

2 Kings

BEREAN STANDARD BIBLE

Chapter 1

ELIJAH DENOUNCES AHAZIAH

¹After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled against Israel. ²Now Ahaziah had fallen through the lattice of his upper room in Samaria and injured himself. So he sent messengers and instructed them: “Go inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I will recover from this injury.” ³But the angel of the LORD said to Elijah the Tishbite, “Go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria and ask them, ‘Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are on your way to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron?’” ⁴Therefore this is what the LORD says: ‘You will not get up from the bed on which you are lying. You will surely die.’” So Elijah departed. ⁵When the messengers returned to the king, he asked them, “Why have you returned?” ⁶They replied, “A man came up to meet us and said, ‘Go back to the king who sent you and tell him that this is what the LORD says: Is it because there is no God in Israel that you are sending these men to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not get up from the bed on which you are lying. You will surely die.’” ⁷The king asked them, “What sort of man came up to meet you and spoke these words to you?” ⁸“He was a hairy man,” they answered, “with a leather belt around his waist.” “It was Elijah the Tishbite,” said the king. ⁹Then King Ahaziah sent to Elijah a captain with his company of fifty men. So the captain went up to Elijah, who was sitting on top of a hill, and said to him, “Man of God, the king declares, ‘Come down!’” ¹⁰Elijah answered the captain, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And fire came down from heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty men. ¹¹So the king sent to Elijah another captain with his fifty men. And the captain said to Elijah, “Man of God, the king declares, ‘Come down at once!’” ¹²Again Elijah replied, “If I am a man of God, may fire come down from heaven and consume you and your fifty men.” And the fire of God came down from heaven and consumed the captain and his fifty men. ¹³So the king sent a third captain with his fifty men. And the third captain went up, fell on his knees before Elijah, and begged him, “Man of God, may my life and the lives of these fifty servants of yours please be precious in your sight. ¹⁴Behold, fire has come down from heaven and consumed the first two captains of fifty,

with all their men. But now may my life be precious in your sight.” ¹⁵Then the angel of the LORD said to Elijah, “Go down with him. Do not be afraid of him.” So Elijah got up and went down with him to the king. ¹⁶And Elijah said to King Ahaziah, “This is what the LORD says: Is there really no God in Israel for you to inquire of His word? Is that why you have sent messengers to inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron? Therefore you will not get up from the bed on which you are lying. You will surely die.”

JEHORAM SUCCEEDS AHAZIAH

¹⁷So Ahaziah died according to the word of the LORD that Elijah had spoken. And since he had no son, Jehoram succeeded him in the second year of the reign of Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat over Judah. ¹⁸As for the rest of the acts of Ahaziah, along with his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?

Chapter 2

ELIJAH TAKEN UP TO HEAVEN

¹Shortly before the LORD took Elijah up to heaven in a whirlwind, Elijah and Elisha were on their way from Gilgal, ²and Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me on to Bethel.” But Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went down to Bethel. ³Then the sons of the prophets at Bethel came out to Elisha and said, “Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today?” “Yes, I know,” he replied. “Do not speak of it.” ⁴And Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me on to Jericho.” But Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So they went to Jericho. ⁵Then the sons of the prophets at Jericho came up to Elisha and said, “Do you know that the LORD will take your master away from you today?” “Yes, I know,” he replied. “Do not speak of it.” ⁶And Elijah said to Elisha, “Please stay here, for the LORD has sent me on to the Jordan.” But Elisha replied, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two of them went on. ⁷Then a company of fifty of the sons of the prophets went and stood at a distance, facing Elijah and Elisha as the two of them stood by the Jordan. ⁸And Elijah took his cloak, rolled it up, and

struck the waters, which parted to the right and to the left, so that the two of them crossed over on dry ground. ⁹After they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Tell me, what can I do for you before I am taken away from you?” “Please, let me inherit a double portion of your spirit,” Elisha replied. ¹⁰“You have requested a difficult thing,” said Elijah. “Nevertheless, if you see me as I am taken from you, it will be yours. But if not, then it will not be so.” ¹¹As they were walking along and talking together, suddenly a chariot of fire with horses of fire appeared and separated the two of them, and Elijah went up into heaven in a whirlwind. ¹²As Elisha watched, he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel!” And he saw Elijah no more. So taking hold of his own clothes, he tore them in two. ¹³Elisha also picked up the cloak that had fallen from Elijah, and he went back and stood on the bank of the Jordan. ¹⁴Then he took the cloak of Elijah that had fallen from him and struck the waters. “Where now is the LORD, the God of Elijah?” he asked. And when he had struck the waters, they parted to the right and to the left, and Elisha crossed over.

ELISHA SUCCEEDS ELIJAH

¹⁵When the sons of the prophets who were watching him from Jericho saw what had happened, they said, “The spirit of Elijah rests on Elisha.” And they went to meet him and bowed down to the ground before him. ¹⁶“Look now,” they said to Elisha, “we your servants have fifty valiant men. Please let them go and search for your master. Perhaps the Spirit of the LORD has taken him up and put him on one of the mountains or in one of the valleys.” “Do not send them,” Elisha replied. ¹⁷But when they pressed him to the point of embarrassment, he said, “Send them.” And they sent fifty men, who searched for three days but did not find Elijah. ¹⁸When they returned to Elisha, who was staying in Jericho, he said to them, “Didn’t I tell you not to go?”

ELISHA HEALS THE WATERS OF JERICHO

¹⁹Then the men of the city said to Elisha, “Please note, our lord, that the city’s location is good, as you can see. But the water is bad and the land is unfruitful.” ²⁰“Bring me a new bowl,” he replied, “and put some salt in it.” So they brought it to him, ²¹and Elisha went out to the spring, cast the salt into it, and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘I have healed this water. No longer will it cause death or unfruitfulness.’” ²²And the waters there have been healthy to this day, according to the word spoken by Elisha.

ELISHA MOCKED

²³From there, Elisha went up to Bethel, and as he was walking up the road, a group of boys came out of the city

and jeered at him, chanting, “Go up, you baldhead! Go up, you baldhead!” ²⁴Then he turned around, looked at them, and called down a curse on them in the name of the LORD. Suddenly two female bears came out of the woods and mauled forty-two of the boys. ²⁵And Elisha went on to Mount Carmel, and from there he returned to Samaria.

Chapter 3

MOAB’S REBELLION

¹In the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat’s reign over Judah, Jehoram son of Ahab became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria twelve years. ²And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not as his father and mother had done. He removed the sacred pillar of Baal that his father had made. ³Nevertheless, he clung to the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away from them. ⁴Now Mesha king of Moab was a sheep breeder, and he would render to the king of Israel a hundred thousand lambs and the wool of a hundred thousand rams. ⁵But after the death of Ahab, the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel. ⁶So at that time King Jehoram set out from Samaria and mobilized all Israel. ⁷And he sent a message to Jehoshaphat king of Judah: “The king of Moab has rebelled against me. Will you go with me to fight against Moab?” “I will go,” replied Jehoshaphat. “I am as you are, my people are your people, and my horses are your horses.” ⁸Then he asked, “Which way shall we go up?” “By way of the Desert of Edom,” replied Joram. ⁹So the king of Israel, the king of Judah, and the king of Edom set out, and after they had traveled a roundabout route for seven days, they had no water for their army or for their animals. ¹⁰“Alas,” said the king of Israel, “for the LORD has summoned these three kings to deliver them into the hand of Moab!” ¹¹But Jehoshaphat asked, “Is there no prophet of the LORD here? Let us inquire of the LORD through him.” And one of the servants of the king of Israel answered, “Elisha son of Shaphat is here. He used to pour water on the hands of Elijah.” ¹²Jehoshaphat affirmed, “The word of the LORD is with him.” So the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him. ¹³Elisha, however, said to the king of Israel, “What have we to do with each other? Go to the prophets of your father and of your mother!” “No,” replied the king of Israel, “for it is the LORD who has summoned these three kings to deliver them into the hand of Moab.” ¹⁴Then Elisha said, “As surely as the LORD of Hosts lives, before whom I stand, were it not for my regard for the presence of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, I would not look at you or acknowledge you. ¹⁵But now, bring me a harpist.” And while the harpist played, the hand

of the LORD came upon Elisha ¹⁶and he said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Dig this valley full of ditches.’ ¹⁷For the LORD says, ‘You will not see wind or rain, but the valley will be filled with water, and you will drink—you and your cattle and your animals.’ ¹⁸This is a simple matter in the sight of the LORD, and He will also deliver the Moabites into your hand. ¹⁹And you shall attack every fortified city and every city of importance. You shall cut down every good tree, stop up every spring, and ruin every good field with stones.” ²⁰The next morning, at the time of the morning sacrifice, water suddenly flowed from the direction of Edom and filled the land. ²¹Now all the Moabites had heard that the kings had come up to fight against them. So all who could bear arms, young and old, were summoned and stationed at the border. ²²When they got up early in the morning, the sun was shining on the water, and it looked as red as blood to the Moabites across the way. ²³“This is blood!” they exclaimed. “The kings have clashed swords and slaughtered one another. Now to the plunder, Moab!” ²⁴But when the Moabites came to the camp of Israel, the Israelites rose up and attacked them, and they fled before them. So the Israelites invaded their land and struck down the Moabites. ²⁵They destroyed the cities, and each man threw stones on every good field until it was covered. They stopped up every spring and cut down every good tree. Only Kir-haraseth was left with stones in place, but men with slings surrounded it and attacked it as well. ²⁶When the king of Moab saw that the battle was too fierce for him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through to the king of Edom, but they could not prevail. ²⁷So he took his firstborn son, who was to succeed him, and offered him as a burnt offering on the city wall. And there was great fury against the Israelites, so they withdrew and returned to their own land.

Chapter 4

THE WIDOW’S OIL

¹Now the wife of one of the sons of the prophets cried out to Elisha, “Your servant, my husband, is dead, and you know that your servant feared the LORD. And now his creditor is coming to take my two children as his slaves!” ²“How can I help you?” asked Elisha. “Tell me, what do you have in the house?” She answered, “Your servant has nothing in the house but a jar of oil.” ³“Go,” said Elisha, “borrow empty jars from all your neighbors. Do not gather just a few. ⁴Then go inside, shut the door behind you and your sons, and pour oil into all these jars, setting the full ones aside.” ⁵So she left him, and after she had shut the door behind her and her sons, they kept bringing jars to her, and

she kept pouring. ⁶When all the jars were full, she said to her son, “Bring me another.” But he replied, “There are no more jars.” Then the oil stopped flowing. ⁷She went and told the man of God, and he said, “Go, sell the oil, and pay your debt. Then you and your sons can live on the remainder.”

THE SHUNAMMITE WOMAN

⁸One day Elisha went to Shunem, and a prominent woman who lived there persuaded him to have a meal. So whenever he would pass by, he would stop there to eat. ⁹Then the woman said to her husband, “Behold, now I know that the one who often comes our way is a holy man of God. ¹⁰Please let us make a small room upstairs and put in it a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp for him. Then when he comes to us, he can stay there.” ¹¹One day Elisha came to visit and went to his upper room to lie down. ¹²And he said to Gehazi his servant, “Call the Shunammite woman.” And when he had called her, she stood before him, ¹³and Elisha said to Gehazi, “Now tell her, ‘Look, you have gone to all this trouble for us. What can we do for you? Can we speak on your behalf to the king or the commander of the army?’” “I have a home among my own people,” she replied. ¹⁴So he asked, “Then what should be done for her?” “Well, she has no son,” Gehazi replied, “and her husband is old.” ¹⁵“Call her,” said Elisha. So Gehazi called her, and she stood in the doorway. ¹⁶And Elisha declared, “At this time next year, you will hold a son in your arms.” “No, my lord,” she said. “Do not lie to your maidservant, O man of God.” ¹⁷But the woman did conceive, and at that time the next year she gave birth to a son, just as Elisha had told her.

ELISHA RAISES THE SHUNAMMITE’S SON

¹⁸And the child grew, and one day he went out to his father, who was with the harvesters. ¹⁹“My head! My head!” he complained to his father. So his father told a servant, “Carry him to his mother.” ²⁰After the servant had picked him up and carried him to his mother, the boy sat on her lap until noon, and then he died. ²¹And she went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God. Then she shut the door and went out. ²²And the woman called her husband and said, “Please send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, that I may go quickly to the man of God and return.” ²³“Why would you go to him today?” he replied. “It is not a New Moon or a Sabbath.” “Everything is all right,” she said. ²⁴Then she saddled the donkey and told her servant, “Drive onward; do not slow the pace for me unless I tell you.” ²⁵So she set out and went to the man of God at Mount Carmel. When the man of God saw her at a distance, he said to his servant Gehazi, “Look, there is the Shunammite woman. ²⁶Please run out now to meet her and

ask, ‘Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is your child all right?’” And she answered, “Everything is all right.” ²⁷When she reached the man of God at the mountain, she clung to his feet. Gehazi came over to push her away, but the man of God said, “Leave her alone, for her soul is in deep distress, and the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me.” ²⁸Then she said, “Did I ask you for a son, my lord? Didn’t I say, ‘Do not deceive me?’” ²⁹So Elisha said to Gehazi, “Tie up your garment, take my staff in your hand, and go! If you meet anyone, do not greet him, and if anyone greets you, do not answer him. Then lay my staff on the boy’s face.” ³⁰And the mother of the boy said, “As surely as the LORD lives and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So he got up and followed her. ³¹Gehazi went on ahead of them and laid the staff on the boy’s face, but there was no sound or response. So he went back to meet Elisha and told him, “The boy has not awakened.” ³²When Elisha reached the house, there was the boy lying dead on his bed. ³³So he went in, closed the door behind the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴Then Elisha got on the bed and lay on the boy, mouth to mouth, eye to eye, and hand to hand. As he stretched himself out over him, the boy’s body became warm. ³⁵Elisha turned away and paced back and forth across the room. Then he got on the bed and stretched himself out over the boy again, and the boy sneezed seven times and opened his eyes. ³⁶Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, “Call the Shunammite woman.” So he called her and she came. Then Elisha said, “Pick up your son.” ³⁷She came in, fell at his feet, and bowed to the ground. Then she picked up her son and went out.

ELISHA PURIFIES THE POISONOUS STEW

³⁸When Elisha returned to Gilgal, there was a famine in the land. As the sons of the prophets were sitting at his feet, he said to his attendant, “Put on the large pot and boil some stew for the sons of the prophets.” ³⁹One of them went out to the field to gather herbs, and he found a wild vine from which he gathered as many wild gourds as his garment could hold. Then he came back and cut them up into the pot of stew, though no one knew what they were. ⁴⁰And they poured it out for the men to eat, but when they tasted the stew they cried out, “There is death in the pot, O man of God!” And they could not eat it. ⁴¹Then Elisha said, “Get some flour.” He threw it into the pot and said, “Pour it out for the people to eat.” And there was nothing harmful in the pot.

FEEDING A HUNDRED MEN

⁴²Now a man from Baal-shalishah came to the man of God with a sack of twenty loaves of barley bread from the first

ripe grain. “Give it to the people to eat,” said Elisha. ⁴³But his servant asked, “How am I to set twenty loaves before a hundred men?” “Give it to the people to eat,” said Elisha, “for this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat and have some left over.’” ⁴⁴So he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.

Chapter 5

NAAMAN CURED OF LEPROSY

¹Now Naaman, the commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man in his master’s sight and highly regarded, for through him the LORD had given victory to Aram. And he was a mighty man of valor, but he was a leper. ²At this time the Arameans had gone out in bands and had taken a young girl from the land of Israel, and she was serving Naaman’s wife. ³She said to her mistress, “If only my master would go to the prophet who is in Samaria, he would cure him of his leprosy.” ⁴And Naaman went and told his master what the girl from the land of Israel had said. ⁵“Go now,” said the king of Aram, “and I will send you with a letter to the king of Israel.” So Naaman departed, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of clothing. ⁶And the letter that he took to the king of Israel stated: “With this letter I am sending my servant Naaman, so that you may cure him of his leprosy.” ⁷When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and asked, “Am I God, killing and giving life, that this man expects me to cure a leper? Surely you can see that he is seeking a quarrel with me!” ⁸Now when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king: “Why have you torn your clothes? Please let the man come to me, and he will know that there is a prophet in Israel.” ⁹So Naaman came with his horses and chariots and stood at the door of Elisha’s house. ¹⁰Then Elisha sent him a messenger, who said, “Go and wash yourself seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will be restored, and you will be clean.” ¹¹But Naaman went away angry, saying, “I thought that he would surely come out, stand and call on the name of the LORD his God, and wave his hand over the spot to cure my leprosy. ¹²Are not the Abanah and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not have washed in them and been cleansed?” So he turned and went away in a rage. ¹³Naaman’s servants, however, approached him and said, “My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, ‘Wash and be cleansed?’” ¹⁴So Naaman went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, according to the word of the man

of God, and his flesh was restored and became like that of a little child, and he was clean.

GEHAZI'S GREED AND LEPROSY

¹⁵Then Naaman and all his attendants went back to the man of God, stood before him, and declared, "Now I know for sure that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel. So please accept a gift from your servant." ¹⁶But Elisha replied, "As surely as the LORD lives, before whom I stand, I will not accept it." And although Naaman urged him to accept it, he refused. ¹⁷"If you will not," said Naaman, "please let me, your servant, be given as much soil as a pair of mules can carry. For your servant will never again make a burnt offering or a sacrifice to any other god but the LORD. ¹⁸Yet may the LORD forgive your servant this one thing: When my master goes into the temple of Rimmon to worship there, and he leans on my arm, and I bow down in the temple of Rimmon, may the LORD forgive your servant in this matter." ¹⁹"Go in peace," said Elisha. But after Naaman had traveled a short distance, ²⁰Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, "Look, my master has spared this Aramean, Naaman, by not accepting what he brought. As surely as the LORD lives, I will run after him and get something from him." ²¹So Gehazi pursued Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running toward him, he got down from the chariot to meet him and asked, "Is everything all right?" ²²"Everything is all right," Gehazi replied. "My master has sent me to say, 'Look, two young men from the sons of the prophets have just now come to me from the hill country of Ephraim. Please give them a talent of silver and two sets of clothing.'" ²³But Naaman insisted, "Please, take two talents." And he urged Gehazi to accept them. Then he tied up two talents of silver in two bags along with two sets of clothing and gave them to two of his servants, who carried them ahead of Gehazi. ²⁴When Gehazi came to the hill, he took the gifts from the servants and stored them in the house. Then he dismissed the men, and they departed. ²⁵When Gehazi went in and stood before his master, Elisha asked him, "Gehazi, where have you been?" "Your servant did not go anywhere," he replied. ²⁶But Elisha questioned him, "Did not my spirit go with you when the man got down from his chariot to meet you? Is this the time to accept money and clothing, olive groves and vineyards, sheep and oxen, menservants and maidservants? ²⁷Therefore, the leprosy of Naaman will cling to you and your descendants forever!" And as Gehazi left his presence, he was leprous—as white as snow.

Chapter 6

THE AXE HEAD FLOATS

¹Now the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, "Please take note that the place where we meet with you is too small for us. ²Please let us go to the Jordan, where each of us can get a log so we can build ourselves a place to live there." "Go," said Elisha. ³Then one of them said, "Please come with your servants." "I will come," he replied. ⁴So Elisha went with them, and when they came to the Jordan, they began to cut down some trees. ⁵As one of them was cutting down a tree, the iron axe head fell into the water. "Oh, my master," he cried out, "it was borrowed!" ⁶"Where did it fall?" asked the man of God. And when he showed him the place, the man of God cut a stick, threw it there, and made the iron float. ⁷"Lift it out," he said, and the man reached out his hand and took it.

ELISHA CAPTURES THE BLINDED ARAMEANS

⁸Now the king of Aram was at war against Israel. After consulting with his servants, he said, "My camp will be in such and such a place." ⁹Then the man of God sent word to the king of Israel: "Be careful not to pass by this place, for the Arameans are going down there." ¹⁰So the king of Israel sent word to the place the man of God had pointed out. Time and again Elisha warned the king, so that he was on his guard in such places. ¹¹For this reason the king of Aram became enraged and called his servants to demand of them, "Tell me, which one of us is on the side of the king of Israel?" ¹²But one of his servants replied, "No one, my lord the king. For Elisha, the prophet in Israel, tells the king of Israel the very words you speak in your bedroom." ¹³So the king said, "Go and see where he is, that I may send men to capture him." On receiving the report, "Elisha is in Dothan," ¹⁴the king of Aram sent horses, chariots, and a great army. They went there by night and surrounded the city. ¹⁵When the servant of the man of God got up and went out early in the morning, behold, an army with horses and chariots had surrounded the city. So he asked Elisha, "Oh, my master, what are we to do?" ¹⁶"Do not be afraid," Elisha answered, "for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." ¹⁷Then Elisha prayed, "O LORD, please open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw that the hills were full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha. ¹⁸As the Arameans came down against him, Elisha prayed to the LORD, "Please strike these people with blindness." So He struck them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha. ¹⁹And Elisha told them, "This is not the way, and this is not the city. Follow me, and I will take you to the

man you are seeking.” And he led them to Samaria. ²⁰When they had entered Samaria, Elisha said, “O LORD, open the eyes of these men that they may see.” Then the LORD opened their eyes, and they looked around and discovered that they were in Samaria. ²¹And when the king of Israel saw them, he asked Elisha, “My father, shall I kill them? Shall I kill them?” ²²“Do not kill them,” he replied. “Would you kill those you have captured with your own sword or bow? Set food and water before them, that they may eat and drink and then return to their master.” ²³So the king prepared a great feast for them, and after they had finished eating and drinking, he sent them away, and they returned to their master. And the Aramean raiders did not come into the land of Israel again.

THE SIEGE AND FAMINE OF SAMARIA

²⁴Some time later, Ben-hadad king of Aram assembled his entire army and marched up to besiege Samaria. ²⁵So there was a great famine in Samaria. Indeed, they besieged the city so long that a donkey’s head sold for eighty shekels of silver, and a quarter cab of dove’s dung sold for five shekels of silver. ²⁶As the king of Israel was passing by on the wall, a woman cried out to him, “Help me, my lord the king!” ²⁷He answered, “If the LORD does not help you, where can I find help for you? From the threshing floor or the winepress?” ²⁸Then the king asked her, “What is the matter?” And she answered, “This woman said to me, ‘Give up your son, that we may eat him, and tomorrow we will eat my son.’ ²⁹So we boiled my son and ate him, and the next day I said to her, ‘Give up your son, that we may eat him.’ But she had hidden her son.” ³⁰When the king heard the words of the woman, he tore his clothes. And as he passed by on the wall, the people saw the sackcloth under his clothes next to his skin. ³¹He announced, “May God punish me, and ever so severely, if the head of Elisha son of Shaphat remains on his shoulders through this day!” ³²Now Elisha was sitting in his house, and the elders were sitting with him. The king sent a messenger ahead, but before he arrived, Elisha said to the elders, “Do you see how this murderer has sent someone to cut off my head? Look, when the messenger comes, shut the door to keep him out. Is not the sound of his master’s footsteps behind him?” ³³While Elisha was still speaking with them, the messenger came down to him. And the king said, “This calamity is from the LORD. Why should I wait for the LORD any longer?”

Chapter 7

ELISHA’S PROPHECY OF PLENTY

¹Then Elisha said, “Hear the word of the LORD! This is what the LORD says: ‘About this time tomorrow at the gate of Samaria, a seah of fine flour will sell for a shekel, and two seahs of barley will sell for a shekel.’” ²But the officer on whose arm the king leaned answered the man of God, “Look, even if the LORD were to make windows in heaven, could this really happen?” “You will see it with your own eyes,” replied Elisha, “but you will not eat any of it.”

THE SYRIANS FLEE

³Now there were four men with leprosy at the entrance of the city gate, and they said to one another, “Why just sit here until we die? ⁴If we say, ‘Let us go into the city,’ we will die there from the famine in the city; but if we sit here, we will also die. So come now, let us go over to the camp of the Arameans. If they let us live, we will live; if they kill us, we will die.” ⁵So they arose at twilight and went to the camp of the Arameans. But when they came to the outskirts of the camp, there was not a man to be found. ⁶For the Lord had caused the Arameans to hear the sound of chariots, horses, and a great army, so that they said to one another, “Look, the king of Israel must have hired the kings of the Hittites and Egyptians to attack us.” ⁷Thus the Arameans had arisen and fled at twilight, abandoning their tents and horses and donkeys. The camp was intact, and they had run for their lives. ⁸When the lepers reached the edge of the camp, they went into a tent to eat and drink. Then they carried off the silver, gold, and clothing, and went and hid them. On returning, they entered another tent, carried off some items from there, and hid them. ⁹Finally, they said to one another, “We are not doing what is right. Today is a day of good news. If we are silent and wait until morning light, our sin will overtake us. Now, therefore, let us go and tell the king’s household.” ¹⁰So they went and called out to the gatekeepers of the city, saying, “We went to the Aramean camp and no one was there—not a trace—only tethered horses and donkeys, and the tents were intact.” ¹¹The gatekeepers shouted the news, and it was reported to the king’s household. ¹²So the king got up in the night and said to his servants, “Let me tell you what the Arameans have done to us. They know we are starving, so they have left the camp to hide in the field, thinking, ‘When they come out of the city, we will take them alive and enter the city.’” ¹³But one of his servants replied, “Please, have scouts take five of the horses that remain in the city. Their plight will be no worse than all the Israelites who are left here. You can see that all the Israelites here are

doomed. So let us send them and find out.” ¹⁴Then the scouts took two chariots with horses, and the king sent them after the Aramean army, saying, “Go and see.” ¹⁵And they tracked them as far as the Jordan, and indeed, the whole way was littered with the clothing and equipment the Arameans had thrown off in haste. So the scouts returned and told the king.

ELISHA’S PROPHECY FULFILLED

¹⁶Then the people went out and plundered the camp of the Arameans. It was then that a seah of fine flour sold for a shekel, and two seahs of barley sold for a shekel, according to the word of the LORD. ¹⁷Now the king had appointed the officer on whose arm he leaned to be in charge of the gate, but the people trampled him in the gateway, and he died, just as the man of God had foretold when the king had come to him. ¹⁸It happened just as the man of God had told the king: “About this time tomorrow at the gate of Samaria, two seahs of barley will sell for a shekel, and a seah of fine flour will sell for a shekel.” ¹⁹And the officer had answered the man of God, “Look, even if the LORD were to make windows in heaven, could this really happen?” So Elisha had replied, “You will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat any of it!” ²⁰And that is just what happened to him. The people trampled him in the gateway, and he died.

Chapter 8

THE SHUNAMMITE’S LAND RESTORED

¹Now Elisha had said to the woman whose son he had restored to life, “Arise, you and your household; go and live as a foreigner wherever you can. For the LORD has decreed that a seven-year famine will come to the land.” ²So the woman had proceeded to do as the man of God had instructed. And she and her household lived as foreigners for seven years in the land of the Philistines. ³At the end of seven years, when the woman returned from the land of the Philistines, she went to the king to appeal for her house and her land. ⁴Now the king had been speaking to Gehazi, the servant of the man of God, saying, “Please relate to me all the great things Elisha has done.” ⁵And Gehazi was telling the king how Elisha had brought the dead back to life. Just then the woman whose son Elisha had revived came to appeal to the king for her house and her land. So Gehazi said, “My lord the king, this is the woman, and this is the son Elisha restored to life.” ⁶When the king asked the woman, she confirmed it. So the king appointed for her an officer, saying, “Restore all that was hers, along with all the proceeds of the field from the day that she left the country until now.”

HAZAELEL MURDERS BEN-HADAD

⁷Then Elisha came to Damascus while Ben-hadad king of Aram was sick, and the king was told, “The man of God has come here.” ⁸So the king said to Hazael, “Take a gift in your hand, go to meet the man of God, and inquire of the LORD through him, ‘Will I recover from this illness?’” ⁹So Hazael went to meet Elisha, taking with him a gift of forty camel loads of every good thing from Damascus. And he went in and stood before him and said, “Your son Ben-hadad king of Aram has sent me to ask, ‘Will I recover from this illness?’” ¹⁰Elisha answered, “Go and tell him, ‘You will surely recover.’ But the LORD has shown me that in fact he will die.” ¹¹Elisha fixed his gaze steadily on him until Hazael became uncomfortable. Then the man of God began to weep. ¹²“Why is my lord weeping?” asked Hazael. “Because I know the evil you will do to the Israelites,” Elisha replied. “You will set fire to their fortresses, kill their young men with the sword, dash their little ones to pieces, and rip open their pregnant women.” ¹³“But how could your servant, a mere dog, do such a monstrous thing?” said Hazael. And Elisha answered, “The LORD has shown me that you will be king over Aram.” ¹⁴So Hazael left Elisha and went to his master, who asked him, “What did Elisha say to you?” And he replied, “He told me that you would surely recover.” ¹⁵But the next day Hazael took a thick cloth, dipped it in water, and spread it over the king’s face. So Ben-hadad died, and Hazael reigned in his place.

JEHORAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹⁶In the fifth year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab over Israel, Jehoram son of Jehoshaphat succeeded his father as king of Judah. ¹⁷Jehoram was thirty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eight years. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹Yet for the sake of His servant David, the LORD was unwilling to destroy Judah, since He had promised to maintain a lamp for David and his descendants forever.

EDOM AND LIBNAH REBEL

²⁰In the days of Jehoram, Edom rebelled against the hand of Judah and appointed their own king. ²¹So Jehoram crossed over to Zair with all his chariots. When the Edomites surrounded him and his chariot commanders, he rose up and attacked by night. His troops, however, fled to their homes. ²²So to this day Edom has been in rebellion against the hand of Judah. Likewise, Libnah rebelled at the same time. ²³As for the rest of the acts of Jehoram, along with all his accomplishments, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁴And

Jehoram rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David. And his son Ahaziah reigned in his place.

AHAZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

²⁵In the twelfth year of the reign of Joram son of Ahab over Israel, Ahaziah son of Jehoram became king of Judah. ²⁶Ahaziah 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 king of Israel. ²⁷And Ahaziah walked in the ways of the house of Ahab and did evil in the sight of the LORD like the house of Ahab, for he was a son-in-law of the house of Ahab. ²⁸Then Ahaziah went with Joram son of Ahab to fight against Hazael king of Aram at Ramoth-gilead, and the Arameans wounded Joram. ²⁹So King Joram returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds that the Arameans 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.

Chapter 9

JEHU ANOINTED KING OF ISRAEL

¹Now Elisha the prophet summoned one of the sons of the prophets and said to him, "Tuck your cloak under your belt, take this flask of oil, and go to Ramoth-gilead. ²When you arrive, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Go in, get him away from his companions, and take him to an inner room. ³Then take the flask of oil, pour it on his head, and declare, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.' Then open the door and run. Do not delay!" ⁴So the young prophet went to Ramoth-gilead, ⁵and when he arrived, the army commanders were sitting there. "I have a message for you, commander," he said. "For which of us?" asked Jehu. "For you, commander," he replied. ⁶So Jehu got up and went into the house, where the young prophet poured the oil on his head and declared, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anoint you king over the LORD's people Israel. ⁷And you are to strike down the house of your master Ahab, so that I may avenge the blood of My servants the prophets and the blood of all the servants of the LORD shed by the hand of Jezebel. ⁸The whole house of Ahab will perish, and I will cut off from Ahab every male, both slave and free, in Israel. ⁹I will make the house of Ahab like the houses of Jeroboam son of Nebat and Baasha son of Ahijah. ¹⁰And on the plot of ground at Jezreel the dogs will devour Jezebel, and there will be no one to bury her.'"

Then the young prophet opened the door and ran. ¹¹When Jehu went out to the servants of his master, they asked, "Is everything all right? Why did this madman come to you?" "You know his kind and their babble," he replied. ¹²"That is a lie!" they said. "Tell us now!" So Jehu answered, "He talked to me about this and that, saying, 'This is what the LORD says: I anoint you king over Israel.'" ¹³Quickly, each man took his garment and put it under Jehu on the bare steps. Then they blew the ram's horn and proclaimed, "Jehu is king!"

JEHU KILLS JORAM AND AHAZIAH

¹⁴Thus Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi, conspired against Joram. (Now Joram and all Israel had been defending Ramoth-gilead against Hazael king of Aram, ¹⁵but King Joram had returned to Jezreel to recover from the wounds he had suffered at the hands of the Arameans in the battle against Hazael their king.) So Jehu said, "If you commanders wish to make me king, then do not let anyone escape from the city to go and tell it in Jezreel." ¹⁶Then Jehu got into his chariot and went to Jezreel, because Joram was laid up there. And Ahaziah king of Judah had gone down to see him. ¹⁷Now the watchman standing on the tower in Jezreel saw Jehu's troops approaching, and he called out, "I see a company of troops!" "Choose a rider," Joram commanded. "Send him out to meet them and ask, 'Have you come in peace?'" ¹⁸So a horseman rode off to meet Jehu and said, "This is what the king asks: 'Have you come in peace?'" "What do you know about peace?" Jehu replied. "Fall in behind me." And the watchman reported, "The messenger reached them, but he is not coming back." ¹⁹So the king sent out a second horseman, who went to them and said, "This is what the king asks: 'Have you come in peace?'" "What do you know about peace?" Jehu replied. "Fall in behind me." ²⁰Again the watchman reported, "He reached them, but he is not coming back. And the charioteer is driving like Jehu son of Nimshi—he is driving like a madman!" ²¹"Harness!" Joram shouted, and they harnessed his chariot. Then Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah set out, each in his own chariot, and met Jehu on the property of Naboth the Jezreelite. ²²When Joram saw Jehu, he asked, "Have you come in peace, Jehu?" "How can there be peace," he replied, "as long as the idolatry and witchcraft of your mother Jezebel abound?" ²³Joram turned around and fled, calling out to Ahaziah, "Treachery, Ahaziah!" ²⁴Then Jehu drew his bow and shot Joram between the shoulders. The arrow pierced his heart, and he slumped down in his chariot. ²⁵And Jehu said to Bidkar his officer, "Pick him up and throw him into the field of Naboth the Jezreelite. For re-

member that when you and I were riding together behind his father Ahab, the LORD lifted up this burden against him: ²⁶“As surely as I saw the blood of Naboth and the blood of his sons yesterday, declares the LORD, so will I repay you on this plot of ground, declares the LORD.” Now then, according to the word of the LORD, pick him up and throw him on the plot of ground.” ²⁷When King Ahaziah of Judah saw this, he fled up the road toward Beth-haggan. And Jehu pursued him, shouting, “Shoot him too!” So they shot Ahaziah in his chariot on the Ascent of Gur, near Ibleam, and he fled to Megiddo and died there. ²⁸Then his servants carried him by chariot to Jerusalem and buried him with his fathers in his tomb in the City of David. ²⁹(In the eleventh year of Joram son of Ahab, Ahaziah had become king over Judah.)

JEZEBEL’S VIOLENT DEATH

³⁰Now when Jehu arrived in Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it. So she painted her eyes, adorned her head, and looked down from a window. ³¹And as Jehu entered the gate, she asked, “Have you come in peace, O Zimri, murderer of your master?” ³²He looked up at the window and called out, “Who is on my side? Who?” And two or three eunuchs looked down at him. ³³“Throw her down!” yelled Jehu. So they threw her down, and her blood splattered on the wall and on the horses as they trampled her underfoot. ³⁴Then Jehu went in and ate and drank. “Take care of this cursed woman,” he said, “and bury her, for she was the daughter of a king.” ³⁵But when they went out to bury her, they found nothing but her skull, her feet, and the palms of her hands. ³⁶So they went back and told Jehu, who replied, “This is the word of the LORD, which He spoke through His servant Elijah the Tishbite: ‘On the plot of ground at Jezreel the dogs will devour the flesh of Jezebel. ³⁷And Jezebel’s body will lie like dung in the field on the plot of ground at Jezreel, so that no one can say: This is Jezebel.’”

Chapter 10

AHAB’S SEVENTY SONS KILLED

¹Now Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria. So Jehu wrote letters and sent them to Samaria to the officials of Jezreel, to the elders, and to the guardians of the sons of Ahab, saying: ²“When this letter arrives, since your master’s sons are with you and you have chariots and horses, a fortified city and weaponry, ³select the best and most worthy son of your master, set him on his father’s throne, and fight for your master’s house.” ⁴But they were terrified and reasoned, “If two kings could not stand against him, how can we?” ⁵So the palace administrator, the overseer of the city,

the elders, and the guardians sent a message to Jehu: “We are your servants, and we will do whatever you say. We will not make anyone king. Do whatever is good in your sight.” ⁶Then Jehu wrote them a second letter and said: “If you are on my side, and if you will obey me, then bring the heads of your master’s sons to me at Jezreel by this time tomorrow.” Now the sons of the king, seventy in all, were being brought up by the leading men of the city. ⁷And when the letter arrived, they took the sons of the king and slaughtered all seventy of them. They put their heads in baskets and sent them to Jehu at Jezreel. ⁸When the messenger arrived, he told Jehu, “They have brought the heads of the sons of the king.” And Jehu ordered, “Pile them in two heaps at the entrance of the gate until morning.” ⁹The next morning, Jehu went out and stood before all the people and said, “You are innocent. It was I who conspired against my master and killed him. But who killed all these?” ¹⁰Know, then, that not a word the LORD has spoken against the house of Ahab will fail, for the LORD has done what He promised through His servant Elijah.” ¹¹So Jehu killed everyone in Jezreel who remained of the house of Ahab, as well as all his great men and close friends and priests, leaving him without a single survivor. ¹²Then Jehu set out toward Samaria. At Beth-eked of the Shepherds, ¹³Jehu met some relatives of Ahaziah king of Judah and asked, “Who are you?” “We are relatives of Ahaziah,” they answered, “and we have come down to greet the sons of the king and of the queen mother.” ¹⁴Then Jehu ordered, “Take them alive.” So his men took them alive, then slaughtered them at the well of Beth-eked—forty-two men. He spared none of them. ¹⁵When he left there, he found Jehonadab son of Rechab, who was coming to meet him. Jehu greeted him and asked, “Is your heart as true to mine as my heart is to yours?” “It is!” Jehonadab replied. “If it is,” said Jehu, “give me your hand.” So he gave him his hand, and Jehu helped him into his chariot, ¹⁶saying, “Come with me and see my zeal for the LORD!” So he had him ride in his chariot. ¹⁷When Jehu came to Samaria, he struck down everyone belonging to Ahab who remained there, until he had destroyed them, according to the word that the LORD had spoken to Elijah.

JEHU KILLS THE PRIESTS OF BAAL

¹⁸Then Jehu brought all the people together and said, “Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu will serve him a lot. ¹⁹Now, therefore, summon to me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests. See that no one is missing, for I have a great sacrifice for Baal. Whoever is missing will not live.” But Jehu was acting deceptively in order to destroy the servants of Baal. ²⁰And Jehu commanded,

“Proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal.” So they announced it. ²¹Then Jehu sent word throughout Israel, and all the servants of Baal came; there was not a man who failed to show. They entered the temple of Baal, and it was filled from end to end. ²²And Jehu said to the keeper of the wardrobe, “Bring out garments for all the servants of Baal.” So he brought out garments for them. ²³Next, Jehu and Jehonadab son of Rechab entered the temple of Baal, and Jehu said to the servants of Baal, “Look around to see that there are no servants of the LORD here among you—only servants of Baal.” ²⁴And they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt offerings. Now Jehu had stationed eighty men outside and warned them, “If anyone allows one of the men I am delivering into your hands to escape, he will forfeit his life for theirs.” ²⁵When he had finished making the burnt offering, Jehu said to the guards and officers, “Go in and kill them. Do not let anyone out.” So the guards and officers put them to the sword, threw the bodies out, and went into the inner room of the temple of Baal. ²⁶They brought out the sacred pillar of the temple of Baal and burned it. ²⁷They also demolished the sacred pillar of Baal. Then they tore down the temple of Baal and made it into a latrine, which it is to this day.

JEHU REPEATS JEROBOAM’S SINS

²⁸Thus Jehu eradicated Baal from Israel, ²⁹but he did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit—the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan. ³⁰Nevertheless, the LORD said to Jehu, “Because you have done well in carrying out what is right in My sight and have done to the house of Ahab all that was in My heart, four generations of your sons will sit on the throne of Israel.” ³¹Yet Jehu was not careful to follow the instruction of the LORD, the God of Israel, with all his heart. He did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit. ³²In those days the LORD began to reduce the size of Israel. Hazael defeated the Israelites throughout their territory ³³from the Jordan eastward through all the land of Gilead (the region of Gad, Reuben, and Manasseh), and from Aroer by the Arnon Valley through Gilead to Bashan.

JEHOAHAZ SUCCEEDS JEHU IN ISRAEL

³⁴As for the rest of the acts of Jehu, along with all his accomplishments and all his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ³⁵And Jehu rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria, and his son Jehoahaz reigned in his place. ³⁶So the duration of Jehu’s reign over Israel in Samaria was twenty-eight years.

Chapter 11

ATHALIAH AND JOASH

¹When Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead, she proceeded to annihilate all the royal heirs. ²But Jehosheba daughter of King Joram, the sister of Ahaziah, took Joash son of Ahaziah and stole him away from among the sons of the king who were being murdered. She put him and his nurse in a bedroom to hide him from Athaliah, and he was not killed. ³And Joash remained hidden with his nurse in the house of the LORD for six years while Athaliah ruled the land.

JOASH ANOINTED KING OF JUDAH

⁴Then in the seventh year, Jehoiada sent for the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, and the guards, and had them brought into the house of the LORD. There he made a covenant with them and put them under oath. He showed them the king’s son ⁵and commanded them, “This is what you are to do: A third of you who come on duty on the Sabbath shall guard the royal palace, ⁶a third shall be at the gate of Sur, and a third at the gate behind the guards. You are to take turns guarding the temple— ⁷the two divisions that would go off duty on the Sabbath are to guard the house of the LORD for the king. ⁸You must surround the king with weapons in hand, and anyone who approaches the ranks must be put to death. You must stay close to the king wherever he goes.” ⁹So the commanders of hundreds 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—and came to Jehoiada the priest. ¹⁰Then the priest gave to the commanders of hundreds the spears and shields of King David from the house of the LORD. ¹¹And the guards stood with weapons in hand surrounding the king by the altar and the temple, from the south side to the north side of the temple. ¹²Then Jehoiada brought out the king’s son, put the crown on him, presented him with the Testimony, and proclaimed him king. They anointed him, and the people clapped their hands and declared, “Long live the king!”

THE DEATH OF ATHALIAH

¹³When Athaliah heard the noise from the guards and the people, she went out to the people in the house of the LORD. ¹⁴And she looked out and saw the king standing by the pillar, according to the custom. The officers and trumpeters were beside the king, and all the people of the land were rejoicing and blowing trumpets. Then Athaliah tore her clothes and screamed, “Treason! Treason!” ¹⁵And Jehoiada the priest ordered the commanders of hundreds in charge of the army, “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.” ¹⁶So they seized Athaliah as she reached the horses’ entrance to the palace grounds, and there she was put to death.

JEHOIADA RESTORES THE WORSHIP OF THE LORD

¹⁷Then Jehoiada made a covenant between the LORD and the king and the people that they would be the LORD’s people. He also made a covenant between the king and the people. ¹⁸So all the people of the land went to the temple of Baal and tore it down. They smashed the altars and idols to pieces, and they killed Mattan the priest of Baal in front of the altars. And Jehoiada the priest posted guards for the house of the LORD. ¹⁹He took with him the commanders of hundreds, the Carites, the guards, and all the people of the land, and they brought the king down from the house of the LORD and entered the royal palace by way of the Gate of the Guards. Then Joash took his seat on the royal throne, ²⁰and all the people of the land rejoiced. And the city was quiet, because Athaliah had been put to the sword at the royal palace. ²¹Joash was seven years old when he became king.

Chapter 12

JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

¹In the seventh year of Jehu, Joash 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 he was instructed by Jehoiada the priest. ³Nevertheless, the high places were not removed; the people continued sacrificing and burning incense there. ⁴Then Joash said to the priests, “Collect all the money brought as sacred gifts into the house of the LORD—the census money, the money from vows, and the money brought voluntarily into the house of the LORD. ⁵Let every priest receive it from his constituency, and let it be used to repair any damage found in the temple.” ⁶By the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash, however, the priests had not yet repaired the damage to the temple. ⁷So King Joash called Jehoiada and the other priests and said, “Why have you not repaired the damage to the temple? Now, therefore, take no more money from your constituency, but hand it over for the repair of the temple.” ⁸So the priests agreed that they would not receive money from the people and that they would not repair the temple themselves. ⁹Then Jehoiada the priest took a chest, bored a hole in its lid, and set it beside the altar on the right side as one enters the house of the LORD. There the priests who

guarded the threshold put all the money brought into the house of the LORD. ¹⁰Whenever they saw that there was a large amount of money in the chest, the royal scribe and the high priest would go up, count the money brought into the house of the LORD, and tie it up in bags. ¹¹Then they would put the counted money into the hands of those who supervised the work on the house of the LORD, who in turn would pay those doing the work—the carpenters, builders, ¹²masons, and stonecutters. They also purchased timber and dressed stone to repair the damage to the house of the LORD, and they paid the other expenses of the temple repairs. ¹³However, the money brought into the house of the LORD was not used for making silver basins, wick trimmers, sprinkling bowls, trumpets, or any articles of gold or silver for the house of the LORD. ¹⁴Instead, it was paid to those doing the work, and with it they repaired the house of the LORD. ¹⁵No accounting was required from the men who received the money to pay the workmen, because they acted with integrity. ¹⁶The money from the guilt offerings and sin offerings was not brought into the house of the LORD; it belonged to the priests.

THE DEATH OF JOASH

¹⁷At that time Hazael king of Aram marched up and fought against Gath and captured it. Then he decided to attack Jerusalem. ¹⁸So King Joash of Judah took all the sacred objects dedicated by his fathers—Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, and Ahaziah, the kings of Judah—along with his own consecrated items and all the gold found in the treasuries of the house of the LORD and the royal palace, and he sent them to Hazael king of Aram. So Hazael withdrew from Jerusalem. ¹⁹As for the rest of the acts of Joash, along with all his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁰And the servants of Joash rose up and formed a conspiracy and killed him at Beth-millo, on the road down to Silla. ²¹His servants Jozabad son of Shimeath and Jehozabad son of Shomer struck him down, and he died. And they buried him with his fathers in the City of David, and his son Amaziah reigned in his place.

Chapter 13

JEHOAHAZ REIGNS IN ISRAEL

¹In the twenty-third year of the reign of Joash son of Ahaziah over Judah, Jehoahaz son of Jehu became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria seventeen years. ²And he did evil in the sight of the LORD and followed the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit; he did not turn away from them. ³So the anger of the LORD

burned against Israel, and He delivered them continually into the hands of Hazael king of Aram and his son Ben-hadad. ⁴Then Jehoahaz sought the favor of the LORD, and the LORD listened to him because He saw the oppression that the king of Aram had inflicted on Israel. ⁵So the LORD gave Israel a deliverer, and they escaped the power of the Arameans. Then the people of Israel lived in their own homes as they had before. ⁶Nevertheless, they did not turn away from the sins that the house of Jeroboam had caused Israel to commit, but they continued to walk in them. The Asherah pole even remained standing in Samaria. ⁷Jehoahaz had no army left, except fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers, because the king of Aram had destroyed them and made them like the dust at threshing. ⁸As for the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, along with all his accomplishments and his might, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ⁹And Jehoahaz rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria. And his son Jehoash reigned in his place.

JEHOASH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

¹⁰In the thirty-seventh year of the reign of Joash over Judah, Jehoash son of Jehoahaz became king of Israel in Samaria, and he reigned sixteen years. ¹¹And he did evil in the sight of the LORD and did not turn away from all the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit, but he walked in them. ¹²As for the rest of the acts of Jehoash, along with all his accomplishments and his might, including his war against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ¹³And Jehoash rested with his fathers, and Jeroboam succeeded him on the throne. Jehoash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel.

ELISHA'S FINAL PROPHECY

¹⁴When Elisha had fallen sick with the illness from which he would die, Jehoash king of Israel came down to him and wept over him, saying, "My father, my father, the chariots and horsemen of Israel!" ¹⁵Elisha told him, "Take a bow and some arrows." So Jehoash took a bow and some arrows. ¹⁶Then Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Put your hand on the bow." So the king put his hand on the bow, and Elisha put his hands on the king's hands. ¹⁷"Open the east window," said Elisha. So he opened it and Elisha said, "Shoot!" So he shot. And Elisha declared: "This is the LORD's arrow of victory, the arrow of victory over Aram, for you shall strike the Arameans in Aphek until you have put an end to them." ¹⁸Then Elisha said, "Take the arrows!" So he took them, and Elisha said to the king of Israel, "Strike the ground!" So he struck the ground three times and stopped. ¹⁹But the man of God was angry with him and

said, "You should have struck the ground five or six times. Then you would have struck down Aram until you had put an end to it. But now you will strike down Aram only three times." ²⁰And Elisha died and was buried. Now the Moabite raiders used to come into the land every spring. ²¹Once, as the Israelites were burying a man, suddenly they saw a band of raiders, so they threw the man's body into Elisha's tomb. And as soon as his body touched the bones of Elisha, the man was revived and stood up on his feet. ²²And Hazael king of Aram oppressed Israel throughout the reign of Jehoahaz. ²³But the LORD was gracious to Israel and had compassion on them, and He turned toward them because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And to this day, the LORD has been unwilling to destroy them or cast them from His presence. ²⁴When Hazael king of Aram died, his son Ben-hadad reigned in his place. ²⁵Then Jehoash son of Jehoahaz took back from Ben-hadad son of Hazael the cities that Hazael had taken in battle from his father Jehoahaz. Jehoash defeated Ben-hadad three times, and so recovered the cities of Israel.

Chapter 14

AMAZIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹In the second year of the reign of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz over Israel, Amaziah son of Joash became king of Judah. ²He 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. ³And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not as his father David had done. He did everything as his father Joash had done. ⁴Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away, and the people continued sacrificing and burning incense on the high places. ⁵As soon as the kingdom was firmly in his grasp, Amaziah executed the servants who had murdered his father the king. ⁶Yet he did not put the sons of the murderers to death, but acted according to what is written in the Book of the Law 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." ⁷Amaziah struck down 10,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. He took Sela in battle and called it Joktheel, which is its name to this very day.

JEHOASH DEFEATS AMAZIAH

⁸Then Amaziah sent messengers to the king of Israel Jehoash son of Jehoahaz, the son of Jehu. "Come, let us meet face to face," he said. ⁹But 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. ¹⁰You have indeed defeated Edom, and your heart has become proud. Glory in that and stay at home. Why should you stir up trouble so that you fall—you and Judah with you?” ¹¹But Amaziah would not listen, so Jehoash king of Israel advanced. He and King Amaziah of Judah faced each other at Beth-shemesh in Judah. ¹²And Judah was routed before Israel, and every man fled to his home. ¹³There at Beth-shemesh, Jehoash king of Israel captured Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Joash, the son of Ahaziah. Then Jehoash went to Jerusalem and broke down the wall of Jerusalem from the Ephraim Gate to the Corner Gate—a section of four hundred cubits. ¹⁴He took all the gold and silver and all the articles found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace, as well as some hostages. Then he returned to Samaria.

JEROBOAM II SUCCEEDS JEHOASH IN ISRAEL

¹⁵As for the rest of the acts of Jehoash, along with his accomplishments, his might, and how he waged war against Amaziah king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ¹⁶And Jehoash rested with his fathers and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel. And his son Jeroboam reigned in his place.

THE DEATH OF AMAZIAH

¹⁷Amaziah son of Joash king of Judah lived for fifteen years after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel. ¹⁸As for the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ¹⁹And conspirators plotted against Amaziah in Jerusalem, and he fled to Lachish. But men were sent after him to Lachish, and they killed him there. ²⁰They carried him back on horses and buried him in Jerusalem with his fathers in the City of David.

AZARIAH SUCCEEDS AMAZIAH IN JUDAH

²¹Then all the people of Judah took Azariah, who was sixteen years old, and made him king in place of his father Amaziah. ²²Azariah was the one who rebuilt Elath and restored it to Judah after King Amaziah rested with his fathers.

JEROBOAM II REIGNS IN ISRAEL

²³In the fifteenth year of the reign of Amaziah son of Joash over Judah, Jeroboam son of Jehoash became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria forty-one years. ²⁴And he did evil in the sight of the LORD and did not turn away from all the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused

Israel to commit. ²⁵This Jeroboam restored the boundary of Israel from Lebo-hamath to the Sea of the Arabah, according to the word that the LORD, the God of Israel, had spoken through His servant Jonah son of Amittai, the prophet from Gath-hepher. ²⁶For the LORD saw that the affliction of the Israelites, both slave and free, was very bitter. There was no one to help Israel, ²⁷and since the LORD had said that He would not blot out the name of Israel from under heaven, He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam son of Jehoash. ²⁸As for the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, along with all his accomplishments and might, and how he waged war and recovered both Damascus and Hamath for Israel from Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ²⁹And Jeroboam rested with his fathers, the kings of Israel. And his son Zechariah reigned in his place.

Chapter 15

AZARIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹In the twenty-seventh year of Jeroboam’s reign over Israel, Azariah son of Amaziah became king of Judah. ²He 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. ³And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Amaziah had done. ⁴Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away; the people continued sacrificing and burning incense there. ⁵And the LORD afflicted the king with leprosy until the day he died, so that he lived in a separate house while his son Jotham had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land. ⁶As for the rest of the acts of Azariah, along with all his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ⁷And Azariah rested with his fathers and was buried near them in the City of David. And his son Jotham reigned in his place.

ZECHARIAH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

⁸In the thirty-eighth year of Azariah’s reign over Judah, Zechariah son of Jeroboam became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria six months. ⁹And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his fathers had done. He did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. ¹⁰Then Shallum son of Jabesh conspired against Zechariah, struck him down and killed him in front of the people, and reigned in his place. ¹¹As for the rest of the acts of Zechariah, they are indeed written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ¹²So the word of the

LORD spoken to Jehu was fulfilled: “Four generations of your sons will sit on the throne of Israel.”

SHALLUM REIGNS IN ISRAEL

¹³In the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah’s reign over Judah, Shallum son of Jabesh became king, and he reigned in Samaria one full month. ¹⁴Then Menahem son of Gadi went up from Tirzah to Samaria, struck down and killed Shallum son of Jabesh, and reigned in his place. ¹⁵As for the rest of the acts of Shallum, along with the conspiracy he led, they are indeed written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. ¹⁶At that time Menahem, starting from Tirzah, attacked Tiphseh and everyone in its vicinity, because they would not open their gates. So he attacked Tiphseh and ripped open all the pregnant women.

MENAHM REIGNS IN ISRAEL

¹⁷In the thirty-ninth year of Azariah’s reign over Judah, Menahem son of Gadi became king of Israel, and he reigned in Samaria ten years. ¹⁸And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, and throughout his reign he did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. ¹⁹Then Pul king of Assyria invaded the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver in order to gain his support and strengthen his own grip on the kingdom. ²⁰Menahem exacted this money from each of the wealthy men of Israel—fifty shekels of silver from each man—to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria withdrew and did not remain in the land. ²¹As for the rest of the acts of Menahem, along with all his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? ²²And Menahem rested with his fathers, and his son Pekahiah reigned in his place.

PEKAHIAH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

²³In the fiftieth year of Azariah’s reign over Judah, Pekahiah son of Menahem became king of Israel and reigned in Samaria two years. ²⁴And he did evil in the sight of the LORD and did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. ²⁵Then his officer, Pekah son of Remaliah, conspired against him along with Argob, Arieah, and fifty men of Gilead. And at the citadel of the king’s palace in Samaria, Pekah struck down and killed Pekahiah and reigned in his place. ²⁶As for the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, along with all his accomplishments, they are indeed written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

PEKAH REIGNS IN ISRAEL

²⁷In the fifty-second year of Azariah’s reign over Judah, Pekah son of Remaliah became king of Israel, and he

reigned in Samaria twenty years. ²⁸And he did evil in the sight of the LORD and did not turn away from the sins that Jeroboam son of Nebat had caused Israel to commit. ²⁹In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria came and captured Ijon, Abel-beth-maacah, Janoah, Kedesh, Hazor, Gilead, and Galilee, including all the land of Naphtali, and he took the people as captives to Assyria. ³⁰Then Hoshea son of Elah led a conspiracy against Pekah son of Remaliah. In the twentieth year of Jotham son of Uzziah, Hoshea attacked Pekah, killed him, and reigned in his place. ³¹As for the rest of the acts of Pekah, along with all his accomplishments, they are indeed written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

JOTHAM REIGNS IN JUDAH

³²In the second year of the reign of Pekah son of Remaliah over Israel, Jotham son of Uzziah became king of Judah. ³³He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. His mother’s name was Jerusha daughter of Zadok. ³⁴And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done. ³⁵Nevertheless, the high places were not taken away; the people continued sacrificing and burning incense there. Jotham rebuilt the Upper Gate of the house of the LORD. ³⁶As for the rest of the acts of Jotham, along with his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ³⁷(In those days the LORD began to send Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah against Judah.) ³⁸And Jotham rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David his father. And his son Ahaz reigned in his place.

Chapter 16

AHAZ REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹In the seventeenth year of Pekah son of Remaliah, Ahaz son of Jotham became king of Judah. ²Ahaz 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 his God. ³Instead, he walked in the ways of the kings of Israel and even sacrificed his son 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. ⁵Then Rezin king of Aram and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel came up to wage war against Jerusalem. They besieged Ahaz but could not overcome him. ⁶At that time Rezin king of Aram recovered Elath for Aram, drove out the men of Judah, and sent the Edomites into Elath, where

they live to this day. ⁷So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, saying, "I am your servant and your son. Come up and save me from the hands of the kings of Aram and Israel, who are rising up against me." ⁸Ahaz also took the silver and gold found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the king's palace, and he sent it as a gift to the king of Assyria. ⁹So the king of Assyria responded to him, marched up to Damascus, and captured it. He took its people to Kir as captives and put Rezin to death.

THE IDOLATRY OF AHAZ

¹⁰Then King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria. On seeing the altar in Damascus, King Ahaz sent Uriah the priest a model of the altar and complete plans for its construction. ¹¹And Uriah the priest built the altar according to all the instructions King Ahaz had sent from Damascus, and he completed it before King Ahaz returned. ¹²When the king came back from Damascus and saw the altar, he approached it and presented offerings on it. ¹³He offered his burnt offering and his grain offering, poured out his drink offering, and splattered the blood of his peace offerings on the altar. ¹⁴He also took the bronze altar that stood before the LORD from the front of the temple (between the new altar and the house of the LORD) and he put it on the north side of the new altar. ¹⁵Then King Ahaz commanded Uriah the priest, "Offer on the great altar the morning burnt offering, the evening grain offering, and the king's burnt offering and grain offering, as well as the burnt offerings, grain offerings, and drink offerings of all the people of the land. Splatter on the altar all the blood of the burnt offerings and sacrifices. But I will use the bronze altar to seek guidance." ¹⁶So Uriah the priest did just as King Ahaz had commanded. ¹⁷King Ahaz also cut off the frames of the movable stands and removed the bronze basin from each of them. He took down the Sea from the bronze oxen that were under it and put it on a stone base. ¹⁸And on account of the king of Assyria, he removed the Sabbath canopy they had built in the temple and closed the royal entryway outside the house of the LORD. ¹⁹As for the rest of the acts of Ahaz, along with his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁰And Ahaz rested with his fathers and was buried with them in the City of David, and his son Hezekiah reigned in his place.

Chapter 17

HOSHEA THE LAST KING OF ISRAEL

'In the twelfth year of the reign of Ahaz over Judah, Hoshea son of Elah became king of Israel, and he reigned

in Samaria nine years. ²And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, but not like the kings of Israel who preceded him. ³Shalmaneser king of Assyria attacked him, and Hoshea became his vassal and paid him tribute. ⁴But the king of Assyria discovered that Hoshea had conspired to send envoys to King So of Egypt, and that he had not paid tribute to the king of Assyria as in previous years. Therefore the king of Assyria arrested Hoshea and put him in prison.

ISRAEL CARRIED CAPTIVE TO ASSYRIA

⁵Then the king of Assyria invaded the whole land, marched up to Samaria, and besieged it for three years. ⁶In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria captured Samaria and carried away the Israelites to Assyria, where he settled them in Halah, in Gozan by the Habor River, and in the cities of the Medes. ⁷All this happened because the people of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. They had worshiped other gods ⁸and walked in the customs of the nations that the LORD had driven out before the Israelites, as well as in the practices introduced by the kings of Israel. ⁹The Israelites secretly did things against the LORD their God that were not right. From watchtower to fortified city, they built high places in all their cities. ¹⁰They set up for themselves sacred pillars and Asherah poles on every high hill and under every green tree. ¹¹They burned incense on all the high places like the nations that the LORD had driven out before them. They did wicked things, provoking the LORD to anger. ¹²They served idols, although the LORD had told them, "You shall not do this thing." ¹³Yet through all His prophets and seers, the LORD warned Israel and Judah, saying, "Turn from your wicked ways and keep My commandments and statutes, according to the entire Law that I commanded your fathers and delivered to you through My servants the prophets." ¹⁴But they would not listen, and they stiffened their necks like their fathers, who did not believe the LORD their God. ¹⁵They rejected His statutes and the covenant He had made with their fathers, as well as the decrees He had given them. They pursued worthless idols and became worthless themselves, going after the surrounding nations that the LORD had commanded them not to imitate. ¹⁶They abandoned all the commandments of the LORD their God and made for themselves two cast idols of calves and an Asherah pole. They bowed down to all the host of heaven and served Baal. ¹⁷They sacrificed their sons and daughters in the fire and practiced divination and soothsaying. They devoted themselves to doing evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger. ¹⁸So the LORD was very angry with Israel, and He removed

them from His presence. Only the tribe of Judah remained, ¹⁹and even Judah did not keep the commandments of the LORD their God, but lived according to the customs Israel had introduced. ²⁰So the LORD rejected all the descendants of Israel. He afflicted them and delivered them into the hands of plunderers, until He had banished them from His presence. ²¹When the LORD had torn Israel away from the house of David, they made Jeroboam son of Nebat king, and Jeroboam led Israel away from following the LORD and caused them to commit a great sin. ²²The Israelites persisted in all the sins that Jeroboam had committed and did not turn away from them. ²³Finally, the LORD removed Israel from His presence, as He had declared through all His servants the prophets. So Israel was exiled from their homeland into Assyria, where they are to this day.

SAMARIA RESETTLED

²⁴Then the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hamath, and Sepharvaim and settled them in the towns of Samaria to replace the Israelites. They took possession of Samaria and lived in its towns. ²⁵Now when the settlers first lived there, they did not worship the LORD, so He sent lions among them, which killed some of them. ²⁶So they spoke to the king of Assyria, saying, “The peoples that you have removed and placed in the cities of Samaria do not know the requirements of the God of the land. Because of this, He has sent lions among them, which are indeed killing them off.” ²⁷Then the king of Assyria commanded: “Send back one of the priests you carried off from Samaria, and have him go back to live there and teach the requirements of the God of the land.” ²⁸Thus one of the priests they had carried away came and lived in Bethel, and he began to teach them how they should worship the LORD. ²⁹Nevertheless, the people of each nation continued to make their own gods in the cities where they had settled, and they set them up in the shrines that the people of Samaria had made on the high places. ³⁰The men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth, the men of Cuth made Nergal, the men of Hamath made Ashima, ³¹the Avvites made Nibhaz and Tartak, and the Sepharvites burned their children in the fire to Adrammelech and Anammelech the gods of Sepharvaim. ³²So the new residents worshiped the LORD, but they also appointed for themselves priests of all sorts to serve in the shrines of the high places. ³³They worshiped the LORD, but they also served their own gods according to the customs of the nations from which they had been carried away. ³⁴To this day they are still practicing their former customs. None of them worship the LORD or observe the statutes, ordinances, laws, and command-

ments that the LORD gave the descendants of Jacob, whom He named Israel. ³⁵For the LORD had made a covenant with the Israelites and commanded them, “Do not worship other gods or bow down to them; do not serve them or sacrifice to them. ³⁶Instead, worship the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt with great power and an outstretched arm. You are to bow down to Him and offer sacrifices to Him. ³⁷And you must always be careful to observe the statutes, ordinances, laws, and commandments He wrote for you. Do not worship other gods. ³⁸Do not forget the covenant I have made with you. Do not worship other gods, ³⁹but worship the LORD your God, and He will deliver you from the hands of all your enemies.” ⁴⁰But they would not listen, and they persisted in their former customs. ⁴¹So these nations worshiped the LORD but also served their idols, and to this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did.

Chapter 18

HEZEKIAH DESTROYS IDOLATRY IN JUDAH

¹In the third year of the reign of Hoshea son of Elah over Israel, Hezekiah son of Ahaz became king of Judah. ²He was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abi, the daughter of Zechariah. ³And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. ⁴He removed the high places, shattered the sacred pillars, and cut down the Asherah poles. He also demolished the bronze snake called Nehushtan that Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had burned incense to it. ⁵Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. No king of Judah was like him, either before him or after him. ⁶He remained faithful to the LORD and did not turn from following Him; he kept the commandments that the LORD had given Moses. ⁷And the LORD was with Hezekiah, and he prospered wherever he went. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and refused to serve him. ⁸He defeated the Philistines as far as Gaza and its borders, from watchtower to fortified city. ⁹In the fourth year of Hezekiah's reign, which was the seventh year of the reign of Hoshea son of Elah over Israel, Shalmaneser king of Assyria marched against Samaria and besieged it. ¹⁰And at the end of three years, the Assyrians captured it. So Samaria was captured in the sixth year of Hezekiah, which was the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel. ¹¹The king of Assyria exiled the Israelites to Assyria and settled them in Halah, in Gozan by the Habor River, and in the cities of the Medes. ¹²This happened because they did not listen to the voice of the LORD their God, but violated His covenant—

all that Moses the servant of the LORD had commanded—and would neither listen nor obey.

SENNACHERIB INVADES JUDAH

¹³In the fourteenth year of Hezekiah's reign, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked and captured all the fortified cities of Judah. ¹⁴So Hezekiah king of Judah sent word to the king of Assyria at Lachish, saying, "I have done wrong; withdraw from me, and I will pay whatever you demand from me." And the king of Assyria exacted from Hezekiah king of Judah three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold. ¹⁵Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace. ¹⁶At that time Hezekiah stripped the gold with which he had plated the doors and doorposts of the temple of the LORD, and he gave it to the king of Assyria.

SENNACHERIB THREATENS JERUSALEM

¹⁷Nevertheless, the king of Assyria sent the Tartan, the Rabсарis, and the Rabshakeh, along with a great army, from Lachish to King Hezekiah at Jerusalem. They advanced up to Jerusalem and stationed themselves by the aqueduct of the upper pool, on the road to the Launderer's Field. ¹⁸Then they called for the king. And Eliakim son of Hilkiah the palace administrator, Shebna the scribe, and Joah son of Asaph the recorder, went out to them. ¹⁹The Rabshakeh said to them, "Tell Hezekiah that this is what the great king, the king of Assyria, says: What is the basis of this confidence of yours? ²⁰You claim to have a strategy and strength for war, but these are empty words. In whom are you now trusting, that you have rebelled against me? ²¹Look now, you are trusting in Egypt, that splintered reed of a staff that will pierce the hand of anyone who leans on it. Such is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who trust in him. ²²But if you say to me, 'We trust in the LORD our God,' is He not the One whose high places and altars Hezekiah has removed, saying to Judah and Jerusalem: 'You must worship before this altar in Jerusalem'? ²³Now, therefore, make a bargain with my master, the king of Assyria. I will give you two thousand horses—if you can put riders on them! ²⁴For how can you repel a single officer among the least of my master's servants when you depend on Egypt for chariots and horsemen? ²⁵So now, was it apart from the LORD that I have come up against this place to destroy it? The LORD Himself said to me, 'Go up against this land and destroy it.'" ²⁶Then Eliakim son of Hilkiah, along with Shebna and Joah, said to the Rabshakeh, "Please speak to your servants in Aramaic, since we understand it. Do not speak with us in Hebrew in the hearing of the people on the wall." ²⁷But the Rabshakeh replied, "Has my master sent me to speak these words only to you and your master, and

not to the men sitting on the wall, who are destined with you to eat their own dung and drink their own urine?" ²⁸Then the Rabshakeh stood and called out loudly in Hebrew: "Hear the word of the great king, the king of Assyria! ²⁹This is what the king says: Do not let Hezekiah deceive you; he cannot deliver you from my hand. ³⁰Do not let Hezekiah persuade you to trust in the LORD when he says, 'The LORD will surely deliver us; this city will not be given into the hand of the king of Assyria.' ³¹Do not listen to Hezekiah, for this is what the king of Assyria says: Make peace with me and come out to me. Then every one of you will eat from his own vine and his own fig tree and drink water from his own cistern, ³²until I come and take you away to a land like your own—a land of grain and new wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive trees and honey—so that you may live and not die. But do not listen to Hezekiah, for he misleads you when he says, 'The LORD will deliver us.' ³³Has the god of any nation ever delivered his land from the hand of the king of Assyria? ³⁴Where are the gods of Hamath and Arpad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria from my hand? ³⁵Who among all the gods of these lands has delivered his land from my hand? How then can the LORD deliver Jerusalem from my hand?" ³⁶But the people remained silent and did not answer a word, for Hezekiah had commanded, "Do not answer him." ³⁷Then Hilkiah's son Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the scribe, and Asaph's son Joah the recorder came to Hezekiah with their clothes torn, and they relayed to him the words of the Rabshakeh.

Chapter 19

ISAIAH'S MESSAGE OF DELIVERANCE

¹On hearing this report, King Hezekiah tore his clothes, put on sackcloth, and entered the house of the LORD. ²And he sent Eliakim the palace administrator, Shebna the scribe, and the leading priests, all wearing sackcloth, to the prophet Isaiah son of Amoz ³to tell him, "This is what Hezekiah says: Today is a day of distress, rebuke, and disgrace; for children have come to the point of birth, but there is no strength to deliver them. ⁴Perhaps the LORD your God will hear all the words of the Rabshakeh, whom his master the king of Assyria has sent to defy the living God, and He will rebuke him for the words that the LORD your God has heard. Therefore lift up a prayer for the remnant that still survives." ⁵So the servants of King Hezekiah went to Isaiah, ⁶who replied, "Tell your master that this is what the LORD says: 'Do not be afraid of the words you have heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria

have blasphemed Me. ⁷Behold, I will put a spirit in him so that he will hear a rumor and return to his own land, where I will cause him to fall by the sword.”

SENNACHERIB’S BLASPHEMOUS LETTER

⁸When the Rabshakeh heard that the king of Assyria had left Lachish, he withdrew and found the king fighting against Libnah. ⁹Now Sennacherib had been warned about Tirhakah king of Cush: “Look, he has set out to fight against you.” So Sennacherib again sent messengers to Hezekiah, saying, ¹⁰“Give this message to Hezekiah king of Judah: ‘Do not let your God, in whom you trust, deceive you by saying that Jerusalem will not be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria. ¹¹Surely you have heard what the kings of Assyria have done to all the other countries, devoting them to destruction. Will you then be spared? ¹²Did the gods of the nations destroyed by my fathers rescue those nations—the gods of Gozan, Haran, and Rezep, and of the people of Eden in Telassar? ¹³Where are the kings of Hamath, Arpad, Sepharvaim, Hena, and Ivvah?’”

HEZEKIAH’S PRAYER

¹⁴So Hezekiah received the letter from the messengers, read it, and went up to the house of the LORD and spread it out before the LORD. ¹⁵And Hezekiah prayed before the LORD: “O LORD, God of Israel, enthroned between the cherubim, You alone are God over all the kingdoms of the earth. You made the heavens and the earth. ¹⁶Incline Your ear, O LORD, and hear; open Your eyes, O LORD, and see. Listen to the words that Sennacherib has sent to defy the living God. ¹⁷Truly, O LORD, the kings of Assyria have laid waste these nations and their lands. ¹⁸They have cast their gods into the fire and destroyed them, for they were not gods, but only wood and stone—the work of human hands. ¹⁹And now, O LORD our God, please save us from his hand, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that You alone, O LORD, are God.”

SENNACHERIB’S FALL PROPHESED

²⁰Then Isaiah son of Amoz sent a message to Hezekiah: “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I have heard your prayer concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria. ²¹This is the word that the LORD has spoken against him: ‘The Virgin Daughter of Zion despises you and mocks you; the Daughter of Jerusalem shakes her head behind you. ²²Whom have you taunted and blasphemed? Against whom have you raised your voice and lifted your eyes in pride? Against the Holy One of Israel! ²³Through your servants you have taunted the Lord, and you have said: “With my many chariots I have ascended to the heights of the mountains, to the remote peaks of Lebanon. I have cut down its

tallest cedars, the finest of its cypresses. I have reached its farthest outposts, the densest of its forests. ²⁴I have dug wells and drunk foreign waters. With the soles of my feet I have dried up all the streams of Egypt.” ²⁵Have you not heard? Long ago I ordained it; in days of old I planned it. Now I have brought it to pass, that you should crush fortified cities into piles of rubble. ²⁶Therefore their inhabitants, devoid of power, are dismayed and ashamed. They are like plants in the field, tender green shoots, grass on the rooftops, scorched before it is grown. ²⁷But I know your sitting down, your going out and coming in, and your raging against Me. ²⁸Because your rage and arrogance against Me have reached My ears, I will put My hook in your nose and My bit in your mouth; I will send you back the way you came.’ ²⁹And this will be a sign to you, O Hezekiah: This year you will eat what grows on its own, and in the second year what springs from the same. But in the third year you will sow and reap; you will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ³⁰And the surviving remnant of the house of Judah will again take root below and bear fruit above. ³¹For a remnant will go forth from Jerusalem, and survivors from Mount Zion. The zeal of the LORD of Hosts will accomplish this. ³²So this is what the LORD says about the king of Assyria: ‘He will not enter this city or shoot an arrow into it. He will not come before it with a shield or build up a siege ramp against it. ³³He will go back the way he came, and he will not enter this city, declares the LORD. ³⁴I will defend this city and save it for My own sake and for the sake of My servant David.’”

JERUSALEM DELIVERED FROM THE ASSYRIANS

³⁵And that very night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down 185,000 men in the camp of the Assyrians. When the people got up the next morning, there were all the dead bodies! ³⁶So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. ³⁷One day, while he was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his sons Adrammelech and Sharezer put him to the sword and escaped to the land of Ararat. And his son Esar-haddon reigned in his place.

Chapter 20

HEZEKIAH’S ILLNESS AND RECOVERY

¹In those days Hezekiah became mortally ill. The prophet Isaiah son of Amoz came to him and said, “This is what the LORD says: ‘Put your house in order, for you are about to die; you will not recover.’” ²Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed to the LORD, saying, ³“Please, O LORD, remember how I have walked before You faithfully

and with wholehearted devotion; I have done what is good in Your sight.” And Hezekiah wept bitterly. ⁴Before Isaiah had left the middle courtyard, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, ⁵“Go back and tell Hezekiah the leader of My people that this is what the LORD, the God of your father David, says: ‘I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears. I will surely heal you. On the third day from now you will go up to the house of the LORD. ⁶I will add fifteen years to your life. And I will deliver you and this city from the hand of the king of Assyria. I will defend this city for My sake and for the sake of My servant David.’” ⁷Then Isaiah said, “Prepare a poultice of figs.” So they brought it and applied it to the boil, and Hezekiah recovered. ⁸Now Hezekiah had asked Isaiah, “What will be the sign that the LORD will heal me and that I will go up to the house of the LORD on the third day?” ⁹And Isaiah had replied, “This will be a sign to you from the LORD that He will do what He has promised: Would you like the shadow to go forward ten steps, or back ten steps?” ¹⁰“It is easy for the shadow to lengthen ten steps,” answered Hezekiah, “but not for it to go back ten steps.” ¹¹So Isaiah the prophet called out to the LORD, and He brought the shadow back the ten steps it had descended on the stairway of Ahaz.

HEZEKIAH SHOWS HIS TREASURES

¹²At that time Merodach-baladan son of Baladan king of Babylon sent letters and a gift to Hezekiah, for he had heard about Hezekiah’s illness. ¹³And Hezekiah received the envoys and showed them all that was in his treasure house—the silver, the gold, the spices, and the precious oil, as well as his armory—all that was found in his storehouses. There was nothing in his palace or in all his dominion that Hezekiah did not show them. ¹⁴Then the prophet Isaiah went to King Hezekiah and asked, “Where did those men come from, and what did they say to you?” “They came from a distant land,” Hezekiah replied, “from Babylon.” ¹⁵“What have they seen in your palace?” Isaiah asked. “They have seen everything in my palace,” answered Hezekiah. “There is nothing among my treasures that I did not show them.” ¹⁶Then Isaiah said to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD: ¹⁷The time will surely come when everything in your palace and all that your fathers have stored up until this day will be carried off to Babylon. Nothing will be left, says the LORD. ¹⁸And some of your descendants, your own flesh and blood, will be taken away to be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” ¹⁹But Hezekiah said to Isaiah, “The word of the LORD that you have spoken is good.” For he thought, “Will there not at least be peace and security in my lifetime?”

MANASSEH SUCCEEDS HEZEKIAH

²⁰As for the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, along with all his might and how he constructed the pool and the tunnel to bring water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²¹And Hezekiah rested with his fathers, and his son Manasseh reigned in his place.

Chapter 21

MANASSEH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Manasseh was twelve years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem fifty-five years. His mother’s name was Hephzibah. 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 destroyed, and he raised up altars for Baal. He made an Asherah pole, as King Ahab of Israel had done, 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, “In Jerusalem I will put My Name.” ⁵In both courtyards of the house of the LORD, he built altars to all the host of heaven. ⁶He sacrificed his own son in the fire, practiced sorcery and divination, and consulted mediums and spiritists. He did great evil in the sight of the LORD, provoking Him to anger. ⁷Manasseh even took the carved Asherah pole he had made and set it up in the temple, of which the LORD 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 wander from the land that I gave to their fathers, if only they are careful to do all I have commanded them—the whole Law that My servant Moses commanded them.” ⁹But the people did not listen and Manasseh led them astray, so that they did greater evil than the nations that the LORD had destroyed before the Israelites.

MANASSEH’S IDOLATRIES REBUKED

¹⁰And the LORD spoke through His servants the prophets, saying, ¹¹“Since Manasseh king of Judah has committed all these abominations, acting more wickedly than the Amorites who preceded him, and with his idols has caused Judah to sin, ¹²this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Behold, I am bringing such calamity upon Jerusalem and Judah that the news will reverberate in the ears of all who hear it. ¹³I will stretch out over Jerusalem the measuring line used against Samaria and the plumb line used against the house of Ahab, and I will wipe out Jerusalem as

one wipes out a bowl—wiping it and turning it upside down. ¹⁴So I will forsake the remnant of My inheritance and deliver them into the hands of their enemies. And they will become plunder and spoil to all their enemies, ¹⁵because they have done evil in My sight and have provoked Me to anger from the day their fathers came out of Egypt until this day.” ¹⁶Moreover, Manasseh shed so much innocent blood that he filled Jerusalem from end to end, in addition to the sin that he had caused Judah to commit, doing evil in the sight of the LORD. ¹⁷As for the rest of the acts of Manasseh, along with all his accomplishments and the sin that he committed, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ¹⁸And Manasseh rested with his fathers and was buried in his palace garden, the garden of Uzza. And his son Amon reigned in his place.

AMON REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹⁹Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem two years. His mother’s name was Meshullemeth daughter of Haruz; she was from Jotbah. ²⁰And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh had done. ²¹He walked in all the ways of his father, and he served and worshiped the idols his father had served. ²²He abandoned the LORD, the God of his fathers, and did not walk in the way of the LORD. ²³Then the servants of Amon conspired against him and killed the king in his palace. ²⁴But the people of the land killed all those who had conspired against King Amon, and they made his son Josiah king in his place. ²⁵As for the rest of the acts of Amon, along with his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁶And he was buried in his tomb in the garden of Uzza, and his son Josiah reigned in his place.

Chapter 22

JOSIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem thirty-one years. His mother’s name was Jedidah daughter of Adaiah; she was from Bozkath. ²And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD and walked in all the ways of his father David; he did not turn aside to the right or to the left.

FUNDING THE TEMPLE REPAIRS

³Now in the eighteenth year of his reign, King Josiah sent the scribe, Shaphan son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, to the house of the LORD, saying, ⁴“Go up to Hilkiah the high priest and have him count the money that has been brought into the house of the LORD, which the doorkeepers have collected from the people. ⁵And let them deliver it

into the hands of the supervisors of those doing the work on the house of the LORD, who in turn are to give it to the workmen repairing the damages to the house of the LORD — ⁶to the carpenters, builders, and masons—to buy timber and dressed stone to repair the temple. ⁷But they need not account for the money put into their hands, since they work with integrity.”

HILKIAH FINDS THE BOOK OF THE LAW

⁸Then Hilkiah the high priest 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, who read it. ⁹And Shaphan the scribe went to the king and reported, “Your servants have paid out the money that was found in the temple and have put it into the hands of the workers and supervisors of the house of the LORD.” ¹⁰Moreover, Shaphan the scribe told the king, “Hilkiah the priest has given me a book.” And Shaphan read it in the presence of the king. ¹¹When the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he tore his clothes ¹²and commanded Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the scribe, and Asaiah the servant of the king: ¹³“Go and inquire of the LORD for me, for the people, and for all Judah concerning the words in this book that has been found. For great is the wrath of the LORD that burns against us because our fathers have not obeyed the words of this book by doing all that is written about us.”

HULDAH’S PROPHECY

¹⁴So Hilkiah the priest, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went and spoke to Huldah the prophetess, the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, the son of Harhas, the keeper of the wardrobe. She lived in Jerusalem, in the Second District. ¹⁵And Huldah said to them, “This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: ‘Tell the man who sent you ¹⁶that this is what the LORD says: I am about to bring calamity on this place and on its people, according to all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read, ¹⁷because 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 kindled against this place and will not be quenched.’ ¹⁸But 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, ¹⁹because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before the LORD when you heard what I spoke against this place and against its people, that they would become a desolation and a curse, and because you have torn your clothes and wept before Me, I have heard you,’ declares the LORD. ²⁰Therefore 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.” So they brought her answer back to the king.

Chapter 23

JOSIAH RENEWS THE COVENANT

¹Then the king summoned all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. ²And he went up to the house of the LORD with all the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as well as the priests and the prophets—all the people small and great—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. ³So 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. And all the people entered into the covenant.

JOSIAH DESTROYS IDOLATRY

⁴Then the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, the priests second in rank, and the doorkeepers to remove from the temple of the LORD all the articles made for Baal, Asherah, and all the host of heaven. And he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron and carried their ashes to Bethel. ⁵Josiah also did away with the idolatrous priests ordained by the kings of Judah to burn incense on the high places of the cities of Judah and in the places all around Jerusalem—those who had burned incense to Baal, to the sun and moon, to the constellations, and to all the host of heaven. ⁶He brought the Asherah pole from the house of the LORD to the Kidron Valley outside Jerusalem, and there he burned it, ground it to powder, and threw its dust on the graves of the common people. ⁷He also tore down the quarters of the male shrine prostitutes that were in the house of the LORD, where the women had woven tapestries for Asherah. ⁸Then Josiah brought all the priests from the cities of Judah and desecrated the high places, from Geba to Beersheba, where the priests had burned incense. He tore down the high places of the gates at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which was to the left of the city gate. ⁹Although the priests of the high places did not come up to the altar of the LORD in Jerusalem, they ate unleavened bread with their fellow priests. ¹⁰He also desecrated Topheth in the Valley of Ben-hinnom so that no one could sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire to Molech. ¹¹And he removed from the entrance to the house of the LORD the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun. They were in the court

near the chamber of an official named Nathan-melech. And Josiah burned up the chariots of the sun. ¹²He pulled down the altars that the kings of Judah had set up on the roof near the upper chamber of Ahaz, and the altars that Manasseh had set up in the two courtyards of the house of the LORD. The king pulverized them there and threw their dust into the Kidron Valley. ¹³The king also desecrated the high places east of Jerusalem, to the south of the Mount of Corruption, which King Solomon of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites. ¹⁴He smashed the sacred pillars to pieces, cut down the Asherah poles, and covered the sites with human bones. ¹⁵He even pulled down the altar at Bethel, the high place set up by Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused Israel to sin. Then he burned the high place, ground it to powder, and burned the Asherah pole. ¹⁶And as Josiah turned, he saw the tombs there on the hillside, and he sent someone to take the bones out of the tombs, and he burned them on the altar to defile it, according to the word of the LORD proclaimed by the man of God who had foretold these things. ¹⁷Then the king asked, “What is this monument I see?” And the men of the city replied, “It is the tomb of the man of God who came from Judah and proclaimed these things that you have done to the altar of Bethel.” ¹⁸“Let him rest,” said Josiah. “Do not let anyone disturb his bones.” So they left his bones undisturbed, along with those of the prophet who had come from Samaria. ¹⁹Just as Josiah had done at Bethel, so also in the cities of Samaria he removed all the shrines of the high places set up by the kings of Israel who had provoked the LORD to anger. ²⁰On the altars he slaughtered all the priests of the high places, and he burned human bones on them. Then he returned to Jerusalem.

JOSIAH RESTORES THE PASSOVER

²¹The king commanded all the people, “Keep the Passover of the LORD your God, as it is written in this Book of the Covenant.” ²²No such Passover had been observed from the days of the judges who had governed Israel through all the days of the kings of Israel and Judah. ²³But in the eighteenth year of Josiah’s reign, this Passover was observed to the LORD in Jerusalem. ²⁴Furthermore, Josiah removed the mediums and spiritists, the household gods and idols, and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem. He did this to carry out the words of the law written in the book that Hilkiah the priest had found in the house of the LORD. ²⁵Neither before nor after Josiah was there any king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart and with all his soul and with all

his strength, according to all the Law of Moses. ²⁶Nevertheless, the LORD did not turn away from the fury of His burning anger, which was kindled against Judah because of all that Manasseh had done to provoke Him to anger. ²⁷For the LORD had said, “I will remove Judah from My sight, just as I removed Israel. I will reject this city Jerusalem, which I chose, and the temple of which I said, ‘My Name shall be there.’”

THE DEATH OF JOSIAH

²⁸As for the rest of the acts of Josiah and all his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? ²⁹During Josiah’s reign, Pharaoh Neco king of Egypt marched up to help the king of Assyria at the Euphrates River. King Josiah went out to confront him, but Neco faced him and killed him at Megiddo. ³⁰From Megiddo his servants carried his body in a chariot, brought him to Jerusalem, and buried him in his own tomb. Then the people of the land took Jehoahaz son of Josiah, anointed him, and made him king in place of his father.

JEHOAHAZ SUCCEEDS JOSIAH

³¹Jehoahaz was twenty-three years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother’s name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. ³²And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his fathers had done. ³³And Pharaoh Neco imprisoned Jehoahaz at Riblah in the land of Hamath so that he could not reign in Jerusalem, and he imposed on Judah a levy of a hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold. ³⁴Then Pharaoh Neco made Eliakim son of Josiah king in place of his father Josiah, and he changed Eliakim’s name to Jehoiakim. But Neco took Jehoahaz and carried him off to Egypt, where he died. ³⁵So Jehoiakim paid the silver and gold to Pharaoh Neco, but to meet Pharaoh’s demand he taxed the land and exacted the silver and the gold from the people, each according to his wealth.

JEHOIAKIM REIGNS IN JUDAH

³⁶Jehoiakim was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother’s name was Zebidah daughter of Pedaiiah; she was from Rumah. ³⁷And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his fathers had done.

Chapter 24

BABYLON CONTROLS JEHOIAKIM

¹During Jehoiakim’s reign, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon invaded. So Jehoiakim became his vassal for three

years, until he turned and rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. ²And the LORD sent Chaldean, Aramean, Moabite, and Ammonite raiders against Jehoiakim in order to destroy Judah, according to the word that the LORD had spoken through His servants the prophets. ³Surely this happened to Judah at the LORD’s command, to remove them from His presence because of the sins of Manasseh and all that he had done, ⁴and also for the innocent blood he had shed. For he had filled Jerusalem with innocent blood, and the LORD was unwilling to forgive. ⁵As for the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim, along with all his accomplishments, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?

JEHOIACHIN REIGNS IN JUDAH

⁶And Jehoiakim rested with his fathers, and his son Jehoiachin reigned in his place. ⁷Now the king of Egypt did not march out of his land again, because the king of Babylon had taken all his territory, from the Brook of Egypt to the Euphrates River. ⁸Jehoiachin was eighteen years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. His mother’s name was Nehushta daughter of Elnathan; she was from Jerusalem. ⁹And he did evil in the sight of the LORD, just as his father had done.

THE CAPTIVITY OF JERUSALEM

¹⁰At that time the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched up to Jerusalem, and the city came under siege. ¹¹And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came to the city while his servants were besieging it. ¹²Jehoiachin king of Judah, his mother, his servants, his commanders, and his officials all surrendered to the king of Babylon. So in the eighth year of his reign, the king of Babylon took him captive. ¹³As the LORD had declared, Nebuchadnezzar also carried off all the treasures from the house of the LORD and the royal palace, and he cut into pieces all the gold articles that Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD. ¹⁴He carried into exile all Jerusalem—all the commanders and mighty men of valor, all the craftsmen and metalsmiths—ten thousand captives in all. Only the poorest people of the land remained. ¹⁵Nebuchadnezzar carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon, as well as the king’s mother, his wives, his officials, and the leading men of the land. He took them into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon. ¹⁶The king of Babylon also brought into exile to Babylon all seven thousand men of valor and a thousand craftsmen and metalsmiths—all strong and fit for battle. ¹⁷Then the king of Babylon made Mattaniah, Jehoiachin’s uncle, king in his place and changed his name to Zedekiah.

ZEDEKIAH REIGNS IN JUDAH

¹⁸Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. His mother's name was Hamutal daughter of Jeremiah; she was from Libnah. ¹⁹And Zedekiah did evil in the sight of the LORD, just as Jehoiakim had done. ²⁰For because of the anger of the LORD, all this happened in Jerusalem and Judah, until He finally banished them from His presence. And Zedekiah also rebelled against the king of Babylon.

Chapter 25**NEBUCHADNEZZAR BESIEGES JERUSALEM**

¹So in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, on the tenth day of the tenth month, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon marched against Jerusalem with his entire army. They encamped outside the city and built a siege wall all around it. ²And the city was kept under siege until King Zedekiah's eleventh year. ³By the ninth day of the fourth month, the famine in the city was so severe that the people of the land had no food. ⁴Then the city was breached; and though the Chaldeans had surrounded the city, all the men of war fled by night by way of the gate between the two walls near the king's garden. They headed toward the Arabah, ⁵but the army of the Chaldeans pursued the king and overtook him in the plains of Jericho, and his whole army deserted him. ⁶The Chaldeans seized the king and brought him up to the king of Babylon at Riblah, where they pronounced judgment on him. ⁷And they slaughtered the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes. Then they put out his eyes, bound him with bronze shackles, and took him to Babylon.

THE TEMPLE DESTROYED

⁸On the seventh day of the fifth month, in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign over Babylon, Nebuzaradan captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon, entered Jerusalem. ⁹He burned down the house of the LORD, the royal palace, and all the houses of Jerusalem—every significant building. ¹⁰And the whole army of the Chaldeans under the captain of the guard broke down the walls around Jerusalem. ¹¹Then Nebuzaradan captain of the guard carried into exile the people who remained in the city, along with the deserters who had defected to the king of Babylon and the rest of the population. ¹²But the captain of the guard left behind some of the poorest of the land to tend the vineyards and fields. ¹³Moreover, the Chaldeans broke up the bronze pillars and stands and the bronze Sea in the house of the LORD, and they carried the bronze to Babylon. ¹⁴They also took away the pots, shovels, wick trimmers, dishes, and all the articles

of bronze used in the temple service. ¹⁵The captain of the guard also took away the censers and sprinkling bowls—anything made of pure gold or fine silver. ¹⁶As for the two pillars, the Sea, and the movable stands that Solomon had made for the house of the LORD, the weight of the bronze from all these articles was beyond measure. ¹⁷Each pillar was eighteen cubits tall. The bronze capital atop one pillar was three cubits high, with a network of bronze pomegranates all around. The second pillar, with its network, was similar.

CAPTIVES CARRIED TO BABYLON

¹⁸The captain of the guard also took away Seraiah the chief priest, Zephaniah the priest of second rank, and the three doorkeepers. ¹⁹Of those still in the city, he took a court official who had been appointed over the men of war, as well as five royal advisors. He also took the scribe of the captain of the army, who had enlisted the people of the land, and sixty men who were found in the city. ²⁰Nebuzaradan captain of the guard took them and brought them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. ²¹There at Riblah in the land of Hamath, the king of Babylon struck them down and put them to death. So Judah was taken into exile, away from its own land.

GEDALIAH GOVERNS IN JUDAH

²²Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon appointed Gedaliah son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, over the people he had left behind in the land of Judah. ²³When all the commanders of the armies and their men heard that the king of Babylon had appointed Gedaliah as governor, they came to Gedaliah at Mizpah—Ishmael son of Nethaniah, Johanan son of Kareah, Seraiah son of Tanhumeth the Netophathite, and Jaazaniah son of the Maacathite, as well as their men. ²⁴And Gedaliah took an oath before them and their men, assuring them, "Do not be afraid of the servants of the Chaldeans. Live in the land and serve the king of Babylon, and it will be well with you."

THE MURDER OF GEDALIAH

²⁵In the seventh month, however, Ishmael son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, who was a member of the royal family, came with ten men and struck down and killed Gedaliah, along with the Judeans and Chaldeans who were with him at Mizpah. ²⁶Then all the people small and great, together with the commanders of the army, arose and fled to Egypt for fear of the Chaldeans.

JEHOIACHIN RELEASED FROM PRISON

²⁷On the twenty-seventh day of the twelfth month of the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Judah's King Jehoiachin,

in the year Evil-merodach became king of Babylon, he released King Jehoiachin of Judah from prison. ²⁸And he spoke kindly to Jehoiachin and set his throne above the thrones of the other kings who were with him in Babylon.

²⁹So Jehoiachin changed out of his prison clothes, and he dined regularly at the king's table for the rest of his life.

³⁰And the king provided Jehoiachin a daily portion for the rest of his life.

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