this message* about Babylon:

² “Raise a flag on that mountain† where nothing grows.
Call out to the men.
Wave your arms to let them know
they should enter through the gates for important
leaders.

³ “I have separated these men from the people,
and I myself will command them.
I have gathered these proud, happy soldiers of mine
to show how angry I am.

⁴ “Listen to that loud noise in the mountains.
It sounds like crowds of people.
People from many kingdoms are gathering together.
The LORD All-Powerful is calling his army together.

⁵ They are coming from a faraway land.
They are coming from beyond the horizon.
The LORD will use this army as a weapon to show his
anger.
They will destroy the whole country.”

⁶ The LORD’S special day is near. So cry and be sad for yourselves. A time is coming when the enemy will steal your wealth. God All-Powerful will make that happen.‡

⁷ People will lose their courage. Fear will make them weak. ⁸ Everyone will be afraid. They will stare at each

* 13:1 message Or “burden.” † 13:2 mountain This probably means Babylon. ‡ 13:6 A time ... happen This is a wordplay in Hebrew. The word meaning “stealing things in war” sounds like the word meaning “God All-Powerful.”

other with shock on their faces. Fear will grip them like the pains of a woman in childbirth.

God's Judgment Against Babylon

⁹ Look, the LORD'S special day is coming! It will be a terrible day. God will be very angry. He will destroy the country and wipe out the sinful people who live there. ¹⁰ The skies will be dark. The sun, the moon, and the stars will not shine.

¹¹ The Lord says, "I will cause bad things to happen to the world. I will punish the evil people for their sin. I will make proud people lose their pride. I will stop the bragging of cruel people. ¹² There will be only a few people left. They will be as rare as pure gold. ¹³ In my anger I will shake the sky, and the earth will be moved from its place."

That will happen on the day the LORD All-Powerful shows his anger. ¹⁴ Then the people from Babylon will run away like wounded deer or sheep that have no shepherd. Everyone will turn and run back to their own country and people. ¹⁵ Anyone caught by the enemy will be killed with a sword. ¹⁶ Everything in their houses will be stolen. Their wives will be raped, and their little children will be beaten to death while they watch.

¹⁷ The Lord says, "Look, I will cause the armies of Media to attack Babylon. Nothing will stop them, even if someone offers them gold and silver. ¹⁸ They will walk on the bows of the young soldiers of Babylon. The enemy soldiers will not show any kindness or mercy even to the babies and young children. ¹⁹ Babylon will be destroyed like the time God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah.

“Babylon is the most beautiful of all kingdoms. The Babylonians[§] are very proud of their city. ²⁰ But Babylon will not continue to be beautiful. People will not continue to live there in the future. Arabs will not put their tents there. Shepherds will not bring their sheep to let them eat there. ²¹ The only animals living there will be wild animals from the desert. People will not be living in their houses in Babylon. The houses will be full of owls and large birds. Wild goats* will play in the houses. ²² Wild dogs and wolves will howl in the great and beautiful buildings. Babylon will be finished. The end is near, and it will not be delayed.”

14

Israel Will Return Home

¹ The LORD will again show his love to Jacob. He will again choose the people of Israel. He will give them their land. Then the non-Israelites* will join the Israelites, and both will become one family—Jacob’s family. ² Those nations will bring the Israelites back to their land. The men and women from the other nations will become slaves to Israel. In the past, those people forced the Israelites to become their slaves. But in the future the Israelites will defeat those nations, and Israel will then rule over them in the LORD’S land. ³ In the past, you were slaves. People forced you to work hard. But the LORD will take away the hard work you were forced to do.

A Song About the King of Babylon

§ 13:19 Babylonians Literally, “Chaldeans.” * 13:21 Wild goats
 The Hebrew word means “hairy,” “goat,” or “goat-demon.” * 14:1
 non-Israelites This usually means those who live in a country but are not yet citizens of that country. Here, it is the non-Israelites who decided to follow God.

⁴ At that time you will begin to sing this song about the king of Babylon:

The king was cruel when he ruled us,
but now his rule is finished.

⁵ The LORD breaks the scepter of evil rulers;
he takes away their power.

⁶ In anger, the king of Babylon beat the people.
He never stopped beating them.

He was an evil ruler who ruled in anger.
He never stopped hurting people.

⁷ But now, the whole country rests and is quiet.
Now the people begin to celebrate.

⁸ You were an evil king,
and now you are finished.

Even the pine trees are happy.
The cedar trees of Lebanon rejoice.

They say, "The king chopped us down,
but now the king has fallen,
and he will never stand again."

⁹ The place of death is excited
that you are coming.

Sheol is waking the spirits
of all the leaders of the earth for you.

Sheol is making the kings stand up
from their thrones to meet you.

¹⁰ They will make fun of you, saying,
"Now you are as dead as we are.
Now you are just like us."

¹¹ Your pride has been sent down to Sheol.

The music from your harps announces the coming of
your proud spirit.

Maggots will be the bed you lie on,

and other worms will cover your body like a blanket.
12 You were like the morning star,
but you have fallen from the sky.
In the past, all the nations on earth bowed down before
you,
but now you have been cut down.
13 You always told yourself,
“I will go to the skies above.
I will put my throne above God’s stars.
I will sit on Zaphon,[†] the holy mountain where the
gods meet.
14 I will go up to the altar above the tops of the clouds.
I will be like God Most High.”
15 But that did not happen.
You were brought down to the deep pit—Sheol, the
place of death.
16 People will come to look at your dead body.
They will think about you and say,
“Is this the same man
who caused great fear in all the kingdoms on earth,
17 who destroyed cities
and turned the land into a desert,
who captured people in war
and would not let them go home?”
18 The kings of other nations lie buried with honor,
each king with his own grave.
19 But you were thrown out of your grave
like a branch cut from a tree and thrown away.
You are like a dead man who fell in battle,
trampled under the feet of other soldiers.
Now you look like any other dead man

[†] 14:13 Zaphon This Hebrew word literally means “north” or “hidden.”

wrapped in burial clothes.

²⁰ Other kings have their own graves,
but you will not join them,
because you ruined your own country
and killed your own people.
So your wicked descendants will be stopped.

²¹ Prepare to kill his children,
because their father is guilty.
His children will never take control of the land.
They will never fill the world with their cities.

²² The LORD All-Powerful said, “I will stand and fight against those people. I will destroy the famous city, Babylon. I will destroy all the people there. I will destroy their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren.” The LORD himself said this.

²³ “I will change Babylon. It will be a place for animals,[‡] not people. It will be a swamp. I will use the ‘broom of destruction’ to sweep Babylon away.” The LORD All-Powerful said this.

God Will Also Punish Assyria

²⁴ The LORD All-Powerful made this promise: “This will happen exactly as I meant for it to happen. It will happen just the way I planned. ²⁵ I will destroy the king of Assyria in my country. I will walk on him on my mountains. He forced my people to be his slaves; he put a yoke on their necks. But that pole will be taken off Judah’s neck, and that burden will be removed. ²⁶ This is what I plan to do for this land. I will use my power to punish all those nations.”

[‡] 14:23 animals Literally, “porcupines.”

27 When the LORD All-Powerful makes a plan, no one can change it. When he raises his arm to punish, no one can stop him.

God's Message to Philistia

28 This message[§] was given to me the year King Ahaz died*:

29 Country of Philistia, don't be happy that the king who beat you is now dead. It is true that his rule has ended, but his son will come and rule. It will be like one snake giving birth to a more dangerous one. The new king will be like a quick and dangerous snake to you. 30 But even the poorest of my people will be able to eat safely. And their children will be able to lie down and feel safe. But I will make your family die from hunger, and your enemy will kill anyone who survives.

31 People near the city gates, cry!
 People in the city, cry out!
 Everyone in Philistia,
 your courage will melt like hot wax.

Look to the north!
 There is a cloud of dust.
 An army is coming,
 and everyone in that army is strong.†

32 But what will the messengers from that nation report about us?
 They will say, "The LORD made Zion strong,
 and his poor people went there for safety."

§ 14:28 message Or "burden." Also in 15:1. * 14:28 year King Ahaz died About 727 B.C. † 14:31 everyone ... strong Or "there are no stragglers in that group."

15

God's Message to Moab

¹ This is a message about Moab:

One night armies took the wealth from Ar in Moab,
and the city was destroyed.

One night armies took the wealth from Kir in Moab,
and the city was destroyed.

² The king's family and the people of Dibon* go to the
places of worship† to cry.

The people of Moab are crying for Nebo‡ and
Medeba.§

They have shaved their heads and beards to show
their sadness.

³ Everywhere in Moab, on the housetops and in the
streets,
people are wearing sackcloth.
Everyone is crying.

⁴ In Heshbon and Elealeh they are crying loudly.
You can hear their voices as far away as Jahaz.
Even the soldiers are frightened.
They are shaking with fear.

⁵ My heart cries, full of sorrow for Moab.
Its people run away to Zoar for safety.
They run to Eglath Shelishiyah.
The people are crying

* 15:2 Dibon A city in the country of Moab. This name is like a Hebrew word meaning "to be very sad." † 15:2 places of worship Or "high places." See "high places" in the Word List. ‡ 15:2 Nebo A city in the country of Moab and the name of a false god. § 15:2 Medeba A city in the country of Moab. This name is like a Hebrew word meaning "to be very sad."

as they go up the road to Luhith.
They are crying loudly
as they walk on the road to Horonaim.

⁶ But Nimrim Brook is as dry as a desert.

The grass has dried up,
and the plants are all dead.

Nothing is green.

⁷ So the people gather up everything they own
and cross the border at Arabah stream.

⁸ You can hear crying everywhere in Moab—
as far away as Eglaim and Beer Elim.

⁹ The water of Dimon* is full of blood,
and I will bring even more troubles to Dimon.

A few people living in Moab have escaped the enemy,
but I will send lions to eat them.

16

¹ You people should send a gift to the king of the land.
You should send a lamb from Sela, through the desert, to
the mountain in the city of Jerusalem.*

² The women of Moab try to cross the river Arnon.
They run around looking for help,
like little birds that have fallen from their nest.

³ They say, “Help us!

Tell us what to do.

Protect us from our enemies
as shade protects us from the noon sun.

We are running from our enemies.

* 15:9 Dimon This is probably the city of Dibon. Dimon is like the Hebrew word meaning “blood.” * 16:1 city of Jerusalem Literally, “daughter Zion.” See “Zion” in the Word List.

Hide us!
Don't give us to our enemies.

⁴ People from Moab were forced to leave their homes.
So let them live in your land.
Hide them from their enemies.”

The robbing will stop.
The enemy will be defeated.
The men who hurt the people will be gone from the
land.

⁵ Then a new king will come.
He will be from David's family.[†]
He will be loyal, loving, and kind.
He will be a king who judges fairly.
He will do what is right and good.

⁶ We have heard that the people of Moab
are very proud and conceited.

They are hot-tempered braggers,
but their boasts are only empty words.

⁷ Because of their pride, everyone in Moab will mourn.
They will wish for the way things used to be.
They will wish for the raisin cakes from Kir Hare-
seth.[‡]

⁸ The fields of Heshbon and the vines of Sibmah no longer
grow grapes.
Foreign rulers have destroyed the vines.

The enemy has reached Jazer

[†] 16:5 David's family The royal family of Judah. God promised that men from David's family would be kings in Judah. [‡] 16:7 Kir Hareseth A city in the country of Moab.

and has spread into the desert and down to the sea.[§]
⁹ I will cry with the people of Jazer and Sibmah,
 because the grapes have been destroyed.
 I will cry with the people of Heshbon and Elealeh
 because there will be no harvest.
 There will be no summer fruit,
 and there will be no shouts of joy for the harvest.
¹⁰ There will be no joy and happiness in the orchard.
 I will end the happy singing and shouting in the
 vineyard.
 The grapes are ready to make wine,
 but they will all be ruined.
¹¹ So I will hum a sad song for Moab and Kir Heres,*
 like a harp playing a funeral song.
¹² The people of Moab will go
 to their high places to worship.
 They will go to their temple to pray,
 but it will not help them.

¹³ The LORD said these things about Moab many times.
¹⁴ And now the LORD says, “In three years (counting as
 exactly as a hired helper would) all those people and the
 things they are proud of will be gone. Only a few of their
 weakest people will be left.”

17

God's Message to Aram

[§] 16:8 Foreign rulers ... the sea Or “These grapes made many foreign rulers
 drunk. The vines spread far to the city of Jazer, then into the desert and down
 to the sea.” * 16:11 Kir Heres Kir Hareseth, a city in the country of Moab.
 Kir Heres means “a city chosen to be destroyed.”

¹ This is a message* about Damascus†:

“Damascus is now a city, but it will be destroyed.
Only ruined buildings will be left there.

² People will leave the cities of Aroer.‡
Flocks of sheep will wander freely in those empty towns;
there will be no one to bother them.

³ The fort cities of Ephraim will be destroyed.
The government in Damascus will be finished.
Those left in Aram will lose everything,
just like the people of Israel,” says the LORD All-Powerful.

⁴ “At that time Jacob’s wealth will all be gone.
Yes, Israel will be like a sick man who has become weak and thin.

⁵ “That time will be like the grain harvest in Rephaim Valley.§ The workers gather the plants that grow in the field. Then they cut the heads of grain from the plants and collect the grain.

⁶ “That time will also be like the olive harvest. People knock olives from the trees, but a few olives are usually left at the top of each tree. Four or five olives are left on some of the top branches. It will be the same for those cities,” says the LORD All-Powerful.

⁷ Then the people will look up to the one who made them. Their eyes will see the Holy One of Israel. ⁸ They will not trust the great things they have made. They

* 17:1 message Or “burden.” † 17:1 Damascus A city in the country of Aram (Syria). ‡ 17:2 Aroer A place in the country of Aram (Syria).

§ 17:5 Rephaim Valley A valley southwest of Jerusalem.

will not go to the special gardens* and altars† they made for false gods. ⁹ At that time all the walled cities will be empty. They will be like the mountains and the forests‡ in the land before the Israelites came. In the past, all the people ran away because the Israelites were coming. In the future, the country will be empty again. ¹⁰ This will happen because you have forgotten the God who saves you. You have not remembered that God is your place of safety.

You brought some very good grapevines from faraway places. You might plant those grapevines, but they will not grow. ¹¹ You will plant your grapevines one day and try to make them grow, and the next day they will blossom. But at harvest time, you will go to gather the fruit from the plants, and you will see that everything is dead. A sickness will kill all the plants.

¹² Listen to all these people!

Their loud crying sounds like the noise from the sea.

Listen, it is like the crashing of waves in the sea.

¹³ And like the waves,

they will rush away when God speaks harshly to them.

They will be like chaff blown away by the wind.

They will be like weeds chased by a storm.

¹⁴ That night, the people will be frightened.

By morning, nothing will be left.

So our enemies will get nothing.

* 17:8 special gardens Gardens where people worshiped false gods.

† 17:8 altars These might be altars for burning incense, or they might be altars for worshipping a special false god. ‡ 17:9 mountains and the forests

With a minor change in the Hebrew, this could be “the Horites and Amorites.”

They will come to our land, but nothing will be there.

18

God's Message to Ethiopia

¹ Look at the land along the rivers of Ethiopia where you can hear the buzzing of insect wings. ² That land sends people down the Nile River in reed boats.*

Fast messengers, go to the people
 who are tall and smooth,
 who are feared far and wide.
 Go to that powerful nation that defeats other countries
 and whose land is divided by rivers.

Go warn them!
³ Like a flag on a hill,
 everyone on earth will see what happens.
 Like a trumpet call,
 everyone in the country will hear it.

⁴ The LORD said, "I will be in the place prepared for me.† I will quietly watch these things happen: On a beautiful summer day, at noon, people will be resting. (It will be during the hot harvest time when there is no rain, but only early morning dew.) ⁵ Then something terrible will happen. Earlier in the year, the flowers bloomed and the new grapes formed buds and began to grow. But before the crop is harvested, the enemy will come and cut the plants. They will break the vines and throw them away. ⁶ The vines will be left for the birds from the

* 18:2 reed boats These boats were made by tying many reeds (a type of water plant) together. † 18:4 the place prepared for me Probably the Temple in Jerusalem.

mountains and the wild animals to eat. The birds will feed on them throughout the summer, and that winter the wild animals will eat the vines.”

⁷ At that time a special offering will be brought to the LORD All-Powerful from the people who are tall and smooth, from those who are feared far and wide, from that powerful nation that defeats other countries and whose land is divided by rivers.[‡] This offering will be brought to the LORD’S place on Mount Zion.

19

God’s Message to Egypt

¹ A message* about Egypt: Look, the LORD is coming on a fast cloud. He will enter Egypt, and all the false gods of Egypt will shake with fear. Egypt’s courage will melt away like hot wax.

² The Lord says, “I will cause the Egyptians to fight against themselves. Men will fight their brothers. Neighbors will be against neighbors. Cities will be against cities. Kingdoms will be against kingdoms.[†] ³ The Egyptians will be afraid and confused. They will ask their false gods and wise men what they should do. They will ask their wizards and magicians, but I will ruin their plans.” ⁴ The Lord GOD All-Powerful says, “I will give Egypt to a hard master. A powerful king will rule over the people.”

[‡] 18:7 Or “At that time the people who are tall and smooth, who are feared far and wide, that powerful nation who defeats other countries and whose land is divided by rivers, those people will be brought to the LORD All-Powerful as a special gift.” * 19:1 message Or “burden.” † 19:2 Kingdoms will be against kingdoms Or “States will be against states.” This means Egyptians will fight other Egyptians.

⁵ The water in the Nile River will dry up and disappear.
⁶ All the rivers will smell very bad.[‡] The canals in Egypt will be dry, and the water will be gone. All the water plants will rot. ⁷ All the plants along the riverbanks will die and blow away. Even the plants at the widest part of the river will dry up, blow away, and disappear.

⁸ The fishermen, all those who catch fish from the Nile River, will become sad and they will cry. They depend on the Nile River for their food, but it will be dry. ⁹ Those who make cloth from flax, who weave it into linen, will all be sad. ¹⁰ Those who weave cloth will be broken, and those who work for money will be depressed.

¹¹ The leaders of the city of Zoan[§] are fools. Pharaoh's "wise advisors" give bad advice. They say they are wise. They say they are from the old family of the kings, but they are not as smart as they think. ¹² Egypt, where are your wise men? They should learn what the LORD All-Powerful has planned for Egypt. They should be the ones to tell you what will happen.

¹³ The leaders of Zoan have been fooled. The leaders of Noph* have believed lies, so they lead Egypt the wrong way. ¹⁴ The LORD confused them, so they wander around and lead Egypt the wrong way. Everything they do is wrong. They are like drunks rolling in their vomit. ¹⁵ There is nothing the leaders can do. (They are "the heads and the tails." They are "the tops and the stalks of plants."[†])

¹⁶ At that time the Egyptians will be like frightened women. They will be afraid of the LORD All-Powerful,

‡ 19:6 smell very bad In Hebrew this is like a name for the Nile River.

§ 19:11 Zoan A city in Egypt. Also in verse 13. * 19:13 Noph Or

"Memphis," a city in Egypt. † 19:15 the heads and ... stalks of plants See Isaiah 9:14-15.

because he will raise his arm to punish the people. ¹⁷ The land of Judah brings fear to everyone in Egypt. Anyone in Egypt who hears the name Judah will be afraid. This will happen because the LORD All-Powerful has planned terrible things to happen to Egypt. ¹⁸ At that time there will be five cities in Egypt where people speak Hebrew.[‡] One of these cities will be named “Destruction City.”[§] The people in these cities will promise to follow the LORD All-Powerful.

¹⁹ At that time there will be an altar for the LORD in the middle of Egypt. At the border of Egypt there will be a monument to show honor to the LORD. ²⁰ This will be a sign to show that the LORD All-Powerful does amazing things. Any time the people cry for help from the LORD, he will send help. He will send someone to save and defend the people—to rescue the people from those who hurt them.

²¹ At that time the LORD will make himself known to the Egyptians, and they really will know the LORD. They will serve him and give him many sacrifices. They will make promises* to the LORD, and they will do what they promise. ²² The LORD will punish the Egyptians, but then he will heal them, and they will come back to him. The LORD will listen to their prayers and heal them.

²³ At that time there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria. Then the Assyrians will go to Egypt, and the Egyptians will go to Assyria. Egypt will work with Assyria.[†] ²⁴ Then Israel, Assyria, and Egypt will join

[‡] 19:18 Hebrew Literally, “the language of Canaan.” [§] 19:18 Destruction City This is a wordplay on the name meaning “Sun City,” which is also called On or Heliopolis. ^{*} 19:21 promises A special kind of promise to God. See

Leviticus 22:18-24. [†] 19:23 Egypt will work with Assyria Or “Egypt will serve Assyria.”

together and control the land. This will be a blessing for the land. ²⁵ The LORD All-Powerful will bless these countries. He will say, “Egypt, you are my people. Assyria, I made you. Israel, I own you. You are all blessed!”

20

Assyria Will Defeat Egypt and Ethiopia

¹ Sargon* was the king of Assyria. He sent his military commander to fight against Ashdod. The commander went there and captured the city. ² At that time the LORD spoke through Isaiah son of Amoz. He said, “Go, take the sackcloth off your waist and the sandals off your feet.” So Isaiah obeyed the Lord and went without clothes or sandals.

³ Then the LORD said, “My servant Isaiah has gone without clothes or sandals for three years. This is a sign for Egypt and Ethiopia. ⁴ The king of Assyria will defeat Egypt and Ethiopia. Assyria will take prisoners and lead them away from their countries. The people, young and old, will be led away without clothes or sandals. They will be completely naked. ⁵ Those who looked to Ethiopia for help will be shattered. Those who were amazed by Egypt’s glory will be ashamed.”

⁶ People living along the coast will say, “We trusted those countries to help us. We ran to them so that they would rescue us from the king of Assyria. But look at them. They have been captured, so how can we escape?”

21

God’s Message About Babylon

* 20:1 Sargon A king of Assyria. He was king about 721–705 B.C.

¹ This is a message* about the “desert by the sea”†:

It is coming like a storm blowing through the Negev.

It is coming in from the desert, from a frightening nation.

² I was given a vision of the hard times to come.

I see traitors turning against you.

I see people taking your wealth.

Elam, go against them!

Media, surround the city!

I will put an end to all their moaning.

³ I saw those terrible things, and now I am afraid.

My fear makes my stomach hurt like the pain of giving birth.

What I hear frightens me.

What I see makes me shake with fear.

⁴ I am worried and shaking with fear.

My pleasant evening has become a nightmare.

⁵ People are rushing around shouting their orders:

“Set the table!

Post the guard!

Get something to eat and drink!

Officers, get up!

Polish your shields!”

⁶ The Lord said to me, “Go find someone to guard this city. He must report whatever he sees. ⁷ Whether he sees

* 21:1 message Or “burden.” Also in verses 11, 13. † 21:1 the desert by the sea Probably Babylon.

a chariot and a team of horses or men riding donkeys or camels, he must listen carefully.”[‡]

⁸ Then one day the watchman[§] called out,

“My master, every day I have been in the watchtower*
watching.

Every night I have been standing on duty.

⁹ Look! I see a man in a chariot
with a team of horses.[†]”

The messenger said,

“Babylon has been defeated!

It has fallen to the ground!

All the statues of her false gods

were thrown to the ground and broken to pieces.”

¹⁰ My people, you will be like the grain crushed on my threshing floor. I have told you everything I heard from the LORD All-Powerful, the God of Israel.

God's Message About Dumah

¹¹ This is a message about Dumah[‡]:

There is someone calling to me from Seir,[§]

[‡] 21:7 Or “Whether he sees a column of teams of horsemen, columns of donkeys, or columns of camels, he must listen carefully.” [§] 21:8 the watchman “the seer,” an ancient title for a prophet. The standard Hebrew text has “a lion.” * 21:8 watchtower A tall building where guards stood and watched to see if anyone was coming near their city. [†] 21:9 a man ... horses Or “a column of teams of horsemen.” This might be a team of horses pulling a war chariot or mounted archers in the Assyrian army who often worked in pairs. [‡] 21:11 Dumah This Hebrew word means “silence.” It may refer to Edom or to a city in Arabia. [§] 21:11 Seir A mountain in Edom or a city in Arabia.

“Guard, how much of the night is left?
How much longer will it be night?”

¹² The guard answered,
“Morning is coming, but then night will come again.
If you have something else to ask,
then come back* later and ask.”

God’s Message About Arabia

¹³ This is a message about Arabia:

A caravan from Dedan spent the night
near some trees in the Arabian Desert.
¹⁴ They gave water to some thirsty travelers.
The people of Tema gave them food.
¹⁵ They were running from swords
that were ready to kill.
They were running from bows
that were ready to shoot.
They were running from a hard battle.

¹⁶ The Lord told me this would happen. He said, “In one year, the way a hired helper counts time, all Kedar’s glory will be gone. ¹⁷ Only a few of the archers, the great soldiers of Kedar, will be left alive.” The LORD, the God of Israel, told me this.

22

God’s Message to Jerusalem

¹ This is a message* about the Valley of Vision†:

* 21:12 come back This can also mean “change your heart” or “repent.”

* 22:1 message Or “burden.” † 22:1 Valley of Vision This probably means one of the valleys near Jerusalem. Also in verse 5.

Jerusalem, what is wrong?

Why has everyone gone up to hide in their upper rooms?

² This city was so happy,
but now there is a terrible uproar.

There are bodies lying everywhere,
but they were not killed with swords.

The people died,
but not while fighting.

³ All your officers ran away together,
but they have all been captured without bows.‡

All the leaders ran away together,
but they were found and captured.

⁴ So I say, “Don’t look at me!
Let me cry!

Don’t rush to comfort me
about the destruction of Jerusalem.”

⁵ The Lord GOD All-Powerful chose a special day for there to be riots and confusion. People trampled on each other in the Valley of Vision. The city walls were pulled down. People in the valley shouted up at those on the mountain. ⁶ Horse soldiers from Elam took their bags of arrows and rode into battle. Soldiers from Kir rattled their shields. ⁷ Your favorite valley was filled with chariots. Horse soldiers were stationed in front of the city gates. ⁸ Then the cover protecting Judah[§] was removed,

‡ 22:3 but they have ... bows Or “but the archers captured them.” § 22:8 cover protecting Judah This might be the wall around Jerusalem, but see Isaiah 4:5-6.

and the people turned to the weapons they kept at the Forest Palace.*

⁹⁻¹¹ Then you noticed how many cracks there were in the walls around the City of David, so you began collecting water from the Lower Pool.† You counted the houses and used stones from them to repair the walls. Then you built a pool between the double walls‡ for storing water from the Old Pool.§

You did all this to protect yourselves, but you did not trust the God who made all these things. You did not even notice the one who made all these things so long ago. ¹² So the Lord GOD All-Powerful told the people to cry and mourn for their dead friends. He told them to shave their heads and wear mourning clothes. ¹³ But look, everyone was happy. The people rejoiced, saying,

“Kill the cattle and sheep,
and let’s celebrate.
Let’s eat meat and drink wine.
Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

¹⁴ The LORD All-Powerful said this to me and I heard it with my own ears: “You are guilty of doing wrong, and I promise that you will die before this guilt is forgiven.” The Lord GOD All-Powerful said these things.

God’s Message to Shebna

* 22:8 Forest Palace A part of Solomon’s palace where his weapons and wealth were stored. † 22:9-11 Lower Pool The pool at the southern tip of the City of David, just below the Upper Pool (the Pool of Siloam). ‡ 22:9-11 pool between the double walls This is probably the Upper Pool (the Pool of Siloam). § 22:9-11 Old Pool Probably the pool at Gihon Spring on the eastern slopes of the city.

¹⁵ The Lord GOD All-Powerful told me to go to Shebna, the palace manager, ¹⁶ and say this: “What are you doing here? None of your relatives are buried here, are they? Then what right do you have to prepare a tomb for yourself in this high place? Why are you cutting a tomb out of this rock?

¹⁷⁻¹⁸ “What a big man you are! But the LORD will crush you. He will roll you into a small ball and throw you far away into the open arms of another country, and there you will die.

“You are very proud of your chariots. But in that faraway land, your new ruler will have better chariots. And your chariots will not look important in his palace. ¹⁹ I will force you out of your position here. Your new leader will take you away from your important job. ²⁰ At that time I will call for my servant Eliakim son of Hilkiah. ²¹ I will take your robe and put it on him. I will give him your scepter. I will give him the important job you have, and he will be like a father to the people of Jerusalem and Judah’s family.*

²² “I will put the key to David’s house around his neck. If he opens a door, no one will be able to close it. If he closes a door, no one will be able to open it. ²³ He will be like a favorite chair in his father’s house. I will make him like a strong peg in a solid board. ²⁴ All the honored and important things of his father’s house will hang on him. All the adults and little children will depend on him. They will be like little dishes and big water bottles hanging on him.”

²⁵ The LORD All-Powerful said, “At that time the peg that is now in the solid board will get weak and break. It

* ^{22:21} people of Jerusalem and Judah’s family Or “The king sitting on the throne in Jerusalem, the royal family of Judah.”

will fall to the ground, and everything hanging on it will be destroyed. Then everything I said in this message will happen. It will happen because the LORD said it would.”

23

God’s Message About Tyre

¹ This is a message* about Tyre:

Ships traveling from Cyprus heard this message:

“Cry, you ships from Tarshish†!
Your harbor has been destroyed.”

² You people living near the sea, mourn in silence.

The merchants of Sidon sent traders across the sea
and filled the city with riches.

³ They traveled the seas looking for grain.

The men from Tyre bought grain that grows near the
Nile River
and sold it to other nations.

⁴ Sidon, you should be very sad,

because now the Sea and the Fort of the Sea‡ say,

“I have no children.

I have never felt the pain of birth;

I have never given birth to children.

I have never raised young men and women.”

⁵ When Egypt hears the news about Tyre,
it will feel the pain of sorrow.

⁶ You ships, try to escape to Tarshish!

* 23:1 message Or “burden.” † 23:1 ships from Tarshish This is probably a special type of cargo ship. Also in verse 14. ‡ 23:4 Fort of the Sea Another name for the city of Tyre.

Cry out, you people living near the sea!

⁷ Can this be that happy city that was founded so long ago?
Is it that same city whose people traveled so far to
settle other lands?[§]

⁸ This city produced so many leaders.
Its merchants were like princes.
Its traders had the whole world's respect.
So who made these plans against Tyre?

⁹ It was the LORD All-Powerful.
He decided to destroy the great things they were so
proud of.
He wanted to disgrace those who were so highly
respected.

¹⁰ Ships from Tarshish, go back home.
Cross the sea as if it were a river.
No one will stop you now.

¹¹ The LORD raised his arm over the sea
to make the kingdoms angry enough to fight against
Tyre.

He commanded Canaan
to destroy her place of safety.*

¹² He said, "Daughter Sidon,[†] you have been hurt badly,
so you will no longer rejoice like a bride.

Go ahead, go to Cyprus[‡] for help,
but you will not find a place to rest there either."

¹³ As for Babylon, look at the land of the Chaldeans!
It is not even a country now.

Assyria built war towers to attack it.

[§] 23:7 traveled ... other lands? Or "came from so far to live here?" * 23:11
Or "He raised his arm over the sea and shook nations. He gave a command
about Canaan to destroy its fortresses." [†] 23:12 Daughter Sidon Another
name for the city of Sidon. [‡] 23:12 Cyprus Literally, "Kittim." This could
also mean "Crete."

The soldiers took everything from the beautiful houses.
Assyria destroyed Babylon.

They turned it into a pile of ruins
and made it a place for wild animals.

¹⁴ So be sad, you ships from Tarshish.
Your place of safety has been destroyed.

¹⁵ People will forget about Tyre for 70 years—that is, about the length of a king’s rule. After 70 years, Tyre will be like the prostitute in this song:

¹⁶ “Oh, woman who men forgot,
take your harp and walk through the city.
Play your song well and sing it often.
Maybe someone will remember you.”

¹⁷ After 70 years, the LORD will review Tyre’s case, and he will give her a decision. Tyre will again have trade. She will be like a prostitute for all the nations on earth.
¹⁸ But Tyre will not keep the money she earns. The profit from her trade will be saved for the LORD. Tyre will give that money to the people who serve the LORD to buy good food and nice clothes.

24

God Will Punish Israel

¹ Look, the LORD is destroying this land.* He will clean out the land completely and force all the people to go far away. ² At that time whatever happens to the common people will also happen to the priests. Slaves and masters will be the same. Women slaves and their

* ^{24:1} land Or “earth.”

women masters will be the same. Buyers and sellers will be the same. Those who borrow and those who lend will be the same. Bankers and those who owe the bank will be the same. ³ Everyone will be forced out of the land. All the wealth will be taken. This will happen because the LORD commanded it. ⁴ The country will be empty and sad. The world will be empty and weak. The great leaders of the people in this land will become weak.

⁵ The people have ruined the land. They did what God said was wrong. They did not obey God's laws. They made an agreement with God a long time ago, but they broke their agreement with God. ⁶ The people living in this land are guilty of doing wrong, so God promised to destroy the land. The people will be punished, and only a few of them will survive.

⁷ The grapevines are dying. The new wine is bad. People who were happy are now sad. ⁸ They have stopped showing their joy. The happy music from the drums and harps has ended. ⁹ They no longer sing as they drink their wine. The beer now tastes bitter to those who drink it.

¹⁰ "Total Confusion" is a good name for this city. The city has been destroyed. People cannot enter the houses. The doors are blocked. ¹¹ People still ask for wine in the marketplaces, but all the joy is gone. It was carried off with everything else. ¹² All that is left is destruction. Even the gates are crushed.

¹³ At harvest time, people knock olives from the trees.

But a few olives are left in the trees.

It will be like that in this land and among the nations.

¹⁴ Those who are left will begin shouting louder than the ocean.

They will rejoice about the LORD'S greatness.

¹⁵ They will say, "People in the east, praise the LORD!"

People in faraway lands,
praise the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.”

¹⁶ We hear songs of praise for God from every place on
earth.

They praise the God who does what is right.

But I say, “Enough!

I have had enough.

What I see is terrible.

Traitors are turning against people and hurting
them.”

¹⁷ I see troubles for you people living in this land.

I see fear, pits, and problems all around.

¹⁸ People will hear about the danger,
and they will be afraid.

Some of them will run away,

but they will fall into holes and be trapped.

Some of them will climb out of the holes,

but they will be caught in another trap.

The floodgates in the sky above will open,

and the floods will begin.

The foundations of the earth will shake.

¹⁹ There will be earthquakes,

and the earth will split open.

²⁰ The sins of the world are very heavy,

so the earth will fall under the weight.

It will shake like an old house.

It will fall like a drunk.

It will not be able to stand.

²¹ At that time the LORD will judge

the heavenly armies in heaven

and the earthly kings on earth.

²² Many people will be gathered together.

They have been locked in the Pit.
 They have been in prison.†
 But finally, after a long time, they will be judged.
²³ The LORD will rule as king on Mount Zion in Jerusalem.
 His Glory will be shown to the city leaders with such
 brightness that
 the moon will be embarrassed
 and the sun will be ashamed.

25

A Song of Praise to God

¹ LORD, you are my God.
 I honor you and praise your name,
 because you did amazing things.
 The words you said long ago are completely true;
 everything happened exactly as you said it would.
² And you destroyed the city that was protected by strong
 walls.
 Now it is only a pile of rocks.
 The foreign palace has been destroyed.
 It will never be rebuilt.
³ That is why powerful nations will honor you.
 Powerful people from strong cities will fear you.
⁴ You have been a safe place for poor people in trouble.
 You are like a shelter from floods and shade from the
 heat
 when powerful men attack.
 They are like rain streaming down the walls
 that protect us from the storm.
⁵ Like the heat of summer in a dry land,
 the angry shouts of those foreigners brought us to
 our knees.

† 24:22 Pit ... prison This is probably “Sheol,” the grave.

But like a thick cloud that blocks the summer heat,
you answered their challenge.

God's Banquet for His Servants

⁶ The LORD All-Powerful will give a feast for all the people on this mountain. At the feast, there will be the best foods and wines. The meat will be good and tender, the wine pure and clear.

⁷ But now there is a veil covering all nations and people. This veil is called "death." ⁸ But death will be destroyed forever.* And the Lord GOD will wipe away every tear from every face. In the past, all of his people were sad, but God will take away that sadness from the earth. All of this will happen because the LORD said it would.

⁹ At that time people will say,

"Here is our God!

He is the one we have been waiting for.

He has come to save us.

We have been waiting for our LORD.

So we will rejoice and be happy when he saves us."

¹⁰ The LORD'S power is on this mountain,

and Moab[†] will be defeated.

The Lord will trample the enemy

like someone walking on straw in a pile of waste.

¹¹ They will reach out their arms to escape

like someone trying to swim.

But their pride will sink

with each stroke they take.

¹² He will destroy their high walls and safe places.

* 25:8 But death ... forever Some Greek versions have "But death will be swallowed in victory." † 25:10 Moab Or "the enemy." This name is like a Hebrew word meaning "enemy."

He will throw them down into the dust on the ground.

26

A Song of Praise to God

¹ At that time people will sing this song in Judah:

We have a strong city with strong walls and defenses.

But God gives us our salvation.*

² Open the gates for the good people to enter.

They are the God's faithful followers.

³ God, you give true peace
to people who depend on you,
to those who trust in you.

⁴ So trust the LORD always,
because in the LORD YAH[†] you have a place of safety
forever.

⁵ But he will destroy the proud city
and punish those who live there.
He will throw that high city down to the ground.
It will fall into the dust.

⁶ Then poor and humble people will walk on those ruins.

⁷ Honesty is the path good people follow.
They follow the path that is straight and true.
And God, you make that way smooth
and easy to follow.

* 26:1 Or "We have a strong city that provides us with salvation. It has strong walls and defenses." † 26:4 LORD YAH Or "YAH YAHWEH," a Hebrew name for God.

⁸ But, LORD, we are waiting for your way of justice.
We want to honor you and your name.

⁹ At night my soul longs to be with you,
and the spirit in me wants to be with you at the dawn
of every new day.

When your way of justice comes to the world,
people will learn the right way of living.

¹⁰ Evil people will not learn to do good,
even if you show them only kindness.

They will still do wrong, even if they live in a good world.
They never see the LORD'S greatness.

¹¹ LORD, your arm is raised to punish them,
but they don't see it.

Show them how strong your love[‡] is for your people.
Then those who are evil will be ashamed.
Yes, your fire will destroy your enemies.

¹² LORD, you have succeeded in doing everything we tried
to do,
so give us peace.

God Will Give New Life to His People

¹³ LORD, you are our God,
but in the past, we followed other lords.

We belonged to other masters,[§]
but now we want people to remember only one name
—yours.

¹⁴ Those dead lords will not come to life.
Those ghosts will not rise from death.

You decided to destroy them,

[‡] 26:11 strong ... love The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy. [§] 26:13 we followed ... masters This is a wordplay. It could also be translated, "Husbands other than you married us." One word sounds like "Baal," the other like a title for God.

and you destroyed everything that makes us think
about them.

¹⁵ LORD, you have helped the nation you love.

You made our nation grow
and brought honor to yourself.*

¹⁶ LORD, people remember you
when they are in trouble.

So because of your punishment,
we called out to you.

¹⁷ LORD, because of you we were in pain,
like a woman giving birth,
who struggles and cries out when it is time.

¹⁸ But we struggled in pain for nothing.
We gave birth only to wind.

We did nothing to save the land.
No one was born to live in the world.

¹⁹ *But the Lord says,*
“Your people have died,
but they will live again.

The bodies of my people
will rise from death.

Dead people in the ground,
stand and be happy!

The dew covering you is like
the dew sparkling in the light of a new day.

It shows that a new time is coming,
when the earth will give birth to the dead who are in
it.”

Judgment: Reward or Punishment

²⁰ My people, go into your rooms
and lock your doors.

* 26:15 Or “You gathered together the nation you love, the nation you drove
into faraway lands.”

Hide in there for a short time
until God's anger is finished.

²¹ Look! The LORD is coming out from his place[†]
to judge the people of the world for the bad things
they have done.

The earth will reveal the blood that has been spilled on it.
It will no longer hide the proof of those murders.

27

¹ At that time the LORD will judge Leviathan,^{*}
the crooked snake.

He will use his great sword, his hard and powerful sword,
to punish Leviathan, that twisting, turning snake.
He will kill the monster of the sea.[†]

² At that time people will sing
about the pleasant vineyard.

³ "I, the LORD, will care for the vineyard.
I will water it at the right time.

I will guard it day and night.
No one will hurt it.

⁴ I am not angry.

But if there is war and someone builds a wall of thorn-
bushes,[‡]
then I will march to it and burn it.

⁵ But if anyone comes to me for safety
and wants to make peace with me,

[†] 26:21 his place Probably the Temple in Jerusalem. ^{*} 27:1 Leviathan
The Dragon or giant snake. Some ancient stories say the Dragon was an
enemy of God. [†] 27:1 monster of the sea This is probably Rahab.

Some ancient stories tell of Rahab fighting with God. [‡] 27:4 a wall
of thornbushes Literally, "thorns and thistles." Farmers planted walls of
thornbushes around vineyards to protect them from animals. See Isaiah 5:5.

then let them come and make peace.

⁶ In the future, Jacob will take root firmly on his soil.
Then Israel will sprout and bloom,
and the world will be filled with his fruit.”

God Will Send Israel Away

⁷ Israel was not hurt as badly as the enemy who tried to hurt it. Not as many of its people were killed as those who tried to kill them.

⁸ The Lord will settle his argument with Israel by sending the people far away. He will speak harshly to Israel. His words will burn like the hot desert wind.

⁹ How will Jacob’s guilt be forgiven? What will happen so his sins can be taken away? The rocks of the altar will be crushed to dust; the statues[§] and altars for worshipping false gods will all be destroyed.

¹⁰ The great city will be empty; it will be like a desert. All the people will be gone—they will run away. The city will be like an open pasture. Young cattle will eat grass there. The cattle will eat leaves from the branches of the vines. ¹¹ The vines will become dry, and the branches will break off. Women will use them for firewood.

The people refuse to understand. So God, their Maker, will not comfort them or be kind to them.

¹² At that time the LORD will begin separating his people from others. He will begin at the Euphrates River and will gather his people from there* to the River of Egypt.†

§ 27:9 statues Or “idols.” See “idol” in the Word List. * 27:12 He will begin ... from there Literally, “He will begin threshing at the stream of the river.” This Hebrew word for stream is like the word meaning “head of grain.”

† 27:12 Euphrates River ... River of Egypt These are the borders of the land God promised to give Israel.

You people of Israel will be gathered together one by one. ¹³ Many of my people are now lost in Assyria. Some of my people have run away to Egypt. But at that time a great trumpet will be blown, and all those people will come back to Jerusalem. They will bow down before the LORD on that holy mountain.

28

Warnings to Northern Israel

¹ Look at Samaria!

The drunks of Ephraim are proud of that city.

It sits on a hill with a rich valley around it.

The Samaritans think their city is a beautiful crown of flowers.

But they are drunk with wine,

and this “beautiful crown” is just a dying plant.

² Look, the Lord has someone who is strong and brave.

He will come into the country like a storm of hail and rain.

Like a powerful river of water flooding the country,

he will throw that crown* down to the ground.

³ The drunks of Ephraim are proud of their beautiful crown,

but that city will be trampled down.

⁴ That city sits on a hill with a rich valley around it.

But that beautiful crown of flowers is just a dying plant.

It will be like the first figs of summer.

As soon as someone sees a ripe one, they pick it and eat it.

* 28:2 that crown That is, Samaria.

⁵ At that time the LORD All-Powerful will become the “Beautiful Crown.” He will be the “Wonderful Crown of Flowers” for his people who are left. ⁶ Then he will give wisdom to the judges who rule his people. He will give strength to the people who are in battles at the city gates. ⁷ But now those leaders are drunk. The priests and prophets are all drunk with wine and beer. They stumble and fall down. The prophets are drunk when they see their dreams. The judges are drunk when they make their decisions. ⁸ Every table is covered with vomit. There is not a clean place anywhere.

God Wants to Help His People

⁹ *The people say, “Who does he think he is trying to teach and explain his message to? Does he think we are babies who were at their mother’s breast only a very short time ago? ¹⁰ He speaks to us as though we were babies:*

“Saw lasaw saw lasaw
Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw
Ze’er sham ze’er sham.”†

¹¹ So God will use this strange way of talking, and he will use other languages to speak to these people.

¹² In the past he spoke to them and said, “Here is a resting place. Let those who are tired come and rest. This is the place of peace.”

But they would not listen to him. ¹³ So the LORD’S words will be senseless sounds‡ to them:

† 28:10 Saw lasaw ... ze’er sham This is probably a Hebrew song to teach little children how to write. It sounds like baby talk or a foreign language, but it can also be translated, “A command here, a command there. A rule here, a rule there. A lesson here, a lesson there.” Also in verse 13. ‡ 28:13 senseless sounds Or “gibberish” or “baby talk.”

“Saw lasaw saw lasaw.
Qaw laqaw qaw laqaw.
Ze’er sham ze’er sham.”

When the people try to walk, they will fall backwards. They will be defeated, trapped, and captured.

No One Escapes God’s Judgment

¹⁴ You leaders in Jerusalem should listen to the LORD’S message, but now you refuse to listen to him. ¹⁵ You have said, “We have made an agreement with death. We have a contract with death. So we will not be punished. Punishment will pass us without hurting us. We will hide behind our tricks and lies.”

¹⁶ Because of these things, the Lord GOD says, “I will put a rock—a cornerstone—in the ground in Zion. This will be a very precious stone. § Everything will be built on this very important rock. Anyone who trusts in that rock will not be disappointed.*

¹⁷ “Workers use a string and weight to show their work is straight and true. I will use justice as the string and goodness as the weight when I lay that foundation. But your safe places were built on lies. So they will be destroyed and washed away when the troubles come against you like hail storms and floods. ¹⁸ Your agreement with death will be erased. Your contract with Sheol will not help you.

“Someone will come and punish you. He will make you like the dirt he walks on. ¹⁹ He will come and take you away. Your punishment will be terrible. Your punishment

§ 28:16 very precious stone This also means a stone has been tested and shown that it has no cracks. * 28:16 Anyone ... disappointed This is found in the ancient Greek version. The standard Hebrew text has “Whoever trusts will not panic.”

will come early in the morning, and it will continue late into the night.

“Then you will understand this story: ²⁰ A man tried to sleep on a bed that was too short for him. He had a blanket that was not wide enough to cover him. *The bed and blanket were useless, and so were your agreements.*”

²¹ The LORD will fight as he did at Mount Perazim. He will be angry as he was in Gibeon Valley.[†] He will do what he must do. It will be what some stranger should do, but he will finish his work. Yes, this is a stranger’s job. ²² Now don’t complain about these things. If you fight against them, you will only tighten the ropes around you.

The words I heard will not change. They came from the Lord GOD All-Powerful, the ruler of all the earth, and these things will be done.

The Lord Punishes Fairly

²³ Listen closely to the message I am telling you. ²⁴ Does a farmer plow his field all the time? No, he doesn’t work the soil all the time. ²⁵ A farmer prepares the ground, and then he plants the seed. He plants different kinds of seeds different ways. He scatters dill seeds, he throws cumin seeds on the ground, and he plants wheat in rows. A farmer plants barley in its special place, and he plants spelt seeds at the edge of his field.

²⁶ Our God is using this to teach you a lesson. This example shows us that God is fair when he punishes his people. ²⁷ Does a farmer use large boards with sharp teeth to crush dill seeds? No, and he doesn’t use a wagon to crush cumin seeds. A farmer uses a small stick to break the hulls from these seeds of grain. ²⁸ People grind grain to make flour, but they don’t grind it forever. As God

[†] 28:21 Mount Perazim ... Gibeon Valley See 1 Chron. 14:8-17.

does in punishing people, a worker might drive his wagon over the grain to remove the hulls, but he does not allow the horses[‡] to crush it. ²⁹ This lesson comes from the LORD All-Powerful, who gives wonderful advice. He is very wise.

29

God Punishes Jerusalem

¹ God says, “Look at Ariel,^{*} the city where David camped. Keep on having your festivals, year after year.

² But I will punish Ariel. The city will be filled with sadness and crying, but it will always be my Ariel.

³ “I will put armies all around you, Ariel. I will raise war towers against you. ⁴ You will be pulled to the ground. Your voice will rise from the ground like the voice of a ghost. Your words come like a whisper from the dirt.”

⁵ There will be so many foreigners that they will be like dust. Cruel people will be like the chaff blowing in the wind. Then suddenly, ⁶ the LORD All-Powerful will punish you with earthquakes, thunder, and loud noises. There will be storms, strong winds, and a burning, destructive fire. ⁷ Many nations will fight against Ariel. It will be a nightmare. Armies will surround Ariel and punish her.

⁸ But it will also be like a dream to those armies. They will not get what they want. It will be like a hungry man dreaming about food. When the man wakes up, he is still hungry. It will be like a thirsty man dreaming about water. When the man wakes up, he is still thirsty. The same thing

[‡] 28:28 horses This word also means “horse soldiers.” ^{*} 29:1 Ariel A name for the altar at the Temple in Jerusalem. This name means “hearth” or “fireplace” but sounds like the word meaning “Lion of God.” Also in verse 7.

is true about all the nations fighting against Zion. Those nations will not get what they want.

⁹ Be surprised and amazed!

You will become drunk, but not from wine.

Look and be amazed!

You will stumble and fall, but not from beer.

¹⁰ The LORD will make you sleepy.

He will close your eyes. (The prophets are your eyes.)

He will cover your heads. (The prophets are your heads.)

¹¹ To you my words are like the words in a book that is closed and sealed.[†] You can give the book to someone who can read and tell that person to read it. But that person will say, "I cannot read the book. It is closed and I cannot open it." ¹² Or you can give the book to someone who cannot read and tell that person to read it. That person will say, "I cannot read the book because I don't know how to read."

¹³ The Lord says, "These people come to honor me with words, but I am not really important to them. The worship they give me is nothing but human rules they have memorized. ¹⁴ So I will continue to amaze them by doing powerful and amazing things. Their wise men will lose their wisdom. Even the most intelligent among them will not be able to understand."

¹⁵ Look at them! They try to hide things from the LORD. They think he will not understand. They do their evil things in darkness. They tell themselves: "No one can see us. No one will know who we are."

[†] 29:11 sealed A piece of clay or wax was put on the closed book to show that the book should not be opened.

¹⁶ You turn things upside down. You think the clay is equal to the potter. You think that something that is made can tell the one who made it, “You did not make me!” This is like a pot telling its maker, “You know nothing.”

A Better Time Is Coming

¹⁷ This is the truth: After a very short time, Lebanon will become rich farmland, and the farmland will be like thick forests. ¹⁸ The deaf will hear the words in the book. The blind will see through the darkness and fog. ¹⁹ The LORD will make poor people happy. The poorest people will rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.

²⁰ This will happen when the people who are mean and cruel have come to an end. It will happen when those who enjoy doing bad things are gone. ²¹ (They lie about good people. They try to trap people in court. They try to destroy innocent people.)

²² So the LORD, who made Abraham free, speaks to Jacob’s family. He says, “Now the people of Jacob will not be embarrassed and ashamed. ²³ They will look around at all the children they have I made with my hands, and they will say that my name is holy. They will honor[‡] the Holy One of Jacob. They will respect the God of Israel. ²⁴ Many of these people did not understand, so they did what was wrong. They complained, but now they will learn their lesson.”

30

Israel Should Trust in God, Not Egypt

¹ The LORD said, “Look at these children. They don’t obey me. They make plans, but they don’t ask me to help them. They make agreements with other nations, but my Spirit does not want those agreements. These people are

[‡] 29:23 honor Or “treat as holy.”

adding more and more sins to the ones they have already done. ² They are going down to Egypt for help, but they did not ask me if that was the right thing to do. They hope they will be saved by the Pharaoh. They want Egypt to protect them.

³ “But I tell you, hiding in Egypt will not help you. Pharaoh will not be able to protect you. ⁴ Your leaders have gone to Zoan, and your representatives have gone to Hanes.* ⁵ But they will be disappointed. They are depending on a nation that cannot help them. Egypt is useless—it will not help. Egypt will bring nothing but shame and embarrassment.”

God’s Message to Judah

⁶ This is a message† about the Negev animals‡:

There is a dangerous place full of lions, adders,§ deadly snakes,* and useless people. And there are people who load their wealth onto donkeys and their treasures on the backs of camels. They carry them to a people who cannot help. ⁷ That useless nation is Egypt. Egypt’s help is worth nothing, so I call Egypt the “Do-Nothing Dragon.”†

⁸ Now write this on a sign so that all people can see it, and write this in a book. Write these things for a future time. This will be far, far in the future:‡

⁹ These people are like children who refuse to obey. They lie and refuse to listen to the LORD’S teachings.

* 30:4 Zoan, Hanes Cities in Egypt. † 30:6 message Or “burden.” ‡ 30:6 Negev animals Or “Creatures of the South,” a phrase that can refer to Egypt.

§ 30:6 adders Very poisonous snakes. * 30:6 deadly snakes Literally, “flying snakes.” † 30:7 Do-Nothing Dragon Or “Resting Rahab,” the great sea monster. Some ancient stories tell about Rahab fighting with God.

‡ 30:8 Write ... future Or “Write this for the future as a witness forever.”

¹⁰ They tell the prophets, “Don’t see dreams[§] about things we should do. Don’t tell us the truth. Say nice things to us and make us feel good. See only good things for us. ¹¹ Stop seeing things that will really happen. Get out of our way. Stop telling us about the Holy One of Israel.”

Judah’s Help Comes Only From God

¹² The Holy One of Israel says, “You people have refused to accept this message from me. You depend on fighting and lies to help you. ¹³ You are guilty of these things. So you are like a tall wall with cracks in it. That wall will fall and break into small pieces. ¹⁴ You will be like a large clay jar that breaks into many small, useless pieces. You cannot use them to get a hot coal from the fire or to get water from a pool in the ground.”

¹⁵ The Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, says, “If you come back to me you will be saved. Only by remaining calm and trusting in me can you be strong.”

But you don’t want to do that. ¹⁶ You say, “No, we need fast horses for battle.” That is true—you will need fast horses, but only to run away because your enemy will be faster than your horses. ¹⁷ One enemy soldier will make threats, and a thousand of your men will run away. And when five of them make threats, all of you will run away. The only thing that will be left of your army will be a flagpole on a hill.

God Will Help His People

¹⁸ So the LORD is waiting to show his mercy to you. He wants to rise and comfort you. The LORD is the God who

§ 30:10 dreams Or “visions.” Special kinds of dreams God used to speak to his prophets.

does the right thing, so he will bless everyone who waits for his help.

¹⁹ You people who live in Jerusalem on Mount Zion will not continue crying. The Lord will hear your crying, and he will comfort you. When he hears you, he will help you.

²⁰ The Lord might give you sorrow and pain like the bread and water you eat every day. But God is your teacher, and he will not continue to hide from you. You will see your teacher with your own eyes. ²¹ If you wander from the right path, either to the right or to the left, you will hear a voice behind you saying, “You should go this way. Here is the right way.”

²² Then you will take your idols covered with gold and silver and make them unfit to be used again. You will throw them away like filthy rags* and say, “Go away!”

²³ At that time the Lord will send you rain. You will plant seeds, and the ground will grow food for you. You will have a very large harvest. You will have plenty of food in the fields for your animals. There will be large fields for your sheep. ²⁴ Your cattle and donkeys will have all the food they need. There will be much food. You will have to use shovels and pitchforks to spread all the food† for your animals to eat. ²⁵ Every mountain and hill will have streams filled with water. These things will happen after many people are killed and the enemy’s towers are pulled down.

²⁶ At that time the light from the moon will be as bright as the sun, and the light from the sun will be seven times brighter than it is now. One day of sunlight will be like

* 30:22 You ... rags Or “You will throw those gods away like menstrual clothes.” † 30:24 food This was special food that had been allowed to ferment. This made the meat of the animal tender and good.

a whole week's worth. This will happen when the LORD bandages his broken people and heals the hurts from their beatings.

²⁷ Look! The LORD is coming from far away. His anger is like a fire with thick clouds of smoke. His mouth is filled with anger, and his tongue is like a burning fire. ²⁸ His breath is like a great river that rises until it reaches the throat. He will judge the nations as if putting them through a strainer that separates the ones fit for destruction. He will put a bit in their mouths to lead them to the place they don't want to go.

²⁹ You will sing happy songs, like the nights when you begin a festival. You will be very happy walking to the LORD'S mountain and listening to the flute on the way to worship the Rock of Israel.

³⁰ The LORD will cause all people to hear his great voice and to see his powerful arm come down in anger. That arm will be like a great fire that burns everything. His power will be like a great storm with much rain and hail. ³¹ Assyria will be frightened by the LORD'S voice and the stick that will beat him. ³² And as the LORD beats Assyria, his people will keep the rhythm with their drums and harps.

³³ Topheth[‡] has been made ready for a long time. It is ready for the king.[§] It was made very deep and wide. There is a very big pile of wood and fire there, and the LORD'S breath will come like a stream of burning sulfur to start the fire.

[‡] 30:33 Topheth Gehenna, the Valley of Hinnom. In this valley people killed their children to honor the false god, "Molech." [§] 30:33 king This is like the name of the false god, "Molech."

31

Israel Should Depend on God's Power

¹ Look at the people going down to Egypt for help. They think the horses they get will save them. They hope the many chariots and powerful soldiers will protect them. But the people don't trust the Holy One of Israel. They didn't ask the LORD for help. ² But he is the wise one who is bringing the disaster. And they will not be able to stop what he commanded. The Lord will attack those who are evil and all who try to help them.

³ The Egyptians are only human, not God. The horses from Egypt are only animals, not spirit. The LORD will stretch out his arm, and the helper will be defeated. And those who wanted help will fall. They will all be destroyed together.

⁴ The LORD told me: "When a lion or its cub catches an animal to eat, the lion stands over the dead animal and roars, and nothing can frighten it away. If men come and yell at the lion, the lion will not be afraid. They might make a lot of noise, but the lion will not run away."

In the same way, the LORD All-Powerful will come down to Mount Zion. He will fight on that hill. ⁵ Just as birds fly over their nest to protect it, so the LORD All-Powerful will defend* Jerusalem. He will save her. He will "pass over" and save Jerusalem.

⁶ People of Israel, you should come back to the God you turned away from. ⁷ That is because when those things happen, people will reject the gold and silver idols you made when you sinned against me.

⁸ It is true that Assyria will be defeated with a sword, but it will not be a human sword that defeats him. Assyria

* 31:5 defend Literally, "fight on" or "fight against."

will be destroyed, but that destruction will not come from a man's sword. Assyria will run away from God's sword, but the young men will be caught and made slaves. ⁹ Their place of safety will be destroyed. Their leaders will be defeated, and they will abandon their flag.

The LORD, whose fireplace is on Zion and whose oven[†] is in Jerusalem, is the one who said this.

32

Leaders Should Be Good and Fair

¹ Listen to what I say! A king should rule in a way that brings justice. Leaders should make fair decisions when they lead the people. ² If this would happen, the king* would be like a shelter to hide from the wind and rain, like streams of water in a dry land, and like the cool shadow of a large rock in a hot land. ³ Then people would actually see what they look at. They would actually listen to what they hear. ⁴ People who are now confused would be able to understand. Those who cannot speak clearly now would be able to speak clearly and quickly. ⁵ Fools would not be called great men. People would not respect men who make secret plans.

⁶ Fools[†] say foolish things, and in their minds they plan evil things to do. They want to do what is wrong. They say bad things about the LORD. They don't let hungry people eat their food. They don't let thirsty people drink the water. ⁷ They use evil like a tool and plan ways to steal from the poor. They tell lies about the poor and keep them from being judged fairly.

[†] 31:9 fireplace ... oven That is, the altar in the Temple. * 32:2 king
Literally, "man." [†] 32:6 Fools Here, this means people who don't follow
God and his wise teachings.

⁸ But a good leader plans good things to do, and that will make him a leader over other leaders.

Hard Times Are Coming

⁹ Some of you women are calm now; you feel safe. But you should stand and listen to the words I say. ¹⁰ You feel safe now, but after one year you will be troubled. That is because you will not gather grapes next year—there will be no grapes to gather.

¹¹ Women, you are calm now, but you should be afraid. You feel safe now, but you should be worried. Take off your nice clothes and put on sackcloth. Wrap it around your waist. ¹² Beat your breasts in sorrow. Cry because your fields are empty. Your vineyards once gave grapes, but now they are empty. ¹³ Cry for the land of my people. Cry because only thorns and weeds will grow there. Cry for the city and for all the houses that were once filled with joy.

¹⁴ People will leave the capital city. The palace and towers will be left empty. People will not live in houses—they will live in caves. Wild donkeys and sheep will live in the city—animals will go there to eat grass.

¹⁵ This will continue until God gives us his Spirit from above. Then the desert will become rich farmland and the farmland will be like thick forests. ¹⁶ That is, what is now a desert will be filled with right decisions, and what is now a farmland will be filled with justice. ¹⁷ That justice will bring peace and safety forever. ¹⁸ My people will be safe in their homes and in their calm, peaceful fields.

¹⁹ But before this happens, the forest must fall and the city must be torn down. ²⁰ Some of you live away from the cities. You plant seeds by every stream and let your cattle and donkeys roam free. You will be very blessed.

33

The Lord Will Show His Power

¹ Look at you. You attack others when you have not been attacked. You turn against others when no one has turned against you. So when you stop your attacks, you will be attacked. When you stop turning against others, they will turn against you.

² LORD, be kind to us.
We have waited for your help.
Give us strength every morning.
Save us when we are in trouble.

³ Your powerful voice makes people run away in fear.
Your greatness causes the nations to run away.

⁴ You people stole things in war. Those things will be taken from you. Many will come and take your wealth. It will be like the times when locusts come and eat all your crops.

⁵ The LORD is very great. He lives in a very high place. He fills Zion with justice and goodness.

⁶ Jerusalem, you are rich with wisdom and knowledge of God. You are rich with salvation. You respect the LORD, and that makes you rich.

⁷ But listen! The messengers are crying outside. The messengers* who bring peace are crying very hard. ⁸ The roads are empty; there is no one walking along the paths. People don't respect each other. They have broken the agreements they made, and they refuse to believe what witnesses† tell them. ⁹ The land is sick and dying.

* 33:7 messengers ... messengers The Hebrew text has two different words that can also mean "angels." † 33:8 witnesses Literally, "cities."

Lebanon is dying and Sharon Valley is dry and empty. Bashan and Carmel once grew beautiful plants—but now those plants have stopped growing.

¹⁰ The LORD says, “Now, I will stand and show people how great and powerful I am. ¹¹ You people have done useless things. These things are like hay and straw. They are worth nothing! Your breath will be like a fire and burn you. ¹² People will be burned until their bones become lime.‡ They will burn quickly like thorns and dry bushes.

¹³ “You people in faraway lands, listen to what I have done. You people who are near me, learn about my power.”

¹⁴ The sinners in Zion are afraid. Those who do wrong shake with fear. They say, “Can any of us live through this fire that destroys? Who can live near this fire that burns forever?”§

¹⁵ Good, honest people who refuse to hurt others for money *will live through that fire*. They refuse to take bribes or listen to plans to murder other people. They refuse to look at plans for doing bad things. ¹⁶ They will live safely in high places. They will be protected in high rock fortresses. They will always have food and water.

¹⁷ Your eyes will see the King in his beauty. You will see the great land. ¹⁸⁻¹⁹ When you think about the troubles you had in the past, you will wonder, “Where are those foreigners who spoke languages we could not understand. Where are the officials and tax collectors from other lands? Where are the spies who counted our defense towers?”

‡ 33:12 lime A white powder that is often used to make mortar or cement. It can be made by burning bones, shells, or limestone. § 33:14 fire that ... burns forever This might mean God, the Fire (Light) of Israel.

God Will Protect Jerusalem

²⁰ Look at Zion, the city of our religious festivals. Look at Jerusalem—that beautiful place of rest. Jerusalem is like a tent that will never be moved. The pegs that hold her in place will never be pulled up. Her ropes will never be broken, ²¹⁻²³ because the LORD is our powerful leader there. That land is a place with streams and wide rivers, but there will be no enemy boats or powerful ships on those rivers. You men who work on such boats can stop your work with the ropes. You cannot make the mast strong enough. You will not be able to open your sails, because the LORD is our judge. He makes our laws. He is our king. He saves us. The LORD will give us our wealth. Even crippled people will get their share. ²⁴ No one living there will say, “I am sick,” because everyone living there has had their guilt removed.

34

God Will Punish His Enemies

¹ All you nations, come near and listen! Listen, all you people. The earth and everyone on it should listen to these things. Everything in this world should hear this. ² The LORD is angry with all the nations and their armies. He will destroy them all and put them to death. ³ Their bodies will be thrown outside. The stink will rise from the bodies, and the blood will flow down the mountains. ⁴ The skies will be rolled shut like a scroll,* and the stars will die and fall like leaves from a vine or a fig tree. All the stars[†] in the sky will rot away. ⁵ The Lord says, “This will happen when my sword in the sky is covered with blood.”

* 34:4 rolled shut like a scroll This is like someone closing a book when they have finished reading it. † 34:4 stars Literally, “the armies of the skies.”

Look, the LORD'S sword will cut through Edom. He judged them guilty, and they must die.[‡] ⁶ The LORD decided there should be a time for killing in Bozrah and in Edom. So the sword of the LORD is covered with blood and fat. The blood is from the "goats." The fat is from the kidneys of the "rams."[§] ⁷ So the rams, the cattle, and the strong bulls will be killed. The land will be filled with their blood. The dirt will be covered with their fat.

⁸ This will happen because the LORD has chosen a time for punishment. He has chosen a year when people must pay for the wrong they did to Zion. ⁹ Edom's rivers will be like hot tar. Edom's ground will be like burning sulfur. ¹⁰ The fires will burn day and night—no one will stop the fire. The smoke will rise from Edom forever. The land will be destroyed forever and ever. No one will ever travel through that land again. ¹¹ Birds and small animals will own that land. It will be a home for owls and ravens. God will leave that land in ruins. People will call it "the empty desert."^{*} ¹² The freemen[†] and leaders will all be gone, and there will be nothing left for them to rule.

¹³ Thorns and wild bushes will grow in all the beautiful homes there. Wild dogs and owls will live in them. Wild animals will make their homes there. Big birds will live in the grasses that grow there. ¹⁴ Wild cats will live there

[‡] 34:5 guilty, and they must die The Hebrew means the people belonged completely to God, and if he does not get them, they must die. [§] 34:6 goats ... rams This probably refers to the people and leaders of Edom.

^{*} 34:11 God ... desert Literally, "He will stretch over it the measuring string of 'emptiness' and the stone weights of 'nothingness.'" These two words described the empty earth in Genesis 1:2. [†] 34:12 freemen Important citizens of a town or country. These people came from "good families" and had never been slaves.

with hyenas.[‡] Wild goats[§] will call to their friends. Night animals* will spend some time there and find a place to rest. ¹⁵ Snakes will make their homes there and lay their eggs. The eggs will open, and small snakes will crawl from the dark places. Birds that eat dead things will gather there like women visiting their friends.

¹⁶ Look in the LORD'S scroll and read what it says: Not one of these will be missing. Not one will be without its mate. God said he would make this happen, so his Spirit will bring them together. ¹⁷ God decided what he should do with them, and then he chose a place for them. He drew a line and showed them their land. So the animals will own that land forever. They will live there year after year.

35

God Will Comfort His People

¹ The dry desert will rejoice. The desert will be glad and blossom. ² It will be covered with flowers and dance with joy. It will be as beautiful as the forest of Lebanon, the hill of Carmel, and the Sharon Valley. This will happen because all people will see the Glory of the LORD. They will see the beauty of our God.

³ Make the weak arms strong again. Strengthen the weak knees. ⁴ People are afraid and confused. Say to them, "Be strong! Don't be afraid!" Look, your God will come and punish your enemies. He will come and give you your reward. He will save you. ⁵ Then the eyes of the blind will be opened so that they can see, and the ears of

[‡] 34:14 hyenas A kind of wild dog that often eats the meat of dead animals that other animals killed. [§] 34:14 Wild goats The Hebrew word means

"hairy," "goat," or "goat-demon." ^{*} 34:14 Night animals Or "Lilith, the night demon." This name is like the Hebrew word for night.

the deaf will be opened so that they can hear. ⁶ Crippled people will dance like deer, and those who cannot speak now will use their voices to sing happy songs. This will happen when springs of water begin to flow in the dry desert. ⁷ Now people see mirages* that look like water, but then there will be real pools of water. There will be wells in the dry land where water flows from the ground. Tall water plants will grow where wild animals once ruled.

⁸ There will be a road there. This highway will be called “The Holy Road.” Evil people will not be allowed to walk on that road. No fools† will walk on it. Only good people will walk there. ⁹ There will be no dangers on that road. There will be no lions there to hurt people or any dangerous animals on it. That road will be for the people God saves.

¹⁰ The LORD will make his people free, and they will come back to him. They will come into Zion rejoicing. They will be happy forever. Their happiness will be like a crown on their heads. Gladness and joy will fill them completely. Sorrow and sadness will be far, far away.

36

The Assyrians Invade Judah

¹ During Hezekiah’s 14th year as king, Sennacherib king of Assyria went to fight against all the strong cities of Judah. Sennacherib defeated those cities. ² He sent his commander with a large army to King Hezekiah in Jerusalem. The commander and his army left Lachish and

* 35:7 mirages In the desert, heat rising from the ground looks like water from far away. This is a mirage. † 35:8 fools Here, this means people who don’t follow God and his wise teachings.

went to Jerusalem. They stopped near the aqueduct* by the Upper Pool,† on the street that leads up to Laundryman's Field.

³ Three men from Jerusalem went out to talk with the commander. These men were Eliakim son of Hilkiah, Joah son of Asaph, and Shebna. Eliakim was the palace manager, Joah was the record keeper, and Shebna was the royal secretary.

⁴ The commander told them, "Tell Hezekiah this is what the great king, the king of Assyria says:

"What are you trusting in to help you? ⁵ I tell you, if you are trusting in power and great battle plans, that is useless. Those are nothing but empty words. Now I ask you, who do you trust so much that you are willing to rebel against me? ⁶ Are you depending on Egypt to help you? Egypt is like a broken walking stick. If you lean on it for support, it will only stab you and hurt you. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, cannot be trusted by anyone who depends on him for help.

⁷ "So maybe you will say, "We trust the LORD our God to help us." But Hezekiah destroyed the altars and high places where people worshiped your God, right? Hezekiah told the people of Judah and Jerusalem, "You must worship only at this one altar here in Jerusalem."

⁸ "If you still want to fight, my master, the king of Assyria, will make this agreement with you. I promise that I will give you 2000 horses if you can find enough

* 36:2 aqueduct A ditch or pipe that carries water from one place to another. Here, this is the Shiloah, a channel that carried water from Gihon Spring to the Old Pool and the Pool of Siloam. † 36:2 Upper Pool The Pool of Siloam at the southern tip of the City of David (Jerusalem), just above the older pool now called Birket al Hamrah.

men to ride them into battle. ⁹ But even then, you couldn't beat even one of my master's lowest ranking officers. So why do you still depend on Egypt's chariots and horse soldiers?

¹⁰ "Now, do you think I came to this country to destroy it without the LORD'S help. No, it was the LORD who said to me, "Go up against this country and destroy it!" ' "

¹¹ Then Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah said to the commander, "Please, speak to us in Hebrew. † We understand that language. Don't speak to us in the language of Judah. If you use our language, the people on the city walls will understand you."

¹² But the commander said, "My master sent me to speak to everyone, not just to you and your master. I must also speak to those people sitting there on the wall. When we surround your city, they will suffer too. Like you, they will become so hungry they will eat their own waste and drink their own urine!"

¹³ Then the commander, shouting loudly in Hebrew, § gave this warning to them all:

Hear this message from the great king, the king of Assyria! ¹⁴ This is what the king says: Don't let Hezekiah fool you! He cannot save you from my power. ¹⁵ Don't listen to him when he tells you to trust in the LORD. Don't believe him when he says, "The LORD will save us. He will not let the king of Assyria defeat the city."

† 36:11 Hebrew Literally, "Judean," the language of Judah and Israel.

§ 36:13 Hebrew Literally, "Judean," the language of Judah and Israel.

¹⁶ Don't listen to Hezekiah! This is what the king of Assyria says: Come out here and show me that you want peace. Then you will all be free to have grapes from your own vines, figs from your own trees, and water from your own well. ¹⁷ After some time, I will come and take you to a land like your own. In that new land, you will have plenty of grain for making bread and vineyards for producing wine.

¹⁸ Don't believe Hezekiah when he tells you, "The LORD will save us." He is wrong. Did any of the gods of other nations save their land from the king of Assyria? ¹⁹ When I destroyed the cities of Hamath and Arpad, where were their gods? What about the gods of Sepharvaim? Were any gods able to save Samaria from my power? ²⁰ None of the gods of these other places were able to save their land from me! So why do you think the LORD can save Jerusalem from me?

²¹ But the people were silent. They did not say a word to the commander, because King Hezekiah had commanded them, "Don't say anything to him."

²² Then the palace manager (Eliakim son of Hilkiyah), the royal secretary (Shebna), and the record keeper (Joah son of Asaph) went to Hezekiah. Their clothes were torn to show they were upset. They told Hezekiah everything the Assyrian commander had said.

37

Hezekiah Asks God to Help

¹ When King Hezekiah listened to their message, he tore his clothes to show he was upset. Then he put on sackcloth and went to the LORD'S Temple.

² Hezekiah sent Eliakim, the palace manager, Shebna, the royal secretary, and the elders of the priests to the prophet, Isaiah son of Amoz. They wore the special clothes that showed they were sad and upset. ³ They said to Isaiah, “King Hezekiah has commanded that today will be a special day for sorrow and sadness. It will be a very sad day—as sad as when a baby should be born, but there is not enough strength for the birth. ⁴ The commander’s master, the king of Assyria, has sent him to say bad things about the living God. Maybe the LORD your God will hear it and prove the enemy is wrong. So pray for those who are still left alive.”

⁵ When King Hezekiah’s officers came to Isaiah, ⁶ he said to them, “Give this message to your master, Hezekiah: The LORD says, ‘Don’t be afraid of what you heard from the commanders! Don’t believe what those “boys” from the king of Assyria said to make fun of me. ⁷ Look, I will send a spirit against the king of Assyria. He will get a report that will make him return to his own country. And I will cut him down with a sword in his own country.’”

The Assyrian Army Leaves Jerusalem

⁸ The commander heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish. He found him at Libnah, fighting against that city. ⁹ Then the king of Assyria got a report that said, “King Tirhakah* of Ethiopia is coming to fight you.”

So the king of Assyria sent messengers to Hezekiah again. ¹⁰ He told them, “Tell King Hezekiah of Judah these things:

* 37:9 Tirhakah This is probably Taharqa, the Pharaoh of Egypt about 690–664 B.C.

‘Don’t be fooled by the god you trust when he says, “Jerusalem will not be defeated by the king of Assyria.”
¹¹ You have heard what the kings of Assyria did to all the other countries. We destroyed them completely. Will you be saved? No! ¹² Did the gods of those people save them? No, my ancestors destroyed them all. They destroyed the cities of Gozan, Haran, Rezep, and the people of Eden living in Tel Assar. ¹³ Where is the king of Hamath? The king of Arpad? The king of the city of Sepharvaim? The kings of Hena and Ivvah?’ ”

Hezekiah Prays to the Lord

¹⁴ Hezekiah received the letters from the messengers and read them. Then he went up to the LORD’S Temple and laid the letters out in front of the LORD. ¹⁵ He prayed to the LORD: ¹⁶ “LORD All-Powerful, God of Israel, you sit as King above the Cherub angels. You alone are the God who rules all the kingdoms on earth. You made heaven and earth. ¹⁷ LORD, please pay attention and hear this. Open your eyes, LORD, and see what is happening. Listen to all the insults against the living God in the message Sennacherib sent! ¹⁸ It is true, LORD. The kings of Assyria did destroy all those nations. ¹⁹ They did throw the gods of those nations into the fire, but they were not real gods. They were only wood and stone—statues that people made. That is why the kings of Assyria could destroy them. ²⁰ But you are the LORD our God, so please save us from the king of Assyria. Then all the other nations will know that you are the LORD, the only God.”

God Answers Hezekiah

²¹ Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent this message to Hezekiah: “The LORD, the God of Israel, says, ‘You

prayed to me about the message that came from King Sennacherib of Assyria. I have heard you.†

²² “So this is the LORD’S message against Sennacherib:

‘The virgin daughter Zion‡ does not think you are important.

She makes fun of you.

Daughter Jerusalem shakes her head at you
and laughs behind your back.

²³ But who was it that you insulted and made fun of?

Who was it that you spoke against?

You were speaking against the Holy One of Israel.

You acted like you were great and he was nothing.

²⁴ You sent your officers to insult the Lord.

This is what you said:

“I took my many chariots up the high mountains
deep inside Lebanon.

I cut down its tallest cedars
and its best fir trees.

I have been on its highest mountain
and deep inside its forests.

²⁵ I dug wells and drank water from new places.

I dried up the rivers of Egypt

and walked where the water was.”

²⁶ ‘How could you say this, Sennacherib?

Did no one ever tell you that I, the Lord, planned
these things long ago?

From ancient times I decided what would happen.

And now I have made it happen.

† 37:21 I have heard you This is from the ancient Greek version and 2 Kings 19:20. ‡ 37:22 The virgin daughter Zion The city of Jerusalem, which is in danger of attack by the Assyrians. See “Zion” in the Word List.

I let you tear down strong cities
and change them into piles of rocks.

²⁷ The people living there had no power.
They were afraid and confused.

They were about to be cut down
like grass and plants in the field.

They were like grass growing on the housetops,
dying before it grows tall.

²⁸ I know all about your battles;
I know when you rested,
when you went out to war,
and when you came home.
I also know when you got upset at me.

²⁹ Yes, you were upset at me.
I heard your proud insults.
So I will put my hook in your nose
and my bit in your mouth.

Then I will turn you around
and lead you back the way you came.’ ”

The Lord's Message for Hezekiah

³⁰ Then the Lord said, “I will give you a sign to show you that these words are true. You will not be able to plant seeds this year, so next year you will eat grain that grew wild from the previous year's crop. But in the third year, you will eat grain from seeds that you planted. You will harvest your crops, and you will have plenty to eat. You will plant vineyards and eat grapes from them.

³¹ “The people from the family of Judah who have escaped and are left alive will be like plants that send their roots deep into the ground and produce fruit above the ground. ³² That is because a few people will come out of Jerusalem alive. There will be survivors coming from

Mount Zion.” The strong love[§] of the LORD All-Powerful will do this.

³³ So the LORD says this about the king of Assyria:

“He will not come into this city
or shoot an arrow here.
He will not bring his shields up against this city
or build up a hill of dirt to attack its walls.

³⁴ He will go back the way he came.
He will not come into this city.
The LORD says this!

³⁵ I will protect this city and save it.
I will do this for myself and for my servant David.”

The Assyrian Army Is Destroyed

³⁶ That night the angel of the LORD went out and killed 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp. When the people got up in the morning, they saw all the dead bodies. ³⁷ So King Sennacherib of Assyria went back to Nineveh and stayed there.

³⁸ One day Sennacherib was in the temple of his god Nisroch, worshiping him. His sons Adrammelech and Sharezer killed him with a sword and ran away to Ararat. So Sennacherib’s son Esarhaddon became the new king of Assyria.

38

Hezekiah’s Illness

¹ At that time Hezekiah became sick and almost died. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz went to see him and told him, “The LORD told me to tell you this: ‘You will die soon.

§ 37:32 strong love The Hebrew word can mean strong feelings such as zeal, jealousy, or love.

So you should tell your family what they should do when you die. You will not get well.’ ”

² Hezekiah turned toward the wall that faced the Temple and began praying to the LORD. ³ “LORD, remember that I have faithfully served you with all my heart. I have done what you say is good.” Then Hezekiah cried very hard.

⁴ Then Isaiah received this message from the LORD: ⁵ “Go to Hezekiah and tell him that the LORD, the God of your ancestor David, says, ‘I heard your prayer, and I saw your tears. I will add 15 years to your life. ⁶ I will save you and this city from the king of Assyria. I will protect this city.’ ”

[21] * Then Isaiah told Hezekiah, “Crush figs together and put them on your sore. Then you will get well.”

[22] Hezekiah asked Isaiah, “What is the sign that proves I will get well and go to the LORD’S Temple?”

⁷ This is the sign from the LORD to show you that he will do what he says: ⁸ “Look, I am causing the shadow that is on the steps of Ahaz[†] to move back ten steps. The sun’s shadow will go back up the ten steps that it has already been on.”

Hezekiah’s Song

⁹ This is the letter from Hezekiah when he became well:

¹⁰ I thought I would live a full life.

But now, in the middle of my life, the time has come for me to die.

* 38:6 These verses fit better here than at the end of the chapter, where they appear in the standard Hebrew text. See 2 Kings 20:6-9. † 38:8 steps of Ahaz The steps of a special building that Hezekiah used like a clock. When the sun shone on the steps, the shadows showed what time of the day it was.

- 11 So I said, “I will not see the LORD YAH[‡] in the land of the living again.
I will not see the people living on earth.
- 12 My home, my shepherd’s tent, is being pulled down and taken from me.
I am finished like the cloth someone rolls up and cuts from the loom.
You ended my life in such a short time.
- 13 All night I cried as loud as a lion,
but my hopes were crushed like a lion eating bones.
You finished my life in such a short time.
- 14 I cried like a bird
and moaned like a dove.
My eyes became tired,
but I continued looking to the heavens.
Lord, I am so depressed.
Promise to help me.”
- 15 What can I say?
He told me what would happen,
and he will make it happen.
I have had these troubles in my soul,
so now I will be humble all my life.
- 16 Lord, use this hard time to make my spirit live again.
Help my spirit become strong and healthy.
Help me become well!
Help me live again!
- 17 Look, my troubles are gone!
I now have peace.
You love me very much.
You did not let me rot in the grave.
You took my sins

[‡] 38:11 the LORD YAH Or “YAHWEH,” a Hebrew name for God. See “YAHWEH” in the Word List.

and threw them away.

¹⁸ The dead cannot praise you.

People in Sheol cannot sing praises to you.

Those who have died and gone below

are not trusting in your faithfulness.

¹⁹ People who are alive, people like me,

are the ones who will praise you.

Fathers should tell their children about how faithful you are.

²⁰ So I say, "The LORD saved me.

So we will sing and play songs in the LORD'S Temple all our lives."

39

Messengers From Babylon

¹ At that time Merodach Baladan son of Baladan was king of Babylon. He sent some men with letters and a gift to Hezekiah when he heard that Hezekiah had been sick. ² This made Hezekiah very happy, so he showed them all the valuable things in his storehouses. He showed them the silver, the gold, the spices, and the expensive perfumes. He showed them the building where he stored the weapons. He showed them everything in his treasuries and everything in his house and throughout his kingdom.

³ Then Isaiah the prophet went to King Hezekiah and asked him, "What did these men say? Where did they come from?"

Hezekiah said, "These men came all the way from Babylon just to see me."

⁴ So Isaiah asked him, "What did they see in your house?"

Hezekiah said, “They saw everything in my palace. I showed them all my wealth.”

⁵ Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Listen to this message from the LORD All-Powerful: ⁶ ‘The time is coming when everything in your house and everything your ancestors have saved until today will be carried away to Babylon. Nothing will be left!’ The LORD All-Powerful said this. ⁷ The Babylonians will take your own sons, and your sons will become officers* in the palace of the king of Babylon.”

⁸ Then Hezekiah told Isaiah, “This message from the LORD is good.” (Hezekiah said this because he thought, “There will be real peace and security during my lifetime.”)

40

Israel’s Punishment Will End

¹ Your God says,

“Comfort, comfort my people.

² Speak kindly to Jerusalem and tell her,

‘Your time of service is finished.

You have paid the price for your sins.’

I, the LORD, have punished you twice

for every sin you committed.”

³ Listen, there is someone shouting:

“Prepare a way in the desert for the LORD.

Make a straight road there for our God.

⁴ Every valley must be filled.

Every mountain and hill should be made flat.

The crooked roads should be made straight,

* 39:7 officers Or “eunuchs.” See “eunuch” in the Word List.

and the rough ground made smooth.

⁵ Then the Glory of the LORD will be shown to everyone.
Together, all people will see it.
Yes, this is what the LORD himself said!”

⁶ A voice said, “Speak!”
So the man said, “What should I say?”

The voice said, “People are like grass.
Any glory they enjoy is like a wildflower.

⁷ When a wind from the LORD blows on them,
the grass dies and the flower falls.
Yes, all people are like grass.

⁸ Grass dies and flowers fall,
but the word of our God lasts forever.”

Salvation: God's Good News

⁹ Zion, you have good news to tell.
Go up on a high mountain and shout the good news.
Jerusalem, you have good news to tell.
Don't be afraid; speak loudly.
Tell this news to all the cities of Judah:
“Look, here is your God!”

¹⁰ The Lord GOD is coming with power.
He will use his power to rule all the people.
He will bring rewards for his people.
He will have their payment with him.

¹¹ Like a good shepherd, he takes care of his people.
He gathers them like lambs in his arms.
He holds them close, while their mothers walk beside
him.

God Made the World; He Rules It

¹² Who measured the oceans in the palm of his hand?
Who used his hand to measure the sky?
Who used a bowl to measure all the dust of the earth?

- Who used scales to measure the mountains and hills?
13 Who could know the LORD'S mind?
Who could be his teacher or give him advice?
- 14 Did the Lord ask for anyone's help?
Did anyone teach him to be fair?
Did anyone teach him knowledge?
Did anyone teach him to be wise?
- 15 Look, all the nations in the world are like one small drop
in the bucket.
If the Lord took all the faraway nations and put them
on his scales,
they would be like small pieces of dust.
- 16 All the trees in Lebanon are not enough
to burn on the altar for the Lord.
And all the animals in Lebanon
are not enough to kill for a sacrifice.
- 17 Compared to God, all the nations of the world are
nothing.
Compared to him, they are worth nothing at all.

People Cannot Imagine

What God Is Like

- 18 Can you compare God to anything?
Can you make a picture of God?
- 19 No, but some people make statues from rock or wood,
and they call them gods.
One worker makes a statue.
Then another worker covers it with gold and makes
silver chains for it.
- 20 For the base he chooses special wood,
a kind of wood that will not rot.
Then he finds a good wood worker,
and the worker makes a "god" that will not fall over.
- 21 Surely you know the truth, don't you?
Surely you have heard.

Surely someone told you long ago.

Surely you understand who made the earth.

22 It is the Lord who sits above the circle of the earth.
And compared to him, people are like grasshoppers.
He rolled open the skies like a piece of cloth.

He stretched out the skies like a tent to sit under.

23 He takes away the power of rulers.
He makes the world's leaders completely worthless.

24 They are like plants that are planted in the ground.
But before they can send their roots into the ground,
God blows on the "plants";
they become dead and dry,
and the wind blows them away like straw.

25 The Holy One says, "Can you compare me to anyone?
No one is equal to me."

26 Look up to the skies.

Who created all those stars?

Who created all those "armies" in the sky?

Who knows every star by name?

He is very strong and powerful,
so not one of these stars is lost.

27 People of Jacob, this is true.

Israel, you should believe it.

So why do you say, "The LORD cannot see the way I live;
he will not find me and punish me"*?

28 Surely you know the truth.

Surely you have heard.

The LORD is the God who lives forever!

He created all the faraway places on earth.

* 40:27 The LORD ... punish me Or "My way is hidden from the LORD; he ignores my case."

He does not get tired and weary.

You cannot learn all he knows.

²⁹ He helps tired people be strong.

He gives power to those without it.

³⁰ Young men get tired and need to rest.

Even young boys stumble and fall.

³¹ But those who trust in the LORD will become strong again.

They will be like eagles that grow new feathers.[†]

They will run and not get weak.

They will walk and not get tired.

41

The Lord Is the Eternal Creator

¹ The Lord says,

“Faraway countries, be quiet and listen to me!

Nations be brave.*

Come to me and speak.

We will meet together

and decide who is right.

² Who woke up the man who is coming from the east?

He called Justice to march with him.

He uses his sword to crush nations.

He uses his bow and conquers kings—

they run away like straw blown by the wind.

³ He chases armies and is never hurt.

He goes places he has never been before.

⁴ Who was able to make all this happen?

[†] 40:31 like ... feathers This probably refers to the ancient belief that eagles regain their youth when they molt (lose and grow back their feathers). See Psalm 103:5. This line could also be translated, “They will rise up like eagles on their wings.” * 41:1 be brave Or “be strong again,” as in Isaiah 40:31.

Who controlled the lives of everyone from the beginning?

I, the LORD, am the one.

I was here at the beginning,
and I will be here when all things are finished.

⁵ People along the coast saw this,
and they were frightened.

Nations at the ends of the earth
shook with fear.

They have come near.
They have arrived.

⁶ “Workers help each other. They encourage each other to be strong. ⁷ One worker cuts wood to make a statue. He encourages the man who works with gold. Another worker uses a hammer and makes the metal smooth. Then he encourages the man at the anvil.[†] This last worker says, ‘This work is good; the metal will not come off.’ Then he nails the statue to a base so that it will not fall over. And it never moves!”

Only the Lord Can Save Us

⁸ The Lord says, “You, Israel, are my servant.
Jacob, I chose you.

You are from the family of my friend, Abraham.

⁹ You were in a faraway country,
but I reached out to you.

I called you from that faraway place.
I said, ‘You are my servant.’

I chose you,
and I have not rejected you.

¹⁰ Don’t worry—I am with you.

[†] 41:7 anvil A heavy metal block. A worker puts hot metal on an anvil and beats the hot metal to change its shape.

Don't be afraid—I am your God.
 I will make you strong and help you.
 I will support you with my right hand that brings
 victory.

¹¹ Look, some people are angry with you,
 but they will be ashamed and disgraced.
 Your enemies will be lost and disappear.

¹² You will look for the people who were against you,
 but you will not be able to find them.

Those who fought against you
 will disappear completely.

¹³ I am the LORD your God,
 who holds your right hand.

And I tell you, 'Don't be afraid!
 I will help you.'

¹⁴ People of Israel, descendants of Jacob, you may be weak
 and worthless,[‡]
 but do not be afraid.
 I myself will help you."

This is what the LORD himself says.

"I am the Holy One of Israel,
 the one who saves you.

¹⁵ Look, I have made you like a new threshing board with
 many sharp teeth.

You will trample mountains and crush them.

You will make the hills[§] like chaff.

¹⁶ You will throw them into the air,
 and the wind will blow them away and scatter them.

Then you will be happy in the LORD.

[‡] 41:14 Jacob ... worthless Literally, "Worm of Jacob, men of Israel."

[§] 41:15 mountains ... hills Symbols of the power of Israel's enemies.

You will be proud of the Holy One of Israel.

¹⁷ “The poor and needy look for water,
but they cannot find any.
Their tongues are dry with thirst.

I, the LORD, will answer their prayers.
I, the God of Israel, will not leave them to die.

¹⁸ I will make rivers flow on dry hills.
I will make springs of water flow through the valleys.
I will change the desert into a lake filled with water.
There will be springs of water in that dry land.

¹⁹ I will make trees grow in the desert.
There will be cedar, acacias, olive trees, cypress, fir
trees, and pines.

²⁰ I will do this so that people will see it and know who did
it.
They will notice what happened.

Then they will understand that the LORD’S hand made it
happen,
that the Holy One of Israel created it all.”

The Lord Challenges the False Gods

²¹ The LORD, the king of Jacob, says, “Come, present
your arguments. Show me your proof. ²² Let your idols
come in and tell us what will happen. Idols, tell us what
happened in the beginning. We will listen closely so that
we can make a decision. Tell us what will happen in the
future. ²³ What signs did you give in the past to prove that
you really are gods? Do something! Do anything, good or
bad, so that we can see that you are alive. Then we might
fear and respect you.

²⁴ “Look, you false gods are worthless. You cannot do anything. Only some horrible fool* would want to worship you.”

The Lord Proves He Is the Only God

²⁵ “I called someone in the north[†] to come.
He is coming from the east where the sun rises,
and he honors my name.

He tramples kings
the way a potter softens clay with his feet.

²⁶ “Who told us about this before it happened
so that we could say he was right?

None of your idols told us anything.
They didn’t say a word,
and they cannot hear anything you say.

²⁷ I, the Lord, was the first one to tell Zion about these things.

I sent a messenger to Jerusalem to say,
‘Look, your people are coming back!’ ”

²⁸ I looked at those false gods.
Not one of them said anything.
They had no advice to offer.

I asked them questions,
but they didn’t say a word.

²⁹ Those gods are all less than nothing.
They cannot do anything.
They are worthless.

* 41:24 fool Literally, “horrible thing.” The Hebrew word usually describes idols and other wicked things that God hates. † 41:25 someone in the north This probably means Cyrus, a king of Persia. He ruled about 550–530 B.C.

42

The Lord's Special Servant

- ¹ “Here is my servant,
the one I support.
He is the one I have chosen,
and I am very pleased with him.
I have filled him with my Spirit,
and he will bring justice to the nations.
- ² He will not cry out or shout
or try to make himself heard in the streets.
- ³ He will not break even a crushed reed.*
He will not put out even the weakest flame.
He will bring true justice.
- ⁴ He will not grow weak or give up
until he has brought justice to the world.
And people in faraway places will hope to receive his
teachings.”

*The Lord Is Ruler
and Maker of the World*

⁵ The LORD, the true God, said these things. (He created the sky and spread it out over the earth. He formed the earth and everything it produced. He breathes life into all the people on earth. He gives a spirit to everyone who walks on the earth.)

- ⁶ “I, the LORD, was right to call you.
I will hold your hand and protect you.
You will be the sign of my agreement with the people.
You will be a light for the other nations.
- ⁷ You will make the blind able to see.
You will free those who are held as captives.

* 42:3 reed A plant that grows near water.

You will lead those who live in darkness out of their prison.

⁸ “I am YAHWEH.

That is my name.

I will not give my glory to another.

I will not let statues take the praise that should be mine.

⁹ In the past, I told you what would happen, and it happened!

Now I am telling you something new, and I am telling you now, before it happens.”

A Song of Praise to the Lord

¹⁰ Sing a new song[†] to the LORD;
praise him everywhere on earth—
all you who sail on the seas,
everything in the sea,
and all you people in faraway places!

¹¹ Deserts and cities, villages of Kedar,
praise the Lord!

People living in Sela, sing for joy!
Sing from the top of your mountain.

¹² Give glory to the LORD.
Praise him, all you people in faraway lands!

¹³ The LORD will go out like a strong soldier.
Like a man going into battle, he will be full of excitement.

He will shout with a loud cry,
and he will defeat his enemies.

God Is Very Patient

¹⁴ “For a long time I have said nothing.

[†] 42:10 new song Whenever God did a new and wonderful thing for his people, they would write a new song about it.

I have controlled myself and kept quiet.
 But now I will cry out like a woman giving birth.
 My breathing is getting faster and louder.
 15 I will destroy the hills and mountains.
 I will dry up all the plants that grow there.
 I will change rivers to dry land
 and dry up pools of water.
 16 Then I will lead the blind along a path they never knew
 to places where they have never been before.
 I will change darkness into light for them.
 I will make the rough ground smooth.
 I will do these things for them;
 I will not abandon my people.
 17 But some of them have left me.
 They say to their gold statues, 'You are my gods.'
 They trust their false gods,
 but they will be disappointed and shamed.

Israel Refused to Listen to God

18 "Deaf people, listen to me!
 Blind people, look and see!
 19 In all the world, no one is more blind than my servant. ‡
 No one is more deaf than my messenger.
 No one is more blind than my chosen people,
 the servant of the LORD.
 20 My people see what they should do,
 but they do not obey me.
 They can hear with their ears,
 but they refuse to listen to me."
 21 The LORD wants them to do what is right.
 He wants them to honor his wonderful teachings. §

‡ 42:19 my servant Here, this probably means the people of Israel.

§ 42:21 Or "The LORD will make his teachings very wonderful. He will do this because he is good."

²² But look at his people.

Others have defeated them and have stolen from them.

The young men are afraid.

They are locked in prisons.

People have taken advantage of them,

and there is no one to protect them.

Others take their money,

and there is no one to say, "Give it back!"

²³ Will any of you pay attention to this warning? Will you ever learn to listen? ²⁴ Who let Jacob be defeated? Who let others take what belonged to Israel? The LORD allowed them to do this. We sinned against him, so he let people take away our wealth. The people did not want to live the way he wanted. They refused to listen to his teaching. ²⁵ So he poured out his anger on them and brought wars against them. It was as if there were fires all around them, but they didn't know what was happening. It was as if they were burning, but they didn't try to understand.

43

God Is Always With His People

¹ Jacob, the LORD created you. Israel, he made you, and now he says, "Don't be afraid. I saved you. I named you. You are mine. ² When you have troubles, I am with you. When you cross rivers, you will not be hurt. When you walk through fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not hurt you. ³ That's because I, the LORD, am your God. I, the Holy One of Israel, am your Savior. I gave Egypt to pay for you. I gave Ethiopia and Seba to make you mine. ⁴ You are precious to me, and I have given you a special place of

honor. I love you. That's why I am willing to trade others, to give up whole nations, to save your life.

⁵ “So don't be afraid, because I am with you. I will gather your children and bring them to you. I will gather them from the east and from the west. ⁶ I will tell the north: Give my people to me. I will tell the south: Don't keep my people in prison. Bring my sons and daughters to me from the faraway places. ⁷ Bring to me all the people who are mine—the people who have my name. I made them for myself. I made them, and they are mine.

⁸ “Bring out the people who have eyes but are blind. Bring out the people who have ears but are deaf.* ⁹ All people and all nations should also be gathered together. Which of their gods said this would happen? Which of their gods would tell what happened in the beginning? They should bring their witnesses. The witnesses should speak the truth. This will show they are right.”

¹⁰ The LORD says, “You people are my witnesses and the servant I chose. I chose you so that you would help people believe me. I chose you so that you would understand that ‘I Am He’—*I am the true God*. There was no God before me, and there will be no God after me. ¹¹ I myself am the LORD, and there is no other Savior. ¹² I am the one who spoke to you, saved you, and told you those things. It was not some stranger who was with you. You are my witnesses, and I am God.” (This is what the LORD himself said.) ¹³ “I have always been God. When I do something, no one can change what I have done. And no one can save people from my power.”

¹⁴ The LORD, the Holy One of Israel, saves you, and he says, “I will send armies to Babylon for you. Many people

* 43:8 blind ... deaf This probably means the Israelites who would not believe God. See Isaiah 6:9-10.

will be captured. Those Chaldeans will be taken away in their own boats. (They are so proud of those boats.)[†] ¹⁵ I am the LORD your Holy One. I made Israel. I am your King.”

God Will Save His People Again

¹⁶ The Lord is making roads through the sea. He is making a path for his people, even through rough waters. The LORD says, ¹⁷ “Those who fight against me with their chariots, horses, and armies will be defeated. They will never rise again. They will be destroyed. They will be put out like the flame in a lamp. ¹⁸ So don’t remember what happened in earlier times. Don’t think about what happened a long time ago, ¹⁹ because I am doing something new! Now you will grow like a new plant. Surely you know this is true. I will even make a road in the desert, and rivers will flow through that dry land. ²⁰ The wild animals will thank me. The large animals and birds will honor me when I put water in the desert and make rivers flow through that dry land. I will do this to give water to my chosen people. ²¹ I made them, and they will sing songs of praise to me.

²² “Jacob, you did not pray to me. Israel, you became tired of me. ²³ You have not brought your sheep as sacrifices to me. You have not honored me with your sacrifices. I did not force you to give gifts to me like slaves. I did not force you to burn incense until you became tired. ²⁴ So you did not use your money to buy things to honor me. But you did force me to be like your slave. You sinned until the bad things you did made me very tired.

[†] 43:14 I will send ... boats Or with minor changes to the Hebrew, “I will send someone against Babylon to break open the gates, and the shouts of victory from the Chaldeans will be changed to crying.”

²⁵ “I, I am the one who wipes away all your sins. I do this to please myself. I will not remember your sins. ²⁶ But you should remember me. Let’s meet together and decide what is right. Tell your story and prove that you are innocent. ²⁷ Your first father sinned, and your lawyers[‡] committed crimes against me. ²⁸ I will make your Temple leaders unfit to serve there. I will destroy Jacob.[§] Bad things will happen to Israel.

44

The Lord Is the Only God

¹ “Jacob, you are my servant. Israel, I chose you. Listen to me! ² I am the LORD, and I made you. I am the one who created you. I have helped you since you were in your mother’s womb. Jacob, my servant, don’t be afraid. Jeshurun,^{*} I chose you.

³ “I will pour water for thirsty people, and streams will flow through the desert. I will pour my Spirit on your children, and I will bless[†] your family. ⁴ They will sprout like grass in the spring and grow like trees by streams of water.

⁵ “One man will call himself, ‘I am the LORD’S.’ Another will use the name, ‘Jacob.’ Another man will sign his name as ‘The LORD’S Hand.’ And another will use the name, ‘Israel.’ ”

⁶ The LORD is the king of Israel. The LORD All-Powerful is the one who will set Israel free. And he says, “I am the only God. There are no other gods. I am the Beginning

[‡] 43:27 lawyers Or “speakers,” people who argue a person’s case in court. This might refer to priests or prophets. [§] 43:28 destroy Jacob Or “I will make Jacob completely mine.” ^{*} 44:2 Jeshurun Another name for Israel. It means “good” or “honest.” [†] 44:3 bless This is a wordplay. This Hebrew word sounds like the word meaning “pool.”

and the End. ⁷ There is no other God like me. If there is, that god should speak now. Let him lay out everything he has done since the time I made these ancient people. Let him show me the signs he gave long ago that prove he knew what would happen in the future.

⁸ “Don’t be afraid! Don’t worry. I am the one who always told you what would happen. You are my proof.‡ There is no other God; I am the only one. There is no other ‘Rock’; I know I am the only one.”

False Gods Are Useless

⁹ Some people make idols, but they are worthless. They love their statues, which are useless. Those who serve as witnesses for these statues cannot even see. They don’t know enough to be ashamed.

¹⁰ Who made these false gods? Who covered these useless statues? ¹¹ Workers made them, and the workers are only human. If they all would come together before me, we could discuss this. Then they would all be ashamed and afraid.

¹² One worker uses his tools to heat iron over hot coals. Then he uses his hammer to beat the metal to shape it into a statue. He uses his own powerful arms, but when he gets hungry, he loses his strength. If he does not drink water, he becomes weak.

¹³ Another worker uses his string line§ and compass* to draw lines on the wood to show where he should cut. Then he uses his chisels† and cuts a statue from the wood. He uses his calipers‡ to measure the statue. In this way

‡ 44:8 proof Or “witnesses.” § 44:13 string line In ancient times, this was a piece of string with wet paint on it. It was used to make straight lines on wood or stone. * 44:13 compass A tool used to draw circles and copy measurements.

† 44:13 chisels Sharp tools used to carve wood or stone.

‡ 44:13 calipers A special measuring tool, like a compass.

the worker makes the wood look exactly like a man, and this statue of a man does nothing but sit in the house.

¹⁴ To split the cedar tree, the worker took some oak or cypress *wedges*. To make sure he had plenty of wood, he planted some pines. But it was the rain that made them grow.

¹⁵ When the man wanted a fire, he took some of the wood to keep him warm. He also used some of it to bake his bread. But then he used that same wood to make a statue to worship as a god! That god is only a statue that he made, but he bows down to it! ¹⁶ He burns half of the wood in the fire. He uses the fire to cook his meat, and he eats the meat until he is full. He burns the wood to keep himself warm. He says, "Good! Now I am warm, and I can see by the light of the fire." ¹⁷ There is a little of the wood left, so he makes a statue and calls it his god. He bows down before it and worships it. He prays to it and says, "You are my god, save me!"

¹⁸ People like that don't know what they are doing! They don't understand. It is as if they have mud in their eyes so they cannot see. Their minds cannot understand. ¹⁹ They don't realize what they are doing. They aren't smart enough to think, "I burned half of the wood in the fire. I used the hot coals to bake my bread and cook the meat I ate. And I used the wood that was left to make this terrible thing. I am worshiping a block of wood!"

²⁰ Someone like that is deceived. They don't know what they are doing.[§] They cannot save themselves, and they will not admit, "This statue I am holding is a lie!"

The Lord, the True God, Helps Israel

²¹ "Jacob, remember these things!

Israel, remember, you are my servant.

§ 44:20 They ... doing Literally, "They eat ashes."

I made you, and you are my servant.

So, Israel, don't forget me.

²² Your sins were like a big cloud,
but I wiped them all away.

Your sins are gone,
like a cloud that disappeared into thin air.

I rescued and protected you,
so come back to me.”

²³ Skies, rejoice for what the LORD has done.

Earth, shout for joy down to your deepest parts!
Start singing, you mountains
and all you trees in the forest!

Yes, the LORD has saved Jacob.

He has shown his glory by rescuing Israel.

²⁴ The one who rescued you is the LORD,
the one who formed you in your mother's womb.

He says, “I, the LORD, made everything.

I put the skies there myself.

I spread out the earth before me.”

²⁵ False prophets tell lies, but the Lord shows that their lies are false. He makes fools of those who do magic. He confuses even the wise. They think they know a lot, but he makes them look foolish. ²⁶ The Lord sends his servants to tell his messages to the people, and he makes those messages come true. He sends messengers to tell the people what they should do, and he proves that the advice is good.

God Chooses Cyrus to Rebuild Judah

The Lord says to Jerusalem, “People will live in you again.”

He says to the cities of Judah, “You will be rebuilt.”

He says to them, “I will repair your ruins.”

²⁷ He tells the deep waters, “Become dry!
I will make your streams dry too.”

²⁸ He says to Cyrus, “You are my shepherd.
You will do what I want.

You will say to Jerusalem, ‘You will be rebuilt!’

You will tell the Temple, ‘Your foundations will be
put in place!’ ”

45

God Chooses Cyrus to Make Israel Free

¹ This is what the LORD said to Cyrus, his chosen king*:

“I took you by your right hand to help you defeat nations,
to strip other kings of their power,
and to open city gates that will not be closed again.

² I will go in front of you
and make the mountains flat.

I will break the city gates of bronze
and cut the iron bars on the gates.

³ I will give you the wealth that is stored in secret places.
I will give you those hidden treasures.

Then you will know that I am the LORD,
the God of Israel, who calls you by name.

⁴ I do this for my servant, Jacob.
I do it for my chosen people, Israel.

Cyrus, I am calling you by name.

You don’t know me, but I know you.†

⁵ I am the LORD, the only God.

There is no other God except me.

* 45:1 chosen king Literally, “the anointed one.” † 45:4 I know you Or
“I will give you a title.”

I put your clothes on you,[‡]
but still you don't know me.

⁶ I am doing this so that everyone will know
that I am the only God.

From the east to the west, people will know that I am the
LORD
and that there is no other God.

⁷ I made the light and the darkness.
I bring peace, and I cause trouble.
I, the LORD, do all these things.

⁸ “May the clouds in the skies above
pour goodness on the earth like rain.

May the earth open up
to let salvation grow.

And may goodness grow with that salvation,
which I, the LORD, created.

God Controls His Creation

⁹ “Look at these people! They are arguing with the one who made them. Look at them argue with me. They are like pieces of clay from a broken pot. Clay does not say to the one molding it, ‘Man, what are you doing?’ Things that are made don't have the power to question the one who makes them. ¹⁰ A father gives life to his children, and they cannot ask, ‘Why are you giving me life?’ They cannot question their mother and ask, ‘Why are you giving birth to me?’ ”

¹¹ The LORD God is the Holy One of Israel. He created Israel, and he says,

“My children, you asked me to show you a sign.

[‡] 45:5 I put ... you This also means “I made you strong.”

You told me to show you what I have done.[§]

¹² I made the earth,
and I created the people on it.
I used my own hands to make the skies.

And I command all the armies in the sky.*

¹³ I was right to give power to Cyrus,[†]
and I will make his work easy.

He will rebuild my city,
and he will set my people free without bribes or
payment.”

The LORD All-Powerful said this.

¹⁴ The LORD says, “Egypt and Ethiopia are rich,
but, Israel, you will get those riches.

The tall people from Seba will be yours.

They will walk behind you with chains around their
necks.

They will bow down before you
and ask you to pray for them and say,

“The true God really is with you,
and there is no other God.’ ”

¹⁵ You are the God people cannot see.

You are the God who saves Israel.

¹⁶ Many people make false gods,
but they will be disappointed.

All of them will go away ashamed.

¹⁷ But Israel will be saved by the LORD.

That salvation will continue forever.

§ 45:11 My children ... done Or “Those who are coming asked for my children. They commanded me to give them the people I made with my own hands.” * 45:12 armies in the sky Sometimes this means the angels, and

sometimes it means the stars. † 45:13 I was right ... Cyrus Or “I gave Cyrus power to do something good.”

Never again will Israel be shamed.

¹⁸ The LORD is God.

He made the skies and the earth.

He put the earth in its place.

He did not want the earth to be empty when he made it.

He created it to be lived on.

“I am the LORD.

There is no other God.

¹⁹ I have spoken openly, not in secret.

I did not hide my words in a dark and secret place.

I did not tell the people of Jacob

to look for me in empty places.

I am the LORD, and I speak the truth.

I say only what is right.

The Lord Proves He Is the Only God

²⁰ “You people who escaped from other nations, gather together before me. (These people carry statues of false gods. They pray to useless gods, but they don’t know what they are doing. ²¹ Tell them to come to me. Let them present their case and discuss these things.)

“Who told you about this before it happened? Who told you this so long ago? I, the LORD, am the one who said these things. I am the only God, the one who does what is right. I am the one who saves, and there is no other! ²² So all you people in faraway places, turn to me and be saved, because I am God, and there is no other.

²³ “When I make a promise, that promise is true. It will happen. And I swear by my own power that everyone will bow before me and will take an oath to obey me.

²⁴ They will say, ‘Goodness and strength come only from the LORD.’ ”

And all who show their anger against him will be humiliated. ²⁵ The LORD will help the people of Israel live right[‡] and praise their God.

46

False Gods Are Useless

¹ The Lord says, “Bel has fallen to the ground. Nebo* is kneeling before me.

“Men put those idols on the backs of animals. They are only heavy burdens that must be carried. They do nothing but make people tired. ² But they all bowed down and fell to the ground. They couldn’t escape; they were all carried away like prisoners.

³ “Family of Jacob, listen to me! You who are left from the family of Israel, listen! I have carried you since you left your mother’s womb. I carried you when you were born, ⁴ and I will still be carrying you when you are old. Your hair will turn gray, and I will still carry you. I made you, and I will carry you to safety.

⁵ “Can you compare me to anyone? No one is equal to me. You cannot understand everything about me. There is nothing like me. ⁶ Some people are rich with gold and silver. Gold falls from their purses, and they weigh their silver on scales. They pay an artist to make a false god from wood. Then they bow down and worship that false god. ⁷ They put their false god on their shoulders and carry it. That false god is useless; people have to carry it! People set the statue on the ground, and it cannot move. That false god never walks away from its place. People can yell at it, but it will not answer. That false god is only a statue; it cannot save people from their troubles.

‡ 45:25 live right Or “find justice.” * 46:1 Nebo A false god of Babylon.

⁸ “Sinners, change your heart and mind. Think about this again. Remember it and be strong. ⁹ Remember what happened long ago. Remember, I am God and there is no other God. There is no other like me.

¹⁰ “In the beginning, I told you what would happen in the end. A long time ago, I told you things that have not happened yet. When I plan something, it happens. I do whatever I want to do. ¹¹ I am calling a man from the east to do what I want. He will come like an eagle from a faraway country. He will do all that I have planned. Everything I said will happen just as I said it would.

¹² “Listen to me, you stubborn[†] people! You are far from doing what is right. ¹³ But I am close to making things right. Salvation will not be delayed much longer. I will bring salvation to Zion and to my wonderful Israel.”

47

God's Message to Babylon

¹ “Fall down and sit in the dirt, Virgin Daughter Babylon. You have no throne, so sit on the ground, daughter of the Chaldeans.*

You are not the ruler now.

You are no longer the beautiful young princess that people said you were.

² Get the millstones ready and grind the grain into flour.

Take off your veil and fancy clothes.

Lift your skirt and get ready to cross the rivers.[†]

³ Men will see your naked body

[†] 46:12 stubborn Literally, “mighty of heart.” * 47:1 Virgin Daughter Babylon, daughter of the Chaldeans Names for the city of Babylon. [†] 47:2 rivers The Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Babylon was between these two rivers.

and use you for sex.
I will make you pay for the bad things you did,
and I will not let anyone help you.

⁴ “My people say, ‘God saves us.
His name is the LORD All-Powerful, the Holy One of
Israel.’ ”

⁵ “So Babylon, sit down and shut up.
Daughter of the Chaldeans, go into the dark prison.
You will no longer be ‘The Queen of the Kingdoms.’

⁶ “I was angry with my people.
They were mine, but I turned against them.
I let you punish them,
but you showed them no mercy.
Even for those who were old
you made the work hard.

⁷ You said, ‘I will live forever.
I will always be the queen.’
You didn’t care what you did to my people.
You didn’t think about what might happen later.

⁸ So now listen, you who love only pleasure!
Feeling so safe, you tell yourself,
‘I alone am important, and no one else matters.
I will never be a widow or lose my children.’

⁹ These two things will happen to you:
First, you will lose your children and then your
husband.
And none of your magic spells will help you.

¹⁰ You do bad things but still feel safe.‡
You say to yourself, ‘No one sees the wrong I do.’

‡ 47:10 You ... safe Or “You put your trust in your evil.”

You thought that your wisdom and knowledge would save you.

You tell yourself, 'I alone am important, and no one else matters.'

¹¹ "But disaster is coming your way.

You don't know when it will happen, but disaster is coming.

And there is nothing you can do to stop it.

¹² You worked hard all your life learning magic and spells.

So start using that magic.

Maybe those spells will help you.

Maybe you will be able to frighten someone.

¹³ You have many advisors.

Are you tired of the advice they give?

Then send out your men who read the stars.

They can tell when the month starts, so maybe they can tell you when your troubles will come.

¹⁴ But they cannot even save themselves.

They will burn like straw.

They will burn so fast that there will be no coals left to cook bread.

There will be no fire left to sit by.

¹⁵ That's what will happen to those you have worked with, the people you did business with all your life.

They will all go their own way.

There will be no one left to save you."

48

God Rules His World

¹ "Family of Jacob, listen to me!

You people call yourself 'Israel,'

but you are from Judah's family.
 When you take an oath, I, the LORD, the God of Israel,
 am the one whose name you use,
 but you are not honest and sincere.

² “Yes, you call yourselves citizens of the holy city,*
 those who depend on the God of Israel.
 The LORD All-Powerful is his name.

³ “Long ago I told you what would happen.
 I told you about these things.
 And suddenly I made them happen.

⁴ I did that because I knew you were stubborn.
 You were like iron that will not bend,
 with heads as hard as bronze.

⁵ So long ago I told you what would happen.
 I told you about those things long before they hap-
 pened.

I did this so that you could not say,
 ‘The gods we made did this.
 Our idols, our statues, made this happen.’ ”

God Punishes Israel to Make Them Pure

⁶ “You heard what I said would happen.
 And you can see it has all been done.
 Shouldn't you tell this to others?

Now I will tell you about new things,
 secrets you have not known before.

⁷ This is something that is happening now, not long ago.
 You have not heard about it before today.
 So you cannot say, ‘We already knew that.’

⁸ But even in the past you didn't listen.
 You didn't learn anything.

* 48:2 holy city That is, Jerusalem.

You never listen to what I say.
 I have always known that you would turn against me.
 You have rebelled against me from the time you were
 born.

⁹ “But I will be patient.
 I will do this for myself.
 People will praise me for not becoming angry and de-
 stroying you.
 You will praise me for waiting.

¹⁰ “Look, I will make you pure,
 but not in the way you make silver pure.
 I will make you pure by giving you troubles.
¹¹ I will do this for myself—for me!
 I will not let you treat me as if I am not important.
 I will not let some false god take my glory and praise.

¹² “Jacob, listen to me!
 Israel, I called you to be my people.
 So listen to me!
 I am the Beginning,
 and I am the End.

¹³ I made the earth with my own hands.
 My right hand made the sky.
 And if I call them,
 they will come to stand before me.

¹⁴ “All of you, come here and listen to me.
 Did any of the false gods say these things would
 happen? No!
 The LORD’S friend[†] will do what he wants

[†] 48:14 friend Or “partner.” This probably means Cyrus, king of Persia. He ruled about 550–530 B.C.

to Babylon and the Chaldeans.

- 15 “I told you that I would call him.
I will lead him,
and I will make him succeed.
16 Come here and listen to me!
I was there when Babylon began as a nation.
And from the beginning, I spoke clearly
so that people could know what I said.”

Now, the Lord GOD sends me and his Spirit to tell you these things. 17 The LORD, the Savior, the Holy One of Israel, says,

- “I am the LORD your God.
I teach you for your own good.
I lead you in the way you should go.
18 If you had obeyed me,
then peace would have come to you
like a full flowing river.
Good things would have come to you again and again,
like the waves of the sea.
19 If you had obeyed me,
you would have had as many children as there are
grains of sand.
And they would always have been mine
and would never have been destroyed.”

- 20 My people, leave Babylon!
My people, run from the Chaldeans!
Tell the news with joy.
Spread the news around the world.
Tell them,
“The LORD rescued his servant Jacob.”

²¹ They never got thirsty as he led them through the
desert,
because he made water flow from a rock.
He split the rock,
and water flowed out.

²² But the LORD also said,
“There is no peace for evil people.”

49

God Calls His Special Servant

- ¹ Hear me, people by the sea.
Listen to me, you faraway nations.
The LORD called me before I was born.
He called my name while I was still in my mother's
womb.
- ² He used me to speak for him.
He used me like a sharp sword,
but he also held me in his hand to protect me.
He used me like a sharp arrow,
but he also kept me safe in his arrow bag.
- ³ He told me, “Israel, you are my servant.
I will do wonderful things with you.”
- ⁴ I said, “I worked hard for nothing.
I wore myself out, but I did nothing useful.
I used all my power,
but I did not really do anything.
So the LORD must decide what to do with me.
He must decide my reward.”
- ⁵ The LORD is the one who made me in my mother's
womb,
so that I could be his servant.

He wanted me to lead Jacob and Israel back to him.
The LORD gives me honor.
I get my strength from my God.

⁶ And now he says, “You are a very important servant to me.
You must bring back to me the tribes of Jacob.
You must bring back the people of Israel who are still alive.
But I have something else for you to do that is even more important:
I will make you a light for the other nations.
You will show people all over the world the way to be saved.”

⁷ The LORD, the Holy Protector of Israel, speaks to his servant.
People hate that servant.
Nations despise him.
He is now a slave to rulers.
The Lord says to him,
“Kings will see you and stand to honor you.
Great leaders will bow down to you.”

This will happen for the LORD. The Holy One of Israel is the one who chose you, and he can be trusted.

The Day of Salvation

⁸ This is what the LORD says:
“There will be a special time when I show my kindness.
Then I will answer your prayers.
There will be a special day when I will save you.
Then I will help you and protect you.
And you will be the proof of my agreement with the people.

The country is destroyed now,
but you will give the land back to the people who own
it.

⁹ You will tell the prisoners,
‘Come out of your prison!’

You will tell those who are in darkness,
‘Come out of the dark!’

The people will eat along the road,
and they will have food even on empty hills.

¹⁰ They will not be hungry or thirsty.
The hot sun and wind will not hurt them.
Their Comforter will lead them.

He will lead them by springs of water.

¹¹ I will make a road for my people.
The mountains will be made flat,
and the low roads will be raised.

¹² “Look! People are coming to me from faraway places.
They are coming to me from the north and from the
west.
They are coming to me from Aswan in Egypt.”

¹³ Heavens and earth, be happy!
Mountains, shout with joy!
The LORD comforts his people.
He is good to his poor people.

¹⁴ But now Zion says, “The LORD has left me;
the Lord has forgotten me.”

¹⁵ But the Lord says,
“Can a woman forget her baby?
Can she forget the child who came from her body?
Even if she can forget her children,
I cannot forget you.

16 I drew a picture of you on my hand.

You are always before my eyes.*

17 Your children will come back to you,
and those who destroyed you will leave.

18 Look up! Look all around you!

All of your children are gathering together and
coming to you.”

The LORD says, “On my life, I promise you this:

Your children will be like jewels that you tie around
your neck.

Your children will be like the necklace that a bride
wears.

19 “You are destroyed and defeated now.

Your land is useless.

But after a short time, you will have many people in your
land.

And those who destroyed you will be far, far away.

20 You were sad for the children you lost, but they will tell
you,

‘This place is too small!

Give us a bigger place to live!’

21 Then you will say to yourself,

‘Who gave me all these children?’

I was sad and lonely.

My children were taken away.

They were gone.

So who gave me these children?

Look, I was the only one left.

Where did all these children come from?” ”

* 49:16 I ... eyes Or “I see your figure before me always.” This is a wordplay.
The Hebrew word “figure” also means “walls.”

²² This is what the Lord GOD says:

“Look, I will wave my hand to the nations.
I will raise my flag for everyone to see.

Then they will bring your children to you.

They will carry your children on their shoulders,
and they will hold them in their arms.

²³ Kings will be their teachers.

The daughters of kings will care for them.

The kings and their daughters will bow down to you.

They will kiss the dirt at your feet.

Then you will know that I am the LORD,
and anyone who trusts in me will not be disappointed.”

²⁴ If a strong soldier takes a prisoner,
can you set him free?

If a powerful soldier guards someone,
can the prisoner escape?

²⁵ Here is the LORD’S answer:

“The prisoners will escape.

Those captured by the strong soldier will be set free.

That’s because I will fight your battles,
and I will save your children.

²⁶ Those people hurt you,

but I will force them to eat their own bodies.

Their own blood will be the wine that makes them
drunk.

Then everyone will know that the LORD saved you.

Everyone will know that the Powerful One of Jacob
saved you.”

¹ This is what the LORD says:

“People of Israel, you say that I divorced your mother,
Jerusalem.

But where is the legal paper that proves I divorced
her?

My children, did I owe money to someone?

Did I sell you to pay a debt?

No, you were sold because of the bad things you did.

Your mother was sent away because of the bad things
you did.

² I came home and found no one there.

I called and called, but no one answered.

Do you think I cannot get you back?

Do you think I cannot save you?

Look, if I gave the command, the ocean would dry up!

I can turn rivers into a desert.

The fish would die without water,
and their bodies would rot.

³ I can make the skies dark.

I can cover the skies in darkness as black as sack-
cloth.”

God's Servant Depends on God

⁴ The Lord GOD gave me the ability to teach, so now I teach these sad people. Every morning he wakes me and teaches me like a student. ⁵ The Lord GOD helps me learn, and I have not turned against him. I will not stop following him. ⁶ I will let those people beat me and pull the hair from my beard. I will not hide my face when they say bad things to me and spit at me. ⁷ The Lord GOD will help me, so the bad things they say will not hurt me. I will be strong. I know I will not be disappointed.

⁸ God is with me, and he is the one who shows that I am innocent. So no one can say I am guilty. If anyone wants to try to prove me wrong, they should come here, and we

will have a trial. ⁹ But look, the Lord GOD helps me, so no one can prove me guilty. As for them, they will all be like worthless old clothes, eaten by moths.

¹⁰ People who respect the LORD also listen to his servant. That servant lives completely trusting in God without knowing what will happen. He really trusts in the LORD'S name and depends on his God.

¹¹ The Lord says, "Look, you people want to do whatever you want. So light your own fires and torches, but you will be punished. You will fall into your fires and torches and be burned. I will make that happen."

51

Israel Should Be Like Abraham

¹ "Some of you people try hard to live good lives. You go to the LORD for help. Listen to me. You should look at Abraham your father. He is the rock you were cut from.

² Abraham is your father, so look at him. Look at Sarah, who gave birth to you. Abraham was alone when I called him. Then I blessed him, and he began a great family with many descendants."

³ In the same way, the LORD will bless Zion. He will feel sorry for her and her people, and he will do something great for her. He will turn the desert into a garden. It will be like the Garden of Eden. The land was empty, but it will become like the LORD'S garden. People there will be very happy. They will sing victory songs to thank God for what he did.

⁴ "My people, listen to me!

My decisions will be like lights showing people how to live.

⁵ I will soon save you and show that I am fair.

I will use my power and judge all nations.
 All the faraway places are waiting for me.
 They wait for my power to help them.

⁶ Look up to the heavens!

Look around you at the earth below!
 The skies will disappear like clouds of smoke.
 The earth will become like worthless old clothes.
 The people on earth will die,
 but my salvation will continue forever.
 My goodness will never end.

⁷ You people who understand goodness should listen to me.

You people who follow my teachings should hear the things I say.

Don't be afraid of evil people.

Don't let their insults upset you.

⁸ They will be like old clothes eaten by moths.

They will be like wool eaten by worms.

But my goodness will last forever.

My salvation will continue forever and ever."

God's Own Power Will Save His People

⁹ Wake up! Wake up!

Arm of the LORD, clothe yourself with strength.
 Show your power the way you did long ago,
 as you have from ancient times.

You are the one who destroyed Rahab.

You defeated the Dragon.*

¹⁰ You dried up the water that was in the deep sea.

You made a road through the deepest parts of the sea.

Your people crossed over and were saved.

* 51:9 Rahab ... Dragon This is Rahab the great sea monster. Some ancient stories tell about Rahab fighting with God.

- 11 The LORD will save his people.
They will return to Zion with joy.
They will be very happy.
Their happiness will be like a crown on their heads
forever.
They will be singing with joy.
All sadness will be gone far away.
- 12 The Lord says, “I am the one who comforts you.
So why should you be afraid of people?
They are only humans who live and die like the
grass.”
- 13 I, the LORD, am the one who made you.
With my power I made the earth
and spread the sky over the earth.
But you have forgotten me,
so you are always afraid that angry men will hurt
you.
Those men planned to destroy you,
but where are they now?
- 14 People in prison will soon be made free.
They will not die and rot in prison.
They will have plenty of food.
- 15 “I am the LORD your God,
the one who stirs up the sea and makes the waves
roar.”
The LORD All-Powerful is his name.
- 16 “My servant, I gave you the words I want you to say,
and I covered you with my hands to protect you. I did this

to make a new heaven and earth and so that you would say to Israel, 'You are my people.' ”

God Punished Israel

¹⁷ Wake up! Wake up!

Jerusalem, get up!

The LORD was very angry with you.

So you were punished.

It was like a cup of poison you had to drink,
and you drank it all.

¹⁸ Jerusalem had many people, but none of them became leaders for her. None of the children she raised became guides to lead her. ¹⁹ Troubles came to you, Jerusalem, in pairs: Your land was destroyed and lies in ruins, and your people suffered from famine and war.

But no one felt sorry for you or showed you mercy. ²⁰ Your people became weak. They fell on the ground and lay there. They were lying on every street corner, like animals caught in a net. They were punished by the LORD'S anger until they could not accept any more punishment. When God said he would give them more punishment, they became very weak.

²¹ Listen to me, poor Jerusalem. You are weak like a drunk, but you are not drunk from wine. You are weak *from that "cup of poison."*

²² Your God is the one who fights for his people. He is your Lord GOD, and he says to you, "Look, I am taking this 'cup of poison' away from you. It is full of my anger, and I am taking it out of your hand. You will not be punished by my anger again. ²³ I will now use my anger to punish the people who hurt you. They tried to kill you. They told you, 'Bow down before us, and we will walk on you.' They forced you to bow down before them, and then they

walked on your back like dirt. You were like a road for them to walk on.”

52

Israel Will Be Saved

¹ Wake up! Wake up!

Zion, clothe yourself with strength.

Holy city of Jerusalem, stand up

and put on your beautiful clothes!

Those filthy foreigners* will not enter you again.

² Jerusalem, get up and shake off the dust!

Daughter Zion,† you were a prisoner,
but take the chains off your neck.

³ The LORD says,

“You were not sold for money.

So I will not use money to set you free.”

⁴ The Lord GOD says, “First, my people went down to Egypt and became slaves. Then Assyria made them slaves.

⁵ Now look what has happened. Another nation has taken my people,” says the LORD. “That country did not pay to take my people, but they rule over them and laugh at them, and they say bad things about me all the time.” The LORD is the one saying these things.

⁶ “This happened so that my people will learn about me. My people will know who I am. My people will know my name, and they will know that I Am He‡ is speaking to them.”

* 52:1 filthy foreigners Or “unclean men that have not been circumcised.”

† 52:2 Daughter Zion Another name for Jerusalem. ‡ 52:6 I Am He This is like YAHWEH, the Hebrew name for God. It shows that God lives forever, and that he is always with his people. See Exodus 3:13-17.

⁷ How wonderful it is to see someone coming over the hills to tell good news. How wonderful to hear him announce, “There is peace! We have been saved!” and to hear him say to Zion, “Your God is the king!”

⁸ The city guards[§] are shouting.
They are all rejoicing together.
They can all see the LORD returning to Zion.

⁹ Ruins of Jerusalem, be happy again!
Rejoice because the LORD
comforted his people and set Jerusalem free.

¹⁰ The LORD showed his holy strength to all the nations.
All the faraway countries saw how God saved his people.

¹¹ So leave Babylon!
Leave that place!
Priests, you carry the things that belong to the LORD.
So make yourselves pure.
Don’t touch anything that is not pure.

¹² You will leave Babylon,
but they will not force you to leave in a hurry.
You will not be forced to run away.
The LORD will be in front of you.
The God of Israel will be behind you.*

God’s Suffering Servant

[§] 52:8 guards Men who stand on the city walls and watch for messengers or trouble coming to the city. Here, this probably means the prophets.

* 52:12 The LORD ... behind you This shows that God will protect his people. Compare Exodus 14:19, 20.

¹³ The Lord says, “Look, my servant will succeed in what he has to do, and he will be raised to a position of high honor. ¹⁴ It is true that many were shocked when they saw him. He was beaten so badly that he no longer looked like a man. ¹⁵ But it is also true that many nations will be amazed at him. Kings will look at him and be unable to speak. They will see what they had never been told. They will understand what they had never heard.†”

53

¹ Who really believed what we heard? Who saw in it the LORD’S great power?*

² He was always close to the Lord. He grew up like a young plant, like a root growing in dry ground. There was nothing special or impressive about the way he looked, nothing we could see that would cause us to like him. ³ People made fun of him, and even his friends left him. He was a man who suffered a lot of pain and sickness. We treated him like someone of no importance, like someone people will not even look at but turn away from in disgust.

⁴ The fact is, it was our suffering he took on himself; he bore our pain. But we thought that God was punishing him, that God was beating him for something he did.

⁵ But he was being punished for what we did. He was crushed because of our guilt. He took the punishment we deserved, and this brought us peace. We were healed because of his pain. ⁶ We had all wandered away like sheep. We had gone our own way. And yet the LORD put all our guilt on him.

† 52:15 They will see ... heard Or “Those who were not told the message saw what happened. Those who did not hear understood.” * 53:1 Who ... power Or “Upon whom was the arm of the Lord revealed?” This could mean, “Who received the punishment from the Lord?”

⁷ He was treated badly, but he never protested. He said nothing, like a lamb being led away to be killed. He was like a sheep that makes no sound as its wool is being cut off. He never opened his mouth to defend himself. ⁸ He was taken away by force and judged unfairly. The people of his time did not even notice that he was killed.[†] But he was put to death[‡] for the sins of his[§] people. ⁹ He had done no wrong to anyone. He had never even told a lie. But he was buried among the wicked. His tomb was with the rich.

¹⁰ But the LORD was pleased with this humble servant who suffered such pain.* Even after giving himself as an offering for sin, he will see his descendants and enjoy a long life. He will succeed in doing what the LORD wanted.

¹¹ After his suffering he will see the light,[†] and he will be satisfied with what he experienced.

The Lord says, “My servant, who always does what is right, will make his people right with me; he will take away their sins. ¹² For this reason, I will treat him as one of my great people. I will give him the rewards of one who wins in battle, and he will share them with his powerful ones. I will do this because he gave his life for the people. He was considered a criminal, but the truth is, he carried away the sins of many. Now he will stand before me and speak for those who have sinned.”

[†] 53:8 The people ... killed Or “There is no story about his descendants, because he was taken from the land of the living.” [‡] 53:8 put to death Or “punished.” [§] 53:8 his This is the reading in a Hebrew copy among the

Dead Sea Scrolls. The standard Hebrew text has “my.” ^{*} 53:10 But the LORD ... such pain Or “The LORD decided to crush him. He decided that he must suffer.” [†] 53:11 the light This is found in some Hebrew scrolls from

Qumran and the ancient Greek version. Light is often used as a symbol for life.

54

God Brings His People Home

¹ “Woman, be happy!
 You have not had any children,
 but you should be very happy.

“Yes, the woman who is alone*
 will have more children than the woman with a
 husband.”
 This is what the LORD says.

² “Make your tent bigger.
 Open your doors wide.
 Don’t think small!
 Make your tent large and strong,
³ because you will grow in all directions.
 Your children will take over many nations
 and live in the cities that were destroyed.

⁴ Don’t be afraid!
 You will not be disappointed.
 People will not say bad things against you.
 You will not be embarrassed.
 When you were young, you felt shame.
 But you will forget that shame now.
 You will not remember the shame you felt
 when you lost your husband.†

⁵ Your real husband is the one who made you.
 His name is the LORD All-Powerful.

* 54:1 The woman ... alone This Hebrew word is like the word “destroyed.”
 This probably means “Jerusalem, the city that is destroyed.” † 54:4
 husband In Hebrew this word is like the name Baal. This means that the LORD
 is Jerusalem’s true God, not the false god Baal.

The Holy One of Israel is your Protector,[‡]
and he is the God of all the earth!

⁶ “Like a woman whose husband has left her,
you were very sad.
You were like a young wife left all alone.
But the LORD has called you back to him.”
This is what your God says.

⁷ “For a short time I turned away from you,
but with all my love I will welcome you again.

⁸ I was so angry that for a while I did not want to see you.
But now I want to comfort you with kindness forever.”
The LORD your Savior said this.

⁹ “Remember, in Noah’s time I punished the world with
the flood.
But I made a promise to Noah that I would never
again destroy the world with water.
In the same way, I promise that I will never again be angry
with you
and say bad things to you.

¹⁰ “The mountains may disappear,
and the hills may become dust,
but my faithful love will never leave you.
I will make peace with you,
and it will never end.”
The LORD who loves you said this.

¹¹ “You poor city!

[‡] 54:5 Protector Or “Redeemer,” someone who cared for and protected the family of a dead relative. Often this person bought back (redeemed) the poor relatives from slavery, making them free again.

Enemies came against you like storms,
and no one comforted you.

But I will rebuild you.

I will use a beautiful mortar to lay the stones of your
walls.

I will use sapphire stones when I lay the foundation.

¹² The stones on top of the wall will be made from rubies.

I will use shiny jewels for the gates.

I will use precious stones to build the walls around
you.

¹³ I, the LORD, will teach your children,
and they will have real peace.

¹⁴ You will be built on goodness.

You will be safe from cruelty and fear.

So you will have nothing to fear.

Nothing will come to hurt you.

¹⁵ I will never send anyone to attack you.

And if any army tries to attack you, you will defeat
them.

¹⁶ “Look, I made the blacksmith. He blows on the fire to
make it hotter. Then he takes the hot iron and makes the
kind of tool he wants to make. In the same way, I made
the ‘Destroyer’ to destroy things.

¹⁷ “People will make weapons to fight against you, but
their weapons will not defeat you. Some people will say
things against you, but anyone who speaks against you
will be proved wrong.”

The LORD says, “That is what my servants get! They get
the good things[§] that come from me, their LORD.

[§] 54:17 good things Or “victory.”

55

God Gives “Food” That Really Satisfies

- ¹ “All you people who are thirsty, come!
Here is water for you to drink.
Don’t worry if you have no money.
Come, eat and drink until you are full!
You don’t need money.
The milk and wine are free.
- ² Why waste your money on something that is not real food?
Why should you work for something that does not really satisfy you?
Listen closely to me and you will eat what is good.
You will enjoy the food that satisfies your soul.
- ³ Listen closely to what I say.
Listen to me so that you will live.
I will make an agreement with you that will last forever.
It will be an agreement you can trust, like the one I made with David—
a promise to love him and be loyal to him forever.
- ⁴ I made David a witness of my power for all nations.
I promised him that he would become a ruler and commander of many nations.”
- ⁵ There are nations in places you don’t know,
but you will call for them to come.
They don’t know you,
but they will run to you.
This will happen because the LORD, your God, wants it.
It will happen because the Holy One of Israel honors you.
- ⁶ So you should look for the LORD
before it is too late.

You should call to him now,
while he is near.

⁷ Evil people should stop living evil lives.

They should stop thinking bad thoughts.

They should come to the LORD again,
and he will comfort them.

They should come to our God
because he will freely forgive them.

People Cannot Understand God

⁸ The LORD says, “My thoughts are not like yours.

Your ways are not like mine.

⁹ Just as the heavens are higher than the earth,

so my ways are higher than your ways,

and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.”

¹⁰ “Rain and snow fall from the sky

and don’t return until they have watered the ground.

Then the ground causes the plants to sprout and grow,

and they produce seeds for the farmer and food for
people to eat.

¹¹ In the same way, my words leave my mouth,

and they don’t come back without results.

My words make the things happen that I want to happen.

They succeed in doing what I send them to do.

¹² “So you will go out from there with joy.

You will be led out in peace.

When you come to the mountains and hills, they will
begin singing.

All the trees in the fields will clap their hands.

¹³ Large cypress trees will grow where there were thorn-
bushes.

Myrtle trees will grow where there were weeds.

All this will happen to make the LORD known,
to be a permanent reminder of his goodness and
power.”

56

All Nations Will Follow the Lord

¹ The LORD said these things, “Be fair to all people. Do what is right, because soon my salvation will come to you. My goodness will soon be shown to the whole world. ² I will bless those who refuse to do wrong and who obey the law about the Sabbath.”

³ Some foreigners will choose to follow the LORD. They should not say, “The LORD will not really accept me like the rest of his people.” A eunuch should not say, “I am only a dry piece of wood. *I cannot have any children.*”

⁴ They should not say that because the LORD says, “Some eunuchs obey the laws about the Sabbath. They choose to do what I want, and they follow my agreement.*

⁵ So I will put a memorial stone in my Temple for them. Their name will be remembered in my city! Yes, I will give those eunuchs something better than sons and daughters. I will give them a name that will last forever! They will not be cut off[†] from my people.”

⁶ “Some foreigners have chosen to follow the LORD. They do this so that they can serve him and love his name and be his servants. They keep the Sabbath as a special day of worship, and they will continue to follow

* 56:4 agreement This usually means the agreement God made with Israel through Moses. (See “agreement” in the Word List.) Here, it might mean the agreement of Isaiah 55:3. † 56:5 cut off To be removed from the list of the people of Israel. This included a person’s being forced to leave family, land, and the people of Israel.

closely my agreement. ⁷ So I will bring them to my holy mountain and make them happy in my house of prayer. The offerings and sacrifices they give me will please me, because my Temple will be called a house of prayer for all nations.” ⁸ The Lord GOD said these things.

The Israelites were forced to leave their country, but the Lord will gather them together again. He says, “I will bring them back together again!”

⁹ Wild animals in the forest,
come and eat.

¹⁰ The watchmen[‡] are all blind.
They don't know what they are doing.

They are like dogs that will not bark.
They lie on the ground and sleep.
Oh, they love to sleep.

¹¹ They are like hungry dogs.
They are never satisfied.

The shepherds don't know what they are doing.
Like their sheep, they have all wandered away.

They are greedy.
All they want is to satisfy themselves.

¹² They come and say,
“I will drink some wine.
I will drink some beer.
I will do the same thing tomorrow,
but I will drink even more.”

57

Israel Does Not Follow God

¹ All the good people are gone,
and no one even noticed.

[‡] 56:10 The watchmen Literally, “The seers,” an ancient title for prophets.

The loyal followers were gathered up,
but no one knows why.

The reason they were gathered up
is that trouble is coming.

² But peace will come too,
and those who trust him will get to rest in their own
beds.

³ “Come here, you children of witches.
Your father committed adultery,
and your mother was unfaithful.

⁴ You are children out of control, full of lies.
You make fun of me.

You make faces
and stick out your tongue at me.*

⁵ All you want is to worship false gods
under every green tree.

You kill children by every stream
and sacrifice them in the rocky places.

⁶ You love to worship the smooth rocks in the rivers.
You pour wine on them to worship them.

You give sacrifices to them, but those rocks are all you get.
Do you think this makes me happy?

⁷ You make your bed on every hill
and high mountain.†

You go up to those places
and offer sacrifices.

⁸ You hide the things that help you remember me

* 57:4 make faces ... tongue This probably refers to the god Bel, which is usually shown making a face and sticking out his tongue. † 57:7 every hill and high mountain The people worshiped false gods in these places. The people thought these false gods would give them good crops and more children.

behind the doors and doorframes.[‡]
 You were with me,
 but you got up to go to them.
 You spread out your bed
 and gave yourself to them.[§]
 You love their beds
 and enjoy looking at their naked bodies.*
 9 You use your oils and perfumes
 to look nice for Molech.
 You sent your messengers to faraway lands,
 and this will bring you down to the place of death.[†]
 10 All of them made you tired,
 but you never gave up.
 You found new strength,
 because you enjoyed them.
 11 You did not remember me.
 You did not even notice me!
 So who were you worrying about?
 Who were you afraid of?
 Why did you lie?
 Look, I have been quiet for a long time.
 Is that why you didn't honor me?
 12 I could tell about your 'good works' and all the 'religious' things you do,
 but that will not help you.
 13 When you need help,
 you cry to those false gods that you have gathered
 around you.

‡ 57:8 doorframes The Israelites were supposed to put special things on their doorframes to help them remember God. See Deuteronomy 6:9.

§ 57:8 gave yourself to them Or "And made agreements with them."

* 57:8 naked bodies This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word also means "memorial," as in Isaiah 56:5. † 57:9 this will ... death Or "You even send them down to Sheol."

Let them help you!
 But I tell you, the wind will blow them all away.
 A puff of wind will blow them all away.
 But the one who depends on me
 will get the land I promised
 and enjoy my holy mountain.†”

The Lord Will Save His People

14 Clear the road! Clear the road!
 Make the way clear for my people!

15 God is high and lifted up.
 He lives forever.
 His name is holy.
 He says, “I live in a high and holy place,
 but I also live with people who are humble and sorry
 for their sins.
 I will give new life to those who are humble in spirit.
 I will give new life to those who are sorry for their
 sins.

16 I will not accuse my people forever.
 I will not always be angry.
 If I continued to show my anger,
 then the human spirit, the life I gave them, would die
 before me.

17 Israel’s evil greed made me angry,
 so I punished them.
 I turned away from them
 because I was angry.
 But they continued to do wrong.
 They did whatever they wanted.
 18 I have seen their way of life, but I will heal them.

† 57:13 holy mountain Mount Zion, one of the mountains Jerusalem was built on.

I will guide and comfort them and those who mourn for them.

¹⁹ I will teach them a new word: peace.

I will give peace to those who are near and to those who are far away.

I will heal them.”

The LORD himself said this.

²⁰ But evil people are like the angry ocean.

They cannot be quiet and peaceful.

They are angry, and like the ocean,
they stir up mud.

²¹ My God says,

“There is no peace for evil people.”

58

People Must Be Told to Follow God

¹ Shout as loud as you can and don't stop.

Shout like a trumpet!

Tell the people what they did wrong.

Tell the family of Jacob about their sins.

² They still come every day to worship me,

acting as if they want to learn my ways.

They pretend to be a nation that lives right

and obeys the commands of their God.

They ask me to judge them fairly.

They want their God to be near them.

³ They say, “We fast to show honor to you. Why don't you see us? We starve our bodies to show honor to you.

Why don't you notice us?”

But God says, “You do things to please yourselves on those special days of fasting. And you punish your

servants, not your own bodies. ⁴ You are hungry, but not for food. You are hungry for arguing and fighting, not for bread. You are hungry to hit people with your evil hands. This is not the way to fast if you want your prayers to be heard in heaven! ⁵ Do you think I want to see people punish their bodies on those days of fasting? Do you think I want people to look sad and bow their heads like dead plants? Do you think I want people to wear mourning clothes and sit in ashes to show their sadness? That is what you do on your days of fasting. Do you think that is what the LORD wants?

⁶ “I will tell you the kind of day I want—a day to set people free. I want a day that you take the burdens off others. I want a day when you set troubled people free and you take the burdens from their shoulders. ⁷ I want you to share your food with the hungry. I want you to find the poor who don’t have homes and bring them into your own homes. When you see people who have no clothes, give them your clothes! Don’t hide from your relatives when they need help.”

⁸ If you do these things, your light will begin to shine like the light of dawn. Then your wounds will heal. Your “Goodness” will walk in front of you, and the Glory of the LORD will come following behind you. ⁹ Then you will call to the LORD, and he will answer you. You will cry out to him, and he will say, “Here I am.”

Stop causing trouble and putting burdens on people. Stop saying things to hurt people or accusing them of things they didn’t do. ¹⁰ Feel sorry for hungry people and give them food. Help those who are troubled and satisfy their needs. Then your light will shine in the darkness. You will be like the bright sunshine at noon.

¹¹ The LORD will always lead you and satisfy your needs in dry lands. He will give strength to your bones. You will be like a garden that has plenty of water, like a spring that never goes dry.

¹² Your cities have been destroyed for many years, but you will rebuild them and their foundations will last for a long time. You will be called “Fence Fixer” and “Builder of Roads and Houses.”

¹³ That will happen when you stop sinning against God’s law about the Sabbath and when you stop doing things to please yourself on that special day. You should call the Sabbath a happy day. You should honor the LORD’S special day by not saying and doing things that you do every other day of the week. ¹⁴ Then you could enjoy the LORD. As the LORD himself says, “I could carry you up to the highest mountain and let you enjoy the land that I gave to your father Jacob.”

59

Evil People Should Change Their Lives

¹ Look, the LORD’S power is enough to save you. He can hear you when you ask him for help. ² It is your sins that separate you from your God. He turns away from you when he sees them. ³ That’s because your hands are covered with blood from the people you murdered. You tell lies and say evil things. ⁴ You can’t be trusted, even in court. You lie about each other and depend on false arguments to win your cases. You create pain and produce wickedness. ⁵ You hatch evil, like eggs from a poisonous snake. Anyone who eats the eggs will die. And if you break one of them open, a poisonous snake will come out.

Your lies are like spider webs. ⁶ They cannot be used for clothes, and you cannot cover yourself with them.

Your hands are always busy sinning and hurting others. ⁷ Your feet run toward evil. You are always ready to kill innocent people. You think of nothing but evil. Everywhere you go you cause trouble and ruin. ⁸ You don't know how to live in peace. You don't do what is right and fair. You are crooked, and anyone who lives like that will never know true peace.

Israel's Sin Brings Trouble

⁹ All fairness and goodness is gone.
There is only darkness around us,
so we must wait for the light.

We hope for a bright light,
but all we have is darkness.

¹⁰ We are like people without eyes.
We walk into walls like blind people.

We stumble and fall as if it was night.
Even in the daylight, we cannot see.
At noontime, we fall like dead men.

¹¹ We are always complaining;
we growl like bears and moan like doves.

We are waiting for justice,
but there is none.
We are waiting to be saved,
but salvation is still far away.

¹² That's because we committed crimes against our God.
Our own sins speak out against us.

We know we are guilty.
We know we have sinned.
¹³ We rebelled against the LORD
and lied to him.

We turned away from our God

and left him.
 We planned to hurt others
 and to rebel against God.
 From hearts filled with lies,
 we talked about it and made our plans.

¹⁴ We pushed Justice away.
 Fairness stands off in the distance.
 Truth has fallen in the streets.
 Goodness is not allowed in the city.

¹⁵ Loyalty is gone,
 and people who try to do good are robbed.

The LORD looked and saw there was no justice.
 He did not like what he saw.

¹⁶ He did not see anyone speak up for the people.
 He was shocked to see that no one stood up for them.
 So with his own power he saved them.

His desire to do what is right gave him strength.
¹⁷ He put on the armor of goodness,
 the helmet of salvation,
 the uniform of punishment,
 and the coat of strong love.*

¹⁸ He will give his enemies the punishment they deserve.
 They will feel his anger.

He will punish all his enemies.
 People along the coast will get the punishment they
 deserve.

¹⁹ People from the west to the east will fear the LORD
 and respect his Glory.

He will come quickly, like a fast-flowing river
 driven by a wind[†] from the LORD.

* 59:17 strong love The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy. † 59:19 wind Or “spirit.”

²⁰ Then a redeemer[‡] will come to Zion
to save the people of Jacob who have turned away
from sin.

²¹ The LORD says, “As for me, this is the agreement that I will make with these people. I promise my Spirit that I put on you and my words that I put in your mouth will never leave you. They will be with you and your children and your children’s children, for now and forever.

60

God Is Coming

¹ “Jerusalem, get up and shine!^{*}
Your Light is coming!
The Glory of the LORD will shine on you.

² Darkness now covers the earth,
and the people are in darkness.
But the LORD will shine on you,
and his Glory will appear over you.

³ Then the nations will come to your light.
Kings will come to your bright sunrise.

⁴ Look around you!
See all the people gathering around.
Those are your sons coming from far away,
and your daughters are there beside them.

⁵ “At that time you will see your people,
and your faces will shine with happiness.
First, you will be afraid,
but then you will be excited.

[‡] 59:20 redeemer Someone who sets a person free by paying their debt.

^{*} 60:1 Jerusalem ... shine Or “Jerusalem, my light, get up!”

All the riches from across the seas will be set before you.

The riches of the nations will come to you.

⁶ Herds of camels from Midian and Ephah
will cross your land.

Long lines of camels will come from Sheba.

They will bring gold and incense.

People will sing praises to the LORD.

⁷ People will collect all the sheep from Kedar and give
them to you.

They will bring you rams from Nebaioth.

You will offer those animals on my altar,
and I will accept them.

I will make my wonderful Temple
even more beautiful.

⁸ Look at the people.

They are rushing toward you like clouds quickly
crossing the sky.

They are like doves flying to their nests.

⁹ The faraway lands are waiting for me.

The great cargo ships are ready to sail.

They are ready to bring your children from faraway lands.

They will bring silver and gold with them

to honor the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel.

He has done wonderful things for you.

¹⁰ Children from other lands will rebuild your walls.

Their kings will serve you.

“When I was angry, I hurt you,
but now I want to be kind to you.

So I will comfort you.

¹¹ Your gates will always be open.

They will not be closed, day or night.

Nations and kings will bring their wealth to you.

12 Any nation or kingdom that does not serve you
will be destroyed.

13 All the great things of Lebanon will be given to you.
People will bring pine trees, fir trees, and cypress
trees to you.

These trees will be used for lumber
to make my Holy Place[†] more beautiful.

This place is like a stool in front of my throne,
and I will honor it.[‡]

14 In the past, people hurt you,
but they will bow down before you.

In the past, people hated you,
but they will bow down at your feet.

They will call you 'The City of the LORD'S,'
'Zion of the Holy One of Israel.'

15 "People hated you.

You were left all alone with no one passing through.

But I will make you great from now on.

You will be happy forever and ever.

16 Nations will give you what you need,
like a child drinking milk from its mother.

But you will 'drink' riches from kings.

Then you will know that it is I, the LORD, who saves
you.

You will know that I, the Great God of Jacob, protect
you.

17 "You now have copper,
but I will bring you gold.

You now have iron,

[†] 60:13 my Holy Place This probably means the Temple in Jerusalem.

[‡] 60:13 I will honor it Or "I will give it glory."

- but I will bring you silver.
 I will change your wood into copper
 and your rocks into iron.
 I will change your punishment into peace.
 And those who punished you will be replaced with
 those who are kind to you.
- 18 There will never again be news of violence in your
 country.
 People will never again attack your country and steal
 from you.
 You will name your walls, 'Salvation'
 and your gates, 'Praise.'
- 19 "The sun will no longer be your light during the day.
 The light from the moon will no longer be your light
 at night.
 The LORD will be your light forever.
 Your God will be your glory.
- 20 Your sun will never go down again.
 Your moon will never again be dark.
 That's because the LORD will be your light forever,
 and the dark days of mourning will end.
- 21 "All your people will be good.
 They will get the land forever.
 They are the young plant in my garden[§]
 that will grow to be a wonderful tree.
 I made them with my own hands.*
- 22 The smallest family will become a large family group.
 The smallest tribe will become a powerful nation.

§ 60:21 young plant ... garden See Isaiah 4:1 and 5:7. * 60:21 They ...
 hands Or "They are the plant I planted, which I made with my own hands, to
 show how wonderful I am."

When the time is right,
I, the LORD, will come quickly.
I will make these things happen.”

61

The Lord's Message of Freedom

¹ The Spirit of the Lord GOD is on me. The LORD has chosen me to tell good news to the poor and to comfort those who are sad. He sent me to tell the captives and prisoners that they have been set free. ² He sent me to announce that the time has come for the LORD to show his kindness, when our God will also punish evil people. He has sent me to comfort those who are sad, ³ those in Zion who mourn. I will take away the ashes on their head, and I will give them a crown. I will take away their sadness, and I will give them the oil of happiness. I will take away their sorrow, and I will give them celebration clothes. He sent me to name them ‘Good Trees’ and ‘The LORD’S Wonderful Plant.’

⁴ Then the old cities that were destroyed will be rebuilt. Those ancient ruins will be made new, as they were in the beginning.

⁵ Then your enemies will come to care for your sheep, and their children will work in your fields and in your gardens. ⁶ You will be called, ‘The LORD’S Priests,’ ‘The Servants of our God.’ You will be proud of all the riches that have come to you from all the nations on earth.

⁷ In the past, other people shamed you and said bad things to you. You were shamed much more than any other people. So in your land you will get two times more than other people. You will get the joy that continues forever. ⁸ That’s because I am the LORD and I love justice.

I hate stealing and everything that is wrong. So I will give the people what they deserve. I will make an agreement with my people forever. ⁹ Their descendants will be known throughout the earth, and everyone will know their children. Whoever sees them will know that the LORD has blessed them.

God's Servant Brings Salvation

¹⁰ The LORD makes me very happy.

I am completely happy with my God.

He dressed me in the clothes of salvation.

He put the victory coat on me.

I look like a man dressed for his wedding,

like a bride covered with jewels.

¹¹ The earth causes plants to grow,

and a garden makes the seeds planted there rise up.

In the same way, the Lord GOD will make goodness and praise

grow throughout the nations.

62

New Jerusalem: A City Full of Goodness

¹ I love Zion,

so I will continue to speak for her.

I love Jerusalem,

so I will not stop speaking.

I will speak until goodness* shines like a bright light,

until salvation burns bright like a flame.

² Then all nations will see your goodness.

All kings will see your honor.

Then you will have a new name

that the LORD himself will give you.

* 62:1 goodness Or "victory."

³ You will be like a beautiful crown that the LORD holds up,
like a king's crown in the hand of your God.

⁴ You will never again be called 'The People God Left.'
Your land will never again be called 'The Land God Destroyed.'

You will be called 'The People God Loves.'
Your land will be called 'God's Bride,'
because the LORD loves you,
and your land will be his.[†]

⁵ As a young man takes a bride and she belongs to him,
so your land will belong to your children.[‡]

As a man is happy with his new wife,
so your God will be happy with you.

⁶ Jerusalem, I put guards on your walls.
They will not be silent.
They will keep praying day and night.

Guards, keep praying to the LORD.
Remind him of his promise.
Don't ever stop praying.

⁷ Don't give him any rest until he rebuilds Jerusalem
and makes it a place that everyone on earth will
praise.

⁸ The LORD made a promise and guaranteed it by his own
power.
And he will use that power to keep his promise.

[†] 62:4 your land ... his Or "He will marry your land." This is a wordplay. The Hebrew word also means "He will be the lord of the land." [‡] 62:5 your land ... children Or "Your builders will marry you."

The Lord said, “I promise that I will never again give your food to your enemies.

I promise that they will never again take the wine you make.

⁹ Whoever gathers the food will eat it and praise the LORD. Whoever gathers the grape will drink the wine in the courtyards of my Temple.”

¹⁰ Come through the gates!

Clear the way for the people!

Prepare the road!

Move all the stones off the road!

Raise a flag as a sign for the nations!

¹¹ Listen, the LORD is speaking to all the faraway lands:

“Tell the people of Zion,

‘Look, your Savior is coming.

He is bringing your reward to you.

He is bringing it with him.’”

¹² His people will be called “The Holy People,”

“The Saved People of the LORD.”

And you, Jerusalem, will be called “The City God Wants,”

“The City God Is With.”

63

The Lord Punishes the Nations

¹ Who is this coming from Edom, from the city of Bozrah?

His clothes are stained bright red.

He is glorious in his clothes.

He is walking tall with his great power.

He says, “I have the power to save you,

and I speak the truth.”

² “Why are your clothes bright red?
They are like the clothes of someone who tramples
grapes to make wine.”

³ He answers, “I walked in the winepress by myself.
No one helped me.
I was angry, and I trampled the grapes.
The juice* splashed on my clothes, so now they are
stained.

⁴ I chose a time to punish people.
Now the time has come for me to save and protect
my people.

⁵ I looked around, but I saw no one to help me.
I was surprised that no one supported me.
So I used my own power to save my people.
My own anger supported me.

⁶ In my anger I trampled down the nations.
I punished them in anger and spilled their blood† on
the ground.”

The Lord Has Been Kind to His People

⁷ I will remember the kind things the LORD has done,
and I will remember to praise him.
The LORD has given many good things
to the family of Israel.

He has been very kind to us.
He has shown us mercy.

⁸ He said, “These are my people.
These are my real children.”

* 63:3 juice Or “strong drink” or “blood.” † 63:6 blood Or “strong drink”
or “strength.”

- So he saved them.
9 The people had many troubles,
but he was not against them.
He loved them and felt sorry for them,
so he saved them.
He sent his special angel to save them.
He picked them up and carried them, just as he did
long ago.
- 10 But they turned against him
and made his Holy Spirit very sad.
So the Lord became their enemy
and fought against them.
- 11 Then they remembered what happened long ago.
They remembered Moses and those with him.
So where is the one who brought them through the sea
along with the shepherds who led his flock?
Where is the one
who sent his Holy Spirit to live among them?
- 12 He was by Moses' side and led him with his wonderful
hand.
He divided the water,
so that the people could walk through the sea.
He made his name famous
by doing those great things.
- 13 He led the people through the deep sea.
Like a horse running through the desert,
they walked without falling.
- 14 Like cattle going down to the valley,
The Spirit of the LORD led them.
This is how you led your people
and made your name wonderful.

A Prayer for God to Help His People

- 15 Please, look down from the heavens.
 See what is happening now.
 Look down at us from your great and holy home in
 heaven.
 Where is your strong love[‡] for us?
 Where is your compassion?
 Why are you hiding your kind love from me?
- 16 Look, you are our father!
 Abraham does not know us.
 Israel does not recognize us.
 LORD, you are our father!
 You are the one who has always saved us!
- 17 LORD, why are you pushing us away from you?
 Why are you making it hard for us to follow you?
 Come back to us!
 We are your servants.
 Come to us and help us!
 Our tribes belong to you.
- 18 Your holy people had their land only a short time.
 Then our enemies trampled down your holy Temple.
- 19 Some people don't follow you.
 They don't wear your name.
 And we have been like them
 for a very long time.

64

- ¹ If you would tear open the skies
 and come down to earth, then everything would
 change.
 Mountains would melt before you.

[‡] 63:15 strong love The Hebrew word means strong feelings like love, hate, anger, zeal, or jealousy.

² The mountains would burst into flames like burning bushes.

The mountains would boil like water on the fire.
Then your enemies would learn about you.
And all nations would shake with fear when they see you.

³ But you have done awesome things that we did not expect.

You came down, and mountains shook in fear before you.

⁴ No one has ever heard of such a God.

No one has ever heard such a story.

No one has ever seen any God except you,
who does such great things for those who trust him.

⁵ You welcome people who enjoy doing good and who remember you

by living the way you want them to.

But we sinned against you,

and you became angry with us.*

But you always saved us!

⁶ We are all dirty with sin.

Even our good works are not pure.

They are like bloodstained rags.

We are all like dead leaves.

Our sins have carried us away like wind.

⁷ We don't call to you for help.

We aren't excited about following you,
so you have turned away from us.

We are helpless before you,
because we are full of sin.

⁸ But, LORD, you are our father.

* 64:5 we sinned ... us Or "But you became angry with us and we sinned."

- We are like clay, and you are the potter.
 Your hands made us all.
- ⁹ LORD, don't continue to be angry with us!
 Don't remember our sins forever!
 Please, look at us!
 We are all your people.
- ¹⁰ Your holy cities are as empty as the desert.
 Zion has become a desert.
 Jerusalem is destroyed.
- ¹¹ Our ancestors worshiped you in our holy Temple.
 That wonderful Temple has now been burned.
 All our precious possessions have been destroyed.
- ¹² LORD, will these things always keep you from helping?
 Will you continue to say nothing?
 Will you punish us forever?

65

All People Will Learn About God

¹ "I helped people who had not come to me for advice. Those who found me were not looking for me.* I spoke to a nation that does not use my name. I said, 'Here I am! Here I am!'

² "All day long I stood ready to accept those who turned against me. But they kept doing whatever they wanted to do, and all they did was wrong. ³ They keep doing things, right in front of me, that make me angry. They offer sacrifices and burn incense in their special gardens.†

⁴ They sit among the graves, waiting to get messages from the dead. They eat the meat of pigs, and their pots are full

* 65:1 I helped ... me Or "I was ready to answer those who did not come to me for advice. I was ready to be found by those who did not look for me."

† 65:3 special gardens Gardens where people worshiped false gods.

of soup made from unclean meat. ⁵ But they tell others, ‘Don’t come near me! Don’t touch me because I am holy!’ They are like smoke in my eyes, and their fire burns all the time.”

Israel Must Be Punished

⁶ “Look, here is a letter that lists all your sins. I will not be quiet until I pay you back for these sins. I will do it by punishing you. ⁷ I, the LORD, am doing this because of your sins and the sins of your ancestors. They did these sins when they burned incense in the mountains. They shamed me on those hills, and I punished them first.”

⁸ The LORD says, “When there is new wine in the grapes, people squeeze out the wine. But they don’t completely destroy the grapes because the grapes can still be used. I will do the same thing to my servants. I will not destroy them completely. ⁹ I will keep some of the people of Jacob. Some of the people of Judah will get my mountains. I will choose the people who will get the land. My servants will live there. ¹⁰ Then Sharon Valley will be a field for sheep. The Valley of Achor[‡] will be a place for cattle to rest. All this will be for my people—for the people who come to me for help.

¹¹ “But you people left the LORD, so you will be punished. You forgot about my holy mountain.[§] You began to worship Luck. You held feasts for the false god, Fate.*

¹² But I decided what would happen to you: you will be killed with a sword. You will all be killed because I called to you, but you refused to answer me. I spoke to you, but

[‡] 65:10 Valley of Achor A valley about ten miles north of Jerusalem.

[§] 65:11 my holy mountain Mount Zion, the mountain Jerusalem is built on. * 65:11 Luck ... Fate Two false gods. The people thought these gods controlled their futures.

you would not listen. You did what I said is evil and chose to do what I did not like.”

¹³ So this is what the Lord GOD says:

“My servants will eat,
but you evil people will be hungry.
My servants will drink,
but you will be thirsty.
My servants will be happy,
but you will suffer shame.

¹⁴ My servants will shout for joy,
but you will cry out in pain.[†]
Your spirits will be broken,
and you will be very sad.

¹⁵ Your names will be like curses to my chosen servants.”
The Lord GOD will kill you,
and then he will call his servants by a new name.

¹⁶ The Lord says, “People now ask blessings from the earth.
But in the future they will ask blessings from the faithful God.

People now trust in the power of the earth when they make a promise.

But in the future they will trust in the God who is faithful.
That’s because the troubles in the past will all be forgotten.
They will be hidden from my sight.”

A New Time Is Coming

¹⁷ “I am creating a new heaven and a new earth.
The troubles of the past will be forgotten.

[†] 65:14 My servants ... pain Literally, “My servants will rejoice with good hearts, and you will scream with painful hearts.”

- No one will remember them.
- 18 My people will be happy and rejoice forever and ever
because of what I will make.
I will make a Jerusalem that is full of joy,
and I will make her people happy.
- 19 “Then I will rejoice with Jerusalem.
I will be happy with my people.
There will never again be crying
and sadness in that city.
- 20 In that city there will never be a baby who lives only a
few days,
and every older person will live for a long, long time.
A person who lives 100 years will be called young.
And whoever doesn’t live that long will be consid-
ered cursed.
- 21 “In that city whoever builds a house will live there;
whoever plants a vineyard will eat the grapes from
that garden.
- 22 Never again will one person build a house
and another person live there.
Never again will one person plant a garden
and another eat the fruit from it.
My people will live as long as the trees.
My chosen people will get full use of whatever they
make.
- 23 Never again will a woman suffer childbirth
and have her baby die.
Women will not fear childbirth.
I, the LORD, will bless all my people and their chil-
dren.
- 24 I will answer them before they call for help.
I will help them before they finish asking.

²⁵ Wolves and little lambs will eat together.

Lions will eat hay like cattle,
and snakes will eat only dust.

They will not hurt or destroy each other on my holy mountain.”

This is what the LORD said.

66

God Will Judge All Nations

¹ This is what the LORD says:

“Heaven is my throne,
and the earth is where I rest my feet.

So do you think you can build a house for me?

Do I need a place to rest?

² I am the one who made all things.

They are all here because I made them,” says the LORD.

“These are the people I care for:
the poor, humble people who obey my commands.

³ Some people kill bulls as a sacrifice,
but they also beat people.

They kill sheep as a sacrifice,
but they also break the necks of dogs.

They offer up grain offerings,
but they also offer the blood of pigs.*

They burn incense,
but they also love their worthless idols.

They choose their own ways,
and they love their terrible idols.

⁴ So I decided to use their own tricks.

* 66:3 dogs ... pigs God did not want his people to offer dogs and pigs as sacrifices.

I will punish them using what they are most afraid
of.
I will do this because I called to them,
but they did not answer.
I spoke to them,
but they did not listen.
They did what I said is evil.
They chose to do what I did not like.”

⁵ You who obey the LORD’S commands,
listen to what he says:
“Your brothers hated you.
They turned against you because you followed me.
Your brothers said, ‘When the LORD shows his glory,
then we will rejoice with you.’
But they will be punished.”

Punishment and a New Nation

⁶ Listen! There is a loud noise coming from the city and
from the Temple. It is the LORD punishing his enemies.
He is giving them the punishment they deserve.

⁷⁻⁸ “A woman does not give birth before she feels the
pain. A woman must feel the pain of childbirth before she
can see the boy she gives birth to. Who ever heard of such
a thing? In the same way, no one ever saw a new world
begin in one day. No one has ever heard of a new nation
that began in one day. But when Zion feels the pain, she
will give birth to her children. ⁹ In the same way, I will not
cause pain without allowing something new to be born.”

The LORD says this: “I promise that if I cause you the
pain of birth, I will not stop you from having your new
nation.” Your God said this.

¹⁰ Jerusalem and all her friends, be happy!

All of you who were sad for her, be happy and rejoice with her!

¹¹ Be happy that you will receive mercy
like milk coming from her breast.

Jerusalem's "milk" will satisfy you!
You will drink it and enjoy her glory.

¹² This is what the LORD says:

"Look, I will give Jerusalem peace that will flow in like a river.

Wealth from all the nations will come flowing into her like a flood.

And like little babies, you will drink that 'milk.'

I will hold you in my arms,
and bounce you on my knees.

¹³ I will comfort you like a mother comforting her child.
You will be comforted in Jerusalem."

¹⁴ When you see these things, you will be happy.

You will be free and grow like grass.

The LORD'S servants will see his power,
but his enemies will see his anger.

¹⁵ Look, the LORD is coming with fire.

His armies are coming with clouds of dust.

He is angry,

and he will punish his enemies with flames.

¹⁶ The LORD will judge the people

and will punish them with fire and his sword.

There will be many people killed by the LORD.

¹⁷ The LORD says, "These are the people who wash themselves and make themselves pure so that they can

go into their special gardens[†] to worship their idols. They follow each other into the gardens to eat meat from pigs, rats, and other dirty things. But they will all be destroyed together.

¹⁸ “They have evil thoughts and do evil things, so I am coming to punish them. I will gather all nations and all people. Everyone will be gathered together to see my Glory.[‡] ¹⁹ I will put a mark on some of the people. I will send some of these saved people to the nations of Tarshish, Libya,[§] Lud* (the land of archers), Tubal,[†] Greece, and all the faraway lands. Those people have never heard my teachings. They have never seen my Glory. So the saved people will tell the nations about my glory. ²⁰ And they will bring all your brothers and sisters from those other nations to my holy mountain[‡] Jerusalem as an offering to the LORD. Your brothers and sisters will ride on horses, mules, camels, and in chariots and wagons. They will be like the gifts that the Israelites bring on clean plates to the Temple of the LORD. ²¹ I will also choose some of these people to be priests and Levites.” The LORD himself said this.

The New Heavens and the New Earth

²² The LORD says, “I will make a new world—new heavens and a new earth—that will last forever. In the same way, your names and your children will always be with me. ²³ Everyone will come to worship me on every

[†] 66:17 special gardens Gardens where people worshiped false gods.

[‡] 66:18 my Glory See “glory” in the Word List. [§] 66:19 Libya A country in North Africa, west of Egypt. ^{*} 66:19 Lud This country was probably in

the country that is now western Turkey. [†] 66:19 Tubal This country was

probably in what is now eastern Turkey. [‡] 66:20 my holy mountain This is probably Mount Zion, the mountain Jerusalem is built on.

worship day; they will come every Sabbath and every first day of the month. § This is what I, the LORD, have said.

²⁴ “Whoever goes out of the city will see the dead bodies of those who sinned against me. The worms eating those bodies will never die, and the fires burning them will never go out. It will be horrible to anyone who sees it.”

§ 66:23 first day of the month Literally, “new moon.” See “new moon” in the Word List.

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