**Joshua**

The Book of Joshua marks a new beginning, to the story of Israel in Canaan. Yet the story continues straight on without a break. Deuteronomy had looked forward to the Israelites occupying Canaan; Joshua describes how they did so. Further back, Genesis had told of God’s promise that Abraham’s descendants would come to possess this land, and the Book of Joshua relates how God fulfilled that promise. So Joshua also marks an end.

There are two stages to its account of the fulfilment. The first half of the book relates how the Israelites came to occupy the land. The second half relates how they allocated it among their clans.

But the story also incorporates two complications. The first half also lists areas of the country that Israel didn’t conquer. These were the areas where most of the more powerful Canaanites lived. Israel mostly settled in the highland where hardly anyone else live. Israelites hearing this story would be unable to suppress a smile, because the areas Israel failed to occupy were the best parts of the country. Sometimes Joshua speaks simply of them not occupying these areas, which might imply it was their fault. Sometimes it speaks of them being unable to occupy them, which implies that God didn’t enable them to complete their occupation.

The other complication is that there indeed were a number of spectacular moments when the Israelites did not follow God’s instructions: see especially the stories about Akan and about the Gib’onites (Joshua 7 and 9). This aspect of the story also points to the implication that, while they are not entirely to blame for their failure to occupy the whole country, they do carry some of the blame.

So the people see all God’s promises fulfilled, but they don’t; and they live by Yahweh’s instructions, but they don’t. The book thus epitomizes the dynamic of the portrait of the people of God in both Testaments. It encourages us to rejoice in God’s fulfilling his promises but also to face the extent to which he hasn’t, yet to live in confident hope that he will do so. It encourages them to be realistic about our own obedience to God and also to commit ourselves anew to keeping our covenant commitment.

Two other aspects of the book often trouble people. The story of how ‘Joshua fit the battle of Jericho’ is well-known. Unfortunately, archeological investigations suggest that no one lived in Jericho in Joshua’s time, nor in Ai, whose conquest follows that of Jericho in the book. So the stories of the Israelites’ capture of these towns don’t correspond to what happened in these particular places. Why might God have inspired Israelite storytellers to develop imaginative stories about the taking of these towns (whose ruins would be familiar)? What the stories do is give concrete expression to the fact that God did give the country to Israel in an amazing way, and to the fact that the Israelites were always in danger of disobeying God.

The other aspect of the book that often troubles people is the fact that Joshua can look like a story about the Israelites committing genocide. This fact seems not to have troubled the New Testament writers, who didn’t see the story of Joshua as incompatible with believing in Jesus. Stephen (in Acts 7) and Hebrews 11 are enthusiastic about Israel’s violent occupation of Canaan. They don’t assume that the story provides a warrant for subsequent acts of genocide, and neither does the Old Testament—Israel didn’t regularly go round annihilating people. The occupation of the country by Joshua was a once-off act of judgment by God. The Canaanites were getting what they deserved for practices such as sacrificing children; they were not just innocent victims. Ironically, though, the book itself makes clear that the Israelites actually didn’t commit genocide. The Canaanites continued in the country for centuries.

**1.1 Just One River to Cross**

1 After the death of Moses, Yahweh’s servant, Yahweh said to Joshua ben Nun, Moses’ minister: 2 ‘Moses my servant is dead. Set off now, cross this Jordan [Yarden], you and this entire people, into the country that I’m giving to them, to the Israelites. 3 Every place on which the sole of your foot treads I give you, as I spoke to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon, as far as the big river (the River Euphrates), all the country of the Hittites, as far as the Great Sea on the west, will be your border. 5 No one will take a stand before you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, I’ll be with you. I won’t let go of you; I won’t abandon you. 6 Be strong, stand firm, because you’re the one who’ll enable this people to take as their domain this country that I swore to their ancestors to give them. 7 Only be strong, stand very firm, so as to keep by acting in accordance with the entire instruction that Moses my servant ordered you. Don’t turn aside from it right or left, in order that you may thrive everywhere you go. 8 This instruction document will not move away from your mouth. You’re to murmur it day and night in order that you may keep by acting in accordance with everything written in it, because then you’ll make your journey successful, then you’ll thrive. 9 I’ve ordered you, “Be strong, stand firm?” haven’t I. Don’t be frightened, don’t be scared, because Yahweh your God will be with you everywhere you go’.

10 So Joshua ordered the people’s overseers: 11 ‘Pass through the middle of the camp and order the people, “Prepare provisions for yourselves, because in three days more you’re going to cross this Jordan, to go in to take possession of the country that Yahweh your God is giving you, to take possession of it”‘.

**1:12 Another Spy Mission**

12 To the Re’ubenites, to the Gadites, and to the half-clan of Menashsheh, Joshua said: 13 ‘Be mindful of the thing that Moses, Yahweh’s servant, ordered you, “Yahweh your God is letting you settle down and is giving you this region. 14 Your wives, your little ones, and your livestock can stay in the region that Moses gave you across the Jordan, but you’re to cross, organized into companies, before your brothers, all the forceful strong men. You’re to help them 15 till Yahweh enables your brothers to settle down like you and they also take possession of the region that Yahweh your God is giving them. Then you can go back to the region that you’re to take possession of and you can take possession of it, which Moses, Yahweh’s servant, gave you across the Jordan, to the east”’.

16 They answered Joshua: ‘All that you’ve ordered us we’ll do. Everywhere that you send us we’ll go. 17 Just as we listened to Moses, so we’ll listen to you. May Yahweh simply be with you as he was with Moses. 18 Any individual who rebels against your bidding and doesn’t listen to your words regarding everything that you order him, is to be put to death. Simply be strong and stand firm’.

2 From Acacias, Joshua ben Nun sent two men to investigate quietly: ‘Go and look at the country, and at Jericho’. They went, and came to the house of a woman who was a whore named Rahab, and they slept there. 2 It was told to the king of Jericho: ‘Here, some men came here tonight, some of the Israelites, to check out the country’. 3 So the king of Jericho sent to Rahab: ‘Bring out the men who came to you, who’ve come to your house, because they’ve come to check out the entire country’. 4 The woman had taken the two men and hidden them. So she said, ‘Yes, the men came to me. I didn’t know where they were from. 5 The gateway was about to be shut at dark and the men went out. I don’t know where the men went. Hurry, pursue after them, because you can overtake them’.

**2:5: Meanwhile, in the Whorehouse**

6 Now she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them among the flax stalks that she had on the roof, laid out. 7 The men pursued after them on the Jordan road, down to the fords. And after their pursuers had gone out, they shut the gateway.

8 Before those men went to sleep, she went up to them on the roof. 9 She said to the men, ‘I acknowledge that Yahweh has given you the country, that a dread of you has fallen on us, and that all the people living in the country have melted away before you, 10 because we heard how Yahweh dried up the water of the Reed Sea before you when you got out of Egypt and what you did to the two Amorite kings who were across the Jordan, to Sihon and to Og, whom you ‘devoted’. 11 We heard, and our mind melted. There was no spirit rising up in anyone in the face of you, because Yahweh your God is God in the heavens above and on the earth below.

12 So now, please swear to me by Yahweh, because I’ve acted in commitment with you, that you’ll also act in commitment with my father’s household. Give me a truthful sign 13 that you’ll let my father and my mother live, and my brothers and my sisters, and everyone who belongs to them, and that you’ll save our lives from death’. 14 The men said to her, ‘Our lives in place of you, to the death, if you don’t tell about our business here. When Yahweh gives us the country, we’ll act in commitment and truthfulness with you’.

**2:15 The Scarlet Cord**

15 She let them down by a rope through the window, because her house was in the fortification, so she was living in the fortification. 16 She said to them, ‘Go to the highland so the pursuers don’t come upon you, and hide there for three days till the pursuers come back, and afterward, you can go on your way’.

17 The men said to her, ‘We’ll be free of this oath to you, which you’ve got us to take: 18 here, when we’re coming into the country, you’re to tie this line of scarlet cord in the window through which you’ve let us down, and you’re to gather to yourself your father, your mother, your brothers, your entire ancestral household, in the house. 19 Anyone who goes out of the doors of your house outside—his blood will be on his head and we’ll be free of guilt. Anyone who’s with you in the house, his blood will be on our head if a hand is laid on him. 20 But if you tell people about this thing of ours, we will be free from the oath to you which you’ve got us to take’. 21 She said, ‘In accordance with your words, so it will be’. She sent them off and they went, and she tied the scarlet line in her window.

22 So they went, and came into the highland and stayed there for three days until the pursuers came back. The pursuers had searched on the entire road but had not found them. 23 The two men came down again from the highland, crossed over, and came to Joshua ben Nun. They recounted to him all the things that had befallen them, 24 and said to Joshua, ‘Yahweh has given the entire country into our hand. What’s more, all the people living in the country have melted away before us’.

**Map for Joshua goes about here**

**3:1: On Getting Your Feet Wet**

3 Joshua started early in the morning and they moved on from Acacias, and came to the Jordan, he and all the Israelites. They stayed the night there before they were to cross over. 2 After three days the overseers passed through the middle of the camp 3 and ordered the people, ‘When you see the pact chest of Yahweh your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you yourselves are to move on from your place and follow it 4 (yet there’s to be a distance between you and it, some 1000 metres by measure – don’t go near it), in order that you may know the way whereby you’re to go, because you haven’t passed this way in previous days’.

5 Joshua said to the people, ‘Make yourselves sacred, because tomorrow Yahweh will do extraordinary things among you’. 6 Joshua said to the priests, ‘Carry the pact chest and pass through before the people’. So they carried the pact chest and went before the people.

7 Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘This day I shall start to make you great in the eyes of all Israel so they may acknowledge that I’m with you as I was with Moses. 8 You yourself are to order the priests carrying the pact chest: “When you come to the edge of the Jordan water, you’re to stand in the Jordan”’.

9 Joshua said to the Israelites, ‘Come up here and listen to the words of Yahweh your God’. 10 Joshua said, ‘By this you will acknowledge that the living God is among you and that he will totally dispossess from before you the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Hivvite, the Perizzite, the Girgashite, the Amorite, and the Yebusite. 11 Here is the pact chest of the Lord of all the earth, passing through the Jordan before you. 12 Now get yourselves twelve men from the Israelite clans, one man per clan. 13 When the soles of the feet of the priests carrying the chest of Yahweh, Lord of all the earth, set down in the Jordan water, the Jordan water will break off (the water coming down from higher up) and stand as a single heap’.

**3:14 The Jordan Stops**

14 So when the people moved on from their tents to cross over the Jordan, the priests carrying the pact chest were before the people. 15 As the people carrying the chest came as far as the Jordan and the feet of the priests carrying the chest dipped into the edge of the water (the Jordan overflows all its banks the entire time of harvest), 16 the Jordan water coming down from higher up stood; it rose as a single heap a great way off at Adam, a town near Tsaretan. Going down to the Steppe Sea (the Salt Sea), it completely broke off. So the people crossed near Jericho. 17 The priests carrying Yahweh’s pact chest stood on dry ground in the middle of the Jordan, steady, while all Israel were crossing on dry ground until the entire nation had come to an end of crossing the Jordan.

4 When the entire nation had come to an end of crossing the Jordan, Yahweh said to Joshua: 2 ‘Get yourselves twelve men from the people, one man each from a clan, 3 and order them, “Carry yourselves twelve stones from here, from the middle of the Jordan, from the place where the priests’ feet stood steady. Take them across with you and set them down at the place where you stay the night tonight”‘. 4 So Joshua called twelve men whom he settled on from the Israelites, one man for each clan. 5 Joshua said to them, ‘Cross before the chest of Yahweh your God, into the middle of the Jordan, and lift up for yourselves, each man, a stone onto his shoulder, corresponding to the number of the Israelites’ clans, 6 in order that this may be a sign among you. When your children ask in the future, “What are these stones of yours?” 7 you’re to say to them, ‘The Jordan water broke off before Yahweh’s pact chest; when it crossed the Jordan, the Jordan water broke off”. These stones will be a permanent reminder for the Israelites’.

**4:8: Looking Forward and Backward**

8 The Israelites did so, as Joshua ordered. They carried twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, as Yahweh spoke to Joshua, corresponding to the number of the Israelites’ clans, took them across with them to the place where they were going to stay, and set them down there. 9 Joshua set up twelve stones in the middle of the Jordan at the place where the feet of the priests carrying the pact chest had stood. They have been there until this day.

10 The priests carrying the chest were standing in the middle of the Jordan until everything had come to an end that Yahweh had ordered Joshua to speak to the people, in accordance with everything Moses had ordered Joshua. The people hurried and crossed, 11 and when the entire people had come to an end of crossing, Yahweh’s chest and the priests crossed before the people.

12 The Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh crossed, organized into companies before the Israelites, as Moses had spoken to them. 13 Some 40,000 men equipped for war crossed before Yahweh to the Jericho steppes for battle. 14 On that day Yahweh made Joshua great in the eyes of all Israel. They lived in awe of him as they had lived in awe of Moses, all the days of his life.

15 Yahweh said to Joshua: 16 ‘Order the priests carrying the affirmation chest to go up out of the Jordan’. 17 So Joshua ordered the priests: ‘Go up out of the Jordan’, 18 and when the priests carrying Yahweh’s pact chest went up out of the middle of the Jordan and the soles of the priests’ feet stepped onto the dry ground, the Jordan water turned back to its place and went over all its banks as in previous days.

**4:19 What Do These Stones Mean?**

19 When the people went up from the Jordan on the tenth of the first month, they camped at Gilgal, on the eastern border of Jericho. 20 These twelve stones that they had got from the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. 21 He said to the Israelites, ‘When your children ask their parents in the future, “What are these stones?” 22 you’re to let your children know, “On dry land Israel crossed this Jordan”, 23 because Yahweh your God dried up the Jordan water before you until you crossed, as Yahweh your God did to the Reed Sea, which he dried up before us until we crossed, 24 in order that all the peoples of the earth might acknowledge how strong is Yahweh’s hand, in order that you might live in awe of Yahweh your God for all time’.

5 When all the kings of the Amorites who were across the Jordan on its western side and all the kings of the Canaanites who were near the Sea heard that Yahweh had dried up the Jordan water before the Israelites until they had crossed, their mind melted and there was no longer any spirit left in them because of the Israelites.

**5:2: Foreskin Hill**

2 At that time Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘Make yourself flint knives and circumcise the Israelites again, a second time’. 3 So Joshua made himself flint knives and circumcised the Israelites at Foreskin Hill.

4 This is the reason why Joshua circumcised the entire people that got out of Egypt, the males. Every one (the men of battle) had died in the wilderness on the way, when they had got out of Egypt. 5 While the entire people that got out had been circumcised, they had not circumcised the entire people born in the wilderness on the way, when they had got out of Egypt. 6 Because for forty years the Israelites had gone in the wilderness until the entire nation (the men of battle who had got out of Egypt) were gone, the people who had not listened to Yahweh’s voice and to whom Yahweh had sworn not to let them see the land that Yahweh had sworn to their ancestors to give us, a land flowing with milk and syrup. 7 In that he had made their sons arise in their place, they are the people Joshua circumcised because they were foreskinned, because they had not circumcised them on the way.

8 When they had come to an end of circumcising the entire nation, they stayed in their place in the camp until they had recovered. 9 Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘Today I’ve rolled away the reviling of Egypt from upon you’. So they’ve named that place Gilgal [Rolling] until this day.

10 The Israelites camped at Gilgal and made the Pesah on the fourteenth day of the month in the evening, in the Jericho steppes. 11 They ate from the country’s produce the day after Pesah, flat bread and roasted grain that actual day. 12 The *maan* stopped the day after they ate from the country’s produce. There was no longer any *maan* for the Israelites. They ate from the yield of the country of Canaan that year.

**5:13 Which Side Are You On?**

13 When Joshua was at Jericho, he lifted his eyes and saw: there, a man standing opposite him, a drawn sword in his hand. Joshua went to him and said to him, ‘Are you for us or for our attackers?’ 14 He said, ‘No, because it’s as Yahweh’s army officer that I’ve now come’. Joshua fell on his face to the ground before him. He bowed low and said to him, ‘What is my lord going to speak to his servant?’ 15 Yahweh’s army officer said to Joshua, ‘Take your boot off your foot, because the place on which you’re standing is sacred’. Joshua did so.

6 Now Jericho was closed, closed tight, before the Israelites. No one was going out and no one was coming in. 2 Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘See, I’ve given Jericho and its king, the forceful strong men, into your hand. 3 You’re to go round the town, all the men of battle circling the town once. You’re to do this for six days, 4 while seven priests carry seven ram’s horns before the chest. On the seventh day you’re to go round the town seven times, while the priests blow on the horns. 5 At the drawing out of a blast on the ram’s horn, when you hear the noise of the horn, the entire company is to give a great shout, the town’s wall will fall flat, and the company are to go up, each individual straight ahead’.

6 So Joshua ben Nun called the priests and said to them, ‘Carry the pact chest, while seven priests carry seven ram’s horns before Yahweh’s chest’. 7 He said to the company, ‘Pass on, go round the town, while the body equipped for a campaign passes on before Yahweh’s chest’.

**6:8: Come Blow Your Horn**

8 When Joshua had said it to the company, the seven priests carrying the seven ram’s horns passed on before Yahweh and blew on the horns, and Yahweh’s pact chest followed them, 9 while the body equipped for a campaign was going before the priests blowing the horns, and the rearguard was going behind the chest, with a continuing blowing on the horns. 10 Joshua ordered the company, ‘You will not shout, you will not make your voice heard, no word will come out of your mouth, until the time I say to you, “Shout!” and you’ll shout’.

11 So he had Yahweh’s chest go round the town, circling it once, then they came to the camp and stayed the night in the camp. 12 Joshua started early in the morning and the priests carried Yahweh’s chest, 13 while the seven priests carrying seven ram’s horns before Yahweh’s chest were continuing to go and blow on the horns, the body equipped for a campaign was going before them, and the rearguard was going behind Yahweh’s chest, with a continuing blowing on the horns. 14 They went round the town once on the second day and came back to the camp. So they did for six days.

15 On the seventh day they started early, at sunrise, went round the town in accordance with this rule, seven times; only on that day did they go round the town seven times. 16 The seventh time, the priests blew on the horns and Joshua said to the company, ‘Shout, because Yahweh has given you the town. 17 The town is to be an object ‘devoted’ to Yahweh, it and everything that’s in it, except that Rahab the whore will live, she and everyone who is with her in the house, because she hid the envoys that we sent. 18 Only, you keep yourselves from what’s to be devoted so you don’t become a thing that’s to be devoted, and you take anything from what’s to be devoted and make the Israelite camp into a thing that’s to be devoted. You will bring disaster on it. 19 All the silver and gold and the objects of copper and iron are sacred to Yahweh. They’re to come into Yahweh’s treasury’.

**6:20: And the Walls Came Tumbling Down**

20 So the company shouted and they blew on the horns, and when the company heard the sound of the horn, the company gave a great shout, the wall fell flat, and the company went up into the town, each individual straight ahead. They captured the town 21 and devoted everything that was in the town, man and woman, young and old, ox and sheep and donkey, with the mouth of the sword.

22 To the two men who had investigated the country Joshua said, ‘Come into the house of the woman who’s a whore and bring out of there the woman and everyone who belongs to her, as you swore to her’. 23 So the young men who’d done the investigating came in and brought out Rahab, her father and her mother, her brothers, and everyone who belonged to her. They brought out her entire kin-group, and set them down outside the Israelite camp.

24 The town they burned in fire with everything that was in it, except that the silver and the gold and the objects of copper and iron they put in the treasury of Yahweh’s house, 25 and Joshua let Rahab the whore live, with her ancestral household and everyone who belonged to her. She’s lived among Israel until this day, because she hid the envoys whom Joshua sent to investigate Jericho.

26 At that time Joshua swore, ‘Cursed before Yahweh be the man who sets about building this town, Jericho. At the cost of his firstborn may he found it and at the cost of his little one may he put up its doors’.

27 Yahweh was with Joshua and report of him went through the entire country. 7 But the Israelites committed a trespass in connection with things to be devoted. Akan ben Karmi, son of Zabdi son of Zerah of the clan of Judah took some of the things that were to be devoted, and Yahweh’s anger raged against the Israelites.

**7.2: Take It Easy**

2 Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai [*ha’ay*,The Ruin], which is by Bet Aven [Trouble House], east of Bet-el. He said to them, ‘Go up and investigate the region’. The men went up and investigated Ai, 3 and came back to Joshua and said to him, ‘The entire company should not go up. Some two or three thousand men should go up and strike down Ai. You shouldn’t make the entire company get weary there, because they are few’. 4 So some 3000 of the company went up, but they took flight before the men of Ai. 5 The men of Ai struck down some thirty-six of them, and pursued them before the gateway as far as the quarries and struck them down on the slope.

The company’s mind melted, turned to water. 6 Joshua tore his clothes and fell on his face to the ground before Yahweh’s chest until the evening, he and Israel’s elders, and they put dirt on their head. 7 Joshua said, ‘Oh, Lord Yahweh, why did you bring this people across the Jordan at all, to give us into the hand of the Amorites to obliterate us? If only we had resolved to live across the Jordan. 8 As for me, Lord, what am I to say after Israel has turned its back before its enemies? 9 The Canaanites and all the people living in the country will hear and surround us us and cut off our name from the earth, and what will you do about your great name?’

10 Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘Get yourself up. Why are you falling on your face there? 11 Israel has done wrong. Yes, they’ve contravened my pact about which I gave them orders. They’ve both taken some of the things that were to be devoted, and they’ve stolen, and they’ve acted deceitfully, and they’ve put things in their bags. 12 The Israelites won’t be able to stand before their enemies, they’ll turn their back before their enemies, because they’ve become something to be devoted. I shall not be with you any more unless you annihilate from among you the thing that’s to be devoted.

**7.13: Coveting Can Kill**

13 Get up, make the people sacred. You’re to say, “Make yourselves sacred for tomorrow, because Yahweh, the God of Israel, has said this: There’s something to be devoted among you, Israel. You can’t stand before your enemies until you’ve removed what is to be devoted from among you”.

14 In the morning you’re to draw near by your clans. The clan that Yahweh takes is to draw near by kin-groups. The kin-group that Yahweh takes is to draw near by households. The household that Yahweh takes is to draw near man by man. 15 The one who is taken in the net is to burn in fire, he and everything that belongs to him, because he contravened Yahweh’s pact and because he did something villainous in Israel’.

16 Joshua started early in the morning and presented Israel by its clans, and the clan of Judah was taken. 17 He presented the kin-group of Judah, and he took the kin-group of Zerah. He presented the kin-group of the Zarhites man by man, and Zabdi was taken. 18 He presented his household man by man, and Akan ben Karmi, son of Zabdi son of Zerah of the clan of Judah was taken. 19 Joshua said to Akan, ‘Son, please give honour to Yahweh, the God of Israel, and make confession to him. Please tell me what you’ve done. Don’t hide it from me’. 20 Akan answered Joshua, ‘Truly I’m the one who’s done wrong against Yahweh, the God of Israel. This actual thing is what I did. 21 I saw in the spoil a fine coat from Shin’ar, and 200 sheqels of silver, and a bar of gold fifty sheqels in weight. I desired them and took them. There, they’re buried in the ground inside my tent, with the silver underneath’.

22 Joshua sent envoys and they ran to the tent, and there, it was buried in his tent, with the silver underneath. 23 They took them from inside the tent and brought them to Joshua and to all the Israelites, and they laid them out before Yahweh.

**7.24: Purging Away the Trespass**

24 Joshua took Akan ben Zerah, the silver, the coat, the gold bar, and his sons, his daughters, his ox, his donkey, his flock, his tent, and everything that he had, he and all Israel with him, and brought them up to Disaster Vale. 25 Joshua said, ‘How you’ve brought disaster on us! Yahweh will bring disaster on you this day’. All Israel pelted him with stones. They burned them in fire and executed them by stoning, 26 and raised a great heap of stones over them until this day. And Yahweh turned back from his angry burning.

That’s why they’ve named that place Disaster Vale, until this day.

8 Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘Don’t be afraid. Don’t be dismayed. Take the entire battle company with you and set off, go up to Ai. See, I’ve given into your hand the king of Ai, his town, his people, and his region. 2 You’re to do to Ai and to its king as you did to Jericho and to its king, only its spoil and its animals you may treat as plunder for yourselves. Set yourself an ambush for the town, behind it’.

3 So Joshua and all the battle company set off to go up to Ai. Joshua chose 30,000 men, forceful strong men, sent them by night, 4 and ordered them, ‘See, you’re going to be men in an ambush for the town, behind the town. Don’t be very far from the town, and all of you be ready. 5 I and the entire company that’s with me—we’ll draw near the town, and when they come out to meet us like the first time, we’ll flee before them. 6 They’ll come out after us till we’ve drawn them away from the town, because they’ll say ‘They’re fleeing before us like the first time’. So we’ll flee before them, 7 and you’ll get up out of the ambush and take possession of the town. Yahweh your God will give it into your hand. 8 When you’ve taken the town, set the town on fire. You’re to act in accordance with Yahweh’s word. See, I’ve given you orders’.

**8.9: The Game Plan Executed**

9 So Joshua sent them, they went to the ambush, and they settled down between Bet-el and Ai, west of Ai. Joshua stayed the night among the company. 10 Joshua started early in the morning and numbered the company, and he and Israel’s elders went up before the company to Ai. 11 All the battle company that was with him went up, moved close and came in front of the town, and camped north of Ai. There was a ravine between them and Ai.

12 So he had taken some 5000 men and set them as an ambush between Bet-el and Ai, west of the town, 13 and the company set up the entire camp, which was north of the town, and its rearguard west of the town. Joshua had gone that night into the middle of the vale.

14 When the king of Ai saw it, the men of the town hurried and started early and went out to meet Israel in battle, he and all his company, at the set place facing the steppe; he didn’t know that there was an ambush for him behind the town. 15 Joshua and all Israel let themselves be beaten before them and fled by the wilderness road. 16 The entire company that was in Ai cried out to one another to pursue after them, and they pursued after Joshua and tore out of the town. 17 Not a man remained in Ai or Bet El who didn’t go out after Israel. They left the town open and pursued after Israel.

18 Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘Hold out the javelin that’s in your hand toward Ai, because I shall give it into your hand’. Joshua held out the javelin that was in his hand toward the town, 19 while the ambush quickly got up out of its place. They ran when he held out his hand, came into the town and captured it, and hurried and set the town on fire.

**8.20: Ai Becomes a Ruin**

20 The men of Ai turned their face behind them and looked: there, smoke from the town went up to the heavens. There was no capacity in them to go this way or that when the company fleeing to the wilderness turned onto the pursuer 21 and Joshua and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the town and that smoke from the town had gone up, and they turned back and struck down the men of Ai. 22 When these [Israelites] came out of the town to meet them, in relation to Israel they were in the middle, some [Israelites] on one side and some on the other. They struck them down so they didn’t let anyone remain to it as escapee or survivor. 23 The king of Ai they took alive and presented him to Joshua.

24 When Israel had finished slaughtering all the people living in Ai in in the fields, in the wilderness where they had pursued them, and all of them had fallen to the mouth of the sword until they had come to an end, all Israel went back to Ai and struck it down with the mouth of the sword.

25 All those who fell that day, both men and women, 12,000, all the people living in Ai. 26 Joshua didn’t take back his hand with which he held out his javelin until he had devoted all the people living in Ai 27 Only the animals and the spoil in that town did Israel take as plunder for themselves, in accordance with Yahweh’s word with which he had ordered Joshua. 28 Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent ruin, a desolation until this day. 29 The king of Ai he hanged on a tree until the time of evening. At sundown Joshua ordered, and they took down his corpse from the tree, threw it at the entrance of the town gateway, and set up over it a great heap of stones, until this day.

**8.30: It’s Over Even When It’s Not Over**

30 Then Joshua built an altar for Yahweh the God of Israel on Mount Ebal, 31 as Moses Yahweh’s servant ordered the Israelites, as it is written in Moses’ instruction document: an altar of whole stones on which no one had wielded iron. They offered up on it burnt offerings for Yahweh and made well-being sacrifices. 32 He wrote there on the stones a copy of Moses’ instruction that he had written, before the Israelites. 33 All Israel, its elders,the overseers, and its rulers, were standing on each side of the chest, facing the Levitical priests who carried Yahweh’s pact chest, resident and native alike, half of them facing Mount Gerizim and half of them facing Mount Ebal, as Moses Yahweh’s servant had ordered beforehand, to bless the people of Israel.

34 After this, he read out all the words of the instruction, the blessing and the slight, in accordance with all that’s written in the instruction document. 35 There was not a word of all that Moses ordered that Joshua didn’t read out in front of Israel’s entire congregation, with the women and little ones and the residents who were going among them

9 When all the kings who were across the Jordan heard, in the highland, in the foothills, and on the entire coast of the Great Sea to near the Lebanon (the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite, and the Yebusite), 2 they gathered together to battle with Joshua and with Israel, with one accord.

**9.3: How to Take Israel In**

3 The people living in Gib’on heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai, 4 and they for their part acted with shrewdness. They went and behaved like envoys, but got worn-out sacks for their donkeys and worn-out wineskins, cracked and mended, 5 with worn-out, patched boots on their feet, and worn-out clothes on themselves, and all the bread they had as their provisions was dry and hard. 6 They went to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal and said to him and to the Israelites, ‘We’ve come from a country far away, so now, solemnize a pact with us’.

7 The Israelites said to the Hivvites, ‘Maybe you’re living among us. How can I solemnize a pact with you?’ 8 They said to Joshua, ‘We are your servants’. Joshua said to them, ‘Who are you? Where do you come from?’

9 They said to him, ‘Your servants have come from a country very far away by reason of the name of Yahweh your God, because we’ve heard the report about him, about all that he did in Egypt, and all that he did to the two Amorite kings who were across the Jordan, to Sihon king of Heshbon and to Og king of Bashan who was in Ashtarot. 11 Our elders and all the people living in our country said to us, ‘Get in your hand provisions for the journey and go to meet them and say to them: “We are your servants, so now, solemnize a pact with us”. 12 This is our bread: we brought it hot as our provision from our houses on the day we left to go to you, but now – here, it’s dry and hard. 13 These wineskins that we filled new – here, they’ve cracked. These clothes of ours and boots of ours have worn out from the great length of the journey’.

14 The people took some of their provisions and didn’t ask for Yahweh’s bidding. 15 Joshua made peace with them and solemnized a pact with them to let them live, and the assembly’s leaders swore an oath to them.

**9.16: How to Swallow Your Pride**

16 At the end of three days after they solemnized the pact with them, they heard that they were near them, living among them.

17 The Israelites moved on and came to their towns on the third day. Their towns were Gib’on, Qephirah, Be’erot, and Ye’arim Township. 18 The Israelites didn’t strike them down because the assembly’s leaders had sworn to them by Yahweh the God of Israel. The entire assembly protested at the leaders, 19 but all the leaders said to the entire assembly, ‘We ourselves swore to them by Yahweh the God of Israel. We can’t now touch them. 20 We’ll do this to them: we’ll let them live, so that there won’t be fury against us because of the oath we swore to them’, 21 so the leaders said to them, ‘They’re to live’, but they became woodchoppers and water carriers for the entire assembly, as the leaders spoke concerning them.

22 So Joshua called them and spoke to them: ‘Why did you beguile us in saying, “We live very far away from you”, and you’re living among us? 23 You’re now cursed. None of you will stop being a servant, both woodchoppers and water carriers for my God’s house’. 24 They answered Joshua, ‘Because it had been clearly told to your servants that Yahweh your God ordered Moses his servant to give you the entire country and to annihilate all the people living in the country from before you. We were very fearful for our lives from before you, so we did this thing. 25 But now, here we are, in your hand. Act toward us in accordance with what is good and with what is right in your eyes to act toward us’.

26 He did so to them: he rescued them from the hand of the Israelites, and they didn’t slaughter them. 27 That day Joshua made them woodchoppers and water carriers for the assembly and for Yahweh’s altar, until this day, at the site that he would choose.

**10:1 Five Kings Panic**

10 When Adonay-tsedeq king of Jerusalem heard that Joshua had taken Ai and devoted it (as he had done to Jericho and its king, so he had done to Ai and its king), and that the inhabitants of Gib’on had made peace with Israel and were among them, 2 people were very fearful, because Gib’on was a big town, like one of the royal towns, and because it was bigger than Ai, and all its men were strong men. 3 So Adonay-tsedeq king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron, to Pir’am king of Yarmut,to Yaphia king of Lakish, and to Debir king of Eglon, saying 5 ‘Go up to me and help me, and we’ll strike down Gib’on, because it’s made peace with Joshua and with the Israelites’.

5 So the five Amorite kings, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Yarmut, the king of Lakish, and the king of Eglon, they and their entire camp, gathered together, went up, camped against Gib’on, and did battle against it. 6 The people of Gib’on sent to Joshua in the camp at Gilgal, saying ‘Don’t slacken your hands from your servants, go up to us quickly, deliver us, help us, because all the kings of the Amorites, the people living in the highland, have collected together against us’. 7 So Joshua went up from Gilgal, he and the entire battle company with him, all the forceful strong men.

8 Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘Don’t be afraid of them, because I’ve given them into your hand. Not one of them will stand before you’. 9 Joshua came on them by surprise; he had gone up all night from Gilgal, 10 and Yahweh put them into a turmoil before Israel. He struck them down in a great rout at Gib’on and pursued them on the road to the Bet-horon ascent, and struck them down as far as Azeqah and as far as Maqqedah.

**10.11: No Compromise**

11 While they were fleeing from before Israel (they were on the Bet-horon descent), Yahweh threw big stones at them from the heavens, as far as Azeqah. More died who died through the hailstones than the Israelites slaughtered with the sword.

12 Joshua spoke to Yahweh then, on the day Yahweh gave over the Amorites before the Israelites, and said before the eyes of Israel,

Sun stand still at Gib’on

moon at the Ayyalon Vale!

13 The sun stood still,

the moon halted,

Until a nation

took redress from its foes.

(It’s written on the Document of the Upright One, isn’t it.)

The sun stood in the middle of the heavens and didn’t hasten to set, the like of a whole day. 14 There hasn’t been anything like that day before it or after it for Yahweh’s listening to someone’s voice, because Yahweh was battling for Israel.

15 Joshua and all Israel with him went back to the camp at Gilgal, 16 and these five kings fled and hid in a cave at Maqqedah. 17 It was told Joshua, ‘Five kings have been found hiding in a cave at Maqqedah’. 18 Joshua said, ‘Roll big stones to the cave’s mouth and appoint men over it to keep them. 19 But you, don’t halt, pursue after your enemies and hit them from the rear. Don’t let them come to their towns, because Yahweh your God has given them into your hand’. 20 When Joshua and the Israelites had finished striking them down in a great rout until they had come to an end, though some survivors escaped from them and came to their fortified towns, 21 the entire company went back to the camp to Joshua at Maqqedah in safety. No one loosened his tongue about the Israelites.

**10.22 Open the Cave**

22 Joshua said, ‘Open the cave mouth and bring these five kings out of the cave to me’. 23 They did so: they brought these five kings out of the cave to him, the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Yarmut, the king of Lakish, the king of Eglon. 24 When they brought these kings out to Joshua, Joshua called all the Israelites and said to the commander over the men of battle who had gone with him, ‘Draw near, put your feet on the necks of these kings’. They drew near and put their feet on their necks. 25 Joshua said to them, ‘Don’t be afraid. Don’t be scared. Be strong, stand firm, because Yahweh will act like this to all your enemies with whom you’re battling’.

26 After this, Joshua struck them down. He put them to death and hanged them on five trees. They were hanged on the trees until the evening. 27 At the time when the sun went down, Joshua gave an order and they took them down from the trees, threw them into the cave where they had hidden, and put big stones on the cave mouth, until this very day.

28 That day Joshua captured Maqqedah and struck it down, it and its king, with the mouth of the sword. He ‘devoted’ them, along with every person who was in it. He didn’t let a survivor remain. He did to the king of Maqqedah as he had done to the king of Jericho. 29 Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Maqqedah to Libnah and battled with Libnah, 30 and Yahweh gave it, too, into Israel’s hand, it and its king. He struck it down with the mouth of the sword, along with every person who was in it. He didn’t let a survivor remain in it. He did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho.

**10.31: Welcome to the Wild Wild West**

31 Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Libnah to Lakish and camped against it and battled against it, 32 and Yahweh gave Lakish into Israel’s hand. He captured it on the second day and struck it down with mouth of the sword, along with every person who was in it, in accordance with all that he had done to Libnah. 33 Horam king of Gezer had gone up then to help Lakish, but Joshua struck down him and his company until he didn’t let a survivor remain to him.

34 Joshua and all Israel with him passed on from Lakish to Eglon and camped against it and battled against it. 35 That day they captured it and struck it down with the mouth of the sword. Every person who was in it he devoted that day, in accordance with all that he had done to Lakish. 36 Joshua and all Israel with him went up from Eglon to Hebron and battled against it. 37 They captured it and struck it down with the mouth of the sword, its king andall its towns and every person who was in it. He didn’t let a survivor remain, in accordance with all that he had done to Eglon. He devoted it and every person who was in it.

38 Joshua and all Israel with him went back to Debir and battled against it. 39 He captured it and its king and all its towns. They struck them down with the mouth of the sword and devoted every person who was in it. He didn’t let a survivor remain. As he had done to Hebron, so he did to Debir and to its king, and as he had done to Libnah and to its king.

**10.40: Welcome to the Wild Wild North**

40 Joshua struck down the entire country: the highland, the Negeb, the foothills, and the slopes, with all their kings. He didn’t let a survivor remain. Anything that breathed he devoted, as Yahweh the God of Israel had ordered. 41 Joshua struck them down from Qadesh Barnea to Gaza [Azzah], all the Goshen region, and as far as Gib’on. 42 All these kings and their country Joshua captured at a single stroke, because Yahweh the God of Israel was battling for Israel. 43 Then Joshua and all Israel with him went back to the camp at Gilgal.

11 When Yabin king of of Hatsor heard, he sent to Yobab king of Madon, to the king of Shimron, to the king of Akshaph, 2 to the kings who were to the north, in the highland, in the steppe south of Kinneret, in the foothills, and in the Dor Heights on the west, 3 the Canaanite on the east and on the west, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, and the Yebusite in the highland, and the Hivvite beneath Hermon in the region of The Watchtower. 4 They went out, those and their entire camp with them, a company as numerous as the sand that’s on the seashore in its large number, with very numerous horse and chariotry. 5 All these kings arranged to meet, and came and camped together at Merom Water to do battle with Israel.

6 Yahweh said to Joshua, ‘Don’t be afraid before them, because tomorrow at this very time I’m going to give all of them up, run through before Israel. You’re to hamstring their horses and burn their chariots in fire’. 7 So Joshua and all his battle company with him came on them at Merom Water by surprise. They fell on them, 8 and Yahweh gave them into Israel’s hand. They struck them down and pursued them as far as Great Tsidon, as far as Misrephot Water, and as far as Watchtower Valley on the east, and struck them down until they let no survivor remain. 9 Joshua did to them as Yahweh had said to him: he hamstrung their horses and burned their chariots in fire.

**11.10: The Entire Country Taken**

10 Joshua turned back at that time and captured Hatsor, and its king he struck down with the sword, because Hatsor was formerly head of all these kingdoms. 11 They struck down every person who was in it with the mouth of the sword, devoting them. Nothing that breathed was left, while he burned Hatsor in fire.

12 All these royal towns and their kings Joshua captured. He struck them down with the mouth of the sword and devoted them, as Moses Yahweh’s servant had ordered. 13 Yet all the towns that were standing on their mound Israel didn’t burn, except that Joshua burned Hatsor alone. 14 All the spoil in these towns and the animals the Israelites took as plunder for themselves. They struck down only all the human beings with the mouth of the sword until they had annihilated them; they didn’t let anything that breathed remain. 15 As Yahweh had ordered Moses his servant, so Moses had ordered Joshua, and so Joshua did. He didn’t take out anything from all that Yahweh had ordered Moses.

16 So Joshua took this entire country: the highland, the entire Negeb, the entire Goshen region, the foothills, the steppe, the highland of Israel and its foothills, 17 from Bald Mountain which goes up to Se’ir and as far as Ba’al Gad in the Lebanon Valley beneath Mount Hermon. He captured all their kings, struck them down, and put them to death.

18 For a long time Joshua did battle with all these kings. 19 There was no town that made peace with the Israelites except the Hivvites living in Gib’on. They took everything in battle, 20 because it issued from Yahweh to stiffen their heart to meet with Israel in battle, in order that he might devote them without there being any grace for them—in order that rather he might annihilate them, as Yahweh had ordered Moses.

**11.21: The Kings East of the Jordan**

21 At that time Joshua came and cut down the Anaqites from the highland, from Hebron, from Debir, from Anab, from the entire highland of Judah, and from the entire highland of Israel, with their towns. Joshua devoted them. 22 None of the Anaqites were left in the country of the Israelites. Only in Gaza, in Gat, and in Ashdod did they remain.

23 So Joshua took the entire country, in accordance with all that Yahweh spoke to Moses, and Joshua gave it to Israel as its domain, in accordance with their divisions, for the clans. And the country was calm from battle.

12 These are the kings of the country whom the Israelites struck down and whose land they took possession of across the Jordan on the east side, from Wadi Arnon as far as Mount Hermon and the entire steppe, on the east side :

2 Sihon king of the Amorites, who lived in Heshbon, ruling from Aro’er, which is on the bank of Wadi Arnon, the middle of the wadi, and half of Gil’ad, as far as Wadi Yabboq, the Ammonites’ border; 3 and the steppe as far as the Kinneret Sea, on the east side; and as far as the Steppe Sea (the Salt Sea), on the east side, the Bet Hayeshimot road; and on the south side, beneath the Pisgah slopes.

4 The border of Og king of Bashan, from what was left of the Repha’ites, who lived in Ashtarot and in Edre’I, 5 ruling over Mount Hermon, over Salkah, and over all Bashan, as far as the border of the Geshurites and the Ma’akatites, and half of Gil’ad, the border of Sihon king of Heshbon.

6 Moses Yahweh’s servant and the Israelites had struck them down, and Moses Yahweh’s servant had given it as a possession to the Re’ubenites, to the Gadites, and to the half-clan of Menashsheh.

**12.7: The Kings West of the Jordan**

7 These are the kings of the country whom Joshua and the Israelites struck down across the Jordan on the west side, from Ba’al Gad in the Lebanon Valley as far as Bald Mountain, which goes up to Mount Se’ir, which Joshua gave to the Israelite clans to be a possession, in accordance with their divisions, 8 in the highland, in the foothills, in the steppe, in the slopes, in the wilderness, and in the Negeb (the Hittite, the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite, and the Yebusite):

9 A king of Jericho

A king of Ai, which is near Bet-el

10 A king of Jerusalem

A king of Hebron

11 A king of Yarmut

A king of Lakish

12 A king of Eglon

A king of Gezer

13 A king of Debir

A king of Geder

14 A king of Hormah

A king of Arad

15 A king of Libnah

A king of Adullam

16 A king of Maqqedah

A king of Bet-el

17 A king of Tappuah

A king of Hepher

18 A king of Apheq

A king of the Sharon

19 A king of Madon

A king of Hatsor

20 A king of Shimron Meron

A king of Akshaph

21 A king of Ta’nak

A king of Megiddo

22 A king of Qedesh

A king of Yoqne’am in Carmel

23 A king of Dor in Dor Height

A king of Goyim in Gilgal

24 A king of Tirtsah

All kings: thirty-one.

**13.1: Joshua’s Time is Almost Over**

13 Now Joshua was old, going on in years. Yahweh said to him, ‘You yourself have become old, you have gone on in years, while the country is very great that remains, to take possession of it. 2 This is the country that remains:

All the areas of the Philistines and all the Geshurites, 3 from the Shihor, which is east of Egypt, as far as the border of Eqron to the north, which is thought of as belonging to the Canaanites (the five Philistine lords, the Gazaites, the Ashdodites, the Ashqelonites, the Gittites, and the Eqronites); the Avvites 4 on the south; the entire Canaanite country, Me’arah belonging to the Tsidonites as far as Apheq (as far as the Amorites’ border); 5 the country of the Giblites and the entire Lebanon on the east from Ba’al Gad beneath Mount Hermon as far as Lebo’ Hamat; 6 all the people living in the highland from the Lebanon as far as Misrephot Water (all the Tsidonites).

I myself will dispossess them from before the Israelites. Only let it fall by lot to Israel as its domain, as I’ve ordered you. 7 So now share out this country as a domain to the nine clans and the half-clan of Menashsheh.

8 With it, the Re’ubenites and the Gadites had taken their domain which Moses gave them across the Jordan to the east, as Moses Yahweh’s servant gave them:

9 from Aro’er which is on the bank of Wadi Arnon, and the town which is in the middle of the wadi; the entire Medeba flatland as far as Dibon; 10 all the towns of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, as far as the Ammonites’ border; 11 Gil’ad and the border of the Geshurites and the Ma’akatites; all of Mount Hermon; all of Bashan as far as Salkah, 12 and the entire kingdom of Og in Bashan, who had reigned in Ashtarot and in Edre’I (he remained from what was left of the Repha’ites). Moses had struck them down and dispossessed them, 13 but the Israelites didn’t dispossess the Geshurites and the Ma’akatites; Geshur and Ma’akah have lived among Israel until this day.

14 Only to the clan of Levi did he not give a domain. The gift offerings of Yahweh the God of Israel are its domain, as he spoke to it.

**Map for the clans’ land allocation goes about here**

**13:15 The Clans East of the Jordan**

15 So Moses gave to the clan of the Re’ubenites, by their kin-groups, 16 and it became their border:

From Aro’er, which is on the bank of Wadi Arnon, and the town in the middle of the wadi, and the entire flatland, as far as Medeba; 17 Heshbon and all its towns, which are in the flatland; Dibon, Master’s Heights, Bet Ba’al Me’on, 18 Yahats, Qedemot, Mepha’at, 19 Qiryatayim, Sibmah, Tseret Shahar on the vale mountain, 20 Bet Pe’or, the Pisgah slopes, and Bet Hayeshimot, 21 all the towns of the flatland, the entire kingdom of Sihon king of the Amorites who reigned in Heshbon, whom Moses struck down, he and the Midyanite leaders Evi, Reqem, Tsur, Hur, and Reba, Sihon’s appointees, living in the country. 22 Bil’am ben Be’or the diviner the Israelites killed with the sword, to add to the people run through by them. 23 The Re’ubenites’ border was the Jordan and the edge of it. This was the Re’ubenites’ domain by their kin-groups, the towns and their villages.

24 Moses gave to the clan of Gad, to the Gadites, by their kin-groups, 25 and it became their border:

Ya’zer; all the towns in Gil’ad; half the Ammonites’ country as far as Aro’er which is east of Rabbah; 26 from Heshbon as far as Watchtower Height and Betonim, from Mahanayim as far as the border of Debir; 27 in the vale, Height House, Bet Nimrah, Sukkot, and Tsaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon; and the Jordan and the edge as far as the end of the Kinneret Sea, across the Jordan on the east side. 28 This was the Gadites’ domain by their kin-groups, the towns and their villages.

29 Moses gave to the half-clan of Menashsheh, so it came to belong to the half-clan of the Menashshites by their kin-groups, 30 and it became their border:

From Mahanayim, all of Bashan, the entire kingdom of Og king of Bashan, all Ya’ir’s Villages in Bashan, sixty towns, 31 half of Gil’ad, and Ashtarot and Edre’I, Og’s royal towns in Bashan, for the descendants of Makir son of Menashsheh, for half the Makirites, by their kin-groups.

**13.32: The Promise to Caleb**

32 These are what Moses made into domains in the Mo’ab steppes across the Jordan east of Jericho. 33 To the clan of Levi Moses didn’t give a domain. Yahweh the God of Israel is their domain, as he spoke to them.

14 These are what the Israelites received as their domain in the country of Canaan, which El’azar the priest, Joshua ben Nun, and the ancestral heads of the Israelites’ clans made into domains, 2 their domain by lot, as Yahweh ordered through Moses, for the nine clans and the half-clan, 3 because Moses had given the domain of the two clans and the half-clan across the Jordan, and to the Levites he had given no domain among them, 4 because the Josephites were two clans, Menashsheh and Ephrayim, and they didn’t give the Levites a share in the country, but rather towns to live in and pasturelands for their livestock and for their cattle. 5 As Yahweh ordered Moses, so the Israelites did, and shared out the country.

6 The Judahites came up to Joshua at Gilgal, and Caleb ben Yephunneh the Qenizzite said to him, ‘You yourself know the thing that Yahweh spoke to Moses, the supernatural man, concerning me and concerning you, at Qadesh Barnea. 7 I was a man of forty years when Moses Yahweh’s servant sent me from Qadesh Barnea to investigate the country, and I brought him back word in accordance with how things were in my mind.

8 My brothers who went up with me made the people’s mind melt, but I myself fully followed after Yahweh my God. 9 That day, Moses swore: ‘If the country on which your foot trod doesn’t become a permanent domain for you and for your descendants, because you fully followed after Yahweh my God….

**14:10 The Country Has Rest from War**

10 So now, here, Yahweh has kept me alive, as he spoke, these forty-five years from when Yahweh spoke this word to Moses when Israel went through the wilderness. So now, here, I am today a man of eighty-five years. 11 I’m still as strong today as on the day Moses sent me. As my energy was then, so is my energy now for battle, both for going out and for coming in. 12 So now, give me this highland that Yahweh spoke of on that day, because you yourself heard that day that Anaqites are there, and big fortified towns. Maybe Yahweh will be with me and I shall take possession of them as Yahweh spoke’.

13 Joshua blessed him and gave Hebron to Caleb ben Yephunneh as his domain. 14 Therefore Hebron came to belong to Caleb ben Yephunneh the Qenizzite as his domain, until this day, because he fully followed Yahweh the God of Israel. (15 Hebron’s name formerly was the Township of Arba; he was the big man among the Anaqites.)

And the country was calm from battle.

**15:1: Judah’s Borders**

15 The lot fell for the Judahites’ clan, by their kin-groups, to the Edomite border, the Tsin Wilderness to the south the bottom edge.

* 2 Their southern border went from the end of the Salt Sea, from the tongue that turns southward, 3 extended to the south of Scorpions Ascent, passed on to Tsin, went up south of Qadesh Barnea, passed on by Hetsron, went up to Addar, turned to Qarqa, 4 passed on to Atsmon, and extended to the Egyptian Wadi. The border’s furthest extents were at the sea. This will be your southern border.
* 5 The border to the east: the Salt Sea as far as the edge of the Jordan.
* The border on the northern side, from the tongue of the sea, from the end of the Jordan: 6 the border went up by Bet Hoglah and passed north of Bet Ha’arabah. The border went up by Bohan ben-Re’uben Stone. 7 The border went up to Debir from Disaster Vale, and northward turning its face to Gilgal, which is in front of Red Rocks Ascent, which is south of the wadi. The border passed on to Shemesh Spring Water. Its furthest extents went to Treader Spring. 8 The border went up by Ben-hinnom Ravine along the Yebusite flank on the south (i.e., Jerusalem). The border went up to the top of the mountain which is opposite Hinnom Ravine to the west, which is at the edge of Repha’ites Vale to the north. 9 The border curved from the top of the mountain to Nephtoah Water Spring and extended to the towns of Mount Ephron. The border curved by Ba’alah (i.e., Ye’arim Township). 10 The border turned from Ba’alah westward to Mount Se’ir, passed by the flank of Mount Ye’arim northward (i.e., Kesalon), went down to Bet-shemesh, and passed on to Timnah. 11 The border extended to the flank of Eqron northward. The border curved to Shikkeron, passed on to Mount Ba’alah, and extended by Yabne’el. The border’s furthest extents were at the sea.
* 12 The western border: the Great Sea and the border.

This was the border of the Judahites all round by their kin-groups.

**15:13 Aksah Insists**

13 In accordance with Yahweh’s bidding to Joshua, he gave to Caleb ben Yephunneh a share among the Judahites, the Township of Arba, the ancestor of Anaq (i.e., Hebron). 14 Caleb dispossessed from there the three Anaqites, Sheshay, Ahiman, and Talmay, the descendants of Anaq. 15 He went up from there against the people living in Debir; the name of Debir was formerly Sepher Township. 16 Caleb said, ‘The person who strikes down Sepher Township and captures it: I’ll give him Aksah my daughter as wife’. 17 Otni’el ben Qenaz, Caleb’s brother, captured it, and he gave him Aksah his daughter as wife.

18 When she came, she incited him to ask for some fields from her father. She got down from her donkey and Caleb said to her, ‘What is it?’ 19 She said, ‘Give me a blessing, because you’ve given me a region in the south. Give me water holes’. So he gave her the upper waterholes and the lower waterholes.

**15:33 Judah’s Towns**

20 This is the domain of the Judahites’ clan by their kin-groups.

21 The towns at the edge of the Judahites’ clan, near the Edomite border, in the Negeb, were:

Qabtse’el, Eder, Yagur, 22 Qinah, Dimonah, Ad’adah, 23 Qedesh, Hatsor, Yitnan, 24 Ziph, Telem, Be‘alot, 25 Hatsor Hadattah, Qeriyyot Hetsron (i.e., Hatsor), 26 Amam, Shema, Moladah, 27 Gaddah Village, Heshmon, Bet Pelet, 29 Shu‘al Village, Be’er Sheba, Bizyotyah, 29 Ba’alah, Iyyim, Etsem, 30 Eltolad, Kesil, Hormah, 31 Tsiqlag, Madmannah, Sansannah, 32 Leba’ot, Shilhim, Ayin, and Rimmon.

All the towns: twenty-nine, and their villages.

33 In the foothills:

Eshta’ol, Tsor’ah, Ashnah, 34 Zanoah, Gannim Spring, Tappuah, Enam, 35 Yarmut, Adullam, Sokoh, Azeqah, 36 Sha’arayim, Aditayim, Gederah, and Gederotayim.

Fourteen towns and their villages.

37 Tsenan, Hadashah, Gad Tower, 38 Dil’an, The Watchtower, Yoqte’el, 39 Lakish, Botsqat, Eglon, 40 Kabbon, Lahmas, Kitlish, 41 Gederot, Bet-dagon, Na’amah, and Maqqedah.

Sixteen towns and their villages.

42 Libnah, Eter, Ashan, 43 Yiphtah, Ashnah, Netsib, 44 Qe’ilah, Akzib, and Mareshah.

Nine towns and their villages.

45 Eqron, its daughter-towns, and its villages; 46 from Eqron westward, everything that was in the vicinity of Ashdod and their villages, 47 Ashdod, its daughter-towns, and its villages; Gaza, its daughter-towns and its villages, as far as the Egyptian Wadi, and the Great Sea and the edge.

48 In the highland:

Shamir, Yattir, Sokoh, 49 Dannah, Sannah Township (i.e., Debir), 50 Anab, Eshtemoh, Anim, 51 Goshen, Holon, and Giloh.

Eleven towns and their villages.

52 Arab, Rumah, Esh’an, 53 Yanum, Bet-tappuah, Apheqah, 54 Humtah, Arba Township (i.e., Hebron), and Tsi’or.

Nine towns and their villages.

55 Ma’on, Karmel, Ziph, Yuttah, 56 Yizre’e’l, Yoqde’am, Zanoah, 57 Qayin, Gib’ah, and Timnah.

Ten towns and their villages.

58 Halhul, Bet-tsur, Gedor, 59 Ma’arat, Bet-anot, and Elteqon.

Six towns and their villages.

60 Ba’al Township (i.e., Ye’arim Township) and Rabbah.

Two towns and their villages.

61 In the wilderness:

Bet Ha’arabah, Middin, Sekakah, 62 Nibshan, Salt Town, and Gedi Spring.

Six towns and their villages.

63 But the Judahites couldn’t dispossess the Yebusites, the people living in Jerusalem, and the Yebusites have lived with the Judahites in Jerusalem until this day.

**16.1 The Josephites**

16 The lot extended for the Josephites from the Jordan at Jericho, at the Jericho water toward the sunrise, through the wilderness, going up from Jericho into the highland to Bet-el. 2 It extended from Bet-el to Luz and passed on to the Arkites’ border at Atarot. 3 It went down to the west to the Yaphletites’ border, as far as the border of Lower Bet-horon and as far as Gezer. Its furthest extents were at the sea. 4 So the Josephites received their domain—Menashsheh and Ephrayim. 5 The border of the Ephrayimites by their kin-groups, was:

The border of their domain toward the sunrise was Atrot Addar as far as Upper Bet Horon. 6 The border extended to the sea, to Mikmetat on the north. The border turned toward the sunrise at Ta’anat Shiloh and passed by it east of Yanoah. 7 It went down from Yanoah to Atarot and to Na’arat, came to Jericho, and extended to the Jordan. 8 From Tappuahthe border extends to the west by Wadi Qanah. Its furthest extents were at the sea. This was the domain of the Ephrayimites’ clan by their kin-groups, 9 and the towns distinguished for the Ephrayimites within the domain of the Menashshites, all the towns and their villages.

10 But they didn’t dispossess the Canaanites who were living in Gezer. The Canaanites have lived within Ephrayim until this day, but they have been a serf work force.

17 The lot fell for the clan of Menashsheh, because he was Joseph’s firstborn.

* For Makir, Menashsheh’s firstborn and Gil’ad’s father (because he was a man of battle): Gil’ad and Bashan had become his.
* 2 So it fell for the remaining Menashshites by their clans, for the descendants of Abi’ezer, for the descendants of Heleq, for the descendants of Asri’el, for the descendants of Shekem, for the descendants of Hepher, and for the descendants of Shemida.

These were the male descendants of Menashsheh, Joseph’s son, by their kin-groups.

**17.3: Menashsheh (and Tselophhad’s Daughters Again)**

3 Now Tselophhad ben Hepher, son of Gil’ad son of Makir son of Menashsheh had no sons, but only daughters. These are the names of his daughters: Mahlah, No’ah, Hoglah, Milkah, and Tirtsah. 4 They drew near before El’azar the priest, before Joshua ben Nun, and before the leaders, saying ‘Yahweh himself ordered Moses to give us a domain among our brothers’. So he gave them a domain among their father’s brothers in accordance with Yahweh’s bidding.

5 Menashsheh’s shares fell as ten, apart from the region of Gil’ad and Bashan which are across the Jordan, 6 because Menashsheh’s daughters received a domain among his sons, while the region of Gil’ad belonged to the remaining descendants of Menashsheh.

7 Menashsheh’s border was:

from Asher to Mikmetat, which is east of Shekem. The border goes to the south, to the people living in Tappuah Spring (8 the Tappuah region belonged to Menashsheh, but Tappuah on the border of Menashsheh belonged to the Ephrayimites). 9 The border goes down by Wadi Qanah. South of the wadi, these towns belonged to Ephrayim, among Menashsheh’s towns, with Menashsheh’s border north of the wadi and its furthest extents at the sea. 10 To the south belongs to Ephrayim, to the north to Menashsheh, and the sea was its border. They come to Asher on the north and Issakar on the east, 11 but in Issakar and in Asher, to Menashsheh belonged Bet-she’an and its daughter-towns, Yible’am and its daughter-towns, the people living in Do’r and its daughter-towns, the people living in Dor Spring and its daughter-towns, the people living in Ta’nak and its daughter-towns, and the people living in Megiddo and its daughter-towns (Three Heights).

12 But the Menashshites couldn’t take possession of these towns; the Canaanites resolved to stay in this region. 13 When the Israelites became strong, they made the Canaanites into a work force, but they didn’t dispossess them at all.

**17.14 A Challenge for Joseph**

14 The Josephites spoke with Joshua: ‘Why have you given me as my domain one lot, one allocation, when I’m a numerous people that Yahweh has blessed, up until now?’ 15 Joshua said to them, ‘If you’re a numerous people, get yourself up into the forest and clear it for yourself, there in the region of the Perizzite and the Repha’ites, when the highland of Ephrayim is too narrow for you’.

16 The Josephites said, ‘The highland isn’t available to us, and there’s iron chariotry among all the Canaanites who live in the vale region, the ones who are in Bet-she’an and in its daughter-towns and the ones who are in the Yizre’el Vale’. 17 Joshua said to the household of Joseph, to Ephrayim and to Menashsheh: ‘You’re a numerous people. You have great energy. You won’t have one lot, 18 because the highland will be yours, because it’s forest but you’ll clear it, and its furthest extents will be yours because you’ll dispossess the Canaanite when they have iron chariotry, when they’re strong’.

18 The entire assembly of the Israelites congregated at Shiloh and placed the appointment tent there, with the country in subjection before them. 2 But there remained seven clans among the Israelites to whom they had not shared out their domain.

**18:3 Surveying the Land**

3 So Joshua said to the Israelites, ‘How long are you going to be slack about coming to take possession of the country that Yahweh the God of your ancestors has given you? 4 Provide yourselves three men per clan and I’ll send them to set off and go through the country, and write it up on the basis of their domain. Then they’re to come to me. 5 They can allocate it for themselves into seven shares. Judah is to stay by its border in the south and the household of Joseph are to stay by their border in the north.

6 You, you’re to write up the country as seven shares and bring it to me here so I can throw lots for you here before Yahweh our God. 7 Because there’s no share for the Levites among you, because Yahweh’s priesthood is their domain, and Gad, Re’uben, and the half-clan of Menashsheh have received their domain across the Jordan toward the sunrise, which Moses, Yahweh’s servant, gave them’.

8 The men set off and went. Joshua ordered the men who were going to write up the country: ‘Go, go about the country, and write it up, come back to me, and I’ll pitch the lot for you here before Yahweh in Shiloh’. 9 So the men went and passed through the country, and wrote it up on a document by towns as seven shares. They came to Joshua in the camp at Shiloh 10 and Joshua pitched the lot for them in Shiloh before Yahweh. So Joshua divided up the country before Israel in accordance with their divisions.

**18:11 Benjamin**

11 The lot of the Benjaminites’ clan by their kin-groups went up. The border of their lot extended between the Judahites and the Josephites.

* 12 Their border on the north side ran from the Jordan. The border went up to Jericho’s northern flank and went up into the highland westward. Its furthest extents were at the Bet Aven Wilderness. 13 The border passed on from there to Luz, to the flank of Luz southward (i.e., Bet-el). The border went down to Atrot Addar by the mountain which is on the south of Lower Bet-horon.
* 14 The border curved and turned on the west side southward from the mountain which is opposite Lower Bet-horon southward. Its furthest extents were at Ba’al Township (i.e., Ye’arim Township), a town of the Judahites. This was the west side.
* 15 The south side: from the edge of Ye’arim Township the border extended westward, and extended to Nephtoah Water Spring. 16 The border went down to the edge of the mountain which is opposite Ben-hinnom Ravine, which is in Repha’ites Vale to the north. It went down Hinnom Ravine to the Yebusite flank on the south and went down to Treader Spring. 17 It curved on the north, extended to Shemesh Spring, and extended to Gelilot, which is in front of Red Rocks Ascent. It went down to Bohan ben-Re’uben Stone, 18 passed on to the flank near the steppe, northward, and went down to the steppe. 19 The border passed on to the flank of Bet-hoglah, northward. The border’s furthest extents were at the tongue of the Salt Sea to the north, at the end of the Jordan to the south. This was the southern border.
* 20 The Jordan constituted its border on the east side.

This is the Benjaminites’ domain by its borders all round, by their kin-groups. 21 The towns of the Benjaminites’ clan by their kin-groups were:

Jericho, Bet-hoglah, Qetsits Vale, 22 Bet Ha’arabah, Tsemarayim, Bet-el, 23 Avvim, Parah, Ophrah, 24 Ammonah Hamlet, Ophni, and Geba.

Twelve towns and their villages.

25 Gib’on, The Height, Be’erot, 26 The Watchtower, Kephirah, Motsah, 27 Reqem, Yirpe’el, Tar’alah, 28 Tsela, Eleph, and Yebusite (i.e., Jerusalem), Gib’ah, Township.

Fourteen towns and their villages.

This is the Benjaminites’ domain by their kin-groups.

**19.1 Simeon, Zebulun**

19 The second lot went out for Shim’on [Simeon], for the Shim’onites’ clan by their kin-groups. Their domain was within the Judahites’ domain. 2 They had as their domain:

* Be’er-sheba (or Sheba), Moladah, 3 Shu’al Village, Balah, Etsem, 4 Eltolad, Betul, Hormah, 5 Tsiqlag, Bet-markabot, Susah Village, 6 Bet Leba’ot, and Sharuhen.

Thirteen towns and their villages.

* 7 Ayin, Rimmon, Eter, Ashan.

Four towns and their villages, 8 and all the villages that are round these towns, as far as Ba’alat Be’er, Ra’mat Negeb.

This is the domain of the Shim’onites’ clan by their kin-groups. 9 The Shim’onites’ domain was part of the Judahites’ share because the Judahites’ share was too big for them, and the Shim’onites received a domain within their domain.

10 The third lot went up for the Zebulunites by their clans.

* The border of their domain ran as far as Sarid. 11 Their border went up westward to Mar’alah, came to Dabbeshet, and came to the wadi which is opposite Yoqne‘am.
* 12 It turned back from Sarid toward the sunrise, along the border of Kislot Tabor. It extended to Daberat and went up to Yaphia.
* 13 From there it passed on to the east, toward the sunrise, to Gat Hepher, to Et Qatsin. It extended to Rimmon, curving to Ne’ah.
* 14 It turned (the northern border) to Hannaton. Its furthest extents were Yiphtah-’el Ravine, 15 Qattat, Nahalal, Shimron, Yid’alah, and Bet Lehem.

Twelve towns and their villages.

16 This is the Zebulunites’ domain by their kin-groups, these towns and their villages.

**19:17 Issakar, Asher**

17 The fourth lot went out for Issakar, for the Issakarites by their kin-groups.

* 18 Their border was Yizre’e’l, Kesulot, Shunem, 19 Hapharayim, Shi’on, Anaharat, 20 Rabbit, Qishyon, Ebets, 21 Remet, Gannim Spring, Haddah Spring, and Bet Patstsets.
* 22 The border came to Tabor, Shahatsim, and Bet Shemesh.
* The Jordan was the furthest extents of their border.

Sixteen towns and their villages.

23 This is the domain of the Zebulunites’ clan by their kin-groups, the towns and their villages.

24 The fifth lot went out for the Asherites’ clan by their kin-groups.

* 25 Their border was Helqat, Hali, Beten, Akshaph, 26 Alammelek, Am’ad, and Mish’al.
* It came to Karmel on the west and Shihor Libnat.
* 27 It turned back toward the sunrise, to Bet Dagon, and came to Zebulun and Yiphtah-’el Ravine to the north, Bet Ha’emeq, and Ne’i’el.
* It extended to Kabul on the north, 28 Ebron, Rehob, Hammon, and Qanah, as far as Great Tsidon. 29 The border turned back to The Height and as far as the fortified town of Tsor. The border turned back to Hosah. Its furthest extents were at the sea in the area of Akzib, 30 Ummah, Apheq, and Rehob.

Twenty-two towns and their villages.

31 This is the domain of the Asherites’ clan by their kin-groups, these towns and their villages.

**19:32 Naphtali, Dan**

32 The sixth lot went out for the Naphtalites, for the Naphtalites by their kin-groups.

* 33 Their border ran from Heleph, Betsa’anannim Oak, Adami Hanneqeb, and Yabne’el as far as Laqqum, and the Jordan was its furthest extents.
* 34 The border turned back westward to Aznot Tabor and went out from there to Huqoq.
* It came to Zebulun on the south
* It came to Asher on the west and Judah at the Jordan toward the sunrise.
* 35 Its fortified towns: Tsiddim, Tser, Hammat, Raqqat, Kinneret, 36 Adamah, The Height, Hatsor, 37 Qedesh, Edre’I, Hatsor Spring, 38 Yir’on, Migdal-el, Horem, Bet-anat, and Bet Shemesh, nineteen towns and their villages.

39 This is the domain of the Naphtalites’ clan by their kin-groups, the towns and their villages.

40 The seventh lot went out for the Danites by their kin-groups. 41 The border of their domain was Tsor’ah, Eshta’ol, Shemesh Town, 42 Sha’alabbin, Ayyalon, Yitlah, 43 Elon, Timnah, Eqron, 44 Elteqeh, Gibbeton, Ba’alat, 45 Yehud, Bene-beraq, Gat-rimmon, 46 Yarkon Water, Raqqon, with the border near Yapho.

47 But the Danites’ border got away from them, and the Danites went up and battled with Leshem and captured it. They struck it down with the mouth of the sword, took possession of it, and lived in it. They named it Dan in accordance with the name of their ancestor Dan.

48 This is the domain of the Danites’ clan by their kin-groups, these towns and their villages.

49 So they finished making the country into domains by its borders. The Israelites gave a domain to Joshua ben Nun among them. 50 At Yahweh’s bidding they gave him the town that he asked for, Timnat-serah in the highland of Ephrayim. He built up the town and lived in it.

51 These are the domains that El’azar the priest, Joshua ben Nun, and the heads of the ancestral households made for the Israelites’ clans by lot in Shiloh before Yahweh at the entrance of the appointment tent. So they finished sharing out the country.

**20.1 The Asylum Towns**

20 Yahweh spoke to Joshua: 2 ‘Speak to the Israelites: “Give yourselves the asylum towns about which I spoke to you through Moses, 3 for a killer who strikes a person down by accident (without realizing), to flee there. They will be an asylum for you from the blood restorer.

4 He will flee to one of these towns, and stand at the entrance of the town gateway and speak in the hearing of that town’s elders. They will receive him into the town among them, and give him a place so he can live with them. 5 When the blood restorer pursues after him, they will not surrender the killer into his hand, because he struck down his neighbour without realizing and he was not hostile to him in previous days.

6 He is to live in that town until he stands before the assembly for a decision, until the death of the great priest who is there at that time. Then the killer may go back and come to his town and to his home, to the town from which he fled”’.

7 So they made sacred Qedesh in Galilee in the highland of Naphtali; Shekem in the highland of Ephrayim; and Arba Township (i.e., Hebron) in the highland of Judah. 8 Across the Jordan (Jericho) toward the sunrise, they made Betser in the wilderness on the flatland, from the clan of Re’uben; Heights-in-Gil’ad from the clan of Gad; and Golan in Bashan from the clan of Menashsheh.

9 These were the set towns for all the Israelites and for the person who is residing among them to flee there, anyone who struck someone down by accident, so that he would not die by the hand of the blood restorer until he stood before the assembly.

**21.1 The Levites’ Needs**

21 The heads of the Levites’ ancestral households came up to El’azar the priest, to Joshua ben Nun, and to the heads of the ancestral households of the Israelites’ clans. 2 They spoke to them at Shiloh in the country of Canaan: ‘Yahweh himself ordered through Moses to give us towns to live in, with their pasturelands for our animals’. 3 So the Israelites gave the Levites part of their domain in accordance with Yahweh’s bidding, these towns and their pasturelands.

* 4 The lot went out for the Qehatite kin-groups: for the descendants of Aaron the priest, from the Levites, it was from the clan of Judah, from the clan of Shim’on, from the clan of Benjamin, by lot, thirteen towns.
* For the remaining Qehatites: from the kin-groups of the clan of Ephrayim, from the clan of Dan, and from the half-clan of Menashsheh, by lot, ten towns.
* 6 For the Gershonites: from the kin-groups of the clan of Issakar, from the clan of Asher, from the clan of Naphtali, and from the half-clan of Menashsheh in Bashan, by lot, thirteen towns.
* 7 For the Merarites by their kin-groups: from the clan of Re’uben, from the clan of Gad, and from the clan of Zebulun, twelve towns.

8 The Israelites gave the Levites these towns and their pasturelands, as Yahweh said through Moses, by lot.

**21.9 The Aaronites and the other Qehatites**

9 From the Judahites’ clan and from the Shim’onites’ clan they gave these towns, which will be named, 10 for the descendants of Aaron from the Qehatite kin-groups of the Levites, because the first lot was for them.

* 11 They gave to them the Township of Arba, the ancestor of the Anaqites (i.e., Hebron) in the highland of Judah, and its pastureland round it. 12 The town’s fields and its villages they gave to Caleb ben Yephunneh as his holding, 13 but to the descendants of Aaron the priest, they gave the killer’s asylum town, Hebron, and its pastureland, Libnah and its pastureland, 14 Yattir and its pastureland, Eshtemoa and its pastureland, 15 Holon and its pastureland, Debir and its pastureland, 16 Spring and its pastureland, Yuttah and its pastureland, and Be Shemesh and its pastureland.

Nine towns from these two clans.

* 17 And from the clan of Benjamin: Gib’on and its pastureland, Geba and its pastureland, 18 Anatot and its pastureland, and Almon and its pastureland

Four towns.

19 All the towns of the descendants of Aaron, the priests: thirteen towns and their pasturelands.

20 For the kin-groups of the Qehatites, the remaining Levites of the Qehatites, the towns in their lot were:

* From the clan of Ephrayim, 21 they gave them the killer’s asylum town, Shekem, and its pastureland in the highland of Ephrayim, Gezer and its pastureland, 22 Qibtsayim and its pastureland, and Bet Horon and its pastureland

Four towns.

* 23 From the clan of Dan: Elteqe and its pastureland, Gibbeton and its pastureland, 24 Ayyalon and its pastureland, Gat-rimmon and its pastureland.

Four towns.

* 25 From the half-clan of Menashsheh: Ta’nak and its pastureland and Gat-rimmon and its pastureland.

Two towns.

All the towns: ten, and their pasturelands, for the remaining kin-groups of the Qehatites.

**21.27 The Gershonites and the Merarites**

27 For the Gershonites, of the kin-groups of the Levites:

* From the half-clan of Menashsheh, the killer’s asylum town, Golan in Bashan and its pastureland, and Be’eshterah and its pastureland.

Two towns.

* 28 From the clan of Issakar: Qishron and its pastureland, Dobrat and its pastureland, 29 Yarmut and its pastureland, and Gannim Spring and its pastureland.

Four towns.

* 30 From the clan of Asher: Mish’al and its pastureland, Abdon and its pastureland, 31 Helqat and its pastureland, and Rehob and its pastureland.

Four towns.

* 32 From the clan of Naphtali, the killer’s asylum town, Qedesh in Galilee, and its pastureland, Hammot Do’r and its pastureland, and Qartan and its pastureland

Three towns and their pasturelands.

33 All the towns of the Gershonites by their kin-groups: thirteen towns and their pasturelands.

34 For the kin-groups of the Merarites, the remaining Levites:

* From the clan of Zebulun: Yoqne’am and its pastureland, Qartah and its pastureland, 35 Dimnah and its pastureland, and Nahalal and its pastureland.

Four towns.

* 36 From the clan of Gad, the killer’s asylum town, Heights-in-Gil’ad and its pastureland, Mahanayim and its pastureland, 37 Heshbon and its pastureland, and Ya’zer and its pastureland.

All the towns, four.

38 All the towns of the Merarites by their kin-groups, the remaining kin-groups of the Levites: their lot was twelve towns.

39 All the Levites’ towns within the Israelites’ holding: forty-eight towns and their pasturelands. 40 These would be the towns, town by town and its pastureland round it—so for all these towns.

**21.41 Not One Word Failed**

41 So Yahweh gave Israel the entire country that he had sworn to give to their ancestors. They took possession of it and lived in it. 42 Yahweh enabled them to settle down all round in accordance with everything that he had sworn to their ancestors. Not one individual of all their enemies stood against them; all their enemies Yahweh gave into their hand. 43 No word fell, of every good word that God had spoken to the household of Israel. Everything came about.

22 Then Joshua called the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh, 2 and said to them: ‘You yourselves have kept everything that Moses, Yahweh’s servant, ordered you, and you’ve listened to my voice in everything that I ordered you. 3 You haven’t abandoned your brothers this long time until this day. You’ve kept the charge from the order of Yahweh your God. 4 But Yahweh your God has now enabled your brothers to settle down, as he spoke to them. So now, turn your face and get yourselves to your tents, to the region of your holding which Moses Yahweh’s servant gave you across the Jordan. 5 Only keep careful watch to act on the order and the instruction that Moses Yahweh’s servant gave you by being loyal to Yahweh your God, by walking in all his ways, by keeping his orders, by attaching yourselves to him, and by serving him with your entire mind and with your entire being’.

**22.6: A Little Local Difficulty**

6 Joshua blessed them and sent them off, and they went to their tents. 7 To one half-clan of Menashsheh Moses had given [land] in Bashan, and to the other half-clan Joshua had given it with their brothers across the Jordan to the west. 8 Further, when Joshua sent them off to theit tents and blessed them, 8 he said to them, ‘Go back to your tents with great riches, with very much livestock, with silver and with gold, with copper and with iron, and with very much clothing. Share out the spoil of your enemies with your brothers’. 9 So the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh turned back and went from being with the Israelites at Shiloh, which is in the country of Canaan, to go the region of Gil’ad, to the land of their holding, which they had acquired at Yahweh’s bidding through Moses.

10 They came to the area of the Jordan which is in the country of Canaan, and the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh built an altar there at the Jordan, an altar big in appearance. 11 The Israelites heard: ‘Here, the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh have built an altar near the land of Canaan, in the area of the Jordan, across from the Israelites’.

12 So the Israelites heard, and the entire assembly of the Israelites congregated at Shiloh to go up to war against them. 13 The Israelites sent Pinhas ben El’azar, the priest, to the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh in the region of Gil’ad, 14 and ten leaders with him, one leader for each ancestral household, for all the clans of Israel. They were, each individual, the head of an ancestral household for the Israelite divisions.

**22.15: Misunderstanding Cleared Up**

15 They came to the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh in the region of Gil’ad and spoke with them: 16 ‘The entire assembly of Israel has said this: “What is this trespass that you’ve committed against Israel’s God in turning back today from following Yahweh, in your building yourselves an altar, rebelling today against Yahweh? 17 Was the waywardness at Pe’or a small thing to us, from which we haven’t purified ourselves this day (and an epidemic came on Yahweh’s assembly), 18 and you yourselves turn back from following Yahweh today? If you rebel against Yahweh, tomorrow he will be furious with the entire assembly of Israel.

19 Yet if the land of your holding is taboo, get yourselves across into the land of Yahweh’s holding where Yahweh’s dwelling is, and hold land among us. Don’t rebel against Yahweh and don’t rebel against us by your building yourselves an altar other than the altar of Yahweh our God. 20 When Akan ben Zerah trespassed in connection with devoting, fury came on the entire assembly, didn’t it. He wasn’t the only one who breathed his last for his waywardness”’.

21 The Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh answered the heads of the Israelite divisions: 22 ‘The God over the gods, Yahweh, the God over the gods, Yahweh, he knows, and Israel – it will know: if it was in rebellion or in trespass against Yahweh, don’t deliver us today 23 for building ourselves an altar to turn back from following Yahweh. Or if it was for offering up a burnt offering or a grain offering on it, or if for making well-being sacrifices on it, Yahweh – may he look for it from us. 24 But if it wasn’t out of anxiety about something that we did this, saying “Tomorrow your children may say to our children, ‘What do you and Yahweh the God of Israel have in common? 25 Yahweh has made the Jordan a border between us and you, Re’ubenites and Gadites. You have no share in Yahweh’”. Your children would make our children stop living in awe of Yahweh.

**22.26 A Happy Ending**

26 So we said, “Let’s please act for ourselves by building an altar, not for burnt offering and not for sacrifice. 27 Rather it will be a witness between us and you and coming generations, for perfoming Yahweh’s service before him, with our burnt offerings and with our sacrifices and with our well-being offerings, and your children will not say tomorrow to our children, ‘You have no share in Yahweh’”. 28 We said, “When they say it to us and to our generations tomorrow, we’ll say, ‘Look at the pattern of Yahweh’s altar which our fathers made, not for burnt offering and not for sacrifice, but it’s a witness between us and you”‘. 29 Far be it from us for us to rebel against Yahweh and turn back today from following Yahweh by building an altar for burnt offering, for grain offering, and for sacrifice, apart from the altar of Yahweh our God that’s before his dwelling’.

30 Pinhas the priest, and the congregation’s leaders (the heads of the Israelite divisions) who were with him, listened to the things that the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the Menashshites spoke of, and it was good in their eyes. 31 Pinhas ben El’azar the priest said to the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the Menashshites, ‘Today we acknowledge that Yahweh is among us, in that you haven’t committed this trespass against Yahweh . Therefore you’ve saved the Isaraelites from Yahweh’s hand’.

32 Pinhas ben El’azar the priest and the leaders went back from the Re’ubenites and from the Gadites from the region of Gil’ad to the country of Canaan to the Israelites and took back word to them. 33 The thing was good in the Israelites’ eyes and they blessed God. They didn’t speak of going up against them to make war, to devastate the land in which the Re’ubenites and the Gadites were living.

34 The Re’ubenites and the Gadites named the altar, that it was a ‘Witness between us that Yahweh is our God’.

**23.1: Beware of the Other People’s Faiths**

23 A long time later, after Yahweh had enabled Israel to settle down from all their enemies around, and when Joshua was old, going on in years, 2 Joshua called all Israel, its elders, its leaders, its rulers, and its overseers, and said to them, ‘I myself have got old, I’ve gone on in years. 3 You yourselves have seen everything that Yahweh your God did to all these nations from before you, because Yahweh your God—he’s the one who was battling for you. 4 See, I’ve caused the lot to fall for you on these remaining nations as a domain for your clans, from the Jordan (yes, all the nations I cut off) and the Great Sea in the west.

5 Yahweh your God – he will push them out from before you and dispossess them from before you so you may take possession of their country as Yahweh your God spoke to you. 6 You’re to be very firm about keeping everything written in Moses’ instruction document by acting on it, without departing from it right or left, 7 and without coming among these nations (these that remain with you). You will not commemorate their gods’ name, you will not swear, you will not serve them, and you will not bow low to them. 8 Rather, you’re to attach yourselves to Yahweh your God, as you’ve done until this day.

9 Yahweh has dispossessed great and numerous nations from before you, and you: not one individual stood against you until this day. 10 One individual from among you can pursue a thousand, because Yahweh your God – he has been battling for you, as he spoke to you.

**23.11 Beware of Contravening the Covenant**

11 You’re to keep careful watch for yourselves so as to be loyal to Yahweh your God, 12 because if you do turn back and attach yourselves to what is left of these nations (these that remain with you) and intermarry with them and have sex with them and they with you, 13 you’re to acknowledge clearly that Yahweh your God won’t continue to dispossess these nations from before you. To you they will become a trap and a snare, a whip on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from on this good land that Yahweh our God has given you.

14 Here I am, going the way of all the earth now. You’re to acknowledge with your entire mind and with your entire being that not one word has fallen down of all the good things of which Yahweh your God spoke to you. Everything has come about for you. Not one word of them has fallen down. 15 But as every good thing of which Yahweh your God spoke to you has come about for you, so Yahweh will cause every bad experience to come about for you, until he’s eliminated you from on this good land that Yahweh your God has given you. 16 When you contravene the pact of Yahweh your God that he ordered you, and go and serve other gods and bow low to them, Yahweh’s anger will rage against you and you will perish quickly from on this good country that he’s given you’.

24 Joshua gathered all Israel’s clans at Shekem and called Israel’s elders, its leaders, its rulers, and its overseers, and they took their stand before God.

**24.2: Think Back Over the Story**

2 Joshua said to all the people, ‘Yahweh, Israel’s God, has said this: “Across the river, your ancestors (Terah, Abraham’s father and Nahor’s father) lived of old and served other gods. 3 I got your ancestor Abraham from across the river and enabled him to go through the entire country of Canaan, and I made his offspring numerous. I gave him Isaac, 4 and gave Isaac Jacob and Esau, and I gave Esau the highland of Se’ir as his domain, while Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt.

5 I sent Moses and Aaron and I hit Egypt as I acted in its midst. Afterward, I got you out. 6 I got your ancestors out of Egypt and you came to the sea. The Egyptians pursued after your ancestors with chariotry and with cavalry, to the Reed Sea. 7 They cried out to Yahweh and he put darkness between you and the Egyptians. He made the sea come over them and it covered them. Your eyes saw what I did to the Egyptians.

You stayed in the wilderness a long time, 8 but I brought you to the country of the Amorites who were living across the Jordan. They battled with you but I gave them into your hand and you took possession of their country. I eliminated them from before you. 9 Balaq ben Tsippor king of Mo’ab rose up and battled with Israel. He sent and called for Bil’am ben Be’or to slight you. 10 But I was not willing to listen to Bil’am and he really had to bless you. So I saved you from his hand.

11 You crossed the Jordan and came to Jericho. The Jericho landowners, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Girgashite, the Hivvite, and the Yebusite, battled against you, but I gave them into your hand. 12 I sent off a hornet before you and it drove them out from before you (two Amorite kings), not by your sword and not by your bow. 13 I’ve given you a country for which you didn’t get weary, towns that you didn’t build but you’ve lived in, eating from vineyards and olive groves that you didn’t plant.

**24.14 ‘You Can’t Serve Yahweh’. ‘Yes We Can!’**

14 ‘So now, live in awe of Yahweh and serve him with integrity and with truthfulness. Remove the gods that your ancestors served across the river and in Egypt, and serve Yahweh. 15 If it’s bad in your eyes to serve Yahweh, choose for yourselves today whom you’ll serve, whether the gods that your ancestors served who were beyond the river, or the gods of the Amorites whose country you’re living in. I and my household, we will serve Yahweh’.

16 The people answered, ‘Far be it for us to abandon Yahweh to serve other gods, 17 because Yahweh our God – he’s the one who got us and our ancestors up from the country of Egypt, from a household of serfs, and who did before our eyes these great signs, and kept us the entire way that we went and among all the peoples through whom we passed; 18 and Yahweh drove out all the peoples (the Amorites) living in the country from before us. We’ll serve Yahweh as well, because he’s our God’.

19 Joshua said to the people, ‘You can’t serve Yahweh, because he’s a sacred God. He’s a passionate God. He won’t carry your rebellions and wrongdoings. 20 When you abandon Yahweh and serve foreign gods, he’ll turn back and bring bad fortune to you and finish you off, after he’s been good to you’.

21 The people said to Joshua, ‘No, because Yahweh is the one we’ll serve’. 22 Joshua said to the people, ‘You’re witnesses against yourselves that you yourselves have chosen for yourselves Yahweh, to serve him’. They said, ‘We’re witnesses’. 23 ‘So now remove the foreign gods that are among you and direct your mind to Yahweh the God of Israel’. 24 The people said to Joshua, ‘Yahweh our God we will serve. To his voice we will listen’.

**24.25 Confirming the Covenant Anew**

25 Joshua solemnized a pact for the people that day and laid down for them a decree and a ruling, at Shekem. 26 Joshua wrote these things in God’s instruction document. He got a big stone and set it up there under the oak that was in Yahweh’s sanctuary. 27 Joshua said to all the people, ‘Here, this stone – it will be a witness against us, because it – it heard all Yahweh’s words that he spoke with us. It will be a witness against you, so you don’t act deceitfully toward your God’. 28 And Joshua sent the people off each to their domain.

29 After that, Joshua ben Nun, Yahweh’s servant, died, a man of 110 years. 30 They buried him within the border that was his domain in Timnat-serah in the highland of Ephrayim, north of Mount Ga’ash.

31 Israel served Yahweh all the time of Joshua and all the time of the elders who lived on after Joshua and who acknowledged all Yahweh’s action that he undertook for Israel. 32 The bones of Joseph, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, they buried in Shekem on the plot in the fields that Jacob had acquired from the sons of Hamor, Shekem’s father, for a hundred qesitas. It had become a domain of the Josephites.

33 El’azar ben Aaron died and they buried him on the hill of Pinhas his son, which had been given him in the highland of Ephrayim.

**Judges**

A quick read of Joshua can give one the impression that the story that now follows will relate how everyone lives happily ever after, but the close of Joshua made clear that the Israelites have by no means entered into full possession of the land of Canaan. Moreover, Joshua’s challenges to the Israelites at the end of Joshua also raise the question of how faithful Israel will be in fulfilling its own promises.

Judges begins (1:1—2:5) by focusing on the areas of the country over which Israel does not yet have control, and it thus conveys a gloomier impression than the book of Joshua as a whole. Further, the areas that remain under Canaanite control are the most populous areas and the ones most worth possessing. Like Joshua, Judges here moves between ‘they didn’t gain control’ and ‘they couldn’t gain control’ of these areas.

A second introduction to the book (2:6—3:4) then outlines a pattern that runs through much of the book. It introduces a series of stories that relate how Israelites turn away from adherence to Yahweh to serve other deities. Yahweh then himself turns away and leaves them to the mercy of their neighbours. In due course this experience of discipline makes them turn back to Yahweh, and he produces a deliverer who can rescue them from their adversaries.

It is these deliverers who provide the book with its title, ‘Judges’, though that English word is thus misleading. I use the expression ‘exercise authority’ to match the rendering elsewhere in this translation. But these leaders are people who don’t have an official position like a governor or a king but who by dint of God’s spirit coming on them are able to do what needs doing for Israel. Their personalities and gifts are also involved, though they tend to be the kind of people who wouldn’t be in positions of official leadership if there were official leaders. God chooses and uses somebody’s little brother, somebody who is handicapped, a son of Anat (a name that suggests he is a Canaanite), and then the greatest of the leaders who is—a woman.

Nor are these leaders commonly people of great faith or insight or a high standard of morality. Indeed, there is a troubling arc to the sequence of their stories. As the book unfolds, the leaders become more and more ambiguous figures.They can get the job done, but they lack the moral qualities that one would like to see accompanying their exercise of leadership.

In this respect they mirror the people themselves, and the later chapters in Judges turn it into the most distasteful and disturbing book in the Bible. It becomes a relentless portrayal of human stupidity, failure, and moral and social blindness. Women pay a heavy price in the conflicts and the abuses it reports, though women also exercise remarkable initiatives in different stories in the book.

Its own repeated comment in the closing chapters is that people were doing what was all right in their own eyes, and it adds the further comment that of course there was no king in Israel. The implication is that a king would be able to do something about the situation. The book thus provides some background to the introduction of kings in the next book, 1 Samuel.

If you add up the periods covered by the times of crisis and subsequent quiet in the book, you end up with a history occupying several hundred years, There isn’t actually room for that long a period between Joshua (about 1200 B.C.) and Saul (about 1050 B.C.). A closer look at the stories, however, reveals that they all concern events and deliverances that are more or less local. They don’t involve all the clans. So the periods of years to which the book refers can be overlapping—a time of crisis in one area can be a time of quiet in another. It’s then theologically significant that the book portrays all the crises and deliverances as involving ‘Israel’. When one suffers, all suffer. Trouble for one part of the body is trouble for the body as a whole.

**1.1: Real Life is More Complicated**

1 After Joshua’s death, the Israelites asked of Yahweh, ‘Who is to go up for us against the Canaanites first, to do battle with them?’ 2 Yahweh said, ‘Judah is to go up. Here, I am giving the country into his hand’. 3 Judah said to Shim’on [Simeon], his brother, ‘Go up with me into my lot so we can do battleagainst the Canaanites, and I’ll go with you into your lot as well’. So Shim’on went with him. 4 Judah went up, and Yahweh gave the Canaanite and the Perizzite into their hand. They struck them down at Bezeq, 10,000 people.

5 They found Adoni Bezeq at Bezeq and battled against him, and struck down the Canaanite and the Perizzite. 6 Adoni Bezeq fled, but they pursued after him. They caught him and cut off his thumbs and big toes. 7 Adoni-bezeq said, ‘Seventy kings, with thumbs and big toes cut off, used to be gleaning under my table. As I have done, so God has made good to me’. They brought him to Jerusalem, and he died there.

8 The Judahites battled against Jerusalem, captured it, and struck it down with the mouth of the sword, and the town they sent up in fire. 9 Afterward, the Judahites went down to battle against the Canaanites living in the highland, the Negeb, and the foothills.

10 Judah went against the Canaanites who were living in Hebron (Hebron’s name was Arba’s Township before). They struck down Sheshay, Ahiman, and Talmay. 11 From there, it went against the people living in Debir (Debir’s name was Sepher Township before).

12 Caleb said, ‘The man who strikes down Sepher Township and captures it: I’ll give him Aksah my daughter as wife’. 13 Otni’el ben Qenaz, Caleb’s brother who was younger than him, captured it, and he gave him Aksah his daughter as wife. 14 When she came, she incited him to ask for some fields from her father. She got down from her donkey and Caleb said to her, ‘What is it?’ 15 She said to him, ‘Give me a blessing, because you’ve given me a region in the south. Give me water holes’. So Caleb gave her the upper waterholes and the lower waterholes.

**1.16 Who Could and Who Couldn’t**

16 The descendants of the Qenite, Moses’ father-in-law, went up from Palms Town with the Judahites into the Judah Wilderness that’s south of Arad, and he went and lived with the people. 17 Judah went with its brother Shim’on and they struck down the Canaanites living in Tsepat. They ‘devoted’ it [*haram*], and named the town Hormah. 18 Judah captured Gaza and its border, Ashqelon and its border, and Eqron and its border. 19 Yahweh was with Judah, and it took possession of the highland, because it couldn’t dispossess the people living in the vale because they had iron chariotry. 20 They gave Hebron to Caleb as Moses spoke, and he dispossessed the three Anaqites from there. 21 But the Yebusites living in Jerusalem the Benjaminites didn’t dispossess. The Yebusites have lived with the Benjaminites in Jerusalem until this day.

22 Joseph’s household, they too, went up to Bet-el; Yahweh was with them. 23 Joseph’s household investigated Bet-el (the town’s name was Luz before) 24 and the men keeping watch saw a man coming out of the town and said to him, ‘Show us the way into the town, will you, and we will act in commitment with you’. 25 He showed them the way into the town and they struck down the town with the mouth of the sword, but the man and his entire kin-group they sent off. 26 The man went to the Hittites’ region and built a town, and named it Luz. That’s its name until this day.

27 Menashsheh didn’t take possession of Bet-she’an and its daughter-towns, Ta’nak and its daughter-towns, the people living in Dor and its daughter-towns, the people living in Yible’am and its daughter-towns, or the people living in Megiddo and its daughter-towns. The Canaanites were resolved to live in this region. 28 When Israel became strong it made the Canaanites into a work force, but it didn’t dispossess them at all.

**1.30 Wailing**

29 Ephrayim didn’t dispossess the Canaanites who were living in Gezer; the Canaanites lived among them in Gezer. 30 Zebulun didn’t dispossess the people living in Qitron or the people living in Nahalol; the Canaanites lived among them and became a work force. 31 Asher didn’t dispossess the people living in Akko or the people living in Tsidon, Ahlab, Akzib, Helbah, Aphiq, or Rehob. 32 The Asherites lived among the Canaanites living in the region, because they didn’t dispossess them. 33 Naphtali didn’t dispossess the people living in Bet-shemesh or the people living in Beth-anat. They lived among the Canaanites living in the region and the people living in Bet-shemesh and Bet Anat became a work force for them.

34 The Amorites forced the Danites into the highland because they didn’t let them come down into the vale. 35 The Amorites resolved to stay in Mount Heres in Ayyalon and in Sha’albim. But the hand of Joseph’s household became heavy and they became a work force. 36 The Amorites’ border went from Scorpions Ascent, from Sela, on upwards.

2 Yahweh’s envoy went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, ‘I enablem you to go up from Egypt and I brought you to the country that I swore to your ancestors. I said, “I will not contravene my pact with you, ever. 2 You yourselves will not solemnize a pact to the people living in this country. You’re to tear down their altars”. But you didn’t listen to my voice. What is this you’ve done? 3 So I’ve also said, “I won’t drive them out from before you. They’ll be at your sides and their gods will be a snare to you”’. 4 When Yahweh’s envoy spoke these words to all the Israelites, the people lifted up their voice and wailed, 5 and named that place Bokim [Wailers], but they sacrificed there to Yahweh.

**2.6: The Power of Forgetting**

6 Joshua had sent the company off, and the Israelites had gone each person to his domain to take possession of the country. 7 The people served Yahweh all Joshua’s time and all the time of the elders who lived on after Joshua, who had seen all Yahweh’s great work that he did for Israel.

8 Joshua ben Nun, Yahweh’s servant, died, a man of 110 years, 9 and they buried him within the border that was his domain at Timnat-heres in the highland of Ephrayim, north of Mount Ga’ash. 10 That entire generation also joined its ancestors, and another generation arose after them who didn’t acknowledge Yahweh, or the work he had done for Israel either. 11 The Israelites did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. They served the Masters 12 and abandoned Yahweh, their ancestors’ God, who had got them out of the country of Egypt. They followed other gods from among the gods of the peoples who were round them, and bowed low to them, and provoked Yahweh.

13 So they abandoned Yahweh and served the Master and the Ashtars, 14 and Yahweh’s anger raged against Israel and he gave them into the hand of people who plundered them. He surrendered them into the hand of their enemies all round. They could no longer stand before their enemies. 15 Wherever they went out, Yahweh’s hand was against them to make things go badly, as Yahweh had spoken and as Yahweh had sworn to them. It put great pressure on them.

16 Yahweh made people to exercise authority arise and they delivered them from the hand of their plunderers, 17 but they also didn’t listen to the people who exercised authority for them, because they whored after other gods and bowed low to them. They departed quickly from the way that their ancestors had walked by listening to Yahweh’s orders. They didn’t do so.

**2.18 When Yahweh Feels Sorry for Them**

18 When Yahweh made people to exercise authority arise for them, Yahweh would be with the one exercising authority and he would deliver them from the hand of their enemies all the time of the one exercising authority, because Yahweh felt sorry on account of their groan in the face of the people afflicting and crushing them. 19 But when the one exercising authority died, they would go back to acting more devastatingly than their ancestors in following other gods to serve them and bow low to them. They didn’t drop any of their practices and their tough-minded way.

20 So Yahweh’s anger raged against Israel. He said, ‘Since this nation have contravened the pact with which I ordered their ancestors and haven’t listened to my voice, 21 I for my part will not continue to dispossess anyone from before them, from the nations that Joshua left when he died’, 22 in order to test Israel by them, whether they’re keeping Yahweh’s way by walking in them, as their ancestors kept it, or not. 23 So Yahweh had let these nations settle down without dispossessing them quickly, and had not given them into Joshua’s hand.

3 These are the nations that Yahweh let settle down, to test Israel by them, all who had not known any of the battles in Canaan, 2 only in order for Israel’s generations to know them, by teaching them about battle—only the people who had not known them before: 3 the five Philistine lords and all the Canaanites, the Tsidonites, and the Hivvites living in the highland of the Lebanon from Ba’al Hermon Mountain as far as Lebo Hamat. 4 They were for testing Israel by them, to know whether they would listen to Yahweh’s order which he had given their ancestors through Moses.

**Map for Judges goes about here**

**3.5 Caleb’s Little Brother Again**

5 So the Israelites lived among the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite, and the Yebusite, 6 and got their daughters for themselves as wives and gave their daughters to their sons, and served their gods. 7 The Israelites did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. They put Yahweh their God out of mind and served the Masters and the Asherahs. 8 Yahweh’s anger raged against Israel and he surrendered them into the hand of Kushan Rish’atayim, the king of Aram-of-the-Two-Rivers. The Israelites served Kushan Rish’atayim for eight years.

9 The Israelites cried out to Yahweh and Yahweh made a deliverer arise for the Israelites and he delivered them: Otni’el ben Qenaz, Caleb’s brother who was younger than him. 10 Yahweh’s spirit came on him and he exercised authority for Israel. He went out to battle and Yahweh gave Kushan Rish’atayim, the king of Aram, into his hand. His hand was powerful over Kushan Rish’atayim, 11 and the region was calm for forty years.

Otni’el ben Qenaz died, 12 and the Israelites again did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. Yahweh made Eglon king of Mo’ab strong over Israel because they did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, 13 and he got the Ammonites and Amaleq to join him. He went and struck Israel down, and took possession of Palms Town. 14 The Israelites served Eglon king of Mo’ab for eighteen years.

**3.15 Another Unlikely Saviour**

15 The Israelites cried out to Yahweh and Yahweh made a deliverer arise for them, Ehud ben Gera, a Benjaminite, a man restricted in his right hand. The Israelites sent an offering by his hand to Eglon king of Mo’ab. 16 Ehud made himself a sword with two edges, half a metre in length. He wrapped it on under his uniform on his right side, 17 and presented the offering to Eglon king of Mo’ab. Now Eglon was a very stout man.

18 When he had finished presenting the offering, he sent off the company who had been carrying the gift 19 but he himself went back from the sculptures that are near Gilgal and said, ‘I have a secret message for you, your majesty’. He said, ‘Silence’, and all the people who stood by him went out from his presence. 20 When Ehud came to him, he was sitting in the cool upper quarters that he had, alone. Ehud said, ‘I have a word from God for you’. He got up from his seat, 21 and Ehud put out his left hand, took the sword from on his right side, and plunged it into his insides. 22 Even the handle went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, because he didn’t pull the sword out of his insides. The dirt came out.

23 Ehud went out through the porch, shut the doors of the upper quarters on him, and locked them 24 as he went out.

His servants came and looked: there, the doors of the upper quarters were locked. They said, ‘Yes, he’s relieving himself in the cool lounge’, 25 and waited until they were shamed. But there—he wasn’t opening the doors of the upper quarters. So they got the key and opened them, and there—their lord was fallen on the ground, dead.

26 Ehud had escaped while they delayed, and had passed the sculptures. He escaped to Se’irah 27 and when he came, blew on the horn in the highland of Ephrayim. The Israelites went down with him from the highland; he was before them. 28 He said to them ‘Pursue after me, because Yahweh has given your enemies, Mo’ab, into your hand’. They went down after him and captured Mo’ab’s Jordan [Yarden] crossings, and didn’t let anyone cross. 29 They struck down Mo’ab at that time, some 10,000 men, every individual hefty and everyone a forceful man. Not one escaped. 30 So Mo’ab bowed down that day under Israel’s hand, and the region was calm for eighty years.

**3.31 Shamgar, Deborah, Lapiddot, and Baraq**

31 After him there was Shamgar ben Anat. He struck down 600 Philistines with an ox goad. He, too, was one who delivered Israel.

4 The Israelites again did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes when Ehud had died, 2 and Yahweh surrendered them into the hand of Yabin king of Canaan who reigned in Hatsor. His army officer was Sisera; he was living in Haroshet Haggoyim. 3 The Israelites cried out to Yahweh because he had 900 iron chariots, and he had afflicted Israel through his strength for twenty years.

4 Now Deborah, a woman who was a prophetess, the wife of Lapiddot, was exercising authority for Israel at that time. 5 She would sit under Deborah’s Palm between The Height and Bet-el in the highland of Ephrayim, and the Israelites would go up to her for a decision.

6 She sent and called for Lightning ben Abino’am, from Qedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, ‘Yahweh the God of Israel has ordered you, has he not: “Go, march to Mount Tabor, and take with you 10,000 men from the Naphtalites and from the Zebulunites. 7 I shall march Sisera, Yabin’s army officer, to you, to Wadi Qishon, with his chariotry and his horde, and I shall give them into your hand”’.

8 Baraq said to her, ‘If you go with me, I’ll go, but if you don’t go with me, I won’t go’. 9 She said, ‘I’ll definitely go with you, only it won’t be your glory on the journey that you’re going on, because it’s into the hand of a woman that Yahweh will surrender Sisera’. So Deborah set off and went with Baraq to Qedesh, 10 and Baraq called out Zebulun and Naphtali to Qedesh. 10,000 men went up after him, and Deborah went up with him. 11 Now Heber the Qenite had split from Qayin, from the descendants of Hobab, Moses’ father-in-law, and spread his tent by the oak at Tsa’anannim, which was near Qedesh.

12 They told Sisera that Baraq ben Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, 13 and Sisera called out all his chariotry (900 iron chariots) and all the company that was with him from Haroshet-goyim to Wadi Qishon.

**4.14 Ya’el**

14 Deborah said to Baraq, ‘Set off, because this is the day that Yahweh has given Sisera into your hand. Yahweh gone out before you, hasn’t he’. So Baraq went down from Mount Tabor, with 10,000 men behind him, 15 and Yahweh threw Sisera, all his chariotry, and all the camp into confusion at the mouth of the sword before Baraq.

Sisera got down from his chariot and fled on foot, 16 while Lighting pursued after the chariotry and after the camp as far as Haroshet Haggoyim. Sisera’s entire camp fell to the mouth of the sword. Not even one was left.

17 Now Sisera had fled on foot to the tent of Ya’el, the wife of Heber the Qenite, because there was peace between Yabin king of Hatsor and the household of Heber the Qenite. 18 Ya’el came out to meet Sisera and said to him, ‘Turn aside, sir, turn aside to me. Don’t be afraid’. So he turned aside to her into the tent and she covered him with a rug. 19 He said to her, ‘Please give me a little water to drink, because I’m thirsty’. She opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink, and covered him. 20 He said to her, ‘Stand at the tent entrance. If someone comes and asks you, “Is there anyone here?” you’re to say, “There’s no one”.

21 But Ya’el, Heber’s wife, got a tent peg and picked up a hammer in her hand. She came to him stealthily and drove the peg through his temple so it went down into the ground; he was in a deep sleep, he was weary. So he died.

22 And there was Baraq, pursuing Sisera. Ya’el went out to meet him. She said to him, ‘Come, I’ll let you see the man that you’re looking for’. He came in to her, and there was Sisera, fallen dead, the peg in his temple.

23 That day God made Yabin king of Hatsor bow down before the Israelites. 24 The Israelites’ hand kept getting tougher on Yabin king of Canaan until they had cut down Yabin king of Canaan.

**5.1 Yahweh’s Faithful Acts**

5 Deborah (and Baraq ben Abino’am) sang that day:

2 At people exercising authority who were letting themselves go in Israel,

at a company offering itself freely: bless Yahweh!

3 Listen, kings,

give ear, sovereigns!

I myself, I shall sing for Yahweh,

I shall make music for Yahweh the God of Israel.

4 Yahweh, when you came out from Se’ir,

when you marched from Edomite country,

Earth trembled,

yes, heavens poured,

Yes, clouds poured water,

5 when mountains quaked,

Before Yahweh the one of Sinay,

before Yahweh the God of Israel.

6 In the time of Shamgar ben Anat,

in the time of Ya’el,

Journeys left off,

people going on paths went by roundabout ways.

7 Peasantry left off,

left off in Israel,

Until I, Deborah, arose,

arose as mother in Israel.

8 It chose new gods,

then there was battling in the gateways.

Shield and spear did not appear

among forty thousand in Israel.

9 My heart was with Israel’s commanders,

who offered themselves freely in the company.

Bless Yahweh,

10 riders on tawny donkeys!

You who sit on saddle blankets,

you who go on a journey, talk.

11 Above the voice of dealers among watering holes,

there they are to commemorate Yahweh’s faithful acts,

Faithful acts for his peasantry in Israel;

then Yahweh’s company went down to the gateways.

**5.12 Who Came and Who Didn’t**

12 Stir, stir, Deborah,

Stir, stir, sound out a song!

Set off, Baraq,

take your captives, ben Abino’am!

13 Then those of the august ones who were left came down,

Yahweh’s company came down for me among the strong men,

14 From Ephrayim people whose root is in Amaleq,

after you, Benjamin with your kin.

From Makir commanders came down,

from Zebulun people wielding the marshall’s staff.

15 The officers in Issakar were with Deborah;

as Issakar, so was Baraq,

sent into the vale behind him.

Among Re’uben’s divisions,

great searchings of heart.

16 Why did you sit among the folds

to listen to the whistlings for the flocks?

Among Re’uben’s divisions,

great searchings of heart.

17 Gil’ad dwelled across the Jordan;

Dan: why did he stay by the ships?

Asher lived at the sea coast

and dwelled by its harbours.

18 Zebulun was a people that reviled its life to the death;

Naphtali was on the heights of the fields.

19 Kings came, battled,

kings of Canaan battled then.

At Ta’nak by Megiddo’s water

they got no gain of silver.

20 From the heavens the stars battled,

from their causeways they battled with Sisera.

21 Wadi Qishon swept them away,

the rushing wadi, Wadi Qishon:

go on with vigour, my soul!

22 Then horse hoofs pounded,

with the galloping, the galloping of his sturdy ones.

23 ‘Curse Meroz’, Yahweh’s envoy said,

‘utterly curse the people living in it,

Because they didn’t come when Yahweh was helping,

when Yahweh was helping against the strong men’.

**5:24 Sisera’s Mother Waits**

24 Most blessed of women be Ya’el,

wife of Heber the Qenite,

most blessed of tent women.

25 He asked for water, she gave milk;

in a bowl fit for august people she presented curds.

26 She put out her hand for the peg,

her right hand for the labourers’ hammer.

She hammered Sisera, smashed his head,

hit and pierced his temple.

27 Between her feet he bent down,

he fell, he lay.

Between her feet he bent down, he fell;

where he bent down, there he fell, destroyed.

28 Through the window Sisera’s mother peered,

she gazed through the lattice.

‘Why is his chariot taking time to come,

why have the rumblings of his chariots delayed?’

29 The smartest of her ladies answer her,

indeed she gives back her word to herself:

30 ‘They’ve found and shared out the spoil, haven’t they,

a woman, two women, for each man,

Spoil of dyed cloth for Sisera,

spoil of dyed cloth embroidered,

two embroidered cloths for the necks as spoil’.

31 So may all your enemies perish, Yahweh,

but may his friends be like the sun coming out in its strength.

The region was calm for forty years

**6.1 The Man Hiding to Beat out Wheat**

6 The Israelites did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes and he gave them into the hand of Midyan for seven years. 2 The hand of Midyan was powerful over Israel. Because of Midyan, the Israelites made themselves hideouts that were in the mountains, caves and strongholds. 3 If Israel had sowed, Midyan, Amaleq, and the Easterners would go up. They would go up against it 4 and camp against them, and devastate the region’s yield until you come to Gaza. They wouldn’t let anything remain alive in Israel, either sheep or ox or donkey, 5 because they and their livestock would go up with their tents. They would come like a locust swarm in their large number. There was no counting them or their camels.

So they came into the region to devastate it, 6 and Israel became very low before Midyan. The Israelites cried out to Yahweh. 7 When the Israelites cried out to Yahweh on account of Midyan, 8 Yahweh sent someone as a prophet to the Israelites. He said to them, ‘Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: “I’m the one who got you up from Egypt, got you out of the household of serfs, 9 rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of all the people who afflicted you. I drove them out from before you and gave you their country. 10 I said to you, ‘I am Yahweh your God. You will not live in awe of the gods of the Amorites in whose country you’re living’. But you didn’t listen to my voice”’.

11 Yahweh’s envoy came and sat under the oak at Ophrah that belonged to Yo’ash the Abi’ezrite. His son Gideon [Gid’on] was beating out wheat in the winepress to keep it safe from before Midyan. 12 Yahweh’s envoy appeared to him and said to him, ‘Yahweh is with you, forceful strong man’. 13 Gideon said to him, ‘Pardon me, my Lord: Yahweh is with us? So why has all this befallen us? Where are all his extraordinary acts that our ancestors recounted to us, saying “Yahweh got us up from Egypt, didn’t he”? Yahweh has now left us alone and given us into Midyan’s fist’.

**6.14 Asking for a Sign**

14 Yahweh turned his face to him and said, ‘Go in this energy of yours and deliver Israel from Midyan’s fist. I’ve sent you, haven’t I’. 15 He said to him, ‘Pardon me, my Lord: how can I deliver Israel? Here, my family is the poorest in Menashsheh and I’m the youngest in my father’s household’. 16 Yahweh said to him, ‘But I’ll be with you, and you’ll strike Midyan down as if they were one man’.

17 He said to him, ‘If I’ve found grace in your eyes, please perform a sign for me that you’re the one speaking with me. 18 Don’t move away from here, please, until I come to you and bring my offering out and set it down before you’. He said, ‘I myself will stay until you come back’.

19 When Gideon had come in, he prepared a kid goat from the flock and a barrel of flour into flat bread. When he’d put the meat in a basket and put the broth in a pot, he took them out to him under the oak. So e brought them up 20 and God’s envoy said to him, ‘Get the meat and the flat bread and set them down on this rock, and pour out the broth’. He did so. 21 Yahweh’s envoy put out the end of the staff that was in his hand and touched the meat and the flat bread. Fire went up from the crag and devoured the meat and the flat bread, as Yahweh’s envoy went from before his eyes.

22 Gideon saw that it was Yahweh’s envoy. Gideon said, ‘Oh, Lord Yahweh, that therefore I’ve seen Yahweh’s envoy face to face!’ 23 Yahweh said to him, ‘Things will be well for you. Don’t be afraid. You won’t die’.

Gideon built an altar there for Yahweh and called it ‘Yahweh-things-will-be-well’. Until this day it’s still in Ophrah of the Abi’ezrites.

**6.25 The Mixed-Up Father**

25 That night Yahweh said to him, ‘Get the ox bullock that belongs to your father and a second bullock of seven years. Tear down the Master’s altar that belongs to your father and cut down the totem pole that’s by it, 26 and build an altar for Yahweh your God on the top of this stronghold, in proper order. Get the second bullock and offer it up as a burnt offering with the wood of the totem pole that you cut down’. 27 So Gideon got ten men from among his servants and did as Yahweh had spoken to him, but as he was too afraid of his father’s household and of the people of the town to do it by day, he did it by night.

28 The people of the town started early in the morning and there, the Master’s altar was demolished, the totem pole that was by it was cut down, and the second bull was sacrificed on the altar that had been built. 29 They said, one to his neighbour, ‘Who did this thing?’ They inquired and sought, and said, ‘Gideon ben Yo’ash did this thing’.

30 The people of the town said to Yo’ash, ‘Bring your son out: he’s to die, because he demolished the Master’s altar and because he cut down the totem pole that was by it’. 31 But Yo’ash said to all who stood round him, ‘Do you yourselves argue for the Master? Or do you yourselves deliver him? The person who argues for him should be put to death by morning. If he’s a god, he should argue for himself, because someone has demolished his altar’. 32 That day they called him Yerubba’al (‘Master-must-argue’), saying ‘The Master must argue against him, because he demolished his altar’.

**6.33 The Fleece**

33 Now all Midyan, Amaleq, and the Easterners gathered together, crossed over, and camped in the Yizre’e’l Vale, 34 and Yahweh’s spirit clothed itself in Gideon. He blew on the horn, and the Abi’ezrites had themselves called out to follow him. 35 When he sent envoys through all Menashsheh, they too had themselves called out to follow him, and when he sent envoys through Asher, through Zebulun, and through Naphtali, they went up to meet them.

36 Gideon said to God, ‘If you’re really going to deliver Israel by my hand, as you spoke: 37 here, I’m placing a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there’s dew on the fleece alone but on all the ground it’s dry, I’ll acknowledge that you will deliver Israel by my hand as you spoke’. 38 So it happened. He started early next day, squeezed the fleece, and wrung out dew from the fleece, a full bowl of water.

39 Gideon said to God, ‘May your anger not rage against me and I’ll speak just one more time. May I please test with the fleece only one more time. May there please be dry on the fleece alone but on all the ground may there be dew’. 40 God did so that night. There was dry on the fleece alone but on the ground there was dew.

7 Yerubba’al (i.e., Gideon) and all the company with him started early and camped above Harod Spring; the Midyanite camp was north of him at Moreh Hill, in the vale. 2 Yahweh said to Gideon, ‘The company that’s with you is too big for me to give Midyan into their hand, so Israel doesn’t take glory for itself over me, saying “My hand delivered me”. 3 Now call out, please, in the ears of the company, “Whoever is afraid and trembling is to go back and fly from Mount Gil’ad”’. 22,000 of the company went back; 10,000 remained.

**7.4 How to Increase the Odds against Yourself**

4 Yahweh said to Gideon, ‘The company is still big. Get them to go down to the water and I’ll smelt them for you there. The one of whom I say to you, ‘This one is to go with you’, he’s to go with you. Everyone that I say to you, ‘This one’s not to go with you’, he’s not to go’.

5 So he got the company to go down to the water. Yahweh said to Gideon, ‘Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue as a dog laps, you’re to place apart; and everyone who bends down on his knees to drink’. 6 The number of people who lapped with their hand into their mouth was 300. All the rest of the company bent down on their knees to drink water. 7 Yahweh said to Gideon, ‘With the 300 men who were lapping I shall deliver you and give Midyan into your hand, while the entire company are to go each individual to his place’. 8 So they got the company’s provisions in their hand, and their horns, while he sent off every Israelite each one to his tents, but kept strong hold of the 300 men.

The Midyanite camp was below him in the vale. 9 That night Yahweh said to him, ‘Set off, go down against the camp, because I’ve given it into your hand. 10 If you’re afraid to go down, you yourself go down to the camp with Purah your boy 11 and listen to what they speak of, and afterward your hands will be strong and you’ll go down against the camp’. So he himself went down with Purah his boy to the edge of where the men organized into companies were in the camp. 12 Midyan, Amaleq, and all the Easterners were lying in the vale like a locust swarm in their large number, and there was no counting their camels, like the sea on the seashore in their large number.

**7.13 The Man with a Dream**

13 Gideon came, and there, a man was recounting a dream to his neighbour. He said, ‘Here, I had a dream. There, a loaf of barley bread was rolling against the Midyanite camp. It came to a tent and struck it down, and it fell. It turned it over, upside down. The tent fell’. 14 His neighbour answered, ‘This is nothing but the sword of Gideon ben Yo’ash, the Israelite. God has given Midyan and the entire camp into his hand’. 15 When Gideon heard the recounting of the dream and its explaining, he bowed low. He went back to the Israelite camp and said, ‘Set off, because Yahweh has given the Midyanite camp into your hand’.

16 He divided the 300 men into three units and put horns into the hand of each of them, with empty pitchers and torches inside the pitchers. 17 He said to them, ‘Look at me and do the same.Here am I, coming against the edge of the camp. As I do, so you’re to do. 18 I’ll blow on my horn, I and everyone who‘s with me, and you’re to blow on your horns, as well, round the entire camp, and you’re to say, “Yahweh’s and Gideon’s!”’

19 So Gideon and the 300 men who were with him came against the edge of the camp at the start of the middle watch. They had only then actually set up the watchmen. They blew on the horns, with the pitchers to be smashed that were in their hand, 20 and the three units blew on their horns and broke the pitchers and took strong hold of the torches in their left hand while the horns for blowing were in their right hand. They called, ‘Yahweh’s sword and Gideon’s’ 21 and stood each person where he was round the camp. The entire camp ran and shouted and fled. 22 The 300 horns blew and Yahweh set one person’s sword against his neighbour in the entire camp. The camp fled as far as Bet Shittim, toward Tsererah, as far as the edge of Meholah Meadow near Tabbat.

**7.23 Oreb and Ze’eb**

23 Israelites from Naphtali, from Asher, and from all Menashsheh had themselves called out, and pursued after Midyan, 24 while Gideon sent envoys through the entire highland of Ephrayim saying, ‘Go down to meet Midyan and capture their water as far as Bet Barah and the Jordan’. All the Ephrayimites had themselves called out, and they captured the water as far as Bet Barah and the Jordan. 25 They captured two Midyanite officers, Oreb and Ze’eb, and killed Oreb at Oreb’s Crag and killed Ze’eb at Ze’eb’s Winepress. So they pursued Midyan, and the head of Oreb and Ze’eb they brought to Gideon from across the Jordan.

8 But the Ephrayimites said to him, ‘Why did you do this thing to us, not calling for us when you went to battle against Midyan?’ They argued with him strongly. 2 He said to them, ‘What have I done now compared with you? Aren’t Ephrayim’s gleanings better than Abi’ezer’s reaping? 3 Into your hand God gave the Midyanite officers Oreb and Ze’eb. What could I do compared with you?’ Then their feelings against him relaxed, when he spoke this word.

4 Gideon came to the Jordan. He was crossing, he and the 300 men who were with him, faint as they were pursuing. 5 He said to the people of Sukkot, ‘Please give us loaves of bread for the company that’s after me, because they’re faint and I’m pursuing after Zebah and Tsalmunna, the Midyanite kings’. 6 The officials of Sukkot said to him, ‘Is the palm of Zebah and Salmunna in your hand now, that we should give your army bread?’ 7 Gideon said, ‘Therefore, when Yahweh gives Zebah and Salmunna into my hand, I’ll thresh your flesh with wilderness thorns and with briars’.

8 From there he went up to Penu’el and spoke to them in this same way, and the people of Penu’el answered him as the people of Sukkot had answered. 9 So he also said to the people of Penu’el, ‘When I come back with things being well, I’ll demolish this tower’.

**8.10 They Were My Brothers**

10 Now Zebah and Tsalmunna were at Qarqor and their camp with them, some 15,000, all that was left of the entire camp of the Easterners; the fallen were 120,000 men drawing the sword. 11 Gideon went up the tent-dwellers road, east of Nobah and Yogbehah, and struck down the camp when the camp was feeling confident. 12 Zebah and Tsalmunna fled and he pursued after them. He captured the two Midyanite kings, Zebah and Tsalmunna, and made the entire camp tremble.

13 Gideon ben Yo’ash came back from the battle, from Heres Ascent. 14 He captured a boy from among the people of Sukkot and questioned him, and he wrote down for him the officials of Sukkot and its elders, seventy-seven people. 15 He came to the people of Sukkot and said, ‘Here are Zebah and Tsalmunna, about whom you reviled me, saying “Is the palm of Zebah and Salmunna in your hand, that we should give bread to your weary men?”’. 16 He got the town’s elders, and wilderness thorns and briars, and taught the people of Sukkot with them. 17 The tower at Penu’el he demolished, and he killed the town’s people.

18 He said to Zebah and to Tsalmunna, ‘Where are the men that you killed at Tabor?’ They said, ‘They were just like you, the very appearance of a king’s sons’. 19 He said, ‘They were my brothers, my mother’s sons. As Yahweh lives, if you had let them live, I would not have killed you’. 20 He said to Yeter, his firstborn, ‘Get up, kill them’. But the boy didn’t draw his sword, because he was afraid, because he was still a boy. 21 Zebah and Tsalmunna said, ‘You yourself get up and attack us, because “As a man is, so is his strength”’. So Gideon got up and killed Zebah and Tsalmunna, and took the crescents that were on their camels’ necks.

**8.22 ‘I’m Not the Hero; the Hero is God’**

22 The Israelites said to Gideon, ‘Rule over us, both you and your son and your grandson, because you’ve delivered us from the hand of Midyan’. 23 Gideon said to them, ‘I myself won’t rule over you and my son won’t rule over you. Yahweh is the one who will rule over you’.

24 But Gideon said to them, ‘I will ask something of you. Each man, give me the earring that was his spoil’ (because they had gold earrings, because they were Yishma’e’lites). 25 They said, ‘We’ll certainly give them’. They spread out a coat and threw there, each man, the earring that was his spoil. 26 The weight of the gold earrings that he asked for came to 1700 in gold, apart from the crescents, pendants, and purple robes that were on the Midyanite kings, and apart from the collars that were on their camels’ necks. 27 Gideon made it into a chasuble and placed it in his town, in Ophrah. All Israel whored after it there. It became a snare to Gideon and to his household.

28 So Midyan bowed down before the Israelites. They didn’t raise their head again. The region was calm for forty years in Gideon’s time.

29 Yerubba’al ben Yo’ash went and lived at home. 30 Gideon had seventy sons who issued from his own body, because he had many wives. 31 His secondary wife who was in Shekem also gave birth to a son for him; he named him Abimelek. 32 Gideon ben Yo’ash died in a good old age and was buried in his father Yo’ash’s tomb in Ophrah of the Abi’ezrites.

**8.33 The Man Who Would Be King**

33 When Gideon died, the Israelites again whored after the Masters, and they made the Pact Master into god for themselves. 34 The Israelites didn’t keep Yahweh their God in mind, the one who rescued them from the hand of all their enemies round them. 35 They didn’t act in commitment with the household of Yerubba’al (Gideon) in accordance with all the good that he had done in Israel.

9 Abimelek, son of Yerubba’al, went to Shekem to his mother’s brothers and spoke to them and to the entire kin-group in his mother’s ancestral household: 2 ‘Speak, will you, in the ears of all the Shekem landowners: “Which is better for you, seventy men ruling over you (all the sons of Yerubba’al), or one man ruling over you? Be mindful that I am your own flesh and blood”’. 3 His mother’s brothers spoke all these things about him in the ears of all the Shekem landowners. Their mind turned away to follow Abimelek, because (they said), ‘He’s our brother’, 4 and they gave him seventy in silver from the house of the Pact Master. With these, Abimelek hired empty-headed and wild men and they followed him. 5 He came to his father’s house in Ophrah and killed his brothers, the sons of Yerubba’al, seventy men on one stone. But Yotam, youngest son of Yerubba’al, was left, because he hid.

6 All the Shekem landowners and the entire Bet Millo gathered, and went and installed Abimelek as king by the oak at the column which was in Shekem.

**9.7 A Parable about Leadership**

7 People told Yotam and he went and stood on top of Mount Gerizim. He lifted his voice and called to them: ‘Listen to me, Shekem landowners, so God may listen to you. 8 The trees went with resolve to anoint a king over themselves. They said to the olive tree, “Do reign over us”. 9 The olive tree said to them, “Should I leave off from my richness, I by whom people honour God and human beings, and go to wave over the trees?” 10 So the trees said to the fig tree, “You go reign over us”. 11 The fig tree said to them, “Should I leave off from my sweetness, my good fruit and go to wave over the trees?” 12 So the trees said to the vine, “You go reign over us”. 13 The vine said to them, “Should I leave off from my new wine, which makes God and human beings rejoice, and go to wave over the trees?”

14 So all the trees said to the thorn bush, “You go reign over us”. 15 The thorn bush said to the trees, “If you’re going to anoint me as king over you with truthfulness, come take shelter in my shade. But if not, may fire come out of the thorn bush and devour the cedars of the Lebanon”.

16 So now, if you’ve acted in truthfulness and integrity and made Abimelek king, and if you’ve done something good by Yerubba’al and by his household, and if you’ve acted toward him in accordance with the dealing of his hands—17 that my father battled on your account and threw his life a distance away and rescued you from the hand of Midyan….

18 But you people have risen up against my father’s household today and killed his sons, seventy men on one stone, and made Abimelek, his handmaid’s son, king over the Shekem landowners, because he’s your brother.

**9.19 Ambition Rebounds**

19 If you’ve acted in truthfulness and integrity with Yerubba’al and with his household this day, rejoice in Abimelek, and may he rejoice in you, too. 20 But if not, may fire come out from Abimelek and devour the Shekem landowners and Bet Millo, and may fire come out from the Shekem landowners and from Bet Millo and devour Abimelek!’ 21 Then Yotam took flight. He escaped and went to Be’er, and lived there, away from the presence of Abimelek his brother.

22 Abimelek held office over Israel for three years, 23 but God sent a bad spirit between Abimelek and the Shekem landowners, and the Shekem landowners broke faith with Abimelek, 24 so that the violence against the seventy sons of Yerubba’al might come home and so that the bloodshed be put on Abimelek their brother who killed them and on the Shekem landowners who had strengthened his hands in the killing of his brothers. 25 The Shekem landowners laid ambushes for him on the tops of the mountains and robbed anyone who passed by them on the road, and it was told Abimelek.

26 Ga’al ben Ebed and his brothers came and passed through Shekem, and the Shekem landowners put their trust in him. 27 They went out to the fields, cut their vineyards and trod them, and made a great celebration. They came into their god’s house and ate and drank, and slighted Abimelek. 28 Ga’al ben Ebed said, ‘Who is Abimelek, and who is Shekem, that we should serve him? Isn’t he the son of Yerubba’al, and Zebul is his appointee? Serve the men of Hamor, the ancestor of Shekem! Why should we be people who serve him? 29 If only this people were in my hand! I would remove Abimelek. Someone would have said to Abimelek, “Amass your army and go out!”’

**9.30 The Ambush**

30 Zebul, the town official, heard the words of Ga’al ben Ebed, and his anger raged. 31 He sent envoys to Abimelek at Tormah to say, ‘Here, Ga’al ben Ebed and his brothers are coming to Shekem, and here, they’re besieging the town against you. 32 So now, set off by night, you and the company that’s with you, and make an ambush in the fields. 33 In the morning, at sunrise, you should start early and charge against the town. Here, he and the company that’s with him are going to go out against you, and you can do to him whatever your hand finds to do’.

34 So Abimelek and the entire company that was with him set off by night and laid an ambush against Shekem in four columns. 35 Ga’al ben Ebed went out and stood at the entrance of the town gateway, and Abimelek and the company that was with him arose from the ambush.

36 Ga’al saw the company and said to Zebul, ‘There, a company is coming down from the tops of the mountains!’ Zebul said to him, ‘You’re seeing the shadow of the mountains as if they were men’. 37 Ga’al spoke once again and said, ‘There, a company is coming down from the centre of the land, and a company is coming from the Elon Me’onenim road!’ 38 Zebul said to him, ‘Where then is your mouth with which you say, ‘Who is Abimelek that we should serve him?’’ This is the company that you rejected, isn’t it! Please go out now, and do battle against it!’

39 So Ga’al went out before the Shekem landowners and battled against Abimelek, 40 but Abimelek pursued him and he fled from before him. Many people fell, run through, as far as the entrance of the gateway. 41 Abimelek stayed in Arumah, but Zebul drove out Ga’al and his brothers from living in Shekem.

**9.42 Undone by a Woman**

42 Next day, the people went out to the fields, and Abimelek was told. 43 He got the company, divided it into three columns, and set an ambush in the fields. He looked: there was the people coming out from the town. He set upon them and struck them down. 44 Abimelek and the columns that were with him charged and stood at the entrance of the town gateway. The other two columns charged against everyone who was in the fields and struck them down, 45 while Abimelek was battling against the town all that day. He captured the town and killed the people that was in it, demolished the town and sewed it with salt.

46 All the Shekem Tower landowners heard, and came into a tunnel at the house of the Pact God. 47 It was told Abimelek that all the Shekem Tower landowners had collected together. 48 Abimelek went up Mount Tsalmon, he and the entire company that was with him. Abimelek got axes in his hand, cut a tree branch, lifted it, and put it on his shoulder. He said to the company that was with him, ‘What you have seen I did, hurry, do like me’. 49 The entire company also cut a branch each, followed Abimelek, placed them against the tunnel, and set fire to the tunnel over them. All the people in the Shekem Tower also died, some thousand men and women.

50 Abimelek then went to Tebets, camped against Tebets, and captured it. 51 There was a strong tower inside the town and all the men and women, all the town’s landowners, fled there, shut themselves in, and went up onto the tower roof. 52 Abimelek came right up to the tower and battled against it, and drew up close to the tower entrance to burn it in fire. 53 But a woman threw an upper millstone on Abimelek’s head and broke his skull. 54 He quickly called to the boy carrying his things and said to him, ‘Draw your sword and put me to death, so they don’t say of me, “A woman killed him”. So his boy thrust him through, and he died.

55 The Israelites saw that Abimelek was dead, and went each man to his place.

**9.56 Peace for a While**

56 So God turned back Abimelek’s bad action which he had undertaken toward his father, in killing his seventy brothers, and God turned back on their head all the bad action of the people of Shekem. The slight by Yotam son of Yerubba’al came true for them.

10 After Abimelek, there arose to deliver Israel Tola ben Pu’ah, son of Dodo, an Issakarite. He was living in Shamir in the highland of Ephrayim. 2 He exercised authority for Israel for twenty-three years. He died, and was buried in Shamir.

3 After him, there arose Ya’ir the Gil’adite. He exercised authority for Israel for twenty-two years. 4 He had thirty sons riding on thirty donkey colts, and he had thirty towns (they call them Ya’ir’s Villages until this day) which were in the region of Gil’ad. 5 Ya’ir died and was buried in Qamon.

6 But the Israelites again did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes and served the Masters, the Ashtars, the gods of Aram, the gods of Tsidon, the gods of Mo’ab, the gods of the Ammonites, and the gods of the Philistines. They abandoned Yahweh and did not serve him. 7 Yahweh’s anger raged against Israel and he surrendered them into the hand of the Philistines and into the hand of the Ammonites. 8 They shattered and crushed the Israelites that year—for eighteen years, all the Israelites who were across the Jordan in the Amorites’ country, which was in Gil’ad. 9 The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to battle against Judah, against Benjamin, and against the household of Ephrayim. It put great pressure on Israel.

10 So the Israelites cried out to Yahweh: ‘We’ve done wrong against you, because we’ve abandoned our God and served the Masters’.

**10.11 God Finds it Hard to Be Tough**

11 Yahweh said to the Israelites, ‘Isn’t it the case that from the Egyptians, from the Amorites, from the Ammonites, from the Philistines…. 12 And the Tsidonites and Amaleq and Ma’on, they afflicted you, and you cried out to me and I delivered you from their hand. 13 But you – you abandoned me and served other gods. Therefore I won’t deliver you again. 14 Go and cry out to the gods that you’ve chosen. They can deliver you in your time of pressure’.

15 But the Israelites said to Yahweh, ‘We’ve done wrong. You yourself, act toward us in accordance with what’s good in your eyes. Only please rescue us this day’. 16 They removed the foreign gods from among them and served Yahweh, and his heart was overwhelmed by Israel’s oppression.

17 The Ammonites had themselves called out and camped in Gil’ad, and the Israelites gathered and camped at The Watchtower. 18 The company (Gil’ad’s officers) said, one to his neighbour, ‘Who is the man who will start battling against the Ammonites? He’s to be head over all the people who live in Gil’ad’.

11 Now Yiphtah the Gil’adite was a forceful strong man, but he was the son of a whore. Gil’ad fathered Yiphtah, 2 but Gil’ad’s wife gave birth to sons for him, and his wife’s sons grew up and drove Yiphtah out. They said to him, ‘You’re to have no domain of your own in our father’s household, because you’re the son of another woman’. 3 So Yiphtah ran away from before his brothers and lived in the region of Good. Empty-headed people collected together to Yiphtah and went out with him.

4 After a time, the Ammonites battled with Israel, 5 and when the Ammonites battled with Israel, the Gil’adite elders went to get Yiphtah from the region of Good. 6 They said to Yiphtah, ‘Come, will you, and be our commander, so we can battle against the Ammonites’.

**11.7 An Invitation Yiphtah Can’t Refuse**

7 Yiphtah said to the Gil’adite elders, ‘You’re the people who were hostile to me and drove me out of my father’s household, aren’t you. So why have you come to me now when things are pressing for you?’ 8 The Gil’adite elders said to Yiphtah, ‘That’s why we’ve come back to you now, so you can go with us and battle against the Ammonites, and you will be head of all the people living in Gil’ad for us’.

9 Yiphtah said to the Gil’adite elders, ‘If you’re bringing me back to battle against the Ammonites and Yahweh gives them over before me, I myself will be your head’. 10 The Gil’adite elders said to Yiphtah, ‘Yahweh himself will be listening between us if we don’t act in accordance with your word, just so’. 11 So Yiphtah went with the Gil’adite elders, and the people made him head and commander over them. Yiphtah spoke all his words before Yahweh at The Watchtower,

12 Yiphtah sent envoys to the Ammonites’ king to say, ‘What is between me and you that you’ve come against me to battle against my land?’ 13 The Ammonites’ king said to Yiphtah’s envoys, ‘Israel took my land when it went up from Egypt, from the Armon as far as the Yabboq, and as far as the Jordan. So now do give it back peacefully’.

14 Yiphtah once again sent envoys to the Ammonites’ king. 15 He said to him, ‘Yiphtah has said this: “Israel didn’t take Mo’ab’s land or the Ammonites’ land, 16 because when they went up from Egypt, Israel went through the wilderness as far as the Reed Sea, then came to Qadesh. 17 Israel sent envoys to the king of Edom to say, ‘Please may I pass through your country’, but the king of Edom didn’t listen. It also sent to the king of Mo’ab and he wasn’t willing. Israel lived at Qadesh, 18 then went through the wilderness and went round the country of Edom and the country of Mo’ab, and came east of the country of Mo’ab. They camped across the Arnon and they didn’t come inside Mo’ab’s border, because Mo’ab’s border is the Arnon.

**11.19 How Israel Tried to Be Peaceable**

19 Then Israel sent envoys to Sihon king of the Amorites, king of Heshbon. Israel said to him, ‘Please may I pass through your country to get to my place’. 20 But Sihon didn’t trust Israel to pass through his border. Sihon gathered his entire company and camped at Yahats, and battled with Israel. 21 But Yahweh the God of Israel gave Sihon and his entire company into Israel’s hand, and they struck them down. So Israel took possession of the entire country of the Amorites living in that country. 22 They took possession of the entire border of the Amorites from the Arnon as far as the Yabboq, and from the wilderness to the Jordan.

23 So now, Yahweh the God of Israel—he dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and are you to dispossess it? 24 Won’t you possess what Kemosh your god enabled you to possess, and we’ll possess all that Yahweh our God dispossessed from before us? 25 And are you now so much better than Balaq ben Tsippor, king of Mo’ab? Did he argue at all with Israel or battle at all with them?

26 While Israel has been living in Heshbon and in its daughter-towns, in Ar’or and in its daughter-towns, and in all the towns that are on the sides of the Arnon for three hundred years, why haven’t you rescued them during this time? 27 I for my part haven’t wronged you, but you for your part are dealing badly with me by battling against me. May Yahweh, who exercises authority, decide authoritatively today between the Israelites and the Ammonites’.

28 The Ammmonites’ king didn’t listen to the words of Yiphtah which he sent to him. 29 Then Yahweh’s spirit came on Yiphtah and he passed through Gil’ad and Menashsheh, passed Watchtower in Gil’ad, and from Watchtower in Gil’ad passed on to the Ammonites.

**11.30 The Man Whose Promise Makes the Blood Run Cold**

30 Yiphtah made a pledge to Yahweh: ‘If you do actually give the Ammonites into my hand, 31 then the one coming out to meet me, who comes out of the doors of my house when I come back from the Ammonites with things being well, will be Yahweh’s. I shall offer this one up as a burnt offering’.

32 So Yiphtah passed on to the Ammonites to do battle against them, and Yahweh gave them into his hand. 33 He struck them down from Aro’er as far when you come to Minnit, twenty towns, and as far as Keramim Meadow, in a very great rout. So the Ammonites bowed down before the Israelites.

34 Yiphtah came home to The Watchtower, and there was his daughter coming out to meet him with a tambourine and with dancing. There was just her, an only child; apart from her he had no son or daughter. 35 When he saw her, he tore his clothes and said, ‘Oh, my daughter, you’ve bent me down, bent me down, you yourself have become someone bringing disaster on me. I opened my mouth myself to Yahweh. I can’t go back’. 36 She said to him, ‘Father, you opened your mouth to Yahweh. Do to me as it came from your mouth, after Yahweh has performed full redress for you from your enemies, the Ammonites’.

37 She said to her father, ‘May this thing be done for me. Let me go for two months so I can walk and go down on the mountains and bewail my girlhood, I and my friends’. 38 He said, ‘Go’, and sent her for two months. She and her friends went and bewailed her girlhood on the mountains. 39 At the end of two months she came back to her father and he performed the pledge that he had made in connection with her. She had not had sex with a man.

It became a decree in Israel: 40 from time to time Israelite girls would go to commemorate the daughter of Yiphtah the Gil’adite, for four days in the year.

**12:1 Shibboleth**

12 Then the Ephrayimites had themselves called out, crossed to Tsaphon, and said to Yiphtah, ‘Why did you cross over to battle against the Ammonites and not call for us to go with you? We’ll burn your house in fire over you’. 2 Yiphtah said to them, ‘I was involved in an argument, my people and the Ammonites, seriously. I called out to you and you didn’t deliver me from their hand. 3 I saw that you were not a deliverer and I took my life in the palm of my hand and passed over to the Ammonites, and Yahweh gave them into my hand. So why have you gone up against me this day to do battle against me?’

4 Yiphtah collected all the Gil’adites and did battle with Ephrayim. The Gil’adites struck Ephrayim down, because they said, ‘You’re Ephrayimite escapees, Gil’ad within Ephrayim—within Menashsheh’. 5 Gil’ad captured Ephrayim’s Jordan crossings, and when Ephrayimite escapees would say, ‘I want to cross’, the Gil’adites said to him, ‘Are you an Ephrayimite?’ and he said, ‘No’. 6 They then said to him, ‘Say *shibbolet*, please’, and he said *sibbolet*, and couldn’t speak in that way. So they took hold of him and killed him by the Jordan crossings. 42,000 Ephrayimites fell at that time.

7 Yiphtah exercised authority for Israel for six years. Then Yiphtah the Gil’adite died, and was buried in the towns of Gil’ad.

8 After him, Ibtsan from Bet Lehem exercised authority for Israel. 9 He had thirty sons and thirty daughters whom he sent off abroad, and he brought in thirty girls for his sons from abroad. He exercised authority for Israel for seven years. 10 Ibtsan died, and was buried in Bet Lehem.

11 After him, Elon the Zebulunite exercised authority for Israel. He exercised authority for Israel for ten years. 12 Elon the Zubulunite died, and was buried in Ayyalon in the region of Zebulun.

13 After him, Abdon ben Hillel the Pir’atonite exercised authority for Israel. 14 He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, riding on seventy donkeys. He exercised authority for Israel for eight years. 15 Abdon ben Hillel the Pir’atonite died, and was buried in Pir’aton in the region of Ephrayim, in the highland of the Amaleqites.

**13.1 Entertaining Angels Unawares**

13 The Israelites again did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes and Yahweh gave them into the hand of the Philistines for forty years.

2 There was a certain man from Tsor’ah, from the kin-group of Dan. His name was Manoah. His wife was infertile; she had not given birth. 3 Yahweh’s envoy appeared to the woman and said to her, ‘Here, please, you’re infertile, you haven’t given birth, but you’re going to get pregnant and give birth to a son. 4 So now keep watch, please, so you don’t drink wine or liquor and don’t eat anything taboo, 5 because here, you’re going to get pregnant and give birth to a son, and no razor is to go up onto his head, because the boy is to be a consecrated person for God from the womb. He’s the one who will start to deliver Israel from the hand of the Philistines’.

6 The woman came and said to her husband, ‘A supernatural man came to me; his appearance was like that of a divine envoy, very awe-inspiring. I didn’t ask him where he was from and he didn’t tell me his name. He said to me, ‘Here, you’re going to get pregnant and give birth to a son. So now don’t drink wine or liquor and don’t eat anything taboo, because the boy’s to be a consecrated person for God from the womb until the day of his death’.

8 Manoah entreated Yahweh: ‘Pardon me, Lord, may the supernatural man whom you sent please come to us again and instruct us what we’re to do for the boy who’s to be born?’ 9 God listened to Manoah’s voice, and God’s envoy again came to the woman. She was sitting in the fields and Manoah her husband was not with her. 10 The woman hurried and ran and told her husband, and said to him, ‘There, the man who came that day has appeared to me’.

**13.11 A Logical Woman**

11 Manoah got up and followed his wife. He came to the man and said to him, ‘Are you the man who spoke to the woman?’ He said, ‘I am’. 12 Manoah said, ‘May your words come true now! What will be the rule for the boy and the work for him?’ 13 Yahweh’s envoy said to Manoah, ‘The woman is to keep watch in connection with everything that I said. 14 Of anything that comes from the grapevine she’s not to eat. Wine and liquor she’s not to drink. Anything taboo she’s not to eat. Everything that I ordered her, she’s to keep watch.

15 Manoah said to Yahweh’s envoy, ‘We’ll please hold you back and prepare a kid goat from the flock before you’. 16 Yahweh’s envoy said to Manoah, ‘If you hold me back, I won’t eat of your meal, but if you make a burnt offering, you may offer it up for Yahweh’ (because Manoah didn’t know that it was Yahweh’s envoy). 17 Manoah said to Yahweh’s envoy, ‘What is your name? When your words come true, we will honour you’. 18 Yahweh’s envoy said to him, ‘Why is it that you ask my name when it’s extraordinary?’

19 Manoah got a kid goat from the flock and a grain offering and offered them up on a crag for Yahweh, and he did something extraordinary as Manoah and his wife were looking. 20 When the flame went up from on the altar to the heavens, Yahweh’s envoy went up in the altar flame as Manoah and his wife were looking. They fell on their faces to the earth. 21 Yahweh’s envoy didn’t appear ever again to Manoah and his wife.

Then Manoah knew that it had been Yahweh’s envoy. 22 Manoah said to his wife, ‘We’ll die, we’ll die, because we’ve seen God!’ 23 His wife said to him, ‘If Yahweh wanted to put us to death, he wouldn’t have received the burnt offering and the grain offering from our hand and he wouldn’t have let us see all these things, or just now have let us hear something like this’.

24 The woman gave birth to a son and named him Samson [Shimshon]. The boy grew, and Yahweh blessed him. 25 Yahweh’s spirit started to impel him in Dan’s Camp between Tsor’ah and Eshta’ol.

**14.1 The Right One for Me**

14 Samson went down to Timnah and saw a woman in Timnah among the Philistine girls. 2 He went up and told his father and his mother and said, ‘I saw a woman in Timnah among the Philistine girls, so now, get her for me as wife’. 3 His father and his mother said to him, ‘Isn’t there a wife among your brothers’ girls or among all my people, that you’re going to take a wife from the foreskinned Philistines?’ Samson said to his father, ‘Get that one for me, because she’s right in my eyes’. 4 His father and his mother didn’t know that it stemmed from Yahweh, because he was looking for an opportunity from the Philistines. At that time the Philistines were ruling over Israel.

5 Samson went down to Timnah with his father and his mother and they came as far as the vineyards at Timnah. And there, a lion whelp, roaring as it met him. 6 Yahweh’s spirit thrust itself onto him and he tore it apart as one might tear apart a kid. There was nothing in his hand. He didn’t tell his father and his mother what he’d done.

7 He went down and spoke to the woman. She was right in Samson’s eyes. 8 He went back some time later to get her, and he turned aside to see the remains of the lion. There, a swarm of bees was in the lion’s corpse, with honey. 9 He scraped it out into his palms and went on, eating it. He went to his father and to his mother and gave them some, and they ate it. He didn’t tell them that he had scraped the honey from the lion’s corpse.

10 His father went down to the woman and Samson made a banquet there, because that was what the young men used to do. 11 When they saw him, they got thirty good friends and they came to be with him.

**14.12 Honey, We Solved the Conundrum**

12 Samson said to them, ‘I shall propound a conundrum to you, please. If you can properly explain it to me in the seven days of the banquet and solve it, I’ll give you thirty shirts and thirty changes of clothing. 13 But if you can’t explain it, you’re to give me thirty shirts and thirty changes of clothing’. They said to him, ‘Propound your conundrum and we’ll listen. 14 He said to them:

From the eater there came out something to eat,

From the vigorous there came out something sweet.

They couldn’t explain the conundrum for three days.

15 On the seventh day they said to Samson’s wife, ‘Coax your husband so he explains the conundrum for us, or else we’ll burn you and your father’s household in fire. Was it to dispossess us that you invited us? Wasn’t it?’ 16 So Samson’s wife wailed at him and said, ‘Really you dislike me. You don’t love me. You propounded a conundrum to my people and you haven’t explained it to me’. He said to her, ‘There, I didn’t explain it to my father and to my mother, and am I to explain it to you? 17 She wailed at him for the seven days that their banquet lasted. On the seventh day he explained it to her, because she pressed him, and she explained the conundrum to the members of her people. 18 So the men of the town said to him on the seventh day, before the sun went down:

What’s sweeter than honey,

What’s more vigorous than a lion?

He said to them,

If you had not ploughed with my heifer

You would not have solved my conundrum!

19 Yahweh’s spirit thrust itself onto him and he went down to Ashqelon and from them he struck down thirty men. He got their strip and gave the changes of clothing to the men who had explained the conundrum. But his anger raged and he went up to his father’s house. 20 Samson’s wife came to belong to his good friend, one who had been his friend.

**15.1 Samson’s Redress**

15 After some time, during the time of the wheat harvest, Samson visited his wife with a kid goat from the flock. He said, ‘I want to come in and have sex with my wife in the room’, but her father wouldn’t let him come in. 2 Her father said, ‘I said for sure that you totally disliked her and I gave her to your good friend. Her little sister is better than her. She can be yours in place of her, can’t she?’ 3 Samson said to them, ‘This time I’m free of guilt in relation to the Philistines when I deal badly with them!’

4 Samson went and caught 300 foxes and got torches. He made them face tail to tail and put a torch between two tails, in the middle, 5 set fire to the torches, and sent them off into the Philistiines’ standing grain. He burned up the stacked grain, and both the standing grain and the olive vineyard. 6 The Philistines said, ‘Who did this?’ and said, ‘Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite, because he took his wife and gave her to his good friend’. So the Philistines went up and burned her and her father in fire.

7 Samson said to them, ‘If you act like this, I shall definitely have redress against you, and only after shall I leave off’. 8 He struck them down, leg upon thigh, in a great rout. He then went down and lived in a cleft in Etam Rock. 9 The Philistines went up and camped against Judah and ran loose in Lehi, 10 and the Judahites said, ‘Why have you gone up against us?’ They said, ‘We’ve gone up to bind Samson, to do to him as he did to us’. 11 So 3000 men from Judah went down to the cleft in Etam Rock and said to Samson, ‘Don’t you acknowledge that the Philistines are ruling over us? So why have you done this to us?’ He said to them, ‘As they did to me, so I did to them’.

**15.12 Jawbone**

12 They said to him, ‘It’s to bind you that we’ve gone down, to give you over into the Philistines’ hand’. Samson said to them, ‘Swear to me that you yourselves won’t attack me’. 13 They said to him, ‘No, but we’ll simply bind you and give you over into their hand. We definitely won’t put you to death’. So they bound him with two new ropes and got him to go up from the Rock. 14 As he came to Lehi and the Philistines shouted on meeting him, Yahweh’s spirit thrust itself onto him and the ropes that were on his arms became like flax that burns up in fire. His bonds melted from on his hands. 15 He found a fresh donkey jawbone, put out his hand and got it, and struck down a thousand men with it. 16 Samson said,

With a donkey jawbone—a donkey-heap, two donkey-heaps;

With a donkey jawbone I’ve struck down a thousand.

17 As he finished speaking, he threw the jawbone from his hand. He called that place Lehi [Jawbone] Height.

18 He was very thirsty. He called to Yahweh and said, ‘You yourself have given this great deliverance by your servant’s hand. Now am I to die of thirst and fall into the hand of the foreskinned?’ 19 God split the hollow that was at Lehi, and water came out from it. He drank, and his spirit came back and he revived. That’s why has been named Haqqore [The Caller] Spring, which is in Lehi, until this day.

20 He exercised authority for Israel in the time of the Philistines for twenty years.

**16.1 Love Actually**

16 Samson went to Gaza and saw there a woman who was a whore, and he had sex with her. 2 Someone said to the Gazites, ‘Samson has come here’. They came round and laid an ambush for him all night at the town gateway. They were still all night, saying ‘At morning light, we’ll kill him’. 3 But Samson lay in bed until midnight, then got up at midnight, took hold of the doors of the town gateway and the two gateposts, pulled them out with the bar, put them on his shoulders, and took them up to the top of the mountain that’s east of Hebron.

4 After that he loved a woman in Wadi Soreq named Delilah. 5 The Philistines’ lords went up to her and said to her, ‘Coax him and see whereby is his great energy and whereby we can overcome him and bind him, so as to subdue him. We—we’ll each give you 1100 in silver’.

6 So Delilah said to Samson, ‘Please tell me whereby is your great energy and whereby you could be bound so as to subdue you’. 7 Samson said to her, ‘If they bind me with seven fresh cords that haven’t been dried, I’d become weak. I ‘d be like any human being’. 8 So the Philistines’ lords took up to her seven fresh cords that hadn’t been dried and she bound him with them, 9 while the ambush was sitting waiting for her in a room. She said to him, ‘Philistines are on you, Samson’, and he snapped the tendons as a strand of fiber snaps when it smells fire. So his energy didn’t become known.

10 Delilah said to Samson, ‘Here, you’ve played about with me. You’ve spoken lies to me. Now, please tell me whereby you could be bound’. 11 He said to her, ‘If they actually bind me with new ropes with which no work has been done, I’d become weak, I’d be like any human being’. 12 So Delilah got new ropes and bound him with them, and said to him, ‘Philistines are on you, Samson!’, while the ambush was sitting waiting in a room. He snapped them from on his arms like a thread.

**16.13 He Didn’t Realize that Yahweh Had left Him**

13 Delilah said to Samson, ‘Until now you’ve played about with me. You’ve spoken lies to me. Tell me whereby you could be bound’. He said to her, ‘If you weave seven braids from my head with the web’. 14 She pinned it with a peg and said to him, ‘Philistines are on you, Samson’. He woke up from his sleep and pulled out the peg (the loom) and the web.

15 She said to him, ‘How can you say “I love you” when your mind isn’t with me? These three times you’ve played about with me and not told me whereby is your great energy’. 16 Because she pressed him with her words all the time and begged him, and his spirit was tired to death, 17 he told her everything in his mind. He said to her, ‘No razor has gone up on my head, because I’ve been a consecrated person for God from my mother’s womb. If my hair were cut, my energy would depart from me and I’d be weak. I’d be like any human being’. 18 Delilah saw that he had told her everything in his mind, and she sent and called for the Philistines’ lords: ‘Come up this time, because he’s told me everything in his mind’. The Philistines’ lords went up to her and took up the silver in their hand.

19 She got him to go to sleep on her lap, and called for a man and cut off the seven braids on his head. She started to humble him, and his energy departed from him. 20 She said, ‘Philistines are on you, Samson!’ He woke up from his sleep and said, ‘I’ll go out as at other times and shake myself free’. He didn’t know that Yahweh had departed from him.

21 The Philistines took hold of him and gouged out his eyes. They took him down to Gaza and bound him in copper shackles, and he became a grinder in the prison.

**16.22 But Samson’s Hair Began to Grow Again**

22 But the hair on his head started to grow, when it had been cut off.

23 Now the Philistines’ lords gathered to offer a great sacrifice for Dagan their god, and for a celebration. They said, ‘Our god has given Samson, our enemy, into our hand’. 24 The people saw him and praised their god, because (they said) ‘Our god has given our enemy into our hand, the one who wasted our country and multiplied the number of us run through’. 25 When their heart felt good, they said ‘Call for Samson. He must make fun for us’. So they called for Samson from the prison house and he entertained them.

They stood him between the pillars, 26 and Samson said to the boy who had a strong hold of him by the hand, ‘Let me be and let me feel the pillars that the house depends on, so I can lean on them’. 27 The house was full of men and women. All the Philistines’ lords were there. On the roof were some 3000 men and women watching Samson making fun.

28 Samson called to Yahweh and said, ‘My Lord Yahweh, please be mindful of me. Please just this once, God, make me strong so I can take redress from the Philistines, redress for one of my two eyes’. 29 And Samson grasped the two middle pillars that the house was established on and leaned on them, one with his right hand and one with his left. 30 Samson said, ‘I myself can die with the Philistines’, and he pushed energetically. The house fell on the lords and on the entire company that was in it. The people whom he put to death when he died were more than he put to death when he lived.

31 His brothers and his father’s entire household went down, lifted him, took him up, and buried him between Tsor’ah and Eshta’ol in the grave of Manoah his father. He had exercise authority for Israel for twenty years.

**17.1 Everyone Did What Was All Right in Their Own Eyes**

17 There was a man from the highland of Ephrayim; his name was Micah. 2 He said to his mother, ‘The 1100 in silver that were taken from you, and you uttered a curse and also said it in my ears: here, the silver is with me. I’m the one who took it’. His mother said, ‘May my son be blessed by Yahweh’. 3 He gave back the 1100 in silver to his mother, and his mother said ‘I’m definitively making the silver sacred for Yahweh from my hand for my son to make a statue and a cast image. I now give it back to you’. 4 So he gave the silver back to his mother and she got 200 in silver and gave it to a smith. He made a statue and a cast image, and it was in Micah’s house.

5 This man Micah had a house of God. He made a chasuble and effigies, and commissioned one of his sons and he became priest for him. 6 At that time there was no king in Israel. An individual would do what was all right in his own eyes. 7 But there was a boy from Bet Lehem in Judah, from the clan of Judah. He was a Levite and had been residing there, 8 but this individual went from the town, from Bet Lehem in Judah, to reside wherever he could find somewhere, and he came to the highland of Ephrayim, as far as the house of Micah, as he made his way. 9 Micah said to him, ‘Where do you come from?’ He said to him, ‘I’m a Levite from Bet Lehem in Judah but I’m going so as to reside wherever I can find somewhere’. 10 Micah said to him, ‘Stay with me. You’ll be a father and a priest for me. I’ll give you ten in silver a year, a set of clothes, and your living’. So the Levite went. 11 The Levite agreed to live with the man, and the boy became to him like one of his sons.

12 So Micah commissioned the Levite, and the boy became priest for him. He was in Micah’s household. 13 Micah said, ‘Now I know that Yahweh will be good to me, because the Levite has become priest for me’.

**18.1 Desperate Dan**

18 At that time there was no king in Israel, and at that time the clan of Dan was looking for a domain for itself to live in, because until that day nothing had fallen to it as a domain among Israel’s clans.

2 The Danites sent from their kin-group five men from their total number, men of ability, from Tsor’ah and from Eshta’ol, to investigate the country and search it out. So they said to them, ‘Go and search out the country’, and they came to the highland of Ephrayim, as far as Micah’s house, and stayed the night there.

3 When they were near Micah’s house and recognized the young Levite’s accent they turned aside there and said to him, ‘Who brought you here? What are you doing in this place? What are you here for?’ 4 He said to them, ‘Micah acted like this and like this for me. He hired me and I became priest for him’. 5 They said to him, ‘Please ask of God so we can know if the journey on which we’re going will be successful’. 6 The priest said to them, ‘Go, things will be well. The journey on which you’re going is in front of Yahweh’.

7 The five men went and came to Layish. They saw the people that was within it, living in confidence in accordance with the rule of the Tsidonites, calm and confident, with no one in the region possessing them by force, bringing shame regarding anything; though they were far away from the Tsidonites and had nothing to do with anyone.

8 So they came to their brothers in Tsor’ah and Eshta’ol, and their brothers said to them, ‘What did you find?’ 9 They said, ‘Set off, let’s go up against them, because we’ve looked at the region: there, it’s very good, and you’re sitting still! Don’t be slow to go, to come and take possession of the region. 10 When you come, you’ll come to a people that feels confident, and the region is wide on both sides. Because God has given it into your hand, a place where there’s no lack of anything that’s in the earth.

**18.11 The Unfortunate Micah**

11 So 600 men of the Danite clan from Tsor’ah and Eshta’ol, wrapped round with battle equipment, moved on from there 12 and went up and camped in Ye’arim Township in Judah (for that reason they call that place ‘Dan’s Camp’ until this day—there, it’s west of Ye’arim Township). 13 They passed on from there to the highland of Ephrayim and came as far as Micah’s house. 14 The five men who had gone to investigate the region of Layish said to their brothers, ‘Do you know that in these houses there is a chasuble and effigies and a statue and a cast image? Now acknowledge what you’re to do’.

15 They turned aside there and came into the young Levite’s house at Micah’s house and asked him whether things were well with him, 16 while 600 men wrapped round with battle equipment were standing at the entrance of the gateway (the men who were from the Danites). 17 The five men who had gone to investigate the country went up, came in there, took the statue, the chasuble, the effigies, and the cast image, while the priest was standing at the entrance of the gateway, with the 600 men wrapped round with battle equipment.

18 When these men came into Micah’s house and took the statue with the chasuble, the effigies, and the cast image, the priest said to them, ‘What are you doing?’ 19 They said to him, ‘Quiet. Put your hand on your mouth. Go with us and become a father and a priest for us. Is it better for you to be a priest for the household of one man or to be a priest for a clan, a kin-group in Israel?’

20 The priest’s heart felt good, so he got the chasuble, the effigies, and the cast image, and came among the company. 21 They turned their face and went, and put the little ones, the livestock, and the valuables before them.

**18.22 The Unfortunate People of Layish**

22 When they had gone a distance from Micah’s house, the men who were in the households that were near Micah’s house had themselves called out, caught up with the Danites, 23 and called to the Danites. They turned round and said to Micah, ‘What’s the matter with you, that you’ve had yourself called out?’ 24 He said, ‘You took my gods that I made, and the priest, and you went. What do I still have? And you say to me, “What’s the matter with you?”’ 25 The Danites said to him, ‘Don’t make your voice heard among us, or men who are fierce in spirit may come upon you and gather up your life and the life of your household’.

26 So the Danites went on their way. Micah saw that they were stronger than him, turned his face, and went back to his house, 27 while they took what Micah had made and the priest that he had. They came to Layish, to a people calm and confident, and struck them down with the mouth of the sword, and burned their town in fire. 28 There was no one to rescue because it was far away from Tsidon and they had nothing to do with anyone (it was in the vale that belonged to Bet-rehob).

They built up the town and lived in it, 29 and named the town Dan, after the name of Dan, their ancestor, who had been born to Israel (the town’s name was Layish originally, however). 30 The Danites set up the statue for themselves, and Yehonatan ben Gershom, son of Moses, he and his sons, were priests for the clan of Dan until the time of the country’s exile. 31 They put in place for themselves Micah’s statue that he had made, the entire time that the house of God was at Shiloh.

**19.1 The Broken Marriage that Might Recover**

19 At that time, when there was no king in Israel, a Levite individual residing in the remote parts of the highland of Ephrayim got himself a woman as a secondary wife from Bet Lehem in Judah, 2 but his wife whored against him and went from being with him to her father’s household in Bet Lehem in Judah, and she was there for a full four months. 3 Her husband set off and followed her to speak to her heart to get her to come back. His boy and a pair of donkeys were with him.

She let him come into her father’s house, and the girl’s father saw him and rejoiced to meet him. 4 His father-in-law, the girl’s father, took strong hold of him, and he stayed with him for three days. They ate and drank and stayed the night there.

5 On the fourth day they started early in the morning and got up to go, but the girl’s father said to his son-in-law, ‘Strengthen your heart with a bit of bread, and go afterward’. 6 So the two of them sat down and ate together, and drank. The girl’s father said to the man, ‘Do reseolve to stay the night. Your heart will feel good’. 7 The man got up to go, but his father-in-law pressed him, and he went back and stayed the night there.

8 They started early in the morning on the fifth day to go, but the girl’s father said, ‘Do strengthen your heart and wait till the day declines’, and the two of them ate. 9 The man got up to go, he and his wife and his boy, but his father-in-law, the girl’s father, said to him, ‘Here, please, the day is slackening toward evening. Please stay the night. Here, it’s the time of day for spreading tents. Stay the night here. Your heart will feel good, and you can start early on your way tomorrow and go to your tent’.

**19.10 A Foreign Town Won’t Be Safe?**

10 The man was not willing to stay the night, and he got up and went. He came as far as in front of Yebus (i.e., Jerusalem). With him were a pair of laden donkeys, and his wife was with him. 11 As they were near Yebus and the day had worn far on, the boy said to his lord, ‘Come on, please let’s turn aside into this town of the Yebusites and stay the night in it’. 12 His lord said to him, ‘We won’t turn aside into a foreign town where there aren’t any Israelites. We’ll pass on as far as Gib’ah’.

13 So he said to his boy, ‘Come on, we’ll get near one of the places and stay the night in Gib’ah or in The Height’. 14 So they passed on, and as they went, the sun set on them beside Gib’ah which belongs to Benjamin, 15 and they turned aside there to come in to stay the night in Gib’ah.

They came in and sat in the town square, but there was no one gathering them into his house to stay the night. 16 But there, an old man came in from his work, from the fields, in the evening. The man was from the highland of Ephrayim; he was a resident in Gib’ah, while the men of the place were Benjaminites. 17 He lifted his eyes and saw the man on a journey, in the town square.

The old man said, ‘Where are you going and where do you come from?’ 18 He said to him, ‘We’re passing through from Bet-lehem in Judah as far as the remote parts of the highland of Ephrayim. I’m from there but I went as far as Bet Lehem in Judah and I’m going to Yahweh’s house. But there’s no one gathering me into his house. 19 Our donkeys have got both straw and fodder and I and your handmaid and the boy with your servants have also got bread and wine. There’s no lack of anything’. 20 The old man said, ‘Welcome to you. All your needs are definitely my responsibility. You’re definitely not to stay the night in the square’.

**19.21 The Horrific Ending**

21 So he brought him into his house and fed the donkeys, and they bathed their feet and ate and drank. 22 While they were making their heart feel good, there, men from the town, scoundrels, surrounded the house, banging on the door. They said to the man who was the master of the house, the old man, ‘Bring out the man who came to your house, so we can have sex with him’.

23 The man who was the master of the house went out to them and said to them, ‘No, my brothers, don’t do something so bad, will you, after this man has come to my house. Don’t perform this villainy. 24 Here is my daughter, a young girl, and his wife. I’ll bring them out to you, please. Humble them. Do to them what’s good in your eyes. But to this man you will not perform this villainy’.

25 The men were not willing to listen to him, so the man took strong hold of his wife and made her go out to them, outside. They had sex with her and acted abusively to her all night until morning, and sent her off as dawn came up. 26 The woman came as morning turned its face and fell at the entrance of the man’s house where her lord was, until daylight.

27 Her lord got up in the morning, opened the doors of the house and went out to go on his journey, and there was the woman who was his secondary wife, fallen at the entrance of the house, her hands on the threshold. 28 He said to her, ‘Get up, let’s go’. There was no response, so he got her onto the donkey.

The man set off and went to his own place. 29 He came to his house and got a knife, took strong hold of his wife, cut her up limb by limb into twelve parts, and sent her off through Israel’s entire border. 30 Everyone who saw said, ‘Such a thing hasn’t happened and hasn’t been seen from the day the Israelites went up from the country of Egypt until this day. Apply yourself to this. Take counsel. Speak’.

**20.1 The Outrage**

20 All the Israelites went out and the assembly congregated as one person, from Dan as far as Be’er Sheba and the region of Gil’ad, to Yahweh at The Watchtower. 2 The cornerstones of the entire people, all Israel’s clans, took their stand as the congregation of God’s people, 400,000 men on foot, drawing a sword. 3 The Benjaminites heard that the Israelites had gone up to The Watchtower.

The Israelites said, ‘Speak: how did this bad thing happen?’ 4 The man who was a Levite, the husband of the woman who had been killed, said, ‘I came, I and my secondary wife, to Gib’ah which belongs to Benjamin, to stay the night. 5 The landowners in Gib’ah set upon me and surrounded the house against me at night. They thought about killing me and they humbled my wife, and she died. 6 So I took hold of my wife and cut her in pieces, and sent her off through every area in Israel’s domain, because they had committed a deliberate wickedness that’s an act of villainy in Israel. 7 Here, all you Israelites, come up with your word, your counsel, here and now!

8 The entire company got up as one man, saying ‘We won’t go, not one of us, to his tent, we won’t depart, not one of us, to his home. 9 This is the thing that we will now do to Gib’ah, against it, by lot. 10 We’ll get 10 men per 100 for all Israel’s clans, 100 per 1000, 1000 per 10,000, to get provisions for the company, to take action by going to Geba in Benjamin in accordance with the total villainy that it’s done in Israel’.

**20.11 The Redress that Misfires**

11 So all the Israelites gathered against the town, united as one man. 12 The Israelite clans sent men through all the Benjaminite clans, saying ‘What is this bad thing that has happened among you? 13 So now give us the scoundrels who are in Gib’ah. We’ll put them to death and burn away what is bad from Israel’. But the Benjaminites were not willing to listen to the voice of their brothers, the Israelites, 14 and the Benjaminites gathered from the towns to Gib’ah to go out to do battle with the Israelites.

15 That day the Benjaminites registered from the towns 26,000 men drawing a sword, apart from the people living in Gib’ah, with 700 picked men registered 16 from this entire company, 700 picked men restricted in their right hand, each one able to sling a stone at a hair and not go wrong.

17 The Israelites apart from Benjamin registered 400,000 men drawing a sword, each one a man of battle. 18 They set off and went up to Bet-el and asked of God: the Israelites said, ‘Who’s to go up for us first for the battle with the Benjaminites?’ Yahweh said, ‘Judah first’. 19 The Israelites set off in the morning and camped against Gib’ah.

20 So the Israelites went out to do battle with Benjamin. The Israelites lined up for battle with them at Gib’ah, 21 but the Benjaminites went out from Gib’ah and devastated Israel that day, 22,000 men to the ground. 22 The company (the Israelites) summoned up its strength and again lined up for battle in the place where they had lined up the previous day.

23 The Israelites went up and wailed before Yahweh until the evening and asked of Yahweh, ‘Shall we go up again to battle with the descendants of Benjamin my brother?’ and Yahweh said, ‘Go up against him’. 24 So the Israelites drew near to the Benjaminites on the second day, 25 but Benjamin came out from Gib’ah to meet them on the second day and devastated the Israelites, 18,000 more to the ground, all these men drawing a sword.

**20.26 The Ambush that Succeeds**

26 All the Israelites and the entire company went up and came to Bet-el. They wailed and sat there before Yahweh and fasted that day until the evening, and offered up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices before Yahweh. 27 The Israelites asked of Yahweh (God’s pact chest was there at that time 28 and Pinhas son of El’azar son of Aaron was standing before him at that time), ‘Shall I go out once more to battle with the descendants of Benjamin my brother, or leave off?’ Yahweh said, ‘Go up, because I shall give them into your hand tomorrow’.

29 Israel put men in ambush against Gib’ah all round. 30 On the third day the Israelites went up against the Benjaminites and lined up against Gib’ah as on other times, 31 and the Benjaminites came out to meet the company. They were drawn away from the town and began to strike down some of the company, run through, as on other times, on the causeways (of which one goes up to Bet-el and one to Gib’ah) in the fields, some thirty men in Israel. 32 The Benjaminites said, ‘They’ve taken a beating before us as before’, but the Israelites had said, ‘We’ll flee and draw them away from the town onto the causeways’.

33 So while all the Israelites got up from their place and lined up at Ba’al Tamar, the Israelite ambush was breaking out from its place, from the Geba wilderness, 34 and 10,000 picked men from all Israel came from south of Gib’ah. The battle was heavy and they didn’t acknowledge that something bad was closing in on them. 35 So Yahweh defeated Benjamin before Israel. That day the Israelites devastated Benjamin, 25,100 men, all these drawing a sword. 36 The Benjaminites saw that they had taken a beating.

**20.36 The Terrible Slaughter of Benjamin**

36b The Israelites had given ground to Benjamin, because they relied on the ambush that they set against Gib’ah. 37 While one ambush quickly charged against Gib’ah, the other ambush advanced and struck down the entire town with the mouth of the sword.

38 The set time for the Israelites with the ambush was, make a great uprising of smoke go up from the town 39 and the Israelites would turn about in the battle. While Benjamin started striking down some thirty men in Israel, run through, because (they said) ‘It’s taking a terrible beating before us like the first battle’, 40 when the uprising (the smoke column) started to go up from the town, Benjamin turned his face behind him, and there, the entire town had gone up into the heavens.

41 Israel circled round and Benjamin became fearful because it saw that something bad had closed in on it. 42 They turned their face before Israel to the wilderness road, but the battle caught up with him, while the men from the towns were devastating him inside it. 43 They surrounded Benjamin, pursued him to Menuhah, and trod him down as far as in front of Gib’ah on the east.

44 There fell of Benjamin 18,000 that day, all these forceful men. 45 They turned their face and fled to the wilderness, to Rimmon Cliff, but on the causeways they gleaned 5,000 men, then caught up with them at Gid’om, and struck down 2,000 of them. 46 So all the fallen from Benjamin that day were 25,000 men drawing a sword, all these forceful men. 47 600 men turned their face and fled to the wilderness, to Rimmon Cliff and lived at Rimmon Cliff for four months, 48 while the Israelites went back to the Benjaminites and struck them down with the mouth of the sword—both entire the town (the people), and the animals and everything that was to be found. They also burned in fire all the towns that were to be found.

**21.1 How Not to Save the Situation**

21 Now the Israelites had sworn at The Watchtower, ‘None of us will give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife’. 2 The company came to Bet-el and sat there before God until the evening. They lifted up their voice, and wailed and wailed, loudly. 3. They said, ‘Why, Yahweh God of Israel, has this happened in Israel, so a clan is missing today from Israel?’

4 Next day the people started early and built an altar there, and offered up whole offerings and well-being sacrifices. 5 The Israelites said, ‘Who is there from all Israel’s clans that didn’t come up in the congregation to Yahweh?’ Because there had been a great oath regarding anyone who didn’t come up to Yahweh at The Watchtower: ‘He will absolutely be put to death’.

6 So the Israelites felt sorry toward Benjamin their brother and said, ‘Today a clan has been cut off from Israel. 7 What can we do for them, for wives for those who are left, when we have sworn by Yahweh not to give them any of our daughters as wives?’

8 They said, ‘Who is there from Israel’s clan’s who didn’t go up to Yahweh at The Watchtower?’ There, no one had come from Yabesh-in-Gil’ad to the camp, to the congregation; 9 the company had registered, and there was no one there from the people living in Yabesh-in-Gil’ad. 10 So the assembly sent 12,000 of the forceful men and ordered them, ‘Go and strike down the people living in Yabesh-in-Gil’ad with the mouth of the sword, and the women and little ones. 11 This is the thing that you’re to do: you’re to devote every male and every woman who has slept with a male’.

12 But they found from the people living in Yabesh-in-Gil’ad 400 young girls who had not had sex by sleeping with a male, and they brought them to the camp at Shiloh, which is in the country of Canaan. 13 The entire assembly sent and spoke to the Benjaminites who were at Rimmon Cliff and called out peace to them. 14 So Benjamin came back at that time and they gave them the women whom they’d let live from the women of Yabesh-in-Gil’ad.

**21.15 Everyone Was Doing What Was All right in His Own Eyes**

But they didn’t find for them [all] in this way. 15 As the company felt sorry for Benjamin because Yahweh had made a breach in Israel’s clans, 16 the elders of the assembly said, ‘What can we do for wives for those who are left, because the women have been annihilated from Benjamin?’ 17 They said, ‘An escape possession for Benjamin—a clan will not be wiped out from Israel! 18 But we ourselves can’t give them wives from among our daughters’ (because the Israelites had sworn, ‘Cursed is the person who gives a wife to Benjamin’).

19 So they said, ‘Here, from time to time it’s Yahweh’s festival at Shiloh’ (which is north of Bet-el, east of the causeway going up from Bet-el to Shekem and south of Lebonah). 20 They ordered the Benjaminites, ‘Go and make an ambush in the vineyards 21 and look. There, if the daughters of Shiloh go out to join in the dances, you go out of the vineyards. Each of you capture a wife for himself from the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the region of Benjamin. 22 When their fathers or their brothers come to argue with us, we’ll say to them, ‘Be gracious to us over them, because we didn’t each get his wife in the battle, because you yourselves didn’t give them to them at a time when you would be liable’.

23 The Benjaminites did so and carried off wives in accordance with their number from the dancers whom they seized. Then they went and returned to their domain, and built up the towns and lived in them.

24 The Israelites went off from there at that time, each to his clan and to his kin-group. They left from there each to his domain.

25 At that time there was no king in Israel. Each person would do what was all right in his own eyes.

**Samuel Book One**

In the English Bible, First Samuel follows on from Ruth. That story ends by telling us about a line of people descended from Ruth and Boaz, the last of whom is David, and 1 Samuel is another take on David’s backstory—on the process that led to David’s becoming king. To complement that point, in the Hebrew Bible First Samuel directly follows Judges. Judges ends with a rueful comment on how people have been doing what was all right in their own eyes because there was no king in Israel. The implication is that Israel needed someone to exercise ongoing authority and get people to take Yahweh seriously. A king may be able to do so.

It’s the first of two books named after Samuel. He did not write them; he dies half way through 1 Samuel. But he is a huge figure in 1 Samuel, one of the three big men in the book. The account of his birth is a powerful story of a woman’s boldness in coming before God with the pain in her life and in challenging God to do something about it, and of this woman’s courage in then giving up the son who is the answer to her prayers, so that he can be Yahweh’s servant.

Samuel is the last of the ‘judges’, the leaders of Israel who dominate the Book of Judges, people who act effectively and with great authority though without the official position of someone like a king. Samuel is also the first great prophet. It’s no coincidence that Yahweh produces him at the same time as kings emerge in Israel. One of the chief responsibilities of a prophet is to be the king’s conscience, to challenge him about what he ought to be doing—and more often about what he ought not to be doing. Samuel is responsible for designating and anointing Saul, the second of the three huge figures, and then for pronouncing Yahweh’s decommissioning of him. He is then responsible for designating and anointing David. He even reappears at the end of the book, coming back from the dead to meet with Saul on the eve of Saul’s last battle.

The background to Samuel’s anointing of Saul is the people’s desire to have a king like other peoples. This desire fits with that comment at the end of Judges, yet the people are going back on a distinctive aspect of their life, the principle that Yahweh is their king, though humanly-speaking it’s hard to imagine how they could have gone on as a people without some form of central government to replace the decentralized system whereby no organization holds the clans together. Although asking for a king implies rejecting Yahweh as king, Yahweh accedes to their request and nominates the king. First Samuel 8—12 expounds all sides of Samuel’s and Yahweh’s attitude to kingship, which one may infer applies to other forms of leadership. There are advantages and disadvantages to having a leader. It costs people, in varying ways.

Yahweh’s mixed feelings about Israel having kings is the background to Saul’s having successes but then experiencingYahweh’s rejection for failures that may not seem very culpable. He is a tragic figure, a man drafted to do a job that Yahweh didn’t really want done and that he himself didn’t really want, but who becomes attached to the job even as he is making mistakes that lead to his rejection. Eventually Yahweh sends a ‘bad spirit’ to Saul—not an evil spirit (the Old Testament doesn’t talk about those) but a depressed and angry spirit, a bad temper.

The third huge figure is David, who is designated by Yahweh as Saul’s successor and who shows himself to be someone who always trusts in Yahweh and is a courageous fighter, a faithful subject, a magnetic personality, an energetic campaigner, a ruthless commander, a shrewd compromiser, and a magnanimous victor. Although anointed by Samuel in Yahweh’s name, before becoming king he has to wait until Yahweh has finished with Saul; he is also a man who is prepared to wait rather than trying to force things. Eventually Saul and his son Jonathan (David’s best friend) meet their death in battle, which opens up the future for David.

**1.1 The Pain of Childlessness**

1 There was a man from Twin Heights in Tsophim, from the highland of Ephrayim, whose name was Elqanah ben Yeroham, son of Elihu son of Tohu son of Tsuph, an Ephrayimite. 2 He had two wives; the name of one was Hannah, the name of the second was Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children.

3 That man used to go up from his town from year to year to bow low and to sacrifice for Yahweh Armies at Shiloh. The two sons of Eli, Hophni and Pinhas, were priests for Yahweh there.

4 A day came when Elqanah sacrificed, and he would give portions to his wife Peninnah and to all her sons and her daughters. 5 To Hannah he would give a portion for two people because he loved Hannah, whereas Yahweh had closed up her womb, 6 and her rival would provoke her greatly to make her fret because Yahweh had closed up her womb. 7 So he would do, year after year. As often as she went up to Yahweh’s house, she would provoke her in this way, and she would cry and not eat. 8 Elqanah, her husband, said to her, ‘Hannah, why do you cry, why don’t you eat, why does your heart feel bad? Aren’t I better for you than ten sons?’

9 Hannah got up after the eating in Shiloh and after the drinking. Eli the priest was sitting on the seat by the doorpost of Yahweh’s palace. 10 She was bitter in spirit but she made a plea to Yahweh and cried and cried, 11 and she made a pledge. She said, ‘Yahweh Armies, if you actually look at your handmaid’s humbling and you’re mindful of me, and you don’t put your handmaid out of mind but give your handmaid a male offspring, I’ll give him to Yahweh all the days of his life. No razor will go up on his head’.

**1.12 A Face Transformed**

12 Because she was doing much pleading before Yahweh, and Eli was watching her mouth, 13 and Hannah was speaking in her heart (only her lips were quivering, but her voice did not make itself heard), Eli thought she was drunk. 14 Eli said to her, ‘How long will you behave like a drunk? Put your wine away from you’. 15 Hannah answered, ‘No, sir, I’m a tough-spirited woman and I haven’t drunk wine or liquor. I’ve poured myself out before Yahweh. 16 Don’t make your handmaid into a scoundrelous woman, because it was out of the dimensions of my tetchiness and my provocation that I’ve spoken until now’. 17 Eli answered, ‘Go, things will be well. The God of Israel: he will give the thing that you’ve asked of him’. 18 She said, ‘May your maidservant find grace in your eyes’.

The woman went on her way and ate, and her face was no longer [the same]. 19 They started early in the morning, bowed low before Yahweh, and went back and came to their home in The Height. Elqanah had sex with his wife Hannah and Yahweh was mindful of her, 20 and at the end of the year Hannah had got pregnant. She gave birth to a son and named him Samuel [Shemu’el], because ‘I asked [*sha’al*]for him from Yahweh’.

21 The man, Elqanah, went up with his entire household to offer Yahweh the yearly sacrifice and his pledge, 22 but Hannah didn’t go up, because (she said to her husband) ‘When the boy is weaned I’ll bring him. We’ll see Yahweh’s face, and he’ll live there permanently’. 23 Elqanah her husband said to her, ‘Do what’s good in your eyes; stay till you’ve weaned him. Only, may Yahweh implement his word’. So the woman stayed and nursed her son until she’d weaned him. 24 She took him up with her when she had weaned him, with a three-year-old bull, a barrel of flour, and a skin of wine, and brought him to Yahweh’s house at Shiloh. He was a boy. 25 They slaughtered the bull and brought the boy to Eli.

**1.26 On Giving Up Your Son**

26 She said, ‘Pardon me, sir, as surely as you live, sir, I’m the woman who stood with you here to make my plea to Yahweh. 27 It was for this boy that I made my plea, and Yahweh gave me what I asked of him. 28 I myself am also giving him to Yahweh; for all the days that he lives he’s given to Yahweh’. He bowed low there to Yahweh, 2 and Hannah made her plea:

My heart has exulted in Yahweh,

my horn has lifted high through Yahweh.

My mouth has opened wide at my enemies,

because I have rejoiced in your deliverance.

2 There’s no sacred one like Yahweh,

because there’s no one apart from you,

there’s no crag like our God.

3 Don’t do much speaking of lofty, lofty speech,

nor should outspoken speech come out of your mouth.

Because Yahweh is a God who knows;

by him actions are weighed.

4 The bows of strong men are broken,

but people who were falling have belted on forcefulness.

5 People who were full have hired themselves out for bread,

but the hungry left off from being hungry.

While the infertile woman has given birth to seven,

the woman with many children is withered.

6 Yahweh is one who puts to death and brings to life,

sends down to She’ol and brings up.

7 Yahweh is one who makes poor and makes wealthy,

puts down, also lifts up.

8 He is one who raises the poor from the dirt,

lifts up the needy from the rubbish tip,

To sit with important people;

he gives them a seat of splendour as their domain.

Because earth’s pillars belong to Yahweh;

he set the world upon them.

9 He keeps the feet of the people who are loyal to him,

but the faithless go silent into the darkness.

Because it’s not by energy that a person prevails;

10 Yahweh – people who argue with him shatter.

The One on High thunder in the heavens;

Yahweh judges the ends of the earth.

He gives vigour to his king,

lifts up the horn of his anointed one.

**2.11 Ministers Who Indulge Themselves**

11 Elqanah went home to The Height, while the boy was ministering to Yahweh in the presence of Eli the priest. 12 Now Eli’s sons were scoundrels; they didn’t acknowledge Yahweh. 13 The priests’ rule with the people was: when each person was offering a sacrifice, the priest’s boy would come while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand. 14 He would thrust it into the pan or the kettle or the cauldron or the pot; all that the fork brought up, the priest would take with it. In this way they would act with all Israel who came there to Shiloh. 15 Further, before they turned the fat into smoke, the priest’s boy would come and say to the individual making the sacrifice, ‘Give over some meat for roasting for the priest; he won’t take boiled meat from you, only raw’. 16 Should the individual said to him, ‘They should actually turn the fat into smoke now, then take for yourself whatever your appetite longs for’, he would say ‘No, but you’re to give it over now, or I’m taking it by force’.

17 The boys’ wrongdoing in Yahweh’s presence was very great, because the men disdained Yahweh’s offering.

18 So Samuel was ministering in the presence of Yahweh, a boy wrapped round in a linen chasuble. 19 His mother would make a little coat for him and bring it up for him from year to year when she went up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice. 20 Eli would bless Elqanah and his wife and say, ‘May Yahweh give you offspring from this woman in place of the one she asked for from Yahweh,’ and they would go to their place. 21 Because Yahweh attended to Hannah, she got pregnant and she gave birth to three sons and two daughters, but the boy Samuel grew up with Yahweh.

**2.22 Why Do you Kick at My Sacrifices?**

22 When Eli was very old, he heard of all that his sons were doing to all Israel and how they were sleeping with the women who fulfilled duties at the entrance of the appointment tent. 23 He said to them, ‘Why do you do such actions as these that I am hearing of, bad actions of yours, from all these people? 24 Don’t, my sons, because the report is not good that I’m hearing Yahweh’s people passing on. 25 If an individual does wrong against an individual, God may plead for him, but if an individual does wrong against Yahweh, who will make a plea for him?’ But they wouldn’t listen to their father’s voice because Yahweh wanted to put them to death. 26 But the boy Samuel was continuing to grow and seem good both with Yahweh and with people.

27 A supernatural man came to Eli and said to him: ‘Yahweh has said this: “Did I clearly reveal myself to your father’s household when rhey were in Egypt, belonging to Pharaoh’s household? 28 I choose him out of all Israel’s clans as a priest for me, to go up on my altar, to burn incense, to carry a chasuble before me, and I gave your father’s household all the Israelites’ gift offerings. 29 Why do you kick at my sacrifice and at my offering which I ordered, at my abode? You’ve honoured your sons more than me in fattening yourselves on the first of every offering of Israel as my people.

**2.30 A Trustworthy Priest**

30 Therefore (a declaration of Yahweh the God of Israel), I did say that your household and your father’s household would go about before me permanently, but now (Yahweh’s declaration), far be it for me, because the people who honour me I honour, but the people who despise me will become slight.

31 Here, a time is coming when I shall cut off your arm and the arm of your father’s household, so that there will be no one as an elder in your household. 32 You will look at the pressure that comes on [my] abode, despite all the good that is done to Israel, and there will be no one as an elder in your household for the entire time. 33 While I shall not cut off every individual of yours from my altar, so as to consume your eyes and make your spirit grieve, the entire abundance of your household: people will die. 34 This will be the sign for you that will come on your two sons, on Hophi and Pinhas: the two of them will die on one day.

35 I shall set up for myself a trustworthy priest. He will act in accordance with what is my mind and in my spirit. I shall build a trustworthy household for him and he will go about before my anointed one for all time. 36 Anyone who is left of your household will come to bow low to him for a payment in silver and a loaf of bread. He will say, “Assign me to one of the priestly duties so I can eat a bit of bread”’.

**Map for Samuel goes about here**

**3.1 A Summons, Not a Call**

3 The boy, Samuel, was ministering to Yahweh in the presence of Eli. Yahweh’s word was rare at that time; there was no vision spreading about. 2 On a day when Eli was lying down in his place (his eyes had started to fail; he couldn’t see) 3 but God’s lamp had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in Yahweh’s palace where God’s chest was, 4 Yahweh called to Samuel.

He said, ‘I’m here’, 5 and ran to Eli and said, ‘I’m here, because you called to me’. He said, ‘I didn’t call. Go back, lie down’. He went and lay down. 6 Yahweh called yet again, ‘Samuel’, and Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, ‘I’m here, because you called to me’. He said, ‘I didn’t call, son, go back, lie down’. 7 Now Samuel hadn’t yet acknowledged Yahweh; Yahweh’s word hadn’t yet revealed itself to him.

8 Yahweh again called Samuel, a third time, and he got up, went to Eli, and said, ‘I’m here, because you called to me’. Eli perceived that Yahweh was calling to the boy. 9 Eli said to Samuel, ‘Go, lie down, and if he calls to you, you’re to say, ‘Speak, Yahweh, because your servant is listening”’. So Samuel went and lay down in his place.

10 Yahweh came and took his stand and called as at the other times, ‘Samuel, Samuel’. Samuel said, ‘Speak, because your servant is listening’.

**3.11 The Message No One Would Want to Give**

11 Yahweh said to Samuel, ‘Here, I’m going to do a thing in Israel such that everyone who hears it – both his ears will tingle. 12 That day I shall implement regarding Eli everything I spoke concerning his household, beginning and finishing it. 13 I told him that I’m going to exercise authority over his household permanently for the waywardness that he knew about, that his sons were slighting [me] for themselves and he didn’t stop them. 14 Therefore I swear concerning Eli’s household: if the waywardness of Eli’s household finds expiation by sacrifice or by offering, permanently….’

15 Samuel lay down until the morning, then opened the doors of Yahweh’s house. But Samuel was afraid of telling Eli the vision. 16 Eli called Samuel: ‘Samuel, my son’. He said, ‘I’m here’. 17 He said, ‘What was the thing that he spoke to you? Don’t hide any of it from me, please. May God do so to you, and may he do more, if you hide from me anything of all that he said to you’. 18 Samuel told him all the things and didn’t hide it from him. He said, ‘He is Yahweh. He will do what is good in his eyes’.

19 Samuel grew up, and as Yahweh was with him, he didn’t allow any of his words to fall to the ground. 20 All Israel from Dan as far as Be’er Sheba acknowledged that Samuel was trustworthy as a prophet belonging to Yahweh. 21 Yahweh again appeared at Shiloh, in that Yahweh revealed himself to Samuel at Shiloh with Yahweh’s word, 4 and Samuel’s word came to all Israel.

**4.1b Get the Covenant Chest**

1b Israel went out to meet the Philistines in battle, and camped at Help Stone, while the Philistines camped at Apheq. 2 The Philistines lined up to meet Israel and the battle spread, and Israel took a beating before the Philistines. They struck down some 4000 men in their line in the fields.

3 The company came to the camp and Israel’s elders said, ‘Why did Yahweh defeat us today before the Philistines? Let’s get Yahweh’s pact chest from Shiloh for ourselves, so he will come among us and deliver us from our enemies’ fist’. 4 So the company sent to Shiloh and carried from there the pact chest of Yahweh Armies, who sits above the sphinxes. Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Pinhas, were with God’s pact chest there.

5 When Yahweh’s pact chest came into the camp, all Israel gave a great shout, and the earth resounded. 6 The Philistines heard the sound of the shout and said, ‘What’s this sound of a great shout in the Hebrews’ camp?’ They came to know that Yahweh’s chest had come into the camp.

7 The Philistines were afraid, because they said, ‘A god has come into the camp’, and they said, ‘Alas for us! Athing like this has not happened to us in previous days. 8 Alas for us! Who will rescue us from the hand of these august gods? These are the gods that struck down the Egyptians in total defeat in the wilderness. 9 Summon up your strength, be men, Philistines, so you don’t serve the Hebrews as they served you. Be men! Do battle!’

10 So the Philistines did battle and Israel took a beating. They fled, each one to his tents. The rout was very great, and from Israel 30,000 men on foot fell, 11 while God’s chest was taken, and Eli’s two sons, Hophni and Pinhas, died.

**4.12 The Splendour is Gone**

12 A Benjaminite man ran from the line and came to Shiloh that day, with his uniform torn and earth on his head. 13 He came, and there, Eli was sitting on a seat by the road, watching, because his heart was trembling for God’s chest. When the man came to tell of it in the town, the entire town cried out. 14 Eli heard the sound of the cry and said, ‘What’s this sound of an uproar?’ The man hurried and came, and told Eli.

15 Eli was a man of ninety-eight years. His eyes were set and he couldn’t see. 16 The man said to Eli, ‘I’m the one coming from the line. I myself fled from the line today’. He said, ‘What was the thing that happened, son?’ 17 The man bringing the news replied, ‘Israel fled before the Philistines. It was both a great disaster to the company, and also your two sons, Hophni and Pinhas are dead, and God’s chest was taken’. 18 When he made mention of God’s chest, he fell backward from on his seat by the side of the gateway. His neck broke and he died, because the man was old and heavy. He had exercised authority for Israel for forty years.

19 His daughter-in-law, Pinhas’s wife, was pregnant, soon to give birth. She heard the report about God’s chest being taken and her father-in-law and her husband being dead, and she bent down and gave birth, because her labour pains came over her. 20 At the time of her dying, the women standing by her spoke: ‘Don’t be afraid, because you’ve given birth to a son’. She didn’t answer. She didn’t give her mind to it.

21 She called the boy Ikabod (‘Where is the splendour?’), saying ‘The splendour has gone into exile from Israel’, in connection with God’s chest being taken, and with her father-in-law and with her husband. 22 She said, ‘The splendour has gone into exile from Israel, because God’s chest has been taken’.

**5.1 You Can’t Mess with the Covenant Chest**

5 When the Philistines took God’s chest, they brought it from Help Stone to Ashdod. 2 The Philistines took God’s chest and brought it to Dagon’s house and set it beside Dagon. 3 The Ashdodites started early next day and there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before Yahweh’s chest. So they took Dagon and put him back in his place.

4 They started early in the morning next day and there was Dagon, fallen on his face on the ground before Yahweh’s chest, with Dagon’s head and both the palms of his hands cut off, on the threshold. Only [the body of] Dagon remained to him. 5 That’s why Dagon’s priests and all the people who come to Dagon’s house don’t tread on Dagon’s threshold in Ashdod, until this day.

6 Yahweh’s hand was heavy on the Ashdodites. He desolated them and struck them down with haemorrhoids, Ashdod and its territories. 7 The Ashdodites saw that it was so, and said, ‘The chest of Israel’s God is not to stay with us, because his hand has been tough with us and with Dagon our god’. 8 They sent and gathered all the Philistines’ lords to them and said, ‘What shall we do with the chest of Israel’s God?’ They said, ‘The chest of Israel’s God should get itself round to Gat’. So they took the chest of Israel’s God round. 9 After they had taken it round, Yahweh’s hand came against the town with a great turmoil. He struck the town’s people from young to old, and haemorrhoids broke out on them.

10 So they sent God’s chest off to Eqron. But when God’s chest came to Eqron, the Eqronites cried out, ‘They’ve brought the chest of Israel’s God round to me to put me and my people to death’. 11 So they sent off and gathered all the Philistines’ lords and said, ‘Send the chest of Israel’s God off so it goes back to its place. It will not put me and my people to death’, because there was a deathly turmoil in the entire town. God’s hand was very heavy there. 12 The men who didn’t die were struck down by the haemorrhoids. The town’s cry for help went up to the heavens.

**6.1 The Need for Reparation**

6 Yahweh’s chest was in the Philistines’ country for seven months. 2 The Philistines called for the priests and for the diviners: ‘What shall we do about Yahweh’s chest? Let us know what we’re to send it off with to its place’. 3 They said, ‘if you’re going to send off the chest of Israel’s God, don’t send if off empty-handed. Rather, you’re definitely to send a reparation back to him. Then you’ll find healing. He’ll get himself acknowledged by you; why should his hand not depart from you?’

4 They said, ‘What’s the reparation that we should send back to him?’ They said, ‘Five gold hemorrhoids and five gold rats, the number of the Philistines’ lords, because the same epidemic came to all of them, and to your lords. 5 You’re to make models of your hemorrhoids and models of your rats that have been devastating the country, and give honour to the God of Israel. Maybe he will ease his hand from upon you and from upon your gods and from upon your country. Why would you harden your mind as Egypt and Pharaoh hardened their mind? When he had acted abusively to them, they sent them off and they went, didn’t they.

7 So now, get and make ready a new cart and two nursing cows on which no yoke has come. Harness the cows to the cart but take their young ones back home, from following them. 8 Get Yahweh’s chest and put it on the cart. The gold articles that you’re sending back to him as a reparation you’re to put in a receptacle by its side, and send it off so it goes, 9 and you’re to look. If it goes up the road to his border, to Bet Shemesh, he’s the one who did this huge bad thing to you. If not, we’ll know that it was not his hand trouched us. It was a chance that happened to us’.

10 The people did so. They got two nursing cows, harnessed them to a cart, shut up their young ones at home, 11 and put Yahweh’s chest on the cart, with the receptacle and the gold rats and the models of their haemorrhoids.

**6.12 Too Hot to Handle**

12 The cows went straight by the road, on the Bet Shemesh road. By a causeway they went steadily and lowed and didn’t depart right or left, with the Philistines’ lords following them as far as the Bet Shemesh border.

13 Bet Shemesh people were reaping the wheat harvest in the vale. They lifted up their eyes and saw the chest, and rejoiced to see it. 14 The cart came to the fields of Joshua of Bet-shemesh and stood there. There was a big stone there. They split the wood of the cart and offered up the cows as a burnt offering for Yahweh. 15 The Levites took down Yahweh’s chest and the receptacle that was with it, in which were the gold articles, and put them on the big stone. The people of Bet-shemesh offered up whole offerings and offered sacrifices that day for Yahweh. 16 The Philistines’ five lords looked, and went back to Eqron that day.

17 These are the gold haemorrhoids that the Philistines gave back as a reparation to Yahweh: one for Ashdod, one for Gaza, one for Ashqelon, one for Gat, one for Eqron. 18 The gold rats: the number of all the Philistines’ towns belonging to the Philistines’ five lords, both fortified town and country hamlet, as far as the big stone on which they set down Yahweh’s chest, until this day in the fields of Joshua of Bet-shemesh.

19 But he struck down the people of Bet-shemesh because they looked in Yahweh’s chest. He struck down seventy individuals (50,000 individuals) among the people. The people took up grieving because Yahweh had struck the people down with a heavy blow.

20 The people of Bet-shemesh said, ‘Who can stand before Yahweh, this sacred God? To whom might he go up from us?’ 21 So they sent envoys to the people living in Ye’arim Township to say, ‘The Philistines have sent Yahweh’s chest back. Come down, take it up to you’. 7 The people of Ye’arim Township came and took Yahweh’s chest up and brought it into the house of Abinadab, on the hill. They made his son El’azar sacred to keep Yahweh’s chest.

**7.2-14 Yahweh Helped Us as Far as This**

2 From the day the chest lived at Ye’arim Township time went on; twenty years passed. The entire household of Israel grieved after Yahweh, 3 and Samuel said to the entire household of Israel, ‘If with your entire heart you’re coming back to Yahweh, remove the foreign gods and the Ashtars from among you. Direct your heart firmly toward Yahweh and serve him alone, and he will rescue you from the hand of the Philistines’. 4 So the Israelites removed the Masters and the Ashtars and served Yahweh alone.

5 Samuel said, ‘Gather all Israel at The Watchtower and I’ll plead with Yahweh on your behalf’. 6 They gathered at The Watchtower and drew water and poured it out before Yahweh. They fasted that day and said there, ‘We have done wrong against Yahweh’. So Samuel exercised authority for the Israelites at The Watchtower.

7 The Philistines heard that the Israelites had gathered at The Watchtower and the Philistines’ lords went up against Israel. The Israelites heard and were afraid of the Philistines. 8 So the Israelites said to Samuel, ‘Don’t be deaf to us and not cry out to Yahweh our God so he may deliver us from the hand of the Philistines’. 9 So Samuel got a suckling lamb and offered it up as a whole burnt offering for Yahweh. Samuel cried out to Yahweh on behalf of Israel, and Yahweh answered him. 10 As Samuel was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines were coming up for battle against Israel, but Yahweh thundered with a loud voice that day against the Philistines and threw them into a turmoil, and they took a beating before Israel. 11 The Israelites went out from The Watchtower, pursued the Philistines, and struck them down as far as below Bet Kar.

12 Samuel got a stone and put it between The Watchtower and The Tooth, and named it Help Stone [EbenHa’ezer]. He said, ‘As far as this Yahweh helped us’. 13 The Philistines bowed down and didn’t any more come within Israel’s border again. Yahweh’s hand was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel. 14 The towns that the Philistines had taken from Israel came back to Israel, from Eqron as far as Gat. Israel rescued their border from the hand of the Philistines, and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites.

**7.15 Appoint Us a King**

15 Samuel exercised authority for Israel all the days of his life. 16 He went year by year and traveled round to Bet-el, Gilgal, and The Watchtower and exercised authority for Israel at all these sites; 17 then his return to The Height, because his home was there. He exercised authority for Israel there and built an altar for Yahweh there.

8 When Samuel was old, he made his sons into people who exercised authority for Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn son was Yo’el and the name of his second Abiyyah; they were authorities in Be’er Sheba. 3 But his sons didn’t walk in his ways. They turned after profit and accepted bribes, and overturned the exercise of authority.

4 So all Israel’s elders gathered and came to Samuel at The Height, 5 and said to him, ‘Here, you’ve got old and your sons haven’t walked in your ways. Now appoint us a king to exercise authority for us like all the nations’. 6 The thing was bad in Samuel’s eyes, when they said ‘Give us a king to exercise authority for us’, and Samuel made a plea to Yahweh.

7 Yahweh said to Samuel, ‘Listen to the people’s voice in everything that they say to you, because it’s not you they’ve rejected, because it’s me they’ve rejected from being king over them. 8 In accordance with all the deeds they’ve done from the day I brought them up from Egypt and until this day, they’ve abandoned me and served other gods, so they’re doing also to you. 9 So now listen to their voice. Only testify against them solemnly and tell them about the authority of the king who will reign over them’.

**8.10 What a King Will Be Like**

10 Samuel spoke all Yahweh’s words to the people who were asking for a king from him. 11 He said, ‘This will be the authority of the king who will reign over you. Your sons he’ll take and make into his chariotry and into his cavalry for himself and they’ll run before his chariotry, 12 making them divisional officers and unit officers for himself, and for ploughing his fields and reaping his harvest and making his battle equipment and his chariot equipment. 13 Your daughters he’ll take as perfumers, cooks, and bakers. 14 Your fields, your vineyards, and your olive groves, the best, he’ll take and give to his servants. 15 Of your seed and your vineyards he’ll take a tenth and give to his courtiers and to his servants. 16 Your servants and your maidservants, your best young men and your donkeys, he’ll take and make into his work force. 17 Of your flock he’ll take a tenth and you yourselves will become servants to him. 18 You will cry out on that day on account of your king whom you’ve chosen for yourselves, but Yahweh will not answer you on that day’.

19 The people refused to listen to Samuel’s voice and said, ‘No! Rather, there is to be a king over us, 20 so we can become like all the nations. Our king will exercise authority, and go out before us and fight our battles’. 21 Samuel listened to all the people’s words and spoke them in Yahweh’s ears. 22 Yahweh said to Samuel, ‘Listen to their voice. Make a king for them’. Samuel said to the Israelites, ‘Go, each one, to his town’.

**9.1 How Saul Lost Some Donkeys**

9 There was a man from Benjamin; his name was Qish ben Abi’el, son of Tseror son of Bekorat son of Aphiah, a Benjaminite—a forceful man. 2 He had a son, his name was Saul [Sha’ul], young and good-looking. There was no one better-looking among the Israelites than him. From his shoulders up, he was loftier than all the people.

3 Donkeys belonging to Qish, Saul’s father, got lost, and Qish said to Saul his son ‘Please take one of the boys with you, and set off and go look for the donkeys’. 4 They passed through the highland of Ephrayim and passed through the region of Shalishah, but they didn’t find them. They passed through the region of Sha’alim, but they were not there. They passed through the region of Benjamin and didn’t find them. 5 When they came to the region of Tsuph, Saul said to his boy who was with him, ‘Come on, let’s go back, so my father doesn’t leave off from the donkeys and get anxious about us’.

6 He said to him, ‘Here, please, there’s a supernatural man in this town. The man is honoured. Everything that he speaks does come about. Let’s go there now. Maybe he’ll tell us about our journey that we’ve gone on’. 7 Saul said to his boy, ‘But here, we can go, but what are we to bring the man, because the bread is exhausted from our bags and there’s no present to bring to the supernatural man. What is there with us? 8 The boy again answered Saul, ‘Here, there’s a quarter-sheqel of silver present in my hand. I’ll give it to the supernatural man so he can tell tell us about our journey’. (9 Formerly in Israel, an individual said this when he was going to inquire of God: ‘Come on, let’s go to the seer’, because the prophet today was formerly called the seer.)

**9.10 The Extraordinary Coincidence**

10 So Saul said to his boy, ‘Your words are good. Come on, let’s go’. So they went to the town where the supernatural man was. 11 When they were going up the ascent to the town and they found girls going out to draw water, they said to them, ‘Is the seer here?’ 12 They answered them, ‘He is, there, before you. Hurry now, because today he’s come to the town because the people have a sacrifice at the shrine today. 13 As you come into the town, there you’ll find him before he goes up to the shrine to eat, because the people won’t eat until he comes, because he has to say the blessing for the sacrifice. After that, the people who’ve been invited will eat. So now, go up, because this very day you’ll find him’. 14 So they went up to the town. As they were coming into the middle of the town—there was Samuel, going out to meet them, going up to the shrine.

15 Now Yahweh had had a word in Samuel’s ear the day before Saul came: 16 ‘This very time tomorrow I shall send you a man from the region of Benjamin, and you’re to anoint him as ruler over my people Israel. He will deliver my people from the hand of the Philistines, because I’ve seen my people, because their cry has come to me’. 17 When Samuel saw Saul, Yahweh himself avowed to him, ‘Here is the man of whom I said to you, “This is the man who will put some restraint on my people”’. 18 Saul went up to Samuel in the middle of the gateway and said, ‘Please tell me where the seer’s house is’.

**9.19 An Unexpected Banquet**

19 Samuel answered Saul, ‘I’m the seer. Go up before me to the shrine and you can eat with me today. I’ll send you off in the morning, but everything that’s on your mind I’ll tell you. 20 As for your donkeys that got lost three days ago: don’t set your mind on them, because they’ve been found. And who is the object of all Israel’s desire?—you and your entire ancestral household’.

21 Saul answered, ‘I’m a Benjaminite, aren’t I, from the smallest of Israel’s clans, and my kin-group is the littlest of all the kin-groups in the clans of Benjamin. Why have you spoken to me of such a thing?’

22 Samuel took Saul and his boy, brought them into the hall, and gave them a place at the head of the people who had been invited; they were some thirty individuals. 23 Samuel said to the cook, ‘Give me the portion that I gave you, about which I said to you, “Put it by you”’. 24 The cook lifted up the thigh and what was on it and put it before Saul.

He said, ‘There is what has remained, put before you. Eat, because it was kept for you for the set time when I said “I am inviting the people”’. So Saul ate with Samuel that day, 25 then they came down from the shrine to the town, and he spoke with Saul on the roof.

**9.26 How Saul Found More than He Bargained for**

26 They started early, and at break of day Samuel called to Saul on the roof: ‘Get up, and I’ll send you off’. Saul got up, and the two of them, he and Samuel, went outside. 27 As they were going down to the edge of the town Samuel said to Saul, ‘Say to the boy that he’s to pass on before us’ (and he passed on) ‘but you stand here this very moment and I shall let you hear God’s word’.

10 Samuel got a flask of oil and poured it on his head and kissed him, and said, ‘Yahweh anoints you as ruler over his domain, does he not. 2 When you go from being with me today, you’ll find two men by Rachel’s grave within the border of Benjamin at Tseltsah. They’ll say to you, ‘The donkeys that you went to look for have been found. Here, your father’s given up on the thing about the donkeys and got anxious about you, saying “What shall I do about my son?”’ 3 You’re to go on from there, and further on you’ll come as far as Tabor Oak. Three men will find you there, coming up to God to Bet-el, one carrying three kid goats, one carrying three loaves of bread, and one carrying a skin of wine. 4 They’ll ask you if things are well with you, and they’ll give you two loaves of bread. You’re to accept them from their hand.

5 After this you’re to come to God’s Hill, where the Philistines’ outpost is. When you come into the town there, you’ll come upon a group of prophets going down from the shrine, with mandolin, tambourine, pipe, and guitar before them. They’ll be prophesying. 6 Yahweh’s spirit will thrust itself onto you and you’ll prophesy with them. You’ll turn into another person. 7 When these signs come about for you, do for yourself what your hand finds, because God will be with you.

**10.8 Is Saul a Prophet, Too?**

8 You’re to go down before me to Gilgal. There; I’m going to come down to you to offer up burnt offerings and to make well-being sacrifices. You’re to wait seven days until I come to you and make known to you what you’re to do’. 9 As he turned his face to go from being with Samuel, God gave him another mind.

All these signs came about that day. 10 They came there, to the hill, and here—a group of prophets coming to meet him. God’s spirit thrust itself onto him and he prophesied among them. 11 Everyone who knew him in previous days looked—and here, he was prophesying with prophets. The people said, one to his neighbour, ‘What’s this that’s happened to ben Qish? Is Saul among the prophets, too?’ 12 One person from there answered, ‘And who is their father?’ That’s why it became an aphorism, ‘Is Saul among the prophets, too?’ 13 He finished prophesying and came to the shrine.

14 Saul’s uncle said to him and to his boy, ‘Where did you go?’ He said, ‘To look for the donkeys. We saw that they weren’t there, and we came to Samuel’. 15 Saul’s uncle said, ‘Please tell me what Samuel said to you’. 16 Saul said to his uncle, ‘He did tell us that the donkeys had been found’. As for the matter of the kingship, he didn’t tell him what Samuel said.

**10.17 How Not to Evade Being Drafted**

17 Samuel called out the people to Yahweh at The Watchtower. 18 He said to the Israelites, ‘Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: “I am the one who brought Israel up from Egypt. I rescued you from the hand of Egypt and from the hand of all the kingdoms that afflicted you”, 19 but today you people have rejected your God who was a deliverer for you from all your bad experiences and your pressures. You said to him, “No, rather you’re to set a king over us”. So now, take your stand before Yahweh by your clans and by your families’.

20 Samuel presented all the Israelite clans, and the clan of Benjamin was taken. 21 He presented the clan of Benjamin by its kin-groups and the kin-group of the Matrites arose, and Saul ben Qish was taken. They looked for him but he couldn’t be found, 22 so they asked of Yahweh again, ‘Has anyone else come here?’ Yahweh said, ‘There, he’s hiding with the things’. 23 They ran and got him from there and he took his stand among the people. He was loftier than all the people, from his shoulders up. 24 Samuel said to all the people, ‘Have you seen the one that Yahweh has chosen, that there’s no one like him among all the people?’ All the people shouted and said, ‘Long live the king’.

25 Samuel spoke to the people of the rule for the kingship, wrote it in a document, and set it down before Yahweh. Then Samuel sent all the people off each to his house. 26 Saul also went to his house at Gib’ah, and with him went the force whose heart God had touched. 27 When scoundrels said, ‘How can this man deliver us?’ and despised him and didn’t bring him an offering, he was like someone deaf.

**11.1 Anger as a Fruit of the Spirit**

11 Nahash the Ammonite went up and camped against Yabesh-in-Gil’ad. All the men of Yabesh said to Nahash, ‘Solemnize a pact to us and we’ll serve you’. 2 Nahash the Ammonite said to them, ‘On this basis I’ll solemnize one to you, on the basis of gouging out the right eye of every one of you. I’ll make it a reviling to all Israel’. 3 The elders of Yabesh said to him, ‘Let us go for seven days and we’ll send envoys through all Israel’s border. If there’s no one who’ll be a deliverer us, we’ll come out to you’.

4 The envoys came to Gib’ah-of-Saul and spoke the words in the people’s ears, and the entire people lifted up their voice and wailed. 5 And there, Saul was coming in behind the herd from the fields. Saul said, ‘What’s happened to the people, that they’re wailing?’ They told him the words of the men from Yabesh.

6 God’s spirit thrust itself onto Saul when he heard these words, and his anger raged right up. 7 He got a pair from the herd and cut them up and sent them off through the entire border of Israel by the hand of envoys, saying ‘Anyone of you who doesn’t go out after Saul and after Samuel: so it will be done to his herd’. Dread of Yahweh fell on the people and they went out as one person. 8 He numbered them at Bezeq; there were 300,000 Israelites and 30,0000 Judahites. 9 They said to the envoys who had come, ‘Say this to the people of Yabesh-in-Gil’ad: ‘Tomorrrow there will be deliverance for you, when the sun gets hot”‘. The envoys came and told the people of Yabesh and they rejoiced. 10 The people of Yabesh said, ‘Tomorrow we’ll go out to you and you can act toward us in accordance with everything that’s good in your eyes’.

**11.11 No Redress**

11 Next day Saul made the company into three units, and they came into the middle of the camp during the morning watch and struck down Ammon until the day got hot. Those who remained dispersed; among them there did not remain two together. 12 The people said to Samuel, ‘Who was the person who said “Is Saul to reign over us?” Give the people over and we’ll put them to death’. 13 But Saul said, ‘No one is to be put to death this day, because today Yahweh has brought about deliverance in Israel’.

14 Samuel said to the people, ‘Come, let’s go to Gilgal and renew the kingship there’. 15 So all the people went to Gilgal and made Saul king there before Yahweh at Gilgal. They made well-being sacrifices there before Yahweh. Saul and all the Israelites rejoiced greatly there.

12 Samuel said to all Israel, ‘Here, I listened to your voice regarding all that you said to me and I made a king reign over you. 2 So now, there is your king walking about before you. I myself am old and grey, but my sons – here they are, with you. I myself have walked about before you from my youth until this day. 3 Here I am. Vow against me in the presence of Yahweh and in the presence of his anointed. Whose ox have I taken? Whose donkey have I taken? Whom have I defrauded? Whom have I crushed? From whose hand have I taken a ransom so I might close my eyes to him? I’ll give it back to you’.

4 They said, ‘You haven’t defrauded us, you haven’t crushed us, you haven’t taken anything from anyone’s hand’. 5 He said to them, ‘Yahweh is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, that you haven’t found anything in my hand’. They said, ‘He is witness’. 6 Samuel said to the people, ‘Yahweh, who made Moses and Aaron and who brought your ancestors up from the country of Egypt.

**12.7 Take Your Stand and Face Facts**

7 So now take your stand so that I may enter into judgment with you before Yahweh on the basis of all Yahweh’s acts of faithfulness which he performed with you and with your ancestors.

8 When Jacob came to Egypt and your ancestors cried out to Yahweh, Yahweh sent Moses and Aaron and got your ancestors out of Egypt and enabled them to live in this place. 9 But they put Yahweh their God out of mind and he sold them into the hand of Sisera the army officer at Hatsor, into the hand of the Philistines, and into the hand of the king of Mo’ab, and they battled against them.

10 They cried out to Yahweh and said, ‘We’ve done wrong, because we’ve abandoned Yahweh and served the Masters and the Ashtars, but now, deliver us from the hand of our enemies and we will serve you’. 11 Yahweh sent Yerubba’al, Bedan, Yiphtah, and Samuel, and rescued you from the hand of your enemies all round, and you lived in confidence. 12 But you saw that Nahash king of the Ammonites was coming against you and you said to me, ‘No, rather a king must reign over us’, when Yahweh your God was your king.

13 So now, here is the king that you chose, that you asked for. Here, Yahweh has put a king over you. 14 If you live in awe of Yahweh, serve him, listen to his voice, and do not rebel against Yahweh’s bidding, and both you and the king who reigns over you follow Yahweh your God….

15 But if you don’t listen to the voice of Yahweh your God but rebel against Yahweh’s bidding, Yahweh’s hand will be against you and against your ancestors.

**12.16 Far Be It for Me to Sin by Not Praying for You**

16 Further, take your stand now and see this great thing that Yahweh is going to do before your eyes. 17 It’s the wheat harvest today, isn’t it. I shall call to Yahweh and he will give thunder and rain. You will acknowledge and see that you did a thing that was extremely bad in Yahweh’s eyes, in asking for a king for yourselves’.

18 So Samuel called to Yahweh and Yahweh gave thunder and rain that day. All the people were in great awe of Yahweh and of Samuel. 19 All the people said to Samuel, ‘Plead on behalf of your servants to Yahweh your God so we don’t die, because we’ve added something bad to all our wrongdoings in asking for a king for ourselves’.

20 Samuel said to the people, ‘Don’t be afraid. You yourselves have undertaken all this bad action. Nevertheless don’t turn aside from following Yahweh. Serve Yahweh with your entire mind. 21 You’re not to turn aside, because [it would be] after something empty, things that are no use and cannot rescue, because they’re empty. 22 Because Yahweh won’t take leave of his people, for the sake of his great name, because Yahweh resolved to make you a people for him. 23 Further, as for me, far be it for me to do wrong against Yahweh by leaving off from pleading for you. I shall instruct you in the way that’s good and right. 24 Nevertheless, live in awe of Yahweh and serve him in truthfulness with your entire mind, because you can see how he has done great things for you. 25 But if you actually do what’s bad: both you and your king, you’ll be swept away’.

**13.1 The King Takes Decisive Action**

13 Saul had been one year reigning and he reigned two years over Israel. 2 Then Saul chose for himself 3000 men from Israel; 2000were with Saul at Mikmas and in the highland at Bet-el, and 1000 were with Yonatan [Jonathan] at Gib’ah-in-Benjamin. The rest of the company he sent off, each one, to his tents.

3 Yonatan struck down the Philistines’ outpost that was at Geba, and the Philistines heard. Saul himself blew on the horn throughout the country, saying ‘The Hebrews are to hear!’ 4 and all Israel heard: ‘Saul has struck down the Philistines’ outpost, and now Israel has come to stink to the Philistines’. The people had themselves called out behind Saul at Gilgal, 5 while the Philistines gathered to battle with Israel: 30,000 chariotry, 6000 cavalry, and a company like the sand that is on the seashore in their large number. They went up and camped at Mikmas, east of Bet Aven. 6 When the Israelites saw that things were pressing for them, that the company was hard pressed, the company hid in caves, in thickets, in cliffs, in pits, and in cisterns, 7 while Hebrews crossed the Jordan [Yarden] to the region of Gad and Gil’ad.

Saul was still at Gilgal, while the entire company following him trembled. 8 He waited seven days for the set time that Samuel said, but Samuel didn’t come to Gilgal, and the company was dispersing from him. 9 So Saul said, ‘Bring up to me the burnt offering and the well-being sacrifices’, and he offered up the burnt offering. 10 As he finished offering up the burnt offering, there was Samuel coming. Saul went out to meet him, to bless him.

**13.11 You’ve Been Stupid**

11 But Samuel said, ‘What have you done?’ Saul said, ‘When I saw that the company was dispersing from me, and you yourself had not come at the set time, and the Philistines were gathering at Mikmas, 12 I said, “The Philistines will now come down to me at Gilgal and I haven’t sought to gain Yahweh’s goodwill”. So I forced myself and offered up the burnt offering’.

13 Samuel said to Saul, ‘You’ve been idiotic. You haven’t kept the order of Yahweh your God, which he gave you. Because Yahweh would now have made your kingship over Israel stand permanently, 14 but now your kingship won’t stand. Yahweh has sought for himself a man in accordance with his own mind. Yahweh has ordered that he is to be ruler over his people, because you haven’t kept what Yahweh ordered you’. 15 And Samuel set off and went up from Gilgal to Gib’ah-in-Benjamin.

Saul numbered the company of those that could be found with him, some 600 men. 16 Saul and Yonatan his son and the company that could be found with them were staying at Geba in Benjamin and the Philistines had camped at Mikmas. 17 A group wreaking devastation went out of the Philistines’ camp in three columns. One column would turn its face toward the Ophrah road, toward the Shu’al region. 18 One column would turn its face toward the Bet Horon road. One column would turn its face toward the border road overlooking Tsebo’im Ravine, toward the wilderness.

19 Now no smith could be found in all the country of Israel because the Philistines had said, ‘So that the Hebrews cannot make sword or lance’. (20 So all Israel went down to the Philistines for anyone to sharpen his ploughshare, his pick, his ax, and his sickle. 21 The charge was two-thirds of a sheqel for the ploughshare and for the picks, and a third for a fork, for the axes, and for setting the goad.) 22 So on a day of battle no sword or lance could be found in the hand of any of the company that was with Saul and with Yonatan, though it could be belonging to Saul and to Yonatan.

**13.23 Yonatan’s Bright Idea**

23 So the Philistines’ garrison had gone out to the pass at Mikmas. 14 A day came and Yonatan ben Saul said to the boy who was his equipment-bearer, ‘Come on, let’s cross over to the Philistines’ garrison that’s across over there’. He didn’t tell his father.

2 Saul was staying on the edge of Gib’ah, under the pomegranate tree which is at Migron. The company that was with him was some 600 men, 3 with Ahiyyah ben Ahitub, who was brother of Ikabod ben Pinhas, son of Eli, Yahweh’s priest at Shiloh, carrying a chasuble; the company didn’t know that Yonatan had gone.

4 Between the crossings by which Yonatan sought to cross to the Philistines’ garrison there was a craggy outcrop on one side of the crossing and a craggy outcrop on the other side of the crossing. The name of the one was Swamp and the name of the other was Thorn. 5 The one outcrop was a pillar on the north near Mikmas, the other on the south near Geba.

6 So Yehonatan said to the boy who was his equipment-bearer, ‘Come on, let’s cross over to the garrison of these foreskinned men. Maybe Yahweh will act on our behalf, because Yahweh has no difficulty in delivering by many or by few’. 7 His equipment-bearer said to him, ‘Do all that’s in your mind. Follow your inclination. Here, I’m with you. Just what’s in your mind’.

8 Yehonatan said, ‘Here, we’re going to cross over to the men and we’ll show ourselves to them. 9 If they say this to us, “Stay still till we reach you”, we’ll stand where we are and not go up to them. 10 But if they say this, “Come up to us”, we’ll go up, because Yahweh will have given them into our hand. This will be the sign for us‘.

**14.11 Jonathan and His Boy**

11 So the two of them showed themselves to the Philistines’ garrison, and the Philistines said, ‘There, Hebrews coming out of the holes wherethey hid themselves’. 12 The men in the garrison avowed to Yonatan and to his equipment-bearer, ‘Come up to us and we’ll make you acknowledge something’. Yonatan said to his equipment-bearer, ‘Come up after me, because Yahweh has given them into the hand of Israel’.

13 Yonatan went up on his hands and his feet with his equipment-bearer behind him. And they fell before Yonatan, with his equipment-bearer putting them to death behind him. 14 The first blow that Yonatan and his equipment-bearer struck was some twenty men, in some half a furlong of an acre of field. 15 There was trembling in the camp, in the field, and in the entire company, while the garrison and the group wreaking devastation also trembled, and the earth shook. It became a supernatural trembling.

16 Saul’s lookouts at Gib’ah-in-Benjamin saw: there, the turmoil was surging. It went hither and thither. 17 Saul said to the company that was with him, ‘Take a count, will you, and see who’s gone from us’. They took a count and there, Yonatan and his equipment-bearer were not there. 18 Saul said to Ahiyyah, ‘Bring up God’s chest’ (because God’s chest was at that time with the Israelites).

19 But while Saul spoke to the priest, the turmoil that was in the Philistines’ camp continued to go on and increase, so Saul said to the priest, ‘Take away your hand’, 20 and Saul and the entire company that was with him had themselves called out and came to the battle. There, one person’s sword was against his neighbour, a very great confusion. 21 Some Hebrews had belonged to the Philistines in previous days, people who had gone up with them into the camp all round, and they too came to be with the Israel that was with Saul and Yonatan, 22 while all the Israelites hiding in the highland of Ephrayim heard that the Philistines had fled, and they too caught up with them in battle. 23 Yahweh delivered Israel that day.

**14.23b A Taste of Honey**

When the battle passed beyond Bet Aven, 24 the Israelites were hard pressed that day. Saul had got the company to swear, ‘Cursed is the man who eats a meal before evening, when I’ve taken redress from my enemies’, and the entire company hadn’t tasted a meal.

25 Now the whole country came into the forest and there was honey on the face of the field. 26 So the company came into the forest, and there, honey flowing. But no one put his hand to his mouth, because the company was in awe of the oath.

27 But Yonatan hadn’t heard his father get the company to swear, and he stretched out the end of the cane that was in his hand, dipped it into a honeycomb, and brought his hand back to his mouth, and his eyes lit up. 28 Someone from the company avowed, ‘Your father actually got the company to swear, “Cursed is the man who eats food today”, and the company has got weary’. 29 Yonatan said, ‘My father has brought disaster on the country. Please see that my eyes lit up when I tasted this bit of honey. 30 Yes, if only the company had actually eaten of its enemies’ spoil that it found today, because now wouldn’t the calamity for the Philistines have been great’.

31 They struck the Philistines down that day from Mikmas to Ayyalon, but the company got very weary. 32 So the company pounced on the spoil, got flock, herd, and calves, and slaughtered them on the ground. The company ate with the blood.

33 People told Saul: ‘There, the company are doing wrong in relation to Yahweh by eating with the blood’. He said, ‘You’ve broken faith. Roll a big stone to me now’. 34 Saul said, ‘Spread out among the company and say to them, “Bring up to me each one his ox and each one his sheep and slaughter it here, and you can eat. You are not to do wrong in relation to Yahweh by eatingwith the blood’. So the entire company brought up, each one, his ox in his possession that night and slaughtered it there. 35 Saul built an altar for Yahweh. It was the first he built as an altar for Yahweh.

**14.36 The Fog of War Clarified**

36 Saul said, ‘Let’s go down after the Philistines tonight and plunder among them till morning light, and not let one person remain among them’. They said, ‘Do all that’s good in your eyes’. But the priest said, ‘Let’s draw near to God here’. 37 So Saul asked of God, ‘Shall I go down after the Philistines? Will you give them into Israel’s hand?’ But he didn’t answer him that day. 38 Saul said, ‘Come up to here, all you cornerstones of the company. Get to know and see how this wrong has happened today. 39 Because as Yahweh who delivers Israel lives, even if it is through Yonatan my son, he will absolutely be put to death’. From the entire company there was no one answered him.

40 He said to all Israel, ‘You’re to be on one side, and I and Yonatan my son will be on the other side’. The company said to Saul, ‘Do what is good in your eyes’. 41 Saul said to Yahweh the God of Israel, ‘Grant the truth’. Yonatan and Saul were taken and the company came out. 42 Saul said, ‘Make it fall between me and Yonatan my son’. Yonatan was taken.

43 Saul said to Yonatan, ‘Do tell me what you’ve done’. Yonatan told him: ‘I just took a taste, with the end of the cane that was in my hand, of a bit ofhoney. Here I am. I will die’. 44 Saul said, ‘May God do thus and may he do more [to me], because you absolutely must die, Yonatan’. 45 But the company said to Saul, ‘Is Yonatan to die when he brought about this great deliverance in Israel? Far be it, as Yahweh lives, if a hair of his head is to fall to the ground, because he has acted this day with God’. So the company redeemed Yonatan and he didn’t die. 46 But Saul gave up from following the Philistines, and the Philistines went to their place.

**14.47 The Successful King**

47 When Saul had taken the kingship over Israel, he did battle all round against all his enemies, against Mo’ab, against the Ammonites, against Edom, against the kings of Tsobah, and against the Philistines. Anyone who would turn his face, he treated as faithless. 48 He acted forcefully, struck down Amaleq, and rescued Israel form the hand of its despoiler.

49 Saul’s sons were Yonatan, Yishvi, and Malki-shua. The name of his two daughters—the name of the firstborn, Merab, the name of the younger, Mikal. 50 The name of Saul’s wife: Ahino’am bat Ahima’ats. The name of his army officer: Abiner ben Ner, Saul’s uncle. 51 Both Qish, Saul’s father, and Ner, Abner’s father, was Abi’el’s son.

52 There was fierce battling against the Philistines all Saul’s time but Saul would see anyone who was a strong man or any forceful individual and get him to join him.

15 Samuel said to Saul, ‘It was me that Yahweh sent to anoint you as king over his people, over Israel. So listen now to the voice (the words) of Yahweh. 2 Yahweh Armies has said this: “I am attending to what Amaleq did to Israel when he set upon them on the way, when they were going up from Egypt. 3 Now go and strike down Amaleq and ‘devote’ everything that it has. You will not spare it. Put to death both man and woman, both child and baby, both ox and sheep, both camel and donkey”’.

4 Saul got the company to listen, and numbered them at Tela’im, 200,000 men on foot and 10,000 men from Judah. Saul came as far as the town of Amaleq and lay in wait in the wadi. 6 Saul said to the Qenites, ‘Go, move away, go down from among the Amaleqites, so I don’t gather you up with them, given that you acted in commitment with all the Israelites when they went up from Egypt’. So the Qenites departed from among Amaleq.

**15.7 The King Who Isn’t Ruthless Enough**

7 Saul struck down Amaleq from Havilah until you come to Shur, which is east of Egypt. 8 He captured Agag king of Amaleq alive, while the entire company he devoted with the mouth of the sword. 9 But Saul and the company spared Agag and the best of the flock, the herd, the second-born, and the lambs, everything that was good. They were not willing to devote them. But every object that was despised and emaciated – they devoted it.

10 Yahweh’s word came to Samuel: 11 ‘I relent of having Saul reign as king, because he’s turned from following me and hasn’t implemented my words’. It enraged Samuel and he cried out to Yahweh all night.

12 Samuel started early in the morning to meet Saul. It was told Samuel, ‘Saul’s come to Carmel. Here, he’s been putting up a monument for himself. Then he turned round and passed on, and went down to Gilgal’.

13 Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said to him, ‘Blessed are you by Yahweh! I’ve implemented Yahweh’s word’. 14 Samuel said, ‘So what’s this sound of a flock in my ears, and the sound of a herd that I’m hearing?’ 15 Saul said, ‘They brought them from the Amaleqites, because the company spared the best of the flock and the herd to sacrifice for Yahweh your God. The rest we devoted’.

16 Samuel said to Saul, ‘Slow down, and I shall tell you what Yahweh spoke to me last night’. He said to him, ‘Speak’. 17 Samuel said, ‘Though you were small in your eyes, you’re the head of Israel’s clans. Yahweh anointed you as king over Israel 18 and Yahweh sent you on a journey. He said to you, ‘Go and devote the wrongdoers, Amaleq. Do battle against them until you’ve finished them off’. 19 Why didn’t you listen to Yahweh’s voice but pounce on the spoil and do what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes?’

**15.20 Listening is Better than Sacrificing**

20 Saul said to Samuel, ‘I listened to Yahweh’s voice! I went on the journey that Yahweh sent me on. I brought Agag king of Amaleq, but Amaleq I devoted. 21 The company took flock and herd from the spoil, the first of what was to be devoted, to sacrifice for Yahweh your God at Gilgal’. 22 Samuel said,

Are burnt offerings and sacrifices as pleasing to Yahweh

as listening to Yahweh’s voice?

Here, listening is better than sacrificing,

heeding than the fat of rams.

23 Because rebellion: the wrongdoing that comes from divination,

arrogance: the trouble that comes from effigies.

Since you rejected Yahweh’s word,

he has rejected you from being king.

24 Saul said to Samuel, ‘I did wrong, because I transgressed Yahweh’s bidding and your words, because I was afraid of the company and I listened to their voice. 25 But now, please carry my wrongdoing. Come back with me and I will bow low to Yahweh’. 26 Samuel said to Saul, ‘I will not come back with you, because you rejected Yahweh’s word and Yahweh has rejected you from being king over Israel’. 27 And Samuel turned round to go.

He took strong hold of the corner of his coat, and it tore, 28 and Samuel said to him, ‘Yahweh has torn the kingship of Israel from you today and given it to a neighbour of yours who is better than you. 29 Further, Israel’s Enduring One does not speak falsely and does not relent, because he’s not a human being so as to relent’.

30 He said, ‘I did wrong. Now please honour me in the presence of the elders of my people and in the presence of Israel, and come back with me, and I will bow low to Yahweh your God’. 31 So Samuel went back after Saul and Saul bowed low to Yahweh.

32 Samuel said, ‘Bring up to me Agag king of Amaleq’. Agag went to him in chains. Agag said, ‘Yes! The bitterness of death is departing!’ 33 But Samuel said, ‘As your sword made women childless, so your mother will become childless beyond other women’. And Samuel cut Agag down before Yahweh at Gilgal.

**15.34 Yahweh Sees into the Heart**

34 Samuel went to The Height while Saul went up to his home at Gib’ah-of-Saul. 35 Samuel didn’t see Saul again until the day of his death, because Samuel took up grieving for Saul when Yahweh had relented that he had made Saul king over Israel.

16 But Yahweh said to Samuel, ‘How long are you going to take up grieving for Saul, when I myself have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and go: I shall send you to Jesse [Yishay]the Bet-lehemite because I’ve seen a king for myself among his sons’. 2 Samuel said, ‘How can I go? Saul will hear and kill me’. Yahweh said, ‘You’re to take a heifer in your possession and say ‘It’s to sacrifice for Yahweh that I’ve come’, 3 and invite Jesse to the sacrifice. I myself will let you know what you’re to do and you’re to anoint for me the one that I say to you’.

4 Samuel did what Yahweh spoke. He came to Bet Lehem, and the town’s elders trembled to meet him and said, ‘Does your coming mean things are well?’ 5 He said, ‘Things are well. It’s to sacrifice for Yahweh that I’ve come. Make yourselves sacred and come with me to the sacrifice’. He made Jesse and his sons sacred and invited them to the sacrifice.

6 When they came, he saw Eli’ab and said, ‘Surely his anointed is in front of Yahweh!’ 7 But Yahweh said to Samuel, ‘Don’t look at his appearance or at the loftiness to which he stands, because I’ve rejected him, because it’s not what a human being sees, because a human being sees what appears to the eyes, but Yahweh sees into the mind’. 8 Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass before Samuel, but he said, ‘Yahweh has not chosen this one either’. 9 Jesse had Shammah pass, but he said, ‘Yahweh has not chosen this one either’. 10 Jesse had his seven sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Yahweh has not chosen these’.

**16.11 Yahweh’s Good Spirit and Yahweh’s Bad Spirit**

11 Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Have the boys come to an end?’ He said, ‘The little one still remains, but there, he’s tending the flock’. Samuel said to Jesse, ‘Send and get him, because we won’t sit down till he comes here’. 12 So he sent and brought him. He was tanned, with lovely eyes, good-looking. Yahweh said, ‘Get up, anoint him, because this is the one’. 13 Samuel got the horn of oil and anointed him among his brothers. Yahweh’s spirit thrust itself on David from that day onward. And Samuel set off and went to The Height.

14 Now Yahweh’s spirit had departed from Saul and a bad spirit from Yahweh had terrified him. 15 Saul’s servants said to him, ‘Please, here, a bad spirit from God is terrifying you. 16 Please, our lord should say that your servants who are before you should look for someone who knows how to play the guitar. When the bad spirit from God is upon you, he would play and it would be good for you’. 17 Saul said to his servants, ‘Look for someone who is good at playing for me, please, and bring him to me’. 18 One of the boys answered, ‘Here, I’ve seen a son of Jesse the Bet-lehemite who knows how to play. He’s a forceful strong man, a man of battle, but smart with words and good-looking, and Yahweh is with him’.

19 So Saul sent envoys to Jesse and said, ‘Send me David your son, who’s with the flock’. 20 Jesse got a donkey, bread, a skin of wine, and a kid-goat from the flock, and sent them by the hand of David his son to Saul. 21 David came to Saul and stood by him. He liked him a lot and he became an equipment-bearer for him. 22 Saul sent to Jesse to say, ‘May David please stand before me, because he’s found grace in my eyes’. 23 When the spirit from God would come to Saul, David would get the guitar and play by hand, and there would be relief for Saul. It was good for him. The bad spirit would depart from him.

**Map for Saul and David goes about here**

**17.1 The Frightening Champion**

17 The Philistines gathered their camp for battle. They gathered at Sokoh which belongs to Judah and camped between Sokoh and Azeqah, at Dammim End, 2 while Saul and the Israelites gathered and camped in Oak Vale and lined up for battle to meet the Philistines. 3 The Philistines were standing on a mountain on one side and Israel was standing on a mountain on the other side, with the ravine between them.

4 A representative went out from the Philistines’ camps, Golyat [Goliath] his name, from Gat, his height three metres and a handbreadth, 5 a copper helmet on his head. He was clothed in a coat of mail (the weight of the coat was 5000 sheqels of copper), 6 with copper shin guards on his legs, a copper javelin between his shoulders, 7 the wood of his his lance like a weavers’ rod, the point of his lance 600 sheqels of iron, and a shield-bearer walking before him.

8 He stood and called to the ranks of Israel: ‘Why should you go out and line up for battle? I’m the Philistine, aren’t I, and you’re Saul’s servants. Choose yourselves someone who will go down against me. 9 If he succeeds in battling with me and strikes me down, we’ll become servants to you. If I’m the one who succeeds over him and strikes him down, you’ll become servants to us and serve us’. 10 The Philistine said, ‘I myself revile Israel’s ranks this day. Give me a man and we’ll do battle together. ‘

11 Saul and all Israel listened to these words of the Philistine, and they were scared, very frightened.

**17.12 The Boy Gets the Chance to See**

12 Now David was the son of an Ephratite individual from Bet Lehem in Judah; his name was Jesse. He had eight sons. In the time of Saul the man was old, going on in age among men. 13 Jesse’s three eldest sons had gone, gone after Saul to the battle. The names of his three sons who had gone into the battle were Eli’ab the firstborn, his second Abinadab, and the third Shammah, 14 while David was the youngest. The three oldest had gone after Saul, 15 while David was going and coming back from being with Saul to shepherd his father’s flock in Bet-lehem.

16 The Philistine went up, starting early and doing it in the evening, and took his stand for forty days

17 Jesse said to David his son, ‘Get a barrel of this roasted grain and ten loaves of this bread, please, and run them to the camp for your brothers. 18 And these ten wedges of cheese, you’re to bring to the divisional officer. You’re to attend to your brothers, as to whether things are well with them, and get some reassurance from them, 19 while Saul and they and all the Israelites are in Oak Vale doing battle with the Philistines’.

20 David started early in the morning, left the flock to a keeper, picked things up, went as Jesse had ordered him, and came to the encampment when the force was going out to the line and shouting for the battle. 21 Israel and the Philistines lined up, line to meet line.

22 David left the things with him in the hand of the equipment keeper and ran to the line. He came and asked his brothers whether things were well with them. 23 While he was speaking with them, there, the representative was going up (Golyat the Philistine was his name, from Gat) from the Philistines’ lines. He spoke these same words, and David listened.

**17.24 You’re Too Young and Inexperienced**

24 When all the Israelites saw the man, they fled from before him. They were very frightened. 25 An Israelite said, ‘Have you seen this man going up? Because he’s going up to revile Israel. The man who strikes him down, the king will give him great wealth and give him his daughter and make his father’s household tax-free in Israel’.

26 So David said to the men standing with him, ‘What will be done for the man who strikes down that Philistine and removes reviling from Israel? Because who is this foreskinned Philistine that he’s reviled the lines of the living God?’ 27 The company said to him this same thing, ‘So it will be done for the man who strikes him down’.

28 Eli’ab, David’s older brother, heard him speaking to the men, and Eli’ab’s anger raged at David. He said, ‘Why is it that you’ve come down? And who did you leave that little flock alone in the wilderness with? I myself know your assertiveness and the bad inclination in your mind, that you’ve come down in order to see the battle’. 29 David said, ‘What have I done now? Wasn’t that just a word?’ 30 He turned from being near him toward another man and said this same thing. The company gave word back to him that was the same as the first.

31 The words that David spoke were heard and they told Saul, and he got hold of him. 32 David said to Saul, ‘No one’s heart should fail him. Your servant himself will go and battle with this Philistine’. 33 Saul said to David, ‘You can’t succeed in going to this Philistine to battle with him, because you’re a boy and he’s been a strong man from his boyhood’.

**17.34 How to Recycle Your Killer Instinct**

34 David said to Saul, ‘Your servant has been shepherding over the flock for his father. A lion or a bear comes and carries off a sheep from the flock, 35 and I go out after it and strike it down and rescue it from its mouth. It rises up against me and I get strong hold of it it by its beard and strike it down and put it to death. 36 Both lion and bear your servant has struck down. This foreskinned Philistine will be like one of them, because he’s reviled the ranks of the living God’. 37 And David said, ‘Yahweh who rescued me from the hand of the lion and from the hand of the bear: he will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine’. 38 Saul said to David, ‘Go, and Yahweh be with you’.

38 Saul clothed David in his uniform and put a copper helmet on his head and clothed him in a coat of mail. 39 David wrapped his sword over his uniform and resolved to walk, because he hadn’t tried it. But David said to Saul, ‘I can’t walk in these because I haven’t tried them’. So David removed them off him, 40 took his stick in his hand, chose five smooth stones for himself from the wadi, put them in the shepherds’ bag which he had, in the pouch, with his sling in his hand, and went up to the Philistine. 41 The Philistine kept walking and drawing near to David, with the shield-bearer before him.

42 The Philistine looked out and saw David, and despised him because he was a boy, tanned and lovely in appearance. 43 The Philistine said to David, ‘Am I a dog that you’re coming against me with sticks?’ And the Philistine slighted David by his gods. 44 The Philistine said to David, ‘Come to me, and I’ll give your flesh to the birds of the heavens and to the animals of the wild’.

**17.45 There Is a God in Israel**

45 David said to the Philistine, ‘You’re coming against me with sword, with lance, and with javelin, but I’m coming against you in the name of Yahweh Armies the God of Israel’s lines, whom you’ve reviled. 46 This day Yahweh will deliver you into my hand and I shall strike you down and remove your head from you. I shall give the carcasses of the Philistines’ camp this day to the birds of the heavens and to the creatures of the earth. All the earth will acknowledge that Israel has a God, 47 and this entire congregation will acknowledge that it is not by sword or by lance that Yahweh delivers, because the battle belongs to Yahweh and he will give you people into our hand’.

48 When the Philistine got up and walked and drew near to meet David, David hurried and ran to the line to meet the Philistine. 49 David put his hand into the bag, got a stone from there, slung it, and struck the Philistine on his forehead. The stone sank into his forehead. He fell on his face to the ground. 50 So David was stronger than the Philistine with sling and with stone. He struck the Philistine down and put him to death. There was no sword in David’s hand, 51 so David ran, stood over the Philistine, got his sword, pulled it from its sheath, and put him to death. He cut off his head with it.

The Philistines saw that their strong man was dead, and they fled. 52 The Israelites and Judahites got up, shouted, and pursued after the Philistines until you come to the ravine and to the gateways of Eqron. The Philistines who were run through fell on the Sha’arim road as far as Gat and as far as Eqron. 53 The Israelites came back from chasing after the Philistines and despoiled their camp. 54 David got the Philistine’s head and brought it to Jerusalem. His equipment he put in his own tent.

**17.55 Saul Has Struck Down His Thousands, David His Ten Thousands**

55 When Saul saw David going out to meet the Philistine, he said to Abner, the army officer, ‘The boy, whose son is he, Abner?’ Abner said, ‘On your life, your majesty, if I know’. 56 The king said, ‘You ask whose son the kid is’. 57 When David came back from striking down the Philistine, Abner got him and brought him before Saul, with the Philistine’s head in his hand. 58 Saul said to him, ‘Whose son are you, my boy?’ David said, ‘The son of your servant Jesse the Bet Lehemite’.

18 When he’d finished speaking to Saul, the person of Yehonatan bound itself to David’s person. Yehonatan became loyal to him as a person like himself. 2 Saul took him that day and didn’t let him go back to his father’s household. 3 Yehonatan and David solemnized a pact because he was loyal to him as a person like himself. 4 Yehonatan took off the coat that he had on and gave it to David, with his uniform, and along with his sword, with his bow, and with his belt.

5 David went out wherever Saul would send him; as he was successful, Saul set him over the men of battle. It was good in the eyes of the entire company, and also in the eyes of Saul’s servants.

6 But when they had come home, when David got back from striking down the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns in Israel for singing and dances to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with celebration, and with triangles. 7 The women who were having fun chanted,

Saul has struck down his thousands,

David his ten thousands.

8 And it really enraged Saul. This thing was bad in his eyes. He said, ‘They’ve given David ten thousands and given me thousands. Only the kingship will yet be his’. 9 Saul was eying David from that day on.

**18.10 Daughters are Just Political Pawns**

10 Next day a bad spirit from God thrust itself on Saul and he prophesied inside the house while David was playing by hand, as he did each day. There was a lance in Saul’s hand 11 and Saul threw the lance. He said ‘I’ll pin David to the wall’; but David turned from before him, twice. 12 Saul was afraid before David because Yahweh was with him and had departed from Saul, 13 and Saul moved him away from being with him and made him a divisional officer, so he went out and came in before the company. 14 David was successful on all his journeys; Yahweh was with him. 15 Saul saw that he was very successful, and he was in dread before him, 16 but all Israel and Judah loved David, because he was going out and coming in before them.

17 Saul said to David, ‘Here’s my oldest daughter Merab. I’ll give her to you as wife. Only be a forceful man for me and engage in Yahweh’s battles’ (Saul had said, ‘My hand must not be against him. The Philistines’ hand is to be against him’). 18 David said to Saul, ‘Who am I and what is my life, my father’s kin-group in Israel, that I should become the king’s son-in-law?’

19 Then at the time for giving Merab, Saul’s daughter, to David, she was given as wife to Adri’el the Meholatite. 20 But Mikal, Saul’s daughter, loved David, and they told Saul. The thing was all right in his eyes. 21 Saul said, ‘I’ll give her to him and she’ll become a snare to him, so the Philistines’ hand may be against him’. So Saul said to David, ‘Through number two you’re to become my son-in-law, right now’.

**18.22 Twice as Many Deaths as Saul Asks for**

22 Saul ordered his servants, ‘Speak to David quietly: “Here, the king delights in you and all his servants love you. So now, become the king’s son-in-law”’. 23 The king’s servants spoke these words in David’s ears. David said, ‘Is it a slight thing in your eyes, becoming the king’s son-in-law, when I am a destitute, slight person?’ 24 Saul’s servants told him, ‘These very words David spoke’.

25 Saul said, ‘Say this to David: “The king will have no delight in a marriage gift except in 100 Philistine foreskins, to have redress on the king’s enemies”‘ (Saul thought to have David fall by the hand of the Philistines). 26 His servants told these things to David, and the thing was all right in David’s eyes, for becoming the king’s son-in-law. The days were not complete 27 but David got up and went, he and his men, and struck down 200 of the Philistines. David brought their foreskins and they fulfilled the number for the king so that he might become the king’s son-in-law. So Saul gave him Mikal his daughter as wife.

28 Saul saw and acknowledged that Yahweh was with David, and Mikal Saul’s daughter loved him, 29 and Saul grew more afraid of David. Saul became hostile to David all the time.

30 The Philistines’ officers went out, and as many times as they went out, David was more successful than all Saul’s servants. His name was highly esteemed.

19 Saul spoke to Yonatan his son and to all his servants about bringing about David’s death, but Yehonatan Saul’s son delighted in David very much, 2 and Yehonatan told David: ‘Saul my father is seeking to bring about your death, so now, please keep watch in the morning, stay in a secret place, and hide. 3 I myself will go out and stand at my father’s hand in the fields where you are, and I’ll speak to my father about you. I’ll see what, and tell you’.

**19.4 A Bad Spirit from Yahweh**

4 Yehonatan spoke good things of David to Saul his father. He said to him, ‘The king shouldn’t do wrong to his servant, to David, because he hasn’t done wrong to you, and because his actions have been very good for you. 5 He put his life in the palm of his hand and struck down the Philistine, and Yahweh brought about a great deliverance for all Israel. You saw and you rejoiced. Why should you do wrong, shedding the blood of a person who is free of guilt, by bringing about David’s death for nothing?’ 6 Saul listened to Yehonatan’s voice, and Saul swore, ‘As Yahweh lives, if he is put to death….’

7 So Yehonatan called to David and Yehonatan told him all these things, and Yehonatan brought David to Saul and he was before him as in previous days. 8 Again there was a battle and David went out to battle with the Philistines and struck them down in a great rout, and they fled from before him.

9 But a bad spirit from Yahweh came on Saul. He was sitting in his house with his lance in his hand, and David was playing by hand, 10 and Saul sought to pin David to the wall, but he slipped away from before Saul, and he pinned the lance into the wall. David fled and escaped that night. 11 Saul sent envoys to David’s house to keep watch on him and put him to death in the morning, but Mikal his wife told David, ‘If you don’t escape with your life tonight, you’ll be put to death tomorrow’.

**19.12 Is Saul Among the Prophets, Too?**

12 So Mikal let David down through the window and he went and escaped and took flight. 13 Mikal got the effigies and put them in the bed, and put a goat’s hair quilt at its head and covered it with clothing. 14 Saul sent envoys to get David, but she said, ‘He’s ill’. 15 So Saul sent the envoys to see David, saying ‘Bring him up to me in the bed, to put him to death’. 16 The envoys came and there, the effigies in the bed and the goat’s hair quilt at its head. 17 Saul said to Mikal, ‘Why did you beguile me like that and help my enemy get away so he escaped? Mikal said to Saul, ‘He himself said to me, “Help me get away. Why should I put you to death?”’

18 When David took flight and escaped, he came to Samuel at The Height and told him all that Saul had done to him. He went, he and Samuel, and they stayed in the cabins. 19 It was told Saul, ‘There, David’s in the cabins at The Height’. Saul sent envoys to get David. He saw a group of prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing presiding over them. God’s spirit came on Saul’s envoys and they too prophesied. 21 People told Saul, so he sent more envoys, but they prophesied, too. Saul again sent, the third envoys, and they prophesied, too.

22 So he also went to The Height. He came as far as the great cistern which is at Seku and asked, ‘Where are Samuel and David?’ Someone said, ‘There, in the cabins at The Height. 23 He went there, to the cabins at The Height, and God’s spirit came on him, too. He walked on and prophesied until he came to the cabins at The Height. 24 He too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel. He fell down naked all that day and all night. That’s why they say, ‘Is Saul among the prophets, too?’

**20.1 A Test of Saul’s Attitude**

20 David took flight from the cabins at The Height and came and said before Yehonatan, ‘What have I done, what is my waywardness, what is my wrongdoing before your father, that he is seeking my life?’ 2 He said to him, ‘Far be it! You will not die. Here, my faither doesn’t do anything big or anything small but he has a word in my ear. Why would my father conceal this thing from me? This won’t be’. 3 But David also swore, ‘Your father does know that I’ve found grace in your eyes, and he’s said, “Yehonatan isn’t to know this, so he won’t be pained”. Actually, as Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, there’s really just a step between me and death’. 4 Yehonatan said to David, ‘What you yourself say, I will do for you’.

5 David said to Yehonatan, ‘Here, tomorrow is the new month. I’m definitely to sit with the king to eat. You should send me off and I’ll hide in the fields until the third evening. 6 If your father does attend to me, you’re to say, “David did ask me about running to Bet-lehem, his town, because there’s the annual sacrifice for the entire kin-group there”. 7 If he says this, “Good”, things are well for your servant, but if it really enrages him, acknowledge that some bad action is certain from him. 8 You’re to act in commitment with your servant because you’ve brought your servant into a pact before Yahweh with you. If there’s waywardness in me, put me to death yourself. Why is it that you should bring me back to your father?’

9 Yehonatan said, ‘Far be it for you! Because if I do get to know that some bad action by my father is certain to come on you, wouldn’t I tell you about it?’ 10 David said to Yehonatan, ‘Who will tell me if your father gives you a tough answer?’

**20.11 Loyalty**

11 Yehonatan said to David, ‘Come on, let’s go out to the fields’. The two of them went out to the fields, 12 and Yehonatan said to David, ‘Yahweh the God of Israel! When I search out my father this very time tomorrow or the third day, and there—things are good for David, I shall then send to you and have a word in your ear, won’t I. 13 May Yahweh act thus to Yehonatan and act thus again: when some bad action toward you seems good to my father, I will have a word in your ear and send you off, and you can go to where things will be well. And may Yahweh be with you as he was with my father. 14 While I’m still alive, will you not act in Yahweh’s commitment with me, and I will not die. 15 And will you not cut off your commitment from my household, ever, not even when Yahweh has cut off David’s enemies, each one, from the face of the ground. 16 Yehonatan has solemnized it with David’s household. Yahweh will look for it from the hand of (the enemies of) David’. 17 Yehonatan again got David to swear by his loyalty to him, because he was loyal to him with the loyalty of his person.

18 Yehonatan said to him, ‘Tomorrow is the new month and you’ll draw attention, because your seat will draw attention. 19 The third day, go right down and come to the place where you hid on the day you did it before, and stay beside the Ezel Stone. 20 When I myself shoot three arrows by the side of it, directing them for myself to a target, 21 there—I shall send the boy, “Go, find the arrows”. If I do say to the boy, “There, the arrows are away from you over here, get them”, you’re to come, because things are well for you, and there’s nothing, as Yahweh lives. 22 But if I say this to the kid, “There, the arrows are away from you over there”, go, because Yahweh has sent you off. 23 The word that we have spoken, you and I: here, Yahweh is between you and me permanently’.

**20.24 Rage and Shaming**

24 So David hid in the fields. The new month came and the king sat down to eat for the meal. 25 The king sat on his seat as usual, in the seat by the wall. Yehonatan got up and Abner sat at Saul’s side, but David’s place drew attention. 26 Saul didn’t speak a thing that day because (he said), ‘There’s been some chance thing so that he’s not pure. Yes, he’s not pure’.

27 Then the day after the new month, the second day, David’s place drew attention, and Saul said to Yeonatan his son, ‘Why didn’t ben Jesse come to the meal either yesterday or today?’ 28 Yehonatan answered Saul, ‘David did ask me about going to Bet Lehem. 29 He said, “Please send me off, because we have a kin-group sacrifice in the town and my brother has given me an order. So now, if I’ve found grace in your eyes, please, I’ll escape and see my brothers”. That’s why he hasn’t come to the king’s table’.

30 But Saul’s anger raged at Yehonatan. He said to him, ‘Son of a perverse, rebellious woman! I know that you’re choosing ben Jesse, aren’t you, to your shame and to the shame of your mother’s nakedness? 31 Because all the days that ben Jesse is alive on the earth, you and your kingship won’t be established. So now, send and get him to me, because he deserves death’.

32 Yeonatan answered Saul his father, ‘Why is he to be put to death, what has he done?’ 33 And Saul threw the lance at him to strike him down. So Yehonatan acknowledged that it was determined by his father to put David to death. 34 Yehonatan got up from the table in an angry rage and didn’t eat a meal on the second day of the new month because he felt pain for David because his father had shamed him.

**20.35 The Play with the Arrows**

35 In the morning Yehonatan went out to the fields for the meeting with David, a young boy with him. 36 He said to his boy, ‘Run, please find the arrows that I’m shooting’. When the boy ran, and he shot an arrow so that it passed him, 37 the boy came to the location of the arrow that Yehonatan had shot, and Yehonatan called after the boy, ‘Isn’t the arrow away from you, over there?’ 38 Yehonatan called after the boy, ‘Hurry, be quick, don’t stand there!’ So Yehonatan’s boy gathered the arrows and came to his lord. 39 The boy didn’t know anything. Only Yehonatan and David knew about the thing. 40 Yehonatan gave the equipment to the boy that he had and said to him, ‘Go, bring it to the town’.

41 When the boy had come and David had got up from toward the south, he fell on his face to the ground and bowed low three times, and they kissed one another and cried with one another, until David did so greatly. 42 Yehonatan said to David, ‘Go to where it will be well, because the two of us have sworn in Yahweh’s name, ‘Yahweh be between me and you and between my offspring and your offspring permanently”‘. So David got up and went, while Yehonatan came to the town.

21 David came to Nob, to Ahimelek the priest. Ahimelek trembled to meet David. He said to him, ‘Why are you alone, and there’s no one with you?’ 2 David said to Ahimelek the priest, ‘When the king gave me an order about a matter, he said to me, “No one is to know anything about the matter on which I’m sending you and about which I gave you order”. I’ve let the boys know about such and such a place. 3 So now, what do you have at hand? Do put five loaves of bread in my hand, or what can be found’.

**21.4 Reenter Goliath’s Sword**

4 The priest answered David, ‘There’s no ordinary bread at hand. Rather, there’s sacred bread, if the boys have only kept themselves from women’. 5 David answered the prest, ‘No, women have been withheld from us, as in previous days. When I’ve gone out, the boys’ bodies have been sacred, when it was an ordinary journey. How much more today, when it’s sacred, [they are sacred] in body’. 6 So the priest gave him what was sacred, because there wasn’t any bread there except the presence bread that had been removed from before Yahweh so as to put warm bread, at the time when it’s taken away.

7 Now there that day, held back before Yahweh, was one of Saul’s servants; his name was Do’eg the Edomite, chief of Saul’s shepherds.

8 David said to Ahimelek, ‘Isn’t there a lance or a sword at hand here? Because I didn’t take my sword or my equipment in my hand, because the king’s business was pressing’. 9 The priest said, ‘The sword of Golyat the Philistine whom you struck down in Oaks Vale—here, it’s wrapped in a cloth behind the chasuble. If you’re to take it for yourself, take it, because there’s none other apart from it here’. David said, ‘There’s none like it. Give it to me’.

10 So David set off and took flight that day from before Saul and came to Akish king of Gat. 11 Akish’s servants said to him, ‘This is David, the king of the country, isn’t it. This is the man they chant about during the dances, isn’t it:

Saul has struck down his thousands,

David his ten thousands.

12 David took these words to heart and became much afraid before Akish the king of Gat. 13 So he disguised his good sense before their eyes and behaved oddly while in their control. He scratched on the gateway doors and let his saliva go down his beard. 14 Akish said to his servants, ‘Here, you see a man who’s acting crazy. Why do you bring him to me? 15 Am I lacking crazy people, that you bring this one to act crazy for me? Is this man to come into my household?

**22.1 The Cave of Adullam**

22 David went from there and escaped to the Adullam Cave. His brothers and his father’s entire household heard, and they went down to him there. 2 Everyone under pressure, everyone who had a creditor, and everyone who was personally bitter collected themselves together to him, and he became their leader. There were some 400 men with him.

3 David went from there to The WatchTower in Mo’ab and said to the king of Mo’ab, ‘May my father and my mother please come out to be with you until I know what God will do for me’. 4 So he led them into the presence of the king of Mo’ab and they stayed with him all the time David was at the stronghold. 5 But Gad the prophet said to David, ‘You’re not to stay at the stronghold. Go, take yourself to the region of Judah’. So David went, and came to the Heret Forest.

6 Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered. Saul was sitting at Gib’ah under the oak on the height, with his lance in his hand and all his servants standing by him. 7 Saul said to his servants who were standing by him, ‘Listen, please, Benjaminites. Will ben Jesse give fields and vineyards to all of you? Will he make all of you divisional officers or section officers? 8 Because all of you have conspired against me. There’s no one who has a word in my ear when my son solemnizes things with ben Jesse. There’s none of you who’s feeling sick for me and has a word in my ear when my son has set up my servant to lie in ambush for me this very day’.

9 Do’eg the Edomite (he was standing with Saul’s servants) answered, ‘I saw ben Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelek ben Ahitub. 10 He asked of Yahweh for him, and gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Golyat the Philistine’. 11 The king sent to call for Ahimelek ben Ahitub the priest, and his father’s entire household, the priests who were at Nob. All of them came to the king.

**22.12 The Danger of Being Identified with David**

12 Saul said, ‘Listen, will you, ben Ahitub’. He said, ‘Here I am, my lord’. 13 Saul said to him, ‘Why have you conspired against me, you and ben Jesse, in giving him bread and a sword, and asking of God for him, so he can rise up against me and lie in ambush this very day?’ 14 Ahimelek answered the king, ‘But who among all your servants is as trustworthy as David, the king’s son-in-law, the officer over your bodyguard, and honoured in your household? 15 Was it today I started asking of God for him? Far be it for me. The king should not lay anything against his servant, against my father’s entire household, because your servant didn’t know anything small or great about all this’.

16 But the king said, ‘You are definitely to die, Ahimelek, you and your father’s entire household’. 17 The king said to the runners standing by him, ‘Turn round and put Yahweh’s priests to death, because their hand is also with David, and because they knew that he was taking flight and they didn’t have a word in my ear’. The king’s servants were not willing to put out their hand to attack Yahweh’s priests, 18 so the king said to Do’eg, ‘You turn and attack the priests’. Do’eg the Edomite turned and was the one who attacked the priests and put them to death that day, eighty-five men bearing the linen chasuble. 19 He struck down Nob, the priests’ town, with the mouth of the sword – both man and woman, child and baby, ox, donkey, and sheep, with the mouth of the sword.

20 One son of Ahimelek ben Ahitub escaped; his name was Ebyatar [Abiathar]. He took flight after David. 21 Ebyatar told David that Saul had killed Yahweh’s priests, 22 and David said to Ebyatar, ‘I knew that day when Do’eg the Edomite was there that he would definitely tell Saul. I was responsible for every life in your father’s household. 23 Stay with me. Don’t be afraid, because whoever seeks your life will be someone who seeks my life, because you will be in my charge’.

**23.1 David on the Run**

23 They told David: ‘Here, the Philistines are battling aginst Qe’ilah, and they’re despoiling the threshing floors’. 2 David asked of Yahweh, ‘Shall I go and strike down these Philistines?’ Yahweh said to David, ‘Go and strike the Philistines down and deliver Qe’ilah’. 3 David’s men said to him, ‘Here, we’re afraid here in Judah, and how much more when we go to Qe’ilah against the Philistines’ lines’. 4 David asked of Yahweh yet again, and Yahweh answered him, ‘Set off, go down to Qe’ilah, because I’m going to give the Philistines into your hand’. 5 So David went with his men to Qe’ilah and did battle against the Philistines, drove off their livestock, and struck them down in a great rout. So David delivered the people living in Qe’ilah.

6 Now when Ebyatar ben Ahimelek had taken flight to David (at Qe’ilah), a chasuble had come down in his hand. 7 It was told Saul that David had come to Qe’ilah. Saul said, ‘God has transferred him into my hand, because he’s shut himself in by coming into a town with doors and a bar’. 8 Saul got the entire company to listen about a battle, about going down to Qe’ilah to besiege David and his men. 9 David got to know that Saul was devising something bad against him, and he said to Ebyatar the priest, ‘Bring up the chasuble’.

10 David said, ‘Yahweh, God of Israel, your servant has heard for certain that Saul is seeking to come to Qe’ilah to devastate the town because of me. 11 Will the Qe’ilah landowners deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down as your servant heard? Yahweh, God of Israel, please tell your servant’. Yahweh said, ‘He will come down’. 12 David said, ‘Will the Qe’ilah landowners deliver me and my men into Saul’s hand?’ Yahweh said, ‘They will deliver’. 13 So David and his men, some 600 people, set off, got out of Qe’ilah, and went about wherever they could go. It was told Saul that David had escaped from Qe’ilah and he left off from setting out.

14 David stayed in the wilderness in the strongholds; he stayed in the highland, in the Ziph Wilderness. Saul looked for him all the time but God didn’t give him into his hand.

**23.15 Slippery Crag**

15 But David saw that Saul had set out to seek his life when David was in the Ziph Wilderness at The Forest. 16 Yehonatan, Saul’s son, set off and went to David at The Forest and strengthened his hand in God. 17 He said to him, ‘Don’t be afraid, because the hand of Saul my father will not find you. You yourself will reign over Israel and I will be second to you. Even Saul my father acknowledges it’s so’. 18 The two of them solemnized a pact before Yahweh, and David stayed in The Forest, while Yehonatan went home.

19 Ziphites went up to Saul at Gib’ah, saying ‘David’s hiding with us, isn’t he, in the strongolds in The Forest, on Hakilah Hill, which is south of The Wasteland. 20 So now, with all the longing to come down that you yourself have, your majesty, come down and we’ll deliver him into the king’s hand’. 21 Saul said, ‘May you be blessed by Yahweh because you’ve spared me. 22 Go, will you, and establish things further. Get to know and see the place where his foot goes, who has seen him there, because they’ve said to me, “He acts very shrewdly”. 23 Look and get to know of all the hiding places where he hides, and come back to me with things established, and I’ll go with you. If he’s in the region, I’ll search for him among all the divisions of Judah’.

24 They set off and went to Ziph before Saul. David and his men were in Ma’on Wilderness in the steppe, to the south of The Wasteland. 25 Saul and his men went to search, and people told David. He went down to The Cliff and stayed in Ma’on Wilderness. Saul heard and pursued after David to Ma’on Wilderness. 26 Saul went one side of the mountain while David and his men were on the other side of the mountain. David was making haste to get away from before Saul, while Saul and his men were surrounding David and his men so as to seize them, 27 when an envoy came to Saul saying ‘Hurry, come, because the Philistines have made a raid on the country’. 28 So Saul went back from pursuing after David and went to meet the Philistines. That’s why they called that place Slippery Cliff.

**23.29 Saul Pays a Visit in a Cave**

29 David went up from there and stayed in the strongholds at Gedi Spring. 24 1 When Saul came back from following the Philistines, they told him, ‘There, David’s in the Gedi Spring Wilderness’. 2 Saul got 3000 picked men from all Israel and went to look for David and his men in the direction of Ibex Rocks. 3 He came to sheepfolds by the road and a cave there, and Saul came in to relieve himself, while David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.

4 David’s men said to him, ‘Here, it’s the day that Yahweh said to you, “Here, I’m giving your enemy into your hand and you can do to him as seems good in your eyes”‘. David got up and cut off the corner of Saul’s coat quietly, 5 but afterward, David’s heart struck him because he’d cut the corner off that belonged to Saul. 6 He said to his men. ‘Far be it for me by Yahweh, if I should do this thing to my lord, to Yahweh’s anointed, in putting out my hand against him, when he’s Yahweh’s anointed!’ 7 David tore his men apart with the words and didn’t let them rise up against Saul.

When Saul set off from the cave and went on his way, 8 David set off afterward and went out of the cave. He called after Saul, ‘My lord king!’ Saul looked behind him and David bent his head, face to the ground, and bowed low. 9 David said to Saul, ‘Why do you listen to people’s words, saying “There, David is seeking something bad for you”? 10 Here, this day your eyes have seen the fact that Yahweh gave you into my hand today in the cave, and they said to kill you, but I had pity on you. I said I wouldn’t put out my hand against my lord, because he is Yahweh’s anointed.

**24.11 A Dead Dog? A Flea?**

11 My father, look and look some more at the corner of your coat in my hand, because when I cut off the corner of your coat, I didn’t kill you. Acknowledge and see that there’s nothing bad and no rebellion in my hand. I haven’t wronged you, but you’re hunting down my life so as to take it. 12 May Yahweh decide between me and you! May Yahweh take redress from you, whereas my hand will not be against you. 13 As the old aphorism says, “It’s from faithless people that faithlessness comes”. Given that my hand will not be against you, 14 after whom has the king of Israel gone out? After whom are you pursuing? After a dead dog? After a single flea? 15 May Yahweh be judge and may he decide between me and you. May he look and settle my argument and decide for me from your hand’.

16 When David finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, ‘Is this your voice, my son David?’ Saul lifted up his voice and wailed. 17 He said to David, ‘You’re more faithful than me, because you’ve dealt me good things but I’ve dealt you bad things. 18 Today you yourself have told of the good that you did to me, the fact that Yahweh delivered me into your hand and you didn’t kill me. 19 When someone finds his enemy and sends him off on his way with good…. Yahweh himself will make good to you with good in return this day for what you’ve done for me. 20 And now, here, I acknowledge that you will definitely reign as king and Israel’s kingdom will rise up in your hand. 21 So now, swear to me by Yahweh, if you cut off my offspring after me, if you annihilate my name from my father’s household….’

22 David swore to Saul, and Saul went home, while David and his men went up to the stronghold.

**25.1 The Man with the Sheep Business**

25 Samuel died, and all Israel collected and lamented for him. They buried him at his home, at The Height.

David set off and went down to the Par’an Wilderness. 2 Now a man in Ma’on with his business in Carmel: this man was very big. He had a flock of 3000 and 1000 goats, and he was shearing his flock in Carmel. 3 The man’s name was Nabal and his wife’s name was Abigayil; the woman was good in her insight and attractive in her appearance, but the man was tough and bad in his practices, though he was a Calebite.

4 David heard in the wilderness that Nabal was shearing his flock 5 and David sent ten boys. David said to the boys, ‘Go up to Carmel and come to Nabal and ask of him in my name whether things are well for him. 6 Say this: “Long life! May things be well for you, may things be well for your household, and may things be well for all that is yours! 7 So now, I’ve heard that you have people shearing. Your shepherds have now been with us. We haven’t let them be put to shame and nothing of theirs has drawn attention [as being missing] all the time that they were in Carmel. 8 Ask your boys and they’ll tell you. So may the boys find grace in your eyes, because we’ve come on a good day. Give what your hand finds to your servants, please, and to your son, to David.

9 David’s boys came and spoke all these very words to Nabal in David’s name, and let be. 10 Nabal answered David’s servants, ‘Who is David, who is ben Jesse? There are many servants breaking away today, each from his lord. 11 Should I take my bread and my water and the meat I’ve slaughtered for my shearers and give them to men who are from I don’t know where?’

**25.12 Abigayil Gets to Work**

12 David’s boys turned round for their journey and went back, and came and told him all these very words. 13 David said to his men, ‘Wrap on, each one, his sword’. They wrapped on, each one, his sword, and David also wrapped on his sword. 14 Some 400 men went up after David while 200 stayed by the things.

15 One of the boys told Abigayil, Nabal’s wife, ‘Here, David sent envoys from the wilderness to bless our lord, but he screamed at them, 16 though the men had been very good to us. We weren’t shamed and we didn’t attend to anything [as being missing] all the time we were going about with them when we were in the fields, 16 while they were a wall round us both by night and by day all the time we were with them shepherding the flock. 17 So now, acknowledge and see what you should do, because something bad is certain for our lord and for his entire household, but he’s a scoundrel to speak to’.

18 Abigayil hurried and got 200 loaves of bread, two skins of wine, five prepared sheep, five measures of roasted grain, 100 raisin blocks, and 200 fig blocks, put them on donkeys, 19 and said to her boys, ‘Pass on before me. Here, I’m coming after you’. She didn’t tell her husband Nabal. 20 While she was riding on the donkey and going down under the cover of the mountain, there, David and his men were going down to meet her. So she ran into them.

21 Now David had said, ‘It really was something false, that I kept watch on everything that belonged to this man in the wilderness and nothing of all that belonged to him drew attention [as being missing], and he has given back something bad to me in return for something good. 22 May God do so to (the enemies of) David and may he do so more if by morning I leave remaining, out of all who belong to him, one person who pisses against a wall’.

**25.23 Fool by Name and Fool by Nature**

23 Abigayil saw David, and hurried and got down from on the donkey. She fell on her face before David, and bowed to the ground. 24 So she fell at his feet and said, ‘The waywardness is in me myself, my lord. May your handmaid please speak in your ears. Listen to your handmaid’s words. 25 My lord should please not give his mind to this scoundrel, to Nabal, because he’s the same as his name. ‘Villain’ [*nabal*]is his name and villainy goes with him.

Now I, your handmaid, didn’t see my lord’s boys whom you sent. 26 But now, my lord, as Yahweh lives, and as you yourself live, Yahweh who has held you back from coming into bloodshed and finding deliverance for yourself by your own hand! Now may your enemies and the people who seek what is bad for my lord be like Nabal! 27 And now may this blessing that your handservant has brought for my lord be given to the boys who go about after my lord.

28 Please bear with your handmaid’s rebellion, because Yahweh will definitely make for my lord a trustworthy household, because my lord is engaged in Yahweh’s battles, and nothing bad will be found in you through your days. 29 When someone sets about pursuing you and seeking your life, my lord’s life will be bound up in the bundle of the living with Yahweh your God, but the life of your enemies he will hurl away, in the middle of a sling’s hollow. 30 And when Yahweh acts toward my lord in accordance with everything good that he has spoken concerning you, and charges you to be ruler over Israel, 31 this is not to be a cause of collapsing or stumbling of mind for my lord—to have shed blood for nothing and for my lord to have found deliverance for himself. And when Yahweh has been good to my lord, you are to be mindful of your handmaid’.

**25.32 A Marriage of Convenience**

32 David said to Abigayil, ‘Yahweh the God of Israel be blessed, who sent you this day to meet me. 33 Blessed be your good judgment and blessed be you yourself, who restrained me this day from coming into bloodshed and finding deliverance for myself by my hand. 34 Yet, as Yahweh the God of Israel lives, who held me back from dealing badly with you: if you had not hurried and come to meet me, by morning light there would definitely not have been left to Nabal one person who pisses against a wall.

35 David took from her hand what she brought for him, and he said to her, ‘Go home, things will be well. See, I’ve listened to your voice and had regard for you’.

36 Abigayil came to Nabal, and there, he had a banquet in his house, like a royal banquet. Nabal’s heart was good in him and he was very drunk, so she didn’t tell him anything small or great until morning light. 37 In the morning, when the wine had left Nabal, his wife told him these things, and his heart died inside him. He turned to stone. 38 Some ten days later Yahweh struck Nabal and he died.

39 David heard that Nabal had died, and said, ‘Yahweh be blessed, who has settled the argument over my reviling at the hand of Nabal, and held back his servant from something bad. Yahweh has made Nabal’s bad action come back on his head’. And David sent and spoke with Abigayil in connection with getting her for himself as a wife. 40 David’s servants came to Abigayil at Carmel and spoke to her: ‘David has sent us to you to get you for him as a wife’. 41 She got up and bowed low, face to the ground, and said, ‘Here is your maidmaid, a handservant to wash my lord’s servants’ feet’. 42 Abigayil hurried and got up, and mounted a donkey with her five girls behind her, and followed David’s envoys. So she became his wife.

43 As David had got Ahino’am from Yizre’e’l, the two of them also became his wives. 44 Saul had given Mikal his daughter, David’s wife, to Palti ben Layish, who was from Gallim.

**26.1 Who Can Lay Hands on Yahweh’s Anointed?**

26 The Ziphites came to Saul at Gib’ah, saying ‘David’s hiding on Hakilah Hill, isn’t he, over against The Wasteland’. 2 Saul set off and went down to the Ziph Wilderness, 300 picked men of Israel with him, to look for David in the Ziph Wilderness. 3 Saul camped on Hakilah Hill, which is over against The Wasteland, by the road. David was staying in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul had come after him into the wilderness. 4 David sent men to investigate and got to know as established fact that Saul had come.

5 Then David set off and came to the place where Saul had camped. David saw the place where Saul lay down with Abner ben Ner his army officer, Saul lying down in the encampment and the company camping round him. 6 David avowed to Ahimelek the Hittite and to Abishay ben Tseruyah, Yo’ab’s brother, ‘Who’ll go down with me to Saul, to the camp?’ Abishay said, ‘I’ll go down with you’.

7 David and Abishay came to the company by night, and there, Saul was lying asleep in the encampment, with his lance stuck in the earth by his head, and Abner and the company lying round him. 8 Abishay said to David, ‘God has surrendered your enemy into your hand today, so now I’ll strike him down with the lance, please, with one thrust into the earth. I won’t need to do it twice’.

9 David said to Abishay, ‘You’re not to do violence to him, because who has put out his hand against Yahweh’s anointed and been free of guilt?’ 10 David said, ‘As Yahweh lives, no, Yahweh will strike him, or his day will come and he’ll die, or he’ll go down to battle and be swept away. 11 Far be it for me by Yahweh to put out my hand against Yahweh’s anointed. But now get the lance that’s at his head and the water jug, please, and let’s take ourselves off’.

**26.12 Saul’s Protectors’ Failure**

12 So David got the lance and the water jug from by Saul’s head and they took themselves off, with no one seeing and no one knowing and no one waking up, because all of them were asleep, because a coma from Yahweh had fallen on them.

13 David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the mountain at a distance; the space between them was great. 14 David called to the company and to Abner ben Ner, ‘Answer, Abner, won’t you!’ Abner answered, ‘Who are you who’ve called to the king?’ 15 David said to Abner, ‘Aren’t you a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why haven’t you kept watch over your lord the king? Because one from the company came to do violence to the king, your lord. 16 This thing that you’ve done isn’t good. As Yahweh lives, you people deserve death because you haven’t kept watch over your lord, over Yahweh’s anointed. Look now. Where are the king’s lance and the water jar, which were by his head?’

17 Saul recognized David’s voice and he said ‘Is this your voice, my son David?’ David said, ‘My voice, my lord king’, 18 and he said, ‘Why is it that my lord is pursuing after his servant? Because what have I done? What bad action is in my hand? 19 So now my lord the king should please listen to his servant’s words. If it’s Yahweh who has incited you against me, may he smell an offering, but if it’s human beings, may they be cursed before Yahweh, because they’ve driven me away so I can’t attach myself to Yahweh’s domain today, saying “Go serve other gods”. 20 So now may my blood not fall to the ground at a distance from Yahweh’s presence, because the king of Israel has gone out to look for a flee, as he might hunt a partridge in the mountains’.

**26.21 I’ve Been Idiotic**

21 Saul said, ‘I’ve done wrong. Come back, my son David, because I won’t deal badly with you again, on account of the fact that my life has been esteemed in your eyes this day. Here, I’ve been idiotic and I’ve made very great mistakes’. 22 David answered, ‘Here’s the king’s lance. One of the boys may come across and get it. 23 Yahweh himself will return a person’s faithfulness and his trustworthiness, in that Yahweh gave you over into my hand today and I was not willing to put out my hand against Yahweh’s anointed. 24 Here, as your life has been important in my eyes this day, so may my life be important in Yahweh’s eyes and may he rescue me from every pressure’. 25 Saul said to David, ‘Blessed are you, my son David. May you both do much and also succeed much’.

David went on his way, while Saul went back to his place. 27 David said to himself, ‘I shall be swept away now one day by Saul’s hand. There’s nothing good for me but to make a final escape to the Philistines’ country. Saul will despair of me, of looking for me any more within Israel’s entire border, and I’ll escape from his hand’. 2 So David set off and crossed over, he and 600 men who were with him, to Akish ben Ma’ok, king of Gat. 3 David lived with Akish in Gat, he and his men, each with his household, David with his two wives Ahino’am the Yizre’e’lite and Abigayil the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. 4 It was told Saul, ‘David has taken flight to Gat’, and he didn’t look for him any more.

5 David said to Akish, ‘If I’ve found grace in your eyes, may they give me a place in one of the country towns so I can live there. Why should your servant live in the royal town with you?’ 6 So that day Akish gave him Tsiqlag. That’s why Tsiqlag has belonged to the kings of Judah until this day. 7 The length of time that David lived in the Philistines’ country was a year and four months.

**27.8 David’s Ruthless Cunning**

8 David and his men went up and made a raid on the Geshurites, the Gizrites, and the Amaleqites, because they were peoples living in the country that extends from Olam as you come to Shur, and as far as the country of Egypt.

9 David would strike down the country and not let a man or woman live, but take flock and herd, donkey, camels, and clothes, and go back and come to Akish. 10 Akish would say, ‘Whom did you raid just now?’ and David would say, ‘The Negeb of Judah’ or ‘The Negeb of the Yerahme’elites’ or ‘The Negeb of the Qenites’. 11 David wouldn’t let man or woman live for bringing to Gat, saying ‘So they don’t tell about us, “David did this”‘. Such was his rule all the time that he lived in the Philistines’ country. 12 Akish came to trust David, saying ‘He’s made himself totally stink among his people, among Israel. He’ll be a servant for me permanently’.

28 During that time the Philistines collected their camp for war so as to battle against Israel. Akish said to David, ‘You do know that you’re to go out with me in the camp, you and your men’. 2 David said to Akish, ‘Therefore, you yourself will know what your servant might do’. Akish said to David, ‘Therefore I will make you my bodyguard permanently’.

3 Now Samuel had died, and all Israel had lamented for him and had buried him at The Height, at his town; and Saul had removed the ghosts and the spirits from the country. 4 The Philistines collected and came and camped at Shunem; Saul collected all Israel and camped at Gilboa. 5 Saul saw the Philistines’ camp and was afraid; his heart trembled much. 6 Saul asked of Yahweh but Yahweh didn’t answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by prophets.

**28.7 What Do You Do When You’re Desperate?**

7 So Saul said to his servants, ‘Look for a woman who is a ghost-mistress for me so I can go to her and inquire through her’. His servants said to him, ‘There, a woman who is a ghost-mistress is in Dor Spring’. 8 Saul disguised himself and put on other clothes and went, he and two men with him, and came to the woman at night. He said, ‘Please divine through a ghost for me. Bring up for me the one that I shall say to you’.

9 The woman said to him, ‘Here, you yourself know what Saul has done, that he’s cut off ghosts and spirits from the country. Why are you laying a trap for my life, to bring about my death?’ 10 Saul swore to her by Yahweh: ‘As Yahweh lives, if waywardness befalls you through this thing….’

11 So the woman said, ‘Who shall I bring up for you?’ He said, ‘Samuel. Bring him up for me’. 12 The woman saw Samuel and cried out in a loud voice. The woman said to Saul, ‘Why have you beguiled me? You’re Saul’. 13 The king said to her, ‘Don’t be afraid. But what have you seen?’ The woman said to Saul, ‘It’s a divine being I’ve seen coming up from the earth’. 14 He said to her, ‘What’s he look like?’ She said, ‘An old man is coming up. He’s wearing a coat’. Saul knew that it was Samuel. He bent his head, face to the ground, and bowed low.

15 Samuel said to Saul, ‘Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?’ Saul said, ‘Things are very pressing for me. The Philistines are battling with me. God has departed from me. He hasn’t answered me anymore either by means of prophets or by dreams. I called to you to enable me to know what I should do’.

**28.16 Samuel Still Speaks Straight**

16 Samuel said, ‘So why do you ask me when Yahweh has departed from you and become your adversary? 17 Yahweh has done to you as he spoke by means of me. Yahweh has torn the kingship from your hand and given it to your neighbour, to David, 18 when you didn’t listen to Yahweh’s voice and didn’t perform his angry rage on Amaleq. That’s why Yahweh has done this thing to you this day. 19 Yahweh will also give Israel with you into the hand of the Philistines. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Yahweh will also give the Israelite camp into the hand of the Philistines’.

20 Saul hurried and fell full length on the ground. He was very frightened by Samuel’s words, while also there was no energy in him because he had not eaten bread all day and all night. 21 The woman came to Saul and saw that he was very fearful. She said to him, ‘Here, your maidservant listened to your voice and I put my life in the palm of my hand. I listened to your words which you spoke to me, 22 so now please listen to your maidservant’s voice as well. I want to put a bit of bread before you. Eat, and there’ll be energy in you when you go on your way’. 23 He refused and said, ‘I won’t eat’, but his servants pressed him, as well as the woman, and he listened to their voice. He got up from the ground and sat on the bed.

24 The woman had a stall-fed calf in the house. She hurried and slaughtered it, got flour and kneaded it, and baked it into flat bread. 25 She brought it up before Saul and before his servants and they ate. Then they got up, and went that night.

29 The Philistines collected their entire camp at Apheq, while Israel was camping at the spring which is in Yizre’e’l 2 and the Philistines’ lords were passing on by sections and by divisions, with David and his men passing on with Akish at the end.

**29.3 The Philistines’ Lords Are Wiser than Akish**

3 The Philistines’ officers said, ‘What are these Hebrews?’ Akish said to the Philistines’ officers, ‘This is David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, isn’t it, who’s been with me for this time (these years). I haven’t found any fault in him from the day he fell away until this day’. 4 The Philistines’ officers were furious with him. The Philistines’ officers said to him, ‘Send the man back. He should go back to his place, where you appointed him. He shouldn’t go down with us in the battle, so he won’t become an adversary to us in the battle. How could this man find acceptance with his lord—it was with those men’s heads, wasn’t it. 5 This is the David of whom they used to chant during the dance, isn’t it:

Saul has struck down his thousands,

David his ten thousands.

6 So Akish called for David and said to him, ‘As Yahweh lives, you’re upright and your going out and coming in with me in the camp is good in my eyes, because I haven’t found anything bad in you from the day you came to me until this day. But in the eyes of the lords you’re not good. 7 So now go back, go while things are well, and you won’t do anything bad in the eyes of the Philistines’ lords’. 8 David said to Akish, ‘But what have I done and what have you found in your servant from the day when I came to be before you until this day, that I shouldn’t come and do battle with the enemies of my lord the king?’

9 Akish answered David, ‘I acknowledge that you are good in my eyes, like God’s envoy. Nevertheless the Philistines’ officers have said, “He will not to go up with us in the battle”. 10 So now, start early in the morning, you and your lord’s servants who have come with you. Start early in the morning and when you have light, go’.

11 So in the morning David started early, he and his men, to go to return to the Philistines’ country, while the Philistines went up to Yizre’e’l.

**30.1 The Disaster While Their Back Was Turned**

30 When David and his men came to Tsiqlag, on the third day, the Amaleqites had made a raid on the Negeb and on Tsiqlag. They’d struck down Tsiqlag and burned it in fire 2 and taken captive the women who were in it, from the youngest to the oldest. They hadn’t put anyone to death but they’d driven them off and gone on their way.

3 So David and his men came to the town: there, it was burnt in fire and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. 4 David and the company that was with him lifted up their voice and wailed until there was no energy in them to wail. 5 David’s two wives had been taken captive, Ahino’am the Yizre’elite and Abigayil the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

6 It put great pressure on David, because the company said to pelt him with stones, because the entire company’s spirit was bitter, each person over his sons and his daughters. But David summoned up his strength through Yahweh his God. 7 David said to Ebyatar the priest, son of Ahimelek, ‘Bring up the chasuble for me, please’. Ebyatar brought up the chasuble to David. 8 David asked of Yahweh, ‘Should I pursue after this raiding gang, will I overtake it?’ He said to him, ‘Pursue, because you will indeed overtake and you will indeed rescue’.

9 So David went, he and 600 men who were with him, and came as far as Wadi Besor. While the people who were to be left halted, 10 David pursued, he and 400 men; 200 men who were too faint to cross Wadi Besor halted.

**30.11 The Informant**

11 They found an Egyptian man in the fields and took him to David. They gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water, 12 and gave him a piece of a fig block and two raisin blocks. He ate and his spirit came back to him (because he hadn’t eaten bread and hadn’t drunk water for three days and three nights). 13 David said to him, ‘Who do you belong to and where are you from?’ He said, ‘I’m an Egyptian boy, the servant of an Amaleqite. My lord abandoned me because I got ill, three days ago, 14 when we had made an incursion against the Negeb of the Keretites and against what belongs to Judah and against the Negeb of Caleb, and we burned Tsiqlag in fire’.

15 David said to him, ‘Will you take me down to this raiding gang?’ He said, ‘Swear to me by God, if you put me to death or if you deliver me into my lord’s hand…. And I will take you down to this gang’. 16 So he took them down and there they were, left to themselves on the face of the ground, eating and drinking and feasting on all the vast spoil that they had taken from the Philistines’ country and from the region of Judah.

17 David struck them down from dusk until the evening of the next day. Not one of them escaped, except 400 young men who mounted camels and fled. 18 David rescued everything that Amaleq had taken. And David rescued his two wives. 19 Nothing was missing to them, both the young and the old, sons and daughters, and from the spoil and all that they had taken for themselves. David got everything back. 20 David took the entire flock, while the herd they drove before that livestock. They said, ‘This is David’s spoil’.

**30.21 All Should Share**

21 David came to the 200 men who were too faint to follow David, so that they had let them stay at Wadi Besor. They went out to meet David and to meet the company that was with him. David went up with the company and he asked them whether things were well. 22 Every bad man and scoundrel of the men who had gone with David answered, ‘Since they didn’t go with me, we shouldn’t give them any of the spoil that we rescued, except an individual his wife and his children, so they can drive them off and go’.

23 David said, ‘You will not do so, my brothers, with what Yahweh has given us. He has kept us and given over the raiding gang that came against us, into our hand. 24 Who would listen to you regarding this thing? Because as will be the share of the person who went down into the battle, so will be the share of the person who stayed with the things. They will share it out together’. 25 From that day onward he made it a decree and a rule for Israel, until this day.

26 David came to Tsiqlag and sent off some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying ‘Here’s your blessing from the spoil of Yahweh’s enemies’, 27 to the ones in Bet-el, to the ones in the Negeb Heights, to the ones in Yattir, 28 to the ones in Aro’er, to the ones in Siphmot, to the ones in Eshtemoa, 29 to the ones in Rakal, to the ones in the towns of the Yerahme’elites, to the ones in the towns of the Qenites, 30 to the ones in Hormah, to the ones in Ashan Cistern, to the ones in Atak, 31 and to the ones in Hebron, to all the places where David had gone about, he and his men.

**31.1 A Last Act of Loyalty to Saul**

31 When the Philistines battled against Israel, the Israelites fled from before the Philistines and fell, run through, on Mount Gilboa. 2 The Philistines caught up with Saul and with his sons and the Philistines struck down Yehonatan, Abinadab, and Malki-shua, Saul’s sons.

3 The battle was hard against Saul, and the archers (the bowmen) found him; he was run through by the archers. 4 Saul said to his equipment-bearer, ‘Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, so these foreskinned men don’t come and thrust me through and act abusively to me’. But his equipment-bearer wasn’t willing because he was very fearful, so Saul took the sword and fell on it. 5 His equipment-bearer saw that Saul was dead and he too fell on his sword and died with him. 6 So Saul died, with his three sons, and his equipment-bearer, as well as all his men, altogether on that day.

7 The Israelites who were across the vale and who were across the Jordan saw that the Israelites had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, and they abandoned their towns and fled (the Philistines came and lived in them).

8 Next day the Philistines came to strip the people who were run through. They found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gilboa, 9 cut off his head, and stripped off his equipment. They sent off through the country of the Philistines all round to proclaim the news to the house of their idols and to the people. 10 They put his equipment in the house of the Ashtars, and his body they fastened to the wall of Bet Shan. 11 But the people living in Yabesh-in-Gil’ad heard about it, about what the Philistines had done to Saul, 12 and they set off, every forceful man. They went all night and got Saul’s body and his sons’ bodies from the walls of Bet-shan. They came to Yabesh and burned them there, 13 then got their bones and buried them under the tamarisk at Yabesh, and fasted for seven days.

**Samuel Book Two**

The story in 2 Samuel is a tragedy. In a broad sense a tragedy is any terrible event, but we can also use the word to describe a certain kind of story, one that relates how someone important and successful experiences the collapse of everything that made him or her important and successful. While this collapse may come about through bad luck, it may come about through bad decisions whose terrible consequences could hardly have been foreseen, yet which with hindsight seem inevitable. The tragedy in 2 Samuel is the tragedy of David.

Ironically, the background to David’s tragedy is another one, that of Saul. Given the circumstances of Saul’s becoming king, it might not seem surprising that his reign ends unhappily. David plays a key role in his downfall, without intending to do so—indeed, David seeks to honour Saul as the king anointed by Yahweh. But Saul’s story unravels and he dies in battle, along with Jonathan, his son and David’s best friend. Their death opens up the way for David to succed Saul. He has already been designated by God for this position, but the process whereby he gets there is a human one.

Naturally enough, the people of Judah, David’s own clan, are ready to recognize him, but the people of the northern clans are aware of other options from within their own number—specifically, someone from Saul’s household might seem a natural choice. But the possible candidates and the party supporting them gradually disappear, so that the northern clans drift into giving their ownrecognition to David.

David then makes an astute move in conquering Jerusalem. Although it sits in the middle of areas assigned to the Israelite clans, the town is still occupied by the Yebusites. David conquers it and makes it his capital. Its position and its history mean that no clan identifies with it, so it has the potential to be viewed as neutral territory, as David’s town. Yahweh later declares that he chose it, but in 2 Samuel, it’s David who takes the initiative in choosing it.

The dynamics of this process recur in the decision to build a permanent sanctuary for worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem. Again it is David’s idea. Yahweh is not enthusiastic about it, because he doesn’t want to be stuck in a fixed place, but he yields to it. He goes on to make a commitment to David that removes some of the ambiguity of his earlier attitude to the idea of having kings. He now promises David that his line will permanently occupy the throne over Israel. His immediate successor will be the king who actually builds the sanctuary in Jerusalem.

In the event, he will be the only successor to reign over the whole of Israel, and after a few centuries Davidic rule over Judah will come to an end. God’s promise about David’s line thus leads in due course to the hope of a Messiah. The word *Messiah* means *Anointed*, and in the Old Testament it applies to actual kings (and priests). But when there are no kings in the present, it comes to refer to the king whom God must surely set up one day.

David wins more spectacular victories but then everything starts to unravel. The second half of 2 Samuel tells of a catastrophic series of events in David’s life, for most of which he is directly or indirectly responsible. They centre on his relationships with people inside and outside his family rather than on political or military events. He has shown himself to be a brilliant leader, but he is a disaster as a human being.

It might seem surprising that he is described as a man after God’s heart. The description need only mean that he is the man God chose; it doesn’t imply that his heart was in tune with God’s heart. But in later pages of the Old Testament he is viewed as a model who contrasts positively with many other kings. For all his wrongdoing and foolishness, at least he stayed faithful to Yahweh and stayed trusting in Yahweh.

**1.1 The Fraud that Will Come Unstuck**

1 After Saul’s death, and when David had come back from striking down the Amaleqites, David stayed in Tsiqlag for two days, 2 and on the third day – there, a man coming from the camp, from being with Saul, with his clothes torn and earth on his head. When he came to David he fell to the ground and bowed low. 3 David said to him, ‘Where do you come from?’ He said to him, ‘I escaped from Israel’s camp’. 4 David said to him, ‘What was it that happened? Please tell me’. He said how the company fled from the battle and also many of the company fell and died and also Saul and Yehonatan his son died.

5 David said to the boy who told him, ‘How do you know that Saul is dead, and Yehonatan his son?’ 6 The boy who told him said, ‘I just happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there, Saul was leaning on his lance, and there, chariotry and cavalry caught up with him. 7 He turned his face behind him and saw me and called to me. I said, “Here I am”. 8 He said to me, “Who are you?” I said to him, “I’m an Amaleqite”. 9 He said to me, “Stand over me, please, and put me to death, because doom has taken hold of me, when my life is still entirely in me’. 10 So I stood over him and put him to death because I acknowledged that he would not live after he had fallen. I took the diadem that was on his head and a bracelet that was on his arm and brought them to my lord, here’.

11 David took strong hold of his clothes and tore them, he and all the men who were with him as well. 12 They lamented and wailed and fasted until evening for Saul, for Yehonatan his son, for Yahweh’s company, and for the household of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

**1.13 How Are the Mighty Fallen**

13 David said to the boy who told him, ‘Where are you from?’ He said, ‘I’m the son of a resident, an Amaleqite’. 14 David said to him, ‘How were you not afraid to put out your hand to do violence to Yahweh’s anointed?’ 15 David called for one of the boys and said, ‘Come up, attack him!’ He struck him down and he died. 16 David said to him, ‘Your blood is on your own head, because your own mouth avowed against you, “I put Yahweh’s anointed to death”‘.

17 David chanted this elegy over Saul and over Yehonatan his son, 18 and he said to teach the Judahites ‘The Bow’ (there, it’s written on the Document of the Upright One):

19 The gazelle, Israel, is run through on your heights:

how have the strong men fallen.

20 Don’t tell it in Gat,

don’t announce the news in Ashqelon’s streets,

Lest the Philistines’ daughters celebrate,

lest the daughters of the foreskinned exult.

21 Mountains of Gilboa, may there be no dew,

no rain on you or fields of contributions,

Because there the strong men’s shield was fouled,

the shield of Saul, no more rubbed with oil.

22 From the blood of the slain,

from the fat of strong men,

The bow of Yehonatan did not turn back,

the sword of Saul did not go back empty.

23 Saul and Yehonatan, loved and delighted in,

in their life and in their death they were not parted.

They were swifter than eagles,

they were stronger than lions.

24 Daughters of Israel,

wail over Saul,

Who clothed you in scarlet and finery,

who put gold ornaments on your apparel.

25 How have the strong men fallen

in the middle of the battle.

Yehonatan, run through on your heights,

26 it’s depressing for me because of you.

My brother Yehonatan,

you were very lovely to me.

Your loyalty was extraordinary to me,

more than the loyalty of women.

27 How have the strong men fallen

and the articles of battle perished!

**Map for David goes about here**

**2.1 Two Kings**

2 After this, David asked of Yahweh, ‘Should I go up into one of the towns of Judah?’ Yahweh said to him, ‘Go up’. David said, ‘Where should I go up?’ He said, ‘To Hebron’. 2 So David went up there, he and also his two wives Ahino’am the Yizre’e’lite and Abigayil the wife of Nabal the Carmelite, 3 and David took up his men who were with him, the man and his household, and they lived in the Hebron towns. 4 The Judahites came and anointed David as king there over the household of Judah.

They told David, ‘The people who buried Saul were the people of Yabesh-in-Gil’ad’. 5 So David sent envoys to the people of Yabesh-in-Gil’ad and said to them, ‘Blessed are you by Yahweh because you acted in this commitment with your lord, with Saul, and buried him. 6 So now may Yahweh act in commitment and truthfulness with you, and I myself will also do this good thing with you, because you did this thing. 7 So now, may your hands be strong, be forceful men, because your lord Saul is dead, and further the household of Judah have anointed me as king over them’.

8 Now Abner ben Ner, army officer for Saul, had got Shameful-man son of Saul [Ish-boshet ben Sha’ul], got him to go across to Mahanayim, 9 and made him king for Gil’ad, for the Ashurites, for Yizre’e’l, for Ephrayim, and for Benjamin—for Israel, all of it. 10 Shameful-man son of Saul was a man of forty years when he became king over Israel and he reigned for two years. However, the household of Judah was following David. 11 The length of the time that David was king in Hebron over the household of Judah was seven years and six months.

**2.12 The Boys Fight It Out**

12 Abner ben Ner went out, he and the servants of Shameful-man son of Saul, from Mahanayim to Gib’on, 13 when Yo’ab ben Tseruyah and David’s servants went out and met them at the Gib’on pool, together. One group sat at the pool on one side, the other group at the pool on the other side. 14 Abner said to Yo’ab, ‘The boys should get up, shouldn’t they, and make fun before us!’ Yo’ab said, ‘They should get up!’ 15 They got up and went across by number, twelve for Benjamin and for Shameful-man son of Saul, and twelve of David’s servants. 16 Each one took strong hold of his neighbour’s head, with his sword into his neighbour’s side; thus they fell together. So they called that place Helqat Hatstsurim [Blades Share], which is in Gib’on.

17 The battle was very tough that day, and Abner and the Israelites took a beating before David’s servants. 18 The three sons of Tseruyah were there, Yo’ab, Abishay, and Asah’el. Now Asah’el was quick on his feet, like one of the gazelles that are in the wild. 19 Asah’el pursued after Abner, and didn’t turn aside as he went, to the right or to the left, from following Abner.

20 Abner turned his face behind him and said, ‘Is it you, Asah’el?’ He said, ‘It’s me’. 21 Abner said to him. ‘Turn yourself to your right or to your left and take hold of one of the boys for yourself and get his strip for yourself’. But Asah’el wasn’t willing to turn aside from following him. 22 Abner once more said to Asah’el, ‘Turn yourself aside from following me! Why should I strike you down to the ground? How could I lift up my face to Yo’ab your brother?’ 23 But he refused to turn aside, and Abner struck him down with the end of his lance, in his abdomen. The lance came out from behind and he fell there and died where he was. Everyone who came to the place where Asah’el had fallen and died, halted.

**2.24. The Struggle for Power**

24 Yo’ab and Abishay pursued after Abner as the sun went down and they came to Ammah Hill, which is east of Giah on the Gib’on Wilderness road. 25 The Benjaminites collected behind Abner and became one company, and they stood on the top of a hill. 26 Abner called to Yo’ab, ‘Is the sword to devour permanently? Do you not acknowledge that it will be bitter at the end? For how long will you not say to the company to turn back from following their brothers? 27 Yo’ab said, ‘As God lives, if you hadn’t spoken, it would rather be in the morning that the company would then give up, each person, from following his brother’. 28 So Yo’ab blew on the horn, and the entire company halted. They didn’t pursue after Israel any longer and didn’t do battle any more. 29 When Abner and his men had gone through the steppe all that night, they crossed the Jordan [Yarden], went all through the gorge, and came to Mahanayim.

30 When Yo’ab had gone back from following Abner, he collected his entire company, and from David’s servants nineteen men drew attention [as missing], with Asah’el, 31 while David’s servants had struck down from Benjamin and among Abner’s men 360; they had died. 32 They carried Asah’el and buried him in his father’s grave, which is in Bet Lehem. Then Yo’ab and his men went all night, and it got light for them in Hebron.

3 The battle between Saul’s household and David’s household was long-drawn-out, though David was growing stronger and Saul’s household was growing weaker. 2 Sons were born to David in Hebron. His firstborn was Amnon, by Ahino’am the Yizre’e’lite. 3 His second was Kil’ab, by Abigayil, the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. The third was Abshalom, the son of Ma’akah bat Talmay, king of Geshur. 4 The fourth was Adoniyyah, the son of Haggit. The fifth was Shephatyah, the son of Abital. 5 The sixth was Yitre’am, by Eglah, David’s wife. These were born to David in Hebron.

**3.6 Abner’s Power Play?**

6 As the battle was going on between Saul’s household and David’s household, Abner was asserting his strength in Saul’s household. 7 Now Saul had a secondary wife; her name was Ritspah bat Ayyah. [Shameful-man] said to Abner, ‘Why have you had sex with my father’s wife?’ 8 It really enraged Abner at Shameful-man’s words. He said, ‘Am I a dog’s head that belongs to Judah? Today I act in commitment with the household of Saul your father and to his brothers and to his friends, and I haven’t let you be found in David’s hand, and today you attribute waywardness to me with the woman. 9 May God do this to Abner and may he do more to him, because as Yahweh swore to David, so I will do for him, 10 to let the kingship pass over from Saul’s household and establish David’s throne over Israel and over Judah, from Dan as far as Be’er Sheba’. 11 He couldn’t say back anything further to Abner, for fear of him.

12 Abner sent envoys to David, in place of himself, saying ‘Whose is the country? You should solemnize your pact with me, and here, my hand will be with you to get all Israel to come round to you’. 13 He said, ‘Good, I myself will solemnize a pact with you. I’m going to ask only one thing from you: you will not see my face unless beforehand you bring Mikal, Saul’s daughter, when you come to see my face’. 14 And David sent envoys to Shameful-man son of Saul, saying ‘Give over my wife Mikal whom I betrothed to myself for a hundred Philistine foreskins’. 15 Shameful-man sent and got her from being with the husband, from being with Palti’el ben Layish. 16 Her husband went with her, wailing as he followed her as far as Bahurim, but Abner said to him, ‘Go, go back’, and he went back.

**3.17 Abner Miscalculates**

17 Abner had word with Israel’s elders: ‘Even in previous days, you were seeking David as king over you. 18 So now, act, because Yahweh has said of David, “By the hand of David my servant I will deliver my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies”’. 19 Abner both spoke in Benjamin’s ear, and Abner also went to speak in David’s ear in Hebron of all that was good in the eyes of Israel and in the eyes of the entire household of Benjamin.

20 Abner came to David at Hebron, twenty men with him, and David made a banquet for Abner and for the men who were with him. 21 Abner said to David, ‘I’ll set off and go and collect all Israel for my lord the king so they can solemnize a pact with you and you can reign over all that your appetite longs for’. David sent Abner off and he went, with things being well.

22 But there, David’s servants and Yo’ab came from a raiding gang, and brought much spoil with them. Abner was not with David in Hebron because David had sent him off and he had gone, with things being well. 23 When Yo’ab and the entire army that was with him came, people told Yo’ab, ‘Abner ben Ner came to the king, and he sent him off; he went with things being well’.

24 Yo’ab came to the king and said, ‘What have you done? Here was Abner coming to you. Why did you send him off? He’s totally gone. 25 You know Abner ben Ner, that he would have come to deceive you and to know your coming and your going and to know everything that you’re doing’.

**3.26 The Elimination of Abner**

26 Yo’ab went out from being with David and sent envoys after Abner, and they brought him back from the Sirah cistern. David didn’t know. 27 So Abner came back to Hebron, Yo’ab took him aside inside the gateway to speak with him in private, but struck him down there, in the abdomen. He died for the blood of Asah’el his brother.

28 David heard afterward and said, ‘I and my kingdom are free of guilt before Yahweh permanently for the shedding of the blood of Abner ben Ner. 29 May it whirl on the head of Yo’ab and on his father’s entire household. May there not be cut off from Yo’ab’s household someone with a discharge or someone with scaliness, or a man who takes strong hold of the spindle or falls by the sword or lacks bread’. 30 Yo’ab and Abishay his brother had killed Abner because of the fact that he had put Asah’el their brother to death at Gib’on in the battle.

31 David said to Yo’ab and to the entire company that was with him, ‘Tear your clothes and wrap on sack and lament before Abner’, while King David was going behind the bier. 32 So they buried Abner at Hebron. The king lifted up his voice and wailed at Abner’s grave. The entire company wailed. 33 The king chanted for Abner:

Should Abner have been dying

the death of a villain?

34 Your hands were not tied up,

your feet were not in chains.

They were brought together like someone falling—

before evil men you fell.

So the entire company continued to wail over him.

**3.35 The Disabled Son**

35 The entire comoany came to get David to eat bread while it was still day, but David swore, ‘May God do this to me and may he do more if I taste bread or anything before sundown’. 36 When the entire company recognized, it was good in their eyes, as everything that the king did was good in the eyes of the entire company. 37 The entire company and all Israel acknowledged that day that putting Abner ben Ner to death did not come from the king.

38 The king said to his servants, ‘You acknowledge do you not, that a leader and a great man has fallen this day in Israel. 39 And I myself am raw today, though anointed king, whereas these men, the sons of Tseruyah, are tougher than me. May Yahweh make good to the person who does what is bad in accordance with the bad thing that he did’.

4 Ben Saul heard that Abner had died at Hebron, and his hands went slack, while all Israel was fearful. 2 Now ben Saul had two men who were officers over raiding gangs. The name of one was Ba’anah and the name of the second was Rekab, sons of Rimmon the Be’erotite, of the Benjaminites because Be’erot was also counted with Benjamin. 3 The Be’erotites had taken flight to Gittayim, and they have been residents there until this day.

4 Now Yehonatan son of Saul had a son who was injured in both feet. He was a boy of five years when the report about Saul and Yehonatan came from Yizre’e’l. His nurse had carried him and fled, and as she was making haste to flee, he fell, so he limped. His name was Mephiboshet [From Shame’s Mouth].

**4.5 The Elimination of Saul’s Other Son**

5 So the sons of Rimmon the Be’erotite, Rekab and Ba’anah, went and at the very heat of the day came to Shameful-man’s house. He was taking a midday lie down. 6 So there, they came inside the house like people getting wheat and struck him down in the abdomen. Then Rekab and Ba’anah his brother escaped. 7 They had come to the house when he was lying on his bed in his bedroom, struck him down, and put him to death, and they removed his head, took his head, went by the Steppe road all night, 8 and brought Shameful-man’s head to David at Hebron. They said to the king, ‘Here is the head of Shameful-man son of Saul, your enemy who sought your life. This day Yahweh has given my lord the king full redress from Saul and his offspring’.

9 David answered Rekab and Ba’anah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Be’erotite, ‘As Yahweh lives, who has redeemed my life from every pressure: 10 when someone told me, “Here, Saul is dead”, and in his eyes he was like someone bringing good news, I seized him and killed him in Tsiqlag, one to whom I might have given something for the news. 11 How much more when faithless men have killed a faithful man in his house on his bed! I will seek his blood from your hand and burn you away from the country, won’t I’. 12 So David ordered the boys and they killed them, cut off their hands and their feet, and hanged them over the pool at Hebron. The head of Shameful-man they took and buried in Abner’s grave at Hebron.

**5.1 David Becomes King and Jerusalem Becomes His City**

5 Then all the Israelite clans came to David at Hebron and said, ‘Here, we are your flesh and blood. 2 Further, in previous days, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who took Israel out and brought Israel in. Yahweh said to you, “You’re the one who will shepherd my people Israel. You’re the one who will be ruler over Israel”‘.

3 So all Israel’s elders came to the king at Hebron, King David solemnized a pact to them at Hebron before Yahweh, and they anointed David as king over Israel. 4 David was a man of thirty years when he began to reign and he reigned for forty years: 5 in Hebron he reigned over Judah for seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned for thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah.

6 The king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Yebusites, the inhabitants of the region. They said to David, ‘You won’t come in here. Actually, the blind and the lame could have removed you’ (saying, ‘David won’t come in here’). 7 But David captured the Zion stronghold (i.e., David’s Town). 8 David said on that day, ‘Anyone striking down the Yebusites (the blind and the lame, treated with hostility by David himself—that’s why they say, “A blind or lame person will not come into the house”) should take possession of the conduit’.

9 David lived in the stronghold and named it ‘David’s Town’. David built it up all round from the Fill to the house. 10 David went on getting bigger and bigger, as Yahweh the God of Armies was with him. 11 Hiram king of Tsor [Tyre] sent envoys to David with cedar wood, crafsmen in wood, and craftsmen in stone for walls, and they built a house for David.

**5.12 For the sake of David’s People Israel**

12 David acknowledged that Yahweh had established him as king over Israel and that he had exalted his kingship for the sake of his people Israel. 13 David took more secondary wives and wives from Jerusalem after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David. 14 These are the names of the children born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Natan, Solomon, 15 Yibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Yaphia, Elishama, Elyada, and Eliphelet.

17 The Philistines heard that they had anointed David as king over Israel, and all the Philistines went up to look for David. David heard, and went down to the stronghold. 18 When the Philistines came, they ran loose in Repha’ites Vale. 19 David asked of Yahweh, ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?’ Yahweh said to David, ‘Go up, because I shall definitely give the Philistines into your hand’, 20 and David came to Ba’al-peratsim. David struck them down there and said, ‘Yahweh has broken out on my enemies before me like a breakout of water’. That’s why they named that place Ba’al Peratsim [Master of Breakouts]. 21 They abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off.

22 The Philistines yet again went up and ran loosein Repha’ites Vale. 23 David asked of Yahweh, but he said, ‘You will not go up. Make a turn round behind them and come to them from the direction of the weeper trees. 24 When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the weeper trees, then take action, because Yahweh will have gone out before you to strike down the Philistines’ camp’. 25 David did so, as Yahweh ordered him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba as far as when you come to Gezer.

**6.1 Little Things Can Have Terrible Consequences**

6 David again gathered every picked man in Israel, 30,000. 2 David set off and went, he and the entire company that was with him, from Ba’alim-in-Judah to take up from there God’s chest over which the name is called out (the name of Yahweh Armies who sits above the Sphinxes). 3 They transported God’s chest on a new wagon and carried it from Abinadab’s house, which was on the hill, with Uzza and Ahyo, Abinadab’s sons, driving the new wagon. 4 So they carried it from Abinadab’s house, which was on the hill, with God’s chest, with Ahyo going before the chest, 5 and David and the entire household of Israel made fun before Yahweh with all juniper wood [instruments], with guitars, with mandolins, with tambourines, with rattles, and with cymbals.

6 But they came as far as Nakon’s threshing floor, and Uzza reached out to God’s chest and grasped it because the cattle had stumbled, 7 and Yahweh’s anger raged at Uzzah. God struck him down there because of the blunder. He died there near God’s chest.

8 It really enraged David that Yahweh had broken out at Uzzah (he called that place Perets Uzzah [Breakout at Uzzah], until this day). 9 David was afraid of Yahweh that day and said, ‘How can Yahweh’s chest come to me?’ 10 So David was not willing to move Yahweh’s chest to him, to David’s Town. David got it to turn aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.

11 Yahweh’s chest stayed at the house of Obed Edom the Gittite for three months. Yahweh blessed Obed Edom and his entire household, 12 and it was told King David, ‘Yahweh has blessed the household of Obed Edom and all that belongs to him on account of God’s chest’, so David went and brought up God’s chest from Obed Edom’s house to David’s Town with rejoicing.

**6.13 How David Honoured Himself Today!**

13 When the people carrying Yahweh’s chest had taken six steps he sacrificed a bull and a fatling, 14 with David whirling before Yahweh with all his vigour, and David wrapped round in a linen chasuble, 15 and David and all the household of Israel bringing up Yahweh’s chest with a shout and with the sound of a horn. 16 Yahweh’s chest was coming into David’s Town as Mikal, Saul’s daughter, was looking out through the window. She saw King David jumping and whirling before Yahweh, and she despised him inside.

17 They brought in Yahweh’s chest and put it in its place inside the tent that David had spread for it. David offered up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices before Yahweh. 18 David finished offering up the burnt offering and the well-being sacrifices, blessed the people in the name of Yahweh Armies, 19 and shared out to the entire people, to the entire Israelite horde, both men and women, to each individual, a round of bread, a date block, and a raisin block.

The entire people went each person to his house, 20 and David went back to bless his household. Mikal, Saul’s daughter, came out to meet David, but she said, ‘How the king of Israel honoured himself today when he exposed himself today before the eyes of his servants’ handmaids, as one of the empty-headed people totally exposes himself!’

21 David said to Mikal, ‘It was before Yahweh, who chose me rather than your father and his entire household to charge me to be ruler over Yahweh’s people, over Israel. I’ll make fun before Yahweh 22 and slight myself yet more than this and be low in my own eyes, but with the handmaids that you speak of, with them I’ll find honour’.

23 To Mikal, Saul’s daughter, no child was born till the day of her death.

**7.1 Yahweh Doesn’t Like Settling Down**

7 When the king had gone to live in his house, when Yahweh had given him a settled position in relation to all his enemies around, 2 the king said to Natan the prophet, ‘Please look: I’m living in a cedar house, but God’s chest is living inside a tent’. 3 Natan said to the king, ‘Go do everything that’s in your mind, because Yahweh is with you’.

4 But that night Yahweh’s word came to Natan: 5 ‘Go and say to my servant, to David, “Yahweh has said this: ‘Are you to build me a house to live in? 6 Because I haven’t lived in a house from the day that I took the Israelites up from Egypt till this day. I’ve been going about in a tent as a dwelling. 7 Everywhere I went about among all the Israelites, did I speak a word with one of the Israelite clan leaders whom I ordered to shepherd my people Israel, saying “Why have you not built me a cedar house?”’”

8 So now you’re to say this to my servant, to David, “Yahweh Armies has said this: ‘I myself took you from the pasture, from following the flock, to be ruler over my people, over Israel, 9 and I’ve been with you everywhere you’ve gone. I’ve cut off all your enemies from before you and I shall make a big name for you, like the name of the big people who are on the earth. 10 I shall make a place for my people, for Israel, and plant them. They will dwell in their place and not tremble again. Evil people won’t humble them again as they did previously, 11 from the day that I ordered leaders over my people Israel. I shall give you a settled position in relation to all your enemies.

**7.11 A House and a Household**

Yahweh tells you that Yahweh will make a house(hold) for you. 12 When your days are full and you lie down with your ancestors, I shall set up your offspring after you, who will come out from inside you, and I shall establish his kingship. 13 He is the one who will build a house for my name. I shall establish his royal throne permanently. 14 I myself will become a father to him and he will become a son to me. When he goes wrong, I shall reprove him with a club in the hand of human beings, with the blows of human hands, 15 but my commitment will not depart from him as I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. 16 Your household and your kingship will be trustworthy permanently before you. Your throne will be established permanently’”’.

17 In accordance with all these words and in accordance with this entire vision, so Natan spoke to David.

18 King David came and sat before Yahweh, and said, ‘Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and who are my household, that you have brought me as far as this? 19 Moreover, this has been small in your eyes, Lord Yahweh. You’ve spoke further about your servant’s household for the distant future. This is instruction about a human being, Lord Yahweh: 20 what more can David speak to you? You yourself have acknowledged your servant, Lord Yahweh. 21 On account of your word and in accordance with your mind you’re doing this entire big thing, making it known to your servant.

**7.22 No God Like Yahweh, No People Like Israel**

22 Thus you are great, Lord Yahweh, because there is no one like you, no God except you, in all that we have heard with our ears. 23 And who is like your people, like Israel, a nation on the earth that God went to redeem for himself as a people, to make for himself a name, and to do big and awe-inspiring things (for you all) for your country before your people whom you redeemed for yourself from Egypt (nations and their gods). 24 You established your people Israel for yourself as a people permanently, and you Yahweh became God for them.

25 Now, Yahweh God, the word that you have spoken about your servant and about his household—establish it permanently and do as you have spoken. 26 May your name be great permanently: “Yahweh Armies is God over Israel”. May your servant David’s household be established before you. 27 Because you, Yahweh Armies, God of Israel, have opened your servant’s ear, saying “I will build a household for you”. That’s why your servant has found his courage to make this plea to you.

28 Now, Lord Yahweh, you are God, and your words are truthful. You have spoken this good thing to your servant. 29 Now resolve to bless your servant’s household so it will be before you permanently, because you, Lord Yahweh, have spoken. May your servant’s household be blessed permanently through your blessing’.

**8.1 David’s Victories**

8 Subsequently, David struck down the Philistines and made them bow down. David took the reins of control from the hand of the Philistines. 2 He also struck down the Mo’abites. He measured them with a length of cord, making them lie down on the ground. He measured two lengths for putting them to death and one full length for letting them live. The Mo’abites became servants to David, bringing offerings. 3 David struck down Hadad’ezer ben Rehob king of Tsobah, when he was going to put back his monument at the river Euphrates. 4 David captured from him 1,700 cavalry and 20,000 men on foot. David hamstrung all the chariotry but of them left 100 chariotry.

5 Arameans from Damascus came to help Hadad’ezer king of Tsobah, and David struck down 22,000 men in Aram. 6 David put outposts in Aram of Damascus and the Arameans became servants to David, bringing offerings. Yahweh delivered David in every place where he went. 7 David took the gold quivers that Hadad’ezer’s servants had and brought them to Jerusalem, 8 and from Betah and from Berotay, Hadad’ezer’s towns, King David took very much copper.

9 To’i king of Hamat heard that David had struck down Hadad’ezer’s entire force, 10 and To’i sent Yoram his son to King David to ask him about whether things were well and to bless him, because he had battled against Hadad’ezer and had struck him down, on account of the fact that Hadad’ezer had been involved in battles with To’i. In his hand were objects of silver, objects of gold, and objects of copper. 11 King David also made them sacred for Yahweh, with the silver and the gold that he made sacred from all the nations that he had subjugated: 12 from Edom, from Mo’ab, from the Ammonites, from the Philistines, from Amaleq, and from the spoil of Hadad’ezer ben Rebob king of Tsobah.

**8.13 David’s Best Time**

13 David made a name when he came back from striking down the Arameans in Salt Ravine, 18,000. 14 He put outposts in Edom. When he put outposts in all Edom, all Edom became servants to David. Yahweh delivered David wherever he went. 15 David reigned over all Israel and David exercised authority in faithfulness for all his people.

* 16 Yo’ab ben Tseruyah was over the army
* Yehoshaphat ben Ahilud was recorder
* 17 Tsadoq [Zadok] ben Ahitub and Abimelek ben Ebyatar were priests
* Tserayah was secretary
* 18 Benayah ben Yehoyada: both the Keretites and the Peletites
* David’s sons were priests.

9 David said, ‘Is there anyone still left of Saul’s household, so I can act in commitment with him for the sake of Yehonatan?’ 2 There was a servant belonging to Saul’s household; his name was Tsiba. They called for him to David, and the king said to him, ‘Are you Tsiba?’ He said, ‘Your servant ‘. 3 The king said, ‘Is there no one at all still left of Saul’s household so that I can act in God’s commitment with him?’ Tsiba said to the king, ‘There’s still a son of Yehonatan; he’s injured in both feet’. 4 The king said to him, ‘Where is he?’ Tsiba said to the king, ‘There, he’s at the house of Makir ben Ammi’el, in Lo Debar’. 5 King David sent and got him from the house of Makir ben Ammi’el, from Lo Debar. 6 Mephiboshet ben Yehonatan, son of Saul, came to David, fell on his face, and bowed low. David said, ‘Mephiboshet!’ He said, ‘Here is your servant’. 7 David said to him, ‘Don’t be afraid, because I’ll definitely act in commitment with you for the sake of Yehonatan your father. I’ll give back to you all the fields of Saul, your father, and you yourself may eat bread at my table regularly’. 8 He bowed low and said, ‘What is your servant, that you have turned your face to a dead dog like me?’

**9.9 Mephiboshet (‘From-Shame’s-Mouth’)**

9 The king called for Tsiba, Saul’s boy, and said to him, ‘Everything that belonged to Saul and to his entire household I am giving to your lord’s son. 10 You are to serve the land for him, you, your sons, and your servants, and bring it so it may be bread for your lord’s son, so he may eat it. But Mephiboshet, your lord’s son, himself is to eat bread continually at my table’ (Tsiba had fifteen sons and twenty servants). 11 Tsiba said to the king, ‘In accordance with all that my lord the king orders his servant, so your servant will act, “with Mephiboshet eating at my table like one of the king’s sons”‘.

12 Mephiboshet had a young son; his name was Mika. Everyone who lived in Tsiba’s household—they were servants of Mephiboshet, 13 though Mephiboshet lived in Jerusalem, because he was eating at the king’s table regularly. He was lame in both feet.

10 Subsequently, the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son began to reign in place of him. 2 David said, ‘I will act in commitment with Hanun ben Nahash, as his father acted in commitment with me’. So David sent by the hand of his servants to console him over his father. David’s servants came to the Ammonites’ country, 3 but the Ammonites’ officials said to Hanun their lord, ‘Is David honouring your father, in your eyes, because he sent you people offering consolation? It’s for the sake of searching out the town and investigating it so as to overthrow it that David sent his servants to you, isn’t it’.

4 So Hanun got David’s servants, clipped off half their beard and cut their clothes in half up to their behinds, and sent them off. 5 People told David and he sent to meet them, because the men were very ashamed. The king said, ‘Stay in Jericho until your beard grows, then you can come back’.

6 The Ammonites saw that they stank with David, and the Ammonites sent and hired Arameans from Bet-rehob and Arameans from Tsobah (20,000 men on foot), the king of Ma’akah (1000 men), and men from Tob (12,000).

**10.7 Yo’ab’s Victories**

7 David heard and sent Yo’ab and the entire army, the strong men. 8 The Ammonites went out and lined up for battle at the entrance of the gateway, with the Arameans from Tsobah and Rehob, the men from Tob, and Ma’akah alone in the fields. 9 Yo’ab saw that the face of battle was against him in front and behind. He picked some of all the picked men of Israel and lined them up to meet the Arameans, 10 while he gave the rest of the company into the hand of Abshay his brother and lined them up to meet the Ammonites. 11 He said, ‘If the Arameans are too strong for me, you’ll be my deliverance, and if the Ammonites are too strong for you, I’ll go to deliver you. 12 Be strong, and let’s summon up our strength on behalf of our people and on behalf of our God’s towns, as Yahweh does what is good in his eyes’.

13 So Yo’ab went up for the battle against the Arameans, he and his company who were with him, and they fled from before him. 14 When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, they fled from before Abishay and came into the town. So Yo’ab turned back from fighting the Ammonites, and came to Jerusalem.

15 The Arameans saw that they had taken a beating before Israel, and they gathered together. 16 Hadad’ezer sent and got the Arameans who were from across the river to go out, and they came to Helam, with Shobak, Hadad’ezer’s army officer, at their head. 17 It was told David, and he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and came to Hela’m, and the Arameans lined up to meet David and did battle with him. 18 The Arameans fled from before Israel. David killed 700 of the Aramean chariotry and 40,000 cavalry, and struck down Shobak, his army officer; he died there. 19 All the kings who were servants of Hadad’ezer saw that they had taken a beating before Israel and they made peace with Israel and served them. The Arameans were afraid to deliver the Ammonites any more.

**11.1 The View from the Roof**

11 At the turn of the year, at the time when the kings go out, David sent Yo’ab and his servants with him, and all Israel, and they devastated the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah, while David was staying in Jerusalem.

2 During evening time David got up from his bed and walked about on the roof of the king’s house, and from on the roof saw a woman bathing. The woman was very good-looking. 3 David sent and inquired about the woman. They said, ‘She’s Bat-sheba bat Eli’am, the wife of Uriyyah the Hittite, isn’t she’. 4 David sent envoys, got her, and she came to him. He slept with her, while she was making herself sacred from her taboo, and she went back to her house.

5 The woman got pregnant, and she sent and told David, ‘I’m pregnant’. 6 David sent to Yo’ab, ‘Send Uriyyah the Hittite to me’. Yo’ab sent Uriyyah to David. 7 So Uriyyah came to him, and David asked him about how well things were with Yo’ab and how well things were with the company and how well things were with the battle. 8 Then David said to Uriyyah, ‘Go down to your house and bathe your feet’. Uriyyah went out from the king’s house, and a present from the king followed him.

9 But Uriyyah slept at the entrance of the king’s house with all his lord’s servants. He didn’t go down to his house. 10 They told David, ‘Uriyyah didn’t go down to his house’. David said to Uriyyah, ‘Didn’t you come from a journey? Why didn’t you go down to your house?’ 11 Uriyyah said to David, ‘The chest and Israel and Judah are staying at Sukkot, and my lord Yo’ab and my lord’s servants are camped on the face of the fields, and should I myself come to my house to eat and drink and sleep with my wife? By your life, by your very life, if I were to do this thing….’

12 David said to Uriyyah, ‘Stay here today, too, and tomorrow I’ll send you off’. So Uriyyah stayed in Jerusalem that day.

**11.12 One Moral Mistake Can Lead to Another**

Next day 13 David called for him, he ate before him and drank, and he got him drunk. But in the evening he went out to lie in his bed with his lord’s servants. He didn’t go down to his house. 14 So in the morning David wrote a letter to Yo’ab and sent it by the hand of Uriyyah. 15 He wrote in the letter, ‘Place Uriyyah near the front of the fiercest battle, and pull back from after him so he may be struck down and die’. 16 So when Yo’ab was keeping watch on the town, he put Uriyyah in the place where he knew that there were forceful men. 17 The men of the town came out and battled against Yo’ab, and of the company some of David’s servants fell. Uriyyah the Hittite also died.

18 Yo’ab sent and told David all the things about the battle. 19 He ordered the envoy: ‘When you finish speaking all the things about the battle to the king, 20 if the king’s temper rises and he says to you, “Why did you go up to the town to battle? Didn’t you know that they would shoot from on the wall? 21 Who struck down Abimelek ben Yerubbeshet? Wasn’t it a woman who threw down an upper millstone on him from on the wall and he died at Tebets? Why did you go up to the wall?” then you are to say, “Your servant Uriyyah the Hittite also died”‘.

22 The envoy went, and came and told David all that Yo’ab had sent him with. 23 The envoy said to David, ‘The men prevailed against us and came out against us into the fields. Then we were against them as far as the entrance of the gateway. 24 But the archers shot at your servants from on the wall and some of the king’s servants died; and your servant Uriyyah the Hittie also died’.

25 David said to the envoy, ‘Say this to Yo’ab: “This thing is not to be bad in your eyes, because the sword devours one way and another way. Make your battle stronger against the town and tear it down”. Strengthen him’.

**11.26 But the Thing David Had Done Was Bad in Yahweh’s Eyes**

26 Uriyyah’s wife heard that Uriyyah her husband was dead, and she lamented over her master. 27 The grieving passed, and David sent and gathered her to his house. She became a wife for him, and gave birth to a son for him.

But the thing that David did was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. 12 So Yahweh sent Natan to David. He came to him and said to him, ‘There were two men in a town, one wealthy, one destitute. 2 The wealthy man had a very large flock and herd. 3 The destitute man didn’t have anything except one small ewe that he had acquired. He had let it live and it had grown up with him and with his children, all together. It used to eat from his bit, drink from his cup, and sleep in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. 4 A traveller came to the wealthy man, but he spared taking something from his flock or from his herd to prepare for the man on a journey who had come to him. He took the destitute man’s ewe and prepared it for the man who had come to him’.

5 David’s anger raged right up at the man. He said to Natan, ‘As Yahweh lives, the man who did this deserves death. 6 He should make good fourfold for the ewe on account of the fact that he did this thing, and since he didn’t spare’.

7 Natan said to David, ‘You’re the man. Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: “I myself anointed you as king over Israel. I myself rescued you from Saul’s hand. 8 I gave you your lord’s household and your lord’s wives into your arms. I gave you the household of Israel and Judah. If that’s little, I would have added to you as much again as these. 9 Why did you despise Yahweh’s word by doing what is bad in my eyes? Uriyyah the Hittite you struck down with the sword and his wife you took as your wife. Him you killed, with the sword of the Ammonites. 10 So now the sword won’t depart from your household, permanently, because of the fact that you despised me and took Uriyyah the Hittite’s wife to be a wife for you’.

**12.11 The Man Who Has Learned How to Be a Prophet**

11 Yahweh has said this: ‘Here, I’m going to make something bad arise for you from your household. I shall take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbour. He’ll sleep with your wives before the eyes of this sun. 12 Because you yourself acted in secret, but I myself will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun”‘.

13 David said to Natan, ‘I’ve acted wrongly against Yahweh’. Natan said to David, ‘Yes. Because Yahweh has made your wrongdoing pass on, you will not die. 14 Nevertheless, because you’ve total ly disdained (the enemies of) Yahweh by this act, yes, the child born to you will definitely die’. 15 And Natan went home.

Yahweh struck the child to whom Uriyyah’s wife gave birth for David, and it became ill. 16 David sought God for the boy. David made a fast and came and stayed the night and lay on the ground. 17 The elders in his household got up over him to make him get up from the ground but he wasn’t willing, and he didn’t eat a meal with them.

18 On the seventh day the child died. David’s servants were afraid to tell him that the child had died, because (they said), ‘Here, when the child was alive, we spoke to him and he didn’t listen to our voice. How can we say to him, “The child is dead”? He may do something bad’. 19 David saw that his servants were whispering to one another and David perceived that the child was dead. David said to his servants, ‘Is the child dead?’ They said, ‘He’s dead’.

**12.20 Death and New Life**

20 David got up from the ground, bathed, put on his oils, and changed his clothes. He came to Yahweh’s house and bowed low. Then he came to his house and asked and they presented him with a meal and he ate. 21 His servants said to him, ‘What’s this thing that you’ve done? When the child was alive, you fasted and wailed. Now that the child is dead, you’ve got up and eaten a meal’. 22 He said, ‘While the child was still alive, I fasted and wailed because I said, “Who knows? Yahweh may be gracious to me. The child may live”. 23 But now he’s dead, why on earth should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I’m going to him, but he won’t come back to me’.

24 David consoled Bat-sheba his wife and had sex with her. He slept with her and she gave birth to a son, and named him Solomon [Shelomoh]. Because Yahweh loved him, 25 he sent by means of Natan the prophet and named him ‘Beloved-by-Yah’, on account of Yahweh.

26 Yo’ab battled against Rabbah of the Ammonites and captured the royal town. 27 Yo’ab sent envoys to David and said, ‘I’ve battled against Rabbah—yes, captured the water town. 28 So now, gather the rest of the company and camp against the town and capture it, so that I myself don’t capture the town and my name is called out over it’.

29 So David gathered the entire company and went to Rabbah, battled against it, and captured it. 30 He got their king’s crown from on his head (its weight was a talent of gold, with precious stones) and it came onto David’s head, while he took out very much spoil from the town. 31 The people that was in it he took out and put them to saws, iron harrows, and iron axes, or transferred them to brickworking. So he would do to all the Ammonites’ towns. Then David and the entire company went back to Jerusalem.

**13.1 Amnon’s Plot**

13 Subsequently: Abshalom, David’s son, had an attractive sister; her name was Tamar. Amnon, David’s son, was in love with her. 2 It was pressing for Amnon, so that he became ill on account of Tamar his sister, because she was a young girl but it was unimaginable in Amnon’s eyes to do anything about her.

3 Now Amnon had a friend; his name was Yonadab ben Shim’ah, David’s brother. Yonadab was a very smart man. 4 He said to him, ‘Prince, why are you down like this, morning by morning? Won’t you tell me?’ Amonon said to him, ‘Tamar, my brother Abshalom’s sister—I’m in love with her’. 5 Yonadab said to him, ‘Lie on your bed and act ill. Your father will come to see you and you’re to say to him, “May Tamar my sister please come and give me bread to eat. May she prepare the food before my eyes in order that I may see and eat from her hand”‘.

6 So Amnon lay down and acted ill, the king came to see him, and Amnon said to the king, ‘May Tamar my sister come and make a couple of pancakes before my eyes, so I may eat from her hand’. 7 So David sent to Tamar his daughter, saying ‘Please go to Amnon your brother’s house and make him some food’. 8 Tamar went to Amnon her brother’s house; he was lying down. She got dough and kneaded it and made pancakes before his eyes, and cooked the pancakes.

9 She got the pan and poured them out before him, but he refused to eat. Amnon said, ‘Get everyone to go out from me’, and everyone went out from him. 10 Amnon said to Tamar, ‘Bring the food into the room so I can eat from your hand’. Tamar got the pancakes that she’d made, brought them to Amnon her brother in the room, 11 and brought them up to him to eat, but he took strong hold of her and said to her, ‘Come to bed with me, sister’.

**13.12 The Rape of a Sister**

12 She said to him, ‘Don’t, brother. Don’t humble me, because such a thing is not done in Israel. Don’t do this villainous thing. 13 I, where would I take my reviling? And you, you’ll be just one of the villains in Israel. So now, please speak to the king, because he wouldn’t withhold me from you’. 14 But he wasn’t willing to listen to her voice. He took hold of her and humbled her and bedded her.

15 Amnon then felt a very great hostility for her, in that the hostility that he felt for her was greater than the love he had felt for her. Amnon said to her, ‘Get up, go’. 16 She said to him, ‘No, because this bad act is greater than the other that you did with me, sending me away’. But he wasn’t willing listen to her. 17 He called the boy who ministered to him and said ‘Please send this woman off, away from my presence, outside, and bolt the door after her’.

18 She had a long-sleeved gown on, because the young princesses used to dress in such robes. His minister took her outside and bolted the door after her. 19 Tamar put dirt on her head, tore the long-sleeved gown that she had on, put her hand on her head, and went her way, crying out as she went.

20 Abshalom her brother said to her, ‘Sister, was it Aminon your brother who was with you? Now, sister, quieten down. He’s your brother. Don’t set your mind on this thing’. Tamar stayed, a desolate woman, in Abshalom her brother’s house. 21 When King David heard about all these things, it really enraged him. 22 Abshalom didn’t speak with Amnon anything bad or good, because Abshalom was hostile to Amnon because of the fact that he had humbled Tamar his sister.

**13.23 The Strife between Brothers**

23 Two full years later, Abshalom’s shearers were at Baal Hatsor, which is near Ephrayim, and Abshalom invited all the princes. 24 Abshalom came to the king and said, ‘Please, here are your servant’s shearers. Will the king and his servants please go with your servant?’ 25 The king said to Abshalom, ‘No, son, we won’t all of us go, we won’t be a burden to you’. He pressed him, but he wasn’t willing to go, but he gave them his blessing. 26 So Abshalom said, ‘But won’t Amnon my brother please go with us?’ The king said to him, ‘Why should he go with you?’ 27 But Abshalom pressed him, and he sent with him Amnon and all the princes.

28 Abshalom ordered his boys, ‘Watch when Amnon’s heart is good because of the wine, will you, and I’ll say to you, “Strike Amnon down”: put him to death, don’t be afraid. I myself am the one who’s given you the order, am I not. Be strong. Be forceful men”‘. 29 Abshalom’s boys did to Amnon as Abshalom ordered, and all the princes got up, each one on his mule, and fled.

30 While they were on the way, the report came to David: ‘Abshalom has struck down all the princes—not one of them was left!’ 31 David got up and tore his clothes and lay on the ground. All his servants stood, their clothes torn. 32 But Yonadab ben Shim’ah, David’s brother, avowed, ‘My lord should not say that all the young princes are dead, because Amnon alone is dead, because it’s been determined at Abshalom’s bidding since the day Amnon humbled Tamar his sister. 33 So now my lord the king should not take the thing to heart, saying “All the princes are dead”, because Amnon alone is dead’.

**13.34 The Woman from Teqo’a**

34 Abshalom took flight, and the lookout boy lifted up his eyes and looked: there, a large company going from the road behind him, from the side of the mountain. 35 Yonadab said to the king, ‘There, the princes have come. In accordance with your servant’s word, so it has happened’. 36 As he finished speaking, there, the princes came; they lifted up their voice and wailed. The king and all his servants also uttered a very great wail. 37 When Abshalom took flight and went to Talmay ben Ammihud king of Geshur, he took up grieving over his son all the time.

38 When Abshalom had taken flight and gone to Geshur, he was there for three years, 39 then going out to Abshalom consumed King David, because he had found consolation over Amnon, that he was dead. 14 Yo’ab ben Tseruyah knew that the king’s mind was on Abshalom, 2 and Yo’ab sent to Teqoa and got a smart woman from there. He said to her, ‘Please act as someone grieving and dress in grieving clothes. Don’t put on oils, be like a woman who’s been grieving for a long time over someone who has died. 3 You’re to come to the king and speak to him in this way’. Yo’ab put the words into her mouth, 4 and the Teqo’ite woman said them to the king. She fell on her face to the ground, bowed low, and said, ‘Deliver, your majesty!’

5 The king said to her, ‘What do you need need?’ She said, ‘Well, I’m a woman who’s a widow; my husband has died. 6 Your maidservant had two sons. The two of them fought in the fields and there was no one to rescue them from each other. One of them struck the other down and put him to death. 7 And here, the entire kin-group has risen up against your maidservant and said, ‘Give us the one who struck his brother down so we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed. We’ll annihilate the heir, too’. So they’ll quench the ember that remains to me, and not give my husband a name or someone remaining on the face of the ground’. 8 The king said to the woman, ‘Go home and I’ll give an order concerning you’.

**14.9 The Parable Explained**

9 The Teqo’ite woman said to the king, ‘On me be the waywardness, my lord king, and on my ancestral household; the king and his throne be free of guilt’. 10 The king said, ‘Anyone who speaks to you, bring him to me, and he will never touch you again’. 11 She said, ‘The king is please to be mindful of Yahweh your God so that the restorer of blood does not bring more devastation and they do not annihilate my son’. He said, ‘As Yahweh lives, if one hair of your son’s falls to the ground….’

12 The woman said, ‘May your maidservant please speak a word to my lord the king’. He said, ‘Speak’. 13 The woman said, ‘So why have you thought things up in this way against God’s people? By the king’s speaking this thing, he is like someone liable to condemnation, in that the king does not let his banished son come back. 14 Because we shall all finally die, like water poured out on the ground that cannot be gathered up. But God does not take up the life of one who thinks of ways so that someone who is banished does not stay banished from him.

15 So now, in that I have come to speak this word to my lord the king because the people have frightened me, your maidservant said, “I must speak to the king; perhaps the king will act on your handmaid’s word, 16 because the king will listen and rescue his handmaid from the fist of someone annihilating me and my son together from God’s domain”. 17 Your maidservant said, “May the word of my lord the king please be for my relief, because my lord the king is like God’s envoy in listening to what is good and what is bad”. May Yahweh your God be with you’.

**14.18 The King Won**

18 The king answered the woman, ‘Please don’t hide a thing from me of what I am asking you’. The woman said, ‘My lord the king may please speak’. 19 The king said, ‘Is Yo’ab’s hand with you in all this?’ The woman answered, ‘By your own life, my lord the king, if anyone could go to the right or to the left from all that my lord the king spoke, because your servant Yo’ab—he’s the one who gave me orders and who put all these things in your maidservant’s mouth. 20 It was for the sake of changing the face of the thing that your servant Yo’ab did this thing. My lord is smart with the same smartness as God’s envoy in knowing everything that’s in the country’.

21 The king said to Yo’ab, ‘Here, I’m going to do this thing. Go and get the boy, Abshalom, back’. 22 Yo’ab fell on his face on the ground and bowed low and blessed the king. Yo’ab said, ‘Today your servant acknowledges that I have found grace in your eyes, my lord king, in that the king has acted on your servant’s word’.

23 Yo’ab set off and went to Geshur and brought Abshalom to Jerusalem. 24 But the king said, ‘He’s to go round to his house and not see my face’. So Abshalom went round to his house and didn’t see the king’s face.

**14.25 The Field Set on Fire**

25 Compared with Abshalom, there was no one in all Israel as attractive, no one to admire so much. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him. 26 When he shaved his head (at the end of each year when he would shave—because it was too heavy for him, so he would shave it), he would weigh the hair on his head: 200 sheqels by the royal weight. 27 There were born to Abshalom three sons and one daughter, and her name was Tamar; she became a woman who was attractive in appearance.

28 Abshalom lived in Jerusalem for two years but didn’t see the king’s face. 29 Then Abshalom sent to Yo’ab so as to send him to the king, but he wouldn’t come to him. He sent again, a second time, but he wasn’t willing to come. 30 So he said to his servants, ‘Look, Yo’ab’s share is by the side of me and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire’. Abshalom’s servants set the share on fire.

31 Yo’ab got up and came to Abshalom at home and said to him, ‘Why did your servants set my share on fire? 32 Abshalom said to Yo’ab, ‘Here, I sent to you, saying “Come here,” so I could send you to the king to say “Why did I come from Geshur? It would be good for me if I were still there”. Now, I should see the king’s face, and if there is any waywardness in me, he may put me to death’. 33 So Yo’ab came to the king and told him, and he called for Abshalom. He came to the king and bowed low to him, with his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Abshalom.

**15.1 Abshalom Prepares for a Coup**

15 Subsequently, Abshalom made ready for himself a chariot and horses, with fifty men running before him. 2 Abshalom would start early and stand by the side of the road to the gateway. When anyone had an argument that was to come to the king for a decision, Abshalom called to him and said, ‘What town are you from?’ and the person said, ‘Your servant is from one of the Israelite clans’, 3 and Abshalom said to him, ‘Look, your words are good and straight, but you have no one from the king to listen’.

4 Abshalom said, ‘If only someone would make me an authority in the country so that anyone who had an argument for decision could come to me and I would see he was recognized as in the right’. 5 When someone drew near to bow low to him, he would put out his hand and take strong hold of him and kiss him. 6 Abshalom acted in this manner to all Israel who would come to the king for a decision. So Abshalom stole the heart of the Israelites.

7 At the end of forty years Abshalom said to the king, ‘I want please to go and make good my pledge that I made to Yahweh in Hebron, 8 because your servant made a pledge when I was living in Geshur in Aram, saying ‘If Yahweh lets me actually go back to Jerusalem, I will serve Yahweh’. 9 The king said to him, ‘Go, things will be well’. So he set off and went to Hebron.

10 But Abshalom sent followers through all Israel’s clans, saying ‘When you hear the sound of the horn, you’re to say, ‘Abshalom has become king in Hebron!’ 11 200 people from Jerusalem had gone with Abshalom, invited and going in integrity. They didn’t know anything. 12 And Abshalom sent for Ahitophel the Gilonite, David’s counsellor, from his town, from Giloh, when he was offering sacrifices. The conspiracy became powerful, and the company going with Abshalom was growing.

**15.13 David’s Flight**

13 Someone came telling David, ‘The Israelites’ mind has gone after Abshalom’. 14 David said to all his servants who were with him in Jerusalem, ‘Get up, let’s take flight, because there’ll be no escape group for us from before Abshalom. Hurry, go, so he doesn’t hurry and catch up with us and hurl something bad upon us and strike the town down with the mouth of the sword’. 15 The king’s servants said to the king, ‘In accordance with all that my lord the king chooses, here are your servants’. 16 The king went out with his entire household after him, but the king abandoned ten secondary wives to keep the house.

17 So the king went out with the entire company after him, and halted at the farthest house, 18 with all his servants passing on his side, and all the Keretites and all the Peletites, and all the Gittites (600 men who had come after him from Gat), passing on before the king. 19 The king said to Ittay the Gittite, ‘Why should you go with us, too? Go back and stay with the king, because you’re a foreigner, and also you’re an exile in relation to your place. 20 You came yesterday. Why should I get you to wander with us today as we go, when I’m going wherever I’m going? Turn back and take your brothers back with you in commitment and truthfulness’.

21 Ittay answered the king, ‘As Yahweh lives and as my lord the king lives, in the place where my lord the king is, whether for death or for life, there will your servant be’. 22 David said to Ittay, ‘Go, pass on’. So Ittay the Gittite passed on, with all his men and all the little ones who were with him.

**15.23 Turn Ahitophel’s Advice into Stupidity**

23 As the entire region was wailing in a loud voice and the entire company was passing on, and the king was passing over Wadi Qidron, and the entire company was passing on before the wilderness road, 24 and there also Tsadoq and all the Levites with him were carrying the chest of God’s pact, they put God’s chest down (and Ebyatar went up) until the company had finished passing on from the town.

25 But the king said to Tsadoq, ‘Take God’s chest back into the town. If I find grace in Yahweh’s eyes, he will let me come back and let me see it and its home. But if he says this, “I don’t want you”, here I am: he can do with me as it is good in his eyes’. 27 So the king said to Tsadoq the priest, ‘Do you see? You go back to the town and things will go well, with Ahima’ats your son and Yehonatan ben Ebyatar, your two sons, with you. 28 See, I’m going to wait in the steppes in the wilderness until word comes from you to tell me’.

29 So Tsadoq and Ebyatar took God’s chest back to Jerusalem and stayed there, 30 while David was going up the Olives Ascent, wailing as he was going up, with his head covered; he was walking barefoot, while the entire company that was with him covered each one his head. They went up wailing as they were going up. 31 When David told, ‘Ahitophel is among the conspirators with Abshalom’, David said, ‘Please turn Ahitophel’s counsel into idiocy, Yahweh!’

**15.32 Two Loyal Friends**

32 David was coming as far as the top where people would bow low to God, and there was Hushay the Arkite to meet him, his coat torn and earth on his head. 33 David said to him, ‘If you pass on with me, you’ll be a burden to me. 34 But if you go back to the town and say to Abshalom, “I’m your servant, your majesty—I used to be your father’s servant in the past, but now I’m your servant”, you can contravene Ahitophel’s counsel for me. 35 Tsadoq and Ebyatar the priestswill be with you there, won’t they. And every word that you hear from the king’s house you can tell Tsadoq and Ebyatar the priests. 36 There, their two sons, Tsadoq’s Ahima’ats and Ebyatar’s Yehonatan, are with them. You can send to me through them everything that you hear’. 37 So Hushay, David’s friend, came to the town as Abshalom was coming to Jerusalem.

16 When David had passed a little beyond the top, there, Tsiba, a servant of Mephiboshet, met him with a pair of donkeys, saddled. On them were 200 loaves of bread, 100 raisin blocks, 100 of summer fruit, and a skin of wine. 2 The king said to Tsiba, ‘Why have you got these?’ Tsiba said, ‘The donkeys are for the king’s household to ride, the bread and the summer fruit are for eating by the boys, and the wine is for drinking by people who are weary in the wilderness’. 3 The king said, ‘And where is your lord’s son?’ Tsiba said to the king, ‘There, he’s staying in Jerusalem, because he’s said, “Today the household of Israel will give me back my father’s kingship”’. 4 The king said to Tsiba, ‘Here, to you belongs everything that belonged to Mephiboshet’. Tsiba said, ‘I bow low. May I find grace in your eyes, my lord king’.

**16.5 Shim’i’s Slighting**

5 King David came as far as Bahurim and there, someone from the kin-group of Saul’s household was going out from there. His name was Shim’i ben Gera. As he went out he was slighting 6 and pelting David and all King David’s servants with stones, with the entire company and all the strong men at his right and at his left. 7 Shim’i said this as he slighted him, ‘Get out, get out, you man of bloodshed, you scoundrel! 8 Yahweh is giving back to you all the bloodshed in the household of Saul, in whose place you became king. Yahweh has given the kingship into the hand of Abshalom your son, and here you are, in a bad situation, because you’re a man of bloodshed’.

9 Abishay ben Tseruyah said to the king, ‘Why should this dead dog slight my lord the king? I shall pass on, please, and remove his head!’ 10 But the king said, ‘What do you and I have in common, you sons of Tseruyah? He can slight in this way because Yahweh has said to him, “Slight David”. Who is to say, “Why have you done that?”?’ 11 David said to Abishay and to all his servants, ‘Here, my son who came out from inside me, is seeking my life. How much more now a Benjaminite? Let him be. He can slight, because Yahweh has said it to him. 12 Maybe Yahweh will look at the waywardness done to me and Yahweh will give back good to me in place of his slighting this day’.

13 David and his men went on their way, while Shim’i was going along the side of the mountain alongside him, slighting and pelting him with stones alongside him and throwing dirt as he went. 14 The king came with the entire company that was with him, faint, and he refreshed himself there.

**16.15 Ahitophel’s Advice**

15 Now Abshalom and the entire company, the Israelite men, came to Jerusalem, and Ahitophel with him. 16 When Hushay the Arkite, David’s friend, came to Abshalom, Hushay said to Abshalom, ‘Long live the king, long live the king’. 17 Abshalom said to Hushay, ‘is this your commitment to your friend? Why didn’t you go with your friend?’ 18 Hushay said to Abshalom, ‘No, because the one whom Yahweh has chosen, he and this company and all the Israelite men—I shall be for him. I shall stay with him. 19 Secondly, whom should I serve? Before his son, shouldn’t I. As I served before your father, so I shall be before you’.

20 Abshalom said to Ahitophel, ‘Give your counsel: what shall we do? 21 Ahitophel said, ‘Have sex with your father’s secondary wives whom he left to keep the house. All Israel will hear that you have let yourself stink with your father, and the hands of all the people who are with you will be strong’. 22 They spread a tent for Abshalom on the roof and Abshalom had sex with his father’s secondary wives before the eyes of all Israel.

23 At that time the counsel of Ahitophel which he gave was like when one asks of a word from God. So it was with all Ahitophel’s counsel both for David and for Abshalom.

17 Ahitophel said to Abshalom, ‘I should please pick 12,000 men and set off and pursue after David tonight 2 so that I come on him when he’s weary and weak-handed. I’ll make him tremble, and the entire company that’s with him will flee. I’ll strike down the king alone 3 and bring back the entire company to you. When everyone has come back (it’s the man you’re seeking), the entire people will be at peace’. 4 The thing seemed right in the eyes of Abshalom and in the eyes of all Israel’s elders, 5 but Abshalom said, ‘Call for Hushay the Arkite as well, please, so we can hear what’s in his mouth as well’. 6 Hushay came to Abshalom and Abshalom said to him: ‘This very word Ahitophel spoke. Shall we act on his word? If not, you speak’.

**17.7 Good Advice Treated as Folly**

7 Hushay said to Abshalom, ‘The counsel Ahitophel has given is not good this time’. 8 Hushay said, ‘You yourself know your father and his men, that they’re strong men. They’re as fierce-spirited as a bear in the wild that has lost its cubs, and your father is a man of battle . But he won’t stay the night with the company. 9 There, he will now be hiding in one of the pits or in one of the places.

And when some of the men fall at the beginning, a person who hears will hear and say, ‘Defeat has come on the company that goes after Abshalom!’ 10 That man, even if he’s a forceful man whose heart’s like the heart of a lion, will totally melt, because all Israel knows that your father is a strong man, as are the forceful men who are with him.

11 Rather I counsel that all Israel from Dan as far as Be’er-sheba (like the sand on the seashore in numbers) gather together to join you, with you personally going among them. 12 We’ll come against him in one of the places where he may be found and we’ll light on him as the dew falls on the ground. None will be left of him and of all the men who are with him, not even one. 13 If he gathers together into a town, all Israel is to bring ropes to that town and we’ll drag it as far as the wadi until not even a pebble is to be found there’.

14 Abshalom and all the Israelite men said, ‘The counsel of Hushay the Arkite is better than the counsel of Ahitophel’; Yahweh had ordered the contravening of Ahitophel’s good counsel so that Yahweh might bring a bad fate on Abshalom. 15 Hushay said to Tsadoq and to Ebyatar the priests, ‘In this and this way Ahitophel counseled Abshalom and the elders of Israel, but in this and this way I myself counseled. 16 Now send off quickly and tell David, “Don’t stay the night at the wilderness crossings. Further, cross right over so that he isn’t swallowed up, the king and the entire company that’s with him”’.

**17.17 Ahitophel’s Suicide**

17 Yehonatan and Ahima’ats were haltng at Treader’s Spring, a maid would go and tell them, and they would go and tell King David, because they couldn’t be seen coming into the town. But a boy saw them and told Abshalom. The two of them went quickly and came to the house of someone in Bahurim. He had a well in his courtyard and they went down there. 19 The wife got a length of cloth and spread it over the face of the well, and scattered groats on it, so that nothing would become known. 20 Abshalom’s servants came to the woman at the house and said, ‘Where are Ahima’ats and Yehonatan?’ The woman said to them, ‘They crossed over the water brook’. They searched, but didn’t find them, and went back to Jerusalem.

21 After they had gone, they got up from the well and went and told King David. They said to David, ‘Set off and cross the water quickly, because Ahitophel has given counsel about you in such-and-such a way’. 22 So David set off, he and the entire company that was with him, and crossed the Jordan before morning light, until not one was missing who had not crossed the Jordan.

23 When Ahitophel saw that his counsel was not acted on, he saddled his donkey, set off, and went home to his town. He gave orders concerning his household, and hanged himself. He died and was buried in his father’s grave.

24 David was coming to Mahanayim when Abshalom crossed the Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. 25 Abshalom had put Amasa over the army in place of Yo’ab. Amasa was the son of a man whose name was Yitra the Israelite, who had had sex with Abigayil bat Nahash, the sister of Tseruyah, Yo’ab’s mother. 26 Israel and Abshalom camped in the region of Gil’ad.

**17.27 David Agrees to Stay Behind**

27 When David came to Mahanayim, Shobi ben Nahash from Rabbat of the Ammonites, Makir ben Ammi’el from from Lo Debar, and Barzillay the Gil’adite from Rogelim 28 brought up for David and for the company that was with him bedding, basins, potter’s containers, wheat, barley, flour, roasted grain, beans, lentils, roasted grain, 29 syrup, curds, a flock, and cheese from the herd to eat, because (they said), ‘The company’s hungry and faint and thirsty in the wilderness’.

18 David numbered the company that was with him and set over them divisional officers and section officers. 2 David sent off the company, a third in the hand ofYo’ab, a third in the hand of Abishay ben Tseruyah, Yo’ab’s brother, and a third in the hand of Ittay the Gittite. The king said to the company, ‘I myself will definitely go out with you as well’. 3 But the company said, ‘You’re not to go out, because if we do flee, they won’t put their mind to us. If half of us die, they won’t put their mind to us. Because there are now 10,000 like us. So now, it will be good that you’re available to us from the town to help’. 4 So the king said to them, ‘Whatever is good in your eyes I’ll do’.

The king stood at the side of the gateway as the entire company went out by sections and by divisions. 5 The king ordered Yo’ab, Abishay, and Ittay, ‘Gently for me with the boy, with Abshalom’. The entire company heard the the king ordering all the officers concerning Abshalom.

6 The company went out to the fields to meet Israel. The battle took place in the Ephrayim Forest 7 and the Israelite company took a beating there before David’s servants. It was a great defeat there that day—20,000 men. 8 The battle took place there spread over the face of the entire region. The forest did more devouring of the company than what the sword devoured that day.

**18.9 Abshalom Meets His Death**

9 Abshalom met up with David’s servants while Abshalom was riding on a mule. The mule came under the tangle of a big oak and his head caught hold of the oak. He was given up between the heavens and the earth as the mule that was under him passed on.

10 Someone saw and told Yo’ab, ‘Here, I’ve seen Abshalom hanging in an oak!’ 11 Yo’ab said to the man who told him, ‘Here, you saw, why didn’t you strike him down to the ground there? It would have been on me to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt’. 12 The man said to Yo’ab, ‘If I were weighing on my palms a thousand pieces of silver, I wouldn’t put out my hand against the prince, because in our ears the king orderd you and Abishay and Gittay, ‘Keep watch, whoever you are, over the boy Abshalom”. 13 If I’d acted falsely against his life, when nothing hides from the king, you yourself would have taken your stand at a distance’.

14 Yo’ab said, ‘I won’t wait for you, thetefore’. He took three sticks into his fist and plunged them into Abshalom’s heart. While he was still alive in the heart of the oak, 15 ten boys, Yo’ab’s equipment-bearers, came round, struck Abshalom down, and put him to death. 16 Yo’ab blew on the horn, and the company turned back from pursuing after Israel, because Yo’ab held the company back. 17 They took Abshalom and threw him into a big pit in the forest, and put up a very big heap of stones over it, while all Israel fled, each person to his tents.

(18 While he was alive Abshalom himself had got and put up for himself the column that’s in King’s Vale, because (he said), ‘I have no son in order to commemorate my name’. People have named the column ‘Abshalom’s Monument’, until this day.)

19 When Ahima’ats ben Tsadoq said, ‘May I run and bring news to the king that Yahweh has acted with authority for him from his enemies’ hand, 20 Yo’ab said to him, ‘You’re not to be a man with news this day. You may bring news another day. This day you’re not to bring news, because the king’s son is dead’.

**18.21 The News Reaches David**

21 So Yo’ab said to a Sudanese [Kushite], ‘Go tell the king what you have seen’. The Sudanese bowed low to Yo’ab and ran. 22 Ahima’ats ben Tsadoq once again said to Yo’ab, ‘Whatever happens, may I myself also please run, after the Sudanese?’ Yo’ab said, ‘Why is it that you’re going to run, son, when there’ll be no reward available for you?’ 23 ‘Whatever happens, I’ll run’. So he said to him, ‘Run’. Ahima’ats ran by way of the plain, and passed the Sudanese.

24 David was sitting between the two gateways. The lookout at the gateway roof went to the wall. He lifted up his eyes and looked: there, a man running alone. 25 The lookout called and told the king. The king said, ‘If he’s alone, there’s news on his lips’. He continued to draw nearer, 26 and the lookout saw another man running. The lookout called to the gateman, ‘There, a man running alone’, and the king said, ‘he’s bringing news, as well’. 27 The lookout said, ‘I see the first runner, it’s like the running of Ahima’ats ben Tsadoq’. The king said, ‘He’s a good man, he comes with good news’.

28 Ahima’ats called out to the king, ‘Things are well’, bowed low to the king, on his face to the ground, and said, ‘Yahweh your God be blessed, who delivered up the men who lifted up their hand against my lord the king!’ 29 The king said, ‘Is it well with the boy, with Abshalom?’ Ahima’ats said, ‘I saw a big uproar when the king’s servant Yo’ab was sending your servant but I didn’t know what it was’.

30 The king said, ‘Come round, take your stand there’. He came round and halted, 31 and there, the Sudanese was coming. The Sudanese said, ‘May my lord the king receive the news that Yahweh has acted with authority for you today from the hand of all the people who rose up against you’. 32 The king said to the Sudanese, ‘Is it well with the boy, with Abshalom?’ The Sudanese said, ‘May my lord the king’s enemies and all who rise up against you to do something bad be like the boy’.

**18.33 Inconsiderate Grief?**

33 The king shook. He went up to the upper story of the gateway and and wailed. As he went he said this, ‘My son Abshalom, my son, my son Abshalom, if only I had died, I in place of you, Abshalom, my son, my son’.

19 It was told Yo’ab, ‘Here, the king is wailing and has taken up grieving over Abshalom’. 2 The deliverance that day turned to grieving for the entire company when the company heard that day, ‘The king is in pain over his son’. 3 The company stole in when they came into the town that day, as a company that has battled steals in ashamed when they’ve fled in the battle, 4 while the king covered his face. The king cried out in a loud voice, ‘My son, Abshalom, Abshalom, my son, my son’.

5 Yo’ab came to the king at home and said, ‘You’ve made the faces of all your servants ashamed today, people who saved your live today and the life of your sons and your daughters, the life of your wives, and the life of your secondary wives, 6 by being loyal to the people who are hostile to you and by being hostile to the people who are loyal to you. Because you’ve told them today that officers and servants are nothing to you. Because I know today that, were Abshalom alive and all of us dead today, then it would be all right in your eyes.

7 So now, get up, go out, encourage your servants! Because I swear by Yahweh, when you do not come out—if anyone stays the night with you tonight…. It will be bad for you, worse than any bad experience that has come upon you from your youth until now’. 8 So the king got up and sat in the gateway, and when they told the entire company, ‘Here, the king is sitting in the gateway’, the entire company came before the king.

**19.8 Bringing David Back**

When Israel fled, each person to his tents, 9 the entire people was arguing. among all the Israelite clans: ‘It was the king who rescued us from our enemies’ fist, and he was the one who saved us from the hand of the Philistines. He has now taken flight from the country because of Abshalom, 10 but Abshalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. So now, why are you sitting still with regard to bringing the king back?’

11 King David himself sent to Tsadoq and to Ebyatar, the priests, saying ‘Speak to the elders of Judah, saying “Why are you last to bring the king back to his house?”‘(when the words of all Israel came to the king at his house). 12 ‘You’re my brothers, you’re my flesh and blood. Why should you be last to bring the king back? 13 And to Amasa say, “You’re my flesh and blood, aren’t you. May God do this to me and may he do more if you do not become officer over the army before me all the time, in place of Yo’ab”‘.

14 He turmed the mind of all the Judahites as one individual, and they sent to the king: ‘Come back, you and all your servants’. 15 The king went back and came as far as the Jordan, while Judah came to Gilgal to go to meet the king, to bring the king across the Jordan. 16 Shim’i ben Gera, the Benjaminite who was from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the Judahites to meet King David, 17 and a thousand Benjaminites with him, while Tsiba, a boy from Saul’s household, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him, rushed to the Jordan before the king. 18 The crossing took place to get the king’s household across and for him to do what was good in his eyes when Shim’i ben Gera fell down before the king as he was crossing the Jordan.

**19.19 Mercy in Victory**

19 He said to the king, ‘May my lord not think of waywardness in connection with me. Don’t be mindful of how your servant was wayward on the day when my lord the king left Jerusalem, by the king giving his mind to it. 20 Because your servant acknowledges that I myself did wrong, but here—today I have come, the first of all Joseph’s household to go down to meet my lord the king’.

21 Abishay ben Tseruyah answered, ‘On account of this, will Shim’i not be put to death, because he slighted Yahweh’s anointed?’ 22 David said, ‘What do you and I have in common, sons of Tseruyah, that you should be an adversary to me today? Is an individual in Israel to be put to death today? Because I know that today I’m king over Israel, don’t I’. 23 So the king said to Shim’i, ‘You will not die’, and the king swore to him. 24 Mephiboshet son of Saul also went down to meet the king. He had not done his feet, he had not done his moustache, and he had not washed his clothes from the day the king went until the day when he came with things beings well.

25 When he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, ‘Why didn’t you go with me, Mephiboshet?’ 26 He said, ‘My lord king, my servant beguiled me, because your servant said, “I want to saddle my donkey and ride on it and go with the king, because your servant is lame”. 27 But he went about [speaking] against your servant to my lord the king, when my lord the king is like God’s envoy.

Do what is good in your eyes. 28 Because there was no one in my father’s entire household except people who deserved death before my lord the king, but you put your servant among the people who eat at your table. What right do I have any more to cry out any more to the king?’

29 The king said to him, ‘Why should you speak any more about these things? I say: you and Tsiba are to share out the fields’. 30 But Mephiboshet said to the king, ‘He can evn take all of it after my lord the king has come home with things being well’.

**19.31 Barzillay Says No Thank You**

31 Now Barzillay the Gil’adite had come down from Rogelim and he crossed over the Jordan with the king, to send him off at the Jordan. 32 Barzillay was very old, a man of eighty years; he was the one who had provided for the king during his stay at Mahanayim, because he was a very big man.

33 The king said to Barzillay, ‘You cross over with me, and I’ll provide for you with me in Jerusalem’. 34 But Barzillay said to the king, ‘How many will be the full years of my life, that I should go up to Jerusalem with the king? 35 I’m a man of eighty years today. Do I know the difference between good and bad? Or can your servant taste what he eats and what he drinks or still listen to the sound of men and and women singing? So why should your servant still be a burden to my lord the king? 36 Hardly could your servant cross the Jordan with the king. Why should the king deal this thing to me? 37 May your servant go back, and I shall die in my town near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Kimham. He should cross with my lord the king. Do for him what is good in your eyes’.

38 The king said, ‘Kimham may cross with me, and I myself will do for him what is good in your eyes. Anything that you choose from me I will do for you’.

39 So the entire company crossed the Jordan. When the king crossed, the king kissed Barzillay and blessed him and he went back to his place, 41 and the king crossed over to Gilgal; Kimhan crossed with him.

**19.41 Tension between Israel and Judah**

40 When the entire Judahite company took the king across, and also half of the Israelite company, 41 there, all the Israelites were coming to the king. They said to the king, ‘Why did our brothers, the Judahites, steal you away and take the king and his household across the Jordan, and all David’s men with him?’ 42 All the Judahites answered the Israelites, ‘Because the king is near to us! Why is it that it enraged you at this thing? Have we actually eaten anything of the king’s, or has preference been given to us?’

43 The Israelites answered the Judahites, ‘We have ten shares in the king, so in David as well I have more than you. So why have you slighted me, so that my word wasn’t first in connection with bringing my king back?’ But the Judahites’ word was tougher than the Israelites’ word.

20 But a scoundrel happened to be there; his name was Sheba ben Bikri, a Benjaminite. He blew on the horn and said, ‘We have no share in David, we have no domain in ben Jesse—each man to his tents, Israel!’ 2 All the Israelites rose up from following David to follow Sheba ben Bikri, but the Judahites attached themselves to their king, from the Jordan to Jerusalem. 3 David came to his house in Jerusalem. The king got the ten secondary wives whom he had made stay to keep the house, and put them in a house that was under guard. He provided for them but he didn’t have sex with them. They were confined until the day of their death, in living widowhood.

4 The king said to Amasa, ‘Call out the Judahites for me in three days, and you yourself, stand here’. 5 Amasa went to call out Judah, but he delayed beyond the time that he had set him. 6 David said to Abishay, ‘Now Sheba ben Bikri will make things worse for us than Abshalom. You take your lord’s servants and pursue after him so he doesn’t find fortified towns for himself, and tear out our eye’.

**20.7 Yo’ab Deals with Amasa**

7 Yo’ab’s men, the Keretites and the Peletites, and all the strong men, went out after him; they went out from Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba ben Bikri. 8 When they were near the big stone which is at Gib’on, Amasa himself came before them. Yo’ab was belted in his uniform (his clothing), and over it there was the belt for a sword, fastened on his hips in its sheath. When he went out, it fell down. 9 Yo’ab said to Amasa, ‘Are things well with you, brother?’ and Yo’ab’s right hand took hold of Amasa’s beard, to kiss him, 10 but Amasa didn’t keep watch for the sword that was in Yoab’s hand, and he struck him down with it in his abdomen and made his insides pour out onto the ground. He didn’t do it to him a second time. He died.

While Yo’ab and Abishay his brother pursued after Sheba ben Bikri, 11 and one of Yo’ab’s boys stood over him and said, ‘Whoever delights in Yo’ab and whoever is for David—after Yo’ab!’ 12 and Amasa was rolling in blood in the middle of the causeway, the man saw that the entire company halted. So he took Amasa round from the causeway into the fields and threw a garment over him, because everyone who came on him saw and halted. 13 When he had been removed from the causeway, everyone passed on after Yo’ab to pursue after Sheba ben Bikri. 14 He had passed through all the Israelite clans to Meadow (Bet Ma’akah). All the Be’erites congregated and came after him also.

15 So they came and besieged him in Bet Ma’akah Meadow. They heaped up a ramp against the town and it stood against the rampart. The entire company that was with Yo’ab were seeking to devastate it to make the wall fall.

**20.16 An Intelligent Woman Saves Her Town**

16 But a smart woman called from the town, ‘Listen, listen! Please say to Yo’ab, “Draw near here so I can speak to you’. 17 He drew near to her. The woman said, ‘Are you Yo’ab?’ He said, ‘I am’. She said to him, ‘Listen to your handmaid’s words’. He said, ‘I’m listening’. 18 She said, ‘People did speak previously, saying “They should just ask at Meadow”, and thus they finished things. 19 Whereas I’m among the truthful who are committed to peace in Israel, you’re seeking to put to death a town that’s a mother in Israel. Why would you swallow up Yahweh’s domain?’

20 Yo’ab answered, ‘Far be it for me, far be it for me, if I should swallow up or devastate. 21 Things aren’t like that. Rather, someone from the highland of Ephrayim, Sheba ben Bikri his name, has raised his hand against the king, against David. Give him alone over, and I’ll go from the town’. The woman said to Yo’ab, ‘There, his head is going to be thrown over the wall to you’.

22 The woman came to the entire people with her smart thinking, and they cut off the head of Sheba ben Bikri and threw it to Yo’ab. He blew on the horn and the men dispersed from the town, each one to his tents, while Yo’ab went back to Jerusalem, to the king.

23 Yo’ab was over the entire Israelite army. Benayah ben Yehoyada was over the Keretites and over the Peletites. 24 Adoram was over the work force. Yehoshaphat ben Ahilud was the recorder. 25 Sheva was secretary. Tsadoq and Ebyatar were priests. Ira the Ya’irite was also a priest for David.

**21.1 Mother Love**

21 There was a famine in the time of David for three years, year after year. David sought Yahweh’s face, and Yahweh said, ‘It’s in connection with Saul and with the blood-stained household, because he put the Gib’onites to death’. 2 So the king called for the Gib’onites and said to them (the Gib’onites were not among the Israelites but rather among what was left of the Amorites, but the Israelites had sworn to them, and Saul had sought to strike them down in his passion for the Israelites and Judah)—3 David said to the Gib’onites, ‘What shall I do for you? How shall I make expiation, so you can bless Yahweh’s domain?’

4 The Gib’onites said to him, ‘We have no [rights to] silver or gold with Saul or with his household and we have no [rights to] put a man to death in Israel’. So he said, ‘Whatever you’re going to say, I’ll do for you’. 5 They said to the king, ‘The man who finished us off and who thought we could be annihilated so we would not take our stand within Israel’s entire border: 6 seven of the men from among his descendants are to be given to us and we will execute them for Yahweh at Gib’ah-of-Saul, Yahweh’s chosen one’. The king said, ‘I myself will give them’.

7 The king spared Mephiboshet ben Yehonatan, son of Saul, because of the oath before Yahweh between David and Yehonatan son of Saul. 8 The king got the two sons of Ritspah bat Ayyah to whom she gave birth for Saul, Armoni and Mephiboshet, and the five sons of Mikal daughter of Saul, to whom she gave birth for Adri’el ben Barzillay the Meholatite, 9 and gave them into the hand of the Gib’onites. They executed them on the mountain before Yahweh. The seven of them fell together. These men were put to death during the first days of harvest, during the beginning of barley harvest.

10 But Ritspah bat Ayyah got sack and spread it on a crag for herself from the beginning of harvest until water poured on them from the heavens. She didn’t let the birds of the heavens settle on them by day or the creatures of the wild by night.

**21.11 A Final Resting Place**

11 It was told David what Ritspah bat Ayyah, Saul’s secondary wife, had done, and he went and got the bones of Saul and the bones of Yehonatan his son from the Yabesh-in-Gil’ad landowners, who had stolen them from the square in Bet-shan where the Philistines had hung them on the day the Philistines struck down Saul at Gilboa. 13 He took up from there the bones of Saul and the bones of Yehonatan his son, and they gathered the bones of the men who had been executed. 14 They buried the bones of Saul and Yehonatan his son in the region of Benjamin in a side chamber in the grave of Qish his father. They did all that the king ordered, and God let himself be entreated for the country subsequently.

15 There was again a battle by the Philistines with Israel. David went down, he and his servants with him, and did battle with the Philistines. David got weary 16 and when Ishbi Benob (who was among the descendants of the Healer, and the weight of whose lance was 300 sheqels, of copper, and he was belted in new things) thought to strike David down. 17 But Abishay ben Tseruyah helped him, struck down the Philistine, and put him to death. Then David’s men swore to him, ‘You will not go out with us to battle any more, so that you do not extinguish Israel’s lamp’.

18 Subsequently there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob. Then Sibbekay the Hushatite struck down Saph, who was among the descendants of the Healer.

19 There was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob, and Elhanan ben-ya’are Oregim, the Bet Lehemite, struck down Golyat the Gittite; the wood of his lance was like a weavers’ rod.

20 There was again a battle at Gat. There was a man of stature with six fingers on his hands and six toes on his feet, twenty-four in number; he also was a descendant of the Healer. 21 He reviled Israel, and Yonatan ben Shim’i, David’s brother, struck him down.

22 These four had descended from the Healer in Gat. They fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

**22.1 The God of the Storm**

1 David spoke the words of this song to Yahweh on the day Yahweh rescued him from the fist of all his enemies and from the fist of Saul.

2 Yahweh, my crag,

my stronghold, the one who enables me to survive,

3 My God, my crag in which I take shelter,

my shield, the horn that delivers me, my turret,

My retreat, my deliverer,

you deliver me from violence.

4 As one to be praised, I call on Yahweh,

and from my enemies I find deliverance.

5 Because death’s waves overwhelmed me,

Beliyya’al’s wadis terrified me,

6 She’ol’s ropes surrounded me,

death’s snares met me.

7 In my pressure I called on Yahweh,

to my God I called.

He listened to my voice from his palace,

my cry for help was in his ears.

8 And the earth quaked and rocked,

the heavens’ foundations shook.

They quaked because it enraged him;

9 smoke went up in his anger,

Fire from his mouth comsumed,

coals burned up from him.

10 He spread the heavens and came down,

with thundercloud beneath his feet.

11 He rode on a sphinx and flew,

he appeared on the wings of the wind.

12 He made darkness round him a bivouac –

a mass of water, clouds of mist.

13 From the brightness in front of him

fiery coals burned up.

14 Yahweh thundered from the heavens,

the One on High gave out his voice.

15 He sent off arrows and scattered them,

lightning, and routed them.

16 The canyons of the sea appeared,

the worlds’ foundations became visible,

Through Yahweh’s reprimand,

at the breath of his angry wind.

22.17 I Have Kept Yahweh’s Ways(?)

17 He sent from on high, he got me,

he drew me out of much water.

18 He rescued me from my my vigorous enemy,

from people hostile to me, because they stood too firm for me.

19 They met me on the day of my disaster,

but Yahweh became my support.

20 He brought me out into a roomy place;

he pulled me out because he delighted in me.

21 Yahweh dealt to me in accordance with my faithfulness;

in accordance with the purity of my hands he gave back to me.

22 Because I have kept Yahweh’s ways

and not been faithless to my God.

23 For all his rulings have been before me;

his decrees – I haven’t departed from them.

24 I’ve been a person of integrity with him,

and I’ve kept myself from waywardness I might have done.

25 So Yahweh has given back to me in accordance with my faithfulness,

in accordance with my purity before his eyes.

26 With the committed person you show commitment,

with the man of integrity you show integrity.

27 With the pure person you show purity,

but with the crooked you show yourself refractory.

28 A humble people you deliver,

but you avert your eyes from exalted people.

29 For you, Yahweh, are my lamp;

it’s Yahweh who illumines my darkness.

30 For with you I can rush at a barricade,

with my God I can scale a wall.

31 God: his way has integrity,

Yahweh’s word is proven.

He is a shield

to all who take shelter with him.

32 Because who is God apart from Yahweh,

who is a crag apart from our God?

22.33 I Will Confess You among the Nations

33 God is my stronghold, my forcefulness;

he released one who had integrity in his way:

34 One who fashions my feet like a deer,

enables me to stand on the heights,

35 Trains my hands for battle

so that my arms could bend a copper bow.

36 You gave me your shield that delivered;

your avowal made me great.

37 You widened my step beneath me;

my ankles did not slip.

38 I pursued my enemies and annihilated them;

I did not turn back until I had finished them off.

39 I devoured them, hit them, they could not get up;

they fell beneath my feet.

40 You belted me with forcefulness for battle,

you bent down beneath me the people who rose up against me.

41 My enemies you made turn tail for me,

the people who were hostile to me – and I wiped them out.

42 They looked, but there was no deliverer—

to Yahweh, but he did not answer them.

43 I ground them fine like the dirt of the earth,

like the mud in the streets I crushed them, beat them out.

44 You enabled me to survive from arguments with my people,

you kept me as head of nations,

A people I did not acknowledge serve me;

45 foreigners cowered before me.

On hearing with the ear, they listened to me;

46 foreigners wilted,

came quaking out of their strongholds.

47 Yahweh lives, my crag be blessed,

may God, the crag who delivers me, be exalted,

48 The God who gives me total redress,

subjects peoples under me,

49 Who gets me out from my enemies,

exalts me above the people who rise up against me,

rescues me from violent men!

50 Therefore I wiil confess you, Yahweh, among the nations,

and make music for your name,

51 A tower bringing deliverance to his king,

acting with commitment to his anointed,

to David and to his offspring permanently’.

**23.1 David’s Last Words**

1 These are David’s last words.

An utterance of David ben Jesse,

an utterance of the man set up by the One on High,

The anointed of the God of Jacob,

the delight of Israel’s melodies.

2 Yahweh’s spirit spoke through me,

his utterance was on my tongue.

3 The God of Israel said,

the crag of Israel spoke to me:

One who rules over people as a faithful man,

one who rules in awe of God,

4 Is like the morning light when the sun rises,

a morning with no clouds;

Because of brightness, because of rain,

there’s growth from the earth.

5 My household is established with God, is it not,

because he has made a permanent pact for me,

laid out in every respect and secured.

He will bring to accomplishment, will he not,

all my deliverance and all I delight in.

6 But scoundrels are like thistles, thrown away, all of them,

because people do not take them in the hand.

7 The person who touches them

equips himself with iron or the wood of a lance,

and they totally burn up where they lie.

**23.8 David’s Strong men**

8 These are the names of the strong men that David had:

* The one who sits in the seat, a Tahkemonite, chief of the Three, was Adino the Etsnite, against 800, run through on one occasion.
* 9 After him El’azar ben Dodo, son of Ahohi, one of the Three Strong Men with David when they reviled the Philistines who had gathered there for battle. The Israelites went up, 10 but he set to and struck down the Philistines until his hand got weary. But his hand attached itself to his sword and Yahweh brought about a great deliverance that day. The company came back after him, only to plunder.
* 11 After him Shamma ben Agee the Hararite. The Philistines had gathered at Lahi and there was a plot in the fields there full of lentils. Whereas the company had fled from before the Philistines, 12 he took his stand in the middle of the plot and defended it, and struck down the Philistines. Yahweh brought about a great deliverance.

13 Three of the Thirty Heads went down and came at harvest to David at the Adullam Cave. A force of Philistines was camped in Repha’ites Vale. 14 David was then in the stronghold and an outpost of Philistines was then at Bet Lehem. 15 David had a longing and said, ‘If only someone could give me a drink of water from the Bet-lehem cistern that’s at the gateway!’ 16 The Three Strong Men broke through the Philistines’ camp, drew water from the Bet-lehem cistern that’s at the gateway, carried it, and brought it to David. But he was unwilling to drink it. He poured it out for Yahweh 17 and said, ‘Far be it for me by Yahweh that I should do this. Should the blood of the men who went at the cost of their lives….?’ So he was unwilling to drink it. These are things that the Three Strong Men did.

**23.18 The Three and the Thirty and the Thirty-Seven**

* 18 Abishay, the brother of Yo’ab ben Tseruyah, was head of a Three. He was wielding his lance against 300, run through. He had a name among the Three. 19 Of the Three, he was the most honoured, wasn’t he. He became officer for them, but he didn’t come to the [other] Three.
* 20 Benayahu ben Yehoyada was a forceful man, prolific in deeds, from Qabtse’el. He struck down the two of Ari’el of Mo’ab. It was he who went down and struck down a lion inside a cistern on a snowy day, 21 and it was he who struck down an Egyptian man, an impressive man. In the Egyptian’s hand there was a lance, but he went down to him with a club, seized the lance out of the Egyptian’s hand, and killed him with his lance. 22 These things Benayah ben Yehoyada did, and he had a name among the Three Strong Men. 23 Of the Thirty, he was most honoured, but he did not come to the Three. David put him in charge of his guard.

24 Among the thirty:

* Asah-el, Yo’ab’s brother
* Elhanan ben Dodo (Bet Lehem)
* 25 Shammah the Harodite
* Eliqa the Harodite
* 26 Helets the Paltite
* Ira ben Iqqesh the Teqo’ite
* 27 Abi’ezer the Anatotite
* Mebunnay the Hushatite
* 28 Tsalmon the Ahohite
* Mahray the Netophatite
* 29 Heleb ben Ba’anah the Netophatite
* Ittay ben Ribay from Gib’ah-of-the- Benjaminites
* 30 Benayahu, a Pir’atonite
* Hidday from the Ga’ash Wadis
* 31 Abi-albon the Arbatite
* Azmavet the Barhumite
* 32 Elyahba the Sha’albonite
* The sons of Yashen, Yehonatan
* 33 Shammah the Hararite
* Ahi’am ben Sharar the Ararite
* 34 Eliphelet ben Ahasbay, son of the Ma’akatite
* Eli’am ben Ahitophel the Gilonite
* 35 Hetsray the Carmelite
* Pa’aray the Arbite
* 36 Yig’al ben Natan from Tsobah
* Bani the Gadite
* 37 Tseleq the Ammonite
* Nahray the Be’erotite, equipment-bearer for Yo’ab ben Tseruyah
* 38 Ira the Yitrite
* Gareb the Yitrite
* Uriyyah the Hittite

Thirty seven in all

**24.1 When Counting Was Wrong**

24 Yahweh’s anger raged against Israel again and he incited David against them, saying ‘Go count Israel and Judah’. 2 So the king said to Yo’ab, the officer over the force that was with him, ‘Go round all the Israelite clans from Dan as far as Be’er Sheba, please, and number the company, so I may know the company’s count’.

3 Yo’ab said to the king, ‘May Yahweh your God add to the company a hundred times over compared with what they are, while the eyes of my lord the king are watching, but why does my lord the king want this thing?’ 4 But the king’s word was strong toward Yo’ab and over the force’s officers, so Yo’ab and the force’s officers went out from the king’s presence to number the company, Israel.

5 They crossed the Jordan and camped in Aro’er, to the south of the town, which is in the middle of Wadi Gad, and on to Ya’zer. 6 They came to Gil’ad and to the region of Tahtim Hodshi and came to Dan Ya’an and round to Tsidon. 7 They came to the fortress of Tyre and all the towns of the Hivvites and the Canaanites and went on to the Negeb of Judah (Be’er Sheba). 8 They went about the entire country and at the end of nine months and twenty days came to Jerusalem. 9 Yo’ab gave the king the number for the registration of the company: Israel came to 800,000 forceful men drawing the sword, and the men of Judah came to 500,000.

10 David’s mind struck him down after he had counted the company, and David said to Yahweh, ‘I have acted very wrongly in what I’ve done. But now, Yahweh, please make your servant’s waywardness pass on, because I’ve been very idiotic’.

**24.11 I Would Rather Fall into God’s Hands than into Human Hands**

11 David got up in the morning when Yahweh’s word came to Gad the prophet, David’s seer: 12 ‘Go and speak to David, “Yahweh has said this: ‘I’m holding out three things over you. Choose one of them for yourself and I shall do it to you”‘. 13 Gad came to David and told him. He said to him, ‘Are seven years of famine to come to you in the country, or are you to have three months of flight before your attackers as he pursues you, or are there to be three days of epidemic in your country? Now acknowledge it and see what word I’m to take back to the one who sent me’. 14 David said to God, ‘It’s very pressurizing for me. We will fall into Yahweh’s hands, please, because his compassion is great. I will not fall into a human hand’.

15 So Yahweh put an epidemic on Israel from the morning until the set time, and there died of the company, from Dan as far as Be’er Sheba, 70,000 individuals. 16 The envoy put out his hand to Jerusalem to devastate it, but Yahweh relented of the bad thing and said to the envoy devastating the company, ‘So much! Now slacken your hand!’

Yahweh’s envoy was by the threshing floor of Aravnah the Yebusite. 17 David said to Yahweh when he saw the envoy who was striking the company down: ‘Here, I’m the one who did wrong. I’m the one who went astray. These people are the flock, what did they do? Your hand should please be against me and against my father’s household’.

**24.18-25 I Won’t Offer Worship that Costs Me Nothing**

18 Gad came to David that day and said to him, ‘Go up, set up an altar for Yahweh at the threshing floor of Aravnah the Yebusite’. 19 David went up in accordance with Gad’s word, as Yahweh ordered.

20 Aravnah looked out and saw the king and his servants crossing to him. Aravnah went out and bowed low to the king, his face to the ground. 21 Aravnah said, ‘Why has my lord the king come to his servant?’ David said, ‘To acquire the threshing floor from you, to build an altar for Yahweh, so the epidemic may hold back from the company’. 22 Aravnah said to David, ‘My lord the king may take it and offer up what is good in his eyes. See, the cattle as the burnt offering and the threshing boards and the cattle’s equipment as wood. 23 Aravnah gives everything to the king, your majesty’. Aravnah said to the king, ‘May Yahweh your God accept you’.

24 The king said to Aravnah, ‘No, because I will definitely acquire them from you for a price. I will not offer up for Yahweh my God burnt offerings that cost nothing’. So David acquired the threshing floor and the cattle for fifty silver sheqels. 25 David built an altar there for Yahweh and offered up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices, and Yahweh let himself be entreated for the country. The epidemic held back from against Israel.

* **Kings Book One**

First Kings continues the story from 2 Samuel—indeed, one might have expected the opening chapters to be part of 2 Samuel, because they relate the closing scenes of David’s life.

Almost half of 1 Kings then tells the story of the reign of Solomon, the last of the three kings who ruled Israel as a whole. A series of motifs from the stories of Saul and David recur in his story. One is the involvement of God’s choice and of human process. In Saul’s story, God’s choice was the dominant factor, even though it was a choice God never wanted to make (because it wasn’t God’s idea to have kings). David’s story interweaves the fact of God’s choosing with a human process whereby much of Israel expects someone from Saul’s family to succeed him, an expectation that complicates the process of David’s succession. In Solomon’s story, the conflictual human process is the dominant factor.

Conflict is more broadly the second motif. Saul’s story is dominated by the need to get victory over the Philistines. David is the person who actually achieves this victory, and also deals with peoples such as the Ammontes and Moabites. Solomon thus inherits a kingdom whose international position is stable; it is indeed the dominant force in the region.

The nature of the kings’ achievements thus varies. Saul begins with a great deliverance of Yabesh-in-Gil’ad but achieves little else. David takes Jerusalem and builds on his military victories by making it the nation’s capital, and he makes plans for a temple for Yahweh there. Solomon builds this temple and builds up the town in other spectacular ways.

The fourth motif is the trajectory of the kings’ reigns. In each case the story unfolds in a way that emphasizes early achievements but then portrays an unraveling. Each king is undone by the pressures and temptations of his position and/or by his personal weaknesses. Whereas for Saul, making his own decisions was his downfall and for David his problem was a wandering eye and a general incompetence in relationships, for Solomon it was the diplomatic marriages that imperiled Israel’s faithfulness to Yahweh. Solomon’s story thus emphasizes his facilitating of the worship of other deities, which results from the diplomatic move of taking a number of wives from other peoples in order to cement relations with them. But the account of his building achievements also hints at his oppression of the ordinary people who have to pay much of the price for this work, and Solomon fulfills Samuel’s warnings about the cost of having kings.

The hints become more explicit statements on the lips of his people after he dies. They want the next king to be less oppressive, but he declines, and this leads to the defection of ten of the Israelite clans and their setting up an alternative state. Because it in fact comprises the bulk of the clans, it retains the name ‘Israel’. The state with the Davidic king, centred on Jerusalem, is merely ‘Judah’.

The rest of 1 Kings interweaves the stories of Israel and Judah, which often involve conflict between the two states. The first king of Israel sets up an alternative worship structure with sanctuaries at the two ends of the kingdom. It also involves forms of worship that use images of God, flouting the basic principle that Yahweh cannot be imaged. The worship thus follows a regular human instinct to make images of the deity, an instinct that features in the traditional worship of Canaan from which the people of Yahweh were supposed to distance themselves. A dominant theme in the interwoven story of Israel and Judah is then how faithful the two peoples are in their worship of Yahweh: whether they worship Yahweh in inappropriate ways or worship other deities. In general, the worship of Israel is more problematic than that of Judah.

The problematic nature of this worship is important background to the emergence of prophets who confront the nation rather than supporting it (as the prophets did in David’s day). These prophets are also involved as Yahweh’s agents in initiating coups in Israel.

* **1:1 David in His Dotage**

1 Now King David was old, advanced in years. They covered him with clothes but he couldn’t get warm, 2 so his servants said to him, ‘They should look for a young girl for my lord the king so she can stand before the king and be his caregiver.She can lie in your arms, and my lord the king will get warm’. 3 So they looked for an attractive girl in the entire territory of Israel, and found Abishag the Shunammite and brought her to the king. 4 The girl was very attractive. She became the king’s caregiver and she ministered to him, but the king didn’t have sex with her.

5 Now Adoniyyah ben Haggit was elevating himself, saying ‘I shall be king’, and he prepared himself chariotry and cavalry and fifty men running ahead of him. 6 His father had not pained him in all his years by saying ‘Why have you acted like this?’ Further, he was very good-looking, and [his mother] had given birth to him after Abshalom. 7 He had words with Yo’ab ben Tseruyah and with Ebyatar [Abiathar] the priest, and they supported Adoniyyah, 8 but Tsadoq [Zadok] the priest, Benayahu ben Yehoyada, Natan the prophet, Shim’i, Re’i, and David’s strong men were not with Adoniyyah.

9 Adoniyyah sacrificed sheep and cattle and fatlings at Zohelet Stone beside Treader Spring, and called all his brothers, the king’s sons, and all the Judahites, the king’s servants, 10 but Natan the prophet, Benayahu, the strong men, and Solomon [Shelomoh] his brother he didn’t call.

11 Natan said to Bat-sheba, Solomon’s mother, ‘You’ve heard, haven’t you, that Adoniyyah ben Haggit has become king, whereas our lord David has not acknowledged it? 12 So now go (may I please give you counsel) and save your life and the life of your son Solomon. 13 Go, come to King David and say to him, “My lord the king, you yourself swore to your handmaid, didn’t you, ‘Your son Solomon – he will become king after me, it’s he who will sit on my throne’. So why has Adoniyyah become king?” 14 There, while you’re still speaking there with the king, I myself will come after you and fill out your words’.

* **1:15 How to Manipulate the Old Man in Order to Get Things Done**

15 So Bat-sheba came to the king in his room. The king was very old and Abishag the Shunammite was ministering to the king. 16 Bat-sheba bent her head and bowed low to the king. The king said, ‘What’s on your mind?’ 17 She said to him, ‘My lord, you yourself swore by Yahweh your God to your handmaid, “Solomon your son—he will become king after me, it’s he who will sit on my throne”. 18 But now, here, Adoniyyah has become king, though my lord the king did not now acknowledge it. 19 He has sacrificed oxen and firstlings and sheep in large number and called all the king’s sons and Ebyatar the priest and Yo’ab the army officer, but Solomon your servant he didn’t call. 20 So you, my lord king—the eyes of all Israel are on you to tell them who is to sit on my lord king’s throne after him. 21 Or when my lord king lies down with his ancestors, I and my son Solomon will be [treated as] wrongdoers’.

22 And there, she was still speaking with the king, and Natan the prophet came. 23 They told the king, ‘Here’s Natan the prophet’. He came before the king and bowed low on his face to the ground to the king. 24 Natan said, ‘My lord king, you yourself have said, “Adoniyyah will reign after me, he’ll sit on my throne!” 25 Because he went down today and sacrificed oxen and fatlings and sheep in large number and called all the king’s sons and the army officers and Ebyatar the priest. There they are, eating and drinking before him. They’ve said, “Long live King Adoniyyah”. 26 But me, myself your servant, and Tsadoq the priest, and Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and Solomon your servant, he didn’t call. 27 Did this thing come from my lord king and had you not made known to your servant who was to sit on my lord king’s throne after him?’

* **1:28 Solomon Enthroned**

28 King David answered, ‘Call Bat-sheba to me!’ She came before the king and stood before the king. 29 The king swore, ‘As Yahweh lives, who redeemed my life from every pressure, 30 indeed as I swore to you by Yahweh the God of Israel that Solomon your son would reign after me, and he would sit on my throne in place of me, so I will do this day’. 31 Bat-sheba bent her head, face to the ground and bowed low to the king, and said, ‘Long live my lord King David!’

32 King David said, ‘Call to me Tsadoq the priest and Natan the prophet and Benayahu ben Yehoyada’. They came before the king 33 and the king said to them, ‘Take with you your lord’s servants and have Solomon my son ride on the mule that belongs to me and have him go down to Gihon. 34 Tsadoq the priest is to anoint him there, with Natan the prophet, as king over Israel. You’re to blow on a horn and say, “Long live King Solomon!” 35 And go up after him so he comes and sits on my throne. He will reign in place of me. Him I have ordered to be chief over Israel and over Judah’. 36 Benayahu ben Yehoyada answered the king, ‘Yes, so may Yahweh the God of my lord king say it! 37 As Yahweh has been with my lord king, so may he be with Solomon. May he make his throne greater than the throne of my lord king David!’

38 So Tsadoq the priest went down, with Natan the prophet and Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and the Keretites and the Peletites, and they had Solomon ride on King David’s mule and had him to go to Gihon. 39 Tsadoq the priest got the horn of oil from the tent and anointed Solomon. They blew on the horn and the entire company said, ‘Long live King Solomon!’ 40 The entire company went up after him. 40 The company were playing on pipes and rejoicing greatly. The earth split with the sound of them.

* **1:41 The Danger When a Coup Fails**

41 Adoniyyah heard, he and all the people who had been called who were with him, as they had finished eating. Yo’ab heard the sound of the horn and said, ‘Why the sound of the township in turmoil?’ 42 While he was still speaking, there, Yonatan ben Ebyatar the priest came. Adoniyyah said, ‘Come in, because you’re a reliable man, and you announce good news’.

43 But Yonatan answered Adoniyyah, ‘Well, our lord King David has made Solomon king! 44 The king has sent with him Tsadoq the priest and Natan the prophet and Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and the Keretites and the Peletites, and they’ve had him ride on the king’s mule. 45 Tsadoq the priest and Natan the prophet have anointed him as king at Gihon, and they went up from there rejoicing and the township was in an uproar. That was the sound that you heard. 46 Also Solomon has sat on the royal throne. 47 And also, the king’s servants came to bless our lord King David, saying “May your God make Solomon’s name better than your name and make his throne greater than your throne”. And the king has bowed low on his bed. 48 And also the king said this: “Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel who has today given someone sitting on my throne, and my eyes are seeing it’.

49 All the people who had been called who were for Adoniyyah trembled, got up, and went each one his way, 50 while Adoniyyah was afraid of Solomon and got up and went and took strong hold of the altar horns. 51 It was told Solomon, ‘There, Adoniyyah is afraid of King Solomon. There, he’s grasped the altar horns, saying “King Solomon must swear to me this very day: if he puts his servant to death with the sword....”’

52 Solomon said, ‘If he becomes a reliable man, not one of his hairs will fall to the ground, but if something bad is found in him, he will die’. 53 So King Solomon sent and they got him to come down from the altar. He came and bowed low to King Solomon, and Solomon said to him, ‘Go to your house’.

* **2:1 David’s Last Will and Testament**

2 The days for David to die drew near, and he ordered Solomon his son: 2 ‘I am going the way of all the earth. You’re to be strong and be a man, 3 and to keep the charge of Yahweh your God by walking in his ways, by keeping his decrees, his orders, his rulings, and his affirmations as written in Moses’ instruction, in order that you may thrive in everything you do and everywhere you turn your face, 4 in order that Yahweh may implement his word which he spoke to me: “If your sons keep watch over their way by walking before me in truthfulness with their entire mind and with their entire being, there will not be cut off for you someone on Israel’s throne”.

5 Further, you yourself know what Yo’ab ben Tseruyah did to me, what he did to the two officers of Israel’s armies, to Abner ben Ner and to Amasa ben Yeter. He killed them, and put the bloodshed of battle into peacetime. He put the bloodshed of battle on his belt that’s round his hips and on his boot that’s on his feet. 6 Act in accordance with your smartness but don’t let his white hair go down to She’ol in peace.

7 The sons of Barzillay the Gil’adite: act with commitment to them so that they are among the people who eat at your table, because they approached me when I took flight from before Abshalom your brother. 8 But here, Shim’i ben Gera the Benjaminite from Bahurim is with you. He uttered a grievous slight of me on the day I went to Mahanayim, but when he came down to meet me at the Jordan [Yarden] I swore to him by Yahweh, “If I put you to death by the sword….”

9 But now, don’t treat him as free of guilt, because you’re a smart man and you’ll know how you should act toward him and have his white hair go down to She’ol in blood’.

* **2:10 A Not-Very Subtle Request**

10 So David lay down with his ancestors and was buried in David’s Town. 11The time that David reigned over Israel was forty years. In Hebron he reigned seven years; in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years. 12 Solomon sat on David his father’s throne and his kingship was well established.

13 Adoniyyah ben Haggit came to Bat-sheba, Solomon’s mother. She said, ‘Is your coming in peace?’ He said, ‘In peace’, 14 and said, ‘I have a word for you’. She said, ‘Speak’. 15 He said, ‘You yourself know that the kingship was mine. All Israel had set their faces toward me reigning. But the kingship turned round and became my brother’s, because it was his from Yahweh. 16 But now I’m making one request from you yourself. Don’t turn my face back’. She said to him, ‘Speak’. 17 He said, ‘Please say to Solomon the king (because he won’t turn your face back) that he should give me Abishag the Shunammite as wife’. 18 Bat-sheba said, ‘Very well, I myself will speak to the king about you’.

19 Bat-sheba came to King Solomon to speak to him about Adoniyyah. The king got up to meet her and bowed low to her. He sat on his throne and placed a throne for the king’s mother, and she sat at his right. 20 She said, ‘I’m going to make one small request from you yourself. Don’t turn back my face’. The king said to her, ‘Ask, mother, because I shall not turn your face back’. 21 She said, ’Abishag the Shunammite should be given to Adoniyyah your brother as wife’.

22 King Solomon answered his mother, ‘Why are you asking for Abishag the Shunammite for Adoniyyah? Ask for the kingship for him, because he’s my brother who’s older than me—for him and for Ebyatar the priest and for Yo’ab ben Tseruyah’. 23 King Solomon swore by Yahweh: ‘May God act in this way to me, and do more in this way, because Adoniyyah has spoken this word at the cost of his life. 24 So now, as Yahweh lives, who has established me and made me sit on the throne of David my father, and made me a household, as he spoke: today Adoniyyah will indeed be put to death’.

* **2:25 The Penalty for Backing the Wrong Horse**

25 So King Solomon sent by the hand of Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and he came upon him and he died. 26 And to Ebyatar the priest, the king said ‘Go to Anatot to your fields, because you deserve death, but on this day I shall not put you to death, because you carried my Lord Yahweh’s chest before David my father and because you let yourself be humbled in all that my father let himself be humbled’. 27 So Solomon drove Ebyatar out from being Yahweh’s priest, fulfilling Yahweh’s word which he spoke about the household of Eli in Shiloh.

28 When the report came to Yo’ab (because Yo’ab had turned away to follow Adoniyyah, though he had not turned away to follow Abshalom), Yo’ab fled to Yahweh’s tent and took strong hold of the altar horns. 29 It was told King Solomon that Yo’ab had fled to Yahweh’s tent. There, he was beside the altar. Solomon sent Benayahu ben Yehoyada, saying ‘Go, come upon him’.

30 Benayahu came to Yahweh’s tent and said to him, ‘The king has said this: “Out!”’ He said, ‘No! Rather I shall die here’. Benayahu took word back to the king, ‘Yo’ab spoke like this, he answered me like this’. 31 The king said to him, ‘Do as he spoke, and come upon him and bury him and remove the blood shed for nothing that Yo’ab poured out, from upon me and from upon my father’s household. 32 Yahweh will bring back his blood on his head, because he came upon two men more faithful and better than him and killed them with the sword, when my father David didn’t know, Abner ben Ner, Israel’s army officer, and Amasa ben Yeter, Judah’s army officer. 33 Their shed blood is to come back on Yo’ab’s head and on the head of his offspring permanently. But for David, for his offspring, for his household, and for his throne, may things be well from Yahweh permanently’.

34 So Benayahu ben Yehoyada went up and came upon him and put him to death. He was buried in his house in the wilderness. 35 The king made Benayahu ben Yehoyada in charge of the army in place of him, while the king made Tsadoq the priest in place of Ebyatar.

* **2:36 The Man Who Might Have Thought Twice**

36 The king sent and called for Shim’i, and said to him, ‘Build yourself a house in Jerusalem and live there. You will not go out from there anywhere. 37 On the day you go out and cross Wadi Qidron, acknowledge clearly that you will definitely die; your blood will be on your own head’. 38 Shim’i said to the king, ‘The word is good. As my lord king spoke, so your servant will do’. So Shim’i lived in Jerusalem for a long time.

39 But at the end of three years two of Shim’i’s servants took flight to Akish ben Ma’akah king of Gat. People told Shim’i, ‘There, your servants are in Gat’. 40 So Shim’i set off, saddled his donkey, and went to Gat to Akish to look for his servants.

So Shim’i went, and brought his servants from Gat, 41 but it was told Solomon that Shim’i had gone from Jerusalem to Gat and had come back. 42 The king sent and called for Shim’i. He said to him, ‘I got you to swear by Yahweh and I testified to you, didn’t I, “On the day you go out and go anywhere, you’re to acknowledge clearly that you will definitely die”, and you said to me, “The word is good. I’ve listened”. 43 So why didn’t you keep the oath before Yahweh and the order that I gave you?’ 44 The king said to Shim’i, ‘You yourself know all the bad dealing (which you acknowledge in your heart) that you undertook toward David my father. Yahweh will bring back your bad dealing on your head, 45 whereas King Solomon will be blessed and David’s throne will be established before Yahweh permanently’. 46 And the king gave orders to Benayahu ben Yehoyada, and he went out and came upon him and put him to death.

So the kingship was established in the Solomon’s hand.

3 Solomon made a marriage relationship with Pharaoh king of Egypt; he took Pharaoh’s daughter and brought her to David’s Town until he had finished building his house and Yahweh’s house and the wall of Jerusalem all round. 2 Only, the people were sacrificing at the shrines because the house for Yahweh’s name was not yet built up to that time, 3 and Solomon was loyal to Yahweh in walking by the decrees of David his father; only, he was sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines.

* **3:4 What Do You Most Want?**

4 The king went to Gib’on to sacrifice there, because it was the biggest shrine; Solomon would offer up a thousand burnt offerings on that altar. 5 At Gib’on Yahweh appeared to Solomon in a dream by night. God said, ‘Ask for what I should give you’. 6 Solomon said, ‘You yourself acted in great commitment with your servant David my father as he walked before you in truthfulness and faithfulness and in uprightness of mind with you. You have kept this great commitment for him and given him a son sitting on his throne this very day.

7 Now, Yahweh my God, you yourself have made your servant king in place of my father David, when I am a small boy who doesn’t know how to go out and come in. 8 Your servant is among your people that you chose, a numerous people that can’t be measured or counted because of the large number. 9 So you should give your servant a listening mind to decide cases for your people, to discern between good and bad, because who can exercise authority for this substantial people of yours? ‘

10 The thing was good in the Lord’s eyes, that Solomon had asked for this thing. 11 God said to him, ‘Since you’ve asked for this thing and you haven’t asked for a long life for yourself and haven’t asked for wealth for yourself and haven’t asked for the life of your enemies, but asked for yourself to be discerning in hearing a case: 12 there, I’m acting in accordance with your words. Here, I am giving you a smart and discerning mind such that there has not been anyone like you before you and there will not arise anyone like you after you. 13 What you did not ask I am also giving you, both wealth and splendour for all your days, such that there has not been anyone like you among the kings. 14 If you walk in my ways by keeping my decrees and my orders as your father David walked, I will make your days long’.

15 Solomon woke up. There, a dream. He came to Jerusalem and stood before the Lord’s pact chest, and offered up whole offerings and made well-being sacrifices, and made a banquet for all his servants.

* **3:16 Two Mothers, One Baby**

16 Then two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. 17 The one woman said, ‘Pardon me, my lord, I and this woman are living in one house. I gave birth with her in the house. 18 On the third day after I gave birth, this woman also gave birth. We were together. There was no outsider in the house with us, only the two of us in the house.

19 This woman’s son died in the night because she lay on it, 20 and she got up in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your handmaid was asleep, laid him in her arms, and laid her dead son in my arms. 21 So I got up in the morning to nurse my son and there – he was dead. But I considered him closely in the morning, and there – it was not my son, whom I had given birth to’. 22 The other woman said, ‘No, because the live one is my son and the dead one is your son’, while the first woman was saying, ‘No, because the dead one is your son and the live one is my son’.

So they spoke before the king, 23 and the king said, ‘The one woman is saying “This is my son, the live one, and the dead one is your son”, while the other one is saying, “No, because the dead one is your son, and the live one is mine”’. 24 The king said, ‘Get me a sword’. They brought a sword before the king. 25 The king said, ‘Divide the live child in two and give half to one and half to the other’. 26 The woman whose son was the live one said to the king (because her insides burned for her son) – she said, ‘Pardon me, my lord, give her the live baby, my lord. Don’t actually put it to death’, whereas the other was saying, ‘It won’t be either mine or yours – divide it’. 27 The king answered, ‘Give her live baby. Don’t actually put it to death. She’s its mother’.

28 When all Israel heard the decision that the king had made, they were in awe before the king, because they saw that there was divine smartness within him for exercising authority.

* **4:1 Solomon’s Administration**

4 So King Solomon was king over all Israel. 2 These were the officials that he had:

* Azaryahu ben Tsadoq (the priest)
* Elihoreph and Ahiyyahu, sons of Shisha (secretaries)
* Yehoshaphat ben Ahilud (the recorder)
* 4 Benayahu ben Yehoyada (in charge of the army)
* Tsadoq and Ebyatar (priests)
* 5 Azaryahu ben Natan (in charge of the prefects)
* Zabud ben Natan the priest (the king’s friend)
* 6 Ahishar (in charge of the household)
* Adoniram ben Abda (in charge of the work force).

7 Solomon had twelve prefects over all Israel; they would provide for the king and his household. There would be a month per year for each for provisioning. 8 These were their names:

* The son of Hur, in the highland of Ephrayim
* 9 The son of Deqer, in Maqats, in Sha’albim, Bet Shemesh, and Bet Hanan Oak
* 10 The son of Hesed, in Arubot: Sokoh and the entire region of Hepher was his
* 11 The son of Abinadab: all Do’r Height (Taphat, Solomon’s daughter, was his wife)
* 12 Ba’ana ben Ahilud: Ta’anak, Megiddo, and all Bet She’an, which is beside Tsaratan, below Yizre’e’l, from Bet She’an as far as Meholah Meadow, as far as across from Yoqmo’am
* 13 The son of Geber: in Heights-in-Gil’ad, the Villages of Ya’ir ben Menashsheh which are in Gil’ad, were his; the district of Argob, which is in Bashan, sixty big towns with a wall and a copper bar, were his
* 14 Ahinadab ben Iddo: Mahanayim
* 15 Ahima’ats: in Napthali (also he took Basemat, Solomon’s daughter, as wife)
* 16 Ba’ana ben Hushay: in Asher and in Alot
* 17 Yehoshaphat ben Paruah: in Yissakar
* 18 Shim’i ben Ela: in Benjamin
* 19 Geber ben Uri: in the region of Gil’ad (the country of Sihon king of the Amorites and Og the king of Bashan), and the one prefect who was in the region.

20 Judah and Israel were as many as the sand that’s by the sea in large number, eating, drinking, and rejoicing.

* **4:21 Solomon’s Prosperity and His Smartness**

21 Solomon was ruling over all the kingdoms from the River to the country of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt, bringing offerings and serving Solomon all the days of his life. 22 Solomon’s food for one day was thirty ten-gallon measures of fine flour, sixty ten-gallon measures of ordinary flour, 23 ten sturdy cattle, twenty pasture cattle, and a hundred sheep, apart from deer, gazelle, roebuck, and fattened geese, 24 because he was holding sway over all of Beyond the River, from Tiphsah as far as Gaza [Azzah], over all the kings of Beyond the River, and he had peace on all his borders, all round.

25 Judah and Israel lived in confidence, each person under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan as far as Be’er-sheba, all Solomon’s days. 26 Solomon had 40,000 stalls of horses for his chariotry and 12,000 cavalry. 27 These prefects would provide for King Solomon and for everyone who approached King Solomon’s table, each for his month. They did not let anything be lacking. 28 As for the barley and the straw for the horses and for the steeds, they would bring it to the place where he would be, each person according to the ruling for him.

29 God gave Solomon smartness and understanding in very great measure and width of mind like the sand that’s on the seashore. 30 Solomon’s smartness was greater than the smartness of all the Qedemites and all the smartness of the Egyptians. 31 He was smarter than all humanity, than Etan the Ezrahite, and Heman, Kalkol and Darda, the sons of Mahol. His name was among all the nations around. 32 He spoke 3000 aphorisms and his songs were 1005. 33 He spoke about trees from the cedar that’s in the Lebanon as far as the hyssop that comes out on the wall. He spoke about animals, about birds, about moving things, and about fish. 34 They came from all the peoples to listen to Solomon’s smartness, from all the kings of the earth who had heard of his smartness.

**5:1 The Chance to Build a House for Yahweh**

5 Hiram king of Tyre [Tsor] sent his servants to Solomon because he had heard that they had anointed him as king in place of his father, because Hiram had always been loyal to David. 2 Solomon sent to Hiram to say, 3 ‘You yourself know of David my father, that he was not able to build a house for the name of Yahweh his God because of the battle that surrounded him until Yahweh put them beneath the soles of his feet. 4 But now Yahweh my God has made things settle for me all round. There’s no adversary and there’s nothing bad happening.

5 So here I’m saying to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, as Yahweh spoke to David my father: “Your son, whom I will put on your throne in place of you, he will build the house for my name.” 6 So now, order that they cut down cedars for me from the Lebanon. My servants will be with your servants, and your servants’ wages – I will give it to you in accordance with anything that you say, because you yourself know that there is no one among us who knows about cutting down trees like the Tsidonites’.

7 When Hiram heard Solomon’s words, he rejoiced greatly. He said, ‘Yahweh be blessed today, who has given David a smart son over this numerous people’. 8 Hiram sent to Solomon: ‘I’ve heard what you sent me. I myself will do all you want in cedar trees and in juniper trees. 9 My servants will get them down from the Lebanon to the sea. It’ll be me who makes them into rafts at the sea for the place that you send to me, and I’ll split them up there. It’ll be you who carries them, and you who’ll do what I want in giving bread to my household’.

**5:10 The Labourers for the Building**

10 So Hiram was giving Solomon cedar wood and juniper wood, all that he wanted, 11 while Solomon gave Hiram 20,000 ten-gallon measures of wheat as provision for his household and twenty [thousand] ten-gallon measures of pressed oil. Thus Solomon would give Hiram year by year. 12 Because Yahweh gave Solomon smartness, as he had spoken to him, there was peace between Hiram and Solomon. The two of them solemnized a pact.

13 King Solomon raised a work force from all Israel; the work force came to 30,000 men. 14 He sent them to the Lebanon 10,000 per month in shifts. They would be a month in the Lebanon, two months at home. Adoniram was in charge of the work force.

15 Solomon had 70,000 load-carriers and 80,000 stonecutters in the highland, 16 apart from Solomon’s prefect officers who were in charge of the work, 3,300 holding sway over the company who were doing the work. 17 The king gave them orders and they transported big stones, fine stones, so as to found the house with hewn stones. 18 Solomon’s builders, Hiram’s builders, and men from Byblos shaped them, and prepared the wood and the stones for building the house.

6 In the 480th year of the Israelites’ getting out of the country of Egypt, in the fourth year in the month Ziv (i.e., the second month) of Solomon’s reign over Israel, he built the house for Yahweh. 2 The house that King Solomon built for Yahweh:

* its length was thirty metres
* its width ten metres
* its height fifteen metres.

3 The porch on the front of the hall of the house:

* its length was ten metres (along the width of the house)
* its width five metres (along the front of the house).

4 He made recessed latticed windows for the house, 5 against the wall of the house he built an extension all round (the walls of the house round the hall and the inner sanctuary), and he made side rooms all round.

* 6 The lowest extension: its width was two and a half metres
* the middle: its width was three metres
* the third: its width was three and a half metres

because he put supports for the house all round outside so as not to fasten them to the walls of the house.

* **6:7 If You Walk**

7 When the house was built, it was built of whole quarry stone. Hammers or chisel, any iron tool, did not make itself heard in the house when it was built. 8 The entrance to the middle side room was on the right side of the house, and winding stairs went up to the middle one and from the middle one to the third.

9 So he built the house and finished it, and panelled the house with beams and planks of cedar. 10 He built the extension against the entire house, two and a half metres its height, and secured the house with cedar wood.

11 Yahweh’s word came to Solomon: 12 ‘This house that you’re building: if you walk by my decrees and act by my rulings and keep all my orders, walking by them, I will implement with you my word that I spoke to David your father. 13 I will dwell among the Israelites and I will not abandon my people Israel’.

14 So Solomon built the house and finished it. 15 He built the walls of the house on the inside with cedar planks from the floor of the house up to the ceiling walls. He overlaid it with wood on the inside and overlaid the floor of the house with juniper planks. 16 He built with cedar boards ten metres from the sides of the house, from the floor as far as the walls, and built for it inside an inner room as the very sacred place. 17 The house (i.e., the hall, in front) was twenty metres. 18 The cedar for the house within: carving of melons and open flowers, everything cedar. No stone was visible.

19 He prepared an inner room inside the house, within, to put Yahweh’s pact chest there. 20 In front of the inner room was ten metres in length, ten metres in width, and ten metres in its height. He overlaid it with beaten gold and overlaid the altar with cedar.

* **6:21 The Inner Room**

21 Solomon overlaid the house inside with beaten gold, and passed gold chains in front of the inner room and overlaid it with gold. 22 So the entire house he overlaid with gold until the entire house was complete, and the entire altar belonging to the inner room he overlaid with gold. 23 In the inner room he made two sphinxes of oil wood; its height was five metres. 24 One sphinx’s wing was two and a half metres and the second sphinx’s wing was two and a half metres. From the ends of its wings to the other ends of its wings was five metres, 25 and the second sphinx was five metres: one measure and one profile for the two sphinxes. 26 The height of one sphinx was five metres, and so the second sphinx.

27 He put the sphinxes in the middle of the inner house. They spread the sphinxes’ wings so that the wing of the one touched the wall and the wing of the second sphinx was touching the second wall, with their wings toward the middle of the house, wing touching wing. 28 He overlaid the sphinxes with gold, 29 and all the walls of the house, all round, he carved with carved engravings of sphinxes, palms, and open flowers, inside and outside. 30 The floor of the house he overlaid with gold, inside and outside.

31 As the entrance of the inner room he made doors of oil wood, the upright (the doorposts) fivefold, 32 the two doors of oil wood. He carved on them carvings of sphinxes, palms, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold. He hammered the gold onto the sphinxes and onto the palms. 33 In this way he made for the entrance to the hall doorposts of oil wood, out of a quarter, 34 and two doors of juniper wood, one door of two leaves folding and the other door of two leaves folding. 35 He carved sphinxes, palms, and open flowers and overlaid them with gold, fitted onto the chiseling. 36 He built the inner courtyard with three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar timbers.

* **6.37 The Forest-like Meeting House**

37 In the fourth year Yahweh’s house was founded, in the month of Ziv, 38 and in the eleventh year in the month of Bul (i.e., the eight month) the house got finished in keeping with all his words and with all his rulings. He built it over seven years.

7 His own house Solomon built over thirteen years. He finished his entire house 2 and built the Lebanon Forest house:

* Its length fifty metres, its width twenty-five metres, and its height fifteen metres
* On four rows of cedar pillars, with cedar timbers on the pillars
* 3 It was paneled with cedar above, on top of the planks that were on the forty-five pillars (fifteen per row)
* 4 Frames, three rows, face to face, three times
* 5 All the entrances and the doorposts, square in frame, in front, face to face, three times
* 6 The porch of pillars he made, twenty-five metres its length and fifteen metres its width
* A porch in front of them and pillars and a canopy in front.

7 He made the porch for the throne where he would exercise authority (the authority porch). It was covered in cedar from floor to floor. 8 His house where he would live (the other courtyard within the porch) was of this same making. He would make a house for Pharaoh’s daughter, whom Solomon took, like this porch. 9 All these things:

* Fine stone, hewn according to measure, trimmed with a trimmer, inside and outside, from foundation to coping, from outside as far as the big courtyard
* 10 The foundation: fine stones, big stones, five-metre stones and four-metre stones
* 11 On top: fine stones, hewn according to measure, and cedar
* 12 The big courtyard all round: three rows of hewn stone and a row of cedar timbers, both for the inner courtyard of Yahweh’s house and for the house’s porch.
* **7:13 The Other Hiram**

13 King Solomon sent and got Hiram from Tyre. 14 He was the son of a woman who was a widow from the clan of Naphtali, but his father had been a Tyrian, a coppersmith. He was full of smartness, of understanding, and of knowledge for doing all work in copper. So he came to King Solomon and did all his work. 15 He shaped the two pillars, of copper.

* The height of one pillar was nine metres
* A line of six metres would go round the second pillar
* 16 Two capitals he made to put on the tops of the pillars, cast in copper; the height of one capital was two and a half metres and the height of the second capital was two and a half metres
* 17 Nets of netted work, twists of chainwork, for the capitals that were on the top of the pillars, seven for one capital, seven for the second capital
* 18 He made the pillars with two rows all round on each net, to cover the capitals that were on the top of the pomegranates, and in this way he made it for the second capital
* 19 The capitals that were on the top of the pillars made of lotuses, in the porch, two metres
* 20 The capitals on the two pillars also above, next to the bulge that was across from the net
* The two hundred pomegranates in rows all round on the second capital
* 21 He set up the pillars for the porch of the hall: he set up the right pillar and named it ‘He-establishes’ and set up the left pillar and named it ‘In-him-is-Strength’
* 22 On the top of the pillars: lotus work.

So the work on the pillars was complete.

* **7:23 The “Sea” and Its Stands**

23 He made the sea, cast:

* Five metres from its lip to its lip, circular all round, two and a half metres its height
* A line of fifteen metres would go round it all round
* 24 Melons under its lip going round it, all round, five metres, encircling the sea all round; two rows of melons cast with its casting
* 25 Standing on twelve cattle, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, three facing east, with the sea on them, above, and all their rears inward
* 26 Its thickness a handbreadth
* Its lip like the making of the lip of a cup, a lotus petal

It could contain 2,000 five-gallon measures.

27 He made the ten stands, copper:

* The length of one stand two metres, two metres its width, and one and a half metres its height
* 28 This was the making of a stand: they had rims, and rims between the frames
* 29 On the rims that were between the frames, lions, cattle, and sphinxes
* On the frames a stand
* On top and below the lions and the cattle, spirals of hammered making
* 30 Four copper wheels for each stand, and copper axles
* Its four legs had shoulder pieces under the basin
* The shoulder-pieces, cast, with spirals across from each
* 31 Its mouth inside the capital and half a metre above
* Its mouth circular, the making of a stand, three-quarters of a metre
* Also on the mouth, carvings
* Their rims square not circular
* 32 The four wheels below the rims
* The wheels’ supports in the stand
* The height of a wheel three-quarters of a metre
* 33 The making of the wheels like the making of a chariot wheel
* Their supports, their backs, their spokes, and their hubs, all cast
* 34 Four shoulder-pieces at the four corners of each stand; from the stand its shoulder-pieces
* 35 At the top of the stand a circular band all round, the height a quarter of a metre
* On the top of the stand, its handles and its rims coming from it.
* **7:36 The Articles for the House**

36 He engraved on the panels of its handles and on its rims sphinxes, lions, and palms, according to the space on each, with spirals all round. 37 Like this he made the ten stands, each cast, one measure, one shape for all of them. 38 He made ten copper basins. Each basin would contain forty five-gallon measures, each basin two metres, each on its stand, for the ten stands. 39 He put the stands five at the right shoulder of the house and five at the left shoulder of the house. The sea he put at the right shoulder of the house to the east, toward the south. 40 Hiram made the basins, the shovels, and the bowls.

So Hiram finished doing all the work that he did for King Solomon at Yahweh’s house:

* 41 Two pillars
* Two globes for the capitals that were on the top of the pillars
* Two nets to cover the two globes for the capitals that were on the top of the pillars
* 42 The four hundred pomegranates for the two nets, two rows of pomegranates for each net, to cover the two globes for the capitals that were on the face of the pillars
* 43 The ten stands and the ten basins on the stands
* 44 The one sea and the twelve cattle beneath the sea
* 45 The buckets, the shovels, the basins, all these articles that Hiram made for King Solomon for Yahweh’s house, polished copper.

46 The king cast them in the Jordan Plain, in the earthen compactness between Sukkot and Tsaretan. 47 Solomon left all the articles alone [unweighed], because of the very, very large number; the weight of the copper was not searched out.

48 Solomon made all the articles that were for Yahweh’s house:

* the gold altar
* the table on which was the presence bread, gold
* 49 the lights (five on the right and five on the left) in front of the inner room, beaten gold
* the flowers, the lamps, and the tongs, gold
* 50 the basins, the snuffers, the sprinklers, the ladles, and the pans, beaten gold
* the hinges for the doors of the inner house, for the very sacred place, for the doors of the house, for the hall, gold.
* **7:51 The Work Completed**

51 So all the work that king Solomon had done for Yahweh’s house was complete, and

Solomon brought in the sacred things from David his father; the silver, the gold, and the articles he put in the treasuries of Yahweh’s house.

8 Then Solomon congregated Israel’s elders (all the heads of the clans, the Israelites’ ancestral leaders) to King Solomon in Jerusalem, to take up Yahweh’s pact chest from David’s Town (i.e., Zion). 2 All the Israelites congregated to King Solomon in the month of Etanim at the festival (i.e., the seventh month). 3 All Israel’s elders came and the priests carried the chest. 4 They took up Yahweh’s chest, the appointment tent, and all the sacred articles that were in the tent. The priests and the Levites took them up 5 while King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel who had assembled to him were with him before the chest, sacrificing sheep and cattle that could not be numbered and could not be counted because of the large number.

6 The priests brought Yahweh’s pact chest to its place, to the inner room of the house, to the very sacred place, under the sphinxes’ wings, 7 because the sphinxes were spreading their wings to the chest’s place; the sphinxes screened the chest and its poles from above. 8 The poles extended and the heads of the poles could be seen from the sacred place in front of the inner room, but they could not be seen outside. They have been there until this day. 9 There was nothing in the chest, only the two stone tablets that Moses had set down there at Horeb, when Yahweh solemnized things with the Israelites, when they got out from the country of Egypt.

10 When the priests went out from the sacred place and the cloud was filling Yahweh’s house, 11 the priests were not able to stand to minister before the cloud, because Yahweh’s splendour was filling Yahweh’s house.

* **8:12 The God Who Dwells in the Cloud**

12 Then Solomon said:

Yahweh has said he would dwell in a thundercloud.

13 I have indeed built a stately house for you,

an established place for you to live in to the ages.

14 The king turned his face round and blessed Israel’s entire congregation, as Israel’s entire congregation was standing. 15 He said, ‘Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel who spoke by his own mouth with David my father, and by his own hand has fulfilled it: 16 “From the day that I got my people Israel out of Egypt I didn’t choose a town from all Israel’s clans to build a house for my name to be there, but I chose David to be in charge of my people Israel”.

17 It was in David my father’s mind to build a house for the name of Yahweh the God of Israel, 18 but Yahweh said to David my father, “In that it was in your mind to build a house for my name, you did well that it was in your mind. 19 Only you yourself will not build the house. Rather, your son, who is going to come out from your insides, he will build the house for my name”.

20 Yahweh has implemented his word that he spoke. I have arisen in place of David my father, I have sat on Israel’s throne as Yahweh spoke, and I have built the house for the name of Yahweh the God of Israel. 21 I have set a place there for the chest where Yahweh’s pact is, which he solemnized with our ancestors when he got them out of the country of Egypt’.

22 Solomon stood before Yahweh’s altar in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his palms to the heavens.

* **8:23 Will God Really Live on Earth?**

23 He said, ‘Yahweh, God of Israel, there is no god like you in the heavens above or on the earth beneath, keeping pact and commitment for your servants who walk before you with their entire mind, 24 who has kept for your servant David my father what you spoke to him. You spoke with your own mouth and with your own hand you have fulfilled it, this very day.

25 So now, Yahweh, God of Israel, keep for your servant David my father what you spoke to him: “There will not be cut off for you someone before me sitting on Israel’s throne, if only your sons keep watch over their way in walking before me as you have walked before me”. 26 So now, God of Israel, may your word please prove trustworthy that you spoke to your servant David my father.

27 Because will God truly live on the earth? There – the heavens, even the highest heavens, could not contain you, certainly not this house that I have built. 28 But turn your face toward your servant’s plea and toward his prayer for grace, Yahweh my God, so as to listen to the resounding cry and to the plea that your servant is making before you today, 29 so that your eyes are opened toward this house night and day, toward the place of which you’ve said, “My name will be there,” so as to listen to the plea that your servant makes toward this place. 30 May you listen to the prayer for grace by your servant and your people Israel, which they make toward this place. May you yourself listen toward the place where you live, toward the heavens, listen and pardon.

* **8:31 Some Things to Pray For**
* 31 Someone who does wrong, an individual to his neighbour, and he takes up an oath against him to get him to swear, and the oath comes before your altar in this house, 32 may you yourself listen in the heavens, and act, and exercise authority for your servants, so as to show the person in the wrong to be in the wrong, bringing his conduct on his head, and to show the person in the right to be in the right, bringing to him in accordance with his being in the right.
* 33 When your people Israel take a beating before an enemy because they do wrong in relation to you, but they turn back to you and confess your name and plead and pray for grace toward you in this house, 34 may you yourself listen in the heavens and pardon your people Israel’s wrongdoing and take them back to the land that you gave to their ancestors.
* 35 When the heavens hold back and there’s no rain because they do wrong in relation to you, but they plead toward this place and confess your name, and turn back from their wrongdoing because you humble them, 36 may you yourself listen in the heavens and pardon the wrongdoing of your servants, of your people Israel, when you instruct them in the good way that they should walk in, and give rain on your country that you gave your people as a domain.
* **8:37 More Things to Pray For**
* 37 When famine happens in the country, when an epidemic happens, blight, mildew, locust, caterpillar, when it happens; when its enemy besieges it in the region of its settlements; any affliction, any illness; 38 any plea, any prayer for grace that any human being belonging to your entire people Israel may have, who acknowledge each one the affliction of his heart and spreads out his palms toward this house, 39 may you yourself listen in the heavens, the established place where you live, and pardon, and act, and give to the individual in accordance with all his ways, in that you know his mind because you alone know the mind of all human beings), 40 in order that they may live in awe of you all the days that they are alive on the face of the ground that you gave to our ancestors.
* 41 Further, to the foreigner who is not of your people Israel but comes from a distant country for the sake of your name (42 because they hear of your big name, your strong hand, and your extended arm) and comes and pleads toward this house, 43 may you yourself listen in the heavens, in the established place where you live, and act in accordance with everything for which the foreigner calls to you, in order that all earth’s peoples may acknowledge your name so as to live in awe of you like your people Israel and to acknowledge that your name is called out over this house that I have built.
* 44 When your people goes out to battle against its enemy by the way that you send them and they plead to Yahweh in the direction of the town that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, 45 may you listen in the heavens to their plea and to their prayer for grace, and decide for them.
* **8:46 One More**
* 46 When they do wrong in relation to you (because there is no human being who doesn’t do wrong) and you’re angry with them and you give them up before an enemy, and their captors take them off captive to the enemy’s country, far or near, 47 and they turn their mind back in the country where they are captive, and turn back and pray toward you for grace in their captors’ country, saying “We’ve done wrong, we’ve been wayward, we’ve been faithless”, 48 and they turn back to you with their entire mind and with their entire being in the country of their enemies who have taken them off captive, and make their plea to you in the direction of their country that you gave their ancestors, the town that you’ve chosen, and the house that I’ve built for your name, 49 may you listen in the heavens, in the established place where you live, to their plea, their prayer for grace, and decide for them, 50 and pardon your people who’ve done wrong in relation to you, for all their acts of rebellion that they have committed against you, and give them compassion before their captors so they may have compassion on them, 51 because they are your people, your domain, which you got out of Egypt, from inside the iron furnace, 52 so that your eyes are opened to your servant’s prayer for grace and to your people Israel’s prayer for grace, so that you listen to them every time they call to you, 53 because you yourself made them distinct for yourself as a domain from all the peoples of the earth, as you spoke by means of Moses your servant when you got our ancestors out of Egypt, Lord Yahweh’.
* **8:54 Blessings**

54 When Solomon had finished making to Yahweh all this plea and prayer for grace, he got up from before Yahweh’s altar, from bending down on his knees with his palms spread out to the heavens, 55 and stood and blessed the entire congregation of Israel, in a loud voice:

56 ‘Blessed be Yahweh, who has given his people Israel a place to settle down in accordance with all that he spoke. Not one word has fallen down of all his good word that he spoke by means of Moses his servant. 57 May Yahweh our God be with us as he was with our ancestors and may he not abandon us, may he not leave us, 58 by inclining our mind to him so that we walk in all his ways and keep his orders, his decrees, and his rulings that he ordered our ancestors. 59 May these words of mine that I have made as a plea before Yahweh be near to Yahweh our God day and night so that he may decide for his servant and decide for his people Israel, each day’s requirement in its day, 60 in order that all the peoples of the earth may acknowledge that Yahweh is God; there is no other. 61 And may your mind be perfect with Yahweh your God so as to walk in his decrees and keep his orders this very day’.

62 The king and all Israel with him were making sacrifice before Yahweh. 63 Solomon made as well-being sacrifices, which he made for Yahweh, 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the Israelites dedicated Yahweh’s house. 64 That day the king made the middle part of the court sacred, which was in front of Yahweh’s house, because he made the burnt offering, the grain offering and the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices there, because the copper altar that was before Yahweh was too small to contain the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices.

* **8:65 Yahweh Appears Again, with a Warning**

65 Solomon made the festival at that time, he and all Israel with him (a big congregation from Lebo Hamat as far as the Egyptian Wadi) before Yahweh our God for seven days, then seven days, fourteen days. 66 On the eighth day he sent the people off and they blessed the king. They went to their tents, rejoicing and good-hearted because of all the good things that Yahweh had done for David his servant and for Israel his people.

9 When Solomon had finished building Yahweh’s house and the king’s house and everything that drew Solomon’s attraction that he wanted to do, 2 Yahweh appeared to Solomon a second time, as he had appeared to him at Gib’on. 3 Yahweh said to him, ‘I’ve listened to your plea and your prayer for grace which you’ve made before me. I’ve made this house that you have built sacred, so as to put my name there permanently. My eyes and my mind will be there for all time.

4 You yourself, if you walk before me as David your father walked, with wholeness of mind and with uprightness, acting in accordance with all that I’ve ordered you, you will keep my decrees and my rulings, 5 and I will set up your kingly throne over Israel permanently, as I spoke to David your father: ‘There will not be cut off for you someone on Israel’s throne’. 6 If you all and your sons actually turn back from following me and don’t keep my orders, my decrees that I’ve put before you, and you go and serve other gods and bow low to them, 7 I will cut off Israel from on the face of the land that I gave them, and the house that I have made sacred for my name I will send off from before my face. Israel will become an object lesson and a taunt among all the peoples.

8 Whereas this house is high, anyone who passes by it will be desolate and will whistle. They will say, “Why did Yahweh act in that way to this country and to this house?” 9 And people will say, “On account of the fact that they abandoned Yahweh their God who got their ancestors out of the country of Egypt, and took strong hold of other gods and bowed low to them and served them. That’s why Yahweh brought upon them all this bad experience”’.

* **9:10 Building Projects**

10 At the end of the twenty years while Solomon built the two houses, Yahweh’s house and the king’s house, 11 when Hiram king of Tyre had supported Solomon with cedar wood and with juniper wood and with gold, all he wanted, King Solomon then gave Hiram twenty towns in the region of Galilee. 12 Hiram went out from Tyre to see the towns that Solomon had given him, but they were not right in his eyes. 13 He said, ‘What are these towns that you’ve given me, brother?’ He called them the Region of Kabul [‘Like-nothing’], until this day. 14 (Hiram had sent the king 120 talents of gold.)

15 This is the account of the work force that King Solomon raised to build Yahweh’s house, his own house, the Fill, the Jerusalem wall, and Hatsor, Megiddo, and Gezer, 16 when Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up and taken Gezer, burnt it with fire, killed the Canaanites who lived in the town, and given it as a dowry to his daughter, Solomon’s wife. 17 Solomon built up Gezer, Lower Bet Horon, 18 Ba’alat, and Tadmor in the wilderness, within the country, 19 and all the supply towns that Solomon had, the chariot towns, the cavalry towns, and the things Solomon felt an attraction for building in Jerusalem, in the Lebanon, and in all the country that he ruled.

20 The entire people that was left of the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite, and the Yebusite, who were not born of the Israelites (21 their descendants who were left after them in the country, whom the Israelites were not able to ‘devote’) Solomon raised as a serf work force until this day. 22 Of the Israelites Solomon did not make anyone a serf, rather they were men of battle, his servants, his officers, his adjutants, his chariot officers, and his cavalry; 23 these were the prefect officers who were in charge of the work for Solomon, 550, holding away over the company doing the work. 24 Yet Pharaoh’s daughter went up from David’s Town to her house which he built for her. Then he built the Fill.

* **9:25 Enter the Queen of Sheba**

25 Three times a year Solomon used to offer up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices on the altar that he built for Yahweh, and burn incense with it (the one that was before Yahweh). So he completed the house.

26 King Solomon made a fleet at Etsyon-geber, which is by Elot on the shore of the Reed Sea in the country of Edom. 27 In the fleet Hiram sent his servants, shipmen who knew the sea, with Solomon’s servants. 28 They came to Ophir and got gold from there,420 talents, and brought it to King Solomon.

10 Since the queen of Sheba had been hearing report of Solomon in connection with Yahweh’s name, she came to test him with conundrums. 2 She came to Jerusalem with a very substantial force, camels carrying spices, very much gold, and precious stones. She came to Solomon and spoke to him of everything that was in her mind, 3 and Solomon told her about all the things she said. Nothing was concealed from the king that he didn’t tell her.

4 The queen of Sheba saw all Solomon’s smartness, the house that he had built, 5 the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the standing of his ministers and their dress, his wine waiters, and his burnt offering that he would offer up at Yahweh’s house, and there was no longer any breath left in her.

* **10:6 Far More Impressive Than I Had Been Told**

6 She said to the king, ‘The thing was true that I heard in my country about your words and about your smartness. 7 I didn’t trust in the words until I came and my eyes saw. But here, the half had not been told me. You have more smartness and good things than the report that I heard. 8 The blessings of your people, the blessings of these servants of yours who are standing continually before you, listening to your smartness! 9 May Yahweh your God be blessed, who delighted in you so as to put you on Israel’s throne in Yahweh’s loyalty to Israel, permanently. He made you king to exercise authority with faithfulness’.

10 She gave the king 120 talents of gold, very much spices, and precious stones. There never again came spices in the quantity that the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon. 11 Hiram’s fleet, which carried gold from Ophir, also brought very much almug wood and precious stones. 12 The king made the almug wood into supports for Yahweh’s house and for the king’s house and into guitars and mandolins for the singers. Such almug wood has not come and has not been seen until this day. 13 King Solomon himself gave the queen of Sheba all that she wanted, that she asked for, beyond what he gave her in accordance with what King Solomon possessed. Then she turned her face and went to her country, she and her servants.

14 The weight of the gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, 15 apart from what came from the traders, from the merchants’ business, and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the region. 16 King Solomon made 200 body-shields of hammered gold (he would raise 600 gold pieces for each sheld) 17 and 300 hand-shields of hammered gold (he would raise three pounds of gold for each shield). The king put them in the Lebanon Forest house.

* **10:18 Throne, Fleet, Trade**

18 The king made a big ivory throne and overlaid it with refined gold, 19 with six steps to the throne, and a circular top for the throne at the back of it, and arms on this side and on that side of the place where one sat, and two lions standing beside the arms, 20 and twelv e lions standing there on the six steps on this side and on that side. None was made like this for any kingdom.

21 All King Solomion’s drinking vessels were of gold and all the vessels in the Lebanon Forest house were beaten gold, none silver—it was not thought of for anything in Solomon’s days, 22 because the king had a Tarshish fleet at sea with Hiram’s fleet. Once in three years the Tarshish fleet would come carrying gold and silver, tusks, monkeys, and peacocks.

23 King Solomon was bigger than all the kings of the earth in wealth and in smartness. 24 All the earth was seeking audience with Solomon to listen to his smartness, which God had put into his mind, 25 and they were bringing each his offering: silver objects and gold objects, robes, weaponry and spices, horses and mules, each year’s requirement in its year. 26 Solomon gathered chariotry and cavalry, and had 1,400 chariotry and 12,000 cavalry. He settled them in chariot towns, and with the king in Jerusalem.

27 The king made the silver in Jerusalem like the stones, and made the cedars like the wild fig trees that are in the foothills in the large number. 28 The origin of the horses that Solomon had was from Egypt and from Qewe. The king’s dealers would get them from Qewe at a price; 29 a chariot went up (it came out from Egypt) for 600 silver pieces, a horse for 150. In this way they would get them out by their own hand to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram.

* **11:1 Diplomatic Marriages**

11 Now King Solomon loved many foreign women (and Pharaoh’s daughter), Mo’abites, Ammonites, Edomites, Tsidonites, and Hittites, 2 from the nations of which Yahweh had said to the Israelites, ‘You will not have sex with them and they will not have sex with you. They will surely turn away your mind after their gods’. To them Solomon attached himself in love. 3 He had 700 consorts and 300 secondary wives, and his wives did turn away his mind.

4 So in Solomon’s old age, his wives did turn his mind away after other gods. His mind became not perfect with Yahweh his God like the mind of David his father. 5 Solomon followed Shameful Ashtar the god of the Tsidonites and Milkom the abomination of the Ammonites. 6 Solomon did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes and did not fully follow Yahweh like David his father. 7 Solomon built a shrine for Kemosh the abomination of Mo’ab on the mountain that’s facing Jerusalem, and for the Shameful King, the abomination of the Ammonites. 8 He did so for all his foreign wives who were burning incense and sacrificing to their gods.

9 Yahweh showed himself angry with Solomon because his mind turned away from Yahweh the God of Israel who had appeared to him twice 10 and had given him orders about this thing, not to follow other gods. He didn’t keep what Yahweh ordered. 11 Yahweh said to Solomon, ‘Since this has been with you, and you haven’t kept my pact and my decrees which I ordered you, I will tear the kingsdom right away from you and give it to your servant. 12 Yet in your days I won’t do it, for the sake of David your father; from the hand of your son I will tear it away. 13 Only, the entire kingdom I will not tear away; one clan I will give to your son, for the sake of David my servant and for the sake of Jerusalem, which I chose’.

* **11:14 Adversaries**

14 Yahweh made rise as an adversary for Solomon Hadad the Edomite. He was from the royal offspring in Edom. 15 When David had been with Edom, Yo’ab went up to bury the people who had been run through, and he had struck down every male in Edom, 16 because for six months Yo’ab and all Israel stayed there until he had cut down every male in Edom. 17 But Adad took flight, he and some Edomite men, some of his father’s servants, with him, so as to come to Egypt; Hadad was a small boy. 18 They set off from Midyan and came to Pa’ran, took some men with them from Par’an, and came to Egypt, to Pharaoh king of Egypt. He gave him a house, said there would be bread for him, and gave him land.

19 Hadad found grace greatly in Pharaoh’s eyes and he gave him his wife’s sister, the sister of Tahpenes, the queen, as wife. 20 Tahpenes’ sister gave birth to Genubat, his son, for him. Tahpenes weaned him within Pharoah’s household, and Genubat was in Pharaoh’s household among Pharaoh’s sons.

21 When Hadad heard in Egypt that David had lain down with his ancestors and that Yo’ab the army officer was dead, Hadad said to Pharaoh, ‘Send me off, so I may go to my country’. 22 Pharaoh said to him, ‘What do you lack with me, that here, you’re seeking to go to your country?’ He said, ‘No, but do send me off’.

23 And God made rise for him as an adversary Retson ben Elyada, who had taken flight from Hadad’ezer king of Tsobah, his lord. 24 He collected men round him and became officer over a raiding gang (when David was killing them); they went to Damascus [Dammeseq] and lived there, and reigned in Damascus. 25 He was an adversary to Israel all Solomon’s days, along with the bad thing that Hadad was. He harassed Israel. He reigned over Aram.

* **11:27 Jeroboam**

26 Now Yarob’am ben Nebat, an Ephratite from Tseredah (his mother’s name was Tseru’ah, a woman who was a widow), a servant of Solomon, raised a hand against the king. 27 This was the thing in connection with which he raised a hand against the king. When Solomon built the Fill, he secured the breach in David his father’s town. 28 This individual Yarob’am was a forceful strong man, and Solomon saw the boy when he was doing work and appointed him over the entire labour force in the household of Joseph.

29 At that time, when Yarob’am went out of Jerusalem, Ahiyyah the Shilonite, the prophet, found him on the road. He was covering himself with a new coat and the two of them were alone in the open country. 30 Ahiyyah seized the new coat that was on him and tore it into twelve pieces. 31 He said to Yarob’am, ‘Take yourself ten pieces, because Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: “Here am I, tearing the kingdom from Solomon’s hand and giving you the ten clans. 32 One clan will be his, for the sake of my servant David and for the sake of Jerusalem, the town that I chose from all Israel’s clans. 33 Because they’ve abandoned me and bowed low to Shameful Ashtar the god of the Tsidonites, to Kemosh the god of Mo’ab, and to Milkom the god of the Ammonites, and have not walked in my ways by doing what is upright in my eyes, my decrees and my rulings, like David his father.

34 I shall not take the entire kingdom from his hand and I shall make him leader all the days of his life for the sake of David my servant, whom I chose, who kept my orders and my decrees. 35 But I shall take the kingdom from his son’s hand and give it to you (the ten clans). 36 To his son I will give one clan for the sake of there always being hegemony for David my servant before me in Jerusalem, the town that I chose for myself to put my name there. 37 But you I shall take, and you will reign over all that your appetite longs for. You will be king over Israel. 38 If you listen to all that I command you, walk in my ways, and do what is upright in my eyes by keeping my decrees and my orders as David my servant did, I will be with you and I will build for you a trustworthy household as I built for David, and I will give Israel to you. 39 I will humble David’s offspring on account of this (yet not for all time)’.

* **11:40 Rehoboam**

40 Solomon sought to put Yarob’am to death, but Yarob’am set off and took flight to Egypt to Shishaq king of Egypt, and he was in Egypt until Solomon’s death. 41 The rest of the things about Solomon, all that he did, and his smartness, they’re written on the document about things regarding Solomon, aren’t they. 42 The time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel was forty years. 43 Then Solomon lay down with his ancestors and was buried in David his father’s town, and Rehab’am [Rehoboam] his son began to reign in place of him.

12 Rehab’am went to Shekem, because all Israel had come to Shekem to make him king. 2 When Yarob’am ben Nebat heard while he was still in Egypt, where he had taken flight from before King Solomon (so Yarob’am lived in Egypt), 3 they sent and called for him. Yarob’am came with the entire congregation of Israel and they spoke to Rehab’am : 4 ‘Your father – he made our yoke tough. So you, now, lighten something of your father’s tough servitude and of his heavy yoke that he put on us, and we’ll serve you’.

5 He said to them, ‘Go for three more days, and come back to me’. The people went, 6 and King Rehab’am took counsel with the elders who had been standing before Solomon his father when he was alive: ‘How do you counsel me to give back word to this people?’ 7 They spoke to him, ‘If today you’ll be a servant to this people, and serve them, and answer them and speak good words to them, they’ll be your servants for all time’.

* **12:8 Declining the Chance to Be a Servant Leader**

8 But he abandoned the elders’ counsel which they gave him and took counsel with the young men who grew up with him, who were standing before him. 9 He said to them, ‘What are you going to counsel, so that we may give back word to this people who spoke to me, “Lighten something of the yoke that your father put on us”?’ 10 The young men who grew up with him spoke with him: ‘You should say this to this people who spoke to you, “Whereas your father made our yoke heavy, you, lighten it from on us”—you should speak like this to them: “My little finger is thicker than my father’s hips. 11 So now, whereas my father imposed a heavy yoke on you, I myself will add to your yoke. Whereas my father disciplined you with whips, I myself will discipline you with scorpions”’.

12 Yarob’am and the entire people came to Rehab’am on the third day as the king had spoken, ‘Come back to me on the third day’, 13 and the king answered the people toughly. He abandoned the counsel of the elders that they had given him 14 and spoke to them in accordance with the counsel of the young men: ‘Whereas my father made your yoke heavy, I myself will add to your yoke. Whereas my father disciplined you with whips, I myself will discipline you with scorpions’. 15 The king didn’t listen to the people, because it was a turn of affairs from Yahweh in order to implement his word, which Yahweh had spoken by means of Ahiyyah the Shilonite to Yarob’am ben Nebat.

16 All Israel saw that the king had not listened to them, and the people gave word back to the king:

What share do we have in David?

—we have no domain in ben Jesse.

To your tents, Israel;

now see to your own household, David.

So Israel went to its tents, 17 though the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah – Rehab’am reigned over them. 18 King Rehab’am sent Adoram, who was in charge of the work force, but all Israel pelted him with stones and he died, while King Rehab’am got himself together to get up into the chariot to flee to Jerusalem.

19 So Israel has rebelled against David’s household until this day.

* **12:20 Yahweh Confronts Rehab’am**

20 When all Israel heard that Yarob’am had come back, they sent and called him to the assembly and made him king over all Israel. No one followed David’s household except the clan of Judah alone.

21 Rehab’am came to Jerusalem and congregated Judah’s entire household and the clan of Benjamin, 180,000 picked men doing battle, to go to battle with the household of Israel, to get the kingship back for Rehab’am son of Solomon. 22 But God’s word came to Shema’yah, the supernatural man: 23 ‘Say to Rehab’am son of Solomon king of Judah, and to the entire household of Judah and Benjamin and the rest of the people: 24 “Yahweh has said this: ‘You will not go up, you will not go to battle with your Israelite brothers. Go back each one to his house, because this thing has come about from me”’. They listened to Yahweh’s word and turned back to go, in accordance with Yahweh’s word.

25 Yarob’am built up Shekem in the highland of Ephrayim and lived there; then he went out from there and built up Penu’el. 26 Yarob’am said to himself, ‘The kingship will now go back to the household of David: 27 if this people go up to make sacrifices in Yahweh’s house in Jerusalem, this people’s mind will turn back to their lord, to Rehab’am king of Judah. They’ll kill me and turn back to Rehab’am king of Judah’.

28 So the king took counsel and made two gold bullocks. He said them, ‘It’s too much for you to go up to Jerusalem. Israel, here are your gods who brought you up from the country of Egypt’. 29 He placed the one in Bet-el and the other he put in Dan, 30 and this thing became a wrongdoing; the people went before the one as far as Dan. 31 And he made the house at the shrines and made priests from the sections of the people who were not from the Levites.

* **12:32 The Destiny of Yarob’am’s Altar**

32 Yarob’am made a festival in the eight month, on the fifteenth day of the month, like the festival that was in Judah, and went up onto the altar. He acted in this way at Bet-el, sacrificing to the bullocks that he had made.

So he put in place at Bet El the the priests of the shrines that he had made 33 and went up on the altar that he had made at Bet-el on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, which he devised out of his own mind, and made a festival for the Israelites. He went up onto the altar to burn an offering, 13 and there, a supernatural man came from Judah by Yahweh’s word to Bet-el, when Yarob’am was standing on the altar to burn an offering. 2 He called out against the altar by Yahweh’s word: ‘Altar, altar, Yahweh has said this: “Here, a son is going to be born to David’s household (Yo’shiyyahu his name). He will sacrifice on you the priests of the shrines who burn offerings on you. People will burn human bones on you”’. 3 He gave a sign that day: ‘This is the sign that Yahweh has spoken: “There, the altar is going to split apart and the waste that’s on it will pour out”’.

4 When the king heard the word of the supernatural man which he called out against the altar at Bet-el, Yarob’am put out his hand from above the altar, saying, ‘Seize him!’ But his hand which he put out against him dried up and he couldn’t take it back to himself, 5 while the altar split apart and the waste from the altar poured out in accordance with the sign that the supernatural man had given by Yahweh’s word. 6 The king avowed to the supernatural man, ‘Please seek the goodwill of Yahweh your God and plead for me so that my hand comes back to me’. The supernatural man sought Yahweh’s goodwill and the king’s hand came back to him, and became as it was previously.

* **13:7 Another Prophet in Bet-el**

7 The king spoke to the supernatural man: ‘Do come with me to the house and have some sustenance, and I’ll give you a gift’. 8 The supernatural man said to the king, ‘If you give me half your household I won’t come with you; I won’t eat bread or drink water in this place, 9 because that’s how he ordered me, by Yahweh’s word: “You will not eat bread and you will not drink water, and you will not go back by the way that you went”’. 10 So he went by another way and didn’t go back by the way that he came to Bet-el.

11 Now an old prophet was living in Bet-el. His son came and recounted to him everything that the supernatural man had done this day in Bet-el, the words that he had spoken to the king. They recounted them to their father 12 and their father spoke to them: ‘Where exactly is the way he went?’ His sons had seen the way that the supernatural man had gone, who had come from Judah. 13 He said to his sons, ‘Saddle the donkey for me’. They saddled the donkey for him and he mounted it 14 and went after the supernatural man. He found him sitting under an oak. He said to him, ‘Are you the supernatural man who came from Judah?’ He said, ‘I am’. 15 He said to him, ‘Go with me to my house and eat some bread’. 16 He said, ‘I can’t go back with you or come with you. I won’t eat bread and I won’t drink water with you in this place, 17 because a thing came to me by Yahweh’s word, “You will not eat bread and you will not drink water there; you will not go back by going the way that you went’.

* **13:18 Prophets, and When to Ignore Them**

18 He said to him, ‘I am also a prophet, like you, and an envoy spoke to me by Yahweh’s word: “Get him to go back with you to your house so he can eat bread and drink water’. He was lying to him. 19 But he went back with him and ate bread in his house and drank water.

20 As they were sitting at the table, Yahweh’s word came to the prophet who had got him to go back, 21 and he called out to the supernatural man who had come from Judah, ‘Yahweh has said this: “Since you have rebelled against Yahweh’s bidding and not kept the order that Yahweh your God gave you, 22 but have gone back and eaten bread and drunk water in the place of which he spoke to you, ‘You’re not to eat bread and you’re not to drink water’, your corpse will not come to your ancestors’ grave’.

23 After he had eaten bread and after he had drunk, he saddled for him the donkey belonging to the prophet whom he had got to go back, 24 and he went, but a lion met him on the way and put him to death. His corpse was thrown on the way. The donkey was standing beside it and the lion was standing beside the corpse, 25 and there, some men were passing and they saw the corpse thrown on the way with the lion standing beside the corpse. They came and spoke of it in the town where the old prophet was living. 26 The prophet who had got him to go back from the way heard and said, ‘It’s the supernatural man who rebelled against Yahweh’s bidding. Yahweh has given him over to the lion and it’s mauled him and put him to death in accordance with Yahweh’s word, which he spoke to him’.

27 He spoke to his sons: ‘Saddle the donkey for me’, and they saddled it. 28 He went and found his corpse thrown on the way, with the donkey and the lion standing beside the corpse. The lion had not eaten the corpse and it had not mauled the donkey.

* **13:29 When the Apostate King’s Son Gets Ill**

29 The prophet took up the supernatural man’s corpse, laid it on the donkey, and took it back. So it came to the old prophet’s town for lamenting and burying it. 30 He laid his corpse in his own grave and they lamented over it, ‘Oh, my brother!’ 31 After burying him he said to his sons, ‘When I die, bury me in the grave where the supernatural man is buried; lay my bones beside his bones, 32 because the word that he called out by Yahweh’s word against the altar that’s in Bet-el and against all the houses at the shrines that are in the towns of Shomron [Samaria] will definitely come about’.

33 After this thing Yarob’am did not turn back from his bad ways but again made priests for the shrines from all sections of the people. Anyone who wanted commissioned himself and became priests of the shrines. 34 This thing was the wrongdoing of Yarob’am’s household both to efface and to annihilate it from upon the face of the ground.

14 At that time Abiyyah ben Yarob’am got ill. 2 Yarob’am said to his wife, ‘Set off, please, make yourself look different so people won’t know that you’re Yarob’am’s wife, and go to Shiloh. There, the prophet Ahiyyah is there. It was he who spoke of me that I would be king over this people. 3 Take ten loaves of bread in your hand, and some cookies and a jar of syrup, and come to him. It’s he who will tell you what will happen to the boy’.

4 Yarob’am’s wife did so. She set off and went to Shiloh and came to the house of Ahiyyah. Ahiyyahu couldn’t see, because his eyes had set, through his old age, 5 but Yahweh himself had said to Ahiyyahu, ‘Here, Yarob’am’s wife is coming to inquire for a word from you concerning her son, because he’s ill. You’re to speak such and such things to her. But when she comes she’ll be acting like a stranger’.

* **14.6 Tough Prophet, Tough Message**

6 So when Ahiyyahu heard the sound of her feet as she came through the entrance, he said ‘Come in, wife of Yarob’am. Why is it you’re acting like a stranger?

I’m sent to you with something tough. 7 Go say to Yarob’am, “Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: ‘Since I raised you from among the people and made you chief over my people Israel 8 and tore the kingship from David’s household and gave it to you, but you have not been like my servant David who kept my orders and followed me with all his mind by doing only what was upright in my eyes, 9 and you’ve dealt more badly in what you’ve done than all who were before you, and gone and made yourself other gods and cast images, so as to provoke me, and me you’ve thrown behind your back, 10 therefore here I am bringing bad fortune to Yarob’am’s household. I shall cut off for Yarob’am the one who urinates against a wall (bound or freed) in Israel. I shall burn away after Yarob’am’s household, as one burns away dung, until it’s finished. 11 The person who belongs to Yarob’am who dies in the town the dogs will eat; the person who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens will eat. Because Yahweh has spoken’”.

12 So you, set off, go to your house. When your foot comes to the town, the child will die. 13 All Israel will lament for him and bury him, because this person alone who belongs to Yarob’am will come into a grave since in him something good has been found in relation to Yahweh the God of Israel, in the household of Yarob’am. 14 But Yahweh will set up for himself a king over Israel who will cut off the household of Yarob’am. This is the day, and what even now? 15 Yahweh will strike Israel down as a reed sways in the water and he will uproot Israel from upon this good ground that he gave to their ancestors, and scatter them beyond the River, since they’ve made their totem poles that provoke Yahweh. 16 He will give Israel over on account of Yarob’am’s wrongdoings that he committed and that he caused Israel to commit’.

* **14:17 In Judah: Rehab’am , Abiyyah**

17 Yarob’am’s wife set off and went, and came to Tirtsah. She was coming through the threshold of the house as the boy died. 18 They buried him and all Israel lamented for him in accordance with Yahweh’s word which he had spoken by means of his servant Ahiyyahu the prophet.

19 The rest of the things about Yarob’am, how he did battle and how he reigned: there, they’re written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel. 20 The time that Yarob’am reigned was twenty-two years, then he lay down with his ancestors and Nadab his son began to reign in place of him.

21 Rehab’am son of Solomon reigned in Judah. Rehab’am was a man of forty-one years when he began to reign and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the town where Yahweh chose to put his name out of all the clans of Israel. His mother’s name was Na’amah the Ammonite. 22 Judah did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes and aroused greater passion in him than anything that their ancestors had done by the wrongdoings that they did. 23 They too built for themselves shrines, columns, and totem poles on every lofty hill and under every verdant tree. 24 There were also hierodules in the country. They acted in accordance with all the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed before the Israelites.

25 In the fifth year of King Rehab’am , Shishaq king of Egypt went up against Jerusalem 26 and took the treasures of Yahweh’s house and the treasures of the king’s house. He took everything. He took the gold shields that Solomon had made; 27 King Rehab’am made copper shields in place of them and appointed them to the control of the officers in charge of the runners who kept watch over the entrance to the king’s house. 28 Whenever the king came to Yahweh’s house the runners would carry them, then take them back to the runners’ chamber.

29 The rest of the things about Rehab’am and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 30 There was battle between Rehab’am and Yarob’am all the time.

* **14:31 Abiyyam, Asa**

31 Rehab’am lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David’s Town. His mother’s name was Na’amah the Ammonite. Abiyyam his son began to reign in place of him. 15 It was in the eighteenth year of King Yarob’am ben Nebat that Abiyyam began to reign over Judah. 2 He reigned three years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Ma’akah bat Abishalom. 3 He walked in all the wrongdoings of his father, which he did before him. His mind was not perfect with Yahweh his God like the mind of David his father. 4 Because it was for David’s sake that Yahweh his God gave him hegemony in Jerusalem by setting up his son after him and by having Jerusalem stand, 5 because David did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes and did not turn aside from anything that he ordered him all the days of his life, except in the thing about Uriyyah the Hittite. 6 There was battle between Rehab’am and Yarob’am all the days of his life.

7 The rest of the things about Abiyyam and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. There was battle between Abiyyam and Yarob’am. 8 Abiyyam lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in David’s Town. Asa his son began to reign in place of him.

9 It was in the twentieth year of Yarob’am king of Israel that Asa began to reign as king of Judah. 10 He reigned forty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Ma’akah bat Abishalom. 11 Asa did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes, like David his ancestor. 12 He put away the hierodules from the country and removed all the idols that his ancestors had made. 13 In addition, Ma’akah his mother he removed from being queen mother, because she had made a monstrosity for Asherah. Asa cut down her monstrosity and burnt it in Wadi Qidron, 14 though the shrines did not disappear. Yet Asa’s mind was perfect with Yahweh all his days. 15 He brought into Yahweh’s house the sacred things belonging to his father and his own sacred things, silver, gold, and articles.

* **15:16 Asa and Ben-hadad**

16 There was battle between Asa and Ba’sha king of Israel all their days. 17 Ba’sha king of Israel went up against Judah and built up The Height, so as not to grant Asa king of Judah anyone going out or coming in. 18 Asa got all the silver and gold that was left in the treasuries of Yahweh’s house and the treasuries of the king’s house and gave them into the hand of his servants, and King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad ben-Tabrimmon son of Hezyon king of Aram, who lived in Damascus, saying 19 ‘A pact between me and you, between my father and your father: here, I have sent you a bribe of silver and gold. Go contravene your pact with Ba’sha king of Israel so he may go up from me’.

20 Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the officers of the forces that he had against Israel’s towns. He struck down Iyyon, Dan, Bet-ma’akah Meadow, and all Kinnerot, on top of all the region of Naphtali. 21 When Ba’sha heard, he left off building up The Height and stayed in Tirtsah, 22 while King Asa got all Judah to listen (there was no one free of obligation) and they carried the stones from The Height and its timber with which Ba’sha had built, and with them King Asa built up Geba in Benjamin and The Watchtower.

23 The rest of all the things about Asa, all his strength, all that he did, and the towns that he built up, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah. Only, at the time when he was old he had an illness in his feet. 24 Asa lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David his father’s town. Yehoshaphat his son began to reign in place of him.

* **15:25 In Ephrayim: Nadab, Ba’sha**

25 Now Nadab ben Yarob’am had become king over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah. He reigned over Israel two years. 26 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes; he walked in the way of his father and and in his wrongdoing, which he caused Israel to commit. 27 Ba’sha ben Ahiyyah, of the household of Yissakar, conspired against him. Ba’sha struck him down at Gibbeton, which belonged to the Philistines, while Nadab and all Israel were besieging Gibbeton.

28 Ba’sha put him to death in the third year of Asa king of Judah and become king in place of him. 29 When he began to reign he struck down Yarob’am’s entire household and did not allow anyone breathing to remain to Yarob’am until he had annihilated it, in accordance with Yahweh’s word which he spoke by means of his servant Ahiyyah the Shilonite 30 because of the wrongs that Yarob’am committed and that he caused Israel to commit, with his provocation that he offered to Yahweh the God of Israel.

31 The rest of the things about Nadab and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they.

32 There was battle between Asa and Ba’sha king of Israel all their days. 33 It was in the third year of Asa king of Judah that Ba’sha ben Ahiyyah began to reign over all Israel in Tirtsah, for twenty-four years. 34 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. He walked in the way of Yarob’am and in his wrongdoing that he caused Israel to commit.

16 Yahweh’s word came to Yehu ben Hanani, against Ba’sha: 2 ‘Since I raised you from the dirt and made you chief over my people Israel, but you have walked in the way of Yarob’am and caused my people Israel do wrong, so as to provoke me with their wrongdoings, 3 here, I’m going to burn away after Ba’sha and after his household. I shall make your household like the household of Yarob’am ben Nebat. 4 The person belonging to Ba’sha who dies in the town, the dogs will eat; and the person belonging to him who dies in the open country, the birds of the heavens will eat’.

* **16:5 The Devastating Word**

5 The rest of the things about Ba’sha, what he did, and his strength, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they. 6 Ba’sha lay down with his ancestors and was buried in Tirtsah, and Elah his son began to reign in place of him. 7 But by means of Yehu ben Hanani the prophet Yahweh’s word had come regarding Ba’sha and regarding his household also, because of all that was bad that he did in Yahweh’s eyes, so as to provoke him by the action of his hands, in being like Yarob’am’s household, and because he had struck it down.

8 It was in the twenty-sixth year of Asa king of Judah that Elah ben Ba’sha began to reign over Israel in Tirtsah, for two years. 9 His servant Zimri, officer in charge of half the chariotry, conspired against him. When he was in Tirtsah getting drunk in the house of Artsa who was in charge of the household at Tirtsah, 10 Zimri came in, struck him down, and put him to death, in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah. He began to reign in place of him, 11 and when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne, he struck down Ba’sha’s entire household. He did not let anyone who urinates against a wall remain to him, either a restorer of his or a friend of his.

12 So Zimri annihilated Ba’sha’s entire household, in accordance with Yahweh’s word that he spoke regarding Ba’sha by means of Yehu the prophet 13 and regarding all Ba’sha’s wrongdoings and Elah his son’s wrongdoings that they had committed and that they had caused Israel to commit, so as to provoke Yahweh the God of Israel with their hollow things. The rest of the things about Elah and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they.

* **16:15 King for a Week**

15 It was in the twenty-seventh year of Asa king of Judah that Zimri reigned seven days in Tirtsah, when the company was encamped at Gibbeton which belonged to the Philistines. 16 The company encamped heard, ‘Zimri has conspired, and he has actually struck down the king’, and all Israel made Omri the army officer king over Israel that day in the camp. 17 Omri went up, and all Israel with him, from Gibbeton, and they besieged Tirtsah. 18 When Zimri saw that the town was taken, he came into the citadel in the king’s house and burned the king’s house with fire over himself. So he died 19 because of his wrongdoings that he committed by doing what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes by walking in the way of Yarob’am, and through his wrongdoing that he committed by causing Israel to do wrong. 20 The rest of the things about Zimri and his conspiracy which he formed are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they.

21 Then the people of Israel split in half. Half the people followed Tibni ben Ginat to make him king, and half followed Omri. 22 The company that followed Omri was stronger than the company of those who followed Tibni ben Ginat, but Tibni died and Omri began to reign.

23 It was in the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah that Omri began to reign over Israel, for twelve years. In Tirtsah he reigned six years, 24 then he acquired the Shomron Mountain from Shemer for two talents of silver, built up the mountain, and called the town he built by the name of Shemer, the lord of the Shomron Mountain.

25 Omri did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes; he dealt badly more than all who were before him. 26 He walked in all the way of Yarob’am ben Nebat and in his wrongdoing that he caused Israel to commit so as to provoke Yahweh the God of Israel with their hollow things. 27 The rest of the things about Omri, what he did and his strength that he showed, are written on the document about things regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they.

* **16:28 Ahab and Jezebel**

28 Omri lay down with his ancestors and was buried in Shomron, and Ah’ab his son began to reign in place of him.29 Ah’ab ben Omri began to reign over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah. Ah’ab ben Omri reigned over Israel in Shomron twenty-two years. 30 Ah’ab ben Omri did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, more than all who were before him. 31 Was it a slight thing, his walking in the wrongdoings of Yarob’am ben Nebat, that he took as wife Izebel [Jezebel] bat Etba’al, king of the Tsidonites, and went and served the Master? He bowed low to him 32 and set up an altar for the Master at the Master’s house which he built in Shomron, 33 and Ah’ab made a totem pole. Ah’ab continued to act so as to provoke Yahweh the God of Israel more than all the kings of Israel who were before him.

34 In his time Hi’el the Bet Elite built up Jericho [Yeriho]. With Abiram his firstborn he founded it and with Segub his youngest he put up its doors, in accordance with Yahweh’s word which he spoke by means of Joshua ben Nun.

17 Eliyyahu [Elijah] the Tishbite from the inhabitants of Gil’ad said to Ah’ab, ‘As Yahweh lives, the God of Israel before whom I have stood , if during these years there will be dew or rain except at the bidding of my word….’

2 Yahweh’s word came to him: 3 ‘Go from here. Turn your face east and hide in Wadi Kerit, which faces the Jordan. 4 You will drink from the wadi and I have ordered the ravens to provide for you there’. 5 He went and acted in accordance with Yahweh’s word. He went and stayed in Wadi Kerit, which faces the Jordan, 6 while the ravens were bringing him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the wadi.

* **17.7 The Ravens and the Widow**

7 After a time the wadi dried up because there was no rain in the country. 8 Yahweh’s word came to him: 9 ‘Set off, go to Tsarephat which belongs to Tsidon, and stay there. Here, I have ordered a woman there who is a widow to provide for you’.

10 He set off and went to Tsarephat, and came to the entrance to the town. There, a woman who was a widow was gathering wood there. He called to her, ‘Please get me a little water in a container so I can drink’, 11 and she went to get it. He called to her, ‘Please get me a bit of bread in your hand’. 12 She said, ‘As Yahweh your God lives, if I have anything baked, only a fistful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug…. So here I am, collecting a couple of pieces of wood and I shall come and make it for me and for my son, and we’ll eat it and die’.

13 Eliyyahu said to her, ‘Don’t be afraid. Come, act in accordance with your word, only make me a small loaf from there first and bring it out to me, and make one for you and for your son afterwards. 14 Because Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: “The jar of flour will not be finished and the jug of oil will not lack until the day Yahweh gives rain on the face of the ground”’. 15 She went and acted in accordance with Eliyyahu’s word, and she ate, she and he and her household for some time. 16 The jar of flour was not finished and the jug of oil did not lack, in accordance with Yahweh’s word which he spoke by means of Eliyyahu.

* **17.17 Back from the Dead**

17 After these things, the son of the woman who was mistress of the household got ill. His illness grew very severe, until no breath remained in him. 18 She said to Eliyyahu, ‘What is between you and me, supernatural man? You’ve come to me to bring my waywardness to mind and put my son to death’. 19 He said to her, ‘Give me your son’. He took him out of her arms and brought him up to the upper floor where he was staying, laid him on his bed, 20 and called to Yahweh: ‘Yahweh my God, the woman with whom I am residing, are you really going to deal badly with her by putting her son to death?’

21 He measured himself out over the child three times and called to Yahweh, ‘Yahweh my God, please may this child’s breath come back inside him!’ 22 Yahweh listened to the voice of Eliyyahu. The child’s breath came back inside him and he came alive. 23 Eliyyahu got the child and took him down from the upper floor into the house, and gave him to his mother. Eliyyahu said, ‘Look, your son is alive’. 24 The woman said to Eliyyahu, ‘Now I do acknowledge that you are a supernatural man and Yahweh’s word in your mouth is truthful’.

18 After much time, Yahweh’s word came to Eliyyahu, in the third year: ‘Go appear to Ah’ab, and I will give rain on the face of the ground’. 2 So Eliyyahu went to appear to Ah’ab. Now the famine was severe in Shomron, 3 and Ah’ab had called for Obadyah, who was in charge of the household. Obadyah was someone who lived greatly in awe of Yahweh. 4 When Izebel cut off Yahweh’s prophets, Obadyah had got a hundred prophets and hidden them, fifty individuals to a cave, and provided them with bread and water.

5 Ah’ab said to Obadyah, ‘Go through the country, to all the water springs and to all the wadis. Perhaps we’ll find grass so we can keep horse and mule alive so we don’t cut off some of the animals’.

* **18:6 The Man Who Served God and King**

6 They split the country for themselves so as to pass through it. While Ah’ab went one way alone and Obadyah went the other way alone, 7 and Obadyah was on the way, there, Eliyyahu met him. He recognized him and fell on his face, and said, ‘Is this you, my lord Eliyyahu?’ 8 He said to him, ‘It’s me. Go say to your lord, “There’s Eliyyahu”’.

9 He said, ‘What wrong have I done that you’re giving your servant into the hand of Ah’ab, to put me to death? 10 As Yahweh your God lives, if there’s a nation or kingdom to which my lord has not sent to seek you out…. They say, “He’s not here”, and he makes the kingdom or the nation swear that it can’t find you. 11 And now you’re saying, “Go say to your lord, ‘There’s Eliyyahu’”, 12 and I myself will go from being with you and Yahweh’s spirit will carry you to where I don’t know, and I’ll come to tell Ah’ab and he won’t find you and he’ll kill me, when your servant has lived in awe of Yahweh from my youth. 13 It’s been told my lord, hasn’t it, what I did when Izebel killed Yahweh’s prophets and I hid a hundred of Yahweh’s prophets, fifty individuals to a cave, and fed them bread and water. 14 And now you’re saying, “Go say to your lord, ‘There’s Eliyyahu’”, and he’ll kill me’.

15 Eliyyahu said, ‘As Yahweh Armies lives, before whom I have stood , I will indeed appear to him today’. 16 So Obadyah went to meet Ah’ab and told him, and Ah’ab went to meet Eliyyahu. 17 When Ah’ab saw Eliyyahu, Ah’ab said to him, ‘Is this you, troubler of Israel?’ 18 He said, ‘I haven’t troubled Israel. Rather, you and your father’s household have, by abandoning Yahweh’s orders and following the Masters. 19 So now, send to gather all Israel to me to Mount Carmel, with the 450 prophets of the Master and the 400 prophets of Asherah who eat at Izebel’s table’.

* **18:20 There Are Times When You Have to Choose**

20 So Ah’ab sent among all the Israelites and gathered the prophets to Mount Carmel. 21 Eliyyahu came up to the entire people and said ‘How long are you going to dither between two positions? If Yahweh is God, follow him. If it’s the Master, follow him’. The people didn’t answer him a word.

22 Then Eliyyahu said to the people, ‘I alone am left as a prophet of Yahweh. The Master’s prophets are 450 individuals. 23 They’re to give us two bulls, and they’re to choose one bull for themselves, divide it up, and put it on the wood, but not set fire. I shall prepare the other bull and put it on the wood, but not set fire. 24 You will call in your god’s name, I’ll call in Yahweh’s name. The God who answers by fire – he is God’. The entire people answered, ‘What you say is good’.

25 So Eliyyahu said to the Master’s prophets, ‘Choose one bull for yourselves and prepare it first, because you’re the majority. Call on your god’s name but don’t set fire’. 26 They took the bull that someone gave them, prepared it, and called on the Master’s name from morning until midday, saying ‘Master, answer us’, but there was no sound, no one answering. They jumped round the altar that people had made.

27 At midday Eliyyahu played about with them: ‘Call in a loud voice, because he’s a god, but it’s because he’s talking or he’s moving or he’s on a journey. Perhaps he’s asleep and he’ll wake up’. 28 So they called in a loud voice and slashed themselves in accordance with their ruling with swords and with spears until blood flowed over them. 29 After midday passed they prophesied until the time for presenting the offering, but there was no sound, no one answering, no heeding.

* **18:30 Yahweh, He is God**

30 Then Eliyyahu said to the entire people, ‘Come up to me’. The entire people came up to him and he mended Yahweh’s altar that was torn down. 31 Eliyyahu got twelve stones, in accordance with the number of the twelve clans of the sons of Jacob (to whom Yahweh’s word had come, ‘Israel will be your name’). 32 He built the stones into an altar in Yahweh’s name and made a trench, like a receptacle for a two-measure barrel of seed, round the altar. 33 He laid out the wood and divided the bull and put it on the wood.

34 He said, ‘Fill four jars with water and pour it over the burnt offering and over the wood’. He said, ‘Do it a second time’. They did it a second time. He said, ‘Do it a third time’. They did it a third time. 35 The water went round the altar and he also filled the trench with water.

36 At the time for presenting the offering, Eliyyahu the prophet came up and said, ‘Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, today may it be acknowledged that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant, and that by your word I have done all these things. 37 Answer me, Yahweh, answer me, so that this people may acknowledge that you Yahweh are God and that you yourself have turned their mind round’.

38 Yahweh’s fire fell and consumed the burnt offering, the wood, the stones, and the dirt, and the water that was in the trench it licked up. 39 The entire people saw and fell on their faces and said, ‘Yahweh, he is God, Yahweh, he is God’. 40 Eliyyahu said to them, ‘Capture the Master’s prophets. None of them must escape’. They captured them, and Eliyyahu took them down to Wadi Qishon and slaughtered them there.

* **18:41 The Prophet Takes Flight**

41 Eliyyahu said to Ah’ab, ‘Go up, eat and drink, because there’s a rumbling sound of rain’. Ah’ab went up to eat and to drink, while Eliyyahu went up to the top of Carmel, crouched to the ground, and put his face between his knees. 43 He said to his boy, ‘Please go up and look in the direction of the sea’. He went up and looked and said, ‘There isn’t anything’. He said ‘Go back’, seven times. 44 On the seventh he said, ‘There, a small cloud, like a person’s fist, going up from the west’. He said, ‘Go up, say to Ah’ab, “Hitch up, and get down, so that the rain won’t hold you back”’. 45 Right then, right then, when the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, there was a great downpour.

Ah’ab got into his chariot and went to Yizre’e’l. 46 Yahweh’s hand came on Eliyyahu, he hitched things round his hips, and he ran before Ah’ab as far as when you come to Yizre’e’l.

19 Ah’ab told Izebel all that Eliyyahu had done and all about how he had killed all the prophets with the sword, 2 and Izebel sent an envoy to Eliyyahu saying, ‘May the gods do like this and may they do more, because this very time tomorrow I shall make your life like the life of one of them’.

3 He was afraid, and he set off and went for his life. He came to Be’er Sheba which belongs to Judah, left his boy behind there, 4 and he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness. He came and sat under a broom bush and asked for his life, that he might die: ‘It’s too much. Take my life now, Yahweh, because I’m no better than my ancestors’.

* **19:5 The Low Murmuring Sound**

5 He lay down and slept under a broom bush. And there, an envoy touching him. He said to him, ‘Get up, eat’. 6 He looked, and there, by his head a loaf baked on coals and a jar of water. He ate and drank, and lay down again. 7 Yahweh’s envoy came back a second time and touched him and said, ‘Get up, eat, because the journey is too much for you’. 8 He got up and ate and drank, and went in the energy of that food for forty days and forty nights as far as God’s mountain, Horeb.

9 He came to a cave there and stayed the night there. And there, Yahweh’s word came to him. He said to him, ‘What is there for you here, Eliyyahu?’ 10 He said, ‘I’ve been very passionate for Yahweh, the God of Armies, because the Israelites have abandoned your pact. Your altars they’ve torn down, your prophets they’ve killed with the sword. I alone am left, and they’ve been seeking my life, to take it’. 11 He said, ‘Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh’. There was Yahweh passing, and a great, strong wind, splitting mountains and breaking up cliffs before Yahweh (Yahweh was not in the wind), after the wind an earthquake (Yahweh was not in the earthquake), 12 after the earthquake a fire (Yahweh was not in the fire), and after the fire a low murmuring sound.

13 When Eliyyahu heard it, he wrapped his face in his coat, went out, and stood at the cave’s entrance. And there, a voice came to him and said, ‘What is there for you here, Eliyyahu?’ 14 He said, ‘I’ve been very passionate for Yahweh, the God of Armies, because the Israelites have abandoned your pact. Your altars they’ve torn down, your prophets they’ve killed with the sword. I alone am left, and they’ve been seeking my life, to take it’.

* **19:15 The Chilling Commission**

15 Yahweh said to him, ‘Go,turn back on your way, to the Damascus wilderness. You’re to come and anoint Haza’el as king over Aram. 16 And Yehu ben Nimshi you’re to anoint as king over Israel, and Elisha ben Shaphat, from Meholah Meadow, you’re to anoint as prophet in place of you. 17 The person who escapes from Haza’el’s sword, Yehu will put to death. The person who escapes Yehu’s sword, Elisha will put to death. 18 But I will leave in Israel 7000, all the knees that have not bent down to the Master and every mouth that has not kissed him’.

19 So he went from there and found Elisha ben Shaphat. He was ploughing with twelve pairs in front of him; he was with the twelfth. Eliyyahu crossed over to him and threw his coat toward him. 20 He abandoned the cattle, ran after Eliyyahu, and said, ‘I shall kiss my father and my mother, please, and follow you’. He said to him, ‘Go, turn back, because what have I done to you?’ 21 He went back from following him, took a pair of cattle, and sacrificed it. With the cattle’s equipment he cooked them (the meat) and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set off and followed Eliyyahu, and ministered to him.

20 Now Ben-hadad king of Aram had collected his entire force, thirty-two kings with him, and horse and chariotry. He went up and besieged Shomron. He did battle against it 2 and sent envoys to the town to Ah’ab king of Israel, 3 and said to him, ‘Ben-hadad has said this: “Your silver and your gold are mine; your good wives and children are mine”’. 4 The king of Israel answered, ‘In accordance with your word, my lord king, I and all that I have are yours’.

* **20:5 The Point to Say No**

5 The envoys went back and said, ‘Ben-hadad has said this: “When I sent to you saying ‘You’re to give me your silver and your gold, your wives and your children’”: 6 rather at this very time tomorrow I shall send my servants to you and they will search your house and your servants’ houses, and everything that’s desirable in your eyes they will put into their own hand and take’.

7 The king of Israel called for all the country’s elders and said, ‘Please acknowledge and see how this man is seeking something bad, because he sent to me for my wives and for my children, for my silver and for my gold, and I didn’t hold them back from him’. 8 All the elders and the entire people said to him, ‘Don’t listen. You will not agree’. 9 So he said to Ben-hahad’s envoys, ‘Say to my lord the king, “Everything about which you sent to your servant at first, I will do, but this thing I cannot do”’. The envoys went and took back word. 10 Ben-hadad sent to him: ‘May the gods do like this and may they do more if the dirt of Shomron suffices for handfuls for the entire company that’s behind me’. 11 The king of Israel answered, ‘Speak: “The one who buckles on should not take pride like the one who loosens”’.

12 When he heard this word (he was drinking, he and the kings, at Sukkot), he said to his servants, ‘Get set’, and they got set against the town. 13 But there, a prophet came up to Ah’ab king of Israel and said, ‘Yahweh has said this: “You’ve seen all of this big horde? Here, I’m giving it into your hand today, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh”’. 14 Ah’ab said, ‘Through whom?’ He said, ‘Yahweh has said this: “Through the provincial officials’ boys”’. He said, ‘Who will hitch up for the battle?’ He said, ‘You’.

* **20:15 The Boys lead the Way to Victory**

15 So he registered the provincial officers’ boys (they were 232) and after them registered the entire company, all the Israelites (7000) 16 and they went out at midday. Ben-hadad was getting drunk at Sukkot, he and the thirty-two kings helping him. 17 The provincial officials’ boys went out first. Ben-hadad sent, and they told him, ‘Some men have gone out from Shomron’. 18 He said, ‘If they’ve gone out for peace, capture them alive—and if they’ve gone out for battle, capture them alive’. But these men went out from the town, the provincial officials’ boys with the force that was behind them, and they struck down each his man. So the Arameans fled, and the Israelites pursued them. Ben-hadad king of Aram escaped on a horse, with cavalry.

21 The king of Israel went out and struck down the horse and the chariotry. He struck the Arameans down in a great rout. 22 But the prophet came up to the king of Israel and said to him, ‘Go, assert your strength, acknowledge and see what you’re to do, because at the turn of the year the king of Aram is going to go up against you’.

23 Now the king of Aram’s servants said to him, ‘Their God is a mountain God. That’s why they were stronger than us. However, we should do battle with them in the flatland. If we will not be stronger than them….

24 This is the thing you should do. Remove the kings, each from his place, and put governors in their places. 25 You should count for yourself a force like the force that fell away from being with you, horse for horse, chariot for chariot, so we can battle with them in the flatland, if we will not be stronger than them.…’

He listened to their voice and did so.

* **20:26 Ben-hadad Tries Again**

26 At the turn of the year Ben-hadad registered the Arameans and went up to Apheq for battle with Israel. 27 When the Israelites had been registered and provided for, they went to meet them. The Israelites camped opposite them like two bare flocks of goats, while the Arameans filled the region. 28 A supernatural man came up and said to the king of Israel, ‘Yahweh has said this: “Since the Arameans have said, ‘Yahweh is a mountain God, he’s not a vale God’, I shall give all of this big horde into your hand, and you will acknowledge that I am Yahweh”’.

29 One side camped opposite the other side for seven days. On the seventh day the battle began, and the Israelites struck down the Arameans, 100,000 men on foot on one day. 30 The ones who were left fled to Apheq, into the town, but the wall fell on the 27,000 men who were left.

Now Ben-hadad had fled and come into the town, to an inner room. 31 His servants said to him, ‘Here, please, we’ve heard that the kings of the household of Israel –that they are kings who show commitment. Please let’s put sack on our hips and ropes on our head and go out to the king of Israel. Perhaps he will let you live’.

32 So they wrapped sack on their hips and ropes on their heads, came to the king of Israel, and said, ‘Your servant Ben-hadad has said, “Please let me live”’. He said, ‘Is he still alive? He’s my brother’. 33 Now the men could divine and they speedily caught it from him, and said, ‘Ben-hadad is your brother’. He said, ‘Go on, get him’.

* **20:33 A Prophet Puts on Disguise**

Ben-hadad went out to him and he got him up into the chariot. 34 He said to him, ‘The towns that my father got from your father, I’ll give back, and you may put street markets for yourself in Damascus as my father put them in Shomron’.

‘And I myself in pact will send you off’. He solemnized a pact to him and sent him off.

35 Now a certain man from among the people who prophesied said to his neighbour, ‘By Yahweh’s word, please strike me down’. But the man refused to strike him down. 36 He said to him, ‘Since you haven’t listened to Yahweh’s voice, there, you will be going from being with me and a lion will strike you down’. He went from beside him and a lion found him and struck him down.

37 He found another man and said, ‘Please strike me down’, and the man struck him down and wounded him. 38 Then the prophet went and stood for the king by the road and disguised himself with a bandage over his eyes. 39 As the king was passing, he cried out to the king, ‘Your servant went out in the middle of the battle and there, a man turned aside and brought a man to me and said, “Keep watch over this man! If he’s actually counted missing, it will be your life in place of his life, or you’ll weigh out a talent of silver”. 40 But your servant was doing things here and there and he—he wasn’t there’. The king of Israel said to him, ‘Thus you yourself have determined the decision about you’.

41 He speedily removed the bandage from on his eyes and the king of Israel recognized him, that he was one of the prophets. 42 He said to him, ‘Yahweh has said this: “Since you sent off from your hand the man who was to be ‘devoted’ to me, it will be your life in place of his life and your people in place of his people”’. 43 The king of Israel went to his house ill-disposed and vexed, and came to Shomron.

* **21:1 Nabot and the Family Land**

21 After these things, as Nabot the Yizre’e’lite had a vineyard that was in Yizre’e’l beside the palace of Ah’ab king of Shomron, 2 Ah’ab spoke to Nabot: ‘Give me your vineyard so it can be a vegetable garden for me, because it’s right beside my house. In place of it I’ll give you a better vineyard than it. If it’s good in your eyes, I’ll give you silver as the price for this one’. 3 But Nabot said to Ah’ab, ‘Far be it for me by Yahweh that I give you my ancestors’ domain’.

4 Ah’ab came to his house ill-disposed and vexed because of the word that Nabot the Yizre’e’lite had spoken to him when he said ‘I won’t give you my ancestors’ domain’. He lay on his bed and turned his face round, and didn’t eat bread. 5 Izebel his wife came to him and spoke to him: ‘Why is it that your spirit’s ill-disposed and you’re not eating bread?’ 6 He spoke to her: ‘I spoke to Nabot the Yizre’e’lite and said to him, “Give me your vineyard for silver, or if you want I’ll give you a vineyard in place of it”, but he said, “I won’t give you my vineyard”’. 7 Izebel his wife said to him, ‘You should now exercise kingship over Israel. Get up, eat bread so you may be in good heart. I myself will give you the vineyard of Nabot the Yizre’e’lite’.

8 She wrote documents in Ah’ab’s name, sealed them with his seal, and sent the documents to the elders and to the important people who were living in the town with Nabot. 9 She wrote in the documents: ‘Call a fast and sit Nabot at the head of the people, 10 and sit two scoundrels in front of him. They are to testify against him: “You have ‘blessed’ God and the king”, and take him out and stone him so that he dies’.

* **21.11 The Capital of Corruption**

11 The men of the town, the elders and the important people who were living in his town, did as Izebel sent to them, as was written in the documents that she sent to them. 12 They called a fast and sat Nabot at the head of the people. 13 The two scoundrels came and sat in front of him. The two scoundrels testified against Nabot in front of the people, ‘Nabot “blessed” God and the king’, and they took him outside the town and pelted him with stones, and he died.

14 They sent to Izebel: ‘Nabot has been stoned. He has died’. 15 When Izebel heard that Nabot had been stoned and had died, Izebel said to Ah’ab, “Set off, take possession of the vineyard of Nabot the Yizre’e’lite, which he refused to give you for silver, because Nabot is not alive. Rather he’s dead’. 16 When Ah’ab heard that Nabot was dead, Ah’ab set off to go down to the vineyard of Nabot the Yizre’e’lite to take possession of it.

17 But Yahweh’s word came to Eliyyahu the Tishbite: 18 ‘Set off, go down to meet Ah’ab king of Israel who is in Shomron: there, in Nabot’s vineyard, where he’s gone down to take possession of it. 19 You’re to speak to him: “Yahweh has said this: ‘Have you murdered and also taken possession?’” You’re to speak to him: “Yahweh has said this: ‘In the place where dogs lapped up Nabot’s blood, dogs will lap up your blood, yours too’”’.

* **21.11 The Dogs Will Eat Jezebel**

20 Ah’ab said to Eliyyahu, ‘Have you found me, my enemy?’ He said, ‘I’ve found you, since you sold yourself to do what is bad in Yahweh’s eyes. 21 “Here am I: I’m going to deal badly with you. I’m going to burn away after you and cut off for Ah’ab the one who urinates against a wall (bound or freed) in Israel. 22 I will make your household like the household of Yarob’am ben Nebat and like the household of Ba’sha ben Ahiyyah, for the provocation that you have offered, and you caused Israel to do wrong”.

23 Yahweh has also spoken about Izebel: “The dogs will eat Izebel on the rampart of Yizre’e’l. 24 The person who belongs to Ah’ab who dies in the town the dogs will eat; the person who dies in the open country the birds of the heavens will eat”’. (25 Indeed there was no one like Ah’ab who sold himself to do what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, whom Izebel his wife incited. 26 He acted most offensively in following idols, in accordance with everything that the Amorites did, whom Yahweh dispossessed from before the Israelites.)

27 When Ah’ab heard these words, he tore his clothes and put sack on his body, and fasted. He lay down in sack and went about quietly. 28 And Yahweh’s word came to Eliyyahu the Tishbite: 29 ‘Have you seen that Ah’ab has bowed down before me? Since he has bowed down before me, I will not bring the bad fortune in his days. In the days of his son I will bring the bad fortune on his household’.

* **22:1 The Prophet with Ten Horns**

22 They stayed three years while there was no battle between Aram and Israel. 2 In the third year Yehoshaphat king of Judah went down to the king of Israel. 3 The king of Israel had said to his servants, ‘Do you acknowledge that Heights-in-Gil’ad belongs to us but we are sitting still instead of taking it from the hand of the king of Aram?’ 4 So he said to Yehoshaphat, ‘Will you go with me for battle at Heights-in-Gil’ad?’ Yehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, ‘I’ll be the same as you, my company the same as your company, my horses the same as your horses’. 5 But Yehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, ‘Please inquire for Yahweh’s word today’.

6 So the king of Israel collected the prophets, some 400 individuals, and said to them, ‘Shall I go up against Heights-in-Gil’ad for the battle, or leave off?’ They said, ‘Go up, and the Lord will give it into the king’s hand’. 7 But Yehoshaphat said, ‘Is there no further prophet of Yahweh here, so we can inquire of him’. 8 The king of Israel said to Yehoshaphat, ‘There’s one further individual to inquire of Yahweh from, but I myself dislike him because he doesn’t prophesy good for me, but bad: Mikayehu ben Yimlah’. Yehoshaphat said, ‘The king shouldn’t say that’. 9 So the king of Israel called to a courtier and said, ‘Do hurry Mikayehu ben Imlah’.

10 As the king of Israel and Yehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting, each on his throne, dressed in robes, at the threshing floor at the entrance to the gateway at Shomron, and all the prophets were prophesying before them, 11 Tsidqiyyah ben Kena’anah had made himself iron horns, and he said, ‘Yahweh has said this: “With these you will gore the Arameans until you have finished them off”’. 12 All the prophets were prophesying in this way, ‘Go up to Heights-in-Gil’ad and succeed. Yahweh will give it into the king’s hand’.

13 Now the envoy who went to call for Mikayehu spoke to him: ‘Here, please, the prophets’ words are good for the king as one bidding. Your word should please be like the word of one of them. You should speak of something good’. 14 Mikayehu said, ‘As Yahweh lives, what Yahweh says to me—I will speak it’.

* **22:15 Who Will Entice Ah’ab?**

15 He came to the king and the king said to him, ‘Mikayehu, shall we go up to Heights-in-Gil’ad for battle, or shall we leave off?’ He said to him, ‘Go up and succeed. Yahweh will give it into the king’s hand’. 16 The king said to him, ‘How many times am I going to get you to swear that you won’t speak to me anything but truth in Yahweh’s name?’

17 So he said, ‘I saw all Israel scattering toward the mountains like a flock that have no shepherd. Yahweh said, “These people have no lords. They should go back, each to his house, with things being well”’. 18 The king of Israel said to Yehoshaphat, ‘I said to you, “He won’t prophesy good fortune for me, but only bad?”, didn’t I’.

19 He said, ‘Therefore listen to Yahweh’s word. I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, with the entire heavenly army standing by him on his right and on his left. 20 Yahweh said, “Who will entice Ah’ab so he’ll go up but fall at Heights-in-Gil’ad?” One said “In this way” and another said “In this way”. 21 Then a spirit went out and stood before Yahweh and said, “I’m the one who’ll entice him”. Yahweh said to him, “How?” 22 He said, “I’ll go out and become a false spirit in the mouth of all his prophets”. He said, “You’re to entice. Yes, you’ll be able to. Go out and do it”. 23 So now, there, Yahweh put a spirit of falsehood in the mouth of all these prophets, in that Yahweh has spoken of something bad for you’.

24 Tsidqiyyahu ben Kena’anah went up and struck Mikayehu on the jaw, and said, ‘Which way did Yahweh’s spirit pass from being with me to speak with you?’ 25 Mikayehu said, ‘There, you’re going to see, on that day when you come to an innermost room to hide’.

* **22:26 You Can Disguise but You Can’t Hide**

26 The king of Israel said, ‘Get Mikayehu and take him back to Amon the town official and to Yo’ash the king’s son, 27 and say “The king has said this: ‘Put this man in the jailhouse and give him slave bread and slave water until I come with things being well’”’. 28 Mikayehu said, ‘If you really do come back with things being well, Yahweh did not speak through me’. (And he said, ‘Listen, you peoples, all of them’.)

29 So the king of Israel went up with Yehoshaphat king of Judah to Heights-in-Gil’ad. 30 The king of Israel said to Yehoshaphat, ‘I’m putting on disguise and coming into battle, but you, dress in your robes’. So the king of Israel put on disguise and came into battle.

31 Now the king of Aram had ordered the thirty-two chariot officers that he had, ‘You will not battle anyone small or great except the king of Israel alone’. 32 When the chariot officers saw Yehoshaphat and said, ‘Yes, he’s the king of Israel’, they turned aside to him to do battle. But Yehoshaphat cried out, 33 and when the chariot officers saw that he was not the king of Israel, they turned back from following him. 34 But a man drew his bow innocently, and struck the king of Israel between the links and the armour. He said to his charioteer, ‘Turn your hand, get me out from the camp, because I’m wounded’.

35 The battle mounted that day, while the king was kept standing in his chariot opposite the Arameans. But he died in the evening. The blood from the wound poured down into the base of the chariot. 36 A shout passed through the camp as the sun set, ‘Each man to his town, each man to his land’.

37 So the king died and came to Shomron, and they buried the king in Shomron. 38 They washed off the chariot by the pool in Shomron, and the dogs licked up his blood as the prostitutes bathed, in accordance with the word of Yahweh that he had spoken.

* **22:39-54 The Fleet that Sank**

39 The rest of the things about Ah’ab, all that he did, the ivory house that he built, and all the towns that he built up, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they. 40 Ah’ab lay down with his ancestors and Ahazyahu, his son, began to reign in place of him.

41 Yehoshaphat ben Asa had become king over Judah in the fourth year of Ah’ab king of Israel. 42 Yehoshaphat was a man of thirty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother’s name was Azubah bat Shilhi. 43 He walked in all the way of Asa his father. He did not turn aside from it, in doing what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes. Yet the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines. 44 Yehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel. 45 The rest of the things about Yehoshaphat, and his strength with which he acted and with which he battled, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 46 The rest of the hierodules who were left in the time of Asa his father he burnt away from the country.

47 There being no king in Edom, a prefect was king, 48 and Yehoshaphat made Tarshish ships to go to Ophir for gold, but he didn’t go because the ships broke up at Etsyon Geber. 49 It was then that Ahazyahu ben Ah’ab said to Yehoshaphat, ‘My servants should go on the ships with your servants’, but Yehoshaphat was not willing.

50 Yehoshaphat lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David his ancestor’s town, and Yehoram his son began to reign in place of him.

51 Now Ahazyahu ben Ah’ab had become king over Israel in Shomron in the seventeenth year of Yehoshaphat king of Judah. He reigned over Israel two years. 52 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes; he walked in the way of his father and in the way of his mother, and in the way of Yarob’am ben Nebat, who had caused Israel to do wrong. 53 He served the Master and bowed low to him, and provoked Yahweh the God of Israel in accordance with all that his father did.

* **Kings Book Two**

The division of the Books of Kings into two is arbitrary; the narrative continues seamlessly. The first two-thirds of 2 Kings continue the interwoven account of Israel and Judah, with the involvement of prophets such as Elijah and Elisha. While the background of the book’s opening chapters is tension between Israel (and Judah) and Syria (Aram), on the horizon is the bigger power of Assyria, the first great Middle Eastern empire to impact Israel and Judah. The middle of the book relates how the Assyrians invade Israel and attempt to require them to function as Assyria’s underlings, but Israel resists and in due course the Assyrians invade again, conquer the Israelite capital, Samaria, transport its people, and replace them with people from other parts of their empire. Subsequently, the Assyrians did take action to enable these immigrants to know how they should properly worship Yahweh in this land of his, and in some respects they do, but many people continue to worship the gods they had followed in the countries they came from. The aftermath of this forced migration forms background to relations between Judah and Samaria about which we read in Ezra.

Second Kings pauses at this point to explain what has happened, not politically but religiously (see 2 Kings 17). The fall of Samaria happened because of its people’s false worship of Yahweh and its worship of other deities, its resistance to its prophets, to its covenant, and to the rules of that covenant, and its practices such as human sacrifice. The interwovenness of the political and the religious in the story supports the suggestion that one of the key themes in 2 Kings is the interwovennness of divine sovereignty and human sovereignty in politics. Sometimes human leaders do things they wish to do, and it can form part of positive things God wishes to achieve. Sometimes human leaders do things they want to do, and it can form part of negative things God wishes to do. Sometimes human leaders do things thy want to do, and it works against God’s puirpose, and he then frustrates their aims.

The last part of 2 Kings tells more briefly the less complicated story of the last generations of Judah when it has become the rump embodiment of Israel. The story begins with the great King Hezekiah. He also experiences invasion by Assyria, but he is faithful to Yahweh and he has on his side the temple in Jerusalem and the promise to David, not to say the prophet Isaiah. The Assyrians wreak havoc in Judah but fail to take Jerusalem, which constitutes Yahweh’s great act of deliverance.

Sadly, Hezekiah’s son is the renegade Manasseh, who experiences more Assyrian pressure, adopts much of northern Israel’s apostate ways, but reigns much longer than he therefore should. His grandson Josiah is both motivated and politically able to revert to Hezekiah’s commitments. In the course of cleaning up the temple, his envoys discover a scroll of Moses’ Torah there which causes panic when people read of the consequences that follow practices like the ones Manasseh sponsored. The discovery thereby encourages further reform. Overlaps with what Josiah does suggest that the Torah scroll may have been a version of what we call Deuteronomy.

Alas, it seems that the policies Manessah implemented are too deeply engrained to be eliminated, and after Josiah’s untimely death things revert to the way they were, which results in Jerusalem and Judah going through the same experience that northern Israel and Samaria had had. The account of the fall of Jerusalem and associated events has a pained atmosphere that conveys something of the grief of the people who went through the experience.

Second Kings comprises the last part the gargantuan work that began in Genesis and it takes the story down to the time of the people who will have heard the story read when it was first compiled. It thus helps them understand who they are and how they need to look at themselves. As is often the case with stories or histories, reading it from the end is illuminating.

One of the factors that has influenced God in keeping the state of Judah in being is the promise he had made that he would never let David’s line of kings disappear, and the last event related by 2 Kings is the release of a deposed and exiled king of Judah. It is a hint that God has indeed not abandoned his promises.

* **1:1 The Lord of the Flies**

1 Mo’ab rebelled against Israel after Ah’ab’s death.

2 Ahazyah fell through the lattice in his upper quarters, which were in Shomron [Samaria], and he was ill. He sent envoys and said to them, ‘Go inquire of the Fly Master, the god of Eqron, whether I will live on after this illness’. 3 But Yahweh’s envoy – he spoke to Eliyyahu [Elijah] the Tishbite, ‘Set off, go up to meet the king of Shomron’s envoys and speak to them: “Is it for lack of a God in Israel that you’re going to inquire of the Fly Master, the god of Eqron? 4 So, therefore, Yahweh has said this: ‘The bed that you have climbed into, you won’t get down from, because you will actually die’”’. And Eliyyahu went.

5 The envoys went back to him, and he said to them, ‘Why is it that you’ve come back?’ 6 They said to him, ‘There was a man came up to meet us and he said to us, “Go, turn back to the king who sent you, and speak to him: ‘Yahweh has said this: “Is it for lack of a God in Israel that you are sending to inquire of the Fly Master, the god of Eqron? Therefore the bed that you have climbed into, you won’t get down from, because you will actually die”’”’. 7 He spoke to them, ‘What was the manner of the man who came up to meet you and spoke these words to you?’ 8 They said to him, ‘A man with lots of hair and a leather wrap belted round his hips’. He said, ‘It was Eliyyahu the Tishbite’.

9 He sent to him an officer over fifty and his fifty men, and he went up to him. There, he was sitting on the top of a mountain. He spoke to him: ‘Supernatural man, the king himself has spoken: come down’. 10 Eliyyahu answered the officer over fifty, ‘If I’m a supernatural man, may fire come down from the heavens and consume you and your fifty men!’ And fire came down from the heavens and consumed him and his fifty men.

* **1:11 Fire from the Heavens Again**

11 He again sent to him another officer over fifty and his fifty men. He went up and spoke to him, ‘Supernatural man, the king himself has said this, “Come down speedily!”’ 12 Eliyyahu answered them, ‘If I’m a supernatural man, may fire come down from the heavens and consume you and your fifty men!’ And supernatural fire came down from the heavens and consumed him and his fifty men.

13 He again sent a third officer over fifty and his fifty men. The third officer over fifty went up, and came and bent down on his knees in front of Eliyyahu and asked him for grace. He spoke to him: ‘Supernatural man, please may my life and the life of these fifty servants of yours be valuable in your eyes! 14 Here, fire fell from the heavens and consumed the previous two officers over fifty and their fifty men. But now, may my life be valuable in your eyes’.

15 Yahweh’s envoy spoke to Eliyyahu: ‘Go down with him. Don’t be afraid of him’. So he set off and went down with him to the king, 16 and spoke to him: ‘Yahweh has said this: “Since you sent envoys to inquire of the Fly Master , the god of Eqron: is it for lack of a God in Israel to inquire of his word? Therefore the bed that you have climbed into, you will not get down from, because you will actually die”’.

17 He died in accordance with Yahweh’s word which Eliyyahu spoke. Yehoram began to reign in place of him, in the second year of Yehoram ben Yehoshaphat king of Judah, because he had no son. 18 The rest of the things about Ahazyahu, what he did, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they.

* **2:1 Elijah’s Cloak**

2 When Yahweh took Eliyyahu up to the heavens in a hurricane, Eliyyahu had gone with Elisha from Gilgal. 2 Eliyyahu said to Elisha, ‘Stay here, please, because Yahweh has sent me as far as Bet-el’. Elisha said, ‘As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, if I abandon you….’ So they went down to Bet-el. 3 The people who prophesied who were at Bet-el went out to Elisha and said to him, ‘Do you know that today Yahweh is going to take your lord from being your head?’ He said, ‘Yes, I myself know. Be quiet’.

4 Eliyyahu said to him, ‘Elisha, stay here, please, because Yahweh has sent me to Jericho [Yeriho]’. He said, ‘As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, if I abandon you….’ So they came to Jericho. 5 The people who prophesied who were at Jericho went up to Elisha and said to him ‘Do you know that today Yahweh is going to take your lord from being your head?’ He said, ‘Yes, I myself know. Be quiet’.

6 Eliyyahu said to him, ‘Stay here, please, because Yahweh has sent me to the Jordan [Yarden]’. He said, ‘As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, if I abandon you….’ So the two of them went, 7 while fifty men from among the people who prophesied went and stood at a distance, far off, and the two of them stood at the Jordan.

8 Eliyyahu got his cape, rolled it up, and struck the water. It divided in both directions and the two of them crossed on dry ground. 9 As they crossed, Eliyyahu said to Elisha, ‘Ask what I should do for you before I’m taken from being with you’. Elisha said, ‘A double share in your spirit should please come to me’. 10 He said, ‘You’ve been tough in asking. If you see me taken from being with you, so it will happen for you. If not, it won’t happen’.

11 As they were continuing to walk and speak, there – fiery chariotry and fiery horses. They separated the two of them and Eliyyahu went up in a hurricane to the heavens, 12 while Elisha was looking and crying out, ‘Father, father, Israel’s chariotry and cavalry!’ Then he could no longer see.

* **2:12 No More Miscarriage**

He took strong hold of his clothes and tore them into two pieces, 13 and lifted up Eliyyahu’s cape which had fallen from upon him. He went back and stood at the Jordan bank. 14 He got Eliyyahu’s cape which had fallen from upon him, struck the water, and said, ‘Where is Yahweh, the God of Eliyyahu? Yes, him?’ He struck the water, it divided in both directions and Elisha crossed. 15 The people who prophesied who were at Jericho, at a distance, saw him and said, ‘Eliyyahu’s spirit has alighted on Elisha!’ They came to meet him and bowed low to the ground before him.

16 They said to him, ‘Here, please, with your servants there are fifty men, forceful people. They should please go and look for your lord in case Yahweh’s spirit has taken him up and thrown him down on one of the mountains or in one of the ravines’. He said to them, ‘You will not send’. 17 But they pressed him until he was shamed, and he said, ‘Send’. They sent fifty men and they looked for three days but didn’t find him. 18 They came back to him while he was staying in Jericho, and he said to them, ‘I said to you, “Don’t go”, didn’t I’.

19 The town’s people said to Elisha, ‘Here, please, the settlement in the town is good, as my lord sees, but the water is bad and the region causes miscarriage’. 20 He said, ‘Get me a new bowl and put salt in it’. They got it for him 21 and he went out to the water outlet and threw the salt there. He said, ‘Yahweh has said this: “I am healing this water. No more will death and miscarriage come from there”’. 22 The water became healthy, until this day, in accordance with the word of Elisha which he spoke.

23 He went up from there to Bet-el. He was going up the road and small boys came out of the town and mocked him: ‘Go up, baldy, go up baldy!’ 24 He turned his face behind him and saw them and slighted them in Yahweh’s name, and two bears came out of the forest. Of them they mauled forty-two boys. 25 He went from there to Mount Carmel and from there went back to Shomron.

* **3:1 Isn’t There a Prophet We Can Ask?**

3 Yehoram ben Ah’ab began to reign over Israel in Shomron in the eighteenth year of Yehoshaphat king of Judah and reigned twelve years. 2 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, only not like his father or like his mother, and he removed the Master’s column which his father had made. 3 Only, the wrongdoings of Yarob’am ben Nebat that he caused Israel to commit—he was attached to them and didn’t depart from them.

4 Now Mesha king of Mo’ab was a sheep breeder. He used to give back to the king of Israel 100,000 lambs and 100,000 rams wool. 5 When Ah’ab died, the king of Mo’ab rebelled against the king of Israel. 6 That day King Yehoram left Shomron and registered all Israel. 7 He went on to send to Yehoshaphat king of Judah to say, ‘Given that the king of Mo’ab has rebelled against me, will you go with me to Mo’ab for battle?’ He said, ‘I will go up, I’m the same as you, my company is the same as your company, my horse is the same as your horse’. 8 He said, ‘By which road shall we go up?’ He said, ‘The road through the Edom Wilderness’.

9 So the king of Israel went, with the king of Judah and the king of Edom, and they went round on the road for seven days. Then there was no water for the camp or for the animals that were behind them. 10 The king of Israel said, ‘Oh no! Yahweh has called for these three kings to give them into the hand of Mo’ab!’ 11 But Yehoshaphat said, ‘Isn’t there a prophet of Yahweh here so we can inquire of Yahweh from him?’ One of the king of Israel’s servants answered, ‘Elisha ben Shaphat, who poured water on Eliyyahu’s hands, is here’. 12 Yehoshaphat said, ‘Yahweh’s word is with him’. So the king of Israel and Yehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him.

* **3:13 The Water that Looked Like Blood**

13 Elisha said to the king of Israel, ‘What do you and I have in common? Go to your father’s prophets and to your mother’s prophets’. The king of Israel said to him, ‘No, because Yahweh has called for these three kings to give them into the hand of Mo’ab’. 14 Elisha said, ‘As Yahweh Armies lives, before whom I stand , if I did not have regard for Yehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look to you or see you. 15 But now, get me a musician’ (when the musician played, Yahweh’s hand would come on him).

16 Then he said, ‘Yahweh has said this: “This wadi is going to make pools, pools”. 17 Because Yahweh has said this: “You will not see wind, you will not see rain, but that wadi – it will fill with water. Both you and your cattle and your livestock will drink”. 18 This is a slight thing in Yahweh’s eyes: and he will give the Mo’abites into your hand. 19 You will strike down every fortified town and every choice town. Every good tree you will fell, all springs of water you will stop up, and every good plot you will make suffer with stones’. 20 And in the morning at the time for making the offering – there, water was coming from the direction of Edom. The region filled with water.

21 Now all the Mo’abites had heard that the kings had gone up to battle against them. They had themselves called out, from everyone who could fasten a belt and upwards, , and they stood at the border. 22 In the morning they started early, and when the sun rose over the water, from a distance the Mo’abites saw the water red like blood. 23 They said, ‘This is blood! The kings have actually been put to the sword. Each man has struck down his neighbour. Now, to the plunder, Mo’abites!’ 24 They came to the Israelite camp, but the Israelites set to and struck down the Mo’abites, and they fled from before them.

* **3:25 An Ultimate Sacrifice**

So they came into it and struck down Mo’ab. The towns they tore down, on every good plot they threw each man his stone and covered it, every water spring they stopped up and every good tree they would fell, until what was left remaining in Qir Hareset was its stones. The slingers surrounded it and struck it down.

26 The king of Mo’ab saw that the battle was too hard for him and he got with him 700 men drawing a sword to break through to the king of Edom, but they couldn’t. 27 So he got his eldest son who was to reign in place of him, and offered him up as a burnt offering on the wall. A great fury came on Israel, and they moved on from there and went back to the land.

4 Now a woman, one of the wives of the people who prophesied, cried out to Elisha, ‘Your servant, my husband, is dead, and you yourself acknowledge that your servant was someone who has lived in awe of Yahweh, and a creditor is coming to take my two children for himself as servants’. 2 Elisha said to her, ‘What am I to do for you? Tell me what you have in the house’. She said, ‘Your maidservant has nothing at all in the house except a jug of oil’. 3 He said, ‘Go and ask for containers for yourself from outside, from all the people who live near you, empty containers. Don’t make it a few. 4 Come in, shut the door behind you and behind your sons, and pour into all these containers. The full one, remove’.

5 She went from being with him and shut the door behind her and behind her sons. People were bringing them up to her and she was pouring. 6 When the containers were full, she said to her son, ‘Bring up another container to me’, but he said to her, ‘There isn’t another container’; and the oil halted. 7 She came and told the supernatural man. He said, ‘Go sell the oil and make good your debt, and you and your children can live on what’s left’.

* **4:8 The Woman Who Had Almost Everything**

8 One day Elisha passed through to Shunem. A big woman was there and she took strong hold of him so he would eat bread. Whenever he passed through, he would turn aside there to eat bread. 9 She said to her husband, ‘Here, please, I know that it’s a sacred supernatural man who passes by us regularly. 10 Please let’s make a little upstairs room with a wall and put a bed for him there and a table and a chair and a lamp. When he comes to us he can turn aside there’.

11 One day he came there and turned aside to the upstairs room and lay down there, 12 and said to Gehazi, his boy, ‘Call this Shunammite woman’. He called her and she stood before him. 13 He said to him, ‘Please say to her, “Here, you’ve acted toward us with all this concern. What is there to do for you? Is there something to speak to the king for you, or to the army officer?”’ She said, ‘I’m living among my own people’. 14 He said, ‘So what is there to do for her?’ Gehazi said, ‘Well, she doesn’t have a son, and her husband is old’. 15 He said, ‘Call her’. He called her and she stood in the entrance. 16 He said, ‘At this season, at [nature’s] reviving time, you’re going to embrace a son’. She said, ‘Don’t, my lord, supernatural man, don’t lie to your maidservant’. 17 But the woman got pregnant and gave birth to a son at this season at reviving time, as Elisha spoke to her.

18 The child grew up, but one day he went out to his father, to the reapers, 19 and he said to his father, ‘My head, my head!’ He said to a boy, ‘Carry him to his mother’. 20 He carried him and brought him to his mother, and he sat on her knees until noon, and died. 21 She took him up, laid him down on the supernatural man’s bed, closed up behind him, and went out.

* **4:22 Did I Ask for a Son?**

22 She called her husband and said, ‘Please send me one of the boys and one of the she-donkeys so I can run to the supernatural man, and come back’. 23 He said, ‘Why are you going to him today? It’s not new month or sabbath.’ She said, ‘Things will be well’. 24 She saddled the donkey and said to her boy, ‘Drive, go, don’t hold back from riding unless I say it to you’.

25 So she went, and came to the supernatural man at Mount Carmel. When the supernatural man saw her from a distance, he said to Gehazi his boy, ‘There’s that Shunammite woman. 26 Now please run to meet her and say to her, ‘Are things well with you? Are things well with your husband? Are things well with the child?’ She said, ‘Things are well’. 27 She came to the supernatural man at the mountain and took strong hold of his feet. Gehazi came up to push her away, but the supernatural man said, ‘Let go of her, because her entire being is bitter to her, whereas Yahweh has hidden it from me and not told me’.

28 She said, ‘Did I ask for a son from my lord? I said, “Don’t deceive me”, didn’t I’. 29 He said to Gehazi, ‘Wrap things round your hips, take my staff in your hand, and go. When you meet someone, you will not bless him, and when someone blesses you, you will not answer him. Place my staff on the boy’s face’. 30 But the boy’s mother said, ‘As Yahweh lives and as you yourself live, if I abandon you….’

So he set off and followed her. 31 Now Gehazi passed on before them and placed the staff on the boy’s face. But there was no sound and no heeding. He went back to meet him and told him, ‘The boy has not woken up’. 32 Elisha came to the house and there – the boy was dead, laid on his bed. 33 He came in and shut the door behind the two of them and pleaded with Yahweh.

* **4:34 Death and Life**

34 He climbed up and lay on the child, put his mouth on his mouth, his eyes on his eyes, his palms on his palms, and crouched over him. And the child’s flesh warmed up. 35 He went back and went into the house here and there, then climbed up and crouched over him, and the boy sneezed seven times. Then the boy opened his eyes. 36 He called Gehazi and said, ‘Call this Shunammite woman’. He called her and she came to him. He said, ‘Take up your son’. 37 She came, and fell at his feet and bowed low to the earth, and took up her son and went out.

38 When Elisha went back to Gilgal and there was a famine in the region, and the people who prophesied were sitting before him, he said to his boy, ‘Put the big pot on and cook stew for the people who prophesy’. 39 One went out into the wild to gather herbs, found a vine of the wild, and gathered gourds of the wild from it, enough to fill his garment. He came and sliced them into the pot of stew, because they didn’t know them. 40 They poured it out for the people to eat, but as they ate some of the stew and they cried out, they said, ’There’s death in the pot, supernatural man’. They couldn’t eat it. 41 He said, ‘So get some flour’, and he threw it into the pot and said, ‘Pour it out for the company so that they eat’. And there was nothing bad in the pot.

42 Now a man came from Ba’al Shalishah and brought the supernatural man some first-products bread, twenty barley loaves, and some plantation growth on the stalk. He said, ‘Give it to the company so they can eat’. 43 His minister said, ‘How can I put this before a hundred individuals?’ He said, ‘Give it to the company so they can eat. Because Yahweh has said this: “Eat and have some left”’. 44 So he put it before them, they ate, and they had some left, in accordance with Yahweh’s word.

* **5:1 The Little Girl Who Knows**

5 Now Na’aman, army officer of the king of Aram, was a big man before his lord, and held in high regard, because through him Yahweh had given deliverance to Aram. Now the man was a forceful strong man, with scaliness. 2 The Arameans had gone out as raiding gangs and had taken captive a little girl from the country of Israel. She was before Na’aman’s wife 3 and she said to her mistress, ‘If only my lord were before the prophet who’s in Shomron. Then he would restore him from his scaliness’. 4 He came and told his lord, ‘The girl who’s from the country of Israel has spoken such and such’, 5 and the king of Aram said, ‘Come on, go, I’ll send a document to the king of Israel’. So he went, took in his hand ten talents of silver, 6000 gold pieces, and ten changes of clothes, 6 and brought the document to the king of Israel, saying: ‘Now, when this document comes to you: here, I’ve sent Na’aman my servant to you so you may restore him from his scaliness’.

7 When the king of Israel read the document, he tore his clothes and said, ‘Am I God, to put to death and make alive, that this man is sending to me to restore someone from his scaliness? Rather, please acknowledge for sure and see, that he is seeking a confrontation with me’.

8 When Elisha the supernatural man heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent to the king: ‘Why have you torn your clothes? He should please come to me, so he may acknowledge that there is a prophet in Israel’.

9 Na’aman came with his horses and with his chariotry and halted at the entrance of Elisha’s house. 10 Elisha sent an envoy to him to say, ‘Go and wash seven times in the Jordan so your flesh may come back for you, and be pure’.

* **5:11 A Skin Disorder Removed**

11 Na’aman was furious and went. He said, ‘Here, I said to myself, “He’ll definitely come out and stand and call in the name of Yahweh his God and wave his hand at the place and restore the scaliness. 12 Amanah and Pharpar, the rivers in Damascus [Dammeseq], are better than all the water in Israel, aren’t they. I could wash in them and be pure, couldn’t I’. So he turned his face and went in wrath. 13 But his servants came up and spoke to him: ‘Father, had the prophet spoken to you of a big thing, wouldn’t you do it? How much more when he said to you, “Wash, and be pure”?’

14 So he went down and dipped in the Jordan seven times in accordance with the word of the supernatural man, and his flesh came back like a little boy’s. He was pure. 15 He went back to the supernatural man, he and all his camp, and came and stood before him, and said, ‘Here, please, I acknowledge that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. So now please take a blessing from your servant’. 16 He said, ‘As Yahweh lives, before whom I stand , if I take anything….’

He pressed him to take it, but he refused. 17 Na’aman said, ‘Then please may there not be given to your servant a mule pair’s load of earth, because your servant will no longer make a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other god but Yahweh? 18 With regard to this thing, may Yahweh pardon your servant: when my lord comes into Rimmon’s house to bow down there and he leans on my hand and I bow down there in Rimmon’s house – when I bow down in Rimmon’s house, may Yahweh pardon your servant in this thing’. 19 He said to him, ‘Go, and things will be well’.

He went a distance in the region from him, 20 and Gehazi, Elisha the supernatural man’s boy, said, ‘Here, my lord has held back Na’aman this Aramean from taking from his hand what he brought. As Yahweh lives, I shall run after him and take something from him’.

* **5:21 A Skin Disorder Imposed**

21 So Gehazi pursued after Na’aman. Na’aman saw him running after him, fell from his chariot to meet him, and said, ‘Are things well?’ 22 He said, ‘Things are well. My lord has sent me to say, “Here, just now two boys have come to me from the highland of Ephrayim, from among the people who prophesy. Please give them a talent of silver and two changes of clothes”’. 23 Na’aman said, ‘Resolve to take two talents!’ He pressed him, and tied up two talents of silver in two bags and two changes of clothes and gave them to two of his boys. They carried them before him. 24 He came to the acropolis, took them from their hand, deposited them in the house, and sent the men off.

So they went, 25 while he came and stood with his lord. Elisha said to him, ‘Where have you come from, Gehazi?’ He said, ‘Your servant hasn’t gone here or there’. 26 He said to him, ‘My mind didn’t go along as the man turned from his chariot to meet you? Is it time to take silver or to take clothes or olive trees or vineyards or sheep or cattle or servants or maidservants? 27 Na’aman’s scaliness will attach itself to you and to your offspring permanently’. He went out from before him, made scaly like snow.

6 The people who prophesied said to Elisha, ‘Here, please, the place where we’re living before you is too confined for us. 2 Please let’s go as far as the Jordan and get a beam each from there and make ourselves a place there to live in’. He said, ‘Go’. 3 One said, ‘Please resolve to go with your servants’. He said, ‘I’ll go’. 4 He went with them and they came to the Jordan. They cut down trees, 5 but one was felling a beam and the iron fell into the water. He cried out, ‘Oh, my lord, and it was borrowed!’ 6 The supernatural man said, ‘Where did it fall?’ He let him see the place, and he cut down a stick and threw it there, and it made the iron float. 7 He said, ‘Take it up for yourself’, and he put out his hand and got it.

* **6:8 Horses and Chariots of Fire round Elisha**

8 Now the king of Aram was battling against Israel, and he took counsel with his servants, saying, ‘My camp will be at such-and-such a place’, 9 but the supernatural man sent to the king of Israel saying, ‘Keep watch not to pass by this place, because the Arameans are going down there’. 10 So the king of Israel sent to the place that the supernatural man had said to him and warned him, and kept watch there more than once or twice.

11 The mind of the king of Aram was agitated about this thing. He called his servants and said to them, ‘Won’t you tell me who of us is on the king of Israel’s side?’ 12 One of his servants said, ‘No, my lord king, rather it’s Elisha, the prophet who’s in Israel, who tells the king of Israel the things that you speak in your bedroom’. 13 He said, ‘Go and see where he is so I can send and get him’.

It was told him, ‘There, in Dotan’, 14 and he sent horses and chariotry there, with a substantial force. They came by night and encircled the town. 15 The supernatural man’s minister started early and got up and went out, and there, a force was surrounding the town, with horses and chariotry. His boy said to him, ‘Oh no, my lord, what shall we do?’ 16 He said, ‘Don’t be afraid, because there are more with us than with them’. 17 Elisha pleaded, ‘Yahweh, please open his eyes so he sees’. Yahweh opened the boy’s eyes and he saw: there, the highland was full of fiery horses and chariotry surrounding Elisha.

* **6:18 The Depths to Which People Can Be Driven**

18 They came down against him, and Elisha pleaded with Yahweh, ‘Please strike down this nation with dazzling’. He struck them down with dazzling in accordance with Elisha’s word. 19 Elisha said to them, ‘This isn’t the way, and this isn’t the town. Follow me and I’ll enable you to go to the man that you’re looking for’, and he enabled them to go to Shomron.

20 When they came to Shomron, Elisha said, ‘Yahweh, open these people’s eyes so they can see’. Yahweh opened their eyes and they saw: there, they were inside Shomron. 21 The king of Israel said to Elisha, on seeing them, ‘Shall I strike them down, strike them down, father?’ 22 He said, ‘You will not strike them down. Do you strike down people whom you took captive with your sword and with your bow? Put bread and water before them so they can eat and drink, and go to their lords’. 23 He made a great banquet for them, and they ate and drank. Then he sent them off and they went to their lords, and the Aramean raiding gangs no longer came into Israel.

24 Subsequently, Ben-hadad king of Aram collected his entire camp and went up and besieged Shomron, 25 and there was a big famine in Shomron. There, they were besieging it until a donkey’s head was eighty silver pieces and a quarter of a liter of pigeon dung was five silver pieces. 26 The king of Israel was passing by on the wall when a woman cried out to him: ‘Deliver me, my lord king!’ 27 He said, ‘Don’t. Yahweh must deliver you. From where am I to deliver you—from the threshing floor or from the wine press?’ 28 But the king said to her, ‘What’s the matter?’ She said, ‘This woman said to me, “Give up your son and we’ll eat him today, and we’ll eat my son tomorrow”, 29 and we cooked my son and ate him. The next day I said to her, “Give up your son and we’ll eat him”, but she hid her son’.

* **6:30 The Men Who Gave Up**

30 When the king heard the woman’s words, he tore his clothes, and as he passed by on the wall, the people saw: there, sack on his flesh, inside. 31 He said, ‘May God do this to me and may he do more if the head of Elisha ben Shaphat stays on him today’.

32 While Elisha was sitting in his house and the elders were sitting with him, he sent a man from before him. Before the envoy came to him, he himself said to the elders, ‘Do you see that this murderous man has sent to remove my head? See, when the envoy comes, shut the door and press him against the door. The sound of his lord’s feet will be behind him, won’t it’.

33 While he was still speaking with them, there, the envoy was coming down to him. He said, ‘Here, this is the bad fate coming from Yahweh. How can I wait for Yahweh anymore?’ 7 Elisha said, ‘Listen to Yahweh’s word. Yahweh has said this: ‘This very time tomorrow: a measure of fine flour will be for a sheqel, two measures of barley for a sheqel, at the gateway of Shomron’. 2 The adjutant on whose hand the king leaned answered the supernatural man, ‘There, were Yahweh making apertures in the heavens, would this thing happen?’ He said, ‘There, you’re going to see it with your eyes, but you won’t eat of it’.

3 Now there were four men with scaliness at the entrance to the gateway. They said, one to his neighbour, ‘Why are we sitting here until we die? 4 If we say, “Let’s go into the town”, there’s famine in the town and we’ll die there, and if we sit here, we’ll die. So now, come on, let’s surrender to the Aramean camp. If they let us live, we’ll live. If they put us to death, we’ll die’. 5 So they set off at dusk to come to the Aramean camp.

* **7.5b The Mysterious Panicked Flight**

5b They came to the edge of the Aramean camp, and there – no one was there. 6 The Lord had made the Aramean camp hear the sound of chariotry, the sound of horse, the sound of a big force, and they had said to one another, ‘Here, the king of Israel has hired against us the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt, to come against us’. 7 They had set off and fled at dusk. They had abandoned their tents and their horses and their donkeys, the camp as it was, and fled for their life.

8 So these men with scaliness came to the edge of the camp and came into a tent and ate and drank and carried silver and gold and clothes from there and went and buried it, and went back and came into another tent and carried silver and gold and clothes from there and went and buried it. 9 But they said each to his neighbour, ‘We’re not doing right. This day is a day of good news. We’re keeping quiet. And should we wait until morning light, waywardness will find us out. Now, come on, let’s go and tell the king’s household’. 10 So they came and called to the town gateman. They told them, ‘We came to the Aramean camp and there, no one and no human sound was there, but horse tied up and donkey tied up and tents as they were’.

11 The gatemen called, and they told the king’s household, within. 12 The king got up in the night and said to his servants, ‘May I please tell you what the Arameans have done to us? They know that we’re starving, and they’ve gone out of the camp to hide in the fields, saying ‘When they go out from the town we’ll capture them alive and come into the town’.

* **7:13 Was It Just a Coincidence? (1)**

13 One of his servants answered, ‘People should please take five of the remaining horses, the ones that have remained here. There, they are like the entire horde of Israel that have remained here: there they are, like the entire horde of Israel that have come to an end. So let’s send them and see’.

14 They got two chariots of horses and the king sent them after the Aramean camp, saying ‘Go and see’. 15 They followed them as far as the Jordan and there, the entire road was full of clothes and articles that the Arameans had thrown away in their haste. The envoys came back and told the king. 16 So the people went out and plundered the Aramean camp, and it was a measure of fine flour for a sheqel and two measures of barley for a sheqel, in accordance with Yahweh’s word.

17 Now In charge of the gateway the king had appointed the adjutant on whose hand he leaned, and the people trampled on him in the gateway and he died, as the supernatural man had spoken when the king went down to him, 18 when the supernatural man said to the king, ‘Two measures of barley for a sheqel and a measure of fine flour for a sheqel, it will be at this very time tomorrow at the gateway of Shomron’. 19 The adjutant had answered the supernatural man, ‘There, were Yahweh making apertures in the heavens, would something such as this happen?’ And he had said, ‘There, you’re going to see it with your eyes, but you won’t eat of it’. 20 It happened to him. The people trampled him in the gateway and he died.

* **8:1 Was It Just a Coincidence? (2)**

8 Now Elisha had spoken to the woman whose son he brought to life: ‘Set off and go, you and your household, and reside wherever you can reside, because Yahweh has called for a famine and it is indeed going to come on the country for seven years’. 2 The woman set off and acted in accordance with the word of the supernatural man. She went, she and her household, and resided in the Philistines’ country seven years.

3 At the end of the seven years the woman came back from the Philistines’ country and went out to cry out to the king about her house and about her fields. 4 The king was speaking with Gehazi, the supernatural man’s boy, saying, ‘Please tell me all the big things that Elisha has done’. 5 He was recounting to the king how he had brought the dead person to life, and there, the woman whose son he had brought to life was crying out to the king about her house and about her fields. Gehazi said, ‘My lord king, this is the woman and this is her son whom Elisha brought to life’. 6 The king asked the woman and she recounted it him, and the king gave her a courtier, saying, ‘Get back all that belongs to her and all the yield from her fields from the day she abandoned the country until now’.

7 Elisha came to Damascus, when Ben-hadad king of Aram was ill. It had been told him, ‘The supernatural man is coming here’. 8 The king said to Haza’el, ‘Take an offering in your hand and go to meet the supernatural man and inquire of Yahweh from him, “Will I live on after this illness?”’

* **8:9 The Assassination**

9 Haza’el went to meet him and took an offering in his hand, all the good things of Damascus, forty camel loads. He came and stood before him and said, ‘Your son, Ben-hadad king of Aram, sent me to you, saying “Will I live on after this illness?”’ 10 Elisha said to him, ‘Go say to him: “You will definitely live on”. But Yahweh has let me see that he will definitely die’. 11 He made his face stay firm, until he was shamed. But the supernatural man cried, 12 and Haza’el said, ‘Why is my lord crying?’ He said, ‘Because I know the bad things that you will do to the Israelites. Their fortifications you will set on fire. Their young men you will slay with the sword. Their little ones you will tear to pieces. Their pregnant women you will rip open. 13 Haza’el said, ‘What is your servant, a dog, that he should do this big thing?’ Elisha said, ‘Yahweh has let me see you as king over Aram’.

14 He went from Elisha and came to his lord. He said to him ‘What did Elisha say to you?’ He said, ‘He said to me, “You will definitely live on”’. 15 But next day he got a cloth, dipped it in water, and spread it over his face, and he died. So Haza’el began to reign in place of him.

16 In the fifth year of Yoram ben Ah’ab king of Israel, whereas Yehoshaphat had been king of Judah, Yehoram ben Yehoshaphat began to reign as king of Judah. 17 He was a man of thirty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem.

18 He walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as Ah’ab’s household had done, because he had Ah’ab’s daughter as wife. He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. 19 But Yahweh was not willing to devastate Judah, for the sake of David his servant, as he had said to him that he would give him hegemony for his sons for all time.

* **8:18 Two kings called Yoram/Yehoram**

20 In his days Edom rebelled from under Judah’s hand, and they made a king reign over themselves. 21 Yoram crossed to Tsa’ir, he and all the chariotry with him. He set off by night and struck down the Edomites (who were surrounding him) and the chariotry officers, and the company fled to their tents. 22 But Edom has rebelled from under Judah’s hand until this day. Then Libnah rebelled at this time.

23 The rest of the things about Yoram and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 24 Yoram lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David’s Town, and Ahazyahu his son began to reign in place of him.

25 It was in the twelfth year of Yoram ben Ah’ab king of Israel that Ahazyahu ben Yehoram began to reign in Judah. 26 Ahazyahu was a man of twenty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned one year in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Atalyahu bat Omri, king of Israel.

27 He walked in the way of the household of Ah’ab and did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes like Ah’ab’s household, because he was an in-law of Ah’ab’s household. 28 He went with Yoram ben Ah’ab for battle with Haza’el king of Aram at Heights-in-Gil’ad. The Arameans struck down Yoram, 29 and King Yoram went back to heal in Yizr’e’el from the wounds with which the Arameans had struck him down at The Height when he was battling with Haza’el king of Aram, while Ahazyahu ben Yehoram king of Judah went down to see Yoram ben Ah’ab because he was ill.

* **9:1 The Anointing of an Asassin**

9 Now Elisha the prophet had called one of the people who prophesied and said to him, ‘Wrap things round your hips, take this flask of oil in your hand, and go to Heights-in-Gil’ad. 2 When you come there, look for Yehu ben Yehoshaphat son of Nimshi, there. You’re to come and get him up from among his brothers and bring him to an inner room. 3 Take the flask of oil, pour it on his head, and say, “Yahweh has said this: ‘I anoint you king over Israel’”, and open the door and flee; don’t wait’.

4 So the boy (the prophet’s boy) went to Heights-in-Gil’ad. 5 When he came, there, the officers of the force were sitting. He said, ‘I have a word for you, officer’. Yehu said, ‘For whom out of all of us?’ He said, ‘For you, officer’.

6 He got up and came into the house, and he poured the oil on his head and said to him, ‘Yahweh, the God of Israel, has said this: “I anoint you king for Yahweh’s people, for Israel. 7 You’re to strike down the household of Ah’ab, your lord, and I will take redress from the hand of Izebel for the shed blood of my servants the prophets and the shed blood of all Yahweh’s servants. 8 The entire household of Ah’ab will perish, and I shall cut off for Ah’ab the one who urinates against a wall (bond or freed) in Israel. 9 I shall make Ah’ab’s household like the household of Yarob’am ben Nebat and like the household of Ba’sha ben Ahiyyah. 10 And Izebel: the dogs will eat her in a Yizre’e’l plot and there will be no one burying her’. And he opened the door and fled.

* **9:11 The Man Who Drives Like a Madman**

11 When Yehu went out to his lord’s servants, they said to him, ‘Are things well? Why did this madman come to you?’ He said to them, ‘You know the man and his talk’. 12 they said, ‘Lies! Tell us, please’. He said, ‘This and that very thing he said to me: “Yahweh has said this: ‘I anoint you king for Israel’”’. 13 They made speed and got each person his coat and put it under him on the top step, and blew on a horn and said, ‘Yehu has become king!’ 14 So Yehu ben Yehoshaphat son of Nimshi, conspired against Yoram.

nNow Yoram had been keeping watch at Heights-in-Gil’ad, he and all Israel, from before Haza’el king of Aram, 15 but King Yehoram had gone back to heal in Yizre’e’l from the wounds with which the Arameans had struck him down when he was battling with Haza’el king of Aram.

So Yehu said, ‘If it’s your desire, no one is to escape and go out of the town to go to tell of it in Yizre’e’l’. 16 Yehu got into his chariot and went to Yizre’e’l, because Yoram was lying there, and Ahazyah king of Judah had come down to see Yehoram. 17 The lookout was standing on the tower in Yizre’e’l and saw Yehu’s pack as it was coming. He said, ‘I see a pack!’ Yehoram said, ‘Get a rider and send him to meet them. He’s to say, ‘Are things well?’ 18 The horserider went to meet him and said, ‘The king has said this, “Are things well?”’ Yehu said, ‘What do you and “Are things well” have in common? Turn round after me’. The lookout told them, ‘The envoy came right to them, but he didn’t come back’.

19 He sent a second horserider. He came to them and said, ‘The king has said this, “Are things well?”’ And Yehu said, ‘What do you and “Are things well” have in common? Turn round after me’. 20 The lookout told them, ‘The envoy came right to them, but he didn’t come back. The driving is like the driving of Yehu ben Nimshi, because he drives like a madman’.

* **9:21 The Whorings of Jezebel**

21 Yehoram said, ‘Hitch up!’ and they hitched up his chariot. Yehoram king of Israel went out, with Ahazyahu king of Judah, each in his chariot. They went out to meet Yehu, and found him on the plot of Nabot the Yizre’e’lite. 22 When Yehoram saw Yehu he said, ‘Are things well, Yehu?’ He said, ‘What can be well while the whorings of Izebel your mother and her sorceries are so many?’ 23 Yehoram turned his hands round and fled, and said to Ahazyahu, ‘Guile, Ahazyah!’ 24 as Yehu put his hand to his bow and struck down Yehoram between the shoulders. The arrow went out through his heart and he bowed down on his knees in his chariot.

25 He said to Bidqar his adjutant, ‘Take him up, throw him into the plot of field belonging to Nabot the Yezre’e’lite, because remember me and you riding as a pair behind Ah’ab his father when Yahweh took up this oracle about him: 26 “If I did not see Nabot’s shed blood and his sons’ shed blood yesterday (Yahweh’s proclamation)…. And I will make it good to you on this plot (Yahweh’s proclamation)”. So now take him up, throw him on the plot in accordance with Yahweh’s word’.

27 When Ahazyah king of Judah saw it, he fled by the Bet Haggan road. Yehu pursued after him and said, ‘Him as well, strike him down’—in his chariot at the Gur Ascent, which is by Yible’am. He fled to Megiddo and died there. 28 His servants took him in a chariot to Jerusalem and buried him in his grave with his ancestors in David’s Town. 29 It had been in the eleventh year of Yoram ben Ah’ab that Ahazyah began to reign over Judah.

* **9:30 Jezebel Puts on Her Make-up**

30 Yehu came to Yizre’e’l, and when Izebel heard, she put mascara on her eyes and made her hair look good and watched through the window. 31 When Yehu came through the gateway, she said ‘Are things well, Zimri, slayer of his lord?’ 32 He lifted his face to the window and said, ‘Who is with me? Who?’ Two or three courtiers looked toward him. 33 He said, ‘Drop her down!’ They dropped her down, and some of her blood spattered on the wall and on the horses, and they trampled her.

34 He came in and ate and drank, and said ‘Please attend to this accursed woman and bury her, because she’s the daughter of a king’. 35 They went to bury her, but they couldn’t find anything of her, only the skull and the feet and the palms of her hands. 36 They came back and told him, and he said, ‘It’s Yahweh’s word that he spoke by means of his servant Eliyyahu the Tishbite: “On a Yizre’e’l plot the dogs will eat Izebel’s flesh. 37 Izebel’s carcass will be like manure on the face of the fields on a Yizre’e’l plot, so that people cannot say, ‘This is Izebel’”’.

10 Now Ah’ab had seventy sons in Shomron. Yehu wrote documents and sent them to Shomron, to the officials in Yizre’e’l, the elders, and to Ah’ab’s guardians, saying, ‘Now, when this document comes to you, and your lord’s sons are with you, and chariotry and horses are with you, and a fortified city, and weaponry, 3 see who is the best and most upright of your lord’s sons, put him on his father’s throne, and do battle for your lord’s household’. 4 But they were very, very fearful, and said, ‘Here, two kings didn’t stand before him, how can we stand?’ 5 So the one in charge of the household, the one in charge of the town, the elders, and the guardians sent to Yehu saying, ‘We are your servants. Everything that you say to us we will do. We will not make anyone king. Do what is good in your eyes’.

* **10:6 Seventy Heads Fall**

6 So he wrote them a second document: ‘If you’re on my side and you’re going to listen to my voice, take the heads of the men (your lord’s sons) and come to me this very time tomorrow in Yizre’e’l’. The king’s sons, seventy of them, were with the big people in the town, who were bringing them up. 7 When the document came to them, they got the king’s sons, slaughtered the seventy, put their heads in baskets, and sent them to him in Yizre’e’l.

8 An envoy came and told him, ‘They’ve brought the heads of the king’s sons’. He said, ‘Put them in two heaps at the entrance to the town gateway until morning’. 9 In the morning he went out and stood and said to the entire people, ‘You are in the right. There, I myself conspired against my lord and killed him, but who struck down all these? 10 Acknowledge how nothing will fall to the earth of Yahweh’s word, which Yahweh spoke concerning the household of Ah’ab, since Yahweh has done what he spoke by means of his servant Eliyyahu’. 11 Yehu struck down all that remained of the household of Ah’ab in Yizre’e’l, and all his big people, his friends, and his priests, until he let no survivor remain to him.

12 Then he set off; he came, and went to Shomron; he was at the shepherds’ binding house on the way, 13 and when Yehu found brothers of Ahazyahu king of Judah, he said, ‘Who are you?’ They said, ‘We are brothers of Ahazyahu. We’ve come down regarding whether things are well with the king’s sons and the queen’s sons’. 14 He said, ‘Capture them alive’. They captured them alive but slew them at the binding house cistern, forty-two individuals. He didn’t let one of them remain.

* **10:15 The Great Festival for Ba’al**

15 He went from there and found Yehonadab ben Rekab, coming to meet him. He blessed him and said to him, ‘Is your mind upright, as my mind is with your mind?’ Yehonadabsaid, ‘It is’. ‘Since it is, give me your hand’. He gave him his hand and took him up to him into the chariot. 16 He said, ‘Go with me and see my passion for Yahweh’. So he got him to ride in his chariot. 17 He came to Shomron and struck down all the people who remained to Ah’ab in Shomron until he had annihilated them, in accordance with Yahweh’s word that he spoke to Eliyyahu.

18 Yehu collected all the people and said to them, ‘Whereas Ah’ab served the Master a little, Yehu will serve him much. 19 So now, all the Master’s prophets, all his servants, and all his priests – call them to me. Not one is to be counted missing, because I have a big sacrifice for the Master. No one who is counted missing will live’. Yehu was acting with guile in order that he might obliterate the Master’s servants.

20 So Yehu said, ‘Make a sacred assembly for the Master’, and they called it.21 Yehu sent through all Israel, and all the Master’s servants came. Not one remained who didn’t come. They came to the Master’s house; the Master’s house filled, end to end. 22 He said to the person in charge of the wardrobe, ‘Get out apparel for all the Master’s servants’. He got the apparel out for them. 23 Yehu came with Yehonadab ben Rekab into the Master’s house and said to the Master’s servants, ‘Search, and see that there are none of Yahweh’s servants here with you, but rather the Master’s servants alone’. 24 They came to make sacrifices and burnt offerings, while Yehu had placed for himself eighty people outside and had said, ‘The individual who escapes from the people that I am bringing into your hands: his life in place of his life’.

* **10:25 The Sacrifice**

25 When he’d finished making the burnt offering, Yehu said to the runners and to the adjutants, ‘Come, strike them down. No one is to get out’. The runners and the adjutants struck them down with the edge of the sword and threw them down. They went right to the town in the Master’s house, 26 got out the columns in the Master’s house, and burnt them. 27 They demolished the Master’s columns and demolished the Master’s house and turned it into latrines, until this day.

28 So Yehu annihilated the Master from Israel; 29 only, the wrongdoings of Yarob’am ben Nebat that he caused Israel to commit– Yehu did not depart from them (the gold bullocks that were at Bet-el and that were at Dan). 30 But Yahweh said to Yehu, ‘Since you’ve done what is good, in doing what was upright in my eyes (in accordance with all that was in my mind you have acted toward the household of Ah’ab), sons to the fourth [generation] will sit on Israel’s throne for you’. 31 But Yehu did not keep watch to walk by the instruction of Yahweh the God of Israel with his entire mind. He did not depart from the wrongdoings of Yarob’am that he caused Israel to commit.

32 In those days Yahweh began to reduce Israel, and Haza’el struck them down through Israel’s entire territory 33 from the Jordan eastward, the entire region of Gil’ad (the Gadites, the Re’ubenites, and the Menashshites), from Aro’er, which is by Wadi Arnon, both Gil’ad and Bashan.

34 The rest of the things about Yehu, all that he did and all his strength, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they. 35 Yehu lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in Shomron, and Yeho’az his son began to reign in place of him. 36 The time that Yehu had reigned over Israel was twenty-eight years in Shomron.

* **11:1 The Boy King-in-Waiting**

11 When Atalyah, Ahazyahu’s mother, saw that her son was dead, she set to and obliterated all the royal offspring. 2 But Yehosheba the daughter of King Yoram, sister of Ahazyahu, got Yo’ash ben Ahazyah and stole him away from among the king’s sons who were being put to death, him and his nanny, in a bedroom. They concealed him from Atalyahu and he wasn’t put to death.

3 He was with her in Yahweh’s house hiding six years, while Atalyah was reigning over the country. 4 In the seventh year, Yehoyada sent and got the centurions of the Karites and of the runners and brought them to him into Yahweh’s house. He solemnized a pact with them and made them swear in Yahweh’s house, and let them see the king’s son.

5 He ordered them, ‘This is the thing that you’re to do: a third of you who are coming in on the [*shabbaton*] and keeping watch over the king’s house, 6 a third at the Sur Gate, and a third at the gateway behind the runners: you’re to keep watch over the house, as a defence. 7 The two sections among you, all who are going out on the sabbath, will keep watch over Yahweh’s house for the king. 8 You’re to encircle the king all round, each man with his equipment in his hand. Anyone who comes against the ranks is to be put to death. Be with the king when he goes out and when he comes in’.

9 The centurions acted in accordance with all that Yehoyada the priest ordered. They took each his men who were coming in on the sabbath with those who were going out on the sabbath, and came to Yehoyada the priest. 10 The priest gave the centurions the lance and the bows that belonged to King David, which were in Yahweh’s house. 11 The runners stood, each with his equipment in his hand, from the shoulder of the house on the right to the shoulder of the house on the left, at the altar and at the house, in charge of the king all round.

* **11:12 An Unusual Covenant**

12 Then he got the king’s son out and put the diadem and the affirmation on him, and they made him king and anointed him. They clapped the palms of their hands and said ‘Long live the king’.

13 Atalyah heard the sound of the runners, the people, and came to the people at Yahweh’s house. 14 She saw, there, the king was standing by the pillar in accordance with the ruling, the officials with the trumpets by the king, and the entire people of the country rejoicing and blowing on trumpets. Atalyah tore her clothes and called, ‘Conspiracy, conspiracy!’

15 Yehoyada the priest ordered the centurions appointed over the force, ‘Take her out between the rows. The person who follows her, put to death with the sword’ ( because the priest said she should not be put to death in Yahweh’s house). 16 They laid hands on her and she came by way of the Horses Entrance to the king’s house, and she was put to death there.

17 Yehoyada solemnized a pact between Yahweh, the king, and the people, that they would be a people for Yahweh, and between the king and the people. 18 The entire people of the country came to the Master’s house and tore it down. Its altars and its images they broke up, doing it well, and Mattan, the Master’s priest, they killed before the altars.

The priest set appointees over Yahweh’s house. 19 He got the centurions, the Karites, the runners, and the entire people of the country, and they took the king down from Yahweh’s house. They came by way of the Runners’ Gate to the king’s house, and he sat on the kings’ throne.

20 The entire people of the country rejoiced, while the town was calm, when they had put Atalyahu to death with the sword at the king’s house. 21 Yeho’ash was seven years of age when he began to reign.

* **12:1 A Plan to Restore the Temple**

12 It was in the seventh year of Yehu that Yeho’ash began to reign and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Tsibyah from Be’er-sheba. 2 Yeho’ash did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes all his days that Yehoyada the priest taught him. 3 Only, the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines.

4 Yeho’ash said to the priests, ‘All the silver from the sacred offerings that’s brought into Yahweh’s house, the silver that’s current for an individual (the silver for persons), his evaluation, all the silver that it comes into an individual’s mind to bring to Yahweh’s house, 5 the priests are to take for themselves, each from his assessor, and they themselves are to strengthen the defects in the house, everywhere a defect is found’.

6 But in the twenty-third year of King Yeho’ash the priests had not strengthened the defects in the house. 7 So King Yeho’ash called Yehoyada the priest, with the priests, and said to them, ‘Why are you not strengthening the defects in the house? So now don’t take the silver from your assessors but give it for the defects in the house’.

8 The priests consented not to take silver from the people and not to strengthen the defects in the house. 9 Yehoyada the priest got a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and put it by the altar, on the right when one comes into Yahweh’s house. The priests who were keeping watch over the threshold would put there all the silver that was brought to Yahweh’s house. 10 When they saw that the amount of silver in the chest was great, the royal scribe went up with the big priest and they tied up and counted the silver that was found in Yahweh’s house.

* **12:11 Not The Fate He Deserved**

11 So they would put the silver that had been quantified into the hands of the men doing the work, who had been appointed to Yahweh’s house. They would have it go out to the carpenters and to the builders who were doing things in Yahweh’s house, 12 and to the masons and to the stonecutters, and for acquiring wood and dressed stones to strengthen the defects in Yahweh’s house, and for all that would need to go out in connection with Yahweh’s house. 13 Yet silver basins, snuffers, bowls, trumpets, all gold articles and silver articles, were not made for Yahweh’s house from the silver brought into Yahweh’s house, 14 because they would give it to the people doing the work so they would strengthen Yahweh’s house.

15 They didn’t keep a reckoning of the men into whose hand they would give the silver to give to the people doing the work, because they were acting with trustworthiness. 16 Reparation silver and decontamination silver would not be brought into Yahweh’s house; it would be the priests’.

17 Then Haza’el king of Aram went up and battled against Gat, and captured it, and Haza’el set his face to go up to Jerusalem. 18 Yeho’ash king of Judah got all the sacred things that Yehoshaphat, Yehoram, and Ahazyahu, his ancestors, kings of Judah, had made sacred, and his own sacred things, and all the gold that could be found in the treasuries of Yahweh’s house and the king’s house, and sent them to Haza’el king of Aram, and he went up from Jerusalem.

19 The rest of the things about Yo’ash, and all that he did, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 20 His servants arose and formed a conspiracy, and struck down Yo’ash at Fill House, which goes down to Silla. 21 Yozabad ben Shim’at and Yehozabad ben Shomer, of his servants – they struck him down and he died. They buried him with his ancestors in David’s Town, and Amatsyah his son began to reign in place of him.

* **13:1 God Sees Israel’s Affliction**

13 In the twenty-third year of Yo’ash ben Ahazyahu king of Judah, Yeho’ahaz ben Yehu began to reign over Israel in Shomron, for seventeen years. 2 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes and followed the wrongdoings of Yarob’am ben Nebat that he caused Israel to commit. He did not depart from it.

3 So Yahweh’s anger raged against Israel and he gave them into the hand of Haza’el king of Aram and into the hand of Ben-hadad ben Haza’el, all the time. 4 Yeho’ahaz sought to gain Yahweh’s goodwill and Yahweh listened to him, because he saw Israel’s affliction, how the king of Aram afflicted them. 5 Yahweh gave Israel a deliverer and they got out from under the hand of Aram, and the Israelites lived in their tents as they had in previous days. 6 Yet they didn’t depart from the wrongdoings of Yarob’am’s household that it caused Israel to do commit. They walked in them, and further, the totem pole stood in Shomron. (7 Because he didn’t leave a company to Yeho’ahaz, except fifty cavalry, ten chariotry, and 10,000 men on foot, because the king of Aram had obliterated them and made them like dirt for trampling.)

8 The rest of the things about Yeho’ahaz and all that he did, and his strength, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they. 9 Yeho’ahaz lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in Shomron. Yo’ash his son began to reign in place of him. 10 It was in the thirty-seventh year of Yo’ash king of Judah that Yeho’ash ben Yeho’ahaz began to reign over Israel in Shomron, for sixteen years. 11 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. He didn’t depart from all the wrongdoings of Yarob’am ben Nebat that he caused Israel to do commit. He walked in them.

12 The rest of the things about Yo’ash, all that he did, and his strength in that he battled with Amatsyah king of Judah, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they. 13 Yo’ash lay down with his ancestors, and Yarob’am sat on his throne. Yo’ash was buried in Shomron with the kings of Israel.

* **13:14 The God Who Has to Be Merciful**

14 Now Elisha was ill with the illness of which he died, and Yo’ash king of Israel went down to him. He wept upon his face and said, ‘Father, father, the chariotry of Israel and its cavalry!’ 15 Elisha said to him, ‘Get a bow and arrows’. He got himself a bow and arrows. 16 He said to the king of Israel, ‘Mount your hand on the bow’. He mounted his hand. Elisha put his hands on the king’s hands 17 and said, ‘Open the window to the east’. He opened it. Elisha said, ‘Shoot’,and he shot. He said, ‘Yahweh’s deliverance arrow! A deliverance arrow against Aram! You will strike down Aram at Apheq so as to finish it off!’

18 He said, ‘Get the arrows’, and he got them. He said to the king of Israel, ‘Strike the ground’. He struck three times, and stopped. 19 The supernatural man was furious with him and said, ‘Striking five or six times! Then you would have struck Aram so as to finish it off, but now it will be three times that you strike Aram’.

20 Elisha died and they buried him. Now raiding gangs from Mo’ab would come into the country at the coming of the new year. 21 People were burying someone and there – they saw a raiding band, and they threw the man into Elisha’s grave. He went, and touched Elisha’s bones, and came to life and stood on his feet.

22 Now Haza’el king of Aram afflicted Israel all the days of Yeho’ahaz, 23 but Yahweh was gracious to them and had compassion on them. He turned his face to them for the sake of his pact with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He was not willing to devastate them, and he has not thrown them out from before his face until now.

24 Haza’el king of Aram died, and Ben-hadad his son began to reign in place of him. 25 Yeho’ash ben Yeho’ahaz took back again from the hand of Ben-hadad ben Haza’el the towns that he had taken from the hand of his father Yeho’ahaz in battle. Three times Yo’ash struck him down and got back the Israelite towns.

* **14:1 Individuals Are Put to Death for Their Own Wrongdoing**

14 In the second year of Yo’ash ben Yo’ahaz king of Israel, Amatsyahu ben Yo’ash king of Judah began to reign. 2 He was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Yeho’addan from Jerusalem. 3 He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes, only not like David his ancestor; in accordance with all that Yo’ash his father did, he did. 4 Only, the shrines did not disappear ; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines.

5 When the kingship was strong in his control, he struck down his servants who had struck down the king, his father. 6 But the sons of the people who had struck him down, he did not put to death, as it is written in Moses’ instruction document where Yahweh ordered: ‘Parents will not be put to death for children and children will not be put to death for parents. Rather, an individual will be put to death for his own wrongdoing’. 7 It was he who struck down Edom in Salt Ravine, 10,000, and captured The Cliff in the battle. He named it Yoqte’el, until now.

8 Then Amatsyah sent envoys to Yeho’ash ben Yeho’ahaz son of Yehu, king of Israel, saying, ‘Com on, let’s face each other’. 9 Yeho’ash king of Israel sent to Amatsyahu king of Judah, saying, ‘A thistle that was in the Lebanon sent to a cedar that was in the Lebanon, saying ‘Give your daughter to my son as wife’. But an animal of the wild that was in the Lebanon passed by and trampled the thistle’. 10 You have indeed struck down Edom and your mind has lifted you up. Enjoy your splendour but stay in your house. Why engage with bad fortune and fall, you and Judah with you?’

* **14:11 The King Who Didn’t Listen**

11 Amatsyahu didn’t listen. So Yeho’ash king of Israel went up and they faced each other, he and Amatsyahu king of Judah at Bet-shemesh, which belongs to Judah. 12 Judah took a beating before Israel and they fled each man to his his tents. 13 Amatsyahu king of Judah, son of Yeho’ash ben Ahazyahu—Yeho’ash king of Israel captured him at Bet-shemesh, came to Jerusalem, and broke down the Jerusalem wall at the Ephrayim Gate as far as the Corner Gate, 200 metres. 14 He took all the gold and the silver and all the articles that were to be found in Yahweh’s house and in the treasuries of the king’s house, and pledges, and went back to Shomron.

15 The rest of the things about Yeho’ash , what he did, and his strength and how he battled with Amatsyahu king of Judah, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they. 16 Yeho’ash lay down with his ancestors and was buried in Shomron with the kings of Israel, and Yarob’am his son began to reign in place of him.

17 Amatsyahu ben Yo’ash king of Judah lived after the death of Yeho’ash ben Yeho’ahaz king of Israel fifteen years. 18 The rest of the things about Amatsyahu are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 19 People formed a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem and he fled to Lakish, but they sent after him to Lakish and put him to death there. 20 But they carried him on horses and he was buried in Jerusalem with his ancestors in David’s Town. 21 All the people of Judah got Azaryah (he was sixteen years of age) and made him king in place of his father Amatsyahu. 22 It was he who built up Elat. He had got it back for Judah after the king lay down with his ancestors.

* **14:23 The King Who Became Taboo**

23 In the fifteenth year of Amatsyahu ben Yo’ash king of Judah, Yarob’am ben Yo’ash king of Israel began to reign in Shomron, for forty-one years. 24 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes; he didn’t depart from all the wrongdoings of Yarob’am ben Nebat that he caused Israel to commit. 25 It was he who got Israel’s territory back from Lebo Hamat as far as the Steppe Sea, in accordance with the word of Yahweh the God of Israel which he spoke by means of his servant Yonah ben Amittay the prophet, who was from Gat-hepher . 26 Because Yahweh saw Israel’s very bitter humbling (neither bound nor freed) and there was no helper for Israel. 27 Yahweh had not spoken of wiping out Israel’s name from under the heavens, and he delivered them by the hand of Yarob’am ben Joash.

28 The rest of the things about Yarob’am, all that he did, and his strength, how he battled and how he got back Damascus [Dammeseq] and Hamat belonging to Judah in Israel, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they. 29 Yarob’am lay down with his ancestors, with the kings of Israel, and Zekaryah his son began to reign in place of him.

15 It was in the twenty-seventh year of Yarob’am king of Israel that Azaryah ben Amatsyah king of Judah began to reign. 2 He was sixteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Yekolyahu from Jerusalem. 3 He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with all that Amatsyahu his father did. 4 Only, the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines. 5 Yahweh touched the king and he was made scaly until the day of his death. He lived in a house apart, while Yotam the king’s son was in charge of the household, exercising authority over the people in the country.

* **15:6 A War Crime**

6 The rest of the things about Azaryahu and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 7 Azaryah lay down with his ancestors and they buried him with his ancestors in David’s Town, and Yotam his son began to reign in place of him.

8 It was in the thirty-eighth year of Azaryahu king of Judah that Zekaryahu ben Yarob’am began to reign over Israel in Shomron, for six months. 9 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes as his ancestors had done. He didn’t depart from the wrongdoings of Yarob’am ben Nebat that he caused Israel to commit. 10 Shallum ben Yabesh conspired against him; he struck him down before the people, put him to death, and began to reign in place of him. 11The rest of the things about Zekaryah, there they are, written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel. 12 That was Yahweh’s word which he spoke to Yehu: ‘Sons to the fourth [generation] will sit on Israel’s throne for you’. So it came about.

13 Shallum ben Yabesh began to reign in the thirty-ninth year of Uzziyyah king of Judah, and reigned for a full month in Shomron. 14 Menahem ben Gadi went up from Tirtsah, came to Shomron, and struck down Shallum ben Yabesh in Shomron and put him to death. He began to reign in place of him. 15 The rest of the things about Shallum and his conspiracy that he formed, there they are, written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel.

16 Then Menahem struck down Tiphsah and everyone who was in it and its territories, from Tirtsah, because it didn’t open up, so he struck it down. He split open all its pregnant women.

* **15:17 The Assyrians Start to Cause Trouble**

17 It was in the thirty-ninth year of Azaryah king of Judah that Menahem ben Gadi began to reign over Israel, for ten years. 18 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes; he didn’t depart from the wrongdoings of Yarob’am ben Nebat that he caused Israel to commit, all his days. 19 Pul king of Ashshur [Assyria]came against the country, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver so that his hands would be with him to strengthen the kingship in his hand. 20 Menahem put the silver out on Israel, on all the forceful strong men, to give to the king of Ashshur, fifty sheqels of silver for each man, and the king of Ashshur went back and did not stop there in the country.

21 The rest of the things about Menahem and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel, aren’t they. 22 Menahem lay down with his ancestors, and Peqahyah his son began to reign in place of him.

23 It was in the fiftieth year of Azaryah king of Judah that Peqahyah ben Menahem began to reign over Israel in Shomron, for two years. 24 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes; he didn’t depart from the the wrongdoings that Yarob’am ben Nebat caused Israel to commit. 25 Peqah ben Remalyahu, his adjutant, conspired against him and struck him down in Shomron in the citadel of the king’s house (with Argob and with Aryeh, so along with him were fifty men from the Gil’adites). He put him to death and began to reign in place of him.

26 The rest of the things about Peqahyah, all that he did, there they are, written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel.

* **15:27 Land Begins to Be Lost**

27 It was in the fifty-second year of Azaryah king of Judah that that Peqah ben Remalyahu began to reign over Israel in Shomron, for twenty years. 28 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes; he didn’t depart from the wrongdoings that Yarob’am ben Nebat caused Israel to commit. 29 In the days of Peqah king of Israel, Tiglat-pil’eser king of Ashshur came and took Iyyon, Bet-ma’akah Meadow, Yanoah, Qedesh, Hatsor, Gil’ad, the Galilee, the entire region of Naphtali, and exiled them to Ashshur.

30 Hoshea ben Elah formed a conspiracy against Peqah ben Remalyahu, and struck him down. He put him to death and began to reign in place of him, in the twentieth year of Yotam ben Uzziyyah. 31 The rest of the things about Peqah and all that he did, there they are, written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Israel.

32 It was in the second year of Peqah ben Remalyahu king of Israel that Yotam ben Uzziyyahu king of Judah began to reign. He was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Yerusha bat Tsadoq. 34 He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes; in accordance with all that Uzziyyahu his father had done, he did. 35 Only, the shrines did not disappear; the people were still sacrificing and burning incense at the shrines. It was he who built up the Upper Gate of Yahweh’s house.

36 The rest of the things about Yotam that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 37 During that time Yahweh began to send Retsin king of Aram and Peqah ben Remalyahu against Judah. 38 Yotam lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David his ancestor’s town, and Ahaz his son began to reign in place of him.

* **16:1 How Not to Render to Caesar**

16 It was in the seventeenth year of Peqah ben Remalyahu that Ahaz ben Yotam king of Judah began to reign. 2 Ahaz was a man of twenty years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. He did not do what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh his God like David his ancestor 3 but walked in the way of the kings of Israel. Further, his own son he passed through the fire in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed from before the Israelites. 4 He sacrificed and burned incense at the shrines, on the hills, and under every verdant tree.

5 Then Retsin king of Aram and Peqah ben Remalyahu king of Israel went up to Jerusalem for battle. They besieged Ahaz but couldn’t win the battle. 6 At that time Retsin king of Aram took back Elat for Aram. He cleared out the Judahites from Elot, and Edomites came to Elat and have lived there until this day.

7 Ahaz sent envoys to Tiglat-pileser king of Ashshur saying, ‘I am your servant and your son. Go up and deliver me from the fist of the king of Aram and from the fist of the king of Israel, who are rising up against me’. 8 Ahaz got the silver and the gold that could be found in Yahweh’s house and in the treasuries of the king’s house and sent them to the king of Ashshur as a bribe, 9 and the king of Ashshur listened to him. The king of Ashshur went up to Damascus, captured it, exiled it to Qir, and put Retsin to death.

10 King Ahaz went to meet Tiglat-pileser king of Ashshur at Damascus, and saw the altar at Damascus. King Ahaz sent Uriyyah the priest a picture of the altar and a plan of it, for every aspect of making it, 11 and Uriyyah the priest built the altar. In accordance with all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, so Uriyyah the priest did, before King Ahaz came from Damascus.

* **16:12 A New Altar**

12 The king came from Damascus and the king saw the altar. The king drew near the altar, went up on it, 13 and turned into smoke his burnt offering and his grain offering, poured his libation, and tossed the blood of the well-being offerings that he had, on the altar.

14 The copper altar that was before Yahweh, he brought near from the front of the house (between his altar and Yahweh’s house) and put it by the side of his altar, to the north. 15 King Ahaz ordered Uriyyah the priest, ‘On the big altar, turn into smoke the morning burnt offering and the evening grain offering, the king’s burnt offering and his grain offering, the burnt offering of the entire people of the country, their grain offering, and their libations. All the blood of the burnt offering and all the blood of the sacrifice you’re to toss on it. The copper altar will be for me to consult at’. 16 Uriyyah the priest acted in accordance with all that King Ahaz ordered.

17 King Ahaz cut off the stands’ rims and removed the basin from on them, took down the sea from on the copper cattle that were beneath it and put it on a pavement of stones, 18 and the sabbath covered-way that they had built in the house and the king’s outside entrance he moved round to Yahweh’s house, on account of the king of Ashshur.

19 The rest of the things about Ahaz that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 20 Ahaz lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David’s Town, and Hizqiyyahu [Hezekiah] his son began to reign in place of him.

* **17:1 The Fall of the Northern Kingdom**

17 It was in the twelfth year of Ahaz king of Judah that Hoshea ben Elah began to reign over Israel in Shomron, for nine years. 2 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, only not like the kings of Israel who were before him.

3 Shalman’eser king of Ashshur went up against him, and Hoshea became his servant and gave back an offering to him. 4 But the king of Ashshur found a conspiracy in Hoshea, when he sent envoys to So king of Egypt and did not take up an offering to the king of Ashshur, as he did year by year. So the king of Ashshur detained him, and confined him in the jailhouse.

5 Then the king of Ashshur went up against the entire country. He went up to Shomron and besieged it for three years. 6 In the third year of Hoshea, the king of Ashshur took Shomron. He exiled Israel to Ashshur and made them live at Halah and at Habor, the river Gozan and the towns of Media.

7 It happened because the Israelites did wrong in relation to Yahweh their God who had got them up from the country of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They had lived in awe of other gods 8 and had walked by the decrees of the nations that Yahweh had dispossessed from before the Israelites, and the kings of Israel that they made.

9 The Israelites had imputed things that were not so to Yahweh their God and built for themselves shrines in all their towns, from a keepers’ tower to a fortified town. 10 They put up columns and totem poles for themselves on every lofty hill and under every verdant tree. 11 They burned incense there in all the shrines, like the nations that Yahweh exiled from before them. They undertook bad things so as to provoke Yahweh. 12 They served idols, of which Yahweh had said to them, ‘You will not do this thing’.

* **17:13 By Means of Every Prophet**

13 Yahweh had testified against Israel (and against Judah) by means of every prophet of his, every seer, saying, ‘Turn back from your bad ways, keep my orders and my decrees in accordance with the entire instruction that I ordered your ancestors and that I sent to you by means of my servants the prophets’. 14 They didn’t listen. They toughened their neck, like the neck of their ancestors who didn’t trust in Yahweh their God. 15 They rejected his decrees, his pact which he solemnized with their ancestors, and his affirmations which he testified against them. They followed hollowness and became hollow, followed the nations that were round them, ones that Yahweh had ordered them not to act like them.

16 They abandoned all the orders of Yahweh their God, and made a cast image (two bullocks) for themselves, made a totem pole, bowed low to the entire heavenly army, and served the Master. 17 They made their sons and their daughters pass through fire, engaged in divination and practised augury, and sold themselves to do what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes so as to provoke him.

18 Yahweh showed himself very angry with Israel and he removed them from before his face; only the clan of Judah remained, alone, 19 though Judah, too, did not keep the orders of Yahweh their God but walked by the decrees of Israel that they made.

20 So Yahweh rejected all Israel’s offspring and humbled them. He gave them into the hand of pillagers until he threw them out from his presence. 21 When he tore Israel from David’s household, they made Yarob’am ben Nabat king, and Yarob’am drove Israel away from following Yahweh and caused them to commit great wrong. 22 The Israelites walked in all the wrongdoings of Yarob’am that he committed; they did not depart from them, 23 until Yahweh turned Israel aside from from his presence, as he spoke by means of all his servants the prophets. So Israel went into exile from upon its soil to Ashshur, until this day.

* **17:28 The Forced Immigrants**

24 The king of Ashshur brought people from Babel, from Kutah, from Avva, and from Hamat and Sepharvayim, and made them live in the towns of Shomron in place of the Israelites. They took possession of Shomron and lived in its towns. 25 When they first lived there, they didn’t live in awe of Yahweh, and Yahweh sent lions against them; they became killers among them. 26 They said to the king of Ashshur, ‘The nations that you exiled and made to live in the towns of Shomron don’t know the ruling of the country’s god, and he’s sent lions against them, and there, they are putting them to death, because they don’t know the ruling of the country’s god’.

27 So the king of Ashshur ordered, ‘Make one of the priests go there that you exiled from there. They’re to go and live there and instruct them in the ruling of the god of the land’. 28 So one of the priests that they exiled from Shomron came and lived in Bet-el and and was instructing them in how they were to live in awe of Yahweh. 29 But they were making nation by nation its own god, and they set them down in the house at the shrines that the Shomronites had made, nation by nation in their towns where they were living. 30 The people from Babel made Sukkot-benot, the people from Kut made Nergal, the people of Hamat made Ashima, 31 the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartaq, the Sepharvites were burning their children in fire for Adrammelek and Anammelek, the gods of Sepharvayim. 32 They were living in awe of Yahweh, but they made themselves shrine priests from their sections. They were acting for them in the houses at the shrines.

33 So they were living in awe of Yahweh and they were serving their gods in accordance with the ruling of the nations from which they had exiled them. 34 Until this day they are acting in accordance with the previous rulings. They are not living in awe of Yahweh and they are not acting in accordance with their decrees, with their rulings, with the instruction, and with the order that Yahweh gave the sons of Jacob, whose name he made into Israel.

* **17.35 The Copper Snake**

35 Yahweh had solemnized a pact with them and ordered them, ‘You will not live in awe of other gods; you will not bow low to them, you will not serve them, and you will not sacrifice to them. 36 Rather, Yahweh who got you up from the country of Egypt by great energy and by an outstretched arm: you are to live in awe of him, bow low to him, and sacrifice to him. 37 The decrees, the rulings, the instruction, and the order that he wrote for you, you’re to keep by acting on it, always. You will not live in awe of other gods. 38 The pact that I’ve solemnized with you, you will not put out of mind. You will not live in awe of other gods. 39 Rather you will live in awe of Yahweh your God, and it’s he who will rescue you from the hand of all your enemies’. 40 But they hadn’t listened. Rather they ‘d been acting in accordance with their previous ruling.

41 And these nations became people who were in awe of Yahweh but were also serving their sculptures. Their children and grandchildren are also acting as their ancestors acted, until this day.

18 It was in the third year of Hoshea ben Elah king of Israel that Hizqiyyah ben Ahaz began to reign as king of Judah. 2 He was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abi bat Zekaryah. 3 He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with all that David his ancestor did. 4 It was he who removed the shrines, broke up the columns, cut down the totem pole, and crushed the copper snake that Moses had made, because until that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it (it was called ‘The Copper’).

* **18:5 The Faithfulness and the Rebellion of Hezekiah**

5 It was on Yahweh the God of Israel that he relied. After him there was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, or that were before him. 6 He stuck to Yahweh. He did not depart from following him but kept his orders, which Yahweh had given Moses, 7 and Yahweh was with him. Wherever he went out, he thrived.

But he rebelled against the king of Ashshur and didn’t serve him, 8 and he himself struck down the Philistines as far as Gaza and its borders, from the keepers’ tower to the fortified town.

9 In the fourth year of King Hizqiyyahu (i.e., the seventh year of Hoshea ben Elah king of Israel) Shalman’eser king of Ashshur went up against Shomron and besieged it. 10 They captured it at the end of three years; in the sixth year of Hizqiyyah (i.e., the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel) Shomron was captured 11 and the king of Ashshur exiled the Israelites to Ashshur and settled them in Halah and in Habor, the River Gozan and the towns of Media, 12 because of the fact that they didn’t listen to the voice of Yahweh their God but transgressed his pact, all that Moses Yahweh’s servant had ordered. They didn’t listen and they didn’t act.

13 In the fourteenth year of King Hizqiyyahu, Sanherib [Sennacherib] king of Ashshur went up against all the fortified towns of Judah and captured them. 14 Hizqiyyah king of Judah sent to the king of Ashshur at Lakish saying, ‘I have done wrong. Turn back from me. What you put upon me, I will carry’. The king of Ashshur placed on Hizqiyyah king of Judah 300 talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. 15 Hizqiyyah gave him all the silver that could be found in Yahweh’s house and in the treasuries of the king’s house. 16 At that time Hizqiyyah cut down the doors of Yahweh’s palace and the posts that Hizqiyyah king of Judah had overlaid, and gave them to the king of Ashshur.

* **18:17 Shut Up Like A Bird in a Cage (as Sennacherib Put It)**

17 The king of Ashshur sent the Tartan, the Rab-saris, and the Rab-shaqeh from Lakish to King Hizqiyyahu in Jerusalem with a heavy force. They went up, and came to Jerusalem and stood at the Upper Pool channel, which is by the Washer’s Field causeway. 18 They called to the king, and Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyahu who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary, and Yo’ah ben Asaph the recorder went out to them.

19 The Rab-shaqeh said to them, ‘Say to Hizqiyyahu, please, “The Great King, the king of Ashshur, has said this: ‘What is this reliance that you have? 20 You’ve said, “Just the word on some lips are counsel and strength for the battle”. Now, on whom have you relied, that you’ve rebelled against me? 21 Now, there, you’ve relied for yourself on the support of this broken reed, on Egypt, which when someone leans on it, comes into his palm and pierces it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all the people who rely on him. 22 But when you say to me, “On Yahweh our God—we’ve relied on him”, he’s the one whose shrines and whose altars Hizqiyyahu has removed, isn’t he, and who’s said to Judah and to Jerusalem, “Before this altar you’re to bow low in Jerusalem”.

23 But now, please make a wager with my lord the king of Ashshur. I’ll give you 2000 horses if you can put riders on them for yourself. 24 So how could you turn back the face of the governor of one of my lord’s lesser servants and rely on Egypt for chariotry and for cavalry for yourself? 25 Is it now without Yahweh that I’ve gone up to this place to devastate it? It was Yahweh who said to me, “Go up to this country and devastate it.”’”’

* **18:26 Don’t Speak in Their Language**

26 Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyahu, Shebna, and Yo’ah said to the Rab-shaqeh, ‘Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, because we’re listening. Don’t speak to us in Judahite in the ears of the people, which is on the wall’. 27 The Rab-shaqeh said to them, ‘Was it to your lord and to you that my lord sent me to speak these words? Wasn’t it to the individuals who are sitting on the wall, to eat their faeces and to drink the water between their legs with you?’

28 The Rab-shaqeh stood and called in a loud voice in Judahite, and spoke: ‘Listen to the word of the Great King, the king of Ashshur. 29 The king has said this: “Hizqiyyahu must not deceive you”, because he won’t be able to rescue you from his hand. 30 And Hizqiyyahu must not get you to rely on Yahweh, saying “Yahweh will definitely recue us, this town won’t be given into the hand of the king of Ashshur”. 31 Don’t listen to Hizqiyyahu.

Because the king of Ashshur has said this: “Make a blessing [agreement]with me. Go out to me, and eat each one his vine and each one his fig tree, and drink each one the water from his cistern, 32 until I come and take you to a country like your country, a country of grain and new wine, a country of bread and vineyards, a country of fresh olive oil and syrup, and you will live and not die. Don’t listen to Hizqiyyahu when he incites you, saying, ‘Yahweh will rescue us’. 33 Have the gods of the nations actually rescued, one of them, his country from the hand of the king of Ashshur? 34 Where were the gods of Hamat and Arpad? Where were the gods of Sepharvayim, Hena, and Ivvah? Indeed did they rescue Shomron from my hand? 35 Who was it among all the gods of the countries that rescued their country from my hand, that Yahweh should rescue Jerusalem from my hand?”’

* **18.36 Perhaps Yahweh Will Listen**

36 They were silent. They didn’t answer him a word, because it was the king’s order, ‘Don’t answer him’. 37 But Elyaqim ben Hilqiyyah who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary, and Yo’ah ben Asaph the recorder came to Hizqiyyahu, their clothes torn, and told him the Rab-shaqeh’s words.

19 When King Hizqiyyahu heard, he tore his clothes and covered himself in sack. He came into Yahweh’s house 2 but he sent Elyaqim, who was in charge of the household, Shebna the secretary, and the priestly elders, covering themselves in sack, to Isaiah [Yesha’yahu] ben Amots the prophet. 3 They said to him, ‘Hizqiyyahu has said this: “This is a day of pressure, reproof, and disdain, because ‘children have come to breaking but there’s no energy to give birth’. 4 Perhaps Yahweh your God will listen to all the words of the Rab-shaqeh, whom the king of Ashshur his lord sent to revile the living God, and will issue a reproof for the words that Yahweh your God heard, and you will lift up a plea on behalf of the remains that are to be found here”’.

5 King Hizqiyyahu’s servants came to Isaiah, 6 and Isaiah said to them, ‘You’re to say this to your lord: “Yahweh has said this: ‘Don’t be afraid before the words you’ve heard with which the king of Ashshur’s boys have insulted me. 7 Here, I’m going to put a spirit in him, and he’ll hear a report and go back to his country, and I shall cause him to him fall by the sword in his country’”’.

8 The Rab-shaqeh went back and found the king of Ashshur battling against Libnah, because he heard that he had moved on from Lakish, 9 and he heard about Tirhaqah king of Sudan [Kush], ‘There, he’s gone out to battle with you’.

* **19:9b What to Do with Tricky Mail**

9b He again sent envoys to Hizqiyyahu, saying 10 ‘You’re to say this to Hizqiyyahu king of Judah: “Your God on whom you’re relying mustn’t deceive you, saying, ‘Jerusalem won’t be given into the hand of the king of Ashshur’. 11 Here, you yourself have heard what the kings of Ashshur have done to all the countries, ‘devoting’ them, and are you the one who’ll be rescued? 12 Did the gods of the nations that my ancestors devastated rescue them—Gozan, Harran, Retseph, and the Edenites who were in Tela’ssar? Where is the king of Hamat, the king of Arpad, the king of La’ir, Sepharvayim, Hena, and Yivvah?

14 Hizqiyyahu took the documents from the envoys’ hand, read them out, and went up to Yahweh’s house. Hizqiyyahu spread it before Yahweh, 15 and Hizqiyyahu pleaded before Yahweh: ‘Yahweh, Israel’s God, sitting above the sphinxes: you are God, you alone, for all the kingdoms of the earth. You are the one who made the heavens and the earth. 16 Yahweh, bend your ear and listen. Yahweh, open your eyes and see. Listen to the words of Sanherib that he has sent to revile the living God.

17 Truly, Yahweh, the kings of Ashshur have put to the sword the nations, and their own country, 18 and put their gods into the fire, because they were not gods but rather the making of human hands, wood and stone, and they obliterated them. 19 But now, Yahweh our God, please deliver us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may acknowledge that you alons are Yahweh God’.

20 Isaiah ben Amots sent to Hizqiyyahu saying, ‘Yahweh, Israel’s God, with whom you pleaded concerning Sanherib king of Ashshur, has said this: “I have heard”. This is the word that Yahweh has spoken about him.

* **19:21b Yahweh’s Own Ridicule**

21b Maiden Miss Zion

despises you, she ridicules you.

Behind you Miss Jerusalem

has shaken her head.

22Whom have you reviled and insulted,

against whom have you lifted your voice?

You’ve raised your eyes on high

against Israel’s sacred one.

23By the hand of your envoys

you’ve reviled the Lord, and said:

‘With the large number of my chariotry I’m the one who’s gone up

to the mountains’ height, Lebanon’s farthest parts.

I’ve cut down the highest of its cedars,

the choicest of its junipers.

I’ve come to its ultimate lodge,

its forest of farmland.

24I’m the one who’s dug

and drunk foreign water.

I’ve dried with the sole of my feet

all Egypt’s streams.

25Haven’t you heard?

—long ago I did it.

In days of old I formed it;

now I’ve made it come about.

It’s happened, crashing fortified towns

into wasted heaps.

26Their inhabitants, short of ability,

are scared and shamed.

They were vegetation of the fields,

green herbage,

Grass on the roofs,

blasted before it grows up.

27Your staying, your going out, and your coming I know,

and your raging at me.

28Since you raged at me,

and your din came up into my ears,

I shall put my hook in your nose,

my bit in your mouth,

I shall make you go back

by the way that you came.

* **19:29 The Promise for Hezekiah**

29This will be the sign for you:

This year, eat the natural growth;

in the second year, the secondary growth.

In the third year sew and reap,

plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

30An escape group from Judah’s household that remains

will add root downward and produce fruit above.

31Because a remainder will go out from Jerusalem,

and an escape group from Mount Zion.

The passion of Yahweh Armies

will do this.

32Therefore Yahweh has said this concerning the king of Ashshur:

“He will not come into this town;

he will not shoot an arrow there.

He will not approach it with a shield;

he will not heap up a ramp against it.

33By the way that he comes he will go back;

into this city he will not come

(Yahweh’s declaration).

34I will shield this town so as to deliver it,

for my sake and for the sake of David my servant.

35That night Yahweh’s envoy went out and struck down 185,000 in the Ashshurites’ camp. People started early in the morning – there, all of them were dead corpses.

36Sanherib king of Ashshur moved on and went, and returned and lived in Nineveh. 37He was bowing low in the house of Nisrok his god when Adrammelek and Sar’etser his sons struck him down with the sword. While they escaped to the country of Ararat, Esar-haddon his son began to reign in place of him.

* **20:1 How to Gain God’s Sympathy**

20 In those days Hizqiyyahu became deathly ill. Isaiah ben Amots the prophet came to him and said to him, ‘Yahweh has said this: “Give orders to your household, because you’re dying. You won’t live on”’. 2 He turned his face round to the wall and pleaded with Yahweh, ‘Oh, Yahweh, please be mindful of how I’ve walked about before you in truth and with a perfect mind, and done what is good in your eyes’. Hizqiyyahu cried and cried much.

4 Isaiah had not gone out of the middle courtyard when Yahweh’s word came to him: 5 ‘Go back and say to Hizqiyyahu, the chief of my people, “Yahweh, the God of David your ancestor, has said this: ‘I have listened to your plea, I’ve seen your tears. Here, I’m going to heal you. On the third day you’ll go up to Yahweh’s house. 6 I shall add fifteen years to your time. From the fist of the king of Ashshur I shall rescue you and this town, and I shall shield this town for my sake and for David my servant’s sake”’. 7 Isaiah said, ‘Get a block of figs’. They got one and put it on the inflammation and he lived on.

8 Hizqiyyahu had said to Isaiah, ‘What will be the sign that Yahweh will heal me and I shall go up to Yahweh’s house on the third day?’ 9 Isaiah said, ‘This will be the sign for you from Yahweh that Yahweh will do the thing that he has spoken of. The shadow has gone ten steps. Can it go back ten steps?’ 10 Yehizqiyyahu said, ‘It’s a slight thing for the shadow to extend ten steps, not that the shadow should turn back ten steps’. 11 So Isaiah the prophet called to Yahweh and he made the shadow go back ten steps on the steps where it had gone down, on the steps of Ahaz.

* **20:12 How to Lose God’s Sympathy**

12 At that time Ber’odak Bal’adan ben Bal’adan king of Babel sent documents and an offering to Hizqiyyahu because he had heard that Hizqiyyahu was ill. 13 Hizqiyyahu heard about them and let them see his entire repository house, the silver, the gold, the spices, and the fine oil, and his equipment house and everything that was to be found in his storehouses. There was not a thing that Hizqiyyahu didn’t let them see in his house and in his entire realm.

14 Isaiah the prophet came to King Hizqiyyahu and said to him, ‘What did these men say? Where did they come from to you?’ Hizqiyyahu said, ‘From a far country, they came from Babel’. 15 He said, ‘What did they see in your house?’ Hizqiyyahu said, ‘They saw everything that’s in my house. There wasn’t a thing that I didn’t let them see in my storehouses’.

16 Isaiah said to Hizqiyyahu, ‘Listen to Yahweh’s word: 17 “There, days are going to come when everything that’s in your house, and that your ancestors have stored up until this day, will be carried to Babel. Not a thing will be left”, Yahweh has said. 18 “Some of your descendants who will issue from you, whom you will father, will be taken and will become courtiers in the palace of the king of Babel”’. 19 Hizqiyyahu said to Isaiah, ‘The word of Yahweh that you have spoken is good’. He said, ‘Isn’t it so, if there’ll be well-being and truthfulness in my days?’

20 The rest of the things about Hizqiyyahu and all his strength, and how he made the pool and the channel and brought the water into the town, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah. 21 Hizqiyyahu lay down with his ancestors and Menashsheh his son began to reign in place of him.

* **21:1 How to Be the Bad Guy**

21 Menashsheh was twelve years of age when he began to reign and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hephtsibah. 2 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed from before the Israelites. 3 He rebuilt the shrines that Hizqiyyahu his father obliterated, and set up altars for the Master and made a totem pole, as Ah’ab king of Israel had done. He bowed low to all the heavenly army and served them. 4 He built altars in Yahweh’s house of which Yahweh had said, ‘In Jerusalem I will put my name’. 5 He built altars for all the heavenly army in the two courtyards of Yahweh’s house. 6 He made his son pass through fire and practised augury and divination and dealt with ghosts and spirits. He did much that was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, so as to provoke him.

7 He put a sculpture of Asherah that he made in the house of which Yahweh said to David and to Solomon [Shelomoh] his son, ‘In this house and in Jerusalem, which I chose from all Israel’s clans, I will put my name permanently. 8 And I shall not continue to make Israel’s foot wander from the land that I gave their ancestors, only if they keep watch to act in accordance with all that I ordered them, and regarding the entire instruction that my servant Moses ordered them’. 9 But they didn’t listen, and Menashsheh got them to wander so as to deal badly more than the nations that Yahweh annihilated from before the Israelites.

10 Yahweh spoke by means of his servants the prophets, 11 ‘Since Menashsheh king of Judah has done these offensive things (he has dealt badly more than all that the Amorites did who were before him) and has also caused Judah to do wrong with his idols, 12 therefore Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: “Here, I am going to bring bad fortune on Jerusalem and Judah such that everyone who hears it – both his ears will screech.

* **21:13 Wiping the Dish Clean**

13 Over Jerusalem I will stretch Shomron’s measuring line and the household of Ah’ab’s scale. I will wipe Jerusalem clean as one wipes a dish clean, wipe it and turn it on its face. 14 I will leave the remains of my domain and give them into the hand of their enemies. They will be plunder and spoil for all their enemies, 15 since they’ve done what is bad in my eyes and they’ve been provoking me from the day that I got their ancestors out of Egypt until this day”’.

16 Further, Menashsheh poured out very much blood of people who were free of guilt, until he filled Jerusalem end to end, beside the wrong that he caused Judah to commit in doing what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. 17 The rest of the things about Menashsheh, all that he did and the wrongdoing that he committed, are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 18 Menashsheh lay down with his ancestors and was buried in the garden of his house, in Uzza’s Garden, and Amon his son began to reign in place of him.

19 Amon was a man of twenty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Meshullemet bat Haruts, from Yotbah. 20 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, as Menashsheh his father did. 21 He walked in all the way that his father walked, and served the idols that his father served and bowed low to them. 22 He abandoned Yahweh, his ancestors’ God, and did not walk in Yahweh’s way. 23 Amon’s servants conspired against him and put the king to death in his house, 24 but the people of the country struck down all those who had conspired against King Amon. The people of the country made Yo’shiyyahu [Josiah] king in place of him.

25 The rest of the things about Amon that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 26 They buried him in his grave in Uzza’s Garden, and his son Yo’shiyyahu began to reign in place of him.

* **22:1 Last Chance to Take the Torah and the Prophets Seriously**

22 Yo’shiyyahu was eight years of age when he began to reign and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Yedidah bat Adayah, from Botsqat. 2 He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes and walked in the entire way of David his ancestor. He did not depart right or left.

3 In the eighteenth year of King Yo’shiyyahu, the king sent Shaphan ben Atsalyahu son of Meshullam to Yahweh’s house, saying 4 ‘Go up to Hilqiyyahu the big priest so he may weigh the silver that’s been brought to Yahweh’s house, which the people keeping watch over the threshold have gathered from the people. 5 They’re to put it into the hand of the people doing the work who were appointed to Yahweh’s house, so they may give it to the people doing the work who are in Yahweh’s house, to strengthen the defects in the house, 6to the craftsmen, to the builders, to the masons, and for the acquiring of wood and hewn stones to strengthen the house. 7Only there will be no reckoning made with them of the silver given into their hand, because they’re acting with trustworthiness’.

8 Hilqiyyahu, the big priest, said to Shaphan, the secretary, ‘I’ve found an instruction document in Yahweh’s house’. Hilqiyyahu gave the document to Shaphan and he read it out. 9Shaphan the secretary came to the king and took back word to the king: ‘Your servants have melted down the silver that was found in the house and they’ve given it into the hand of the people doing the work who were appointed to Yahweh’s house’. 10And Shaphan the secretary told the king: ‘Hilqiyyah the priest gave me a document’. Shaphan read it out before the king.

* **22:12 The Tough and Gentle Prophetess**

11 When the king heard the words in the instruction document, he tore his clothes. 12The king ordered Hilqiyyah the priest, Ahiqam ben Shaphan, Akbor ben Mikayah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asayah the king’s servant, 13 ‘Go inquire of Yahweh on my behalf and on behalf of the people and on behalf of all Judah about the words in this document that’s been found, because great is Yahweh’s wrath that has set on fire against us because our ancestors didn’t listen to the words in this document by acting in accordance with everything that’s written for us’.

14Hilqiyyahu the priest went, with Ahiqam, Akbor, Shaphan, and Asayah, to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum ben Tikvah son of Harhas, keeper of the robes; she was living in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter. They spoke to her.

15She said to them, ‘Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: “Say to the man who sent you to me: 16‘Yahweh has said this: “Here, I’m going to bring bad fortune to this place and to its inhabitants, all the things in the document that the king of Judah read out, 17because of the fact that they abandoned me and burned incense to other gods in order to provoke me with all the actions of their hands. My wrath will set on fire against this place and it will not douse”’”.

18But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of Yahweh, you’re to say this to him: “Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: ‘The words that you have heard: 19since your mind softened and you bowed down before Yahweh when you heard what I had spoken against this place and against its inhabitants (becoming a desolation and a slighting) and you tore your clothes and cried before me, I for my part have also listened (Yahweh’s declaration). 20 Therefore, here, I am going to gather you to your ancestors and you will gather yourself to your great grave with things being well. Your eyes will not see all the bad fortune that I am going to bring on this place’”’. They took the word back to the king.

* **23.1 The Covenant and the Clean-up**

23 The king sent and gathered to him all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem, 2 and the king went up to Yahweh’s house, with everyone in Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and the priests and the prophets, and the entire people, young and old. He read out in their ears all the words in the pact document found in Yahweh’s house. 3 The king stood by the pillar and solemnized a pact before Yahweh, to follow Yahweh and keep his orders, his affirmations, and his decrees with their entire mind and with their entire being, by setting up the words of this pact that were written on this document. The entire people stood by the pact.

4 The king ordered Hilqiyyahu the big priest, the priests of the second order, and the people keeping watch over the threshold to take out from Yahweh’s palace all the articles made for the Master and for Asherah and for the entire heavenly army, and he burned them outside Jerusalem in the Qidron Fields, and carried their dust to Bet-el. 5 He did away with the clergy whom the kings of Judah had made to burn incense in the shrines in the towns of Judah and the areas round Jerusalem, and the people who burned incense for the Master, for the sun, for the moon, for the constellations, and for the entire heavenly army. 6 He took the totem pole out of Yahweh’s house, outside of Jerusalem, to Wadi Qidron, and burned it in Wadi Qidron, crushed it to dust, and threw its dust over the grave of the ordinary people. 7 He demolished the houses of the hierodules that were in Yahweh’s house, where the women were weaving “houses” for the totem-pole.

8 He brought all the priests from the towns of Judah and defiled the shrines where the priests burned incense, from Geba as far as Be’er-sheba. He demolished the shrines at the gateways, which were at the entrance of the gateway of Yehoshua, the official over the town, which were on one’s left at the town gateway. 9 Yet the priests of the shrines did not go up to Yahweh’s altar in Jerusalem; rather, they ate flat bread among their brothers.

* **23:10 Honouring the Long ago Prophets**

10 He defiled the Hearth which is in the Ben-hinnom Ravine so that no one would make his son or his daughter pass through fire to the Shameful King. 11 He did away with the horses that the kings of Judah gave for the sun, from the entrance of Yahweh’s house, near the hall of Natan-melek the courtier, which was in the precincts. He burned the sun chariots in fire. 12 The altars that were on the roof of Ahaz’s upper quarters, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars that Menashsheh had made in the two courtyards of Yahweh’s house, the king demolished. He ran from there and threw their dust into Wadi Qidron.

13 The shrines that were facing Jerusalem, which were south of Destroyer Mountain, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Shameful Ashtar the abomination of the Tsidonites, for Kemosh the abomination of Mo’ab, and for Milkom the offense of the Ammonites, the king defiled. 14 He broke up the columns and cut up the totem poles and filled their site with human bones.

15 Also the altar which was at Bet-el (the shrine that Yarob’am ben Nebat, who caused Israel to do wrong, made)—also that altar and the shrine, he demolished. He burned the shrine and beat it to dust, and burned the totem pole.

16 Yo’shiyyahu turned his face and saw the graves that were there on the mountain. He sent and got the bones from the graves and burned them on the altar, and defiled it in accordance with Yahweh’s word that the supernatural man called out, who called out these things. 17 He said, ‘What’s that sign that I’m looking at?’ The people of the town said to him, ‘The grave of the supernatural man who came from Judah and called out these things that you have done to the Bet-el altar’. 18 He said, ‘Let him be. No one is to disturb his bones’. So they saved his bones, and the bones of the prophet who came from Shomron.

* **23:19 The Incomparable Reformer**

19 All the houses at the shrines that were in the towns of Shomron, which the kings of Israel had made so as to provoke, Yo’shiyyahu also removed. He acted toward them in accordance with the actions that he undertook at Bet’el. 20 He sacrificed all the priests of the shrines who were there, on the altars, and burned human bones on them, and went back to Jerusalem.

21 The king ordered the entire people: ‘Make Pesah [Passover] for Yahweh your God as is written on this pact document’. 22 Because it had not been made like this Pesah since the days of the leaders who had led Israel or all the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah. 23 Rather, in the eighteenth year of King Yo’shiyyahu this Pesah was made for Yahweh in Jerusalem.

24 The ghosts, the spirits, the effigies, the idols, and all the abominations that were to be seen in the country of Judah and in Jerusalem, Yo’shiyyahu also burned away, in order to implement the things in the instruction that were written on the document that Hilqiyyahu the priest had found in Yahweh’s house.

25 Before him there was no king like him who turned back to Yahweh with his entire mind, with his entire being, and with his entire might in accordance with Moses’ entire instruction, and after him none rose up like him. 26 Yet Yahweh did not turn back from the great angry rage with which his anger raged against Judah because of all the provocative acts with which Menashsheh had provoked him. 27Yahweh said, ‘Judah, too, I shall remove from before my face, as I removed Israel. I shall reject this town that I chose, Jerusalem, and the house of which I said, “My name will be there”’.

* **23:28 The Loss of Josiah**

28The rest of the things about Yo’shiyyahu and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 29In his days Pharaoh Neko king of Egypt went up against the king of Ashshur at the River Euphrates. King Yo’shiyyahu went to meet him, but he put him to death at Megiddo when he saw him. 30His servants transported him dead from Megiddo and brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his grave.

The people of the country got Yeho’ahaz ben Yo’shiyyahu , and anointed him and made him king in place of his father. 31 Yeho’ahaz was a man of twenty-three years when he began to reign and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal bat Yirmeyahu, from Libnah. 32 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with all that his ancestors had done. 33 Pharaoh Neko confined him at Riblah in the region of Hamat to stop him reigning in Jerusalem, and put a levy on the country of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold.

34 Pharaoh Neko made Elyaqim ben Yo’shiyyahu king in place of his father, but turned his name into Yehoyaqim. He took Yeho’ahaz, and he came to Egypt and died there. 35 The silver and the gold Yehoyaqim gave to Pharaoh, only he assessed the country so as to give the silver in accordance with Pharaoh’s bidding. Each person according to his assessment, he exacted the silver and the gold from the people of the country so as to give it to Pharaoh Neko.

36 Yehoyaqim was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Zebudah bat Pedayah, from Rumah. 37 He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, in accordance with all that his ancestors did.

* **24:1 How Things Start to Collapse**

24 In his days Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel went up and Yehoyaqim became his servant for three years, but he turned back and rebelled against him. 2Yahweh sent against him raiding gangs of the Kasdites [Chaldeans], raiding gangs from Aram, raiding gangs from Mo’ab, and raiding gangs of the Ammonites. He sent them against Judah to obliterate it, in accordance with Yahweh’s word which he spoke by means of his servants the prophets. 3Indeed, it was at Yahweh’s bidding that it happened to Judah, to remove them from before his face because of Menashsheh’s wrongdoings, in accordance with all that he did, 4and also the blood of people who were free of guilt that he had shed. He had filled Jerusalem with the blood of people free of guilt, and Yahweh was not willing to pardon.

5The rest of the things about Yehoyaqim and all that he did are written on the document about things of the time regarding the kings of Judah, aren’t they. 6Yehoyaqim lay down with his ancestors and his son Yehoyakin began to reign in place of him. 7The king of Egypt did not go out of his country again, because the king of Babel had taken all that had belonged to the king of Egypt from the Egyptian Wadi as far as the River Euphrates.

8Yehoyakin was eighteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned three months in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Nehushta bat Elnatan, from Jerusalem. 9He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, in accordance with all that his father did. 10At that time the servants of Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel went up to Jerusalem and the town came under siege. 11Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel came against the town while his servants were besieging it, 12and Yehoyakin king of Judah went out to the king of Babel, he, his mother, his servants, his officials, and his courtiers. The king of Babel took him in the eighth year of his reign.

* **24:13 The First Judahite Exile and the Final Siege**

13He took away from there the treasures of Yahweh’s house and the treasures of the king’s house, and cut off all the gold objects that Solomon had made in Yahweh’s palace, as Yahweh had said. 14He exiled all Jerusalem, all the officials and all the forceful strong men, 10,000 exiles, and every craftsman and smith. No one remained apart from the poorest element of the people in the country. 15He exiled Yehoyakin to Babel, and the king’s mother, the king’s wives, his courtiers, and the country’s leaders he made go as exiles from Jerusalem to Babel, 16with all the forceful men, 7000 (and craftsman and smith, 1000), all of them the strong men doing battle. The king of Babel made them come as exiles to Babel.

17The king of Babel made Mattanyah, his uncle, king in place of him, and turned his name to Tsidqiyyahu [Zedekiah]. 18 Tsidqiyyahu was twenty-one years of age when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Hamutal bat Yirmeyahu, from Libnah. 19He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with all that Yehoyaqim had done, 20because of the fact that Yahweh’s anger was against Jerusalem and against Judah until he threw them out of his presence.

Tsidqiyyahu rebelled against the king of Babel, 25 and in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, on the tenth of the month, Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel came against Jerusalem, he and his entire force. He camped against it and built blockades all round. 2 The town came under siege until the eleventh year of King Tsidqiyyahu. 3 On the ninth of the month the famine had become overwhelming in the town and there was no bread for the people of the country. 4The town broke open, and all the men of battle in the night by way of the gateway between the double wall which was by the king’s garden, while the Kasdites were all round the town.

* **25:4b The Destruction and the Second Judahite Exile**

4bHe went by the steppe road, 5but the Kasdite force pursued after the king. They overtook him in the Jericho steppes when his entire force had scattered from him. 6They captured the king and took him up to the king of Babel at Riblah, and he pronounced a decision about him. 7Tsidqiyyahu’s sons they slaughtered before his eyes, Tsidqiyyahu’s eyes he gouged out, and he bound him with copper chains and brought him to Babel.

8In the fifth month, on the seventh of the month (i.e., the nineteenth year of King Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel) Nebuzar’adan the chief of the guards, servant of the king of Babel, came to Jerusalem 9and burned Yahweh’s house, the king’s house, and all the houses in Jerusalem. Every house of a big person he burned in fire. 10The walls round Jerusalem, the entire Kasdite force that was with the chief of the guards demolished. 11The rest of the people who remained in the town and the people who had submitted (who had submitted to the king of Babel) and the rest of the horde, Nebuzar’adan the chief of the guards took into exile, 12but some of the poorest elements in the country the chief of the guards let remain as vinedressers and farm workers.

13The copper pillars that were in Yahweh’s house, and the stands and the copper sea that were in Yahweh’s house, the Kasdites broke up and carried their copper to Babel. 14The buckets, the shovels, the snuffers, the ladles, and all the copper articles with which they ministered, they took. 15The pans and the sprinklers, whatever was of gold and whatever was of silver, the chief of the guards took. 16The two pillars, the one sea, and the stands that Solomon made for Yahweh’s house—there was no weighing the copper in all these articles. 17The height of the one pillar was nine metres , with a copper capital on it; the height of the capital was one and a half metres, with a net with pomegranates on the capital all round, all of it copper, and like these was the second pillar with the net.

* **25:18 Is it the End or Is There Hope?**

18The chief of the guards took Serayah the head priest, Tsephanyahu the number two priest, and the three keepers of the threshold, 19and from the town he took a courtier who was appointee over the men of battle, and five people from the heads who were before the king, who were found in the town, the secretary of the army officer who mustered the people of the country, and sixty individuals from the people of the country who were found in the town. 20Nebuzar’adan the chief of the guards took them and made them go to the king of Babel at Riblah. 21The king of Babel struck them down and put them to death at Riblah, in the region of Hamat.

So Judah went into exile from upon its land, 22while the people that remained in the country of Judah whom Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel allowed to remain—he appointed over them Gedalyahu ben Ahiqam son of Shaphan. 23All the officers of the forces, they and their men, heard that the king of Babel had appointed Gedalyahu, and they came to Gedalyahu at at The Watchtower, with Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah, Yohanan ben Qareah, Serayah ben Tanhumet the Netophatite, and Ya’azanyahu son of the Ma’akatite, and their men. 24Gedalyahu swore to them and to their men, and said, ‘Don’t be afraid of the Kasdites’ servants. Stay in the country. Serve the king of Babel. Things will be good for you’.

25But in the seventh month Yishma’e’l ben Netanyah son of Elishama, of royal descent, came with ten men with him, and struck down Gedalyahu and put him to death, him and the Judahites and the Kasdites who were with him at The Watchtower. 26And all the people, young and old, and the officers over the forces, set off and came to Egypt, because they were afraid of the Kasdites.

27 But in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Yehoyakin king of Judah, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-seventh of the month, Ewil-merodak king of Babel, in the year he began to reign, lifted up the head of Yehoyakin king of Judah from the jailhouse. 28 He spoke of good things with him, gave him a seat above the seat of the kings who were with him in Babel, 29 and changed his jail clothes. He ate bread before him regularly for his entire life. 30 His provision was given him as a regular provision from the king, a day’s allocation on its day, for his entire life.