

2 Chronicles

BEREAN STANDARD BIBLE

Chapter 1

SOLOMON'S PRAYER FOR WISDOM

¹Now Solomon son of David established himself securely over his kingdom, and the LORD his God was with him and highly exalted him. ²Then Solomon spoke to all Israel, to the commanders of thousands and of hundreds, to the judges, and to every leader in all Israel—the heads of the families. ³And Solomon and the whole assembly went to the high place at Gibeon because it was the location of God's Tent of Meeting, which Moses the servant of the LORD had made in the wilderness. ⁴Now David had brought the ark of God from Kiriath-jearim to the place he had prepared for it, because he had pitched a tent for it in Jerusalem. ⁵But the bronze altar made by Bezalel son of Uri, the son of Hur, was in Gibeon before the tabernacle of the LORD. So Solomon and the assembly inquired of Him there. ⁶Solomon offered sacrifices there before the LORD on the bronze altar at the Tent of Meeting, where he offered a thousand burnt offerings. ⁷That night God appeared to Solomon and said, "Ask, and I will give it to you!" ⁸Solomon replied to God: "You have shown much loving devotion to my father David, and You have made me king in his place. ⁹Now, O LORD God, let Your promise to my father David be fulfilled. For You have made me king over a people as numerous as the dust of the earth. ¹⁰Now grant me wisdom and knowledge, so that I may lead this people. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?" ¹¹God said to Solomon, "Since this was in your heart instead of requesting riches or wealth or honor for yourself or death for your enemies—and since you have not even requested long life but have asked for wisdom and knowledge to govern My people over whom I have made you king— ¹²therefore wisdom and knowledge have been granted to you. And I will also give you riches and wealth and honor unlike anything given to the kings before you or after you." ¹³So Solomon went to Jerusalem from the high place in Gibeon, from before the Tent of Meeting, and he reigned over Israel.

SOLOMON'S RICHES

¹⁴Solomon accumulated 1,400 chariots and 12,000 horses, which he stationed in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. ¹⁵The king made silver and gold as common

in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as abundant as sycamore in the foothills. ¹⁶Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and Kue; the royal merchants purchased them from Kue. ¹⁷A chariot could be imported from Egypt for six hundred shekels of silver, and a horse for a hundred and fifty. Likewise, they exported them to all the kings of the Hittites and to the kings of Aram.

Chapter 2

PREPARATIONS FOR THE TEMPLE

¹Now Solomon purposed to build a house for the Name of the LORD and a royal palace for himself. ²So he conscripted 70,000 porters, 80,000 stonecutters in the mountains, and 3,600 supervisors. ³Then Solomon sent word to Hiram king of Tyre: "Do for me as you did for my father David when you sent him cedars to build himself a house to live in. ⁴Behold, I am about to build a house for the Name of the LORD my God to dedicate to Him for burning fragrant incense before Him, for displaying the showbread continuously, and for making burnt offerings every morning and evening as well as on the Sabbaths, New Moons, and appointed feasts of the LORD our God. This is ordained for Israel forever. ⁵The house that I am building will be great, for our God is greater than all gods. ⁶But who is able to build a house for Him, since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain Him? Who then am I, that I should build a house for Him, except as a place to burn sacrifices before Him? ⁷Send me, therefore, a craftsman skilled in engraving to work with gold and silver, with bronze and iron, and with purple, crimson, and blue yarn. He will work with my craftsmen in Judah and Jerusalem, whom my father David provided. ⁸Send me also cedar, cypress, and algum logs from Lebanon, for I know that your servants have skill to cut timber there. And indeed, my servants will work with yours ⁹to prepare for me timber in abundance, because the temple I am building will be great and wonderful. ¹⁰I will pay your servants, the woodcutters, 20,000 cors of ground wheat, 20,000 cors of barley, 20,000 baths of wine, and 20,000 baths of olive oil."

HIRAM'S REPLY TO SOLOMON

¹¹Then Hiram king of Tyre wrote a letter in reply to Solomon: "Because the LORD loves His people, He has set

you over them as king.” ¹²And Hiram added: “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who made the heavens and the earth! He has given King David a wise son with insight and understanding, who will build a temple for the LORD and a royal palace for himself. ¹³So now I am sending you Hiram-abi, a skillful man endowed with creativity. ¹⁴He is the son of a woman from the daughters of Dan, and his father is a man of Tyre. He is skilled in work with gold and silver, bronze and iron, stone and wood, purple, blue, and crimson yarn, and fine linen. He is experienced in every kind of engraving and can execute any design that is given him. He will work with your craftsmen and with those of my lord, your father David. ¹⁵Now let my lord send to his servants the wheat, barley, olive oil, and wine he promised. ¹⁶We will cut logs from Lebanon, as many as you need, and we will float them to you as rafts by sea down to Joppa. Then you can take them up to Jerusalem.” ¹⁷Solomon numbered all the foreign men in the land of Israel following the census his father David had conducted, and there were found to be 153,600 in all. ¹⁸Solomon made 70,000 of them porters, 80,000 stonecutters in the mountains, and 3,600 supervisors.

Chapter 3

TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION BEGINS

¹Then Solomon began to build the house of the LORD in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the LORD had appeared to his father David. This was the place that David had prepared on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. ²Solomon began construction on the second day of the second month in the fourth year of his reign. ³The foundation that Solomon laid for the house of God was sixty cubits long and twenty cubits wide, according to the old standard. ⁴The portico at the front, extending across the width of the temple, was twenty cubits long and twenty cubits high. He overlaid the inside with pure gold.

THE TEMPLE’S INTERIOR

⁵He paneled the main room with cypress, which he overlaid with fine gold and decorated with palm trees and chains. ⁶He adorned the temple with precious stones for beauty, and its gold was from Parvaim. ⁷He overlaid its beams, thresholds, walls, and doors with gold, and he carved cherubim on the walls. ⁸Then he made the Most Holy Place; its length corresponded to the width of the temple—twenty cubits long and twenty cubits wide. And he overlaid the inside with six hundred talents of fine gold. ⁹The weight of the nails was fifty shekels of gold. He also overlaid the upper rooms with gold.

THE CHERUBIM

¹⁰In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim of sculptured work, and he overlaid them with gold. ¹¹The total wingspan of the cherubim was twenty cubits. One wing of the first cherub was five cubits long and touched the wall of the temple, and its other wing was five cubits long and touched the wing of the other cherub. ¹²The wing of the second cherub also measured five cubits and touched the wall of the temple, while its other wing measured five cubits and touched the wing of the first cherub. ¹³So the total wingspan of these cherubim was twenty cubits. They stood on their feet, facing the main room.

THE VEIL AND PILLARS

¹⁴He made the veil of blue, purple, and crimson yarn and fine linen, with cherubim woven into it. ¹⁵In front of the temple he made two pillars, which together were thirty-five cubits high, each with a capital on top measuring five cubits. ¹⁶He made interwoven chains and put them on top of the pillars. He made a hundred pomegranates and fastened them into the chainwork. ¹⁷Then he set up the pillars in front of the temple, one on the south and one on the north. The pillar on the south he named Jachin, and the pillar on the north he named Boaz.

Chapter 4

THE BRONZE ALTAR AND MOLTEN SEA

¹He made a bronze altar twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and ten cubits high. ²He also made the Sea of cast metal. It was circular in shape, measuring ten cubits from rim to rim, five cubits in height, and thirty cubits in circumference. ³Below the rim, figures of oxen encircled it, ten per cubit all the way around the Sea, cast in two rows as a part of the Sea. ⁴The Sea stood on twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south, and three facing east. The Sea rested on them, with all their hindquarters toward the center. ⁵It was a handbreadth thick, and its rim was fashioned like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It could hold three thousand baths.

THE TEN BASINS, LAMPSTANDS, AND TABLES

⁶He also made ten basins for washing and placed five on the south side and five on the north. The parts of the burnt offering were rinsed in them, but the priests used the Sea for washing. ⁷He made ten gold lampstands according to their specifications and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north. ⁸Additionally, he made ten tables and placed them in the temple, five on the south side and five on the north. He also made a hundred gold bowls.

THE COURTS

⁹He made the courtyard of the priests and the large court with its doors, and he overlaid the doors with bronze. ¹⁰He put the Sea on the south side, at the southeast corner.

COMPLETION OF THE BRONZE WORKS

¹¹Additionally, Hiram made the pots, shovels, and sprinkling bowls. So Hiram finished the work that he had undertaken for King Solomon in the house of God: ¹²the two pillars; the two bowl-shaped capitals atop the pillars; the two sets of network covering both bowls of the capitals atop the pillars; ¹³the four hundred pomegranates for the two sets of network (two rows of pomegranates for each network covering both the bowl-shaped capitals atop the pillars); ¹⁴the stands; the basins on the stands; ¹⁵the Sea; the twelve oxen underneath the Sea; ¹⁶and the pots, shovels, meat forks, and all the other articles. All these objects that Hiram-abi made for King Solomon for the house of the LORD were of polished bronze. ¹⁷The king had them cast in clay molds in the plain of the Jordan between Succoth and Zeredah. ¹⁸Solomon made all these articles in such great abundance that the weight of the bronze could not be determined.

COMPLETION OF THE GOLD FURNISHINGS

¹⁹Solomon also made all the furnishings for the house of God: the golden altar; the tables on which was placed the Bread of the Presence; ²⁰the lampstands of pure gold and their lamps, to burn in front of the inner sanctuary as prescribed; ²¹the flowers, lamps, and tongs of gold—of purest gold; ²²the wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, ladles, and censers of pure gold; and the gold doors of the temple: the inner doors to the Most Holy Place as well as the doors of the main hall.

Chapter 5

THE ARK ENTERS THE TEMPLE

¹So all the work that Solomon had performed for the house of the LORD was completed. Then Solomon brought in the items his father David had dedicated—the silver, the gold, and all the furnishings—and he placed them in the treasuries of the house of God. ²At that time Solomon assembled in Jerusalem the elders of Israel—all the tribal heads and family leaders of the Israelites—to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD from Zion, the City of David. ³So all the men of Israel came together to the king at the feast in the seventh month. ⁴When all the elders of Israel had arrived, the Levites took up the ark, ⁵and they brought up the ark and the Tent of Meeting with all its sacred furnishings. The Levitical priests carried them up. ⁶There, before the

ark, King Solomon and the whole congregation of Israel who had assembled with him sacrificed so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered. ⁷Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place in the inner sanctuary of the temple, the Most Holy Place, beneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁸For the cherubim spread their wings over the place of the ark and overshadowed the ark and its poles. ⁹The poles of the ark extended far enough that their ends were visible from in front of the inner sanctuary, but not from outside the Holy Place; and they are there to this day. ¹⁰There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets that Moses had placed in it at Horeb, where the LORD had made a covenant with the Israelites after they had come out of Egypt. ¹¹Now all the priests who were present had consecrated themselves regardless of their divisions. And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, ¹²all the Levitical singers—Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and relatives—stood on the east side of the altar, dressed in fine linen and playing cymbals, harps, and lyres, accompanied by 120 priests sounding trumpets. ¹³The trumpeters and singers joined together to praise and thank the LORD with one voice. They lifted up their voices, accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and musical instruments, in praise to the LORD: “For He is good; His loving devotion endures forever.” And the temple, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud ¹⁴so that the priests could not stand there to minister because of the cloud. For the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

Chapter 6

SOLOMON BLESSES THE LORD

¹Then Solomon declared: “The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud. ²But I have built You an exalted house, a place for You to dwell forever.” ³And as the whole assembly of Israel stood there, the king turned around and blessed them all ⁴and said: “Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has fulfilled with His own hand what He spoke with His mouth to my father David, saying, ⁵“Since the day I brought My people out of the land of Egypt, I have not chosen a city from any tribe of Israel in which to build a house so that My Name would be there, nor have I chosen anyone to be ruler over My people Israel. ⁶But now I have chosen Jerusalem for My Name to be there, and I have chosen David to be over My people Israel.” ⁷Now it was in the heart of my father David to build a house for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ⁸But the LORD said to my father David, ‘Since it was in your heart to build a house for My Name, you have done well to

have this in your heart. ⁹Nevertheless, you are not the one to build it; but your son, your own offspring, will build the house for My Name.' ¹⁰Now the LORD has fulfilled the word that He spoke. I have succeeded my father David, and I sit on the throne of Israel, as the LORD promised. I have built the house for the Name of the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹¹And there I have placed the ark, which contains the covenant of the LORD that He made with the children of Israel."

SOLOMON'S PRAYER OF DEDICATION

¹²Then Solomon stood before the altar of the LORD in front of the whole assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. ¹³Now Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high and had placed it in the middle of the courtyard. He stood on it, knelt down before the whole assembly of Israel, spread out his hands toward heaven, ¹⁴and said: "O LORD, God of Israel, there is no God like You in heaven or on earth, keeping Your covenant of loving devotion with Your servants who walk before You with all their hearts. ¹⁵You have kept Your promise to Your servant, my father David. What You spoke with Your mouth You have fulfilled with Your hand this day. ¹⁶Therefore now, O LORD, God of Israel, keep for Your servant, my father David, what You promised when You said: 'You will never fail to have a man to sit before Me on the throne of Israel, if only your descendants guard their way to walk in My law as you have walked before Me.' ¹⁷And now, O LORD, God of Israel, please confirm what You promised to Your servant David. ¹⁸But will God indeed dwell with man upon the earth? The heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain You, much less this temple I have built. ¹⁹Yet regard the prayer and plea of Your servant, O LORD my God, so that You may hear the cry and the prayer that Your servant is praying before You. ²⁰May Your eyes be open toward this temple day and night, toward the place where You said You would put Your Name, so that You may hear the prayer that Your servant prays toward this place. ²¹Hear the plea of Your servant and of Your people Israel when they pray toward this place. May You hear from heaven, Your dwelling place. May You hear and forgive. ²²When a man sins against his neighbor and is required to take an oath, and he comes to take an oath before Your altar in this temple, ²³then may You hear from heaven and act. May You judge Your servants, condemning the wicked man by bringing down on his own head what he has done, and justifying the righteous man by rewarding him according to his righteousness. ²⁴When Your people Israel are defeated before an enemy because they have sinned against You, and they return to You and confess

Your name, praying and pleading before You in this temple, ²⁵then may You hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your people Israel. May You restore them to the land You gave to them and their fathers. ²⁶When the skies are shut and there is no rain because Your people have sinned against You, and they pray toward this place and confess Your name, and they turn from their sins because You have afflicted them, ²⁷then may You hear from heaven and forgive the sin of Your servants, Your people Israel, so that You may teach them the good way in which they should walk. May You send rain on the land that You gave Your people as an inheritance. ²⁸When famine or plague comes upon the land, or blight or mildew or locusts or grasshoppers, or when their enemies besiege them in their cities, whatever plague or sickness may come, ²⁹then may whatever prayer or plea Your people Israel make—each knowing his own afflictions and spreading out his hands toward this temple— ³⁰be heard by You from heaven, Your dwelling place. And may You forgive and repay each man according to all his ways, since You know his heart—for You alone know the hearts of men— ³¹so that they may fear You and walk in Your ways all the days they live in the land that You gave to our fathers. ³²And as for the foreigner who is not of Your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of Your great name and Your mighty hand and outstretched arm—when he comes and prays toward this temple, ³³then may You hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, and do according to all for which the foreigner calls to You. Then all the peoples of the earth will know Your name and fear You, as do Your people Israel, and they will know that this house I have built is called by Your Name. ³⁴When Your people go to war against their enemies, wherever You send them, and when they pray to You in the direction of this city You have chosen and the house I have built for Your Name, ³⁵then may You hear from heaven their prayer and their plea, and may You uphold their cause. ³⁶When they sin against You—for there is no one who does not sin—and You become angry with them and deliver them to an enemy who takes them as captives to a land far or near, ³⁷and when they come to their senses in the land to which they were taken, and they repent and plead with You in the land of their captors, saying, 'We have sinned and done wrong; we have acted wickedly,' ³⁸and when they return to You with all their heart and soul in the land of the enemies who took them captive, and when they pray in the direction of the land that You gave to their fathers, the city You have chosen, and the house I have built for Your Name, ³⁹then may You hear from heaven, Your dwelling place, their prayer and pleas, and may You uphold their cause. May You forgive Your people who sinned against You. ⁴⁰Now,

my God, may Your eyes be open and Your ears attentive to the prayer offered in this place. ⁴¹Now therefore, arise, O LORD God, and enter Your resting place, You and the ark of Your might. May Your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, and may Your godly ones rejoice in goodness. ⁴²O LORD God, do not reject Your anointed one. Remember Your loving devotion to Your servant David.”

Chapter 7

FIRE FROM HEAVEN

¹When Solomon had finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. ²The priests were unable to enter the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled it. ³When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD: “For He is good; His loving devotion endures forever.”

SACRIFICES OF DEDICATION

⁴Then the king and all the people offered sacrifices before the LORD. ⁵And King Solomon offered a sacrifice of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep. So the king and all the people dedicated the house of God. ⁶The priests stood at their posts, as did the Levites with the musical instruments of the LORD, which King David had made for giving thanks to the LORD and with which David had offered praise, saying, “For His loving devotion endures forever.” Across from the Levites, the priests sounded trumpets, and all the Israelites were standing. ⁷Then Solomon consecrated the middle of the courtyard in front of the house of the LORD, and there he offered the burnt offerings and the fat of the peace offerings, since the bronze altar he had made could not hold all these offerings. ⁸So at that time Solomon and all Israel with him—a very great assembly of people from Lebo-hamath to the Brook of Egypt—kept the feast for seven days. ⁹On the eighth day they held a solemn assembly, for the dedication of the altar had lasted seven days, and the feast seven days more. ¹⁰On the twenty-third day of the seventh month, Solomon sent the people away to their homes, joyful and glad of heart for the good things that the LORD had done for David, for Solomon, and for His people Israel.

THE LORD’S RESPONSE TO SOLOMON

¹¹When Solomon had finished the house of the LORD and the royal palace, successfully carrying out all that was in his heart to do for the house of the LORD and for his own

palace, ¹²the LORD appeared to him at night and said to him: “I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for Myself as a house of sacrifice. ¹³If I close the sky so there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send a plague among My people, ¹⁴and if My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land. ¹⁵Now My eyes will be open and My ears attentive to the prayers offered in this place. ¹⁶For I have now chosen and consecrated this temple so that My Name may be there forever. My eyes and My heart will be there for all time. ¹⁷And as for you, if you walk before Me as your father David walked, doing all I have commanded you, and if you keep My statutes and ordinances, ¹⁸then I will establish your royal throne, as I covenanted with your father David when I said, ‘You will never fail to have a man to rule over Israel.’ ¹⁹But if you turn away and forsake the statutes and commandments I have set before you, and if you go off to serve and worship other gods, ²⁰then I will uproot Israel from the soil I have given them, and I will banish from My presence this temple I have sanctified for My Name. I will make it an object of scorn and ridicule among all the peoples. ²¹And when this temple has become a heap of rubble, all who pass by it will be appalled and say, ‘Why has the LORD done such a thing to this land and to this temple?’ ²²And others will answer, ‘Because they have forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers, who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and have embraced other gods, worshipping and serving them—because of this, He has brought all this disaster upon them.’”

Chapter 8

SOLOMON’S ADDITIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

¹Now at the end of the twenty years during which Solomon had built the house of the LORD and his own palace, ²Solomon rebuilt the cities Hiram had given him and settled Israelites there. ³Then Solomon went to Hamath-zobah and captured it. ⁴He built Tadmor in the wilderness, in addition to all the store cities that he had built in Hamath. ⁵He rebuilt Upper and Lower Beth-horon as fortified cities with walls, gates, and bars, ⁶as well as Baalath, all the store cities that belonged to Solomon, and all the cities for his chariots and horses—whatever he desired to build in Jerusalem, Lebanon, and throughout the land of his dominion. ⁷As for all the people who remained of the Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites (these people were not Israelites)—⁸their descendants who remained in the land, those whom the Israelites had not de-

stroyed—Solomon conscripted these people to be forced laborers, as they are to this day. ⁹But Solomon did not consign any of the Israelites to slave labor, because they were his men of war, the leaders of his captains, and the commanders of his chariots and cavalry. ¹⁰They were also the chief officers for King Solomon: 250 supervisors. ¹¹Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the palace he had built for her. For he said, “My wife must not live in the house of David king of Israel, because the places the ark of the LORD has entered are holy.” ¹²At that time Solomon offered burnt offerings to the LORD on the altar of the LORD he had built in front of the portico. ¹³He observed the daily requirement for offerings according to the commandment of Moses for Sabbaths, New Moons, and the three annual appointed feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Tabernacles. ¹⁴In keeping with the ordinances of his father David, Solomon appointed the divisions of the priests over their service, and the Levites for their duties to offer praise and to minister before the priests according to the daily requirement. He also appointed gatekeepers by their divisions at each gate, for this had been the command of David, the man of God. ¹⁵They did not turn aside from the king’s command regarding the priests or the Levites in any matter, including that of the treasuries. ¹⁶Thus all the work of Solomon was carried out, from the day the foundation was laid for the house of the LORD until it was finished. So the house of the LORD was completed. ¹⁷Then Solomon went to Ezion-geber and to Eloth on the coast of Edom. ¹⁸So Hiram sent him ships captained by his servants, along with crews of experienced sailors. They went with Solomon’s servants to Ophir and acquired from there 450 talents of gold, which they delivered to King Solomon.

Chapter 9

THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

¹Now when the queen of Sheba heard about the fame of Solomon, she came to test him with difficult questions. She arrived in Jerusalem with a very large caravan—with camels bearing spices, gold in abundance, and precious stones. And she came to Solomon and spoke with him about all that was on her mind. ²And Solomon answered all her questions; nothing was too difficult for him to explain. ³When the queen of Sheba saw the wisdom of Solomon, the palace he had built, ⁴the food at his table, the seating of his servants, the service and attire of his attendants, the attire of his cupbearers, and the burnt offerings he presented at the house of the LORD, it took her breath away. ⁵She said to the king, “The report I heard in my own country about

your words and wisdom is true. ⁶But I did not believe the reports until I came and saw with my own eyes. Indeed, not half of the greatness of your wisdom was told to me. You have far exceeded the report I heard. ⁷How blessed are your men! How blessed are these servants of yours who stand continually before you and hear your wisdom! ⁸Blessed be the LORD your God, who has delighted in you to set you on His throne to be king for the LORD your God. Because your God loved Israel enough to establish them forever, He has made you king over them to carry out justice and righteousness.” ⁹Then she gave the king 120 talents of gold, a great quantity of spices, and precious stones. There had never been such spices as those the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon. ¹⁰(The servants of Hiram and of Solomon who brought gold from Ophir also brought algum wood and precious stones. ¹¹The king made the algum wood into steps for the house of the LORD and for the king’s palace, and into lyres and harps for the singers. Never before had anything like them been seen in the land of Judah.) ¹²King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired—whatever she asked—far more than she had brought the king. Then she left and returned to her own country, along with her servants.

SOLOMON’S WEALTH AND SPLENDOR

¹³The weight of gold that came to Solomon each year was 666 talents, ¹⁴not including the revenue from the merchants and traders. And all the Arabian kings and governors of the land also brought gold and silver to Solomon. ¹⁵King Solomon made two hundred large shields of hammered gold; six hundred shekels of hammered gold went into each shield. ¹⁶He also made three hundred small shields of hammered gold; three hundred shekels of gold went into each shield. And the king put them in the House of the Forest of Lebanon. ¹⁷Additionally, the king made a great throne of ivory and overlaid it with pure gold. ¹⁸The throne had six steps, and a footstool of gold was attached to it. There were armrests on both sides of the seat, with a lion standing beside each armrest. ¹⁹Twelve lions stood on the six steps, one at either end of each step. Nothing like this had ever been made for any kingdom. ²⁰All King Solomon’s drinking cups were gold, and all the utensils of the House of the Forest of Lebanon were pure gold. There was no silver, because it was accounted as nothing in the days of Solomon. ²¹For the king had the ships of Tarshish that went with Hiram’s servants, and once every three years the ships of Tarshish would arrive bearing gold, silver, ivory, apes, and peacocks. ²²So King Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom. ²³All the kings of the earth sought an audience with Solomon to

hear the wisdom that God had put in his heart. ²⁴Year after year, each visitor would bring his tribute: articles of silver and gold, clothing, weapons, spices, horses, and mules. ²⁵Solomon had 4,000 stalls for horses and chariots, and 12,000 horses, which he stationed in the chariot cities and also with him in Jerusalem. ²⁶He reigned over all the kings from the Euphrates to the land of the Philistines, as far as the border of Egypt. ²⁷The king made silver as common in Jerusalem as stones, and cedar as abundant as sycamore in the foothills. ²⁸Solomon's horses were imported from Egypt and from all the lands.

THE DEATH OF SOLOMON

²⁹As for the rest of the acts of Solomon, from beginning to end, are they not written in the Records of Nathan the Prophet, in the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and in the Visions of Iddo the Seer concerning Jeroboam son of Nebat? ³⁰Solomon reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel forty years. ³¹And Solomon rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of his father David. And his son Rehoboam reigned in his place.

Chapter 10

REBELLION AGAINST REHOBAM

¹Then Rehoboam went to Shechem, for all Israel had gone there to make him king. ²When Jeroboam son of Nebat heard about this, he returned from Egypt, where he had fled from King Solomon. ³So they sent for Jeroboam, and he and all Israel came to Rehoboam and said, ⁴"Your father put a heavy yoke on us. But now you must lighten the burden of your father's service and the heavy yoke he put on us, and we will serve you." ⁵Rehoboam answered, "Come back to me in three days." So the people departed. ⁶Then King Rehoboam consulted with the elders who had served his father Solomon during his lifetime. "How do you advise me to respond to these people?" he asked. ⁷They replied, "If you will be kind to these people and please them by speaking kind words to them, they will be your servants forever." ⁸But Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders; instead, he consulted the young men who had grown up with him and served him. ⁹He asked them, "What message do you advise that we send back to these people who have spoken to me, saying, 'Lighten the yoke your father put on us'?" ¹⁰The young men who had grown up with him replied, "This is how you should answer these people who said to you, 'Your father made our yoke heavy, but you must make it lighter.' This is what you should tell them: 'My little finger is thicker than my father's waist! ¹¹Whereas my father burdened you with a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke.

Whereas my father scourged you with whips, I will scourge you with scorpions.'" ¹²After three days, Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam, since the king had said, "Come back to me on the third day." ¹³And the king answered them harshly. King Rehoboam rejected the advice of the elders ¹⁴and spoke to them as the young men had advised, saying, "Whereas my father made your yoke heavy, I will add to your yoke. Whereas my father scourged you with whips, I will scourge you with scorpions." ¹⁵So the king did not listen to the people, and indeed this turn of events was from God, in order that the LORD might fulfill the word that He had spoken through Ahijah the Shilonite to Jeroboam son of Nebat.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

¹⁶When all Israel saw that the king had refused to listen to them, they answered the king: "What portion do we have in David, and what inheritance in the son of Jesse? To your tents, O Israel! Look now to your own house, O David!" So all the Israelites went home, ¹⁷but Rehoboam still reigned over the Israelites living in the cities of Judah. ¹⁸Then King Rehoboam sent out Hadoram, who was in charge of the forced labor, but the Israelites stoned him to death. And King Rehoboam mounted his chariot in haste and escaped to Jerusalem. ¹⁹So to this day Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David.

Chapter 11

SHEMAIAH'S PROPHECY

¹When Rehoboam arrived in Jerusalem, he mobilized the house of Judah and Benjamin—180,000 chosen warriors—to fight against Israel and restore the kingdom to Rehoboam. ²But the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah the man of God: ³"Tell Rehoboam son of Solomon king of Judah and all the Israelites in Judah and Benjamin ⁴that this is what the LORD says: 'You are not to go up and fight against your brothers. Each of you must return home, for this is My doing.'" So they listened to the words of the LORD and turned back from going against Jeroboam.

REHOBAM FORTIFIES JUDAH

⁵Rehoboam lived in Jerusalem, and he built up cities for defense in Judah. ⁶He built up Bethlehem, Etam, Tekoa, ⁷Beth-zur, Soco, Adullam, ⁸Gath, Mareshah, Ziph, ⁹Adoraim, Lachish, Azekah, ¹⁰Zorah, Aijalon, and Hebron, the fortified cities in Judah and Benjamin. ¹¹He strengthened their fortifications and put officers in them, with supplies of food, oil, and wine. ¹²He also put shields and spears in all the cities and strengthened them greatly. So Judah and Benjamin belonged to him.

JEROBOAM FORSAKES THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES

¹³Moreover, the priests and Levites from all their districts throughout Israel stood with Rehoboam. ¹⁴For the Levites left their pasturelands and their possessions and went to Judah and Jerusalem, because Jeroboam and his sons had rejected them as priests of the LORD. ¹⁵And Jeroboam appointed his own priests for the high places and for the goat demons and calf idols he had made. ¹⁶Those from every tribe of Israel who had set their hearts to seek the LORD their God followed the Levites to Jerusalem to sacrifice to the LORD, the God of their fathers. ¹⁷So they strengthened the kingdom of Judah and supported Rehoboam son of Solomon for three years, because they walked for three years in the way of David and Solomon.

REHOBAM'S FAMILY

¹⁸And Rehoboam married Mahalath, who was the daughter of David's son Jerimoth and of Abihail, the daughter of Jesse's son Eliab. ¹⁹She bore sons to him: Jeush, Shemariah, and Zaham. ²⁰After her, he married Maacah daughter of Absalom, and she bore to him Abijah, Attai, Ziza, and Shelomith. ²¹Rehoboam loved Maacah daughter of Absalom more than all his wives and concubines. In all, he had eighteen wives and sixty concubines, and he was the father of twenty-eight sons and sixty daughters. ²²Rehoboam appointed Abijah son of Maacah as chief prince among his brothers, intending to make him king. ²³Rehoboam also acted wisely by dispersing some of his sons throughout the districts of Judah and Benjamin, and to all the fortified cities. He gave them abundant provisions and sought many wives for them.

Chapter 12

SHISHAK RAIDS JERUSALEM

¹After Rehoboam had established his sovereignty and royal power, he and all Israel with him forsook the Law of the LORD. ²In the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, because they had been unfaithful to the LORD, Shishak king of Egypt attacked Jerusalem ³with 1,200 chariots, 60,000 horsemen, and countless troops who came with him out of Egypt—Libyans, Sukkites, and Cushites. ⁴He captured the fortified cities of Judah and came as far as Jerusalem. ⁵Then Shemaiah the prophet came to Rehoboam and the leaders of Judah who had gathered at Jerusalem because of Shishak, and he said to them, "This is what the LORD says: 'You have forsaken Me; therefore, I have forsaken you into the hand of Shishak.'" ⁶So the leaders of Israel and the king humbled themselves and said, "The LORD is righteous." ⁷When the LORD saw that they had humbled themselves,

the word of the LORD came to Shemaiah, saying, "They have humbled themselves; I will not destroy them, but will soon grant them deliverance. My wrath will not be poured out on Jerusalem through Shishak. ⁸Nevertheless, they will become his servants, so that they may learn the difference between serving Me and serving the kings of other lands." ⁹So King Shishak of Egypt attacked Jerusalem and seized the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the royal palace. He took everything, including the gold shields that Solomon had made. ¹⁰Then King Rehoboam made bronze shields in their place and committed them to the care of the captains of the guard on duty at the entrance to the royal palace. ¹¹And whenever the king entered the house of the LORD, the guards would go with him, bearing the shields, and later they would return them to the guardroom. ¹²Because Rehoboam humbled himself, the anger of the LORD turned away from him, and He did not destroy him completely. Indeed, conditions were good in Judah.

REHOBAM'S REIGN AND DEATH

¹³Thus King Rehoboam established himself in Jerusalem and reigned. He was forty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned seventeen years in Jerusalem, the city the LORD had chosen from all the tribes of Israel in which to put His Name. His mother's name was Naamah the Ammonite. ¹⁴And Rehoboam did evil because he did not set his heart to seek the LORD. ¹⁵Now the acts of Rehoboam, from first to last, are they not written in the records of Shemaiah the Prophet and of Iddo the Seer concerning the genealogies? There was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam throughout their days. ¹⁶And Rehoboam rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. And his son Abijah reigned in his place.

Chapter 13

ABIJAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹In the eighteenth year of Jeroboam's reign, Abijah became king of Judah, ²and he reigned in Jerusalem three years. His mother's name was Micaiah daughter of Uriel; she was from Gibeah. And there was war between Abijah and Jeroboam. ³Abijah went into battle with an army of 400,000 chosen men, while Jeroboam drew up in formation against him with 800,000 chosen and mighty men of valor.

CIVIL WAR AGAINST JEROBOAM

⁴Then Abijah stood on Mount Zemaraim in the hill country of Ephraim and said, "Hear me, O Jeroboam and all Israel! ⁵Do you not know that the LORD, the God of Israel, has given the kingship of Israel to David and his descendants

forever by a covenant of salt? ⁶Yet Jeroboam son of Nebat, a servant of Solomon son of David, rose up and rebelled against his master. ⁷Then worthless and wicked men gathered around him to resist Rehoboam son of Solomon when he was young, inexperienced, and unable to resist them. ⁸And now you think you can resist the kingdom of the LORD, which is in the hands of David's descendants. You are indeed a vast army, and you have with you the golden calves that Jeroboam made for you as gods. ⁹But did you not drive out the priests of the LORD, the sons of Aaron, and the Levites? And did you not make priests for yourselves as do the peoples of other lands? Now whoever comes to consecrate himself with a young bull and seven rams can become a priest of things that are not gods. ¹⁰But as for us, the LORD is our God. We have not forsaken Him; the priests who minister to the LORD are sons of Aaron, and the Levites attend to their duties. ¹¹Every morning and every evening they present burnt offerings and fragrant incense to the LORD. They set out the rows of showbread on the ceremonially clean table, and every evening they light the lamps of the gold lampstand. We are carrying out the requirements of the LORD our God, while you have forsaken Him. ¹²Now behold, God Himself is with us as our head, and His priests with their trumpets sound the battle call against you. O children of Israel, do not fight against the LORD, the God of your fathers, for you will not succeed." ¹³Now Jeroboam had sent troops around to ambush from the rear, so that while he was in front of Judah, the ambush was behind them. ¹⁴When Judah turned and discovered that the battle was both before and behind them, they cried out to the LORD. Then the priests blew the trumpets, ¹⁵and the men of Judah raised the battle cry. And when they raised the cry, God routed Jeroboam and all Israel before Abijah and Judah. ¹⁶So the Israelites fled before Judah, and God delivered them into their hands. ¹⁷Then Abijah and his people struck them with a mighty blow, and 500,000 chosen men of Israel fell slain. ¹⁸Thus the Israelites were subdued at that time, and the men of Judah prevailed because they relied on the LORD, the God of their fathers. ¹⁹Abijah pursued Jeroboam and captured some cities from him: Bethel, Jeshanah, and Ephron, along with their villages. ²⁰Jeroboam did not again recover his power during the days of Abijah, and the LORD struck him down and he died. ²¹But Abijah grew strong, married fourteen wives, and became the father of twenty-two sons and sixteen daughters. ²²Now the rest of the acts of Abijah, along with his ways and his words, are written in the Treatise of the Prophet Iddo.

Chapter 14

ASA REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Then Abijah rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. And his son Asa reigned in his place, and in his days the land was at peace for ten years. ²And Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of the LORD his God. ³He removed the foreign altars and high places, shattered the sacred pillars, and chopped down the Asherah poles. ⁴He commanded the people of Judah to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, and to observe the law and the commandments. ⁵He also removed the high places and incense altars from all the cities of Judah, and under him the kingdom was at peace. ⁶Because the land was at peace, Asa built fortified cities in Judah. In those days no one made war with him, because the LORD had given him rest. ⁷So he said to the people of Judah, "Let us build these cities and surround them with walls and towers, with doors and bars. The land is still ours because we have sought the LORD our God. We have sought Him, and He has given us rest on every side." So they built and prospered. ⁸Asa had an army of 300,000 men from Judah bearing large shields and spears, and 280,000 men from Benjamin bearing small shields and drawing the bow. All these were mighty men of valor. ⁹Then Zerah the Cushite came against them with an army of 1,000,000 men and 300 chariots, and they advanced as far as Mareshah. ¹⁰So Asa marched out against him and lined up in battle formation in the Valley of Zephathah near Mareshah. ¹¹Then Asa cried out to the LORD his God: "O LORD, there is no one besides You to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O LORD our God, for we rely on You, and in Your name we have come against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God. Do not let a mere mortal prevail against You." ¹²So the LORD struck down the Cushites before Asa and Judah, and the Cushites fled. ¹³Then Asa and his army pursued them as far as Gerar. The Cushites fell and could not recover, for they were crushed before the LORD and His army. So the people of Judah carried off a great amount of plunder ¹⁴and attacked all the cities around Gerar, because the terror of the LORD had fallen upon them. They plundered all the cities, since there was much plunder there. ¹⁵They also attacked the tents of the herdsmen and carried off many sheep and camels. Then they returned to Jerusalem.

Chapter 15

THE PROPHECY OF AZARIAH

¹Now the Spirit of God came upon Azariah son of Oded. ²So he went out to meet Asa and said to him, "Listen to me, Asa

and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD is with you when you are with Him. If you seek Him, He will be found by you, but if you forsake Him, He will forsake you. ³For many years Israel has been without the true God, without a priest to instruct them, and without the law. ⁴But in their distress they turned to the LORD, the God of Israel, and sought Him, and He was found by them. ⁵In those days there was no safety for travelers, because the residents of the lands had many conflicts. ⁶Nation was crushed by nation, and city by city, for God afflicted them with all kinds of adversity. ⁷But as for you, be strong; do not be discouraged, for your work will be rewarded.”

ASA’S REFORMS

⁸When Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Azariah son of Oded the prophet, he took courage and removed the detestable idols from the whole land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities he had captured in the hill country of Ephraim. He then restored the altar of the LORD that was in front of the portico of the LORD’s temple. ⁹And he assembled all Judah and Benjamin, along with those from the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon who had settled among them, for great numbers had come over to him from Israel when they saw that the LORD his God was with him. ¹⁰So they gathered together in Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa’s reign. ¹¹At that time they sacrificed to the LORD seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep from all the plunder they had brought back. ¹²Then they entered into a covenant to seek the LORD, the God of their fathers, with all their heart and soul. ¹³And whoever would not seek the LORD, the God of Israel, would be put to death, whether young or old, man or woman. ¹⁴They took an oath to the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting, trumpets, and rams’ horns. ¹⁵And all Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn it with all their heart. They had sought Him earnestly, and He was found by them. So the LORD gave them rest on every side. ¹⁶King Asa also removed his grandmother Maacah from her position as queen mother because she had made a detestable Asherah pole. Asa chopped down the pole, crushed it, and burned it in the Kidron Valley. ¹⁷The high places were not removed from Israel, but Asa’s heart was fully devoted all his days. ¹⁸And he brought into the house of God the silver and gold and the articles that he and his father had dedicated. ¹⁹And there was no war until the thirty-fifth year of Asa’s reign.

Chapter 16

WAR BETWEEN ASA AND BAASHA

¹In the thirty-sixth year of Asa’s reign, Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah and fortified Ramah to prevent anyone from leaving or entering the territory of Asa king of Judah. ²So Asa withdrew the silver and gold from the treasures of the house of the LORD and the royal palace, and he sent it with this message to Ben-hadad king of Aram, who was ruling in Damascus: ³“Let there be a treaty between me and you as there was between my father and your father. See, I have sent you silver and gold. Now go and break your treaty with Baasha king of Israel, so that he will withdraw from me.” ⁴And Ben-hadad listened to King Asa and sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel, conquering Ijon, Dan, Abel-maim, and all the store cities of Naphtali. ⁵When Baasha learned of this, he stopped fortifying Ramah and abandoned his work. ⁶Then King Asa brought all the men of Judah, and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timbers Baasha had used for building. And with these materials he built up Geba and Mizpah.

HANANI’S MESSAGE TO ASA

⁷At that time Hanani the seer came to King Asa of Judah and told him, “Because you have relied on the king of Aram and not on the LORD your God, the army of the king of Aram has escaped from your hand. ⁸Were not the Cushites and Libyans a vast army with many chariots and horsemen? Yet because you relied on the LORD, He delivered them into your hand. ⁹For the eyes of the LORD roam to and fro over all the earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are fully devoted to Him. You have acted foolishly in this matter. From now on, therefore, you will be at war.” ¹⁰Asa was angry with the seer and became so enraged over this matter that he put the man in prison. And at the same time Asa oppressed some of the people.

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF ASA

¹¹Now the acts of Asa, from beginning to end, are indeed written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ¹²In the thirty-ninth year of his reign, Asa became diseased in his feet, and his disease became increasingly severe. Yet even in his illness he did not seek the LORD, but only the physicians. ¹³So in the forty-first year of his reign, Asa died and rested with his fathers. ¹⁴And he was buried in the tomb that he had cut out for himself in the City of David. They laid him on a bier that was full of spices and various blended perfumes; then they made a great fire in his honor.

Chapter 17

JEHOSHAPHAT REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Asa's son Jehoshaphat reigned in his place, and he strengthened himself against Israel. ²He stationed troops in every fortified city of Judah and put garrisons in the land of Judah and in the cities of Ephraim that his father Asa had captured. ³Now the LORD was with Jehoshaphat because he walked in the earlier ways of his father David. He did not seek the Baals, ⁴but he sought the God of his father and walked by His commandments rather than the practices of Israel. ⁵So the LORD established the kingdom in his hand, and all Judah brought him tribute, so that he had an abundance of riches and honor. ⁶And his heart took delight in the ways of the LORD; furthermore, he removed the high places and Asherah poles from Judah. ⁷In the third year of his reign, Jehoshaphat sent his officials Ben-hail, Obadiah, Zechariah, Nethanel, and Micaiah to teach in the cities of Judah, ⁸accompanied by certain Levites—Shemaiah, Nethaniah, Zebadiah, Asahel, Shemiramoth, Jehonathan, Adonijah, Tobijah, and Tob-adonijah—along with the priests Elishama and Jehoram. ⁹They taught throughout Judah, taking with them the Book of the Law of the LORD. They went throughout the towns of Judah and taught the people. ¹⁰And the dread of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that surrounded Judah, so that they did not make war against Jehoshaphat. ¹¹Some Philistines also brought gifts and silver as tribute to Jehoshaphat, and the Arabs brought him 7,700 rams and 7,700 goats from their flocks. ¹²Jehoshaphat grew stronger and stronger, and he built fortresses and store cities in Judah ¹³and kept vast supplies in the cities of Judah. He also had warriors in Jerusalem who were mighty men of valor. ¹⁴These are their numbers according to the houses of their fathers: From Judah, the commanders of thousands: Adnah the commander, and with him 300,000 mighty men of valor; ¹⁵next to him, Jehohanan the commander, and with him 280,000; ¹⁶and next to him, Amasiah son of Zichri, the volunteer for the LORD, and with him 200,000 mighty men of valor. ¹⁷From Benjamin: Eliada, a mighty man of valor, and with him 200,000 armed with bows and shields; ¹⁸and next to him, Jehozabad, and with him 180,000 armed for battle. ¹⁹These were the men who served the king, besides those he stationed in the fortified cities throughout Judah.

Chapter 18

JEHOSHAPHAT ALLIES WITH AHAB

¹Now Jehoshaphat had an abundance of riches and honor, and he allied himself with Ahab by marriage. ²And some years later he went down to visit Ahab in Samaria, where Ahab sacrificed many sheep and cattle for him and the people with him and urged him to march up to Ramoth-gilead. ³Ahab king of Israel asked Jehoshaphat king of Judah, "Will you go with me against Ramoth-gilead?" And Jehoshaphat replied, "I am as you are, and my people are your people; we will join you in the war." ⁴But Jehoshaphat also said to the king of Israel, "Please inquire first for the word of the LORD." ⁵So the king of Israel assembled the prophets, four hundred men, and asked them, "Should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should we refrain?" "Go up," they replied, "and God will deliver it into the hand of the king." ⁶But Jehoshaphat asked, "Is there not still a prophet of the LORD here of whom we can inquire?" ⁷The king of Israel answered, "There is still one man through whom we can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies anything good for me, but only bad. He is Micaiah son of Imlah." "The king should not say that!" Jehoshaphat replied. ⁸So the king of Israel called one of his officials and said, "Bring Micaiah son of Imlah at once." ⁹Dressed in royal attire, the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah were sitting on their thrones at the threshing floor by the entrance of the gate of Samaria, with all the prophets prophesying before them. ¹⁰Now Zedekiah son of Chenaanah had made for himself iron horns and declared, "This is what the LORD says: 'With these you shall gore the Arameans until they are finished off.'" ¹¹And all the prophets were prophesying the same, saying, "Go up to Ramoth-gilead and triumph, for the LORD will deliver it into the hand of the king."

MICAIAH PROPHESES AGAINST AHAB

¹²Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah instructed him, "Behold, with one accord the words of the prophets are favorable to the king. So please let your words be like theirs, and speak favorably." ¹³But Micaiah said, "As surely as the LORD lives, I will speak whatever my God tells me." ¹⁴When Micaiah arrived, the king asked him, "Micaiah, should we go to war against Ramoth-gilead, or should we refrain?" "Go up and triumph," Micaiah replied, "for they will be delivered into your hand." ¹⁵But the king said to him, "How many times must I make you swear not to tell me anything but the truth in the name of the LORD?" ¹⁶So Micaiah declared: "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd. And the LORD

said, "These people have no master; let each one return home in peace." ¹⁷Then the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you that he never prophesies good for me, but only bad?" ¹⁸Micaiah continued, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing on His right and on His left. ¹⁹And the LORD said, 'Who will entice Ahab king of Israel to march up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?' And one suggested this, and another that. ²⁰Then a spirit came forward, stood before the LORD, and said, 'I will entice him.' 'By what means?' asked the LORD. ²¹And he replied, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets.' 'You will surely entice him and prevail,' said the LORD. 'Go and do it.' ²²So you see, the LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouths of these prophets of yours, and the LORD has pronounced disaster against you." ²³Then Zedekiah son of Chenaanah went up, struck Micaiah in the face, and demanded, "Which way did the Spirit of the LORD go when He departed from me to speak with you?" ²⁴Micaiah replied, "You will soon see, on that day when you go and hide in an inner room." ²⁵And the king of Israel declared, "Take Micaiah and return him to Amon the governor of the city and to Joash the king's son, ²⁶and tell them that this is what the king says: 'Put this man in prison and feed him only bread and water until I return safely.'" ²⁷But Micaiah replied, "If you ever return safely, the LORD has not spoken through me." Then he added, "Take heed, all you people!"

AHAB'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

²⁸So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat king of Judah went up to Ramoth-gilead. ²⁹And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "I will disguise myself and go into battle, but you wear your royal robes." So the king of Israel disguised himself and went into battle. ³⁰Now the king of Aram had ordered his chariot commanders, "Do not fight with anyone, small or great, except the king of Israel." ³¹When the chariot commanders saw Jehoshaphat, they said, "This is the king of Israel!" So they turned to fight against him, but Jehoshaphat cried out, and the LORD helped him. God drew them away from him. ³²And when the chariot commanders saw that he was not the king of Israel, they turned back from pursuing him. ³³However, a certain man drew his bow without taking special aim, and he struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. So the king said to his charioteer, "Turn around and take me out of the battle, for I am badly wounded!" ³⁴The battle raged throughout that day, and the king of Israel propped himself up in his chariot facing the Arameans until evening. And at sunset he died.

Chapter 19

JEHOSHAPHAT REPROVED BY JEHU

¹When Jehoshaphat king of Judah had returned safely to his home in Jerusalem, ²Jehu son of Hanani the seer went out to confront him and said to King Jehoshaphat, "Should you help the wicked and love those who hate the LORD? Because of this, the wrath of the LORD is upon you. ³However, some good is found in you, for you have removed the Asherah poles from the land and have set your heart on seeking God."

JEHOSHAPHAT'S REFORMS

⁴Jehoshaphat lived in Jerusalem, and once again he went out among the people from Beersheba to the hill country of Ephraim and turned them back to the LORD, the God of their fathers. ⁵He appointed judges in the land, in each of the fortified cities of Judah. ⁶Then he said to the judges, "Consider carefully what you do, for you are not judging for man, but for the LORD, who is with you when you render judgment. ⁷And now, may the fear of the LORD be upon you. Be careful what you do, for with the LORD our God there is no injustice or partiality or bribery." ⁸Moreover, Jehoshaphat appointed in Jerusalem some of the Levites, priests, and heads of the Israelite families to judge on behalf of the LORD and to settle disputes. And they lived in Jerusalem. ⁹He commanded them, saying, "You must serve faithfully and wholeheartedly in the fear of the LORD. ¹⁰For every dispute that comes before you from your brothers who dwell in their cities—whether it regards bloodshed or some other violation of law, commandments, statutes, or ordinances—you are to warn them, so that they will not incur guilt before the LORD and wrath will not come upon you and your brothers. Do this, and you will not incur guilt. ¹¹Note that Amariah, the chief priest, will be over you in all that pertains to the LORD, and Zebadiah son of Ishmael, the ruler of the house of Judah, in all that pertains to the king. And the Levites will serve as officers before you. Act resolutely; may the LORD be with the upright!"

Chapter 20

WAR AGAINST JEHOSHAPHAT

¹After this, the Moabites and Ammonites, together with some of the Meunites, came to make war against Jehoshaphat. ²Then some men came and told Jehoshaphat, "A vast army is coming against you from Edom, from beyond the Sea; they are already in Hazazon-tamar" (that is, En-gedi). ³Jehoshaphat was alarmed and set his face to seek the LORD. And he proclaimed a fast

throughout Judah. ⁴So the people of Judah gathered to seek the LORD, and indeed, they came from all the cities of Judah to seek Him.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S PRAYER

⁵Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem in the house of the LORD in front of the new courtyard ⁶and said, "O LORD, God of our fathers, are You not the God who is in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations? Power and might are in Your hand, and no one can stand against You. ⁷Our God, did You not drive out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham Your friend? ⁸They have lived in the land and have built in it a sanctuary for Your Name, saying, ⁹'If disaster comes upon us—whether sword or judgment, plague or famine—we will stand before this temple and before You, for Your Name is in this temple. We will cry out to You in our distress, and You will hear us and save us.'¹⁰And now, here are the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, whom You did not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt. So Israel turned away from them and did not destroy them. ¹¹See how they are repaying us by coming to drive us out of the possession that You gave us as an inheritance. ¹²Our God, will You not judge them? For we are powerless before this vast army that comes against us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon You." ¹³Meanwhile all the men of Judah, with their wives and children and little ones, were standing before the LORD.

THE PROPHECY OF JAHAZIEL

¹⁴Then the Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite from Asaph's descendants, as he stood in the midst of the assembly. ¹⁵And he said, "Listen, all you people of Judah and Jerusalem! Listen, King Jehoshaphat! This is what the LORD says: 'Do not be afraid or discouraged because of this vast army, for the battle does not belong to you, but to God. ¹⁶Tomorrow you are to march down against them. You will see them coming up the Ascent of Ziz, and you will find them at the end of the valley facing the Wilderness of Jeruel. ¹⁷You need not fight this battle. Take up your positions, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD on your behalf, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid or discouraged. Go out and face them tomorrow, for the LORD is with you.'" ¹⁸Then Jehoshaphat bowed facedown, and all the people of Judah and Jerusalem fell down before the LORD to worship Him. ¹⁹And the Levites from the Kohathites and Korahites stood

up to praise the LORD, the God of Israel, shouting in a very loud voice.

THE ENEMIES DESTROY THEMSELVES

²⁰Early in the morning they got up and left for the Wilderness of Tekoa. As they set out, Jehoshaphat stood up and said, "Hear me, O people of Judah and Jerusalem. Believe in the LORD your God, and you will be upheld; believe in His prophets, and you will succeed." ²¹Then Jehoshaphat consulted with the people and appointed those who would sing to the LORD and praise the splendor of His holiness. As they went out before the army, they were singing: "Give thanks to the LORD, for His loving devotion endures forever." ²²The moment they began their shouts and praises, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir who had come against Judah, and they were defeated. ²³The Ammonites and Moabites rose up against the inhabitants of Mount Seir, devoting them to destruction. And when they had finished off the inhabitants of Seir, they helped to destroy one another. ²⁴When the men of Judah came to a place overlooking the wilderness, they looked for the vast army, but there were only corpses lying on the ground; no one had escaped. ²⁵Then Jehoshaphat and his people went to carry off the plunder, and they found on the bodies an abundance of goods and valuables—more than they could carry away. They were gathering the plunder for three days because there was so much.

THE JOYFUL RETURN

²⁶On the fourth day they assembled in the Valley of Beracah, where they blessed the LORD. Therefore that place is called the Valley of Beracah to this day. ²⁷Then all the men of Judah and Jerusalem, with Jehoshaphat at their head, returned joyfully to Jerusalem, for the LORD had made them rejoice over their enemies. ²⁸So they entered Jerusalem and went into the house of the LORD with harps, lyres, and trumpets. ²⁹And the fear of God came upon all the kingdoms of the lands when they heard that the LORD had fought against the enemies of Israel. ³⁰Then Jehoshaphat's kingdom was at peace, for his God had given him rest on every side.

SUMMARY OF JEHOSHAPHAT'S REIGN

³¹So Jehoshaphat reigned over Judah. He was thirty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-five years. His mother's name was Azubah daughter of Shilhi. ³²And Jehoshaphat walked in the way of his father Asa and did not turn away from it; he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD. ³³The high places, however, were not removed; the people had not yet

set their hearts on the God of their fathers. ³⁴As for the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, from beginning to end, they are indeed written in the Chronicles of Jehu son of Hanani, which are recorded in the Book of the Kings of Israel.

JEHOSHAPHAT'S FLEET IS WRECKED

³⁵Later, Jehoshaphat king of Judah made an alliance with Ahaziah king of Israel, who acted wickedly. ³⁶They agreed to make ships to go to Tarshish, and these were built in Ezion-geber. ³⁷Then Eliezer son of Dodavahu of Mareshah prophesied against Jehoshaphat, saying, "Because you have allied yourself with Ahaziah, the LORD has destroyed your works." So the ships were wrecked and were unable to sail to Tarshish.

Chapter 21

JEHORAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹And Jehoshaphat rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. And his son Jehoram reigned in his place. ²Jehoram's brothers, the sons of Jehoshaphat, were Azariah, Jehiel, Zechariah, Azariah, Michael, and Shephatiah; these were all sons of Jehoshaphat king of Israel. ³Their father had given them many gifts of silver and gold and precious things, as well as the fortified cities in Judah; but he gave the kingdom to Jehoram because he was the firstborn. ⁴When Jehoram had established himself over his father's kingdom, he strengthened himself by putting to the sword all his brothers along with some of the princes of Israel. ⁵Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. ⁶And Jehoram walked in the ways of the kings of Israel, just as the house of Ahab had done. For he married a daughter of Ahab and did evil in the sight of the LORD. ⁷Yet the LORD was unwilling to destroy the house of David, because of the covenant He had made with David, and since He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever.

EDOM AND LIBNAH REBEL

⁸In the days of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against the hand of Judah and appointed their own king. ⁹So Jehoram crossed into Edom with his officers and all his chariots. When the Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, he rose up and attacked by night. ¹⁰So to this day Edom has been in rebellion against the hand of Judah. Likewise, Libnah rebelled against his hand at the same time, because Jehoram had forsaken the LORD, the God of his fathers. ¹¹Jehoram had also built high places on the hills of Judah; he had caused the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves and had led Judah astray.

ELIJAH'S LETTER TO JEHORAM

¹²Then a letter came to Jehoram from Elijah the prophet, which stated: "This is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: 'You have not walked in the ways of your father Jehoshaphat or of Asa king of Judah, ¹³but you have walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and have caused Judah and the people of Jerusalem to prostitute themselves, just as the house of Ahab prostituted itself. You have also killed your brothers, your father's family, who were better than you. ¹⁴So behold, the LORD is about to strike your people, your sons, your wives, and all your possessions with a serious blow. ¹⁵And day after day you yourself will suffer from a severe illness, a disease of your bowels, until it causes your bowels to come out.'"

JEHORAM'S DISEASE AND DEATH

¹⁶Then the LORD stirred against Jehoram the spirit of the Philistines and Arabs who lived near the Cushites. ¹⁷So they went to war against Judah, invaded it, and carried off all the possessions found in the king's palace, along with his sons and wives; not a son was left to him except Jehoahaz, his youngest. ¹⁸After all this, the LORD afflicted Jehoram with an incurable disease of the bowels. ¹⁹This continued day after day until two full years had passed. Finally, his intestines came out because of his disease, and he died in severe pain. And his people did not make a fire in his honor as they had done for his fathers. ²⁰Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. He died, to no one's regret, and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings.

Chapter 22

AHAZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Then the people of Jerusalem made Ahaziah, the youngest son of Jehoram, king in his place, since the raiders who had come into the camp with the Arabs had killed all the older sons. So Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah. ²Ahaziah was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem one year. His mother's name was Athaliah, the granddaughter of Omri. ³Ahaziah also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab, for his mother was his counselor in wickedness. ⁴And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as the house of Ahab had done, for to his destruction they were his counselors after the death of his father. ⁵Ahaziah also followed their counsel and went with Joram son of Ahab king of Israel to fight against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-gilead. But the Arameans wounded Joram. ⁶So he returned to Jezreel to recover from

the wounds they had inflicted on him at Ramah when he fought against Hazael king of Aram. Then Ahaziah son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to Jezreel to visit Joram son of Ahab, because Joram had been wounded. ⁷Ahaziah's downfall came from God when he went to visit Joram. When Ahaziah arrived, he went out with Joram to meet Jehu son of Nimshi, whom the LORD had anointed to destroy the house of Ahab.

JEHU KILLS THE PRINCES OF JUDAH

⁸So while Jehu was executing judgment on the house of Ahab, he found the rulers of Judah and the sons of Ahaziah's brothers who were serving Ahaziah, and he killed them. ⁹Then Jehu looked for Ahaziah, and Jehu's soldiers captured him while he was hiding in Samaria. So Ahaziah was brought to Jehu and put to death. They buried him, for they said, "He is the grandson of Jehoshaphat, who sought the LORD with all his heart." So no one was left from the house of Ahaziah with the strength to rule the kingdom.

ATHALIAH AND JOASH

¹⁰When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to annihilate all the royal heirs of the house of Judah. ¹¹But Jehoshabeath daughter of King Jehoram took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the sons of the king who were being murdered, and she put him and his nurse in a bedroom. Because Jehoshabeath, the daughter of King Jehoram and the wife of Jehoiada the priest, was Ahaziah's sister, she hid Joash from Athaliah so that she could not kill him. ¹²And Joash remained hidden with them in the house of God for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

Chapter 23

JOASH ANOINTED KING OF JUDAH

¹Then in the seventh year, Jehoiada strengthened himself and made a covenant with the commanders of hundreds—with Azariah son of Jeroham, Ishmael son of Jehohanan, Azariah son of Obed, Maaseiah son of Adaiah, and Elishaphat son of Zichri. ²So they went throughout Judah and gathered the Levites from all the cities of Judah and the heads of the families of Israel. And when they came to Jerusalem, ³the whole assembly made a covenant with the king in the house of God. "Behold, the king's son!" said Jehoiada. "He must reign, just as the LORD promised concerning the descendants of David. ⁴This is what you are to do: A third of you priests and Levites who come on duty on the Sabbath shall keep watch at the doors, ⁵a third shall be at the royal palace, and a third at the Foundation Gate, while all the others are to be in the courtyards of the house

of the LORD. ⁶No one is to enter the house of the LORD except the priests and those Levites who serve; they may enter because they are consecrated, but all the people are to obey the requirement of the LORD. ⁷The Levites must surround the king with weapons in hand, and anyone who enters the temple must be put to death. You must stay close to the king wherever he goes." ⁸So the Levites and all Judah did everything that Jehoiada the priest had ordered. Each of them took his men—those coming on duty on the Sabbath and those going off duty—for Jehoiada the priest had not released any of the divisions. ⁹Then Jehoiada the priest gave to the commanders of hundreds the spears and the large and small shields of King David that were in the house of God. ¹⁰He stationed all the troops, with their weapons in hand, surrounding the king by the altar and the temple, from the south side to the north side of the temple. ¹¹Then Jehoiada and his sons brought out the king's son, put the crown on him, presented him with the Testimony, and proclaimed him king. They anointed him and shouted, "Long live the king!"

THE DEATH OF ATHALIAH

¹²When Athaliah heard the noise of the people running and cheering the king, she went out to them in the house of the LORD. ¹³And she looked and saw the king standing by his pillar at the entrance. The officers and trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets, while the singers with musical instruments were leading the praises. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and screamed, "Treason, treason!" ¹⁴And Jehoiada the priest sent out the commanders of hundreds in charge of the army, saying, "Bring her out between the ranks, and put to the sword anyone who follows her." For the priest had said, "She must not be put to death in the house of the LORD." ¹⁵So they seized Athaliah as she reached the entrance of the Horse Gate on the palace grounds, and there they put her to death.

JEHOIADA RESTORES THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD

¹⁶Then Jehoiada made a covenant between himself and the king and the people that they would be the LORD's people. ¹⁷So all the people went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols to pieces and killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars. ¹⁸Moreover, Jehoiada put the oversight of the house of the LORD into the hands of the Levitical priests, whom David had appointed over the house of the LORD, to offer burnt offerings to the LORD as written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and song, as ordained by David. ¹⁹He stationed gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the LORD, so that no one who was in any way unclean could enter. ²⁰And he

took with him the commanders of hundreds, the nobles, the rulers of the people, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD and entered the royal palace through the Upper Gate. They seated King Joash on the royal throne, ²¹and all the people of the land rejoiced. And the city was quiet, because Athaliah had been put to the sword.

Chapter 24

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

¹Joash was seven years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem forty years. His mother's name was Zibiah; she was from Beersheba. ²And Joash did what was right in the eyes of the LORD all the days of Jehoiada the priest. ³Jehoiada took for him two wives, and he had sons and daughters. ⁴Some time later, Joash set his heart on repairing the house of the LORD. ⁵So he gathered the priests and Levites and said, "Go out to the cities of Judah and collect the money due annually from all Israel, to repair the house of your God. Do it quickly." The Levites, however, did not make haste. ⁶So the king called Jehoiada the high priest and said, "Why have you not required the Levites to bring from Judah and Jerusalem the tax imposed by Moses the servant of the LORD and by the assembly of Israel for the Tent of the Testimony?" ⁷For the sons of that wicked woman Athaliah had broken into the house of God and had even used the sacred objects of the house of the LORD for the Baals. ⁸At the king's command a chest was made and placed outside, at the gate of the house of the LORD. ⁹And a proclamation was issued in Judah and Jerusalem that they were to bring to the LORD the tax imposed by Moses the servant of God on Israel in the wilderness. ¹⁰All the officers and all the people rejoiced and brought their contributions, and they dropped them in the chest until it was full. ¹¹Whenever the chest was brought by the Levites to the king's overseers and they saw that there was a large amount of money, the royal scribe and the officer of the high priest would come and empty the chest and carry it back to its place. They did this daily and gathered the money in abundance. ¹²Then the king and Jehoiada would give the money to those who supervised the labor on the house of the LORD to hire stonecutters and carpenters to restore the house of the LORD, as well as workers in iron and bronze to repair the house of the LORD. ¹³So the workmen labored, and in their hands the repair work progressed. They restored the house of God according to its specifications, and they reinforced it. ¹⁴When they were finished, they brought the rest of the money to the king and Jehoiada, and with it were made articles for the house of

the LORD—utensils for the service and for the burnt offerings, dishes, and other objects of gold and silver. Throughout the days of Jehoiada, burnt offerings were presented regularly in the house of the LORD.

JEHOIADA'S DEATH AND BURIAL

¹⁵When Jehoiada was old and full of years, he died at the age of 130. ¹⁶And Jehoiada was buried with the kings in the City of David, because he had done what was good in Israel for God and His temple.

THE WICKEDNESS OF JOASH

¹⁷After the death of Jehoiada, however, the officials of Judah came and paid homage to the king, and he listened to them. ¹⁸They abandoned the house of the LORD, the God of their fathers, and served the Asherah poles and idols. So wrath came upon Judah and Jerusalem for this guilt of theirs. ¹⁹Nevertheless, the LORD sent prophets to bring the people back to Him and to testify against them, but they would not listen. ²⁰Then the Spirit of God came upon Zechariah son of Jehoiada the priest, who stood up before the people and said to them, "This is what God says: 'Why do you transgress the commandments of the LORD so that you cannot prosper? Because you have forsaken the LORD, He has forsaken you.'" ²¹But they conspired against Zechariah, and by order of the king, they stoned him in the courtyard of the house of the LORD. ²²Thus King Joash failed to remember the kindness that Zechariah's father Jehoiada had extended to him. Instead, Joash killed Jehoiada's son. As he lay dying, Zechariah said, "May the LORD see this and call you to account."

THE DEATH OF JOASH

²³In the spring, the army of Aram went to war against Joash. They entered Judah and Jerusalem and destroyed all the leaders of the people, and they sent all the plunder to their king in Damascus. ²⁴Although the Aramean army had come with only a few men, the LORD delivered into their hand a very great army. Because Judah had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers, judgment was executed on Joash. ²⁵And when the Arameans had withdrawn, they left Joash severely wounded. His own servants conspired against him for shedding the blood of the son of Jehoiada the priest, and they killed him on his bed. So he died and was buried in the City of David, but not in the tombs of the kings. ²⁶Those who conspired against Joash were Zabad son of Shimeath the Ammonitess and Jehozabad son of Shimrith the Moabitess. ²⁷The accounts of the sons of Joash and the many pronouncements about him, and of the restoration of the house of God, are indeed written in

the Treatise of the Book of the Kings. And his son Amaziah reigned in his place.

Chapter 25

AMAZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Jehoaddan; she was from Jerusalem. ²And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not wholeheartedly. ³As soon as the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, Amaziah executed the servants who had murdered his father the king. ⁴Yet he did not put their sons to death, but acted according to what is written in the Law, in the Book of Moses, where the LORD commanded: "Fathers must not be put to death for their children, and children must not be put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin."

AMAZIAH'S VICTORIES

⁵Then Amaziah gathered the people of Judah and assigned them according to their families to commanders of thousands and of hundreds. And he numbered those twenty years of age or older throughout Judah and Benjamin and found 300,000 chosen men able to serve in the army, bearing the spear and shield. ⁶He also hired 100,000 mighty men of valor from Israel for a hundred talents of silver. ⁷But a man of God came to him and said, "O king, do not let the army of Israel go with you, for the LORD is not with Israel—not with any of the Ephraimites. ⁸Even if you go and fight bravely in battle, God will overthrow you before the enemy, for God has power to help and power to overthrow." ⁹Amaziah asked the man of God, "What should I do about the hundred talents I have given to the troops of Israel?" And the man of God replied, "The LORD is able to give you much more than this." ¹⁰So Amaziah dismissed the troops who had come to him from Ephraim and sent them home. And they were furious with Judah and returned home in great anger. ¹¹Amaziah, however, summoned his strength and led his troops to the Valley of Salt, where he struck down 10,000 men of Seir, ¹²and the army of Judah also captured 10,000 men alive. They took them to the top of a cliff and threw them down so that all were dashed to pieces. ¹³Meanwhile the troops that Amaziah had dismissed from battle raided the cities of Judah, from Samaria to Beth-horon. They struck down 3,000 people and carried off a great deal of plunder.

AMAZIAH REBUKED FOR IDOLATRY

¹⁴When Amaziah returned from the slaughter of the Edomites, he brought back the gods of the Seirites, set

them up as his own gods, bowed before them, and burned sacrifices to them. ¹⁵Therefore the anger of the LORD burned against Amaziah, and He sent him a prophet, who said, "Why have you sought this people's gods, which could not deliver them from your hand?" ¹⁶While he was still speaking, the king asked, "Have we made you the counselor to the king? Stop! Why be struck down?" So the prophet stopped, but he said, "I know that God has determined to destroy you, because you have done this and have not heeded my advice."

JEHOASH DEFEATS AMAZIAH

¹⁷Then Amaziah king of Judah took counsel and sent word to the king of Israel Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu. "Come, let us meet face to face," he said. ¹⁸But Jehoash king of Israel replied to Amaziah king of Judah: "A thistle in Lebanon sent a message to a cedar in Lebanon, saying, 'Give your daughter to my son in marriage.' Then a wild beast in Lebanon came along and trampled the thistle. ¹⁹You have said, 'Look, I have defeated Edom,' and your heart has become proud and boastful. Now stay at home. Why should you stir up trouble so that you fall—you and Judah with you?" ²⁰But Amaziah would not listen, for this had come from God in order to deliver them into the hand of Jehoash, because they had sought the gods of Edom. ²¹So Jehoash king of Israel advanced, and he and Amaziah king of Judah faced each other at Beth-shemesh in Judah. ²²And Judah was routed before Israel, and every man fled to his own home. ²³There at Beth-shemesh, Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Jehoahaz. Then Jehoash brought him to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate—a section of four hundred cubits. ²⁴He took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the house of God with Obed-edom and in the treasuries of the royal palace, as well as some hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

THE DEATH OF AMAZIAH

²⁵Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. ²⁶As for the rest of the acts of Amaziah, from beginning to end, are they not written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel? ²⁷From the time that Amaziah turned from following the LORD, a conspiracy was formed against him in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But men were sent after him to Lachish, and they killed him there. ²⁸They carried him back on horses and buried him with his fathers in the City of Judah.

Chapter 26

UZZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹All the people of Judah took Uzziah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. ²Uzziah was the one who rebuilt Eloth and restored it to Judah after King Amaziah rested with his fathers. ³Uzziah was sixteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-two years. His mother's name was Jecoliah; she was from Jerusalem. ⁴And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. ⁵He sought God throughout the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God. And as long as he sought the LORD, God gave him success. ⁶Uzziah went out to wage war against the Philistines, and he tore down the walls of Gath, Jabneh, and Ashdod. Then he built cities near Ashdod and among the Philistines. ⁷God helped him against the Philistines, against the Arabs living in Gur-baal, and against the Meunites. ⁸The Ammonites brought tribute to Uzziah, and his fame spread as far as the border of Egypt, for he had become exceedingly powerful. ⁹Uzziah built towers in Jerusalem at the Corner Gate, the Valley Gate, and the angle in the wall, and he fortified them. ¹⁰Since he had much livestock in the foothills and in the plain, he built towers in the desert and dug many cisterns. And since he was a lover of the soil, he had farmers and vinedressers in the hill country and in the fertile fields. ¹¹Uzziah had an army ready for battle that went out to war by assigned divisions, as recorded by Jeiel the scribe and Maaseiah the officer under the direction of Hananiah, one of the royal officers. ¹²The total number of family leaders of the mighty men of valor was 2,600. ¹³Under their authority was an army of 307,500 trained for war, a powerful force to support the king against his enemies. ¹⁴Uzziah supplied the entire army with shields, spears, helmets, armor, bows, and slingstones. ¹⁵And in Jerusalem he made skillfully designed devices to shoot arrows and catapult large stones from the towers and corners. So his fame spread far and wide, for he was helped tremendously until he became powerful. ¹⁶But when Uzziah became powerful, his arrogance led to his own destruction. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, for he entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. ¹⁷Then Azariah the priest, along with eighty brave priests of the LORD, went in after him. ¹⁸They took their stand against King Uzziah and said, "Uzziah, you have no right to offer incense to the LORD. Only the priests, the descendants of Aaron, are consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have acted unfaithfully; you will not receive honor from the LORD God." ¹⁹Uzziah, with a censer in his hand to offer in-

cense, was enraged. But while he raged against the priests in their presence in the house of the LORD before the altar of incense, leprosy broke out on his forehead. ²⁰When Azariah the chief priest and all the priests turned to him and saw his leprous forehead, they rushed him out. Indeed, he himself hurried to get out, because the LORD had afflicted him. ²¹So King Uzziah was a leper until the day of his death. He lived in isolation, leprous and cut off from the house of the LORD, while his son Jotham had charge of the royal palace and governed the people of the land. ²²As for the rest of the acts of Uzziah, from beginning to end, they are recorded by the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz. ²³And Uzziah rested with his fathers and was buried near them in a field of burial that belonged to the kings, for the people said, "He was a leper." And his son Jotham reigned in his place.

Chapter 27

JOTHAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His mother's name was Jerushah daughter of Zadok. ²And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done. In addition, he did not enter the temple of the LORD. But the people still behaved corruptly. ³Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD, and he worked extensively on the wall at the hill of Ophel. ⁴He also built cities in the hill country of Judah and fortresses and towers in the forests. ⁵Jotham waged war against the king of the Ammonites and defeated them, and that year they gave him a hundred talents of silver, ten thousand cors of wheat, and ten thousand cors of barley. They paid him the same in the second and third years. ⁶So Jotham grew powerful because he ordered his ways before the LORD his God. ⁷As for the rest of the acts of Jotham, along with all his wars and his ways, they are indeed written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. ⁸He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. ⁹And Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried in the City of David. And his son Ahaz reigned in his place.

Chapter 28

AHAZ REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Ahaz was twenty years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. And unlike David his father, he did not do what was right in the eyes of the LORD. ²Instead, he walked in the ways of the kings of

Israel and even made cast images of the Baals. ³Moreover, Ahaz burned incense in the Valley of Ben-hinnom and sacrificed his sons in the fire, according to the abominations of the nations that the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. ⁴And he sacrificed and burned incense on the high places, on the hills, and under every green tree.

ARAM DEFEATS JUDAH

⁵So the LORD his God delivered Ahaz into the hand of the king of Aram, who attacked him and took many captives to Damascus. Ahaz was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who struck him with great force. ⁶For in one day Pekah son of Remaliah killed 120,000 valiant men in Judah. This happened because they had forsaken the LORD, the God of their fathers. ⁷Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim, killed Maaseiah the son of the king, Azrikam the governor of the palace, and Elkanah the second to the king. ⁸Then the Israelites took 200,000 captives from their kinsmen—women, sons, and daughters. They also carried off a great deal of plunder and brought it to Samaria. ⁹But a prophet of the LORD named Oded was there, and he went out to meet the army that returned to Samaria. “Look,” he said to them, “because of His wrath against Judah, the LORD, the God of your fathers, has delivered them into your hand. But you have slaughtered them in a rage that reaches up to heaven. ¹⁰And now you intend to reduce to slavery the men and women of Judah and Jerusalem. But are you not also guilty before the LORD your God? ¹¹Now therefore, listen to me and return the captives you took from your kinsmen, for the fierce anger of the LORD is upon you.” ¹²Then some of the leaders of the Ephraimites—Azariah son of Jehohanan, Berechiah son of Meshillemoth, Jehizkiah son of Shallum, and Amasa son of Hadlai—stood in opposition to those arriving from the war. ¹³“You must not bring the captives here,” they said, “for you are proposing to bring guilt upon us from the LORD and to add to our sins and our guilt. For our guilt is great, and fierce anger is upon Israel.” ¹⁴So the armed men left the captives and the plunder before the leaders and all the assembly. ¹⁵Then the men who were designated by name arose, took charge of the captives, and provided from the plunder clothing for the naked. They clothed them, gave them sandals and food and drink, anointed their wounds, and put all the feeble on donkeys. So they brought them to Jericho, the City of Palms, to their brothers. Then they returned to Samaria.

THE IDOLATRY OF AHAZ

¹⁶At that time King Ahaz sent for help from the king of Assyria. ¹⁷The Edomites had again come and attacked Judah and carried away captives. ¹⁸The Philistines had also raided the cities of the foothills and the Negev of Judah,

capturing and occupying Beth-shemesh, Aijalon, and Gederot, as well as Soco, Timnah, and Gimzo with their villages. ¹⁹For the LORD humbled Judah because Ahaz king of Israel had thrown off restraint in Judah and had been most unfaithful to the LORD. ²⁰Then Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came to Ahaz but afflicted him rather than strengthening him. ²¹Although Ahaz had taken a portion from the house of the LORD, from the royal palace, and from the princes and had presented it to the king of Assyria, it did not help him. ²²In the time of his distress, King Ahaz became even more unfaithful to the LORD. ²³He sacrificed to the gods of Damascus, who had defeated him, and he said, “Because the gods of the kings of Aram have helped them, I will sacrifice to them that they may help me.” But these gods were the downfall of Ahaz and of all Israel. ²⁴Then Ahaz gathered up the articles of the house of God, cut them into pieces, shut the doors of the house of the LORD, and set up altars of his own on every street corner in Jerusalem. ²⁵In every city of Judah he built high places to offer incense to other gods, and so he provoked the LORD, the God of his fathers. ²⁶As for the rest of the acts of Ahaz and all his ways, from beginning to end, they are indeed written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ²⁷And Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried in the city of Jerusalem, but he was not placed in the tombs of the kings of Israel. And his son Hezekiah reigned in his place.

Chapter 29

HEZEKIAH CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE

¹Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah, the daughter of Zechariah. ²And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. ³In the first month of the first year of his reign, Hezekiah opened and repaired the doors of the house of the LORD. ⁴Then he brought in the priests and Levites and gathered them in the square on the east side. ⁵“Listen to me, O Levites,” he said. “Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the house of the LORD, the God of your fathers. Remove from the Holy Place every impurity. ⁶For our fathers were unfaithful and did evil in the sight of the LORD our God. They abandoned Him, turned their faces away from the dwelling place of the LORD, and turned their backs on Him. ⁷They also shut the doors of the portico and extinguished the lamps. They did not burn incense or present burnt offerings in the Holy Place of the God of Israel. ⁸Therefore, the wrath of the LORD has fallen upon Judah and Jerusalem, and He has made them an ob-

ject of terror, horror, and scorn, as you can see with your own eyes. ⁹For behold, this is why our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and daughters and wives are in captivity. ¹⁰Now it is in my heart to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, so that His fierce anger will turn away from us. ¹¹Now, my sons, do not be negligent, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, to minister before Him, and to burn incense.” ¹²Then the Levites set to work: Mahath son of Amasai and Joel son of Azariah from the Kohathites; Kish son of Abdi and Azariah son of Jehallelel from the Merarites; Joah son of Zimmah and Eden son of Joah from the Gershonites; ¹³Shimri and Jeuel from the Elizaphanites; Zechariah and Mattaniah from the Asaphites; ¹⁴Jehiel and Shimei from the Hemanites; and Shemaiah and Uzziel from the Jeduthunites. ¹⁵When they had assembled their brothers and consecrated themselves, they went in to cleanse the house of the LORD, according to the command of the king by the words of the LORD. ¹⁶So the priests went inside the house of the LORD to cleanse it, and they brought out to the courtyard all the unclean things that they found in the temple of the LORD. Then the Levites took these things and carried them out to the Kidron Valley. ¹⁷They began the consecration on the first day of the first month, and on the eighth day of the month they reached the portico of the LORD. For eight more days they consecrated the house of the LORD itself, finishing on the sixteenth day of the first month. ¹⁸Then they went in to King Hezekiah and reported, “We have cleansed the entire house of the LORD, the altar of burnt offering with all its utensils, and the table of the showbread with all its utensils. ¹⁹Moreover, we have prepared and consecrated all the articles that King Ahaz in his unfaithfulness cast aside during his reign. They are now in front of the altar of the LORD.”

HEZEKIAH RESTORES TEMPLE WORSHIP

²⁰Early the next morning King Hezekiah gathered the city officials and went up to the house of the LORD. ²¹They brought seven bulls, seven rams, seven lambs, and seven male goats as a sin offering for the kingdom, for the sanctuary, and for Judah. And the king commanded the priests, the descendants of Aaron, to offer them on the altar of the LORD. ²²So they slaughtered the bulls, and the priests took the blood and splattered it on the altar. They slaughtered the rams and splattered the blood on the altar. And they slaughtered the lambs and splattered the blood on the altar. ²³Then they brought the goats for the sin offering before the king and the assembly, who laid their hands on them. ²⁴And the priests slaughtered the goats and put their blood on the altar for a sin offering, to make atonement for

all Israel, because the king had ordered the burnt offering and the sin offering for all Israel. ²⁵Hezekiah stationed the Levites in the house of the LORD with cymbals, harps, and lyres according to the command of David, of Gad the king’s seer, and of Nathan the prophet. For the command had come from the LORD through His prophets. ²⁶The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. ²⁷And Hezekiah ordered that the burnt offering be sacrificed on the altar. When the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD and the trumpets began as well, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel. ²⁸The whole assembly was worshipping, the singers were singing, and the trumpeters were playing. All this continued until the burnt offering was completed. ²⁹When the offerings were completed, the king and all those present with him bowed down and worshiped. ³⁰Then King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the LORD in the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness and bowed down and worshiped. ³¹Then Hezekiah said, “Now that you have consecrated yourselves to the LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the house of the LORD.” So the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all whose hearts were willing brought burnt offerings. ³²The number of burnt offerings the assembly brought was seventy bulls, a hundred rams, and two hundred lambs; all these were for a burnt offering to the LORD. ³³And the consecrated offerings were six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep. ³⁴However, since there were not enough priests to skin all the burnt offerings, their Levite brothers helped them until the work was finished and until the priests had consecrated themselves. For the Levites had been more diligent in consecrating themselves than the priests had been. ³⁵Furthermore, the burnt offerings were abundant, along with the fat of the peace offerings and the drink offerings for the burnt offerings. So the service of the house of the LORD was established. ³⁶Then Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had prepared for the people, because everything had been accomplished so quickly.

Chapter 30

HEZEKIAH PROCLAIMS A PASSOVER

¹Then Hezekiah sent word throughout all Israel and Judah, and he also wrote letters to Ephraim and Manasseh inviting them to come to the house of the LORD in Jerusalem to keep the Passover of the LORD, the God of Israel. ²For the king and his officials and the whole assembly in Jerusalem had decided to keep the Passover in the second month,

³since they had been unable to keep it at the regular time, because not enough priests had consecrated themselves and the people had not been gathered in Jerusalem. ⁴This plan pleased the king and the whole assembly. ⁵So they established a decree to circulate a proclamation throughout Israel, from Beersheba to Dan, that the people should come to keep the Passover of the LORD, the God of Israel, in Jerusalem. For they had not observed it in great numbers as prescribed. ⁶At the command of the king, the couriers went throughout Israel and Judah with letters from the king and his officials, which read: “Children of Israel, return to the LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, so that He may return to those of you who remain, who have escaped the grasp of the kings of Assyria. ⁷Do not be like your fathers and brothers who were unfaithful to the LORD, the God of their fathers, so that He made them an object of horror, as you can see. ⁸Now do not stiffen your necks as your fathers did. Submit to the LORD and come to His sanctuary, which He has consecrated forever. Serve the LORD your God, so that His fierce anger will turn away from you. ⁹For if you return to the LORD, your brothers and sons will receive mercy in the presence of their captors and will return to this land. For the LORD your God is gracious and merciful; He will not turn His face away from you if you return to Him.” ¹⁰And the couriers traveled from city to city through the land of Ephraim and Manasseh as far as Zebulun, but the people scorned and mocked them. ¹¹Nevertheless, some from Asher, Manasseh, and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem. ¹²Moreover, the power of God was on the people in Judah to give them one heart to obey the command of the king and his officials according to the word of the LORD.

HEZEKIAH CELEBRATES THE PASSOVER

¹³In the second month, a very great assembly gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. ¹⁴They proceeded to remove the altars in Jerusalem and to take away the incense altars and throw them into the Kidron Valley. ¹⁵And on the fourteenth day of the second month they slaughtered the Passover lamb. The priests and Levites were ashamed, and they consecrated themselves and brought burnt offerings to the house of the LORD. ¹⁶They stood at their prescribed posts, according to the Law of Moses the man of God. The priests splattered the blood, which they received from the hand of the Levites. ¹⁷Since there were many in the assembly who had not consecrated themselves, the Levites were in charge of slaughtering the Passover lambs for every unclean person to consecrate the lambs to the LORD. ¹⁸A large number of the people—many from Ephraim, Manasseh, Issachar, and Zebulun—had not

purified themselves, yet they ate the Passover, contrary to what was written. But Hezekiah interceded for them, saying, “May the LORD, who is good, provide atonement for everyone ¹⁹who sets his heart on seeking God—the LORD, the God of his fathers—even if he is not cleansed according to the purification rules of the sanctuary.” ²⁰And the LORD heard Hezekiah and healed the people. ²¹The Israelites who were present in Jerusalem celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days with great joy, and the Levites and priests praised the LORD day after day, accompanied by loud instruments of praise to the LORD. ²²And Hezekiah encouraged all the Levites who performed skillfully before the LORD. For seven days they ate their assigned portion, sacrificing peace offerings and giving thanks to the LORD, the God of their fathers. ²³The whole assembly agreed to observe seven more days, so they observed seven days with joy. ²⁴For Hezekiah king of Judah contributed a thousand bulls and seven thousand sheep for the assembly, and the officials contributed a thousand bulls and ten thousand sheep for the assembly, and a great number of priests consecrated themselves. ²⁵Then the whole assembly of Judah rejoiced along with the priests and Levites and the whole assembly that had come from Israel, including the foreigners who had come from Israel and those who lived in Judah. ²⁶So there was great rejoicing in Jerusalem, for nothing like this had happened there since the days of Solomon son of David king of Israel. ²⁷Then the priests and the Levites stood to bless the people, and God heard their voice, and their prayer came into His holy dwelling place in heaven.

Chapter 31

THE DESTRUCTION OF IDOLS

¹When all this had ended, the Israelites in attendance went out to the cities of Judah and broke up the sacred pillars, chopped down the Asherah poles, and tore down the high places and altars throughout Judah and Benjamin, as well as in Ephraim and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the Israelites returned to their cities, each to his own property. ²Hezekiah reestablished the divisions of the priests and Levites—each of them according to their duties as priests or Levites—for the burnt offerings and peace offerings, for ministry, for giving thanks, and for singing praises at the gates of the LORD’s dwelling.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR WORSHIP

³The king contributed from his own possessions for the regular morning and evening burnt offerings and for the

burnt offerings on the Sabbaths, New Moons, and appointed feasts, as written in the Law of the LORD. ⁴Moreover, he commanded the people living in Jerusalem to make a contribution for the priests and Levites so that they could devote themselves to the Law of the LORD. ⁵As soon as the order went out, the Israelites generously provided the first-fruits of the grain, new wine, oil, and honey, and of all the produce of the field, and they brought in an abundance—a tithe of everything. ⁶And the Israelites and Judahites who lived in the cities of Judah also brought a tithe of their herds and flocks and a tithe of the holy things consecrated to the LORD their God, and they laid them in large heaps. ⁷In the third month they began building up the heaps, and they finished in the seventh month. ⁸When Hezekiah and his officials came and viewed the heaps, they blessed the LORD and His people Israel. ⁹Then Hezekiah questioned the priests and Levites about the heaps, ¹⁰and Azariah, the chief priest of the household of Zadok, answered him, “Since the people began to bring their contributions into the house of the LORD, we have had enough to eat, and there is plenty left over, because the LORD has blessed His people; this great abundance is what is left over.”

HEZEKIAH ORGANIZES THE PRIESTS

¹¹Then Hezekiah commanded them to prepare storerooms in the house of the LORD, and they did so. ¹²And they faithfully brought in the contributions, tithes, and dedicated gifts. Conaniah the Levite was the officer in charge of them, and his brother Shimei was second. ¹³Jehiel, Azariah, Nahath, Asahel, Jerimoth, Jozabad, Eliel, Ismachiah, Mahath, and Benaiah were overseers under the authority of Conaniah and his brother Shimei, by appointment of King Hezekiah and of Azariah the chief official of the house of God. ¹⁴Kore son of Imnah the Levite, the keeper of the East Gate, was in charge of the freewill offerings given to God, distributing the contributions to the LORD and the consecrated gifts. ¹⁵Under his authority, Eden, Miniamin, Jeshua, Shemaiah, Amariah, and Shecaniah faithfully distributed portions to their fellow priests in their cities, according to their divisions, old and young alike. ¹⁶In addition, they distributed portions to the males registered by genealogy who were three years of age or older—to all who would enter the house of the LORD for their daily duties for service in the responsibilities of their divisions—¹⁷and to the priests enrolled according to their families in the genealogy, as well as to the Levites twenty years of age or older, according to their responsibilities and divisions. ¹⁸The genealogy included all the little ones, wives, sons, and daughters of the whole assembly. For they had faithfully consecrated themselves as holy. ¹⁹As for the priests,

the descendants of Aaron, who lived on the farmlands around each of their cities or in any other city, men were designated by name to distribute a portion to every male among the priests and to every Levite listed by the genealogies. ²⁰So this is what Hezekiah did throughout Judah. He did what was good and upright and true before the LORD his God. ²¹He acted with all his heart in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law and the commandments, in order to seek his God. And so he prospered.

Chapter 32

SENNACHERIB INVADES JUDAH

¹After all these acts of faithfulness, Sennacherib king of Assyria came and invaded Judah. He laid siege to the fortified cities, intending to conquer them for himself. ²When Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib had come to make war against Jerusalem, ³he consulted with his leaders and mighty men about stopping up the waters of the springs outside the city, and they helped him carry it out. ⁴Many people assembled and stopped up all the springs and the stream that flowed through the land. “Why should the kings of Assyria come and find plenty of water?” they said. ⁵Then Hezekiah worked resolutely to rebuild all the broken sections of the wall and to raise up towers on it. He also built an outer wall and reinforced the supporting terraces of the City of David, and he produced an abundance of weapons and shields. ⁶Hezekiah appointed military commanders over the people and gathered the people in the square of the city gate. Then he encouraged them, saying, ⁷“Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged before the king of Assyria and the vast army with him, for there is a greater One with us than with him. ⁸With him is only the arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles.” So the people were strengthened by the words of Hezekiah king of Judah.

SENNACHERIB THREATENS JERUSALEM

⁹Later, as Sennacherib king of Assyria and all his forces besieged Lachish, he sent his servants to Jerusalem with a message for King Hezekiah of Judah and all the people of Judah who were in Jerusalem: ¹⁰“This is what Sennacherib king of Assyria says: What is the basis of your confidence, that you remain in Jerusalem under siege? ¹¹Is not Hezekiah misleading you to give you over to death by famine and thirst when he says, ‘The LORD our God will deliver us from the hand of the king of Assyria?’ ¹²Did not Hezekiah himself remove His high places and His altars and say to Judah and Jerusalem, ‘You must worship before

one altar, and on it you shall burn sacrifices"? ¹³Do you not know what I and my fathers have done to all the peoples of the lands? Have the gods of these nations ever been able to deliver their land from my hand? ¹⁴Who among all the gods of these nations that my fathers devoted to destruction has been able to deliver his people from my hand? How then can your God deliver you from my hand? ¹⁵So now, do not let Hezekiah deceive you, and do not let him mislead you like this. Do not believe him, for no god of any nation or kingdom has been able to deliver his people from my hand or from the hand of my fathers. How much less will your God deliver you from my hand!" ¹⁶And the servants of Sennacherib spoke further against the LORD God and against His servant Hezekiah. ¹⁷He also wrote letters mocking the LORD, the God of Israel, and saying against Him: "Just as the gods of the nations did not deliver their people from my hand, so the God of Hezekiah will not deliver His people from my hand." ¹⁸Then the Assyrians called out loudly in Hebrew to the people of Jerusalem who were on the wall, to frighten and terrify them in order to capture the city. ¹⁹They spoke against the God of Jerusalem as they had spoken against the gods of the peoples of the earth—the work of human hands.

JERUSALEM DELIVERED FROM THE ASSYRIANS

²⁰In response, King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz cried out to heaven in prayer, ²¹and the LORD sent an angel who annihilated every mighty man of valor and every leader and commander in the camp of the king of Assyria. So he withdrew to his own land in disgrace. And when he entered the temple of his god, some of his own sons struck him down with the sword. ²²So the LORD saved Hezekiah and the people of Jerusalem from the hands of King Sennacherib of Assyria and all others, and He gave them rest on every side. ²³Many brought offerings to Jerusalem for the LORD and valuable gifts for Hezekiah king of Judah, and from then on he was exalted in the eyes of all nations.

HEZEKIAH'S ILLNESS AND RECOVERY

²⁴In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. So he prayed to the LORD, who spoke to him and gave him a sign. ²⁵But because his heart was proud, Hezekiah did not repay the favor shown to him. Therefore wrath came upon him and upon Judah and Jerusalem. ²⁶Then Hezekiah humbled the pride of his heart—he and the people of Jerusalem—so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them during the days of Hezekiah. ²⁷Hezekiah had very great riches and honor, and he made treasuries for his silver, gold, precious stones, spices, shields, and all kinds of valuable articles. ²⁸He also made storehouses for the harvest of grain and

new wine and oil, stalls for all kinds of livestock, and pens for the flocks. ²⁹He made cities for himself, and he acquired herds of sheep and cattle in abundance, for God gave him very great wealth. ³⁰It was Hezekiah who blocked the upper outlet of the Spring of Gihon and channeled it down to the west side of the City of David. And Hezekiah prospered in all that he did. ³¹And so when ambassadors of the rulers of Babylon were sent to him to inquire about the wonder that had happened in the land, God left him alone to test him, that He might know all that was in Hezekiah's heart.

HEZEKIAH'S DEATH

³²As for the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his deeds of loving devotion, they are indeed written in the vision of the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. ³³And Hezekiah rested with his fathers and was buried in the upper tombs of David's descendants. All Judah and the people of Jerusalem paid him honor at his death. And his son Manasseh reigned in his place.

Chapter 33

MANASSEH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. ²And he did evil in the sight of the LORD by following the abominations of the nations that the LORD had driven out before the Israelites. ³For he rebuilt the high places that his father Hezekiah had torn down, and he raised up altars for the Baals and made Asherah poles. And he worshiped and served all the host of heaven. ⁴Manasseh also built altars in the house of the LORD, of which the LORD had said, "My Name will remain in Jerusalem forever." ⁵In both courtyards of the house of the LORD, he built altars to all the host of heaven. ⁶He sacrificed his sons in the fire in the Valley of Ben-hinnom. He practiced sorcery, divination, and witchcraft, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did great evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger. ⁷Manasseh even took the carved image he had made and set it up in the house of God, of which God had said to David and his son Solomon, "In this temple and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, I will establish My Name forever. ⁸I will never again cause the feet of the Israelites to leave the land that I assigned to your fathers, if only they are careful to do all that I have commanded them through Moses—all the laws, statutes, and judgments." ⁹So Manasseh led the people of Judah and Jerusalem astray, so that they did greater evil than the nations that the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

MANASSEH'S REPENTANCE AND RESTORATION

¹⁰And the LORD spoke to Manasseh and his people, but they did not listen. ¹¹So the LORD brought against them the military commanders of the king of Assyria, who captured Manasseh, put a hook in his nose, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon. ¹²And in his distress, Manasseh sought the favor of the LORD his God and earnestly humbled himself before the God of his fathers. ¹³And when he prayed to Him, the LORD received his plea and heard his petition. So He brought him back to Jerusalem and to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD is God. ¹⁴After this, Manasseh rebuilt the outer wall of the City of David from west of Gihon in the valley to the entrance of the Fish Gate, and he brought it around the hill of Ophel and heightened it considerably. He also stationed military commanders in all the fortified cities of Judah. ¹⁵He removed the foreign gods and the idol from the house of the LORD, along with all the altars he had built on the temple mount and in Jerusalem, and he dumped them outside the city. ¹⁶Then he restored the altar of the LORD and sacrificed peace offerings and thank offerings on it, and he told Judah to serve the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁷Nevertheless, the people still sacrificed at the high places, but only to the LORD their God. ¹⁸As for the rest of the acts of Manasseh, along with his prayer to his God and the words of the seers who spoke to him in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel, they are indeed written in the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ¹⁹His prayer and how God received his plea, as well as all his sin and unfaithfulness, and the sites where he built high places and set up Asherah poles and idols before he humbled himself, they are indeed written in the Records of the Seers. ²⁰And Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried at his palace. And his son Amon reigned in his place.

AMON REIGNS IN JUDAH

²¹Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. ²²And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. Amon served and sacrificed to all the idols that his father Manasseh had made, ²³but he did not humble himself before the LORD as his father Manasseh had done; instead, Amon increased his guilt. ²⁴Then the servants of Amon conspired against him and killed him in his palace. ²⁵But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his place.

Chapter 34

JOSIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. ²And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.

JOSIAH DESTROYS IDOLATRY

³In the eighth year of his reign, while he was still young, Josiah began to seek the God of his father David, and in the twelfth year he began to cleanse Judah and Jerusalem of the high places, the Asherah poles, the carved idols, and the cast images. ⁴Then in his presence the altars of the Baals were torn down, and he cut to pieces the incense altars that were above them. He shattered the Asherah poles, the carved idols, and the cast images, crushed them to dust, and scattered them over the graves of those who had sacrificed to them. ⁵Then he burned the bones of the priests on their altars. So he cleansed Judah and Jerusalem. ⁶Josiah did the same in the cities of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, as far as Naphtali, and in the ruins around them. ⁷He tore down the altars and Asherah poles, crushed the idols to powder, and cut to pieces all the incense altars throughout the land of Israel. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

JOSIAH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

⁸Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, in order to cleanse the land and the temple, Josiah sent Shaphan son of Azaliah, Maaseiah the governor of the city, and Joah son of Joahaz, the recorder, to repair the house of the LORD his God. ⁹So they went to Hilkiah the high priest and gave him the money that had been brought into the house of God, which the Levites who guarded the doors had collected from the people of Manasseh and Ephraim, from all the remnant of Israel, from all Judah and Benjamin, and from the people of Jerusalem. ¹⁰They put it into the hands of those supervising the work in the house of the LORD, who in turn gave it to the workmen restoring and repairing the house of the LORD. ¹¹They also gave money to the carpenters and builders to buy dressed stone, as well as timbers for couplings and beams for the buildings that the kings of Judah had allowed to deteriorate. ¹²And the men did the work faithfully. The Levites overseeing them were Jahath and Obadiah, descendants of Merari, and Zechariah and Meshullam, descendants of Kohath. Other Levites, all skilled with musical instruments, ¹³were over the laborers and supervised all who did the work, task by task. Some of the Levites were secretaries, officers, and gatekeepers.

HILKIAH FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW

¹⁴While they were bringing out the money that had been taken into the house of the LORD, Hilkiah the priest found the Book of the Law of the LORD given by Moses. ¹⁵And Hilkiah said to Shaphan the scribe, “I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the LORD!” And he gave it to Shaphan. ¹⁶Then Shaphan brought the book to the king and reported, “Your servants are doing all that has been placed in their hands. ¹⁷They have paid out the money that was found in the house of the LORD and have put it into the hands of the supervisors and workers.” ¹⁸Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king. ¹⁹When the king heard the words of the Law, he tore his clothes ²⁰and commanded Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Abdon son of Micah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the servant of the king: ²¹“Go and inquire of the LORD for me and for those remaining in Israel and Judah concerning the words in the book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that has been poured out on us because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD by doing all that is written in this book.”

HULDAH’S PROPHECY

²²So Hilkiah and those the king had designated went and spoke to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum son of Tokhath, the son of Hasrah, the keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District. ²³And Huldah said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Tell the man who sent you ²⁴that this is what the LORD says: I am about to bring calamity on this place and on its people, according to all the curses written in the book that has been read in the presence of the king of Judah, ²⁵because they have forsaken Me and burned incense to other gods, that they might provoke Me to anger with all the works of their hands. My wrath will be poured out upon this place and will not be quenched.’ ²⁶But as for the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, tell him that this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘As for the words that you heard, ²⁷because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard His words against this place and against its people, and because you have humbled yourself before Me and have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I have heard you,’ declares the LORD. ²⁸Now I will indeed gather you to your fathers, and you will be gathered to your grave in peace. Your eyes will not see all the calamity that I will bring on this place and on its people.’” So they brought her answer back to the king.

JOSIAH RENEWS THE COVENANT

²⁹Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ³⁰And he went up to the house of the LORD with all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as well as the priests and the Levites—all the people great and small—and in their hearing he read all the words of the Book of the Covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. ³¹So the king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD to follow the LORD and to keep His commandments, decrees, and statutes with all his heart and all his soul, and to carry out the words of the covenant that were written in this book. ³²Then he had everyone in Jerusalem and Benjamin take a stand in agreement to it. So all the people of Jerusalem carried out the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. ³³And Josiah removed all the abominations from all the lands belonging to the Israelites, and he required everyone in Israel to serve the LORD their God. Throughout his reign they did not turn aside from following the LORD, the God of their fathers.

Chapter 35**JOSIAH RESTORES THE PASSOVER**

¹Then Josiah kept the Passover to the LORD in Jerusalem, and the Passover lamb was slaughtered on the fourteenth day of the first month. ²He appointed the priests to their duties and encouraged them in the service of the house of the LORD. ³To the Levites who taught all Israel and were holy to the LORD, Josiah said: “Put the holy ark in the temple built by Solomon son of David king of Israel. It is not to be carried around on your shoulders. Now serve the LORD your God and His people Israel. ⁴Prepare yourselves by families in your divisions, according to the instructions written by David king of Israel and Solomon his son. ⁵Moreover, stand in the Holy Place by the divisions of the families of your kinsmen the lay people, and by the divisions of the families of the Levites. ⁶Slaughter the Passover lambs, consecrate yourselves, and make preparations for your fellow countrymen to carry out the word of the LORD given by Moses.” ⁷From his own flocks and herds Josiah contributed 30,000 lambs and goats plus 3,000 bulls for the Passover offerings for all the people who were present. ⁸His officials also contributed willingly to the people and priests and Levites. Hilkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the chief officials of the house of God, gave the priests 2,600 Passover offerings and 300 bulls. ⁹Additionally, Conaniah and his brothers Shemaiah and Nethanel, as well as Hashabiah, Jeiel, and Jozabad, officers of the Levites, contributed to the Levites 5,000 Passover offerings and 500

bulls. ¹⁰So the service was prepared; the priests stood in their places and the Levites in their divisions according to the king's command. ¹¹And they slaughtered the Passover lambs, while the priests splattered the blood handed to them and the Levites skinned the animals. ¹²They set aside the burnt offerings to be given to the divisions of the families of the people to offer to the LORD, as it is written in the Book of Moses. And they did the same with the bulls. ¹³They roasted the Passover animals on the fire according to the regulation, and they boiled the other holy offerings in pots, kettles, and bowls and quickly brought them to all the people. ¹⁴Afterward, they made preparations for themselves and for the priests, since the priests, the descendants of Aaron, were offering up burnt offerings and fat until nightfall. So the Levites made preparations for themselves and for the priests, the descendants of Aaron. ¹⁵The singers, the descendants of Asaph, were at their stations according to the command of David, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer. And the gatekeepers at each gate did not need to leave their posts, because their fellow Levites made preparations for them. ¹⁶So on that day the entire service of the LORD was carried out for celebrating the Passover and offering burnt offerings on the altar of the LORD, according to the command of King Josiah. ¹⁷The Israelites who were present also observed the Passover at that time, as well as the Feast of Unleavened Bread for seven days. ¹⁸No such Passover had been observed in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel ever observed a Passover like the one that Josiah observed with the priests, the Levites, all Judah, the Israelites who were present, and the people of Jerusalem. ¹⁹In the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, this Passover was observed.

THE DEATH OF JOSIAH

²⁰After all this, when Josiah had set the temple in order, Neco king of Egypt marched up to fight at Carchemish by the Euphrates, and Josiah went out to confront him. ²¹But Neco sent messengers to him, saying, "What is the issue between you and me, O king of Judah? I have not come against you today, but I am fighting another dynasty, and God has told me to hurry. So stop opposing God, who is with me, or He will destroy you!" ²²Josiah, however, did not turn away from him; instead, in order to engage him in battle, he disguised himself. He did not listen to Neco's words from the mouth of God, but went to fight him on the Plain of Megiddo. ²³There the archers shot King Josiah, who said to his servants, "Take me away, for I am badly wounded!" ²⁴So his servants took him out of his chariot, put him in his second chariot, and brought him to

Jerusalem, where he died. And Josiah was buried in the tomb of his fathers, and all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for him.

LAMENTS OVER JOSIAH

²⁵Then Jeremiah lamented over Josiah, and to this day all the male and female singers recite laments over Josiah. They established them as a statute for Israel, and indeed they are written in the Book of Laments. ²⁶As for the rest of the acts of Josiah and his deeds of loving devotion according to what is written in the Law of the LORD— ²⁷his acts from beginning to end—they are indeed written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

Chapter 36

JEHOAHAZ SUCCEEDS JOSIAH

¹Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah and made him king in Jerusalem in place of his father. ²Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. ³And the king of Egypt dethroned him in Jerusalem and imposed on Judah a levy of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. ⁴Then Neco king of Egypt made Eliakim brother of Jehoahaz king over Judah and Jerusalem, and he changed Eliakim's name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Eliakim's brother Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt.

JEHOIAKIM REIGNS IN JUDAH

⁵Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God. ⁶Then Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jehoiakim and bound him with bronze shackles to take him to Babylon. ⁷Nebuchadnezzar also took to Babylon some of the articles from the house of the LORD, and he put them in his temple in Babylon. ⁸As for the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, the abominations he committed, and all that was found against him, they are indeed written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. And his son Jehoiachin reigned in his place.

JEHOIACHIN REIGNS IN JUDAH

⁹Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months and ten days. And he did evil in the sight of the LORD. ¹⁰In the spring, King Nebuchadnezzar summoned Jehoiachin and brought him to Babylon, along with the articles of value from the house of the LORD. And he made Jehoiachin's relative Zedekiah king over Judah and Jerusalem.

ZEDEKIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹¹Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. ¹²And he did evil in the sight of the LORD his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke for the LORD. ¹³He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God. But Zedekiah stiffened his neck and hardened his heart against turning to the LORD, the God of Israel. ¹⁴Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people multiplied their unfaithful deeds, following all the abominations of the nations, and they defiled the house of the LORD, which He had consecrated in Jerusalem.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM

¹⁵Again and again the LORD, the God of their fathers, sent word to His people through His messengers because He had compassion on them and on His dwelling place. ¹⁶But they mocked the messengers of God, despising His words and scoffing at His prophets, until the wrath of the LORD against His people was stirred up beyond remedy. ¹⁷So He brought up against them the king of the Chaldeans, who put their young men to the sword in the sanctuary, sparing neither young men nor young women, neither elderly nor infirm. God gave them all into the hand of

Nebuchadnezzar, ¹⁸who carried off everything to Babylon—all the articles of the house of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the house of the LORD and of the king and his officials. ¹⁹Then the Chaldeans set fire to the house of God and broke down the wall of Jerusalem. They burned down all the palaces and destroyed every article of value. ²⁰Those who escaped the sword were carried by Nebuchadnezzar into exile in Babylon, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. ²¹So the land enjoyed its Sabbath rest all the days of the desolation, until seventy years were completed, in fulfillment of the word of the LORD spoken through Jeremiah.

THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS

²²In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken through Jeremiah, the LORD stirred the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to send a proclamation throughout his kingdom and to put it in writing as follows: ²³“This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: ‘The LORD, the God of heaven, who has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, has appointed me to build a house for Him at Jerusalem in Judah. Whoever among you belongs to His people, may the LORD his God be with him, and may he go up.’”