# Psalms

The Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 things that we can say to God. In putting it that way, I oversimplify slightly, as a few psalms have God speaking to us, but the vast majority are prayers and praises addressed to God. You could say that they are Israel’s hymnbook and prayerbook.

They are divided into five books—English translations make that point explicit with the headings ‘Book One’ (at the beginning), ‘Book Two’ (at Psalm 42), and so on. The five books of Psalms thus parallel the five books of the Torah. The Torah comprises teaching on what God has done for Israel and on the life God expects of Israel. The Psalms comprise teaching on the nature of praise and prayer. But they teach not by giving instructions but by giving examples.The examples divide into a few main types.

1. There are hymns of praise for who God is and for the great things God has done in creation and for his people. They refer to the exodus and to God’s involvement in Israel’s subsequent story. But they also emphasize how all the nations should therefore come to acknowledge this God.
2. There are prayers of protest about the way things are now working out, which contrasts with the affirmations appearing in the praise hymns. There are protests that belong on the lips of the people as a whole, of their leader, and of individuals. They describe how Israel itself has been defeated, how its leader is under attack, and how an individual is overwhelmed by people’s attacks or accusations. One noteworthy feature is the amount of space they give to description of the plight and suffering of the people who are praying; they are much less specific about what they expect God to do beyond acting to rescue. While formulating this description no doubt offers release for them, its more direct point is to get God to notice and take action. And sometimes before these psalms end, they already express the conviction that God has heard the pleas, so that the person praying can look forward to the act of God that will follow.
3. There are some prayers that presuppose the reality of that kind of experience but are more dominated by a note of trust and hope.
4. There are songs of praise that testify to the way God has responded to a prayer of this kind and has delivered the people or the leader or the individual. A noteworthy feature of them is the way they mingle addressing God in thanksgiving and addressing other people in testimony. They are designed both to glorify God and to build up the faith and trust of people who have not had this experience of deliverance.

A few psalms don’t fit into these categories. Some speak from God or from a human teacher to the community rather than from human beings to God. The first two psalms are examples, Psalm 1 being a challenge to faithful living, Psalm 2 a declaration about God’s faithfulness to the Davidic king. Such psalms remind worshipers that they can’t be involved in praise or prayer unless they are people living faithful lives. And they remind them that the God of whom the psalms speak is one involved in the political affairs of the nation and committed to fulfilling his purpose in the world. The fact that there was no Davidic king after the fall of Jerusalem meant that the psalms’ references to the king became promises and declarations of hope about the Davidic king that God would surely enthrone again one day, and this development is part of the background to references to them in the New Testament.

The Davidic king is an important figure in the Psalms, though the references to David in the introductions to the psalms don’t imply that he wrote them. The introductions relate to ways in which the Psalms were used in worship (e.g., tunes), and we don’t understand many of the terms they use. However many psalms David may have written, his position as the patron of the temple means that they all appear under his sponsorship. The key to using the psalms is the realization that they are designed for ongoing use by the people of God and by individuals, so that who wrote them is not very important.

## Psalm 1 You Have a Choice

1The blessings of someone who has not walked

by the counsel of the faithless,

Or stood on the way of wrongdoers,

or lived in the settlement of the arrogant!

2Rather, his delight is in Yahweh’s instruction,

and he murmurs about his instruction day and night.

3He’s like a tree planted by channels of water,

which gives its fruit in its time,

And its foliage doesn’t fade;

all that he does succeeds.

4Not so the faithless people;

rather, they’re like the chaff that the wind blows away.

5Therefore the faithless don’t rise up when a ruling is given,

nor wrongdoers in the assembly of the faithful.

6Because Yahweh acknowledges the way of the faithful,

but the way of the faithless perishes.

## Psalm 2 God Laughs on His People’s Behalf

1Why have nations crowded together,

and peoples murmur about something empty,

2Earth’s kings take a stand,

leaders made plans together,

against Yahweh and against his anointed –

3’We’ll break off their means of discipline,

throw off their ropes from us’?

4The one who sits in the heavens makes fun;

the Lord ridicules them.

5Then he speaks to them in his anger,

terrifies them with his rage.

6’But I myself installed my king on Zion,

my sacred mountain!’

7I shall recount Yahweh’s decree:

he said to me,

‘You’re my son;

today I myself have fathered you.

8Ask of me and I’ll make nations your domain,

earth’s ends your holding.

9You’ll smash them with an iron club,

shatter them like an object made by a potter’.

10So now, show some insight, you kings,

accept discipline, you people who exercise authority in the earth.

11Serve Yahweh with awe,

rejoice with trembling, surrender sincerely,

12So that he doesn’t get angry

and you perish as regards the way,

Because his anger will soon burn up;

the blessings of all who take shelter with him!

## Psalm 3 You’re Not Alone

A composition. For David when he took flight from Abshalom his son.

1Yahweh, how many are my adversaries;

many people are rising up against me.

2Many people are saying of me,

‘There’s no deliverance in God for him!’ *(Rise)*

3But you are Yahweh, a shield about me,

my splendour, the one who lifts my head high.

4With my voice I would call to Yahweh,

and he’s answered me from his sacred mountain. *(Rise)*

5I myself have laid down and slept;

I’ve woken up, because Yahweh sustains me.

6I’m not afraid of a company of myriads

that has set itself against me all round.

7Rise up, Yahweh,

deliver me, my God,

Because you’ve struck all my enemies on the jaw,

You’ve smashed the teeth of the faithless.

8Deliverance belongs to Yahweh,

your blessing is on your people. *(Rise)*

## Psalm 4 Who Can I Turn to?

The leader’s. With strings. A composition. David’s.

1When I call, answer me,

my faithful God!

Under pressure you widened me;

be gracious to me and listen to my plea!

2You people, how long will the one I honour be for shaming,

will you be loyal to something empty, will you seek a lie? *(Rise)*

3So acknowledge that Yahweh has distinguished the committed person for himself;

Yahweh is the one who listens when I call to him.

4Tremble and don’t do wrong;

say it in your heart on your bed and be quiet. *(Rise)*

5Offer faithful sacrifices,

and put your confidence in Yahweh.

6Increased numbers of people are saying,

‘Who will enable us to see good fortune?

– the light of your face has fled from upon us, Yahweh’.

7You’ve put rejoicing in my heart

from the time when their grain and their new wine has increased.

8In well-being I will lie down and sleep, all at once,

because you alone are Yahweh;

you enable me to live in confidence.

## Psalm 5 Pleading with the King

The leader’s. To flutes. A composition. David’s.

1Give ear to the things I say, Yahweh,

consider my murmur.

2Heed the sound of my cry for help,

my King and my God, because it’s with you I plead.

3Yahweh, at morning may you listen to my voice,

at morning I lay it out to you and wait.

4Because you’re not a God who delights in faithlessness;

that which is bad can’t reside with you.

5Wild people can’t take their stand in front of your eyes;

You’re hostile to all who devise trouble.

6You obliterate people who speak a lie;

at someone of blood and guile, Yahweh takes offence.

7But I myself will come to your house through the abundance of your commitment;

I will bow low to your sacred palace in awe of you.

8Yahweh, lead me in your faithfulness

for the sake of the people who are watching for me;

make your way direct before me.

9Because there’s no established truth in their mouth;

their inner being is malice.

Their throat is an opened grave,

They’re slippery with their tongue.

10Have them make restitution, God;

they should fall by means of their own counsels.

Because of the abundance of their rebellions drive them out,

because they’ve defied you.

11But may all the people who take shelter with you rejoice,

may they resound permanently.

As you protect them,

may the people who are loyal to your name triumph in you.

12Because you yourself bless the faithful person, Yahweh;

you surround him with acceptance like a body-shield.

## Psalm 6 The Way Prayer Makes a Difference

The leader’s. With strings. On the eighth [tone]. A composition. David’s.

1Yahweh, don’t reprove me in your anger,

don’t discipline me with your wrath.

2Be gracious to me, Yahweh, because I’m faint;

heal me, Yahweh, because my bones shake in fearfulness.

3My entire being shakes in great fearfulness,

and you, Yahweh – how long?

4Turn back, Yahweh, pull me out,

deliver me for the sake of your commitment!

5Because there’s no commemoration of you in death;

in She’ol who confesses you?

6I’m weary of my groaning, I make my bed swim every night,

I melt my mattress with my tears.

7My eye has wasted away through provocation,

grown old because of all my adversaries.

8Depart from me, all you who devise trouble,

because Yahweh has heard the sound of my crying.

9Yahweh has heard my prayer for grace;

Yahweh receives my plea.

10All my enemies will be shamed and be very fearful;

they w’l turn back and be shamed instantly.

## Psalm 7 The Judge Is on Your Side

Lament. David’s, which he sang for Yahweh concerning the Sudanese words. The Benjaminite.

1Yahweh my God, in you I take shelter

– deliver me from all the people who are pursuing me, rescue me,

2So that one doesn’t tear me apart like a lion,

ripping me to pieces when there’s no one to rescue.

3Yahweh my God, if I did this,

if there’s evil in the palms of my hands,

4If I have dealt something bad to my friend,

but pulled out my adversary without reason,

5May the enemy pursue me and overtake me,

may he trample my life to the ground,

may he lay down my splendour in the dirt. *(Rise)*

6Rise up, Yahweh, in your anger;

lift yourself up at the great outburst of my adversaries.

Awake, my God, you must order a the exercise of authority;

7the assembly of the nations should come round you.

Take your seat over it on high;

8Yahweh must rule the peoples.

Exercise authority for me, Yahweh,

in accordance with my faithfulness and with my integrity, over me.

9The bad ways of faithless people must please come to an end,

and you must establish the faithful person.

The faithful God

is one who tests minds and inner being.

10God is my shield on high,

one who delivers people who are upright in mind.

11God exercises authority for the faithful person;

God condemns each day.

12If someone doesn’t turn back, he whets his sword,

He’s directed his bow and fixed it.

13He’s fixed deadly weapons for himself,

he makes his arrows into flames.

14There, someone twists with trouble,

he’s pregnant with oppression, he gives birth to falsehood.

15He’s dug a cistern and made it deep,

but he’s fallen into the hole he makes.

16His act of oppression comes back onto his own head,

his violence comes down on his own skull.

17I will confess Yahweh in accordance with his faithfulness

and make music to the name of Yahweh, the One on High.

## Psalm 8 Thus Far and No Further

The leader’s. On the Gittite. A composition. David’s.

1Yahweh our God,

how august is your name in all the earth,

You who put your grandeur above the heavens

2by the mouth of babies and sucklings.

You founded something vigorous to deal with your adversaries,

to stop the enemy and the person taking redress.

3When I see the heavens, the things that your fingers made,

moon and stars that you established,

4What are people that you are mindful of them,

human beings that you attend to them?

5But you made them fall short of God by a little,

and crown them with honour and magnificence.

6You let them rule over the things that your hands made;

you put everything under their feet –

7Sheep and cattle, all of them,

and the animals of the wild, too,

8The birds of the heavens, the fish of the sea,

what passes over the paths in the seas.

9Yahweh our God,

how mighty is your name in all the earth!

## Psalm 9 Praise and Thanksgiving as a Key to Prayer (1)

The leader’s. Secrets. The son’s. A composition. David’s.

1I will confess you, Yahweh, with my whole mind,

I will recount all your extraordinary deeds.

2I will rejoice and exult in you,

I will commemorate your name, the One on High.

3When my enemies turn back,

they collapse and perish before you,

4Because you exercised authority for me and made a judgment for me;

you sat on your throne as one who exercises authority in faithfulness.

5You reprimanded nations, you obliterated the faithless person,

you wiped out their name for ever and ever.

6The enemy is finished, ruins permanently;

you uprooted towns, their commemoration perished.

Them! 7But Yahweh sits for ever;

he established his throne for exercising authority.

8He’s the one who exercises authority s for the world with faithfulness,

he gives judgment for the peoples with uprightness.

9Yahweh became a turret for the downtrodden person,

a turret for times of pressure,

10So that people who acknowledge your name will rely on you,

because you didn’t abandon people who inquired of you, Yahweh.

11Make music for Yahweh who sits in Zion,

tell among the peoples of his deeds,

12Because the one who inquires about bloodshed was mindful of them,

he didn’t put out of mind the cry of the humble.

13Be gracious to me, Yahweh,

see my humbling at the hand of the people hostile to me,

you who lift me up from death’s gateways,

14In order that I may recount all your praiseworthy acts;

in the gateways of Miss Zion I will rejoice in your deliverance.

15Nations plunged into the pit they made;

in the net that they hid, their foot caught.

16Yahweh caused himself to be acknowledged, he made an authoritative decision;

by the act of his own fists the faithless person trapped himself. (*Recitation; Rise)*

17Faithless people should turn back to She’ol,

all the nations that put Yahweh out of mind,

18Because the needy person will not be out of mind without end,

or the hope of the humble perish permanently.

19Rise up, Yahweh, a human being should not exercise power,

nations should enter into judgment in your presence.

20Appoint something fearful for them, Yahweh;

nations should acknowledge that they are human beings. *(Rise)*

## Psalm 10 The Wretched of the Earth

1Why do you stand far off, Yahweh,

hide in times of pressure?

2When the faithless person in his position of majesty hounds the humble,

they should catch themselves by the strategies that they have thought up.

3Because the faithless person has praised the longing of his appetite

and blessed the greedy person.

The faithless person has disdained Yahweh,

4in accordance with the loftiness of his look.

‘God won’t inquire, he’s not here’;

in all his strategies 5his ways are profane.

All the time your acts of authority are high up, at a distance from him;

all his adversaries – he snorts at them.

6He’s said to himself, ‘I shall not slip, generation after generation’;

‘I shall not be in bad circumstances’, 7he’s sworn.

His mouth is full of acts of guile and repression;

under his tongue are oppression and trouble.

8He lives in a hiding place in the villages,

so that in complete secret he can kill someone free of guilt.

His eyes watch for the wretched person;

9he waits in secret like a lion in its lair.

He waits to catch the humble;

he catches the humble by dragging him in his net.

10The wretched, collapsing, sinks down,

and falls because he is so numerous.

11He’s said to himself, ‘God has put it out of mind,

He’s hidden his face, he’s never looked’.

12Rise up, Yahweh;

God, lift your hand,

don’t put the humble out of mind.

13Why has the faithless person disdained God,

said to himself, ‘He does not inquire’?

14You’ve seen, because you yourself

look out at oppression and vexation.

Giving it into your hand, the wretched abandons it to you;

the orphan – you’re the one who has been a helper.

15Break the arm of the faithless and the bad person,

so that when you inquire after his faithlessness, you will not find it.

16Yahweh will be king for ever and ever;

the nations will have perished from his country.

17When you’ve heard the longing of the humble, Yahweh,

you establish their mind, you bend your ear,

18To exercise authority for orphan and downtrodden;

no one from the earth will frighten ever again.

## Psalm 11 Flee or Stay?

The leader’s. David’s.

1With Yahweh I take shelter;

how can you say to me,

‘Flit to your mountain, bird,

2because there – the faithless direct a bow.

They’ve set their arrow on a string,

to shoot in the shadow at the people who’re upright in mind.

3When the foundations are torn down,

the faithful person – what can he do?’

4Yahweh is in his sacred palace,

Yahweh whose throne is in the heavens.

His eyes behold,

his eyelids examine human beings.

5Yahweh examines the faithful person,

and the faithless, and the ones who love violence –

his entire being is hostile to them.

6He rains coals of fire and sulphur on the faithless people;

a scorching wind is the portion in their cup.

7Because Yahweh is faithful, he loves faithful deeds;

the upright person – his face beholds him.

## Psalm 12 Sometimes God Speaks

The leader’s. On the eighth [tone]. A composition. David’s.

1Deliver, Yahweh, because the committed person has come to an end,

because the people who are true have vanished from among humankind.

2An individual speaks emptiness to his neighbours;

with smooth lip through a double mind they speak.

3Yahweh should cut off all the smooth lips,

the tongue that speaks big things,

4The people who’ve said, ‘With our tongues we will be strong:

our lips will be with us – who will be lord over us?’

5’Because of the destruction of the humble, because of the cry of the needy,

now I will rise up’, Yahweh says.

‘I will set myself up as deliverance’,

he testifies to him.

6Yahweh’s words are pure words,

silver purified in a furnace on the ground,

refined seven times.

7Yahweh, you will keep them;

you will preserve us from the generation that lasts permanently.

8All round, the faithless walk about,

as flimsiness stands high for humankind.

## Psalm 13 How Long, How Long, How Long, How Long?

The leader’s. A composition. David’s.

1How long, Yahweh: will you put me out of mind permanently,

how long will you hide your face from me?

2How long must I lay up [people’s] plans in my entire being,

sadness in my heart day by day,

– how long will my enemy stand high over me?

3Look out, answer me, Yahweh my God;

give light to my eyes, so that I don’t sleep in death,

4So that my enemy doesn’t say, ‘I’ve finished him off’,

my adversaries celebrate because I slip.

5But I myself trust in your commitment;

my heart will celebrate your deliverance.

I will sing to Yahweh,

because he has dealt to me.

## Psalm 14 What a Rogue Says to Himself

The leader’s. David’s.

1A villain has said to himself,

‘There’s no God here.

People have become devastating, offensive, in their action;

there’s no one doing good here’.

2From the heavens Yahweh has looked out

at humankind,

To see if there is someone insightful,

inquiring of God.

3Everyone has departed, altogether they’re foul;

there’s no one doing good here, there isn’t even one.

4They don’t acknowledge him, do they, all the people devising trouble,

who eat my people.

They’ve eaten food;

they haven’t called Yahweh.

5They’re experiencing dreadful terror there,

because God is among the faithful circle.

6You people may shame the humble person’s counsel,

but Yahweh is his shelter.

7If only there were deliverance for Israel from Zion,

when Yahweh turns back his people’s fortunes.

Jacob will be celebrate,

Israel will rejoice!

## Psalm 15 How to Dwell with God

A composition. David’s.

1Yahweh, who may reside in your tent,

who may dwell on your sacred mountain?

2One who walks with integrity, acts with faithfulness,

and speaks truth inside.

3He has not gone about talking,

has not done wrong to his neighbour,

has not taken up reviling against someone near him.

4In his eyes a contemptible person is to be rejected,

but he honours people who live in awe of Yahweh;

he has sworn to bring about something bad and not changed it.

5He has not given his silver on interest,

and not taken a bribe against someone free of guilt;

one who does these things, who does not slip ever.

## Psalm 16 I’ve Set Yahweh in Front of Me

An inscription. David’s.

1Keep me, God,

because I take shelter with you.

2I’ve said of Yahweh,

‘My Lord, you are my good, none above you’,

3To the sacred ones who are in the country,

and the august ones in whom is all my delight.

4Their pains will be many,

the people who attend to another [god].

I will not pour their blood libations;

I will not take up their names on my lips.

5Yahweh, my allocated share, my cup,

you’re the one who takes hold of my lot.

6Apportionments have fallen to me in lovely places;

yes, a perfect domain for me.

7I will bless Yahweh who has counselled me;

yes, by night my inner being disciplines me.

8I have set Yahweh in front of me continually;

because he’s at my right hand, I shall not slip.

9Therefore my entire being rejoices,

my spirit celebrates,

yes, my flesh will dwell in confidence.

10Because you won’t abandon my life to She’ol,

you won’t give over someone committed to you to see the Abyss.

11You will let me know the path to life,

joyful fulfillment with your face,

lovely things at your right hand permanently.

## Psalm 17 Go On, Look into My Heart

A plea. David’s.

1Listen in faithfulness, Yahweh,

heed my resounding cry.

Give ear to my plea,

on lips that are without guile.

2May an authoritative ruling for me go out from your presence;

may your eyes behold what is upright.

3Were you to test my mind, visit me by night,

try me, you wouldn’t have found [anything]

– I had determined that my mouth would not transgress.

4As for human actions, in accord with the word of your lips,

I myself have kept watch on the paths of the robber.

5My steps have taken hold of your tracks,

my feet have not slipped.

6I myself call you, because you will answer me, God;

bend your ear to me, listen to my word.

7Act in an extrsordinary way with deeds of commitment,

you who deliver those who take shelter with you

from the people who rise up against them, by your right hand.

8Keep me like the apple of your eye,

in the shadow of your wings hide me,

9From the faithless who’ve destroyed me,

the enemies of my life who surround me.

10They’ve closed their minds,

with their mouth they have spoken with majesty.

11Our steps – they’ve now surrounded us;

their eyes – they set them to extend through the country.

12His appearance is like a lion that’s eager to tear,

like a whelp that sits in ambush.

13Rise up, Yahweh,

meet him face to face, bring him down!

Enable me to survive from the faithless with your sword,

14from human beings with your hand, Yahweh.

From human beings—in their lifetime will you fill their belly,

with their share in life and with what you have stored up.

Their children are to be full,

and they are to leave what they have over to their own young.

15When I behold your face in faithfulness,

I will be full with your form when I awake.

## Psalm 18:1-24 Rescued from Death

The leader’s. Yahweh’s servant’s. David’s, who spoke to Yahweh the words of this song on the day Yahweh rescued him from the fist of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. He said:

1I dedicate myself to you, Yahweh, my strength,

2Yahweh my cliff, my fortress, the one who enables me to survive,

My God, my crag in which I take shelter,

my shield, the horn that delivers me, my turret.

3As one to be praised, I called Yahweh,

and from my enemies I found deliverance.

4Death’s ropes have overwhelmed me,

Beliyya’al’s wadis terrified me,

5She’ol’s ropes have surrounded me,

death’s snares have confronted me.

6In my pressure I called on Yahweh,

I cried for help to my God.

7And the earth has quaked and rocked,

the mountains’ foundations shook.

They’ve quaked because it enraged him;

8smoke has gone up in his anger.

Fire from his mouth consumed,

coals have burned up from him.

9He’s spread the heavens and come down,

with thundercloud beneath his feet.

10He’s ridden on a sphinx and flown,

swooped on the wings of the wind.

11He’s made darkness his hiding place round him,

his bivouac water cloud, masses of mist.

12From the brightness in front of him, through his masses there have passed

hail and fiery coals.

13Yahweh has thundered in the heavens,

the One on High gave out his voice.

Hail and fiery coals:

14he’s sent off his arrows and scattered them,

shot lightning and routed them.

15Canyons of water have appeared,

the world’s foundations have come into sight,

At your reprimand, Yahweh,

at the breath of your angry wind.

16He sent from on high, he got me,

he drew me out of much water.

17He rescued me from my vigorous enemy,

from people hostile to me, because they stood too firm for me.

18They met me on the day of my disaster,

but Yahweh has become a support for me.

19He’s brought me out into a roomy place;

He’s pulled me out because he delighted in me.

20Yahweh has dealt to me in accordance with my faithfulness;

in accordance with the purity of my hands he gave back to me,

21Because I have kept Yahweh’s ways

and not been faithless to my God.

22Because all his rulings have been in front of me;

his decrees I didn’t let depart from me.

23I’ve been a person of integrity with him;

I’ve kept myself from waywardness I might have done.

24So Yahweh has given back to me in accordance with my faithfulness,

in accordance with the purity of my hands before his eyes.

## Psalm 18:25-50 The One Who Keeps My Lamp Alight

25With the committed person you show commitment;

with the man of integrity you show integrity.

26With the pure you show yourself pure;

with the crooked you show yourself refractory.

27Because you’re one who delivers a humble people

but puts down exalted eyes.

28Because you’re the one who keeps my lamp alight;

it's Yahweh my God who illumines my darkness.

29Because with you I can rush at a barricade;

with my God I can scale a wall.

30God: his way has integrity;

Yahweh’s word is proven.

He is a shield,

to all who take shelter with him.

31Because who is God apart from Yahweh,

who is a crag except our God?

32God is the one who belts me with forcefulness,

and makes my way one that has integrity,

33Who fashions my feet like a deer,

enables me to stand on the heights,

34Who trains my hands for battle,

so that my arms could bend a copper bow.

35You’ve given me your shield that delivered;

your right hand sustained me, your avowal made me great.

36You widened my step beneath me;

my ankles have not slipped.

37I pursued my enemies so that I could overtake them;

I didn’t turn back until I finished them off.

38I hit them and they couldn’t get up;

they fell beneath my feet.

39You’ve belted me with forcefulness for battle;

you bent down beneath me the people who rose up against me.

40My enemies you’ve made turn tail for me;

the people who were hostile to me – I wiped them out.

41They cried for deliverance, but there was no deliverer—

[cried] to Yahweh, but he has not answered them.

42I ground them fine like dirt before the wind,

flattened them like mud in the streets.

43You enabled me to survive from arguments with the people,

you set me as head of nations.

A people I did not acknowledge serve me;

44on hearing with the ear, they listened to me.

Foreigners wither before me,

45foreigners wilt and come quaking out of their strongholds.

46Yahweh lives, my crag be blessed,

may my God who delivers be exalted,

47The God who gives me total redress

subjects peoples under me,

48Who enabled me to escape from my enemies,

yes, exalts me above the people who rise up against me,

rescues me from the violent man!

49Therefore I will confess you Yahweh among the nations,

and make music for your name,

50The one who gives great acts of deliverance to his king,

acting with commitment to his anointed,

to David and to his offspring permanently!

## Psalm 19 The Mystery of Sin

The leader’s. A composition. David’s.

1The heavens are recounting God’s splendour,

the sky is telling of what his hands made.

2Day by day it pours out speech,

night by night it proclaims knowledge.

3There’s no speech, there are no words,

whose voice does not make itself heard.

4In all the earth their noise has gone out,

at the end of the world their utterances.

For the sun he put a tent in them;

5it’s like a groom going out of his dressing room .

It rejoices to run the path, like a strong man,

6as its going out is from the end of the heavens.

Its completed circuit is at their [other] end,

and there’s nothing hidden from its heat.

7Yahweh’s instruction has integrity,

bringing life back.

Yahweh’s affirmation is trustworthy,

making the naïve smart.

8The things Yahweh has determined are upright,

rejoicing the mind.

Yahweh’s order is clean,

enlightening the eyes.

9Awe for Yahweh is pure,

standing permanently.

Yahweh’s rulings are true;

They’re faithful altogether.

10They’re more desirable than gold,

than much pure gold,

sweeter than syrup,

than the juice of honeycombs.

11Yes, your servant takes warning through them,

and in keeping them there are great results.

12Who can understand mistakes?

– free me from things that are hidden;

13yes, hold your servant back from assertive deeds.

May they not rule over me, then I’ll be whole,

and free of great rebellion.

14May the sayings of my mouth be acceptable to you,

and the murmur of my mind before you,

Yahweh, my crag and my restorer.

## Psalm 20 Chariotry, Horses, Yahweh

The leader’s. A composition. David’s.

1May Yahweh answer you on the day of pressure,

the name of Jacob’s God set you on high.

2May he send your help from the sacred place,

support you from Zion.

3May he be mindful of all your offerings,

enrich your burnt sacrifice. *(Rise)*.

4May he give to you what is in accordance with your mind,

fulfill every counsel of yours.

5May we resound at your deliverance,

in the name of our God we’ll lift our banners:

may Yahweh fulfill all your requests.

6Now I acknowledge

that Yahweh has delivered his anointed.

He answers him from his sacred heavens,

with the mighty acts of deliverance of his right hand.

7These people [make mention] of chariotry, those people of horses,

but as for us – we make mention of the name of Yahweh our God.

8Those people have bent down and fallen,

but as for us – we’ve risen up and taken our stand.

9’Yahweh, deliver the king!’

– may he answer us on the day we call.

## Psalm 21 An Embodiment of Blessing

The leader’s. A composition. David’s.

1Yahweh, the king rejoices in your vigour,

how greatly he takes joy in your deliverance!

2You gave him the longing of his heart;

the request of his lips you didn’t deny.

3Because you meet him with blessings of good,

set on his head a crown of pure gold.

4When he asked for life from you, you gave him,

length of days for ever and ever.

5Great is his splendour through your deliverance,

grandeur and magnificence you bestow on him.

6Because you make him [an embodiment of] blessing permanently,

you gladden him with rejoicing at your presence.

7Because the king trusts in Yahweh

and by the commitment of the One on High he doesn’t slip.

8Your hand finds all your enemies,

your right hand finds the people hostile to you.

9You make them like a blazing furnace

at the time of your appearing.

Yahweh in anger swallows them up;

fire consumes them.

10Their posterity you destroy from the earth,

their offspring from among humanity.

11When they’ve directed something bad against you,

thought up a strategy, they don’t succeed.

12Because you set them back

when you aim at their faces with your bows.

13Be on high, Yahweh, in your vigour

- we will sing and make music about your strength.

## Psalm 22:1-18 My God, My God, Why?

The leader’s. On Dawn Help. A composition. David’s.

1My God, my God, why have you abandoned me,

far away from delivering me, from the word I yell?

2My God, I call by day but you don’t answer,

and by night – there’s no quietness for me.

3But you sit as the sacred one,

the great praise of Israel.

4In you our ancestors trusted;

they trusted and you enabled them to survive.

5To you they cried out and they escaped;

in you they trusted and they were not shamed.

6But I’m a worm, not a person,

an object of reviling for human beings, an object of contempt for the people.

7All who see me ridicule me,

open their mouth, shake their head.

8’He should commit it to Yahweh, he must enable him to survive,

he must rescue him, because he delights in him’.

9Because you’re the one who enabled me to break out of the womb,

enabled me to trust at my mother’s breast.

10On you I was thrown from birth;

from my mother’s womb you were my God.

11Don’t be far away from me,

because pressure is near, and there’s no one to help.

12Many bulls have surrounded me,

sturdy Bashan steers have encircled me.

13Tearing and roaring lions

have opened their mouth at me.

14I’ve spilled out like water,

all my bones have become loose.

My mind’s become like wax;

It’s melted inside me.

15My energy’s withered like a piece of pot,

my tongue sticks to my palate.

You’ve put me into death’s dirt,

16because dogs have surrounded me.

An assembly of bad people has hemmed me in;

my hands and feet have shriveled.

17I can count all my bones,

while those people look out and see me.

18They divide my clothes for themselves;

for my garments they let lots fall.

## Psalm 22:19-31 When You Know That God Has Heard

19But you, Yahweh, don’t be far away

– my strength, come quickly as my help.

20Rescue my life from the sword,

my very self from the dog’s power.

21Deliver me from the lion’s mouth;

may you have answered me from the oryxes’ horns.

22I will recount your name to my brothers;

in the middle of the congregation I will praise you.

23You who live in awe of Yahweh, praise him,

all Jacob’s offspring, honour him!

Revere him,

all Israel’s offspring!

24Because he hasn’t despised, he hasn’t treated as abominable,

the lament of the humble.

He hasn’t hidden his face from him

but listened to his cry for help to him.

25From you will be my praise in the great congregation;

my pledges I will make good in front of the people who live in awe of him.

26Humble people will eat and be full;

people who inquire of Yahweh will praise him

– may your heart live permanently.

27All the ends of the earth will be mindful and turn back to Yahweh;

all the kin-groups of the nations will bow low before you.

28Because kingship belongs to Yahweh;

he rules over the nations.

29All the enriched of the earth have eaten, and bowed low;

before him all the people who are going down into the dirt will kneel,

and the person who hasn’t been able to keep himself alive.

30Offspring will serve him;

a generation to come will be told of my Lord.

31They will recount his faithfulness to a people to be born,

because he has acted.

## Psalm 23 In the Dark of the Canyon

A composition. David’s.

1My shepherd being Yahweh, I don’t lack;

2he enables me to lie down in grassy pastures.

He leads me to settled water;

3he turns my life back.

He guides me in faithful tracks

for the sake of his name.

4Even when I walk in a deathly dark ravine,

I’m not afraid of bad fortune,

Because you’re with me;

your club and your cane – they comfort me.

5You spread a table before me

in front of my adversaries.

You’ve enriched my head with oil;

my cup fills me up.

6Yes, goodness and commitment pursue me

all the days of my life.

I shall go back to Yahweh’s house

for long days.

## Psalm 24 Will God Let You In? Will You Let God In?

David’s. A composition.

1The earth and what fills it are Yahweh’s,

the world and the people who live in it.

2Because he founded it on the seas,

set it on the rivers.

3Who goes up onto Yahweh’s mountain,

who gets up in his sacred place?

4One clean as to the palms of his hands and pure in mind,

who has not lifted up himself to emptiness

and not sworn so as to beguile.

5He lifts a blessing from Yahweh

and faithfulness from his God who delivers.

6This is the circle of people who inquire of him,

Jacob who seek your face. *(Rise)*

7Lift your heads, gateways;

lift yourself up, age-old doors,

so that the glorious King may come in.

8’Who is he, then, the glorious King?’

– Yahweh the vigorous one and the strong man,

Yahweh the strong man in battle.

9Lift up your heads, gateways;

lift up, age-old doors,

so that the glorious King may come in.

10’Who is that, then, the glorious King?’

—the glorious King is Yahweh Armies. *(Rise)*

## Psalm 25 I Can’t Wait

David’s

1To you, Yahweh,

I lift my entire being, 2my God.

I’ve trusted in you – I must not be shamed;

my enemies must not exult about me.

3Yes, all the people who hope in you will not shamed;

the people who break faith without reason will be shamed.

4Enable me to acknowledge your ways, Yahweh,

teach me your paths.

5Direct me in your truthfulness and teach me,

because you’re my God who delivers;

in you I have hoped all day.

6Be mindful of your compassion, Yahweh, and your commitment,

because they are age-old.

7Don’t be mindful of the wrongs of my youth

and my acts of rebellion.

In accordance with your commitment be mindful of me yourself,

for the sake of your goodness, Yahweh.

8Yahweh is good and upright;

therefore he instructs wrongdoers in the way.

9He directs the humble by his authority,

teaches the humble his way.

10All Yahweh’s paths are commitment and truthfulness

to people who keep his pact, his affirmations.

11For the sake of your name, Yahweh,

pardon my waywardness, because it’s great.

12Who, then, is the individual who lives in awe of Yahweh?

– he instructs him in the way he should choose.

13His life lodges in goodness,

and his offspring possess the country.

14Yahweh’s confidences are with people who live in awe of him,

and his pact, in enabling them to acknowledge him.

15My eyes are continually toward Yahweh,

because he’s the one who gets my feet out of the net.

16Turn your face to me and be gracious to me,

because I’m alone and humble.

17The pressures in my mind have widened;

get me out from my straits.

18Look at my humbling and oppression;

carry all my wrongdoings.

19Look at my enemies, how they are many,

and at the violent hostility they show to me.

20Keep my life, rescue me;

I must not be shamed, because I’ve taken shelter with you.

21Integrity and uprightness must preserve me,

because I’ve hoped in you.

22God, redeem Israel

from all its pressures.

## Psalm 26 I Wash My Hands in Innocence

David’s

1Exercise authority for me, Yahweh,

because I – I have walked in integrity.

In Yahweh I’ve trusted;

I don’t slip.

2Probe me, Yahweh, try me,

test my inner being and my mind.

3Because your commitment is in front of my eyes;

I walk about by your truthfulness.

4I haven’t sat with empty men;

I don’t come with deceitful people.

5I’m hostile to the congregation of people who deal badly;

I don’t sit with the faithless.

6I wash the palms of my hands with freedom froim guilt

so that I may go about your altar, Yahweh,

7To let people hear the sound of confession,

to recount all your extraordinary deeds.

8Yahweh, I’m loyal to the abode that is your house,

the dwelling place of your splendour.

9Don’t gather me up with wrongdoers,

my life with men of bloodshed,

10In whose hand is deliberate wickedness,

and whose right hand is full of bribes.

11But I’m one who walks in my integrity;

redeem me, be gracious to me!

12My foot has stood on level ground;

in the great congregation I will bless Yahweh.

## Psalm 27 One Thing

David’s

1Yahweh is my light, my deliverance:

of whom should I be afraid?

Yahweh is the stronghold of my life:

of whom should I be in dread?

2When people who deal badly drew near me,

to devour my flesh,

My adversaries and my enemies:

those people collapsed, fell.

3If an army camps against me,

my heart will not be afraid.

If battle arises against me,

during this I trust.

4One thing I’ve asked from Yahweh,

it’s what I seek,

For me to live in Yahweh’s house,

all the days of my life,

To behold Yahweh’s loveliness,

and to consult each morning in his palace.

5Because he keeps me safe in his shelter

on the day of bad fortune.

He hides me in his tent as a hiding place;

he lifts me high on a crag.

6So now my head is high,

above my enemies round me.

In his tent I will offer noisy sacrifices;

I will sing and make music for Yahweh.

7Listen, Yahweh, to my voice when I call;

be gracious to me, answer me.

8For you my mind said,

‘Seek my face!’

Your face I seek, Yahweh:

9don’t hide your face from me.

Don’t turn aside your servant in anger;

you’ve been my help.

Don’t leave me, don’t abandon me,

my God who delivers.

10When my father and my mother have abandoned me,

then Yahweh will take me in.

11Instruct me in your way, Yahweh,

lead me on a level path.

In view of the people watching for me,

12don’t give me over to the will of my adversaries.

Because there have arisen against me false witnesses,

a person who testifies violence.

13Unless I trusted to see good things from Yahweh

in the country of the living….

14Hope in Yahweh, be strong,

may your mind stand firm, hope in Yahweh!

## Psalm 28 Our Vigour and God’s

David’s

1To you, Yahweh, I call;

my crag, don’t be deaf toward me,

So that you aren’t silent in relation to me,

and I become like the people who go down into the Cistern.

2Listen to the sound of my prayers for grace,

when I cry for help to you,

When I lift up my hands

to your sacred inner room.

3Don’t drag me off with faithless people,

with people who devise trouble,

People who speak of well-being with their neighbours,

when there is bad dealing in their mind.

4Give to them in accordance with their doings,

in accordance with the badness of their deeds.

In accordance with the action of their hands give to them,

give back their dealing to them.

5Because they don’t consider Yahweh’s acts,

the work of his hands;

may he tear them down and not build them up.

6Yahweh be blessed,

because he’s heard the sound of my prayers for grace.

7Yahweh is my vigour and my shield;

in him my mind has trusted, and I will find help.

My mind has exulted,

and I will glorify him with my song.

8Yahweh is vigour for him and stronghold;

he is the great deliverance of his anointed.

9Deliver your people, bless your domain,

shepherd them and carry them permanently.

## Psalm 29 Yahweh’s Voice Produces Convusions

A composition. David’s.

1Give Yahweh, you divine beings,

give Yahweh splendour and vigour.

2Give Yahweh the glory of his name,

bow low to Yahweh in sacred array.

3Yahweh’s voice was over the water,

the glorious God thundered,

Yahweh over mighty water.

4Yahweh’s voice was with energy;

Yahweh’s voice was with magnificence.

5Yahweh’s voice breaks cedars;

Yahweh breaks off cedars of Lebanon.

6He makes them jump like a calf,

Lebanon and Siryon like a young oryx.

7Yahweh’s voice splits flames of fire,

8Yahweh’s voice convulses the wilderness,

Yahweh convulses the Qadesh Wilderness.

9Yahweh’s voice convulses oaks,

strips forests.

In his palace everyone in it says,

‘In splendour 10Yahweh sat on high;

Yahweh sat as king permanently’.

11Yahweh gives vigour to his people;

Yahweh blesses his people with well-being.

## Psalm 30 I Prayed, Yahweh Answered, Yahweh Acted

A composition. A song at the dedication of the house. David’s.

1I will exalt you, Yahweh, because you put me down,

but did not let my enemies rejoice about me.

2Yahweh my God,

I cried for help to you, and you healed me.

3Yahweh, you got my life up from She’ol,

you kept me alive from going down into the Cistern.

4Make music for Yahweh, you who are committed to him,

confess his sacred commemoration,

5Because there’s a moment in his anger,

a life in his acceptance.

In the evening crying lodges,

but at morning there’s resounding.

6I – I had said when I was at ease,

‘I shall not slip ever’.

7Yahweh, in your acceptance

You’d put in place vigour for my mountain.

You hid your face;

I became fearful.

8To you, Yahweh, I would call,

to my Lord I would pray for grace.

9’What would be the gain in my blood being shed,

in my going down to She’ol?

Can dirt confess you,

can it tell of your truthfulness?

10Listen, Yahweh, be gracious to me;

Yahweh, be a helper for me.

11You turned my lament into dancing for me,

you undid my sack and belted me with rejoicing,

12so that my heart might make music and not stop;

Yahweh my God, I will confess you permanently.

## Psalm 31 My Times Are in Your Hand

The leader’s. A composition. David’s.

1Since I’ve take shelter with you, Yahweh,

may I never be shamed;

enable me to survive by your faithfulness.

2Bend your ear to me,

hurry and rescue me.

Be for me a crag, a stronghold,

a fortress to deliver me.

3Because you’re my cliff, my stronghold;

for your name’s sake lead me and guide me.

4Do get me out of the net that they concealed for me,

because you’re my stronghold.

5Into your hand I assign my spirit;

You’ve redeemed me, Yahweh, truthful God.

6I’m hostile to people who keep things that are empty and hollow;

I myself trust in Yahweh.

7I shall celebrate and rejoice in your commitment,

you who’ve seen my humbling;

you’ve acknowledged the pressures on me.

8You haven’t delivered me into the hand of the enemy;

You’ve stood my feet in a wide place.

9Be gracious to me, Yahweh,

because there’s pressure on me.

My eye wastes away because of vexation;

my entire being and my body.

10Because my life comes to a finish in sadness,

my years in groaning.

My energy has collapsed because of my waywardness,

my bones waste away.

11Before all my adversaries I’ve become an object of reviling,

and very much so for my neighbours,

A dread to my acquaintances;

people who see me in the street flee away from me.

12I’m put out of mind like someone who’s died;

I’ve become like a container perishing.

13Because I’ve heard the smears of many people,

alarm all round,

As they scheme together against me;

they’ve conspired to take my life.

14But I – I’ve trusted in you, Yahweh;

I’ve said, ‘You are my God’.

15My times are in your hand;

rescue me from the hand of my enemies, from my pursuers.

16May your face shine upon your servant;

deliver me, in your commitment.

17Yahweh, may I not be shamed, because I have called you;

may the faithless people be shamed.

As they go silent to She’ol,

18may false lips be quiet,

Which speak arrogantly against the faithful,

with majesty and contempt.

19How much good you have,

which you’ve stored up for those who live in awe of you,

With which you’ve acted toward those who take shelter with you,

in front of people.

20You hide them in a hiding place in your presence

from human plots.

You conceal them in a bivouac

from arguing tongues.

21Yahweh be blessed,

because he has been extraordinary in his commitment to me,

as a town besieged.

22I myself had said in my haste,

‘I’m cut off at a distance from your eyes’.

On the contrary, you heard my voice praying for grace,

when I cried out for help to you.

23Be loyal to Yahweh, all you who are committed to him;

Yahweh preserves the people who are true,

but makes good plentifully to the person who acts with majesty.

24Be strong; your mind should stand firm,

all you who wait for Yahweh.

## Psalm 32 Love Covers a Multitude of Sins

David’s. An instruction.

1The blessings of the one whose rebellion is carried,

whose wrongdoing is covered!

2The blessings of the person

whose waywardness Yahweh does not think about,

in whose spirit there is no deceit!

3When I was silent,

my bones wasted away with my anguish all day.

4Because day and night your hand was heavy on me;

my strength was sapped [as] in summer drought. *(Rise)*

5I acknowledged my wrongdoing to you;

I didn’t cover my waywardness.

I said, ‘I shall confess my rebellions to Yahweh’,

and you yourself carried the waywardness of my wrongdoing. *(Rise)*

6Because of this everyone who is committed should plead with you,

at the time when he is found out.

Yes, when much water overwhelms,

it will not reach him.

7You’re a hiding place for me, you preserve me from trouble,

you surround me with survival shouts.

8’I shall give you insight, instruct you in the way you should go;

I shall offer counsel, my eye on you.

9Don’t be like a horse,

like a mule that has no understanding,

Whose advance requires curbing with bit and bridle,

or there is no coming near you’.

10Many are the pains of the faithless,

but the person who trusts in Yahweh –commitment surrounds him.

11Rejoice in Yahweh, celebrate, you faithful;

shout, all you upright of mind.

## Psalm 33 God’s Commitment Fills the Earth

1Resound, faithful people, in Yahweh;

praise is fitting for the upright.

2Confess Yahweh with the mandolin;

make music for him with the ten-stringed guitar.

3Sing him a new song;

do well in playing, with a shout.

4Because Yahweh’s word is upright,

and every act of his is done in truthfulness.

5He’s loyal to faithfulness in exercising authority;

Yahweh’s commitment fills the earth.

6By Yahweh’s word the heavens were made,

by the breath of his mouth all their army,

7Gathering the sea’s water as in a dam,

putting the deeps in treasuries.

8All the earth is to live in awe of Yahweh;

all the world’s inhabitants are to revere him.

9Because he’s the one who spoke, and it happened;

he’s the one who ordered, and it stood up.

10Yahweh has contravened the nations’ counsel,

frustrated the peoples’ intentions.

11Yahweh’s counsel stands permanently,

the intentions of his mind for generation after generation.

12The blessings of the nation for which Yahweh is its God,

the people he chose as a domain for himself!

13From the heavens Yahweh has looked,

seen all humanity.

14From the established place where he lives he’s gazed

at all the people who live on the earth,

15The one who shapes their mind, all together,

who considers all their actions.

16There is no king who delivers himself by the abundance of his resources;

a strong man doesn’t rescue himself by the abundance of his energy.

17The horse is a falsehood for deliverance,

and by the abundance of its forcefulness it doesn’t provide escape.

18There, it’s Yahweh’s eye that’s on people who live in awe of him,

people who wait for his commitment,

19To rescue their life from death,

and keep them alive in famine.

20Our entire being hopes for Yahweh;

he is our help and our shield.

21Because in him our heart rejoices;

because in his sacred name we’ve trusted.

22May your commitment be over us, Yahweh,

as we’ve waited for you.

## Psalm 34 Look to Him and Become Bright

David’s. When he concealed his sanity before Abimelek so that he drove him out, and he went.

1I will bless Yahweh all the time;

his praise will be in my mouth continually.

2In Yahweh my entire being takes pride;

the humble should listen and rejoice.

3Magnify Yahweh with me;

we’ll exalt his name together.

4I inquired of Yahweh and he answered me,

and rescued me from all my terrors.

5People look to him and become bright;

their faces need not be confounded.

6This humble man called and Yahweh himself listened,

and delivered him from all his pressures.

7Yahweh’s envoy camps round the people who live in awe of him

and pulls them out.

8Taste and see that Yahweh is good;

the blessings of the man who takes shelter with him!

9Live in awe of Yahweh, you who are his sacred ones,

because there’s no lack for people who live in awe of him.

10Lions are destitute and starve,

but people who inquire of Yahweh don’t lack any good thing.

11Come, children, listen to me;

I’ll teach you about awe for Yahweh.

12Who’s the individual who delights in life,

who loves days for seeing good fortune?

13Preserve your tongue from what is bad,

your lips from speaking a lie.

14Depart from what’s bad and do what’s good;

seek well-being, pursue it.

15Yahweh’s eyes are on the faithful,

his ears are to their cry for help.

16Yahweh’s face is against people who do what’s bad,

to cut off their commemoration from the country.

17People cry out, and Yahweh listens,

and rescues them from all their pressures.

18Yahweh is near to the people who are breaking inside,

and delivers the people who are crushed in spirit.

19When the bad things that come to the faithful person are many,

Yahweh rescues him from them all.

20He keeps all his bones;

not one of them breaks.

21Bad fortune brings the death of the faithless person,

and the people who are hostile to the faithful incur liability.

22Yahweh redeems the life of his servants,

and none who take shelter with him incur liability.

## Psalm 35:1-16 Argue for Me

David’s.

1Argue with the people who argue with me, Yahweh,

battle with the people who battle me.

2Take strong hold of hand-shield and body-shield,

and arise as my help.

3Draw lance and pike

to meet my pursuers.

Say to me,

‘I am your deliverance’.

4They must be shamed and disgraced,

the people seeking my life.

They must turn backward and be confounded,

the people thinking up something bad for me.

5They must be like chaff before the wind,

with Yahweh’s envoy chasing.

6Their way must be darkness and slipperiness,

with Yahweh’s envoy pursuing them.

7Because for nothing they’ve hidden their net’s pit for me,

for nothing they dug it for my life.

8Devastation must come that he doesn’t know,

his own net that he hid must catch him,

as devastation may he fall into it.

9But my entire being will rejoice in Yahweh,

it shall be glad at his deliverance.

10All my bones will say,

‘Yahweh, who is like you,

One who rescues the humble person from the one stronger than him,

the humble and needy person from the robber?’

11Violent witnesses arise,

people who ask me about what I don’t acknowledge.

12They make good to me with bad for good,

mourning for my entire being.

13But I – when they were ill,

my clothing was sack.

I humbled myself with fasting,

and my plea would turn back to my heart.

14I walked about as if it was my friend, as if it was a brother;

as if I were a mother grieving, mourning, gloomy.

15But at my stumbling they’ve rejoiced and gathered,

gathered against me as assailants.

People I didn’t know

have torn at me and not stopped.

16As the most profane twisted people who ridicule,

they have ground their teeth against me.

## Psalm 35:17-28 ‘We’ve Swallowed Him Up!’

17Lord, how long until you see?

– bring back my life from their devastation,

my dear life from the lions.

18I shall confess you in the great congregation,

among a numerous people I shall praise you.

19My lying enemies must not rejoice at me,

the people hostile to me for nothing, who glint their eyes.

20Because they don’t speak of peace;

they’re against the quiet people in the country.

They think up false statements,

21and they’ve widened their mouth against me.

They have said,

‘Ah, ah, our eye has seen it!’

22You’ve seen, Yahweh, don’t be silent;

Lord, don’t be far away from me!

23Stir yourself, wake up, to exercise authority for me,

to argue for me, my God and Lord!

24Exercise authority for me in accordance with your faithfulness,

Yahweh my God; they mustn’t rejoice over me.

25They must not say inside, ‘Ah, our desire!’

– they must not say, ‘We’ve swallowed him up!’

26They must be shamed and confounded altogether,

the people who rejoice at bad fortune coming to me.

They must be clothed in disgrace and shame,

the people who act big over me.

27They must resound and rejoice,

the people who delight in the faithfulness shown me,

So that they will say continually, ‘Yahweh is great,

the one who delights in the well-being of his servant’.

28And my tongue will tell of your faithfulness,

of your praise all day.

## Psalm 36 Your Truthfulness Reaches to the Skies

The leader’s. Yahweh’s servant’s. David’s.

1A rebellious utterance by a faithless person

is in my mind.

There is no reverence for God

in front of his eyes.

2Because he flatters himself in his own eyes,

about being found out for his waywardness, about meeting hostility.

3The words of his mouth are trouble and deceit;

he’s left off having insight, doing good.

4He thinks up trouble on his bed,

he takes his stand on a no-good way, he doesn’t reject what is bad.

5Yahweh, your commitment is in the heavens,

your truthfulness reaches as far as the skies.

6Your faithfulness is like supernatural mountains,

your authority is like the great deep.

Human being and animal you deliver, Yahweh;

7how valuable is your commitment.

Divine beings and human beings

take shelter in the shadow of your wings.

8They feast on the richness of your house,

you let them drink from your lovely wadi.

9Because with you there is a living spring;

in your light we see light.

10Draw out your commitment to the people who acknowledge you,

your faithfulness to the upright in mind.

11The majestic foot must not come on me,

the hand of faithless people must not make me flee.

12The people who devise trouble have fallen there,

they have been thrown down, they can’t get up.

## Psalm 37:1-20 The Humble Will Enter into Possession of the Land

David’s

1Don’t get into a rage because of people who deal badly,

don’t get passionate because of people who do evil.

2Because like grass they fade quickly,

like green plants they wither.

3Trust in Yahweh and do good,

dwell in the country and pasture on truthfulness.

4Revel in Yahweh,

and he’ll give you the requests of your heart.

5Commit your way to Yahweh;

trust in him and he’ll act,

6He’ll bring out faithfulness for you like light,

exercise of authority for you like midday.

7Be still before Yahweh,

and wait patiently for him.

Don’t get into a rage with the person who makes his way successful,

with the individual who acts on his strategies.

8Let go of anger, abandon wrath;

don’t get into a rage, only to do something bad.

9Because people who deal badly will be cut off,

but those who hope in Yahweh – they’ll enter into possession of the country.

10Yet a little while and there’ll be no faithless person;

you’ll consider his place, and there’ll be no one.

11The humble – they’ll enter into possession of the country

and revel in abundance of well-being.

12The faithless person schemes against the faithful

and grinds his teeth against him.

13The Lord makes fun of him,

because he’s seen that his day will come.

14Faithless people have drawn the sword,

and directed their bow,

To make the humble and needy fall,

to slaughter people who are upright in their way.

15Their sword will come into their own heart,

their bows will break.

16Better is the little of the faithful

than the great mass of the faithless.

17Because the arms of the faithless will break,

but Yahweh upholds the faithful.

18Yahweh will acknowledge the days of people of integrity,

and their domain will last permanently.

19They won’t be shamed at a time when things are bad,

and in days of famine they’ll be full.

20Because faithless people will perish,

Yahweh’s enemies.

They’ll come to a finish like the most valuable of pastures,

come to a finish in smoke.

## Psalm 37:21-40 What I”ve Seen and Not Seen

21The faithless person borrows and cannot make good,

but the faithful person is gracious and gives.

22Because the people blessed by him will enter into possession of the country,

but the people slighted by him will be cut off.

23A man’s steps are established by Yahweh,

when he delights in his way.

24When he falls he’s not thrown headlong,

because Yahweh supports with his hand.

25I was young and yes, I’m old,

but I haven’t seen a faithful person abandoned,

or his offspring seeking bread.

26All day he’s gracious and lends,

and his offspring are a blessing.

27Depart from what’s bad and do good,

and dwell permanently.

28Because Yahweh is loyal to the exercise of authority,

and doesn’t abandon people committed to him.

They are kept watch over permanently,

but the offspring of the faithless are cut off.

29Faithful people will enter into possession of the country,

and dwell for ever and ever.

30The mouth of the faithful person murmurs smartness,

and his tongue speaks with authority.

31His God’s instruction is in his mind;

his steps don’t slip.

32The faithless person watches for the faithful,

and seeks to to put him to death.

33Yahweh doesn’t abandon him into his hand,

and doesn’t declare him in the wrong when entering into judgment about him.

34Hope in Yahweh,

and keep his way.

He’ll raise you up so that you enter into possession of the country;

when the faithless are cut off, you’ll see.

35I’ve seen a faithless man, violent,

arousing himself like a verdant native tree,

36But he passed on – there, he was gone;

I sought him and he couldn’t be found.

37Keep watch on the person of integrity, see the upright person,

because there is a future for the man of peace.

38But rebels are annihilated all at once;

the future of the faithless is cut off.

39The deliverance of the faithful comes from Yahweh,

their stronghold in time of pressure.

40Yahweh helps them and enables them to survive,

he enables them to survive from the faithless and delivers them,

because they take shelter with him.

## Psalm 38 Suffering Can Sometimes Link to Sin

A composition. David’s. For commemoration

1Yahweh, don’t reprove me in your fury,

or discipline me in your wrath.

2Because your arrows have descended on me,

your hand has descended upon me.

3There’s no integrity in my body by reason of your condemnation;

there’s no well-being in my bones by reason of my wrongdoings.

4Because my wayward acts have passed over my head;

like a heavy burden, they’re too heavy for me.

5My wounds have smelled and festered

by reason of my denseness.

6Because I went astray, I’m utterly bowed down;

all day I’ve gone about gloomy.

7Because my thighs are full of burning,

and there is no integrity in my body.

8I’ve become numb, utterly crushed;

I howl because of the rumbling in my heart.

9Lord, all my longing is in front of you;

my groaning has not hidden from you.

10My heart has taken flight, my energy has abandoned me;

the light in my eyes – they, too, are not with me.

11My friends and my neighbours

stand back at a distance from my affliction.

The people near me have stood far off,

12and people who seek my life have laid traps.

People who inquire about something bad for me have spoken malice;

all day they murmur lies.

13But I myself am like a deaf person, I cannot hear,

like a dumb person who cannot open his mouth.

14I’ve become like someone who doesn’t hear;

there’s no reproof in my mouth.

15Because I’ve waited for you, Yahweh;

you – you will answer, Lord my God.

16Because I said, ‘They must not rejoice about me;

when my foot slipped, they acted big over me’.

17Because I am set for stumbling;

my pain is in front of me continually.

18Because I tell of my waywardness,

I’m anxious because of my wrongdoings.

19My mortal enemies are numerous,

the people hostile to me with falsehood are many.

20The people who makes good with something bad for something good

attack me on account of my pursuing what is good.

21Don’t abandon me, Yahweh;

my God, don’t be far from me.

22Hurry to my help,

Lord my deliverance.

## Psalm 39 Just a Breath

The leader’s. Yedutun’s. A composition. David’s.

1I said, ‘I shall keep watch on my ways,

so that I don’t do wrong with my tongue.

I shall keep a muzzle on my mouth,

as long as a faithless person is in front of me’.

2I was dumb, in silence;

I was quiet, more than it was good.

And as my pain stirred,

3my mind became heated inside me.

As I murmured, fire burned up;

I spoke out with my tongue.

4Get me to acknowledge my end, Yahweh,

the number of my days, what it is.

5There, you made my days handbreadths;

my span is as nothing in front of you.

Yes, every human being, standing firm, is simply a breath; (*Rise*)

6yes, it’s as a shadow that a person walks about.

Yes, it’s for a breath that people are in turmoil;

someone may heap up, but not know who’s going to gather them in.

7So now, what have I hoped for, Lord?

– my waiting is for you.

8Rescue me from all my acts of rebellion,

don’t make me an object of reviling to the villain.

9I was dumb, I didn’t open my mouth,

because you were the one who acted.

10Turn away your affliction from me;

because of the blow of your hand I – I am finished.

11With reproofs for waywardness you’ve disciplined someone,

and consumed like a moth what he desires;

yes, every human being is a breath. (*Rise*)

12Listen to my plea, Yahweh, give ear to my cry for help,

don’t be silent at my crying.

Because I’m a sojourner with you,

a transient like all my ancestors.

13Look away from me so that I may smile,

before I go and there is nothing of me.

## Psalm 40 I Didn’t Hide Your Faithfulness Within My Heart

The leader’s. David’s. A composition.

1I hoped and hoped in Yahweh,

and he bent to me and listened to my cry for help.

2He got me up from a roaring cistern,

from the overflowing mud.

He set up my feet on a cliff,

he established my steps.

3He put a new song in my mouth,

an act of praise to our God.

Many could see it and live in awe,

and trust in Yahweh.

4The blessings of the man

who makes Yahweh his trust

And has not turned his face to the arrogant

or to people who follow a lie!

5You, Yahweh, my God,

have done many things.

Your extraordinary deeds and your intentions for us

– there is no one to set alongside you.

Were I to tell and speak,

they are too numerous to recount.

6Sacrifice and offering you didn’t want

– you dug ears for me;

burnt offering and purification offering you didn’t ask for.

7Then I said, ‘Here, I’ve come;

in a written scroll it is inscribed for me.

8I wanted to do what’s acceptable to you, my God;

your instruction was within my inmost self.

9I announced the news of your faithfulness in the great congregation;

there – I wouldn’t close my lips,

as Yahweh, you yourself know.

10I didn’t hide your faithfulness within my heart;

I told of your truthfulness and your deliverance.

I didn’t conceal your true commitment

before the great congregation.

11You, Yahweh,

may you not close up your compassion from me;

may your true commitment preserve me continually.

12Because bad experiences have surrounded me,

beyond numbering.

My wayward acts have caught up with me;

I haven’t been able to see.

They’re more numerous than the hairs on my head;

my mind has abandoned me.

13Show acceptance, Yahweh, by rescuing me;

Yahweh, hurry to my help.

14May they be shamed and reviled altogether,

the people who seek my life, to destroy it.

May they turn backward and be confounded,

the people who want what is bad for me.

15May they be desolate on account of their shame,

the people who say to me ‘Ah, ah!’

16May they celebrate and rejoice in you, all the people who seek you;

may they say continually ‘Yahweh is great’,

the people loyal to your deliverance.

17But I’m humble and needy;

may my Lord take thought for me.

You’re my help and the one who enables me to survive;

my God, don’t delay!

## Psalm 41:1-12 Learning from the Poor

The leader’s. A composition. David’s.

1The blessings of the one who has insight into the poor person,

whom Yahweh saves on the day when bad things happen!

2Yahweh keeps watch over him and keeps him alive,

and blesses him in the country,

and you won’t give him to the appetite of his enemies.

3Yahweh sustains him on his sickbed;

his entire bed you’ve transformed, in his illness.

4I myself said, ‘Yahweh, be gracious to me;

heal me, because I have done wrong in relation to you.

5My enemies speak of bad fortune for me:

‘When will he die, and his name perish?

6If he comes to see [someone],

he speaks emptiness.

His mind collects trouble for himself,

which he speaks when he goes outside’.

7All the people hostile to me whisper together against me;

they think up bad things for me.

8‘A lethal pestilence besets him;

in that he has laid down, he won’t not get up again’.

9Even my friend whom I trusted,

one who eats bread with me,

has acted big against me as a cheat.

10But you, Yahweh, be gracious to me,

raise me up, and I’ll make good to them.

11Through this I have acknowledged that you delighted in me,

because my enemy does not shout over me,

12And I – in my integrity you’ve taken hold of me,

and stood me up before you permanently.

## Psalm 41:13 An Interim Closing Act of Praise

13Yahweh the God of Israel be blessed,

from age to age,

Amen, Amen.

## Psalm 42 Where Is Your God?

The leader’s. An instruction. The Qorahites’.

1Like a deer that strains toward water canyons,

so my entire being strains toward you, God.

2My entire being is thirsty for God,

for the living God;

When will I come

and appear before God?

3My crying has become my food,

day and night,

While people say to me all day,

‘Where is your God?’

4These things I shall bring to mind,

as I pour out my entire being within me:

That I shall pass along in the shelter,

lead people right to God’s house,

With a voice of resounding and confession,

the festive crowd.

5Why do you bow low, my entire being,

[why] are you in turmoil within me?

Wait for God, because I shall yet confess him

for the deliverance that comes from his face.

6My God, my entire being bows low within me;

therefore I bring you to mind,

From the Jordan region and the Hermons,

from Little Mountain.

7Deep is calling to deep,

in the sound of your waterfalls.

All your breakers and your waves

have passed over me.

8By day may Yahweh order his commitment,

and by night may his song be with me.

A plea to my living God:

9I will say to God, my cliff,

‘Why have you put me out of mind,

why do I go about gloomy,

With affliction from an enemy,

10with murder in my bones?

My adversaries have reviled me,

while they say to me all day,

‘Where is your God?’

11Why do you bow low, my entire being,

and why are you in turmoil within me?

Wait for God, because I shall yet confess him,

as the deliverance of my face and my God.

## Psalm 43 God’s Light and Truthfulness to Lead Me

1Exercise authority for me, God,

argue for my cause.

From a nation that is not committed,

from a deceitful and evil individual, enable me to survive.

2Because you are God my stronghold;

why have you rejected me?

Why do I go about gloomy,

through an enemy’s affliction?

3Send your light and your truthfulness, they will lead me;

they will bring me to your sacred mountain, to your great dwelling,

4So that I can come to God’s altar,

to the God in whom I rejoice joyfully,

and confess you with the guitar,

God my God.

5Why do you bow low, my entire being,

and why are you in turmoil within me?

Wait for God, because I shall yet confess him

as the deliverance of my face and my God.

## Psalm 44:1-16 It’s Not in My Bow that I Trust

The leader’s. The Qorahites’. An instruction.

1God, we’ve heard with our ears,

our ancestors have recounted to us,

The deed you did in their days, in past days,

2you yourself with your own hand.

You dispossessed nations and planted them;

you brought bad fortune on peoples and sent them off.

3Because it was not by their sword that they entered into possession of the country,

it was not their arm that delivered them,

But your hand and your arm, and the light of your face,

because you accepted them.

4You are my king, God;

order Jacob’s deliverance!

5Through you we charge at our adversaries,

by your name we tread down our attackers.

6Because it’s not in my bow that I trust;

my sword doesn’t deliver me.

7Because you’ve delivered us from our adversaries,

and shamed the people hostile to us.

8God is the one whom we praise all day;

your name we shall confess permanently. (*Rise*)

9Yet you’ve rejected and disgraced us,

and you don’t go out with our armies.

10You turn us back from the adversary,

and the people hostile to us have plundered us at will.

11You make us like sheep for food,

and you’ve scattered us among the nations.

12You sell your people without profit;

you didn’t go high in their price.

13You make us an object of reviling to our neighbours,

an object of ridicule and derision to the people round us.

14You make us an object lesson among the nations,

something to shake the head at among the peoples.

15All day my disgrace is in front of me;

the shame of my face has covered me,

16At the voice of the person reviling and insulting,

at the presence of the enemy exacting redress.

## Psalm 44:17-26 Wake Up, God!

17All this has come upon us and we haven’t put you out of mind;

we haven’t been false to your pact.

18Our mind has not turned backward;

our steps have not deviated from your path,

19That you should have crushed us into the place of jackals,

covered us over with deathly darkness.

20If we’d put our God’s name out of mind,

and spread our palms to a foreign god,

21God would search this out, wouldn’t he,

because he knows the mind’s secrets.

22Rather, it’s because of you that we’ve been run through all day;

we have been thought of as sheep for slaughter.

23Rise up, why do you sleep, Lord?

– wake up, don’t reject permanently!

24Why do you hide your face,

put our humbling and affliction out of mind?

25Because our being bows down in the dirt,

our heart clings to the ground.

26Get up as our help,

redeem us for the sake of your commitment!

## Psalm 45 The Marriage Challenge

The leader’s. On Lotuses. The Qorahites’. An instruction. A love song.

1My mind stirs with a fine message;

I’m speaking my work to a king,

my tongue is the pen of a speedy secretary.

2You’re the most handsome of human beings;

grace is poured onto your lips

– therefore God has blessed you permanently.

3Wrap your sword onto your side,

strong man, with your grandeur and magnificence,

4and in your magnificence win.

Ride in the cause of truthfulness and faithful lowliness,

so that your right hand directs you to awe-inspiring deeds.

5Your arrows are sharpened;

peoples are beneath you.

They fall in the heart of the king’s enemies;

6your throne, God’s, is lasting and permanent.

Your royal club is an upright club;

7you’re loyal to faithfulness and you’re hostile to faithlessness.

Therefore God, your God,

has anointed you with celebratory oil beyond your companions.

8All your clothes are myrrh, aloes, and cassia;

from your great ivory palace strings entertain you.

9The great princess stands in your jewels,

the queen at your right hand in gold of Ophir.

10Listen, young lady, look, bend your ear;

put out of mind your people, your father’s household.

11The king will desire your beauty;

because he’s your lord, bow low to him.

12The daughter town of Tsor will seek your goodwill with a gift,

the wealthiest of the people 13with all splendour.

To the inside, the princess, with her gold embroidery,

her dress 14of coloured cloth, will be taken to the king,

The girls behind her, her friends,

will be brought to you.

15They’ll be taken with joyful celebration;

They’ll come into the king’s palace.

16In place of your ancestors will be your sons;

you will appoint them as officials throughout the country.

17I shall make mention of your name in every generation after generation;

therefore peoples will confess you lastingly, permanently.

## Psalm 46 Be Still and Know that I Am God

The leader’s. The Qorahites’. On Secrets. A song.

1God is for us shelter and vigour,

a help in pressures, readily to be found.

2Therefore we’re not afraid when the earth moves,

when mountains slip into the middle of the seas.

3Its water may be in turmoil and foam,

the mountains may quake when it lifts up high. *(Rise)*

4A river with its streams rejoices God’s town,

the sacred place where the great dwelling of the One on High is.

5God being in the middle of it, it will not slip;

God helps it as morning turns its face.

6Nations are in turmoil, kingdoms slip;

when he gives his voice, earth dissolves.

7Yahweh Armies is with us;

Jacob’s God is a turret for us. (*Rise*)

8Go behold the deeds of Yahweh,

who causing great destruction in the earth,

9Stopping battles

as far as the end of the earth,

When he breaks up the bow and snaps the lance,

burns chariots in the fire.

10’Relax, and acknowledge that I am God;

I will be high among the nations, I will be high in the earth’.

11Yahweh Armies is with us;

Jacob’s God is a turret for us. *(Rise)*

## Psalm 47 The Outrageous Confession

The leader’s. The Qorahites’. A composition.

1All you peoples, clap the palms of your hands,

shout to God with a resounding voice.

2Because Yahweh, the One on High, is awe-inspiring,

the great king over all the earth.

3He subdues peoples under us,

nations under our feet.

4He chooses our domain for us,

the majesty of Jacob to whom he is loyal. *(Rise)*

5God has gone up with a shout,

Yahweh with the sound of a horn.

6Make music for God, make music;

make music for our king, make music.

7Because God is king of all the earth;

make music with insight.

8God has become king over the nations;

God has sat on his sacred throne.

9The leaders of the peoples have gathered,

the people of Abraham’s God.

Because the shields of the earth belong to God;

he has gone up very high.

## Psalm 48 Our Town

A song. A composition. The Qorahites’.

1Yahweh is great, and much to be praised,

in our God’s town.

His sacred mountain 2is a beauty of a height,

the greatest joy in all the earth.

The heights of Tsaphon are Mount Zion,

the great king’s town.

3In its citadels God

has caused himself to be acknowledged as a turret.

4Because there – the kings assembled,

passed along together.

5When those men saw, they were stunned,

they were frightened, they made haste.

6Trembling grasped them there,

writhing like a woman in labour.

7With an east wind

you break up Tarshish ships.

8As we’ve heard, so we’ve seen,

in Yahweh Armies’ town,

in our God’s town,

which God will establish permanently. *(Rise)*

9God, we have reflected on your commitment,

within your palace.

10God, like your name,

so your praise reaches to the ends of the earth.

Your right hand is full of faithfulness;

11Mount Zion will rejoice.

Judah’s towns will celebrate

on account of your rulings.

12Go round Zion, circle it,

count its towers.

13Set your mind on its rampart,

tour its citadels,

so that you can recount to a future age

14that this is God,

our God lastingly and permanently

– he will direct us against death.

## Psalm 49 You Can’t Take It with You

The leader’s. The Qorahites’. A composition.

1Listen to this, all you peoples;

give ear, all you inhabitants of the world,

2Both ordinary people and important people,

wealthy and needy together.

3My mouth will speak smartness,

the murmur from my mind will be understanding.

4I shall bend my ear to a poem,

resolve my conundrum with the guitar.

5Why should I be afraid in bad days,

when the waywardness of people cheating me surrounds me,

6People who trust in their resources,

and take pride in the abundance of their wealth?

7Huh; it definitely can’t redeem someone;

it can’t give God his ransom.

8The redemption of his life would be expensive;

it would be insufficient permanently,

9So that he should live on permanently,

not see the pit.

10Because one can see that smart people die,

the dimwit and stupid person perish together.

They abandon their resources to others,

11whereas their inward thought is that their home will be permanent,

Their dwelling to generation after generation

—they had called lands by their names.

12A human being does not lodge in honour;

he is like cattle that are terminated.

13This is the way things are for them, the people characterized by dimwittedness,

and after them the people who accept their talk. *(Rise)*

14Like sheep they’ve headed for She’ol;

death shepherds them.

The upright hold sway over them at morning,

and their form is for wasting in She’ol,

away from its lofty home.

15Yet God will redeem my life from the hand of She’ol,

because he will take me. *(Rise)*

16Don’t be afraid when someone becomes wealthy,

when the splendour of his house becomes great,

17Because when he dies he doesn’t take it all;

his splendour doesn’t go down after him.

18If he blesses himself in his lifetime,

and people confess you, that you do well for yourself,

19He comes to the circle of his ancestors;

never does he see the light.

20A human being in honour but who does not have understanding

is like cattle that are terminated.

## Psalm 50 Keep it Simple

A composition. Asaph’s.

1God, Yahweh God, has spoken,

and called the earth from the rising of the sun as far as its going down.

2From Zion, the fullness of beauty,

God has shone out; 3our God comes and cannot be silent.

Fire devours before him,

and round him it has stormed greatly.

4He calls to the heavens above,

and to the earth for a judgment about his people.

5’Gather to me the people committed to me,

the people who sealed a pact with me over a sacrifice’.

6The heavens have told of his faithfulness,

because he is a God who exercises authority. *(Rise)*

7Listen, my people, and I will speak;

Israel, and I will testify against you –

I am God, your God.

8About your sacrifices I don’t reprove you,

and your burnt offerings are continually in front of me.

9I would not take a bull from your house,

goats from your pens.

10Because every animal in the forest is mine,

the cattle on a thousand mountains.

11I know every bird in the mountains,

and every creature of the wild is with me.

12If I were hungry, I would not say so to you,

because the world and what fills it is mine.

13Do I eat the flesh of the sturdy

or drink the blood of goats?

14Sacrifice a thank-offering to God,

and make good your pledges to the One on High.

15Call me on the day of pressure;

I’ll pull you out, then you’ll honour me.

16But to the faithless person, God has said:

What’s your business, recounting my decrees,

and taking my pact onto your mouth,

17When you’re one hostile to discipline,

and you throw my words behind you?

18If you’ve seen a thief, you’ve accepted him,

and your lot has been with adulterers.

19You’ve given your mouth to bad dealing;

you harness your tongue to deceit.

20As you sit you speak against your brother,

with your mother’s son you find fault.

21These things you’ve done and I have been silent;

You’ve thought I really was like you.

I reprove you and lay it out before your eyes;

22please consider this, you who put God out of mind,

so that I don’t tear you apart and there’s no one to rescue.

23The person who sacrifices a thank-offering honours me,

and the person who directs his way

– I let him see God’s deliverance.

## Psalm 51 Teach Me to Repent

The leader’s. A composition. David’s. When Natan the prophet came to him as he had come to Bathsheba.

1Be gracious to me, God, in accordance with your commitment.

in accordance with the abundance of your compassion wipe away my rebellions.

2Wash me thoroughly from my waywardness,

cleanse me from my wrongdoing.

3Because I myself acknowledge my rebellions;

my wrongcoming is in front of me continually.

4In relation to you alone have I acted wrongly,

and done what is bad in your eyes,

In order that you are faithful in your speaking,

clean in your exercise of authority.

5On one hand, in waywardness I was birthed,

in wrongdoing my mother conceived me.

6On the other, you delight in truthfulness in hidden places;

in the secret place you make me acknowledge smartness.

7Remove my wrongdoing with hyssop so I’m pure,

wash me so I’m whiter than snow.

8Let me listen to joy and rejoicing;

may the bones you’ve crushed celebrate.

9Hide your face from my wrongdoings,

wipe away all my wayward acts.

10Create for me a pure mind, God;

renew an established spirit within me.

11Don’t throw me out of your presence;

don’t take your sacred spirit from me.

12Give back to me the joy of being delivered by you;

may your generous spirit sustain me.

13I will teach rebels your ways,

and wrongdoers will turn back to you.

14Rescue me from shed blood, God,

the God who delivers me;

my tongue will resound concerning your faithfulness.

15Lord, open my lips,

and my mouth will tell of your praise.

16Because you wouldn’t delight in a sacrifice, were I to give it;

you wouldn’t accept a burnt offering.

17Godly sacrifices are a broken spirit;

a broken, crushed mind, God, you would not despise.

18Do good to Zion through your acceptance;

build up Jerusalem’s walls.

19Then you will delight in faithful sacrifices,

burnt offering and whole offering;

then people will take bulls up onto your altar.

## Psalm 52 How to Stand Tall

The leader’s. An instruction. David’s. When Do’eg the Edomite came and told Saul, ‘David came to Ahimelek’s house’.

1Why do you take pride in what is bad, strong man,

when God’s commitment holds all day?

2Your tongue thinks up malice,

like a sharpened razor, you who’re acting with deceit.

3You’re loyal to what is bad rather than what is good,

to falsehood rather than faithful words. *(Rise)*

4You’re loyal to all devouring words,

you deceitful tongue.

5God will indeed tear you down permanently,

break you and pull you from your tent,

uproot you from the land of the living. *(Rise)*

6Faithful people will see and be in awe,

and make fun of him:

7’There’s the man

who didn’t make God his stronghold,

But trusted in the abundance of his wealth,

found vigour in his malice’.

8But I’m like a verdant olive tree

in God’s house.

I have trusted in God’s commitment lastingly and permanently;

9I will confess you permanently, because you’ve acted.

And I will hope in your name, because it’s good,

in front of the people committed to you.

## Psalm 53 There’s No God Here

The leader’s. On Pipe. An instruction. David’s.

1A villain has said to himself,

‘There’s no God here’.

People have been devastating and offensive in evil;

there’s no one doing good here.

2From the heavens God has looked out

at human beings,

To see if there is someone insightful,

inquiring of God.

3The whole of it has turned backward, altogether they’re foul;

there’s no one doing good, there isn’t even one.

4They don’t acknowledge, do they, the people devising trouble,

who eat my people?

They’ve eaten food;

they haven’t called God.

5They’re experiencing dreadful terror there,

when there had been no terror.

Because God is scattering the bones of the one camping against you;

you’ve shamed them, because God has rejected them.

6If only there were deliverance for Israel from Zion,

when God turns back his people’s fortunes.

Jacob will celebrate,

Israel will rejoice!

## Psalm 54 With a Free Offering I Will Sacrifice to You

The leader’s. With strings. An instruction. David’s. When the Ziphites came and told Saul, ‘David’s hiding with us, isn’t he’.

1God, deliver me by your name,

by your strength give judgment for me.

2God, listen to my plea,

heed the sayings of my mouth.

3Because aliens have risen up against me,

frightening people have sought my life,

people who haven’t put God in front of them.

4Here – God is my helper,

my Lord is the very sustainer of my life.

5May he make the bad experience come back to the people who are watching for me;

in your truthfulness wipe them out.

6With a free offering I will sacrifice to you,

I will confess your name, Yahweh, because it’s good.

7Because it has rescued me from every pressure,

and my eye has looked at my enemies.

## Psalm 55 Throwing Things onto God

The leader’s. With strings. An instruction. David’s.

1God, give ear to my plea,

don’t hide from my prayer for grace.

2Heed me and answer me;

I’m frantic in my talking and I reel,

3At the voice of the enemy,

in the face of the oppression of the faithless.

Because they make trouble fall down on me,

and in anger they harass me.

4My mind whirls within me,

deathly dreads have fallen upon me.

5Fear and trembling come into me,

horror has covered me.

6I said, ‘If only I had wings;

like a pigeon I could fly and dwell somewhere’.

7There, I would go far away in flight,

I would lodge in the wilderness. *(Rise)*

8I would hurry to a place where I could survive,

from the sweeping wind, from the hurricane.

9Lord, swallow up, divide their speech,

because I’ve seen violence and argument in the town.

10Day and night they go round it on its walls,

while trouble and oppression are inside it.

11Malice is within it;

repression and deceit don’t move away from its square.

12Because it’s not an enemy that reviles me, which I could bear,

or someone hostile to me that has acted big over me,

from whom I could hide,

13But you, a person of my kind,

my companion, someone I knew,

14Together we would enjoy confidences

as we walked about in the throng into God’s house.

15Great desolation on them,

they should go down to She’ol alive,

because there are bad dealings in their residence, among them.

16I am one who calls to God;

Yahweh will deliver me.

17Evening and morning and noon I talk,

and I am in turmoil, but he has listened to my voice.

18He has redeemed my life in well-being from my encounter,

because many indeed were with me.

19God listens and puts them down,

the one who sits of old, (*Rise*)

The one in whom there are no changes;

but they had no awe of God.

20He put out his hand against his friends,

he violated his pact.

21The butter in his mouth was smooth,

but encounter was in his mind.

His words were softer than oil,

but they—they were unsheathed swords.

22Throw onto Yahweh what is given you,

and he himself will sustain you.

He will never let

the faithful person fall down.

23God, you yourself will bring them down,

to the deepest pit,

The people of bloodshed and deceit

will not have half their days,

but I – I will trust in you.

## Psalm 56 I Am Afraid,, I’m Not Afraid

The leader’s. On the Silent Pigeon of Far-off Places. David’s. An inscription. When the Philistines seized him in Gat.

1Be gracious to me, God, because a man has hounded me;

all day a man of battle afflicts me.

2The people watching for me have hounded me all day,

because those battling me from a lofty position are many.

3On the day I am afraid,

I do trust in you.

4In God whose word I praise,

in God I’ve trusted.

I’m not afraid:

what can flesh do to me?

5All day they pervert my words;

all their intentions to deal badly are against me.

6They stir up strife, they lie in ambush, those people,

they keep watch on my steps,

as if they’re hoping for my life.

7For the trouble they devise, reduce them to survivors,

in anger put the peoples down, God.

8You’ve recorded my lamenting,

you yourself have put my tears into your flask;

they’re in your record, aren’t they.

9Then my enemies will turn back

on the day I call;

I know this, because God is mine.

10In God whose word I praise,

in Yahweh whose word I praise,

11In God I’ve trusted, I’m not afraid:

what can a human being do to me?

12Given that pledges to you are binding upon me, God,

I shall make good my thank offerings to you,

13Because you’ve rescued my life from death,

my foot from tripping up, haven’t you,

So that I might walk about before God,

in the light of life.

## Psalm 57 My Mind Is Set

The leader’s. Do not Destroy. David’s. An inscription. When he fled from before Saul into the cave.

1Be gracious to me, God, be gracious to me,

because my life has taken shelter with you.

And in the shadow of your wings I shall take shelter

until malice passes.

2I will call to God, the One on High,

to God who is going to bring it to an end for me.

3May he send from the heavens and deliver me,

as he reviles the one who hounds me. *(Rise)*

May God send his commitment

and his truthfulness 4to my life.

I shall lie down among lions,

devouring human beings,

Their teeth a pike and arrows,

their tongue a sharp sword.

5Rise above the heavens, God,

your splendour above all the earth.

6People set a net for my feet;

my life was bowing down.

They dug a pit before me;

they fell right into it. *(Rise)*

7My mind is set, God,

my mind is set.

I shall sing and make music;

8wake up, my heart.

Wake up, mandolin and guitar;

I shall wake up the dawn.

9I will confess you among the peoples, Lord,

I will make music for you among the nations.

10Because your commitment is big, as far as the heavens,

your truthfulness as far as the skies.

11Rise above the heavens, God,

your splendour above all the earth.

## Psalm 58 A Challenge to the Principalities and Powers

The leader’s. Do not Destroy. David’s. An instruction.

1You gods, do you truly speak with faithfulness,

exercise authority for human beings with uprightness?

2Actually, with your mind you devise acts of evil in the country;

with your hands you deal out violence.

3Faithless people go astray from the womb;

people who speak lies are wayward from birth.

4Their poison is like snake poison,

like a deaf viper that blocks its ear,

5That does not listen to the voice of the charmers,

the expert weaver of spells.

6God, smash their teeth in their mouth;

break the fangs of the lions, Yahweh.

7They should vanish like water when it goes away;

when one aims his arrows, so should they dry up.

8Like a snail that vanishes as it goes,

like a woman’s stillbirth, they should not behold the sun.

9Before your pots sense the thorn,

as a living person, so should rage whirl them off.

10The faithful person will rejoice when he beholds redress,

when he bathes his feet in the blood of the faithless.

11Someone will say, ‘Yes, there is fruit for the faithful,

yes, there are gods exercising authority in the country.

## Psalm 59 My Turret

The leader’s. Do not Destroy. David’s. An instruction. When Saul sent and watched his house so as to put him to death.

1Rescue me from my enemies, my God;

do set me on high above the people who rise up against me.

2Rescue me from those who devise trouble,

deliver me from people of bloodshed.

3Because there, they lie in wait for my life;

vigorous people stir up strife against me.

Not for my rebellion, not for my wrongdoing, Yahweh,

4nor for my waywardness, do they run and set themselves up.

Stir yourself to meet me, and look,

5yes, you, Yahweh God Armies,

God of Israel.

Wake up to attend to all the nations;

don’t show grace to any of the people who break faith who devise trouble. *(Rise)*

6They come back at evening,

they howl like a dog and go round the town.

7There, they bellow with their mouth,

swords on their lips, because who is listening?

8But you, Yahweh, make fun of them,

you ridicule all the nations.

9My vigour, I keep watch for you,

because God is my turret.

10The God committed to me will meet me,

God will enable me to look at the people who are watching for me.

11Don’t kill them, in case my people are unmindful;

by your resources, make them wander.

Put them down, Lord our shield,

12for the wrongdoing of their mouth, the word of their lips.

So that they are caught by their majesty

and by the oath and by the lie they recount.

13Finish them off in wrath,

finish them off so they are no more,

So that people may acknowledge that God rules in Jacob,

to the ends of the earth. *(Rise)*

14They come back at evening,

they howl like a dog and go round the town.

15Those people – they wander about for food;

if they are not full they stay the night.

16But I – I will sing about your vigour,

I will resound at morning about your commitment.

Because you’ve become my turret,

a retreat on the day when I was under pressure.

17My vigour, to you I will make music,

because God is my turret,

the God committed to me.

## Psalm 60 How to Deal with Unfulfilled Promises

The leader’s. On The Lotus of Testimony. An inscription. David’s. For teaching. When he fought Aram-of-the-Two-Rivers and Aram Tsobah, and Yo’ab went back and struck down Edom in Salt Ravine, 12,000 men.

1God, you’ve rejected us, broken us,

been angry – turn back to us!

2You’ve shaken the country, torn it open

– mend its splits, because it’s slipped.

3You’ve made your people see tough things,

you’ve made us drink wine that caused us to stagger.

4You have given people who live in awe of you a banner to flee to

because of the bow. (*Rise)*

5In order that your beloved people may pull out,

deliver with your right hand, answer me.

6God had spoken by his sacredness:

‘I will exult as I allocate Shekem

and measure out Sukkot Vale.

7Gil’ad will be mine,

Menashsheh will be mine,

Ephrayim will be a stronghold for my head,

Judah my scepter,

8Mo’ab will be my washbasin,

against Edom I will throw my boot;

raise a shout against me, Philistia!

9Who will conduct me to the fortified town,

who would lead me to Edom?’

10You yourself have rejected us, God, haven’t you,

you don’t go out with our armies, God.

11Grant us help against the adversary,

given that human deliverance is empty.

12Through God we will act with forcefulness;

he’s the one who will trample on our adversaries.

## Psalm 61 How to Pray with Your Leader

The leader’s. On a stringed instrument. David’s.

1Listen to my resounding noise, God,

heed my plea.

2From the end of the earth I call to you,

while my heart flags.

To a crag that rises high above me may you lead me,

3because you’ve been a shelter for me,

a vigorous tower before the enemy.

4I shall reside in your tent permanently,

I shall shelter in the hiding place of your wings. *(Rise)*

5Because you, God, have listened to my pledges;

you gave their possession to the people who hold your name in awe.

6You will add days to the king’s days;

his years will be like generation after generation.

7He will live permanently before God;

appoint commitment and truthfulness so they may preserve him.

8Thus I shall make music to your name permanently,

in making good my pledges day by day.

## Psalm 62 Silence Toward God

The leader’s. On Yedutun. A composition. David’s.

1Indeed, toward God my entire being is silent;

from him my deliverance comes.

2Indeed, he is my crag and my deliverance,

my turret—I shall not slip far.

3How long will you attack someone,

commit murder, all of you?

Like a bent wall, a fence that’s been pulled down

– 4indeed, they have taken counsel so as to pull him down from his dignity.

They accept lying;

they bless with their mouth, but inside they slight. *(Rise)*

5Indeed, be silent toward God, my entire being,

because from him my hope comes.

6Indeed, he’s my crag, my deliverance,

my turret—I shall not slip.

7On God rests my deliverance and my splendour;

my strong rock, my shelter, is God in person.

8Trust in him at all times, you people,

pour out your heart before him;

God is our shelter. *(Rise)*

9Indeed, human beings are hollow,

people are a lie.

9Going up on scales,

they’re less than hollow, altogether.

10Don’t trust in fraud, don’t put hollow hopes in robbery;

resources – when they bear fruit, don’t set your mind on them.

11God spoke of one thing,

two things that I heard:

That God has vigour 12and you, Lord, have commitment,

that you yourself make good for someone in accordance with his action.

## Psalm 63 I Am Mindful of You on My Bed

A composition. David’s. When he was in the Wilderness of Judah.

1God, you are my God, I look urgently for you,

my whole person thirsts for you.

My body aches for you,

in a dry, faint country without water.

2Yes, in the sacred place I’ve beheld you,

seeing your vigour and your splendour.

3Because your commitment is better than life;

my lips will extol you.

4Yes, I shall bless you throughout my life;

in your name I shall lift up the palms of my hands.

5As with juiciness and richness my appetite will be full,

and with resounding lips my mouth will give praise,

6If I am mindful of you on my bed,

murmur about you during the watches.

7Because you’ve been my help,

and in the shade of your wings I shall resound.

8My whole person has clung after you;

your right hand has taken hold of me.

9But those people, who seek devastation for my life,

will come into the depths of the earth.

10The people who hurl someone onto the edges of the sword

will be the prey of jackals.

11But the king – he will rejoice in God;

everyone who swears by him will take pride,

because the mouth of people who speak falsehood is stopped up.

## Psalm 64 The Failure of the Well-plotted Plot

The leader’s. A composition. David’s.

1Listen to my voice, God, as I talk,

may you preserve my life from the enemy’s terror.

2May you hide me from the council of people dealing badly,

from the crowd of people devising trouble,

3Who have whetted their tongue like a sword,

who have directed their bitter word like arrows,

4To shoot from hiding at the person of integrity

– they shoot at him suddenly and they’re not afraid.

5They take strong hold for themselves of a word about bad dealing,

they recount it, in hiding traps.

They’ve said ‘Who will see them?’

6as they plot evil.

‘We have completed a plot that’s well-plotted;

the inner thinking of a person and his mind are deep’.

7But God has shot them with an arrow;

suddenly the blows that strike them down have come.

8They’ve made it collapse on themselves with their tongue;

all who look at them shake their head.

9Everyone was in awe; they’ve told of God’s act,

They’ve gained insight into his deed.

10The faithful person rejoices in Yahweh

and takes shelter with him;

all the upright in mind take pride.

## Psalm 65 The God of Atonement and the God of the Harvest

The leader’s. A composition. David’s. A song.

1To you silence is praise,

God in Zion.

To you a pledge is made good,

2the one who listens to a plea.

All flesh come right to you

3with wayward words.

Whereas our rebellions would have been too strong for me,

you yourself expiate them.

4The blessings of the person you choose and bring near,

so that he dwells in your courtyards!

May we be full with the good things of your house,

your sacred palace.

5Answer us with awe-inspiring deeds in faithfulness,

God who delivers us!

Object of trust for all the ends of the earth

and the far off sea,

6Who established the mountains by his energy,

who is belted with strength,

7Who stills the din of the seas,

the din of their waves, yes, the tumult of the peoples.

8The people who live at the ends are in awe at your signs;

you make the entry points of morning and evening resound.

9You’ve attended to the earth and watered it;

you greatly enrich it.

God’s channel is full of water;

you prepare their grain.

Because in this way you prepare it:

10saturating its furrows, smoothing its ridges,

You soften it with rains,

you bless its growth.

11You’ve crowned the year with your good things;

your cart tracks flow with richness.

12The pastures of the wilderness flow,

the hills wrap on celebration.

13The meadows put on flocks,

the vales envelop themselves in wheat,

they shout, and sing too.

## Psalm 66 I Shall Make Good My Pledges

The leader’s. A song. A composition.

1Shout for God, all the earth,

2make music for the splendour of his name!

Make his praise splendour,

3say to God, ‘How awe-inspiring are your acts!

At the abundance of your vigour

your enemies wither before you.

4All the earth bow low to you,

they make music to you, make music to your name!’ *(Rise)*

5Come and see the deeds of God,

the one who is awe-inspiring for his activity in relation to human beings.

6He turned sea into dry land,

so they could cross the river on foot.

There let us rejoice in him,

7the one who rules permanently by his strength!

His eyes watch the nations;

the defiant – they should not rise up against him. *(Rise)*

8Peoples, bless our God,

let the sound of his praise be heard,

9The one who places us in life,

and doesn’t give our foot to slipping.

10Because you’ve tried us, God,

You’ve refined us like someone refining silver.

11You let us come into a net,

put a constraint on our hips.

12You let someone ride at our head,

we’ve come into fire and into water,

but you’ve got us out into flourishing.

13I shall come into your house with burnt offerings,

I shall make good my pledges to you,

14The ones that my lips uttered,

that my mouth spoke when I was under pressure.

15As burnt offerings I will offer up fatlings to you,

with the aroma of rams;

I’ll make ready bulls with goats. *(Rise)*

16Come listen and I’ll recount,

all you who live in awe of God,

what he’s done for me.

17To him with my mouth I called;

he was exalted by my tongue.

18If I could have seen trouble in my heart,

my Lord would not listen.

19In fact God listened,

heeded the sound of my plea.

20God be blessed,

the one who didn’t turn aside my plea

or his commitment from me!

## Psalm 67 Bless Us, and Let Other Peoples Acknowledge It

The leader’s. With strings. A composition. A song.

1May God be gracious to us and bless us,

may he shine his face with us, (*Rise*)

2For the acknowledging of your way in the earth,

your deliverance in all the nations.

3May peoples confess you, God,

may peoples confess you, all of them.

4May countries rejoice and resound,

because you exercise authority over peoples with uprightness,

you guide nations in the earth. *(Rise)*

5May peoples confess you, God,

may peoples confess you, all of them.

6As earth has given its produce,

may God, our God, bless us.

7May God bless us,

may all the ends of earth live in awe of him.

## Psalm 68:1-18 Father of the Orphan, Protector of the Widow

The leader’s. David’s. A composition. A song.

1When God arises, his enemies scatter,

the people hostile to him flee before him.

2You blow them away like smoke blowing away,

like wax melting before fire.

The faithless perish before God,

3but the faithful rejoice.

They exult before God,

they celebrate with rejoicing.

4Sing to God,

make music to his name.

Lift up the one who rides on the clouds,

whose name is Yah, and exult before him.

5Father for orphans, judge for widows,

is God in his sacred abode.

6God enables people who are alone to live at home,

brings out prisoners in chains,

yet the defiant dwell in parched land.

7God, when you went out before your people,

when you marched through the wilderness, (*Rise*)

8Earth shook, yes, heavens poured,

before God, the one of Sinai,

before God, the God of Israel.

9You shed generous rain, God;

your own domain, when it was languishing – you yourself provided for it.

10Your dwelling – they’ve lived in it;

you provide for the humble with your goodness, God.

11The Lord gives a word;

the women announcing the news are a great army.

12Kings of armies flee, flee;

the young girls of the house share the spoil,

13though they stay among the sheepfolds,

The wings of a dove covered in silver,

its pinions in pale gold.

14When Shadday scatters kings there,

it snows on Tsalmon.

15Mount Bashan is a supernatural mountain,

Mount Bashan is a many-peaked mountain.

16Why do you keep watch, mountains, peaks,

on the mountain that God desired as his place to live?

– yes, Yahweh will dwell there permanently.

17God’s chariotry were myriads, thousands doubled;

the Lord was among them at Sinai in sacredness.

18You went up on high, you took captives,

to get gifts among people,

Yes, defiant ones,

to dwell as Yah God.

## Psalm 68:19-35 Kingdoms of the Earth, Sing to God

19The Lord be blessed day by day;

the God who is our deliverance supports us. *(Rise)*

20God is for us a God of deliverance;

to Yahweh God belong departures to death.

21Yes, God hits his enemies’ head,

the hairy crown of the one who walks about in his great liability.

22The Lord said, ‘I’ll bring them back from Bashan,

I’ll bring them back from the depths of the sea,

23In order that your foot may hit in blood;

your dogs’ tongue – its share may be from your enemies’.

24People saw your journeyings, God,

the journeyings of my God, my king, into the sacred place.

25Singers came first, then string-players,

amid girls playing tambourines.

26In the great congregation that bless God,

Yahweh, you [who issued] from Israel’s fountain.

27There was little Benjamin, holding sway over them,

Judah’s officials, their noisy crowd,

Zebulun’s officials, Naphtali’s officials:

28your God ordered vigour for you.

Be vigorous, God,

you who acted for us 29from your palace;

Right up to Jerusalem to you

kings will bring tribute.

30Reprimand the creature in the reeds,

the assembly of sturdy among the bullocks, the peoples.

Trampling on those who accept silver,

you scattered peoples who delight in confrontations.

31Envoys will come from Egypt,

Sudan will run with its hands to God.

32Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God,

make music to the Lord, (*Rise*)

33To the one who rides on the highest heavens of old

– there, he gives out his voice, a vigorous voice.

34Give vigour to God, whose majesty is over Israel,

his vigour in the skies.

35God, you are to be held in awe in your most sacred place,

the one who is God of Israel.

He gives vigour and great might to his people;

God be blessed.

## Psalm 69:1-18 Passion Means Persecution

The leader’s. On Lotuses. David’s.

1Deliver me, God,

because the water has come up to my neck.

2I’ve sunk in a deep flood;

There’s no foothold.

I’ve come into torrents of water;

a deluge has overwhelmed me.

3I’ve become weary with calling,

my throat has become dry.

My eyes fail,

waiting for my God.

4They are more numerous than the hairs on my head,

the people hostile to me for nothing.

Numerous are the people who are trying to put an end to me,

my enemies, with falsehood.

What I haven’t stolen,

then I must give back.

5God, you yourself know my denseness;

the things for which I’m liable are not hidden from you.

6The people who hope in you must not be shamed through me,

Lord Yahweh Armies.

The people who seek you must not be disgraced through me,

God of Israel.

7Because it’s on account of you that I’ve carried reviling,

that disgrace has covered my face.

8I’ve become a stranger to my brothers,

an alien to my mother’s children.

9Because passion for your house has consumed me;

the words of reviling with which people have reviled you have fallen on me.

10I cried with fasting, with my entire being,

and it became words of reviling for me.

11I made sack my clothing,

and I became an object lesson for them.

12The people who sit at the gateway talk about me;

—the drinkers’ song.

13But I: my plea to you, Yahweh,

is a time of acceptance.

God, in the abundanceof your commitment answer me,

in the truthfulness of your deliverance.

14Rescue me from the mud; I must not sink;

may I be rescued from the people hostile to me, from the torrents of water.

15The deluge of water must not overwhelm me,

the flood must not swallow me,

the pit must not close its mouth over me.

16Answer me, Yahweh, because your commitment is good;

in accordance with the abundance of your compassion turn your face to me.

17Don’t hide your face from your servant,

because I’m under pressure, hurry, answer me.

18Draw near to me, restore me;

because of my enemies, redeem me.

## Psalm 69:19-36 Trusting God with Your Anger

19You yourself know my reviling,

my shame, my disgrace.

All the people watching for me are in front of you;

20reviling has broken my spirit, and I’m ailing.

I’ve hoped for someone to sympathize but there’s no one,

for comforters but I haven’t found any.

21People have put poison in my food,

for my thirst they’ve given me vinegar to drink.

22May their table become a trap before them,

a snare for their allies.

23May their eyes go dark so they can’t see,

may their hips shudder continually.

24Pour out your condemnation on them;

may your angry rage overtake them.

25May their encampment become desolate,

may there be no one living in their tents.

26Because you – the person you struck down, they’ve pursued,

and the suffering of the people run through by you, they’ve heralded.

27Put waywardness on top of their waywardness;

may they not come to your faithfulness.

28May they be erased from the document of living people;

may they not be written down with the faithful.

29When I’m humble and suffering,

may your deliverance set me on high, God.

30I shall praise God’s name with a song,

I shall magnify it with confession.

31It will seem good to Yahweh more than an ox,

a bull with horns and divided hoofs.

32Humble people have seen and rejoiced;

you who unquire of God – may your spirit revive.

33Because Yahweh is going to listen to the needy,

and not despise his captives.

34May heavens and earth praise him,

seas and everything that moves in them.

35Because God will deliver Zion

and build Judah’s towns.

People will live there and possess it,

36the offspring of his servants will hold it as their domain,

people who are loyal to his name will dwell in it.

## Psalm 70 Telling God What to Do

The leader’s. David’s. For commemoration.

1God, to rescue me,

Yahweh, to my help, hurry!

2They should be shamed and reviled,

the people who seek my life.

They should turn backward and be confounded,

the people who want what is bad for me.

3They should turn back on account of their disgrace,

the people who say, ‘Ah, ah!’

4They should celebrate and rejoice in you, all the people who seek you;

they should say continually, ‘God is great’,

the people loyal to your deliverance.

5But I am humble and needy –

God, hurry to me.

You’re my help and the one who enables me to survive;

Yahweh, don’t delay!

## Psalm 71:1-16 From Birth through to Old Age

1I have taken shelter with you, Yahweh;

I must not be shamed ever.

2In your faithfulness rescue me, enable me to survive,

bend your ear to me, deliver me.

3Be for me a crag,

an abode for coming to continually,

Which you’ve ordered to deliver me,

because you’re my cliff, my fastness.

4My God, enable me to survive from the fist of the faithless,

from the grip of the evildoer and robber.

5Because you have been my hope, Lord Yahweh,

the one whom I’ve trusted from my youth.

6On you I have leaned from birth,

from my mother’s womb.

You’ve been my support;

my praise has continually been of you.

7I’ve been a true sign for many people,

as you have been my strong shelter.

8My mouth is full of your praise,

of your glory all day.

9Don’t cast me off for my old age,

when my energy is finished, don’t abandon me.

10Because my enemies have said of me,

and people who keep watch for my life have taken counsel together:

11’Since God has abandoned him, pursue him,

seize him, because there’s no one to rescue him’.

12God, don’t be far from me;

my God, hurry to my help.

13They should be shamed and finished,

the people who attack my life.

They should dress themselves in reviling and disgrace,

the people who seek something bad for me.

14But I – I will wait continually,

and add to all your praise.

15My mouth – it will recount your faithfulness,

your deliverance all day.

Because I don’t know how to write,

16I’ll come with the mighty acts of my Lord Yahweh,

I’ll make mention of your faithfulness, yours alone.

## Psalm 71:17-24 You’ve Taught me and I Will Tell of It

17God, you have taught me from my youth,

and until now I tell of your extraordinary deeds.

18So even until my old age and grey hair,

God, don’t abandon me,

Until I tell of your strength to a generation,

[tell] to everyone who is to come your strength,

19and your faithfulness, God, on high.

You who have done big things, God

- who is like you?

20You who have let me see pressures,

many and bad,

Will give me life again,

and from the depths of the earth bring me up again.

21You will grant me much greatness

and turn round to comfort me.

22And I myself will confess you with a mandolin

for your truthfulness, God.

I will make music for you with the guitar,

sacred one of Israel.

23My lips will resound when I make music for you,

and my entire being, which you’ve redeemed.

24Yes, my tongue will talk of your faithfulness all day ,

because they have been shamed, because they have been confounded,

the people who sought something bad for me.

## Psalm 72:1-17 How to Pray for the Government

Solomon’s

1God, give the king your rulings,

the royal son your faithfulness.

2May he give judgment for your people with faithfulness,

your humble ones with authority.

3May the mountains bear well-being for the people,

and the hills, in faithfulness.

4May he exercise authority for the humble among the people,

deliver the needy, crush the fraud.

5May they live in awe of you while the sun shines,

and before the moon, generation after generation.

6May he come down like rain on mowed grass,

like downpours, an overflowing on the earth.

7May the faithful person flourish in his days,

and abundance of well-being, until the moon is no more.

8May he hold sway from sea to sea,

from the river to the ends of the earth.

9May wildcats kneel before him,

may his enemies lick the dust.

10May the kings of Tarshish and foreign shores

bring back an offering.

May the kings of Sheba and Seba

present a gift.

11May all kings bow low to him,

all nations serve him.

12Because he rescues the needy person crying for deliverance

and the humble person who has no helper.

13May he have pity on poor and needy,

so that hedelivers the lives of needy people.

14From repression and from violence may he restore their life,

and may their blood be valuable in his eyes.

15May he live and be given

gold from Sheba.

May pleas be said on his behalf continually;

all day may people pray for blessing for him.

16May there be an abundance of grain in the country,

on the top of the mountains.

May his fruit shake like Lebanon,

may people thrive from the town like the grass in the country.

17May his name be permanent,

before the sun may his name have offspring,

So that people may pray to be blessed through him;

may all nations count him fortunate.

## Psalm 72:18-20 Another Interim Closing Act of Praise

18Yahweh God,

the God of Israel be blessed,

the one who alone does extraordinary things.

19His splendid name be blessed permanently;

may the entire earth fill with his splendour.

Amen, Amen.

20The pleas of David ben Jesse end.

## Psalm 73:1-14 I Had Nearly Tripped

Composition. Asaph’s.

1Indeed, God is good to Israel,

to the pure in heart.

2But I – my feet all but turned away,

my steps were nearly tipped out.

3Because I was passionate about the wild people,

the well-being of the faithless that I can see.

4Because there are no stresses threatening their death,

and their chest is portly.

5In oppression from people they have no part;

they are not afflicted like other people.

6Therefore majesty is round their neck;

a coat of violence wraps round them.

7Their eye bulges because of hardness;

the schemes in their mind have overflowed.

8They scoff and speak of dealing badly,

from their position on high they speak of fraud.

9They’ve set their mouth in the heavens,

and their tongue walks about on the earth.

10Thus hammering comes back to his people,

and full waters are drained by them.

11And they say, ‘How does God know,

is there knowledge with the One on High?’

12There – these are the faithless people, at ease permanently,

as they have amassed resources.

13Indeed, it was with empty results that I had kept my heart clean

and washed the palms of my hands in freedom from guilt,

14I’ve come to be afflicted all day,

and my reproof happens each morning.

## Psalm 73:15-28 God Redeems Now

15If I had said I would recount it thus,

there, I would have broken faith with the circle of your children.

16But when I thought about how to know about this,

it was oppressive in my eyes,

17Until I came to God’s great sanctuary,

so that I might consider their end.

18Indeed, you will set them among deceptions;

You’re making them fall to lies.

19How they’re coming to desolation suddenly;

They’re come to an end, they’re finished, through terrors.

20Like a dream on waking, Lord,

on stirring, you will despise their shadow.

21When my mind is embittered,

and in my inner being I’m cut through,

22then I’m stupid and I don’t know things;

I became an animal with you.

23But I’ve been with you continually;

you’ve grasped my right hand.

24By your counsel you lead me,

and afterward you will take me to splendour.

25Whom do I have in the heavens?

– and with you, I haven’t wanted anyone on the earth.

26Though my flesh and my mind are finished,

God is my mind’s crag and my share permanently.

27Because there – the people who are far from you perish;

You’re terminating everyone who whores in relation to you.

28But I – nearness to God is good for me;

I’ve made my Lord Yahweh my shelter,

so as to recount all your deeds.

## Psalm 74 Destruction, Blasphemy, Villainy

An instruction. Asaph’s

1God, why have you rejected us permanently,

[why] does your anger smoke at the flock you pasture?

2Be mindful of your assembly,

which you acquired long ago,

Which you restored as the clan that was your domain,

Mount Zion, where you dwelt.

3Lift up your steps to the perpetual desolations,

every bad action that the enemy undertook in the sacred place.

4Your adversaries roared inside your appointed places,

they made their own signs into signs.

5It could be recognized as like someone bringing up

axes against a thicket of trees.

6And now its engravings altogether

they were smashing with hatchet and cleavers.

7They sent off your sanctuary in fire, down to the ground;

they defiled the dwelling of your name.

8They said to themselves, ‘We’ll put them down altogether’;

they burnt all God’s appointed places in the country.

9We couldn’t see our signs, there was no longer a prophet,

there was no one with us who knew how long.

10Until when, God, will the adversary blaspheme,

will the enemy revile your name permanently?

11Why do you turn back your hand,

withhold your right hand in the fold of your coat?

12But God, my king of old,

the one who effects acts of deliverance in the middle of the earth:

13You’re the one who parted the sea by your vigour,

you smashed the dragons’ heads on the water.

14You’re the one who crushed Livyatan’s heads,

so you could make it food for a company of wildcats.

15You’re the one who split spring and wadi,

you’re the one who dried up perennial rivers.

16Day is yours, night is also yours;

You’re the one who established the light, the sun.

17You’re the one who set all earth’s boundaries;

summer and winter – you’re the one who shaped them.

18Be mindful of this: an enemy has blasphemed, Yahweh,

a villainous people has reviled your name.

19Don’t give the life of your dove to an animal,

don’t put out of mind permanently the life of your humble ones.

20Look at the pact,

because the dark places in the country are full of pastures of violence.

21The broken must not turn back shamed;

the humble and needy should praise your name.

22Rise, God, argue for your judgment,

be mindful of your reviling by villains all day.

23Don’t put out of mind the voice of your adversaries,

the din of the people who rise against you, going up continually.

## Psalm 75 The Promise of an Intoxicating Chalice

The leader’s. Do not destroy. A composition. Asaph’s. A song.

1We have confessed you, God, we have confessed,

and when your name drew near, people have recounted your extraordinary deeds.

2’Indeed I will take the set time,

when I myself will exercise authority with uprightness.

3Whereas earth and all its inhabitants are trembling,

I am the one who ordered its pillars. (*Rise*)

4I have said to the wild people , “Don’t be wild”,

and to the faithless, “Don’t lift your horn”.

5Don’t lift your horn high,

[or] speak with forward neck’.

6Because it’s not from the east or from the west,

not from the mountains’ pasturage,

7But God exercises authority;

this person he puts down, that person he lifts up.

8Because there is a chalice in Yahweh’s hand,

with fermented wine, full of spices.

He’s pouring from it, they will indeed drain its dregs;

all the faithless on the earth will drink.

9But I – I will tell of it permanently,

I will make music for Jacob’s God.

10’Whereas I will cut all the horns of the faithless,

the horns of the faithful person I will lift up.

## Psalm 76 To Be Held in Awe by Earth’s Kings

The leader’s. With strings. A composition. Asaph’s. A song.

1God made himself be acknowledged in Judah,

in Israel his name is great.

2His shelter came to be in Shalem,

his abode in Zion.

3There he shattered the bow’s flames,

shield, sword, and battle. *(Rise)*

4You were resplendent,

august on the mountains of prey.

5The sturdy-hearted let themselves be plundered,

they fell into a deep sleep,

None of the forceful men could lift their hands

6at your reprimand, God of Jacob.

Both chariot and horse lay stunned;

7you – you were to be held in awe.

Who can stand before you

in the time of your anger?

8From the heavens you let your judgment be heard;

the earth was in awe and was still,

9When God rose to exercise authority,

to deliver all the humble in the land. *(Rise)*

10Because human wrath confesses you;

you wrap on the remainder of your wrath.

11Give pledges and make them good, to Yahweh your God;

all those round him bring tribute to the one who is to be held in awe.

12He curbs the spirit of leaders;

he is to be held in awe by earth’s kings.

## Psalm 77 Has God Changed?

The leader’s. On Yedutun. Asaph’s. A composition.

1With my voice to God, yes, I will cry out;

with my voice to God, yes, so that he may give ear to me.

2On the day when I was under pressure,

I have inquired of my Lord.

My hand has reached out by night and does not grow numb;

my entire being refuses to find comfort.

3I shall be mindful of God and be in turmoil,

I shall talk as my spirit faints. (*Rise*)

4You’ve grasped the guards on my eyes;

I’ve been constrained and I can’t speak.

5I’ve thought of days of old,

years of ages past.

6I shall be mindful of my song by night,

as I murmur in my heart, and my spirit has sought hard.

7Will it be permanently that my Lord rejects,

and never again shows acceptance?

8Has his commitment ceased to exist permanently,

his word come to an end for generation after generation?

9Has God put out of mind the showing of grace,

or shut off his compassion in anger? *(Rise)*

10I said, ‘That has distressed me:

the change in the right hand of the One on High’.

11I shall be mindful of Yah’s deeds;

yes, I shall be mindful of your extraordinary deeds of old.

12I shall murmur about your every act,

I shall talk of your deeds.

13God, your way is characterized by sacredness;

who is a god as great as God?

14You are the God who performs extraordinary deeds;

you caused your vigour to be acknowledged among the peoples.

15You restored your people with your arm,

the descendants of Jacob and Joseph. *(Rise)*

16Water saw you, God;

when water saw you, it would convulse.

Yes, deeps would tremble;

17clouds poured down water.

Skies gave voice;

yes, your arrows would go about.

18The sound of your thunder was in the whirlwind,

lightning lit up the world.

The earth trembled and shook;

19your way was in the sea.

Your paths were in mighty water,

though your steps were not acknowledged.

20You led your people like a flock

by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

## Psalm 78:1-11 Pass On the Story

An instruction. Asaph’s.

1Give ear to my instruction, my people;

bend your ear to the sayings of my mouth.

2I shall open my mouth with a poem,

pour out conundrums from of old.

3Things that we have heard and acknowledged,

that our ancestors have recounted to us,

4We will not hide from their descendants,

recounting to the next generation,

The praises of Yahweh and his vigour,

the extraordinary things that he did.

5He implemented an affirmation in Jacob,

put instruction in Israel,

Which he ordered our ancestors

to get their descendants to acknowledge,

6In order that the next generation might acknowledge them,

descendants who would be born,

So they might rise up and recount them to their descendants,

7so they might put their assurance in God,

And not put out of mind God’s acts,

but observe his orders,

8And not become like their ancestors,

a defiant and rebellious generation,

A generation that did not set its mind,

and whose spirit was not true to God.

9The Ephrayimites, equipped as archers,

turned back on the day of meeting [in battle].

10They didn’t keep God’s pact

but refused to walk by his instruction.

11They put out of mind his deeds,

the extraordinary things that he had let them see.

## Psalm 78:12-31 God’s Generosity and People’s Response

12In the sight of their ancestors he had done something extraordinary,

in the country of Egypt, in the region of Tso’an.

13He divided the sea and enabled them to pass through it,

he made the water stand like a mound.

14He led them by means of a cloud by day,

and all night by means of a fiery light.

15He divided crags in the wilderness,

and enabled them to drink like the deeps, abundantly.

16He got streams out from a cliff,

and made water flow down like rivers.

17But they went on repeatedly doing wrong in relation to him,

and defying the One on High in the desert.

18They tested God with [deliberation of] their mind,

in asking food for themselves.

19They spoke against God:

‘Can God lay a table in the wilderness?

20Yes, he struck a crag and water flowed,

wadis gushed.

Can he also give bread,

or provide meat for his people?’

21Therefore Yahweh listened and raged;

fire broke out against Jacob,

and also anger arose against Israel,

22Because they didn’t trust in God,

they didn’t rely on his deliverance.

23So he ordered the skies above,

opened the doors of the heavens.

24He rained manna on them to eat,

gave them grain from the heavens.

25Each one ate food fit for the sturdy;

he sent them provisions to fill them.

26He He would make the east wind move in the heavens,

he drove the south wind by his vigour.

27He rained meat on them like dirt,

winged birds like the sand at the seas.

28He made them fall inside his camp,

round his great dwelling.

29They ate, and they were very full;

he would bring them their longing.

30They hadn’t turned aside from their longing,

their food was still in their mouth,

31When God’s anger rose against them,

and he killed some of their beefiest,

put down Israel’s youth.

## Psalm 78:32-55 Responsiveness is Short-lived, But So Is Wrath

32For all this they did wrong again,

and didn’t trust in all his extraordinary deeds.

33He made their days end in hollowness,

their years in terror.

34If he killed them, they would inquire of him,

turn back and look urgently for God.

35They were mindful that God was their crag,

God on High their restorer.

36But they deceived him with their mouth,

with their tongue they would lie to him.

37Their mind was not set with him;

they didn’t stay true to his pact.

38But because he was compassionate,

he would expiate waywardness and not devastate.

He repeatedly turned his anger back;

he didn’t stir all his wrath.

39He was mindful that they were flesh,

a passing wind that doesn’t come back.

40How much they would defy him in the wilderness,

pain him in the wasteland.

41Repeatedly they tested God,

upset Israel’s Sacred One.

42They weren’t mindful of his hand,

the day when he redeemed them from the adversary,

43When he put his signs in Egypt,

his portents in the region of Tso’an.

44He turned their great river into blood;

people couldn’t drink from their streams.

45He would send off a swarm against them and it ate them,

frogs and they devastated them.

46He gave their produce to the caterpillar,

their crop to the locust.

47He killed their vine with hail,

their wild figs with flood.

48He surrendered their animals to hail,

their livestock to lightning flashes.

49He would send off among them his angry rage,

outburst, condemnation, and pressure,

A delegation of bad envoys,

50that would clear a trail for his anger.

He didn’t hold back their life from death

but surrendered their existence to epidemic.

51He struck down every firstborn in Egypt,

the first issue of vigour in the tents of Ham.

52He got his people on the move like sheep,

drove them like a flock in the wilderness.

53He led them in confidence and they were not fearful,

but their enemies – the sea covered them.

54He brought them to his sacred territory,

the mountain that his right hand acquired.

55He dispossessed nations before them,

allotted them a share as their domain;

he enabled Israel’s clans to dwell in their tents.

## Psalm 78:56-72 When God Woke Up

56But they tested and defied God on High;

they didn’t keep his affirmations.

57They turned backward and broke faith like their ancestors;

they turned like a deceitful bow.

58They vexed him with their shrines,

aroused his passion with their images.

59God listened and raged,

and quite rejected Israel.

60He left the dwelling at Shiloh,

the tent where he had dwelt among humanity.

61He gave his vigour to captivity,

his glory to the hand of the adversary.

62He surrendered his people to the sword;

he raged at his own domain.

63Fire consumed its young men,

and its girls were not lamented.

64Its priests fell by the sword;

its widows could not cry.

65But my Lord woke up like someone asleep,

like a strong man shouting because of wine.

66He beat back his adversaries,

gave them permanent reviling.

67He rejected Joseph’s tent,

Didn’t choose the clan of Ephrayim.

68He chose the clan of Judah,

Mount Zion, to which he was loyal.

69He built his sanctuary like the heights,

like the earth that he founded permanently.

70He chose David as his servant

and took him from the sheep pens.

71He brought him from following the ewes

to shepherd Jacob his people,

Israel his domain.

72He shepherded them in accordance with the integrity of his mind;

he would lead them by the skillful acts of his fists.

## Psalm 79 How Long Will Your Passion Burn?

A composition. Asaph’s.

1God, nations came into your domain,

defiled your sacred palace,

made Jerusalem into ruins.

2They gave your servants’ corpses

as food to the birds of the heavens,

the flesh of the people committed to you to the creatures of the earth.

3They poured out their blood like water

round Jerusalem with no one to bury them.

4We became an object of reviling to our neighbours,

of ridicule and derision to the people round us.

5How long, Yahweh – will you be angry permanently,

will your passion burn up like fire?

6Pour out your wrath on the nations

which have not acknowledged you,

On the kingdoms

which have not called on your name.

7Because they have consumed Jacob,

and desolated his home.

8Don’t keep in mind the wayward acts of the past for us;

may your compassion meet us quickly,

because we’ve got very low.

9Help us, our God who delivers,

for the sake of the splendour of your name.

Rescue us, make expiation for our wrongdoings,

for the sake of your name.

10Why should the nations say,

‘Where is their God?’

May redress for your servants’ blood that was poured out

be acknowledged among the nations before our eyes.

11May the captive’s groan come before you;

in accordance with the greatness of your might

preserve the people about to die.

12Give back to our neighbours sevenfold, into their heart,

their reviling with which they’ve reviled you, Lord.

13But we are your people,

the flock you shepherd.

We will confess you permanently;

to generation after generation we will recount your praise.

## Psalm 80 Bring Back! Come Back!

The leader’s. For Lotuses. An affirmation. Asaph’s. A composition.

1You who shepherd Israel, give ear,

you who drive Joseph like a flock.

You who sit above the sphinxes, shine out

2before Ephrayim, Benjamin, and Menashsheh.

Stir your might,

come as deliverance for us.

3God, bring us back,

shine your face so we may find deliverance.

4Yahweh, God Armies,

how long have you fumed at your people’s plea?

5You’ve fed them weeping as food,

made them drink tears by measure.

6You’ve set us at contention with our neighbours;

our enemies ridicule us at will.

7God Armies, bring us back,

shine your face so we may find deliverance.

8You moved a vine from Egypt,

dispossessed nations and planted it.

9You cleared a way before it, it

put its roots down and filled the country.

10Mountains were covered by its shade,

supernatural cedars by its branches.

11It put out its boughs as far as the sea,

its shoots to the river.

12Why have you broken open its walls,

so that all the people who pass by the way pluck it?

13The boar from the forest tears at it,

the creature of the wild feeds on it.

14God Armies, please come back,

look from the heavens and see,

Attend to this vine,

15the stock that your right hand planted,

And over the offspring you took firm hold of for yourself.

16burned in fire, cut;

at the reprimand from your face they perish.

17May your hand be upon the one at your right hand,

upon the man you took firm hold of for yourself.

18We will not turn backward from you;

give us life, and we will call on your name.

19Yahweh, God Armies, bring us back,

shine your face so that we may find deliverance.

## Psalm 81 Praising and Listening

The leader’s. On the Gittite. Asaph’s.

1Resound for God our vigour,

shout for Jacob’s God.

2Raise the music, strike the tambourine,

the melodious guitar with the mandolin.

3Blow the horn at the new month,

at the full moon for our festival day.

4Because it’s a decree of Israel,

a ruling of Jacob’s God,

5An affirmation he laid on Joseph,

when he went out over the country of Egypt.

I listen to a lip I had not acknowledged:

6’I removed his shoulder from the burden;

his fists passed on from the basket.

7Under pressure you called and I pulled you out,

I answered you in the secret place of thunder.

I tested you at Argument Water:

8”Listen, my people, and I will testify to you;

Israel, if you listen to me…

9There will not be for you a foreign god,

you will not bow low to an alien god.

10I Yahweh am your God,

the one who brought you up from the country of Egypt;

widen your mouth and I will fill it”.

11But my people didn’t listen to my voice;

Israel was unwilling in relation to me.

12So I sent them off in the determination of their mind,

so that they might walk by their own counsels.

13If only my people were listening to me,

[if only] Israel would walk about in my ways.

14In a little while I would put down their enemies,

turn my hand against their adversaries’.

15The people hostile to Yahweh would wither at him,

and their fate would be permanent.

16He let them eat of the best of wheat;

‘From the crag I filled you with syrup’.

## Psalm 82 Challenging the Gods and God

A composition. Asaph’s.

1God is standing in the divine assembly;

among the gods he exercises authority.

2How long will you [gods] exercise authority for evil,

show regard to faithless people? *(Rise)*

3Exercise authority for the poor and the orphan,

show faithfulness to the humble and the destitute.

4Enable the poor and the needy to survive,

rescue them from the hand of the faithless.

5They don’t acknowledge,

they don’t consider.

As they walk about in darkness,

all earth’s foundations slip.

6I myself said, ‘You’re gods,

offspring of the One on High, all of you.

7Therefore you will die like a human being,

fall like one of the officials’.

8Arise, God, exercise authority for the earth,

because you possess all the nations as your domain.

## Psalm 83 Don’t Be Calm, God

A song. A composition. Asaph’s.

1God, don’t keep your silence, don’t be mute,

don’t be calm, God.

2Because there – your enemies are in turmoil,

the people who are hostile to you have reared their head.

3They formulate shrewd confidences against your people,

they take counsel with one another against the people you cherish.

4They’ve said, ‘Come on, let’s wipe them out from being a nation,

so that Israel’s name will be brought to mind no more’.

5Because they’ve taken counsel together with one mind;

against you they seal a pact –

6The tents of Edom and the Ishma’elites,

Mo’ab and the Hagrites,

7Gebal, Ammon, and Amaleq,

Philistia with the inhabitants of Tsor.

8Ashshur, too, has joined with them;

they’ve become a source of strength for Lot’s descendants. *(Rise)*

9Act toward them like Midyan,

like Sisera, like Yabin, at the Qishon Wadi.

10They were destroyed at En-do’r;

they became manure for the ground.

11Treat them – their leaders like Oreb and like Ze’eb,

all their chiefs like Zebah and Tsalmunna,

12People who said, ‘Let’s take possession

of God’s pastures for ourselves’.

13My God, make them like a whirl,

like stubble before the wind.

14Like fire that burns up a forest,

like a flame that sets mountains on fire,

15So may you chase them with your hurricane,

terrify them with your tempest.

16Fill their faces with slighting,

so that they seek your name, Yahweh.

17May they be shamed and terrified permanently,

may they be confounded and may they perish.

18May they acknowledge that you, whose name is Yahweh,

you alone are the One on High over all the earth.

## Psalm 84 The One Day and the Thousand Days

The leader’s. On the Gittite. The Qorahites’. A composition.

1How much loved is your fine dwelling,

Yahweh Armies.

2My entire being yearned, yes it failed,

for Yahweh’s courtyards,

So that my mind and my body

might resound for the living God.

3Yes, a bird – it found a home,

a pigeon a nest for itself,

Where it put its young – your great altar,

Yahweh Armies, my King and my God.

4The blessings of the people who live in your house,

who can still praise you! *(Rise)*

5The blessings of the person whose vigour comes through you,

the causeways in their mind!

6The people who pass through Balsam Vale

make it a spring.

Yes, the first rain will cover it with blessings;

7they will go from rampart to rampart.

The God of gods will appear in Zion,

8Yahweh God Armies.

Listen to my plea, give ear,

God of Jacob. *(Rise)*

9See our shield, God,

look to the face of your anointed.

10Because a day in your courtyards is better than a thousand,

I would choose being at the threshold of my God’s house,

Rather than dwelling in the tents of the faithless person,

11because Yahweh God is sun and shield.

Yahweh gives grace and splendour;

he does not withhold good for people who walk with integrity.

12Yahweh Armies,

the blessings of the person who trusts in you!

## Psalm 85 Faithfulness and Well-being Have Embraced

The leader’s. The Qorahites. A composition.

1Yahweh, you acccepted your country,

you turned back Jacob’s fortunes.

2You carried your people’s waywardness,

you covered all their wrongdoings.

3You withdrew all your outburst,

you turned from your angry burning.

4Turn us back, God who delivers us,

contravene your vexation with us.

5Will you be angry at us permanently,

prolong your anger to generation after generation?

6Will you yourself not again bring us to life,

so that your people may rejoice in you?

7Yahweh, let us see your commitment,

give us your deliverance.

8I will listen to what the God Yahweh will speak,

because he will speak of well-being,

To his people and to those committed to him,

those who do not turn back to dimwittedness.

9Indeed his deliverance is near for people who live in awe of him,

so that his splendour may settle in our country.

10Commitment and truthfulness – they’ve met;

faithfulness and well-being – they’ve embraced.

11Truthfulness – it springs up from the earth;

faithfulness – it has looked down from the heavens.

12Yes, Yahweh – he will give good things;

our land – it will give its produce.

13Faithfulness – it will walk about before him

as he sets his feet on the way.

## Psalm 86 A Servant Leans on His Master

A plea. David’s.

1Bend your ear, Yahweh, answer,

because I’m humble and needy.

2Keep watch over my life, because I’m committed;

deliver your servant – you are my God.

As one who trusts in you, 3be gracious to me, my Lord,

because to you I call all day.

4Make your servant’s entire being rejoice,

because to you, my Lord, I lift up my being.

5Because you, my Lord, are good and pardoning,

big in commitment to everyone who calls you.

6Give ear to my plea, Yahweh,

heed the sound of my prayers for grace.

7On the day when I’m under pressure I call you,

because you answer me.

8There is no one like you among the gods, my Lord,

and there are no acts like yours.

9All the nations that you’ve made will come

and bow low before you, my Lord.

They will honour your name,

10because you’re great, one who does extraordinary things.

You are God, you alone;

11instruct me in your way, Yahweh.

I will walk about by your truthfulness;

may my mind be one, in awe at your name.

12I will confess you, my Lord, my God, with all my mind;

I will honour your name permanently.

13Because your commitment is great over me;

you will rescue my life from deepest She’ol.

14God, assertive people have arisen against me,

an assembly of terrifying people has sought my life.

Whereas they haven’t put you in front of them,

15you are my Lord,

The compassionate and gracious God,

long-tempered and big in commitment and truthfulness.

16Turn your face to me and be gracious to me,

give your vigour to your servant.

Deliver the son of your handmaid,

17show me a sign for good,

So that the people who are hostile to me may see and be shamed,

because you, Yahweh, have helped me and comforted me.

## Psalm 87 Glorious Things of Thee Are Spoken, Zion

The Qorahites’. A composition. A song.

1Founded by him among the sacred mountains,

Yahweh is loyal to Zion’s gates

more than all Jacob’s dwellings.

2Honourable things are spoken in you,

God’s town. *(Rise)*

3I will make mention of Rahab and Babel

to the people who acknowledge me.

There are Philistia, Tsor, with Sudan

– each was born there.

4To Zion it will be said,

‘Each and every one was born in it’.

He is the one who will establish it, the One on High;

5Yahweh will record, in writing down the peoples,

‘Each was born there’. *(Rise)*

6They sing as they dance,

‘All my fountains are in you’.

## Psalm 88 A Cry from the Grave

A song. A composition. The Qorahites’. The leader’s. On Pipe. For affliction. An instruction. Heman the Ezrahite’s.

1Yahweh, my God who delivers,

by day I have cried out, by night in front of you.

2May my plea come before you;

bend your ear to my resounding noise.

3Because my whole person is full of bad experiences;

my life has arrived at She’ol.

4I am thought of with the people who go down into the Cistern,

I’ve become like a man without strength,

5An outcast among the dead, like people run through,

lying in the grave,

Of whom you’ve been mindful no more,

when they are cut off from your hand.

6You’ve put me in the deepest Cistern,

in dark places, in the depths.

7Upon me your wrath has pressed down;

with all your breakers you’ve humbled me. (*Rise*)

8You’ve taken my acquaintances far from me,

made me a great offence to them.

I’m confined so that I cannot go out,

9my eye has become dim through humbling.

I’ve called you, Yahweh, each day,

I’ve stretched out my palms to you.

10Do you do extraordinary things for the dead,

do ghosts rise to confess you? (*Rise*)

11Is your commitment recounted in the grave,

your truthfulness in Abaddon?

12Are your extraordinary deeds made known in the darkness,

your faithfulness in the land of forgetting?

13But I, Yahweh, I’ve cried to you for help,

in the morning my plea meets you.

14Yahweh, why do you reject me,

hide your face from me?

15I’m afflicted, breathing my last since youth;

I’ve borne your dreads, I despair.

16Your acts of rage have passed over me,

your acts of terror have destroyed me.

17They are round me like water all day,

they’ve encircled me altogether.

18You’ve taken friend and neighbour far from me,

my acquaintances – darkness.

## Psalm 89:1-18 The Stable World

An instruction. Ethan the Ezrahite’s

1Of Yahweh’s acts of commitment I will sing permanently,

for generation after generation I will cause his truthfulness to be acknowledged with my mouth.

2Because I’ve said, ‘Your commitment is built up permanently;

the heavens – you establish your truthfulness in them’.

3’I sealed a pact for my chosen,

I swore to David my servant:

4”I will establish your offspring permanently,

I will build your throne for generation after generation”’.

5In the heavens they confess your extraordinary deeds, Yahweh,

yes,your truthfulness in the congregation of the sacred ones.

6Because who in the sky can equal Yahweh,

can compare with Yahweh among the divine beings,

7The God inspiring great reverence in the council of the sacred ones,

inspiring awe above all those round him?

8Yahweh, God of Armies, who is like you,

mighty Yah, with your truthfulness surrounding you?

9You rule over the majesty of the sea;

when it lifts its waves, you’re the one who can still them.

10You’re the one who crushed Rahab, like someone run through;

with your vigorous arm you scattered your enemies.

11The heavens are yours, yes, the earth is yours,

the world and what fills it: you’re the one who founded them.

12North and south – you’re the one who created them;

Tabor and Hermon – they resound at your name.

13To you belongs an arm with strength;

your hand is vigorous, your right hand stands high.

14Faithfulness in the exercise of authority is the establishment of your throne;

commitment and truthfulness come to meet your face.

15The blessings of the people that acknowledges the shout,

that walks about in the light of your face, Yahweh!

16In your name they celebrate all day,

in your faithfulness they stand high.

17Because you’re their vigorous glory;

through your acceptance our horn stands high.

18Because our shield belongs to Yahweh,

our king to Israel’s Sacred One.

## Psalm 89:19-37 The Stable Promise

19Then you spoke in a vision to the people committed to you:

‘I put help on a strong man,

I raised high one chosen from the people.

20I found David, my servant,

with my sacred oil I anointed him,

21The one with whom my hand will be established;

yes, my arm will enable him to stand firm.

22No enemy will extort from him,

or evil person humble him.

23I will crush his adversaries before him,

beat down the people hostile to him.

24My truthfulness and commitment will be with him,

and in my name his horn will stand high.

25I will set his hand on the sea,

his right hand on the great river.

26That man will call me, ‘You’re my father,

my God, the crag that delivers me’.

27Yes, I myself will make him my firstborn,

on high in relation to earth’s kings.

28Permanently will I keep my commitment to him;

my pact will be true for him.

29I will set his offspring evermore,

his throne like the days of the heavens.

30If his sons abandon my instruction,

don’t walk by my rulings,

31If they profane my decrees

don’t keep my orders,

32I will attend to their rebellion with a club,

their waywardness with blows,

33But my commitment I will not contravene from him;

I will not be false to my truthfulness.

34I will not profane my pact;

What’s come out of my lips I will not change.

35Once and for all I’ve sworn by my sacredness:

‘If I lie to David…’.

36His offspring will be there permanently,

his throne like the sun in front of me,

37Like the moon, which is established permanently,

a witness in the sky that’s truthful’. *(Rise)*

## Psalm 89:38-51 But Is the Promise Stable?

38But you yourself have rejected, spurned,

burst out with your anointed.

39You’ve renounced your servant’s pact,

profaned his diadem to the earth.

40You’ve broken through all his walls,

made his fortifications a ruin.

41All the people who pass his way have plundered him;

He’s become an object of reviling to his neighbours.

42You’ve lifted high his adversaries’ right hand,

You’ve made all his enemies rejoice.

43Yes, you’ve turned back his sword’s blade,

not enabled him to rise up in the battle.

44You’ve made his purity cease;

his throne you’ve hurled to the earth.

45You’ve cut short the days of his youth,

clothed him in shame. *(Rise)*

46How long, Yahweh – will you hide permanently,

will your wrath burn up like fire?

47Be mindful – I, what a short span,

for what emptiness you created all human beings.

48Who is the man who can live on and not see death,

can enable himself to escape from She’ol’s hand? *(Rise)*

49Where are your former acts of commitment, my Lord,

which you swore to David in your truthfulness?

50Be mindful, my Lord, of your servant’s reviling,

which I’ve carried in my heart,

Of all the many peoples

51who have reviled,

Of your enemies, Yahweh,

those who have reviled the steps of your anointed.

## Psalm 89:52 Amen Anyway

52Yahweh be blessed permanently.

Amen, amen.

## Psalm 90 God’s Time and Our Time

A plea. Moses’, supernatural man.

1Lord, you were an abode for us,

generation after generation.

2Before mountains were birthed

and you laboured with the earth and the world,

From age to age,

you were God.

3You would turn back mere human beings, right to being crushed;

you said, ‘Turn back, people!’

4Because a thousand years

in your eyes were like a day,

Yesterday when it passes,

or a watch in the night.

5You swept them away in sleep,

though in the morning they would be like grass that grows fresh.

6In the morning it can flourish and grow fresh;

by evening it dries up and withers.

7Because we are finished through your anger,

through your wrath we have been fearful.

8You’ve set our wayward acts in front of you,

our youthful deeds in the light of your face.

9Because all our days have turned their face through your outburst;

we’ve finished up our years as murmuring.

10The days of our years in themselves are seventy years,

or with strength eighty years.

But their drive has been oppression and trouble,

because it’s passed by speedily and we’ve flown away.

11Who acknowledges the vigour of your anger,

and your outburst, in accordance with awe for you?

12In counting our days, so make us acknowledge it,

in order that we may bring home a smart mind.

13Turn back, Yahweh, how long?

– relent about your servants.

14Fill us in the morning with your commitment,

and we will resound and rejoice all our days.

15Enable us to rejoice in accordance with the days of your humbling us,

the years we’ve seen bad fortune.

16May your deed appear to your servants,

your magnificence for their descendants.

17May the Lord’s loveliness come about,

our God for us.

Establish the deed of our hands for us;

yes, the deed of our hands – establish it.

## Psalm 91 Shadow of the Almighty

1As someone who lives in the hiding place of the One on High,

who lodges in the shade of Shadday,

2I say of Yahweh, ‘My shelter,

my stronghold, my God in whom I trust’.

3Because he’s the one who will rescue you from the hunter’s trap,

from the malicious epidemic.

4With his pinion he’ll cover you,

and under his wings you’ll find shelter;

his truthfulness will be a body-shield, a rampart.

5You needn’t be afraid of something dreadful by night,

of an arrow that flies by day,

6Of an epidemic that walks in the dark,

of a scourge that destroys at noon.

7A thousand may fall at your side,

ten thousand at your right hand

– it will not reach to you.

8You’ll only look with your eyes

and see a making good to the faithless.

9Because you’re one who has made Yahweh ‘My abode’,

the One on High your shelter.

10Nothing bad will be given access to you,

no harm will approach your tent.

11Because he’ll order his envoys to you,

to keep you in all your ways.

12They’ll carry you on the palms of their hands

so you don’t hit your foot on a stone.

13You’ll tread on cub and viper,

You’ll trample on lion and serpent.

14’Because he’s attracted to me, I shall enable him to survive;

I shall set him on high, because he’s acknowledged my name.

15He will call me and I’ll answer, I’ll be with him when he is under pressure,

I’ll pull him out and honour him.

16I’ll fill him with long days,

and show him my deliverance’.

## Psalm 92 A Psalm Used on the Sabbath

A composition. A song. For the sabbath day.

1It’s good to confess Yahweh,

to make music for your name, you who are the One on High,

2To tell of your commitment in the morning,

and of your truthfulness at night,

3With ten-string and with mandolin,

with recitation, on the guitar.

4Because you’ve made me rejoice, Yahweh, by your act;

at the deeds of your hands I resound.

5How great your deeds have been, Yahweh;

your intentions were very deep.

6The stupid person – he doesn’t acknowledge,

the dimwit – he doesn’t understand this:

7when the faithless flourish like grass,

and all the people who devise trouble thrive,

It’s to be annihilated for all time,

8whereas you are up on high permanently, Yahweh.

9Because there – your enemies, Yahweh,

because there – your enemies perish;

all the people who devise trouble scatter.

10But you’ve raised up my horn like an oryx,

my exhaustion with refreshing oil.

11My eye has looked at the people who’re watching for me;

the people who rise against me, dealing badly

– my ears can hear them.

12The faithful person is like a date palm that flourishes,

like a Lebanese cedar that grows great,

13Planted in Yahweh’s house,

which flourish in our God’s courtyards.

14They still fruit in old age,

they become verdant and fresh,

15Telling that Yahweh is upright,

my crag in whom there is no evil.

## Psalm 93 Is the Earth Vulnerable?

1Yahweh began to reign,

he put on majesty;

Yahweh put on, belted on vigour.

Yes, the world is established, it doesn’t slip;

2your throne is established since long ago,

you are from of old.

3Rivers lifted up, Yahweh,

rivers lifted up their voice,

rivers lift up their crushing.

4Above the voices of many water,

august, the sea’s breakers,

Yahweh was august on high.

5Your affirmations have been very truthful,

your sacredness has adorned your house,

Yahweh, for long days.

## Psalm 94 The God of Redress

1God of total redress, Yahweh,

God of total redress, shine out.

2Rise up as the one who exercises authority over the earth,

give back their dealing to the majestic people.

3How long will the faithless, Yahweh,

how long will the faithless exult,

4Will they pour out, speak assertively,

will all the people who devise trouble hold forth?

5They crush your people, Yahweh,

they humble your domain.

6They kill the widow and alien,

they murder the orphan.

7And they say, ‘Yah does not see,

Jacob’s God does not consider it’.

8Consider, you stupid among the people,

you dimwits, when will you show some insight?

9The one who plants the ear – he listens, doesn’t he;

the one who shapes the eye – he looks, doesn’t he.

10The one who disciplines nations – he reproves, doesn’t he,

the one who teaches humanity about knowledge.

11Yahweh knows about humanity’s intentions,

that they are hollow.

12The blessings of the man whom you discipline, Yah,

and teach from your instruction,

13To give him calm from bad times,

until a pit is dug for the faithless person!

14Because Yahweh does not leave his people,

does not abandon his domain.

15Because authority will come right back to faithfulness,

and all those who are upright in mind will follow it.

16Who rises up for me with the people dealing badly,

who takes a stand for me with the people devising trouble?

17Were Yahweh not a help for me,

soon I myself would have dwelt in silence.

18If I said, ‘My foot is slipping’,

your commitment, Yahweh, sustains me.

19When anxieties multiply inside me,

your comforts give me pleasure.

20Can a malicious throne ally with you,

someone who shapes oppression by means of a decree?

21They gang against the life of the faithful person,

they condemn to death the person who’s free of guilt.

22But Yahweh has been a turret for me,

my God a crag that’s a shelter.

23He has turned back their trouble-making on them,

he will put an end to them through their bad ways;

Yahweh our God will put an end to them.

## Psalm 95 Will You Just Shut Up and Listen?

1Come, let’s resound for Yahweh,

let’s shout for our crag who delivers us.

2Let’s draw near to his face with confession;

We’ll shout for him with melodies.

3Because Yahweh is the great God,

the great king over all gods,

4The one in whose hand are the far reaches of the earth,

and to whom the mountain peaks belong,

5The one to whom the sea belongs (he made it)

and the dry land (his hands shaped it).

6Come, let’s bow low, let’s bend down,

let’s bow the knee before Yahweh our maker.

7Because he’s our God

and we’re the people he pastures,

the sheep in his hand.

Today, if you listen to his voice,

8don’t toughen your mind as you did at Meribah [Argument],

As on the day at Massah [Testing] in the wilderness,

9when your ancestors tested me.

They tried me, though they’d seen my action;

10for forty years I loathed the generation.

I said, ‘They’re a people who go astray in mind,

and they—they have not acknowledged my ways,

11Of whom I swore in my anger,

“If they come to my place to settle down….”’

## Psalm 96 Yes, Yahweh Has Begun to Reign

1Sing for Yahweh a new song,

sing for Yahweh all the earth!

2Sing for Yahweh, bless his name,

announce the news day after day of his deliverance!

3Recount his splendour among the nations,

his extraordinary deeds among all the peoples!

4Because Yahweh is great and much to be praised;

he’s to be held in awe above all gods.

5Because all the nations’ gods are nonentities,

whereas Yahweh made the heavens.

6Grandeur and magnificence are before him,

vigour and glory in his sanctuary.

7Bestow on Yahweh, you kin-groups of the peoples,

bestow on Yahweh splendour and vigour.

8Bestow on Yahweh the splendour due to his name,

carry an offering and come into his courtyards.

9Bow low to Yahweh in his sacred splendour;

tremble before him, all the earth.

10Say among the nations, ‘Yahweh has begun to reign!’

– yes, the world will stand firm, it will not slip.

He will give judgment for the peoples with uprightness;

11the heavens may rejoice and the earth celebrate.

The sea and what fills it may thunder,

12the fields and all that is in it exult.

Then all the trees in the forest may resound

13before Yahweh, because he is coming.

Because he is coming to exercise authority over the earth;

he will exercise authority over the world with faithfulness,

over the peoples with truthfulness.

## Psalm 97 The Real King of Kings

1Yahweh has begun to reign, earth should celebrate,

many foreign shores should rejoice!

2Cloud and darkness are round him,

faithfulness in exercising authority is the establishment of his throne.

3Fire goes before him

and has set on fire his adversaries all round.

4His lightning flashes have lit up the world;

the earth has seen and convulsed.

5Mountains like wax have melted before Yahweh,

before the Lord of all the earth.

6The heavens have told of his faithfulness,

and all the peoples will see his splendour.

7They will be shamed, all those who serve an image,

those who take pride in nonentities;

all the gods have bowed low to him.

8Zion has listened and rejoiced,

the daughter-towns of Judah have celebrated,

on account of your authoritative rulings, Yahweh.

9Because you, Yahweh, are the One on High over all the earth,

you have ascended very high over all the gods.

10You who are loyal to Yahweh, be hostile to what is bad;

he keeps watch on the lives of people committed to him,

he rescues them from the hand of the faithless.

11Light has been sown for the faithful person,

rejoicing for those who are upright in mind.

12Rejoice in Yahweh, you faithful,

confess the commemoration of his sacredness!

## Psalm 98 Revealed to the Eyes of the Nations

A composition.

1Sing for Yahweh a new song,

because he has performed extraordinary deeds!

His right hand has wrought deliverance for him,

yes, his sacred arm.

2Yahweh has caused his deliverance to be acknowledged;

to the eyes of the nations he has revealed his faithfulness.

3He has been mindful of his commitment and his truthfulness

to the household of Israel.

All the ends of the earth have seen

the deliverance of our God.

4Shout for Yahweh, all the earth,

break out and resound and make music!

5Make music for Yahweh with the guitar,

with the guitar and the sound of music!

6With trumpets and the sound of the horn,

shout before the King, Yahweh!

7The sea and what fills it should thunder,

the world and the people who live in it.

8Rivers should clap the palms of their hands,

mountains should resound together,

9Before Yahweh, because he has come

to exercise authority over the earth.

10He exercises authority over the world with faithfulness,

over the peoples with uprightness.

## Psalm 99 The One Who Carries Things

1Yahweh has begun to reign – peoples should tremble;

the one who sits above the sphinxes – the earth should shake.

2In Zion Yahweh is great,

and he is on high over all the peoples.

3They should confess your name, great and awe-inspiring

– he is sacred.

4With the vigour of a king, loyal to the exercise of authority,

you are the one who established uprightness.

Authority and faithfulness in Jacob:

you are the one who implemented them

5Lift Yahweh our God high

and bow low to his footstool

– he’s sacred.

6Moses, and Aaron among his priests,

and Samuel among the people who call his name,

They were people calling to Yahweh, and he himself would answer them,

7in the pillar of cloud he would speak to them.

They kept his affirmations, the decree he gave them;

8Yahweh our God, you answered them.

You became a God who carried things for them,

but one who exacted redress for their actions.

9Lift Yahweh our God high and bow low to his sacred mountain

– because Yahweh our God is sacred.

## Psalm 100 Shout for Yahweh, All the Earth

A composition. For the thank-offering.

Shout for Yahweh, all the earth,

2serve Yahweh with rejoicing,

come before him with resounding.

3Acknowledge that Yahweh is God,

he is the one who made us and we are his,

his people and the sheep he pastures.

4Come into his gateways with confession,

his courtyards with praise,

confess him, bless his name.

5Because Yahweh is good,

his commitment is permanent,

his truthfulness to generation after generation.

## Psalm 101 The Leadership Challenge

David’s. A composition.

1I will sing of commitment and the exercise of authority,

for you Yahweh I will make music.

2I will show insight in the way that has integrity;

when will you come to me?

I will go about with integrity in my mind

within my household.

3 I will not set in front of my eyes anything of Beliyya’al;

I’m hostile to the action of deviant people

—it will not stick to me.

4A crooked mind will depart from me;

I will not acknowledge bad ways.

5The person who speaks against his neighbour in secret

– I will put an end to him.

The person lofty in his own eyes and wide of mind

– I will not tolerate him.

6My eyes will be on the person who is trustworthy in the country,

to live with me.

The person who walks on the way of integrity

– he will minister to me.

7The person who practises deceit

will not live within my household.

The person who speaks lies

will not be established in front of my eyes.

8Each morning I will put an end to all the people who are faithless in the country,

so as to cut off from Yahweh’s town all who devise trouble.

## Psalm 102:1-11 My Heart’s Withered

A plea. For a humble person when he is faint and pours out his talk before Yahweh.

1Yahweh, listen to my plea;

may my cry for help come to you.

2Don’t hide your face from me

on a day when there is pressure for me.

Bend your ear to me;

on the day when I call, be quick, answer me.

3Because my days are finished in smoke,

my bones have burned as in a fireplace.

4My heart’s been stricken like grass and it’s withered,

because I’ve put out of mind eating my food.

5Because of the sound of my groaning,

my bone sticks to my flesh.

6I’ve come to resemble a tawny owl of the wilderness,

I’ve become like a screech owl of the ruins.

7I’ve been awake and I’ve become like a bird,

alone on a roof.

8All day my enemies have reviled me;

people whom I call crazy have sworn oaths by me.

9Because I’ve eaten ashes like bread

and mixed my drink with tears,

10In the face of your condemnation and your fury,

because you picked me up and threw me out.

11My days are like an extended shadow,

and I – I wither like grass.

## Psalm 102:12-28 I Have Hope for Zion, but Is There Hope for Me?

12But you, Yahweh – you will sit permanently,

your commemoration will continue for generation after generation.

13You – you will arise, you will have compassion on Zion,

because it’s time to be gracious to it, because the set time has come.

14Because your servants have accepted its stones,

and been grace ious to its dirt.

15Nations will live in awe of Yahweh’s name,

all earth’s kings of your splendour.

16Because Yahweh has built up Zion,

has appeared in his splendour.

17He has turned his face to the plea of the naked person

and not despised their plea.

18May this be written down for the next generation,

so that a people to be created may praise Yah,

19because he has looked down from his sacred height,

from the heavens Yahweh has looked at the earth,

20To listen to the prisoner’s cry,

to release people doomed to death,

21For the recounting of Yahweh’s name in Zion,

his praise in Jerusalem,

22When peoples collect together,

yes, kingdoms, to serve Yahweh.

23He has humbled my energy on my way,

he has cut my days.

24I will say, ‘My God, don’t take me up

in the middle of my days.

Your years continue generation after generation;

26before, you founded the earth,

and the heavens are the making of your hands.

25Whereas they may perish,

you will stand.

All of them could wear out like a coat;

like clothing you could pass them on.

They would pass on, 27but you are the one,

and your years will not come to an end.

28May your servants’ children dwell,

and their offspring endure, before you’.

## Psalm 103 He Has Distanced Our Rebellions from Us

David’s

1Bless Yahweh, my entire being;

all my being, [bless] his sacred name.

2Bless Yahweh, my entire being;

don’t put out of mind all his dealings.

3He’s the one who pardons all your waywardness,

who heals all your illnesses,

4Who restores your life from the pit,

who garlands you with commitment and compassion,

5Who fills you in your finery with goodness,

so that your youth renews like an eagle.

6Yahweh performs faithful deeds,

acts of authority for all the oppressed.

7He would make his ways known to Moses,

his deeds to the Israelites.

8Yahweh is compassionate and gracious,

long-tempered and big in commitment.

9He doesn’t argue permanently,

he doesn’t hold onto it for a long time.

10He hasn’t acted toward us in accordance with our wrongdoings;

he hasn’t dealt to us in accordance with our wayward acts.

11Because in accordance with the loftiness of the heavens over the earth,

his commitment was been strong over people who hold him in awe.

12In accordance with the distance of east from west,

he has distanced our rebellions from us.

13In accordance with a father’s compassion for his children,

Yahweh has had compassion for people who hold him in awe.

14Because he himself knows our frame;

he is mindful that we are dirt.

15A mere human being: his days are like grass;

like a flower in the fields – that’s how he blooms.

16When the wind passes by it, it is no more;

its place doesn’t recognize it any more.

17But Yahweh’s commitment lasts from age to age

for people who hold him in awe, and his faithfulness to their grandchildren,

18For people who keep his pact

and are mindful of the things he has determined, so that they perform them.

19Yahweh established his throne in the heavens;

his reign rules over everything.

20Bless Yahweh, his envoys, energetic strong men performing his word,

listening to the sound of his word.

21Bless Yahweh, all his armies,

his ministers doing what is acceptable to him.

22Bless Yahweh, all his works,

in all the places where he rules.

Bless Yahweh, my entire being.

## Psalm 104:1-23 Provision for Human Beings and Donkeys

1Bless Yahweh, my entire being!

– Yahweh my God, you became very great.

You put on grandeur and magnificence,

2wrapping on light like a coat,

Stretching the heavens like a tent,

3one fixing his lofts in the water,

One making clouds his transport,

one going about on the wings of the wind,

4Making his envoys of winds,

his ministers of flaming fire.

5He founded the earth on its establishments,

so that it would never slip, ever.

6You covered it with the deep like a garment,

so that the water would stand above the mountains.

7At your reprimand they would flee;

at the sound of your thunder they would make haste.

8They would go up mountains, they would go down valleys,

to the place that you founded for them.

9You set a boundary they were not to pass;

they would not again cover the earth.

10You’re the one who sends out springs in wadis,

so that they go about between the mountains.

11They water every animal of the field;

donkeys break their thirst.

12By them the birds of the heavens dwell;

from among the branches they give voice.

13You’re one who waters mountains from his lofts

– from the fruit of your deeds the earth has its fill.

14You are the one who grows grass for the cattle,

and plants for the service of human beings,

To make bread go out from the earth,

15and wine that rejoices a person’s heart,

To make the face shine with oil,

and bread that sustains a person’s heart.

16Yahweh’s trees get their fill,

the cedars of Lebanon that he planted,

17Where birds nest,

the stork – the junipers are its home.

18The lofty mountains belong to the ibex,

the cliffs are a shelter for the rock badgers.

19He made the moon for set times;

the sun knows its setting.

20You bring darkness so that it becomes night:

in it every creature of the forest moves about.

21The lions roar for prey,

yes, in seeking their food from God.

22When the sun rises, they gather,

and crouch in their abodes.

23Human beings go out to their work,

and to their service until evening.

## Psalm 104:24-35 Withdrawing Breath, Giving Breath

24How the things you made multiplied, Yahweh;

you made them all with smartness;

the earth is full of your possessions;

25That’s the sea, great,

and wide in reach.

There are moving things without number,

living things small and great.

26There ships go about,

Livyatan that you shaped to have fun in it.

27All of them look to you,

to give their food at its time.

28You give them, they gather;

you open your hand, they have their fill of good things.

29You hide your face, they’re fearful;

you gather up their breath, they breathe their last,

and go back to their dirt.

30You send out your breath, they are created,

and you renew the face of the ground.

31May Yahweh’s splendour be permanent;

may Yahweh rejoice in his deeds,

32The one who looks on the earth and it trembles;

he touches the mountains and they smoke.

33I will sing for Yahweh while I live,

I will make music for my God while I’m still here.

34May my talk be pleasant to him;

I myself will rejoice in Yahweh.

35May wrongdoers come to an end from the earth;

faithless people – may there be none of them anymore.

Bless Yahweh, my entire being;

praise Yah.

## Psalm 105:1-22 Tell Your Story

1Confess Yahweh, call in his name,

make known his deeds among the peoples.

2Sing for him, make music for him,

talk about all his extraordinary deeds.

3Take pride in his sacred name;

the heart of all who seek Yahweh should rejoice.

4Inquire of Yahweh and his vigour;

seek his face continually.

5Be mindful of his extraordinary deeds, those which he has done,

his portents, and the rulings of his mouth,

6You offspring of Abraham his servant,

descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones.

7He is Yahweh our God;

his rulings are in all the earth.

8He has been mindful permanently of his pact,

the word he ordered to a thousand generations,

9That which he sealed to Abraham,

and swore to Isaac.

10He established it as a decree to Jacob,

to Israel as a lasting pact,

11saying, ‘I will give the country of Canaan to you,

as a share, your domain’.

12When they were few in number,

little and resident aliens in it,

13And they went about from nation to nation,

from one kingdom to another people,

14He did not allow anyone to oppress them,

but reproved kings on account of them:

15’Don’t touch my anointed ones,

don’t do wrong to my prophets’.

16He called for hunger on the country;

every staff of bread he broke.

17He sent before them a individual

who was sold as a servant, Joseph.

18They subjected his foot to the fetter;

iron came onto his person.

19Until the time his word came about,

Yahweh’s saying refined him.

20A king sent and freed him,

a ruler of peoples, and released him.

21He made him lord of his household,

ruler over all his possessions,

22To constrain his officials according to his will,

and to make his elders smart.

## Psalm 105:23-45 45In Order That They Might Keep His decrees

23Israel came to Egypt;

Jacob resided in the country of Ham.

24He made his people very fruitful,

made them more numerous than their adversaries.

25He turned their mind against his people,

to scheme against his servants.

26He sent Moses his servant,

Aaron whom he had chosen.

27They placed among them words about his signs,

his portents in the country of Ham.

28He sent darkness, and it became dark;

they did not defy his word.

29He turned their water into blood,

and put their fish to death.

30Their country teemed with frogs,

in their kings’ rooms.

31He spoke, and a swarm came,

mosquitoes in all their territory.

32He made their rain hail,

flaming fire in their country.

33He struck down their vine and their fig tree,

broke down the trees in their territory.

34He spoke, and the locust came,

the grasshopper without number.

35It ate all the vegetation in their country,

ate the fruit of their land.

36He struck down every firstborn in their country,

the first of all their vigour.

37He got them out, with silver and gold;

none among their clans collapsed.

38Egypt rejoiced when they got out,

because dread of them had fallen on them.

39He spread a cloud for covering,

and a fire to light the night.

40They asked and he brought quail,

and he would fill them with bread from the heavens.

41He opened a crag and water flowed,

went in dry places as a river.

42Because he was mindful of his sacred word

with Abraham his servant,

43He got his people out with joy,

his chosen ones with resounding.

44He gave them the nations’ countries,

and they took possession of the labour of the peoples,

45In order that they might keep his decrees

and observe his instructions.

Praise Yah!

## Psalm 106:1-22 He Gave Them What They Asked

1Praise Yah!

Confess Yahweh, because he is good,

because his commitment is permanent.

2Who can utter Yahweh’s mighty acts,

get people to listen to all his praises?

3The blessings of people who keep watch over the exercise of authority,

of the person who does what is faithful at all times!

4Be mindful of me, Yahweh, when you act with acceptance toward your people,

attend to me when you deliver them,

5So that I may see the good things that come to your chosen,

rejoice in the rejoicing of your nation,

take pride with your domain.

6We’ve done wrong with our ancestors,

we’ve been wayward, we’ve been faithless.

7Our ancestors in Egypt did not have insight into your extraordinary deeds,

they were not mindful of the magnitude of your acts of commitment.

8But he delivered them for the sake of his name,

so that his might would be acknowledged.

9He reprimanded the Reed Sea and it dried up,

and he enabled them to go through the deeps like a wilderness.

10He delivered them from the hand of the one who was hostile to them,

restored them from the hand of the enemy.

11Water covered their adversaries;

not one of them was left.

12They trusted in his words,

and sang his praise.

13They quickly put his deeds out of mind;

they did not wait for his counsel.

14They felt a deep longing in the wilderness,

they tested God in the wasteland.

15He gave them what they asked,

but sent a wasting in their entire being.

16They were jealous of Moses in the camp,

of Aaron, Yahweh’s sacred one.

17The earth opened and swallowed Datan,

closed over Abiram’s assembly.

18Fire burned up among their assembly,

a flame that set on fire the faithless.

19They made a bullock at Horeb,

bowed low to an image.

20They exchanged their splendour

for the representation of an ox eating grass.

21They put out of mind their deliverer,

the one who had done great things in Egypt,

22extraordinary deeds in the country of Ham,

awe-inspiring deeds at the Reed Sea.

## Psalm 106:23-47 Deliver Us in the Same Way!

23He said he would annihilate them,

except that Moses, his chosen,

Stood in the breach before him,

to turn back his wrath from devastating.

24They rejected the beautiful country,

and didn’t trust in his word.

25They muttered in their tents,

and didn’t listen to Yahweh’s voice.

26So he raised his hand [to swear] to them,

that he would make them fall in the wilderness,

27Make their offspring fall among the nations,

and scatter them among the countries.

28They joined the Master-of-Pe’or,

and ate sacrifices offered for the dead.

29They provoked by their deeds,

and an epidemic broke out among them.

30But Pinhas stood and intervened,

and the epidemic held back.

31It was thought of for him as a faithful deed,

generation after generation permanently.

32They angered at Meribah Water;

it was bad for Moses because of them.

33Because they rebelled against his spirit,

he was rash with his tongue.

34They didn’t devastate the peoples,

as Yahweh had said to them.

35They mixed with the nations,

and learned what they did.

36They served their images;

they became a snare for them.

37They sacrificed their sons

and their daughters to demons.

38They shed the blood of someone free of guilt,

the blood of their sons and their daughters,

Whom they sacrificed to the images of Canaan,

so that the land became ungodly through the bloodshed.

39They became defiled through their deeds;

they whored in their actions.

40Yahweh’s anger burnt against his people,

he loathed his domain.

41He gave them into the hand of the nations;

people hostile to them ruled over theme He He.

42Their enemies afflicted them,

and they bowed down under their hand.

43Many times he would rescue them,

but those people – they were rebellious in their counsel.

They sank low because of their waywardness,

44and he saw the pressure that came to them.

When he heard their resounding shout,

45he was mindful of his pact to them.

He relented in accordance with the magnitude of his acts of commitment,

46and made them objects of compassion

before all their captors.

47Deliver us, Yahweh our God,

collect us from the nations,

to confess your sacred name

to glory in your praise.

## Psalm 106:48 Another Amen

Yahweh, the God of Israel, be blessed,

from age to lasting age!

All the people is to say,

‘Amen’; praise Yah!

## Psalm 107:1-22 Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So

1Confess Yahweh, because he is good,

because his commitment is permanent.

2The people restored by Yahweh are to say it,

those whom he restored from the hand of the adversary,

3And collected from the countries,

from the north and from the west.

4They wandered in the wilderness, in the wasteland;

they didn’t find the way to a settled town.

5Hungry, thirsty too,

their entire being within them fainted.

6But they cried out to Yahweh in the pressure that came to them,

and he rescued them from their straits.

7He directed them by a straight way,

so as to go to a settled town.

8They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment,

his extraordinary deeds for human beings,

9Because he has sated the person who is scurrying about,

and filled the hungry person with good things.

10People living in darkness and deathly gloom,

prisoners of humbling and iron,

11Because they had defied the things God said,

despised the counsel of the One on High:

12He humbled their heart with oppression;

they collapsed without a helper.

13But they cried out to Yahweh in the pressure that came to them,

and he delivered them from their straits.

14He got them out of darkness and deathly gloom,

and would break their bonds.

15They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment,

his extraordinary deeds for human beings.

16Because he has broken up copper doors,

shattered iron bars.

17Dense people, because of their rebellious way,

and through their acts of waywardness, experienced humbling.

18Their appetite loathed all food;

they reached death’s gateways.

19But they cried out to Yahweh in the pressure that came to them,

and he delivered them from their straits.

20He sent his word and healed them;

he released them from their deep pit.

21They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment,

his extraordinary deeds for human beings.

22They are to offer thanksgiving sacrifices,

and tell of his deeds with resounding noise.

## Psalm 107:23-45 Consider Yahweh’s Acts of Commitment

23People who go down to the sea in ships,

doing work in extensive waters,

24These people – they saw Yahweh’s deeds,

and his extraordinary deeds in the deep.

25He spoke and set a hurricane in place,

and it lifted its waves.

26They went up to the heavens, they went down to the depths;

their entire being melted away in their trouble.

27They reeled and staggered like a drunk,

and all their smartness swallowed itself up.

28But they cried out to Yahweh in the pressure that came to them,

and he delivered them from their straits.

29He turned the hurricane into stillness;

their waves went quiet.

30They rejoiced when they became silent,

and he led them to the haven they wanted.

31They are to confess to Yahweh his commitment,

his extraordinary deeds for human beings.

32They are to exalt him in the congregation of the people,

and praise him in the session of the elders.

33He turns rivers into wilderness,

water outlets into thirsty land,

34Fruitful land into salt marsh,

because of the bad ways of the people who live in it.

35He turns wilderness into a pool of water,

dry land into water outlets.

36He has let hungry people live there;

they have established a settled town.

37They’ve sowed fields and planted vineyards,

and they have produced fruit, a yield.

38He’s blessed them and they’ve increased greatly,

and he doesn’t let their cattle decrease.

39But they have decreased and become low

through oppression, bad fortune, and sadness.

40He pours contempt on leaders,

and makes them wander in a waste where there is no way.

41But he sets the needy person on high out of humbling,

and makes their kin-groups like a flock.

42The upright will see and rejoice;

all evil has stopped its mouth.

43Who is the smart person who will keep watch on these things?

– they will consider Yahweh’s acts of commitment.

## Psalm 108 Urging God to Act in Light of His Promises

A song. A composition. David’s.

1My mind is established, God,

I will sing and make music, yes, my entire being.

2Wake up, mandolin and guitar;

I will wake the dawn.

3I will confess you among the peoples, Yahweh,

I will make music for you among the nations.

4Because your commitment is great, over the heavens,

your truthfulness up to the skies.

5Be high over the heavens, God,

over all the earth your splendour.

6In order that the people you love may be pulled out,

deliver me by your right hand and answer me.

7God had spoken by his sacredness:

‘I will exult as I allocate Shekem

and measure out Sukkot Vale.

8Gil’ad will be mine,

Menashsheh will be mine.

Ephrayim will be a stronghold for my head,

Judah my scepter.

9Mo’ab will be my washbasin,

over Edom I will throw my boot,

over Philistia I will shout out.

10Who will conduct me to the fortified town,

who would lead me to Edom?

11You’ve rejected us, haven’t you, God;

you don’t go out with our armies, God.

12Grant us help against the adversary,

Given that human deliverance is empty.

13Through God we will act with forcefulness;

he is the one who will trample on our adversaries.

## Psalm 109:1-19 How to Deal with Being Swindled

The leader’s. David’s. A composition.

1God, my praise, don’t be silent,

2because it’s a faithless mouth,

And a deceitful mouth, that people have opened against me;

they have spoken with me by means of a lying tongue.

3With hostile words they’ve surrounded me,

and battled against me for nothing.

4In return for my friendliness they accuse me;

so I [am making] a plea.

5They’ve brought on me bad in return for good,

hostility in return for my friendliness.

6’Appoint a faithless person over him,

an accuser who will stand at his right hand.

7When he enters into judgment, may he come out as faithless;

may his plea lead to condemnation.

8May his days be few;

may another person take his appointment.

9May his children become orphans,

his wife a widow.

10May his children wander about,

ask and inquire from their ruins.

11May the creditor strike at all that he has,

may strangers plunder his earnings.

12May he have no one showing commitment,

may there be no one being gracious to his orphans.

13May his succession be for cutting off,

in the next generation may their name be blotted out.

14May the waywardness of his ancestors stay in mind for Yahweh,

may his mother’s wrongdoings not be blotted out.

15May they be in front of Yahweh continually;

may he cut off their commemoration from the earth.

16Because of the fact that he was not mindful

to keep commitment,

But pursued the person who was humble and needy,

and the one crushed in spirit, to put him to death.

17He liked slighting, and it came about for him;

he didn’t want blessing, and it was far from him.

18He put on slighting like a coat,

it came into his insides like water,

into his bones like oil.

19May it be for him like clothing in which he covers himself,

and as a belt that he wraps round continually’.

## Psalm 109:20-31 Wages for Accusers

20May this be the wages of my accusers

from Yahweh,

the people who speak what is bad against me.

21So you, Yahweh, Lord,

deal with me for the sake of your name;

because your commitment is good, rescue me.

22Because I am humble and needy,

and my heart is run through within me.

23Like a shadow as it lengthens, I am gone;

I am shaken off like a locust.

24My knees have collapsed from hunger;

my body has wasted, away from fatness.

25I – I have become an object of reviling to them;

when they see me, they shake their head.

26Help me, Yahweh my God,

deliver me in accordance with your commitment,

27So that people may acknowledge that this is your hand,

that you, Yahweh, you have done it.

28Those people may slight me, but you – may you bless;

they will have arisen and been disgraced, but your servant will rejoice.

29May my accusers put on shame,

may they wrap round their disgrace like a coat.

30I will confess Yahweh greatly with my mouth,

in the middle of many people I will praise him,

31because he stands at the right hand of the needy person,

to deliver him from the people who exercise authority over him.

## Psalm 110 Enemies Become Footstool

David’s. A psalm.

1Yahweh’s proclamation to my lord:

‘Sit at my right

until I make your enemies your footstool’.

2Yahweh will send your vigorous scepter out from Zion;

hold sway among your enemies.

3Your people are willing offerings

on the day you deploy your forces.

In sacred magnificence from the womb of dawn

the dew of your youths is yours.

4Yahweh has sworn,

and will not relent:

‘You are a priest permanently

after the manner of Melkizedeq’.

5The Lord is at your right;

he has hit kings on the day of his anger.

6He judges among the nations, filling them with bodies;

he has hit heads over the earth, far and wide.

7From the wadi by the way he drinks;

therefore he can raise his head.

## Psalm 111 The Lasting Pact

1Praise Yah!

I will confess Yahweh with my whole mind

in the council of the upright, the assembly.

2Yahweh’s doings are great,

inquired about for all their delights.

3His action is grandeur and magnificence,

his faithfulness stands permanently.

4He achieved commemoration for his extraordinary deeds;

Yahweh is gracious and compassionate.

5He has given meat to people who live in awe of him;

he is mindful of his pact permanently.

6He told his people of the energy of his doings

in giving them the domain of the nations.

7The doings of his hands are true and authoritative;

all the things he has determined are truthful,

8Established lastingly and permanently,

done in truth and uprightness.

9He sent redemption to his people,

he ordered his pact permanently.

His name is sacred and to be held in awe;

10awe for Yahweh is the essence of smartness.

Good insight belongs to all who do them;

his praise stands permanently.

## Psalm 112 Blessed So As to Bless

1Praise Yah!

The blessings of the person who lives in awe of Yahweh,

who delights much in his orders!

2His offspring will become a strong man in the country;

the generation of the upright will be blessed.

3Riches and wealth are in his house,

and his faithfulness stands permanently.

4He rises in the darkness as light for the upright,

gracious, compassionate, and faithful.

5Good is the person who is gracious and lends,

as he fulfills his words with the [proper] exercise of authority.

6Because he will not slip, ever;

the faithful person will become an object of commemoration permanently.

7He is not afraid of bad news;

his mind is established, reliant on Yahweh.

8His mind is held firm so that he is not afraid,

until he looks on his adversaries.

9He spreads abroad as he gives to the needy;

his faithfulness stands permanently.

His horn will stand high in splendour;

10the faithless person will see and be vexed.

He will grind his teeth and waste away;

the longing of faithless people will perish.

## Psalm 113 The One Who Gets Down Low to Look

1Praise Yah!

Praise, Yahweh’s servants,

praise Yahweh’s name!

2May Yahweh’s name be blessed,

now and permanently!

3From the rising of the sun to its setting,

Yahweh’s name be praised!

4Yahweh is on high over all nations,

his splendour is over the heavens!

5Who is like Yahweh our God,

the one who goes on high to sit,

6Who gets down low to look,

in the heavens and the earth,

7Who lifts up the poor person from the dirt,

raises the needy person from the rubbish heap,

8To enable them to sit with leaders,

with the leaders of the people,

9Who enables the childless woman to sit in the household,

the mother of children, rejoicing?

Praise Yah!

## Psalm 114 The Scared Place

1When Israel got out from Egypt,

Jacob’s household from a jabbering people,

2Judah became its sacred place,

Israel its realm.

3When the sea saw, it fled;

the Jordan – it was turning back.

4The mountains – they jumped like rams,

the hills like the children of the flock.

5What was it with you, sea, that you were fleeing,

Jordan, that you were turning back,

6Mountains that you were jumping like rams,

hills like the children of the flock?

7Tremble, before the Lord, earth,

before Jacob’s God,

8Who turned the crag into a pool of water,

basalt into a spring of water.

## Psalm 115 The Gods with Bodies that Don’t Work

1Not to us, Yahweh,

not to us,

But to your name give splendour,

for your commitment, for your truthfulness.

2Why should the nations say,

‘Where is their God, please?’

3Whereas our God is in the heavens;

everything that he wants he has done.

4Their images are silver and gold,

the making of human hands.

5They have a mouth but they don’t speak,

they have eyes but they don’t see,

6They have ears but they don’t hear,

they have a nose but they don’t smell,

7Their hands but they don’t feel, their feet but they don’t walk about;

they don’t murmur with their throat.

8Their makers become like them,

everyone who relies on them.

9Israel, rely on Yahweh!

– he is their help and their shield.

10Household of Aaron, rely on Yahweh!

– he is their help and their shield.

11People who live in awe of Yahweh, rely on Yahweh!

– he is their help and their shield.

12In that Yahweh has been mindful of us, he will bless us;

he will bless Israel’s household,

he will bless Aaron’s household.

13He will bless the people who live in awe of Yahweh,

the small along with the great.

14May Yahweh add to you,

to you and to your children.

15May you be blessed by Yahweh,

maker of heavens and earth.

16The heavens are heavens belonging to Yahweh,

but the earth he gave to human beings.

17Whereas the dead do not praise Yah,

nor any who go down to silence,

18We – we will bless Yah,

now and permanently.

Praise Yah!

## Psalm 116 I Will Make Good My Pledges

1I am loyal, because Yahweh listens

to my voice, my prayers for grace.

2Because he has bent his ear to me,

and through my days I will call.

3Death’s ropes encompassed me,

She’ol’s restraints found me.

When I find pressure and sadness,

4I call out in Yahweh’s name:

‘Oh now, Yahweh,

save my life!’

5Yahweh is gracious and faithful;

our God is compassionate.

6Yahweh keeps watch over simple people;

I sank low, and he delivered me.

7Turn back, my entire being, to your rest,

because Yahweh – he has dealt to you.

8Because you pulled out my life from death,

my eye from tears, my foot from being pushed down,

9I can walk about before Yahweh

in the land of the living.

10I trust, because I could say,

‘I – I have become very low’.

11I – I said in my haste,

‘Every human being lies’.

12What shall I give back to Yahweh,

for all his dealings with me?

13I will lift the deliverance cup,

and call out in Yahweh’s name.

14I will make good my pledges to Yahweh,

right in front of all his people, please.

15Valuable in Yahweh’s eyes

is the death of people who are committed to him.

16Oh, Yahweh,

because I am your servant,

I am your servant, the son of your handmaid;

you loosed my bonds.

17I will make a thanksgiving sacrifice to you,

I will call in Yahweh’s name.

18I will make good my pledges to Yahweh,

right in front of all his people, please,

19in the courtyards of Yahweh’s house,

in the middle of Jerusalem.

Praise Yah!

## Psalm 117 A Lot in a Few Words

1Praise Yahweh, all you nations,

extol him all you peoples.

2Because his commitment to us has been strong;

Yahweh’s truthfulness is permanent.

Praise Yah.

## Psalm 118 This Is the Day That the Lord Has Made

1Confess Yahweh, because he is good,

because his commitment is permanent.

2Israel is please to say,

‘His commitment is permanent’.

3Aaron’s household is please to say,

‘His commitment is permanent’.

4The people who live in awe of Yahweh are please to say,

‘His commitment is permanent’.

5Out of constraint I called Yah;

Yah answered me with roominess.

6Because Yahweh is mine, I will not be afraid;

what can a human being do to me?

7Yahweh is mine as my helper,

and I shall look on the people who are hostile to me.

8It’s better to take shelter with Yahweh

than to rely on human beings.

9It’s better to take shelter with Yahweh

than to rely on leaders.

10All nations surrounded me;

in Yahweh’s name I can indeed wither them.

11They surrounded me, yes, surrounded me;

in Yahweh’s name I can indeed wither them.

12They surrounded me like bees;

they’ve been extinguished like a fire of thorns

– in Yahweh’s name I can indeed wither them.

13You pushed me hard, so as to fall,

but Yahweh—he helped me.

14Yah was my vigour and protection,

and he became my deliverance.

15The noise of resounding and deliverance

was in the tents of the faithful.

Yahweh’s right hand acts with forcefulness,

16Yahweh’s right hand lifts up high,

Yahweh’s right hand acts with forcefulness.

17I shall not die, but live,

and recount Yah’s deeds.

18Yahweh severely disciplined me,

but didn’t give me over to death.

19Open the faithful gateways to me;

when I come through them, I shall confess Yahweh.

20This is Yahweh’s gateway;

faithful people come through it.

21I will confess you, because you answered me

and became deliverance for me.

22’The stone that the builders spurned

became the head cornerstone’.

23This came about from Yahweh;

It’s been extraordinary in our eyes.

24This was the day that Yahweh made;

so that we would celebrate and rejoice in it.

25Oh, Yahweh, will you deliver us, please?

– oh, Yahweh, enable us to succeed, please.

26Blessed be the one who comes in Yahweh’s name;

we are blessing you from Yahweh’s house.

27Yahweh is God; he has shone light to us

– tie the festal offering with cords to the horns of the altar.

28You are my God and I will confess you;

my God, I will exalt you.

29Confess Yahweh, because he is good,

because his commitment is permanent.

## Psalm 119:1-24 God’s Laws as the Way to Blessing

1The blessings of people who have integrity in their way,

who walk by Yahweh’s instruction!

2The blessings of people who observe his affirmations,

who inquire of him with their entire mind!

3Indeed, they have not done evil;

they have walked in his ways.

4You yourself have given the order that the things you have determined

are to be well kept.

5Oh that my ways may be firm

in keeping your decrees!

6Then I shall not be shamed

when I look to all your orders.

7I will confess you with uprightness of mind

as I learn of your faithful rulings.

8I will keep your decrees;

don’t totally abandon me.

9How can a youth keep his path clean?

– by keeping watch in accordance with your word.

10I’ve inquired of you with my whole mind;

don’t let me stray from your orders.

11I’ve treasured your words in my mind

in order that I may not do wrong in relation to you.

12Blessed are you, Yahweh;

teach me your decrees.

13With my lips I’ve recounted

all the rulings of your mouth.

14In the way of your affirmations

I’ve rejoiced as over all riches.

15I shall talk about the things you have determined

and look to your paths.

16In your decrees I will take pleasure;

I will not put out of mind your words.

17Deal to your servant

so that I may live, and keep your word.

18Open my eyes so that I may look

to extraordinary things from your instruction.

19I’m a sojourner on the earth;

don’t hide your orders from me.

20My entire being has failed with longing

for your rulings all the time.

21You’ve reprimanded the assertive;

cursed are the people who stray from your orders.

22Roll away from me reviling and shame,

because I’ve observed your affirmations.

23Although officials have sat, have spoken against me,

your servant talks about your decrees.

24Yes, your affirmations are my pleasure,

my counsellors.

## Psalm 119:25-48 Standing on the Promises

25My entire being is stuck in the dirt:

bring me to life in accordance with your word.

26I recounted my ways and you answered me;

teach me your decrees.

27Help me understand the way of the things you have determined,

so that I may talk about your extraordinary deeds.

28My entire being has wept itself away through sorrow;

set me up in accordance with your word.

29Remove the way of falsehood from me;

grace me with your instruction.

30I’ve chosen the way of truthfulness;

I’ve set out your rulings.

31I’ve stuck to your affirmations;

Yahweh, don’t shame me.

32I run the way of your orders,

because you widen my mind.

33Teach me the way of your decrees, Yahweh,

so that I may preserve it to the utmost.

34Help me understand, so that I may observe your instruction,

and keep it with all my mind.

35Direct me on the trail of your orders,

because I delight in it.

36Bend my mind to your affirmations

and not to profit.

37Help my eyes pass from seeing emptiness;

bring me to life by your way.

38Implement for your servant what you’ve said,

that which was for people who live in awe of you.

39Make my reviling, which I dread, pass,

because your rulings are good.

40There, I long for the things you’ve determined;

in your faithfulness bring me to life.

41So may your commitment come to me, Yahweh,

your deliverance in accordance with what you’ve said.

42And I shall answer the person who reviles me with a word,

because I’ve relied on your word.

43So don’t snatch right away from my mouth your truthful word,

because I’ve waited for your rulings.

44And I will keep your instruction continually,

lastingly and permanently.

45So I will walk about in wideness,

because I’ve inquired of the things you’ve determined.

46And I will speak of your affirmations in front of kings,

and not be shamed.

47So I will take pleasure in your orders,

to which I am loyal.

48And I will lift the palms of my hands to your orders, to which I am loyal,

and I will talk about your decrees.

## Psalm 119:49-72 Teach Me

49Be mindful of your word to your servant,

upon which you’ve caused me to wait.

50This is my comfort in my humbling,

that what you’ve said has brought me to life.

51Though the assertive have mocked me greatly,

I haven’t turned away from your instruction.

52I’ve been mindful of your rulings from of old,

Yahweh, and found comfort.

53Rage has grasped me because of the faithless people,

who abandon your instruction.

54Your decrees have been my protection

in the house where I reside.

55I’ve been mindful by night of your name, Yahweh,

and I’ve kept your instruction.

56This is how it’s been for me,

because I’ve observed the things you’ve determined.

57Yahweh being my share,

I’ve said I would keep your words.

58I’ve sought your goodwill with all my heart;

be gracious to me in accordance with what you’ve said.

59I’ve thought about my ways

and turned back my feet to your affirmations.

60I’ve hurried and not delayed

to keep your orders.

61Though the ropes of the faithless were round me,

I haven’t put out of mind your instruction.

62In the middle of the night I get up

to confess you for your faithful rulings.

63I’m a friend to all who live in awe of you

and to the people who keep the things you’ve determined.

64The earth is full of your commitment, Yahweh;

teach me your decrees.

65You’ve done good things with your servant,

Yahweh, in accordance with your word.

66Teach me goodness of discretion and acknowledgment,

because I’ve trusted in your orders.

67Before I became low I was going astray,

but now I’ve kept what you said.

68You’re good and you do good;

teach me your decrees.

69The assertive have smeared falsehood over me,

whereas I observe the things you’ve determined with my whole mind.

70Their mind is thick like fat,

whereas I’ve taken pleasure in your instruction.

71It was good for me that I was humbled,

in order that I might learn your decrees.

72The instruction that comes from your mouth is better for me

than thousands of gold and silver pieces.

## Psalm 119:73-96 Waiting

73Given that your hands made me, established me,

help me understand so that I may learn your orders.

74People who live in awe of you will see and rejoice,

because I’ve waited for your word.

75I’ve acknowledged, Yahweh, that your rulings are faithful,

and in truthfulness you’ve humbled me.

76May your commitment become my comfort, please,

in accordance with what you’ve said to your servant.

77May your compassion come to me so that I may live,

because your instruction is my pleasure.

78May the assertive be shamed, because they have put me in the wrong by means of falsehood,

whereas I talk about the things you’ve determined.

79May the people who live in awe of you turn back to me,

the people who acknowledge your affirmations.

80May my mind be of integrity in your decrees

in order that I may not be shamed.

81My entire being fails [in looking] for your deliverance;

for your word I’ve waited.

82My eyes fail regarding what you’ve said,

in saying ‘When will you comfort me?’

83When I’ve become like a water-skin in smoke,

I haven’t put out of mind your decrees.

84How many are your servant’s days:

when will you act with authority against my pursuers?

85The assertive have dug pits for me,

which is not in accordance with your instruction.

86All your orders are truthful;

when people pursue me with falsehood, help me.

87They’ve almost finished me off in the country,

but I haven’t abandoned the things you’ve determined.

88In accordance with your commitment bring me to life,

so that I may keep the affirmations of your mouth.

89Your word is permanent, Yahweh,

standing in the heavens.

90Your truthfulness lasts generation after generation;

you established the earth and it has stood firm.

91As for your rulings, they’ve stood firm today,

because everything is your servants.

92Were not your instruction my pleasure,

I would then have perished through my humbling.

93Never will I put out of mind the things you’ve determined,

because by means of them you’ve brought me to life.

94I am yours, deliver me,

because I’ve inquired of the things you’ve determined.

95Whereas faithless people have hoped to make me perish,

I show understanding of your affirmations.

96As for every finish, I’ve seen an end,

but your order is very wide.

## Psalm 119:97-120 I Can Be Smarter Than My Professor

97How loyal I am to your instruction!

– all day it is my talk.

98Your orders make me smarter than my enemies,

because they are mine permanently.

99I’ve gained more insight than all my teachers,

because your affirmations are my talk.

100I show more understanding than the elders,

because I’ve observed the things you’ve determined.

101I’ve kept back my foot from every bad path,

in order that I might keep your word.

102I haven’t departed from your rulings,

because you’ve instructed me.

103How smooth the things you say have been to my palate,

more than syrup to my mouth.

104Through the things you’ve determined I show understanding;

therefore I oppose every false path.

105Your word is a lamp to my foot,

a light to my trail.

106I swore and set it up,

that I would keep your faithful rulings.

107I am low, very low, Yahweh;

bring me to life in accordance with your word.

108Please accept the free offerings of my mouth, Yahweh,

and teach me your rulings.

109My life is in the palm of my hand continually,

but I haven’t put out of mind your instruction.

110Faithless people have placed a trap for me,

but I haven’t strayed from the things you’ve determined.

111I’ve made your affirmations my own permanently,

because they are the joy of my heart.

112I’ve bent my mind to act on your decrees,

permanently, to the utmost.

113I’m hostile to divided people,

and I’m loyal to your instruction.

114Since you’ve been my shelter and shield,

I’ve waited for your word.

115Depart from me, you who deal badly,

so that I may observe my God’s orders.

116Hold me up in accordance with what you said, so that I may live;

don’t let me be ashamed of my expectation.

117Sustain me so that I may find deliverance,

and have regard to your decrees continually.

118You’ve thrown out everyone who wanders from your decrees,

because their deceptiveness is false.

119As dross, you’ve made all the faithless people in the country cease;

therefore I’m loyal to your affirmations.

120My flesh shivers in reverence for you;

I live in awe of your rulings.

## Psalm 119:121-44 The Opening Up of Your Words Gives Light

121I’ve made faithful rulings;

don’t leave me to oppressors.

122Make a pledge to your servant for good things;

the assertive must not oppress me.

123My eyes fail [in looking] for your deliverance,

for what you said about your faithfulness.

124Act with your servant in accordance with your commitment,

and teach me your decrees.

125As I am your servant, help me understand,

so that I may acknowledge your affirmations.

126It’s a time for Yahweh to act;

people have violated your instruction.

127Therefore I’m loyal to your orders,

more than to gold and silver.

128Therefore I’ve treated as upright everything that you’ve determined about everything;

I’ve been hostile to every false path.

129Your affirmations are extraordinary things;

therefore my entire being has observed them.

130The opening up of your words gives light,

helping the simple to understand.

131I opened wide my mouth and panted,

because I longed for your orders.

132Turn your face to me and be gracious to me,

in accordance with your ruling for people who are loyal to your name.

133Establish my feet by what you say,

so that no evil may have power over me.

134Redeem me from human oppression,

so that I may keep the things you’ve determined.

135Shine your face on your servant,

and teach me your decrees.

136My eyes have run down streams of water,

because people have not kept your instruction.

137You’re faithful, Yahweh,

and upright in your rulings.

138You’ve ordered the faithfulness of your affirmations,

and the truthfulness, exceedingly.

139My passion has devoured me,

because my adversaries have put your words out of mind.

140What you say has been much proven,

and your servant is loyal to it.

141Although I am small and despised,

I haven’t put out of mind the things you’ve determined.

142Your faithfulness is a faithfulness that is permanent,

and your instruction is truth.

143Although pressure and straits have found me,

your orders are my pleasure.

144The faithfulness of your affirmations is permanent;

help me understand so that I may live.

## Psalm 119:145-160 My Eyes Have Anticipated the Watches

145I’ve called with all my heart; answer me, Yahweh,

so that I may observe your decrees.

146I’ve called you – deliver me,

so that I may keep your affirmations.

147I’ve anticipated the twilight and cried for help,

as I waited for your word.

148My eyes have anticipated the watches,

to talk about what you’ve said.

149Listen to my voice in accordance with your commitment;

Yahweh, bring me to life in accordance with your ruling.

150People who pursue deliberate wickedness are near;

they are far from your instruction.

151You are near, Yahweh,

and all your orders are true.

152Of old I’ve acknowledged from your affirmations

that you founded them permanently.

153See my humbling, pull me out,

because I haven’t put out of mind your instruction.

154Argue my cause and restore me;

in light of what you’ve said, bring me to life.

155Deliverance is far from the faithless,

because they hav n’t inquired of your decrees.

156Your compassion is great, Yahweh;

bring me to life in accordance with your rulings.

157Although my pursuers and adversaries are many,

I haven’t turned away from your affirmations.

158I’ve seen people who break faith and loathed them,

people who didn’t keep what you said.

159See that I’ve been loyal to the things you’ve determined;

Yahweh bring me to life in accordance with your commitment.

160Truthfulness is the first principle of your word,

and every faithful ruling of yours is permanent.

## Psalm 119:161-176 The Appeal of the Lost Sheep

161Officials have pursued me for nothing,

but my heart has revered your word.

162I rejoice over what you’ve said,

like someone who finds much plunder.

163Whereas I’m hostile to and take offence at falsehood,

I’m loyal to your instruction.

164I’ve praised you seven times a day

for your faithful rulings.

165There is much well-being for people who are loyal to your instruction,

and there isn’t anything that can make them collapse.

166I’ve looked for your deliverance, Yahweh,

and acted on your orders.

167I’ve kept your affirmations with my entire being;

I am totally loyal to them.

168I’ve kept the things you’ve determined and your affirmations,

because all my ways are in front of you.

169May my resounding come near your presence, Yahweh;

in accordance with your word, help me understand.

170May my prayer for grace come before you;

in accordance with what you’ve said, rescue me.

171May my lips pour forth praise,

because you teach me your decrees.

172May my tongue chant of what you’ve said,

because all your orders are faithful.

173May your hand come to my help,

because I’ve chosen the things you’ve determined.

174I’ve longed for your deliverance, Yahweh,

and your instruction is my pleasure.

175May my entire being live and praise you,

and may your rulings help me.

176I’ve wandered like a lost sheep:

look for your servant,

because I haven’t put your orders out of mind.

## Psalm 120 Peaceableness

1A song of the ascents.

To Yahweh, when I was under pressure,

I called and he answered me.

2Yahweh, rescue my life from false lips,

from a deceitful tongue.

3What will it give you, what will it add to you,

deceitful tongue?

4The arrows of a strong man, sharpened,

with coals of broom shrubs.

5Oh for me, that I’ve resided with Meshek,

dwelt with Qedar’s tents.

6A long time I’ve been dwelling

with someone hostile to peace.

7I am for peace, but when I speak,

they are for battle.

## Psalm 121 Peacefulness

1A song for the ascents

I raise my eyes to the mountains:

from where does my help come?

2My help comes from Yahweh,

maker of heavens and earth.

3He doesn’t give your foot to slipping;

your keeper doesn’t doze.

4There, he doesn’t doze and he doesn’t sleep,

Israel’s keeper.

5Yahweh is your keeper, Yahweh is your shade,

at your right hand.

6By day the sun will not strike you down,

or the moon by night.

7Yahweh will keep you from everything bad;

he will keep your life.

8Yahweh will keep your going out and your coming in,

from now and permanently.

## Psalm 122 Praying for Jerusalem

1A song of the ascents. David’s.

I rejoiced when people said to me,

‘We’ll go to Yahweh’s house’.

2Our feet have been standing

in your gates, Jerusalem,

3Jerusalem, which is built

as a town that is joined together to itself,

4Where the clans went up, Yah’s clans,

(an affirmation for Israel),

to confess Yahweh’s name.

5Because thrones for exercising authority sat there,

thrones for David’s household.

6Ask for the well-being of Jerusalem;

may people who are loyal to it be secure.

7May there be well-being in your rampart,

ease in your citadels.

8For the sake of my brothers and my friends

I shall please speak of well-being for you.

9For the sake of the house of Yahweh our God

I will seek good things for you.

## Psalm 123 Praying for Grace

A song of the ascents.

1To you I raise my eyes,

you who sit in the heavens.

2There, like the eyes of servants

toward the hand of their masters,

Like the eyes of a maidservant

toward the hand of her mistress,

So are our eyes toward Yahweh our God,

until he is gracious to us.

3Be gracious to us, Yahweh, be gracious,

because we’ve become very full of contempt.

4Our entire being has become very full for itself

of the ridicule of complacent people,

of the contempt of majestic people.

## Psalm 124 Our Help Is the Name of the Lord

A song of the ascents. David’s.

1Were it not Yahweh who was ours,

Israel is please to say,

2Were it not Yahweh who was ours

when people arose against us,

3Then they would have swallowed us alive

in their angry burning against us.

4Then the water – it would have carried us off;

the torrent – it would have passed right over us.

5Then it would have passed right over us,

the seething water.

6Yahweh be blessed,

who did not give us as prey to their teeth.

7Our life is like a bird

that has escaped from the hunters’ trap.

The trap – it broke;

and we – we escaped.

8Our help is the very name of Yahweh,

maker of heavens and earth.

## Psalm 125 Mountains Round Jerusalem, Yahweh Round His People

A song of the ascents.

1The people who rely on Yahweh are like Mount Zion,

which will not slip – it will sit permanently.

2Jerusalem – mountains are round it;

Yahweh – he is round his people,

now and permanently.

3Because the faithless club will not rest

over the allocation of the faithful,

In order that the faithful do not put

their hands to evil.

4Do good, Yahweh, to the people who are good,

yes, to the people who are upright in their mind.

5But the people who bend their crooked ways,

may Yahweh make them go, the people who devise trouble;

well-being [be] on Israel!

## Psalm 126 Dreaming, Crying, Resounding

A song of the ascents.

1When Yahweh turned back Zion’s fortunes,

we became like people dreaming.

2Then our mouth would fill with laughter,

our tongue with resounding.

Then they would say among the nations,

‘Yahweh has shown greatness in acting with them’.

3Yahweh has shown greatness in acting with us;

we became people celebrating.

4Turn back our fortunes, Yahweh,

like canyons in the Negev.

5May people who sow with crying

reap with resounding.

6The person who goes, but goes crying,

carrying the seed bag –

As he comes, may he come with resounding,

carrying his sheaves.

## Psalm 127 Insomnia

1A song of the ascents. Solomon’s.

If Yahweh doesn’t build a house,

in vain the builders have laboured on it.

If Yahweh doesn’t keep a town,

in vain the the one who keeps watch has been wakeful.

2It is in vain for you, being people early to get up,

people late to sit down,

People who eat bread of toil

– yes, he gives sleep to his beloved.

3There, sons are your domain from Yahweh;

the fruit of the womb is a reward.

4Like arrows in a strong man’s hand

– so are the sons of youth.

5The blessings of the man

who has filled his quiver!

Of them he will not be shamed

when they speak with enemies in the gateway.

## Psalm 128 Blessings and Good Things

A song of the ascents.

1The blessings of anyone who lives in awe of Yahweh,

who walks in his ways!

2Because you will eat the fruit of the palms of your hands,

your blessings and good things of yours.

3Your wife like a fruitful vine

in the inner rooms of your house,

Your children like the slips of olive trees

round your table.

4There, surely thus will he be blessed,

a man who lives in awe of Yahweh.

5May Yahweh bless you from Zion;

you can look at the good things of Jerusalem,

All the days of your life,

6and look at your grandchildren;

well-being [be] on Israel!

## Psalm 129 Atrocities

A song of the ascents.

1People have attacked me much since my youth,

Israel is please to say,

2People have attacked me much,

though not prevailed over me.

3Over my back ploughmen have ploughed;

they made long furrows.

4Yahweh is faithful;

he cut through the ropes of the faithless people.

5May they be shamed and may they turn backward,

all the people who are hostile to Zion.

6May they become like the grass on roofs

that withers before someone has plucked it,

7With which a reaper has not filled his fist,

or a gatherer his arm,

8And passersby have not said,

‘Yahweh’s blessing on you;

we bless you in Yahweh’s name’.

## Psalm 130 From the Depths

A song of the ascents.

1From the depths I have called you, Yahweh:

2Lord, listen to my voice.

May your ears become attentive

to the sound of my prayers for grace.

3If you keep watch on wayward acts, Yah:

Lord, who can stand?

4Because with you there is pardon,

in order that you may be held in awe.

5I have hoped for Yahweh,

my entire being has hoped.

For his word I have waited,

6my entire being for Lord,

More than people keeping watch for the morning,

people keeping watch for the morning.

7Israel, wait for Yahweh,

because with Yahweh there is commitment.

With him the redemption will be great,

8when he himself redeems Israel from all its wayward acts.

## Psalm 131 No Big Ideas

A song of the ascents. David’s.

1Yahweh, my mind has not been lofty,

my eyes have not looked high.

I haven’t gone about with big ideas

or extraordinary deeds beyond me.

2If I haven’t conformed

and quietened my entire being….

Like someone nursed with its mother,

so my entire being is nursed with me.

3Israel, wait for Yahweh,

now and for evermore.

## Psalm 132 If You Build It, He Will Come

A song of the ascents.

1Yahweh, be mindful for David

of all his being humbled,

2In that he swore to Yahweh,

pledged to Jacob’s Champion,

3’If I come into my tent, my house,

if I climb into my bed, my couch,

4If I give sleep to my eyes,

slumber to my eyelids,

5Until I find the place belonging to Yahweh,

the dwelling belonging to Jacob’s Champion…’.

6There, we heard of it at Ephrata,

we found it in the Ya’ar fields.

7Let’s come to his dwelling,

let’s bow low to his footstool.

8Rise, Yahweh, to your place, to settle down,

you and your powerful chest.

9Your priests put on faithfulness,

the people who are committed to you resound.

10For the sake of David your servant,

don’t turn back the face of your anointed one.

11Yahweh swore to David in truthfulness;

he will not turn back from it:

‘One from the fruit of your body

I will put on your throne.

12If your sons keep my pact,

my affirmations that I will teach them,

For all time their sons

also will sit on your throne.

13Because Yahweh chose Zion,

which he wanted as a seat for himself.

14For all time this is my place to settle down,

where I will sit, because I wanted it.

15Its supplies I will greatly bless;

its needy people I will fill with bread.

16Its priests I will clothe with deliverance,

its committed people will resound loudly.

17There I will make David’s horn flourish;

I am setting up a lamp for my anointed one.

18Its enemies I will clothe in shame,

but on him his crown will sparkle’.

## Psalm 133 Brothers Living As One

1A song of the ascents. David’s.

There, how good and how lovely

is brothers living as one,

2Like good oil on the head,

going down onto the beard,

Aaron’s beard,

which goes down on the collar of his clothes,

3Like the dew of Hermon,

which goes down on the mountains of Zion.

Because there Yahweh ordered blessing,

life for evermore.

## Psalm 134 How to End the Day

1A song of the ascents.

There, bless Yahweh, all you servants of Yahweh,

you who stand in Yahweh’s house at night.

2Raise your hands to the sacred place

and bless Yahweh.

3May Yahweh bless you from Zion

– the one who is maker of heavens and earth.

## Psalm 135 Anything that Yahweh Has Wished, He Has Done

1Praise Yah!

Praise Yahweh’s name;

praise, servants of Yahweh,

2You who stand in Yahweh’s house,

in the courtyards of the house of our God.

3Praise Yah, because Yahweh is good;

make music for his name, because it’s lovely.

4Because Yah chose Jacob for himself,

Israel as his personal treasure.

5Because I myself acknowledge that Yahweh is great;

our Lord above all gods.

6Anything that Yahweh has wished,

he has done in the heavens and on the earth,

In the seas and all the depths,

7making clouds rise from the end of the earth.

He has made flashes of lightning for the rain,

getting wind out from his storehouses,

8The one who struck down the firstborn of Egypt,

both human beings and cattle.

9He sent signs and portents

in the middle of Egypt

against Pharaoh and against all his servants,

10The one who struck down many nations

and killed numerous kings,

11Sihon king of the Amorites,

Og king of Bashan,

And all the kingdoms of Canaan,

12and gave their country as a domain,

a domain for Israel his people.

13Yahweh, your name is permanent;

Yahweh, your commemoration is through generation after generation.

14Because Yahweh acts in judgment for his people

and gets relief in connection with his servants.

15The nations’ images are silver and gold,

the making of human hands.

16They have a mouth but they don’t speak,

they have eyes but they don’t see.

17They have ears but they don’t hear;

no, there’s no breath in their mouths.

18Their makers will become like them,

anyone who relies on them.

19Household of Israel, bless Yahweh;

household of Aaron, bless Yahweh.

20Householdof Levi, bless Yahweh;

you who live in awe of Yahweh, bless Yahweh.

21Yahweh be blessed from Zion,

the one who dwells in Jerusalem.

Praise Yah!

## Psalm 136 His commitment is Permanent

1Confess Yahweh, because he is good

(because his commitment is permanent).

2Confess the God of gods

(because his commitment is permanent).

3Confess the Lord of lords

(because his commitment is permanent).

4The one who did big, extraordinary things alone

(because his commitment is permanent),

5Who made the heavens with understanding

(because his commitment is permanent),

6Who spread the earth over the water

(because his commitment is permanent),

7Who made the big lights

(because his commitment is permanent),

8The sun to rule the day

(because his commitment is permanent),

9The moon and the stars to rule the night

(because his commitment is permanent),

10Who struck down Egypt through their firstborn

(because his commitment is permanent),

11And got Israel out from the middle of them

(because his commitment is permanent),

12With a strong hand and an extended arm

(because his commitment is permanent),

13The divider of the Reed Sea into two divisions

(because his commitment is permanent),

14Who let Israel pass through the middle of it

(because his commitment is permanent),

15But shook Pharaoh and his force into the Reed Sea

(because his commitment is permanent),

16The one who enabled his people to go through the wilderness

(because his commitment is permanent),

17The one who struck down great kings

(because his commitment is permanent),

18Who killed august kings

(because his commitment is permanent),

19Sihon king of the Amorites

(because his commitment is permanent),

20Og king of Bashan

(because his commitment is permanent),

21And gave their country as a domain

(because his commitment is permanent),

22A domain for Israel his servant

(because his commitment is permanent),

23Who was mindful of us in our lowliness

(because his commitment is permanent),

24And tore us away from our adversaries

(because his commitment is permanent),

25Giver of food to all flesh

(because his commitment is permanent).

26Confess the God of the heavens

(because his commitment is permanent).

## Psalm 137 Mindfulness, God’s and Ours

1By the rivers of Babel,

there we sat, yes, we cried

as we were mindful of Zion.

2On the poplars in the middle of it

we hung our guitars.

3Because there they asked,

our captors, for the words of a song,

The people who play about with us, for rejoicing:

‘Sing us one of the Zion songs!’

4How can we sing Yahweh’s song

on foreign soil?

5If I put you out of mind, Jerusalem,

may my right hand put out of mind.

6May my tongue stick to my palate

if I am not mindful of you,

If I do not exalt Jerusalem

above the pinnacle of my rejoicing.

7Yahweh, be mindful for the Edomites

of Jerusalem’s day,

The people who were saying, ‘Strip it,

strip it, to its foundation’.

8Ms Babel, you who are to be destroyed:

the blessings of the person who make good to you

for the thing that you dealt to us.

9The blessings of the person who grasps your babies

and dashes them on the cliff.

## Psalm 138 How to Be Defiant in Spirit

David’s

1I will confess you with all my heart,

in front of the gods I will make music for you.

2I will bow low to your sacred palace,

and confess your name for your commitment and for your truthfulness,

Because you have made great above everything

your name, your word.

3On the day I called, you answered me;

you make me defiant in my being, with vigour.

4All earth’s kings will confess you, Yahweh,

because they will have heard the sayings of your mouth.

5They will sing of Yahweh’s ways,

because Yahweh’s splendour will be great.

6Because Yahweh is on high, but he sees the lowly;

lofty, he acknowledges from afar.

7If I walk in the middle of pressure you will give me life;

on account of my enemies’ anger you will put out your hand.

Your right hand will deliver me;

8Yahweh will bring it to an end for me.

Yahweh, your commitment is permanent;

don’t slacken your hold of the things your hands made.

## Psalm 139 Openness

The leader’s. David’s. A composition.

1Yahweh, you’ve searched me out and got to know me:

2you yourself have got to know my sitting and my rising,

you’ve understood my intention, from far away.

3My walking and my reclining you’ve measured;

with all my ways you’ve become familiar.

4Because there’s not an utterance on my tongue

– there, Yahweh, you’ve got to know it all.

5Behind and in front you’ve bound me,

and put the palm of your hand on me.

6Your knowledge is too extraordinary for me;

it’s towered high, I can’t prevail over it.

7Where could I go from your spirit,

where could I take flight from your face?

8If I were to go up to the heavens, you would be there;

if I were to make She’ol my bed – there you would be.

9Were I to take dawn’s wings,

dwell on the far side of the sea,

10There, too, your hand could lead me away,

your right hand could grasp me.

11Were I to say, ‘The darkness can certainly seize me,

light can be night round me’,

12Darkness, too, would not be too dark for you,

and night would be light like day;

darkness and light are the same.

13Because you are the one who created my inner being,

when you wove me in my mother’s womb.

14I will confess you, on account of the fact that I was set distinguished in an awe-inspiring way;

the things you made were extraordinary.

I myself acknowledge you fully;

15my frame was not concealed from you,

When I was made in secret,

when I was embroidered in earth’s depths.

16Your eyes saw me as an embryo,

and on your document were written, all of them,

The days that were shaped,

when there was not one of them.

17So for me, how valuable were your intentions, God,

how numerous was the sum of them!

18If I could count them, they would be more than the sand;

when I’ve come to an end, I will still be with you

19If you would only slay the faithless person, God,

and people of bloodshed would depart from me,

20People who speak of you in connection with a strategy,

your adversaries who have lifted you up for emptiness.

21I’m hostile to people who are hostile to you, Yahweh, am I not,

and I loathe people who rise up against you.

22With complete hostility I’m hostile to them;

they’ve become enemies for me.

23Search me out, God, and acknowledge my mind;

test me and acknowledge my concerns.

24See if there is an idolatrous way in me

and lead me in the ancient way.

## Psalm 140 The Shield

The leader’s. A composition. David’s.

1Pull me out, Yahweh, from the bad person,

preserve me from the individual of great violence,

2People who’ve thought up bad things in their mind,

who stir up battles every day.

3They’ve sharpened their tongue like a snake;

a spider’s poison is under their lips. *(Rise)*

4Keep me from the hand of the faithless person, Yahweh,

preserve me from the individual of great violence,

People who’ve thought up how to trip my steps;

5majestic people have hidden a trap for me, and ropes.

They’ve spread a net by the side of the track,

They’ve set snares for me. *(Rise)*

6I’ve said to Yahweh, ‘You are my God’;

give ear, Yahweh, to the sound of my prayer for grace.

7Yahweh, my Lord, the [one with the] vigour that delivers me,

you’ve shielded my head on the day of weaponry.

8Yahweh, don’t grant the wishes of the faithless person;

don’t let his plan succeed so that they are exalted. *(Rise)*

9The head of the people who surround me

– may the oppression caused by their lips cover them.

10May burning coals tumble on them with fire;

may it make them fall into pits so that they don’t get up.

11May the person with a [violent] tongue not be established in the country;

the violent person – may bad fortune hunt him into pens.

12I’ve come to acknowledge that Yahweh makes a judgment for the humble,

a ruling for the needy.

13Yes, the faithful will confess your name;

the upright will live in your presence.

## Psalm 141 On Keeping One’s Mouth Shut

A composition. David’s.

1Yahweh, when I call you, hurry to me,

give ear to my voice when I call to you.

2May my plea be established as incense before you,

the lifting of the palms of my hands as the evening offering.

3Set a watch at my mouth, Yahweh,

keep guard at the door of my lips.

4Don’t let my mind turn away to something bad,

to have dealings in faithlessness

with people who devise trouble.

So I shall not feed on their delights;

5the faithful person may hit me with commitment and reprove me.

May choice oil not adorn my head,

because my plea is still against their bad ways.

6When their authorities have fallen at the sides of the cliff,

they will listen to the things I say, because they are lovely.

7Like someone cleaving and splitting the earth,

our bones have been scattered at the mouth of She’ol.

8Because my eyes are toward you, Yahweh my Lord,

with you I have taken shelter, don’t expose my life.

9Keep me from the sides of the trap that they have laid for me,

and from the snares of people who devise trouble.

10May the faithless fall into their own nets all at once,

while I myself pass through.

## Psalm 142 A Prisoner’s Plea

An instruction. David’s. When he was in the cave. A plea.

1With my voice I will cry out to Yahweh,

with my voice I will pray for grace to Yahweh.

2I will pour out my talk before him;

the pressure on me I will declare before him.

3When my spirit faints away within me,

you’re the one who knows my trail.

On the way that I walk about,

they’ve hidden a trap for me.

4Look at my right hand and see

– there’s no one who recognizes me.

Retreat has failed for me;

there’s no one who inquires about my life.

5I’ve cried out to you, Yahweh;

I’ve said, ‘You’re my shelter,

my share in the land of the living’.

6Heed my resounding shout,

because I’ve been brought very low.

Rescue me from my pursuers,

because they stand too firm for me.

7Get me out of my prison,

to confess your name.

Round me faithful people will gather,

because you’ve dealt to me.

## Psalm 143 God’s Faithfulness Not Mine

A composition. David’s.

1Yahweh, listen to my plea,

give ear to my prayer for grace, in your truthfulness,

answer me in your faithfulness.

2Don’t come into the exercise of authority with your servant,

because no living person counts as faithful before you.

3Because my enemy has pursued my life,

crushed my existence to the earth,

Made me live in darkness,

like people long dead.

4My spirit has fainted away within me;

my mind is desolate inside me.

5I have been mindful of the days of old,

I’ve murmured about all you had done,

I would talk about the action of your hands.

6I’ve spread out my hands to you,

my entire being has been like dry earth in relation to you. *(Rise)*

7Be quick, answer me, Yahweh;

my spirit is finished.

Don’t hide your face from me,

so that I shall be like the people who go down into the Cistern.

8Let me hear of your commitment in the morning,

because it’s on you that I’ve relied.

Let me know the way that I should walk,

because it is to you that I’ve lifted up my soul.

9Rescue me from my enemies, Yahweh;

with you I’ve found cover.

10Teach me to do what’s acceptable to you,

because you are my God.

May your good spirit lead me

on level ground.

11For the sake of your name, Yahweh, give me life;

in your faithfulness will you get me out of the pressure on me.

12In your commitment will you put an end to my enemies,

obliterate all the people who are attacking me,

because I’m your servant.

## Psalm 144 The God Who Snatches Away

David’s.

1Yahweh, my crag, be blessed,

the one who trains my hands for encounter,

my fingers for battle,

2The one committed to me, my fastness,

my turret, the one who enables me to survive,

My shield, the one with whom I take shelter,

who subdues my people under me.

3Yahweh, what is a human person that you should acknowledge him,

a mere human being that you should think about him?

4A human person is like a breath,

his days like a passing shadow.

5Yahweh, spread your heavens and come down,

touch the mountains so that they smoke.

6Make lightning flash and scatter them,

send your arrows and rout them.

7Send your hands from on high,

snatch me away, rescue me,

From the great water,

from the hand of foreigners,

8Whose mouth has spoken emptiness,

and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

9God, I will sing

a new song for you,

on a ten-stringed mandolin I will make music for you.

10As the one who gives deliverance to kings,

who snatches away David his servant,

From the deadly sword 11snatch me away,

rescue me from the hand of foreigners,

Whose mouth has spoken emptiness,

and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood.

12In that our sons are like saplings,

nourished in their youth,

Our daughters are like a corner pillar,

carved in the pattern of a palace,

13Our storehouses are full

of provisions of this kind and that kind,

Our flocks number thousands, myriads in our fields,

14our cattle are laden,

There is no breach and no going out

and no cry in our squares:

15The blessings of the people that has it like this,

the blessings of the people whose God is Yahweh!

## Psalm 145 Thine is the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory

An act of praise. David’s.

1I will exalt you, my God, King;

I will bless your name lastingly and permanently.

2Every day I will bless you;

I will praise your name lastingly and permanently.

3Yahweh is great and much to be praised;

of his greatness there is no searching out.

4One generation will extol your works to another generation,

and tell of your mighty acts.

5Of the glorious magnificence of your grandeur,

and your extraordinary deeds, I will talk.

6People will speak of the might of your awe-inspiring acts;

your greatness – I will recount it.

7They will pour forth commemoration of your great goodness,

and resound at your faithfulness.

8Yahweh is gracious and compassionate,

long-tempered and big in commitment.

9Yahweh is good to all;

his compassion is over all the things he made.

10All the things you made will confess you, Yahweh;

the people committed to you will bless you.

11They will talk of the splendour of your reign,

they will speak of your might,

12To get his mighty acts acknowledged by human beings,

the splendour and magnificence of his reign.

13Your reign is a reign over all ages,

your rule over generation after generation.

14Yahweh supports all who are falling,

and lfts upright all who are bent down.

15The eyes of all look to you,

and you give them their food at its time.

16You open your hand,

and fill every living thing with your acceptance.

17Yahweh is faithful in all his ways,

committed in all his actions.

18Yahweh is near to all who call him,

to all who call him in truth.

19He acts with acceptance to the people who live in awe of him;

he listens to their cry for help and delivers them.

20Yahweh keeps watch over all who are loyal to him,

but he devastates all the faithless.

21My mouth will speak Yahweh’s praise;

all flesh will bless his sacred name,

lastingly and permanently.

## Psalm 146 Don’t Rely on Leaders

1Praise Yah!—

praise Yahweh, my entire being.

2I will praise Yahweh through my life,

I will make music for my God while I exist.

3Don’t rely on leaders,

on a human being with whom there is no deliverance.

4His breath leaves, he goes back to his ground;

on that day, his deliberations have perished.

5The blessings of the one who has Jacob’s God as his help,

whose expectation is of Yahweh his God,

6Maker of heavens and earth,

the sea and all that is in them!

The one who keeps faith permanently,

7exercising authority for the oppressed,

Giving food to the hungry

– Yahweh frees captives.

8Yahweh opens the blind;

Yahweh lifts upright the people who are bent down.

Yahweh is loyal to the faithful;

9Yahweh keeps watch over the resident aliens.

He relieves orphan and widow,

but subverts the way of the faithless.

10Yahweh will reign permanently

– your God, Zion, for generation after generation;

praise Yah!

## Psalm 147 Reasons for Hope

1Praise Yah!—

because making music for our God is good,

because glorifying theone who is our praise is beautiful.

2Yahweh is the builder of Jerusalem,

he gathers those of Israel who were driven out..

3He’s the one who heals the broken in heart,

and bandages their wounds.

4He calculates the number of the stars

and pronounces the names of them all.

5Our Lord is great and mighty in energy;

of his understanding there is no reckoning.

6Yahweh restores the humble,

brings down the faithless to the earth.

7Chant for Yahweh with confession,

make music for our God with the guitar.

8He’s the one who covers the heavens with clouds,

provides rain for the earth,

makes the mountains grow grass.

9He gives their food to cattle,

to the offspring of the raven when they call.

10He doesn’t delight in the strength of a horse;

he doesn’t value the thighs of a person.

11Yahweh values people who live in awe of him,

people who put their expectation in his commitment.

12Jerusalem, extol Yahweh,

praise your God, Zion,

13because he’s made strong the bars of your gateways,

blessed your children within you.

14He gives your territory well-being,

fills you with the finest of wheat.

15He sends his utterance to the earth;

his word runs quickly.

16He gives snow like wool;

he scatters frost like ash.

17He throws his hail like bits of bread;

who can stand before his ice?

18He sends his word and melts them;

when he blows his breath, water flows.

19He tells his words to Jacob,

his decrees and his rulings to Israel.

20He has not done so for any nation;

his rulings – they don’t know them;

praise Yah!

## Psalm 148 Reasons for Praise

1Praise Yah!—

praise Yahweh from the heavens,

praise him in the heights.

2Praise him, all his envoys,

praise him all his armies.

3Praise him, sun and moon,

praise him all bright stars.

4Praise him, highest heavens,

and you water that is above the heavens.

5They should praise Yahweh’s name,

because it was he who gave the order so they were created.

6He set them in place them lastingly and permanently,

he gave a decree and it will not pass.

7Praise Yahweh from the earth,

sea monsters and all depths,

8Fire and hail, snow and fog,

hurricane doing his word,

9Mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars,

10Creatures and all cattle,

things that move and winged birds,

11Kings of the earth and all peoples,

officials and all authorities in the earth,

12Young men and young women too,

old and young too.

13They should praise Yahweh’s name,

because his name alone is on high.

His grandeur is over the earth and the heavens,

14but he has lifted up a horn for his people,

A reason for praise for all who are committed to him,

for the Israelites, the people who come near him:

praise Yah!

## Psalm 149 Dance and Slaughter

1Praise Yah!—

sing for Yahweh a new song,

his praise in the congregation of the committed people.

2Israel is to rejoice in its maker,

the children of Zion are to celebrate their King.

3They are to praise his name in dancing;

tambourine and guitar are to make music for him.

4Because Yahweh accepts his people;

he adorns the humble with deliverance.

5The committed people are to exult in their splendour,

they are to resound on their beds,

6Acclamations of God in their throat

and a two-edged sword in their hand,

7To execute redress on the nations,

reproofs on the peoples,

8To bind their kings with shackles,

their nobles with iron chains,

9To execute on them the ruling that is written

– it will be magnificence for all the people committed to him;

praise Yah!

## Psalm 150 The Praise of God, the Eternal Creator, is Finished and Completed

1Praise Yah!—

praise God in his sacred place,

praise him in his strong firmament.

2Praise him in his acts of strength,

praise him in accordance with his immense greatness.

3Praise him with the blast of the horn,

praise him with mandolin and guitar.

4Praise him with tambourine and dancing;

praise him with strings and pipe.

5Praise him with cymbals that can be heard,

praise him with noisy cymbals.

6Every breath should praise Yah:

praise Yah!

**Proverbs**

The Book called ‘Proverbs’ is indeed dominated by one-liners that express a truth, often vividly and concretely, but it is the middle third of the book (chapter 10—22) that is most characterized by these sayings. The first third (chapters 1—9) is a collection of something more like sermonettes that may occupy half a chapter. The last third is a mixture of the two.

They all have in common that they are teaching about life that bases itself on how life itself works out in practice—or at least on how it’s supposed to work out. Proverbs doesn’t appeal to the exodus or the covenant and it doesn’t refer to the Torah or to the Prophets. It does presuppose that the God of Israel is the real God (it uses the name Yahweh) and it presupposes that life must always be lived within the framework of faithfulness and uprightness. But while it takes that framework for granted, it then works empirically. It fits with this feature of Proverbs that it is a part of the Old Testament that has close parallels with works we know from other Middle Eastern cultures (the ‘Thirty Sayings’ in chapters 22—24 parallel an Egyptian set of Thirty Sayings). Proverbs thus recognizes that God has not left the world as a whole without any awareness of his ways, of right and wrong, and of how life works. Such awarenesses are hard-wired into humanity.

The proverbs are ‘Solomon’s,’ though the implication is not that he wrote them. Indeed, you could almost say that nobody ‘writes’ proverbs—at least the one-liners. They just happen. Solomon is the patron of the worldly wisdom that appears in Proverbs (and in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs) as David is the patron of psalmody. If we wonder about the background of the material in Proverbs, then three contextsa re worth bearing in mind.

First, much of the material presents itself as the teaching that parents offer their children. While this image may have become a figure of speech, the family is indeed the natural first context in which people are encouraged to grow up from naivity to smartness. Such teaching in Proverbs would ultimately go back to way before Solomon’s day. One can imagine its teaching in the context of the life of the clan in Genesis. And the story of Joseph illustrates a number of the themes of Proverbs.

Second, scattered through the book are a number of observations about kings and how to relate to them, and that material suggests another context in which the material could naturally be used, the training of young men and women for the administration. Beyond the explicit references to the king there are many other references to wise speech, the dynamics of decision-making, and self-control that would be important for people involved in the administration.

Third, the opening part of the book also includes some reflection on the nature of creation, of God’s involvement in creation, and of the way creation reflects something of God. That reflection makes one think in terms of the syllabus for theological education in Israel. By New Testament times the ‘scribes’ were certainly people who had been involved in theological education. We don’t know how it developed in Israel, but it wouldn’t be surprising in Proverbs was a set text in theological schools when they came into being.

The opening chapters speak of Smartness as a woman who is its embodiment, and the last verses of the book comprise a description of the resourceful woman. It occupies twenty-two lines, one line for each letter of the Hebrew alphabet, so that it describes the resourceful woman from A to Z. The poem shows how extensive were the opportunities for a woman in Israel—in this case, a woman who is the mistress of a household, but she is active outside the house and not just inside. Alongside the metaphor of Ms. Smartness and the picture of the resourceful woman is the metaphor of Ms. Stupidity and the picture of the woman who can lead a man astray. In the Torah, the point would be that sexual dallying and adultery are wrong. In Proverbs, the point is that they are also really stupid.

**1:1 Knowledge, Ethics, and Spirituality**

1 Aphorisms of Solomon ben David king of Israel:

2So as to know smartness and discipline,

to understand words that express understanding,

3To get discipline so as to act with insight,

faithfulness, the exercise of authority, and uprightness,

4To give shrewdness to the naïve,

knowledge and strategy to the youth,

5So that the smart person may listen and increase in his grasp,

the understanding may acquire skill,

6So as to understand an aphorism and a parable,

the words of the smart and their conundrums:

7The first principle of knowledge is awe for Yahweh;

dense people despise smartness and discipline.

8Listen to your father’s discipline, son,

don’t leave your mother’s instruction,

9Because they’re a graceful garland for your head,

a chain for your neck.

10Son, if wrongdoers entice you, don’t be willing,

11if they say ‘Go with us.

Let’s lie in wait for blood,

let’s ambush someone free of guilt, for nothing.

12Let’s swallow them alive, like She’ol –

whole, like people going down to the Cistern.

13We’ll find every sort of valuable riches,

we’ll fill our houses with spoil.

14Let your lot fall among us;

there’ll be one purse for us all’.

15Son, don’t go on the way with them;

keep your foot from their trail.

16Because their feet run to bad dealing,

they hurry to shed blood.

17Because it’s for nothing that a net is spread

before the eyes of any owner of wings.

18But those people lie in wait for their own blood,

they ambush their own lives.

19Such are the paths of everyone who gets wrongful gain;

it takes the life of its owners.

**1:20 The Naïve, the Arrogant, the Dimwit**

20Smartness resounds in the open streets,

in the squares she gives her voice.

21At the head of the noisy places,

at the entrances of the gateways,

in the town she says her words.

22’How long will you naïve people be loyal to naïveté?

—arrogant people desire arrogance for themselves.

Dimwits are hostile to knowledge;

23do turn back at my rebuke.

Here, I will pour out my spirit to you,

I will let you know my words.

24Since I called but you refused me,

I stretched out my hand but there was no one heeding,

25You’ve spurned all my counsel,

and you weren’t willing for my rebuke,

26I myself too will make fun of your disaster;

I shall ridicule when what you dread comes,

27When what you dread comes like devastation,

and your calamity arrives like a tempest,

when trouble and disaster come upon you.

28Then they’ll call me but I won’t answer,

they’ll look urgently for me but they won’t find me,

29Because of the fact that they were hostile to acknowledgment,

didn’t choose awe for Yahweh.

30They weren’t willing for my counsel,

they spurned every rebuke of mine.

31They’ll eat the fruit of their way,

they’ll have their fill of their own counsels.

32Because the turning back of the naïve will kill them,

and the ease of dimwits will obliterate them.

33But the person who listens to me will dwell in confidence,

safe from the dread of bad fortune.

**2:1 The Household That Goes Down to Death**

2 Son, if you take the things I say,

hide up my orders with you,

2Getting your ear to heed smartness,

inclining your mind to understanding,

3If you indeed call to understanding,

give your voice to understanding,

4If you seek it like silver,

search for it like treasure,

5Then you’ll understand awe for Yahweh,

you’ll find acknowledgment of God.

6Because Yahweh gives smartness;

from his mouth come acknowledgment and understanding.

7He hides up adeptness for the upright,

being a shield for people who walk with integrity,

8Preserving the paths of authority,

he keeps watch on the way of people committed to him.

9Then you’ll understand faithfulness and authority,

and uprightness, every good track.

10Because smartness will come into your mind,

acknowledgment be lovely to your entire being.

11Strategy will keep watch over you,

understanding will preserve you,

12Rescuing you from the way of the bad person,

from the one speaking things that are crooked,

13People who abandon upright paths,

going in the ways of darkness,

14Who rejoice to deal badly,

celebrate the crooked actions of the bad person,

15People whose paths are crooked,

who are deviant in their tracks;

16Rescuing you from the other woman,

from the alien woman who is slippery in the things she says,

17Who abandons the partner of her youth,

puts out of mind her pact with God.

18Because her household goes down to death,

her tracks to the ghosts.

19Anyone who comes to her doesn’t come back;

he doesn’t reach the paths of life;

20In order that you may walk in the way of good people,

keep the paths of the faithful.

21Because the upright will dwell in the country,

the people of integrity will be left in it.

22But the faithless will be cut off from the country,

the people who break faith will be ripped up from it.

**3:1 Commitment, Truthfulness, Trust**

3 Son, don’t put my instruction out of mind;

your mind is to observe my orders.

2Because length of days and years of life

and well-being is what they will add to you.

3Commitment and truthfulness must not abandon you;

bind them on your neck, write them on the tablet of your mind.

4Thus find grace and good insight,

in the eyes of God and of human beings.

5Rely on Yahweh with all your mind,

don’t lean on your own understanding.

6In all your ways acknowledge him,

and he himself will keep your paths straight.

7Don’t become smart in your own eyes;

live in awe of Yahweh and depart from what’s bad.

8It will be health for your body,

a tonic for your bones.

9Honour Yahweh with your riches ,

with the first of all your yield.

10Your barns will fill with plenty,

your vats will overflow with new wine.

11Don’t reject Yahweh’s discipline, son,

don’t be dismayed at his reproof.

12Because the one Yahweh is loyal to, he reproves,

just like a father the son he accepts.

**3:13 The Tree of Life**

13The blessings of the person who finds smartness,

the person who obtains understanding!

14Because her profit is better than the profit of silver,

her yield than pale gold.

15She’s more valuable than rubies;

nothing you delight in equals her.

16Length of days is in her right hand;

in her left hand wealth and splendour.

17Her ways are lovely ones;

all her trails are well-being.

18She’s a tree of life to people who take strong hold of her;

one who gets hold of her is blessed.

19It was by smartness that Yahweh founded the earth;

he established the heavens by understanding.

20By his knowledge the deeps split,

and the skies would drop dew.

21Son, they must not deviate from your eyes;

preserve adeptness and strategy.

22They will be life for your whole person,

and grace for your neck.

23Then you’ll go your way with confidence,

and you won’t hit your foot.

24If you lie down, you won’t be fearful;

you’ll lie down and your sleep will be pleasant.

25You won’t be afraid of a sudden terror

or of the devastation of the faithless when it comes,

26Because Yahweh will be your assurance,

and will keep your foot from being caught.

27Don’t withhold good from the one to whom it’s due

when it’s in your hand to act.

28Don’t say to your neighbour, ‘Go, and come back,

I’ll give it tomorrow’, when it’s with you.

29Don’t devise something bad against your neighbour,

when he’s living with a feeling of security with you.

30Don’t argue with someone for nothing,

if he hasn’t dealt something bad you.

31Don’t be jealous of a violent individual,

and don’t choose any of his ways.

32Because a deviant person is offensive to Yahweh;

his confidences are with upright people.

33Yahweh’s curse is on the household of the faithless person,

but he blesses the home of faithful people.

34If he himself behaves arrogantly to the arrogant,

to the humble he gives grace.

35Smart people will have splendour as their domain,

but dimwits take up slighting.

**4:1 On Discipline**

4 Listen to a father’s discipline, sons,

heed, so as to acknowledge understanding.

2Because I give you a good grasp;

don’t abandon my instruction.

3Because I was a son to my father,

tender and the only one before my mother.

4He instructed me and said to me,

‘Your mind is to take hold of my words;

keep my orders and you’ll live’.

5Acquire smartness, acquire understanding;

don’t put it out of mind and don’t turn away from the sayings of my mouth.

6Don’t abandon her and she’ll keep you;

be loyal to her and she’ll protect you.

7The first principle of smartness is, acquire smartness,

and among all the things you acquire, acquire understanding.

8Exalt her and she’ll elevate you;

she’ll honour you when you embrace her.

9She’ll give your head a graceful garland,

she’ll present you with a glorious diadem.

10Listen, son, and take my sayings,

and the years of your life will be many.

11I instruct you in the way of smartness,

I direct you in upright tracks.

12As you go, your step will not be in straits;

if you run, you won’t collapse.

13Take a strong hold of discipline, don’t slacken hold,

preserve it, because it’s your life.

14Don’t come onto the path of faithless people,

don’t walk in the way of people who deal badly.

15Avoid it, don’t pass through it;

turn from it and pass by.

16Because they won’t sleep if they don’t act badly;

They’re robbed of their sleep if they don’t make someone collapse.

17Because they eat bread that comes from faithlessness

and drink wine that comes from violent acts.

18But the path of the faithful is like dawn light,

getting more light until the establishing of the day.

19The way of faithless people is very darkness;

they don’t acknowledge how they will collapse.

**4:20 On Resisting Temptation**

20Son, heed my words,

bend your ear to the things I say.

21They must not deviate from your eyes;

keep them within your mind.

22Because they are life to the people who find them,

health for a one’s whole body.

23Above everything that you keep watch over, preserve your mind,

because from it things go out into life.

24Keep away from you crookedness of mouth;

put deviousness of lips far away.

25Your eyes must turn forward,

your eyelids be straight ahead of you.

26Weigh the track for your foot;

all your ways must be firm.

27Don’t turn right or left;

keep your foot way from evil.

5 Heed my smartness, son,

bend your ear to my understanding,

2So as to keep strategy,

and so that your lips may protect knowledge.

3Because the lips of an alien woman drip honey,

her mouth is smoother than oil.

4But her end is as bitter as gall,

sharp as a two-edged sword.

5Her feet go down to death,

her steps take hold of She’ol.

6So that she doesn’t weigh the path to life,

her tracks wander, though she doesn’t acknowledge it.

7So now, sons, listen to me,

and don’t depart from the sayings of my mouth.

8Keep your way far from her,

don’t go near the entrance to her house,

9So that you don’t give your wealth to other people,

your years to someone cruel,

10So that strangers don’t eat their fill of your energy,

and [the fruit of] your pains are in the house of a foreigner.

11You’ll groan at your end,

when your flesh and body are finished.

12You’ll say, ‘How I was hostile to discipline,

and my mind spurned rebuke.

13I didn’t listen to my instructors’ voice,

I did not bend my ear to my teachers.

14I was soon in every kind of bad situation

in the middle of the assembled congregation’.

**5:15 Crazy for Love**

15Drink water from your cistern,

running water from within your well.

16Should your fountains gush outside,

your streams of water in the squares?

17They should be for you alone,

so that there’s none for strangers with you.

18May your spring be blessed,

may you rejoice in the wife of your youth,

19She’s a doe to love,

a graceful deer.

Her breasts should drench you all the time;

be crazy on her love continually.

20Why be crazy on a stranger, son,

and embrace the arms of a foreigner?

21Because an individual’s ways are in front of Yahweh’s eyes;

he weighs all his tracks.

22His wayward acts capture the faithless person;

he gets taken hold of by the ropes of his wrongdoing.

23That person dies for lack of discipline;

he’s crazy on the abundance of his denseness.

6 Son, if you’ve given a guarantee for your neighbour,

clapped the palms of your hands for a stranger,

2Trapped yourself by the sayings of your mouth,

caught yourself by the sayings of your mouth:

3Do this then,

son, and rescue yourself.

When you’ve come into the palm of your neighbour’s hand,

go, lower yourself, press your neighbour.

4Don’t give sleep to your eyes

or slumber to your eyelids.

5Rescue yourself like a gazelle from the hand,

like a bird from the hand, of a hunter.

6Go to the ant, you sloth ,

look at its ways and get smart.

7One that has no commander,

overseer, or ruler,

8Prepares its bread in summer,

gathers its food at harvest.

9How long will you lie down, you sloth,

when will you get up from your sleep?

10A little sleep, a little slumber,

a little folding of the hands to lie down,

11And your destitution will come like someone walking about,

your want like someone with a shield.

12Someone who is a scoundrel, an evil individual,

going with a crooked mouth,

13Winking his eyes, speaking with his feet,

pointing with his fingers,

14Crooked actions in his mind, devising something bad;

all the time he lets loose disputes.

15Therefore suddenly his disaster will come on him,

in an instant he’ll break, with no healing.

**6:16 Jealousy and Wrath**

16These are six things Yahweh is hostile to,

seven offensive to his entire being:

17Haughty eyes, a false tongue,

and hands shedding the blood of someone free of guilt,

18A mind devising troublesome intentions,

feet hurrying to run to something bad,

19Someone who breathes out lies as a false witness,

and someone who lets loose disputes between brothers.

20Son, observe your father’s order,

don’t leave your mother’s instruction.

21Fasten them into your mind continually,

bind them onto your neck.

22When you’re going about, it will lead you,

when you lie down it will keep watch over you,

when you wake up, it will talk to you.

23Because an order is a lamp and instruction is a light,

and the rebuke that disciplines is a way to life,

24To keep you from the woman who is bad,

from the smoothness of the tongue of an alien woman.

25Don’t desire her beauty in your heart;

she must not take you with her eyelids.

26Because for a woman who’s a whore,

[the cost is] as much as a loaf of bread.

But a man’s wife,

she’ll capture your dear life.

27Can someone scoop up fire into the fold of his coat,

and his clothes will not burn?

28If someone walks about on coals,

will his feet not burn?

29So it is with one who has sex with his neighbour’s wife;

no one who touches her will go free.

30People don’t despise a thief when he steals

to fill his appetite, when he’s hungry.

31But if he’s found out, he’ll make good sevenfold;

he’ll give all the riches of his household.

32One who commits adultery with a woman is lacking in sense;

one who does it is devastating himself.

33He’ll find injury and slighting;

his reviling will not wipe away.

34Because jealousy means a man’s wrath;

he won’t spare on the day of redress.

35He won’t show regard for any compensation;

he won’t agree, even when you offer a big bribe.

**7:1 Let Me Tell You a Story**

7 Son, keep my words,

store up my orders with you.

2Keep my orders and live,

and my instruction as the apple of your eye.

3Fasten them on your fingers,

write them on the tablet of your mind.

4Say to smartness, ‘You’re my sister’,

and call understanding ‘Friend’,

5To keep you from the alien woman,

the foreign woman who is smooth in the things she says.

6Because through the window of my house,

by way of my lattice, I looked out,

7And I saw among the naïve, I considered among the young men,

a youth lacking in sense.

8He was passing along the street by her corner,

he was walking the way to her house,

9At dusk, in the evening of the day,

at the approach of night and darkness.

10There, a woman to meet him,

dressed as a whore, restrained in heart.

11She’s noisy and defiant;

her feet don’t stay in her house.

12Now in the street, now in the squares,

and by every corner, she lies in wait.

13She takes strong hold of him and kisses him,

makes her face forceful and says to him,

14’Though well-being sacrifices were incumbent on me,

today I’ve made good my pledges.

15Therefore I’ve come out to meet you,

to look urgently for your face, and I’ve found you.

16I’ve spread my couch with coverlets,

coloured Egyptian linens.

17I’ve perfumed my bed,

with myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.

18Come on, let’s drench ourselves in love until morning,

let’s exult in lovemaking.

19Because the man isn’t here in his house,

he’s gone on a journey a long way.

20He’s taken a bag of silver in his hand;

he’ll come home at the middle of the month’.

**7:21 The Story Has a Solemn End**

21She’s turned him away with the abundance of her grasp of things,

with the smoothness of her lips she drives him.

22All at once he’s going after her,

like an ox that comes to the slaughter,

Like a dense person bounding into constraint,

23until an arrow pierces his liver,

Like a bird rushing into a trap,

when it doesn’t know it will be at the cost of its life.

24So now listen to me, sons,

heed the sayings of my mouth.

25Your mind isn’t to turn into her ways;

don’t wander into her trails.

26Because she’s made many fall, run through;

numerous are all the ones killed by her.

27Her house is a major road to She’ol,

going down to death’s rooms.

8 Smartness calls, doesn’t she.

understanding gives her voice.

2At the highest point along the trail,

at the crossroads, she takes her stand.

3At the side of the gateways at the township entrance,

at the way in to the entrances, she resounds.

4’People, I call to you,

my voice is to humankind.

5Understand shrewdness, you naïve;

understand sense, you dimwits.

6Listen, because I speak honourable things;

the opening of my lips, upright things.

7Because my palate murmurs truth;

faithlessness is offensive to my lips.

8All the sayings of my mouth are characterized by faithfulness;

there’s nothing crooked or twisted in them.

9All of them are straight to someone of understanding,

upright to people who have found knowledge.

10Take my discipline and not silver,

knowledge more than choice pale gold.

11Because smartness is better than rubies,

and no delights can compare with her.

**8:12 Let Me Tell You My Story**

12I, smartness, dwell with shrewdness;

I find knowledge of strategies.

13Awe for God

is hostility to what is bad.

Majesty and majesticness and the bad way,

and a crooked mouth, I am hostile to.

14Mine are counsel and adeptness;

I am understanding, I have strength.

15By me kings reign

and rulers decree what is faithful;

16By me officials govern,

leaders, all who exercise authority faithfully.

17I am loyal to people who are loyal to me;

people who look urgently for me find me.

18Wealth and splendour are with me,

enduring riches and faithfulness.

19My fruit is better than pale gold, even than fine gold,

my yield than choice silver.

20I walk about in the way of faithfulness,

among the trails of authority,

21Giving a domain to people who are loyal with substance,

and I fill their treasuries.

22Yahweh acquired me at the beginning of his way,

before his actions of old.

23Long ago I was formed,

at the beginning, at earth’s origins.

24When there were no deeps I was birthed,

when there were no springs heavy with water.

25Before the mountains were settled,

before the hills I was birthed,

26While he had not yet made the earth and fields,

and the first of the world’s lumps of dirt.

27When he established the heavens, I was there,

when he marked out the horizon on the face of the deep,

28When he made the skies above firm,

when the deep’s fountains were vigorous,

29When he set its limit for the sea,

so that its water might not transgress his bidding.

When he marked out earth’s foundations,

30I was a child by his side.

I was full of pleasure day by day,

having fun before him all the time,

31Having fun in his world, in his earth,

and full of pleasure in humanity.

32So now, sons, listen to me:

the blessings of people who keep my ways!

33Listen to discipline and become smart, don’t put it out of mind;

34the blessings of the person who listens to me,

Seeking my gateways keenly day by day,

keeping watch at the posts of my entrances!

35Because one who finds me finds life,

and obtains acceptance from Yahweh.

36But one who wrongs me does violence to his life;

all who are hostile to me are loyal to death.

**9:1 The Two Voices**

9 Smartness has built her house;

She’s hewn her seven pillars.

2She’s slaughtered her animals, mixed her wine,

indeed set her table.

3She’s sent her girls so she can call,

on the township’s high elevations,

4’Whoever is naïve should turn aside here’;

one who is lacking in sense, she says to him,

5’Come, eat my bread,

drink of the wine I’ve mixed.

6Abandon naïveté and live,

walk in the way of understanding’.

7One who disciplines an arrogant person gets slighting for himself;

one who reproves someone faithless, a hurt for himself.

8Don’t reprove an arrogant person or he’ll be hostile to you;

reprove someone smart and he’ll be loyal to you.

9Give something to someone smart and he’ll get yet smarter;

make something known to a faithful person and he’ll increase in his grasp.

10Awe for Yahweh is the beginning of smartness;

understanding lies in acknowledgment of the Sacred One.

11Because through me your days will be many

and the years of your life will increase.

12If you’re smart, you’re smart for your benefit;

if you’re arrogant, you’ll carry it alone.

13The Dimwit Woman is noisy;

naïveté, and she doesn’t acknowledge anything.

14She sits at the entrance of her house,

on a seat at the township’s heights,

15Calling to passersby, people making their paths straight:

16’Whoever is naïve should turn aside here’.

The person who is lacking in sense, she says to him,

17’Stolen water is sweet, a secret meal is lovely’.

18He doesn’t acknowledge that the ghosts are there;

the people she calls are in the depths of She’ol.

**10:1 The Mouth of the Faithful Is Fruitful**

10 Solomon’s aphorisms .

A smart son rejoices a father,

but a dimwit son is a mother’s sorrow.

2Treasures that come from faithlessness don’t profit,

but faithfulness rescues from death.

3Yahweh doesn’t let the faithful person go hungry,

but he thwarts the malice of faithless people.

4A lazy fist makes destitute,

but the hand of determined people makes wealthy.

5One who gathers in summer is an insightful son;

one who sleeps in harvest is a disgraceful son.

6There are blessings on the head of the faithful person,

but the mouth of faithless people conceals violence.

7The commemoration of the faithful person becomes a blessing,

but the name of faithless people rots.

8One who is smart of mind accepts orders,

but one dense of lips comes to ruin.

9One who walks in integrity walks in confidence,

but one who makes his ways crooked gets known.

10One who winks an eye gives hurt,

and one dense of lips comes to ruin.

11The mouth of a faithful person is a fountain of life,

but the mouth of faithless people conceals violence.

12Hostility stirs up disputes,

but loyalty covers over all acts of rebellion.

13Smartness is found on the lips of the person of understanding,

but there’s a club on the back of one who is lacking in sense.

14Smart people store up knowledge,

but the mouth of a dense person is ruin drawing near.

15The riches of the wealthy person are his strong township;

their destitution is the ruin of the poor.

16The earnings of the faithful person make for life;

the yield of the faithless person makes for wrongdoing.

**10:17 The Dimwit’s Real Fun**

17One who keeps correction is on the path to life,

one who abandons reproof goes astray.

18Someone who conceals hostility with false lips,

and the one who issues charges, he’s a dimwit.

19Where there’s an abundance of words, rebellion doesn’t leave off,

but one who holds back his lips is insightful.

20The tongue of a faithful person is choice silver;

the mind of faithless people is worth little.

21The lips of a faithful person pasture many,

but dense people die for lack of sense.

22Yahweh’s blessing – it makes wealthy,

and painful toil doesn’t add to it.

23Real fun for a dimwit is implementing a deliberate wickedness,

but for someone of understanding, it’s smartness.

24The dread of a faithless person – it comes to him,

but the longing of faithful people is granted.

25When a tempest passes, the faithless person isn’t there,

but the faithful person is a lasting foundation.

26Like vinegar to the teeth, like smoke to the eyes,

so is the lazy person to the people who sent him.

27Awe for Yahweh prolongs days,

but the years of the faithless shorten.

28The waiting of faithful people will be rejoicing,

but the hope of faithless people will perish.

29Yahweh is a stronghold for someone of integrity in his way,

but the ruin of people who devise trouble.

30The faithful person will never slip,

but the faithless will not dwell in the country.

31The mouth of the faithful person is fruitful with smartness,

but the crooked tongue will be cut off.

32The lips of the faithful person know what finds acceptance,

but the mouth of the faithless, things that are crooked.

**11:1 On Lying Scales**

11 Lying scales are an offence to Yahweh,

and a perfect weight is what he accepts.

2Assertiveness comes, and slighting comes,

but with modest people there is smartness.

3The integrity of the upright guides them,

but the deviousness of people who break faith destroys them.

4Riches don’t avail on the day of an outburst [of wrath],

but faithfulness rescues from death.

5The fathfulness of a man of integrity makes his way straight,

but the faithless person falls by his faithlessness.

6The faithfulness of the upright rescues them,

but people who break faith are captured through malice.

7At the death of a faithless person hope perishes,

and waiting for riches perishes.

8The faithful person pulls out from pressure,

and the faithless person comes in in place of him.

9With the mouth the impious person devastates his neighbour,

but through the knowledge of the faithful, people pull out [from trouble].

10When things are good for the faithful, the township exults;

when the faithless perish, there is resounding.

11By the blessing of the upright a township rises up,

but by the mouth of the faithless it’s torn down.

12One who despises his neighbour lacks sense,

and a person of understanding keeps quiet.

13Someone who goes about as a slanderer reveals a confidence,

but someone trustworthy of spirit conceals a thing.

14When there’s no steering, a people falls,

but deliverance comes with an abundance of counsellors.

15A bad person will do badly when he stands surety for a stranger,

but someone hostile to people clapping hands will be secure.

**11:16 The Gold Ring in a Pig’s Nose**

16A woman of grace takes hold of splendour,

and violent men take hold of wealth.

17A person of commitment deals to himself;

someone cruel troubles his own self.

18One who is faithless makes a false profit,

but someone who sews faithfulness, a trustworthy wage.

19One established in faithfulness goes to life,

but one who pursues what is bad, to his death.

20The crooked in mind are an offence to Yahweh,

but people of integrity in their way are the ones he accepts.

21Hand to hand, the bad person will not go free of guilt,

but the offspring of the faithful will escape.

22A gold ring in a pig’s nose

is a beautiful woman turning aside from discretion.

23The longing of the faithful is only good;

the hope of the faithless is for an outburst [of wrath].

24There is one who scatters and gets still more,

and one who holds back beyond what is upright, only to be in want.

25A person of blessing will be enriched,

and someone who drenches – he’ll also be drenched.

26One who withholds grain – the people will curse him,

but blessing will be on the head of one who sells.

27Someone who urgently looks for what is good seeks acceptance,

but the one who looks for what is bad, it comes on him.

28One who relies on his wealth – he falls,

but the faithful flourish like foliage.

29Someone who troubles his household gets wind as his domain,

and someone dense is a servant to one who is smart of mind.

30The fruit of a faithful person is a tree of life,

but a smart person takes lives.

31If someone who is faithful on earth is made good,

how much more the faithless person and the wrongdoer.

**12:1 The One Who Know His Animal’s Appetite**

12 One who befriends correction befriends knowledge,

but one who is hostile to reproof is stupid.

2One who is good obtains acceptance from Yahweh,

but he regards a man of strategies as faithless.

3A person cannot be established through faithlessness,

but the root of the faithful will not slip.

4A resourceful woman is her husband’s crown,

but a shameful one is like decay in his bones.

5The intentions of the faithful are the [proper] exercise of authority;

the steering of the faithless is deceit.

6The words of the faithless are a deadly ambush,

but the mouth of the upright rescues them.

7Overturn the faithless and they’re not there,

but the household of the faithful stands.

8On the basis of his insight an individual is praised,

but one who’s crooked in mind comes to contempt.

9Better one who is slighted but is his own servant

than one who looks honourable but lacks bread.

10A faithful person knows his animal’s appetite,

but the compassion of the faithless is cruel.

11One who serves his land will have his fill of bread,

but one who pursues empty things lacks sense.

12The faithless person desires what is a trap for bad people,

but the root of the faithful gives.

13In the rebellion of lips is a snare for a bad person,

but a faithful person gets out of pressure.

14From the fruit of an individual’s mouth he has his fill of good things,

and the dealing of someone’s hands comes back to him.

**12:15 Silence, Words, and Smartness**

15The way of a dense person is upright in his eyes,

but the smart person listens to counsel.

16A dense person – his vexation makes itself known at the time,

but a shrewd person conceals a slighting.

17Someone who testifies truthfully tells things with faithfulness,

but a false witness with deceit.

18There is one who rants like sword-thrusts,

but the tongue of smart people is a healing.

19A truthful lip is established permanently,

but a false tongue lasts for the blink of an eye.

20Deceit is in the mind of people who devise something bad,

but for people who counsel well-being, there is rejoicing.

21No trouble befalls the faithful person,

but the faithless are full of bad fortune.

22False lips are an offence to Yahweh;

people who act truthfully are the ones he accepts.

23A shrewd person conceals knowledge,

but the mind of dimwits calls out denseness.

24The hand of determined people rules,

but [someone characterized by] laziness will belong to a work force.

25Anxiety in a someone’s mind weighs it down,

but a good word makes it rejoice.

26A faithful person shows his neighbor the path,

but the way of the faithless leads them astray.

27Laziness will not roast game,

but the riches of a person are valuable – determined.

28On the path of faithfulness there is life,

and on the way of its trail, no death.

**13:1 Hope Deferred Sickens the Heart**

13 A smart son [listens] to a father’s discipline,

but someone arrogant doesn’t listen to a reprimand.

2From the fruit of his mouth a person eats what is good,

but the appetite of the people who break faith is for violence.

3One who preserves his mouth preserves his life,

but one who opens his lips wide – ruin is his.

4The lazy person – his appetite desires, but there is nothing;

the appetite of the determined is enriched.

5A faithful person is hostile to a lying word,

but a faithless person stinks and comes to confounding.

6Faithfulness preserves [the person of] integrity in the way,

but faithlessness overturns a wrong[doer].

7There is one who acts wealthy but there’s nothing,

one who acts destitute but there’s much riches.

8The ransom for someone’s life is his wealth,

but one who is destitute doesn’t listen to a reprimand.

9The light of the faithful rejoices,

but the lamp of the faithless goes out.

10Only by means of assertiveness does someone produce strife;

smartness is with people who take counsel.

11Riches gained from emptiness diminish,

but someone who gathers by hand makes it grow.

12Hope deferred sickens the heart,

but longing that comes about is a tree of life.

**13:13 The Company You Keep**

13One who despises a word, it will be ruinous for him,

but one who lives in awe of an order, he’ll be made good.

14The instruction of a smart person is a fountain of life,

for departing from deadly snares.

15Good insight gives grace,

but the way of people who break faith is strong.

16Every shrewd person acts with knowledge,

but a dimwit spreads denseness.

17A faithless envoy falls into bad fortune,

but a trustworthy emissary – healing.

18Destitution and slighting – one who rejects discipline,

but one who keeps watch on correction is honoured.

19Longing that comes about is pleasant to the appetite,

but departing from bad ways is an offence to the dimwit.

20One who walks with smart people gets smart,

but the friend of dimwits does badly.

21Bad fortune pursues wrongdoers,

but good fortune makes good to the faithful.

22A good man gives a domain to grandchildren,

but the resources of the wrongdoer are stored up for the faithful person.

23The fallow ground of the destitute – abundance of food,

but it’s swept away for want of the exercise of authority.

24Someone who holds back his club is hostile to his son,

but one who loves him gets him up early with discipline.

25The faithful person eats to fill his appetite,

but the stomach of the faithless lacks.

**14:1 Even in Laughter a Heart May Hurt**

14 The smartest of women builds her house,

but denseness tears it down with her own hands.

2One who lives in awe of Yahweh walks in uprightness,

but one who despises him is deviant in his ways.

3In the mouth of the dense person there is a shoot of majesty,

but the lips of smart people keep watch over them.

4When there are no oxen the stall is clean,

but there’s abundance of yield through the energy of a bull.

5A trustworthy witness doesn’t lie,

but a false witness testifies lies.

6Someone arrogant seeks smartness and there is none,

but knowledge is easy for the person of understanding.

7Go at a distance from the dimwit;

you won’t have known knowledgeable lips.

8The smartness of someone shrewd means understanding his way,

but the denseness of dimwits is deception.

9Dense people are arrogant about reparation,

but between upright people there is acceptance.

10The heart knows its own bitterness,

and in its rejoicing a stranger doesn’t share.

11The house of the faithless will be devastated,

but the tent of the upright will flourish.

12There is a way that is upright before someone,

but its end is the ways of death.

13Even in laughter a heart may hurt,

and rejoicing – its end may be grief.

14Someone who turns backward in heart will be full from his ways,

and a good person from his deeds.

15A naïve person trusts in anything,

but someone shrewd understands his step.

16A smart person is afraid and turns aside from what is bad,

but a dimwit rages and is confident.

**14:17 Oppressing the Poor Reviles Their Maker,**

17One who is short-tempered will do dense things,

and a person of strategies will be meet with hostility.

18The naïve get denseness as their domain,

but the shrewd wear a crown of knowledge.

19Bad people bow down before good people,

and the faithless at the gateways of someone faithful.

20Even with his neighbour someone destitute meets with hostility,

but the friends of a wealthy person are many.

21One who despises his neighbour is a wrongdoer,

but one who is gracious to the humble: his blessings!

22People who devise bad things go astray, don’t they,

but people who devise good things: commitment and truthfulness.

23In all painful toil there will be profit,

but the word of lips: only being in want.

24Their wealth is the crown of the smart,

but the denseness of dimwits is denseness.

25A truthful witness saves lives,

but one who testifies lies, deceit.

26In awe for Yahweh, vigorous security,

and for one’s children it will be a shelter.

27Awe for Yahweh is a fountain of life,

to depart from deadly snares.

28The glory of a king lies in the abundance of a people,

and in the absence of a nation lies the ruin of a ruler.

29Long-temperedness is abundant in understanding,

but shortness of spirit exalts denseness.

30A healthy mind is life for the flesh,

but passion is rot for the bones.

31One who oppresses a poor person reviles his maker,

but one who is gracious to a needy person honours him.

32In his bad fortune a faithless person is thrown down,

but a faithful person finds shelter when he’s dying.

33In the mind of a person of understanding smartness settles,

and in the middle of dimwits it makes itself known.

34Faithfulness exalts a nation,

but wrongdoing is a reproach to peoples.

35The acceptance of a king [will be] toward an insightful servant,

but his outburst will be [toward] a shameful one.

**15:1 A Gentle Response Turns Back Wrath**

15 A gentle answer turns back wrath,

but a painful word arouses anger.

2The tongue of the smart makes knowledge good,

but the mouth of dimwits pours out denseness.

3Yahweh’s eyes are in every place,

observing the bad and the good people.

4A healing tongue is a tree of life,

but deviation in it is brokenness in spirit.

5A dense person spurns his father’s discipline,

but one who keeps watch on reproof shows shrewdness.

6The house of the faithful person: much riches,

but in the yield of the faithless, trouble.

7The lips of the smart spread knowledge,

but the mind of dimwits – not so.

8The sacrifice of the faithless is an offence to Yahweh,

but the plea of the upright is acceptable to him.

9The way of the faithless person is an offence to Yahweh,

but he is loyal to one who pursues faithfulness.

10Discipline is bad to one who abandons the path,

but one who is hostile to reproof dies.

11She’ol and Abaddon are in front of Yahweh;

how much more the minds of human beings.

12Someone arrogant doesn’t befriend one who reproves him;

he doesn’t go to the smart.

13A rejoicing heart makes the face good,

but by hurt in the heart the spirit is crushed.

14The mind of a person of understanding seeks knowledge,

but the mouth of dimwits feeds on denseness.

15All the days of a humble person are bad,

but a good heart is a continual feast.

16Better a little with awe for Yahweh,

than much treasure and turmoil with it.

**15:17 Better a Helping of Greens When Love Is There**

17Better a helping of greens when love is there,

than a fattened bull when hostility is with it.

18A wrathful man stirs up a dispute,

but one who is long-tempered calms an argument.

19The way of a lazy person is like a hedge of thorn,

but the path of the upright is cleared.

20A smart son rejoices his father,

but a dimwitted man despises his mother.

21Denseness is a joy to one who lacks sense,

but a person of understanding makes his going upright.

22Intentions get contravened when there is no council,

but with an abundance of counsellors they get implemented.

23In the answer of his mouth there is rejoicing for a person,

and a word at its time – how good!

24The path of life is upward for someone insightful,

in order to depart from She’ol below.

25Yahweh tears down the house of the majestic,

but establishes the boundary of the widow.

26Bad intentions are an offence to Yahweh,

but lovely sayings are pure.

27One who gets dishonest gain troubles his household,

but one who is hostile to a gift will live.

28The mind of a faithful person murmurs so as to answer,

but the mouth of faithless people pours out bad things.

29Yahweh is far away from the faithless,

but listens to the plea of the faithful.

30The lamp of the eyes rejoices the heart;

good news enriches the bones.

31The ear that listens to life-giving reproof

lodges among the smart.

32One who leaves go of discipline despises himself,

but one who listens to reproof acquires sense.

33Awe for Yahweh is smartness’s discipline;

lowliness is before splendour.

**16:1 Yahweh Weighs Spirits**

16 The ordering of the mind belongs to a human being,

but the answer of the tongue comes from Yahweh.

2All an individual’s ways are clean in his eyes,

but Yahweh weighs spirits.

3Roll your actions onto Yahweh,

and your intentions will be established.

4Every deed of Yahweh is for what it answers,

even the faithless person for a bad day.

5Anyone lofty of mind is an offence to Yahweh;

hand to hand he won’t go free of guilt.

6By commitment and truthfulness waywardness is expiated,

and with awe for Yahweh there’s a departing from anything bad.

7When Yahweh accepts an individual’s ways,

he causes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

8Better is a little with faithfulness

than abundance of yield without judgment.

9The mind of a person thinks out his course,

but Yahweh establishes his step.

10There is divination on a king’s lips;

in giving judgment, one doesn’t trespass against his bidding.

11Balance and scales for judgment belong to Yahweh;

all the stones in the bag are his making.

12Acting with faithlessness is an offence to kings,

because the throne stands on faithfulness.

13Faithful lips are what kings accept;

He’s loyal to one who speaks upright things.

14The king’s wrath is death’s envoy,

but someone smart will expiate it.

15There is life in the light of the king’s face,

and his acceptance is like a cloud with spring rain.

16Acquiring smartness – how much better than pale gold,

and acquiring understanding is to be chosen rather than silver.

**16:17 Majesty, Loftiness; Brokenness, Collapsing**

17The causeway of the upright: departing from anything bad;

one who preserves his way keeps his life.

18Majesty goes before brokenness,

loftiness of spirit before collapsing.

19Lowliness of spirit with the humble

is better than sharing plunder with the majestic.

20One who is insightful about a thing will find good fortune,

and one who relies on Yahweh, his blessings.

21One who is smart of mind is called understanding,

and sweetness of lips increases people’s grasp.

22The insight of people who possess it is a fountain of life,

but denseness is the discipline of dense people.

23The mind of someone smart makea his speech insightful,

and on his lips it increases people’s grasp.

24Lovely sayings are a honeycomb,

sweet to the entire being and healing for the body.

25There is a road that is right before someone,

but its end is roads that lead to death.

26The appetite of a labourer labours for him,

because his mouth is pressing on him.

27A scoundrel digs for bad things,

and on his lip is a veritable scorching fire.

28A crooked person lets loose a dispute,

and a gossip separates a friend.

29A violent person misleads his neighbour,

and makes him go in a way that isn’t good.

30A person winks his eyes in thinking up crooked things;

he purses his lips when he’s finished something bad.

31Grey hair is a glorious crown;

it’s found by way of faithfulness.

32Better to be long-tempered than a strong man,

and one ruling over his spirit than one taking a town.

33The lot is cast in the fold of the coat,

but every ruling it makes is from Yahweh.

**17:1 Yahweh Tests Minds**

17 Better a dry bit of bread and ease with it,

than a house full of sacrifices with arguments.

2An insightful servant will rule over a disgraceful son,

and share in the domain among the brothers.

3The crucible for silver, the furnace for gold,

and Yahweh tests minds.

4Someone who deals badly heeds a lip that brings trouble;

falsehood gives ear to a malicious tongue.

5One who ridicules a destitute person reviles his maker;

one who rejoices at disaster will not go free of guilt.

6Grandchildren are the crown of elders,

and their parents are the glory of children.

7A plentiful tongue isn’t fitting for a villain,

much less a false tongue for a leader.

8A bribe is a gracious stone in its owner’s eyes;

wherever he turns his face, he’ll thrive.

9One who seeks loyalty covers over rebellion,

but one who repeats a thing separates a friend.

10A reprimand gets down into a person of understanding,

more than lashes into a dimwit—a hundred.

11A bad person seeks only rebellion,

but a cruel envoy will be sent off against him.

12Let a bereaved bear meet with someone,

but not a dimwit in his denseness.

13Someone who gives back something bad for something good –

bad fortune will not move away from his household.

14The beginning of a dispute releases water,

so before contention breaks out, abandon it.

**17:15 A Rejoicing Heart Enhances Healing**

15One who declares a faithless person faithful or declares a faithful person faithless,

both of them are an offence to Yahweh.

16Why is the price in a dimwit’s hand

for acquiring smartness, when he has no sense?

17A neighbour is a friend at any time;

a brother is born for pressure.

18Someone lacking in sense claps the palm of his hand,

standing surety before his neighbour.

19One who likes rebellion likes strife;

one who makes his entrance lofty seeks breaking down.

20Someone crooked of mind doesn’t find good fortune,

and someone who twists with his tongue falls into bad fortune.

21One begets a dimwit to one’s grief,

and the father of a villain doesn’t rejoice.

22A rejoicing heart enhances healing,

but a crushed spirit dries up bones.

23A faithless person takes a bribe from the fold of his coat,

to bend the paths of the exercise of authority.

24Smartness is before someone of understanding,

but the eyes of the dimwit are at the end of the earth.

25A dimwit son is a vexation to his father,

and bitterness to the one who gave birth him.

26Surely penalizing a faithful person is not good –

striking down leaders for uprightness.

27One who has knowledge holds back his words;

a person of understanding is cool of spirit.

28Even a dense person, keeping silence, is thought smart;

one who keeps his lip closed, understanding.

**18:1 Yahweh’s Name is a Refuge**

18 One who isolates himself seeks what he longs for;

he breaks out against all adeptness.

2The dimwit doesn’t delight in understanding,

but rather in disclosing his thinking.

3When a faithless person comes, contempt also comes,

and with slighting comes reviling.

4The words from someone’s mouth are deep water;

a fountain of smartness is a flowing wadi.

5Showing regard to the faithless person is not good,

by turning away the faithful person when exercising authority.

6The lips of a dimwit come into an argument,

and his mouth calls to blows.

7The mouth of a dimwit is his ruin,

and his lips are a snare for his life.

8The words of a gossip are like bites of food,

and they go down into the inner rooms of the stomach.

9Really, one who slackens in his work –

he is brother to a master of devastation.

10Yahweh’s name is a strong tower,

into which the faithful person runs and is high up.

11A wealthy person’s riches are his strong township,

and like a high wall, in his thinking.

12Before being broken, someone’s mind is lofty,

but before splendour comes lowliness.

**18:13 A Crushed Spirit – Who Can Bear It?**

13One who gives word back before he listens –

it’s his denseness and shame.

14A person’s spirit sustains his illness,

but a crushed spirit – who can bear it?

15An understanding mind acquires knowledge,

and the ear of smart people seeks knowledge.

16A person’s gift widens the way for him,

and conducts him before big people.

17The first person in a dispute seems in the right,

then his neighbour comes and examines him.

18The lot stops disputes,

and separates numerous people.

19A brother acting rebelliously is stronger than a strong township,

and disputes are like the barrier of a citadel.

20From the fruit of someone’s mouth his stomach gets full;

from the yield of his lips he gets full.

21Death and life are in the hand of the tongue;

those who are love it eat its fruit.

22When someone finds a wife, he finds something good,

and obtains acceptance from Yahweh.

23The destitute person speaks prayers for grace,

but the wealthy person answers fierce things.

24There are neighbours to act like neighbours,

and there’s one who’s loyal, sticking firmer than a brother.

**19:1 Riches Make Many Friends**

19 Better one who’s destitute who walks with integrity

than one who’s crooked with his lips and he’s a dimwit.

2Surely without knowledge appetite isn’t good,

and one who’s hasty on his feet goes wrong.

3A person’s denseness overturns his way,

but his mind rages against Yahweh.

4Riches make many friends,

and a poor person becomes separate from his friend.

5A false witness will not go free of guilt,

one who testifies lies will not escape.

6Many seek the goodwill of a leader,

and everyone befriends the person with a gift.

7All the brothers of a destitute person are hostile to him –

how much more do his neighbours keep their distance from him;

someone who pursues things to say – he doesn’t have them.

8One who acquires sense befriends himself;

one who keeps understanding finds good fortune.

9A false witness will not go free of guilt,

and one who testifies lies will perish.

10Luxury isn’t fitting for a dimwit,

certainly not for a servant to rule over officials.

11A person’s insight lengthens his anger,

and his glory is to pass over an act of rebellion.

12The king’s rage is a growl like a lion’s,

and his acceptance is like dew on grass.

13A dimwit son is malicious to his father,

but a woman’s disputes are a continuing drip.

14House and riches are a domain from parents,

but a woman of insight comes from Yahweh.

**19:15 The Peril of Laziness**

15Laziness make deep sleep fall,

and a slack person gets hungry.

16One who keeps an order keeps his life;

one who despises his ways will die.

17One who’ gracious to a poor person lends to Yahweh,

and he’ll make good to him for his dealing.

18Discipline your son when there’s hope,

and don’t apply yourself to putting him to death.

19One who’s big in wrath carries a penalty;

if you rescue him, you’ll do it again.

20Listen to counsel and accept discipline,

in order that you may be smart when you come to the end.

21Many intentions may be in a person’s mind,

but Yahweh’s counsel is the one that gets implemented.

22A person’s longing is his reproach,

but a destitute person is better than a liar.

23Awe for Yahweh leads to life;

one eats one’s fill, spends the night, doesn’t fear bad fortune.

24The lazy person buries his hand in the bowl;

he can’t even bring it back to his mouth.

25Strike down someone arrogant and the naïve person will become shrewd;

reprove someone of understanding – he’ll understand knowledge.

26One who destroys a father, puts a mother to flight,

is a son who brings shame and confounding.

27Son, leave off listening to discipline,

and you’ll stray from words of knowledge.

28A witness who’s a scoundrel is arrogant toward the exercise of authority,

and the mouth of faithless people swallows trouble.

29Acts of authority are prepared for the arrogant,

and blows for the back of dimwits.

**20:1 Drink Is Noisy**

20 Wine is arrogant, drink is noisy,

and anyone who goes astray through them isn’t smart.

2The king’s dreadfulness is a growl like a lion’s;

one who infuriates him wrongs himself.

3Ceasing from an argument is splendour for a person,

but every dense person breaks out.

4After fall the lazy person doesn’t plough,

and he asks at harvest, and there’s nothing.

5The counsel in someone’s mind is deep water,

but someone understanding can draw it up.

6An abundance of people may call out, ‘a person of commitment’,

but a person of truthfulness who can find?

7A faithful person walks about with integrity –

the blessings of his children after him!

8A king sitting on a throne of judgment

winnows all that’s bad with his eyes.

9Who can say, ‘I’ve kept my mind clean,

I’m pure from my offence?’

10Different stones, different measures,

both of them are an offence to Yahweh.

11It is indeed by his deeds that a youth lets himself be recognized,

whether his action is clean and whether it’s upright.

12The ear listens, the eye sees;

Yahweh made both of them.

13Don’t love sleep, so that you don’t become poor;

open your eyes, be full of bread.

14’Bad, bad’, says the buyer,

and goes off, then takes pride.

15There is gold and abundance of jewels,

but lips with knowledge are a valuable object.

**20:16 Don’t Say, ‘I’ll Recompense a Bad Deed’**

16Take his garment, because he made a pledge to a stranger;

bind him, on account of a foreign woman.

17Dishonest bread is pleasant to someone,

but afterward his mouth will fill with gravel.

18Intentions are established through counsel;

do battle with steering.

19One who reveals a confidence goes about as a slanderer;

don’t share with someone who has his lips open.

20One who slights his father and his mother,

his lamp will go out at the approach of darkness.

21A domain hastened at the beginning,

at the end of it will not be blessed.

22Don’t say, ‘I’ll make god for a bad deed’;

hope in Yahweh and he’ll deliver you.

23Different stone are an offence to Yahweh;

deceptive scales are not good.

24A man’s steps come from Yahweh;

how can someone understand his way?

25It’s a snare when someone is wild regarding making something sacred,

and consults after vows.

26A smart king winnows faithless people,

and turns back the wheel over them.

27The breath of a person is Yahweh’s lamp,

revealing all the rooms in your insides.

28Commitment and truthfulness protect a king;

he maintains his throne by commitment.

29The glory of youths is their energy;

the magnificenceof elders is their grey hair.

30Blows that wound scour things that are bad,

and beatings, the rooms of one’s insides.

**21:1 The Way of a Man Can Be Strange**

21 The king’s mind is a water channel in Yahweh’s hand,

which he bends wherever he wants.

2Someone’s entire way is upright in his own eyes,

but Yahweh weighs minds.

3Exercising authority in a faithful way

is to be chosen for Yahweh over a sacrifice.

4Exaltedness of eyes and wideness of mind:

the fallow ground of the faithless is wrongdoing.

5The intentions of the determined person do end up in gain,

but anyone who’s hasty does end up in want.

6Working for treasures by means of a false tongue

is a breath driven away, people seeking death.

7The destructiveness of the faithless sweeps them off,

because they refuse to exercise [proper] authority.

8The way of a man: twisting, and strange,

but his action: clean and upright.

9Living on a corner of the roof is better

than a disputatious woman and a shared house.

10The appetite of the faithless person desires what is bad;

his neighbour isn’t graced in his eyes.

11Through the punishing of someone arrogant a naïve person gets smart,

and through gaining insight into someone smart he gets knowledge.

12One who is faithful gains insight into the household of the faithless person,

turning over the faithless to their bad fortune.

13One who shut his ear to the cry of the poor person –

he too will call and not be answered.

14A gift in secret calms anger,

a bribe in the fold of the coat, vigorous wrath.

15Exercising authority means rejoicing for the faithful

but ruin to one who brings trouble.

16Someone who wanders from the way of insight

will settle down in the congregation of ghosts.

**21:17 The Sacrifice of the Faithless Is an Offence**

17One who loves rejoicing: a person in want;

one who loves wine and oil will not get wealthy.

18The faithless person is a ransom for someone faithful,

and one who breaks faith, in place of upright people.

19Living in a wilderness region is better

than an disputatious and vexatious woman.

20Desirable treasure and oil are in the home of someone smart,

but a dimwit of a person will swallow them up.

21One who pursues faithfulness and commitment

finds life, faithfulness, and splendour.

22Someone smart went up to a town of strong men

and brought down the stronghold in which it was confident.

23One who keeps his mouth and his tongue

keeps his life from pressures.

24The assertive, presumptuous person – arrogant his name –

acts in an outburst of assertiveness.

25The longing of the lazy person puts him to death,

because his hands have refused to act.

26All day someone may feel longing,

but the faithful gives and doesn’t hold back.

27The sacrifice of the faithless is an offence,

yes, because he brings it with a deliberate wickedness.

28A lying witness will perish,

but someone who listens to the end will speak.

29A faithless person looks forceful in his face,

but one who is upright – he understands his way.

30There’s no smartness, there’s no understanding,

There’s no counsel in front of Yahweh.

31The horse is prepared for the day of battle

but the deliverance belongs to Yahweh.

**22:1 Rich and Poor Meet**

22 A name is to be chosen rather than much wealth;

grace is better than silver and than gold.

2Wealthy and destitute meet;

Yahweh makes all of them.

3Someone shrewd sees something bad and hides;

naïve people pass on and pay the penalty.

4The effect of lowliness is awe for Yahweh,

wealth, splendour, and life.

5Thorns (traps) are in the way of the crook;

one who keeps watch on his life stays far from them.

6Initiate a youth with regard to his way;

even when he gets old, he won’t depart from it.

7The wealthy person rules over the destitute

and the borrower is a servant to the one who lends.

8One who sews evil will reap trouble;

the club with which he expresses his outburst will be finished off.

9One who is good of eye will be blessed,

because he gives of his bread to the poor person.

10Drive out the arrogant person and dispute will depart;

judgment and slighting will cease.

11One who is loyal to being pure in mind,

grace on his lips, the king is his friend.

12Yahweh’s eyes preserve knowledge

but he overturns the words of one who breaks faith.

13Someone lazy says, ‘A lion in the street,

in the middle of the square I shall be murdered!’

14The mouth of alien women is a deep pit;

one condemned by Yahweh falls there.

15Denseness is bound up in a youth’s mind;

the club of discipline will take it far away from him.

16One who oppresses the poor person: it’s to make much for himself;

one who gives to the wealthy person: it’s only to come to want.

**22:17 Thirty Sayings: One to Five**

17Bend your ear, listen to smart people’s words,

and apply your mind to my knowledge.

18Because it will be lovely when you keep them inside you;

they will be prepared all at once on your lips.

19So that your reliance may be on Yahweh,

I enable you to know them today – yes, you.

20I’ve written for you thirty, haven’t I,

with counsels and knowledge,

21To enable you to know the truest of truthful sayings,

so as to take back sayings in truthfulness to the people who send you.

22[1] Don’t rob the poor person because he’s poor,

and don’t crush the humble person at the gateway.

23Because Yahweh will argue their cause,

and despoil the people who despoil them of life.

24[2] Don’t befriend someone characterized by anger,

and you will not come with someone of frequent wrath,

25So that you don’t learn his paths,

and get a snare for your life.

26[3] Don’t be among the people who clap the palm of the hand,

among the people who stand surety for debts.

27If you have nothing to make good with,

why should someone take your bed from under you?

28[4] Don’t remove an age-old boundary mark,

one that your ancestors made.

29[5] You’ve beheld someone quick at his work?

– he’ll stand before kings,

he won’t stand before people who are in the dark.

**23:1 Thirty Sayings: Six to Fourteen**

23 [6] When you sit to dine with a ruler,

understand well who is before you.

2Put a knife to your throat

if you’re someone with an appetite.

3Don’t long for his tidbits,

given that it’s a lying meal.

4[7] Don’t get weary in order to become wealthy;

out of your understanding, leave off.

5Should your eyes flit upon it, it’s gone,

because it definitely makes itself wings;

like an eagle, it flies to the heavens.

6[8] Don’t eat the meal of someone who is bad of eye,

and don’t be desirous of his tidbits.

7Because like a hair in the throat, so is he;

he says to you, ‘Eat and drink’,

but his heart isn’t with you.

8The bit you’ve eaten you’ll throw up,

and ruin your lovely words.

9[9] In the ears of a dimwit don’t speak,

because he’ll despise the insight of your utterances.

10[10] Don’t remove an age-old boundary mark,

and don’t come into the fields of orphans.

11Because their restorer is strong;

he’ll argue their cause with you.

12[11] Bring your mind to discipline,

and your ear to knowledgeable sayings.

13[12] Don’t withhold discipline from a youth;

if you strike him down with a club, he won’t die.

14You may strike him down with a club,

and rescue his life from She’ol.

15[13] Son, if your mind is smart,

my mind will rejoice, mine too.

16My inner being will exult,

when your lips speak with uprightness.

17[14] Your mind must not be jealous of wrongdoers,

but rather of [people who live in] awe for Yahweh all day.

18Rather there will be a future,

and your hope will not cut off.

**23:19 Thirty Sayings: Fifteen to Eighteen**

19[15] You, my son, listen, and be smart,

and direct your mind on the way.

20Don’t become among the people who toss down wine,

among those who gorge themselves on meat.

21Because one who tosses down and gorges will lose his possession,

and slumbering will clothe him in rags.

22[16] Listen to your father who begot you,

and don’t despise your mother when she’s old.

23Acquire truth, don’t sell it –

smartness, discipline, and understanding.

24The father of someone faithful will truly celebrate,

the one who begets someone smart will rejoice in him.

25May your father and your mother rejoice,

the one who gave birth to you celebrate.

26[17] Give your mind to me, son,

may your eyes preserve my ways.

27Because a whore is a deep pit,

a foreign woman is a narrow well.

28Indeed, she lies in wait as if for prey,

and multiplies the people who break faith among humanity.

29[18] Who has ‘Oh’, who has ‘Aagh’,

who has disputes, who has talk,

Who has wounds for nothing,

who has bleary eyes?

30People who linger over wine,

who come to investigate mixed wine.

31Don’t look at wine because it’s red,

because it gives its eye in the chalice,

goes about smoothly.

32At its finish it bites like a snake,

poisons like a viper.

33Your eyes will see strange things,

your mind will speak twisted things.

34You’ll become like someone lying down in the middle of the sea,

like someone lying down on the top of the rigging.

35’Though they struck me down, I didn’t hurt,

though they beat me, I didn’t know.

When will I wake up? –

I’ll seek it once again!’

**24:1 Thirty Sayings: Nineteen to Thirty**

24 [19] Don’t be jealous of bad people,

don’t desire to be with them.

2Because their mind mutters destruction,

and their lips speak of oppression.

3[20] By smartness a house gets built,

and by understanding it gets established.

4By knowledge its rooms get filled

with all valuable and lovely riches.

5[21] A smart man is vigour itself,

someone knowledgeable firms his energy.

6Because by steering you do battle to your advantage,

and deliverance comes through an abundance of counsellors.

7[22] Smartness is too high for a dense person;

at the gateway he doesn’t open his mouth.

8[23] While they may call one who intends to deal badly

‘a master of strategies’,

9Dense deliberate wickedness, an expression of denseness, is wrongdoing,

and an arrogant person is an offence to people.

10[24] Should you slacken on a day of constraint,

your energy will be constrained.

11[25] Rescue people who are being taken off to death,

who are slipping toward slaughter; if you hold back….

12When you say, ‘There, we didn’t know this’,

the one who weighs minds will discern, won’t he.

The one who preserves your life, he will know,

and will give back to a person in accordance with his deed.

13[26] Eat syrup, son, because it’s good,

liquid honey, sweet to your palate.

14In this way acknowledge smartness for your appetite;

if you find it, there’s a future,

and your hope will not cut off.

15[27] Don’t lie in wait, faithless one, at the home of a faithful person,

don’t destroy his dwelling.

16Because seven times a faithful person may fall, and rise,

but the faithless will collapse through one bad fortune.

17[28] When your enemy falls, don’t rejoice,

and when he collapses, your heart should not celebrate,

18So that Yahweh doesn’t see and it’s bad in his eyes,

and he turns back his anger from him.

19[29] Don’t get heated at people who do bad things,

don’t get jealous of the faithless,

20Because there’s no future for the bad person;

the lamp of the faithless goes out.

21[30] Live in awe of Yahweh, son, and of the king,

and don’t share with people who are changing,

22Because suddenly disaster may arise for them,

and ruin from both of them: who can know?

**24:23 Another Set of Sayings**

23These also belong to the sages.

Recognizing the person in making exercising authority isn’t good:

24someone saying to the faithless person ‘You’re in the right’.

Peoples curse him,

nations condemn him.

25But for people who issue reproof, things will be lovely,

and upon them will come the blessing of good things.

26He kisses with the lips,

the one who speaks back with straight words.

27Prepare your work outside,

get it ready in the fields for yourself;

afterwards build your house.

28Don’t become a witness against your neighbour for nothing;

will you mislead with your lips?

29Don’t say, ‘As he did to me,

so I’ll do him,

I’ll give back to the man in accordance with his deed’.

30I passed by the field of someone lazy,

and by the vineyard of one lacking sense.

31There, it had all come up in weeds,

chickpeas covered its surface,

its stone wall was torn down.

32When I myself beheld, I applied my mind;

when I saw, I grasped some discipline.

33A little sleep, a little slumber,

a little folding of the hands to lie down,

34and your destitution comes walking about,

your want like someone with a shield.

**25:1 Golden Apricots in Silver Settings**

25 These, too, are aphorisms of Solomon, which the men of Hizqiyyahu king of Judah compiled.

2It’s God’s splendour to conceal a thing,

but kings’ splendour to explore a thing.

3The heavens regarding height, the earth regarding depth,

and the mind of kings – there’s no exploring.

4Remove dross from silver,

and an article comes out for the smith;

5Remove the faithless person before a king,

and his throne is established in faithfulness.

6Don’t magnify yourself before a king,

and don’t stand in the place of big people,

7Because it’s better for someone to say to you ‘Go up there’,

than move you down before a leader.

What your eyes have seen

8should not go out into an argument quickly,

In case – what will you do at the end of it,

when your neighbour puts you to shame?

9Argue for your cause with your neighbour,

but don’t reveal someone else’s confidence,

10In case someone who hears it reproaches you

and the charge against you doesn’t turn back.

11Golden apricots in silver settings

is a word appropriately spoken.

12A gold earring or an ornament of fine gold

is someone smart reproving into a listening ear.

13Like the cold of snow at harvest time

is a trustworthy envoy to the people who sent him;

he brings back his lord’s soul.

14Clouds and wind but no rain

is someone who takes pride in a false gift.

**25:15 A Gentle Tongue Can Break a Bone**

15Through being long-tempered a commander can be enticed;

a gentle tongue can break a bone.

16When you find syrup, eat enough for yourself,

so that you don’t get your full of it and throw up.

17Make your foot rare at your neighbour’s house,

so that he doesn’t get his fill of you and become hostile to you.

18A hammer, a sword, a sharpened arrow,

is someone who testifies against his neighbour as a false witness.

19A bad tooth and a wobbly foot,

is confidence in someone who breaks faith on a day of pressure.

20One who takes off a coat on a cold day,

vinegar on a wound,

and a singer of songs to a bad heart.

21If someone hostile to you is hungry, give him bread to eat;

if he’s thirsty, give him water to drink,

22Because you’re heaping coals on his head,

and Yahweh will make good to you.

23A north wind may give birth to rain,

and a secretive tongue a condemning face.

24Living on a corner of the roof is better

than an disputatious woman and a shared house.

25Cold water to a dry throat

is good news from a far off land.

26A muddied spring, a ruined fountain,

is a faithful person slipping before a faithless person.

27Eating much syrup isn’t good,

nor is it splendid to investigate people’s splendour.

28An town that’s been opened up, where there’s no wall

is someone for whose spirit there’s no restraint.

**26:1 The Dimwit**

26 Like snow during summer and like rain during harvest,

so splendour is not fitting for a dimwit.

2Like a sparrow flitting and like a swallow flying,

so being slighted for nothing will not come about.

3A whip for a horse, a bridle for a donkey,

and a club for the back of dimwits.

4Don’t answer a dimwit in accordance to his denseness,

so that you don’t become like him, you too.

5Answer a dimwit in accordance with his denseness,

so he doesn’t become smart in his own eyes.

6Someone cutting off his feet, drinking violence,

sending words by means of a dimwit.

7Legs hang down from someone disabled,

and an aphorism in the mouth of dimwits.

8Like binding a stone in a sling,

so is one who gives splendour to a dimwit.

9A thorn grows up into the hand of a drunk

and an aphorism in the mouth of dimwits.

10An archer running through everyone

and one who hires a dimwit or hires people passing through.

11As a dog goes back to its vomit,

a dimwit repeats his denseness.

12I’ve seen someone smart in his own eyes;

there’s hope for a dimwit more than for him.

13A lazy person says, ‘There’s a lion cub on the road,

a lion among the squares’.

14The door turns on its hinge,

the lazy person on his bed.

15The lazy person buries his hand in the bowl;

he’s too weary to bring it back to his mouth.

16The lazy person is smarter in his own eyes

than seven people speaking back with discretion.

**26:17 When There’s No Gossip, Disputes Go Quiet**

17One who takes strong hold the ears of a passing dog

is one who bursts out in an argument that isn’t his.

18Like a madman who is shooting

fiery arrows of death,

19So is someone who beguiles his neighbour

and says, ‘I was having fun, wasn’t I’.

20In the absence of wood a fire goes out,

and when there’s no gossip, disputes go quiet.

21Charcoal for embers and wood for a fire,

and a disputatious person for heating up an argument.

22The words of a gossip are like bites of food,

and they go down into the rooms of the stomach.

23Silver dross laid over pot,

burning lips but a bad mind.

24With his lips a hostile person disguises himself;

inside him, he puts deceit.

25When he makes his voice gracious, don’t trust him;

because seven offences are in his mind.

26His hostility will be concealed by deception;

his bad action will reveal itself in a congregation.

27One who digs a pit will fall into it,

one who rolls a stone, it will come back onto him.

28A false tongue is hostile to the people crushed by it;

a smooth mouth works a pushing down.

**27:1 Trustworthy Are the Wounds of a Friend**

27 Don’t takes pride in tomorrow,

because you don’t know what a day will give birth to.

2A stranger should praise you and not your mouth,

a foreigner and not your lips.

3A stone is weighty and sand is heavy,

but a dense person’s vexation is heavier than both of them.

4The cruelty of wrath and the flooding of anger:

but who can stand before jealousy?

5Reproof openly expressed is better

than friendship concealed.

6The wounds of a friend are trustworthy;

the kisses of someone hostile are importunate.

7Someone full despises honey,

but someone hungry: anything bitter is sweet.

8Like a sparrow flitting from its nest,

so is someone flitting from his place.

9Oil and incense rejoice the heart,

and the sweetness of one’s friend, more than one’s own counsel.

10Don’t abandon your friend or your father’s friend,

and don’t come to your brother’s house on your day of disaster.

Better one who dwells near

than a brother far away.

11Be smart, son, and rejoice my heart,

so I may speak back to one who reviles me with a word.

12When someone shrewd sees something bad, he hides;

naïve people pass on and pay the penalty.

13Take his garment, because he made a pledge to a stranger;

bind him, on account of a foreign woman.

**27:14 The Crucible of Praise**

14One who blesses his neighbour in a loud voice

in the morning, early:

it will be thought of for him as a slighting.

15A continuing drip on a rainy day,

and a disputatious woman, are similar.

16People who hide her could hide the wind,

or he could grasp oil in his right hand.

17Iron sharpens iron,

and a person sharpens the face of his friend.

18One who guards a fig tree will eat its fruit,

and one who keeps watch on his lord will be honoured.

19Like water, face to face,

so the heart of a person to a person.

20She’ol and Abaddon don’t get full,

and the eyes of a human being don’t get full.

21A crucible for silver, a furnace for gold,

and an individual for a mouth praising him.

22If you grind the dense person in a mortar,

in the middle of the grain in a pestle,

his denseness will not depart from him.

23You should really know the faces of your flock,

apply your mind to your herds,

24because riches aren’t permanent

or a crown for generation after generation.

25Hay goes away and new grass appears

and the growth of the mountains is gathered.

26Lambs are for your clothing,

goats for the price of a field,

27Enough goats’ milk for your meal,

for a meal for your household and life for your young girls.

**28:1 Interest and Profiteering**

28 The faithless flee when there’s no one pursuing,

but faithful people are as confident as a lion.

2When there’s rebellion in the country,

its rulers are many.

But when there’s someone who understands,

someone who knows, established order will last long.

3A man who is destitute and who oppresses the poor:

rain beating down and there’s no bread.

4People who abandon instruction praise the faithless person;

people who keep instruction fight against them.

5Bad people don’t understand the exercise of authority,

but people who seek Yahweh understand everything.

6Better someone destitute walking in integrity,

than someone crooked in his ways, but he’s wealthy.

7An understanding son observes instruction,

but one who befriends gluttons disgraces his father.

8Someone who increases his riches through interest and profiteering

amasses it for someone who will be gracious to the poor.

9One who turns his ear aside from listening to instruction:

even his plea is an offence.

10One who misleads the upright into a bad way,

he’ll fall into his own pit, but people of integrity get good things as their domain.

11A wealthy person is smart in his own eyes,

but a poor person of understanding can search him out.

12At the exulting of the faithful there’s much glorying,

but at the rise of the faithless, people have to be searched for.

13One who covers his rebellions will not succeed,

but one who confesses and abandons will be shown compassion.

14The blessings of the person who continually reveres,

whereas one who toughens his mind falls to bad fortune.

**28:15 The Peril of Shutting the Eyes**

15A roaring lion or a advancing bear:

a faithless ruler over a poor people.

16A leader lacking understanding and abundant in acts of oppression;

one hostile to dishonest gain will extend his days.

17When one oppressed by shedding someone’s blood

flees to a cistern, people should not take hold of him.

18A person who walks in integrity will find deliverance,

but one who’s crooked in his ways will fall at once.

19One who serves his land will be full of bread,

but one who pursues empty things will be full of destitution.

20A person of trustworthy deeds will be abundant in blessings,

but one hasty to get wealthy will not go free of guilt.

21Recognizing a person isn’t good,

but a man may rebel for a bit of bread.

22One who is bad in eye hurries for riches,

and doesn’t acknowledge that lack will come to him.

23One who reproves a person in the end

will find more grace than one who makes his tongue smooth.

24One who robs his father and his mother

and says ‘It’s not an act of rebellion’ –

he is a companion of one who devastates.

25One wide of appetite provokes dispute,

but one who relies on Yahweh will be enriched.

26One who relies on his own mind – he’s a dimwit,

but one who walks in smartness – he’ll escape.

27One who gives to a destitute person – there’s no lack,

but one who shuts his eyes – many are the curses.

28When the faithless rise up, people hide,

and when they perish, the faithful become many.

**29:1 You Could Suddenly Break and There Could be No Healing**

29 A person of many reproofs who toughens his neck

will suddenly break, and there will be no healing.

2When the faithful increase, the people rejoice,

but when a faithless person rules, the people groan.

3Someone who loves smartness rejoices his father,

but one who befriends whores obliterates riches.

4A king enables a country to stand by the exercise of authority,

but a man of great deceit tears it down.

5A man who flatters his neighbour

spreads a net for his steps.

6In the rebellion of someone bad there’s a snare,

but a faithful person resounds and rejoices.

7A faithful person acknowledges the cause of the poor;

a faithless person doesn’t understand acknowledgment.

8Arrogant people stir up a township,

but the smart turn back anger.

9Someone smart may enter into judgment with a dense person,

but he’ll rage and have fun and there’ll be no settlement.

10People inclined to bloodshed may be hostile to someone of integrity,

but the upright will seek the person out.

11A dimwit lets all his spirit out;

someone smart holds it back.

12A ruler who gives heed to a false word:

all his ministers will be faithless.

13A destitute man and a man given to deceit meet:

Yahweh enlightens the eyes of them both.

**29:14 How the Throne Will Stand Firm**

14A king who exercises authority for the poor in truth:

his throne will be established permanently.

15Club and reproof give smartness,

but a youth sent off shames his mother.

16When the faithless increase, rebellion increases,

but the faithful will see their downfall.

17Discipline your son and he’ll enable you to settle down,

and give much delight to your entire being.

18When there’s no vision, the people throw off restraint,

but someone who keeps instruction – his blessings!

19By words a servant will not be disciplined,

when he understands but there’s no answer.

20If you behold someone hasty with his words,

there’s hope for a dimwit more than for him.

21Someone who indulges his servant from youth:

at the end he’ll become his offspring.

22Someone angry provokes a dispute,

and someone given to wrath rebels much.

23A person’s majesty will make him fall,

but one lowly of spirit will take hold of splendour.

24Someone who shares with a thief is hostile to himself;

he hears the oath and doesn’t tell.

25A person’s trembling sets a snare,

but one who relies on Yahweh will be set on high.

26Many seek the regard of a ruler,

but the ruling about a person comes from Yahweh.

27An evildoer is an offence to the faithful,

and someone upright in his way is an offence to the faithless person.

**30:1 I’m Just a Weary Sojourner but I Have Some Words from God**

30 Words of Agur ben Yaqeh. The oracle. The man’s pronouncement to Iti’el, to Iti’el and Ukal.

2Truly I’m a brute more than a person,

and I don’t have human understanding.

3I haven’t learned smartness

and I don’t possess the knowledge of the sacred ones.

4Who has gone up to the heavens and come down,

who has gathered the wind in his open hands?

Who has confined the water in a cloak,

who has set all earth’s ends?

What is his name and what is his son’s name,

if you know?

5Everything God says is tested;

he’s a shield to those who take shelter with him.

6Don’t add to his words,

so that he doesn’t reprove you and you prove a liar.

7Two things I ask of you;

don’t hold back from me before I die.

8Emptiness and a lying word keep far from me,

destitution and wealth don’t give me,

let me grab the bread that is my due,

9So that I don’t get full and renounce

and say, ‘Who is Yahweh?’

Or so that I don’t get poor and rob,

and take the name of my God.

10Don’t mention a servant to his lord,

in case he slight you, and you’re liable.

11A generation that slights its father,

and doesn’t bless its mother!

12A generation that’s pure in its own eyes,

but its filth isn’t washed off!

13A generation – how its eyes are high,

and its eyelids rise!

14A generation whose teeth are swords,

and their jaws knives,

To consume the humble from the earth,

the needy from humanity!

**30:15 Creation and Numbers**

15The leech has two daughters,

‘Give, give!’

These are three things that don’t get full,

four that don’t say ‘Plenty!’—

16She’ol, a barren womb,

a country that isn’t full of water,

and fire that doesn’t say ‘Plenty!’

17The eye that ridicules a father

and despises obedience to a mother:

The ravens in the wadi will gouge it out,

and young eagles will eat it.

18Those are three things too extraordinary for me,

four that I don’t know:

19An eagle’s way in the heavens,

a snake’s way on a crag,

A ship’s way in the heart of the sea,

and a man’s way with a girl.

20Such is the way of an adulterous woman:

she eats and wipes her mouth,

and says, ‘I haven’t brought trouble’.

21Under three things the earth shudders,

and under four that it cannot bear:

22Under a servant when he becomes king,

and villain when he’s full of bread,

23Under a woman who has met with hostility when she marries,

and a maidservant when she dispossesses her mistress.

24Those are four smallest things on earth,

but they are the smartest of the smart:

25Ants are a people not strong,

but they prepare their bread in summer;

26Hyraxes are a people not numerous,

but they make their home in a cliff;

27Locusts have no king,

but they go out organized, all of them;

28You can take hold of a lizard in your hands,

but it’s in a king’s palaces.

29Those are three things good in their stride,

four that are good in moving:

30The lion is the strong man among animals,

it doesn’t turn back from before anyone;

31One belted round the hips; or a goat;

and a king – no rising against him.

32If you’ve been villainous in exalting yourself,

and if you’ve schemed – hand on your mouth!

33Because pressing milk issues in butter,

pressing the nose issues in blood,

and pressing anger issues in an argument.

**31:1 The Demon Drink**

31 The words of King Lemu’el. A pronouncement with which his mother disciplined him.

2What, my son, what, son of my womb,

what, son of my pledges?

3Don’t give your resources to women,

your ways to women who wipe out kings.

4It’s not for kings, Lemuel,

not for kings to drink wine,

and for rulers, or liquor.

5In case they drink and put out of mind what has been decreed,

and are hostile to the cause of all humble people.

6Give liquor to someone who is perishing,

wine to one who is bitter inside.

7He can drink and put out of mind his destitution,

and his oppression he won’t keep in mind any more.

8Open your mouth for the dumb,

for the cause of all the people who are passing away.

9Open your mouth, exercise authority faithfully,

give judgment for the humble and needy person.

**31:10 The Resourceful Woman**

10Who can find a resourceful woman?

– her value is far above rubies.

11Her husband’s mind relies on her,

and he lacks no spoil.

12She deals him good not bad,

all the days of her life.

13She looks for wool and flax,

and works with delight with the palms of her hands.

14She becomes like a trader’s ships,

when she brings her bread from far away.

15She rises while it’s still night,

and gives a bite to her household,

and an allocation to her girls.

16She schemes about a field and gets it;

from the fruit of the palms of her hands she plants a vineyard.

17She wraps her hips in vigour,

and firms up her arms.

18She checks that her trading is good;

her lamp doesn’t go out at night.

19She puts out her hands to the spindle,

and her palms take hold of the wheel.

20She opens her palm to the humble person,

puts out her hands to the needy person.

21She isn’t afraid for her household because of snow,

because her entire household is dressed in crimson.

22She makes coverlets for herself;

her clothing is linen and purple.

23Her husband is acknowledged at the gateways,

as he sits with the country’s elders.

24She makes fabric and sells it,

and gives a sash to the merchant.

25Vigour and magnificence are her clothing;

she can make fun of a future day.

26She opens her mouth with smartness;

committed instruction is on her tongue.

27She watches over the goings of her household;

she doesn’t eat the bread of laziness.

28Her children rise up and declare her blessed;

her husband praises her:

29’Many women produce resources,

but you surpass all of them’.

30Grace is false, beauty is hollow,

but a woman who lives in awe of Yahweh – she is to take pride.

31Give to her from the fruit of her hand;

her deeds should praise her at the gateways.

# Job

The Book of Job is something like the script for a play—there’s no indication that it was performed, but it could have been. The main part of the book is an argument between Job, three of his friends, an angry young man who appears later, and then Yahweh himself, who eventually responds to Job. The framework for the argument is the story of how Job, someone exemplary in his commitment to Yahweh and someone who has done really well in life, loses everything in a series of calamities, and how Yahweh eventually restores him. The argument happens in poetry, which puts us on the track of the fact that this isn’t simply the transcript of something that happened, though the basic stoy line reflects things that happen often enough, and in this sense I imagine it is based on fact.

But the book’s point isn’t dependent on its being factual. The point about the book is to discuss various approaches to handling the way that people do experience the kind of horrifying tragedy that comes to Job. In this work, discussing the issue doesn’t mean trying to explain why people suffer. It’s not about the problem of evil, or theodicy, in this sense. It’s more about how one lives with an experience like Job’s. And it presupposes that the experience of tragedy raises even bigger questions about the very nature of our relationship with God and the basis of that relationship.

Making these questions the basis of an argument between the participants enables the book to look at the questions from different angles. All these angles have some truth to them, though they are not all very relevant to Job.

1. The book’s starting point is that there is a relationship of deep mutual commitment between Job and God. But that starting point raises the question whether Job is committed to God because it means God blesses him. The story therefore imagines God agreeing that Job should be tested by taking away his blessings, to see how he reacts; and Job passes the test. So the first insight about the relationship between God and us is that it’s based on the free trust and commitment between God and us, not on what we get out of it; and that tragedy can be a means of testing us. (In this introduction to the book, a key role is played by “The Adversary,” who is a member of God’s staff whose job it is to make sure that people don’t get away with things that they shouldn’t get away with. He is a safeguard against God being too soft. In English Translations, he is often referred to as Satan, but this is misleading.)
2. The second insight about the relationship is that Job can have an exceptional freedom in expressing his grief, anguish, and puzzlement, and in expressing to God his anger, frustration, and sense of betrayal (see chapters 3—27).
3. A third insight is expressed time and time again by Job’s three friends (interwoven in chapters 3—27), who know that tragedy often issues from our disobedience. The problem is that often it does not. But often it does, so their insight Is a real one, though it’s irrelevant to Job.
4. The poem about wisdom in Job 28 reminds readers that awe and thus obedience in relation to God is the key to being smart.
5. The insight expressed by the angry young man (chapters 32—37) is that tragedy can be something through which God speaks to you and through which he draws you nearer to himself. It too is a real insight, but not very relevant to Job.
6. When God appears (chapters 38—41) he reminds Job that he is God and Job isn’t, and that the world doesn’t circulate round Job. If Job thinks he can run the world better than God, he should try. Tragedy drives one to recognize that one must and can trust God and submit to God.
7. The close of the story affirms that in the end God is faithful. The fact that most people’s stories don’t end as comfortingly as Job’s makes it all the more important to affirm this truth about God.

## 1:1 The Man of Integrity

1 There was a man in the country of Uz named Job [Iyyob]. That man was a person of integrity and upright, in awe of God and turning aside from what is bad. 2There had been born to him seven sons and three daughters. 3His acquisitions comprised 7000 sheep, 3000 camels, 500 yoke of cattle, 500 she-donkeys, and a very large servant body. That man was bigger than all eastern people.

4His sons used to make a feast at the house of an individual on his day, and send and call for their three sisters to eat and to drink with them. 5When the days of the feast had made their round, Job would send and make them sacred. He would start early in the morning and offer up burnt offerings for the number of them all, because (Job said) ‘Perhaps my children have done wrong and “blessed” God inside’. In this way Job would act continually.

6There was a day when the divine beings came to take their stand with Yahweh. The adversary, too, came among them. 7Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘From where do you come?’ The adversary answered Yahweh, ‘From roaming on the earth and from walking about on it’. 8Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘Have you applied your mind to my servant Job, because there’s no one like him on the earth, a person of integrity and upright, in awe of God and turning aside from what is bad?’

9The adversary answered Yahweh, ‘Is it for nothing that Job lives in awe of God? 10Have you yourself not hedged about him and about his household and about everything that he has, all round? You’ve blessed the action of his hands, and his acquisitions have spread through the earth. 11However, put out your hand, please, and touch everything that he has. If he doesn’t “bless” you to your face….’

12Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘There, everything that he has is in your hand. Only against him you may not put out your hand’. So the adversary went out from being in Yahweh’s presence.

## 1:13 When Life Falls Apart

13There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their oldest brother 14when an envoy came to Job and said, ‘The cattle were ploughing and the she-donkeys were pasturing next to them, 15and Sabeans fell and took them, and struck down the boys with the edge of the sword. I alone am the only one who has escaped to tell you’.

16While this man was still speaking, another came and said, ‘Fire from God fell from the heavens and burned up the flocks and the boys, and consumed them. I alone am the only one who has escaped to tell you’.

17While this one was still speaking, another came and said, ‘Kasdites made three columns and made a dash on the camels and took them, and struck down the boys with the edge of the sword. I alone am the only one who has escaped to tell you.

18While this one was still speaking, another came and said, ‘Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their oldest brother, 19and there – a big wind came from across the wilderness and touched the four corners of the house. It fell on the young people and they died. I alone am the only one who has escaped to tell you’.

20Job got up, tore his coat and shaved his head, fell to the ground and bowed low, 21and said, ‘Naked I came out of my mother’s womb, and naked I will go back there. Yahweh gave and Yahweh has taken. Yahweh’s name be blessed’.

21In all this Job did not do wrong. He did not ascribe corruptness to God.

## 2:1 The Wise Silence of Friends

2 There was a day when the divine beings came to take their stand with Yahweh. The adversary, too, came among them to take his stand with Yahweh. 2Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘From where do you come?’ The adversary answered Yahweh, ‘From roaming on the earth and from walking about on it’. 3Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘Have you applied your mind to my servant Job, because there’s no one like him on the earth, a person of integrity and upright, in awe of God and turning aside from what is bad? He’s still holding strongly to his integrity whereas you incited me against him to swallow him up for nothing’.

4The adversary answered Yahweh, ‘Skin for skin! All that a man has he will give for the sake of his life. 5However, put out your hand, please, and touch his bones and his flesh. If he doesn’t “bless” you to your face….’

6Yahweh said to the adversary, ‘There he is, in your hand. Only keep his life’. 7So the adversary went out from Yahweh’s presence and struck Job down with a bad inflammation from the sole of his foot as far as the crown of his head, 8and he got himself a piece of pot to scratch himself with as he was sitting among ashes.

9His wife said to him, ‘Are you still holding strongly to your integrity? “Bless” God and die’. 10He said to her, ‘Like the speaking of one of the villainous women, you too speak. We accept good fortune from Yahweh. Do we not accept bad fortune?’ In all this Job didn’t do wrong with his lips.

11Three friends of Job heard about all these bad things that had come upon him, and they came each one from his place: Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Tsophar the Na’amatite. They met together by agreement to come to express their sorrow to him and to comfort him, 12but they raised their eyes from afar and didn’t recognize him. They raised their voice and cried. They ripped, each one, his coat and they threw dirt over their heads, to the heavens.

13They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights with no one speaking a word to him because they saw that his suffering was very great.

## 3:1 Job: Perish the Day I was Born

3 Subsequently, Job opened his mouth and slighted his day. 2Job avowed:

3Perish the day on which I was born,

and the night that said ‘A male has been conceived!’

4That day should be darkness,

God above should not inquire about it,

and light should not shine on it.

5Darkness and deathly shadow should reclaim it,

cloud should dwell over it.

Blackness by day should terrify it,

6that night – shadow should take it.

It should not be one with the days of the year,

it should not come in the number of months.

7There, that night should be barren,

no resounding should come in it.

8The people who curse a day should damn it,

the people ready to rouse Livyatan.

9Its dusk stars should be dark,

it should hope for light when there is none.

It should not see the eyelids of dawn,

10because it did not shut the doors of my womb,

and conceal oppression from my eyes.

## 3:11 Job: Life Means Turmoil, Death Means Rest

11Why did I not die at birth,

go out from the womb and breathe my last?

12Why did knees meet me,

or why breasts that I would suck?

13Because now I would be lying and calm,

I would have slept then and would rest myself,

14With kings and the counsellors of the earth,

who build up ruins for themselves,

15Or with officials who have gold,

who fill their houses with silver.

16Or why was I not like a buried stillborn,

like babies that have not seen the light?

17There the faithless leave off causing turmoil;

there people wearied of energy rest.

18All at once prisoners relax;

they don’t hear the boss’s voice.

19Small and big are there;

the servant is free of his master.

20Why does he give light to the oppressed,

life to the bitter in spirit,

21People who wait for death but there is none,

who search for it more than hidden treasures,

22Who rejoice with gladness,

who are joyful, because they find a grave,

23To the man whose way has concealed itself,

and whom God has hedged about?

24Because my sighing comes before my food,

my groans pour out like water.

25Because I dreaded something and it happened to me,

what I was terrified of comes to me.

26I was not at ease, I was not calm,

I did not rest, and turmoil came.

## 4:1 Eliphaz: Can a Mere Human Being Be in the Right in God’s Eyes?

4 Eliphas the Temanite answered:

2Should one venture a word to you, will you be distraught?

— but holding back utterances: who could?

3Here, you have disciplined many,

you would strengthen weak hands.

4Your utterances would enable one who was collapsing to get up,

you would firm up bending knees.

5Yet now it comes to you, and you are distraught;

it touches you, and you are fearful.

6Is your awe not your assurance,

and the integrity of your ways your hope?

7Be mindful, please: who is that person free of guilt who has perished,

where did the upright people disappear?

8As I have seen, the people who plough trouble,

and sow oppression, reap them.

9By God’s breath they perish,

by his angry blast they come to a finish.

10The lion’s roar, the cub’s sound,

the teeth of the whelps—they crumple;

11The tiger perishes for lack of prey,

the cougar’s children scatter.

12A word stole to me,

my ear got a whisper of it.

13In uneases from visions of the night,

when deep sleep falls on human beings,

14Dread befell me, and trembling,

and brought dread to the mass of my bones.

15A wind was sweeping over my face,

it was bristling the hair on my flesh.

16It was halting, but I didn’t recognize its appearance,

the form in front of my eyes.

I heard a murmur, a voice:

17’Can a mere human being be in the right before God,

can a man be pure before his maker?’

18If he does not trust his servants,

and attributes folly to his envoys,

19How much more people who dwell in mud houses,

whose foundation is in the dirt,

so that people crush them before [they crush] a moth.

20Between morning and evening they are struck down;

without anyone noticing they perish permanently.

21Is it not that, when their tent cord is pulled up from them,

they die, and without smartness?

## 5:1 Eliphaz: God Frustrates the Intentions of the Shrewd

5 Please call – is anyone going to answer you,

and to which of the sacred ones will you turn your face?

2Because provocation kills the dense person,

passion puts the simple-minded to death.

3I myself have seen a dense person who was taking root,

but I have immediately declared his home cursed.

4His children will be far from deliverance;

they will collapse in the gateway and with no one to rescue.

5A hungry person will eat his harvest, will take it into baskets,

and thirsty people will pant after their resources.

6Because trouble does not grow out from dirt,

oppression does not spring up from the ground.

7Because a human being may be born for oppression

and plagues go flying lofty.

8However, I myself inquire of God,

and before God I set my words,

9One who does big things of which there is no searching out,

extraordinary deeds until there is no numbering,

10The one who gives rain on the face of the earth,

sends water on the face of the countryside,

11Setting the lowly on high,

so that mourners soar to deliverance,

12Contravening the intentions of the shrewd,

so that their hands don’t achieve adeptness,

13Capturing smart people through their shrewdness,

so that the counsel of the clever sweeps away.

14By day they meet with darkness,

at noon they grope as in the night.

15But he delivers the needy person from the sword of their mouth,

from the hand of the strong;

16So there is hope for the poor person,

and evil shuts its mouth.

## 5:17 Eliphaz: God Wounds But Binds Up

17There – the good fortune of the man God reproves;

so don’t reject Shadday’s correction.

18Because he is the one who wounds but binds up,

he hits but his hands heal.

19During six attacks he will rescue you;

during seven, bad things will not affect you.

20In famine he redeems you from dying;

in battle – from the hands of the sword.

21During the scourge of the tongue, you will hide,

you will not be afraid of destruction when it comes.

22Of destruction and of blight you will make fun;

you will not be afraid of the animals of the country.

23Because your pact is with the stones of the field,

and the animals of the wild are made at peace with you.

24You will acknowledge that there is well-being in your tent;

you will attend to your home and not miss anything.

25You will acknowledge that your offspring are many,

your descendants like the grass of the earth.

26You will come to the grave in fullness,

as a sheaf comes up at its time.

27There – we have searched this out and it is so;

listen to it, acknowledge it for yourself.

## 6:1 Job: There’s No Help For Me

6 Job answered:

2If only my provocation could be truly weighed,

and people could lift on the scales the malice shown to me, altogether.

3Because it would now be heavier than the sand of the seas;

that is why my words have been wild.

4Because Shadday’s arrows are in me,

their poison my spirit drinks up,

God’s terrors line up against me.

5Does a wild donkey bray over grass,

does an ox bellow over its fodder?

6Is something insipid eaten without salt,

is there taste in the juice of a mallow?

7My appetite refuses to touch;

those things are like food for when I am ill.

8If only my request would come about,

and God would grant my hope,

9That God would show willing and crush me,

let loose his hand and cut me off.

10It would still be my consolation

(though I would contort with writhing that wouldn’t spare),

because I will not have not disowned the things said by the Sacred One.

11What energy do I have that I should wait,

what end do I have that I should prolong my life?

12Is my energy the energy of stones,

or is my flesh copper?

13Surely there is no help for me in myself,

and adeptness has driven itself away from me.

## 6:14 Job: You Call This Friendship?

14As for one who refuses commitment to his friend,

he abandons awe for Shadday.

15My brothers have broken faith like a wadi,

like the canyons with wadis that pass away,

16That are dark with ice,

when snow piles over them.

17At the time when they flow, they’ve expired;

in the heat, they’ve disappeared from their place.

18Caravans divert their path;

they go up into the wasteland and perish.

19Caravans from Tema have looked to them,

traveling groups from Sheba have hoped in them.

20They’re confounded, because they had trusted;

they came right to it and they’re shamed.

21Because now you’ve become nothing;

you see something fearful and you’re afraid.

22Did I say to you, ‘Give me—

out of your energy pay a bribe on my behalf?

23Save me from the hand of my adversary,

from the hand of violent people redeem me’?

24Instruct me, and I myself will be quiet;

enable me to understand how I’ve erred.

25How painful are upright things that have been said –

but how does reproof from you reprove?

26Do you think up utterances for reproof,

and are the sayings of a despairing man for the wind?

27Would you also make the lot fall for an orphan,

and barter over your friend?

28But now, show willing, turn your face to me;

if I lie to your face….

29Please turn back, there should not be evil;

turn back, my right standing is still intact.

30Is there evil on my tongue,

or can my palate not discern malice?

## 7:1 Job to God: A human Being Has Hard Service on Earth

7 A mere human being has hard service on earth, doesn’t he,

and his days are like the days of an employee,

2Like a servant who longs for shadow,

and like an employee who hopes for his wages.

3Thus I have been given months of emptiness as my domain,

nights of oppression have been counted out for me.

4If I lie down, I say

‘When shall I get up?’

But evening drags on,

and I am full of tossings until morning twilight.

5My flesh is clothed in maggots,

and clogs of dirt,

my skin has become broken and oozing.

6My days have been swifter than a weaver’s shuttle,

and they’ve come to a finish in an absence of thread.

7Be mindful that my life is wind;

my eye will not again see good things.

8The eye that sees me will not behold me;

your eye will be on me, but I will be no more.

9A cloud comes to a finish and goes;

so the person who goes down to She’ol does not come up.

10He does not go back to his home again;

his place does not recognize him again.

## 7:11 Job: What Are Human Beings that You Pay Them So Much Attention?

11Indeed I will not hold back my mouth;

I will speak in the pressure my spirit,

I will talk in the bitterness of my entire being.

12Am I the Sea or the Dragon,

that you set a watch over me?

13When I’ve said, ‘My bed will comfort me,

my mattress will carry part of my talk’,

14You scare me with dreams,

and terrify me with visions.

15My entire being would choose strangling,

death, away from my bones.

16I’ve rejected it, I shall not live permanently;

leave off from me, because my days are hollow.

17What is a mere human being that you make him great,

and that you set your mind on him,

18That you attend to him each morning

and test him every moment?

19How long will you not look away from me,

not slacken hold of me until I swallow my spit?

20If I’ve done wrong, what do I do to you,

you who preserve humanity?

Why have you made me into a target for yourself

so that I’ve become a burden to myself?

21Why do you not carry my rebellion

and let my waywardness pass?

Because I shall now lie down in the dirt,

and when you look urgently for me, I will be no more.

## 8:1 Bildad: On Learning from the Past

8 Bildad the Shuhite answered:

2How long will you utter these things?

— the sayings of your mouth are a massive wind.

3Does God twist the exercise of authority,

does Shadday twist what is right?

4If your sons did wrong in relation to him,

he sent them into the hand of their rebellion.

5If you yourself look urgently for God,

and seek for grace with Shadday,

6If you’re clean and upright,

surely he will now arise for you

and he will make good your faithful estate:

7your beginning may have been small,

but your end will grow very great.

8Because ask the former generation, please,

Set your mind to what their ancestors searched out,

9Because we are of yesterday and we don’t know,

because our days on earth are a shadow.

10They can instruct you, can’t they, and say to you,

and get utterances out from their mind?

11Can papyrus get tall where there’s no marsh,

can reed grow without water?

12While still in its shoot form when it’s not cut,

it would wither before any grass does.

13So are the paths of all who put God out of mind;

the hope of the impious man perishes.

14His assurance breaks off,

his trust is a spider’s house.

15He relies on his house but it doesn’t stand;

he takes strong hold of it but it does not hold.

16While he may be moist before the sun,

and his shoot may go out over his garden,

17His roots may interweave over a heap,

may behold a house among stones,

18If they swallow him up from his place,

it denies him: ‘I didn’t see you’.

19There, that’s the joy of his way;

and from the dirt another springs.

20On the other hand, God does not reject the man of integrity,

and does not take strong hold of the hand of the person who acts badly.

21He will fill your mouth with laughter again,

and your lips will shout.

22The people hostile to you will clothe themselves in disgrace;

the tent of the faithless will be no more.

## 9:1 Job: God Does Not Answer

9 Job answered:

2Truly I acknowledge that it is so;

but how can a mere human being be in the right with God?

3If he wants to argue with him,

he doesn’t answer him once in a thousand.

4Smart in mind and firm in energy –

who has been tough with him and been at peace? –

5The one who moves mountains though they don’t acknowledge him,

who overturns them in his anger,

6Who shakes the earth from its place

so that its pillars shudder,

7Who says to the sun that it should not shine

and seals over the stars,

8Who spread out the heavens by himself

and trod on the back of the sea,

9Who is the maker of the Bear, Orion,

Pleiades, and the rooms of the South,

10Who does big things, beyond searching out,

extraordinary deeds, beyond numbering.

11If he were to pass by me, I would not see,

were he to sweep past, I would not discern him.

12If he were he to snatch away, who could make him turn back,

who could say to him, ‘What are you doing?’

13God—he doesn’t turn back his anger;

under him Rahab’s helpers bow low.

14How much less can I be one to answer him,

to choose words against him?

15Though I am in the right, I would not answer him;

I would ask for grace from the one who exercise authority for me.

16If I called and he answered me,

I would not trust that he would give ear to my voice,

17He who crushes me for a trifle,

and multiples my wounds for nothing.

18He doesn’t let me get my breath back,

but fills me with bitterness.

19If it’s about energy – there, he is firm;

if it’s about exercising authority – who can enable me to meet him?

20Though I were in the right, my mouth would declare me in the wrong;

I am a man of integrity, but it could declare me crooked.

## 9:21 Job: There is No Arbiter Between Us

21Whereas I am a man of integrity, I don’t acknowledge myself,

I reject my life.

22It’s all the same, that’s why I say

‘He finishes off the person of integrity and the faithless’.

23If a scourge suddenly puts to death,

he ridicules the plight of people who are free of guilt.

24When the earth is given into the hand of the faithless,

he covers the face of the people who exercise authority in it –

if not he, then who is it?

25My days have been swifter than a runner;

as they’ve taken flight, they haven’t seen good things.

26They’ve swept by like boats of reed,

as an eagle that swoops on prey.

27If my saying is, ‘I’ll put my talk out of mind,

I’ll abandon my look and be cheerful’,

28I’m terrified of all my pains,

I know that you won’t hold me free of guilt.

29I am the one who’ll be declared in the wrong;

why then should I get weary in vain?

30If I wash with soap,

and cleanse the palms of my hands with caustic,

31You would then dip me in a pit,

so that my clothes would take offence at me.

32Because he isn’t a man like me so I could answer him,

should we come to make a ruling together.

33No, there’s no arbiter between us

who might lay his hand on the two of us.

34Were he to remove his club from upon me,

so that dread of him might not terrify me,

35I would speak and not be afraid of him,

because I am not like this in myself.

10 With my entire being I loathe my life;

I shall let loose my talk for myself,

I shall speak in the bitterness of my being.

2I will say to God, ‘Don’t declare me in the wrong;

let me know what it is you argue with me about.

3Does it seem good to you that you oppress,

that you reject the labour of your fists

and smile on the counsel of faithless people?

## 10:4 Job: Do You Have Eyes of Flesh?

4Do you have eyes of flesh,

do you see as a mere human being sees?

5Are your days like the days of a mere human being,

are your years like the years of a man,

6That you seek for my waywardness,

inquire after my wrongdoings?

7Although you know that I’m not in the wrong,

and there’s no one who rescues from your hand.

8Whereas your hands shaped me and made me,

altogether, all round, you’ve swallowed me up.

9Be mindful, please, that you made me like mud:

but you turn me back to dirt.

10Did you not pour me out like milk,

set me like cheese?

11You clothed me with skin and flesh,

wove me with bones and sinews.

12You showed me life and commitment,

your attention watched over my spirit.

13But these things you hid in your mind,

I know that that this was in your thinking:

14If I did wrong, you would watch me,

and not hold me free of the guilt of my waywardness.

15If I’m in the wrong, alas for me:

but if I am in the right, I can’t lift my head,

Full of being slighted,

drenched with my humbling.

16Should [my head] stand high, you’d hunt me like a cub,

and again show extraordinary power against me.

17You bring new witnesses in front of me,

increase your vexation toward me,

changes of hard service with me.

18So why did you get me out of the womb?

– I could have breathed my last, and eye not seen me.

19I could have been as if I never was,

I could have been carried from the womb to the grave.

20My days are few, aren’t they, so leave off,

get away from me so I may look cheerful for a moment,

21Before I go (and I will not come back)

to a country of darkness and deathly shadow,

22A land of gloom like darkness,

deathly shadow without order,

so that it shines like darkagainst

## 11:1 Tsophar: Can You Plumb God’s Depth?

11 Tsophar the Na’amatite answered:

2Should an abundance of words not be answered,

or should a man with lip be treated as in the right?

3Your prattle may silence human beings,

you may ridicule and there may be no one to rebuke,

4You may say ‘My grasp of things is clean,

and I have been pure in your eyes’,

5However, would that God might speak

and open his lips with you,

6And tell you the secrets of being smart,

because there are two sides to adeptness and you should acknowledge

that God lets some of your waywardness be forgotten for you.

7Could you find God’s reaches,

or find Shadday’s completeness?

8The loftiness of the heavens – what can you do,

deeper than She’ol – what can you know?

9Its measure is longer than the earth,

wider than the sea.

10If he sweeps by and takes captive and congregates,

who can turn him back?

11Because he knows empty men;

when he sees trouble, does he not discern?

12A hollow man will get a mind

when a wild donkey is born a human being.

13If you direct your mind

and spread your palms toward him,

14If there is trouble in your hand, put it far away,

and don’t let evil dwell in your tents,

15Because then you will lift your face, free of blemish,

and you will be constrained, but you won’t be afraid.

16Because you yourself will put trouble out of mind,

You’ll remember it as water that has passed by.

17Your life span will rise brighter than noonday;

though it be gloomy, it will become like morning.

18You’ll be confident, because there’ll be hope;

when you search, you’ll take your rest in confidence.

19You’ll lie down and there’ll be no one to disturb,

and many will seek your goodwill.

20But the eyes of the faithless will fail,

retreat vanishes from them,

their hope is a dying breath.

## 12:1 Job: You’re So Smart

12 Job answered:

2Truly you are the people

and smartness will die with you.

3I too have a mind like you, I don’t fall lower than you,

and in whose thinking are there not things like these?

4I shall become one who is a laughing stock to his friend,

who calls to God and he answers;

one in the right, a man of integrity, is a laughing stock.

5While there is contempt for calamity in the thought of the person who is secure,

it is prepared for people whose foot slips.

6Tents stay at ease for robbers

and people who provoke God have confidence,

as people whom God has brought into his hand.

7However, please ask the animals so that can instruct you,

and the birds of the heavens so they can tell you,

8Or talk to the earth so it may instruct you,

and so the fish of the sea can recount it you.

9Who does not acknowledge, among all these,

that Yahweh’s hand has done this,

10The one in whose hand is the life of every living thing,

and the spirit of all human flesh?

11The ear tests utterances, doesn’t it,

as the palate tastes food for itself.

12Among the aged lies smartness,

in length of days lies discernment.

13With him are smartness and strength,

to him belong counsel and discernment.

14On one hand, he tears down and it is not built up,

he locks up a man and he is not released.

15On the other, he holds back the water and it dries up,

he sends it off and it overwhelms the country.

16With him are vigour and adeptness,

to him belong the person who goes astray and the one who leads astray.

## 12:17 Job: Just Listen, will you?

17He makes counsellors go stripped,

makes people who exercise authority go crazy.

18He loosens the bond put on by kings,

ties a belt round their hips.

19He makes priests go stripped,

overthrows the enduring.

20He removes speech from trustworthy men,

takes the discretion of elders.

21He pours contempt on leaders,

slackens the belt of the strong.

22He reveals mysteries from the darkness,

gets deathly shadow out into the light.

23He lifts up nations and obliterates them,

expands nations and leads them.

24He removes the mind from the heads of a country’s people,

and makes them wander in a wasteland where there’s no way.

25They grope in the darkness where there is no light,

and he makes them wander like a drunk.

13 There, my eye has seen all this,

my ear has heard and understood it.

2Corresponding to your knowledge, I too know;

I don’t fall lower than you.

3However I myself will speak to Shadday,

I want to reprove God.

4 However, you are smearers of falsehood,

nonentity physicians, all of you.

5If only you would simply be quiet;

it would be smartness for you.

6Please listen to my reproof,

heed the arguments from my lips.

7Is it for God that you speak evil,

or for him that you speak deceitfully?

8Is it for him that you show regard,

or for God that you argue?

9Would it be good if he searched you out,

would you play about with him as one plays about with a mere human being?

10He would reprove you strongly,

even if you covertly show regard.

11His dignity would terrify you, wouldn’t it,

and dread of him would fall on you.

12Your reminders are aphorisms made of ash,

your responses are responses made of mud.

13Be quiet for me and I myself will speak;

there will befall me whatever may.

14Why do I lift my flesh between my teeth,

put my life into the palms of my hands?

15There, though he may slay me, I will not wait,

yet I will defend my ways to his face.

16That, too, will be deliverance for me,

that an impious person does not come before him.

17Listen attentively to my utterances,

to my declaration in your ears.

## 13:18 Job to God: Why Do You Conceal Your Face?

18Here, please, I have lined up a case;

I know that I am the one who will be prove to be in the right.

19Who is the one who will argue with me?

– because now I would be quiet and breathe my last.

20Yet don’t do two things with me,

then I need not conceal myself from your face:

21Take the palm of your hand far from me;

may dread of you not scare me.

22Call and I will be the one who answers,

or I will speak and you speak back to me.

23How many are my acts of waywardness and my wrongdoings?

– make known to me my rebellion and my wrongdoing.

24Why do you conceal your face,

and think of me as an enemy to you?

25Do you frighten a leaf that’s being blown away,

do you pursue dried-up chaff,

26That you should write down bitter things for me

and make me own the wayward acts of my youth,

27Put my feet in the stocks,

keep watch on all my paths,

put a mark on the roots of my feet?

28And that is one who wears out like something rotten,

like a garment moth has eaten.

14 A human being, born of a woman,

is short in days and full of turmoil.

2Like a flower, he comes up but withers,

takes flight like a shadow and does not stand.

3Yes, at this person you open your eye,

and bring me into making a ruling with you.

4Who can bring clean from defiled?

– not one person.

5If his days are determined, the number of his months is with you,

you have set his limits and he cannot pass them,

6Turn away from him so that he may leave off,

until he’s happy with his day, like an employee.

## 14:7 Job: If Only You Would Hide Me in She’ol

7Because there is hope for a tree;

if it is cut down, it can renew itself again,

and its sucker will not leave off.

8If its root grows old in the earth,

and its stump dies in the dirt,

9At the scent of water it will bud

and make a shoot like a plant.

10But a man – he dies and is prostrate;

a human being breathes his last, and where is he?

11The water goes from a sea,

a river becomes parched and dry,

12And a man lies down and does not get up,

until the heavens are no longer.

They don’t wake up,

they don’t rise from their sleep.

13If only you would hide me in She’ol,

conceal me until your anger turns back,

Set a limit for me and be mindful of me:

14if a man were to die, could he come to life?

All the days of my hard service

I would wait until my renewal came.

15You would call and I myself would answer you;

for the making of your hands you would long.

16Because now when you counted my steps,

you would not keep watch for my wrongdoings.

17My rebellion would be sealed up in a pouch;

you would coat over my waywardness.

18However, a falling mountain crumbles,

and a crag dislodges from its place,

19Water wears away stones,

its torrents wash away the dirt of the earth:

And you oblitedrate a mere human being’s hope;

20you overpower him permanently and he goes;

you alter his face and send him off.

21His sons find honour but he doesn’t know,

or they are insignificant and he doesn’t discern it.

22Only, his flesh hurts him

and his own self grieves for him.

## 15:1 Eliphaz: Are You Really So Smart?

15 Eliphaz the Temanite answered:

2Would a smart man answer with windy knowledge,

fill his belly with the east wind,

3Argue with talk that’s no use,

and utterances by which he cannot profit?

4Indeed you – you contravene awe,

you restrain talk before God.

5Because your waywardness teaches your mouth,

you choose the tongue of shrewd people.

6Your mouth declares you in the wrong, not I;

your lips testify against you.

7Are you the first human being who was born,

or were you birthed before the hills?

8Do you listen in God’s cabinet,

or do you restrain smartness to yourself?

9What do you know and we don’t know it,

or understand and it is not in our possession?

10Among us are a grey-haired man, an old man,

mightier in days than your father.

11Are God’s comforts too small for you,

a word in gentleness with you?

12Why does your mind capture you,

why do your eyes flash,

13That you turn back your spirit on God

and let out your utterances from your mouth?

14What is a human being that he should be clean,

one born of woman that he should be in the right?

15There, in his sacred ones he does not trust,

and the heavens are not clean in his eyes.

16How much less one offensive and foul,

a man drinking evil like water.

17I will explain, listen to me,

and what I have beheld I will recount,

18Things that smart people tell,

and have not concealed, from their ancestors.

19To them alone the land was given,

when no stranger passed among them.

## 15:20 Eliphaz: What (Allegedly) Happens to the Faithless

20All the days of the faithless man, he writhes,

the number of years that are hidden for the violent man.

21Dreadful sounds are in his ears;

when he is doing well, a robber comes upon him.

22He is not sure of coming back from darkness;

he is spied over for the sword.

23He wanders about for bread, where is it?

– he knows that the day of darkness is prepared, at his hand.

24Pressure terrifies him, anguish overwhelms him,

like a king ready to attack.

25Because he stretched out his hand against God,

acted the strong man against Shadday.

26He runs against him head down

with the thickness of his shields’ backs,

27Because he has covered his face with fat

and put brawn on his thighs.

28But he will dwell in ruined towns,

houses that people don’t live in,

that have prepared to be heaps.

29He will not be wealthy, his resources will not rise up;

their gains will not extend over the land.

30He will not depart from darkness,

flame will wither his shoot;

he will depart by the wind from his mouth.

31He should not trust in emptiness, leading himself astray,

because emptiness will be his recompense.

32Before his time he will wither;

his branches will not be verdant.

33He will do violence to his unripe grapes like a vine,

he will throw off his blossom like an olive tree.

34Because the impious man’s assembly is barren,

and fire consumes the tents of one who gives bribes.

35He conceives oppression and gives birth to trouble;

their womb prepares guile.

## 16:1 Job: Comforters? More Like Troublemakers

16 Job answered:

2I have heard many things like these;

all of you are oppressive comforters.

3Is there a limit to windy words –

what ails you that you answer?

4I too could speak like you

if you yourselves were in my own place.

I could sound out against you in utterances

and shake my head over you.

5I could firm you up with my speech;

the moving of my lips could hold things back.

6If I speak, my hurt does not hold back;

but if I leave off, what goes from me?

7Indeed he has now worn me out;

you have desolated my whole assembly.

8You have shriveled me, it’s become a witness;

my gauntness rises up against me, it testifies against me.

9His anger has torn and been hostile to me,

He’s gnashed his teeth at me.

My adversary sharpens his eyes toward me;

10people have gaped at me with their mouth.

With reviling they’ve struck me on the cheek,

they mass together against me.

11God has delivered me up to an evildoer,

thrown me into the hands of the faithless.

12I was at ease, but he’s shattered me,

He’s grasped me by the neck and smashed me,

He’s set me up for himself as a target,

13his archers surround me.

He pierces my kidneys and doesn’t spare;

he pours my bile on the earth.

14He assaults me, with assault on top of assault;

he runs at me like a strong man.

15I’ve sewed sack over my skin

and buried my horn in the dirt.

16My face is red from crying

and over my eyelids is deathly shadow,

17Although there was no violence in my fists

and my plea was clean.

## 16:18 Job: A Witness in the Heavens?

18Earth, don’t cover my blood;

there must not be a place for my cry.

19Even now, there – my witness is in the heavens,

my advocate is on high.

20Though my friends are people who scorn me,

my eye pours out to God.

21He will issue reproof for a man with God

[as] a human being does for his friend.

22Because numbered years will come

and I will go the path on which I shall not come back.

17 My spirit is broken, my days are extinguished,

the graves are for me.

2If it’s not the case that mockeries are with me,

and on their recalcitrance my eye lodges….

3Please put my pledge by you –

who is the one who will clap my hand?

4Because you’ve hidden their mind from insight;

therefore you will not be exalted.

5’For a meal he tells on friends,

and his children’s eyes fail’:

6He has made me a proverb for peoples,

I shall become something at which to spit in the face.

7My eye has grown dim from provocation,

my limbs are like a shadow, all of them.

8The upright are desolate at this,

the one who is free of guilt arises against the impious.

9The faithful person grasps his way;

the man who is pure of hands grows firmer.

10However, all of you, please come back again–

but I will not find a smart man among you.

11My days have passed, my strategies have snapped,

the desires of my heart.

12They make night into day;

light is nearer than darkness.

13If I hope for She’ol as my home,

lay out my bed in the darkness,

14I call out to the Pit, ‘You are my father’,

to the worm, ‘My mother’, ‘my sister’.

15Where then is my hope,

who can behold my hope?

16Will they go down to the poles of She’ol,

will we descend altogether to the dirt?

## 18:1 Bildad: Reaffirming the Moral Foundation of the World

18 Bildad the Shuhite answered:

2How long until you put an end to utterances?

– consider, and afterward we will speak.

3Why are we thought of as cattle,

stupid in your eyes?

4One who tears himself apart with his anger –

for your sake will the earth be abandoned,

will a crag dislodge from its place?

5Yes, the light of the faithless goes out,

the flame of his fire doesn’t shine.

6Light darkens in his tent,

his lamp above him goes out.

7His vigorous steps become short,

his own counsel throws him down,

8Because he’s thrust into a net by his own feet;

he walks about onto the mesh.

9A trap grasps him by the heel,

clamps get strong hold of him.

10A rope for him is hidden in the earth,

a trap for him on the trail.

11All around, terrors terrify him,

shatter him at his feet.

12Trouble is hungry for him,

disaster has prepared for his stumbling.

13It consumes his skin-covered limbs;

death’s firstborn consumes his limbs.

14His confidence tears away from his tent,

and it marches him to the king of terrors.

15Fire dwells in his tent,

sulphur scatters over his home.

16Below, his roots dry up;

above, his foliage withers.

17Commemoration of him perishes from the country,

and he has no name in the outside world.

18They thrust him out from light to darkness,

drive him out of the world.

19He has no posterity, no offspring, among his people,

and he has no survivor in his place where he resided.

20At his day people in the west are desolate,

people in the east grasp horror.

21Indeed, these are the dwellings of the evildoer,

this is the place of the one who did not acknowledge God.

## 19:1 Job: Ten Times You’ve Shamed Me

19 Job answered:

2How long will you torment my entire being,

crush me with utterances?

3These ten times you have shamed me;

you feel no disgrace when you abuse me.

4Yet truly, should I have erred,

my error lodges with me.

5If you truly magnify yourselves above me,

and argue with me on the basis of my reviling,

6Acknowledge here that God has put me in the wrong,

has put siege-works round me.

7If I cry out ‘Violence’, I don’t get an answer;

if I call for help, there’s no exercise of authority.

8He’s barred my path and I can’t pass,

and he sets darkness over my trails.

9He’s stripped my splendour from me,

removed the crown on my head.

10He tears me down all round, and I am gone;

he uproots my hope like a tree.

11He makes his anger rage against me;

he thinks of me as like his adversaries for him.

12His raiding gangs come on altogether,

They’ve built up their way against me,

They’ve camped at my tent all round.

## 19:13 Job: I Know That My Restorer Lives, But…

13He’s put my brothers far from me;

my acquaintances have indeed become strangers to me.

14The people near to me and the people I knew have left off,

the people residing in my house have put me out of mind.

15My servant girls think of me as a stranger;

I’ve become a foreigner in their eyes.

16I’ve called to my servant but he doesn’t answer,

when with my own mouth I ask him for grace.

17My breath is strange to my wife,

I’m loathsome to my siblings.

18Even little children have rejected me;

when I get up, they speak against me.

19All my confidential friends have taken offence at me,

and those I’ve been loyal to have turned against me.

20My bone sticks to my skin and my flesh,

and I’ve escaped by the skin of my teeth.

21Be gracious to me, be gracious to me, you’re my friends,

because God’s hand has touched me.

22Why do you pursue me like God,

and why aren’t you full of my flesh?

23If only here my utterances were written down,

if only they were inscribed in a document,

24With an iron pen and lead,

engraved on a crag permanently.

25But I myself know that my restorer is alive,

and as the last will get up on the dirt.

26After my skin has thus been stripped,

away from my flesh I will behold God,

27Whom I will behold for myself;

my eyes will have seen him, and not a stranger.

My inner being within my chest fails,

28when you say, ‘How have we pursued him?’

The root of the thing is found in me;

29be terrified of the sword for yourselves.

Because your wrath is wayward acts that deserve the sword,

in order that you may acknowledge that there is judgment.

## 20:1 Tsophar: My Uneases

20 Tsophar the Na’amatite answered:

2This is why my uneases make me speak back,

because of my feelings within me.

3When I hear correction that shames me,

a spirit from my understanding makes me answer.

4Do you acknowledge this: from of old,

from the placing of humanity on the earth,

5That the resounding of faithless people is of the briefest,

the rejoicing of the impious is for a moment.

6If his exaltation climbs to the heavens

and his head touches the clouds,

7Like his dung he perishes permanently;

people who saw him say, ‘Where is he?’

8Like a dream he flies away and people cannot find him;

he is driven away like a night vision.

9Though an eye looked on him, it does not do so again;

his place beholds him no more.

10His children seek the grace of poor people,

his hands give back his vigour.

11His bones were full of his youthfulness,

but with him it lies down in the dirt.

12If something bad is sweet in his mouth

as he hides it under his tongue,

13As he spares it and does not abandon it,

but holds it back inside his palate,

14His food in his stomach turns

into the venom of asps within him.

15The resources he has swallowed he vomits,

as God discharges it from his insides.

## 20:16 Tsophar: How Wickedness Gets Its Reward

16He sucks the poison of asps,

the viper’s tongue kills him.

17He is not to see the streams,

the rivers, the wadis of syrup and cream.

18He gives back the gains and doesn’t swallow,

he doesn’t exult in the very resources from his trading.

19Because he crushed, abandoned poor people,

seized a house when he was not building it,

20Because he doesn’t know ease inside him,

he doesn’t let any of what he desired escape.

21There’ll be no survivor to eat it;

therefore his good things will not endure.

22When his abundance is full, pressure will overtake him;

every hand of the oppressor will come upon him.

23May he be for the filling of his belly,

send off on him his angry rage,

and rain it upon him as his food.

24When he takes flight from an iron weapon,

a copper arrow will pass through him.

25When he pulls it out and it comes out of his body,

the shining thing out of his gall bladder,

Dreads come upon him,

26all darkness is hidden up for his treasures.

Fire will consume him, unfanned;

may it pasture on the survivor in his tent.

27The heavens will reveal his waywardness,

the earth is going to rise up for him.

28May a flood exile his household,

torrents on the day of his anger.

29This is the faithless person’s share from God,

the domain spoken of by God.

## 21:1 Job: If Only Wickedness Did Get Its Reward!

21 Job answered:

2Listen properly to my utterance;

may this be the comfort you offer.

3Bear with me while I myself speak,

and after I have spoken, you may ridicule.

4Am I: is my talk toward a human being,

so why should my spirit not be short?

5Turn your face to me and be desolated,

put your hand on your mouth.

6If I am mindful, I am terrified;

trembling grasps my flesh.

7Why do faithless people live on,

as they grow older, also get stronger in resources?

8Their offspring are established before them, with them,

their descendants are before their eyes.

9Their households are doing well, without fear;

with no club of God on them.

10His bull breeds and does not fail;

his cow delivers and does not miscarry.

11They send off their little ones like sheep,

their children skip about.

12They lift their voice to tambourine and guitar,

rejoice to the sound of the pipe.

13They finish their days with good things,

and in peace go down to She’ol.

14They say to God, ‘Depart from us,

we don’t want to acknowledge your ways.

15What is Shadday that we should serve him,

and how do we profit when we pray to him?’

16There, are their good things not in their own hand,

though the counsel of faithless people is far away from me.

## 21:17 Job: Your Words of Comfort Are Hollow

17How often does the lamp of faithless people go out,

and the disaster due to them come upon them,

the destiny he shares out in his anger.

18They should be like straw before wind,

like chaff that a tempest seizes.

19Whereas God may hide up his trouble for his children,

he should make it good to him, so that he acknowledges it.

20His eyes should see his destruction;

he should drink Shadday’s wrath.

21Because what will he want for his household after him,

when the number of his months has been curtailed?

22Can one teach God knowledge,

when he is the one who exercises authority over people on high?

23One person dies in his full strength,

all peaceable and at ease.

24His pails are full of milk

and the marrow in his bones is juicy.

25Another person dies bitter in himself;

he has not tasted good things.

26Altogether they lie down in the dirt

and worms cover over them.

27There, I know your intentions,

the strategies with which you will do violence against me,

28That you will say, ‘Where is the leader’s house,

where is the tent that was the dwelling of the faithless people?’

29Have you not asked people who pass by on the way,

not recognized their evidences,

30That on the day of disaster a bad person is held back,

on the day when outbursts are carried along.

31Who tells of his conduct to his face;

when he has acted, who makes good to him?

32When he is carried along to the graves,

and someone watches over his tomb,

33The clods in the wadi are sweet to him;

behind him everyone follows,

and there is no numbering those before him.

34So how can you comfort me with hollowness?

– the things that you say back: trespass remains.

## 22:1 Eliphaz Rewrites Job’s Life

22 Eliphaz answered:

2Is a man useful to God,

that a person of insight should be of benefit to him?

3Is it a delight to Shadday when you are in the right,

or is there profit when you show integrity in your ways?

4Is it because of your awe that he reproves you,

comes to make a ruling with you?

5Are your bad ways not great,

and is there no end to your acts of waywardness?

6Because you take pledges from your brothers for nothing,

you strip the clothes of the naked.

7You don’t give water to the weary person,

you hold back bread from the hungry,

8As a strong man to whom the land belongs,

a man held in high regard who lives on it.

9Widows you’ve sent off empty,

the strength of orphans is crushed.

10That’s why traps are all round you,

and sudden dread frightens you,

11Or darkness when you cannot see,

and a flood of water that covers you.

12God is lofty in the heavens, isn’t he;

see the peak of the stars, how high!

13You’ve said, ‘What does God know,

can he exercise authority through the thundercloud?

14The clouds are a screen for him and he doesn’t see,

as he goes about the circuit of the heavens’.

## 22:15 Eliphaz: Come Back!

15Do you keep watch on the age-old path

that men of trouble have trod,

16Who were shriveled up when it was not time,

whose foundation was washed away in a river,

17People who said to God, ‘Depart from us’,

and ‘What will Shadday do for them?’

18But he was the one who filled their houses with good things;

the counsel of faithless people is far away from me.

19Faithful people see and celebrate,

the one who is free of guilt ridicules them:

20’Is it not the case that those who rose against us have disappeared,

and what was left of them the fire has consumed?’

21Please be of benefit to him and be at peace;

by these things good will come to you.

22Please take instruction from his mouth

and lay up in your mind the things he said.

23If you come back to Shadday you’ll be built up,

when you move evil far from your tent.

24You’ll regard precious metal as dirt,

Ophir gold as a crag in the wadis.

25Shadday will be your precious metal,

choice silver for you,

26When you then revel in Shadday,

and lift your face to God.

27You’ll pray to him and he will listen to you,

and you’ll make good your pledges.

28You’ll determine something and it will arise for you,

and on your ways light will shine.

29When people make others fall, you’ll say ‘Lift them up’,

and he’ll deliver the downcast of eyes.

30He’ll rescue one who is not free of guilt –

He’ll find rescue through the cleanness of your palms.

## 23:1 Job: Who Moved?

23 Job answered:

2My talk is indeed rebellious today,

though my hand is heavy with my groaning.

3If only I knew how I could find him,

could come as far as his established place.

4I’d lay out my case before him,

fill my mouth with reproofs.

5I’d get to know the utterances he would answer me,

I’d understand what he’d say to me.

6Would he argue with me with abundance of energy?

– no, surely he’d set his mind on me.

7There it would be an upright man who would enter into reproof with him,

and I would survive permanently from the one who exercises authority over me.

8If I go east, he is not there,

and west, I don’t discern him,

9North where he acts, I don’t behold him;

he may turn south, but I don’t see him.

10But he knows the way that is mine;

if he tests me, I’ll come out as gold.

11My foot has grasped his track,

I’ve kept his way and not turned aside.

12From the order of his lips I haven’t moved away,

I’ve hidden up the sayings of his mouth more than my portion of food.

13He is one; who can turn him back?

– what he himself desires, he does,

14Because he’ll bring to completion what was decreed regarding me,

and there are many things like these in his mind.

15Therefore I’m fearful of his presence;

when I consider, I’m in dread of him.

16God has made my mind soft;

Shadday has made me fearful,

17But I haven’t expired before the darkness;

from before me he has covered the gloom.

## 24:1 Job: Why Are Times Not Kept by Shadday?

24 Why are times not hidden up by Shadday?

– those who acknowledge him do not behold his days.

2People remove boundary stones,

seize a flock and pasture it,

3Drive away the orphans’ donkey,

take the widow’s bull as a pledge,

4Turn aside the needy from the road:

the humble in the land have been made to hide together.

5There, they’re wild donkeys in the wilderness,

who go out in the course of their work.

Looking urgently for prey, the steppe belongs to it,

food for the boys.

6In the open country they harvest its fodder,

and glean the vineyard of the faithless.

7They stay the night naked, without clothing;

There’s no covering against the cold.

8They get wet from the mountain rain,

and without a shelter they embrace a crag.

9People seize the orphan from the breast,

take the baby of a humble person as a pledge.

10They go about naked, without clothing,

and hungry, though they carry sheaves.

11Between their terraces they press oil,

and they tread the winepresses, but they are thirsty.

12From the town men groan,

the entire being of people run through cries for help,

but God does not lay a charge of corruptness.

## 24:13 Job: Who Can Prove Me a Liar?

13Those people – they are among those who are rebels against the light,

they don’t recognize its ways,

they don’t live in its trails.

14At first light the murderer gets up

so he may slay the humble and needy,

And in the evening become like a thief,

15while the eye of the adulterer watches for dusk,

Saying ‘No eye will behold me’,

and he puts a cover on his face.

16He breaks into houses in the dark,

by day they shut themselves in; they don’t acknowledge light.

17Because for them, altogether, morning is deathly shadow,

because he recognizes deathly shadow’s terrors.

18He should be a slight thing on the face of the water,

their domain in the land should be slighted;

no one should turn his face by way of their vineyards.

19Both drought and heat seize snow water,

and She’ol, people who have done wrong.

20The womb should put him out of mind,

the worm should find him sweet.

No longer should he be kept in mind;

evil should break like a tree.

21He deals badly with the infertile woman, who does not give birth,

he does no good to the widow.

22He drags off the sturdy by means of his energy;

he rises up, and he should not trust in his life.

23He gives himself confidence and leans on it,

and his eyes are on their ways.

24They are on high for a while, then there is nothing of them;

they are brought low, like a mallow they shrivel,

like a head of grain they wither.

25If it is not so, who can prove me a liar,

make my utterance into nothing?

## 25:1 Bildad: Even the Stars Are Not Clean

25 Bildad the Shuhite answered:

2Rule and dread are with him;

he brings about well-being in his heights.

3Is there any numbering of his raiding gangs,

or on whom does his light not rise?

4And how can a mere human being be right with God,

how can someone born of a woman be clean?

5There, even the moon is not bright

and the stars are not clean in his eyes.

6How much less a mere human being, a worm,

or a man, a maggot.

## 26:1 Job: The Edges of His Ways

26 Job answered:

2How you have helped someone without energy,

delivered an arm without vigour!

3How you have counseled someone without smartness,

and made known adeptness in abundance!

4With whom have you told utterances,

and whose breath came out from you?

5The ghosts are made to writhe

beneath the water, with those who dwell in it.

6She’ol is naked in front of him,

there is no cover for Abaddon.

7The one who stretched out the north over the waste,

suspended earth over nothingness,

8Wrapped the water in his clouds

(and the thundercloud did not break beneath them),

9Enclosed the view of his throne,

spread his thundercloud over it.

10He drew a borderline on the face of the water

at light’s boundary with darkness.

11The heavens’ pillars quake,

they are aghast at his reprimand.

12By his energy he stirred up the sea,

by his understanding he hit Rahab.

13By his wind the heavens became clear;

his hand ran through the twisting snake.

14There, these are the edges of his ways,

and what a whisper is the word that we hear of him,

so who understands the thunder of his strength?

## 27:1 Job: I Do Identify wtth the People of Integity

27 Job again took up his poem:

2By the life of God who has dismissed the exercise of authority for me,

Shadday who has made my life bitter,

3All the while there is breath in me,

and God’s spirit is in my nostrils,

4If my lips speak evil,

or my tongue—if it murmers deceit….

5Far be it from me that I should say you are right;

until I breathe my last I will not dismiss my integrity from me.

6I hold strongly to my being in the right and I will not slacken hold of it;

my conscience does not revile me for any of my days.

7May my enemy be like the faithless,

may the one who rises against me be like the evildoer.

8Because what is the hope of the impious man when he is cut down,

when God requires his life?

9Will God listen to his cry,

when pressure comes upon him,

10Or will he revel in Shadday,

call God at any time?

11I will instruct you in God’s hand,

what is with Shadday I will not hide.

12There, you have beheld, all of you,

so why this total hollowness you manifest?

## 27:13 Job: And I Do Affirm That Wicked People Get Their Deserve

13This is the share of the person who is faithless with God,

the domain that violent people get from Shadday.

14If his children are many – it is for the sword,

and his descendants will not be full of bread.

15The people who survive him will be buried by death,

and their widows will not cry.

16If he heaps up silver like dirt,

and prepares clothing like mud,

17He may prepare, but a faithful person will wear,

and a person free of guilt will share out the silver.

18He has built a house like a nest,

like the bivouac a watchman makes,

19He may lie down a wealthy man but he will not do so again;

when he opens his eyes, there is none of it.

20Terrrors overtake him like water;

by night a tempest has seized him.

21The east wind lifts him and he has gone;

it sweeps him from his place.

22It throws itself at him and does not spare,

though he takes flight urgently from its hand.

23It claps the palms of its hands at him

and whistles at him from its place.

## 28:1 Interlude: There Is a Mine for Silver…

28 Indeed there is a source for silver,

a place for gold that people will refine.

2Iron is taken from the dirt,

stone that someone pours as copper.

3He has put an end to darkness,

and to every limit, he was searching out.

Stone in darkness and deathly shadow

4has been broken open by a wadi, away from any resident.

Forgotten people, away from anyone’s foot, have dangled,

away from a human being they’ve swayed.

5Earth from which food comes forth

has been changed like fire below it.

6Its stones were the place of sapphire,

and it had gold dust.

7The bird of prey did not know the trail,

the falcon’s eye has not gazed on it.

8Majestic beasts have not made a way to it,

the cub has not advanced on it.

9Someone has put out his hand against the flint,

overturned the mountains by the root,

10He has split channels through the crags

and his eye has seen every precious thing.

11He has dammed up the sources of the rivers

so that he might bring hidden things out into the light.

## 28:12 … But Where Can Wisdom Be Found?

12But smartness: from where can it be found,

where is understanding’s place?

13No human being can know its comparative value,

and it’s not found in the country of the living.

14The deep says, ‘It’s not in me’;

the sea says, ‘It’s not with me’.

15Fine gold can’t be given in its place;

silver can’t be weighed out as its price.

16It can’t be balanced against Ophir gold,

against precious onyx or sapphire.

17Gold or crystal can’t compare with it,

or containers of fine gold be its exchange.

18Coral and jasper can’t be brought to mind;

a pouch of smartness is more than rubies.

19Topaz from Sudan cannot compare with it;

it can’t be balanced against pure gold.

20So smartness: from where does it come,

where is understanding’s place?

21It hides from the eyes of every living thing;

from the birds in the heavens it conceals itself.

22Abaddon and death say,

‘With our ears we’ve heard report of it’.

23God understands the way to it;

He’s the one who knows its place.

24Because he’s the one who looks to the ends of the earth,

sees beneath all the heavens.

25In setting a weight for the wind,

and establishing the water by measure,

26When setting a decree for the rain

and a way for the bolt of thunder,

27Then he saw it and took account of it,

established it and also searched it out.

28And he said to humanity:

There, smartness is awe for the Lord,

understanding is departing from evil.

## 29:1 Job: The Way Things Were (1)

29 Job again took up his poem:

2If only it was like the months of the past,

like the days when God was keeping watch over me,

3When his lamp was shining over my head,

when I was walking through the darkness with his light,

4As I was in my days early in the year,

when God’s confidences were at my tent,

5When Shadday was still with me,

my boys were round me,

6When my steps bathed in cream,

and the crag poured streams of oil for me.

7When I went out of the township gateway,

set my seat in the square,

8Boys saw me and withdrew,

old men got up, stood.

9Officials held back utterances,

put the palm of their hand to their mouth.

10The voices of rulers were quiet,

their tongue stuck to their palate.

11When the ear heard, it wished me good fortune;

when the eye saw, it testified to me,

## 29:12 Job: The Way Things Were (2)

12Because I rescued the humble person crying for deliverance,

the orphan and the one who had no one to help.

13The blessing of the person who was perishing would come upon me;

I made the heart of the widow resound.

14I clothed myself in faithfulness so that it clothed itself in me;

the [proper] exercise of authority by me was coat and turban.

15I was eyes to the blind person,

I was feet to the lame.

16I was father to the needy;

I sought out the argument of the person I did not know.

17I broke the jaws of the evildoer

and threw the prey from his teeth.

18I said, ‘I shall breathe my last with my nest,

I shall make my days as many as the phoenix,

19My root opened to the water,

dew lodging in my branches,

20My splendour fresh with me,

my bow renewing itself in my hand’.

21People listened to me and waited,

they kept themselves quiet for my counsel.

22After my utterance they would not speak again;

upon them my word would drop,

23They would wait for me as for rain,

they would open their mouth as for the late rain.

24When I would make fun with them, they would not believe it;

the light of my face they would not discount.

25I would choose the way for them and sit as head,

I would dwell like a king among his troops,

like one who comforts mourners.

## 29:21 Job: The Way Things Are (1)

30 But now people make fun of me,

people younger than me in days,

People whose fathers I would have rejected

from putting with my sheep dogs.

2Indeed, what use would the energy of their hands be to me,

when their vigour has perished from them,

3People who in want and desolate hunger flee,

to the arid ground, the edge of devastating devastation,

4Who pick the saltwort on bushes;

the root of broom is their food.

5They are driven out from society,

people shout at them like a thief,

6So they dwell in the gully of wadis,

holes in the dirt and rocks.

7They bray among the bushes,

huddle under the thistles,

8Villains, yes, nameless people,

they are struck down from the country.

9And now I’ve become their song,

I’ve become something to talk about for them.

10People take offence at me, they stay far from me,

but they don’t hold back spit from my face.

11Because someone has loosened my bow and humbled me,

before me they’ve less loose restraint.

12When a brood arises at my right,

they let my feet loose,

and build up their paths to disaster against me.

13They break down my trail to express malice to me;

they profit though they have no helper.

14They come as through a wide breach,

beneath the devastation they roll in.

15Terrors are turned upon me;

like the wind it pursues my honour.

My deliverance passes on like a cloud,

16so now my life pours out for me.

Days of humbling grasp me,

17night pierces my bones for me,

and the things that gnaw at me don’t rest.

## 30:18 Job: The Way Things Are (2)

18With abundance of energy he grasps my clothing,

belts me like the neck of my garment.

19He has thrown me into the mud,

and I’ve come to resemble dirt and ashes.

20I cry for help to you but you don’t answer me,

though I stood, and you considered me.

21You turn into someone cruel to me;

with the might of your hand you’re hostile to me.

22You lift me to the wind, make me ride on it,

and dissolve me with a crash.

23Indeed I know you’ll take me back to death,

to the appointed home for every living person.

24Surely no one puts out his hand against a ruin,

if in his calamity there is a cry for help regarding these things.

25If I did not cry for one whose day was tough—

my entire being grieved for the needy.

26Indeed I hoped for good things, but bad things came;

I waited for light, but darkness came.

27My insides churn and don’t stop,

my days of humbling meet me.

28I walk about dark, without warmth;

when I get up in the congregation I cry for help.

29I’ve become a brother to jackals,

a friend to ostriches.

30My skin turns black on me,

my bones burn with heat.

31My guitar has become for mourning,

my pipe for the sound of people crying.

## 31:1 Job: The Way I Have Walked (I)

31 I sealed a pact for my eyes,

so how could I consider a girl?

2What is the share that God gives from above,

the domain that Shadday gives from the heights?

3It’s disaster for the evildoer, isn’t it,

ruin for the people who devise trouble.

4He himself sees my ways, doesn’t he,

takes account of all my steps?

5Have I walked with emptiness,

has my foot hastened after guile?

6He should weigh me on faithful scales,

so that God may acknowledge my integrity.

7If my step turns aside from the way,

or my mind has gone after my eyes,

or a blemish has stuck to my palms,

8May I sow but another eat,

may my descendants be uprooted.

9If my mind has been enticed by a woman

or I have laid in wait at my neighbour’s door,

10May my wife grind for another,

and over her may other men kneel,

11Because this would have been a deliberate wickedness;

it would be waywardness for the mediators to deal with,

12Because it is a fire that consumes to Abaddon,

and it would uproot my entire yield.

## 31:13 Job: The Way I Have Walked (II)

13If I’ve rejected the case of my servant or my maidservant

when they argued with me,

14What will I do when God arises;

when he pays attention, what will I say back?

15Didn’t my maker make him inside his mother,

Didn’t one person prepare us in the womb?

16If I hold back from the want of poor people,

or let a widow’s eyes fail,

17And eat my bit of food alone,

so that the orphan has not eaten of it,

18Because from my youth he has grown up with me like a father,

and I have guided her from my mother’s womb;

19If I see someone perishing for lack of clothing,

and a needy person has no covering,

20If his insides have not blessed me

when he would get warm from the shearing of my sheep;

21If I have shaken my hand against the orphan

because I could see that I had help at the gateway;

22My shoulder blade should fall from the shoulder,

my forearm break from the joint,

23Because disaster from God would be dread to me

and I could not endure his dignity.

## 31:24 Job: The Way I Have Walked (III)

24If I’ve made gold my assurance

or said to fine gold, ‘my confidence’,

25If I rejoice because my resources are great,

because my hand has found a massive amount,

26If I see light when it shines,

or the bright moon going,

27And my mind was enticed in secret

and my hand kissed my mouth,

28That, too, would be waywardness calling for mediation,

because I would have been deceiving God above.

29If I rejoice in the calamity of someone hostile to me

or thrill when bad fortune found him –

30But I haven’t given my mouth to wrongdoing,

to asking for his life by a curse.

31If the men in my tent have not said,

‘If only there was someone who had not been full of his meat!’

32No stranger lodges in the street;

I open my doors to the path.

33If I covered my rebellion like Adam,

hiding my waywardness in my heart,

34Because I fear the great horde,

and the contempt of kin-groups would terrify me,

so that I would keep quiet and not go out of my entrance….

35If only I had someone listening to me:

here is my mark – Shadday should answer me,

the one who argues with me should write a document.

36If I did not carry it on my shoulder,

bind it on me as my crown.

37I would tell him the number of my steps,

present it as to a ruler.

38If my land cries out against me

and its furrows weep together,

39If I have consumed its energy without silver

and made its owners sigh,

40In place of wheat may thistle come up,

in place of barley, stinkweed.

The words of Job have come to an end.

## 32:1 Elihu: The Angry Young Man

32 These three men stopped answering Job, because he was in the right in his eyes. 2But anger raged in Elihu ben Barak’el the Buzite, of the family of Ram. His anger raged at Job because he thought himself more in the right than God, 3and his anger raged at his three friends because they didn’t find an answer although they declared him in the wrong. 4While Elihu had waited for Job with his words because they were older than him in years, 5Elihu saw that there was no answer in the mouth of the three men, and his anger raged. 6So Elihu ben Barak’el the Buzite answered:

I am young in years

and you are old.

For this reason I hesitated and was afraid

of explaining what I know to you.

7I said, ‘Age should speak,

abundance of years should make smartness known’.

8Nevertheless it is the spirit in a human being,

the breath of Shadday, that gives understanding.

9It’s not the advanced people who are smart

or the elders who understand the exercise of authority.

10Therefore I say, ‘Listen to me,

I myself will explain what I know, I as well’.

11There, I’ve waited for your words,

I’ve given ear to your understanding.

While you searched out utterances,

12I was giving consideration to you.

But there, there is no one who has reproved Job,

none of you has answered the things he said.

13Beware that you say, ‘We’ve found smartness;

God must blow him away, not a human being’.

14He did not line up utterances for me,

and I shall not give back reply to him with the things you said.

15Because they are fearful, they haven’t answered anymore;

utterances have moved on from them.

16I waited when they didn’t speak,

when they halted, they didn’t answer anymore.

17I myself will answer, I too, with my share,

I will declare what I know, I too.

18Because I am full of utterances;

the spirit in my insides constrains me.

19There, my insides are like wine that isn’t open,

like skins of new wine that burst.

20I must speak so it will relieve me,

I shall open my lips and answer.

21Please, I will not show regard for anyone

or give titles to any person.

22Because I don’t know how to give titles;

my maker would soon carry me off.

## 33:1 Elihu: Don’t Argue With God

33 However, please listen to my utterances, Job,

give ear to all I have to say.

2Here, please, I’m opening my lips,

my tongue is speaking in my palate.

3The things I say are the uprightness of my mind;

my lips utter knowledge, purified.

4God’s spirit made me;

Shadday’s breath keeps me alive.

5If you can, speak back to me;

lay it out before me, take your stand.

6Here am I, the same as you to God;

I was nipped from clay, I too.

7There, dread of me should not terrify you;

pressure from me should not be heavy on you.

8You indeed have said in my ears,

I could heard the sound of the utterances:

9’I am clean, without rebellion;

I am pure and there’s no waywardness in me.

10There, he finds occasions for opposition to me,

he thinks of me as his enemy.

11He puts my feet in the stocks,

he watches all my paths’.

12There, in this you’re not in the right;

I shall answer to you, that God is greater than a mere human being.

13Why do you argue with him,

because he doesn’t answer any of someone’s words?

14Because God speaks once,

and twice, though he does not behold it.

## 33:15 Elihu: How God Tries to Win Us Back

15In a dream, a vision in the night,

when deep sleep falls on people,

during slumbers in bed,

16Then he opens the ear of people,

and in disciplining them perturbs them,

17To turn a person away from an action

and cover a man’s majesty from him.

18He holds his life back from the Pit,

his existence from crossing the River.

19He is reproved by pains on his bed,

constant argument in his bones.

20His existence makes him loathe bread,

his life desirable food.

21His flesh fails so that it cannot be seen,

his bones that could not be seen are laid bare.

22His life draws near to the Pit,

his existence to the bringers of death.

23If there is an envoy by him,

one spokesperson from the thousand,

To tell of the person’s uprightness,

24and be gracious to him and say,

‘Redeem him from going down to the Pit,

I have found a ransom’:

25His flesh healthier than his youth,

he will go back to his young days.

26He will pray to God and he will accept him;

he will see his face with a shout.

So he will give back his right standing to the person;

27he will sing to people and say,

‘I did wrong and twisted what was upright,

and it was not advantageous for me.

28He redeemed my life from passing into the Pit;

my existence will see light’.

29There, God does all these things,

twice, three times with a man,

30To bring him back from the Pit

so that he may be alight with the light of life.

31Heed, Job, listen to me;

be quiet, and I will speak.

32If there are things to say, speak back;

speak, because I want you to be in the right.

33If there are not, you listen to me;

be quiet, and I will teach you smartness.

## 34:1 Elihu: Drinking Ridicule Like Water

34 Elihu answered:

2Listen to my utterances, you smart people;

give ear to me, you who have knowledge.

3Because the ear tests utterances,

as the palate tastes something to eat.

4Let’s choose a ruling for ourselves,

let’s acknowledge between ourselves what is good.

5Because Job has said, ‘I’m in the right;

God has turned aside the case about me.

6Regarding the case about me, I declare it a lie,

my arrow-wound grave, without having rebelled’.

7What man is like Job,

who drinks ridicule like water?

8He travels in company with people who devise trouble,

and he walks with faithless people,

9Because he’s said, ‘There’s no benefit to a man,

in his being accepted with God’.

10Therefore, you sensible people,

listen to me.

Far be it for God to act in faithlessness,

for Shadday to do evil.

11Because he makes good for a person’s action to him,

and in accordance with an individual’s path he makes him meet with things.

12Indeed, in truth God does not act faithlessly;

Shadday does not twist the exercise of authority.

13Who appointed the earth to him,

who set the world [to him], all of it?

14If he sets his mind to it,

he can gather his spirit and his breath to him.

15All flesh would breathe their last together

and humanity go back to dirt.

16So if there is to be understanding, listen to this,

give ear to the sound of my utterances.

17Is someone indeed in control who is hostile to the [proper] exercise of authority

—do you declare the faithful, strong one to be in the wrong?

18He is the one who says to a king, ‘Scoundrel’,

to rulers, ‘Faithless’,

19Who does not show regard to officials

and does not recognize the important person before the poor.

## 34:19b Elihu: Tested to the Limit

19bBecause all of them are the making of his hands;

20suddenly they die, in the middle of the night.

A people is in turmoil and they pass away;

a sturdy person is removed, not by human hand.

21Because his eyes are on an individual’s ways;

he sees all his steps.

22There is no darkness, there is no deathly shadow,

for people who devise trouble to hide there.

23Because he doesn’t laid down a set time for an individual

to go to God for a ruling.

24He shatters strong people without searching out,

and puts others in place instead of them.

25Thus he recognizes their deeds;

he overturns them in the night and they collapse.

26He pummels them among the faithless

in a place where people see.

27Because of the fact that they have departed from following him;

they have not had insight into any of his ways,

28So as to cause the cry of the poor to come to him,

so that he listens to the cry of the humble.

29Should he be calm, who can call him faithless,

should he hide his face, who can behold him?

He is over nation and over individual together,

30to stop the impious person reigning,

to stop a people’s traps.

31Because has someone said to God,

‘I will carry it, I will not act ruinously.

32What I cannot behold, instruct me in yourself;

if I have done evil, I will not do so again’?

33Is he to make good in the way you think, when you’ve rejected him?

—because you should choose, not I;

speak what you know.

34People with sense say to me,

a smart man listening to me:

35’Job doesn’t speak with knowledge,

his words are not with insight.

36Would that Job were tested to the limit,

about replies befitting people who devise trouble.

37Because he adds to his wrongdoing:

he abounds in rebellion among us,

and multiplies the things he says to God’.

## 35:1 Elihu: What Difference Do You Make to God?

35 Elihu answered:

2Do you think this is a good ruling,

when you say, ‘I am more in the right than God’?

3When you say, how does it benefit you—

‘How do I profit more than from wrongdoing?’

4I myself will make utterances back to you,

and your friends with you.

5Look to the heavens and see,

behold the skies that are lofty above you.

6If you have done wrong, what do you do to him,

and if your rebellions have been many, what do you do to him?

7If you are in the right, what do you give him,

or what does he get from your hand?

8Your faithlessness affects a person like yourself,

your being in the right affects a human being.

9Because of the multitude of the oppressed, people cry out;

they cry for help because of the power exercised against so many,

10But no one says, ‘Where is God my maker,

who gives melodies in the night,

11Who teaches us more than the animals of the earth,

makes us smarter than the birds in the heavens?’

12They cry out there but he does not answer

before the majesty of bad people.

13Indeed God does not listen to emptiness,

Shadday does not behold it.

14How much less when you say you don’t behold him,

your case is before him, and you wait for him,

15And now that his anger has given no attention,

and he has not given much acknowledgment to rebellion.

16Job opens his mouth with hollowness,

makes utterances that are without knowledge proliferate.

## 36:1 Elihu: The God Who Opens Our Ear

36 Elihu again spoke:

2Wait for me a little and I will explain to you,

because there are yet utterances to be said for God.

3I will carry my knowledge from far away,

and I will ascribe faithfulness to my maker.

4Because truly my utterances are not false;

one with integrity in knowledge is with you.

5There, God is strong but he doesn’t reject—

strong in energy of mind.

6He doesn’t let the faithless person live,

and he gives a ruling for the humble people.

7He doesn’t hold back his eyes from faithful people,

but seats them with kings on a throne,

permanently, and they are lofty.

8If people are bound in chains,

caught in humbling bonds,

9He tells them what they’ve done,

and their acts of rebellion, that they acted big.

10He opens their ear to correction

and says how they should turn back from trouble.

11If they listen and serve,

They’ll finish their days with good things,

their years in happiness.

12But if they don’t listen, they’ll cross the River,

they’ll breathe their last without knowledge.

13But the impious of mind lay up anger,

they don’t cry for help when he binds them.

14They die in youth,

their existence among the hierodules.

15He pulls the humble person out through his humbling,

and opens their ear through affliction.

## 36:16 Elihu: God is Great, and We Cannot Know

16Indeed, he has drawn you away from the brink of pressure,

to a broad place where there is no constraint, instead of it,

and what is laid on your table is full of richness.

17But you’re full of the judgment due to the faithless person;

judgment and the exercise of authority take hold.

18Because wrath mustn’t draw you away through wealth;

a large amount of ransom money must not turn you aside.

19Would your wealth line up, without pressure,

and all your energetic efforts?

20Don’t long for the night,

to take up peoples where they are.

21Keep watch, don’t turn your face to trouble,

because you’ve chosen this rather than humbling.

22There, God towers in his energy;

who is an instructor like him?

23Who has appointed his way for him,

who has said, ‘You’ve done evil’?

24Be mindful that you should exalt what he does,

which people have sung about.

25All humanity has beheld it;

a human being looks at it from afar.

26There, God is great, and we cannot know –

of the number of his years there is no searching out.

27Because he draws up the drops of water

that distill as rain in his mist,

28Which the skies pour down,

dispense upon humanity as a shower.

29Indeed, can one understand the spreading of cloud,

the thunders from his bivouac?

30There, he spreads his lightning over it,

he uncovers the roots of the sea.

31Because by these things he governs peoples,

gives food in abundance.

32He covers over the palms of his hands with lightning,

and orders it against its mark.

33His thunder tells of him,

his angry passion against evil.

## 37:1 Elihu: The Awe-Inspiring Creator

37 Indeed at this my heart trembles

and leaps from its place.

2Listen, listen to the raging of his voice,

the murmur that comes out from his mouth.

3Beneath the entire heavens he lets it loose,

and his lightning over the corners of the earth.

4After it, a voice roars;

he thunders with his majestic voice.

He doesn’t hold them back

when his voice makes itself heard;

5God thunders with his voice in extraordinary ways.

does great things that we cannot know,

6When he says to the snow,

‘Fall on the earth’,

And the downpour of rain,

his vigorous downpour of the rains.

7On every human being’s hand he imposes a seal,

so that everyone may acknowledge what he does.

8Living things come into the lair,

lie down in their den.

9The tempest comes out of its room,

the cold from the driving winds.

10By God’s breath he makes ice,

and the expanse of water into something frozen.

11He also loads the cloud with moisture,

scatters his lightning thundercloud,

12And it turns round and round at his directions,

so that they do all that he commands them.

Over the face of the earthly world,

13either for the exercise of his club, or for the sake of his earth,

or for the sake of his commitment – he makes them happen.

14Give ear to this, Job;

stand and consider God’s extraordinary deeds.

15Do you know how God lays things upon them,

how the lightning from his thundercloud shines out?

16Do you know about the balancing of the clouds,

the extraordinary deeds of the one who is perfect in knowledge,

17You whose clothes become hot,

when the earth is calm because of the south wind?

18Could you spread the skies with him,

hard like a mirror of cast metal?

19Help us know what we’re to say to him;

we can’t lay it out, from before darkness.

20Will it be announced to him that I shall speak,

has someone said that he is confused?

21But now, people cannot look at the light,

when it is bright in the skies.

And the wind has passed and cleared them,

22when gold comes from the north.

God on High awe-inspiring in grandeur,

23Shadday: we couldn’t find him.

Great in energy and in the exercise of authority,

but with abundance of faithfulness, he doesn’t humble.

24Therefore people live in awe of him,

though he doesn’t look at any of the smart-minded.

## 38:1 Yahweh: You Need to Accept Your Limits

38 Yahweh answered Job from a hurricane:

2Who is this who darkens counsel

by utterances without knowledge?

3Belt up your thighs like a man, please,

so I can ask you and you can let me know.

4Where were you when I founded the earth?

– tell, if you know and understand.

5Who set its dimensions, since you will know,

or who stretched a line over it?

6On what were its bases sunk,

or who threw its corner stone,

7When the morning stars resounded together

and all the divine beings shouted?

8And who shut the sea in with doors,

when it gushed from the womb it came out of,

9When I made cloud its clothing,

thundercloud its blanket,

10Decreed my limit for it,

set a bar and doors,

11And said, ‘You may come as far as this,

but not go further;

here it’s set, at the majesty of your waves’?

12Since your days began, have you ordered morning,

let the dawn know its place,

13For it to grasp the earth by the corners,

so that faithless people shake out of it?

14It turns like clay under a seal,

so that they stand out like a garment.

15From faithless people their light holds back,

and their high arm breaks.

16Have you come to the springs of the sea,

or walked about through the reaches of the deep?

17Have the gateways of death opened to you,

or can you see the gateways of deathly shadow?

18Have you considered the expanses of the earth?

– tell, if you know it all.

## 38:19 Yahweh: What Do You Really Know?

19Where is the way to where light dwells,

and darkness – where is its place,

20That you may take it to its territory,

and understand the trails to its home?

21You know, because you were coming to birth then,

and the number of your years is many.

22Have you come to the storehouses of snow,

or can you see the storehouses of hail,

23Which I have held back for the time of pressure,

for the day of drawing near and of battle?

24Where then is the way to where lightning is shared out,

where the east wind is scattered over the earth?

25Who cut a channel for the torrent,

and a way for the bolt of thunder,

26To rain on land with no people,

wilderness with no one in it,

27To satisfy the devastated devastation,

and make a crop of grass flourish?

28Does the rain have a father,

or who fathered the the drops of dew?

29From whose womb did the ice come out,

the frost from the heavens, who fathered it,

30When water hardens like stone,

and the surface of the deep freezes?

31Can you tie Pleiades’ bonds,

or loose Orion’s belt?

32Can you lead out Mazzarot at its time,

or lead out the Bear with its children?

33Do you know the decrees of the heavens,

or can you implement its authority on earth?

34Can you lift up your voice to the cloud,

so that a flood of water may cover you?

35Can you send off shafts of lightning so that they go,

and say to you, ‘Here we are!’

36Who put smartness in the ibis,

or who gave understanding to the cockerel?

37Who can give an account of the skies with smartness,

and tilt the water skins in the heavens,

38When dirt pours into a mass,

and clods are made to stick together?

## 38:39 Yahweh: Could You Care for Nature?

39Can you hunt prey for a lion,

and fill the appetite of whelps,

40When they crouch in dens,

lie in wait in a bivouac?

41Who prepares its provision for the raven

when its young cry for help to God

and wander without food?

39 Do you know the time for the mountain goats to give birth,

keep watch as the deer goes into labour?

2Do you count the months they complete,

or know the time for their giving birth?

3They crouch so that they may deliver their young,

as they send off their pains.

4Their offspring become strong, they grow up in the open,

they go out and don’t come back to them.

5Who sends off the wild donkey, free,

and who looses the ropes of the wild mule,

6Whose home I made the steppe,

its dwellings the salty land?

7It makes fun of the uproar of the township;

it doesn’t listen to the shouts of a driver.

8It ranges mountains as its pasture,

and searches after any green thing.

9Is an oryx willing to serve you,

will it lodge by your feeding trough?

10Can you hold an oryx with a harness to the furrow,

will it till the vales behind you?

11Can you rely on it because its energy is great,

and abandon your toil to it?

12Can you trust it that it will bring back your seed,

and gather it to your threshing floor?

13The wing of the screechers exults:

is it a stork’s wing and plumage?

14Because she abandons her eggs on the earth,

lets them get warm on the dirt,

15And puts out of mind that a foot may crush it,

or a creature of the wild trample it.

16She’s tough with her offspring so that they are not hers,

her toil is in vain, without dread.

17Because God made her forget smartness,

didn’t give a share of understanding to her.

18At the time when she flaps on high,

she makes fun of the horse and its rider.

## 39:19 Yahweh: So Many Extraordinary Creatures!

19Do you give the horse its strength,

do you clothe its neck with a mane?

20Do you makeit quiver like a locust?

– the grandeur of its snort is a dread.

21They paw with force; it rejoices in its energy,

as it goes out to meet the weapons.

22It makes fun of dread, doesn’t frighten,

Doesn’t turn back from the face of the sword.

23By it a quiver resounds,

a flash of lance and javelin.

24With shaking and raging it swallows the earth,

and it can’t stand firm when there’s the sound of the horn.

25At the blast of the horn it says, ‘Ah’,

and from far away it smells battle,

the thunder of the officers, and the shout.

26Is it by your understanding that the hawk takes flight,

spreads its wings to the south?

27Is it at your bidding that the eagle is lofty,

and that it puts its nest high?

28It dwells on the cliff,

and lodges on an outcrop of the cliff, a stronghold.

29From there it searches for food,

from far away its eyes look out,

30So its young drink blood;

where there are people who have been run through, there it is.

40 Yahweh answered Job:

2Does the person who argues with Shadday correct him?

– the one who reproves God, must answer it.

3Job answered Yahweh:

4There, I am slight, what could I say back?

– I put my hand to my mouth.

5I have spoken once, and I will not answer –

twice, and I will not do so again.

## 40:6 Yahweh: Think About the Great Creature

6But Yahweh answered Job from a hurricane:

7Belt up your thighs like a man, please,

so I can ask you and you can let me know.

8Would you indeed contravene my exercise of authority,

declare me in the wrong in order that you may be in the right?

9Do you have an arm like God,

or can you thunder with a voice like his?

10Adorn yourself with majesty and loftiness, please,

cloth yourself in splendour and grandeur.

11Scatter your angry outbursts about,

see every majestic person and bring him low.

12See every majestic person and make him bow down,

throw down the faithless where they stand.

13Bury them in the dirt all together,

conceal their faces in the hidden place.

14And I too will confess you,

that your right hand can bring deliverance to you.

15There, please, is the Great Creature, which I made along with you,

which eats grass like cattle.

16There, please, its energy is in its insides,

its vigour in the muscles of its stomach.

17It hangs its tail like a cedar,

the sinews of its thighs are intertwined.

18Its bones are tubes of copper,

its limbs like a bar of iron.

19It is the first of God’s ways;

its maker can draw near with his sword.

20Because the mountains carry produce for it,

and all the animals of the wild have fun there,

21It lies down underneath the lotuses,

in the cover of the reeds and in the marsh.

22The lotuses screen it as its shade,

the willows of the wadi surround it.

23There – when the river gushes, it doesn’t make haste;

it’s confident that Jordan bursts forth at its bidding.

24Can someone take it by its eyes

or pierce its nose, in traps?

## 41:1 Yahweh: Think About Livyatan [Leviathan]

41 Can you pull in Livyatan with a fishhook

or tie down its tongue with a rope?

2Can you put a reed in its nose

or pierce its jaw with a hook?

3Will it make many prayers for grace to you,

will it speak smooth words to you?

4Will it seal a pact with you

that it will be taken as a lifelong servant?

5Will you have fun with it like a bird

or put it on a leash for your girls?

6Will partners barter over it,

will they divide it up among the dealers?

7Can you fill its skin with harpoons

or its head with fish spears?

8Lay your fist on it,

be mindful of the battle, don’t do it again.

9There, hope for [capturing] it tells a lie

– isn’t one even overwhelmed at the sight of it?

10No one is so cruel that he gets it to rise;

so who is the one who take a stand before me?

11Who confronts me so that I make good?

– under the entire heavens, things are mine.

12I will not be silent about its limbs or its strong word,

or the grace of its frame.

13Who has stripped off the surface of its garment,

who can come with a double bridle for it?

14Who has opened the doors of its face?

– its teeth all round are a dread.

15Its back is rows of shields,

shut up with a tight seal.

16One comes up to the other;

a breath could not come between them.

17They stick each one to its brother;

they clasp each other and cannot separate.

18Its sneezes flash lightning,

its eyes are like the eyelids of dawn.

19From its mouth go torches,

sparks of fire escape.

20From its nostrils smoke goes out,

like a pot heated, with rushes.

21Its breath sets coals on fire;

flame goes out from its mouth.

## 41:22 Job Relents

22In its neck vigour lodges;

dismay leaps before it.

23The folds of its flesh stick;

it is cast on it, it doesn’t slip.

24Its heart is cast like stone,

cast like a bottom millstone.

25At its rising up, divine beings are in dread;

at its crashes, they fail.

26The sword that reaches it does not prevail –

spear, dart, or lance.

27It thinks of iron as straw,

of copper as rotten wood.

28Arrow doesn’t make it take flight;

sling stones turn into chaff for it.

29A club is thought of as chaff;

it makes fun of the shaking of a javelin.

30Its underparts are sharp bits of pot;

it spreads a threshing sledge on mud.

31It makes the deep boil like a pot,

it makes the sea like a pot of ointment.

32Behind it, it lightens a trail;

one would think the deep to be white hair.

33There is no one on the dirt to rule it,

made without fright.

34It sees everything lofty;

it is king over all noble creatures.

42 Job answered Yahweh:

2I acknowledge that you can do anything;

no strategy is impracticable for you.

3’Who is this who darkens counsel without knowledge?’

– thus I told of things that I did not understand,

things too extraordinary for me, that I did not know.

4’Listen, please, and I myself will speak;

I will ask and you can let me know’.

5I have listened to you with the listening of an ear,

and now my eye has seen you.

6Therefore I reject and find consolation

about dirt and ashes.

## 42:7 So They All Lived Happily Ever After

7After Yahweh had spoken these words to Job, Yahweh said to Eliphaz the Temanite, ‘My anger rages against you and against your two friends, because you haven’t spoken to me what is established truth, like my servant Job. 8So now get yourselves seven bulls and seven rams, go to my servant Job, and offer up a burnt offering on your behalf. Job my servant can plead for you, because I will show regard to him so as not to act with you in light of your villainy, because you haven’t spoken to me what is established truth, like my servant Job’. 9Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Tsophar the Na’amatite went and did as Yahweh spoke to them.

Yahweh showed regard to Job. 10When Yahweh restored Job’s fortunes after he pleaded on behalf of his friends, Yahweh increased all that Job had to double. 11All his brothers and all his sisters and all his former acquaintances came and ate a meal with him at his house. They consoled and comforted him for all the bad things that Yahweh had brought on him, and they gave him a piece of silver each and a gold ring each.

12When Yahweh blessed the latter part of Job’s life more than the former, he had 14,000 sheep, 6000 camels, 1000 yoke of cattle, and 1000 donkeys. 13He had seven sons and three daughters. 14He named the first Yemimah, the second Ketsiyah, and the third Qeren Happuk. 15There could not be found women as beautiful as Job’s daughters in the entire country. And their father gave them a domain among their brothers.

16Afterward, Job lived 140 years, and saw his sons and his grandsons, four generations. 17Job died old and full of years.

**The Song of Songs**

The expression ‘song of songs’ means it’s ‘the best song’. It’s a series of poems about the relationship between two people who are in love. They are poems that describe in an imaginative way moments in a relationship. They may all refer to the same relationship or they may be separate imaginative compositions; there are no indications that they are poems that tell one couple’s story. The relationship between the two people is evidently exclusive and it implies a commitment that will surely be lifelong, but the two are not living together, so they are apparently not married. Further, they speak of tensions and conflicts in the community over their relationship, so their relationship is apparently not yet ‘official’ in the community. They are not betrothed, though in their own minds and hearts they are evidently committed.

The opening description of the songs as Solomonic marks them as expressions of wisdom or smartness in the same way as Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. They are the kind of smart teaching of which Solomon was the patron. The description need not imply that he composed the poems, and what we know of him from his story in Kings and Chronicles doesn’t suggest he would have had the kind of experience or would think the kind of way that the poems do. Indeed, he would have a lot to learn from them. (In the imaginative picture in chapter 3, the emphasis lies on his opulence and might rather than on his love.)

There are expressions in the poems that can also describe something about relationships between God and his people: ‘I belong to my love and he belongs to me’. But there are no indications that the poems were written to illustrate that relationship or that they were included in the Scriptures on that basis. Indeed, while the Scriptures do use marriage as an image for the relationship between God and his people, the kind of marriage they have in mind in that connection is one where the husband is master and the wife is submissive. The relationship portrayed in the Song of Songs is egalitarian rather than hierarchical, so that most of it does not correspond to the way relationships between God and his people work.

Like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, the poems issue from reflection on how life actually works out, and what they do is invite people to live in light of the reality that they describe. They would thus have things to say to young couples and also to the wider community. They have things to say about the wonder of the relationship between two people, and also about its frustrations, fears, and pressures.

The way Hebrew works often indicates whether a male or a female is the speaker, and in these poems it is therefore generally possible to know when the man is speaking and when the woman is speaking.

**1:1 Alone Together**

1The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s [Shelomoh’s].

Woman 2May he kss me with some of the kisses of his mouth! –

because your love is better than wine.

3The fragrance – your oils are good,

your name is oil poured out.

Therefore girls love you;

4pull me after you, let’s run.

The king has brought me into his rooms;

let’s celebrate and rejoice in you.

Let’s make mention of your love more than wine;

rightly they love you.

5I am dark but lovely,

Jerusalem daughters,

Like the tents of Qedar,

like Solomon’s curtains.

6Don’t look at me because I’m dark-skinned,

because the sun has stared at me.

My mother’s sons were enraged with me,

they made me someone who guards the vineyards.

My vineyard, the one I had,

I didn’t guard.

7Tell me, you whom my entire being loves,

where do you pasture,

where do you rest them at midday?

Why should I be like someone covering herself

by the flocks of your companions?

Man  8If you don’t know for yourself,

loveliest of women,

Get yourself out in the tracks of the flock,

pasture your goats

by the shepherds’ dwellings.

9To a mare among Pharaoh’s chariots

I have compared you, my dear.

10Lovely are your cheeks with earrings,

your neck with necklaces;

11we will make gold earrings for you,

with studs of silver.

Woman 12While the king was on his couch,

my nard gave its fragrance.

13My love to me is a bag of myrrh

that lodges between my breasts.

14My love to me is a cluster of henna

in the vineyards of Gedi Spring.

Man  15There you are, so lovely, my dear;

there you are, so lovely, your eyes doves.

**1:16 The Crocus and the Apricot**

Woman 16There you are so lovely, my love,

yes beautiful, yes our couch is verdant.

17Cedars are the beams of our house,

junipers our rafters.

2 I am a crocus of Sharon,

a lotus of the vales.

Man  2Like a lotus among thorns,

so is my dear among the daughters.

Woman 3Like an apricot among the trees of the forest,

so is my love among the sons.

In its shade I desired to sit,

and its fruit was sweet to my palate.

4He brought me into the house of wine,

and love was his standard over me.

5Refresh me with raisins, revive me with apricots,

because I’m ill with love.

6His left arm under my head,

his right arm would embrace me.

7I want you to swear, Jerusalem daughters,

by the gazelles or by the deer in the fields:

If you awaken, if you arouse love,

before it wishes….

8The sound of my love! – there, he’s coming,

leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills.

9My love is like a gazelle,

or a young stag.

There, he’s standing, behind our wall,

gazing from the window, peering from the lattice.

10My love affirmed and said to me:

‘Get yourself up, my dear,

my lovely one, and get yourself going!

11Because there – the winter has passed,

the rain has stopped and taken itself off.

12The blossoms have appeared in the country,

the time of music has arrived,

The voice of the dove

has made itself heard in our country.

13The fig tree has ripened its green fruit,

the blossoming vines have given their fragrance.

Get yourself up, my dear,

my lovely one, and get yourself going!

14My dove, in the clefts of the crag,

in the hiddenness of the cliff,

Let me see your appearance,

let me hear your voice.

Because your voice is pleasing,

your appearance is alluring’.

15Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes,

ruining the vineyards, when our vineyards are in blossom.

**2:16 My Love Is Mine and I Am His**

Woman 16My love belongs to me and I belong to him,

the one who pastures among the lotuses.

17While the day breathes and the shadows flee,

turn round, be like a gazelle, my love,

or a young stag on the Beter Mountains.

3 On my bed by night, I searched for the one my entire being loves;

I searched for him but didn’t find him.

2’I’ll get up, please, and go round the town,

through the streets and through the squares.

I’ll search for the one my entire being loves;

I’ve searched for him but not found him’.

3The watchmen found me as they went round the town:

‘Have you seen the one my entire being loves?’

4Scarcely had I passed them,

when I found the one my entire being loves.

I took hold of him and wouldn’t slacken hold of him,

until I’d brought him to my mother’s house,

to the room of the one who conceived me.

5I want you to swear, Jerusalem daughters,

by the gazelles or by the deer in the fields:

If you awaken, if you arouse love,

before it wishes….

Man  6Who is this coming up from the wilderness,

like columns of smoke,

Perfumed with myrrh and incense,

from every powder of a merchant?

7There, Solomon’s bed,

sixty strong men round it,

of the strong men of Israel.

8All of them are girded with a sword,

trained in battle,

Each with his sword on his side,

because of the terror of the night.

9King Solomon had made himself a sedan,

of wood from the Lebanon.

10He had made its posts of silver,

its base of gold, its seat of purple.

Its inside was inlaid with love

by the Jerusalem daughters.

11Go out and look, Zion daughters,

at King Solomon in the crown

With which his mother has crowned him on his wedding day,

on the day of his heartfelt rejoicing.

**4:1 Crazy for Love**

Man 4 There you are, so lovely, my dear,

there you are, so lovely.

Your eyes are doves

behind your veil.

Your hair is like a flock of goats

that stream from Mount Gil’ad.

2Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes

that climb up from the washing,

Which are all of them twinning,

and there’s none bereaved among them.

3Like a crimson ribbon are your lips;

your mouth is lovely.

Like the splitting of a pomegranate

is your brow behind your veil.

4Like David’s Tower is your neck,

built in courses,

Hung with a thousand shields on it,

all the bows of strong men.

5Your two breasts are like two fawns,

the twins of a gazelle pasturing among the lotuses.

6While the day breathes,

and the shadows flee,

I’ll get myself to the mountain of myrrh,

to the hill of incense.

7Every part of you is lovely, my dear;

there’s no flaw in you.

8With me from Lebanon, my bride,

with me from Lebanon, you should come!

You should gaze from the top of Amana,

from the top of Senir and Hermon,

From the abodes of lions,

from the mountains of leopards.

9You’ve captured my heart, my sister, my bride, you’ve captured my heart,

with one of your eyes,

with one strand of your necklace.

10How beautiful is your love,

my sister, my bride!

How much better is your love than wine,

the fragrance of your oils than all perfumes!

11Your lips drop honey, my bride;

syrup and milk are under your tongue.

The fragrance of your robes

is like the fragrance of Lebanon.

12A locked garden, my sister, my bride,

a locked fountain, a sealed fountain:

13Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates,

with choice fruit,

Henna with much spikenard,

14spikenard and saffron,

Cane and cinnamon,

with all the incense woods,

Myrrh and aloes,

with all the top perfumes:

15A garden spring,

a well of living water,

flowing from Lebanon.

**4:16 Nightmares and Dreams**

Woman 16Awake, north wind, and come, south wind,

breathe on my garden so its perfumes may spread.

May my love come to his garden,

and eat its choice fruit!

Man 5 I’ve come to my garden, my sister, my bride.

I’ve plucked my myrrh with its perfume.

Girls Eat, friends, drink,

get drunk on love.

Woman 2I was sleeping, but my mind was awake;

the sound of my love, knocking!

‘Open for me, my sister, my dear,

my dove, my perfect one.

My head is full of dew,

my hair with the moisture of night’.

3’I’ve taken off my robe; how can I get dressed?

I’ve washed my feet, how can I get them dirty?’

4My love put out his hand through the hole;

my heart was in turmoil for him.

5I myself got up to open to my love;

my hands dripped with myrrh.

So my fingers were flowing myrrh

on the hollows of the bolt.

6I myself opened the door for my love,

but my love had turned, passed on.

My entire being had gone out at his speaking;

I looked for him but I didn’t find him,

I called him, but he didn’t answer me.

7The watchmen found me as they went round the town;

they struck me down, injured me.

They took my shawl from upon me,

the watchmen on the walls.

8I want you to swear, Jerusalem daughters,

if you find my love:

What are you to tell him?

– that I am ill with love.

**5:9 How is Your Love More Than Another Love?**

Girls  9’How is your love more than another love,

most beautiful among women?

How is your love more than another love,

that you want us to swear in that way?

Woman 10’My love is radiant and ruddy,

outstanding among ten thousand.

11His head is gold, fine gold;

his hair curly, black as a raven.

12His eyes are like doves by water canyons,

bathing in milk, sitting by a full pool.

13His cheeks like a bed of spice,

towers of perfumes.

His lips are lotuses,

dripping flowing myrrh.

14His hands are gold rods,

covered in Tarshish-stone.

His stomach is an ivory plate,

overlaid with sapphires.

15His legs are alabaster pillars,

founded on sockets of fine gold.

His appearance is like the Lebanon,

choice as the cedars.

16His palate is total sweetness;

all of him is desirable.

This is my love, this is my dear,

Jerusalem daughters!

Girls 6 Where has your love gone,

loveliest among women?

Where has your love turned his face,

so we may search for him with you?

Woman 2My love has gone down to his garden,

to the beds of spice,

To pasture in the gardens,

and to pick lotuses.

3I belong to my love and my love belongs to me,

the one who pastures among the lotuses.

Man  4You’re beautiful, my dear, as Tirtsah,

lovely as Jerusalem, awe-inspiring as bannered armies.

5Turn your eyes round from in front of me;

they – they overwhelm me.

Your hair is like a flock of goats

that stream from Mount Gil’ad.

6Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes

that climb up from the washing,

Which are all of them twinning,

and there’s none bereaved among them.

7Like the splitting of a pomegranate

is your brow behind your veil.

8There are sixty queens,

eighty secondary wives,

Girls without number;

9my dove, my perfect one, is unique.

She’s unique to her mother,

She’s special to the one who gave birth to her.

Daughters have seen her and called her blessed;

queens and secondary wives have praised her.

**6:10 His Desire Is Toward Me**

Girls 10Who is this who looks out like the dawn,

beautiful as the moon,

Special like the sun,

awe-inspiring as bannered armies?

Woman 11I went down to the garden of nut-trees

to see the blossoms in the wadi,

To see the budding of the vine,

whether the pomegranates had bloomed.

12Though I didn’t know,

my entire being set me with the chariots of my generous people.

Girls 13Turn back, turn back, Shulammite;

Turn back, turn back, so we may behold you!

Man Why will you behold the Shulammite,

like the Mahanayim dance?

7 How beautiful are your feet

in sandals, noble daughter!

The curves of your hips are like rings,

the work of a craftsman’s hands.

2Your navel is a round bowl;

mixed wine will not be lacking.

Your waist is a heap of wheat,

encircled by lotuses.

3Your two breasts are like two fawns,

the twins of a gazelle.

4Your neck is like an ivory tower,

your eyes are pools at Heshbon,

By the gate of Bat-rabbim,

your nose like the Lebanon tower,

Watching toward Damascus,

5your head upon you like Carmel,

The locks on your head like purple;

a king is captivated by your tresses.

6How beautiful you are, how lovely you are,

love with delights;

7This, your stature, is like a palm,

your breasts are clusters.

8I’ve said, I shall climb the palm,

I’ll take hold of its stems.

May your breasts please be like the clusters of the vine,

the fragrance of your breath like apricots,

9your palate like good wine.

Woman It goes straight to my love,

gliding over the lips of sleepers.

10I belong to my love

and his desire is toward me.

11Come, my love, let’s go out to the fields,

let’s lodge in the hamlets.

12Let’s start early for the vineyards,

let’s see if the vine has budded,

The blossom has opened, the pomegranates have bloomed;

there I’ll give my love to you.

13The mandrakes have given fragrance,

and at our doors are all choice things.

Fresh and also old things, my love,

I’ve stored for you.

**8:1 Love Is as Fierce as Death**

Woman 8 If only you could be made like a brother to me,

one who was nursing at my mother’s breasts.

When I found you in the street I could kiss you;

people would not despise me, either.

2I would lead you, I would bring you,

to the house of my mother, the one who taught me.

I would get you to drink some spiced wine,

some of my pomegranate juice.

3His left hand would be under my head,

his right hand would hold me.

4I want you to swear, Jerusalem daughters, don’t awaken,

don’t arouse love, before it wishes.

Girls 5’Who is this coming up from the wilderness,

leaning on her love?’

WomanUnder the apricot tree I aroused you;

there your mother conceived you,

there the one who gave birth to you conceived you.

6Make me like a seal on your heart,

like a seal on your arm.

Because love is as fierce as death,

passion as tough as She’ol.

Its darts are darts of fire,

a supernatural flame.

7Much water could not quench love,

nor rivers overflow it.

If someone gave all his household’s resources for love,

people would totally despise him.

Boys 8’We have a little sister;

she doesn’t have breasts.

What shall we do for our sister

on the day when she’s spoken for?

9If she’s a wall,

we’ll build on it a silver battlement.

If she’s a door,

we’ll enclose it with cedar paneling.

Woman 10I am a wall

and my breasts are like towers;

Then I’ve become in his eyes

like one who finds well-being.

11Solomon had a vineyard

in Ba’al Hamon;

He gave the vineyard to guards;

someone would give for its fruit

a thousand silver pieces.

12My vineyard is before me;

the thousand are yours, Solomon,

and two hundred for the people who guard the fruit.

Man 13You who live in the gardens, with friends listening:

let me hear your voice.

Woman 14Take flight, my love,

be like a gazelle,

Or like a young stag,

on the mountains of spices.

**Ruth**

Ruth is a short story about the aftermath of a series of calamities that come to an Israelite family. Although Ruth herself may be the book’s most prominent character, Na’omi is almost as important, and it is worth also reading the story from the angles of Elimelek, Mahlon, Kilyon, Orpah, Boaz, Obed, and other characters who are even more minor.

In the Hebrew Bible Ruth appears in the company of the Song of Songs, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther. The Jewish community reads each of these ‘Five Scrolls’ on one main occasion each year. Ruth is used at the Shabu’ot Festival (Pentecost), in light of its focus on harvest. The story also provides fine examples of commitment to the Torah, and the giving of the Torah became a theme of the Shabu’ot Festival.

In the order of books in the English Bible, Ruth offers a breath of fresh air after the unpleasantness of the later stories in Judges. It contributes to the the transition from Judges to 1 and 2 Samuel in another way, in that we discover at the very end of Ruth that we are reading the story of how David acquired his great grandmother. That note adds extra significance to the fact that the book’s heroine is a Mo’abite. Elsewhere, the Scriptures emphasize the importance of not intermarrying with people such as Mo’abites who could lead Israelites to serve other gods. Ruth makes explicit that foreigners who come to serve Yahweh are a different matter. Israel is always open to such foreigners. Its faith is not ethnically based.

The book presupposes a cultural context in which the men have the formal authority in society, and it tells a story about how women may nevertheless be able to take responsibility for their destiny. It makes little reference to God directly acting, and it thus reminds readers how God often works via human planning and initiative and through coincidences. And it shows how a traditional culture can provide safety nets for vulnerable people through the expectations laid on the ‘restorer’ (English translations often use the word *redeemer*). The restorer is asenior member of the extended family who is expected to be willing to use his resources to help members of the family get back on their feet and to restore equilibrium when things get out of order.

**1.1 How Na’omi’s Life Falls Apart**

1 During the time when the people who exercised authority were doing so, there was a famine in the country and a man went from Bet Lehem in Judah to reside in Mo’abite country, he, his wife, and his two sons. 2 The man’s name was Elimelek, his wife’s name was Na’omi, and his two sons’ names were Mahlon and Kilyon—Ephratites from Bet Lehem in Judah.

So they came to Mo’abite country and they were there, 3 but Elimelek, Na’omi’s husband, died. She remained, she and her two sons. 4 They took up for themselves Mo’abite wives; the name of the first was Orpah and the name of the second, Ruth. They lived there some ten years, 5 but the two of them, Mahlon and Kilion, also died, and the woman was left without her two sons and without her husband.

6 She set off, she and her daughters-in-law, and went back from Mo’abite country, because she had heard in Mo’abite country that Yahweh had attended to his people by giving them bread. 7 So she left the place where she was, her two daughters-in-law with her, and they went on the road to go back to the region of Judah.

8 But Na’omi said to her two daughters-in-law, ‘Go, get back, each one to her mother’s household. May Yahweh act in commitment with you as you’ve acted with the dead men and with me. 9 May Yahweh grant to you that you find a place to settle down, each one in the household of her husband’. She kissed them and they lifted up their voice and cried. 10 They said to her, ‘But we should go back with you to your people’.

**1.11 The Choice**

11 Na’omi said, ‘Go back, my daughters, why should you go with me? Do I still have sons inside me so they can become husbands for you? 12 Go back, my daughters, go, because I’m too old to belong to a man. If I said there’s hope for me, even if I both belonged to a man tonight and also gave birth to sons, 13 would you therefore wait until they grew up, would you therefore hold yourself back from belonging to a man? No, my daughters, because things are much more bitter for me than for you, because Yahweh’s hand has gone out against me’.

14 They lifted up their voice and cried again and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth attached herself to her. 15 So she said, ‘There, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Go back after your sister-in-law’. 16 Ruth said, ‘Don’t press me to abandon you by turning back from following you, because where you go I shall go and where you stay the night I shall stay the night. Your people will be my people and your God will be my God. 17 Where you die I’ll die, and there I’ll be buried. So may Yahweh do to me, and so may he do more, if death divides between me and you….’

18 She saw that she was showing herself firm about going with her, and she left off from speaking to her. 19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bet Lehem. When they came to Bet Lehem, the entire town was astir over them. They said, ‘Is this Na’omi?’ 20 She said to them, ‘Don’t call me Na’omi [Lovely], call me Mara [Bitter], because Shadday has made things very bitter for me. 21 I went full. Yahweh has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Na’omi when Yahweh has humbled me, when Shadday has dealt badly with me?’

**1.22 She’s a Mo’abite, for Goodness’ Sake!**

22 So Na’omi went back, she and Ruth the Mo’abite her daughter-in-law with her, coming back from Mo’abite country. They came to Bet Lehem at the beginning of the barley harvest. 2 Now Na’omi had a relative of her husband’s, a forceful strong man, from Elimelek’s kin-group. His name was Bo’az. 2 Ruth the Mo’abite said to Na’omi, ‘Please, may I go to the fields and I’ll glean among the ears of grain behind someone in whose eyes I may find grace’. She said to her, ‘Go, daughter’. 3 So she went.

She came and gleaned in the fields behind the reapers and chance took her to the share in the fields belonging to Bo’az, who was from Elimelek’s kin-group. 4 And there was Bo’az, coming from Bet Lehem. He said to the reapers, ‘Yahweh be with you’ and they said to him, ‘Yahweh bless you’. 5 Bo’az said to his boy who was standing by the reapers, ‘Who does that girl belong to?’ 6 The boy who was standing by the reapers said, ‘She’s a Mo’abite girl who came back with Na’omi from Mo’abite country. 7 She said, ‘Please, may I glean and gather among the sheaves behind the reapers’. She came and stood from then, in the morning, until now. Her stay in the house has been short’.

8 Bo’az said to Ruth, ‘Listen, daughter, will you. You’re not to go to glean in another field. No, you will not pass on from here. Attach yourself to my girls, 9 your eyes on the field that they reap. Follow them. I’ve ordered the boys not to touch you, heven’t I. When you’re thirsty, go to the containers and drink from what the boys draw’.

**2.10 The God of Coincidences**

10 She fell on her face and bowed low to the ground and said to him, ‘Why have I found grace in your eyes, as you’re recognizing me, and I’m a foreigner?’ 11 Bo’az answered her, ‘It’s been fully told me everything that you’ve done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband. You abandoned your father and your mother and the country that was your homeland and went to a people that you had not acknowledged in previous days. 12 May Yahweh make good for your deed. May your wages be complete from Yahweh the God of Israel, under whose skirts you’ve come to take shelter’. 13 She said, ‘May I find grace in your eyes, sir, because you’ve comforted me and spoken to your maidservant’s heart, and I’m not one of your maidservants’.

14 Bo’az said to her at the meal time, ‘Come up here and eat some of the bread and dip your bit in the vinegar’. So she sat by the side of the reapers, he passed her the roasted grain, and she ate and was full, and she had some left over. 15 She got up to glean, and Bo’az ordered his boys, ‘She can also glean among the sheaves, and you will not put her down. 16 You can also pull some out for her from the bundles, and abandon them and she can glean. You will not reprimand her’.

17 She gleaned in the fields until the evening and beat out what she’d gleaned. It came to something like a barrel of barley. 18 She picked it up and came to the town, and her mother-in-law saw what she’d gleaned, and she got out and gave her what was left over from when she’d been full.

19 Her mother-in-law said to her, ‘Where did you glean today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who recognized you’. She told her mother-in-law who she had worked with and said, ‘The name of the man that I worked with today was Bo’az’.

**2.20 How Not to Leave the Initiative to the Man**

20 Na’omi said to her daughter-in-law, ‘May he be blessed by Yahweh, who hasn’t abandoned his commitment with the living and with the dead’. Na’omi said to her, ‘The man is a close relative of ours. He’s one of our restorers’. 21 Ruth the Mo’abite said, ‘He also said to me, ‘You’re to attach yourself to my boys until they’ve finished the entire harvest that belongs to me”’. 22 Na’omi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, ‘Daughter, it will be good that you go out with his girls, and people don’t come upon you in another field’. 23 So she attached herself to Bo’az’s girls to glean until the finish of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest, and lived with her mother-in-law.

3 Na’omi her mother-in-law said to her, ‘My daughter, shouldn’t I seek a place for you to settle down that will be good for you? 2 So now, Bo’az is our relative, isn’t he. You’ve been with his girls. Here, he’s winnowing the barley on the threshing floor tonight. Have a bath, put on your makeup, put on your best clothes, and go down to the threshing floor. Don’t make yourself known to the man until he’s finished eating and drinking. 4 When he lies down and you know the place where he lies down, come in and uncover his feet and lie down. He himself will tell you what you should do’. 5 She said to her, ‘Everything that you say to me, I’ll do’.

6 She went down to the threshing floor and acted in accordance with all that her mother-in-law had ordered her. 7 Bo’az ate and drank and his heart felt good. He came to lie down at the edge of the heap. She came quietly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.

**3.8 The Obstacle to a Happy Ending**

8 In the middle of the night the man gave a start and twisted round: there, a woman lying at his feet! 9 He said, ‘Who are you?’ She said, ‘I’m Ruth, your handmaid. You should spread your skirt over your handmaid, because you’re a restorer’.

10 He said, ‘May you be blessed of Yahweh, daughter. You’ve made your last act of commitment better than your first in not following the young men, whether a poor one or a wealthy one. 11 So now, my daughter, don’t be afraid, all that you say I will do for you, because everyone at my people’s gateway acknowledge that you’re a forceful woman. 12 But now, because it’s true that I’m a restorer, but there’s also a restorer nearer than me, 13 stay the night tonight, and in the morning, if he will act as restorer, good, he may act as restorer. But if he doesn’t want to act as your restorer, I myself will act as your restorer, as Yahweh lives. Lie down until the morning’.

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning but got up before one person could recognize his neighbour. He said, ‘It shouldn’t become known that the woman came to the threshing floor’, 15 but he said, ‘Bring the shawl that you have on and hold it’. She held it and he weighed out six measures of barley and put it on her.

He went to the town, 16 and she came to her mother-in-law. She said, ‘How are you, my daughter?’ She told her all that the man had done for her, 17 and said, ‘He gave me these six measures of barley, because he said “Don’t come to your mother-in-law empty-handed”’. 18 She said, ‘Stay, my daughter, until you know how the matter falls, because the man won’t relax. Rather he’ll finish the thing today’.

**4.1 How Not to Get Overextended in Real Estate**

4 Now Bo’az had gone up to the gateway and sat down there. And there, the restorer of whom Bo’az had spoken was passing. He said, ‘Come over, sit down here, so-and-so’. He turned aside and sat down. 2 He got ten men from the town’s elders and said, ‘Sit down here’, and they sat down. 3 He said to the restorer, ‘The share in the fields that belonged to our brother, to Elimelek: Na’omi, who has come back from Mo’abite country, is disposing of it. 4 I myself said, “I must open your ear, saying ‘Acquire it in the presence of the people who are sitting here, in the presence of the elders of my people. If you’re to act as restorer, restore, but (if he’s not to restore) do tell me, so I may know, because there’s no one to act as restorer apart from you, but I’m after you’”‘. He said, ‘I’ll act as restorer’.

5 But Bo’az said, ‘On the day you acquire the fields from Na’omi’s hand and from Ruth the Mo’abite, you will have acquired the dead man’s wife, to set up the dead man’s name over his domain’. 6 The restorer said, ‘I can’t act as restorer for myself, or I’ll devastate my domain. You act as restorer for yourself regarding my position as restorer, because I cannot act as restorer’.

7 Now this is how it was formerly in Israel, in connection with acting as restorer and with transfer. To make any matter firm, a man took off his boot and gave it to his neighbour. This was the attestation process in Israel. 8 So the restorer said to Bo’az, ‘Acquire it for yourself’, and took off his boot. 9 Bo’az said to the elders and the entire people, ‘You’re witnesses today that I’ve acquired from Na’omi’s hand everything that belonged to Elimelek and everything that belonged to Kilion and Mahlon. 10 I’ve also acquired Ruth the Mo’abite, Mahlon’s wife, for myself as wife, to set up the dead man’s name over his domain, so the dead man’s name is not cut off from among his brothers and from the gateway of his place. You’re witnesses today’.

**4.11 How David Acquired his Grandfather**

11 The entire company that was at the gateway and the elders said, ‘Witnesses! May Yahweh make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and like Le’ah, both of whom built up Israel’s household. Act capably in Ephratah, call out a name in Bet Lehem! 12 May your household be like the household of Perets, to whom Tamar gave birth for Judah, through the offspring that Yahweh will give you through this girl’.

13 So Bo’az got Ruth and she became his wife. He had sex with her and Yahweh enabled her to get pregnant. She gave birth to a son, 14 and the women said to Na’omi, ‘Yahweh be blessed, who hasn’t held back a restorer for you today. May his name be called out in Israel! 15 For you he will be one who gives life back and provides for your old age, because your daughter-in-law who loves you has borne him, she who has been better for you than seven sons’.

16 Na’omi got the child and put him in her arms and became a nurse for him. 17 The neighbours named him, saying ‘A son has been born to Na’omi’, and named him Obed. He was father of Jesse, father of David.

This is the family history of Perets. Perets fathered Hetsron. 18 Hetsron fathered Ram. Ram fathered Amminadab. 20 Amminadab fathered Nahshon. Nahshon fathered Salmah. 21 Salmon fathered Bo’az. Bo’az fathered Obed. 22 Obed fathered Jesse. Jesse fathered David.

# Lamentations

These five prayer-poems grieve over a great disaster that has happened to Jerusalem. The poems presumably relate to the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 587BC, though the book doesn’t make any concrete references that make that link explicit. But if that disaster is the one Lamentations refers to, it is appropriate that the book thus follows the account of this event in Jeremiah. Tradition identifies Jeremiah as the author, though the poems themselves are anonymous.

Each poem comprises twenty-two verses (except the middle one, with sixty-six), which is the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet, and the first four poems are alphabetical—that is, the verses begin with the successive letters of the alphabet. They express grief , protest, and prayer from A to Z.

The Hebrew Bible has the books of the Bible in a different order from that in the English Bible (which follows the order in the Greek translation of the Bible). The Hebrew Bible groups Lamentations with some other shorter books (Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, and Esther) that are used once a year in Jewish communities. Lamentations is used on the sixth day of the month Ab, which overlaps with July-August, to mark the anniversary of the fall of Jerusalem in 587 and in 70AD.

## 1:1 The Town Bereft

1 Oh!—the town sits alone

that abounded with a people.

She became like a widow,

she who was great among the nations.

She who was a queen among the provinces

became a slave.

2She cries and cries in the night;

there are tears on her cheeks.

She has no comforter

from all her allies.

All her friends broke faith with her;

they became enemies to her.

3Judah went into exile after humbling

and a great amount of servitude.

When she went to live among the nations

she didn’t find a settled place.

All her pursuers caught up with her

amidst her pressures.

4The roads to Zion are mourning,

because of the lack of people coming for the set times.

All her gateways are desolate,

her priests are groaning.

Her girls are suffering,

and her – it’s hard for her.

5Her adversaries became her head,

her enemies are at peace.

Because Yahweh made her suffer

on account of the great number of her rebellions.

Her infants went into captivity

before the adversary.

6From Miss Zion

all her glory went away.

Her officials became like deer

that had found no pasture.

They walked without energy

before the pursuer.

7Jerusalem has been mindful,

in her days of humbling and wandering,

Of all the desirable things she had,

which there were from days before.

When her people fell into the hand of the adversary

and there was no one helping her,

The adversaries saw her,

made fun of her coming to an end.

8Jerusalem did wrong and did wrong;

therefore she became taboo.

All the people who had honoured her treated her as wretched

because they saw her exposure.

Yes, she groaned

and turned backward.

9Though her uncleanness was in her skirts,

she hadn’t been mindful of her future.

She went down in extraordinary ways;

she had no comforter.

‘Yahweh, look at my humbling,

because the enemy has got big’.

10The adversary laid his hand

on all her desirable things.

Because she saw nations

that came into her sanctuary,

Who you ordered should not come

into your congregation.

11All her people are groaning,

looking for bread.

They have given their desirable things

for food to bring life back.

‘Look, Yahweh, heed,

because I’ve become wretched’.

## 1:12 It’s Nothing to You Who Pass By, Is It?

12Though it’s nothing to you, all you who pass along the road,

heed and look.

Is there any pain like my pain,

which was dealt out to me,

when Yahweh made me suffer

on the day of his angry blazing?

13From on high he sent fire,

into my bones, and it held sway over them.

He spread a net for my feet;

he turned me backward.

He made me a desolation,

faint all day long.

14The yoke of my rebellions was bound on,

they interweave by his hand.

They came up onto my neck;

he made my energy collapse.

The Lord gave me

into the hands of people before whom I cannot stand.

15The Lord within me threw aside

all my sturdy men.

He called for a set time against me

to break my young men.

The Lord trod in a press

young Miss Judah.

16’On account of these things I’m crying;

both my eyes are going down with water.

Because a comforter is far from me,

someone bringing my life back.

My children have become desolate,

because an enemy was strong’.

17Zion spread out her hands;

she has no comforter.

Yahweh ordered to Jacob

the people round him as his adversaries.

Jerusalem became

something taboo among them.

18’Yahweh is in the right,

because I rebelled against his bidding.

Listen, please, all you peoples,

see my pain.

My girls and my young men

went into captivity.

19I called to my friends;

those people beguiled me.

My priests and my elders

perished in the town,

When they looked for food for themselves

so they might bring their life back.

20See, Yahweh, how there was pressure on me;

my insides churned.

My heart turned over within me,

because I had rebelled and rebelled.

Outside, the sword bereaved;

at home, very death.

21People heard that I was groaning;

I had no comforter.

When all my enemies heard of my bad fortune, they were glad

that you yourself had acted.

You brought about the day you called for –

they should be like me.

22All their bad action should come before you—

deal with them,

As you dealt with me

on account of all my rebellions.

Because my groans are many,

and my heart is faint’.

## 2:1 Anger

2 Oh!—with his anger the Lord clouds over

Miss Zion.

He threw down Israel’s glory

from the heavens to the earth.

He was not mindful of his footstool

on his day of anger.

2The Lord swallowed up all Jacob’s pastures

and didn’t spare.

In his fury he tore down

Miss Judah’s fortifications.

He brought right to the earth, made ordinary,

the kingdom and its officials.

3He cut off every horn of Israel

in his angry blazing.

He turned backward his right hand

from before the enemy.

He burned up against Jacob like a flaming fire

consuming all round.

4He directed his bow as an enemy,

took his stand with his right hand as an adversary.

He killed everyone

who was desirable to the eye.

In Miss Zion’s tent

he poured out his wrath like fire.

5The Lord became like an enemy;

he swallowed up Israel.

He swallowed up all her citadels,

devastated her fortifications.

He made great in Miss Judah

mourning and moaning.

6He violated his shelter like a garden,

destroyed his set place.

Yahweh caused set time and sabbath

to be put out of mind in Zion.

In his angry condemnation he spurned

king and priest.

7The Lord rejected his altar,

abandoned his sanctuary.

He gave over the walls of her citadels

into the enemy’s hand.

They gave voice in Yahweh’s house

as on the day when it was a set occasion.

8Yahweh intended to devastate

Miss Zion’s wall.

He stretched out a line,

he didn’t turn back his hand from swallowing up.

He made rampart and wall mourn;

together they languished.

9Her gateways sank into the earth;

he obliterated and broke up her bars.

Her king and her officials are among the nations;

there is no instruction.

Her prophets, too, found

no vision from Yahweh.

10Miss Zion’s elders

sit on the earth, they’re silent.

They’ve taken up dirt on their head,

they’ve wrapped on sack.

Jerusalem’s girls

have lowered their head to the earth.

11My eyes are spent with tears,

my insides churn.

My heart has poured out to the earth

on account of the breaking of my dear people,

While infant and suckling faint

in the township’s squares.

12To their mothers they say,

‘Where are grain and wine?’

As they faint like someone run through

in the town’s squares,

As their life pours out

in their mothers’ arms.

## 2:12 Is This the Town Called “The Joy of All the Earth”?

13What can I avow, what can I liken to you,

Miss Jerusalem?

What can I compare with you so I may comfort you,

fair Miss Zion?

Because your breaking is as big as the sea;

who can heal you?

14Your prophets beheld for you

things that were empty and arid.

They didn’t reveal your waywardness

so as to restore your fortunes.

They beheld for you

empty prophecies and seductions.

15All the people who pass your way

have clapped the palms of their hands at you.

They’ve whistled and shaken their head

at Miss Jerusalem:

‘Is this the town of which they used to say,

“Complete in beauty, a joy to the entire earth”?’

16Against you all your enemies

have opened their mouth wide.

They’ve whistled and ground their teeth,

they’ve said, ‘We’ve swallowed her up.

Indeed this is the day that we hoped for;

we’ve found it, we’ve seen it’.

17Yahweh did what he schemed,

he accomplished his word,

Which he ordered long ago;

he tore down and didn’t spare.

He let an enemy rejoice over you,

exalted the horn of your adversaries.

18Their heart cried out to the Lord;

Miss Zion’s wall,

Make tears go down like a wadi,

day and night.

Don’t give yourself respite;

your dear eye must not stop.

19Get up, resound at night,

at the beginning of the watches.

Pour out your heart like water

in front of the presence of the Lord.

Lift up the palms of your hands to him

for the life of your infants,

Who faint with hunger

at the top of all the streets.

20Look, Yahweh, heed

the one with whom you’ve dealt like this.

Do women eat their fruit,

the babies they dandle?

Are priest and prophet killed

in the Lord’s sanctuary?

21Young person and old

lay on the ground in the streets.

My girls and my young men

fell by the sword.

You killed them on your day of anger,

you slaughtered them, you didn’t spare.

22You call (as on the day of a set occasion)—

for terrors for me from all round.

On Yahweh’s day of anger

there was no one escaping or surviving.

Those whom I dandled and raised –

my enemy finished them off.

## 3:1 The Man Who Saw Humbling

3 I am the man who saw humbling,

by his furious club.

2He drove me and made me go

in darkness and not light.

3Yes, against me

repeatedly he’d turn his hand all day long.

4He wore away my flesh and my skin,

he broke my bones.

5He built up against me and surrounded me

with poison and weariness.

6He made me live in darkness,

like those long dead.

7He walled me in and I couldn’t get out,

he made my chains heavy.

8Even when I’d cry out and call for help,

he shut out my plea.

9He walled in my ways with stonework,

twisted my paths.

10He was a lurking bear to me,

a lion in hiding.

11He diverted my ways and mangled me,

made me desolate.

12He directed his bow and set me up

as the target for his arrow.

13He made the shafts from his quiver

come into my inner being.

14I became an object of fun to all my people,

their song all day long.

15He filled me with bitter herbs,

saturated me with vinegar.

16He broke my teeth on the gravel,

bent me down in the ashes.

17My soul gave up on well-being,

I forgot good things.

18I said, ‘My distinction has perished,

and my waiting for something from Yahweh’.

19To be mindful of my humbling and my wandering

was vinegar and poison.

20My spirit is mindful, so mindful,

and it bows down within me.

## 3:21 They Are New Every Morning

21This I bring back to my mind,

therefore I shall wait:

22Yahweh’s acts of commitment, that we’re not finished,

that his compassion isn’t ended.

23They’re new each morning;

his truthfulness is great.

24’Yahweh is my share’, my entire being said;

therefore I shall wait for him.

25Yahweh is good to people who hope in him,

to the person who inquires of him.

26It’s good that one waits and keeps still

for Yahweh’s deliverance.

27It’s good for a man

that he carries a yoke in his youth.

28He should sit alone and be still

when he’s put it on him.

29He should put his mouth in the dirt;

perhaps there’s hope.

30He should give his jaw to the one who strikes him down,

become full of reviling.

31Because the Lord

doesn’t reject permanently.

32Rather he brings suffering, but has compassion,

in the greatness of his acts of commitment.

33Because it’s not from his heart that he humbles

and brings suffering to human beings,

34Crushing under his feet

all earth’s prisoners,

35Turning aside the exercise of authority for a man

in front of the presence of the One on High,

36Putting someone in the wrong in his argument

when the Lord didn’t look.

37Who is it who said and it happened,

when the Lord didn’t order?

38From the mouth of the One on High

do not the bad things and the good things issue?

39Of what should a living person complain,

a man in connection with his wrongdoings?

40Let’s search out and examine our ways

and turn back to Yahweh.

41Let’s lift up our mind with the palms of our hands

to God in the heavens.

42When we ourselves rebelled and defied,

you yourself didn’t pardon.

43You wrapped yourself in anger and pursued us,

you killed and didn’t spare.

44You wrapped yourself in your cloud

so that a plea didn’t pass through.

## 3:45 Yahweh’s Shadow Side

45You make us trash and refuse

among the peoples.

46Against us all our enemies

have opened their mouth wide.

47Terror and trap have become ours,

ruin and breaking.

48My eye flows with streams of water

because of the breaking of my fair people.

49My eye has poured and won’t stop,

without respite,

50Until Yahweh looks down

and sees from the heavens.

51My eye has dealt hard to my entire being

because of all the girls in my town.

52My enemies hunted me relentlessly

like a bird for no reason.

53They put an end to my life in a pit

and threw stones at me.

54Water flowed over my head;

I said, ‘I’m lost’.

55I called on your name, Yahweh,

from the deepest pit.

56You listened to my voice, ‘Don’t close your ear

concerning my relief, to my cry for help’.

57You came near on the day when I would call on you;

you said, ‘Don’t be afraid’.

58You pressed the arguments for me, Lord,

you restored my life.

59You’ve seen the wrong done to me, Yahweh:

exercise authority with a ruling for me.

60You’ve seen all their redress,

all their intentions for me,

61You’ve listened to their reviling, Yahweh,

all their intentions against me,

62The lips of the people who rise up against me

and their murmuring against me all day long.

63Look at them sitting and rising;

I’m their song.

64Give back their dealings to them, Yahweh,

in accordance with the action of their hands.

65May you give them a covering over their mind,

your vow for them.

66May you pursue them in anger and annihilate them

from under Yahweh’s heavens.

## 4:1 What Happened to Loving Mothers

4 Oh!—gold tarnishes,

fine gold changes.

Sacred stones pour out

at the top of every street.

2Zion’s precious children,

worth their weight in pure gold –

Oh, they’re thought of like clay vessels,

a potter’s handiwork.

3Even jackals offer the breast,

nurse their young.

My dear people has become cruel,

like ostriches in the wilderness.

4The suckling’s tongue sticks

to the roof of its mouth, for thirst.

Infants ask for bread;

there’s no one offering it to them.

5People who ate gourmet food

are desolate in the streets.

People brought up in purple

cling to rubbish heaps.

6The waywardness of my dear people had become bigger

than the wrongdoing of Sedom [Sodom],

Which was overturned in a moment,

though hands didn’t whirl at it.

7Her consecrated people were purer than snow,

whiter than milk.

Their frame was redder than coral,

their body was sapphire.

8Their appearance became blacker than soot;

they weren’t recognized in the streets.

Their skin shrivelled on their frame;

it became dry like wood.

9The people run through by the sword were better off

than the people run through by famine,

Those who slip away, thrust through,

for lack of the produce of the field.

10The hands of compassionate women

cooked their children.

They became food for them

through the breaking of my dear people.

11Yahweh finished up his wrath,

poured out his angry blazing.

He kindled a fire in Zion;

it consumed its foundations.

## 4:12 Yahweh’s Anointed Captured

12The kings of the earth didn’t believe,

or all the world’s inhabitants,

That adversary or enemy would come

through Jerusalem’s gates.

13Because of her prophets’ wrongdoings,

her priests’ wayward acts,

People who shed within her

the blood of the faithful,

14They wandered blind through the streets,

they were defiled with blood,

Without people being able

to touch their clothes.

15’Go away, polluted’, they called to them,

‘Go away, go away, don’t touch’.

When they fled and wandered, people said among the nations,

‘They must be resident no longer’.

16Yahweh’s presence divided them up,

he no longer looks to them.

They didn’t honour the face of priests,

they didn’t show favour to elders.

17Our eyes still spend themselves

looking for help for ourselves, in vain.

On our watchtowers we watched

for a nation that wouldn’t deliver.

18People hounded our steps

so that we didn’t walk in our squares.

Our end was near, our days were full,

because our end had come.

19Our pursuers became swifter

than the eagles in the heavens.

They chased us on the mountains,

they lay in wait for us in the wilderness.

20The breath of our lungs, Yahweh’s anointed,

was captured in their traps,

The one of whom we had said, ‘In his shade

we will live among the nations’.

21Celebrate and rejoice, Miss Edom,

you who live in the country of Uts.

To you, too, the chalice will pass;

you’ll get drunk and you’ll strip naked.

22Your waywardness is complete, Miss Zion;

he will no longer exile you.

He’s attending to your waywardness, Miss Edom;

he’s exposing your wrongdoings.

## 5:1 Have You Totally Rejected Us?

5 Be mindful, Yahweh, of what happened to us;

look, and see our reviling.

2Our domain was turned over to strangers,

our homes to foreigners.

3We became orphans with no father,

our mothers actual widows.

4We drank our water for money;

our wood comes for payment.

5We were pursued, at our neck;

we were weary, but there was no settling down for us.

6We’ve put out our hand to Egypt,

to Ashshur to get a fill of bread.

7Our parents did wrong and are no more,

and we were the ones who carried their wayward acts.

8Servants have ruled over us;

there’s no one freeing us from their hand.

9It’s at the risk of our lives that we bring our bread,

because of the sword in the wilderness.

10Our skin was as hot as an oven,

because of the fever of famine.

11They humbled women in Zion,

girls in Judah’s towns.

12Officials were hung up by their hand;

elders weren’t respected.

13Young men carried a millstone,

boys collapsed with wood.

14Elders turned back from the gate,

young men from their music.

15The joy of our heart ceased;

our dancing was turned to mourning.

16The crown on our head fell;

oh, alas for us, because we did wrong.

17Because of this, our heart became sick,

because of these things, our eyes become dark,

18Because of Mount Zion, which is desolate;

jackals have walked about on it.

19You, Yahweh, sit permanently,

your throne endures through the generations.

20Why do you put us out of mind permanently,

abandon us for length of days?

21Bring us back to yourself, Yahweh, so we may come back;

make our days new, as before.

22But you have totally rejected us,

you have been utterly furious with us.

**Ecclesiastes**

Ecclesiastes is one of the most reassuring books in the Bible in the way it encourages us to face facts about how life is. Whereas Proverbs majors on positive aspects to the way life works out, Ecclesiastes acknowledges that things are more complicated than a first, surface reading of Proverbs might seem to imply. Often Ecclesiastes proceeds by quoting the kind of observation that appears in Proverbs and saying ‘Yes, but…’

A substantial chunk of the beginning of the book takes Solomon as a test case for looking at life, though the book never mentions Solomon by name. It refers to the author as Qohelet, which is related to the Hebrew word for ‘congregation.’ I translate it as ‘churchman.’ An implication of using this name is that this book is proper ‘church teaching,’ proper teaching for the people of God. It refers to its ‘hero’ as ‘David’s son,’ which probably suggests Solomon, though there are many other people to whom the phrase applies. But Solomon was the man who had everything—women, wisdom, achievement, power, pleasure. So he provides a test case for whether these things can make life worthwhile. And his answer is, they don’t.

It’s not that these things are totally useless. They are all worthwhile. But they are not ultimately significant. They don’t provide the ultimate answers. In the absence of such ultimate answers, really everything is ‘hollow.’ This declaration forms a bracket round the book as a whole. When one looks empirically at life in the world, one can see ways in which things make sense and ways in which life is worthwhile, but also ways in which they don’t make sense and in which the things that people tell themselves make worthwile are not really of ultimate significance. Qohelet emcourages us to remember that they are nevertheless things that ‘God gives’—that phrase recurs in the book. There’s some value in seeking to live a faithful life and in enjoying life with one’s family, work, and food and drink. It’s not enough, but it’s not nothing.

**1:1 Everything Is Hollow**

1 The words of Churchman, son of David, king in Jerusalem.

2Utter hollowness, said Churchman,

utter hollowness, everything is hollow.

3What value is there for a person

in all the toil that he undertakes under the sun?

4A generation goes, a generation comes;

the earth stands permanently.

5The sun rises and the sun sets

and rushes to its place where it rises.

6The wind goes to the south and turns round to the north,

it turns, turns as it goes,

and on its turnings the wind goes back.

7All the wadis go to the sea, but the sea isn’t full;

to the place where the wadis go,

there they go again.

8All the things are laborious;

no one could speak of it.

The eye isn’t replete as regards looking,

the ear isn’t full as regards listening.

9What has happened is what will happen;

what has occurred is what will occur;

there’s nothing new under the sun.

10Where there is a thing that someone says,

‘See this, it’s new’,

Already it has happened

for ages that were before us.

11There is no commemoration for the earlier people,

and also for future people who are to come.

For them there will be no commemoration,

with the people who will be in the future.

**1:12 A King’s Achievement**

12I, Churchman, began to reign over Israel in Jerusalem. 13I gave my mind to looking into and exploring with smartness everything that occurs under the the heavens. It’s a bad business God gave human beings to be busy with. 14I saw all the actions that occur under the sun. There, everything is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

15Something crooked cannot become straight,

and something lacking cannot be counted.

16I myself spoke inside myself: ‘Here, I’ve got big and increased in smartness above everyone who has been over Jerusalem before me. My mind has seen much of smartness and knowledge. 17I’ve given my mind to a knowledge of smartness and a knowledge of madness and apparent insight. I’ve come to acknowledge that this, too, was a shepherding of wind.

18Because with abundance of smartness there’s much vexation,

and one who increases knowledge increases pain.

2 I myself said inside myself, ‘Come on, please, I’ll test you with rejoicing. Look into what’s good’. There, that is also hollow.

2Of having fun, I said, ‘It’s mad’,

and of rejoicing, ‘What does this do?’

3I explored inside myself, stretching my flesh with wine while directing my mind with smartness and taking hold of idiocy, until I could see which one was good for human beings, which they should practise under the heavens for the number of the days of their life. 4I made my achievements big. I built houses for myself, I planted vineyards for myself, 5I made gardens and parks for myself and planted in them trees with every fruit. 6I made pools of water for myself, to water from them a forest flourishing with trees. 7I acquired servants and maidservants and ones born in my household. I also had livestock, herd and flock; I had more than all who were before me in Jerusalem.

**2:8 Wealth and Learning**

8I also amassed for myself silver and gold and the personal treasure of kings and provinces. I made for myself male and female singers, and the pleasures of human beings, many women. 9I got big and increased more than anyone who was before me in Jerusalem; also my smartness stood with me. 10Nothing that my eyes asked for did I keep from them. I didn’t hold my mind back from any rejoicing; rather, my mind rejoiced in all my labour. This was my share from all my labour.

11But I myself turned my face to all the things that my hands had done and to the labour that I had put into doing it. There, everything was hollow, a shepherding of wind. There was no value under the sun.

12I turned my face to see smartness, madness, and idiocy. Because what will the person do who comes after the king? That which people have already done. 13I myself saw that

There is value to smartness over idiocy,

like the value of light over darkness.

14The smart person – his eyes are in his head,

but the dimwit walks in darkness.

But I myself also acknowledged that one experience happens to each of them. 15So I myself said inside myself: like the experience of the dimwit, so it will happen to me, too. So why have I myself then been exceedingly smart? I spoke inside myself: ‘this is hollow, too’. 16Because there’s no commemoration permanently of the smart person, just like the dimwit, in that already in the coming days each will have gone out of mind. But how can the smart man die just like the dimwit? 17So I was hostile to life, because the action that occurs under the sun is bad with me, because everything is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

18So I myself was hostile to all the labour that I myself have expended under the sun, which I shall leave to the person who will be after me. 19Who knows whether he’ll be a smart person or an idiot? But he’ll hold power over all the labour that I’ve expended and the smartness that I’ve exercised under the sun. This too is hollow.

**2:20 Everything Has Its Time**

20So I myself turned round to letting myself despair about all the labour that I’ve expended under the sun. 21Because there’s a person whose labour was with smartness, with knowledge, and with skill, and he gives his share from it to a person who didn’t labour for it. This is also hollow, something very bad. 22Because what does the person have for all his labour and for his mind’s shepherding, with which he’s laboured under the sun? 23Because all his days, his busyness is pain and vexation. By night, too, his mind doesn’t lie down. This is also hollow.

24There’s nothing better with a person that he eats and drinks and lets himself see good things through his labour. I myself have also seen that this is from God’s hand. 25Because who eats and who hastens apart from me? 26Because to the person who is good before him he gives smartness, knowledge, and rejoicing, and to the wrongdoer he gives the busyness of gathering and collecting—to give to someone who is good before God.

This too is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

3 Everything has a moment,

every purpose under the sun has a time:

2A time of birthing, a time of dying,

a time of planting, a time of uprooting what is planted,

3A time of killing, a time of healing,

a time of demolishing, a time of building,

4A time of crying, a time of having fun,

a time of wailing, a time of dancing,

5A time of throwing stones, a time of collecting stones,

a time of embracing, a time of staying far from embracing,

6A time of searching, a time of obliterating,

a time of keeping, a time of throwing out,

7A time of tearing, a time of mending,

a time of being silent, a time of speaking,

8A time of being loyal, a time of being hostile,

a time of battle and a time of peace.

9What’s the value for the man who acts, in what he labours over? 10I’ve seen the busyness that God has given human beings to be busy with. 11He’s made everything beautiful in its time; he’s also put permanence into their mind, but not so that humanity can find out what God has done from the beginning until the end.

**3:12 There’s No Justice**

12I acknowledged that there is nothing good with them except to rejoice and do what’s good in their lifetime. 13Also, everyone who eats and drinks and sees good things through all his labour – it’s God’s gift. 14I acknowledged that

Everything that God does,

it will be permanent.

To it there is nothing to add,

and from it, there’s nothing to take away.

God has acted so that people live in awe before him.

15What has happened, already is,

and that which is to happen, has already happened.

And God seeks out what has been driven away.16Further, I’ve seen under the sun:

In the place for the [proper] exercise of authority, faithlessness was there,

in the place for faithfulness, faithlessness was there.

17I myself said inside myself,

Over the faithful person and the faithless

God will exercise authority.

Because there will be a time for every purpose

and for every activity there.

18I myself said inside myself with regard to human beings, it’s for God to purify them and for them to see that they are animals. 19Because the experience of human beings and the experience of animals is a single experience for them. Like the dying of the one, so is the dying of the other. Each has the same spirit. The advantage of humanity over animals – there is none, because each is hollow. 20Each goes to the same place. Each came into being from dirt and each goes back to dirt. 21Who knows if the spirit of human beings goes up and the spirit of animals goes down beneath the earth?

22So I saw that there is nothing better than that a person enjoys his activities, because this is his share, because who can give him discernment to see what will happen after him?

4 I again saw all the oppressed people that are appearing under the sun. There, the tears of the oppressed, and there is no comforter for them; yes, from the hand of their oppressors is the energy, and there is no comforter for them. 2I myself extolled the dead people, who had already died, more than the living people, who were still alive. 3Better than both of them is the one who hasn’t yet come into being, who hasn’t seen the bad activity that occurs under the sun.

**4:4 If Two People Lie Together, They Can Be Warm**

4I myself saw all labour and all skill in activity: it’s the jealousy of a person by his neighbour. This too is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

5The dimwit folds his hands,

and eats his own flesh.

6Better a palm-full with settlement than two fistfuls with labour, and a shepherding of wind.

7I again saw hollowness under the sun. 8There’s one person, and he has no second person, either son or brother. And there’s no end to all his labour; nor is his eye full of wealth. ‘But for whom am I labouring and depriving myself of good things?’ This too is hollow, a bad business. 9Two are better than one, in that they have better reward for their labour. 10Because if they fall, one can lift up his companion; but alas for the single person who falls and has no second person to lift him up. 11Further, if two people lie down together, they are warm, but for one – how can he be warm? 12And if someone overpowers him (the one person), the two can stand up in front of him. And a triple cord doesn’t break quickly.

13Better a young man who’s poor but smart than a king who’s old but a dimwit, who doesn’t know how to heed a warning any more, 14because from the prison house he can get out to become king, even when he was born destitute in the kingdom. 15I saw all the living who walk about under the sun with the youth, the second [king], who stands in place of him. 16There was no end to all the people, to all before whom he stood; also those who are after him will not rejoice in him. Because this too is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

**5:1 Sell Your Tongue and Buy a Thousand Ears**

5 Keep watch on your feet as you go to God’s house. Drawing near to listen is better than the giving of a sacrifice by dimwits, because they don’t acknowledge that they are doing something bad. 2Don’t be hasty with your mouth; your mind shouldn’t be quick to let out a word before God, because God is in the heavens and you’re on the earth. Thus your words should be few. 3Because

A dream comes with an abundance of busyness,

and the voice of a dimwit with an abundance of words.

4When you make a pledge to God, don’t delay making it good, because there’s no delight in dimwits. What you pledge, make it good. 5It’s better that you don’t make a pledge than that you make a pledge and don’t make it good. 6Don’t give your mouth to causing your flesh to do wrong. Don’t say before the envoy, ‘It was a mistake’. Why should God be furious at your voice and destroy what your hands have made? 7Because in an abundance of dreams is much hollowness, and many words. Rather, live in awe of God.

8If you see oppression of the destitute person and violation of the faithful exercise of authority in the province, don’t marvel at the matter, because one who is lofty keeps watch over one who is lofty, and ones who are lofty over them. 9The value for the land in every way is this: a king for the field that’s worked.

**5:10 It’s Not Enough but It’s Not Nothing**

10Someone who loves silver doesn’t have his fill of money, nor whoever loves riches of his yield. This too is hollow. 11With the increase of his goods, the people who consume them increase, so what’s the profit of their owners except his eyes seeing them? 12The sleep of someone who serves is sweet whether he eats little or much, but the richness of the wealthy person doesn’t leave him to sleep. 13There is a sick bad fortune I saw under the sun: wealth kept by its owner to his bad fortune, 14or that wealth perishes through a bad business; and he fathers a son but there’s nothing in his hand. 15As he got out from his mother’s womb, naked he again goes, as he came; he carries nothing of his labour in his hand when he goes. 16This too is a sick bad fortune. Corresponding to the way he comes, so he goes, and what’s the value to him that he labours for the wind? 17Further, all his days he eats in darkness with much vexation, illness, and fury.

18Here’s what I myself saw as good, that it’s beautiful to eat and to drink and to see what’s good in all his labour that he expends under the sun for the number of the days of his life that God gives him, because this is his share. 19Further, each person to whom God gives wealth and possessions and whom he empowers to consume some of them, to take up his share and to rejoice in his labour – this is God’s gift. 20Because he won’t be very mindful of the days of his life, because God busies him with his mind’s rejoicing.

**6.1 Everyone Is Going to the Same Place**

6 There’s a something bad that I saw under the sun, and there’s much of it with human beings: 2a person to whom God gives wealth, possessions, and splendour, and who has no lack regarding his appetite for anything that he desires, but God doesn’t empower him to consume any of it, and a stranger consumes it. This is hollow and an bad sickness. 3If a man fathers a hundred children and lives many years, and however many are the days of his years, his appetite can’t be full from the good things: then even if it was not buried, I say the stillbirth is better off than him. 4Because it comes in hollowness and it goes in darkness, and its name is covered in darkness; 5though it doesn’t see or know the sun, that one is more settled than the other one.

6Even if he lives a thousand years twice over but doesn’t see the good things, each is going to one place, isn’t he. 7All a person’s labour is for his mouth, but his appetite doesn’t get full. 8Because what’s the value for the smart person over the dimwit? What does the humble person have, who knows how to walk in front of the living? 9The eyes seeing is better than the appetite journeying. This too is hollow, a shepherding of wind.

10What happens has already been named, and what a human person is has become known. He cannot contend with one who is stronger than him, 11because the more the words are, the more is the hollowness. What’s the value for a person? 12Because who knows what is good for a person in life for the number of the days of his hollow life? He spends them like a shadow, so who can tell the person what will happen under the sun after him?

**7:1 Better the House of Morning Than the House of Feasting**

7 A good name is better than good oil,

and the day of death than the day of birth.

2Going to a house of mourning

is better than going to a house of feasting ,

Inasmuch as that is the end of everyone

and the living person should put it into his mind.

3Vexation is better than fun,

because despite a bad look in the face,

the mind will be good.

4The mind of smart people is in a house of mourning,

the mind of dimwits in a house of rejoicing.

5It’s better to listen to the reprimand of a smart person

than be listening to the song of dimwits,

6because the fun of dimwits

is like the sound of thistles under a pot

But this too is hollow,

7because fraud can make a fool out of a smart person,

and a gift can obliterate the mind.

8The end of something is better than its beginning,

endurance of spirit is better than loftiness of spirit.

9Don’t be quick to feel vexed in your spirit,

because vexation settles in the heart of dimwits.

10Don’t say, ‘How did it happen

that the former days were better than these’,

because it’s not out of smartness that you ask about this.

11Smartness is good, like a domain,

and something valuable to people who see the sun.

12Because as smartness is a veritable shelter,

silver is a veritable shelter.

But the value of knowledge

is that smartness keeps its masters alive.

13Look at God’s activity,

because who can straighten

what he has twisted?

14In the day when things are good, be with what is good,

and in the day when things are bad, see:

God made both this one as well as that one,

with the result that a person cannot find out

anything after him.

**7:15 I’ve Not Found a Woman**

15I’ve seen everything in my hollow days.

There’s a faithful person who perishes in his faithfulness

and there’s a faithless person who endures in his faithlessness.

16Don’t be exceedingly faithful

and don’t act excessively smart: why should you be devastated?

17Don’t be exceedingly faithless and don’t be idiotic:

why should you die when it’s not your time?

18It’s good that you take hold of the one

but also not let go of your grasp of the other,

because someone in awe of God will go out with all of them.

19Smartness strengthens a smart person

more than ten people holding power who were there in a town.

20Because there’s no faithful human being on earth who does good and doesn’t do wrong. 21Further, don’t give your mind to all the things that people speak, so that you don’t hear your servant slighting you, 22because many times your mind also knows that you too have slighted other people.

23When I tested all this with smartness, I said ‘I shall be smart’, but it’s far away from me. 24What happens is far away and deep, deep; who can find it out? 25I myself turned round with my mind to know and to explore, and to seek smartness and thought, and to know faithlessness as dimwittedness and idiocy as madness.

26I myself find more bitter than death the woman who is a great trap, whose mind is a great snare, whose hands are a great chain. One who is good before God escapes from her, but a wrongdoer is caught by her. 27Look, this is what I’ve found, Churchman said, adding one thing to another to find some thinking, 28which I myself sought further but didn’t find. I found one human being among a thousand, but a woman among these I didn’t find. 29Only, look at this, I found that God made humanity upright, but they have sought many thoughts.

**8.1 For Every Purpose There’s a Time to Make a Decision**

8 Who is like the smart person,

and who knows the meaning of a saying:

‘A person’s smartness lightens up his face,

and the strength of his face is changed’.

2I [say]: keep the king’s bidding,

and on account of the oath to God 3don’t be fearful.

You should go out from before him;

don’t stand against something bad.

Because he can do anything that he purposes,

4in that the king’s word has power,

And who can say to him, ‘What are you doing?’;

5one who keeps an order will not know something bad.

And the time to exercise authority

the mind of a smart person will know.

6Because for every purpose there’s a time to exercise authority,

when what is bad for a person is great for him.

7Because he doesn’t know what will happen,

because who can tell him when it will happen?

8There’s no one who has power over the spirit,

to restrain the spirit,

and there’s no one who has power

over the day of death.

There’s no discharge during a battle,

and faithlessness cannot rescue the people who are masters of it.

9All this I saw as I gave my mind to every action that occurs under the sun, the time when a human being held power over a human being, with bad results for him. 10And then I saw faithless people buried, when they came from the sacred place. They went about and they were put out of mind in the town where they had so acted. This too is hollow.

**8:11 To Eat and to Drink and to Rejoice**

11When the edict regarding something bad isn’t enacted quickly, consequently the mind of people inside them is full of dealing badly, 12when a wrongdoer does something bad a hundred times, and it is extended for him. Because I do know that

It will be good for people who live in awe of God,

because they live in awe of him,

13And it will not be good for the faithless person

and he won’t extend his days, like a shadow,

because he doesn’t live in awe of God.

14There’s a hollowness that occurs on the earth, that there are faithful people to whom things befall in accordance with the action of the faithless, and there are faithless people to whom things befall in accordance with the action of the faithful. I said, ‘This too is hollow’. 15So I myself extolled rejoicing, because there’s no good for a person under the sun except to eat and to drink and to rejoice. That can accompany him in his labour for the days of his life that God has given him under the sun.

16When I gave my mind to knowing smartness and looking at the busyness that is fulfilled on the earth (because even day and night one does not see sleep with one’s eyes), 17and looked at all the action of God: a human being cannot find out about the action that is undertaken under the sun. When a human being persists in seeking, he doesn’t find. Even if a smart person says he’ll know, he cannot find out.

**9:1 Remember You’re Going to Die**

9 Because all this I put into my mind, and I sifted all this, that faithful and smart people and their acts of service are in God’s hands. Both love and hostility: a person doesn’t know anything beforehand. 2Everything is as it is for everyone. One experience comes to the faithful person and to the faithless, to the good and to the pure and to the polluted, to the person who sacrifices and to the person who doesn’t sacrifice. As the good person so is the wrongdoer. The person who swears is like the person who is afraid of an oath. 3This is something bad about everything that occurs under the sun, that there is one experience for everyone.

Further, the mind of human beings is full of bad things and there is madness in their mind during their life, and afterwards – to the dead. 4Because whoever is joined to all the living – there is confidence, because a living dog is better than a dead lion. 5Because the living know that they will die, but the dead don’t know anything. There is no more reward for them, because their commemoration has gone out of mind. 6Both their love and their hostility and their passion has already perished. They have no more share permanently in all that occurs under the sun.

7Go, eat your bread with rejoicing, drink your wine with a good mind, because God already approved your actions. 8At all times your clothes should be white and oil should not be lacking on your head. 9See life with the woman that you love all the days of your hollow life that you’ve been given under the sun, all your hollow days, because that is your share in life and in your labour that you expend under the sun. 10Everything that your hand finds to do, do with all your energy, because there is no action, thought, knowledge, or smartness in She’ol, where you’re going.

**9:11 …And it May be Sooner Than You Think**

11I again saw under the sun that

The race doesn’t belong to the swift people,

the battle doesn’t belong to the strong men,

Nor bread to the smart people,

nor wealth to the discerning people,

Nor grace to the knowledgeable people,

because time and chance happen to all of them.

12Rather, a person cannot know his time.

Like fish that are taken in a bad net

and like birds that are taken by a trap,

like them, human beings are snared by a bad time when it falls on them suddenly.

13This too I’ve seen as smartness under the sun, and it seemed big to me. 14There was a small town and the people in it were few. A big king came to it, surrounded it, and built big strongholds against it. 15There was found in it a poor man who was smart, and he saved the town by his smartness, but no one was mindful of that poor man. 16I myself said,

Smartness is better than strength,

but the poor man’s smartness is despised

and his words are not listened to.

17The words of smart people with calmness

are listened to more than the crying out of a ruler among dimwits.

18Smartness is better than implements of engagement,

but one wrongdoer can obliterate much good.

10 When dead flies make a stink,

they ferment the perfumer’s oil.

Outweighing smartness, splendour,

is a little idiocy.

2The mind of a smart person goes to his right,

the mind of a dimwit goes to his left.

3Further, on a journey, as an idiot goes, his sense is lacking,

and he tells everyone that he’s an idiot.

4If the spirit of the ruler arises against you,

don’t let go of your place,

because calmness can let go of great wrongdoings.

**10:5 The Distressing Dynamics of Smartness and Power**

5There’s something bad I’ve seen under the sun,

the very error that comes from someone holding power:

6Idiocy has been put in many high positions,

and wealthy people sit in a lowly place.

7I’ve seen servants on horses,

and officials walking on the ground like servants.

8The person who digs a pit falls into it;

the person who breaks down a wall – a snake bites him.

9The person who quarries stones is hurt by them;

the person who splits logs is endangered by them.

10If the iron has become dull,

and he hasn’t sharpened it before,

He must exert more force,

so smartness is a value for giving success.

11If the snake bites when there’s no spell,

there’s no value in a master of the tongue.

12The words from the smart person’s mouth mean grace,

but the lips of a dimwit swallow him.

13The beginning of the words from his mouth is idiocy

and the end of his mouth is bad madness,

14But the idiot multiplies words,

though a person doesn’t know what will happen.

And what will happen after him,

who can tell him?

15The labour of dimwits wearies him,

because he doesn’t know how to go to a town.

16Alas for you, country whose king is a youth

and whose ministers eat in the morning.

17The blessings of the country whose king is one born of important people

and whose officials eat at the proper time,

for strength and not drinking.

18Through laziness the roof sags,

through drooping hands the house drips.

19For fun people make a meal,

wine rejoices life;

silver answers everything.

20Even in your thinking don’t slight the king,

and in your bedroom don’t slight a wealthy person,

Because a bird of the heavens may make the sound travel,

an owner of wings may tell of the thing.

**11:1 Enjoy Your Life…**

11 Send off your bread on the surface of the water,

because in an abundance of days you will find it.

2Give a share to seven or even to eight,

because you don’t know what bad thing may happen on the earth.

3If the clouds fill,

they will pour down rain on the earth;

If a tree falls

on the south or on the north,

In the place where the tree falls,

there it will be.

4Someone who keeps watch on the wind will not sow,

and someone who sees the clouds will not reap.

5As you don’t know the way of the wind,

like the limbs in the womb of a pregnant woman,

So you don’t know the action of God

who does everything.

6In the morning sow your seed

and at evening don’t let your hand relax,

Because you don’t know

which one will succeed,

This one or the other,

or if both of them will be equally good.

7The light is sweet

and it’s good for the eyes to see the sun.

8Because if a person lives many years,

he should rejoice in all of them.

But be mindful of the days of darkness,

because they will be many; everything that will come is hollow.

9Rejoice, young man, during your youth;

your mind should make you feel good in the days of your youth.

Walk about in the ways of your mind

and in the sights of your eyes.

But acknowledge that for all these things

God will bring you to account.

**11:10 Mindful of Your Creator**

10So remove vexation from your mind

and make what is bad pass from your body

Because youth and vigour are hollow,

12 so be mindful of your creator in the days of your youth,

Before the bad days come,

and the years arrive of which you’ll say,

‘There’s no purpose for me in them’,

2before it goes dark,

The sun, the light, the moon, and the stars,

and the clouds come back after the rain,

3On the day when the keepers of the house tremble,

and the strong men stoop.

The women who grind stop because they are few,

and the women who look through the windows get dark.

4The gateways to the street are shut,

as the sound of the mill becomes low.

One gets up at the sound of a bird,

but all the songs get weak.

5Further, people are afraid of a height

and there are terrors on the road.

The almond blossoms, the grasshopper carries itself along,

and the caperberry bears fruit.

But the human being is going to his eternal home

and the mourners are coming round in the street –

6Before the silver cord snaps,

and the gold bowl breaks,

The jar shatters at the spring,

and the wheel breaks at the cistern,

7The dirt goes back to the earth as it was,

and the spirit goes back to the God who gave it.

8Utter hollowness, said Churchman,

utter hollowness, everything is hollow.

9But further: because Churchman was smart, he still taught the people knowledge. He weighed and examined, set in order many aphorisms. 10Churchman sought to find purposeful words, and what is written was upright. Truthful words, 11smart words, are like goads; the masters of collections are like fixed nails. They were given by one shepherd.

12But further, beyond these, son, beware. Of the making of many books there is no end, and much study is a wearying of the body. 13The end of the thing; everything has been heard. Live in awe of God and keep his orders, because this is for everyone. 14Because God brings every action to account, including everything hidden, whether good or bad.

**Esther**

In the 1930s, the Nazi regime in Germany formulated a ‘final solution to the Jewish question’ that involved the killing of all the Jews in Germany and in the areas of Europe it controlled. The Book of Esther tells the story of the first great attempt at such a ‘final solution’ formulated by a Persian state official, Haman, in the fifth century B.C. It is he same period as Ezra and Nehemiah and another reminder that by no means all Judahites returned to Jerusalem after the exile.

Haman’s plan is frustrated as a result of some coincidences and some brave acceptance of responsibility by a young woman called Hadassah whose Persian name was Esther. As it happens, the king has dismissed his queen because she wouldn’t be put on display at a party; and as it happens, Esther wins a beauty context and becomes the next queen. She is therefore in a position to get the king to reverse his decision to have Haman’s plan implemented and to give the Judahites permission to kill any Persians who are foolish enough to attack them anyway (which a large number are).

The story is full of irony, humour, and exaggeration, such as the twelve-month beauty preparation and Hamon’s twenty-five metres high gallows on which he end up being hanged himself. It makes no reference to God or prayer or the Torah and it thus puts the emphasis on Judahites taking responsibility for their destiny and on coincidences. It thus both contrasts with and compares with the exodus story. It testifies to God’s involvement in ensuring that his people are preserved, but it keeps that involvement operative behind the scenes—In the way we usually experience it.

**1:1 The Woman Who Won’t Play Ball**

1 In the days of Xerxes [Ahashverosh], that Xerxes who reigned from India [Hoddu] as far as Sudan [Kush] over 127 provinces – 2in those days, when King Xerxes sat on his royal throne which was in the Shushan fortress, 3in the third year of his reign, he made a banquet for all his officials and his servants. The force of Persia and Media [Paras and Maday], the nobles, and the officials of the provinces were before him, 4while he let them see the wealth of his royal splendour and the glorious dignity of his greatness for many days – 180 days.

5At the fulfilment of these days the king made a banquet for the entire people to be found in the Shushan fortress, great to small, for seven days, in the courtyard of the king’s palace garden:

* 6white cloth, cotton, and blue cloth, held by bands of fine linen and purple to silver rods and alabaster pillars
* couches of gold and silver on a pavement of porphyry, alabaster, marble, and mosaic
* 7giving of drinks in gold vessels (vessels differing from one another)
* much royal wine in accordance with the king’s liberality
* 8drinking in accordance with the rule ‘Theres no one restraining’, because the king had lain it down in this way with every senior person in his household, to act in accordance with what was acceptable, individual by individual.

9Queen Vashti also made a women’s banquet at the royal house of King Xerxes.

10On the seventh day, when the king was in good heart because of the wine, he said to Mehuman, Bizzeta, Harbona, Bigta, Abagta, Zetar, and Karkas, the seven eunuchs who ministered to the presence of King Xerxes, 11to get Vashti the queen to come before the king in her royal diadem, to let the peoples and the officials see her beauty, because she was good-looking. 12Queen Vashti refused to come at the king’s word by means of the eunuchs.

**1:12b The Men Who Are Afraid**

12bThe King was quite furious. His wrath burned up in him. 13The king said to the experts who knew the times (because this was the thing with the king in relation to all the people who knew law and judgment; 14near to him were Karshena, Shetar, Admata, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memukan, the seven officials of Persia and Media who could see the king and sat in first place in the realm), 15’According to law, what should be done with Queen Vashti because she has not acted on the word of King Xerxes by means of the eunuchs?’

16Memukan said before the king and the officials, ‘It’s not against the king alone that Vashti the queen has gone astray, but against all the officials and against all the peoples that are in all King Xerxes’ provinces. 17Because the thing about the queen will get out to all the women, so as to make them despise their masters in their eyes, when they say, ‘King Xerxes said to get Vashti the queen to come before him, and she didn’t come’. 18This day the leading women of Persia and Media who have heard the thing about the queen will say it to all the king’s officials, with quite enough despising and fury.

19If it seems good to your majesty, a royal word should issue from his presence and it should be written in the laws of Persia and Media and not pass away, that Vashti will not come before King Xerxes. The king should give her royal position to another woman who is better than her. 20The king’s proclamation that he makes will make itself heard in all his realm (because it’s great), and all the women will give dignity to their masters, great to small’.

21The thing seemed good in the eyes of the king and the officials, and the king acted in accordance with Memukan’s word. 22He sent documents to all the king’s provinces, to each province in accordance with its script and to each people in accordance with its language, for every man to be ruling in his household and to be speaking in accordance with the language of his own people.

**2:1 The Beauty Contest**

2 Subsequently, when King Xerxes’ wrath had subsided, he was mindful of Vashti and what she had done and what had been determined against her. 2The king’s boys ministering to him said, ‘They should seek for the king young, good-looking girls. 3The king should appoint people in all the provinces of his realm so they can collect every young, good-looking girl to the Shushan fortress, to the women’s household, into the control of Hege, the king’s eunuch who kept watch over the women, and their cleansing treatments should be given them. 4The girl who seems good in the king’s eyes should reign in place of Vashti’. The thing seemed good in the king’s eyes, and he did so.

5Now there was a Judahite man in the Shushan fortress named Mordokay ben Ya’ir son of Shim’i son of Qish, a Benjaminite, 6who had been taken into exile from Jerusalem with the group of exiles that had been exiled with Yekonyah [Jehoiachin] king of Judah, which Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel took into exile. 7He was guardian of Hadassah (i.e., Esther), his uncle’s daughter, because she had no father or mother. The girl was lovely of figure and good-looking. When her father and mother died, Mordokay took her as a daughter to him.

8When the king’s word, his law, made itself heard and many girls collected to the Shushan fortess into the control of Hegay, Esther was taken into the king’s household into the control of Hegay, who kept watch over the women. 9The girl seemed good in his eyes and she gained commitment before him. He hastened to give to her her cleansing treatments and her portions, and the seven girls who had been looked out to give to her from the king’s household. He changed her and her girls to the best part of the women’s household. 10Esther did not tell of her people or her family, because Mordokay had ordered her not to tell of it.

**2:11 The Girl Who Pays a Price**

11Each and every day Mordokay used to walk about before the courtyard of the women’s household so as to know about Esther’s welfare and what was being done with her.

12When a turn arrived, girl by girl, for coming to King Xerxes, at the end of things happening to her in accordance with the law for the women, for twelve months (because their cleansing days were fulfilled like this, six months with oil of myrrh and six months with perfumes and women’s cleansing treatments), 13in this way the girl came to the king: everything that she would say would be given her, so as to come with her from the women’s household to the king’s household. 14Whereas she came in the evening, in the morning she went back to the second women’s household, into the control of Sha’ashgaz, the king’s eunuch who kept watch over the secondary wives. She would not come again to the king unless the king wanted her and she was called for by name.

15When the turn arrived for Esther daughter of Abihayil (uncle of Mordokay, who had taken her as daughter to him) to come to the king, she did not seek anything except what Hegay the king’s eunuch who kept watch over the women said. Esther would gain grace in the eyes of everyone who saw her.

16Esther was taken to King Xerxes in his royal household in the tenth month (i.e., the month of Tebet) in the seventh year of his reign. 17The king liked Esther more than all the women and she gained grace and commitment before him more than all the young girls, and he put a royal diadem on her head and made her queen in place of Vashti. 18The king made a great banquet for all his officials and his servants, ‘Esther’s Banquet’. He made a holiday for the provinces and gave gifts in accordance with the capacity of the king.

**2:19 – 3:11 Amaleq Redivivus**

19When the young girls collected a second time, Mordokay was sitting at the king’s gateway. 20Esther had not told of her family or her people, as Mordokay had ordered her; Esther did as Mordokay said, as when she was in guardianship with him.

21During that time, when Mordokay was sitting at the king’s gateway, Bigtan and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs who kept watch over the threshold, became furious and sought to lay hand on King Xerxes. 22The thing became known to Mordokay, he told Esther the queen, and Esther told the king in Mordokay’s name. 23The thing was inquired into and found to be so, and the two of them were hanged on a pole. It was written in the document about things of the time, before the king.

3 Subsequently, King Xerxes promoted Haman ben Hammedata the Agagite. He elevated him and put his seat above all the officials who were with him. 2All the king’s servants who were at the king’s gateway would kneel and bow low to Haman, because the king had ordered this regarding him. But Mordokay didn’t kneel and didn’t bow low. 3The king’s servants who were at the king’s gateway said to Mordokay, ‘Why are you transgressing the king’s order?’ 4But when they said it to him day by day, he didn’t listen to them.

They told Haman, to see whether Mordokay’s words would stand, because he had told them that he was a Judahite. 5Haman saw that Mordokay was not kneeling or bowing low to him, and Haman filled with wrath, 6but in his eyes he despised laying hand on Mordokay alone, because they had told him Mordokay’s people, and Haman sought to annihilate all the Judahites who were in Xerxes’ entire kingdom—Mordokay’s people.

**3:7 The Lottery That Meant Death**

7In the first month (i.e., the month of Nisan) in King Xerxes’ twelfth year, they made *pur* (i.e., the lot) fall before Haman, from day to day and from month to month: [it fell on] the twelfth (i.e., the month of Adar). 8Haman said to King Xerxes, ‘There is a people, spread about and divided among the peoples in all the provinces in your kingdom, and their laws are different from every people. They don’t act on the king’s laws, and it’s not advantageous for the king to let them be. 9If it seems good to your majesty, it should be written down to obliterate them. I will weigh out 10,000 talents of silver into the hands of those who do the work, to bring into the king’s treasuries’.

10The king removed his ring from on his hand and gave it to Haman ben Hammedata the Agagite, the Judahites’ adversary. 11The king said to Haman, ‘The silver is given to you, and the people, to do with it as seems good in your eyes’.

12So the king’s secretaries were called for in the first month, on the thirteenth day of it, and it was written down in accordance with all that Haman had ordered, to the king’s satraps and to the governors who were over each and every province and to the officials people by people, province by province, in accordance with its script, and people by people in accordance with its language, written in the name of King Xerxes and sealed with the king’s ring. 13Documents were sent by means of the runners to all the king’s provinces regarding annihilating, killing, and eliminating all the Judahites, from young to old, little ones and women, on one day, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month (i.e., Adar), and for despoiling them as plunder. 14A copy of the document was to be given out as a law in each and every province, shown to all the peoples so that they would be ready for this day.

15The runners went out, driven by the king’s word, and the law was given out in the Shushan fortess. While the king and Haman sat down to a banquet, the town of Shushan was perplexed.

**4:1 The Risk That Needs Taking**

4 When Mordokay got to know of all that had been done, Mordokay tore his clothes and put on sack and dirt. He went out into the middle of the town and cried out with a loud and bitter cry. 2He came as far as before the king’s gateway, because there was no coming into the king’s gateway in sack clothing. 3In each and every province, the place where the king’s word and his law arrived, there was great mourning on the part of the Judahites, fasting, weeping, and lamenting; sack and dirt were laid down for most people.

4Esther’s girls and her eunuchs came and told her, and the queen went all-a-tremble. She sent Mordokay clothes to put on so he could remove the sack from on him, but he didn’t accept them. 5Esther called for Hatak, one of king’s eunuchs whom he had put in place before her, and ordered him to Mordokay to get to know what this was and why this was happening.

6Hatak went out to Mordokay in the town square which was before the king’s gateway 7and Mordokay told him everything that had happened to him and the details about the silver that Haman said he would weigh out to the king’s treasuries for the Judahites, to obliterate them. 8He gave him a copy of the document containing the law that had been given out in Shushan for their annihilation, to let Esther see and to tell her, and to order her to come to the king and seek grace with him and inquire before him concerning her people.

9Hatak came and told Esther Mordokay’s words, 10but Esther said to Hatack and ordered him to Mordokay, 11’All the king’s servants and the people of the king’s provinces know that any man or woman who comes to the king in the inner courtyard who has not been called for – he has one law, to put them to death, unless the king extends to him the gold scepter, and he lives. And I haven’t been called for to come to the king these thirty days’.

**4:12 The Possibility of a Non-miraculous Miracle**

12They told Mordokay Esther’s words, 13and Mordokay said to take back word to Esther, ‘Don’t imagine within yourself that you’ll escape in the king’s household better than all the Judahites, 14because if you stay quite silent at this time, relief and rescue will arise for the Judahites from a place, but you and your father’s household will perish. Who knows if it was for a time like this that you arrived at the royal position?’

15Esther said to take back word to Mordokay, 16’Go assemble all the Judahites to be found in Shushan and fast for me. Don’t eat or drink for three days, night or day. I, too, will fast with my girls in this way, and in this way I’ll come to the king, which is not in accordance with the law. And as I perish, I perish’. 17Mordokay passed it on and acted in accordance with everything that Esther ordered him.

5 On the third day, Esther put on royal dress and stood in the inner courtyard of the king’s house, opposite the king’s house, while the king was sitting on his royal throne in the royal house opposite the entrance to the house. 2When the king saw Esther the queen standing in the courtyard, she gained grace in his eyes. The king extended to Esther the gold scepter that was in his hand and Esther drew near and touched the head of the scepter.

3The king said to her, ‘What do you have, Esther, queen? What’s your request? Up to half the kingdom, it will be given you’. 4Esther said, ‘If it seems good to the king, may the king and Haman come today to the banquet that I have made for him’. 5The king said, ‘Hurry Haman to act on Esther’s word’. So the king and Haman came to the banquet that Esther had made.

**5:6 The Girl Who Knows How to Work Her Man**

6The king said to Esther at the wine banquet, ‘What’s your petition? It will be given you. What’s your request? Up to half the kingdom, it will be done’. 7Esther answered, ‘My petition, my request: 8if I have found grace in the king’s eyes and if it seems good to the king to grant my petition, to act on my request, may the king and Haman come to the banquet that I will make for them, and tomorrow I will act in accordance with the king’s word’.

9Haman went out that day rejoicing and good-hearted, but when Haman saw Mordokay at the king’s gateway and he didn’t get up and didn’t tremble because of him, Haman filled with wrath at Mordokay. 10But Haman controlled himself and came to his house. He sent and got his friends and Zeresh his wife to come. 11Haman recounted to them the splendour of his wealth and the large number of his sons and all the way that the king had promoted him and that he had elevated him above the officials and the king’s servants. 12And Haman said, ‘Indeed, Esther the queen did not get anyone to come to the banquet with the king that she made, except me. Tomorrow, too, I am called to her with the king. 13But all this does not seem advatageous to me every time that I see Mordokay the Judahite sitting at the king’s gateway’.

14Zeresh his wife with all his friends said to him, ‘They should make a pole twenty-five metres high, and in the morning you should say to the king that they should hang Mordokay on it; and go with the king to the banquet rejoicing’. The thing seemed good to Haman and he made the pole.

6 That night the king’s sleep took flight and he said to bring the records document (the things about the time). They were being read out before the king 2and it was found written that Mordokay had told of Bigtana and Teresh, two of the king’s eunuchs among the guards of the threshold, who had sought to lay a hand on King Xerxes. 3The king said, ‘What dignity or promotion was done for Mordokay for this?’ The king’s boys, his ministers, said, ‘Nothing was done with him’.

**6:4 Haman Comes Unstuck**

4The king said, ‘Who’s in the courtyard?’ Now Haman had come into the outer courtyard of the king’s house to say to the king to hang Mordokay on the pole that he had prepared for him. 5The king’s boys said to him, ‘There’s Haman standing in the courtyard’. The king said, ‘He’s to come in’. 6Haman came in, and the king said to him, ‘What’s to do with a man whose dignity the king wants?’ Haman said to himself, ‘For whom would the king want dignity more than me?’

7So Haman said to the king, ‘A man whose dignity the king wants: 8they should bring royal apparel that the king has worn and a horse on which the king has ridden and on whose head a royal diadem has been put, 9and put the apparel and the horse into the hand one of one of the king’s noble officials. They should clothe the man whose dignity the king wants, have him ride on the horse through the town square, and call out before him, ‘This is what is done for the man whose dignity the king wants!’

10The king said to Haman, ‘Hurry, get the apparel and the horse, as you’ve spoken, and do that for Mordokay the Judahite, who sits in the king’s gateway. No word of all that you have spoken should fall’. 11Haman got the apparel and the horse, clothed Mordokay, had him ride through the town square, and called out before him, ‘This is what is done for the man whose dignity the king wants’.

12Mordokay went back to the king’s gateway while Haman hastened to his house, mourning and head covered. 13Haman recounted to Zeresh his wife and to all his friends everything that had happened to him. His smart people and Zeresh his wife said to him, ‘If Mordokay, before whom you have begun to fall, is of Judahite origin, you will not overcome him, because you will surely fall before him’.

**6:14 Fates Reversed**

14While they were still speaking with him, the king’s eunuchs arrived and hastened to bring Haman to the banquet that Esther had made. 7 So the king and Haman came to drink with Esther the queen, 2and the king said to Esther again on the second day at the wine banquet, ‘What’s your petition, Queen Esther? It will be given you. What’s your request, up to half the kingdom? It will be done’. 3Esther answered, ‘If I’ve found grace in your eyes, your majesty, and if it seems good to your majesty, may my life be given me as my petition, and my people as my request, 4because I and my people have been sold for annihilating, killing, and obliterating. Had we been sold as servants and as maidservants, I would have kept silent, because the adversity would not be commensurate to the damage to the king’.

5King Xerxes said – he said to Esther the queen, ‘Who’s this? Where’s this man who is so full of himself to act like this?’ 6Esther said, ‘The man who’s an adversary and an enemy is this bad man Haman’. As Haman was terrified before the king and the queen, 7in his wrath the king set off from the wine banquet for the palace garden, while Haman stayed to seek for his life with Esther the queen, because he saw that a bad fate was certain for him from the king.

8When the king came back from the palace garden into the wine banquet house, Haman was falling on the couch where Esther was. The king said, ‘Is he also to violate the queen with me, in the house?’ As the word went out from the king’s mouth, they covered Haman’s face. 9Harbonah, one of the eunuchs before the king, said, ‘In addition, there’s the pole that Haman made for Mordokay, who spoke something good for the king, standing in Haman’s house, twenty-five metres high’. The king said, ‘Hang him on it’.

**7:10 The Right to Self-Defence**

10So they hanged Haman on the pole that he had set up for Mordokay, and the king’s wrath subsided. 8 That day King Xerxes gave over the household of Haman, the Judahites’ adversary, to Esther the queen, while Mordokay came before the king because Esther had told of what he was to her. 2The king removed his ring, which he had taken away from Haman, and gave it to Mordokay, and Esther put Mordokay in charge ofHaman’s household.

3Esther again spoke before the king, and fell before his feet and cried. She sought grace from him to take away the bad action of Haman the Agagite, the intention that he had thought up against the Judahites. 4The king extended to Esther the gold scepter and Esther got up and stood beforethe king. 5She said, ‘If it seems good to the king, if I have found grace before him, if the thing seems proper before the king and I seem good in his eyes, may things be written to turn back the documents, the intention of Haman ben Hammedata the Agagite, which he wrote so as to obliterate the Judahites who are in all the king’s provinces, 6because how can I look upon the bad fate that will befall my people? How can I look upon my family’s obliteration?’

7King Xerxes said to Esther the queen and to Mordokay the Judahite, ‘Here, I have given Esther the household of Haman and they have hanged him on the pole because he put out his hand against the Judahites. 8You yourselves – write as it seems good in your eyes concerning the Judahites in the king’s name and seal it with the king’s ring’ (because a document that’s been written in the king’s name and sealed with the king’s ring can’t be turned back).

**8:9 Rejoicing with Relief**

9So the king’s secretaries were called at that time, in the third month (i.e., the month of Sivan) on the twenty-third of it, and it was written in accordance with all that Mordokay ordered, to the Judahites and to the satraps, the governors, and the officials of the provinces that are from India as far as Sudan, 127 provinces, province by province in accordance with its script, and people by people in accordance with its language, and to the Judahites in accordance with their script and in accordance with their language.

10He wrote in King Xerxes’ name, sealed it with the king’s seal, and sent documents by the hand of the runners on horses, riding royal relay steeds, the offspring of racehorses, 11that the king permitted the Judahites who were in each and every town, to congregate and stand up for themselves, so as to annihilate, to kill, and to obliterate the entire force of a people or province attacking them, little ones and women, and to plunder their spoil 12on one day, in all King Xerxes’ provinces, on the thirteenth of the twelfth month (i.e., the month of Adar). 13A copy of the document to be given out as a law in each and every province, shown to all the peoples, so that the Judahites would be ready for this day to take redress from their enemies. 14The runners went out riding royal relay steeds, hastening and driven by the king’s word, and the law was given out in the Shushan fortess.

15When Mordokay went out from before the king in royal apparel, blue and white, a big gold crown, and a robe of fine linen and purple, the town of Shushan shouted and rejoiced. 16For the Judahites there was light and rejoicing, joy and dignity. 17In each and every province and in each and every town, in a place where the king’s word and his law arrived, there was rejoicing and joy for the Judahites, a banquet and a good time. Many of the peoples of the country professed to be Judahites, because dread of the Judahites had fallen upon them.

**9:1 The Slaughter**

9 So in the twelfth month (i.e., the month of Adar), on the thirteenth, the day when the king’s word and his law were due to be acted on, on the day when the Judahites’ enemies expected to be in power over them, that was turned round, so that the Judahites – they were in power over the people hostile to them. 2The Judahites in their towns in all King Xerxes’ provinces congregated to lay a hand on people who sought something bad for them, but no one stood up before them, because dread of them had fallen on all the peoples. 3All the king’s provincial officials, satraps, governors, and people doing work were elevating the Judahites, because dread of Mordokay had fallen on them, 4because Mordokay was big in the king’s house and report of him was going through all the provinces, because the man Mordokay was getting bigger and bigger.

5So the Judahites struck down all their adversaries with a stroke of the sword, with killing and obliteration, and acted against the people hostile to them in accordance with what was acceptable to them. 6In the Shushan fortess the Judahites killed and obliterated 500 people, 7and killed Parshandata, Dalphon, Aspata, 8Porata, Adalya, Aridata, 9Parmashta, Arisay, Ariday, and Vayzata, 10the ten sons of Haman ben Hammedata, the Judahites’ adversary, but they did not lay their hand on the plunder.

11That day the number of the people killed in the Shushan fortess came before the king, 12and the king said to Esther the queen, ‘Given that in the Shushan fortess the Judahites have slaughtered and obliterated 500 people, and Haman’s ten sons, in the remainder of the king’s provinces what have they done? But what’s your petition? It will be given you. What else is your request? It will be done’. 13Esther said, ‘If it’s seems good to the king, may it be given to the Judahites who are in Shushan tomorrow also to act in accordance with today’s law, and may they hang Haman’s ten sons on the pole’. 14The king said this was to be done, and a law was given out in Shushan and they hanged Haman’s ten sons.

**9:15 The Commemoration**

15So the Judahites who were in Shushan congregated again on the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and killed 300 people in Shushan, but did not lay their hand on the plunder. 16The remainder of the Judahites, who were in the king’s provinces, congregated and stood up for themselves and got relief from their enemies. They killed 75,000 of the people hostile to them, but did not lay their hand on the plunder, 17on the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. They let be on its fourteenth and made it a day of banquet and rejoicing, 18while the Judahites who were in Shushan congregated on its thirteenth and on its fourteenth, but left be on its fifteenth and made it a day of banquet and rejoicing. 19That’s why the rural Judahites, who live in the rural towns, make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar into rejoicing and banquet, a good time and one of sending portions one to his neighbour.

20Mordokay wrote down these things and sent documents to all the Judahites who were in in all King Xerxes’ provinces, near and far, 21to lay upon them to make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar, and its fifteenth day, each and every year, 22as the days when the Judahites got relief for themselves from their enemies and the month that turned for them from sadness to rejoicing and from grief to a good time—to make them days of banquet and celebration, and sending portions one to his neighbour and gifts to the needy.

23The Judahites accepted what they had begun to do and what Mordokay had written to them, 24because Haman ben Hammedata the Agagite, the adversary of all the Judahites, had thought to obliterate the Judahites and had caused the *pur* to fall (i.e., the lot) so as to crush them and obliterate them. 25But when it came before the king, he said with the document: his bad intention, which he had thought up against the Judahites, should come back onto his own head, and they should hang him and his sons on the pole. 26On account of this they called these days Purim, after the word *pur*.

**9:26 A Law that Will Last**

26bOn account of this, on account of all the words in this communiqué and what they had seen—on account of such things and what had come to them, 27the Judahites implemented and accepted for themselves and for their offspring and for all who would join them, so that it should not pass away, to make these two days, in accordance with the document about them and in accordance with their time, each and every year, 28these days being commemorated and made in each and every generation, family, province, and town. These days of Purim will not pass away from among the Judahites and their commemoration will not cease from their offspring.

29Esther the queen, daughter of Abihayil, and Mordokay the Judahite wrote with all force to implement this second communiqué about Purim. 30He sent documents to all the Judahites in the 127 provinces in Xerxes’ realm, words about well-being and truthfulness, 31to implement these days of Purim at their times as Mordokay the Judahite and Esther the queen implemented them for themselves , and as they had implemented for themselves and for their offspring words about the fasts and their outcry. 31Esther’s word implemented these statements about Purim and it was written down in the document.

10 King Xerxes put a work force on the country and the shores across the sea. 2All his forceful and strong action and the detail about the importance of Mordokay which the king conferred on him, are written down on the document with the things of the time regarding the kings of Media and Persia, aren’t they, 3because Mordokay the Judahite was second-in-command to King Xerxes, important to the Judahites, and accepted by the large number of his brothers, inquiring after what was good for his people and speaking of well-being for all its offspring.

# Daniel

The Book of Daniel divides into two halves. The first half is a series of stories, amazing but easy to understand. They tell about a series of pressures that come on four Judahite boys taken off into exile in Babylon at the beginning of the sixth century, who are well-born and clever enough to get drafted into the Babylonian administration. The question is, can they survive the pressures as well as succeed there? Will God enable them to do so? God does, and the imperial authorities recognize it.

The second half is a series of dreams and visions (expanding on a first dream vision in chapter 2), amazing and hard to understand. Each of the dreams and visions tells the story from Daniel’s own day up to a great crisis four centuries later. In the 160s BC Jerusalem was ruled from Syria as part of the Seleucid Empire, one of the entities into which Alexander the Great’s empire split. Its current ruler, Antiochus IV, banned worship in accordance with the Torah and imposed alien forms of worship in Jerusalem. The dreams and visions in Daniel envisage the sequence of empires from Daniels’ day up to Antiochus (Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, the Seleucids) and promise that at the end of this story God will put the empires down and bring in his own rule.

To judge from parallels with other dream visions from the cultural context, these stores expressed as depictions of the future are actually accounts formulated near the end of the story they tell. The actual future promise in them promises deliverance from Antiochus. And against all the odds the people of Jerusalem did get their freedom from Antiochus, and became masters of their own fate for the first time for many centuries. Of course it wasn’t the final end, but it was a kind of anticipation of the final end, like the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. The visions were thus vindicated and shown to be God-given. The pressures of the time, the persecution, and the outrageous action on the part of the emperor recurred a century or two later when the Romans annexed Judea, and the portrait of events helped people in Jesus’ day understand what was going on and to live in hope.

## 1:1 On Drawing the Line

1 In the third year of the reign of Yehoyaqim king of Judah, Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel came to Jerusalem and besieged it. 2The Lord gave into his hand Yehoyaqim king of Judah and some of the articles from God’s house, and he brought them to the country of Shin’ar, to his god’s house. He brought the articles to his god’s treasure house.

3The king said to Ashpenaz, the chief over his courtiers, to bring some of the Israelites, both some of royal descent and some of the important people 4(young men in whom there was no defect, good in appearance, insightful in terms of all smartness, knowledgeable, discerning in knowledge, and in whom there was capacity to stand in attendance in the king’s palace), and to teach them the learning and the language of the Kasdites. 5The king assigned to them a daily allocation from the king’s supplies and from the wine he drank, and to bring them up for three years and some of them would stand in attendance before the king.

6Among them were some Judahites, Daniyye’l, Hananyah, Misha’el, and Azaryah, 7but the officer over the courtiers determined on names for them. For Daniyye’l he determined on ‘Beltesha’tstsar’, for Hananyah ‘Shadrak’, for Misha’el ‘Meshack’, and for Azaryah ‘Abed Nego’.

8Daniyye’l determined in his mind that he would not defile himself with the king’s supplies and with the wine he drank, and he asked the officer over the courtiers that he might not defile himself. 9God gave Daniyye’l commitment and compassion before the officer over the courtiers, 10but the officer over the courtiers said to Daniyye’l, ‘I’m afraid of my lord the king, who assigned your food and your drink. What if he sees your faces thinner than the other young men of your generation and you risk my head with the king?’

## 1:11 The Test

11So Daniyye’l said to the guard whom the officer over the courtiers had assigned over Daniyye’l, Hananyah, Misha’el, and Azaryah, 12’Please test your servants for ten days. They could give us some legumes to eat and water to drink, 13and our appearance and the appearance of the young men who eat the king’s supplies will be visible before you. Deal with your servants in accordance with what you see’. 14He listened to them regarding this thing, and tested them for ten days. 15At the end of ten days their appearance looked better and they were heftier in body than all the young men who were eating the king’s supplies. 16So the guard would carry away their supplies and the wine they were to drink, and give them legumes.

17These young men, the four of them: God gave them knowledge and insight in all writing and smartness, while Daniyye’l had discernment in all vision and dreams. 18At the end of the time that the king had said to bring them, the head of the courtiers brought them before Nebukadne’tstsar . 19The king spoke with them, and from all of them there was not found anyone like Daniyye’l, Hananyah, Misha’el, and Azaryah. So they stood in attendance before the king. 20Every matter of discerning smartness that he asked of them, the king found them ten times superior to all the diviners and chanters that were in his entire kingdom.

21Daniyye’l was there until the first year of Koresh [Cyrus] the king.

## 2:1 Except the Gods, Whose Home Is Not with Humanity

2 In the second year of Nebukadne’tstsar ’s reign, Nebukadne’tstsar had dreams. His spirit was agitated, but his sleep came over him. 2The king said to call the diviners, chanters, charmers, and Kasdites to tell the king his dreams, and they came and stood in attendance before the king. 3The king said to them, ‘I had a dream, and my spirit is agitated to know the dream’. 4The Kasdites spoke to the king (in Aramaic): ‘Long live the king! Relate the dream to your servants and we’ll explain its meaning’. 5The king answered the Kasdites: ‘A firm decision has issued from me: if you don’t make known to me the dream and its meaning, you’ll be torn limb from limb and your houses turned into rubble. 6But if you explain the dream and its meaning, you’ll receive a reward and gift and great honour from me. Now: explain to me the dream and its meaning’.

7They answered a second time, ‘May your majesty relate the dream to his servants, and we’ll explain its meaning’. 8The king answered, ‘I know for sure that you’re buying time, because you see that a firm decision has issued from me 9that if you don’t make the dream known to me, there’s a specific decree for you. You’ve arranged with each other to tell me something false and base, until the situation changes. Now: relate the dream to me, and I’ll know that you can explain its meaning’. 10The Kasdites answered the king, ‘There’s no one on earth who can explain the thing for the king. Thus no great king or ruler has asked a thing like this of any diviner or chanter or Kasdite. 11The thing that the king is asking is so daunting that there’s no one else who can explain it to the king except the gods, whose home is not with humanity’. 12At this, the king became furious, very angry, and he said to put to death all Babel’s experts.

## 2:13 The God Who Changes Times and Eras

13So the decree went out and the experts were to be killed, and they looked for Daniyye’l and his companions to kill them. 14Daniyye’l responded with shrewdness and judgment to Aryok, the king’s chief of police, who had gone out to kill the experts in Babel. 15He answered Aryok, ‘Royal marshal, why is there the severe decree from the king?’ Aryok made the thing known to Daniyye’l, 16and Daniyye’l went and asked the king that he might give him a time, and he would explain the meaning to the king.

17Then Daniyye’l went to his house and made the thing known to his companions, Hananyah, Misha’el, and Azaryah, 18for them to ask for compassion from the God of the heavens about this mystery, so that Daniyye’l and his companions might not be put to death, with the rest of the experts in Babel.

19Then the mystery was revealed to Daniyye’l in a vision by night. So Daniyye’l blessed the God of the heavens. 20Daniyye’l avowed:

The name of God be blessed from age to age,

because smartness and strength are his!

21He changes times and eras,

removes kings and establishes kings.

He gives smartness to the smart,

knowledge to the people who know discernment.

22He reveals things that are deep and hidden;

he knows what’s in the dark, and light dwells with him.

23God of my ancestors, I confess and praise you,

because you’ve given me smartness and strength.

You’ve now made known to me what we asked of you.

you’ve made known to us the thing that the king asked.

24Thus Daniyye’l went to Aryok, whom the king had appointed to kill Babel’s experts. He came and said this to him: ‘Don’t kill the experts in Babel. Take me to the king and I’ll explain the meaning to the king’.

## 2:25 The Dream Statue

25With haste Aryok took Daniyye’l before the king and said this to him: ‘I’ve found a man from the Judahite exiles who can make known the meaning to the king’. 26The king answered Daniyye’l (whose name was Beltesha’tstsar), ‘Can you make known to me the dream that I saw, and its meaning?’ 27Daniyye’l answered before the king, ‘The mystery about which the king asked—experts, chanters, diviners and exorcists can’t explain it to the king. 28But there is a God in the heavens revealing mysteries, and he has made known to King Nebukadne’tstsar what will happen at the end of the time.

Your dream, the visions in your head in bed, was this. 29Your majesty, in bed your thoughts came concerning what will happen after this, and the one who reveals mysteries made known to you what will happen. 30And I—not because of smartness that there is in me above any other human being has this mystery been revealed to me, but in order that the meaning should be made known to the king, and you may know the thoughts in your mind.

31Your majesty, you were looking, and there – a large statue. This statue was big and its brightness extraordinary, standing in front of you, an awe-inspiring sight. 32That statue: its head was of fine gold, its chest and its arms of silver, its stomach and its sides of copper, 33its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of pottery. 34You watched as a stone broke off, not by hands, and hit the statue on its feet of iron and pottery, and shattered them. 35All at once the iron, the pottery, the copper, the silver, and the gold shattered. They became like chaff from a summer threshing-floor. The wind carried them. No place was found for them. But the stone that hit the statue became a big crag and filled the entire earth.

36That was the dream. We will relate its meaning before the king.

## 2:37 After Nebukadne’tstsar, What?

37You, your majesty, king of kings, to whom the God of the heavens gave kingship, sovereignty, power, and honour, 38and gave into your hand, wherever they live, human beings, animals of the wild, and birds of the heavens, and made you rule over all of them—you’re the head of gold. 39In your place another kingship will arise, inferior to you, and another, third kingship, of copper, which will rule over the entire earth. 40The fourth kingship will be strong as iron, because iron shatters and smashes anything. Like iron that crushes, it will shatter and crush all these. 41In that you saw the feet and toes partly of clay pottery and partly of iron, it will be a split kingship, but some of the toughness of iron will be in it. Insofar as you saw iron mixed with earthen pottery, 42and the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, to some extent the kingship will be strong but in part it will be fragile. 43In that you saw the iron mixed with earthen pottery, human beings will unite, but they won’t stick with each other, as iron doesn’t stick with pottery.

44In the time of those kings, the God of the heavens will set up a kingship that won’t be destroyed through the ages; the kingship won’t pass to another people. It will shatter and terminate all these kingships, and it will stand through the ages, 45insofar as you saw that a stone broke off from the crag, not by hands, and shattered the iron, the copper, the pottery, the silver, and the gold.

The great God has made known to the king what will happen after this. The dream is true. Its meaning is reliable’.

46King Nebukadne’tstsar fell on his face and bowed down before Daniyye’l. He said to present an offering and fragrant oblations to him. 47The king answered Daniyye’l, ‘Indeed your God is God of gods, Lord of kings, and revealer of mysteries, that you can reveal this mystery’. 48The king elevated Daniyye’l and gave him many great gifts. He would have made him ruler over the entire province of Babel and chief officer over all the experts in Babel, 49but Daniyye’l asked the king to appoint Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego over the administration of the province of Babel, with Daniyye’l at the king’s court.

## 3:1 On Facing the Music

3 Nebukadne’tstsar the king made a gold statue thirty metres in height, three metres in width. He set it up in the Dura Valley in the province of Babel. 2Nebukadne’tstsar the king sent to assemble the satraps, the governors, and the commissioners, the counsellors, the treasurers, the judges, the officers, and all the provincial officials, to come for the dedication of the statue that Nebukadne’tstsar the king had set up. 3They assembled, the satraps, the governors, and the commissioners, the counsellors, the treasurers, the judges, the officers, and all the provincial officials, for the dedication of the statue that Nebukadne’tstsar the king had set up, and they stood in front of the statue that Nebukadne’tstsar had set up.

4The herald called out forcefully, ‘To you it is being declared, peoples, nations, and languages, 5at the time when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, cithara, trigon, psaltery, ensemble, and all types of music, you’re to fall and bow down to the gold statue that Nebukadne’tstsar the king has set up. 6Anyone who doesn’t fall and bow down will at that moment be thrown inside a red-hot blazing furnace’. 7So at that time when all the peoples heard the sound of the horn, pipe, cithara, trigon, psaltery, and all types of music, all the peoples, the nations, and the languages would bow down to the gold statue that Nebukadne’tstsar the king had set up.

8So at that time some Kasdites came and denounced the Judahites. They avowed to King Nebukadne’tstsar : ‘Long live the king! 10Your majesty, you gave notice that anyone who hears the sound of the horn, pipe, cithara, trigon, psaltery, ensemble, and all types of music is to fall and bow down to the gold image, 11and anyone who doesn’t fall and bow down will be thrown inside a red-hot blazing furnace. 12There are some Judahites whom you appointed over the business of the province of Babel, Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed-nego. These men have not taken any notice of you, your majesty. They haven’t revered your gods or bowed down to the gold image that you’ve set up’.

## 3:13 But Even If Our God Doesn’t Rescue Us…

13Nebukadne’tstsar in rage and fury said to bring Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego, and these men were brought before the king. 14Nebuchadnezar avowed to them: ‘Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego, do you really not revere my gods and bow down to the gold statue that I’ve set up? 15If you’re indeed now ready, at the time when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, cithara, trigon, psaltery, ensemble, and all types of music, to fall and bow down to the statue that I’ve made….

But if you won’t bow down, at that moment you’ll be thrown inside a red-hot blazing furnace. And who is the god who could rescue you from my hand?’ 16Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego answered, ‘King Nebukadne’tstsar, we don’t need to make any response to this. 17If our God, whom we revere, exists, he’s able to rescue us from the red-hot blazing furnace, and he will rescue us from your hand, your majesty. 18But if he doesn’t, be it known to you, your majesty, that we won’t revere your gods or bow down to the gold statue that you’ve set up’.

19Nebukadne’tstsar filled with wrath, and the expression on his face toward Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego changed. He avowed that they should heat the furnace seven times higher than it was customary to heat it. 20He said to the strongest men in his forces to tie up Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego, to throw them into the red-hot blazing furnace. 21These men were tied up in their trousers, shirts, headwear, and other clothes, and thrown inside the red-hot blazing furnace. 22So because of the king’s strict word, when the furnace was heated excessively, the flame from the fire killed those men who took up Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego.

## 3:23 Four Men Walking Free in the Furnace

23So these three men, Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego, fell inside the red-hot blazing furnace, tied up. 24Then Nebukadne’tstsar the king was startled and stood up in haste. He avowed to his advisers, ‘Wasn’t it three men, bound, that we threw inside the furnace?’ They answered the king, ‘Certainly, your majesty’. 25He avowed, ‘There, I see four men, free, walking about inside the fire. There’s no affect on them. The appearance of the fourth is like a divine being’.

26Nebukadne’tstsar went near the door of the red-hot blazing furnace. He avowed, ‘Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed-nego, servants of God on High, come out, come here’. Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego came out from inside the fire. 27The satraps, the governors, and the commissioners, and the king’s advisers, assembled. They looked at these men, on whose bodies the fire had not had power and the hair on whose head was not singed. Their trousers were unaffected. The smell of the fire had not come on them.

28Nebukadne’tstsar avowed, ‘The God of Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego be blessed, who’s sent his envoy and rescued his servants who entrusted themselves to him. They defied the king’s word and gave up their body so they might not revere or bow down to any god but their God. 29Notice is given by me that any people, nation, or tongue that says something remiss about the God of Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego will be torn limb from limb and his house turned into rubble, because there’s no other god who can rescue like this’.30The king promoted Shadrak, Meshak, and Abed Nego in the province of Babel.

## 4:1 Nebukadne’tstsar Gives His Testimony

4 ‘Nebukadne’tstsar the king to all the peoples, the nations, and the languages that live in all the earth. May your well-being abound! 2It has seemed good to me to relate the signs and wonders that God on High has done with me. 3His signs—how great! His wonders—how mighty! His kingship is a kingship that lasts permanently, his rule continues generation after generation!

4I, Nebukadne’tstsar, was at peace in my house, flourishing in my palace. 5I had a dream and it disturbed me, and images while I was in bed, visions that came into my head, alarmed me. 6Notice was given by me to bring all Babel’s experts so they could make known the dream’s meaning. 7The diviners, the chanters, the Kasdites, and the exorcists came, and I related the dream before them, but they couldn’t make its meaning known to me.

8Finally there came before me Daniyye’l, whose name is Beltesha’tstsar in accordance with my God’s name, and in whom is the spirit of the sacred gods. I related the dream before him: 9”Beltesha’tstsar, chief of the diviners, I know that the spirit of the sacred gods is in you and that no mystery defeats you. Tell me the visions in the dream that I had, and its meaning.

10The visions that came into my head: I looked, and there, a tree in the middle of the earth. Its height was big. 11The tree grew and became mighty. Its height reached the heavens. It was visible to the end of the entire earth. 12Its foliage was lovely, its fruit abundant, and there was food for everyone in it. Beneath it the animals of the wild sheltered. In its branches the birds of the heavens dwelt. From it all humanity fed.

## 4:13 The Dream Should Be for Your Enemy

13I looked in the visions that came into my head in bed, and there, a lookout, a sacred being, coming down from the heavens. 14He called forcefully, ‘Fell the tree, cut off its branches, strip off its foliage, scatter its fruit. The animals must flee from beneath it, the birds from its branches. 15Yet leave its rooted stump in the earth. With a ring of iron and copper, with the grass of the wild, with the dew of the heavens he is to be watered, and with the animals his share will be in the plants of the earth. 16His mind is to be changed from that of a human being; the mind of an animal is to be given him. Seven periods are to pass over him.

17The decision is by the decree of the lookouts, the intent is by the word of the sacred ones, with the object that human beings may acknowledge that the One on High rules over human kingship. He can give it to whomever he wishes and set up over it the lowest of people’”.

18I, King Nebukadne’tstsar , had this dream. You, Beltesha’tstsar, tell me its meaning, since all my kingdom’s experts can’t make its meaning known to me. But you can, because the spirit of the sacred gods is in you’.

19Daniyye’l, whose name was Beltesha’tstsar, was overcome at that very moment. His thoughts alarmed him. The king avowed, ‘Beltesha’tstsar, the dream and its meaning shouldn’t alarm you’. Daniyye’l avowed, ‘My lord, the dream should be for your enemy, its meaning for your foe. 20The tree that you saw that grew and became mighty, its height reached the heavens and it was visible to the end of the entire earth, 21its foliage was lovely, its fruit abundant, and there was food for everyone in it, beneath it animals of the wild sheltered, in its branches the birds of the heavens dwelt: 22you, your majesty, are the one who’s grown and become mighty. Your stature has grown and reached the heavens, your rule to the end of the earth.

## 4:23 Break with Your Wrongdoings by Faithfulness

23In that your majesty saw a lookout, a sacred one, come down from the heavens and say, “Fell the tree, destroy it, yet leave its rooted stump in the earth; with a ring of iron and copper, with the grass of the wild, with the dew of the heavens he’s to be watered, and with the animals his share will be, until seven periods pass over him”: 24this is the meaning, your majesty.

It is the decision of the One on High that has befallen my lord the king. 25They’re going to lead you away from human beings, and your home will be with the animals of the wild. They’ll feed you plants, like oxen, and water you with dew from the heavens. Seven periods will pass over you, until you acknowledge that the One on High rules over human kingship. He can give it to whomever he wishes. 26But in that they said to leave the rooted stump of the tree: your kingship is going to arise for you from when you acknowledge that the heavens rule.

27But, your majesty, may my counsel be pleasing to you. Break with your wrongdoings by faithfulness, your waywardness by grace to the humble, in case there may be an extending of your being at peace’.

28It all befell King Nebukadne’tstsar . 29At the end of twelve months, he was walking on the royal palace in Babel. 30The king avowed, ‘This is great Babel, which I myself built as a royal home by my sovereign might and for my majestic honour!’

## 4:31 A Warning Implemented

31The thing still on the king’s lips, a voice fell from the heavens: ‘To you they’re saying, King Nebukadne’tstsar : your kingship has passed from you. 32They’re going to lead you away from human beings and your home will be with the animals of the wild. They’ll feed you plants, like oxen. Seven periods will pass over you, until you acknowledge that the One on High rules over human kingship and can give it to whomever he wishes’.

33At that moment the thing was fulfilled upon Nebukadne’tstsar . He was led away from human beings, he ate plants, like oxen, and his body was watered with the dew of the heavens, until his hair had grown long like eagles and his nails like birds.

34’At the end of the time, I, Nebukadne’tstsar , raised my eyes to the heavens. My sanity came back to me and I blessed the One on High, praised and honoured the One Who Lives Permanently, whose rule is a rule that lasts permanently, whose kingship continues generation after generation. 35All earth’s inhabitants are counted as nothing. He acts in accordance with his wishes with the force in the heavens and the inhabitants of the earth. There’s no one who can restrain his hand or say to him, “What have you done?”

36At that time, my sanity came back to me, and as for the honour of my kingship, my glory and my splendour came back to me. My advisers and my important people sought audience with me. I was established over my kingdom, and exceeding power was added to me. Now I, Nebukadne’tstsar , praise, exalt, and honour the King of the Heavens, all of whose deeds are true and his ways just, and who can put down people who walk in pride’.

## 5:1 A Party Interrupted

5 Belsha’tstsar the king served a big dinner for his thousand important people, and in the presence of the thousand he was drinking wine. 2Belsha’tstsar said, when he tasted the wine, to bring the gold and silver vessels that Nebukadne’tstsar his father had taken from the palace in Jerusalem so they could drink from them—the king, his important people, his queens, and his consorts. 3The gold and silver vessels that had been taken from the palace in God’s house in Jerusalem were brought in, and they drank from them—the king, his important people, his queens, and his consorts. 4They drank wine and praised gods of gold and silver, copper, iron, wood, and stone.

5At that moment the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote, over against the lamp-stand, on the plaster of the wall of the king’s palace. The king saw the palm of the hand that wrote. 6The king—his face changed colour. His thoughts alarmed him. His hip joints went loose and his knees knocked one against the other. 7The king called forcefully to bring the chanters, Kasdites, and exorcists. The king avowed to the smart people of Babel, ‘Anyone who can read this writing and tell me its meaning will wear the purple, and the gold chain on his neck, and will rule as Third in the kingdom’.

8All the king’s smart people came, but they couldn’t read the writing or make known its meaning to the king. 9King Belsha’tstsar became very alarmed, his face changed colour further, and his important people were put in turmoil.

## 5:10 You Can Keep Your Rewards

10The queen—because of the words of the king and his important people, she came into the banquet hall. The queen avowed, ‘Long live the king! Your thoughts shouldn’t alarm you or your face change colour. 11There’a man in your kingdom in whom is the spirit of the sacred gods. In your father’s days, illumination, insight, and smartness like the gods’ smartness was found in him. King Nebukadne’tstsar your father appointed him as chief of the diviners, chanters, Kasdites, and exorcists—your father as king. 12Since a remarkable spirit, knowledge, and insight—interpreting dreams, explaining puzzles, and resolving enigmas—was found in him, in Daniyye’l whom the king named Beltesha’tstsar, Daniyye’l should now be called. He’ll relate the meaning’.

13Daniyye’l was brought before the king. The king avowed to Daniyye’l, ‘You are Daniyye’l, one of the exiles from Judah that my father as king brought from Judah. 14I’ve heard about you, that the spirit of the gods is in you, and illumination, insight, and remarkable smartness are found in you. 15The smart people (the chanters) have now been brought before me so they could read this writing and make its meaning known to me, but they couldn’t relate the words’ meaning. 16I myself have heard about you, that you can explain meanings and resolve enigmas. If you can now read the writing and make known its meaning to me, you will wear the purple and the gold chain on your neck, and rule as Third in the kingdom’.

17Daniyye’l answered before the king, ‘Your gifts can be for you; give your gifts to someone else. Nevertheless I’ll read the writing for your majesty and make known the meaning to him.

## 5:18 Weighed and Found Wanting

18You, your majesty—God on High gave kingship, greatness, majesty, and honour to Nebukadne’tstsar , your father. 19Because of the greatness given him, all peoples, nations, and languages trembled and feared before him. Whomever he wished, he killed, and whomever he wished, he kept alive. Whomever he wished, he elevated, and whomever he wished, he put down. 20When his mind became elevated and his spirit arrogant, so that he became presumptuous, he was taken from his royal throne, and his honour was removed from him. 21He was led away from human beings, and his mind was made like an animal, his dwelling with wild donkeys. They fed him grass like oxen and his body was watered with the dew of the heavens, until he acknowledged that God on High rules over human kingship and can set up over it whomever he wishes.

22But you, his son, Belsha’tstsar, have not humbled your mind because you knew all this, 23but have elevated yourself above the Lord of the Heavens. They brought the vessels from his house before you, and you, your important people, your queens, and your consorts have drunk wine in them, and praised gods of silver and gold, copper, iron, wood, and stone, that don’t see, don’t hear, and don’t know. But the God who has your breath in his hand, with all your ways, you haven’t glorified.

24From before him the palm of the hand was sent, and this writing inscribed. 25This is the writing that was inscribed: “Counted at a mina, a teqel, and two halves”. 26This is the meaning of the words: “A mina”: God countedout [*mena*]the days of your kingship and handed it over. 27”A teqel”: you’ve been weighed [*teqal*]on the scales and found deficient. 28”A half”: your kingship has been broken in half [*peras*]and given to Media and Persia’. 29Belsha’tstsar gave orders and they clothed Daniyye’l with the purple and with the gold chain on his neck and called out concerning him that he would rule as Third in the kingdom.

30That night Belsha’tstsar the Kasdite king was killed, 31and Darius [Dareyavesh] the Mede acquired the kingship, as a man of sixty-two years.

## 6:1 Standing Firm in Faith

6 It seemed good to Darius to appoint over his kingdom 120 satraps who would be spread through the entire kingdom, 2and over them three supervisors, of whom Daniyye’l was one, to whom these satraps would give account, and the king would not be troubled. 3This man Daniyye’l distinguished himself above the other supervisors and satraps because of the remarkable spirit in him, and the king was inclined to appoint him over the entire kingdom.

4The supervisors and satraps were seeking to find some fault on Daniyye’l’s part in the kingdom’s affairs, but they couldn’t find any fault or corruption because he was trustworthy; no negligence or corruption could be found against him. 5Those men said, ‘We shall not find any fault in this Daniyye’l unless we find it regarding his God’s law’.

6So these supervisors and satraps mustered to see the king and said this to him: ‘Long live Darius the king! 7All the supervisors of the kingdom, the governors, the satraps, the advisers, and the commissioners have taken counsel about the setting up of a royal decree and the enforcing of an injunction that anyone who makes a petition of any god or human being for thirty days, except of you, your majesty, will be thrown into a lion pit. 8Your majesty, issue the injunction now and sign the document, so that it may not be changed, as a law of Media and Persia, which won’t pass away’. 9So King Darius signed the document and the injunction.

10When Daniyye’l got to know that the document had been signed, he went to his house with its windows open at its top, facing Jerusalem, and three times a day he’d get down on his knees and pray and give thanks before his God, because he’d been doing so before this.

## 6:11 The Frustrated King

11Those men mustered and found Daniyye’l petitioning and praying for grace before his God. 12They came near and spoke before the king about the royal injunction: ‘You signed an injunction, didn’t you, that anyone who petitions any god or human being for thirty days except you, your majesty, will be thrown into the lion pit’. The king answered, ‘The thing stands firm, as a law of Media and Persia, which won’t pass away’. 13They answered before the king, ‘Daniyye’l, one of the exiles from Judah, has not taken notice of you, your majesty, or of the injunction that you signed. Three times a day he makes his petition’.

14When he heard the thing, he was very displeased in himself, and regarding Daniyye’l he set his mind to delivering him. Until sundown he was working on rescuing him. 15Then those men mustered and said to the king, ‘Your majesty, acknowledge that it is a law of Media and Persia that any injunction or decree that the king sets up cannot be changed’. 16Then the king said, and they brought Daniyye’l and threw him into the lion pit.

The king avowed to Daniyye’l, ‘Your God whom you revere continually must deliver you’. 17A stone was brought and put on the mouth of the pit, and the king sealed it with his signet and with the signets of his important people, so that the intention regarding Daniyye’l might not be changed. 18The king went off to his palace. He spent the night without food; nothing was brought before him. Sleep eluded him.

## 6:19 Shutting the Lions’ Mouths

19In the morning, the king got up at first light and went off in haste to the lion pit. 20As he drew near to the pit, he cried in an anguished voice to Daniyye’l. The king avowed, ‘Daniyye’l, servant of the living God, your God whom you revere continually—could he deliver you from the lions?’ 21Daniyye’l spoke with the king: ‘Long live the king! 22God sent his envoy and shut the lions’ mouth. They haven’t injured me, because before him innocence was found in me—and also before you, your majesty, I’ve done no injury’.

23The king was very glad about him, and said to get Daniyye’l up out of the pit. So Daniyye’l was got up out of the pit. No injury was found in him, because he had trusted in his God. 24The king said, and they brought those men who had attacked Daniyye’l and threw them into the lion pit, them, their children, and their wives. They hadn’t reached the ground in the pit before the lions overpowered them and crushed all their bones.

25Then Darius the king wrote to all peoples, nations, and tongues that live in the entire earth: ‘May your well-being abound! 26From me notice is given that in every domain of my kingdom, people must tremble and fear before Daniyye’l’s God, because he is the living God and he stands permanently. His kingship is one that will experience no injury, his rule will continue to the end. 27He delivers and rescues and does signs and wonders in the heavens and in the earth. He rescued Daniyye’l from the hand of the lions’.

28So this Daniyye’l flourished during the reign of Darius and during the reign of Cyrus the Persian.

## 7:1 The Four Weird Animals

1In the first year of Belsha’tstsar king of Babel, Daniyye’l had a dream, visions that came into his head in bed. He wrote the dream down.

The beginning of the account: 2Daniyye’l avowed, ‘I looked in my vision during the night, and there, the four winds of the heavens stirring up the Great Sea, 3and four huge animals coming up out of the sea, each different from the others.

* 4The first was like a lion but it had an eagle’s wings. I looked as its wings were plucked off and it was lifted up from the ground and set on its feet like a human being, and a human mind was given to it.
* 5And there—another, second animal. It was like a bear, but it was lifted up on one side, with three ribs in its mouth, between its teeth. They said this to it: “Get up, eat lots of meat!”
* 6After that, I looked, and there—another, like a leopard, but it had four bird’s wings on its back. The animal had four heads, and authority was given it.
* 7After that, I looked in the night visions and there—a fourth animal, fearsome, terrifying, and extremely powerful. It had huge iron teeth, devouring, crushing, and trampling what was left with its feet. It was different from all the animals that were before it. It had ten horns. 8I looked at the horns, and there—another small horn came up among them, and three of the first horns were uprooted before it. And there—something like human eyes in this horn, and a mouth speaking great things.

## 7:9 A Throne Scene

9I looked as

Thrones were set in place

and someone advanced in years sat down.

His clothing was like white snow,

the hair of his head like lamb’s wool.

His throne was flashes of flame,

its rings a blazing flame.

10A river of flame was flowing,

coming out from before him.

A thousand thousands ministered to him,

a myriad myriads stood in attendance before him.

The court sat,

and books were opened.

11I looked because of the sound of the great things that the horn was speaking. I looked as the animal was killed. Its body was destroyed and given to the burning fire. 12The rest of the animals: their authority was taken away, but an extension of their lives was given to them for a set time. 13I looked in my night visions, and there,

With the clouds in the heavens

someone like a human being came.

He reached the one advanced in years

and they presented him before him.

14To him was given authority, honour, and kingship;

all peoples, nations, and languages were to revere him.

His authority is an authority that lasts permanently,

that won’t pass away,

his kingship one that won’t be destroyed.

15I (Daniyye’l) was disturbed in my spirit within me at this. The visions that came into my head alarmed me. 16I came near one of those standing in attendance and asked him the truth about all this. He told me and made known the meaning of the thing: 17”These huge animals, of which there were four: four kings will arise from the earth, 18but the sacred ones on high will acquire the kingship. They will take hold of the kingship permanently, lastingly and permanently”.

## 7:19 One Who Talks Big is Silenced

19I wanted to understand about the fourth animal which was different from all of them (extremely fearsome, its iron teeth, its copper claws), devouring, crushing, and trampling what was left with its feet, 20and about the ten horns that were on its head, and the one that came up and three fell before it—and that horn had eyes and a mouth speaking great things, and its appearance was bigger than its companions. 21I looked, and that horn made war with the sacred ones and prevailed over them, 22until the one advanced in years came and judgment was given for the sacred ones on high, and the time arrived and the sacred ones took hold of the kingship.

23He said this:

* The fourth animal—there will be a fourth kingship in the earth that will be different from all the kingships. It will devour the entire earth, tread it down, and crush it.
* 24The ten horns—from that kingship ten kings will arise.
* After them another will arise. He will be different from those before him. He will bring low three kings. 25He will say things against the One on High and oppress the sacred ones on high. He will try to change times and a law. They will be given into his hand for a period, periods, and half a period. 26But the court will sit and take away his authority, to annihilate it and obliterate it permanently. 27The kingship, the authority, and the greatness of the kingships under the entire heavens will be given to the people of the sacred ones on high. Its kingship will be a kingship lasting permanently. All authorities will revere and bow down to it.

28That’s the end of the account.

I Daniyye’l—my thoughts were very alarming to me. My face changed colour. I kept the thing in my mind’.

## 8:1 A Ram, a Goat, and the Terminating of Offerings

1In the third year of the reign of Belsha’tstsar the king, a vision appeared to me (me, Daniyye’l), after the one that appeared to me earlier. 2I looked in the vision (when I saw it, I was in Shushan, the fortress town in Elam Province)—I looked in the vision and I was at the Ulay Gate. 3I raised my eyes and looked, and there—a ram standing before the gate. It had two horns. The horns were high, but the one was higher than the other. The high one came up later. 4I looked at the ram charging west and north and south. No animals could stand before it. There was no one could rescue from its hand. It acted according to its wishes and got big.

5As I was considering it, there, a male goat coming from the west across the face of the entire earth, without touching the ground. The goat, a conspicuous horn between its eyes, 6came to the ram that possessed the two horns, which I had seen standing before the gate, and ran at it in energetic wrath. 7I looked at it reaching the ram. It raged at it, struck the ram down, and broke its two horns. The ram didn’t have the energy to stand before it. It threw it to the earth and trampled it. There was no one could rescue the ram from its hand.

8The male goat grew very big, but just when it had become so substantial, the big horn broke. Four conspicuous ones came up in its place, toward the four winds in the heavens. 9From one of them came up a small horn. It grew abundantly toward the south and toward the east and toward the splendour. 10It grew as far as the army of the heavens, and made some of the army, some of the stars, fall to earth, and it trampled them. 11It grew as far as the officer over the army. By it the regular offering was removed and his sacred place and an army were overthrown. 12It will be set over the regular offering in rebellion; it will throw truthfulness to the ground. It will act and succeed.

## 8:13 The Greek King Who Goes Too Far

13I heard a sacred one speaking, and another sacred being said to the one who was speaking, ‘How long will the vision be—the regular offering and the desolating rebellion, the giving of both the sacred place and the army to trampling?’ 14He said to me, ‘For 2,300 evenings and mornings. But the sacred place will emerge in the right’.

15While I (Daniyye’l) was looking at the vision and seeking understanding, there—standing in front of me was a human-like person, 16and I heard a human voice within Ulay. It called, ‘Gabriel, help this man understand the vision’. 17He came near where I was standing. When he came, I was overwhelmed and I fell on my face. He said to me, ‘Understand, young man, that the vision relates to the time of the end’. 18When he spoke with me, I fell into a trance, on the face of the ground, but he touched me and stood me up where I had been standing. 19He said, ‘Here am I; I’m going to make known to you what will happen at the conclusion of the condemnation, because it’s for the time set for the end.

* 20The ram that you saw, having two horns, is the kings of Media and Persia.
* 21The buck (the he-goat) is the king of Greece.
* The big horn between its eyes—that’s the first king.
* 22The one that broke and four stood up in its place: four kingships will stand up from a nation, but not with its energy.
* 23At the conclusion of their kingship, when the rebels reach full measure, a king will arise fierce of face and understanding conundrums. 24His energy will be substantial, but not by his own energy. He will perform extraordinary acts of devastation and he will succeed when he acts. He will devastate the substantial, and a people of sacred ones, 25with his insight. He will succeed in deceit through his power and through his mind he will get big. With ease he will devastate many, and he will stand against the officer-in-chief. But without a human hand he will break.

26The vision of evening and morning: what has been said is the truth. You, seal the vision, because it relates to many days’.

27I (Daniyye’l) fell ill for some days, but got up and performed the king’s business. But I was overcome by the vision and there was no one could help me understand it.

## 9:1 What Happened to the Seventy Years of Jeremiah 29?

9 In the first year of Darius son of Ahasweros, of Median birth, who was made king over the kingdom of the Kasdites—2in the first year of his reign, I (Daniyye’l) was considering in the scriptures the number of years that were (Yahweh’s word to Yirmeyah the prophet) to be fulfilled for Jerusalem’s wastes, seventy years.

3I set my face toward the Lord God, to make a plea and prayers for grace with fasting, sack, and ash. 4I pleaded with Yahweh my God and made confession: ‘Oh, Lord, great and awe-inspiring God, who keeps pact and commitment to people who are loyal to him and keep his orders: 5we did wrong, we were wayward, we were faithless, we rebelled, we turned aside from your orders and your rulings. 6We didn’t listen to your servants the prophets who spoke in your name to our kings, our officials, and our ancestors, and to all the country’s people.

7To you, Lord, belongs the right; to us, shame of face this very day, to Judah’s people, to Jerusalem’s inhabitants, and to all Israel, near and far, in all the countries where you drove them because of their trespass that they committed against you. 8Yahweh, to us belongs shame of face, to our kings, to our officials, and to our ancestors, who did wrong to you. 9To the Lord our God belong compassion and acts of pardon, because we rebelled against him 9and didn’t listen to the voice of Yahweh our God by walking according to his instructions that he set before us by means of his servants the prophets. 11All Israel transgressed your instruction and turned aside so as not to listen to your voice.

## 9:11 Lord, Listen! Lord, Pardon!

11bThe vow and the oath that was written in the instruction of Moses, God’s servant, overwhelmed us. Because we did wrong to him, 12he confirmed his word that he spoke against us and against the people who exercised authority over us, by bringing great bad fortune upon us that hasn’t been done under the entire heavens as it has been done in Jerusalem.

13As it is written in Moses’ instruction, all this bad fortune came upon us, but we didn’t seek the goodwill of Yahweh our God by turning away from our waywardness and gaining insight through your truthfulness, 14so Yahweh watched over this bad fortune and brought it on us, because Yahweh our God was in the right in all his actions that he undertook, and we didn’t listen to his voice.

15But now, Lord our God, who got your people out of the country of Egypt with a strong hand and made yourself a name this very day, we did wrong, we were faithless. 16Lord, in accordance with all your faithfulness, please may your anger and your wrath turn back from your town, Jerusalem, your sacred mountain, because through our wrongdoings and our ancestors’ wayward acts, Jerusalem and your people became an object of reviling to all the people round us.

17So now, listen, our God, to your servant’s plea and to his prayers for grace, and shine your face on your desolate sanctuary, for the Lord’s sake. 18Bend your ear, my God, and listen, open your eyes and look at our desolations and at the town over which your name is called, because it’s not on the basis of our faithful acts that we’re letting our prayers for grace fall before you, but on the basis of your abundant compassion. 19Lord, listen! Lord, pardon! Lord, heed and act, and don’t delay, for your sake, my God, because your name is called over your town and over your people’.

## 9:20 Seventy Sevens until That King Who Goes Too Far

20I was still speaking, pleading, confessing my wrongdoing and the wrongdoing of my people Israel, and letting my prayers for grace fall before Yahweh my God for my God’s sacred mountain—21I was still speaking in my plea when Gabri’el, the person whom I saw in the vision I had before, tired and weary, reached me at the time of the evening offering 22and enabled me to understand. He spoke with me: ‘Daniyye’l, I have now come out to give you insight in understanding. 23At the beginning of your prayers for grace a word went out, and I myself have come to relate it, because you’re held in high regard. So understand the word and gain understanding into the vision.

24Seventy sevens have been assigned for your people and for your sacred town to bring the rebellion to an end, to do away with wrongdoings, to wipe away waywardness, to bring permanent faithfulness, to seal vision and prophet, and to anoint a most sacred place.

25You’re to acknowledge and perceive:

* from the issuing of a word for restoring and building up Jerusalem to an anointed, a leader, there are seven sevens
* for sixty-two sevens it will again be built up, square and moat
* but in the pressure of the times, 26after the sixty-two sevens, an anointed will be cut off, and will have neither the town nor the sacred place; a leader to come will devastate a people and its end will come by a flood, but until the end of battle, devastations are determined
* 27a pact will prevail for many people for one seven, for half the seven he will suspend sacrifice and offering, and upon a wing will be a great abomination, desolating, until a conclusion and something decreed overwhelms the desolator.

## 10:1 The Last Great Vision

10 In the third year of Cyrus king of Persia, a word revealed itself to Daniyye’l who was called Beltesha’tstsar. The word was true: a great war. He understood the word; he had understanding through the vision.

2’In those days I (Daniyye’l) was mourning for a period of three weeks. 3I ate no food held in high regard; meat and wine didn’t come into my mouth. I didn’t put on makeup at all until the completion of the period of three weeks.

4On the twenty-fourth day of the first month I was on the bank of the big river (i.e., Hiddeqel [the Tigris]). 5I raised my eyes and looked, and there, a man clothed in linen, his hips belted with pure gold, 6his body like topaz, his face like the brightness of lightning, his eyes like fiery torches, his arms and his feet like the gleam of polished copper, and the sound of his words like the sound of thunder. 7I (Daniyye’l) alone saw this vision. The people who were with me didn’t see the vision, yet a great terror fell on them and they fled into hiding. 8So I remained alone. I looked at this great vision. No energy remained in me. My vigour turned to devastation in me. I didn’t retain any energy.

9I heard the sound of his words, but when I heard the sound of his words, I went into a trance onto my face, with my face to the ground. 10But there, a hand touched me and shook me onto my knees and the palms of my hands. 11He said to me, ‘Daniyye’l, man held in high regard, understand the words that I’m going to speak to you. Stand up in your place, because I’ve now been sent to you’. When he spoke this word with me, I stood up, trembling.

## 10:12 A Battle in the Heavens

12He said to me, ‘Don’t be afraid, Daniyye’l, because from the first day that you set your mind to understand and humble yourself before your God, your words were heard. I’ve come because of your words. 13The officer over the kingdom of Persia was standing over against me for twenty-one days, but there, Mika’el, one of the senior officers, came to help me. So I had remained there with the kings of Persia, 14but I’ve come to enable you to understand what will happen to your people at the end of the time, because there’s yet a vision for that time’.

15While he spoke with me in accordance with these words, I put my face to the ground and kept silence. 16But there, someone with the likeness of human beings touched my lips, and I opened my mouth and spoke to the one standing over against me: ‘My lord, because of the vision my convulsions have overthrown me. No energy has remained in me. 17How can this servant of my lord speak with this my lord when I—no energy now stays in me, no breath remains in me’.

18The one with a human appearance touched me again and strengthened me. 19He said, ‘Don’t be afraid, man held in high regard, things will be well for you. Be strong, be strong’. When he had spoken with me I asserted my strength and said, ‘My lord may speak, because you’ve strengthened me”.

20He said, ‘You know why I’ve come to you, don’t you. Now I shall go back to do battle with the officer over Persia. When I go off, there, the officer over Greece is going to come. 21Nevertheless, I shall tell you what is inscribed in the truthful document. No one is asserting his strength with me against these except Mika’el, your [people’s] officer. 11 But I—in the first year of Darius the Mede, my place was to strengthen and fortify him.

## 11:2 On Earth as It Is in the Heavens

2Now I shall tell you some truth. There, three kings more are going to stand for Persia, and a fourth will possess great wealth, more than anyone. In accordance with the strength he gets through his wealth, he will stir up everyone against the kingdom of Greece. 3A strong man king will arise, rule a great dominion, and act in accordance with his will. 4But as soon as he arises, his kingdom will break and scatter to the four winds of the heavens, and not to his posterity nor in accordance with the dominion that he ruled, because his kingdom will uproot and belong to other people apart from these.

5The southern king will be strong, but one of his officers will be stronger than him, and he will rule a greater dominion than his dominion. 6At the end of some years people will make an alliance, and the southern king’s daughter will come to the northern king to effect an agreement. But she won’t retain the energy of her strength, nor will his strength stand. She will be given up, she and her escorts and the one who fathered her and the one who gave her strength.

In time 7one of the shoots from her roots will stand in his place. He will come against the force and come into the stronghold of the northern king. He will act against them and be strong. 8Also their gods with their images, with their articles held in high regard, gold and silver, he will take captive to Egypt. For some years he will stand back from the northern king. 9He will come against the kingdom of the southern king but will go back to his own country. 10His sons will wage war and gather a horde of many forces. It will come repeatedly, and sweep and pass through, and again wage war as far as his stronghold.

## 11:11 The Meaningless To and Fro

11The southern king will rage and go out and do battle with him (with the northern king). He will raise a large horde, but the horde will be given into his hand. 12The horde will be carried off, but his mind will become superior. He will make myriads fall, but he won’t prevail. 13The northern king will again raise a horde, greater than the first. At the end of a period of years he will come repeatedly with a great force and with much equipment.

14In those times many will stand against the southern king. Wild men among your people will raise themselves, to confirm a vision, but they will collapse. 15The northern king will come, heap up a ramp, and capture a fortified town. The southern forces won’t stand, even his company of picked soldiers. There will be no energy to stand. 16The one who comes against him will act as he pleases, and there will be no one standing before him. He will stand in the splendid country, destruction in his hand. 17He will set his face to come into control of his entire kingdom, but will make an agreement with him and give him a wife, in order to devastate it. But it won’t stand, it won’t come about for him. 18He will set his face toward foreign shores and capture many, but a commander will stop his reviling for him so that he won’t be able to turn back his reviling for him. 19He will turn his face back to the strongholds in his own country. But he will collapse and fall and not be found.

20There will stand in his place one who sends round an oppressor of royal splendour. But in a few days he will break, not by anger or battle.

## 11:21 People Who Break Faith with the Covenant

21There will stand in his place someone despised, to whom they’ve not given royal honour. He will come with ease and gain power over the kingdom by empty words. 22Overwhelming forces will be overwhelmed before him and will break; so too a ruler of the pact. 23Through the making of alliances with him, he will exercise deceit. He will arise and become substantial with a small group, 24with ease. He will come against the richest of provinces and do what his father and forefathers didn’t do. Plunder, spoil, and wealth he will scatter among people. He will devise plans against fortresses, until a certain time. 25He will assert his strength and his mind against the southern king with a large force. The southern king will do battle with a large and very substantial force, but he won’t stand, because people will devise plans against him. 26People who eat his provisions will break him. His force will be overwhelmed. Many will fall, run through. 27The two of them, the kings, their mind set on bad dealing, will speak lies at one table, but it won’t succeed, because an end will yet wait for the set time.

28He will go back to his country with great wealth and with his mind against a sacred pact. So he will act and go back to his country. 29At the set time he will come against the south again, but it won’t be like the first and the second time. 30Ships from Kittim will come against him, and he will cower and turn back. He will be condemning a sacred pact and he will act. He will go back and heed the people who abandon a sacred pact. 31Forces of his will stand and treat the sanctuary, the fortress, as ordinary. They will remove the regular offering and set up the desolating abomination.

32People who act faithlessly toward a pact he will make into apostates by empty words, but a people that acknowledge their God will be strong and will act. 33The insightful among the people will help the multitude to understand, but they will fall by sword, by fire, by captivity, and by becoming prey, for a time.

## 11:34 The End Approaches

34When they fall, they will receive a little help, but many will join them with empty words. 35Some of the insightful people will fall, to refine them, to purify, and to cleanse, until the time of the end, because it will yet wait for the set time.

36So the king will do as he pleases. He will exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, and against the God of gods he will speak extraordinary things. He will succeed until condemnation is complete, because what has been decreed has been done. 37To his ancestors’ gods he won’t heed, nor to the one women hold in high regard. He won’t heed any god, because over everything he will magnify himself. 38A stronghold god he will honour in his place. A god whom his ancestors didn’t acknowledge he will honour with gold and with silver, with precious stones and with things held in high regard. 39He will attend to the securest of fortresses with the help of an alien god. To those whom he recognizes he will give great honour. He will let them rule over the multitude and divide up land as payment.

40At the time of the end the southern king will wrestle with him, but the northern king will storm against him with chariotry, with cavalry, and with many ships. He will come against countries, sweep and pass through, 41and come against the splendid country. Many will fall, but these will escape from his hand: Edom, Mo’ab, and the chief part of the Ammonites. 42He will put out his hand on other countries, and the country of Egypt will not find escape. 43He will rule the treasuries of gold and silver and all the things held in high regard in Egypt, with the Libyans and Sudanese at his heel. 44But reports will alarm him from the east and from the north and he will go out in great wrath to destroy and annihilate many. 45He will pitch his royal tents between the seas and the splendid sacred mountain. But he will come to his end. There will be no helper for him.

## 12:1 The People Who Will Shine Like Stars

12 At that time Mika’el will stand, the high officer who stands by the members of your people. There will be a time of pressure such as hasn’t happened since it became a nation until that time. But at that time your people will escape, everyone who is found written in the book, 2and many sleeping in the country of dirt will wake up, some to permanent life, some to great reviling, to permanent abhorrence. 3The insightful people will be bright, like the sky’s brightness, and the people who helped many to be faithful like stars, for ever and ever.

4You, Daniyye’l, close up the words, seal the book, until the time of the end. Many will run to and fro so that knowledge may increase’.

5I (Daniyye’l) looked, and there—two others standing, one on the river bank this side, one on the river bank the other side. 6Someone said to the man dressed in linen, who was above the water of the river, ‘How long until the end of the extraordinary events?’ 7I listened to the man dressed in linen who was above the water of the river. He raised his right hand and his left hand to the heavens and swore by the Ever-Living One, ‘For a set time, set times, and a half. When the shattering of the power of the sacred people ends, all these things will come to an end’.

8Though I listened, I didn’t understand. I asked, ‘My lord, what will be the final stage in these events?’ 9He said, ‘Go, Daniyye’l, because the words are closed up and sealed until the time of the end. 10Many will purify themselves, cleanse themselves, and refine themselves, but the faithless will act faithlessly. None of the faithless will understand, but the people of insight will understand.

11From the time when the regular offering is removed and a desolating abomination put in place will be 1,290 days. 12The blessings of the one who waits and reaches 1,335 days! 13You, go to the end and settle down, so you may stand for your destiny at the end of the time’.

**Ezra**

Ezra and Nehemiah were originally one book; they were divided into two some time after Christ’s day. They tell the story of the community in Judah over the first hundred years after the moment when Judahites who had been taken off into exile (or whose parents had been taken off into exile) were allowed to return to Judah to rebuild the temple, in about 539. The books thus continue the story told in Kings and in Chronicles. But whereas those books relate a fairly continuous story, Ezra-Nehemiah is episodic.

* First, Ezra 1—6 tells of the actual return of some of those Judahites, by the commission of the Persian emperor and in fulfillment of the promise of Jeremiah, and of their rebuilding of the temple. In relating this story, Ezra –6 emphasizes the problem of opposition from the other little peoples that surrounded Judah, all of them provinces of the Persian empire. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah were allies of Zerubbabel the governor and Joshua the priest in getting the community to complete the work. But the work does get completed, and the achievement is reason for a great celebration.
* Without warning Ezra 7—10 then jumps forward half a century to the mission of Ezra himself. The opening date indicates that he came from Babylon to Jerusalem in 458. (That fact in itself makes evident that by no means all Judahites had accepted the chance to join in the move to Jerusalem described in Ezra 1—6.) He comes as a theologian who is an expert in the Torah of Moses, and he brings a copy of the Torah with him in order to campaign for people in Jerusalem to implement what it says. It wouldn’t be surprising if this mission marks the moment when the “Books of Moses” (Genesis to Deuteronomy) have reached the form in which we know them. Ezra comes to Jerusalem with the support of the Persian emperor, who will have seen the advantage to him of having a good administrative order in the province, of a kind that the people themselves would accept. A key feature of Ezra’s work is his persuading Judahites to terminate their marriages with people from the other communities around, which imperiled the distinctiveness of Israel as God’s people.
* Next the story moves to the mission of Nehemiah (Nehemiah 1—7). Nehemiah came from Susa in Persia to Jerusalem in 445. He has heard in Susa of the broken-down state of things in Jerusalem. He first prays, then he too gets the support of the emperor (whose butler he is) for him to go to Jerusalem to do something about it. His signature achievement is the rebuilding of the city’s walls, again despite opposition from neighbouring communities. But he also campaigns for the community to be generous rather than self-serving as it lives with the economic pressures of the times.
* Finally the two books give some account of Ezra and Nehemiah working together, and of some further events (Nehemiah 8—13). This last section of the story involves the community reading the Torah and accepting a commitment to aspects of the way of life that marks them out that were apparently neglected, such as proper observance of the Sabbath and support for the temple and its worship. The story also speaks of action to get more people to come and live in Jerusalem, which will have been discouraged by the city’s broken-down state. The books close with further action by Nehemiah to deal with offensive practices such as trading on the Sabbath (again) and intermarrying with people from other communities that could lead them into unfaithfulness (again). It is an important initiative in seeing that the people of God stayed in being and did not cease to exist through assimilation.

So if one was going to subdivide Ezra-Nehemiah, it might have been more illuminating to divide it into four parts, not just two.

**1:1 Yahweh Stirs the Emperor and the People**

1 In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia [Koresh king of Paras], fulfilling Yahweh’s word from the mouth of Jeremiah [Yirmeyah], Yahweh stirred the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, and he made an announcement pass through his entire kingdom, and also in writing: 2’Cyrus king of Persia has said this:

Yahweh the God of the heavens has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. 3Whoever among you from all his people: may his God be with him, and may he go up to Jerusalem which is in Judah and build the house of Yahweh the God of Israel; he is the God who is in Jerusalem. 4Anyone who remains, from all the places where he is a resident – the people of his place are to support him with silver, with gold, with property, and with cattle, along with the free offering for the house of God which is in Jerusalem’.

5So the ancestral heads of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests and the Levites, everyone whose spirit God stirred, set to so as to go up to build up Yahweh’s house which is in Jerusalem. 6All the people who were round about them strengthened their hands with silver articles, with gold, with property, with cattle, and with choice things, apart from every free offering. 7Cyrus the king took out the articles belonging to Yahweh’s house that Nebukadne’tstsar had taken out from Jerusalem and put in his god’s house. 8Cyrus king of Persia took them out by the hand of Mitredat the treasurer, and counted them out to Sheshbatstsar, the Judahite leader. 9These are their count:

gold bowls: 30

silver bowls: 1000

knives: 29

10gold dishes: 30

double silver bowls: 410

other articles: 1000

11All the articles of gold and of silver: 5400.

All these Sheshbatstsar took up when the exiles were taken up from Babel to Jerusalem.

**2:1 Who We Were**

2 These are the people of the province, who went up from among the captives in exile whom Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel had exiled to Babel and who went back to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town, 2who came with Zerubbabel, Yeshua, Nehemyah, Serayah, Re’elayah, Mordekay, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvay, Rehum, Ba’anah.

The number of the men belonging to the Israelite people:

3sons of Par’osh 2,172

4sons of Shephatyah 372

5sons of Arah 775

6sons of Pahat Mo’ab (by the sons of Yeshua, Yo’ab) 2,812

7sons of Elam 1,254

8sons of Zattu 945

9sons of Zakkay 760

10sons of Bani 642

11sons of Bebay 623

12sons of Azgad 1,222

13sons of Adoniqam 666

14sons of Bigvay 2,056

15sons of Adin 454

16sons of Ater (by Yehizqiyyah) 98

17sons of Betsay323

18sons of Yorah 112

19sons of Hashum 223

20sons of Gibbar 95

21sons of Bet-lehem 123

22people of Netophah 56

23people of Anatot 128

24sons of Azmavet 42

25sons of Arim Township, Kephirah and Be’erot 743

26sons of The Height and Geba 621

27people of Mikmas 122

28people of Bet-el and Ha’ay 223

29sons of Nebo 52

30sons of Magbish 156

31sons of the other Elam 1,254

32sons of Harim 320

33sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 725

34sons of Yereho 345

35sons of Sena’ah 3,630.

36The priests:

sons of Yeda’yah (by the household of Yeshua) 973

37sons of Immer 1,052

38sons of Pashhur 1,247

39sons of Harim 1,017

40The Levites:

sons of Yeshua and Qadmi’el (by the sons of Hodavyah) 74

41The singers:

sons of Asaph 128

**2:42 Gatemen, Assistants, and Undocumented People**

42The sons of the gatemen:

sons of Shallum

sons of Ater

sons of Talmon

sons of Aqqub

sons of Hatita

sons of Shobay

altogether 139

43The assistants:

sons of Tsiha

sons of Hasupha

sons of Tabba’ot

44sons of Qeros

sons of Si’aha

sons of Padon

45sons of Lebanah

sons of Hagabah

sons of Aqqub

46sons ofHagab

sons ofShalmay

sons of Hanan

47sons ofGiddel

sons ofGahar

sons ofRe’ayah

48sons of Retsin

sons of Neqodah

sons of Gazzam

49sons ofUzza

sons of Paseah

sons of Besay

50sons ofAsnah

sons ofMe’unim

sons of Nephusim

51sons ofBaqbuq

sons of Haqupha

sons of Harhur

52sons ofBatslut

sons ofMehida

sons of Harsha

53sons ofBarqos

sons ofSisera

sons of Temah

54sons ofNetsiah

sons ofHatipha

55The sons of Solomon’s servants:

sons ofSotay

sons ofHassopheret

sons of Peruda

56sons of Ya’alah

sons ofDarqon

sons of Giddel

57sons ofShephatyah

sons ofHattil

sons ofPokeret Hatstsebayim

sons of Ami

58All the assistants and the sons of Solomon’s servants 392

59These are the people who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addan, Immer, but who could not tell their ancestral household and their origin, whether they were from Israel:

60sons of Delayah

sons ofTobiyyah

sons of Neqoda 652

61Of the sons ofthe priests:

sons ofHabayah

sons of Haqqots

sons of Barzillay (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillay the Gil’adite and was called by their name:

62these looked for their record in the the enrolment by genealogy but they couldn’t be found, and they were deconsecrated from the priesthood. 63The administrator said to them that they should not eat of the very sacred things until there was a priest standing with Urim and Tummim.

64The entire congregation altogether 42,360;

65apart from their servants and handmaids: these were 7,337;

and they had 200 male and female singers;

66their horses 736; their mules 245; 67their camels 435; their donkeys 6,720.

**2:68 New Beginnings**

68Some of the ancestral heads, when they came to Yahweh’s house in Jerusalem, gave a free offering for God’s house, to put it in its place on its established site. 69In accordance with their energy, to the treasury for the work they gave gold, 61,000 drakmas; silver, 5000 minas; and priests’ robes, 100. 70The priests, the Levites, some of the people, the singers, the gatemen, and the assistants went to live in their towns, and all Israel in their towns.

3 When the seventh month arrived, with the Israelites in their towns, the people gathered as one person in Jerusalem. 2Yeshua ben Yotsadaq and his brother priests, and Zerubbabel ben She’alti’el and his brothers, set to and built the altar of the God of Israel, to offer up burnt offerings on it as is written in the instruction of Moses the supernatural man. 3They established the altar on its established site because they were in dread of the peoples of the countries, and they offered up burnt offerings on it for Yahweh, the burnt offerings for morning and for evening. 4They made the Sukkot Festival as it is written, and the burnt offering day by day, by the number in accordance with the ruling, each day’s requirement in its day, 5and afterward the regular burnt offering and the ones for the new months and for all the occasions set by Yahweh that were made sacred, and for anyone making a free offering for Yahweh.

6From the first day of the seventh month they began to offer up burnt offerings for Yahweh, though Yahweh’s palace had not been started. 7They gave silver to the hewers and to the craftsmen, and food, drink, and oil to the Tsidonites and to the Tyrians, to bring cedar logs from the Lebanon by sea to Yafo, in accordance with the authorization to them by Cyrus king of Persia.

**3:8 Shouts of Joy and the Sound of Crying**

8In the second year of their coming to the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, Zerubbabel ben She’alti’el and Yeshua ben Yotsadaq, and the rest of their brothers (the priests, the Levites, and all the people who had come from the captivity to Jerusalem) began, and put in place the Levites from people of twenty years and upwards to supervise the work on Yahweh’s house. 9Yeshua, his sons and his brothers, and Qadmi’el and his sons (descendants of Yehudah) stood up together to oversee the one doing the work on God’s house (the sons of Henadad, their sons and their brothers, the Levites).

10When the builders started Yahweh’s palace, they put in place the priests in their vestments with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise Yahweh in accordance with the directions of David king of Israel. 11They sang responsively in praise and confession to Yahweh, ‘Because he is good, because his commitment stands permanently for Israel’, and the entire people gave a big shout in praise of Yahweh, because Yahweh’s house had been started. 12While many of the priests and the Levites and the ancestral heads, the old men who had seen the first house, at the start on this house before their eyes were crying with a loud voice, many were raising their voice in a shout of rejoicing. 13The people couldn’t recognize the sound of the shout of rejoicing from the sound of the people’s crying, because the people were giving a big shout. The sound was audible from afar.

4 The adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the people from the exile were building a palace for Yahweh the God of Israel, 2and they came up to Zerubbabel and to the ancestral heads and said to them, ‘We’ll build with you, because we inquire of your God like you, and we’ve been sacrificing for him since the days of Esar Haddon king of Ashshur, who got us up here’.

**4:3 Offers of Help Refused**

3Zerubbabel, Yeshua, and the remainder of the ancestral heads of Israel said to them, ‘It’s not for you and for us to build a house for our God, because we as one will build for Yahweh the God of Israel, as King Cyrus king of Persia ordered us’.

4Then the people of the country were making the hands of the people of Judah slacken and making them fearful to build. 5They were bribing counsellors against them so as to contravene their counsel all the days of Cyrus king of Persia and until the reign of Darius [Doryavesh] king of Persia, 6and in the reign of Xerxes [Ahashverosh], at the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

7Then in the days of Artaxerxes [Artahshasta], Bishlam, Mitredat, Tabe’el, and the remainder of his associates wrote to Artaxerxes king of Persia. The writing of the document was in Aramaic and translated.

(Aramaic.) 8Rehum the administrator and Shimshay the secretary wrote a communiqué about Jerusalem to King Artaxerxes as follows.

9’Rehum the administrator, Shimsay the secretary, and the remainder of their associates, the authorities and officials, of Tarpel, Persia, Erek, Babel, Shushan (i.e., the Elamites) 10and the remainder of the peoples that the great and glorious Ashurbanipal [Osnapper] exiled and made live in the town of Shomrayin [Samaria] and the remainder of Beyond-the-River province

(so now 11this is a copy of the communiqué they sent him) to Artaxerxes the king.

Your servants, men of Beyond-the-River province:

So now 12be it known to the king that the Judahites who came up from you to us have come to Jerusalem. They are building up the rebellious and wicked town. They have completed the walls and strengthened the foundations. 13Now be it known to the king that if this town is built up and its walls are completed, they will not give tribute, taxes, or tolls, so the kings’ interests will suffer harm.

**4:14 A Pattern of Tension Running Through the Story**

14Now since we share the salt of the palace and it’s not right for us to see the king’s dishonour, therefore we have sent and made it known to the king 15so that they may search in the document with your ancestors’ records. You will find in the records document and acknowledge that this town is a rebellious town, harmful to kings and provinces. People have been making mutiny in it from days of old. Because of that this town was destroyed. 16We make it known to the king that if this town is built up and its walls are completed, as a result of that you will not have a share in Beyond-the-River’.

17The king sent a message:

To Rehum the administrator, Shimshay the secretary, the remainder of their associates who live in Shomrayin, and the remainder of Beyond-the-River, good wishes.

So now 18the letter that you sent to us was explained, read out before me. 19A decree was made by me, and they searched and found that this town from days of old has risen against kings. Rebellion and mutiny have been made in it. 20There have been powerful kings over Jerusalem and they have exercised authority over the whole of Beyond-the-River. Tribute, taxes, and tolls were rendered to them. 21Now make a decree to stop these men. That town will not be built up until the order is made by me. 22Be careful about acting negligently in this. Why should damage grow so as to harm kings?

23When a copy of the letter from Artaxerxes the king was read out before Rehum, Shimshay the secretary, and their associates, they went with speed to Jerusalem to the Judahites and stopped them with compelling force.

**4:24To Return to the Time of the Temple Building…**

24So work stopped on God’s house in Jerusalem. It stopped until the second year of the reign of Darius king of Persia, 5 and Haggay the prophet and Zecharyah ben Iddo prophesied to the Judahites who were in Judah and in Jerusalem in the name of the God of Israel, over them. 2Then Zerubbabel ben She’alti’el and Yeshua ben Yotsadaq set to and began to build God’s house in Jerusalem, God’s prophets being with them, supporting them.

3At that time Tattenay the governor of Beyond-the-River, Shetar Bozenay, and their associates came to them and said this to them: ‘Who made you a decree to build this house and finish these supplies?’ 4Then we said to them, ‘What are the names of the men who are constructing this building?’ 5But God’s eye was on the Judahite elders, and they didn’t stop them while an account could go to Darius, and then they would bring back a letter about this.

6A copy of the communiqué that Tattenay governor of Beyond-the-River, Shetar Bozenay, and his associates, the officials of Beyond-the-River, sent to Darius the king. 7They sent a message to him, and in it was written as follows:

To Darius the king, all good wishes. 8Be it known to the king that we went to Judah province to the house of the great God. It’s being built up of dressed stone, and wood is being set in the walls. This work is being done punctiliously and it is succeeding in their hand. 9Then we asked of these elders as follows: ‘Who made you a decree to build this house and finish these supplies?’ 10We also asked for their names to make them known to you, so that we could write down the name of the men who are at their head.

**5:11 A Defence**

11They sent back a message like this to us: ‘We are the servants of the God of the heavens and the earth. We are building up the house that was built many years before this, when a great king of Israel built it and completed it. 12Yet because our ancestors angered the God of the heavens, he gave them into the hand of Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel, the Kasdite. He destroyed this house and exiled the people to Babel. 13However, in the first year of Cyrus king of Babel, Cyrus the king made a decree to build up this house of God. 14The articles belonging to the house of God, of gold and silver, which Nebukadne’tstsar took out of the palace in Jerusalem and brought to the palace in Babel, Cyrus the king also took out of the palace in Babel and they gave them to someone named Sheshbatstsar whom he made governor. 15He said to him, “Take up these articles, go off, put them in the palace in Jerusalem. And the house of God is to be built up on its place”. 16This Sheshbatstsar then came and made a start on the house of God in Jerusalem. From then until now it’s been being built, but it’s not complete’.

17Now, if it seems good to the king, there should be a search in the king’s treasure-house there in Babel, if it’s the case that a decree was made by Cyrus the king for building up that house of God in Jerusalem. And may the king send us his wish concerning this’.

6 Then a decree was made by Darius the king and they searched in the documents house where treasures were kept in Babel.

**6:2 An Astounding Result**

2But a scroll was found in the fortress at Ahmeta in Media province. In it was written as follows:

Memorandum. 3In the first year of Cyrus the king, Cyrus the king made a decree: ‘The house of God in Jerusalem. The house is to be built up, a place where people make sacrifices, with its foundations buttressed, its height thirty metres, its width thirty metres, 4three courses of dressed stone and a course of new wood. The expense will be paid by the king’s house. 5Also the articles belonging to the house of God, of gold and silver, which Nebukadne’tstsar took out of the palace in Jerusalem and brought to Babel are to be given back. It is to go to the palace in Jerusalem to its place. You are to deposit it in God’s house’.

6’Now Tattenay governor of Beyond-the-River, Shetar Bozenay, and their associates, officials of Beyond-the-River, stay away from there. 7Leave the work on this house of God alone. The governor of the Judahites and the elders of the Judahites are to build up this house of God on its place, 8and a decree is made by me about what you’re to do with these elders of the Judahites, to build up this house of God. The expense is to be paid punctiliously to these men out of the assets of the king, out of the tribute from Beyond-the-River, so as not to cause a stop. 9Whatever they need, both young bulls, rams, and lambs for burnt offerings for the God of the heavens, wheat, salt, wine, and oil, in accordance with the word of the priests in Jerusalem – it’s to be given them day by day without fail, 10so that they may present pleasing sacrifices to the God of the heavens and pray for the life of the king and his sons.

11And a decree is made by me that anyone who defies this message, wood will be removed from his house and he will be lifted up and beaten upon it, and his house will be made forfeit, because of this. 12And may the God who had his name dwell there overthrow any king or people who puts out a hand to defy—to damage this house of God in Jerusalem. I, Darius, have made a decree. It’s to be put into effect scrupulously’.

**6:13 Success and Celebration**

13Then Tattenay governor of Beyond-the-River, Shetar Bozenay, and their associates, in keeping with what Darius the king sent, accordingly acted punctiliously. 14The elders of the Judahites built, and succeeded through the prophesying of Haggay the prophet and Zecharyah ben Iddo. They built and finished by the decree of the God of Israel and by the decree of Cyrus, Darius, and Artaxerxes king of Persia. 15This house was completed on the third day of the month of Adar; it was in the sixth year of the reign of Darius the king.

16The Israelites, the priests, the Levites, and the remainder of the exiles made the dedication of this house of God with celebration. 17For the dedication of this house of God they presented 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and 12 goats as a purification offering for all Israel, according to the number of the clans of Israel. 18They set up the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their groups for the service of God in Jerusalem, in accordance with what is written in Moses’ document.

19The people from the exile made the Pesah [Passover] on the fourteenth of the first month, 20because the priests had purified themselves, and the Levites altogether were pure, all of them. They slaughtered the Pesah for all the people from the exile, for their brother priests, and for themselves. 21The Israelites who had come back from the exile ate, with everyone who had madehimself distinctfrom the defilement of the nation in the country, to join them to inquire of Yahweh the God of Israel. 22They made the Flat Bread festival for seven days with rejoicing, because Yahweh had made them rejoice when he turned round the mind of the king of Ashshur to them so as to strengthen their hands in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.

**7:1 Enter the Priest-Theologian**

7 After these things, in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra ben Serayah, son of Azaryah son of Hilqiyyah 2son of Shallum son of Tsadoq son of Ahitub 3son of Amaryah son of Azaryah son of Merayot 4son of Zerahyah son of Uzzi son of Buqqi 5son of Abishua son of Pinhas son of El‘azar son of Aaron the head priest – 6that Ezra went up from Babel. He was a smart scholar in the instruction of Moses which Yahweh the God of Israel had given. In accordance with the hand of Yahweh his God upon him, the king had given him everything that he sought.

7Some Israelites, some priests, Levites, singers, gatemen, and assistants went up to Jerusalem in the seventh year of Artaxerxes the king, 8and he came to Jerusalem in the fifth month (it was the king’s seventh year), 9because on the first of the first month it was the start of the journey up from Babel, and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem in accordance with the good hand of his God upon him, 10because Ezra had set his mind to inquire of Yahweh’s instruction so as both to keep and to teach decree and ruling in Israel.

11This is a copy of the letter that King Artaxerxes gave Ezra the priest-scholar, scholar in things concerning Yahweh’s orders and his decrees for Israel:

12’Artaxerxes, king of kings, to Ezra the priest-scholar in the instruction of the God of the heavens (and so on). Now: 13a decree is made by me that anyone in my kingdom from the people of Israel and its priests and Levites who freely offers to go to Jerusalem with you, may go. 14Because you are sent by the king and his seven counsellors to inquire about Judah and Jerusalem on the basis of the instruction of your God which is in your hand, 15and to take silver and gold that the king and his counsellors have made as a free offering for the God of Israel whose dwelling is in Jerusalem, 16and any silver and gold that you find in all Babel province, with the free offering of the people and the priests that they make for the house of their God in Jerusalem.

**7:17 What We Owe, and What We Give Because We Want To**

17Therefore with this money acquire punctiliously bulls, rams, and lambs, and their grain offerings and their drink offerings, and present them on the altar in the house of your God in Jerusalem. 18And what seems good to you and to your brothers to do with the remainder of the silver and the gold, in accordance with the will of your God, you may do. 19The articles given to you for the service of your God’s house, deliver before God in Jerusalem. 20The remainder of the needs of your God’s house that it falls to you to give, you may give from the king’s treasure-house.

21I, Artaxerxes the king – by me a decree is made to all the treasurers in Beyond-the-River, that anything Ezra the priest-scholar in the instruction of the God of the heavens asks of you is punctiliously to be done, 22up to 100 talents of silver, to 100 ten-gallon measures of wheat, to 100 five-gallon measures of wine, to 100 five-gallon measures of oil, and salt without prescribed limit. 23Anything that is by the decree of the God of the heavens is to be done scrupulously for the house of the God of the heavens, so that fury does not come on the realm of the king and his sons. 24And to you we make it known that all priests, Levites, musicians, gatemen, assistants, and workers in this house of God – it’s not permitted to impose tribute, taxes, and tolls on them.

25You, Ezra, in accordance with your God’s smartness which is in your possession, appoint authorities and judges who will give judgment for all the people in Beyond-the-River, for all who acknowledge your God’s instructions, and make them known to anyone who does not acknowledge them. 26Anyone who does not observe the instruction of your God and the instruction of the king, judgment will be done to him punctiliously, whether by death, by banishment, by confiscation of property, or by imprisonment.

**7:27 God Working through the King**

27Blessed be Yahweh, our ancestors’ God, who put into the king’s mind in this way to glorify Yahweh’s house which is in Jerusalem 28and extended commitment to me before the king and his counsellors and all the king’s officials, the powerful men.

I myself showed myself strong in accordance with the hand of Yahweh my God upon me, and collected heads from Israel to go up with me. 8 These are the ancestral heads and the enrolment by genealogy of the people who went up with me in the reign of Artaxerxes the king from Babel:

* 2of the sons of Pinhas, Gershom
* of the sons of Itamar, Daniyy’el
* of the sons of David, Hattush, 3of the sons of Shekanyah
* of the sons of Parosh, Zekaryah, and with him were enrolled by geneology 150 males
* 4of the sons of Pahat Mo’ab, Elyeho’enay ben Zerahyah, and with him 200 males
* 5of the sons of Shekanyah, ben Yahazi’el, and with him 300 males
* 6and of the sons of Adin, Ebed ben Yonatan, and with him 50 males
* 7and of the sons of Elam, Yesha’yah ben Atalyah, and with him 70 males
* 8and of the sons of Shephatyah, Zebadyah ben Mika’el, and with him 80 males
* 9of the sons of Yo’ab, Obadyah ben Yehi’el, and with him 218 males
* 10and of the sons of Shelomit, ben Yosiphyah, and with him 160 males
* 11and of the sons of Bebay, Zekaryah ben Bebay, and with him 28 males
* 12and of the sons of Azgad, Yohanan ben Haqqatan, and with him 110 males
* 13and of the sons of Adoniqam, the last ones – these are their names: Eliphelet, Ye’i’el, and Shemayah, and with them 60 males
* 14and of the sons of Bigvay, Utay and Zakkur, and with him 70 males.

**8:15 God’s Good Hand**

15I collected them at the river that comes to Ahava and we camped there for three days. I considered the people and the priests, and didn’t find any of the Levites there. 16So I sent for Eli’ezer, for Ari’el, for Shema’yah, for Elnatan, for Yarib, for Elnatan, for Natan, for Zekaryah, and for Meshullam as heads, and for Yoyarib and for Elnatan as people of understanding, 17and ordered them to Iddo, the head at Kasiphaya, the worship site, and put words in their mouth to speak to Iddo, his brother, the assistants at Kasiphaya, the site, to bring us ministers for the house of our God.

18In accordance with the good hand of our God upon us they brought us a man of insight from the sons of Mahli ben Levi, son of Israel, namely Sherebyah, and his sons and his brothers, eighteen people, 19and Hashabyah and with him Yesha’yah of the sons of Merari, his brothers and their sons, twenty people, 20and of the assistants that David and the officials had given for the service of the Levites, 220 assistants; all of them were recorded by name.

21I called a fast there at the River Ahava to humble ourselves before our God so as to seek from him a straightforward journey for us and for our little ones and for all our property, 22because I was ashamed to ask the king for a force and cavalry to help us against an enemy on the way, because we’d said to the king, ‘The hand of our God is upon all who seek him, for good, but his vigour and his anger are on all who abandon him’. 23So we fasted and sought God about this, and he let himself be entreated by us.

**8:24 The Journey and the Arrival**

24I distinguishe twelve of the priestly officials, Sherebyah and Hashabyah and with them ten of their brothers, 25and weighed out to them the silver, the gold, and the articles, the contribution for our God’s house that the king, his counsellors, his officials, and all Israel who were to be found, had raised. 26I weighed out into their hand the silver, 650 talents; the silver articles, 100 talents, the gold, 100 talents; 27the gold bowls, twenty, worth 100 darics; and two articles of good, shining copper, as precious as gold.

28I said to them, ‘You are sacred for Yahweh, and the articles are sacred, and the silver and the gold are a free offering for Yahweh, your ancestors’ God. 29Be watchful and keep them until you weigh them out before the priestly officials, the Levites, and the ancestral officials of Israel in Jerusalem in the halls of Yahweh’s house’.

30The priests and the Levites received the weighed out silver and gold and the articles to bring to Jerusalem to our God’s house. 31We moved on from the River Ahava on the twelfth of the first month to go to Jerusalem. The hand of our God was upon us and he rescued us from an enemy’s fist and ambush on the way.

32We came to Jerusalem, stayed there three days, 33and on the fourth day the silver and the gold and the articles were weighed out in our God’s house into the hand of Meremot ben Uriyyah the priest and with him El’azar ben Pinhas, and with them Yozabad ben Yeshua and No’adyah ben Binnuy, the Levites, 34everything by number/by weight. The entire weight was written down at that time. 35The people who had come from the captivity, the people from the exile, presented burnt offerings for the God of Israel, twelve bulls for all Israel, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve goats as a purification offering. The whole was a burnt offering for Yahweh. 36They gave the king’s instructions to the king’s satraps and the governors of Beyond-the-River, and they supported the people and the house of God.

**9:1 The Importance of Keeping Distinct**

9 When these things finished, the officials came up to me to say, ‘The people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not made themselves distinct from the peoples of the countries in light of their offensive practices (of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Yebusite, the Ammonite, the Mo’abite, the Egyptian, and the Amorite), 2because they’ve got some of their daughters for themselves and for their sons, and the sacred seed has mixed with the peoples of the countries, while the hand of the officials and the overseers has been first in this trespass’.

3When I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my coat, pulled hair from my head and from my beard, and sat desolate. 4Anyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel was gathering to me because of the exiles’ trespass. I was sitting desolate until the evening offering.

5At the evening offering I got up from my self-affliction but bent down on my knees in my torn garment and coat and spread out my palms to Yahweh my God, 6and said, ‘My God, I’m disgraced and ashamed to lift up my face to you, my God, because our wayward acts have grown above our head, and our liability is great, as far as the heavens. 7From the days of our ancestors until this day we’ve been in great liability, and through our wayward acts we’ve been given into the hand of the kings of the countries, we, our kings, our priests, with sword, with captivity, with plunder, and with shame of face, this very day.

8Now for a little while there’s been grace from Yahweh our God, in letting an escape group remain for us and giving us a stake in his sacred place, in our God’s brightening our eyes and giving us a little life in our servitude. 9Because we’re serfs, but in our serfdom our God hasn’t abandoned us but has extended commitment to us before the kings of Persia so as to give us life, to raise up our God’s house and make its wastes stand, and to give us a fence in Judah and in Jerusalem.

**9:9 How to Make Your People’s Confession**

10But now what can we say, our God, after this? – because we’ve abandoned your orders 11that you issued by means of your servants the prophets, saying, ‘The country into which you’re going to take possession of it is a country polluted by the pollution of the peoples of the countries, through their offensive practices with which they’ve filled it from end to end in their defilement. 12So now don’t give your daughters to their sons or get their daughters for your sons. You will not inquire after their well-being or benefit, ever, so that you may be strong and eat the good of the country and enable your children to possess it permanently’.

13After all that’s come upon us because of our bad ways and our great liabilities, when you, our God, have held back [in punishing] below our waywardness, and given us an escape group like this, 14shall we go back to contraveningng your orders and intermarrying with the peoples who are characterized by these offensive practices? You will be angry with us so as to finish us off, so that there’s no people remaining, no escape group, won’t you. 15Yahweh, God of Israel, you’re in the right, because we remain as an escape group this very day. Here we are before you with our liability, but there’s no standing before you on account of this’.

10 While Ezra was pleading and making confession, crying and falling down before God’s house, a very great congregation from Israel, men, women, and children, collected to him, because the people were crying bitterly. 2Shekanyah ben Yehi’el of the sons of Elam answered Ezra, ‘We’ve trespassed against our God and got foreign women come to live from the peoples of the country. But now there’s hope for Israel over this, 3so now let’s solemnize a pact to our God to get all the women and those born from them to go away, by the counsel of my lord and of those who tremble at our God’s order. It should be done in accordance with the instruction. 4Set to, because the thing rests on you, and we’re with you. Be strong and act’.

**10:5 Where There’s Commitment There’s Hope**

5Ezra set to and swore the priestly officials, the Levites, and all Israel to act in accordance with this word, and they swore. 6Ezra got up from his place before God’s house and went into the hall of Yehohanan ben Elyashib. When the went there, he didn’t eat food and he didn’t drink water, because he was grieving over the exiles’ trespass.

7They passed an announcement through Judah and Jerusalem to all the people from the exile, that they should collect in Jerusalem. 8Anyone who didn’t come in three days, in accordance with the counsel of the officials and the elders – all his property would be devoted and he himself would be distinguished from the exile congregation.

9So all the men of Judah and Benjamin collected in Jerusalem in three days; it was the ninth month, the twentieth of the month. All the people sat in the square at God’s house, trembling about the thing and because of the rains.

10Ezra the priest got up and said to them, ‘You’ve trespassed. You’ve got foreign women come to live, adding to Israel’s liability. 11But now, make confession to Yahweh, your ancestors’ God, and do what is acceptable to him. Make yourselves distinct from the peoples of the country and from the foreign women’.

12The entire congregation answered with a loud voice, ‘Yes, it’s for us to act in accordance with your word. 13Nevertheless the company is large and the time is the rains. We don’t have the energy to stand outside, and it’s not the work of one day or of two, because we’ve become greatly rebellious in this thing. 14Our officials should please stand [here] for the entire congregation, and anyone in our towns who’s got foreign women come to live should come at set times, and with them the elders town by town, and its authorities, until we turn back the angry rage of our God from us over this thing’. 15Only Yonatan ben Asah’el and Yahzeyah ben Tiqvah stood against this, but Meshullam and Shabbatay the Levites helped them.

**10:16 The Tough Action**

16The people from the exile acted in this way. Ezra the priest, the men who were the ancestral heads, for their ancestral family, and all of them by their names, made themselves distinct and sat on the first day of the tenth month to inquire into the thing. 17They finished with all the men who’d got foreign women to come to live, by the first day of the first month.

18There were found among the sons of the priests who’d got foreign women to come to live:

* Yeshua ben Yotsadaq and his brothers Ma’aseyah, Eli’ezer, Yarib, and Gedalyah; 19they gave their hand that they would send away their wives and, being liable, a ram from the flock, for their liability
* 20of the sons of Immer, Hanani and Zebadyah
* 21of the sons of Harim, Ma’aseyah, Eliyyah, Shema’yah, Yehi’el, and Uzziyyah
* 22of the sons of Pashhur, Elyo’enay, Ma’aseyah, Yishma’e’l, Netan’el, Yozabad, and El’asah

23of the Levites:

* Yozabad, Shim’i, Qelayah (i.e., Qelita), Petahyah, Yehudah, and Eli’ezer

24of the singers

* Eliyashib

of the gatemen:

* Shallum, Telem, and Uri

25Of the Israelites:

* of the sons of Parosh, Ramyah, Yizzeyah, Malkiyyah, Miyyamin, El’azar, Malkiyyah, and Benayah
* 26of the sons of Elam, Mattanyah, Zekaryah, Yehi’el, Abdi, Yeremot, and Eliyyah
* 27of the sons of Zattu, Elyo’enay, Elyashib, Mattanyah, Yeremot, Zabad, and Aziza
* 28of the sons of Bebay, Yehohanan, Hananyah, Zabbay, Atlay
* 29of the sons of Bani, Meshullam, Malluk, Adayah, Yashub, She’al, and Ramot
* 30of the sons of Patah Mo’ab, Adna, Kelal, Benayah, Ma’aseyah, Mattanyah, Betsal’el, Binnuy, and Menashsheh
* 31of the sons of Harim, Eli’ezer, Ishshiyyah, Malkiyyah, Shema’yah, Shim’on, 32Binyamin, Malluk, Shemaryah
* 33of the sons of Hashum, Mattenay, Mattattah, Zabad, Eliphelet, Yeremay, Menashsheh, Shim’i
* 34of the sons of Bani, Ma’aday, Amram, and U’el, 35Benayah, Bedeyah, Keluhu, 36Vanyah, Meremot, Elyashib, 37Mattanyah, Mattenay, Ya’asay, 38Bani, Binnuy, Shim’i, 39Shelemyah, Natan, Adayah, 40Maknadebay, Shashay, Sharay, 41Azar’el, Shelemyahu, Shemaryah, 42Shallum, Amaryah, Yoseph
* 43of the sons of Nebo, Ye’i’el, Mattityah, Zabad, Zebina, Yadday and Yo’el, Benayah.

44All these had got foreign wives, and there were some of them who were women who had had children.

**Nehemiah**

For an introduction, see the introduction to Ezra

**1:1 Survivors Troubled and Disgraced**

1 The words of Nehemyah ben Hakalyah.

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, when I was in Shushan, the fortress, 2Hanani, one of my brothers, came, he and some men from Judah, and I asked them about the Judahites, the escape group that remained from the captivity, and about Jerusalem. 3They said to me, ‘The remaining people, who remain from the captivity there in the province, are in a very bad way and are subject to reviling there in the province, with Jerusalem’s wall broken down and its gateways set on fire’. 4When I heard these things I sat and cried and grieved for days. I was fasting and pleading before the God of the heavens.

5I said, ‘Oh! Yahweh, God of the heavens, great and awe-inspiring God, keeping pact and commitment for people who are loyal to him and keep his orders! 6Please may your ear become heeding and your eyes opened to listen to the plea of your servant that I’m making before you today, day and night, for the Israelites your servants, making confession concerning the wrongdoings of the Israelites that we have committed in relation to you. I and my ancestral household have done wrong. 7We’ve acted very ruinously in relation to you. We haven’t kept the orders, the decrees, and the rulings with which you ordered Moses your servant.

8Be mindful, please, of the word with which you ordered Moses your servant, “Should you people trespass, I for my part will scatter you among the peoples, 9but should you turn back to me and keep my orders and do them, if the people who’ve been driven away are at the end of the heavens, from there I will collect them and bring them to the place where I chose to have my name dwell”. 10And they are your servants and your people whom you redeemed by your great energy and your strong hand. 11Oh! Lord, please may your ear become heeding to your servant’s plea and to the plea of your servants who want to live in awe of your name. Please enable your servant to succeed today and give him compassion before this man’.

**1:11b Boldness (and Discretion) as a King’s Servant**

11bNow I was the king’s butler, 2 and in the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes [Artahshasta] the king, when wine was before him, I carried the wine and gave it to the king. I hadn’t been in a bad way before him, 2so the king said to me, ‘Why is your face looking bad when you’re not ill? This is nothing but something bad on your mind’. I became very much afraid, 3but I said to the king, ‘Long live the king! Why should my face not look bad when the town where my ancestors’ graves are lies waste and its gateways have been consumed by fire?’

4The king said to me, ‘What are you asking for?’ I pleaded with the God of the heavens 5and said to the king, ‘If it seems good to the king and if your servant seems good before you, that you send me to Judah to the town of my ancestors’ graves so that I may build it up’. 6The king said to me, with the consort sitting beside him, ‘How long will your journey be? When will you come back?’ So it seemed good before the king and he sent me, and I gave him a date.

7I said to the king, ‘If it seems good to the king, may they give me communiqués for the governors of Beyond-the-River so that they may let me pass until I come to Judah, 8and a communiqué to Asaph the keeper of the park which belongs to the king so that he may give me logs for roofing the gateways of the fortress that belongs to the house, for the town wall, and for the house to which I shall come’. The king gave them to me in accordance with the good hand of my God upon me. 9I came to the governors of Beyond-the-River and gave them the king’s communiqués. The king sent with me officers of a force and cavalry. 10But Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiyyah the Ammonite servant heard, and it seemed very bad to them that someone had come to seek something good for the Israelites.

**2:11 A Secret Survey**

11I came to Jerusalem and I was there for three days, 12then I set to by night, I and a few men with me. I didn’t tell anyone what my God had put into my mind to do for Jerusalem, and there was no animal with me except the animal that I was riding on. 13I went out through the Ravine Gate by night, to the Jackals Spring and to the Rubbish Gate. I was examining the Jerusalem walls that had been broken down and its gateways that had been consumed by fire. 14I passed on to the Spring Gate and to the King’s Pool, but there was no room for the animal under me to pass. 15So I was going up through the wadi by night and I was examining the wall, then I went back and came in through the Ravine Gate.

Thus I went back, 16 while the overseers didn’t know where I’d gone or what I was doing, and I hadn’t until now told the Judahites, the priests, the important people, the overseers, and the rest of the people who were going to be doing the work. 17I said to them, ‘You see the bad situation that we’re in, that Jerusalem lies waste and its gateways have been set on fire. Come, let’s build up the Jerusalem wall and no longer be subject to reviling’. 18I told them of my God’s hand, that it was good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he said to me, and they said, ‘Let’s set to and build’. So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

19Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiyyah the Ammonite servant, and Geshem the Arab heard, and they ridiculed us and despised us. They said, ‘What’s this thing that you’re doing? Are you rebelling against the king?’ 20I sent back word to them: ‘The God of the heavens – he’ll enable us to succeed. We, his servants—we’ll set to and build. You have no share or right or record in Jerusalem’.

**3:1 Everyone Played Their Part (1)**

* 3 So Elyashib the big priest and his brother priests set to and built up the Sheep Gate. They made it sacred and put in place its doors, and as far as the Hundred Tower they made it sacred, as far as Hanan’el’s Tower
* 2next to him the men of Yereho [Jericho] built
* next to him Zakkur ben Imri built
* 3the Fish Gate, the sons of Hassena’ah built up; they roofed it and put in place its doors, its bolts, and its bars
* 4next to them Meremot ben Uriyyah son of Haqqots did the strengthening
* next to them Meshullam ben Berekyah son of Meshezab’el did the strengthening
* next to them Tsadoq ben Ba’ana did the strengthening
* 5next to them the Teqo’ites did the strengthening, but their august people didn’t give their neck to the service of their lord
* 6the Yeshanah Gate, Yoyada ben Paseah and Meshullam ben Besodeyah did the strengthening of; they roofed it and put in place its doors, its bolts, and its bars
* 7next to them Melatyah the Gib’onite and Yadon the Meronotite did the strengthening (people of Gib’on and The Watchtower, the seat of the Beyond-the-River governor)
* 8next to him Uzzi’el ben Harhayah (goldsmiths) did the strengthening
* next to him Hananyah of the perfumers did the strengthening, but they abandoned Jerusalem as far as the wide wall
* 9next to them Rephayah ben Hur, official over half the district of Jerusalem, did the strengthening
* 10next to them Yedayah ben Harumaph did the strengthening, in front of his house
* next to him Hattush ben Hashabneyah did the strengthening
* 11a second section Malkiyyah ben Harim and Hashshub ben Paha Mo’ab did the strengthening, and the Ovens Tower.

**3:14 Everyone Played Their Part (2)**

* 12Next to him Shallum ben Hallohesh, official over half the district of Jerusalem, did the strengthening, he and his daughters
* 13the Ravine Gate, Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah did the strengthening; they built it up and put in place its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and 500 metres in the wall as far as the Rubbish Gate
* 14the Rubbish Gate, Malkiyyah ben Rekab, official over the district of Bet-hakkerem, did the strengthening; he built it up and put in place its doors, its bolts, and its bars
* 15the Spring Gate, Shallun ben-Kol-hozeh the official over the district of The Watchtower did the strengthening; he built it up, covered it, and put in place its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and the wall of the Shelah Pool belonging to the King’s Garden, and as far as the steps going down from David’s Town
* 16after him Nehemyah ben Azbuq, official over half the district of Bet-tsur, did the strengthening as far as opposite David’s graves, as far as the man-made pool, and as far as the Strong Men’s House
* 17after him the Levites did the strengthening: Rehum ben Bani
* next to him Hashabyah, official over half the district of Qe’ilah, did the strengthening for his district
* 18after him their brothers did the strengthening: Bavvay ben Henadad, official over half the district of Qe’ilah
* 19next to him Ezer ben Yeshua, official over The Watchtower, did the strengthening of a second section, from opposite the ascent to the armoury at the corner
* 20after him Baruk ben Zakkay burned [with zeal]; he did the strengthening of a second section, from the corner as far as the entrance of the house of Elyashib the big priest.

**3:25 Everyone Played Their Part (3)**

* 21After him Meremot ben Uriyyah son of Haqqots did the strengthening of a second section, from the entrance of Elyashib’s house and as far as the end of Elyashib’s house
* 22after him the priests who were the people of the plain did the strengthening
* 23after him Binyamin and Hashshub did the strengthening opposite their house
* after him Azaryah ben Ma’aseyah son of Ananyah did the strengthening beside his house
* 24after him Binnuy ben Henadad did the strengthening of a second section, from the house of Azaryah to the corner, to the angle
* 25Palal ben Uzzay: from opposite the corner and the tower going out from the king’s upper house which belongs to the court of the guard
* after him Pedayah ben Parosh 26(the assistants were living on the Ophel as far as opposite the Water Gate to the east and the projecting tower)
* 27after him the Teqo’ites did the strengthening of a second section from opposite the big projecting tower as far the Ophel wall
* 28above the Horses Gate, the priests did the strengthening, each one opposite his house
* 29after him Tsadoq ben Immer did the strengthening opposite his house
* after him Shema’yah ben Shekanyah, keeper of the East Gate, did the strengthening
* 30after him Hananyah ben Shelemyah and Hanun ben Tsalaph (the sixth) did the strengthening of a second section
* after him Meshullam ben Berekyah did the strengthening opposite his room
* 31after him Malkiyyah of the goldsmiths did the strengthening as far as the house of the assistants and the merchants, opposite the Registration Gate and as far as the upper floor at the angle
* 32between the upper floor of the angle to the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants did the strengthening.

**4:1 Reasons for Discouragement**

4 When Sanballat heard that we were building up the wall, it enraged him. He was greatly provoked. He ridiculed the Judahites 2and said before his brothers and the Shomron [Samaria] force, ‘What are the feeble Judahites doing? Will they abandon it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish in the day? Will they bring to life the stones from the heaps of dirt, when they’re burnt?’ 3Tobiyyah the Ammonite, being beside him, said, ‘What they’re building, if a fox went up, he’d breach their wall of stones’.

4’Listen, our God, because we’ve become an object of contempt. May their reviling turn back on their own head. Make them into spoil in a land of captivity. 5Don’t cover over their waywardness. Their wrongdoing should not be blotted out from before you, because they’ve uttered provocation in front of the builders’.

6So we built up the wall, and the entire wall joined up until it was half done. The mind of the people was on doing it.7But when Sanballat, Tobiyyah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that restoration of the Jerusalem walls had progressed in that the broken parts had begun to close up, it enraged them very much, 8and all of them conspired together to come to battle against Jerusalem and cause confusion in it. 9We pleaded with our God and put in place a watch over them day and night in the face of them.

10But Judah said,

The carrier’s energy has collapsed,

and there is much dirt.

We ourselves are not able

to build up the wall.

11And our adversaries said, ‘They won’t know and they won’t see when we come in among them and kill them, and stop the work’. 12And when the Judahites who lived beside them came, they said to us ten times from all the places, ‘You should come back to us’.

**4:12 Sword and Trowel, Faith and Hope**

13So I put in place at the lowest parts of the space behind the wall at the exposed points – I put the people in place by kin-groups with their swords, their lances, and their bows. 14I looked, and I stood up and said to the important people, to the overseers, and to the rest of the people, ‘Don’t be afraid of them. The Lord, the one who is great and awe-inspiring—be mindful of him and do battle for your brothers, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes’.

15When our enemies heard that it had become known to us and that God had contravened their counsel, we went back to the wall, all of us, each to his work. 16But from that day, half of my boys were doing the work and half of them were holding strongly onto lances, shields, bows, and armour, with the officials behind the entire house of Judah 17who were building up the wall. The basket-carriers who were transporting: with one hand he was doing the work and with one he was holding strongly onto the weapon. 18The builders were fixed each with his sword on his hips, but they were building. And the person who sounded the horn was beside me.

19I said to the important people, to the overseers, and to the rest of the people, ‘There’s much work, and widely spread, and we’re divided on the wall, far away one from another. 20At the place where you hear the sound of the horn, collect there to us. Our God – he’ll battle for us’. 21So we were doing the work with half of them holding strongly onto lances, from when dawn came up until the stars came out. 22Further, at that time I said to the people, ‘Each man and his boy should stay the night within Jerusalem; they’ll be a watch for us at night and they’ll work by day’. 23I, my brothers, my boys, and the men in the watch behind me – we didn’t take off our clothes, each one, with his weapon at the water.

**5:1 The Community’s Moral Challenge**

5 But there was a great outcry by the people and their wives toward their Judahite brothers. 2There were some saying, ‘Our sons and our daughters, we are many. We must get grain so we can eat and live’. 3There were some saying, ‘Our fields, our vineyards, our homes – we’re mortgaging them so we can get grain during a famine’. 4And there were some saying, ‘We’ve borrowed silver for the king’s tax—our fields and our vineyards. 5Now, our flesh is the same as our brothers’ flesh, our children are the same as their children, but here – we’re binding our sons and our daughters as servants. Some of our daughters are bound. There’s no power in our hand; our fields and our vineyards belong to other people’.

6It enraged me very much when I heard their outcry and these words. 7When my mind had counselled me, I argued with the important people and the overseers: ‘Are you advancing loans, one with his brother?’ and I set a big congregation against them. 8I said to them, ‘We acquired our Judahite brothers who’d been sold to the Gentiles, as far as it lay in us. Will you indeed sell your brothers so that they may be sold to us?’

They were silent. They couldn’t find a word. 9I said, ‘The thing that you’re doing isn’t good. Will you not walk in awe of God to avoid reviling before our Gentile enemies? 10Indeed, I, my brothers, and my boys are advancing loans of silver and grain with them. Please let’s abandon this advancing loans. 11Please give them back this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive trees, and their houses, and the percentage on the silver, the grain, the new wine, and the fresh oil that you’re advancing them’.

**5:12 Putting Your Money Where Your Mouth Is**

12They said, ‘We’ll give them back, and we won’t seek anything from them. We’ll act in this way, as you’re saying’. So I called for the priests and swore them to act in accordance with this word. 13I also shook out my pocket and said, ‘May God shake out like this anyone who does not implement this word, from his house and from his labour. May he become shaken out like this and empty’. The entire congregation said ‘Yes’, and praised Yahweh, and the people acted in accordance with this word.

14Further, from the day I was ordered to become governor in the country of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, I with my brothers didn’t eat the governor’s food. 15The previous governors who were before me made things heavy for the people, and for food and wine for one day took from them forty sheqels of silver (further, their boys had power over the people). I didn’t do so, out of awe for God.

16And further, I strengthened the work on this wall; we didn’t acquire fields, and all my boys were collected there for the work. 17The Judahites and the overseers, 150 individuals, and the people who came to us from the nations that were round us, were at my table. 18What was being prepared for one day, an ox, six choice sheep, and birds, they were prepared for me with all kinds of wine in quantity at an interval of ten days, but with this I didn’t seek the governor’s food, because the service was heavy on this people.

19Be mindful for me of all that I’ve done for this people, my God, for good.

**6:1 Don’t Trust Anybody**

6 When it came to be heard by Sanballat, Tobiyyah, by Geshem the Arab, and by the rest of our enemies, that we had built up the wall and that no breach was left in it (though up to that time I hadn’t put in place doors in the gateways), 2Sanballat and Geshem sent to me: ‘Come, let’s meet together at Kephirim in Ono Valley’. But these men were thinking to do something bad to me, 3so I sent envoys to them saying, ‘I’m doing some big work and I can’t come down. Why should the work stop when I slacken hold of of it and come down to you?’

4They sent me this same message four times, and I sent this same message back to them. 5Sanballat sent me this same message with his boy a fifth time, with an open communiqué in his hand, 6written in it: ‘Among the nations it’s come to be heard (and Gashmu says): you and the Judahites are thinking to rebel. That’s why you’re building up the wall. You’re going to be their king, according to these words. 7You’ve also put prophets in place to call out in Jerusalem about you, “A king in Judah”. It will now make itself heard to the king, these very words. So now go, and let’s take counsel together’.

8I sent to him: ‘Nothing like these things that you’re saying has happened; rather you’re devising things out of your own mind’, 9because they were all of them making us afraid, saying ‘Their hands will slacken from the work and it won’t be done’.

So now strengthen my hands.

**6:11 The Work Completed**

10I myself came to the house of Shema’yah ben Delayah son of Mehetab’el, when he was confined. He had said,

Let’s meet in God’s house,

inside the palace.

Let’s shut the doors of the palace,

because they’re coming to kill you,

by night they’re coming to kill you.

11I said, ‘Will a person like me take flight? And who is there like me who may go into the palace and live? I won’t come’. 12I realized: there, God had not sent him, because he’d spoke the prophecy about me when Obiyyah and Sanballat had hired him. 13It was to this end that he’d been hired, to the end that I’d be afraid and I’d act in this way and do wrong, and they’d have a bad name, in order that they could revile me.

14Be mindful, my God, of Tobiyyah, and of Sanballat in accordance with these acts of his, and also of Noadyah the prophetess and of the rest of the prophets who were making me afraid.

15The wall was complete on the twenty-fifth of Elul, after fifty-two days. 16When all our enemies heard, all the nations that were round us were afraid, and they fell greatly in their own eyes because they acknowledged that this work had been done by our God.

17Also in those days, the important people among the Judahites were having many communiqués go to Tobiyyah, and ones that were Tobiyyah’s were coming to them, 18because many people in Judah were under oath to him, because he was a son-in-law of Shekanyah ben Arah, and Yehohanan his son had taken the daughter of Meshullam ben Berekyah. 19Further, they were saying good things about him before me, and they were letting my words go out him when Tobiyyah sent communiqués to make me afraid.

**7:1 The Need for a New Population**

7 When the wall was built and I’d put in place the doors, they appointed the gatemen, the singers, and the Levites. 2I ordered in charge of Jerusalem Hanani my brother and Hananyah the fortress officer, because he was truly a trustworthy man and one who lived in awe of God more than many. 3I said to them, ‘The Jerusalem gateways will not open until the sun is hot; until those men are standing in position they must shut the doors and hold them fast. And put in place the inhabitants of Jerusalem as watches, one individual at his watch and another individual opposite his own house’.

4Now the town was wide on both sides and big, but the people within it was small, and there were no houses built up. 5My God put it into my mind and I collected the important people, the overseers, and the people, for enrolment by genealogy. I found the document with the roll of the people who went up at the first, and found written in it:

6These are the people of the province who went up from among the captives in exile whom Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel had exiled and who went back to Jerusalem and to Judah, each to his town, 7who came with Zerubbabel, Yeshua, Nehemyah, Azaryah, Ra’amyah, Nahamani, Mordecay, Bilshan, Misperet, Bigvay, Nehum, Ba’anah.

The number of the men belonging to the Israelite people:

8sons of Par’osh 2,172

9sons of Shephatyah 372

10sons of Arah 652

11sons of Pahat Mo’ab (by the sons of Yeshua and Yo’ab) 2,818

12sons of Elam 1,254

13sons of Zattu 845

14sons of Zakkay 760

15sons of Binnuy 648

16sons of Bebay 628

17sons of Azgad 2,322

18sons of Adoniqam 667

19sons of Bigvay 2,067

10sons of Adin 655

21sons of Ater (by Hizqiyyah) 98

22sons of Hashum 328

23sons of Bezay 324

24sons of Hariph 112

25sons of Gib’on 95

26people of Bet-lehem and Netophah 188

27people of Anatot 128

28people of Bet-azmavet 42

29sons of Ye‘arim Township, Kephirah and Be’erot 743

30sons of The Height and Geba 621

31people of Mikmas 122

32people of Bet-el and Ha’ay 123

33people of the other Nebo 52

34people of the other Elam 1,254

35sons of Harim 320

36sons of Yereho 345

37sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono 721

38sons of Sena’ah 3,930.

**7:39 Ministers on the Roll**

39The priests:

sons of Yeda’yah (by the household of Yeshua) 973

40sons of Immer 1,052

41sons of Pashhur 1,247

42sons of Harim 1,017

43The Levites:

sons of Yeshua (by Qadmi’el, by the sons of Hodavyah) 74

44The singers:

sons of Asaph 148

45The gatemen:

sons of Shallum

sons of Ater

sons of Talmon

sons of Aqqub

sons of Hatita

sons of Shobay

altogether 138

46The assistants:

sons of Tsiha

sons of Hasupha

sons of Tabba’ot

47sons of Qeros

sons of Si’ah

sons of Padon

48sons of Lebanah

sons of Hagabah

sons ofShalmay

sons of Hanan

49sons ofGiddel

sons ofGahar

sons ofRe’ayah

sons of Retsin

sons of Neqodah

51sons of Gazzam

sons ofUzza

sons of Paseah

52sons of Besay

sons ofMe’unim

sons of Nephishesim

53sons ofBaqbuq

sons of Haqupha

sons of Harhur

54sons ofBatslit

sons ofMehida

sons of Harsha

55sons ofBarqos

sons ofSisera

sons of Temah

56sons ofNetsiah

sons ofHatipha

57The sons of Solomon’s servants:

sons ofSotay

sons ofSopheret

sons of Perida

58sons of Ya’ela

sons ofDarqon

sons of Giddel

59sons ofShephatyah

sons ofHattil

sons ofPokeret Hatstsebayim

sons of Amon

60All the assistants and the sons of Solomon’s servants 392

61These are the people who came up from Tel Melah, Tel Harsha, Kerub, Addan,and Immer, but who could not tell their ancestral household and their origin, whether they were from Israel:

62sons of Delayah

sons ofTobiyyah

sons of Neqoda

642

63Of the priests:

sons ofHabayah

sons of Haqqots

sons of Barzillay (who had taken a wife from the daughters of Barzillay the Gil’adite and was called by their name):

64these looked for their record in the the enrolment by genealogy but it was not found, and they were deconsecrated from the priesthood. 65The administrator said to them that they should not eat of the very sacred things until there was a priest standing with Urim and Tummim.

**7:68 The Need for a New Community**

66The entire congregation altogether 42,360

67apart from their servants and handmaids: these were 7,337

and they had 245 male and female singers

68their horses 736; their mules 245; 69camels 435; donkeys 6,720.

70Some of the ancestral heads gave to the work. The administrator gave to the treasury gold (1,000 drakmas), basins (50), priests’ robes (530). 71Some of the ancestral heads gave to the work treasury gold (20,000 drakmas) and silver (2,200 minas). 72What the remainder of the people gave: gold (20,000 drakmas), silver (2,000), and priests’ robes (67).

73The priests, the Levites, the gatemen, the singers, some of the people, the assistants, and all Israel went to live in their towns. The seventh month arrived, with the Israelites in their towns, 8 and the entire people gathered as one person to the square that’s before the Water Gate, and said to Ezra the scholar to bring Moses’ instruction document with which Yahweh had ordered Israel. 2Ezra the priest brought the instruction before the congregation (men and women and all who could understand when they listened) on the first day of the seventh month. 3He read out in it before the square which is before the Water Gate from dawn until midday, in front of the men and the women and the people who could understand, with the ears of the entire people toward the instruction document.

4Ezra the scholar stood on a wooden tower that they made for the thing. There stood beside him Mattityah, Shema, Anayah, Uriyyah, Hilqiyyah, and Ma’aseyah on his right, and at his left Pedayah, Misha’el, Malkiyyah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zekaryah, Meshullam. 5Ezra opened the document before the eyes of the entire people, because he was above the entire people, and as he opened it, the entire people stood. 6Ezra blessed Yahweh, the great God, and the entire people answered, ‘Yes, yes’ with a raising of their hands, then bent their heads and bowed low to Yahweh, faces on the ground. 7Yeshua, Bani, Sherebyah, Yamin, Aqqub, Shabbetay, Hodiyyah, Ma’aseyah, Qelita, Azaryah, Yozabad, Hanan, Pela’yah, and the Levites, helped the people understand the instruction, with the people in their place. 8They read out in the document, in God’s instruction, explaining and giving insight so they understood the reading.

**8:9 Mourning or Celebration?**

9Nehemyah (he was the administrator), Ezra the priest-scholar, and the Levites who were helping the people understand, said to the entire people, ‘Today is sacred for Yahweh your God. Don’t mourn, don’t cry’, because the entire people were crying as they heard the words of the instruction. 10He said to them, ‘Go, eat rich food, drink sweet drinks, and send off portions to anyone who has nothing prepared, because today is sacred for our Lord. Don’t be in pain, because joy in Yahweh is your protection’. 11The Levites were silencing the entire people, saying ‘Hush, because today is sacred, don’t be in pain’. 12So the entire people went to eat and drink and send off portions and make great rejoicing, because they understood the things that they had made known to them.

13On the second day, the ancestral heads of the entire people, the priests, and the Levites gathered to Ezra the scholar, to get insight into the words of the instruction. 14They found written in the instruction that Yahweh had ordered by means of Moses that the Israelites should live in bivouacs [*sukkot*]in the festival in the seventh month 15and that they should make heard and should pass on an announcement in all their towns and in Jerusalem: ‘Go out into the mountains and bring olive branches, pine tree branches, myrtle branches, palm branches, and leafy tree branches to make bivouacs, as it is written’.

16So the people went out and brought them, and made themselves bivouacs, each person on his roof, or in their courtyards, in the courtyards of God’s house, in the square at the Water Gate, or in the square at the Ephrayim Gate. 17The entire congregation of people who had come back from the captivity made bivouacs and lived in the bivouacs, because the Israelites had not done so since the days of Joshua ben Nun until that day, and there was very great rejoicing.

18So he read out in the document of God’s instruction day by day, from the first day until the last day. They made festival for seven days and an assembly on the eighth day, in accordance with the ruling.

**9:1 How to Make Your Confession**

9 On the twenty-fourth day of this month the Israelites assembled with fasting and with sack, and dirt on themselves. 2The offspring of Israel distinguished themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their wrongdoings and their ancestors’ wayward acts. 3They got up in their position and read out in Yahweh their God’s instruction document for a quarter of the day, and for a quarter they were confessing and bowing low to Yahweh their God.

4On the Levites’ stairway Yeshua and Bani (Qadmi’el, Shebanyah, Bunni, Sherebyah, Bani, Kenani) got up and cried out in a loud voice to Yahweh their God. 5The Levites Yeshua and Qadmi’el (Bani, Hashabneyah, Sherebyah, Hodiyyah, Petahyah) said, ‘Get up, bless Yahweh your God from age to age:

“May people bless your glorious name,

though exalted above all blessing and praise.

6You are Yahweh, you alone;

you made the heavens,

The highest heavens and all their army,

the earth and all that’s on it,

the seas and all that’s in them.

You give life to all of them,

and the army in the heavens bow low to you.

7You are Yahweh, the God who chose Abram and got him to go out from Ur of the Kasdites, and made his name Abraham. 8You found his mind trustworthy before you and you solemnized the pact with him to give the country of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Yebusite, and the Girgashite – to give [it] to his offspring. You implemented your words, because you’re faithful.

9You saw our ancestors’ humbling in Egypt and you heard their cry at the Reed Sea. 10You performed signs and proofs against Pharaoh and against all his servants and against all the people of his country because you acknowledged that they asserted themselves over them, and you made a name for yourself this very day.

**9:11 Self-assertion and Pardon**

11You split the sea before them and they passed through the middle of the sea on dry ground, but you threw their pursuers into the depths, like a stone into vigorous water. 12With a cloud column you led them by day, and with a fire column by night, to give light for them the way in which they were to go.

13On Mount Sinai you came down and spoke with them from the heavens. You gave them upright rulings and truthful instructions, good decrees and orders. 14Your sacred sabbath you caused to be acknowledged by them, and you ordained for them orders, decrees and instruction by means of Moses your servant. 15Bread from the heavens you gave them for their hunger, and you made water go out from a cliff for them, for their thirst. You said to them to go and take possession of the country that you had raised your hand [to swear] to give them.

16But they, our ancestors, asserted themselves, toughened their neck, and didn’t listen to your orders. 17They refused to listen and were not mindful of your extraordinary deeds, which you’d done with them. They toughened their neck and appointed a head so as to go back to their serfdom, in their rebelliousness.

But you are a pardoning God, gracious and compassionate, long-tempered and big in commitment, and you didn’t abandon them, 18even when they made themselves a calf figurine and said, “This is your God who got you up from Egypt”. They committed great acts of disdain. 19But you in your great compassion – you didn’t abandon them in the wilderness. The cloud column didn’t depart from them by day to lead them on the way, nor the fire column by night to give light to them and on the way in which they were to go.

**9:20 Provision and Rebellion**

20You gave them your good spirit to enable them to succeed. You didn’t withhold your manna from their mouth and you gave them water for their thirst. 21When for forty years you provided for them in the wilderness, they didn’t lack, their clothes didn’t wear out, and their feet didn’t swell. 22You gave them kingdoms and peoples, and allocated these as a border. They took possession of the country of Sihon, which was the country of the king of Heshbon, and the country of Og king of Bashan.

23You made their children as many as the stars in the heavens and brought them to the country that you said to their parents to go in to possess. 24The children came and took possession of the country. You made the inhabitants of the country, the Canaanites, bow down before them,and you gave them into their hand, both their kings and the peoples of the country, to do with them in accordance with what was acceptable to them. 25They took fortified towns and rich land and took possession of houses full of every good thing: hewn cisterns, vineyards, olives, and fruit trees, in large number. They ate, were full, grew stocky, and reveled in your great goodness.

26But they defied and rebelled against you and threw your instruction behind their back. They killed your prophets who testified against them to get them to come back to you, and they committed great acts of disdain. 27You gave them into the hand of their adversaries and they oppressed them. In their time of pressure they cried out to you and from the heavens you yourself would listen. In accordance with your great compassion you gave them deliverers and they delivered them from the hand of their adversaries.

**9:29 Servants or Serfs**

28But when things settled down for them, they again dealt badly before you. You abandoned them into the hand of their enemies and they held sway over them. They again cried out to you, and from the heavens you yourself would listen and rescue them in accordance with your great compassion, time after time. 29You testified against them to get them to come back to your instruction, but they themselves asserted themselves and didn’t listen to your orders. They did wrong by your rulings, which a person should act on and live by. They presented a defiant shoulder, they toughened their neck, and they didn’t listen.

30You prolonged things for them for many years and testified against them by your spirit by means of your prophets, but they didn’t give ear, so you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the countries. 31But in your great compassion you didn’t make an end of them and you didn’t abandon them, because you are a God gracious and compassionate.

32So now, our great God, strong and awe-inspiring, keeping pact and commitment, may all the suffering not seem small before you that has found us, our kings, our officials, our priests, our prophets, our ancestors, and all your people, from the days of the kings of Ashshur until this day. 33You are in the right over everything that has come upon us, because you’ve acted truthfully, but we’ve acted faithlessly. 34Our kings, our officials, our priests, and our ancestors—they didn’t act on your instruction and they didn’t heed your orders and your affirmations that you testified against them. 35Despite their kingship and despite your great goodness that you gave them and despite the wide and rich country that you gave before them, they didn’t serve you and they didn’t turn back from their bad ways.

36Here we are, serfs today. The country you gave our ancestors to eat its fruit and its goodness, here we are, serfs on it. 37Its great yield belongs to the kings that you’ve put over us because of our wrongdoings. They’re ruling our bodies and over our animals in accordance with what is acceptable to them. We’re under great pressure.

**9:38 Putting Your Life Where Your Mouth Is**

38Because of all this, we are comfirming a pledge and putting it in writing, and on the sealed document are our officials, our Levites, and our priests’.

10 So on the sealed documents are Nehemyah ben Hakalyah, the administrator, and

* Tsidqiyyah
* 2Serayah
* Azaryah
* Yirmeyah
* 3Pashhur
* Amaryah
* Malkiyyah
* 4Hattush
* Shebanyah
* Malluk
* 5Harim
* Meremot
* Obadyah
* 6Daniyye’l
* Ginneton
* Baruk
* 7Meshullam
* Abiyyah
* Miyyamin
* 8Ma’azyah
* Bilgay
* Shema’yah

These were the priests. 9The Levites:

* Yeshua ben Azanyah, Binnuy of the sons of Henadad, Qadmi’el
* 10their brothers Shebanyah, Hodiyyah, Qelita, Pela’yah, Hanan, 11Mika, Rehob, Hashabyah, 12Zakkur, Sherebyah, Shebanyah, 13Hodiyyah, Bani, Beninu.

14The heads of the people:

* Par’osh
* Pahat Mo’ab
* Elam
* Zattu
* Bani
* 15Bunni
* Azgad
* Bebay
* 16Adoniyyah
* Bigvay
* Adin
* 17Ater
* Hizqiyyah
* Azzur
* 18Hodiyyah
* Hashum
* Betsay
* 19Hariph
* Anatot
* Nebay
* 20Magpi’ash
* Meshullam
* Hezir
* 21Meshezab’el
* Tsadoq
* Yaddua
* 22Pelatyah
* Hanan
* Anayah
* 23Hoshea
* Hananyah
* Hashshub
* 24Hallohesh
* Pilha
* Shobeq
* 25Rehum
* Hashabnah
* Ma’aseyah
* 26and Ahiyyah
* Hanan
* Anan
* 27Malluk
* Harim
* Ba’anah.

28The remainder of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatemen, the singers, the assistants, and everyone who made themselves distinct from the peoples of the countries to God’s instruction, their wives, their sons, and their daughters, everyone who knows, having understanding, 29were taking strong hold of their brothers, the august ones among them, and coming into a curse and into an oath to walk by God’s instruction that was given by means of Moses, God’s servant, and to keep and act on all the orders of Yahweh our Lord, and his rulings and his decrees.

**10:30 On Being Specific**

30 Namely:

* We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the country and we will not take their daughters for our sons.
* 31The peoples of the country who bring merchandises or any grain on the sabbath day to sell, we will not get from them on the sabbath, or on a sacred day.
* We will leave alone the seventh year and the loan linked to any pledge.
* 32We have put in place for ourselves orders to impose on ourselves one-third of a sheqel per year for the service of our God’s house, 33for the bread in the row, the regular grain offering, and for the regular burnt offering, that of the sabbaths, of the new months, for the appointed occasions, for sacred things, and for purification offerings to make expiation for Israel, and all the work in our God’s house.
* 34We have let lots fall for the wood offering (the priests, the Levites, and the people) to bring it to our God’s house by ancestral households at designated times year by year to burn up on the altar of Yahweh our God, as it is written in the instruction.
* 35And to bring the first fruits of our ground and the first fruits of every fruit of every tree year by year for Yahweh’s house, 36and the firstborn of our sons and of our animals, as it is written in the instruction, and to bring the firstborn of our cattle and of our flocks to our God’s house to the priests who minister in our God’s house.
* 37We will bring the first of our dough, our contributions, and the fruit of every tree, new wine and fresh oil, to the priests to the halls in our God’s house, and the tenth of our ground to the Levites; the Levites are the ones who collect the tenths in all the towns where we serve. 38The priest, the son of Aaron, is to be with the Levites during the tenthing by the Levites, and the Levites are to take up a tenth of the tenth to our God’s house, to the halls of the treasure house, 39because the Israelites and the Levites are to bring to the halls the contribution of grain, new wine, and fresh oil. The sanctuary articles, the priests who minister, the gatemen, and the singers are there. We will not abandon our God’s house.

**11:1 The Sacred Town (1)**

11 The people’s officials lived in Jerusalem, while the remainder of the people let lots fall to get one out of ten to come to live in Jerusalem, the sacred town, while nine tenths were in the towns. 2The people blessed all the individuals who decided freely to live in Jerusalem.

3These are the heads of the province who lived in Jerusalem, while in the towns of Judah people lived in their towns, each individual on his holding, Israel, the priests, the Levites, the assistants, and the descendants of Solomon’s servants, 4and some of the Judahites and some of the Benjaminites lived in Jerusalem.

* Of the Judahites:

Atayah ben Uzziyyah son of Zekaryah son of Amaryah son of Shephatyah son of Mahalal’el of the descendants of Perets,

5and Ma’aseyah ben Baruk son of Kol-hozeh son of Hazayah son of Adayah son of Yoyarib son of Zekaryah son of the Shilonite.

6All the descendants of Perets who were living in Jerusalem: 468 forceful men.

* 7These are the Benjaminites:

Sallu ben Meshullam son of Yo’ed son of Pedayah son of Qolayah son of Ma’aseyah son of Iti’el son of Yesha’yah,

8and after him Gabbay, Sallay: 928.

9Yo’el ben Zikri was appointee in charge of them

and Yehudah ben Hassenu’ah was second-in-command over the town.

10Of the priests:

Yeda’yah ben Yoyarib, Yakin, 11Serayah ben Hilqiyyah son of Meshullam son of Tsadoq son of Merayot son of Ahitub, chief over God’s house, 12and their brothers doing the work for the house: 822

Adayah ben Yeroham son of Pelalyah son of Amtsi son of Zekaryah son of Pashhur son of Malkiyyah, 13and his brothers, ancestral heads: 242

and Amashsay ben Azar’el son of Ahzai son of Meshillemot son of Immer, 14and their brothers, forceful strong men: 128

Zabdi’el ben Haggedolim was appointee in charge of them.

**11:15 The Sacred Town (2)**

* 15Of the Levites:

Shema’yah ben Hashshub, son of Azriqam son of Hashabyah son of Bunni

16and Shabbetay and Yozabad in charge of the outside work for God’s house, of the heads of the Levites

17Mattanyah ben Mikah son of Zabdi son of Asaph, head; at prayer, the one who began the confession

Baqbuqyah, second-in-command, one of his brothers

and Abda ben Shammua son of Galal son of Yedutun

18All the Levites in the sacred town: 284.

* 19The gatemen:

Aqqub, Talmon, and their brothers who watched at the gateways: 172.

* 20The remainder of Israel , the priests, the Levites in all the towns of Judah, each on his property.

21The assistants were living on the Ophel; Tsipha and Gishpa were in charge of the assistants.

22The Levites’ appointee in Jerusalem was Uzzi ben Bani son of Hashabyah son of Mattanyah son of Mika, of the Asaphite singers, in charge of the work in God’s house, 23because there was an order from the king concerning them, a pledge about the singers, each day’s requirement in its day.

24Petahyah ben Meshezab’el, of the descendants of Zerah son of Judah, was at the king’s hand in connection with everything regarding the people.

* 25As for the villages, with their fields: some of the Judahites lived in Arba Township and its daughter-towns, in Dibon and its daughter-towns, and in Yeqabtse’el and its villages, 26in Yeshua, in Moladah, in Bet Pelet, 27in Hatsar Shu’al, in Be’er Sheba and its daughter-towns, 28in Tsiqlag, in Mekonah and its daughter-towns, 29in En Rimmon, in Tsorah, in Yarmut, 30Zanoah, Adullam and their villages, Lakish and its fields, and Azeqah and its daughter-towns. So they camped from Be’er-sheba to the Hinnom Ravine.
* 31The Benjaminites: from Geba, Mikmash, Ayyah, and Bet-el and its daughter-towns; 32Anatot, Nob, Ananyah, 33Hatsor, Ramah, Gittayim, 34Hadid, Tsebo’im, Neballat, 35Lod and Ono, Cratsmen’s Ravine. 36Some of the Levites who were Judah’s allocations belonged to Benjamin.

**12:1 Priests and Levites in the Community**

12 These are the priests and the Levites who went up with Zerubbabel ben She’alti’el and Yeshua:

* Serayah
* Yirmeyah
* Ezra
* 2Amaryah
* Malluk
* Hattush
* 3Shekanyah
* Rehum
* Meramot
* 4Iddo
* Ginnetoy
* Abiyyah
* 5Miyyamin
* Ma’adyah
* Bilgah
* 6Shema’yah
* Yoyarib
* Yeda’yah.
* 7Sallu
* Amoq
* Hilqiyyah
* Yeda’yah.

These were the heads of the priests and their brothers in the time of Yeshua. 8The Levites:

* Yeshua, Binnuy, Qadmi’el, Sherebyah, and Yehudah
* Mattanyah, in charge of confession songs, he and his brothers
* 9Baqbuqyah and Unni, their brothers, were opposite them for the watches
* 10Yeshua fathered Yoyaqim, Yoyaqim fathered Elyashib, Elyashib fathered Yoyada, 11Yoyada fathered Yonatan, Yonatan fathered Yaddua.

12In the time of Yoyaqim, priests who were the ancestral heads were:

* for Serayah, Merayah
* for Yirmeyah, Hananyah
* 13for Ezra, Meshullam
* for Amaryah, Yehohanan
* 14for Meliku, Yonatan
* for Shebanyah, Yoseph
* 15for Harim, Adna
* for Merayot, Helqay
* 16for Iddo, Zekaryah
* for Ginneton, Meshullam
* 17for Abiyyah, Zikri
* for Minyamin
* for Mo’adyah, Piltay
* 18for Bilgah, Shammua
* for Shema’yah, Yehonatan
* 19and for Yoyarib, Mattenay
* for Yeda’yah, Uzzi
* 20for Sallay, Qallay
* for Amoq, Eber
* 21for Hilqiyyah, Hashabyah
* for Yeda’yah, Netan’el.

22The Levites in the time of Elyashib, Yoyada, and Yohanan, and Yaddua, written down as ancestral heads (and the priests in the reign of Darius the Persian); 23the Levites as ancestral heads written down on the document about things of the time right up to the time of Yohanan ben Elyashib; 24so the Levites’ heads:

* Hashabyah, Sherebyah, Yeshua ben Qadmi’el, and their brothers opposite them, for praising, for confessing, by the order of David the supernatural man, watch responding to watch
* 25Mattanyah, Baqbuqyah, Obadyah, Meshullam, Talmon, Aqqub, keeping watch as gatemen at the storerooms by the gateways.

26These were in the time of Yoyaqim ben Yeshua son of Yotsadaq, and in the time of Nehemyah the governor and Ezra the priest-scholar.

**12:27 Dedication Choirs**

27At the dedication of the Jerusalem wall, they looked for the Levites from all their places to get them to come to Jerusalem to make a dedication with rejoicing, with confessions and with song, cymbals, mandolins, and with guitars. 28The singers gathered both from the plain round Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophatites, 29from Bet Hagilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmavet, because the singers had built themselves villages round Jerusalem. 30The priests and the Levites purified themselves and purified the people, the gateways, and the wall.

31I got the officials of Judah to go up onto the wall and I put in place two big confessions and processions:

* To the right on the wall to the Rubbish Gate. 32Hosha’yah and half the officials of Judah followed them, 33with Azaryah, Ezra, and Meshullam, 34Yehudah, Binyamin, Shema’yah, Yirmeyah, 35some of the priests’ sons with trumpets, Zekaryah ben Yonatan son of Shema’yah son of Mattanyah son of Mikayah son of Zakkur son of Asaph, 36his brothers Shema’yah and Azar’el, Milalay, Gilalay, Ma’ay, Netan’el, Yehudah, Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the supernatural man, and Ezra the scholar before them. 37Above the Spring Gate, straight ahead of them they went up the ascent to David’s Town by the ascent to the wall, above David’s house, and as far as the Water Gate on the east.
* 38The second confession which went the opposite way with me behind it and half the people, on the wall above the Ovens Tower as far as the wide wall, 39and above the Ephrayim Gate, by the Yeshanah Gate, by the Fish Gate, Hananel’s Tower, the Hundred Tower, and as far as the Sheep Gate. They halted at the Guard Gate.
* 40The two confessions halted at God’s house, as did I and half the overseers with me, 41and the priests Elyaqim, Ma’aseyah, Minyamin, Mikayah, Elyo’enay, Zekaryah, Hananyah, with trumpets, 42and Ma’aseyah, Shema’yah, El’azar, Uzzi, Yehohanan, Malkiyyah, Elam, and Ezer. The singers made themselves heard, with Yizrahyah the appointee. 43They made big sacrifices that day and rejoiced, because God had enabled them to rejoice greatly. The women and the children also rejoiced. The rejoicing in Jerusalem was heard from afar.

**12:44 Intermarriage Again**

44On that day they appointed people over the treasury rooms for the contributions, for first fruits, and for the tenths, to collect in them (for the fields belonging to the towns) the portions mentioned by the instruction for the priests and for the Levites, because there was rejoicing in Judah over the priests and over the Levites who stood 45and kept their God’s watch and the purity watch, and the singers and the gatemen, in accordance with the order of David, Solomon his son 46(because in the days of David and Asaph of old, there were heads of the singers and a song of praise and confession to God). 47In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemyah all Israel were giving the singers and the gatemen’s portions, each day’s requirement in its day, and making things sacred for the Levites, while the Levites were making things sacred for the Aaronites.

13 On that day there was a reading out in Moses’ document in the ears of the people and it was found written in it that an Ammonite or Mo’abite should not come into God’s congregation, permanently, 2because they did not meet the Israelites with bread and with water but hired Bil’am [Balaam] to slight them (but our God turned the slighting into blessing). 3When they heard the instruction, they distinguished the entire mixed crowd from Israel.

4Before this, Elyashib the priest had been put in a hall in our God’s house. Being near to Tobiyyah, 5he had made for him a big hall where before they had been putting the grain offering, the incense, the articles, the tenth of grain, new wine, and fresh oil, the order for the Levites, the singers, and the gatemen, and the contribution for the priests.

**13:6 More Frustrations**

6During all this time I was not in Jerusalem because in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babel I came to the king, but at the end of a period of time I asked of the king 7and came to Jerusalem. I considered the bad thing that Elyashib had done for Tobiyyah in making a room for him in the courtyards of God’s house. 8It seemed very bad to me. I threw all the articles of Tobiyyah’s household outside from the hall 9and said they should purify the halls, and I put back there the articles from God’s house, the grain offering, and the incense.

10I got to know that the Levites’ portions had not been given, so that the Levites and the singers doing the work had taken flight each to his field. 11I argued with the overseers and said, ‘Why has God’s house been abandoned?’ I collected them and put them in place at their position, 12and all Judah brought the tenth of the grain, the new wine, and the fresh oil into the treasuries. 13I made as treasurers in charge of the treasuries Shelemyah the priest, Tsadoq the secretary, Pedayah from the Levites, and next to them Hanan ben Zakkur son of Mattanyah, because they were reckoned trustworthy, and it was up to them to make allocations to their brothers.

14Be mindful of me, my God, because of this. Don’t blot out my acts of commitment, which I have performed in God’s house and in its duties.

15In those days I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the sabbath, and bringing grain heaps and stacking them on donkeys, and also wine, grapes, figs, and every load, and bringing them into Jerusalem on the sabbath day. I testified on the day when they sold provisions 16and when the Tyrians who lived there were bringing fish and all merchandise and selling on the sabbath to Judahites and in Jerusalem, 17and I argued with the important people in Judah: ‘What is this bad thing that you’re doing, and profaning the sabbath day? 18Our ancestors acted like this, didn’t they, and our God brought on us all this bad fortune, and on this town. You’re bringing more rage against Israel by profaning the sabbath’.

**13:19 Desecration and Trespass**

19When the gateways of Jerusalem grew dark before the sabbath, I said that the doors should shut, and I said that they should not open them until after the sabbath. Given that I put in place some of my boys at the gateways, no load would come in on the sabbath day. 20The merchants and the people selling all merchandise stayed the night outside Jerusalem once or twice, 21but I testified against them: ‘Why are you staying the night opposite the wall? If you do it again, I’ll lay hands on you’; from that time they didn’t come on the sabbath. 22I said to the Levites that they should purify themselves and come keep watch over the gateways to make the sabbath day sacred.

Be mindful of this for me as well, my God, and have pity on me in accordance with the abundance of your commitment.

23In those days I also saw the Judahites had got Ashdodite, Ammonite, and Mo’abite women to come to live. 24Their children were speaking half in Ashdodite, and none of them knew how to speak Judahite, but in accordance with the tongue of one people or the other. 25I argued with them and slighted them, and struck some of them down and pulled out their hair, and made them swear by God: ‘If you give your daughters to their sons or if you get some of their daughters for your sons or for yourselves…. 26It was in these things that Solomon king of Israel did wrong, wasn’t it. Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by God, and God made him king over all Israel; foreign women caused even him to do wrong. 27Are we to listen to you doing this great bad thing, trespassing against our God by getting foreign women come to live?’

28One of the sons of Yoyada, the son of Elyashib the big priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. I made him take flight from me. 29Be mindful with regard to them, my God, because they polluted the priesthood, the pact of the priesthood and the Levites.

30I purified them of everything foreign and put the watches in place for the priests and for the Levites, each one in his work, 31and for the wood offering at designated times and for the first fruits. My God, be mindful for me for good.

# Chronicles Book One

The First Book of Chronicles retells the entire story from Adam to David which is told in Genesis to Samuel. Why does it do so, and why does the Bible include two versions of the story? One could compare the fact that the New Testament includes four versions of the Jesus story. It would be less confusing to have just one. But a good story can be told from different angles, and the more you tell it, the more illuminating it becomes. You get a different take on it, you get a different author’s angle on what it means, and you look at it from the perspective of a different audience.

The first thing that strikes you when you start reading Chronicles is that the opening third is just lists of names. In part, that’s the way it summarizes the entire story from Adam to David. It’s a bit like the opening frames of an episode in a tv serial that provide a lightning reminder of the story so far. This “series” as a whole is going to focus on David, but the audience needs to see David in his context in the entire story of Israel—indeed, the entire story of the world. This entire story leads up to him. But the chapters also preserve lots of other information that helps the readers know where they came from. The coverage is uneven; perhaps it simply preserves what was available.

The lists of names include references to people living way later than David’s day, and Book One of Chronicles as a whole leads into Book Two which takes the story on through another five centuries after David, up to the time when people from Judah are taken off into exile and are then encouraged to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. So Chronicles was not written in David’s day, which makes that focus striking. Chronicles is a version of Israel’s story told by someone living in Jerusalem in the time of the Second Temple and told for people living in that context. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah and the visions in Daniel give us some insight into events during those times.

Why does Chronicles focus on David? The answer emerges when we consider the book’s angle on its hero. Its interest lies not in the great warrior or the smart operator of 1 and 2 Samuel, nor is he the intriguing human being with clay feet that those books also portray. Those books also relate how David set going the process whereby the first temple was built, and it’s this aspect of David’s achievement that interests Chronicles.

Its angle would be significant for people living in Second Temple times. They were hard times. The community in Judah that centred on Jerusalem was a shadow of its former self. Geographically it was the size of a county not a state. Politically it was a colony of the Persian empire. Its faith and its life were often under pressure from neighbouring peoples. When things are like that, how do you hold on?

The Old Testament gives people several complementary answers. The prophets’ answer is that you look to the future and tell yourself that things are going to get better. Judah was not just whistling in the wind when it lived by such hopes. God had made a commitment to David that God could not get out of, and people could live in light of promises that God would one day send them a new David.

A complementary answer is that you look to the past, to what God has done in the past, and it is this answer that attracts Chronicles. Its interest in the past idoesn’t focus on creation, Abraham, the exodus, or Joshua, but on David. It does so from this angle, David as founder of the temple worship. Telling that story encourages people in Jerusalem to live in the present, because for all the limitations of present experience, one great privilege they do have is the daily round of temple worship. Some of the lists in the first third of the book, and the lists in the last third, relate to the actual arrangements for worship and other aspects of community life in David’s day, and in the time of the book’s readers.

That daily worship is also significant for people who don’t live in Jerusalem. The priest in an English church used ring the church bell before going into church morning and evening. People who could not respond to the summons could know that the priest was conducting the prayers and could join in at a distance. Elsewhere in Judah, people could know that temple worship was being offered and could associate themselves with it. They could even do so from many miles away, as Daniel did.

## 1:1 In the Beginning

* 1 Adam, Seth, Enosh, 2Kenan, Mahalalel, Yared, 3Enoch, Methuselah, Lamek, 4Noah, Shem, Ham, and Japhet
* 5Japhet’s sons: Gomer, Magog, Maday, Javan, Tubal, Meshek, and Tiras
* 6Gomer’s sons: Ashkenaz, Diphat, and Togarmah
* 7Javan’s sons: Elishah, Tarshish, Kittites, and Rodanites
* 8Ham’s sons: Sudan [Kush], Egypt, Put, and Canaan
* 9Sudan’s sons: Seba, Havilah, Sabta, Ra’ama, and Sabteka
* Ra’ama’s sons: Sheba and Dedan
* 10Sudan fathered Nimrod; he was the first to be a strong man on the earth
* 11Egypt fathered Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, 12Patrusites, Kasluhites (Philistines came out from there), and Kaphtorites
* 13Canaan fathered Tsidon (his firstborn), Het, 14the Yebusite, the Amorite, the Girgashite, 15the Hivvite, the Arkite, the Sinite, 16the Arvadite, the Tsemarite, and the Hamatite
* 17Shem’s sons: Elam, Ashshur, Arpakshad, Lud, Aram, Uts, Hul, Geter, and Meshek
* 18Arpakshad fathered Shelah and Shelah fathered Eber
* 19To Eber two sons were born:
* The name of the one was Peleg [Division] because in his days the earth divided
* His brother’s name was Yoktan
* 20Yoktan fathered Almodad, Sheleph, Hatsarmavet, Yerah, 21Hadoram, Uzal, Diklah, 22Ebal, Abima’el, Sheba, 23Ophir, Havilah, and Yobab; all these were Yoktan’s sons
* 24Shem, Arpakshad, Shelah, 25Eber, Peleg, Re’u, 26Serug, Nahor, Terah, 27Abram (i.e., Abraham)
* 28Abraham’s sons: Isaac and Ishma’el; 29these are their lines of descent:
* Ishma’el’s firstborn, Nebayot, Qedar, Adbe’el, Mibsam, 30Mishma, Dumah, Massa, 31Hadad, Tema, Yetur, Naphish, and Qedemah; these are Ishma’el’s sons
* 32The sons of Qeturah, Abraham’s secondary wife: she gave birth to Zimran, Yoqshan, Medan, Midyan, Yishbaq, and Shuah
* Yoqshan’s sons: Sheba and Dedan
* 33Midyan’s sons: Ephah, Epher, Hanok, Abida, and Elda’ah; all these were Qeturah’s sons.

## 1:34 Esau’s Line

* 34Abraham fathered Isaac
* Isaac’s sons: Esau and Israel
* 35Esau’s sons: Eliphaz, Re’u’el, Ye’ush, Ya’lam, and Qorah
* 36Eliphaz’s sons: Teman, Omar, Tsephi, Ga’tam, Qenaz, Timna, and Amaleq 37Re’u’el’s sons: Nahat, Zerah, Shammah, and Mizzah
* 38Se’ir’s sons: Lotan, Shobal, Tsib’on, Anah, Dishon, Etser, and Dishan
* 39Lotan’s sons: Hori and Homam; and Timna was Lotan’s sister
* 40Shobal’s sons: Alyan, Manahat, Ebal, Shephi, and Onam
* Tsib’on’s sons: Ayyah and Anah
* 41Anah’s sons: Dishon
* Dishon’s sons: Hamran, Eshban, Yitran, and Keran
* 42Etser’s sons: Bilhan, Za’avan, Ya’aqan
* Dishan’s sons: Uts and Aran
* 43These are the kings who reigned in the country of Edom before a king reigned among the Israelites:
* Bela ben Be’or; his town’s name was Dinhabah
* 44Bela died, and Yobab ben Zerah from Botsrah began to reign in place of him
* 45Yobab died, and Husham from the Temanites’ country began to reign in place of him
* 46Husham died, and Hadad ben Bedad, who struck down Midyan in Mo’ab’s area, began to reign in place of him; his town’s name was Avit
* 47Hadad died, and Samlah from Masrekah began to reign in place of him
* 48Samlah died, and Sha’ul from Broads-on-the-River began to reign in place of him
* 49Sha’ul died, and Ba’al Hanan ben Akbor began to reign in place of him
* 50Ba’al Hanan died, and Hadad began to reign in place of him; his town’s name was Pa’i, and his wife’s name was Mehetabel bat Matred, the daughter of Gold Water
* 51Hadad died
* The Edomite clans were
* the Timna clan
* the Alvah clan
* the Yetet clan
* 52the Oholibamah clan
* the Elah clan
* the Pinon clan
* 53the Qenaz clan
* the Teman clan
* the Mibtsar clan
* 54the Magdi’el clan
* the Iram clan
* These were the Edomite clans.

## 2:1 The Beginning of Judah’s Line

* 2 These are Israel’s sons:

Re’uben, Shim’on [Simeon], Levi, Judah, Yissakar, Zebulun, 2Dan, Joseph, Benjamin, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher

* 3Judah’s sons: Er, Onan, and Shelah (the three were born to him from Bat-shua the Canaanite); Er, Judah’s firstborn, was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, and he put him to death; 4since Tamar his daughter-in-law gave birth to Perets and Zerah for him, altogether Judah’s sons were five
* 5Perets’s sons: Hezron and Hamul
* 6Zerah’s sons: Zimri, Etan, Heman, Kalkol, and Dara, five altogether
* 7Karmi’s sons: Akar [Trouble], the troubler of Israel, who trespassed on something devoted
* 8Etan’s sons: Azaryah
* 9Hezron’s sons, who were born to him: Yerahme’el, Ram, and Kelubay
* 10Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, a leader of the Judahites, 11Nahshon fathered Salma, Salma fathered Bo’az, 12Bo’az fathered Obed, and Obed fathered Jesse
* 13Jesse fathered Eli’ab as his firstborn, Abinadab the second, Shim’a the third, 14Netan’el the fourth, Radday the fifth, 15Otsem the sixth, David the seventh
* 16Their sisters were Tseruyah and Abigayil
* Tseruyah’s sons: Abshay, Yo’ab, and Asah’el, three
* 17Abigayil gave birth to Amasa; Amasa’s father was Yeter the Ishma’elite
* 18Caleb ben Hezron fathered children with Azubah his wife, and with Yeri’ot; these were her sons: Yesher, Shobab, and Ardon
* 19Azubah died and Caleb took himself Ephrat, who gave birth to Hur for him
* 20Hur fathered Uri and Uri fathered Betsal’el
* 21Afterward, Hezron had sex with a daughter of Makir, father of Gil’ad; he had taken her when he was a man of sixty years and she gave birth to Segub for him
* 22Segub fathered Ya’ir; he had twenty-three towns in the region of Gil’ad 23but Geshur and Aram took from them the Villages of Ya’ir, Qenat and its daughter-towns, sixty towns; all these were sons of Makir, father of Gil’ad
* 24After Hezron’s death in Caleb Ephratah, Hezron’s wife Abiyyah gave birth to Ashhur, father of Teqoa, for him.

## 2:25 Judah’s Line

* 25The sons of Yerahme’el, Hezron’s firstborn, were: the firstborn Ram, Bunah, Oren, Ozem, and Ahiyyah
* 26Yerahme’el had another wife and her name was Atarah; she was the mother of Onam
* 27The sons of Ram, Yerahme’el’s firstborn, were: Ma’ats, Yamin, and Eqer
* 28Onam’s sons were: Shammay and Yada
* Shammay’s sons: Nadab and Abishur
* 29The name of Abishur’s wife was Abihayil; she gave birth to Ahban and Molid for him
* 30Nadab’s sons: Seled and Appayim
* Seled died without sons
* 31Appayim’s sons: Yish’i
* Yish’i’s sons: Sheshan
* Sheshan’s sons: Ahlay
* 32The sons of Yada, Shammay’s brother: Yeter and Yonatan
* Yeter died without sons
* 33Yonatan’s sons: Pelet and Zaza
* These were Yerahme’el’s sons
* 34Sheshan did not have sons, but rather daughters, but Sheshan had an Egyptian servant and her name was Yarha; 35Sheshan gave his daughter to Yarha his servant as wife, and she gave birth to Attay for him
* 36Attay fathered Natan, Natan fathered Zabad, 37Zabad fathered Ephlal, Ephlal fathered Obed, 38Obed fathered Yehu, Yehu fathered Azaryah, 39Azaryah fathered Helets, Helets fathered El’asah, 40El’asah fathered Sismay, Sismay fathered Shallum, 41Shallum fathered Yeqamyah, and Yeqamyah fathered Elishama.

## 2:42 Caleb’s Line

* 42The sons of Caleb, Yerahme’el’s brother:
* Mesha his firstborn; he was the father of Ziph
* The sons of Mareshah, father of Hebron
* 43Hebron’s sons: Qorah, Tappuah, Reqem, and Shema
* 44Shema fathered Raham the father of Yorqo’am
* Reqem fathered Shammay
* 45Shammay’s son was Ma’on; Ma’on was the father of Bet-tsur
* 46Ephah, Caleb’s secondary wife, gave birth to Haran, Motsa, and Gazez
* Haran fathered Gazez
* 47Yahday’s sons: Regem, Yotam, Geshan, Pelet, Ephah, and Sha’aph
* 48Caleb’s secondary wife Ma’akah gave birth to Sheber and Tirhanah, 49she gave birth to Sha’aph the father of Madmannah, Sheva the father of Makbenah, and the father of Gib’a, and Caleb’s daughter was Aksah; 50these were Caleb’s children
* The son of Hur, Ephratah’s firstborn: Shobal father of Ye’arim Township, 51Salma father of Bet-lehem, Hareph father of Bet-gader
* 52Shobal father of Ye’arim Township had sons, Haro’eh, half of the Menuhot, 53and the kin-groups of Ye’arim Township: the Itrites, the Putites, the Shumatites, and the Mishra’ites (from these the Tsora’tites and the Eshta’olites came)
* 54Salma’s sons: Bet Lehem, Netophatites, Atrot Bet Yo’ab, half the Manahatites (the Tsorites), 55and the kin-groups of the secretaries living in Ya’bets, Tir’atites, Shim’atites, Sukatites; these are the Qenites who come from Hamat, father of Rekab’s household.

## 3:1 David’s Line

3 These were David’s sons who were born to him in Hebron:

* the firstborn Amnon, by Ahino’am the Yizre’e’lite
* the second Daniel, by Abigayil the Carmelite
* 2the third Abshalom, the son of Ma’akah the daughter of Talmay king of Geshur
* the fourth Adoniyyah, the son of Haggit
* 3the fifth Shephatyah, by Abital
* the sixth Yitre’am, by Eglah his wife

4Six were born to him in Hebron; he reigned there seven years and six months, in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years, 5and these were born to him in Jerusalem:

* Shim’a, Shobab, Natan, and Solomon [Shelomoh]—four by Bat-shua bat Ammi’el
* 6Yibhar, Elishama, Eliphelet, 7Nogah, Nepheg, Yaphia, 8Elishama, Elyada, and Eliphelet—nine

9All were David’s sons, besides the secondary wives’ sons; and Tamar was their sister

10Solomon’s son: Rehab’am ; his son Abiyyah; his son Asa; his son Yehoshaphat; 11his son Yoram; his son Ahazyahu; his son Yo’ash; 12his son Amatsyahu; his son Azaryah; his son Yotam; 13his son Ahaz; his son Hizqiyyahu; his son Menashsheh; 14his son Amon; his son Yo’shiyyahu

* 15Yo’shiyyahu ’s sons: the first-born Yohanan, the second Yehoyaqim, the third Tsidqiyyahu, the fourth Shallum
* 16Yehoyaqim’s sons: his son Yekonyah, his son Tsidqiyyahyu
* 17The sons of Yekonyah, the captive: She’alti’el his son, 18Malkiram, Pedayah, Shen’atstsar, Yeqamyah, Hoshama, and Nedabyah
* 19Pedayah’s sons: Zerubbabel and Shim’i
* Zerubbabel’s sons: Meshullam and Hananyah; and Shelomit was their sister
* 20Hashubah, Ohel, Berekyah, Hasadyah, Yushab Hesed—five
* 21Hananyah’s son: Pelatyah and Yesha’yah
* Rephayah’s sons, Arnan’s sons, Obadyah’s sons, Shekanyah’s sons
* 22Shekanyah’s sons: Shemayah
* Shemayah’s sons: Hattush, Yig’al, Bariah, Ne’aryah, and Shaphat—six
* 23Ne’aryah’s son: Elyo’enay, Hizqiyyah, and Azriqam—three
* 24Elyo’enay’s sons: Hodavyah, Elyashib, Pelayah, Aqqub, Yohanan, Delayah, and Anani—seven

## 4:1 The Prayer of Ya’bets

4 Judah’s sons: Perets, Hezron, Karmi, Hur, and Shobal

* 2Re’ayah ben Shobal fathered Yahat; Yahat fathered Ahumay and Lahad; these were the kin-groups of the Tsor’atites
* 3The father of Etam, these: Yizre’e’l, Yishma, and Yidbash, and their sister’s name was Hatslelponi
* 4Penu’el was the father of Gedor and Ezer was the father of Hushah
* These were the sons of Hur, the firstborn of Ephratah, the father of Bet Lehem
* 5Asshur the father of Teqoa had two wives, Hel’ah and Na’arah
* 6Na’arah gave birth to Ahuzzam, Hepher, Temeni, and Ha’ahashtari for him; these were Na’arah’s sons
* 7Helah’s sons: Tseret, Tsohar, and Etnan
* 8Qots fathered Anub, Hatstsobebah, and the kin-groups of Aharhel ben Harum
* 9Ya’bets was more honourable than his brothers. His mother had named him Ya’bets ‘Because I gave birth to him in suffering pain [‘*otseb*]’. 10Ya’bets called to the God of Israel, ‘If only you will really bless me and enlarge my territory and your hand will be with me and you will act against bad fortune so that I don’t suffer pain’. God brought about what he asked.
* 11Kelub, Shuhah’s brother, fathered Mehir; he was father of Eshton
* 12Eshton fathered Bet Rapha, Paseah, and Tehinnah, father of Ir Nahash; these were the people of Rekah.

## 4:13 More Judahites

* 13Qenaz’s sons: Otni’el and Seryah
* Otni’el’s sons: Hatat 14and Me’onotay; he fathered Ophrah
* Seryah fathered Yo’ab, father of Craftsmen’s Ravine (because they were craftsmen)
* 15The sons of Caleb ben Yephunneh: Iru, Elah, and Na’am, the sons of Elah, and Qenaz
* 16Yehallel’el’s sons: Ziph, Ziphah, Tirya, and Asar’el
* 17Ezrah’s son: Yeter, Mered, Epher, and Yalon
* She got pregnant with Miryam, Shammay, and Yishbah father of Eshtemoa; 18his Judahite wife gave birth to Yered father of Gedor, Heber father of Soko, and Yequti’el father of Zanoah; these were the sons of Bityah, daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took
* 19The sons of Hodiyyah’s wife, Naham’s sister: the father of Qe’ilah the Garmite and Eshtemoa the Ma’akatite
* 20Shimon’s sons: Amnon, Rinnah, Ben-hanan, and Tilon
* Yishi’s sons: Zohat and Ben-zohet
* 21The sons of Shelah son of Judah: Er father of Lekah, La’addah father of Mareshah, the kin-groups of the linen service household at Bet Ashbea, 22Yoqim, the people of Kozeba, Yo’ash and Saraph who ruled in Mo’ab, and Yashubi Lehem (the words are ancient). 23They were the potters and the people who lived at Neta’im and Gederah; they lived there with the king, in working for him.

## 4:24 Descendants of Shim’on [Simeon]

24Shim’on’s sons: Nemu’el, Yamin, Yarib, Zerah, Sha’ul

* 25Shallum his son, Mibsam his son, Mishma his son
* 26Mishma’s sons: Hammu’el his son, Zakkur his son, Shim’i his son
* 27Shim’i had sixteen sons and six daughters, but his brothers didn’t have many sons.

Their entire kin-group did not produce as many as the Judahites. 28They lived

* in Be’er-sheba
* in Moladah
* in Hatsar Shu’a,
* 29in Bilhah
* in Etsem
* in Tolad
* 30in Betu’el
* in Hormah
* in Tsiqlag,
* 31in Bet Markabot
* in Hatsar Susim
* in Bet Bir’i
* and in Sha’arayim.

These were their towns until David began to reign; 32 and their villages, Etam, Ayin, Rimmon, Token, and Ashan (five towns), 33and all their villages that were round these towns as far as Ba’al. These were their settlements.

They had their enrolment by genealogy:

* 34Meshobab
* Yamlek
* Yoshah ben Amatsyah
* 35Yo’el
* Yehu ben Yoshibyah son of Serayah son of Asi’el
* 36Elyo’enay
* Ya’aqobah
* Yeshohayah
* Asayah
* Adi’el
* Yesimi’el
* Benayah
* 37Ziza ben Shiph’i son of Allon son of Yedayah son of Shimri son of Shema’yah.

38These who come by name were leaders in their kin-groups.

Their ancestral households broke out so as to become a large number 39and went to the approaches to Gedor on the east of the ravine to look for pasture for their flock. 40They found rich, good pasture and the region was wide on both sides, calm and peaceful, because the people who lived there before had been from Ham 41but these people who are written down by name came in the days of Hizqiyyahu king of Judah and struck down their tents, and the Me’unites who were found there, ‘devoted’ them until this day, and settled in place of them, because there was pasture for their flock there. 42Of them, some of the Shim’onites went to Mount Se’ir—500 people, with Pelatyah, Ne’aryah, Rephayah, and Uzzi’el, the sons of Yishi, at their head. 43They struck down the remaining escapees of Amaleq, and they have lived there until this day.

## 5:1 Re’uben

5 The sons of Re’uben, Israel’s firstborn (because he was the firstborn, but when he defiled his father’s bed, his birthright was given to the sons of Joseph, the son of Israel, and he was not for enrolment by genealogy on the basis of the birthright, 2because Judah was strong among his brothers and a chief came from him, but the birthright belonged to Joseph) – 3the sons of Re’uben, Israel’s firstborn: Hanok, Pallu, Hezron, and Karmi.

* 4The sons of Yo’el: Shema’yah his son, Gog his son, Shim’i his son, 5Mikah his son, Re’ayah his son, Ba’al his son, 6and Be’erah his son, whom Tillegat Piln’eser king of Ashshur exiled; he was leader of the Re’ubenites.
* 7His brothers by his kin-groups according to the enrolment by genealogy, by their lines of descent: the head, Ye’i’el, Zekaryahu, 8and Bela ben Azaz son of Shema son of Yo’el. He lived in Aro’er and as far as Nebo and Ba’al Me’on, 9and to the east he lived as far as when you come to the wilderness this side of the River Euphrates, because their cattle became many in Gil’ad. 10In the days of Saul they did battle with the Hagri’tes, and they fell by their hand. So they lived in their tents over the entire face of east of Gil’ad.

11Gad’s sons lived opposite them in the region of Bashan as far as Salkah: 12Yo’el the head, Shapham the second, Ya’nay, and Shaphat, in Bashan. 13Their brothers by their ancestral households: Mika’el, Meshullam, Sheba, Yoray, Ya’akan, Zia, and Eber—seven. 14These were the sons of Abihayil ben Huri son of Gil’ad son of Mika’el son of Yeshishay son of Yahdo son of Buz. 15Ahi ben Abdi’el son of Guni was head of their ancestral household. 16They lived in Gil’ad, in Bashan, in its daughter-towns, and in all the Sharon pasturelands, to their farthest extent. 17All of them were enrolled by genealogy in the days of Yotam king of Judah and in the days of Yarob’am king of Israel.

## 5:18 The Warriors

18Re’uben’s sons, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh: of the forceful men carrying shield and sword, drawing the bow, and trained in battle, 44,760 able to go out in the army, 19did battle with the Hagrites, Yetur, Naphish, and Nodab, 20and sought help against them. The Hagrites and all the people who were with them were given into their hand, because they cried out to God in the battle and he let himself be entreated by them because they relied on him. 21They captured their livestock, 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2000 donkeys, and 100,000 people, 22because many fell, run through, because the battle was God’s. They lived in place of them until the exile.

23The people in the half-clan of Menashsheh lived in the region. They were numerous from Bashan as far as Ba’al Hermon, Senir, and Mount Hermon. 24These were the heads of their ancestral households: Epher, Yish’i, Eli’el, Azri’el, Yirmeyah, Hodavyah, and Yahdi’el, forceful strong men, men with names, heads of their ancestral households.

25But they trespassed against their ancestors’ God and whored after the gods of the peoples of the country, whom God had annihilated from before them. 26And the God of Israel stirred the spirit of Pul king of Ashshur (the spirit of Tillegat Pilneser king of Ashshur) and he took them into exile—the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh. He brought them to Halah, Habor, and the River Gozan, until this day.

## 6:1 Levi’s sons

6 Levi’s sons: Gershon, Qehat, and Merari

* 2Qehat’s sons: Amram, Yitshar, Hezron, and Uzzi’el
* 3Amram’s sons: Aaron, Moses, and Miryam
* Aaron’s sons: Nadab and Abihu, El’azar and It’amar
* 4El’azar fathered Pinhas
* Pinhas fathered Abishua
* 5Abishua fathered Buqqi
* Buqqi fathered Uzzi
* 6Uzzi fathered Zerahyah
* Zerahyah fathered Merayot
* 7Merayot fathered Amaryah
* Amaryah fathered Ahitub
* 8Ahitub fathered Tsadoq
* Tsadoq fathered Ahima’ats
* 9Ahima’ats fathered Azaryah
* Azaryah fathered Yohanan
* 10Yohanan fathered Azaryah (it was he who acted as priest in the house that Solomon built in Jerusalem)
* 11Azaryah fathered Amaryah
* Amaryah fathered Ahitub
* 12Ahitub fathered Tsadoq
* Tsadoq fathered Shallum
* 13Shallum fathered Hilqiyyah
* Hilqiyyah fathered Azaryah
* 14Azaryah fathered Serayah
* Serayah fathered Yehotsadaq
* 15Yehotsadaq went when Yahweh exiled Judah and Jerusalem by the hand of Nebukadne’tstsar

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16Levi’s sons: Gershom, Qehat, and Merari

* 17These are the names of Gershom’s sons: Libni and Shim’i
* 18Qehat’s sons: Amram, Yitshar, Hebron, and Uzzi’el
* 19Merari’s sons: Mahli and Mushi

These are the kin-groups of Levi by their ancestors

* 20Gershom’s: Libni his son, Yahat his son, Zimmah his son, 21Yo’ah his son, Iddo his son, Zerah his son, Ye’ateray his son
* 22Qehat’s sons: Amminadab his son, Qorah his son, Assir his son, 23Elqanah his son, Ebyasaph his son, Assir his son, 24Tahat his son, Uri’el his son, Uzziyyah his son, and Sha’ul his son
* 25Elqanah’s sons: Amasay and Ahimot; 26Elqanah
* Elqanah’s sons: Tsopay his son, Nahat his son, 27Eli’ab his son, Yeroham his son, Elqanah his son
* 28Samuel’s sons: the firstborn, and the second (Abiyyah)
* 29Merari’s sons: Mahli, Libni his son, Shim’i his son, Uzzah his son, 30Shim’a his son, Haggiah his son, Asayah his son.

## 6:31 The Singers

31These whom David put in place over the singing in Yahweh’s house, from when the chest was set down, 32were ministering before the dwelling, the appointment tent, with singing, until Solomon built Yahweh’s house in Jerusalem. They stood in connection with their service in accordance with the ruling given to them. 33These were the people who stood , with their sons:

* Of the Qehatites:
* Heman the singer, son of Yo’el son of Samuel 34son of Elqanah son of Yeroham son of Eli’el son of Toah 35son of Tsuph son of Elqanah son of Mahat son of Amasay 36son of Elqanah son of Yo’el son of Azaryah son of Tsephanyah 37son of Tahat son of Assir son of Ebyasaph son of Qorah 38son of Yitshar son of Qehat son of Levi son of Israel.
* 39His brother Asaph who stood at his right—Asaph ben Berekyahu son of Shim’a 40son of Mika’el son of Ba’aseyah son of Malkiyyah 41son of Etni son of Zerah son of Adayah 42son of Etan son of Zimmah son of Shim’i 43son of Yahat son of Gershom son of Levi.
* 44The Merarites, their brothers, were on the left: Etan ben Qishi son of Abdi son of Malluk 45son of Hashabyah son of Amatsyah son of Hilqiyyah 46son of Amtsi son ofBani son ofShemer 47son of Mahli son ofMushi son ofMerari son of Levi.

48Their brother Levites were given to all the service at the dwelling, God’s house, 49while Aaron and his sons were burning incense on the burnt offering altar and on the incense altar in connection with all the work in the very sacred place and in connection with making expiation for Israel in accordance with all that Moses, God’s servant, ordered.

## 6:50 Aaron’s Family’s Settlements

50These are the sons of Aaron: El’azar his son, Pinhas his son, Abishua his son, Buqqi his son, Uzzi his son, Zerahyah his son, Merayot his son, Amaryah his son, Ahitub his son, Tsadoq his son, Ahima’ats his son. 54These are their settlements, by their enclosures, in their territory:

* To Aaron’s sons, the Qehatite kin-group (because theirs was the lot), 55they gave them Hebron in the region of Judah and its surrounding pasturelands, 56but the town’s fields and its villages they gave to Caleb ben Yephunneh. 57To Aaron’s sons they gave the asylum towns, Hebron, Libnah and its pasturelands, Yattir, Eshtemoa and its pasturelands, 58Hilen and its pasturelands, Debir and its pasturelands, 59Ashan and its pasturelands, and Bet Shemesh and its pasturelands. 60From the clan of Benjamin, Geba and its pasturelands, Alemet and its pasturelands, and Anatot and its pasturelands. All their towns thirteen among their kin-groups.
* 61To the remaining sons of Qehat from the clan kin-group, from the half-clan, the half of Menashsheh by lot, ten towns.
* 62To the sons of Gershom by their kin-groups, from the clan of Yissakar, from the clan of Asher, from the clan of Naphtali, and from the clan of Menashsheh in Bashan, thirteen towns.
* 63To the sons of Merari by their kin-groups, from tha clan of Re’uben, from the clan of Gad, and from the clan of Zebulun, by lot twelve towns.

64So the Israelites gave the Levites the towns and their pasturelands. 65They gave them by lot from the clan of the Judahites and from the clan of the Shim’onites and from the clan of the Benjaminites these towns that they call by their names.

## 6:66 The Qehatites, the Gershomites, and the Merarites

66Some of the kin-groups of the Qehatites: there were towns in their territory from the clan of Ephrayim. 67They gave them

* the asylum towns
* Shekem and its pasturelands in the highland of Ephrayim
* Gezer and its pasturelands
* 67Yoqme’am and its pasturelands
* Bet Horon and its pasturelands
* 69Ayyalon and its pasturelands
* Gat-rimmon and its pasturelands
* 70and from the half-clan of Menashsheh Aner and its pasturelands
* Bil’am and its pasturelands for the remaining kin-group of the Qehatites who remained.

71To the Gershomites:

* from the half-clan of Menashsheh, Golan in Bashan and its pasturelands and Ashtarot and its pasturelands
* 72 from the clan of Yissakar, Qedesh and its pasturelands, Dobrat and its pasturelands, 73Heights and its pasturelands, Anem and its pasturelands
* 74from the clan of Asher, Mashal and its pasturelands, Abdon and its pasturelands, 75Huqoq and its pasturelands, and Rehob and its pasturelands
* 76 from the clan of Naphtali, Qedesh-in-Galilee and it pasturelands, Hammon and its pasturelands, and Qiryatayim and its pasturelands.

77To he Merarites, those who remain:

* from the clan of Zebulun, Rimmono and its pasturelands, Tabor and its pasturelands
* 78across the Jordan at Jericho, on the east of the Jordan: from the clan of Re’uben, Betser in the wilderness and its pasturelands, Yahtsah and its pasturelands, 79Qedemot and its pasturelands, and Mepha’at and its pasturelands
* 80and from the clan of Gad, Heights-in-Gil’ad and its pasturelands, Mahanayim and its pasturelands, 81Heshbon and its pasturelands, and Ya’zer and its pasturelands.

## 7:1 Down to Our Own Day: Yissakar, Benjamin, Naphtali, Menashsheh

7 Yissakar’s sons: Tola, Pu’ah, Yashub, and Shimron, four

* 2Tola’s sons: Uzzi, Rephayah, Yeri’el, Yahmay, Yibsam, and Shemu’el, heads of their ancestral households belonging toTola, forceful strong men; by their lines of descent , their number in David’s days 22,600
* 3Uzzi’s sons: Yizrahyah; Yizrahyah’s sons: Mika’el, Obadyah, Yo’el, and Yishshiyyah—five, all of them heads; 4with them, by their lines of descent, by their kin-groups, army raiding gangs ready for battle, 36,000, because they had many wives and children
* 5Their brothers in all the kin-groups of Yissakar, forceful strong men, their enrolment by genealogy 87,000, all of them

6Benjamin: Bela, Beker, and Yedi’a’el, three

* 7Bela’s sons: Etsbon, Uzzi, Uzzi’el, Yerimot, and Iri—five, heads of ancestral households, forceful strong men, their enrolment by genealogy 22,034
* 8Beker’s sons: Zemirah, Yo’ash, El’ezer, Eli’onay, Omri, Yeremot, Abiyyah, Anatot, and Alemet, all these sons of Beker, 9their enrolment by genealogy by their lines of descent, heads of their ancestral households, forceful strong men, 20,200
* 10Yedi’a’el’s sons: Bilhan; Bilhan’s sons: Ye’ush, Binyamin, Ehud, Kena’anah, Zetan, Tarshish, and Ahishahar, 11all these sons of Yedi’a’el, ancestral heads, forceful strong men, 17,200 able to go out in the army to battle
* (12And Shuppim and Huppim, Ir’s sons; Hushim; Aher’s sons)

13Naphtali’s sons: Yahtsi’el, Guni, Yetser, and Shallum, sons of Bilhah

14Menashsheh’s sons: Asri’el, to whom his Aramean secondary wife gave birth; she gave birth to Makir, father of Gil’ad

* 15Makir took a wife for Huppim and for Shuppim; his sister’s name was Ma’akah
* The name of the second was Tselophhad; Tselophhad had daughters
* 16Ma’akah, Makir’s wife, gave birth to a son and named him Peresh; his brother’s name: Sheresh; his sons: Ulam and Reqem
* 17Ulam’s sons: Bedan
* These were the sons of Gil’ad ben Makir son of Menashsheh; 18his sister Hammoleket gave birth to Ishhod, Abi’ezer, and Mahlah
* 19Shemida’s sons were Ahyan, Shekem, Liqhi, and Ani’am.

## 7:15 Down to Our Own Day: Ephrayim, Asher

20Ephrayim’s sons: Shutelah, Bered his son, Tahat his son, Ele’adah his son, Tahat his son, 21Zabad his son, Shutelah his son, and Ezer and Ele’ad. The men of Gat who were born in the region killed them, because they went down to take their cattle. 22Ephrayim their father grieved for many days, and his brothers came to comfort him. 23He had sex with his wife and she got pregnant and gave birth to a son. He named him Beri’ah because there had been actual bad fortune [*bera’ah*]in his household. 24His daughter was She’erah. She built up Bet-horon (Lower and Upper) and Uzzen She’erah.

25Rephah his son, Resheph, Telah his son, Tahan his son, 26La’dan his son, Ammihud his son, Elishama his son, 27Non his son, Yehoshua his son: 28their holding and their settlements were Bet-el and its daughter-towns, and on the east Na’aran, and on the west Gezer and its daughter-towns, Shekem and its daughter-towns, as far as Ayyah and its daughter-towns, 29and alongside the Menashshites Bet-she’an and its daughter-towns, Ta’anak and its daughter-towns, Megiddo and its daughter-towns, Do’r and its daughter-towns. The sons of Joseph the son of Israel lived in these.

30Asher’s sons: Yimnah, Yishvah, Yishvi, and Beri’ah, and Serah their sister

* 31Beriah’s sons: Heber and Malki’el
* He was Birzayit’s father
* 32Heber fathered Yaphlet, Shomer, Hotam, and Shua their sister
* 33Yaphlet’s sons: Pasak, Bimhal, and Ashvat; these were Yaphlet’s sons
* 34Shemer’s sons: Ahi, Rohgah, Hubbah, and Aram
* 35The son of Helem his brother: Tsophah, Yimna, Shelesh, and Amal
* 36Tsophah’s sons: Suah, Harnepher, Shu’al, Beri, Yimrah, 37Betser, Hod, Shamma, Shilshah, Yitran, and Be’era
* 38Yeter’s sons: Yephunneh, Pispah, and Ara
* 39Ulla’s sons: Arah, Hanni’el, and Ritsya.

40All these sons of Asher, heads of the ancestral households, proven men, forceful strong men, heads among the leaders. Their enrolment by genealogy in the army in battle: their number, 26,000 men.

## 8:1 Down to Our Own Day: Benjamin

8 Benjamin fathered Bela his firstborn, Ashbel the second, Aharah the third, 2Nohah the fourth, and Rapha the fifth

* 3Bela had sons: Addar, Gera, Abihud, 4Abishua, Na’aman, Ahoah, 5Gera, Shephupham, and Huram
* 6These are Ehud’s sons, ancestral heads of the inhabitants of Geba, but they exiled them to Manahat: 7Na’aman, Ahiyyah, and Gera; he exiled them and fathered Uzza and Ahihud
* 8Shaharayim fathered sons in the open country in Moab after he had sent them away (Husham and Ba’ara were his wives); 9by Hodesh his wife he fathered Yobab, Tsibya, Mesha, Malkam, 10Ye’uts, Sakeyah, and Mirmah; these were his sons, ancestral heads; 11by Hushim he fathered Ahitub and Elpa’al
* 12The sons of Elpa’al: Eber, Misham, Shemed (he built Ono and Lod and its daughter-towns), 13Beri’ah, and Shema (they were ancestral heads of the inhabitants of Ayyalon—they put to flight the inhabitants of Gat), 14Ahyo, Shashaq, and Yeremot
* 15Zebadyah, Arad, Eder, 16Mika’el, Yishpah, and Yoha were Beri’ah’s sons
* 17Zebadyah, Meshullam, Hizqi, Heber, 18Yishmeray, Yizliah, and Yobab were Elpa’al’s sons
* 19Yaqim, Zikri, Zabdi, 20Eli’enay, Zilletay, Eli’el, 21Adayah, Bera’yah, and Shimrat were Shim’i’s sons
* 22Yishpan, Eber, Eli’el, 23Abdon, Zikri, Hanan, 24Hananyah, Elam, Antotiyyah, 25Yiphdeyah, and Penu’el were Shashaq’s sons
* 26Shamsheray, Sheharyah, Atalyah, 27Ya’areshyah, Eliyyah, and Zikri were Yeroham’s sons

28These were the ancestral heads by their lines of descent. These heads lived in Jerusalem.

## 8:29 Saul’s Family

29Gib’on’s father lived in Gib’on. His wife’s name was Ma’akah. 30His firstborn son Abdon, Tsur, Qish, Ba’al, Nadab, 31Gedor, Ahyo, and Zeker. 32Miklot fathered Shim’ah. They also lived opposite their brothers in Jerusalem, with their brothers. 33Ner fathered Qish, Qish fathered Saul, and Saul fathered Yehonatan, Malki-shua, Abinadab, and Eshba’al. 34Yehonatan’s son was Merib Ba’al. Merib Ba’al fathered Mikah.

* 35Mikah’s sons: Piton, Melek, Ta’area, and Ahaz
* 36Ahaz fathered Yeho’addah; Yehoaddah fathered Alemet, Azmavet, and Zimri
* Zimri fathered Motsa
* 37Motsa fathered Bin’a, Rapha his son, El’asah his son, Atsel his son
* 38Atsel had six sons; these are their names: Azriqam, Bokeru, Yishma’e’l, She’aryah, Obadyah, and Hanan; all these were Atsel’s sons
* 39The sons of Esheq his brother: Ulam his firstborn, Ye’ush the second, and Eliphelet the third
* 40Ulam’s sons were forceful strong men, drawing the bow, and they produced a large number of children and grandchildren, 150, all these Benjaminites.

9 All Israel was enrolled by genealogy: there, they are written down on the document about the kings of Israel. But Judah was taken into exile to Babel because of their trespass.

## 9:2 The Returners

2The first people settling who were on their holding in their towns were Israel, priests, Levites, and assistants, 3while some Judahites, some Benjaminites, some Ephrayimites, and some Menashshehites settled in Jerusalem:

* 4Utay ben Ammihud son of Omri son of Imri son of Bani, from the sons of Perets son of Judah
* 5Of the Shilonites: Asayah the firstborn and his sons
* 6Of the sons of Zerah: Ye’u’el and his brothers—690
* 9Of the Benjaminites: Sallu ben Meshullam son of Hodavyah son of Hassenu’ah, 8Yibneyah ben Yeroham, Elah ben Uzzi son of Mikri, and Meshullam ben Shephatyah son of Re’u’el son of Yibneyah, 9and their brothers, by their lines of descent—956; All these people were ancestral heads of their ancestral households
* 10Of the priests: Yedayah, Yehoyarib, Yakin, 11and Azaryah ben Hilqiyyah son of Meshullam son of Tsadoq son of Merayot son of Ahitub, chief over God’s house, 12and Adayah ben Yeroham son of Pashhur son of Malkiyyah, and Ma’asay ben Adi’el son of Yahzerah son of Meshullam son of Meshillemit son of Immer, 13and their brothers, heads of their ancestral households—1760, forceful strong men for the work in the service of God’s house
* 14Of the Levites: Shema’yah ben Hashshub son of Azriqam son of Hashabyah, of the Merarites; 15and Baqbaqqer, Heresh, Galal, and Mattanyah ben Mika son of Zikri son of Asaph; 16and Obadyah ben Shemayah son of Galal son of Yedutun; and Berekyah ben Asa son of Elqanah who lived in the villages of the Netophatites.

## 9:17 The Gatemen

17The gatemen: Shallum, Aqqub, Talmon, Ahiman, with their brother Shallum the head. 18Until now they have been at the King’s Gate on the east, gatemen for the Levites’ camp. 19Shallum ben Qore son of Ebyasaph son of Qorah and his brothers belonging to his ancestral household, the Qorahites, were in charge of the work involved in the service, keeping watch over the tent thresholds; their ancestors had been in charge of Yahweh’s camp as people keeping watch over the entrance. 20Pinhas ben El’azar was chief over them before; Yahweh was with him. 21Zekaryah ben Meshelemyah was gateman at the door of the appointment tent. 22All of them, people proven as gatemen at the thresholds—212. They were in their villages enrolled by genealogy. David and Samuel the seer had established them in their position of trust.

23They and their sons were in charge of the gateways of Yahweh’s house (of the tent house) by watches. 24The gatemen were on the four sides, east, west, north, and south. 25Their brothers in the villages were to come every seven days on a schedule, with these men, 26because the four strongest gatemen (they were Levites) were in the position of trust; they were in charge of the halls and of the treasuries in God’s house. 27They stayed the night round God’s house because the watch was their responsibility and they were in charge of the opening morning by morning.

## 9:28 Saul’s family Background

28Some of them were in charge of the articles used in the service, because they would bring them in with a count and take them out with a count. 29 Some of them were put in charge of the articles, both all the sacred articles and the flour, the wine, the oil, the incense, and the spices 30(some of the priests were the people who made the blend of the spices). 31Mattityah of the Levites (he was the firstborn of Shallum the Qorahite) was in the position of trust in charge of the making of the griddle cakes. 32Some of the Qehatites from among their brothers were in charge of the row bread, to prepare it sabbath by sabbath.

33These are the singers, the ancestral heads of the Levites, in the halls, free, because responsibility was upon them day and night in the work. 34These were the ancestral heads of the Levites by their lines of descent. These heads lived in Jerusalem.

35Gib’on’s father Ye’i’el lived in Gib’on (his wife’s name was Ma’akah) 36with his firstborn son Abdon, Tsur, Qish, Ba’al, Ner, Nadab, 37Gedor, Ahyo, Zekaryah, and Miklot

* 38Miklot fathered Shim’am, and they too lived in Jerusalem opposite their brothers, with their brothers
* 39Ner fathered Qish, Qish fathered Saul, Saul fathered Yehonatan, Malki-shua, Abinadab, and Eshba’al; 40Yehonatan’s son was Merib Ba’al; Meri-ba’al fathered Mikah
* 41Mikah’s sons: Piton, Melek, and Ta’area
* 42Ahaz fathered Yarah; Yarah fathered Alemet, Azmavet, and Zimri; Zimri fathered Motsa
* 43Motsa fathered Bin’a, Raphayah his son, El’asah his son, Atsel his son
* 44Atsel had six sons; these are their names: Azriqam, Bokeru, Yishma’e’l, She’aryah, Obadyah, and Hanan; these were Atsel’s sons.

## 10:1The End of Saul

10 Now the Philistines battled against Israel. The Israelites fled from before the Philistines and fell, run through, on Mount Gilboa, 2and the Philistines caught up with Saul and with his sons. The Philistines struck down Yonatan, Abinadab, and Malki-shua, Saul’s sons. 3The battle was hard against Saul, and the archers found him with an arrow; he was run through by the archers.

4Saul said to his equipment-bearer, ‘Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, so these foreskinned men don’t come and deal abusively with me’. But his equipment-bearer wasn’t willing, because he was very fearful. So Saul took the sword and fell on it. 5His equipment-bearer saw that Saul was dead and he too fell on his sword and died. 6So Saul died, with his three sons; his entire household died, altogether. 7All the Israelites who were in the vale saw that people had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, and they abandoned their towns and fled (the Philistines came and lived in them).

8Next day the Philistines came to strip thepeople who had been run through. They found Saul and his sons fallen on Mount Gilboa, 9stripped him, tooked up his head and his equipment, and sent them off through the Philistines’ country all round, to announce the news to their idols and their people. 10They put his equipment in the house of their gods, and his skull they fastened to the house of Dagan.

11All Yabesh-in-Gil’ad heard all that the Philistines had done to Saul, 12and they set off, every forceful man, took up the corpse of Saul and the corpses of his sons, and brought them to Yabesh. 13They buried their bones under the oak at Yabesh and fasted for seven days.

13Saul died because of his trespass, which he committed against Yahweh in regard to Yahweh’s word which he had not kept, and also in asking something of a spirit, so as to make inquiry;14he didn’t inquire of Yahweh. So he put him to death and turned the kingship over to David ben Jesse [Yisay].

## 11:1 David Anointed

11 All Israel collected to David at Hebron, saying, ‘Here, we are your flesh and blood. 2Further, in previous days, even when Saul was king, you were the one who took Israel out and brought Israel in. Yahweh your God said to you, “You’re the one who’ll shepherd my people Israel. You’re the one who’ll be chief over my people Israel.”’

3So all Israel’s elders came to the king at Hebron, David solemnized a pact to them at Hebron before Yahweh, and they anointed David as king over Israel in accordance with Yahweh’s word by means of Samuel.

4David and all Israel went to Jerusalem (i.e., Yebus); the Yebusites were there as inhabitants of the region. 5The inhabitants of Yebus said to David, ‘You won’t come in here’, but David captured the Zion stronghold (i.e., David’s Town). 6David said, ‘Anyone striking down the Yebusites first will be head and officer’. Yo’ab ben Tseruyah went up first and became head.

7David lived in the stronghold; that’s why they named it ‘David’s Town’. 8He built up the town all round, from the Fill all rround, while Yo’ab brought to life the remainder of the town. 9David went on getting bigger and bigger, as Yahweh Armies was with him.

10These are the heads of the strong men that David had, the people who asserted their strength with him in his kingship, with all Israel, in making him king in accordance with Yahweh’s word concerning Israel, 11and these are the number of the strong men that David had.

* Yashob’am the Hakmonite was head of the adjutants. He was wielding his lance against 300, run through on one occasion.
* 12After him was El’azar ben Dodo, the Ahohite; he was one of the Three Strong Men, 13and he was with David at Pas Dammim when the Philistines gathered there for battle. A plot of field was full of barley. Whereas the company fled from before the Philistines 14they made a stand in the middle of the plot, defended it, and struck down the Philistines. Yahweh brought about a great deliverance.

## 11:15 Some Spectacular Exploits

15Three of the Thirty Heads went down to the crag to David at the Adullam Cave. The Philistine camp was camped in Repha’ites Vale. 16David was then in the stronghold, and an outpost of Philistines was then at Bet Lehem. 17David 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!’ 18The Three broke through the Philistines’ camp, drew water from the Bet-lehem cistern that’s at the gateway, and carried it and brought it to David. But David was unwilling to drink it. He poured it out for Yahweh 19and said, ‘Far be it for me by God that I should do this. Am I to drink the blood of these men, at the cost of their lives?’ – because they had brought it at the cost of their lives. So he was unwilling to drink it. These are things that the Three Strong Men did.

* 20Abshay, the brother of Yo’ab, was head of a Three. He was wielding his lance against 300, run through. He had a name among the Three. 21Of the Three, he was doubly honoured, and he became officer for them, but he didn’t come to the [other] Three.
* 22Benayah ben Yehoyada was a forceful man, prolific in deeds, from Qabtse’el. He struck down the two of Ari’el from Mo’ab. It was he who went down and struck down a lion inside a cistern on a snowy day, 23and it was he who struck down an Egyptian man, a huge man of two metres. In the Egyptian’s hand there was a lance like a weavers’ rod, but he went down to him with a club, seized the lance from the Egyptian’s hand, and killed him with his lance. 24These things Benayah ben Yehoyada did, and he had a name among the Three Strong Men. 25Of the Thirty, there he is, most honoured, but he didn’t come to the Three. David put him in charge of his guard.

## 11:26 The Forceful Strong Men

26The forceful strong men:

* Asah-el, Yo’ab’s brother
* Elhanan ben Dodo from Bet Lehem
* 27Shammot the Harorite
* Helets the Palonite
* 28Ira ben Iqqesh the Teqo’ite
* Abi’ezer the Anatotite
* 29Sibbekay the Hushatite
* Ilay the Ahohite
* 30Mahray the Netophatite
* Heled ben Ba’anah the Netophatite
* 31Ittay ben Ribay from Gib’ah-of-the-Benjaminites
* Benayah the Pir’atonite
* 32Huray from the Ga’ash Wadis
* Abi’el the Arbatite
* 33Azmavet the Bahrumite
* Elyahba the Sha’albonite
* 34The sons of Hashem the Gizonite
* Yonatan ben Shageh the Hararite
* 35Ahi’am ben Sakar the Hararite
* Eliphal ben Ur
* 36Hepher the Mekeratite
* Ahiyyah the Pelonite
* 37Hetsro the Carmelite
* Na’aray ben Ezbay
* 38Yo’el, Natan’s brother
* Mibhar ben Hagri
* 39Tseleq the Ammonite
* Nahray the Berotite, equipment-bearer for Yo’ab ben Tseruyah
* 40Ira the Yitrite
* Gareb the Yitrite
* 41Uriyyah the Hittite
* Zabad ben Ahlay
* 42Adina ben Shiza, the Re’ubenite, head of the Re’ubenites, and thirty with him
* 43Hanan ben Ma’akah
* Yoshaphat the Mitnite
* 44Uzziyya the Ashteratite
* Shama and Ye’i’el sons of Hotam the Aro’erite
* 45Yedi’a’el ben Shimri and Yoha his brother the Titsite
* 46Eli’el the Mahavite
* Yeribay and Yoshavyah sons of Elna’am
* Yitmah the Moabite
* 47Eli’el, Obed, and Ya’asi’el the Metsobayite

## 12:1 A Time of Encouragement

12 These are the people who came to David at Tsiqlag when he was still held back because of Saul ben Qish. They were among the strong men helping in battle, 2able to wield the bow, right-handed and left-handed with stones and with arrows from the bow, from among Saul’s brothers from Benjamin.

* 3The head, Ahi’ezer, and Yo’ash, the sons of Shema’ah the Gib’atite
* Yezi’el and Pelet, the sons of Azmavet
* Berakah
* Yehu the Anatotite
* 4Yishma’yah the Gib’onite, a strong man among the Thirty, and in charge of the Thirty
* Yirmeyah
* Yahazi’el
* Yohanan
* Yozabad the Gederatite
* 5Eluzay
* Yerimot
* Be’alyah
* Shemaryahu
* Shephatyahu the Haruphite
* 6Elqanah, Yishsheyahu, Azar’el, Yo’ezer and Yashob’am, the Qorahites
* 7Yo’e’lah and Zebahyah, sons of Yeroham from Gedor.

8Forceful strong men from the Gadites made themselves distinct to join David at the stronghold in the wilderness, forceful strong men in the army, ready for battle, able to wield shield and spear, with their face the face of a lion, and making speed like gazelles on the mountains:

* 9Ezer the head
* Obadyah the second
* Eli’ab the third
* 10Mishmannah the fourth
* Yirmeyah the fifth
* 11Attay the sixth
* Eli’el the seventh
* 12Yohanan the eighth
* Elzabad the ninth
* 13Yirmeyahu the tenth
* Makbannay the eleventh.

14These of the Gadites were army heads, the smallest for a hundred, the biggest for a thousand. 15These were those people who crossed the Jordan in the first month when it was filling up over all its banks, and put to flight all the vale people to the east and to the west.

## 12:16 A Time for Caution

16Some Benjaminites and Judahites came as far as the stronghold to David, 17and David went out before them. He avowed to them, ‘If you’ve come to me so that things may go well, to help me, my mind will be one with you, but if it’s to beguile me in relation to my attackers when there is no violence in my fists, may our ancestors’ God see and reprove’. 18And a spirit put on Amasay, head of the Thirty:

For you, David, and with you, ben Jesse, may things be well;

May things be well for you, and things be well for the person who helps you,

Because your God has helped you.

So David received them and made them into the heads of his raiding gangs.

19Some of Menashsheh submitted to David when he came with the Philistines for battle against Saul, but they didn’t help them because the Philistines’ lords in council sent him off, saying, ‘He’ll submit to his lord, Saul, at the cost of our heads’. 20When he went to Tsiqlag, some Menashshites submitted to him, Adnah, Yozabad, Yedi’a’el, Mika’el, Yozabad, Elihu, and Tsillethay, chiliarchs belonging to Menashsheh. 21It was those people who helped David against the raiding gang, because all of them were forceful strong men. They became officers in the army, 22because day by day people were coming to David to help him, until the camp was as big as God’s camp.

## 12:23 Time for Celebration

23These are the numbers of the heads of the people equipped for the army who came to David at Hebron to turn over Saul’s kingship to him in accordance with Yahweh’s bidding:

* 24Judahites carrying shield and spear—6,800 equipped for the army
* 25Of the Shim’onites, forceful strong men for the army—7,100
* 26of the Levites—4,600; 27Yehoyada, the chief of Aaron, and with him 3,700; 28and Tsadoq, a boy, a forceful strong man, and his ancestral household, twenty-two officers
* 29Of the Benjaminites, Saul’s brothers, 3,000 (until now the majority of them were keeping watch for Saul’s household)
* 30Of the Ephrayimites, 20,800 forceful strong men, people with names in their ancestral household
* 31Of the half-clan of Menashsheh, 18,000, who were designated by their names to come to make David king
* 32Of the Yissakarites, people who had understanding of the times so as to know what Israel should do—their heads 200, and all their brothers at their bidding.
* 33Of Zebulun, people able to go out in the army, lining up for battle with all battle equipment—50,000 to help, without a double mind
* 34From Naphtali, 1,000 officers, and with them, with shield and lance—37,000
* 35From the Danites, people lining up for battle—28,600
* 36From Asher, people able to go out in the army to line up for battle—40,000
* 37From across the Jordan, from the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh, with all battle army equipment—120,000

38All these men of battle, assisting the line-up, with a perfect mind, came to Hebron to make David king over all Israel, while all the remainder of Israel also were of one mind in making David king. 39They were there with David for three days eating and drinking, because their brothers had prepared it for them. 40People who were near to them as far as Yissakar, Zebulun, and Naphtali were also bringing food on donkeys, on camels, on mules, and on cattle, edibles of flour, fig blocks, raisin blocks, wine, oil, cattle, and sheep in quantity, because there was rejoicing in Israel.

## 13:1 A Frightening Outburst

13 David took counsel with the chiliarchs and centurions, every chief, 2and David said to the entire Israelite congregation, ‘If it seems good to you and it’s from Yahweh our God, let’s break out and send to our remaining brothers in all the regions of Israel, and with them the priests and the Levites in their pastureland towns, so they may collect to us 3and we may turn our God’s chest over to us, because we didn’t inquire of him in Saul’s days’. 4The entire congregation said to do so, because the thing was upright in the eyes of the entire people.

5So David congregated all Israel from Shihor in Egypt as far as Lebo Hamat, to bring God’s chest from Ye’arim Township. 6David and all Israel went up to Ba’alah (to Ye’arim Township which belongs to Judah) to take up from there the chest of God, Yahweh who sits above the sphinxes, which is called by the name. 7They transported God’s chest on a new wagon from Abinadab’s house, with Uzza and Ahyo driving the wagon 8and David and all Israel making fun before God with all their vigour, with songs, with guitars, with mandolins, with tambourines, with cymbals, and with trumpets. 9But they came as far as Kidon’s threshing floor and Uzza put out his hand to grasp the chest, because the cattle had stumbled. 10Yahweh’s anger raged at Uzza and he struck him down on account of the fact that he had put out his hand to the chest. He died there before God. 11It enraged David that Yahweh had broken out at Uzza. He called that place Perets Uzza [Breakout at Uzza], until this day.

12David was afraid of God that day, saying, ‘How can I bring God’s chest to me?’ 13So David did not move the chest to him, to David’s Town. He got it to turn aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 14God’s chest stayed with Obed Edom’s household in his house for three months, and Yahweh blessed the household of Obed-edom and everything he had.

## 14:1 When you Need to Know What to Do

14 Hiram king of Tyre sent envoys to David, with cedar wood, craftsmen in walls, and craftsmen in wood, to build him a house. 2David acknowledged that Yahweh had established him as king over Israel, because his kingship had been exalted exceptionally high for the sake of his people Israel.

3David took more wives in Jerusalem and David fathered more sons and daughters. 4These are the names of the ones born, who were his in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Natan, Solomon, 5Yibhar, Elishua, Elpelet, 6Nogah, Nepheg, Yaphia, 7Elishama, Be’elyada, and Eliphelet.

8The Philistines heard that David had been anointed as king over all Israel, and all the Philistines went up to look for David. David heard, and went out before them. 9When the Philistines came, they raided Repha’ites Vale. 10David asked of God, ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?’ Yahweh said to him, ‘Go up, and I shall give them into your hand’ 11So they went up to Ba’al Peratsim, and David struck them down there. David said, ‘God has broken out on my enemies by my hand like a breakout of water’. That’s why they named that place Ba’al Peratsim [Master of breakouts]. 12They abandoned their gods there. David said it, and they were burned in fire.

13The Philistines again raided the vale. David again asked of God, but God said to him, ‘You will not go up after them. Make a turn away from them and come to them from the direction of the weeper trees. 15When you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the weeper trees, then you’re to go out in battle, because God will have gone out before you to strike down the Philistine camp’. 16David did as God ordered him, and they struck down the Philistine camp from Gib’on as far as Gezer.

17David’s name went out through all the countries as Yahweh put a dread of him on all the nations.

## 15:1 Preparations for Taking the Chest

15 He made houses for himself in David’s Town, and prepared a place for God’s chest and pitched a tent for it. 2Then David said no one was to carry God’s chest but only the Levites, because Yahweh chose them to carry Yahweh’s chest and to minister to him permanently. 3David congregated all Israel to Jerusalem to take up Yahweh’s chest to its place which he had prepared for it. 4David gathered the Aaronites and the Levites:

* 5of the Qehatites, Uri’el the official and his brothers—120;
* 6of the Merarites, Asayah the official and his brothers—220;
* 7of the Gershomites, Yo’el the official and his brothers—130;
* 8of the Elitsaphanites, Shemayah the official and his brothers—200;
* 9of the Hebronites, Eli’el the official and his brothers—80
* 10of the Uzzi’elites, Amminadab the official and his brothers—112.

11David called for Tsadoq and for Ebyatar the priests, and of the Levites for Uri’el, for Asayah, for Yo’el, for Shemayah, for Eli’el, and for Amminadab. 12He said to them, ‘You are the Levites’ ancestral heads. Make yourselves sacred, you and your brothers, so that you may take up the chest of Yahweh, the God of Israel, to where I have prepared for it 13Because you were not there the first time, Yahweh our God broke out on us, because we did not inquire of him in accordance with the ruling’.

14The priests and the Levites made themselves sacred for taking up the chest of Yahweh,the God of Israel. 15The Levites carried God’s chest as Moses had ordered in accordance with Yahweh’s word, on their shoulder, with poles on them. 16David said to the Levites’ officials to get their brothers, the singers, with musical instruments, guitars, mandolins, and cymbals, to stand , making things heard by raising their voice in rejoicing.

## 15:17 The Great Celebration

17So the Levites got to stand :

* Heman ben Yo’el
* of his brothers Asaph ben Berekyahu
* of the Merarites, their brothers, Etan ben Qushayahu
* 18with them their brothers as number two Zekaryahu, son, Ya’azi’el, Shemiramot, Yehi’el, Unni, Eli’ab, Benayahu, Ma’aseyahu, Mattityahu, Eliphalehu, Miqneyahu, Obed Edom, and Ye’i’el, the gatemen
* 19the singers Heman, Asaph, and Etan making things heard on copper cymbals
* 20Zekaryah, Azi’el, Shemiramot, Yehi’el, Unni, Eli’ab, Ma’aseyahu, and Benayah with guitars, on ‘Eternal Things’
* 21Mattityahu, Eliphelehu, Miqneyahu, Obed Edom, Ye’i’el, and Azazyahu with mandolins, on ‘The Eighth’
* 22Kenanyahu, the Levites’ official, with prophecy, to exercise discipline with prophecy because he was discerning
* 23Berekyah and Elqanah, the chest’s gatemen
* 24Shebanyahu, Yoshaphat, Netan’el, Amasay, Zekaryahu, Benayah, and Eli’ezer the priests, sounding on the trumpets before God’s chest
* Obed Edom and Yehiyyah the chest’s gatemen.

25David, Israel’s elders, and the chiliarchs went to take up Yahweh’s pact chest from Obed-edom’s house with rejoicing. 26As God helped the Levites carrying Yahweh’s pact chest, they sacrificed seven bulls and seven rams, 27with David clad in a robe of Egyptian linen, and all the Levites who were carrying the chest, and the singers, and Kenanyah the singers’ prophetic officer, and on David a linen chasuble, 28as all Israel were taking up Yahweh’s pact chest with a shout, with the sound of a horn, with trumpets, and with cymbals, making things heard with guitars and mandolins.

29Yahweh’s pact chest was coming into David’s Town as Mikal, Saul’s daughter, was looking out through the window. She saw King David jumping and having fun, and she despised him inside.

16 They brought in God’s chest and put it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and presented burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices before God. 2David finished offering up the burnt offering and the well-being sacrifices, blessed the people in Yahweh’s name, 3 and shared out to each person in Israel, man and woman, to each individual a round of bread, a date block, and a raisin block.

## 16:4 Sing to Yahweh, All the Earth!

4He put some of the Levites before Yahweh’s chest as ministers, to make mention, to confess, and to praise Yahweh the God of Israel:

* Asaph the head,
* Number two to him, Zekaryah
* Ye’i’el, Shemiramot, Yehi’el, Mattityah, Eli’ab, Benayahu, Obed Edom, and Ye’i’el,with guitars as instruments and with mandolins
* Asaph making things heard with the cymbals
* 6Benayahu and Yahazi’el the priests with trumpets regularly before God’s pact chest.

7Then on that day David first put confession of Yahweh into the hand of Asaph and his brothers:

8Confess Yahweh, call out in his name,

get his deeds acknowledged among the peoples.

9Sing for him, make music for him,

talk of all his extraordinary deeds.

10Take pride in his sacred name;

the heart of those who seek Yahweh should rejoice.

11Inquire of Yahweh and his vigour;

seek his face continually.

12Be mindful of his extraordinary deeds, which he has done,

his signs and the rulings of his mouth,

13Offspring of Israel his servant,

descendants of Jacob, his chosen ones.

14He is Yahweh our God;

his rulings are in all the earth.

15Be mindful of his pact permanently,

the word he ordered for a thousand generations,

16Which he solemnized with Abraham,

his oath to Isaac,

17Made to stand for Jacob as a decree,

for Israel as a lasting pact,

18Saying, ‘To you I will give the country of Canaan

as an allocation and as your domain’.

19When you were few in number,

a tiny group, and sojourning in it,

20And they went about from nation to nation,

from a kingdom to another people.

21He didn’t leave be anyone to oppress them,

but reproved kings on account of them:

22’Don’t touch my anointed ones,

don’t deal badly toward my prophets’.

## 16:23 All the People Said, “Yes!’

23Sing for Yahweh all the earth,

announce the news of his deliverance, from day to day.

24Recount his splendour among the nations,

among all the peoples his extraordinary deeds.

25Because Yahweh is great and much to be praised;

he is to be held in awe above all gods.

26Because all the gods of the peoples are nonentities,

whereas Yahweh made the heavens.

27Grandeur and magnificence are before him,

vigour and glory at his site.

28Kin-groups of the peoples, give Yahweh,

give Yahweh splendour and vigour.

29Give Yahweh the splendour due to his name,

take up an offering and come before him.

Bow low to Yahweh in his sacred glory;

30tremble before him, all the earth.

Yes, the world stands firm, it does not slip;

31the heavens should rejoice, the earth be glad.

They should say among the nations,

‘Yahweh has become king’.

32The sea should roar and everything that fills it,

the open country should trumph and all that’s in it.

33Then the trees in the forest should resound before Yahweh,

because he is coming to exercise authority over the earth.

34Confess Yahweh, because he is good,

because his commitment lasts permanently.

35Say, ‘Deliver us, our God who delivers,

collect us and rescue us from the nations,

To confess your sacred name,

to glory in your praise’.

36Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel

from age to age.

All the people said ‘Yes’ and ‘Praise Yahweh’. 37And he abandoned before Yahweh’s pact chest there:

* Asaph and his brothers to minister before the chest regularly in connection with each day’s requirement in its day
* 38Obed Edom and their brothers—68
* Obed Edom ben Yeditun and Hosah as gatemen
* 39Tsadoq the priest and his brothers, the priests, before Yahweh’s dwelling at the shrine which was at Gib’on, 40to offer up burnt offerings for Yahweh on the burnt offering altar regularly, morning and evening, in connection with all that is written in Yahweh’s instruction with which he ordered Israel
* 41With them Heman, Yedutun, and the remainder of the proven men who had been designated by their names to confess Yahweh ‘Because his commitment is permanent’.
* 42With them (Heman and Yedutun) trumpets and cymbals for the people who make things heard, and instruments for a song to God
* The sons of Yedutun at the gateway

43The entire people went each one to his house and David turned to bless his household.

## 17:1 Who Builds a House, and What Kind?

17 When David had gone to live in his house, David said to Natan the prophet, ‘Here am I living in a cedar house and Yahweh’s pact chest is under tent cloths’. 2Natan said to David, ‘Do everything that’s in your mind, because God is with you’.

3But that night God’s word came to Natan: 4’Go and say to David my servant, “Yahweh has said this: ‘It’s not you who will build me a house to live in. 5Because I haven’t lived in a house from the day that I brought Israel up, until this day. I’ve been from tent to tent, and from a dwelling. 6Everywhere I went about in all Israel, did I speak a word to one of the people exercising authority in Israel whom I ordered to shepherd my people, saying “Why have you not built me a cedar house?”’”

7So 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 chief over my people Israel, 8and I’ve been with you everywhere you’ve gone. I’ve cut off all your enemies from before you and I shall make for you a name like the name of the big people who are on the earth. 9I shall make a place for my people Israel and plant it. It will dwell in its place and not tremble again. Evil people will not wear it down again as they did previously, 10from the days when I ordered leaders over my people Israel. I shall make all your enemies bow down.

And I tell you: Yahweh will build a house(hold) for you. 11When your days are full for going to be with your ancestors, I shall set up your offspring after you, who will be one of your sons, and I shall establish his kingship. 12He is the one who will build me a house. I shall establish his throne permanently. 13I myself will become a father to him and he will become a son to me. I shall not remove my commitment from him as I removed it from the one who was before you. 14I shall let him stand in my house and in my kingship permanently. His throne will become established permanently”’.

## 17:15 There is No One Like Yahweh

15In accordance with all these words and in accordance with this entire vision, so Natan spoke to David.

16King David came and sat before Yahweh and said, ‘Who am I, Yahweh God, and who are my household, that you have brought me as far as this? 17And this has been small in your eyes, God. You’ve spoken about your servant’s household for the distant future. You’ve seen me as one of lofty human form, Yahweh God. 18What more can David add regarding your servant’s honour? You yourself have acknowledged your servant. 19Yahweh, for your servant’s sake and in accordance with your own mind you are doing this entire big thing, making known all the big things.

20Yahweh, there is no one like you, no God except you, in all that we’ve heard with our ears. 21And who is like your people Israel, a nation on the earth that God went to redeem for himself as a people, to make yourself a name for big and awe-inspiring deeds, in driving nations out from before your people that you redeemed from Egypt. 22You made your people Israel into a people for yourself permanently, and you Yahweh became God for them.

23Now, Yahweh, the word that you have spoken about your servant and about his household – may it be trustworthy permanently. Do as you have spoken. 24May it be trustworthy so that your name may be great permanently: “Yahweh Armies, the God of Israel, is God for Israel”. May your servant David’s household be established before you. 25Because you, my God, have opened your servant’s ear about building him a household. That’s why your servant has found it to plead before you.

26Now, Yahweh, you are God. You’ve spoken this good thing about your servant. 27Now you’ve resolved to bless your servant’s household so it will be before you permanently, because you, Yahweh, have blessed, and it is blessed permanently’.

## 18:1 Wars and Rumors of Wars

18 Subsequently, David struck down the Philistines and made them bow down; David took Gat and its daughter-towns from the hand of the Philistines. 2He struck down the Mo’abites, and the Mo’abites became David’s servants, bringing offerings. 3David struck down Hadad’ezer king of Tsobah Hamat, when he was going to put up his monument at the River Euphrates. 4David captured from him 1000 chariotry, 7000 cavalry, and 20,000 men on foot. David hamstrung all the chariotry, but of them left 100 chariotry.

5Arameans from Damascus [Dammeseq] came to help Hadad’ezer king of Tsobah, and David struck down the Arameans, 22,000 men. 6David put men in Aram of Damascus, and the Arameans became David’s servants, bringing offerings. Yahweh delivered David in every place where he went. 7David took the gold quivers that were with Hadad’ezer’s servants and brought them to Jerusalem 8and from Tibhat and from Kun, Hadad’ezer’s towns, David took very much copper with which Solomon made the copper sea, the columns, and the copper articles.

9To’u king of Hamat heard that David had struck down the entire force of Hadad’ezer king of Tsobah, 10and he sent Hadoram his son to King David to ask him about whether things were well and to bless him, on account of the fact that 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’u.

All the gold, silver, and copper objects—11David also made them sacred for Yahweh, with the silver and the gold that he took up from all the nations, from Edom, from Mo’ab, from the Ammonites, from the Philistines, and from Amaleq. 12When Abishay ben Tseruyah struck down Edom in Salt Ravine, 18,000,13he put outposts in Edom; all Edom became David’s servants.

## 18:13 Suspicion and Humiliation

13bYahweh delivered David wherever he went. 14David reigned over all Israel, and he was exercising authority in a faithful way for his entire people.

* 15Yo’ab ben Tseruyah was over the army
* Yehoshaphat ben Ahihud was recorder
* 16Tsadoq ben Ahitub and Abimelek ben Ebyatar were priests
* Shavsha was secretary
* 17Benayah ben Yehoyada was over the Keretites and the Peletites
* David’s sons were the first people at the king’s right hand.

19 Subsequently, Nahash king of the Ammonites died, and his son began to reign in place of him. 2David said, ‘I will act in commitment with Hanun ben Nahash, because his father acted in commitment with me’. So David sent envoys to console him about his father. David’s servants came to the Ammonites’ country to Hanun, to console him, 3but the Ammonites’ officials said to Hanun, ‘Is David honouring your father, in your eyes, because he sent you people offering consolation? It’s for the sake of searching out and overthrowing, investigating the country, that his servants have come to you, isn’t it’.

4So Hanun got David’s servants, clipped them and cut their clothes in half up to their behinds, and sent them off. 5People went and told David about the men and he sent to meet them, because the men were very ashamed. The king said, ‘Stay in Jericho until your beard grows and you can come back’. 6The Ammonites saw that they stank with David. So Hanun and the Ammonites sent 1,000 silver talents to hire themselves chariotry and cavalry from Aram-of-the-Two-Rivers, Aram Ma’akah, and Tsobah. 7They hired themselves 32,000 chariotry, the king of Ma’akah, and his company, and came and camped before Medeba, while the Ammonites gathered from their towns and came for battle. 8David heard and sent Yo’ab and the entire army, the strong men.

## 19:9 Be Strong and Show Yourself Strong

9The Ammonites went out and lined up for battle at the entrance to the town, with the kings who came in the open country on their own. 10Yo’ab saw that the face of the battle was against him in front and behind. He picked some of all the picked men in Israel and lined them up to meet the Arameans, 11while he gave the rest of the company into the hand of Abshay his brother and they lined up to meet the Ammonites. 12He 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 deliver you. 13Be strong, and let’s assert our strength on behalf of our people and on behalf of our God’s towns, as Yahweh does what is good in his eyes’.

14So Yo’ab went up before the Arameans for the battle, he and his company who were with him, and they fled from before him. 15When the Ammonites saw that the Arameans had fled, they too fled from before Abishay his brother and came into the town. So Yo’ab came to Jerusalem.

16The Arameans saw that they had taken a beating before Israel, and they sent envoys and got the Arameans who were from across the River to go out, with Shophak, Hadad’ezer’s army officer, at their head. 17It was told David, and he gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, came to them, and lined up against them.

So David lined up to meet the Arameans in battle, and they did battle with him. 18The Arameans fled from before Israel and David killed 7000 of the Aramean chariotry and 40,000 men on foot, and put to death Shophak the army officer. 19The servants of Hadad’ezer saw that they had taken a beating before Israel and they made peace with David and served him. The Arameans were not willing to deliver the Ammonites any more.

## 20:1 Giants of Men

20 At the time of the turn of the year, at the time when the kings go out, Yo’ab led out the army force, devastated the Ammonites’ country, and came and besieged Rabbah, while David was staying in Jerusalem. Yo’ab struck down Rabbah and tore it down. 2David got their king’s crown from on his head and found its weight a talent of gold, with precious stones in it. It came onto David’s head, as he took out very much spoil from the town. 3The people that was in it he took out and submitted to saws, iron harrows, and axes. So David would do to all the towns of the Ammonites. Then David and the entire company went back to Jerusalem.

4Subsequently, a battle started at Gezer with the Philistines. Then Sibbekay the Hushatite struck down Sippay, one of the descendants of the Repha’ites. So they bowed down. 5There was again a battle with the Philistines. Elhanan ben Ya’ir struck down Lahmi, brother of Golyat [Goliath] the Gittite; the wood of his lance was like a weavers’ rod. 6There was again a battle at Gat, and there was a man of stature with twenty-four fingers and toes, six on each. 7He reviled Israel, and Yehonatan ben Shim’a, David’s brother, struck him down. 8These had descended from the Healer in Gat. They fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants.

## 21:1 Temptation and Fall

21 An adversary stood up against Israel and incited David to count Israel. 2So David said to Yo’ab and to the company’s officers, ‘Go number Israel, from Be’er Sheba as far as Dan, and bring it to me so I may know their number’. 3Yo’ab said, ‘May Yahweh add to his people a hundred times as many as they are. My lord king, all of them are my lord’s servants, aren’t they. Why does my lord seek this? Why should it bring liability on Israel?’ 4But when the king’s word was strong over Yo’ab, Yo’ab went out and went about in all Israel, then came to Jerusalem. 5Yo’ab gave David the number for the registration of the people. All Israel was 1,100,000 men drawing the sword; Judah was 470,000 men drawing the sword; 6Levi and Benjamin he did not register among them because the king’s word was offensive to Yo’ab.

7This thing was bad in God’s eyes, and he struck Israel down. 8David said to God, ‘I’ve acted very wrongly in that I have done this thing. But now, please make your servant’s waywardness pass away, because I’ve been very idiotic’.

9Yahweh spoke to Gad, David’s seer: 10’Go and speak to David: “Yahweh has said this: ‘I’m holding out three things to you. Choose one of these for yourself and I shall do it for you”’. 11Gad came to David and said to him, ‘Yahweh has said this: “Accept for yourself 12either three years of famine, or three months of being swept away before your adversaries, with your enemies’ sword overtaking, or three days of Yahweh’s sword and epidemic in the country and Yahweh’s envoy causing devastation in the entire territory of Israel”. So now see what word I am to take back to the one who sent me’.

13David said to Gad, ‘It’s very pressurizing for me. I shall fall into Yahweh’s hand, please, because his compassion is very great. Into a human hand I will not fall’.

## 21:14 No Cost-free Offerings

14 So Yahweh put an epidemic on Israel and 70,000 individuals from Israel fell. 15God sent an envoy to Jerusalem to devastate it, but as he was devastating it, Yahweh saw and relented over the bad thing and said to the devastating envoy, ‘So much! Now slacken your hand’.

Yahweh’s envoy was standing by the threshing floor of Ornan the Yebusite. 16David lifted his eyes and saw Yahweh’s envoy standing between the earth and the heavens with his drawn sword in his hand extended over Jerusalem. David and the elders, covered in sack, fell on their faces. 17David said to God, ‘I’m the one who said to number the people, aren’t I. I’m the one who did wrong and did what was definitely bad. These people are the flock, what did they do? Yahweh my God, your hand should please be against me and against my ancestral household, not as an epidemic against your people’.

18Now Yahweh’s envoy said to Gad to say to David that David should go up to set up an altar for Yahweh at the threshing floor of Ornan the Yebusite. 19David went up at Gad’s word which he spoke in Yahweh’s name. 20Ornan came back and saw the envoy (his four sons with him were hiding; Ornan was threshing wheat). 21David came to to Ornan and Ornan looked and saw David, went out of the threshing floor, and bowed low to David, face to the ground.

22David said to Ornan,‘Give me the threshing floor site so I can build an altar for Yahweh on it. Give it to me at the full price so that the epidemic may hold back from the people’. 23Ornan said to David, ‘Take it for yourself. My lord the king may do what is good in his eyes. See, I’m giving the cattle as the burnt offerings and the threshing boards as wood and the wheat as the grain offering. All of it, I’m giving’. 24But King David said to Ornan, ‘No, because I will definitely acquire them at the full price, because I won’t lift up to Yahweh what belongs to you. I won’t offer up a burnt offering that cost nothing’.

## 21:25 Preparations Begin

25So David gave Ornan 600 gold sheqels in weight for the site. 26David built an altar there for Yahweh and offered up burnt offerings and well-being sacrifices. He called to Yahweh, and he answered him with fire from the heavens on the burnt offering altar. 27Yahweh said it to the envoy and he put his sword back into its sheath.

28At that time, when David saw that Yahweh had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Yebusite, he sacrificed there. 29Yahweh’s dwelling which Moses made in the wilderness, and the burnt offering altar, were at the shrine at Gib’on at that time, 30and David could not go before it to inquire of God because he was terrified before the sword of Yahweh’s envoy. 22 David said, ‘This is the house of Yahweh God. This is the burnt offering altar for Israel’.

2David said to assemble the resident aliens who were in the country of Israel, and he got them to stand as hewers to hew dressed stones for building God’s house. 3David prepared iron in quantity for the nails for the doors of the gateways and for the clasps, copper in quantity, beyond weighing, 4and cedar logs beyond numbering (because the Tsidonites and the Tyrians brought cedar logs in quantity to David). 5David said, ‘Solomon my son is a boy and green, and the house to build for Yahweh is to be exceptionally big so as to have a name and glory in all the countries. I should please prepare for him’. So David prepared in quantity before he died.

6He called Solomon his son, and ordered him to build a house for Yahweh the God of Israel.

## 22:7 The Man of Peace for a Time of Peace and a Place of Peace

7David said to Solomon his son, ‘I myself – it was in my mind to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, 8but Yahweh’s word came to me: “You’ve shed blood in quantity and fought big battles. You will not build a house for my name, because you’ve shed much blood on the earth before me. 9Here, a son has been born to you. He’ll be a settled man. I’ll enable him to settle down from all his enemies all round, because his name will be Solomon [Shelomoh] and I’ll give peace [*shalom*]and calm upon Israel in his days. 10It’s he who will build a house for my name. He’ll become a son to me and I’ll become a father to him. I’ll establish his kingly throne over Israel permanently”.

11Now, son, may Yahweh be with you, and may you succeed and build the house of Yahweh your God, as he spoke concerning you. 12Yet may Yahweh give you insight and understanding and may he order you over Israel, and so that you keep the instruction of Yahweh your God. 13Then you will succeed, if you keep watch over acting on the decrees and the rulings that Yahweh ordered Moses for Israel.

Be strong and stand firm. Don’t be afraid, don’t be scared. 14Here, by my restraint I’ve prepared for Yahweh’s house 100,000 talents of gold, 1,000,000 talents of silver, and copper and iron beyond weighing (because it was in quantity). I’ve prepared logs and stones, but you can add to them. 15With you in large numbers are workmen (hewers, craftsmen in stone and wood, and every kind of smart person in all work), 16the gold, the silver, the copper, and the iron, beyond numbering. Set to and do it. May Yahweh be with you’.

17David ordered all Israel’s officials to help Solomon his son: 18’Yahweh your God is with you, isn’t he, and he’s enabled you to settle all round, because he’s given into my hand the inhabitants of the country, and the country is in subjection before Yahweh and before his people. 19Now give your mind and your being to inquiring of Yahweh your God, and set to and build Yahweh your God’s sanctuary so as to bring Yahweh’s pact chest and God’s sacred articles to the house that’s built for Yahweh’s name’.

## 23:1 The Levites’ Divisions

23 When David was old and full of years, he made Solomon his son king over Israel. 2David gathered all the officials of Israel, and the priests and the Levites. 3The Levites were numbered, from age thirty and upward; their head count for the males was 38,000. 4Of these, in charge of the work in Yahweh’s house were 24,000; overseers and authorities, 6,000; 54,000 gatemen; and 4,000 praising Yahweh ‘with instruments that I made for praising’. 6David allocated them to divisions:

* The sons of Levi: Gershon, Qehat, and Merari
* 7The Gershonites: La’dan and Shim’i
* 8La’dan’s sons: the head Yehi’el, Zetam, and Yo’el—three
* 9Shim’i’s sons: Shelomit, Hazi’el, and Haran—three

These were La’dan’s ancestral heads

* 10Shim’i’s sons: Yahat, Zina, Ye’ush, and Beri’ah—these were Shim’i’s sons, four
* Yahat was the head, Zina the second, and Ye’ush and Beri’ah did not have many sons so they became an ancestral household with one appointment
* 12Qehat’s sons: Amram, Yitshar, Hebron, and Uzzi’el—four
* 13Amram’s sons: Aaron and Moses
* Aaron was distinguished to make sacred the very sacred things, he and his sons permanently, to burn incense before Yahweh, to minister to him, and to bless in his name, permanently
* 14Moses, the supernatural man: his sons were named after the clan of Levi
* 15Moses’ sons: Gershom and Eli’ezer
* 16Gershom’s sons: Shebu’el the head
* 17Eli’ezer’s sons were Rehabyah the head; Eli’ezer didn’t have other sons but Rehabyah’s sons were exceptionally numerous
* 18Yitshar’s sons: Shelomit the head
* 19Hebron’s sons: Yeriyyahu the head, Amaryah the second, Yahazi’el the third, and Yeqam’am the fourth
* 20Uzzi’el’s sons: Mikah the head and Yishshiyyah the second
* 21Merari’s sons: Mahli and Mushi
* Mahli’s sons: El’azar and Qish
* 22El’azar died and didn’t have sons, but rather daughters, and the sons of Qish, their brothers, took them
* 23Mushi’s sons: Mahli , Eder, and Yeremot—three.

## 23:24 The Levites’ Roles

24These are the Levites by their ancestral households – the ancestral heads as they were registered by a headcount of names, the people doing the work in connection with the service of Yahweh’s house, from age twenty and upward. 25Because David said, ‘Yahweh the God of Israel has settled his people down and come to dwell in Jerusalem permanently, 26so also for the Levites there’s no carrying the dwelling and all its articles, for its service’. 27Because by the last words of David, those are the number of the Levites from the age of twenty and upwards. 28Because their standing was at the side of the Aaronites for the service of Yahweh’s house:

* over the courtyards and over the halls
* over the purity of everything that was sacred, and the work involved in the service of God’s house
* 29the row bread, the fine flour for a grain offering, the flat bread wafers, the griddle loaves,the mixed loaves, and every weight and measure
* 30standing morning by morning to confess and praise Yahweh, and similarly in the evening
* 31all offering up of burnt offerings for Yahweh for the sabbaths, for the new months, and for the appointed festivals by number, in accordance with the ruling for them, regularly, before Yahweh.

32So they would keep watch over the appointment tent, over what was sacred, and over the Aaronites, their brothers, for the service of Yahweh’s house.

24 The divisions of the Aaronites.

Aaron’s sons: Nadab and Abihu, El’azar and Itamar. 2Nadab and Itamar died before their father and they had no sons, so El’azar and Itamar acted as priests. 3David, Tsadoq of the sons of El’azar, and Ahimelek of the sons of Itamar allocated them to their appointment by their service. 4El’azar’s sons were found to be more numerous by male heads than Itamar’s sons, so they allocated El’azar’s sons as sixteen heads of ancestral households and Itamar’s sons as eight heads of ancestral households. 5They allocated them by lots, both of them, because they were the sacred place’s officials and God’s officials, from El’azar’s sons and from Itamar’s sons.

## 24:6 The Aaronites’ Divisions

6Shema’yah ben Netan’el the secretary, of the Levites, wrote them down before the king, the officials, Tsadoq the priest, Ahimelek ben Ebyatar, and the ancestral heads of the priests and of the Levites—an ancestral household taken for El’azar, then one taken for Itamar.

* 7The first lot came out for Yehoyarib
* the second for Yeda’yah
* 8the third for Harim
* the fourth for Se’orim
* 9the fifth for Malkiyyah
* the sixth for Miyyamin
* 10the seventh for Haqqots
* the eighth for Abiyyah
* 11the ninth for Yeshua
* the tenth for Shekanyahu
* 12the eleventh for Eliyashib
* the twelfth for Yaqim
* 13the thirteenth for Huppah
* the fourteenth for Yeshebe’ab
* 14the fifteenth for Bilgah
* the sixteenth for Immer
* 15the seventeenth for Hezir
* the eighteenth for Happitstsets
* 16the nineteenth for Petahyah
* the twentieth for Yehezqe’l
* 17the twenty-first for Yakin
* the twenty-second for Gamul
* 18the twenty-third for Delayahu
* the twenty-fourth for Ma’azyahu

19These were their appointment, in relation to their service, for coming into Yahweh’s house in accordance with the ruling for them by means of Aaron their father, as Yahweh the God of Israel had ordered him.

20Of the Levites who were left:

* Of Amram’s sons: Shuba’el
* Shuba’el’s sons: Yehdeyahu
* 21of Rebahyahu—of Rebahyau’s sons: the head Yishshiyyah
* Of the Yitsharites: Shelomot
* of Shelomot’s sons: Yahat
* 23Yeriyyahu’s sons: Amaryahu the second, Yahazi’el the third, Yeqam’am the fourth
* 24Uzzi’el’s sons: Mikah
* of Mikah’s sons: Shamir
* 25Mikah’s brother: Yishshiyyah
* of Yishshiyyah’s sons: Zekaryahu
* 26Merari’s sons: Mahli and Mushi
* the sons of Ya’aziyyahu, his son (27Merari’s sons by Ya’aziyyahu, his son): Shoham, Zakkur, and Ibri
* 28of Mahli: El’azar (he did not have sons)
* 29of Qish—Qish’s sons: Yerahme’el
* 30Mushi’s sons: Mahli, Eder, and Yerimot.

These were the sons of the Levites by the ancestral households.

31They also let lots fall, along with their Aaronite brothers, before David the king, Tsadoq, Ahimelek, and the ancestral heads of the priests and the Levites, the ancestral head along with his younger brother. 25 And David and the army officers made distinct for the service the sons of Asaph, Heman, and Yedutun, who prophesied with guitars, mandolins, and tambourines.

## 25:1b: The Watches

The number of them (the people fulfilling the work in connection with their service) was:

* 2Asaph’s sons: Zakkur, Yoseph, Netanyah, and Asar’elah, Asaph’s sons at the side of Asaph, who prophesied at the side of the king.
* 3Yedutun – Yedutun’s sons: Gedalyah, Tseri, Yeshayahu, Hashabyahu, Mattityahu, six, at the side of Yedutun their father with the mandolin, who prophesied in confessing and praising Yahweh.
* 4Heman—Heman’s sons: Buqqiyyahu, Mattanyahu, Uzzi’el, Shebu’el, Yerimot, Hananyah, Hanani, Eli’atah, Giddalti, Romamti Ezer, Yoshbeqashah, Malloti, Hotir, and Mahazi’ot. 5All these sons of Haman the king’s seer with God’s words, to lift up his horn. God gave Heman fourteen sons and three daughters, 6all these by their father’s side in singing in Yahweh’s house with cymbals, mandolins, and guitars, for the service of God’s house.

Asaph, Yedutun, and Heman were by the king’s side. 7Their number with their brothers, trained in singing for Yahweh, every one discerning: 288. 8They let lots fall for the watch, the big man along with the young man, discerning man with learner.

* 9The first lot (Asaph’s) came out for Yoseph
* Gedalyah, the second, he, his brothers, and his sons—12
* 10the third Zakkur, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 11the fourth for Yitsri, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 12the fifth Netanyah, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 13the fifth Buqqiyyah, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 14the sixth Yesar’elah, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 15the eighth Yesha’yahu, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 16the ninth Mattanyahu, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 17the tenth Shim’i, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 18eleventh Azar’el, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 19the twelfth for Hashabyah, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 20for the thirteenth Shuba’el, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 21the the fourteenth Mattityahu, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 22for the fifteenth for Yeremot, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 23for the sixteenth for Hananyahu, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 24for the seventeenth for Yoshbeqashah, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 25for the eighteenth for Hanani, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 26for the nineteenth for Malloti, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 27for the twentieth for Eli’atah, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 28for the twenty-first for Hotir, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 29for the twenty-second for Giddalti, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 30for the twenty-third for Mahazi’ot, his sons, and his brothers—12
* 31for the twenty-fourth for Romamti Ezer, his sons, and his brothers—12

## 26:1 The Gatemen

26 The divisions of the gatemen:

* Qorahites: Meshelemeyahu ben Qore of the sons of Asaph
* 2of Meshelemeyahu, sons: Zekaryahu the firstborn, Yedi’a’el the second, Zebadyahu the third, Yatni’el the fourth, 3Elam the fifth, Yehohanan the sixth, Elyeho’enay the seventh
* 4of Obed Edom, sons: Shema’yah the firstborn, Yehozabad the second, Yo’ah the third, Sakar the fourth, Netan’el the fifth, 5Ammi’el the sixth, Yissakar the seventh, Pe’ulletay the eighth (because God blessed him)
* 6to Shema’yah his son sons were born who ruled for their ancestral households because they were forceful strong men; 7Shema’yah’s sons: Otni, Repha’el, Obed, Elzabad
* his brothers, forceful men: Elihu and Semakyahu
* 8all these of the sons of Obed Edom, they, their sons, and their brothers, people forceful in their energy for the service— of Obed Edom, sixty-two
* 9Meshelemeyahu had sons and brothers, forceful men—eighteen
* 10Hosah of the Merarites had sons: Shimri the head (because he was not the firstborn but his father made him head), 11Hilqiyyahu the second, Tebalyahu the third, Zekaryahu the fourth; all sons and brothers of Hoseh—thirteen.

12These are the gatemen’s divisions by the strong men who were the heads, in watches along with their brothers, to minister in Yahweh’s house. 13They let lots fall, small and big alike, gateway by gateway:

* 14the lots to the east fell to Shelemyahu
* Zekaryahu his son, a counsellor with insight: they let lots fall and his lot came out to the north
* 15for Obed Edom, to the south, and for his sons, the stores
* 16for Suppim and for Hosah, to the west, with the Shalleket Gate on the upper causeway.

Watch along with watch:

* 17to the east, six Levites
* to the north, four daily
* to the south, four daily
* for the stores, two by two
* 18at the colonnade to the west, four at the causeway, two at the colonnade.

19These are the divisions of the gatemen belonging to the Qorahites and the Merarites.

## 26:20 The Levites’ Responsibilities

20The Levites:

* Ahiyyah in charge of the treasuries of God’s house and the treasuries of the sacred things
* 21La’dan’s sons, the sons of the Gershonites belonging to La’dan, the ancestral heads of La’dan the Gershonit: Yehi’eli
* 22Yehi’eli’s sons: Zetam and Yo’el his brother, in charge of the treasuries of Yahweh’s house

23of the Amramites, the Yitsharites, the Hebronites, and the Uzzi’elites:

* 24Shebu’el ben Gershom, the son of Moses, chief over the treasuries
* 25His brothers by Eli’azar: Rehabyahu his son, Yesha’yahu his son, Yoram his son, Zikri his son, and Shelomit his son
* 26that Shelomit and his brothers were in charge of all the treasuries of the sacred things that David the king made sacred, with the ancestral heads, for the chiliarchs, the centurions, and the army officers; 27some of the spoil from battles they made sacred for strengthening Yahweh’s house; 28everything that Samuel the seer, Saul ben Qish, Abner ben Ner, and Yo’ab ben Tseruyah made sacred (anyone who made something sacred) was in the control of Shelomit and his brothers

29Of the Yitsharites: Kenanyahu and his sons—in connection with work outside, in charge of Israel as overseers and authorities.

* 30Of the Hebronites: Hashabyahu and his brothers, forceful men, 1,700, with an appointment over Israel across the Jordan westward regarding all Yahweh’s work and regarding the king’s service.
* 31Of the Hebronites, Yeriyyah the head of the Hebronites by his lines of descent, by his ancestors: in the fortieth year of David’s reign they were inquired after, and forceful strong men were found among them in Ya’zir-in-Gil’ad; 32his brothers, forceful men, 2,700, ancestral heads—David the king appointed them in charge of the Re’ubenites, the Gadites, and the half-clan of Menashsheh in connection with everything of God’s and everything of the king’s.

## 27:1 The Army Roster

27 The Israelites by their number (the ancestral heads, the chiliarchs, the centurions, and their overseers who ministered to the king in everything concerning the divisions that came in and went out month by month, all the months of the year); each division was 24,000:

* 2in charge of the first division, for the first month: Yashob’am ben Zabdi’el, in charge of his division of 24,000—3of the sons of Perets, the head over all the army officers, for the first month
* 4in charge of the second month’s division: Doday the Ahohite in charge of his division with Miqlot the chief, in charge of his division of 24,000
* 5the third army officer, for the third month: Benayah ben Yehoyada, the head priest, in charge of his division of 24,000; 6that was Benayah the strongest man among the Thirty and in charge of the Thirty and his division, Ammizabad his son
* 7the fourth, for the fourth month: Asah-el, Yo’ab’s brother, and Zebadyah his son after him, in charge of his division of 24,000
* 8the fifth, for the fifth month: the officer Shamhut the Yizrahite, in charge of his division of 24,000
* 9the sixth, for the sixth month: Ira ben Iqqesh, the Teqo’ite, in charge of his division, 24,000
* 10the seventh, for the seventh month: Helets the Pelonite, from the Ephrayimites, in charge of his division of 24,000
* 11the eighth, for the eighth month: Sibbekay, the Hushatite of the Zerahites, in charge of his division of 24,000
* 12the ninth, for the ninth month: Abi’ezer, the Anatotite of Benjamin, in charge of his division of 24,000
* 13the tenth, for the tenth month: Mahray, the Netophatite of the Zerahites, in charge of his division of 24,000
* 14the eleventh, for the eleventh month: Benayah, the Peratonite from the Ephrayimites, in charge of his division of 24,000
* 15the twelfth, for the twelfth month: Helday the Netophatite of Otni’el, in charge of his division of 24,000.

## 27:16 The Administration

16In charge of the Israelite clans:

* for the Re’ubenites: chief, Eli’ezer ben Zikri
* for the Shim’onites: Shephatyahu ben Ma’akah
* 17for the Levites: Hashabyah ben Qemu’el
* for Aaron: Tsadoq
* 18for Judah: Elihu, from David’s brothers
* for Yissakar: Omri ben Mika’el
* 19for Zebulun: Yishma’yahu ben Obadyahu
* for Naphtali: Yerimot ben Azri’el
* 20for the Ephrayimites: Hoshea ben Azizyahu
* for the half-clan of Menashsheh: Yo’el ben Pedayah
* 21for the half of Menashsheh in Gil’ad: Yiddo ben Zekaryahu
* for Benjamin: Ya’asi’el ben Abner
* 22for Dan: Azar’el ben Yeroham.

These were the officers of the Israelite clans. 23David did not take their number for the people of twenty years or less, because Yahweh had said he would make Israel as numerous as the stars in the heavens, 24though Yo’ab ben Tseruyyah began to count, but he did not finish; at this, fury came on Israel and the number did not go into the number of the things concerning King David.

* 25in charge of the king’s treasuries: Azmavet ben Adi’el
* in charge of the treasuries in the open country (in the towns, in the hamlets, and in the towers): Yehonatan ben Uzziyyahu
* 26in charge of the people doing work in the open country, in the service of the ground: Ezri ben Kelub
* 27in charge of the vineyards: Shim’i the Ramatite
* in charge of what was in the vineyards for the wine treasuries: Zabdi the Shiphmite
* 28in charge of the olive trees and the wild fig trees that were in the foothills: Ba’al Hanan the Gederite
* in charge of the oil treasuries: Yo’ash
* 29in charge of the cattle pasturing in Sharon: Shirtay the Sharonite
* in charge of the cattle in the vales: Shaphat ben Adlay
* 30in charge of the camels: Obil the Ishma’elite
* in charge of the she-donkeys: Yehdeyahu the Meronotite
* 31in charge of the flocks: Yaziz the Hagrite.

All these were officials over the property that belonged to King David.

* 32Yehonatan, David’s uncle, was a counsellor; he was a discerning person and a secretary
* Yehi’el ben Hackmoni was with the king’s sons
* 33Ahitophel was counsellor to the king
* Hushay the Arkite was the king’s friend
* 34After Ahitophel were Yehoyada ben Benayah and Ebyatar
* Yo’ab was the king’s army officer.

## 28:1 David’s Commission

28 David congregated in Jerusalem all Israel’s officials, the clan officials, the divisional officials who ministered to the king, the chiliarchs, the centurions, and the officials over all the property and cattle belonging to the king and to his sons, with the courtiers and the strong men, every forceful strong man. 2David the king rose to his feet and said, ‘Listen to me, my brothers, my people. I—it was in my mind to build a place to settle down for Yahweh’s pact chest, for our God’s footstool, and I have prepared for building it. 3But God said to me, “You aren’t the one to build a house for my name because you’re a man of battles; you’ve shed blood”.

4Yahweh the God of Israel chose me from my father’s entire household to be king over Israel permanently, because he chose Judah as chief, and in Judah’s household, my father’s household, and from my father’s sons he accepted me to make me king over all Israel. 5And from all my sons (because Yahweh has given me many sons) he chose Solomon my son to sit on Yahweh’s kingly throne over Israel. 6He said to me, “Solomon your son – he will build my house and my courtyards, because I’ve chosen him as a son to me, and I myself will become a father to him. 7I will establish his reign permanently if he is strong in acting on my orders and my rulings this very day”.

8So now before the eyes of all Israel, Yahweh’s congregation, and in the ears of our God: Keep and inquire of all the orders of Yahweh our God in order that you may possess the good country and give it to your children as their domain after you permanently.

9And you, Solomon my son: Acknowledge your father’s God and serve him with a perfect mind and with a willing being, because Yahweh inquires of all minds and discerns every inclination in people’s intentions. If you inquire of him, he will be found by you, but if you abandon him, he will spurn you permanently. 10See, now, that Yahweh has chosen you to build a house for the sanctuary. Be strong and act!’

## 28:11 The Plan and the Charge

11David gave Solomon his son the plan for the porch, its houses, its storerooms, its upper quarters, its inside rooms, the house for the expiation cover, 12the plan for all that was with him by the spirit for the courtyards of Yahweh’s house and for all the halls around, for the treasuries in God’s house and for the treasuries for sacred things, 13for the divisions of the prests and the Levites and all the work involved in the service of Yahweh’s house, for all the articles involved in the service of Yahweh’s house, 14for the gold with the weight (for the gold for all the articles used service by service), for the silver vessels with the weight (for all the articles used service by service), 15the weight for the gold candelabra and the gold lamps, with the weight candelabrum by candelabrum and its lamps, and for the silver candelabra, with the weight for the candelabrum and its lamps in accordance with the service of candelabrum by candelabrum, 16the weighed gold for the tables for the row [of bread] table by table, and silver for the silver tables, 17the forks, the basins, and the pitchers, pure gold, for the gold vessels, with the weight vessel by vessel, and the silver vessels, with the weight vessel by vessel, 18for the incense altar refined gold, with the weight, and for the plan for the chariot, the gold sphinxes spreading and shielding Yahweh’s pact chest, 19all of it in writing, through Yahweh’s hand upon me. He has given me insight into all the plan’s workings’.

20David said to Solomon his son, ‘Be strong and stand firm, and act. Don’t be afraid, don’t be scared, because Yahweh God, my God, is with you. He won’t let go of you, he won’t abandon you, until the finishing of all the work in connection with the service of Yahweh’s house. 21Here are the divisions of the priests and the Levites for the service of God’s house, and with you in all the work everyone who is free with smartness for every service, and the officials and all the people in connection with all your words’.

## 29:1 David’s Provision

29 David the king said to the entire congregation, ‘Solomon my son, the one God chose, is a boy and green, though the work is big, because the castle is not for a human being but for Yahweh God. 2With all my energy I have prepared for my God’s house,the gold for the gold things, the silver for the silver, the copper for the copper, the iron for the iron, the logs for the logs, onyx stones and settings, stones of antimony and colour, every precious stone, and alabaster stones, in quantity. 3And further, through my acceptance in my God’s house, I have gold and silver as personal treasure that I’m giving for my God’s house on top of all I have prepared for the sacred house: 43000 talents of gold (Ophir gold), 7000 talents of refined silver to overlay the houses’ walls (5the gold for the gold, the silver for the silver), and for all the work in the hand of the craftsmen. So who is going to give freely, commissioning himself to Yahweh today?’

6The ancestral officials, the Israelite clans’ officials, the chiliarchs, the centurions, and the officials over the king’s work gave freely. 7They gave for the service of God’s house 5000 talents of gold, 10,000 darics, 10,000 talents of silver, 18,000 talents of copper, and 100,000 talents of iron. 8The person who had stones to be found with him—they gave them to the treasury of Yahweh’s house, into the hand of Yehi’el the Gershonite. 9The people rejoiced over their free giving because it was with a perfect mind that they had given freely for Yahweh. David the king, too, rejoiced greatly.

## 29:10 Who Am I and Who Is My People?

10David blessed Yahweh before the eyes of the entire congregation. David said, ‘You are to be blessed, Yahweh, God of Israel our father, from age to age. 11Yours, Yahweh, is greatness, strength, glory, honour, and grandeur, because everything in the heavens and on the earth is yours, Yahweh – the kingship and preeminence in relation to everything, as head. 12Wealth and splendour come from before you. You rule over everything. In your hand are energy and strength. It’s in your hand to make anyone big or strong. 13So now, our God, we confess you and praise your glorious name.

14But who am I and who is my people that we hold onto the energy to give freely like this, because everything comes from you, and it’s from your hand that we’ve given you. 15Because we are resident aliens before you, transients like all our ancestors. Our days are like a shadow on the earth, and without hope. 16Yahweh our God, all this mass that we have prepared to build a house for you, for your sacred name, is from your hand. Everything is yours.

17My God, I acknowledge that you test the mind and that integrity is what you accept. I myself with my integrity of mind havd freely given all these things, and now your people who have presented themselves here – I have seen them giving freely to you with rejoicing. 18Yahweh, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our ancestors, keep this permanently as the inclination of the intentions in your people’s mind, and establish their mind in relation to you. 19To Solomon my son give a perfect mind to keep your orders, your affirmations, and your decrees, and to do it all, and to build the castle for which I have prepared.

## 29:20 Full of Years

20David said to the entire congregation, ‘Bless Yahweh your God, please’. The entire congregation blessed Yahweh, their ancestors’ God. They knelt and bent their heads to Yahweh and to the king 21and made sacrifices for Yahweh and offered up burnt offerings for Yahweh the next day after that day: 1000 bulls, 1000 rams, 1000 lambs, with their libations, sacrifices in large numbers for all Israel. 22They ate and drank before Yahweh that day with great rejoicing.

They again made Solomon ben David king and anointed him for Yahweh as chief, and Tsadoq as priest. 23Solomon sat on Yahweh’s throne as king in place of his father. He was successful and all Israel listened to him. 24All the officials, the strong men, and also all King David’s sons, gave their support to Solomon the king. 25Yahweh made Solomon exceptionally big before the eyes of all Israel and gave him a royal grandeur that had not been on any king over Israel before him.

26When David ben Jesse reigned over all Israel, 27the time that he reigned over Israel was forty years. In Hebron he reigned seven years and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three. 28He died in a good old age full of years, of wealth, and of honour, and Solomon his son began to reign in place of him. 29The things about David the king, early and late, there they are, written down in the things of Samuel the seer, in the things of Natan the prophet, and in the things of Gad the seer, 30with his entire reign and his might, and the times that passed for him, for Israel, and for the kingdoms of the earth.

# Chronicles Book Two

Like 1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles is a history of Israel that focuses on the history of the temple and its worship. The first part (chapters 1-9) retells the story of Solomon’s reign with a focus on his activity in building the temple, on the basis of the preparation and provision that David completed.

The middle part (chapters 10-28) retells the story of the two centuries when Judah and Ephrayim were divided into two nations, but it does so by focusing almost entirely on Judah. By setting up its indendent state, Ephrayim has cut itself off from Jerusalem and cut itself off from the household of David. In effect it has cut itself off from the real people of God, so its story does not really belong in that story. The book makes clear that it comes from the Second Temple period, when the Persian king has made it possible for Judahites to rebuild the temple but when Judah is merely a Persian colony and an embattled little community whose relationships with surrounding Persian colonies are difficult. The stories of Ezra and Nehemiah open a window into some of that trickiness. One of the most difficult is with the people of Samaria, who are the people now living in the area of what was once Ephrayim. Second Chronicles encourages Judah to trust in its special relationship with God and not be be threatened by or tempted into compromised with Samaria/Ephrayim.

One way its stories off encouragement is the way they relate monumental victories that Judah won over those two centuries when Ephrayim and Judah were separate peoples. The battles are told larger than life in a way that enhances their excitement and their encouragement. The numbers are way out of line with the actual size of the peoples of the day, and even more out of line with the size of the peoples for whom Chronicles’ version of the stories was written. The stories underline the way that trust in God not the size of your army is the key to survival and to success.

The last part of the book (chapters 29-36) returns to giving more focused attention to the temple. It covers the period after the downfall of Ephrayim to the Assyrians, though it ignores that event because Ephrayim’s story is not really part of the story of Israel. (The use of the word ‘Israel’ is often confusing in the Old Testament, but especially in 2 Chronicles. On one hand, ‘Israel’ was the usual political name of the northern kingdom, and it is then set over against ‘Judah’. On the other hand, ‘Israel’ denotes the people that God chose, the people of Abraham and Moses and David. In this sense Chronicles can refer to Judah as ‘Israel’. Let the reader beware! I myself refer to the northen kingdom by its other name, Ephrayim, to try to reduce the confusion.)

This last part of the book has two heroes, Hezekiah and Josiah, who were both involved in reforming the temple’s worship. The odd thing about Josiah is that having acted with great faithfulness to Yahweh, he died quite young. His story contrasts with that of his grandfather, Manasseh, an apostate king who neveretheless reigned for fifty-five years. Chronicles offers implicit explanations of those disparities by describing how Manasseh repented of his wrongdoing while Josiah ignored a word from God in taking on the battle in which he died. Chronicles is thus able to affirm th truth of one of its important themes, that God is faithful and responsive to the people who are faithful and responsive to him but that failing in your faithfulness and responsiveness leads to trouble.

The book almost closes with Judah’s own undoing of the reforms of Hezekiah and Josiah and with the temple’s destruction by the Babylonians. But finally the Persian emperor declares that he has a commission from Yahweh [!] to rebuild the temple, and he encourages Judahites in exile throughout his empire to go back to Jerusalem to do it. That last little paragraph is also the first paragraph in the story in Ezra and Nehemiah, and the order of the books in the English Bible encourages us to read them in this sequence. But in most Hebrew Bibles these books come at the very end, in the order Ezra-Nehemiah-Chronicles, which points to the possibility that Ezra and Nehemiah are not the sequel to Chronicles; Chronicles is the prequel to Ezra-Nehemiah. That overlap between Chronicles and Ezra is the way Chronicles encourages its readers to see it as such a prequel. It offers further encouragement to see the book as speaking to the needs and pressures and questions of the Second Temple period.

## 1:1 What Would You Like Me to Give You?

1 Solomon [Shelomoh] ben David showed himself strong over his kingdom; Yahweh his God was with him and made him exceptionally big.

2Solomon spoke to all Israel (to the chiliarchs and the centurions, to the authorities, and to every leader in all Israel, the ancestral heads), 3and Solomon and the entire congregation with him went to the shrine which was at Gib’on, because God’s appointment tent, which Moses, Yahweh’s servant, made in the wilderness, was there, 4though God’s chest David had taken up from Ye’arim Township when David had prepared for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. 5But the copper altar, which Betsal’el ben Uri the son of Hur had made, was there beforeYahweh’s dwelling. So Solomon and the congregation inquired of it. 6There Solomon went up on the copper altar before Yahweh, which was at the appointment tent, and offered up a thousand burnt offerings on it.

7That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, ‘Ask for what I should give you’. 8Solomon said to God, ‘You yourself acted in great commitment with David my father and you have made me king in place of him. 9Now, Yahweh God, may your word with David my father prove trustworthy, because you have made me king over a people as numerous as the earth’s dirt. 10Now give me smartness and knowledge so that I may go out and come in before this people. Because who can exercise authority for this great people of yours?’

11God said to Solomon, ‘Since this was in your mind, and you haven’t asked for wealth and possessions and honour, or the life of the people hostile to you, nor was it even long life that you asked for, but you’ve asked for smartness and knowledge so you can exercise authority for my people over which I’ve made you king, 12smartness and knowledge are going to be given to you, and wealth and possessions and honour I will give to you, which have not belonged in this way to the kings who have been before you, nor will belong in this way to those after you’.

## 1:13 Solomon’s Flourishing

13Solomon came, apropos the shrine which was at Gib’on, to Jerusalem from before the appointment tent, and reigned over Israel.

14Solomon gathered chariotry and cavalry; he had 1,400 chariotry and 12,000 cavalry. He settled them in chariot towns and with the king in Jerusalem. 15The king made the silver and the gold in Jerusalem like the stones, and made the cedars like the wild fig trees that are in the foothills, in the large number. 16The 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; 17they took up a chariot (they brought it 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.

2 Solomon said to build a house for Yahweh’s name and a house for himself as king. 2Solomon numbered 70,000 carriers, 80,000 hewers in the highland, and 3,600 supervisors over them.

3Solomon sent to Huram king of Tyre [Tsor], saying, ‘As you did with David my father when you sent him cedars to build himself a house to live in: 4here, I’m going to build a house for the name of Yahweh my God, to make sacred for him for burning spiced incense before him, and the regular row [of bread], and burnt offerings morning and evening, for the sabbaths, for the new months, and for the appointed occasions of Yahweh our God. This is laid upon Israel permanently. 5The house that I’m going to build will be big, because our God is bigger than all gods. 6But who can hold onto the energy to build him a house, because the heavens, even the highest heavens cannot contain him, so who am I that I should build him a house except for burning incense before him?

## 2:7 What’s Needed for the House of God

7But now send me someone who’s smart at working in gold, in silver, in copper, in iron, in purple, scarlet, and blue, and who knows how to do engraving, with the smart people who’re with me in Judah and in Jerusalem whom David my father prepared. 8And send me cedar, juniper, and algum logs from the Lebanon, because I acknowledge that your servants know about cutting Lebanese logs. And there, my servants will be with your servants 9to prepare logs in large number for me, because the house that I’m going to build will be big, extraordinary. 10Here, for the choppers, the people who cut the logs, I’m giving: crushed wheat for your servants, 20,000 ten-gallon measures; barley, 20,000 ten-gallon measures; wine, 20,000 five-gallon measures; and oil, 20,000 five-gallon measures’.

11Huram king of Tyre said in a written message, and sent to Solomon, ‘In Yahweh’s loyalty to his people he has made you king over them’. 12Huram said, ‘Blessed be Yahweh the God of Israel who made the heavens and the earth, who gave David the king a smart son, who knows about insight and understanding, who will build a house for Yahweh and a house for himself as king. 13So now I’m sending someone smart who knows about understanding, Huram Abi, 14the son of one of the Danite women and his father a Tyrian man, who knows about working in gold, in silver, in copper, in iron, in stones, in wood, in purple, in blue, in fine linen, and in scarlet, and how to do all engraving and to do any designing that will be given him, with your smart people and the smart people of my lord David your father. 15And now the wheat, the barley, the oil, and the wine that my lord said, he should send them to his servants. 16We ourselves will cut down trees from the Lebanon in accordance with all your need and we will bring them to you as rafts by sea to Yafo, and you can take them up to Jerusalem’.

## 2:17 The Work Begins

17Solomon numbered all the people who were resident aliens who were in the country of Israel, following on the numbering of them by David his father. They were found to be 153,600. 18Of them he made 70,000 carriers, 80,000 hewers in the highland, and 3,600 supervisors to get the company to serve. 3 And Solomon began building Yahweh’s house in Jerusalem on Mount Moriyyah where he had appeared to David his father, at David’s site which he had prepared, at the threshing floor of Ornan the Yebusite. 2He began to build in the second month, on the second, in the fourth year of his reign. 3These were Solomon’s foundation for building God’s house:

* the length thirty metres (by the former measure)
* the width ten metres
* 4the porch corresponding to the length, corresponding to the width of the house, ten metres
* the height sixty metres.

He overlaid it on the inside with pure gold. 5The big house he covered with juniper wood, and he covered it with fine gold. He put on top of it palms and chains. 6He decorated the house with precious stones for glory; the gold was Parvayim gold. 7He covered the house (the beams, the thresholds, and its walls and its doors) with gold, and engraved sphinxes on the walls.

8He made the very sacred house: its length corresponding to the house’s width, ten metres, and its width ten metres. He covered it with fine gold, 600 talents, 9the weight of the nails fifty sheqels of gold. The upper quarters he covered in gold.

10In the very sacred house he made two sphinxes, sculptured work, and they overlaid them with gold. 11The sphinxes’ wings: their length ten metres—the wing of the first two-and-a-half metres touching the wall of the house and the other wing two-and-a-half metres touching the other sphinx’s wing, 12the other sphinx’s wing two-and-a-half metres touching the wall of the house and the other wing two-and-a-half metres attaching to the first sphinx’s wing, 13these sphinxes’ wings speading ten metres; they were standing on their feet with their faces to the house.

## 3:14 The Features of the House

14He made the expiation cover of purple, blue, scarlet, and fine linen, and made sphinxes on it. 15Before the house he made two pillars sixteen metres in length; the capital that was on top of it was two-and-a-half metres. 16He made chains in the inner room and put them on top of the pillars, and he made a hundred pomegranates and put them into the chains. 17He set up the pillars in front of the palace, one on the right and one on the left. He named the right ‘He-establishes’ and the left ‘In-him-is-Strength’.

4 He made a copper altar, ten metres its length, ten metres its width, five metres its height. 2He 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
* 3figures of cattle under it round it, all round, ten metres, encircling the sea all round
* two rows of the cattle, cast along with its casting
* 4standing 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
* 5its thickness a handbreadth
* its lip like the making of the lip of a cup, a lotus petal
* taking strong hold of 10,000 gallons, which it would hold.

6He made ten basins and put them five on the right and five on the left, for washing in them. In them they would rinse the work for the burnt offering, while the sea was for the priests’ washing in. 7He made the ten gold candelabra in accordance with the ruling for them and put them in the palace, five on the right and five on the left. 8He made ten tables and set them in the palace, five on the right and five on the left. He made a hundred gold sprinklers. 9He made the priests’ courtyard and the big enclosure and doors for the enclosure, and their doors he overlaid with copper. 10He put the sea at the right shoulder, to the east, toward the south.

## 4:11 The Work Completed

11Huram made the basins, the shovels, and the bowls. So Huram finished doing all the work that he did for King Solomon in God’s house:

* 12two pillars
* the two globes and capitals on the top of the pillars
* two nets to cover the two globes for the capitals that were on the top of the pillars
* 13the 400 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
* 14he made the stands and he made the basins on the stands
* 15the one sea and the twelve cattle under it
* 16the buckets, the shovels, the basins, and all their articles that Huram his father made for King Solomon for Yahweh’s house, polished copper.

17The king cast them in the Jordan Plain, in the earthen compactness between Sukkot and Tsaretan. 18Solomon made all these articles, a large number, so that the weight of the copper was not searched out. 19Solomon made all the articles that were in God’s house:

* the gold altar
* the table on which was the presence bread
* 20the candelbra and their lamps for burning in accordance with the ruling, before the inner room, beaten gold
* 21the flowers, the lamps, and the tongs, gold (i.e. solid gold);
* 22the snuffers, the sprinklers, the ladles, and the pans, beaten gold
* the entrance for the house, its doors, the inside parts for the very sacred place, and the doors of the house for the palace, gold.

5 So all the work that Solomon did for Yahweh’s house was complete, and Solomon brought in the sacred things from David his father; the silver, the gold, and all the articles he put in the treasuries of God’s house.

## 5:2 When You Can Tell God Is Present

2Then Solomon congregated Israel’s elders (all the heads of the clans, the Israelites’ ancestral leaders) to Jerusalem, to take up Yahweh’s pact chest from David’s Town (i.e., Zion). 3Every individual in Israel congregated to the king at the festival (i.e., the seventh month). 4All Israel’s elders came and the Levites carried the chest. 5They took up the chest, the appointment tent, and all the sacred articles that were in the tent. The priests, the Levites, took them up 6while King Solomon and the entire assembly of Israel who had assembled to him before the chest were sacrificing sheep and cattle that could not be numbered and could not be counted because of the large number.

7The 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. 8The sphinxes were spreading their wings over the chest’s place; the sphinxes covered the chest and its poles from above. 9The poles extended and the heads of the poles coming from the chest could be seen in front of the inner room, but they could not be seen outside. It has been there until this day. 10There was nothing in the chest, only the two tablets that Moses put in at Horeb, when Yahweh solemnized things with the Israelites when they got out from Egypt.

11When the priests went out of the sacred place (because all the priests who were to be found had made themselves sacred—there was no keeping to the divisions), 12the Levite singers, all of them, Asaph, Heman, and Yedutun, and their sons and their brothers, dressed in linen, with tambourines and with guitars and mandolins, were standing east of the altar, and with them were 120 priests blowing trumpets. 13When the trumpeters and the singers as one made one sound to be heard to praise and confess Yahweh and raised a sound on trumpets, on tambourines, and on musical instruments, and praised Yahweh ‘Because he is good, because his commitment is permanent’, the house filled with a cloud—Yahweh’s house. 14The priests could not stand ministering before the cloud because Yahweh’s splendour filled God’s house.

## 6:1 A Thick Cloud and a Stately House

6 Then Solomon said:

Yahweh has said he would dwell in a thundercloud,

2but I myself have built you a stately house,

an established place for you to live in to the ages.

3The king turned his face round and blessed Israel’s entire congregation, as Israel’s entire congregation was standing. 4He 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: 5“From the day when I got my people out of the country of Egypt I didn’t choose a town from all Israel’s clans to build a house for my name to be there and I didn’t choose anyone to be chief over my people Israel. 6But I have chosen Jerusalem for my name to be there, and I have chosen David to be in charge of my people Israel”.

7It was in David my father’s mind to build a house for the name of Yahweh the God of Israel, 8but 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. 9Only 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”.

10Yahweh 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. 11I have set there the chest where Yahweh’s pact is, which he solemnized with the Israelites’.

## 6:12 God Dwells with Humanity on Earth!

12He stood before Yahweh’s altar in front of the entire congregation of Israel and spread out his palms 13(because Solomon had made a copper platform and put it in the middle of the enclosure, its length two-and-a-half metres, its width two-and-a-half metres, and its height one-and-a-half metres; so he stood on it, and knelt on his knees in front of the entire congregation of Israel, and spread out his palms to the heavens).

14He said, ‘Yahweh, God of Israel, there is no god like you in the heavens or on the earth, keeping pact and commitment to your servants who walk before you with their entire mind, 15who 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.

16So 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 by my instruction, as you have walked before me”. 17So now, Yahweh, God of Israel, may your word prove trustworthy that you spoke to your servant David.

18Because will God truly live with humanity on the earth? There, the heavens, even the highest heavens, could not contain you, certainly not this house that I’ve built. 19But 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 the plea that your servant’s uttering before you, 20so that your eyes are opened toward this house day and night, toward the place of which you said you would put your name there, so as to listen to the plea that your servant makes toward this place. 21May you listen to the prayers for grace by your servant and your people Israel, which they make toward this place. May you yourself listen from the place where you live, from the heavens, listen and pardon’.

## 6:22 Be One Who Listens to Us

* 22If someone does wrong 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, 23may you yourself listen from the heavens and act and exercise authority for your servants, so as to turn it back on the one who is in the wrong, bringing his conduct on his head, and to show the person in the right to be in the right, giving to him in accordance with his being in the right.
* 24If your people Israel take a beating before an enemy because they do wrong in relation to you, but they turn back and confess your name and plead and pray for grace before you in this house, 25may you yourself listen from the heavens and pardon your people Israel’s wrongdoing and take them back to the land that you gave to them and to their ancestors.
* 26When 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, when they turn back from their wrongdoing because you humble them, 27may you yourself listen in the heavens and pardon the wrongdoing of your servants, 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.
* 28When famine happens in the country, when an epidemic happens , blight, mildew, locust, or caterpiller, when it happens; when its enemies besiege it in the region of their settlements; any affliction or any illness; 29any plea, any prayer for grace that any human being may have or your entire people Israel may have, who acknowledge each one his affliction or illness, and he spreads out his palms toward this house, 30may you yourself listen from the heavens, the established place where you live, and pardon, and give to the individual in accordance with all his ways (in that you know his mind because you alone know the mind of human beings), 31in order that that they may live in awe of you by walking in your ways all the days that they are alive on the face of the ground that you gave to our ancestors.

## 6:32 No Ethnic Limits to Yahweh

* 32Further, to the foreigner who is not of your people Israel but comes from a distant country for the sake of your big name, your strong hand, and your extended arm, and comes and pleads toward this house, 33may you yourself listen from the heavens, from 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, and 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.
* 34When your people goes out to battle against its enemies by the way that you send them and they plead to you in the direction of this town that you have chosen and the house that I have built for your name, 35may you listen from the heavens to their plea and to their prayer for grace, and decide for them.
* 36When 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 a country far or near, 37and they turn their mind back in the country where they are captive, and turn back and pray toward you for grace in the country of their captivity, saying, “We’ve done wrong, we’ve been wayward, we’ve been faithless,” 38and they turn back to you with their entire mind and with their entire being in the country of their captivity where people have taken them off captive, and make their plea in the direction of their country that you gave their ancestors, the town that you’ve chosen, and to the house that I’ve built for your name, 39 may you listen from the heavens, from the established place where you live, to their plea, their prayers for grace, and decide for them, and pardon your people who have done wrong in relation to you.

40Now, my God, may your eyes please be opened and your ears be heeding to a plea from this place.

## 6:41 A Committed People Can Rejoice

41So now,

Yahweh God, rise to your settled place,

you and your powerful chest.

May your priests, Yahweh God,

clothe themselves in deliverance.

May your committed people rejoice in good things,

42Yahweh God.

Don’t turn back the face of your anointed ones;

be mindful of your servant David’s acts of commitment’.

7 When Solomon had finished pleading, and the fire had come down from the heavens and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and Yahweh’s splendour had filled the house, 2the priests couldn’t come into Yahweh’s house because Yahweh’s splendour filled Yahweh’s house. 3When all the Israelites saw the fire and Yahweh’s splendour on the house, they bent down, face to the ground, on the pavement. They bowed low and confessed Yahweh, ‘Because he is good, because his commitment lasts permanently’.

4When the king and all the people made sacrifice before Yahweh, 5King Solomon sacrificed 22,000 cattle and 120,000 sheep, and the king and the entire people dedicated God’s house, 6while the priests were standing at their watches, the Levites with the instruments for singing to Yahweh, which David the king had made for confessing Yahweh, ‘Because his commitment lasts permanently’, with David’s praise in their hand, and the priests blowing trumpets in front of them, and all Israel standing.

7Solomon made sacred the middle of the courtyard which was before Yahweh’s house, because he made the burnt offerings and the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices there, because the copper altar that Solomon had made couldn’t contain the burnt offering, the grain offering, and the fat parts. 8Solomon made the festival at that time for seven days, and all Israel with him, a very big congregation, from Lebo Hamat as far as the Egyptian Wadi.

9On the eighth day they made an assembly, because they made the dedication of the altar for seven days and the festival for seven days. 10On the twenty-third day of the seventh month he sent the people off to their tents, rejoicing and good-hearted because of the good things that Yahweh had done for David, for Solomon, and for Israel his people.

## 7:11 If My People

11Solomon had finished Yahweh’s house and the king’s house. Everything that had come into Solomon’s mind to do in Yahweh’s house and in his own house he succeeded in doing. 12And Yahweh appeared to Solomon at night and said to him, ‘I’ve listened to your plea and chosen this place for myself as a house for sacrifice. 13If I hold back the heavens and there’s no rain, or if I order the locust to consume the country, or if I send off an epidemic against my people, 14and my people over whom my name is called out bow down and plead and seek my face, and turn back from their bad ways, I myself will listen from the heavens and pardon their wrongdoing, and heal their country. 15My eyes will now be opened and my ears be heeding to this place’s plea. 16So now I’ve chosen and made sacred this house for my name to be there permanently. My eyes and my mind will be there for all time.

17You yourself, if you walk before me as David your father walked, acting in accordance with all that I’ve ordered you, and you keep my decrees and my rulings, 18I will set up your kingly throne as I solemnized it to David your father, saying “There will not be cut off for you someone ruling in Israel”.

19But if you people turn back and abandon my decrees and my orders that I’ve put before you, and you go and serve other gods and bow low to them, 20I will uproot them from upon my land that I gave them, and this house that I’ve made sacred for my name I will throw out from before my face and make it into an object lesson and a taunt among all the peoples.

21This house, which has been high – everyone who passes by it will be desolate and will say, “Why did Yahweh act in that way to this country and to this house?” 22And people will say, “On account of the fact that they abandoned Yahweh their ancestors’ God who got them out of the country of Egypt, and took strong hold of other gods and bowed low to them and served them. That’s why he brought upon them all this bad fate”’.

## 8:1 Solomon’s Other Projects

8 At the end of the twenty years while Solomon built Yahweh’s house and his own house 2(and the towns that Huram gave Solomon – he built them up and got Israelites to live there), 3Solomon went to Hamat Tsobah and overpowered it, 4and built Tadmor in the wilderness, and all the supply towns that he built in Hamat. 5He built Upper Bet Horon and Lower Bet Horon as fortified towns (walls, gateways, and a bar), 6Ba’alat and the supply towns that belonged to Solomon, all the chariotry towns and the cavalry towns—every attraction that Solomon had for building in Jerusalem, in the Lebanon, and in all the country he ruled.

7The entire people that were left of the Hittite, the Amorite, the Perizzite, the Hivvite, and the Yebusite, who were not of Israelite birth (8of their descendants who were left after them in the country, whom the Israelites had not finished off), Solomon raised them as a work force until this day. 9Of the Israelites, whom Solomon did not make into servants for his work: rather they were men of battle, adjutant officers, and officers over his chariotry and his cavalry, 10and these were King Solomon’s prefect officers, 250, holding sway over the people.

11Pharaoh’s daughter Solomon took up from David’s Town to the house that he built for her, because (he said), ‘My wife will not live in the house of David king of Israel, because those places where Yahweh’s chest has come are sacred’.

12Solomon then offered up burnt offerings for Yahweh on Yahweh’s altar which he built before the porch, 13 offering up each day’s requirement in its day in accordance with Moses’ order for the sabbaths, the new months, and the three appointed occasions in the year, on the Flat Bread Festival, on the Shabu’ot Festival, and on the Sukkot Festival.

14In accordance with the ruling of David his father, he put in place the priests’ divisions for their service, the Levites for their watches to praise and to minister in front of the priests, each day’s requirement in its day, and the gatemen by their divisions, gateway by gateway, because this was the order of David, the supernatural man. 15They did not depart from the king’s order regarding the priests or the Levites in connection with anything, or in connection with the treasuries.

## 8:16 There Had Been Nothing Like It

16So all Solomon’s work was established from the day Yahweh’s house was founded and until Yahweh’s house was finshed, complete.

17Solomon then went to Etsyon-geber and to Elot on the sea coast in the country of Edom. 18Huram sent ships to him by the hand of his servants; his servants knew the sea. They came with Solomon’s servants to Ophir and got gold from there, 450 talents, and brought it to King Solomon.

9 Since the queen of Sheba heard report of Solomon, she came to test Solomon in Jerusalem with conundrums, with a very substantial force, both camels carrying spices, and gold in quantity, and precious stones. She came to Solomon and spoke with him of everything that was in her mind, 2and Solomon told her about all the things she said. Nothing was concealed from Solomon that he didn’t tell her.

3The queen of Sheba saw Solomon’s smartness, the house that he had built, 4the food on his table, the seating of his servants, the standing of his ministers and their dress, his wine waiters and their dress, and his stairway by which he would go up to Yahweh’s house, and there was no longer any breath in her.

5She said to the king, ‘The thing is true that I heard in my country about your words and about your smartness. 6I didn’t believe their words until I came, and my eyes saw, but here, half of the extent of your smartness had not been told me; you exceed the report that I heard. 7The blessings of your people, the blessings of these servants of yours who are standing continually before you and listening to your smartness! 8May Yahweh your God be blessed, who delighted in you so as to put you on his throne as king for Yahweh your God, in your God’s loyalty to Israel in enabling them to stand, permanently, and made you king over them to exercise authority with faithfulness.

## 9:9 All That She Wanted

9She gave the king 120 talents of gold, spices in very large quantity, and precious stones. There never again came spice like that spice that the queen of Sheba gave King Solomon. 10Huram’s servants and Solomon’s servants, who brought gold from Ophir, also brought algum wood and precious stones. 11The king made the algum logs into causeways for Yahweh’s house and for the king’s house and into guitars and mandolins for the singers. Ones like these had not been seen before in the country of Judah. 12King Solomon himself gave the queen of Sheba all that she wanted, that she asked for, beyond what she brought to the king. Then she turned round and went to her country, she and her servants.

13The weight of the gold that came to Solomon in one year was 666 talents of gold, 14apart from what the traders and the merchants were bringing; and all the kings of Arabia and the governors of the region were bringing gold and silver to Solomon. 15King Solomon made 200 body-shields of hammered gold (he would raise 600 gold pieces for each sheld) 16and 300 hand-shields of hammered gold (he would raise 300 pieces of gold for each shield). The king put them in the Lebanon Forest house.

17The king made a big ivory throne and overlaid it with refined gold, 18with six steps to the throne, and a gold footstool for the throne attached, and arms on this side and on that side of the place where one sat, and two lions standing beside the arms, 19and twelve lions standing there on the six steps on this side and on that side; none was made like this for any kingdom.

## 9:20 Tusks, Monkeys, and Peacocks

20All King Solomion’s drinking vessels were gold and all the vessels in the Lebanon Forest house were beaten gold—silver was not thought of for anything in Solomon’s days, 21because the king had a fleet going to Tarshish with Huram’s servants. Once in three years the Tarshish fleet would come carrying gold and silver, tusks, monkeys, and peacocks.

22King Solomon was bigger than all the kings of the earth in wealth and in smartness. 23All the kings of the earth were seeking audience with Solomon to listen to his smartness, which God had put into his mind, 24and 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. 25Solomon had 4000 stalls for horses and chariots and 12,000 cavalry. He settled them in chariot towns, and with the king in Jerusalem.

26He was ruling over all the kings from the River as far as the Philistines’ country and as far as the Egyptian border. 27The 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. 28They were getting horses out of Egypt for Solomon, and out of all the countries.

29The rest of the things about Solomon, early and late, are written in the words of Natan the prophet, in the prophecy of Ahiyyah the Shilonite, and in the visions of Ye’do the seer concerning Yarob’am ben Nebat, aren’t they. 30Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. 31Solomon lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in the town of David his father. Rehab’am his son began to reign in place of him.

## 10:1 How Rehoboam Could Win People’s Allegiance

10 Rehab’am [Rehoboam] went to Shekem, because all Israel had come to Shekem to make him king. 2But when Yarob’am [Jeroboam] ben Nebat heard while he was in Egypt, where he had taken flight from before Solomon the king, Yarob’am came back from Egypt, 3and they sent and called for him. Yarob’am and all Israel came and spoke to Rehab’am : 4’Your father – he made our yoke tough. So now, lighten something of your father’s tough servitude and of his heavy yoke that he put on us, and we’ll serve you’.

5He said to them, ‘In three more days, come back to me’. The people went, and 6King 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?’ 7They spoke to him: ‘If you’re good to this people and accept them and speak good words to them, they’ll be servants to you for all time’.

8But 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. 9He 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 upon us”?’ 10The young men who grew up with him spoke with him: ‘You should say this to the people who spoke to you: “Whereas your father made our yoke heavy, you, lighten it from on us”—you should say this to them: “My little finger is thicker than my father’s hips. 11So 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 with scorpions”’.

## 10:12 How Not to Win People’s Allegiance

12Yarob’am and all the people came to Rehab’am on the third day as the king had spoken, “Come back to me on the third day, 13and the king answered them toughly. So King Rehab’am abandoned the elders’ counsel 14and spoke to them in accordance with the young men’s counsel: ‘I shall make your yoke heavy. I myself shall add to it. Whereas my father disciplined you with whips, I myself will with scorpions’. 15The king didn’t listen to the people, because the turn of affairs came from God in order that Yahweh might implement his word, which he had spoken by means of Ahiyyahu the Shilonite to Yarob’am ben Nebat.

16All Israel [saw] that the king had not listened to them, and the people said back to the king:

What share do we have in David?—

we have no domain in ben Jesse.

Each one to your tents, Israel;

now see to your own household, David.

So all Israel went to their tents, 17though the Israelites who were living in the towns of Judah – Rehab’am reigned over them. 18King Rehab’am sent Hadoram, who was in charge of the work force, but the Israelites pelted him with stones and he died, though King Rehab’am got himself together to climb up into the chariot to flee to Jerusalem.

19So Israel rebelled against David’s household, until this day.

11 Rehab’am came to Jerusalem and congregated the household of Judah and Benjamin, 180,000 picked men doing battle, to go to battle with Israel and get the kingship back for Rehab’am. 2But Yahweh’s word came to Shema’yahu, the supernatural man: 3’Say to Rehab’am son of Solomon king of Judah, and to all Israel in Judah and in Benjamin: 4“Yahweh has said this: ‘You will not go up, you will not go to battle with your brothers. Go back each one to his home, because this thing has come about from me”’. They listened to Yahweh’s words and turned back from going against Yarob’am.

## 11:5 People from Ephrayim Join Rehoboam

5Rehab’am lived in Jerusalem but built up towns as a fortress in Judah. 6He built up Bet-lehem, Etam, Teqoa, 7Bet-tsur, Soko, Adullam, 8Gat, Mareshah, Ziph, 9Adorayim, Lakish, Azeqah, 10Tsorah, Ayyalon, and Hebron, which are in Judah and in Benjamin, as fortress towns. 11He strengthened the fortresses and put chiefs in them, and treasuries of food, oil, and wine, 12and in each and every town shields and spears. He strengthened them very greatly.

So Judah and Benjamin were his, 13while the priests and the Levites who were in all Israel took their stand with him, from all their territory, 14because the Levites abandoned their pasturelands and their holding and went to Judah and to Jerusalem (because Yarob’am and his sons rejected them from acting as priests for Yahweh 15and put in place priests for himself for the shrines for the goats and for the calves that he made). 16Following them from all the Israelite clans, the people who were giving their mind to seek Yahweh the God of Israel came to Jerusalem to sacrifice for Yahweh, their ancestors’ God. 17They strengthened the kingdom of Judah and enabled Rehab’am to be firm for three years, because they walked in the way of David and Solomon for three years.

18Rehab’am took Mahalat bat Yerimot, the son of David, and Abihayil bat Eli’ab, the son of Jesse. 19She gave birth to sons for him, Ye’ush, Shemaryah, and Zaham. 20After her he took Ma’akah bat Abshalom. She gave birth for him to Abiyyah, Attay, Ziza, and Shelomit. 21Rehab’am loved Ma’akah bat Abshalom more than all his wives and his secondary wives (because he had eighteen wives and sixty secondary wives , and fathered twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters).

22Rehab’am put in place Abiyyah son of Ma’akah as head, as chief among his brothers, because it was to make him king. 23He was discerning and he got some of all his sons to break out to all the regions of Judah and Benjamin, to all the fortified towns, gave them provisions in quantity, and asked for a horde of wives.

## 12:1 You Abandon Me; I Abandon You

12 When Rehab’am had established his kingship and he was strong, he abandoned Yahweh’s instruction, he and all Israel with him, 2and in the fifth year of King Rehab’am , Shishaq king of Egypt went up against Jerusalem because they had trespassed against Yahweh, 3with 1,200 chariotry and 60,000 cavalry; there was no numbering of the company that came with him from Egypt (Libyans, Sukkiyyites, and Sudanese [Kushites]). 4He captured the fortified towns that belonged to Judah and came as far as Jerusalem.

5Shema’yah the prophet came to Rehab’am and the Judahite officers who had gathered in Jerusalem in face of Shishaq, and said to them, ‘Yahweh has said this: “You people have abandoned me, so I myself have also abandoned you into the hand of Shishaq”’. 6The Israelite officers and the king bowed down and said, ‘Yahweh is in the right’. 7When Yahweh saw that they had bowed down, Yahweh’s word came to Shema’yah: ‘They have bowed down. I will not devastate them, but in a little while will give them an escape group. My wrath will not pour out on Jerusalem by means of Shishaq, 8but rather they will be servants to him and will acknowledge [the difference between] serving me and serving the kingships of the earth’.

9Shishaq king of Egypt went up against Jerusalem 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; 10King 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. 11Whenever the king came to Yahweh’s house the runners came and they would carry them, then take them back to the runners’ chamber.

12So when he bowed down, Yahweh’s anger turned back from him and did not completely devastate him; and in Judah there were good things, too.

## 12:13 A Salt Covenant

13King Rehab’am showed himself strong in Jerusalem and reigned, in that he was a man of forty-one years when he began to reign and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the town that Yahweh chose to put his name there out of all Israel’s clans. His mother’s name was Na’amah the Ammonite. 14But he did what was bad, because he didn’t establish his mind to inquire of Yahweh.

15The things about Rehab’am , early and late, are written in the words of Shema’yah the prophet and Iddo the seer regarding enrolment by genealogy, aren’t they. There were battles between Rehab’am and Yarob’am all the time. 16Rehab’am lay down with his ancestors and was buried in David’s Town, and Abiyyah his son began to reign in place of him.

13 In the eighteenth year of King Yarob’am, Abiyyah began to reign over Judah. 2Three years he reigned in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Mikayahu bat Uri’el, from Gib’ah. There was a battle between Abiyyah and Yarob’am, 3and Abiyyah hitched up for the battle with a force of strong men of battle, 400,000 picked men, while Yarob’am lined up with him for battle with 800,000 picked men—strong, forceful.

4Abiyyah got up on Mount Tsemarayim, which is in the highland of Ephrayim, and said, ‘Listen to me, Yarob’am and all Israel. 5It’s for you to acknowledge, isn’t it, that Yahweh the God of Israel gave kingship over Israel to David permanently, to him and to his sons, by a salt pact. 6Yarob’am ben Nebat, a servant of Solomon ben David, rose up and rebelled against his lord. 7There collected to him empty-headed scoundrels, and they took a firm stand against Rehab’am son of Solomon when Rehab’am was a boy and green in mind, and he didn’t assert his strength before them. 8Now you’re saying you’ll assert your strength before Yahweh’s kingship in the hand of David’s sons. Whereas you’re a numerous horde and you have with you the gold calves that Yarob’am made for you as gods, 9you drove out Yahweh’s priests, the Aaronites, and the Levites, didn’t you,and made priests for yourselves, like the peoples of the countries. Anyone who comes to commission himself, with a bull from the herd and seven rams, becomes a priest, for no-gods.

## 13:10 Don’t Do Battle with Yahweh

10But for us, Yahweh is our God. We haven’t abandoned him. The priests ministering to Yahweh are Aaronites, with the Levites at work, 11burning up whole offerings for Yahweh morning by morning and evening by evening, with spiced incense and the row of bread on the pure table, and the gold candelabrum and its lamps to burn evening by evening, because we are keeping the charge of Yahweh our God, but you people have abandoned it. 12So here, God is with us, at the head, and his priests with resounding trumpets to sound against you. Israelites, don’t battle with Yahweh, your ancestors’ God, because you won’t succeed’.

13Now Yarob’am had sent an ambush round to come from behind them, so they were before Judah, and the ambush was behind them. 14Judah turned their face, and there –the battle was in front and behind for them. They cried out to Yahweh, with the priests blowing on the trumpets, 15and the men of Judah shouted. When the men of Judah shouted, God himself hit Yarob’am and all Israel before Abiyyah and Judah. 16The Israelites fled from before Judah and God gave them into their hand. 17Abiyyah and his company struck them down in a great rout. There fell of Israel, run through, 500,000 picked men.

18So the Israelites bowed down at that time and the Judahites stood firm because they relied on Yahweh, their ancestors’ God. 19Abiyyah pursued after Yarob’am and captured some towns from him, Bet-el and its daughter-towns, Yeshanah and its daughter-towns, and Ephrayin and its daughter-towns. 20Yarob’am did not retain energy any more in the days of Abiyyahu, and Yahweh struck him and he died, 21but Abiyyahu showed himself strong. He got himself fourteen wives and fathered twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. 22The rest of the things about Abiyyah, his ways and his words, are written in the commentary of the prophet Iddo.

## 14:1 We Rest on Thee

14 Abiyyah lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in David’s Town, and Asa his son began to reign in place of him. In his days the country was calm ten years. 2Asa did what was good and upright in the eyes of Yahweh his God. 3He removed the alien altars and the shrines, broke up the columns, and cut down the totem poles. 4He said to Judah that they were to look to Yahweh, their ancestors’ God, and to act on the instruction and the order. 5From all the towns in Judah he removed the shrines and the incense stands. The kingdom was calm before him, 6and he built up fortified towns in Judah because the country was calm and there was no battle made with him in those years, because Yahweh enabled him to settle down. 7He said to Judah, ‘Let’s build up these towns and surround them with a wall and towers, gateways and bars, while the country is before us, because we’ve inquired of Yahweh our God. We’ve inquired of him and he has enabled us to settle down all round’. So they built and they were successful.

8Asa had a force carrying body-shield and spear from Judah, 300,000 men, and from Benjamin 280,000 men carrying hand-shield and drawing a bow. All these were forceful strong men. 9Zerah the Sudanese went out against them with a force of 1,000,000 and 300 chariots, and came as far as Mareshah. 10Asa went out before him and lined up for battle in the Tsephat Ravine near Mareshah. 11Asa called to Yahweh his God: ‘Yahweh, there is no one compared with you to help, between the numerous and the powerless. Help us, Yahweh our God, because we lean on you and in your name we’ve come against this horde. You are Yahweh our God. A mere human being is not to hold on with you’.

## 14:12 God’s Spirit Comes

12Yahweh hit the Sudanese before Asa and before Judah, and the Sudanese fled. 13Asa and the company that was with him pursued them as far as Gerar, and some of the Sudanese fell. There was no saving of life for them, because they broke up before Yahweh and before his camp.

They took up very much spoil 14and struck down all the towns round Gerar, because a dread of Yahweh was on them. They plundered all the towns because there was much plunder in them. 15They also struck down the cattle tents and captured sheep in large number and camels, then went back to Jerusalem.

15 Azaryahu ben Oded – God’s spirit came on him 2and he went out before Asa and said to him, ‘Listen to me, Asa and all Judah and Benjamin. Yahweh is with you when you are with him. If you inquire of him he will be found by you, but if you abandon him, he will abandon you. 3For a long time Israel had no true God, no priest instructing, and no instruction, 4but in the pressure upon it turned back to Yahweh the God of Israel. They sought him, and he let himself be found by them.

5In those times there was no well-being for the person who went out or for the person who came in, because there was much turmoil among all the inhabitants of the countries. 6Nation was crushed by nation, town by town, because God put them into a turmoil with every kind of pressure. 7But you: be strong. Your hands are not to slacken, because there will be wages for your work’.

8When Asa heard these words, the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he showed himself strong and got rid of the abominations from the entire country of Judah and Benjamin and from the towns that he had captured from the highland of Ephrayim, and he renovated Yahweh’s altar which was before Yahweh’s porch.

## 15:9 Taking the Initiative in Covenant

9He collected all Judah and Benjamin and the resident aliens with them from Ephrayim and Menashsheh and from Shim’on, because people from Israel in great number had submitted to him when they saw that Yahweh his God was with him. 10They collected in Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa’s reign. 11They sacrificed for Yahweh that day some of the spoil; they brought 700 cattle and 7000 sheep 12 and came into a pact to inquire of Yahweh their ancestors’ God, with their entire mind and with their entire being. 13Anyone who would not inquire of Yahweh the God of Israel would be put to death, whether small or great, man or woman. 14They swore to Yahweh with a loud voice, with a shout, with trumpets, and with horns. 15All Judah rejoiced over the oath because they swore with their entire mind and sought him with their entire heart, and he let himself be found by them. Yahweh enabled them to be settled all round.

16In addition, Ma’akah mother of Asa the king he removed as queen mother, because she had made a monstrosity for Asherah. Asa cut down her monstrosity, turned it to dust, and burned it in Wadi Qidron, 17though the shrines did not disappear from Israel. Yet Asa’s mind was perfect all his days. 18He brought into God’s house the sacred things belonging to his father and to him, silver, gold, and articles, 19while no battle happened until the thirty-fifth year of Asa’s reign.

16 In the thirty-sixth year of Asa’s reign, 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. 2Asa got silver and gold out from the treasuries of Yahweh’s house and the king’s house and sent to Ben-hadad king of Aram who lived in Damascus [Dammeseq], saying, 3’A pact between me and you and between my father and your father: here, I’ve sent you silver and gold; go contravene your pact with Ba’sha king of Israel so that he may go up from me’.

## 16:4 God’s Eyes Are Ranging Through the Earth

4Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the officers of the forces that he had against Israel’s towns. He struck down Iyyon, Dan, Water Meadow, and all the supply places, the towns in Naphtali. 5When Ba’sha heard, he left off building up The Height and stopped his work, 6while Asa the king got all Judah and they carried the stones from The Height and its timber with which Ba’sha had built, and with them he built up Geba and The Watchtower.

7But at that time Hanani the seer came to Asa king of Judah and said to him, ‘For your leaning on the king of Aram and not leaning on Yahweh your God, because of this the king of Aram’s force has escaped from your hand. 8The Sudanese and the Libyans were a force in large numbers, of chariotry and cavalry, very many, weren’t they, but when you lent on Yahweh, he gave them into your hand. 9Because Yahweh – his eyes are ranging through the entire earth, to show himself strong with people whose mind is perfect toward him. You’ve been very idiotic in connection with this, because from now on there will be battles with you’. 10Asa was provoked by the seer, and he put him into the stocks because he was in a rage with him on account of this, and Asa oppressed some of the people at that time.

11There, the things about Asa, early and late – there they are, written on the document about the kings of Judah and Israel. 12In the thirty-ninth year of his reign Asa had an ailment in his feet, until his ailment was exceptionally serious, and further, in his ailment he did not inquire of Yahweh but with physicians. 13Asa lay down with his ancestors and died in the forty-first year of his reign. 14They buried him in the graveyard that he had cut for himself in David’s Town. They laid him in his bed, which they filled with spices and perfumes blended by blending work, and they made for him a very great fire.

## 17:1 A Teaching Mission

17 Yehoshaphat his son began to reign in place of him and showed himself strong over Israel. 2He put a force in all the fortified towns of Judah and put outposts in the country of Judah and in the towns of Ephrayim that Asa his father had captured.

3Yahweh was with Yehoshaphat because he walked in the earlier ways of David his ancestor and did not inquire of the Masters. 4He inquired of the God of his father and walked by his orders, not in accordance with the practice of Israel. 5Yahweh established the kingship in his hand and all Judah gave offerings to Yehoshaphat, so that he had wealth and splendour in quantity. 6His mind was lofty in Yahweh’s ways, and further he removed the shrines and the totem poles from Judah.

7In the third year of his reign he sent his officials Ben-hayil, Obadyah, Zekaryah, Netan’el, and Mikayahu to teach in the towns of Judah, 8and with them the Levites Shema’yahu, Netanyahu, Zebadyahu, Asah’el, Shemiramot, Yehonatan, Adoniyyah, Tobiyyahu, and Tob Adoniyyah, the Levites, and with them Elishama and Yehoram, the priests. 9They taught in Judah, Yahweh’s instruction document being with them. They went round through all the towns of Judah and taught among the people.

10A dread of Yahweh was on all the kingships of the countries that were round Judah and they didn’t battle with Yehoshaphat. 11Some Philistines were bringing Yehoshaphat offerings and silver as a levy; also the Arabs were bringing him flocks: 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats.

12So Yehoshaphat was getting bigger and bigger. He built castles and supply towns in Judah; 13he had much work in the towns of Judah, and men of battle, forceful strong men, in Jerusalem. 14These, their registering by their ancestral households was:

for Judah as chiliarchs—

* Adnah the officer, and with him 300,000 forceful strong men
* 15next to him Yehohanan the officer, and with him 280,000
* 16next to him Amasyah ben Zikri, who gave freely for Yahweh, and with him 200,00 forceful strong men;

17and from Benjamin—

* a forceful strong man, Elyada, and with him 200,000 men able to wield bow and shield
* 18next to him Yehozabad, and with him 180,000 men equipped for the army.

19These were the people ministering to the king, apart from the people that the king put in the fortified towns in all Judah.

## 18:1 The Prophet Ah’ab Didn’t Like

18 Yehoshaphat had wealth and splendour in quantity. He made a marriage alliance with Ah’ab, 2and at the end of some years went down to Ah’ab in Shomron [Samaria]. Ah’ab sacrificed sheep and cattle in quantity for him and for the company that was with him, and incited him into going up to Heights-in-Gil’ad.

3Ah’ab king of Israel said to Yehoshaphat king of Judah, ‘Will you go with me to Heights-in-Gil’ad?’ He said to him, ‘I’ll be the same as you, my company the same as yours, with you in the battle’. 4But Yehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, ‘Please inquire for Yahweh’s word today’.

5So the king of Israel collected the prophets, 400 individuals, and said to them, ‘Shall we go to Heights-in-Gil’ad for battle, or shall I leave off?’ They said, ‘Go up, and God will give it into the king’s hand’. 6But Yehoshaphat said, ‘There isn’t any further prophet of Yahweh here, is there, so we may inquire of him’. 7The king of Israel said to Yehoshaphat, ‘There is one further individual to inquire of Yahweh from, but I myself dislike him because he doesn’t prophesy good for me but always bad. He’s Mikayehu ben Yimlah’. Yehoshaphat said, ‘The king shouldn’t say that’. 8So the king of Israel called to a courtier and said, ‘Hurry Mikayehu ben Imlah’.

9As the king of Israel and Yehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting, each on his throne, dressed in robes, sitting at the threshing floor at the entrance to the gateway of Shomron, and all the prophets were prophesying before them, 10Tsidqiyyahu 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”’. 11All 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’.

## 18:12 The Lying Spirit

12Now the envoy who went to call for Mikayehu spoke to him: ‘Here, the prophets’ words are good for the king, as one bidding. Your word should please be like one of them. You should speak of something good’. 13Mikayehu said, ‘As Yahweh lives, what my God says to me – I will speak it’.

14He came to the king and the king said to him, ‘Mikah, shall we go up to Heights-in-Gil’ad for battle, or should I leave off?’ He said, ‘Go up, and succeed! They will be given into your hand’. 15The 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?’

16So he said, ‘I saw all Israel scattered on 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”’. 17The king of Israel said to Yehoshaphat, ‘I said to you, “He won’t prophesy something good for me, but rather something bad”, didn’t I’.

18He said, ‘Therefore, listen to Yahweh’s word. I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne, with the entire heavenly army standing to his right and his left. 19Yahweh said, “Who’ll entice Ah’ab king of Israel so he’ll go up but fall at Heights-in-Gil’ad?” One spoke, saying “Like this”, and another saying “Like this”. 20Then a spirit went out and stood before Yahweh and said, “I’m the one who’ll entice him”. Yahweh said to him, “How?” 21He said, “I’ll go out and become a false spirit in the mouth of all his prophets”. He said, “You are to entice him. Yes, you’ll be able to. Go out and do it”. 22So now, there, Yahweh put a false spirit in the mouth of these prophets of yours, in that Yahweh has spoken of something bad for you’.

## 18:23 The Power of Chance

23Tsidqiyyahu 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?’ 24Mikayehu said, ‘Here, you are going to see, on that day when you come to an innermost room to hide’.

25The king of Israel said, ‘Get Mikeyahu and take him back to Amon the town official and to Yo’ash the king’s son 26and say, “The king has said this: ‘Put this man in the jailhouse and give him slave bread and slave water until I come back with things being well’”’. 27Mikayehu 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’.)

28So the king of Israel went up with Yehoshaphat king of Judah to Heights-in-Gil’ad. 29The 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 they came into battle.

30Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot officers, ‘You will not battle anyone small or great except the king of Israel alone’. 31When the chariot officers saw Yehoshaphat and said ‘He’s the king of Israel’, they turned round to him to do battle. But Yehoshaphat cried out and Yahweh helped him. God incited them away from him, 32and when the chariot officers saw that it was not the king of Israel, they turned back from following him. 33But 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’.

34The battle mounted that day, while the king of Israel was keeping himself standing in the chariot opposite the Arameans until the evening. But he died toward the time of the sun’s setting.

## 19:1 Proper Exercise of Authority

19 Yehoshaphat king of Judah went back to Jerusalem to his house with things being well, 2but Yehu ben Hanani the seer went out before him. He said to King Yehoshaphat, ‘Do you help the faithless, are you loyal to the people hostile to Yahweh? For this, there is fury upon you from before Yahweh. 3Yet good things are found with you, because you burned away the totem poles in the country and set your mind on inquiring of God’.

4Yehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, but he again went out among the people from Be’er Sheba as far as the highland of Ephrayim and got them to come back to Yahweh, their ancestors’ God. 5He put in place authorities in the country in all the fortified towns in Judah, town by town.

6He said to the authorities, ‘Watch what you’re doing, because it’s not for a human being that you exercise authority but for Yahweh, who is with you when you speak an authoritative word. 7So now, a dread of Yahweh is to be upon you. Keep watch and act, because with Yahweh our God there is no evil or honouring of the face or taking of a bribe’. 8(Also in Jerusalem Yehoshaphat put in place some of the Levites and the priests and some of the ancestral heads of Israel for the exercise of Yahweh’s authority and for arguments.)

They came back to Jerusalem 9and he ordered them, ‘You’re to act like this: with awe for Yahweh, with truthfulness, and with a perfect mind. 10Every argument that comes to you from your brothers who are living in their towns, between blood and blood, between instruction and order, decrees, or rulings, you’re to warn them so that they don’t become liable before Yahweh and fury come on you and on your brothers. So you will do, and you won’t become liable. 11Here, Amaryahu the head priest is over you in everything to do with Yahweh, and Zebadyahu ben Yishma’el is the chief of Judah’s household in everything to do with the king. The Levite overseers are before you. Be strong when you act. Yahweh be with the good’.

## 20:1 How to Pray in a Political Crisis

20 Subsequently the Mo’abites and the Ammonites, and some of the Me’unites, came against Yehoshaphat for battle. 2People came and told Yehoshaphat, ‘A great horde is coming against you from across the sea, from Aram. There, they’re at Hatsetson Tamar (i.e.,, Gedi Spring)’. 3Yehoshaphat was afraid and gave himself to inquiring of Yahweh, and he called a fast for all Judah. 4Judah collected to seek help from Yahweh; from all the towns in Judah, too, people came to seek Yahweh.

5Yehoshaphat stood in the congregation of Judah and Jerusalem in Yahweh’s house before the new court. 6He said, ‘Yahweh, our ancestors’ God: you are God in the heavens and one who rules all the kingships of the nations, are you not. In your hand are energy and strength. There’s no one able to take a stand with you. 7It was you, our God, wasn’t it, who dispossessed the inhabitants of this country from before your people Israel and gave it to the offspring ofAbraham your friend permanently. 8They lived in it and built you a sanctuary in it for your name, saying 9”If bad fortune comes upon us (the sword exercising authority, or epidemic, or famine), we will stand before this house and before you, because your name is in this house, and we will cry out to you because of the pressure on us, and you will listen and deliver”.

10Now, there, people from Ammon and Mo’ab and Mount Se’ir, into which you did not let Israel come when they came from the country of Egypt (rather they departed from being against them and did not annihilate them), 11here – they are dealing to us by coming to drive us out from your possession which you let us possess. 12Our God, you will exercise authority over them, won’t you, because there’s no energy in us before this great horde that’s coming against us. We don’t know what we’ll do, but our eyes are on you’. 13All Judah was standing before Yahweh, also their little ones, their wives, and their children.

## 20:14 The Two Stages Whereby We See Answers to Prayer

14Then Yahazi’el ben Zekaryahu son of Benayah son of Ye’i’el son of Mattanyah, the Levite, one of the sons of Asaph – Yahweh’s spirit came on him in the middle of the congregation, 15and he said, ‘Heed, all Judah, inhabitants of Jerusalem, and King Yehoshaphat. Yahweh has said this to you: “Don’t be afraid, don’t be scared before this great horde, because the battle is not yours but God’s.

16Tomorrow, go down against them. There they’ll be, going up by the Tsits Ascent. You’ll find them at the end of the wadi, before the Yeru’el Wilderness. 17It’s not for you battle on this occasion. Take your position, stand, and see Yahweh’s deliverance of you, Judah and Jerusalem. Don’t be afraid, don’t be scared. Tomorrow, go out before them. Yahweh will be with you”’.

18Yehoshaphat bowed his head, face to the ground, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem fell before Yahweh to bow low to Yahweh. 19The Levites from the Qehatites and from the Qorahites stood up to praise Yahweh the God of Israel with an exceptionally loud voice.

20They started early in the morning and went out to the Teqoa Wilderness. When they went out, Yehoshaphat stood and said, ‘Listen to me, Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem. Stand firm in faith in Yahweh your God and you will stand firm; stand firm in faith in his prophets and you will succeed’. 21He took counsel with the people and put in place people singing for Yahweh and praising his sacred glory as they went out before the armed company, and saying, ‘Confess Yahweh, because his commitment is permanent’.

22At the time when they began resounding and praising, Yahweh set ambushes against the people of Ammon, Mo’ab, and Mount Se’ir who were coming to Judah, and they took a beating. 23The people of Ammon and Mo’ab stood against the inhabitants of Mount Se’ir to devote and annihilate them. When they’d finished off the inhabitants of Se’ir, they helped, each individual, to devastate his neighbour.

## 20:24 Relief and Thanksgiving

24When Judah came to a watchtower toward the wilderness and they turned their faces toward the horde – there, they were corpses fallen to the ground. There was no escape group. 25Yehoshaphat came with his company to plunder their spoil and they found among them, in quantity, both property and corpses and desirable articles. They rescued things for themselves until they couldn’t carry anything. They were plundering the spoil for three days because there was so much.

26On the fourth day they congregated in Blessing Vale (because they blessed Yahweh there, that’s why people have called the place Blessing Vale until this day). 27Everyone from Judah and Jerusalem went back with Yehoshaphat at their head, going back to Jerusalem with rejoicing, because Yahweh had let them rejoice over their enemies. 28They came to Jerusalem with mandolins, with guitars, and with trumpets, to Yahweh’s house. 29Dread of God came over all the kingships in the countries when they heard that Yahweh had battled with Israel’s enemies. 30So Yehoshaphat’s kingship was calm; his God enabled him to settle down all round.

31Yehoshaphat began to reign over Judah as a man of thirty-five years, when he began to reign, and he reigned twenty-five years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Azubah bat Shilhi. 32He walked in the way of his father Asa and did not turn aside from it in doing what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes. 33Yet the shrines did not disappear and the people did not set their minds on their ancestors’ God.

34The rest of the things about Yehoshaphat, early and late – there they are, written in the words of Yehu ben Hanani, which were entered into the document about the kings of Israel. 35But subsequently, Yehoshaphat king of Judah joined with Ahazyah king of Israel; he was faithless in so doing. 36He joined with him in making ships to go to Tarshish. They made the ships at Etsyon Geber. 37Eli’ezer ben Dodavahu from Mareshah prophesied against Yehoshaphat: ‘As you’ve joined with Ahazyahu, Yahweh is breaking out on your work’. And the ships broke up and had to hold back from going to Tarshish.

## 21:1 The Son Who Killed His Brothers

21 Yehoshaphat lay down with his ancestors and was buried with his ancestors in David’s Town, and his son Yehoram began to reign in place of him. 2He had brothers, Yehoshaphat’s sons: Azaryah, Yehi’el, Zekaryahu, Azaryahu, Mika’el, and Shephatyahu. All these were sons of Yehoshaphat king of Israel. 3Their father gave them many gifts of silver and of gold, and of choice things, with fortified towns in Judah, but the kingship he gave to Yehoram, because he was the firstborn.

4Yehoram rose up over his father’s kingship and showed himself strong, and killed all his brothers with the sword, and also some Israelite ministers. 5Yehoram was a man of thirty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem. 6He 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. 7But Yahweh was not willing to devastate David’s household, for the sake of the pact that he solemnized to David, and as he had said he would give him and his sons hegemony for all time.

8In his days Edom rebelled from under Judah’s hand and got a king to reign over them. 9Yehoram went across with his officers and all his chariotry with him. He rose by night and struck down the Edomites, who were surrounding him and the chariot officers. 10But Edom has rebelled from under Judah’s hand until this day. Then Libnah rebelled from under his hand at that time, because he had abandoned Yahweh, his ancestors’ God. 11He also made shrines in the highland of Judah, and got the inhabitants of Jerusalem to whore, and drove Judah away.

## 21:12 How to Be Really Unpopular

12A document from Eliyyahu [Elijah] the prophet came to him, saying ‘Yahweh the God of David your ancestor has said this: ‘Since you have not walked in the ways of Yehoshaphat your father and in the ways of Asa king of Judah 13but have walked in the way of the kings of Israel, and got Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to whore, as the household of Ah’ab got them to whore, and your brothers, your father’s household, who were better men than you, you have also killed – 14here, Yahweh is going to inflict a great beating on your people, on your sons, on your wives, and on all your property, 15and you yourself with a great illness, with an illness of the insides, until your insides come out because of the illness, days upon days”’.

16Yahweh made the spirit of the Philistines and the Arabs who were near the Sudanese rise against Yehoram. 17They went up against Judah, broke into it, and took captive all the property that could be found belonging to the king’s house, and also his sons and his wives. No son remained to him except Yeho’ahaz, the youngest of his sons.

18After all this, Yahweh hit him in his insides with an illness without healing. 19After days upon days, as the end of two years came, his insides came out with his illness, and he died because of the bad illness. His people did not make a fire for him like the fire for his ancestors. 20He was a man of thirty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem but went without people caring. They buried him in David’s Town but not in the kings’ graves.

22 The inhabitants of Jerusalem made Ahazyahu, his youngest son, king in place of him, because the raiding gang which came into the camp with Arabs had killed all the older ones. So Ahazyahu ben Yehoram began to reign as king of Judah.

## 22:2 Two Forceful Women

2Ahazyahu 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. 3He too walked in the ways of Ah’ab’s household, because his mother was his counsellor in acting faithlessly. 4He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, like Ah’ab’s household, because they became his counsellors after his father’s death, to his devastation. 5He also went by their counsel when he went to battle with Yehoram ben Ah’ab king of Israel, against Haza’el king of Aram at Heights-in-Gil’ad. The Arameans struck Yoram down, 6so he went back to heal in Yizr’e’el because they had been striking him down (the people who struck him down at The Height when he was battling with Haza’el king of Aram).

Now Azaryahu ben Yehoram king of Judah went down to to see Yehoram ben Ah’ab in Yizr’e’el because he was ill. 7But from God came the treading down of Ahazyahu for coming to Yoram. When he came, he went out with Yehoram to Yehu ben Nimshi whom Yahweh had anointed to cut down Ah’ab’s household. 8When Yehu entering into judgment with Ah’ab’s household, he found the Judahite officers and Ahazyahu’s nephews, Ahazyahu’s ministers, and killed them. 9He looked for Ahazyahu and took him captive; he was hiding in Shomron. They brought him to Yehu and put him to death. They buried him, because (they said), ‘He’s the son of Yehoshaphat, who inquired of Yahweh with his entire mind’.

Ahazyahu’s household could not retain energy for reigning. 10When Atalyahu, Ahazyahu’s mother, saw that her son was dead, she set to and obliterated all the royal offspring of Judah’s household. 11But Yehoshab’at, the king’s daughter, got Yo’ash ben Ahazyahu and stole him away from among the king’s sons who were being put to death and put him and his nanny in a bedroom. Yehoshab’at bat Yehoram, the wife of Yehoyada the priest, concealed him (because she was Ahazyahu’s sister) from Atalyahu, and she didn’t put him to death. 12He was with them in God’s house hiding for six years, while Atalyah was reigning over the country.

## 23:1 Two Covenants Among People

23 In the seventh year, Yehoyada showed himself strong and got the centurions, Azaryahu ben Yeroham, Yishma’e’l ben Yehohanan, Azaryahu ben Obed, Ma’aseyahu ben Adayahu, and Elishaphat ben Zikri, into a pact with him. 2They went round in Judah and collected the Levites from all the towns in Judah, and the ancestral heads of Israel. They came to Jerusalem 3and the entire congregation solemnized a pact in God’s house with the king.

He said to them, ‘Here, the king’s son will reign, as Yahweh spoke concerning David’s sons. 4This is the thing that you’re to do: a third of you who are coming in on the sabbath as priests and as Levites are to be gatemen on the thresholds, 5a third in the king’s house, a third at the Foundation Gate, the entire people in the courts of Yahweh’s house. 6No one is to come into Yahweh’s house except the priests and the ministering Levites; they may come in because they are sacred, but the entire people is to keep Yahweh’s charge. 7The Levites are to encircle the king all round, each with his equipment in his hand. Anyone who comes into the house is to be put to death. They are to be with the king when he comes in and when he goes out.

8The Levites and all Judah 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, (becauseYehoyada the priest did not free the divisions). 9Yehoyada the priest gave the centurions the lances, the hand-shields, and the body-shields that belonged to King David, which were in God’s house. 10He put in place the entire people, each with his weapon in his hand, from the shoulder of the house on the right as far as the shoulder of the house on the left, at the altar and at the house, in charge of the king all round. 11Then they got the king’s son out, put the diadem and the affirmation on him, and made him king. Yehoyada and his sons anointed him and said, ‘Long live the king!’

## 23:12 A New Covenant with God

12Atalyahu heard the sound of the people running and praising the king and came to the people at Yahweh’s house. 13She saw, there, the king was standing by his pillar at the entrance, and the officials with their trumpets by the king, and the entire people of the country rejoicing and blowing on trumpets, and the singers with musical instruments, who were helping them to know how to give praise. Atalyahu tore her clothes and said, ‘Conspiracy, conspiracy!’

14Yehoyada the priest sent out the centurions who were appointed over the force and said to them, ‘Take her out between the rows. The person who follows her is to be put to death with the sword’ (because the priest said, ‘You will not put her to death in Yahweh’s house’). 15They laid hands on her and she came to the Horse Gate entrance to the king’s house, and they put her to death there.

16Yehoyada solemnized a pact between himself and the entire people and the king, that they would be a people for Yahweh. 17The entire people came to the Master’s house and tore it down. Its altars and its images they broke down, and Mattan, the Master’s priest, they killed before the altars.

18Yehoyada put the appointments in Yahweh’s house in the hand of the Levite priests to whom David had given a share over Yahweh’s house in offering up Yahweh’s burnt offerings in accordance with what is written in Moses’ instruction, with rejoicing and with song on the basis of David’s directions. 19He put in place the gatemen at the gateways of Yahweh’s house so that anyone who was defiled in any way should not come in. 20He got the centurions, the august people, the people’s rulers, and all the people of the country, and took the king down from Yahweh’s house. They brought him through the Upper Gate to the king’s house and seated the king on the royal throne. 21The entire people of the country rejoiced, while the town was quiet, when they had put Atalyahu to death by the sword.

## 24:1 Boy King, Insistent Young Man

24 Yo’ash was seven years of age when he began to reign and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Tsibyah, from Be’er Sheba. 2Yo’ash did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes all the days of Yehoyada the priest. 3Yehoyada got him two wives, and sons and daughters were born to him.

4Subsequently, it came into Yo’ash’s mind to renovate Yahweh’s house. 5He collected the priests and the Levites and said to them, ‘Go out to the towns of Judah and collect silver from all Israel to strengthen your God’s house, each year’s requirement in its year. You’re to make speed about the thing’. But the Levites didn’t make speed. 6So the king called for Yehoyada the head and said to him, ‘Why have you not required of the Levites to bring from Judah and from Jerusalem the levy of Moses, Yahweh’s servant, and the congregation of Israel, to the affirmation tent?’ 7Because the faithless Atalyahu—her sons had broken into God’s house, and further had made all the sacred things in Yahweh’s house for the Masters.

8So the king said, and they made a chest and put it at the gateway of Yahweh’s house, outside, 9and they gave voice in Judah and in Jerusalem to bring to Yahweh the levy of Moses, Yahweh’s servant, made on Israel in the wilderness. 10All the officials and the entire people rejoiced and brought it, and threw it into the chest until they’d filled it. 11At the time when they would bring the chest to the king’s appointees by the hand of the Levites, when they saw that the silver was much, the king’s secretary and the head priest’s appointee would come and empty the chest and carry it and take it back to its place. So they did day by day, and they gathered silver in quantity.

12The king and Yehoyada gave it to the people doing the work, the service for Yahweh’s house, and they were hiring masons and craftsmen to renovate Yahweh’s house, and also craftsmen in iron and copper to strengthen Yahweh’s house.

## 24:13 But When the Mentor’s Gone…

13The people doing the work did it, and restoration progressed by the work at their hand. They set up God’s house in accordance with its design and made it stand firm. 14When they’d finished, they brought before the king and Yehoyada the remainder of the silver and they made articles for Yahweh’s house, articles for ministry and the burnt offerings, ladles, and gold and silver articles. They were offering up burnt offerings in Yahweh’s house regularly all the days of Yehoyada.

15But Yehoyada grew old and became full of years and died, a man of 130 years when he died. 16They buried him in David’s Town with the kings, because he had done good things in Israel with God and God’s house. 17But after Yehoyada’s death the officials of Judah came and bowed low to the king. Then the king listened to them 18and they abandoned the house of Yahweh, their ancestors’ God, and served the totem poles and the idols, and fury came on Judah and Jerusalem because of this liability of theirs.

19Yahweh sent prophets among them to turn them back to Yahweh, and they testified against them, but they didn’t give ear. 20God’s spirit clothed Zekaryahu ben Yehoyada, the priest, and he stood above the people and said to them: ‘God has said this: “Why are you transgressing Yahweh’s orders? You will not succeed. Because you have abandoned Yahweh, he has abandoned you”’. 21But they conspired against him and pelted him with stones, by the king’s order, in the court of Yahweh’s house. 22So Yo’ash the king was not mindful of the commitment with which Yehoyada his father had acted with him, and he killed his son. As he died he said, ‘May Yahweh see and require’.

23At the turn of the year, a force from Aram went up against him. They came to Judah and Jerusalem and eliminated all the people’s officers from the people. All their plunder they sent off to the king of Damascus, 24because the Aramean force had come with a few men but Yahweh gave into their hand a force of a very large number because they had abandoned Yahweh, their ancestors’ God.

## 24:24b Boy King, Insistent Young Man, Apostate Adult

So they executed acts of authority upon Yo’ash, 25and when they went from him (because they abandoned him with many wounds), his servants conspired against him because of the shedding of the blood of the sons of Yehoyada the priest, and they killed him on his bed. So he died and they buried him in David’s Town, but they didn’t bury him in the kings’ graves. 26These were the people who conspired against him: Zabad ben Shim’at (the Ammonite woman) and Yehozabad ben Shimrit (the Moabite woman). 27His sons, the quantity of prophecy against him, and the founding of God’s house—there, they are written in the exposition in the document about the kings. His son Amatsyahu began to reign in place of him.

25 Amatsyahu began to reign as a man of twenty-five years and he reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Yeho’addan, from Jerusalem. 2He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes, only not with a perfect mind. 3When the kingship was strongly in his control, he killed his servants who had struck down the king, his father, 4but the children he didn’t put to death, because it was in accordance with what is written in the instruction in Moses’ document where Yahweh ordered, ‘Parents will not die because of children and children will not die because of parents. Rather, it is as an individual for his own wrongdoing that people are to die’.

5Amatsyahu collected the Judahites and set them by ancestral households under chiliarchs and centurions, for all Judah and Benjamin. He registered them from the age of twenty upwards and found them to be 300,000 picked men able to go out in the army, able to grasp spear and shield. 6He hired from Israel 100,000 forceful strong men for 100 talents of silver. 7But a supernatural man came to him saying, ‘Your majesty, the army of Israel is not to come with you, because Yahweh is not with Israel (all the Ephrayimites). 8Rather, come, you act, be strong for battle. God could make you collapse before an enemy, because there’s energy in God to help and to make collapse’.

## 25:9 A War Crime

9Amatsyahu said to the supernatural man, ‘But what am I to do about the 100 talents that I gave to the Israelite raiding gang?’ The supernatural man said, ‘Yahweh has the means to give you much more than this’. 10So Amatsyahu made them distinct (the raiding gang that had come to him from Ephrayim) for them to go to their own place. Their anger raged greatly against Judah, and they went back to their place in angry fury.

11Amatsyahu himself showed himself strong and drove his company, and went to Salt Ravine. He struck down the men of Se’ir, 10,000, 12and the Judahites captured 10,000 alive, brought them to the top of The Cliff, and threw them down from the top of The Cliff; all of them tore apart. 13But the men in the raiding gang that Amatsyahu sent back from going with him to the battle made a raid against the Judahite towns from Shomron as far as Bet Horon, struck down 3000 of them, and took much plunder.

14After Amatsyahu came from striking down the Edomites, he brought the gods of the people of Se’ir and set them up for himself as gods, and he would bow low before them and burn incense for them. 15Yahweh’s anger raged at Amatsyahu and he sent a prophet to him. He said to him, ‘Why have you inquired of the gods of the people who did not rescue their people from your hand?’ 16When he spoke to him, he said to him, ‘Have we made you a counsellor to the king? Leave off for yourself! Why should they strike you down’. The prophet left off, and said, ‘I know that God has counselled to devastate you, because you have done this and not listened to my counsel’.

## 25:17 What Counts as Effective Counsel

17Amatsyahu king of Judah took counsel and sent to Yo’ash ben Yeho’ahaz son of Yehu, king of Israel, saying ‘Come on, let’s face each other’. 18Yo’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. 19You’ve said, “There, you’ve struck down Edom”, and your mind has lifted you up, so that you behave with splendour. Stay in your house now. Why stir up something bad? You’ll fall, you and Judah with you’.

20Amatsyahu didn’t listen, because it was from God, in order that he might give them into his hand, because he’d inquired of the Edomite gods. 21So Yo’ash king of Israel went up, and he and Amatsyahu king of Judah faced each other at Bet Shemesh , which belongs to Judah. 22Judah took a beating before Israel and they fled each man to his tents. 23Amatsyahu king of Judah, son of Yo’ash son of Yeho’ahaz—Yo’ash king of Israel captured him at Bet Shemesh, brought him to Jerusalem, and broke down the Jerusalem wall from the Ephrayim Gate as far as the Corner Gate, 200 metres. 24He took all the gold and the silver and all the articles that were to be found in God’s house with Obed Edom. and the treasuries of the king’s house, and hostages, and went back to Shomron.

25Amatsyahu ben Yo’ash king of Judah lived after the death of Yo’ash ben Yeho’ahaz king of Israel fifteen years. 18 The rest of the things about Amatsyahu, early and late, there, they are written on the document about the kings of Judah and Israel, aren’t they. 27After the time when Amatsyahu departed from following Yahweh, 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. 28They carried him on horses and buried him in Jerusalem with his ancestors in the Town of Judah.

## 26:1 A Young Man’s Achievements

26 All the people of Judah got Uzziyyahu (he was sixteen years of age) and made him king in place of his father Amatsyahu. 2It was he who built up Elot. He had got it back for Judah after the king lay down with his ancestors.

3Uzziyyahu was sixteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned fifty-two years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Yekolyah, from Jerusalem. 4He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with all that Amatsyahu his father did. 5He came to inquire of God in the days of Zekaryahu, who enabled him to understand awe for God, and in the days when he inquired of Yahweh, God enabled him to be successful.

6He went out and battled against the Philistines and broke through the wall of Gat, the wall of Yabneh, and the wall of Ashdod, and built up towns in Ashdod and among the Philistines. 7God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabs who lived in Gur-ba’al, and the Me’unites. 8The Ammonites gave offerings to Uzziyyahu, and his name went as far as the entry point to Egypt, because he became exceptionally strong. 9Uzziyyahu built towers in Jerusalem on the Corner Gate, on the Ravine Gate, and on the Angle, and made them strong. 10He built towers in the wilderness and hewed many cisterns, because he had much livestock, and in the foothills and in the flatland—ploughmen and vinedressers in the mountains and in the farmland, because he loved the ground.

## 26:11 On the Separation of Church and State, Old Testament-Style

11Uzziyyahu had a battle force, men able to go out in the army as a raiding gang by the number of their registering by the hand of Ye’i’el the secretary and Ma’aseyahu the overseer, in the control of Hananyahu from the king’s officials. 12The total number of the ancestral heads of the forceful strong men was 2,600, 13and in their control an army force of 307,500 able to do battle with forceful energy to help the king against the enemy.

14Uzziyyahu prepared for them, for the entire army, shields, spears, helmets, coats of armour, bows, and slingstones. 15He made in Jerusalem contrivances, an inventor’s invention, to be on the towers and on the corners, for shooting arrows and big stones. His name went out far, because he did extraordinarily in acquiring help, until he was strong.

16But when he became strong, his mind became lofty, until he acted devastatingly. He trespassed against Yahweh his God, and came into Yahweh’s palace to burn incense on the incense altar. 17Azaryahu the priest followed him; with him were eighty priests of Yahweh, forceful men. 18They stood against Uzziyyahu the king and said to him, ‘It’s not for you, Uzziyyahu, to burn incense for Yahweh, but for the priests, the Aaronites, who have been made sacred, to burn incense. Get out of the sanctuary, because you’ve trespassed. It will not mean splendour for you from Yahweh God’.

19Uzziyyahu was furious, the censor for burning incense in his hand. When he got furious with the priests, scaliness broke out on his forehead before the priests in Yahweh’s house, by the incense altar. 20Azaryahu the head priest turned his face to him, with all the priests: there, he was scaly on his forehead. They hurried him from there, and he himself hastened to get out, because Yahweh had touched him. 21Uzziyyahu the king was made scaly until the day of his death. He lived in a house apart as a person who was scaly, because he was cut off from Yahweh’s house, while Yotam his son was in charge of the king’s house, exercising authority over the people in the country.

## 26:22 The Son Who Had Learned a Lesson

22The rest of the things about Uzziyyahu, early and late, Isaiah [Yesha’yahu] ben Amots the prophet wrote. 23Uzziyyahu lay down with his ancestors but they buried him with his ancestors in the burial field that belonged to the kings because (they said), ‘He was made scaly’. Yotam his son began to reign in place of him.

27 Yotam was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Yerushah bat Tsadoq. 2He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with all that his father Uzziyyahu had done, only he did not come into Yahweh’s palace. But the people acted devastatingly.

3It was he who built up the Upper Gate of Yahweh’s House, and built on a large scale on the Ophel Wall. 4He built up towns in the highland of Judah, and in the forests he built castles and towers. 5When he battled with the king of the Ammonites he was stronger than them; the Ammonites gave him that year 100 talents of silver, 10,000 ten-gallon measures of wheat, and 10,000 of barley. This the Ammonites gave back to him—and in the second and third year. 6Yotam showed himself strong because he established his ways before Yahweh his God. 7The rest of the things about Yotam, and all his battles and his ways—there they are, written on the document about the kings of Israel and Judah. 8He was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem. 9Yotam lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in David’s Town, and Ahaz his son began to reign in place of him.

28 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 Yahweh’s eyes like David his ancestor, 2but walked in the ways of the kings of Israel. He even made cast images for the Masters. 3He was the one who burned incense in the Ben-himmon Ravine and burned up his sons in fire in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed from before the Israelites. 4He sacrificed and burned incense at the shrines, on the hills, and under every verdant tree.

## 28:5 The Warning to the Victors

5So Yahweh his God gave him into the hand of the king of Aram, and they struck him down, took captive a large group of his, and brought them to Damascus. He was also given into the hand of the king of Israel; he struck him down in a great rout. 6Peqah ben Remalyahu killed 120,000 in Judah on one day, all forceful men, because of their abandoning Yahweh, their ancestors’ God. 7Zikri, the Ephrayimite strong man, killed Ma’aseyahu the king’s son, Azriqam the chief over the house, and Elqanah, number two to the king, 8and the Israelites took captive 200,000 of their brothers, wives, sons, and daughters, and also plundered much spoil from them and brought the plunder to Shomron.

9There was a prophet of Yahweh there, Oded by name. He went out before the army which was coming to Shomron and said to them, ‘Here, because of the wrath of Yahweh your ancestors’ God with Judah, he gave them into your hand and you killed them in a fury that reached as far as the heavens. 10And now you are saying that you’ll subjugate the people of Judah and Jerusalem as your servants and maidservants, while you yourselves – with you there are only liabilities in relation to Yahweh your God, aren’t there. 11So now listen to me. Give back the captives that you’ve taken from your brothers, because the angry rage of Yahweh is on you’.

12People from among the heads of the Ephrayimites, Azaryahu ben Yehohanan, Berekyahu ben Meshillemot, Yehizqiyyahu ben Shallum, and Amasa ben Hadlay, rose up against the people coming from the army. 13They said to them, ‘You will not bring the captives here, because it will be a liability upon us in relation to Yahweh; you’re saying you’ll add to our wrongdoings and to our liabilities, because our liability is great and there’s angry rage against Israel’. 14So the armed men abandoned the captives and the plunder before the officers and the entire congregation

## 28:15 The Administrators with Compassion

15The people who have been designated by name set to, took strong hold of the captives, and clothed all the naked with the spoil. They both clothed them and gave them boots and food and drink, and bathed them and led them (everyone who was collapsing) on donkeys, and brought them to Jericho (Palms Town) beside their brothers, and went back to Shomron.

16At that time King Ahaz sent to the kings of Ashshur for help for himself. 17The Edomites had again come and struck down Judah and taken captives, 18and the Philistines had raided the towns in the foothills and in the Negeb belonging to Judah. They had taken Bet-shemesh, Ayyalon, Gederot, Soko and its daughter-townships, Timnah and its daughter-townships, and Gimzo and its daughter-townships, and gone to live there, 19because Yahweh made Judah bow down on account of Ahaz king of Israel, because he had been lax in Judah and had trespassed against Yahweh.

20Tillegat Pilne’eser king of Ashshur came out against him and put him under pressure; he did not strengthen him, 21because Ahaz had divided up Yahweh’s house and the house of the king and the officers and given it to the king of Ashshur, but it was no help to him.

22In his time of pressure he added to his trespassing against Yahweh, that King Ahaz, 23and sacrificed to the gods of Damascus who had struck him down; he had said, ‘Because the gods of the king of Aram help them, I will sacrifice to them so that they may help me’. So those became the cause of his collapsing, and that of all Israel. 24Ahaz gathered the articles from God’s house and cut up the articles from God’s house. He shut the doors of God’s house and made himself altars in every corner of Jerusalem. 25In each and every town in Judah, he made shrines to burn incense for other gods, and provoked Yahweh, his ancestors’ God.

26The rest of the things about him and all his ways, early and late – there they are, written on the document about the kings of Judah and Israel.27Ahaz lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in the town, in Jerusalem, because they didn’t bring him into the graves of the kings of Israel. His son Yehizqiyyahu began to reign in place of him.

## 29:1 The New David

29 Yehizqiyyahu [Hezekiah] began to reign as a man of twenty-five years and reigned twenty-nine years in Jerusalem. His mother’s name was Abiyyah bat Zekaryahu. 2He did what was upright in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with all that David his ancestor did. 3He, in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of Yahweh’s house and strengthened them.

4He brought the priests and the Levites and gathered them in the eastern square, 5and said to them, ‘Listen to me, Levites. Make yourselves sacred now and make sacred the house of Yahweh, your ancestors’ God. Take out the defilement from the sacred place. 6Because our fathers trespassed and did what was bad in the eyes of Yahweh our God, and abandoned him. They turned their faces from Yahweh’s dwelling. They turned their back. 7They also shut the porch’s doors and put out the lamps. They didn’t burn incense and they didn’t offer up a burnt offering in the sacred place for the God of Israel. 8So Yahweh’s fury came on Judah and Jerusalem. He made them a thing of horror and desolation and a thing to whistle at, as you see with your own eyes. 9There, our fathers have died by the sword and our sons and daughters and wives have been in captivity on account of this.

10It’s now in my mind to solemnize a pact to Yahweh the God of Israel so that his angry rage may turn back from us. 11My sons, don’t be negligent now, because you’re the ones Yahweh chose to stand before him to minister for him, to be people who minister and burn incense for him’.

12So the Levites set to:

* Mahat ben Amasay and Yo’el ben Azaryahu, of the Qehatites
* of the sons of Merari, Qish ben Abdi and Azaryahu ben Yehallel’el
* of the Gershonites, Yo’ah ben Zimmah and Eden ben Yo’ah
* 13of the sons of Elitsaphan, Shimri and Ye’i’el
* of the sons of Asaph, Zekaryahu and Mattanyahu
* 14of the sons of Heman, Yehi’el and Shim’i
* and of the sons of Yedutun, Shema’yah and Uzzi’el.

## 29:15 The Great Purification

15They gathered their brothers and made themselves sacred, and came in accordance with the king’s order, by Yahweh’s words, to purify Yahweh’s house. 16The priests came into the inside Yahweh’s house to purify it, and took out all that was defiled that they found in Yahweh’s palace into the court of Yahweh’s house. The Levites received it to take it outside to Wadi Qidron. 17They began to make it sacred on the first of the first month and on the eighth of the month they came to Yahweh’s porch. They made Yahweh’s house sacred in eight days, and on the sixteenth day of the first month they finished.

18Then they came inside to Hizqiyyahu the king and said, ‘We’ve purified Yahweh’s entire house, the burnt offering altar, and all its implements, and the table for the row [of bread] and all its implements. 19All the implements that King Ahaz spurned when he was king, when he trespassed, we’ve prepared and made sacred. There they are, before Yahweh’s altar’.

20Yehizqiyyahu the king started early, gathered the town officials, and went up to Yahweh’s house. 21They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven goats as a purification offering for the kingship, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. He said to the Aaronites, the priests, to offer them up on Yahweh’s altar. 22They slaughtered the cattle, and the priests received the blood and tossed it against the altar. They slaughtered the rams and tossed the blood against the altar. They slaughtered the lambs and tossed the blood against the altar. 23They took up the goats for the purification offering before the king and the congregation, and they leaned their hands on them. 24The priests slaughtered them and made the purification with their blood to make expiation for all Israel, because the king had said that the burnt offering and the purification offering were for all Israel. 25He put the Levites in place in Yahweh’s house with cymbals, with mandolins, and with guitars, by the order of David, Gad the king’s seer, and Natan the prophet, because the order was through Yahweh through his prophets.

## 29:26 What God Has Made Possible

26So the Levites stood with David’s instruments and the priests with the trumpets, 27and Hizqiyyahu said to offer up the burnt offering at the altar. At the time when the burnt offering began, Yahweh’s song and the trumpets began, along with the instruments of David king of Israel, 28with the entire congregation bowing low, the singers singing, and the trumpeters trumpeting, all of it until they finished the burnt offering. 29When they’d finished offering it up, the king and all who were to be found with him bent down and bowed low. 30Yehizqiyyahu the king with the officers said to the Levites to praise Yahweh in the words of David and of Asaph the seer, and they praised with rejoicing and bent their heads and bowed low.

31Yehizqiyyahu avowed, ‘You have now commissioned yourselves to Yahweh. Come up and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to Yahweh’s house’. The congregation brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and everyone who was free in heart, a burnt offering. 32The number of burnt offerings that the congregation brought was 70 cattle, 100 rams, 200 lambs as a burnt offering for Yahweh, all these. 33The sacred things were 600 cattle and 3000 from the flocks. 34Only the priests were few and they could not skin all the burnt offerings, so their brothers, the Levites, added to their strength until the finishing of the work and until the priests had made themselves sacred (because the Levites were more upright in mind in making themselves sacred than the priests). 35Also there were burnt offerings in quantity with the fat parts of the well-being sacrifices and with the libations for the burnt offering.

So the service of Yahweh’s house was established, 36and Yehizqiyyahu rejoiced, with all the people, over what God had established for the people, because the thing had happened so rapidly.

## 30:1 One Nation

30 Yehizqiyyahu sent to all Israel and Judah and also wrote communiqués to Ephrayim and Menashsheh to come to Yahweh’s house in Jerusalem to make Pesah [Passover] for Yahweh, the God of Israel. 2The king took counsel, he and his officials and the entire congregation in Jerusalem, about making the Pesah in the second month, 3because they couldn’t do it at that time because the priests had not made themselves sacred in sufficiency, and the people had not assembled to Jerusalem.

4The thing was upright in the king’s eyes and in the congregation’s eyes. 5So they put in place a word to pass an announcement through all Israel from Be’er-sheba as far as Dan about coming to make Pesah for Yahweh, the God of Israel, in Jerusalem, because they hadn’t done it in large numbers as it is written.

6The runners went out with the communiqués from the hand of the king and his officials, through all Israel and Judah, in accordance with the king’s order, saying ‘Israelites, turn back to Yahweh the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, and he will turn back to the escape group that remains to you from the fist of the kings of Ashshur. 7Don’t be like your fathers and like your brothers who trespassed against Yahweh, their ancestors’ God, and he made them into a desolation, as you see. 8Don’t toughen your neck now like your ancestors. Give your hand to Yahweh, come to his sanctuary which he made sacred permanently, serve Yahweh your God, so that his angry rage may turn back from you. 9When you turn back to Yahweh, your brothers and your children will find compassion before their captors and they will come back to this country, because Yahweh your God is gracious and compassionate, and he will not turn aside his face from you if you turn back to him’.

## 30:10 Laughter and Response

10The runners were passing from town to town in the region of Ephrayim and Menashsheh and as far as Zebulun, but they were making fun of them and ridiculing them. 11Yet people from Asher, Menashsheh, and Zebulun bowed down and came to Jerusalem. 12God’s hand was on Judah, too, to give them one mind to act on the order of the king and the officials by Yahweh’s word.

13So a numerous people gathered to Jerusalem to make the Flat Bread Festival in the second month, a congregation in very large numbers. 14They set to and removed the altars that were in Jerusalem and removed all the incense stands and threw them into Wadi Qidron.

15They slaughtered the Pesah on the fourteenth of the second month, while the priests and the Levites were ashamed, and made themselves sacred and brought burnt offerings to Yahweh’s house. 16They stood in their position in accordance with the ruling for them, in accordance with the instruction of Moses the supernatural man, the priests tossing the blood from the Levites’ hand.

17Because much of the congregation had not made themselves sacred, the Levites were in charge of the slaughter of the Pesah animals for everyone who was not pure, to make them sacred for Yahweh, 18because most of the people (much of the group from Ephrayim and Menashsheh, Yissakar and Zebulun) had not purified themselves, but they ate the Pesah not in accordance with what is written, because Yehizqiyyahu had pleaded for them: ‘May the good Yahweh expiate on behalf of 19everyone who has set his mind on inquiring of God, Yahweh his ancestors’ God, though not in accordance with purification in the sacred place’. 20Yahweh listened to Yehizqiyyahu and healed the people.

## 30:21 The Great Rejoicing

21The Israelites who were to be found in Jerusalem made the Flat Bread Festival for seven days with great rejoicing and the Levites and the priests praising Yahweh daily with powerful instruments for Yahweh. 22Yehizqiyyahu spoke to encourage all the Levites who showed good insight for Yahweh, and they ate what was appointed for the seven days, making well-being sacrifices and confessing Yahweh, their ancestors’ God. 23The entire congregation took counsel to make another seven days, and made seven days with rejoicing, 24because Hizqiyyahu king of Judah raised for the congregation 1000 bulls and 7000 from the flock, while the officials raised for the congregation 1000 bulls and 10,000 from the flock, and the priests made themselves sacred in large numbers.

25The entire congregation of Judah rejoiced, with the priests and the Levites, the entire congregation that came from Israel, and the resident aliens who had come from the country of Israel but who lived in Judah. 26So there was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, because from the days of Solomon ben David king of Israel there had not been something like this in Jerusalem. 27The Levite priests rose and blessed the people. And there was listening to their voice; their plea came to his sacred abode, to the heavens.

31 When they had finished all this, all Israel who were to be found went out to the towns of Judah and broke up the columns, cut down the totem poles, and demolished the shrines and the altars from all Judah and Benjamin, and in Ephrayim and Menashsheh, until they had finished. Then all the Israelites went back each to his holding, to their towns.

## 31:2 Embarrassment de Richesse

2Yehizqiyyahu put in place the divisions of the priests and the Levites, by their divisions, each in accordance with his service (with regard to the priests and the Levites), for the burnt offering and the well-being offerings, to minister and to confess and to praise in the gateways of Yahweh’s camps; 3and the king’s share, from his property, for the burnt offerings – the morning and the evening burnt offerings and the burnt offerings for sabbaths, for beginning of months, and for set times, as it is written in Yahweh’s instruction. 4He said to the people, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to give the priests’ and Levites’ share, in order that they might hold fast to Yahweh’s instruction.

5When the word broke out, the Israelites produced much of the very first of grain, new wine, fresh oil, syrup, and all the yield of the field. They brought a tenth of everything, in quantity. 6The people of Israel and Judah who lived in the towns of Judah—they too brought a tenth of cattle and flock and a tenth of sacred things that had been made sacred for Yahweh their God, and put them in heaps upon heaps. 7In the third month they began to found the heaps and in the seventh month they finished.

8Yehizqiyyahu and the officials came and saw the heaps, and blessed Yahweh and his people Israel. 9Yehizqiyyahu inquired of the priests and the Levites about the heaps 10and Azaryahu the head priest, of the household of Tsadoq, said to him, ‘From when they began bringing the contribution into Yahweh’s house, there’s been eating and being full and having a quantity remain, because Yahweh has blessed his people, and this horde remains over’. 11So Yehizqiyyahu said to prepare halls in Yahweh’s house, and they prepared them, 12and brought in the contribution, the tenth, and the sacred things, truthfully.

## 31:12b The Trustworthy Administrators

12bThe chief over them was Kananyahu the Levite; Shim’i his brother was number two . 13Yehi’el, Azazyahu, Nahat, Asah’el, Yerimot, Yozabad, Eli’el, Yismakyahu, Mahat, and Benayah were appointees under the control of Kananyahu and Shim’i his brother, by the appointment of Yehizqiyyahu the king and Azaryahu the chief over God’s house. 14Qore ben Yimnah the Levite, gateman on the east, was in charge of the free offerings to God, to give out the contribution for Yahweh and the very sacred things. 15In his control were Eden, Minyamin, Yeshua, Shema’yahu, Amaryahu, and Shekanyahu, in the priests’ towns in their trustworthy position, to give out to their brothers by their divisions, old and young alike:

* 16apart from their enrolment by genealogy, to males from three years and upward
* to everyone who came into Yahweh’s house, each day’s requirement in its day, for their service in their watches, by their divisions
* 17the priests’ enrolment by genealogy, by their ancestral households
* the Levites from twenty years and upward in their watches, by their divisions,
* 18and (in line with the enrolment by genealogy of all their little ones, their wives, their sons, and their daughters) to the entire congregation, because in their trustworthy position they would make themselves very sacred.

19And to the Aaronites, the priests, in their towns’ pastureland fields, everywhere town by town: men who have been designated by their names were to give portions to every male among the priests, and to the entire enrolment by genealogy among the Levites.

20Yehizqiyyahu acted like this in all Judah. He did what was good, upright, and trustworthy before Yahweh his God. 21In all the work that he began in the service of God’s house and in the instruction and in the order, by inquiring of his God with his entire mind, he acted and succeeded.

## 32:1 The Assyrian Crisis

32 After these things with their trustworthiness, Sanherib [Sennacherib] king of Ashshur came. He came against Judah, camped against the fortified towns, and said he would break into them for himself. 2Yehizqiyyahu saw that Sanherib had come with his face directed to battle against Jerusalem 3and took counsel with his officials and his strong men about blocking the water in the springs that were outside the town. They helped him, 4and a large company collected and blocked all the springs and the stream flowing through the middle of the country, saying ‘Why should the kings of Ashshur come and find much water?’ 5He showed himself strong and built up all the wall that had been broken through, and raised the towers on it, and outside it another wall. He strengthened the Fill in David’s Town and made weaponry in quantity, and shields, 6and put battle officers over the people.

He collected them to him in the square at the town gateway and spoke to encourage them: 7’Be strong and stand firm. Don’t be afraid, don’t be scared in face of the king of Ashshur and in face of the entire horde that’s with him, because with us is one greater than with him. 8With him is an arm of flesh, but with us is Yahweh our God to help us and to fight our battles’. The people leaned on the words of Yehizqiyyahu king of Judah.

9Subsequently, Sanherib king of Ashshur sent his servants to Jerusalem (he was at Lakish, and his command with him) to Yehizqiyyahu king of Judah and to all Judah who were in Jerusalem, saying, 10’Sanherib king of Ashshur has said this: “On what are you relying, living in a siege in Jerusalem? 11Yehizqiyyahu is inciting you to give yourselves over to dying by hunger and by thirst, isn’t he, in saying, ‘Yahweh our God will rescue us from the fist of the king of Ashshur’. 12He, Yehizqiyyahu, removed his shrines and his altars, didn’t he, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, ‘Before one altar you are to bow low, and on it burn incense’.

## 32:13 The Superpower’s Boast

13You acknowledge what I and my ancestors have done to all the peoples of the countries, don’t you. Were the gods of the countries’ nations at all able to rescue their country from my hand? 14Which among all the gods of these nations that my ancestors ‘devoted’ was able to rescue his people from my hand, that your God should be able to rescue you from my hand? 15Hizqiyyahu should not now deceive you. He should not incite you like this. Don’t trust him. Because no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to rescue his people from my hand or from the hand of my ancestors. Certainly your gods will not rescue you from my hand”’.

16His servants spoke further against Yahweh God and against Yehizqiyyahu his servant, 17and he wrote documents to revile Yahweh the God of Israel and to say about him, ‘Like the gods of the countries’ nations that did not rescue their people from my hand, so Yehizqiyyahu’s God will not rescue his people from my hand’. 18They called in a loud voice in Judahite to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to make them afraid and fearful, in order that they might take the town. 19They spoke of Jerusalem’s God as they spoke about the gods of the peoples of the earth, the making of human hands.

20Yehizqiyyahu the king and Isaiah ben Amots the prophet pleaded about this and cried out to the heavens, 21and Yahweh sent an envoy and he effaced every forceful strong man, chief, and officer in the camp of the king of Ashshur. He went back in shame to his country. He came into his god’s house, and there some of the people who had come out from inside him made him fall by the sword.

## 32:22 Even Hezekiah Can Stumble

22Yahweh delivered Yehizqiyyahu and Jerusalem’s inhabitants from the hand of Sanherib king of Ashshur and from the hand of everyone. He led them all round 23and many were bringing offerings for Yahweh to Jerusalem and choice things for Yehizqiyyahu king of Judah. He rose high in the eyes of all the nations from then on.

24In those days Yehizqiyyahu became deathly ill, but he pleaded to Yahweh, and he spoke to him and gave him a sign, 25but Yehizqiyyahu did not give back in accordance with the dealing done to him, because his mind became lofty. So there was fury on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. 26But Yehizqiyyahu bowed down, when his mind had become lofty, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Yahweh’s fury didn’t come on them in Yehizqiyyahu’s days.

27Yehizqiyyahu had wealth and splendour, very great. He made himself treasuries for silver, for gold, for precious stone, for spices, for shields, and for all desirable objects, 28supplies of the yield of grain, new wine, and fresh oil, and stalls for each and every cattle and flocks for folds. 29He made himself towns and livestock, flocks and cattle, in large numbers, because God gave him very much property. 30He, Yehizqiyyahu, blocked the Upper Gihon water outlet and directed it down on the west of David’s Town. Yehizqiyyahu succeeded in all his action. 31And so with the spokesmen of the officials from Babel who sent to him to inquire about the sign that happened in the country, when God abandoned him to test him so as to know everything in his mind.

32The rest of the things about Yehizqiyyahu and his acts of commitment – there they are, written in the vision of Isaiah ben Amots the prophet, on the document regarding the kings of Judah and Israel. 33Yehizqiyyahu lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in the upper floor of the graves of David’s sons, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem did him honour when he died. Menashsheh his son began to reign in place of him.

## 33:1 The Possibility of Repentance

33 Menashsheh was twelve years of age when he began to reign and he reigned fifty-five years in Jerusalem. 2He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations that Yahweh dispossessed from before the Israelites. 3He rebuilt the shrines that Yehizqiyyahu his father had demolished, set up altars for the Masters and made totem poles, and bowed low to all the heavenly army and served them. 4He built altars in Yahweh’s house, of which Yahweh had said, ‘In Jerusalem my name will be permanently’. 5He built altars for all the heavenly army in the two courtyards of Yahweh’s house. 6He himself made his sons pass through fire in Ben-hinnom Ravine. He practised augury, divined, acted as a medium, and dealt with ghosts and spirits. He did much that was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, so as to provoke him.

7He put the image sculpture that he made in God’s house, of which God had said to David and to Solomon his son, ‘In this house and in Jerusalem, which I chose from all Israel’s clans, I will put my name permanently. 8And I will never again remove Israel’s foot from upon the land that I put in place for their ancestors, only if they keep watch to act on all that I ordered them—the entire instruction, the decrees, and the rulings by means of Moses’. 9Menashsheh made Judah and Jerusalem and the inhabitants of Jerusalem wander so as to deal badly, more than the nations that Yahweh annihilated from before the Israelites.

10Yahweh spoke to Menashsheh and to his people but they didn’t heed, 11so Yahweh brought against them the officers of the army belonging to the king of Ashshur. They took Menashsheh captive in hooks, bound him with copper shackles, and made him go to Babel. 12But when he was under pressure, he sought the goodwill of Yahweh his God. He bowed right down before his ancestors’ God 13and pleaded to him. He let himself be entreated by him and listened to his prayer for grace, and let him go back to Jerusalem to his kingship. So Menashsheh acknowledged that Yahweh was God.

## 33:14 Menashsheh and Amon

14Subsequently he built an outer wall for David’s Town, west of Gihon, in the wadi and as you come through the Fish Gate. It went round the Ophel. He made it very lofty. He put forceful officers in all the fortified towns in Judah. 15He removed the foreign gods and the image from Yahweh’s house and all the altars that he had built on the mountain of Yahweh’s house and in Jerusalem, and threw them outside the town. 16He built up Yahweh’s altar and made on it well-being sacrifices and thank offerings. He said to Judah to serve Yahweh the God of Israel, 17though the people were still sacrificing at the shrines, only for Yahweh their God.

18The rest of the things about Menashsheh, his plea to his God, and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of Yahweh his God – there they are, on the things of the kings of Israel. 19His plea and his being entreated by him, and all his wrongdoing and his trespass, and the sites in which he built shrines and put in place totem poles and sculptures, before he bowed down—there, they’re written in the words of his seers. 20Menashsheh lay down with his ancestors and they buried him in his house, and Amon his son began to reign in place of him.

21Amon was a man of twenty-two years when he began to reign and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. 22He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes, as Menashsheh his father had done. To all the sculptures that Menashsheh his father had made, Amon sacrificed and served them. 23He did not bow down before Yahweh as Menashsheh his father bowed down, but rather he, Amon, made his liability great. 24His servants conspired against him and put him to death in his house, 25but the people of the country struck down those who had conspired against King Amon. The people of the country made Yo’shiyyahu his son king in place of him.

## 34:1 The Great Reformer

34 Yo’shiyyahu [Josiah] was eight years of age when he began to reign and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. 2He did what was upright in the eyes of Yahweh and walked in the ways of David his ancestor. He did not depart right or left.

3In the eighth year of his reign when he was still a boy he began to inquire of the God of David his ancestor, and in the twelfth year began to purify Judah and Jerusalem of the shrines, the totem poles, the sculptures, and the cast images. 4They demolished the Masters’ altars before him, and the incense stands that were above, over them, he cut down. The totem poles, the sculptures, and the cast images he broke up, made dust of them, and threw it over the face of the graves of the people who had sacrificed to them. 5The priests’ bones he burned on their altars. He purified Judah and Jerusalem, 6and in the towns of Menashsheh, Ephrayim, and Shim’on, and as far as Naphtali, and in their ruins all round, 7he demolished the altars and the totem poles, crushed the sculptures to dust, and cut down the incense stands in the entire country of Israel, and went back to Jerusalem.

8In the eighteenth year of his reign, when he had purified the country and the house, he sent Shaphan ben Atsalyahu, Ma’aseyahu the town official, and Yo’ah ben Yo’ahaz the recorder to strengthen the house of Yahweh his God. 9They came to Hilqiyyahu the big priest and gave him the silver that had been brought to God’s house, which the Levites who keep watch over the threshold had gathered from the hand of Menashsheh and Ephrayim, from the entire remainder of Israel, and from all Judah and Benjamin and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

10They gave it into the hand of the one doing the work, the people appointed in Yahweh’s house. The ones doing the work who were doing it in Yahweh’s house gave it for dealing with the defects and for strengthening the house. 11They gave it to craftsmen and masons for acquiring hewn stones and logs for the clasps and for roofing the houses that the kings of Judah had let become devastated.

## 34:12 The Worrying Discovery

12The men were acting with trustworthiness in the work:

* appointed in charge of them: Yahat and Obadyahu, Levites from the Mararites, and Zekaryah and Meshullam from the Qehatites, to supervise
* the Levites, everyone with understanding of musical instruments, 13both in charge of the carriers and supervising everyone doing the work, service by service
* some of the Levites: secretaries, overseers, and gatemen.

14When they were taking out the silver that had been brought to Yahweh’s house, Hilqiyyahu the priest found a document of Yahweh’s instruction by means of Moses. 15Hilqiyyahu avowed to Shaphan the secretary, ‘I’ve found an instruction document in Yahweh’s house’. Hilqiyyahu gave the document to Shaphan, 16and Shaphan brought the document to the king. He also took word back to the king: ‘All that was given into your servants’ hands, they’re doing. 17They’ve melted down the silver that was found in Yahweh’s house and given it into the hand of the appointees and into the hand of the people doing the work’. 18And Shaphan the secretary told the king, ‘Hilqiyyahu the priest gave me a document’, and he read it out before the king.

19When the king heard the words in the instruction, he tore his clothes. 20The king ordered Hilqiyyahu, Ahiqam ben Shaphan, Abdon ben Mikah, Shaphan the secretary, and Asayah the king’s servant, 21’Go inquire of Yahweh on my behalf and and on behalf of the remainder in Israel and Judah about the words in the document that’s been found, because great is Yahweh’s wrath that’s poured upon us because our ancestors didn’t keep Yahweh’s word by acting in accordance with everything that’s written on this document’.

22Hilqiyyahu and those whom the king [had said] went to Huldah the prophetess, wife of Shallum ben Toqhat son of Hasrah, keeper of the robes; she was living in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter. They spoke to her in this way.

## 34:23 The Prophetess Speaks Straight

23She said to them, ‘Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: “Say to the man who sent you me: 24’Yahweh has said this: “Here, I’m going to bring bad fortune on this place and its inhabitants, all the curses written on the document that they read out before the king of Judah, 25because 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, so that my wrath will pour out on this place and will not go out”’”.

26But to the king of Judah who sent you to inquire of Yahweh, you’re to say to him, “Yahweh the God of Israel has said this: ‘The words that you have heard: 27since your mind softened and you bowed down before God when you heard his words about this place and about its inhabitants, and you bowed down before me and tore your clothes and cried before me, I for my part have also listened (Yahweh’s declaration). 28Here, I’m going to gather you to your ancestors, and you’ll gather yourself to your great grave with things being well. Your eyes will not see all the bad fortune that I’m going to bring on this place and on its inhabitants’”’.

They took word back to the king 29and the king sent and gathered all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. 30The king went up to Yahweh’s house, with everyone in Judah, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the Levites, and all the people, old and young. He read out in their ears all the words of the pact document found in Yahweh’s house. 31The king stood in his position and solemnized a pact before Yahweh to follow Yahweh and to keep his orders, his affirmations, and his decrees with his entire mind and with his entire being, by acting on the words of the pact that were written on this document. 32He got everyone who was to be found in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem acted in accordance with the pact of God, their ancestors’ God.

## 34:33 Preparations for a Great Celebration

33Yo’shiyyahu removed all the offensive things from all the regions that belonged to the Israelites and got everyone who was to be found in Israel to give their service to Yahweh their God. All his days they did not depart from following Yahweh, their ancestors’ God.

35 Yo’shiyyahu made Pesah for Yahweh in Jerusalem; they slaughtered the Pesah on the fourteenth of the first month. 2He put in place the priests at their watches and he strengthened them for the service of Yahweh’s house. 3He said to the Levites, who helped all Israel understand, who were sacred for Yahweh, ‘Put the sacred chest in the house that Solomon ben David, king of Israel, built. There’s no carrying it on the shoulder for you now; serve Yahweh your God and his people Israel now.

4Establish yourselves by your ancestral households according to your divisions, by the writing of David king of Israel and by the writing of Solomon his son. 5Stand in the sacred place by the ancestral household groupings of your brothers (the members of the people) and the ancestral household divisions of the Levites, 6and slaughter the Pesah. Make yourselves sacred and prepare it for your brothers, acting in accordance with Yahweh’s word by means of Moses’.

7 Yo’shiyyahu raised for the members of the people flocks, lambs and goats (all of it for the Pesah occasions for everyone who was to be found) to the number of 30,000, and cattle 3,000, these from the king’s property. 8His officials raised a free offering for the people, for the priests, and for the Levites; Hilqiyyah, Zekaryahu, and Yehi’el, the chiefs over God’s house, gave for the Pesah occasions 2,600, and 300 cattle. 9Kananyahu, Shema’yahu and Netan’el his brothers, and Hashabyahu, Ye’i’el, and Yozabad, the Levites officials, raised for the Levites for the Pesah occasions 5,000, and 500 cattle.

## 35:10 No Pesah Like This for Centuries

10So the service was prepared. The priests stood in their position, with the Levites by their divisions in accordance with the king’s order. 11They slaughtered the Pesah and the priests tossed some of the blood they had while the Levites were doing the skinning. 12They removed the burnt offering to give them to the groups by ancestral households, to the members of the people, to present to Yahweh in accordance with what is written in Moses’ document, and so for the cattle. 13The cooked the Pesah in fire in accordance with the ruling, and the sacred things they cooked in pots, in cauldrons, and in pans, and ran them to all the members of the people.

14After, they prepared things for themselves and for the priests, because the priests , the Aaronites, were involved in offering up the burnt offering and the fat parts until evening, while the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests, the Aaronites. 15The singers, the Asaphites, were in their place in accordance with the order of David, Asaph, Heman, and Yedutun the king’s seer, and the gatemen were at gateway by gateway: there was no departing from their service for them, because their Levite brothers prepared for them.

16The entire service of Yahweh was prepared that day, making the Pesah and offering up burnt offerings on Yahweh’s altar in accordance with the order of King Yo’shiyyahu . 17The Israelites who were to be found made the Pesah at that time, and the Flat Bread Festival, for seven days. 18Pesah had not been made like this in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. No kings of Israel had made one like the Pesah that Yo’shiyyahu made, with the priests, the Levites, all Judah, and Israel to be found, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 19This Pesah was made in the eighteenth year of Yo’shiyyahu ’s reign.

## 35:20 One Fatal Mistake

20After all this, when Yo’shiyyahu had established the house, Neko king of Egypt went up to do battle at Karkemish on the Euphrates, and Yo’shiyyahu went out to meet him.

21He sent envoys to him saying, ‘What is there between you and me, king of Judah? You’re not the one I’m against today, but against the household that’s doing battle with me. God said I should hurry. Hold yourself back from God, who’s with me, so he doesn’t devastate you’.

22But Yo’shiyyahu didn’t turn his face round from him but disguised himself to do battle against him. He didn’t listen to the words of Neko from the mouth of God but came to battle in the Megiddo Valley, 23and the archers shot King Yo’shiyyahu . The king said to his servants, ‘Get me out, because I’m badly hurt’. 24His servants got him out of the chariot, put him on the second-in-command’s chariot, and took him to Jerusalem, but he died. He was buried in his ancestors’ graves, and all Judah and Jerusalem was mourning over Yo’shiyyahu .

25Jeremiah [Yirmeyahu] lamented over Yo’shiyyahu , and all the singers (male and female) have spoken of Yo’shiyyahu in their laments until this day. They made them a decree in Israel. There, they’re written in the laments. 26The rest of the things about Yo’shiyyahu and his acts of commitment in accordance with what is written in Yahweh’s instruction, 27his words early and late: there, they are written on the document about the kings of Israel and Judah.

36 The people of the country got Yeho’ahaz ben Yo’shiyyahu and made him king in place of his father in Jerusalem.

## 36:2 The Rebellious End

2 Yeho’ahaz was a man of twenty-three years when he began to reign and he reigned three months in Jerusalem, 3but the king of Egypt removed him in Jerusalem and levied the country for a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. 4The king of Egypt made Elyaqim his brother king over Judah and Jerusalem and changed his name to Yehoyaqim. Neko took Yo’ahaz his brother and brought him to Egypt.

5 Yehoyaqim was a man of twenty-five years when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. He did what was bad in the eyes of Yahweh his God. 6Nebukadne’tstsar king of Babel went up against him and bound him with copper shackles to make him go to Babel. 7Nebukadne’tstsar brought some of the articles from Yahweh’s house and put them in his palace in Babel. 8The rest of the things about Yehoyaqim and the offensive things that he did, and what was found against him—there, they are written on the document about the kings of Israel and Judah. His son Yehoyakin began to reign in place of him.

9Yehoyakin was eighteen years of age when he began to reign and he reigned three months and ten days in Jerusalem. He did what was bad in Yahweh’s eyes. 10At the turn of the year King Nebukadne’tstsar sent and brought him to Babel with desirable articles from Yahweh’s house. He made Tsidqiyyahu, his brother, king over Judah and Jerusalem.

11 Tsidqiyyahu was twenty-one years of age when he began to reign and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem. 12He did what was bad in the eyes of Yahweh his God and did not bow down before Jeremiah the prophet from Yahweh’s mouth. 13Further, he rebelled against Nebukadne’tstsar, who had made him swear by God. He toughened his neck and firmed up his mind from turning back to Yahweh the God of Israel. 14Further, all the officials of the priests and the people committed many acts of trespass, in accordance with the offensive practices of the nations, and defiled Yahweh’s house which he had made sacred in Jerusalem.

## 36:15 The Land Fulfills Its Sabbaths

15Yahweh, their ancestors’ God, sent to them by means of his envoys, starting early and sending, because he had pity on his people and on his abode. 16But they were mocking God’s envoys, despising his words, and scoffing at his prophets, until Yahweh’s wrath against his people rose, until there was no healing.

17So he brought up the king of the Kasdites [Chaldeans] against them. They killed their young men by the sword in their sacred house. He did not have pity on young man or young girl, elder or greybeard. He gave everything into his hand. 18All the articles in God’s house, big and small, the treasures of Yahweh’s house, and the treasures of the king and his officers – he brought everything to Babel. 19They burned God’s house and demolished the wall of Jerusalem. They burned all its citadels with fire and devastated all its desirable objects.

20He exiled to Babel the people who remained from the sword and they became his and his sons’ servants until Persian kingship reigned, 21to fulfill Yahweh’s word by the mouth of Jeremiah, until the country made amends for its sabbaths. All the days of its desolation it stopped [*shabat*], to fill up seventy years.

22But in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia [Koresh king of Paras], fulfilling Yahweh’s word by the mouth of Jeremiah, Yahweh stirred the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, and he made an announcement pass through his entire kingdom, and also in writing: 23’Cyrus king of Persia has said this:

Yahweh the God of the heavens has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and he himself has appointed me to build him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever among you from all his people: may Yahweh his God be with him, and he is to go up’.